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Looking at People Watching People:
A Comparative Approach of American and British Advertising

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Abstract:

Advertising reaches millions of audiences every day, yet some of the most impactful ads only appear once, while other advertisements thrive in a world where audiences are most receptive to what the campaign is feeding to the masses. Spaces like the Super Bowl, ads created for the wonders of television are the bridge between artificial realism and situational experiences that most people can relate or aspire to, but what if one person's experience is leaning towards misrepresentation? In this paper, I'll be using media studies to dissect American advertising, through its construction of non-profit advertising and responding to the form of strategy being used.

Keywords: public service announcements, advertising, shock advertising, television studies, Mad Men, representation

Introduction:

Advertising, much like films and television, can be viewed within Henry Giroux's conception of popular culture, "as a serious object of politics and analysis" (164). Advertising, seen and consumed daily by many, also offers a reason to get up off the couch to use the restroom or to go on your mobile phone. In today's market, you can leave one's space of viewing media and see the ads you were trying to avoid pop up in the new platform you've redirected your attention to. Advertising in its print form, is now competing with fast-paced advertising, placed within our social media platforms and internet pages. The digital age has now expanded how society acknowledges these strategies, the development and the digitized transformation of advertising. In this project, I will be looking at advertising through the lens of the non-profit sector and dissect how media makers distribute and circulate information for their target

demographics. From the strategy, the copy and the importance of the ad when it is placed within the consumer's hands and eyes, we can see how advertising is a serious object of both analysis and the political framework it provides.

As I explore the public service advertisement, we can see the differences between both the American and the European advertisers' approach towards the mode of storytelling. The form and construction of a public service announcement, birthed from televised advertising, provides more voices to the world of advertising and consumerism. This project bridges the birth of television post-World War II to how advertisements are being created at a rapid speed for the digital platform; the digital advertisement creates a whole new conversation in the world of advertising. Public service advertisements functions within both countries however it wasn't until 1998 when the Don't Look campaign went public from British charity NSPCC. The level of shock-advertising became well aware of how to tell a story. European advertisements from 1998 moving forward have evolved faster and became bolder while American public service advertisements didn't catch up until 2005's creation of the Montana Meth Project.

American Public Service Advertising, defined by the Broadcast Education Association, is "an opportunity for non-profit or not for profit organizations to benefit from donated ad time or space whenever traditional advertising runs: in print **for**, online, on broadcast outlets, or out of the home". Advertising also "plays a key role in the development of both the medium of TV and the disciplinary matrices of television studies in the United States" according to Anna McCarthy in her text *Television and Public Service in the United States: Writing The History Of A Problem*.

A Critique on the Birth of American Television

As written in *As Seen on TV: The Visual Culture of Everyday Life in the 1950's*, Karal Ann Marling writes that “television was a picture window on faraway places,” and we have to remember that television only paints the picture of artificiality because nothing is the same outside of the television set (81). Consumer culture allows television viewers to see the newest of new things and the buy-in within the consumer translates into consumeristic ideals by allowing strategy and life to come alive in front of our eyes.

Commercials in the 1950's and the 1960's allowed the viewer to see themselves as new subjects and to imagine this new subjectivity as immediately related to the use-of advertised products, regardless of whether it was soap, toothpaste, or any other beauty product. In fact, this tactic is still being used in advertising today by re-envisioning these mundane products to sell new subjectivity to the masses. Commercials' use of a jingle or a catch phrase helps the consumer remember the product for years to come because of the joy and subliminal phrasing within the choice of language and the music. In the world of public service advertising, there is no real catch phrase because the worlds of situational experiences are mirrored with the artificial reality that representation presents for the viewers at home, and the two are blended together so methodically and precisely. While commercials and television offer a pathway into uncharted worlds, re-representing the lives of people that live in the world, we are only able to do so much within a thirty, a sixty or ninety-second spot. As the creation of television has gathered audiences and families together, huddled around the TV we have to realize the challenges of American advertising and how messages suitable for families and children are sold to us through the confinement of a thirty or sixty second spot. In the 1960's to 1970's, we saw public service advertisements that were few and far between. It wasn't until the emergence of the “Keep America Beautiful” ads of Susan Spotless in the early 1960's and the crying Native American

male in the early 1970's, that we start to see a true shift in how advertising is supposed to send a message to the masses. Advertising in the public service space used the mode of television to talk to its biggest demographic: children. Children through television are being exposed to shows like Sesame Street and Mister Rogers Neighborhood, as well as Saturday morning cartoons. These television shows are offering ways for children to see themselves and hear themselves on the screen. They are also distracting children by showing them who they can look up to but disregard real people and their ways of approaching real-life topics. Advertising often misrepresents how the child is supposed to be seen or heard by letting them become less than when being targeted for an ad. In the 1970's into the 1990's, we see an explosion of cartoon and fictional figures and no sight of as adult figures discussing important safety tips, from: eating sensibly to brushing our teeth, to heavier topics like crossing the street, saying no to drugs, and smoking. Public service advertisements in the 1980's aimed at children used animation to the advertiser's advantage. While the animation isn't a bad thing, the technique of familiarity is what the advertisers want: a strategic mode in captivating one of the biggest consumers of products, children. The strategical move to employ artificial realism through cartoons and never through an actor is what makes the child become familiarized with the product being sold to them, at an extremely young age. Advertiser's cannot sell the idea of people's lived experiences to the child but they can provide artificiality that keeps the child coming back for more, to sit in front of the television for longer periods. Carol Byrd-Bredbenner writes in her essay *Saturday Morning Children's Television Advertising: A Longitudinal Content Analysis*, that: "Television is one of the greatest educators ever invented: it influences the attitudes, behaviors, and values of viewers—intended or not—beginning before children can walk, talk, read or write" (382-83).

