

David milazzo

Literature, Russian Literature



David Milazzo Ms. Hogan CLL 190 10/21/11 Eco-Shaped Pollution: Why Poland Springs New Eco-Shaped Ad Campaign is not so Eco-Friendly Poland Spring's recent advertisement puts its viewers in a serene natural environment; a nice sunny day overlooking a crystal clear spring on a green field. In the center of this field is a giant plastic bottle, one that is "environmentally friendly." The bottle is praised and pointed out for using "less plastic," "less paper," and the very important "dye-free cap." The bottle is called the "Eco-Shaped bottle" and is designed to have less impact on the earth. The entire scene is under the giant caption that tells of how Poland Spring is doing "less" to the environment. The company is selling water in a disposable plastic bottle yet the advertisement seems to be trying to convince people that by consuming their disposable product they are somehow helping the environment; that because they drink Poland Spring water they are doing "less to the environment. This advertising strategy however is not uncommon. According to Julia B. Corbett " 'green advertising' has focused on ads that promote environmental sensitivity toward... a corporate image of environmental sensitivity" (Corbett 148). The recent ad campaign may seem to be about Poland Spring's new "Eco-Shaped" bottle, but it is really about diverting attention from the pollution the bottle generates to instead creating a pro-environmental view of the company and its product. The Eco-Shaped bottle by Poland Spring is marketed with a few selling points the company points out directly in their advertisement. The bottle uses "30% less plastic", "less paper" and a "dye-free cap". These improvements are better for the environment than the original bottle used by Poland Spring. However the problem lies in the fact

that the product is still harmful to the environment. Last time I checked less of a bad thing is still a bad thing. According a recent article by Hope Molinaro, the California Department of Conservation (CDOC) stated, “ in California, more than a billion plastic water bottles wind up in the trash each year” and that total is only the amount of bottles in the state of California (Molinaro, 64). The total amount equates to 3 million empty water bottles per day disposed of in just one state (Molinaro, 64). That large amount of plastic has many detrimental effects to the environment. The materials used to make the bottles consist of a tremendous amount of resources and are difficult to dispose of if not recycled. There is an overwhelming amount of evidence to make the claim that a good portion of the plastic bottle waste generated in the United States is produced by the Poland Spring Company. Not only is the plastic filling our landfills, but there is evidence that the water bottle company is polluting its own town. According to a 2008 study of pollution demographics of Androscoggin County in Maine, where Poland Spring’s headquarters is located, the particulate matter is 62% higher there than the United States average (Unknown). It’s also 61% higher than the state of Maine’s average particulate matter found (Unknown). Particulate matter is a complex mixture of extremely small particles and liquid droplets. Particle pollution is made up of a number of components, including acids (such as nitrates and sulfates), organic chemicals, metals, and soil or dust particles. Poland Spring’s advertisement does not show any of this particulate matter when depicting how green and lush the springs it gets its water from are. One aspect of the Poland Spring’s advertisement that I find different and contradictory to traditional green thinking is that in the ad the

plastic Poland Spring water bottle, is shown in nature. Normally when a plastic water bottle is found laying in a field or any natural setting for that matter, it is viewed upon as pollution. In this ad the bottle is sitting in nature and is supposed to be appealing to the human eye. The bottle is shown in a way that it blends into the natural setting and tries to convince people that it almost belongs there, in the midst of nature; that the unnatural belongs with the natural. It is easy to relate the bottle as being positive to the environment however as it blends in with the incredible sunrise in the background on a beautiful day with a clear sky. The bottle is featured sitting in a field where the growth of the field is doing outstanding and there is not one dead or even one imperfectly grown plant. The land is doing so well it is almost portrayed as being happy and at peace with a giant, unnatural, plastic water bottle sticking out of it. This scene does not just occur in the ad however as pollution is a huge issue when there is a “disposable” factor to the product. A second contradiction in the ad is that Poland Spring is a water bottle company whose ad features more lush, green field than the body of water in which their product comes from. The ad is trying to make the product fall into the American consumers mind as a green product hence the green field is more affective than a view of the lake or spring containing the water Poland Spring is selling. Poland Spring is really trying to hammer in the point that it’s product is green and eco-friendly, and the more green in the picture the more green the consumer sees. Contradiction number three this ad uses is the slogan that titles it. In the current green revolution sweeping across America the constant theme is doing more for the environment. Under Poland Springs fancy, flower-laden font reads the words “doing less”.

