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Colonization of the Woman's Body: *Sociological Analysis*

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INTRODUCTION

In a rhetorical sense, technology in the advent of modernity was seen as a concept to liberate man from nature or superstitions. Therefore, the quest for technology and its various forms is unbound and continuous. However, the current status of technologies can be analyzed as exerting an outstanding impact on the bodies of those subject to them, robbing them of their creativity and having led to standardization and homogenization in society. Modern technology is re-imposing traditional belief systems of beauty. This conception of modernity can be located in the examination of the consequences that enhancement technologies have caused women to go under the knife and equate their outer appearances with both their self-confidence and ability to improve their social and personal relationships. Technologies have therefore led women to fall into a kind of barbarism of cyborgs. Also, women who change their bodies in line with dominant ideals of beauty frequently achieve a greater sense of power and control over their physical selves and social life, even though they might be reinforcing gendered norms that are disadvantageous to women as a group.

The Indian Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons suggests that the demand for cosmetic surgery¹ from 2010 onwards has never been greater despite the financial recession of the last decade, there has been a high rise amongst people especially women to undergo cosmetic plastic surgery.² The American Society of Plastic Surgeons advocates that 15.6 million people in the U.S. underwent some type of aesthetic procedure in 2014, with an increase of 3 percent from 2013 both surgical and non-surgical procedures. One of the highest demands and increased trends was lifting and tightening up body parts after massive weight loss, and by this more and more people opted for weight-loss surgery. It has been reported that 92 percent of the patients were women, however certain procedures are becoming increasingly common among men. The highest range of people to opt for cosmetic surgeries are between the ages of 40 to 54. Some of the procedures that are gaining demand among women are breast lift and augmentation,

1 The words 'plastic surgery', 'cosmetic/aesthetic surgery and enhancement technologies have been used correspondingly; however as the word suggests, the meanings might differ but both words are used synonymously in the literature and often mean an aesthetic procedure and a corrective procedure.

²Indian Association of Aesthetic Surgeons.Iaaps.net. Retrieved 16 March 2017, from <http://www.iaaps.net/inner.php?cid=2>.

rhinoplasty³, liposuction, eyelid surgery, facelift, tummy tuck, dermabrasion⁴, butt lift and augmentation and botox.⁵

As stated above, 92% of the people who resort to plastic surgery are women. This means that women's bodies in society are colonized by the cosmetic surgery industry. The ascent in the ubiquity of cosmetic surgery magnifies just a single sort of beauty and bars numerous women from continually achieving this perfection and idealism, so while women may feel empowered about themselves, cosmetic procedures go about as a type of absorption into the idealism that exists broadly, because the demonstration of cosmetic surgery strengthens the beauty standards. With cosmetic surgery, this hegemonic perfection or standard is turning out to be more feasible, and in this manner, a few women alter their characters and identities that are molded by various reasons such as ethnicity, age, body shape, wrinkles, and so on, and this, in turn, creates a homogenized group that recognizes "others" as deviant.

Therefore, society keeps on tolerating significant body changes from aesthetic surgery, it is hazy what else society will acknowledge and underwrite with a specific end goal to accomplish the beauty norm. It is essential to inspect why is turning into a worthy beauty apparatus, why cosmetic surgery is turning into a worthy beauty apparatus, and why women are the biggest buyers of plastic surgery?

The rationale behind working on this topic is because we live in a social world that is obsessed with looks, this is manifested in ways such as only if someone had that better-looking body part, they could achieve more in life, have more confidence, get over their intimacy issues and so forth, well not to forget that being better or the best is culturally defined and this conception is especially driven into women, who are constantly worried about their appearance exhibits the length they're prepared to go to change the way they look, even compelling them to go under the knife. These women opt for augmentations due to numerous reasons such as - self-improvement, hoping to get a better body image in society or because they want to please their spouse or partner. Nonetheless, one can also notice as a sociologist that it may be because of the hegemony of the ever-advancing biotechnologies that have imprisoned women into an iron-cage structure, making them feel more and more insecure about the way they look, which ultimately causes

³ Commonly known as a nose job

⁴ Commonly known as body polishing

⁵ Retrieved from (2015). CBS News.

them to resort to extreme makeovers and enforcing them believe that ‘if they might have a better face or body, life in the private/public sphere would be a lot easier. Besides these hypotheses and also as a sociologist, it is necessary to examine a “social phenomenon” from a multi-dimensional perspective. Apart from this, there is not much literature written based on the experiences of women, specifically Indian women that compel them to visit beauty clinics for body alterations. Therefore, it would be interesting to analyze the real reason or individual experiences (moral, social or personal) of women to examine “why they opt for body augmentation”.

1.2 Objectives

The objective of my research is to analyze and understand-

- The experiences of women who undergo and who have undergone body augmentation. Also, personal and social reasoning of why they decide for body augmentation.
- Whether the current technological innovations are influencing the conventional notions of beauty.
- To understand the political and social context of the emergence of ‘ideal’ beauty.

1.3 Research Questions

- What are the experiences and anxieties of those women who seek enhancement technologies such as cosmetic surgery for the alteration of their looks?
- How have these notions of beauty emerged in the social world? Who decides such notions of beauty that force women to go under the knife?

1.4 Methodology

In any given research, methodology plays a crucial role. Research methodology helps the researcher in gathering information, collecting data, arranging chronologically, participating in the fieldwork, use of statistical tools, designing questionnaires, recording evidence etc. Nevertheless, this study comprises both primary and secondary data to help the researcher to

study the experiences of women who are adopting or have adopted enhancement technologies, whether the current technological innovations are influencing the conventional notions of beauty, and To understand the political and social context of the emergence of beauty. The dissertation will study and analyze the effects of technology both positively and negatively that it has on the beauty industry and try to link it to the broader social context with the help of various sociological theories.

(A) Research Plan

To enable me to understand more about the advancements of enhancement technologies whether it has a positive or negative effect on the beauty industry, experiences of women undergoing or undergone enhancement, cosmetic surgeries that are influencing the conventional notions of beauty and the influence of the political and social context of the emergence of beauty, had collected primary data by conducting a thick description, Semi-structured, in-depth interview and reviewed literature as the secondary data collection method. In-depth interviews will be conducted with a sample size of 10 Indian women, divergent in age, ethnicity, race and sexual orientation from various beauty clinics in Delhi NCR.

(B) Tools and Techniques

In the process of collecting data, tools and techniques come into functional use in exploring various questions related to the field. In this thesis, a thick description, Semi-structured, in-depth interviews have been carried out to study the experiences of women.

(C) Selected Methods

1) Thick Description and In-depth Interview

By using these methods, the aim is to try to study the experiences of women, and how has cosmetic surgery helped them in modifying their self-image. What have their experience and reasons been opting to go under the knife?

2) Literature Review

Studies around cosmetic surgeries in India are not substantial. However, studies around the same in other nations are carried in out wide numbers. Analyses around studies have been made, which are related to self; beauty and technology, to understand the effects and notions of beauty that emerged in the social world. Who decides such notions of beauty that force women to go under the knife? What are the factors that are contributing to these beauty-related social changes? Thus an attempt will be made to make a connection between the data collected and the literature reviewed.

Chapter 1

'Beautification' of the Body and Enhancement Technologies

“Technologies of the self are the forms of knowledge and strategies that permit individuals to effect by their means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, to transform themselves to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.”

- Michel Foucault, Technologies of the Self (1988)

1.1 Technologized Bodies

"Technology" is routinely comprehended, as alluding to the factual utilization of procedures and information to constructive procedures is one of the real strengths to have undermined the productive essentialness of the body in modern times. However, it can be contended that the possibility of 'technological bodies', notwithstanding, recommends not only that the work-based and different backgrounds in which we live have turned out to be more innovatively and technologically influenced, but technological procedures and awareness have started entering, to colonize, remake and progressively rule and control the very substance of the body. This raises the likelihood that the spatial and practical courses of action of the natural properties of our bodies have been changed by the structures of society, and to a degree which challenges traditional thoughts of what it is to be and have a body.⁶

In the technological age, we will never again be reliant on time or space. Everything would be customized. Machines would comprehend and know us like any ordinary person would or even past that. The technological age implies that we have more options. We have control over what and when we desire.⁷

In the era of human-technology fusion,

“When one Bluetooth device communicates with another, the human body is a major obstacle,

⁶Shilling, C. (2005). *The Body in Culture, Technology and Society*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

⁷Negroponte, N. (2000). *Being digital* (1st ed.). New York: Knopf.

causing devices to drain their power since radio signals don't easily pass through the human tissue. But researchers at U.C. San Diego this year pioneered an alternative: a prototype of a way to use magnetic fields to turn the body into a vehicle to deliver magnetic energy between electronic devices.”⁸

Before the techno-human fusion happened, Bluetooth was used to transfer data from one technological device to another. However, with the ever-increasing social acceptance of technology, there is a discovery where a human body can act as a device in itself to help transfer data from one device to another. With this fusion of the two, one can agree that the human body is no longer just a ‘biological body’ rather the ‘body’ is being technologized to enable us to live beyond the limits.

The concept of Actor-Network-Theory⁹ exhibits that the "performers" in Actor-Network-Theory (ANT) are not simply humans rather they are technologically advanced devices and machines, these can be included when considering networks of collaborations and interactions that they have with other objects.

Thus, excluding these devices and machines from the framework means profoundly altering the nature of social structures. It is essential to understand that the way thoughts are deciphered and conveyed i.e. through communication systems, is similarly as vital as considering their "social setting."

The social is created; To study the 'social', we should begin with its destinations of generation such as cosmetic surgery clinics. Therefore, to study the social, it is essential to concentrate on the locations where advancements and innovations happen.

“And I came across skin resurfacing treatment in a TV advert, which made believe that there might be something out there for me to be able to look youthful again... if I get a chance to do this again and I would also like to do a body lift, so that not just my skin should look youthful but my body as well.”

⁸Brown, K. (2015). *The 7 most insane ways that tech-enhanced the human body in 2015*. Fusion.net. Retrieved 23 April 2017, from <http://fusion.net/the-7-most-insane-ways-that-tech-enhanced-the-human-bod-1793853808>.

⁹ANT is an approach to social theory and research originating in the field of science studies, which treats objects as a part of the social network. Latour, B. (2005). *Reassembling the Social* (1st ed.). Oxford: OUP Oxford.

To the reason why women resort to the technological invasion of the body to bring about enhancement and how media plays an important role in the social structure, it is essential to understand the social settings in which these technologies and devices are developed, which also have an impact in constructing the social. Therefore, the interaction and relationship of the individual with the device or technology utilized are what determines the various forms of society.

The 'social' cannot just be understood in isolation with just a human-to-human interaction, rather it is crucial to analyze the various networks and connections that link human beings and objects in a given social structure.

Technology is a technique for expanding and deploying our human functions and work, which has been developing globally in the historical past. There is a differentiation in our interplay with technology and it is of two types i.e. reason-driven and socio-culturally determined actions. Technology permits people to extend their innate and instinctive capacities to be more effective and fruitful. Along these lines, technology cannot really be associated with its historical past and political setting, as it is human instinct to attempt to perform our vital errands with less exertion to a feasible extent.

Moreover, technology cannot be completely regarded as being an element of the structure of suppression in society.

“During the 1960s, the drug thalidomide, formerly used as a sedative, was found to produce congenital deformities in children when taken by the mother during early pregnancy. Children were commonly born with the absence of the long bones of the arms, with the legs and feet often also being affected. The Limb Fitting Centre at Roehampton, London, creates and fits prosthetic limbs for children affected by thalidomide.”¹⁰

The use of technology to help built or design prosthetic limbs for children affected by thalidomide is an effective approach to give access to children to walk or to carry out daily activities like any abled person would do. Thus, technology cannot always be seen as repressive rather on the optimistic side, technology gives them opportunities and enables social

¹⁰Wolbring, G. *Obsolescence and body technologies*, Dilemata Int. J. App. Ethics 2010, 2, 67–83.

development, which was previously closed to them. With prosthetic limbs, these children can go to regular school along with able-bodied children rather than being home-schooled.

One can say that *“Disabled people perceive enhancements as highly beneficial and not immoral”*.

Therefore, technology will dependably remain a noteworthy piece of society and our association and relation with technology will just change as our way of life changes around it.¹¹

“Gone are the days when technology was majorly used for the “impaired” to develop prostheses or for individuals who had lost a body part due to a disease or accident to restore their mobility or motility. While now, as society is aiming toward a cyborg universe, cyber-technologies and science are being incorporated trying to fuse the brain and body with machines, making the human form, like our phones, our cars, and remote controllers rather just a bit more high-tech.”

Hence, the issue in society is not just the plenitude of technology and innovation or our reliance on it, rather it is the way we utilize innovation to connect with society. There is nothing oppressive or repressive about technological and innovative developments and the routes in which it associated with us socio-culturally, rather our issues with innovation and technology originate from dis-adjustments and imbalances in the ways we utilize it.¹²

1.2 Body as a Source of Technology

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels construct their hypothesis of humankind in light of a perspective of the body as a constructive origin of innovative intercessions and mediation into nature. Human beings were a segment of, yet were additionally separate from, nature, and individuals' capacity to externalize and embody themselves, and their environment empowered them to create devices and techniques that could start to change the innate world in accordance to their own particular ideas. As the techniques utilized did not simply change nature, but rather prompted quick and longer-term changes in the structure and advancement of the body, these advancements and expansion additionally included certain physical changes in what it intended to be human.

¹¹Habermas, J. (1970). Technology and science as ideology. *Toward a rational society*, 81(122), 107.

¹²Habermas, J. (1970). Technology and science as ideology. *Toward a rational society*, 81(122), 107.

“Earlier, technology was not just seen as a high-tech force or scientific computerization rather technology comprised of materials that could be implemented by man to control or utilize nature based on his basic necessities. However, with the invasion of technology and the digitalization process of the human body, the body is no longer a ‘natural’ entity. Initially, the technology was visible as a force or device utilized outside the body, such as a remote controller but now, technology itself has undergone a transformation and is viewed as a technique that has started to invade the human body i.e. a pacemaker¹³.”

Gorge Simmel gives us a different approach to this way to deal with the connection between the body, innovation and nature. The supposition that the body is described by limits and confinements, he contends that the human limits sensory creativity and estimations don't just compel what we can do, but rather permit us to amplify innovatively some of these substantial breaking points. Individuals have historically skilled this by figuring out how to use natural and inorganic matter to upgrade their versatility, flexibility and neurological range. Moreover, The body may compound as a source of innovation, yet history demonstrates that advancements have become ingrained in traditions, strategies and societal structures that appear to write themselves on the activities and characters of embodied people and regularly seem rigid to new eras. These technological artifacts, conditions, and innovatively upgraded structures have been broken down as having the possibility to limit individual arrangements, strengthen social imbalances and exploit individuals, and devastate groups in society.¹⁴

“Technology, body and nature can be interlinked by viewing since nature has limited the body to an extent, technology, on the other hand, pushes the body beyond the limits. This is clearly visible with the invention of the bionic eye (the Argus II)¹⁵, this device is used to restore some vision to patients who are blind as a result of a rare condition called retinitis pigmentosa, it is used on patients with the most common cause of sight-loss.”

Furthermore, this can be seen inside the tangled connection between innovation, society, and history, in which neither innovation regulates society nor does society write the procedure of

¹³A small electrical machine put inside a person to make the heart beat evenly. *Definition of PACEMAKER*. Merriam-webster.com. Retrieved 23 April 2017, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pacemaker>.

¹⁴Shilling, C. (2005). *The Body in Culture, Technology and Society*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

¹⁵Brown, K. (2015). *The 7 most insane ways that tech enhanced the human body in 2015*. Fusion.net. Retrieved 23 April 2017, from <http://fusion.net/the-7-most-insane-ways-that-tech-enhanced-the-human-bod-1793853808>.

innovative change.

Human bodily functions; both mental and physical are continuously being more and more influenced by science and technology. Such forms of “human enhancement”, in specific “human enhancement technologies” (HET), are being utilized, advanced or visualized in numerous sectors of practice as broad as assistive technologies for disabled people, pharmacology, military research, reproductive medicine and sports.¹⁶

The technological ability to modify biology, along with the social conditions and cultural expectations that enable such transformations, derives from a range of techniques that augment bodily forms and functions. These techniques, collectively known as enhancement technologies, aim to improve human characteristics, including appearance and mental or physical functioning, often beyond what is ‘normal’ or necessary for life and well-being.

