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“YOU ALL LOOK LIKE @WOLFIECINDY”: THE HOMOGENY OF FACIAL SELF-
PRESENTATION AMONG FEMALE INSTAGRAM USERS

by

KELLY MCGINTY

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of the University of the Incarnate Word
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for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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Kelly McGinty

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PRESENTATION AMONG FEMALE INSTAGRAM USERS

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University of the Incarnate Word, 2021

The emergence of a single facial aesthetic among professionally beautiful women on Instagram has popularized and idealized a specific look (i.e., Instagram Face) within a generation of young women and has normalized nonsurgical interventions and the use of photo editing in order to achieve it. It is the face of Kim Kardashian West, Kylie Jenner, Emily Ratajkowski, Bella Hadid, and many other women who are considered attractive and who have large followings on the social platform. Through data collected by a quantitative content analysis, this thesis investigates how these women all look astoundingly the same, with uniformly high and contoured cheekbones, uplifted “cat-like” eyes, high arched eyebrows, full lips, a strongly projected chin, a defined jawline, a flat platform beneath the chin, and completely smooth skin. This research argues that Instagram has perpetuated the desire for this standardized face through Kylie Jenner filler package promotions, celebrity call-out accounts, and a class of celebrity plastic surgeons on the app. This thesis builds upon Gill’s (2007) framework of postfeminism in order to argue that women viewing this content and internalizing the aforementioned beauty ideal may be susceptible to self-objectification, body surveillance, and altering their facial self-presentation in order to resemble Instagram Face.

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Chapter 1: The Rise of Instagram Face and the Fall of Feminism

On August 21, 2020, singer-songwriter blackbear released his fifth studio album titled *everything means nothing*. The featured track “why are girls?” includes the lyric, “you all look like @wolfiecindy,” the “you all” referring to “girls” in general (0:21). @wolfiecindy is the Instagram handle used by 22-year old Instagram model Cindy Kimberly who, as of January 2021, has 6.6 million followers and is lauded for her physical beauty. She is among a plethora of women on Instagram with a large following and therefore a large capacity for influence. Naturally, these women have become the beauty standard. The thing is, though, that they all adhere to the same elements of facial self-presentation. In other words, they all kind of look the same, as blackbear points out.

This homogenized image of female facial beauty has been coined “Instagram Face” by *The New Yorker* writer Jia Tolentino (2019) in a piece titled *The Age of Instagram Face*. In this article, Tolentino describes Instagram Face as “a young face, of course, with poreless skin and plump, high cheekbones. It has catlike eyes and long, cartoonish lashes; it has a small, neat nose and full, lush lips” (para.1). This face replicates the features of some of the most idealized women on the app such as Kendall Jenner and Bella Hadid, and is created from a mixture of good genes, photo-editing, and cosmetic surgery. It has garnered traction among a generation of young women because it is the face that “instantly pops up on a phone screen” when Instagram is opened (para. 2). Instagram’s saturation with images displaying this face has resulted in “a generic sameness” of female facial self-presentation (para. 2). With Instagram Face comes the belief that any woman can obtain it if she has enough money and makes the “right” consumer choices. Instagram Face influences women to covet the faces of other women and upholds

“Ideals of female beauty that can only be met through...processes of physical manipulation” (para. 7).

To blackbear and Tolentino’s point, the popularity of Instagram Face constructs a narrowly defined image of female facial beauty on the app. Images of ideal female beauty are inherently harmful towards women as they obstruct women’s control over their bodies, intrinsically forcing them to adhere to certain self-presentation standards dictated by society (Bartky, 1990; Dworkin, 1974; Wolf, 1991). These standards “define precisely the dimensions of [women’s] physical freedom” (Dworkin, 1974, p. 113). The spread of models of beauty poison women with physical obsessions. This feminist ideology is especially embodied in Instagram beauty standards due to the app’s nature as a visual presentation hub. However, the view that women are objectified victims of beauty standards is not the discourse that surrounds Instagram Face. Rather, women who present themselves as objects of the beauty standard on Instagram are understood to do so as a freely chosen act of empowerment, a notion that aligns with the postfeminist movement. According to postfeminist thought, women have agency and are able to choose to modify their bodies at their will in pursuit of beauty, and instead of doing so being seen as the emblem of women’s ongoing oppression, it is seen as an expression of freedom. The postfeminist movement has been met with ongoing uncertainty about its authenticity. This uncertainty is expressed by feminists who argue that it still reflects a culture that forces beauty standards which encourage constant self-surveillance of one’s image and reinscribe women’s position as objects within society (Faludi, 1991; Gamble, 2001; Jeffreys, 2005; McRobbie, 2009). In this way, Instagram and its dissemination of a single ideal for female facial beauty serves as an example of postfeminist media culture while perpetuating the problematics of beauty standards argued by feminist theory. This thesis seeks to shed light on the way

Instagram Face is informed by larger rules of female presentation that has ties to patriarchal control.

Images of ideal beauty are inescapable for female Instagram users, who made up over half of all Instagram users in the year 2020 (Aslam, 2021). It is therefore crucial to critically analyze what these women are being told is beautiful and how this ideal may influence the relationship of an individual with her own body. This gives rise to three researchable questions: How is female facial beauty presented on Instagram? To what extent do women idealize the facial features of women who are considered beautiful on Instagram? And how does Instagram encourage conformity to a homogenous beauty ideal? In response to these questions, this thesis analyzes how feminine beauty is presented, viewed, and circulated on Instagram. I first analyze displays of beauty on Instagram to argue that female facial beauty is presented as a restricted range of desirable features. Following, I consider the popularity of user-created filters and makeup tutorials on the app that replicate Instagram Face, as well as analyze the tendency of Instagram users to digitally edit celebrity images to align with Instagram Face. I argue that these are exhibitions of the belief endemic to Instagram users that Instagram Face constitutes ideal self-presentation. Finally, I analyze how Instagram encourages female users to modify their own self-presentation to replicate Instagram Face and in doing so implicitly instructs them to engage in self-objectification and body-surveillance. Throughout this thesis, I engage with postfeminist ideas around the subject of socially-constructed ideals for female beauty and self-presentation to argue that Instagram Face upholds patriarchal power under a guise of female autonomy.

This thesis asserts that three categorical artifacts on Instagram act as examples of postfeminist media culture which highlight a need for women to self-objectify, self-survey and strategically manage their bodies in accordance with Instagram Face. The first of which being

“Kylie Package” promotions, which are posts on Instagram promoting dermal filler services focused on mimicking the features of Kylie Jenner. The second artifact of focus is what I refer to as “celebrity call-out accounts” and are profiles dedicated to highlighting female celebrities’ appearance changes. They do so through before-and-after images to suggest cosmetic surgeries in between, super zoomed in photos to reveal facial “flaws” (i.e., anything that does not align with Instagram Face), and exposing the raw versions of images that women had digitally edited. The third artifact this thesis analyzes are the accounts of plastic surgeons, which showcase images and videos of women who received cosmetic surgery with focus on changing specific parts of their faces. Uncoincidentally, the changed parts almost always resemble Instagram Face. I argue that collectively these artifacts naturalize the behaviors of self-objectification, body-surveillance, and conformity of self-presentation to a homogenous beauty ideal. Instagram Face is largely unattainable without cosmetic intervention, as most of the women embodying the look have either admitted to receiving multiple treatments or are speculated to have done so. Kylie Packages, celebrity call-out accounts, and plastic surgeons’ accounts desensitize users to cosmetic procedures, normalizing them as a way for women to exercise their agency and take control over their circumstances.

Instagram’s algorithm gives popular posts more visibility. As this thesis highlights, the most popular displays of feminine beauty the app all adhere to the same standards of facial self-presentation. This combination makes it difficult to view alternate versions of beauty. The result is a narrowed, homogenized criterion for female beauty. This thesis explores a territory largely uncharted by academic research. Scant research exists on facial beauty within Instagram, overshadowed by larger topics of ideal body shape and size on the platform. This thesis offers a foundation for further critical examination of Instagram Face and considerations of how female

facial beauty is presented on Instagram. Additionally, it serves to refute arguments that cosmetic surgery is an empowered feminist act.

This thesis begins with a review of literature which focuses on feminist critiques of postfeminist themes in order to build a foundation of knowledge to apply to my own research on Instagram Face. I then propose data collected through a quantitative content analysis which details the adherence to Instagram Face in the facial self-presentation of women who are considered beautiful on the app. Following, I argue that content circulating the app such as makeup tutorials and images of female celebrities that are digitally altered into Instagram Face reflect the idealization of Instagram Face by users. Filters that detect one's features and alter them to look like Instagram Face are also considered, as they are widely used by women on the app and are thus reflective of their desire to embody Instagram Face in their own self-presentation. I then focus on the application of the postfeminist themes of self-objectification, body-surveillance, and management of self-presentation through beauty practices to Kylie Package promotions, celebrity call-out accounts, and plastic surgeons' accounts. I conclude by detailing implications of the perpetuation of Instagram Face and discuss its contribution to the obscuring of women's freedom.

Chapter 2: Postfeminism and the Body

Postfeminism has garnered a significant amount of research attention, likely due to the fact that the meaning of the term is highly contested. Whereas some scholars use the term to signal a historical or temporal shift—a time after second-wave feminism—others use it to delimit a (progressive) new kind or “wave” of feminism, and some use the term to refer to a (regressive) backlash against feminism (Gill, 2007; Riley et al., 2017). In agreement with Gill (2007), I approach postfeminism as a “sensibility” conceptualized by a set of interrelated themes including: “the shift from objectification to subjectification; an emphasis upon self-surveillance, monitoring and self-discipline” and “a focus on individualism, choice and empowerment” (p. 147). My usage of the term throughout this thesis therefore refers to a form of media culture consisting of a set of images, ideas, and representations of women characterized by these themes. Furthermore, following in Gill’s footsteps, I recognize postfeminism as an object of study rather than an analytical perspective and therefore for this thesis I assume the role of a feminist analyst of postfeminist culture (p. 148).

This chapter intends to cultivate a thorough understanding of postfeminism in order to bolster its application to the contextualization of Instagram Face. This chapter will focus on three major themes which emerge repeatedly throughout the literature reviewed: self-objectification, body-surveillance, and management of self-presentation. By engaging with feminist academic work, I first demonstrate that postfeminism leads women to self-objectify and refute its premise that such self-objectification is shorthand for liberation. I then explore how postfeminism encourages women to participate in self-scrutiny of their own body through comparison of their appearance to hegemonic beauty standards. Subsequently, I look into how women’s meticulous management of their self-presentation, often through cosmetic surgery, is fueled by

postfeminism. The final part of this chapter will consider the elision of postfeminism with neoliberalism and the close relationship between the two. Although literature presents postfeminism and its defining themes in a variety of contexts, this chapter will focus on the application of these themes to beauty standards and cosmetic surgery.

Self-Objectification

Postfeminism teaches women that self-objectification is progressive. It pushes for a more active construction of femininity which places women in the position of control, shifting away from objectification as something done *by* men *to* women. Instead, women present *themselves* in a seemingly objectified manner. The practice of self-objectification, cloaked with a sense of female choice and power, is an important characteristic of postfeminism. In this way, postfeminism teaches women that self-objectification is a marker of women's liberation from men.

Baldissarri et al. (2019) found that experiencing objectifying situations leads women to objectify themselves. This is in line with Fredrickson and Roberts' (1997) objectification theory which proposes that when women become so accustomed to outsiders' obsession with the female form, they internalize this focus on appearance and view attractiveness as their primary value, resulting in self-objectification of their own bodies. This theory provides a framework for understanding how external forces encourage women's preoccupation with their physical appearance. In this thesis, those external forces manifest as Instagram content and warrant critical examination to how they might be encouraging women to view themselves as a collection of body parts rather than a whole person.

Baldissarri et al. (2019) also found that women who self-objectify feel incapable of making conscious choices and have a decreased belief in personal free will. However, this study

does not consider postfeminist beliefs or context as a moderator which might mask this decreased feeling of free will with narratives of female empowerment and choice. This study proves that self-objectification is not the conscious choice of women. Postfeminism, however, gives women the illusion that it is. For example, Hale (2017) interviewed young social media influencers who underwent cosmetic procedures. Feminist authors have long argued that cosmetic procedures are a consequence of the pressures placed upon women to conform to beauty ideals (Bordo, 1993; Wolf, 1991). All of the women Hale interviewed used the word “empowerment” to justify their decision to get cosmetic work. However, not one of them could explain exactly how or why getting cosmetic work is empowering. Rather, Hale notes women used the word as a way to deflect deeper questions and conversation about cosmetic work altogether. Instead of admitting that they care what other people think, they justified their lip fillers or nose jobs as expressions of personal empowerment. This may be due to the fact that “in postfeminism, to be cast as helpless, or a victim [of patriarchal control] is shameful” (Rutherford, 2018, p. 626). Building off of Gill’s (2007) argument that depicting women as free agents does not account for why the resulting look of femininity is so homogenized (e.g. hairless body, slim waist, firm buttocks, etc.), I argue that the feeling of decreased free will as pointed out by Baldissarri et al. is not dissipated in the postfeminist context, but rather masked. The postfeminist rhetoric of empowerment and choice is merely a discourse concealing continued objectification and oppression of women. Hale’s study incites the following question: if women really do have choice in how they express their femininity, independent from male control, why is one specific form of femininity (i.e., Instagram Face) so ubiquitous?

Traditional forms of mass media contribute to women’s self-objectification. In a textual content analysis of *Health* magazine, Serna (2018) found that many articles approach the body as

distinct parts, “focusing on one part of the body and giving the readers ways to fix that specific part of the body” (p. 134). She illuminates how this magazine provides readers with specific ways (i.e., targeted workouts) to achieve a particular body part modeled after women who possess the “ideal” form of this body part, such as Selena Gomez’s “amazing toned legs.” It additionally provides readers with a visual reference of the exact standard so that women can imagine that body part on their own bodies. These articles and accompanying images encourage women to dissect their body for very specific flaws, such as “armpit fat, stretch marks, cellulite, canckles, or a double chin” (p. 134). Serna argues these tendencies of women’s magazines are an example of postfeminism in that they formulate active objectification rather than passive or voyeuristic, especially considering the magazine’s female audience.

Ouellette (2019) also evidences the postfeminist shift from passive objectification to active self-objectification through a comparative analysis of Victoria’s Secret catalogues from 1996-2006. He notes that whereas models in earlier catalogs were positioned as passive objects of the male gaze, looking away from the camera with arms folded and legs crossed, newer editions showcase models in more active poses such as staring directly into the camera and thrusting their breasts toward the camera.

Researchers studying self-objectification among Asian women found that women’s magazines in Asia highlight more cosmetics and facial beauty products than clothing, and while dieting is a main topic, so is facial cosmetic surgery (Wang & Li, 2020). Additionally, they found that when female politicians are the subject of Chinese news articles, they focus on the woman’s makeup or clothing rather than her deeds as a politician, reiterating the message to female readers that a woman’s appearance is more important than any other aspect of her. While

these findings focused on objectification of women's bodies in Asia, the findings parallel how women's bodies are treated by media in the United States.

White (2018) argues that videos posted by accounts *My Pale Skin* and *NikkieTutorials* on YouTube “foster feminist empowerment and reconfigure women's engagement with beauty within a genre that is ordinarily associated with social control and beauty norms” (p. 145). However, these texts and others which ignore the politics of beauty standards “risk reinscribing postfeminist celebrations of ‘choice’ because they do not fully interrogate the cultural mandates that make it difficult for women to opt out of beauty culture” (p. 145).

The popularity of social media amongst young women provides even more opportunity for the normalization of self-objectification. When social media suggests women to physically alter their appearance, it is sending them a message to self-objectify (Wang & Li, 2020). To this point, Sales (2016) spent years interviewing teenage girls about their relationships with social media. She found that common amongst these young women is the belief that self-objectifying practices including getting lip filler are expressions of individual female empowerment or feminism.

Studies rarely concentrate on self-objectification solely within the medium of Instagram. An exception is Feltman and Szymanski's (2018) correlational study which demonstrates that higher Instagram usage is linked with higher self-objectification and body surveillance amongst a sample of undergraduate women. Liu (2018) also found a positive relationship between Instagram use and self-objectification, as well as heightened self-consciousness.

