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Week 3 Reading Analyses

This week’s readings have been very intriguing and eye-opening relating to women in media and how body-shaming comes into play. In Susan Bordo’s article “Never Just Pictures” discusses the impact of creating a norm that unhealthy models are what every woman should aspire to look like. However, Bordo explains the negative messages portrayed within that context. She mentions how “fat is the devil, and we are continually beating him”. Or that “children in this culture grow up knowing that you can never be thin enough and that being fat is one of the worst things one can be”. It is noticed by these statements that Bordo’s theme is to highlight the reality of body-shaming or the expectation many women and now men feel to look a certain way in order to be considered ‘attractive’. She argues that eating-disorders are “overdetermined in this culture”. Due to not only the expectations that women have toward their bodies but anxiety also comes into play. Whether that involves the types of nutrients they put into their bodies, or the needs and physical vulnerabilities that they have that is not in their control. It is normalized to eat healthy or not to eat fatty foods at all. It’s common to have women eat one bad thing and consider it a “cheat day” or to burn it off at the gym right after. However, Bordo argues that these types of anxieties are “deep and long-standing in Western philosophy and religion”. She mentions that consumer culture is encouraging us to eat what we’re craving, but then we feel a sense of guilt afterwards as media glamorizes self-discipline. A concept grasped within this reading was the irrational ideas based around not only what women should look like, but the pressure that men have too. This ideology affects men and women and it’s important to know how we should teach children not to be so drawn to the idea of the perfect look. This type of material will be very useful in my everyday life as it is something that I experience every day. I have had my fair share of insecurities relating to my body and what it should look like and I think it’s important to realize we are who we are for a reason, we look how we want to look and we shouldn’t idolize unhealthy body-types as something beneficial to us. As long as we are healthy and are comfortable in our own-skin, then we must educate the next generation and our own, that being yourself is something not to be criticized, but appreciated and loved.