

THE CONTINUAL REDEFINEMENT  
OF THE PERFECT BODY IMAGE

1960 - 1990

Aisling Ludden

N. Gordon Bawa

*THE CONTINUAL REDEFINEMENT  
OF THE PERFECT BODY IMAGE*

*1960 - 1990*

Aisling Ludden



# CONTENTS

## INTRODUCTION

## CHAPTER 1: WHAT ARE THE IDEALS?

## CHAPTER 2: THE POLITICS OF APPEARANCE

## CHAPTER 3: GIRLS AND THE CONCEPT OF BODY IMAGE

## CHAPTER 4: MODELS AND REPLICAS

## CONCLUSION

## FOOTNOTES

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

**THESIS FOR DEGREE OF B.DES IN  
FASHION DESIGN  
BY AISLING LUDDEN  
N.C.A.D. C.N.E.D.**

---

*The Continual Redefinement  
of the Perfect Body Image  
1060 - 1990  
Aisling ludden*

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	
CHAPTER 1: WHAT ARE THE IDEALS ?	1 - 6
CHAPTER 2: THE POLITICS OF APPEARANCE	7 - 11
CHAPTER 3: GIRLS AND THE CONCEPT OF BODY IMAGE	12 - 17
CHAPTER 4: MODELS AND RESOURCES	18 - 22
CONCLUSION	24 - 26
FOOTNOTES	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	



# INTRODUCTION

---

*The Continual Redefinement  
of the Perfect Body Image  
1960 - 1990  
Aisling Ludden*

I have chosen to examine the subject of female body image and its relations to models and resources, out of a concern for the continual redefinition of 'idealized' body shapes imposed on women (1960 - 1990). I am examining why it is the image we form of ourselves and each other, that shape our reaction to and feelings to our fellows. I am trying to grasp an understanding of why women, in comparison to men, have such obsessive feelings and concerns in relation to bodily appearance. I am studying the relationship between clothing factors and eating disorders with body satisfaction. I am questioning how economics, politics and the social structure affect the physical shape of women, and why at thirteen years old girls begin to assume a distorted body image. We are freed of corsets, yet internal constraints have overtaken external constraints in compliance with the belief that the female body is deficient and in need of reshaping.

## *Chapter 1*

# WHAT ARE THE IDEALS ?

For centuries beauty has been considered a feminine attribute and its pursuit a feminine responsibility. In fact the work beauty itself reflects the intimate connection between beauty and femininity. Derived from the Latin word bellus, a diminutive of bonus (good) beauty was originally used only in reference to women and children. Webster's New World Dictionary (1982) has as one of its definitions of beauty "a very goodlooking woman"(1). In the platonic tradition beauty is understood as a singular, uniform, unchanging and external form; something beyond the physical body. Beauty, says Plato, is "an everlasting loveliness which neither comes nor goes which neither flowers nor fades, for such beauty is the same on everyhand, the same now as then, here as there, this way as that way the same to every worshipper as it is to every other"(2).

Every woman has her own ideal identity. Since the sixties, the uniformity of the ideal look has been severely affected by the emergence of female designers. There is no longer one fashion story but a multiple of options; nevertheless there are ideals embodying each one and, for those lacking a definite self-image, the stereotyped variety of styles merely renders them helpless. Aspiring to an ideal image is often associated with moral goodness, with being virtuous. Social-psychological research documents this "what is beautiful is good". Why we study the latest form of stereotype is attributed to many factors. First, attractive persons are believed to live more successful and fulfilling lives (Berscheid and Walster 1974)(3) - A study measuring the effects of changes in attractiveness accomplished by cosmetic surgery showed subjects 'before' and 'after' photographs. The 'after' photographs were rated as significantly kinder, warmer, happier and confident after becoming more fashionably attractive. Therefore we perceive attractive people as having character traits that are socially desirable. Germaine Greer writes on the stereotype "Her value is solely attested by the demand she excites in others"(4). The basic principles of the perfect body image are a woman's responsibility and we are rewarded by society on the basis of how close we come to embodying the ideal. The importance of body weight and shape in determining the perception of one's own degree of physical attractiveness is a central determinant of a woman's perception of herself. In Otto Weininger's book Sex and Character (1906) (5) he remarks with horror that if



you ask a woman about herself, she understands it to be her body. She does not seek to define herself by asserting her image or her merit, her behaviour. For men, weight and body shape are important but not central in perceived attractiveness to the opposite sex. Men are judged by their achievements rather than by their appearance. A woman shows her values by choosing a successful and personable man.

In a Glamour magazine survey (1984), Wooley and Wooley (6) found that 63% of women sought to attain an ideal body shape, 33% reported that their weight sometimes affected how they felt about themselves and only 4% stated it never did. The data was based on 33,000 respondents which suggested the prevalence of weight - related concerns and their importance to woman. Almost everyday I am subjected to a conversation dealing with body dissatisfaction; I can honestly say while researching this subject I did not come across anyone who expressed a positive attitude to their body. Even those whose bodies and faces are enshrined in glossy magazines display weak identities. Their shape is regarded as something separate from their person as a being. Jordanova describes body image as a term from psychology used to express an individuals subjective picture of his or her own body.(7) It suggests the body in child development and hence also its centrality in any psychic disturbance. At the core of the phenomenology of body image dissatisfaction are the two images: the perceived and the ideal self. Failure to match the internalized, ideal prompts self criticism, damaging ones self esteem. Men transcend their bodies and turn their energies towards the world, while women are encouraged to improve and invest in their bodies and, as the borders of the ideal are continually redefined and exceedingly narrow, it is a woman's trial to conform. While the 'ideal' is a timeless quality, the stereotyped beautiful woman in the commercial sense is tightly fettered. It is a state to be attained or lost. So while women direct great energy towards evaluating and improving their image, Plato reminds us that beauty cannot, "take the form of the face or of hands or of anything that is of the flesh"(8).

Why we perceive attractive people as being virtuous and superior beings is proved by MG Efrans study (1974) (9) on the effect of the physical appearance on the judgment of guilt on interpersonal attraction and on the severity of recommended punishment in simulated court cases. The

results found that attractive individuals benefitted more positively, being deemed guilty less often and seen worthy of milder punishments, awarded more favourable judgments than less attractive individuals. In 1939 'Miss Shapely Legs' entrants had to wear paper bags on their heads so their faces did not influence the judges. (10)

Sine 1960 Western culture has experienced a marked trend towards an increasingly thin beauty ideal for women. Comparing measurements of the ideal body image of 'Miss World' over a twenty year period has proved that the image of the perfect body shape has become significantly thinner. Because we have not known food shortages, we have developed new larger bones; thus, over the last twenty five years young women have actually become heavier while the beauty ideal for this same age group has become lighter (11). This fact is consistent with height and weight tables from 1953 - 1983 (see figure 1). I believe there is a perversity in human nature which causes us to strive for that which is most difficult. Our highly bound cultural ideals have undergone many changes from the fleshy models in Rubens' paintings, reflecting the beauty ideal of his era. Today we view these marvellous rounded bodies as obese (see figure 2). For an overwhelming number of women in our society, being a woman means feeling too fat. Implicit in the cultural legislation of a uniform and uniformly thin body, ideal for a woman seems to be an assumption that a woman can choose and is responsible for her body type and weight. This is false. Body size and weight include a large genetic contribution which determines how food is metabolized and therefore affects one's ability to store fat. The male 'ideal' body of current society more closely resembles the 'natural' body most men assume, while the female 'ideal' is far thinner than the 'natural' female figure. Hence, from a biological perspective, it is not surprising to find discrepancies between self and ideal for women but not for men. Women overestimate their size; many studies document womens consistent exaggeration of their own body size, both of the figure as a whole and of specific body parts - typically the fat bearing areas such as waists and hips. I carried out a simple test on female colleagues in which they evaluated the size of fellows and of themselves. Results showed that women accurately judge the body size of other people but always overestimate their own size and shape. From my reading available on body image, there seems to be three factors comprising body esteem:



'sexual attractiveness', which assesses satisfaction with physical attractiveness and sexuality; 'weight control' which involves satisfaction with body parts that pertain to 'body size'; and 'physical condition' which measures evaluation of physical qualities such as stamina and strength. All of these factors are tapped by the 'ideal' of the fashion industry's sizing system. The manufacturers interpret the 'ideal' through the clothing that they manufacture (12). The ideal figure has a shoulder width equal to hip girth with waist girth 9 - 11 inches small than bust or hip. This shape embodies balance so that the symmetrical proportion must be even. In order to portray its products in a desirable way, the fashion industry presents these on an idealized figure. Fashion illustration, photography, and catwalk models use a form of the ideal figure - taller and slimmer but always conforming to the ideal in proportion and balance. The basic fit of garments for a manufacturer is a block wherein the ideal body is evident in proportion and balance. Armstrong (1987) (13) stated that industrial dress forms "represent a composite figure type that is accepted as the standard ideal of the human torso". (See fig. 2)

So the industry's ideal is a symmetrical shape with an upright stance with aesthetically pleasing body proportions. For the Greeks of Praxiteles's day images of the nude body constituted a central component of society's public life. Greek statues were products of a strongly developed impulse toward formal regularity. In Kenneth Clark's book 'The Nude' (1960) he suggests the classical nude of Greece and Rome, the 'Esquiline Venus' was constructed on a modular scheme in which the unit of measurement was the head "breasts will become fuller, waists narrower, and hips will describe a more generous arc, but fundamentally this is the architecture of the body which will control the observations of classically minded artists till the end of the nineteenth century" (14) (see figure 3).

Germaine Greer comments "In that mysterious dimension where the body meets the soul, the stereotype is born and has her being. She is more body than soul, more soul than mind. To her all belongs that is beautiful, even the very word beauty itself" (15).

When a woman's body is not in line with the ideal of the fashion industry the message is that something is wrong with her and she is less than the ideal. Company magazine (1988) asked 4,000 readers how they felt about

the sizing system used by manufacturers (16). The results proved that sizing is inconsistent; where one label's size 10 is another's size 14. Generally, readers were less satisfied with the fit of garments to the lower body, perceiving the cause as related to the body and not the clothing. Thus they are left with a dissatisfied body image. Female consumers who can purchase fashionable clothing in the limited ideal size range receive a stamp of approval from the powerful segment of society - garment manufacturers, retailers and designers. Women are obsessed with trying to change their bodies in order to experience a validation of worth.

