

The Illusionists [Full-Length Version]

[Transcript]

Archive Video: Well, there they are. Our new electronic media, or our new gadgets. You push a button, and the world is yours. You know how they talk about the world getting smaller? Well, it's thanks to these that it is. Everywhere is now our own neighborhood. But not only is the world getting smaller, it's becoming more available and more familiar to our minds and to our emotions. The world is now a global village. A global village.

[Montage of westernized ads in public spaces all over the world]

Susie Orbach: We see the selling of the westernized image as the badge of modernity in India, in Singapore, in China, in Japan, where the notion of how you join globalized culture is the taking of a western body.

[Montage of westernized television ads]

Ruchi Anand: There is one of those trends happening, where we are trying to embody this westernized, modernized image, because that's where power comes from. Power in society, power in the western world, power with your job, power with your own beauty.

Paola Audrey Ndengue [in French]: Skin whitening, we call it scraping, has become practically banal.

Maysa: If you walk around the streets of Lebanon, I think you'd realize that most people look the same. Specifically people from a certain social class that have the money to have this many surgeries.

Eri Shibata [in Japanese]: Japanese women are under incredible pressure to have an ideal body, just like top models and manga characters. The problem is that the desire to look this way doesn't come from the women themselves; it's often imposed by society and mass media.

Harrison Pope: I can remember when I was a high school student that body image was just not a concern. Nobody in those days worried about whether they had a six-pack of abdominal muscles or faithfully went to the gym six days a week. It just was not an issue when I was a teenager.

Jean Kilbourne: It's often seemed to me that a person who feels happy and secure isn't going to be a very good consumer because that person isn't going to be looking for products, to shore up the self-image or to feel better about oneself.

[Montage of western beauty product TV ads]

Part I: Insecurity Sells

Jean Kilbourne: Of course there's nothing wrong with people wanting to look attractive and sexy. Just about everyone wants that. So the problem isn't the desire to be desired, or the desire to be attractive and sexy, it's the ways in which this is corrupted and exploited by the commercial culture.

Narrator: A recent study by psychological science has found that people spend more if they're feeling sad and self-focused, even when the sad feelings are temporary.

Jean Kilbourne: The ideal consumer is someone who's constantly dissatisfied, constantly needs more and more products in order to feel better. Actually, the ideal consumer is an addict, someone who has to have a product, and the product will never really meet the need, so the craving goes on and on and on and never ends.

Fashion Model [whispers]: Obsession. Obsession.

Narrator: And for those consumers who already feel rather happy and secure, the industry has devised endless creative opportunities to feel otherwise. The best example is cellulite. It's an invented disease. Throughout history, cellulite was always considered perfectly normal body fat. The word "cellulite" actually appears for the first time in Vogue Magazine in 1968, in a three-page article about this obnoxious condition that women were not aware of. And soon, a cottage industry of anti-cellulite creams is born. In 1987, Vogue warns American women that working in an office can damage their skin. Air particles found in an office can lead to what Vogue calls "occupational dermatitis." In 2006, Vogue warns its readers about so-called "aging feet."

Jean Kilbourne: One thing that I think most people don't realize is the extraordinary amount of power that advertisers have in terms of the content of the media. That people like to think that there's kind of a wall between editorial content and advertising, but in fact, there really isn't. And there's less and less of such a wall than ever before.

News Broadcaster [in TV Clip]: Our cameras are gonna show you a non-surgical facelift live during our newscast.

Jean Kilbourne: A huge amount of the content that we get on the news is actually video news reports that are sponsored and paid for by corporations without the viewer being aware of it.

News Correspondent [in clip]: We're actually going to see four different non-invasive treatments during this hour. It's actually started, uh...Kathy is our patient, dermatologist Dr. Dale Isaacson is performing the procedure. The first one is Thermage, which for the very first time can be done on the eyelids. Now about 15 minutes before Dr. Isaacson started, Kathy had a Valium. Kathy, how are you feeling right now?

Kathy [in clip]: I...I feel absolutely fine.