As innovations in biomedicine and bioengineering are modifying, there is more demand to alter biological forms and functions in the body. A belief in the technological ability to improve the body’s natural capabilities along with cultural assumptions about what is considered to be “deficient,” “normal,” or “enhanced” has led to a variety of body-altering techniques that not only repair or replace functions; but may go beyond what is typically considered therapeutic medical intervention. In essence, the ability exists to redesign the human body according to particular needs and desires, altering or building in new features.¹⁷

“A woman undergoing enhancement surgery for the sake of getting her breasts augmented is a type of enhancement that goes beyond the therapeutic medical process. She is getting her body redesigned and customized to feel complete and feminine according to the hegemonic ideals of beauty. She is changing the ‘biological’ form of her body. In such a case, there is no ‘repairing or restoring’ the body, rather it is an invitation of ‘human enhancement technologies’. Such surgeries are not necessary to sustain life, by preference it is a matter of desires being fulfilled through bio-technological advancements.”

¹⁶Institute for Technology Assessment and Systems Analysis (ITAS), Research Centre Karlsruhe, Rathenau Institute,.. (2009). *HUMAN ENHANCEMENT STUDY*. Brussels, © European Parliament, 2009: EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT Science and Technology Options Assessment STOA.

¹⁷Hogle, L. (2005). Enhancement Technologies and the Body. *Annu. Rev. Anthropol.*,34(1), 695-716.

1.3 The Body as a Commodity

Technological forces have applied a noteworthy effect on the bodies and situations of individuals. In utilizing technology to change their condition, people have started to change themselves and their physical limits.

“Women suffering from excessive weight problems often opt to undergo liposuction or fat removal processes because, for them, surgery is the easiest way to lose weight that goes beyond their physical limits by restricting themselves to strict diets and exercises. They believe that if everything else fails, science and technology is the last resort that would surely help them to achieve, what they otherwise cannot or could not achieve through comparatively more ‘natural’ lifestyle.”¹⁸

The current status of cyber-technological advances, be that as it may, has been seen by many as applying a remarkable effect on the assemblages of those subject to them, denying them of their innovativeness and productive noteworthiness for society. On account of cyborgs, plastic surgery and genetic engineering, together with the developing number of courses in which machines can be attached to the flesh, appear to be at times to prompt ever-more profound incorporation of social standards and monetary objectives into the bodies of those subject to them.

“After getting a laser treatment done for about 4-5 hours and getting the dressing removed after 2 hours of rest, post-surgery. I could not imagine how my face would look. I was just wondering if will I look ‘normal’ again. What will people think? Will I be able to work again? What about my marriage or prospects? I felt bad because of my face. However, these cosmetic surgeries helped my face to look as it was before or probably, as people say, I’ve started to look better, post-surgery.”¹⁹

This depicts that to oneself in society, one is forced to upgrade oneself by going under the knife. Beauty technology or science enables a person to transform every body part they like, in order to feel complete and acceptable both in personal and professional life alike and such process enforces and reinforces social standards of beauty. These technological instruments help to shape social relations and everyday life. In order for her to ‘cure’ her face, she thought surgery is the

¹⁸For further study, read Appendix 2

¹⁹For further study, read Appendix 2

only permanent and fastest option to do so.

The globalization of the body is attached to the globalization of medication and innovation itself: the medication of today includes a globalized movement of patients looking for cures in geologically far-off, cutting-edge research institutes of drug and medicine; of nutrition and fitness experts looking for predominant settings for practice and better financial benefits; of the gigantic flow of pharmaceuticals and medicinal apparatus pulled into the worldwide economy.²⁰

The socially developed feeling of the body as "anatomy or pathological examination" and as a site for therapeutic and technical intercession and innovation, there has been a considerable measure of consideration and analysis on the body and has been a subject to the dominance of medicine, supervision and control, since the historical past. Sociological investigation of the body challenges the biomedical model as a method for understanding the importance of the body and its disorder and shows how the body is as much a socially developed entity as it is one which grasps a particular anatomical frame. The medicalization²¹ and the therapeutic look are articulations of the innovations of force and power that control the body as a principled, clinical and scientific entity.²²

“The body is being invaded by divergent forms of technology and science and the world of cosmetic surgery and physical therapy has transformed dramatically over the years with the coming of new kinds of technical innovations. Such as, corsets were used in the historical past, during the Victorian era (16th Era) because the beauty of a woman was considered based on the size of her waistline, which was a long process to get the desired waistline, however now, women are undergoing hourglass surgeries in order to achieve the desired beauty standards because such a process is easier and quicker to achieve. Thus, the social order determines or forms existing beauty standards and how the body should be created and reshaped in order to look feminine, whether surgically or non-surgically. Nevertheless, with the existence of cosmetic surgery, the body turns into a scientific entity that requires invasion or control to make it fit in as society desires.”

²⁰Brown, N. & Webster, A. (2004). *New medical technologies and society* (1st ed.). Cambridge: Polity.

²¹‘Medicalization’ is a process through which the 'medical gaze' defines the objects under its scrutiny. Foucault uses this phrase to describe the sense in which the patient is subject to medical inspection. In this process we give control of our bodies to medical experts and as such we are in this sense de-centered from our bodies: they become objects for others

²² Brown, N. & Webster, A. (2004). *New medical technologies and society* (1st ed.). Cambridge: Polity.

The commodification of the female body and how it is abused in the beauty "market" can be examined as the fixation of achieving that "perfect" female face and "flawless" female body through methods for human enhancement surgeries and thereafter resorting to commodity fetishism²³ that is exhibited as finishing the look of what it "signifies" to be a 'she' by buying branded and designer commodities.²⁴

“Reality shows such as ‘Extreme Makeover’²⁵ exhibits ordinary women who are unhappy with their look, undergo surgeries to look ‘better’ and ‘attractive’ by upgrading their face and body parts. Every part of the body is seen as an entity that can be commoditized through surgeries, fashion brands, advertisements and drama serials. Such as, ‘ I came across skin resurfacing treatment in a TV advert, which made me believe that there might be something out there for me to be able to look youthful again.’²⁶ Female bodies are being objectified as a substance that can be changed or reshaped like a commodity and are sold to the female consumer, who then further objectifies herself as a commodity.”

There is a tension amongst motherhood and sexuality, wherein a woman who has borne babies will urgently endeavor to conceal her body made prominent by childbirth, as it reduces her sexual character. Cosmetic surgery such as breast augmentation is promoted to correct sagging breasts, which are seen as unattractive survivals of motherhood.

Additionally, the universe of popular culture facilitates and adds to this social shame of the post-labor body. Surgery is consequently connected to sexuality—a methods for moving past a phase in a woman's life cycle, which denote the end of her reproductive stage, permitting her to rise again as a sexually attractive being.²⁷

“Similarly, after giving birth to two children, I thought undergoing abdominoplasty. My

²³ The idea of ‘commodity fetishism’ was denoted by Karl Marx, “a commodity appears at first sight an extremely obvious, trivial thing. But its analysis brings out that it is a very strange thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties”. Fetishism in anthropology refers to the primitive belief that godly powers can inhere in inanimate things (e.g., in totems). Marx borrows this concept to make sense of what he terms "commodity fetishism." As Marx explains, the commodity remains simple as long as it is tied to its use-value. Introduction to Karl Marx, Module on Fetishism. (2002). Cla.purdue.edu.<https://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/marxism/modules/marxfetishism.html>.

²⁴ Ambivalence, P. (2008).Commodification of the female body.WordPress. Retrieved from <https://boxedambivalence.wordpress.com/>

²⁵ To borrow it from ABC’s reality show, Extreme Makeover. (2002).

²⁶ For further study, read Appendix 2

²⁷ Edmonds, A. (2010). *Pretty modern*. Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press.

abdominal region had expanded to the extent that made me feel uncomfortable (both personally and socially) and made me feel old. After a week of post-surgery involving a lot of pain and inconvenience, I felt youthful again. And with youth, one always feels a lot more confident...the children are, worth every inconvenience and pain nonetheless this does not stop a mother from thinking whether or not anything can be done to improve such a 'problem'."²⁸

Therefore, having a post-baby belly, sagging breasts, stretch marks etc. are socially shamed because postpartum weight does not conform to the social standards of beauty. Social norms expect a mother, just after delivery or within six months to get back to 'shape', which would in turn enable her to regain her sexuality since a post-delivery body isn't seen as 'sexy' enough or a flabby/loose belly makes a woman lose her 'youthful' look.

There are too many adverts already and market promotions that talk about how can a mother get rid of her postpartum weight through various scientific inventions stating *'At first this might seem like an unnecessary expense for post-partum women, but the results you will see make the investment in your body and health worth every penny'*²⁹, such as abdominal binders³⁰ or diverse diet regimes and exercises. This exhibits that, motherhood is glorified nevertheless, the postpartum body shape that is attached to it, is often frowned upon.

Along these lines, bodily enhancement surgeries in the past were at one time a silent process where individuals who had, had gotten "work done" would eagerly deny it that at any point the process happened. However it has now turned into an across-the-world situation, transparently discussed, celebrated and a few superstars conversing with cameras about how it has helped their psychology and professional life.

"I love them so much, I had to talk about them...I'd feel better not to have some secret. It's much freer to say it and then you don't have to worry someone will dig it up." – Iggy Azalea on her boob job to E! (March 2015)³¹

²⁸For further study, read Appendix 2

²⁹*Benefits of wearing an abdominal binder.* (2016). *Bellefit Maternity*. Retrieved 24 April 2017, from <http://tpts://www.bellefit.com/blog/benefits-of-wearing-an-abdominal-binder/>

³⁰Abdominal binders keep the fetus in place and reduce stretch marks and softening of the abdominal wall after childbirth. *Benefits of wearing an abdominal binder.* (2016). *Bellefit Maternity*. Retrieved 24 April 2017, from <http://tpts://www.bellefit.com/blog/benefits-of-wearing-an-abdominal-binder/>.

³¹Gonzales, E. (2015). *16 CELEBRITIES ON PLASTIC SURGERY.* *Harper's BAZAAR*. Retrieved 24 April 2017, from <http://www.harpersbazaar.com/beauty/health/a10679/celebrities-on-plastic-surgery/>.

Technological advancements are moving rapidly. Bits and digitization have begun to change the character of media. Similarly, media will help in filling a platform between innovation and human beings.³²

Bodily enhancements and the business itself have covertly, unobtrusively sneaked into the lounges of homes through the TV, not through in-your-face promotions but rather with reality arrangement and dramatization serials. It is practically hard to avoid the tempest of advertisements for cosmetic surgeries on TV, or on live shows in view of aesthetic surgery. Bodies of women are being dissected on screens with a woman viewing everything as she sits on her couch set. Therefore, a woman's body has been commoditized both on and off the screen.³³

“Last year, I got married at the age of 45. And since, it was a special day in my life, I was bound to look perfect. Also, since my husband is a few years younger than me, I felt even more compelled to undergo surgery to look at least as old as he is or younger. And I came across skin resurfacing treatment in a TV advert, which made me believe that there might be something out there for me to be able to look youthful again.”

Women's bodies are commoditized on screen through various advertisements and reality serials such as ‘Extreme Makeover’, where each scene starts with a "wail" story, that comes to the line of the imminent "patient" communicating their disappointment with the way they look or their despondency with their dress size, and how they can accomplish more in life, have more certainty, get over their sexual issues, only if they "recently had that better looking" body part. Obviously, some portions of the producers’ ploy inspire watchers to identify and sympathize with the individual.

Women are commoditized off-screen when these women are influenced by these promotions and advertisements. They believe *“if this woman can have it or reverse the aging process, why can't I have it?”* they often are able to connect with women, who are facing negative body image. To put it *“I came across skin resurfacing treatment in a TV advert, which made me believe that there might be something out there for me to be able to look youthful again.”*³⁴

³²Negroponte, N. (2000). Being digital (1st ed.). New York: Knopf.

³³Ambivalence, P. (2008).Commodification of the female body.*WordPress*. Retrieved on 27th April 2017 from <https://boxedambivalence.wordpress.com/>.

³⁴ For further study, read Appendix 2

“However, the disadvantageous part of Botox injections is the temporality of the effect because it wears off after every 3-4 months, so the continuous process of undergoing a non-surgical enhancement like this is painful and expensive.”³⁵

The question lies here is, what happens when the aftereffects of the surgery start to disappear over a period, just like in the case mentioned above? It has accomplished a stage where it ends up evidently like manufacturing a product i.e. manufacturing and re-creating a body and identity and this process of creating and manufacturing is a vicious circle that most women fall prey to.³⁶

1.4 The Body Trap

Since the 1990’s cosmetic procedures have become extremely evident in society. Ever since then women have become the main consumers of cosmetic surgery and the main participant in popular culture. Cosmetic surgery provides a means to alter and “improve” people’s appearances. Women can augment breasts, diminish wrinkles, and get rid of "droopy" eyes; notwithstanding, on the grounds that just because technology and surgery is accessible, ought to women give up their personalities, character and identifications so as to fit in with the culturally defined hegemonic³⁷ or predominant perfect?³⁸

“I had been socially stigmatized when I was fat, which played up with my psychological and emotional health.”³⁹

Women who are overweight or fat are fat-shamed or bullied, which depicts that in order to conform or become acceptable in society, women are forced to attain the ‘ideal weight’, such as in the case above, the participant mentions that *“due to being overweight, I was unable to find a suitable groom to get married.”* By this, we can safely assume that she her desire for undergoing surgery (liposuction) is intrinsically connected to her *“finding a suitable groom to*

³⁵ For further study, read Appendix 2

³⁶ Ambivalence, P. (2008). Commodification of the female body. *WordPress*. Retrieved on 27th April 2017 from <https://boxedambivalence.wordpress.com/>. This is cited from Deleuze, G., Guttari, F. (1972) *“The I Desiring Machines”* in *Anti Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

³⁷ Denoted by Antonio Gramsci, the concept of "hegemony," or ideological domination. When one ideology, or worldview, dominates, it suppresses or stamps out, often cruelly, any other ways of explaining reality. *Antonio Gramsci and the idea of 'hegemony'*. (2017). *Www-personal.umich.edu*. Retrieved 7 April 2017, from <http://www-personal.umich.edu/%7Ehfox/gramsci.html>.

³⁸ Okopny, C. L. (2005). *Reconstructing women's identities: The phenomenon of cosmetic surgery in the United States* (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Florida).

³⁹ For further study, read Appendix 2

get married to.” Therefore, she had to lose 20 kilos surgically for her to fit into the ‘ideal weight’ hegemony and perfection. *“Someone advised me to get liposuction done”*, which means since surgery is the easiest option available; women are pressurized to go under the knife at the cost of losing their character, self and identity.

The consequences of aesthetic surgery frequently come to the detriment of a woman's individual character and identity.⁴⁰ Individuals who are willing to undergo such surgeries do not understand the risks and pain involved, just to make themselves re-invented. One can only be attracted to the performance of aesthetic surgeons on their use of power and ability to magically transform an “ugly” duckling into a “beautiful” swan.

*“If I get a chance to do this again and I would also like to do a body lift, so that not just my skin should look youthful but my body as well.”*⁴¹

*“A week of post-surgery involving a lot of pain and inconvenience, I could see a huge difference in my body and it was worth everything for me because I felt youthful again.”*⁴²

A participant who underwent a skin resurfacing surgery is already convinced and confident that she would want to undergo another surgery in order to enhance her body and identity. However, women like her more than often neither give a second thought about the health risks that are attached in the process of undergoing surgery and post-surgery period such as nerve damage, infections, scarring, hematoma⁴³, anesthesia complications⁴⁴ and so forth and nor are they well-informed about the risks that are attached to various surgeries. Also, women imagine, opting for cosmetic surgery is the ‘best thing’ they could ask for because they often believe that the magic knives, which the surgeon uses, has the power and ability to give them what they have always ‘desired’.

There is an implicit juggernaut that is gradually claiming an evident position in our present culture, becoming so normalized in media and cosmopolitan magazines, which are furthermore

⁴⁰Morgan, K. (1991). Women and the Knife: Cosmetic Surgery and the Colonization of Women's Bodies. *Hypatia*, 6(3), 25-53. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1991.tb00254.x>.

⁴¹ For further study, read Appendix 2

⁴² For further study, read Appendix 2

⁴³Hematoma is a pocket of blood that resembles a large, painful bruise. Schaefer, A., & Pletcher, P. (2015). The 10 Most Common Plastic Surgery Complications. Healthline. Retrieved 26 April 2017, from <http://www.healthline.com/health/most-common-plastic-surgery-complications>.

⁴⁴Schaefer, A., & Pletcher, P. (2015). The 10 Most Common Plastic Surgery Complications. Healthline. Retrieved 26 April 2017, from <http://www.healthline.com/health/most-common-plastic-surgery-complications>.

causing it to be perceived as “natural”.

Cosmopolitan magazine 1970 proclaimed that ‘surgically enhanced breasts have a better contour than the real thing seemed to reflect the mood of those women who used them to supplement rather than restore breast appearance.’⁴⁵

“I had always thought of undergoing breast enhancement surgery because I felt extremely unattractive with the size of my breasts... I desperately needed surgery because I could no longer deal with the teases and stress...after surgery, I feel as if I am complete as female gender, the breast size that I have right now is what I have desired throughout. I am able to fit into anything possible, which makes me feel even more confident and makes me look even more attractive.”⁴⁶

“I would highly recommend aesthetic surgeries to those who would want to enhance their look in any way because it definitely lifts up the attitude and confidence in public.”⁴⁷

In most circumstances ‘why do women undergo surgery?’ the reason was to live a ‘happy’ life, which disallowed them from encountering because of specific body parts that didn’t allow them to prior to surgery, which expresses that by getting surgery done, they are supplementing their desires and feelings through surgery.

