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BEAUTY BOYS: The Aesthetic Labour of Transformation

by

Keer (Coco) Wang ©

Bachelor of Arts in Honours Communication Studies, Wilfrid Laurier University, 2016

Thesis

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

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Abstract

Under the advertising banner of recognizing gender fluidity, the past year has seen global makeup brands announcing male spokesmodels for campaigns that seek to be more diverse in capturing the emerging Generation Z by promoting makeup for boys. The media has described the rise of the "boy in makeup" as propelled by male social media influencers known as beauty boys who are destabilizing the traditional boundaries of gender roles. I turn my attention to the necessary interrogation of the corporeality of these socially mediated bodies in manner of a Foucauldian genealogy approach to trace the power relations of subjectification and the various contingences that brought forth this moment. I examine beauty boys through the culture of transformation, where fame and visibility gained through a labouring body can engender forms of upward mobility in the pursuit of self-actualization. This desire for visibility within contemporary neoliberal culture, driven by aspirations for social and economic capital have coded, quantified, and systematized practices of looking, engaging, and interacting. Beauty boys are as much about masculinity as they are about the wider political economy marked by promotional capitalism and the attention economy. I introduce beauty boys as engendering several forms of physical, psychic, and digital transformation of our bodies, subject position, and identities: transformation from an ordinary persona to that of a celebrity through microcelebrity practices; transformation of the physical and digital body through glamour labour; aesthetic transformation of beauty boys through makeup practices; identity exploration and transformation through the practices of vlogging.

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Beauty Boys: an Introduction

Under the advertising banner of recognizing gender fluidity, the past year has seen global makeup brands announcing male spokesmodels for campaigns that seek to be more diverse in the inclusion of other consumer markets, capturing the emerging Generation Z in promoting makeup for boys. In October 2016, 17-year-old social media personality, James Charles, is announced as the first ever male model for CoverGirl, generating positive media coverage and feedback in the beauty brand's push for diversity (Ahsan, 2016; Kell, 2016). Later in the month, Gabriel Zomora becomes the first-ever male beauty curator for Ipsy, a Los Angeles–based beauty-box subscription service for samples of trending beauty products (Arlexis, 2016). In January 2017, Manny Gutierrez, known as Manny MUA (Make-Up Artist), becomes the first ever male ambassador for Maybelline's "That Boss Life" campaign, launching the new Big Shot Mascara (Harmon, 2017). Two weeks later, 17-year-old British YouTube star, Lewys Ball, becomes the first male ambassador for Rimmel London's campaign #LiveTheLondonLook, signifying "there isn't one London look, it is whatever you want it to be" (Stone, 2017). In the following month, British blogger Jake-Jamie Ward (known by his social media personality, The Beauty Boy) is announced as the face of UK L'Oreal Paris's latest campaign for the Infallible Total cover range (Cliff, 2017a). Ward has a successful following of around 18,000 on his YouTube channel by producing videos aimed at men. Though successful, this is still relatively small in comparison to top YouTube beauty vloggers with millions of followers. He, however, garnered attention in launching a viral social media campaign #MakeupIsGenderless on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook in last

year April 2016 (Ward, 2016). UK L'Oreal Paris's move to sign a male spokesmodel follows US L'Oreal Paris's January launch of its True Match foundation range campaign that includes millennial male model Darnell Bernard, and transgender model Hari Nerf (L'Oreal Paris USA, 2017). Marie Claire's article "The Beauty Boys of Instagram" describes the rise of the boy in makeup as a

> beauty movement – an expanding community of male-identified digital stars who showcase their expertise on themselves. And their rapidly growing follows, totaling in millions, evidence the power of their influence, from Instagram to YouTube channels where fans of all gender can watch them *transform*. (Beck and Valenti 2016, emphasis added)

Internet celebrities have been a contemporary interest in celebrity studies specifically due to its close relation to contemporary digital life.

I discuss in Chapter One, the construction of celebrity and fame through the various media of presentation such as film and television and the Internet. What becomes clear in such interrogations is that celebrity is a marker of public visibility, a kind of visibility that is increasingly unattached to talent, achievement, or accomplishment, but "exists between the arcs of truth-telling and myth making" (Redmond, 2015, p. 80). The desire for fame indulges a sense of self-actualization, and the acknowledgement that you exist, but public visibility needs to be constantly maintained as one's private life can be in contention with one's public persona. In exploring the relationship of technology to the constitution of celebrity, new media allow new presentations of the public self. Micro-publics emerge along with microcelebrities, creating the appearance of a niche public life

that is nevertheless governed by the wider political field. New forms of stars emerge such as DIY celebrities or microcelebrities, impregnating the notion that the modern world of a shrinking job market is paradoxically democratic and open to all, as ordinary people find their way to fame through webcamming, reality TV, the blogosphere, and social media. The aspirations to do what you love and escape one's mediocre career and class positions makes the labour to win attention so attractive. The increased opportunity to create and disseminate media and the cultural notion of microcelebrities appears to be inclusive as ordinary people become the interest of the media, even if status is continuously controlled and value is unremittingly measured in hits, likes, and views of the attention economy.

What becomes clear is an expanding discourse of visibility, recognition, and fame that makes evident a new and contemporary system of value. To gain self-advantage in a free market means that what matters the most is "winning" attention, emotional allegiance and market share in what's known as a promotional culture (Wernick, 1991). Not only are goods and people commodified, they must create their own rhetorically persuasive meaning. In a neoliberal promotional capitalism, we are reduced to become "entrepreneurs of the self" (du Gay, 1996) as promotional rhetoric becomes intrinsic to contemporary forms of self-presentation, in order to advance one's own interest against others. As such, the branded self must be understood as a distinct kind of labour tied to the promotional mechanism of the post-Fordist market.

Self-branding is a form of affective, immaterial labour purposefully undertaken by individuals in order to gain attention, reputation, and potentially, profit (Hearn, 2008). The relationship of immaterial labour to self-branding involves an understanding of the self as a kind of product that is flexible, fragmented, and saleable. Thus, branding the self

is not simply a result of economic structures, but also a result of changing cultural outlooks. The labour of self-branding is thus economic in the sense that it relies on conditions of production of advanced capitalist societies, and it is cultural in that it involves a more diffuse, immaterial labour that creates new cultural norms and outlooks about the authentic self.

In retail and hospitality sectors, emotional and affective tendencies are becoming more important to productivity in the workforce which highlights the body as an embodied asset. Corporeal capacities in the management of image, attitude, posture, sociability, reputation, lifestyle and aesthetics are increasingly mobilized, developed and commodified, requiring both physical and virtual forms of self- surveillance and bodily interventions. Framing bodily interventions as a form of gendered labour in contemporary neoliberal society posits a highly entrepreneurial, self-reflexive, forward-looking subjectivity that works on the self on the basis of the market. Thus, individuals often undertake various precarious conditions as investment for their future aspirations, even if the rewards system is highly unequal.

The growing industry of men's grooming products also signify similar concerns of embodiment in relation to the job and marriage market, and more importantly to the construction of masculinity and its increasing entanglement with the consumer market. Metrosexuals, a media saturated and self-conscious kind of masculinity who partake in activities that are traditionally conceptualized as feminine such as grooming and, on the extreme end of the spectrum, makeup use, are seen as destabilizing the binary notions of gender. Men's accounts of makeup use however, are framed in terms of functionality for its corrective purposes rather than beautification. Hetero-masculinity founded on work,

sexual attraction, success, and pragmatism are still influential in the use and function of men's makeup products.

If men who wear corrective makeup are at the extreme end of metrosexuality, where do we place beauty boys who wear glamourous makeup, and actively embrace non-normative sexualities?

This emerging phenomenon asks the questions of body, subjectivity and power, such as: Can beauty boys be viewed as a progressive and subversive movement towards problematizing gender boundaries?; Does it offer new social scripts to express one's identity?; Can this be viewed as another move to de-politicize hybrid identities in the context of advanced capitalism that produces differences for the sake of commodification?; Is it predominately an image-based practice bound up with dominant masculinity?; Does the signification of "beauty *boys"* present an easily digestible subjectivity that merely suggests a youthful, playful, childlike performance?; What does it mean when out of a spectrum of beauty boys, only young attractive gay men win positions with cosmetic brands?; and finally, What about the claim that makeup is genderless, echoed by major beauty brands and beauty boys who actively assert its ideology and never its implications? Before attempting to answer these questions, I first turn my attention to the necessary interrogation of the corporeality of these socially mediated bodies.

I posit that studies of bodies via digital media should not be understood as anthropocentric or mediacentric but be treated as discursive-material enactments that are dynamically produced in doing, which through the process of materialization gives the effects of boundary and fixity. In contrast to Cartesian dualism, the body has been

conceptualized as entanglement (Barad, 2007), assemblage (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988), glitch (Sundén, 2015), situated subject (Beauvoir, 2012), code (Hansen, 2012), multiplicity and becoming. To become a beauty boy is not only a question of gendered bodies but the co-constitutive relationship between objects, bodies, space, discourse and practices. The growing shared agency between people and technologies implicates our subjectivity and eschews the normative sense of human agency as it is distributed along subjects, discursive practices, social media platforms and interfaces. What does it mean when technology is part of the matrix that constitutes our being and subjectivity? What does it mean when identity performance realized in the embodied social inscription of body are organized through social media platforms? Contemporary sexual-body-subject are embodied, embedded, entangled in technological and performative networks, so how should we understand our desiring corporality as "material-semiotic generative nodes" (Haraway, 1988, p. 595)? As a node in "multiple networked performances" (Senft, 2008, p. 35) of technology, social media platforms, codes and protocols, corporeality, practice, discourse and affect, the "intra-actions" (Barad, 2007) that occur within this entangled phenomena enacts boundaries that materialize and demarcate entities as separate from one another. To be a viable subject in a network society is to enclose the tacit labour of various actors and actants in performative networks, backgrounding the agency of technological apparatuses, the presence of social media platforms and their algorithmic culture, and the material constitutions of makeup, presenting them as disclosed and discrete entities. In the desire for recognition in a network society, beauty boys engage in body work that is both explicit and tacit as to negotiate their socially mediated bodies within material-discursive entanglements. I seek to highlight how the discursive-material

formation of makeup as transformative and genderless functions in a heteronormative matrix that nevertheless produces an embodied form of vulnerability.

My study on beauty boys can be seen as looking at the struggles against the submission of subjection and a struggle for a new subjectivity, where individuals actively produce themselves as beauty boys and are at the same time subjugated to power. Subjects are revealed as neither natural or ahistorical but produced through specific historical contingences with their associated discourses, as well as how power/knowledge/truth form practices from material-discursive frameworks. In other words, the intelligibility and materialization of subjects is an effect of the truth regimes and power. Foucault sees power and knowledge as imbricated with one another, produced through different discourses in a constellation of relations between practice, discourse, and non-discursive events. Using a Foucaudian genealogy (discussed in Chapter Two), focusing on the interaction of and the relationship between discursive and non-discursive practices, the productive effects of power work on the body/subject, and how we have come to conceive of ourselves as subjects inform the analysis of this paper. The successive pronouncement of beauty boys as makeup ambassadors for campaigns that focus on gender equality problematizes contemporary masculinity and traditionally feminized activity of putting on makeup. The task of genealogy is then to trace a line of decent following a course of contingencies and accidents in their dispersion, in order to arrive to this rupture in the present where makeup emerges as a problem.

Looking at contemporary mainstream newspaper and magazine articles, I trace two discursive themes that frame beauty boys as a form of a microcelebrity and beauty boys as a social movement to destabilize gender roles. In proclaiming makeup as

genderless, makeup has been conceptualized as a form of gender performance and play. I argue that the Makeup as Gender discourse strays from the corrective functionality discourse in the metrosexual moment, and instead looks at makeup as performance for self-expression and self-actualization. The transformation of makeup also evokes forces of empowerment, confidence, and courage to reject, challenge, and question gender rules, and ultimately evoke visibility as the marker of status and individualism as possibilities of change. Makeup as a form of play, which allows an easy venture into gender play, backgrounds the lived vulnerability of the abject bodies of beauty boys. By advocating for only positive feelings, while shutting down negatives ones such as anger and frustration, is also cutting off the root of often political feelings such as the anger and frustration towards inequality.

Contemporary discourse unifies beauty boys as microcelebrity and beauty boys as a social movement, interpreting the audience as consumer citizens, who through their consumption power can partake in civic action. I argue that the discursive formation of beauty boys and its subsequent makeup campaigns with transnational brands is a form of commodity activism that raises serious questions on what is considered civic engagement, as the discourse of beauty boys continues to background political organizing by privileging the belief of network media and brand power as the solution to gender issues. When the same transnational beauty brands have significant disproportionate female representation in the executive level, it makes the makeup as genderless movement dubious. To be a beauty boy as a microcelebrity is to engage in fan management and self-branding practices through the performance of authenticity where the goal of visibility can in effect further one's own network and community with

rewards of social and economic capital. This means privileging the logics of the market to gain value and accelerate social change rather than considering other political actions, which I discuss in Chapter Three. When beauty campaigns appropriate seemingly progressive causes and driven by the largely white, middle-class, gay men, rather than cisgender women, other queer identities, and people of colour, white men are still positioned as the main historical and social agents of change. The mobilization of beauty boys in makeup campaigns reflects the broader ways in which discourses of gender, race, sexuality have been mobilized to expand neoliberalism through commodity activism that use discourses from feminism and queerness.

In Chapter Four, I look at the practices of beauty boys through their YouTube videos and investigate the various self-branding strategies employed to gain visibility and viability. Mainly, I explore the myth of authenticity that backgrounds the various physical and digital interventions of the body, social and economic capital, and the geographical location that allows for productive sociality. I frame beauty boy as active subjects that negotiate authenticity through the relationship between brands, self-branding, and their audience, through discourse of professionalization as YouTube content creators.

In Chapter Five, I present a discursive analysis of YouTube videos from the top ten beauty boys who have had a brand collaboration to introduce four makeup registers that reinforce the discourse of makeup as transformative. The discourse of transformation is deployed in different makeup practices in what I categorize as "corrective," "glamourous," "drag," and "creative" makeup. *Corrective makeup* has functional aims of "correcting" skin deficiencies to arrive at a more confident self which presupposes the body as always flawed under the heteronormative consumer-orientated definitions of

beauty. *Glamourous makeup* is a spectacle of glamour which celebrates makeup's playful artifice as a form of escapism from the lived reality in order to occupy an aspirational future. *Drag makeup* seeks an intentional, theatrical transformation of male appearance to female impersonation. *Creative makeup* engenders professionalization as a makeup artist to transform the artist into a work of art. Makeup has been a refuge to deal with issues of self-identity and self-esteem, used as an outlet for self-expression and creativity, and a projection of an idealized future invoking upward mobility. Transformative makeup identifies the body as a site for refining identities, and makeup stands as a way to negotiate our relationship with our bodies. Makeup practice tries to control, blot out and eradicate the viscous fluid of our porous molecular composition under normative ideals of beauty is at the same time a constant reminder the porous body opens up possibilities of multiple identity expressions to negotiate beauty norms.

Chapter Six focuses on why particularly YouTube is adapt for propagating the beauty boy culture. I look at YouTube, purchased by Google, as a platform which literally and ideologically conveys a sense of being raised, progressive, egalitarian, and accessible, heralding the utopian and democratic potential of the internet as giving everyone a stage to express themselves. YouTube's conceptual use of platforms aligns with the discourse of the ordinary celebrity, who can bypass the gatekeepers of traditional media and reclaim the construction of their own identities. We can say that celebritisation is built into the architecture of YouTube, where online visibility and profitability is based on social media metrics in the form of views, comments, and subscriptions. Google's ability to sell advertisement with user-generated content using its AdSense program speaks to the invisible infrastructure of the algorithmic culture that favours certain

production and viewership than others. YouTube's new advertising-friendly guidelines tighten policies on content and monetization, where shifting algorithms can cause automatic demonetization, represses creations of certain content.

At the same time, vlogging offers a form of identity formation through documenting and communicating the self in a process of actualization that brings the self into being. The co-producing of identity through vlogging provides a space to self-invent and experiment with the manifestation of new identities, being visible to themselves and others as an image. Vlogging does not have a clear linear narrative structure because of the on-going process of representation, revisioning and retelling of our past and present selves, while projecting an ideal future self. Using my case studies of Manny Gutierrez and James Charles, I showcase how both beauty boys experiment with different personas to come to a more desirable identity that one finds attractive. Nevertheless, experimenting with the manifestation of new identities is not without its risk, and still inscribed in larger community norms and heteronormative commercial-orientated conception of beauty.

Lastly, in my conclusion, I argue that vlogging as a tool of self-disclosure indulges in a voluntary confessional practice as an effort to overcome shame, guilt and inhibition in a process to better understand the self and one's experiences. The feedback function of vlogging allows for the community to share advice on how to cope with difficulties which has a communal, didactic, and therapeutic purpose. Vlogging on YouTube allows beauty boys to gain public visibility that is denied of them in heteronormative public settings and their audiovisual presence is itself a sense of empowerment, motivating others to also claim visibility, and to enable self-construction and self-reflection as a beauty boy. Watching other beauty boys on YouTube can

motivate and enable other men to realize their passion and recognize their own narrative as a beauty boy.

The emergence of beauty boys is not the outcome of any singular cause but produced through a variety of conflicting and overlapping contingences such as feminist scholarship and masculinity studies, the rise of the style press in the 1980's, the production of clothing outlets for men, the growing men's grooming industry, the influence of RuPaul's drag race, the infiltration of multicultural beauty as marketing strategies, the success of the Dove's Campaign for real beauty, and the increasing number of cultural intermediaries that are implicated in the production of knowledge as truths. These contingences gave rise to beauty boys as a distinctively Western phenomenon, and their identity formation as driven by capitalism that continues to award those who participate in the larger dominant heteropatriarchal culture.

Chapter 1: The Cult of Celebrity, Beauty, and Masculinity

The *Marie Claire* article "The Beauty Boys of Instagram" describes the rise of the boy in makeup as a "beauty movement – an expanding community of male-identified digital stars who showcase their expertise on themselves" (Beck & Valenti, 2016). This statement highlights beauty boys as not simply about boys in makeup but found in the convergence of celebrity culture and participatory media. To become a beauty boy is to become a digital star, a social media influencer with millions of followers from Instagram to YouTube. Joshua Gamson (2011) has marked contemporary celebrity culture as a decisive turn towards the ordinary, or what Graeme Turner (2010) refers to as the "demotic turn." Beauty boys, as ordinary people–turned–celebrities are well settled in the contemporary insurgence of ordinary people in media culture. I will be tracing celebrity through the media of film, television, and social media platforms to show how beauty boys occupy a new celebrity type: the microcelebrity who employs the self-presentation strategies of authenticity, intimacy, and self-branding. I interrogate the celebrification of the ordinary through the desire for fame as an effect of power that pushes us in the game to win attention through techniques of self-branding in order to gain viability, recognition, and success. How does the desire of fame, embodied in the celebrity, function as technology of power "which determine[s] the conduct of individuals and submit[s] them to certain ends or domination, and objectivizing of the subject" (Foucault, 1997, p. 225). An examination of celebrity and fame through the media of film, television, and social media platforms will highlight the tensions of merit and manufacture, authenticity and fakery, intimacy and separatability that play in a field of domination on the very bodies of beauty boys.

Makeup being a thematic interest of beauty boys relates to the longer discussion of beauty and its politics. Contemporary beauty studies note the increased surveillance of the body through apps and smartphone cameras as well as peer surveillance that positions the body as always/already flawed and in need of commercial solutions. In the context of social media platforms, subjectivity is predicated on the legitimization and feedback from audiences who take up disciplinary positions to assess authenticity and the symbolic value of appearance. As surveillance extends to the psychic life in the Love Your Body (hereafter, LYB) discourse, affective dispositions of self-confidence become a key area of intensive marketing, resulting in a convergence of social issues and market solutions in the manner of commodity activism. Lastly, I use the scholarship of beauty as labour to interrogate the technologies of self that reconstruct the material body and virtual body as desirable and attractive, and the various material limitations of the body such as gender, race, class and mobility.

While beauty politics has primarily focused on women's experience, men's interest in image conscious–practices also has a long trajectory. At the core, my research is an investigation into the experience of men and how they navigate their identities in contemporary culture. My focus is on the ways consumer culture continues to reconstruct masculinities in the subject of the metrosexual. The increased market for men's grooming products has generated discussions of men in makeup. In the metrosexual moment, makeup is framed as functional tool for corrective purposes, defending against accusations of homosexuality, and in an interesting departure, beauty boys use makeup for beautification and embrace various non-normative sexualities. Scholars are unsettled on whether metrosexuals who engage in image- conscious practices signify a

destabilization of gender boundaries or are simply an outcome of the market still bound up in dominant masculinity. I hope my discussion of beauty boys can add to this conversation.

Following this reasoning, the three parts of my literature review concern the rise of celebrity and microcelebrity, feminist literature on beauty, and commercial masculinity. I am interested in how commercial culture frames beauty boys as microcelebrities who effect through their own means certain deployments of self-presentation strategies (authenticity, intimacy, and self-branding) in the engagement of glamour labour, as to gain visibility and self-actualization. At the same time subjugated to neoliberal aesthetics and discourses of self-betterment, self-improvement, and entrepreneurism, beauty boys accept the rewards of fame and visibility despite inhabiting the risks themselves for the purpose of transformation.

Part I: Celebrity and Microcelebrity

The term microcelebrity has been used by theorists to examine a form of online performance that uses strategies of self-branding to gain visibility, attention, and fame through managing their audiences as fans. First coined in Terri Senft's *Camgirls: Celebrity and Community in the Age of Social Networks*, the term microcelebrity is used to describe "a new style of online performance that involves people 'amping up' their popularity over the Web using technologies like video, blogs and social media networking sites" (Senft, 2008, p. 25). This quote suggests two factors: the desire for fame, and the mobilization of a network culture (Castells, 2000, 2004; Papacharissi, 2010; Terranova, 2004).

The Desire for Fame

In the interest of mapping a historical trajectory of fame, emphasis has been placed on the idea that the culture of fame is changing in new and significant ways. The term “fame” is often used synonymously with “star” and “celebrity”. The term “celebrity” is from the Latin word *celebrem* and derived from the verb meaning “to celebrate” and the noun describing “one whose is well-known in public” from the French word *célèbre*. The original use referred to a form of ritual or ceremony, and then it had begun to be used to connote the condition of being famous around the fourteenth century (Drake & Miah, 2010, p. 50). Being famous indicates that celebrity status depends on public recognition and co-construction, suggesting that fame of a celebrity is not dependent on direct or personal reciprocity. By the nineteenth century, it was used as a descriptive noun to denote a person of fame (Drake & Miah, 2010, p. 51). While some scholars have argued the emergence of celebrity as we know it to be around mid-eighteenth century Europe (Inglis, 2010; Krieken, 2012; Morgan, 2011), others have addressed contemporary celebrity culture as a continuation of even earlier version of fame (Braudy, 2000; Kleinberg, 2011). Leo Braudy’s *The Frenzy of the Renown* (2000), for example, attempts to give a sweeping history of the “will to fame” that begins in early Roman times and argues that the desire for fame has been a fundamental component in western societies over many centuries. He argues that the condition of being well-known is not unprecedented, just imbued with a shifting definition of achievement throughout various point in time. While the degree of fame has faced inflation, intensification, and acceleration with the rise of individuation, democratization and mass media, these are matters of degree rather than of substance. This emphasis on continuity has often been

challenged by recent scholarship (Rojek, 2001; Turner, 2004) that examines the pervasiveness of celebrity culture across modern mass media, which presents contemporary celebrity as a new development, rather than simply an extension of fame from previous conditions.

For Chris Rojek (2001), modern celebrity is a product of "mass-circulated newspapers, TV, radio and film" (2001). He later argues it is historically linked to the invention of public relations, promotion and publicity industries of the twentieth century (Rojek, 2012). It was for this reason that Richard Schickel maintains "there was no such thing as celebrity prior to the beginning of the twentieth century" (Schickel, 1985, p. 21). Previously, people were famous for their achievements and own value, whereas modern fame is detached from intrinsic merit or efforts, refracted through the machines of publicity and promotion (Boorstin, 1971; Schickel, 1985). Boorstin's aphorism, "celebrity is a person who is well-known for their well-knowness" (Boorstin, 1971, p. 58) appropriately describes celebrity fame as not contingent on success, but fabricated in order to gain attention in the public. In his perspective, public relations, promotion and publicity industries fundamentally construct celebrity as inauthentic and dominated by media's "pseudo event," boosting significance through strategic planning and staging in the scale of media coverage, rather than assessing the event's importance. In the same vein, celebrity can be considered a "human pseudo event" that is constructed by the media and evaluated based on the scale of their media visibility (Boorstin, 1971, p. 57). In this way, Boorstin anticipates Guy Debord's (1983) "society of the spectacle," and Jean Baudrillard's concept (1994) of the simulacra.

Appropriately, Gamson's (1992) research is motivated by the desire to trace shifts in the discourse of two competing claims to fame narratives: the notion of an authentic fame that is naturally deserved and derived, and celebrities as artificially manufactured. By the late twentieth century, he notes the manufacture of fame narrative has been intensified. The behind-the-scenes mechanism of celebrity production and image construction has been increasingly exposed, along with the intentional deployment of irony in the discourse of celebrity that both acknowledge and embrace celebrity as a commercial enterprise. At the same time, there has been increased emphasis on the power and agency of the audience who is self-conscious of the publicity machine and the commercial structure of celebrities. Rojek offers a taxonomy to navigate through these two competing narratives by distinguishing between "ascribed celebrity," a phenomenon that predates modern mass media concerning lineage and monarchy, "achieved celebrity," which recognizes rare skills or talents, and "attributed celebrity" which arises from the work of culture intermediaries (Rojek, 2001, p. 17). Marwick extend this taxonomy to microcelebrities as "ascribed" or "achieved" which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Although celebrity is not a modern phenomenon, contemporary celebrity articulates a distinct dynamic of fame. Whether celebrity developed through mass circulated magazines (Boorstin, 1971), high profile journalism (Gabler, 1995), or the demand of celebrity material (P. D. Marshall, 1997), the development of mass media, along with sectors of publicity, signified a cultural shift that privileged the visual, the image, and the sensational over the reasonable and the rational. Information relies on useful ideological symbols that personify meaning (Schickel, 1985, p. 28). For example,

the use of photography in mass media towards the publicizing of people makes dissemination of faces easier than the dissemination of ideas (Gamson, 1994, p. 21). Alexander Walker (1970) has also talked about the importance of film close-ups as having the ability to capture the personality of the star and instills new forms of desire (p. 21). The highly individuated nature of the star depends on specificity; various statements that give their image depth and a set of personality to represent the star (DeCordova, 2001, p. 9) are often used as a way for studios to differentiate their products from one another (Gamson, 1994, p. 25).

The discourse of fame as merit and manufacture is a key theme in the interrogation of the celebrity, microcelebrity, and the subject of my analysis, the beauty boy. Contingent on celebrities as artificially manufactured, I hope to document in the following shifts and events that deploy the discourse of fame as specific techniques of self-presentation, and the construction of image/personae as particular strategies of self-branding.

Fame and Film Studies. A key site of tracing the development of fame has been the establishment of the star system in Hollywood cinema. Richard deCordova's *Picture Personalities: The Emergence of the Star System in America* (2001) draws on Foucault's concept of discourse, which I will discuss in detail in Chapter Two, to trace how the star was brought into being through three stages: the discourse of acting from 1907, the emergence of the picture personality from 1909, and the development of the star from 1914. Initially, motion pictures did not promote actors as identities independent of the roles they played in film. This changed around 1909, when producers began to include a cast list and to credit individual performers, giving rise to picture personalities. Picture

personalities are an effect that unified representations of character across a number of films, while giving the illusion that it has its basis outside the film (DeCordova, 2001, p. 86). Picture personality was defined by a discourse that restricted knowledge to the professional existence of the actor, where the personality was a coherent construct promotionally integrated with the screen performance. DeCordova argues this is the early premise of privileging the private self, where the personality becomes equally an object of commercial interest, a salable commodity. In other words, celebrity value was tied to both the actor on the screen, and also to the individual person playing the character. Its commercial function is to build an interest in the individuals themselves and a desire to see them perform the personality on screen.

In 1914, DeCordova argues that a shift occurred transforming picture personality to a star image, where the private lives outside of a star's professional existence becomes the site of truth and knowledge. There is a disarticulation between the identity of the star with the personalities they played on screen. There are shifting levels of identity in a field of subjectivication that a person can perform such as the fiction character of the narrative, the actor with certain aesthetics techniques, a personality of the person gathered through the appearance in a number of films, and a star whose personal life has been publicized, emerging an identity completely removed from his or her appearance in films. To unravel an actor's identity is contingent on repetitive consumer behavior in order to get to know the actor, and consequently, celebrity serves as an important everyday context of meaning-generation. It is clear that the star system began to pay particular attention to an actor's identities and its this possibility for expansive knowledge that allowed for greater flexibility and freedom to be marketed by the industry. Gamson (1992) suggests a more

gradual and variable timeline that also considers the construction of fame before and beyond the emergence of Hollywood cinema. Gamson's analysis is useful in emphasizing that a historical account of fame is not a unidirectional timeline, but rather the explanation of fame is gradually renegotiated through changing cultural and media contexts.

The star image of celebrities is the early instance where the private self becomes the site of truth and knowledge. The commercial value of commodifying the private life of stars enters a stage of intensification when ordinary people, without professional existence in the media industry, come in to fame using their private life as the content of their celebrity.

The star system should not be seen as monolithic and homogenous, but rather comprised of a multitude of industries and cultural intermediaries such as agents, managers and publicists active in the production of celebrity. While their activities appear increasingly visible in the media spheres, much can still remain hidden from view, rendering the work of producing fame invisible. The making of a celebrity is an industry in its own right, discursively constructed by various institutions including public relations, news and journalism, agent and management, photographers, fitness trainers, personal assistants, cosmetic experts, entertainment law, audience, and rating metrics. In my later analysis, I will focus on the institutionalized nature of fame even for those outside the media production of traditional celebrities, the ordinary internet celebrities who are seemingly more authentic.

Forming a dispersed view of power, celebrity is a field of intertextual representations where meaning is assembled from actors and actants involved, generating

the omnipresent celebrity image and the codes of representation through which their image is reproduced, developed and consumed. Yet, this complex assemblage has a single molar appearance, that of a celebrity. The instatement of the Right to Publicity in 1953 further propelled the myth that a sole individual is involved in the production of his or her star image (Coombe, 2006). The star image, the celebrity identity, the public persona became a single-authored form of intellectual property. Celebrity as an industry became celebrity as an individual in a form of property that could be alienated or contractually appropriated by others. In other words, being famous "is appropriated by the celebrity as intrinsic parts of a personality over which proprietary claims are made" (Coombe, 2006, p. 724). Being overly recognized is constitutive of the celebrity value, and the ability to generate attention is transformed by law into an inherent quality of an individual and subject to market exchange. Philip Drake (2007) suggests that approaches to the perspective of celebrity as a form of intellectual property and legal discourse should be embedded in a cultural context. As he observes, English courts have been more cautious about assigning property and privacy rights to the famous compared to in the United States, where they are more vigorously upheld. This suggest that legal discourses are deeply shaped by cultural values, and the legal regulation of the celebrity image is as much a part as the cultural construction of celebrity.

Being a star implies they no longer solely depend on the institutions that are the original source of their visibility as they have access to the audience based on the relation established through their star image. The development of the star marks an expansion in the kinds of knowledge that could be produced unrelated to their role in films. Thus, individual stars had other motivations to promote not just themselves as performers, but

also as promotional objects. In this vein, Marshall (1997) paints celebrity as a symbol of democratic individualism. The strict boundaries of former hierarchy can now be determined by one's own merit, dissolving the customary divisions of traditional society. The triumph of individuality is articulated through the freedom of consumption and capital accumulation, ideologically laden with the promise of success, upward mobility, and choice in social condition. His discussion of film stars emphasizes the discourse of freedom, individuality, and independence, along with an audience who continues to reiterate their significance through consumption. As an idol of consumption (Lowenthal, 1961, p. 115), celebrity espouses the ideologies of the American Dream and serves as an aspirational figure to show what a successful life looks like (Dyer, 1979, p. 48–9). As a symbol for success and wealth and productive of desire, the aspirations for fame can alleviate the status of the ordinary and experiences of the mundane. By coupling consumer culture with democratic aspiration, celebrities serve more than just an economic value but are also an integral part of cultural and social identification.

The celebrity is a key site of media attention. Leo Braudy (2000) explains that fame offers us a flattering kind of visibility that restores the wholeness to the representation of the self. Fame has been a way of expressing the legitimacy of the individual within society. Being famous is validating for the individual, confirming one's existence in a world where traditional forms of social validation such as religion are in decline. As Schickel previously mentioned, modern fame detaches from talent or achievements. In this case, to be famous for yourself means you come into your rightful inheritance, a form of "personal justification" (Braudy, 2000, p. 7). Braudy (1986) adds that the desire of fame has always been "inseparable from the idea of personal freedom"

(p. 7). Always emphasizing the contingent and historical nature of fame, he considers the concept of democratization as a key theme in the contemporary discussion of celebrity. In this respect, celebrity is not a status that separates the ordinary and the extraordinary, but a promise of the extraordinary that is touchable and attainable.

Nick Couldry (2000) has a similar observation of the fantasy to be included in some major cultural forms such as television or film. Popular culture has provided the platform of such fantasy of "getting on the stage" especially for members of the working class (p. 5). Couldry (2003) argues that stars and celebrities now fully occupy the social center, and media speaks for that center which we accept as legitimate. He argues that ordinary people are prepared to self-disclose on television out of the false sense that media speaks for the center of the social world, thus gaining a sense of political enfranchisement through the symbolic power of the media. The fantasy of getting on the stage, or being famous, can be extremely attractive for individuals to be detached from their place in social hierarchy. The class dimension offered here in the analysis of fame as born out of the desire to escape identification with the working class is very much needed in the discussion of contemporary television format of reality TV. The discourse of democratic individualism, self-validation, and empowerment of the media center makes fame attractive to ordinary people who feels disenfranchised in the current political economy.

Here, it's fruitful to mention that the development of celebrity in fields other than the cinema has its own histories and cultural content. While the film star is the most socially grounded instance of the modern celebrity, it cannot serve as the only perspective to understand the widespread desire for fame among ordinary people. The construction of

a celebrity must be culturally situated, and thus medium specificity often offers a way to avoid sweeping cultural processes and attunes to the meaningful distinctions between, for example, film stars and television personalities.

Fame in Television. While film produced stars through performing other roles, in television, personalities perform themselves. John Langer (1981) suggested that film produced stars, and television produced personalities. The key attribute of television personalities is the ability to eliminate the distance between their performance and themselves through a high degree of professionalism and skill (Bennett, 2010), unlike film stars who insist on their seperability. James Bennet (2010) looks at the specificity of television to the production and circulation of television celebrity. Bonner (2003) suggests, however, that such distinction has lost some of its pertinence "as celebrity culture has become so large a part of our mediated culture" (p. 75) and television's centrality to celebrity culture has increased. Television is often associated with a shift away from the meritocratic ideals of stardom and depleting the aura of stardom in its production of personalities, but stardom is very much possible through television formats.

