Gill: from sexual objectification to sexual subjectification: the resexualisation of women’s bodies in the media

Gill argues on how women have become such a sexual object and nothing more than that, she goes on to argue how is it that women have become so objectified in society today and how women’s are perceived.

She goes on speak about a t-shirt which became one of the bestselling items of British high street fashion store (French connection); the top was a merely representations of play on words which were not correctly positioned in the right place it read ‘FIT CHICK UNBELIEVABLE KNOCKERS’ and this was put across the middle of a woman’s chest imprinted on a t-shirt. Her main arguments suggest that not only were these t-shirts objectifying but very sexualised, as many years ago women were fighting for women’s right, nevertheless the fact women were also fighting to not be seen in such demeaning nature; women have always wanted not to be seen as sex symbol but yet with the generations we live in we are merely the complete opposite of what we strive to be, women choose to buy such tops which were diminishing us. The fact that these t-shirts were being sold in such speed meant that we were no longer at era where sexual objectification was at its highest but instead we was facing a sexual subjectification of a major increase.

What has changed from being a sex object to sexual subject meant representations from earlier 60s/70s were no being shown as feminism; furthermore this is happening at a moment when women are being told they can ‘have it all’ and are doing better than ever before in schools, jobs etc. we have merely become the representations of what the politicians have implemented on us and what the society seems to consider that’s its normal.

Gill suggests that “resexualisation of women’s bodies in this strange, contradictory context is as part of a backlash against feminism” (Furuhashi) this can be said not only was this t-shirt an attack on women but also served as a threat towards men. The fact that they’ve used such flamboyant advertisement to enhance women’s attributes
is so downgrading and not only that but many require women to be their selves and please yourself but within such methods how can one truly define themselves.

You cannot be yourself when you’re constantly being thrown images of what a woman should look like and how to behave within such an uptight popular culture. Firstly the problem with exclusions is a mist, looking from media representations women are perceived as active desiring sexual objects; and only the young, slim and beautiful women are subjected to such; “as Myra MacDonald has pointed out, older women, bigger women, women with wrinkles, etc are never accorded sexual subjecthood and are still subject to offensive and sometimes vicious representations”. (Furuhashi)

Another good point Gill suggest is the notion that women are pleasing themselves and they are aware of what they are doing, she goes on to say that not to forget that these so called women are also endowed with agency; it’s so open and free that it’s notion tends to broader the post-feminist discourses which tends to present women as autonomous agents which are no longer obliged or restricted by any inequalities or power imbalances which also allows them the use of make-up to make themselves feel good.

The purpose of women dressing in a particular way is not only purely to please men, She argues deeply that this seem to represent a deeper in depth of a male judging gaze to the outside world as this was done to with the purpose of also offer power to women with the status of choices of becoming a sex object; “ in this way, sexual objects objectification can be presented not as something done to women by some men, but as the freely chosen wish of active, confident, assertive females subjects”. (Furuhashi)

In conclusion it is clear that there are many ways of reading such memes but within this instance we can say that it created ‘playfulness or irony’ and nevertheless these t-shirts are polysemic. But we can definitely say the sexual subjectification certainly still lives amongst us and it’s how we are willing to accept it and deal with it. Women
will always be finding their voices in what they believe are true feminine but how can one deal with the modern world that really believes sex sells?

Bibliography: