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UNIVERSITE MOULOUD MAMMERI DE TIZI-OUZOU
FACULTE DES LETTRES ET DES LANGUES
DEPARTEMENT D'ANGLAIS

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The Influence of Instagram on Women's Body Image

Presented by:
Houria AOUINE
Zohra TEMAL

Supervised by:

Ms. Sadia SEDDIKI

Broad of Examiners:
Chair: Miss. Zouhra TAFROUKHT (MAA).Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou.
Examiner: Ms. Dalila MATMER (MAA). Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou.
Supervisor: Ms. Sadia SEDDIKI (MAA). Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou.

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To my best friends and to all my family.

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To my dear parents especially my mother to whom I owe an

immense gratitude and love

To my dear sisters and brother (Dahbia, Karina, sadi)

To all my family

To my dear best friends Lilia, Rosa and Samia

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Absract

The present dissertation deals with the influence of Instagram on women's body image. Through the analysis of Instagram's portrayal of women, our work demonstrates how the idealized body image on Instagram is used to destroy and disempower women. In the discussion of these issues, the focus has been put on the way Instagram affects and influences women's physical and mental well-being. For this purpose, the theoretical framework of this dissertation has been relied on Naomi Wolf's *The Beauty Myth* (1991) which examines how the promoted images on the social media misrepresent, objectify women and lead to the destruction of their identities. In order to show how women are depicted and objectified in media by men and how women perceive themselves and other ones. We have used Laura Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975) as a supportive theory. Through our analysis, we have reached the following results; women are portrayed negatively, Instagram influences women's mental and physical well-being. The last result we have reached is that Instagram can have positive impacts on women's body image. The outline of this study comprises a discussion of three main sections that include: the representation of women in media, the effects of Instagram on women's body image and Instagram: women embracing their authenticity. As a conclusion, it is found that Instagram affects negatively the psychological and physical health of women which lead them to the destruction of their identities as it may be a tool to raise women's self-esteem.

Key Words: Social media, Instagram, Ideal Body Image, Beauty Myth, Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema, Negative and Positive Representation, Influence and Effects.

I.   General Introduction

Media plays an important role in today's world. It is considered as the main source of communicating information, building knowledge and entertaining people through what is broadcasted in television, published in newspapers and advertised in billboards. All these forms of media are supposed to be objective in delivering accurate news but sometimes they can be biased and subjective in reporting some issues.[1] This is done to keep people's minds under their influence and control. In fact, "if media did what it was intended for, it will be a great force in building the nation but, at present, media has become a money-making sector".[2]

One of media's most influential forces is its ability to affect changes through manipulating people's thoughts and controlling public's decisions. It also affects people's perspectives through the messages and images advertised and promoted in different avenues of media.[4] As a result, the latter has an important role in the communication of social, political and cultural stereotypes. These stereotypes portray women's body image through the posted pictures and content in magazines, television and billboards.

For years, the media has been portraying women negatively; it has generally, focused on their pitfalls and neglected their achievements. Media tackles sensitive issues concerning women through the objectified and sexualized images portrayed in different kinds of traditional media. For instance, magazines tend to over-represent girls and focus on beauty and fashion. In addition, they encourage women to focus on their physical appearance but they rarely make reference to their intellectual capacities.[5] These magazines are flooded with images concerning physical beauty and body size. Traditional media also focuses on domesticity, marriage and motherhood to

reinforce traditional gender roles[6] and to reduce women to mothers and wives. As a result, these stereotypical representations may lead to women's objectification and to violence and sexual harassment.

Like traditional forms of media, social media which is relatively new invention has participated in the perpetuation of unrealistic images and stereotypical representation of women which creates frustration, disappointment and body dissatisfaction for women. Social media encourages women to follow severe diets in order to attain an ideal and unrealistic weight and body. These can lead to eating disorders in some women and young girls. Consequently, those women who fail to look like models promoted by media suffer from self-deception and anxiety. Social media has developed into an accessible online platform and has become prominent in people's live. Facebook, Snapshat, Twitter and Instagram are among these media platforms that bombard women with images of the thin ideal body.

Instagram, which was created in 2010, is a new social media platform that has gained a huge success among internet users'.[7] This photo-based application advertises the ideal women's body image through the shared images. The former works by sharing photos and short videos with the followers and it allows the users to edit their photos. These reasons made Instagram the favourite application for its users' especially women who are obsessed about their appearance. Women are always reminded about the unattainable standards of beauty and they have to conform to society's expectations. This latter undermines women's body image which is defined by Jillian Croll as the flexible vision of one's body, appearance, feelings and moving. It may be determined by perceptions emotions and physical sensations.[8]

Social media in general and Instagram in particular affects women's body image. In our work, we intend to deal with the influence of Instagram on women's body image by applying Naomi Wolf's theory *The Beauty Myth* (1991) and Laura Mulvey's theory *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975). We think that this is an interesting topic to be investigated. Hence, in our dissertation we will attempt to shed light on the impact of Instagram on women's perception.

Review of the Literature

Women are obsessed by the "thin ideal". This unattainable standard, for most women of beauty, is promoted in every avenue of the media: magazines, television shows, movies and commercials. Various studies have been carried on the theme of women's body image in relation to media. In her article "Media Representation of Female Body Images in Women's Magazines" (2006), Karen Ruth Brown focuses on the effects of the promoted female body image in women's magazines.[9] She argues that media are seen as the main transmitters of an unrealistic female body image. Brown also reports that there is a link between image dissatisfaction and media consumption.[10] She writes that the exposure to beauty and fashion magazines can accentuate more the desire to have a thin body and can promote the idea that only celebrities and models represent the perfect female body shapes.[11] She adds that "consuming magazine media appeared to constitute more of a risk for the development of eating disorders than viewing television".[12] She concludes that the images presented in magazines send a "dangerous message" and present unrealistic role models to girls.[13]

Another study sheds light on the effects of the promoted beauty in different media platforms on women and young girls. Western women are obsessed with

beauty, they search to obtain it at any cost. In YWCA USA's (Young Women's Christians of United States of America, a nonprofit organization) article "Beauty at Any Cost: The Consequences of American's Beauty Obsession on Women and Girls"(2008), the report discusses the effects of women's looking for unattainable beauty and an attractive body like those of celebrities.[14] The article reports that women want to be beautiful at all cost, even by damaging their health and wasting money and that creates a serious problem. It adds that every woman is a participant in a daily beauty pageant with her will or without.[15] The report claims that women are addicted to cosmetic products and plastic surgery, botox injunctions and dieting, just to attain a perfect body. It is argued that women's dream to possess an unattainable beauty and body image is going worse in different domains of woman's lives like in economy, health and relationships.[16] Women follow chronic and unhealthy diets, they smoke in order to lose weight and take unnecessary risks during cosmetic surgical procedures. In relationships, either personal or interpersonal, women have a low self esteem, lack of confidence and dissatisfaction with their own bodies.[17]

In addition to the two previous studies, Cortney S. Warren discusses the influence of culture on body image and ideals of beauty in his article "The Mass Media, Body Image and Self-Deception"(2014). She asserts that mass media works truly in making women feel ugly and unsatisfied about their bodies. She argues that "we don't think about how profoundly the mass media influences the lies we tell ourselves on television, in movies, and in advertisement, we are fed information about who we should be in our culture".[18] This implies that media identifies a culture dictated to be a global international one. Cortney also claims that American women are expected to look like eternally eighteen years old with a perfect skin, beautiful eyes, long eyelashes, shiny teeth, a tinny shape and a feminine figure.[19]

In their article "Social Comparisons on Social Media The Impact of Facebook on Young Women's Body Image Concern and Mood" (2015), Jasmine Fardouly et al discuss the effect of Facebook usage on women's mood and beauty image. The authors found that "women reported being more negative mood after brief exposure to Facebook then after an appearance neutral websites".[20] They also highlight the idea that women are influenced negatively by the use of Facebook, this usage creates women's dissatisfaction about their hair, skin, face and weight after a brief exposure to the promoted images in Facebook.[21]

Issue and Working Hypothesis

Contrary to other forms of media, there is a dearth of materials on the influence of Instagram on women's body image. These materials, one found, usually focus on the negative impact of this platform on women and neglect its positive side. This work, then, comes to fill this void in academia. In addition to this, the originality of this work lies in the use of Naomi Wolf's theory *The Beauty Myth* (1991) which examines how the promoted images in the media objectify women and lead to the destruction of their identities, and Laura Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975) which shows how women are constantly objectified and told what to do and how to look by patriarchal society. On account of this, the purpose of the present dissertation is to show how Instagram and the ideal body image are generally used to disempower and marginalize women. It will also attempt to highlight how women are influenced by this social media platform and to demonstrate what are the effects of this latter on women's body image. This work will also explore the positive impact Instagram may have on its users' body image and self esteem.