Cosmetic surgeries were only made available to the elite class, however, such is not the case anymore; as there is a rise in the popularity of cosmetic surgery, there is also a rise in multitudes of people from the middle classes who have access to such procedures.

“I no longer have to worry about how my face looks because it is being taken care of by professionals...Botox is expensive and painful.”⁴⁸

Women who opt for surgery are no longer just the elite and rich thanmiddle-class women who have to make sacrifices in order to look ‘normal’ in society and believe that ‘normality’ can be restructured with professional help.

There are overabundances of aesthetic beauty clinics advertising these surgeries as affordable

⁴⁵Shilling, C. (2005).*The Body in Culture, Technology and Society*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

⁴⁶ For further study, read Appendix 2

⁴⁷ For further study, read Appendix 2

⁴⁸ For further study, read Appendix 2

and accessible and one can notice a wide range of these advertisements in magazines, newspapers, and hoardings, with headings such as “*be born again*”⁴⁹, “*we make fairytales come true*”⁵⁰, “*it will change more than your body*”⁵¹ etc. these taglines play with a person’s feelings in manifolds and attach enormous hope to their emotions. However, the language used by the beauty and the digital industry cannot only be criticized in terms of the qualities, shortcomings, precision or error of writings, rather subjective analysts should take examination at the social practices, portrayals, suppositions and stories about our lives that are uncovered in the style of these writings.⁵²

*“And I came across skin resurfacing treatment in a TV advert, which made me believe that there might be something out there for me to be able to look youthful again.”*⁵³

These writings speak volumes; we need the beauty industry and popular culture to tell us how we should look and how should we feel about ourselves, whether we fit or not fit into the norms of beauty. It’s ironic that we, as adults keep telling ourselves and each other how independent we are as human beings to rationalize our thoughts and feelings when in reality we are highly dependent on the market to tell us about our beauty status i.e. A fat person should feel or is made to feel inferior about his/her body, whereas a slim person is praised for not being “fat”. It raises questions, about whether can one ever fit in. Or whether the beauty norm is hyperbolized that it’s almost unachievable? Or probably the ever-pressurizing and hegemonic force to look ‘young.’ It’s a famous saying that, ‘*it’s a compliment if someone says that you don’t look your age, you look younger.*’ The need to consistently look youthful, deny women to embrace and be proud of the aging process their body goes through. Such kind of language tells us ‘*what a forty-year-old or a sixty-year-old woman should look like.*’

Taglines that are used in the advertisements are so persuasive and catchy that it induces women to change how they look and feel about themselves.

⁴⁹Murano, G. (2012). *10 Coolest Plastic Surgery Ad-ODDEE*. Retrieved from *Oddee*. http://www.oddee.com/item_98299.aspx.

⁵⁰Murano, G. (2012). *10 Coolest Plastic Surgery Ads-ODDEE*. Retrieved from *Oddee*. http://www.oddee.com/item_98299.aspx.

⁵¹Murano, G. (2012). *10 Coolest Plastic Surgery Ads-ODDEE*. Retrieved from *Oddee*. http://www.oddee.com/item_98299.aspx.

⁵²Brennen, B. (2013). *Qualitative research methods for media studies* (1st ed.). New York: Routledge.

⁵³ For further study, read Appendix 2

Cosmetic advancements force both men/women alike to transform their bodies and position themselves closer to the ever-demanding culturally and socially defined versions of “goddess-like/god-like” women/men in the western world, Horkheimer and Adorno in “Dialectics of Enlightenment” debate on the homogenization of culture in a capitalist society, to quote “*the technology of the culture industry is no more than the achievement of standardization and mass production, sacrificing whatever involved a distinction between the logic of the work and that of the social system.*” Therefore to argue that the variety of cultural forms available to people is reducing in number, rather than having new ideas and values emerging in our cultural-social orders, there is a coherent reduction in creativity and diversity, it is mostly based on the repetition of values and ideas i.e. “capitalist culture involves the repetition of ideas”.⁵⁴

Thus, cosmetic surgery is more about “passing” and “positioning” of body/self in the hegemonic ideals of beauty in society (homogeneity of self and body); less about standing out as heterogeneous “individuals”.⁵⁵

*“Loss of hair was causing a huge demoralizing effect. And I wanted to feel attractive...also, my family is looking for a suitable groom for me, so it became more crucial to undergo surgical treatment...after undergoing surgery, I feel a lot more confident and totally satisfied with the surgery...also, society becomes easier to live in, if a person is good-looking”*⁵⁶

Being bald is often disesteemed in society, especially for women. Women with long and thick hair are appreciated and seen as ‘beautiful’ because that’s what social standards of beauty demand. Having a short hairstyle is more than often seen as ‘boyish’ or a woman comes across as a ‘tom boy’; therefore, social demand for having similar kinds of hairstyles maintains a kind of status quo and homogeneity in society. Anything other than what is demanded is labelled as deviant or absurd. Women spend huge amounts of money on themselves, like in the above situation, in order to get better treatment or socially accepted/loved or get a ‘suitable groom’ because beauty is worshipped in our existing social structure. Therefore, there is a production and repetition of standardized and normalized ideas of beauty.

Most individuals, who opt for aesthetic procedures, often decline that they are/had or strive to

⁵⁴Adorno, T. W., Horkheimer, M., & Cumming, J. (1986). *Dialectic of enlightenment*. London : Verso, 1986

⁵⁵Gilman, S. (2001). *Making the body beautiful* (1st ed.). Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

⁵⁶ For further study, read Appendix 2

keep it as implicit as possible for the fear of being labelled as “unnatural and artificial” and negative social reactions towards their decisions, this is ironic because celebrities in popular culture who have opted or opt to go under the surgeon’s knife are however perceived as “normal” or “maintenance of beauty” and are much talked hyped about in relation to outstanding success or failures.

“Although, I am afraid to disclose any of these decisions to my partner, colleagues and friends because of the fear of being stigmatized as “artificial”. I want to be seen as someone “who is natural.”⁵⁷

“Although, I haven’t discussed any of my decisions on getting botox with anyone amongst my family, friends or my partner is because I am afraid of being judged from the point of view of being a chain smoker and the other of being labelled as “unnatural”, “artificial” and “unnecessary”.⁵⁸

“I wouldn’t want to disclose this (liposuction) to them because I am afraid on being socially stigmatized on various levels, which affects my mental well-being considerably because I had been socially stigmatized when I was fat, which played up with my psychological and emotional health.”⁵⁹

From the experiences of women undergoing or have undergone surgery, most women are ashamed of being vocal about going under the knife, if at least not with the intention of looking ‘beautiful’ but at least with the mindset of aligning the body with the self or to look ‘normal’ and ‘confident’. They hide the fact they are having plastic surgery from their husbands, relatives and friends, most of them are afraid to be stigmatized as somebody who is ‘artificial’ and all sorts of negative reactions, they believe they might have to encounter or be treated differently. One can argue that if surgery were purely based on medical reasons, probably cynical judgments wouldn’t be heard; judgments would be more based on sympathy and empathy.

One can believe that *“instead of the body, the self appears on stage”*.

“And I came across skin resurfacing treatment in a TV advert, which made believe that there

⁵⁷ For further study, read Appendix 2

⁵⁸ For further study, read Appendix 2

⁵⁹ For further study, read Appendix 2

might be something out there for me to be able to look youthful again.”⁶⁰

Popularculture to great extent, forces people to transform themselves i.e. to cut the old self, in order to transform into something enhanced and new. The rebirth comes from transformations, which can be seen in context with the “death” or killing of the “old self”.⁶¹

*“Cosmetic surgery has given a new dimension to my life and career.”*⁶²

This shows that cosmetic surgery is a medium through which, women can ‘kill the old self’, for something ‘new’

One can understand the early 21st century boom of cosmetic surgery in a larger framework by setting the interest for cosmetic surgery and the "freedom for instant change" inside the more extensive marvel of globalization. There can be three worldwide social impacts: popular culture, consumerism, and electrical economy of looking great.⁶³

Media coverage is seen as a means of normalizing cosmetic surgery, and setting models for satisfactory appearance.

*“I came across skin resurfacing treatment in a TV advert, which made me believe that there might be something out there for me to be able to look youthful again....definitely lifts up the attitude and confidence in public.”*⁶⁴

Media advertisements showcase cosmetic surgery as a ‘normalized’ part of modern life. The way cosmetic surgery is advertised plays a partial role in the rising demand for cosmetic surgery⁶⁵. Women utilize many technological resources accessible to them in order to build up their own esteem and feeling of self and to expand their physical capital and power in society.

Cosmetic surgery is seen not just as an apparatus only to improve one's appearance, but additionally as one, which can upgrade an individual's life in general. Cosmetic surgery along

⁶⁰ For further study, read Appendix 2

⁶¹Wegenstein, B. (2012). *The cosmetic gaze* (1st ed.). Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

⁶² For further study, read Appendix 2

⁶³Wegenstein, B. (2012). *The cosmetic gaze* (1st ed.). Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press

⁶⁴ For further study, read Appendix 2

⁶⁵Wiseman, E. (2014). *Is cosmetic surgery now a normal part of modern life?* Eva Wiseman. *Theguardian*.

Retrieved 27 April 2017, from <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/feb/09/is-cosmetic-surgery-normal-modern-life>.

these lines gives off an impression of being promoted as a consumer as opposed to a genuine medicinal mediation, which may influence how customers see it.⁶⁶

Women undergo cosmetic surgery not just to impress others, but they do it to impress themselves. For most women, it is about regaining their confidence.

Popular culture and profoundly advanced stories of cosmetic surgery are viewed as solid consolation to have surgery, especially for youthful women who consider famous people to be good examples or role models. This thought demonstrates that celebrity fandom is prescient of the yearning for cosmetic surgery.⁶⁷

*“Popular and media cultures today are introducing a wholesale shift away from a focus on personalities to celebrity body parts and their artificial enhancement. To view the body in the light of celebrity culture means, in effect, to see the self increasingly in terms of possible surgical alterations.”*⁶⁸ (Elliot, 2010: 463)

In a study, it was depicted that cosmetic surgery is depicted inside the media and its impact. It showed that cosmetic surgery is broadly canvassed in the media, highlighting that *‘it’s all over the place and pushed in our countenances’*. In the respondent’s perspectives, Cosmetic Surgery scope has turned out to be standard in specific media: *“I believe it’s like the norm now ... you wouldn’t get a magazine and go ‘goodness my’ on the grounds that there’s surgery in there ... you see it consistently. There’s constantly another celebrity saying they’ve had surgery and it’s helped them or ... stories about regular individuals too that have had it.”*⁶⁹

Surgery was seen as being glamorized by the media. This glamorization and concentration on the positives of cosmetic surgery in the media was seen to prompt more noteworthy acknowledgment and longing for surgery: a respondent states that *‘You see a greater number of pros than cons, and when you see pictures of it ... they enhance with airbrush the entire body to make it look perfect ... and afterward you’re like to “I need that, I need to resemble that!”*

⁶⁶Gimlin, D. (2002). *Body work: Beauty and self-image in American culture*. Univ of California Press.

⁶⁷Ashikali, E., Dittmar, H., & Ayers, S. (2016). Adolescent girls’ views on cosmetic surgery: A focus group study. *Journal Of Health Psychology, 21*(1), 112-121. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1359105314522677>.

⁶⁸Elliott, A. (n.d). ‘I Want to Look Like That!’: Cosmetic Surgery and Celebrity Culture. *Cultural Sociology, 5*(4), 463-477.

⁶⁹Ashikali, E., Dittmar, H., & Ayers, S. (2016). Adolescent girls’ views on cosmetic surgery: A focus group study. *Journal Of Health Psychology, 21*(1), 112-121. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1359105314522677>.

Popular culture was seen as normalizing cosmetic surgery, and also setting measures for satisfactory appearance, as a respondent claims; *'It's quite recently the norm now ... since it got so enormous, it's not a major ordeal anymore, individuals simply have it and it sets a benchmark, in the event that you don't look like this, it's not acceptable'*.⁷⁰

Popular culture has dependably been a vital piece of our society. Individuals frequently wind up associating with characters in movies and commercials, fancying to be physically similar to them i.e. "culminate" without imperfections. Such longings frequently rise, scorn towards one's physical self.

*"As long as I didn't get a facelift done, I was under-confident and stressed about the way my facial skin looked with the number of wrinkles and lines on it and have always tried to reverse the signs of aging."*⁷¹

*"My abdominal region had expanded to the extent that made me feel uncomfortable (both personally and socially) and made me feel old. I was unable to wear attractive clothes because I was always so conscious of my abdominal area."*⁷²

*"A solution and cure to an undesirable appearance i.e. uneven skin tone and the removal of blemishes...ever since, I got all of these done; I have never felt any happier than the way I feel now. Cosmetic surgery has given a new dimension to my life and career."*⁷³

This self-loathing or disappointment with the self has prompted the appropriation of aesthetic surgeries. These post-modern-day surgeries concentrate on de-naturalizing the body or deconstructing the body. This is refreshing as it frees the person from self-loathing.

These cyber-technologies (techno-human fusion) and cosmetic surgeries are giving power of decision and flexibility to people. Be that as it may, women's activists and realists are endeavouring sufficiently hard to invert this hegemonic power that is predominant in the current social order. Nonetheless, cyber-technologists answer for all issues such as self-loath, is innovation. They believe that a definitive answer for flexibility and freedom is innovation. The

⁷⁰ To know more, go to: Ashikali, E., Dittmar, H., & Ayers, S. (2016). Adolescent girls' views on cosmetic surgery: A focus group study. *Journal Of Health Psychology*, 21(1), 112-121. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1359105314522677>.

⁷¹ For further study, read Appendix 2

⁷² For further study, read Appendix 2

⁷³ For further study, read Appendix 2

body is never viewed as normal to them; they view it as the aftereffect of innovation. For them, the body is viewed as a mechanical framework, which can be hacked for one's own motivation.

1.5 Customization of the Body: Cyberpunk and Cyberspace

Before the onset of the fusion of body-machine sciences, technology outside the human body aimed at helping those with serious mobility problems, machines have already been developed to carry out chores (such as vacuuming), while remote control devices enabled the temperature and lighting of the domestic environment to be altered.

Email, chat rooms and other forms of electronically mediated communication can help reduce the social impact of physical disabilities, while also enabling individuals to avoid those social stigmas that can damage an individual's chances of being treated as an equal in situations of physical co-presence. Such technological modes of interchange' can provide a substitution corrective to the body's limitations and 'open up new possibilities for intimacy and self-expression.⁷⁴ Therefore, such technologies can help individuals to enter into and/or feel a part of the existing social order.

In the 21st Century, customizing the body is a popular project of both success and survival for it allows the individuals freedom by enhancing and extending the body. They have an option for change rather than being stuck with something that they aren't satisfied with.

*"I was extremely worried about my loose & heavy abdomen region and overall fat in thighs, buttocks and arms. I was looking for a permanent solution to this and was not getting anything, anywhere. Despite maintaining a fit regime of food and exercise, I was unable to bring myself in shape. I was tired of hiding my fat under loose, unattractive clothes. Therefore, I resorted to cosmetic surgery to reshape my body to give me a more feminine look, by adding contours in the right places. Post-surgery gave me a different body, something that I could only dream about."*⁷⁵

Innovation has empowered individuals to turn back the clock, reshape their bodies and erase any apparent "imperfections."

In using technology to restore previous bodily capacities and the options that social

⁷⁴Shilling, C. (2005). *The Body in Culture, Technology and Society*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

⁷⁵ For further study, read Appendix 2

environments may once have offered, now no longer seem to, there's a sense in which the substitutive effects of this resource also extend and enhance the physical body and its environment. These technologies such as cyberspace, information technology, virtual imaging, visual reality, and biomedical methods of body reconstruction influence our perception and narrative of how we view the 'body' in the present time.

Cyberpunk can be defined as exploring how the body can be enhanced through spectacular human-machine combinations, but technology has long allowed people to extend their bodily capacities.⁷⁶

"In the era of cyborg, there has been an invention in the science of brain-computer interface, where, chips are implanted in the brain that interacts with the brain's electrical signals to do anything from moving a robotic arm to helping ease the strain of PTSD.⁷⁷ Such implants are also utilized to translate thoughts into action for people with neurological impairments, also achieved breakthroughs in the allowing paralyzed patients to control a computer cursor with their thoughts."⁷⁸

This clearly exhibits that cyberpunks reject the body as a biological being rather they consider that the body is already shaped by technologies. In other words, cyberpunks do not view the body as a biological or socially constructed identity rather they provide technology as the solution to the individual's liberation.

