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Reading Between the Pixels

As my husband finished reading a rather intellectually stimulating article in a popular men's magazine, he flipped the page to reveal quite an interesting advertisement. My gaze immediately fell upon the following print ad, which contained the photograph of a decrepit old man dressed in a black suit, wearing a diamond encrusted gold dollar sign ring, embraced by a wedding-gown clad, large breasted, peroxide bleached blond, young bimbo. Next to the shocking newlyweds was a new, cherry red Dodge Viper convertible, parked on a black patterned brick driveway, in front of a gorgeous mansion wall adorned with lavish vegetation and concrete Grecian pottery overflowing with ferns. The inept looking, liver spotted, likely incontinent, prune-like old geezer stood in vulgar contrast to the voluptuous, energetic, seductive, fertile youthfulness of the female beside him. At first one might become shocked at such a display. The printed quote at the bottom of the page, "NEED WE SAY MORE"" brought the car company's powerful message into clarity. The Dodge Motor Company, by degrading women, claiming that their car will serve as something of a fountain of youth, and asserting that material items are more important than depth of character, is hoping to convince you that their car is something you want.

It's easy to see why this advertisement was placed in a men's magazine, since it is highly likely that it would alienate any female viewer. The woman has been portrayed as shallow and materialistic, unable to provide for herself, having no other options than to marry this crusty old man to attain the wealth that she desires. Her vanity and lack of self worth are so great that

she has traded her self respect for social status.

The first thought that entered my mind as I viewed this ad was the staggeringly high rate of divorce in this country. Having no intention of living a full life or raising a family, the woman pictured in this ad has apparently married this elderly man with only the intention of either divorcing him quickly or waiting for the old fart to "kick the bucket" while living lavishly in the lap of luxury. Consequently, it seems that the reader is being subjected to an advertisement for divorce or for potential infidelity rather than that for a sports car. It is completely absurd to suppose for one second that these people devoted themselves to each other out of love. From the old man's point of view, this woman has become nothing more than another one of his exquisite possessions, hardly more important or significant than his precious Dodge Viper. The woman has become an object and the manufacturer would like for you to feel that ownership of this car will make anything you desire more attainable.

By depicting their automobile in such a situation, the Dodge Company has made it seem as though owning their sports car is like diving into a fountain of youth. How else could this white-haired, balding, old man have scored such a ripe, attractive young woman? Aside from his apparent wealth, the ad implies she must want him for his car. After all, aging has a direct correlation with decrease in both sexual attractiveness and libido. It would seem to be very appealing for an older man to be able to marry a young, sexy woman, and this advertisement claims that ownership of this automobile makes an old man more desirable. Consequently, financially endowed males are the target audience of this advertisement. It tells them that if they own this automobile, any woman will be more attainable, regardless of age or physical appearance since the haggard old man's appearance makes him seem like more of a candidate for

a Viagra advertisement than a car commercial. The ghastly contrast of age between the man and the woman is almost comical.

Wastefulness, materialism, vanity, and shallowness were just a few words that came to mind when viewing this advertisement. A person with depth of character should not need to surround themselves with such material possessions. It has been preached in many religions that one should not become overzealous with their earthly belongings, for these items are insignificant in the greater scope of things. Americans have become synonymous with their love of convenience. Human nature has been plagued with a lust for greed, a driving factor in the success of capitalism and the fundamental flaw in the design of communism. A person who would drive a Dodge Viper probably would not drive it because they need this form of transportation; they would more likely than not drive it because they want to so proudly display their high ranking social status. Because of its high cost, a Viper is by no means an economical or practical automobile. This vehicle would appeal to wealthy people with money to burn on frivolous luxuries. Sadly, to some people this vein display of wealth and this very much American love of luxury can appear extremely desirable.

The Dodge Motor Company should not have run this print advertisement. While being humorous to some viewers, they managed to instantly offend at least half of the buying audience. It was offensive and degrading women, portraying them as mere objects of a materialistic male figure. The woman's value appeared to be no greater than that of the automobile. Unfortunately the claims of the car's ability to bring back the appeal of youth may have some truth to it. Just as the clothes made the man in a social setting, when on the road your value is judged by your automobile. The vanity of the general population of our nation and the human species lust for

wealth is so great that upon seeing a Dodge Viper on the road, one could not help but look upon the driver with envy and desire. While this advertisement did an excellent job of portraying the Dodge Viper, in a humorous and eye catching way, as an object to be coveted, its design flaws outweigh its qualities.