

Women's Objectification by Consumer Culture

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Abstract

Since centuries, patriarchy defined women as objects to serve the needs of gender elite. In past women were confined to their reproductive function by the ideology of 'separate spheres', but with the rise of consumer culture their aesthetic function is impinged upon drastically. The rising consumer culture at the turn of the century invented 'beauty ideology' to sell its wares to consumers. Although all women across geographical, class and race bounds are expected to adhere to a standardized physical appearance but women working for mass media are the most vulnerable victims of beauty ideology. Mass media, being the main sty of consumer culture plays havoc with bodies of celebrities and models to bring them up to an idealized beauty norm to bring more consumers into its stringent clasp. The purpose of my research is to focus on the message articulated by an American writer Brian D'Amato in a well reputed novel *Beauty*. My intent is to examine critically how celebrities working for mass media are objectified by presenting them as 'sex objects' for global consumption. The present paper proposes to draw attention to Amato's critique of women's objectification by consumer culture.

Keywords: Consumer culture, Celebrities, Aesthetic standard, Objectification, Sex objects, Global consumption

1. Consumer Culture

Consumerism is seen as the preoccupation of society with the acquisition of the common goods. Theorists of consumer culture (Sassateli 2007) state that objects and commodities have always been vital even in traditional societies, but consumer culture's stringent grip over people's subjectivities is an unprecedented phenomenon in present time. Globalization of commodities and cultural flows with a substantial role played by sophisticated advertising spurred consumer culture in late capitalist era.

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The people's unquenchable thirst for the latest and the best commodity is the hall mark of present era.

Marxist theorists (Evans 1976; Packard 2005; Lawence 2001; Galbraith 2001; Susman 1979; Featherstone 2012) believe that in a post-fordist era a host of scientific and social institutions have contributed in designing consumer identity to sell fast paced, mass produced consumer goods, because a consumer culture relies on an unending number of consumers. Mass media with the help of advertizing helped to habituate people psychologically to conform to consumerism by associating products with perfect looking media icons and celebrities. Thus mass media shaped identity of the people by creating 'artificial needs' for the consumers by associating a number of consumer goods with perfectly trimmed, flawless bodies of female celebrities. These media icons are used to create 'an itch to buy, see and do all the things' done by these models.

2. Women's Objectification

Immanuel Kant believes that viewing and perceiving a person as an object that exists only for his or her sexual gratification is called objectification (Langton 1995). Kant believes that objectification dehumanizes a person and reduces him or her to only a thing. Women exist in the perception of the objectifier not more than an instrument of his pleasure and with the fulfillment of that appetite they are cast away like 'lemon which has been sucked dry'.

Feminists (Bordo 1993; Okin 1979) note that Western philosophical and religious thought has always been infected by mind/ body binary. Man was associated with thought, rationality, meditation whereas woman was considered a deviation from that norm hence she was associated with body and feelings divorced from intellect. This association of women by philosophers and intellectuals led her confinement to reproductive and aesthetic purposes.

Radical feminists (Bartky 1990, 2006; Dworken 1974) explain sexual objectification as reducing a woman to her sexual parts or function to the detriment of the rest of her personality. They explicate that women in patriarchal culture are reduced to sexual performance which is regarded as fully representing them. Women are reduced to less than human and are taught to perceive themselves not more than that through a lot of disciplinary practices.

Feminist media theorists (Killborne 1999; Berberick 2010; Jacobson and Mazur 1995) state that women with the help of feminism got rid of oppressive feminine roles, but they could not rid themselves of 'feminine image' which oppresses women as consumers as well as workers of consumer culture. Female celebrities with whom various products are associated, are depicted as empowered and enjoying a subject position. Media discourses preponderantly stifle any dissenting voice in these advertisements. It does not give a peep into violent and rigorous procedures that cement women celebrities' object position. In these advertisements fabrications, meddling of graphic artists commissioned to correct the basal deficiencies in the original image is never hinted at. The viewer sees only an air-brushed image of a model and hence moves on the road of self destruction by emulating these unachievable ideals.

