

Glorious Perfection



In Amy L. Beck's essay, "Struggling for Perfection," she stresses that the standards set by the media for perfection "are responsible for defining what is sexy and reinforce the belief that aesthetic appeal is a woman's highest virtue" (683). Supported by life knowledge and sturdy arguments, Beck delivers a great deal of information to back up her beliefs. Beck says the portrayal of women through the media has a harmful affect in our society, and my experience tells me she is correct.

Comment [L11]: Great opening to the essay and good use of a quote!

Comment [L12]: Nice clear, crisp thesis. Wonderful!

She starts the essay off by stating how the media, through different avenues, uses sex to draw appeal to their products. Some of the examples she uses are Playboy, Victoria Secret, and pornography. She addresses how some argue that the media has no effect on society. This sets the platform for her arguments, by disagreeing with the people who say that the media has no effect on "the way men treat the real women in their lives" (683). When I first heard that statement, my thought was, "Are those women not real?" Beck's experiences working at the psychiatric hospital gave her a first hand perspective into the

Comment [L13]: I'm not sure I follow completely your reaction to the statement. Could you explain what you mean a bit more?

lives of bulimics, anorexics, and others with psychological problems. The first eight weeks at the hospital she worked with anorexia and bulimia victims. To her, society presented these "models," literally very skinny women, for other women to look up to. And these other women only felt accepted if they looked like these models. So, by extreme methods, they lost a lot weight. The last four weeks of her stay, she worked in the main ward with abused women, who were battered by relatives, boyfriends, or family friends. She said that pornography, and other portrayals of women in that matter, distort how men view women. They see them as "ornaments." Towards the end of the essay, she recognizes that "sexually charged images of women in the media are not the only cause of this continuing problem, but they certainly play a main role" (685).

Many women and men see the images in the displays at the mall or in the commercials on TV, and think, "if I looked like that, I would be accepted." I know that, especially in my teen years, I thought that. With time, I've realized there are more important virtues, but there are many people who don't ever come to that realization.

Take my cousin for example. She was a straight A student. She graduated from college with two degrees. She is a professional harpist and pianist. My cousin, who was like a sister to me, was both bulimic and anorexic. Through high school and into college, she was in and out of hospitals. She lived with me during that time. Even before she become anorexic and bulimic, she was a very beautiful person. She was always the prettiest of the cousins in my family. But she never felt like that. No matter what we told her, she demanded perfection. Perfection was what she saw on TV and in the movies. And the media told my cousin, "this model" or "this actress" is perfection. So, she pushed herself towards eating disorders. Not only did it alter her physical appearance, but internally she

Comment [L14]: A feel a bit more summing up of her argument would help—connect the dots back to media portrayals of women.

Comment [L15]: You need a transition sentence here introducing your second half of the essay. Present your view.

Comment [L16]: It would be really great if you could remember a specific instance.

Comment [L17]: Notice your short, choppy sentences. Can you combine some to make them flow. Here is a version:

She was a straight A student who graduated from college with two degrees and is a professional harpist and pianist.

became hollow. When she wanted to impress people, she would act. She was very charming and seemed genuine. And then there were times when I was alone with her, and she would share her emptiness. I would see it in her eyes. Reading this article, makes me think a lot about her. I believe, even though she chose this route, that she definitely was influenced by society to do those things.

Abuse is not something new. Pornography is not something new. Pornography basically makes women (and men), objects to be appealing to the eye. The key is that they become objects to be enjoyed and are for other people's pleasure. That can be a dangerous thing. Pornography is not the only cause of abuse, but, like Beck said, it definitely can be an ingredient for abuse. Just like many women fall prey to wanting to look like models, many men fall prey to this mindset that women are meant for their pleasure. In the particular unit Beck was in the last four weeks of her stay, she encountered women who were badly mistreated. Beck says, "These men [who abused the women] are not genetically predisposed to disrespect and abuse women. Their attitudes towards women were societally conditioned" (685). When they don't feel like their pleasure is met or they are not respected, I believe, in some cases that abuse can be a problem. Like Beck said, this does not apply to all men and women, but it does apply to some. ~~a-~~ And because it does apply to some, it is an issue.

