Surveillance is a feminist issue

Chapter submitted to the Handbook of Contemporary Feminism edited by Andrea Lee Press and Tasha Ouren

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We are living in a moment of unprecedented surveillance: surveillance by the state, by corporations, by media, and by technology companies, the latter amassing an almost unimaginable amount of information about us from our 'data trails'. However, we are not only being watched, we also monitor ourselves and others, as a 'surveillant imaginary' (Andrejevic, 2015) takes hold in contemporary culture. Most work on surveillance studies focuses on men, both as objects and actors – we need to think only of the anti-heroes Julian Assange (‘wikileaks’) and Edward Snowden (NSA), celebrated for their role in 'leaking' information in the public interest. Moreover, in academia, surveillance studies remains an especially male dominated field within sociology, political science and digital cultural studies.

In this chapter I will argue that surveillance is a feminist issue. I will contribute to the emerging field of feminist surveillance studies (Dubrofsky & Magnet, 2015), and I will further highlight research within feminist media studies that may contribute to this field, but is not necessarily recognised as surveillance studies. This includes work on the male gaze and the politics of looking, female friendship, social media use and the quantified self. In addition my aims in this chapter are as follows: first, to move beyond top-down theorisations of surveillance in order to open up questions about peer surveillance and self surveillance; secondly, to build a conceptual architecture to show the connections between postfeminist culture and surveillance; and thirdly to explore the links between neoliberalism and new practices of looking, which Mark Hayward (2013) dubs a 'neoliberal optics'. Overall, I will argue that digital and media

cultures and postfeminist modalities of subjecthood are coming together to produce a novel and extraordinarily powerful regulatory gaze on women.

The chapter is divided into two broad parts. In part one I will offer a brief introduction to the study of surveillance, including emerging work in feminist surveillance studies, and will then introduce contemporary understandings of neoliberalism and postfeminism. The second part of the paper will look in detail at surveillance as a feminist issue. It will begin by outlining relatively conventional accounts of media surveillance of women (e.g. in advertising and celebrity culture). It will then turn to the participatory culture of postfeminism to examine peer surveillance, drawing on Alison Winch's (2015) work on the shift from a panopticon to a gynaeopticon. Finally I will approach the diverse range of practices that might be characterised as self surveillance including the growing significance of self tracking technologies, photographic filters and beauty apps. The chapter concludes by asking whether we are seeing the emergence of a distinctively postfeminist and neoliberal gaze.

Surveillance studies

Surveillance studies has grown dramatically in recent years as an academic area of expertise – as well as a public topic of interest. David Lyons (2001:2) has proposed a widely accepted definition of surveillance which regards it as 'any collection and processing of personal data, whether identifiable or not, for the purposes of influencing or managing those whose data have been garnered'. Not surprisingly, the

bulk of research focuses on the surveillance practices of the state, the military, the immigration apparatus and – more recently – corporate surveillance by companies like Google or Facebook. A growing interest in biometric surveillance is centred mostly on compelled forms of surveillance, showing how it works to 'dismantle or disaggregate the coherent body bit by bit' (Ericson & Hagerty, 2006) so that a whole person becomes fragmented into a composite of datasets. As Lisa Nakamura (2015) has argued, these practices also remake the body 'classifying somebody's as normative legal, and some as illegal and out of bounds'.

Nakamura's work is part of an emergent field of feminist surveillance studies. As yet relatively new, it represents a much-needed challenge to mainstream surveillance studies which has not 'placed a difference, gender and sexuality at the forefront of their enquiries' (Walby & Anais, 2015). In their important intervention into the field Rachel Dubrofsky & Shoshana Amielle Magnet (2015) set out the commitment of feminist surveillance studies to critical projects that are intersectional, interventionist and activist in their orientation – drawing as much from queer theory and critical race studies as from gender studies. To date, this work has largely focused on top-down forms of surveillance as they intersect with and constitute gendered, racist and classed systems of colonialism, exclusion, wars on terror, drugs, etc. Airport scanners, reproductive technologies, the surveillance of sex workers and their clients, and even birth certificates have been examined – demonstrating how these practices authorised some bodies and not others, criminalising and marginalising people through seemingly neutral apparatuses – that are revealed as anything but. 'There is no form of surveillance that is innocent' as Nakamura (2015) says. My argument here is that media and cultural studies has much to contribute to this body of work.

