

The comparative analysis of Gibson girls of 20th century and contemporary females

Ziye Lin^{1,2} *

¹ The Glasgow School of Arts, Glasgow G3 6RQ, UK

² University for the Creative Arts, Epsom KT18 5BE, UK

* Corresponding author: Email: 1246198486@qq.com.

Abstract: There is a complex relationship between fashion and dress to identity. It's worth noting that given twining, cloths can be a portrayal of one's identity because they tell people something about class, gender, status, and so on. Also, the author asserts that cloths can lead to misinterpretation because they are not able to speak (Entwistle, 2000: 112). It is because of this argument that copious theories have emerged in an attempt to explain the relations. Entwistle, in her book, highlights the centrality of dressing to people's identities, gender, and sexuality (2000, p.40). These sentiments are also held by Stroope, Walker, and Franzen (2017, 85), who posit that the portrayal of identity has led to theories such as feminism. Therefore, feminism has existed in all aspects of life since it came into being in early 1910. These concepts are also used in various ways in the fashion industry making it significant in contemporary times. Feminist theory mainly accentuates the analysis of gender inequality. Therefore, it aims to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of gender. In her book, Butler believes that gender is used sometimes as a way to secure heterosexuality (2006, 5). Therefore, according to Griffin (2015, p.196), feminism wanted to transform the entire realms of the lives of women: social, political, cultural, personal, and economical. Consequently, Zinn and Dill (2016, 76) assert that feminists meant to remove all psychological and structural obstacles to the financial independence of women. The reason is that most of them believed that gender was produced and considered through sexual hierarchy as outlined by (Butler, 2006, 5). Some of the themes explored in these theories entail objectification, contemporary discrimination, and art history. Indeed, feminists combined lots of reasons that became related to a New Woman. Some crusaded for woman voice, others fought for labor and socialism, whereas others still called for birth control and 'free love.' As a result, Butler (2006, 7), in her book, she continues to point out that feminist views attempt to eliminate and overthrow gender, because it is a typical signal of women. The feminism resurgence in the recent past has been integral in the evolution of the modern fashion industry. It is a relief that females are no longer anticipated to fit into a particular mold for them to be perceived as beautiful. The stereotypical thinking, as well as the labeling of females as sexual objects, often have negatively impacted how several women dress Entwistle (2000, p.40). As denoted by Fraser (2017, 167), this is something that most women seem to be reluctant to dress because of the fear that they might be perceived as sexually provocative. Seabrook, Ward, and Giaccardi (2019, 556) also echoed this sentiment but went further to posit that fortunately for feminists, especially those in the fashion industry, feminism has led to the promotion of females as sexual beings rather than sexual objects. Many people are happy that the industry is catching up, though centuries later.

Keywords: Gender; Feminism; Identity; Female Beauty; Fashion.

1. Introduction

Even though women like Susan Anthony and Margaret Fuller worked to enhance American women's quality of life during 1800, the contemporary cries of the feminist movement was just beginning to be heard in the 20th century (Zinn, and Dill, 2016: 78). Women's political participation began to become more radical, mainly in Chicago and New York, from the early 1880s to the 1890s. However, most American citizens know about women's movements mainly through newspapers. Low subscription magazines spread the message to all sectors of society across the country (Butler, 2006: 5). As a result, because of their widespread distribution, the magazines were the main convey of the newly formed feminine American ideal. In the 1890s, a famous magazine illustrator--Charles Gibson wanted to redefine the concept of women in the country by creating Gibson girls. Gibson girls have been adding luster to many covers of American magazines. The image of the Gibson Girls reflected the main concerns of the movement of women during the early 20th century. Some of the common themes that emerged from the illustration of Gibson entail dress reform, education, manners,

sexuality, marriage and females in the workplace.