In a flash, advertising transports us into a dimension of sound, space and voice. However, some messages we are given do not show happy endings and the modes of sound and voice offer new ways of understanding, new ways of listening and looking at a social problem. Most American public service advertisements sell the situation that is coated with a message of hope. American advertisers do not push the audience into the harsh reality that the world has to offer. European charity ads often exploit the situation inside the ad during moments of destruction and devastation. Public service advertisements in Europe shock audiences into paying attention to the issues being presented. This exploitation of an advertiser's representation of child abuse or neglect, drunk driving and organizations that help youth at risk and help stop cruelty to young people is what sets these advertisers apart. These themes, as depicted in European advertising, are meant to shock you and also sell you the nightmare-like qualities that actual people experience on a daily basis.

Watching television is an activity for coming together but the programming being shown might not always present life in actual form, much like a reality show where most of it is scripted or a sitcom where we know the life presented is fictional. If done well, television programming can show us real representations of people in their homes or out in the streets. Advertising does do this through the mode of the public service advertisement, may it be through the Partnership For a Drug Free America or Montana Meth Project in the United States. The worlds of artificial realism and situational experiences carefully crafted through the advertiser's eyes often presents the horrors (shown on screen-or not) by letting them live with a sense of emptiness, when sandwiched with a jingle or imagery that presents a sense of banal joyfulness, that only this product can fill your life with. How can a misrepresentation or a caricature of someones lived experience deter the message that the public service advertisement wants to provide? If

television can blend both artificiality and realism to make us stop and watch, we have something that connects our society to an experience that is truthful not artificial.

When we are shown the horrors of reality inside a thirty-second public service advertisement, the situational experiences become hauntingly familiar for people who have experienced that moment in their life or have built their own bridges past the trauma that have affected their growth as a person. Truth in advertising is a powerful mechanism when the space of mindless watching is interrupted by a societal issue that causes us to wonder what is being sold or to ask ourselves why this message, why is this the ad being presented to me-the audience? The art of strategy is not just within the campaign itself but also in how we, the consumers, are able to respond to a call-to-action that the advertisement is telling us to do. Television's complexities lie within the brand strategy and the product itself.

The Art of the Advertising Strategy

As advertising evolves and understands its milestones through the landscape of media, it's important to understand how the breakthrough occurs. Let's consider a contemporary example like Mad Men to discuss the potential and the challenges that came with the growth of advertising. Some Madison Avenue ad men might not have liked the representations and characterizations the program offers to the viewers at home. Matthew Weiner knew that he wanted to showcase the artificial realism and situational experiences of ad men through the representation of 1960's New York. Kerri P. Steinberg writes in her book *Jewish Mad Men: Advertising and the Design of the American Jewish Experience*, that advertising "becomes a screen through which to view American life , a generation post-World War II consumerism, Cold War paranoia and the undoing of rigid social and cultural notions of decor in the 1960's" (7).

This perception and re-representation of the 1960's in advertising for the 2007 series Mad Men, bring viewers into the decisive times and struggles that proper representation had to offer with both decades in conversation with each other.

Mad Men first premiered on TV in 2007 and has gained a huge following from it's journey through the 1960's with the lives of the characters. Mad Men is a phrase that was coined to describe the Manhattan Advertising men that flourished in New York City during the 1960s. The story deals with the struggles of wealth, truth-telling and the dog-eat-dog reality of the advertising business. The show's timeframe starts in 1960 and ends right at the start of 1971. The ensemble follows a story line that exemplifies what it was like living and working in Manhattan during the 1960s. Mad Men follows a group of women and men through real-time situations that help the audience understand the turbulent decade with historical moments to help land the story into specific moments of the decade. While Mad Men lets these characters grow and fizzle out (through the eleven years that Weiner explores in seven seasons), the show also explores the space of the office and brings the audience into how their ad firm goes through the process of creating the commercial (print, radio or television), how it comes to life and how it can become a success or a failure.

Mad Men shows us how lucrative the advertising business was in the 1960s for a successful agency like Sterling Cooper. It reminds us of brands and products being sold such as: Kodak, Heinz, Right Guard, Jaguar and Maidenform bras (*Are you a Jackie or a Marilyn?*). While these products are important to see their staying power in a globally-diverse market, we are also recognizing its staying power with how the advertising is being discussed in the offices of Sterling Cooper. Sterling Cooper much like contemporary advertising agencies wanted to grow, and to do that it had to move into the big leagues like the BBDO or McCann Erickson

companies. In season seven, there is a merger between Sterling Cooper and McCann Erickson. The stakes are higher now and the advertising goals increase.

Advertising is becoming increasingly more lucrative for agencies that can woo big name companies with their ad proposals. The viewing audience can imagine the potential of advertising and see the challenges of landing large accounts through the growth of time, showcased in season after season of Mad Men. At the end of the series we see Don Draper turn to meditation to find meaning and make peace with the misfortunes he experienced throughout the series. During a session the meditation bell gives Don a moment of clarity and an idea for an advertising campaign for Coke. The series ends with the iconic “I’d Like to Buy the World A Coke” jingle and slogan that defined the early 1970’s. Mad Men illustrates the influence and impact that advertising had on viewing audiences, as well as how advertising creates the memorable and desired; these creatives were re-envisioning culture before popular culture became the creatives at-work.

Mad Men also shows us that advertisements would often reflect the current culture and political climate, on accident or on purpose. For example, a pivotal moment in this conception, on Matthew Weiner’s part, was looking at something so vital to the 1960’s like the assassination of JFK and how it reads to us, in the 2000’s-moving forward. The assassination forced the agency to scrap the potential Aqua Net hair spray strategy because the storyboard images matched images of the famous Zapruder film which captured the fatal shot to President Kennedy's head. Don and Peggy had different reactions to the president’s death and the impact on the ad through Aqua Net’s strategy. Don built a wall around his emotions. He wanted to move along and continue with life as if nothing was wrong or out of the ordinary. Peggy’s small but important line “We’ll Be Ok...” reflects her acceptance and optimism. In the essay “*Mourning*

Becomes the Mad Men: Notes on Nostalgia”, Aviva Dove-Viebahn writes about the relationship between Don and Peggy: “To Don, loss and nostalgia are powerful tools of the advertising trade, lending both him and Peggy a special aptitude to seek out and manipulate customers’ hopes and dreams”. (6) While other people who work in the office are mourning a tragic event, Don and Peggy are trying to come up with an idea of how to re-format the strategy to get customers to buy Aqua Net. They are the only two in the office on the day of JFK’s burial.

