Busting a Gut

Carly Babel
Dr. Hackey
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Obesity is America's number one leading health epidemic, affecting more than 93 million Americans today (OAC). From 1985 to 2010, obesity has gone from affecting an average of 10% of individuals in just about every state to today affecting 33.8% of people within each state. Children and adults alike all over the U.S. are being diagnosed with obesity and encouraged to change their lifestyles. But, that is easier said than done. Doctors are prescribing patients to lose weight, exercise, eat healthy, and in extreme cases, go under the knife, but none of these recommendations are making a dent in lowering the rate of obesity. Rather, the number of people obese in the United States steadily increases at an alarming rate. But why? Many people like to blame the individual who is battling the obesity disease for not making a change, but it goes beyond self-control and will power. Obesity is a psychological disease and physical battle that has individuals struggling to re-invent their lives. Media outlets today, such as television, now focus increased attention on broadcasting weight-loss programs to influence viewers who identify themselves as overweight to lose weight in sake of their life and future. Such television programs, however, exploit overweight individuals, rather than help them in their journey to a healthy life. Today, media portrayals of obesity must incorporate more education on weight loss and health initiatives, acknowledging this disease's mental battle rather than simply blaming its victim.

Whether geared to children or adults, more and more television shows are either based around our obsession with weight, or incorporate weight as a major theme. The popularity of such shows such as, *The Simpsons*, *Family Guy*, *Rocko's Modern Life*, *The King of Queens*, *The Biggest Loser*, *MTV's True Life: I am Obese*, *True Life: I'm Addicted to Food*, *I Used to be Fat*, and *Return to Fat Camp* are just the few reality/cartoon series in recent years that intentionally mock, or ostracize overweight individuals and their struggle to lose weight. For neither reality

shows nor adult cartoons focus their attention on warning Americans about the growing obesity epidemic, but rather they focus viewers to laugh at their expense. Reality shows like *The Biggest Loser* and *MTV's Fat Camp*, and cartoon series like *The Simpsons* and *Family Guy*, are four prime examples of how media attention towards obese individuals have taken a turn for the worse. All four shows depict the obese as lazy, lacking will power, unattractive, or in denial of their condition. These qualities, in turn, become their identity, shaping the audience's impression of them as overweight individuals. *The Biggest Loser, MTV's Fat Camp, The Simpsons, and Family Guy* may appeal to different audiences, but each address the same underlying preconceived notion: 'fat' people are inadequate and unaware of their state of health. The media quickly picked up on this and ran, changing their whole idea of what entertainment should consist of when overweight individuals are the main focus.

The television media today no longer is used to help educate the overweight on weight loss tips and tricks, but it now advocates as an entertainment resource. As Blaszkiewicz notes, television re-invented its purpose in recent decades and no longer sells just products. As times have changed, so have one's interests. In her article on reality television, Blaszkiewicz objected that

> Since its emergence in the early 1950s, television has undoubtedly become one of the most widely used media for promotional activity. It has transformed, however, from selling a product, to selling a lifestyle. Consumption is not promoted through specific brands or products, but rather through methods of weight-loss that are meant to be attainable by not only the participants of the program, but the viewing audience as well (Blaszkiewicz, 28-29).

A healthy life is one of slender size and small proportions, not oversized consumptions. TV reflects this; Americans are being sold on this idea that obesity is not socially acceptable and it is not ok to be fat. Jan Sheehan emphasizes how "Society places an immense pressure on people to look good, stay thin, and fit into a certain size. This then stigmatize people who don't fit the description" (Sheehan). We are learning from TV series, in particular cartoon series poking fun at the obese on TV, that fat is out and skinny is in. The media is selling skinny with a happy life and obesity with a lazy life. Our obsession with weight as an issue then surfaces in humor and satire. As Chelsea Heuer notes, this lighter side of obesity is presented more outwardly in cartoon shows than in reality shows. "...Overweight cartoon characters have typically been depicted as unattractive, unintelligent, unhappy and cruel. In 40 percent of shows, at least one obese character is disliked, and in over half of these shows, an obese character is shown thinking about or eating food" (Heuer). Overweight characters on TV are stereotyped as either lazy or lacking will power. These two traits get illustrated together due to their hand in hand nature.

Both of these words invoke within us an image that gets labeled onto those we have been conditioned to associate them with. For example, when one thinks of the word lazy, one thinks sluggish, inactive, un-energetic, and lethargic... someone who is obese. Yet, when one thinks of the word willpower they think determination, desire, and strength, someone strong and slender; not someone big-boned and overweight. Rather, someone encompassing those features would be seen as 'lacking willpower'. For years, we have associated these terms with the overweight and have used them to fit our mold of how we think of them. Because television has always reinforced the trend of blame the victim in relation to obese people, society has never had a reason to deconstruct their current views of them. Both Abigail Saguy and Rene Almeling

acknowledge this, saying how society has increasingly been blaming the individual for being overweight. They mention how today,

> Media routines are relying more on individualized, rather than socio-structural, frames. News tends to be ‘‘people-centered,’’ where ‘‘clearly identified individuals personify or stand in for larger, more difficult to grasp social forces’’. This means that the news media tend to blame social problems on individuals rather than on systemic forces (Saguy and Almeling, 59).

Media attention is becoming more focused on the personal struggles and failings of characters and reality contestants as the reason for becoming their disease. By blaming the individual, television programs are adding to the burden of obese individuals already dealing with heavy consequences and ridicule. Yet, this seems to be a common characteristic within humans, to blame others for their own misfortune, not wanting to take part in the matter. Morone talks of how in a lot of issues circling around public health issues and policy, individuals like to place fault in others to not have the government seen as an aiding contributor in one’s predicament. He says how “Moral constructions-stereotypes- are constantly constructed, reconstructed, and contested. Once they gain wide currency, they become crucial political facts. They define national problems and plausible solutions” (Morone, 1004). In short, Americans love to project public health issues onto those who decided to take part in such acts. It is them who chose those bad habits; no one forced it onto them. Blaszkiewicz follows this, using *The Biggest Loser* as an example of this, saying how, “What may seem like an inventive way to help those with serious weight issues become ‘healthy’, *TBL* has been heavily criticized by many scholars. Primarily, the program is framed in a way that perpetuates negative stereotypes of individual will- power and failure when it comes to issues of obesity” (Blaszkiewicz, 32). Instead of encouraging

individuals to get help and live differently, like Blaskiewicz and Morone contend, the public does the opposite, thinking they are helping individuals by yelling at them or placing blame where it should be pointed elsewhere.

According to psychotherapist and pop-culture analyst Beth Bernstein,

> …the archetype of the "fat foolish guy" dates all the way back to the 1950s with *The Honeymooners*. Ralph Kramden really started the formula of the fat bumbling man with the thin, capable, long-suffering wife that's been repeated ... from *All in the Family* to *King of Queens* and *The Simpsons* and *Family Guy* and all those kinds of shows...Like the fat fellas, plus-sized women tend to fall into certain stereotypes. They're usually the fat, funny best friend.She never has a boyfriend, is never the focus of a story, but is kind of endearing" (Bernstein)

Whether these individuals are telling jokes or making jokes about themselves, they still will get labeled as the funny character on that show. This character type has been in television since the 1950s and seems to not be going away. But it is characters like this that we are portraying on the media that are making us think about what Bernstein asks, "Who wants to be a member of a population where you are mocked and made fun of and criticized and judged?" (Bernstein)

It is cartoon series, like *The Simpsons* and *Family Guy* that have led us to keep this question in the back of our minds as they have increasingly subjected fat characters to humility, having them only think about food, complain about exercise, and be harassed for their weight by other characters and family members.

One show that illustrates such proof of this 'blame the victim' approach is *The Simpsons*: a series that has been recently named the oldest and longest running cartoon television series

today. For years, *The Simpsons* has grabbed the attention of young and old audience members alike, with its family oriented nature: Homer's comical personality and love for food, Marge's nagging demeanor, Lisa's straight-edge ways, Bart's rebellious nature, and a slew of inappropriate and politically incorrect remarks. But over time, however, weight became a more prominent theme on *The Simpsons*.

"King Size Homer", an episode in the seventh season of *The Simpsons*, illustrates the shows abuse of the overweight. The show begins with a serious tone, as Lisa- the moral center of the Simpson family- tries to persuade her father not to gain over 60 pounds just in order to be on disability. She tries to persuade her dad that being obese is unhealthy and no doctor would approve of his plan; gaining weight to just be qualified as disabled is ridiculing the system. But then, the tone changes, and the attitude of Homer gaining weight is lifted. The writers have Bart, the rebel of the family, encouraging Homer to gain weight and offering to help him. At one point, Bart says his dream is to be like Homer, a disabled fat guy when he grows up. The scene plays out like this:

> Homer: (*reading 'Am I Disabled?' book aloud*) Hyper-obesity. If you weigh more than 300 pounds, you qualify as disabled. / Bart: If you gain 61 pounds they will let you work at home? / Homer: Yup, that's the deal. No more exercise program. No more traffic. No more blood drives or charity walks. / Lisa: Dadd!! / Homer: AHH!! / Lisa: I must protest. You're abusing a program intended to help the unfortunate. / Homer: Hehehe. I'm not saying it isn't sleazy honey. But try to see it my way. All my life I have been an obese man trapped inside a fat man's body.
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> Lisa: (*to Marge)* The longer he lives like this, the harder it will be to go back. / Marge: Hmm... you're right. Hmp.. maybe if I use my least nagging tone of voice. Hoommerr! Homerr! Homer! That's it. That's the one. Alright, send him on in. / Lisa: Daad... / Homer: Yes honey? / Lisa: Umm...mom just baked a cake. / Homer: Oh!! (*Homer running into the kitchen*)

This episode is filled with harsh remarks and stereotypical perspectives that show the lack of will power and laziness associated with obesity. Within the first minute of the show, the audience sees Homer hiding in the bathroom to get out of five minutes of calisthenic exercise at work. He is then shown screaming and protesting not to make him do five minutes of exercise while his boss's assistant, Smithers, is shown commenting on how ridiculous he is acting because it is only five minutes. Through *The Simpsons*, Homer encourages us automatically to see laziness as a characteristic of the obese. His laziness stems from his own choices—he does not want to exercise or eat healthy. As Saguy and Almeling commented, "News articles tend to moralize weight above and beyond the science on which they are reporting by attributing obesity to factors under people's individual control—especially those thought to reflect moral character, like choosing to be sedentary or making bad food choices" (Saguy and Almeling, 67). Homer making a scene about working out for five minutes gears our attention to the thought that it is one's personal choice if they do not want help. But in reality, it is the fact that we do not sympathize for them or see it thru their eyes how hard their weight is to deal with on their own that we associate this "blame the victim" theory with obese people.

Homer being displayed with no shirt on, stomach out, out of breath, thinking one push-up is two, and sweating profusely after barely doing any type of work out adds to the fuel of our brewing thoughts on their lazy tactics and out of shape demeanor. When Homer finally gains all

the weight he wanted to, viewers see the repercussions of his actions. Homer is no longer allowed into the movies because he is too fat, and Lisa uses food as a lure to get Homer to get up from his chair. The characters in the show demonstrate common stereotypes of people who are overweight. Homer's boss calls him a "gastropod", Lisa's friends mention hearing her dad ate all the food at a restaurant and the restaurant then had to close down, and Marge informs Homer she is losing her attraction to him. Other examples include Homer saying he has always been an obese man in a fat man's body (when the correct phrase is one having always been a skinny man stuck in a fat man's body), Homer calling himself a big-fat dynamo and wanting that cake he was promised, the directors putting Homer in a moo moo and seen washing his 'fat guy' hat, Homer's fingers being too big for the phone dials, and Homer being lazy, using a dipping bird to do his work. Although each of these different clips only lasted for a couple minutes, the message for the audience is clear; the stereotypes of the obese are perfectly executed to match Homer's famous persona of his love for pink frosted donuts with rainbow sprinkles.

Throughout the years on *The Simpsons*, food has played as a major role in Homer's life. Whether he is thinking about it, dreaming about it, or fantasizing about food (Hmmm.... Donutssss), his life is defined by eating. Continuously on *The Simpsons*, obese people are portrayed as lazy, out of breath, a sweet tooth, unintelligible, unattractive, and worthless. The characters in *The Simpsons* continuously belittle Homer, making him feel horrible about himself. While the writers reinforce that this is ok, they also attempt to show pain and embarrassment on his face in the way he reacts to people calling him fat and lazy and when he is rejected from certain establishments due to his weight. But after this pity is over, the writers pick up where they left off poking fun at his weight and body shape. The excess weight he gained in the episode "King-Size Homer" gets then played up by the directors by putting him in a floral pink and blue

moo moo and a hat he calls his ‘fat guy hat’. This serious issue of obesity turns quickly into a comical joke, as Homer chooses his wardrobe based on comfort rather than presentability. Putting Homer in a moo moo, of all clothing options, says a lot about how we view obese people when it comes to clothing, feeling as though they rather wear more flowing garments to conceal their bodies and make it easier for them to move around. Yet, in the real world, wearing a flowy garment is seen as one just being tired and a bum. It not only emphasizes an obese or rather ‘hyper-obese’ person’s outlook on themselves, but how the world sees them. The directors and writers of the show ignore what is important and focus only on entertaining their viewers. Audience members pick up on how characters treat overweight people in cartoons and reinforce existing stereotypes of obese people onto those around them.

This reality of other people’s view of those who are overweight is quite apparent and evident, especially in *The Biggest Loser*. Every contestant on *The Biggest Loser* starts off telling their story and automatically presenting the audience with <u>their</u> reasoning for becoming overweight. They open up to the audience and come clean, saying they have stopped living in denial and have finally admitted to themselves and their family members that they have a serious eating problem and need help before they literally kill themselves with their addiction. Unlike *The Simpsons*, where Homer is portrayed in a joking manner, this reality show describes weight gain as a struggle. This issue does not just go away after the episode airs; it is a continuing battle. But, to keep up with reality shows today and the audience’s attention, weight-loss shows, like *The Biggest Loser* that are supposed to be promoting a healthier lifestyle have succumbed to caring more about viewer ratings, including entertaining pieces within each segment because without it, why else would we watch overweight individuals lose weight without drama or temptation? This exact concept motivated *The Biggest Loser* to play off the idea of laziness, and

one's weak will-power and incorporate temptation challenges throughout the season. Yet, every time they air, it is so hard to watch because no one wants to see the contestants cheat after all the hard work they have done. It is disgusting in one respect but pure entertainment in another, feeding into the audience's view of how un-controlling obese people appear when around such food. Blaszkiewicz stresses in her paper how *The Biggest Loser* does this throughout the series, though we might think otherwise because the show's general focus is on losing weight. She says that,

> A study done by Sender and Sullivan on the effects of *The Biggest Loser* on audiences found that most audience members left intact assumptions that the obese body represents the failure of will in a culture... and a failure of self-esteem (Sender and Sullivan, 2008:582).This individual will- power and failure is linked to personal responsibility... The program's contestants are forced to tell 'their' story, providing personal reasons for their weight problems. The depiction of weight-loss methods is not only misleading, but dangerous (Blaszkiewicz, 32).

This is not the message the media should be sending. Obesity has nothing to do with one's impulsiveness; it has everything to do with one's mind.

In season twelve for example, TBL featured a "donut-temptation" challenge. In the first five minutes, viewers are introduced to the donut challenge:

> Host-Alison: Hi Guys. / Vinny: What in the world is this? Homer Simpson's hideaway or something? / Host-Alison: Here at *The Biggest Loser* ranch, you have the luxury that most people don't have. You can work out whenever you want, at any time of day, with world class trainers. But not this week because for this week the gym will only be open for three times a day... Your team will only get to work out during one of those time

> slots.... just like all of us in the real world, you have to squeeze in your workouts when you can. Each donut is 35 calories. So if you want to decide when your team works out, you gotta pay the price. You will have three minutes... the team that eats the most donuts will get to pick what time all three teams train.

The challenge begins and none of the contestants eat any donut holes, except for a few, but they only have about a handful at most. But then, we see one contestant named John on the black team, who thinks he is doing his team a favor, and eats thirty-seven donuts to make sure they win the challenge. Now, none of the contestants find this out until the end because until then, they are in their own cubicles, but as viewers watch, many become appalled, saddened, and horrified. This atrociously exploits the obese at a stage of the game where they are just starting out. This challenge sets up contestants for failure; its purpose was truly to embarrass and it showed. Such challenges like this entice audiences to bash the overweight even more and to view them as unable to resist food. What shows should be doing is having audience members wanting the contestants to lose weight and improve their health, not preparing them for their own down fall. It are moments like these that although a struggle to watch, need to be captured to show America not only how hard of an addiction food is for people and how reality series geared towards losing weight should not dangle food in front of those fighting their obesity, but how television series help encourage our negative association of obese people with food. Television series like *The Biggest Loser* and the *The Simpsons*, make lasting impressions on people whether for the better or worse of society.

By placing bad food in large, cartoonish quantities in front of overweight individuals one is not helping the problem, rather one is enabling it. Putting food in front of an obese person is like if doctors at rehab clinics were to put drugs in front of a drug addict or alcohol in front of an

alcoholic in the beginning of their stay. The weaning off period in any addiction is the most important and vital time for the person suffering to live without such substances, but a temptation is impossible to resist when it is put in front of someone a few days after they give up the habit; it does not help the cause. One of the newer trainers on the *The Biggest Loser*, Dolvett, has been known to not favor these challenges on the show and reiterates this stance of his on the recent *The Biggest Loser Thanksgiving Special*. After one of many commercial breaks, the *Thanksgiving Special* on NBC decided to welcome viewers back with infamous clips from temptation challenges from the past to the present season. As the clips were shown, you see previous contestants' reactions along with the trainers, all sharing the same face of disgust. Once the clips were shown, the host greets audience members with her reaction to the scenes chosen and then narrows in on Dolvett.

> Host-Alison: That was nuts right? Dolvett, I know you are not a fan of temptations, what did you feel about that? / Dolvett: You know, some of them go into it with the idea that they are gonna win and you know... I never liked that kind of thing because you are trying to wean them away from those bad habits but when you put temptations it just makes the work that much harder.

Dolvett, a renowned certified trainer, perfectly rationalizes to America why temptation challenges are not only extremely unhealthy for the contestants, but morally wrong. As Dolvett sees it, the contestants take a step back, rather than a step forward and become re-introduced to the foods they are supposed to see as bad. This segment might have alternative motives, acting as a way to make sure contestants do not binge eat or to have them realize how different fatty foods taste in comparison to nutritional foods, but either way, like Dolvett said, it is taking away from their goal, to lose weight and learn to live a healthier lifestyle. For Americans, it feeds our

humor, but for the contestants, it just makes it that much harder for them to beat their disorder. The American media needs to take obesity and weight-loss as seriously as those who are fighting this disease. It cannot just be trainers and doctors who are stressing healthier lifestyles, it needs to be everyone. But it is a funny contrast here when though these trainers are promoting healthier eating habits and ways of life, they are also ridiculing their contestants. In the article "The Biggest Loser: The Discursive Constitution of Fatness" Silk and Francombe make long time viewers take a step back and see what the media has been implementing in our minds all along, highlighting the trainers not so ethical ways. Silk and Francombe go on to say how,

> *TBL* individualizes fatness...The personal trainers situate all the blame on the individuals for being 'obese'; the way out, the escape from this condition is a renewed focus on self and the need to take '100% responsibility.' Insults, if not outright victimization and humiliation (McRobbie, 2004; also Bonner, 2008), revolve around the exercise, presumably to motivate the contestant: 'being fat is your fault'; 'you are letting down your family.' These *lipoliteracies*—the dominant cultural meanings attached to "fat" bodies in western societies (Graham, 2005)—circulate within *TBL* around themes of inactivity, laziness, defiance, lack of control, moral failings, ill-health, unhappiness, food addiction, lack of willpower, inability to manage desire, and, lower than *normal* levels of intelligence (Crandall, 1994; McMurria, 2008; Murray, 2008) (Silk and Francombe, 6).

A show many have fallen in love with and became addicted to because one thought it encouraged weight-loss and really was striving to speak to America and see this growing epidemic as an issue hitting all ages and walks of life, is really just another show mis-

conceptualizing the obese population and hindering their confidence with ridicule and harsh stigmas. Dolvett prides himself on believing in helping the obese population of Americans and making a difference in these people's life, like every other trainer, like Bob Harper and Anna Kournikova, but if they want this message to ring throughout the nation, they need to do as they preach. As the trainers call their team 'fat' and tell them that 'they are to blame' for becoming overweight, they are making it alright for Americans to do the same. If a world-renowned, certified trainer can say it, what is wrong with us saying it?

Television shows are so impressionable to this century's generational viewer today that comments like this become laminated into society forever and then transformed into raw humor. Shows circling around the issue of obesity or that have overweight characters on their series like to use these individuals as a comic relief. This common humiliation of overweight characters plays a huge part in the episode "The Heartbroke Kid" from *The Simpsons* season sixteen. Audience members follow Bart as he starts to gain weight after his school installs new vending machines that only sell un-healthy, processed foods to kids for a dollar. Bart starts eating chips and chocolate bars for dinner in place of the home cooked meals his mother (Marge) makes the family. Marge gets so upset that Bart will not eat the food she has slaved over that she takes Bart's junk food away from him. Yet, when he starts to whimper like a baby for it, she gives into his whining and lets him have the chips back, becoming an enabler. We then fast forward three weeks later and the show plays its opening credits again, but now Bart is fat, taking longer to get out of school; while he rides his skateboard home, the pavement cracks along his path. After an uneasy, wobbly ride he finally reaches home, but as he nears the couch to sit, he has a heart-attack. Bart is taken to the doctor where we witness some element of seriousness in lieu of his

health, but the scene quickly turns comical when Dr. Hibbert points to Bart's body X-ray and explains how Bart has malted milk balls in his arteries and Lafy Tafy the size of his liver in his stomach.

Bart is put on a strict diet. The viewers watch him struggle to eat healthy and at one point witness him cheating on his diet, having hid a secret stash of junk food in the wall of his room, while the rest of his family went to a milk shake festival. Lisa catches Bart cheating on his diet and tries to tell her father, Homer, but she finds him rolling around in bed with ten empty milk shake cups all around him. The picture of unhealthy food associated with being consumed in large quantities, encourages us to link satisfactory feelings with eating candy and ice cream. Then, later on in the episode, we see a scene where Bart and other overweight characters are poked fun at in our expense for some comic relief. The scene starts out after the family has just had an intervention for Bart's bad eating habits:

> Bart: Help! Kidnappers! / Marge: They're not kidnappers! They're professionally trained child snatchers who are taking you to a maximum security fat camp./ Bart: I'm not fat!
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> Tad Spangler, Facility Director: Wake up fatties! Stop dreaming about butter. Dream calories are real calories. Alright here is how this exercise works. You tow me around the track. As we gather speed I whip you gently, you state your name and you tell me how you got so heavy. / Kent Brockman: Kent Brockman. Channel six news. I gorge on kettle corn during the sports and weather. / Tad Spangler: We know. Your side fats starting to spill over to channel five and seven. I hope you're getting three paychecks. / Bart: Bart

> Simpson. I'm just big boned! / Tad Spangler: No such thing! / Bart: Growth spurt?! / Tad: Doesn't exist!
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> Marge: Jimminy kimmel. Look how much they are charging for Bart's treatment. / Homer: That free-loading fatso!

Within a ten minute segment, *The Simpsons* criticize overweight individuals to no end, by not only using the terms "fatties" and "fatso", but by ridiculing their addiction, having the trainer presume they are dreaming about food and poking fun of their bodies. To whip them into shape, Bart and his fellow campers drag the trainer around the track in a carriage called the "Chubby Chaser." Though such remarks are subtle and quickly exchanged, they still process in our minds as true stereotypes of how those who are obese or overweight think/act. Just from this thirty minute episode, a child and an adult can pick up insulting words and misconstrued messages of how to treat overweight people. As the media pokes fun of the obese, the directors encourage this misconception we have of them by portraying Bart in the most humiliating light they can to the point where they have his addiction to food having him do bizarre acts to eat such indulgences, like ice cream. As the show makes us laugh at his desperation, we begin to learn to laugh at those who act the same way and see food as their vice. Because no one is telling us that it is not alright to think this is funny to mock the obese, we are then conditioned into thinking that it is ok to laugh at overweight people struggling to not eat a cheeseburger. Our feel good moment of laughter becomes their self-conscious moment of shamefulness. We feed into their problem; the more society jokes, the more these individuals turn to food to give them comfort and self-confidence because other than from food, they are getting no support or satisfaction from anyone else.