Martha Nussbaum (1995) provides a comprehensive framework for objectification which will be utilized in the present research. Nussbaum comments that a person's objectification comprises treating a person in one of the seven ways enumerated below:

1. Instrumentality: if a person is treated as an instrument or tool to serve the purpose of the objectifier.
2. Denial of autonomy: if a person is treated as wanting in autonomy and self determination.
3. Violability: if a person is treated as deficient in boundary-integrity.
4. Fungibility: when a person is treated as interchangeable with other things of the same sort or different type.
5. Ownership: if a person is treated as possessed by another person who can buy or sell him/her.
6. Denial of subjectivity: if a person is treated as an object whose feelings and emotions are not worth consideration.
7. Inertness: if a person is treated as deficient in agency and activity.

The great masterpiece and the national best seller *Beauty* (D'Amato 1992) shows that the educated, so-called emancipated and independent women working for mass media are treated as 'sex objects'. The novel opens up in beauty industry in the modern New York where beauty is commoditized by Jamie Angelo who instead of carving upon clay selects celebrities, media icons and models to inscribe patriarchal aesthetic notions on their flesh. He is not content with minor modifications; rather he prefers basal revision in which he redesigns their faces.

All those models who constellate his office are desperate to get treatment as they are aging. Feminist media theorist (Chapkis 1988) contends that modeling is a highly rewarding profession in terms of money but it is the most fleeting of professions, because it allows a female model a span of eight to ten years. After that their career comes to a dead end and ostracized, models have to start anew. Angelo is well informed that face is an asset for celebrities in consumer culture where women's value is calculated by the youthful face and that women's faces senesce much quicker than men's. To earn unimaginable economical rewards as well as sexual gratification he engrafts artificial skins to their faces and thereby exposes them to insalubrious and insecure tools and procedures. The novel *Beauty* may well be analyzed with respect to the seven notions mentioned by Martha Nussbaum.

2.1. Instrumentality

Feminist theorists see instrumentality as the defining characteristic of objectification. Objectification (Kant 1995; and Nussbaum 1995) is treating a person as tool for someone else's purposes. Considering a person as a tool is a moral failure to revere the humanity of the person. Although many women are taken as instruments in the novel where Angelo becomes an objectifier who treats them not better than objects as tools of his nefarious purposes. We see however that there is some vital scope to find Jaishree Manglani as an instrument for Jamie Angelo who acts on his will to satiate himself with certain benefits enumerated below.

Jamie Angelo is a perfectionist by nature who loathes ugliness and is repulsed by any unpleasing sight. Angelo's thirst for beauty makes him feel like 'a vampire, wandering the streets, looking for ugly girls to capture and grant them perpetual youth'. Women's only function according to him is to please men's sight and he avows to turn every woman around into a 'smooth skin, a smooth surface' and thereby furnishing the beauty industry with 'real sex objects'. He is allured by the amazing body of an ethnic writer, stage director and player Jaishree Manglani, but is repulsed by emerging wrinkles on the face of thirty years old actress.

About her emaciated appearance, Angelo comments that although she has not lost her looks yet she was looking 'haggard' as crowfeet and an overstretched skin around her mouth were visible. Apart from that a tiny network of hairline wrinkles running through her nose and forehead abominate him.

These defects were unacceptable to him as he says ‘...I was beginning to recoil violently from her various imperfections and wasn’t feeling too attracted towards her lately’. Owing to these blemishes his relationship with Jashiree is at the verge of breakup as she is getting old. His disgust at her ageing face is eminent as he comments, ‘...it was more that the signs of her ageing were signs of the inevitability of our eventual breakup’ and to ‘arrest that flaw’ he sets a trap to convince her to undergo the surgical procedure.

Angelo with the assistance of his room-mates Mark Saltzman and David Lowenthal started with burn victims who were not left with enough skin and these surgeons reconstructed their faces by grafting artificial skin to their faces. Quite aware of the market demands this trio learns quite early in their career that working on burn victims is not highly rewarding as reconstructing the faces of ‘heavy people like media icons’ for whom their face is an asset and to arrest any flaw in their faces they are willing to spare any amount of money. Angelo realizes that a star’s face is an investment for the media as well. The only thing that media prefers displaying is an icon’s face and that face has to be tailored according to the changing requirements of consumer culture. Reconstructing celebrities’ faces affords him an ever expanding field of aging stars and unimaginable monetary benefits which would be used to afford a luxurious life in Los Angeles after disposing off his ‘Paradise Loft’. He desires to have a state of the art modernized clinic which would be like an art gallery with a pretty reconstructed female receptionist and a big exquisite office which would be flocked by all the renowned Hollywood stars.

