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### Argumentative Synthesis: Final Draft

Super bowls, the world's biggest sporting event, draw in hundreds of millions of viewers each year. Consequently, the commercial time slots are coveted real estate with companies competing to create the most memorable scene yet. Unfortunately, this male centered sport ushers in alcohol commercials that perpetuate sexism towards women which ultimately is replicated in the onlooking youth. So, while “close to one in four Americans watch the spectacle for the commercials in between the passes and touchdowns”, says Dyfed Loesche, a Data Journalist, the messages must be meaningful and accurate (1). Marketing agencies need to redirect their campaigns to protect female super bowl viewers and children.

The masculine culture of football has been on a trend of encouraging over sexualized content in the commercials and can affect children viewers. While Assistant Professor Jeanie Willis believes that advertisements must be a form of entertainment, it can be argued that the message they carry are just as memorable (26). Adolescents are seeing commercials such as Bud Lites “Yoga”, where two onlooking men sneak into a yoga class to watch young women in tight yoga pants and small sports bras practice yoga and begin to associate the company's message with their own actions, beliefs and family values (D'Alessio). Other commercials, like Miller Lites “Mud Fighting” show women, in merely underwear wrestling in a water fountain over the product (The Ad Show). Commercials like these promote the sexualized culture of women in onlooking children.

Additionally, commercials with sexualized messages promote distance between men and women in the world of sports, perpetuating the issue into adulthood. In “Sport, Beer and Gender” a similar notion that beer and sports link men is noted by Sport and Sociology Professor John Horne, yet the sexist depiction of women is mentioned but deduced to a mere consequence (66). Campaigns such as Budlights “Up For Whatever” ran the slogan “The perfect beer for removing ‘no’ from your vocabulary for the night”, which implies towards male sexual dominance of women without consent or Miller Lites “Skirt”, which tells men to “man up” and stop acting as females wearing skirts and drinking tasteless light beers, promote the barrier between women, men and beer during “leading single telecast TV programs in the United States in 2015” (Hughes Joiner Nielson).

Ultimately, Professor John Horne argues that both the United Kingdom and the United States allow sports to promote alcohol through advertisements he does acknowledge sports related beer advertisements “link beer, masculinity, and sexuality in a way that could well be constructed as offensive to women” (67). However, the effects are much deeper than merely offensive. The effects can start in young girls whose “healthy development” is negatively affected by sexualization in media in regards to their “cognitive and emotional consequences”, “mental and physical health” and sexual development” says Eileen Zurbriggen, PhD (Chair) Professor of Psychology (Zurbriggen et al).

These effects are carried into a female's adult life, as well. A study by Howard Lavines, a Professor at Stony Brook, Donna Sweeney and Stephen H. Wagner of Northern Illinois University, on sexist advertisements’ effects on body dissatisfaction showed that these advertisements “produce distorted body images by setting unrealistic standards of female

beauty” along with other “cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral consequences of exposure to gender stereotypic television advertising”(1049). The effects, since this study was conducted in 1999, are predictably even greater currently due to the influx of media in our daily lives.

Ultimately, as Research associates Philip Myers and Frank Biocca at the University of North Carolina found “even 30 minutes of television... can alter a woman's perception of the shape of her body” and can result in “anorexia... and bulimia” down the road, along with others (103).

While this does not refer directly commercial advertisements it can be inferred that commercials may even have a greater influence compared to television on a woman's perception of her body because they are spread over a greater viewer pool across various platforms in rapid succession.

While the marketing schemes still seem reliant on the concept that “sex does catch people's attention in advertisements”, as proved in a study done by researcher Jessica Blair, viewers are actually increasingly turned off by this notion (Blair et al 109). Some other football advertisements are making strides towards redirecting the focus for the female group of consumers. For example, PayPal’s “New Money in Town” commercial employs a catchy song and flashy titles to draw consumers in. Even the NFL has released a commercial called “SuperBowl Babies” in which the family aspect of a Super Bowl is truly preserved as children born following a Super Bowl are depicted. Finally, in Budweiser's 2016 “Not Backing Down” commercial, the common sexualized women is no more. Instead, a strong focus on the actual product itself draws viewers in with captions like “not imported” and “not backing down since 1876” highlight key qualities of the product without the suggestive use of women. None of these advertisements need or used seductive women, proving that sex is not necessarily all that sells and that there are other productive means of reaching viewers. This assumption is only further

backed up by recent statistics in which viewers voted on the most likable commercials of Super Bowl 50 (USA Today). None of the top five included any sexualized scenes of women but instead mostly comedic relief, and perhaps not a coincidence none were alcohol companies who seem to be the largest culprits of over sexualized commercials. Regardless, these statistics prove that to the universal view, male or female, sex is not necessarily all that sells.

Millennials are providing hope towards the women's cause in conjunction with the companies. As author and speaker on communication leadership Morley Winograd and co-author Michael Hais, entertainment and media market researcher, state “The attitude of the millennial generation that will have the most impact on the daily lives of Americans is...the belief that there are no inherently male or female roles in society” (201). Women are no longer restricted by preset standards, which will hopefully encourage advertisers to make the same switch. With the positive influence of the millennial generation and the encouraging newly directed messages from alcohol companies, the trend of oversexualized messages is becoming outdated.

In conclusion, to make this shift a reality, the mindset must change. Understanding that viewers are more than the “elusive and desirable male demographic”, as described by Professor Lawrence A Wenner, but instead include all demographics such as women and children will remind marketing agencies of those hearing their messages and inspire positive messages (Wenner 121). Ultimately, more companies need to begin following in the footsteps of companies already redirecting their focus to all consumer groups in a way that omits the sexual portrayal of women and perhaps even going further and as the APA suggests " replace all of these sexualized images with ones showing girls in positive settings--ones that show the uniqueness and competence of girls," to positively influence girls at a young age and into

adulthood (Zurbriggen et al). Because 15.43 billion dollars were spent related to the Super Bowl last year, it is crucial that companies depict the right message (National Retail Federation). Although the images only appear for 30 seconds, their effects can last a lifetime.

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