The structure of this dissertation will follow the IMRAD method. The dissertation starts with an introduction, in which the problematic is identified. It is

followed by a brief overview of the studies which have dealt with women's body image. The methods and materials section is devoted to the summary of the two theories and a brief presentation of Instagram. The discussion section is divided into three sections. The first one focuses on the representation of women in media. The second examines the effects of Instagram on women's body image; this part highlights different diseases caused by Instagram. The last section deals with the celebrities who share selfies on Instagram without makeup to look authentic to send positive images to fans. Our dissertation ends with a general conclusion that sums up the main issues dealt within in this piece of research.

Endnotes

[1]Chamzad2, "The Role of Media in Society," https://www.wattpad.com/445664-argumentative-writtings-and-competition-essay-the (accessed November 23, 2017).

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Tassadit Louni and Malika Chabane Chaouche, "Women Representation in the British Tabloid Press: The Daily Mail as a Case Study," Master Diss (University of Tizi Ouzou, 2014), 02.

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[8]Jillian Croll, "Body for Adolescent in Guidelines for Adolescent Nutrition Services," ed. Jannie Stage et al (University of Minnesota, 2005), 155. www.epi.umn.edu>let>img>adol_ch13.pdf (accessed June 25, 2017).

[9]Karen Ruth Brown, "Media Representation of Female Body Images on Women's Magazines," http://digital.liberary.okstate.edu/etd/umi-okstate-2016.pdf (accessed November 4, 2017).

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid., 28.

[12]Ibid., 29.

[13]Ibid., 30.

[14]YWCA. USA, "Beauty at Any Cost. The Consequences of Americans Beauty Obsession on Women and Girls," 2008. http://www.ywca.org/atf/cf/%7B711d5519-9e3c-4362-b753-ad138b5d352c%7D/BEAUTY-AT-ANY-COST.PDF (accessed June 26, 2017).

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid., 2.

[17]Ibid., 4.

[18]Cortney S. Warren, "The Mass Media, Body Image and Self Deception," *Psychology Today*, June 04, 2014. https://www.psychologytoday.com>blog (accessed June 26, 2017).

[19]Ibid.

[20]Jasmine Fardouley et al, "Social Comparisons on Social Media: The Impact of Facebook on Young Women's Body Image Concern and Mood," 2015, 43. https://www2.cpsxiunsw.edu.au/Users/Ivartanian/Publication/Fardouley,%20Diedrichs,%20Vatanian,%20&%Halliwell%20(2015).pdf. (accessed November 03, 2017).

[21]Ibid.

I. Method and Materials

Within this research paper we intend to study the influence of social media specifically "Instagram" on women's body image. We will rely on Naomi Wolf's theory *The Beauty Myth* (1991) and Laura Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema (1975).*

1. Methods

a. Naomi Wolf's *The Beauty Myth*

Naomi Wolf is an American feminist scholar who wrote in 1991 *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women*. The book is mainly concerned with the images of beauty displayed by the mass media and how the promotion of these images leads to the destruction of women's identities. This theory focuses on the idea that women want to be different from what they were before by rejecting the traditional role they perform as mothers and housekeepers and replacing it by another modern form of discrimination "Beauty Myth" which leads women to mental and physical disorders.[22] She argues that modern women are obsessed by the thin, perfect and ideal body. In addition to this, Wolf asserts that the educated, liberated women of the first world, who gained their freedom, do not feel free since they are oppressed by society and its expectations on their physical appearance: bodies, faces, hair and clothes.[23] "As women released themselves from the feminine mystique of domesticity, the beauty myth took over its lost ground, expanding as it waned to carry on its work of social control".[24]

Wolf makes reference to five places where beauty myth is employed against women: in work, media, culture, sex and religious sphere. She also refers to violence

against women by men and women themselves in the form of eating disorders and cosmetic surgeries.[25] She adds that society uses the images of females beauty as a tool to put an end to women's advancement. Besides, this myth is employed as a system to control and prevent women's advance by patriarchal institutions and institutional powers.[26]

Wolf employs the term of "Iron Maiden" which refers to a German instrument used in the Middle Ages to punish people. Wolf uses this concept in her book in order to introduce the metaphor of "the Beauty Myth" to explain how women suffer physically and psychologically to reach the unreal standards of beauty and conform to certain criteria.[27] She also tackles the physical and psychological harm of the models' images on women's bodies, like eating disorders: anorexia, bulimia and binge eating.[28]

Another important issue dealt within "Beauty Myth" is the role of the media in women's lives since it influences women's perception of themselves and their lives. That is why women today are disappointed, feel oppressed and think they are powerless. Women are passive because they are addicted to certain social media platforms and enjoy what makes them pleasant and comfortable. However, the media pressures them to conform to the ideal beauty and embody the standards, qualities labeled.[29] By this, it is evident that the Media is weakening women psychologically and even physically. In this context Wolf says that "the contemporary ravages of the beauty backlash are destroying women physically and depleting us psychologically".[30]

The publication of the "Beauty Myth" allowed Wolf to become a representative of the Third Wave of feminism. Gloria Steinem supports Naomi Wolf's theory, she

wrote " The Beauty Myth is a smart angry, insightful book, and a clarison call to freedom. Every woman should read it".[31]

The "Beauty Myth" has been overused with traditional media: magazines, newspapers and television since the publication of the book in 1991. But it is rarely been coined with Instagram. Therefore, this theory is relevant to our topic because Instagram, like other types of media, promotes images of an ideal body and affects women's bodies negatively through undermining women's self-esteem, disempowering them and destroying their identities. That is why we try to apply it on our work which consists on "The Influence of Instagram on Women's Body Image".

b. Laura Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*

To reach our purpose of analyzing the influence of Instagram on women's body image, we will also use Laura Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975) theory to support Naomi Wolf's *The Beauty Myth (1991)*. "Male Gaze" is a term introduced by Laura Mulvey in her essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* in 1975. Laura Mulvey is influenced by Freud's Psychoanalysis, as she adopts concepts from the language of psychoanalysis in order to elaborate her theory . She discusses the term of "scopophilia"[32] in which Freud refers to "taking other people as objects, subjecting them to a controlling and a curious gaze".[33] Mulvey says that cinema provides a number of possible pleasures among them "Scopophilia": " the pleasure of looking and being look at"[34]; The term "gaze" refers to how we fixe and look to something with fascination this term is used more with visual media like advertisement, cinema and television programs.[35]

Male Gaze is a feminist theory that deals with the representation of women in different visual media and tends to examine the way men see women and how

women see themselves and other women particularly in the field of Cinema where they are mispresented and submitted to men, they are portrayed as objects not as a human being. They are used to be admired only for their physical appearance, women's existence depends on male's presence and this existence's aim is only for visual pleasure. For men, in acting, women are like their source of inspiration. "Male Gaze" theory tends to empower men and objectify women since they are seen as men's property they are presented as passive,[36] alienated and subordinated groups due to the male gaze, however male's role portrayed as active one, their roles consist on looking at others and satisfying their desires.

