Jonathan Allen

Lab 4

I chose a TV advertisement for the video game "World of Warcraft”. It is available at <http://youtu.be/cuGvsciIE4c> and is thirty seconds long. I’ll also upload a screenshot of when I submit this essay.

I chose this ad because the psychology of video games fascinates me. A video game is fun or not because it gives you rewards and consequences at appropriate times. Similarly, a video game gets boring if the designer did not implement rewards and consequences for the player’s behavior. A well designed video game may actually become addictive. A video game creates an artificial environment where we can take all we know about learning and behavioral psychology and implement it perfectly. World of Warcraft is probably the most (in)famous example of this. Take it from someone who knows, it can be quite addictive. There is always one more objective to complete or one more reward to earn. Always, you need just a few more minutes of play.

Now the ad starts off with a close up of a young, attractive woman. She is wearing stylish, but rather thick glasses. The glasses tell us that she is intelligent, very hip, and maybe a bit of a geek. So this ad is probably targeted towards women who would identify with her, or young men who would be attracted to her.

She has a very skeptical and disgusted look on her face as she tells us that her boyfriend got her Warcraft for her birthday. This ad is probably targeting people who are a little skeptical about these kinds of games, getting those people to identify with this woman.

Anyway she decides to try the game. And decides the game is more important to her than her boyfriend and dumps him. Oh snap she is single and plays Warcraft and is attractive and intelligent. Again it is targeting young men.

So the ad targets young people of both sexes who see themselves as hip, but geeky who may or may not think it is socially acceptable to play a video game which is famous for becoming addictive.

The ad sends a very sophisticated and subtle message about the addiction. On the one hand it pokes fun at itself a little. It knows what people think of video game addiction. On the other hand, it hints that maybe you are better off addicted to something good rather than investing in bad things (like crap boyfriends). The ad plays a very tricky game, acknowledging that addiction is a thing with this game, but at the same time minimizing this or even making it seem like a good thing. Who knows maybe it is. I certainly have many many fond memories of the game, and many very good friends from that game. But then again, watching this ad terrifies me because it makes me want to play again.