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English 101

The Price of Safety and Security

In the ad entitled “2017 Subaru Impreza”, the audience is immediately aware of the product being exhibited; a car. For years, Subaru has been pushing out ads that effectively tug at our heartstrings by reminiscing about emotional experiences that are common to the American family life experience and this one is no exception. The scene laid before us portrays a milestone event where most parents have a mixture of nervousness and pride; the departure of their young adult to college. Throughout the ad, we see a young boy running around the house and collecting his belongings with his dog tailing after him. The father is not in the same room as the boy, however he continues to monitor him carefully. Just because the child is out of sight does not mean that the boy is out of his father’s mind. This contributes to the ethos of the ad as it a parent’s duty to guard over their child with an eagle’s eye.

The intended audience for this commercial are parents who have newly graduated high school students. This is evident at the end of the ad when the boy is all grown up and is about to get into his car. With all of the attention given to him, it is apparent that he is the main character and the vessel for the message that Subaru wishes to convey. That is that parents should provide a means of transportation that will keep their precious cargo safe. One method that Subaru employs is the juxtaposition of age between the two boys. His mannerisms add to the sense of an innocent soul who craves to grow up and do what his parents are doing. This is also apparent when asked if he needs assistance gathering his belongings, as he politely shouts “No thanks Dad!” from the base of the stairwell. Although this is an effective use of pathos, there is little to no logos present. Much of what is presented can be classified as glittering generalities, an appealing facade that has nothing logical backing it. There is no rational reason presente to be enough to convince us to buy a Subaru because there aren’t any statistics or awards that the car has earned.

The use of blankets and stuffed animals collected by the boy are effective means to portray his innocence. These are symbols of youth and as a marker for how much you have grown up. The items gathered also do not have much practicality to a person who owns a car and is going off to college. It is meant as a display of cutting off ties to the life that he once knew and is being propelled into the next chapter of his life. Another symbol utilized to show a tether to childhood by Subaru is the boy’s dog as it is something that has grown up alongside him. In using a dog, the ad is able to form a personal connection with the viewer because typically people grew up with some form of a pet. It then allows the viewer to let their guard down and in turn Subaru is able to assure them that an Impreza will keep their child safe when they cannot. This section of the ad excels as it clearly displays its telos and kairos at the same time as the it conveys its overall message with appropriate timing.

Another element used in the ad is the music plays in the background. Unlike most advertisements, which have upbeat and catchy tunes, this soundtrack is quite peaceful. It is very similar to what you would find playing in a child’s bedroom if they cannot sleep. This draws in the viewer/parent back to a time when they were sitting at the base of their child’s bed, consoling them about the nightmare they had woken up from. The music choice further adds to the pathos of ad as it delves into personal moments parents had with their youngster. These are the key and critical moments in a child’s life to bond and draw closer to their guardian angel.

As the boy shifts the focus from these items and elements to the car, Subaru attempting to assure the viewer that this car will keep their child safe. For years the parent has been trying to protect the child from themselves while they make bold claims such as “I got this”. As a terrified parent, one would want to ensure nothing but the highest degree of safety and security for their child as they head off into the world without the direct supervision of the parent. This car will keep them protected when the parent is not able to be there to watch over them. In the end, the parent cannot keep their young adult from growing up and must trust in the car for safekeeping. For both the parent and the child, this scene is a coming of age scenario and letting go is the hardest part of the process. Subaru then makes it a point that both the parent and the child can have what they want; helping ease the anxiety for both parties.

Overall, the ad effectively communicates that parents will do many things throughout the child’s life to keep them. Some of these methods include the use of melodic music and the young boy’s personal belongings. It allows for the viewer to become relaxed and calm, in turn, permitting themselves to understand the ideology presented by Subaru. One area where the ad falters is in it’s overuse of pathos and little to no logos. This ad seems to specifically target parents in a sentimental light, unlike other car advertisements where they project the safety ratings of their vehicles. Subaru does none of this and hopes that one would look past this. That being said, the overall ideology presented is not at fault. Nothing about it is false or negative by any means and can be attributed as a fact.

Most of the viewers watching the ad have had the opportunity to have a set of parents who wanted to keep them out of harm’s way. With that being said, we as the audience should accept this ideology as it has shaped and formed all of us. It goes with us everywhere we go, in every moral and logical decision. The ideology does not need to have a refinement in the delivery because it is effectively conveyed. Where the ad could use some improvements is by adding some safety statistics as the boy is turning a corner. For example, when there is an angle change, the screen could display some text describing the safety rating or how it has a groundbreaking new feature. This would give some more objective reasons to purchase a Subaru as it has been shown to be tested in some capacity. In my personal opinion, I would buy a Subaru if the presented modification was added as it would give me a peace of mind.