

A Semiotic Analysis of Youth Representation in SilverQueen Television Advertisements

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study aims to analyze the youth representation in five versions of SilverQueen television advertisements and reveal the ideologies reflected in such representation. The data are five versions of SilverQueen television advertisements which are broadcasted in Indonesia from 2002 until 2012. The theories used in this study are Barthes' orders of signification (1957) and the theory of visual elements proposed by Dyer (1996). The findings of the study show that youth is represented in five versions of SilverQueen television advertisements (2002-2012) through similar ways. Youth is represented in SilverQueen television advertisements through three visual elements (actor, setting, and property): (1) the attractive young people as actors and actresses of the advertisements who are estimated to be about 18-25 years old. They wear casual clothes which represent informality and some accessories which make their appearances look more attractive; (2) the choices of setting which mostly take place outdoors represent the youth's interest for spending their free time outdoors and enjoying nature; and (3) the choices of property reflect that young people love to relax, hang out with their friends, and have interest for exploration and visiting places. In terms of ideologies, this study found two ideologies behind such representation, namely freedom and hedonism

Keywords: *youth, representation, television advertisement, ideology*

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, a large number of television advertisements use young people as their models. Some famous products such as Coca Cola, Beng Beng, Pocari Sweat, Indosat IM3 and any other products use young people as their television advertisement's models. The tendency to use young people as models is probably motivated by the fact that young people have particular special qualities or images which can help the advertised products to get attention from television viewers. According to Mayo (2011), some core characteristics of young people today are bright, creative, optimist, good at sharing, global learners, active participant and question asker. Thus, those positive qualities will eventually attract the television viewers to pay attention to the advertisements.

Meanwhile, advertisement is one of the most effective media to communicate with everyone in this world. Oxford Dictionary online (2014) defines 'advertisement' as a notice or announcement in a public medium promoting a product, service, or event or publicizing a job vacancy. Advertisement can be anywhere, it can be in the radio, the newspaper, Internet, and television. In many industries, advertisement is used to help the company markets their products. Moreover, advertisement also has a significant role to

persuade people. Advertisement is used to convey certain messages, and sometimes some symbols are used to support the delivery of those messages to the people. Therefore, those messages and symbols need to be considered.

Advertisement not only promotes products, but it also indicates the ideology of a society. The notion of 'ideology' is commonly used in the social sciences, such as in politics and mass media (Van Dijk, 2000). Wodak and Meyer (2009, p.8) define ideology as a logical and relatively standard set of beliefs or values. Furthermore, Eagleton (1991) states that ideology is the process of producing meanings, signs and values in the social life. Therefore, ideology can be said as some beliefs and values shared in a certain society.

Ideology can be viewed through representation in advertisements. According to Chandler (2007), representation is the formation of reality in any medium. Additionally, Hall (1997) states that representation is a medium of social construction of meaning and values which is used by a group of people in a culture. In short, representation can be said as a medium that transmits reality to the society. Considering those points, a study concerning youth representation in television advertisement is significant to be conducted.

This present study attempts to investigate the representation of youth in SilverQueen television advertisements and reveal the ideology reflected in such representation. This study is limited to analyzing five SilverQueen television advertisements. The five versions of SilverQueen television advertisements chosen in this study are SilverQueen 'Road Trip' (2002), SilverQueen 'Ocean' (2004), SilverQueen 'Balloon' (2007), SilverQueen 'Moveable Feast' (2009), and SilverQueen 'Beautiful Journey' (2012). This study uses semiotics theory for analyzing those television advertisements. Furthermore, this study analyzes how youth is represented in those television advertisements through the visual elements found in those advertisements, namely actor, setting, and property.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Television advertisement

Advertisement and television are two inseparable things because they are interdependent. In one side, advertisement is usually placed in mass media, and in another side, television is the most popular mass medium. Nowadays, watching television seems to be an integral part of every day. It is supported with the result of some surveys. First, according to survey results from Ipsos

Open Thinking Exchange (OTX) in 2014 (as cited in MarketingCharts.com, 2014), the typical viewing method for 81% of Americans is watching live TV and a separate study from BroadStream Solutions in 2014 similarly finds that roughly 8 in 10 American adults are watching live TV. Second, according to the survey conducted by Nielsen Indonesia in 2014 (as cited in Nielsen.com, 2014), television is still the most popular mass medium in Indonesia, or statistically, 95% of Indonesian people is still watching television.