In a report on sizing systems in Marie Claire (1989) it was revealed that the British Standards Institute's last survey took place in the 1950's. They measured more than three million women and compiled 'average' statistics for sizes (17). Most major clothing manufacturers and individual designers now finance their own research, tailoring their results to their particular customers. This means that everyone is working to their own guidelines, and measurements will therefore vary greatly between retailers. Styles of garments are therefore aimed at definite shapes of people. Anthony Price, who recently showed a capsule collection of his work in the RDS Dublin, obviously designs for a minority of women. His thigh length, tight stretch-knit dresses left little to the imagination. He has worked out his own sizing system during twenty years in the business. Among his customers he claims that breasts and bottoms have got smaller. He says "in shape women are becoming more like boys" (18). This contradicts the research conducted at Loughborough University (1987) where David Book - consultant to Marks and Spencer - was in charge of establishing a modern sizing system. he says, "The results gave us different size averages from those established in the 1950's where every woman wore corsetry which gave a false impression .....The survey showed that busts have got larger and we are selling more 36B bras and more D and DD cups. Waists appear to have thickened"(19). Alison Knox, a consultant for Next agrees, "Women are becoming proportionally bigger, more linear." (20)

The truth is womens' curves swell at the hips and again at the thighs. Why is this seen as a deformity? Large hips, thighs and bellies were regarded as desirable and sensual until women became 'liberated'. Flesh is textured, rippled, dense and layered. It is now termed 'cellulite', a term



introduced by Vogue into America in 1973. It is now perceived as a disfigurement. Before that it was just female flesh. The problem has only troubled women since it has been called a problem. "Young women born after 1960 have been made ill enough 'having seen little representation of sexuality apart from beauty pornography. But they are not as ill as the generation who were children in the 1970's, those even younger women are sick - almost to death. And the daughters of the 1980's" - Naomi Wolf in *The Beauty Myth* (1990) (21). In the last three decades the fashion industry has idealized the pubescent figure and denied the natural state of womanhood. Many top models are so thin that they no longer menstruate and by definition are not women at all since they have rendered themselves infertile. "If they are to free themselves from the dead weight that has once again been made out of femaleness, it is not ballots or lobbyists or placards that women will need as much as a new way to see" - Naomi Wolf in *The Beauty Myth* (1990) (22).

## *Chapter 2*

# THE POLITICS OF APPEARANCE

---

*The Continual Redefinement  
of the Perfect Body Image  
1960 - 1990  
Aisling Ludden*

For centuries the basis of man's identity has been that of a counter-identification with woman. She is reduced to a maternal stereotype and because of that is kept within clearly defined social areas and forms of language. The tyranny of 'proper' feminine appearances was interrupted by the second feminist wave of the 1960's. It started in the 1960's as large numbers of educated middle class young women moved to work in cities and lived alone between school and marriage. The economy saw a growth, unprecedented in its modern history, leading to the dawn of what was optimistically labelled the 'age of affluence'. This boom was to reshape many areas of social life, from class relations to moral attitudes and family life, to the emergence of new social opportunities, new sub-classes, changed political alliances, and relations between the sexes. An explosion of youth cultures and a fragmentation of moral consensus. In the early 1960's femaleness continued to be primarily defined in terms of motherhood and homebuilding. Marriage more than ever was an almost inevitable step in the transition to adult life, the essential gateway to independence, and social status. Women were wooed by the great consumer industries, but chiefly at first in their roles as controllers of the household purse. Society realised that the female sexuality could be utilised, stimulated and reshaped to the demands of mass marketing. It was a sexuality designed to capture the man - cosmetics, clothes, personal accoutrements were by business an essential part of the reconstructed 'feminine mystique'. Sexuality was more explicit than ever before playing over concepts of femininity that was being constructed in the process of sexualisation was that of the 'sex kitten'. As women were becoming liberated, constructed stereotypes were born to undermine their work and independence. Three decades later standards by which women are judged and self-critically judged remain the same. Though feminism has changed the way women view the world and themselves, it often appears as if the media has cashed in on feminism rewritten in a commercial translation as the 'natural look'. The feminist movement's position on beauty was always radical, simplistic and puritanical to the core. The movement added a second set of standards against which women could measure themselves to a lingering sense of feminine inadequacy, these standards added shame for our supposed failures as feminists. in Janet R. Richards' book 'The Sceptical Feminist' (1982) she expresses concern that, in defying codes of feminine appearance, feminists have done more harm than good to the cause of sexual equality; women who intentionally fail to



look pleasing to men have created the myth that feminists are ugly, therefore alienating women who may have supported feminist goals" (23). Many other women, whose general opinions should certainly count as feminist are reluctant to associate themselves with such unattractiveness.... The image of the movement comes from the individuals in it; if large numbers of them are unattractive, the movement as a whole is bound to be so too .... refusing to please men cannot be a means to ending women's dependence on them ... if they can afford to disregard what men think of them, they are independent already; the most it can be is a gesture of defiance' (24). Richards suggests that refusing to be conventionally attractive is to cut off one's nose to spite one's face. Betty Friedan said in 1960 that, "the unpleasant image of feminists today resembles less the feminists themselves than the image fostered by the interests who so bitterly opposed the vote for women in state after state" (25), Naomi Wolf (1990) says, "the beauty myth of the present is more insidious than any mystique of femininity yet: a century ago Nora slammed the door of the doll's house; a generation ago women turned their backs on the consumer haven of the isolated multi-applianced home; but where women are trapped today there is no door to slam" (26). Today women's progress has come to a standstill.

When women entered the modern workforce, the value system of the marriage market was substituted with the labour economy becoming her enemy. In order to draw women away from centers of power, the marketplace was saturated with images and articles directing attention to women's shape and features, censoring real faces and bodies. Society enforced an economy that depends on slaves and promotes images at slavery to manifest themselves. Raymond Williams suggests in his book *Resources and Hope* (1989), "The whole array of mass cultural institutions has one keystone; money from advertising"(27), he goes on to say "much of contemporary advertising is necessary only in terms of the kind of economy we now have: a stimulation of consumption in the direction of particular products and firms often by irrelevant devices rather than real advertising which is an ordinary form of public notice"(28). The speed and magnitude of communication systems mean that society can train its members in almost any direction. In Laura Mulvey's book *Visual and Other Pleasures* (1989), she suggests, "The female body has become



industrialised, a woman must buy the means to paint on and sculpt a look of femininity. A look which is the guarantee of visibility in sexist society for each individual woman. Advertisements sell the means of production of the look, sealing it in with a mark of feminine desirability attainable by means of lipsticks. The beauty industry has established itself as a seat of power. Since 1980 women's position and stature within the workplace have risen exponentially, yet we are still governed by an imposed social conscience. A conscience that constantly reminds us to 'shape up' (29). More women have since acquired positions of power but in relation to their body image women are as manipulated as were their great grandmothers. Recent reports show they spend years of their lives in unnecessary misery aspiring to the body shape of the latest fashionable figures.

The female body has always served as an arena for a competitive display. In the eighteenth century "the most popular pictorial device of the cult of beauty was the comparison"(30). K. Theweleit, in his book Male Fantasies (1977), goes on to say, "These pictorials placed women in constant opposition to an ideal image as well as to their own bodies and these of other women. The road to beauty did not pass through a woman's experience of her own body; it was then and is now "simply one more road to her constitution as an object and representation"(31).

Traditional sex-role definitions specify very different sources of status for men and women for men, quantifiable criteria of successful functioning are available, such as income or value of possessions. Since women have traditionally lacked such criteria, beauty has been a currency that has enabled them to gain access to male resources. The pace of social change made great advances for women, but history gives us examples of how with every cultural change, society has lied to women. In the nineteenth century we were told that menstruation, masturbation, pregnancy and the menopause were diseases. The regulation of menstruation was as obsessive as the regulation of fat today. From 1870 to 1910 middle class women were beginning to organize, on behalf of higher education, entrance to the professions and political rights. Simultaneously, the female nervous disorders of anorexia nervosa, hysteria and neurasthenia became epidemic and the Darwinian nerve specialist 'arose to dictate' proper feminine behaviour outside the asylum as well as in it, to oppose

women's efforts to change the conditions of their lives (32). Normal physical activity a century ago was ugly. If she read, she put her health in danger; participation in education and employment was seen as making women ugly just as the beauty industry suggests 'fluorescent lights, central heating, and air pollution' age us and make us ugly today.

In 1990 women are expected to be successful in their careers and as a mother. These are women who can now be valued by society on the basis of occupational success and financial independence. In general, research suggests that women with multiple roles enjoy an enhanced sense of well being. But further research is needed to assess the relationship among a general sense of well being, self esteem and body satisfaction. I believe that as demands on and expectations for women have risen, they feel compelled to be both beautiful and smart. The media sells women the need to achieve a fashionable weight, along with her other accomplishments on the job and at home. Television programmes and commercials represent women in three roles only; maternal, housekeeping and decorative. By analysing television commercials one finds women depicted as unresentful, indulgent servants to their husbands and children, and in need of advice to perfect these roles. Women are depicted as competent in the domain of self-beautification and television commercials promote the view that women are experts only in a decorative role. More than any other single film maker Jean Luc Godard has shown up the exploitation of women as an image in consumer society. For Godard this image is the very basis of consumer society. He understands the forces that mould women into a stereotype, and reduce them to impotence, so that it conforms to a given concept of female sexual appeal.

Godard never shows women placed in an economic or social role that is not an aspect of their sexual function or marriage. In 'A bout de souffle' (1969) Patricia goes to a press conference given by novelist M. Parvulesco who has just published an erotic novel. When Patricia asks "Do you believe that women have a role to play in modern society?", he takes off his glasses and says, "Yes, if she is charming, and is wearing a striped dress and dark glasses". The deliberate misunderstanding becomes the deliberate suggestion; women's contribution to the world can be measured



according to their sex appeal. In his book *Ways of Seeing*, (1988) (33), the critic

John Berger writes, "Men look at women, women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only the relations of men and women but the relations of women themselves. This phenomenon prevails through high art and low culture. The images of women are created by men to the shape of their own desire, needs and fears. Women historically dependent on man manipulated and exploited those fantasies to their own advantage. A nasty situation and a stressful one." This play is exemplified by the Marquise de Merteuil in the play *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*; "We had six hours ahead of us; I was determined to make this a time of uninterrupted rapture for him and therefore tempered his storms with charming coquetry. Never I believe, have I gone to such trouble to please; I was truly content with my own efforts. After dinner I alternated between playing the child and the rationale woman, now displaying reason, now sensibility or even licentiousness. I enjoyed treating him like a sultan leading him into his harem where I played all his favourites. All of this came from the same woman though to him it must have seemed as if each pleasure came from a new lover." (34)

Although much has changed since the woman's liberation euphoria of the late 1960's, when everything seemed possible, much more has not. The convention that women stayed at home looking after babies was caught in its own myth by the 1960's. As women became better educated and had more freedom there was a rejection of the accepted occupation for a grown woman just to cook, dust, wash, sew and reproduce another version of herself. Today women do all this and go out to work.

## *Chapter 3*

# GIRLS AND THE CONCEPT OF BODY IMAGE



"She was created to be the toy of man, his rattle, and it must jingle in his ears, whenever dismissing reason, he chooses to be amused."

