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An investigation into the motives of changing the
appearance; is it driven by personal motives or to
impress society?

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Abstract

With the advancement of cosmetic technology, our need to change and alternate our physical appearance has never been so easy and so attainable. Today, the use of plastic surgeries, hyaluronic injections, silicone implants and botox facilitate these demands for constant change all around the world. Is the motive to change our appearances done for the benefit of others or for ourselves? In this essay we will investigate this notion by looking into the reasons why cosmetic technology is so popular and why more and more individuals are drawn to these drastic changes. Getting old is inevitable, there is no escaping it! Yet in the 21st century cosmetic companies and campaigns have managed to convince the world that people can cheat the process of ageing- what's even more concerning is that young people feel the need to jump on this hype to prevent looking old as early as possible. The way we look, the way we dress, the shape of our bodies has never mattered as much as it does in today's society.

Introduction

With the increasing use of social media platforms, editing apps and Instagram influencers left and right, we now live in a constant state of having to look a certain way by sustaining a specific image of beauty at the face of digital society. One major factor that accounts for people's motives to change their appearances are social media platforms such as Instagram and current trends. According to Hootsuite's article, 1 billion people use Instagram per month with a user statistics of 52% females to 48% males. With social media playing such a huge part in everybody's lives, it is no surprise how we are so easily influenced and affected by it. According to an article by Ying Lin (Orbelo) in 2019, half a million of Instagram users were solely influencers "whose preferred and only channel of influence is Instagram". And so we wonder why some of us worry, fuss over and pick at our bodies every second of every day. When we do decide to do something about these imperfections, are we doing it for others or for ourselves? Well, the answer is simple. In today's society we no longer strive to do things that are beneficial for us but for the rest of the world to see, to comment on, to react to. It would be almost ridiculous to believe that young girls dream of getting breast augmentations and butt implants simply because they want to. That is not the case. Social media stars like Kylie Jenner and many more who at the age of 23 have already had a fair amount of surgical procedures to make her look the way that she does being one of the top most followed celebrity on social media, it is fairly easy to see how one person's perception of beauty can affect millions of other young minds to want to alternate their image and convince them to go under the knife.

Maybe young kids are constantly brain washed by Disney films? All princesses are beautiful and thin? Why they usually live in beautiful castles and have perfect life? It all can have a major impact on little girls. They always want to look pretty and wear beautiful dresses just like the Disney princesses and dolls. But what is even worse is the fact that sometimes mothers put pressure on their kids when they are young. It is very important for them to make their children look like dolls. They can spend up to thousand of pounds each month just to have a little copy of themselves. By buying same dresses for themselves and their children and doing same hairdo. In America it is also very known to put the kids into pageant competitions where they can win cash prizes and many others. It is very frustrating to see how parents use their children to earn money and what worse to put them on public display. In this age is it hard for the kids to say no, because they just cannot. They do not have their own point of view because of the age. It is the same situation with mothers that allow their daughters to take place in TV shows like "Got talent" or they find modeling agencies that put kids in advertisements and more. This all is putting even more pressure especially on the girls causing emotional problems like low self-esteem and depression. It can also cause serious eating disorders. When kids become teenagers they start putting makeup on- usually too early in age 11. If you write a question "What makeup does a teenager need?" We have listed over 10 makeup products they should use. Why are they doing it? It is not like they should hide anything with foundation. What about natural beauty? In the internet era where it is full with beauty gurus and makeup tutorials young people want to do same thing? Children especially in teenagers age always want to look and behave older like adults. Maybe they do it to just impress friends or maybe to "fit in" to other teenagers. Especially in this age they are exposed on judgement and mobbing. This problem is very common in primary and secondary school. If a kid is a bit overweight it being rejected from the rest of students. It will be humiliated and usually full of depression that can cause even bigger problems.