The obese population of the world is suffering from our blame and stigma we place on them every day. Individuals are humiliated and discriminated against because of an issue that is out of their hands. It requires a change from within and the guidance from others to have them build a new life for themselves that we have helped to tear down. Kathleen Doheny goes on to say how "Overweight people feel they are being judged and victimized for a condition that they feel is out of their control and they need sympathy, support, and help tailored to their specific circumstances" (Doheny). Each individual encompasses their own body and their own biological identity, making obesity unique in each person. Yet, obesity likes to culminate under one umbrella of reasons, from being inactive to unhealthy, and then to uncaring. Many stigmas like this today are now laminated in our culture in relation to everyday life. People, who are overweight, depending on their size, will have to sometimes buy two airline or train tickets because they will not fit in one sit. In other cases, people who weigh over a certain weight sometimes will not be able to go on certain rides at amusement parks. Then there is discrimination at work where in some cases people have not been hired because they were overweight, even though their resumes were excellent. In business and in everyday life, a slender body is associated with being successful and seen as more appealing to one's eye. But with such stigmas and repercussions acted on these outlooks, people lose out on opportunities and are punished for being who they are, weight and all. We are enforcing that being overweight is socially unacceptable and reinforcing a 'slender life' with the limitations we have set in place in society.

In the reality series *The Biggest Loser*, on more than one occasion, the trainer Dolvett has grown fond of bringing viewers down to reality in taking obesity seriously. In season twelve, a scene played out amongst Vinny, his teammates, and Dolvett that was not a laughing matter. At

one point in the show, members of the Red team poke fun of themselves. These individuals are so used to laughing about their weight in order to make themselves feel better about themselves and to beat others to the punch that they do not realize they are only hurting themselves even more by not taking their health seriously. As the team meets with Dolvett before their 'Last Chance Workout', an unexpected conversation unfolds.

> Vinny: I want to do those ab things. / Jessica: Cecil is going down. Wait, does everyone know who Cecil is? Dolvett has met Cecil right? / Vinny: Everyone has met Cecil. Well, *(lifts up his shirt and starts rubbing his belly and starts pushing his stomach together so his belly button is like a mouth)* Hello, my name is Cecil. *(in a deeper voice)* I am trying to get off Vinny because I am killing him, slowly. Haha *(everyone is chuckling)* / Dolvett: *(aside to the viewers)* Vinny, making fun of his stomach, nicknaming him Cecil, he is making fun of his health and the disadvantage that he has with his weight. That is not a laughing matter. People with cancer don't name their tumors. This is the thing that is literally killing you. This is a life or death situation.

After Dolvett says this to the camera, he then says it aloud to Vinny and the whole team very sternly. Being overweight is not a joking matter; making fun of your disease is horrendous. Like Dolvett says, no one who has cancer goes around naming their tumors. The obesity epidemic needs to be taken more seriously and this scene is a wakeup call to Americans all over the United States. This is serious; it no longer is a game. The extra baggage one has on their body is because they put it there and that weight now slowly kills them. These contestants are killing themselves with food, just like a majority of the rest of the world. The message that Dolvett tells the audience is an important one for audiences around the world to hear, but if such a serious

message is trying to warn Americans about obesity, why must it be followed by this humiliating scene of Vinny making fun of his stomach? The show may save contestants lives and may inspire others to change their lives, to exercise and eat healthy, but that does not mean that they also do not want to encourage our shallow humor.

America is considered one of the 'fattest' nations in the world, ranking in at number nine on the World Health Organization chart of 'Fattest Countries in the World'. (World Health Organization) People from countries that are not, for the majority, made up of obese people, like to laugh at us and think of us as disgusting for how some of us live our lives; we as a society have begun to agree with them. As the media and others around the globe begin to make more remarks about being overweight, one begins to get the impression that being overweight is bad and not attractive. For years, the media has been a staple of revealing the up and coming fashions while promoting different ads for clothing, food, accessories, etc. Yet, on every one of these ads, not a single person is overweight. Every last ad has an average sized individual selling their product, even fast food places. Recently, even news channels have been unconsciously promoting a thinner waistline. For example, when weatherman Al Roker on NBC's *The Today Show* was first starting out on the show, he was overweight. But as time passed, Al Roker got bigger and was later reported going under the knife for gastric bypass surgery to save his life and to become healthy. Al Roker could have come to decide this on his own, but who is to say directors and TV producers did not have a say in the matter? Television shows stress the link between slenderness and beauty on adults and teens alike, now defining what size is 'overweight' and what size is 'skinny'.

One reality series that targets this common theme exactly and reaches out to the most impressionable individuals out there today, teens, is MTV's Return *to Fat Camp*. This television

series is a documentary that follows the lives of seven young teens that go to Camp Pocono Trails in Pennsylvania in the summer to lose weight. Essentially, this camp is a ‘fat boot camp’, with the Head Instructor of the Camp weighing each individual at the end of the week and having each individual do certain daily exercise classes throughout the day, while providing them with healthy, well-balanced meals. This new life they are trying to build for themselves though is not without drama. MTV, a popular network show for teens and young adults, features several shows about overweight individuals struggling to lose weight. Though it emphasizes teens losing weight, it shows us how upset they are with their weight in terms of ‘how they look’ rather than ‘how they are health wise’. The show starts off with each kid, stating their name, age, and what they do not like about themselves; as they do so their weight and goal weight is put at the bottom of the screen. The list of individuals the camera follows throughout camp includes: Logan, 14 years old and 228 lbs.; Dan, 14 years old and 223 lbs.; Adisa, 14 years old and 226 lbs.; and Sam, 16 years old and 144 lbs. Each kid stands with a white background behind them, the camera centered and focused in on them and their entire body, hiding nothing, and showing them at all angles while pointing to what parts of their body they are self-conscious about. Teens everywhere begin to look at themselves and see if they have that same jiggle or stomach as those who are on the TV.

