

Confetti Of Literary Thoughts

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Filter and Selfie Dysmorphia - Social Media and Beauty Standards

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The paper aims to explore the impact of social media on beauty standards and the representation of body image. With the increasing influence of social media on society, there is a growing concern about the unrealistic beauty standards portrayed on social media platforms. This project seeks to examine the impact of these unrealistic standards on individuals' self-esteem, body image, and overall mental health. The project will analyse the content of various social media platforms, including Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, to identify the common beauty standards and trends that are promoted. Additionally, the project will also examine the impact of social media influencers and celebrities on beauty standards and the extent to which they contribute to the promotion of unrealistic beauty ideals. Furthermore, the project aims to investigate the potential solutions that can be implemented to address the negative effects of unrealistic beauty standards on social media. This includes exploring the role of social media companies, influencers, and individuals in promoting a more inclusive and diverse representation of beauty. Overall, this project seeks to provide insight into the complex relationship between social media and beauty culture, and the potential impact it has on individuals' mental health and wellbeing. The findings of this project can inform future research and policy interventions aimed at promoting a healthier and more positive representation of beauty on social media platforms.

Filter dysmorphia and selfie dysmorphia are two related but distinct concepts that have emerged in the age of social media and smartphone photography. Filter dysmorphia is a phenomenon where individuals become obsessed with how they look in filtered images and seek cosmetic procedures to achieve the same appearance in real life. This is often driven by the desire to conform to unrealistic beauty standards perpetuated by social media and perceived pressure to present a flawless appearance online. Filter dysmorphia can lead to body dysmorphic disorder and mental health conditions characterised by obsessive preoccupation with perceived flaws in one's appearance. Selfie dysmorphia, on the other hand, is a more general term used to describe the obsession with taking selfies and constantly

seeking validation through social media likes and comments. Selfie dysmorphia can also contribute to body image issues and low self esteem particularly among young people who are most likely to use social media. Both filter and selfie dysmorphia can have negative impact on mental health and wellbeing, and its important for individuals to be aware of these phenomena and to seek help if they are experiencing symptoms of BDD or other mental health condition related to body image. It is also important for society to challenge unrealistic beauty standards and promote more diverse and inclusive representations of beauty It's important for individuals to be aware of these phenomena and to use social media and photo editing apps in moderation without relying on them for validation or to achieve an unrealistic appearance. Seeking support from mental health professionals can also be helpful for those struggling with these issues.

Invention of photography in the early 19th century was a pivotal point in human history. Before photography, information was relayed by written word, word of mouth, or by illustrations and paintings .photography was the first where humans could capture the real world without any exaggeration or distortion. Photographs could replicate the world just the way it looked. It did not depend on external factors to impart meaning .it was indeed a wonder an amazing technology that the changed the way humans perceived the world. It could show the past, it could travel people from place to place. It was preserving time, connecting the whole world. Photography broke the tumbrel spatial limitations of seeing and irrevocably pushed the world into a new direction. Photography was the harbinger of a new age; it gave the world images. An image is a site recreated something that is plugged from its time and space and arrested for our within the moment .photography has evolved a lot from its black and white still images. This capture examines the changes in beauty culture along with the media, by applying the concept of simulation of French theorist Jean Baudrillard.

In his book "*Simula and Simulacra*" published in 1981 Jean Baudrillard, a French social and cultural theorist theorised that the postmodern world is a world of simulation. The book was primarily concerned with the role images play in contemporary society and the way that reality is mediated by the images. He criticised the postmodern condition in which technology and media production control the meaning of life. He used a tale to illustrate the postmodern condition, a story of a Kingdom where a map was drawn with so much precision in detail and measurement that it eventually became a replacement for the actual geography, the map became the empire that it was only supposed to represent. In the postmodern world

reality is being replaced by an imitation which was only meant to represent the original. He called this imitation a simulation, a representation so realistic that it is indistinguishable from the actual reality. According to Baudrillard simulation has escalated to a point that they now compose the understanding of reality, heightened simulation distracts the world with imperceptible images. The simulacra in a postmodern society do not hide the reality as in other ages because there is no reality to hide, there is no limitation as there is no real but only the simulation. The successive phases of an image in a simulation are what Baudrillard called sacramental order, order of maleficence, order of sorcery and the fourth is no longer of the order of appearances, but of simulation. First is the reflection of a profound reality, a faithful representation of truth, at the next stage it masks and denatures a profound reality the image perverted is distorted, thirdly it masks the absence of a profound reality that is the image is an illusion pretending to be reality, fourthly it has no relation to any reality whatsoever it is its own pure simulacrum. This is how images are manipulating reality, it is a gradual but stable process of replacing a reality which does not exist. Historical evolution of the concept of simulacra has three orders. The first order existed in the pre-modern period, the relationship between reality and refraction were direct and simple, people had a clear notion of the original and its copy, reality and imitation were clearly distinguishable. Where people derived meaning only from theology.

