

Amy Ford

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PART I

A girl in middle school sees an ad for getting thin. She decides to starve herself in pursuit of 'beauty'. Anorexia hooks her in and pulls her down. She is goaded on by thinspiration sites until her heart stops.

A model walks down the runway, her arms are all bone. 'This is beautiful' people tell her. Her legs are as skinny as twigs. 'That is beautiful' people tell her. Her heart slows down, and stops. 'You are beautiful' people tell her.

You see? This is what happens all the time. I have chosen this topic, body image, because of this. Someone needs to tell people the truth they shy away from. The topics I will unveil: eating disorders, modeling, media and the history of body image.

Anorexia nervosa and Bulimia nervosa. These are two of the nations most common eating disorders. Anorexia, is starving yourself and requires a lot of self control. According to Lori Gottlieb's article, "Body Bullies", 1% of young women develop anorexia. In Hoffman and Sargent's article, "Eating

Disorders”, that can be found on SIRS database, states that one out of ten eating disorders lead to death. Vanessa Rancano tells people in her article published by NPR.org in 2015, that anorexia is serious and is more likely to cause death than any other mental illness. Bulimia is when a person binges on food and then force themselves to throw it up. Bulimia has disastrous effects on the body. When you constantly throw up it can damage your stomach. Over 90% of people with eating disorders are young women.(Hoffman and Sargent) Now let's talk about the main cause of eating disorders. the main cause of eating disorders is media.In fact seeing artificially perfected images can hurt your body image. In 2012, “Dangerous Online Culture Glorifies Eating Disorders.” was written by Brooke Auxier that told people, 10 million women or affected by eating disorders. But, let's take a step back. It’s important to take care of your body and love it the way it is. Remember you can be clinically overweight and still be healthy. "The media are so much a part of these girls' lives, that it almost becomes the air they breathe, the water the fish swims in, and it doesn't get noticed." (Brown) Jane D. Brown is stating that media becomes a regular thing for girls that sometimes the dangers go unnoticed.

If you know someone with an eating disorder, reach out to a school counselor or therapist.

Models are prone to body shaming and negative body image. Their job entitles them to be the skinniest that they can be. 54% of models have been told to lose weight. Models are more likely to have an eating disorder. If you gain weight in the model industry you might lose your job.(Neighmond, NPR) So models turn to anorexia and bulimia to solve that problem. In Julie Mehta's article she states that one hundred percent of fashion photos are retouched or changed. Only two percent of girls consider themselves pretty.(Ashley Graham, TEDX) Models are starving and killing themselves just so we can get that glimpse of a perfect look that we can never achieve, but are willing to kill ourselves in pursuit of that so called beauty. Younger and younger girls are joining this industry and tearing their lives apart. " It's an industry that defines perfection from the outside in." says Ashley Graham, a plus-sized model in her TEDX talk. I agree, she is saying that the model industry takes girls who are pretty on the outside, not the inside. She's right, if take time to look at the pictures in your magazine, the people in it don't look like real people. They have plastic looking eyes, noses, mouths and hair. Plastic legs and arms. The

photos are kind of creepy when you think about it. Modeling is what almost every girl dreams to be, but if she found out the ugliness in the beauty industry I wonder if she would feel the same way.

Now, let's talk about media. An average American sees around one thousand five hundred ads a day.(Johnsen,SIRS) Whether it be about toys, makeup,clothes, cars, houses, apps or phones. They all influence us in some way. We talk about the funny ones with our friends. Point out the sexist ones to our family and sigh over another car commercial. Media is highly influential to us in all forms. Media is one of the main cause of eating disorders. Teens are persuaded to buy and use cosmetics. In fact, over 300,000 teens have used some sort of cosmetics.(Mehta,"Pretty Unreal") Media takes women's bodies and turns them into artificial beings. They make them seem sexy as if that is the only good trait a woman can have.

Which do you think is a real tragedy? Hundreds of African children starving or malnourished, or finding a gray hair? Hurricane survivors stranded without food, or being a little over average weight? Now, these changes might be important to you, but they are certainly NOT tragedies. Media changes our lives. It can change our view of things and hurt our self

esteem. It's important that we don't chase after that perfectness and love ourselves for who we are. Media shouldn't change us.

Body image has been an issue for a long, long time. Before WWI girls barely thought of their looks and instead focused on work and smarts.(Brumberg XXI) But, some women still struggled with their body image, even with the absence of media. Less women had problems with their bodies, but it was still there. In the 1830's, Queen Victoria of England was body conscious, she hated her hands and attempted to cover them up with rings and gloves.(Brumberg XVIII) In the 1920's fashion gave women's bodies a new purpose, to look as pretty as possible. Film added to this idea, the women were portrayed in more and more romantic movies.(Brumberg 98) In some ways film was the first media to influence girls to be skinnier and prettier. In the 1880's girls were happy about gaining weight and eating food.(Brumberg 99) When the 1920's rolled around that view had changed. Girls of all ages were obsessed with 'slimming' or dieting. Girls wanted to be like actors in movies and people in magazines,(Brumberg 99) this is another example of early media influence. In 1995 girls considered the perfect body to be 5 feet and 7 inches tall, weighing 110 pounds. Verses in 1920, where 125 pounds was

considered the ideal.(Brumberg 119) If I had to guess it was an increase of media that changed the ideal, perfect body. In the 1960's, body shaming became more popular, phrases such as " I'm so fat." and " I hate myself." were to be heard regularly in the halls. (Brumberg 119) Lately American girls have been vigilant about their weight. Watching it carefully and checking their bathroom scale. In the late 90's dieting became a normal thing for girls, families did not try to stop their daughters from starving themselves and a skinny girl was desirable. By the year 2000, the perfect, ideal body had changed yet again.(Brumberg 123) Instead of the skinny female look, girls were inspired to work out and get stronger. To have muscles instead of just bones. This was not as bad as dieting or starving yourself. Women as well as men worked out constantly. But, of course. Some worked too hard, injuring themselves or becoming exhausted. The pursuit of bodily perfection, once considered vain and selfish has become an obsession.