According to Mulvey, the way viewers view films is divided into two categories: "Voyeurism" and " fetishist".[37] The fact that the audiences watch movies without being involved in the plot allows them to become bystanders of the characters' lives, this results an objectification and narcissistic identification. Voyeurism or viewers' curiosity transforms the represented figure into something that is blindly admired; thus, this fetish looks attractive but in reality is objectified.[38]

We find that it is important to use this theory in dealing with our subject since the main concepts elaborated by Laura Mulvey in her essay fit our analysis, which concerns Instagram and women's body image. Even though this theory was applied mainly with the way women are represented and gazed in cinema, movies and advertisements, we will use it on social media Instagram.

2. Materials

Instagram

To achieve our aim, we will analyze how women are affected by the social media Instagram by using some shared photos in this application. Instagram is a new platform of social media that has emerged recently, it was developed in San Francisco by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger. This application was launched exactly in 2010 as a free one. The word Instagram consists of two concepts: instant camera and telegram.[39] It works as a mobile desktop and internet based photo sharing application and service, indeed it is available in thirty three languages. Consequently, it is considered as "the one of the most influential networks in the world" .[40] In addition to this, Instagram became the favorite application for the users of social media. In 2017 it reached a number of 700 million users. Furthermore, people prefer to use this social platform since it has advantages such as the ability to alter their photos to look more beautiful and attractive.[41]

Endnotes

[22]Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women* (New York: Harper Collins e-books, 1991), 10.

[23]Ibid., 09.

[24]Ibid., 10.

[25]Ibid., 16.

[26]Ibid., 10.

[27]Ibid., 17.

[28]Ibid., 11.

[29]Wikipedia, The Beauty Myth, , http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Beauty_Myth (accessed September 30, 2017).

[30]Wolf, *Beauty Myth,* 10.

[31]The Beauty Myth, Wikipedia.

[32]Laura Mulvey, *"Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,"* https://amherst.edu/system/files/media/1021/Laura%20Mulvey,%20Visual%20Pleasure.pdf (accessed 04, 2017).

[33]Ibid.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Ibid., 811.

[36]Ibid., 808.

[37]Ibid., 812.

[38]Ibid., 813.

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[40]Ibid.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Ibid.

II. Results

Our dissertation intended to analyse Instagram's influence on women's body image. We centered our analysis on the representation of unrealistic bodies of women in the media and its influence on their physical and mental conditions. To approach our work and to develop our discussion, we have chosen Noami Wolf's *The Beauty Myth: How Images Of Beauty Are Used Against Women* (1991) and in particular the chapter "*The Beauty Myth*" and Laura Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure And Narrative Cinema* (1975) as theoretical frame works to demonstrate the effects of Instagram.

We have devoted the first section of the discussion to analyzing the way women are represented in the media and women's body image in relation to Instagram. We noticed that they are portrayed in negative, inferior and passive roles. Media focuses on women's weaknesses and neglects their achievements and intellectual contributions. Instagram, as a case study, demonstrates how this platform affects women's mental and physical well-being in order to please the others, especially the opposite sex. Media's stereotypical representation of women works for the male's benefit by exploiting them (women) for men's personal and professional goals. Women are also represented as "sex objects". This sexualization of women pushes instagrammers to be obsessed with female beauty and they always desire more attractive images of women.

We analysed different articles and Instagram accounts, it is evident that Instagram influences women's body image by the promotion of unrealistic and photoshopped images that lead them to decrease women's self-esteem and perception of themselves, in order to keep them on the margin of societies . In addition to this, this study also revealed that Instagram influences and affects negatively the mental

and physical health of women. As a result, women turn to plastic and cosmetic surgeries as this may lead to troubles such as eating disorders, depression and anxiety.

The last result that we have reached through this study is that there are some celebrities engaged in sharing images without makeup on Instagram in order to help rise the self-esteem of the users, especially the ones who have problems with their physical appearance and are ashamed about their looks and to be as a role models, while looking authentic as it seems that Instagram has some positive effects on women's body image.

we reached the conclusion that besides Instagram's negative impacts on the users' minds especially women and young girls, by the promotion of altered images on Instagram, many health problems are induced, among them eating disorders like binge eating, anorexia nervosa and bulimia. We come also to conclude that some celebrities used this application for positive purposes.

IV. Discussion

Chapter One

1) **The Representation of Women in Media**

Women are shown in the Media as objects and continue to be predominantly represented in passive and stereotyped roles in films and television. In this sense, Laura Mulvey argues in her essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975) that women are always in constant need of men:

> The film opens with woman as object of the combined gaze of spectator and all the male protagonist in the film. She is isolated, glamorous, on display, sexualized. But as the narrative progresses she falls in love with the main male protagonist and becomes his property, losing her outward glamorous characteristics, her generalized sexuality, her show girl connotations; her eroticism is subjected to the male star alone.[43]

Women are far more likely to be portrayed as victims and referred to in terms of their age, physical appearance or family role in the news, but they are less likely to appear in important positions behind the scenes. Working women are also discriminated again, since the media focuses more on their physical appearance. For instance, female politicians are judged by the "*Beauty Myth*" since media users have the tendency to focus on their bodies, age and beauty rather than on their professional and political careers. This illustrates that beauty and physical attractiveness play an important role even in politics. Naomi Wolf states that the *"Beauty Myth"* is employed also at the workplace since women are classified according to " beauty qualifications"[44] that they should own in order to reach higher positions. She states,

> The fixation on "beauty" of the 1980's was a direct consequence of, and a one-to-one check and balance upon the entry of women into powerful positions. The triumphs of "beauty" ideologies in the eighties came about as

a result of real fear, on the part of the central institutions of our society, about what might happen if free women made free progress in free bodies through a system that calls itself a meritocracy.[45]

Social Media

a) Facebook

The representation of women in Facebook is not very different from other types of media; in this social media platform women are also misrepresented. In her article "Facebook is Full of Cheesy Messages –but Why Are so Many Anti-Women?", Kate Bevan states that Facebook is a motivational application due to the encouragement messages and the exaggerated images sent through it which push its users to live in an unreal world.[46] Consequently, women are the major target of this social platform, since they believe in what is reported on it to feel that they are supported and belong to a specific group, because people are always in need of others and belonging. According to Ashwini Nadkrani, M.D. in the department of Psychiatry, and Stefan G. Hofman, department of psychology, Boston Medical Center, Facebook is encouraged by two main necessities. The first one, is the need to belong, which is caused by two factors demographic and cultural. The second is the need for self-presentation which is conducted by self-esteem, self-worth, narcissism (excessive love of oneself), neuroticism and shyness.[47]

Kate Bevan adds that what struck her is the portrayal of women which is startlingly reductive. They are portrayed as dependent on men and as if they are always in need of the presence of a husband or children in their lives to complete them.[48] That is why women are viewed like wives, mothers and grand-mothers. In the same context, she mentions some clichés. One of these clichés is that women are always seen as dependent to someone (a husband or children).[49] To illustrate this,

Bevan gives the example of a woman facebook user who says, "I am a lady, I don't party or sleep around to get attention. Yes, we do still exist". Indeed, women are portrayed as submissive, their roles are restricted only to giving birth. These social platforms standardize some criteria of beauty like having the ideal weight, being blonde, toned and thin.[50]

b) Instagram

In her report *"The Royal Society for Public Health in the UK"*, Fox Kara explains that Instagram is a dangerous social networking application. She reports that 1500 young people between fourteen to twenty-four years are exposed to the negative effects of social media, consequently the majority of them suffer from anxiety, depression, self identity and negative body image.[51] Young women, especially adolescents, are pushed "to compare themselves to unrealistic largely curated, filtered and photoshopped version of reality" states Matt Keracher.[52] Instagram makes girls and women feel as if their bodies are imperfect and not good enough. As a result, many women try to follow and imitate celebrities and stars who have a perfect thin body. To enhance and to reach their ideal look, women use diet and plastic surgery. The images of the models promoted in social media create a sort of dislike and body loathing in women who do not conform to this type of body image. Fox Kara reports that people who spend more than two hours per day connecting on social networking sites are suffering from poor mental health including psychological distress, "the social media use in general was described as more addictive than cigarettes and alcohol".[53]

