

Model designs essay



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Just by browsing a few magazines or looking at the latest fashion trends a person will be convinced that 'thin is in and therefore attractive'. This is primarily rooted in how fashion industry use models which are almost always skinny. Designers are usually blamed for creating dresses that fits only to women size 5 and below. Models are required not only to be thin but to be tall, have a fair and flawless usually white complexion and shiny hair.

It do not pose a real problem if these features are normal for most women and nobody would mind it if there are no complications and abnormalities that arise from advertising 'thin as attractive'. However, it is not normal and there are a number of complications with a wide range of the greater public being affected. This essay ought to answer the question whether the modelling industry bear any responsibility in providing healthy, realistic, physical role models for young women? It is a case that needs critical evaluation since it does not only concern the well-being of the models but of thousands of woman who follow fashion trends.

While some may argue that it is the responsibility of the individual if she would believe and follow the fashion industry, an initiative from the industry itself will not only hasten but would recreate a new definition and a more realistic 'model'. Sharlene Hesse-Biber, author of 'Am I thin Enough Yet?' quoted Pediatrics in their 1988 issue wherein they generalized that 'adolescent girls and women have a general conception of attractiveness which do not conform with biological attractiveness or is not an actual standard of a healthy body' (page 100).

This essay would like to put forward that indeed modelling and fashion industries are responsible in providing role models for young women. Since the current fashion industry has a negative effect in maintaining a healthy depiction of a role model for young women, this essay would like to put forward that the fashion industry should change their standards for models and design clothing and fashion in general that will suit a normal healthy women. The eating disorders that usually connected with the modelling industry's depiction of beauty are anorexia and bulimia. Anorexia is the fear of getting fat or losing control of their food intake.

Bulimia is characterized when men and/or women eat large amount of food followed by self-induced vomiting and/or using laxatives (Dawson 2001).

Hesse-Biber (1996) explains that although the number of pre-teens who are affected by what she termed as ' fashion cult' are not yet anorexic; most of the young adolescent and teenagers are documented to have ' fear of fat'. Despite being informed that they have ' normal body weight' and proper nutrition most teenagers undergoes extreme dieting to cope with what is attractive as they are seen in television, magazines and other media.

Furthermore, Hesse-Biber (1996) reported that the practice of extreme dieting also leads to ' nutritional dwarfing' described as having ' short stature and delayed puberty. CBS highlights the report of Tracy Smith regarding how consumers, most prominently teens try to look the same way as fashion models. Smith did an interview with model Christine Alt who told her how much the industry makes ' models' fit into a shape and size that not all women can do (2007). Models themselves fall as the primary prey of the

fashion industry. Models try to fit from one size to a smaller one as designs gets thinner.

Kelly Cutrone a fashion show producer is quoted in saying that clothes simply ‘ look better on taller, younger and thinner models’ (Smith, 2007).

Nonetheless, there are recent incidents of models fatality due primarily to anorexia. Baroness Kingsmill is quoted by BBC news requiring models to show their health proof. Baroness Kingsmill is the head of Model Health Inquiry which repeatedly tries to ban models under 16 years old. Madrid Fashion Week (Smith, 2007) on the other hand banned US size 0 and requires models to at least have at least 18. 5 body mass index.

Focus on model’s health was questioned after several models died due to eating disorder/s and unhealthy lifestyles. One of them, Ana Carolina Reston died because of infection that was caused by anorexia in 2006. London Fashion Week also recommends that there must be an urgent establishment of health education and awareness programme among model agencies (BBC. co. uk, 2007). The Council of Fashion Designers of America Diane von Furstenberg also states that ‘ awareness’ is the prime goal, for now, since it would be terrifying for the models to know that their BMI’s were not enough or that they have eating disorders (Critchell and Scott, 2008).

Fashion industry basically is an institution that is fuelled by innovations and trends in clothing and accessory designs. The fashion industry is only concern with what the models are supposed to wear and not how the model/s will fit in the clothing. However, due to the fact that ‘ thin’ has been in season or ‘ in fashion’ for as long as twenty years, it is not only a trend but

a custom for designers to create clothing that fits a size zero. Indeed models nowadays are not valued for their curves but for their ‘ hanger-like’ way of showcasing the designs in the runway.

With ‘ super-thin’ models, designers would not need to adjust the curves in their work to look good in one model, instead they only need to create clothes that will fit and look good in a hanger. Salkind and Rasmussen (2008) states that ‘ eating disorders are rare or even unknown to cultures that do not place emphasis thinness as a standard of beauty’ (page 311). They also found a relation with an increase of eating disorder in countries as thinness becomes a cultural ideal. Another author, Anna Motz (2008) found out that eating disorder such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa is over-represented in women.

Nevertheless, it cannot be generalized that socio-cultural factors alone contribute to the prevalence of eating disorders in women since not all women experience such disorder(s) (p. 189). Anna Motz (2008) further discussed that in a feminist perspective, ‘ thinness’ is not the sole outcome of the fashion ‘ beauty cult’. She elaborated two other, flawlessness and youthfulness. Modern technology also proves to promote these three in terms of dermatology and cosmetics. Several techniques are offered just to maintain a flawless outlook. Several advertisements and product endorsements focus on looking younger.

With these regard, culture and gender meanings are usually blamed for the self-harm, particularly self-starvation that prevails in women of modern societies which instead of being criticised is still being celebrated and

commercialized. Sarah Chase (2008) presents the importance of magazines in shaping femininity and masculinity among teenagers. While men look at women, women look at themselves as being looked at, according to Chase. Magazines require women to maintain a high standard of physical appearance as described in the magazines.

To this extent they must follow the beauty myths and cultural ideals as dictated by the fashion industry. 'Luxury and fashion were symbols of power, brilliantly exploited by rulers and avidly pursued by the nobility' (Steele, 1998). This can be one of the underlying reason why and how fashion gains popularity. Being fashionable is almost tantamount to being luxurious since fashion is made to please the elites who are usually the patrons of designers. Luxury, on the other hand represents power. Fashionable, in a sense, also depicts power as it influences other people (Steele, 1998).

While models tend to wear clothes that are mostly size 2 to 0, an average woman is believe to range from size 8-12. Such difference not only makes it hard for ordinary women to be in-fashion but also set unrealistic goals for aspiring models and trendy people. Studies (Chase, 2008; Motz, 2008) undermine the fact that most female teenager believe that modelling is a fabulous job. Thus, they look forward to become one even in their own terms. Becoming a trend setter or simply being known as fashionable somehow increase self-confidence and self-worth. It is therefore crucial that models resemble as a 'role model' themselves.

In connection, the standard for beauty and slimness must be changed to adapt with healthy living and lifestyle. To do this, designers must create their designs in response to what people actually need instead of creating clothing that only fits a selected few. Media must also change how they depict women by showing more curves and promoting health in their articles and respective media spaces. The fashion industry as a whole should not promote thinness and expand awareness of the risks that accompanies modelling industry. Certain do's and don'ts regarding dieting and weight loss program should also be lectured to models as well as the public.

The importance of a balanced diet and the different effects of starvation are crucial to convince models that a need for change is utterly necessary. Most importantly, women most especially pre-teens should be informed regarding the ' beauty myths' and the ' thinness cult' and how it can possibly be fatal or destroy one's life. It is more important and beneficial for all concerns if the fashion industry would revise their sense of beauty into something that shall cater the need of the greater public. After all, the public does not, in itself, exist for the fashion industry; instead fashion and modelling industry exist for the public.