Furthermore, according to Mcdermott and Albrecht (2002), television is a powerful medium to attract many audiences because it reaches people without considering age, sex, income, or educational level. Television offers an audio-visual experience, and it makes dramatic and lifelike representations of people and products. In line with this, Cook (2005) also states that advertisement as one of the television features, is also a virtually noticeable type in all contemporary societies. Therefore, television plays an important role in representing and shaping attitudes because television can easily influence the way people think.

Between the 1940s and 2000s, television advertisement had a great and wide-ranging impact on American society and culture. It influenced the way that

people think about such important social issues as race, gender, and class. It played an important role in the political process, particularly in shaping national election campaigns. TV programs and commercials have also been mentioned as major factors contributing to increased American materialism (a view that places more value on acquiring material possessions than on developing in other ways). Television also helped to spread American culture around the world (Gale, 2007).

Meanwhile, television advertisement appeared for the first time in Indonesia shortly after the establishment of the first Indonesia television station named Televisi Republik Indonesia (TVRI) on August 24, 1962. Then, in 1963, the first three television advertisements appeared in TVRI. Advertising industry began to grow rapidly when some private television stations were established, such as RCTI and SCTV in the late 1980s, and TPI, ANTV, Indosiar in the 1990s.

The Visual Elements of Television Advertisement

There are some visual elements of television advertisement analyzed in this study such as actor, setting, and property. Those visual elements should be analyzed in order to reveal the connotative meaning. Those visual elements are analyzed by using

the theories of visual elements by Dyer (1996).

Dyer (1996) mentions that television advertisement has three visual elements, namely actor, setting, and property:

1. Actor

Actor is the person who carries the message of an advertisement. There are two things which can be observed from the actor in the television advertisement: fashion and physical appearance. Barnard (2006) claims that the actor's physical appearance and fashion connote some meanings. For example, tie (fashion) has connotative meaning 'modern' and 'professionalism', while white or bright skin (physical appearance) connotes 'beauty' and 'healthiness', and smile (physical appearance) connotes 'happiness', 'decreasing tension', and 'irony'.

2. Setting

Setting refers to the place in which the advertisement is made. It can also be defined as the context which support the foreground. Setting will affect the main action or purpose of the advertisement because setting carries meaning and value. For example, the setting of SilverQueen 'moveable feast' television advertisement is in the lakeside and at the top of the cliff.

3. Property

Property is the things which support the message of advertisement. Property has

an important role in television advertisement because it has symbolic meaning. That symbolic meaning can support the message of the advertisement. For example, property used in SilverQueen ‘beautiful journey’ is camera and Segway.

Moreover, in order to enrich the analysis of those visual elements, the theory of connotation in color proposed by Wilfred (1962) is also utilized in this study. Wilfred (1962) says that color has some distinctive meanings. The elaboration about connotation in color is shown as follows:

Table 1. Connotation in Color
(Wilfred, 1962)

Color	Connotation
Red	Aggressiveness, activeness, strength, bravery, sexiness, evil, revolution, passion, anger, violence, and danger.
Dark Red	Friendliness and aristocrat.
Pink	Femininity, love, romanticism, sympathy.
Dark Blue	Wisdom, honesty, intensity, power, constructiveness, sincerity, cooperativeness, and integrity.
Light Blue	Peace, spiritually calm, young, sportiveness, depression, introvert, delicacy, and firmness.
Yellow	Tolerance, light, fast, inspiration, happiness, hope, gold, cheeriness, cowardice, illness, and deceit.

Green Naturalness, affection, emphatic, young, peace, enviousness, poison, freshness, wickedness.

Orange Energy, happiness, friendliness, activeness, creativity, warm, and bright.

Purple Royalty, femininity, expressiveness, young, sensitiveness, hope, spiritual obsession, and richness.

Black Formality, darkness, magic, mystery, grief, artist, and elegance.

White Purenness, naivety, peace, and goodness.

Grey Independence, stability, seriousness, and critic.

Brown Fertility, old, wealthy, melancholy, and depression.

