

**THE POWER OF PIXELS: HYPER REALITY OF WRINKLE CREAM
ADVERTISEMENTS**



*Project submitted to St. Teresa's College (Autonomous) in partial fulfilment of the requirement for
the degree of BACHELOR OF ARTS in English Language and Literature*

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project titled "The Power of Pixels: Hyperreality of Wrinkle Cream Advertisements" is the record of bona fide work done by me under the guidance and supervision of Ms. Vinitha John, Assistant Professor, Department of English.

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I hereby certify that this project entitled “The Power of Pixels: Hyperreality of Wrinkle Cream Advertisements” by Meghna Sathish is a record of bona fide work carried out by her under my supervision and guidance.

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The power of pixels - hyperreality of wrinkle cream advertisements.

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The images used in advertising fabricate a deceptive representation, a simulation of reality that obscures the truth. The images used in wrinkle cream advertisements show drastic improvements in skin texture. They also use models with airbrushed and seemingly perfect skin which can be misleading as they do not represent the reality of the natural aging process. The claims made by advertisements are often unrealistic and unattainable, often creating illusions of beauty. Simulacra and loss of reality are brought in by forgetting the real faces with wrinkles and fine lines. In this project titled "The power of pixels- hyperreality in Wrinkle Cream Advertisements" we use Jean Baudrillard's theory of simulations, simulacra, and hyperreality to examine the images of five different advertisements and how they lead to the creation of a hyperreal society. The project is divided into two chapters. The first chapter provides a detailed description of Baudrillard's theories and how they can be used in the analysis of the imagery in advertisements. The second chapter analyses five advertisements namely Neutrogena, L'Oréal Revita Lift Anti-wrinkle Day Cream, Ponds Age Miracle, Mama Earth, and Clarins Double Serum, and uncovers a comprehensive understanding of the images used in wrinkle cream advertisements and how they perpetuate hyper-reality.

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Introduction

Marketing is a complex tool that has the power to shape our world in both positive and negative ways. On one hand, it boosts economic growth and can be a source of entertainment through creative campaigns. It also can introduce us to new products and inform us about potential solutions. It can even be used to raise awareness for important social causes. However, we must also recognize its potential to manipulate and distort reality, especially in skincare. This persuasive power can have damaging effects, particularly through fear-mongering, emotional manipulation, and unrealistic portrayals. As a result, vulnerable demographics are often pressured into making impulsive purchases and can develop damaging body image issues. Furthermore, the constant push for consumption can foster materialism and raise privacy concerns. Advertising is a double-edged sword that must be approached with caution and awareness. The beauty industry thrives on hyperreality, putting it in the spotlight. Photo shopped models with seemingly flawless skin establish unattainable ideals, breeding feelings of discontentment and fueling the false belief that aging is something to be fought against. These images represented in advertisements prey on our insecurities about wrinkles and imperfections, manipulating our fears and creating a reliance on their products for validation and contentment. But these promises of instant gratification ultimately crumble, leaving us endlessly chasing the illusion of perfection.

According to Baudrillard, renowned for his exploration of hyperreality, these images not only reflect the world but actively construct it. They fabricate a deceptive representation, a simulation of reality that obscures the truth - in this instance, human skin's wondrous variety and inherent attractiveness. This manufactured universe places utmost importance on appearances, disregarding the importance of one's inner well-being. As a result, it intensifies societal pressure and strips away individuality. To break free from the alluring grip of

Hyperreality, we must sharpen our critical thinking skills and cultivate a keen sense of media literacy. This means questioning the authenticity of unrealistic claims and dismantling manipulative tactics that try to control our perceptions. It is vital that we advocate for responsible advertising that embraces realistic beauty standards, promotes holistic well-being, and avoids the use of misleading narratives. Ultimately, emancipating ourselves and others from the suffocating influence of hyperreality requires us to reject its facade and reclaim our own unique stories of beauty and self-worth.

