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# Rhetoric Of The Image

The origins of advertising go as far back as newspaper advertising in the early 17th century in London. Advertising can be used to sway opinions, promote an item, sell a lifestyle, build awareness, and inform. Nowadays we are constantly being advertised too, from the moment you get up in the morning and check your phone, turn on the tv, check your laptop, and begin your commute to work chances are you will instantly come across some sort of advertisement. They are all trying to get you to do something in some shape or form. Among many other things, but most importantly every advertising is sending a message, and it can be broken down using Roland Barthes' Rhetoric of the Image. In this paper I will be examining the an advertisement that goes against smoking but in an unconventional way. It is an Australian ad focused on putting out cigarette butts.

The first thing I will focus on in the ad is the linguistic language of it. The had has a clear message, it states "Save Lives Stub it out" on its own it maybe hard to understand what it means exactly. But let's break it down on its own without taking the photo into account. So upon reading the headline, I instantly thing of some sort of public service announcement of some sort. Based on the language used I can instantly connect that



the add is for the general public and is made to build awareness and have a sense of urgency and importance. Though based off the language used it is unclear what and how they expect you to do but you can understand that action is required in order to save the lives.

Once you examine the visual it begins to tie in the message. But let's take a look at the visual and analyze it on its own. The visual is very graphic in nature and attention grabbing, but on its own the message is still somewhat unclear. The visual shows the tip of a cigarette butt burning, and within the burning cigarette you can see forest fires and burning houses, you see a lot of devastation and that is meant to draw attention to a problem. Without any words you can connect with the visual and understand that this is something tragic going on within the picture. What is unclear with the visual standing alone is that there is no call to action, yes it is clear that something is wrong but what is unclear is what is expected from the viewer.

So now that we have gone over the the language and the visuals acting independently, now let's tie them both together and get the full overview what the message is looking to convey. The graphic visual of the fire burning the forest and houses within the cigarette butt mixed with the headline of “save lives stubs it out” the message becomes very clear. The language and visual are essential for making effective advertisement. When done well they both work together to bring the message to a simple understanding. I believe in this case it did exactly what they needed it to do, with forest fires being a big problem in Australia and cigarette butts being one of the leading caused for it. Though language is essential for communication, I believe for the most effective form we need that visual aspect.

#### Work Cited

Barthes, Roland. “Barthes-Rhetoric-of-the-Image.” 1977.

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