One area of scholarship which has particular relevance to this project is the growing interest in self-tracking and self-monitoring (Nafus & Sherman, 2014; Lupton, 2014 a; Rettberg, 2014) which has been understood as giving rise to a 'quantified self' – a reflexively monitoring self who uses the affordances of digital technologies to collect, monitor, record - and potentially share - a range of information about her or himself. This is in part facilitated by the potentialities of mobile phones which now include as standard (i.e. in their factory settings) a variety of applications that allow users to self monitor a range of aspects of their lives: e.g. to count their steps, record their weight, monitor their calorific intake, measure and evaluate their sleep. Increasing numbers of people now routinely 'track' several aspects of their everyday lives via their phones, and applications are proliferating at an extraordinary rate with multiplying health apps (blood pressure, glucose levels, medication records, etc), psycho apps (mood, relaxation, meditation, confidence), apps related to pregnancy (which now outnumber those available for any other health related topic), apps to monitor work and productivity, apps to get organised, apps to monitor finance, and even those to track one's sex life.

Taken together these apps massively augment the possibilities for digital self-monitoring, reinforcing the rationality of relentless self scrutiny which is a feature of postfeminist and neoliberal culture. Lupton's (2014b) conceptualisation foregrounds links between the quantified self and neoliberalism: 'the very act of self tracking, or positioning oneself as a self tracker, is already a performance of a certain type of subject: the entrepreneurial, self optimising subject'. They fit perfectly with a neoliberal society concerned to replace' critique with technique, judgment with measurement' (Davies, 2014:16) in such a way to efface power and displace it onto

seemingly neutral or impersonal systems or algorithms that can govern 'at a distance' (Latour, 1987). Governing thus becomes recast as a technical rather than political activity – one in which both 'big data' and micro-measurement increasingly play a part (Ajana, 2013)- and is entangled, with questions about ownership, privacy, 'dataveillance' and so on.

Postfeminism and neoliberalism

The surveillance of women must be understood in relation to the profound grip of postfeminism and neoliberalism in contemporary culture. According to many scholars (Gill, 2007; McRobbie, 2009; Gill & Scharff, 2011; Henderson & Taylor, in press) there are strong links between neoliberal values and the postfeminist sensibility circulating in contemporary culture- to the extent to which postfeminism might be considered as the gendered version of neoliberalism (Gill, in press). Neoliberalism has been broadly understood as a political and economic rationality characterized by privatization, a 'rolling back' and withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provision, alongside an emphasis 'that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong property rights, free markets and free trade' (Harvey, 2005: 2). In neoliberal societies the enterprise form is extended to 'all forms of conduct' (Burchell,1993: 275) and 'interpellates individuals as entrepreneurial actors in every sphere of life' (Brown 2005:42). Individuals are constituted as self-managing, autonomous and 'responsibilised'.

Extending critical writing on neoliberalism, feminist scholars have compellingly demonstrated its gendered politics. Both postfeminism and neoliberalism are structured by a grammar of individualism that has almost entirely replaced notions of the social or political, or any idea of individuals as subject to pressures, constraints or even influence from the outside. Used as a critical term postfeminism reflects upon how popular culture both takes feminism into account yet also repudiates it McRobbie, 2009). Angela McRobbie (2009) suggests that this 'double entanglement' facilitates both a doing and an undoing of feminism in which young women are offered particular kinds of freedom, empowerment and choice 'in exchange for' or 'as a kind of substitute for' feminist politics and transformation. McRobbie's work brings to the fore the importance of feminism in understanding the postfeminist moment – a point also emphasized by Yvonne Tasker and Diane Negra (2007:3) who argue that postfeminism has to do with the 'pastness' of feminism 'whether that pastness is merely noted, mourned or celebrated'.

A specific theorization of postfeminism as a sensibility has become very significant in the last decade. The idea of a postfeminist sensibility is designed to highlight a number of key points. First postfeminism used in this way refers to an object of study rather than a perspective, historical period or a backlash as in other formulations (see Gill 2007b, Gill, 2016). That is, rather than being a postfeminist I identify myself as an analyst of postfeminist culture interested in critically interrogating the ideas and discourses that comprise the common sense about gender in contemporary culture. Secondly the term highlights the sense of the patterned nature of social life and the necessity of capturing the empirical regularities in contemporary discourses and representations of gender. 'Sensibility' was chosen rather than other alternative

lexical options such as ‘ideology’ or ‘regime’ in order to retain a fluidity, a sense of postfeminism as a cultural but also an affective and psychological phenomenon (see below and Gill, in press for longer discussion). A third key feature of this perspective is its empirical value- its usability in studies of contemporary culture.

