

The Voice Behind The Faces: Emotional Labor In The Modeling Industry

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This study became essential to me as a result of my own personal struggle with body dysmorphia this past year. Throughout 2017, I worked as a professional model, striving to achieve an impossible body standard set within the industry. The unreachable waif prototype led me to obsessively compare myself to others and lose total perception of myself and reality. Within weeks of launching into the industry I had lost 15 pounds off of my already small figure and was working more than ever. As a young woman I felt that the benefits outweighed the costs (excuse the pun) and was rewarded as countless people told me that this was “the most womanly and beautiful I’ve ever looked”. It wasn’t until my mom and I lost touch, and the people that truly loved me became genuinely worried about my health that I realized I had a problem. I hit a breaking point when I became depressed, anxious, and started to experience severe panic attacks. Many models find it immensely difficult to find their way in an industry where all eyes are on them, and all aspects of their body are analyzed and critiqued. Thus, estrangement of the self becomes a common issue amongst models whom often redirect their identity management strategies and align themselves with an image of perfection- losing themselves in the process This impression management in fact led me to the point of becoming so inadequate at depersonalizing, that I submitted to periods of emotional deadness, as Hochschild’s sociological theories have allowed me to understand.

That being said, the fashion industry also comes with profuse benefits, offering an outlet for artistic exploration, that I was not ready to abandon. Thus, by performing this study I was able to see that these issues were a part of a larger system, and that there are in fact strategies that can mitigate the negative effects that may come with the career choice. As expressed by Hochschild, as a precaution against burnout many experienced workers develop a healthy estrangement, a definitive separation of self from role. Thus, today I have adopted other identities: I am a model, I am a student, I am a philanthropist, and I am an athlete. By focusing on a number of identities as a whole, and not focusing on only one, I have been able to adopt a far healthier mindset. With this newfound perspective I hope to experience a career filled with light and longevity

The Voice Behind The Faces: Emotional Labor In The Modeling Industry

Through Hochschild's lens of emotion work I analyze how models have both managed, and been impacted, by being commoditized in the fashion industry. This type of emotional labor can have varying consequences and take an immense toll on mental-health for models. Thus, by analyzing interviewee's responses through a sociological perspective I am able to gain insight into the innate reasons behind these outcomes. Specifically, focusing on the theories offered by Hochschild, Marx, and Goffman. In conducting my study, I questioned the ways in which models are socialized, their bodily identity and emotional management strategies, and the consequences their job has on their well-being, health, and life. Throughout this paper I will show that models experience a bind due to the expectations people place on their body that often lead them to become alienated from others, from the self, and from the physical body; overall impacting their well-being.

Models currently weigh 23% less than the average woman, a drastic change from the 8% difference that existed twenty years ago (Levine 1996). In order to compete at an elite level, young girls often strive for an unrealistic and un-maintainable physique. The way the industry currently operates often hinders the mental well-being of those within it, as seen through the experiences of vulnerable teens operating without correct social provision. There is visible service to improving the industry; however, the detrimental mechanisms of this culture will continue to persist if drastic systemic reform is not taken. By interviewing professional models, I was able to discover the intricacies of a model's relationship with her fellow models, agents, designers, and casting directors; and the impacts these relationships have had on a models' body image and mental health. Moreover, I offer an authentic perspective as a professional working model, allowing for greater access to the truth behind these influences. By utilizing a qualitative

approach, I was able to identify which parties are most influential in defining the cultural messages that affect a models' body image standards.

Body image is a seemingly personal idea that generally appears to be a product of individual belief, opposed to social influence. However, due to evidence of its formation in peer and social groups during adolescence, it is evident that body image is something that is socially-defined and culturally understood. In fact, through learning about Durkheim's concept of the *social fact* it is evident that there are certain norms in society that transcend individual thoughts and beliefs and are capable of acting as social constraints on the individual (Durkheim 1982). By way of this, body image can be defined not only on a personal level but may vary in systematic ways across wider demographics and influenced by various social and environmental factors. Thus, socially-defined body image ideals that drive eating and exercising habits may be important determinants of one's' body size and the body image ideals, and behaviors, linked to norms about standard body composition, eventually influencing a women's weight. Moreover, in learning of Cooley's concept of the *Looking Glass Self* (LGS) it can be understood that a person's self is grown out of society's interpersonal interactions. Individuals are defined by the relations they have with others, and the perceptions of how these others, the people who make up this person's society, view the individual. Cooley believed that this process of self-construction starts at a very young age, but is ongoing, and that the self evolves based on changing social environments, and the specific people a given person interacts with. Cooley outlined the LGS concept to have three basic elements: the imagination of our appearance to the other person, the imagination of his judgment of that appearance, some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification about the judgment of the other (Cooley 1902). These three elements contribute to the self-image one has of him/her self, leading to an individual's sense of self-worth. It is my

intrinsic belief that these feelings can be understood through the lens of modeling and can help provide a sociological explanation to many of the dynamics in the fashion industry. As a result of the competitive nature of the industry and the constant shifting of beauty norms, the modeling industry is becoming more selective than ever affecting a model's well-being, and the importance placed on desires for status and belonging.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Foundational Theory

Through the understanding of Marx, Goffman, and most prominently Hochschild's key theories we can understand the social implications the industry can have on the self, that is the models. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production (Marx 1846). Thus, the class which is the ruling material force, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. By way of this, greed is a product of civil society, not as a result of human nature; as our job as humans now is to be the producers. Where modern society is purely focused on the cash nexus, and maximum efficiency. Marx (1927) expresses his dire hate for the division of labor, for which he saw as the root of alienation. It is crucial that we understand the different types of alienation that can occur to the worker, or model in this case, laboring under a capitalist system of production. Firstly, alienation of the worker from their product. Secondly, alienation of the worker from the act of production. Thirdly, alienation of the worker from their species-essence, and lastly, alienation of the worker from other workers. By way of this capitalist structure in which we exist, the worker no longer "feels himself outside of his work" as his work does not belong to him (Marx 1844: 149).

