

# New Beauty Icons: Freedom or Conviction to the Human Body\*

Prof. Dr. Yasemin İNCEOĞLU  
Yrd. Doç. Dr. Altan KAR

galatasaray üniversitesi, iletişim fakültesi  
yinceoglu@gsu.edu.tr  
yeditepe üniversitesi, ticari bilimler fakültesi  
altankar@yeditepe.edu.tr

## Özet

### **Yeni Güzellik İkonları: İnsan Bedeninin Özgürlüğü mü, Mahkûmiyeti mi?**

*Günümüzde, giderek küreselleşen güzellik olgusu evrensel güzellik ikonları yaratmaktadır. Kadınlar, güzellik endüstrisi tarafından çeşitli yollarla empoze edilen bu ideal ölçülere kavuşmak için türlü yollara başvurmaktadır. Aslında, kadınlar söz konusu güzellik ikonlarına tam olarak benzeyemeyeceklerini de bilirler, ancak, medya ve özellikle tüketim kültürünün baskılarına boyun eğler ve güzellik endüstrisi ve tüketiciler arasındaki bu kısır döngüde adeta gönüllü kurban olarak yerlerini alırlar.*

*Günümüzde kadınlar, yeni estetik teknolojilerinin sağladığı imkanlar karşısında neredeyse masum kalan kozmetik ürünleriyle tatmin olmamaktadırlar. Estetik ameliyatların yeni yöntemlerle, giderek ucuzlaması, daha kısa sürelerde ve daha az acı çekilerek ve daha ucuza yapılması çok büyük talep yaratmaktadır.*

*Bu makalade, kadın ve güzellik ilişkisinin kuramsal arka planı alan araştırmasıyla desteklenmiştir. Araştırmada, estetik ameliyat yaptırmış olan 30 kadınla derinlemesine mülakat yöntemiyle görüşülmüş ve onların güzellik algıları ortaya konmaya çalışılmıştır.*

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*Güzellik ve kişisel bakım endüstrisi sürekli bir biçimde kadının narsist, mazoşist ve kırılgan doğa özelliklerini hedefleyen ve sömüren yeni estetik müdahaleleri devreye sokarak yeni tüketim alanları yaratmaktadır. Güzellik endüstrisi bir yandan ideal beden ölçülerine sahip ikonlar yaratırken, kadınlara, yeni teknoloji ve yöntemler aracılığıyla güzel olma şansını vermektedir. Böylece kadınlar, güzellik içgüdüğü ve popüler kültür endüstrisinin dayattığı geçici ve yapay mutluluğa gönüllü olarak katılmaktadırlar.*

**anahtar kelimeler:** kadın, güzellik endüstrisi, estetik teknolojileri, tüketim toplumu, popüler kültür

## **Résumé**

### **Nouvelles icônes de la beauté : liberté ou servitude du corps humain**

*Modifié entièrement dans le processus de globalisation, le concept de beauté se trouve à l'origine de la création des icônes universelles de la beauté. Pleinement conscientes de l'impossibilité d'atteindre les tailles idéales imposées par l'industrie de la beauté, les femmes ne se gardent pour autant de participer au cercle vicieux comme victimes volontaires sous la pression de la culture de la consommation et des média.*

*Avec l'émergence des nouvelles possibilités techniques dans le domaine de la chirurgie esthétique, les femmes ne voient plus une source de satisfaction dans les produits cosmétiques. La demande pour les interventions de la chirurgie esthétique a augmenté de façon remarquable avec la mise en application des méthodes de la technologie avancée ayant pour objectif principal la réduction du coût, de la douleur et de la durée de l'opération.*

*Dans le présent article, la réflexion théorique sur la relation entre la femme et la beauté est complétée par une série d'études de cas. 30 femmes qui ont subi au moins une fois dans leur vie une intervention de chirurgie esthétique ont été interrogées dans le cadre des entretiens directs afin de révéler leur perception relative à la beauté.*

*L'industrie de la beauté et du bien-être personnel ne cesse d'élargir et de multiplier les domaines de consommation, notamment par l'introduction des nouvelles modalités d'intervention chirurgicale inventées spécialement en vue d'exploiter les aspects narcissique, masochiste et vulnérable du genre féminin. D'une part l'industrie de la beauté crée des icônes qui possèdent des tailles idéales, d'autre part elle donne aux femmes le « droit » d'être belle grâce à la nouvelle technologie et aux nouvelles méthodes. Ainsi les femmes participent-elles à leur gré au bonheur temporaire et artificiel, une illusion créée et propagée*

*par les moyens de l'industrie de la culture de masse, en éprouvant une impression d'être « plus belle ».*

**mots-clés :** *femme, industrie de la beauté, intervention de chirurgie esthétique, société de consommation, culture populaire*

### **Abstract**

*Nowadays, "globalizing beauty" concept creates universal beauty icons. Even though women are aware of the impossibility to reach the ideal sizes that are imposed by the beauty industry, they take place in the vicious cycle as a volunteer victim with the pressures of the consuming culture and the media.*

*With the possibilities of new aesthetic technologies, women are not any more satisfied with the cosmetic products. Realization of the aesthetic operations in a more painless, more rapid and cheaper way with the advanced technology methods has increased the demands.*

*In this article theoretical background of the relationship between women and beauty is supported by a field study. In-depth interviews were conducted to reveal the perception of beauty of 30 women who had plastic surgery operations.*

*The beauty and personal care industry are continuously creating new consumption areas by introducing new surgical interventions which, to a great degree, exploits and targets the narcissist, masochist and vulnerable nature/characteristics of women. On one hand the beauty industry creates icons that possess ideal body sizes and on the other gives chance to women the "right" to be beautiful with new technology and methods. Thus, the women voluntarily participate in the temporary and artificial happiness with the instinct of being "more beautiful" and the demands according to what popular culture industry imposes.*

**keywords:** *women, beauty industry, aesthetic technologies, consumption society, popular culture*

*"The men are as they behave and the women are as they appear. The men gaze the women and the women observe their being gazed. Thus a female becomes transposed herself into an object, especially into a visual object, something to be gazed." (Berger, 47).*

## **Introduction**

### **The psychological background of the beauty; the female who monitors her own image from the perspective of the gazing person**

A female acquaints herself with self-chasing starting from the early years of her childhood. She is always on the stage at the symbolic plane and she subconsciously believes that her performance is for the male audience (Tseelon, 2002). She is continuously preoccupied with her own appearance; this is complemented by the comprehension of her existence and the sensation of being favoured by somebody else as herself. This situation leads to the separation of the female's self-individualism as; the gazing and being gazed personalities. The female starts perceiving these two personalities as two elements separated from each other (Berger, 1988). This splitting in the self-perception of the female is correlated to her breakaway from her mother, biologically.

A woman's own body perception, as an individual, is surely not independent from the regard of her mother from whom she provides the first vital care. The way a mother cares for, perfects, loves and even calls her child embraces and restricts the child's body. Thus, the child realizes the impossibility of eternal satisfaction, in other words, limits of the body, which is not possible until it gets lost. The aforementioned here is a mental loss, which means being deprived of the "absolute" and even deadly pleasure of the "integral" body and getting "pleasure" from partial body parts. What psychoanalysis studies is not the outward anatomical body but the mental body, that is the unconscious design of our own body perception reflected to us from the other side. What is important here is that the thing we call as body can not be established without the loss, in other words the loss of integral pleasure (Erşen, 2008). It is guessed that this ongoing desire of perfection lies under the beautification attempts of women, ranging from cosmetics to plastic surgeries and failing to result with a complete satisfaction in no ways. Freud explains the female attitude that is diverted to continuously observing herself with the **narcissism** concept; he refers to two different stages of narcissism under the scope of the development of the erotic lives of the people. The first stage is the "entity love" stage of the childhood that exists in parallel to the child's love to the woman nurturing it. Later, this narcissistic sentiment forms the basis for the object preferences as "devotion" or "dependence" (Bowie, 2007). Lacan breaks down Freud's belief of the little child's prospect that is established between the entity love and the devotion to the mother figure. He superposes a solely self-contained emphasize

on the narcissism concept basing on the Narcissus Mythos?'. According to Lacan, the tragic story of Narcissus does not only tell about delusive egotism, he is also captured by the fantastic power of the reflected image on the surface and he falls in the charm of the reflected image at self-destruction degree. At this stage which is also known as mirror stage, the person fixes in the energy and erotic based relation in the source of the passionate link established with this image that will be called as self "ego" (Freud, 1998). In the mirror stage, the person enters into a process that alienates her body from herself. Thus, the constructed ego follows its passionate until the point of self-sacrificing for it at the final stage (Bowie, 2007). According to Lacan, the "primary" narcissism is an unavoidable structural inevitableness that determines the mechanism of all the human passions (Freud, 1998).

The complex geometry of the mirror stage that is consisted of the body, ambiance and mirror operates as a deception, an adulteration and a defraud on the individual. It is possible to observe this in the operation of Lacan's "**fragmented body**" (**corps morcele**) concept. For forming a tool to the individual in keeping her memory of perception of physical disharmony alive, this fantasy has a certain distinctive interrelation with the identity estranged from the ego. The body that appeared fragmented and crumpled up and the anxieties evoked at that moment provoke the individual's desire on having a secure physical ego. The object, whether it is tended to the forward, meaning towards the body or it is tended to the backward, meaning towards "fragmented body (corps morcele)", all he/she thinks is the construction (Bowie, 2007). The individual's completion requirement starting from the breaking off the mother will appear as reconstruction of the body repeatedly throughout the life.

The beauty experience occurs when met with the objects having the figure of perfect beauty. The spirit tries possessing the beauty when met with these objects; it tries to change its environment until the infinity by perceiving the world from the eyes of a perfectionist. Freud propounds that the pleasure of the dressing exhibition primarily comes from the individual's to its own body and then to the clothing and other adornments on the body which is metonymically directed by a type of narcissistic investment (Pacteau, 2008). The body is a much more meaningful area where the castration game is either performed or rejected. The talking of a made-up mouth is just like forbidden, any longer the radiant half open lips has no functions such as speaking, eating and kissing. In the root of the dense erotic value that has an objectivity like a made-up jewel of a mouth, adversely there is the logic of keeping it closed rather than bringing it

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\* **Narcissus Myth:** Narcissus was a beautiful youth in ancient Greece who fell in love with his own reflection in a pool. He pined away and eventually died and was turned into a flower because he could never fully possess himself. Freud saw this story as a good way of illustrating the idea of an ego that has become totally self-absorbed and can no longer relate to the outside world. (Ruth Barry, *Freud, A Beginner's Guide*, 2005, p.63)

to forefront as an erogenous cleavage as believed. Since the various parts of the body were converted into the indicators, they have been overexcited by fascinating themselves and their seduction powers arise from this perverted self-satisfying (masturbation) action. The best object that best summarizes this presentation event and that appears as the foundation stone of the political economy unique to the body is the female body (Baudrillard, 2002). According to Freud, the self-exhibitionism desire is the change of scopophilia stimulation. The exhibitionism arises from the **autoerotic** activity containing the glazing of a person to her body parts. Lacan summarizes that external relation established by the human with self-body with "I am being glazed, meaning I am a picture" statement. The pleasure obtained by self-exhibitionism comes forward through the identification of the object with the glazing of the other, the object perceives herself as a **picture** from the other's perspective; the pleasure is basically scopophilic\*. Freud propounds that any unconsciously exhibitionist person is also peeper (voyeur) (transference from Freud, Pacteau, 2005). The fetishism is one of the methods referred for compensating the castration anxiety while the peep (voyeur) is one of the methods referred for compensating the tendency to exhibitionism (Tseelon, 2005). Today, the fashion and advertisement that densely affect the individuals are trying to form completely soft lined autoerotic appearance and those are trying to direct the development of the image. "Since you are responsible for your body, you have to be interested with it, you have to take care of it and you have to do so through a graphical system addressing the prestige and with the indicators that the population models mediate and reflect etc. (Baudrillard, 2002). The female is in a kind of beauty trap formed with the established social values and the psychological pressures created out of those on one hand and the imperativeness of matching the ideal sizes imposed by the consumption culture on the other hand.

The femininity is a mask used by the female for leaving the male undefended against his fears from the powers of female. According to Lacan, the femininity, like fetish, is behaving as if concealing something that is nonexistent, in other words the castration of something that is nonexistent (Tseelon, 2002). We face to a stage drama based on the ejaculation mechanisms (erection) and having castration at all around us in fashion, advertisements, nude theatre. "The boots, buskins up to the buttocks, pantywaists worn under the maxi coats, hand gloves covering the elbows or the socks ending over the buttocks... covering the body in such, turns it into a kind of indicator (Baudrillard, 2002).

The female says that she feels weakened or naked when either dressed up bad or usually lacking make up (Tseelon, 2002). The female, who

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\* **scopophilic instinct** (voyeurism) pleasure in looking at or love of watching another person as an erotic object, pornography appeals to voyeuristic desire and often the object of voyeurism is undressed or engaged in some kind of sexual activity. It's accepted as a sexual deviation in the case of sexual satisfaction is pre-conditioned. (transference from Freud: Pacteau, 2005:181)

subconsciously acts with the stimulation of continuously glazed object, attaches importance to being a monitored object in others eyes rather than being herself.

### **Inversion of the Beauty Concept through Narcissistic Resurrounding**

The perceptions of the individuals about themselves, their identifications and their expressions are relational, those are determined according to the other individuals within the social relations network. Their efforts for having better bodies are related to the senses regarding their attached values for themselves, their places within the social relations and their controls over their lives (Thomson & Hirshman, 1995).

Today, the "rediscovery" of the body, which has been a criticism of the divine towards the fact, freedom and liberation for long time, briefly the contestation on behalf of the human against the God, is now being performed in the form of being blessed. After a thousand year of Puritanism age, the "rediscovery" of the body in the form of physical and sexual liberation and its absolute presence in the advertisement, fashion and public culture, the health, dieting, treatment culture that surround the body, the youth obsession, the caring related to the body, the "desire expression" surrounding the body, all those are the indicators showing that the body has become a liberation object in appearance (Baudrillard, 2008). The female's happiness is possible through liberating her body within this context. She will be happier as her proximity to the determined measures. However, the social assumptions are also not fixed, those are continuously renewed in accordance with the profit intended expectation of the popular system. The female should run after the changing measures without getting tired, otherwise her catching "happiness" will not be possible.

In a capitalist society, the general status of the private property is also applied to the body, social practice and the representation of this practice in the mind. The current structures of the Production - Consumer relations are essentially leading to a double practice dependent of the split mental representation of the self-body; the body practice as capital, the body practice as fetish (Consumer object). In both cases, the conscious surrounding of the body apart from the rejection (both economically and psychically) is important (Baudrillard, 2008).

The articles published in women magazines on beauty and body are placing the determinants and the relations same with the social life between the object and body objectivity as a dangerous couple under the appearance of arbitrating everybody with their own bodies. The interesting thing beyond this implicit terrorism towards the female is not for getting acquaintance with the

body but it is the suggestion to the females for curling inside their bodies to reform them towards the external and surrounding it narcissistically “externally” as the most bright, most perfect and functional object pursuant to the completely exhibitioner and fetishist logic. “I am discovering my body, I have started loving my body.” Thus, “the renowned body” is already an investment regarding the “capitalist” purposes, in other words, the body is managed, arranged as a cultural asset and is directed as one of the numerous social status indicators. As the pleasure means and prestige exhibitor “the renowned body”, where as, it turns into a consumer object that is more deeply alienated than using it as the labor power following the liberation expression fitted in it. Through this long sanctifying process, the **beauty** and **eroticism** are leitmotifs of the functional body as a narcissistic cult object or the body that is handled as social tactic and ritual item (Baudrillard, 2008). The female, who rather evaluates her appearance at an external appreciation measure based on the glazing of others, is directed to either “liking herself” or to a beauty affinity converged towards inner due to the new narcissistic surrounding of the popular system.

Within the framework of this functional esthetic related to the body, it is impossible to distinguish the process of the object’s obedience to her ideal ego and the faced process of the society’s alternatively imposed **liking herself**, the challenge of complying with caring herself rules from each other. This situation experienced as an exchanging form between the directed narcissistic values and the indicators is the **directed** and **functional glorifying** of the beauty. The real intention in this **self-seduction** event that has a meaningless appearance is that the body would have a detailed optimal management standard in the indicators market. This narcissism perversion are interrelated with the body or body parts through putting it into a form of a game consisting of certain techniques, objects, gestures, traces and indicators (Baudrillard, 2002). The body should be handled as a project and each part of it should be dealt separately. Since the basic purpose of the life is “happiness”, the key of the happiness is being pleased with the appearance. So, the body is the one that deserves all sacrifices such as time, money and energy as possibly the most important project of the life.

The “liberation” of the body leads the establishment of the body as the interest object. As the body and anything related to the relation with the body, this interest is consisted of two opposite meaning components; this interest is not only positive but it is simultaneously negative. The body is usually “liberated” as simultaneously of these double interests. As the consequences of these, the establishment of the body in modern sense brings in a great interest surrounding that will press on the body and award it (Baudrillard, 2008). The body is willing to suffer for deserving the award at the end. Here, it is observed that a kind of “consent economy” logic is put in operation. The unhappiness of the female increases in parallel to the distance to her idealized



body sizes. Therefore, she accepts spending the required money and time and suffering for reaching to the sublimated body sizes.

Today, it is the sexuality that manages the “rediscovery of the body” and the consuming as per our definitions together with the beauty. By means of the narcissistic re-surrounding, the beauty command that tells the valuation of the body includes the eroticism in terms of the sexuality. In the “erotic made” body, the preponderant factor is the social function of the exchange. All the “Consumer” area is full with eroticism. The bodies and objects create a homogeneous indicators network that their given meanings are exchangeable and that contributes “add value” to each other mutually. “The beauty is turned into an absolute religious imperative for the female, being beautiful is neither a natural endowment nor an ethically qualified power; it is the indicator of the eligibility and liberation. The beauty ethic that is just identical to the fashion ethic may be defined as demoting of all “the utilization values” (energy, activity, sexuality) of the body to a single functional “changing value”. This changing value intangibly involves the glorious and perfect body idea in itself. The beauty is nothing more than an exchangeable indicators material.” The rediscovery of the body primarily goes through the objects from the cleanness to the make up after passing through the sun tanning, sports, and numerous fashion “liberations”. In fact, the only liberated impulsion seems to be likely the purchasing impulsion (Baudrillard, 2008). Within that context, the body is at the center of the consumer type actions, the producer created by the individual for establishing connection between itself and the society is an important object of the consumer (Thomson & Hirshman, 1995).

The indicator is the fashion model as the exemplary body reference in the system called as the political economy. The fashion model that is the contemporary duplicate of the robot represents the body totally made functional by the value rule (Baudrillard, 2002). Although the female realizes that these emblazoned body sizes, which are naturally unmatchable, are artificial, she cannot escape from the desire for sublimating them.

### **Ideal Female Sizes; Conviction to the Imposed Beauty**

The beauty is related to the knowledge competence, we call things beautiful when their appearances give us pleasure. Consequently, the beauty is constituted at appropriate ratio. Our feelings are pleased with the good proportional things, the sensation is also a ration like any other knowledge competence (Eco, 2006 ). Even if, the beauty related ratios do change in every period, they are perceived as the characteristics belonging to distinguished groups. The lower income groups imitate the distinguished ones; however, this will not be quite significant unless they climb the social ladder.

The fashion trend experienced in the recent few decades created trends addressing the ideal sizes regarding the ideal bodies' topic. Twiggy or Julie Christie of the 60's, Maria Schneider of the 70's, Nastasia Kinsky of the 80's, Cindy Crawford of the 90's and Angelina Jolie of the 2000's have oriented the body sizes. Those created images crowded out all doubts on the subject that there is only one ideal and perfect body. Today, there is a certain culturally accepted female norm; she should be as tall as between 1.68 cm and 1.70 cm with long legs, tanned skin and fresh appearance and she should have no excessive weight. "Tanned, thin, lively and lovely....." (Coward, 1993). As mentioned earlier, the body sizes that became an object of the consumer by the popular system are continuously changing and re-producing. Here, the main purpose is the surviving of the beauty industry that will ensure reaching to the ideal sizes such as health, esthetics, sports centers.

The compression of the beauty comprehension in such a narrow frame clearly shows that a constraining female beauty and behaviour ideal exist even in West as much as the Non-European societies implementing clitoridectomy (circumcising the clitoris) (Coward, 43). The corrected and reformed female images in the visual area affect our personal relations with our bodies, whether they fit those passionately and extensively manipulated pictures and images, do create distrustfulness feeling and our bodies feel distress. The beauty anxieties damage the self-respect of the female (Orbach, 2006).

The ideal body sizes are not exactly suitable to the bodies of teenager girls, they rather fit to the bodies of the older females that keep their youth (Coward, 1993). Our present body ideal impacts a vast geographical area influencing the distant far countries from USA; it erodes the national beauty standards in Japan, Saudi Arabia and Brazil. Pertaining to the current world means having visibly modern and western body sizes (Dove, Orbach, p.8). It is observed that most females took actions and started changing themselves such as making up, dieting and correcting their eating faultinesses following the anxiety feelings created by the ideal female appearance (Dove Researching Findings, 2005). However, are the females happier in comparison with the past after so much effort? In other words, we doubt whether approaching towards the ideal body sizes is the key of permanent happiness as claimed to be!

### **Fostering the Beauty Desire and Anxiety Feeling**

Freud told that no males would escape from the castration anxiety and in the so-called developed Western world; no females can escape from the "beauty". The beauty will be inevitably either referred to or begrudged from the women childhood (Pacteau, 2005). Being a glazed object causes the female continuously concerned with her outlook. The experimental evidences show that the apprehensions of the women are much more negative on their heights

in comparison with the men. The female is exposed to much more severe criticisms in respect to the attractiveness and she is criticized harshly when she is not attractive (Tseelon, 2002). Being continuously monitored simultaneously travels with the anxiety feeling that traps the female lifetime and she can never escape from it.

According to Freud, "the beauty love is a perfect example of the impulsion of which its purpose is inhibited". Thus Freud emphasized the fantastic extend of the beauty. In this extend the flair (instinct) object is converted to the "stimulation" (impulse) object and the possibility of the timely satisfaction of the need is converted to the impossibility of achieving the desire. The desire continuously inviting inhibitions and losses is defined in the production of the symptoms and defence processes. There is always an image following the female that the question regarding the beauty of the female would be addressed, "Beautiful as .....!" Therefore, the desire tries to reach the portrayed perfection that requires only the body beyond the impossible body and more than a body (Pacteau, 2005).

The feminine desires are invited with the trap of achieving to the ideals; ideal legs, ideal hair, ideal houses together with " promises of perfection" in the future. You feel better if you may achieve those ideals. The dissatisfaction of the female is re-arranged as a continuous desire, as the desire for much more, as the perfect working of the previously existing one (Coward, 1993). The systematized roles such as being ideal sweetheart, ideal spouse, and ideal mother are daily re-produced in the media and social environment and the female's escaping from those impression centers is not much possible.

The females are generally unsatisfied with their appearances compared to the males. The 70% of the world's female population refrains from the ordinary living activities (giving their opinions, dating with their boyfriends, performing a physical activity, going to school and work or going to an interview) due to their dislike of their appearances. The females, who feel themselves bad in terms of their appearances, prefer staying at home, sleeping or watching TV. The teenager girls and females feel that they have to wear masks continuously in order to approach to the present narrow beauty ideal instead of facing to the world with all their inequalities and varieties (Etcoff, 2000).

The appearance anxiety became predominant over any health conceptions, mental and physical health integrity. The females are persuaded that "the mental and physical health is possible with a better appearance" by the popular expression. Some promises form the attractiveness of this feel-good ideology. Those are primarily the possibilities of changing the body shape and that this changing would be at the direction to the cultural ideal discussed on the "beautiful body". The secondary one is that this shape would only be

achieved through consuming more. Consequently, these considerations mean an excessive interest in the health of the females. Thus, the appearance is reduced to the medical engagements regarding the physical fitness. In fact, the exhaustion, prostration, laziness are all the indicators of the depression or unhealthiness, always the body is handled for potential treatment (Coward, 1993). The constructed problems and the provided solutions are converged with the narcissistic structures of the females as the glazed objects are the factors that may lead the depressions in the females.