Newscaster 1 [in clip]: Dieters have a new ally in the battle to lose weight.

Newscaster 2 [in clip]: Yeah, it's called Ally, the first FDA-approved over-the-counter weight-loss drug, and it hits stores today...

TV Announcer [in clip]: From NBC News, this is a special age-defying edition of Today!

Jean Kilbourne: People sometimes say to me, well, 'women must want this, because it's women who support these industries and women buy all these products and so this must be something that...advertisers are just giving people what they want!' And the truth is, I think, that women are deeply conditioned from birth to feel that what's most important about us is how we look. That our lovability, our desirability, depends upon our appearance, our bodies. And if you believe that--and it's very difficult not to--of course you're gonna be looking for products, and you're gonna be looking for fashion, and you're gonna be looking for things that will deliver the goods, that will make you more beautiful, in the society sense of the word.

Harrison Pope: The advertising industry has already saturated the female half of the population and has already done its best to convince women that they should be dissatisfied with themselves and should purchase a plethora of new products to make themselves more beautiful. And so now it seems that in the last 30 or 40 years, the advertising industry has now turned its sights on the other half of the population, hoping to find new markets. And if one can convince men that they are not muscular enough or lean enough, or that their physiques are not adequate, you can perhaps generate yet another market of insecure individuals who will purchase various products in the hope of attaining greater beauty.

Part II: The Official Body

News Anchor (in French): Now, in world news: can you guess which country has the most plastic surgery procedures per capita? Well, it's neither Brazil, nor the United States; it's Lebanon. One in three women has had plastic surgery procedures. There are even special bank loans for plastic surgery.

Nadine Moawad: We have the most plastic surgeries than anywhere else in the world, and the interesting thing is that we're always competing with Brazil. So one year Lebanon's number one, one year it's Brazil number one. And my theory, it's only because there's 12 million Lebanese living in Brazil. That sort of--you know, they're constantly competing about who has more plastic surgery operations. And there's tourism packages for people from other Arab countries to come to Lebanon and have plastic surgery procedures here. It's automatically been built into the economy. It's become an industry in itself.

Dr. Toni Nassar: Everyday, I receive people, let's say from Kuwait, from Saudi Arabia, from France, from USA, from Canada. This year, we have a big demand in the butt. I think of

plastic surgery now, it entered into the culture of the country. And nowadays, they talk about it freely. In the past, it was more closed and secret. Nowadays, the plastic surgery is the talk of the town, and it's the talk of every day. When two new women meet each other, the first talk is the talk about beauty, about plastic surgery.

Maysa: Sadly enough actually, I grew up in a culture where people would be like, "oh, you have a beautiful face, haram. Haram, your body, you should do something about your body." Some doctors would actually ask you, "who would you like to look like?" Everyone looks exactly the same.

Maher Mezher: We used to receive 30 to 35 calls a day for the total of our products, so people asking about personal loans, housing loans, car loans, and the other products. And after launching plastic surgery campaign, we were receiving between 300 to 400 calls a day. In Lebanon, appearance is important to socialize. And in Lebanon, we really socialize a lot. People, they feel that it is important for their improvement in their career and then in their life to build up friends, to become more successful. That's why people are attaching more and more importance to appearance and to plastic surgery.

Nadine Moawad: If you open any newspaper with classifieds, where they're searching for jobs, and they're searching for women, most of our jobs say "must be beautiful." If they're good, they say "must be presentable," but most of them say "must be beautiful, must be good-looking" for jobs like accounting.

Susie Orbach: One of the tragedies that's happening at the moment is that we're losing bodies, as fast as we're losing languages. Just as English has become the lingua franca of the world, so the white, blondified, small-nosed, perk-breast, long-legged body, is coming to stand in for the great variety of human bodies that there are.

[Montage of skin whitening ads]

Black & White

Narrator: Mumbai: India's biggest city, and the country's commercial and entertainment capital. Strolling through its streets, it's hard to miss the ubiquitous messages advertising skin whitening products. White Beauty; Fair & Lovely; Perfect White. The market for fairness creams has had an explosive growth since the 1970s. But the desire to have light skin has deeper roots.

