Derek Wei

Safiya Karmy-Jones

English 131

15 October 2016

The Dramatic Coca-Cola Sip

It was the middle of July, my friends and I had walked for what felt like 2 hours in the Sahara Dessert but in reality only 10 minutes in downtown Atlanta. Just before the soles of our shoes melted, the droplets of sweat on our faces were greeted by the chilling air conditioning at the World of Coca-Cola. There was lots to explore and learn but what stood out to me the most was when we proceeded into a theater where we watched an exclusive Coca-Cola short film. As I watched, I felt a surge of emotions roll through every nerve in my body. Joy, excitement, inspiration, love, and happiness all traveled through my body from head to toe, leaving goosebumps as they zipped on by. I recall, watching my friends and other people in the audience tear up and begin to cry by how touched they were by the video. Since then, Coca-Cola commercials have continued to intrigue me. Whether you remember hearing their slogans, “taste the feeling” or “open happiness”, Coca-Cola has been around for many years, 130 years to be exact. The corporation has put immense focus into the way they market their products in their widely televised commercials. Every Coke commercial emphasizes on positive emotions. Whether that be enjoyment, good holiday vibes, vacation vibes, cheerfulness or happiness. These emotions are conveyed through a social setting of family, friends, or couples. People are touched by the things portrayed in these commercials, which don’t directly correlate with Coca-Cola, except for the fact that at the very end of every commercial there is a dramatic Coca-Cola sip.

Taking a more in depth look at these commercials we see many reoccurring patterns seen throughout the genre of Coca-Cola. Every commercial mainly features the classical Coca-Cola bottles. This establishes the brand’s authenticity and credibility by showing that Coca-Cola has been around for 153 years. These bottles are usually shot up close, in order to show the premade condensation on the outside of the bottle and the fizzling carbonation within the soda. It is clear that the company is appealing to teenagers because their cast are mainly teenagers and feature moments that are related and relevant to a teenager such as school, family time, vacations with friends, or romantic relationships. The setting of these commercials typically stem from a nice looking house that is decked with accessories, fancy sit-down restaurants, or a tropical vacation spot. The plot of the commercial usually has a character who is facing a dilemma that is preventing them from feeling happy but is quickly delighted after receiving a bottle of Coke. Or the plot will consist of highlight moments during a vacation or holiday that is made more joyous because of the presence of Coke. In the recent 20th Century commercials, the song *Taste the Feeling* has become the underlying theme song. The song is introduced in many ways. They directed the song towards teenagers by using popular genres such as, pop, acoustics, EDM or instrumental. Most importantly, before the commercial ends, a dramatic sip of Coca-Cola will be filmed to associate and solidify the positive emotions and a teenager feels with a bottle of Coke. At the World of Coca-Cola, they feature a short film of multiple Coca-Cola commercials. At the very end of the film they compile every moment together by having the cast from the different commercials take the dramatic sip. The trope of the dramatic Coca-Cola sip is unique because it correlates to the specific positive emotion felt within the commercial. Whether that be happiness, joy, love, inspiration or a feeling of achievement. The scene is typically shot with one person, usually the protagonist, lifting up an ice cold Coke (with condensation around the bottle) to take a sip. The person’s eyes are always gently closed as if they are relaxed and delighted. Their head is slightly tilted upwards to show the viewers a satisfying gulp. The background is slightly faded out and brightly lit, usually by a sunset or sunrise. Coca-Cola uses this trope in their commercials to target middle class teenagers because they are at an age where they are most impressionable and have family incomes that are able to incorporate Coca-Cola as a daily accessory. The company hopes to use the trope in their commercials to effectively connect to the teenager and establish a loyal consumer. This is seen in *Brotherly Love*, where a brother finally gets to sip his bottle of Coke after being saved from bullies, and *Anthem*, where many snapshot moments of fun times are flashed. The producers at Coca-Cola cleverly market their products to teenagers of the middle class, through the use of the dramatic Coca-Cola sip.

The Coca-Cola commercial, titled *Brotherly Love* starts off with a younger brother who seems to always get teased by his older brother. The older brother purposely distracts the younger brother when he’s playing video games and puts his headphones on an out of reach shelf. They focus on this sibling relationship further when a group of bullies snatch an ice cold refreshing bottle of Coke from the younger brother. Without a bottle of Coke by his side, the younger brother is on the verge of tears and sadness. The older brother sees this injustice and steps in to get the Coke bottle back for his brother and this time, letting him have the first sip. The music, setting and lighting all allude to happiness being restored because Coke is now back in the hands of the brother. At this moment, the trope of the dramatic Coca-Cola sip awaits its entrance. As expected the younger brother slowly brings the bottle of Coke up to his mouth, closes his eyes and takes a big refreshing gulp. The background is faded out gently with the afternoon sun shining in the back. This commercial was released on January 2016 with the intent to capture the teenager’s attention through a typical family setting. Coca-Cola recreated moments that are relatable to every family, specifically the middle class, and added the presence of their product. For example, many families enjoy a sit down dinner but in the commercial there was new addition to the typical scene. Instead of having dinner with a glass of milk or water, every member of the family had a big tall glasses of fizzling Coca-Cola. Likewise, when the younger brother was playing video games in the living room, there was an ice cold bottle of Coca-Cola sitting on the coffee table next to him. This constant presence of Coca-Cola in these settings work to make Coca-Cola a must-have, affordable accessory to any middle class family. Producers also show the consumers that you will be on the verge of tears and anger if your Coke bottle is taken away from you through the younger brother’s reaction. The setting of these scenes help identify that the teens come from the middle class. Their house is furnished with olive green linen couches, bookshelves, pottery, pictures and surround sound speakers. The family has possession over gaming systems, uniform dining plates, over the head headphones and denim jackets while also attending after school sports. Teenagers are able to relate to the commercial on a personal level and begin to assimilate Coca-Cola into their daily lives similar the brothers. The dramatic Coca-Cola sip at the end, cleverly markets to teens by networking the middle class family connection and the feeling of family together. The dramatic sip is seen multiple times as the bowtie on a gently wrapped gift of happy emotions.

