Anti-Aging By Amanda Hess

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Article Critique

The Ever-Changing Business of 'Anti-Aging' is an article written by Amanda Hess on the ever-growing debate of ageing and ageism. A few years ago, I had a chance to read a book on ageing written about two thousand years ago by a Roman philosopher, Seneca, on old age. Seneca tried to convince his generation about the luxury of being old. He gave a list of arguments regarding old age and its benefits. It was a courageous text, full of hope and love for life. The point of referring to Seneca is to emphasize the fear about death that was present in his age; it is probable that the young people of that time disgusted old age. We as humans are unique because we have a sense of loss of time; we know that we are going to die. Albert Camus says that the knowledge that we are going to die makes life a joke. We are afraid, and this fear is real. Death is the ultimate reality of our existence. We don't want to die, and we don't want to get old. The Ever-Changing Business of 'Anti-Aging' is about this impending fear of death and ugliness that comes with age and the foolishness of 21st-century humans to recognize its fears.

The article focuses on the consumerist approach towards ageing, the anti-age movement, and 'the end of anti-ageing', as well as the ever-evolving euphemisms the beauty industries have been using since the 20th century. She goes on to tell the hypocrisies of the cosmetic industry when on one hand they are promoting 'anti-aging' products and on the other hand they are suggesting embracing old-age. Furthermore, she gave a very thoughtful overview of the past century's obsession with youth and fear of ageing. Furthermore, she gives a very thoughtful opinion on old age, suggesting the only cure for old age is death, but we are unable to accept this inevitable end (Hess, 2017). In this culture, she says that being old is "to be erased — to be deemed irrelevant, disappear from magazine covers and popular films, and get tucked away into facilities, managed and cared for." She goes on to express the corporations' interest in making money by selling products that they deem scientifically approved.

Therefore, these companies make money, and they will keep on as 'Every woman is always getting older'. She also tells the mainstream ugly advertisement tricks developed to 'exploit generational mood swings concerning how a woman should be'. Amanda argues that in the 70s, the ads were made to humiliate women, but now, in our time, these campaigns are 'framed' to inspire old age. She also critiques the foolish attempt of removing the signs of old age, which is considered as an 'accomplishment' and a 'virtue'. She continues to highlight the duplicitous position of the people involved in this campaign. She ends her article with this defining statement that captures her whole

point:

“We nod and agree that we should embrace our wrinkles while quietly understanding that none of us, individually, want to be the one who actually looks old.”

As far as the journalistic style is concerned, Amanda is bold and daring as well as honest in her expression; she highlights a culture destined to consumerism while unable to accept the most potent realities of life and, more specifically, death. Second, the article is investigative as she links the present issues with the past and makes a very beautiful link that helps in understanding the current malaise that was ever present in this culture and now has taken a new shape. Third, the information is factual and it is not manipulated; it is objective and accurate. I find this article very effective; it has an efficient style as well as powerful subject matter.

I find this article very realistic and perceptive. I think I can empathize with the writer’s point of view. Her position on the concept of ageing is neither sentimental nor dramatic but real. We must accept and embrace that this is the essential reality of our lives; we are born so that we can die, and the goal of life is ageing and death (Butler, 1969). We are matter in motion subjected to decay and decomposition. It is the rule of nature, and according to Amanda Hess, we cannot control nature, and hence, we cannot reverse our facial features resulting from ageing.

I have already expressed my feelings and my rationale regarding the strength of the article. As far as the shortcomings are concerned, I think the language could have been simpler. There are many high-frequency words that could have been replaced with simple layman language. This is the reason that Amanda’s article might have a small audience; the article is not directed to the masses but a selected upper middle-class audience. One can argue that the article is a critique of the upper middle class and elite class’s obsession with beauty standards and the fear of old age. ‘Intermittent fasting’, ‘blood transfusion from teenagers’ and ‘human growth hormone injections’ are only affordable if you are a rich businessman in America or a wealthy Hollywood star. We are disgusted to face the immoral boundaries we can cross in order to fight against old age and death. And the cosmetic industries are busy categorizing every product as natural and scientific to justify their exploitation. Amanda depicted the present-day dilemmas of our culture and its inability to understand the core nature of the situation.

References

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