Advertisement and Ideology

According to Sunardi (as cited in Widaningsih, 2011), there are five reasons which can lead people’s curiosity to watch or see an advertisement, as follows:

1. To inform

Advertisement often inform about some new information to audience about several related fact.

2. To signify

Advertisement has its own signifier which will signify something else broader.

3. To paint

Visual elements of advertisement such as color, object, or actor in advertisement will portray or describe the product offered.

4. To surprise

Advertisement recurrently surprise audience with its 'shocking value'.

5. To awaken desire

The visual elements and 'shocking value' of advertisement often awaken audiences' desire to purchase the product.

Thus, based on five reasons above, people usually pay attention to the advertisement and notice every detailed information in the advertisement. It is in line with Berger (2013, p. 12) who states that "when somebody "read" other people, either in real life or in mass media such as advertisements, commercials, and films, he or she pays a great deal of attention to things like their hairstyles, the clothing and the shoes they wear, and their body ornaments. All of these objects are signs meant to convey certain notions about what these people are like." In other words, those certain notions can lead people into certain ideology.

Orlebar (2009) states that ideology is the set of values and beliefs that people believe to be true, and it becomes a part of people's daily lives. In other words, ideology is the natural agreed values or common sense that run and support the

society. Meanwhile, Croteau and Hoynes (2014, p. 159) tell that ideology "is basically a system of meaning that helps define and explain the world and that makes value judgments about that world".

Based on those explanations above, it can be seen that ideology plays an important role because ideology is related to concepts such as belief system and values which can lead to the process of influencing people's way of thinking and shaping people's attitudes. Those processes are also supported with the fact that it will be so easy to see or watch various advertisements in daily life. People will pay attention to the product that the advertisement offer and also certain notions that the advertisement try to convey through particular images and texts.

Moreover, according to Larrain (1979), ideology can have the positive and negative meaning. Ideology with positive meaning refers to a system of opinions, values, and knowledge which are connected with certain class interests and whose cognitive value may vary. Meanwhile, ideology with negative meaning means that ideology is perceived as a false consciousness, thus it needs to do the fraud by distorting other understanding of social reality.

Thus, it can be concluded that advertisement and ideology is correlated to each other. Advertisement takes a role as a

medium and ideology as the hidden message. This matter is also reinforced by the fact that “advertisement as a means of representation and meaning construct ideology within themselves through the intervention of external codes which are located in society. The advertisement will use images, notions, concepts, myths already available in the culture” (Dyer, 1982, p. 102).

Representation

Danesi (2004, p. 16) defines representation as “the use of signs, (pictures, sounds, etc.) to relate, depict, portray, or reproduce something perceived, sensed, imagined, or felt in some physical form”. Meanwhile, Griffiths (2010) says that representation is about the construction in any medium of aspects of reality such as people, places, objects, events and other abstract concept. In other words, these definitions suggest that representation is the utilization of signs in order to construct aspects of reality.

Mohammadi (2011) also tells that representations are directly related with collective meanings, power relations, status hierarchies, resistance, alliances or conflicts which may occur in the society. In addition, Hall (1997) states that representation is a significant part of the process in which meaning is created and exchanged between

members of culture. It involves the use of languages, signs, and images which stand for things. Those suggest that representation deals with various matters in society and becomes the important part of them.

Furthermore, Hall (1997) also states that things, concept, and sign are related to the production of meaning in language. Representation is the process linking those three elements together.

Representation in media is important because representation is undeniably powerful enough to persuade the viewers or audiences to think about particular topic. Wilson (2011) says that all media texts are re-presentations of reality. All media texts are intentionally composed, written, framed, cropped, captioned, branded, targeted and censored by the producers. In other words, all media texts are entirely artificial versions of the reality that people perceive around them which are codified into a series of signs and symbols which can be read by people.

Barthes’s Orders of Signification

Barthes (1957) mentions three orders of signification. The first order of signification is denotation. Denotation consists of a signifier and a signified. The second order is connotation. It consists of a signifier (signifier and signified of the denotative sign) and an additional signified attached to it. The third order of signification

is a myth or ideology (the combination of denotation and connotation).