The modern female is both the priestess and the manager of her body, she cares keeping her body beautiful and competitive. Fatness is accepted as "beautiful" in some other places and ages. However, the universal beauty that is accepted as everybody's **duty and right** in the consumer society may not be separated from the slimness. Even, the appearances of the models and fashion models, with which the beauty identified it self are scraggy and fleshless in terms of both denying the flesh and glorifying the fashion (Baudrillard, 2008).

The most important mechanism for maintaining the interests of the females on the created body ideal is constructing this ideal on abhorrence towards the fatness and flesh. The females feeling themselves overweighed believe that their fatnesses always indicate their weaknesses and oreximania. The terms such as "fat", "round", "full" etc. appear as the kind terms of the fatness, therefore they have negative meanings. More importantly, the language used for the female body forms integral postulates that may result in the establishment of the female's relation with her body based only on "punishment" and "hate". The first one is the "**fragmentation**" of the body; the different parts of the body are stated with the third person and as the "problem areas". This fragmentation feeling leads the alienation of the female to her own body and it causes her entering into a relationship with her own body completely masochistically or penalizing it. Because of this, the hate towards the body turns into a pathologic situation. It is nourished with the statements such as "Fatness is illness" or "if you are living in fear of cellulite .....". The therapies of the illness are even worse, the body should be hurt, and the person **should be in pain** for the excessive parts (Coward, 1993). It is worth having pain for the award that will be received at the end. The body is "**sacrificed**" for the beautiful appearance.

### **The Expression of the Popular Beauty that Developed Interdependently with the New Possibilities of the Esthetics Surgery**

#### *"Achieving the Ideal Beauty is No More a Promise"*

From the archaic age to the 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the bright skin has been admired in all over the world. The adjectives such as the white porcelain

for the face, ivory for the neck, marble for the breasts, snow white for the hands have been used. In the West, towards the end of 19th century, with the rise of a puritan performance ethics, there has also been a radical change in the perception of the body: The fatness has been started to be correlated with laziness. Contrary to this, the thin bodies have represented the success and the wisdom (Breustedt and Riedle, 2008). As it is also mentioned above, for the women the war against fatness has transformed into a thinness gripper that has lasted until today with the popular expression being backed by the media.

Since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the visual world has been under the effect of the bourgeois ideology trying to annihilate the exaggerations. According to this ideology, the Greek and the Renaissance bodies have represented the excellent. The surgery has also complied with the bourgeois aesthetic understanding. Between 1890 and 1920, a transition from one ideal image to the other has been clearly recognized. In 1890, in the West, namely in Europe and USA, the flawless woman is in flesh. In the period until 1920, "a new woman" image has appeared; a masculine type which has almost no breast and no hips. Here, the important thing is that on which common main image one community compromises in conclusion, an ideal appearance which is found to be beautiful by not only the individuals but also by everyone. (Gilman, 2001). The admittances regarding the woman body have also been affected from the continuously changing trends of the fashion. Therefore, the symbolized beauty icons have also been changing in every period. In addition to this, it has been observed that the thinness which has been regarded as the prerequisite of the beauty from 1980's to today onwards has still kept its effects.

With the youth movement in the year of 1968, a thinness culture that has never been seen throughout the history has started to expand. The English model Twiggy has become the icon of this movement, the life has ever after turned into a nightmare for the women who are not like "toothpicks". With the penetration of the televisions in the villages and with the screens full of Barbie baby style women, only in 38 months the young people who suffer from the eating disorders has doubled. In the same period, 74 % of the young women and men participating to the anthropologist and psychiatrist Becker's research have stated that they have found themselves as very fat and ugly, 62 % of the people participating to the research started dieting (Breustedt and Riedle, 2008).

The researching performed by the Dove cosmetics company in 2005 covering 11 countries has revealed interesting results on the appearances aspects that the teenager girls and women desire changing themselves. In the range between the 15 and 17 ages, it was observed in Japan that teenager girls desire changing their appearances as follows; 63% in their weights, 57% in their body shapes, 54% at their necks, 41% in their face appearances, 34% in their eye shapes. While the teenager girls from Saudi Arabia (38%), Canada

(34%) and Brazil (31%) wanted to change their hair, the teenagers from Canada (22%), Germany (21%) wanted to change their skin colours.

In the aforementioned researching, the desired changes on the appearance aspect of the women between the ages 15 and 64 are quite different from the teenager girls of the same country. For example, 50% of the American women and 55% of the Canadian women wanted a change in their weights. This ratio is also quite high among the Japanese (49%). The ratio of the women that are not satisfied with their body shapes arise as the most desired change on the appearance aspect again in Japanese teenager girls (57%). The ratio of the Canadian females that want to change their heights is (35%) and again this is the highest among the Japanese females (38%). Among the ones who want to change their hair are the Brazilian (33%), Japanese (32%), Chinese (33%) and Saudi Arabian (33%) women. The women who want to change their face appearances are primarily the Japanese (26%) and Canadian (22%). The highest ratio of Chinese women (25%) want to change their skin colours and with the 21% of highest rank, the Japanese women are again the ones who want to change their eye shapes (Dove Report, 2005).

From the age of enlightenment period till today onwards, as of 18<sup>th</sup> century, it has ever after been known that the life has not been determined before and forever. But, in last thirty years, it has been accepted that the identity can be entirely changeable, the body and spirit integrity has never remained the same and therefore, the person himself/herself can also change that. With the enlightenment, the ideas that the social activity field has expanded, the person has been responsible for himself/herself and appearance of his/her body. The idea that the human himself/herself can control his/her body in the name of pursuing the individual happiness has been actualized. This development has also formed *the ideological prerequisite of the aesthetic surgery development* (Gilman, 2001). Today, the interventions on the body are not only oriented to cover the regions which are defective in aesthetic terms but also the de novo designing of the body is at issue.