Some people are emotionally unstable and can take their life and some grow up thinking that they are worth nothing and are ugly and fat. Then they notice that all that surrounds them is not really like they thought it will be. Is it because of the fact that most of TV commercials have known celebrities in them? They are admiring all of them for how they look like, how they dance, sing and perform. Which is making worse this whole thing. All of this is piling up our minds and we start to lost ourselves in thinking what is good for us and what should we change. Then people also see all those models usually promoting perfumes in short TV spots and posters on bus stops and many other places that are full of skinny models. Models that have different lifestyles. They are getting paid for how they look like and this is why they care about their bodies so much. They always need to look perfect so brands can use them in their new campaigns. They also have you-tube accounts where they upload their videos showing their day routine. Young people can copy those behavior that could end badly by going into different types of diseases eg. anorexia. So when those young people are surrounded with all of this how they can still accept how they look like if all they see is perfect faces and ideal bodies. What they do not know is the process all those photographs and advertisements go through. Makeup, hair styles and editing like eg. photoshop and lightroom. They are 100 percent sure that those models always look perfect. We are constantly comparing ourselves to another people. If we see a beautiful woman on the street with nice clothes we want to look just like her. As women we are regularly seeking inspiration and we do like to look as good as possible. We desire to look as good or even better than someone

else, because we know that we want to feel that way but also we like when other women are jealous and when men look at us. As a photographer I do know how much good editing can change in a photograph. I know what things we are able to do to make a nose smaller, eyes bigger and stomach flatter. These days there is hundreds of smartphone apps where you can edit whatever you want. From smoothing the skin through making breasts bigger to even adding six-pack. What for is that? The answer is very simple. Instagram- social media platform and app where people can post videos and photos on their accounts. It starts getting weirder when we start looking closely to some of the photographs that beauty vloggers or bloggers put in. Then it does not take much time to notice how good their photoshop skills are. This is just the “top of the iceberg”. I would split it in three categories.

Categories of

First one is with people that pretend they look different. Apart from putting makeup on, dress fancy like they barely do. Women suck in their cheeks to make their faces slimmer, overdraw their lipstick to make the lips look fuller and bigger. By pulling in their stomachs they can achieve smaller waist for few seconds that is just enough to take a photo. So there they are standing in front of a mirror trying for minutes and sometimes hours to take a good photo of them.

The second category is people that change their faces without the involvement of surgeries. By lash extensions, lip fillers and other injections they can change themselves a lot. Today's aesthetic medicine can do a lot and it is constantly expanding on diverse areas. A lot of beauticians do injections sometimes even without any training and the results are really bad. People do not know how easy is it to get an infection that can cause even a dead skin problems. This is why it is good to find a good doctor that does those procedures for years. For a lot of them lip fillers is usually a beginning, then hyaluronic acid in the cheeks to enhance them, botox to prevent wrinkles, permanent makeup and chin lipolysis.

Third category is mostly about people that are so drawn into this “perfect body” plan so they decide to do plastic surgeries. They even fly to different countries to do them, because it is cheaper, but do not think about the complications they can have. This means that if something bad would happen- an infection, nerve damage, deep vein thrombosis or even scarring they are left with this problems alone. Of course it does not happen often, but we can reduce the risk of it by choosing good doctor that had many patients and is experienced. People that do not have much money but still want change their body usually go to Turkey, Lithuania, Ukraine, Korea or other countries where treatments can cost even up to 60% less than in UK. It is hard for some people to live in a world that is so full of possibilities and it is even harder to find a good not invasional solution for women problems. There will be a time when they will understand that the problem is in their heads- not their bodies, but I still think is going to take time. For some of them this will never help and they might need a psychiatrist. Even with so many self love campaigns and projects that talk about

tolerating the fact how we are born there is still a lot of people that cannot accept themselves. By plastic surgeries we do not change ourselves on the outside but also on the inside. Most people become confident and open, but we do not talk about how people that their surgeries were not successful feel and behave. Not every surgery can satisfy us. Especially when it is done very badly. What then? Before the surgery we were shy and critical about our bodies, but after it we are even more oversensitive and emotionally unstable because the end result is not what we wanted at the beginning. According to Hullett, the general emotional arc after surgery begins with depression as you heal, then shifts to a honeymoon phase when you can see the result but soon morphs into some measure of disappointment. Those that fantasized the physical change would result in more attention, a promotion or attractive partner are often let down by the reality. Moreover, their expectations of beauty may rise, says Hullett. Even if the procedure was an improvement, they become deeply disappointed when the result isn't "perfect."