Unpacking the postfeminist sensibility

A number of relatively stable 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’ 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 what we might understand as the ‘psychic life of neoliberalism and postfeminism (Scharff, 2015; 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& Orgad, in press) and finally the importance of surveillance to neoliberal and postfeminist cultures. We explore these in turn.

First there is the pre-eminent emphasis upon the body as both the locus of womanhood, and the key site of women’s value. Earlier constructions of femininity in western culture highlighted other features – many of them problematic e.g. women’s

role as mothers, or as bearers of certain psychological characteristics such as compassion, or as occupiers of particular roles such as caring – but today the body is to the fore. As Alison Winch (2015) has put it 'managing the body is…the means by which women acquire and display their cultural capital'. Whilst the body has been argued to be a 'project' for everyone in late modernity (Featherstone, 1999), for women the requirement to work on and perfect the body has reached such an intensity that it has been suggested that patriarchy has 'reterritorialised' – albeit in obfuscated form - in the fashion and beauty complex (McRobbie, 2009). A key aspect of this is that such aesthetic labour must be regarded as freely chosen rather than culturally demanded – with the implication that in undertaking body and beauty practices women are simply 'pleasing themselves' rather than being subject to external pressures. Linked to this the idea of makeover and self-transformation has become prominent in postfeminist culture.

More broadly postfeminism is implicated in the emergence of a set of distinctive 'new femininities' (Gill & Scharff, 2011), as constructions of gender identity undergo a shift. One example of this tendency is the change in the way that women's sexuality is represented. Scholars of media noted that representations of women in the 1970s and early 1980s largely centred around depicting women as weak, passive objects of a male gaze. They were often presented as unintelligent and as preoccupied with a narrow range of gender-stereotyped interests (refs). In the sphere of intimacy, constructions often highlighted women's insecurity, lack of knowledge, and desire to be liked/loved. When represented sexually tropes of objectification dominated- as in the classic adverts in which women were shown draped over cars, etc. In postfeminist media culture a striking shift is the break with 'traditional' forms of passive

objectification, substituted by the construction of women as active, desiring sexual subjects. It may be that this is simply objectification in a new form (Gill, 2003) but nevertheless the shift is a significant one (see Barker et al, in press)

Such 'entrepreneurialsim' is not limited to 'sexiness' or to work to add value to or capitalise the body. In fact these examples are instances of a much wider trend towards entrepreneurial self-hood that is intimately related to neoliberalism. This is marked by injunctions to work on, discipline, improve and maximize the self. As such women are hailed as active, bold, confident subjects who are empowered to write the stories of their own lives, who are, to put in another way, architects of their own destinies. In cultures marked by a postfeminist sensibility, notions of choice and agency are prominent and invoked repeatedly. One of the most profound consequences of this is the implication that women are no longer constrained by any inequalities or power relations that might hold them back: their lives are the outcome of their own choices. As such, languages for talking about structures and culture have been eviscerated. Any remaining power differences between women and men are understood as being self-chosen, not as the outcome of cultural forces or unfair structures, and inequalities have become increasingly 'unspeakable' (Gill, 2014) both because they challenge the neoliberal hegemony and because of widespread 'gender fatigue' (Kelan, 2009) – although this is currently challenged by the rise of popular feminism (but see Gill, 2016 on post-postfeminism)

Further it is clear that postfeminism has a 'psychic life' similar to that of neoliberalism (Scharff, 2015; Brown, 2015). This draws our attention to the fact that

the sensibility is not simply manifest in cultural products such as films or magazines, but also acts to shape subjectivities. One aspect of this can be seen in the new significance accorded to notions of character and attitude in postfeminist culture (Allen & Bull, 2016). 'Resilience', 'happiness', 'grit' and 'confidence' are amongst the characteristics celebrated in postfeminist cultures – matching perfectly neoliberal capitalism's emphasis upon individualism and the need for subjects who embrace risk, take responsibility for themselves, and have the all-important quality of 'bouncebackability' for when things go badly (Forkert,2014; Neocleus, 2013) In research on contemporary imperatives to confidence (Banet-Weiser, 2015); Favaro, in press; Gill& Orgad, 2015) the peculiarly gendered aspects of this can be seen clearly, as 'low self-esteem' among girls and women becomes invoked as the cause of women's problems, with individual programmes and strategies to develop confidence being heralded as the solutions. The solution becomes: work on your confidence, don't change the world. A confidence trick indeed!