This project titled “The Power of Pixels: Hyperreality of Wrinkle Cream Advertisements”, examines the use of hyperreality and simulacra in wrinkle cream advertisements. The distinction between the real and simulated is reduced through the images represented in advertisements. The concept of hyperreality described by Baudrillard shows a world that is heavily simulated it becomes impossible to distinguish from the actual world. In this state images and representations hold more power than reality itself. In addition, Baudrillard used the word “simulacrum” to describe the artificial replicas that have no real-world grounding. In this context even images of aging and wrinkle creams are merely copies of copies, eventually losing their connection to the original source. In this project, we explore the usage of hyperreality and simulacra in the advertising of wrinkle cream by taking examples of five different advertisements namely Neutrogena, L'oreal Revita lift Anti-wrinkle Day Cream, Ponds Age Miracle, Mama Earth, and Clarins Double Serum. Moreover, these advertisements perpetuate the harmful notion that genuine beauty can only be achieved through images of flawless and wrinkle-free skin. These unrealistic images in advertisements might create insecurities in individuals. It is important to recognize these advertisements that present such unrealistic images and replace them with realistic representations. By identifying recurring themes, like the glorification of youth and the portrayal of aging as undesirable, and examining customer reviews of these advertisements, we can unveil how wrinkle cream advertising perpetuates hyperreality and false ideals of eternal youth and beauty.

The project is divided into two chapters the first chapter is of a theoretical background. It provides a detailed description of Baudrillard's theory of simulations, simulacra, and hyperreality. The chapter also provides a brief introduction to theoretical concepts of two literary theorists namely Roland Barthes and Judith Williamson. The second chapter begins by focusing on the images used in advertisements and their influence on society. It also portrays ageism and its relevance within these concepts. The chapter then provides examples by using five different wrinkle cream advertisements. These five advertisements indicate the imagery used in displaying wrinkle cream products in today's market. They are then aligned with Baudrillard's concepts and views.

Chapter 1

Understanding Hyperreality

Advertising is one of the most powerful tools in this arsenal, shaping our perceptions, desires, and ultimately, our choices. Beyond simply informing us about products and services, advertising can exert a powerful influence on our subconscious. Through carefully crafted messages, emotional appeals, and visual storytelling, advertisers can trigger our desires, manipulate our perceptions, and ultimately, persuade us to take action. In today's hyper-connected world, advertisements permeate every aspect of our lives. Advertisements influence people and their perceptions of beauty. The unrealistic images and flawless standards of beauty trigger feelings of poor self-worth among the individuals. This is particularly harmful to the younger generations who are in the process of discovering their identities. The images produced in advertising also shape societal values and norms.

Advertising frequently promotes values of materialism and individuality devaluing aspects such as social responsibility and environmental sustainability. They distort our perceptions of others and ourselves. It also sets a false beauty standard that promotes unattainable images of flawless beauty and wrinkle-free skin. Physical attributes are associated with attractiveness and achievements. Advertisements and their image representations frequently perpetuate conventional gender roles. Most of the advertisements show images of women and men who are less represented with social or daily concerns. Wrinkle cream advertisements in particular focus on the images of wrinkles in women as a concern whereas men are represented less. The images often portray young women free of fine lines and wrinkles. Such representations can conform to idealized versions of masculinity and femininity. Many literary theorists have discussed imagery in advertising. Their works produce valuable insights on how advertising works and the impact of imagery used in them. One such

prominent literary theorist is Roland Barthes a renowned French thinker who significantly transformed our comprehension of various areas including advertising. Roland Barthes in his famous work *Rhetoric of the Image* (1964) talks about how advertising images are intricately designed to pique consumer desires. They are not arranged randomly but are designed carefully and exist for particular reasons. He sees two kinds of linguistic messages at work, the first one being a devoted message consisting of the captions and the labels on the product, and a connoted message which is the word itself. In his essay, Barthes dissects how ads like the one with Panzani pasta use words to "anchor" our interpretation of the image. In this case, "Panzani" anchors the veggies and bag to a specific brand and lifestyle (Italian, fresh, fancy). Without that word, the image could be interpreted in many ways. Barthes argues that by anchoring meanings, ads limit our freedom to think for ourselves and push us toward their desired perception. Anchorage can also offer clarity and context for complex images. In conclusion, Barthes argues that natural reality is not essentially encrypted or encoded; rather it is a reproduction of visual images that enforces cultural meaning upon it. He viewed advertisements not just as sale pitches, but as complex systems of signs and symbols that communicate on multiple levels.

