



Filtered Identities: Exploring the Intersection of Technology and Selfhood.

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Abstract:

Social media platforms like Instagram and use of beauty filters have changed how we present ourselves online. These filters affect how we think about our bodies, gender, and who we are. It has taken over our actual self by transforming presentation online. This paper explores how filters redefine body politics, gender performance and identity construction. Drawing on Haraway's cyborg theory and Butler's gender performativity, it argues that filters are blurring human boundaries with technology while intensifying gender norms and creating a new standard of expressing, as filters are contributing to identity fragmentation, self-objectification and anxiety, reflecting a shift from fixed identity to algorithmically structured posthuman subjectivity. Ultimately, beauty filters highlight the complex interplay between technology, identity, and power, impacting self-presentation and social interaction in the digital age.

Keywords: Beauty filters, Body politics, Gender performance, Technology, Identity.

Introduction:

Due to the growth of social media, there has been the widespread adoption of beauty filters that are transforming the way individuals present themselves online. These digital tools often act as trivial cosmetic enhancements which have become an integral part of the online experience, with users very easily and smoothly integrating it into their daily social media interactions. However, beneath their harmless surface, beauty filters have significant implications for body politics, gender performance, and identity construction. As there has been a constant availability and accessibility of these filters it has created a cultural landscape where the boundaries between the authentic and the filtered self are increasingly submerged by creating an illusion of reality.

As technology continuously shape and transforms by human experience and thus has become an integral part of our existence, redefining the very notion of what it means to be human. The concept of the cyborg, as proposed by Donna Haraway, explains the fusion of human and machine by raising important questions about the agency and identity of the self in the digital age. Similarly, Judith Butler's notion of gender as a performative act highlights the construction of identity as complex power dynamics, particularly in the context of social media, where individuals are constantly negotiating and performing their identities.

It is against this backdrop that this paper examines the impact of beauty filters on body politics, gender performance, and identity construction, seeking to shed light on the intricate



mechanisms of self-presentation and identity formation in this digital era. And how all this has led to the increasing questions about how one should be or not be like.

Objective of the Study:

This research explores how beauty filters on social media impact body politics, gender performance, and identity construction, drawing on Haraway's cyborg theory and Butler's gender performativity. Specifically, the study aims to examine the ways in which beauty filters contribute to body politics on social media and analysing the impact of filters on gender performance and identity construction while exploring the implications of the posthuman self in the context of beauty filters.

Significance of the Study :

The understanding of impact of beauty filters on body politics is of major importance in today's digitally focused age, as social media is increasingly shaping perceptions of self and others. This study highlights the interplay between technology, identity, and power contributing to critical discussions about digital culture and identity politics and how the interrelation of all of these will help us understand the age better.

Body Politics on Social Media

Body politics refers to the ways how human bodies are regulated, controlled, and represented within social, cultural, and political contexts. It also examines how power dynamics, such as laws, societal norms, and institutional practices, takes hold on our identity and behaviour, and the key areas include gender, sexuality and race.

Body politics on social media on the other hand refers to the ways in which these power relations are shaped by the body in digital spaces and in social media platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat, and Facebook have become key sites where body politics play out, influencing how individuals perceive and present their bodies. **Beauty Filters and Body Norms**, beauty filters on social media are promoting beauty ideals that are resulting on being unattainable due to which it is leading towards body dissatisfaction and pressures to conform to societal beauty norms which are hard to achieve. Filters of such kind including smooth skin, slim faces, or enhance features contribute to narrow down definitions of beauty, that is impacting how individuals view their own bodies while also judging others.

Self-Objectification and Body Surveillance, the continual exposure to images that are filtered can lead to self-objectification, which means where individuals will view their bodies through the lens of external validation. So, whatever they'll post must be seeking for someone to comment that will satisfy to the beauty standards achieved. This can result in body surveillance, where individuals monitor and adjust their appearance to fit digital ideals. **Power Dynamics and Representation**, when power dynamics involves body politics on social media, it means it is related to representation of self and out of them certain bodies (e.g., thin, able-bodied, white) are often privileged and amplified on these platforms, while others are marginalized or excluded, reinforcing existing social hierarchies.



Impact on Mental Health, the pressures to conform to filtered beauty ideals can impact mental health, contributing to anxiety, body dissatisfaction, and identity issues as individuals navigate the gap between their natural appearance and digital enhancements.