The second order Simulacra was in the time of modernity and industrialisation, the automated modes of production made mass manufacturing within a short time possible. Numerous copies produced from one source rendered the original insignificant. The product's ability to imitate reality threatens to replace the authority of the original version, because the copy is just as "real" as its prototype. It was during modernity that photography became popular, photographs represented the world with uncanny resemblance, it was reproducing eyesight but unlike eyesight images could be manipulated to change the meaning. Every image embodies a way of seeing, perception or appreciation of an image depends also upon the individual's way of seeing. With images and videography, it was easier to impart new, different meanings to those images. The position where the image is placed, captions used to describe the image, music placed as background can all alter and influence the meaning of an image. The image's meaning depended primarily on its presentation, its mystification. This is what the Beauty industry successfully did in the modern age, they deliberately introduced images in a specific manner that eventually people began to assimilate the intended meaning the industry bestowed upon the images. Meaning of success, dignity, recognition became associated with beauty, and people started to absorb this

meaning. The beauty industry was altering people's perception of reality, carefully maneuvering their definition of beauty. "To simulate is to feign to have what one doesn't have" (Baudrillard 1981 p4). Simulation or imitation indicate an absence of reality. Beauty industry produced its empire upon a bunch of lies they indoctrinated into the culture with the aid of the media; their entire existence is dependent on the distortion of reality. "Beauty myth" created new beauty standards in order to expand the beauty industry and these "beauty norms" or "standards of beauty" were established using images, because more than anything images have the power to breach the human psyche. Despite how much lies the beauty industry spread, despite how much they distorted reality, people always brought beauty products because the barrier between reality and representation were collapsing, unrealistic beauty standards were thriving because people were starting to lose their grip on what was real and most wanted to be a part of that illusion. They were confusing these images with reality. The natural process of ageing, having hair, gaining weight, having wrinkles, having pimples, and having cellulite became beauty hazards because people were beginning to accept the simulation of the human women beauty industry produced which is impeccable, even though they know it is impossible to achieve this fool proof body they still chase after this fantasy. During modernity the beauty industry began to slowly replace the reality of actual or possible beauty with a beauty myth with their arsenal of images. In second order of simulation imitation is more of a representation than a simulation, the difference between pretending and simulating is that "pretending, or dissimulating, leaves the principle of reality intact: the difference is always clear, it is simply masked, whereas simulation threatens the difference between the "true" and the "false," the "real" and the "imaginary" (1981 Baudrillard p4). Even though the lines between reality and imitation blurred during modernity, reality was still achievable by critical approaches because it is not completely gone but hidden beneath pretences, the differences were visible and within reach, because the scope and extent of how much images could influence people were not actually high during the modern world compared to the contemporary world.

In the third order of simulation, simulacrum precedes the original and the distinction between reality and simulation no longer exists. The simulation is the reality, and originality becomes a totally meaningless concept. simulation, is opposed to representation, which stems from the principle of the equivalence of the sign and of the real. Simulation, on the contrary, stems from the Utopia of the principle of equivalence, from the radical negation of the sign as value, from the sign as the reversion and death sentence of every reference. Representation attempts to absorb simulation by interpreting it as a false representation, simulation envelops

the whole edifice of representation itself as a simulacrum. In postmodern era Reality is produced from miniaturised cells, matrices, and memory banks, models of control. It is operational based on the model cybernetic play with total control. The simulation in contemporary society is controlled by the "web". The reflexive truth of the mirror, the perspectival truth of the panoptic system and of the gaze is no longer in charge but the manipulative truth of the test that sounds out and interrogates, of the laser that touches and pierces, of computer cards that retain your preferred sequences, of the genetic code that controls your combinations, of cells that inform your sensory universe is in control of the production of reality. "You no longer watch TV, it is TV that watches you" (1981 Baudrillard p 21) is the postmodern condition, a switch from the panoptic mechanism of surveillance to a system of deterrence, in which the distinction between the passive and the active is abolished. What Baudrillard means is Television does not affect people, instead people affect it, television and viewers are formed from part of the same DNA structure, viewers model after media and media models after viewers, gradually forming a hyper reality. In social media people try to model themselves after the beauty standards of influencers and the Influencers try to mould themselves after beauty standards in society eventually rendering the whole process meaningless. Most photos that are posted on social media are all staged, the images that are presented to us by the fashion world are not real, they are manufactured by the beauty industry, nothing in these pictures is real, models admit that even to them, their own pictures after hours of makeup styling and editing is hardly recognizable.

In the social media age, hours of makeup and styling is not enough to create any impact and there are apps and filters to create ideal looks, which can enhance the appearance of a person to the point that it is humanly impossible to achieve that look naturally. Carrie Hammer in a TEDx talk "*The*

Business of Beauty is Ugly" coined the term "beauty gap" to describe the current beauty standard created by the industry, where it is "no longer about illusions but closer to delusion". She says this one-dimensional view and standard of beauty is a lot of manipulation and smoke and mirrors.

"Beauty gap" is the space between delusory expectations of beauty and reality, in the space between these two words there are a lot of unrealistic images, images that do not exist in the real world, usually this "beauty Gap" slips by unnoticed which further devastates the people who believe these images are real. In her talk Carrie is exposing some ugly truths behind the sparkles of beauty industry. She talks about underage models who wear heavy make-up to

look like thirty-year-olds with flawless features. "Frankenstein Photoshop" is a technique used by the beauty industry to deceive the customers when they superimpose one model's features over another model. It is when a model's leg, arms or any specific body part is superimposed with the specific body part of a body double. What these images suggest is that no one is beautiful as a whole and not even the woman on the cover of magazines. One fact that is overlooked by most is that even videos are edited frame by frame using tools. These editing apps remove wrinkles, under eye dark circles, inches of body fat. 99% of advertisements are retouched after the shoot. Face tune is an app used by over 50 million people, it's the most paid app in many countries. They are used to edit even the personal pictures, the images that are posted in Instagram and other social media platforms are heavily filtered and edited. According to Carrie Hammer "delusion is not an exception it is the rule". Social media is flooded with digitally altered images which are no longer distinguishable from reality. In the documentary "Beauty cult", media researcher Ulli Weish posits that these altered images in social media are directly feeding to the subconscious and all these messages settle into a viewer's thoughts. Psychotherapist Harriet Vrana says that any attempt to confirm today's duty ideas are bound to fail because these ideas are based on an illusion that is not real or possible. The girls who are trying to fit themselves into that image and it does not work because that image is far too removed from reality. It is not just social media images that people are battling, mobile phone clouds and accounts are packed with photo diaries of their looks captured on a near-daily, if not weekly, basis. This digital record of thousands of pictures, as opposed to the two or three printed at a time from disposable cameras, means people are locked into a battle with reality and construction, which would have been unthinkable in the pre-digital, pre-social media age.

Besides social comparison there is some sort of self-comparison too in the postmodern age. Impact of advertisement on people where it tests and manipulates the consumers in a hyperreal world is that products no longer possess function, it no longer serves the customer rather customer serves them. "You are the screen, and the TV watches you" (1981 Baudrillard p 36). The Internet is chiselling people's choices to fit the products by carefully displaying images or videos, it places advertisements repeatedly that tempt the user to consume the said product. Involuntary the web is creating the culture and along with it the beauty trends. It alters its algorithm after users' taste, it is creating the simulation modelling on its users and unlike the traditional media this is more dangerous because the traditional media produces a simulation based on whole society, but social media

algorithm create simulation alter and model after individuals eventually creating people their own bubble of "reality" and "truth". Everyone is cocooned inside their own polarised version of references that internet has customised just for them. In Baudrillard's words it is not just individuals that are influenced by the web, but the web is influenced by individuals. This is what happened in the second order of simulation too, but the third order of simulation differ from its previous order because unlike in the modern world the differences are no longer visible because there is no difference to find out, the simulation is no longer an illusion or a fantasy it is the reality of the time, beauty myth is no longer a myth but a 'norm'. Movement like fitspo and thinspo condition like selfie dysmorphia, zoom dysmorphia are all bitter truths of a hyperreal world. Filters are individual algorithms that alter the appearance of an image. It is a graphical editing technique used to transform images. A filter can alter the features of an image with a single click, it can give bigger eyes, longer eyelashes, higher cheekbones, smoother or lighter skin or even fairer skin. It made people look more attractive in their pictures. With the introduction of apps like face tune the photo shopping techniques upped a notch. The face tune app could allow even more enhancements of features, it could whiten teeth, it could give a thin nose, it could brighten eyes, plump up lips, could brighten eyes, plumped up lips, it could give flawless, superficial facial features with a tweak of fingers. It obscured the "perceived flaws" of the beauty standards, and it provided a transformed image with impractical often unattainable beauty standards. These filtered images gave people an impression that they can look flawless too. These kinds of Impressions can take its toll on psychological well being. People began to spend hours on their selfies editing to make them look better and better. This urge to edit their own pictures, to keep on editing became an addiction to depend on the filtered and realistic versions. An obsession with selfie images began, people began to concentrate more on their own self image, and each time they looked at their own pictures, each time they used a filter to enhance a particular feature they began to feel dissatisfied with their natural facial features and appearance. Seeing themselves through a distorted lens for a very long time began to affect their mental health. People began to lose touch with reality, after seeing their filtered versions for many times people began to feel dissatisfied with their natural self. This condition is called "selfie dysmorphia" or "Snapchat dysmorphia" by cosmetic surgeons. It is a body image disorder as a need to heavily edit one's own digital image and intense dissatisfaction with one's own physical appearance after using digital features. Dr Tijion Esho, a cosmetic surgeon coined this term after many patients came and requested him to alter their physical features through surgery to resemble their filtered image. Unlike the prior generation who kept silent about their