Fiske (1990) states that denotation provides a relationship between the signifier and signified within a sign. Denotation is also the most stable signification of sign since denotation meaning does not need readers' assumption. Denotation refers to the literal meaning of the sign. For instance, a picture of a group of kids riding bicycles at the park denotes that particular moment.

Meanwhile, Chandler (2002) states that connotation meaning is combined with readers' assumption, in which an assumption is influenced by some codes, for example, cultural codes. The third order of signification is a myth or ideology. According to Berger (as cited in Ririn, 2011, p. 28) states that "myth is assigned to create a natural rationalization of a particular belief".

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative method. This method is appropriate for this study because this study uses videos of SilverQueen television advertisements as the data and focuses on describing, analyzing, and interpreting the youth representation in SilverQueen television advertisements. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2005), qualitative research requires a collection of interpretive and natural

setting which is used to rationalize and interpret phenomenon in terms of human life's meaning. In addition, Creswell (2009) says that qualitative research occurs in natural settings, where human behaviour and events occur. He also says that a study which involves visual materials data collection and interpretive information of overall findings can be categorized as a qualitative research.

The data were in the form of videos of Silver Queen television advertisements. There were five versions of Silver Queen television advertisements selected in this study and they are broadcasted in Indonesia:

1. SilverQueen 'Road Trip' version (2002) (duration: 32 seconds).
2. SilverQueen 'Ocean' version (2004) (duration: 31 seconds).
3. SilverQueen 'Balloon' version (2007) (duration: 31 seconds).
4. SilverQueen 'Moveable Feast' version (2009) (duration: 29 seconds).
5. SilverQueen 'Beautiful Journey' version (2012) (duration: 31 seconds).

All the advertisements were downloaded from www.youtube.com. Those advertisements were selected because those advertisements contain the issue of youth representation. After that, some scenes contain the issue of youth representation in each of those five television advertisements would be selected.

(2002-2012) through similar ways. Youth is represented in *SilverQueen* television advertisements through three visual elements (actor, setting, and property).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Youth Representation in *SilverQueen* Television Advertisements

Youth is represented in five versions of *SilverQueen* television advertisements



Actors and Actresses

First Order of Signification	Second Order of Signification	Third Order of Signification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Short-haired actors and long-haired actresses. -Actors and actresses are wearing casual clothes. - Actors and actresses are wearing some accessories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Short hair signifies handsomeness for man, while long hair signifies beauty for woman. -Casual clothes signify informality. -Accessories signify stylishness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Handsome and beauty show that <i>SilverQueen</i> associates its product with attractive young people in order to imply an idea that attractive young people consume <i>SilverQueen</i> chocolate bar. -Informality signifies that <i>SilverQueen</i> chocolate bar is a product which is suitable to be consumed in informal occasion or leisure time, such as vacation. -Stylishness indicates that being stylish is one of young people's ways to be socially recognized by other people.

Firstly, all actors and actresses used in those five television advertisements are a group of young people who are estimated to be about 18-25 years old. Their physical appearances and fashion qualify the stereotypical appearance of attractive young people. Most actors have short hair and most

actresses have long hair which signify handsomeness and beauty. They are wearing casual clothes, namely t-shirt, sleeveless shirt, shirt, tank tops, hoodie jacket, jeans, skirt, and shorts which signify informality. They also are wearing some accessories, namely sunglasses, necklace, bracelet, hat,

and cap in order to make their appearances look more attractive, so that they can be socially recognized by other people. Thus, it can be seen that the advertiser has an

intention to portray stereotypical appearance of attractive young people in the advertisement.

The Dominant Colors

First Order of Signification	Second Order of Signification	Third Order of Signification
-White -Brown -Red -Green -Dark blue	-White signifies goodness. -Brown signifies fertility. -Red signifies activeness, strength, and bravery. -Green signifies affection and freshness. -Dark blue signifies sincerity and cooperativeness.	-Goodness reflects <i>SilverQueen</i> chocolate bar as a product with good quality. -In terms of youth, fertility can be a symbol of the quality of producing creative ideas. In other words, to be the attractive young people, young people should be able to produce creative ideas. -Activeness, strength, and bravery indicates three ideal qualities which is possessed by attractive young people. -Freshness describes <i>SilverQueen</i> chocolate bar as a product which is made of fresh ingredients, while affection reflects that chocolate is also usually associated with a sentimental value, such as love. -Sincerity and cooperativeness reflect positive characteristics which are owned by young people.