Mary Wollstonecraft (1792). (35)

Puberty, which usually occurs about the ages of twelve to fourteen, has always been recognised as a special significance in that it is the turning point between childhood and adult life. In primitive tribes all over the world it is ushered in by puberty rites in which the boy and girl are initiated into adulthood. The rites vary, some consisting of sexual orgies while others consist of the infliction of pain. This structural or anatomical growth is accompanied by corresponding physiological development. "Young girls realise with brutal suddenness that every since she was born, has lived by dreams, and has to stand and face the gaze of others, feel and survive the weight of her desire." She now lives in the present when all she had felt was the future" Christiane Olivier (1989) (36) Females internalise society's message that the should care a great deal about their looks as expectations and emphasis on attractiveness are taught early in life. Parents, teachers and peers all depict girls as more attentive to their looks. Extra attention is paid to the pretty child. While boys choose toys involving physical and mechanical activity, girls are encouraged to select toys centering on adornment and nurture. The media message continually endorses a woman's need to be attractive - a message that clearly influences adults and children alike. From a survey on child readers, "Women on Words and Images", (1972) (37) found that girls in the readers, were constantly concerned about how they looked, while boys never were. Attending to ones appearance was seen as a major activity for girls characters as were cooking, sewing, and looking on, while boys did everything such as problem-solving and playing hard. In this early stage of life, dress and physical appearance were found to be closely linked with personal development and social acceptance. There is an association between femininity and smallness as early as three years old. In adolescence, attraction between the sexes, the development of a unique identity and social acceptance with peers each assume major importance. The pressure to be attractive is a form of social madness and to be attractive, we are told is to have a good body shape. For Naomi Wolf, "Anorexia was the only way I could keep the dignity in my body that I had as a kid and that I would lose as a woman". She questions a lost year of

normal growth. "How many inches in height did I lose by having calcium withheld from my bones? How many years sooner will a brittle spine bend ~~by~~ neck down? ..... Who owes me for the year long occupation of a mind at a time of its most urgent growth?"(38) The world does not tell girls that their bodies are valued for what they contain, rather than for what they display. Once 'puppy fat' appears, girls become critical of their bodies, with greatest dissatisfaction directed toward the midsection area, i.e. waist, hips and thighs. how clothing looks on the body becomes crucial. Throughout Linder's book "The Girl Who Couldn't Stop Eating" (1955) (39), he refers to the bulimic woman's use of clothing as a sign of her feelings about her self-image. In Susie Orbach's book "Hunger Strike" (1986) she notes that many anorexic women view "clothing and dressing as fraught with tension and pain" (40). Girls can either embrace the fact that they are suddenly desirable, or refuse to enter the fields coloured by signs of sexual identity and desire. They think long and hard about woman. They will wear sexless clothes, refusing mother's plea to wear anything feminine out of horror because that brings about the possibility that she might be turned into someone else's object. For some the effects of becoming a woman are severe. It is difficult enough to grasp one's physical changes without the pressure to conform to a shape idealised by society - "No sooner does her pubic hair appear than she has to learn to obliterate it" Germaine Greer (1970) (41). Christiane Olivier recalls her feelings at puberty, "I was absolutely set on being valued for my inner features, not my outward and visible ones. But alas I had the sense I was swimming against the tide, going against the grain. I was the only one who thought my scheme was working. Other people were only aware of my looks. how long was this farce going to go on / I know now the answer to that - my whole life." (1989) (42).

At an early age children are given tremendous encouragement to explore their environment. They are praised on their achievements, gaining a positive body image and self concept. By the time they enter primary school, children have had only the adoring attention of immediate family and friends. In their first year of school they suddenly realise that other people form opinions of them too. This stage creates a sense of separateness and limitations within the self. All of a sudden the child becomes aware of body image and self concept. When girls move into a mixed secondary school, they think in terms of their body image in



relation to the opposite sex, very often, in a system which promotes gender stereotyping. Thelma Jones, co-author of "Boys and Girls go out to Play" (1990) recently put forward a report to Frank Fahy, the Minister for Sport in Ireland, on her findings in relation to body image and exercise adherence in secondary level education. She found that girls did not always receive the weekly ninety minute exercise class as recommended by the Department of Education. Girls attending mixed schools, scrutinized, evaluated and criticised their body shape to a far greater extent than those attending an all girls school. In relation to physical exercise, boys have a much larger support system than girls. Certain physical activities such as Gaelic, football, rugby, golf and cricket are predominantly male, whereas dance, gymnastics and aerobics are predominantly female activities. Swimming, badminton, out door pursuits and volleyball are the only activities equal to both and this, Jones believes, is because they are taught in a less competitive manner, based on skill rather than aggression. Women's physical activities are generally less valued, the time and expertise of teachers involved contrasting with that of boys. The majority of girls suffer from a distorted body image, happy with permanent features such as height and face but concerned with the midsection of their bodies. Hip development makes some girls waddle, they are laughed at by boys, increasing self-consciousness. In order to hide breast development they stoop their shoulders forward. The physical reasons for awkwardness are not properly explained to adolescents, therefore they are vulnerable and can develop feelings of inferiority and excessive self-consciousness. The idea of many girls that evidence of maturity is shameful is partly derived from the fact that at an early age girls are conditioned that their sex organs are 'taboo'. The idea is accentuated by the fact that their sex organs are organs of excretion, and we are taught to suppress our natural organs. The fact of girls developing a distorted body image has less to do with aesthetic distaste, more with deep sexual shame. The parts of the body vary, but what girls are concerned with i.e. breasts, thighs, hips, buttocks and stomachs are the most sexually central parts of a woman. There must be something wrong with the way in which sex is culturally taught to boys and girls and something wrong with the way women are asked to experience their own bodies?

Young women are still suffering from terrible hangups in relation to their bodies, which are regarded as separate identities to the rest of their beings.

---

*The Continual Redefinement  
of the Perfect Body Image  
1960 - 1990*

Aisling Ludden

A neurosis characterised by disassociation of consciousness - a part of the mind split off from the rest - a disassociation caused by repression becomes part of a complex. Schoolgirls as young as nine years old are falling victim to senior's eating disorders because of society's continued obsession with weight and shape control. There is a pressing need for an education programme to alert young girls to the dangers of strict dieting in secondary schools - are described as the cradles of eating disorders.

Irish consultant psychologist Dr. Ann Leader insists that widespread public ignorance about these disorders is preventing them from being treated as real illnesses. Although these are now recognised as the fastest growing neurotic ailment in the Western World, many young women are ashamed to seek medical and psychiatric help. It is a continual and salient emotion in women's relationship with their bodies and a sense of shame which involves feeling bad about who one is with the entire self the target of hostility. In addition, despite increasingly sophisticated methods for treating sufferers, figures suggest that only one third of them can ever be fully cured. Dr. Leader warns that the problem will continue to soar unless there is a major change in attitudes toward obesity, added that society must allow women to follow health and normal eating habits. Dr. Leader says "They are usually ambitious, perfectionist people who lack confidence and feel that if they at least look good it will compensate for their deficiencies. They are all lumped together in a situation with State exams and often compete to be the thinnest" (43). A study of 3,000 people, aged between 15 and 30, carried out by the St. Francis Medical Center in Westmeath, found that one fifth were suffering from an eating disorder. Obesity was the most common form of eating disorder, accounting for 60 per cent of cases. Anorexia nervosa accounted for 35 per cent.

The post 1960 daughter sees more images of impossible 'beautiful' women engaged in 'sexual' posturing in one day than her mother saw throughout adolescence. Saturated in imagery of the ideal body shape, competition between girls is fierce. I can remember many girls being subjected to taunting in relation to physical exercise because of their body shape. In such an atmosphere eating disorders make perfect sense. Beauty, health, energy and self confidence are ideals sought after, yet the prevailing concern with the shape and weight of the female body is driving even younger women to illness - almost to death. The anorexic chooses



solitude rather than desire. "In the lives of women, an unprotected, empty inside cohabits strangely with a generous outside" (Christiane Olivier (1989). (44)

The weight issue revolves in many relationships, mother - daughter, friend - friend, colleague - colleague. Weight takes on a measurement of ones worth; women report that upon entering a room they automatically sweep their gaze across the female occupants and assess where they rank. Who is fatter? Who is thinnest? A competitive aspect of femininity and thinness is the female-against-female competition produced by the effort to attract and secure a man. Women will starve in order to attain what they perceive as an ideal, but their ideal does not always relate to what men find attractive. Studies on what male and females perceive as the opposite. Ideal shape shows that women are misinformed. The errors are in opposite directions with women underestimating and men overestimating the body size desired by the other sex. Women are conditioned to define themselves in relation to and in connection with other people, while males are more oriented towards their own sense of importance. This framework accounts for sex differences in moral reasoning. There is an analogous difference in the way men and women view their bodies. Men view their bodies as functional tools that need to be in shape; women primarily see their bodies as commodities, their physical appearance serving as an interpersonal currency. A study of adolescent males and females found that girls' self concepts derived from perceptions of physical body attractiveness, whereas boys' self concepts were derived from perceptions of physical and instrumental effectiveness (45). A woman's appearance achieves interpersonal and societal success; girls are socialised to be oriented towards others, to need their peers' approval in order to gain rewards. Magazines marketed at schoolgirls spontaneously discuss concerns with weight and body shape intricately interwoven with other personal issues. Both sexes should be presented with the other as a combination of sexual object and human being rather than learning these 'qualities' as separate entities.

At puberty, pregnancy and menopause, the physiological changes women undergo make weight gain possible. Men do not experience analogous milestones, in terms of increased fat. Even before puberty, girls have 10 to 15 per cent more fat than boys and after puberty girls have almost twice as

much as boys. Although hormonal changes at puberty seem strongly implicated in weight gain in females, the precise role of the sex hormones in weight regulation is still not fully understood. Progesterone plays an important lipogenic role affecting weight gain by increasing the palatability of sweet foods. Since the progesterone level varies throughout the menstrual cycle many women experience an increase in appetite during the last week before menstruation or during pregnancy. Women start out in life with more fat than men do and the developmental junctures in women's lives that produce rapid and marked changes in weight regulation systems. The young girl encounters the first of these natural fat making capacities at precisely the time she becomes most concerned with her appearance. Regardless of cultural, ethnic or social factors, women are more genetically predisposed to fat than men. Assuming that bodysize and weight are normally distributed, only a minority of women can be expected to 'naturally' match the thin ideal, as the great majority have larger, heavier bodies. In the light of these biological factors and socio-cultural explanations offered earlier, it is my recommendation that we should encourage each other not to change the natural shape of our bodies but the rules that try to govern them.