In looking further into social dynamics, it is essential to acknowledge that our interactions with others plays a key component in what we openly demonstrate with regards to our roles; filtering what we put on the *front stage*, in comparison to the private arenas, or the *backstage*. In this *front stage* behavior, we have immense concern for the way in which things appear, causing for unwanted feelings of shame when we don't genuinely identify with it or cannot enact it properly. This is detrimental and can lead to drastic consequences on the self, and the notion of self-verification. In order to demonstrate this concept Goffman (1956) utilizes a metaphor of a theater and its' performers to represent human social interaction, referred to as the dramaturgical analysis approach. Dramaturgy is the idea that life is a never-ending play for which people are the actors, and our performances are rooted in the matters taught to us by way of our socialization. Thus, we conduct *impression management*, for which we manipulate others' impressions of us by using vast mechanisms of presentation including: our manner of interacting, our appearance, and the very social setting. Overall, it must be understood that we are always enacting roles. Society has guided the conditions we think we need to adhere by to function in certain roles. People spend a vast amount of energy and time focusing on impression management, acquiring the appropriate characteristics by staging a character.

Although Hochschild valued Goffman's work on how we try to control our appearance through unconsciously observing rules, she knew something was missing. Thus, she sought after the questions of what we were act upon, and how we manage that acting- stopping the feeling, for example. How workers limit their emotional offerings to surface acting in order to preserve their sense of self, and what happens when that no longer is possible. Societies' social structure significantly shapes our individual interactions, prompting us to fit our emotions into contexts of *feeling rules*. These feeling rules lay out how we should feel in a situation as dictated by society,

specifically described through his descriptions of surface acting, deep acting, emotion work, and emotion labor. It is vital we understand that social rules affect our emotions and behavior in different settings, for which Hochschild has coined the term: *emotional labor*. Emotional labor occurs in almost every situation, dictating how we must feel or portray our emotions (Hochschild 1979). For example, Delta flight attendants must re-define their situation while at work and not let passengers influence their reaction, essentially exchanging emotion for wages. Different roles in society call for different emotional conducts by individuals, inherently making emotional exchange an additional part of the job. These processes are a result of the broader realm of feeling rules that exist in society and guide and influence everyday emotional interactions.

Consequently, it is imperative to address the strenuous consequences that occur from disconnecting ones' display and ones' genuine feeling over a long period of time. This can be excessively problematic; thus, we try to minimize this strain by bringing both closer together by altering what we feel or modifying what we fake (Hochschild 1983). As Hochschild describes: "when a flight attendant feels that her smile is "not an indication of how she really feels," or when she feels that her deep or surface acting is not meaningful, it is a sign that she is straining to disguise the failure of a more general trans- mutation. It indicates that emotion work now performed on a commercial stage... is failing to involve the actors or convince the audience in a way that it once did" (Hochschild 1983). This hindering emotional labor is often seldom recognized, rarely honored, and almost never taken into account by employers as a component of on-the-job stress (Hochschild 1983). For these workers, as so for models, emotion work, feeling rules, and social exchange have been removed from the private domain and placed in a public

one, where they are “processed, standardized, and subjected to hierarchical control” (Hochschild 1983: 153).

Managing Emotions and Determining Behavior In the Modeling Industry

The fashion Industry has manifested into a trillion-dollar business. Thus, it is imperative the economic implications behind a model work, and the industries structuring of that work, be analyzed. With respect to how Marx expressed his understanding of the ‘labor-based theory’ of wealth, Ashley Mears’ (2011) makes an effort to understand what determines success for a model in a winner-take-all market, by actually becoming a model herself. In light of this she analyzes the labor structure of modeling, one filled with extreme inequality, enormous amount of uncertainty, and very high debt. In this she highlights the “very visible lucrative rewards to many barely making a living, uncertain, precarious earnings”. That it is an industry for which the objectification and exploitation of a female’s body is used for capitalist gain. One where models have the least amount of power and agency, as “the fate of a model is largely contingent on how their look is evaluated”. As a result of this economically driven labor force, as Marx would remark, we end up losing ourselves. This lack of control and separation from our true self is the result of operating as a product that is producing for the benefit, or monetary gain, of others. Mears brings in historical insight that attributes to the surplus of size 0 models today, discussing globalization in the 1990s, and the inundation of Russian Models, that increased the rise in models, and the need for a model to differentiate themselves through any means necessary.

Goffman clarifies the characteristics that are essential as a performer for the function of accurately staging a character. In modeling we often conduct impression management by morphing into alternate beings, and exuding a rather extroverted persona; one beyond our

authentic personality. These backstage transitional instances are often unseen; these are the private times where openness, helplessness, and truth, are commonly displayed (Goffman 1959). On the contrary, the frontstage instants encapsulate the ‘perfected’ versions of ourselves, the ones in which we publicly display. With regards to modeling, these represent the curated split second moments that the world sees when I, or other models, walk on stage or are seen in an editorial. These snapshots are depicted as instances of sheer confidence; however, there is an unseen level of pure chaos, rejection, stress, and mental work, that lies behind the facade. In the literal, physical, backstage of runway shows many models start off as a blank slate; exposed, raw, and timid. Encapsulating a “naked un-socialized look, a look of concentration, a look of one who is privately engaged in a difficult, treacherous task” (Goffman 1956: 235). However, in the production of becoming a part of the designer’s artistic vision; by means of exotic clothing, bold makeup, and sculpted hair, we are molded into a different person. We become a character the designer is striving to depict.