This brief review of feminist scholarly work that has based its research on objectification theory shows that regular exposure to objectifying experiences socializes girls and women to engage in self-objectification, whereby they come to treat themselves as objects to be evaluated

by others based upon appearance. This previous research provides a point of reference to analyze Instagram Face in order to find if it is perpetuating the behavior of self-objectification. Using this literature as a framework to look at images of Instagram Face provides insight into how the media displays images that portray women as objects and lead women to internalize this view of their bodies as a collection of parts, minimizing or neglecting altogether other aspects of themselves such as their personalities, stories, and dreams.

Body-Surveillance

Self-objectification manifests as body-surveillance (Dakanalis et al., 2015). This is a form of self-consciousness characterized by habitual monitoring of the body's outward appearance (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Halprin (1995) believes that many women "tend to internalize standards of beauty and judge themselves to the point of self-hatred" (p. 42). As a result, they monitor how their body looks in relation to gender-specific sociocultural beauty ideals in order to avoid negative judgements from others (Dakanalis et al., 2015). This contributes to a wide array of mental health issues in women including anxiety, eating disorders, and depression (McLean & LaGuardia, 2016).

In their review of research conducted on Fredrickson and Roberts' (1997) objectification theory, Moradi and Huang (2008) provide evidence to argue that the "internalization of sociocultural standards of beauty" should be considered as an "intervening variable, in addition to self-objectification and body surveillance" (p. 393). However, in the postfeminist perspective where self-objectification is understood as an example of women's freedom, the practice of body-surveillance "comes to be viewed as an important part of happiness and liberation rather than a negative effect of beauty ideals" (Serna, 2018, p. 130).

Tiggemann and Miller (2010) found that among young women in Australia, those who spent more time on social media reported more internalization of sociocultural attitudes about physical appearance. This inner endorsement of sociocultural beauty ideals has been found to be related to higher levels of body-surveillance (Nowatzki & Morry, 2009; Vandebosch & Eggermont, 2012). This is relevant to the present study because it helps understand how internalization of beauty ideals may lead women to partake in body-surveillance, comparing their own body to this internalized ideal.

Social comparison theory states that people understand their own worth and value by comparing themselves to others (Festinger, 1954). When social comparison happens in person, it is limited to the people you see in real life. However, on Instagram, people are able to compare themselves to anyone they see online in the same way they would compare themselves to their friends. Because Instagram is a visual app, the comparison users engage in is nearly exclusively based on physical appearance. When the images women are comparing themselves to are of the “ideal” female appearance, it results in upward comparisons where the women in the images they are comparing themselves to are better than they are (Fardouly et al., 2018). In real life, people engage in both upward and downward comparisons in which they compare themselves to other women and perceive themselves as better or more proficient than them, in some way. However, on Instagram, the upward comparison is constant.

Alexander (2018) studied the body consciousness of clinical staff working in a cosmetic and plastic surgery environment. She argues that because cosmetic surgery clinical staff are constantly surrounded by patients seeking ways to improve their physical appearance, they might develop heightened body consciousness. Alexander found that those working in cosmetic surgery environments feel as though they do not have control over how their body looks. Rather, they

depend on surgeons, injectables, and other non-surgical procedures to change and enhance their physical appearance. She also found that employees in this setting disagree with the idea that a person is “stuck” with the looks they are born with. This could be because they are more aware than the general population about what cosmetic surgery can accomplish. The conclusion is that knowledge of cosmetic surgery procedures leads these employees to believe they can change their appearance. I argue that Instagram users are in the same kind of setting as those working in a cosmetic surgery environment in that they are also constantly exposed to people who have chosen to undergo cosmetic surgery and information regarding these procedures. Therefore, the findings from this study may also apply to the setting of Instagram as well in that users may experience the same body consciousness as the cosmetic surgery staff.

Duncan (1994) argues that Foucault’s notion of the panopticon effect, the idea that constant surveillance causes prisoners to self-monitor, is useful to understand how women’s internalization of feminine body ideals creates self-surveillance. The panopticon is a particular prison structure which allows a watchman to observe inmates without them knowing whether or not they are being watched (Foucault, 1975/1977). Duncan claims that structure of looking “encourages the continual surveillance of the self” (1994, p. 50). This is useful for understanding how women objectify and survey their own bodies. As women internalize this “panoptic gaze,” they “begin monitoring their own bodies for any transgressions against the ideals of appearance culture” (Serna, 2018, p. 131). Moreover, Duncan claims that women believe this self-surveillance emanates from their own personal beauty standards rather than unrealistic ideals set by society.

Wegenstein and Ruck (2011) propose that the wide array of cosmetic interventions available due to modern technologies has created the “cosmetic gaze” which is “a way of looking

at bodies as awaiting an improvement” (p. 28). This gaze is “informed by the techniques, expectations and strategies of bodily modification” (p. 28). Under the cosmetic gaze, one looks at her own body and those of others as in need of fixing. Through the cosmetic gaze, an improved version of the body can be envisioned—an “after” picture so to speak. Women’s relationship with their bodies under the cosmetic gaze is an attempt to produce the body as an object that conforms to a desired prototype. This is useful towards the present study because it helps understand the impact of exposure to cosmetic surgery in relation to body-consciousness and surveillance, especially considering its prevalence on Instagram.

Gill (2007) highlights the emphasis on self-surveillance in women’s magazines where women’s body shape, muscle tone, and attire are “rendered into ‘problems’ that necessitate ongoing and constant monitoring and labour” (p. 155). She argues that the increased intensity of self-surveillance within postfeminist media culture indicates that women’s bodies are intensively regulated, even though such regulation is strictly denied. Rather, it is understood as agentic. Additionally, this self-surveillance and labor that results from it “must never be disclosed” (p. 155). While these magazines offer instruction and tips to young women on how to enhance their appearance, it is important that women appear “carefree and unconcerned about their self-presentation” (p. 155). This ties into Franke-Ruta’s (2006) “natural beauty myth” dominant in America which stems from the belief that beauty is purely a natural attribute. Franke-Ruta refutes the idea of natural beauty, deeming it “virtually impossible” (para. 5). She argues that “any woman can be beautiful if she merely treats beauty as a form of discipline” (para. 7). While I fundamentally disagree with Franke-Ruta’s claim that beauty is an egalitarian process due to the fact that it ignores issues of race and class which hinder some women from achieving the increasingly narrow mainstream beauty ideals, the idea that American society values “natural”

beauty over acquired beauty is important because it explains why so many celebrities deny claims of cosmetic surgery, and why Instagram accounts such as the ones considered in the present study feel the need to call them out on it. The pervasiveness of cosmetic surgery distorts our notion of what is natural.

In short, literature pertaining to the topic of body-surveillance strongly suggests that the combination of internalized beauty ideals and monitoring attractive peers typically leads to a preoccupation with monitoring one's appearance in women. The ideas discussed in this review are valuable to apply to the idealization and display of Instagram Face in order to explore Instagram as an avenue through which women are provoked to survey their bodies. Concepts contained in this literature such as social comparison theory and the cosmetic gaze will be useful considerations to understand how Instagram encourages body-surveillance.

Self-Presentation

Holla and Kuipers (2016) propose that beauty is an active, constructive practice. People can undergo “aesthetic labour” in order to attain certain dispositions of the body. Or in other words, they can manage their self-presentation to conform to beauty ideals. These researchers, however, do note how this marginalizes women of lower classes and ethnic minorities. They reiterate that “people are mostly born with a certain appearance” and aesthetic labor can only do so much (p. 4). The beauty ideal is more attainable for women who already closely resemble it than those whose features require more than just slight tweaks to fit the ideal. Such advantage explains why women who are “born within spitting distance of Instagram Face would want to keep drawing closer to it” (Tolentino, 2019, para. 12). However, the act of pursuing beauty or trying to increase aesthetic capital is likely to contribute to lower self-esteem (Anderson et al.,

2010). Therefore, any encouragement of doing so on Instagram may cause this effect in female Instagram users.

Because the pursuit of Instagram Face is heavily reliant on the use of injectable fillers and cosmetic surgery, it is important to review feminist works on plastic surgery in relation to beauty ideals. In 1991, Wolf predicted in her classic *The Beauty Myth* that

women in our “raw” or “natural” state will continue to be shifted from category “woman” to category “ugly,” and shamed into an assembly-line physical identity. As each woman responds to the pressure, it will grow so intense that it will become obligatory, until no self-respecting woman will venture outdoors with a surgically unaltered face. (p. 269)

The present study validates her prediction by highlighting the prevalence of cosmetic surgery and the pressures to undergo such procedures on Instagram. While Wolf does argue that cosmetic surgery is a political means of controlling women and maintaining the patriarchy, writing “the more legal and material hindrances women have broken through, the more strictly and heavily and cruelly images of female beauty have come to weigh upon us,” *The Beauty Myth* does not consider how this oppression is camouflaged as women’s choice and empowerment (p. 1).

Davis (1995) was one of the first studies to explore how women felt about having cosmetic surgery. She interviewed women before and after their surgery and came to the conclusion that “cosmetic surgery can be an understandable step in the context of an individual woman’s... possibilities of taking action to alter her circumstances” (p. 163). While Davis did recognize that such decisions were being made within a disciplinary beauty culture that idealizes certain body types, she mainly emphasized the agency of women seeking cosmetic procedures. Through studying women’s motivations to undergo cosmetic surgery, both Davis and Blum (2003) have shown that most women claim to do so “for themselves.” The “for me” answer is usually “produced in defiant refutation” of the supposition they are responding to societal

expectations for the body beautiful (Bordo, 1998, p. 193). Thus, women are offered a new sense of personal control, freedom and empowerment while also acquiring value on the heterosexual market (Salmenniemi & Adamson, 2015; Skeggs, 2004). However, the perspective that women think these decisions are purely their own ignores the social pressures and influence from beauty standards. Bordo (1993) claims that recognizing women have agency is not incompatible with recognizing that cultural context shapes the outcome of that agency. The meaning of internalization is to unconsciously make an outsider's attitude or behavior part of one's own nature. Therefore, the argument that it is a woman's choice to have cosmetic surgery disregards internalized beauty standards as an underlying motivator. To this point, Wolf (1991) argues that beauty ideals lead women to voluntarily submit themselves to regimes akin to torture such as self-starvation and cosmetic surgery (p. 257). Use of such extreme measures results from what Goldman (1992) proposes as a "mundane psychic terror associated with not receiving 'looks' of admiration" (p. 123). Thus, a woman's decision to undergo cosmetic surgery can be seen as a consequence of an internalized objectifying gaze.

In contrast, some argue that feminist viewpoints on cosmetic surgery erase women's subjectivity. For example, Alsop and Lennon (2018) discuss the relationship between plastic surgery and the expressive body, claiming that bodies should be recognized "not just as objects to be aesthetically improved upon in accordance with some cultural norm, but also expressive of some subjectivity" (p. 103). While expressive bodies reveal temporary states about a person such as "whether they are anxious or exuberant, relaxed or watchful, whether they want company or want to be left alone," they also reveal our position within a wider social sphere such as whether we are masculine or feminine and attractive or not. When discussing how plastic surgery may feel empowering to some women, Alsop and Lennon argue that plastic surgery helps construct "a

body able to produce particular affective responses in others” (p. 103). In other words, they can configure their bodies to be seen as attractive to other people. While the researchers highlight this as a sense of personal control over a woman’s body, I argue this reifies that women produce themselves under the male gaze, which challenges the notion that women really do have control in how they present themselves. Women undergoing cosmetic surgery “may perceive themselves as agents of their physical change, while they, in fact, act in concert with the prevailing ideology” (Lirola & Chovanec, 2012, p. 488).

Along with Brooks (2010), I find issue in the notion that undergoing cosmetic surgery is a marker of women’s liberation. A woman’s control over her body, “once the foundation of feminist discourse about abortion, contraception and the like, has mutated into a woman's right to inject her crow's-feet with botulism” (para. 6). Feminist calls for autonomy have morphed into “a tool of neoliberalism” (Rutherford, 2018, p. 627) in that mainstream feminism has become less about political righteousness and more about individual gain (Crispin, 2017). This is especially so because undergoing cosmetic surgery may help a woman accrue aesthetic capital: “the privileges and wealth people receive from aesthetic traits, such as their face, hair, body, clothes, grooming habits and other markers of beauty” (Anderson et al., 2010, p. 565). However, I agree with Holla and Kuipers (2016) who argue that “as a whole the pursuit of beauty suppresses women” (p. 9). Even though plastic surgery in theory provides a wide array of potential outcomes, it typically results in a restricted range of bodily shapes and features (in the present study’s case, Instagram Face). Thus, while feminist authors have pointed out that women undergoing plastic surgery upholds the patriarchal power dynamic (Bordo, 1993; Morgan, 1991; Negrin, 2002), I argue that these women are also contributing to the oppression of other women who may not be able to achieve the beauty ideal as easily due to factors such as race and class,

considering that “the female subject centered by postfeminism is white and middle class by default” (Tasker and Negra, 2007, p. 3).

The rise of idealized self-presentation on Instagram has led to the trend of “Instagram versus reality” posts in which the same woman is depicted in an “ideal” image side by side with a “real” image (Tiggemann & Anderberg, 2020). The “ideal” photo is usually digitally enhanced or photoshopped whereas the “real” photo is a more natural, authentic representation of the woman. The “ideal” photo is the one posted by the woman to her Instagram page, thus is her self-presentation, whereas the “real” image is sourced by the user posting the Instagram versus reality comparison. These posts “seek to expose the falseness of social media and thereby discourage women from comparing themselves with idealistic and unrealistic images” (p. 2). Tiggemann and Anderberg studied the effects of these posts on female users’ body dissatisfaction. Their experiment consisted of exposing women to three types of images: the “ideal” image alone, the “real” image alone, and the two images side by side. They found that viewing Instagram versus reality posts “resulted in decreased body dissatisfaction relative to the ideal images” (p. 1). Because this type of post is concerned with the same moment in time and highlights photoshop usage rather than surgical procedures, I argue these results do not apply to the “before and after” images of celebrities before and after plastic surgery considered in the present study. The Instagram versus reality posts identify inauthentic self-presentation that is unattainable by even the most beautiful women who post these images, whereas before and after plastic surgery posts can be seen as more authentic and attainable in that the woman actually looks like that in real life, due in part to cosmetic interventions.

A dominant theme of postfeminist media culture is the makeover paradigm which “requires people (predominately women) to believe, first, that they or their life is lacking or

flawed in some way; second, that it is amendable to reinvention or transformation by following the advice of relationship, design or lifestyle experts and practicing appropriately modified consumption habits” (Gill, 2007, p. 156). One of the most explicit ways this message is conveyed to women in postfeminist media culture is through makeover shows on television. These shows, what Hollows (2000) calls the “makeover takeover,” began in the home and garden and food sector, but now extend into areas such as fashion and even cosmetic surgery. These shows begin by shaming aspects of their participants (frequently their appearance). They then encourage participants to change their ways and often bring in experts to give them advice. After their makeover, they are portrayed as better versions of themselves. This same theme and message in these television shows can be applied to Instagram content.

This literature on self-presentation management will be helpful references to explain how Instagram perpetuates women to turn to outside means (i.e., cosmetic surgery) of obtaining confidence in attempt to measure up to peers who embody Instagram Face.

Postfeminism in a Neoliberal Era

Many feminist authors argue that postfeminism is almost completely informed by neoliberal ideology (Gill, 2007, 2008; Gill & Scharff, 2011; Radner, 2011; Taylor, 2012). In doing so, these authors contextualize postfeminism as either a part of neoliberalism or a concept that works in tandem with neoliberalism. The resonance between postfeminism and neoliberalism lies in the common themes of agency, choice, and self-discipline.

Gill (2008) argues that there is a “profound relation between neoliberal ideologies and postfeminism” (p. 442). Both are “structured by a current of individualism that has almost entirely replaced notions of the social or political, or any idea of the individual as subject to

pressures, constraints or influence from outside themselves” (p. 443). Thus, postfeminism is “at least partly constituted through the pervasiveness of neoliberal ideas” (p. 443).

