

# The body in consumer culture



Through out history the body has been a major subject of study, A. Howson view of the body in the eyes of consumers today suggests a great deal about society and where their morality and figures of importance really lie. In this essay Howson explores a major deal of aspect that deal with the perception of the body in our society today as well as past conceptions of what the body used to stand for. Howson begins the essay with the breaking down of the different aspect of what the body means, followed by how it is perceived.

By breaking this analysis into the concepts of: •Consumer culture • Identity •Plastic surgery Howard closely scrutinizes the different perceptions of what consumer culture has become according to appearance has a major influence on the way people look today. Consumer culture Howson argues that society no longer purchases goods and services for their use to, however the emotion behind the purchase is self gratifying. In essence people are no longer going out to get the things thy want, but they are going out to get the things they desire and don? necessarily need. The reasons behind this change is defined simply in stages of consumer culture and its life span. The stages consist of the following:

- Production of goods and services Goods and services used to be produced in such a way people knew exactly what they were going to get when they walked into the store, from color of product and variety (limited at the time) also if the shop keeper would recommend it. Consumption with in the early times was a functional purchase and not a desired one. Advertising growth As advertising became more of an integral element of society, more and more producers of goods and advertising created perceptions that became the norm in order to create a bigger market share by telling consumers what

they should look like and what they should wear in order to be a part of an ever popular culture of consumerism.

- Technological advances Due to the fact that technology played a major role in the consumer culture, more and more people were getting the opportunity to work shorter days and still have the opportunity to go out and purchase goods and services. Increasing Wages During post war years more people were being paid more money as there was more opportunity to go out and buy more products and services in a booming economy.
- The department store Society was then introduced to the department store. This concept of shopping was aimed at bombarding the consumer with information about product and how much it would be influencing the people around them and create the concept of lifestyles. Identity

Howson believes that identity of consumers is not really known, due to external factors such as advertising constantly telling people what to wear, where to go, what to eat and what is considered beautiful, that consumers are being controlled on a higher level and they do not realize it. This is also evident via lifestyle choices that people make and eventually trickle down to the people around them. Advertising has a major role to play in all of this as it is our daily porthole to what is new in the world today, where can I get it and how much roughly does it cost.

Advertising is a fundamental aspect of consumer culture and reaches out to a large array of people from different social and economical background, This in turn makes over indulging seem normal and accepting credit as a normal way of life. Plastic Surgery The craze behind our society today has

become increasingly addictive and is not causing more harm than reconstruction. As more and more people can now afford things that were unheard of for the common working class individual are readily available now.

Plastic surgery is just one of those topics. A lot more people are going under the knife in the pursuit of consumer beauty. My thoughts I personally think that our society has gone crazy in the pursuit of beauty. In the case of consumer culture, we have lost our values and what we used to believe in due to the fact that an industry has come out and told us what we should do with every breathing moment of our lives, something has to change quickly or we will loose ourselves in a decade.