The first wave of reality TV formats such as *Popstars* or *Search for a Supermodel* have come from the trend of branding pop bands. In Turner's (2004) analysis of The Spice Girls, who were conceived more as a brand than as a band from the start, he argues their success was the outcome of a strategic marketing plan (p. 57) dependent on each individual member's ability to construct convincing celebrity identities for themselves (p. 55). Their appeal to the public is their explicit acknowledgement of their commodification and their refusal for this factor to delegitimize them. Marshall (1997) points out the discursive opposition of authenticity and inauthenticity in the music

industry. They must be the romantic artist that resists commodification, and at the same time, they are manufactured and created by the industry. Previously, entertainment industries have geared towards vertical integration to control the whole process of production, distribution, and sale; the industry has complete control of the star from the very beginning. The example of The Spice Girls, however, proposes the ideology of the "democratic celebration of celebrity" (P. D. Marshall, 1997, p. 174) where savvy individuals can have their own power and autonomy if they play the fame game well.

Competing paradigms of the TV talent quest for genuine talent offer the opportunity of fame within a very restrictive commercial framework, that doesn't allow much individual agency or acceptance of one's individuality by fitting in to the preconceived mould, seemingly echoing Francesco Alberoni's (Alberoni, n.d.) powerless elite argument. These TV talent quests, however, still maintain some connection between talent and the status of celebrity through winning the competition. The next phase of reality TV shows, such as *Big Brother*, were dependent on a complete pseudo-event, and have a tremendous promotional potential through interconnected promotional outlets. It seems the appeal of manufacturing celebrity has been welcomed in commercial television who took it upon themselves to produce celebrities rather than to discover them. This is done by using ordinary people, with no special talent, as the talent in their program, what Turner calls "produced from nothing" (Turner, 2004, p. 51). Without any special training or previous performance history, ordinary people bypass the conventional conditions of entry and proliferate in game shows, infotainment, talk shows, or reality television.

This decisive turn towards the ordinary is what Gamson (2011) consider the most prominent development in American celebrity culture in the twenty-first century.

Ordinariness is a persistent theme in the last two decades of celebrity culture and should come as no surprise. As Boorstin and Braudy have previously demonstrated, fame is disconnected from exceptionality, talent, or merit. The celebrity industry doesn't need celebrities to be extraordinary if they can be artificially produced for mass consumption. In this narrative, they are just like us, only better marketed. After the demise of the Hollywood studio system where celebrity production was tightly controlled, antitrust action in the late 1940s allowed celebrity productions to be dispersed amongst greater number of parties. Celebrity production become more visible and displays of ordinariness quickly took central place in exhibiting the real self behind the manufactured celebrity image (Gamson 2011, p.1063). Images of famous people's everyday lives invite identification with ordinary people, and markers of the real, true, and authentic.

Most notably, television programming strategies and web technologies bring the ordinary to the forefront. Due to the fiscal crises within mainstream television and high costs of network program production in a competitive market, reality television producers used ordinary people, who gave their labour for free, in order to lower production costs and increase network profit (Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2015). Reality programming was cheaper to produce, and bypassed union constrains and agents' fees by employing ordinary people who were non-union actors (Gamson, 2011, p.1067). Ordinariness is an essential programming strategy that is cheap and can be easily replaced (Collins, 2008). Investigating the production process and broader economic and political context, Alison Hearn (2011) uses autonomist Marxist ideas to argue that reality television and its promotional capacities were an outcome of the post-Fordist era, where texts, audiences,

and modes of production all advance the logics of capitalistic production and accumulation (p. 315).

Reality TV programs such as *Big Brother* are a successful example of this trend that does not focus on manufacturing a celebrity personnel per se, but rather on manufacturing a successful programming for advertisers. Next to the cash prize to attract each wave of contestants for reality TV, the real prize for participants is the prize of celebrity. Along the same vein, Alison Hearn and Stephanie Schoenhoff (2015) see the rise of reality television production in the 1990s and 2000s as the ideal platform to generate celebrity value. In other words, celebrity is the byproduct of a strategic programming strategy (Turner, 2004, p. 53). Such perspectives suggest that while ordinary people can use reality TV to possibly win the prize of celebrity, they are still dominated by the media industry that created them and are easily replaceable by the next wave of contestants. While the participants of reality TV depend on television programming for their visibility (as picture personalities depended on film), the ordinary television participant produced content on themselves, and their private life. Ordinary people as celebrities depends on the intensification and multiplication of discourse connected to one's private life as site of truth and knowledge. The narrative of ordinary people becoming celebrities is one of reality programming's main story lines, for example for talent competitions such as *American Idol, So You Think You Can Dance*, and *America's Next Top Model*. Tom Mole (2004) explains this fascination with the mechanics of celebrity production, how they are transformed, commodified, and marketed as "hypertrophic celebrity" culture.

Turner (2004, 2006, 2010) refers to the proliferation of ordinary people in mass media as the demotic turn**.** He challenges the democratic notion of the digital revolution (Jenkins, 2006) that speaks to an increase of opportunities for participation, the celebrification of the ordinary. However, widening access does not necessarily mean democratic politics. Elements of democratization are often read into the contemporary production of celebrity seen in reality TV that generates new opportunities for the ordinary person. He coined the term "demotic turn" to refer to the "increased visibility of the ordinary person as they have turned themselves into media content through celebrity culture" (2010, p. 2). However, does the proliferation of the "ordinary" in tabloids, reality TV, docu-soaps, journalism, talk radio, and user-generated content produce new visibility for the ordinary people in the media reflect something fundamental democratic, or is it merely an increased appearance of participation circumscribed in a hierarchical media system?

While the celebrification of the ordinary creates visibility for more women and people of colour, and increased self-determination, Turner sees this as an accidental consequence. In critique of John Hartley's (1999) "democratainment," Turner makes the argument that the demotic turn is more focused than ever on the production of cultural identities, and the distribution of entertainment in order to serve the interests of the corporation. Media is no longer just an instrument of power of the state, or servicing class interest but an apparatus itself, serving its own interest of commercial power. Rather than producing democracy, the elevation of the ordinary is more concerned with generating programming, an inexhaustible way of producing new content, in an active cultural construction of identity and desire.

The proliferation of the ordinary within media culture and the sophistication of producing celebrities using ordinary people as media content signify a changing conception of the audience as not just passive consumers but also active producers. Since Turner's (2004) conception of the demotic turn, he devoted his later book *Ordinary People and the Media: The Demotic Turn* (2010) to also investigate the domain of user-generated content. The turn towards the ordinary is treated as a pervasive condition, and one in which we locate the object of our study; beauty boys are ordinary people who effect through their own means the achievement of fame and promises of happiness, wholeness, and self-actualization. In the framework of reality TV, celebrification of the ordinary is circumscribed in the restrictive commercial framework, and true to the nature of commodified goods. In the framework of the Internet, taking reality TV's programming strategy as a technology of the self, self-made celebrities forge a persona through self-formation. Interrogating social media platforms and the wider political economy of self-branding, the changing attitudes towards fame—now equated with attention—is where we arrive at a new type of celebrity, the microcelebrity.

Fame on the Internet. Earlier, I have noted that it is important to note the cultural domain of the celebrity. Thus, the specificity of a film star's celebrity in comparison to that of a television's personality showcase the importance of dealing with the particular meaning of different celebrities in terms of the media through which they are predominately produced and in terms of the industry from which they have emerged. Despite the overarching political-economical process, there are crucial distinctions within. It is with this perspective that scholars of microcelebrity have pursued the object

of their study as emerging from its own cultural specificities of network media, and its exclusively to the Internet.

When ordinary people seek fame and bypass these mainstream media structures in order to communicate directly with a potential fan-base via the internet, it seems to suggest another kind of politics. The Internet, especially the Web 2.0 (Fuchs, 2014) phenomena such as *YouTube, MySpace, Facebook,* and *Instagram*, create spaces where users can increasing become "prosumers," or those who produce their own content in addition to, or in conjunction with consuming it. As the "digital tools to self-publicity are increasingly available to ordinary people" (Bennett & Holmes, 2010, p. 76) it lowers the barrier of entry by bypassing the tightly controlled publicity system. While web technologies have on one hand cast the net wider in terms of extending the reach of the entertainment industries, it also instigated a bottom-up approach to celebrification that is autonomous from its predecessors. In Senft's (2008) study of cam-girls who use personal websites as a means of constructing and managing fame, or what Turner refer to as "Do-It-Yourself Celebrity" (Turner, 2004, p. 55), it would seem that the product has seized control of its own production process.

This different celebrity environment is also distinctively marked by audiences celebrating their own star-making power and recognizing their ability to make someone famous. Matthew Hill (2011) argues that media and culture studies perpetuate a rigid binary between celebrities and audience. When celebrities are addressed as culturally ubiquitous, it produces a symbolic inequality between mass-mediated celebrities and the receptive fan-consumers (Couldry, 2003, p. 52; D. Holmes, 2005, p. 211). The division between celebrities and the "ordinary" people based on factors of recognition and fame

positions celebrities in places of visibility and non-celebrities in places of invisibility, looking to their counterparts aspirationally. Earlier works on celebrity (Marshall, 1997; Rojek, 2001) and fandom (Hills, 2003; Jenkins, 1992; Sandvoss, 2005) represent a division of labour in media production and consumption. On the other hand, scholarship on fandom focuses on active audience and theories of participatory culture (Baym, 2000; Jenkins, 1992, 2006). When people are drawing from celebrity culture to produce user-generated content, making meaning from celebrity culture in their daily lives is essential to the process of celebrification that trickles down to a greater number of people such as blog writers, social media users, or YouTube stars. Essentially, by conceptualizing networked media as harboring a participatory culture, celebrity can be seen as practiced by greater number of people. In other words, microcelebrity is possible due to social media technologies that enable average people to gain access to the audiences of a traditional celebrity in an attention economy.

Fame in Subcultures. Matthew Hill (2006) seeks to challenge the boundary division of celebrity and fans by interrogating subculture celebrities, fans that achieve a certain level of celebrity status within their own fan community. Hill (2004) defines subcultural celebrities as “mediated figures who are famous only by and for their fan audiences” (p. 61). While subculture celebrities differ from mass-mediated celebrity, fans who move into the category of media professionals and become producers of the very text they are a fan of can resemble traditional celebrities. While subcultures produce their own celebrities rather than just interpreting pre-existing mainstream celebrities, subculture celebrity also replicates the hierarchy structure of mainstream celebrities.

Senft (2008) argues that microcelebrities can be seen as extension of subculture celebrities.

In "Celebrity, Participation, and the Public," Turner (2015) aims to engage with more recent development of DIY celebrities and proliferation of user-generated content on the web that again serve the discourse of ordinary celebrities. Turner, however, sees Hills's notion of subculture celebrities as more useful than microcelebrities as it avoids the medium specificity of internet celebrities. Mainly, the interrogation of microcelebrities is based on the technology that enables its existence, and Turner sees that as too restricting to interrogate the mutating formation of a celebrity. Being faithful to his interest in celebrity and public, he sees microcelebrity creating a more narrow and restricted conception of a public and substituting it instead with short-circuited personal networks. Turner sees the localized character of the network as lacking in analysis while the ubiquity generated by a wider public receives greater attention. This opposition of network and public is for Turner the difference between microcelebrity and mass-mediated celebrity. Subculture celebrity however is not technologically specific and focuses on the cultural function of this celebrity. My discussion of beauty boys often bleeds together the concepts of the public, publicity, network-publics, audience and viewers, mainly because the social practice of microcelebrity blends the different modes of address of communities and audiences, of public and network.[1]

[1] Brenton J. Malin (2011) outlines two perspectives of publics that brought forth two modes of publicity in regard to attention in the new media age. Walter Lippman believes that the discrepancy between people's attitudes and actions prevents the public from understanding their true collective interest and must be facilitated by intellectuals through market research in order to make informed decisions for the functioning of a democratic society. The essence of democracy is the freedom to suggest, promote, and persuade by an invisible government of elitists. Public relation specialists, in other words, have a democratic function in manufacturing the common interest of the elite to be the common interested of the public through the rationalization of persuasion. John Dewey on the other hand, believes information should be readily available to citizens that allows their participation in the public sphere, as the freedom of expression enforces democratic communication. This on the other hand, becomes a marketplace of ideas when

In “You May Know me from YouTube: (Micro-) Celebrity in Social Media,” Marwick (2015b) defines in greater acuity what microcelebrity is by highlighting its distinction from subculture celebrities. While subcultural celebrities may also have personal contact with fans, use social media, and have a relatively small audience, there are several key differences. Foremost, microcelebrity is a set of practices rather than a personal quality. Examples of subculture celebrities can include media fans themselves (Hills, 2006), actors on cult television shows (M. Hall & Williams, 2005), or television producers (Chin & Hills, 2008). And examples of local celebrities can be newscasters, politicians, professors, or the lifeguard at the pool (Ferris, 2010, p. 393). These examples suggest that subculture or local celebrities seem to be scaled-down versions of traditional celebrities, without the ubiquitous recognition. In addition, microcelebrities have fame that is native to social media. While this characteristic is noted by Turner, Marwick sees this quality as emancipatory. While the fame of subculture celebrities tends to remain in small networks, the technological affordances of social media platforms allow a fluid migration of fame that bares an ease of entry to other cultures. Furthermore, microcelebrities use celebrity practices strategically to boost online attention and popularity. Lastly, subculture celebrity is “necessarily linked to subculturally valorized achievements, whether these are writing fan fiction which only circulates within the fan culture, writing academic studies which perhaps circulate slightly more widely in terms of niche-mediation, or producing a specific, beloved TV series for primetime, international consumption” (Hills, 2006, p. 115). While fans can be primary producers, they nevertheless use raw material from existing cultural products or productions to

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corporations have more resources and means to sell their ideology and impose hegemony. The publicity of promotion and publicity of openness are two dominant ideologies at play in my discussion of beauty boys.

create content for media properties like *Doctor Who* or *Star Trek*, whereas microcelebrities produce content on themselves.

Technological affordances are integral to the possibility of certain strategies of self-performance. The range of action depends on the interface of human objectives and technological affordances (Hutchby, 2001). In this context, scholars of microcelebrity had been careful to offer in-depth case studies and ethnographic field studies in some cases to capture the unique expressions of human and technological entanglement (Abidin, 2015, 2016; Abidin & Thompson, 2012; García-Rapp, 2017b; Marwick, 2013, 2015b, 2015a; Marwick & boyd, 2011; Senft, 2008; Smith, 2016) which Turner failed to capture in his analysis. Through the case studies of Mollysoda, (a Tumblr microcelebrity), and Miranda Sings (a YouTube microcelebrity), Marwick (2015b) isolates the technological affordances and the cultural dynamics at play in the construction of these recognizable personalities. For Mollysoda, her visible sensibilities are deeply contextualized within the particular technological platform of Tumblr and its aesthetics. Similarly, Miranda Sings' strategic self-performance utilizes the textual and visual affordances of YouTube as a platform. While the content of microcelebrity might look different across cases, the construction of a consumable persona through self-branding and strategic self-presentation, viewing their audience as a fan base while effectively managing them with a set of practices to sustain popularity, is the same (Marwick & boyd, 2011).

Towards a Definition of Internet Celebrities

The Internet generates a space for internet celebrities, cyber-celebrities, anticelebrities, and microcelebrities. The attempts to name these new types of celebrity operate in a

contested terrain over terminology and definition. Gamson (2011) describes three different types of Internet celebrity: anticelebrity, do-it-yourself (DIY) celebrity, and microcelebrity. When the most unlikely of people become celebrated as a sort of collective-in-joke, they are referred to as anticelebrities. Gamson defines DIY celebrities as people who pursued fame outside of the traditional celebrity system through self-branding. Examples include Tila Tequila and Jeffree Star who created their own brand and identity on Myspace. Gamson defines microcelebrity as someone famous to a small community of fans who participate directly in producing the celebrity. For microcelebrities, the scope of fame is micro, and the way fame is generated is through the interactive dissemination of information about everyday life. This type of celebrity is made possible through online publishing, networking sites, and self-publishing. In other words, internet celebrities are ordinary people who have amassed an audience, challenging the production of celebrity safeguarded by highly controllable institutional models, ultimately elevating the role of fans and audience into star-making positions that function under the ideology of democratization of fame.

Recent ethnographic studies of internet celebrities prove that the distinction between DIY celebrities and microcelebrities is almost non-existent. The denotation of fame as "micro" is also deceptive of the power of microcelebrities. Crystal Abidin's (2016) study of social media microcelebrity, what she calls "influencers," shows that the scope of their fame are much like Gamson's DIY celebrity, garnering mainstream popularity through high-profile mainstream news that highlights their earning power and impact. Social media influencers engage in the techniques of microcelebrity, but show that the scope of their fame is expansive, rather than constricted to subcultures, personal

networks, or their fan base. Accessing coverage and networks of a traditional celebrity, social media influencers such as microcelebrities need go beyond its constriction of scope and reachability. Thus, it is useful to conceptualize microcelebrity as a set of practices designed to maintain popularity. As Hearn and Schoenhoff (2015) explain, "The SMI works to generate a form of "celebrity" capital by cultivating as much attention as possible and crafting an authentic "personal brand" via social media, which can be subsequently used by companies and advertisers for consumer outreach (p. 194). The success of high profile social media influencers creates a narrative of democratization of fame and success, belying the fact that it is only achievable for a notable few. What several scholars (Banet-Weiser, 2012a; Khamis, Ang, & Welling, 2017a; Marwick, 2013; Senft, 2013) make clear, however, is that these success stories always celebrate narratives of empowerment and self-improvement, ultimately the triumph of the attention economy.

Microcelebrities. As microcelebrities view their online connections as an audience, interacting with fans becomes gravely important to sustain their popularity, and to divulge facets of closeness and accountability. The microcelebrity as a subject is a product of the audience, and not necessarily of the performer. For Senft (2008), the making of a microcelebrity is based on various contradictions that destabilize the ideologies of publicity and marks their difference from mainstream celebrity. Foremost, the making of a microcelebrity and their web popularity is dependent on the relationship to the audience, rather than a separation from them like in mainstream celebrity culture. Dyer (1979) proposes the question of reality versus image in media's construction of the star that implores audiences to obsessively deconstruct the star image in order to arrive at the authenticity of stars. In evaluating the audience's responsiveness and attitudes

towards camgirls, Senft highlights the key difference being the real-time interaction between audiences and camgirls that allows for a sense of connection and community. Interactions with camgirls allow an intimate scrutiny of their lives, unlike audiences who obsessively ask who these traditional celebrities really are.

Marwick and boyd's (2011) research of celebrity practices on Twitter showcases how traditional celebrities have, in turn, also adopted techniques formally characterized as belonging solely to microcelebrity. The distinction between traditional celebrities and microcelebrities based on the different levels of connection to their audiences can be resolved if celebrities are employing microcelebrity practices. Mainstream celebrity practitioners must also engage in emotional labour to maintain a network of affective ties with their followers in order to gain and maintain attention online (Marwick & boyd, 2011, p. 156). Personal interaction has a much lower barrier of entry but the labour to upkeep can be heavy. Nevertheless, interaction is crucial to maintaining fame as it builds a level of intimacy and relatability, similar to television personalities. Horton and Wohl's (1956) study of parasocial relations suggest that regularly viewing the cast of a television show every week creates a feeling of intimacy and familiarity that can be emotionally gratifying. Microcelebrity extends this ideal to networked webs of direct interaction. In the following, I outline authenticity, intimacy, and self-branding as three key interrelated techniques of microcelebrities.

Authenticity. Authenticity has always been a key in the discursive of formation of a celebrity. In Hollywood's production of the star image, audience members are engaged in repetitive consumer behaviour to unravel a star's identity and arrive at their authentic and private self. In the case of branding pop brands, artists must acknowledge

their inauthenticity having been commodified and manufactured by the industry, but also retain their authenticity as a romantic artist in their relentless refusal to let commodification de-legitimize them. When reality TV uses the private life of an ordinary television participant as content, it requires no effort on the part of the audience to unravel or deconstruct anything in the consumption of perceived authenticity (A. Hall, 2009). When ordinary people use microcelebrity techniques to gain popularity in the case of DIY celebrities or social media influencers, the deployment of authenticity becomes a strategy of self-presentation. Microcelebrities want to imply they are just ordinary people (Ellcessor, 2012; Kanai, 2015a; Meyers, 2009; Smith, 2016), rather than celebrities, and this narrative of an ordinary persona is essential in creating closeness and intimacy. Audiences expect microcelebrities to be more authentic than traditional celebrities because they are not a result of the star-making system. The presumption is that there is little difference between perceived and actual microcelebrity personas, relying on the performance of (constructed) authenticity through practices of self-branding.

Assessing authenticity is also context dependent since there is no absolute quality of authenticity. Tristan Walker, the former director of business development for Foursquare, suggests that authenticity can be determined over time by comparing microcelebrities' current action to past actions (Marwick, 2013, p. 12). This self is authentic in ways that links a single presumably authentic self to a body of verifiable information, creating a persistent identity. In other words, authenticity is not about revealing the essential self, but is about consistent uniformity in self-performances. This sense of authenticity suggests that it is not about how much a person reveals but about the measure against honesty that is exemplified by consistency. On the other hand, Lionel

Trilling (2009) would call this sincerity, which is honesty without pretense, whereas authenticity is the revealing of the hidden inner life. The act of revealing intimate information, or strategies of disclosive intimacy, often creates a bond between microcelebrity practitioners and their audiences. More often than not, being authentic also depends on display of vulnerability. Self-disclosure is way to give a complete view of one's authentic self, one that seems transparent and open to others. Though posts by SMIs are viewed as more personal and thus intimate, they still have private and public boundaries that they navigate by curating the backstage they show to give the illusion of full disclosure (Abidin, 2015). Marshall's notion of the "public private self" describes this style of self-presentation which involves the production of public version of the private self on social media platforms (Marshall, 2010, p. 44). As Gamson warns, the search for celebrity value "is ultimately part of a heightened consciousness of everyday life as a public performance – an increased expectation that we are being watched, a growing willingness to offer up private parts of the self to watchers known and unknown, and a hovering sense that perhaps the unwatched life is invalid of insufficient" (Gamson, 2011, p. 1068).

In their analysis of Zoe 'Zoelle' Sugg, who has obtained fame by posting beauty-related videos on YouTube, Rachel Berryman and Misha Kavka (2017), showcase how disclosing behind the scenes and gendered performances give the sense of ordinariness which increases relatability. Vlogging as a medium to focus on behind-the-scenes intimacy is almost inseparable from YouTubers' claims to ordinariness. In their analysis of her vlogs, Zoe without makeup and in comfortable clothes suggests the lifestyle of the ordinary, that behind the camera she is just an ordinary girl. Zoe highlights her lack of

technical proficiency, reaffirms her ordinary status in gendered terms. These behind-the-scenes displays of ordinariness reinforce the authentic self despite celebrification, similar to tensions of authenticity despite commodification of pop bands. Vlogs serve as a vehicle for the discourses of authenticity in order to promote their branded personas as truth, channeling the affective impact of authenticity into the economic impact of consumers' trust in microcelebrities. The private moments shot for public consumption imply that these glimpses must reinforce their celebrified persona, bring together the ordinary person, the celebrity, and influencers who consumers trust. Essentially, authenticity is negotiated symbolically and can prove to be a useful analytical tool.

To create a self that simultaneously appears authentic and yet is carefully edited demands ongoing self-monitoring, and an ongoing awareness and evaluation of the audience in the name of brand consistency. The construction of authenticity is a self-branding practice that operates on contradicting narratives of promoting both authenticity and business-targeted self-presentation (Abidin, 2015). The neoliberal ideals of identity which emphasize empowerment and self-improvement create individual responsibility for skill acquisition, self-surveillance, and self-branding as a project to access a better "true" self. Sarah Banet-Weiser (2012a) argues that self-branding as a means to access authenticity is an expression of a moral framework to become a better self, or even a truer self.

Lastly, Senft also attunes our attention to other actants that facilitate the display of theatrical authenticity. The use of better lighting, focus, and image resolution gives a sense of perceptual realism that is dependent on the affordances of technological

equipment and mediation. As noted in Berryman and Kavka's analysis of vlogging, the use of tools and technological mediations are co-constructed to displays of authenticity.

Intimacy. Crystal Abidin (2016) defines social media influencers as ordinary internet users who monetize their followings by integrating "advertorials" into their content production. Advertorial is a portmanteau of advertisement and editorial, and are highly personalized, opinion-laden promotions of products and services that influencers endorse for a fee (Abidin, 2015). Abidin's (2015) study of Singapore social media influencers showcases how microcelebrities appropriately mobilize intimacies in different ways in order to monetize their personal lives. Abidin categorizes four types of intimacies: commercial, interactive, reciprocal, and disclosive. *Commercial intimacy* looks at the commodification of intimacy, which situates personal attachments as profit-oriented. *Interactive intimacies* extend intimacies fostered on digital platforms to physical settings. While physical interaction is not a criterion for all microcelebrity, it is for social media influencers who depend on face-to-face meetups in formal and informal settings to complement digital space engagements. *Reciprocal intimacies* close the divide between performer and audience through direct engagements and erase the sense of distance and hierarchy characteristic of mainstream celebrity–audience relations. And finally, *disclosive intimacies* imply that the disclosure of behind-the-scenes, trivial and mundane aspect of everyday life that convey a sense of intimacy between friends.

These various performances of intimacy are more extensive than parasocial relations with television and radio personalities who facilitate a one-sided impression of interpersonal connection though theatrics like conversational small talk that gives the impression of intimacy and rapport, without any actual reciprocity involved (Horton &

Richard Wohl, 1956). In the same fashion, microcelebrities employ what Abidin calls "perceived interconnectedness" that uses performances of intimacy rather than performances of theatrics. Microcelebrities engage in a bi-directional flow of dialogue with their audience rather an illusion of rapport between personalities and audience. Social media platforms allow for this interactive model, and one-to-many and one-to-one conversation structure rather than the broadcast model of television and radio technology. This ultimately allows for the co-construction of conversation between performer and audience rather than a domination of hierarchical broadcast system of producer and audience. In this sense, perceived interconnectedness has a more democratic and equalizing infrastructure enabled by social media platforms that depend on intimacy strategies to sustain themselves. Disrupting the hierarchical boundaries between celebrities and fans through envisioning a participatory culture of social media is deploying and engaging in plays of intimacy, which becomes evident in understanding microcelebrity.

The triangulation of celebrity, commodification and intimacy, melds influence and intimacy into a new source of money and fame. Berryman and Kavika introduce the intimacy pact that connects intimacy to authenticity to self-promotion as encouraging Zoe's followers to enact their intimate connection with her by supporting the circulation and sales of commodities she endorses. Kavka (2008) sees YouTube videos as an extension of televisual "technologies of intimacy" that instigate feelings of proximity evoked by intimate media to encourage the formation of affective relationships between audience and content. Small screen media brings celebrities spatially, temporally, and emotionally close through the production of affective proximity (Kavka, 2008, p. 7).

Intimacy is instigated within and by Zoe's videos, as well as her interaction with fans on social media platforms. This appeal of intimacy is intractably linked as a gendered performance as Zoe adopts a "big sister" persona in relation to her followers (Berryman & Kavka, 2017). The role of intimacy in the celebrification and commodification of microcelebrities depends on the construction of the feminized self. This gendered nature of microcelebrity is evident and will be interrogated in the second section of this literature review.

YouTube beauty gurus demonstrate most vividly the integration of commodification in feelings of intimacy and authenticity. Beauty boys as male YouTube beauty gurus also employ the strategies of authenticity to create intimacy, and to effect sales of commodities. Much thematic content on makeup is market-orientated including monthly products that a YouTuber loves, presented in a way that is consistent with their self-brand, and displays of authenticity (García-Rapp, 2017b, p. 239).

Self-branding. The condition of fame and search for visibility in celebrity culture also mirrors broader economic and political conditions of neoliberal promotional capitalism (Hearn, 2011). The vast literature on neoliberalism continues to make it a contested term, but most scholars tend to agree that neoliberalism involves the extension of market principles into all areas of life. The flexible accumulation of post-Fordism relies on computerization and networked communications, and the intensification of promotion and marketing practices (Harvey, 1990, p. 92). In a state of neoliberal governmentality, the ideology of the free market and reducing the role of the state also means stressing individual responsibility to invest in image-building and building one's own human capital (Harvey, 2007). Derived from the political and economic

development of “self-help” literature in the late 1990s, self-branding encourages individuals to purposefully construct potent images of themselves in order to gain success in the precarious work world (Shepherd, 2005, p. 597).

The merging of American politics (Boorstin, 1971) and the business world in the search for charismatic CEOs (Khurana, 2004) with celebrity value has reminded us that fame and attention have become integrated into the cultural process of our daily lives. All workers, employed or unemployed, are compelled to take on the work of online sociality, image building, and reputation construction, all in the search for celebrity value (Hearn, 2008). Ernest Sternberg (1998) calls phantasmagoric labour the process where “performers now intentionally compose their persona for the market through methods learned from the celebrity world” (p. 3). Sternberg argues that self-presentation is neither ahistorical nor ritualistic as Goffman suggests, and traces the evolution of labour performance through the romantic and modernist styles. What differentiates self-presentation in our current era are the ways which labour is becoming intimate and personal, to strategically produce a persona in the fashion that suits the demands of the neoliberal market for personal advantage. The strategies of self-presentation are not only reserved for those seeking fame, but for those who wish to advance their value on the market. The process of self-commodification, self-branding, and the becoming of the “economic men” (Foucault, 2010) is not a niche characteristic of ordinary people wishing to reach a level of fame but are the logics of capital. In other words, the economic logic of self-performance requires complex image-making practices of the persona, a method learned through the practices of celebrity. In order to advance value on the market, ordinary people must seek fame in the process of self-commodification and self-branding.

The process of immaterial commodification to manipulate personality, affect, and emotions demands engagement in immaterial labour in order gain fame and attention.

Marwick attributes the popularity of self-branding during the dot-com boom as a response to several social changes such as the success of corporate brands, rise of project-based work cultures, entrepreneurial labour models, and gradual popularization of the Internet (Marwick, 2013, p. 165). The strategic creation of an identity to be promoted and sold to others migrated from the culture of creative, entrepreneurial labour in Silicon Valley and its association with the dot-com boom, to the general career and employment advice as a universal solution for economic downturn. Similarly, Senft also sees self-branding as the effect of the market economy. In “Microcelebrity and the Branded Self,” Senft (2013) describes the paradox of late capitalism as an economy that cannot afford to hire educated young people and a slowing down of labour and consumer spending power (p. 349). The simple supply and demand logic of the economy no longer applies to those who want to “make it” in today’s reality with the shrinking job market. On the other hand, in the fashion of communicative capitalism (Dean, 2005), there are increased opportunities to create and disseminate media, and cultural notions of celebrity appear to be expanding and inclusive in the demotic turn.

The logics of neoliberal economy demand self-branding practices for those who wish to advance their value on the market. The optimistic promise of democracy in expanding inclusiveness of media culture implore ordinary people to self-brand and be concerned in image-making. Thus, for reality TV participants to advance their value through the promise of celebrity, they work to produce branded versions of themselves within the constrictions of the industry. Similarly, self-branding, along with strategies of

authenticity and intimacy, are microcelebrity practices ordinary people use to gain value in the market. Susie Khamis, Lawrence Ang and Raymond Welling (2017b) argue that social media's promise of fame and wealth to ordinary users encourages practices of self-branding, since the commercial viability of SMIs is both inspirational and seemingly replicable (p. 194). Social media intensifies self-branding practices among ordinary people, and the convergence culture of social media allows the creation of a single identity to be leveraged across multiple media types with commercial capacities. Celebrification through self-promotion is inherent to social media technologies (Khamis et al., 2017b; Smith, 2016). As Marwick (2015a) notes, ordinary users have become Instagram famous through salable selfies, and her concept of "Instafamous" can also be applied to other social media sites. In other words, social media platforms are productive of self-branding practices and produce a neoliberal subject.

In this context, self-branding is the pursuit of attention through skills of self-performance and image making. As John Hartley (1996) puts it, "in a market where years of experience can be outbid by a squirt of hairspray, it is not learning but looks, not the cerebral but celebrity, that marks the winners" (p. 36). Success is detached from any specific talent or skills, but centers the way we present, produce, and package the self in the pursuit of attention.

Various authors see the influence of the attention economy at work with narratives of self-branding, where the desire for fame becomes the desire for attention (Burgess & Green, 2013; Goldhaber, 1997; Marwick, 2013; Senft, 2013). Taking a neoliberal reading of microcelebrities, Senft frames the rise of microcelebrities in the context of the attention economy. Michael Goldhaber (1997) argues that while the

internet has provided people with a wealth information, it also created a scarcity of attention. In other words, in a media-saturated environment what is valuable is what holds our attention. As attention is a limited resource, it is also a profitable commodity (boyd, 2010, p. 53). Using the framework of the attention economy, Senft sees the Internet as a marketplace where each of us are buying and selling ourselves online, competing for attention. Senft critiques the empowerment discourse of the attention economy, which on the surface seems to generate self-determination, but the economic reality speaks to diminishing labour and consumer power.

Marwick similarly placed the performative practices of microcelebrities and celebrities to gain followers as a symptom of the online attention economy. Using similar taxonomies as Rojek by adapting anthropologist Ralph Linton's concept of achieved and ascribed in *Status Update*, Marwick (2013) distinguishes two ways to gain fame on the internet: achieved or ascribed, both of which exist on the continuum of microcelebrity. Being ascribed fame by others for one's achievements or being well-known in certain subcultures is often produced by the celebrity media about them. Ascribed microcelebrity is treated with almost the same status as a traditional celebrity in terms of the distant celebrity–fan relationship. In contrast, achieved microcelebrity is "a self-presentation strategy that includes sharing personal information about oneself, constructing intimate connections to create the illusion of friendship or closeness, acknowledging an audience and identifying them as fans, and strategically revealing information to increase or maintain this audience" (Marwick, 2013, p. 117). Achieved is consciously arranging the self to achieve recognition. Microcelebrity exists in on a continuum of ascribed and achieved status that ultimately produces structures of hierarchy. Ascribed

microcelebrities who achieved fame through their accomplishments would be viewed at a higher status than those who employ self-presentation practices without accomplishments to justify their fame. The line between these two categories is blurry for microcelebrity practitioners who must navigate the boundaries of achievements and self-promotion. As Liam Berriman and Rachel Thompson (2015) point out, fame on YouTube emerges not at the moment of production but rather accumulates through the attention of their audience (p. 11).

Marwick, however, critically makes a key distinction between the desire for fame, and the desire for attention. The desire for fame is often equated with a desire for economic security, but a desire for attention requires constant labour. Microcelebrities engage in these productive labours to gain attention and followers in the hopes of gaining social and economic capital, but the reward system is highly uneven.