Cyberpunk sciences have created celebrity images of hi-tech body modifications. Such technology to transform or modify the human body and transforming it into something extended or beyond the biological body, might allow individuals to go beyond the physical limits.

"Prostheses, other than just being seen as a substitute for a missing body part or bodily actions, have also come to be developed as extensions, that goes beyond the "naturalization" of the body."

⁷⁶Shilling, C. (2005). *The Body in Culture, Technology and Society*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. According to Merriam-Webster dictionary defines cyberpunk as science fiction dealing with future urban societies dominated by computer technology and an opportunistic computer hacker.

⁷⁷PTSD means Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Signs and Symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Psychguides.com. Retrieved 29 April 2017, from <http://www.psychguides.com/guides/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-symptoms-causes-and-effects/>.

⁷⁸Brown, K. (2015). *The 7 most insane ways that tech enhanced the human body in 2015*. Fusion.net. Retrieved 23 April 2017, from <http://fusion.net/the-7-most-insane-ways-that-tech-enhanced-the-human-bod-1793853808>.

The progression of cyber-technologies, however, has massively accelerated these possibilities. Such body “customizations” can be perceived as “hacking” a body for personal purposes.⁷⁹

“Stelios Arcadiou, an Australian performance artist known as Stelarc grew a human ear on his inner forearm, which he eventually plans to outfit with a miniature microphone and wirelessly connect to the Internet so that anyone who wants to can listen in on his life.”⁸⁰

Such ventures can be viewed in terms of how utilization of technology can help in replicating a body part, shifting it to any part of the body and utilizing it for alternative capacities. It shows both a craving to deconstruct the biological body and to incorporate microminiaturized gadgets (cyborgs) inside the body.

Also, cyberspace can be understood in terms of providing opportunities for individuals for experimenting with their self-identity.

“In popular culture, models and actors are highly airbrushed, appearances are programmed and the versions of the self are transformed and enhanced, which is all done by the help of technology; however most of the populous are forced to believe that such appearances are “natural”.”

Technological and scientific advancements can also be viewed in the realms of transplantation procedures and aesthetic surgeries, which enables individuals to experiment and explore their individuality and form their own version of it.

“I got my facelift and neck lift done for my 25th anniversary party and I am extremely satisfied with the results, it's just been a couple of months and I am already looking 15 years younger...I feel I have regained my youthfulness and confidence along with it.”⁸¹

“My abdominal region had expanded to the extent that made me feel uncomfortable (both personally and socially) and made me feel old... a week of post-surgery involving a lot of pain and inconvenience, I could see a huge difference in my body and it was worth everything for me

⁷⁹Pitts, V. (2003). *In the flesh* (1st ed.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

⁸⁰Brown, K. (2015). *The 7 most insane ways that tech enhanced the human body in 2015*. *Fusion.net*. Retrieved 23 April 2017, from <http://fusion.net/the-7-most-insane-ways-that-tech-enhanced-the-human-bod-1793853808>.

⁸¹ For further study, read Appendix 2

because I felt youthful again. And with youth, one always feels a lot more confident.”⁸²

*“And I came across skin resurfacing treatment in a TV advert, which made me believe that there might be something out there for me to be able to look youthful again.”*⁸³

Thus, social standards of beauty, thinness and fitness keep on allowing or promoting a considerable lot of these body changes, nonetheless, and the quest for an appearance demonstrative of youth, vitality and effectiveness, which are prized by companies, keeps on applying an intense impact over the choices of people.

Enormous studies exhibit that women who change their bodies in accordance with prevailing beliefs of beauty, often accomplish a more prominent feeling of power and control over their physical selves and social life, despite the fact that they might strengthen gendered standards that are disadvantageous to women as a whole.⁸⁴

*“Ever since I got all of my cosmetic tattooing done; I have never felt any happier than the way I feel now. Cosmetic surgery has given a new dimension to my life and career.”*⁸⁵

*“After breast augmentation surgery, I feel as if I am complete as female gender, the breast size that I have right now is what I have desired throughout. I am able to fit into anything possible, which makes me feel even more confident and makes me look even more attractive.”*⁸⁶

It is obvious that people utilize many technological resources accessible to them, which they use to build up their own esteem and feeling of self and to expand their physical capital and power in society. Technological access influences the methods, speed of representation and self-representation as symbols of social and cultural capital.

The space that individuals need to build up their characters, regardless of the presence of deep social standards and beauty idealisms, shows that cyber-technologies⁸⁷ bears to individuals a

⁸² For further study, read Appendix 2

⁸³ For further study, read Appendix 2

⁸⁴ Gimlin, D. (2002). *Body work: Beauty and self-image in American culture*. Univ of California Press.

⁸⁵ For further study, read Appendix 2

⁸⁶ For further study, read Appendix 2

⁸⁷ Cyber-technologies can be understood as technologies, which can ‘fix’ social relationships and people’s identities in place, effectively structuring human networks and the individual sense of self around key material artefacts. Shilling, C. (2005). *The Body in Culture, Technology and Society*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

chance to explore different avenues regarding different renditions of singularity and self.

Subordination in one way can be viewed as subjected to patriarchal, western social standards of beauty and in another way can be viewed as being reliant on technological innovation and or to be subjected to biomedical surveillance and pathology.

Cyberpunk can be viewed as a moment reply to the corporate colonization of the body, which brings up pivotal issues about who possesses and controls it.

Aesthetic surgeries and cyberpunk both work towards denaturalizing the body, which can be connected to the liberal subject who can opt for his/her customized personality. They both are connected as they both take a shot at the vision *be whom you need to be*.

“Someone advised me to get liposuction done... liposuction is one of the easiest ways to lose weight if one finds exercising tedious like myself... the surgeon removed unwanted fat from my body, which made me lose almost 20kgs and also changed the shape of my body, after which I felt very light, healthy and attractive.”⁸⁸

Cyberpunk and cosmetic surgery purchasers are viewed as an individual's decision; they can shop, rethink or reproduce their bodies with the assistance of innovation and money. One can likewise take a sight at these technologized bodies as a social procedure and not exclusively as an individual choice. They have originated from social and political battles.⁸⁹

Therefore, it can be summarized that in the 21st century, technological innovation has progressively moved from the outside (remote controlling devices and computer desktops) into the inside (human body) and its encompassing environment, progressively obscuring limits between the technological and the physical.⁹⁰

1.6 Standardization of Cosmetic Surgery: Risks and Threats

Cosmetic surgery has turned out to be broadly acknowledged in our way of life without an appropriate examination of why women are willing to undergo mutilation, which in a way

⁸⁸ For further study, read Appendix 2

⁸⁹Pitts, V. (2003). In the flesh: The cultural politics of body modification. Springer.

⁹⁰Shilling, C. (2005).The Body in Culture, Technology and Society. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

damages themselves with all sorts of risks involved which is widely implicit.⁹¹

The complications involved in breast implants are breast-feeding difficulties, calcium build-up in breast tissue, also called “calcification”, breast pain, infection, including toxic shock syndrome—when during breast implant surgery, wounds are contaminated with micro-organisms, such as bacteria or fungi etc.⁹²

Numerous women's activists contend that the fusion of mutilation with cosmetic surgery is excessively outrageous and cruel, notwithstanding, it can be agreed that the way of cutting and reshaping the body in view of an aesthetic justification is a type of mutilation.

Cosmetic surgery is additionally a type of mutilation in light of the fact that a large portion of the techniques performed mangle or eradicate the "original or old" body part that in most cases did not rupture or fail; rather was changed exclusively for stylish reasons.

“I had always thought of undergoing breast enhancement surgery because I felt extremely unattractive with the size of my breasts... I would look simply flat-chested with zero proportions and curves on my body, which caused me high levels of stress and anxiety... after surgery, I feel as if I am complete as the female gender, the breast size that I have right now is what I have desired throughout. I am able to fit into anything possible, which makes me feel even more confident and makes me look even more attractive.”

At the end of the day, one can argue that cosmetic procedures, which wipe out a body quality in return for an all more socially fitting body part that is illustrative of the beauty norm are a type of mutilation of the body.

“Ever since I have taken Botox injections, I feel more confident and attractive. It has in a way brought happiness and youthfulness to my life. I feel secure in my personal life as well. I, no longer have to worry about how my facial looks because it is being taken care by professionals... however, the disadvantageous part of Botox injections is the temporality of the effect because it

⁹¹Okopny, C. L. (2005). Reconstructing women's identities: The phenomenon of cosmetic surgery in the United States (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Florida).

⁹²Breast Implant Complications.(2017). *Fda.gov*. Retrieved 4 April 2017, from <https://www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/ProductsandMedicalProcedures/ImplantsandProsthetics/BreastImplants/ucm259296.htm>.

wears off after every 3-4 months, so the continuous process of undergoing a non-surgical enhancement like Botox is expensive and painful.”⁹³

Therefore, Plastic surgery rates have expanded disregarding the physical dangers and risks included, which furthermore leads to emotional and psychological damage. The popular cultural inclination to grasp and commend cosmetic surgery has empowered individuals to separate themselves from the real mechanics and hazards required in aesthetic methodologies.⁹⁴

Virginia Blum in her book, *Flesh Wounds: The Culture of Cosmetic Surgery* offers to investigate the working space to unwind the magical technique of the brow lift. The doctor cut two little incisions into the patient's scalp so he could pry the skin separated. He then utilized a bore to make a passage that he could scope with his camera, and with this passage, the specialist can fix the skin and lift the brows.⁹⁵

Blum expresses: *"Toward the finish of this separation of skin from the fascia, nearly her entire face had been undermined... By revamping tissue, re-establishing the substructure, to make a more young contour...he pulled the skin back and stapled it close,"* denoting the fulfillment of the procedure. Highlighting the mechanics of such a system demonstrates that what a few individuals take part in order to fit the beauty ideal," is no less stunning than what most cosmetic procedures demand.⁹⁶

Individuals keep on having aesthetic surgery to some extent since they can ceaselessly separate themselves from the specifics of surgery and conceivable dangers and risks required in looking great.

A gorge is made amongst individuals and aesthetic surgery that permits cosmetic surgery to be standardized and not seen as a type of physical mutilation. Albeit cosmetic surgery is getting to be standardized in most cultures, other culture's norms of beauty "customs" are effortlessly delegated as mutilation in light of the fact that their beliefs are not illustrative of what is esteemed in specific cultures. It turns out to be anything but difficult to condemn what others do

⁹³ For further study, read Appendix 2

⁹⁴Okopny, C. L. (2005). *Reconstructing women's identities: The phenomenon of cosmetic surgery in the united states* (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Florida).

⁹⁵Okopny, C. L. (2005). *Reconstructing women's identities: The phenomenon of cosmetic surgery in the united states* (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Florida).

⁹⁶Blum, V. (2005). *Flesh wounds* (1st ed.). Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press.

for the sake of perfection.⁹⁷

Investigations into cosmetic surgery prove the different dangers of surgery, "Agony, numbness, wounding, discoloration, and depigmentation as often as possible take after liposuction...Face-lifts can harm nerves, leaving the patient's face all time numb. More genuine intricacies incorporate fat embolisms, blood clots, fluid depletion, and even death." Risks from a breast enhancement are likewise high (thirty to fifty percent) and can incorporate diminished affectability of the areolas, blockage of the breast alongside agonizing swelling.⁹⁸

The risks and dangers associated with cosmetic surgery are not adequately covered in the media. In cases where such risks are covered, they tend to be in the form of extreme stories, rather than portraying the more common side effects and complications.

"The media doesn't state the dangers of it, they just show how you could look, and the best things that come out of it, but they don't say that you could die ... it's only the good bits"

"They only show the extremes of it ... [when] surgery goes really wrong, or when people have gone over the top with it and 'they don't show the small things. They don't show the fact that you could have pain, or headaches, or sickness ... they won't show that 'cos it's not extreme enough. So they'll either show it perfect or really bad."

Cosmetic surgery, therefore, appears to be marketed as a consumer product rather than a serious medical intervention, which may impact how consumers view it⁹⁹

On the off chance that society keeps on tolerating significant body changes from aesthetic surgery, it is hazy what else society will acknowledge and underwrite with a specific end goal to accomplish the beauty norm. It is essential to inspect precisely why it is that cosmetic surgery is turning into a worthy beauty apparatus, and why it is women are the biggest buyers of plastic surgery. It analyzes our ideas of beauty and what individuals will persevere or sacrifice to

⁹⁷Okopny, C. L. (2005). Reconstructing women's identities: The phenomenon of cosmetic surgery in the united states (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Florida).

⁹⁸Gimlin, D. (2000). Cosmetic surgery: beauty as a commodity. *Qualitative Sociology*, 23(1).

⁹⁹Ashikali, E., Dittmar, H., & Ayers, S. (2016). Adolescent girls' views on cosmetic surgery: A focus group study. *Journal Of Health Psychology*, 21(1), 112-121. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1359105314522677>.

accomplish this look to the beauty norms and practices of different social orders.¹⁰⁰

The non-Westerners adopted the Western form of beauty standards, Anglo-Saxon look and Caucasian skin tone. For instance, Bollywood actress, Priyanka Chopra underwent 30 aesthetic surgeries, just to fit into the “ideals of beauty” of the western culture.

At the end of the day, individuals need to inspect why plastic/ cosmetic surgery is not generally seen as a type of mutilation or distortion to the body, but rather yet it appears to be “surgery”. For instance, Rhinoplasty, performed on the nose is just seen as plastic surgery, instead of viewing it as a disfigurement to the “authentic” nose structure, since the bone is restructured or broken down, in order to get the ‘perfect’ shaped nose according to the predominant beauty ideal.

Standardization of a 'beauty ideal', achieved through cosmetic surgery promotes the homogenization of society. Thus, if the technicalities of cosmetic methodologies and processes are disregarded a homogenized or monoculture social order is inescapable.

Chapter 2

¹⁰⁰Okopny, C. L. (2005). *Reconstructing women's identities: The phenomenon of cosmetic surgery in the United States* (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Florida).

Women and Cosmetic Surgery

“The beauty market has basically been building over a time-frame, distinctive promoting strategies, as though ‘a new beauty standard’ must be continually pointed, which powers women to religiously take after this ‘new standard’.”

- Alexandra Edmonds, Pretty Modern (2010)

2.1. Remaking the ‘She’

Cosmetic surgery remains as a definitive image of capture of the human body for physical magnificence and beauty. It symbolizes the surprising extent to which women will adopt, keeping in mind the end goal of obtaining bodies that meet current standards of appeal and beauty.

“My abdominal region had expanded to the extent that made me feel uncomfortable (both personally and socially) and made me feel old. I was unable to wear attractive clothes because I was always so conscious of my abdominal area. And in today’s figure conscious society, greater attention is directed to size and shape of our bodies.”¹⁰¹

The participant undergoes an abdominoplasty surgery in order to get rid of her post-partum weight, she’s getting rid of the fat around her abdomen because she felt uncomfortable and wanted to be ‘normal’ again and she is also governed by the force of ‘beauty norms’ since she mentions, *“in today’s figure conscious society, greater attention is directed to size and shape of our bodies.”*

It is said that beauty is a dialect of personality and a promoter of self-regard.¹⁰² However, beauty is not simply a stylish classification connected to appearances and bodies, rather it includes, the characterization of economic wellbeing, sexual orientation and class.

“I feel that this is a solution and cure to an undesirable appearance i.e. uneven skin tone and the removal of blemishes. I wanted to be perceived as someone who is ‘decently’ looking. Ever since

¹⁰¹ For further study, read Appendix 2

¹⁰² Brand, P. (2000). *Beauty matters* (1st ed.). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

I got all of these done; I have never felt any happier than the way I feel now. Cosmetic surgery has given a new dimension to my life and career. ¹⁰³

Being beautiful is not only associated with physical appearance, rather from the above situation, beauty is also associated with social class and economic wellbeing.

Accordingly, beauty standards are framed by social relations and social classes and practices, which in the long run created open doors and commercialization of fashion and beauty enterprises.¹⁰⁴

New cosmetic advances have opened up the likelihood for radical change i.e. it can now change principal parts of the body. Cosmetic surgery not only targets ageism, but rather physical qualities related to identity markers such as racial or ethnic characteristics are also likewise focused on it. This is valid, especially for women who are forced or influenced to never feel comfortable in their own bodies.

*“Asian-American women are driven to undergo a double-eyelid surgery, in order to make their eyes larger and more Caucasian-type. Another surgery they conventionally opt for is the sculpting of the nose tip or augmentation of the nose to give a prominent look. These women undergo these surgeries because they feel it will build their chances of finding opportunities of work and general acknowledgment by potential mates.”*¹⁰⁵

Cosmetic surgery sustains ageism and prejudice based on race and ethnicity on the grounds that the perfection it conveys highly depends on an incomprehensive and illusionary form of beauty perfection. Therefore, technology has empowered individuals to look forward to good days in order to get their bodies reshaped and remove any apparent "blemishes."