The concept of feminism has been a controversial issue. Feminism is closely related to political rights, social freedom and economy. In the patriarchal society from the 19th century to the early 20th century, the first wave of American feminism prevailed. It was exhibited mainly through the illustration, which was created by Charles Dana Gibson of an image of a "new woman" named Gibson Girl, as mentioned above. The Gibson Girl changed and challenged the standard female image and broke the traditional female perception (Zinn, and Dill, 2016, p.78). These women were independent and free, but they were in stark contrast with feminists in politics. So Gibson girls play an important role in influencing contemporary females.

The content mainly studies is the influence of Gibson girls on contemporary women and society in the 20th century. Also, the main aim of the study is to provide a comparative analysis of Gibson girls of 20th century and contemporary females, with a focus on fashion. The dissertation will cover following aspect: The first is to discuss the Gibson Girl's group and how they differ from the feminists. The second is to discern the kind of negative impact does the so-called "new women's

“behavior brings to society and the kind of trend brought to the fashion field at that time. The third is to explore feminism and the consumption psychology of women in today's society, and how contemporary society defines “new women.” also how the beauty of Gibson Girl is defined and how it affects society.

2. Fashion and Identity with Feminism

There is a complex relationship between fashion and dress to identity. It's worth noting that given twinning, cloths can be a portrayal of one's identity because they tell people something about class, gender, status, and so on. Also, the author asserts that cloths can lead to misinterpretation because they are not able to speak (Entwistle, 2000: 112). It is because of this argument that copious theories have emerged in an attempt to explain the relations. Entwistle, in her book, highlights the centrality of dressing to people's identities, gender, and sexuality (2000, p.40). These sentiments are also held by Stroope, Walker, and Franzen (2017, 85), who posit that the portrayal of identity has led to theories such as feminism. Therefore, feminism has existed in all aspects of life since it came into being in early 1910. These concepts are also used in various ways in the fashion industry making it significant in contemporary times.

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3. Social Gender and Female Beauty

The social gender construction is also a theory in sociology and feminism about gender culture and society have created gender roles, and the roles are defined as appropriate behaviors of individuals of a specific gender. As a result, according to Wilson (2003, 119), fashion has become obsessed to great extend with gender and it also redefines and defines the boundary of gender.

On the other hand, An American liberal self-proclaimed feminist Naomi Wolf had redefined the relationship between beauty and female identity. According to her, “The quality called “beauty” objectively and universally existed. A woman must want to embody it, and men must want to possess women who embody it” (Wolf, 2016: 709). Similarly, she goes on to say that competition between women is regarded as an aspect of the Beauty myth, which has continuously divided women over the years (Wolf, 1991: 1). She asserts that for many years, youth and virgins have been "beautiful" for females as they represent experience in many cultures. In addition, ignorance and aging for women are perceived as "unbeautiful" since women grow more potent with time (Wolf, 1991: 1). This sentiment is also echoed by Fox Genovese (2015: 161), who says that the definition of female beauty in different age groups is very different in society. As a result, women began to engage in the beauty industry, they began to pursue beauty, obsessed with physical perfection.

Also, the female beauty for a long time has been associated with dressing. For instance, as denoted by Wilson (2003: 123), dressing during the 19th-century, virgin conveyed their durability, such as seductiveness. And Naomi Wolff holds the same view. In her opinion, the society has always believed that women's beauty usually depreciates with time, which is not tenable in her opinion. She asserts that female beauty is a myth, and anybody can modify themselves to look as they want, the only limitation being taste and modern appropriateness standards (Wolf, 1991: p. 68). The concept of female beauty focusing was fully used in the Gibson Girls, which was personification for the ideal feminine physical attractiveness showed by the artist Charles Gibson, mainly during the 19th century. These illustrations were used in the cover of various magazines, as the epitome of female beauty.

4. Conclusion

A comparative analysis of the “Gibson Girl” has been very essential to discern their influence in the contemporary fashion world, especially among women. Accordingly, by using various theories such as feminism and consumer psychology, the influence of the “Gibson Girl” is quite evident. It can be said that "Gibson girl" has made great contribution to the feminist movement.

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