"The content of education as a rule is the content of our actual social relations and will only change as part of a wider change"

Raymond Williams. (46)

## CHAPTER 4

# MODELS AND RESOURCES



"The many young women who are wounded by the continual public use of women's bodies today, diagnose correctly, that women are thereby reduced to objects of desire. Since the graphic artists of the turn of the century, adapted the ancient hard sell of ideals and slogans, propaganda and claptrap by representing them in the female form, the inevitable lust of the eye for female flesh, has been the premise of advertising"

Marina Warner

'Monuments and Maidens' (Page 320) (47)

The word 'magazine' was first applied to a woman's journal by bookseller Edward Cave in 1732 (48). The grim post-Great War years, the thirties Depression, the deprivations of the 1939 - 45 Second World War were followed by an unprecedented demand, for consumer products, a 'never had it so good' prosperity, which in turn reacted upon the women's magazine market. By 1960 there was an eroticism of many aspects of social life especially in the increasing sexual explicitness of advertising, where sex became an obvious inducement to an ever-extending and often useless consumption of goods. Although women's expectations and roles have changed, in the last three decades, the messages put forward by female journals have remained relatively unchanged since the post-war period. Editors and publishers presume that women are at best 'unconfident' and at worst 'incompetent', they 'need' or 'want' to be instructed - continually redefining the skills of femininity. Women's magazines are pervasive in the extent to which they promulgate values and attitudes. They tell women what to think and do with themselves, their lovers, their husbands, their parents, children and colleagues. They define norms for what their followers should say, wear, cook, read, explore, ignore or care about. Women are simultaneously presented with messages on two wavelengths, 'get out there and show the world you can shape your life', but also 'remember you can achieve as a wife and mother too'. The psychosocial tension generated by these dualistic messages are overlaid with every woman can choose the 'kind' of woman she wishes to be. This freedom to choose a 'type' - 'ideal' - 'shape' is a continual conflicting message - the choices are culture and category bound. Magazines continually select and shape their messages to fit the parameters and precepts of the current 'ideal'. Women's magazines promote a cult of femininity, they consciously set out to foster a woman's sense of her own worth, they preach the ideal of a woman's power of self determination

---

*The Continual Redefinement  
of the Perfect Body Image  
1960 - 1990*

Aisling Ludden

through their emphasis on self help, and 'true' happiness is found if women conform to their material and emotional ends. They attempt to promote a collective female social reality - founded on conformity, a consciously cultivated array of set meanings and values. Physical beauty is more than a goal in its own right. It symbolizes a separate power structure within female society. By prescribing narcissistic rituals, magazines tell their audience that they are all potentially 'beautiful'. Editorials are now advitorials; the economics of women's periodical publishing rely on advertisement revenue from cosmetics, haircare and slimming products, accounting for a high percentage of income. In the 1950's advertising revenues soared, shifting the balance between editorial and advertising departments. In a chapter of Betty Friedan's *'The Feminine Mystique'* (1963) entitled 'The Sexual Sell', she traced how American housewives' 'lack of identity', and 'lack of purpose' is used as a marketing strategy. The career woman was portrayed as 'unhealthy' from the advertisers point of view and 'that it would be to their advantage not to let this group get any larger ... they are not the ideal type of customer. They are too critical' (49). Today advertisers sell specialized anti-aging cream, high-tech diet products, aiming at the career woman in the same way they sold household appliances to the women of the 1950's. In Erving Goffmans book *'Gender Advertising'*, (1979) (50) there is an examination of the conventionalised portrayal of women through advertising. Women more than men are pictured engaged in involvements which remove them psychologically from the social situation ~~at~~ large, leaving them unoriented, in it and to it, and therefore dependent on the protectiveness of their environment. We are asked to believe that women go into uncontrollable ecstasies at the sight and smell of tables that have been lovingly caressed with spray on polish.

Womens magazines represent a mass culture. The relationship between the woman reader and her magazine is a form of female solidarity. Yet this 'solidarity' censors real women. The imagery of the majority of women portrayed in magazines do not offer an alternative way of viewing oneself. Idealised bodies and faces, touched up by artists, set a standard of perfection which does not reflect reality. In Naomi Wolf's book *'The Beauty Myth'* (1990) she suggests 'Before 1960, 'good' and 'bad', as applied to women, corresponded with 'non-sexual' and 'sexual'. After the rise of beauty pornography and the sexual half-revolution, 'good' began to mean

---

*The Continual Redefinement  
of the Perfect Body Image  
1960 - 1990*

Aisling Ludden



'beautiful' - (thin - hence - sexual' and 'bad' meant 'ugly' - (fat) - hence - nonsexual' (51).

The health cult of recent years has had a dramatic effect on women and their body image. The American soaps of the 1980's represented the continual perfect moment. The life of the Carringtons represented the ultimate expression of 'Beauty' and Success' as a state to be attained. The midlife trio - Linda Evans, Joan Collins and Diane Carroll proved week after week, that real beauty defies the changes of time. the appeal of Jane Fonda's 'workout', Linda Evans' 'beauty and exercise' book and racquel welch's 'total beauty and fitness programme', lies in the promise that they can get you into shape - their shape.

Jane Fonda, acknowledge queen of physically fit midlife beauties, set a standard for those who did not compare with Jean Shrimpton in the 1960's. yet, the media suggests that the older the body left to itself, is lazy, undisciplined and out of control. Skin care products echo this and advertisements imitate medical journalism. <sup>see fig 10.11</sup> Clarins give a 'beauty prescription, Estee Lauder's 'Time Zone moisture recharging complex can reprogramme the future of dry skin', while their 'science-proven' Night Repair is applied with a medical syringe and rubber balloon. Clinique suggests if you 'stay with your treatment - the temporary 'regression' will stop'. Estee Lauder's 'Time Zone', 'normalises your skin so it can resist forming lines and wrinkles for years longer than you would expect'. This implies that natural 'normal' skin is 'abnormal'. When cosmetic manufacturers make claims of anti-aging, of creams having deep biological effects, they step beyond the bounds of reason and truth. Women are being lied to by advertisements promoting 'magical' and 'cellular replacement' ingredients in their products. The health cult has physically reshaped women. When women disregarded understructures they literally created a market which would reshape their bodies in the pursuit of beauty. To contrast greatly with the fifties ideal, (twiggy was introduced. Her thinness, now commonplace, was shocking at the time. Vogue introduced her (1965), "Twiggy is called Twiggy because she looks as though a strong gale would snap her in two" (52). People began to play at being sporty in the 1960's. Clothes were never designed as functional pieces of sportswear but the vital thing was, that they looked as though they were. Hair transplants and facelifts became reality. In 1969 Vogue



remarked that 'sportsclothes showed fashion how to be fast and free'. In 1978, Vogue sported the first grey cotton jersey, a fabric that was to dominate sportswear. Lycra was introduced into the functional garments of the 1970's. The quality lent itself to the body-hugging look inspired by roller skating, skateboarding and roller disco dancing. Body building and weight lifting for women began in the early eighties, and Norma Kamali adapted the weight lifter's outfit for aerobics.

To coincide with the new emphasis on body-sculpting through fitness programmes, the cosmetic surgery industry expanded. Techniques developed in experiments using women as laboratory animals. In the first stabs at liposuction in France, powerful hoses tore out of women massive globules of living tissue, entire nerve works, dendrites and ganglia, nine French women died (53). The surgeons' market is imaginary since there is nothing wrong with women's bodies and faces that a change in social attitudes won't cure. The revenue relies on multiplying female self hatred and negative female body images. Cosmetic surgeons do not advertise for a share of the market that already exists - their advertisements create new markets, and as they become richer they can afford to take out larger advertisement spaces. Society's hatred and fear of fat has introduced operations such as stomach stapling, which reduces the size of the stomach by stapling it up with up to 200 pieces of stainless steel. In October 1989 two British women died following the operation which generally causes thirty seven complications. Breast reduction and enlargement operations are in existence because women are kept ignorant about what breasts are actually like. The media screens idealistic breasts, almost never representing those that are soft, asymmetrical, immature or mature. As this censorship keeps women ignorant about real bodies it is easy to convince women that their body shape is wrong. That their breasts are - too full, too low, too high, too small, are imperfect. Women embrace ideals that are inhuman. Surgeons give breasts a rigidification that turns them to the consistency of hard plastic. The brochures of clinics delete information relevant to pain, loss of nipple sensation or risk of death. In the US 200,000 to one million women had their breasts cut open and sacs of chemical gel implanted (54). <sup>see fig 13</sup> The dawn of the surgical age in the 1980's gave women, who can afford it, the opportunity to be 'perfect'. As technology improves, the expectation of cosmetic surgery will continue to rise.

Maintaining an attractive appearance through the disciplined exercise of control over the body is not a new concept. Since the 1920's society has encouraged fitness programmes, the model of the youthful and physically fit woman is perceived as a symbol of the beauty of feminine control over appetites and age. The exercise of the control over the body compensates and enhances a life out of control. Taking control of one's body image gives a sense of personal power. Obsessive fitness reflects increased expectations and high insecurity among women. Society lacks images of proud older women who keep their own body shapes.

Through the health cult, women have developed their bodies through exercise and good diet so they have a size and stature that allows them to be strong. Unfortunately, women have yet to fully realise that being healthy means living with your natural female body shape. Technology radically destabilizes the social value of the female body.

"The insides of my thighs are black. I am aghast but my surgeon seems quite pleased"

'Fat Suction - Trying it for Thighs'

Vogue - October 1988 (55)

The body continually evolves until it ceases to exist at all - a disturbing proposition for those reduced to no more than their bodies. The woman awarded the title of beauty, momentarily escapes into the external ideal. As the female body is under constant transformations to call beauty only the still life of unchanging 'perfection' is no praise for creatures as diverse as women. Male maturity is valued, men come into their own, while women fade at the peak of their lives. There is a human fear and disdain for the mortal body and sanctuaries are sought to escape its limits.

## CONCLUSION

# THE SHAPE OF WOMEN TO COME



Society has long dictated ways for women to alter their bodies to achieve 'unnatural' beauty ideals. Dieting resembles foot binding and corseting in that all of these represent instances in a long history of women's mutilating their bodies for the sake of beauty. Take as an example the nineteenth century, in which attaining the beautiful female body required wearing a corset. Among the short term results of tight lacing were shortness of breath, constipation, weakness and a tendency to violent indigestion, while long term effects included bent or fractured ribs, displacement of the liver, and uterine prolapse. Despite these ghastly side effects physicians prompted their use because women's bodies were thought to be too weak to sustain themselves without support. Similarly, in current times dieting and 'cosmetic surgery' has been strongly advocated by the medical profession as a safe means of reducing weight, despite potential negative effects. In Ireland there is relatively little emphasis on health education, on self-help health or community care. Overworked doctors hand out prescriptions to people who don't need drugs so much as information to be able to look after their bodies and their minds. As women we must work to shape society's negative attitude towards real bodies. The writers of 'Our Bodies Ourselves' (1978) suggest that 'we must challenge the stereotypes which minimise our abilities; we must challenge social and economic forces in our culture which falsely glorify youthfulness. Let us reaffirm our potential for personal growth and contribution to society at every stage in life?' (56) The struggle for woman's equality is continually undermined by society's pressure to aspire to a specific weight and shape in relation to height and age. The diet industry wishes to promote belief that the pursuit of thinness is the pursuit of better health. Thinner does not mean healthier.

