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5/1/03
Essay 1.10

Controversial Ads

Every second of the day, no matter where you are, you are influenced by advertisements. As we drive down the highway listening to the radio we hear advertisements through commercials and look out the window to see huge billboards. When surfing the internet advertisements “pop up”, and while watching television advertisements are viewed even more. These advertisements focus on catching the eye of the beholder. Some focus their attention towards adults, some towards kids, and some are accidentally catching both eyes. The advertisement industry has now started to promote sex and comedy as a way to sell their items. Billboards now show scantily clad women over one hundred feet tall on the sides of highways and sexual oriented advertisements now “pop up” on the internet while visiting various sites. Television now has a Miller Lite commercial with women wrestling in water and Budweiser had a commercial with frogs speaking to promote beer. Trojan Condoms advertises with exploding geysers to promote their condoms. Monetary gains may be occurring because some believe sex and comedy sells, but because of these advertisements our children are being influenced to act inappropriately at a very young age.

Children do not need to be influenced by this advertising. “The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth at Georgetown University released December 17 a report saying that America’s youth has been overexposed to alcohol advertising” (Craig). Beer companies absolutely advertise toward adolescents. One has to think about who the

Budweiser frog campaign was for. “The WB has alcohol ads during ‘Dawson’s Creek’ and ‘Smallville’, and that’s a thirteen to eighteen year old audience. It could be because it’s prime time, but it’s questionable.”(Craig) Why do companies need to aim alcohol towards the youth of our world today?

These alcohol companies know exactly what they are doing. It was found that “if you look at the profit margins of alcohol manufactures, a significant portion are underage consumers. They know they’re advertising for adolescents” (Craig). Under aged drinking accounts for nearly fifty-three billion dollars worth of revenue for alcohol companies each year.(Miller) “Twenty-two million teenagers – some seventy-seven percent of all twelve to eighteen year-olds in the U.S. (we didn’t even count kids under twelve or between nineteen and twenty) watch television after 9 p.m. when booze ads routinely grace the airwaves.” (Miller) “The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth at Georgetown released a study reporting that alcohol companies were reaching America’s youths with advertising more effectively than they were with adults”(Craig).

Government agencies wonder why so many underage people drink. They allow these companies to purposely advertise towards the adolescents of our society. Why doesn’t our government do anything about it? It is obviously because the alcohol tax is one of the biggest means of income that our government has. In 1995 the United States government received around nine and a half billion dollars in revenue from alcohol taxes.(Young) Our government should take a little bit more money out of this revenue to promote more safe drinking habits and teach more classes on why underage drinking is so hazardous.

Not only is it wrong that these alcohol companies target our adolescents and the government does nothing about it, but it is wrong that these companies are influencing people's moral character. Our moral integrity is being challenged every second of the day now. As a nineteen year old male, these advertisements promoting sex are very much what I *want* to see. But as a nineteen year old Catholic male, with some integrity, I do not believe that women should be perceived to the public in this way and I do not *need* to see this. When you have women wrestling in water ripping each others' clothes off and men cheering them on, you have crossed the line in advertising. Women are not merely objects for which we compete, but are on the other hand an object of our affection. Women deserve the same amount of respect as any other human being upon this earth. If they are trying to advertise towards younger males with this, why don't they have men wrestle and advertise towards younger women? Obviously it is because of who they are targeting. These companies know men drink more than women. But by using them as objects of sex, they are declining them of all forms of respect.

Our youth today is not only being affected by alcohol commercials, but also commercials promoting safe sex. One of the most often viewed commercials out there promoting safe sex is the Trojan Condoms commercial. During this commercial a geyser explodes in the background while two people are "making out" due to sensational pleasure. Sex is not something that should be taken so light heartedly by the youth of our world. Sex is something sacred, and a persons' virginity should be held sacred until marriage.

These horrific advertisements are portraying to our youth that sex is something that all should enjoy whenever they please. Yes we should all enjoy sex, but only at the right time in our lives. More teenagers today are becoming pregnant than ever before, and it is because our advertising world is telling them it is alright to engage in sexual acts at such a young age. In the 1980's around twenty-one percent of women fifteen to nineteen became pregnant. In the 1990's that number rose to around twenty-four percent for these fifteen to nineteen year old women.(Guttmacher Institute) Many teens are also contracting sexually transmitted diseases (STD's). "The number of teens nationwide who are infected with an STD is staggering. A report from the Austin, Texas-based Medical Institute for Sexual Health finds that 1 out of 4 teenagers currently have or have had a sexually transmitted disease."(Albernaz) Some believe that a condom can protect them from the transfer of fluid. Well it does not. It is only there to reduce the risk of STD's and unwanted pregnancies.

Why must we be put into these situations? There is no way to avoid them. Our life is judged in the end on how we live our lives today. The people involved in creating these horrific advertisements do not need to be destroying our chances to be judged righteously. They are condemning themselves and they do not need to condemn the lives of others. They may be looking for monetary gains, but what they need to be looking at is the effect they are having on the minds and actions of our world's youth. Every year more and more people die in alcohol related accidents due to under aged drinking, and more and more youth pregnancies and STD's are occurring. It seems that these companies, by advertising to the youth, are advertising to promote under aged drinking

and sexual acts reserved for marriage. Not only does it need to stop and but these advertisements need to stop now!