Finally, the postfeminist sensibility is also marked by a distinctive affective or tonal quality. Writing in 2009, Angela McRobbie discussed what she saw as a postfeminist 'melancholia' in contemporary culture as gender distress in the form of eating disorders, self-harm and certain forms of addiction 'came to be established as predictable, treatable, things to be managed medically rather than subjected to sustained social scrutiny' (2009: 112). Importantly, McRobbie highlights the normalization of female distress against the backdrop of repeated injunctions to girls and women to recognise themselves as powerful, successful, as winners in the new gender order – what Anita Harris (2014) calls 'can do girls'. Without any language (e.g. feminism) to understand their experiences of pain, suffering or failure as

structurally produced, she argues, a range of 'postfeminist disorders' became vehicles for expressing young women's 'illegible rage', effectively materialising agony that was 'unspeakable' in political terms. However, alongside the outward expression of pain and distress as individual pathologies, it can also be argued that postfeminism is marked by other affects: defiance and 'performative shamelessness' (Dobson, 2015), 'warmly-couched hostility' (Elias & Gill, 2016) and languages of self-actualization and inspiration (Gill & Orgad, in press; Henderson & Taylor, in press) – seen in everything from self-help, to popular memes, to greetings cards that instruct to 'live, love, laugh' or 'dance like nobody is watching'. The 'feeling rules' (Hochschild, 1979) of postfeminism call forth a subject who is fun, resilient, positive and relentlessly upbeat- such that particular affective states and ways of being are to be disavowed and repudiated – especially anger, which in turn has become associated with the 'feminist killjoy' (Ahmed, 2010).

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Another key feature of postfeminist culture is surveillance. This will be my focus in the remainder of the chapter. Within media, cultural and gender studies more broadly surveillance of women's bodies and of their appearance are long-established topics of concern – though they may not previously have been apprehended through the explicit use of the term surveillance. Nevertheless, ideas such as 'practices of looking' (Betterton, 1987), 'ways of seeing' (Berger, 1972), the male gaze (Mulvey, 1975) and the female gaze (Gamman & Marshment, 1989; spectacular girls (Projansky, 2014) and ways of appearing (Conor, 2004) offer -amongst many other terms - compelling

and important bodies of work on the way women become subject to particular kinds of observation and scrutiny in popular culture. Research on beauty practices and body image represents another large sub-field of research which draws on feminist-Foucaultian approaches to argue that women's appearance is subject to profound discipline and regulation – even when beauty practices are seemingly freely chosen. As Sandra Lee Bartky (1990) has argued, women are 'not marched off to electrolysis at gunpoint' and nor are they passive in the extraordinary ingenuity they display in beauty rituals, yet 'in so far as the disciplinary practices of femininity produced a "subjected and practiced", an inferiorized, body, they must be understood as aspects of far larger discipline, an oppressive and inegalitarian system of sexual subordination'.

This chapter contributes to an understanding of surveillance as intensifying, extensifying and moving into the realm of subjectivity or psychic life. It highlights the potentially injurious force of surveillance and its proliferating spheres, techniques and practices. We begin with a relatively familiar site of surveillant practices: the media.

Media and surveillance

More than a decade ago, in my book Gender and Media (Gill, 2007), I argued that 'surveillance of women's bodies … constitutes perhaps the largest type of media content across all genres and media forms' (2007b:149) – a trend that has been increasing exponentially. It is impossible to understand the heightened surveillance of

women's appearance in contemporary culture without reference to celebrity culture with its circulating news articles, magazines, gossip sites and social media. In tandem with new photographic technologies it has helped to inaugurate a moment of 360 degree surveillance. Being 'in the public eye' now also has an amplified meaning as camera phones can be used to record and upload images and video within seconds, giving rise to hitherto unknown phenomena such as the ability to precisely locate the whereabouts of a celebrity from images uploaded to Twitter or Instagram. The dissemination and uptake of practices previously associated with the paparazzi such as 'the upskirt' shot has generated discussion (Schwartz 2008), as has the use of other covert filming techniques – frequently designed for the objectification of women (e.g. the scandal over the filming, then distribution, of images of women eating whilst on train journeys). This represents the domestication and mainstreaming of photographic practices once associated with professional media in a way that must be understood as part of the wider force of convergence culture, participatory media and the breakdown of stable distinctions between producers and consumers. As Amielle Shoshana Magnet (ref) has argued, the pleasures of this kind of gaze need to be theorized; it represents perhaps a scopophilic surveillance. The costs of this also require urgent attention. As I argue below, it constitutes what Mark Andrejevic (2015) dubs the 'vertiginous growth' of the 'surveillant imaginary', and, importantly the dispersal of this imaginary as a way of being in and apprehending the world.