'My life will change if I lose weight', 'you create your own sense of identity with your body shape', 'I feel like a thin woman trapped in a fat body'. These comments are all too common. Women will have to start recognizing that true fulfillment will be found when they make the most of all aspects of the body instead of concentrating on weight and shape. 'Work that Body' and 'Go for the burn', are just two of the slogans used by fitness fanatics to encourage us to change our body shape. Media phrases like 'battle of the bulge', 'fat bashing', and 'fighting the flab' are encouraging self hatred. A departure from stereotypical definitions of female body types would result in positive attitudes. A new diverse sizing

---

*The Continual Redefinement  
of the Perfect Body Image  
1960 - 1990*

Aisling Ludden

system would allow consumers to search until they find garments to fit their proportions. The industry should further refine choices for petite and large sizes. From my reading of available literature on the subject of body image, it is possible to conclude that while body image distortion has traditionallu been recognized as a central feature of the anorexic female, body size overestimation is characteristic of most women in general. Women more than men spend a great deal of time and energy worrying about appearance and feeling too fat. Men show greater satisfaction than women with aspects of their bodies. In a response to a cultural imperative that women be attractive - that is, thin and given that thinness is not, for many women their natural body build, women appear obsessed because they persistently expend much effort and attention in the pursuit of the ideal. It is not vanity or conceit, but shame and social pressure that lead to womens preoccupation with their appearance. This preoccupation and the behaviour it engenders have serious psychological consequences and considerably affect physical health as well. These consequences include, decreased self esteem for failure to meet the thin idealized body type, feelings of helplessness and frustration in response to unsuccessful dieting efforts, and becoming preoccupied and even victimized by consumerism. The psychological consequences of weight concerns and chronic body dissatisfaction may also be the causes of depression in many women. Current sociocultural influences teach women to only what the ideal body looks like, but also how to try to attain it, including dieting, purging and other deregulating behaviour. Germain Greet suggests, 'She must fight the guilt of failure in an impossible set up, and examine the set up. She must ignore interested descriptions of her health, her morality and her sexuality, and assess them all for herself.... Essentially she must recapture her own will and her own goals, and energy to use them" (1971) (57). On average females have lower metabolic rates than males. This is in part a function of difference in body size but is also due to differences in the ratio of lean to fat tissue. Fat tissue is more metabolically inert than lean tissue, and females are predisposed to have a higher proportion of fat to lean tissues than males. Thus women are genetically programmed to have a proportionally higher fat composition than men and lower resting metabolic rates. Sex linked hormones play a major role in stimulating fat storage and perhaps fat cell development, thus in each of the milestones in the course of women's biological development - puberty, pregnancy, and menopause - women have the potential to increase fat. Women's



repeated weight reduction attempts serve to deregulate their metabolic systems and make attainment of the thin ideal even more unlikely. The biological effects of dieting do not lend to weight loss. If someone decreases their calorie intake greatly they suppress their metabolism rate. The human system is efficient; it accommodates the decrease in incoming fuel by slowing down the metabolism rate. This response represents an important homeostatic mechanism, for the fat stores are protected from speedy depletion. While adaptive biologically, this effect is clearly not in the interest of dieters aiming for weight loss. When people stop dieting and resume normal calorie intake, their metabolism takes its time to rebound to its normal pace. Therefore normal eating or overeating after a diet will tend to produce weight gain which typically leads to yet another dieting attempt. It is a vicious cycle.

In the last few years, shrimp like models are being replaced by more curvaceous women. In response to the latest ideal, designer, model Diana Brill has introduced the 'Brill-bra' - Brill stresses 'it is an ingenious contraption or wires and lifts that can both raise your breasts and introduce them to each other - it isn't an office bra. It is close under the armpits and the major hardware comes in the back - it is quite pretty in the front, but there are a lot of hidden wires there' (1991) (58).

This contraption is apparently revolutionising the American lingerie industry and will soon be available on this side of the Atlantic - so much for progress. The future of women depends on women becoming allies rather than competitors.

"The toughest but most necessary change will come, not from men or from the media, but from women, in the way in which they see and be-have towards other women".

Naomi Wolf 'The Beauty Myth' (1990) pg 233 (59)



## FOOTNOTES

### CHAPTER 1

1. Websters New World Dictionary (1982)
2. Jowett B. The Dialogues of Plato, Sphere (1970)
3. Berscheid/Walster on Physical Attractiveness, Academic Press (1974)
4. Greer G. The Female Eunuch, The Stereotype pg. 56 (1971)
5. Weininger O. Sex and Character pg. 186 (1906)
6. Glamour Magazine, Wooley/Wooley, Feb pg. 198 - 252 (1984)  
(Survey on Bodyshapes)
7. Jordanova L., Sexual Visions pg. 43 (1989)
8. Jowett B., The Dialogues of Plato, Sphere (1970)
9. Efran MG, Journal of Research in Personality pg. 45 (1974)
10. Miss Shapely Legs, Cosmopolitan Magazine October (1989)
11. Height & Weight Tables, 1959 - 1983
12. Armstrong H., Pattern Making for Fashion Design pg.8 (1987)
13. IBID
14. Kenneth Clark, The Nude pg. 41 (1959)
15. Germaine Greer, The Female Eunuch pg. 55 (1971)
16. Company Magazine, Survey on Fashion Retailers, March (1988)
17. Marie Claire Magazine, Report on Sizing Systems, September (1989)
18. IBID
19. IBID
20. IBID
21. Naomi Wolf, The Beauty Myth, pg. 185 (1990)
22. IBID pg. 8
23. Janet R. Richards, The Sceptical Feminist pg. 51(1982)
24. IBID pg. 51
25. Betty Friedan, The Feminine Mystique, pg. 87 (1963)
26. Naomi Wolf, The Beauty Myth, pg. 8 (1990)
27. Raymond Williams, Culture and Society, Penguin pg. 70 (1961)
28. IBID pg. 70
29. Laura Mulvey, Visual and Other Pleasures, pg. 54 (1989)
30. Theweleit K. Male Fantasies, Chapter 2 (1977)
31. IBID
32. Naomi Wolf, The Beauty Myth pg. 184 (1990)

33. John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, pg. 47 (1988)
34. Theweleit K., *Male Fantasies*, Chapter 2 (1977)
35. Wollstonecraft M., *A Vindication of Womens Rights* pg. 66 (1792)
36. Olivier C., *Joscatas' Children*, pg. 80 (1989)
37. *Women on Words and Images. Sex stereotyping in childrens readers* (1972).
38. Wolf V., *The Beauty Myth*, pg. 169 (1990)
39. Linder R. *The Girl Who Couldn't Stop Eating* (1955)
40. Orbach S. *The Hunger Strike* pg. 156 (1986)
41. Greer G. *The Female Eunuch* pg. 84 (1971)
42. Olivier C. *Joscastas' Children* pg. 73 (1989)
43. Dr. Leader, *Diet Alert*, Evening Press, February (1991)
44. Olivier C. *Joscastas' Children* pg. 80 (1989)
45. Lerol, Orlos, Knapp - *Physical Attractiveness in Adolescence* - pg. 313 (1979)
46. Williams R., *Culture & Society*, chap. 6, 1961
47. Warner M. *Monuments and Maidens*, Chapter 13 pg. 320 (1988)
48. *A World of Woman* (1978)
49. Friedan B. *The Feminine Mystique, The Sexual Sell* (1963)
50. Goffman E. *Gender Advertising* (1979)
51. Wolf N, *The Beauty Myth* pg. 40(1990)
52. *Vogue Magazine British Edition* (1965)
53. Wolf N. *The Beauty Myth*, pg. 60 (1990)
54. *IBID* pg. 62 (1990)
55. *Vogue Magazine 'Trying it for Thighs' October* (1988)
56. Rakusen J., *Our Bodies Ourselves*, pg. 532 - 533 (1978)
57. Greer G. *The Female Eunuch* pg. 323 (1971)
58. *Irish Independent* 12/2/1990
59. Wolf N. *The Beauty Myth* pg. 233 (1990)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Armstrong H.      Patternmaking for Fashion Design  
Harper and Row NY (1987)
- de Beauvoir S.    The Second Sex, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books,  
London (1972)
- Berger J.          Ways of Seeing, Penguin Books, London (1988)
- Clark K.          The Nude, R&R Clark Limited, Edinburgh,  
John Murray Limited, pg 67 - 68
- Ferguson M.      Forever Feminine, Henemann  
Educational Books Limited, London (1983)
- Frieden B.        The Feminine Mystique, Penguin Books Limited  
Harmondsworth London (1963)
- Goffman E.        Gender Advertising, The McMillan Press Limited  
London/Basingstoke (1979)
- Greer G.          The Female Eunuch, Paladin Grafton Books Limited  
London (1971)
- Hudson L.        Bodies of Knowledge, Weidenfeld & Nicholson  
Limited, Clapham, London (1982)
- Jordanova L.     Sexual Visions, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hertfordshire  
(1989)
- Jowett B.        The Dialogues of Plato  
Sphere G.B. (1970)
- Mulvey L.        Visual & Other Pleasures  
The McMillan Press Limited (1989)



BIBLIOGRAPHY (contd..)

