

Applied Representational Analysis

Second Draft Assignment for Essay 1

Due September 16 in three copies. Three double-spaced pages, with the ad and the peer reviews you received on the first draft.

Advertisements are a pervasive, yet often underestimated, cultural force in contemporary American society. Although we often find their messages simplistic or stupid—if we bother to interpret them at all—companies would cease to use ads if they weren't incredibly effective. While, obviously, the purpose of an ad is to push product, ads also shape consumers' self images and subtly influence how we picture human relations.

The articles that we are studying concerning advertisement, Anandi Ramamurthy's "Constructions of Illusion: Photography and Commodity Culture" and Susan Bordo's "Beauty (Re)discovers the Male Body," give you sophisticated tools to analyze ads. They also explore important social issues, such as the way that advertisers exploit our insecurities about our appearance to sell a whole range of products.

Choose an ad from a contemporary magazine that features a human image. In three pages of typed and double-spaced writing, analyze the ad carefully. Try to determine what audience it addresses, how it attempts to appeal to that audience, and what image of femininity or masculinity it appears to endorse. Feel free to include other points of analysis, too. Be sure to describe the ad in enough detail that a person who hasn't seen it would still be able to understand what you have to say.

Attach the original ad to the copy you give me, and make photocopies for your peer reviewers. If you want to reuse the ad, you probably want to avoid stapling it to anything.