Women on Instagram are objectified by men because the latter see the former as sexual objects and not as human beings, women are also self-objectified

through the photos they are sharing.[54] A huge number of images are posted, as a result, this may explain the issue of the sexualization of women and teenage girls through revealing photos, nudity and laying down in a sexual way to attract other persons' attention. Women posting these images think that it is a way of liberating themselves and expressing freedom. Fox Kara asserts that girls expose and present themselves in sexy positions as a way to show that they are free to do everything,[55] but the opponents say that this action is due to women's conformity and obeyance to the theory of the *"Male Gaze"* which refers to a concept developed by Laura Mulvey that consists in presenting women as objects for male pleasure.[56] The posted images reflect the objectification and sexualization of women who are presented as men's property or "sexual objects" and "sexual slaves".[57] People are obsessed with female appearance and bodies, consequently women evaluate themselves according to others' judgments and evaluation.[58]

The misrepresentation of women on Instagram is due to their objectification. The photos posted and the ideas shared on this social media platform lead to women's unsatisfaction about their body image. In her article "Your Body on Display: Social Media and Your Self-Image", Susan Krauss, a Psychology Professor, defines the objectification as "the tendency to treat an individual not as a person with emotions and thoughts, but as a physical being or 'object'. In most cases, it refers to thinking of a person not as a door stop, but as a sexual object, there to provide pleasure to others".[59] She reminds us that an objectified image emphasizes a person's sexuality, and this by showing skin. She also identifies objectification as: "the portrayal of semi clothed woman's body intended to emphasize her sexuality".[60] Susan Krauss argues that these portrayals are more pronounced with women, because

advertisers believe that women's nudity promotes and attracts more consumers "The more skin the model shows, the more products they can sell".[61]

2) Women's Body Image in Relation to Instagram

The word "beauty" has several definitions and it varies from one individual to another, depending on what the person considers as beautiful. It is often argued that beauty is embodied in the body, soul and goodly deeds, however, the media limits more often than not, beauty to physical attractiveness and thinness.[62] In this context, Jillian Croll defines "body image" as the lively vision of one's body appearance, feelings and moves, and it could be determined by these three elements: perception, emotions and physical sensations.[63] "Body image" is also influenced by self-esteem and external evaluation. Consequently, cultural messages and social standards of body shape and good looks affect one's body image. Many Women believe that their beauty is centered on their physical appearance, thus they pay a great attention to their looks, women want to be younger, to appear at their twenties, be thin, have sexual and attractive bodies and look like actresses, singers and models. Women are afraid of the aging process, Naomi Wolf refers to this as the "Terror of Aging".[64]

In her article "How social media is a toxic mirror", Rachel Simmons argues that social platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapshat allow users to admire their appearance and compare themselves to others.[65] Researchers say that the active users on social media, who spend more time in sharing, commenting and comparing themselves to those photos, are the most harmed physically and psychologically and are too sensitive.[66] In the same vein, Amy Slater, a psychologist, confirms that Facebook users are more concerned with body image than non users, besides girls

are more affected than boys through having body image disturbance and eating disorders.[67]

The reason that allows people enjoy social media is the free applications which means that the users are not required to pay any tax in order to access them; they also have the opportunity to manipulate their photos by adding makeup or other beauty products. That is why internet is called a great democratizer,[68] as a result people have become addicted to these applications. Achieving the perfect Instagram image is not easy as it may appear, even celebrities suffer from this issue. This is confirmed in Ellie Woodward's article "This Is How Celebrities Are Altering Their Instagram Photos". Woodward argues that most celebrities who appear on Instagram alter their photos.[69] In comparing Instagram photos and photographers shots taken in the same day, it is easy to realize that something is missing or wrong, some distortions are invisible but they become apparent in some photos, they may be corrected simply by Photoshop. To illustrate this, we have below two photos of Kim Kardashian (Figure 01 a, b) taken in the same day: one captured by photographers on the red carpet and the second is taken from her Instagram account.[70]

Figure 01 a: is taken from Kim Kardashian's Instagram account .

Figure 01 b: represents Kim Kardashian's photo taken by journalists in the red carpet.

What is apparent is that her waist is slightly wider and less smooth when standing in the red carpet compared to the mirror-selfie photo. Moreover, commentators of a posted selfie of Kylie Jenner drew attention to the huge differences between the selfie and the photo taken by the paparazzi.[71] (Figure 02 a, b).

Figure 02 a: a photo of Kylie Jenner taken by paparazzi.

Figure 02 b: Kylie Jenner's selfie taken from her Instagram account.

Ellie Woodward used the same applications celebrities use in order to adjust her photos: Face tune, which offers plenty of editing options for photos consisting of: smoothing, reshaping, tone alterations and filters.[72] Woodward tested these applications by slimming herself down, this was achieved by the use of " reshape" and "refine", then "tweaking". To look smooth, she used "smooth" and " smoother" functions. The result is as she expected it, she achieved a celebrity look like (Figure 03 a, b). She writes,

> After all, Kim, as well as numerous other celebrities, have spoken out time and time again about the pressures they feel to appear perfect at all times. It's pretty clear that this application can be used to drastically alter your appearance. Whatever it's this app that celebrities are using or something else entirely remains to be seen, but either way, I think I'll be going back to good old Instagram and my trusty Amaro filter and leaving the rest of it to celebs.[73]

Figure 03 a: represents the journalist Ellie Woodward before testing the application.

Figure 03 b: Woodward's photo after the alteration.

Ellie Woodward concludes that, "you can pretty much change your entire face and body with this application but it isn't real".[74]

The majority of celebrities know how to manipulate Instagram and how to show perfect pictures of their bodies. These perfect pictures are achieved with the help of professionals in styling, makeup, clothing and even photoshopping. In this respect, Dr. Simon Ourian, medical director of Epione Beverly Hills confesses that,

> Before they step in front of the camera they have a team of makeup artists whose sole responsibility is to camouflage their flaws. Lightening people, cinematographers and directors shoot them from the best angles. And anything that winds up in a magazine or on magazine cover is re-touched with photoshop.[75]

There are some applications for altering photos before you share them to Instagram according to Jorden Roper's article "6 Apps Top Brands Use to Create Gorgeous Instagram Photos". These applications can be used even after posting

pictures to Instagram by editing them. Among these applications we find VascoCam which is the favorite fashion blogger. It has different filters to use in order to prettify photos. In addition to this, AfterLight is an impressive application by its filters and editing features. Adobe Photoshop Express is another application which has multi filters, adjustement options and premium features.[76]

Instagram is a recent application that is used for sharing and posting photos and videos. What is apparent is that most Hollywood stars are using this application due to the services it offers especially the alterations done while photographing and sharing. Most of the stars love this camera application, because it hides different distortions of their bodies. There are different filters we may use in this application, these filters are ordered according to categories, which are: Nature, Fashion, Food and Selfies.[77]

In his article "30 Hollywood Stars on Instagram", Tonto Murray asserts that Instagram is a transformative technology which has reduced the role of the paparazzi. The latter make their money by selling their photos to the media and fans, even celebrities do so.[78] In fact, not all celebrities have embraced Instagram; what is apparent is that the active celebrity Instagram users are mostly young. In his article "How and Why 13-24 Year – Olds Use Instagram", Tyler Beck, the Director of Social Media Week (a leading news platform and worldwide conference), argues that teenagers are more interested in Instagram because of the role it plays in their lives.[79] This application helps them discover their passions, learn about the world and connect with friends and all this by a visual language, since this generation prefers the visual language over reading.[80] Aria, twenty two year old Canadian girl, says that " people don't really want to read through text all the time they just want to see it visually, it's more appealing".[81] This means that people prefer to share photos

and videos because it is an easy way to express the message, and at the same time it is a way to receive likes, comments, reactions and building communities. In the same context, Tyler Beck adds that Instagram's services consist in knowing what is new, what is next and what their friends do because this application deals with photographs at the immediacy of the moment.[82]

Many celebrities started using Instagram since the appearance of this application in 2010. They employ it to share their photos with their fans and update them about their activities. A kind of competition is created between celebrities about the number of their followers and the photos shared. According to *Marie Claire* Magazine the most followed celebrities on Instagram are: Selena Gomez with 117 million followers and 1366 shared photos, followed by Ariana Grande who has 114 followers with 3328 photos. Then comes Taylor swift with 100 million followers and only 18 publications. The next is Beyonce followed by 99,7 million of fans and she shared 1504 photos. After her we find Kim Kardashian with 90,98 million followers and 3963 shared photos.[83]

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Chapter Two

The Effects of Instagram on Women's Body Image

1) How Does Instagram Influence Women's Body Image?