Beyond the theories both Marx and Goffman offer Hochschild is interested in how we definitively manage emotions. Models are constantly enacting strategies and in the process of modifying and reinventing themselves, shifting from surface acting to deep acting (Hochschild 1983). In modeling surface acting can come in the form of dress, attitude, and reference groups. However, in adopting different mentalities these notions of emotional enactment can cause us to stray from our true selves over time, and eventually to get lost in the seemingly harmless process experiencing deep acting.

Through in depth interviews Sylvia Holla (2015) highlights the relationship for fashion models between their self, their body, and their work. Expressing the complexity of the industry as a result of the industries’ heavy demands on aesthetic labor. By conducting graphic data in the

major European fashion cities Holla demonstrates that the seemingly physical industry has a far deeper connection to self-hood than what people see. Ultimately, contributing to the idea that the body connects to self-hood in institutional contexts; furthering Hochschilds (1979) discussion of emotional labor. This emotional labor is conducted in today's service society, implicitly and explicitly declaring how we should act and manage our emotions; for which Mears categorizes as "floating norms" (2011). These floating norms describe discipline under market constraint and social expectations that guide behavior; causing models to adhere to notions and act a certain way as a result of the industries' intricate system. Mears looks at the New York fashion industry as the most cut throat and competitive of the lot, shedding light onto women's fashion modeling as a disciplining labor process in which female bodily capital is transformed into a cultural commodity.

Professions that have high amounts of emotional labor often lead to mental health consequences for many people. For examples, a study of 3000 female flight attendants showed the demands of the job, via emotional labor and the difficult schedule, led to mental health issues primarily in the form of anxiety and depression. These poor consequences were seemingly linked to isolation and solitude, fear of being inadequate friends and partners due to job demands, and lack of protection by employers with respect to workplace exposures; all extremely common and detrimental issues models face in their environment. Although a flight attendant's job is vastly different than a models, they both require heavy emotional labor as understood through Hochschild, not to mention erratic schedules filled with constant travel. As what was once a private act of emotion management is now being sold as labor in fields of public-contact jobs (Hochschild 1983).

The true 'super' models

Although there are many models who have 'done it right', the three primary ones that come to mind include: Gisele Bundchen, Cameron Russell, and Karlie Kloss. These three models view modeling as only a portion of their identity, by capitalizing on versatility and healthy self-management. As expressed in Gisele's autobiography, she voices that "It was important for [her] to do my job well, but also to never let modeling define who I was. I actually never became a model; I did modeling" (Bundchen 2018). Gisele began her career at the young age of 14, and has appeared in 400 campaigns and 1200 magazine covers; today ranked as one of the top supermodels in the world. That being said, her private life stands in dramatic contrast to her public image. In fact, Gisele expresses that in an effort to protect herself and to avoid getting hurt or feeling objectified, "[she] created a shield around [herself]. [stating:] The private me was Gisele, but the model Gisele was her. That's what I called her, too—her". This 'her' allowed her to transform in her shoots and develop into different characters, but she made a concrete effort to make sure those personas were separate from who she really is (Bundchen 2018). Cameron Russell highlights the truth behind modeling and gives us a backstage look at who she truly is, and how she has navigated the industry in her Ted Talk: 'Looks aren't everything. Believe me, I'm a model'. This Ted Talk has gained 24,630,568 views as a result of her candid dialogue and insight into her life. Cameron sees modeling as, not an end point, but rather a starting point. As a result of this, she works to use her media influence and image to create change, to make people more responsible. Cameron explains that modeling should not be someone's only aspiration, as it's "not a career path" (Russell 2013). In light of this, Cameron Russell, is one of the most well-respected activists' and an immense inspiration in the modeling world, even creating the "Model

Mafia”, for which I am a member, that focuses on having models use their visibility to fight for global change and create leaders in their respected philanthropic initiatives. In a similar vein, Karlie Kloss, despite having graced millions of magazine covers, has one favorite that really stands out; the December 2017 cover for Forbes magazine representing the class of 2018’s “30 Under 30” of which Kloss was a student. Karlie emerged from taking classes at NYU, to creating her own *Kode With Karlie* foundation which has instructed over 500 young women to code. This has fostered both a community and opportunity for girls in tech, an industry where gender-disparity is immensely prominent. Karlie has used her 12.6 million Instagram followers to promote not only beauty, but intelligence and health. Today she works for model-clients “that are excited to work with [her] not because of just what [she] looks like, but because of what [she] stands for”. Kloss saw immense value through the utilization of her platform to be “seen as well as heard” (Kloss 2017).

Gap In The Literature and Present Study

Former sociological research that dealt with the modelling industry was conducted in 2012; however, this was six years ago and was conducted through an economic lens of sociology; recognizing the labor structure of modeling by means of the extreme inequality, enormous uncertainty, and high debt. This research highlighted modeling as a form of freelance labor with extremely high risk, and expressed the immense pressure placed on models in order to mitigate the uncertainty that comes with the “winner takes all” market (Mears 2012). Unlike Mears, I wanted to place less focus on what determines a given model’s chances of success, and more focus onto the internal behavior of a model and her relationship with the fashion

community. I wanted to utilize a qualitative approach to understand which parties are most influential in defining the cultural messages that affect a models' body image standards.

METHODS

The data presented here derive from interviews with 5 female models between 19-22 years old living in New York City. As an extremely competitive industry it is apparent that mental-health can take a toll as a result. Rather than making causal claims, my sample allows for identifying patterns in the data in line with a case study approach.

Designed to encourage narrative descriptions of models' experiences, interviews centered on 10 open-ended questions about body image, including participants' interactions with other models, agents, designers, casting directors, and the implications of those experiences.