Genz (2006) claims that the existence of postfeminism “points to the mixed messages and conflicting demands of a neo-liberal consumer culture that offers women both freedom and enslavement” (p. 347). She argues that postfeminism participates in the “discourses of capitalism and neoliberalism that encourage women to concentrate on their private lives and consumer capacities as the sites for self-expression and agency” (pp. 337–38). Walker (2016) notes that “modern womanhood is in line with the neoliberal and postfeminist values” which “glorify individual success and participating in consumer culture as a marker of women’s liberation” (p. 4). She points out the problematic paradoxical nature of postfeminism and neoliberalism which “suggest that superstructures of oppression are no longer enforced in western society - whilst simultaneously re-enforcing them” (p. 3).

Empowerment is central to both neoliberalism and postfeminism and by the 1990s, it had acquired a gender—it was female (Gonick, 2006). Women who feel empowered “carry the belief that they can control the circumstances of their lives [and] will work hard to overcome adversity” (Rutherford, 2018, p. 623). Riger (1993) critiques how empowerment has become a psychologized feeling. She points out that empowerment is a “device for occluding the material and structural realities that constrain peoples’ abilities to control the circumstances of their lives” (as cited in Rutherford, 2018, p. 623). To this point, feeling empowered and actually being empowered are very different things and a sense of empowerment induces in women a sense of “power, competence, self-esteem, and freedom to make choices in life in the absence of any significant structural change in social conditions” (Becker, 2005, p. 158).

Postfeminism and neoliberalism are also deeply enmeshed by their mutual emphasis on agency and choice. As Budgeon (2011) has stated, “the neoliberal tropes of freedom and choice are increasingly associated with the category ‘young woman’” (p. 284). In postfeminism, “strict adherence to beliefs in a woman’s agency and unconstrained choice are seen as essential for avoiding the dreaded discourse of female victimhood that feminists have worked so hard to overcome” (Rutherford, 2018, p. 626).

Baker (2010) studied the psychological strategies used by young women to live up to the structures of neoliberalism and postfeminism. She found that her participants engaged in a self-presentation strategy of presenting oneself as an active, freely choosing subject. Regarding the relationship between neoliberalism, postfeminism, and the internalization of beauty standards, Gill (2008) reminds us that “we know almost nothing about how the social or cultural ‘gets inside’, and transforms and reshapes our relationships to ourselves” (p. 433). While we may not know the neuroscience about how culture “gets inside,” changing the outside is “the task of neoliberal subjects to work on and transform themselves as to be to be maximally successful and productive” (Rutherford, 2008, p. 629). Banet-Weiser et al. (2020) points out that female empowerment is “almost exclusively about consumer power – not a challenge of gendered power relations and rationalities” and “the stark contradictions between this *feeling* of gender equality and the reality [seem] easily explained away – through individual desires and aspirations rather than concrete and material contexts” (p. 9).

As demonstrated in this chapter, there is a significant amount of research supporting the idea that postfeminism encourages women to participate in self-objectification, body surveillance, and self-presentation management in accordance with hegemonic beauty ideals.

As has been previously reported in the literature, media and in particular social networking sites perpetuate these practices. Furthermore, a number of authors have recognized that neoliberalism is postfeminist in that they both focus on individual women's "empowerment" and "choice" while eliding the patriarchal undergirding of these phenomena. However, there is very little research focusing on these themes in terms of facial self-presentation and facial beauty standards, as discussion of women as objects is almost always in relation to the female body from the neck down. With Instagram Face being unexplored terrain in academic research, this review offers a foundation for its critical examination and consideration of how female facial beauty is presented and idealized on Instagram within a postfeminist climate.

Chapter 3: Method

In what follows, I perform a quantitative content analysis and qualitative textual analysis of Instagram Face. I first conduct a quantitative content analysis of images posted by popular female Instagram users which display facial self-presentation in order to reveal the extent of homogenized female facial beauty on the app. I retrieve this content from the personal Instagram accounts of these women. Berelson (1952) defines quantitative content analysis as “a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (p. 18). The “quantitative description” Berelson refers to indicates a numerical summary of the content, usually presented in the form of a table. This method allows for the “mapping [of] key characteristics of large bodies of text” and “follows clearly articulated rules and procedures” (Hansen et al., 1998, p. 123). The “text” can expand to comprise visual content in research centered on visual content such as the research constituting Chapter 4 of this thesis. Quantitative content analysis is “based on measuring the amount of something (violence, negative portrayals of women, or whatever) in a representative sampling of some mass-mediated popular art form” (Berger, 1998, p. 23). It produces “frequencies of preselected categories or values” within the content (Given, 2008, p. 121). My analysis measures the frequency of Instagram Face elements in the facial self-presentation of women who are considered beautiful by their followers. As image sharing has become a central part of the communication process through social media, there has been a shift in quantitative content analyses from its traditional linguistic elements to “genres of self-representation such as profile pictures on Facebook (Emmons and Mocarski, 2014), or to ‘selfies’ on Instagram (Veum and Undrum, 2018)” (Parry, 2020, p. 364). This thesis participates in this shift by using quantitative content analysis to

demonstrate the ubiquity of a single form of facial self-presentation among female Instagram users.

My method of analysis in the latter part of Chapter 4 as well as Chapters 5–7 is qualitative textual analysis. Whereas quantitative textual analysis is deductive in nature, qualitative content analysis is inductive, “beginning with deep close reading of text and attempting to uncover the less obvious contextual or latent content therein” (Given, 2008, p. 121). Qualitative textual analysis closely examines specific content to deconstruct the meanings it produces. While texts are designed to have a preferred meaning, there is no “correct” meaning and qualitative textual analysis identifies possible interpretations. This does not mean the researcher can make the text mean whatever they want it to mean. The part of the researcher is to derive meaning based on “the codes, conventions, and genre of the text and its social, cultural, historical, and ideological context” (Given, 2008, p. 865). Qualitative textual analysis considers “interconnections of meaning both inside and outside the text” (Given, 2008, p. 865). Thus, when analyzing my content I keep in mind considerations such as who created the content and who the intended audience is, as well as its connection to a wider context. What is treated as text in qualitative textual analysis comes in various formats and are known as artifacts. Artifacts are “symbolic, purposeful, and intentional things” which are “made by humans rather than the result of natural phenomenon” (Czerwinski, 2018, p. 57). These objects of study are selected based on their social significance. For my analysis, I selected three artifacts located on Instagram: Kylie Package promotions, celebrity call-out accounts, and the accounts of plastic surgeons. Throughout these chapters, I take a feminist perspective to bring women’s oppression to the center of analysis. This thesis utilizes feminist academic writings on postfeminism, but also

seeks to incorporate discussion of these artifacts and Instagram Face into the critical landscape of postfeminist media culture.

My decision to deploy a mixed-methods approach of quantitative and qualitative textual analysis fulfills my research goal to both explain the prominence of Instagram Face in the facial self-presentation of Instagram users and explore how content on the app encourages conformity to this beauty ideal. One of the benefits of textual analysis (both qualitative and quantitative) is that the data is naturally occurring: it exists before the researcher decides to analyze it (Given, 2008). Therefore, “insight into meaning construction and the ideological implications of texts are not subject to the biases that are evident when data sources are created for, or around, the research project” (Given, 2008, p. 865). Utilization of these methods allows me to demonstrate the homogeneity of female facial self-presentation on Instagram as well as how women are encouraged to idealize and replicate this form of facial self-presentation.

Chapter 4: The Quantification and Idealization of Instagram Face

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, this chapter serves to demonstrate that Instagram Face is the dominant form of facial self-presentation among the women who are widely considered beautiful on Instagram. Through analyzing the facial self-presentation of female Instagram users who occupy a position of feminine beauty in society, I find striking commonalities and therefore dissect exactly what constitutes female facial beauty on Instagram.

Second, this chapter illuminates the extent to which Instagram users idealize Instagram Face. Whether it be care of filters or makeup, female Instagram users are trying to achieve Instagram Face in their own self-presentation. I argue that the augmented reality filters and makeup tutorials which aim to replicate Instagram Face are indicative of an idealized attitude towards the look. Furthermore, I contend that a trend of photoshopping female celebrities to align more with Instagram Face signifies that users believe Instagram Face makes a woman beautiful or more so.

The Quantification of Instagram Face

As beauty standards have changed over time, so has the way in which they are established. Before the days of social media, beauty standards were dictated by geographical location and ethnicity. Women really only had the influence of their mothers and other local women. But once magazines and Hollywood became widespread, celebrities in traditional media began to dictate beauty ideals. Presently, social media has pretty much replaced traditional media, and platforms such as Instagram indicate who the most followed women are, and therefore the most influential. These women on Instagram have become the beauty standard. Because female beauty standards are informed, created, and perpetuated on Instagram, it is important to look at what exactly that beauty standard is. This gives rise to my research question:

How is female facial beauty presented on Instagram? To answer this question, I turn to the women who embody female facial beauty: “professionally beautiful women.”

My usage of the term professionally beautiful women is based on Wolf’s (1991) idea of “professional beauties” and “the professional beauty qualification (PBQ).” Professional beauties were a “clearly defined class of those explicitly paid for their ‘beauty’” (p. 27). This was before women entered the workforce in large numbers during World War II and included the “display professions—fashion mannequins, actresses, dancers, and higher-paid sex workers such as escorts” (p. 27). Wolf notes that “Until women’s emancipation, professional beauties were usually anonymous, low in status, unrespectable. The stronger that women grow, the more prestige, fame, and money is accorded to the display professions” (p. 27). Furthermore, “the model fantasy is probably the most widespread contemporary dream shared by young women from all backgrounds” (p. 41). Instagram, then, is perhaps so popular among young women because it allows users to present themselves in the likeness of a model.

Related is the PBQ which explains how beauty is the necessary qualification for a woman’s rise in economic, financial, and social power. The PBQ posits that beauty is an investment for one’s future as it is the condition to women’s success. Arguably, Instagram models and influencers serve as the modern version of professional beauties and modeling is a PBQ profession because it trades good looks for preferment. In this study, I use the term professionally beautiful women to refer to women who work in an industry that is entirely organized around physical beauty (e.g., models and “Instagram models”). Therefore, while PBQ is certainly at play in other high-profile professions such as singing and acting, women whose fame could be attributed to circumstances external to primarily beauty are not included in this study. This decision is further reasoned based on Brenner and Cunningham’s (1992) declaration

of models as “holders of aesthetic capital *par excellence*” and “symbolic carriers of beauty ideals” (as cited in Holla and Kuipers, 2016, p. 16). These women’s position in society places them as the criteria for what is considered beautiful.

In order to identify the most influential professionally beautiful women, I referenced a list tallying the models with the widest social reach which ranks models on Instagram according to follower count (“Models.com’s Social List”). The top 50 women on this list constitute my sample. Metrics on Instagram are a form of validation. A woman’s number of followers on Instagram translates into her aesthetic capital. Therefore, these 50 women hold the most aesthetic capital. I then coded the facial features of each woman to determine whether she displayed the predefined characteristics of Instagram Face. To do this, I referenced visuals including photos and videos posted to her account in which she exhibits facial self-presentation. Each woman received a “yes” or “no” corresponding with the following categories: uplifted, catlike eyes; full lips; defined, chiseled cheekbones; strongly projected chin; flat platform beneath chin; defined, chiseled jawline; absence of lines/wrinkles; straight, upturned nose; high eyebrows; shallow, voluminous tear troughs; and absence of acne. In attempt to be as objective and accurate as possible, I utilized foundational knowledge of plastic surgery and makeup artistry during this coding process. The results for each category were then quantified into percentages to indicate which features occur most frequently across the professionally beautiful women on the app, thus defining the beauty ideal endemic to Instagram. The number of women who adhere to Instagram Face in their self-presentation reveals the extent of homogenized facial self-presentation on Instagram.

I found (See Appendix) that 64% of the women in my sample present their faces with uplifted, catlike eyes. Eighty-six percent have full lips. Defined, chiseled cheekbones, a strongly

projected chin, a flat platform beneath the chin, and a defined, chiseled jawline appear across 100% of the women. Additionally, 78% display a straight and upturned nose, 84% have high eyebrows, and 98% have shallow, voluminous tear troughs. As far as skin texture goes, 84% of women present their faces with a total absence of wrinkles and lines, and 100% present their face sans acne. Furthermore, 48% of women in this sample possess all of the characteristics of Instagram Face. The results of this coding indicate that the features of Instagram Face appear in shocking frequency across the most influential professionally beautiful women on the app, and therefore provide the information that these facial features constitute beauty within Instagram.

While many of the coded facial characteristics are relative, a quick web search of the celebrity followed by the feature in question will reveal how it is interpreted by society. For example, type “Bella Hadid eyes” into a search engine and see results populate such as “How to get snatched fox-eyes like Bella Hadid” (Avaliani, 2020). These results are indicative of a general consensus that she has “fox-eyes.” Similarly, search “Rosie Huntington-Whiteley lips” and see the article (and many similarly titled), “The Secret to Rosie Huntington-Whiteley’s Perfect Lips,” which deems them “full to perfection” (Marie, 2016, para. 1).

Standards of self-presentation on Instagram are shaped by these users. This data explains that female facial beauty on Instagram is presented as a restricted range of facial characteristics. In theory, Instagram allows users to freely choose how to present themselves digitally. It has the ability to present women through images in unique ways, unprecedented because of norms of formulaic images of women in traditional media. And yet, the data suggests that there is even more conforming as women prescribe to the same beauty and self-presentation habits.

Given that social media is the root of beauty ideals, and that professionally beautiful women on the app serve as the standard of beauty, this quantified data reveals what women are

being told is beautiful (and consequently, what is not). This information brings up my second research question: To what extent do women idealize the facial features of women who are considered beautiful on Instagram? I will now answer this question by looking at how certain content on the app reflects the idealization of Instagram Face as the standard of beauty by female Instagram users.

The Idealization of Instagram Face

Besides metrics including the follower count of these professionally beautiful women being among the highest on the app and the likes they receive on their posts ranging from the hundreds of thousands to the multi-millions, and in addition to the thousands of appearance-praising comments, heart-eye emojis, and admiring language that pour in under these women's selfies, the idealization of Instagram Face as the standard of female beauty is overwhelmingly apparent in other locations on the app outside of just these women's accounts. The general consensus that Instagram Face makes a woman beautiful or more beautiful is demonstrated through the popularity of augmented reality filters that transform the user's face into Instagram face, a plethora of makeup tutorials instructing how to achieve Instagram Face through use of makeup, and a startling new trend which takes photos of already beautiful women and digitally alters them to be more so by adding or enhancing Instagram Face features.

Instagram allows users to create and share their own augmented reality filters which can be superimposed onto photos and videos. While they started out innocently enough, adding dog ears or hearts, they have now entered a more invasive territory: carving out cheekbones, making noses smaller, plumping lips, accentuating jawlines, and completely smoothing out the skin. They have latched onto the Instagram Face aesthetic phenomenon—all replicating this single, very popular face from the cat eye shape, to the visible cheekbones, to the full lips.

In August 2019, Instagram removed all filters “that depict or promote cosmetic surgery,” but that ban appears to only include those explicitly related to plastic surgery such as “Plastica,” which mimicked the effects of extreme cosmetic surgery, and “FixMe,” which replicated how a cosmetic surgeon marks a person's face before procedures (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2019, para. 1). Filters that lend users Instagram Face still remain. These filters contribute to a homogenized version of beauty on Instagram by allowing them to “more closely resemble images of ideal or normative femininity” (Elias & Gill, 2018, p. 67). The way these filters modify women’s faces confirms that their natural faces are not acceptable or good enough to present to the world. These filters further populate Instagram with displays of Instagram Face in that they allow users who do not have Instagram Face to display themselves in that manner.