Judith Williamson, a professor, and a journalist, has also contributed towards the idea of image through her book *Decoding Advertisements* (1978). She regards advertisements as one of the most important cultural factors molding and reflecting our everyday life. In her book, Judith Williamson uses semiotics and ideology to analyze print advertising. Although the study is based on advertisements from the late 1970s, Williamson's theories and guiding principles provide a profound grasp of how advertising functions in the modern digital world.

French theorist Jean Baudrillard explored the ideas of simulation and hyperreality. He argued that advertisements distort reality by fostering simulations that replace reality. In his

work *Simulacra and Simulations*, he argued that advertising produces an idealized world that has little or no resemblance to the real one. The distinctions between reality and its representations are vague in today's modern society. As a result of these advancements, three concepts have emerged: simulation, simulacra, and hyperreality.

The term "simulation" implies the process of generating artificial reality. "Disneyland is presented as imaginary to make us believe that the rest is real, whereas all of Los Angeles and the America that surrounds it are no longer real but belong to the hyperreal order and the order of simulation"(Baudrillard 14). In Baudrillard's view, Disneyland's curated fantasy serves as a smokescreen, masking the hyperreal unreality of surrounding Los Angeles and America. While we're lulled into believing Disneyland's fabricated magic, the "real" world we return to is itself consumed by simulations and artificiality. It's a paradoxical trap; the "imaginary" reinforces the very hyperreal we're trying to escape. These simulations aim to mimic or replace aspects of the real world, offering alternative experiences and potentially blurring the line between real and artificial. In *Simulations*, Baudrillard categorizes the breakdown of the image into simulation via four successive phases: the image first reflects a basic reality; then masks or perverts that basic reality; then masks the absence of a basic reality; and finally, the image bears no relation to any reality.

it is the reflection of a profound reality;
 it masks and denatures a profound reality;
 it masks the absence of a profound reality;
 it has no relation to any reality whatsoever;
 it is its own pure simulacrum.(6)

According to Baudrillard, when it comes to postmodern simulation and simulacra, "it is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real"(2).

Simulacra are copies or representations of something that may have no original meaning. Think of heavily edited advertising photos, idealized beauty standards, or historical reenactments. Unlike simulations, which aim to create an entire experience, simulacra focuses on replicating specific objects or concepts, often exaggerating or distorting them. This can lead to a sense of unreality and detachment from the genuine object. Baudrillard brings in the concept of simulacra by bringing in an example of God.

But what if God himself can be simulated, that is to say, can be reduced to signs that constitute faith? Then the whole system becomes weightless, it is no longer anything but a gigantic simulacrum - not unreal, but simulacrum, that is to say never exchanged for the real, but exchanged for itself, in an uninterrupted circuit without reference or circumference. (Baudrillard 5)

When Baudrillard suggests that even God is simulated and reduced to simply signs and symbols, he raises questions about the nature of faith. If this were the case, the whole structure of faith would vanish, becoming a self-contained network of meaning unconnected to the outside world. Baudrillard breaks simulacra down into three orders. First the natural; which is based on image and imitation, second the material world produced by machines, and third the simulated world.

Hyperreality refers to a state where it is hard to tell the distinction between reality and simulation. In this hyperreal world, individuals lose the ability to distinguish between what is real and what is not. The constant bombardment of simulations and the overwhelming influence of signs and symbols over real experiences contribute to this state. These simulacra permeate every aspect of our life from the carefully crafted images to the idealized beauty standards in advertising blurring the line between the real and the artificial. These images created thus tend to become more real than reality itself. 'Take your desires for reality!' can be understood as the ultimate slogan of power since in a non-referential world, even the confusion of the reality

principle and the principle of desire is less dangerous than contagious hyperreality”

(Baudrillard 24). ‘Take your desires for reality!’ turns into the ultimate power play in a world where virtual realities rule the day. As the real diminishes it is less concerning to blur the lines of reality and its images because it adds power to the hyperreal. It fuels a cycle where an imaginary world thrives on our desires. Hyperreality replaces genuine experiences with fantasized versions of reality. Under its influence, people lose themselves as they consume the images it offers. Jean Baudrillard's theory of hyperreality offers a profound and disturbing critique of the contemporary world. By highlighting the pervasive presence of simulacra and the blurring of lines between reality and simulation, Baudrillard forces us to confront the artificiality and superficiality that characterize our lives. In a world overflowing with simulations and hyperrealities, commercials create entire universes of want in addition to selling objects. We go through a world where the "real" and the virtual merge together, with themes and pictures that have been carefully crafted to influence our perceptions.