Averaging 1 hour in length, interviewees were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Recruitment occurred through targeted sampling, for which respondents were determined through my personal relationship with the models in the industry. I set about acquiring the interviewees by contacting a portion of models by phone with information about the study and requested that they think about their willingness to be involved in the study. In this message, interested models were encouraged to contact me via email to schedule a time for their face-to-face interview.

My data sample resembles common experiences in the industry in many ways, by having a case study method where I targeted people with different experiences: someone that continued to model with a positive relationship with it, someone who quit the modeling industry, and three females who I believe represent the majority; girls still trying to navigate the space.

Through my personal existing rapport with interviewees, I was able to garner responses which most accurately and honestly represent the lived experiences of the model subpopulation I am studying.

Due to the highly intimate nature of my research topic a debrief before and after the interview was essential. Moreover, I made it clear that it was acceptable for individuals to choose to skip certain questions or leave the interview altogether. Ethical considerations were vital in this study as immensely personal matters were shared; therefore, both the confidentiality and the anonymity of all research participants was guaranteed. Creating pseudonyms for those who wished and accurate naming accountability for those that desired.

Themes presented in this paper arose from an inductive analytic approach. Temi, a qualitative transcription site, facilitated the transcription for which I did the initial coding of discussions. In reading these quotes, I was shocked by how descriptions of conversations revealed much about participants' self-identities. Through focused coding by hand, I closely examined how participants' comparisons with other models reflected self-characterizations, and how comments made by authoritative figures had important implications for models' own self-image. In reviewing models' interviews I looked for trends that appeared in multiple cases. These trends were then marked by code, such as; "depression", and "anxiety" for which I could then track throughout the data, allowing me to find patterns between the respondents. After conducting the analysis and comparing the results to previous studies it became clear that I offered insight about the industry, and its' implications on the self, that had not been examined before.

RESULTS

Cases

There were 5 cases for which i acquired my results. Case number 1, Zuzu Tadeushuk, is a 21 year old from New York State who is a writer and lover of academia, and began modeling at the top level of high fashion 4 years ago. Today, she has quit modeling in order to satisfy her own life needs. Case number 2, Katie Moore, is a 21 year old model from Texas who started her career at 16, with a newfound makeover and an extremely fast launch into high fashion. Today she has openly come forward about her eating disorder, and is heavily involved with the model alliance as a major advocate for promoting change within the industry. The next 3 cases wish to remain anonymous, thus I have established pseudonyms for them and left out identifiable details. Case number 3, Claudia, is 21 years old from the United States who began her modeling career after having attended two years of college. Today she navigates the body maintenance required for modeling through her genuine love of fitness and health. Case number 4, Melissa, is a 21 year old from outside the United States; however, is currently residing in New York, whom is both equally involved in high fashion and commercial work. Lastly, case number 5, Kristen, is a 21 year old model born outside of the United States who began an extremely reputable high fashion start at the mere age of 13. Today, she is navigating her trajectory, working with both high fashion and commercial clients in order to ultimately reach her desired goals, while making a stable living.

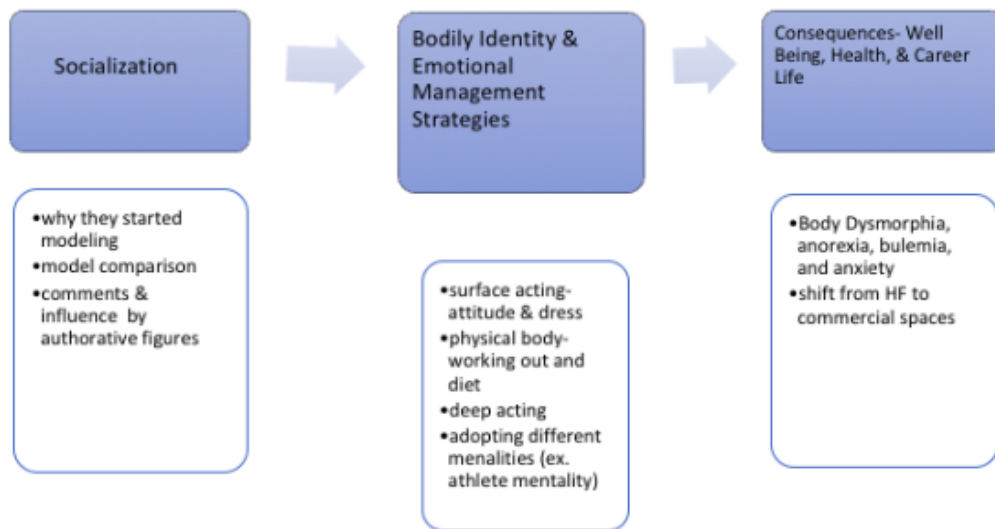


Figure 1: A conceptual model representing the general pathway a model takes when assimilating to the fashion industry.

As you can see in the conceptual model above (Figure 1), most models experience one pathway through several diverse and intricate facets. A models' development stems from their socialization into the industry, to the bodily identity and emotional management strategies they enact in becoming a model, to the consequences these may, or may not, have on their well-being. The interviews took a form that allowed me to get a full picture of the experiences of the models. Narratives from the early experiences that taught them expectations, to what they were doing to cope, to the consequences of their strategies and what they're doing now.

In understanding the complexities that come with the industry I had to begin from the core: the socialization process. By way of this I uncovered why the girls started modeling, whether they had any recounts of model comparison or influence, and whether agents, designers, casting directors, or other authoritative figures, played a part of their process.

Socialization

The early stages

In understanding the outcomes models have experienced, it was imperative to understand why they began modeling in the first place. Each model saw modeling as something fun and exciting, as Melissa remarked, “ I grew up watching the Victoria Secret Show and to be one of those confident women was my dream,” or as Zuzu expressed, “I started by sending pictures into an agency as a dare from my brother. I didn’t think it would actually happen, and then it did, and I thought ok this could be fun!” Each of the 5 cases entered modeling with an open mind for travel, capital gain, and excitement.