He plans Manglani’s face lift believing the restructured version of her would become ‘walking billboard’ of his artistic and surgical skills. After augmentation she could be used as an allurements for other women to present themselves for surgical change. After her alteration, employing all tactics of marketing he commercializes his master piece’s appearance. She is presented in Whitney opening for the first time where he has invited business magnates, art dealers, film directors, curators. He displays his creation proudly to the elite gathering and seeing all gazes focused on her person he comments that she has stolen all femininity in the room.

Virginia L. Blum (2003) writes '... the instant Jamie releases her to the public she becomes a paradigm for others to emulate'. James Annesley (1996) rightly comments that a human face has been transposed into an advertisement in the novel *Beauty*. Jaishree's transformation has opened a whole new venue for him. After some time many renowned celebrities take more interest in his 'designer people'.

2.2. Autonomy Denial

Autonomy leads to empowerment since a person who makes decisions and takes bold steps to reach a decision and realizes his/ her dreams is an empowered person. Denying autonomy is seen by Nussbaum as lacking self-determination. The novel gives us clear evidence that the independent, liberated and educated women working for media have to part with their autonomy in the practitioners' office.

Feminists (Wolf 1991; Faludi 1991) comment that although these procedures are claimed to be elective enterprise, yet they are mandatory for the women working specially in display profession. Celebrities and models are the easiest target for these practitioners as they are lured by the rhetoric of career progression or a strong bond with their beloveds to compel them to surgical table. In such cases that choice is not an authentic choice according to Wolf as the choice between survival and oblivion is not a real choice. All such advertisements presented by media which boost surgical industry by floating the idea that a perfect body is better able to be hired and promoted.

Susan Sontag (1972) and Nancy Baker (1984) establish that patriarchy constructs two different standards for different sexes. The culture awards grace and reverence to men's weather beaten and wrinkled faces as they are the obvious signs of their hard earned experience. But the culture hardly shows any respect or even tolerance for experienced or intellectually mature women. Old age is presented as a 'moral disease', a social pathology to women. Jaishree does not show willingness for surgical alteration initially, however her approaching age is accused for her downswing career. Angelo's imposition speaks clearly of his desire to see her changed face rather than her desire. He says, '...let's change your face...maybe I could just turn you into a supermodel'. He wants to design for her an ideal face against whom all other women of all ages must be measured. He knows that ideal beauty of any given time period is evinced by the top celebrity or star of the screen of that time and such epitome of beauty sets a standard for all other women to be measured against it.

Jaishree is adamant in the face of his persistence. It is however only when Angelo declares that the signs of age on her face are the sign of their break up she has to change her decision. Angelo declares out rightly that her caring not much about her appearance and face is 'like trying to hurt our relationship'. When she realizes that to save their relationship she'll have to undergo the procedure, she yields. The pain of surgery is endurable to her as compared to pain of losing her beloved and the pain of other women striding her past because of a youthful appearance.

In order to achieve his goal of redesigning her face, Jamie employs computer generating images (CGI). Images of more than hundred models across the globe are utilized and composited into a single image and later on Jaishree is to be fix into that image. He mixes and remixes these images to get the desired composite image. Jaishree's voice is conspicuously absent from the scene and its Jamie Angelo's desires, plans and designs that are taken into consideration and are worked out. He professes to consult his client but there is no preoperative consultation, neither is there any consultation during the procedure. In her case it seems straightaway maneuver rather than consultation. In short cosmetic surgery subjects her to 'technological colonization'.

2.3 Violibility

Feminist law theorist (Mackinnon 2006) writes that some barbarities are excluded from the definition of human rights violation by virtue of their being prevalent. Such cruelties become so usual that immensity of the violation is overlooked because of their being widespread. Law cabals with patriarchy to make it happen. It makes people believe that if something is really condemnable it cannot happen and if something is happening prevalently and became usual it cannot be that wrong. Beauty practices at the turn of the century seem to be beyond notice of authorities because of their being so prevalent that they are not considered condemnable as they are happening to women in the name of beauty.

Cosmetic industry is contributing to the sexist ideology by declaring all such women sick who fall short of aesthetic standard constructed by mass media. As it involves unprecedented pecuniary rewards so unlicensed practitioners are also flooding the market and no intervention is seen on the part of authorities.