Familiar and everyday forms of intensified surveilling of women's bodies are to be found in the gossip and celebrity magazines and websites whose content is dominated by forensic dissection of the cellulite, fat, blocked pores, undepilated hairs, wrinkles,

blotches, contouring, and hairstyle/sartorial/cosmetic surgery (mis)adventures of women in the public eye. I hope that at some future point in history people will look back upon the preoccupations of this period with horror and incredulity. The sheer volume and intensity of this nano-surveillance (Elias, 2016) of female celebrity bodies represents in my mind a kind of madness and malaise at a cultural level. Red circles or other textual devices highlight close-ups of each and every 'failing' bodily part in a context in which no aesthetic misdemeanor is too trivial to be microscopically 'picked over and picked apart by paparazzi photographers and writers.' (Gill, 2007b: 149).

It is striking to note the extent to which the surveillant gaze is becoming more and more intense – operating at ever finer-grained levels and with a proliferating range of lenses that do not necessarily regard the outer membrane of the body – the skin – as their boundary. This intensified and increasingly forensic surveillance is seen repeatedly in contemporary advertising and beauty culture – with the recurrent emphasis upon microscopes, telescopic gunsights, peep holes, alarm clocks, calipers and set squares. 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) – an image that is becoming almost ubiquitous in beauty salons - and the magnifying glass, used to scrutinize pores or to highlight blemish-free skin, but – more importantly at a meta-level – underscoring the idea of the female face and body as under constant (magnified) surveillance.

One case in point is Benefit's POREfection campaign (2015) which constructs facial beautification through an analogy with espionage rendering women as 'spygals' (at a

beauty counter near you). Likewise Estee Lauder's (2015) campaign for 'little black primer' invites us to 'spy' women's made-up eyes through a peephole. Perfumier Douglas also deploys the magnifying glass trope, repeatedly encouraging the audience for their brand messages to forensically analyze what is wrong with a face (our own or others') and how it can be improved (e.g. is it too 'wide', 'thin', 'round', 'square', is the nose too 'broad' or 'long'?). These are just a few examples attesting to the way in which an ever refined (and punitive) visual literacy of the female face is being normalized, and has intensified with the prevalence of high definition digital photographic technologies.

As well of the ubiquity of media surveillance of the female body, its extensiveness across media sites, and its intensification to ever finer grained micro-surveillance, it is also worth mentioning the way in which it is entangled with hostility towards women in general and feminists in particular. We need only think of the excoriating attacks on Hillary Clinton's body and fashion sense by the right wing media, or of the way in which women who speak out about gender inequality can be subjected to the most vicious micro-surveillance and commentary on their appearance. Indeed one of the oldest and most well-established patterns of media representation of women is the move which disentitles someone from speaking on the grounds that she is ugly. Body shaming is a political tactic (Grisard, 2016). In postfeminist media culture this is given a new twist such that perceived attractiveness can also be grounds for attack. Furthermore, women who speak publicly – but particularly those who speak as feminists – can also find themselves being threatened or punished by 'exposure' of various kinds. An example is actress Emma Watson who was viciously trolled for publicly stating her support for the feminist He for She campaign, with the threat that

if she did not ‘shut up’ her private photographs would be published. What all these tendencies have in common is the way in which they connect scrutiny of women’s appearance with the right to speak. It is clear that hostile surveillance of women’s bodies in this way is intimately connected to their silencing. There is an important and growing body of research on hate speech, ‘e-bile’ and popular misogyny (Jane,2014; Banet-Weiser & Miltner, 2016), but as yet the ways in which its dynamics are implicated in surveillance of women has not been extensively explored.

