Neoliberal beauty

Rosalind Gill

'Forget foundation. Choose confidence' asserts an advertisement for Chanel, currently prominent on my Instagram feed. 'Be optimal' exhorts another for Martiderm, promoting serums, fillers and other cosmetics for 'smart aging'. 'Aubrey is feeling 11/10' declares a poster for a hipster-oriented 'wellness service' which offers at-home beauty treatments that will help you to 'glow'. A fourth advertisement, ubiquitous in London's tube train network, shows a manicured hand in which one of the polished red nails has (horrors!) chipped varnish: 'You don't have time for this' empathizes the bold copy – but luckily Treatwell has got your back.

These advertising messages, all seen in the few days before beginning work on this chapter, offer a glimpse of some of the contradictory images and ideas that constitute contemporary discourses about beauty in the West. A plethora of different trends is circulating: the increasing entanglement of the beauty industry with surgical, pharmaceutical, and genetics industries; a growing overlap between beauty and 'wellness', including 'clean eating' and positive health discourses; an emphasis upon feeling good as well as looking good, and on beauty as a 'state of mind' (*pace* Dove) linked to confidence and authenticity; the impact of smartphone technologies on the way in which we learn about and practice appearance work – from social media micro-celebrities and influencers to beauty apps that can filter images, evaluate our appearance and recommend or book beauty treatments; the diversification of mainstream beauty ideals to include bigger, older and disabled models as well as women of color, queer and non-binary models across media; and yet,

simultaneously, an intensification and extensification of beauty pressures, and their institutionalization as a compulsory form of 'labor' for women, and, increasingly, men and non-binary people.

This complicated terrain has generated multiple perspectives and programs of work from scholars interested in beauty and appearance. In addition to well-established psychological and Foucauldian studies framed by questions about body image and bodily discipline (Bartky, 1990; Bordo, 1993; Cash & Smolak, 2011; Paxton, 2014) there are a growing number of productive avenues for research, drawing variously on affect theory, Deleuzian approaches, intersectional and critical race perspectives, transnational, postcolonial and decolonial approaches, as well as by third wave and affirmative approaches (see Elias et al 2017 for discussion of these perspectives). As Ashley Mears (2014:1330) has put it 'beauty is having a moment in the social sciences'- evidenced by new journals, calls for special issues, thematic sections of professional associations as well as by the proliferation of novel empirical studies for example of fat beauty, bridal beauty, and queer beauty.

In this chapter I contribute to this vibrant field of scholarship through a critical account of neoliberalism and 'aesthetic entrepreneurship' that is built from research in labor studies, surveillance studies and psychosocial studies. The chapter is divided into two broad parts. In the first part I offer an introduction to neoliberalism and its gendered (and racialised and classed) iteration as postfeminism, highlighting its relevance to beauty. Then in the second part of the chapter I look at three dynamic trends which this theoretical approach makes visible: the intensification of beauty pressures, its extensification or spreading out across time, space and parts of the body, and its move into the interior with a focus on cultivating a

'beautiful self'. The conclusion draws together these arguments with a focus on aesthetic entrepreneurship.

Everyday neoliberalism

Neoliberalism is a contested term, and also one that is used in a myriad of different ways. While the most prominent accounts of neoliberalism are historical, political and economic (Harvey 2007; Giroux 2015), stressing privatization, deregulation and a rolling back of the state from social and welfare provision, a growing body of work applies the notion to social, cultural and psychological phenomena. Jo Littler (2017:4) discusses neoliberalism less as a grand overarching political rationality than as a quotidian ideology – the new normal - in which distinctively neoliberal notions of choice, entrepreneurialism, competition and meritocracy have insinuated themselves into 'the nooks and crannies of everyday life'. Wendy Brown (2015) analyses neoliberalism's 'stealth revolution' across the demos such that the market has become the model for all forms of human action. From a similar perspective, an 'economisation of subjectivity' (McNay 200:59) can be observed, as people are exhorted to think about their lives through notions of enterprise, calculation and personal responsibility. In dating, for example, ideas of market value, consumer choice, and investment have become common ways to think and talk about intimate relationships (Illouz 2007; O'Neill 2018).

An important body of work of research in media and cultural studies has contributed to this understanding of neoliberalism, showing how it attempts to remodel and makeover the body and subjectivity. Many media have been involved in this: constructing the individual as

an entrepreneurial and 'responsibilized' subject invested in self-transformation e.g. to become more slim, more beautiful, to look ten years younger or to become more date-able (see, e.g. Ouellette and Hay 2008).

