

Beauty: In the Eyes of the Beholder

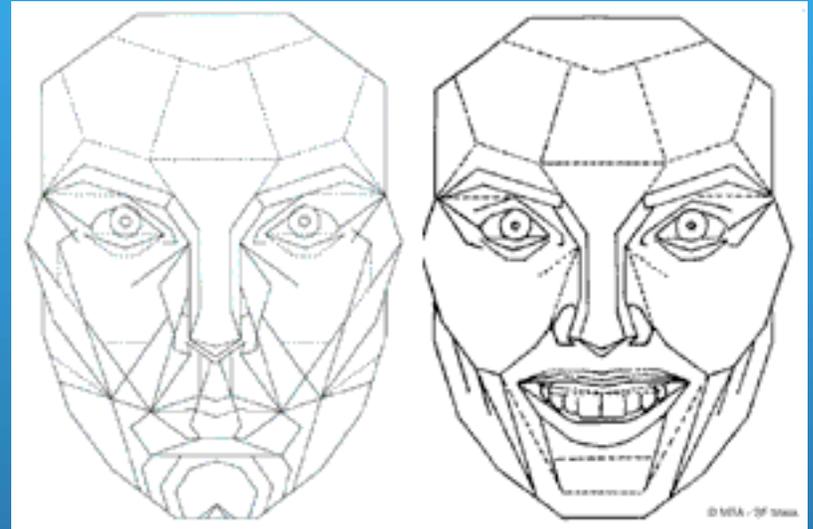
Student Group #1

Universal Perception

Media and Its Influences

Standards of Beauty

- Plato: golden proportions
 - Width of an ideal face
 - Length of a nose
- Victor Johnston: FacePrints
 - Rate given pictures on a scale
 - Best pictures merged
- Dr. Stephen Marquardt: golden ratio
 - “People have tried to understand a beautiful face. It’s an image that is mathematically quantifiable. All life is biology, all biology is chemistry, all chemistry is mathematics.”



Courtesy of Dr. Stephen Marquardt,
<http://www.beautyanalysis.com>.
Used with permission.

Beauty Beyond Facial Symmetry

- Body proportions
 - Preference for women with low waist-to-hip ratios
 - Hourglass figure
- Psychologists (Newcastle University, England)
 - Indigenous people in southeast Peru prefer high WHRs
 - Little contact with the Western world

Images removed due to copyright restrictions. Please see

<http://motivatedphotos.com/?id=13463>

<http://www.istockphoto.com/stock-photo-4216567-fight-fat.php>

Media Influences (US)

- Mean bust-waist-hip measurements of Miss America contest winners
 - 1920s: 32-25-35 (Clara Bow)
 - 1930s: 34-25-35 (Jean Harlow)
 - 1940s: 35-24-35 (Lana Turner)
 - 1950s onward: equal bust and hip ratio (usually 35 or a "perfect 36") and a 23 to 24 inch waist.

Publicity photos of [Clara Bow](#), [Jean Harlow](#), and [Lana Turner](#) removed due to copyright restrictions.

Transnational Exchange of Images

- Douglas Yu of the University of East Anglia in England
 - Preference for hourglass-body probably swayed by advertising
- New beauty standard
 - Advertising
 - Movies
 - Music Videos

Images removed due to copyright restrictions. Please see [Charlie's Angels: The Complete First Season](#); [Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle](#); [Zhang Ziyi in *Memoirs of a Geisha*](#)

Societal Standards of Beauty

Magazine covers removed due to copyright restrictions. Please see:
[Seventeen USA, March 2009](#);
Seventeen South Africa, November 2009;
[Seventeen India, October 2008](#);
[Seventeen Japan, January 2009](#).