The desire of remaking the body and self has occurred due to the hegemonic ideals of beauty and women have been subjected to this, which has increasingly caused a constant threat for them being dependent on body modifications and cosmetic surgeries to be viewed as “transformed for

¹⁰³ For further study, read Appendix 2

¹⁰⁴ Peiss, K. (2000). Introduction. On beauty ... and the history of business. *Enterprise And Society*, 1(3), 485-506. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/es/1.3.485>.

¹⁰⁵ Kaw, E. (1993). Medicalization of Racial Features: Asian American Women and Cosmetic Surgery. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 7(1), 74-89. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1525/maq.1993.7.1.02a00050>

the better”, this has led to the reshaping of the body, which inherently reshapes the self, i.e. gives a sense of happiness, confidence and power.

“I have tried every anti-aging product on the market shelf and I still haven’t looked quarter of what I look right now. At my party, I looked and felt like a young bride again and everybody was amazed by my look. I feel I have regained my youthfulness and confidence along with it. As long as I didn’t get a facelift done, I was under-confident and stressed about the way my facial skin looked with the number of wrinkles and lines on it and have always tried to reverse the signs of aging.”¹⁰⁶

The participant above feels that undergoing surgery was a great option because it changed and enhanced how she looked through the removal of wrinkles on her face and neck. She feels empowered by the transformation, which gives her immense happiness, confidence and power.

However, transforming into the beauty ideal through surgery surely makes a woman happy with her desired body; she also stresses keeping the transformation implicit because of the fear of being seen as ‘inauthentic’, which she tries passing herself off as the “original and authentic” even after undergoing surgery.

“Cosmetic surgery has given a new dimension to my life and career. Although, I am afraid to disclose any of these decisions to my partner, colleagues and friends because of the fear of being stigmatized as “artificial”. I want to be seen as someone ‘who is natural’.”¹⁰⁷

Therefore, cosmetic surgery definitely helps in reshaping the body in accordance with the beauty norm, albeit the feeling of self is constantly being shuffled between happiness for fitting in and the fear of being labelled as inauthentic for using medical procedures for fitting in. To brief, both the body and self are in many layers socially constructed.

2.2 Colonizing the Body

Choosing cosmetic surgery is no longer in the area of being perceived as immoral, suspicious, private, nonconformist or pathologically narcissistic rather it is being perceived as the standard. This development is bringing on a feeling of stigmatization of those women who have quit opting for cosmetic surgery and are viewed as deviant and is viewed as oddballs.

¹⁰⁶ For further study, read Appendix 2

¹⁰⁷ For further study, read Appendix 2

From this stance, cosmetic surgery can be comprehended as a method for colonizing the body since women who don't coordinate with what is viewed as customary and beautiful, encounter a compulsion to fit in. In this manner, "cosmetic surgery aims at creating a lived temporal reality of the human subject by technologically creating beauty and appearances that then seen as 'the real'."¹⁰⁸

"I was extremely worried about my loose & heavy abdomen region and overall fat in thighs, buttocks and arms. I was looking for a permanent solution to this and was not getting anything, anywhere. Despite maintaining a fit regime of food and exercise, I was unable to bring myself in shape. I was tired of hiding my fat under loose, unattractive clothes. Therefore, I resorted to cosmetic surgery to reshape my body to give me a more feminine look, by adding contours in the right places. Post-surgery gave me a different body, something that I could only dream about. Now, I take pride in the way I look."

"Corsets were used in the historical past, during the Victorian era (16th Era) because the beauty of a woman was considered based on the size of her waistline, which was a long process to get the desired waistline, however now, women are undergoing hourglass surgeries in order to achieve the desired beauty standards because such a process is easier and quicker to achieve. Thus, the social order determines or forms existing beauty standards and how the body should be created and reshaped in order to look feminine, whether surgically or non-surgically. Nevertheless, with the existence of cosmetic surgery, the body turns into a scientific entity that requires invasion or control to make it fit in as society desires."

Viewing cosmetic surgery from the nature of colonization, one can say that aesthetic surgery is a type of "colonization of a woman's body" since a female's body is seen as a 'primary substance', which is seen that such a 'substance' has the ability to be examined as a raw material to be abused in length in terms of looks, sensuality, care, affirmation and productivity. Such a stance can be examined in the way that the body and personality are changed and enhanced, this can be comprehended in terms of a colonized entity, on the grounds that the body is compelled to fit in with the supreme and prevailing standards of glamour and beauty, which is socially constructed by the colonizers.

¹⁰⁸Morgan, K. (1991). Women and the Knife: Cosmetic Surgery and the Colonization of Women's Bodies. *Hypatia*, 6(3), 25-53. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1991.tb00254.x>.

Therefore, one can say that the female body is colonized by the dominant ideas of beauty and such dominance is not only seen in the contemporary context, rather one can study further about such dominance historically.

Albeit, women are falling prey and there is a rise in the reliance on different beauty specialists other than simply the cosmetic surgeon because the culturally and socially dominant ideals of beauty have started to be influenced by beauty clinics such as the salon, dermatology, aesthetics, pharmacology, beauticians and so forth. These assistances are effectively accessible, who are progressively attempting to control and change the body into an inexorably unreal and perpetually ideal entity, that's been possessed by the colonizers of the beauty industry to immortalize the ideals of beauty.¹⁰⁹

“Cosmetic tattooing is a solution and cure to an undesirable appearance i.e. uneven skin tone and the removal of blemishes. She wanted to be perceived as someone who is ‘decently’ looking. She states ‘Ever since I got all of these done; I have never felt any happier than the way I feel now. Cosmetic surgery has given a new dimension to my life and career.’”¹¹⁰

The reason for undergoing abdominoplasty¹¹¹ is that my abdominal region had expanded to the extent that made me feel uncomfortable (both personally and socially) and made me feel old. I was unable to wear attractive clothes because I was always so conscious of my abdominal area... A week of post-surgery involved in a lot of pain and inconvenience, but I could see a huge difference in my body and it was worth everything for me because I felt youthful again. And with youth, one always feels a lot more confident... Of course, the children are, worth every inconvenience and pain. Nonetheless, this does not stop a mother from thinking whether or not anything can be done to improve such a ‘problem’.”¹¹²

¹⁰⁹Morgan, K. (1991). Women and the Knife: Cosmetic Surgery and the Colonization of Women's Bodies. *Hypatia*, 6(3), 25-53.<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1991.tb00254.x>.

¹¹⁰ For further study, read Appendix 2

¹¹¹Surgical process that involves the removal of excess flesh from the abdomen. Abdominoplasty. Oxford Dictionaries. Retrieved from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/abdominoplasty>.

¹¹² For further study, read Appendix 2

Through the study, one can claim that for the participant to undergo abdominoplasty involves a significant dilemma as she says that although she tried out a wide range of diets and exercise to get rid of the post-baby belly signifies that surgery was her last resort. One can also analyze that the only possible way to get rid of the dissatisfaction, uneasiness and the ‘problem’ that she had with her body and self was by undergoing surgery because she agrees that ‘in today’s figure conscious society, greater attention is directed to the size and shape of our bodies.’ After undergoing surgery, she finds it easier to align the self with the body because having the extra flesh removed from the abdomen is what she has always desired, she was able to develop a relationship with her body because she felt a sense of comfort, which came after the surgical process. She felt that there was a “problem” with her body and once the problem got fixed, a sense of satisfaction and happiness emerged.

“I had always thought of undergoing breast enhancement surgery because I felt extremely unattractive with the size of my breasts. Among my friends, I was teased as a “boobless” woman and nothing nice in clothing would fit me, I would look simply flat chested with zero proportions and curves on my body, which caused me high levels of stress and anxiety... after surgery, I feel as if I am complete as female gender, the breast size that I have right now is what I have desired throughout. I am able to fit into anything possible, which makes me feel even more confident and makes me look even more attractive.”¹¹³

In all the above cases, the body is seen as imperfect due to aging, excess weight, acne blemishes or any other bodily appearances, which were seen as uncontrollable by each woman. As a result, they contended that their imperfect bodies were erroneous pointers of character, and, successfully depicted a falsehood about who they truly are.

Cases like these legitimize cosmetic surgery as well as endeavour to transform it into an appropriate and authentic character. Cosmetic surgery progresses toward becoming for them not a demonstration of misdirection, but rather a push to adjust the body to self.

According to Wolf 1991, a woman tries to arrive at a romanticized idea of female beauty in accordance to a man’s perspective.

¹¹³ For further study, read Appendix 2

However, this analysis might be untrue, by closely examining the experiences and explanation of women for their cosmetic surgery, it can be advocated that their objectives behind surgery were neither to transform into someone that is noticeably beautiful nor intended to look beautiful for their spouses, partners, family, friends, relatives and so forth. All in all, their motivation wasn't to look good for anyone but for themselves.

In reality, these women unyieldingly demanded that they modified their bodies for their own fulfillment, essentially using such procedures to make what they perceive as a 'standard' appearance—an appearance that mirrors a conventional self.

Additionally, when women undergo cosmetic surgery, they are reacting to extremely selective and limiting thoughts of normality and the standard self, ideas, which neither apply to the populace majorly nor allow liberty for the diversity of ethnicity. As a result, cosmetic surgery, as contended, "serves" for those women who undergo these surgical processes, however, it serves just inside the setting of a culture of appearance that is profoundly selective and limiting, which is more an arrangement of control in light of bodily portrayals of sexual orientation, age and ethnicity and less about a culture of beauty.

Therefore, the reason behind getting surgery done was to live a 'happy' life, which disallowed them from encountering because of specific body parts that didn't allow them prior to surgery.¹¹⁴

2.3. Why do women undergo surgery?

*"Cosmetic surgery has given a new dimension to my life and career. Although, I am afraid to disclose any of these decisions to my partner, colleagues and friends because of the fear of being stigmatized as 'artificial'. I want to be seen as someone 'who is natural'."*¹¹⁵

*"I feel secure in my personal life as well. I, no longer have to worry about how my face looks because it is being taken care of by professionals. Although, I haven't discussed any of my decisions with anyone amongst my family, friends or partner is because I am afraid of being judged from the point of view of being a chain smoker and the other of being labelled as 'unnatural', 'artificial' and 'unnecessary'."*¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴Gimlin, D. (2000). Cosmetic surgery: beauty as a commodity. *Qualitative Sociology*, 23(1).

¹¹⁵For further study, read Appendix 2

¹¹⁶For further study, read Appendix 2

“Liposuction is one of the easiest ways to lose weight if one finds exercising tedious like myself. Only my parents know about this surgery, otherwise, my friends, colleagues, and relatives are amazed to see the change. I wouldn’t want to disclose this to them because I am afraid of being socially stigmatized on various levels, which affects my mental well-being considerably because I had been socially stigmatized when I was fat, which played up with my psychological and emotional health.”¹¹⁷

Transformation through surgery surely makes a woman happy with her desired body; transformation here, I see is how the woman tries to at least see herself as “normal” rather than intending to be “beautiful” or fitting into the ideal beauty norm.

However, most of these women highlighted that they would want to keep the transformation implicit because of the fear of being seen as ‘inauthentic’, which they try passing off as the “original and authentic” even after undergoing surgery.

Therefore, cosmetic surgery definitely helps in reshaping the body in accordance with their desires, albeit the feeling of self is constantly being shuffled between happiness for fitting in and the fear of being labelled as inauthentic for using medical procedures for fitting in.

To brief, both the body and self are in many layers socially constructed. This is explanatory in most interviews conducted.

In order to substantiate the data collected, a study also exhibits,

In popular culture, there lies an implicit notion that the benefits of plastic surgery are somehow inauthentic and, therefore, undeserved because the desired benefits of plastic surgery are purchased rather than “natural,” the relationship between a new nose or wider eyes or thinner thighs and the self seems often in doubt.

The commercial character of cosmetic surgery seems to provide service to the relationship between an inner state and its outer expression in physical appearance. In contrast to women, the author studied in an anaerobic class, who were working hard to detach their identities from their bodies, women who undergo plastic surgery must work even harder to reattach their identities to

¹¹⁷For further study, read Appendix 2

their new appearances.

“On the one hand, they are using plastic surgery to tell a story about themselves: I am the woman with slim thighs or a button nose. But, on the other hand, they must also tell a story about plastic surgery in order to counter the charges of its inauthenticity. They must show somehow, to themselves and even more than to others, that the new appearance is both deserved and a better indicator of the self than the old appearance—an appearance necessarily repositioned as “accidental.” The result, then, is that the woman who has undergone plastic surgery finds herself in a double bind. She is unhappy with her appearance. But she must also defend herself for the very efforts she makes to alter that appearance. Therefore, not the results of plastic surgery, but the very fact of having had plastic surgery, become the primary indicator of identity.”¹¹⁸(Gilman, 2000: 81)

Through the data collected, most individuals, who opt for aesthetic procedures, often decline what they are/had or strive to keep it as implicit as possible for the fear of being labelled as “unnatural and artificial” and negative social reactions towards their decisions, this is ironic because when celebrities in popular culture who have opted or opt to go under the surgeon’s knife are however perceived as “normal” or “maintenance of beauty” and are much talked hyped about in relation to outstanding success or failures. One can believe that “instead of the body, the self appears on stage”.

Popular culture to great extent, forces people to transform themselves, to cut the old self in order to transform into something enhanced and new. The rebirth comes from transformations, which can be seen in context with the “death” or killing of the “old self”.¹¹⁹

In most literatures, plastic surgery is conventionally seen as a process that enforces and reinforces the futile attributes of modern standards of beauty. Be that as it may, this isn't the situation; cosmetic surgery works for the individuals who are experiencing or have experienced it.

¹¹⁸Gimlin, D. (2000). Cosmetic surgery: beauty as a commodity. *Qualitative Sociology*, 23(1).

¹¹⁹Wegenstein, B. (2012). *The cosmetic gaze* (1st ed.). Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

All of the women interviewed in this study communicated colossal happiness and satisfaction with their surgeries and are willing to undergo surgery again in order to *'fix the undesirable body part and imperfections'*.

There is a story that is involved behind every decision of undergoing the process and literatures should focus more on such stories rather than being more objective in understanding such a critical social phenomenon. Therefore, cosmetic surgery regularly accomplishes accurately the objectives expected by the individuals who experience it.¹²⁰

From the data collected, it can be examined that all of the women interviewed were quite aware that individuals having appealing looks have a greater tendency to be more socially acceptable and celebrated. To quote from the interviews done,

*"In today's figure conscious society, greater attention is directed to the size and shape of our bodies', 'because the world is driven by beauty', 'as we all know, we live in a world, where facial looks are very crucial and half of your work gets done if one is good-looking' and so forth."*¹²¹

As a study suggests, good-looking individuals are more socio-culturally acceptable and influential, there is power that is attached to individuals who are bodily appealing, individual's attractiveness and charm adds as a bonus in various aspects such as mate selection, romantic relationships, career, and promotional opportunities.¹²²

Acceptance towards cosmetic surgery is a prominent factor, despite resistance towards the process. From the primary data collected, women post-surgery showed their acceptance by stating,

¹²⁰ As a researcher, it can be gathered that there is little to no literature based on the experiences of individuals in relation to plastic surgery i.e. studying plastic surgery intrinsically and personally according to those who have undergone it. Rather than simply critiquing cosmetic surgery as a process that enforces beauty standards, it is essential to look beyond the surface i.e. how cosmetic surgery helps in providing happiness, satisfaction and helps in creating a positive body- image to the individual.

¹²¹For further study, read Appendix 2

¹²²Ashikali, E., Dittmar, H., & Ayers, S. (2016). Adolescent girls' views on cosmetic surgery: A focus group study. *Journal Of Health Psychology, 21*(1), 112-121. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1359105314522677>.

“I would recommend cosmetic surgery to anyone who feels the way I’ve felt because it’s essential to feel good about oneself, however possible.”¹²³

“I would always encourage one to enhance their body, whichever way possible as long as it gives them a boost of confidence about their look because this world is driven by beauty.”¹²⁴

“Life is too short for one to be sad about the way they look and if one can change the way their look; I highly recommend they should.”¹²⁵

“I would highly recommend aesthetic surgeries to those who would want to enhance their look in any way because it definitely lifts up the attitude and confidence in public.”¹²⁶

Current study into the theory of objectification has demonstrated a connection between self-objectification and acceptable stances towards aesthetic surgery.

Calogero et al's. (2010), analyzed whether factors identified with objectification theory, for example interpersonal sexual objectification, self-surveillance, and body shame, anticipated acceptable perspective toward aesthetic procedures.¹²⁷

2.4 Technolizing Feminity: how are current technological innovations influencing the conventional notions of beauty?

According to literature, ‘technology’, not only influenced the work-based and different backgrounds in which we live and has designed it to be more innovatively and technologically advanced, however technological procedures and awareness have started entering, to colonize, remake and progressively rule and control the very substance of the body.