The ordinary activities such as using the cosmetics products, making diets or flattening the hair has given their places to the aesthetic operations oriented to the breast enlargement, the liposuction in the hips, the cheek saturation and the lengthening of the legs to increase height; they have ever after turned out to be not innocent and not entertaining applications. The desire of a body in which the individual does not approve his/her body as it is and which can be perfectible and produced in a way that will fit to the today's fashion has turned into a full-scale scenario. (Orbach, 2006).

This obsessive understanding which is in love with the body and always advises taking care of the body well has hindered all the secret cooperations of

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the body and the desire. This approach has been closer to the “**preparation**” ceremonies to **sacrifice** the body, the actor review techniques of the primitive societies than to the oppressive techniques of the puritan age. The fashion has been the impulse that feeds this depravedness which is irrepressible, irrational and devastating itself as only a hider of a daily, obsessive, disciplinary process beyond the beauty and gracefulness which are its objectives at the beginning. The mysterious system of the body contours, thinness’ glamorousness, as only they are the forms of the violence, have been of a vital importance for fastening the excellence and reviving it with violence as in the case of sacrificing the body (Baudrillard, 2008). While the body has been ennobled with the ideal body sizes, it also separates from the intimateness context and is brought to a communal situation. The human starts to perceive his/her body as an image more than himself/herself with the communal context in which she/he is represented, this is the human’s alienation to his/her own body. Within this context, the artificialness of the popular expression as “I love myself ....” and the ironic game to which it absorbs the women have precisely appeared at this point. Although the women is made to be believed that she makes the commercial investments devoted to her body because she loves herself too much, she makes them because she will like it more as a result of these beautification attempts.

According to Freud, the sexual stimulation (libido) spends a huge power for performing the activities required by the civilization. The ability of exchanging something that had sexual purpose initially, now however moved outside of sexuality with another one that serves for this purpose physically is called **glorification** (Freud, 1998). There is the change of the object in the representation of the feminine body; a change from the live female towards the artwork is experienced. However, the object of the glorified stimulation is still based on the characteristics of the sexual object at variable extend. The feminine shape is glorified through making it mathematical and when she becomes the actual living female, not the image of a female; she passes into another dimension unavoidably. The guideline sizes are now scratched on the live flesh with a bistoury. The females obey the similar impositions of the esthetic proportion decision everyday. This implementation that sometimes involves destroying by violence in order to re-create the parts of the living body later in accordance with the correct sizes ideal clearly operates at the border of the sadism and/or **masochism** (Pacteau, 2005).

“As in the unpleasant other situations, the pain feelings also scratched on the sexual stimulation and they produce a pleasant situation, the object accepts the unpleasant pain even voluntarily for the sake of the pleasant situation.” In the first stage, the object imposes the pain on her, in the second stage there is masochism substantially. When the object imposed the pain on her, there is a convergence from being active to being passive. In the masochism, the pleasure constrained on the passive object follows the main impulsion directed to the dominance!...” (transference from Freud, Pacteau, 2005).

In summary, it was observed that in all of the 11 countries, in which the researching was conducted, the women desired changes on their appearance aspects. However, the dissatisfaction on the appearance aspects was more common among primarily the Japanese women and following that the Canadian women.

### **Field Study**

**Purpose:** Theoretical background of the relationship between women and beauty is supported by a field study. Aim in this study is to examine how much effort women give in order to be beautiful and how they conceive such effort.

**Method:** In-depth interviews were conducted to the women who had plastic surgery operations due to their aesthetic concerns.

**Sample:** Participants consist of those women in high and middle income bracket who wish to change their appearance and accordingly had several plastic surgery operations by willingly allocate a budget. All 30 participants have a Bachelor's Degree and been working in various professional sectors.

**Findings:** Specific questions are addressed in order to disclose general thoughts on beauty and to reveal the beauty perception of those interviewed women in the scope of this study. General topics of questions are as follows: How do they define a beautiful woman, how did they decide to have a plastic surgery operation, how did they feel before and after the operation and if they plan to have another operation or not.

Analysis of data obtained from the interviews made by thirty women in total are presented below.

### **Definition of the Beautiful Woman**

Two categories are emerged from participants' definition of the beautiful women. The first one is attributed to physical size, while the second one also seems to be related to physical attributes but rather acts as a supplementary element to the first one.

#### **Physical Appearance:**

- Proportional body size
- Big, colorful and beaming eyes,
- Buxom lips,
- Long leg (almost unanimous decision)
- Shining, flat white teeth,
- Slim, thin body with thin bone,
- Beautiful, long hair,
- Bright, lucid skin (white),
- Tall,



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- Circular and lifted buttock,
  - Wasp waist.

**Other details peculiar to appearance:**

- Well-groomed (almost unanimous decision)
  - “24-hour care as if going on a stage at any time”
- Athletic, fit appearance
- Smiling and beaming eyes,
- Being at peace with self,
- Charismatic, cool, not a loser type,
- Unspoiled beauty once talking,
- Attractive,
- Smiling face
- Self-confident, self-assured,
- Natural,
- Smart
- Noble
- Sex appeal
- Fashionable

Physical appearance should go hand in hand with knowledge and personality. Beauty of woman shouldn't disappear once she starts to talk. There is no point to have a baby face if woman is cold and dull. While the baby faced women resembling one another may be repulsive, women having a distinct appearance and being self-confident may seem to be more beautiful even though their bodies aren't proportional.

Participants also gave examples of celebrities who they think matched their beauty criteria: Monica Bellucci, Charles Theron, Cate Blanchett, Catherina Deneuve and Angelina Jolie are associated with the woman type defined above. Linguistic of these definitions regarding the appearance and personality of women is the same with those used in especially cosmetics and similar products' advertisements in which definitions of beautiful women and advices for women are given. It shows how popular culture and media affect the beauty conception of women in regard to both definition of beautiful women and associated celebrities with this definition.

**Plastic Surgery Operations of the Interviewees**

Most widespread plastic surgery operation among participants is nose operation (12 people). Runner up is breast enlargement, reduction and lift operations (10 people). Other operations in the list are eyelid surgery, liposuction, face-lifting, lip fill, vaginal area and eyebrow lifting respectively.