For years media has badly affected girls body image. Eating disorders are no longer rare and dieting is a normal experience. The conditioning of the body is a lifelong endeavor. Media has shown girls unattainable beauty, pictures are photoshopped and female politicians are picked apart for their

looks, not their ideas. Girls are stereotyped and disrespected, paid less and sexually abused. The media takes these serious things and twists them into meaningless spats. Young girls are taught that you have to be skinny and frail. That you should be whiny and obsessed with fashion. Girls are folded into their molds and get stuck in media's stereotypes. Only we can change media's perception of girls bodies. Before it's too late.

PART II

My research question is how media affects girls body image? I chose this topic because my mom struggled with her body image and I myself have struggled with my body image. Some people might consider the media harmless to girls and others disagree strongly. Companies are driven by the profit of beauty products. Based on my research I have found that media affects girls body image badly. From eating disorders to modeling, media affects girls negatively.

One opinion on my topic is that media affects girls badly. This statement is backed up by a scientific study done in a land that had almost no exposure to media. When media was introduced bulimia cases rose 11%, and 50% of girls who watched TV more than three days a week were more

likely to describe their bodies as too fat. Media had been introduced to this place and after that happened girls hated their bodies more. They contracted eating disorders and dieted more.(Mulliniks, SIRS.)

Of course, companies that sell cosmetics have a different opinion. They have to, their main market is with ageing women and teenagers. They encourage girls to be skeptical about themselves and to buy more products. This way, they get more money. Loreal in their annual report in 2016 were earning 32 billion dollars and their marketing style seems to be working. So why change their skinny models? (Loreal Annual Report 2016).

The answer that I have found for my research question is not shared by everybody, some people say that girls are in no way affected by media. I disagree, one of the main causes of eating disorders is media. 65% of eating disorders are linked to bullying, and cyberbullying is common. This happens on media. There are thinspiration sites all over media and promotion of anorexics and unreachable skinniness.

My topic is valuable to bring up because it is killing people and we can change it, but we aren't. Eating disorders are heavily caused by media and people die from them every day. We can boycott beauty products and be kinder to each other about our bodies, it is possible to be kind to other

people. Magazines can show people who aren't artificial and people whom we can relate with. This should be happening, but it isn't.

Throughout this project I have come to understand more about **why** people get eating disorders, I have learned how truly hurtful even the simplest ads can be to a girls body image. " the brand doesn't sell extra large sizes because they don't want larger people shopping in their stores." (Abercrombie+Fitch CEO Mike Jeffries) This quote is simply unacceptable! I thought things were getting better but as I dived deeper into this topic I learned that very few things have changed. I mean, this statement is borderline segregation!

I love this topic because it makes me angry. Good angry and passionate angry. I have struggled with deadlines and my interview. I did not enjoy typing up my interview because it feels blocky and uncomfortable. I am looking forward to my MGP and am enjoying typing up this paper. I still want to know what was the first case of an eating disorder and how people handled it. I want to know this because it would be interesting to know how methods have changed. I also would like to know why people bully other people about their bodies. Why? Is it because they don't like theirs or is it because that's what people expect girls to do to other girls? Maybe it's

because media represents that? Also, why are people's worth based on how they look? I mean, I get that its ideal for mating but, we um, don't really need that anymore. Beauty has been a struggle for the longest time, changing shape so often in the dreams of young girls. Recently media has been a big player in changing the image of beauty. It's a wonder nobody knows the real beauty, we humans are so blind that we misinterpret it so often. Real beauty is not a skin we put on to cover our hearts, nor is it a race, color, hair style or weight. Beauty is loving our bodies, to be at peace within and to bloom with kindness, I know we can change the image of beauty.

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This report is stocked full of facts about how many cosmetics they sell
worldwide. How much people spend on them. This report is only a year old,
and very helpful in seeing how we are affected by advertisements.

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From the 1800's to present day, Brumberg shows how different variables
come into play with a girls growing body and insecurities.

Plus-size? More Like My Size | Ashley Graham | TEDxBerkleeValencia.
Performance

by Ashley Graham, TedX, 2015.

Ashley Graham is a plus sized model, in her Tedx talk she tells people
about her experience in the beauty business. She talks about defying
stereotypes while being a plus sized model.

Stripping away negative body image | Lillian Bustle | TEDxJerseyCity.
Performance by Lillian Bustle, TEDX, 2015.

Ending the Pursuit of Perfection. Performance by Iskra Lawrence, TEDX, 2017.

Chronicles of Anorexia: The Girl, the Mirror and the Fridge. Performance by Harriet Manaker, TEDxYouth.2015

Looks Aren't Everything Believe Me, I'm a Model. Performance by Cameron Russell, TED, 2013.

After Anorexia: Life's to Weigh Your Cornflakes. Performance by Catherine Pawley, TEDX, 2017.

This TEDX talk by Catherine Pawley is about her struggle with anorexia, it takes us into the reasons why she turned to anorexia and how she finally made it to recovery, barely escaping with her life.

The Business of Beauty is Very Ugly. Performance by Carrie Hammer, TEDX, 2016.

Have You Hated Your Body Enough Today? Performance by Michelle Elman, TEDX, 2017.

Stop Hating Your Body; Start Living Your Life. Performance by Taryn Brumfitt, TEDX, 2017.