A crucial question remains after reading Baudrillard's disturbing insights: how can we take back control of our desires and experiences in the face of endless simulations, telling the real from the fake in our search for connection and meaning? In conclusion, an advertisement dangles before us an image of an “other” but invites us to become the same.

Chapter 2

Imagism in Advertisements

We are on a constant run to stay youthful and achieve the glass skin effect or trends that make us look young and beautiful. Numerous goods with various claims are available in the market including vitamins, minerals, and even plastic surgery. You are surrounded by every vitamin known to man, skincare products, and haircare products and you have to purchase all of this to appear young. Advertising for beauty goods focuses mostly on rewinding and stopping time. And it's excellent if you can rewind; if not, we need to end this right there. In this generation, it is fairly common to battle with looking and feeling young. The media today instills a wrong notion among the youth of today to look young as they age. The question of “why do we have to be age-perfect?” is left unanswered. Our culture is all about looks and youth. It is uncommon to see elderly people playing the characters of aged citizens that are typically presented by younger people, as a result, nobody truly knows what an elderly person looks like or behaves like. In our society, a lot of women in their latter years’ experience feelings of invisibility. Through a concentration on young narratives and an absence of depiction of older people on screen, social media pushes these youth-dominated anti-aging themes by erasing the presence of older people in both film and society at large. Older individuals become less noticeable due to this lack of representation, fading into the background both on and off-screen as they progressively blend into the darkness. The extensive variety of anti-aging products, supplements, anti-aging treatments, cosmetic surgery, and anti-aging creams represent the attitude of the youth that has normalized this modern culture.

“Age is just a number”, but marketing does not realize this truth today. The marketing sector is now failing to address ageism. Even in this age, ageism is still discouraged in the marketing industry. Age-related stereotypes that are detrimental and possibly destructive are predominant in advertising. Elders, especially women are often underrepresented in advertisements compared to their actual share in the consumer market.

Advertisements sell simulacra by creating idealized realities, manipulating emotions, and using narratives to make products seem essential for achieving the desired lifestyle; which is according to Baudrillard the artificial representations of real realities. Mary Klages in her text *A Guide for the Perplexed* mentions that “the hyperreality of the created world becomes more real than the real world” (172). It suggests that the simulated worlds we create whether through advertising, social media, or virtual realities become so convincing that they start to overshadow our perception of the real world. This chapter looks into the hyperreal world the wrinkle cream advertisements create and analyses them using the theories of hyperreality, simulacra, and simulation proposed by Jean Baudrillard.

Neutrogena’s ‘Rapid Wrinkle Repair Cream’ advertisement starring Jennifer Garner claims to achieve wrinkleless skin within a week. The cream might be beneficial for an added boost of replenishment of the skin making it look brighter. Still, the idea of fighting against wrinkles brings in the concept of simulacrum which is something that replaces reality with its representation. Jennifer Garner is represented with pore less and wrinkle-free skin dominated by youthful features which creates an unrealistic image of women in their forties.



Fig.1.Wrinkle-freeskin. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n714NHr7neI>

Retinol helps maintain the elasticity of the skin and rejuvenates or replenishes the skin helping in improving skin health conditions by replenishing it with hydration. However, the idea generated by pictures in advertisements that include unrealistically flawless skin, an instant glow from the product, and the absence of any wrinkles or skin texture even at the age of forty produces a surreal mood. These images become “real” for many viewers obscuring the natural process of aging. Social media's creativity allows us to redefine beauty in our terms. “A lot will happen in your life, wrinkles just won’t” (In One Week, Jennifer Garner's Skin Transforms) statement is misleading. It creates a tense situation where wrinkles are seen as something less and preventing it appears to be a great success in this context. Jennifer Garner was around 46 years old while advertising this product. She was well fit for the advertisement representing women in their age group. But she appeared wrinkleless and bright despite her age. This creates a fake world that is very different from the aging process occurring naturally. Thus, bringing in the concept of hyperreality.



Fig.2. Airbrushed Skin. www.youtube.com/watch?v=jtmWV9oxVwM

L'oreal Revita lift Day Cream Anti-wrinkle + Firming advertisement is another advertisement that was produced in 2010 and shows the clear usage of imagery and its impact on our perceptions. This advertisement claims to achieve the effect of antiaging within just four weeks. In these four weeks, these advertisements promise miraculous transformations that go against everything science tells us about how our bodies work. Skin doesn't renew itself in a matter of days, it takes months and true lasting change often requires ongoing dedication and healthy habits. Embracing diversity in appearances and championing self-acceptance can effectively combat the overwhelming pressure to conform to artificial beauty standards. The tagline "Because we are worth it" (L'oreal Revita lift Day Cream Anti-wrinkle + Firming 2010 Advertisement), which is frequently connected to L'Oréal's wrinkle cream advertising, has gained popularity. The tagline does not explicitly provide evidence of "worthiness", thus forming an imitation. Here there is a loss of reality thus simulacrum. The tagline blurs the line between self-worth and consumption of goods. It doesn't define what "worth" truly means; because "worth" is ambiguous it might serve to marginalize those who don't match the idealized model. Thus, the tagline creates a multifaceted example of hyperreality. It seems powerful at first, as though women should be allowed to indulge and take care of themselves. But it rests on the idea that being worthy requires meeting a certain beauty standard, which is frequently connected to having a young, wrinkle-free appearance. The advertisement displays a closeup of a woman's face with flawless, airbrushed skin and no visible wrinkles. The image usage embodies simulacrum because it does not depict a real face but a replica of a youthful perception. The natural aging indicators are removed resulting in an unrealistic ideal. This may be ageist, racially discriminatory, and inconsiderate of other people's perceptions of beauty and value.



Fig .3. Clear Skin. www.youtube.com/watch?v=tmzpaN9gvhE

Another advertisement featuring Shenaaz Gill shows an Indian brand Mama Earth. In the advertisement, we can see her talking about her new resolution to have good skin for which she uses mama earth products to improve collagen production. It is formulated with potent retinol that works as an effective anti-aging treatment by increasing collagen production. The natural Bakuchi, on the other hand, brightens skin by reducing pigmentation and plumps the skin by boosting collagen. In this advertisement, the actor has clear skin and natural-looking makeup that enhances her features. The minimalist designs and uncluttered visuals offer a promising outlook on the whole advertisement. The advertisement showcases perfect lighting and an idealistic background that enhance the visual imagery thus capturing the audience's trust in the product. The images used do not portray an aged woman changing with the use of the product; thus providing unrealistic images of ageless beauty.



Fig .4. Drastic Improvements. www.youtube.com/watch?v=VH3r5nvsXR8.

Another advertisement that serves as an example of the same is 'Ponds Age Miracle'. The pond's age miracle campaign lures us into the belief of achieving everlasting beauty and an unreal promise of turning back the clock. It taps into our innate desire to maintain a youthful experience. But when we examine closely, we discover a manufactured world designed to manipulate our perception with images that lack authentic representation of aging. The advertisement presents flawless and unblemished faces creating a distorted reality that romanticizes the youth and dismisses the natural process of aging. The miracle ingredients and lofty promises of drastically reversing aging fail to acknowledge the intricacies of skin aging and set unrealistic expectations. The advertisement displays a young woman in her thirties concerned about her smile lines and eye creases. The products claim to prevent the appearance of fine lines portraying a model that has no signs of aging. The advertisement showcases a woman smiling confidently with soft lighting and a blurred background. The blurred background further lays emphasis on the woman thus providing a closeup display of her features. Actors portray joy, confidence, and social acceptance linking these positive emotions to the product use. These images show drastic improvements through digital manipulation or

lighting tricks. Society today is concerned about the process of aging and resorts to all methods that prevent or minimize it. Wrinkle cream advertisements thus create copies of unreal images promising the authenticity of the real. The concept of simulacra and simulations is thus clearly evident in such portrayals of human beauty. Beauty embraces genuine emotions and celebrates all stages of life. The statement “love your smile, forget the lines” (Ponds Age Miracle – Expressions) may seem like a heartfelt sentiment, but a closer look reveals some problems. Here we can see an era where simulations like media, images, and signs have overtaken reality. These simulations create their own internal logic and meaning, often detached from any real reference.