These practitioners change women's bodies into 'man-made women' by perpetrating surgical violence on their bodies. In technologically advanced countries like America, women were relieved of the pain caused by reproduction; consumer culture started violating them in the name of beauty. These surgeons and beauticians are selling violence by associating old age with sickness. Old age is shown as a deformity in need of correction.

James Annesley in *Blank Fictions* (1998) and "Commodification, Violence and the Body" (1996) categorizes the novel *Beauty* as 'Blank Fiction' which is replete with 'gruesome scenes, brutal images and corporal violence'. The novel provides many instances in which women's body is brutalized and dehumanized by an aggressive perforation, and carved upon for economical reasons.

Penny Pen is another model who is pretty still she consults Jamie Angelo for a number of her troubles. She tells him that her facial structure does not satisfy her. She is not happy with her laugh lines and thinks they are disfiguring her beauty and the prospects of her progress in her profession. She is over conscious about minute lines appearing on her face and crowfeet and eye bags gradually surrounding her beautiful eyes.

Consumer culture has distorted concepts of health and disease. Homogenous, standardized, commodified and tensile beauty is defined as health whereas mature, experienced and empowered old age is constructed as disease. To divest healthy women of their energy, activity and self confidence, it defines emaciated appearance, inactivity and inertness as beauty and health. Jaishree, Penny Penn, Ross and Virginia Freidan are sold skin cancer by using the gloss of beauty, youth and health. But during the procedure they have to undergo a number of unbearably painful stages. Aftermaths of these face-lift procedures are unbearable pain, swelling, bruises and death of facial sensations. Their jaws feel dislocated. Smiling and laughing is forbidden to them as this would submit them to stress and would multiply pain in facial nerves and would distort their artificially induced facial structure. Later on these women are struck by skin cancer because the reckless surgeons injected untested material. Marks of old age are 'ironed out' of their faces as if they were pieces of fabric rather than living human flesh.

These women before entering 'Paradise Loft' were healthy and functional, but after undergoing the procedure they lie there because sickness has been inducted into their skin in the name of health and beauty. They herded the surgeons' office not because of their sickness rather they thought them not beautiful as per patriarchal standard. The fastest burgeoning violent industry is growing because the criteria to get an operation theatre is becoming slacker and easier. Slightest wrinkle on their face qualifies them operable and they easily get an accommodative surgeon to undertake the procedure. These women gamble their lives for their loved ones or their sources of livelihood.

Jamie Angelo proclaims that he uses only local anesthetics by inserting a multi-pronged Novocain needle. He starts by taking flesh off their faces. To alter their appearance he conducts the major procedures to give them double chin and removes eye-bags. He covers tiny imperceptible facial pores and accentuates cheekbones by removing flesh from those segments. He is most proud of the 'radical remaking' of his client's face which is taken as a 'canvas' on which he draws some guidelines with blue marker and mops them over with germicidal stuff. Afterwards, he makes moles on their faces by using Novocain. Then, he uses a surgical sander which is like a 'dentist's drill machine' to peel off the original live skin off their faces.

After removing the natural skin from their faces, he starts the process of replacing it with artificial skin which is another horrifying process. He soaks a layer of cotton pad in anticoagulant and holds it close to the place from where the patch has been removed and makes it seep down through the semi porous artificial skin's layers. This makes the bulge underneath to vaporize. Then, he takes out dyes and matches them with the skin later on.

He engrafts PCS 10 by peeling off the whole living breathing natural skin with chemical sanders. For those ethnic celebrities like Jaishree who have darker tone and to adjust in visual medium, PCS 10 seems most suitable because it gives a lighter tone to ethnic celebrities' dark skins and they can come closer to American standard of beauty based on white complexion. Over this PCS 10, the practitioner grafts another white colored thin layer of the 'Bickerton-Clarke'; another form of artificial skin which is dropped over flesh pulsating underneath it.

This phase is followed by filling up the pores. He is happy that he manages it as no other practitioner can manage it. He has a 'little dentist's tool attached to the handle of a soldering iron' which is used to fill these pores with colored plastic. He makes numerous indentations in the artificial skin with the tool and then holds their shape when they cool down. He occasionally adds 'artificial hairs' which he does by 'patching each individual hair with a scalpel and then trim it'. The narrator sands over all skin and reskins entire face in order to give these media icons 'smooth pleasing skin' that is the requirement of the media. Grafting artificial skin, filling pores and sanding out irregularity is done with the help of various drugs like novocaine, Xylocaine and the Valium to tranquil the pain of this procedure. The procedure is completed in many sittings and the victim is suspended from participating in any activity in between these phases. 'Sculptural phase' is followed by 'dying phase'. The techniques that he uses on his clients are weird and unable to be used on living human flesh.