Aqua Net and other campaigns never get to the pitch meeting, because of the turbulent times that the television show wants to replicate what is happening in our outside world. Yet, for the series finale, it all comes into place for our hero. Mad Men’s series finale constructs one of the final moments of a television series, by reminding the consumer and media-watchers of the show of one of the most famous ads to come out of the 1970’s: The Coke ‘Hilltop’ Ad. Mad Men’s choice of using the hilltop ad to close out the show does two things for the audience watching at home. The first thing it does is use the advertisement as a popular culture vantage point of something that has been created with lasting value. The second, which is harder to pull off, uses a mode of nostalgia to re-introduce Coke to the Mad Men audience. Nostalgia has been used as a powerful tool throughout the series, yet nostalgia has always been seen as a mode of looking at the good place (featured through Peggy’s Heinz Baked Beans copy in season five) or the place that cannot be (using the Kodak Carousel to showcase Donald Draper’s life moving backwards, a remembrance of moments gone by). Time is the pinnacle approach to extracting emotions from these moments on TV. Time is the choice in how the copy is being delivered, the length of the commercial and the choice of tempo when looking at how the scene or the commercial is being constructed. Time is a crucial importance to the impact of a commercial, but

the ever-changing times also rely on the advertisement to hone in on the revolving door-aspect of changing times.

While Mad Men hints at the infamous Daisy ad for president Johnson, it does not do anything besides present it as a gateway to bringing in a new character. While it seems to be poignant to showcase the presidential and political deaths mirroring dire times at the agency, they do not dread on these events but offer it as a meditation on the darkness that the 1960's offers to us, as historians looking back at this decade. Advertising also allows us to take the dire times and sell these moments to the mainstream audience by offering the mode of suffering on screen as a way to make it a meditation-of sorts- to the public to stop them in their tracks. While we are often made to remember ads not because of their impact on society, they are meant to be cornerstones of familiarity, not moments of solemn remembering. The escape for audiences presented with our main characters in Mad Men sees the characters creating body language that is both alienating and succumbing to the stage direction being presented for television audiences. These characters begin breathing air into an active audience, who can fully deconstruct the space of Madison Avenue and the space between media's control of the active audience and the audience's activity, into how we are watching the show socially and culturally.

Political Attack Ads and Presentation

Advertising persuades the potential customer to step inside the creation of the media-landscape, the space where the ad thrives and lives with the message's life expectancy rate of less than a month. Advertising persuades the mindless customer to come along on their journey which then tries to manipulate the consumer into buying the product. Sometimes buying the product is presented as a more complex choice, like buying your vote for a political campaign.

President Lyndon B. Johnson's 1964 Daisy ad uses a young girl in an end of the world strategy suggesting what viewers see on TV could happen if America chooses the wrong person to lead the 'free world'. The voice-over in the commercial when the atomic bombs burst says: "These are the stakes to make a world in which all of God's children can live, or to go in the dark. We must either love each other, or we must die". American advertising had not been pushing stark realism like this ground-breaking commercial, but soon after this ad and countless others used real-life scenarios dressed up in scare tactics in order to gain more traction through the political sphere. The ad was a milestone for advertisers on how we can create a powerful commercial in the duration of sixty-seconds.

Attack ads are one way to help build or break down credibility in your campaign, which had happened in the 1988 presidential race between Dukakis and George Bush Sr. The infamous Willie Horton attack ad is presented as factual evidence but fed into the fear-mongering approach meant to scare the American public. This political attack ad, using Willie's mugshot photo presented as a menacing male, will live in history with his crimes showcased on television. The ad, purchased by George Bush sr. supporters against Dukakis for presidential nominee, "tarred Dukakis with a soft-on-crime label". This a significant marker in the loss of Dukakis's campaign. Both ads, the 'Willie Horton' and 'Revolving Door' ads, caused Dukakis to lose the 1988 presidential race. Fear-mongering ads should not be looked at with disgust or be tossed aside because they help us understand the culture at that particular moment in time to see how society responds to the specifics within fear-mongering itself. To base an advertisement around the aspect of fear-mongering and scaring the consumer of your product, it is possible that "product and copy approaches influenced irritation" (Barnes, Doston 1990) and this could be said for how audiences felt when watching the Willie Horton presidential attack ad.

There is an experience you have with the product itself and how you can be a better person knowing you have this product in your possession, but the persuasion of that product means you must buy into the messages that advertising is presenting to you. Once the “I” becomes a signal for the viewer to see themselves replicate and reproduce much like a political attack ad, how is the effect of a product like a public service announcement supposed to sell grief and sadness to make you become more aware, take some action or donate money? Advertising tricks us all into the excess, the joys and the wonder that a product can give you. When advertising approaches children and sells them a product or an idea, the child often will remember something that is catchy or a figure that is embedded in their young, tangible psyche. Jingles, familiar characters and slogans-within the use of strategy-all live within the world of the advertisement and are remembered when the ad is flashy and bold, rich with color or familiar faces. Sometimes the celebrity makes a more important punch than the ad itself, but the celebrity also needs to distance their notoriety for the ad to be remembered for the right reasons. So how important are jingles, slogans and the use of strategy for commercials in today’s climate?

