Sean Russell

April 13, 2016

SPCM100-013

Final Essay - Budweiser’s “Coming Home”

Say what you like about consumerism and advertising, sometimes it really does know how to make us feel. Budweiser’s “Coming Home” is a poignant example of this, showing some of the best parts of the advertising industry. In this essay, I will summarize this commercial, analyze it by using the Rhetorical Method and the Race & Ethnicity Method, incorporate an outside source, and evaluate the commercial.

*Summary*

The commercial begins with a phone call between two brothers, one of whom is out on deployment with the military. In two frames side by side, it shows the brother who was on deployment making the journey home, first on a plane, then a bus, finally arriving home, while the other brother makes party preparations in a barn, performing various tasks such as cleaning and shopping. The brother who was on deployment walks over to the barn and opens it up, and sees the welcome home sign and his family. At this point, the video returns to being a single frame, as the two brothers hug one another, and the one from the military goes to greet his family.

*Rhetorical Method*

The equipment for living provided by this commercial is fairly clear. It provides an image of a pretty all american family, with one son being a soldier, a family barn, and how important close family ties are. It teaches us to be appreciative of the people close to us (and the Budweiser that ties us together). The two main characters are both white men, with predominantly white minor characters. The house they live in is not ostentatious, but it is nice enough.

The plot is somewhat non-linear, in that two different stories are being told at the same time on screen, but it is all sequential. There is no particularly complex order in this commercial. The pace is fairly rapid, however compared to other modern commercials it is somewhat slower than average. There is a little talking in the video, but most of the audio comes from the soundtrack, which is a sort of country acoustic guitar song. The most notable thing about the video is the manner in which it is split into two separate frames.

The ethos in this commercial is very strong. The only thing that seems somewhat out of place is how prominent Budweiser is in the life of this family. Otherwise, the setting seems like something straight out of Anywhere America, and the homecoming of soldiers is something that frequently occurs in real life. While I personally am from a fairly different background than the characters depicted in the video, it is all very relatable to me. While I might not have anyone I am close to out on deployment, there certainly are times when I see people I haven’t for a while, and that is relatable.

The commercial appeals to the human sense of family and togetherness. The plot was a major factor in this, in that the coming home plot inherently brings out feelings of unity. In addition, the soundtrack added to the atmosphere, and the split of the video into two different frames coming together at the end. It was a fairly emotional commercial, I felt some of the feelings the people in the text did.

*Race & Ethnicity Method*

White people comprise the majority of those on screen throughout this text . They are all shown to be caring towards one another and generally good people. The soldier is dressed in soldier clothes, but most everyone else is well dressed, if casual. Since white people are portrayed in so many roles, it is difficult to compare them to they typical media portrayal, but this does seem to be a pretty typical family. This type of good white family representation is frequent in many sorts of media, especially things with wholesome, lighter themes such as sitcoms. African Americans are the only other people depicted in this video, and they are all in the background.

Since white people are pretty much the only ones depicted, and they are depicted as well off and happy, it can be said that white people are the ones who hold the power at least in this video. This shows nothing but a positive portrayal of whites, which is not all that unusual, especially when it comes to commercials that do not have time to deal with very serious subject matter.

*Outside Source*

“The Portrayal of Family in Advertising: Children’s Perspectives” analyzes the changing portrayal of family structures in mass media, particularly advertising and the impact that it has on children. In addition to doing this, it also describes in less detail how the portrayal of family in advertising affects those of us who are not children. Unsurprisingly, exposure to non traditional families leaves different impressions to different demographics, but the research suggests that even among fairly hard line socially conservative groups, exposure to non traditional families can lead to increased tolerance for non traditional people, especially families portrayed in a positive light. This is the one failing of this Budweiser commercial. It does not challenge the hegemony in any way whatsoever.

*Evaluation*

Although the commercial fails to challenge the hegemony in any way, it is a beneficial text because of its portrayal of the wholesome values of caring for your family. It is not significantly hampered by the fact that it is a commercial, because while at some parts the inclusion of Budweiser is excessive, the inclusion does not significantly affect the message of the commercial. In addition, though it fails to challenge the hegemony, it is not necessary for every single text to challenge the hegemony if it supports other positive values.

*Conclusion*

In conclusion, the Budweiser's commercial “Coming Home” portrays a believable, hegemonic family celebrating the return of one of their own. In spite of the fact that continued portrayal of a hegemonic family does nothing for the plight of minorities, this commercial is still a beneficial text for showing good deeds in a believable environment.

**Works Cited**

Budweiser. "Budweiser 'Coming Home'" N.p., 14 Feb. 2012. Web. 13 Apr. 2016.

Johansen, Elise. "The Portrayals of Family in Advertising: Children ' S Perspectives." Digital Commons, 1 Aug. 12. Web. 13 Apr. 2016. <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu /cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1038&context=businessdiss>.

**CSU Honor Code**

*I will not give, receive, or use any unauthorized assistance when completing the assignments for this course.*