Fig .5. Flawless Skin. www.youtube.com/watch?v=jyDftpBJPYk

Finally, let's take another example. The advertisement ‘Defy signs of aging with the new Double Serum| Clarins’ claims to produce an effect within a week of its use. It promises to reduce the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. The statement “to decode the language of youth and visibly reduce signs of skin aging” (Defy signs of aging with the new Double Serum| Clarins). Hyper texting tactics in marketing and communication often involve emotional manipulation. Unfortunately, this can lead to exploiting people's impulses for instant gratification, ultimately causing dissatisfaction and disappointment. The language

of youthfulness today examines beauty through the lens of glassy wrinkle-free skin devoid of natural texture due to aging. The advertisement uses more than one model, all with flawless and texture less skin.



Fig .6. Flawless Skin. www.youtube.com/watch?v=jyDftpBJPYk

Each model represents distinctive features but each one of them is given a bright background and a good source of lighting that show cases their flawless-looking skin. The models do not have any visible wrinkles even under close-up shots. The constant efforts to visibly reduce the signs of aging promote an idealistic environment and a hyperreal atmosphere where importance is given to people who age slowly and look way younger than their age. Potential problems arise within the tagline “It’s all about you” by Clarins. Even though the message supports individuality, the obsession with anti-aging can perpetuate harmful societal standards that associate beauty with youth. By tapping into fears of aging, anti-aging messages reinforce the idea that wrinkles and other signs of aging are undesirable and require fixing. This can lead to unnecessary stress and discontent with the natural process of aging. The tagline can also be seen from a critical point of view by inferring a meaning that it’s all about you and your appearance that defines beauty. Wrinkle cream advertisements portray the idea that it’s all about looking youthful and bright, and measuring your worth in today’s ideal and hyperreal world. Baudrillard’s theories on simulacra and hyperreality are well

substantiated through these advertisements.

By challenging the false idea of flawless beauty, breaking free from limiting stereotypes, and avoiding the superficial tokenism of inclusion, brands have the opportunity to rise above the narrow focus on youth and beauty. By incorporating honest and diverse representations into their storytelling, brands not only promote inclusivity but also connect with audiences of all ages. This shift towards authenticity aligns with Baudrillard's call for genuine experiences, embracing the beauty and potential of aging and celebrating the true essence of India - a nation overflowing with unique narratives waiting to be authentically shared. This is not simply about being politically correct but about dismantling the manufactured illusion of perfection. To break free from these seductive, yet artificial snares, brands must make a deliberate attempt. They must deconstruct the simulated versions and fully embrace the genuine encounters of older individuals. Picture captivating and heartfelt tales that honour their vitality and insightfulness, highlighting their wide range of accomplishments, interests, and meaningful impact that goes beyond mere outer appearances. These sincere depictions, interwoven with heartwarming narratives of intergenerational families, have the power not only to promote inclusivity but also to tap into the emotional connection of shared experiences across age groups. Red flags are raised by the widespread practice of using young ladies in skincare marketing on several fronts. First of all, it airbrushes the truth of the human experience by misrepresenting wrinkles as defects that should be removed, misrepresenting the natural aging process. These advertisements frequently display highly photoshopped pictures of youthful models with unreal, wrinkle-free skin, drawing a line between imagination and reality. This not only upholds impossible beauty standards but also feeds people's discontent with their natural looks because they are constantly exposed to artificial standards. With their unrealistic portrayals of timeless beauty, wrinkle cream commercials are selling simulacra, or manufactured realities that substitute a filtered, unreachable ideal for the genuine experience of aging. These carefully constructed worlds take advantage of fears, play with desires, and

eventually turn self-worth into a commodity. Advertisements use photoshopped before and after pictures of models that represent idealized skin tones and perfect notions of beauty. Additionally, these advertisements make use of and magnify current social fears. They exploit ageism by showing wrinkle-free skin as the path to prosperity, happiness, and social acceptance, especially for women. This preys on aging-related vulnerabilities and insecurities by setting unreasonable and impossible expectations.