Some filters that have gained extreme popularity are named after women who famously possess Instagram Face and give the user that woman’s features. For example, a filter created by Soul (n.d.-e) called “Like Gigi” makes whoever uses it look similar to Gigi Hadid. It changes the eye shape to be catlike, smooths the skin to be pore-less, makes the lips fuller, makes the eyebrows higher and more arched, gives super defined cheekbones, and contours the nose. Similarly, the filter called “Bella + Kendall” by the same creator makes users look like Bella Hadid and Kendall Jenner (Soul, n.d.-a). Bella Hadid has been called the most beautiful woman in the world by plastic surgeon Julian De Silva who mapped out her face according to a mathematical equation called “the Golden Ratio of Beauty Phi” and deemed it “physical perfection” (Rajani, 2019). Such facial “perfections” are transferred onto these augmented reality filters. Note how in this case, one filter is used to replicate two separate women’s faces. The two women have such similar facial characteristics that their look is considered shared, no longer belonging to a unique individual but instead is considered an indistinguishable face. These filters

are sending women the message that they would be prettier if they looked like Gigi and Bella Hadid or Kendall Jenner. Their popularity shows the large number of users who want to look like them or present themselves in the same way as them. The user behind many of these filters has over 400 thousand followers which is indicative of favor for this user's filters that make anyone look like the standard of beauty. Users seemingly appreciate the option Soul supplies them with to manipulate their faces to look beautiful by Instagram standards. Other filters are not explicitly named after Instagram Face holders, but transform specific facial features to align with the Instagram Face version of that feature. For example, Soul's (n.d.-d) filter "Foxy love" changes the eyes into an uplifted, catlike or fox-eye shape.

Even women who already have Instagram Face use these filters, reinforcing the idea that one can be made more beautiful by emphasizing their Instagram Face features: by making their already full lips even bigger, their already neat nose even smaller or straighter, and their acne and wrinkle-free skin even smoother. A popular filter that has been used by female users who already embody Instagram Face is called "Cute Baby Face" by Soul (n.d.-c). Many women from my sample in the previous chapter including Winnie Harlow, Emily Ratajkowski, Bella Hadid, Romee Strijd, and Alessandra Ambrosio have used this filter, making their Instagram Face features even more prominent (Soul, n.d.-b).

Instagram is plagued with makeup tutorials for Instagram Face features. Users share makeup techniques to show how Instagram Face features can be achieved with makeup. Users create tutorials to show other users "how to fake big lips" (Harpaz, 2020) and "get bigger looking lips" (Marjan, 2020b). These instructional posts are often geared specifically toward achieving the effect of enlarged lips on camera—the tool for self-presentation on Instagram. Such posts show the exact products and techniques used to make the lips look bigger. Common

techniques include using lipliner to outline the lips beyond their natural border, using bronzer beneath the bottom lip and/or above the upper lip, and using a lighter shade of lipstick at the center of the lips and a darker one on the corners. If products or shades are not specified, the comments pester the poster to tell them as if they believe buying that specific product or shade is the ticket to beauty.

Similarly, there is a plethora of tutorials showing users how they can achieve or mimic the uplifted, catlike or fox eyes of Instagram Face. Some tutorials do so by applying eyeliner in a way that it extends beyond the natural corner of the eye in an upward direction (Gwmakeup, 2021). One Instagram Reel (Kohli, 2021) demonstrates a “Bella eye hack” for achieving this eye shape by applying strategically applying false eyelashes in an upward-slanted direction to emulate the Bella Hadid’s eye shape. Fox-eye coveters even go to the lengths of using tape to lift the corners of the eyes (MursalCosmetics, 2021) or suggesting hairstyles that pull tightly at the corner of the eye and brow, lifting them (Appleton, 2020).

The quest for a smaller nose is evident through the large number of makeup tutorials on the app aimed toward making the nose appear smaller. Posts demonstrating “how to fake a nose job” are commonplace (Marjan, 2020a). One nose contour technique has even been deemed so valuable that it is likened to a “witches secret” (Valentina, 2020).

Tips and tricks to instantly enhance cheekbones are available at the fingertips of Instagram users. Everyone has cheekbones, but the tutorials aim to create more visible, defined, accentuated, and/or heightened versions. The most common technique seen on Instagram for this result is using contour beneath the cheekbone and highlighter on the cheekbone.

There exists on Instagram many instructional posts on how to “sharpen” the jawline using the technique of cream contouring. Additionally, the virality of “hacks” for achieving a more

defined jawline in photos imply that it is unacceptable or at the very least undesirable to be photographed with an undefined jawline. It is interesting to note how many of these makeup tutorials are aspirational to cosmetic surgery in the sense that they show explicit intent to replicate the effects of widely desired procedures.

Some Instagram tutorials combine all of these techniques to show how to get a full Instagram Face. Evelina (2020) shows her audience “How to Look Facetuned IRL” in an IGTV video. Facetune is a photo-editing app that lets users change and enhance their looks. It is notoriously used to allow women to align their looks with the current beauty standard. Referring to the eye and eyebrow area, Evelina advocates that “you want everything to be lifted” (1:32) and that the featured techniques “[give] you that supermodel...look” (2:02). She shows how to use eyeliner and eyeshadow “for that perfect foxy cat eye” (2:37) and instructs how to apply makeup to the cheeks “to create that chiseled look” (3:48). And of course, she details how “to make your lips bigger” (3:53).

In the same way that the filters mimic popular women’s faces, many makeup tutorials on the app are targeted towards achieving the same look as a celebrity with Instagram Face features. This fact implies that the version of the feature that the celebrity has is the ideal one, as the tutorials aim to mimic them. Of course, being that Bella Hadid has been crowned the most beautiful woman, her looks are consistently aspired toward on the app. Given that Hadid exhibits all of the features of Instagram Face (as determined in the previous chapter), the idealization of her face is synonymous with that of Instagram Face.

There is a recent trend among Instagram accounts to take pictures of female celebrities and apply digital face alteration to give them Instagram Face—thick lips, ski-slope nose, and super-smooth skin. These women are already considered some of the most beautiful in the world,

but Instagram users photoshop them to make their looks align more with modern beauty trends including Instagram Face. These users tweak eyebrows, nose shape, lip size, and remove any line or blemish from the face. While they do not include the unedited version of the photo in the post, a simple internet search will reveal the original image, indicating what edits have been made to make these stars fit modern beauty trends.

One such account sharing photos of female celebrities with additional photoshopping is @goddess.women, which shares images of female celebrities in their 20s, 30s, and 40s, and uses both recent photos and older ones. This page frequently posts edited red-carpet images of women in my sample who already have some or all features of Instagram Face. Women from Emily Ratajkowski, Cara Delevigne, Kendall Jenner, Gigi Hadid, Romee Strijd, Rosie Huntington-Whiteley, Irina Shayk, Candice Swanepoel, Kaia Gerber and many more are given plumper lips, smooth skin, extra-long false eyelashes and smoky eyeshadow. This account also includes images of singers like Selena Gomez and actresses like Anne Hathaway. It even lifts some still shots from 1990s films and television shows such as Kate Winslet in *Titanic* and Jennifer Anniston in *Friends*. This is only one of many accounts that partake in this type of photoshopping and the app is crowded with these edited photos. Such photos further populate Instagram with images of Instagram Face even with women who do not present themselves in that way, or a more enhanced version of it (even smoother skin, even plumper lips, even higher cheekbones). While these photos are clearly manipulated and do receive criticism for that fact in the comment section, the account's 262 thousand followers seem to approve, with each post garnering tens of thousands of likes. These images reinforce the idea that Instagram Face features make someone beautiful or more so.

The quantified data proposed in this chapter explains which facial characteristics the most-followed female models on the app have in common, demonstrating the homogeneity of facial presentation among beautiful women on Instagram and the pervasiveness of Instagram Face. The trends embodied in this data have not gone unnoticed by users who witness them, as there is a very present idealization of Instagram Face on the app. Such idealization is revealed by filters and makeup tutorials that aspire to recreate elements of Instagram Face and the digital editing of female celebrities into poster images of the look. Identifying the homogenization of female facial beauty into Instagram Face and the idealization of this ubiquitous look is valuable for understanding why certain self-presentation habits exist and why body alterations are commonplace on the app.

Chapter 5: Instagram Face and Self-Objectification

So far, I have shown that Instagram Face is both prominent and idealized on Instagram. With my first two research questions answered, I will now engage with my final one: how does Instagram encourage conformity to a homogenous beauty ideal? In response to this question, I will explore how the app encourages the postfeminist behaviors of self-objectification, body-surveillance, and management of self-presentation in accordance with this specific beauty ideal. The following three chapters will consider how these themes are produced by Kylie Package promotions, celebrity call-out accounts, and the accounts of celebrity plastic surgeons. In this chapter, I will analyze how these three artifacts encourage self-objectification in female users.

Kylie Package Promotions

The aesthetics industry has taken Instagram Face and commodified it, selling it in the form of dermal filler packages named after Kylie Jenner, who is at the vanguard of this “it” look. These dermal filler packages focus on creating a chiseled facial structure, the essence of Instagram Face as evident by my findings in Chapter 4 that all of the top professionally beautiful women on the app have defined chins, cheekbones, and jawlines. The main components of the so-called Kylie Package include jawline filler, cheekbone filler, chin filler, and/or lip filler.

Kylie Jenner’s image (an image of Instagram Face) is affecting young women’s culture of modifying their appearance. According to Tijerina et al., (2019), following Kylie Jenner’s announcement that she got lip fillers, internet searches for the term “lip fillers” increased by 3233%. While at first Jenner’s enlarged lips may have looked misplaced, her celebrity status on Instagram made her altered beauty seem normal. Not only are her followers now accustomed to an augmented Kylie, they want to become like Kylie. These Kylie packages confirm this by profiting off of how she presents herself on social media.

In September 2019, the Advertising Standards Authority banned Kylie Package ads from Instagram for "misleadingly" suggesting their packages "would give customers lips, cheeks and jawline that closely resembled her look," a fact alone that is indicative of its potential to negatively impact users (Sweney, 2019). The hashtag associated with these packages, #KyliePackage, was also banned. However, the hashtag #KylieJennerPackage remains. While some still advertise this service as the Kylie Package, many have been forced to rebrand, no longer associating their service with Kylie Jenner, though the components of the package remain the same. In whatever form these services persist, their origin as the Kylie Package is important because it reveals the inspiration for these treatments and the image they are oriented towards.

The images that promote Kylie Packages make separate elements of the female face the entire focus of each frame. They burrow in on certain parts of the female body like cameras do in film and television. In doing so, they are breaking women down into component parts, with each of these parts representing their supposed perfect and ideal form. The photos feature an object, not a subject. A jawline, a pair of lips, a set of cheekbones, a chin—not a woman as a human being. Reducing women to these individual elements encourages women to view themselves as parts rather than a whole. These photos of dismemberment suggest to women that if they have one body part that is not up to the beauty standard, they cannot be beautiful. They are objectifying because they approach the body as distinct parts and focus on the appearance of them. They isolate a particular characteristic of a woman and overwrite everything else which crucially makes them who they are.

Beauvoir (1949/2011) is ambiguous as to what the "Other" represents when proposing that women model themselves under the gaze of an Other. Many feminist authors have

interpreted it to be the male gaze in which a man sexually objectifies a woman by perceiving her as a means for sexual gratification. However, it could also include the beauty standards that latch onto bodily insecurities in women, creating false needs to moderate her appearance with cosmetic products and treatments.

In the same way that breast augmentation surgeries have commodified breasts, these Kylie packages position women's facial features as a marketable object for consumption. They make women's cheekbones, jawline, lips, and chin the focus of visual attention. The ability to buy and sell these features, which are interpreted on Instagram as a symbol of female beauty, causes women's features to be increasingly viewed as objects that can be owned. The feeds of practitioners that offer Kylie Packages feature consecutive images of the same sharp jawline, the same sculpted cheeks, the same defined chin, and the same plump lips over and over, just on different women. This reinforces the thought that any women can possess these desirable features if she makes that choice.

The objectification of Instagram Face allows the aesthetics industry to speak about low cheekbones, undefined jawlines, weak chins, and thin lips as problems which can be “fixed” with dermal fillers. For example, Kiss Aesthetics (2017e) posted a photo showcasing a woman's freshly-injected jawline with the caption, “Non Surgical Jawline/Chin Augmentation 📍 To enhance a weak jaw/chin and define the jawline.” The “weak jaw/chin” is proposed as a problem which necessitates fixing and “Non Surgical Jawline/Chin Augmentation” is offered as the solution.

Another account selling the Kylie Package, Faces By AKJ Aesthetics (2019a), captioned a before and after photo of a client's face:

The 5ml was used across the cheeks, jawline, chin and lips. The angle in which these pictures are taken shows her cheeks looking quite flat before treatment. After the

treatment you can see there's greater projection in this anterolateral view, what we refer to as the OG curve. Now she has cheekbone elevation!

This caption indicates that “flat” cheekbones are a problem and need treatment. Faces By AKJ

Aesthetics (2019b) also posted an image showcasing a woman's jawline, lips, and cheeks before and after treatment with the Kylie Package captioned:

Our 5ml Kylie package bringing great results yet again! 🥰

👉 Cheek Contouring giving the appearance of higher cheekbones! The new volume there lifts the lower face which improves face shape for a great front profile!

👉 Jawline Sculpting adds new definition there too and you can see a very noticeable difference to the side profile! This treatment will also lift the areas below and this time it's the under chin area that is improved.

👉 HD Lip Enhancement giving that volume, shape and definition in our clients lips. The cupid's bow is now more defined and you can see that the lip corners have been lifted too. Advanced injecting techniques giving a perfect finish to her new plump, soft looking lips!

The image features the client's face from the eyes down. It has large, bright pink arrows pointing at her lips, cheekbone and jaw. These arrows draw even more attention to those features individually. Use of the language “improved” to describe the result indicates that these features make the woman's face more attractive. The image additionally blurs out the woman's eyes. This could be for privacy reasons, suggesting that the woman does not want it known that she underwent cosmetic treatment, and would emphasize the postfeminist notion that women should “continue the work of femininity but still appear...entirely unconcerned about their self-presentation” (Gill, 2007, p. 155). On the other hand, it could be to draw even more focus to the specific treated areas, further emphasizing them as objects of visual attention separate from the woman as a whole. Similarly, this caption on a post by Kiss Aesthetics (2018a) objectifies women's chins:

There are no words to describe how much we enjoy doing chins. Such a small procedure can give the illusion of a more feminine, slimmer, contoured face.

First photo by Antonia, second by Luci.

Chin Augmentation 📍 Time taken : 10-15 minutes 📍 Durability : 12-18 months depending on individual/lifestyle etc.

Calling all * double chins *

bum chins *

square chins *

Chin Augmentation may well be the answer! •elongate the face giving the illusion of a slimmer face

- fill out hollows (bum chins)

- demasculation (square/manly) shaped chins that would prefer a softer more elegant oval shaped chin.

- those with an overbite/double chin who want a more feminine side and front profile

- to strengthen the jawline from both sides and front giving a more contoured look.

Anything that is not the chin of Instagram Face including “double chins,” “square chins,” and “bum chins” are made into problems that require fixing. Chin augmentation is proposed as “the answer” to this problem. Additionally, any chin that is not the perfect “oval shaped chin” is posited as unfeminine, and the chin filler part of the Kylie Package will make a woman “more feminine” by fixing her “manly” chin. These parts of a woman’s face that are rendered into problems encourage women to think of their faces “the way that a McKinsey consultant would think about a corporation: identify underperforming sectors and remake them, discard whatever doesn’t increase profits and reorient the business toward whatever does,” the “profits” in this case being pretty to look at (Tolentino, 2019, para. 7).

Putting a price on these packages encourages women to use their consumer agency only so far as it makes them more beautiful to look at. Although women may believe that they have complete freedom in what they choose to consume, women are being encouraged to cater their bodies towards the needs or desires of the Other (i.e., the beauty standard). These packages are a manifestation of the thought that women are carefully manipulated for others to gaze upon. Furthermore, these practices are female-owned and operated, making women both the oppressed and the oppressors. They become victims of an objectifying culture while at the same time perpetuating it.