Social Media–Based Metrics. While these authors situate microcelebrities within theories of the attention economy, they provide a rather incomplete assessment of social media platforms that does not account for the essential brand measurement mechanics, social media analytics or the algorithmic culture that give rise to these subjectivities. Alison Hearn and Stephanie Schoenhoff's (2015) research reveals that various assessment measures are put into place to measure the value of a celebrity. The people meter, the Nelson rating, and the Q score rating system are all engaged in selling an audience's attention, with greater acuity of targeted demographics. More recent celebrity metrics such the David-Brown Index or E-Score have rationalized affective attributes of trust and influence.

Similar rating metrics are designed to measure the value of microcelebrity through social scoring metrics such as the Klout score. By tracking users' social media accounts, and monetizing through a perks program, the inherent structure of Klout reinforces the logics of celebrity by exploiting users to achieve visibility and attention through work (Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2015). Further enhancing the aspirational nature of celebrity through the perks program, Klout rewards users for their social capital and their visibility. This exploitive platform engages users to perform uncompensated immaterial labour with the hope that it reaps future rewards. Like the logics of capitalism, only a few can or will succeed.

Along with Turner's critique of democratization of celebrity, Hearn and Schoenhoff (2015) reason that social media, as the process of capitalist valorization, are productive of class inequalities. Similarly, Marwick argues that some form of hierarchy exists in any online community, and social media metrics quantify and qualify status, and in extension self-worth (Marwick, 2013). These metrics for attention and visibility are built into social media whether it's views, comments, and subscription on YouTube; followers and retweets on Twitter; or likes and number of friends on Facebook (García-Rapp, 2017b, p. 232). Whether they are automatically or algorithmically generated, the use of metrics to define value and status and fostering visibility has been recognized as "measures of attention" (Burgess & Green, 2013, p. 40), "metrics of fame" (P. D. Marshall, 1997, p. xxxiv), "measures of success" (Jakobsson, 2010, p. 111), and "popularity markers" (García-Rapp, 2017b, p. 233). Social media metrics are descriptive but also performative, conferring hierarchal status and influence in an attention economy.

Vulnerability. At the same time, there were significant negative emotional costs to pursuing attention "including anxiety, information overload, lack of time, and hurt feelings due to audience comments and interactions" (Marwick, 2013, p. 196). The negative aspects of microcelebrity are predominantly the negative criticism and trolling of strangers or even antifans, enhanced by constant surveillance and hyper scrutiny from users and gossip media outlets. There is also a growing attention to "horizontal surveillance" and "peer surveillance" (A. S. Elias, Gill, & Scharff, 2017, p. 15), which Alison Winch (2015a) calls the "girlfriend gaze" where women and girls police each other's looks and behaviors. The critique of authenticity, appearance and sexuality especially aimed at women requires a very thick skin (Marwick, 2013). As microcelebrities find both their online and offline lives are publicized and discussed (Abidin, 2016), they need to learn how to handle the emotional trauma and stress that comes with it by inhabiting the risks themselves (Marshall, 2015, p. 235). Unlike mainstream celebrities who have access to bodyguards, drivers, agents, and managers, microcelebrities rarely do (except high profile ones).

In the commodification of authenticity and intimacy through self-branding practices for the pursuit of visibility, microcelebrities often background the vulnerabilities of their everyday experience and the various amount of under-visualized labour involved in producing one's own body as social and economic capital. Microcelebrities in the beauty community on YouTube can benefit from scholarship on aesthetic labour to demonstrate the tacit body work microcelebrities enact as means to a good life promised by visibility.

Part II: Beauty Myth: the Labour of Beauty

Questions of beauty have always been central to feminism since the women's liberation movement that condemned female objectification in terms of women's physical attractiveness (Elias, Gill, & Scharff, 2017a, p. 6). There are summaries of beauty studies that seeks to periodize the feminist debate on beauty (Chancer, 1998; Craig, 2006; Jha, 2015) which consists of three broad orientations. Foremost, feminist work on beauty has been influenced by *psychology*, which often takes a linear and hypodermic model of "media effects" that examines how cultural constructions of the body impact self-perception and self-esteem (Grogan, 2007). Another approach takes a *feminist Foucaultian* account, exemplified by the works of Susan Bordo (1993), Sandra Lee Bartkey (1990) and Jana Sawicki (1991). This approach regards beauty as a disciplinary technology and presents women's appearance as subject to discipline and regulation even when beauty practices are seemingly freely chosen. This approach has been criticized for taking a cultural determinist perspective that pays no attention to women's agency. It also lacks an account of the interrelation between the "beauty myth" and women's embodied practice. Nor does it account for theories of affect and a psychosocial understanding of how disciplinary powers shape our desires and feelings (Elias et al., 2017a).

The third approach sees beauty pressures as *backlashes against feminism*, for example in the works of Susan Faludi (2009) and Naomi Wolf (1997). While Faludi sees an increased focus on beauty aesthetics as part of a wider backlash against second-wave feminism, Wolf critiques the beauty industry for manufacturing the "beauty myth" as a political weapon against women's advancement. Their analyses show the relation between US feminist history and intensifying pressures of fashion and beauty, which

again highlights beauty as operating in social and cultural matrix in complex ways.

Ana Elias, Rosalind Gill, and Christina Scharff (2017) argues that feminist debate on beauty has been at a stand-still due to the polarization along various lines: representationalism against new materialism, bodily discipline against theory of affect, and cultural determinist against female agency. Contemporary feminist beauty scholarship has seen a resurgence of interest in beauty that seeks to overcome the impasse of these polarizations. An emergent theme is intersectional and transnational beauty studies that examines the politics of beauty as also constituted by ideologies of race, class and nation. Extensive research on beauty pageants as nation-building projects (Banet-Weiser, 1999; M. L. Craig, 2002; Ochoa, 2005), and research on the Korean (Kim, 2017) and Chinese beauty cultures (Yang, 2011) all caution against reductive readings but attune to everyday cultural practices of beauty and women's experiences of them. It seems the most interesting work not only challenges the sexism of beauty norms but also works towards decolonizing and transnationalising beauty studies.

The affective turn in beauty studies has been conceptualized as "emotional capitalism," the affective, the body-without-image body (Featherstone, 2010; Massumi, 2002), stemming from a Foucaultian and a Deleuzian approach (R. Coleman, 2012; R. Coleman & Figueroa, 2010). My interest is on how a Foucaultian or discursive approach extends the work previously discussed and seeks to explore how affects like desire, love, and shame, are bound up with subjecthood (Tate, 2007; Tyler, 2008). The affective and psychic nature of experienced bodily disgust functions as regulation and control of moral judgments of certain bodies as good, and others as morally repulsive, which Fahs (2017) describes as "the regulatory politics of disgust." Disgust becomes a regulatory, politicized

emotion that dictates bodily practices and imagined future bodies. Bodily desires of glamour and the experience of disgust towards fluid and oil secretion, for example, are mobilized through specific makeup practices that inform the aestheticized constructions of beauty boys.[2]

Elias, Gill, and Scharff (2017b) position the interplay between feminism and narratives of body transformation in the context of neoliberalism. Gill has characterized postfeminism as “gendered neoliberalism” (p. 24) but positions it as an object of study rather than a historical period. She is interested in interrogating postfeminist sensibility and its discursive, ideological, affective and psychosocial assemblage that stresses the body as the center of postfeminist culture. The importance of makeover and self-transformation also links to the psychic life of neoliberalism and postfeminism (Gill, 2016; Scharff, 2016), with a distinctive affective tone of being upbeat and positive (Gill & Orgad, 2015), giving notions of choice, agency, autonomy, and empowerment. They further argue that in this distinctively postfeminist and neoliberal moment, beauty pressures have intensified and extended into the realm of subjectivity facilitated by technologies and consumer capitalism (Elias et al., 2017a, pp. 14–16). Intensification is facilitated by the affordances of smart phone cameras and the ubiquity of image posting on social media that articulates routines of self-surveillance, exacerbated by consumer culture that expands traditional makeup sets to include more products and routines. Scrutinization involves not only checklisting the normative beauty attributes, but also finding its constitutive outside, marking the body in a transgressive reading of its deviant

[2] This is especially true in what I will later come to call “corrective makeup”.

features.

Surveillance of the Body in the Aesthetic Regime

The starkest examples of surveillance of the body that come to mind are found in celebrity culture, especially in the gossip genre and the magazine industry. The gendered nature of surveillance in the beauty industry invites another look at surveillance post-Panopticon (Boyne, 2000), sprouting terms such as "synoptic surveillance" (Mathiesen, 1997), "gynaeoptic surveillance" (Winch, 2015b), and "surveillant scopophilia" (Dubrofsky & Magnet, 2015). I have already noted the various degree of self-surveillance in our discussion of authenticity and vulnerability as a site to scrutinize self-performance and a site of emotional harm. Yet, the gendered nature of surveillance has yet to be foregrounded.

In contemporary media culture, surveillance is not only an embodied practice but also enjoyed content, like the mimic surveillance footage of Reality TV. Shoshana Magnet's conceptualization of "surveillant scopophilia" that combines pleasure in looking with surveillance practices insists we are attentive to how a range of technologies can produce different ways of looking, not just those produced by the entertainment industry for mass consumption (Dubrofsky & Magnet, 2015, p. 12). In the framework of self-monitoring and self-tracking of a quantified self, study of filters and beauty project new ways of seeing ourselves (Rettberg, 2014; Wendt, 2014). Filters and use of editing applications are inlaid with certain aesthetic values that privilege certain cultural norms such as whiteness, and at the same time we use them to accentuate our character (Rettberg, 2014, p. 79). Elias, Gill, and Scharff (2017) further maintain that filters and self-modification apps use smartphone cameras as a "pedagogy of defect" (Bordo, 1997,

p. 37) which continues to position the body as always/already flawed, and in need of commercial cosmetic solutions (p. 15–16). What is shown here is the intensification of beauty pressure of a forensic and magnified surveillance with recurrent ideas of "photo beauty" or "HD-ready skin" in a continuous scrutinizing gaze of pores, skin, and appearance (Elias et al., 2017a, p. 15). Women have embodied sophisticated visual literacy in examining others, and their own bodies (Morton, 2015). Postfeminist culture has intensified the personal aesthetic regime of women, by increasing greater self-surveillance in scale and scope, as no part of the body may escape scrutiny and work (Lazar, 2017; Negra, 2008).

Peer surveillance as the postfeminist gaze. The intercourse between feminist praxis and surveillance also manifest theorizing an institutional gaze in relation to female subjectivity. Skeggs's (2001) investigation of women's experiences in the toilet spaces of English gay and lesbian bars shows the authority of appearances. Successful achievement of a feminine appearance is dependent on being legitimized by others. The symbolic value of appearance constitutes the basis for reading, knowing, and categorizing personhood, highlighting the "visual economy" as a process of how women's subjectivity is predicated on others.

Peer surveillance in relation to social media has also been explored in the framework of culture surveillance that informs proper performance of femininity online (Steeves & Bailey, 2015). There is an intensification of surveillance and discipline in self-presentation for the acknowledgment and legitimization of others, but requires it to be constantly maintained through gendered, disciplinary feedback (Dobson, 2016; Kanai, 2015b; Ringrose, 2010; Ringrose & Harvey, 2015; Steeves & Bailey, 2015). This is of

particular important for YouTube microcelebrities that depend on gendered feedback to improve channel popularity (Kanai, 2015b, p. 96). Kanai (2015b) argues that watching real people, like on reality TV, invites spectators or users to take up disciplinary positions, comparing and measuring the participants. Audiences acknowledge the self-branding practices of the performer and thus come to their position to impose judgment as a consumer. Thus, the performer strives to achieve an authentic brand in performing proper postfeminist femininity of heterosexiness (Dobson, 2016; Ringrose, 2010), adopting an internalized eye of the spectator. Just as celebrity depends on co-construction from their audience, beauty boys, especially in their makeup practice, depend on legitimization and feedback from their audience who are quick to impose judgment. The authority of appearance in beauty boy aesthetics depend on their winning performance and artistry and gaining acknowledgement from their audience.

This form of homosocial peer surveillance is further explored as a postfeminist sensibility (Riley, Evans, & Mackiewicz, 2016). Alison Winch (2012) argues that mainstream media places women's friendship at the core of feminine identities, also exploiting the culture of sisterhood by forming them as consumer oriented. Networks of friends offer support and advice, but they are also necessary for the promotion of the self. Women seek approval of their worth from other women to become more visible, and therefore seemingly more empowered. Winch termed "the girlfriend gaze" as a modality of looking between women that is increasingly mutually self-policing in a strategic and analytical way. This homosocial intimacy between women is at the same time born out of the complex assemblage of affect including envy, love, hate, jealousy, identification, and the desire for status (Winch, 2013, p. 26). Winch (2015b) calls this the "gynaeoptic

surveillance” to describe a gendered neoliberal surveillance where many women watch many women to perform work on one’s body that is never finished. While it offers intimate pleasures and belonging, it also enacts the cruel beauty norms by regulating the body and sexuality. Similarly, YouTube’s beauty community is framed as a culture of sisterhood, a network of support and a place for the promotion of the self. It is at the same time juxtaposed against a suffocating surveillance by the same members of the community. Beauty boys as male beauty YouTubers adopt the homosocial gaze between women and are subjected to a peer-driven surveillance that presents the body as flawed while celebrating the continuous labour in an inclination towards the beautiful.

Psychic Life of Neoliberal Beauty Culture

The intensification of the surveillance gaze does not end at the skin. Beauty culture also incites surveillance of the psychic life, such as having a correct set of affective dispositions or feelings of confidence. This movement has accelerated various non-profit organizations, state-funded initiatives, advertising campaigns (Banet-Weiser, 2015), grassroots activism (Lazar, 2017), and online activism (Lynch, 2011). The beauty industry capitalized in this movement by producing feel-good advertising campaigns that have been termed as the “love your body” (hereafter, LYB) discourse (Gill & Elias, 2014).

Gill and Elias indicated the growth of the LYB discourse was a result of many factors. The growth of social media makes is an attractive medium for advertisers to spread their feel-good promotional message (Gill & Elias, 2014, p. 182). It was also an attempt by mainstream media to respond to feminist critique of the harmful and toxic body image ideals portrayed in the media. Significantly, the moral panic surrounding

middle class white girls' problematic self-esteem evidenced by the rise of eating disorders and body image issues has garnered public and national attention (Banet-Weiser, 2014). The bodies of white, middle-class, can-do girls are at the forefront of public attention and concern. Being highly visible makes them an ideal group to be at the heart of most ideological campaigns, especially those promising self-esteem through consumption of commodities (Banet-Weiser, 2014). In need of empowerment, intensive marketing has been targeted at vulnerable girls with low self-esteem with messages of girl power, offering a consumer solution to the problem (Banet-Weiser, 2015). Emerging from a historical context of self-help and therapeutic culture, the need to empower oneself and become confident requires intensive labour that invests in the body and one's self-image in order to better conform to a male dominant culture. Banet-Weiser's discussion of the "market for self-esteem" and its role in neoliberal brand culture showcases how self-esteem can be achieved by simply remembering how beautiful you are, rather than a critical interrogation of the cultural, social, and political milieu. Under this ideology, real beauty is a form of behavior, one that exudes self-confidence through neoliberal ideals of self-improvement, self-branding, and entrepreneurship, ultimately benefiting corporate power (Banet-Weiser, 2014; Murray, 2013). The convergence of social issues and market solutions, especially embodied by Dove's Campaign for Real Beauty, presents feminism as a trend and commodity (Favaro, 2017, p. 295). LYB discourses are powerful and celebratory because they seem to interrupt the beauty myth in contemporary media culture. Also owned by Unilever, CoverGirl's campaign for #LashEquality have similar sentiments in inviting consumer citizenship through consumption of corporate brand strategies that celebrate beauty boys as advocators for

social change.

This market solution to overcoming self-esteem, confidence, or body issues is premised on neoliberal ideology that everyone has choice, everyone has power in their own hands. Women are autonomous, agentic, responsible and accountable for their life with abilities to self-care and self-improve. Favaro (2017) further highlights the entrepreneur approach to obtaining a positive attitude that rationally assesses the body. Hence, we do not question the broader socio-cultural context and its institutional underpinnings of patriarchal capitalism (Lynch, 2011; Murphy & Jackson, 2011; Murray, 2013) that produce the “confidence gap” (Banet-Weiser, 2014, 2015) in the first place. Advocating for only positive feelings, while shutting down negatives ones is also cutting off the root of often political feelings, such as the anger and frustration towards inequality. The confidence culture has a profound affective force for women to relate to others’ lived experiences that are at once celebratory and punitively reject women without confidence as abject. Low self-esteem, feelings of vulnerability, victimhood are rearticulated as self-pity, and lack of personal drive for one’s own life. It is no longer good enough to have a beautiful body, but also a beautiful mind with post-feminist attitudes of the self. Their subjectivity must also embrace an affirmative confident disposition, which hints at a deeper level of surveillance.

Gill and Elias offer strong points of critique to the LYB discourse. Foremost, while magazines’ visual semiotics construct the idea of real and authentic women, these images are ironically produced through cosmetics and technology such as Photoshop. Murray (2013, p. 97) argues that Dove experienced a drop in sales due to controversy over the realness of Dove Pro-Age texts which might have been altered and touched up.

Dove is ironically juxtaposing LYB messages and the visual representation LYB ideologies seems to reject. While the beauty boy subjectivity is also predicated on the LYB discourse, it ironically also celebrates digital manipulation of the body alongside the reveling authenticity and realness.

Beauty as Labour

The multiplication of terms for different forms of labouring such as emotional labour (Hochschild, 1987), creative labour (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011), immaterial labour (Hardt & Negri, 2005; M. Lazzarato, 2006), free labour (Terranova, 2000), affective labour (Wissinger, 2007), venture labour (Neff, 2012), market-embodied labour (Otis, 2011), passionate labour (Postigo, 2009), hope labour (Kuehn & Corrigan, 2013), aspirational labour (Duffy, 2016), playbour (Kücklich, 2005), intimate labour (Boris, 2010), tacit labour (Abidin, 2016), bodily labour (Kang, 2010), glamour labour (Wissinger, 2015) , aesthetic labour (Mears, 2014), body work (Gimlin, 2002), beauty work (Kwan & Trautner, 2009), and display work (Mears & Connell, 2015) suggest the diversity of practices that can be seen to constitute work. An increasing number of studies document the organizational practices in “style labor markets” of retail and hospitality to manage workers’ emotional and affective tendencies that are becoming more important than productivity in the workforce (Nickson, Warhurst, Witz, & Cullen, 2001). UK sociologists (Nickson et al., 2001) argue that places like restaurants and bars, luxury retail, and entertainment are using employee corporeality to appeal aesthetically to customers. Shifting from the paradigms of emotional labour (Hochschild, 1987), aesthetic labour foregrounds embodiment to capture the corporeality of employees along with their emotions as managed for commercial profit.

In Hoshchild's (1983) research on airline management and training of flight attendants, she describes emotional labour as "the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display" (1987, p. 7). In other words, employers require employees to manage their own feelings and the customers as part of the job. By backgrounding the processes of embodiment however, emotional labour seems to be predicated on a mind/body dualism (Entwistle & Wissinger, 2006). In Warhurst and Nickson's (2009) reading, they argue that the overlap is self-evident even though Hochschild fails to tease it out. Employees' corporeality involves a complex management of hair, makeup, posture, fashion, tone, friendliness, managing emotions, dealing with conflict, self-presentation on social media among other bodily displays, some of which are also crucial to emotional labour.

Employees needs to be "looking good and sounding right" in order to perform affective interactions with customers (Christopher Warhurst & Nickson, 2001). Aesthetic labour can be subsequently defined as:

> to the hiring of workers with corporeal capacities and attributes that favourably appeal to the senses of the customers and which are then organizationally mobilized, developed and commodified through training, management and regulation to produce an embodied style of service. (Chris Warhurst & Nickson, 2009, p. 399)

The financial crisis of the 1970s pushed organizations to differentiate themselves in order to capture different niche markets. Employees are deliberately aestheticized as part of the brand identity in order to attract customers. The commodification of corporeality is then

crucial for the aesthetics of organizations where the software (employees) deliver the same sensory affect along with the hardware (store layout and product design)(Witz, Warhurst, & Nickson, 2003).

Embodiment and beauty is also explored in conjunction with theoretical ideas of cultural capital in concepts such as aesthetic capital (T. L. Anderson, Grunert, Katz, & Lovascio, 2010) and erotic capital (Hakim, 2010). Body is a form of asset as one moves across social space, eliciting wide array of social, cultural, and economic benefits. Hakim's conception of erotic capital places beauty as a central element, along with sexual attractiveness, sociality, charm, and liveliness, when well-developed and trained can yield success in the marriage or job market. For Hakim, beauty if deployed strategically and exercised, can be a source of power out of individual effort—of course, neglecting any account of socio-cultural milieu that privileges whiteness, youth, and conventional sexualities.

Other terms are also employed in research on beauty and employment. Gimlin (2002) provides an ethnographic exploration to four sites of gendered "body work" such as hair styling salons, cosmetic surgeons' offices, and aerobic classes. To enact body projects related to beauty and fitness, Gimlin identifies the body as the site for redefining identities. The self is predicated on the body, and a disjunction occurs when an authentic self is trapped inside a "mismatched," unwanted, corporeal shell. Through technological interventions, this disjunction is healed and "the women come to understand their preoperative body as accidental and their current, more 'normative' appearance as a more accurate indicator of who they really are" (Gimlin, 2002, p. 146). Rather simply proposing that women are enslaved to the 'beauty myth' perpetuated by hegemonic

American culture, Gimlin (2002) argues that body work allows women to "create space for personal liberation" (p. 2) to resist beauty ideologies. Women are presented as active agents, negotiating the relationship bodies have with beauty norms, rather than passive bodies being worked on. Gimlin argues body work provides a valid, coherent, stable me-ness, in the active manipulation of the body to achieve a celebrated self-hood. Underlying her narrative, she suggests that the body is in flux and pliable to fluctuations and augmentations with some material changes characterized as natural such as aging, and readjustment of the body such as cosmetic surgery, exercise, hair makeovers as deliberate. I position beauty boys as engaging in certain levels of body work to again find their bodies as desirable and attractive, when their authentic self is trapped in a corporal shell unable to express itself.

Under the subset of body work, Kwan and Trautner (2009) develop beauty work to describe beauty practices such as applying makeup to enhance physical attractiveness in order to elicit employment benefits and social rewards. Mears (2014) describes beauty work as unpaid labour individuals perform on their own bodies. In contrast, bodily labour is paid work directed at maintaining or improving the appearance of others such as by a hairdresser. In these studies, it shows body modifications also confer a psychic modification. Yang's (2017) investigation of Chinese beauty salons notes they offer holistic services that focus on both physical and psychological aspects.

Aesthetic labour in this spectrum is paid labour, directly or indirectly, like bodily labour, but performed on one's own body like body or beauty work, with a focus on affect and appearance. Display work and market-embodied labour are varieties of aesthetic labour. Display work, a mixture of unpaid body work and paid bodily labour,

describes jobs such as stripping, adult film acting, and sex work which require a high degree of bodily display that is explicitly sexualized (Mears & Connell, 2015). Market-embodied labour (Otis, 2011) entails bodily modification in relation to local cultural norms and expectations such as class and gender. It goes to show that economic markets are embedded in social relations, bodily matter, and senses (Mears, 2014, p. 1336). Contextualizing aesthetic labour denaturalizes the idea of beauty to show how it is constructed through various strategic management techniques.

Mears (2014) offers two critiques to a purely economic perspective of aesthetic labour. She argues that "looking good" should not be a naturalized predefined given but must be situated in the local context that defines what the "right look" is. To this end, she examines the role of aesthetic labour in organizational, freelance, and market settings to articulate how organizational context of a workplace, various cultural norms, gender and class expectations of a local culture dictate the management and performance of aesthetic labour. Secondly, the intersectionality of gender, race, and class dictates who have access to beauty in the first place, let alone aesthetic labour, which is deeply seating the race, class, and gender inequalities. In this sense, aesthetic labour deepens class and racial inequalities by rendering non-conforming bodies invisible. Furthermore, aesthetic labour as form of gendered performance furthers gender inequality by continuing to objectify and sexualize women and reduce the female subjectivity to the body.

Extending beyond aesthetic labour that works on the body, Wissinger (2015) also looks at how aesthetic labour can be applied to virtual bodies in light of recent technological advancements in what she terms "glamour labour." Her important and insightful research on New York's modeling industry's relentless requirement to

construct body, style, and reputation provides the basis for thinking about how current levels of technological development can inform notions of embodiment.

Her definition of glamour labour extends beyond work on body to also work of one's personality, relationships, reputation, lifestyles, and overall image.

> Glamour labor works on both body and image—the bodywork to manage appearance in person and image work to create and maintain one's "cool" quotient—how hooked up, tuned in, and "in the know" one is. Glamour labor involves all aspects of one's image, from physical presentation, to personal connections, to friendships and fun. (Wissinger, 2015, p. 3)

Glamour labour reveals the type of work involved in performance of constructed authenticity, intimacy, and self-branding as a microcelebrity. The aesthetic labour applied to the public-private persona also encourages virtual forms of self-surveillance, the ongoing regulation of bodily potentials and connectivity made possible by always being connected to the Internet and social media. Technology entangled with our embodiment seeks to optimize life, organizing our vital forces for our bodies' potential to transform, mutate, engage. Glamour labour usefully extends aesthetic labour by capturing the labour of the image to reflect embodiment as informed also by technology, and fusing emotional, affective, aesthetic labour and body and beauty work as various forms of optimization.

Both aesthetic labour and glamour labour refute accounts of beauty work in terms of docile bodies or passivity and speak to the feelings of pleasure and empowerment that can seduce workers to accept unfavourable working conditions. Ouelette (2017) has shown how the glamourisation of hair stylists in contemporary media culture often

obscures and justifies the exploitative working condition. In the cultural industries, workers receive heavy discounts and free stuff that they would otherwise not be able to afford in order to access an aspirational lifestyle (McClain & Mears, 2012). Mears suggests that future research looks at aesthetic laborer motivation and non-monetary forms of compensation, and I think Kuehn and Corrigan's work on hope labour and McDuffy's work on aspirational labour can help explain the motivations for undertaking aesthetic labour and glamour labour even in unfavourable and precarious conditions.

Both "hope labour" and "aspirational labour" explain the temporal relationship between the present undertakings and future aspirations. Hope labour seeks to explain the motivations for undertaking "un- or under-compensated work carried out in the present, often for experience or exposure, in the hope that future employment opportunities may follow" (Kuehn & Corrigan, 2013). To address contemporary precarity in the labour market, new modes of productive labour are framed as present investment for future award, a stark rationalization of neoliberal governance that shifts costs and risk on to the individual. Following these conceptualizations, Duffy (2016) defines aspirational labour as "a forward-looking, carefully orchestrated, and entrepreneurial form of creative cultural production […] Labourers seek to mark themselves as creative producers who will one day be compensated for their talents – either directly or through employment in the cultural industries" (p. 446).

Importantly, Duffy conducted in-depth interviews with bloggers, or what my paper frames as microcelebrities. Similar to microcelebrities, she concludes that aspirational labourers have the following characteristics: authenticity and the celebration of realness, the instrumentality of affective relationships, and entrepreneurial brand

devotion (Duffy, 2016, p. 447). Her work bridges scholarship of microcelebrity with the turn to labour by framing microcelebrities as cultural workers engaged in aspirational labour. Microcelebrities can also be seen as undertaking glamour labour as it is not exclusive to models or the style industry, but more so to all of us (Elias et al., 2017a, p. 38). Completing the circle, models undertaking glamour labour "as means to the good life" (Wissinger, 2015, p. 3) underlies the affectivity of hope and aspiration. Like Mears (2014), Duffy's analysis foregrounds the working of power and conceptualizes aspirational labour as gendered, perpetuating hegemonic beauty norms. She also emphasizes aspirational labourers' tendency to background their cultural, aesthetic, or erotic capital in their production of the authenticity narrative. As aspirational labourers seek rewarding work of "doing what you love," it obscures the highly uneven reward system where only a few can reach success.

Duffy's emphasis on the problematic constructions of gender and class can be adeptly applied to glamour labour as well. Labourers require a certain level of economic capital before engaging in aspirational labour, or even glamour labour. Any body and beauty work would require consumption, and any work of the virtual image would require various from of technological equipment, the leisure time to learn these tools, and the affordability to take presently unpaid work for future rewards. Other optimizations of bodily affectivity such as social connection and engagement often require time and capital investment to appear at, for example, conferences, workshops, and networking events that would take place in metropolitan centers. Thus, investment in glamour labour though compelling and available to everyone, it is also seeped in access issues along axes of gender, race, class, and mobility.

Despite the investment of these labour practices, none of them promises success. The success of glamour labour depends on the ability to make the work involved invisible (Wissinger, 2015, p. 10), or what Abidin (2016) describes as tacit labour. Extending Polyani's tacit knowledge, Abidin conceptualizes tacit labour to embody "a collective practice of work that is understated and under-visibilized from being so thoroughly rehearsed that it appears as effortless and subconscious" (Abidin, 2016, p. 10). In her research of SMIs, the production of a selfie involves complex procedures of makeup and dressing, lighting and gendered posturing, editing in apps—in other words, glamour labour—in order to produce commercial selfies that must appeal to followers and pass the watchful eyes of in-group policing. Aspirational labourers doing unpaid labour for brands means accepting rewards of visibility, or in other words celebrity, while making their own labour invisible in order to maintain authenticity.

The last addition to this discussion is Elias, Gill, and Scharff's (2017) conception of "aesthetic entrepreneurship," which recognizes the entrepreneurial enactments of creativity and agency of aspirational labourers and glamour labourers as grounded in neoliberalism. What underlies these subjectivities is "a calculating, self-reflexive, "economic" subject; one that calculates about itself and works upon itself in order to better itself" (du Gay, 1996, p. 124) —and this includes appearance" (Elias et al., 2017, p. 39). An aesthetic entrepreneur is involved in making over the whole self, both physical and psychic in an autonomous, self-inventing and self-regulating fashion, undertaking the costs and risks on the self.

As some of these authors point to, aesthetic labour, glamour labour, aspirational labour, and aesthetic entrepreneurship has yet to fully examine men's experience of

beauty-related labour practices. This work on beauty boys extends this growing bodying of research concerned with the intersection of beauty, embodiment, technology, and their market value.

Part III: Masculinity and Consumer Culture

Commercial Masculinity

While beauty politics has focused on women's experience, there are a plethora of terminology used to describe men who show an interest in activities that traditionally fall in the feminine domain. For example, "gastrosexuals" refer to men aged 25-44 with an interest in global cuisine and cook to impressed women; "mentertainers" refer to men who throw dinner parties to showcase their culinary skills; and "Martha Studly" refers to men with an eye for interior design (M. Hall, 2014, p. 16). Similarly, there are various terms to describe activities and products with a masculine twist such as "boyzillian," "guyliner," "manbags," "mankup," "manscaping," "manscara," "manties," "mantyhose," (M. Hall, 2014, pp. 159–160). Men's interest in image-conscious practices is of course nothing new. Bill Osgerby's (2003) historical account of men's interest in image enhancement can be traced back to the 19th Century. Osgerby (2003) argues that men's grooming simply remained invisible due to the perception of a "feminine realm of consumption and a masculine realm of production" (p. 59). His study of "dandy," "dude," "Arrow Men," "Jazz Age Gatsby buck," and "gangsters" legitimizes masculine archetypes oriented around the pleasures fulfilled by commodity consumption of image and style. Other previous masculinities include the 17th Century Fop, 18th Century Macaroni, 20th Century Flaming Heterosexual, the 1980s/early-1990s New Man and New Lad (Coad, 2008, pp. 22–24; Gill, 2003), and the yuppie (Shugart, 2008). Osgerby

suggests that there is a much longer history of consumption-oriented identities of American masculinity. Progressively, a leisure-orientated consumer ethos became much more prominent in the late 20th Century and articulations of masculinity formed around pleasures of hedonistic consumption and stylistic display were more socially accepted than previous predecessors.

Contemporary masculinities are centripetal to the development of modern consumerism. Edwards (2016) defined the consumer society as:

> a series of social, economic and economic political developments that characterize contemporary or late capitalist society. These include the increasing organization of society and societal institution around consumption; the expansion in time and money spent on consumption activities, from leisure and sports to arts and shopping; the snowballing symbolic significance of goods in constructing individual identities and group practices; the increasing commodification and aestheticization of everyday life; and the rising significance of consumerism in the reconstruction of social divisions (p. 4).

The commercial exploitation of masculinities has not only sprung important male magazines and the growth in market for men's fashion, but it is also used to sell everything from toothpaste to porn. While some scholars traced the origins of commercial masculinity to the 1950s pop culture scene of Elvis Presley (Mort, 1996), others looked toward the heterosexual hedonism of Hugh Hefner's *Playboy* magazine that welcomed the well-dressed, well-accessorized (by cars and women) playboy (Chapman, 1988; Ehrenreich, 1983). Still, most scholars agree that the 1980s witnessed a more extensive shift toward the gender objectification of the male body than any previous

time, where style-based masculinities start to replace class-based masculinities (Edwards, 2016; Mort, 1996; Nixon, 1996a).

Mort identified the 1970s as a period to "play about with masculinities" as previous unified youth culture of the 1950s and 1960s were disintegrated and replaced with creative advertising of male fashion that offered a proliferation of expressive style and hybrid forms of identity (Mort, 1996, p. 203). In Nixon's (1996a) analysis of menswear, visual representation, and the men's style press, he concludes the commercialization of masculinity in the 1980s witnessed new politics of looking as male-on-male, female-on-male, female-on-female ran alongside the male-on-female gaze. Similarly, Mark Simpson indicates that the commercial initiatives to acquire new markets have "'queered' all the codes of official masculinity of the last hundred years or so: It's passive where it should be active, desired where it should be desiring, looked at where it should be always looking" (Simpson, 2004, n.p.).

Transformed by commercial and economic forces marked by the Thatcherite deregulation of the economy, clothing outlets for men are marketed as aspirational style rather than class, and visual representations of sexualized and objectified men in advertising and television framed the image of a narcissistic new man that is self-confident, well groomed, muscular, but also sensitive and nurturing (Nixon, 1996a). Lastly, style magazines for male audiences, such as *GQ, Esquire*, *Maxim*, *FHM*, and *Men's Health*, offered new aesthetic codes that had "a lot more to do with new markets for the constant reconstruction of masculinity through consumption" (Edwards, 2016, p. 82). The homoerotic gaze (Cole, 2000) is more evident with the proliferation of male bodies in men's style magazines, and rest in the tension between challenging hegemonic

masculinity (Connell, 1995) and dismissing homosexuality by rendering consumption unproblematic. According to Edwards (2003), style magazines' denial of homosexuality allows men to enjoy looking at men outside the questions of gender and sexuality through the use of irony and discursive constructions of gender difference. Certainly, commercial masculinity also has strong links to gay men who are accused of feminizing men's fashion to reflect a distinctively gay aesthetic, and gay men in turn resent the appropriation of their distinctive visual style by the fashion industry (Beynon, 2002, p. 104). Here Shugart (2008) notes is one of the key tensions between normative masculinity and commercial masculinity.

