

A Closet Full of Dreams

Manuel Moreno

English Discipline, El Paso Community College

English 1301: Composition I

Professor Kelli L. Wood

July 19, 2020

A Closet Full of Dreams

As the economy stretches the dollar in hard financial times, more consumers are dreaming about what to buy once they have money. According to Davis, an adult educator and media education specialist, there is a myth that explains the culture or customs of a people. In the article, "Power of Images: Creating the Myths of Our Time," Davis (1992) says that there are six common misperceptions or myths about American culture. The one fabricated lie that everyone can relate to is "the good life consists of buying possessions that cost lots of money" ("Myth #3," para. 1). While companies fight over customer dollars, they constantly advertise extravagant "lifestyles that are available for our enjoyment-if only we could afford it" ("Myth #3," para. 1). Advertisements imply that their products will bring consumers happiness, and that buying those goods is the only way we will truly be happy, and a recent Heineken beer advertisement is a great example of this.

In "Heineken Walk in Fridge," a couple moves into a new apartment and is hosting a housewarming party. The female is eager to show the new home to all her friends. While giving all the women a tour of the apartment, she points out the dining area, the master bedroom, and finally stops at the closet. She enthusiastically opens the two doors to the walk in closet. The women begin to scream and celebrate as they notice the giant room filled with new clothes and shoes. While appreciating the women's wealth, their screams are overwhelmed by piercing screams of men. The women proceed to check on the commotion and find the men in a giant walk in fridge filled with Heineken beer. The men are screaming and celebrating louder than the women (Heineken, 2009).

Since its formation in 1952, Heineken Holding N.V.'s objective is to market their product exclusively to the target audience: men. During this commercial, the company points out the very

distinct view men and women have on wealth. The first twenty seconds is designated to show how important material objects are to women, and how shallow and materialistic women are. During the last ten seconds of the commercial, the company shows the men cherishing the wall-to-wall beer, indicating what men value most are not belongings, but simple pleasures. The ad seems to go against the myth “the good life consists of buying possessions that cost lots of money” (Davis, 1992, “The New Myths” section, para. 1). However, a closer look shows the same reaction to wealth in both genders. Men will become ecstatic and scream like women, if they buy this type of beer.

Even though the company tries to show the difference between the two genders, the ad shows a perfect example of cause and effect and the correlation between the products and the life of happiness. The advertisement also suggests that our friends and colleges will be impressed by material objects. The more items or goods we purchase, the more respect and admiration we will receive. The commercial implies that they will scream and rejoice at the mere sight of expensive purchases. In his article, “Idols of the Marketplace,” Kavanaugh (1986), a professor of philosophy, states, “The ultimate moral imperative is to consume as a matter of identity. Our very meaning is wrapped up in the economics of production and consumption of more products. Products are portrayed as the condition of happiness” (“Buying Ourselves” section, para. 3). This article relates the same sentiment toward a society of consumers who buy goods aimlessly to please themselves and others. Material objects should not have an important value attached to them. These items should not be how we are measured or how we are perceived by others. Schudson (1986) says that purchasing “holds implicitly or explicitly that freedom, fulfillment, and personal transformation lie in the world of goods. It proposes that we transform our lives by buying something more” (“Potent Symbols” section, para. 4).

In this ad, like so many others, people's attitudes are transformed by ownership. When viewing advertisements, we should look past the superficial message, and try to interpret what those ads are insinuating. This advertisement advocates a lie: "the good life consists of buying possessions that cost lots of money" (Davis, 1992, "Myth #3" section, para. 1). It focuses on material wealth and how we will be perceived by those who know us when we have it. It also advocates not just possession, but possession in overwhelming abundance. Like other advertisements before it, it doesn't just tell us to buy things, but that our dreams should be of buying lots of things. Our dreams should not consist of what is in our closet; they should be about hanging on to what matters most.

References

Davis, J. F. (1992). Power of images: Creating the myths of our time. *Media & Values*, (57).

Center for Media Literacy, <http://www.medialit.org/reading-room/power-images-creating-myths-our-time>

Heineken Beer [Advertisement]. (30 December 2009). *Heineken walk in fridge*. [Video].

YouTube, <https://youtu.be/yIutgzwhAc>

Kavanaugh, J. (1986). "Idols of the Marketplace." *Media & Values*, (37). *Center for Media*

Literacy, <http://www.medialit.org/reading-room/idols-marketplace>

Schudson, M. (1986). Advertising: Hit or myth? *Media & Values*, (37). *Center for Media*

Literacy, <http://www.medialit.org/reading-room/advertising-hit-or-myth>