Perfect: From the Bottom to the Top

Meghan Trainor, a renowned singer and actress, wrote the song “All About That Bass” to appeal to all people - especially girls struggling with body image.  She effectively does this by using the three rhetorical appeals: ethos, pathos, and logos. The appeals are used in both the lyrics and the video of her popular hit from 2014 to communicate the positive message of how we should be proud of our individual bodies.

Trainor appeals to males and females of different backgrounds and body types by expressing her own character through the lyrics of the song and the visuals in the music video.  She uses lyrics such as, “I ain't no size two” from the start to show the listeners that she isn’t a small, skinny girl, but rather a relatable role model. She uses this quote to directly appeal to her main targeted audience: girls who may not quite fit the stereotypical “perfect” appearance.  Likewise, in the video, she is shown singing and dancing with others of various ethnicities and sizes, representing the inclusion of all people by appealing her message to others with similar appearances to those on screen. She also dances with pride, to show that she is proud of body, not ashamed, and that others should be proud as well.

Trainor also appeals to her viewers and listeners emotionally by boosting their confidence and positivity level with the song and the video. Trainor uses the line, “Every inch of you is perfect from the bottom to the top” to boost her audience’s self-esteem and to say that there is nothing wrong with not being a “stick figure”.  This is supported by a visual representation in the video of her using her hand to point from her toes to her head to show that not one part of the body is imperfect. The upbeat music and bright, pastel colors also create a comfortable and light atmosphere that evoke feelings of contentment and optimism about the listeners’ own personal body image.

Trainor further uses evidence to strengthen her message against the false idea of perfection the world advertises in her lyrics, claiming that she “[sees] the magazines working that Photoshop”.  This implies current magazines Photoshop images to make other girls feel inferior through their altered photos, shown by her usage of the before and after images. By describing this action as “shit”, she creates a connection between the world’s idea of beauty and something undesirable, asking people if the logical course of action to take is to attempt to match a false, edited model or to accept our natural perfection.

Meghan Trainor strategically appeals to her viewers in many ways through her lyrics and music video.  Firstly, she gains empathy by demonstrating to them that she has pride in the way she looks. Additionally, she promotes positive emotions in her listener by reassuring them that size does not define who you are and that you are perfect just the way you are.  Finally, she references evidence to show viewers that there has been incidents of Photoshopped images, but that these promote a negative body image that are best to be ignored, supporting her message that people of all shapes and sizes are beautiful despite what society may tell them.