Ruchi Anand: Most Indians still have internalized racism, where the western body image is definitely more superior, because remember India is an ex-colony of the British, where we've always had this fascination for the white man or the white woman and how she looks. So there is, I think, one of those trends happening, where we are trying to embody this westernized, modernized image, because that's where power comes from. Some say "fair." It's all relative. North Indian women are lighter-skinned than South Indian women, for the most part. But everybody is trying to aim at the light skin, so the North Indian

woman, who's already got a lighter skin, is aiming at being as light as the British colonial woman or the American woman that she sees on TV or a white model. It's unattainable! That's when you go out and seek products that are extremely dangerous because there's no way that you can, sort of, change the color of your skin. That's what you're born with. Why don't we just accept that brown is beautiful or black is beautiful?

Narrator: The market for skin-whitening creams is so lucrative that there are about 50 new products introduced in the Asia-Pacific region every year.

Ad Narrator [in clip]: Go sleeveless on him with fairer, whiter underarms.

Narrator: Pharmaceutical company MidasCare has recently caused an uproar with its skin-whitening 'intimate wash,' promising to make women's genitals whiter. The possibilities are endless for making Indian women insecure about their skin tone. And nowadays, there is a new target.

Ruchi Anand: So you have for instance, you know, cream that was targeting women for the longest time, called Fair and Lovely. There's a counterpart for the men now. It's called Fair and Handsome, and it's Emami that launched it in 2005. With exactly the same set of reasoning is that alright, you have it all, you're a male, um, so vis-a-vis the women, you already have the power, but vis-a-vis the white man, you're probably still not as well off, so if you want to go that notch up into the power hierarchy, being fair might help. And so, whether it's for a job or whether it's for matchmaking or whether it's for appearing as more westernized, modernized, sometimes what the west calls "civilized," it helps to be whiter.

Narrator: We can also find skin-whitening messages in the most unexpected places.

Paola Audrey Ndengue [in French]: The use of skin whitening creams unfortunately is really common in Africa. I mention Africa because the vast majority of women who use these creams here come from the diaspora and have been brought up in a culture where skin whitening--we call it scraping--is so normal it's practically banal. So here in France, I think it's unfortunately a common practice. Even though very few people talk about it. It's totally taboo. Skin whitening is so common here that authorities had to intervene. They banned the sales of products that contain 'hydroquinone,' one of the key ingredients of skin whitening creams, and that can be very dangerous. Despite this ban, all you have to do is go to the neighborhood 'La Goutte d'Or' and you will still be able to find these creams that contain hydroquinone. I think that advertising and mass media have played a role in this. Everywhere you see black women who are not 'too black,' so they can be accepted by mainstream media. The most prominent women in entertainment today are all fair skinned and have a huge influence even on black women who live abroad like here in France.

Narrator: L'Oreal, the world's biggest cosmetics company, has run into trouble with an ad for hair color featuring the singer Beyoncé, who is virtually unrecognizable. L'Oreal has vehemently denied altering Beyoncé's complexion, yet what's interesting is to notice the many faces of Beyoncé in the company's ads over the years. The idealization of a fair skin tone is not always a black and white issue; porcelain white skin has been valued in many

parts of Asia for centuries. It's seen as synonymous with youth, elegance, and refinement, a trend that beauty companies have been quick to cash in on. Japan breaks all records when it comes to consumption of skin care products. Women use on average seven to ten products a day. Afraid of the sun's effect on skin aging, many women use umbrellas to shield themselves from the sun's rays. Having a porcelain white skin, free of blemishes and beauty spots, is the ultimate beauty ideal in Japan.

Akane [in Japanese]: In Japan, there is a proverb that says, "a white complexion hides all flaws." It means that, even if you're not attractive, having white skin makes you beautiful. Traditionally, the Japanese have always valued white skin.

