

Auriana Adams

Professor Olliff

English 115

10 December 2014

A Beautiful Perception

Growing up, feelings of desertion consumed me. In elementary school I was bullied. “Five head,” “pigs in a blanket,” and “dump truck” were phrases I grew to loathe, for they were chanted to me from days on end. All of the girls who I considered friends picked on my weight, for my appearance was not to their liking. Beauty, the one word that can destroy those who allow it, is triggered by the belief that individuals must look a certain way in order to enhance the lives of others. This unknown concept of beauty destroyed me. When women are overpowered by the idea of beauty, they no longer feel normal, as their perspectives of themselves have changed.

Everyday women in our society develop their own standards of beauty, taking cues from what they have read in the magazines, heard on the radio, or witnessed firsthand. This standard that women must be a certain weight in order to be accepted creates an issue in how women perceive themselves, categorizing beauty into one of size and shape. Whether an individual prefers a low nose or a high nose, long hair or short hair, blue eyes or brown, the idea of beauty is constantly changing. The cause of body dissatisfaction is a result of the scrutiny women in contemporary society endure due to their external appearances. Influencing the minds of society’s young women through the media and advertisements, such as two ads for Lee and Levi’s, which conflict in their perception of beauty: one of the ads categorizes beauty into one of size and shape, while the other suggests that beauty cannot be measured.

Lee's ad for "New Slimming Jeans" attempts to solve every woman's need to feel confident and comfortable in their skin. By using phrases such as "Lee Instantly Slims You," and "Slender Secret Fit," the eyes of many women are drawn towards this ad. Taking up ½ of the ad is a smiling woman with straight/white teeth. This woman's nose is sleek and narrow. It is proportional to the rest of the lines on her face, making her very pleasing to look at. She is wearing a beige blazer and a grey tank top. This woman's thick, bouncy, and brunette colored hair, makes the red lipstick she has on very distinct. She is noticeably thin, with an hour-glass figure. The text on this ad is in a white bold font, pictured on a red background. Not only is this ad pictured on a red background, but the woman in the ad has a tape measure around her waist stopping between the numbers of 28 and 31.



Lee's ad uses what can be seen as an "appealing" and "attractive" young woman in order to evoke emotion in readers. By seeing the woman in the ad, women who are not satisfied with their external appearance will want to use Lee's product in order to achieve the look of the woman pictured. In the public today, a beautiful woman is shown as the one depicted in the ad, "slim" and "fit." The phrase "Slender Secret Fit" is used in the ad to help buyers understand that it is possible to disguise a size behind a pair of jeans. This phrase keeps a "secret" and allows the media to govern decisions made.

A little extra flab is something to be ashamed of, for slim is in. The girls who bullied me in elementary school bullied me because I was not slim, so I did everything in my power to look desirable. Lee's advertisers believe that all women seek to be thin, so they use this insecurity to further benefit their company's sales. The purpose of Lee's ad was to convince young women to buy their jeans in order to look slimmer. The white bold font was used in the ad to stress the importance of its meaning, while the color red was used in the Lee advertisement as a color of "sexiness" and "power."

When women wear their new Lee "Instantly Slims You" jeans, they should feel sexy, powerful, and beautiful. The color red makes the women viewing the ad feel as if she can be the "sexy" that the ad is conveying. The red lipstick she is wearing is also worn as a symbol of confidence and beauty, making viewers want to be more like the woman on the ad. Human biologist Charles Fang, conducted research that proved that in our society men prefer women who are symmetrical. Fang concluded that "in general, men have a preference for women with low waist-to-hip ratios... and a face in which the forehead and jaw are in vertical alignment" (Feng). The woman in the ad has a very symmetrical face and body shape, which is supposed to make her appealing to the eyes of men. Women wanting to be more appealing to men will look

at this ad and believe that this is what they need to look like. The measuring tape stopping between the numbers of 28-31 also shows that slim and symmetric is what is desired. The woman in the ad is society's typical beautiful brunette. Lee's ad categorizes beauty into one of size and shape. To Lee, beauty is measurable.

Taking a different perspective on beauty, Levi's ad strives to make one feel comfortable in their skin. In this ad there is a picture of three different young women. Though these women look similar in size, none of them are the same shape. The woman on the far left has blonde hair, while the other two women have brown hair. They all have on white shirts and are touching their skin in their poses. The woman to the far left is smiling, the woman in the middle is looking down at her legs, and the woman to the far right has more of a fierce facial expression. The words written on the ad are pink, and the background of the ad is a simple tan color. Covering the ad from top to bottom are phrases such as "All Asses Are Not Created Equal," "It's About Shape Not Size," "Slight Curve," "Bold Curve," and "Jeans Too Tight in the Waist."

LEVI'S CURVE ID

ALL ASSES WERE NOT CREATED EQUAL

NEW CUSTOM FITS FOR WOMEN. IT'S ABOUT SHAPE NOT SIZE.

JEANS TOO TIGHT IN THE WAIST?	THE WAIST FITS BUT DOESN'T FLATTER?	THE WAIST TENDS TO GAP IN THE BACK?
SLIGHT CURVE	DEMI CURVE	BOLD CURVE
CELEBRATES STRAIGHT FIGURES NO PINCHING AT THE WAIST SHAPES YOUR SEAT, FITS YOUR THIGHS	SHOWS OFF YOUR WAIST FRAMES YOUR CURVES ELONGATES YOUR LEGS	HONORS REAL CURVES NO GAPPING OR PULLING HUGS YOUR WAIST

In the Levi's ad it is apparent that beauty comes in all shapes and sizes. This ad encourages one to break free from society's definition of beauty and be free. The women all have different hair color because the ad strives to bring about equality. The ad is saying that all women are beautiful no matter their hair color. This ad is conveying to readers that everyone is beautiful and should be accepted no matter their size, and this is why they use phrases like "All Asses Are Not Created Equal" and "It's About Shape Not Size." Levi's wants the customers buying the jeans to know that though society may place women in certain categories based on their external appearance, they as a company do not. The pink lettering on the page gives the ad a very happy and feminine vibe, showing that these women love the way they look in their curve fitting jeans.

The woman to the far left is smiling because she feels comfortable in her new jeans, while the woman in the middle is looking down admiring the way the jeans fit to her shape. The woman on the far right has a serious facial expression, showing potential buyers that it is possible to be fierce and beautiful in jeans that fit to your body shape. All of the women are touching their skin in their poses to show how comfortable they are in their own skin. They are also all wearing white shirts to convey to readers that they are still pure and have not let society corrupt the way they view themselves, for they know that they are beautiful just the way they are.

As a young woman growing up in today's society, women are defined based on how they look. I was ugly because I was not skinny. Women are constantly told to "get what fits," in other words, get what makes you look good based on our cultural norms. Women feel as if they are not enough in the eyes of others and will strive to do things and look like others in order to feel beautiful. I was affected firsthand by the influence of others and know what it is like to strive to

be something other than yourself. Lee's ad is an example of the media telling women in society to look a certain way, while the Levi's ad is an example of the media trying to make women feel comfortable with who they are as a person. Whether it is preferred to be heavier set or thin, women today allow society to shape their individual lives. The Lee ad defines beauty as being a certain size and shape, and the Levi's ad does not measure beauty and defines it as being comfortable with whom you are. Slim is not the new sexy and heavier set people are allowed to be comfortable in their skin.

Works Cited

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