Teens and young adults watch the show to see their progress and the drama they go through, not necessarily paying attention to the message the show is trying to share with viewers. This camp is evidence of childhood obesity, but teens are not recognizing it, they just see young kids at camp who are trying to lose weight to look good. Yet, one detail that teens have noticed and commented on circles around one camper-- Sam. Every person at home saw this 16 year old girl come up on screen and thought the same exact words... “She isn’t fat. Why is she on the

show? If I was at fat camp and bigger than her, I would be so angry she was there". This girl Sam puts every overweight individual on the show to shame, mocking them by not only being the smallest person there, but by classifying herself as fat, when she clearly is the opposite. Even articles that wrote about the premiering of this show described her as "an attractive averaged size girl who sees herself as overweight" (Hareyan). Within the show, even girls at the camp were shown looking at her and commenting on how jealous they were of how skinny she was, wondering why she was even there. But when we go back to her in the beginning of the episode where she is questioned about herself and why she is at fat camp, she exclaims how her "...stomach is probably my worst part. Disgusting! It's huge! It blubs! It's nasty! It needs to go away! I don't like my weight. I don't like my size. I don't like anything about my body...at home I walk through my school and no one notices I am there. I am 5 foot 2. I am chubby. I am walking through the hallway. I am taking up space" (MTV, Sam). It is sad to hear a girl so unhappy with herself and with how her body looks but it is even sadder that nothing out of her mouth was about losing weight for her health, but rather to be skinny and attractive. MTV is telling teens they need to lose weight to feel good about themselves and look attractive not because they are endangering their health. Obese people have immense body image issues, especially adolescents. They have a hard time dealing with their appearance and fitting in. Pedro Miguel Lopes de Sousa says that

> Social communications media perpetuate this "obsession with appearance" that society itself constructs. Seeking to identify with a social group has brought Man to conformity and approximation to these standards, causing the emergence of the concept of the "deviant individual" indicating anyone who fails to meet these standards. These

> individuals are considered to have an imperfect body, causing feelings of inadequacy and discriminatory feelings on the part of others (Lopes de Sousa, 552).

As a society, we continuously are told what the perfect body is and are trying to fit that mold to look beautiful. Adolescents, who are growing up and coming into their own, are held captive under this spell to look 'good' to be popular. A study done by Sousa proved this obsession of looks, revealing how 12.7% of teens that were questioned whether they were skinny, average or fat, said they were fat when really they were not at all. Teens are falsely labeling themselves and classifying themselves as overweight in times when they are not. On top of that, having a show like MTV's *Return to Fat Camp*, solidifies teenager's thoughts about themselves and makes it alright to call themselves 'chubby' and 'fat', all negative word associations with their appearance. It also does not help that the show emphasizes at the end how the girl Sam finally becomes official with her boyfriend. It makes it seem that because she was 'fat', he would not go out with her. Teenagers see this and then think, 'Well, if I am fat, I am never going to have a boyfriend/girlfriend. No one is going to like me'.

At the end of the show, we see how much weight the campers lost, before and after pictures, and how they have been doing a couple months later, revealing if they have kept off the weight, have lost more, or have gained it back. A lot of times the teens will have kept the weight off, but a majority gains it right back. These kids on this show are not learning what they need to about making healthy choices, rather they are just being given the serving size they need to eat and the well-balanced meal all on a tray. No one is educating them on food nutrition or health risks that go along with being overweight; they only are emphasized to work out and be active to obtain a better looking body that society has come to define as 'one that is tone and has a flat stomach'.

The reality series, *Return to Fat Camp*, looks at obesity in an unattractive light, but it is not the only series that has singled out this view society has on weight and body. A cartoon series that criticizes the overweight and emphasizes unattractiveness with being obese, as well, in an even more outrageous way than T*he Simpsons*, with small and more insensitive jabs is *Family Guy*. *Family Guy* has transformed cartoon adult humor into a more risqué type of entertainment. The shows whole demeanor revolves around making fun of the family and other characters throughout the show. But a common theme that has centered on the cartoon has been making fun of the overweight in a way that makes them feel ugly to the public. In *Family Guy*, we see Peter throughout the series being made fun of for being fat, Meg being fat, every member of the family becoming fat, and other characters/family members making fun of all of them for being fat at one point, while using vulgar names. A lot of times, though, the series captures the essence of Giuseppe Riva's view of bodies in society today, expressing unattractiveness with being overweight. In Riva's article, "The Key to Unlocking the Virtual Body: Virtual Reality in the Treatment of Obesity and Eating Disorders" he explains how,

> ... the body has become a symbol of personal order and disorder: slenderness is associated with happiness, success, and social acceptability; being overweight is linked to laziness, lack of willpower, and being out of control... to control our body, we are taught to disembody ourselves (self-objectification) and consider the body as an object that others look at (Riva, 285).

Family Guy unlocks this idea of the body being a symbol of social acceptability and a link between success and failure. The episode that encourages skinny physiques associated with beautiful people and privileges is season two's, episode seventeen 'He's Too Sexy For His Fat',

when Peter gets liposuction, giving up on trying to help his son, Chris, lose weight after realizing his son is ashamed to go into a pool without his shirt on. The episode starts out with the Griffin family at the grocery store, Lois with Stewie, Meg and Brian at one end of the grocery store, Peter nearby, having just spilt a case of beer and now sipping it off the floor, and Chris, at the other end, reading a comic book. All of a sudden, Chris is approached by a police officer who suspects him of shoplifting.

> Police Officer: Alright son, I'm gonna need those two ham's back. / Chris: Uh.. I.. I.. I don't have any hams. / Police Officer: Lift up your shirt son. / Chris: *(as police office lifts up his shirt and feels up his stomach and chest)* I need an adult! I need an adult! / Police Officer: You're not a shop lifter. You're just a fat kid. Huh. Sorry about that fatty fat fatty. Hey Tom he is just a fat kid. Aren't you fatty? You're just a big old fat kid. Here's some chocolate fatso. / Chris: Thanks!

Right off the bat, in the beginning highlights of the episode, the audience is not only given a glimmer of what the show will be about, but are hammered with the word fat more than five times within the scene. As the officer realizes Chris is just 'fat', he laughs, tells his friend, and then gives him a chocolate bar to just then insult him afterwards. This casual exchange of the word "fat", "fatso", and "fatty" gets jammed into our minds as associating with those who are overweight as the scene plays out. Then, we are conditioned into learning to reward an individual who one considers overweight with sweets or chocolates. We, humans, all associate obese people with food and think of them in no positive manner, it is not just this security guard. In the article by Sheehan, it was found that a lot of times

> Obese employees are often viewed as lazy, less competent, sloppy, and lacking in self-discipline by co-workers and supervisors. In schools and colleges, obese students face

> harassment, rejection from peers, and biased attitudes from teachers. Negative attitudes about overweight patients have also been reported by doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals (Sheehan).

As a whole population, no matter age or profession one is in, overweight individuals are being surrounded by poor energy and hit in the face with ridicule, day in and day out. From people who the obese would least expect criticism from, they are receiving it. This episode of *Family Guy* proves it, from strangers to one's own family members, there is no escaping the harsh realities of being overweight in an era where it is not socially acceptable. Every act that occurs in this episode is on purpose. For example, the fact that the writer used two hams as the objects that Chris was supposedly stealing is a tell all of how fat we, the audience, are to imagine him being.