Much work in this vein is built from textual analysis of some kind, but Christina Scharff's (2016) interview and ethnographic research with female cultural workers demonstrates how these mediated ideas are lived and experienced in daily life. Her rich analysis shows that neoliberal ideas are not just limited to cultural texts, but are increasingly shaping accounts of everyday life and subjectivity. She notes the way that neoliberal ideas come to be the taken-for-granted of working life, with her respondents referring to the self as a business to be worked on and optimized; being constantly active in the pursuit of their goals; embracing risks; repudiating or minimizing injuries or difficulties; and expressing the belief that they have an obligation to 'stay positive' whatever happens. What is striking is the extent to which these ways of talking about themselves were widely shared, profoundly individualized and also – crucially – psychologized.

Most work on neoliberalism assumes a generic human subject. However, it is clear that the resources to become a neoliberal subject are unevenly distributed and vary by class, race and gender (Allen 2014; Ringrose & Walkerdine 2008; Gilroy 2013) - as well as in relation to age, health status and disability, it can be assumed. Some research contends that women – and young women in particular - are positioned as ideal subjects of neoliberalism- hailed, as Angela McRobbie (2009:15) puts it, as 'subjects of capacity' who are rendered responsible not just for their individual lives and success but also for broader social change. Moreover,

consumption and self-transformation are entangled with neoliberalism and are profoundly gendered, with women called on disproportionately to makeover and manage their bodies.

Postfeminism has become a key term that speaks to distinctive gendered features of the current cultural conjuncture. In earlier formulations, postfeminism was defined by its relationship to feminism – its assumed 'pastness' whether that pastness is 'merely noted, mourned or celebrated' (Tasker & Negra 2007: 3). This relationship has long been understood as complicated - involving incorporation, repudiation and commodification. Increasingly, however, postfeminism seems to have 'cut loose' from a particular relationship to feminism – not least because of the resurgence of a 'popular feminism' in the West since 2014 and particularly in the wake of the MeToo movement. There is not space here to discuss this but there are passionate debates about precisely how to characterise the current moment – whether it is one of popular feminism (Banet-Weiser 2018), neoliberal feminism (Rottenberg 2018), gendered neoliberalism (Henderson & Taylor (2019) or postfeminism (see e.g. Gill 2016; 2017; Keller & Ryan 2018; Rottenberg et al 2019). For my purposes here the term is less important than the critical orientation to the sensibility- a sensibility that is structured by individualism and by an absence of structural or institutional accounts of injustice, as well as by a perspective that ignores other axes of power such as those relating to race, class and sexuality. Furthermore whether it is characterised as postfeminism, popular feminism or neoliberal feminism the broad contours of the sensibility are clearly capitalism-friendly rather than critical, and easily assimilable into corporate life.

A number of other relatively stable and patterned features of this sensibility have been identified recurrently across studies and contexts. These stress the significance of the body

in postfeminist culture; the emergence of ‘new femininities’ (Gill and Scharff 2011) that break with earlier significations in important ways; the prominence given to notions of choice, agency, autonomy and empowerment as part of a shift towards entrepreneurial modes of self-hood (Banet-Weiser 2012); the importance of makeover and self-transformation, linked to the psychic life of neoliberalism and postfeminism (Scharff 2016; Gill 2016); the distinctive affective tone of postfeminism, particularly its emphasis upon the upbeat and the positive, with the repudiation of pain, injury, insecurity and anger (Scharff 2016; Kanai 2015; Gill and Orgad 2015) and finally the importance of surveillance of the female body to neoliberal and postfeminist cultures.

One widely noted feature is the prominence accorded to the body in postfeminist culture- less for what it can do than for how it appears, which is figured both as the locus of womanhood and the key site of women’s value – displacing earlier constructions of femininity, which highlighted particular roles or characteristics (such as motherhood or caring). These were of course highly problematic, but today – and no less so - the body takes centre stage. As Alison Winch (2015:21) puts it: ‘In the hypervisible landscape of popular culture the body is recognised as the object of women’s labour: it is her asset, her product, her brand and her gateway to freedom and empowerment in a neoliberal market economy’.