People do plastic surgeries no matter of the consequences and the pain they might feel during and after those complicated procedures. It is easy to lay on a table and be botched by a doctor that is putting a breast implant. It takes only 2 hours and costs usually around 3-6 thousand pounds and there is just a long full recovery process that can take up to a year. But what is a year for a person that whole life did not have any breasts at all. Understanding those people's problem is important but where have we lost ourselves to not love our bodies just like they look like. Some people just exaggerate about how they look like and want a plastic surgery that really they do not need at all. On one hand breast implants can help a woman to feel better and confident but on the other hand it may not help them at all and even make their mentality even weaker than before their operation. It is known that quite a few women do breast implants for their partners/ husbands and usually they regret that decision because they make the biggest implants possible that can cause back problems and many more.

It became something necessary for many people wanting to look younger, enhance their features, or repairing an abnormality. Plastic surgery can be cosmetic or reconstructive depends on the clients needs. Reconstructive plastic surgery is a correction of dysfunctional body parts or abnormalities. These are usually the repairments of burns, or abnormalities that those people had from birth, tumor, cancer, or traumatic injuries. Cosmetic surgery is typically used for maintaining normal appearance. To restore it, or enhance it beyond the average features if the human body. In 2006, nearly 11 million cosmetic procedures were performed in the United States. Since the start of the century, cosmetic surgery has increased by 50 percent worldwide. Over the last 30-40 years, plastic surgery procedures have increased in young women. Usually in the ages of 16 – 35. Plastic surgery does not only appear in celebrities today, but average teen girls as well. A lot of parents (especially fathers) buy a plastic surgery for their daughters for 18th birthday. It became something normal like it was buying other gift. More and more females are suffering from eating disorders, depression and many other issues, because they are not able to deal with all the pressure and hate being directed towards them. Women are turning to plastic surgeries to try and make their bodies look perfect which has resulted in a lot of serious health problems. Some females are so desperate to please the public eye that they have put themselves in danger by having plastic surgeries on the black market.

Many historians believe that plastic surgeries began in Ancient Egypt and Rome in the 1st century B.C. During WWII plastic surgery continued to grow and became more advanced and known. Surgeons constantly learned to perform the procedures with being very precise and fast. After this there were a lot of celebrities doing them because of the enormous prices of those plastic surgeries. Normal people could not afford any of them.

Some people do surgeries to change themselves to feel better or to promote themselves on instagram and other social media platforms. With their “perfect bodies” they can earn money by being an affiliate with for example makeup, cosmetics or clothing brands. They get a promotional code which will allow us (the followers) buy a product much cheaper. How does it work? The influencer that gave us the code is getting some of the money on the account from every purchase we made. Often companies want bloggers and influencers to show their product to a potential client. It is often that influencers collaborate with known brands to make a product that will be “limited edition” which creates a need in people to buy it. They think it is only a one time offer they just are more fancy to spend money on this special product.

But what science tells is that not a skinny model body is the perfect one but the plump and curvy one. So why women still want to be skinny and tall? The perfect vital statistics are 39-25-36 not 34-24-34 like the models have.



VICTORIA'S SECRET AND DOVE CAMPAIGN PHOTOGRAPHS

This is an image of two different campaigns promoting loving our (women) body that came out in 2014, but they are totally different. One of them made by "Dove" looks more realistic and shows women of all the colors and shapes which encourages us more to buy and support this brand. By looking at the other campaign photo woman could feel bad and start thinking that there is something wrong with them. This advertisement makes women feel insecure about their bodies. We all know Victoria's Secret fashion show and there are always beautiful and thin models on the catwalk. People were concern if the brand is saying that a model body is perfect and all the others are not. After a big backlash they changed the slogan into "A body for everybody" which makes a lot more sense.

Kardashians Case

Kim Kardashian-West is known in the internet for having the perfect body. In the middle of this all attention she has we often forget that her body did not look like this years ago. She went through a lot of plastic surgeries that created this outcome. Kim is still changing quite a lot every year to look like this. Kylie Jenner is another known celebrity that looked completely different 5-6 years ago and should remember she is only 22. Another fact is when a girl or a woman sees a picture of a famous celebrity like her she wants to look similar, wear identical clothes and pose same way Kylie did. People forget about the fact that celebrities or Instagram bloggers often don't look in real life like they do on the photographs they post on their social media platforms. When we have a look at her whole family we see also Kendall- her sister that is 24 years old and is a model. Khloé and Kourtney that also have been through a lot of plastic surgeries and injections. Kris Jenner is their 64 years old mother that does not look this age which we can assume she also had Botox and hyaluronic acid injected in her face. Caitlyn Jenner is the father but yet a mother of them. She is transgender and had been through a lot of plastic surgeries to help her become a woman. All members from this family besides the one modeling did change at least one thing surgically or by injections. Some of them do not want to admit that they did anything with their bodies, but we can clearly see that some features they have do not look natural. Young girls are obsessed with Kylie Jenner and her life. They love every inch of her body which is usually nothing good for them, because they do want surgeries to look like her. They want her lips. They want her life. With over 150 million followers on Instagram we can just guess what percentage already did "Kylie's Lips".

Is it easier to find friends with a perfect body? There are often "groups" of people that you can notice on Instagram or on a night out. Those groups of ladies are characterized by the way they look. Perfect long hair, nails, eyelashes, lips, makeup and bodies - all of it is fake. They always hold on together and they will judge every inch of your body and what are you wearing. These women are not real friends. They are full of jealousy. Continuously looking for more treatments and injections to look better than any other woman. But why? Is it easier to find a rich husband? A millionaire maybe? It is convenient for them to not have to work and have everything they have ever wanted. From designer dresses, expensive shoes to plastic

surgeries. What else? Marvelous vacations and cruising on big yachts. This is definitely a life. But is it really worth it?

Changing our bodies so much that our friends and families are not able to recognize us already? This is not healthy or good for us at all, but yet we still do it and enjoy it. We live in a constant fear that other people will judge us and this is one of the biggest issues here. Even easier thing for some woman is to find a sugar daddy that in return for company or sex relationship will give something in return. Meal in exclusive restaurant, shoes, bags, jewelry, cars and even apartments. Some woman can change their life for this experience. Change country they live in, give up job or even family and friends. It is easier to be in a relationship without marriage where they are able to end it whenever they want.

Why people do plastic surgeries instead of just going to the gym to exercise? They would not need a liposuction if they would have a diet and a personal trainer. People like this usually say they do not have time for any of this, but the truth is that it is the easiest way to run away from willpower and to be honest it is also a lot quicker to achieve the goal than running on a treadmill.

Botched Case

In very famous TV show called “Botched” we can see a broad range of plastic surgeries done by doctors at the show. It is common that people come to them with a problem caused by another doctor that did not meet their expectations. Interesting thing is that if they see a contraindications that is very important they will refuse to do a certain procedure. They usually recommend to not do it at all or wait few months/years. People usually cannot wait and go to another clinic to get this surgery done and regret it instantly. Sometimes a patient—or her doctor—may realize after they’ve invested the money and time into a procedure that they have an underlying issue rather than a physical one. After surgery, they may simply become fixated on another body part. “They develop a new obsession,” Hullett says. “They get the nose fixed, and then it’s the eyebrows. They fix the eyebrows, and then it’s the ears. The perceived abnormality keeps moving.”

Plastic surgeries have a huge impact on people’s lifestyles. There are people that do celebrities impersonations. Years ago it was just makeup and how people dress. Nowadays people come to clinics and hospitals to change their faces to look like for example: Britney Spears or Paris Hilton.