Model comparison

A primary way we are socialized is by our surrounding environment. Our reference groups influence the way we think, become, and act. In understanding Hochschild’s interactionist perspective we can see that emotions are a social act, and operate as signals representing the relation between the self and the environment; where your capacity to manage emotions is dependent on the expectations of others towards us. Thus, micro feeling work is far more closely correlated with macro social institutions than many comprehend (Hochschild 1983). These emotional cues become among the most momentous in human interaction. By way of this, in understanding models’ socialization into the industry we must understand their living situation. Models often reside in spaces owned by the agency, informally known as “model apartments,” when they move to New York. Because models live here as they are just becoming assimilated into the industry, the interactions that occur within these homes play a major role in shaping the beginning of a young model’s career and the behaviors they adopt. As Katie

exclaimed reflecting on her time in a model apartment, “My Russian roommate would poke my stomach and say, ‘Where are your abs? Like you eat so good. Where are your abs? Why aren’t you skinny?’” This was similar for Kristen, who expressed, “Two of the girls I lived with were vomiting in the toilet furiously, and they would never clean it up. And I don’t know if it directly affected or influenced me, but one of the other girls was 15 from Russia and didn’t speak English, and I couldn’t help but think, ‘Is she going to think this is normal and okay?’ The most harmful part was that the girls that were doing it were the most successful.” My respondents’ remarks about the effects of their time in model apartments all aligned with one another; they were filled with abnormal, perverse, destructive behaviors; as reiterated when Zuzu emphasized, “I started to realize a lot of models were bulimic. It became like a social activity.” Furthermore, existing in a constant environment of slender models competing for similar jobs leads to unhealthy habits. As Melissa recounts, “I was living with one of my best friends who’s very skinny, and we would share a room. When we were getting ready together in front of the mirror, I would see her legs and think, ‘I wish I had your legs.’ I felt like I was huge, and I knew this is what I needed to aspire to, what I needed to be if I wanted to be successful. Next thing I knew, I was getting told I was too skinny to even do shows.”

Comments and influence by authoritative figures

Comments made by others have the ability to shape our behavior and can have important ramifications on how we see ourselves. This is especially evident when power dynamics are involved, as complications arise due to the fact that employers are gaining more as the “corporate world has a toe and a heel, and each performs a different function: one delivers a service, the other collects payment for it” (Hochschild 1983: 137). The problem for the worker thus becomes

how to generate and sustain the applicable feeling, as the employer has “a degree of control over the emotional activities of employees” (Hochschild 1983:147). Emotion management is thus exchanged in the marketplace where the commodification process drives workers to become estranged from their own feelings in the workplace. This issue becomes heightened when comments come from people in positions of power. In modeling, comments made by authoritative figures (e.g., agents, casting directors, and designers), which may seem harmless at the time, can in many instances lack sensitivity, with dire consequences for young models. As Zuzu expressed reflecting on her modeling trajectory, “My first season went really well. Then the next season I only booked 3 shows, which was devastating because I expected to book a lot. My agency called me afterwards telling me people didn’t book me because I was overweight.” For Zuzu, this comment led to an endless cycle of doubt, causing her to feel “afraid of [her] agents...excessively interpreting things.” This experience with agents occurred for Katie as well whose former agents “would force [her] to do juice cleanses and would measure [her] everyday, telling [her] to run six miles a day.” This resulted in extreme body exhaustion to the point of shaking and constant illness. This intensive and unmanageable regimen was recommended to Claudia as well, after a traumatic experience in which, as she explains, “my agent took polaroids of me in my underwear and then he photo-shopped them and brought my waist in saying, ‘This is what you look like, and this is what you should look like’ as my waist went in and out. The worst part was I was in a room filled with other models and agents.” Even comments that suggest models should gain weight can be harmful and stress inducing, as Melissa described after receiving a call from her agency in Paris during the height of her shows saying, “We don’t actually think you should come to Paris for shows, you’re looking really on the skinny side.” She explained, “hearing this from them was the biggest slap in the face when they had always been

telling me to lose weight... I felt like they wanted to instill fear in me and prove their power, proceeding to message me everyday asking, 'What did you eat today? Did you gain weight?' And all I could help but think is no I have not gained 10 pounds in 12 hours."

These comments are often filtered through agents from even more powerful actors such as designers. This territory becomes extremely delicate as the body plays such a major role in one's' career. For example, as a designer remarked about Zuzu when hiring her for a campaign, "We'll take her, but her arms are too big. Can she do something to make her arms look better?" This was an unrealistic expectation placed on her, expecting her to "fix her arms" in the next week. Thus, as she states, "They accepted me, but with modifications. For the next week I was going crazy at the gym, and when I ended up doing the job, all I could be was self-conscious about my arms," which is evidently not what the designer wanted either. Kristen recounted a similarly harmful experience, when her agent said, "I got an email from a client this week saying you're too skinny here' with an attachment of my Instagram-picture. "I know its coming from a good place, but there is a big lack of sensitivity in saying it like that. It's so personal. It's the most personal thing." Thus, although the body is a large proponent of a models' job , it must still be respected as the sacred being that it is. As Melissa remarks with reference to body-driven comments:"That's not your place. You wouldn't do that to your best friend. You wouldn't do that to your sister. Don't do it to me."

