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Rhetorical Analysis of FKA Twigs Banned Calvin Klein Advertisement

In the early weeks of January, an advertisement from the clothing brand Calvin Klein depicting British musician FKA Twigs was deemed too revealing by the Advertising Standards Authority. This received backlash from both fans and the artist herself. Numerous other advertisements such as a Kendall Jenner advertisement of the same nature was not censored (Burga & Cleary). The effectiveness of the advertisement created in context of the rhetors sparked a massive controversy that went beyond the original message of the advertisement.

The advertisement itself persuades the audience viewing it to view the intended image to show the perfectness of the product.

The ideology of the text shows that you can also look perfect in their product just by purchasing it. Another part of the

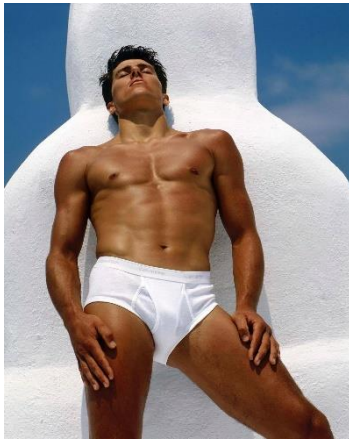
advertisement is that it is a part of a series entitled 'Calvins or

nothing', a series of photographs and videos depicting various kinds of celebrities in their underwear and various other garments. These advertisements use ethos to persuade people into purchasing the products for numerous reasons. From the celebrities to the shiekhness of them, they draw you into the advertisements and lure you to purchase their products. But why did this advertisement receive so much controversy? Did the rhetors fail at their message or



did it succeed in the wrong circumstance? Would this advertisement work better in America instead of England? These elements should be analyzed to conduct a proper representation of the advertisement.

Calvin Klein is known for their provocative advertisements and has had a history of being controversial. The photograph of FKA Twigs herself, conveys the same meaning their advertisements have done previously. It shows a revealing image with the model wearing the products of the company. However, this is meant to be persuasive to lure the viewer to purchase more products. According to an article by Hannah Malach of Women's Wear Daily "In 1982, Calvin Klein entered the briefs business, launching with a \$500,000 advertising



campaign featuring Olympian pole vaulter Tom Hintnaus. The debut of Calvin Klein underwear saw rapid success, with Bloomingdale's selling \$65,000 worth of briefs in two weeks and first-year sales projected at \$4 million." Their method of using revealing photographs as a form of advertisement has worked well for them and shows their purpose of selling the product to the masses. Using this, it would make sense for

the current advertisement in discussion to work however, do to it being deemed too revealing by the Advertising Standards Authority, the intended use of it may not work. Through a visual perspective, the advertisement should work but, it also works through a media-centered perspective. This is due to the controversy surrounding it which then caused numerous different websites online to cover the topic. The artist in the photograph herself posted on Instagram that she was upset with the decision of banning the advertisement. Numerous other outlets pointed out to the fact that she is a BIPOC, and this was the motivation to censor it. This

caused outrage online and the intended use of the advertisement transcended its original meaning and create a new form for it. By media outlets posting the text, the brand backed her opinion. This would increase the support for both the artist and the company and would make more people want to purchase their products in support of their choices to them.

These elements influence the way we view both the company and the artist and with the use of the media-centered perspective, we can analyze the conflict beyond the rhetors control. The audiences view of the text, allowed for it to spread further than it might have been if it were not due to the controversy of the photograph. This can be considered a change in the times as we progress further we are able to identify and openly criticize racist and biased opinions placed in advertisements and policies. Based on the advertisement, a person could conclude that censoring the advertisement of a BIPOC person might have been racially motivated. Another person might conclude that the banning of the advertisement in the UK was justifiable due to how revealing it might seem to them. Both claims provided can be backed with evidence but, speaking in normal terms, most would have concluded that this advertisement was censored due to racism. The motives behind these actions can also be cited in playing a role in popular culture, as the UK has a different culture when compared to The United States of America. In the United States of America, this advertisement might be showcased in a mall or on a billboard without anyone changing their minds on the opinions of the contents of it. It might be more acceptable to show such advertisements in the United States of America instead of The United Kingdom. These factors play important roles in how our societies are and can tell us a lot about how alike and different both cultures could be.

To under this, the advertisements intended message from the rhetors was changed due to how the media and the country chose to portray it. To come to this answer, one would have to analyze both sides of each of the respective entities and both would also have to understand the nuances of each side. This would benefit anyone to understand what was occurring and show them how rhetoric plays a huge role in this conversation. When coming to a final statement for this, understanding both sides are important to form a proper conclusion and require conversation and independent research to figure out what is working here to see a rhetorical analysis of the advertisement. The average person might conclude it was motivated by racism, but another might come to a different conclusion. But no matter what answer they come to; they will still use rhetoric to view the information at hand.

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