Vries and Peter (2013) found that women who were “primed with an objectified female model and then asked to describe themselves to others were more likely to engage in self-objectification” (as cited in Whitbourne, 2013, para. 11). Kylie Package promotions are an example of an objectified model and the outcome is an audience who sees it and engages in self-objectification, as evident by user comments such as: “I need this so bad,” “I need a face like this!,” “I need this jawline,” “I need a new face,” “this is what I want,” “I need this omg,” “this is literally exactly what I need,” “give me this nowww,” “ughhhh NEED 😭,” “I need this. My Face IS fat,” “I need this ASAP,” and “what I’d do to have a jawline like this.” Furthermore, there are many comments on these promotions indicating that women would go to the lengths of traveling overseas just to receive this treatment: “literally need to plan a trip from the us to come see you guys 🍷🍷 want this so bad!!,” “I just sent a DM for appointment. I am coming from the US.,” “I will come from Germany!!,” “Any availability around November 23-25 for an overseas client?,” “brb booking a flight so I can go to this place,” and “So absolutely beautiful! I need to make a trip to see you guys from NYC.” These accounts appear to have a target audience of young women, one of which indicated “I NEED THIS !!! (when I’m 18)”. These young women view the Kylie Package as a purchasable solution to their physical insecurities. For example, one user praises it as an “answer” to her “prayers.” Another tags a friend and assures her, “we aren’t pretty because we’re poor.” In a similar respect, others announce that they “will spend thousands,” and even “all my money” to get the results of the Kylie Package. Such comments are indicative of women placing significant weight on their looks and reflect a self-objectifying mindset. Therefore, those who view the image appear to engage in self-objectification.

Many women undergo these treatments as means obtain confidence. Such mentality reinforces the postfeminist notion of empowerment in that it is seen as taking their situation as

less beautiful into their own hands. However, if a woman's confidence depends on how closely she replicates the socially constructed beauty ideal, then the motive is really to satisfy the gaze of that Other.

The bounty of comparison photos on these accounts is broken up by an occasional post that preaches self-love and acceptance such as one by Kiss Aesthetics (2018c) that declares, "Cosmetic procedures do not make you any less beautiful, nor do they make you any more beautiful. Beauty is found in the soul." Still, using comparison photos to show a physical change, even if the caption is emphasizing an emotional or spiritual change, emphasizes what the body looks like, contradicting the concept. The images all over the accounts are more powerful than a few periodic words about self-acceptance.

Celebrity Call-Out Accounts

There is an entire culture on Instagram dedicated to "exposing" cosmetic procedures celebrities have had. The largest account is Celeb face which has 1.5 million followers as of January 2021. But this account is just the tip of the iceberg, as there are dozens that chronicle the face changes of celebrities. Professionally beautiful women appear on every single one of these accounts. Most of the claims about them are alleged or rumored because these women rarely admit to undergoing cosmetic treatments or plastic surgery, assumably because their career hinges on being beautiful and the discourse around plastic surgery within this Instagram micro-culture is that it is cheating. These accounts frequently publish before-and-after posts which juxtapose old and new photos of celebrities and influencers and speculate which cosmetic procedures they have had done. Another common type of post on these pages is taking an image of a female celebrity and reverse-engineering it to reveal what that person would look like sans cosmetic interventions.

Objectification theory states that experiencing objectifying situations leads women to self-objectify (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Celebrity call-out accounts, in their focus on the appearance of female celebrities, are objectifying environments. They offer close, nearly obsessive dissection of the way celebrities' bodies are constructed. They compare women's Instagram posts to the original paparazzi photos to reveal discrepancies and feature side-by-side comparisons. Some of which suggest changes in women's appearance by cosmetic procedures while others reveal digital editing of the body. Kendall Jenner, Bella Hadid, Naomi Campbell, Gigi Hadid, and Irina Shayk are among the professionally beautiful women who are frequently featured on these pages, all of whom have made millions off of their looks. These accounts analyze lip fillers, laugh at photoshop attempts, and expose distorting edits. These accounts highlight visual changes of women's faces morphing into Instagram face. For example, posts frequently point out Bella Hadid's nose changing from downturned with a hump to small, straight, and upturned. One of such posts by Exposing Celeb Surgery (2019) is captioned, "Bella Hadid's nose job" and features a slideshow of five side-by-side photos zoomed in on Hadid's nose from different angles. The hyper-focus on her nose is reinforced by comments left on the post including: "Her nose looks so fake," "She's got a saddle nose. The doctor is assumed to be Dr. Kassir. Popular for that type of nose," "The tip looks kinda odd but she does look nicer," "The surgeon chopped the sh!t out of her nose," "The nosejob of the century," "Legendary," "nose job goals," "It's collapsed," and "Can't believe she tried to 'fix' her nose and ended up with that." Another common area of focus is the shift of women's eyebrows from low and straight to high and arched. In one such instance, Celebrity Plastics (2020) collages three sets of photos labeled "before" and "after" of Bella Hadid, Kendall Jenner, and Ariana Grande, cropped so that only their eyes, nose, and eyebrows are in frame and asks: "Who had the best browlift?!"

In my opinion @bellahadid had the best glow-up! What do you think?” Posing this question invites viewers to offer their opinion on these women’s appearances. The comment section is filled with remarks on Hadid’s, Jenner’s, and Grande’s eyebrows such as: “I feel like if Bella blinks too hard her skin is going to rip open,” “Ariana always looks like she’s really worried lol,” “Kendalllllll obvi. Bella’s is too high and ariana’s brows just aren’t it,” and “Ariana’s eyebrows are so bad, Kendall has the more natural ones and bella just looks like a mf tiger.”

These accounts are objectifying because they focus on the appearance of the body rather than the function of the body. Every post and mostly every comment on these posts have to do with women’s appearances. These accounts take women and place them under a microscope, examining their every pore, line, and crevice. Focusing on specific parts of the body, in this case those related to Instagram Face, is reinforcing the idea that women are objects made up of parts, and that these parts can (and should) be altered for the sake of beauty. For instance, there is an entire post by Plasticcelebs (2020) dedicated to Kendall Jenner’s lips featuring four images of her mouth over the years which document changes in her lips’ appearance.

It is evident in comments left on these posts that they may encourage the women who view them to self-objectify. On photos speculating that a celebrity has had plastic surgery, women leave comments such as: “Tbh this just makes me want lip fillers,” “I want the doctor’s name,” and “Omg I want [a browlift] so bad!” On posts that show how a celebrity edited the look of her face in a side-by-side with the unedited version, women leave comments such as “Ok but what editing app did she use? I need that!” Such comments indicate that viewing posts objectifying professionally beautiful women inspire self-objectification in female users.

These accounts demonstrate the never-ending societal scrutiny over the female body. By shaming celebrities’ unaltered pictures or “before” photos, as well as the edited pictures and

“after” photos, these accounts serve as harsh a reminder that women will never be good enough for the world. On these accounts, women obsess over other the appearance of other women. One post by Celeb face (2020) includes nine before-and-after photos of different celebrities with lip fillers asks: “Who made a good choice? Who made a mistake?,” inviting users to openly survey and praise or scrutinize these women’s lips in the comment section. Some condemn their appearance by writing: “They ALL look awful!,” “All the lips look terrible,” “They all look horrible with it,” “Elsa looks more like a squirrel,” “You know when you cry so much your face get swollen. They looks like that,” “Why do they all look like fishes,” and “They all have bloated sausage lips.” Others praise the lip filler in comments like: “They all look better,” “Wow Kylie is so lucky. Lip fillers changed her whole look,” “tbh all of em look better after filler,” and “To be fair most of them really needed the lip filler their lips used to be SO thin...”

It is possible that female users may imagine this same level of scrutiny being applied to their own appearance. It may encourage them to look at her face and imagine how other people perceive them. One user writes that she “wouldn’t be so insecure about not having a visible jawline if social media just accepted it as natural beauty.” One in 50 people have body dysmorphia and it is more common amongst women, meaning many women already worry incessantly about minor or imaginary perceived physical flaws (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018). A way to combat this worry is for a woman to remind herself that everyone else is too busy thinking about their own appearance to pay any real attention to hers, and that women are more than the sum of their parts. This is a very valuable lesson, one that these accounts—even those that declare to have good intentions (many of them claim they are just trying to show “the truth”)—work to undermine.

Plastic Surgeons

A class of celebrity plastic surgeons and cosmetic dermatologists has emerged on Instagram, posting videos where they inject their patients (who are largely young women) and showcasing before-and-after photos of patients who receive lip fillers, nose jobs, and cheek enhancements. These plastic surgeons have huge follower counts ranging from tens of thousands into the millions. Their large audience made up of mainly women warrants critical examination of the messages they implement into society.

In a classic example of male objectification of the female body, Khorsandi (2020) posts a series of photos featuring a woman with full, plump lips. His caption, “While her hair may make us stare, and her eyes may have it, it’s the lips that grab it ... oh what a woman can do with our attention,” positions a woman’s lips as an object of visual attention. This surgeon closes this caption by urging women to “Swipe left for more lip filler inspiration #juvederm.” Such a suggestion encourages women to perceive other women’s lips as products that they can obtain via his services.

The accounts of plastic surgeons invite evaluating women based on their looks. For example, Ghavami (2019) posted a video of a young woman’s face captioned, “Our Patient From Our Most Recent Post! 🍷✨ A quick follow up to see how her post operative healing has been coming along. She’s looking fantastic, don’t you agree? Comment below! 🍷” Another example of plastic surgeons summoning attention to women’s appearance is when Kassir (2020a) posted a before-and-after of his rhinoplasty patient and asks, “How great does our beautiful patient look only 3 weeks after Designer Rhinoplasty ®by Dr. Kassir?” He mentions that the woman’s “Bridge was straightened and reduced, nose deprojected and top lifted and refined,” which are

changes that are in line with obtaining Instagram Face and allow the woman to look “great” and “beautiful.”

Even when not prompted explicitly, users in the comment section offer their opinion on how the featured woman looks. Although they are not the woman in the photo being objectified, consistently witnessing commenting on outward qualities of appearance and attractiveness of women reinforce the evaluative nature of the female body, that it is just there for others to look at. Moreover, Meier and Gray (2014) found that increased appearance focus and exposure (e.g., posting, viewing, or commenting on uploaded photographs) was a significant predictor of self-objectification among women.

Objectification theory posits that particular environments, those that draw attention to the body, increase the likelihood of self-objectifying (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Plastic surgeons’ Instagram pages are certainly an environment which draws attention and focus to the female body, thus making female users who view these pages susceptible to self-objectification. The comments such as “this is what I need!” and “want want want” that roll in under nearly every post on these pages reaffirm this connection.

Chapter 6: Instagram Face and Body-Surveillance

In the last chapter, I showed that self-objectification is normalized and even encouraged within Instagram. Self-objectification leads to body-surveillance, so I will now apply the same level of critique to my artifacts to show how they encourage the behavior of self-surveying the body. As Lupton (2014) notes, “the very act of self-tracking, or positioning oneself as a self-tracker, is already a performance of a certain type of subject: the entrepreneurial, self-optimising subject” (para. 7). This type of subject closely aligns with the neoliberal and postfeminist subject this thesis considers. Therefore, this chapter fulfills the crucial task of looking at Instagram’s exhortations to meticulous self-surveillance of the female body. Furthermore, Lewallen (2016), when researching the effects of Instagram on social comparison, found a relationship between women looking at images of other women on the app, subsequently becoming insecure about their own looks, and then fantasizing about changing their appearance to look like the women featured in the images. This chapter analyzes Instagram content that may contribute to this outcome.

Kylie Package Promotions

On Kylie Package promotions, the potential for upward social comparison is constant. Captions like “Jawline G O A L S 💖” posted on an up-close image a woman’s jaw after receiving jawline filler indicate that the images women view on this page are idealized (Kiss Aesthetics, 2017e). The word “goals” implies that the appearance displayed in this image is what women should strive to achieve, therefore encouraging women to survey their own bodies and compare them to the photo to determine how they stack up. Of course, the fake lips, fake chins, fake cheekbones, and fake jawlines on these pages are so unrepresentative of women’s natural bodies that when a woman compares herself to them, she will always fall short. On Instagram, women

compare themselves to and seek to mimic those that they admire, in this case it is explicitly Kylie Jenner. Or more specifically, Jenner's chin, jaw, lips, and cheekbones. Within the app, body surveillance is a sort of survival strategy to keep up with beauty standards. Kylie Package promotions offer visual references for women to compare their faces with to notice discrepancies, and even provide checklists for women to read through to identify if they have any of those "flaws" or "problems." An example of such a checklist can be found in a caption by Kiss Aesthetics (2017c) which recommends chin filler as "the perfect treatment" for:

- those with; - an over bite (to balance out)
- those with a square shaped face to elongate and give a more feminine appearance [*sic*]
- those with little or no chin - those who want to add definition to the face for a more chissled [*sic*] look
- those who feel like they have saggy skin on the neck or a turkey neck!
- bum chins
- those with a square/masculine chin.

The same page suggests that a better chin is "created by ADDING filler strategically to REDUCE the appearance [*sic*] of jowls/double chin" (2017h). Speaking about cheekbones, Kiss Aesthetics (2018e) says that cheekbone filler "creates a cheek bone that for many is not visible naturally - and thus - a shadow beneath it - giving the appearance of a slimmer, more defined, and contoured face" and close with a message for Jenner: "Kylie eat your heart out." This language suggests that women should not only scrutinize their overall appearance, but also pay attention to specific parts of the body in order to dissect smaller, extremely specific "flaws" like a "double chin" or "not visible" cheekbones.

Kylie Package promotions are conditioning women to focus on what separate entities they lack. This focus is exemplified in Kiss Aesthetics' (2019c) caption on a photo showcasing a woman's cheekbones:

The Ogee curve is the soft 's' shaped curve of the cheek that can be seen from an oblique angle. It goes from the lateral brow bone, to the convex fullness of the upper cheek, and then back down to the corner of the mouth.

Placing an Ogee curve in people's faces makes older faces look younger and younger people more beautiful 💖 Fun fact - Most models have a Ogee curve!

Because models are understood as the epitome of female beauty in society, the way that this caption establishes that "most models have a Ogee curve!" may encourage women to survey their faces for the Ogee curve as a measurement of their own beauty.

Kylie Package promotions encourage Wegenstein and Ruck's (2011) cosmetic gaze through which women look at their body as in need of fixing with cosmetic treatments. The images in these promotions allow women to see what their body could look like by way of cosmetic interventions. By lending a cosmetic gaze, Kylie Package promotions encourage women to survey their bodies to see if they "need" these treatments, to determine if they have a "weak" chin or other perceived subpar body part compared to what it "should" look like.

Images of women's faces that have underwent the Kylie Package are portrayed as the ideal form of the female face. Such portrayals imply that those who do not have features resembling these images are less feminine or performing bad femininity. This idea is evidenced in many of the captions associated with images of the Kylie Package calling these procedures "feminizing," suggesting that women who do not have the ideal version of these features are masculine. Kiss Aesthetics (2017b) exemplifies the positioning of the Kylie Package as a vehicle for displaying femininity by saying:

***FACIAL SLIMMING & DE-MASCULINIZATION ***

Chin and / or Jaw Filler - •achieves a more feminine jawline immediately slimming the face • good for clients with large or square chins who want to give the illusion of a smaller chin

- those without a chin who want to create one
- to elongate and CONTOUR, giving the appearance of a slimmer, more chissled face.
- those who may feel they have an over bite and may want to rebalance the facial proportions from the side to create a more balanced side profile.

NOTE * for unbelievable results add CHEEK fillers to further elongate and slim the face. This comes under the KYLIE package on the booking links.

The phrases “DE-MASCULINIZATION” and “achieves a more feminine jawline” illustrate how the features obtained by the Kylie Package are categorized as feminine whereas the absence of those features is seen as masculine.

Gill (2007) argues that “Monitoring and surveying the self have long been requirements of the performance of successful femininity” (p. 155). Many captions on Kiss Aesthetics’ page convey this idea. One of such, accompanying a photo showing the results of jawline filler, reads: “A pronounced or angled jawline can be aesthetically pleasing. In women, especially, a heart shaped face is often associated with femininity” (2020a). The caption goes on to say that jawline augmentation can help create this face shape. Similarly, on a post showing a woman’s face before and after dermal fillers, Kiss Aesthetics (2020c) asks: “Something bothering you but not quite sure what?” And then offers a “solution” that “sometimes all you are looking for is a little profile balancing to feminize the face.” This caption suggests for women to be insecure about certain aspects of their face even before they have come to such conclusions themselves. Through this caption, practitioners of the Kylie Package “seek to identify and ‘diagnose’ problems before they even become visible to the naked eye” (Elias & Gill, 2018, p. 70). The “problem” identified is painted as an improper or unideal display of femininity. Another post by Kiss Aesthetics (2018f) that is comprised of before-and-after photos stitched together details how the injectors “elongated the chin and projected anteriorly, added contour to the cheeks and volumised the lips” in order to “soften the profile and feminise the shape of her face.” An image showcasing a woman’s chin before and after filler states that, “This client has immediately achieved a more feminine jawline” (Kiss Aesthetics, 2017a). Describing the after photo as feminine or more feminine automatically categorizes the before photo unfeminine or less

feminine. Therefore, women may survey their own faces to see if they look like the before image and determine if they “need” these treatments in order to “properly” display femininity. Situating femininity as something that can be acquired illustrates the postfeminist notion that femininity is “a bodily property” (Gill, 2007, p. 149). In this sense, surveying the body is the vehicle for women to transform into an embodiment of “good” femininity, a process that upholds the patriarchal systems behind gendered concepts such as femininity and masculinity.