Horizontal and peer surveillance

The topic of trolling brings us to the second mode of surveillance I want to discuss: horizontal surveillance. This is surveillance that operates laterally across society rather than in a top-down way. It is surveillance by peers rather than surveillance from above by the state, the military, employers, etc. The rapid proliferation of social media and Web 2.0 technologies have brought horizontal surveillance to attention, but arguably it existed as a phenomenon long before the internet, seen in practices of community social control, for example, or in the way that young women ‘police’ each other’s looks and behaviours – operating through what Alison Winch (2013) has called a ‘girlfriend gaze’.

Winch’s work has been important in theorizing different modalities of surveillance, tracking a shift from a panoptic to a gynaeoptic mode. The Panopticon was Jeremy Bentham’s design for a prison in which a watch-tower in the middle facilitated the possibility of the prisoners, in cells arranged around the outside, being under

surveillance all the time. Those doing the surveillance could watch without themselves being seen, whilst inmates had to assume that they were observable at all times, even if this was not in fact the case. Michel Foucault used the panopticon as a metaphor to understand how subjects internalize disciplinary power. It captures vividly the notion of a surveillance society.

This version of surveillance was challenged by Thomas Matthieson who argued that in societies dominated by media, rather than the many being under surveillance by the few, there is a reversal in which the few are watched by the many. He calls this idea the synopticon. It resonates with contemporary media culture and celebrity in which the 'masses' follow an elite of models, actors and musicians.

However, Alison Winch has argued that neither the panopticon nor the synopticon fully capture the nature of contemporary surveillance:

> 'The fragmentation of media audiences into niche markets and evolution of a web 2.0 world where women coproduce and participate in brand spreading, means that the image of the synopticon and panopticon needs development. In digital culture, the panopticon, the synopticon and the paradigms of the many watching the many women, work in harmony. The internalised gaze is honed, perfected and given the opportunity to indulge through synoptic practices such as celebrity scrutiny. This is then devolved among gendered networks through which women can relate and express intimacy. In the gynaeopticon they all turn their eyes on each other in tightly bound networks where they gaze and gazed upon.' (ms p.5)

Building on Winch's important intervention, I would argue that contemporary culture teachers practices of micro scrutiny and assessment – whether they are directed from 'ordinary people' to celebrities or whether they are implicated in our looks between ourselves – Winch's (2013) 'girlfriend gaze' or what we have called 'peer surveillance' (Ringrose et al 2012). Research by Ana Elias supports this notion of a homosocial gaze, characterised simultaneously by affection and by 'normative cruelties' (Ringrose and Renold, 2010), and 'warmly couched hostility' (Elias & Gill, 2016). Young women in Elias's study in the UK and Portugal felt themselves to be subject to almost ubiquitous surveillance. Simon talked about feeling that on the (London) underground 'everyone is scanning you, like everyone is measuring you, taking my measures.'. This experience offered few safe spaces – not even the changing rooms at the gym or pool. One woman described feeling that even in the most cursory 'glance' she was being 'x-rayed'. Another vividly expressed her experience of being subject to a 'checklist' gaze – in which other women would sweep up and down her body 'checking out' different features of her appearance:

> Adriana: "I experience it on a daily basis, I mean… If I happen to be at any given place and even with people that know me well… I realise that they look at you very often from head to toe in order to grasp how you look and if there is anything different in the way you look, kind of 'ok, hold on, let me check you out!' I understand that it is not malicious, most of the time… but… it feels almost like a checklist kind of 'ok you are approved, move ahead'… (makes gesture as if on production line for robots) (quoted in Elias, 2016)

Such modes of apprehending one another as women also relate to what Terri Senft has called 'the grab' as a characteristic form of attention in social media. In this

postfeminist economy of visibility men are frequently imagined as bearers of a more benign gaze, with women the ones who both appreciate and attack other women in a form of intimate homosocial policing (envy, appreciation). Heterosexual men, by contrast, are often depicted only as 'admirers' of women, presented as 'grateful' when any woman shows them attention or is sexually interested in them – a motif that runs throughout magazine sex advice (Gill, 2009; Barker et al, 2017). However, Rachel O'Neill's (in press) work on pick-up culture challenges this view, showing vividly how men's looks at women can be hostile, evaluative and vicious. Likewise Laura Thompson's (in press) work on heterosexual dating sites compellingly demonstrates how a common response among men to a rebuff -however gentle or polite e.g. 'Thanks but I'm seeing someone else now' – can provoke vitriolic abuse that is almost always centred on the woman's appearance – e.g. 'I didn't like you anyway you fat bitch'. So common have these forms of abuse become that dedicated sites exist for women to post their experiences (Tinder Nightmares, Bye Felipe). 'Selfie-hatred' sites are another arena which provide a vehicle for men to attack women's ugliness and narcisissism (Burns, 2015), part of a wider 'networked misogyny' (Banet-Weiser & Miltner, 2016). These forms of horizontal surveillance, then, are not only 'gynaeoptic' (among women) but circulate across gender lines, but with women as their primary object.