Moreover, there are some dominant colors used in the actors and actresses' clothes and accessories, namely white, brown, red, green, and dark blue. Those colors is used in almost all those five television advertisements. According to Wilfred (1962), white signifies goodness; brown signifies fertility, red signifies activeness, strength, and bravery; green

signifies affection and freshness; and dark blue signifies sincerity and cooperativeness. Those colors are perceived as the portrayal of positive characteristics of youth in those five advertisement. Through those colors, young people are represented as those who are active, strong, brave, affectionate, fresh, sincere, and cooperative. Young people are also described as those who possess fertility. According to Cambridge dictionary online (2015), fertility is defined as the quality of

producing a lot of unusual and interesting ideas. Meanwhile, goodness is perceived as the reflection the good quality of of *SilverQueen* chocolate bar itself.



Settings

First Order of Signification	Second Order of Signification	Third Order of Signification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The road -Beach -The bridge (as a gathering place) -The ocean -The island -The meadow -In the air (in the hot air balloon) -The lakeside -The Cliff -In the woods -The seashore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The road signifies journey. -Beach signifies calmness. -The bridge (as a gathering place) signifies togetherness. -The ocean, the island, In the air (in the hot air balloon), and the cliff signify freedom. -The meadow, the lakeside, the woods, and the seashore signify nature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Journey indicates the myth of youth: young people are adventurous individuals who like to explore places and enjoy nature. -Calmness creates the idea that young people are those who seek peace and calmness. Therefore, this imagery activates the myth of youth: young people love to relax and have leisure time. -Togetherness shows the idea that young people love to have fun with their friends. Therefore, this idea activates the myth of youth: young people tend to be emotionally dependent on their friends. -Freedom reflects the myth of youth: young people love to be free -Nature forms the myth of youth: young people love to relax and have leisure time.

Secondly, the setting of those five versions of *SilverQueen* television advertisements always take place in outdoor places, namely the road, the beach, the bridge, the ocean, the island, the meadow, the lakeside, the cliff, the woods, and the

seashore. Through those choices of setting, youth is represented as those who love to spend their free time and hang out with their friends outdoors. They love doing activities outdoors and relaxing in nature. Those notions are also supported by some activities done by the actors and actresses in those advertisements, namely driving a buggy car on the beach, cycling around the island, flying in hot air balloon, riding *Segway*, playing around the lakeside, relaxing at the

top of the cliff and in the woods and the seashore. In relation to the product, *SilverQueen* chocolate bar itself is declared by the advertiser as the right companion for people while relaxing in their free time. Thus, the youth's tendency to spend their free time outdoors and relax in nature is in line with the *SilverQueen* chocolate bar's selling point.



Property

First Order of Signification	Second Order of Signification	Third Order of Signification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Buggy car -The boat -The hammock -The couch -The convertible car -The hot air balloon -The guitar -Camera -Bonfire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The buggy car and the boat signify exploration. -The hammock and couch signify relaxation. -The convertible car and the hot air balloon signify freedom. -The guitar, camera, and bonfire signify togetherness. 	<p>The property used in this advertisement reflects the myth of youth: young people love to relax, be free and have leisure time outdoors, explore things, visit places, and hang out and have fun with their friends.</p>

Thirdly, in those five television advertisements, youth is also represented through the use of some property, namely convertible car, buggy car, *Volkswagen* kombi car, boat, bicycle, hot air balloon, hammock, the guitar, bonfire, couch, and camera. Through that choices of property, youth is described as those who love to relax, be free and have leisure time outdoors, explore things, visit places, and hang out and have fun with their friends. Youth's interest in exploration and visiting places are represented through the utilization of some kinds of vehicles, namely Buggy car and the boat. Meanwhile, the idea that young people love to relax is represented through the utilization of the hammock and couch. The convertible car and hot air balloon represent freedom. The guitar, camera and bonfire reflect that young people value friendship and love to hang out and have fun with their friends.