With this shift, the ‘beauty imperative’ has gained ever more traction with arguments that sexual attractiveness is the ultimate measure of a success for a woman – whatever else she is, she must also be beautiful and normatively strive for perfection (McRobbie 2015); Widdows 2018). This is underscored by the radical expansion of appearance surveillance in contemporary culture as we are incited relentlessly to surveil women’s bodies, and trans

and non-binary bodies, with a range of gazes that may be anxious, desiring, envious, appreciative or hostile. This is facilitated by magazine close-ups, arrows, red circles, magnification, highlighted areas: centred on cellulite dimples, visible panty lines, messy brows, and other purported flaws.

In a Deluezian frame, McRobbie (2009) argues that patriarchy has been 're-territorialized' in the fashion-beauty complex, creating unliveable pressures. These produce a particular kind of melancholia and 'illegible rage' expressed through 'postfeminist disorders' that include bulimia, anxiety, depression, drinking and forms of addiction. Here I want to suggest that in this distinctively postfeminist and neoliberal moment, beauty pressures have intensified, extensified and also moved into the realm of subjectivity in new and pernicious ways, facilitated by new technologies and by aggressive consumer capitalism that is colonizing women's bodies. It is to this that I turn next.

No outside? The extensification of beauty pressures

Beauty pressure is extensifying or spreading out in at least three significant ways in contemporary Western culture. First, it can be noted that the requirement to 'look good' is extending to new temporalities or moments in a woman's life that might previously have been considered 'outside' or 'beyond' beauty pressures. It has shifted deeper into childhood, as media, cosmetics and fashion companies have moved in on younger age groups with beauty -focused teen magazines and product ranges. Clarins 2019 slogan is 'Beautiful at every age' and advertising and in-store branding includes the pull quote "In beauty it is never too early and never too late" by the company's founder/director Jaques Courtin-Clarins. Interestingly, a google search for this quote reveals a number of consumer

questions about just when is too early to start using products containing acid peelers and retinol. The other end of life is also comprehensively colonized; indeed, mobilizations of fear and anxiety about aging are the beating heart of the beauty-industrial complex, as shown by Michelle Lazar's (2017) analysis of cosmetics advertising where the fixation on youth correlates with the denigration of aging. Moreover, if at one point, pregnancy represented, for some women, an escape from or relaxation of the demands of beauty (Tyler 2011), this is no longer the case, at least in the West. Analysing the visibility of the maternal in contemporary culture, Shani Orgad and Sara de Benedictis (2015) show how aesthetic labour has become a central feature demanded of the good 'stay-at-home' mother. In fact, getting back to your pre-baby weight is increasingly represented in the media as a far greater achievement than giving birth or parenting, with predictable effects on women such as increased fear and anxiety around weight and appearance (Nash 2014)

A second form of extension of beauty pressure is to be found in the expansion of areas of the body requiring product-service-solutions. 'Upper arm definition' became a major preoccupation in the late 1990s; armpits were a new target in the mid 2000s (see for example Dove's video An Open Letter to the Armpit). These campaigns were closely followed by more focus on the eyebrows, the suggestion of the 'thigh gap' as a new standard of bodily desirability, alongside the invention of new disciplinary constructs such as the 'bikini bridge', the 'underboob' and the 'thigh brow'.

The beauty industry has also increasingly moved 'inside' the body with a range of products- starting with vitamins and mineral tablets and now extending to heavily promoted daily 'drinks' that promote the 'beauty immune system', collagen, and anti-oxidant defences, and

so on. Developments in genetics represent another new focus for cosmetics companies – promised to female consumers as scientific interventions that work with your personalised DNA profile (see for example Geneu.com).

A third trend that represents an extension of beauty and a diminishing of any 'outside' is the dramatic move of beauty treatments out of the salon or clinic and into the home. Facilitated by smartphone apps whose GPS systems make location-based services easy to access and to 'push' via notifications, the home beauty market is an expanding development which makes beauty 'mobile'. Looking at advertising for beauty service portals such as Urban.com and Treatwell.co.uk it is fascinating to see how services are promoted through an emphasis on time-famine (e.g 'you don't have time' for that broken nail/scrappy eyelash extension), professionalism (you need to look right) and – revealingly- for services that can be booked without having to speak to anyone (e.g Treatwell promises ' It's 2019 -you don't have to phone'). What is striking then is not simply how this potentially changes the meaning of a beauty treatment or procedure, quite literally domesticating it, but also how the interpellation precisely assumes the busy, responsible, self-optimising subject that neoliberalism promotes –in this way constituting this neoliberal subjectivity in the moment of hailing.

