Good essay on digital plastic surgery

Technology, Internet

Article Summary:

In this article, the author discusses how images of celebrities' bodies, in particular female celebrities, are frequently photoshopped to look completely different from the way they actually look. Photo-retouching has become so common that the covers of magazines rarely contain images that have not been doctored in some way. Legs and arms are made thinner, stomaches are made flatter, complexions are made fairer, and teeth are made whiter. Sometimes, the person in the retouched picture looks nothing at all like the person in the original photograph. Not only are actresses and models subjected to this treatment, but so are businesswomen like Martha Stewart and singers like Nelly Furtado. Digital photo-retouching has created an image of beauty that has no basis in reality.

Response to article:

Unrealistic standards of beauty have had a profound impact on my self image. Even when I am aware that an image that I am looking at has been photoshopped, I will still find myself comparing my own face and body to the ones on the cover of the magazine and feeling a sense of inadequacy. Even though I know the image is unrealistic, and a misrepresentation of reality, I will feel that I do not measure up to level of perfection that that image depicts.

It is somewhat embarrassing to admit, but photoshopped images of celebrities – people who are always already beautiful and thin – have made me feel inferior many times in the past. They have made me feel self-conscious about my weight and figure, although I know that I am at a healthy

weight and this fact has been confirmed by my doctors. They have made me feel insecure about my skin, although I know that in addition to the retouching, the models are also wearing make-up, and their photographers have used flattering lighting techniques to further disguise their physical flaws. Especially since I struggle with occasional acne outbreaks, I have sometimes felt inferior because my skin is nowhere near as " flawless" as what I see on magazine racks, in movie posters and on store windows, and in digital advertisements in the numerous websites I visit each day.

Digital retouching presents an image of desirability that I, consciously or subconsciously, compare myself to every time I encounter it. Every time I enter a store, walk past a department store window, or browse to my favorite websites, I am confronted with a reminder that the way I look is not as good as the way other people look. Multiple times a day I am reminded of the blotchiness of my skin, the flabbiness of my stomach, and the dullness of my hair. Multiple times a day, I am reminded of my inadequateness, my inferiority, and my undesirability.

Seeing photoshopped images everywhere I go has made it very difficult to feel good about my appearance under any circumstance. If I have been working out regularly for a while and have begun to lose some weight or gain some muscle, I will still compare my body to the perfectly muscular and toned bodies of photoshopped models and feel ashamed of myself. Sometimes, if I am having a particularly bad acne flareup, I will feel so ashamed about my appearance that I will be reluctant to go out in public at all. In darker moments, my acne has affected me so badly that I even feel subhuman. I know that it is superficial to feel this way, but looks matter.

As I have moved forward in life, I have learned to accept my physical flaws and not to expect myself to look like the images depicted by the media. I am aware that even the models in the magazines don't look like their pictures. I am trying everyday to accept myself, in spite of my imperfections, and to keep my expectations realistic. But sometimes, knowing the difference between fantasy and reality is an impossible task.