Later on in this episode, there is scene where the Griffins are at a public pool and Chris does not want to take his shirt off because he feels self-conscious about his weight. After watching this scene, it comes to one's attention why so many overweight individuals are so insecure about themselves and how this is not what they want for themselves, rather they want to be healthy but need help and support. The scene plays out as follows:

> Lois: Chris, why don't you want to take your shirt off? / Chris: Well, cause I'm fat. / Lois: Oh, honey. No one thinks you're fat. / Pool boy: I'm sorry sir, you can't park your van on the diving board. / Lois: This is my son. / Pool boy: Oh, my apologizes. Hey Tom, he is not a van. He is just a fat kid. / Peter: Don't listen to him Chris. I am going to get you a soda. You wait here. *(Peter then puts a steering wheel lock on Chris like he is a car)*

What we see here is Chris, again, seen as an enormous mass, taking up a huge area, blocking the public's way from diving into the pool. Instead of Chris being suspected of shoplifting, he is mistaken for a van, which is a preposterous association, but one being used to resemble how overweight he is. Then right after we see the pool guy shouting to his buddy that he is just a fat kid and Peter trying to make him feel better by buying him a soda, locking him up like a car before he goes. These two scenes in this one episode mirror each other in their similar objective to portray the obese as nothing more than "fat" blobs that can do nothing more than eat and consume sugary foods. Peter thinks his son will feel better with a soda, while the police officer thought Chris would excuse his mistake with a chocolate bar.

The media plays into this stereotype we have for how obese people react to harsh criticism. Our common thought is that an obese person resorts to food in their time of need to cheer themselves up. But when television shows back this hypothesis up, it also subliminally encourages those individuals who are overweight to eat when someone makes them feel bad or calls them "fat". How can America decrease obesity when cartoons, especially *Family Guy* and *The Simpsons* are just pushing individuals to eat, making it alright to eat as much as they do? It does not help either though when the rest of the episode focuses partly on Stewie gaining weight, eating everything in sight just to make it harder for Chris to eat healthy food, and then Peter getting liposuction because working out is too hard. After Peter chooses the easy way out, he inhabits a life as a "beautiful person", finding out about this other world he was never a part of before because he was fat, and is now a part of private clubs, private societies, etc. What these shows are telling society is that being beautiful opens doors to a more sophisticated life and being overweight has one living an average, boring life.

Throughout this episode, irony plays a huge role, acting as the main tool for our comic relief by having "the outcome of some situation or action turn out the exact opposite of the intended outcome" (Irony). In scenes where we see Chris eating healthy, but then Stewie eating in excess to tempt him to cheat, and Peter helping Chris work out, but then leaving him to get liposuction, are just a few examples of where irony takes its hold. In Stewie's segment, the writers show how hard it is for Chris to change his diet when no one else does, but then have Stewie degrade him by having him inhaling chicken, mashed potatoes, and chocolate cake. On the flip side, with Peter, we see a father's interest in helping his son become healthy, but then Peter become interested in losing weight himself becoming then involved in a secret, spectacular life. From this scene, the audience innately starts to wonder which group they are a part of in real life, the beautiful people or ugly people? To suggest such a separation has people thinking this is true because where else would the cartoon have got it from. From here, skinny begins to resemble popularity and beauty, while fat resembles ugly and misfit. But, what the public does not realize is how superficial of a view this is; rather than look at oneself as skinny or overweight, one needs to see themselves as healthy or unhealthy. Once one figures out their health status one needs to then realize that beauty is not based on being skinny and thin, beauty is how one feels within; it is about being healthy and healthy does not mean skinny because skinny can be unhealthy. Ever since the media has changed America's view of what consists of a beautiful body image, the look has focused more on clothes sizes rather than BMI numbers. But sometimes, these so called indicators cannot be indicators at all; not even one's appetite. People can be so blinded with habits they have been doing for years that they do not notice when they may be more out of breath than usual or when they go up for thirds and fourths after every meal.

At times, it takes more than the individual to see weight as their problem. A lot of obese people are in denial, not wanting to believe they are obese because it is sad. The media takes this denial one has and turns it into a running joke, making people utter gasps of how one can be so surprised about being classified as overweight. But the fact they tend to ignore what is staring them right in the face because they do not want to be seen as a social health expenditure makes it hard for them admit they are of a certain classification and are living an unhealthy lifestyle. It is hard for anyone to hear a doctor tell them they are overweight, obese, or morbidly obese because it sounds like a cancer. Like being called a nerd, one feels outed, stereotyped, made fun of, and judged. A majority of times when people first hear this, especially on television, their emotion of shock and disbelief is over-exaggerated because to them, they are fine. For example, in *Family Guy* season 4, episode 17, "The Fat Guy Strangler", we see Peter being stubborn in getting a physical. Like a lot of men today, Peter wants to avoid this at all costs. However, when Peter finally makes it to the doctors after Lois forces him to go with her, he is faced with a surprise of a lifetime. As Lois asks the doctor to just tell her how Peter's health is after he goes around the bush for five minutes, the doctor finally replies,

> Doctor: Oh yeah, he is fine. He is just really fat. / Lois: Oh thank God. / Peter: Woah wah wah wait! Hey hey.. Hang on a second! Did you just say I was fat? / Doctor: Well um yeah you... you're pretty fat. / Peter: Um ok, this is news to me.

From the doctor, we see a nonchalant manner in him diagnosing Peter as "fat" like he does not care. First off, no doctor would ever call their patient fat; rather they would use politically correct medical terminology like obese or overweight. Second, after the doctor calls him fat, he does not even tell Peter how being overweight is unhealthy or give him any suggestions of some different

exercise/diet regimes he could take up. Being fat is whatever to the doctor when it should be serious. Having the doctor not care then has overweight individuals thinking that maybe they do not at all.

> A survey involving a nationally representative sample of primary care physicians revealed that…more than 50 percent believed that obese patients would be noncompliant with treatment. One-third thought of them as "weak-willed" and "lazy". Another study found that as patients' weight increased, physicians reported having less patience, less faith in patients' ability to comply with treatment, and less desire to help them (Whyte, 321).

If doctors are losing hope in their patience and are stigmatizing their views on these individuals when they should be more understanding and helping, this makes the public see health professional supporting this train of thought. Doctors should be trying to steer the public away from this message and should have hope for their patients. Overweight individuals go to them because they are supposed to be the most non-biased, non-judgmental person they can turn to for advise in this area of expertise, but if they too fall short in belief that they will ever change, like everyone else in their life, no future progress will be made and our stereotypes have won.