Partnership for a Drug Free America and Persuasion

As the creation of television has gathered audiences and families together, huddled around the TV we have to realize the challenges of American advertising and how messages suitable for families and children are sold to us through the confinement of a thirty or sixty second spot. In the 1960’s to 1970’s, we saw public service advertisements that were few and far between. It wasn’t until the emergence of the “Keep America Beautiful” ads of Susan Spotless in the early 1960’s and the crying Native American male in the early 1970’s, that we start to see a true shift in how advertising is supposed to send a message to the masses. Advertising in the

public service space used the mode of television to talk to its biggest demographic: children. Children through television are being exposed to shows like Sesame Street and Mister Rogers Neighborhood, as well as Saturday morning cartoons. These television shows are offering ways for children to see themselves and hear themselves on the screen. They are also distracting children by showing them who they can look up to but disregard real people and their ways of approaching real-life topics. Advertising often misrepresents how the child is supposed to be seen or heard by letting them become less than when being targeted for an ad. In the 1970's into the 1990's, we see an explosion of cartoon and fictional figures and no sight of as adult figures discussing important safety tips, from: eating sensibly to brushing our teeth, to heavier topics like crossing the street, saying no to drugs, and smoking.

The Partnership for a Drug Free America's 1993 collection of ads shows the timid limits that American advertisers and strategists used to inform children. This assortment of ads was catered to New York City Grade schoolers. Two interesting ads from the collection using Penny from Pee Wee's Playhouse and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles sell the idea of saying no to drugs. I think these two ads approach the idea of saying no to drugs interestingly but still do not push the mark. The ad featuring the cartoon turtles is an interesting ad in the construction of what the child is watching on screen. While the Penny ad is showcasing a cartoon that the kids would be familiar with, the cartoon with the turtles being inserted into the ad created a bigger problem for the little kid. The ad leaves the teacher to let the television and the cartoon teach the group of children instead of stepping in and hearing from an adult. These two ads do not allow someone trained to help in real-time situations for the small children to look up. While the kid makes the correct decision in the turtles ad, the ad cuts away from the scenario to use the cartoon to step in as the adult. This construction lets the television babysit the children versus letting the parent

come in to talk about what they have just witnessed. This non-profit ad is still encouraging the children to use the mode of television to re-direct its power by using the cartoon to act as the parental figure.

While the turtles end up doing the talking to us, it's not using the voice of the children talking to other children at home. One ad in the series entitled 'My Older Brother' starts with a young boy talking to us, beginning with a night time silhouette of the older brother rifling through his younger brother's pants looking for cash. The dialogue is all spoken from the young brother's POV and experience with seeing how his brother has changed. Then it cuts to a nighttime fight that the older brother has with his young brother. The ad switches between the nighttime fight and the sunlit room with his brother talking to the camera, yet there is no shock to this ad. There is not a single feeling of danger or violence that, in today's standards, would be traumatic for the viewer. Having a young child talking to the camera and speaking in a calming voice is still persuading the viewers of the ad to find solace and comfort in just talking about the issue. The television ad can act as a play, performing tragedy, comedy and horrific moments with a cinematic-dramatic quality. This ad falls short because there was no differentiating between the trauma and the self, the nightmare presented on camera of a brother fighting with his younger sibling is not seen as horrific but seen as ominous with the lighting changes. At times, the fight feels less than violent and more about a performance of roughhousing caught on camera, with nothing violent or atrocious to be seen by the naked eye because this ad is catered to grade schoolers.

These ads with the African-American boy and the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles stand out from the others, but they stand out for the wrong reasons. The potential of what advertising can do for children could invite more audiences to really pay attention to the messages being

presented on screen. This also could lead to stronger discussions between parents or older siblings about what they had just watched. The downfall of this collection of ads from the Partnership for A Drug Free America to ads previously shown from the 1980's has not shown much growth or change. While the Partnership for a Drug-Free America continues to present work to the American public, certain moments in the American advertising world try to shift how the public is being shown representations of reality. No other American campaign in the last twenty years has been more impactful in rural American life than the emergence of the Montana Meth Project.

The Montana Meth Project: A Media Study

The Montana Meth Project helped curb the appetite for this drug by creating a strategic plan that was aimed specifically at 12 to 17 year old children. In the essay "*Unselling A Dangerous Drug*" by Steven A. Mange and Thomas M. Siebel, the media that was being made for the public was geared for teens and the media created was supposed to "cut through the clutter" by creating media that would " 'unsell' meth to teens" (411). The first series of ads focuses on one subject and the deterioration of a life still growing into themselves, to visually make the audience uncomfortable by offering a depiction of what could become of the user. The first ad, featured in the catalogue of advertisements made available on YouTube, shows a young woman, mid to late teens getting ready to shower. As she is in the shower, she sees trails of blood in the shower by her feet. She turns around and sees herself covered in scratches, sleepless eyes and cuts all across her neck up (shoulders, face, and lips). Her future self tells her "Don't do it. Don't do it".

The second ad features an androgynous-appearing person in a grey hoodie, meant to say that it could be anyone, at the local laundromat. A person with their hoodie up walks in and demands everyone's belongings (mostly cash is handed over) with rage presented as a way to get what you want. The perpetrator then sees the person sitting far from all the violence occurring at the laundromat. The person then grabs the androgynous-male presenting person by the scruff of the hoodie and says "This wasn't supposed to be your life!" as the camera comes into focus, we see that the person waiting at the laundromat is the perpetrator, donned with facial scarring, cuts and bruising to the face and left eye. The ads are meant to be a mirror held up to the people facing the realities of what this drug would do to you if you became hooked on meth.

One of the most infamous from their first batch of commercials is titled 'Just Once'. In this thirty-second ad, we see how one person's interaction with meth soon ripples into their daily actions and life, surrounding and beckoning to the drug's power. The use of light and camera technique in this ad is going to become more familiar within this campaign. Our subject becomes worse and worse after being introduced to the drug, resorting to stealing in order to get her fix. The copy of the ad is what is the most effective, because of how simple the text is: "I'm gonna try meth just once. I'm gonna smoke this just once, I'm gonna steal just once, I'm gonna sleep with him for meth just once". The last scene shows how far the drug has taken the older sister. While passed out from a binge, we see the younger sister rifling through her sisters' pants, and the younger sister says 'I'm gonna try meth, just once.'" The creation of this ad out of the four from the original media campaign makes the strongest impact from a narrative structure yet presents no shock value. The shock value of these ads is done by the make-up and cinematic presence that the ads soon match with the next series of advertisements.