Narrator: The irony is that while pushing white skin in the East, these same companies tell you to avoid it at all cost in the West. They sell skin whitening creams in half of the world and self-tanning lotions in the other. Clearly, they don't care what color your skin is, as long as you are insecure about it. The ideal is often impossible to achieve, but the illusion is that this beauty can be bought, if only people keep consuming.

Never Too Thin

Narrator: The weight loss industry could be defined as the capitalist success story of the 20th Century, as no other business with a 98% failure rate could earn as much: \$586 Billion dollars a year worldwide. Similarly to the anti-aging business, the weight-loss industry would have modest earnings if people succeeded in losing weight and keeping it off. Most people who diet do so in cycles, dieting over and over again in the hope of achieving a slimmer figure. And contradictory messages allow for nearly infinite growth and expansion.

[Ad montage]

Narrator: It's a little-known fact that the multinational Unilever, the same company that owns Dove and Fair and Lovely skin whitening cream, had a curious acquisition spree in April 2000. Unilever purchased the ice cream brand Ben & Jerry's and the weight loss drink Slim-Fast on the same day. Prudential Security's analyst John McMillan commented in the Wall Street Journal, 'the fact that one product makes you fat and one makes you thin is funny, but they didn't say boo to address that.' In some ways, corporations don't care if you're skinny or overweight. They make money as long as the bar of what is considered attractive is very difficult to reach. Over the years, the size of fashion models has dramatically decreased. Despite this, today even waify models aren't thin enough for advertisers. Digitally retouching models in order to make them appear thinner is standard practice.

Jean Kilbourne: Recently, Ralph Lauren ran an ad in which the model had been Photoshopped to have an impossible body. Her head was actually bigger than her pelvis. The actual model, who was 5'10" and weighed 115 LBs was fired for being too fat, and they used Photoshop to make this grotesque image and I'm sure we are going to see more and

more of that. The human body just cannot get any thinner. The models can't get any thinner than they are, but they can use Photoshop to make a thinner and thinner image.

Narrator: And when models are too skinny, protruding bones are routinely airbrushed out. Because these images of unattainable bodies are everywhere, they reach not only those who are overweight but also people who don't need to diet, with dangerous consequences.

For centuries, Japan and neighboring Asian countries valued diverse body types. A curvy female body symbolized wealth and fertility but things changed starting in the 1980s; a dramatic increase in eating disorders swept across the region. According to a study conducted by Dr. Tetsuya Ando at the National Institute of Mental Health, about 30 per cent of Japanese women in their 20s are categorized as underweight. Whereas obesity is increasing amongst men, women's average Body Mass Index is decreasing year after year.

Dr. Tetsuya Ando: Many young women think their bodies are oversized, even if they are underweight. That's surprising.

Jason Karlin: I think one of the things you see in Japanese media that's also present in other places as well is that there's kind of a gap between what men and women perceive as ideals of beauty. For example, those that do appeal to a male audience, those that are often the idols that you hear about in Japanese media culture tend to have a kind of aesthetic to them that is not like the aesthetic you would associate with western models. They tend to be shorter in stature, they tend to have characteristics of femininity that are almost in some sense the opposite of what we would associate with the long legged models in the west. And in part, the explanation for this has always been that traditionally, the male audience within Japan, of young, adolescent men are attracted to images of women who are more accessible, more attainable.

On the other hand, Japanese women go to the opposite extreme of trying to cultivate that body image that they see in women's magazines, which are women's bodies that are very thin with very long legs and with many of the characteristics that we associate with this global culture of beauty that is circulating throughout the world.

Ruchi Anand: I grew up watching movies in the 70s and the 80s where actresses like Reka or Raki or Hema Malani, you know the nice hour glass figures, you know, padded, sort of more, what I call traditional looking, embodying a certain image that was close to home. What home was then, pre-globalization. Now what we're seeing is, a trend towards an imitation of the westernized body image. These girls literally are fighting for the size 0 which was never known as beautiful in India.

Part III: Brave New World

Narrator: Around the world, the market for men's grooming products has seen an explosive growth in the last few years. There's a new war being waged against men's body hair.