Celebrity Call-Out Accounts

As Elias and Gill (2018) note, “it is impossible to understand the heightened surveillance of women’s appearance in contemporary culture without reference to celebrity culture with its circulating news articles, magazines, gossip sites and social media” (p. 65). Celebrity call-out accounts are part of this culture and highlight the intensification of surveillance of women’s bodies. While Elias and Gill argue that “more familiar and everyday forms of intensified surveilling of women’s bodies are to be found in gossip and celebrity magazines and websites,” I propose that celebrity call-out accounts are even more familiar and everyday forms because the modern generation of young women use social media more often than they read magazines or websites (p. 65). Thus, it is crucial to look at these accounts as a product of neoliberalism and postfeminism that encourage “critical and forensic surveillance” of women’s appearance (p. 63).

Accounts such as @ExposingCelebSurgery, @igfamousbydana, and @CelebBeforeAndAfter put celebrities’ and influencers’ (mainly female) old and recent images to suggest they have had surgeries in between. The very existence of this before/after binary depends on seeing one side as superior to the other. It connotes that the before image is something that should be altered, while the after image is the one to aspire towards. Drawing on

social comparison theory, which describes how one looks to others to get information about how to define themselves, a woman who views this type of post may be led to compare herself to the women in them, noticing similarities between herself and the “before” photo (Festinger, 1954). These accounts may incite the propensity of women to think of their face as a “before” photo on one of these pages, noticing if their chin is “weak” as in Kendall Jenner’s “before” photo, if there is a bump on their nose like the one on Bella Hadid in her “before” photo, if their cheekbones are ill-defined like Jasmine Sander’s “before” photo, or if their lips are thin like Sara Sampaio’s “before” photo. All of these “flaws” are eliminated in these women’s “after” photos, persuading women to view the attributes they have in common with the “before” photos as in need of fixing.

The account @celebface creates GIFs of influencers’ doctored pictures that fade away to reveal the unretouched images, which are typically retrieved from photographers’ professional websites. @S0cialMediaVsReality, @TruthAboutFaves and @Beauty.False contrast edited and unaltered paparazzi pictures or stills from videos in side-by-side graphics. These accounts openly shame versions of women’s faces that are not the ideal form. @celebface often includes sneering captions directed at the women’s faces it features. And even though their biography reads, “Not here to shame people,” the culture of exposing indicates that their so-called imperfect faces are shameful. When these accounts do this, they automatically convey the same message to followers. Publicly shaming the subjects of these pages unintentionally reproduces the same standards that oppress women and cause the celebrities to want to hide or fix these flaws in the first place. Vilifying these women passes the same message to others who may compare the bodies in the images to their own. Calogero et al. (2014) found that “link between self-objectification and intentions to have cosmetic surgery was partially mediated by body shame”

(p. 2). Therefore, openly shaming bodies that women may relate with could contribute to their decision to change the way they look for the sake of a hegemonic beauty standard.

When a woman is constantly watching herself, and anticipating how she is perceived, she is also creating the version of herself in her head that she wishes to be seen. The before-and-after photos on these accounts showcase the potential of what one can become through use of cosmetic procedures. Viewing other women's "after" photos may encourage women to view themselves through the cosmetic gaze and imagine what their own "after" photo could look like if they had the same procedures. The cosmetic gaze "uses imagery of 'ideals' that culture craves and sells" when viewing the body (Wegenstein, 2012, p. 184). The "after" photos on these pages are images of ideals. Showing that celebrities come to look like they do by cosmetic interventions and that is how they achieve the beauty ideal makes it so that "the possibilities offered by technologies to re-envision and revise the physical body have been incorporated into our beauty ideals" (Wegenstein, 2012, p. 184). Celebrity call-out accounts reveal that Instagram Face is a look that is created through use of injectable fillers and surgical procedures by showing that most of the women who have this face used those means to acquire it. One comment left Celeb face's (2019) then/now photo of Sonia Ammar indicates that it makes women think there is "No natural TRUE beauty anymore." It is understood that in order to become beautiful, one has to get cosmetic work done. Showing all of these before-and-after photos of celebrity transformations encourages the cosmetic gaze which "perceives all bodies in light of some potentially transformative completion" (Wegenstein, 2012, p. x). Additionally, as Wegenstein (2012) argues, "being surrounded by made-over bodies produces a desire for one's own makeover" (p. 2). Finally, the cosmetic gaze "produces a gaze that is circular: I see myself in the bodies of others, and the bodies of others tell me how I look or could look" (p. 2). When women

view @celebface and other before-and-after accounts, they are encouraged to see themselves as the “before” photo and what they could become in the “after” photo with the help of cosmetic work.

Leaving women to speculate about which procedures professionally beautiful women have had done is indicative of use of the cosmetic gaze as it is showing knowledge of what these procedures can do and what look they can result in. Posts that simply offer before-and-after photos with no further caption other than “then and now” leave commenters to use the space to say which cosmetic procedures they think the female celebrity has undergone. Such dialogue demonstrates knowledge of what cosmetic surgery can change features from and into.

Plastic Surgeons

The Instagram accounts of plastic surgeons need to be understood in relation to “the dominant neoliberal and postfeminist sensibility circulating in contemporary society which addresses women as entrepreneurial subjects *par excellence*” (Elias & Gill, 2018, p. 60). By encouraging self-surveillance to discover “flaws” in their physical appearance, plastic surgeons on Instagram are teaching women that their faces are not attractive enough. This self-surveillance is positioned as a regime required of women for the display of ideal facial beauty—a display which can be acquired by turning to the services of these plastic surgeons—which I discuss in further detail in the next chapter. For now, I focus on how these accounts encourage women to partake in critical surveillance of their physical selves.

Plastic surgeons create consumer desires produced by body-surveillance and offer a way to satisfy them. For example, Khorsandi (2017) captions a video of himself injecting a woman’s under-eye area:

Placing #Fillers around the eyes and in the #teartrough are a powerful way of reducing the signs of aging. With our painless and safe approach to fillers we can make your

#eyebags look naturally better. Think about it: 20 minutes that will last up to a year.
 #botox #juvederm #Restylane #restylaneRefyne @lvskin77 Raise your hand
 🙋🙋🙋🙋🙋 if this is for you?

This caption is directly telling their followers to survey their faces to see if they have these eyebags. Since smooth tear troughs are one of the characteristics of Instagram Face, positioning eyebags as a flaw is reinforcing that Instagram Face is the ideal and anything other than that is unacceptable. Asking “is this for you?” is another way of asking “do you have this flaw?” and if so, the post provides a way fix it by getting tear trough filler.

Women are “offered” a way to measure their individual facial attractiveness by plastic surgeons who discuss the ideal appearance of certain features. Kassir (2020b) invites women to benchmark specific aspects of their appearance, specifically their nose, in a video showing illustrations of different nose shapes. He introduces the video by saying, “hey guys look at this photo here of different types of noses... some of which are good and some of which aren’t.” He then goes through each shape that is “not good” including “the classic droopy tip nose with a little bit of a bump. We get this one a lot that we try to fix.” He calls a nose that is convex “a classis ethnic nose.” He goes through seven noses that are “not good” until he gets to the one that looks like the nose of Instagram Face: small, straight, and a slightly lifted tip. He says, “this is a good nose.” At the end of the video, he asks viewers to “tell us what type of nose you have now and what type of nose you like, and we would love to talk to you about it.” This plastic surgeon is giving women a visual reference to all of the nose shapes that are “bad” and pointing to the single one that is “good,” encouraging them to look at their nose and compare it to the illustrations in the video to determine if they have an acceptable nose or not.

Services offered by plastic surgeons are located within a consumer culture that sees undertaking such services upon the body as voluntary. However, some instances compel women

to scan their “unruly” bodies. In one such instance, Ourian (2020b) posts a video of himself injecting a woman’s jawline, transforming it before followers’ eyes in seconds from undefined and round to “contoured” and “enhanced.” The caption is short. It simply asks: “Do you like your jawline?” This post is asking women to survey their jawlines—a very specific area of the body—and implies that they should not like it if it resembles that of the woman in the video’s “before” jawline. This post is a perfect example of Gill’s (2007) critique of postfeminist media culture that tells women: “you thought you were comfortable with your body? Well think again!” (p. 155).

Plastic surgeons make it easy for women to measure their beauty by providing photos that clearly outline the “ideal” placement and proportions of women’s faces. Ourian (2020a, 2020b, 2020d, 2020e, 2021) does this by tracing parts of women’s faces in his before-and-after photos with white markings to make clearly visible what changes have been made. These markings in before-and-after format consequently relay what shape is less-than-ideal for the featured facial part and what shape is ideal. For example, Ourian (2017b) posted images of a woman’s face from an oblique angle before and after cheek filler. Both photos are marked with a white line tracing the woman’s face from the forehead down to the chin. The “before” image shows a line that is nearly flat at the cheekbone, whereas the “after” image shows a rounded cheekbone shape. These tracings make it easy for women to survey their own faces from the same angle to see if their line is flat and needs treatment like the patient in the photos. The caption includes, “😓 Treatment: Non-surgical cheek contouring 🎯 Purpose: Augment and lift the cheeks,” reinforcing that high, augmented cheekbones are the goal. In another post, Ourian (2020e) shows zoomed-in photos of the side-view of a woman’s chin. The “before” image traces the chin and neck shape to reveal a round line, whereas in the “after” image, the line beneath the

chin is straight. These images exhibit treatment for “doublechin” and state the purpose as “to reduce the fat pat and tighten the skin under the neck.” This post is advocating for Instagram Face’s flat platform beneath the chin.

Under postfeminism, “more and more aspects of the body come under surveillance” (Gill, 2007, p. 155). This surveillance is extremely evident on plastic surgeons’ pages. A woman is even encouraged to survey her nostrils in a post by Ourian (2020d) that shows a before-and-after of just a woman’s nostrils with the “after” nostrils being smaller, of course. The accompanying caption: “🤒Treatment: Non-Surgical "Nose Job" ; reduction of nostrils 🎯 Purpose: Lower and reduce the appearance of flaring nostrils” makes a woman more inclined to check whether her own nostrils are too big or flared and need to be “fixed.” This is just one example of what Elias and Gill (2018) refer to as the “intensification (ever finer, more detailed and more forensic)” and “extensification (spreading out, more diffuse and leaving no areas unsurveilled)” of surveillance of women’s bodies (p. 74).

Treatments offered by plastic surgeons are regularly positioned as a way to achieve Instagram Face, with women’s “before” faces being significant only as a part of the transformation to Instagram Face. For example, in a video uploaded by Ghavami (2020c), a 29-year-old woman receives a “brow lift and snatch.” The term “snatched” arose from social media and is used to describe something as very attractive. Thus, this post synonymizes a high eyebrow with attractiveness, reinforcing the idealization of Instagram Face. Ghavami says this is “for long-term snatching” and calls it a “celeb secret.” He offers this treatment as a solution for “low brow position.” Similarly, Khorsandi (2018) posts a video of a young woman getting fat “melted” and skin “tightened” under the neck to “#PerfectTheNeck,” implying that having a non-

“contoured” neck is imperfect. He calls this procedure a “solution” which positions having fat beneath the chin as a problem.

Plastic surgeons on Instagram represent neoliberalism in their purporting to provide women “assistance” in their pursuit of beauty by offering scientific benchmarks against which they can “measure” their beauty. One case in point is a post by Ourian (2020c) which displays before-and-after images of a woman’s side profile. The visible changes to her jawline include a contoured and defined jaw in the “after” photo, which is of course in line with Instagram Face. The caption describes this result as the “ideal Gonial (jawline) angle,” potentially encouraging women to survey their jawline to see if it aligns with what is proposed as “ideal.” To make women’s self-surveillance even more specific and scrutinous, he offers the exact angle the jawline “should” make: “If the angle is too narrow face could look too masculine ...and if too large, face can look undefined. For women I try to achieve a 120°-130°.” This specification of an “ideal” jawline angle conjures up a motivation for a woman to grab a protractor and measure the angle of her jawline to see how she measures up to the ideal feminine angle.

Women may compare parts of their body to the “before” image in before-and-after posts to determine their own adequacy. This tendency is evident in one comment on a nose job before and after post saying, “Ughhh she literally had the nose that I currently have 😭 and I’m jealous her nose is perfect now and mine isn’t.” Similarly, another user comments that “The before picture is literally my nose at the moment I’m hoping to get a rhinoplasty soon! Can’t wait! Hers look so beautiful after.”

Chapter 7: Instagram Face and Self-Presentation

In the previous two chapters I established how my artifacts may lead to self-objectification and body-surveillance in the women who consume posts featuring Instagram Face. I will now move on to how these three types of posts (Kylie Packages, celebrity call-out accounts, and plastic surgeons) encourage women to alter their self-presentation to align with Instagram Face.

Kylie Package Promotions

Posts displaying Kylie Packages centralize the postfeminist makeover paradigm as crucial to aligning one's facial self-presentation with the hegemonic beauty ideal. The makeover paradigm is exhibited in the theme of transformation that dominates Kylie Package promotions. For example, Kiss Aesthetics (2017d) emphasizes the Kylie Package as a force that affirms "the possibilities of transformation, rejuvenation, and alteration for everyone" (Weber, 2009, p. 1):

Ever wondered how Kylie Jenner has transformed her face?
We have put together a 'Kylie' package revealing all her secrets and procedures she loves.
It includes:
Jawline defining
Chin sculpting.
Cheek Filler
Designed specifically to enhance your bone structure giving you a more chiseled and contoured, slimmer, celebrity appearance. This really is the A - listers BEST kept secret and will TRUELY transform your face.

This caption teaches young women that they need to have an extreme makeover in order to be beautiful by today's standards. Another example of how these packages emphasize a need for transformation, change, or a "makeover" can be seen in Kiss Aesthetics' (2017f) caption that accompanies a photo of a woman before and after receiving the Kylie Package: "Just look at how refreshed she looks. Typical example of how such subtle changes can COMPLETELY change your face. ----- This client has The Kylie Package focusing on the cheeks, jaw and chin."

These captions are examples of the postfeminist makeover paradigm in that women may choose to alter their self-presentation using one or many of the suggestions the account makes in order to achieve Instagram Face. These captions not only offer descriptions of the parts of the body that should be scrutinized, but also propose the Kylie Package as the solution for these problems. In before-and-after posts, the “before” subject is conveyed as a failure of good femininity, with her flat cheekbones, double chin, thin lips, and undefined jaw. The “after” subject, however, is portrayed as an example of good femininity, a woman who has conformed to the hegemonic ideal of female beauty.

The aesthetic capital that one acquires from conforming to the beauty standard influences how a woman perceives herself, especially if she is aware that her newfound value and worth is a result of her transformation. This shift in self-perception may cause women to look at their pre-makeover self as their “old” self and their post-makeover self as their “new” self. This distinction of the “old” and “new” self can be observed in Faces By AKJ Aesthetics’ (2019b) referral to a client’s lips after receiving lip filler as “her new plump, soft looking lips.” This description positions the before, the “old” version of her lips, as a failure and the makeover is positioned as the pathway to success.