- Olivier C.            *Joscastas' Children, The Imprint of Woman*  
Routledge, London (1989)
- Orbach S.            *Fat is a Feminist Issue*  
Arrow Books, London (1989)
- Orbach S.            *Hunger Strike*, W.W. Norton, NY (1986)
- Packard V.           *The Hidden Persuaders*  
Penguin Books Limited, Middlesex, England (1981)
- Rakusen J.           *Our Bodies Ourselves*  
Phillips A.           Penguin Books Limited, London (1978)
- Richards R.J.        *The Sceptical Feminist*  
Penguin Books Limited, Middlesex (1987)
- Theweleit K.        *Male Fantasies*, UK Polity Press, Cambridge (1977)
- Warner M.           *Monuments and Maidens*, George Werdenfeld and  
Nicolas Limited, London (1985)
- Weeks J.            *Sex Politics & Society*, Longman Group Limited  
Harrow, England (1981)
- Williams R.          *Culture and Society*  
Penguin Books Limited GB (9161)
- Wolf N.              *The Beauty Myth*, Chatto & Windus, London (1990)
- Wollstonecraft M.   *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* – (1792)  
Penguin, Harmondsworth (1975)

*A World of Woman, An illustrated History of Womens Magazines*, Eden Quay, Dublin, 1. (1978)

---

*The Continual Redefinement  
of the Perfect Body Image  
1960 - 1990  
Aisling Ludden*

**Table 1**  
Metropolitan Height and Weight Tables for Women, 1959 and 1983

WOMEN													
Height (Without Shoes)		SMALL FRAME				MEDIUM FRAME				LARGE FRAME			
		1959	1983	Change Since 1959	Percent Change	1959	1983	Change Since 1959	Percent Change	1959	1983	Change Since 1959	Percent Change
Feet	Inches	Weight in Pounds (Without Clothing)											
4	9	90-97	99-108	9	11	10	11	94-106	106-118	12	12	13	11
4	10	92-100	100-110	8	10	9	10	97-109	108-120	11	11	11	10
4	11	95-103	101-112	6	9	6	9	100-112	110-123	10	11	10	10
5	0	98-106	103-115	5	9	5	8	103-115	112-126	9	11	9	10
5	1	101-109	105-118	4	9	4	8	106-118	115-129	9	11	8	9
5	2	104-112	108-121	4	9	4	8	109-122	118-132	9	10	8	8
5	3	107-115	111-124	4	9	4	8	112-126	121-135	9	9	8	7
5	4	110-119	114-127	4	8	4	7	116-131	124-138	8	7	7	5
5	5	114-123	117-130	3	7	3	6	120-135	127-141	7	6	6	4

Table 1: continued

WOMEN													
Height (Without Shoes)		SMALL FRAME				MEDIUM FRAME				LARGE FRAME			
		1959	1983	Change Since 1959	Percent Change	1959	1983	Change Since 1959	Percent Change	1959	1983	Change Since 1959	Percent Change
Feet	Inches	Weight in Pounds (Without Clothing)											
5	6	118-127	120-133	2	6	2	5	124-139	130-144	6	5	5	4
5	7	122-131	123-136	1	5	1	4	128-143	133-147	5	4	4	3
5	8	126-136	126-139	0	3	0	2	132-147	136-150	4	3	3	2
5	9	130-140	129-142	-1	2	-1	1	136-151	139-153	3	2	2	1
5	10	134-144	132-145	-2	1	-1	1	140-155	142-156	2	1	1	1

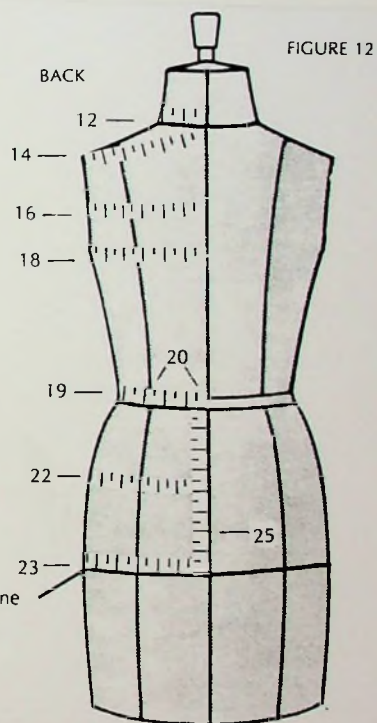
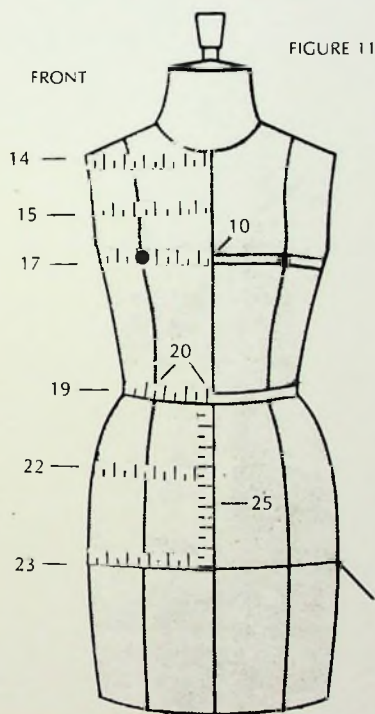


Fig. 2 ARMSTRONG. THE IDEAL OF THE FASHION  
INDUSTRY SIZING SYSTEM





Fig. 4 'PEACE AND WAR' - RUBENS



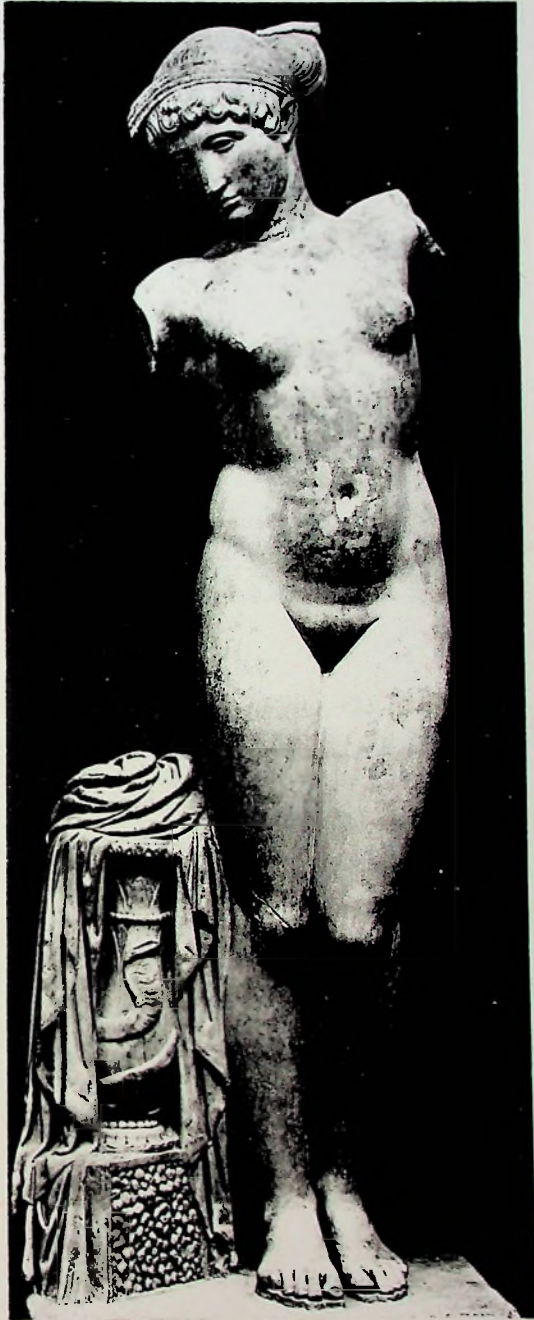


Fig. 3 THE ESQUILINE VENUS  
THE CLASSICAL NUDE OF GREECE AND ROME





Fig. 5 THE VENUS DE MILO  
THIS STATUE HAS BECOME TO BE CONSIDERED THE  
PROTOTYPE OF GREEK FEMININE BEAUTY





Fig. 6 A NINETIES IDEAL





Fig. 7 THE NINETIES IDEAL , TOP MODEL - LINDA EVANGELIST





Fig. 8

THE IDEAL COMPLEXION





Fig. 9 CERAMIDE TIME COMPLEX CAPSULES FROM ELIZABETH ARDEN IN THEIR BIZARRE EMBRYO CASINGS. ARE COSMETIC COMPANIES BORROWING FROM THE PACKAGING OF BIRTH CONTROL.



# ESSENCE OF SKIN CAVIAR CELLULAR EYE COMPLEX

LA PRAIRIE, SWITZERLAND

La Prairie presents new solutions to serious concerns.

SKIN CAVIAR is an intensive skincare treatment in a revolutionary encapsulated form. This advanced encapsulation technique allows unique combinations of ingredients in a high-powered concentration of vitamins, humectants, emollients and plant naturals.

This gives the skin the look and feel of a more perfect texture. Now, ESSENCE OF SKIN CAVIAR CELLULAR EYE COMPLEX, a silky micro-gel, condenses daily care into treatment that is just as intensive—just as exclusive—as the product from which it evolved. The critical difference—it's formulated specifically for the eye area, making it appear firmer, more toned, retexturized.

Learn exactly how these concentrated new forms of skincare can work for you.

And, while at the La Prairie counter, receive a valuable complimentary sample of still another La Prairie treatment product.

*La Prairie, the cellular skincare system developed at  
Clinic La Prairie, Montreux, Switzerland.*

Available at

*Saks Fifth Avenue*



Fig. 10

BEAUTY TREATMENT, ADVERTISEMENTS  
USING MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY



ESTÉE  
LAUDER

Advanced  
Night  
Repair

Protective  
Recovery  
Complex



# MULTI MOISTURE

The new way to moisturize.

