Women in media

Sociology, Women

' The Objectification and Dismemberment of Women in the Media-A study on women portrayal in media' Author: Jyoti jain, Lecturer, Amity Business School, Amity University Rajasthan, Jaipur (Raj.) Abstract " Women's bodies continue to be dismembered in advertising. Over and over again just one part of the body is used to sell products, which is, of course, the most dehumanizing thing you can do to someone. Not only is she a thing, but just one part of that thing is focused on. " Jean Kilbourne Modern Advertising is an annual multi-billion Dollar business now-a-days.

Advertising is everywhere - in magazines, on television, in movie theaters, on countless web pages, on busses, in subways and on milk-cartons. In fact, advertisements are so common in our times that we don't even realize we are looking at them anymore. They invade not only our mailboxes, but our minds and in doing so, they contribute to the image we shape of women in ourculture. Women are often presented in a dehumanized way in mass media images, their humanity sacrificed to display the artificial ideal.

Women are not only turned into a thing, but the thing is broken down into component parts, each of which also represents an ideal form. She is dismembered. The debate, whether the portrayal of women in advertising is a serious or overrated issue, has been ongoing for quite some time and the final answer may never be found. Does the objectification of women in advertising have an adverse affect on society? Is there moreviolenceagainst women as a result of these images? Are women being exploited? This paper tries to find out some of the cause and effect of these objectification and dismemberment on women in common. ******** Article type: Conceptual paper Key words: Dismemberment, Objectification, media, advertisementSun

Theme -Objectification of women in media Media that objectify women portray women as physical objects that can be looked at and acted upon-- and fail to portray women as subjective beings with thoughts, histories, and emotions. In reality, human beings are both objects as subjects, as they are physical collections of molecules as well as individuals. To objectify someone, then, is to reduce someone exclusively to the level of object.

Literature review A Definition of Media Objectification Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) coined the term, objectification theory, which suggests that our culture socializes girls and women to internalize an observer's perspective on their own bodies. When young girls and women internalize an observer's perspective of their own bodies, they live much of their life in the third-person. This is called self-objectification. The Objectification and Dismemberment of Women in Media In dismemberment ads the images highlight one part of women's body neglect others.

Magazine ads show a dismembered female body, with parts, instead of the whole, a practice that according to media activist, Jean Kilbourne, turns women into objects. Indeed, the objectification of women is evident in our society where women are constantly sexualized, but the dismemberment of women has yet to receive the consideration and exploration it deserves. Kilbourne (2002) suggested that the dismemberment of women is a monstrous problem in advertising. Typically, dismemberment ads employ female body parts for the purpose of selling a product. Dismemberment ads promote the idea of separate entities.

These ads overtly and covertly encourage a woman to view her body as many individual pieces rather than a whole. Dismemberment ads leave many women feeling that their entire body is spoiled on account of one less than perfect feature. If a woman has less than satisfactory legs, then her potential for beauty is spoiled. In other words, if every body part is not flawless, then the possibility for beauty is ruined. Many women compare their bodies and sexuality to the eroticized images that are plastered on billboards and television and in magazines and movies (Kilbourne, 2002).

With these images bombarding the mass media, it alters the reality and consciousness. This results in viewing women just as pleasure objects and toys; this is the first step in converting women into prostitute. Pleasure and sex which can be bought apart from woman's soul: conditioning men into thinking of women as objects and pressurizing women to " conform" to sex-beauty protocols this de-humanizing continues. It is not about what dress some one is wearing, its hyper reality and politicization of women's bodies which we are objecting. Is Objectification a Problem?

If considered generally to some degree, objectification is not necessarily a problem. It has been a tendency of human nature to look at others as physical beings, and individuals sometimes choose to present themselves as others primarily as objects through their dress or behavior. Objectivity becomes an issue when it is frequent, and when people are commonly presented only as objects and not as subjects as well. Women are frequently objectified in the media. When one see an image of a woman who is

presented passively, and who demonstrates no other attributes aside from her physical or sexual being, that's objectification.

Here are some contemporary examples of women who are commonly (although not always) portrayed as passive objects to be enjoyed exclusively as physical beings: • Sexualized images of women inmusicvideos • Pinup posters of sexualized models • Women in pornography • Waitresses at Hooters Dismemberment ads focus on one part of the body, e. g. , a woman's lips. Hence we get numerous images of lips, legs, breasts, butts, torsos - female body parts. Frequently in such images the head is missing, emphasizing that females are not valued for their intellect, but for their external form, their curves.

