

Livingstons americans, thou shalt shop

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

I disagree that shopping is good for the soul all the time if it becomes the predominant end of a materialistic life.

I agree with Livingston that purchasing power is a tool by which consumers can influence firms to become more environmentally-conscious and responsive to consumer demands and that consumer spending can improve the economy by driving demand that influences employment and investment. Consumers, by choosing what to buy and not to buy, can definitely impact corporate activities. An example is when consumers stop buying certain brands that the media exposes as coming from firms who conduct harmful environmental practices. By boycotting these products, consumers directly affect corporate decisions, such as when companies stop these harmful practices and change them to regain consumer trust. Aside from forcing corporations to be environmentally-conscious, consumers are also compelling companies to care for what the former cares about.

Consumers are now using their purchasing power to change unethical corporate practices. For instance, when Americans knew about the sweatshops of Nike in Indonesia and China, consumers forced Nike to change their contractors' workplace conditions and wages when they boycotted the company's products (Nisen). These are only some of the many examples of how consumer power is social and political power too. Furthermore, consumer spending is a significant component of affecting economic growth. Personal consumption is currently 70% of the U. S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Mathews). Clearly, consumption has a large impact on economic performance because it increases the demand that drives investment and jobs.

Aside from these points, I no longer agree with Livingston that shopping is
<https://assignbuster.com/livingstons-americans-thou-shalt-shop/>

good for the soul all the time if it becomes the principal end of life, instead of a means to better ends. Livingston argues that shopping is good for the soul because shopping is what people do during their leisure time and that when they shop, they also do so for their loved ones (155). Truly, people spend when they are with loved ones or for their families and friends. However, Livingston is making hasty generalization when he assumes that spending is connected to the higher goal of “emotional surplus” (Livingston 155) because some people now have become so materialistic that they shop automatically without understanding what these things are for and that material things are not the most important factors of human life. Instead, some shop to brag about their lifestyles or to sustain a lavish life. They are now living to work, instead of working to live. Shopping has become their identities and ways of life, and these mindsets are not necessarily soul-enriching, as Livingston claims. There is a difference between shopping for social goals and shopping as an end because it is already embedded in superficial selfhood. Livingston should be careful in making assumptions about what shopping can do for the human soul because some people have already forgotten the role of shopping in being a better person because they are too trapped in the materialistic culture of society.

Shopping has its pros and cons for the environment, society, and the human soul. Livingston has some convincing points regarding shopping's contribution to the economy and corporate ethics, but his generalization on shopping's development of the human soul is hardly believable. As long as people work to shop and shop alone, they are not meaningfully living anymore.