

# Controversial ad

[Sociology](#), [Social Issues](#)



Written Task 2 - A Critical response Advertisements are a specific kind of media which have the aim to sell an idea or a product to the audience they are directed at. Very often, this Idea or product is not sold in a direct way but through the use of a metaphor or another stylistic device. This leaves the reader a lot of room for interpretation about what the Idea behind the advertisement is. Often, depending on the cultural background/context of the reader, the interpretation can be very different.

In the ad that will be analyzed in this response, two main groups might have different Interpretations of the message of the ad. One of these groups is non-religious people, and the other one is religious people. The ad that will be discussed is a poster or picture by " Antonio Federici Gelato Italiano". The company produced this specific ad, which was then banned for being too offensive. This already shows that there will be a group for which the ad is too offensive, but for other people who will have a different interpretation it won't.

Using the big 5 tools of analysis, will give a quite general Idea of the meaning of the ad, and this idea will be close to the one in the mind of non-religious people, however for a religious audience there will be more to it. To start, one thing that can be looked at is the structure and content of the ad. There is a nun holding a pack of Antonio Federici ice cream and she is wearing quite a lot of make up. Also, there is a priest who seems to be taking his clothes off and has a very muscular body.

The priest and the nun are looking at each other in a seductive manner, and the background is dark. It seems like they are in a church. Right next to the

nun's hand (holding the Ice cream) there is a piece of text made of light letters, which stands out, saying " Submit to temptation". The main focus in the picture is on the priest's body (since everything around it is black) and on him and the nun being together in a, what seems to be, sexual way. The tone of the picture is very seductive, because of words such as " Resist to temptation" and the exposed body of the priest.

Also the colour black and the candles of the church in the background add on to this. And the mood that is created is very intriguing and sexual. Clearly the audience of this advertisement does not include children, as one main tool to attract audience in this case is sex. Different interpretation of the ad come in once analysing what the purpose and meaning/theme of it might be. For a nonreligious group of readers (who are not offended in general by sex as a tool to sell) this ad will be nothing more than another way of using sex and prohibition to sell and attract.

A reader who is not religious will not feel personally offended by seeing religion being associated with sex nor by seeing a main rule of religion being diminished for the purposes of selling. Just as a girl who is skinny will not feel offended by an ad that makes fun of fat girls. In the case of this ad, a non-religious reader will interpret it as yet another example of using sex and " taboos" to sell a product. This interpretation is due to the cultural background of the reader.

A non- religious individual who has not had religion as part of his education, society or as a main part of his life will not consider some aspects of this ad, as it isn't part of her/his life. This is the importance of the context of

interpretation of any text, because it will completely change whether the reader will feel personally attacked or directed to when reading the text. In the case of a non-religious group there is nothing more to the interpretation of this text. On the other hand, for a religious audience this ad has an entirely different meaning.

In the case of a religious individual, different factors will be considered than those a non-religious group will consider, also due to her/his cultural background. First of all, this ad openly diminishes religion by associating it with sex and ice cream. On the picture it is clear that there is sexual tension between a priest and a nun, the priest has a muscular body, they are in a church and it's all because of ice cream. Someone who has had religion as part of their education, society or every day life will feel offended by this, because the ad is diminishing something that is a big part of their life.

Also the religious group will feel that religion is being diminished by the words "Submit to temptation" because it seems that submitting to temptation (engaging in sexual activity as a priest or nun) is being promoted, or not being taken seriously. Secondly, this ad also is not respecting (or again, diminishing) an important rule of some religions: celibacy of priests and nuns. The ad is using it to create a prohibitive mood that together with sex will sell a product. The religious audience will see this as using something sacred to them for commercial purposes.

So the interpretation of the religious group will be, that this ad is not only selling ice cream but also diminishing religion and trivializing important religious rules. To conclude, it is clear that the cultural context of an

audience will give rise to different interpretations of an ad such as this one, and will sometimes have such a big influence that the ad will be banned. It is always important to consider different possible interpretations of a text because if one group is big enough it will have a significance impact on the way it will be treated. Word count: 996