### **When did the Plastic Surgery Operations Arouse Their Attention and What Expectations They had from Plastic Surgery**

It is understood that beauty concerns of participants mostly began in their maidenhood. Participants' complex towards their nose especially in this period led the majority of them to have nose operation. One third of participants interviewed, expressed that they didn't find their noses beautiful (same as mentioned in the Dove's cosmetics report) since their childhood and thus they always wanted to have an operation in order to free from their complexes.

Another parameter which leads women to have a plastic surgery operation is their concern of being a beautiful-looking women which begins with pre-matrimony, marriage and after-matrimony periods. It is emerged that public acknowledgement is associated with physical appearance in especially 30's and that tendency to have plastic surgery operation is increased by the public pressure created by media. Some remarkable statements of participants who had surgery operations for so called reasons are as follows:

"I wanted to feel beautiful when I looked into the mirror" (8 people)

"in order to be easily acknowledged by my entourage"

"for self-confidence" (4 people)

"to free from my complexes" (4 people)

"we had separated with my boyfriend, I did it with a reactionary motive"

"as my husband was mocking at my physical appearance"

"to amuse myself, some women keep changing their hair color, my situation is more or less the same"

### **How did They Choose the Doctor for Plastic Surgery Operation**

The most important factor while choosing the doctor is a reference taken from an acquaintance or a friend. Moreover, it is also preferred that doctor performed an operation for a friend and relative before. Aforementioned criteria affected 16 participants. Besides that, there are some examples in which doctors were deemed to be trusted as they were family friends (4 people).

Other than those, people who made their decisions by virtue of news seen on the press and Internet about the doctor also constitute the majority (6 people). There are some participants who had their operations abroad. These people based their decisions on the acknowledgement level of the doctor in his field of expertise.

### **What were the Expectations from Plastic Surgery Operations, How Would it Affect Their Life?**

The most common expectation from plastic surgery operations is the desire of the participant for "feeling more beautiful." (10 people). "I wanted to

be at peace with myself in the mirror” statement is another similar expectation (3 people). The desire of a woman for liking herself in front of the mirror is transformed into the desire of that woman for being more beautiful in front of others if we consider the “mirror” as a metaphor in that respect. It is understood that others’ “gaze” is more important than that of herself.

“Self-confident boost” expectation from plastic surgery operations emerges as an important factor among the participants (5 people).

Another expectation that may be associated with the mirror metaphor emerges as in the “my clothes would suit me” statement. For example, statements such as “I would be able to wear bikini” “I would be freed from padded bras” are recorded (6 people). Here again women’s desire for being physically acclaimed by the others can be visible. Furthermore, statements such as “I wanted to be at peace with myself”, “I would like my body more”, “I would be able to look into mirror peacefully” show how women interiorized the media discourse. It is understood that women think that beauty in accordance with media-imposed criteria will give a person self-confidence and will create a prerequisite to be at peace with the community.

The fact that plastic surgery operations may effect the relationship between women and man may also emerge as an expectation. One person among the participants of the research stated that she decided to have a plastic surgery operation for she “acknowledged that her marriage wouldn’t last long” as her marriage were in shatters and her husband wanted to get divorced. Furthermore, one participant stated that she decided to have an operation to “start a new life” after “she got divorced from her husband” and one other participant said she did it “with a reactionary motive” for “she wanted to draw attention” “after her boyfriend left her.”

### **Did They Hesitate While Deciding to Have an Operation?**

Only one third of 30 participants hesitated while deciding to have a plastic surgery operation. Hesitation matters are “narcosis fear” (2 people), “what if the results don't turn out to be natural” (2 people), “blood and needle fear”, “risk of emboli”, “what if the results don't turn out to be beautiful”, “hesitations related to beliefs”, “what if my husband doesn’t like it.”

### **Satisfaction from Plastic Surgery Operations**

Almost all participants are satisfied with the results of plastic surgery operations they had (25 people). They also expressed quite positive opinions in relation to how their lives were affected after plastic surgery operation. Some of the participants expressed that physical change in particular also provides

better “psychological” mood. Some interesting statements about how operations affected their lives are as follows:

- “I feel like I am resurrected.”
  - “I wish I’ll find an operation to stretch my soul as my stretched face.”
  - “I was feeling disgusted when I looked into the mirror, now I discard that feeling.”
  - “I can go out without wearing bra, I can dress décolleté.”
  - “I can dress whatever I want, for example I can wear my swimsuits.”
- “I can dress décolleté. When I look into the mirror, I see a young, energetic, shining face rather than an old woman. Thank God.”
  - “I am highly satisfied, I can look into mirror comfortably.”

Here we can see the importance of “mirror” in women’s life. Freud explains this situation as “the mirror stage” where women fall in love with their own beauties in front of the mirror.

Those who are not satisfied with the operations are only 5 people out of 30 participants. The ones who feel themselves unsatisfied since the result didn’t meet their expectations, plan to have another operation in the near future.

### **What is the Basis of Happiness?**

If we recall the answers given by women to “expectations from plastic surgery operations” question, they stated that they “want to feel themselves more beautiful and thus be happier as they become at peace with themselves.” But when they are asked what makes a human being happy, quite ironic answers were received being totally different and even in contradiction with the beauty obtained by plastic surgery operation. For example, some of participants stated that bliss is “related to inner world of a human being.”

Remarkable answers for happiness are as follows: “to realize what a human being have in their hands and so try to satisfy with what they have rather than chasing what he/she doesn’t have”, “to live in a peace of their own by loving oneself as is without complaining.” These statements reveal the paradox, which lies between the definition of happiness and behavior of women, peculiar to those participants who already state that physical changes also lead “psychological happiness”, who “feel that they are resurrected” and more importantly who said “that they are now at peace with themselves” after plastic surgery operations. It is understood that the happiness alleged to be obtained by plastic surgery operations does not lead the real happiness defined as “inner happiness” and that regeneration gained by the operation only gives a temporary happiness. Furthermore, it is understood that participants cannot

totally comprehend satisfaction and happiness concepts, which is verified hundred percent by Gilman's explanation. According to him, although various psychological research show that nearly 85% of patients are satisfied with the results after even three years of operation, it should be noticed that what is addressed here is satisfaction, rather than happiness.

