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“’I miss you’ baseball cap.”

Appeals

This image uses all three types of rhetorical appeals. It uses logos by depicting a baseball cap, which is an item of clothing with a functional purpose. A cap keeps one’s head dry and keeps the sun off one’s face. Since the sun has harmful rays and since the rain can mess up one’s hairstyle, it is logical to want to cover your head and wearing a cap is one means of doing that. The creator of the cap appeals to emotion by means of the writing on the cap. The phrase is one we associate with romantic relationships. Longing is obviously an emotion, as is loneliness, and this cap seems to be expressing both. The creator appeals to ethos by showing the cleverness to replicate a commonplace sort of experience (typing something on Facebook chat and having someone else read it) on a commonplace piece of clothing (a baseball cap). The appeal to ethos is probably the weakest of the three since one could argue that this is not that clever a thing to do since there is no way to tell if the creator of the cap was the first person to do something like this.

Argument

The argument behind making this cap and taking this photo is that technology has become so commonplace that it should be a means of representation for a person. Since so many of us use Facebook chat to communicate with others why shouldn’t we show that the same way we show off designer clothes or clothes with the logos of sports teams? But at the same time it is also sad that people increasingly identify themselves as online users because Facebook chat is not the same as talking to a person in real life. That’s why the creator used writing that signifies sadness. Having someone “see” your message doesn’t mean they will respond to it, whereas talking to someone in real life means that they will most likely respond or at the very least react to it. So the argument is that using technology like social media is now a means of self-expression but also that that realization is kind of depressing because real life experiences are always richer than digital ones, especially in terms of relationships (where one would be likely to type/receive what is written on the cap).

Purpose

The purpose behind making this cap may be to sell them in order to make money. Alternatively the purpose may also be to reinforce the idea that talking to someone in real life is better than doing so online, even though there are times when the former may not be possible.

Audience

The audience of this image is anyone who likes to wear baseball caps and who uses social media (especially Facebook) extensively. You can tell that it targets Facebook users because the writing at the bottom of the cap is identical to Facebook’s system of chat notifications. There may be a racial component to the audience in that the rhetor targets white people because the hand in the image is that of a white person.

Foregrounding

The blue of the cap and the pink background contrast since one color is light and the other dark. The cap is foregrounded as the viewer focuses on it. There is nothing in the background besides the pink color so there is nothing to distract the viewer. The pink background simply makes it easier to focus on the cap.

Color

The blue of the cap and the pink background contrast so the cap is easier to see. Also, the colors on the cap replicate those of Facebook chat, from the blue bubbles to the white text. The use of blue on the cap perhaps is a reference to “feeling blue” which implies sadness, which is reflected in the writing.

Kairos

Considering that millions, if not billions, of people use Facebook every day, this is a timely image that uses Kairos. The rhetor makes us aware of what it means to replicate personal, in real life conversations in a digital context, and how empty that can make us feel.

Representation

This image has just one person in it, who seems to be white. That may tie into the rhetor’s argument, since the image could have just been the cap and the background. On the other hand, since the rhetor only includes a hand, that may be a reference to the parts of the body that compose messages on Facebook chat (the fingers).

Symbols/Metaphor

All different types of people wear baseball caps, from ballplayers to filmmakers to the current president. To link a baseball cap to a replication of a text message on Facebook chat is to suggest that all different sorts of people use Facebook chat, just like all different types of people wear baseball caps. But the writing on the cap suggests that this is a sad reality and not something to celebrate.

Rule of thirds

To an extent the rhetor uses the rule of thirds. The cap is framed in the center and surrounded by blank space on either side. However, it is not evenly divided into thirds. Also, the pink background on either side does not really contribute to the visual text’s argument. Perhaps it does if the rhetor wanted to make the pink background stand for emptiness, since emptiness is part of the appeal to pathos used by the rhetor (along with longing).

Persuasiveness

I’m not sure if I would buy this hat but it’s neat. It reminds me of girls that identify as “sad girls” on Tumblr. As a social media user I am well aware of how empty Facebook chat can be as compared to real life conversations. I like how this image pinpoints how addicted we are to social media and how we present ourselves as social media savvy in terms of how we dress. This image also reminds me of how some people have started wearing postinternet fashion.