The determination of how to get Instagram Face justifies the need for a key figure in the makeover paradigm—“the expert”—who is depicted as highly knowledgeable about good femininity. In this case, the “experts” are the practitioners offering the Kylie Package. Kiss Aesthetics (2019b) establishes themselves as such in this caption:

Facial proportions are important as they are what defines ‘human beauty’ in science and essentially what society would determine as more beautiful. Sometimes - what you think you don’t want or haven’t given much thought to - (a rhino in this case) may take you further towards the divine ratio of proportion and scientifically make you ‘more attractive’. Equally - what you think you want may take you further AWAY from the divine ratio of proportion and scientifically make you ‘less attractive’. Not what you

came for right ? Do not ignore the advice of your practitioner. We are trained to recognise what will work for you - and what won't.

These experts promise to make women more beautiful and urge them to listen to their advice. They offer the Kylie Package as a form of “entrepreneurial labour that will help subjects maximize their visual capital” (Elias & Gill, 2018, p. 72). By positioning themselves as mentors, they promise to lead women into the bounds of good femininity by making her more attractive. Moreover, this caption showcases how Kylie Package promotions exploit the use of scientific knowledge (e.g., “the divine ratio of proportion”) to establish credibility and authority. Kylie Package practitioners then capitalize on said credibility in this caption to advise specific amounts of filler as to what will “beautify” the face:

We would recommend 2ml minimum for the cheeks (1ml each) , and 4ml for the average jawline. Don't underestimate the power of a cheek. If you want to augment your jawline it's important to consider the upper portion of the face too - adding product to your jawline alone may simply make you look unbalanced and bottom heavy. Yes - Jawlines will contour you- but it's cheekbones that truly beautify. (Kiss Aesthetics, 2019a)

This caption reveals the standards by which these expert figures judge female beauty. Captions in which Kylie Package practitioners position themselves as experts deploy the paradox of the makeover paradigm that Weber (2009) points out: “to be empowered, one must fully surrender to experts” (p. 4). Despite the postfeminist and neoliberal guises of self-surveillance and self-making, the makeover paradigm makes women's success in performing good femininity dependent on outside intervention. It posits that woman who is unhappy in her current situation (physical appearance wise) needs guiding advice from an expert. Postfeminism emphasizes that women are free to choose what to do with her body, however, those choices are only socially accepted if they align with the ideals surrounding the female body. These captions exemplify that

if a woman does not choose “correctly,” she is in need of an expert, pointing to a loss in feminist agency as a consequence of beauty ideals.

According to postfeminism, women can take pleasure from appearing a certain way without the approval of others. The idea of being feminine for oneself suggests independence from judgment from the Other. However, the women who look like this, in this case, Kylie Jenner and others with Instagram Face, receive praise and validation for their appearance, so wanting to mimic their appearance assumes placing value in how others perceive that look. This caption by Kiss Aesthetics (2017g) demonstrates the approval a woman receives for monitoring herself to conform to the ideals of feminine beauty:

The Kylie Package focusing on the cheeks, jaw and chin to CONTOUR DEFINE AND SLIM

TOTAL:3 ML filler

📌 Time taken : 15-30 mins 📌 Durability : 12-18 months - 📌 Purpose:Chissle [*sic*] the face and define/Contour/Elongate the face.

The results are truly [*sic*] unbelievable and I can honestly say a client who has had these treatments has never been able to leave easily after 🤩 walking through the shop floor the makeup girls / other clients downstairs ALWAYS stopping them to admire. 💖

As this passage demonstrates, a woman might alter her self-presentation “for herself,” but she is rewarded with admiring looks from others for her appearance. In this way, becoming attractive to look at is a way for women to attract an appreciating gaze from outsiders. Aligning one’s self-presentation with hegemonic beauty ideals cannot be truly for oneself if an internalized gaze from the Other drives it, seeking to satisfy society’s desire for this specific form of female appearance. Women have choice in how they present themselves, but being told that one specific look is “goals” and “gorgeous,” likely drives their motivation to present themselves to cater to the desires of who is looking at them.

Postfeminism celebrates femininity as a “bodily property” that is evoked to the full extent for the sake of empowerment (Gill, 2007). The realization of this point can be observed in

the hyper-feminine “after” subjects in these before-and-after posts exemplifying “ideal” feminine beauty. These packages are portrayed as an aid to self-confidence, reinforcing the postfeminist sensibility that aesthetic labor is for oneself, through a caption by Kiss Aesthetics (2017i) in which the creator of the Kylie Package mentions, “I really want to get these packages out there as I know how much it has improved my confidence in the past year and I would love to help others feel as great about themselves as I do!” In this caption, the makeover (the Kylie Package) is conveyed to result in a confident, empowered self through conformity to beauty norms which brings social privilege and mobility. Furthermore, Faces By AKJ Aesthetics (2018), in emphasizing a client’s happiness with the results of the Kylie Package, suggests to women that the Kylie Package could bring them happiness, too:

Our Kylie Package! 💕 Before and after pics from 2 angles 😍 Swipe to see the side view! 🙌

Filler in the cheek gives our client that contoured look there but it also lifts the lower face causing this to become slimmer. Then with the Jawline Sculpting you get that extra definition there too and the result is another happy client leaving our clinic! 💕

Of course, in postfeminist media culture a woman’s pursuit of beauty is positioned as self-generated and aesthetic labor must be understood as entrepreneurial. The neoliberal postfeminist subject is cast as a willing participant in beautification who is actively achieving her desires. This is exemplified in a post b Kiss Aesthetics (2020b) that tells followers, “now is the perfect time to invest in YOU.” This caption reinscribes the expectation for women to willingly undertake beauty practices that involve time, money, physical discomfort, and even health risks.

Kylie Packages claim to make women more beautiful. However, the way they promise to do so is by making them look like somebody else (i.e., Kylie Jenner). For example, Kiss Aesthetics (2018b) offers women a way to enhance their beauty through use of the Kylie Package:

What can we do with the Kylie package ? Does it really work?
 The answer is YES!!! Human beauty in science is based on the Divine Proportion. Studies have shown a higher score of attractive-ness is scored when faces have the 'golden ratio'. The Kylie package is here to help restore that ratio and enhance your natural beauty...Purpose: Chissle the face and define/Contour/Elongate the face.

This caption claims that the Kylie Package will improve women's "natural beauty," but the way of doing so is offered as treatments that will give them characteristics of a completely separate woman. The resulting message is that a woman's beauty only increases as her resemblance to the hegemonic beauty ideal increases.

Kylie Package promotions reinforce the neoliberal and postfeminist idea that women may use their consumer power to advance her current situation, in this beauty practices that will increase her aesthetic capital. This is done through a caption by Kiss Aesthetics (2019d):

We want to build a relationship with you & work together over several sessions to achieve overall rejuvenation, beautification and artistry. You can't rush beauty, you can't put a price on it, you can't do it all in one session & one size does not fit all. We want to know you for the long run. YOU are unique. ★.

The practitioners of the Kylie Package here state that "you can't put a price on beauty," yet sell a package with an explicit purpose of "beautification." Additionally, this caption is telling women, "you are unique," but at the same time encouraging them to look like a woman who is positioned as more beautiful than them. These contradictory messages respectively reinscribe beauty as a commodity and Instagram Face as the standard of beauty.

Kylie Package promotions normalize, trivialize, and encourage cosmetic procedures as part of the aesthetic regime of women. This is reflective of postfeminism's increased intensity on "perfecting" the female body. For example, Kiss Aesthetics (2018d) explicitly encourages women to submit their bodies to cosmetic procedures and insists it is a natural part of performing good femininity:

Forget the perceived stigma of undergoing a cosmetic procedure - the stigma is old news now. Medical aesthetics is a natural progression and addition to an otherwise positive routine that helps you take care of your natural age-ing process. Not really a big deal for others to worry about - so what are you worried for? This is a 3 ml combined filler package which we can tailor to your needs to knock a good few years off 😊✨.

Kylie Packages gloss over deep-rooted and societally imposed insecurities concerning physical appearance with a temporary fix of injectable fillers. They encourage women to believe these treatments are the key to self-esteem and happiness through their ability to allow women to display a specific form of beauty. Although Kylie Packages may be positioned as a form of self-care, their function as aesthetic labor may be better suited as a form of self-destruction, as they go beyond notions of self-care and are instead examples of “a regime of forensic self-scrutiny and self-monitoring that constitutes the ‘nano surveillance’ of visual appearance (one’s own and that of other women) as a normative practice” (Elias & Gill, 2018, p. 74).

Celebrity Call-Out Accounts

The Instagram accounts that come to show how celebrities look like they do are instructional. They provide users with a guide on exactly what procedures they would need to get to look more like a specific female celebrity (who is most often a professionally beautiful woman embodying Instagram Face). Some of these instructions are intentional, explicitly offering followers advice on which procedures to get to look like Kendall Jenner for example. Aesthetic University (2018a, 2018b) is an example of this intentionality. They post side-by-side before-and-after images of professionally beautiful women in which the after photo is marked up on different areas of the face, showcasing which areas likely received treatment and what that treatment was. They call these posts “prescriptions,” sharing which procedures they would “prescribe” if someone “wanted a similar transformation” to the featured woman. Aesthetic University (2018a) showcases supermodel Candice Swanepoel and “prescribes” Botox in the

forehead, between the eyebrows and to the outer eye area, Voluma (a brand of injectable filler) to the nasal bridge, cheekbone, chin, and lips, and Radiesse (another brand of injectable filler) to the jawline. This is to say if a woman wants to look like supermodel Candice Swanepoel, which as we have already established Instagram says she “should,” then she should get these specific treatments. In another one of these prescription posts, Aesthetic University (2018b) marks an “after” photo of Kendall Jenner with “Botox” in the forehead and above the upper lip, a “Brow lift with Botox,” a “Rhinoplasty,” “Voluma” in the cheeks and chin, “Juvederm Ultra Plus” in the lips, and “Radiesse” along the jawline. The caption suggests that women should get these treatments if they “have a similar before and want a similar result” to Kendall.

Celebrity call-out accounts show how “imperfect” faces transform into “perfect” ones. Dana (2020) gushes about Kendall Jenner’s “nose job, lip filler, brow lift, and general glow up. She looks INCREDIBLE!!” The term “glow up” is used to refer to an improved physical appearance. Female users chime in with comments like “She looks fabulous!.” The cheering of the transformation of specific parts of professionally beautiful women’s faces that takes place on these pages propagates that women with the same facial elements displayed in the “before” of these transformed celebrities are worse off and automatically in need of changing.

While some celebrity call-out accounts explicitly give advices when it comes to injectables to look like a celebrity, other accounts seem to do it unintentionally. Many of accounts claim to seek to show the “truth” and help raise girls and women’s self-esteem. Despite these apparently good intentions, however, they still serve as guides to how to look like a certain celebrity. Dana (2019a) claims that the purpose of her page is “to expose photoshop or cosmetic procedures that can warp our idea of what is attainable (both naturally or cosmetically-enhanced) and what is not.” She posts before-and-after photos of female celebrities and says what she

thinks they have had done based on what changes are visible. A six-part post by Dana (2019b) on Hailey Bieber speculates that she had “buccal fat pad removal for facial slimming,” “under eye and cheek filler for sculpted cheeks and fixing under eye circles,” “Botox or threads for brow lift,” “lip filler,” and “nose job.” This is literally an exact guide for how to look like Hailey Bieber— how to get her chiseled face structure, her plump lips, her high arched eyebrows. While it is meant to be educational and to help combat our warped perception of “natural beauty,” it is also showing women how they can achieve the type of beauty that is praised on Instagram.

These accounts also feed postfeminist neoliberal discourses that require women to bear full responsibility for their life, and that their life is an outcome of deliberative choices. They show that women can use their consumer capabilities to buy cosmetic procedures, ones synonymous on Instagram with beauty, as a means to gain aesthetic capital. The comments on these pages reinforce this idea that beauty is a commodity: “We’re not ugly we’re just poor,” “Anyone can be a model like this smh,” “So maybe it isssss possible to become a super model. Just need maybe 15 grand,” and “Anyone can go from plain to beautiful if you’re rich.”

Plastic Surgeons

Plastic surgeons post videos to their accounts where they inject their patients (who are largely young women) and before-and-after photos of patients who receive lip fillers, rhinoplasty, and cheek enhancements, which are all signifiers of Instagram Face. They expose a definite trend towards plumped lips, lifted eyebrows, slimmed noses, prominent cheekbones, and a defined jawline—encouraging women to reject any other facial type. For example, Kosins (2020a) posts a before-and-after slideshow showcasing the results of rhinoplasty. The “before” photos show “a large #nose, a dorsal hump and a plunging tip when she smiles” The “after” photo shows “a much smaller, cuter nose.” In another instance, Kassir (2020c) shows before-

and-after of rhinoplasty surgery and adds in the caption that “lifting and refining the nasal tip, straightening the profile, and removing the bump” made the woman’s nose “more aesthetic.”

Similarly, Ghavami (2020e) posts a before-and-after collage of a woman’s face captioned:

Facial Sculpting Before + After

- Buccal fat removal

- Jawline Lipo

+ fat transfer to the high cheekbones

For a more modellesque contoured look, buccal fat removal is a great option to remove fat from the cheeks to show case those cheekbones with no bleeding or trauma.

Buccal fat removal is a popular procedure amongst many models and celebrities. What this procedure does is highlight the definition in your cheekbones by removing unnecessary fat. #byeee 🙌

To further enhance your results you can add fat transfer to your cheekbones + undereyes for the ultimate #FaceGoal

Calling the resulting look “modellesque” implies that the facial presentation displayed in the “after” photo is more beautiful than that in the “before,” as models are positioned in society as the most beautiful of women. Furthermore, saying that this procedure is “popular among many models and celebrities” reinforces the idea that beauty can be bought and “buccal fat removal” is how a woman can look as pretty as a model. The description of “high” and “defined” cheekbones is in line with the Instagram Face. Deeming this look “the ultimate #FaceGoal” situates these characteristics as what every woman should strive to achieve.

Photosets showcasing the results of plastic surgery reveal a trend of lips plumping, jawlines sharpening, and noses thinning. The before-and-after photos present a bias toward a specific type of facial presentation as the “before” images typically show a face that does not align with Instagram Face and the “after” images routinely display one embodying Instagram Face. This intensifies the pressure to conform to one, rigid female face type.

Plastic surgeons’ accounts reinscribe postfeminist notions of choice as they position undergoing cosmetic interventions as an individual choice a woman can make to improve her

circumstances. This notion is exemplified in a caption by Kosins (2020b) proclaiming, “This patient is so happy and said [getting a nose job] is the one of the best decisions she ever made!” However, these surgeons ignore the pressures of beauty culture that may lead a woman to make this decision. Furthermore, the fact that these plastic surgeons are men and are the ones doing the altering of female faces upholds the historical power of men to dictate ideal femininity. This power is exemplified through an image posted by Ghavami (2020a) consisting of a patient with surgical markings and himself with syringes and titles the female patient “the art” and the surgeon “the artist.” He implies that he, as a plastic surgeon, possesses the “skill and expertise” to enhance “problem areas.” This power also situates plastic surgeons as the expert figure central to the postfeminist makeover paradigm. These surgeons present themselves as a source of authority. Ourian (2021) does so by telling his followers that “when sculpting the face: every millimeter, every line, and every angle must be measured, evaluated and considered multiple times. It is this art and science that takes years to understand and even longer to master.” This caption implies that he has mastered “sculpting the face” to perfection, a feat that not everyone is capable of. This authority is accepted by women in the comment section of these pages which depict the surgeons as “life changers” and “miracle workers.”

Plastic surgeon’s accounts are an example of the makeover paradigm that dominates postfeminist media culture. The makeover paradigm holds that women who subject their appearance to reinvention and demonstrate ideal femininity find happiness and confidence as a result of this reinvention. This idea is exemplified in the way that Kassir (2020a, 2020c) ends every one of his before-and-after rhinoplasty posts with, “New nose, new life!” This portrayal of newfound happiness is also seen in a caption by Kosins (2020b) about a rhinoplasty patient: “At only 3 months she looks so amazing and happy!” This surgeon also regularly posts patient

testimonials in which women praise him for giving them “the nose of [their] dreams.” Such testimonials include: “I am forever grateful for your amazing work.... I could not be happier!” and “I was able to take media photos for my school and had confidence to do so! I would have never been able to do this confidently before my surgery. Thank you!” These posts suggest that changing one’s physical appearance and undergoing a “transformation” or “makeover” will improve a woman’s life. According to Ghavami (2020b), the reasons for jawline contouring include to: “1. Feel confident, 2. Wear less makeup, 3. Stop using so many filters, 4. No more editing photos.” He does not reason this procedure as a way to better emulate the beauty standard or to be more beautiful to gaze upon. Rather, he makes the goals of the procedure personal to the women it targets to paint the picture that they are doing it entirely for themselves. This caption positions women as the ideal neoliberal subject—autonomous and empowered—but only as such by adhering their actions to what the Other wants. Plastic surgeons facilitate women in their quest for attractiveness (and consequently happiness and confidence) and perpetuate the idea that beauty comes in the form of products and services available for consumption, such as a “new” nose through rhinoplasty.