Bodily Identity and Emotion Management strategies

Surface acting

Dressing the part and embodying the designer's supposed 'dream' is something the majority of models see as a positive and strategic method. We manipulate our clothing, hair,

accessories, and so forth to portray a certain kind of self when we encounter other people (Goffman 1956). This is not a seemingly simple process; however, as we work off of emotional cues and feeling rules in order to fit these presentations, and manage these specific interactions (Hochschild 1983). As Kitty remarked, “I’m always googling images of the brand before and trying to wear certain things to match it. For example, if it’s boho, trying to fit myself to the brand.” However, dressing the part can be a large struggle for some, as Zuzu explains, “It gave me anxiety because you ascribe the clothes a certain power in terms of saying something about you or flattering your figure that you know the client would like. By way of this, nothing was ever right.” The importance placed on this seemingly surface level component thus becomes so insurmountable as there is little room or time for any other form of self-expression to be shown in a fast-paced fashion-casting setting. Leading to mass feelings of doubt, shame, and anxiety.

This surface acting goes beyond dress and can also be displayed by one's' attitude, and presentation of self in the casting room. In trying to emulate the person models' believed the designer would wish to hire, each girl sought out different personas; working to regulate their emotions to create a publicly visible facial and bodily display within the workplace. In this type of heavy client and customer interaction mass efforts go into expressing something you may not genuinely feel (Hochschild 1983). These tokens of respect come to represent an exchange where we manage undesirable feelings in return for career success (Hochschild 1983). With this, personality became a form of capital (Hochschild 1983). As Zuzu explained in preparing for fashion week castings: “I needed to overcompensate and be extra outgoing. I could never be the girl that tried to play it cool...without seeming rude. That was too hard.”

We learn to accept the tension we feel between our onstage selves and real selves as normal (Hochschild 1983). Castings are often short and to the point, and in that split second of

meeting the attitude we bring into the setting holds an enormous amount of power. As Melissa states, “At castings you have to fake it. Say you had a traumatic summer, all you have to say is summer was great thank you! It was routine, that’s what they want to hear.” As Katie put it, “I one hundred percent feel that the industry is looking for something that I’m not, and at the end of the day you’re trying to book a job. So if they’re looking for some really cool grunge girl, even though that’s definitely not my personality, I may just have to go in there and act a little more edgy... I don’t think that’s something to be ashamed of. I’m just trying to book a job like every other girl.”

That being said, at times the ‘new persona’ may not be self-induced, as Melissa exclaimed: “when I go to my agency thinking I’m wearing something that expresses me..they end up changing me... it feels like an attack on me and my style. What is it helping now causing me to feel uncomfortable in the outfit and dread going to the casting?”. Or as Claudia explained: “I was just speaking to a friend who’s agent told her when she started doing high fashion that she was too nice and needed to go into castings like a bitch because that’s’ what sells in high fashion. And as soon as she did, she actually booked the jobs.”

Furthermore, when models are picked for exclusive jobs with designers they tend to hand over themselves for physical adaptations. These identity changes, although scary for some, can also allow for immense growth and excitement, as Claudia put it: “I had my long blonde hair that I’ve had my whole life. I went to the castings, they wanted to chop my hair off and bleach it into this edgy vision. It made my career and I would do it all over again..but it was definitely tough, trying to navigate who I was with something that was so “not me” . However, in this instance she, as many others have, learned to accept and embrace it. Allowing her to feel as if she had this “ new persona[she] had never had before”. It must be noted that despite the surface

acting that goes on with these physical instances change, there becomes a bigger issue of self-critique. This is specifically demonstrated when asking the models what makes a successful career, and every case said authenticity is truly what gives a girl longevity. The comments consistently supported the notion that, “the people that get really far in the industry these days are those that are themselves”. So, as Melissa puts it : “it’s frustrating when agents feel they can choose who can be themselves and who cannot”. Likewise, the same results occur when designers completely reshape a girl into their vision. This often results in a large identity loss and ultimately begs the question; who is worthy of remaining as they are, and who is not?

Physical body

The body, and the managing thereof , is deeply affected by how those in society view one another which can lead to the way people see themselves. In modeling mandating the physical body becomes a large portion of the job. Your body is your commodity and the vehicle through which you thrive in the industry. The amount of value placed on the body, thus can be detrimental, as Kylie states: “ you compare yourself to your former self, so because my best season was my very first season, and I was definitely more than 5 pounds lighter than I am now...so I think if I want to have that success again, I would need to look like that again. But it's not as easy as it was”. This outer body work additionally comes with a lot of inner-work, often through deception with our social sphere. We often give the perception we’re doing something else to avoid stirring conflict and scrutiny. As Zuzu puts it: “I never talked to my friends at home about my anxiety towards jobs, or body image issues, I knew they would have thought I was being crazy”. Or as Kristen remarks: “I would go for dinner with them and just order black coffee and pretend I ate before”. We put ourselves through extremities of dieting, leading to

weird relationships with food and often deprivation driven-impulses. As Zuzu expressed: “I was planning up for months before shows. I was extremely cut and dry. No bread, no, sugar, no dairy. This often can get taken too far, as Claudia expressed “ If you asked me if I had a social life last year I would say no. I have only now began to figure out the balance of being less regimented”.

Deep acting

The inconsistencies of the industry evidently take a toll on a lot of girls, causing them to act out in ways they don't necessarily identify with. This can be problematic and lead to estrangement of identity when trying to perform deep acting in order to increase their given chance of success. Prompting questions to arise causing girls to try to comprehend what their work role is, and what is truly them (Hochschild 1983). As Kristen remarked: “I had periods when I wasn't working where I was turning to drugs and alcohol, it was numbing the pain, some girls may develop an eating disorder, some may just non stop party, and some will do both” . These irregularities, as Claudia puts it, in which you are “ working like crazy for a whole month and then all of a sudden you have two weeks where nothing goes on” causing “ you[to] start to question yourself and search for reasons as to why you're not working.” These moments are ones when the girls truly feel lost from themselves, when after being shaped so much through surface acting, they reach a point of complete self abandonment.