Miss Universe

Photos removed due to copyright restrictions. Please see
[Contestants for Miss Universe 2006 Swimsuit Portrait](#);
[Natalie Glebova, Miss Universe 2005](#);
[Zuleyka Rivera Mendoza, Miss Universe 2006](#);
[Riyo Mori, Miss Universe 2007](#);
[Dayana Mendoza, Miss Universe 2008](#);
[Stefania Fernandez, Miss Universe 2009](#)

Body Dissatisfaction

A Globalized Phenomenon

Body dissatisfaction

- Negative personal perception about ones own image
- In women, body satisfaction and weight are closely related
- Correlation between advancing technology and increased prevalence of body dissatisfaction

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.
Please see "[Thin Girl, Fat Shadow.](#)"

“Glossy images of the white-Western ideal - models and movie stars who are tall, able-bodied, rich, disproportionately blond and white, and exceptionally thin - sell everything from cars to nail polish to fitness videos, from California to Calcutta” (Lelwica)

Scope of Presentation

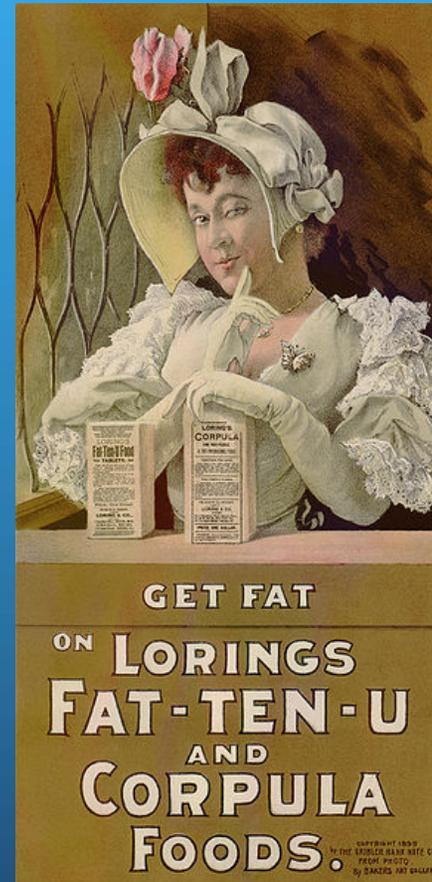
- Limited to women
- Limited to adaption of the “thin” ideal
- Can only examine extreme cases

Explanations

- What does figure represent?
 - Health
 - Economic status
 - Social status

Historically

- Slim waist nearly constant throughout history
 - Represents health and fertility
- Trend for fuller figure in 17th and 18th century



“Fear of Fatness”

- Accompanied economic and public health changes associated with industrialization
- Cultural shift in European societies toward a preference for thinner “slimmer” female body form

Thinness goes global

- Marked increase in eating disorders globally
- Increased availability of “weight loss” products to cater to demand
- Changing beauty ideal

The facts

- Link between exposure to Western media images and likelihood of eating disorders
 - Introduction of television in Fiji
 - Effects on children

A phenomenon in progress

- Eating disorders undiagnosed or misdiagnosed
- Women of older generation have different beauty ideals

So why thinness?

- Debate between:
 - globalized fashion, music and entertainment media
 - generic ailment of affluence, modernization, and the conflicting demands now placed on young women

Cosmetics

Agents of Change



Sarah Bernhardt, June 1877. Image from [Project Gutenberg](#).

Photo of [Solange Magnano](#) removed due to copyright restrictions.

Text removed due to copyright restrictions.
Please see <http://www.cosmeticsurgeryloans.us/>

The Cosmetics Industry is Global

Australia

- USA
- UK
- China and Hong Kong
- Denmark
- Norway
- Thailand
- South Korea
- Taiwan

Skin Color

Role in Perception of Beauty

White Prefers Tanned Skin...

Images removed due to copyright restrictions. Please see

<http://www.tan.sprayking.ca/images/spray-tan1.jpg>

<http://collegecandy.files.wordpress.com/2008/08/28/tanning.jpg>

http://www.sunlounge.com.au/images/mystic_tan_booth.jpg

<http://www.tanningresources.com/images/LotionGroup.jpg>

Asian Prefers Pale Skin...

Images removed due to copyright restrictions. Please see [Photo 1](#); [Mineral Wear Talc-Free Mineral Loose Powder](#); [FANCL Whitening Products](#); any photos of Estee Lauder Soft Clean Rinse-Off Cleanser, ZA True White Cleansing Foam, Kose Sekkisei White Powder Wash, and Diorsnow Sublissime Whitening Radiance Foam Cleanser.

Why???