cosmetic procedure, the social media generation normalised the cosmetic procedures. People using altered or filtered versions of themselves started wanting to look exactly like that image and began to approach cosmetic surgeons. They came asking for highly rounded eyes which was impossible, noticing an alarming trend among his patients who brought celebrity's pictures with them requesting surgery to achieve celebrity's features he coined the condition "selfie dysmorphia". Filter technology is making people more aware of what is possible with their faces, and started having cosmetic surgeries to achieve that particular look. Selfie dysmorphia is a precise illustration of hyperreality, where people began to lose the distinction between their own Mirror image and their own filtered version of beauty. Before filters people were dissatisfied with other people's images, but with the invention of filters it was not just the images of other people they were fighting, it was their own images were fighting. When people keep editing their own pictures and keep posting this pictures brain their mind gets confused and they begin to believe that filtered image is their image and when they see their real reflection they feel discontented and dissatisfied because in their mind in their memory they look unblemished like their filtered images and this is what this generation is fighting against in a hyperreal society they are fighting against their own memory. The constant exposure to filtered pictures in social media can change people's expectations about other people too, people from different genders start to expect their partner to have unrealistic beauty standards, to have an inhuman beauty, this causes issues in relation also. While selfie dysmorphia is not a medical condition experts say that it would be a sign of a larger mental health issue. Young people who highly manipulate their photos are a sign of BDD. Social media images make people unhappy and they use filters to temporarily solve or "fix" their appearance, which actually perpetuates these unrealistic expectations in a cyclic manner. The more they feel unhappy, the more they will use filters that go on and on until ultimately they seek cosmetic procedures, which will not solve the issue. A journal published in the International Journal of Women's Dermatology coined a new term "zoom dysmorphia". The 2020 pandemic quarantined a lot of people who had to work from home using apps like zoom, staring at their own face on a screen through a distorted camera all day have wrecked their self-image, which caused the condition called "zoom dysmorphia", a feeling of unhappiness or dissatisfaction about their looks exacerbated by looking at themselves on camera all day. Research attributes many of these concerns to "increased hours spent on videoconferencing" and the use of tools like filters to alter appearance. Front-facing cameras distort images like a "funhouse mirror," they make noses look bigger and eyes look smaller. This effect is exacerbated by proximity to the lens, which is generally nearer to you than a

person would ever stand in a real .Dr. Arianne Shadi Kourosch, a dermatologist and the director of Community Health at Massachusetts General Hospital, conducted a survey and said that over 70% of the 7,295 participants in the new survey expressed "feeling anxiety" about their in-person appearance. Eighteen months of using front-facing cameras has distorted the selfimage of people and the study reveals that the effects are not going away easily. Kourosch said that respondents who spent more time on social media and more frequently used photo-editing tools or filters had "great anxiety" about their appearances. Changes in self-perception and anxiety as a result of constant video-conferencing may lead to unnecessary cosmetic procedures, especially in young adults who have had increased exposure to online platforms including videoconferencing, social media, and filters throughout the pandemic.

In conclusion, social media has become a major platform for promoting beauty standards that are often unrealistic and unattainable for the average person. The beauty industry and influencers play a significant role in shaping these standards, creating a culture where people feel pressure to conform to certain beauty ideals in order to be accepted and valued. PThrough this project, we have examined the various ways in which social media perpetuates unrealistic beauty standards, including the use of filters and photo editing tools, the promotion of specific body types and beauty ideals, and the pressure to maintain a flawless appearance at all times. It is important to recognize the impact that social media has on our perceptions of beauty and to critically evaluate the messages we receive through these platforms. By challenging the narrow definitions of beauty that are often presented on social media and embracing a more diverse and inclusive vision of beauty, we can begin to create a more positive and empowering beauty culture that celebrates individuality and self- expression.

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