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Van Heusen Ties Advertisement

In the media, stereotypes play an important role in creating societal biases. It uses stereotypes to shape how people see gender, race, and culture, either reinforcing or challenging existing views, whether negative or positive. Advertising can often influence and change anyone's view on the roles we play in society. In the Van Heusen Tie Ad, from the 1950s, sets a perfect example on how the roles in a family should work which reinforces the gender stereotypes and blatant sexism by showing women in an obeying and submissive way while the man is this powerful and dominant figurehead of the household. By using the visual and the textual rhetoric this ad demonstrates the societal biases by making it seem normal for the “man of the house” to be in control and portraying the woman as being obedient. Looking at this ad, we see how the media can often support the traditional gender norms by using stereotypes instead of challenging them.

In the Van Heusen Tie advertisement, we can see how the ad uses visual and textual elements to reinforce the traditional gender stereotypes. We are met with a man, who is the husband in this case, lying in bed comfortably and relaxed, while a woman who is depicted as the wife, on her knees serving the man breakfast. Under this image is the slogan that goes “*Show Her It's a Man's World.*” This shows and reinforces the inequality of the traditional way of the household, claiming that men should be in control and superior while the women's role is to

submit and serve the man of the house. The mix of the image and words supports the traditional idea that women belong as the supporting role in the family making sure that all the household duties are done while the men hold this higher power both in public and private life. The ad uses bright colors and the man's tie and shirt serving as the main focus of the advertisement. The different colors show his dominant position guiding the viewers towards him. However the color of the women's clothing and the position of her kneeling rather indicates that she is less significant and suggests her only role is serving the man in the image. The color of the woman's clothing further reinforces the idea of the stereotype of women wearing and liking feminine colors such pink which is the color of the woman's robe. The clothing of both the individuals shows that the man is dressed as if he is about to leave for work signaling employment, despite the fact that he is in bed, and the woman is dressed in a robe, implying that she will be in the house all day doing household chores, one of which is serving her husband breakfast. This ad is clearly telling people to accept these old positions in the house as normal and desirable, which supports gender stereotypes in society.



Another idea that the Van Heusen ad uses to make its point is that being a man is linked to financial success and on your appearance. The idea that "it's a man's world" is portrayed as

common sense, and the tie represents that dominance. The ad ties masculinity to the product as the tie being the main focus of this advertisement, it would symbolize power, and whatever the man wears could represent his authority. What this Ad is trying to say is that any man that wears these ties and has on professional attire could help with asserting his dominance over any woman whether in private or public. This stereotype that men need to look successful and in charge in order to fulfill their roles in society is reinforced by this connection between appearance and authority. The ad makes it seem like these things symbolize power and define masculinity. Which supports the idea of traditional gender norms and also reinforces the cultural expectation that men should try to be in charge and control while women should stay in supportive and obedient positions.

To conclude, the Van Heusen Ties ad shows how the media can often portray stereotypes to reinforce things like traditional gender norms and the roles of the household illustrating men as always being dominant while women are submissive and obedient. By using both visual and the textual rhetoric the advertisement promotes the idea that men should assert dominance and success by how they look, while women are restricted to household chores. This reinforces societal biases that limit roles based on gender and suggests men and women have set in stone positions in society.

Citations:

Sharp, Gwen. "Show Her It's a Man's World." 24 July 2011. *The Society Pages*.