Forensic beauty: intensification

As well as spreading out and extending over places, times of life, and sites of the body requiring work, the beauty industrial complex is also intensifying dramatically. This is facilitated by a 'surveillant imaginary' that is 'expanding vertiginously' (Andrejevic 2015). More than a decade ago, writing a book about *Gender and the Media* I argued that

‘surveillance of women's bodies … constitutes perhaps the largest type of media content across all genres and media forms’ (Gill, 2007: 255). In the 2020s that is not only still true, but surveillance is operating at ever finer-grained levels, becoming forensic in its gaze. It is striking that microscopes, telescopic gunsights, peep holes, calipers and set squares have become ubiquitous in beauty advertising. Images of cameras and of perfect ‘photo beauty’ or of ‘HD- ready’ skin also proliferate. Most common of all are the motifs of the tape measure (often around the upper thigh) and the magnifying glass, used to scrutinize pores, sun damage or broken capillaries, but – more importantly at a meta-level – underscoring the idea of women’s appearance as under constant (magnified) surveillance.

This surveillance is not only top down or emanating from media or beauty industries. It is also increasingly ‘horizontal’ or ‘peer surveillance’. Alison Winch (2013) coined the term ‘gynaeoptic surveillance’ to talk about the ‘girlfriend gaze’ in which women and girls police each other’s looks and behaviours in a way that is characterised simultaneously by judgment, affection and ‘normative cruelties’ (Ringrose and Renold 2010). This relational surveillance, in person and on social media, requires much further analysis.

Ana Elias (forthcoming) offers an interesting initial study. She notes the forensic self-surveillance young women in her research practised, and dubs it ‘nano-surveillance’ because of the fineness and intensity of the scrutiny involved. Indeed, women’s self-examination could routinely involve careful scrutiny of eyebrows, magnification of pores, as well as submission of selfies to apps that measure and deliver a score of facial symmetry. Elias’s young female participants based in the UK and Portugal also felt themselves subject to constant evaluation from other people, particularly women. One woman vividly

described her feeling that there was a ‘checklist gaze’ enacted by most women she met, which involved a quick but sweeping scrutiny of her entire body checking from her footwear to the top of her head and forming an instant evaluation. It would seem that- partly as a result of the affordances of smartphones and the associated dramatic turn to the visual in contemporary culture – new visual literacies are developing, particularly for the face. I notice that my own ‘ways of seeing’ are quite different from those of my young students – with my own practice of looking at someone being both less intense and more benign. When I hear younger women talking in detail about contouring, brow definition or about different mascara effects – upon only having seen an image of a face for a fraction of a second – my own ‘glance’ is revealed to me as something like a blur, so little information does it offer. It is as if newer visual literacies generate high definition digital pictures, while my own rendered image is a low resolution one, which generates an overall impression but none of the specifity. This is a not related to eyesight but is a cultural effect - one which is quite literally changing the way we look and see.

Brands are clearly involved in both creating and capitalizing on these new sophisticated visual literacies, for example by expanding everyday skin care and make-up sets dramatically. Mac now recommends following eight steps just for coloring the lips! The last few years has also seen beauty brands rapidly moving onto smartphone app platforms to offer beauty tutorials, personalised make-up and hair care solutions (‘your own personal beauty advisor on your phone’), and other services. These sit alongside other beauty apps such as surgery ‘try-out’ apps that offer the opportunity to ‘visualize a whole new you’ after surgical enhancement, teeth whitening, eyebag removal, etc; aesthetic benchmarking apps that give the – algorithmic – answer to questions such as ‘how hot am I?’ or ‘how old do I

look?'; and apps which use the camera functions of smartphones to scan the body for flaws and problems e.g. broken capillaries, sun damage, or the effects of smoking. As we have argued elsewhere (Elias and Gill 2017:157), beauty apps 'increase the extent to which the female body and face are rendered visible as a site of crisis and commodification'. Increasingly they also produce feedback loops in which cosmetics (e.g. foundation, tightening serum) are claimed to (re)produce on actual embodied faces and bodies the filter/surgical effects produced by these apps: 'a definite case of life being forced to imitate art/ifice' (Elias and Gill 2017: 159).