After he gets promised amount, he tells his customers that the treated segments of their bodies are rendered numb for ever as all sensations in them are killed forever. The artificially induced patches of plastic don't feel water while swimming or taking shower. Cold and warmth introduced by weathers or a loving touch are rendered alien to their skins as their skins become impenetrable to all sensations. The sensitivity index of the mutilated segments of these people will be noticed by intimate people. These women have irrepressible itches during and after these procedures in the portion which undergoes surgery but they are forbidden to prick.

Another 'trivial' problem with these procedures is that they need a constant repairing as he explains to Penny Penn that she would start to look 'patchy' in a couple of years or even the artificial skin gets abraded or natural skin can preclude artificial skin to be absorbed in the natural one and then she should come back to him for certain repairs. These procedures he proclaims are unlike plastic surgery where only once an operation is performed; here the practitioner can work on top of the artificial skin over and over. The market has invented a problem which keeps on multiplying to breed the profit of its practitioners.

2.4 Fungibility

Nussbaum defines fungibility as interchanging one person with another person or thing. Mass media and its practitioners treat women as commodities readily interchanged with other women. The person who provides beauty objects to mass media is Jamie Angelo who himself does not stick to a single woman and keeps shifting his loyalty from one to another. He has a girlfriend Ute who is pretty but not stunning. Her body image is distorted by Angelo who does not want to talk to her because he is stuck with a new model Katrina. Ute objects to Angelo's desertion of her by loudly giving vent to her feelings of insecurity and objects to Jamie's attitude by saying that Ute is pretty but idiot and will succeed because she is only nineteen years. Angelo seems fed up with this relationship as she doesn't attract him anymore. Instead of placating her, he keeps on distancing himself from her and says that she must find someone better than him, who is more caring and loving as Angelo is least interested in her. He dumps Ute for Katrina and later Katrina is discarded for Jaishree. Ute is frustrated at the humiliation she is made to suffer and says, 'You just dumped me the moment you found someone prettier. And I know that infantile Katrina is gorgeous and everybody notices her on the street and nobody notices me'.

Finally he declares that not only Ute but Katrina too are old enough to be discarded as he has found another pretty actress to toy with. He taunts her and says that his affair with Katrina too is over and they both should 'form a support group' against him as he is fed up with both of them. Ute is well informed of the fact that waspy and white girls attract men. She knows that the ever-changing standard of beauty is white as she comments, 'It doesn't matter, she is white, and that's what beauty is, looking white'.

2.5. Ownership

Martha Nussbaum defines ownership as, 'if a person is treated as possessed by another person who can be bought and sold by the objectifier'. Jamie Angelo not only redesigns celebrities he asserts his ownership of them after remodeling. After he has engineered Jaishree with a new face, he seems very excited and boasts to tell people about his creation. He refers to her as a 'my project'. She too senses that she is dealt with as his product as she reminds him after the procedure that this whole thing was about him; not about her at all.

She laments 'I'm less than I used to be. I'm just a You-thing'. She is described as 'my best art work to date'. After her transformation he realizes that she is no more a human being. Although she is really stunning, beautiful and childlike judged by consumer culture but her Self has been stifled altogether. He is struck by a current of repugnance and shivering as if he were sleeping with a dead object. He comments, 'I just started shaking and not wanting to touch her or get anywhere near her, even though she was my own work'.

But he readily overcomes this feeling of repulsion when she is presented for the first time in 'Whitney opening'. The reaction of the people makes him to possess her completely. Once the people looked at her, there was a more hushing and whispering to indicate their interest in her as a pleasant sight rather than a dignified human being. She outstripped his own anticipations of her appearance, he comments. His dream of getting fame is about to come true because of his magnum opus. She becomes an 'insignia' for his artistic innovations. Seeing people looking at her with admiration, he is further elated and felt like holding her face and possessing it like a piece of art, as he comments 'my living sculpture'. After giving her new face he gives her a new name Minaz in accord with his own designs rather than her will. He even invites art dealers, curators, collectors, artists and photographers to introduce Minaz and take credit for her superb acceptance.

