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*Body Image*

Throughout the course of time, body images for both men and women have changed drastically. During the 1800s, the true essence of beauty for a woman was curvy and full figured. However, unlike today, the ideal image of a woman is skinny and somewhat fit. On the other hand, the average man today is perceived to be a body builder- muscles and no fat. “Between the 1880s and 1920s, that pleasant image of fat thoroughly, changed in the United States” (Fraser, 597). Before this time, women were considered sexy and beautiful if they were heavy. Americans knew that the extra layer of fat meant you that you can afford to eat well and be able to fight off contagious diseases (Fraser, 596). As time progressed, the ideal voluptuous woman or man changed to the new ideal of “it was glamorous to look sickly” (Fraser 598).

“Thinness is, at its heart, a peculiar American preoccupation” (Fraser 601). According to Fraser, this statement is very true. Today, there are girls and older woman who will idolize models to, hopefully, one day be just like them. Models are some type of motivation and inspiration for women today. Women can probably admit that pictures of gorgeous, thin, and Photo-shopped women are plastered on mirrors or walls to ensure their determination to be them. In fact, Fraser states that “a cultural obsession” with weight became reputable in our country when important factors of life preferred thinness as the epitome of beauty- symbols, medicine, and modernity.

Some people in society would agree that “sickly skinny: is not true beauty. However, this is the trend for models, such as Kate Moss. According to the article by Terrance Rafferty, when Calvin Klein featured ads of Kate Moss on New York City buses, the public did not approve of it. For example, the ads were “routinely defaced” with graffiti saying “FEED ME.” Unfortunately, this negative feedback for this one ad has not changed the view on models. Although some see sickly skinny as an attractive appeal for women, others see it as complete sabotage of true inner and outside beauty.

Over the last few decades, the idea of sexy and beautiful has changed. Looking back at images of full figured models from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and then skinny ones from today, society has definitely changed. Marilyn Monroe was known to be one of the biggest sexual icons. Along with the other women such as Mae West, Clara Bow, Diana Rigg and Barbara la Marr, they were all able to look sexy and beautiful with clothes on. Beauty was not about being naked, super skinny, and having Photoshop changing you. Point blank, these models portray true beauty inside and out. They were all confident in themselves. For the other pictures with Jessica Alba, Kate Upton, Megan Fox, Sofia Vergara, and Rihanna they are all naked or half naked. The right question to ask is: How are these pictures sexy and beautiful? They are being portrayed as sexy symbols rather than beautiful women.

On the other hand, the ideal man has also changed. During the early 1900’s, the handsome and sexy look for men was sophisticated dress like Gary Cooper and James Cagney. For today, the ideal sexy man is with muscles and a flat stomach with six packs. For example, Channing Tatum, Matthew McConaughey, and Taylor Lautner are all shirtless in their pictures. Basically, the fewer clothes a person has on, the sexier they are.

“They thin ideal that developed in the United States from the 1880s to the 1920s was not just a momentary shift in fashion; it was a monumental turning point in the way that women’s bodies were appraised by men and experienced by woman” (Fraser, 601). So in other words, people can say that the idea of voluptuous and full figured is getting skinnier as the days go on. Marilyn Monroe was known to be voluptuous; however, now Sophia Vergara is considered voluptuous. People can understand the idea of curvy and full figured women. It means that a woman is wide on their hips and has big breasts. Women that are skinny, but curvy are the ones that should be plastered on walls for motivation. They feel good about themselves and can say that they are confident. They would probably agree that sickly skinny is not attractive.

To conclude, one question that society should ponder about is: Why would anyone want to walk around looking sick when they can walk around looking like they actually take care of themselves? Staying fit and healthy is completely different from looking anorexic. Eventually, if society does not change his or her views of the ideal man or woman, this ideal might possibly become something so extreme that people are going to walk around looking like skeletons. This is not going to be a pretty sight, and, or healthy whatsoever. Therefore, society needs to work on changing views and working towards something beneficial to keep people’s motivation strong to stay healthy and fit the right way.