PETA's Objectification of Women

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PETA’s Objectification of Women

Abir Malik, Bonnie Boaz

Abstract

The reason why PETA is so popular and known all throughout the world is because of their shock tactics used for advertising. PETA advertisements cross over the human/animal divide. They make the audience of their advertisements feel emotions for the animals by causing them to believe that humans and animals are much more similar than they think. They emphasize the similarities between animals and humans by dehumanizing humans, especially women, but they also anthropomorphize animals making them appear more like humans (Atkins-Sayre, 2010). They are completely trying to get rid of the human and animal divide to gain attention from their audience. There are no limitations or what extent they will go in order to bring attention to their campaign, whether it is positive or negative. As long as people are talking about it, they are satisfied. Bongiorno’s research concluded that men found the sexual advertisements to be arousing but that did not relate to the support for the cause. This proved their hypothesis that using sexualized advertisements for ethical cause would actually decrease the intention of supporting the cause (Bongiorno, 2013). It is very ironic that most studies revealed that women are predominant in the animal right’s movement yet they are the ones who are exploited in animal right campaigns. About 60-80% of women make up the animal right groups and are the single most important factor behind this ethical cause (Gaarder, 2011). The reason behind this relates to the oppression many of these women have felt over their lifetime, which again PETA ironically contradicts in their advertisements.

Introduction

PETA’s sole purpose is to defend animal’s rights. However, in standing up for animal rights, they show women with little to no clothing on, presenting women as sexual objects. PETA’s intentions of animal wellness are concealed behind their controversial ads, where they overlook the rights of women. The advertisements objectifying women as equals of animals and shown as sex beings have become more known throughout the world and end up developing a negative image for a positive cause. The reason PETA has been so effective in their campaigning is due to the shock tactics they use, including the controversial and stunning images and ideas that are made to “shock” the audience and grab their attention. Although PETA’s recent ad campaigns have garnered shock and public attention, these ad campaigns are not gaining supporters because the audience does not want to help a cause that dehumanizes and exploits women.

Results/Discussion

While these negative, sexualized messages upset the audience gravely, positive advertisements could keep the audience pleased and motivated to assist PETA with their ethical treatment of animals mission. People are more likely to support a cause that promotes a positive message. While PETA does promote animal rights, it also ironically degrades women by portraying them as equal or lesser value of animals. Perception may play a huge role in PETA advertisements because of what message people believe the advertisements are giving off. These advertisements have a negative influence on their viewers, where seeing women displayed as dehumanized objects increases acceptance of unethical behavior such as rape and violence towards women by the audience. However, PETA would be most successful with more followers and supporters if they used images that would not contradict their message or victimize the entire gender of women.

Conclusion

Works Cited

Acknowledgements

UROP – Financial Assistance, Professor Bonnie Boaz – Mentorship