Commercial masculinity has been credited as an inevitable response to the changing landscape of sexual politics where the objectification of men almost signals a level playing field (Robinson, 2000), while other critics believe commercial masculinity is more the outcome of developments in marketing, advertising, and commercialization than sexual politics (Beynon, 2002; Edwards, 2016; Mort, 1996). Writing in a British context, Nixon notes it is also easy to overemphasize the significance of these developments for the majority of the population who were far away from the metropolitan center of London, "where categories of male and female, straight and gay, black or white, remain remarkably stable" (Nixon, 1996, p. 117).

Although gender is central to this discussion, cultural discourses of race and class are also profoundly relevant as they intersect with changing conceptions of identity, status, and privilege. The shifting economies of work of the postindustrial service industries such as advertising, media, promotion, and public relations have in other ways economically and socially marginalized the working-class masculinities. A hierarchy of

masculinities is still in existence that valorizes the good looking, young, rich, and affluent masculinity of the metropolis.

The niche-marketing tactics of renewed consumerism have much to gain in strategically opening up new markets to engulf male consumers. Chapman (1988) argues that the mutating nature of patriarchy incorporates its subversion by embracing the feminine as to strategically retain its dominance. “New masculinity, like the old, relies upon a fissure in gender and an unequal position of values” (Chapman, 1988, p. 247). A redefinition of masculinity in its hybrid forms is but a better way to retain the control of legitimate masculinity over women and deviant men (Chapman, 1988, p. 235). While Mort (1996) attributes new masculinities to the dynamics of the marketplace, promotional culture offered the opportunities to experiment with various images and social scripts that intensified the proliferation of individualities (p. 209). If these shifts in masculinities are not a genuine transformation of sexual politics, they nonetheless do speak to the various consequences of economics, marketing, political ideology, and consumer society, that offer some disruptions to patriarchy. It has become commonplace that consumer culture is obsessed with the body, and now bodies of men, their naked bodies, their bodies dressed in fashionable garb, toned, defined, sexy, are still relaying a strong binding sense of masculinity.

Metrosexuality

In a 1994 *Independent* article “Here Come the Mirror Men,” British journalist Mark Simpson first introduced the term “metrosexuality” to describe the change in men’s grooming practices that reflect a “new, narcissistic, media-saturated, self-conscious kind of masculinity” (2004, p.1). Simpson (2002) described the metrosexual as:

> A young man with money to spend, living in or within easy reach of a metropolis because that's where all the best shops, clubs, gyms and hairdressers are. He might be officially gay, straight or bisexual, but this is utterly immaterial because he has clearly taken himself as his own love subject.

For Simpson, attention to appearance and narcissism are the fundamental qualities of a metrosexual, and it follows that shopping, accessorizing, and using body products are natural activities of self-care. The term was popularized when applied to celebrity David Beckham and also foregrounded the relationship of metrosexuality and sports culture. Heterosexual outings from other athletes like Cristiano Ronaldo, Pat Riley, Alex Rodriguez, Freddie Ljungberg, Ian Thorpe (Coad, 2008) and Rugby star Gavin Henson (Harris & Clayton, 2007b) ensued.

Apart from Simpson's original emphasis on the irrelevance of sexuality, the term now has connotations of femininity, sophistication, and heterosexuality (M. Hall, 2014, p. 34). Coad attributes these problematic connotations to the role of commercial marketing. As the term was picked up by various mainstream media, global marketing and communications agencies, Euro RSCG Worldwide released two reports, "The Future of Men: U.S.A" and "The Future of Men: U.K" (Coad, 2008, p. 26). According to Coad, Euro RSCG was the main push to reframe Metrosexuality as a form of commercial masculinity, a strategy to find profits in new markets. A market generated definition of metrosexuality emphasizes metrosexuals as strictly heterosexual and fails to address the underlying queerness of the subject. In an effort to exclude anything queer with the subject, the word metrosexual is presented as a portmanteau between "metropolitanism" and "heterosexuality" (Coad, 2008, p. 27). The surplus of disposable income allows the

"survival of the heterosexual male [in a] consumerist world, an adaptation to its market expectations within the context of broader shifts in postmodernity, cosmopolitanism and globalization" (Carniel, 2009, p. 75). Ultimately, reducing metrosexuality to heterosexuality dampens the new politics of looking and queer ways of being.

It comes as no surprise that some scholars dismiss metrosexuality as a media and market-generated term to attract new consumers rather than a genuine transformation of masculinity (Edwards, 2006; Harris & Clayton, 2007b, 2007a), much like the new men and the new lad. Harris and Clayton (2007b, p. 152) argue that men have always embodied behaviours contradicting the dominant male archetype which precisely show the workings of cultural hegemony. And for Shugart (2008), it was a historical moment in popular culture, a fleeting trend with the purpose of reconciling commercial masculinity with normative masculinity by organizing homosociality in strategic ways.

Other critiques suggest metrosexuality as not simply another incarnation of commercial masculinity, but representing changes in masculinities (Carniel, 2009; Coad, 2008; M. Hall, 2014; Harrison, 2008; T. Miller, 2005, 2006). In Miller's analysis of the makeover Television show, *A Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, he concludes that men's consumption practices and attention to appearance was brought about by the changing political and economic shift in the labour market. Furthering Nixon's (1996a) propositions, Miller describe the wage discrimination in middle-class U.S labour marketing as one based on appearance that affects both women and men. "Major corporations frequently require executives to tailor their body shapes to the company ethos, or at least encourage employees to cut their weight in order to reduce health care costs to the employer" (T. Miller, 2005, p. 113). Sales of moisturizers, pedicures,

manicures, hair dyes, and even cosmetic surgery by middle-aged men increased to avoid hitting the “silver ceiling.” The effects of ageing give off the perception of being “less successful, intelligent, and athletic,” hampering career advancement (T. Miller, 2005, p. 113). However, these grooming practices seem to suggest that women pursue beautification for trivial matters, while men seek functional improvements for things like career.

Despite changes in men’s consumption, it is still too early to determine any permanent changes to masculinity. What Miller (2005) identifies is a form of neoliberal queerness where queerness becomes a form of commodity aesthetics that can be adopted and discarded. The professionalization of queerness packages a set of image-management tactics for the normative masculinity to achieve success personally or professionally, reflecting the labour processes of neoliberalism. While *A Queer Eye* helped transmit metrosexuality to a wider audience (Coad, 2008), queerness becomes a new form of commodity that can be consumed safely apart from but compatible with heteronormativity. Coad (2008) suggests Metrosexuality as ultimately challenging traditional notions of gender by moving beyond the dualism of masculine and feminine, heterosexuality and homosexuality. He explains:

> Metrosexuality is based on the idea that power can be shared between the sexes, rather than be exclusively seen as a sign of virility or naturally pertaining to the male sex. Metrosexuality means that passivity can be shared by men and women rather than confused with femininity. It also implies a destigmatization of homosexuality and a consequent decrease of homophobia, since metrosexuality is blind to sexual orientation and privileges no single sexual identity. As well, the

> fact that metrosexuality can replace conventional categories of sexual orientation means that less attention is being paid to traditional binary opposition separating males into two discrete categories, heterosexual or homosexual. (2008, p. 197)

It would seem then that metrosexual masculinity compels men to reevaluate their own masculinity. While metrosexual celebrity sport stars encourage heterosexual men to engage in traditional feminine and homosexual practices; Carniel sees it as the circulation and propagation of the metrosexual look, encouraging an image-conscious masculinity through consumption practices. Carniel (2009), in his study of metrosexuality and Australian soccer argues that “while metrosexuality re-socializes men as consumers, it does not necessarily alter other fundamental characteristics of hegemonic masculinity” (p. 81). He sees metrosexuality as a hybridization of existing paradigms of masculinity. When metrosexuality is demonstrated as an explicit “look” and associated with a celebrity status, it is much more excusable as a spectacle of his celebrity (Carniel, 2009) in ways like David Bowie’s use of makeup and coloured costumes (M. Hall, 2014, p. 29). Coad (2008) also acknowledges the metrosexual look by arguing for metrosexuality’s dual status for having the potential to unsettle traditional gender and sexuality boundaries, or existing purely as an asexual aesthetic of the young, metropolitan, avant-garde man. The convergence of metrosexuality and celebrity culture and the use of queer as branding for television programming speak to the necessary impression management and self-branding for beauty boys who are discursively constructed as microcelebrities.

Harrison’s multimodal analysis of an studi5ive, an online website for male mascara, concurs with Carniel as she finds that such advertising encourages men to be consumers of traditionally feminized products while allowing them to maintain their

normative masculinity. She notes that advertisers of men's cosmetics reframe traditionally feminine products such as mascara through verbal and visual cues that allow men to consume them without losing their qualities traditionally gendered as masculine. Men's makeup is

> considered 'corrective', that is, as addressing a health concern rather than a beauty issue. Also, much of the discourse about the products attempts to validate their use through scientific terminology. Thus, Velocity Moisturizer Emulsion, a facial cream, is 'vitamin-enriched' with the capacity to 'stabilize skin's natural defences ... while special humectants attract and hold additional moisture for hours. (Harrison, 2008, p. 61)

Hall's (2014; M. Hall, Gough, & Seymour-Smith, 2012) discursive analysis of men's accounts of makeup use on YouTube yields similar finding where men's use of cosmetics have been centered around the discourse of corrective measures rather than for the purposes of beautification. As Harrison notes, men's makeup use is one of the more extreme metrosexual appearance-related practices, so perhaps engaging in this practice challenges gender distinction more than others. In analyzing a young YouTuber's daily makeup routine and video responses, he notes some of the comments reframe men's cosmetics use for healthy, hygiene, and corrective purposes. Commenters reproduce notions of heterosexual prowess and self-respect, while defending potential charges of being gay. Surprisingly, some commenters presented makeup use as enhancing masculine features by contouring the face, nose, cheekbones, and chin. It is clear that makeup used by heterosexual men is still regarded as non-normative, incurring defensive remarks, "I'm METRO, NOT gay" (M. Hall, 2014, p. 121). The findings nonetheless suggest that

traditional masculinity is not in decline but repackaged for a consumer-oriented society.

Unlike previous scholars, Hall takes his investigation to self-ascribed metrosexuals in four online settings: men's style magazines, commercial forums, video and advertising testimonials. Rather than taking a sociological interpretation of metrosexuality, or presenting it as a predefined given, Hall interrogates metrosexuality as an "emergent feature" of social interactions to see how self-identified metrosexuals navigate the parameters of their identity. In Hall's (2014) analysis of customer testimonials of men's cosmetic line 4VOO Distinct Man, a Canada-based company with internal outlets that provides luxury cosmetic and skincare, he concludes that men were able to defend themselves against charges of effeminacy and being gay by framing cosmetic use on a "need" to or "want" to use basis. The majority of testimonials fall under the need to use basis based on factors such as the environment, lifestyle, and skin problems. In other words, the majority use makeup for corrective purposes rather than for beautification. Hetero-masculinity founded on work, sexual attraction, success, and pragmatism is still influential in the use and function of men's makeup products. The analysis shows the vulnerabilities in traversing conventional gender boundaries even in online spaces facilitated by marketers which suggest that it is still too early to say whether makeup will become normalized for men. On the other hand, what this does suggest is the possibility that changes in work and lifestyle are the motivating factors of changes in contemporary masculinities.

If men who wear corrective makeup are at the extreme end of metrosexuality, where do we place beauty boys who wear glamourous makeup, and actively embrace non-normative sexualities? Beauty boys play in the narrative of a historical trajectory of

men's consumption of style, but also differ from its predecessors. Unlike metrosexuals who use makeup for corrective purpose in a need to use basis, beauty boys use makeup for beautification. Beauty boys also face similar interrogations as metrosexuals: does it offer new social scripts to express one's identity, challenge traditional gender and sexuality boundaries, or is it predominately an image-based practice bound up with dominant masculinity? Like Hall, I take my investigation of self-ascribed beauty boys online to interrogate how commercial cultures continue to play a huge role in reconstructing contemporary masculine identities.

Chapter 2: A Genealogy approach towards the production of beauty boys

Before we can account for Foucault's genealogy as a tool of historical analysis, we must first outline the ways where Foucault's approach to history is different from others, maintained in three key rejections: rejection of the dialectical and progressive view of history; rejection of the concept of history in terms of great ideological beliefs, and rejection of the totalising vision of history as patterns of coherence (Schirato, Danaher, & Webb, 2012). Foucault envisions history as overlapping and contesting rather than a single fixed entity, as we progressively reconstruct the past to serve in the interest of the present (Schirato et al., 2012). He rejects seeing history as a continuous linear trajectory that is teleological but attunes to the disjunctions and discontinuity along with the unity and repetition (Schirato et al., 2012). Thus, his research methodologies of archaeology and genealogy are both informed by this perspective on history.

Archaeology and Genealogy

Archaeology reveals the discontinuities of history and the apparatuses that produce some values as universal and others as unthinkable. What Foucault tries to do is grasp the distinctive epistemological structure, an *episteme*, that governs the discursive formation of statements. He does this through the analysis of visibility in conditioning the sayable statements, and vice versa in a mutually constitutive function (Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 25). Foucault's concern is then analysing statements in the archive, being "the general system of the formation and transformation of statements" (Foucault, 2002, p. 130). Kendall and Wickham (1999) refer to this relationship as investigating the archive of discourse (p. 25). In focusing on the appearance of statements, Foucault is content with providing a description of surface appearance rather than a search for a deeper meaning. His non-interpretive research challenges the presumption of a unified subject, and history as a consequence of the different motivation of historical actors (Schirato et al., 2012, p. 4). Seeking the appearance of statements rather than the search for authors and actors, avoids attributing origins to human actors.

Often critiqued due to its structuralist overtones of the episteme imposing its patterning onto discourses (Kendall & Wickham, 1999; Koopman, 2013), Foucault takes another turn in the 1970s having been concerned with formulating ways to account for power as a budding post-structuralist (Foucault, 1980, p. 92). Foucault clarifies that he is not trying to provide a theory of power, but a new way to bring to light techniques of power where human beings are made into subjects (Foucault, 1983, p. 208). He outlines three modes of objectification which transform human beings into subjects: objectivizing human beings into a status of sciences, objectivizing subject through dividing practices,

self-objectivizing where human beings turn him or herself into a subject (Foucault, 1980, p. 97). Thus, Foucault is interested in the on-going process of subjugation of our bodies that determines our gestures and behaviours.

Genealogy, on the other hand, is concerned with power and body in terms of how "subjects are gradually, progressively, really and materially constituted through a multiplicity of organisms, forces, energies, desires, thoughts, paying attention to its material instance as a constitution of subjects" (Foucault, 1980, p. 97). Foucault himself saw the two methods as complementary to "alternate, support, and complete each other" (Foucault, 1971, p. 27). Seen as an extension of archaeology (Koopman, 2013, p. 20), we might think of genealogy as the *strategic* development of archaeological research (Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 31). Archaeology emphasizes the discursive phenomenon, whereas genealogy is more concerned with the interaction of and relationship between discursive and non-discursive practices (Anaïs, 2013, p. 126), attuning to the relays of power that maintains this relationship. In other words, archaeology explores the episteme under which statements are combined and regulated to form and define a distinct field of knowledge and object, whereas genealogy is more focused on how productive effects of power work on the body/subject.

Genealogy as History of the Present

Genealogy as history can be best described by Foucault as presenting a "history of the present" to interrogate the emergence of certain epistemological structures, to provide an assemblage of events that seeks no origin, to make the workings of power and discourse visible to us (Saar, 2002). Genealogy as history of the present, history of events, is a

constitutive process that relays its discontinuities, transformations and contingences to allow for the dynamic and continuous mutation of the object of study (Anaïs, 2013).

Drawing from Nietzsche, Foucault aligns his genealogy with the search for the processes of descent and emergence. Genealogy is to trace the line of descent following a course of contingencies and accidents in their dispersion, in order to arrive at an event of rupture and emergence. Through descent, Foucault challenges the idea of continuity and progression of history and sees them as a dispersion of accidents and contingences:

> to follow the complex course of descent is to maintain passing events in their proper dispersion; it is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations—or conversely, the complete reversals—the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that truth or being does not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents (Foucault, 1984, p. 81)

And again, he says:

> The search for descent is not the erecting of foundations: on the contrary, it disturbs what was previously considered immobile; it fragments what was thought unified; it shows the heterogeneity of what was imagined consistent with itself (Foucault, 1984, p. 82).

Genealogy opposes the search for origins or the building of foundations because such search presupposes the existence of primordial essences “that precede the external world of accident and succession” (Foucault, 1984, p. 78). Rather, genealogy traces the discontinuous process of accidents, events, and contingences whereby the past becomes

the present. It challenges the regimes of truth and established modes of knowledge to show the heterogeneity of what is considered unified, normalized, and consistent.

In companion to the rejection of history as progress, emergence rejects the finality of historical development. Emergence looks at the “moment or arising” when “the various systems of subjection” meet at the interstice in a “hazardous play of domination” (Foucault, 1984, p. 83). Focusing on discontinuities that mark the struggle of the present allows for a level of indeterminacy that avoids the unilateral cause and effect of a totalizing history. The struggle and confrontation between forces, the play of subjugation and domination is fixed “in rituals, in meticulous procedures that impose rights and obligations. It establishes marks of its power and engraves memories on things and even within bodies” (Foucault, 1984, p. 85). Foucault has maintained that the body is an essential component where operation of power/knowledge is localized and where the markings of history reside:

> The body is the inscribed surface of events…Genealogy, as an analysis of descent, is thus situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history's destruction of the body. (Foucault, 1984, p. 83)

Genealogy as descent and emergence returns us to the mapping of power and systems of subjugation. Foucault’s analytics of power have framed it as a dividing practice, a nexus of power-knowledge, as productive of subjects and of truth. He also describes power as a relation between forces, “a mode of action which does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead, it acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on existing actions,

or on those which may arise in the present or in the future" (Foucault, 1983, p. 220). Power constitutes and reproduces its resistance, oppositions, dispositions. In the sphere of emergence marked by opposition and plays of domination, emergence uses "this resistance as a chemical catalyst so as to bring to light power relations" (Foucault, 1983, p. 211). Foucault introduces three forms of struggle: struggle against domination, struggle against exploitation, and struggle against the forms of subjection.

> There are two meanings of the word subject: subject to someone else by control and dependence and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to. (Foucault, 1983, p. 212)

Judith Butler's (1993) work on performativity further map out the relations of discourse and non-discursive practices in her interrogation of sex. The idea that neither sex nor gender are natural enunciations of the body, but rather are culturally constituted, shows that the categorization of the body as male or female is a fantasy grounded on the illogic of predicating gender on a sexual binary. The social construction of gender suggests a natural pre-given body of pure sexual difference waiting for inscription. Nature is seen as passive, blank, outside of culture and before intelligibility, rather than recognizing sex as having its own history. The sexed body like the cultural construction of gender is also produced through a discursive formation in the process of materialization that consolidates its normative condition. Sex is no longer a bodily given but rendered intelligible through discourse; it is the sedimented effect of reiterative practices that acquires naturalization.

Butler points out that materiality is “bound up with signification from the start” (Butler 1990, 6), which suggests that the materiality of sex is constituted through signification and does not prefigure it. Any body that exists prior to the marking of sex will be a fictional one, for that body is constituted as signifiable only though the marking of sex (Butler, 1993, p. 62). It is the first condition before all other bodily differences are produced. To say the body/gender/sex is an effect of Discourse, Culture, Power can adhere to a structuralist understanding of subjectivity. Conceptualizing the body as an effect of power seems, on its surface, to render critical resistance or political agency unrealizable. The body becomes a passive object on which power operates, functions, and inscribes, and the body and its material, sexual difference is "black-boxed," hiding the relations of heterogeneous elements (Grosz, 1994). However, she also affirms constructions and its relation to temporality in the reiterative citations of norms. Butler accentuates that power does not act, power is the reiterative activity in its persistence and instability, and thus sex is both produced but also has the potential to be destabilized (Butler, 1993, p. xviii). It is also within the repeated stylization of the body as a set of regulatory acts that sites of contestations occur. As drag reveals for Butler, and beauty boys reveal for me, the instability of gender and sex, the performative nature of gender identities within power structures that regulates our actions, can be at the same time aimed at destabilizing and disturbing the normative expression of gender that rests on essential gender identity.

Genealogy as Critique

Genealogy is a means of using history as a critical engagement with the present. Dreyfus and Rainbow explain, “This approach explicitly and self-reflectively begins with

a diagnosis of the current situation. There is an unequivocal and unabashed contemporary orientation" (Dreyfus, Rabinow, & Foucault, 1983, p. 119). David Garland (2014) describes the diagnosis of the problem as the first step in conducting a genealogy (p. 377). Garland points us to how Foucault structures his writing when presenting a phenomenon by presenting how modern conceptions are different from those of previous eras or presenting the conventional historical accounting, only to declare it mistaken (Garland, 2014, p. 377). For example, conventional historical studies traced the rise of the modern prison to the reform proposal of the Enlightenment era or to the influence of early modern custodial institutions. Foucault then challenges such explanations to show the connection between the emergence of the modern prison and techniques of discipline in non-penal settings such as military barracks, schoolrooms, monasteries and manufacturers (Garland, 2014, p. 376). Rather than linked with Enlightenment ideals, the modern prison is an exercise of power and knowledge over bodies in space with disciplinary practices of individuations, surveillance, examination, training, dressage, correction, and normalization (Garland, 2014, p. 376).

Garland tasks genealogists with identifying how certain phenomenon came to be regarded as a problem. Foucault is often referred to as a historian of the present because his approach is to select a problematic relation and trace the historical forces that shaped the problem rather than choose a specific period of investigation. Accordingly, he was interested in the process of how and why certain things became a problem, such as madness, crime, and sexuality. Foucault states, "I set out from a problem expressed in the terms current today and I try to work out its genealogy. Genealogy means that I begin my analysis from a question posed in the present" (Foucault, 1990a, p. 262). In Colin

Koopman's *Genealogy as Critique* (2013), he takes seriously Foucault's claim of the importance of problematization for all his works (p. 93). In his genealogies of modern punishment and sexuality, Foucault does not apply value judgement in whether it is right or wrong. Rather, genealogy is critique, in that it critically defines the conditions which certain practices and beliefs as seen as problematic (Koopman, 2013, p. 95). The process of denaturalization already suggests the critical element as genealogy seeks to reveal the historicity of our very beings. Koopman argues that genealogy as the problematization of the present is neither to subvert nor vindicate existing practices, beliefs, and conceptions, but a way of reconstruction in which we may transform ourselves and come to alternative forms of thought and practice (Koopman, 2013, p. 146).

Foucault understands modern philosophy as divided since the critical works of Kant. One camp is concerned with the "analytics of truth" to map the conditions which true knowledge in possible (Foucault, 1990b, p. 95). On the other camp, which Foucault is embedded in, is the critical interrogation of the present and present field of possible experiences, called "ontology of the present, an ontology of ourselves" (Foucault, 1990b, p. 95). Genealogy as a critical ontology of ourselves means that through the historical analysis of the contingences that made us who we are, we may move beyond the limits that are imposed upon us.

Doing Genealogy

While Foucault gives an epistemological and theoretical orientation of genealogy, and as a project revealed in *Discipline and Punish* (1995) and *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1* (1990c), he never offered a how to *do* a genealogy as a method nor wants to offer such prescriptions. Seantel Anaïs (2012) argues that genealogy constitutes an ethos of analysis

rather than a strict post-structuralist methodology. The key is employing a methodology that fills in the gap as one sees fit that still attunes to genealogy's epistemological and theoretical orientations (Anaïs, 2012, p. 129). Anaïs puts genealogy and critical discourse analysis in conversation to offer some practical ways to design and carry out research in a mixed-methodology.

Assembling an archive. Genealogy requires assembling an archive. "Genealogy, consequently, requires patience and a knowledge of details, and it depends on a vast accumulation of source materials" (Foucault, 1984, pp. 76–77). This large set of material is not to be taken as a totality of unified data which is capable of telling the whole story, a narrative from begging to end (Anaïs, 2013, p. 130). Rather the accumulation of sources is done with the inter-relationship between discourses in mind. Genealogy does not "limit the contours or the growth of a data set, yielding surprising research trajectories and exciting finding that often spawn new projects or extensions of earlier ones" (Anaïs, 2013, p. 130). The archive is grouped through the process of descent and emergence, looking at the contingent play of events to the eruptions generated in the emergent field of domination and struggle. In other words, the assembling of an archive is situated in such rupture that questions existing regimes of practice. Genealogy makes no prior decisions regarding what materials will fit and allows for the possibility of the researching adding new source material, while defending itself in what made it into the archive and what is excluded.

My accumulation of source material takes seriously the living nature of the data set. For one, during the proposal stage of my investigation of men in makeup, Charles had not been named Covergirl, let alone the subsequent beauty boy ambassadors. During

my research, I had to constantly expand my data to attune to new findings and events. As this is a relatively new and sparsely covered phenomenon, I did not restrict how I gathered these additional texts but considered for inclusion any material that might be relevant to my analysis.

My archive includes two major sets of text. First are articles from newspapers and magazines, accessed online, to map out the current phenomenon of beauty boys, and how they are objectivized as consumers in the field of marketing, and bodies constituted as peripheral subjects through dividing practices. Second, I looked to YouTube videos as self-narratives to see how individuals actively seek subjugation. I conducted two case studies on Manny Gutierrez, age 27, and James Charles, age 19 to limit the scope of my research on beauty boys. I excluded male beauty influencers from other regions other than North America and England, as I found that beauty boy is a distinctively western phenomenon. Male beauty influencers in Korea, China, and Japan are outside the scope of this paper but offer trajectories for further research.

The case study involved video analysis of the two YouTubers through their YouTube accounts "Manny Mua," and "James Charles." Given the time and resources, I was able to undertake only two case studies, where I looked at Gutierrez's 223 videos dated from July 20, 2014 to May 28, 2017; and 43 videos from Charles's YouTube channel from March 3, 2016 to May 30, 2017. I essentially looked at the day of the first video to the end of May, 2017 as I conducted my first phase of video analysis in April, 2017. These two YouTubers were selected as they were the first two to be named as ambassadors of a global brand in the specific framing of challenging the boundaries of gender roles. Furthermore, they were identified as objects of discourse by my

accumulated magazine and newspaper sources, framed as symbols for the genderless makeup movement, and showcased by their online presence on social media. Using the number of subscribers as the qualifier, Gutierrez and Charles takes second and third place as the most popular male beauty vloggers, following after Jeffree Star. Unlike Jeffree Star who struggles against any form of categorization, Gutierrez and Charles self-identify as beauty boys. Given their age gap, Gutierrez as among the first to set the scene as male beauty vlogger on YouTube and Charles is part of the new wave of younger male beauty influencers, showing the continuity of discursive formation and its processes of materialization.

The intertextuality of videos, and videos as communication, means I also ventured to some videos of Patrick Starrr, Jeffree Star, and others that seemed relevant in my second source material gathering phase. Due the limited representation of Gutierrez and Charles in terms of race, gender, and sexuality, Patrick Starrr is a notable person of colour to reach tremendous level of fame and influence, and Jeffree Star perhaps the most controversial beauty vlogger, who challenged gender stereotypes since his popularity on My Space serve to diversity representation and perspectives.

I view both data sets involving articles and videos as texts fitting for a discourse analysis. CDA is often critiqued as taking an impoverished definition of discourse in focusing on the linguistic when analyzing a text (Anaïs, 2013; Kendall & Wickham, 1999), or in visual methodology of discourse analysis to only considering visual meaning decontextualized from its material manifestation (Iedema, 2003). Discourse should not only be focused on language as the production of meaning but look also towards the

blurring of boundaries between language, image, and other elements of designed multimedia environments.

Attending to the systematic nature of text. Just as a pure focus on language is too limiting in analyzing discourse, texts should not only be considered for their content but also their material and performative aspects to uncover the power relations in its production and circulation. As Fairclough (1995) suggests, content cannot be studied as distinct from form because “contents are always necessarily realized in forms” (p. 188). This research devotes time to uncovering the conditions of possibility behind YouTube videos, the discourse of fame, and the material structures involved in determining its production and circulation. The production of YouTube videos is determined by the conventions of the institution and community normalizations, which underwrites and legitimizes content creation. More so than just the format and structure of YouTube videos, they also adhere to rules of what can be said in what ways in accordance to various institutional forces such as Google, YouTube, brands, and the AdSense program. To analyze YouTube videos as a discursive artifact also demands the attention to the social context within which it is produced and consumed.

Reading for silences. Jean Carabine (2001) stresses the importance of reading for absences, and silences, as well as resistance and counter-discourse in conduction a genealogy. Doing so is not out of the desire to speak for the marginalized positions, but to diagnose the reason of their position, in other words to map the wider historical discourses that maintain their positions as marginal. Anaïs (2012) offers two practical ways genealogy can read for silences through a mixed methodology offered by CDA: reading along the text and reading against the text. First, as mentioned in the earlier

section, pay close attention to the content of a text, and its form or materiality. Second, actively look for silences, omission, and question the official position offered by the text. Reading for silences allows for a critical approach to the apparatuses of knowledge production and power relation. I pay attention to the non-discursive elements, and the practices of beauty boys in terms of tacit labour that is omitted in official discourses. The discourse of a progressive and glamourized beauty boy, omit the vulnerability and labouring of their material body.

Chapter 3: What is a Beauty Boy?

Where once makeup rested in the domain of a feminized experience, men in makeup are becoming hyper-visible as mainstream media holds the banner of equality. It seems the proliferation, intensification, and extensification of knowledge about gender equality has entered the sacred domains of female aesthetics and politicized YouTube's beauty community. In the past, the use of makeup has been theorized as a disciplinary practice of femininity, where docile subjects self-surveil their aesthetics at all times. With the expansion of commercial masculinity, the extreme end of metrosexuals is also experimenting with makeup for corrective measures to meet the current social standards in the job and marriage market (Harrison, 2008). I do not wish to assume that there is a real and profound shift in identity politics in proclaiming makeup as genderless, presented through the emergence of beauty boys. Nor do I wish to regard the discussion as essentially trivial. Instead, I argue that beauty boys are best treated as a discursive formation for making sense of the contemporary Western formulations of masculinity that leaves open the questions about the existence of a profound cultural shift in masculinity.

There are no agreed-upon criteria for identifying beauty boys among the actual male population, and the static essentialized regimes of representation by mainstream media are problematic in forming certain discourse of beauty boys that contradicts one's own lived experience. Whether it is to view them as regimes of representation, outcome of marketing practices, or the lived experience of contemporary young men, beauty boys function not as static fixed identities, but as discursive formations. The emergence of beauty boy representations opens up the possibility to "do" beauty boy, where such

performance of beauty boys can be something one knowingly enacts to gain visibility or economic benefits.

My empirical research of the self-produced videos of beauty boys points to an extremely complicated relationship between beauty boys' self-actualization and the templates of masculinity offered in magazines and other cultural forms. This chapter is concerned with how "beauty boys" are discursively constituted in contemporary Western media such as online newspaper and magazine articles. The heightened press interest in beauty boys since the announcement of James Charles as CoverGirl's brand ambassador articulated beauty boys in two dominant discursive themes:

Theme 1: Beauty boys as microcelebrities

> Male beauty vloggers may be straight, gay, gender fluid, or transgender but it's immaterial to their impressive social media following on Instagram and/or YouTube generated through their creative talents, and production of entertaining content.

Theme 2: Beauty boys as social movement

> Beauty boys is part of a movement to degender makeup and normalize men in makeup, destabilizing the traditional boundaries of masculinity and femininity, which I identify two distinct subthemes:
>
> a. Men in Makeup (hereafter, MIM)
>
> b. Makeup as Gender (hereafter, MAG)

Beauty boys are an unstable joining of two discursive themes, that of a microcelebrity who uses self-presentation techniques to manage their audience as fans and gain popularity, and that of social advocate to destabilize gender roles, empowering those who

feel marginalized wearing makeup. Mainstream media outlets have proposed an unproblematic process where social action is increasingly defined by market practices, market incentives, and corporate profits, positing a heightened belief in the market and of networked media as the accelerator of social change.

Theme 1: Beauty Boys as Microcelebrity Practitioners

Beauty boys are primarily framed by mainstream media in five ways: as YouTube content creators, beauty bloggers, male makeup artists, those who showcase their makeup artistry on social media, and those internet famous. *Marie Claire's* article, "The Beauty Boys of Instagram" describes beauty boys as "an expanding community of male-identified digital stars who showcase their expertise on themselves" (Beck & Valenti, 2016). Digital star, YouTube star (Yi, 2017), social media star (Kell, 2016), social media personality (Ahsan, 2016), social media celebrity (Muttucumaru, 2017) are different ways mainstream media tries to grapple with those who are social media famous. Foremost, beauty boys are introduced by their online identity and the level of their social engagement in the number of followers, subscribers, likes, and views, as well as, their affiliations with beauty brands. Secondly, as prosumers of YouTube beauty content, they are the "product of [their] environment" (Mahbubani, 2016). Like beauty boys Charles, Gutierrez, and Gabriel Zomora, 12-year-old Ruben de Maid also learned how to apply makeup from YouTube tutorials, and now aspires to have his own YouTube brand (Lubitz, 2017a). These characteristics are bespoken to microcelebrities, whose fame is dependent on branding a consumable persona and managing their relationship with their audiences to sustain their popularity (Senft, 2008). As beauty b/vloggers, they must be passionate about makeup and skillful in its application. As YouTube content creators,

they need to produce interesting and entertaining content while demonstrating their talent with makeup. An interest in the feminized domain of makeup is, most importantly, irrelevant to their sexuality (Alptraum, 2016; Choy, 2017). They can be straight, gay, gender fluid, or transgender, but that is secondary to their role as a male beauty vlogger.

As discussed in the literature review, Gamson conceptualized Internet celebrities in three categories: anticelebrity, DIY celebrity, and microcelebrity. Gamson's definition of DIY celebrity (someone who creates their own brand and identity outside the traditional celebrity system), and microcelebrity (someone famous to a small community of fans who participate directly in producing the celebrity) seems inconsequential in contemporary celebrity practices.

Firstly, while ordinary everyday internet users do not have access to the traditional celebrity system, YouTube content creators are becoming more institutionalized through agencies and influencer or talent management firms, complete with a manager, lawyer, assistants, PR team, or even a production and editing team. Some of the very successful YouTubers are represented by people who have worked with and represented celebrities, actors, writers and other talents. Unique to YouTube, *StyleHaul*, a multi-channel network for beauty recently launched a men's network brand "Hauk" to focus on men's lifestyle and target male audiences (Gutelle, 2016). Already representing ninety YouTube content creators that generate over one billion views per months, Hauk captured major YouTube content creators in gaming, comedy, sports, and pranking genres. While mainly focused on female demographics, Hauk will target the personal lives of content creators, leading to more branding opportunities such as apparel and grooming. *Rare Global*, a talent management firm based in California represents

some of the top-earning YouTube stars such as Wengie who has ten million subscribers and is the most popular YouTuber from Australia. Other representations include Jenn Im, Jackie Aina, and Stephanie Villa, who are all high-profile names in the beauty and fashion community on YouTube. *Gleam Futures,* a prominent digital talent management firm that helped the career of prominent U.K creators such as Alfie Dyes, Zoe Sugg (Zoella), Tanya Burr, and Casper Lee just to name a few, produces more than just YouTube videos, but also bestsellers, DVD, and comedy documentaries. These talent management firms institutionalize an influencer microcelebrity system not unlike traditional celebrity production. Today's Internet celebrities are far different from the camgirls filming in their bedroom (Senft, 2008). While these YouTube content creators have a community of fans who participate directly in producing their status as celebrity, they are also part of a complex network of production that has many similarities with traditional celebrities. As Marwick and boyd (2011) note, mainstream celebrities are also adopting micro-celebrity practices, contracting the same digital marketing management firms for their social media content and relationships (Koughan & Rushkoff, 2017).