This can be visualized with the case mentioned below, on how technological advancements can be used to transform or change the entire structure of a ‘biological’ body into an ever demanding ‘standard of beauty’. Society has altered the perception of beauty beyond rational thought.

¹²³For further study, read Appendix 2

¹²⁴For further study, read Appendix 2

¹²⁵For further study, read Appendix 2

¹²⁶For further study, read Appendix 2

¹²⁷Vaughan-Turnbull, C., & Lewis, V. (2015). Body Image, Objectification, and Attitudes Toward Cosmetic Surgery. *Journal Of Applied Biobehavioral Research*, 20(4), 179-196. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/jabr.12035>.

“I was extremely worried with my loose & heavy abdomen region and overall fat in thighs, buttocks and arms... I was unable to bring myself in shape. I was tired of hiding my fat under loose, unattractive clothes. Therefore, I resorted to cosmetic surgery to reshape my body to give me a more feminine look, by adding contours in the right places. Post-surgery gave me a different body, something that I could only dream about.”

This raises the likelihood that the spatial and practical courses of action of the natural properties of our bodies have been changed in accordance with the structures of society, and to a degree which challenges traditional thoughts of what it is to be and have a body.¹²⁸

Technological forces have applied a noteworthy effect on the bodies and situations of individuals. In utilizing technology to change their condition, people have started to change themselves and their physical limits.

The current status of cyber-technological advances, be that as it may, has been seen by many as applying a remarkable effect on the assemblages of those subject to them, denying them of their innovativeness and productive noteworthiness for society.

On account of cyborgs, plastic surgery and genetic engineering, together with the developing number of courses in which machines can be attached to the flesh, appear to be at times to prompt an ever-more profound incorporation of social standards and monetary objectives into the bodies of those subject to them.

The socially developed feeling of the body as "anatomy or pathological examination" and as a site for therapeutic and technical intercession and innovation, there has been a considerable measure of consideration and analysis on the body and has been a subject to the dominance of medicine, supervision and control, since the historical past. Sociological investigation of the body challenges the biomedical model as a method for understanding the importance of the body and its disorder, and shows how the body is as much a socially developed entity as it is one which grasps a particular anatomical frame.

The medicalization¹²⁹ and the therapeutic look are articulations of the innovations of force and

¹²⁸Shilling, C. (2005). *The Body in Culture, Technology and Society*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

¹²⁹'Medicalization' is a process through which the 'medical gaze' defines the objects under its scrutiny. Foucault uses this phrase to describe the sense in which the patient is subject to medical inspection. In this process we give control

power that control the body as a principled, clinical and scientific entity.¹³⁰

As a study suggests, in Brazil, there is a tension amongst motherhood and sexuality, wherein a woman who has borne babies will urgently endeavor to conceal her body made prominent by childbirth, as it reduces her sexual character. Cosmetic surgery such as breast augmentation is promoted to correct sagging breasts, which are seen as unattractive survivals of motherhood. Additionally, the universe of pop culture facilitates and adds to this social shame of the post-labor body.

This can be aptly located in the case study, where a participant after giving birth to two children claims her reason for undergoing abdominoplasty¹³¹

“My abdominal region had expanded to the extent that made me feel uncomfortable (both personally and socially) and made me feel old. I was unable to wear attractive clothes because I was always so conscious of my abdominal area. And in today’s figure conscious society, greater attention is directed to the size and shape of our bodies. A week of post-surgery involving a lot of pain and inconvenience, I could see a huge difference in my body and it was worth everything for me because I felt youthful again. Of course, the children are, worth every inconvenience and pain. Nonetheless this does not stop a mother from thinking whether or not anything can be done to improve such a ‘problem’.”¹³²

Therefore, surgery is consequently connected to sexuality—a methods for moving past a phase in a woman's life cycle, which denote the end of her reproductive stage, permitting her to rise again as a sexually attractive being.¹³³

Through the study, one can claim that for the participant to undergo abdominoplasty involves a significant dilemma as she says that although she tried out a wide range of diets and exercise to

of our bodies to medical experts and as such we are in this sense de-centered from our bodies: they become objects for others

¹³⁰Brown, N. & Webster, A. (2004). *New medical technologies and society* (1st ed.). Cambridge: Polity.

¹³¹Surgical process that involves the removal of excess flesh from the abdomen. Abdominoplasty. *Oxford Dictionaries*. Retrieved from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/abdominoplasty>.

¹³² For further study, read Appendix 2

¹³³Edmonds, A. (2010). *Pretty modern*. Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press.

get rid of the post-baby belly signifies that surgery was her last resort. One can also analyze that the only possible way to get rid of the dissatisfaction, uneasiness and the *'problem'* that she had with her body and self was by undergoing surgery because she agrees that *'in today's figure-conscious society, greater attention is directed to the size and shape of our bodies.'*

After undergoing surgery, she finds it easier to align the self with the body because having the extra flesh removed from the abdomen is what she has always desired, she was able to develop a relationship with her body because she felt a sense of comfort, which came after the surgical process. She felt that there was a *"problem"* with her body and once the problem got fixed, a sense of satisfaction and happiness emerged.

From the case studies above, one can say that technology is invading the body to adhere to the prescribed notions of beauty, indeed to bring about a transformation in self. Technology is the easiest and most permanent way of enhancement.

From the data collected, the participant who underwent surgery in order to get the hourglass body, states, *'I resorted to cosmetic surgery to reshape my body to give me a more feminine look, by adding contours in the right places'*¹³⁴; in a way conforms to the hegemonic desire of "hourglass being the ideal figure", which is proven by a scientific research carried out stating, 'women with "hourglass" figures such as Marilyn Monroe, Jessica Alba, the Hollywood actress and Alessandra Ambrosio, Victoria's Secret model, were found to poses the *"perfect"* body.

Scientists concluded that such a small ratio was considered good for a woman's health and resulted in high fertility.'¹³⁵

Cosmetic advancements force both men/women alike to transform their bodies and position themselves closer to the ever-demanding culturally and socially defined versions of *"goddess-like/god-like"* women/men in the western world. Thus, cosmetic surgery is more about *"passing"*

¹³⁴ For further study, read Appendix 2

¹³⁵To study further, Hough, A. (2010). *Women with hourglass figures and perfect waists most attractive, study finds.* *Telegraph.co.uk.* Retrieved from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/science/science-news/7965211/Women-with-hourglass-figures-and-perfect-waists-most-attractive-study-finds.html>.

and “*positioning*” one’s body/self in the hegemonic ideals of beauty in society (homogeneity of self and body); less about standing out as heterogeneous “*individuals*”.¹³⁶

“Aesthetic processes are one of a kind in the medicalization procedure as the threats of experiencing these methods are limited with a specific end goal to accomplish the beauty ideal. Also, cosmetic surgery is not a method for engaging in conventional medication that spotlights enhancing wellbeing, health and additionally, and physical functioning since it just enhances the appearance of people. In this way, people may look for medicines, such as aesthetic techniques, keeping in mind the end goal of settling their nonmedical issues. Thus, the measure of aesthetic processes performed has fundamentally expanded over the previous decade, particularly among American females contrasted with their male partners.” (American Society of Plastic Surgeons, 2011)

This strengthens the social messages custom fitted to females to meet the female benchmarks of beauty winding up noticeably and gradually more constrained and impossible.

The more prominent profundity of research is justified to see how aesthetic surgery focuses to impact on their patients experience of surgery since these techniques are expanding at a high rate.¹³⁷

The participants in this study were traumatized with the aging process and did everything possible to reverse the process, which ultimately let cosmetic surgery become their last resort. They viewed aging, lines and wrinkles as unappealing and considered it to be a disadvantage to their socioeconomic and personal existence.

Linking it to a study conducted can substantiate the data. The study states, “*It is hardly surprising that ageing appearance is viewed so negatively as an unwelcome reminder of bodily deterioration, by the skincare industry.*”

As Dr. Eileen Bradbury, consultant psychologist, said in an interview by BBC online News on June 9, 1999, “*we are very fixed on the idea that youth is connected to not just beauty but to being powerful, being strong, healthy, energetic, having the best jobs and having the most*

¹³⁶Gilman, S. (2001). *Making the body beautiful* (1st ed.). Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

¹³⁷Merianos, A. L., Vidourek, R. A., & King, K. A. (2013). Medicalization of female beauty: A content analysis of cosmetic procedures. *The Qualitative Report*, 18(46), 1.

money.” That is to say, ageing has become associated not only with physical appearance but worthiness as a person, women in particular. Ageing is perceived as ‘war’ women should combat or fight against. Consequently, a wide audience is encouraged to take beneficial strategies to combat ageing. Under the influence of an expanding promotion with its propaganda for commodities, one of the most common beneficial strategies consumers choose is to spend money on commodities, such as anti-ageing skincare products to prevent or solve ageing in order to give an acceptable impression and appearance” (Chen, 2006: 207).¹³⁸

Women are generally supposed or educated to see their bodies as a position of dominance and power to be modified through surgeries. For women needing to be thought to be socially attractive, is in a manner endeavouring, in a competing setting, for a reward, for a position, for power.

“Cosmetic surgery has given a new dimension to my life and career.”¹³⁹

The attestation of a woman's beauty in society carries with it privileged heterosexual affiliations, and special access to types of power inaccessible to the plain, the ugly, the aged and the infertile.

Thus, giving insights, data and the decisions that one can in aesthetic surgery that extents from Liposuction to Rhinoplasty to Breast improvement, there is no range of the body that is not accessible to the mediations and transformations performed by aesthetic surgeons with the goal of making a twentieth century variant of "*feminaperfecta*". Manifestations of such vision are making an increasing number of women from various classes feel that their satisfaction and prosperity rely on following this "*femina perfecta*".

What women are encountering is not a pattern but rather an adjustment in state of mind. In this way, women who are making sacrifices in their lives with a specific end goal to select enhancement technologies are exceeding in number.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸Chen, J. (2006). The Technologization of Femininity: The Perfection of Ageing Through Science. *Intercultural Communication Studies*, 15(2), 204.

¹³⁹ For further study, read Appendix 2

¹⁴⁰Morgan, K. (1991). Women and the Knife: Cosmetic Surgery and the Colonization of Women's Bodies. *Hypatia*, 6(3), 25-53. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1991.tb00254.x>.

From the data collected, participants stated that ‘*undergoing surgery involved deep pain and sacrifices, however, cosmetic surgery is worth it*’ this shows that no matter, how much ever painful the surgery process might be, women felt the need to fit into the ‘*femina perfecta*’, to regain their self through the body either for power, satisfaction, normalcy or socio-economic mobility.

Therefore, institutionalized standards of beauty are ending up noticeably more achievable, a product for which, every single woman can, on a basic level, sacrifice and undergo pain on the off chance that she is to survive and become successful. Along these lines, now innovation and technology are creating a manifestation of youth and the existence of "beauty" for all women, who can manage the cost of it.

As Morgan puts it,

“*Natural destiny is being supplanted by technologically grounded coercion, and the coercion is camouflaged by the language of choice, fulfillment and liberation*”(Morgan, 1991: 158).¹⁴¹

2.5 Resurrection of the Body: the political and social context of the emergence of ‘ideal’ beauty

Images of female bodies can be seen all over the place, from commercials to billboards. Female celebrities are becoming more youthful, taller and thinner, extensively evident in newspapers, on television and in films. The commodification of the female body and how it is abused in the beauty "market" can be examined as the fixation on achieving that "perfect" female face and "flawless" female body through methods for human enhancement surgeries and thereafter resorting to commodity fetishism¹⁴² that is exhibited as finishing the look of what it "signifies" to

¹⁴¹Morgan, K. (1991). Women and the Knife: Cosmetic Surgery and the Colonization of Women's Bodies. *Hypatia*, 6(3), 25-53. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1991.tb00254.x>.

¹⁴²The idea of ‘commodity fetishism’ was denoted by Karl Marx, “a commodity appears at first sight an extremely obvious, trivial thing. But its analysis brings out that it is a very strange thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties”. Fetishism in anthropology refers to the primitive belief that godly powers can inhere in inanimate things (e.g., in totems). Marx borrows this concept to make sense of what he terms "commodity fetishism." As Marx explains, the commodity remains simple as long as it is tied to its use-value. *Introduction to Karl Marx, Module on Fetishism.* (2002). [Cla.purdue.edu.https://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/marxism/modules/marxfetishism.html](https://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/marxism/modules/marxfetishism.html).

be a 'she' by buying branded and designer commodities.¹⁴³

Gender and self-perception are depicted contrarily in various courses all through the media in the social structure of modern times. It can be seen that popular culture offers something beyond just endorsing products. They trade values, pictures, ideas, love, sexuality, popularity and normalcy. They eventually disclose to us our identity and what we ought to endeavour to be. The way we see our bodies can largely affect how we feel about ourselves. To a bigger degree, self-perception is profoundly impacted by popular culture.

From the data collected, we can analyze that women came across the idea of surgery from either advertisements, market or oral communication because the dominant ideals of beauty are the most promoted through such mediums of communication to the public and all of them were deeply affected by their distorted body image and were willing to go to the end of the world to transform how they look and feel about their body and self, nowhere in their experience, did they feel that they needed to look like a certain manner. However, they desired to fit into their self-perceived category of 'normalcy', in order to live a 'happy' life.

This exhibits that these women are willing to fit into the dominant category of beauty, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Popular culture can be seen as a medium to coax women into comprehending that their 'original or natural' bodies are imperfect and therefore, there is a need to undergo reconstruction in order to surpass the 'natural' because technology is seen to be superior to nature, furthermore, these messages occupy and consumes their mind into cognizing that their bodies and identities need reconstruction, for the better because that's what popular culture usually and strongly exhibits i.e. the endorsing the 'best' sides of surgery, excluding the threats, risks and the permanent disfigurements that comes with the cost of going under the knife.

Therefore, the reconstruction of the body, eventually leading to the reconstruction of the self and identity, can be both negative and positive. Literary texts demonstrate that females are more fixated on these body ventures, conceivably in light of the fact that as Evans (2002) contends the

¹⁴³Ambivalence, P. (2008).Commodification of the female body.*WordPress*. Retrieved on 1st May 2017 from <https://boxedambivalence.wordpress.com/>.

female body, not at all like the male, has dependably been viewed as insecure and pliable.¹⁴⁴

In order to fit into the social structure, one has to distance oneself from nature by wearing cosmetics and incorporating fashion, and with the use of cosmetics and fashion, one is trying to elevate and differentiate oneself from animals. Also, in this manner, aesthetic surgeries, cosmetics, ornaments, clothing and style are utilized to exemplify that one is attempting to be edified and civilized.¹⁴⁵

This can be studied by saying that from the data collected, all of the women incorporated surgeries to “reconstruct” their bodies, to look ‘normal’ and ‘civilized’, further leading to the ‘elevation’ of their identity and self.

For instance,

“A young adult who opted to undergo permanent makeup/cosmetic tattooing after breaking out with facial acne, to save both time and regular investment into buying conventional makeup. She feels that this is a solution and cure to ‘an undesirable’ appearance i.e. uneven skin tone and the removal of blemishes. She wanted to be perceived as someone who is ‘decently’ looking. She states ‘Ever since I got all of these done; I have never felt any happier than the way I feel now. I want to be seen as someone “who is normal.””¹⁴⁶

This can be analyzed that the woman is trying to rise above nature through the means of cosmetic surgery, i.e. ‘she has to lay all the arts under contribution for the means of lifting herself above nature into something that is superior and divine’.¹⁴⁷

Therefore, *“There exists an obvious mind-body separation in society—everything around us is either constructed by a human’s opinion or the actuality we were born into. In that sense, society is fake and man-made; it doesn’t actually materialize in our surroundings. Society is but a set of*

¹⁴⁴This Issue Of Cosmetic Surgery Sociology Essay. (2015). UKEssays. Retrieved 16 April 2017, from <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/sociology/this-issue-of-cosmetic-surgery-sociology-essay.php>

¹⁴⁵Baudelaire, C. In Praise of Cosmetics. *The Painter of Modern Life, collected in My Heart Laid Bare and Other Prose Writings*, Peter Quennell, ed., Norman Cameron, trans. (London: George Weidenfeld & Nicholson Ltd., 1950), 63.

¹⁴⁶ For further study, read Appendix 2

¹⁴⁷Baudelaire, C. In Praise of Cosmetics. *The Painter of Modern Life, collected in My Heart Laid Bare and Other Prose Writings*, Peter Quennell, ed., Norman Cameron, trans. (London: George Weidenfeld & Nicholson Ltd., 1950), 63.

*rules that exists in our heads. What is real and natural is the body we were bestowed in life. Likewise, "gold is not inherently precious, its value is man-made."*¹⁴⁸

To understand what causes women to go under the knife, there is not just a single hypothetical approach that can completely clarify or embody aesthetic surgery, however, they give a stage that empowers us to scrutinize a few beliefs that are the mutual jargons of cosmetic surgery.