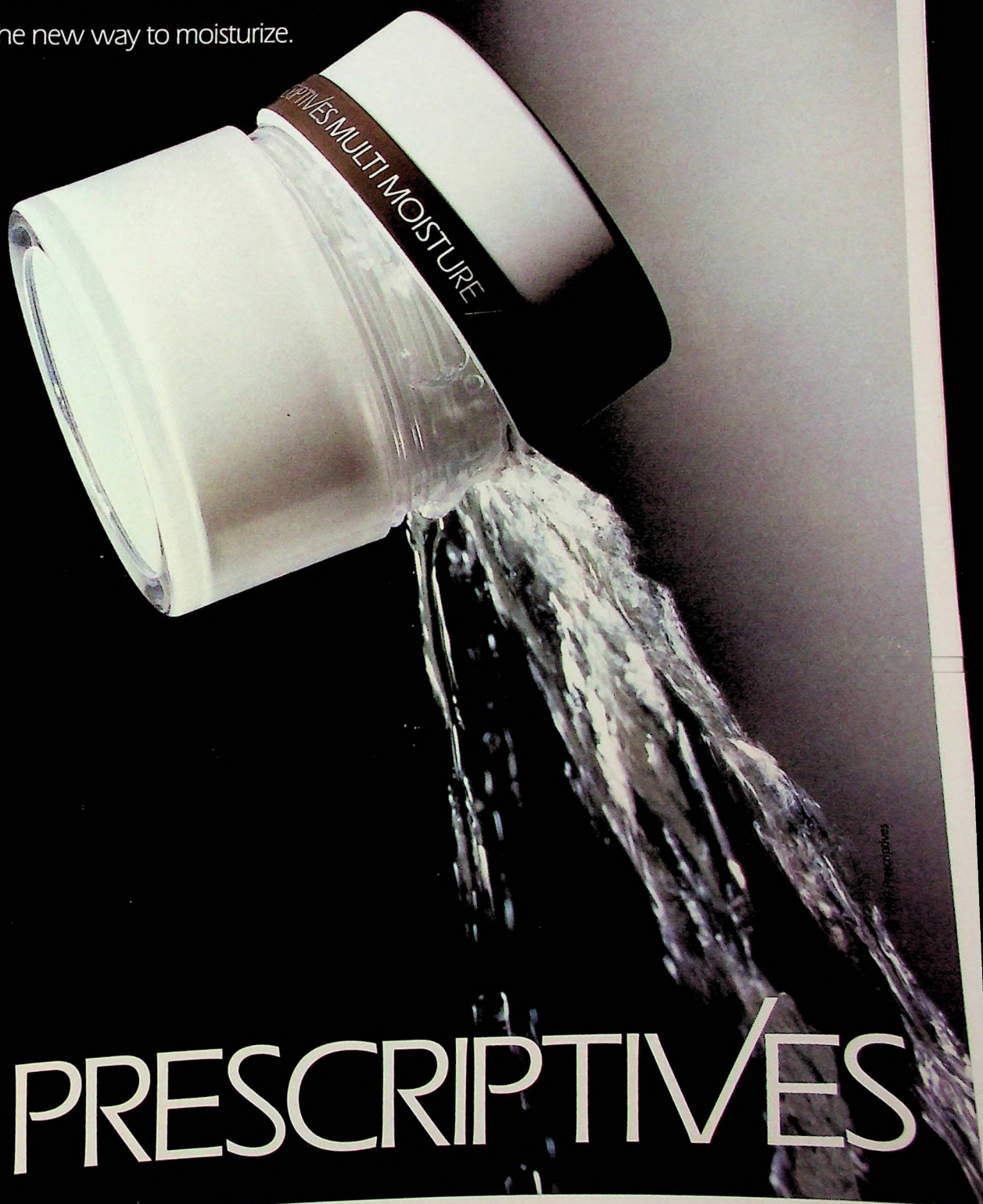


Fig. 12



Fig. 13

# Good looks *can* last your lifetime!

## Some of the excellent procedures undertaken at The Pountney Clinic

### Spot Fat Reduction

Whilst a strict regime of diet and exercise may appear to work wonders in reducing our overall body weight there invariably remain stubborn areas that refuse to respond to normal weight reduction and control methods. This spot fat can now be removed through liposuction. The figure is recontoured more pleasingly and the results can often be quite dramatic.

Surgeons at The Pountney Clinic have performed suction-assisted lipectomies for many years, eliminating fatty deposits from knees, tummies, thighs and other common areas such as beneath the chin, from the buttocks and the removal of excessive male breast tissue.

### Breast Enlargement

The breast enlargement, or augmentation, operation may be desirable for a number of reasons. Most often, breast enlargement helps those women who consider that their breasts are too small for their individual frame. Sometimes, of course, the breasts may shrink quite naturally following childbirth and breast feeding. Cosmetic surgery enlargement improves or restores the fullness and firmness that are required. In all situations the eventual size of the breasts is discussed between the patient and surgeon during consultation.

The general principle of modern breast augmentation is simple, involving the insertion of a self-contained silicone implant (prosthesis) through a small hairline incision which is hidden in the skin crease beneath the breast where it meets the chest. The implant then lies over the muscle wall and beneath the actual tissue of the breast so that only the breast itself may be felt.

For some persons the enlargement procedure may vary slightly—each case is highly individual. For these the implant will be inserted beneath the chest wall muscle. This also creates a natural shape. The frame of the patient and existing breast shape and tissue will determine the relevant type of procedure. For each procedure the implant is compatible with normal breast tissue, sharing similar texture and general characteristics.

### Nose Refinement

Over the years the nose refinement procedure has become probably the most requested and performed cosmetic surgery procedure. This is understandable in that it applies equally to both men and women and is the most easily identifiable feature. The wrong shape can spoil the profile and general appearance of an otherwise attractive person. It is chiefly for this reason that so many people, particularly those in the public eye, have elected to have their noses remodelled.

With this improvement operation all the skills and experience of the cosmetic surgeon are brought into play. The facial features—its general shape and appearance, the characteristics of the face and lips, the profile formed by these in conjunction with the chin and forehead—all are equally as important. The final effects of the nose refinement operation produce a more pleasing nose shape and size together with a general enhancement of the face itself.

No-one can turn back the clock. But at The Pountney Clinic our experienced cosmetic surgeons have achieved remarkable and lasting improvements to face and figure for men and for women. Thousands of people of all ages have benefitted from well-proven cosmetic improvement procedures.

Can cosmetic surgery help you? To find out obtain our comprehensive full colour brochure. Then, if you wish, arrange a no-obligation surgeon's consultation at our clinic. Our surgeons are highly experienced and all are Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons. All have extensive Plastic and Cosmetic surgical backgrounds.

The Pountney Clinic is one of Europe's longest established and respected specialist cosmetic surgery hospitals. At a consultation you will be able to assess for yourself the excellent facilities that we have been able to develop (with the assistance of the Area Health Authority) specifically for patients seeking improvement through cosmetic surgery.

## More of the excellent procedures undertaken at The Pountney Clinic

NOSE IMPROVEMENT & REFINEMENT · FACELIFTS  
WRINKLE IMPROVEMENT · EYEBAG AND EYELID IMPROVEMENT  
BREAST ENLARGEMENTS, UPLIFTS AND REDUCTIONS  
INVERTED NIPPLE IMPROVEMENT · SPOT FAT REDUCTION  
SCAR REFINEMENT · 'TUMMY TUCKS' · 'BAT EAR' CORRECTION  
RECEDING CHIN CORRECTION · CHEEK IMPLANTS  
MOLE, WART & TATTOO REMOVAL · OVERCOMING MALE BALDNESS

Telephone **01-570 9658** or send coupon



**The Pountney Clinic**  
GOOD LOOKS CAN LAST A LIFETIME!

Please telephone  
**01-570 9658**

**THE POUNTNEY CLINIC**

**41 Bath Road, Hounslow  
West London TW3 3BN**

I am interested in the following improvement procedure:

BLOCK CAPITALS

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

3 MINS FROM LONDON AIRPORT





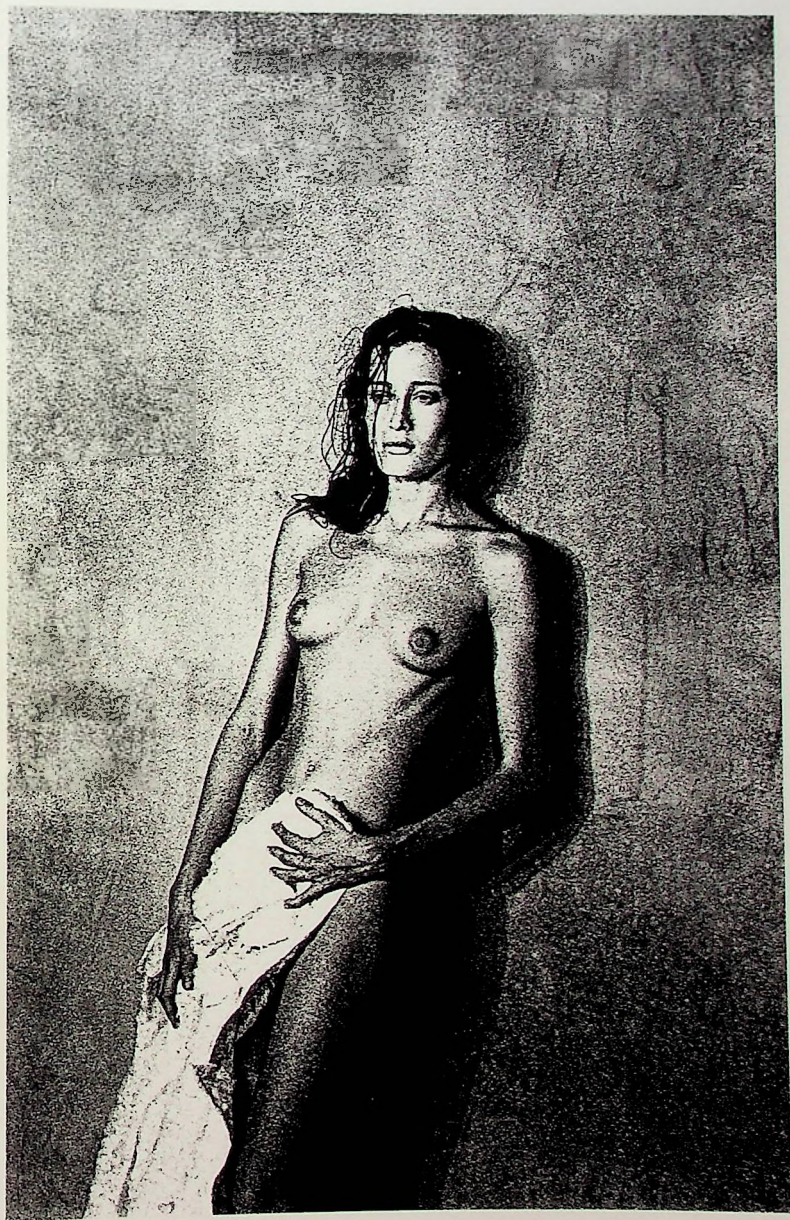


Fig. 14





Fig. 15 A FIFTIES BRA WORN TO ACHIEVE THE IDEAL

It's quicker and easier  
with **VIM**



...that's why she's smiling!

Full marks, Mum! Two minutes ago that bath was a sight. Young Jimmy left it ringed with half the playground's grime. Look now! Beaming with that never-been-used look that Sudsy Vim gives everything it touches. Yes, everything brightens up when you and Sudsy Vim get going.

There's time to spare for a well-earned break when Sudsy Vim is your daily help. And when you tackle the midday meal there's a shining stove and a row of happy, Vim-trim saucepans ready and waiting. Vim's quick sudsing action deals thoroughly with the stickiest grease, the toughest dirt. Does it so safely, so quickly. Sudsy Vim is made to make you feel bright about all your cleaning.

**VIM** shines as it cleans  
-fastest of all!

Hudson & Knight Limited

VIM-500

Fig. 16

"It's a Maytag...I didn't need any other reason to get a Maytag Dishwasher," writes Mrs. Di Mango.

"My Maytag clothes washer is going on 11, and it's never needed a repair. How do you stay in business when your appliances last so long?"



"Would you believe I need to have a dishwasher I only need 12 times in 20 years?" writes Mrs. Maifidi Di Mango of Brooklyn, New York. "I find so time and practically wash all my dishes before putting them in the machine. And then I sometimes had to wash them over again."

"What a change, now that I have a Maytag Dishwasher. It saves me all kinds of time and gets dishes as clean as I like."

Know why you're so pleased with your Maytag, Mrs. Di Mango? Maytag's exclusive Micro-Mesh™ Filter keeps the water cleaner. And Maytag has a full-size spray arm on top, as well as one below, for extra cleaning power! So your dishes get clean without pre-rinsing.

Giant capacity is another fine Maytag convenience. It's the only dishwasher that takes 10-inch plates in both racks.

See Maytag Built-In and Portable Dishwashers—and also Maytag Food Waste Disposers—at your Maytag Dealer's now. He's in the Yellow Pages.