Secondly, Gamson describes micro-celebrities as being famous to niche groups of people. While the size of their followings cannot compare to mainstream celebrities, the focus on the “micro” in microcelebrities is misleading in that size is relative and boundaries of communities are fluid. The numbers of followers could be the initial step towards visibility, but a sole focus on followers belies the hidden networks that propagate their celebrity status. Abidin (2016), in her study of social media influencers in Singapore, notes how quickly these microcelebrities garnered the attention of mainstream popularity in the larger collective imaginary. In broadening YouTube content creation

and distribution to creating makeup brands, merchandises, and book series, partnering up with global bands, having their product placements in Sephora, being on the scene of Fashion Week, Coachella, movie premieres, or being photographed with mainstream celebrities such as Kim Kardashian are only some of the ways in which beauty influencers are no longer just famous to a niche group of people. YouTube's beauty community is entangled with the entertainment, beauty, and fashion industry at large, and even more so in the forefront of many social issues and campaigns. The infiltrations of beauty into mainstream consciousness are part in parcel to the interest of this paper.

Thirdly, Gamson's three categorizations are insufficient to capture the ever-changing nature of celebrity. His example of Jeffree Star as a DIY celebrity is based on his earlier music career through My Space. Now, Jeffree is a popular YouTuber in the beauty community, adhering to Gamson's description of a microcelebrity.

Given these contradictions, how should we conceptualize beauty boys? I map beauty boys within the discourse of Internet Celebrities in this way:

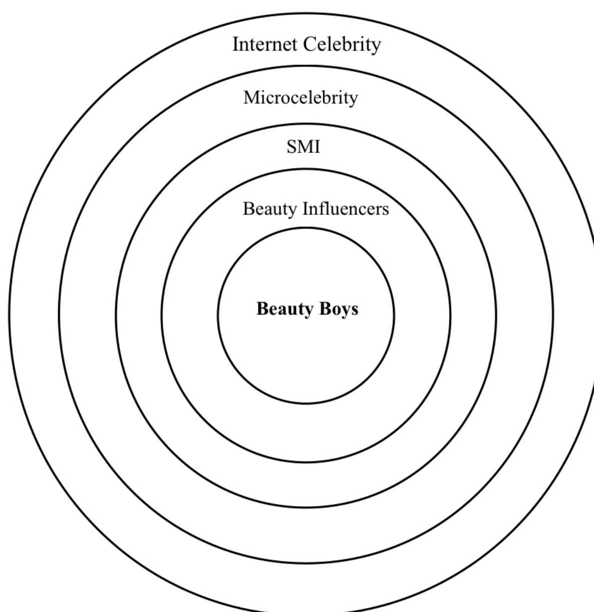

Figure 3.1. Tracing beauty boys within the discourse of Internet celebrities

Microcelebrities. Marwick and boyd argue that microcelebrity is best thought of as "a mindset and set of practices in which audience is viewed as a fan base; popularity is maintained through ongoing fan management; and self-presentation is carefully constructed to be consumed by others" (Alice Marwick & boyd, 2011, p. 140). They maintain that microcelebrity should be conceptualized as a set of performative practices that use social media to develop and manage an audience. Microcelebrity uses a set of "strategies and practices that place fame on a continuum, rather than as a bright line that separates individuals" (Alice Marwick & boyd, 2011, p. 140). Conceptualizing microcelebrity as a form of practice rather than a distinct subjectivity shows how self-branding and social media management is integral to people of variety of backgrounds and professions.

Social media influencers. In this vein, Abidin identifies social media influencers as microcelebrity practitioners "who monetize their following by integrating 'advertorials' into their content production" (Abidin, 2016, p. 3). In other words, social

media influencers (SMIs) must employ microcelebrity techniques to manage and sustain their popularity through the careful balancing act of maintaining a form of authenticity and intimacy, and monetizing through collaboration with brands.

Beauty influencers. Stemming from SMIs, popular beauty vloggers are often introduced as beauty influencers or beauty gurus. A beauty influencer can be thought of as an ordinary internet user who specializes in beauty-related knowledge and practice and sustains popularity through effective microcelebrity practices such as monetizing their audience in both digital and physical spaces. They are successful microcelebrity practitioners whose main career is social media. Many beauty influencers have a diversified social media profiles and must move beyond commodifying themselves and their everyday lives, but also produce entertaining content or present themselves as someone who is knowledgeable. Popular YouTubers in the beauty and lifestyle community fall under this category.

Beauty boys. Among the crowded and competitive community of beauty influencers, a minority of them are male and prescribe to the title or are described by others as “beauty boys.” Male beauty vlogging began to emerge in 2014 (i.e. Jeffree Star, Patrick Starrr, Manny MUA) with only a handful of people, but has now grown to include the younger male beauty influencers (e.g., James Charles, Thomas Halbert, Ruben de Maid). Men’s interest in makeup is also found in metrosexuals, who wear minimal makeup for corrective purposes. Many makeups for men are enhancers such as mascara, bronzers, tanners, and foundation that stay away from beautification and colour. Beauty boys, however, do not promote men-specific marketed makeup, and instead use

mainstream makeup marketed towards the female population. They embrace glamourous makeup with bold colors, seek makeup's playful artifice and feel beautiful in doing so.

It seems the most obvious differentiation between beauty influencers and beauty boys is the marker of their gender. Gutierrez often remarks that "being a guy doing it" is part of the reason why his channel grew so fast in comparison to the large community of female beauty influencers (Gutierrez, 2014c). But is it too simplistic to say that beauty boys are just male beauty influencers or men in makeup, when amongst all of the male beauty vloggers on YouTube, the status of beauty boy is only ascribed to and achieved by certain individuals, mainly white, middle-class, gay men.

While passion and skill are something that all beauty vloggers must demonstrate, beauty boys should emphasize their skill and techniques in doing more complicated looks such as glamourous, drag, and creative makeup. As makeup is traditionally viewed as a disciplinary practice of femininity, there is an expectation that all women know how to use makeup on some level. Male beauty vloggers are usually more successful when demonstrating more complicated looks than just an average girl doing her everyday makeup routine. This debunks the notion that makeup is a skill rather than an innate feminized ability and shows that it can be practiced by other genders as well.

Beauty boys primarily showcase their makeup skills on themselves which presuppose their self-confidence. It marks the difference between traditional male make-up artist whose profession is to apply makeup on others—in other words, bodily labour—and performing the beautification process on oneself—in other words, aesthetic labour. While the former has very direct economic payment for the labour performed, the latter mostly consist of indirect rewards that can manifest at a later time. While the feeling of

confidence and the freedom to express oneself is present, any monetary rewards are a future aspiration that requiring constant laboring.

Many beauty boys have worked at companies such as Sephora or MAC Cosmetics as “Artists”. MAC Artistry profiles thousands of makeup artists, many of which are male. Not only beauty boys, but many beauty vloggers have worked in some form of beauty retailing or creative industries right before or while venturing in to YouTube. In the cases of younger beauty boys who are teens still in school, or just out looking for jobs, being a viable YouTuber is upscaling in comparison to their current job positions, even if it’s aspirational labour for future compensation. The subjectivity of a beauty boy and pursuit of fame is the outcome of late capitalism, an economy that cannot afford to hire educated young people while espousing cultural notions of celebrity and increased opportunities in the demotic turn (Senft, 2013, p. 349). The allure of being a beauty influencer often deters young beauty bloggers from the path of higher education, since higher education does not seem to promise job security in the current economy, and better success is to be found in the attention economy. In such a way, makeup practices also engender socio-economical transformations as performing more entertaining, engaging, and complicated makeup practices give rise to attention and monetization.

In the early days of YouTube’s beauty community, one could garner attention with simply producing product reviews and monthly favorites, which are videos that talk in depth about products the vlogger is loving throughout the month. As the beauty community grew bigger, gaining visibility required more creative and entertaining content. The technical literacy required to make appealing and entertaining content is required for all YouTube content creators, and not specific to male beauty vloggers.

Beauty boys must brand themselves as content creators operating in an attention economy, paying close attention to their social media metrics.

An economy of attention requires constant innovation and creativity. Charles attributes his success on social media to his originality as the YouTube beauty industry have become saturated (Charles, 2018b). You can no longer sustain your viewership by doing simple makeup tutorials.

> You have to do something different. You have to do something that's going to set yourself apart from everybody else…At the end of the day, there's a million other people doing it so the only people who are really succeeding and who are gaining quickly are the ones who are really setting themselves apart and establishing themselves as both an entertainer and an artist. (Charles, 2018b)

Thus, content diverges to doing more video challenges and creating attention-grabbing titles. Gutierrez's videos in the beginning consists of makeup tutorials, hauls, product reviews, vlogs, and more interpersonal videos that lets the viewer get to know him. Since then, his video titles are more attention grabbing such as "Story Time: I shit myself in public", "MY COMING OUT STORY", "PENIS HIGHLIGHTERS…WTF!!!", "Grindr Hookup Does My Makeup!", "My Most EMBARRASSING Gay Sexual Experience", "APPLYING MAKEUP WITH A CONDOM!", "TRUTH OR DARE GET READY WITH US", "SEX PROOF" MASCARA TESTED! WTF!". His channel diversified to testing new makeup, collaborations with other top beauty vloggers, more entertaining content like "FULL FACE 7-ELEVEN MAKEUP" and makeup challenges. In the last seven months, none of Gutierrez's videos are strictly tutorial as he consistently brings out more video ideas that focuses on entertainment rather than informative content.

While self-acclaimed beauty boys come in different shapes, colours, and aesthetics, the top beauty boys with the largest traction and brand opportunities are all without a doubt conventionally beautiful. For example, Gutierrez's fans gush about how attractive, hot, gorgeous, beautiful, he is both without makeup and when he dons his transformations. Careful to not treat beauty as a naturalized predefined given, a close analysis of aesthetics foregrounds the power relations that define beauty such as class, race and gender. Beauty boys are young, attractive, light-skinned, able-bodied, middle class, English speaking, and from high-teledensity areas such as North America, Europe, and Australia. Simondac, from a Pilipino background, is the darkest beauty boy and only beauty boy of colour to have reached tremendous success with 3.8 million subscribers. Interestingly, while the discourse of beauty boys as microcelebrity examined in the previous chapter subsumes a bricolage of identities, the well-known beauty boys and the ones winning the positions of brand ambassadorship are all self-identified gay men. The successful and viable beauty boys on YouTube are gay despite professions of sexual irrelevancy. The feeling of beauty is deeply seated with identity and sexuality. Growing up Mormon and struggling with his sexuality, Gutierrez has been sent to counseling to "correct" his sexuality resulting in years of depression. The moment he felt the most beautiful "would probably be the first time I kissed a boy" (Kantor, 2017). Gutierrez's recounts his first gay experience as feeling right, "it felt like I wouldn't have to hide anymore" (Kantor, 2017). Thus, beauty is also a set of psychic dispositions to be yourself, and be confident in one's own skin, body, and sexuality, echoing the LYB discourse.

One primary way beauty is ascribed is through youth. While used interchangeably, men in makeup and beauty boys come from two different trajectories. While men in makeup are found throughout history, beauty boys are such that they are *boys*, from as young as ten years old to late twenties. The construction of beauty boys as boys rather than men in makeup appeals to the younger demographic that makes the majority of their audience, but also implies the playfulness of youth. Not only does it present a smooth, youthful, and radiant skin as beautiful, it also highlights the affective dispositions of fun, playfulness, and light-heartedness. The transgressive act of men in makeup can be seen as relegated to more of a trivial plaything of boys who have yet to reach adulthood, where hegemonic masculinity is protected by adulthood. The status of beauty influencer also makes such transgressive acts more acceptable. Like David Bowie wearing eyeliner, and David Beckham as a metrosexual, celebrity status creates a milieu of acceptance for their transgressive acts, as if it is part of being a celebrity. It becomes more acceptable as long as beauty boys originate within the YouTube's beauty community—and stay within it.

Theme 2: Beauty Boy as a Movement

To defend against the charge that beauty boys are another marketing ploy, other mainstream discourses of beauty boys focus on men in makeup as a social movement for advancing gender politics. Beauty boys are advocates for normalizing men in makeup such as Jake Jamie Ward, also known as The Beauty Boy. Starting the #makeupisgenderless campaign, he aims to dispel the notion that men in makeup is simply a commercial trend but rather suggesting it is a social movement to destabilize gender roles. "This isn't a trend—it's a movement and a positive change for the future.

We need to keep pushing, talking, and raising awareness to make a long-term change that will stick" (Allen, 2017). The celebratory and positive direction of featuring males in beauty campaigns follows that makeup should be genderless and be moved from the traditional domains of femininity to be enjoyed by all genders. Grooming and cosmetics is a space to redefine masculinity and create a more inclusive environment for a more gender and sexually fluid generation. Men in makeup is nothing new; but the rise of beauty boys and affiliations with big brands like CoverGirl and Maybelline propel a larger conversation about a social movement to degender makeup and destabilize traditional notions of masculinity.

Men in makeup. Since James Charles has been named the new CoverGirl in October 2016, many male-specific cosmetic companies have stepped into the lime light under the #makeupisgenderless movement. MMUK Man, 4VOO's Men's Cosmetics, Recipe for Men, Korres, W7, BRTC Homme, House of Formen, The Men Pen, Taxi Men, Mënaji are some of the online brands that develop makeup specifically for men ranging from skincare productions, BB creams, CC cream, foundation, concealer, blotting powder, colour correctors, setting spray, facial hair enhancer, bronzer, tinted moisturizer, anti-shine powder, beard filler, eyeliner, primer, eyebrow pencil, and other endless options. As Hall explored in his work on metrosexuality, image conscious activities that are traditionally feminine now have men counterparts such as: boyzillian, guyliner, manbag, mankup, manscaping, manscara, manyhose, mantie, and more (p. 16). Suddenly, there is a whole range of men-specific grooming items as a strategy to sell traditional feminine products and activities. In Harrison's (2008) semiotic analysis of male mascara, she focused on the marketing strategy to reframe typically feminine

products in masculine ways whether visually or by renaming them. The tendency safeguard traditionally masculine qualities while consuming feminized products is what I call the men in makeup (MIM) discourse. An extension of commercial masculinity, men in makeup is reminiscent if not a repackaging of the metrosexual moment. Apparent in Hall's analysis of men's cosmetic 4VOO and Harrison's analysis of Studio5ive, MIM discourse allows metrosexuals to consume feminized products while disavowing homosexuality, viewing makeup as a functionality rather than frivolous beautification. Since the naming of James Charles as the next CoverGirl and its subsequent press interest, men-specific online companies retool the MIM discourse as a form of commodity activism to satisfy the desire of good looking skin through the banner of social progress.

The male grooming and image enhancing product is a growing market valued at $47.2 billion in 2015, and projected to increase to reach $60.7 billion by 2020, according to Euromonitor (Weinswig, 2017). The largest category is men's toiletries which included shower, skin and hair care products, comprising 37% of total sales in 2015. The growth of male grooming products has extended beyond that of shaving and fragrances, indicating a more extensive grooming routine as men are paying more attention to skin care and hair care. As more variety of men's products have been introduced to the market, these men specific brands are hoping to grab the unmet market.

MMUK Man has the widest range of products and selection. Launched in 2012, MMUK Man has finally stepped into mainstream retail with its launch at ASOS in 2017. Confidence is central to MMUK Man marketing. Makeup can be used to "look more appealing, feel more confident…look more sexy" (Mens MakeUp, n.d.). MMUK Man is

for the “alpha male”, so you can become “masculine enriched” while going to gym, tan or groom (Mens MakeUp, n.d.). This step to venture in world of men’s makeup is of course to satisfy the ladies who wants their men to look more appealing. Thus, product range tackles the signs of aging, acne, and eye bags, all functions to return the skin to its best youthful condition. These male cosmetic companies all share similar range of corrective makeup products. Formen carries male concealer of three colours “housed in one solid product” that is “engineered” to remove all imperfections (Formen Inc, n.d.). Mënaji’s Tinted Moisturizer is a “hard-working example” bespoken to the working class masculine identity (“Menaji Power Hydrator Plus Tinted Moisturizer SPF 30,” n.d.). The rhetoric used has the connotation of functionality through science and technology. Mënaji’s president Pamela Viglielmo said that reframing the name of products such as their “911 Eye Gel” or “Camo Concealer” makes them easier to understand and use (Eitel, 2017). Unlike eye creams and concealers aimed at women, such as First Aid Beauty’s “Eye Duty Triple Remedy AM Gel Cream” or Maybelline’s “Instant Age Rewind Eraser Dark Circles Concealer,” reframing the name of makeup products in a more masculine, no-frills, get-the-job done approach, while evoking a sense of emergency and rescue, images of camouflage and military, incitements to save and protect help to rationalize makeup use while safeguarding traditional masculinity. Viglielmo further explains, “You only have a few seconds to make a first impression … Likewise, you only have a few seconds to teach a man how to cover up pimples” (Eitel, 2017). The assumption is clear, men don’t have the time or patience to spend on beautification. Due to the pressures of the job and marriage market, using makeup is an instrumental means to an end.

While there is a market for men's grooming and appearance related products, advertising makeup for men is a huge challenge. MMUK Man's advertising feature handsome toned topless men with simple neutral packaging, paying tribute to the male body. Similarly, Formen sticks to the white and black packaging with masculine symbolism of deer antler as its logo. The packaging and framing of these products in their verbal and visual discursive choices reveal the ways these products are gendered masculine (Harrison, 2008). With simple packaging and description, time saving all-in-one products, male beauty is framed as a no-frills, functional, efficient and pragmatic tool. These cosmetic companies allow men to consume traditionally feminized products while maintaining masculine qualities. Market-orientated repackaging of traditional masculinity on one hand degenders makeup as purely feminized products, but still portrays a very limiting idea of genderless makeup, again portraying a dichotomy of makeup for men, and makeup for women rather than a whole range of genders. Rather than challenging gender binaries as they claim to do, MIM discourse targets straight men rather than thinking outside of traditional masculinity. Men's beauty and skincare line tries to reimage the concept of makeup, but only serves to reinforce heteronormative masculinity.

Makeup as gender. Radically different from MIM, is what I term Makeup as Gender (MAG) discourse which signify makeup as a form of gender play. Also under the #makeupisgenderless movement, MAG formulates makeup as: inclusive, transformative, empowering, artistic, fun, expressive, free and playful. In this discursive formation, makeup becomes a form of gender play. Foremost, MAG is enveloped in the nature of inclusivity, to normalize makeup for the average men and the LGBTQ community on an

everyday basis. MAG discourse conceives makeup as genderless in order to confront gender binaries. In beauty boy Zomora's words in the *Bustle* online blog, beauty boys "normalize the idea of men wearing makeup. Makeup has no limits" (Arlexis, 2016). Echoing beauty boy Ward's #makeupisgenderless campaign, Charles acknowledges in his interview with Ellen Degeneres that "makeup has become a more genderless concept, which is so cool and something that [he is] all for" (Fisher, 2016). CoverGirl's campaign of the new So Lashy mascara is marketed as a universal mascara designed for everyone, "for all lash types, for us, for all," captured in the hashtag #LashEquality (CoverGirl, 2016). Similarly, Gutierrez advocates, "I believe makeup is GenderLESS and has no rules" (Hudson, 2017). In a similar vein, Patrick Simondac also known as PatrickStarrr, a Filipino-American beauty vlogger has the tagline "Makeup is a one-size fits all" (Beck & Valenti, 2016). Lewys declares, "Anyone can wear makeup, no matter who you are" (Stone, 2017). *Milk*'s makeup campaign for the release of its new cosmetic product, Blur Stick, produced with men's beauty site *Very Good Light* has the slogan to "*Blur* the Lines" of gender (Haines, 2017). Ellie Violet Bramley (2017) from *The Guardian* goes as far as to call this "post-metrosexual" where makeup is just makeup. To assert that makeup is genderless can be seen as disrupting the orders of normalcy, a progressive move for more acceptance of those who wish to express their gender through makeup, a rupture of an industry that normalizes makeup with femininity. In these statements from magazine and newspaper articles, makeup is anthropomorphized as not having a gender, rather than presupposing a feminine gendered being.

MAG propels the inclusiveness of makeup through its transformative qualities that allows one the freedom of self-expression. Jeffree Star in an interview with *Glamour* highlights the various characteristics of MAG:

> When I first started playing with makeup, I was 12 years old, and I didn't really know what it was. I just loved the idea of transformation…I loved that you could become a character. So, to me it was an extension of art. Not like I was hiding anything, but it's almost like a masque or a costume. You just feel different, like a boss-ass bitch. And I love that at the end of the day you can wipe it off, and you're back to you. It's an extension of your artistic side. And beauty and makeup have molded me into the person I think I am today. (Reimel, 2017)

Makeup is seen as art, performance, or painting (Alptraum, 2016) for self-expression and self-actualization (Ahsan, 2016; Cliff, 2015, 2017; Lubitz, 2017a; Markovinovic, 2017; Milnes, 2017; Pergament, 2016). The transformation of makeup also evokes forces of empowerment, confidence, and courage (Alptraum, 2016; Cliff, 2017a; London, 2016; Markovinovic, 2017; Muttucumaru, 2017; Yi, 2017) to reject, challenge, and question gender rules (Nahman, 2016). Unlike MIM which safeguard against charges of homosexuality, MAG emphasizes more education, tolerance and acceptance of the LGBT community (Blair, 2017; Caffyn, 2016). We can learn from queer identities as examples to "gently blend (or outright break) expectations around gender expression" (Alptraum, 2016).

Unlike MIM discourse which features robust masculinity and neutral aesthetics, MAG discourse attends to more diversity in gender representation and a colorful aesthetic. Jecca Makeup, for example, caters to the needs of transgender people with their

Correct and Conceal palette that is capable of covering a beard shadow. With neutral pinks and blues and a tagline #MakeupHasNoGender, the makeup brand's editorial shoots feature more creative and colorful looks away from the purely corrective nature of makeup products. The glitter and bold aqua and corals makeup on their Instagram page speak to the transformative and fun qualities of makeup while their website sports more softer hues and colours. Beauty boy Jeffree Star's makeup company, Jeffree Star Cosmetics, features a range of liquid lipsticks, eyeshadows, and highlighters. Jeffree Star designs his advertorial shoot to sport hyper masculine and hyper feminine aesthetics with bold, smoky colours, and drag aesthetics. Known to feature people of all genders, Jeffree Star Cosmetics is all about the expressive individual. Similarly, Manny Gutierrez's makeup company, Lunar Beauty, launched "Life's a Drag" eyeshadow palette featuring Gutierrez in drag makeup alongside three racially diverse drag queens.

Milk's Blur the Line campaign for its cosmetic product Blur Stick hopes to create unity and equality by representing a spectrum of self-expression, casting ambiguous, line-blurring individuals. The video begins with a series of question posed by different individuals: "'What's gender?' 'Are we really still talking about this?' 'Who is she?' 'Who isn't she?'" (Greville, 2017). One of the actors continues, "If gender wasn't a thing, we'll all be like energies …the hair, the eyelashes, brows, the chipping nail polish… It's all me" (Greville, 2017). MAG means "if anything, no genders is all genders" (Bornstein 28). It is a space containing all possible genders and those yet imagined. Makeup became a space for people to express the inadequacies of categorization and labelling of gender and identity. "Once you break outside what your environment has molded you to be, there's …no limits as to…what you can do, or what you can be, or who you can

become…There is room for every dimension of what you are" (Greville, 2017). Makeup is a way to play with gender identities, to discover one's own, and perhaps never sticking to one. Makeup allows for the improvisation of gender expression of those that exists, and those not imagined.

Unsatisfied with the fixity of gender binaries, Star with no preference for pronouns, identifies himself as an alien. In a journey of shifting gender and sexuality over a lifetime, Star decides to just stick with Jeffree. Jeffree's fluctuating moments of gothic histrionics, hyper femme aesthetics, queen of all sorts, fabulous strangeness, and out of this world otherness, his non-conforming gender, desire, sexuality, and relationship are "anarchic, ungendered blobs" (Halberstam, 2012, p. 37).

> If you go back like ten years ago, you will find interviews where I say I'm gay or I'm androgynous or I say I'm whatever. And I think that was an easy route for me because I didn't really know what was going on in my brain. I am attracted to both genders and I have been with transgender people and I just don't even know if there's a name for it. And even with all these new labels out there, I still am just like, "I'm Jeffree, and I'm attracted to whoever I want to be." I'm attracted to anyone. I'm attracted to personalities. Gender doesn't really matter to me. (S. Anderson, 2017)

Behaviour and mood, environment and inspiration, makeup and body augmentations allow him the "hallucinatory visions of alternate futures" (Halberstam, 2012, p. 58) and a fearlessness to explore the queer mix of desires. As an artist of his body, he can engage in fanciful and imaginative improvisation to makes sense of the world, to fail and try again. When gender is seen as less fixed, less determined, and more negotiated and fluid, the

realm of gender becomes more opened and experimental. Halberstam argues in *Gaga Feminism* (2012) that providing alternatives that are more compelling and stimulating than heterosexuality, we can begin the process of denaturalization. Strangeness is where Jeffree likes to stay because in the midst of instability and crisis, we can reinvent something new out of strangeness.

Butler's influential book *Gender Trouble* has framed gender as performative and generated what Butler refers to as the "bad reading" or "voluntarist reading" of her book when gender is seen as a garment: "one woke in the morning, donned that gender for the day, and then restored the garment to its place at night" (Butler, 1993, p. x). Halberstam's article "Mackdaddy, Superfyly, Rapper: Gender, Race, and Masculinity in the Drag King scene" interestingly notes that the bad reading of gender trouble was used by drag kings as their "rationale for drag, performance, and identity" (Halberstam, 1997, pp. 108–109). The voluntarist notion of gender prescribed by drag kings, for Halberstam, "confirms in a perverse way Butler's premise that gender is a construction that looks natural and sometimes feels chosen" (Halberstam, 1997, p. 109).

Star expresses a similar understanding of gender as a characteristic that involves conscious choice, not the involuntary reiteration of norms that Butler describes. Star categorizes his fashion, makeup, and hair as a performance he willfully chooses daily. "I wake up and I'm like, Do I want to look like this today, or do I want to be super feminine?" (Orfanides, 2017). I do not think beauty boys have a very naïve understanding of gender, but instead reiterate gender as a form of social construction that is flexible and unstable. Star characterizes his transgression as associated with pleasure, play, and a sense of freedom. A voluntarist reading of Butler can be an incentive for gender

transgression "in order to experience a freedom in relation to gender expression and a potential to change both gender expression and gender identity" (Lööv, 2015, p. 110). MAG ultimately confers to this bad reading of *Gender Trouble*, viewing makeup as gender that can be put on and wiped off at the end of the day to encourage everyday gender play.

The voluntarist understanding of gender poses three challenges. Again, missing the point about the naturalization of gender through reiterative performances, destabilizing gender norms is portrayed as "easy, breezy, social progress" (Nahman, 2016), a point we will return to later. Secondly, unlike Star, most beauty boys safeguard their identity as men against charges of transgenderism, likened to metrosexuals safeguarding against homosexuality in their image-conscious practices. While Star would like to dissolve any connection between biology and gender, some beauty boys demand a cleaving to? the boundaries of their identity. The beauty boy movement operates under the call to deconstruct gender binaries, yet this deconstruction is set on the assumption that there exists a natural sexual constitution of *boy*. Charles often defends his sexed body and sexuality as many family members mistook him for transgender when he first expressed an interest in wearing makeup. Charles relates "My parents started questioning me about whether or not I was transgender—whether or not I was trying to be a woman. It was a big argument. It took a lot of thorough conversations to explain that it's an art form for me. I'm still confident as a boy, and I will always be a boy" (Gander, 2016). Similarly, beauty boy Alan Macias says, "I'm a boy in makeup, I'm not trans. I'm not a drag queen" (Beck & Valenti, 2016). While challenging the construction of gender, they are content with the naturalness of their sex. By retaining their identity as men, and

subjugated as beauty boys, who in their visibility and microcelebrity practices gain economic and social capital, returns to the bread-winner ideology of masculinity, and the nostalgic of the heteronormative family. Gutierrez tweets, "Being a man isn't about how "tough" or "masculine" you are, it's about taking care of the ones you love" (Blair, 2017). Gutierrez and Charles as white, middle-class, gay men frequently invite their nuclear family on their channel to show the importance of familial love and support. Supporting family members, and in Gutierrez case creating Lunar Beauty as a family business, presents a successful picture of domestic bliss and reinforces the hegemony of the marriage system. The promise of social and cultural capital within capitalism drives gender identity, where wealth, power, status all work to reinforce masculinity. For Gutierrez, this is especially played out in his relationship with his father where success in the marketplace still confer power and reaffirm masculinity in homosocial relationships.

Thirdly, without penetrating the barriers of our skin as associated with transgenderism, beauty boys constitute the less permanent practice of makeup as a playful venture into transgression, and like Cinderella, the transformation comes off at the end of the night. While I framed this in a celebratory notion of gender fluidity, the lived reality of marginalization disappears in MAG discourse. Though the makeup comes off, we never really go back to the way we were, nor do we want to. There are snippets of dialogue focused on the online harassment beauty boys face every day in mainstream media, but they are quickly replaced with a shrug of positivity. The violent and negative backlash against boys in makeup reminds us that to be inscribed is also an experiential phenomenon. One might be able to ignore and shrug off being called "a faggot," but it becomes harder when every day, "there's people telling you, "You're an AIDS infested

faggot" and "You look like a fucking horse, you should kill yourself." (Star, 2017)

> I have always been a guy in makeup since tenth grade. And the world was not how it is today. Ten years ago, there were no guys in makeup on YouTube. There was no men in makeup parading the streets. There was no people like me and I was very alone…. I think people don't realize how it really was. I would leave the house and people would spit on me. They would scream faggot at me. They would scream freak. And they would degrade me every single day…I was emotionally abused every time that I left the house. People did not accept me… I felt like a piece of shit… This world is still so dark and miserable. And there are so many crazy things happening that I don't know if everyone fully realized what it is to be different" (Star, 2017).

In a DIY documentary with YouTuber Shane Dawson (2018), Star took off his pants and showed the audience that his iconic tattoos covering from head to neck was only a re-inscription of a body full of scars from multitudes of cuts plaguing every inch of his skin as if to placate the wounds and intensities of pain. What's missing from mainstream discourse of beauty boys is accounts of depression, death threats, rage and anger at the world, hoping the pepper spray in your purse can save you this time from being ganged up on and beaten.

Always predicated on the corporeal, embodiment is construed as a way of inhabiting the world through one's acculturated body. Grounded in phenomenology with an emphasis on the lived experience, Nick Crossley notes in Merleau-Ponty's argument, "Our bodies are our way of being in and experienc[ing] the world…our bodies are not, in the first instance, objects of experience for us, rather our very means of experience; and

what we experience is not our bodies but rather something other which they afford us access to and 'intend'" (Crossley, 2001, p. 16). Identities are bound up in the corporeal schema grasped through our being-in-the-world, and the embodied experience accentuates the vulnerability of the lived body in mobility. The points of purchase in major beauty department stores also produce boundaries of access and denial for the lived body. Cosmetic counters at a local drug mart or high-end makeup store and its spatial location, placement of makeup, sales associates and their perceptions, the choice of color, language, image, and text conjoin with the affective production of makeup. To walk into Sephora or Macey's is to walk into a world of signification and affective production, which creates a lived boundary and vulnerability for the body. While makeup can be branded as genderless, the spatial mobility in these affective productions of the feminine can be sites of vulnerability for beauty boys. Gender framed as donning a garment, free, fun, and easy, cannot articulate the painful experiences of gender transgression.

The Cultural Production of Beauty Boys as Brand Activist

For David Yi, founder of men's beauty blog *Very Good Light*, beauty boys are part of a growing movement, who "along with brands seeking to tap an emerging market of male consumers, are aiming to normalize men experimenting in beauty practices often relegated to women" (Biron, 2017). With a slew of makeup campaigns signing male beauty vloggers and trans models, these brands have received very positive responses and are feted as a genius marketing move (Caffyn, 2016; Kell, 2016). Individuals born after 1998, termed Generation Z, account for one fourth of the North American population and influence $600 billion in family spending according the PR and marketing Agency Ketchum (Kell, 2016). Laura Brinker, the president of influencer marketing at Coty, owner of the

CoverGirl brand, recognizes that the population is increasingly expressing diverse gender identities, and would continue to be important for Generation Z. Attracted to messages of inclusiveness, diversity, and less restrictive gender roles, J. Walter Thompson Intelligence finds that 56% of Generation Z know someone who uses gender neutral pronouns, indicating the central role of gender identity, dominating our everyday conversations (Kell, 2016). In a cultural climate that celebrates self-expression of “You do you,” Brinker acknowledges that “in beauty, a culture of fearless self-expression, fuelled in part by social media, is on the rise." (Diaz, 2016). Intensive marketing is thus aimed at providing a brand platform to help consumers explore the narratives of self-expression and self-actualization.

Yi believes that it is very trendy for huge national retailers to use male beauty vloggers as ambassadors, but only as a consequence of the rise of beauty boys on YouTube (Biron, 2017). The originating factor of men in makeup is due to an organic growth of male beauty vloggers on social media, and while brands are capitalizing on such movement, the increasing visibility is seen as socially progressive. What Yi proposes is an unproblematic joining of commercial interests with social action, where consumption of makeup and engagement with beauty boys are framed by corporate interest as forms of civic behaviour to address social injustices.

Commodity activism. Commodity activism speaks to the phenomenon where civic engagement and social action are increasingly defined by market practices, market incentives, and corporate profits. A question of whether this is corporate appropriation turning social action into a marketable commodity or consumer-based resistance to challenge and reimagine social and political dynamics of power creates a stale rigid binary. Sarah Banet-Weiser and Roopali

Mukherjee (2012) have explored the historical relations of this contradicting nature of social activism as commodity forms across two centuries. Consumption practices as influencing historical struggle and solidarity, constituting the discourse of citizenship, reshaping gendered subjects, facilitating political goals of minorities have ultimately upheld the liberatory promise of the market itself. And in exchange, corporations are more responsive to consumers for their brand loyalty.

Banet-Weiser (2012) notes the ambivalent nature of contemporary brand culture in the specific deployment of commodity activism that sees brand culture as both an economic strategy and cultural space, consumers as entrepreneurs of the self and part of networked publics, engagement as creative activity and forms of exploitation, all simultaneously holding the promise of feminist goals with the logics of the market exchange. She argues that contemporary brand culture succeeded the mass homogenous marketing of mid-20th century and the niches and authenticity focus of the later 20th century, to arrive at a more elaborate relationship between consumer and producers in the form of authentic engagement (Banet-Weiser, 2012a, p. 38).

