Globalization of Eating Disorders Review

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Susan Bordo, in the Globalization of Eating Disorders (Bordo), conducts an observational study of different societies across the world in a bid to understand what has led to the upscale in the number of eating disorders in the world. As her thesis statement, the author aims to show how the western media images have affected several cultures all over the world, leading to them to change their eating habits and develop eating disorders in a bid to fit the advertised body types.

The author on supporting her thesis, argues that most societies, before being exposed to the western idea of the perfect body by the media, had an acceptance and tolerance of people having big (fat) bodies, and in some societies, this was a symbol of health and wealth (Bordo). However, this way of thinking was altered when western images in magazines and television shows started to glorify thin/slim bodies labeling them as the ideal body to have. The effect this had, is that people and especially women started practicing eating disorders such as fasting and dieting to lose weight and have the 'ideal' thin body.

In making her arguments, the author points out how different cultures globally, from women in Fiji to those in Central Africa, and Nigeria have been forced to depart from their culture of embracing voluptuous women. The author also points out the power images have, in affecting young people's minds and way of thinking. Such images, according to the author, give the young people the illusion that no matter their background, as long as they have a particular type of body, they can be universally accepted regardless of their gender, race, or ethnicity (Bordo).

In conducting her research, Susan Bordo aimed to help societies all over the world, especially young people, to be more tolerant and embrace different body types. More

importantly, she aimed to dispel the culture of people utilizing eating disorders to fit the advertised 'ideal' body. As an additional objective, the author also wants society to embrace people with huge bodies and not force them to conform to the 'ideal' slim body.

In delivering her message, the author utilizes a descriptive rhetorical mode of delivery. She does this by creating for us a visual picture of a girl obsessed with her image in the mirror, and whose aim is to lose weight to look like her favorite musicians (Bordo). On top of that, the author tries to paint us pictures of different societies such as Fiji and Nigeria and how their culture was, before influences from magazines and television shows.

The research by Susan Bordo was quite an eye-opener. Fashion magazines, television shows, and fitness advertisements have harmed society by instilling in people's minds that only one type of body is the right one. Social media with sites such as Facebook and Instagram have also worsened this state of affairs. The presence of social media models and influencers has added extra pressure on the upcoming generation to have a particular type of body to match the one they see these socialites that get thousands of 'likes' have. Such pressure to look a certain way may cause the young people to adopt and develop eating disorders, and it may send some into depression when they cannot achieve their desired body type.

As a possible solution, one way to change this culture of idolizing thin/slim body and villainizing a huge body is for magazines to normalize using models with huge(fat) body shapes. Another culture change is for celebrities to embrace having huge/voluptuous body shapes rather than all of them trying to fit the stereotype of curvy slim bodies and thus add the pressure. One celebrity who is currently leading the way in this is Lizzo, who has achieved tremendous success being a plus-size woman who has accepted and embraced her body.

References

Bordo, S. (n.d.). The Globalization of Eating Disorders. *Thinking, Reading, and Writing About*

the New Global Era, 18-21.