In these opening ceremonies, even her signature colors and fabrics are chosen by him. Minaz is a changed person altogether. From a performing artist, a singer, a director of plays, she is turned into a super model that could stop traffic, and who could excite the people around by her bewitching face. With her transformation her voice has been silenced and she is advised by her creator to pose as a 'dumb model' who does not evince her thought, and only present herself as a body and nothing better than that.

Jaishree has been cast in Hollywood films; a few run-ways are arranged for her. She has been cast as a super model in numerous advertisements. She is utilized to publicize Hollywood values to a worldwide audience. Angelo carefully molded and disciplined her appearance and packaged her for global audience and consumption. To make her conform to the prevalent cultural aesthetic standard new kind of makeup, outfits and hair style are selected by him. In short she under the combined effect of fashion, beauty, surgical, advertising and film industries is ready for worldwide consumption as a 'sex object'.

2.6 Denial of Subjectivity

Nussbaum equates subjectivity denial with depriving a person of his/her feelings and experiences. Jaishree does not dream of becoming a super model. She writes stage plays and directs them. Being a Yale student she wants to pursue her studies in literary graduation school. She wants to get PhD, but he doesn't allow her to adopt that line of action. He warns her of intimidating academic problems, petty department squabbles and the scrounging around for thesis topics. He warns her against the departmental politics and difficulty involved in university publications. He boldly asserts that he finds no attraction in teaching profession for her and presents modeling as the most suitable profession for her.

In the face of her persistent refusal he plays upon their relationship and career progression. Her decision to get admission would be 'the kiss of death for our relationship' he says to her. So it was for his love and just to honor this relationship with him, she decides to undergo the procedure. Otherwise he maps for her the entire road to walk upon as if he possesses her. She is promoted to stardom by presenting at various auditions in Hollywood. She is booked for innumerable films, people constellate around her to have a look at her and appreciate her pretty face. She is invited at dinners by elite class to display their status. Her manager manages her schedule and business magnates, hiring her for their advertisements, send their cars to pick and drop at particular timings. Angelo gives vent to public opinion:

People know models are mentally and emotionally goof people who cannot manage their affairs. They are like cats that are beautiful sight but self-interested and decelerated, devoid of any sense of responsibility. The people move them about to display their status and take their pictures. Otherwise they are not important to people as human beings (279).

The women he has transformed surgically are not only his 'products' they are the customers and finally they are the advertisements of his surgical and artistic skills. D'Amato has shown that by employing cosmetic surgery, consumer culture is carving the cultural definitions of feminine aesthetics on women's flesh instead of subverting them. He has provided what patriarchy has always demanded.

2.7 Inertness

Nussbaum defines inertness as if a person is treated as deficient in agency and activity. These women who are undergoing all these procedures are made to feel powerless and helpless objects whereas the practitioner is seated at a powerful position. The voice of these models is not heard throughout the procedure, the surgeon, artist inscribes his preferences on their bodies. Angelo comments that these women undergoing surgical procedures are always vulnerable in front of powerful practitioners.

3. Conclusion

The present research was executed to inquire the operations of consumer culture to objectify women in American novel *Beauty*. The research analyzed consumer culture's contribution in usurping women's subject-hood and treating them as advertisements for mass media. Theoretical framework based on Martha Nussbaum's concept of women's objectification was utilized to carry out this research.

The novel furnishes a comprehensive evidence of Brian D'Amato's insightful study of consumer culture's stringent grip on women working for mass media. The writer has carefully depicted how and why celebrities are objectified in consumer culture. The novel throws light on female characters' feelings and emotional traumas who strive for economical independence by stepping in mass media. The novel illustrates that for women who associate economical independence and a fake empowerment with consumer oriented objects destiny means not individuality or emancipation dreamed by two hundred years of feminists' movement. Display profession serves the interests of patriarchal culture by altering them from persons into sex objects. Male dominated consumer culture makes them realize that they are inadequate and lacking in their bodies and the beauty industry capitalizes on this inadequacy and the aesthetic surgeons and beauticians offer unhealthy treatments for radical alteration of their bodies. The feeling of inadequacy is so suffocating that for these women no solution less than a radical transformation is enough, without which they and their bodies are unacceptable in a culture where their only objective in life is to sell consumer goods.

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