In the context of body politics on social media, beauty filters are not just trivial tools but contribute to broader societal discussions about beauty, identity, and power.

Gender Performance

Butler's Gender Performativity, Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity (1990) explains that gender is a performative act shaped by societal norms. Beauty filters, by intensifying hyper feminized and masculinized visual codes, reinforce rigid gender norms and contribute to the performance of gender online. The filters that are constantly available accentuate traditionally feminine or masculine features pressures individuals to conform to these norms, impacting how they present their gender online.

The performance of gender through filters can both empower individuals to experiment with their identities and reinforce societal expectations of gender, highlighting the complex dynamics of gender in the digital age.

Identity Construction

Identity construction is impacted by beauty filters by erasing the boundaries between the authentic self and the specific selves that are structured online. This leads to a shift from embodied identity to algorithmically curated posthuman subjectivity. Individuals increasingly view themselves through the lens of enhancements that are digitally framed, raising questions about authenticity and the nature of identity that is supposed to be original.

The use of filters contributes to identity fragmentation, as individuals navigate multiple versions of themselves online. This fragmentation is exacerbated by the constant exposure to idealized and filtered images.

Haraway's Cyborg Theory

Haraway's theory blurs the boundaries, Donna Haraway's cyborg theory of (1991) proposes that boundaries between human and machine are increasingly getting thin, nearly invisible and beauty filters are exemplifying this, as users incorporate digital enhancements into their presentation of self, creating a fusion of organic and technological elements. This blurring challenges traditional notions of identity and embodiment, raising questions about agency and selfhood in the digital age.

The cyborg metaphor highlights the ways in which technology and human identity are intertwined, impacting how individuals understand themselves and their relationships with others.

Identity Fragmentation

The use of beauty filters contributes to identity fragmentation, as individuals navigate multiple versions of themselves online. This fragmentation is exacerbated by the constant exposure to idealized, filtered images, leading to anxiety and uncertainty about one's identity. Identity



fragmentation can impact mental health and relationships, as individuals struggle to reconcile their digital and offline selves. It nearly becomes impossible at some point to split the difference of what is presented online and how a person comes out when communicated I person so that blur here looks clear on this part.

Self-Objectification

Beauty filters lead to self-objectification, where individuals view their bodies through the lens of external validation. This can exacerbate body dissatisfaction and anxiety as individuals compare their natural features to filtered ideals.

Self-objectification is linked to broader issues of body politics, as individuals internalize societal beauty standards and pressures to conform. Haraway's cyborg theory and Butler's gender performativity together highlight how beauty filters blur human-tech boundaries and intensify gender norms, impacting body politics and identity.

The posthuman self that emerges from this dynamic is algorithmically curated, raising questions about authenticity and the nature of identity in the digital age. The interplay between technology, identity, and power in the context of beauty filters demands critical discussions about digital culture, identity politics, and the impact of technology on human relationships.

Conclusion:

The rapid increase and use of beauty filters on social media platforms marks a significant shift in how individuals sail and explore about their identity in order to fit in and also body politics, and self-presentation in the digital age. Now, because of this the boundaries are blurring between human and technology, intensifying gender norms, and contributing to posthuman subjectivity, filters highlight the complex interplay between technology, identity, and power.

The implications of this shift have many sides. On one hand, filters can empower individuals to experiment with their identities and express themselves in new ways, offering a space for creativity and self-reinvention. On the other hand, the pressures to conform to filtered ideals can exacerbate issues like body dissatisfaction, anxiety, and identity fragmentation, underscoring the need for critical discussions about digital literacy, body politics, and the impact of technology on mental health.

Ultimately, the rise of beauty filters demands a revaluation of how we understand identity, embodiment, and agency in the posthuman era. As technology continues to shape and be shaped by human experience, it is crucial to consider the ways in which digital tools like filters contribute to broader societal transformations, influencing how we perceive ourselves and interact with others in the digital landscape. As our interaction and particular achieved self may lead to satisfaction of settled standards and if not my lead to anxiety and fear of missing out causing to harm our mental health. So the understanding and awareness of these issues which are a part of our daily activity may help us to help ourselves and also lead others to give reasons that why and what are the explanation of their particular worry if related to online self-dissatisfaction of their picture or post of any kind.



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