In conclusion, youth is represented in *SilverQueen* television advertisements through attractive young people as actors and actresses of the advertisements. youth as

adventurous individuals who love freedom and outdoor places. They are wearing casual clothes and accessories which fit the setting of the advertisements, and also make them look more attractive. Through the actors and actresses, youth is also portrayed as people who love relaxing, hanging out and having fun together with their friends. Those actions somehow also suggest that youth's life is full of joy. In other words, those advertisements try to convey that happiness is something that is closely related to youth's life. Then, the choices of setting which mostly take place outdoors represent the youth's interest for spending their free time outdoors and enjoying nature. The choices of property also reflect that young people love to relax, hang out with their friends, and have interest for exploration and visiting places. Thus, youth is represented in positive ways in all five versions of *SilverQueen* television advertisements.

The Ideologies Reflected in Youth Representation in *SilverQueen* Television Advertisements

After analyzing youth representation, it can be seen that there are two ideologies reflected in such representation, they are freedom and hedonism.

First, freedom is an ideology reflected in youth representation because young people described in those five versions of *SilverQueen* television advertisements are those who freely do what they want and go wherever they want without being guided or influenced by any authority figure. It can be seen that in those five television advertisements, young people are described as those who can do what they want, namely take a road trip, sail a boat, and fly in a hot air balloon without any involvement from any authority figure.

Second, hedonism is the second ideology reflected in youth representation in those television advertisements. According to Vlach (2012), hedonism is “the view that the pursuit of pleasure is the highest good”. Meanwhile, Cambridge dictionaries online (2015) defines hedonism as living and behaving in ways that mean you get as much pleasure out of life as possible, based

on a belief that the most important thing in life is to enjoy yourself. Thus, the youth representation in *SilverQueen* television advertisements reflects hedonism because all of those television advertisements only highlight the way young people have fun and pursue pleasure. It can be seen that all of those television advertisements only focus on one side of youth’s life, the way they enjoy their free time in order to find happiness and pleasure.

CONCLUSION

Based on overall discussion, it can be concluded that the youth is represented in those *SilverQueen* television advertisements through similar ways. Youth is represented in *SilverQueen* television advertisements through three visual elements (actor, setting, and property).

Firstly, the choices of the actors and the actresses used in the five *SilverQueen* television advertisements are attractive young people who are estimated to be about 18-25 years old. They are wearing casual clothes which represent

informality and some accessories which make their appearances look more attractive. Meanwhile, there are also some dominant colors used in the actors and actresses' clothes and accessories, namely white, brown, red, green, and dark blue. Those colors are perceived as the portrayal of positive characteristics of youth in those five advertisement. Through those colors, young people are represented as those who are active, strong, brave, affectionate, fresh, sincere, and cooperative.

Secondly, the choices of setting of SilverQueen television advertisements are always outdoors, namely the road, the beach, the bridge, the ocean, the island, the meadow, the lakeside, the cliff, the woods, and the seashore. That choices of setting represent the youth's interest for spending their free time to do activities outdoors and relaxing in nature. Through those choices of setting, youth is also represented as those who love to spend their free time to hang out with their friends outdoors.

Thirdly, in those five television advertisements, youth is also

represented through the use of some property, namely convertible car, buggy car, Volkswagen kombi car, boat, bicycle, hot air balloon, hammock, the guitar, bonfire, couch, and camera. Through that choices of property, youth is described as those who love to be free, relax and have leisure time outdoors, explore things, visit places, and hang out and have fun with their friends.

Furthermore, there are two ideologies reflected in youth representation in those five versions of SilverQueen television advertisements, they are freedom and hedonism. Freedom is viewed because young people described in those five versions of SilverQueen television advertisements are those who freely do what they want and go wherever they want without being guided or influenced by any authority figure. It can be seen that in those five television advertisements, young people are described as those who can do what they want, namely take a road trip, sail a boat, and fly in a hot air balloon without any involvement from any authority figure.

Hedonism is the second ideology reflected in youth representation in those television advertisements. Youth representation in SilverQueen television advertisements reflects hedonism because all of those television

advertisements only highlight the way young people have fun and pursue pleasure. It can be seen that all of those television advertisements only focus on one side of youth's life, the way they enjoy their free time in order to find happiness and pleasure.

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