Another way in which we can gauge how beauty pressures are intensifying is by looking at what happens to women who are designated as living outside these norms – whether by choice or not. In a world in which a focus on appearance is so dominant, the costs of non-compliance are amplified. This is felt disproportionately by some more than others – for example, trans rather than cis women, disabled rather than able-bodied women, fat rather than slim women. Breanne Fahs' (2014) work has been powerful in showing how small must be the deviations from 'normative femininity' in order to be read as 'transgressions'. In her research she encouraged her female students not to remove body hair for the duration of the semester in which they studied her course. Her students accounts' of their own feelings and experiences, as well as the reactions of others to their 'hairier' bodies, vividly illustrates the punitive force of ideals of female hairlessness and what she calls 'the regulatory politics of disgust' (Fahs 2017). More broadly, there seems to be some kind of 'inflationary' process going on in which the most minor acts of resistance to expectations of female appearance are heralded as 'radical', and 'revolutionary' acts- perhaps part of the vernacular defiance that characterises popular and celebrity feminism (Gill 2016). In this context the most minor

acts – e.g. going without mascara or having a visible panty line when wearing leggings– get treated as if they are revolutionary gestures that threaten to bring down patriarchal capitalism as we know it. Elsewhere (Elias et al 2017) we have documented some examples of this, showing how celebrities can attract characterisations as 'fierce', 'sassy' and 'badass' just for going without a bra or wearing sneakers rather than heels while out in the city. Clearly, again, this is deeply shaped by factors other than gender: the parameters allowed to different women are shaped by racism, classism, ageism.

The psychic life of neoliberal beauty culture

As well as intensifying and extensifying, beauty culture is also increasingly moving into the domain of the psychological – exhorting women not only to focus on their appearance but also to believe that they're 'worth it' (L'Oreal) and realise that beauty is 'a state of mind' (Dove). The industry's seemingly inexhaustible focus on self-esteem and confidence has become known as 'femvertizing' or 'LYB' (love your body) messaging. The trend has been important for challenging or interrupting the stream of hostile messages about women's bodies, focussed on 'flaws', 'battles', what is 'wrong' and how women could improve themselves. It is also significant in facilitating a more diverse corpus of images of women - in terms of body size and shape, race and ethnicity, age, and disability. More recent campaigns have also featured genderqueer people, and a wider range of images of sexuality and religious diversity – L'Oreal and H&M have both recently used images of women wearing hijab in advertising campaigns in the UK, which is significant in the context of increasing racism, Islamophobia and right wing nationalism.

While this body diversity and body positivity is clearly to be welcomed, there are also numerous reasons to avoid uncritical celebration of femvertizing. These have been discussed extensively elsewhere (Gill & Kanai 2019) but include the 'fakeness' of the LYB visual regime; its decontextualization or hollowing out of diversity in such a way as to negate the force and history of racism or homophobia; its persistent re-citing of body-shaming and hateful discourse e.g. 'fat talk'; its cynical commodification of female empowerment; and the fact that many of the same companies now exhorting us to love our bodies are precisely those most deeply invested in promoting dissatisfaction with our bodies (e.g. Weightwatchers, Special K).

In addition to these critiques, I would highlight the way in which current anti-beauty beauty discourses blame women for their own unhappiness or discontent – suggesting that female body dissatisfaction is women's own fault – women 'do this to themselves' (see Dove's advertisement Patches for a vivid example). Feeling fat, feeling ugly, disliking your own hair or feeling that you don't look right and can't fit in or pass – all these are constructed as women's own individual problems. Women's (sometimes) difficult relationships to their own embodied selves become both dislocated from structural features of patriarchal racial capitalism and shorn of their psychosocial complexity (see also Lynch 2011; Murphy 2013), as if painful feelings can simply be sloughed off with a boost of positive energy or an inspirational slogan.

Above all LYB discourses are implicated in a wider 'confidence cult' which operates as a new 'cultural scaffolding' (Gavey 2005) for the regulation of women suggesting that physical

beauty is no longer enough. Women must also 'upgrade' their subjectivity so that they are confident, happy and positive subjects – no matter how they actually feel.

Rather than representing a loosening of the grip of punishing appearance standards for women, it is an escalation - the additional move of beauty into the arena of subjectivity. This resonates with wider tendencies in neoliberalism which requires subjects who work on their characters and psychic dispositions, and follow appropriate 'neoliberal feeling rules' (Gill & Kanai 2018).