Psychology goes hand in hand with body image. When someone does not feel at ease with her physical appearance she will be also psychologically unsatisfied. That is why the media focuses on Instagram users' weaknesses towards their bodies. Instagram influences people's perception and self-esteem about their physical appearance by promoting an ideal body, but not real, and presenting models' silhouettes. So, when people see these attractive and desirable figures, comparisons are made between their own bodies and the celebrities' ones and a bad image is created for their own appearance and realize they are less attractive than these stars. As a result, a sentiment of unhappiness, a bad mood and body dissatisfaction are made in women about their looks. Therefore, they are eager to have an unrealistically thin body shape, meaning that the ideal silhouette influences women's minds negatively. In turn, women who spend a lot of time and have an excessive contact with the media become victims of these technologies.

2) The Effects of the Promoted Body Image in Instagram on Women and Young Girls

Women's images vehiculed by the media are affecting the wider society. The media idealizes and promotes a body image with certain criteria like thinness, beauty and sexiness in order to encourage its users to follow these models. Consequently, women desire and sometimes are obliged to follow "the model" to be beautiful in the eyes of others and to be accepted in society since beauty becomes a parameter of belonging to society which means that if you are not beautiful you will

be marginalized. In this context, society classifies women into two classes: the first is "the good" women or " beautiful" ones.[84] This class includes women who have the ideal body shape and who follow the media's promoted image. The second one refers to the "bad" women, or the ones who do not follow the criteria or laws of beauty imposed by advertisements and fashion.[85] This latter is rejected and marginalized. Many women prefer to imitate the "beautiful" and "thin" models portrayed by the media in order to be accepted. Thus, these portrayals of women in the media creates a dissatisfaction and low self-esteem about their body image.

The classification of women and the imposition of a certain ideal body results in negative impacts, among them violence. It was reported in *the Daily Mail* that many women experience physical or verbal violence in their lives and that they suffer more from the verbal one.[86] A Los Angeles professional violinist Mia Matsuniya, an ethnic Japanese, decided to take action against the men who assaulted her verbally on 'Instagram'. She reveals that "pretty much most of my life now, I've encountered Asian Fetishists, Pedophiles, Stalkers, Racists, and who- knows - how many unsolicited sexual comments".[87] "I became really angry"[88] says Mia, adding "It's absolutely unacceptable to treat anyone this way. People often deny the existence of racism or sexism, but I'm pelted with it almost daily and here's my proof ".[89] Among these insulting messages "can I tie you up and brush your teeth?".[90] Mia says that "in fact, they make me feel objectified, dehumanized, and degraded. I think the more time you spend reading them, you really begin understanding my position".[91]

Instagram tends to show photos of women with perfect and ideal bodies which leads to many problems in society. Women and young girls especially are always on war with their physical appearance. The magazines, internet and media

accentuate this desire of having an ideal body and make them feel imperfect and they lose self-esteem when they start to compare themselves to these models. Women start to feel distressed when they see that they are irreconcilable with those women shown on social media. As a result, this may cause many illnesses like eating disorders including Bulimia, Anorexia, Nervosa and over eating. In this context Naomi Wolf argues,

> Reproductive rights gave Western women control over our own bodies; the weight of fashion models plummeted to twenty three percent below that of ordinary women, eating disorders rose exponentially, and a mass neurosis was promoted that used food and weight to strip women of that sense of control.[92]

This means young girls are excessively influenced by the idealized bodies popularized by the media which lead them to various healthy and psychological problems.

Women start to imitate these unrealistic and photoshoped images shown on Instagram. Unfortunately, women always choose the wrong path in their quest for beauty by turning to dangerous practices like: plastic surgery, severe diet and excessive exercises in order to lose some weight. These practices are in their point of view the best way and solution to reach their ideal female body. Eventually this is harmful to their health but they do not care about the consequences. They only want to be beautiful, and are ready to do everything just to attain the perfect body image even by sacrificing their health. Noami Wolf sheds light on the idea that women are victims of the media's advertisement of the ideal beauty. She states,

> During the past decade, women breached the power structure; meanwhile, eating disorders rose exponentially and cosmetic surgery became the fastest growing medical specialty. During the past five years, consumer spending doubled, pornography became the main media category, ahead of legitimate films and records combined, and thirty- three thousand American women told researchers that they would rather lose ten to fifteen pounds than achieve any other goal.[93]

Physical appearance plays a major role in the lives of young girls in order to be integrated in society by sharing their photos and images. The photos shared on Instagram affect young girls' minds and their self confidence, since adolescence is a time of identity formation. Consequently, these images push young girls to imitate celebrities and create in them an ambition to know more about sexuality, attractiveness and beauty from an earlier age.[94] From this, we can deduce that women are affected by Instagram and they live under constant pressure, in this perspective Naomi Wolf argues that women are tortured and their lives are put in an "Iron Maiden".[95] This concept refers to a German instrument which was used as a tool to torture people in the Middle Ages. According to her, beauty is used as a way of torturing and putting pressure on women.

Dr. Constance Quinn, a director of the "Renfrew Center", (a center specializes for eating disorders treatment like anorexia, bulimia, binge eating and related mental illnesses in New York), reports that "The internet and social media have brought us amazing things. The downside, specifically related to the clients-with facebook and Instagram in particular-is it flood us with images that are very often unrealistic".[96] The quotation above explains that all what is shown on social media can be sophisticated and unreal, the promoted images try to make people believe in the imaginary world.

Many women follow severe diets, which lead them to serious health problems like eating disorders. Moreover, men and boys also suffer from negative body image. According to Tabitha Farrar they use "anabolic steroids"[97] in order to gain more muscle mass. It is always assumed that only women suffer from this problem, but this is not always the case, men also suffer from body image too. However, they do not admit that they are affected by this issue as girls are.[98]

3) **The Negative Effects of Instagram on Women's Body Image**

From what has been said so far, it is evident that Instagram's photos affect women's perceptions of their own physical appearance. They start to follow any proposed way to change their looks and reach the ideal body promoted by the media. For this sake, women risk their lives and face dangerous situations to be beautiful, as Wolf says that beauty is the main issue which women suffer for.[99] A study has been conducted by Nicole Dion in the College of Art and Sciences at Salem State University in which she argues that, "social media use is a good predictor of body dissatisfaction, eating disorders symptoms and life satisfaction in adolescent girls".[100] From this we can deduce that the use of social media causes a negative comparison between the instagrammers; indeed, this comparison leads to other health troubles like low self-esteem, plastic surgeries, eating disorders and excessive exercises .