- In America and Europe:
 - Believe tanned skin shows healthiness
 - Rationale: If you are rich, you wouldn't have to work all day long in Walmart, so you have time to spare on the beach and get tanned
- In Asia:
 - Believe pale skin shows pureness and elegance
 - Rationale: If you are rich, you wouldn't be selling vegetables in a open-door market where the sun darkens you over the years. instead, if you are rich, you would be sitting in an office enjoying air conditioning and stay relatively pale

So it looks like...

wealth

plays a major part in perceptions of beauty

More...

- Tanning: <http://www.tanningfacts.com/>
- Making Pale: <http://eladies.sina.com.cn/beauty/p/2009/0420/1602855646.shtml>

Role of globalization:

Images removed due to copyright restrictions. Please see
“[Japanese Style: Extreme Tanning.](#)” *YoPress*, November 9, 2006.

Case Study (In Egypt)

- Brown skin is preferred because it shows higher social status
- Literary Work Reference:
 - "Yet, Egyptians in lower income and middle class neighborhoods also acknowledge the attractiveness of women of various hues and body types and measure a woman's beauty in terms of non-physical as well as physical attributes. Therefore, I argue that Egyptian notions of beauty consist of a mixture between an aesthetic ideal that may be particularly oppressive for women whose body size, shape, skin color, hair texture, and features differ from the Eurocentric one promoted in mainstream media and a more fluid and flexible understanding of beauty that exists at the community level."
- "Brown Skin is Half the Beauty: Conceptions of Skin Color and Beauty in Contemporary Egypt"

So overall, globalization...

becomes a *centralizing* force in the perception of beauty around the world.

Sources

"Anorexia found in rural Africa." *BBC News*. 5 July 2000. Web.

"Cosmetics to Japan." *Austrade.gov.au*. Australian Government, 29 Sept. 2008. Web.

Crosnoe, Robert, Kenneth Frank, and Anna Strassmann Mueller. "Gender, Body Size and Social Relations in American High Schools." *Social Forces* 86.3 (2008). *Project Muse*. Web.

Efron, Sonni. "Women's Eating Disorders Go Global." *The Los Angeles Times* 18 Oct. 1997. Web.

Feng, Charles. "Looking Good: The Psychology and Biology of Beauty." *Journal of Young Investigators*. Dec. 2002. Web.

"Former Miss Argentina dies after plastic surgery." *CNN.com*. 1 Dec. 2009. Web.

"Japanese Style: Extreme Tanning." *Yopress*. 9 Nov. 2006. Web.

Lee, Diana. "Striving for Asian Beauty Leads to a Universal Standard." *UniOrb.com*. 25 June 2007. Web.

Lelwica, Michelle, Emma Hoglund, and Jenna McNallie. "Spreading the Culture of Thinness from California to Calcutta." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 25.1 (2009): 19-41. *JSTOR*. Web.

Sources

Littlewood, Roland. "Commentary: Globalization, Culture, Body Image, and Eating Disorders." *Culture, Medicine, Psychiatry* 28 (2004): 597-602. *JSTOR*. Web.

"Loans for Cosmetic Surgery in Lebanon." *Bio-Medicine*. Web.

Mazur, Allan. "U.S. Trends in Feminine Beauty and Overadaptation." *The Journal of Sex Research* 22.3 (1986): 281-303. *JSTOR*. Web.

Onishi, Norimitsu. "Globalization of Beauty Makes Slimness Trendy." *The New York Times* 3 Oct. 2002. Web.

Poole, Maurita. "[Brown Skin is Half the Beauty: Conceptions of Skin Color and Beauty in Contemporary Egypt](#)." *All Academic Inc. (Abstract Management, Conference Management and Research Search Engine)*. 20 April 2007. Web.

Riordan, Teresa. *Inventing Beauty: A History of the Innovations that Have Made Us Beautiful*. New York: Broadway, 2004. Print.

"Tanning Indoors is an Educated Choice." *TanningFacts.com*. Web.

"White Asian skin against tanning." *Sunless Tanning Tips*. Web.

MIT OpenCourseWare
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

21G.076 Globalization: the Good, the Bad, and the In-Between
Fall 2009

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.