Adopting mentalities

Adopting mentalities appears to be a strategic coping mechanism allowing girls to justify the work they're putting into their career while not becoming all-consumed by it in their everyday life. For instance, as Claudia remarks, she has taken on an ‘athlete-mentality’ for which she “works out every single day and if [she] were to quit modeling tomorrow, [she] would

definitely still do a workout every single day because of how it makes [her] feel. Energized and strong.” other mentalities include, a realistic-body mentality, that, as Kristen remarks: “ I work cautiously to take care of myself in the best way I can, I think that a lot of girls struggle with it, often by wanting a body that may not be possible for their body type or for their age. So I’ve made a concerted effort as I know happiness comes when people embrace what they have”. Other management strategies include removing measuring from the equation. As Katie puts it: “ I haven't stepped on the scale in a long time because I know I get in my head about it, whether it's good or really bad- I get in my head about it”. By instead, putting as much effort in as they can into being satisfied, girls have been able to see their best mental and physical results.

Consequences On Well-being

Mental and bodily health

Through the process of such highly intensive physical and emotional labor we tend to lose ourselves. Each of the girls openly announced they have body dysmorphia, to some extent or another. Body dysmorphia is a debilitating disease that overwhelms an individual to the point that a person can lose sight of oneself. As Melissa puts it: “ I went to a runway fitting and the clothes were falling off of me. I felt awful and couldn’t help but wonder- when did it get this bad?”. Or As Zuzu recounts of the emotional trauma when her mother voiced concerns, and her agency told her she was too skinny for couture season, that she was just “sad that I didn’t see myself properly, because I was convinced I was looking better than ever and still had 5 pounds to lose”. Leaving her with no reward of shows, only “shame” as she puts it. Or as Kristen outright states, “ I've come to the conclusion I have body dysmorphia”. That in New York it wasn’t recognizable, when she was so heavily immersed in the industry, but that when she came home

“ [her] mom started getting really mad saying [she] isn't eating any of the food [she] loves, and that [she] had gotten too skinny”. These comments as Katie recounts, can actually be sickly-reaffirming” , causing you to think that “yes, I’m doing something right, they see the changes”. This is what defines it as a disease. Sadly, change often only comes when you really start to see it yourself, and want to fix it. Furthermore, as emphasized earlier, two of the cases recognized that anorexic habits engulfed their life to the point that they were cutting calories to unhealthy amounts, and two experienced bulimia as a part of this “social-culture”. Furthermore, 4 out of the 5 expressed deep anxiety and panic attacks that had co-aligned with their body issues, and the pressure they were putting on themselves for success.

Shift from commercial to high fashion spaces

As the general consensus became clear , it is evident that all of the models felt less pressure working in a commercial setting compared to that of high fashion. There's an interesting irony to the modeling industry; one often strives for the low-paying highly reputable high fashion jobs, while denying high paying commercial jobs until a job arises that is “acceptable” enough to keep you a relevant editorial model, and also allows for capital gain. As Melissa states: “If you start commercial there is little chance of high fashion, so my agency was restrictive in what I could do at the start”. That, with her growth in age and experience: “ I now have more of a say in what I’m doing. In the commercial aspect of things people are nice to you, and I feel in high fashion they pride themselves on making models feel uncomfortable. For example at a casting you’re made to wait so long, in an uncomfortable setting like you’re not even human. Even when sitting on the floor i've had casting directors come up to me saying: you’re taking up the whole hallway”. This is often common for new models, ones of lower-

status, thus feelings are treated as inconsequential by the higher status individuals (Hochschild 1983). They felt both less bodily pressure, and a greater level of respect. As Zuzu remarked: “I felt like commercial work was a lot easier on my body in terms of expectations for thinness, I felt like it was a more free space for body variation. But definitely still within a verse”. Moreover, as Claudia explained, the high fashion space simply doesn’t foster an opportunity to get to know the models: “with runway you don't get that opportunity to show them who you really are, its based on what you look like, so I know right before fashion week I'm going to be thinking much more about my body and how I'm gonna lose weight rather than before some big commercial castings”. This structured environment is further emphasized by Kristen who states: “The industry has changed. Things used to be fit to each individual. Now it’s just mass market. Now we’re like cattle. They have to get 100 of us through in an hour. So then they don’t have time to fit things to people. It’s really sad. But it's a fact”. Consequently, It truly comes down to navigating the space that’s right for you as a model, and your needs. As Kristen stated: “recently I’ve been doing a lot of money jobs that aren't necessarily the best things, but just to pay my rent. It is like trying to find the perfect mix between good money jobs that people aren't going to see and then good jobs that are crappy money that people are going to see.”

Adopting different identities and mentalities

After acknowledging the industries impacts on the self, strategies moving forward have been radically different for each model. From Claudia who has taken on an “athlete mindset” for the purposes of feeling “energized and strong”, instead of skinny. To Zuzu who has quit after analyzing and paying more attention to the fact that she was “living in this constant state of panic about [her] appearance... filled with never ending anxiety”. As the academic she is, by “reading sociology and psychology journals [she] started to analyze [her] situation through a science

based, factual, outside perspective”. Consequently, showing her “that this industry was an objectively toxic thing for [her]”. Furthermore, another strategy utilized by the models is to be outwardly honest with themselves and their respective agents to help alleviate foreseen anxiety. As Katie put it: “I switched agents, and I told them: I have an eating disorder and I don’t want to be measured every day and if that’s what you’re going to do I’m walking..and they were amazing they told me “we’ll accept you however you are” . They emphasized to her that what sells her is her professionalism and personality, and she's come to understand that ‘every time I’m on a shoot maybe the clothes don't fit as well as they would on some other girl but I've always gotten good feedback. The energy you bring to your job in the long run is what gives you longevity”. These management strategies have all helped to alleviate some of the negative consequences that come with the industry; allowing for the acknowledgements of the positive parts the career has to offer.