[Commercial Montage]

Speaker 1: Manscaping: it's the act of tweezing, waxing dissolving and shaving unwanted hair from all parts of your body. In fact, these days, many men are choosing to do away with practically every bit of hair as part of their regular men's grooming routine. Yes, that includes the nether regions.

Speaker 2: Taking care of the hair down there certainly has its benefits; you might say when there's no underbrush, the tree looks taller.

Speaker 3: Start at the hairline and shave to the base using single strokes, shave in the direction of the hair initially to remove as much as you can.

Kate Upton: I wouldn't date a guy that had a grooming problem so no.

Narrator: The trend for hairlessness may have started in pornography, an industry that is exponentially larger and more profitable than the mainstream film business.

The XXX Factor

Gail Dines: So let's talk about the size of this industry. Now, really accurate statistics are hard to come by. Generally speaking, they say that pornography is about a 12 billion dollar a year industry, which is bigger than the mainstream film industry in America. Worldwide, they reckon it's \$97 billion.

[Archival Footage]

Archive Video: Hello there, I'm George Putnam. I'd like to begin with a fact, a simple yet shocking fact. It is this. A flood tide of filth is engulfing our country in the form of newsstand obscenity. It is threatening to pervert an entire generation of our American children. A major factor that makes youngsters prime targets for this printed filth is the natural curiosity of youth about the mysterious force of sex.

Gail Dines: You live in a society absolutely awash with porn images; soft-core porn images from Victoria's Secret to Maxim to music videos. Let me ask you a question: would you all agree that the food industry shapes the way you eat? Would you agree the clothes industry shapes the way you dress? So would you not say the sex industry shapes the way we have sex? How could this be the only industry that has no effect in the world?

You cannot make sense of media images of women today without starting your analysis of pornography. Everywhere you look, MTV, movies, video games, everywhere you go, you see images that really 15 years ago you would have found in mainstream pornography. And this is the process that has happened. The mainstreaming of pornography now in pop culture.

[Media montage]

Gail Dines: Pornography has a very specific idealized image of women. Thin, toned, big breasted, and above all hairless. And when you think of young boys and young men getting their first introduction to sex via pornography, they become kind of accustomed to seeing women with absolutely no body hair. And what I've found in my interviews very interestingly, is that a lot of boys and men are really disgusted by women's pubic hair because they're just not used to it. And in some cases, I've even heard from my students that their boyfriends refuse to have sex with them if they've got body hair. And this could have very severe consequences when you are bringing up a generation of men who really are disgusted by what looks like an adult woman.

Good Morning America Speaker: Get ready to weigh in, get ready to take sides because some parents are going to argue to you that it's fine for little girls to get luxurious spa treatments and we're not just talking manicures here, we're talking about bikini waxes.

Student: Well because I've been brought up in a porn culture I feel like body image is focused on a lot and growing up I always had that trouble, like, I have to match up to these expectations. But why? They're not my expectations. But they're what society made us think that is okay.

Narrator: The mainstreaming of pornography into popular culture has had profound consequences in the ways young girls are portrayed in the media.

Gail Dines: Now this is something you are seeing across the media. You are seeing younger and younger girls made to look like women. And this can have incredible implications and consequences for young girls.

[TV Show Clip]

Barbie: Oh, I know what this look needs. My little rhinestone studded butterfly barrette. It's right here in my closet.

Barbie's Friend: Wow. That's not a closet. That's a planet called Fashion.

Getting Them Young

Susan Linn: There's a kind of marketing that's called Aspirational Marketing. And that's another example of how children's just normal developmental evolution is exploited. It's perfectly normal for little kids to want to be like older kids.

[Game of Life Ad]

Boy: I made \$50,000 in the stock market today.

Girl: I had twins.

Girl: I went to the poor farm.

Boy: I'm on Millionaire Acre. That's Life!

Singing: The Game of Life.