The shock-value within these ads are also fragmenting themselves, the addict, because the addict who is getting help and re-transforming their life isn't wanting to go back into the world of drug abuse. In the essay *I'm Not Gonna Be Like 'That Guy': Examining Antidrug Shock Advertising through the Eyes of "That Guy"* by Jaysen Ferestad and Melissa Thompson, they write: "The MMP (Montana Meth Project) depicts meth addicts as the deviant enemy to be feared. It warns young people not to be like 'that guy'. But what about 'that guy'?" (174). How does media represent the re-transformed, or do those stories get lost in the shuffle of media representing the right roles and casting a dark shadow on the un-sellable, the undesirable?

In wave three of the Montana Meth Project, American filmmaker Darren Aronofsky created a collection of ads for the non-profit, using teenager voices and simulating scenes of panic, wistful sorrow and violence done with swooping camera effects and creating an atmosphere of devastation and uncertainty. These advertisements, filmed in familiar or unfamiliar locales like a motel room, a kitchen, a car ride at night and outside of the family home around the holidays. While the ads are heartbreaking, the simplistic value of familiar fights and familiar events are supposed to invigorate feelings in the user and present the shock value as non-normal behavior or non-normal ways of being. Can an ad move the addict out of their spiral down the rabbit hole? Does advertising still have that impact to force a change and present a proverbial mirror to the audience, to the viewer?

While the graphic advertisements portray the meth user under representations of unhygienic or untrustworthy people, the representation that this project is providing to its audience is one of terror and shame, melded together. While these young drug users are created as monstrous, the fear of becoming addicted to a life of crime and lifeless pleasure in order to obtain meth is seen as an obsolete goal and this non-profit's advertising is offering you two sides

of the coin when it comes to representation. While a life addicted to drugs is not something new to audiences out there, the use of youth and teenagers talking instead of having the adults take on the voice-acting helps to move further away from the feeling of the parental guardian scolding them for what they have done; using the voice of a teenage girl or boy helps to provide a small shell of comfort for the teens that are dealing with this social problem.

The audience becoming the active viewer only becomes active when an advertisement is well-aware of the impact it gives to the space bridging the media behind the screen to the what the audience can tangibly receive from the combination of advertising and storytelling. This can be seen in Magdalini Tsoutsoumpi's essay *Audience Reception of Charity Advertising: Making Sense, Interpreting and Decoding Advertisements that Focus on Human Suffering*, in which she states "the exploitation of spectators' feelings renders advertisements a personal experience for everybody, where the respective appeals are becoming invasive and unforgettable, hence important to everybody" (3). How are audiences reacting towards the suffering of an individual, present in the Montana Meth Project? When the individual responds to the humanistic need to care for someone while also being repulsed by a strangers' appearance, it becomes a juggling act of how our heart and mind responds differently. Visual analysis of these characters in the advertising world distances us between the worlds of representing someone dealing with issues of abuse, drink driving or drug abuse. This distance is presented within the advertising as well, by excluding the characters in the ad and only presenting voices and using the camera as the character talking for us in the advertisement.

In the ads from the Montana Meth Project, we see our subjects as they move through the world dealing with addiction while also never seeing the main subject in frame. It's an important mode of the strategy to not introduce the main character in the first frame, yet the powerful act

within the ad lets us hear the voice of the unseen before we see the actual person. The ad Darren Aronofsky directed in 2010 entitled 'Friends' offers an insight to viewers (who do not partake in meth) what it's like to see someone overdose. The camera spins around inside of the car, acting as a questioning parameter between the faces of everyone involved to us, the audience being someone to also allow for this to have happened. From the driver to the friends to the bystander, the life of a psychoactive ad can torment the viewer by making them relive something that they have suppressed in their own psyche or it may bring up the repressed events in their life.

In the essay *Predicting Attitude Toward Methamphetamine Use: The Role of Antidrug Campaign Exposure and Conversations About Meth in Montana*, Adam S. Richards writes:

“Actual exposure to a campaign itself does not guarantee processing of the media content; it is possible to be in the presence of an advertisement without engaging the message” (126).

Richards also states that there is a way that advertising presents itself within the dialogue of the masses and culture, by reading a message from both its encoded and decoding properties. If the Montana Meth Project is making bigger strides in the world of American advertising, where does it put us with UK public service advertising? Are we finally in line with what the UK is doing and providing for its consumers when offering charity ads to the public??

The Responsibility of NSPCC

In the UK, there are several charity groups that are offering ways of looking into the social problems that flood rural and urban parts of the UK. NSPCC, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, has been a charity who's taken big steps moving forward in providing help to children and young people all throughout the UK-Ireland-Wales provinces. They have linked up with another charity Childline in 2005 and have been making big strides

into informing the public on all forms of abuse and providing help to children all-across Great Britain. One of its most important campaigns began twenty years ago titled the ‘Full Stop’ campaign. The NSPCC Full Stop Campaign, which their infamous ‘Don’t Look’ ad came out of, elicited negative responses with the public when the ad first aired. The campaign, ‘Open Your Eyes’ had negative responses because it presented a flashback for certain viewers of their time growing up. Through NSPCC’s catalogue of advertising at the beginning of the full stop campaign (late 1999) and through look through their work for the next ten years, we see the different strategies they used to get their message across to empower children to speak out or to help give children the opportunity for them to come in and share their experiences, over the phone or internet.

Shock advertising let NSPCC and other charities of the time be bold with their statements and really prove their staying power through the twenty years they have been living in the advertising sphere. The shock advertising used in these Public Information Films (PIFs) such as *Neighbors* (2002), *Cartoon Boy* (2002), *Adulthood Lucy* (2003), *Suffering in Silence* (2004) and *Ventriloquist* (2004), create a need to discuss what the child and young person is going through, but what can a cinematic information film do besides provide a fictitious thirty, sixty or ninety second ad for the audience watching at home? Is TV supposed to grab us and proverbially slap us in the face with the harsh realities in the world? Cinematic quality is used throughout strong advertising, yet the public service ads being deconstructed in this paper really make us question the role of the camera and what tricks it is presenting to us, the viewer. Understanding the role of the advertiser is also understanding the fine balance between audience and strategy, which can be interpreted through the text by Douglas C. West and Adrian Sargeant in their essay *Taking Risks with Advertising: The Case of the Not-For-Profit Sector*. In their essay, they state: “in employing

‘shocking ads’ charities run the risk of offending or outraging the general public, potentially alienating donors and even undermining the charitable aims of the organization” (1028).