DISCUSSION

Evidently, there are different pathways models have taken from the moment they enter the industry, to the strategies they have enacted to navigate their career, that all come together to shape their lives and contribute to their overall well-being. This pathway takes the general course of socialization into modeling, to bodily identity and emotional management strategies, to the resulting connections and consequences the modeling industry has had on their everyday lives. However, the intricacies and impacts of these concepts slightly vary for each girl. In analyzing the 5 models socialization process the initial introduction to the industry came from general aspirations of glamour, fun, and ultimately a search for capital. It is apparent that agencies play an enormous role in shaping the young females modeling career, thus one can either be

extremely lucky and be guided with a healthy mindset and realistic expectations, or alternatively, be faced with insensitive remarks and destructive criticism. The power the agency has in shaping a young-females career path is enormous. When learning of bodily identity and emotional management strategies across the board all 5 of the models felt themselves pushing to dress and act as the visions they believed the respective designers desired. These visions were taught to them by model comparison, and casting director and agents remarks. By way of this they ultimately strived to emulate a “cool girl” or overtly expressive persona. As a result of adopting these identities, often times models felt identity crisis, self-shame, anxiety, and doubt. Essentially, faking it until they became it. The result of this alienation from the self led to many detrimental consequences, including body dysmorphia for all 5 models interviewed, 2 cases of bulimia, and 2 cases of anorexia.

Beyond these life threatening diseases, models had to learn how they would proceed in managing their lives, which proved to be different across the 5 females. Zuzu, after a course of uphill and downhill moments in the industry realized that it no longer served her and that her mind had become all consumed by “the body” and management thereof, that she respectfully quit. Claudia, on the other hand, felt that by adopting a sports mentality, and focusing on her love of health, she was able to manage her body in the space with greater ease. Katie found it beneficial, as well, to focus on her other passions beyond modeling; with ultimate hopes to start acting (again),and by engaging actively in the model alliance as an advocate for change. Conclusively, these results demonstrate by not letting the modeling industry define them, separating their professional lives from their personal lives, and by being honest with themselves and their agents, models can lead successful career paths and life courses. It must be recognized that there is no right way, and no one recipe. However, by understanding these strategies, and

focusing on the self and strength building, hopefully we will see an age with lower rates of burnout.

FUTURE

Where Do We Go From Here?

Although attempts have been made to better the industry, clearly there is much room for improvement. As we have come to understand, institutional purposes are directly correlated with the workers psychological arts as competition is no longer restricted to individuals (Hochschild 1983). The most drastic of changes in the industry occurred last year in Paris, where a BMI standard was set to ensure only healthy models were on the runway. However, this new standard did not create as much change as desired, as numbers were easily fabricated in an effort to have models walk shows by any means necessary. Progressive steps were taken when casting director, James Scully, performed a Business of Fashion (BOF) talk to shed light on the hidden truths of the modeling industry. Scully highlighted the dire need to rethink the fashion system and the power dynamics that exist within it, by emphasizing the many moments of objectification models experience. For example, the moments during fashion week where models are forced to wait at castings for 15 hours in dark hallways without water to only enter a room and have 30 seconds with a designer. Furthermore, he emphasizes the issue of expectations: expressing that models cannot be held to the unrealistic measurement that they once were when they were pre-pubescent teens (Scully, 2017). Most recently, Vogue Magazine published their September issue with an article highlighting why fashion needs to commit to an age appropriate, 18 plus, modeling standard. They expressed the need for this radical change to avoid burnout and mental health

issues for young models, who often enter with a lack of understanding of who they truly are. A notion myself, and all 5 interviewees, directly felt the consequences of.

I have been lucky enough to have incredible agents that are considerate of my emotions due to our personal relationship. However, this is not the case for many models. Entering into an industry where it is easy to take things personally can be extremely overwhelming. Thus, proper informative discussions when a model enters the industry could act as a useful transition tool; to give models a realistic approach to the industry, and help them set accurate expectations. As harm could drastically be reduced if workers could feel a greater sense of control over the conditions of their work lives (Hochschild 1983).

As demonstrated through my interviewees' responses, it is evident that casting director and designers' comments can have immense implications on how models' view themselves, as often times humanization lacks in these encounters. There has been immense strides this year to combat these issues, for instance, when Conde Nast announced a 'code of conduct' mandate within their corporate structure. This set the behavioral guidelines for anyone working on a Conde Nast shoot, in an effort to protect and safeguard a models' dignity. Conde Nast owns 19 of the most well-respected magazines young models aspire to work with- from Vogue, to Glamour, to Allure. Presumably, the example set by Conde Nast will assist in encouraging the adaptation of an acceptable code of conduct by other major players.

The most radical idea that was given by an interviewee, an idea I wholeheartedly support, was to manage the "fit model size". Fit models are essentially 'live mannequins' whose bodies are used to test the drape and fit of a designers pieces prior to it being released on the runway. Thus, by beginning with the source and ensuring fit models meet a realistic size and adhere to a proper health regimen we can then ensure that show sizes are not outlandishly petite. In a similar

vein, eliminating “one-size-fits- all” brands is equally as crucial. What message does that give young girls who do not fit the standard size? What is the ‘right’ size?

Most importantly, revolutionary change occurs most often when there is a change in precedent set by those individuals holding the most influence. These powerful actors are generally the ones reaping the most financial success as well as the most notoriety. These individuals need to assume the responsibility that comes from being at the top and stand up for those who have no voice. It is only through a shared movement embraced by all in the industry that true change will ever come about.

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