Susan Linn: And the marketing industry got the bright idea of saying well, if preschool kids want to be like teenagers let's market to them as if they were teenagers. And it began with Barbie.

[1950s Barbie commercial]

Singing: Barbie, you're beautiful. You make me feel my Barbie doll is really real.

[2000s Barbie commercial]

Ad Narrator: Which fashionista are you?

Singing: Are you a girly girl or an artsy girl? Cutie girl or a sassy girl? Are you a wild or glam girl?

Ad Narrator: You can collect all six.

Narrator: Virtually every classic toy has followed the trend, undergoing a radical transformation.

[1980s Strawberry Shortcake commercial]

Ad Narrator: Welcome to the world of Strawberry Shortcake.

[2011 Strawberry Shortcake commercial]

Ad Narrator: Strawberry Shortcake. Puttin' on the glitz. Featuring glittery nails, glamorous hair, fabulous fashion, and fun.

[1950s Lego commercial]

Ad Narrator: Lego is here. Hey kids! Look! A whole new world to build.

Singing: This young girl had such fun. She used Lego one by one. With a nick knock paddy whack, built a house a-grand. This young girl's a Lego fan.

[2012 Lego commercial]

Ad Narrator: New! Lego Friends! Welcome to beautiful Heart Lake City. Time to chill with the girls. At the beauty shop, Emma is styled and ready to go.

Emma: This is gonna be so much fun.

Susan Linn: We began to see makeup marketed to ever-younger girls. Now, you know, there's lingerie for four year-olds. As preschool girls and their parents are told that they don't want baby dolls and they don't want to look like little girls they want to look like teenagers, that becomes the norm in the market.

[Advertising montage]

Jean Kilbourne: I think that the sexualization of children is not so much about sex, it's really about consuming. That the real point is to turn these children into consumers at a very young age. If you can eroticize shopping in childhood then you will get these people lined up at the malls for the rest of their lives.

[Bratz commercial]

Singing: Bratz boutique. It's all about shopping. Check it out. Scan your things.

Jean Kilbourne: What they're doing is they're conditioning girls at incredibly young ages to feel that how they look is what's most important about them, that their lovability depends on their sex appeal and they can buy this look and this sex appeal if they just choose the right products and try hard enough.

Narrator: Boys are not immune to stereotypes and are also heavily targeted by the advertising industry and mass media but with very different messages.

Harrison Pope: Here we have the original GI Joe from 1964 and I'm afraid that my copy here has lost a couple of his limbs because I have shown him at various conferences around the world. But as you can see, 1964 GI Joe if he were my height or the size of an average man would be a perfectly normal looking man. He has no large biceps or chest muscles or any particular muscularity. But now, let's take a look at GI Joe ten years later from 1975. And as you can see now, GI Joe has started to spend a bit of time in the gym. And then, by 1992, we see that GI Joe has not only been spending quite a lot of time in the gym but maybe even has taken a touch of anabolic steroids here and there. So this is sort of a graphic illustration of this evolution of focus on muscularity just over the span of a few decades.

[Video game montage]

Narrator: Video games and virtual worlds are impacting both boys and girls. Nowhere is this more evident than in Japan, where the virtual and the real often overlap.

Future Bodies

Eri Shibata [in Japanese]: Why are big eyes so popular in Japan? It's because the lead characters in anime and manga always have big eyes. Growing up, Japanese girls and boys see so many of these images and so they believe that having big eyes equals happiness and success.

Narrator: The story of AKB48 is emblematic of what the future may have in store for us. AKB48 is the most famous music group in Japan, with over 80 members, all girls, ranging in age from 13 to mid 20s. Their concerts, music videos and product endorsements have made them one of the highest earning musical acts in the world. Their members are everywhere. They are constantly talked about. Their every media appearance carefully dissected by fans. So when a never-before-seen girl starred in a high profile commercial for the candy company Glico, discussions about her set the media and Blogosphere on fire.

Jason Karlin: When Eguchi Aimi first appeared in her commercial this was without any type of announcement from the production company. For many fans, there was a moment of disbelief. Was this a new member of this idol group that we had never seen before? Was this a new member who was going to be promoted at the front because she was featured prominently in this advertisement in the center.