We don't say that Mrs. Di Mango's dishwasher will equal the record of her washer. But dependability is what we try to build into every Maytag. No matter what job it's made for.

**MAYTAG**  
THE DEPENDABILITY PEOPLE

Mail coupon for beautifully illustrated booklet.

The Maytag Company  
Dept. LK-11, Newton, Iowa 50208  
I enclose 10c. Send me your illustrated booklet that gives full details about dependable Maytag Built-In and Portable Dishwashers, and Maytag Food Waste Disposers, too. (I'm thinking of (check one) ☐ Replacing ☐ Remodeling ☐ Building



Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_

FEMALE COMRADESHIP IN THE KITCHEN





Fig. 18.



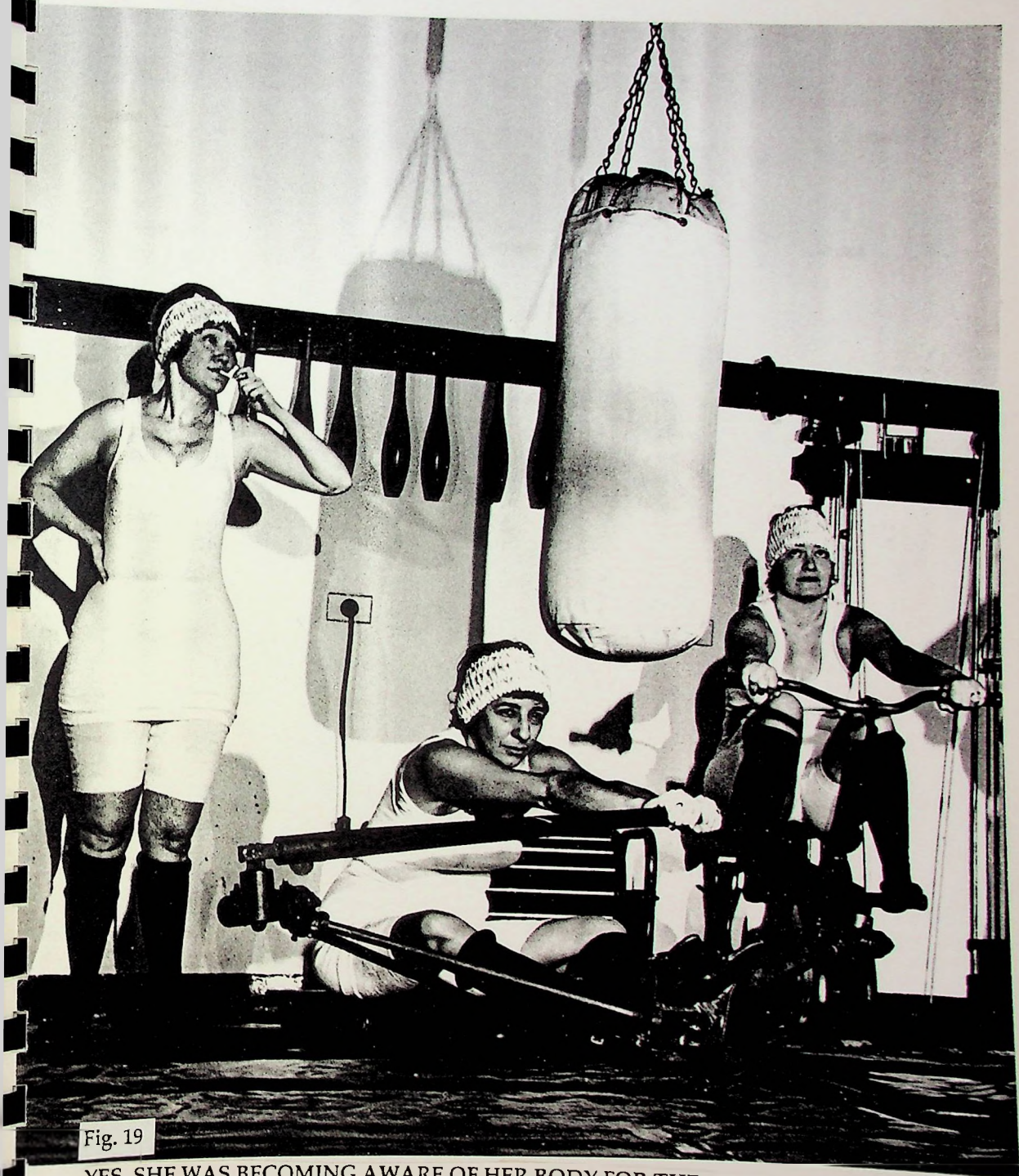


Fig. 19

YES, SHE WAS BECOMING AWARE OF HER BODY FOR THE FIRST TIME, AND TO SOME IT CAME AS A PRETTY BIG SHOCK.



# In the Flesh



Dianne Brill



Faith Ford



Jane Fonda



Marla Maples



Dolly Parton

Fig. 20 A VARIATION OF IDEALS



1961: Gets a Jackie do



1962: Takes up nursing



1962: Earns her wings



1966: Bobs her hair



1968: Goes mod

# The Plastic Versions





Fig. 21 THE SIXTIES IDEAL - JEAN SHRIMPTON  
PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID BAILEY, 1965



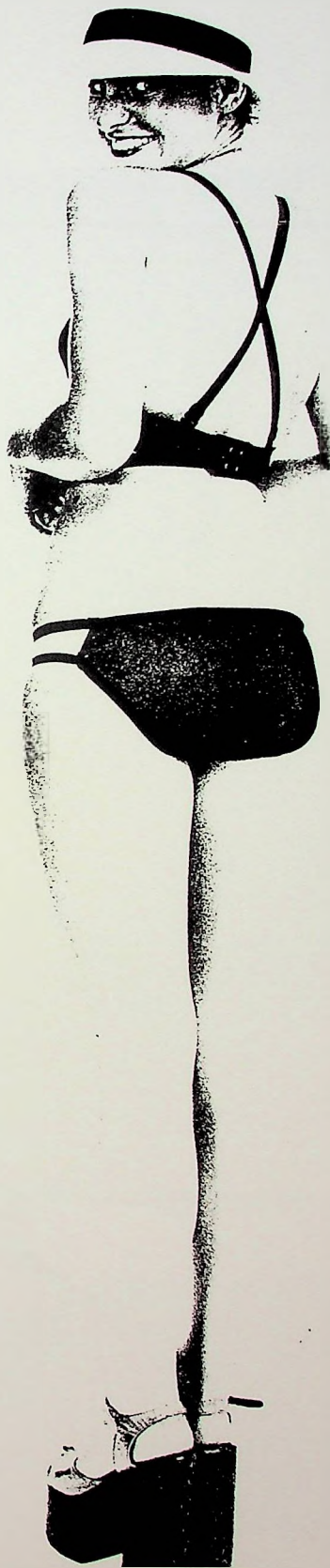


Fig. 22 THE SEVENTIES IDEAL

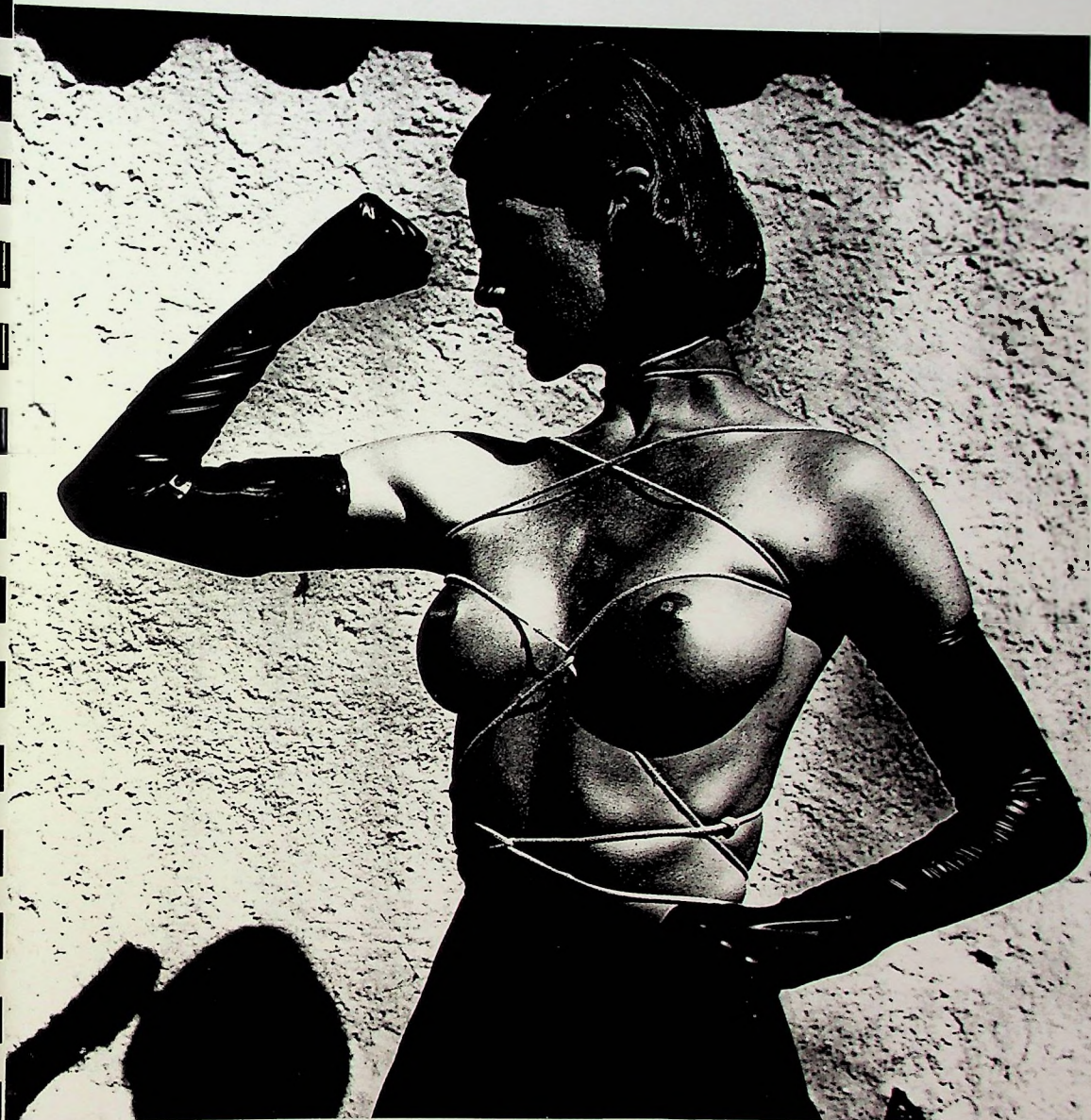


Fig. 23 HELMUT NEWTON. TIED UP TORSO - 1980