A few feminist theorists (Morgan, 1991; Wolf, 1990) portray cosmetic surgery as essentially a repressive or disciplinary system. Whereas, others (Davis, 1995) perceive women's decision of cosmetic surgery as a matter of practicing agency over their body and the way their body should look. This collection of agency as being reflected in magazines which, frequently portray women as effectively assuming the responsibility of their bodies through their choice to experience cosmetic surgery.¹⁴⁹

Through the data¹⁵⁰, one can assume that cosmetic surgery, however, does give an outlet or agency to women to break out of the bodies that do not conform to the beauty norm. They believe that the easiest and permanent way to transform or rectify their body or self is through cosmetic surgery, even if such a stance does enforce and reinforce the dominant beauty ideal, which pressurizes more and more women to coincide or follow the unrealistic standardization of beauty.

In totality, the beauty ideal is constructed and enforced by various social institutions, whether its oral communication of those who have experienced it or popular culture that dominates the market of aesthetic surgery.

Michel Foucault's work on the understanding of the body has a critical effect. Foucault concentrated on the disciplinary administrations guided against the body to deliver 'docile bodies' that can be controlled to effectively create and adjust to the social and institutional norms. Foucault contended that the ascent of political freedom and institutions in contemporary western culture was led by a new disciplinary power concentrated on the body. This discipline governs the body so that it 'produces subjected, used, transformed and improved called the "docile

¹⁴⁸Tan, G. (2017). Subverting Social Messages. *The New York Times Style Magazine, Singapore*. Retrieved on 1st May 2017 from <http://www.tsingapore.com/article/subverting-social-messages>.

¹⁴⁹Parker, R. (2010). *Women, doctors and cosmetic surgery* (1st ed.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

¹⁵⁰ For further study, read Appendix 2

bodies".¹⁵¹

We can utilize Foucault's focal bits of knowledge of power, in relation to prison and armies, but one can utilize this context to perceive how women's bodies are entering "an apparatus of power that investigates it, breaks it down and reconstructs it" through a conspicuously political transformation of embodiment" (Foucault 1979,138). One can relate this idea to aesthetic surgery by discussing the dispersion of power all through western industrialized societies that are progressively dedicated to a mechanical and technological beauty ideal.¹⁵²

Therefore, technological powers have applied a noteworthy effect on the bodies and situations of individuals. In utilizing technology to change their condition, people have started to change themselves and their physical limits.

Philosophical propositions have been censured for reviewing body as a solitary character, which incorporates both mind and body however what is required is "corporeal feminism". It has been contended that the body ought to be taken a gander at both from inside, that is, psychoanalytically and from outside that is lived encounters and experiences. The body is a physical portrayal of culture, convictions, impacts and attitude however respond to it in various ways.¹⁵³

It can be contended that feminists need to embrace a 'wealthier moral sentence structure and vocabulary while conjecturing cosmetic surgery'. Dismissing cosmetic surgery inside and out as a patriarchal practice and overbearing that the cosmetic surgery industry was so 'straightforwardly oppressive' that it required just inadequate investigation, implies that feminists have not been completely occupied with the verbal confrontation and debates about the industry.¹⁵⁴

In relation, all of the women interviewed in this study communicated colossal happiness and satisfaction with their surgeries and are willing to undergo surgery again in order to 'fix the

¹⁵¹Foucault, M., & Sheridan, A. (2012). *Discipline and punish* (1st ed.). New York: Vintage.

¹⁵²Morgan, K. (1991). Women and the Knife: Cosmetic Surgery and the Colonization of Women's Bodies. *Hypatia*, 6(3), 25-53. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1991.tb00254.x>.

¹⁵³Grosz, E. (1987). Notes towards a corporeal feminism. *Australian feminist studies*, 2(5), 1-16.

¹⁵⁴Heyes, C. J. (2007). Cosmetic surgery and the televisual makeover: A Foucauldian feminist reading. *Feminist Media Studies*, 7(1), 17-32.

undesirable body part and imperfections’.

There is a story that is involved behind every decision of undergoing the process and kinds of literature should focus more on such stories rather than being more objective in understanding such a critical social phenomenon.

Surgeons in cosmetic surgeries have the chance to compose onto women's bodies that are socially and culturally worthy principles of beauty, which signifies "male" requirements. The cosmetic surgery industry is male overwhelmed and women are the principal customers of it.¹⁵⁵

Utilizing distinctive technology, the human bodies are being made increasingly unreal or hyper-real—and this can be understood from the feminist viewpoint—as the transformations are done to delight the male as opposed to the woman being calm with her natural self.¹⁵⁶ However, the surgical gaze might be initially in view of how men look at women i.e. owing its socio-cultural power to the imbalance of sexual positions, is itself assuming control as the transcendent social look.

The surgical scrutiny is shared by many individuals in this culture as one minutely evaluates the bodies and faces of celebrities, as one obediently looks into the mirror regularly to check wrinkle and aging lines, tested by Melanie Griffith from her surgically and digitally changed Revlon confront: "*Don't deny your age. Resist it.*" one underestimates that s/he can in assorted ways change the body—either by method for exercise or cosmetics or hair highlighting or, on the other hand, surgery; the body that is viewed as transformable is the body at the flip side of the surgical look. More it appears that what was at one time the connection between the male look and the female body/canvas is presently experienced in the connection between innovation and technology as a rule and anybody.¹⁵⁷

Contrastingly, a vast portion of women, who are having breast implants to enhance their breasts and acknowledge any health hazard worth the subsequent benefit and help to their self-regard and market esteem are not 'socio-cultural idiots'; more often than not, they are very aware of the structure of beauty standards and social rewards that they are reacting to and sustaining in

¹⁵⁵Wegenstein, B. (2012). *The cosmetic gaze* (1st ed.). Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

¹⁵⁶Morgan, K. (1991). Women and the Knife: Cosmetic Surgery and the Colonization of Women's Bodies. *Hypatia*, 6(3), 25-53. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1991.tb00254.x>.

¹⁵⁷Blum, V. (2003). *Flesh wounds: The culture of cosmetic surgery*. Univ of California Press.

society. “They know that Bally Matrix Fitness is telling the truth about our culture when it tells them that you don’t just shape your body; you shape your life. They may even recognize that Bally Matrix is also creating that culture. But they insist on their right to be happy on its terms.”¹⁵⁸

The human body is a politically engraved element. With regard to femininity and beauty, it is the woman who is in charge of whatsoever “oppression” they experience from the ill effects of impulsive desires and oppressive regimes of “fashion.”

As per this concept, thus, the man's fascinations have no obligation to shoulder, nor does the socio-cultural settings, which underlines the woman's desire for those of the other (man), which sexualizes and commodifies women's bodies, and offers them minimal other opportunities for social or individual power. Or maybe, it is in our basic female nature to be attracted to such technicalities, and to will to bear whatever physical burden is required. Therefore, to perceive a woman as an overbearing victim that lacks power, intervention and participation in the patriarchal structure is just too over-simplistic.¹⁵⁹

In a study, women demanded that they didn't have cosmetic surgery to end up noticeably alluring. They had surgery since they felt uncomfortable in their bodies; their bodies did not fit the feeling of their identity. Along these lines, aesthetic surgery was intercession in personality and who they were. It empowered them to lessen the separation between the interior and exterior with the goal that others could consider them to be as they saw themselves. These women considered themselves to be operators who, by redoing their bodies, changed their lives as well. They all rejected the idea that by having surgery, they had permitted themselves to be forced, standardized or ideologically controlled. Despite what might be expected, cosmetic surgery cleared a path for them to take control over conditions, which they already had no control.¹⁶⁰

Thus it can be stated that, it is difficult to comprehend whether through cosmetic surgery, women conform to the existing structures of beauty, perpetuate such a structure or do they see themselves as liberated agents who have complete control over their bodies. Thus, to understand

¹⁵⁸Bordo, S. (1993).Feminism, Foucault and the politics of the body.*Up against Foucault: Explorations of some tensions between Foucault and feminism*, 179.

¹⁵⁹Bordo, S. (1993).Feminism, Foucault and the politics of the body. *Up against Foucault: Explorations of some tensions between Foucault and feminism*, 179.

¹⁶⁰Davis, K. (1997). Cosmetic Surgery as Feminist Utopia?.*European Journal of Women's Studies*, 4(1), 23-37.

the political and social context of the emergence of 'ideal' beauty cannot be done through a narrow approach.

Conclusion: The blended boundaries between technology and the human body

The expanding inescapability of technological development has led to a techno-human fusion into our daily existence. Regardless of its relationship with the human body and the encompassing conditioner through the unique interaction that the media and popular culture have framed around us, not through in-your-face promotions but rather with reality arrangement and dramatization serials. Therefore, the techno-scientific innovation of the 21st century has enabled an expanding interaction between technology and the human body, which has led to the blurring of boundaries between technology and humans.

This thesis tries to analyze the various approaches to understanding the human-technology relationship and the development of the body and self through technology and various social constructions.

It is stated that technological procedures and awareness have started entering, to colonize, remake and progressively rule and control the very substance of the human body. However, various kinds of literature talk about the social construction of technology, which argues that excluding techno-scientific devices and machines from the social framework mean profoundly altering the nature of social structures. Therefore, it is essential to understand that the way thoughts are deciphered and conveyed i.e. through various communication systems, is similarly as vital as considering their "social setting." Additionally, technology is seen to permit people to extend their innate and instinctive capacities to be more effective and fruitful. In context to this, technology cannot really be associated with its historical past and political setting, as it is human instinct to attempt to perform our vital errands with less exertion to a feasible extent. Moreover, technology cannot be completely regarded as being an element of the structure of suppression in society. Hence, there isn't a single approach that exists to understand the relationship between the human body and technological innovation.

Earlier, technology was not just seen as a high-tech force or scientific computerization rather technology comprised of materials that could be implemented by man to control or utilize nature based on his basic necessities. However, with the invasion of

technology and the digitalization process of the human body, the body is no longer a 'natural' entity. Initially, the technology was visible as a force or device utilized outside the body, such as a remote controller but now, technology itself has undergone a transformation and is viewed as a technique that has started to invade the human body i.e. a pacemaker. Also, we can study an association between technology, body and nature, where nature has limited the body to an extent; technology on the other hand pushes the body beyond the limits.

To sum up, one can say that human bodily functions; both mental and physical are continuously being more and more influenced by science and technology. Such forms of "human enhancement", in specific "human enhancement technologies" (HET), are being utilized, advanced or visualized in numerous sectors of practice as broad as assistive technologies for disabled people, pharmacology, military research, reproductive medicine and sports.

Nonetheless, as innovations in biomedicine and bioengineering are modified, there is more demand to alter biological forms and functions in the body. A belief in the technological ability to improve the body's natural capabilities along with cultural assumptions about what is considered to be "deficient," "normal," or "enhanced" has led to a variety of body-altering techniques that not only repair or replace functions but may go beyond what is typically considered therapeutic medical intervention. In essence, the ability exists to redesign the human body according to particular needs and desires, altering or building new features.

In the 21st century, technological innovation has progressively moved from the outside (remote controlling devices and computer desktops) into the inside (human body) and its encompassing environment, progressively obscuring limits between the technological and the physical.

Women are the biggest and chief targets and consumers of cosmetic surgery. New innovative technologies have caused an extraordinary effect on the female body and the situations around them. This shows the utilization of technology has enabled humans to transform their existing conditions, and themselves and enable them to go beyond their bodily limits.

However, on account of cyborgs, plastic surgery and genetic engineering, together with the developing number of courses in which machines can be attached to the flesh, appear to be at times to prompt ever-more profound incorporation of social standards and economic objectives into the bodies of those subject to them. This depicts that in order to prove oneself in society, one

is forced to upgrade oneself by going under the knife. Beauty technology or science enables a person to transform every body part they like, in order to feel complete and acceptable both in personal and professional life alike and such process enforces and reinforces social standards of beauty.

There have been extensive moves to commoditize and attack the female body in the beauty "market", which can be examined as the fixation on achieving that "perfect" female face and "flawless" body through methods for human enhancement surgeries and thereafter resorting to commodity fetishism that is exhibited as finishing their complete outlook of what it "signifies" to be a 'she' by buying branded and designer products.

Earlier, bodily enhancement surgeries in the past were at one time a silent process where women who had, had gotten "work done" would readily deny it that at any point the process happened. However it has now turned into an across-the-world situation, transparently discussed, celebrated and a few superstars conversing with cameras about how it has helped their psychology and professional life.

Technological advancements have started to move rapidly. 21st-century digitization has begun to change the character of media. Similarly, media helps in filling a platform between technology and humans; it in a way enables the bridge of the gap between techno-science and human beings.

Therefore, from the above argument, it can be safely assumed that bodily enhancements and the business itself have covertly, unobtrusively sneaked into the lounges of homes through the TV, not through in-your-face advertisements, but rather with reality programs and dramatization serials. It is practically hard to avoid the tempest of advertisements for cosmetic surgeries on TV, or on live shows in view of aesthetic surgery. Bodies of women are being dissected on screens with a woman viewing everything as she sits on her couch set. Therefore, a woman's body has been commoditized both on and off the screen. In such a stance, it's true that media plays a crucial role in connecting scientific processes such as cosmetic surgeries to women, who are watching it.

Since the 1990's cosmetic procedures have become extremely evident in society. Cosmetic surgery provides a means to alter and "improve" people's appearances. Women can augment breasts, diminish wrinkles, and get rid of "droopy" eyes; notwithstanding, on the grounds that

just because technology and surgery are accessible, ought to women give up their personalities, character and identifications so as to fit in with the culturally defined hegemonic or predominant perfect. Such as, women who are overweight or fat are fat-shamed or bullied, which depicts that in order to conform or become acceptable in society, women are forced to attain the 'ideal weight' by going under the knife, at the cost of ignoring their identity, self and character in order to conform to the socially hyper-real and unreal demands of beauty.

Also, a woman who undergoes such surgeries does not understand the risks and pain involved, in order to make herself re-invented. Women think that cosmetic surgeons with the utilization of his/her magic knives will be able to transform an 'ugly' duckling into a 'beautiful' swan, with this thought in mind they blindly fall into the trap of enhancement through magical instruments and techniques.

There is an extensive force by the beauty industry and popular culture to tell us how women should look, and how should they feel about themselves, whether they fit or are unfit into the norms of beauty. The beauty market keeps on striving to enforce norms of beauty i.e. a fat person should feel or is made to feel inferior about his/her body, whereas a slim person is praised for not being "fat". It raises questions, about whether can one ever fit in. Or whether the beauty norm is hyperbolized that it's almost unachievable? Taglines used in the advertisements are so persuasive and catchy that they induce women to change how they look and feel about themselves.

Media advertisements showcase cosmetic surgery as a 'normalized' part of modern life. The way cosmetic surgery is advertised plays a partial role in the rising demand for cosmetic surgery. Women utilize many technological resources accessible to them in order to build up their own esteem and feeling of self and to expand their physical capital and power in society.

Cosmetic surgery is seen not just as an apparatus only to improve one's appearance, but additionally, as one, which can upgrade an individual's life, in general, see it. Women's self-loathing or disappointment with the self has prompted the appropriation of aesthetic surgeries. These post-modern-day surgeries concentrate on de-naturalizing the body or deconstructing the body. This is refreshing as it frees the person from self-loathing.

Cosmetic surgery has turned out to be broadly acknowledged in our way of life without an appropriate examination of why women are willing to undergo mutilation, which in a way

damages themselves with all sorts of risks involved which is widely implicit. Such as, the complications involved in breast implants are breastfeeding difficulties, calcium build-up in breast tissue, also called “calcification”, breast pain, infection, including toxic shock syndrome—when during breast implant surgery, wounds are contaminated with micro-organisms, such as bacteria or fungi etc.

Cosmetic surgery is additionally a type of mutilation in light of the fact that a large portion of the techniques performed mangle or eradicate the "original or old" body part that in most cases did not rupture or fail; rather was changed exclusively for stylish reasons.

Hence, one can argue that cosmetic procedures, which wipe out a body quality in return for an all more socially fitting body part that is illustrative of the beauty norm are a type of mutilation of the body. This can be viewed through the expanding rates of cosmetic surgery, disregarding the physical dangers and risks included, which furthermore leads to emotional and psychological damage. The popular cultural inclination to grasp and commend cosmetic surgery has empowered individuals to separate themselves from the real mechanics and hazards required in aesthetic methodologies.

Cosmetic surgery sustains ageism and prejudice based on race and ethnicity on the grounds that the perfection it conveys highly depends on an incomprehensive and an illusionary form of beauty perfection. Therefore, technology has empowered individuals to look forward to good days in order to get their bodies reshaped and to remove any apparent "blemishes."