Neoliberalism and a neoliberal self. Commodity activism in the contemporary neoliberal moment, expands market logic to all areas of life and to our very body. Despite the different contestation to the discourse of neoliberalism, David Harvey's (2007) definition serves our purposes here:

> in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong

> private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. (p. 2)

Within a neoliberal society, the joining of corporate relations, social and political causes function under corporate social responsibility, re-orientating ethical frameworks and social justice as sharing the interest of profit and capitalism. Neoliberalism interpellates a consumer citizen that reconciles the satisfaction of individual desires while simultaneously addressing social and ecological injustices, leaving us to question what counts as civic resistance. The consumer citizen as capitalistic citizenship privileges the practice of consumption over other forms of democratic engagement, overshadows the limitations and critique of consumption as cultural resistance, and disengages from interrogations of global power structures of gender.

The role of celebrity, and now microcelebrity is central to commodity activism, which calls the audience to align their interest with transnational corporations. The rise of Web 2.0 and solidification of influencer marketing in brand culture politically imparts a form of communicative capitalism where the "ideals of access, inclusion, discussion and participation come to be realized in and through expansions, intensifications and interconnections of global communication" (Dean, 2005, p. 55). There is the assumption that internet interactivity and social networking can and will generate political and social change. Josée Johnston (2008) notes, "while formal opportunities for citizenship seemed to retract under neoliberalism, opportunities for a lifestyle politics of consumption rose correspondingly" (p. 246). Displacing collective political action, delimitating the productive forces of politics, and circumscribing the constitution of critical subjectivity, to propose the solutions as within the consumers themselves, accessed through

consumption practices, ultimately excuses individuals from taking a more collective orientated approach to political and social issues.

Not only does neoliberalism encapsulate social relations, affect and emotions, social and political resistance, individuals are reconstituted as economically productive. As I have outlined in the literature review, Alison Hearn (2008, 2011, 2012) sees the neoliberal self as an outcome of post-Fordist mode of production marked by flexible accumulation, where the production of images, knowledge, and symbolic value is more important than the material product itself, propelling an intensification of image-building. As such, the branded self must be understood as a distinct kind of labour tied to the promotional mechanism of the post-Fordist market. Self-branding is a form of affective, immaterial labour purposefully undertaken by individuals in order to gain attention, reputation, and potentially, profit (Hearn, 2008) which in many case requires beauty boys to background their own racialization in a beauty culture that still predominately privilege whiteness. Self-branding, derived from the political and economic development of "self-help" literature in the late 1990s, encourages individuals to purposefully construct potent images of themselves in order to gain power in the precarious work world of patriarchy. Much like the celebrity culture, success is detached from any specific talent or skills, but on the way, we present, produce, and package the self in the pursuit of attention. The improved self is a promotional vehicle that seeks to generate celebrity value by espousing their own image persona. The relationship of immaterial labour to self-branding involves an understanding of the self as a kind of product that is flexible, fragmented, and saleable.

In this context, self-branding in the pursuit of attention is crucial to success. To gain self-advantage in a free market means that what matters the most is "winning"

attention, emotional allegiance and market share in what's known as a promotional culture (Wernick, 1991). Not only are goods and people commodified, they must engage in symbolic production and create their own rhetorically persuasive meaning. In a neoliberal promotional capitalism, we are reduced to become "entrepreneurs of the self" (du Gay, 1996, p. 70) as promotional rhetoric becomes intrinsic to contemporary forms of self-presentation, in order to advance one's own interest against others. In the logics of Web 2.0, winning attention is monetizability and fame is social and economic capital.

The goal of a microcelebrity is achieving fame through self-presentation practices, possible through accumulating attention of their audience. The desire for fame is driven by the promise of economic security and social capital but achieved through the constant labour for generating attention. A form of laboring in the case of beauty boys which privileges white, middle-class, gay men. The integration of market logics into Web 2.0 technologies privileges the highly visible, entrepreneurial, self-configured, and self-regulated individual, rewarding those with higher social status. More specifically, the rewards of status, wealth, and power are reserved for those willing to be part of the dominant, mainstream, heteropatriarchal culture. Web 2.0 is a neoliberal technology of subjectivity, providing a blueprint for how to achieve fame and attention based on the cultural logics of celebrity (Marwick, 2013, p. 14). Microcelebrity works towards networked visibility which promises practitioners fame and wealth. As a YouTube content creator, revenue is generated through monetizing videos, brand sponsorships and collaborations. The blueprint to become a viable beauty influencer projects a standardized trajectory. For example, one beauty influencer explains; "What we are told as influencers is that your journey is to make money through videos, through sponsorships, through ad

posts on Instagram, to move to LA, to collaborate with brands, to be posting for a certain amount, and all that stuff that comes…with the territory" (Simon, 2017). Microcelebrity practitioners must engaged in an on-going production of the body and the self, the embodied self/brand. Becoming an influencer is to also assume the subjectivity of a worker, treating YouTube content creation as a form of freelance or independent contract work in an ever-precarious digital cultural industry. Situating YouTube as a career ultimately normalizes the absorption of market risk as projects of the self.

In the case of Cover Girl and Maybelline using MAG discourse through the medium of beauty boys to foreground its gender equality message, transnational cosmetic companies arise in this narrative as an accelerator of social change while helping microcelebrities to further their visibility and status within mainstream heteropatriarchal culture. Commodity activism produces market value in affective relations with microcelebrities. While engaging with our favourite beauty boy and brands that they endorse, we are contributing to the profitability of the brand through immaterial labour. Beauty boys in the discourse of MAG address the fixity of gender roles and empowers their fans, but also create opportunities for makeup brands to exploit their audience in the veil of democratic openness. Beauty boys attend launch events and Hollywood parties, sponsor media events and appear in advertisements, trying to "[bring] awareness to equality one lash at a time" (Hess, 2016). As the forefront of these social campaigns, beauty boys are seen as the accelerator of social change rather than women, people of colour, and other queer identities. Thus, brands emphasize the value of microcelebrity practices and compensate individuals based upon their ability to influence the members of their social community above more substantive interrogations with gender issues and

gender relations. Beauty boys demonstrate a form of neoliberal queerness, who embodies the queering of gender without the queering of politics.

For example, MAG discourse conveniently backgrounds the fact that many major beauty companies have little or no female representation. LedBetter is a research group that operates a database on female representation in the board of directors or executive positions of the world's top consumer companies. In the category of personal care, women occupy 34 percent of board positions and 24 percent of executive positions on average as of 2016 (M. Cheng, 2017). Using data from Ledbetter (2016), I configure this table to highlight the makeup and skincare conglomerates and their female representation on the board and in executive positions (see Table 3).

Table 3

Female Representation in Global Cosmetic Brands

Brands	**Female representation on the board (%)**	**Female representation in executive leadership (%)**
Coty (Rimmel London, Cover Girl, Philosophy)	0	0
Estee Lauder (MAC Cosmetics, Origins, Smashbox Cosmetics, Lab Series, Glamglow, Bumble and Bumble)	47	31
L'Oréal (SkinCeuticals, La Roche-Posay, Vichy, Shu Uemura, Urban Decay, Maybelline New York, NYX Professional MakeUp, Kiehl's, Yves Saint Laurent, Giorgio Armani	47	31
LVMH (Dior, Guerlain, Benefit, Fresh, Make Up For Ever, Nude)	35	8
Revlon	33	7
Walgreens Boots Alliance (No7, Soap & Glory	30	30

Most notably, Coty, who owns CoverGirl, has no female representation on its board or its senior executive positions at all until April of 2017, after pressure from outside groups (M. Cheng, 2017). After the acquisition of Proctor & Gamble's beauty sector, Coty becomes the world's third largest beauty company, finally adding Sabine Chalmers into previously all male board of directors (Utroske, 2017). The insurgence of women-led startups and investors favoring women-led ventures are looking more optimistic for gender equality in face of multibillion industry run mostly by men. Though better than the industry average of women representation in other sectors, this is far away from an outcry of genderless makeup.

Tension Between Making Money and Breaking Barriers: the Case of YouTuber Arieh Simon

The tension between the two dominant discourses of beauty boys as YouTube microcelebrities, and beauty boys as a movement to destabilize traditional notions of masculinity and femininity is evident in the case of Arieh Simon. Simon was a teen when he started his YouTube channel in December 2014. And two years after meeting his idols Gutierrez and Simondac, he uploaded a final, and now only video on his channel, "Current Thoughts 4: Leaving Youtube." As a 12-year-old, Simon started on YouTube making a wide range of videos before morphing his channel into a beauty channel. "I really enjoyed that period of my YouTube career, because it was all just for me. I wasn't monetizing my videos, it was just all for YouTube. I stayed at less than 300 subscribers the entire time, and I was so happy…[and] proud …of my three hundred subscribers" (Simon, 2017). Simon wasn't seeking fame and the economic security that came with it but started his channel as a way of self-expression and self-actualization, to normalize

men in makeup. “I started my channel for the fun of it…I’m trying to bring happiness, I’m trying to bring awareness to subjects that don’t have light shown to them, make the boy industry more well-known, and break down barriers” (Simon, 2017). Simon deploys the MAG discourse in why he loves makeup. Simon does not wear makeup every day, because he does not use makeup for corrective purpose. “I love makeup for the transformation aspect of it, and I find it to be artistic, and I find it to be a way to express myself and be creative” (Simon, 2017). Using makeup as a form of identity expression of “being yourself” or rather, becoming yourself is the core of the MAG discourse. What ultimately made him leave YouTube was ironically the success of his channel, being dominated by the logics of attention economy and forced into the trajectory of an influencer as his numbers grew.

Ariel met Gutierrez and Simondac at a Benefit-sponsored meet and greet in San Francisco. Gutierrez expresses in his snapchat how much meeting young Simon and his supportive father meant to him as a symbol of the changes beauty boys are making in contemporary society. He sees Simon as a gesture of the fearlessness to be themselves, corresponding and celebrating one’s individuality. Through Gutierrez’s and Simondac’s shout out on social media, Simon quickly gained more visibility and followers on Instagram. Suddenly, his three hundred followers turned to twelve thousand followers. Simondac effectively taught him how to succeed in neoliberal capitalistic society. To maintain an Instagram presence with a bigger audience means you need to be posting every day. Simon was introduced to social media as a career, and this encouraged him to conceptualize himself as a worker, while as a 12-year-old, he “didn’t even realize that Instagram is a job, and people make money out of it…Once you get more followers, you

start to fall in to what you are told to do…to care more about numbers, to know more about the whole scene, to know more about money" (Simon, 2017). YouTube as a site of vernacular creativity became an industry, and beauty industry for influencers is very much dominated by the cultural logics of celebrity.

The increased status, reputation or popularity motivates online engagement, and also increase stress and anxiety. "I had this whole new stress of being active with my new followers on Snapchat, being active with my new followers everyday on Instagram, posting two videos a week" until making videos was less fun and more stress (Simon, 2017). The added stress of time management for making videos, and looking good on camera, being creative in content production made Simon resent makeup. "I'm being forced into this track" of a YouTube *career* (Simon, 2017). "It wasn't what I signed up for" as social status and economic security was never the goal (Simon, 2017). Simon's understanding of being an influencer is to help his audience to be more confident or to come out and claim the identity of being gay, rather than becoming a form of microcelebrity. Vlogging also allows for an ongoing process of "becoming" by inscribing the vlogger in multiple and intersubjective reflections (Raun, 2015, p. 1) and such for Simon a medium for working on and exploring the self. To continue to grow one's channel requires more surveillance and metrics analysis, sometimes sacrificing one's creative agency by producing videos designed primarily to "perform well." Simon's channel is not strictly about beauty, and often contains reflections pieces—not the norm for an influencer in the fame game. What he conveys is not always the forward looking, entrepreneurial self, and thus not always favourable for sponsorship. While being offered a brand sponsorship to go to GenBeauty L.A, he felt a contradiction between the

YouTube industry and his core values. While a boy in makeup, he does not want to be a part of the beauty *industry* or ascribe to the beauty boy subjectivity. "Makeup is makeup, it doesn't need all the stuff tied to it… And that's why I love makeup. And it has nothing to do with followers, [or] knowing when the right time is to post". To "do" beauty boy is a careful negotiation of beauty boy as a microcelebrity and beauty boy as a social movement, commercial objectives of makeup brands and one's own creative agency. The case of Simon showcases the ambiguous and contradicting nature of the beauty boy subjectivity, which requires the labour of self-regulation, discipline, and micromanagement.

Beauty boys are on one hand a form of microcelebrity that depends on a salable self through the management of fans, deployment of authenticity, and strategized self-branding to secure economic and social capital. On the other hand, they are social advocates of political ideals such as freedom and empowerment, working to destabilize gender roles and emancipate those that feel marginalized wearing makeup. Part neoliberal branding and part social movement speaks to the ambivalent nature of beauty boys, whose abject bodies are seeking symbolic legitimacy, and in their citationality are enabling subversive reterritorialization under the beauty boy's movement to deconstruct gender binaries. Constituted with brand culture and seeking viability in the economy of attention means a reconciliation between consumerism and social change, which by no means is objective or neutral.

Wanting to be part of the dominant, mainstream, heterosexual culture is deserving of visibility. Beauty boys seeking viability in contemporary neoliberal culture confer a

sense of homonormativity where queer subjectivities can self-actualize only through heteropatriachal culture and values.

Rather than a rearticulation of a binary oppositions between citizen and consumers, consumption practices and political struggles, I want to attune to the ways in which commodity activism opens up possibilities of new identities, where the "axes of oppression…interact with consumer culture to reinvent grassroots identification…as tactical strategies for resistance and reimagination" (Mukherjee & Banet-Weiser, 2012, p. 5). Beauty boys are negotiating with the call to do what you love as the romantic artist but are at the same time embedded in a neoliberal economy and of promotional capitalism. The interjection of brand deals, and the pressure to remain viable as a microcelebrity and as an advocate of a social movement depend on careful deployment of authenticity as strategy to negotiate the contradictory nature of beauty boys which we will discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: How to "do" Beauty Boy

It's difficult to describe what the right look of a beauty boy is, yet having the right look or the wrong look is often used as explanation for why certain opportunities panned out and some didn't. Beauty boy is both physically embodied and represented by images from photoshoots, Instagram photos, YouTube videos that are neither fully encompassed by a person nor a representation. More than just a person or an image, the beauty boy emerges from a complex integration of objects, symbols, discourses and activities, coalescing in this entity that is identifiable yet difficult to pin down (Wissinger, 2015, p. 10). Wissinger's (2015) concept of glamour labour (the management of appearance, presence, and reputation of the person and image), is useful in analyzing on-going labour of the physical body, digital image, and the qualities of bodily affectivity. Paying attention to the power relations that configure the beauty boy aesthetic, this analysis is centered on questions such as: How is beauty earned meritocratically?; How can it be achieved or ascribed?; and How does it perpetuate inequalities by being unequally available to some and not others? (Tilly, 1998).

The project of physical beauty and digital beauty also envelopes the beauty boy aesthetic that describes some affective qualities that configure beauty boys' body/image. The bodily connections with the audience through the deployment of authenticity, and the maintenance of authenticity through professionalization as a YouTube content creator, are constitutive to the viability of beauty boys' subjectivity. The physical connection to other YouTubers through the geographical clustering in Los Angeles becomes an added advantage to some in the sharing of resources and access to more opportunities. Social

networks, friends, and feuds ascribe the status of fame and guard against social climbers with a smaller following, forming relationships that are highly scrutinized, surveilled, and mediated This chapter explores the different themes that emerge in the practices of beauty boys in their trajectory of fame, such as increased intervention of the body to achieve an idealized version of beauty, the performance of authenticity in relation to audience and brands, the prerequisite of certain forms of social and economic capital, and the geographical cluster of L.A. engendering productive sociality as constitutive of beauty boys' viability. The discourse of authenticity is a productive myth deployed by beauty boys to remain relatable and maintain their popularity, but it also downplays the glamour labour involved in investing in one's body/image and reputation, negotiating the triadic relationship between brand, branded-self, and the audience, and engaging in compulsive sociality by moving to L.A. in order to further professionalization as a beauty boy.

The Physical and Digital Body/Image

The sharp rise in social complexity comprised of an explosion of social, biological and machinic actors, sustained and accelerated by digital infrastructures, also foregrounds the way in which beauty is comprised of an exponential increase in actors. To achieve the beautiful mainstream ideal in a post-modern designer body culture (Bordo, 1993) means accepting the body as open to high degrees of individual agency and intervention. The unfixed body varies in size, shape, colour, and age and is subjected to medical and non-medical interventions. Bodily modification through fitness and diet, surgical and pharmaceutical interventions constructs a productive body that is merged with technology. The tendencies of social media platforms that aggregate the spread of

neoliberal and biopolitical imperatives makes the embodiment of technology attractive (Wissinger, 2015, p. 2). Engagement with images and technology is entangled with the bodily boundaries of sex, race and class that confronts the cultural construct of the body as a form of work.

Bodies that do not meet beauty standards can be fixed. It seems all successful beauty vloggers have had some form of plastic surgery (Dragun, 2018). The access to conventional beauty increases with economical capital to invest in cosmetic surgery (Dragun, 2018; Gutierrez, 2018f) or chemical peel treatments (Gutierrez, 2016a), teeth veneers (Gutierrez, 2017b), and other forms of body modification. Gutierrez's subjectivity is bound up in desire, love, and shame, represented for example in his insecurities surrounding the size of his forehead and lips, which were quickly augmented with a hairline surgery and lip injections. The youthfulness of his skin is supplemented by Hollywood's best skincare experts. Be yourself and love yourself, but there is nothing wrong with, as Gutierrez would say, in "putting your best foot forward" (Gutierrez, 2018b). The contradiction between being confident in one's own skin and conforming to the heteronormative ideals of beauty through plastic surgery, a craze in the beauty community, seems comfortably settled in the economy of attention. The physical body can be augmented with certain interventions, so can the digital body/image through the use of editing tools.

Facetune has earned its spotlight on social media communities as a well-used selfie editor. Charles, self-proclaimed queen of Facetune, spearheaded the movement to show viewers how to achieve a fabulous selfie through various techniques and apps. At the same time revealing the artifice of his own Instagram account having been thoroughly

edited, he justifies editing and modification as an art itself (Charles, 2017, 2018a). Instagram becomes an like a model's portfolio, to catch the attention of the general public, and brand scouts. Similarly, Gutierrez finds editing an art itself, one he has a lot of fun in (Gutierrez, 2018b) as pleasure is to be found in distinct sensations, experiences and the imagination (Baker, 2017). The aesthetic register of a bright, shiny, or glittery surface can have a direct effect upon our emotional and sensorial experience, making editing a selfie a pleasurable activity.

It's well acknowledged in the community that a selfie in Snapchat has the best quality. Quality here does not mean clearness, but rather a filter in itself that presents a more aesthetically pleasing photo (Charles, 2017). The process of Gutierrez and Charles Facetuning their own pictures also show a close scrutiny of every pixel and imperfection. Gutierrez's regular routine consists of lowering his hair line, sharpening the cheeks, jaw, neck, and ears, patching up pimples, whitening the teeth and whites of the eye, lightening the eye color, and enhancing the detail of lashes and highlights of the skin. Facetune is used for correction such as erasing a pimple or covering a dark eye circle, and at the same time trying to achieve one's perceived reality that doesn't translate on camera due to the lens, lighting, environment or background. For example, the camera might not pick up the lighter hues of the eye, or the glimmers of a highlighter, which Facetune supplements. The process of immortalizing beauty in a digital image shaped by the affordances of technology and inclinations of idealized beauty is a testament to the relationship of the physical body and the virtual image. A material transformation of the body through dress and makeup, gendered posturing to be alluring and attractive, with eyes that demand attraction, taken to its virtual identity through the manipulation of codes is also

intermingled with one's own desires, shame and pleasure found in the sensorial experience of playing with colour and texture.

Beauty is exposed to its own artifice, engrossed in exciting the senses in pretty glitters and shining highlights than purely a transmission of meaning or message. Rather than teaching the audience how to create a certain look, Instagram selfies are positioned to capture attention and evoke feeling. Bodily affectivity becomes a valuable commodity and susceptible to manipulation by the media (Wissinger, 2015). Gutierrez explains that a selfie is not just about the makeup, but it's about the whole picture which "must look really good and presentable" (Gutierrez, 2018b). It is about the feel of the whole image that is important. The subtle negotiations of enhancement but not too much or too fake, acknowledgment in one's own artifice but to not be caught doing so, and retaining one's authenticity by being transparent in what is real and what is touched up, ultimately constitutes what is appropriate beautification.

In an interview with Ellen Degeneres, Charles recounts the story of his viral Instagram selfie that brought him the attention of CoverGirl to become the first CoverBoy (Mandell, 2016). Unhappy with his senior picture and the way it looked despite getting "glam", he brought his own ring light, a lighting tool to produce cleaner and clearer images for makeup photography, "so [his] highlight would be poppin" (Fisher, 2016). This occurrence speaks to the entanglement of machinic actors that brought forth his visibility. Abidin's ethnographic work on Singaporean beauty influencers examines Instagram selfies as what she terms "subversive frivolity" to challenge populist discursive framing of influencers as marginal, inconsequential, and unproductive (Abidin, 2016, p. 1). Abidin examines tacit labour, the "collective practice

of work that is understated and under-visibilized from being so thoroughly rehearsed that it appears as effortless and subconscious" (Abidin, 2016, p. 10) to be a form of subversion. The subjectivities we encounter on tactfully curated Instagram accounts and YouTube videos engage in various forms of tacit labour which are necessary to a successful performance of glamour. Next to the obvious embodied makeup practices, beauty boys also require a know-how of lighting and posturing. The photographic tropes of gendered posturing and the desire for clear image come together at the moment the highlight on Charles' cheeks become pronounced. The embodied technical skills in taking a desirable selfie and the manipulation of image and video production through apps and software are forms of social capital. Selfies are carefully selected from a repertoire of images, videos are carefully edited out of chunks of footage, and this selection and editing are informed both by a technological expertise, gendered apparatus of bodily production, and self-branding that adhere to a designed theme and aesthetics. As Charles's experiences demonstrate, to be desirable and viable as social media influencer requires technological embodied know-how that adheres to the photographic tropes of a clear quality image with good lighting. Informed by gendered bodily production of glam makeup carves out the beauty boy subjectivity that is desirable.

Connections with the Audience: Deployment of Authenticity and Intimacy

Glamour labour also involves expending energy to open the body up to intimately interact with technologies that monitor our engagement and potential. It is also exposing our connections, movements and sensations through social media tracking and

surveillance. The bodily capacity for connection with the audience, brands, and other YouTubers is also central to the organic accumulation of attention.

As previously discussed in the literature review, the triangulation of authenticity, intimacy, and self-branding is constitutive of the beauty boy subjectivity. Discourses of authenticity have flourished in the context of new emergent technologies that allows consumer citizens to actively engage in the production process in a bottom-up approach. Commercial media also appeals to the authenticity discourse in deploying themes of "ordinariness" in advertising campaign such as Dove's Real Beauty campaigns use of "real" women in the social cause of female empowerment (Banet-Weiser, 2012a). It seems the traditional barriers of entry to glamourous industries of fashion and beauty are more permeable in the digital age (Duffy, 2016). "The authenticity ideal becomes a productive narrative to embrace" (Duffy, 2016, p.447). Rather than emphasizing the markers of status, Gutierrez's deployment of authenticity begins with asserting that he is just like us. He often affirms that he is just another boy, another ordinary person who is so blessed with the opportunities because of his fans. One of his attractive qualities, noted by one follower in a Q & A segment, is his being so "down to earth.". In the same segment, Gutierrez explains "I'm a regular dude making videos doing makeup. Like there's nothing that I'm doing that is spectacular and different than like other people that someone can do just as easily and just as well, if not better than I am" (Gutierrez, 2014c). Gutierrez also emphasizes there is little difference between his actual self and his persona on YouTube, presenting his camera persona as his authentic self.

Authenticity also depends on disclosive intimacy (Abidin, 2015) which maintains access one's private life and the mundane details to impart a sense of intimacy between

friends. There's a fine balance between the need to be humble and the need to show one's private life, which—with the increasing success of a YouTube celebrity—may now include a very successful and luxurious lifestyle, complete with mansion and luxury cars, something that may alienate viewers (Kelly, 2017). Gutierrez and Charles have always successfully been able to bring their audience into their private life by the continuous update on Snapchat from the first peek in morning to shutting off the light and going to bed at night. Gutierrez strategically crafted narratives to introduce a pet into the family, a relationship, and even revealing his health condition and experience of vitiligo out of the feeling of accountability to his viewers, which maintains a performance of authenticity.

The assertion of his ordinary status of being a regular dude making videos, and the sharing of his growth and success reinforce closeness and intimacy with his followers. For his long-time subscribers, they are able to witness the clumsy conjectures with technology, as he learned how to film and edit, play with voice overs, to his current technological proficiency. Growing with Gutierrez through his journey as a beauty vlogger, every success is framed as "our" successes. "I cannot wait to see what we have in store for the next three years and what YouTube and what any other social media platform takes us. I always tell you guys it's not just my journey, it's our journey and you guys allowed me to do what I love…and I just want to say thank you." (Gutierrez, 2017a) Displaying humbleness in acknowledging the audience as the reason for his success, giving thanks, appreciation, material goods and prizes construe a feeling of reciprocation. Love is given back to the fans, and honour is bestowed to the loyal fans. The title of Maniacs is given to those members of Gutierrez's audience that follow him across all platforms. Charles is also particularly good at maintaining intimacy with his audience in a

similar way by invoking the discourse of sisterhood as a community of support, rather than a relationship between an influencer and his followers. He calls his followers "sisters" and has weekly sister shout-outs where he acknowledges one of his followers in his videos.

In Duffy's research on fashion bloggers, she finds that participants use the authenticity mythos to "downplay a baseline level of economic capital that is presumably a prerequisite for aspirational labourers hoping to achieve their goals" (p. 448). Often invisible is the baseline level of economic capital and time investment necessary for beauty boys to gain visibility. Foremost, beauty boys must have the necessary tools and makeup for their makeup looks or product reviews. In addition, beauty boys must have the required technologies for producing and distributing their content: photography equipment, vlog camera, microphone, lighting equipment, editing software, wireless internet access, smart phones and other forms of investment. Gutierrez consider himself fortunate as a Sephora then Mac employee, thus having access to free and discounted makeup. At the beginning of his YouTube career, he didn't have a lot of money to buy makeup, getting most of his makeup from work and admitting "I'm fucking cheap" (Gutierrez, 2014a), "I'm poor as fuck bitch", and "I don't buy makeup ever" (Gutierrez, 2014b). He admits in his first every beauty haul on October 24, 2014, that beauty influencer and CEO of Makeup Geek, Marlena Stell whom he had met in L.A had bought him a bunch of the makeup in the haul. Gutierrez often recounts this event and his appreciation and gratefulness to Stell who had helped him when he was unable to afford makeup which was necessary to grow his channel. Gutierrez invested in softboxes and a Canon T3i to start his channel which at first consisted of sitting against a floor and

filming, to filming in his bedroom, and finally to having a beauty studio room. Over the years, influencer content production espouses more sophisticated techniques in digital editing, that "defined and refined multiple aesthetic traditions" (Burgess 117). Top YouTubers have extremely clear and high-quality videos that not only benefit from good quality equipment and lighting, but also learned editing techniques, and in some cases hiring others for video production and channel management. The desire of clear image and "theatrical authenticity" (Senft, 2008, p. 16) in the use of better lighting, clarity, and image resolution to give a sense of perceptual realism is dependent on the affordances of technological equipment and mediation.

Being a beauty vlogger means there is no real division between work and personal life. Before YouTube can become a viable career to make a stable monthly income, most YouTube content creators create, film, and edit videos while working full time jobs. When Gutierrez first began his channel, he worked full time at Sephora and devoted the rest of his time to make and edit videos as soon as he came home. He also needed to maintain his social media presence and be constantly available on Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, and Twitter to broadcast his daily life, thoughts, makeup looks, and interact with his followers. Living in San Diego means a lot of time spent travelling to various beauty conventions, collaborations, brand opportunities, and events. Charles, on the other hand, went in to YouTube as a career with enough capital from his brand deal with CoverGirl. Being freshly graduated from high school without responsibilities of having a family, he could afford to treat YouTube as a full-time job right away, thus gaining a large audience very quickly. Despite assertions of their ordinariness, many beauty boys are not just regular people. They have certain attributes (as discussed in the

previous chapter) that conform to the heteronormative standards of beauty, and some baseline capital or unique positions that affords them certain access to the cultural production on YouTube.

Connections with the Brand: Authenticity through Professionalizing as a YouTube Content Creator

Maintaining a positive relationship with brands is also essential to displays of authenticity. García-Rapp (2017a) developed a model of authenticity to explain the relationship of brand and authenticity in her analysis of YouTuber BubzBeauty. The formula includes being trustworthy, honest, and open about brand reviews and being rightfully motivated for brand reviews under the intention to inspire and help viewers. Characteristics including not “overselling” product reviews and only review products the YouTuber likes. This model certainly applies to Gutierrez and Charles who makes it clear that they are only reviewing products that they like, but they don’t necessary “undersell” product reviews. Gutierrez and Charles are known for their aggressive advertising of their commission discount codes, but always in a form of postmodern branding (Holt, 2004) that is ironic in poking fun at itself, acknowledging that the audience are in the know of the economy of YouTube beauty industry. Rather than underselling, Charles practices “overselling” which emphasizes the commerciality of the branded self while poking fun at it. In response to critiques of overselling his influencer discount codes, Charles created his fan merchandise with what has now became a meme, “use code James for 10% off” as the logo. “The full range of irony is only intelligible through an awareness of the problematic relationship between the expressed and the intended, between character and statement, and between essence and appearance." (Sloane, 2001, p. 404). Charles started

to use #notsponsored but #shouldbe hashtags whenever there is a mention of a brand, asking for sponsorship from Facetune to Ikea, from his favourite drink to his favourite restaurant. By making evident the branded nature of life itself and commodify forms in our everyday consumption and interaction, Charles uses irony to destabilize meaning of the branded-self, using his trolls, memes, and critiques as video content and merchandise logos.

Secondly, García-Rapp's model suggests that beauty vloggers have more agency in performing an authentic self, while backgrounding the role of the brand. Without the appearance of so, the brand deal ultimately influences the beauty vlogger's display of trustworthiness, openness, honesty and appropriate motivation.

Influencer marketing is a relatively new trend that is quickly garnering more advertising dollars. Previously, influencer marketing had been mainly based on the size of their reachable audience, and now personal branding proves to be more important. Having brand ambassadors implies a more long-term relationship between the brand and the influencer, and thus a more authentic relationship. The move to become ambassadors for a brand is a more meaningful partnership than a few integrated social media content posts. Building a long-term relationship with influencers is building a long-term relationship with their audiences. The saturation of influencer marketing also means that brands are looking to differentiate themselves without losing authenticity, and constantly seeking out the new generation of influencers. In 2017, brands took influencers on luxury trips to Hawaii, Bora Bora, private islands, sponsoring influencers for various events, extending invitations to exclusive Hollywood parties, and sending personalized PR packages and gifts. For this reason, some beauty vloggers are often accused of being

“sell-outs,” endorsing brands mainly for profit. For beauty vloggers who have already established a long-term relationship with a brand and enjoy their products, to then promote a product would have the appearance of authenticity (García-Rapp, 2017a). Authenticity is constantly negotiated between the audience, the influencer, and the brand which takes strategic planning and presentation. Thus, the appearance of authenticity takes a lot of scrutiny and regulation which SMIs have to master. The growing significance of influencer marketing means a greater surveillance of SMIs, tracking audience engagement with branded content to measure their impact. Entangled with brand relationship are data and technology surveillance that constantly tries to assess the value of their branded self.

Frustrations with brand deals are common, from having a hard time getting paid when producing a video that the sponsors don’t like, to coming up with an idea that satisfies both parties. The majority of concerns lie in negotiating the terms of full-integration content, where creator and brand work together to make a video rather than just a sponsor mention, which is an explicit mention that acknowledges the brand in the video. For example, collaborations might depend on brand approval, where the brand must approve of the video before going live or else the content creator must go back and change it. Other issues arise when working with third party PR companies of brands which can break down in the chain of communication. A research participant of the Internet Creators Guild, “The Sate of the Brand Deal” says, “The hardest part? Getting the brand to trust that I know what I’m doing and let me sell the product in a way that’s authentic to my audience” (Guild, 2017). Similarly, in his Snapchat Charles expresses the frustrations of working with brands that robs the creative agency from influencers.

> I don't really do that many sponsored things on my channel mostly because I am such a huge believer in only working or doing sponsored content with brands that I really…genuinely like and like the products of. I'm never going to take money just for an Instagram post or a YouTube video. That is not me, I will not ruin my brand… It's really refreshing as an influencer to work with a brand that really get it and have mutual respect. So many brands just see influencer like a fucking billboard that they can throw their money at… I think I work really hard to not only build a following of amazing sisters out there but also build a trust…But so many brands for some reason because they have a few thousands of dollars in their pocket, they can just break that trust and that I just wanna fuckin promote their shit everywhere and tattoo their new foundation or mascara, or concealer on my forehead. (Beauty Snapz, 2018)

Authenticity and trust in the triangulation of influencer, brand, and audience go hand in hand. Not only must the influencer be authentic and build trust with the audience, the influencer must also negotiate trust with the brand, in order to maintain trust with the audience. Thus, successful collaborations or successful displays of authenticity are influencers who not only appear authentic to their audience, but who also successfully maintain brand–influencer relations and communication. Charles' management teams have negotiated in his contract that he no longer does brand approval, but for smaller digital content creators, they have to balance their sense of ownership and creativity with brand contracts that just want a mouthpiece.

One way influencers navigate their relationship to brands and their subjectivity as a content creator is by conceptualizing social media as a career, and recognizing

themselves as workers. Charles explains:

> If you are a brand hiring an influencer to work with you, you should be thinking about it just like if you are a brand hiring an employee. You need to do a background check and need to trust the person that you're hiring. You should know all about my past, you should know about my scandals that I have had. You should know about the videos that I post. You should know about what videos perform best. You should know when I upload. You should know about my following, my sisters, what I've been working on. And then, if you like everything I have to offer and bring to the table then you should hire me. Do not hire me unless you fully trust me as an influencer, and as my own brand is going to give you a good piece of content for our contract. Yes, there's money involved, and I want to be compensated for doing my work. And don't say I'm in this for the money because anybody should be compensated for doing work no matter what the job is, and that is the T. (Beauty Snapz, 2018)

Charles has expressed on Snapchat his dissatisfaction with some brands who think "influencers can be bought" without developing a relationship with them (Beauty Snapz, 2018). Charles and Gutierrez explicitly acknowledge that compensation involves more than the creation of content for brands but also all glamour labour that goes into constructing themselves as a consumable brand. With more transparency coming from influencers such as Charles' video titled "HOW MUCH MONEY BEAUTY GURUS *REALLY* MAKE", beauty vloggers are at the forefront in advocating for payment of their labour and professionalizing YouTubers to be more than a hobby.