Conclusion: Neoliberal beauty and aesthetic entrepreneurship

In this chapter I have argued that a neoliberal sensibility shapes contemporary beauty culture. I have suggested that the beauty industrial complex has extended and intensified its grip and has also moved deeper into women's psychic lives, calling on women to be smart, responsible, self-optimising subjects who work on their appearance and on their character and dispositions to cultivate a beautiful body and an appealing, positive mental attitude. Of course the way in which these neoliberal injunctions is felt and experienced, and the degree to which they are taken up, varies significantly, and empirical research is needed to explore this. Moreover, the beauty practices with which women engage, while often culturally demanded, are not passively enacted; women are not cultural dupes or automata. On the contrary, I would argue that the distinctive features of neoliberal beauty precisely require a subject who is active, creative and ingenious: she maximises her time, looks for the right deals, uses apps on her smartphone to alter her photos or experiment with a new look, undertakes various anticipatory labours, practices forms of vigilance and aesthetic rest (Dosekun 2016) (e.g. letting nails 'breathe' in between applications of varnish or acrylics, giving hair a rest between

extensions or a weave). She may sometimes watch what she eats and drinks; she may shop for 'ethical' products; she may undertake various forms of psychological practice such as repeating positive affirmations, working on developing 'gratitude' or defending against feelings of shame for not being pretty enough, slim enough, curvy enough. She will not do all these things (and they are clearly unevenly distributed at the level of time and money). And if she undertakes some of these activities then she will not do so all the time. But what is clear is that both significant work and an enterprising mindset are required by contemporary neoliberal beauty culture- we are increasingly called on to be aesthetic entrepreneurs.

The notion of aesthetic entrepreneurship builds from the critical approaches to neoliberalism set out in this chapter, with their focus on neoliberalism as a project designed to remake subjectivity. It also develops from the 'turn to labor' in contemporary sociology and cultural studies which seeks to unpack the multiplicity of forms of laboring that go into any form of work – whether the 'emotional labor' of the flight attendant (Hochschild 1983), the 'creative labor' of the media worker (Hesmondhalgh & Baker 2011) or the 'aesthetic labor' of the barista. Most research on aesthetic labor looks at employment – particularly in the service industries - with an emphasis upon the ways that organisations seek to recruit for and manage 'the way employees feel and look as well as the way they behave' (Grugulis et al 2004: 7) What Elizabeth Wissinger (2015:3) calls 'glamour labor' is especially relevant, as she demonstrates how the models she studied were not just focussed on appearance but also worked on '"cool" quotient – how hooked up, tuned in, and "in the know" one is. Glamour labor involves all aspects of one's image, from physical presentation, to personal connections, to friendships and fun'.

I want to conclude by arguing that 'glamour labor' is not just the labor of models or others in the beauty business, but is increasingly a labor in which we are all expected to participate (whether we do so or not). This is clear in fashion design, in clothes and beauty retail, in many sections of media, music and entertainment, among the growing numbers of people who post pictures of their daily outfit online, in the booming 'industry' of beauty vlogging – and in many other kinds of 'work' (Elias et al 2016). But, more than this, some form of aesthetic labor is increasingly demanded of all women (and increasing numbers of men), as we live in societies that become ever more dominated by new forms of visuality, appearance and looking, and in which more and more of us partake in the endless labor of 'curating a visible self' on and offline (Dobson 2015). The notion of aesthetic entrepreneurship captures the labor and creativity involved in this, tying it back to wider accounts of neoliberalism. Like the neoliberal subject more generally, the aesthetic entrepreneur is called on to be autonomous and self-regulating in the pursuit of beauty, and to manage its demands, risks and injuries as well as to enjoy its pleasures.

Bibliography

Allen, Kim. 2014. 'Blair's Children': Young Women as 'Aspirational Subjects' in the Psychic Landscape of Class. *Sociological Review*, 62(4): 760-779.

Andrejevic, Mark. 2015. Foreword. In R. E. Dubrofsky and S. A. Magnet (eds) *Feminist Surveillance Studies*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. ix-xviii.

Banet-Weiser, Sarah. 2012. *AuthenticTM: The politics of ambivalence in a brand culture*. New York: New York University Press.

Banet-Weiser, S., 2018. *Empowered: Popular feminism and popular misogyny*. Duke University Press.

Banet-Weiser, Sarah., Gill, Rosalind. and Rottenberg, Catherine., 2019. Postfeminism, popular feminism and neoliberal feminism? Sarah Banet-Weiser, Rosalind Gill and Catherine Rottenberg in conversation. *Feminist Theory*, 21(1), pp.3-24.

Bartky, S., 1990. *Femininity and domination: Studies in the phenomenology of oppression*, pp.83-98.

Bordo, S., 1993. *Unbearable weight: feminism, western culture, and the body.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Brown, Wendy. 2015 *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*. New York: Zone Books.

Cash, Thomas F., and Linda Smolak.2011 *Understanding body images: Historical and contemporary perspectives.* New York: Guilford Press.