Unlike *Brotherly Love,* the 2016 Coca-Cola commercial, *Anthem,* reaches out to teenagers by capturing fun moments all teens can never get enough of. Moments of happiness, love and excitement are witnessed in climatic clips from snowball fights with friends, sleep over parties, romantic dates and beach parties. The company aims to be relatable to teenagers of the middle class by featuring common past times, social festivities, or vacations with friends. Even though these moments typically exist without the presence of Coca-Cola, the fun seems to be intensified and the smiles seem to be brighter when Coke is present. These scenes include a girl taking a quick sip of Coca-Cola before launching a snowball at her friend. Girls at a sleep over gossiping with a bottle of Coca-Cola in their hands. Teenagers happily galloping across the sandy sun holding a bucket filled with Coca-Cola on a tropical vacation-like beach. Teenagers begin to notice that these moments of thrilling fun share the same overarching theme, Coca-Cola. The Coca-Cola anthem, *Taste the Feeling*, plays in the background with a pop genre twist. And without fail, at the end of this commercial a young gentlemen is filmed grasping a dripping ice cold bottle, looking up into the vast, faded blue sky. As his eyes delicately close to take in the flavor the sun gently shines through the bottle. By having the dramatic sip at the end of the commercial. Coca-Cola is able to synthesize all the positive emotions they portray in this commercial in one big sip. Teenagers begins to associate paradise, happiness, love and good vibes with the dramatic sip of Coca-Cola. So the next time, these teenagers go on vacation to the beach, have snowball fights, go on dates or have a sleep over they will have a slight reminder that these moments of joy can be magnified more with Coca-Cola. Teenagers can’t wait to get their hands on a bottle themselves, so that they too, can perform their very own dramatic sip. The dramatic sip’s purpose is to separate Coca-Cola from only being known as a soda brand but instead, to equate Coca-Cola to emotions of thrilling fun, and joy.

In the article, *How Coca-Cola has tricked everyone into drinking so much of it*, Roberto A. Ferdman exposes Coca-Cola’s “brilliant marketing” tactics that is seen in every commercial, the dramatic sip. Coca-Cola understands that reaching to teenagers on an emotional level is the most effective marketing strategy. Ferdman explains that Coca-Cola ads are no longer “selling a drink” but instead, “the advertisements are designed to sell happiness”. Additionally as we saw in at the dining and living room of *Brotherly Love* and the moments portrayed in *Anthem,* throughout the commercial the Coca-Cola brand appear in “subtle” ways. These appearances are intended to register Coke on a “subliminal level” in a teenager. The dramatic sip at the end is filmed to such detail and clarity that the bottle of Coke in the sip becomes a part of the emotions you feel in the commercial and ties everything together. Ferdman explains that Coca-Cola targets teenagers of the middle class because an industry publication table shows that “young people drink more than older people”. Knowing teens are impressionable, Coca-Cola deliberately use the dramatic sip to market to teens in hope of a potential “lifetime customer” (Ferdman). And as seen in the previous two commercials, Coca-Cola does this through the dramatic sip where emotions and Coke seem to be one and the same.

Whether you have visited the World of Coke or have seen a few Coke commercials you begin to find Coca-Cola relevant in many parts of your daily life. And with each new commercial that is aired, you begin to associate a new positive emotion with that classic bottle of Coca-Cola. In *Brotherly Love* we see Coca-Cola help teenagers envision their product in a family setting through a tough love relationship between two brothers. *Anthem* brings about many familiar social moments and tells us how much more magnified joy, love and happiness can be made with Coca-Cola. Roberto A Ferdman further highlighted Coke’s magic marketing and why we associate a bottle of Coke to an emotion. In the end, you’ll have a web filled with emotions such as joy, love, adventure, happiness. These emotions aren’t fully complete until we glance at the driving force of Coca-Cola’s marketing success. At the center of this web is the images of countless teenagers from all parts of the world taking a dramatic sip of Coca-Cola and you begin to believe you can almost taste the feeling.

# Works Cited

*Anthem*. Dir. Coca-Cola. 2016. YouTube Video. 20 October 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-AmKP9VE2Ms>.

*Coca-Cola | Brotherly Love #TasteTheFeeling*. Dir. Coca-Cola. 2016. YouTube Video. 20 October 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xq8trrEecGg>.

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**Reflection paragraph**

I decided to choose Coca-Cola as my genre because it was something I was fascinated with after I visited the World of Coke in Atlanta, Georgia. I recall watching their feature film in the theater and siting in awe of how a few sets of commercials could bring so many people to tears. I turned to my friend after our visit and said “Wow, that’s some great marketing tactics”. Therefore, when prompted to write about a genre we were curious about, I quickly knew this was the time for me to write out my fascinations with Coke commercials and deeper my understanding in them. I chose my claim because I felt like the commercials couldn’t possibly be targeting everyone in the world. I also knew that many older and wealthier people stopped drinking soda because they are aware of the health effects associated with soda. After closer analysis, I noted that the cast is filled with teenagers, and the “feeling” they’re selling are moment’s teenagers of the middle class either long to experience or experience on a daily basis. I successfully evolved my Short Assignment 1 into a longer academic paper. By deepening my analysis of the trope, the dramatic sip, and also adding a published source that is critiquing the same thing I am really helped further and bring deeper understanding to my paper. I could definitely apply these skills to future research papers, and refine just how closely I should analyze every aspect of a piece of text before writing about it.