The desire of remaking the body and self has occurred due to the hegemonic ideals of beauty and women have been subjected to this, which has increasingly caused a constant threat for them being dependent on body modifications and cosmetic surgeries to be viewed as “transformed for the better”, this has led to the reshaping of the body, which inherently reshapes the self, i.e. gives a sense of happiness, confidence and power.

Through data analysis, it was found that in most circumstances on ‘why women undergo surgery?’ the reason was to live a ‘happy’ life, which disallowed them from encountering because of specific body parts that didn’t allow them to prior surgery, which expresses that by getting surgery done, they are supplementing their desires and feelings through surgery. Post-surgery is enabling them to align the body with the self because achieve the ‘perfect’ body or a

body part is all that they desired. Women were able to develop a relationship with their bodies because they felt a sense of comfort, which came after the surgical process. They felt that there was a “problem” with their body and they had to solve it through surgery.

Also, through the data collected, most individuals, who opt for aesthetic procedures, often decline that they are/had or strive to keep it as implicit as possible for the fear of being labelled as “unnatural and artificial” and negative social reactions towards their decisions, this is ironic because when celebrities in popular culture who have opted or opt to go under the surgeon’s knife are however perceived as “normal” or “maintenance of beauty” and are much talked hyped about in relation to outstanding success or failures. One can believe that “instead of the body, the self appears on stage”.

In most kinds of literature, plastic surgery is conventionally seen as a process that enforces and reinforces the futile attributes of modern standards of beauty. Be that as it may, this isn't the situation; cosmetic surgery works for the individuals who are experiencing or have experienced it. However, all of the women interviewed in this study communicated colossal happiness and satisfaction with their surgeries and are willing to undergo surgery again in order to ‘fix the undesirable body part and imperfections’.

One can understand through the thesis how are current technological innovations influencing the conventional notions of ‘beauty’. It can be assumed that the institutionalized standards of beauty are ending up noticeably more achievable through technology, a product for which, every single woman can, on a basic level, sacrifice and undergo pain on the off chance that she is to survive and become successful. Along these lines, now innovation and technology are creating a manifestation of youth and the existence of "beauty" for all women, who can manage the cost of it.

In order to fit into the social structure, one has to distance oneself from nature by wearing cosmetics and incorporating fashion, and with the use of cosmetics and fashion, one is trying to elevate and differentiate oneself from animals. Also, in this manner, aesthetic surgeries, cosmetics, ornaments, clothing and style are utilized to exemplify that one is attempting to be edified and civilized.

This can be studied from the findings that all of the women incorporated surgeries to “reconstruct” their bodies, to look ‘normal’ and ‘civilized’, further leading to the ‘elevation’ of their identity and self.

It is said that the human body is a politically engraved element. With regard to femininity and beauty, it is the woman who is in charge of whatsoever “oppression” they experience from the ill effects of impulsive desires and oppressive regimes of “fashion.”

As per this concept, thus, the man's fascinations have no obligation to shoulder, nor does the socio-cultural settings, which underlines the woman's desire for those of the other (man), which sexualizes and commodifies women's bodies, and offers them minimal other opportunities for social or individual power. Or maybe, it is in our basic female nature to be attracted to such technicalities, and to will to bear whatever physical burden is required. Therefore, to perceive a woman as an overbearing victim that lacks power, intervention and participation in the patriarchal structure is just too over-simplistic.

Through the analysis, women demanded that they didn't have cosmetic surgery to end up noticeably alluring. They had surgery since they felt uncomfortable in their bodies; their bodies did not fit the feeling of their identity. Along these lines, aesthetic surgery was intercession in personality and who they were. It empowered them to lessen the separation between the interior and exterior with the goal that others could consider them to be as they saw themselves. These women considered themselves to be operators who, by redoing their bodies, changed their lives as well.

It can be stated that it is difficult to comprehend whether, through cosmetic surgery, women conform to the existing structures of beauty, perpetuate such a structure or do they see themselves as liberated agents who have complete control over their bodies. Thus, to understand the political and social context of the emergence of ‘ideal’ beauty cannot be done through a narrow approach.

Therefore, the hegemonic expectation of being seen as beautiful highly depends on the fact that women ought to fit into a particular demand of perfection. Most women, in any case, can never hold fast to this standard; along these lines, they're expected to trade their individual characters or social markers keeping in mind the end goal to 'fit in'. In spite of the possibly beneficial

outcomes of cosmetic surgeries on building up the confidence of women, the proliferation of these surgeries makes a hegemonic demand for a monoculture where women are no longer allowed to have divergent social and ethnic indicators which enable them to set up their characters.

APPENDIX

Appendix-1

Interview Guide

- Pre-surgery process- the type of surgery chosen; reason or motivation behind the decision; sufficiently made aware of the in-surgery and post-surgery medical consequences?
- Pre/post-surgery perceptions- what were the feelings while going into the operation theatre, concerns about complications/surgery process, pre-operation expectations for results and immediate feelings after the operation?
- Aesthetic outcome: size; shape; the appearance of the scar; body wholeness/harmony; proportionate; feel to touch; do you see this surgery as natural or unnatural?
- Psychological well-being and self-concept: changes in mood; changes in confidence level; emotional distress resulting from teasing, comments, or stares prior to or after operation; body image issues; self-consciousness; self-esteem; feelings of femininity; cancer worry; closure to emotions surrounding disease; feelings of normalcy.
- Relationships with friends and family: reactions of friends and family; difference in treatment or attitude; marital relationship; family relationships; strain of physical or emotional problems on relationships; avoidance behavior; more or less outgoing; feelings in a social setting; perceptions in the workplace.

- **Surgical care:** satisfaction with care; satisfaction with information provided; comfort with surgeon; confidence in surgeon; surgical setting; clinic; staff; follow-up care; information about scar healing.
- **Expectations:** fulfillment of expectations; willingness to repeat and/or recommend procedure; satisfaction with overall appearance; regrets; outcome better or worse than expected; process better or worse than expected.

Appendix – 2

1. Cosmetic Tattooing

In a case study, where a young adult opted to undergo permanent makeup/cosmetic tattooing after breaking out with facial acne, to save both time and regular investment into buying conventional makeup. She feels that this is a solution and cure to an undesirable appearance i.e. uneven skin tone and the removal of blemishes. She wanted to be perceived as someone who is ‘decently’ looking. She states ‘Ever since I got all of these done; I have never felt any happier than the way I feel now. Cosmetic surgery has given me a new dimension to my life and career. Although, I am afraid to disclose any of these decisions to my partner, colleagues and friends because of the fear of being stigmatized as “artificial”. I want to be seen as someone “who is normal”. Besides, life is too short for one to be sad about the way they look and if one can change the way their look; I highly recommend they should.’

2. Abdominoplasty

A participant after giving birth to two children claims her reason for undergoing abdominoplasty¹⁶¹ “my abdominal region had expanded to the extent that made me feel uncomfortable (both personally and socially) and made me feel old. I was unable to wear attractive clothes because I was always so conscious of my abdominal area. And in today’s figure-conscious society, greater attention is directed to the size and shape of our bodies. A week of post-surgery involved a lot of pain and inconvenience, I could see a huge difference in my body and it was worth everything for me because I felt youthful again. And with youth, one always feels a lot more confident. My family has been very supportive all throughout and didn’t see it as if I’m opting for the “easy” way because they have seen me struggling with diets and exercises prior to abdominoplasty. Of course, the children are, worth every inconvenience and pain. Nonetheless, this does not stop a mother from thinking whether or not anything can be done to improve such a ‘problem’.”

¹⁶¹Surgical process that involves the removal of excess flesh from the abdomen. Abdominoplasty. *Oxford Dictionaries*. Retrieved from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/abdominoplasty>. 27th April 2017.

3. Rhytidectomy

A participant who had undergone rhytidectomy¹⁶² claims ‘I got my facelift and neck lift done for my 25th anniversary party and I am extremely satisfied with the results, it's just been a couple of months and I am already looking 15 years younger, all the sagging skin over neck and face has gone. I have a well-defined jawline. I have tried every anti-aging product on the market shelf and I have still haven't look quarter of what I look right now. On my party, I looked and felt like a young bride again and everybody was amazed by the look. I feel I have regained my youthfulness and confidence along with it. As long as I didn't get a facelift done, I was underconfident and stressed about the way my facial skin looked with the number of wrinkles and lines on it and have always tried to reverse the signs of aging. I would always encourage one to enhance their body, whichever way possible as long as it gives them a boost of confidence about their look because the world is driven by beauty. Fortunately, my family, especially my husband and friends were supportive of my surgery and encouraged me to undergo one. They don't see this as a negative thing as long as it made me feel positive about myself and happy.’

4. Skin Resurfacing/Rejuvenation

Another participant put forth her experience by claiming “Last year, I got married at the age of 45. And since, it was a special day in my life, I was bound to look perfect. Also, since my husband is a few years younger to me, I felt even more compelled to undergo surgery to look at least as old as he is or younger. And I came across skin resurfacing treatment in a TV advert, which made believe that there might be something out there for me to be able to look youthful again, since I had been dealing with blotches, scars, wrinkles and hyperpigmentation for a long time, which of course dulled my self-image. After undergoing surgery, in the first setting itself made me feel a few years younger and by the time the final setting got over, I was looking not more than the age of 35. I was overwhelmed with the results and for my wedding and honeymoon, I was looking spotless. If I get a chance to do this again and I would also like to do a body lift, so that not just my skin should look youthful but my body as well. As far as my husband and family are concerned, I didn't tell anyone about my decision because it's a personal

¹⁶²Plastic surgery for the removal of lines or wrinkles from the skin, especially of the face; an instance of this, a facelift.rhytidectomy. *Oxford*. Retrieved from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/rhytidectomy>. 27th April 2017.

choice and I feel that it's not anyone's business to know I would highly recommend aesthetic surgeries to those who would want to enhance their look in any way because it definitely lifts up the attitude and confidence in public."

5. Botox Injections to reverse the process of aging

The motivation for another participant to get Botox¹⁶³ done in order to reverse the signs of aging exclaimed "I am a chain smoker and since it is hard to quit and as many people know smoking over a period of time causes aging and to cover the lines and wrinkles on my face, I decided to take Botox injections in order to treat wrinkles on the forehead, near the eyes and on the lower part of the face. I chose to do it because as we all know, we live in a world, where facial looks are very crucial and half of your work gets done if one is good-looking. Ever since I have taken Botox injections, I feel more confident and attractive. It has in a way brought happiness and youthfulness to my life. I feel secure in my personal life as well. I, no longer have to worry about how my face looks because it is being taken care of by professionals. Although I haven't discussed any of my decisions with anyone amongst my family, friends or partner because I am afraid of being judged from the point of view of being a chain smoker and the other of being labelled as "unnatural", or "artificial" and "unnecessary". Therefore, I don't wish to disclose anything about the reason behind my youthfulness, although it is enhanced "who doesn't go through a lot for one to look beautiful." However, the disadvantageous part of Botox injections is the temporality of the effect because it wears off after every 3-4 months, so the continuous process of undergoing a non-surgical enhancement like Botox is expensive and painful."

¹⁶³ Botox is a purified form of botulinum, a neurotoxin causing botulism, injected in minute amounts especially to treat muscle spasms and relax facial muscles in order to reduce wrinkles. the definition of Botox. (2017). Dictionary.com. Retrieved 26 April 2017, from <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/botox?s=t>.

6. Liposuction

A participant shared her motivation behind liposuction¹⁶⁴ ‘I am 27 years old and was suffering from excessive weight problems due to which I was unable to find a suitable groom to get married and my weight was increasing with time. I had a sitting job at the office, late hours of work were making it worse, and I started developing lots of health problems due to it. Then someone advised me to get liposuction done. But I was very confused and scared about where to get it done. Then I decided on visiting a surgeon and saw his results of surgery, after gaining confidence I got my liposuction done. The surgeon removed unwanted fat from my body, which made me lose almost 20kgs and also changed the shape of my body, after which I felt very light, healthy and attractive. Liposuction is one of the easiest ways to lose weight, if one finds exercising tedious like myself. Only my parents know about this surgery, otherwise my friends, colleagues, and relatives are amazed to see the change. I wouldn’t want to disclose this to them because I am afraid on being socially stigmatized on various levels, which affects my mental well-being considerably because I had been socially stigmatized when I was fat, which played up with my psychological and emotional health.’”

7. Hair Transplant

A participant while still undergoing surgical treatment for hair-loss states that “I have been suffering from hair loss problem since 2-3 years. I tried medication for about 2 years but there was no positive impact from it, so I opted to undergo hair transplant¹⁶⁵. Loss of hair was causing a huge demoralizing effect. And I wanted to feel attractive. Also, my family is looking for a suitable groom for me, so it became more crucial to undergo surgical treatment. After undergoing surgery, I feel a lot more confident and totally satisfied with the surgery. Hair does play an important role in a persons’ life, and not just facial looks. I would recommend hair transplantation to those who are worried about hair loss or thinning of hair because I do know

¹⁶⁴A technique in cosmetic surgery for removing excess fat from under the skin by suction.Liposuction. *Oxford*. Retrieved from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/liposuction>. 27th April 2017.

¹⁶⁵A surgical procedure in which hair follicles are transplanted from one part of the head to another part where the hair is thinning or receding.Hair Transplant. *Oxford*. Retrieved from https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/hair_transplant. 27th April 2017.

what it feels to deal with hair loss. Also, society becomes easier to live in, if a person is good-looking.”

8. Hourglass Surgery

A participant after undergoing an hourglass surgery advocates that ‘I was extremely worried with my loose & heavy abdomen region and overall fat in thighs, buttocks and arms. I was looking for a permanent solution to this and was not getting anything, anywhere. Despite of maintaining a fit regime of food and exercise, I was unable to bring myself in shape. I was tired of hiding my fat under loose, unattractive clothes. Therefore, I resorted to cosmetic surgery to reshape my body to give me a more feminine look, by adding contours in the right places. Post-surgery gave me a different body, something that I could only dream about. Now, I take pride in the way I look. I am vocal about my experience and surgery because it doesn’t matter what others judge me as, as long as I am happy and confident. Also, if my experience of resorting to surgery can help another woman, I would be grateful.’

9. Breast Augmentation

A young adult who was extremely depressed about her breast size exclaimed, “I had always thought of undergoing breast enhancement surgery because I felt extremely unattractive with the size of my breasts. Among my friends, I was teased as a “boobless” woman and nothing nice in clothing would fit me, I would look simply flat chested with zero proportions and curves on my body, which caused me high levels of stress and anxiety. Thus, as soon as I entered university I desperately needed surgery because I could no longer deal with the teases and stress. After surgery, I feel as if I am complete as female gender, the breast size that I have right now is what I have desired throughout. I am able to fit into anything possible, which makes me feel even more confident and makes me look even more attractive. I would recommend cosmetic surgery to anyone who feels the way I’ve felt because it’s essential to feel good about oneself, however possible. It doesn’t matter what others label me as after surgery as long as I feel positive about my body.”

10. Laser Treatment

A participant narrates an incident of experiencing a harsh accident she states, “It happened a year ago. I never wanted it but I had to. So I had just started my career when it happened. I was

coming back from work and I had an accident. Our car was hit by another car and the right side window broke and all the glass pieces went into my face. It was horrible. My forehead, my right side nose, cheek, ear and neck were injured. We were rushed to a government hospital and the doctor gave us first aid. He said he could put stitches but then marks will be left all over my right face. But because I was working in an airline, I could not afford to have scars on my face, since such a career demands attractiveness. Therefore, I decided to see a cosmetic surgeon.

After 4-5 hours of the surgery, I came out and rested for good 2 hours, I came back to my place. I could not imagine all this had actually happened. When I saw my face, it was all covered with surgical dressing. I was just wondering how would I look. What will people think? Will I be able to work again?

After a week, my dress was changed and again the same thing was on my face. I wanted to see my face but it was all covered. Being a girl, I had so many things in my mind- what if it does not get healed and my marriage, my work, my whole life-what will I do? When I would see my family and friends, they used to cry because getting badly bruised on your face was huge and was a life changer, which was for the worse.

As weeks passed, considering movies, I thought that I'll be having white colour stitches all over my face but when finally I saw my face it was all red. I used to cry. I could not go out, I felt bad because of my face. I always had to surgically dress my face, which was very painful; but later as time passed I got lasers done and that made my face look and feel much better.

After 3 months I joined back and I had to put on makeup because of my job. I felt good the first time I saw myself with makeup. I was very happy that my face is finally getting better and just like before. It was visible, so people used to ask me about it. But I was happy to tell them as it had become better as of what I had seen. I went through so much. I remember I could not eat for a month.

These cosmetic surgeries made my face look like before. People say that I had started looking better than before after my accident. Recently this year I again had to go through another surgery due to some scars, which were not in a good shape. I was scared because of all the injections and medicines and stitches and pain. But it all went well and after a month I joined back. Now I put on makeup and go to my job. I still am going through lasers for all the betterment. But I am happy that my face is fine now.”

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