This quote works with how we understand the construction of the ‘Don’t Look’ advert from the NSPCC full stop campaign. In the article entitled *Are Anti-child abuse ads Ethical and Effective?* Doctors Chari, Hyman and Shabbir state that these type of ‘shock ads’ could be classified as psychoactive ads. They write that psychoactive ads are “emotion-arousing that can cause a meaningful, well-defined group of people to feel either extremely anxious or ... to feel a loss of self-esteem” (2). This group of doctors note that advertisements affecting self-esteem are an important first step in addressing the “efficacy and ethicality” (3) of ads that use this type of aggressive-emotional persuasion for the viewer to relate to. Even if only a small number of the viewers felt uncomfortable emotions that brought them back to an unsettling and familiar space, did the NSPCC have an obligation to help those viewers deal with the strong messages? The life of a psychoactive ad can torment the viewer by making them relive something that they have suppressed in their own psyche or it may bring up the repressed events in their life by showcasing dialogue or a representation of an event that they vividly remember.

In this construction of shock advertising living in the world of advertising, this is the strategy: to make you stop in your tracks and see the harsh realities painted on your television screen. NSPCC, Barnardo’s, Think! UK and the now-defunct Kids Company offered ways of looking into a harsh world through shock advertising by showcasing cinematic ads that tugged at our heart strings, made our jaws drop and made us re-think our view of the world as it relates to drinking and driving, child abuse and the possibilities that advertising can do for the public through its re-interpretations of abuse, neglect and trauma.

Certain ads want to test the limits of what is acceptable to be viewed by both children and adults. Using comparative media analysis, NSPCC has made advertisements that present the child as prey, yet still allowing space for the audience to see how the abuser is filmed at home. By looking at both *Astro-Bot* and *Doll* from 2007, we can see how both genders are being constructed, being abused and present a call-to-action of the advertisers to create ads that are insightful and impactful. Each ad shows the limitations of protecting a child and each is written as it would be to showcase these limitations in its simplest form.

In the ad for boys, the robot voice over says: “Astro-Bot to base, Astro-Bot to base! My mission is to protect (...*Thomas*...) from his daddy! He locks him in the dark place! Astro-Bot to the rescue!”. In just three simple shots of the camera showcasing the robot foreground, a close up of the robot speaking with its bulb flashing on the top of its head, and then an aerial shot of the entire bedroom showcasing the clutter, the emptiness and the sorrow of a child who has been forgotten in a bedroom that offers all clues to a child who has been neglected and potentially abused. The tagline for the merger of Childline and NSPCC is: “Without Childline, who would abused children talk to?”

In the ad for girls, the copy for the doll ad is much more horrific, enabling for a response right away versus the boy-robot ad that seems helpless. The reason it seems helpless is because no boy is seen in the ad, while in the doll ad we partially see a girl playing in her room with the doll that is speaking. The doll says: “My name is Mindy! I can sing and play games! Will you hug me? You can tell me all your secrets! My best friend Ellie tells me hers! Her mummy comes into her room, and punches her!!” The voice recording of the doll acts up and glitches, causing the audio to repeat itself on the last statement with ‘and punches Her!’. This ad also shows only three cutaways between the ad and voice-over of the doll. The doll is being played with by Ellie

who is partially seen playing with a stuffed rabbit and the doll. The next shot cuts to a close-up of the doll and the artificiality being shown offers a stale-facade that a child can speak to and imagine that they will be their best friend. The last shot shows the entire room with barely any signs of her being abused in the room, yet the child is called out of the room so the ad could be implying that the abuse of the mother punching her would not be seen in the beautifully sunlit room.

Both ads present a crisis for children with the tagline from Childline, yet the ads still are shocking by having the toys talk straight to camera and imply the necessity of helping these children by also asking us to call the hotline if we, the public, have questions. Both ads also have a website to help these children and countless others shown and said by an older-male's voice over. The website is given during the last few seconds of the ad and while these two ads from NSPCC are alarming and startling from the copy written for them, for some ads that the NSPCC has done the idea that less is more is much more impactful.

The Contrast of European to American

European charity advertisements are quite different from American public service advertising, but the difference lies between how far a public service or charity should go in order to make their point. According to the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) in the UK, they wanted to crack down on how audiences (specifically children) were handling the tough advertisements and what families and television standards can do in order to not cause stress for families. American and European, televised and printed advertising, use all the cinematic tools that we would expect from a well-crafted film. Audiences go to see a well-crafted film but how do audiences watch a well-crafted commercial? Advertising is in a very interesting moment of

time, having multiple conversations with their customers on separate and different platforms. One conversation is being made off YouTube while another conversation is happening from the product placement in reality television shows, or cheaply made television. A jingle is made from the diluted and familiar pop song while another slogan is being plastered on a bus shelter presenting an interactive space for someone to relate, have fun or be spellbound by the effects created in the space of the bus shelter. Advertising is selling ways of living and ways of being in society because we must adapt to the complex community of consumers and customers. So how can public service advertising change with the evolving platforms between print, television and the digital realm?

