**Levitt’s Theory of Ads**

Jessica Szczechowicz ENG 201: Journal Response 12/15/12

Levitt offers numerous comparisons between advertising and art within this article. For example, Levitt describes advertising as being “representational,” just as many pieces of art are reproductions of real things. What he means by this is that both are literally “falsehoods” in nature because they are embellished and emphasized copies of the original, often so much so that the viewer’s perception is distorted. Additionally, Levitt explains that advertising is like art in the sense that it [advertising] “tries to affect our mind and actions” just as “poets, preachers, professors, etc.” attempt to do. He further states that because of the false embellishment of these objects, people who observe both advertisements and works of art do not only wish for the tangible object, but they also desire the emotions and ideals set forth by the presentation of object. He believes it is a mind game that we so often endure.

On an ethical standpoint, Levitt stresses that “life is not a morality play.” He continues by describing life as a “ceaseless struggle against nature,” where we cannot escape our wants and wishes. It is his belief that if businesses can act upon fulfilling people’s desires in a specialized manner without breaching the established “society standards,” then by all means it should be done. Therefore, Levitt concludes that as long as the advertising or art representation is not to the point of falsehood where it would cause harm or outright deceit, then it can be considered an ethical practice. An example of an unacceptable action would be advertising a product or service as something that is helpful to the consumer when really it is not. For instance, if a company were to claim that their smoothie mixes will help you lose weight, but in reality they contain so much sugar that users will become diabetic, that is not an ethical form of advertising. I agree with Levitt’s conclusion and believe that as long as the company does not completely take advantage of the consumer or promise them something that cannot be fulfilled through the purchased product then advertising is a fair and sensible engagement.