### **Did They Plan to Have Another Plastic Surgery Operation?**

60% of interviewed people say that they can have another plastic surgery operation. Especially not only those unsatisfied ones with the plastic surgery operation but also the ones who believe that effects of plastic surgery operation won't last long plan to repeat the operations.

The fact that plastic surgery operations give a temporary happiness is already stated above. Short transition emotion clearly verifies this satisfaction-dissatisfaction condition resulted from the operation.

### **Conclusion**

The body is reformed everyday by the media and popular expressions and the icons having the ideal body sizes are walking around for keeping the desires of the females at all times. The articles published in the female magazines on beauty and body are placing the determinants and the relations same with the social life between the object and body objectivity as a dangerous couple under the appearance of arbitrating everybody with their own bodies.

The females who devote themselves to the perfumeries, massages, regimes upon "the hope of re-discovering their bodies" are frequently met. In the reality, the theoretical equivalencies of the body and objects as the indicators allow the magic equivalency of the "purchase; you will be in peace with yourself". This is the point where the psycho-functionality gets its economical and ideological meaning; body sells, beauty sells, eroticism sells. In order to use the body rationally for the production purposes, the body should liberate and obtain its liberation (Baudrillard, 2008).

The "liberation" of the body leads the establishment of the body as the interest object. As the body and anything related to the relation with the body, this interest is consisted of two opposite meaning components; this interest is not only positive but it is simultaneously negative. The body is usually "liberated" as simultaneously of these double interests. As the consequences of these, the establishment of the body in modern sense brings in a great interest surrounding that will press on the body and award it (Baudrillard, 2008). The body is willing to suffer for deserving the award at the end. Here, it is observed that a kind of consent economy logic is put in operation. The

unhappiness of the female increases in parallel to the distance to her idealized body sizes. Therefore, she accepts spending the required money and time and suffering for reaching to the sublimated body sizes.

In the western consumer culture, the body while being normalized on one hand and since it is different than the ideals on the other hand, is a "social" fact that should be vigorously contested for through the means such as diet, cosmetics, care and plastic (esthetic) surgery etc. (Thomson & Hirshman, 1995). The research reveals that the desired body of a female is always a thinner body than the existing. The females state that "they almost do not like their body sizes", that "they cover their bodies with the clothing", that "they are not satisfied with their sizes", and that "they would be better if they were thinner". These statements point out an idealized "**other body**" concept. The "other body" is the body that is not theirs and as per the statements of the participants, it has "a slim waist, a normal breast size", "a bonny face", "nice legs" and "long height". The defined body is the "desired other" body created by effects of the media and social expressions (Dedeoğlu & Savaşçı, 2008). The females know that the images they see at the media are illusions, however the visual arena full of magnificent looking, tall, long legged, big breasted, accomplished, independent, successful, mysterious females re-produce their desires (Orbach, 2006). Thus, the help of the stimulators continuously kept alive through the popular expression and media stick the females in a limited body type, an image like an icon and a narrow beauty frame.

We can see the same statements pointing out the "other body" concept in our in depth-interviews, as we see in the Dove research. When the definition of the beautiful woman was asked, the answers were mainly attributed to physical sizes and physical appearances such as proportional body size, big, colorful and beaming eyes, buxom lips, long legs, slim, thin body with thin bone. According to the definitions of beauty made by the participants was the image of Western-type "**thin and white**" woman, pumped by the popular culture and media since the beginning of twentieth century starting from Twiggy and supported by "Barbie Doll" image.

As Lacan points out in his "fragmented body" (*corps morcele*) concept, the body that appeared fragmented and crumpled up and the anxieties evoked at that moment provoke the individual's desire on having a secure physical ego. The object, whether it is tended to the forward, meaning towards the body or it is tended to the backward, meaning towards "**fragmented body (corps morcele)**", all he/she thinks is the construction (Bowie, 2007). The individual's completion requirement starting from the breaking off the mother will appear as reconstruction of the body repeatedly throughout the life. Many women have to seek unattainable perfection in their looks, beauty becomes a symptom. These images of the perfect body that drives women into beauty parlours and gyms,

and sadly to depression, neurosis, psychosis or death. Many women develop eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia. Their dysmorphic bodies are not recognised in the mirror. Their agency is so invested in what they look like, that there is nothing else inside. Their destiny is to be permanently alienated from their real selves as they seek to live up to the needs and desires of men. The answers of our participants were as follows: "I wanted to feel beautiful when I looked into the mirror" (8 people) "in order to be easily acknowledged by my entourage", "we had separated with my boyfriend, I did it with a reactionary motive", "as my husband was mocking at my physical appearance".

According to Freud, the pain experienced for achieving the ideal body sizes is not completed at once, the body should be excelled by taking it in hand part by part. For this reason, having pain for several times is accepted, if the excellence is not achieved at the end of the operation, even multiple pains for the same body part are observed. Our field research also shows that 60% of the interviewees say that they can have other plastic surgery operations till they achieve the excellence. These practices that are being described as masochistic and sadistic behaviour by Freud, may be violently destructive from time to time in order to achieve the goal of "ideal sizes".

In world wide, it has been observed that the women's desire to approach the beauty ideal has been continuing very rapidly. Realization of the aesthetic operations in a more painless, more rapid and cheaper way with the advanced technology methods has increased the demands.

One of the most striking questions of our field study was; "what are your expectations from plastic surgery operations". The women answered by stating that "they want to feel themselves more beautiful and thus be happier as they become at peace with themselves." But when they were asked what makes a human being happy, quite ironic answers were received being totally different and even in contradiction with the beauty obtained by plastic surgery operation. For example, some of participants stated that bliss is "related to inner world of a human being."

Our study once again points out that the desire of being beautiful has been an unchangeable destiny for women. Beauty in all times has developed an exterior pressure form which dominates women by different measures and different methods. Since women are conditioned to be admired by others' looks, they are usually consented to the most radical applications. The beauty industry on one hand creates icons that possess ideal body sizes and on the other, gives chance to women the "right" to be beautiful with the new technology and methods. Thus, the women voluntarily participate in the temporary and artificial happiness with the instinct of being beautiful and the demands imposed by the popular culture industry.

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