Narrator: Eguchi Aimi even appeared on the cover of the Japanese magazine, Weekly Playboy, which referred to her as the ultimate love-bomb. Fans of the group were in disbelief, never before had they witnessed such an astronomic rise from obscurity to fame. Something didn't sit right.

Jason Karlin: And it was only later and in part through the detective work of the fans themselves that they came to the conclusion that she was most likely a kind of a digital composite of the various members of the idol group itself. Finally, of course, the production company did reveal that Eguchi Aimi was in fact a component of the leading members of this idol group AKB48.

Jason Karlin: The virtual idol here represents something that is beyond life and death, it becomes an object of timeless beauty and pleasure.

Narrator: This may very well be one of the first moments in human history when the line between real and virtual has been successfully blurred.

Jean Kilbourne: We're going to see real models replaced by these virtual bodies that will be created by computer. So this then will become the image against which real women and girls will be comparing themselves.

Gail Dines: If tomorrow women all over the world looked in the mirror and if they liked what they saw reflected back at them, then we would have to reshape capitalism as we know it because how many industries survive on the fact that women are incredibly self-loathing? Which, of course, did not come from nowhere, it came from the media, which is

also tied into many of these industries. If you take away that self-loathing that women have then you will see industries all over the globe go bankrupt. So what I really think young women need to understand is that you are being exploited, and you are being manipulated and you are being seduced into hating yourself as a way to generate astronomical profits that keep a very few very wealthy.

Agents of Change

Gail Dines: At stake here, in terms of who controls the media, is what kind of society we want to live in. The question becomes, do you want to live in a society that is owned and controlled by a handful of corporations who determine the nature of our visual landscape? Do you want a handful of corporations to determine what femininity should look like, what masculinity should look like what sexuality should look like, or do you think that we, as people, should have a right to determine our own cultural images? That we should have a right to decide what kind of culture we live in and especially what kind of culture our children grow up in. I think that's our basic human right, it is not a right of the corporations.

Speaker: Ladies and gentlemen, the distinguished author, Mr. Aldous Huxley.

Aldous Huxley: Brave New World is a study of the future as it may be unless we are extremely careful. It depicts a society in which man has replaced nature by science, morality by drugs, individuality by total conformity. It is a hideous prospect, yet we seem determined to follow this path of self-destruction. But Brave New World need not be our future. The choice, after all, is always in our own hands.

Narrator: And our own hands have never been this powerful. Throughout the entire history of mankind, public discourse was tightly controlled by a small cast of wealthy individuals. All this changed in the 1990s with the advent of the Internet. Today, an individual with a device connected to the Internet can spark a revolution. A blogger can be heard as loud and clear as the CEO of a Fortune 500 company.

[News Montage]

TV Host: A 14-year-old is getting credit for inciting change in one of the biggest teen magazines in the industry.

Anchor: Seventeen magazine promises to get real about beauty after an outcry in May. Julia Bloom. She organized an online petition asking for one unaltered photo spread per month.

Reporter: Disney is said to be retreating now from its Princess Merida makeover.

Reporter: Sisters Lexie and Lindsay Kite are on a mission to help girls take back their beauty. And they are countering cosmetic surgery billboards with billboards of their own.

They're also speaking across the country, telling girls and their parents to reject all messages that make girls believe their bodies are not good enough.

Narrator: Across the world, there are almost 3 billion people with an Internet connection, 70 per cent of them are online every day. Eight new people start using the Internet every second. And there are more than 130,000 new websites created every single day. This has the potential to be an almighty digital army that could be mobilized for change. Challenging the status quo, creating healthy media, taking on powerful corporations that profit from our insecurities. I could tell you that we are capable of anything, that we can start a sea change, but it won't be the whole truth. We're in for a fierce, long, challenging battle. The other side has almost endless money and resources at their disposal. It's not going to be easy, but it's definitely going to be worth it.

[END]