Dobson, Amy Shields. 2015 *Postfeminist Digital Cultures: Femininity, Social Media, and Self-representation*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Elias, Ana Sofia. forthcoming *Beautiful Body, Confident Soul: Young Women and the Beauty Labour of Neoliberalism*. Unpublished PhD thesis, submitted to King's College London.

Elias, Ana Sofia. and Gill, Rosalind. 2017. Beauty surveillance: The digital self-monitoring cultures of neoliberalism. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 21(1), pp.59-77.

Elias, Ana., Gill, Rosalind. and Scharff, Christina. 2017. Aesthetic labour: Beauty politics in neoliberalism. In *Aesthetic labour* (pp. 3-49). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Fahs, Breanne. 2014 Perilous Patches and Pitstaches: Imagined Versus Lived Experiences of Women's Body Hair Growth. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 38: 167-180.

Fahs, Breanne. 2017. Mapping ‘gross’ bodies: The regulatory politics of disgust. In *Aesthetic Labour* (pp. 83-99). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Gavey, Nicola. 2005. *Just Sex? The Cultural Scaffolding of Rape*. London: Routledge.

Gill, Rosalind. 2007. *Gender and the Media.* Cambridge: Polity.

Gill, Rosalind. 2016. Post-postfeminism? New Feminist Visibilities in Postfeminist Times. *Feminist Media Studies,* 16(4): 610-630.

Gill, Rosalind. 2017. The Affective, Cultural and Psychic Life of Postfeminism. *European Journal of Cultural Studies,* 20(6):606-626.

Gill, Rosalind. and Orgad, Shani. 2015. The Confidence Culture. *Australian Feminist Studies*, 30(86): 324-344.

Gill, Rosalind. and Scharff, Christina. (eds) 2011. *New Femininities: Postfeminism, Neoliberalism and Subjectivity*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gill, Rosalind. and Kanai, Akane. 2018. Mediating neoliberal capitalism: Affect, subjectivity and inequality. *Journal of Communication*, *68*(2), pp.318-326.

Gilroy, Paul. 2013. '... We Got To Get Over Before We Go Under ...' Fragments for a History of Black Vernacular Neoliberalism. *New Formations*, 80-81: 23-38.

Giroux, Henry. A. 2015. *Against the terror of neoliberalism: Politics beyond the age of greed*. Routledge.

Grugulis, Irene. Warhurst, Chris. and Keep, Ewart. 2004. What’s happening to ‘Skill’? In Chris. Warhurst, Irene. Grugulis and Ewart. Keep (eds) *The Skills That Matter*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1-18.

Harvey, David. 2007. *A brief history of neoliberalism*. USA: Oxford University Press.

Henderson, Margaret. and Taylor, Anthea. 2019 *Postfeminism Down Under: The Australian Postfeminist Mystique.* Abingdon/New York: Routledge.

Hesmondhalgh, David. and Baker, Sarah. 2011. *Creative Labour: Media Work in Three Cultural Industries*. Abingdon/New York: Routledge.

Hochschild, Arlie. 1983. *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. Berkeley/London: University of California Press.

Illouz, Eva. 2007. *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity.

Kanai Akane. 2015. WhatShouldWeCallMe? Self-Branding, Individuality and Belonging in Youthful Femininities on Tumblr. *M/C Journal*, 18(1).

Keller, Jessalynn, and Maureen E. Ryan, eds. 2018. *Emergent Feminisms: Complicating a Postfeminist Media Culture*. New York: Routledge.

Lazar, Michelle.M. 2017. ‘Seriously Girly Fun!’: Recontextualising Aesthetic Labour as Fun and Play in Cosmetics Advertising. In *Aesthetic Labour* (pp. 51-66). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Littler, Jo. 2017. *Against Meritocracy*. Abingdon/New York, NY: Routledge.

Lynch, Meghan. 2011. Blogging for Beauty? A Critical Analysis of Operation Beautiful. *Women’s Studies International Forum*, 34(6): 582–92.

McNay, Lois. 2009. Self as Enterprise: Dilemmas of Control and Resistance in Foucault's The Birth of Biopolitics. *Theory, Culture & Society* 26(6): 55-77.

McRobbie, Angela. 2009. *The Aftermath of Feminism*: *Gender, Culture and Social Change.* London: Sage.

McRobbie, Angela. 2015. Notes on the Perfect: Competitive Femininity in Neoliberal Times. *Australian Feminist Studies* 30(83): 3-20.