Some advertisers and campaigns have tried new ways of being seen. Advertisers have understood that they are constantly finding new forms to stand out in the digital, rhizomatic universe. While viewership and audience attention spans begin to decrease when the space for watching an advertisement occurs, these content creators are aware of how to approach the ad, in its placement of the person viewing this media and viewership of who is being presented as the subject. The 2012 charity ad from SamuSocial de Paris entitled “A woman’s Nightmare” is one example of the discussion of power, held within the hands of the viewership-the audience. At the beginning of the ad, text appears on the screen and shows the website up for two seconds, under awomansjourney.com, the website leaves after two seconds on the screen and then text appears stating “On May 31st (of 2012), if the women’s emergency shelter closes its doors, homeless women will have to sleep outdoors.” We then look at one of many instances of how this would look. The ad follows a woman (who is pictured as homeless) and we see her with all her belongings. She asks two men she sees on the street for a cigarette and they hassle and harass her. She is then aggressively fondled and just about to be raped out on the street, in a subway-

tube shelter. As she fends off her attackers, we watch her run for her life. We follow her through a section of Paris and watch as the two men run after her, done beautifully with properly lit corridors and frantic filmmaking to bring out the tension and horror that this woman could face. We then see her leaving the subway-tube corridors into the street and running up to the women's shelter.

As we see her through the glass banging on the pane and pleading for safety and help, a box on the ad comes up towards the bottom left saying, "To keep the shelter open, please share the petition." The box has a 20 second timer for her to come into the women's shelter. Text then appears on the screen stating: "if the viewer does not share the petition to keep the shelter open, this is how the film ends". The ad then picks up 13 seconds left with the petition clock running out of valuable seconds to help this defenseless woman. We see the woman carried off by the two men who chased her out of the subway-tube, pleading to be freed and fighting for her life. The film then shows what would happen if the petition is shared. As the woman runs up to the shelter, a mouse goes up and clicks on the petition to be shared. At the twelve-second mark, the petition box fades away and the film looks brighter to insinuate the change in possibility. A man who works for the shelter comes to let her in and look upon her attackers. The ad then dissolves and shows the website again for about four seconds on screen.

The way this online ad was directed pro-bono by director Frederic Schoendoerffer, Duncan Macleod of Inspiration Room writes: "18,000 signatures were shared on Facebook and Twitter during the first week. On the tenth day of the campaign, Samusocial of Paris received a mandate from the government announcing that the shelter would definitively remain open". The power of a well-crafted advertisement is understood through the power of both the problem and the potential of how to tackle the issues to the masses witnessing the problem, maybe through

cinematic expression or through factual and fast advertising, never discounting the possibility of what the problem can be from the response of the viewers. The persistent persuasion by charity groups and non-profit organizations is all meant for the viewer to find some sort of heart with the message being presented. The possibility within a powerful ad means the viewer will be able to respond and let the ad have its own presence on screen, having the audience understand through the persuasive tools that cinema has to offer within the short amount of time.

Advertising seen in the UK presents ways of looking inward on subject material that, for some, is hard to digest. While the United States has presented media and advertising that makes us take a step back to pay attention, the UK has presented advertising that seem to make bigger waves onto the public. The American public should be able to be shown these harsher, bolder slices of artificial reality because the ads themselves really do stop you dead in your tracks to pay attention and to be shown something you never would have seen prior in advertising. The UK examines how social spaces become scary and horrific, such as: spaces within the home, settings that we walk through in our daily life and re-represent these memories and flashbacks to revisit and re-recognize. The ads in the UK often show the horrific nature of domestic violence towards women, fire safety, child abuse and neglect, as well as the dangers of distracted and/or drunk driving. The television ad can act as a play, performing tragedy, comedy and horrific moments with a cinematic-dramatic quality but only if we trust our advertisers to have full control of what audiences can be shown, especially children and how persuasive the cinematic text can do.

Kids Company presented a well-crafted ad that was simple but thought provoking by bold cinematography accompanied by a video-recorded voice of a small child. The script is simple: “See where I live. See where I sleep. See what I eat. See where I play. See my teacher who doesn’t see me. See where I fall. See the doctor who said everything will be alright. See

where they've put me when I've been bad. See the social workers trying to get in. See where mum pushed me too hard. See the ambulance that comes. See the policeman. See the neighbor's flowers. See the news. See the politicians blaming each other. See the inquiry they order. See their report. See where it goes. See it happening all over again." This type of cinematic simplicity offers the viewer of the ad to see the tactful way of displaying the synchronicity of both artificial realism and situational experiences. The experiences faced by this young child presents truth in advertising while also dancing on the line of re-representing reality. The quality of this ad is tarnished because of the scandal associated with this now defunct charity organization.

Contemporary US Advertising

If reality is often artificial yet still employing the situational experiences that many can comprehend within the space of the advertisement, does it hit too close to home to sell a product or does the quality of the ad begin to shrink from its overstepping of invisible but all-knowing boundaries? In the essay by Thompson and Ferestad, they write (about shock advertising) that "modern day (US) shock campaigns generate substantial stigma by creating 'grotesque creatures' of drug users" all knowing that "most anti-drug campaigns fail to make a significant impact on the intended audience" (175). For a campaign like Montana Meth Project to use its strategy within the media-based campaigns to be aimed at the youth who are interested in exploring with this drug, their research states "addressing the impact of such campaigns (MMP) on other populations is virtually nonexistent" (175).

How does the advertisement approach many audiences at once, by understanding where their target audience will be achieved yet also hitting other demographics who might be seeing

the same media? An example of an US campaign that needed to be fully realized and seen by the American public was the placement of the No More campaign during Super Bowl 49. No More, a campaign and “NFL’s anti-domestic violence organization”, showed its first 60 second spot in 2015 and it came at a perfect time when people were huddled around the television absorbing messages about razors, the newest truck and beer. The public service advertisement was about domestic abuse, an issue that plagued the 2014-2015 football season in large part because of the domestic abuse indictment of Ray Rice. Taken from an actual 911 recording posted on Reddit, No More’s 2015 advertisement was needed to showcase the horrors that women and others have gone through during the thrill and evil excitement that can result from overtly masculine energy when watching something like the Super Bowl.