By enunciating their professional status as a YouTuber, and recognizing their efforts as labour, YouTubers are also attempting to collectively organize. The Internet Creators Guide (ICG) was created to organize the tens of thousands of people making their living creating online content in order to make their profession more sustainable. ICG promotes the interest of online creators by "organizing collective representation efforts, advocating on their behalf, and developing resources with best practices" (Internet Creators Guild, n.d.) They advocate for online creators with platforms, policy makers, and press with the ultimate hope of making this profession more sustainable. Among the key documents they produced include a report on brand deals to understand how creators price themselves, what influences those rates, and some best practices such as acceptable minimum rates. In their survey, 58% of people do not know, or are unsure of how much a brand deal on their channel is actually worth, let alone negotiate the terms. With the constant changes of followers and engagement, online content creators need to stay up to date with valuing their channels for brand integrations. Such organization speaks to some of the collective experiences of YouTubers, who are often teenagers, and provide some form of support on how to navigate YouTube as a career in the digital culture industry.

This relationship is increasingly complicated by the emerging polarity of influencers and micro-influencers. The hierarchy of influencers based on numbers posits that influencers with big followings monopolize big brand sponsorships. Smaller influencers, or micro-influencers, find it hard to compete for attention. The intricate ways influencers can be sponsored or supported makes it difficult for consumers to discern a "honest" review from a "paid" review. Stell (2018) cited $60,000 as the average for

having an influencer review their products which is exorbitant fee for a small brand owner. Rather than undervaluing their channel or needing to advocate for compensation, bigger influencers have lucrative compensation package that only bigger brands can afford. The astronomical fees to hire top beauty boys make smaller indie brands unable to compete against transnational corporations, again calls to the question of authenticity in the relationship between brands, influencers, and fans. I think it's important to acknowledge the shifting performance of authenticity as a micro-influencers grow to become a big influencer. While Gutierrez built his following in his performance as "an ordinary dude," he can no longer sustain his popularity in the same way.

For example in one month in 2018, Gutierrez lost 360,718 subscribers as his performance of authenticity was called into question. Gutierrez, Star, and beauty vlogger Laura Lee, whose friendship played out on social media in their frequent collaborations and socialization, became an envious "cool kid's" group of the beauty community on YouTube. After a fallout with Jeffree Star, Gutierrez and Lee formed a new group involving Nikita Dragun, and Gabriel Zamora. Since then, the feud between these big influencers have been the focus of media outlets and gossip channels alike. When Zomora tweeted a picture of the group with the caption, "Bitch is bitter because without him we're doing better", a dig at Star, Star's fans retaliated by circulating offensive, racist, and prejudiced comments Gutierrez, Lee, Dragun, and Zamora have made in the past, creating a public relations scandal that put the relationship of the four into contention. Lee and Gutierrez suffered dramatic subscriber loss as they are condemned for the lack of authenticity and accountability in their apology videos by the public. While Gutierrez and Lee's apology videos have incurred harsh rebuke and blacklash,

Zomora released an apology video to all the people involved, especially to Star, titled "My Truth" that had not only incurred forgiveness but also support from many people. Zomora gained 361, 084 followers in 30 days, while Star gained 1,053,780 followers in the same period. In his video, Zamora recounted Gutierrez's action in the scandal, accused Gutierrez of social climbing tendencies, only to then publically end their relationship. Since then, Gutierrez has taken a leave from YouTube and all his social media platforms, and Lee had retailers discontinue her products. What I found to be particularly interesting in this turn of events are the consequences when performances of authenticity fail. When beauty boys are no longer beauty boys because of their love of makeup, but love of the economic benefits, the audience takes it upon themselves to be regulators of ethics in the beauty community. The various dramas surrounding big influencers are signifying in various way that performances of authenticity are no longer enough to sustain popularity for a big influencer.

Zomora's video received 4.1 million views since it was published on August 21, 2018 and subsequently sparked a lively discussion in the beauty community. Subsequently, Stell released "My truth regarding the beauty community" and "4 Truth in Makeup: My Pledge to the Beauty Community", Tati Westbrook released her version also titled "MY TRUTH…", and, catching on, Charles released "MY TRUTH…just kidding lol chit chat and get ready with me". In reply to Zamora, Star tweeted "The truth will always set you free. Always" Star have always used the discourse of truth during a controversy. During his public fallout with Kat Von D, he released "DEAR KAT VON D: IT'S EASIER TO TELL THE TRUTH". During his relationship with Nathan, who identity as a straight male, he posted, "THE TRUTH ABOUT MY RELATIONSHIP."

His documentary with Shane Dawson is titled, “The Truth About Jeffree Star”. In the midst of complicated relationships, confusing identities, and fluid sexualities, there’s the need to discover some inner truth, some stability to the instability, some form of realness when authenticity is revealed to be an edited performance. One can construct realness by undertaking a confessional activity when there is some risk of telling the truth usually regarding some controversial issue where the response can be negative and be used against you. Despite the risk of criticism and rebuke, influencers feel the need to tell the truth out of a sense of duty to their audience and the beauty community. As bigger influencers become the center of attention of gossip channels and media outlets, performance of authenticity in the narrative of an ordinary persona and revealing the hidden inner life through behind-the-scene are no longer enough. Bigger beauty influencers also need to take some risk to speak up regarding the condition of the beauty community, and engage in self-criticism, out of the duty to their audience, despite the possible risk and backlash.

Connection with other YouTubers: the geographical cluster in Los Angeles

The exposure and attention generated from gossip channels, audiences, media outlets, and other YouTubers have always postulated particular beauty boys at the center. One part is due to the size of their following, but another is due to the geographical cluster surrounding L.A. Contrary to the claims that technology has rendered distance unimportant giving equal access to all YouTubers, scholars have argued that social networking is the foundational process in which creative milieus form (Castilla, Hwang, Granovetter, & Granovetter, 2000). The unique feature of the Western beauty community is the geographical concentration of prominent beauty influencers in Hollywood. As

social networks breed economic growth, beauty boys Star, Gutierrez, Simondac, Charles, Zomora and all reside in Los Angeles and its vicinity because that's where all the brand events and opportunities for beauty influencers are. Professionalization as a beauty boy comes from formal and informal networking opportunities realized in the geographical cluster of L.A. Hollywood parties, seminars, conferences, and informal gatherings are central to the structuring of the beauty industry that relies on collaborations and sharing of resources and ideas. These informal events are where beauty influencers can meet brand reps and other YouTubers who can become collaborators to cross-pollinate audiences. And of the many brand events held, one can network and be offered contracts and opportunities. Gutierrez recognizes now that he achieved status and visibility in the beauty industry, that there is a crossing over to the mainstream Hollywood possible through "productive sociality" (Duffy, 2016; Wissinger, 2007). Beauty influencers are not just digital influencers, making YouTube or Instagram posts, but are also transgressing into traditional Hollywood (Dragun, 2018), motivating vloggers to move to Los Angeles. Simondac explains his motivation to move from Florida to L.A.:

> I love California… I love how I'm always inspired to work more, to push myself more…I'm not saying Florida's a bad place, it's just that there wasn't brands. Here, there are makeup stores, there are makeup boutiques…And there's people that work on set, like this is Hollywood. I'm in Hollywood. There's red carpets and I have friends that are celebrity makeup artist and it's just really cool to be surrounded by those people…There's more opportunity here for me. (Simondac, 2015)

Gutierrez often complained on Snapchat about his frustration of frequently flying to L.A.

for his YouTube career, which I understand to be his motivation to finally buy a house in L.A. along with the possible social networks, ability to establish relationships with more successful YouTubers, and therefore employability.

The practice of networking often can provide industry support and become a main resource for maintain employability (Neff, 2005). When Gutierrez had a smaller audience, he utilized the power of his audience through retweets and likes to gain the attention of bigger YouTubers, which failed more than succeeded. After attending beauty conventions, he had more opportunity to network with bigger YouTubers. Gutierrez's relationship with Simondac and his subsequent collaborations with well-known beauty vloggers such as Star have increased his visibility. His relationship with Patrick and Makeup Geek at the beginning of his YouTube career offered him a form of support such as internal labour markets, job training, and job security—the same as what the CIG tries to achieve for its members.

As Neff argues, "social ties are *constitutive* of productive milieus within cultural industries, and the work central to maintaining these social ties happens outside of formal boundaries of organizations and inside industrial social settings" (Neff, 2005, p. 139). The first meetings between friends are no doubt at beauty conventions and informal social events, strengthened by the social networks of living in L.A. (Dragun, 2018). Having such a group is positive in generating support, sharing of resources, and cross-pollinating audiences, gaining more visibility together. While glamour labour in the management of bodily intervention, performance of authenticity, and the constitution of social ties are integral to maintaining visibility, the most important function of beauty boys is still the art of transformation in front of the camera. The production of makeup

content as entertainment and techniques of makeup application will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: The Transformative Power of Makeup

Themes of transformation are becoming increasingly popular in contemporary popular culture, as exemplified in renovation, makeover, and reality TV shows. The dominance of the makeover paradigm "started with food and homes and gardens, but has now extended to clothing, cleanliness, work, dating, sex, cosmetic surgery and raising children" (Gill, 2016, p. 156). In a postfeminist framework, the makeover paradigm begins with a flawed and lacking self that is transformed through the advice, education, and sometimes humiliation of experts and modified consumption habits, to arrive at a more successful self. Themes of transformation have always pervaded popular culture in the stories of myths and legends before taking a decisive postfeminist turn. In his introduction of artistry of transformational makeup, Thomas Morawetz (2001) reveals three unnerving and subversive fantasy staples of popular culture surrounding the lack of trust in the naturalness, constancy, and recognisability of faces: when our own face change uncontrollably and unpredictably, when one is able to change appearance at will, and when others have the ability to change faces at will or random. The first is often seen in early horror and science fiction genre where one transforms into Mr. Hyde, a werewolf or a total stranger. Having control to change appearance at will is also a form of liberation in shedding the attribution and responsibility of the previous self. Lastly, the recognition that other has the ability to do the same is to jeopardize the ideas of constancy and naturalness, erasing the borders between nature and artifice. The transformative powers of makeup tap into the unnerving fantasies of festivals, carnivals, and Halloween that seduces celebrants into assuming new identities, in the creations of new things, humans, and almost humans (Morawetz, 2001, p. 12).

Using the work of Anthony Giddens and Ulrick Bech, McRobbie highlights the increasing call for individuals to "invent their own structures" (McRobbie, 2004, p. 260). This postmodern notion of identity that celebrates choice and freedom to invent our own structures "internally and individualistically" replaces the reliance on the old social structures that are fading away (McRobbie, 2004, p. 260). The transformative power of makeup to become our self-ideals, to transform into a complete other, rests upon a process of individuation through self-monitoring practices.

Beauty boys share the same story, learning the *transformative power* of makeup to control the uncontrollable and unpredictable, to change appearance at will, and to teach others the skills of transformation that throw the social value of naturalness as good into question. Makeup has been a refuge to deal with issues of self-identity and self-esteem and used as an outlet for self-expression and creativity. Beauty boys have envisioned makeup in the context of its professional field, a practice of self-expression, an art form, a tool of identity formation, while recognizing its positive and transformative qualities. The main goal of transformational makeup is to evoke feelings, attitudes, and responses that expressive faces call forth. The face is treated as a canvas that is the embodied and expressive flesh of a living being. The painted face must seduce us, so we can lose sight of its artificiality, and instead see them subverted as a new identity, as the essence of something else, or as works of art. The discourse of transformation is deployed in different makeup practices in what I categorize as "corrective," "glamourous," "drag," and "creative" makeup (see Table 5). *Corrective makeup* has functional aims of correcting skin deficiencies to arrive at a more confident self. *Glamourous makeup* celebrates makeup's playful artifice as a form of escapism from the lived reality in order

to occupy an aspirational future. *Drag makeup* seeks an intentional, theatrical transformation of male appearance to female impersonation. And *creative makeup* engenders professionalization as a makeup artist to transform the artist into a work of art. In drag and creative makeup, creations have their own characteristics, personality, and relationships.

Glamourous, drag, and creative makeup imagine makeup as an artform that uses the embodied living face as the canvas. The art of painting the face is a triadic relationship between the artist, the audience, and the final image where the artist also becomes a work of art, animating it and giving it life (Morawetz, 2001, p. 10). The created being exists briefly before the makeup comes off, surviving only in visual records. While makeup is a tool that affirms identity, it also leads the audience to ponder the stability of identity as transformational makeup excites questions about identity, appearance, and transformation.

Table 5

Makeup Register for Beauty Boys

Makeup Register for Beauty Boys	**Aesthetics**	**Transformation**	**Place**
Corrective	Neutrals, matte	Confidence, Real self	For everyday wear
Glamourous	Neutrals, bold colours, glitters, shimmers	Escapism, Aspirational labour, Claiming time for the self	Social media, special events
Drag	Bold colours, dramatic, glued down eyebrows/ no eyebrow/ or arched eyebrow Five-o'clock shadow is covered Optional wigs, accessories	Female gender performance, Reimagining yourself, Character transformation	Social media, special events
Creative	All colours, SFX materials	Actor is subverted into a work of art	Social media, special events

In a discursive analysis of YouTube videos, I categorize the makeup register in videos of the Top 10 beauty boys (in terms of subscriber rate) who had a major collaboration with a makeup brand. Beauty boys include: Jeffree Star, who owns his own makeup line; Charles, who is L'Oréal's ambassador for the So Lashy mascara; Gutierrez, who is Maybelline's ambassador for the Big Shot mascara; Simondac or Patrick Starrr, who created MAC x Patrick Starrr collection; Bretman Rock, who collaborated with Morphe in a eyeshadow palette; Zamora, who is the first male Ipsy curator; Halbert, who collaborated with MILK makeup to release blue lip shade Frosy; Ball, who starred in Rimmel London's #livethelondon look campaign' Ward, who starred in L'Oreal's concealer palette and foundation ads; and Gary Thompson, who is part of L'Oreal's True

Match campaign.

I categorized each video into six categories: corrective, glamour, drag, creative, no makeup, and other (see Figure 5.1). Glamourous makeup is the most popular form of makeup aesthetic, consisting more than 55% of total content across the top four beauty boys, while there seems to a negative correlation between the percentage of corrective makeup practices to the number of subscribers. The Beauty Boy and The Plastic Boy are known to do more corrective makeup looks. 89.2% of Ward's content, and 69.3% of Thompson's content are on corrective makeup, and they stay at the bottom ten in terms of subscribers. Ward and Thompson are two of the earlier male beauty vlogger son the scene, and Thompson has a shocking 313 videos. Uploading regularly is one of the main ways to gain subscribers. As the only black beauty boy to have collaborated with a major brand such as L'Oréal, it is unfortunate he didn't rise to popularity. Among the top four beauty boys, the percentage of corrective makeup content didn't pass 9.3%. As opposed to Ward's audience demographics of mainly males, Guterriez reveals the majority of his audience is women. This can mean that women enjoy more elaborate makeup practices for its entertainment value where as men watches corrective makeup for practical purposes.

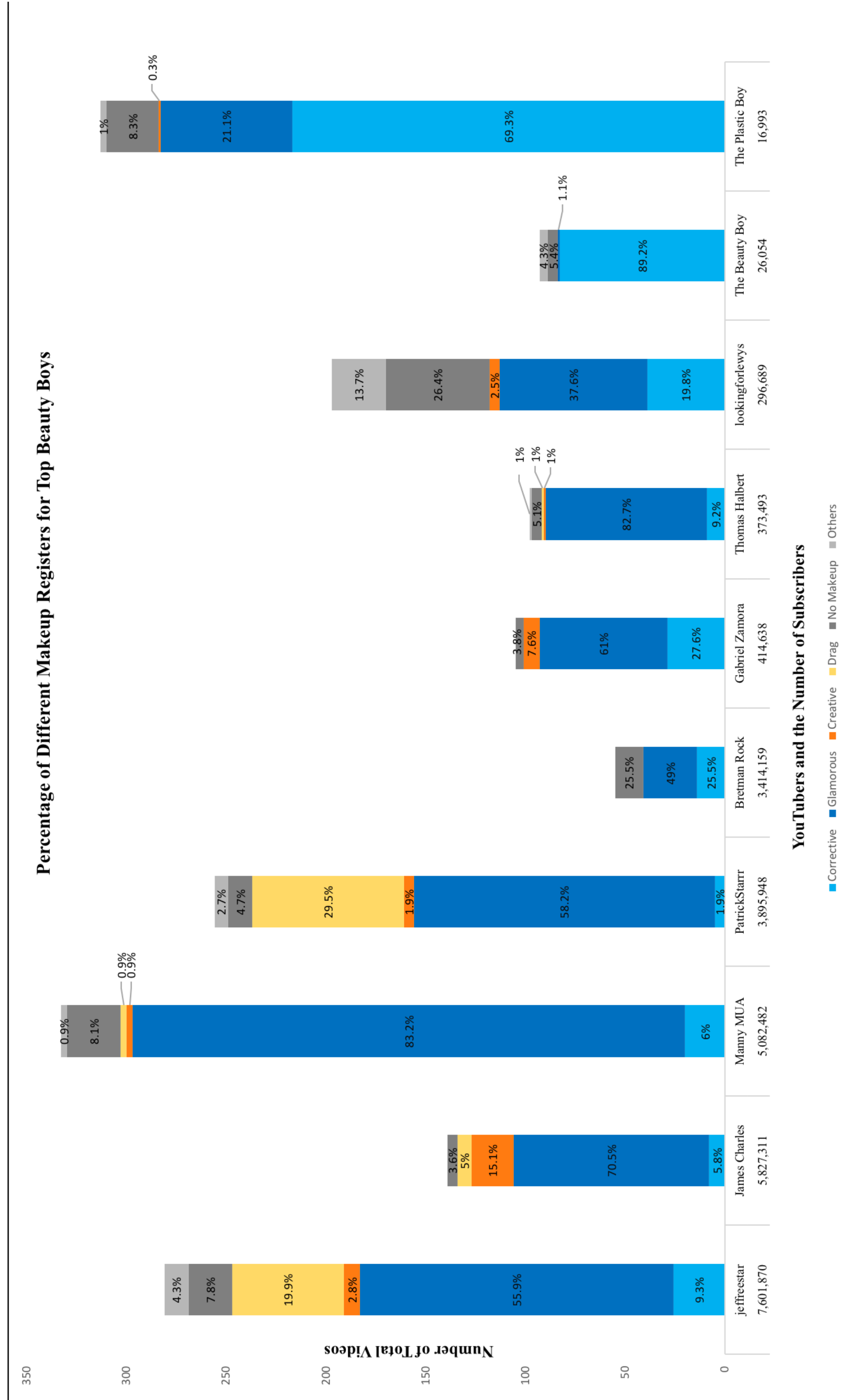

Figure 5.1. Percentage of different makeup registers for top beauty boys.

Corrective

Figure 5.2a. Manny MUA's corrective makeup, screengrabbed. (Gutierrez, 2018c)

Figure 5.2b. James Charles' corrective makeup, screengrabbed. (Charles, 2016)

Corrective makeup (see Figure 5.2a, 5.2b) has functional aims which presupposes skin conditions as deficiencies or flaws that need fixing in order to arrive at a more confident self. Corrective makeup presupposes that an authentic self is trapped inside a mismatched, unwanted corporeal shell (Gimlin, 2002) due to the physiological changes of the face that are uncontrollable such as effects of aging, unexpected breakouts, skin conditions such as scars, acne, psoriasis, rosacea, or just tired eyes and uneven skin tone. Through corrective makeup interventions, this disjunction is healed, and men feel that their painted face is more of an accurate indicator of who they are. Echoing makeup use in the metrosexual moment and emblematic of the MIM discourse, corrective makeup is seen less as a process of beautification and more as a functional purpose for addressing skin health issues, and in extension mental health issues. When skin conditions such as acne, oiliness, and psoriasis are causes for feelings of low confidence and depression,

makeup has allowed men to achieve what they feel is acceptable for men in a heteronormative society: what they feel is their best, real, and attractive self. Interviewee Alex, as a boy who likes to wear makeup, expresses to Daily Mail Online “I feel less like myself without [makeup], as if I hid away more” (Cliff, 2015a). Corrective makeup transforms men and women in to a better version of themselves, to boost confidence and enhance their appearance.

The materiality of the skin in its contours, bumps, blemishes, are framed as "imperfections" and "discolorations." The techniques of makeup practices make it clear that it recognizes the materiality of the body, in its pigmentation, texture, sensitivity, heat and its permeability in the seepage of fluids. Corrective makeup is seen as the first step of makeup application, and subsequently what glamourous makeup builds on. Thus, primer, foundation, and concealer are a must in the beginning of every foundation routine, followed by powder and setting spray to provide coverage but also a lasting “skin-like” appearance, where makeup does not look “cakey throughout the day” or “heavy on the skin” (Gutierrez, 2018c)

First, “the face needs to be completely clear…clean” (Gutierrez, 2018c). Then in a foundation routine, Charles starts with the primer to “smooth out my skin … because I have a million bumps. And I’m a teenager who gets pimples and blackheads and all sorts of gross things on my face” (Charles, 2016). Similarly, Gutierrez “really like to go for a primer that’s great for pore control… I have big pores…I’m a dude, I have man skin, [so] I have larger pores. I have more textured skin than the average female woman would so” (Gutierrez, 2018e). “I like to use primer that has silicone in it…and focus the product on the T-Zone, as well as my pores and just …fill them in…which will help the makeup

look more smooth and less texturized," (Gutierrez, 2015b) because "pores are pools of death. If you look into them, you'll probably fall in. They're really bad and they are really nasty" (Gutierrez, 2014a). Using a primer "really helps me smooth out any of my pores and any imperfections I have on my face, so I'll put that in areas that I kind of crease a little bit more and where I get a little bit oily" (Gutierrez, 2018c).

Next step is foundation and concealer to provide any color correction and coverage. After primer, Charles would normally "colour correct my face…but I just shaved this morning…so not feeling too blue today" (Charles, 2016). Gutierrez would go in with an elaborate foundation routine:

> I like to use between three or four foundations for my entire face…I like the L'Oreal Pro Matte Infalliable for matte-fying my skin and lasting all day on my skin…I will be taking the Hourglass Vanish Stick, and this is going to go on my cheeks. Specifically, I like to do three stripes…a little bit on my bearded area because I have that blue discoloration from my facial hair. A little bit on the chin, a little bit on the sides of my temples, and one little stripe on my nose for added coverage…because that's where I have the most problem areas. Then I take the Dior Airflash in the shade 200…we are going to press and pat this foundation. (Gutierrez, 2018c)

In the words of Star, if it takes "twelve layers of foundation" and power to "pack into the skin", do it (Star, 2015). Following foundation is the use of powder and "baking" to further stop the flow, manifestation, and effects of abject fluids such as sweat and oil. Oil, sweat, dirt and other fluids exerted from the pores of the skin are constantly being

controlled, blotted, hidden as to not disturb the clean, poreless, smoother finish. While none of these material contour of the skin is in need of correction, the signification of these markers as gross, bad, and nasty, problematizes skin in a hierarchy of desire, constructing what is bad skin, what is good skin, what to cover up, and what to accentuate, what is abject and what is normative.

Corrective makeup is best exemplified by Birmingham based Jake-Jamie Ward, also known as The Beauty Boy, who started to play with makeup in order to cover up his acne. His channel is appealing to straight men who want to achieve perfect looking skin, and an extra boost of confidence that healthy skin can give (Cliff, 2015a). Seventy-two percent of his views are from male audiences who are looking for advice online in fear of the vulnerability in approaching a makeup counter (Cliff, 2015a). Ward focuses on less elaborate corrective makeup routines that gives a “no-makeup” makeup look. The “naturalness” of the no-makeup makeup look appears to be more welcoming in capturing straight cisgender men, who might be more hesitant about makeup, in the makeup is genderless movement (Lubitz, 2017b). Men in makeup hope to embrace their traditionally masculine features of stubble and beard despite the use of makeup (Hess, 2016). Unraveling the notion of makeup as a feminine excess, men can still maintain their sense of masculinity or even use it to accentuate their masculinity, e.g., in shaping a sharper jaw. Corrective makeup discourse maintains that makeup has nothing to do with gender and sexuality, it is instead a solution to unwanted skin conditions.

The NDP Group survey on men’s grooming reveals that about 42% of men do not believe they have skin problems, and 17% believe skincare products are for women (“Inside the Minds of Men,” 2015). Yet, at least 80% of the men surveyed use grooming

products, with millennials aged 18 to 34 engaging in more elaborate rituals concerned with acne prevention, oil and shine control, and pore minimization (“Inside the Minds of Men,” 2015). Based on Mintel analysis of U.K male grooming consumption, 31% of men aged 16 to 24 have used B.B. cream (“Inside the Minds of Men: Makeup and Grooming Opportunities”, 2015). Mintel’s, a market research company, Charlotte Libby explains, “Rather than being a minority, men who buy grooming products to boost self-esteem or feel more attractive are now the majority” (“Inside the Minds of Men”, 2015). As social media already increased the focus of appearance, reaching male consumers online is seen as more effective due to the stigma and association with frivolous femininity of approaching an actual skin care counter. Research shows men engage in corrective makeup practices more than they like to admit; beauty boys who don corrective makeup hope to enunciate these silent practices and make them more normalized.

Similar to themes of transformation in a postfeminist framework, the transformative power of corrective makeup lies in the sense of confidence it gives, which also presupposes that we all have flaws that needs fixing, improving, and correcting. In *Allure*’s article “Makeup Tips for Men by Men Who Actually Wear Makeup,” the body is framed as projects to be worked on. “We all have little workarounds when it comes to makeup, whether it's dry skin, hooded lids, or a full beard, and gender obviously has nothing to do with your ability to learn and create” (Sinks, 2018). The body is viewed as always in need of an improvement under the heteronormative consumer-oriented definitions of beauty. Following Gimlin, I want to argue that the use of corrective makeup is not simply a ploy of a hegemonic American culture, encapsulating women and man in the beauty myth. Rather, beauty boys present makeup as a way to negotiate our

relationship with our bodies. While corrective makeup practices are employed to achieve a valid, coherent, stable me-ness, in the active manipulation of the body, to achieve this celebrated self-hood is also a constant reminder that the body is in flux and pliable to fluctuations and augmentations. There is a repetitive perpetuation of a matte, poreless, smooth skin, and a call to control the viscous fluids of our porous molecular composition as if to reassert the solidity which self-representation depends on, while attuning to the porous boundaries of the body itself. Beauty boys recognizing makeup as having transformative powers can be predicated on a rather sophisticated understanding of the body, personhood, and subjectivities, situating the body as fluid canvas engaged in the active practice to achieve the multiplicity of subject expressions. What the elaborate steps of corrective makeup signify is that body fluids are difficult to control; they seep, flow, and are a constant reminder of the body over subjectivity (Grosz, 1994, p. 194). The porous body destabilizes any coherent subjectivity, or stable self-hood, and opens up possibilities of multiple subjectivities. Corrective makeup tries to assert a functional approach to correcting skin deficiencies and achieve a more confident subjectivity, it at the same time reminds us of the possibly to negotiate these beauty norms and the possibility to be transformed into something else.

Glamourous

Figure 5.3a. Manny MUA’s glamourous makeup, screengrabbed (mannymua733, 2018c)

Figure 5.3b. James Charles’ glamourous makeup, screengrabbed (jamescharles, 2018b)

While Wissinger (2015) describes glamour labour as a form of yearning to produce a salable body and self, the other assumption of glamour is associated with dramatic makeup, clothing, hair, and drag queens, which in this context proves another useful tool of analysis. You might recognize glamourous makeup from the full coverage foundation and concealer, contouring, big lashes, a bold eyeshadow look, and glossy lips (see Figures 5.3a, 5.3b). Crafted to achieve perfection, a smooth surface of skin, sparkly eyeshadow, the face painted with glamourous makeup works to capture the imaginations of beauty, sexuality, theatricality, wealth, dynamism, notoriety, movement, and leisure (Gundle, 2008, p. 8). Glamourous makeup is heavy, dramatic, and colourful, deploying

MAG discourse in celebrating makeup as an art form for its ability to transform into something dramatically different. Seventy-five percent of Charles video content comprise of glamourous makeup because he "try new techniques and styles almost every day" (Abelman, 2016). Charles explains, "I'm always challenging myself. Makeup is an art form for me. It's a form of expression, and it's such a cool way to get my creative juices flowing" (Abelman, 2016). Beauty boys deconstruct the illusion of using makeup to fix flaws, a supplement for natural deficiencies, but as a form of joyful creation that embraces makeup's playful artifice. A celebration of artifice or what Halberstam has termed "Gaga feminism", a feminism "of the phony, the unreal, and the speculative" (Halberstam, 2012, p. xii), glamour can be seen as a queer aesthetic.

The most definitive aesthetic of the MAG discourse is glamourous makeup. The glamourous aesthetic is the normative practice among beauty boys (see Figure 5.1) and the look that brands are looking for in its affective dimension of empowerment and freedom of expression, becoming the ideal version of beauty content in its suitability for advertisement. I characterize glamorous makeup as "Instagram makeup" for two reasons: Firstly, because it is makeup mostly done for social media. Before beauty boys turned into male beauty vloggers, most started their careers on Instagram to gain traction. Secondly, because it is a highly mediated and manipulated process as demonstrated in my previous discussion on Facetuning. First used in the nineteenth century, glamour described elements of magic, charm, and sorcery and always retained its sense of deceptiveness (Dyhouse, 2010; Postrel, 2013). As such, glamourous makeup constantly refers to its own artifice. Glamourous makeup is not for everyday but is "always linked with artifice and performance" (Dyhouse, 2010, p. 1). Gutierrez and Charles, for

example, do not usually wear makeup on a day-to-day basis, and only put on a full face of glamorous makeup for events and for social media, circumstances that require their identity as beauty boy and its sophisticated allure.

Glamorous makeup should not be confused with beauty or style, but instead connotes a successful and winning performance of makeup expertise in executing a perfect eyeliner, a blinding highlight, or a poreless base. Accordingly, glamour is not something one can possess, but exists in what John Berger describes as the state of social envy in social relations (Berger, 1990, p. 132), a sort of envy without resentfulness or jealousy but that appears aspirational and instills projection and longing (Postrel, 2013). Berger (1990) explains, "the happiness of being envied is glamour" (p. 132), which highlights glamour as residing in the relationship between the envied and those who envy. The performance of glamour as a form of non-verbal rhetoric persuades the audience through images, totems, and concepts to elicit an emotional response of aspirational envy for the feelings of youth, beauty, self-possession, wealth, leisure, sex appeal, adulation, friendship, fame, and freedom (Postrel, 2013), all characteristics possessed by beauty boys. The audiences, or those who envy, are meant to envy themselves if they also buy the makeup products to achieve the glamourous aesthetic and more so if they engage in microcelebrity practices themselves to achieve visibility, fame, and success. The audience is meant to pursue creative activities of makeup transformation that hold the promise of economic and social capital, of public recognition and career opportunities, of fame and visibility. Glamour instills a forward-looking, entrepreneurial enactment of creativity in glamour makeup to become an object of envy for others, in the promise of fame, visibility, and microcelebrity.

Glamour acquired connotations of yearning for the good life, dreams of flight, transformation, and escape during the golden age of glamour in 1930s Hollywood (Dyhouse, 2010). Viewing makeup as an art form and a way of self-expression can be a powerful form of escapism for those who are experiencing the lived reality of oppression. For Rivera, a more traditionally masculine-presenting beauty boy, makeup was a form of escape for being a feminine-leaning boy in macho-centric, Hispanic culture. Rivera explains, "even though I knew at the time it was very against gender norms; it just made me feel very happy about myself" (Beck & Valenti, 2016). Star describes a similar narrative of escapism in his relationship with makeup. "I come from a family of chaos, alcoholism and abuse and when I discovered makeup, that was my happy place. I got to go and play with makeup for hours and escape the horrible reality that was my life, my shitty fucking parents, and my crazy upbringing" (Star, 2017). In Gutierrez's collaboration reveal of a liquid lipstick with Gerard Cosmetics, he explains:

> I named this colour Serenity because of the Japanese anime Sailor Moon. Serenity was the princess of the Moon… The show Sailor Moon was a huge influence for me when I was younger. And I always felt like I really connected with that show, because during the day the main character Usagi — she was a dorky child who was just always out of place. She never felt like she belonged and that really just resonated within me when I was younger because that's how I felt…And at night, she would turn into this badass crime-fighting vixen…I feel like now as an adult I'm so much more confident in who I am as a person…And makeup brings me to a serene place…Makeup is my go-to. It's what I feel happy doing. Doing makeup makes me feel happy and it takes me to a place of serenity."

The parallelism Gutierrez made of Usagi transforming to Sailor Moon and of his own life made possible by makeup speaks to the escapist and transformative qualities of glamour. Makeup creates a space for personal liberation from the lived class and gender realities in a playful way, while engendering transformative forces of empowerment and aspirations for a better life.

While the performance of glamour can reinforce restrictive regimes of the normative, for ordinary, everyday people, it is also a form of aspirational labour to obtain a life we fantasize about, to engage in different versions of me (Thrift, 2008, p. 14) and escape the confines gender roles and class positions. Dyhouse (2010) in her book *Glamour: Women, History, Feminism* suggests that a desire for glamour often represents a refusal to be imprisoned by the norms of class and gender. A change of appearance at will gives those positioned outside white, reproductive, middle-class, heterosexual regime, a feeling of liberation from the imprisonment of gender and race attributions. The aesthetics of glamour can be about purposefully claiming time back for the self and provoking idealized visions of the future.

While we can feel the effects of glamour in what it does, there is no real checklist to identify glamour. Practices of glamourous makeup depend on the embodied artistry of applying makeup and the technical digital manipulation of the overall image. All makeup—makeup tools, lighting, camera equipment, editing software, internet, computer, smartphone, posturing—are positioned for a successful performance of glamour, but the allure of glamour depends on whether such deceptions go unnoticed, whether the result appears as effortless, whether it evokes affective feelings of envy and longing. The performative function of glamour requires “an exchange between object and

audience in which the manipulation of reality may be understood but must be concealed" (Postrel, 2013, p. 81). While YouTube tutorial content has a pedagogical function and reveals the process of transformation, it by no means dispel its magic. The tacit labour that goes into an Instagram post, behind-the-scene work, uncut footage, networking, and brand deals are circumvented in order to accentuate an easily replicable, effortless, achievable process of glamour and a promise of success as a microcelebrity that only a few every achieve. The audience must willingly participate in the process of seduction and suspension of belief. This affective quality of glamour emerging between social ties makes glamourous makeup the most potent technology of capitalism, and most fitting for a salable self-brand.