Self-surveillance

The final modality of surveillance I want to consider is self-surveillance, which sits alongside media surveillance and horizontal surveillance. In a moment in which

practices of looking are so central to postfeminist culture, it would be surprising if this hadn't extended to the self. And indeed it has! Again it seems to play out in profoundly assymetrical ways, with women exhorted to relentless self-scrutiny and self-improvement, incited to see and apprehend themselves through what Susan Bordo called a 'pedagogy of defect', which operates at ever finer levels. This is seen clearly in the extraordinarily rapid development of smartphone apps. Whilst many self-tracking and self-monitoring apps – for example those concerned with exercise, sleep, time-management or various health indicators (blood pressure, blood sugar, heart rate) are targeted and used across genders, a growing number of genres of apps focus pre-eminently upon women. These include 'psycho-technology apps' (for example around developing mindfulness, positive thinking, happiness and confidence/self-esteem); dieting apps which inform, evaluate and track food intake; the enormous range of applications marketed to women around menstruation, conception, pregnancy and parenting; and proliferating 'beauty apps' – of which there are tens of thousands already. I consider these briefly here as one example of how the surveillant imaginary extends to the self.

Earlier I highlighted the proliferation of images of magnifying glasses, tape measures and HD imaging technologies as tropes in cosmetics advertising. A quantified/biometric rationality increasingly runs through contemporary beauty culture. This could be seen as a metricization of the postfeminist gaze, which subjects the female body to increasingly 'scientific' and quantified forms of surveillance and judgment, which – as we have argued elsewhere (Elias & Gill,2016) – now extends to trichological, glandular, dermatological, vascular, and genetic aesthetics- no longer even seeing the skin as a meaningful boundary. This is further underscored with the

development of beauty pharmacology – e.g tablets to promote healthy skin and nails, drinks to build collagen – as well as the contemporary force of the 'clean eating' movement with its ideas of being 'beautiful on the inside' (too). The apps that we consider below are usually free of charge or under a dollar and push the postfeminist surveillant beauty culture even further in this direction, with a focus on scanning and surveilling the self in ever more minute fashion.

It is possible to identify several distinct genres of self-surveilling beauty app. First and most ubiquitous are 'filters' and 'selfie-modification' apps which promise to edit and enhance photos ready for posting. Amy Slater from the Centre for Appearance Research in Bristol found in her research in seven European countries that 43% of young women routinely used filters and 74% agreed with the statement that 'I would never publish a photo that I don't look my best in'. The use of filters on selfies has become so commonplace that a filter was built into the reverse photo function of the new generation of Samsung Galaxy phones in 2016, **automatically** enhancing selfies in a set number of highly predictable and formulaic ways.

The app versions of filters promise to help you more closely resemble ideals of normative femininity with capacities to lose weight, contour the face, 'swipe to erase blemishes, whiten teeth, brighten dark circles and even reshape your facial structure' (Face Tune). They encode troubling racialized sub-texts too, with popular features including eyelid reshaping, nose remodelling or skin lightening in increasingly transnational circuits of beauty. As Ana Elias and I have argued elsewhere, selfie-modification 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 reproduce on actual embodied faces the filter effects produced by these apps: a definite case of life being forced to imitate art/ifice. As with other types of beauty app they further intensify visual literacies of the face, feeding into the extent to which more and more products and practices become normatively demanded. Mac now has an 8-step routine for colouring the lips alone!