Low self-esteem results from the conjunction of advertisements and exposure to unrealistic photos. Women are powerless in face of these posts and start to dislike their bodies, by the way they pronounce their dissatisfactions towards their shape. This is how unhappiness and negative emotions are created. According to Oxford Learners Pocket Dictionary, self esteem consists of " the feeling of being happy with your own character and abilities".[101] Self-esteem can be either positive or negative. It is positive when a person is satisfied by her own competences and has confidence in her abilities.[102] Today women suffer from a low self-esteem which creates in them inner conflicts, this is due to the means of communication and standardization of a prototype body which is unreal.

According to Louis Janda P.h.D, low self-esteem is a source of different illnesses. He says,

People with low self-esteem are conducted to experience anxiety. They should think about saying or doing something that might displease those around them. Consequently, they feel rather powerless to control the direction of their lives.[103]

To have a positive self-esteem is conditioned with the acceptance and the love of others for us, this may not always be possible. Women insist to be liked by everyone and feel that they are admired. Thus, women take risks by the decisions they take in order to get a beautiful body, it means pleasant to others.[104]

Self-esteem can be negative when the person follows the media (unrealistic images) and the fashion blindly.[105] This leads women to be dissatisfied with their bodies which in turn creates low self-esteem. Ironically, the producers of makeup, beauty products and the industry of fitness take profit of advertisements and unreal photos shared on Instagram to attract more consumers.[106] Simmons Rachel argues that "we've long understood that movies, magazines and television damage teen's body image by enforcing a 'thin ideal'. Less known is the impact of media on body confidence".[107]

In addition, the social media, more precisely visual platforms, are used excessively by the users who are obsessed with their appearance and take these tools to compare themselves with the celebrities. This comparison results in different dilemmas[16] which Simmons refers by writing "earlier this year, psychologists found robust cross-cultural evidence linking social media use to body image concerns, dieting, body surveillance, drive for thinness and self objectification in adolescents".[108]

Women take huge risks vis-a-vis their lives by following different pieces offered by the media. Magazines, newspapers and even social media praise plastic and cosmetic surgeries, by highlighting the outcomes of these operations in changing faces and shapes, women seek to look like celebrities and their idols. In

her article "Study Reveals The Dangers of Plastic Surgery Advertisement on Instagram", Kari Paul argues that most Americans are influenced by celebrities and plastic surgeons who are promoting their photos on social media,[109] (Figure 04). She adds that half of plastic surgeons believe that "social media is a cheap way of advertising their services".[110] According to an American Society of Plastic Surgeons Survey Mikhael Salzhauer, plastic surgeon, uses social media, especially Instagram in advertising his surgeries; by doing so he has gained over 500.000 followers on Instagram.[111]

Figure 04: Dr. Miami Mickhael Salzhauer shares a photos of woman before and after the surgery intervention on his Istagram account.

Instagram in its turn shows the worthiness of body alteration, by promoting women's photos before and after these surgeries, and by hiding the surgical faults through interventions, as it advertizes the surgeons in addition to photos attractive slogans are used to create low self-esteem and invite them to make the first step. Dr. Maher Anous, a plastic surgeon in Beverly Hills uses this slogan "We Know Beauty" to attract more clients, the Mississauga Cosmetic Surgery Clinic uses this slogan "A More Natural Younger You". The Cosmetic Surgery Clinic in

Beirut, Facial Enhancement and Rejuvenation Procedures "Stay Young & Beautiful Forever".[112]

Excessive Exercises

To maintain a perfect body, women pursue excessive exercises to lose weight or counteract the effects of eating. The causes of excessive exercise may be both psychological and biological.[113] Women think that these excessive exercises are the best way to lose calories and weight, in other words, to reach a beautiful body shape. All this is the result of the influence of media through promoting the perfect body shape. SHEmazing Team, one Ireland's leading female-focussed websites, published an article in which they introduced Essena O'Neill an Australian Model, addicted to Instagram.[114] She speaks about the harm social media has caused to her mental and physical well-being. She spent hours on social media especially Instagram sharing photos and waiting for more followers, likes and comments. She started to eat in an unhealthy way, skip meals and do excessive exercises in order to stay slim for photoshoots,[115] but sometimes she took photos in strategic ways. She comments on one of her photos shared on Instagram with a bikini saying "Stomach sucked in, strategic pose, pushed up boobs. I just want younger girls to know this is not a candid life, or cool or an inspiration. It's contrived perfection made to get attention" (Figure 05).[116] O'Neill took the decision to no more use this application and detached herself from social media platforms in order to regain her health.[117]

Figure 05 : a photo of Essena O'Neill shared on Instagram where she says that it is taken in a strategic way.

Eating Disorders

A recent study of University College London has emphasized the over use of Instagram leads to eating disorders, the latter are fatal and serious illnesses which may cause disturbances in an individual's eating comportements.[118] In addition to this, the Royal Society for Public Health reports that after the use of Instagram the users always feel depressed and lonely. They also suffer from low self-esteem and lack of sleep.[119] These disorders may lead to depression and are mainly caused by body's dissatisfaction and the misrepresentation of society. Among these diseases: anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge eating.

The Sun reports that Alexis Ren, a twenty years old American model with 9,2 million followers, admits that Instagram was the main cause behind her eating Disorders.[120] When Alexis reached the peak of her fame, she became obsessed with her physical appearance and started eating less. She told *Cosmopolitain* "I was my worst critic ever, the only sense of relief I had was to be able to monitor my

eating and workout". She confesses that when she reached a higher number of followers on Instagram she began to eat less and less. She says "It was a vicious cycle where when I did eat, I just felt worse, so I didn't want to eat, and ate less and less", "I was scared of food".[121]

Anorexia Nervosa

In her article "Pro anorexia, Bulimia Social Media Posts on the Rise", Katie Cincotta demonstrates the harm that Instagram, as other social media platforms, cause for some instagrammers who believe that "nothing tastes good as being thin feels".[122] They advocate starvation as a sign of power and victory, teens think that losing weight is an important way to attract others' attention which lead to anorexia.[123] Cincotta supports her ideas by referring to Dr Ben Buchanen, who is from Victorian Counseling and Psychological Services and a specialist in treating body dysmorphic disorders, who says, "Social media turbocharges these checking and reassurance-seeking behaviours, which can include posting photos of themselves and checking how many 'likes' they receive".[124]

Anorexic people perceive themselves as overweight, although they maintain a healthy weight or an underweight.[125] This disease has the highest mortality rate compared to other mental illnesses, which means that anorexic people die by starving, following severe diets and committing suicide.[126] Its symptoms vary from extremely restricted eating, extreme thinness (emaciation), intense fear of gaining weight, distorted body image, a self-esteem that is heavily influenced by perceptions of body weight and shape, or a denial of the seriousness of low body weight.[127] According to *The Daily Mail* a girl of twenty two years old named Kerry Hooton admits that Facebook and Instagram are behind her Anorexia. She says that she

spends the whole day on these social media platforms and this has influenced her way of eating and eventually she limited herself to consuming no more than 200 calories a day.[128]

According to Medical Dictionary anorexia is defined as,

> A mental illness in which a person has an intense fear of gaining weight and body shape. People with this illness believe themselves to be fat even when their weight is so low that their health is in danger. A person with anorexia nervosa severely restricts food intake and usually becomes extremely thin.[129]

Bulimia Nervosa

In her article "Social Media Helps Fuel Some Eating Disorders", Marcela Rojas says that social media users share information and photos which lead to eating disorders among them bulimia. She argues that Instagram is flooded with images of "spindly legs, concave stomachs and jutting ribs" and comments like "pretty girls don't eat", "skip dinner, be thinner".[130]

Rojas continues " 'Pro-ana'(pro-anorexia) and 'pro-mia'(pro-bulimia) websites have existed since the inception of the Internet" and she affirms that Instagram is among these social platforms, where users share ideas and photos to rise self-destructive behaviors. They also promote that an eating disorder is not an illness, but a lifestyle choice.[131] She adds that instagrammers search for ' Likes': "1 like= 2 hours of fasting". She quotes Jessica Kilbride's, a Westchester Therapist, saying, "an eating disorder rarely occurs in a vacuum. A lot of times there's anxiety and depression".[132]