Mears, Ashley. 2014. Aesthetic Labor for the Sociologies of Work, Gender and Beauty. *Sociology Compass*, 8(12): 1330-1343.

Murphy, Rewa. 2013. *(De)Constructing "Body Love" Discourses in Young Women's Magazines*'. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Victoria: University of Wellington.

Murray, Dara Persis. 2013. Branding 'Real' Social Change in Dove's Campaign for Real Beauty. *Feminist Media Studies,* 13(1): 83-101.

Nash, Meredith. 2014. Picturing Mothers: A Photovoice Study of Body Image in Pregnancy. *Health Sociology Review*, 23(3): 242-253.

O'Neill, Rachel. 2018. *Seduction: Men, masculinity and mediated intimacy*. John Wiley & Sons.

Orgad, Shani. and De Benedictis, Sara. 2015. The 'stay-at-home' mother, postfeminism and neoliberalism: Content analysis of UK news coverage. *European Journal of Communication*, *30*(4), pp.418-436.

Ouellette, Laurie. and Hay, James. 2008. *Better living through reality TV*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Paxton, Susan J. 2014. Evidence, Understanding and Policy: A Perspective from Psychology. Presented to the Body Image Summit, Government Equalities Office, London, Uk. Accessed https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/body-confidence-a-rapid-evidence-assessment-of-the-literature

Ringrose, Jessica. and Renold, Emma. 2010. Normative Cruelties and Gender Deviants: The Performative Effects of Bully Discourses for Girls and Boys in School. *British Educational Research Journal*, *36*(4): 573-596.

Ringrose, Jessica. and Walkerdine, Valerie. 2008. Regulating the Abject: The TV Make-over as Site of Neo-liberal Reinvention Toward Bourgeois Femininity. *Feminist Media Studies,* 8(3): 227-246.

Rottenberg, Catherine. 2018. *The rise of neoliberal feminism*. Oxford University Press.

Scharff, Christina. 2016 The Psychic Life of Neoliberalism: Mapping the Contours of

Entrepreneurial Subjectivity. *Theory, Culture & Society* 0(0) 1–16

Tasker, Yvonne. and Negra, Diane. (eds) 2007. *Interrogating Postfeminism: Gender and the Politics of Popular Culture*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Tyler, Imogen. 2011. Pregnant Beauty: Maternal Femininities under Neoliberalism. In Rosalind. Gill and Christina. Scharff (eds) *New Femininities: Postfeminism, Neoliberalism and Subjectivity*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 21-36.

Widdows, Heather. 2018. *Perfect me: Beauty as an ethical ideal*. Princeton University Press.

Winch, Alison. 2013. *Girlfriends and Postfeminist Sisterhood*. Basingstoke: Palgrave

Macmillan.

Winch, Alison. 2015. Brand Intimacy, Female Friendship and Digital Surveillance Networks.

New Formations, 84: 228-245.

Wissinger, Elizabeth. 2015. *This Year's Model: Fashion, Media, and the Making of Glamour*. New York: NYU Press.

Bio

Rosalind Gill is Professor of Social and Cultural Analysis at City, University of London, and a Professorial Fellow at the University of Newcastle, New South Wales. She is author or editor of more than 10 books concerned with media, culture, new technologies and labour. Her recent books include *Aesthetic Labour: Beauty Politics in Neoliberalism* (with Ana Elias and Christina Scharff, Palgrave, 2017) *Mediated Intimacy: Sex Advice in Media Culture* (Polity, 2018), and she is currently completing a monograph for Duke University Press that looks critically at 'confidence'. Her work is animated by questions about power and social justice and the relationship between culture and subjectivity. In 2020 she will be visiting EHESS in Paris to develop her work on the psychic life of neoliberal capitalism – discussing ideas about the commodification of emotions, the selling of rebellion, and the psychological turn in neoliberalism.

Abstract

This chapter looks critically at the way that neoliberalism is shaping trends in beauty. It argues that beauty pressures are intensifying, extending over new times, places and sites of the body, and also moving ‘inside’ in the form of injunctions to be confident, resilient and to fashion a positive mental attitude. Although there are seeming counter-trends that include a diversification of notions of beauty, the chapter argues that the injunction to be beautiful is tightening rather than loosening its grip. The chapter is located theoretically in discussions of neoliberalism and postfeminism, and it also introduces the notion of ‘aesthetic entrepreneurship’ (Elias et al 2016)