

Exercise 17: “Anna’s mother begs for change” and “Fashion fun at 12 years old” (p. 26)

1. Explain each author’s views about young models. Who is their target audience?

- i. Adopting a candid and solicitous tone, **Ms Suttcliff** encourages parents to avoid beauty pageants because young girls become obsessed with their physical appearance.
- ii. **Mr Smar** is adamant that 12-year-old models are too young for Fashion Week. Becoming increasingly high-minded, he believes that organisers of the Coolabar Fashion Week are controversially seeking publicity.
- iii. **Ms Haffner** defensively campaigns for a girl’s right to chose on the grounds that we should not generalise about their emotional readiness.

Depiction of the models: Both Ms Suttcliff and Mr Smar depict young girls as too immature to withstand the psychological pressures of modelling. Ms Suttcliff states that as a result of her daughter’s early exposure to modelling, she became withdrawn and introverted and now needs counselling to build up her confidence. In contrast, Ms Haffner believes that girls mature at different ages and many enjoy the experience of modelling at a young age.

2. Find examples of the following language choices:

- i. **anecdotal evidence:** the poignant story of Ms Suttcliff’s daughter describes her loss of self esteem and confidence. This adds a personal dimension and enables her concerned audience – parents and girls – to readily identify with the pressures of modelling.
- ii. **stereotype/generalisation:** “girls will be girls and just love dressing up and showing off”: Ms Haffner suggests that all girls have fun in the fashion business and thrive on the exposure it affords.
- iii. **cliché:** there’s a lot of “sour grapes”: this phrase implies that people become jealous of the girls if they are successful at a young age. (Ms Haffner)
- iv. **simile:** girls are dressed up to “look like a china doll” (Ms Suttcliff). Also, the girls are treated like Barbie dolls (Mr Smar)

Purpose and impact	Example of words, phrases and/or techniques
<i>elicit sympathy for young models</i>	The daughter “spends half her life at the psychologist building up her confidence.” I realised “to my peril” it was not just “a bit of girlish fun”. Ms Suttcliff depicts her problems with her daughter in such a way as to encourage readers to show sympathy for the girl’s obsessive behaviour. Mr Smar states that one girl, who overacted to a photographer’s offensive personal comments, “took three years to get over it and nearly died”.
<i>play upon parents’ fears</i>	Ms Suttcliff instils a sense of fear in parents who do not adequately protect their children and expose them to the dangers of modelling. She cites the psychological affect on her daughter as proof that the young models suffer. Mr Smar: The word “lecher” to refer to the photographer carries negative connotations and draws attention to the possibility of shameful behaviour.
<i>make young models feel anxious</i>	Mr Smar: “There’s a host of problems, too, that confront young models ...”. According to Mr Smar, young girls are in danger of becoming sex objects. It is also dangerous for them to become obsessed with body image at such a young age. “It’s very hard for the young ones to take a stand.” This also implies that they are vulnerable to exploitation because of their inexperience and immaturity.
<i>allay parents’ concerns</i>	Ms Haffner: “Girls will be girls and just love dressing up and showing off.” Ms Haffner reinforces the stereotype of girls and believes that it is a natural part of growing up that should be embraced.
<i>make parents feel outraged</i>	Mr Smar: parents are likely to be outraged by the depiction of the photographer as a “lecher” and the fact that girls are vulnerable to their “legendary” and unreasonable “creative demands”.