Additionally, these accounts reinforce the postfeminist notion that women should undergo intense self-discipline but still appear “unconcerned about their self-presentation” (Gill, 2007, p. 155). This notion is evident by the recurrent emphasis placed by these surgeons on the results to be “natural.” For example, Kosins (2020c) shows a patient before-and-after having a nose job and explains, “The goal was to leave a small convexity to the bridge and to also refine the tip so that the results would be as natural as possible. Even on her bottom view, there is absolutely no sign of #surgery.” Similarly, Ghavami (2020d) writes: “Sculpted and extremely natural, if someone were to meet her on the street they would not know she had a rhinoplasty.”

According to these posts, a woman should spend tens of thousands of dollars to do the work of femininity but must never disclose or admit that she has done so. Ghavami (2020c, 2020d) even has a trademarked hashtag, “KeepThemGuessing™,” that he often includes in his captions, reinforcing the postfeminist need for women to not appear like they have worked to look how they do, as that would belittle the beautification process.

To conclude this discussion on plastic surgeon’s influence on women’s self-presentation, I would like to draw a parallel between historical, painful practices of female bodily-manipulation and the services provided to women by plastic surgeons. To do this I turn specifically to a video originally uploaded by Kourtney Kardashian and was re-posted by Diamond (2020). The video shows Kardashian undergoing a skincare treatment by Diamond and adds that she “felt like being tortured today by @drjasondiamond.” Diamond adds “beauty hurts” in the caption. These statements reinforce the idea that the services performed by plastic surgeons on women to achieve Instagram Face are examples of “ideals of female beauty that can only be met through painful processes of physical manipulation” that “have always been with us, from tiny feet in imperial China to wasp waists in nineteenth-century Europe” (Tolentino, 2019, para. 7).

Chapter 8: Implications of Fillers and Filters for Feminism

In this thesis, I have argued that Instagram Face disseminates “a multiplicity of ideas, techniques, images, practices, products, and surgical interventions relating to the maximization of visual capital” (Elias & Gill, 2018, p. 75). I identify this variety as “aestheticizing” virtual reality filters, makeup tutorials, Kylie Package promotions, celebrity call-out accounts, and plastic surgeons. As discussed, these artifacts are structured on postfeminist and neoliberal ethics which produce behaviors of self-objectification and body-surveillance and invite strategies of self-presentation located in the consumer market.

Standards of beauty, including Instagram Face, “describe in precise terms the relationship that an individual will have to her own body” (Dworkin, 1974, p. 113). This thesis shows how exposure to this specific beauty standard could exacerbate how much women criticize their physical appearance. I have argued that Instagram Face is predicated on the “relentless beauty surveillance, labour and optimal transformation through consumption” of a postfeminist and neoliberal moment (Elias & Gill, 2018, p. 60). The regime of Instagram Face which involves self-objectification, body-surveillance, and particular strategies of self-presentation places women’s bodies under a patriarchal regulatory gaze. This thesis expands feminist research contending that beauty practices are not a woman’s individual choice, but an important aspect of women’s oppression. As feminist philosopher Marilyn Frye (1983) writes:

Trying to make sense of one’s own feelings, motivations, desires, ambitions, actions and reactions without taking into account the forces which maintain the subordination of women to men is like trying to explain why a marble stops rolling without taking friction into account. What feminist theory is about, to a great extent, is just identifying those forces... and displaying the mechanics of their applications to women as a group (or caste) and to individual women. The measure of success of the theory is just how much sense it makes of what did not make sense before. (p. xi)

I have identified some of these “forces which maintain the subordination of women to men” as Kylie Package promotions, celebrity call-out accounts, and plastic surgeons on Instagram.




Postfeminism dismisses the idea that women are victims who are coerced into beauty practices. It instead features a rhetoric enmeshed in neoliberal notions of agency, choice, and empowerment that place women as “knowledgeable consumers who [can] exercise their power of choice in the market” and insists that this autonomy makes it so that beauty practices are no longer oppressive to women (Jeffreys, 2005, p. 6). I argue instead that postfeminist media culture is ignorant to the forces, such as those discussed in this thesis, that enact women’s conformity to the beauty practices of femininity.

Postfeminism proposes that altering one’s appearance can bring a woman happiness and confidence. However, it is important to consider where one’s idea of what is beautiful comes from and whether the happiness derived from doing so is determined by how her own appearance aligns with that internalized idea of beauty. As this thesis demonstrates, many women on Instagram internalize one form of female facial beauty and weigh their happiness based on how closely their features align with it, evidenced by user commentary that is admiring of and aspirational towards Instagram Face and the patient testimonials that proclaim their newfound happiness from changing their nose, plumping their lips, etc. It is of course very difficult to distinguish one’s genuine wants and needs from those which society has conditioned one to believe are one’s own. This thesis points out some of the messages that women are exposed to on Instagram every day that may blur that line. If altering one’s looks for the sake of beauty is not a woman’s true choice—which I have argued it is not—then it does not reflect the values of feminism, even if it is cloaked in a narrative of choice and autonomy as it is within postfeminist media culture. With that being said, the intention of this thesis is not to render

women powerless. As hooks (1984) insists, “feminist ideology should not encourage (as sexism has done) women to believe they are powerless” (p. 93). It should instead “clarify for women the powers they exercise daily and show them ways these powers can be used to resist sexist domination and exploitation.” This thesis conceptualizes women’s relationships to their bodies within Instagram as a reflection of the societally-constructed ideals of femininity in order to highlight the need for “acts against oppression” to “become integral with self, motivated and empowered from within” (Lorde, 1984, p. 58).

As apparently the first study examining Instagram Face, this thesis maps out a way of critically thinking about the phenomenon. The value that the digital world of Instagram places on women’s appearance makes it hard for female users to resist beauty practices of femininity. Instagram Face is a beauty standard that all but necessitates cosmetic surgery. The way that the app offers women daily metrics that inform them how they are performing visually on the market and provide instant physical validation in the form of a “like” requires women to edit their faces and use needles and filler in order to fit in. Despite being enforced through guises of empowerment and choice, the expectations of women to partake in self-objectification, body-surveillance, and strategies of self-presentation to conform to beauty ideals reinforce sexual difference and both demonstrate and maintain the subordination of women.

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- Kiss Aesthetics [@kiss_aesthetics]. (2017b, June 14). **FACIAL SLIMMING & DEMASCULINIZATION* Chin and / or Jaw Filler - •achieves a more feminine jawline immediately slimming the face* [Photographs]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/BVVF5M5CgvKH/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Kiss Aesthetics [@kiss_aesthetics]. (2017c, July 24). **Chin Augmentation * This procedure immediately re balances the face and is the perfect treatment for those with; - an* [Photographs]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/BW77fIsAT6P/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Kiss Aesthetics [@kiss_aesthetics]. (2017d, August 22). *Client Selfie Registered practitioner - trained by a doctor with 20 years’ experience in dermal fillers. We are safe, insured,* [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/BYGtziAA0Gi/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Kiss Aesthetics [@kiss_aesthetics]. (2017e, September 2). *Jawline G O A L S 💖 Non Surgical Jawline/Chin Augmentation 📍 To enhance a weak jaw/chin and define the jawline* [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/BYjL0QPHpIB/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

- Kiss Aesthetics [@kiss_aesthetics]. (2017f, September 4). *Just look at how refreshed she looks. Typical example of how such subtle changes can COMPLETELY change your face.* - [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/BYohEA8nt1S/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Kiss Aesthetics [@kiss_aesthetics]. (2017g, September 28). *The Kylie Package focusing on the cheeks, jaw and chin to CONTOUR DEFINE AND SLIM TOTAL:3 ML filler 📌 Time* [Photographs]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/BZmVfXmHWLv/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Kiss Aesthetics [@kiss_aesthetics]. (2017h, October 7). *This is an illusion created by ADDING filler strategically to REDUCE the appearance of jowls/double chin. Filler placed anteriorly in* [Photographs]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/BZ9ZqBKmqST/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Kiss Aesthetics [@kiss_aesthetics]. (2017i, November 29). *The 'Kylie' package put together BY MYSELF (YES EVERYONE HAS COPIED US) 🤔🤔🤔 SWIPE 📌 TO SEE BEFORE* [Photographs]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/BcGDXJ5numb/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Kiss Aesthetics [@kiss_aesthetics]. (2018a, January 3). *There are no words to describe how much we enjoy doing chins. Such a small procedure can give the illusion* [Photographs]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/BdfyQSxH7AT/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Kiss Aesthetics [@kiss_aesthetics]. (2018b, July 13). *The K Y L I E. As performed on Megan from love island. What can we do with the Kylie* [Photographs]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/BIMBeNKHVJ-/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Kiss Aesthetics [@kiss_aesthetics]. (2018c, August 11). *Just a reminder, always be kind, and never judge. We all have different soul food. For some that may be* [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/BmVY6QbnxQ/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Kiss Aesthetics [@kiss_aesthetics]. (2018d, October 3). *Forget the perceived stigma of undergoing a cosmetic procedure - the stigma is old news now. Medical aesthetics is a* [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Boe85QrnwV2/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Kiss Aesthetics [@kiss_aesthetics]. (2018e, October 30). *Won't cheek filler make me fat ?! NO absolutely not. It creates a cheek bone that for many is not* [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/BpjKxYqnX1Z/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
- Kiss Aesthetics [@kiss_aesthetics]. (2018f, December 6). *Before——>After 🌟 Don't get too set on what treatments you would like - as they may not be what* [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/BrC3VLenAeV/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Kiss Aesthetics [@kiss_aesthetics]. (2019a, July 28). *Personalised Package including jawline and cheek augmentation. We would recommend 2ml minimum for the cheeks (1ml each)*, [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/B0eN_pTHYok/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Kiss Aesthetics [@kiss_aesthetics]. (2019b, October 1). *Before—>After 🌟 Profile Harmonising for our beautiful client using 4 ml spread across the Lips, Cheeks, and nose. 🌟 Please* [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/B3FpclhHbD-/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Kiss Aesthetics [@kiss_aesthetics]. (2019c, October 7). *The Ogee curve is the soft 's' shaped curve of the cheek that can be seen from an oblique angle* [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/B3VGOEBn86O/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Kiss Aesthetics [@kiss_aesthetics]. (2019d, October 10). *Why choose Kiss? 🌟 We are a team of specialist doctors, nurses and therapists that will treat you as an* [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/B3cM4BKnrKe/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Kiss Aesthetics [@kiss_aesthetics]. (2020a, July 29). *A pronounced or angled jawline can be aesthetically pleasing. 🌟 In women, especially, a heart shaped face is often associated* [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CDPOxUbHF5C/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Kiss Aesthetics [@kiss_aesthetics]. (2020b, March 20). *Off work? Now is the perfect time to invest in YOU. Over the coming weeks I am going to be* [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/B981ZFGHruX/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Kiss Aesthetics [@kiss_aesthetics]. (2020c, March 5). *Something bothering you but not quite sure what? Sometimes all you are looking for is a little profile balancing to* [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/B9XZuH-nBdv/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Kohli, N. [@nadjmabeauty]. (2021, April 11). *Bella eyes Hack 💖* [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/reel/CNiH DU3IatK/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Kosins, A. [@aaronkosinsmd]. (2020a, May 7). *Great example of a typical #rhinoplasty patient I see in my #plasticsurgery practice. Overall this patient had a large #nose* [Photographs]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/B_5D3_GjeyN/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Kosins, A. [@aaronkosinsmd]. (2020b, August 21). *🔥 Happy #friyay everyone! Super excited to show you this 3 month #rhinoplasty result. This patient is so happy and* [Video and Photographs]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CEJy6LJ1k5/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

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- Marjan [@youngcouture_]. (2020b, June 18). 🥰 *How to get bigger looking lips 🥰 • take any cream contour and contour around your lips!!!! • this helps give* [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CBIXxTHnclY/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
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Appendix

Presence of Instagram Face Elements in the Facial Self-Presentation of the 50 Most-Followed Models on Instagram

User	Name	Uplifted, catlike eyes	Full lips	Defined, chiseled cheekbones	Strong projected chin	Flat platform beneath chin	Defined, chiseled jawline	Absence of lines/wrinkles	Straight, upturned nose	High eyebrows	Shallow, voluminous tear troughs	Absence of acne	Total Yes	IG face %
@kendalljenner	Kendall Jenner	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/11	100%
@gigihadid	Gigi Hadid	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/11	100%
@caradelevigne	Cara Delevingne	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	9/11	82%
@bellahadid	Bella Hadid	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/11	100%
@chrissyteigen	Chrissy Teigen	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/11	100%
@haileybeiber	Hailey Bieber	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	9/11	82%
@emrata	Emily Ratajowski	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	10/11	91%
@chiaraferragni	Chiara Ferragni	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/11	100%
@gisele	Gisele Bündchen	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	8/11	73%
@realbarbarapalvin	Barbara Palvin	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/11	100%
@taylor_hill	Taylor Hill	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	10/11	91%
@angelcandices	Candice Swanepoel	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	10/11	91%
@irinashayk	Irina Shayk	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	9/11	82%
@alexisren	Alexis Ren	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/11	100%
@adrianalima	Adriana Lima	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/11	100%
@mirandakerr	Miranda Kerr	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	8/11	73%
@rosiehw	Rosie Huntington Whiteley	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	8/11	73%
@ashleygrahm	Ashley Graham	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/11	100%
@alessandraambrosio	Alessandra Ambrosio	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/11	100%
@naomi	Naomi Campbell	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/11	100%
@karliekloss	Karlie Kloss	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	10/11	91%
@winnieharlow	Winnie Harlow	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/11	100%
@heidiklum	Heidi Klum	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	6/11	55%
@sarasampaio	Sara Sampaio	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	9/11	82%
@tyrabanks	Tyra Banks	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	9/11	82%
@romeestrijd	Romee Strijd	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/11	100%
@sofiarichie	Sofia Richie	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	9/11	82%
@wolfecindy	Cindy Kimberly	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/11	100%
@doutzen	Doutzen Kroes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	9/11	82%
@oliviapalermo	Olivia Palermo	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	8/11	73%
@hoskelsa	Elsa Hosk	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/11	100%
@josephineskriver	Josephine Skriver	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/11	100%
@kateupton	Kate Upton	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	9/11	82%
@behatiprinsloo	Behati Prinsloo	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/11	100%
@kaiaigerber	Kaia Gerber	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	10/11	91%
@pampitaoofficial	Carolina Ardohain	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	9/11	82%
@i_am_kiko	Kiko Mizuhara	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/11	100%
@luisanalopilato	Luisana Lopilato	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	7/11	64%
@lilyaldrige	Lily Aldridge	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/11	100%
@stellamaxwell	Stella Maxwell	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/11	100%
@liuwenlw	Liu Wen	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/11	100%
@cindycrawford	Cindy Crawford	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	8/11	73%
@izabelgoulart	Izabel Goulart	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/11	100%
@iskra	Iskra Lawrence	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	10/11	91%
@jastookes	Jasmine Tookes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	10/11	91%
@goldenbarbie	Jasmine Sanders	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/11	100%
@lilyrose_depp	Lily Rose Depp	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	9/11	82%
@stefaniegiesinger	Stefanie Giesinger	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	10/11	91%
@thylaneblondeau	Thylane Blondeau	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11/11	100%
@parisjackson	Paris Jackson	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	9/11	82%
Total Yes		32/50 (64%)	43/50 (86%)	50/50 (100%)	50/50 (100%)	50/50 (100%)	50/50 (100%)	42/50 (84%)	39/50 (78%)	42/50 (84%)	49/50 (98%)	50/50 (100%)		