

Soon Do Paek

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Condom Is Right

People in the 1990s who carried a condom in his wallet faced social pressure to explain why they bore such a vulgar item. To avoid accusation of promiscuity, folk even invented an urban myth that putting a condom in a wallet brings fortune to its owner. This anecdote reveals cultural attitude toward the device that regarded it as vulgar and disorderly. For a condom manufacturer, overcoming such widespread disapproval against the item constituted the primary objective for financial success. Therefore, companies have emphasized positive roles of the contraceptive in sexual ethics that prevented unwanted pregnancy and venereal diseases. This approach aimed to overturn a conventional meaning system by associating a condom, which originally represented lechery, with morality. **Following the same method, the Trojan's condom advertisement, "Evolve," adopts a good-versus-evil contrast and places the product and its users on the moral side.**

To begin with, the campaign employs an aggressive strategy in order to claim moral high ground; it not only praises users of the product but also attacks non-users. The advertisement uses a metaphor by depicting men who try to hook up with a girl without a condom as pigs. Pigs are also a conventional symbol of moral deficit, which can be found in a famous quote by John Stuart Mill, "Better to be a human dissatisfied than a pig satisfied." In addition, the hogs in the commercial show sexually abnormal behavior such as smelling hair, looking at hips and taking unapproved photos of women. As the swine are a metaphor for non-users of the product, these images imply that men who do not use a condom are perverts that sexually objectify women. With this message combining with the main copy "Be a man"

and the product name “Evolve,” the campaign suggests that using a condom is a requirement for being a morally solid person; anybody who does not use it has not even evolved from an animal that seeks only physical gratification from its partner. To sum up, the ad targets non-users of its product primarily by laying a guilt trip on them.

On the other hand, the advertisement makes an existing user group stay loyal by giving them a sense of superiority. Existing users are again metaphorically represented by a couple of human beings at the center of the advertisement. As opposed to several pig-woman couplings that do not look at each other, the main couple face one another directly and exchange their eyes while holding their hands together. This amicable image of the pair refers to mutual respect and faith, which is a prerequisite for subjectivity in any relationship. As the lovers serve as a metaphor for condom users, this campaign suggests that respect, faith and subjectivity exist in a relationship where partners agree together to use condoms. In strong contrast with those pigs and displeased women around, the human couple are lauded as role models of healthy relationship. As a result, existing customers are reinforced in their motivation to buy the item. Through this double strategy of applauding a user group while denouncing non-users, the advertisement accomplishes its initial target; once deeply associated with promiscuity, now a condom is revalued as a moral item.

Furthermore, the campaign aims to alter consciousness of women by embodying strong female subjectivity. This commercial, analyzed by gender politics, can be interpreted as empowering women as well as criticizing male behavior. First, the background is a beach, a typical place where men flirt with women. Second, the conduct of the pigs exemplifies sexual objectification that men practice in such settings. However, the women featured in the ad, who are being objectified by the male gaze, are not just victimized; instead, they are expressing strong displeasure towards the pigs. Among those women, the biggest figure with curly hair is the representative of the whole – enlightened and autonomous female individuals.

First, she is holding up a book, suggesting that she is educated and intelligent. In addition, her curly hair is a symbol of naturalness as well as resistance to oppression against women, which was first used in natural hair movements by black feminists in the 1960s. Then, she gives a look of disdain and pays little attention to a pig, namely men who do not use a condom. This whole image can be seen as a woman no longer being an object and stepping forward to be a subject in a sexual relationship. In other words, by selecting a male on the basis of whether he uses a condom or not and rejecting those who do not, a woman can be a principal agent. Once more, the campaign employs a good-versus-evil opposition, and this time autonomous women who demand condom use from their partners perch on the good side.

As a result of this female empowerment, the campaign broadens its appeal to female observers, an important group of agents that may stimulate purchases of male consumers. Any condom manufacturer should consider gender equality as a desirable value, because in a society where women have stronger voice they are more likely to decide whether their partners wear a condom or not. In that case, one possible argument is that it should not only be men but also women that “use” condoms. From that perspective, the main copy, “Be a man. Use a condom every time,” which is directed exclusively to male viewers, might be unsatisfying, since it contradicts the proposition that a condom is an essential element of a sexual relationship that women and men should use together. However, to define a use of a condom, which is after all a contraceptive worn on male genitalia, as a responsibility for both sexes may impose an extra burden on female – especially in a world where substantial amount of men consciously neglect wearing the barrier device or even force their partners to take oral contraceptives. Knowing this peril, the campaign does not explicitly specify women as direct consumers. However, female viewers remain as the target audience of the advertisement, as it seeks a change of awareness from women that shall result in an extensive use of the product within a society. In other words, men should prepare a condom and “use” it; women should

force them to do so.

In conclusion, the Trojan's advertisement of "Evolve" concentrates not on functionality but on the moral value of the product that promotes subjectivity in a relationship. Also, the campaign conveys individually designed messages to separate groups of viewers that are divided into good or evil. A group of existing users along with women who regard condom use as necessary is represented as positive figures in the campaign, resulting in reinforcement of their identities. On the contrary, a group of non-users falls into the latter category as morally deficient and uncivilized beings. Furthermore, the advertisement endorses a strong feminist idea in order to expand social influence of the product. To sum up, the campaign provides an example of how moral nature of a product enables advertisers to blend a social message into a commercial.