“Sizzler Promotional Commercial 1991.”

Appeals

Sizzler uses all three appeals. They appeal to logos by attempting to solve the problem of feeding the problem when both families are working. The ad appeals to pathos through the pleasure or happiness of eating good healthy food, especially the type of good healthy food that you choose. Sizzler shows ethos by catering to the needs of different diners with different tastes. It is believable that no matter what you want to eat, and no matter whether you want table service or a buffet, Sizzler will have what you are looking for, and it will likely be within your budget. This is credibility because Sizzler shows that they listen to what diners want, and it is the choices and tastes of diners that allow them to exist as a business.

Argument

Sizzler argues that you should eat there because it gives you choices (buffet vs table service), it is affordable and offers delicious food, and because it fits into your busy lifestyle. Also, having choices while eating out is linked with American identity suggesting that eating at Sizzler is an American thing to do.

Purpose

The purpose of this ad is to get people to eat at Sizzler. It may be a promotional video for training purposes (according to the Youtube title) but the end result of it is to help Sizzler make money as a business.

Audience

The audience is Americans who like to eat out, specifically those with children as there are a lot of families featured in this ad. The ad’s audience may have extended beyond America to an international audience in 1991. It is hard to tell from the ad however.

Color

With the exception of the title screens showing the Sizzler logo, the colors in this commercial are bright, including sunrises and brightly lit dining rooms. This suggests that Sizzler is to be trusted because we can see what’s in the food in the same way that we can see other people in the light.

Syllogism/Enthymeme

This ad uses an enthymeme by emphasizing choices and freedom. It is implied (but not stated) that having choices and freedom when eating out is better than not having choices or freedom. It is also implied (but not stated) that there is something inherently American about choices and freedom, since the voiceover discusses both ideas (being American and having choices and freedom). This is even though people living in other countries also have choices and freedom when eating out. Another enthymeme is the connection between both parents working signifying that there is less time to cook. The idea that you cannot cook and work at the same time is implied but not stated.

Kairos

This ad uses Kairos by situating it in the context of the early 90s when America was getting used to the idea of both parents working. Sizzler uses examples of women working jobs that were traditionally considered to be only for men in the past (construction for example).

Representation

This ad features a diverse cast in terms of race but also in terms of age and in terms of occupation. The point of this is to suggest that all different types of Americans appreciate what Sizzler has to offer as a restaurant. Some of the characters in this ad are stereotypical Americans; the yuppie executive, the sailor, the cowboy, the sea captain, etc.

Rhetorical Situation

This ad has a rhetorical situation. The exigence is that more parents are working which means that they don’t have time to both work and cook dinner. Therefore they need to find an alternative to cooking that still allows them to feed their family. The audience in this case is people with families that live near Sizzler restaurants (presumably American families since this ad is for an American audience). The constraints include the possibility that nobody in a given family will enjoy the food Sizzler offers. Another constraint is that families may not be able to afford Sizzler meals even though Sizzler mentions in the ad that their food is affordable.

Symbols/Metaphors

Sizzler stands for having choices and freedom. Those two things stand for being American. Some of the cast also act as symbols. The girl playing baseball is an expression of empowering girls and also an expression of national identity (because baseball is America’s pastime). Also, the sailor with his girlfriend shows support for the military and for heterosexual relationships.

Tone

There is a positive tone to this commercial. The music has upbeat lyrics and a sense of progression in the rhythm that culminates in a sick saxophone solo. The expressions of the Sizzler workers in the ad and the diners and the rest of the cast (pretty much everyone is smiling) contributes to the positive tone.

Persuasiveness

I was not persuaded by this commercial because it dates from the pre-ironic age of commercials. Some of the claims made in this ad are corny to a modern audience and the claim of America being linked with choices is kind of hard to believe since many countries have similar styles of government. The food did look good but that’s kind of to be expected in restaurant ads. I may have felt differently about the persuasiveness of this ad if I had a family because then I would be more likely to eat out.

Works Cited

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