During the advertisement the audience experiences the woman on the phone after dialing 911. The camera is acting as her eyes, observing what she lived through and her understanding the eggshells that she is walking on by calling 911. Shot just like documentary footage, the camera relies on the space to become a character just as much as the woman on the phone is. The tension presented in the space presents realism that connects us to the person calling for help. Staging the phone call as an order for a pizza, the dispatcher keeps the woman on the phone for as long as she can before becoming certain that the predator is picking up clues. The imagery staged in front of us looks like an investigative scene of the crime, shot with tense realism and presented as mirrored images of a home. Half way through the ad, at 0:29, we are seeing the television playing in a bedroom-den like space and the silhouette of a figure watching television. Not until then did we picture another person in the space. This image is paired with another image of a wall either punched in or a possible head slammed into it which leaves a mark in the drywall, shown at 0:37.

Visually the ad is quiet, somewhat confusing at the start because we are unsure what we are watching. Faded with a tonal quality of light blue-grey the horrors within the home are presented as monstrous but it isn't until we see the shadow half way into the commercial that we realize the monster lives with her. The ad starts out as if she is by herself and the perpetrator has left the space. The strategic move to keep him in the house helps the viewer feel the woman's fear as she is on the phone. U.S. advertising has made strong strides to ensure this type of public service advertisement can get airtime. Interestingly, in Europe, this type of advertisement would be considered tame. The delayed response of strong powerful advertising has been a concern of mine. This delayed response through American advertisers, creating content against invisible lines by not smashing through the proverbial glass of shocking the audience. By allowing no form of shock advertising into the American psyche lets us stay behind and keeps us in the shadows instead of living in the light and staying contemporary with other countries out there. We can do so much more to appeal to the masses by using stronger forms of advertising to the United States about the epidemics plaguing our country.

Conclusion:

Television's role in viewing media has been accessed as a space for binge-watching that can become tired and listless. An active audience can help us understand what we are watching on television, but shouldn't we also recognize the faults in the system throughout the 20th century? How have the faults of commercialized television, by not addressing "viewers as citizens rather than consumers" (320, McCarthy), contributed, in fact, resulted in the problematic

ways in which audiences approach the form today? Have we forgotten that advertising presents re-representations of the world, once fascinating and knowledgeable but now full of anti-intellectualism to sell the latest trend in clothing or food? How we watch television and advertising depends on how you consume the media presented to you, the viewer. Sut Jhally in his text states : “The visual images that dominate public space and public discourse are, in the video age, not static” (203). By this statement, we have to create the discussion of how cinema and advertising come together and thrive in a world full of print material, billboards and the power that advertising has as a two-dimensional format. The impact that advertising has grown into as a cinematic video experience has grown out of the tube of television and become its own entity persuading and captivating audiences young and old by its devilish power and scintillating strategy and jingles for you to remember a product and it’s whimsy that it will add into your life.

Advertising uses the fantasy within storytelling by reflecting itself as if it is a mirror, shining from within the culture onto the consumer. The mirror has two faces and each face is being shown through the construction of an ad itself. Depending on where you’re standing, you are able to see both outlets of sight, as the media consumer and as the content creator. The culture of every decade from the 1940’s to the present day looks upon advertising in new ways in which the advertisers are understanding people, placing themselves in the I-status where the self becomes analyzed and looked upon. While there are techniques of freudian thought in how the “I” is brought into the gleam of advertising, the I-state always wants the consumer within the self to approach the product knowing this product was made for them.

While the “I” becomes apparent in how the culture consumes the commercial product, we then have to question how advertisements like the public service announcement often are re-representing what society truly wants. This is when the consumer’s emotions become first

priority over the consumption of goods. While we aren't consuming a good like bread, butter or a pair of shoes, we are using the money we have extra of to help out a service that seems to need help from the consumer to stay afloat. From drunk driving to smoking, from addictions to abuse, we are constantly living in a world that is closed and hidden behind venetian blinds, yet advertising wants to shine a light on these issues and present the silhouettes that are often hiding in plain sight. Advertising appeals to society from the simplest ways, with showcasing abused animals to then highlighting the display of children's hospital as inspirational and adorable to pull at your heartstrings. While this works for the display of money-handling and bringing topics of importance to the table, it lacks the truth in advertising; this form of advertising comes off as cheap and constantly reproducible. What makes these ads work is that they let the audience find the feelings inside of themselves. Advertising is meant to sell a feeling, not just the product itself. If both the feeling and the product are sold to the customer and consumer, then the advertiser has done their job.

Advertising, written in the book *Ads, Fads and Consumer Culture* by Arthur Asa Berger, states: "Advertising tries to attract attention to, create the desire for, and stimulate action that leads to the purchase of products and services advertised...that is, advertisers hope to convince, to persuade, to motivate, and most importantly, to get people to act, to do something" (7). While this is the point of advertising, advertising is an ever-changing climate that is adapting to what the seller wants, may it be sensuality to how men or women are photographed to entice the audience. Advertising understands its mode of becoming too complex for the viewer but complexities are needed for a commercial to belong in the popular culture cannon, especially when they make an impact. The 1984 Macintosh commercial, seen as an important stepping

stone to understanding image-based text within the semiotic field, outlived the 1984 Super Bowl game and is still looked at with a staying power of 35 years.

In the text *Images of Thought and Acts of Creation: Deleuze, Bergson and the Question of Cinema* by Amy Herzog, she writes: “to designate images “time-” or “movement-” runs the risk of remaining merely descriptive if one does not fully grasp that the distinction between the two is neither a question of form nor content” (3). This conception of cinema with movement or time attached to the advertisement, or cinema in Amy’s case, is that advertising for the television screen is in its most-simplest form, a small film. The need for us to dissect the use of time, or movement, in an ad like the 1984 Macintosh ad is pertinent to the way an ad can shock us into how the aura and perception of the ad can present itself as new and thrilling. Advertising should be doing this at every possible second it can afford to. Our need for advertising to live up to the momentum that the 1984 Macintosh ad presents is crucial to my argument. Advertising can not sit on the sidelines anymore, and it needs to pack a punch and drive home the message it wants to send out to the public with a fire inside its belly. The messages broadcasted to the media-watching public need to be presented with accuracy in strategic planning and marketing on top of creating a piece of thirty, sixty or ninety-second advertising that surprises and entices audience viewership.

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