According to the American National Institute of Mental Health, Bulimia Nervosa is a serious health problem usually developed during adolescence mainly among young women. People with this illness, known as Bulimics, eat a large amount of food in a short time (binge) and then they try to get rid of what they have consumed by vomiting, fasting, exercising excessively or using laxatives.[133]

Consequently, Bulimia results from giving more attention to weight and often it is followed by depression, it is also considered as a psychiatric illness. This disease can cause severe damage and even death.[134] Bulimia Nervosa is defined as:

> An eating disorder in which persistent over concern with body weight and shape leads to repeated episodes of binging (consuming large amounts of food in a short time) associated with induced vomiting. It involves the use of laxatives, fasting, and/ or excessive exercise to control weight.[135]

Women with bulimia always control their weight fearing of being fat and they are defined by a sort of dissatisfaction about their body shape.[136]

Binge Eating

IANS (Private Indian News Agency) published an article "Are Facebook, Instagram and Youtube Causing Eating Disorders", where it explains that people who spend lot of time on social media such us Instagram may risk suffering from binge eating. The study shows that Instagram leads to eating disorders and body image concerns, "eating disorders include anorexia nervosa, bulimia, binge eating disorder and other clinical and mental health issues where people have a distorted body image and disordered eating".[137]

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, Binge Eating is so different from bulimia in periods of eating. Unlike bulimia, binge eating is not followed by purging, excessive exercises or fasting. [138] This type of eating disorder had marked the American society where its citizens are suffering from overweight and obese. Its symptoms according to the same source are "eating unusually large amounts of food in a specific amount of time, eating even when you're full or not hungry, eating fast during binge episodes, eating alone or in secret to avoid embarrassments, feeling distressed, ashamed, or guilty about your eating, frequently dieting, possibly without weight loss".[139]

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Chapter Three

Instagram: Women Embracing their Authenticity?

Contrary to most celebrities, who use the filter in Instagram to look attractive, a few stars, models, actors try to break the routine and look "au-natural" and authentic. These stars have captured their cuteness in a totally new and unusual way that the fans love sometimes and criticize other times. These celebrities choose to share photos on Instagram "sans makeup" and this choice is not random. It is a strategy to bring attention of Instagram users and look similar to other people and closer to them. In her article "The 71 Best Celebrity No Makeup Selfies", Lauren Alexis Fisher quotes Cameron Diaz, who appeared sans makeup to attract the fans' attention and to show her acceptance of the process of aging,[140]

> I'm so excited to continue the conversation because learning that you can age well, will actually help age better. If you understand how your body works then you can take action to help keep it in the best possible condition so it can carry you through a long and a beautiful life.[141]

Cameron Diaz comments on her photo on Instagram, where she refers to the importance of the internal beauty and how to live only by understanding the functioning of one's body. She accepts her aging process and she tries to make women believe that older ones are not neglected by society and they are attractive, sexy and still have their place in it.[142] Naomi Wolf states " 'Beauty' is by definition inert, timeless, and generic".[143]
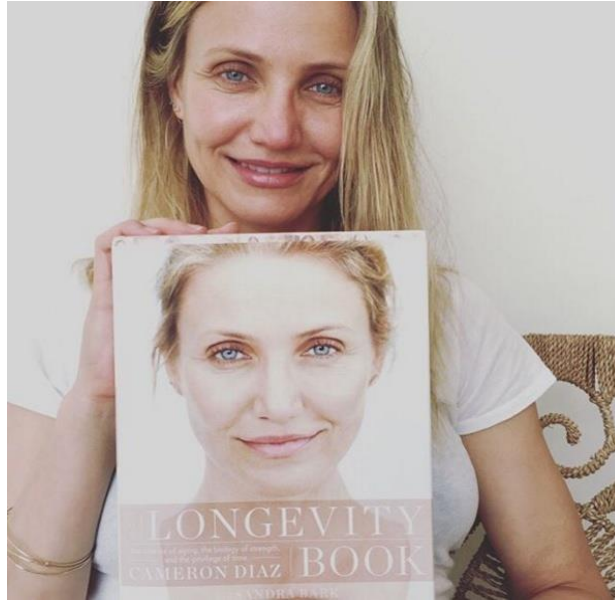
Figure 06 : Cameron Diaz shared a photo on Instagram without makeup .

There are some women who are against cosmetic products and all what causes harm and damage to their health especially the skin. Alicia Keys created a movement, called "No Makeup Movement"[144] to support natural beauty and to help other people and stars to increase their self-esteem. She confesses that her main goal in launching this movement is to regain her confidence.[145] She says that "she was fed up of using make up in order to hide her face". She adds "I hope to god it's a revolution cause I don't want to cover up anymore. Not my face, not my mind, not my soul. Nothing".[146]   The new attitude   taken by different stars is surprising, especially after their appearing with fresh faces on the red carpet, as is the case with Alicia Keys.

In her article "Keys Search CNN Entertainment The Anti Makeup Movement in Hollywood", Lisa Respers writes that Alicia Keys is the first woman A-Lister to be captured in the red carpet without makeup and that was the beginning of the appearance of the No Makeup Movement.[147] Keys continues to post her photos with a fresh face on Instagram and she calls others to join her in the way of standing

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natural in different festivals (Figure 07). Lisa Respers describes Keys as beautiful even without makeup and she looks more authentic than she is with it. She is classified the first one in the selection of top beautiful celebrities without makeup. The singer tells *CNN* that she no more longer wants "to cover up". She also asserts that she wants to appear strong and confident with her fresh face.[148] Many women started to imitate Alicia Keys, that is how the appearance without makeup has become a tendency.

Figure 07: Alicia Keys' Photos without makeup.

Another singer that occasionally appears without retouch on Instagram is Beyonce. In her article "Beyonce Goes Makeup Free in New Instagram Photo- See the Pic!", Jordona Ossad argues that Beyonce is like some other A- listers who have the habit to share photos with no makeup on their Instagram accounts on occasions.[149] Beyonce's latest free makeup selfie (Figure 06) on Instagram has drawn attention from the followers. What makes this selfie different from the others is that she used the front camera of a phone. This captured photo looks as a work of art,

it is an original and natural shot. It looks as if the photo is taken strategically, not by chance or any plannification.[150]

Figure 08: Beyonce's latest free makeup selfie.

In their article "Wonder Women Goes Makeup free!", Heidi Parker and Samer Swifor have analyzed a photo of the actress Gal Gadot, who appeared on Instagram without makeup (Figure 09).[151] The star was shooting her film "Wonder Woman", where she looked beautifully made up, arriving at home late. After that she had a sleepless night because she has a three month baby with colic and she was woken up by her older daughter of five years old. Even her followers praised her natural look. Her husband also commented on her photo "my wife scrawled beneath a white silhouette of the super hero herself".[152]

Figure 09: a photo of Gal Gadot without makeup

Adele is another celebrity who does not care much about her appearance. She has appeared several times without make up and she regularly posts photos on Instagram with a natural face. Adele opposes those stars who do anything to attract the attention of men, the media and fans. She rejects the Westernized concept of "beautiful",[153] and never tries to make changes about her look in order to satisfy the viewers and critics. For her external beauty has less importance than the interior one like: the combination of values, talent, poise and confidence.[154] Adele confesses that she sings to amaze the listener and not to attract attention to her physical appearance. This means that she does not pay attention to how people see her. In this sense Adele is the anti thesis of "the woman as icon, displayed for the gaze and enjoyment of men".[155]

