

Weighing In

Lately I've been watching a lot of 1980s television shows on DVD and online. Two things strike me. One is how early to mid-eighties fashions have cycled back into style. Seriously, you can buy a new outfit in a store and then hop in a time machine back to 1983 and look perfectly on trend. The second thing is what was considered the ideal figure then is now viewed as being too big. I kid you not, my jaw dropped when I saw women in dance attire who were actually *pudgy*. Other episodes feature women in bathing suits who have meat on their bones. I mean *thigh* meat. I mean they have *actual hips*. And it's not just that 80s-style jeans and pants are high-waisted and baggy and give the appearance of weight – these women have curves and natural padding which is so frowned upon by today's media's twisted standards.

I really wanted to jump up and shout, "Did anyone else see that?" while at the same time waited for the Skinny Police to barge in and arrest these ladies for having such gorgeous, non-sculpted, protruding-hip bodies. I mean, these ladies look great and yet today's television and film are so inundated with impossibly svelte figures that to see normal, non-underweight women as main characters is a surprise, though back then these actresses were considered slender. It's sad that women must now look even skinnier to be "slender." What will the standards be like in another 20-30 years? Will skeletons or invisibility be the new "slender"? Because we can't get much thinner and still exist.

Meanwhile, a glimpse at the tabloids at the grocery store checkout counter shows the subject of weight isn't going away. One headline screams about an actress "bullied" about her weight. Ironically, magazine below it shows a full shot of Oprah, whose weight rollercoaster has been documented for years, with a strategically-placed banner across her mid-section. I don't have a degree in rocket science, but I'm not dumb and therefore am betting the banner is there to hide her belly. Was she bullied into doing that or did she do it to increase sales? Dear Oprah, when will you accept yourself and by your acceptance help other women stop torturing themselves to achieve some nebulous standard of perfection? If you have a bulge or roll of fat, I wouldn't think, "Ugh, how disgusting. That means this magazine isn't worth reading." I'd think, "Yes! You go, girl! If she's not afraid to show it like it is, then maybe the articles in this magazine are honest, too."

Interestingly, the men's standard of perfection doesn't appear to have changed. Sure, dudes with more muscles will get more shirtless onscreen time, but on the whole, what is fit and trim for guys circa 2012 seems the same as for 1983. Hardly seems fair. Then again, if you Google "Standard of Perfection," you'll find there really is one. It is *a compilation of the desired qualities and characteristics of a breed of livestock usu. with indication of the faults to be esp. avoided* (<http://www.merriam-webster.com>). That's right, folks. perfection is for livestock breeding.

And that tells us all we need to know about perfection.