

Photoshopping Ethics— Arts & Communications Class- Graphics Design Tech

Name _____ Period _____ Date _____

SECTION ONE: CONTENT

Summarize the article in your own words using the Cornell Notes template.

>>>Who is **Valérie Boyer**? What does she want changed?

Why? and What kind of opposition does she face?

Your summary should be written in full sentences and last for at least 1/2 of a page.....

Use full sentences with correct spelling and grammar.

Marks will be awarded based on your ability to correctly summarize the content of this article, as well as your ability to use correct spelling and grammar, and for the effectiveness of your communication.

SECTION TWO: ACTION

The article focuses on one aspect of a growing concern about digital photography: **the increasingly easy ability to change images with software like Photoshop is making us question the veracity (or realness) of the images we see around us.** Do bodies like this really exist? Have the events we see been altered for better effect? And if a photograph can be manipulated, can we really use it as evidence in criminal trials?

It's an issue governments are wrestling with. (The article proves that.) It's also an issue photographers are wrestling with; for over a century, photography has been viewed as being an alternative way to capture the world around you, and now that is changing.

Part **2 of this assignment** in this section is to write a few paragraphs about your **opinion on this issue.** (an short opinion essay)

How much of a threat do you believe digital imaging is to the acceptance of photography in our everyday lives as real?

And what is your **opinion of the code of ethics**? Is it a realistic response? Is it enforceable? If you don't think it is, then how might it be? Do they have to do more promotion for one to be around and used worldwide? (Should it be worldwide or just national?) How should they accomplish that?

Use the 2 sides of the Cornell Notes sheet to write the SUMMARY (section 1) and your OPINION ESSAY (section 2).. Due on Thursday Sept 18t

The New York Times

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FROM THE AUTHOR OF
**MYSTIC
RIVER**

December 3, 2009

Point, Shoot, Retouch and Label?

By [STEVEN ERLANGER](#)

PARIS

VALÉRIE BOYER is 47, a member of the French parliament and a divorced mother of three. She is tall, fashionable and, dare we say it, slim.

But she has also created a small furor here and abroad with her latest proposal: a draft law that would require all digitally altered photographs of people used in advertising be labeled as retouched.

Some think such a law would destroy photographic art; some think it might help reduce anorexia; some say the idea is aimed at the wrong target, given that nearly every advertising photograph is retouched. Others believe such a label might sensitize people to the fakery involved in most of the advertising images with which they're bludgeoned.

Underneath it all is an emotional debate about what it is to be attractive or unattractive, and whether the changing ideals of beauty — from [Sophia Loren](#) to Twiggy — have ever been realistic.

"Michelangelo painted idealized bodies, so the idea of idealized beauty was already there," said Anne-Florence Schmitt, editor of *Madame Figaro*, the newspaper's glossy woman's magazine. "It's a fake debate."

For Ms. Boyer, who has a background in health administration, the fight is really about her two teenage daughters, 16 and 17, and the pressures on young women to match the fashionable ideal of a thin body and perfect skin.

"I got interested in the subject of the body because it's really a mother's reflection," she said. "It's the closeness I have to adolescents that drove me to become interested in these subjects."

It is a topic that consumes her. "If someone wants to make life a success, wants to feel good in their skin, wants to be part of society, one has to be thin or skinny, and then it's not enough — one will have his body transformed with software that alters the image, so we enter a standardized and brainwashed world, and those who aren't part of it are excluded from society."

Her proposed law has yet to be voted on in the National Assembly, where Ms. Boyer sits as a member of the center-right from heavily Socialist Marseille. The legislation is aimed at advertising, though its preamble suggests expanding the measure to other kinds of photographs. Her initiative has already brought her attention, as part of a larger, passionate and confused debate about models, beauty and anorexia.

It's a debate that goes well beyond France. In the United States, *Self* magazine, which champions accepting one's "true self," recently published a thinned-down photo of the singer Kelly Clarkson, with a headline pushing "total body confidence." Lucy Danziger, *Self*'s editor, defended the photo as "the truest we have ever put out there," but many disagreed. There was also a fuss about a bizarrely retouched photo of the model Filippa Hamilton, whose waist was reduced to the width of her head, for a [Ralph Lauren](#) ad in Japan. *Brigitte*, a popular German woman's magazine, decided last month that as of 2010 it would only use photos of "ordinary" women. The editor, Andreas Lebert, said he was "fed up" with retouching photos of what he considered underweight models.

In France, Inès de La Fressange, a former model and clothes designer, calls Ms. Boyer's bill "demagogic and stupid," arguing that the causes of anorexia are complex.

