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## Media Literacy Essay

Sut Jhally, a professor of communication at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, who focuses on cultural studies, advertising, media, and consumption claims that advertising is the most powerful and sustained form of propaganda, and if we are not careful and mindful, will be responsible for destroying the world as we know it, and I cannot help but agree. I also think that Jhally's belief is in harmony with the Five Concepts at the Center of Media Literacy's Five Core Concepts that we have studied throughout our class for this semester. The 5 Core Concepts are: First, that all media messages are constructed. Secondly, the media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules. Third, and my favorite since it's a fact, we all experience the same media message differently. The fourth is that media have embedded values and points of view. And last but not the least, most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power. As we are all aware, media is prevalent and a constant factor in today's society, and even more now than ever, and we are all affected by it whether we believe so or not. From the day we were born, most of our parents wanted the very best for us from what brand of baby food they will feed us, what brand of pampers they will use as part of our

potty training, to what brand of baby clothing they would like for us to wear. These choices that they made for us resulted from media, whether it be from television advertisements, or whether we heard it from our family and friends, whose opinions were influenced by the media of some sort, since clearly the media's job is to help us simply make the right choice for us and our loved ones, or so we thought. In the next paragraphs, I will dwell and divulge why I believe Jhally's claim applies to each of the Five Concepts at the Center for Media Literacy's Five Core Concepts.

I strongly see where Jhally is coming from as far as his disdain for the Media and how his views apply to the Five Concepts at the Center for Media Literacy. I find that Jhally's claim supports the first of the Five Concepts which is that, "all media messages are constructed." I feel that anything that comes from the media are purposely created to solicit emotions from all of its audience for the simple fact of making a profit. I read and cannot explain the truth further than what I read about it: "Media texts are built just as surely as buildings and highways are built. The key media texts are built just as securely as buildings and highways are built. The key behind this concept is figuring out who constructed the message, out of what materials and to what effect. In other words, media advertisers are always targeting an audience and studying the public's taste and emotional vulnerability before putting out their ad. I feel that this first concept applies to what Jhally's belief because we are all guilty of falling for it. Personally, I am when it comes to skin products. If I see an makeup advertisement and see that my favorite celebrity is endorsing it, I will be more likely to purchase it and trust its reliability as opposed to if a normal woman appears in it. I have made the

mistake of being too trusting on recommended skin products, therefore, even if a product ended up not working for me, I still keep choosing and purchasing at the store since my favorite celebrity is part of it, not realizing that the celebrity itself was the big part in the commercial that was so convincing in making me a believer of the skin product's success rate from the get go.

I read that, in his 1991 video *Dreamworlds* he describes the image of women in music videos as male adolescent fantasies: young and pretty, willing and eager to please men, saying no when meaning yes, often reduced to outward appearances and body parts. He concludes that an unhealthy attitude towards sexual violence can be fostered by these videos, and calls for balancing them with other cultural representations of sexuality. I find that the music videos that Jhally is referring to correlates greatly with the second of the Five Concepts. The music videos uses the young and pretty girls as its creative language with its own rule in attempt to catch their targeted audiences' attention, and in this case, the targeted audience are males.

The third concept from the Five Concepts is a given when it comes to knowing that Jhally is aware how media messages are different to each and everyone of its audience (us) and who are all from different walks of life, therefore, regardless of who its target is, there is still something to say that media is still affecting our decision no matter how much we wish it will not. Take for example the fact that each of us see something via various media portals, justifying the belief that the bottom line is each of us still takes in the media that we see, and although we experience it in different ways, we still

experience it no matter how beneficial and non-beneficial it might be.

The fourth concept is that the media have embedded values and point of view. "Advertising tells us the future is now, live in the present, don't worry about the future. Yet as Jhally illustrates we have reason to worry. Not only are we destroying the planet, we are engaging in wars over access to limited resources. Though the job of advertising may be to get us to consume, its social power is far greater. It creates and sustains a consumer culture that does not deliver on its promise for happiness, that leaves many people both at home and abroad in suffering, that is destroying the planet, that will obliterate our future." I have to use an example that sounds simple but in perfect relation to this fourth concept. I believe that when it comes to purchasing my skin product, I can relate greatly and also agrees completely when Jhally stated that, "Advertising tells us the future is now, live in the present, don't worry about the future, all these sound good but when I do purchase a skin product, I always obtain it by some kind of discount or an additional free makeup or cleanser. However, if I keep on purchasing beauty products simply reliant to the fact that I get something free, over the span of time I will be accumulating a lot of debts on my credit card, and this is simply what advertising does. It tells us to live today with no regard to our future's financial and emotional security. Yet, I still fall for this type of media and what the skin/makeup company is doing, and upon deeper thoughts and consideration, I am quite impressed how this skin/makeup company knows my weaknesses as a buyer, and the more I order, the more they tempt me with freebies until I have no more room to place the free skincare and makeup I received,

and this is how media or advertising plays such a powerful role in my decision making.

Last but not the least, Jhally's angst against advertising I feel agrees with the fifth out of the fifth Core Concepts, "Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power. I'll use this article that I read about world media to prove that most media messages are out to profit, "Much of the world's media were developed as money-making enterprises. Newspapers and magazines lay out their pages with ads first; the space remaining is devoted to news. Likewise, commercials are part and parcel of most television watching. Now, the Internet has become an international platform through which groups or individuals can attempt to persuade. By considering the core concepts behind every media message, you equip yourself with an ability to analyze and interpret a message — and to accept or reject its legitimacy."

In conclusion, I am honored to have read about Sut Jhally and learned a lot of new things about the media and its ever-growing impact on our society today as a whole. I would like to share with you the 2 links to videos that are perfect pairs to this: The first video answers the question, "How do advertisers actually seek to persuade us?" It contains a group of emotional and logical appeals common to acts of persuasion, advertising, and propaganda.

On the other hand, the second video, Max Stossel discusses how ironically we all lose when everyone profits off of our attention.

Video 1: Advertising and Propaganda Techniques

[https://youtu.be/C8qxE\\_pFJ7U](https://youtu.be/C8qxE_pFJ7U)

Video 2: Advertising is Destroying Everything / Max Stossel / TEDxUNC

<https://youtu.be/vmDwDHwJTQI>