The media's impact on society assignment

I Am What I See It is tragic the way today's culture has become so obsessed with having a perfect body type. The ironic thing is the ideal image presented in the media is actually considered unhealthy for many. Why should we, I say we to associate myself with common middle-class American, aspire to be a certain size and shape just because it is commonly shown on TV or the internet, especially when it is considered unhealthy? The only reasonable explanation for this crave of having the perfect body that I can come up with, is the hypnotic enslavement of trying to live a grander lifestyle.

Most of the media advertisements concerning fashion and other material possessions are intertwined with the lavishing lifestyles of celebrities or, more specifically, models. It is the common, middle-class American that is exposed to a " greater" lifestyle through advertisements I. e. commercials, posters, and billboards. In order to feel the empowerment of this superior lifestyle one must try and duplicate the lives of the celebrities and the models used to sell products. It is the uncontrollable desire to obtain the maximum amount of pleasure from life through the necessity of luxurious items that has kept many consumers in mental bondage.

While trying to live according to this higher standard of living, a person can become obsessed with the exact image presented in advertisements. The way commercials have recently been constructed, creating the allusion of involving a particular viewer in the ad, has deemed the exposed to a place where they don't have any self control. The idea of controlling the attention of the audience reaches a point when the viewer is no longer focused on just

the product but now the entire picture. The mind is not just tuned into buying the product, the mind shifts into a fantasy type realm.

The focal point evolves into the complete scenario and the model used to sell the product becomes replaced with the observer. The observer now wants to be placed in that privileged position. With the evolution of the focal point there is, as a result, the intensified desire on a broader scale. For example, a underwear commercial may be have the goal of just selling the underwear, but if the model in the ad is a particular size it can be portrayed in a way that forces the audience to want to impersonate that model.

A simple mentality of the only way I am going to get full enjoyment out of this particular product, is if I replace the model with myself while yet still sharing the same characteristics as the model. If the model has a six pack, then I need to have a six pack. If the model has perfect teeth, then I need to have perfect teeth. If model wears a size 0 in the advertisement, in order for me to be as potentially happy as I should be with the items presented I need to be a size zero. There are many positive and negative effects from this type of mentality.

It could promote good exercise and healthy eating. However, if the viewer strives to become like certain celebrities and models in the media, it is important that the examples are in good health. If the model is emaciated then, the audience is now on a collision course with bad health. And along with extremely small sizes, comes bad health practices to reach those sizes. As I look at the United States I see two responses in particular to the common use of models who are really thin. One has been the yearning to

reach those size zeros by any means necessary, which has led to various eating disorders.

The other response is more evident, and that is a certain rebellion against the smaller size. As some numbers show the United States has a increasing number of obesities, I believe that can be somewhat attributed to the skinnier persons portrayed in advertisements. In the midst of this theory, it is clearly seen how much influence the media can have on a individual. With that much power, the media can easily dictate what is acceptable and what is not. If most of the advertisements use skinny models, then the acceptable size for individuals will become skinny.

If the models shown in the media have no body fat, then the acceptable body type for the individual who is exposed to any sort of media is one that has no body fat. Once the middle class population as a whole has become hypnotized and trained into a mindset of constantly seeking what it acceptable, the power of the media becomes limitless. The only hope is to somehow find a way to make all appearances acceptable including different sizes and shapes. What are some steps to changing this fad? My solution would be simply to attack the source of the problem which is the constant usage of the emaciated prototype model.

If various models are used in advertisements, such as those who embody our diverse culture- Tall, short, black, white, skinny, and fat; the obsession with becoming the model who wears a size 0, or a model who is emaciated and anorexic would not be as apparent. As a result people would not feel as self conscious about their image, and less concerned with a standard size or

shape. Once this particular insecurity is eradicated, I would also assume that advertisement companies would become more successful. Merchandise would become appealing to a more expansive range of people. But the question is, who is going to take that first step?