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Perfume and Persuasion: A Rhetorical Analysis of How Advertising Captivates Our Senses

The power of advertising influences consumer behavior and shapes societal norms.

Advertisements can drive consumers to purchase goods and services through persuasive messaging and emotional intrigue. An advertisement may appeal to aspirations, fears, and/or the needs of its audience to propel them to invest in the marketed product. One example of this influential advertising is found in the ad for Dolce and Gabbana's "The One" Fragrance which uses the need for affiliation and/or affection, the need for aesthetic perfection, and the need to achieve/be successful to sell a prominent and affectionate lifestyle.

In 2006, Dolce and Gabbana released "The One" Fragrance for women. Later, in 2008, they released "The One" Fragrance for men due to its popularity with men loving it on the women in their lives. This fragrance appeals to both genders and this ad encapsulates that by using two individuals that appeal to both men and women. Mathew McConaughey and Scarlett Johansson entice both men and women because they are two attractive individuals who others either fantasize about or strive to be like. This ad engages those individuals who are either young and looking to find love, or "The One", or those in relationships looking to entice their partners further. From this it can be surmised that the target audience of this ad is young to middle-aged adults ranging from early 20s to later 30s looking to be in romantic relationships.

The ad by Dolce and Gabbana uses the need for affiliation and/or affection to sell this romantic lifestyle. Mathew McConaughey and Scarlett Johansson are affectionately pressed

together in what appears to be a romantic relationship. The way Mr. McConaughey is casually pointing to something while Ms. Johansson smiles warmly suggests a level of comfortability together further instilling this concept of an intimate relationship. This basic appeal in advertising alludes to the promise of loving sexual relationships which further impresses that the audience for this ad are those individuals looking to have these sensual encounters.

This ad also uses the need for aesthetic perfection to promote this lifestyle and sell their product. Mathew McConaughey and Scarlett Johansson are arguably some of the most beautiful people according to today's societal standards. Mr. McConaughey is a tall, lean, and physically fit individual. He is known for his defined muscles and distinctive look. He has a strong jawline, fair complexion and dark hair. In the ad, he is wearing a suit which may not show off his muscles, but by using Mathew McConaughey specifically, we know what is beneath the suit leading to his sex appeal and the use of aesthetic perfection. He is someone men aspire to be while women, on the other hand, would love to date him.

Opposite Mathew McConaughey is Scarlett Johanson who is also quite the object of desire. She is known for her fair skin, signature blonde hair, striking hazel eyes, and full pouty lips. She is also known for being physically fit and having a curvy hourglass figure. In this ad, she is wearing a dress made of black lace which has a delicate and suggestive nature. Like Mr. McConaughey, Ms. Johansson has desirability and by using her in the ad, Dolce a Gabbana is appealing to the use of aesthetic perfection. She is someone women are driven to idolize while men pine for her.

The ad for Dolce and Gabbana's "The One" Fragrance also uses the need to achieve/be successful appeal. By using two well-known figures who are incredibly successful in their careers, Dolce and Gabbana is trying to sell you a prominent lifestyle. People know the names

Mathew McConaughey and Scarlett Johansson and their names are not even in the ad. People recognize them immediately as incredibly famous actors. Even the background of the ad suggests their roles in society. With lighting structures behind them, it is assumed to be some kind of movie set, adding to the prominent and famous lifestyle of these two.

The ad also uses color techniques to draw us to the product. The ad is in black and white which gives it a timeless and artistic quality. Black and white emphasizes composition, light and texture over color and it evokes emotion such as nostalgia while providing a sense of drama. By using this monochrome color scheme, Dolce and Gabbana are invoking a sense of sentimentality relating to their product. The product itself is in color which draws your eye to the bottles of fragrance. Even Mr. McConaughey seems to be pointing towards the product which further exemplifies its importance in the ad.

The overall ad proposes the idea that by purchasing and using this product, one might find a romantic, affectionate relationship and live a celebrated and notable life. It suggests that this is the fragrance of Mathew McConaughey and Scarlett Johansson, a type of testimonial of the fragrance. Even the name of the fragrance suggests a glittering generality. By calling the fragrance “The One”, Dolce and Gabbana is counting on the consumer to associate this fragrance with finding “The One”. The ad is effective because it uses a sense of glamour and drama to sell this idea and this lifestyle. Using celebrities is particularly efficacious because it provides endorsement to this brand and product. In final analysis the Dolce and Gabbana ad for “The One” Fragrance uses the need for affiliation and/or affection, the need for aesthetic perfection, and the need to achieve/be successful clearly and effectively to promote their product.