This is a clear indication that Poland Spring is not being beneficial to the environment by saying they are “ doing less” harm to the planet we live on. Over the serene sunset, over laying the clear blue sky, and lush green field, lies an admission of pollution and guilt by the company. Poland Spring’s methods however are not so uncommon in today’s advertising market. Many advertising campaigns are seen now featuring nature in one way or another and one of the more common ways to do this is through and advertisements backdrop. According to Julia B. Corbett, “ Using nature merely as a backdrop whether in the form of wild animals, mountain vistas or sparkling rivers-is the most common use of the natural world in advertisements. ” (Corbett 150) So when Poland Spring sets it’s water bottle in the green field, with little purple flowers swaying in the wind, the peaceful sunset over looking the bluest clear sky the world has to offer, followed by beautiful green hills rolling off to the distance there is a purpose to it. The purpose according to Julia could be that the company is trying to promote a “ corporate image of environmental responsibility. ”(Corbett 148) This is very well one if not the main initiative of the advertisement and it is even so less of an advertisement as it is a rebuttal. Recently, as our country starts to become more “ green” and environmentally aware, there has been some recent campaigns against the consumption of bottled water. One major campaign against bottled water has been “ Think outside the bottle”. Even the mayor of Miami, Manny Diaz along with a dozen or so mayors, is calling on municipal governments to phase out bottled-water purchases in a resolution to be presented at the U. S. Mayors Conference (Barnes). Poland Spring is trying to distract the average consumer from believing the hype that the bottle are bad for the

environment and tries to prove that they are doing something about it. Poland Spring's advertisement is focusing on green aspects of its product and is trying to make the company appear to have a green initiative, however the Poland Spring's target audience is not the hardcore environmentalist. Any person who puts some research into what they buy and cares about the environment is going to know that consumption of disposable plastic water bottles is not going to help the environment. The ad however does target the average consumer who does sort of care about the environment but does not research into what they consume. A consumer might see the recent anti-water bottle campaigns and generate a negative view of the disposable, plastic water bottles that Poland Spring sells. That is why Poland Spring's ad was created in the first place, to turn the average consumer's view of the water bottle and the Poland Spring Company from a negative one to a positive one. In times of environmental awareness that the United States is currently facing, many unenvironmentally friendly companies are finding it harder and harder to promote sales for their products. Poland Spring is no different in that respect but tries a different approach that is gaining in popularity, green advertising. Poland Spring uses nature to show a pristine and beautiful backdrop for their hazardous product. The ad is focusing on deterring the public's view of Poland Spring from environmentally damaging to environmentally caring. As shady and undermining the ad is to not only the people but the earth its self, the ad creates a pro-environmental image of a company that does not practice what is preaches. Works Cited Barnes, Tayler. " Anti Bottled Water Campaign Enlists Mayors to Cause." Corporate Accountability International. Miami

Herald. Web. 07 Nov. 2011. . Corbett, Julia B. "Faint"Green: Advertising and the Natural World. " Communicating Nature: How We Create and Understand Environmental Messages. Island, 2005. Web. Molinaro, Hope. " Plastic Water Bottles Go to Waste, Says Calif. Conservation Agency." *Plastics Engineering* 59. 7 (2003): 64-. ProQuest Research Library. Web. 7 Nov. 2011. Unknown. Poland Spring Pollution Indexes. Raw data. Androscoggin County. CLRSreach.com