Quite a few years ago a new trend has begun. People wanted to look like dolls- Barbie dolls. To achieve that goal they removed their ribs, put silicon implants and nose jobs. Today almost every country has its own Barbie and Ken. One man called Rodrigo Alves is from Brazil and did over 100 cosmetic procedures including surgeries and injections. Spending over 500,000 pounds on them. Removing ribs, putting six-pack implants, lip injections and rhinoplasty is only few of the procedures he went over. He was in many TV shows and in known program called Of course Rodrigo keeps us all updated on all his surgeries on his social media and TV. Justin Jedlica is another person who is known as human ken doll. He is from United States and did already over 200 cosmetic procedures including chest implants, back implants, biceps implants, triceps implants, shoulders implants and many more. Justin is known for his perfect muscular body.



REAL LIFE BARBIE AND KEN DOLL

Looking at this picture does not let me think that those are real photographs of human beings. They look like dolls. This shows how photography can also make us think that what we see is fake in sort kind of way. Their bodies are fake but they are people that has been through a lot of plastic surgeries. Interesting news is that they met in real life.

Some people want to become elves or fantasy characters. They change their skin color, hair, make their eyes bigger and many more. A famous type of surgery was otoplasty, which was the reshaping of the ear. It is very known procedure to change the ear shape. It was very common during WWII and it was done by pinning the ear closer to the head. These procedures were mainly done to repair soldiers that were hurt or injured during battle so they could function normally again. Times have changed and now doctors use this technique to create an elf's ear that is very long and spiky. To do this they need to create a cartilage. To do this they can either use a piece of bone from a patient or put a silicon implant inside the ear to shape it in.

A lot of people do plastic surgeries and do not think about what else it could cause. They often lose friends and families do not want to speak with them either. Finally, the hidden hazards within the family may be worst of all. Children who watch a parent or close relative take the drastic measure of surgery can develop a skewed vision of their own bodies that they may never escape. Likewise, women who hope a procedure will help their romantic relationship often receive a rude awakening. According to Hullett, men are especially apt to misunderstand a woman's motives, believing her to be dissatisfied or interested in attracting other men. In fact, he's seen more relationships fail rather than flourish after one partner undergoes a major physical change. "You can't control the way others react," warns Yuan. He once had a patient, a young mother in her 20s, who got a breast augmentation. She was thrilled with the results but had not expected that her suburban-mom peer group would disapprove and make her feel uncomfortable about her new body. She returned six months later and had the implants removed.

This topic is well known and talked about. Bad surgeries caused people to lose their jobs or to get any. It is not a problem when the issue can be noticed easily. However if a man or a woman will do a plastic surgery to gain edge at work may lose good relations with their colleagues. They may perceive this person as someone who manipulates and that possibility it is a threat. The reality shows that other man often interpret a male colleague's new head of hair as an unfair advantage, or women may decide a female's new, larger breasts are an abuse or sexual power. Well known is the fact of people being the subject of office gossip, especially after having a plastic surgery.

Asia takes the first place for plastic surgeries. For people living there it is like going to a hair salon. This continent is also known for the most extreme plastic surgeries South Korea could be the capital of plastic surgeries because the statistics show that at least 20% of them had at least one plastic surgery. For example in USA it is only 5% of the women population. The most common surgery that is picked by men and women is eye lift. Venezuela is also known for plastic surgery. Banks give credits for people to do them. There was one case where one of the Politicians there organized a lottery where you could win a breast implant surgery. This country is also known for most beautiful women. They had 7 miss universe, 6 miss world and 6 miss international. That can affect girls in that country by putting a pressure to look beautiful and do lots of surgeries. It is also common to get a plastic surgery as a gift. Thailand is a country that is picked by a lot of people to change changing the sex to become a transgender male or female. Statistics show that some of plastic surgeries that are done in this country are much cheaper. In some cases it is a 30-60 percent compared with other prices. Behind the Mask and Beneath the Glitter are two books written by a plastic surgeon – Robin Yuan. He believes that if the patient is not emotionally stable or financially secure the results could be bad. As an example I would like to point at people who may feel insecure and can cause lost of their confidence as the final result. Borrowing money for a cosmetic surgery is a common thing to do for many women and men that want to change their bodies. Emotional and mental costs after this type of a procedure are never fully know says Joseph Hullett. It is very often that people are stressed before having the surgery. Too much stress can cause lack of sleep and recuperation that often includes pain, causes most to experience some degree of depression. Dr. Dennis Schimpf, FACS, who is the author of "Finding Beauty: Think, See and Feel Beautiful", but he is also a