This topic is very important to me, because in a few years I will be raising children. I want to raise them in an environment that is healthy for their development. I don't want my seven year old looking in the mirror wondering if she's fat. I don't want my son to date girls in high school just because he thinks they'll help his status. I hope that they never think they have to measure up to a standard that society has set for them.

Comment [L18]: Notice you are summarizing Beck here within the section of the paper about your experience.

Comment [L19]: Quote could be "sandwiched" better—sentence before setting up the quote and sentence after clarifying its significance.

Comment [L110]: Watch for over using coordinate conjunctions to start sentences

Comment [L111]: You would hardly ever need a comma before because.

Comment [L112]: This is great. Here is your key.

They should do and be what they love. They should love people for who they are. The images on TV and on display at the mall can't express those true values. I think that the media should realize and take responsibility for the impact they are having on our society and make changes.

Feedback on Essay #3:

This is "formative feedback" intended to help you know where you might want to go with this essay if you choose to revise it.

<u>CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION</u>	Score on a 1 to 6 scale (6 being the best)
Understanding of the task and topic The writer has appropriately addressed the topic as well as the rhetorical situation (writer-reader-text-occasion)	<u>5/6</u>
Careful construction and organization The author has shaped their essay with a clear introduction, body, and conclusion (Essay Form)	<u>5</u>
Introduction The writer has written an introduction that connects to the reader, captures their attention, clarifies the issue or topic, and presents a clear point (in the last sentence of the introduction).	<u>6</u>
Development The author has developed each side adequately to get their point across. The author has used both quoted and reported information from a source as well as specific ILLUSTRATIVE STORIES from their experience to support and "SHOW" what "they say" and what the author believes.	<u>5</u>
Handling Quotes The author has integrated quotes well, "sandwiching" them with appropriate commentary before and after. Punctuation of quotes handled correctly.	<u>5</u>
Focused Grammatical Issues: Punctuation, avoiding run-ons and sentence fragments, avoiding agreement problems (pronoun and subject-verb agreement)	<u>6</u>
Clean Copy: Grammatical Correctness Has the author avoided usage errors in verbs, standard word formation, articles, comparatives and superlatives and word choice as well as errors in mechanical conventions like spelling, capitalization and punctuation?	<u>5/6</u>
Essay Score: <u>5</u>	

Comments:

This is an excellent essay. You have a particularly good introduction and you handle quotes really well! Excellent!

I have some feedback on both organization and development. I notice that you have a good section after your introduction summarizing Beck's views. You then shift to the second half of the essay where you express your views and experience. But then you return to summarizing Beck's views (on pornography). Hmm...

I think that part of the problem is that you may not have the kind of first person experience to support your view point on eating disorders as you have for the relationship between pornography and sexual abuse. I think the way around that is to link the abusive behavior of men with the kind of self-abuse that is eating disorders (link but not equate). That may work. Perhaps you don't have the same kind of specific support in this section like you had in the last—that's ok.

You might consider some structural changes to your paper:

Either:

--shift the summary of Beck's views on pornography up to the first half of the paper so each side is clearly divided

--or go back and forth

>Beck's view on eating disorders

>my experience and view on eating disorders

> Beck's views on pornography and sexual abuse

>my perspective on porn and sexual abuse

Grammatically, I am noticing in this paper that you have a lot a lot of short choppy sentences. I recommend that you try reading your paper aloud and see where opportunities are to combine sentences to help the flow. For example, here's one:

I don't want my seven year old looking in the mirror wondering if she's fat. I don't want my son to date girls in high school just because he thinks they'll help his status.

I don't want my seven year old looking in the mirror wondering if she's fat, and I don't want my son to date girls in high school just because he thinks they'll help his status.

Great work on this essay.

LI