Dominique Issermann, a French fashion photographer, thinks that Ms. Boyer has not only misunderstood the problem, but also the nature of photography itself. "There is this illusion that photography is 'true,'" she said. But a camera can easily distort reality through the use of a different lens without any retouching. "As soon as you frame something you exclude something else," she said, adding that photographs are "a piece of reality, but the reality of the world is different." In family photos, for instance, "Someone always says, 'That doesn't look like you at all.'"

For Ms. Issermann, the problem is not photography, but a "prepubescent style" — a kind of adolescent androgyny, in which skinny, not very muscular young men are paired with skinny, not very curvaceous girls "disguised as women." Still, she said, digital pictures often need retouching "to recreate the emotion that caused you to press the shutter in the first place."

She pointed to her well-known shot of Keira Knightley taken for Chanel. Most people think the picture was retouched to enlarge Ms. Knightley's partly exposed breast, Ms. Issermann said, but in fact the retouching was done "to add a bit on the thigh. She's too thin there."

"Between Botero and Giacometti, the world finds its way," she said. "We still want heavenly people in a heavenly light. It's the paradise of the image."

But there are those in France who support Ms. Boyer's labeling proposal. Philippe Jeammet, professor of psychiatry at the Université Paris Descartes, said it "is the least we could do." He said that photos "are a factor of influence, especially for the most vulnerable young girls." He would go further. "There should even be sanctions," he said. "Retouched photos are a deception, an illusion, and we must think about the consequences."

For Ms. Boyer, the issue is about standards and lying. She was recently struck by a magazine headline that read: "Be who you are!" On the back cover was an obviously Photoshopped picture of a teenager.

"The pictures contradict the message," she said, and that contradiction is evidence of the "schizophrenia" that exists between "the representation of an ideal world, a very thin, tanned and white-toothed woman without wrinkles," and "the plebe who has health problems, who doesn't necessarily have white teeth, has wrinkles and puts on weight."

Ms. Boyer knows what it's like to feel like an outsider. Her parents were pieds noirs who fled from Algeria in 1962 with nothing but "a beach bag, with photo albums, and my mother took the silverware and a doll they had just given me," she said. The experience and the memories pushed her into politics.

Ms. Boyer drew attention last year when she drafted another law, which would make the promotion of extreme dieting a crime punishable by up to two years in prison and a fine of some \$45,000. That law is largely aimed at Internet sites and blogs advocating an "anorexic lifestyle" like the pro-ana (for pro-anorexia) movement, which began in the United States. It passed the French lower house, but is stuck in the Senate.

There are several thousand pro-ana Web sites in France, Ms. Boyer said, and up to 40,000 women suffer from anorexia.

"Children look a lot at the Internet," she said, adding, "even if you're close by, even if you're attentive, even if you love them a lot, that's not enough to protect them. Especially when they target them, because pro-ana blogs are aimed at young girls in particular, they give them perverse advice, like, 'Lie to your mother, say you're going to eat at a friend's house, cut your hair so you don't have to say that you're losing it.'"

But she's also been involved in the government's efforts to cope with obesity, more prevalent in France than many imagine. Two-thirds of French men and half of all women ages 35 to 74 are thought to be overweight, while a fifth of all adults are considered obese, according to a recent study by the Institut Pasteur. Already advertisements for highly caloric foods like soda and candy require labels that, for example, warn people to "avoid eating foods that are too greasy, too sugary, too salty."

Christine Leiritz, chief editor of the French magazine Marie Claire, compared the labels to those Ms. Boyer wants on retouched photographs, suggesting that they will only tell people what they already know.

"Our readers are not idiots," Ms. Leiritz said, "especially when they see those celebrities who are 50 and look 23," like a much-remarked recent fashion shot of [Sharon Stone](#) that appeared this August in Paris Match. "Of course they're all retouched."

Magazines must police themselves, Ms. Leiritz said, but at the same time, "fashion provides a dream" that is important for women. "It's not just explaining what to wear. I think a women's magazine is also partly a dream, which is made possible by a certain perfection in image."

Ms. Boyer herself loves fashion magazines. Shown a French Vogue that had a photograph of a reclining woman's torso attached to a dog's hindquarters, and asked if the photo needed to be labeled as retouched, she grabbed the magazine and said, "Magnificent!"

"I buy tons of women's magazines. I love fashion and I love life," she said. "But it seems to me that as a matter of professional ethics, you have to warn people that the image of the body has been modified."

It's a matter of honesty, she insisted. "Do you think you have to lie in order to dream? We must treat the public as adults, and I think it's a true feminist battle. I don't understand why women's magazines aren't rallying to it."

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Topic: _____

Main Ideas	Details
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Summary

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