Now, this goes the same for Lois as well because Lois's reaction was one of relief. In Lois's position or any spousal position, no one should ever be relieved that their loved one is just fat. There are a variety of health risks that go along with being overweight and it is not an issue to take lightly. Lois becomes an enabler, like we see Marge Simpson was with her son Bart earlier on; but now, as we turn to see Peter's reaction, we see him in utter shock and denial that

he is fat. Peter cannot believe such nonsense. Peter's reaction is very ironic because in a lot of cases like this, obese people do not think they are fat or ignore it. As Dr. John Whyte argues,

> Many who are overweight do not perceive any problems in their individual circumstances. In a study of 6,000 people, 8 percent of people who were obese thought they were healthy and did not need to lose weight, despite the fact that 35 percent had high blood pressure, 15 percent had dyslipidemia, and 14 percent were diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. Pejorative connotations are ascribed to obese folks "out there," not oneself. This prejudice may be partly due to how the media portray people who are obese. (Whyte, 321).

Denial holds individuals back from changing their lives around. No one wants to believe they are obese, but until one does and one stops masking their ailment with laughter, they will then be saved.

Obesity has captured our attention in more ways than one. In the United States, our rationalization for individuals becoming overweight has been stigmatized heavily by the media and the public alike. With our busy lifestyles and love for enlarging proportions, we as a nation, have redefined our definition of satisfaction. In essence, the bigger the better. But this growing idea has taken hold of our nation for years through various media outlets. More and more videos and news coverage segments have dedicated themselves to this epidemic to make Americans more aware of how obesity can be resolved. But the increased media attention seems to have only added to ridicule of overweight individuals and their struggles that go beyond their addiction and into psychological issues. We put these individuals on display for us to watch and

see them struggle. Though at times we do hear ourselves cheer for them, for the most part we are just laughing at them, in astonishment that they might not be able to do a certain exercise or resist eating a cookie. But who is to blame? TV shows going back in time to one's childhood to those that have been around for years, have always had a "fat" character that has been used as the comical humor. But enough is enough; it is time for the media industry in America to take charge of this very serious disease that is only growing and re-invent the way we educate Americans on healthy eating and lifestyles, educating them on this very real epidemic of obesity that is sweeping our nation.

On ABC's *Good Morning America*, an article was written called "From Fab to Fat and Back: Trainer Gains Weight to Better Understand Clients' Needs" about an Australian personal trainer who gained 88 pounds in six months to then try and lose it all in order to better understand what his client's go through on a daily basis. For many trainers it is easy to say go harder, faster, push for one more minute, but it is another to be on the receiving end of that yelling, unable to push. When this personal trainer, Paul "PJ" James, undertook this journey, he had no idea what he was in for, but learned it was no joke; it was a seriously mental battle. In the article, he expresses at times having felt hopeless, that he would never lose the weight, and that all the sugary and fatty food he was eating he actually began to enjoy, a little too much. When he started to work out again and eat healthy, he mentions finding himself craving those items still, having a hard time breaking this addiction. Today, PJ is still trying to lose the weight he gained, but he says that although he does not fully understand what it is like to be overweight all one's life, he has a better understanding and sees how hard it is to lose the weight (Alfonsi, 1-2). What this man did was truly incredible and inspiring, but he did not mean to encourage people to go out and gain a ton of weight in order to understand the struggles an obese person has to go

through day in and day out; his motive was more to have people start looking at the disease of obesity as more than a physical battle, but as a mental one.

TV genres, both cartoon and reality, have made major impacts on viewers all over the world. Whether it be our love for entertainment or obsession with fixating on other people's lives and problems rather than our own, twenty-first century viewers have caught themselves watching more television programs than spending time with their family and friends. As our culture has gotten more and more wrapped in the bouts of television, we have also got more heavily influenced and educated by what we are being shown on its set; a lot being geared toward our current crazes.

Within the past decade, weight has climbed to the top of our interest pool in topics in which people have become increasingly focused on, whether it now be in news segments on health or nutrition, reality shows on weight, or adult cartoon series, weight has become the main topic of discussion ever since obesity was named a threatening epidemic sweeping our nation. But as the encouragement of weight loss is stressed, so are the stereotypical images of the obese. In television series ranging from cartoons shows like *The Simpsons* and *Family Guy* to reality shows like *The Biggest Loser*, and MTV's *Return to Fat Camp*, overweight individuals have been put on display for all of America to watch, make fun of, and be subjected to ridicule. All four television series alike, in one way or another, poke fun of their overweight characters portraying them as either lazy, lacking willpower, weak, in denial, unattractive, or at fault for their disease. More and more often, obese people in the media are our punch lines and the humorous characters we laugh at. The insensitive jabs and hurtful remarks only hurt the public's image of the overweight even more and laminate our long time stigma we have placed on obese individuals for years.

With the obesity epidemic not slowing down any time soon, shows like T*he Simpsons*, *Family Guy*, *The Biggest Loser* and *Return to Fat Camp*, need to start remolding their message they relaying onto the public about our overweight population. We, as a society, need to help raise awareness about obesity rather than make fun it. Seeing this epidemic as a laughing matter only reinforces individuals to think of the obese as having no self-control or will power to change. Obesity is more than saying no to that second helping or choosing an apple over a chocolate bar. It is a lifestyle one has lived out for years and one that is hard to get out of, especially with no support.

Words like 'fat', 'fatty', and 'fatso' that are used so carelessly in the media, encourage viewers of all generations to associate these words with the overweight and make it ok to use to poke fun and manipulate such individuals. Because educational broadcastings purely based on losing weight are not fun to watch, series like MTV's *Return to Fat Camp* have resorted to focusing on weight loss in terms of their struggles with drama and romance, while NBC's *The Biggest Loser* emphasizes weight loss in terms hot trainers and temptation challenges. These shows influence audiences to lose weight, but through audience appeal; rather, what our nation needs the media to do is work with medical experts to provide programs that will reach out to the obese and teach them how not only to eat better and how to read labels, but what different exercises one can do every day and small, manageable steps one can inhabit in their daily life to live a healthier life. No longer using overweight people for humor may change our overall cultural media, but what it will do is take a step in the right direction towards ending the gut busting humor we have grown to know, love, and abuse.

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