

Chelsie Rimel
Professor O'Hara
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"A New Definition of Feminine"

The 1920s were a progressive decade for women. With the passing of the nineteenth amendment, women were granted the right to vote. Various other laws allowed women to own property and inherit land. Ladies banded together and formed special interest groups to further their social prominence. A group known as the "Flappers" altered people's views on the physical appearance and personalities of women. Flappers donned loose fitting dresses, trousers, and other apparel that was previously reserved for males. Their hair was short, but their hemlines were shorter. Adopting a different look did not mean completely dropping femininity or sex appeal. Flappers drove cars, drank and smoked in public, and were sexually liberated. These women lead independent lifestyles and pursued personal self interest. Lancôme's ad revisits the idea of the autonomous woman who crosses gender boundary lines. Masculine is the new feminine. The commonplaces of Barbie pink and long blonde hair are now giving way to short pixie cuts and blazers as androgyny plays a large role in this commercial. Emma Watson's appearance and mannerisms both allude toward a reformed, uncontrollable woman. She does not look like the girl next door and her mysterious personality poses ambiguous questions. Emma Watson herself personifies the message that the company wants to portray with her progressive style. Lancôme attempts to entice the potential buyer by showcasing Watson's androgynous style, self-assurance, and individualistic traits. Lancôme wants the viewer to believe that it is possible to obtain Watson's looks and confidence by simply wearing the perfume.

Most perfume manufacturers attempt to persuade customers by using a celebrity or famous spokesperson to endorse their product. Dior has used Natalie Portman and Charlize Theron while Chanel has employed Keira Knightley and Scarlett Johansson. All four of these ladies are well known for their roles in popular films. Some have even won Oscars for their work. Emma Watson, the spokesperson in the Lancôme commercial, is no exception. Watson's claim to fame is her role as the brave heroine, Hermione Granger, in the Harry Potter movie series. Audiences across the world have watched her grow from a child into a striking young woman. Although popular, Watson does not fit the typical starlet profile. One will not see her on the cover of tabloids or at the center of a TMZ scandal. She has made it a priority to live semi normal life. In 2009, she attended Brown University for two years until deciding to postpone her education until a later date. Other than her short campaign with Burberry in 2008, her Lancôme promotion is the only advertising experience. A fresh face to the advertising industry, Watson has a look that has matured with age.

Emma Watson's style is progressive and tests fashion boundaries. In 2010, she was advised by her agent not to cut her hair, but she went with her own inhibitions anyway. Her haircut was a transitioning point in her life. Stepping away from a "safe" style and moving towards a more edgy, modern way of dressing. The advertisement flaunts her pixie cut and differentiating clothing choice. Furthermore, using a spokesperson who personifies the character in the video gives the advertisement ethos and credibility. Her style mirrors the chronology of her career as she attempts to identify herself as a mature Hollywood actress. Lancôme capitalizes on kairos with this transitioning point in her career. Similar to her character

in the video, Watson asserts herself as a woman moving towards independence with a modern look to match.

The male figure in the video is awestruck at the sight of Watson as she enters the store. Donning a black hat, button up shirt and tie, a blazer, and lace shorts, she is obviously fashion conscientious. The shirt and blazer paired with the lacy shorts is the perfect balance of menswear and femininity. Her evening wear consists of a ruffled pink dress juxtaposed with a black leather bomber jacket and bold lipstick color that demands attention. Such a combination is unexpected and represents both ends of the male/female spectrum. Her wardrobe exhibits the ideal androgynous look. She eludes confidence and individuality through her clothing choice. The man in the figure cannot help but be attracted to her. Most women are not comfortable wearing menswear and lipstick that makes such a bold statement. Her style risks mirror her unafraid, confident, personality.

It is Watson's self-assurance and confidence that makes her alluring. According to Ezine Articles, confidence is one of the seven most attractive features a man finds in a woman. While in the bookstore, she knows exactly what she is seeking and is not afraid to ask for what she wants. The viewer should also note not so coincidental note that the title of the book she purchases shares the name of the perfume. Leaving a memorable impression, the man cannot get her out of his head; he needs to find this girl. With parallels to Prince Charming chasing after Cinderella a midnight with her glass slipper, the male lead rushes to find Watson with her hat. Note the masculinity associated with a fedora as opposed to a glass slipper. As he approaches a staircase, the clock strikes midnight. Just when he believes that she has gone, Watson comes from around a corner. Like Cinderella, she nonchalantly acknowledges the man.

Appearing to lean in for a much anticipated kiss, she suddenly turns away and laughs. With a bit of fairy tale like magic, the hat dances onto her head. She then turns away and departs, leaving the man wanting more. Watson is no damsel in distress. Her confidence is more masculine in nature as she snubs the man. This refusal leaves the viewer asking questions. Does she like him? Is she simply playing hard to get? Or is she even interested in men at all? Her mysterious and questionable actions add to her elusive psyche. Lancôme asserts that the wearer of this perfume will obtain the same confidence and ambiguous personality as Watson.

Flappers of the roaring twenties would approve of Watson's androgynous style and autonomous personality. She embodies the flapper ideology. In the advertisement, Watson epitomizes a liberated woman— a bold and striking individual. Lancôme wants the buyers of their perfume to stand out. Lancôme hopes that the commercial will appeal to women who find themselves more daring and edgy while encouraging ladies who are not to move in that direction. Essentially, Lancôme asserts that their perfume is Watson's style, autonomous personality, and confidence packed into a pretty, purple bottle.

“Works Cited”

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