Pedagogic apps offer instructions and tutelage in techniques to enhance appearance, delivering it in the form of professional help from 'your personal beauty advisor' on your phone. Whilst there is much generic tutoring, similar to magazine's tips on 'how to perfect smoky eyes' etc, what is striking is the extent to which camera phones have facilitated customizable 'help'. For example many apps allow you to upload a photo so that they can advise on what colours look good, what hairstyle would suit, what foundation match is ideal, what your ideal brow arch would look like – and then on how to achieve and perfect the recommended looks. 'Try-out' apps take this several steps further – allowing you to enact a 'virtual makeover' of your face or body. 'Do you sometimes wonder how you would look with whiter teeth and a brighter smile'? one app asks – and instantly shows you the madeover 'you'. Plastic surgery simulator lite and many other apps ask people 'how would you look with a different nose, chin, breasts or buttocks, or with less weight?' Facetouchup promises 'we bring you the same digital imaging technology that surgeons use'. Horizontal links to the plastic surgery industry are well-established and increasingly these apps form a digital shop window for women considering cosmetic procedures – complete with GPS-location based 'push notifications' with 'reviews, special offers, etc.

A different type of beauty app takes self-surveillance to a whole new level by using the camera function of smartphones to scan the face or body for actual or potential damage: broken veins, sun damage, moles, etc. These 'problems' may not be visible to the naked eye but can be predicted using apps such as UMSkinCheck or Smoking Time Machine, allowing users to engage in anticipatory labour to forestall or mitigate these risks. Whilst some of these detect serious health conditions (e.g. indications of skin cancer), the vast majority are about aesthetic self-surveillance: no one dies of tiny broken capillaries or of cellulite on the upper arms!

Finally an enormous number of apps promise 'aesthetic benchmarking'. 'Do you ever wonder if you are ugly and your friends just don't tell you? Ugly Meter, Face Meter, Golden Beauty meter and many other apps will offer you their (algorithmic) answers to these questions. You can also check out How Old Do I Look? How Hot Am I? and determine your degree of facial symmetry or how closely you resemble the golden ratio. In giving their feedback there are no holds barred: 'you're so ugly you could win a contest', along with products, labour or cosmetic procedures that might help: eye bag removal, laser hair therapy, etc. Quite aside from the particularities of each of these popular apps, what they do collectively, in my view, is quite extraordinarily to intensify the surveillant gaze, inciting girls and women to self-surveill, to scan, to monitor, to submit to judgment, to consider themselves, above all, as flawed, defective and in need of forensic self-scrutiny and relentless aesthetic labour (Elias et al, in press).

Conclusion: Postfeminist looking and neoliberal optics

Forty years ago the way that art, film and television 'looked at' and portrayed women was subject to animated discussion. John Berger (1972) wrote that women in art were continually presented as objects: 'men look and women appear' he argued; 'men look at women and women watch themselves being looked at'. Laura Mulvey (1975) discussed the cinematic gaze arguing that men were 'bearers of the look' and women defined by their 'to be looked-at-ness'. Decades of discussion in feminist studies, queer theory and black and anti-racist scholarship challenged this 'monolithic' position with its tendency to deny female agency, to elevate gender above all other differences (e.g class, race, age), to remain trapped in a heteronormative framing, and to 'read off' meanings from studies of texts rather than examining the viewing practices of actual embodied viewers and audiences(refs).

Almost half a century on, what is clear is that these issues are not resolved, but, more than this, that we urgently require a revitalization of the debates about ways of seeing, looking, gazing - at ourselves, at each other and at those people elevated to hypervisibility in contemporary culture, whether our entertainment celebrities or our politicians. What I have sought to do in this chapter is to argue that surveillance is a feminist issue, and one to which media, film and cultural studies scholars have much to contribute. It is of course not just an issue of gender, as surveillance plays out unevenly both within and across genders: trans rather than cis gendered people, disabled rather than able bodied people are far more subject to surveillance, which is also marked in classed and racialized ways.

In this chapter in foregrounding gender in relation to the politics of looking, I have not, however, posited a gender bi-furcated gaze, a split between an assumed binary of

men who look and women who appear. Rather I have sought to argue that there are multiple modalities of surveillance in operation, including media surveillance, peer surveillance and self-surveillance. These are not neatly gendered in the way that Berger or Mulvey might have argued. Rather, they are shaped by distinctively postfeminist and neoliberal ways of seeing and apprehending the self and others, by a sensibility in which extracting and producing value from the body is central and an entrepreneurial ethic dominates. Is there, as Mark Hayward (2013) has argued, a neoliberal optics? Are we seeing the emergence of a 'postfeminist gaze' (Riley & Evans, 2016)? One thing is sure, whilst we are all implicated the surveillant imaginary, the 'work of being watched' remains disproportionately women's work in a way that requires our urgent attention.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Ana Elias for ongoing discussions that informed this paper, and Elektra Lapavitsas for her editorial assistance.

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