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The Colors of Advocacy

The objective of my paper is to analyze the rhetorical elements of a recent advertisement that has caught my attention. While looking over several magazines an advertisement in allure magazine caught my eye. Allure is a beauty magazine, so I expected to see most if not all the advertisements to be beauty-focused. Interestingly the ad that I chose is not necessarily a beauty advertisement however, I have found the beauty in it.

Visually there is a lot that is going on. However, the intended message is still straightforward. To focus on the visual aspects of the ad, there are two photographs in this image. The first image is a portrait-style black and white image of a woman of African descent. It is a close shot of mostly her face and hair, and she is being shot from her side profile. Her head is tilted slightly upward with her gaze being straight ahead. Her facial features and hair texture are boldly emphasized and simplified through the black and white contrast of the image. She is centered at the bottom left corner of the frame in the foreground. The second image is in the background with its dimensions matching the frame width times height. There are several people in the image that can be clearly seen. They all seem to be of African descent. Two are clearly wearing matching t-shirts with a popular slogan on them. The image is in black and white with an orange-brown colored overlay on top. There are two yellow custom shapes diagonal from each other in the midground. There are two white lines in the foreground also diagonal from each

other. One being in front of the woman, bottom left and the other is located at the top right. There are two orange lines in the midground centered towards the middle of the frame. Lastly, the woman's face is outlined twice, first in purple than in orange.

Moving on to the typographic elements of the piece. Located in the top right corner is the most important information. I know this because of how this text is presented. Font size, weight, and color are devices designers use to influence and direct the viewers' attention to the most important text. The visual and typographic hierarchy seen here is strong yet weakened in certain places however that is not what this essay is about so I will have to move past it. The text reads "NAACP, Advocacy has one direction, forward. Visit NAACP.ORG/FORWARD and includes their social media profiles." Moving on to the next body of text, in the form of a poster held by the people in the other image are names of black people who were killed by police officers written on the poster. Two people in the poster are also wearing Black Lives Matter t-shirts. That is all for the textual aspect of the ad.

I believe the message that is intended to be understood is one about supporting the Black Lives Matter movement. About supporting and caring about the people who have fallen by American police officers' hands. I believe this message is trying to promote courage, strength, and resilience when regarding such tense issues as police brutality. There should be no stopping nor going back as a society must push forward to find justice. This can all be seen through the movement that the image has. The woman figure seems to be in motion, her hair is being pushed back as if she is walking against the wind. She is looking forward and with her head held high. She looks a peace; she looks sure of herself. The fluid form of the yellow shapes and white and

orange lines in the image add to the sense of movement as they curve and bend at certain angles. I stated earlier that there should be no stopping nor going back as a society must push forward to find justice. This can also be seen through the intentional color and picture choices. Yellow is not a confrontational color. It stands out more like a traffic signal. Like those yellow triangles that direct you to what is coming ahead. In color psychology, it is said that the color mustard symbolizes creativity and diversity. Something that all-important movements need. The colors in the piece are playful yet serious, intentionally chosen by designers to influence our mood and feelings towards the image. The bright colors release a positive connotation link in our brains while simultaneously reforming that with the black and whiteness of the image that reminds us to focus and take the subject matter literally and for what it is. To communicate seriousness. Everything in design is intentional. From the color choice to the font style and weight.

I ask myself if this image did not have any text would I still get the message and vice versa... The answer is yes. I believe that all the elements in this composition go extremely well together and communicate the intention/ denoted message effectively. However, there is always more than meets the eye. As humans, we can think past the obvious. To find additional or alternate significances that matter may hold hidden to the naked eye, but not to our analytical minds.

There are so many questions to be asked. In an image where the most important subject matter is colored in black and white, why are there accents of color? Why is there it that such a serious subject matter is rendered in bright shades of yellow, lilac purple, and orange that hold positive connotative values? Why are there two outlines of the woman's facial profile? Many

more questions could be asked, should be asked but for page length purposes I will only present these.

I want to end this essay by answering one of the questions that I asked. The one regarding why this color choice. Although color' is not universal, locally the element of color is a powerful device that can be utilized to help the viewer comprehend the subject quicker and deepen that understanding to a higher extent. Children can understand color, humans from an early age decide what their favorite color is. Color is an enhancer in our everyday life. When I see this color combination, I see that the most important elements are in black and white meaning the answers to society's issues should be as clear and Uncomplicated as black and white. Black Lives Matter mission is to find justice for those who have been wrongfully murdered by our law enforcement system by bringing attention to the issue. All they want is for no more unarmed African Americans to be murdered. However, as simple as that want may seem. Look at the social-political climate that we are in today. African American folk continue to be shot down, people ignorantly ignore the movement's message and try to slander its progress. That just goes to show you that life is not seen in black and white. There is always gray matter in the middle. There are always different emotions/ colors that are mixed in with everything that we do. Anger is red, yellow is happiness, blue is sad, etc. There is always a meaning behind color. The linguistic message behind this advertisement is to promote a positive attitude towards social justice issues from both sides of the fence. Be tolerant, use your presence not your fists, do not fight fire with fire. Be calm and not angry. That will be the actions that change the world.

Works Cited

Organization, NAACP. "Allure Magazine ." *Ebsco.com*, Nypl.org, Allure.com, Flipster , Apr. 2021, allure.eoncontent.ebscohost.com.