founder of Sweetgrass Plastic Surgery in South Carolina, USA and he has his own theory that cell phones, selfies and social media platforms have increased the desire for plastic surgeries.

10-15 years ago it was not that common to take selfies or any photos. Usually you could find yourself on birthday or wedding photographs. Technology makes progress and we use it all the time. Our mobile phones, tablets and social media platforms are constantly being used day by day. Documenting our lives and how we look became a common thing to do. With that we also document the aging process which can also change the way we think about ourselves.

Hyaluronic lip injections should not have any other benefits apart from increasing self-esteem. However there are some cosmetic treatments that can benefit your health. There are cases which prove that Botox helped with different types of conditions and diseases. Chronic migraines, excessive sweating, Bell's palsy and depression. As matter of fact sometimes people can fight with issues like this for many years. Botox treatment takes about 10-15 minutes and results can last up to 12 months. It is similar when it comes to hyaluronic injections. The only issue with Botox or hyaluronic injection is that we are getting addicted to do it, because you need to repeat it every 6-12 months and every time we want more and more injections in the same place or we want them in some more areas like nose, chin and many other. If there is any reason for us to not be able to re-do the injection we feel worse and we feel the pressure to do it again as soon as possible.

Breast reduction is frequently chosen by women who have back problems. Plastic surgeries like this help people who have lost weight to shed extra skin that can cause severe rashes and infection which is great. It may not be curing cancer but the final impact and psychological benefits are incredible. Women after traumatic events often do surgeries, because it helps them to go through the problems they had in life before. It works like a mask for them which helps them with depression as well.

Wallace said that if you tamper with the body's balance, you can risk creating a new issue in same or different areas of your body. Recent research has shown that liposuction can slim one problem area while creating another one. Women who suction fat from their thighs and lower abdomen eventually destroy fat cells, but when they finally gain weight, it distributes unevenly and often to less flattering areas like the upper abdomen, back and arms. Wallace also warns that changing one feature sometimes throws off the appearance of others. One of the most common surgeries in United States is to have a tummy tuck which can often cause proportion problems, especially with the thighs. While having a normal size nose it may look weird with big lips. A lot of Botox injections can paralyze some facial muscles and can cause other good muscles to appear overpowering. Everyone is different and might have various symptoms and side effects after a surgery or injections. To make the risk smaller you are usually being asked by the Doctor to do blood tests and some other. Marilyn Leisz had a simple procedure to her eyes, but yet 30 surgeries later she is still not able to blink on her both eyes. Penny Johnson who is a British businesswoman decided to

do a face-lift surgery which caused nerves damage. She lost her business due to this accident. Those are just two people out of thousand who had some extreme problems after the surgery. It is important to remember that problems like this happen quite rarely and usually we can read about them in the internet.

Conclusion

Overall there are still a lot of people that change their bodies and how they look not for themselves but for others. We want to be the best version of ourselves.

Partners, friends are important for us but sometimes it goes a bit to far and we put likes or followers before them. Those people need attention. The problem starts in young people's heads and then transits into adult life where especially women cannot handle the pressure and are not able to live their bodies just like they should do. World changes so quickly and we like to follow new trends and innovations. Every one of us is different and that what makes us beautiful. If everyone would look the same or similar the world would be boring.

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