Adele is constantly criticized about her weight by some fans, the media and stylists. Karl Lagerfeld, a French stylist and photographer, referred to her as being "too fat", but Adele declared that "she is proud of her image as a representative of

real women and that she's never aspired to look like the type of women that Lagerfeld sends down his catwalks".[156] In an interview with *People Magazine* she says "I've never wanted to look like models on the cover of magazines. I represent the majority of women and I'm very proud of that".[157] In her article "Adele Pose (encore) Sans Maquillage sur Instagram", Maelys Erissy clarifies the cancelling of the concert of Adele in August 17th in Phoenix, Arizonna. The singer posted a free makeup photo, and justifies her inability to sing that day. Adele shows that she is confident through this capture (Figure 10) because she faces her fans with a sickly face.[158]
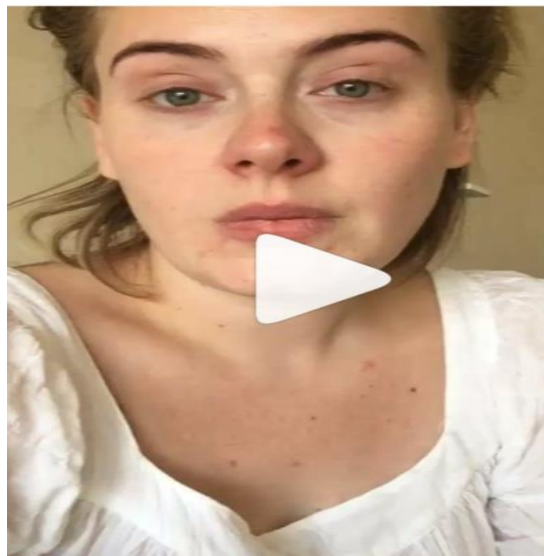

Figure 10: Adele shares a photo on Instagram with a sickly face.

Adele also appears in a funny photo on Instagram, celebrating her 29th birthday. Most of her followers were surprised by the photo since she looks like a grand-mother (Figure 11), but pleasing.[159] The British star confesses her attitude vis-à-vis the process of aging. She finds that it is difficult but worthy to live, which means that Adele does not show any fear against aging what Naomi Wolf calls "Terror of Aging" and "Physical Obsession".[160]

Figure 11: a funny photos shared by Adele on her Instagram account in her 29th birthday.

According to Katie Sall, despite Adele's fame she prefers to live far away from limelight. Recently (2016) she got engaged to Simon Konecki and made a secret marriage to which only her family and friends were invited, contrary to other celebrities who always take these kinds of occasions as an opportunity to promote their images and sell their photos on television for advertisement, attract attention and make money.[161]

Seeing various images of stars on Instagram without makeup make the fans feel confident about themselves and their physical appearance because these photos display several problems of skin and weight of stars. Unconsciously people think that these stars are more relatable and they look like everyone, not as they are shown on TV and elsewhere. In reality, most celebrities look as ordinary people without makeup. They have a body shape which is full of flaws as wrinkles, cellulite, ringing and muffin top but they always try to hide them by the help of makeup professionals, but these stars are still victims of some distortions in their bodies as

all the rest of people. One of these weaknesses that cannot be hidden especially during the period of summer is the muffin top. Some celebrities are captured by Paparazzi during their holidays with a bikini showing all what they are trying to hide in the red carpet. For instance we can make reference to Chantelle Houghton who was photographed in an unflattering look during her vacation in Spain running on the beach.[162]

Figure 12 : Chantelle Houghton photographed in an unflattering look

This photo (figure 12) shows clearly the muffin top of Houghton with the bikini. Another example is taken from *The Daily Mail* where the reporter captured the actress Eva Longoria in Puerto Rico this year (2017), with a growing belly (figure 13).[163] From this we can deduce that all women have problems with their bodies and they struggle everyday in order to look beautiful and attractive.

Figure 13 : Eva Longoria captured by the Paparazzi with a growing belly.

Weight gain is not the only problem of stars, they have other ones including skin distortions like stretch marks and cellulite. Some of these stars developed these issues during adolescence, pregnancies and others developed them when they are gaining and losing weight several times.[164] The choice of some stars of not wearing makeup and turning to plastic surgery anymore is not only about health, but also to show their satisfaction about their bodies. Therefore, it is a way of raising the self-esteem of the fans who have the same problems with the celebrities and are ashamed about that. They accept their flaws and distortions, but they use them as a means to reach the peak of the fame. Even though they are seen by other people as strange and sometimes they receive strong criticism and are misregarded on social media.

Many stars have confronted the world of media by sharing their photos on Instagram without using photoshop to hide their distortions. Stacey Solomon, the former X Factor singer, says that she loves distortions that she has on her body and she is proud of that.[165] In her article "Stacey Solomon Says she Wants to Celebrate her Muffin Top, Saggy Boobs and Stretch Marks", Rachel Revesz informs us that

Solomon shared a video entitled "Society labelled imperfections". Solomon appeared with a bikini and this has boasted the self-esteem of her Instagram followers, knowing that this video is seen 220,000 times in a day.[166] According to the same source Solomon confirms that "muffin top, saggy boobs and stretch marks" are the three parts she most loves in her body.[167]

In her article *"New Study Shows Impact Of Social Media On Beauty Standards"*, Brigit Katz answers her question: "What shapes our perception of beauty? by illustrating with five celebrities who have skin fails and are proud of them". Among these stars is Chantelle Winnie, a fashion model with a skin disorder called "Vitilligo", she has the same skin's trouble with Michael Jackson[168](Figure 14). Winnie's Instagram account is full of her photos. She tells *The Guardian* that "if humans want to see types of people over and over that's what industries will give us".[169] This means that this model has a positive self-esteem and encourages people to be different, proud of themselves and accept their weaknesses.

Instagram/Chantelle Winnie

Figure 14 : Photo of Chantelle Winnie showing her skin disorder Vitilligo on Instagram.

As a result, Chantelle Winnie does not use makeup to cover her face or has not resorted to any form of plastic surgery. From this, we can deduce that external beauty does not always play an important role in succeeding in the professional life. Though Chantelle Winnie looks different from other people, she seems unique. Naomi Wolf states that "The beauty is not universal or changeless, though the West pretends that all ideals of female beauty stem from one platonic Ideal Women; the Maori admire a flat vulva, and the Padung, droopy breasts".[170]

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V. General Conclusion

The aim of our dissertation has been to analyze and evaluate how Instagram influences women's body image and presents them negatively, in a way which undermines their self-esteem. This analysis has focused on three main themes: the representation of women in the media and women's body image in relation to Instagram, the effects of Instagram on women's body image and Instagram: women embracing their authenticity?.

The focus in the first section has been on the representation of women in the media in general and Instagram in particular where they are portrayed negatively and subjected to male domination and "Male Gaze". Instagram's promotion of women's ideal bodies lead them to imitate models. As a result, feelings of unsatisfaction and deception rise because they cannot reach the ideal advertised silhouette. This analysis reached the result that women are used as objects to sell and exploit in order to satisfy males' desires. .

The second section has dealt with the effects of Instagram on women's body image; it is divided into three sub-sections. The first part has dealt with the way Instagram influences women and lead them to imitate some models. While failing in this path a feeling of unhappiness and body dissatisfaction rise in women about their looks. The second one, has dealt with the effects of the promoted body image on women and young girls. At this level we have found that women are classified into two categories: "good" and "bad" women, according to the achievement of the ideal body image. It has been also demonstrated that the ideal body image creates self-hatred and violence towards women. In addition to this, we have noticed that young girls imitate celebrities at an earlier age, this affects them negatively. The third part

has focused on the negative effects of Instagram on women's body image including eating disorders: bulimia, binge eating, anorexia and excessive exercices.

The third section has dealt with celebrities sharing selfies on Instagram without makeup to look authentic so that to send positive images to women and young girls. Through this section, it has been demonstrated that there are some celebrities who have chosen to appear authentic on Instagram and in the red carpet for different reasons among them: health and self-confidence and a good role models for fans.

To conclude, the topic of our dissertation has dealt with the influence of Instagram on women's body image and it has been treated from two feminist media perspectives. We would like to pave the way for further research and studies, we think it will be interesting to compare Instagram's with audio- visual's (television) influence on women's body image.

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