Sut Jhally points out that presenting women as fragmented and disconnected body parts detracts from thinking about women as real people with their own intellect, feelings, dreamsand desires. Women become objects for consumption. Measuring the Effects of Objectification through the Use of the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale McKinley and Hyde (1996) developed the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS). The OBCS has three components: body surveillance, body shame, and beliefs about appearance control. 1.

The first element of the OBCS is body surveillance, the degree to which women view themselves as an object. The feminine body has been constructed as an object to be looked at. This construction encourages women to view their bodies as if they were outside observers. Psychological research has proven that there are negative implications for constant self-

surveillance and self-objectification (McKinley & Hyde, 1996; Fredrickson & Noll, 1997; Gettman & Roberts, 2004; Brooks, 1995). 2. The second element of the OBCS is body shame. This encompasses the internalization of cultural beauty standards.

Sadly, when women experience internalization, the beauty standards appear to originate from the self, and many women believe that the attainment of these standards is possible, even in the face of considerable evidence to the contrary. The internalization of cultural beauty standards promotes body shame, body dissatisfaction, anxiety, anddepression(McKinley & Hyde, 1996). 3. The third element of the OBCS is appearance control beliefs. The OBCS relies heavily on the underlying assumption that women are taught to believe that they are responsible for how they look and have the ability and obligation to alter them when necessary.

Convincing women that they can achieve the impossible beauty standards of our culture can have very negative effects. There are certainly instances in which a woman has no control over her appearance, and if this is the case, the woman feels like afailure(McKinley , 1996). The Implications of Objectification Result shown by the different studied conducted on objectification and dismemberment shows that these may contribute to the development of several mentalhealthrisks, includingeating disorders, unipolar depression, and sexual dysfunction.

The subsequent studies attest to the negative implications of objectifying the female body. • Depression & Anxiety Kuring and Tiggemann (2004) conducted a study consisting of 286 undergraduate students (115 men, 171

women). Participants were administered a questionnaire that contained " measures of self-objectification and self-surveillance, measures of the proposed consequences of self-objectification (body shame, appearance anxiety, flow and awareness of internal bodily states), as well as the outcome variables of disordered eating and depressive mood" (301).

The study found that self-objectification leads to self-surveillance that, in turn, leads to body shame and appearance anxiety and in both greater disordered eating and more depressed mood. This finding is only true for women. Contrarily, men experienced much lower levels of self-surveillance. However, the men who presented evidence of self-surveillance experienced increased body shame and appearance anxiety. It is noteworthy that men showed no presence of self-objectification, thus suggesting that women are overwhelmingly more likely to experience self-objectification and self-surveillance.

The rare cases in which men experience self-surveillance, similar emotions and reactions are present (Kuring & Tiggemann, 2004). • Disorded eating habits Fredrickson, Noll, Quinn, Roberts, and Twenge (1998) found that self-objectification contributed to disorderd eating directly. The participants were administered the Self-Objectification Questionnaire, which required them to rank the order and the significance of 12 body attributes by how important each is to their physical self-concept. Their hypothesis posits that anticipated body shame encourages women to participate in disordered eating.

Oftentimes, women who engage in disordered eating are attempting to maintain or gain body satisfaction and avoid the dreaded experience of body

shame. Their hypothesis received support. Thus, it can be safely assumed that our culture's practice of sexual-objectification of the female body has profoundly negative effects on women, and disordered eating is only one of many. • Body Dissatisfaction Study conducted by Baker, Towell, and Sivyer (1997). This study investigated the role of visual media by examining the relationship between body image issatisfaction and abnormal eating attitudes in visually impaired women. Body dissatisfaction and abnormal eating attitudes are frequent effects of our culture's promotion of an unattainable beauty ideal.. The results indicate that visual media may play a crucial role in the development and maintenance of body dissatisfaction and disordered eating (Baker et al. , 1997). • Anxiety & sexual dissatisfaction In a study conducted by Gettman and Roberts (2004), the results demonstrated that the objectification prime led to significantly higher levels of appearance anxiety.

It also led to a decrease in the appeal of physical aspects of sex. This is the first piece of evidence that lends support to the prediction that objectification contributes to sexual dysfunction (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Perhaps sexualizing and objectifying women actually decreases their sex drive rather than increases their sex drive. Conclusion " What women suffer, then, is more insidious than invisibility. It is deliberate erasure. " Undoubtedly, the sexualized portrayal of women in the media has significantly negative outcomes.

These negative outcomes are not only affecting adult women but also young girls. The problematic representations of women in the media deserve our

immediate attention, consideration, and research. Future studies should include: further exploration of the relational barriers between men and women, the centerfold syndrome and its effect on human intimacy, the appeal of physical sex to women and its relationship to the dismemberment of women in the media. References Baker, D. , Sivyer, R. , & Towell, T. (1997).

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