Conclusion

In this project, we have delved deeply into the deceptive world of hyperreality and simulacra as portrayed in wrinkle cream advertisements. We have exposed false narratives and exaggerated claims. The project highlighted the damaging narratives of advertisements that perpetuate narrow beauty standards and ageism. The choice of celebrities in all of these advertisements are women who don't show signs of aging but instead represent the ideal beauty standard of having clear and younger-looking skin. Advertisements erase the natural appearance of aging and perpetuate unattainable beauty standards by portraying wrinkles as undesirable imperfections that should be eliminated. Brands perpetuate ageism by excluding older women from the narrative of beauty and self-care, and by emphasizing young, wrinkle-free models. In Indian advertising, the portrayal of youth is often a glossy and extended version of reality, leading to a one-dimensional view of aging experiences. There is a problem with this manufactured world relying on youthful actors and the construction of age-defying messages. On one hand, it feeds into the desires of the audience but on the other hand, it reinforces the damaging stereotypes and alienates a significant part of the population. The advertisement uses a younger model representing the desired outcome, as the older models portray the "problem" that the product solves, which is aging. According to Baudrillard, this kind of advertising worsens the hyperreal society in which idealized models and other simulations take the place of reality. Even the natural process of aging is turned into a commodity and solved in the market of media.

One of the key takeaways from this project is the point that hyperreality thrives on illusion. The advertisements for wrinkle creams present unrealistic images of aging concealing the authentic beauty of the human journey. Exploitation of our deepest insecurities is the basis for manipulation in wrinkle cream ads. Advertisements feed off our most vulnerable spots.

Wrinkles and blemishes are capitalized on by these ads which portrays aging as an enemy that should be vanquished. Before and after images that show off unbelievable makeovers are often achieved with unrealistic touch-ups or misleading illumination. The essential point behind this celebrity endorsement is to affirm these impossible objectives thus making one more dependent on such products. Such practices increase the gap between aspiration and reality. The temptation to have ageless, faultless skin can cause low self-esteem and self-worth.

Although using imagism in advertising can be effective, excessive reliance on it leads to major downsides, undermining its impact and creating ethical issues. Focusing too much on visually appealing images can lead to products being presented in a superficial way, ignoring their practical aspects. This can mislead consumers, leaving them with an incomplete picture and making them more likely to be influenced by emotional manipulation. Instead of making informed decisions, they may be drawn in by the product's appearance and emotional appeal, which could result in buying something they don't truly need. Excessive emphasis on visual aesthetics can hinder the delivery of essential information. Consumers struggle to assess products effectively, grasp their actual value, and make well-informed choices when crucial details are omitted. This lack of transparency harms consumers who rely on accurate information to make wise purchasing decisions. Excessive use of similar images across products and industries results in a blandness that obscures individual brands' distinctiveness and value propositions. Moreover, dependence on stereotypical images can be discriminatory and marginalizing, as they fail to encompass the diverse consumer landscape. The pursuit of aesthetically pleasing visuals can sometimes lead to inappropriate or exploitative portrayals. Cultural appropriation, objectification, and the perpetuation of harmful stereotypes are all potential pitfalls of relying solely on imagery. Visual representations alone are often inadequate when it comes to showcasing the intricacies of many products and services. Image-based marketing can fall short in conveying the complex features, enduring benefits, or ethical implications of an offering. This poses a challenge as visual strategies may fail to fully capture the depth and value of what a product or service has to offer.

The project aims to shed light on the manipulative tactics used in advertisements. These ads often feature digitally altered models with flawless skin, which creates an unrealistic and harmful standard. It fails to acknowledge the diversity of human experiences and perpetuates damaging stereotypes. Every wrinkle and line on a person's face tells a story of laughter, happiness, and life events that have shaped them into who they are today. Advertisements lure us with promises of “visible results in 7 days” but real beauty needs time and faithfulness. The overwhelming focus on Eurocentric, young traits limit the array of ethnicities and ages. This way they create an isolating and misleading picture of beauty thus creating a hyperreal society.

The flawless images represented in advertisements thus become a simulacrum. They blur the line between the real and unreal image of the product; thus, producing a hyperreal realm. Simulacra and loss of reality are brought in by forgetting the real faces with wrinkles and fine lines. These airbrushed images shift reality and focus on images that are more pleasing to the audience's vision of idealized beauty. The simulated images seemingly blend with the advertisements blurring the line between reality and promise. The images used in advertisements thus function as illustrations of how hyperreality works through images.

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