Drag

Figure 5.4a. Patrick Starrr's Jessica Rabbit drag transformation, screengrabbed. (Simondac, 2017)

Figure 5.4b. Jeffree Mattel drag transformation, screengrabbed. (jeffreestar, 2018)

Figure 5.4c. Lunar Beauty Campaign of Manny MUA in drag, screengrabbed. (mannymua733, 2018b)

Figure 5.4d. James Charles in drag transformation. (jamescharles, 2018a)

I would like to begin by making it clear that my categorization of drag makeup does not suggest that beauty boys are drag queens. Drag makeup (see Figures 5.4a, 5.4b, 5.4c, 5.4d) speaks to the normalized surface aesthetics of drag performance on social media. Rather than impersonating stereotypical feminine behavior, participating in drag shows or balls, or incorporating speech into drag stylization, drag makeup on beauty boys' YouTube channels are concerned with drag artistry and the power of makeup in engendering dramatic transformations.

The line between drag makeup and glamour makeup is blurry as glamourous makeup utilizes techniques from drag culture such as heavy contouring, baking, and cut crease. Contouring plays with shadowing and highlighting the face to create dimensions

of femininity. Baking the face or letting the face cook, is a method of application where a generous amount of translucent power is applied on top of concealer or foundation, letting the natural body temperature melt the makeup into the skin and letting powder soak up any oils and shine. This technique was created to block the flows of fluids from the body for drag performance. Other makeup techniques such as “Instagram brows,” which begin lightly and grow in intensity over a highly defined arch, are all designed to exaggerate feminine features. For Gutierrez, whose first experience with makeup was doing drag with friends before the days of Instagram and YouTube, he has already taken drag techniques such as baking into his everyday routine. Due to the relatively larger pores of males that create extra sebum and oil, beauty boys’ makeup practices tend to be heavier and utilize drag techniques.

Professional makeup artists are critical of the normalization of glamourous makeup on Instagram as their clients come with pictures of heavily done and edited makeup looks, using drag techniques and playing with exaggerated femininity. Wayne Goss, male makeup artist on YouTube in his video “INSTAGRAM IS TURNING GIRLS INTO DRAG QUEENS!” highlights the harsh and masculine aesthetic effect when women uses drag makeup techniques. As drag makeup filters into the public consciousness and becomes more mainstream through social media, makeup routines stop being centered around being for men or women, but around the materiality of skin and shape of face.

It is undeniable that emerging male beauty social media influencers owe a lot to drag culture. Beauty boy Alexander Rivera (@AlexFAction) observes, “Drag queens were really the trailblazers that led individuality and art…I really do feel that the current

movement of men in makeup, whether it be masculine or feminine, does derive from drag makeup" (Beck & Valenti, 2016). For Gutierrez, creating his first makeup palette, Life's a Drag, is a paying a homage to the influence of drag and the LGBTQ community:

> I actually started my career as Manny MUA in drag. My first experience with makeup ever was in drag for Halloween. I'd done drag a couple times after that. And I would have never become Manny MUA… never followed the path that I am on right now if it wasn't for drag. I wanted to do something that was just an homage to the drag community because it really is important to me… to me drag is not only about female impersonation, it's about the freedom of expression when it comes to makeup, when it comes to wardrobe, when it comes to literally anything you want to do…it's about creating what you want to create and not caring what other people think and I feel like that's always been my message since day one. (Gutierrez, 2018d)

As many beauty boys are either embedded in the drag culture or have their first experiences with makeup through drag, it is not the aesthetics of drag but the power of transformation and the creative freedom that [they] seeks to maintain (Beck & Valenti, 2016).

Simondac denies his identity as a drag queen, but the aesthetics of Patrick Starrr are derived from his time at Pulse in Orlando. "Patrick Starrr is very Orlando queen... I owe a lot of my aesthetic to Pulse and the drag queens there" (Chan, 2017). As Patrick Starr, he is able to play with makeup and its magical transformative qualities. Despite the wigs, clothes, accessories, and heels, Patrick Starrr affirms that beneath it all, he is a boy. Yet, there are instances where he engages in theatrical performance of drag that is

rehearsed and collaborative (see figure 5.1), having other creators design the costumes, wig, or head pieces. And other times, Star and Simondac's performance of gender are nontheatrical, they did not rehearse, or reveal the process where gender is constructed (as a tutorial would) but took on their own complex identifications through cross-dressing, makeup, and bodily modifications.

Thus, I distinguish glamourous makeup as seeking the power of creative transformation and drag makeup as doing the same through an intentional theatrical performance of gender. What the drag makeup register is concerned with is the theatrical performance of drag makeup that is rehearsed, prepared, and staged in order to capture attention on social media, drag makeup is first notably characterized by the gluing down of eyebrows. For Jeffree Star who shaves his eyebrows, or beauty boys with naturally arched brows, this step can be avoided. High coverage foundation and concealer, multiple steps of baking, extreme contouring, multiple sets of lashes are readily different from the process of glamourous makeup. The caking, beating, and baking of the face are also far more extreme than glamourous makeup. Highly influenced by RuPaul's Drag Race (RPDR), mainstream drag makeup is performed for social media rather than for the gay community, somewhat normalizing the appearance of a dramatic cut crease, the technique to extend the whites of the eye, and the use of big lashes. In the golden Ru era of drag, RPDR and the presence of drag queens from RPDR on social media have brought the drag aesthetic (mainly makeup and hair) into mainstream for a wider heterogeneous audience. Fascinated with drag artistry, Charles has been experimenting and practicing drag aesthetics and collaborating with drag queens Aquaria and Farrah Moan, who are popular YouTubers and often collaborators with other beauty boys. In

addition, Patrick Starrr and Charles have uploaded drag makeup tutorials with performance complete with personality, aesthetic, garment, and hair of their female impersonations, particularly planned, rehearsed, and staged for social media.

Creative

Figures 5.5a. James Charles creative makeup, screengrabbed. (jamescharles, 2018c)

Figures 5.5b. Manny MUA's creative makeup, screengrabbed. (mannymua733, 2018a)

Creative makeup can range from a Halloween makeup, to special effects makeup, to more interpretive looks (see Figures 5.5a, 5.5b, 5.5c, 5.5d). Due to the higher level of difficulty, there is a sense of professionalism that comes with creative makeup. Usually, beauty channels that deal specifically with creative makeup such as Alex Fraction and Eddie Camro (@Eddienarcissist) brand themselves as professional makeup artists rather beauty boys.

Figures 5.5c. Alex Faction creative makeup (Alex Faction, 2016)

Figures 5.5d. eddienarcissist creative makeup, screengrabbed. (eddienarcissist, 2018)

By branding themselves as professional makeup artist that specialize in transformational makeup, beauty boys envision themselves as artists in the fullest sense. Like painting, they work with their skin and materials that have near-flesh qualities, like architects, they design and meet daunting technological challenges, and like performance artists, their work is animated. As the actor, they are provisionally lost within the makeup, and as the audience, we lose sight of the raw materials that go into its construction and see them subverted into works of art, into beings, non-humans, monsters.

Though self-taught through YouTube, Charles was originally known for his more editorial and creative makeup looks that differed from glamourous makeup looks. Creative makeup garners less attention in viewership, but Charles is able to incorporate creative makeup into his channel to balance between his own creative agency and being a viable entrepreneur of the self. Since SFX makeup and theatrical makeup is an

institutionalized discipline and a marker of professionalization, creative makeup practices establish legitimacy as a professional makeup artist in YouTube's beauty community.

Chapter 6: Becoming Beauty Boy

The inspiration for this chapter started off with questions about why YouTube is particularly apt for propagating the beauty boy culture. Significantly, Gutierrez and Charles experimented with makeup and their makeup career on other social media platforms before a decisive turn towards YouTube. I want to argue that YouTube's platform ideology proposes a democratic, egalitarian and utopian sense of the internet which compliments a neoliberal conception of the freedom of choice and individuation. YouTube as the most prolific aggregator of UGC, and most specifically vlogs, and its unique compensation package propels a commodity centered interpretation of the self. On some levels, these ideas have already been explored in my earlier discussion of the economy of attention, and self-celebrification. But the interest of this chapter is to explore the practice of vlogging on YouTube as engendering a process of becoming a Beauty Boy. Vlogging is conceptualized as a tool of identity formation lending itself to experimentation with identities, manifestations of the self into a coherent identity, and acting as a communal therapeutic function in dealing with trauma. Vlogging not only becomes a phenomenon of self-affirmation, it also aids in community building, offering possible templates of representation to others who can recognize and claim their own narratives as beauty boys.

YouTube as a Platform

Tarleton Gillespie (2010) examines the ways the metaphor of the platform has been utilized by YouTube to navigate and appeal to all its stakeholders. A platform suggests "a progressive and egalitarian arrangement, promising to support those who stand upon it," while taking a neutral position regarding such activity (Gillespie, 2010, p. 350). Both

literally and ideologically, the platform conveys the sense of being raised, progressive, egalitarian, and accessible, heralding the utopian and democratic potential of the internet as giving everyone a stage to express themselves. Gillespie argues that YouTube use the platform's ideological positioning to appeal to users and empower individuals to speak, to *broadcast yourself*.

> This more conceptual use of 'platform' leans on all of the term's connotations: computational, something to build upon and innovate from; political, a place from which to speak and be heard; figurative, in that the opportunity is an abstract promise as much as a practical one; and architectural, in that YouTube is designed as an open-armed, egalitarian facilitation of expression, not an elitist gatekeeper with normative and technical restricts. (Gillespie, 2010, p. 352)

The broader "participatory turn" of vernacular creativity (Burgess, 2006), user-generated content (Fuchs, 2014), and bottom-up engagement (Spurgeon, 2008) demonstrate the DIY ideology of participatory culture with hopeful ideas about the democratization of cultural production (Jenkins, 2006, pp. 135–137). YouTube's conceptual use of platform focuses on ordinary users, who can bypass the gatekeepers of traditional media and reclaim the construction of their own identities. The core location of UGC have migrated into video aggregators sites such as YouTube, and its revenue structure is the most attractive to users who wants to make a living doing what they love.

YouTube has various customizability features to increase its marketing revenue in two main ways: Google Preferred and True View advertisement. Google Preferred is like prime-time television, which bundles YouTube's content amongst the top 5% of the highest performing channels on YouTube, ranked by Google's preference score, into

packages of channels for brand advertisers. Google's preference score is an algorithm that measures popularity (the watch time) and passion (the engagement level) to considerably increase brand awareness and reach. Brand advertisers can also choose True View which reaches audiences through categorization of demographic, affinity audiences, geography, or topic. There are four types of True View ads: In-stream which are pre-roll, mid-roll, or post-roll ads that can be viewed in its entirety or skippable after five seconds; the next three are called video discovery ads which are ads that are charged only when someone engages with the ad. They can be In-slate ads which are commercial breaks interspersed through the videos that are usually longer than ten minutes, In-search ads which appear in YouTube search results if it is relatable to the search, and In-display ads which appear on the side of the video content (M. Coleman, 2014). In-stream ads are the most popular to viewers and advertisers because it allows the audience to skip (thus keeping the rapport between producers and their audience) and advertisers to save money, since advertisers do not need to pay if the ad is skipped after five seconds. Google, through its algorithms shape some of the conditions which content is produced, favouring more moderated commercialized channels (like beauty and lifestyle) and less smaller and niche-specific channels. Google's acquisition of YouTube, the biggest video search engine, allows ads to be sold against all videos and video searches, sharing the revenue for video advertising with content creators, which spurred the production of higher quality content.

YouTubers share 45% in the earnings through the YouTube Partner Program which lets creators monetize their content through Google AdSense and from YouTube Premium subscribers. And in some cases, YouTubers produce Paid Content which

requires users to pay for a subscription fee to access the content of the channel. With the recent changes to the Partner Program, creators need to attain a total of 4,000 watch hours over twelve months and have at least a thousand subscribers to be considered for the program, instead of the ten thousand lifetime views previously (YouTube, 2018). Creators are paid based on CPM (cost per 1000 impression) which are priced based on the type of ad and the country. Traffic from US, UK, Australia are significantly higher compared to countries in Eastern Europe (Sanchez, 2017)

As a content producer, one must negotiate how the ads appear on the channel, whether through: display ads, overlay ads, skippable video ads, non-skippable video ads, bumper ads, or sponsored cards. This gives the appearance that agency is in the hands of the creator in how they monetize and present themselves to their audience. Yet, producers are at the full discretion of YouTube in the removal of their Google Preferred Status, and the demonetization of videos based on violations of YouTube policy. Producers must curb their content creation to be deemed appropriate and not in violation of the intellectual property of others for monetization. This higher barrier of entry to the Partner Program stresses the channel's ability to make impressions, and the CPM rates incentivize creators to attract certain type of audiences, privileging those residing in countries with higher CPM payback.

A surge of automatic demonetization through YouTube's algorithms happened by looking at the metadata of videos and other factors due to YouTube's new advertising-friendly guidelines in 2012. The parameters of the algorithms were broadened in 2015 as a measure to vet content relating to terrorism, and again in 2017 against violent and extreme content. This involves new systems and technology, tightening policies on

content and monetization, along with ten thousand more employees as human moderators (Wojcicki, 2017). More consideration is given to advertising on YouTube which will enforce stricter criteria, more manual curation, and more human ad reviewers. YouTube is preparing a report to give more transparency around flagged content in part due to the various consequences of YouTube's invisible infrastructures at work for the content creators. YouTube now lets you know which video has been de-monetized and videos can be re-monetized after a review process. This means it was hard to know which videos were demonetized before, and creators are shocked that years' worth of de-monetization has happened at all (Guild, 2016). The list of things that can result in de-monetization of a video is actually quite vague, and frustratingly videos are often erroneously de-monetized which will result in significant lost revenue, especially for viral content and time sensitive subject videos. Lastly, the creators are burdened with the consequences of changing the meta-data of their videos, having to make regular appeals for review (losing views or monetization during the review), and ultimately discouraged from making edgy interesting content. The problem is ongoing demonetization and lack of transparency as creators don't understand why certain videos get demonetized. Despite claims that both advertisers and creators are integral to this "creator economy," it seems YouTube is placing its commercial interest first. The lack of transparency, updates, and changing of algorithms directly affects YouTubers' viewerships. For big content creators whose livelihood is dependent on AdSense, algorithmic changes to search results and video control affect their views drastically and they are left to themselves to figure out what happened to the decline in their views. The lack of work benefits such as paid leave, sick leave, contribution to a retirement fund speaks to the precarious condition of depending

on AdSense. With creators who have more diversified income, they often have more edgy content without the need to censor. While YouTube does share advertising revenue, the propriety nature of YouTube and Google still results in an unequal distribution of power where content creators have little share in the productive resources and decision-making process.

The possibility of monetization and the ability to do what you love as a career through YouTube as a platform, has aggregated beauty lovers from different social networking sites into a beauty community on YouTube. Recalling my earlier discussion of DIY celebrity (Turner, 2015) and the turn towards the ordinary (Gamson 2011), the more accessible the platform is, the more opportunities there are for commercializing amateur content, sometimes elevating the ordinary to the extraordinary. We can say that celebritisation is built into the architecture of YouTube, where online visibility and profitability is based on social media metrics in the form of views, comments, and subscriptions. The process of self-celebritisation has been conceptualized in two competing ways. UGC is seen as voluntary servitude to capital, exploitation, and domination (Beer & Burrows, 2010; Fuchs, 2014; Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010; Terranova, 2000). It is on the other hand framed as a freedom to forge a sense of oneself and individuality beyond the traditional, religious, status or classed criteria (Rojek, 2001). The neoliberal ideology of freedom of choice is echoed by beauty boys who made it on their own, through their own hard work and dedication. From this perspective, the American Dream is possible for everyone with enough sacrifice and hard work. Upward mobility is seen as a choice, making “personal responsibility and privatized risk feel, paradoxically, empowering” (Wilson, 2017). Gutierrez often suggests to others who want

to have a YouTube career doing what they love; just put yourself out there, be consistent and dedicated, then success will follow (Gutierrez, 2018g). He always emphasizes how hard he works for his fans to get to where he is now. The ability of self-assertion and forging of identity is portrayed as a task of work ethics.

Emblematic of YouTube participation, vlog entries are the most prevalent form of UGC on YouTube with roots stemming from webcam culture, personal blogging, and the widespread "confessional culture" (Dovey, 2015; Matthews, 2007) that characterizes television talk shows and reality television focused the happenings of everyday life (Burgess & Green, 2013, p. 67). Focusing on vlogs as a tool of identity construction, Daniel R. Smith (2014; 2016) traces the development of vlogs to eighteen century romanticism in the work of Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self* (1992), where the vlog stands for the expressive self that Taylor dates to the romantic poets. "One becomes a 'self' not through having a stable internalised essence, but rather through the expressive practices that articulate, fortify and 'make manifest' (Taylor 1989, p.374) oneself: 'I express my vision of things in some works of art, perhaps a novel or play' (Taylor 1989, p.374) or a YouTube video" (D. Smith, 2014, p. 258). The self is constructed from not only inward introspection but must be brought to light and manifest itself through articulation and expression in some form of medium. The self becomes a product of our own creation. In this respect, Smith argues, the expressive self should not be about empowerment versus exploitation but rather between the finitude and infinitude in making their 'self' manifest (D. R. Smith, 2016, p. 343). While subjects are under processes of exploitation and unequal empowerments couched in the domain of capital

and neoliberal discourses, vlogs also realize Taylor's philosophy of the self and the ethical obligation to live up to our unique individuality.

Vlogging as a Tool of Identity Formation

From the disciplinary studies of autobiography (Poletti & Rak, 2014) and persona studies (Marshall, 2014), vlogging has also been conceptualized as a contemporary form of autobiography in which individuals engage in a process of documenting their lives, and in doing so construct their identities online (Kennedy, 2016). Echoing Taylor, the process of documenting or communicating the self is identity forming as the process includes writing, filming, and posting, bringing the subject or self into being. Vlogging as identity formation presents identity as much more mutable, chosen not for the sake of ethical obligations to live to one's originality, but more so as an intentional enactment of a version of self as a public persona that is necessary for selfhood. Using the works of Ezra Park and Erving Goffman, Ümit Kennedy describes the construction of identity through vlogging as the performance of a mask. The mask, or persona, is our "truer self, the self we would like to be" (Kennedy, 2016). Beauty boys are in the process of constructing their mask, or their desired persona, realized through self-presentation techniques, vlogging and techniques of transformation discussed in the previous chapter.

The construction of identity through vlogging has usually been analyzed through the metaphor of a mirror (Kavoori, 2011; Kennedy, 2016; Procter, 2014; Raun, 2015). Lesley Proctor argues that in the psychoanalysis work of Jacque Lacan, C.H Cooley's idea of the looking glass self, and Erving Goffman's work on self-presentation suggest a gap between performance and reflection as we experience ourselves and the image in the mirror through "symbols, language, social structures, and situated variables of social

interaction rather than directly" (Procter, 2014). Thus, it would be helpful to think of the image as persona, a projection of self in the case of public presentation.

Anandam Kavoori speaks of the mirror as a genre of "profound investment in the daily production of the self – it requires an enormous amount of time, emotional commitment and personal will" (Kavoori, 2011, p. 140). From a symbolic interaction perspective, Kavoori sees self-production not as solely socially determined but also purposive and creative. Social media platforms offer a continuous process of actualization where the persona exist in an unique medium of the real/virtual space in which they are actualized, while their digital nature allows the persona to be contextually multiple and variously mediated (Kavoori, 2011, p. 140).

Tobias Raun's (2015) research on transgender vlogging on YouTube also adopted the metaphor of the mirror to conceptualize the process of constructing, producing, and exploring the self. Vlogs are likened to mirrors as they allow individuals to try out different identities or personas. "The mirroring function invites the YouTuber to assume the shape of a desired identity/presentation, constantly assuming and evaluating oneself as an attractive image, trying out different styles of the flesh (Butler, 1990, p. 177), poses and appearances" (Raun, 2015, p. 367). Vlogging allows those undergoing the transitioning process a space to self-invent and experiment with the manifestation of new identities. The co-production of identity through vlogging "engenders an on-going process of becoming man/women/trans by inscribing the vlogger in multiple and intersubjective reflections, being visible to themselves and others as an image" (Raun, 2015, p. 365). Unlike Proctor, Raun's use of the mirror analogy isn't a disjunction between image and self, but a process of becoming where the image co-produces a

desirable identity, where the individual embodies their performance, and realizes the self through it.

Vlogging can also be thought of as a literal mirror because recording and uploading a video enables one to look at their own reflection as one records a video (Raun, 2015). Gutierrez had trouble confronting himself as an image during his first few vlogs, commenting on needing to get use to the viewfinder (Gutierrez, 2014d). As time went on, he grew acquainted and comfortable with his recording equipment and the persona/image on camera. To become comfortable, Gutierrez would talk to himself, vogue, be silly, pose, monitoring his own appearance and continuously commenting on his looks revealed in the bloopers he would include at the end of the videos. This style of vlogging involves a flirtatious interaction with the camera. Raun suggests that "the flirtatious and seductive interaction with the camera is self-directed, connected to a (re)discovering of oneself as an attractive image" (Raun, 2015, p. 368). Vlogging allows male beauty vloggers to experiment with their identity performance as a beauty boy and assume the performance we are most satisfied with. The seduction between the camera and self can be a very healthy in generating self-love and spill into one's offline life, embodying the attractive image.

Disjunction between performance and self and self as an object. As Proctor suggested in his metaphor of the mirror, there is a disjunction between the performance in front of the mirror and the image in the mirror itself. The image in the mirror realizes a self that is a "product of their own creation and an object distinct from themselves in its objectification" (D. R. Smith, 2016, p. 343). While Gutierrez affirms his authentic personality, speaking in front of the camera as he would in front of his friends, he also

recognizes the disjunction between Manny MUA and just Manny. In a video opening up about his anxiety and depression, Gutierrez said, “I know it’s very not glamorous and not Manny MUA, but I want you in on Manny as well” (Gutierrez, 2018h). His private-public persona as Manny MUA is a desirable identity whom Manny aspires to be. He envisions Manny MUA as a strong and confident individual that can become a “rock for people to look up to” (Gutierrez, 2015c), a “beacon of hope” (Gutierrez, 2014d) and a “role model” (Gutierrez, 2018h). He is encroached in the narrative of self-betterment because Manny MUA is a role model and a supportive figure for others. Beauty boys are paradoxically vulnerable subjects as men in makeup, constantly straddling the line between being accepted and rejected, residing on the boarder of intelligibility, but they are also empowering and confident role models. The strong, confident, empowering personas appear in the image of beauty boy, and the vulnerability is recused into the shadows, embodied in the self in front of the mirror. Gutierrez and Charles feel the need to apologize for moments of vulnerability in front of the camera because those moments transgress the disjunction of the persona/image, and the embodied performance of self. “I am very much an open book, but usually an open book of positivity, and creativity, and marketing…but it’s not very often that you guys see me being vulnerable. And the truth is I don’t really like being vulnerable” (Charles, 2018d). They want their channel to be a positive space surrounding a strong confident subject at the center.

Experimenting and Exploring the Self through Vlogging

Manny MUA. To To become Manny MUA, as a beauty boy, also requires a process of experimentation and exploring the self. Beauty boys have big personalities and attitudes which are a striking difference from the “Good Girl” discourse we are used to

with previous female beauty vloggers. Gutierrez admits that his extroverted nature and confidence really helped his channel grow, as the biggest thing is just putting yourself out there (Gutierrez, 2014c). Manny MUA utilized the performance of his drag character, Baby Sleepy, inspired by American drag queen and YouTube personality David Noriega's drag character Angel Baby, to help grow his confidence. Gutierrez envisioned his drag queen name as Alisa Edwards and developed the character Sleepy Baby, who is first introduced on his Instagram. Taking the performance style of Angel Baby, he developed his own chola drag character Baby Sleepy.

The chola, a Latino gang girl, as a drag persona was appealing particular for its narrative of toughness and power. Anthropologist Linda Seligmann in her first field research in Peru in 1974, remarked "the forceful, energetic …women known as *cholas*…stood out because they appeared fearless, astute, different, and unpredictable" (Seligmann, 1989, p. 694). Norma Mendoza-Dention (1996) in her ethnographic study of chola in a Californian highschool proposes chola as a form of drag performance for the Latina identity. Chola dictates what good girls are not. Drag uses the tools of feminine gendered performativity to destabilize the hegemonic masculine gender norms, by naming what is feminine and thus policing the boundaries of the heterosexual subject. Chola functions in a similar way, policing the boundaries of the good girl, the feminine girl. Destabilizing gender norms of a good girl, the chola "has a penchant for beating up boys, forming exclusive female societies, and cultivating an appearance that refuses to conform to either Mexican or American notions of what little girls are made of" (Mendoza-Denton, 1996, p. 50).

Gutierrez's performance of the chola was meant to compensate for his more shy and reserved demeanor until he grew more comfortable in front of the camera. As a defensive mechanism, since he was not comfortable with all the judgment on social media, the chola performance helped Gutierrez to channel a strong, willful, aggressive, assertive, and sexualized persona "like I'm a badass fucking bitch like *try me* kind of thing" (Gutierrez, 2017a). This which was very different than the discourse of the Good Girl such as the "big sister" persona of Zoella (Berryman & Kavka, 2017). Female beauty vloggers like BubzBeauty are often characterized as ethical, nice, kind, embodying feel good messages, or what I call the Good Girl discourse. Wengi similarly makes her channel family friendly and is very mindful of languages and cursing. On the other hand, a chola persona inscribes on bodies a specific kind of femininity that destabilized how "good" girls should act, dress, and talk (Mendoza-Denton, 1996, p. 47).

The symbolic unconventional use of makeup to articulate a distinct style of the Mexican diaspora aesthetics in hair and makeup is evident in the use of the eyeliner as member identification of particular political communities. The nature of the eyeliner, especially the length signals toughness and power. Cholas' discourse of makeup sees the eyeliner as a means of transforming into a tough and threatening demeanor. Against the disciplinary practices of makeup as a technology of femininity, Cholas' use of darker foundation to signal ethnic pride regardless of skin colour showcases the ways in which there are ruptures in the disciplinary regime.

Gutierrez's performance of Baby Sleepy focuses on the long black-haired wig, and chola makeup aesthetics. In his "Chola Makeup Tutorial" (Manny Gutierrez, 2015a), he donned the wig, accessories, a whole outfit, and the makeup. When he first started

performing Baby Sleepy on his Instagram, Gutierrez gained a lot of followers, but didn't want to brand himself as "the dude that does the chola character" (Manny Gutierrez, 2015b). Gutierrez didn't want to base his YouTube career on drag performances of Baby Sleepy, but as a beauty influencer. While Gutierrez slowly grew out of his Baby Sleepy performance as he became more comfortable in front of the camera and more established in the beauty community. He still often shifts style between the two personas as Manny MUA, the ordinary dude, and Baby Sleepy in mannerism and way of speaking, often drawing on the lexicon and resources of the chola. "I still do it to this day. I'll be on Instagram talking and then all of the sudden Baby Sleepy will take over" (Gutierrez, 2017a). For me, the defining mannerism and humor of Gutierrez is still reminiscent of his chola voice, though seen less and less. Gutierrez (somewhat problematically) associates the chola's mannerism and way of speaking as more "ghetto" and "ratchet" and associates it with his racialized lower-class beginnings. Gutierrez is seen in a coming-of-age narrative where distancing himself from the chola persona, from his lower-class Latino background, is a transition to a better and more successful life, a relatable role model for his audience.

James Charles. Similarly, Charles also used vlogging as a way to explore possible representation of the self. Before Charles ventured in to the beauty industry, he made his first YouTube channel on June 30, 2013 as more of a comedy channel. The performance in front of the camera was marked by nervousness, insecurity and discomfort. Charles' body language was uncomfortable, not knowing what to do with his arms and hands, while the dialogue and speech seems forced. This changed when he started his second YouTube channel, having had a lot of experience in mastering one's

appearance in front of the camera. Charles in his first video channel enacted a very different persona. “I was not myself. I was making so many jokes trying to in with that quirky Tumblr awkward, relatable teen aesthetic” (Charles, 2018c). Charles spent a lot of time on Tumblr before YouTube which influenced his decision to experiment with the quirky Tumblr aesthetic and admits to the various scripted performance to appear relatable rather than performing his true self. Reacting to his old YouTube channel, Charles was very uncomfortable because he could not identify with that awkward Tumblr teen anymore. Despite the various bodily interventions in the manipulation of technology in the construction of beauty boys, authenticity is maintained in the sense of Taylor’s ethical obligation to live up to one’s originality. Their career as male beauty vlogger seems like a natural destination of following their passions. Despite the various other possible career options, being where they are now is being true to themselves.

Experimenting with the manifestation of new identities is not without its risks, nor is it a free for all space for self-invention as the transformative qualities of makeup would suggest. For the 2018 Beauty Con Los Angeles, Charles transformed himself in full SFX disguise and interviewed different influencers, posing as Steve, a journalist from an online magazine. Charles received a double chin, bushy unkempt shoulder-length hair, a full-grown beard, and thick eyebrows. “I was a very very creepy looking crusted dusted man, asking very very personal questions…I was myself James in a very different body I would say. It was a very very uncomfortable moment for me” (Charles, 2018d).

Figure 6. James Charles in special FX disguise for Beauty Con Los Angeles (Charles, 2018d).

At the end of the day, Charles described as having his first anxiety attack because of people's rude, nasty, and mean reaction to Steve.

> Today was tricky for me because it wasn't me. James Charles is confident. I love myself. I am so happy around my fans and around strangers. I can be bubbly. I can be myself. I am not ashamed of that, and I love who I am. And I can talk to anybody and that's why I do my "strangers do my makeup" videos, because they are so much fun. And I get to travel to new places and meet new people, and also meet you sisters along the way. But for some reason, having to play a different persona, and kind of hide everything that I've worked for over the past few years … was so weird and I could not do it. It was literally like taking my persona of talking fast, using their hands, having their nails on, having their jewelry[3] that

[3] This is referencing a Cartier Love bracelet.

> they've worked hours and hours and hours of sleepless nights for, and being able to wear a full face of makeup, and style their hair really nicely, and have cute clothes, all of the sudden having to throw that all away, to having no body know who I am, what I worked for, and what I stand for, and having to be a totally different person who is literally a polar opposite of myself, I could not do it…I felt genuinely trapped under all that makeup, and all that hair, [and] that beard. And I felt like I was literally becoming Steve, who nobody knew, and a lot of people were treating very very poorly. And it kind of brought me back to how I was feeling in the beginning of the industry. Feeling very unwelcomed, unliked, unwanted…That's kind where the anxiety attack came from, and that's why I needed to get out of that situation, and get the makeup off, and come back as me. (Charles, 2018d)

The persona of "James Charles," the confident and social person that can travel the world is someone "James" has to work on in the affective, social, and economical dimension. His identity as a beauty boy, with the makeup, hair, nail, and an expensive Cartier bracelet are integral to his identity formation. They are symbolic of the profound investment in the daily production of the self (Kavoori, 2011). Charles' testament reveals reputation as an important factor of identity performance, and reputation needs time to build. Steve, on the other hand, is a representation of that which the beauty industry abhors, the "unattractive" and grotesque individual who does not realize that their aesthetics are abhorrent. Charles' persona, like all beauty boys, is constructed against that image. "The feeling, the air, the attitude, the egos, the entitlement from some of the people…you just feel like you are not wanted in a room and that your presence to

somebody else is not taken seriously" (Charles, 2018d). Charles explains that his confidence is derived from the persona as James Charles, a self-brand and a content creator:

> My confident comes from my work which has built my reputation. When I first joined the beauty industry a few years ago I was a boy, of course, and I was also sixteen years old. And so because of that, a lot of people already didn't take me seriously…But there's also a lot of things that I could controlled that ruined my reputation in the industry very very early on. I got involved in a lot of drama. I fought with a lot of very different influencers… and because of that – a lot of influencers of course work very close with brands…I lost on a lot huge brand opportunity. And I also had… a lot of scandals… I just didn't have the best experience coming into the industry, and it's something that I have to deal with and fix those relationship and build back my reputation from hard work... A lot of confidence does come from the fact that I have to fight to get to where I am today. And it feels like a battle I finally won. Whenever you win of course you feel really really powerful and you feel great, and you feel just on top of the world. (Charles, 2018d)

The hair, dress, makeup, and jewelry are symbolic of the hard work Charles put into to building back his reputation, his presence, and acknowledgement from other people; "And not because I needed to feel famous or because I needed the attention, but because I have worked so hard over the past few years to fix myself…fix that reputation and really show people my true colours and show people that I am a good person. And show people that I do have so much love in my heart" (Charles, 2018d). Impression management,

investment in the production of self and reputation is something Charles had to work on through in his introspection, disclosure on social media, support from his fans, and feedback from those that watch him. Charles explains that what he learned from this experience is to stray away from letting his confidence come solely from his work, and dependant on his reputation as James Charles. Because when James Charles falters and becomes Steve, his reputation and confidence derived from his self-branding goes with it too. Taking on the persona as Steve is experimenting with an alterity that doesn't make us, us. While on one hand, the power of transformation through makeup is empowering, but it can also be suffocating when we take on an unattractive persona.

Vlogging as a Tool of Self-Disclosure

Gutierrez treats vlogging as a tool of self-disclosure. "I treat my YouTube as my diary, I really do. That's why I created videos for as long as I have" (Gutierrez, 2018h). Whether in more confessional styles of video or GRWM video, Gutierrez is absorbed in a free flow of talk confronting socio-psychological issues. Raun (2012) argues that shame as a traumatic experience of rejection and humiliations is connected to certain identity formations (p. 176). Vlogging, he argues, becomes an archive of feelings as a way to cope with stigmatization and trauma that is not supported by dominant culture (Raun, 2012, p. 166). While being gay is an aspect of identity that is not always visible, being a beauty boy requires visibility. Suffering from the skin condition vitiligo, is another visible marker of difference that can produce ambivalent feelings about one self. Vitiligo is a skin condition in which the white blood cells attack the melanin in your skin and creates white patches all over the body.

> I haven't had the courage to create this, but I feel like it's time…It feels like it's been me in the closet… when I was like 16 years old and I wanted to get out so bad. And I wanted to talk about things so badly, but I didn't want to because I wasn't confident enough at the time… I feel like it's the weight on my chest and I don't want to hide it anymore… I want to be honest with myself… Today's video is … almost like a diary, like a journal of my experience having vitiligo and how I am coping with it currently… I just want to come clean…I want to get over it… I have it on my hands…on my hips, and on some areas [where] I don't want it at all… It's embarrassing and so psychologically draining…I saw myself naked and I was … so embarrassed. I was like no one's going to love me…because I have these spots. I look like a freak… Through time it's something that I can own and be part of me and being proud of my spots, being proud of being different… But I hope by me making this video if anyone out there has similar ailments or has any other skin condition that they are not happy with or embarrassed by that they can help me with how they cope…Maybe in a way, this is me handling my problem … Me making this video is like a healing thing for me. I needed to make this so that I cannot be scared…I hope that we one day can overcome our insecurities…I want you guys to know that you guys aren't alone if you guys do suffer from something like this… I feel like I can breathe easier now. (Gutierrez, 2016b)

In Gutierrez's self-disclosure, he used the metaphor of coming out of the closet to describe his experience with vitiligo. The "closet" revolves around secrecy and disclosure of an aspect of identity that is not quite visible (Raun, 2012, p. 172). Despite the fact that

the term *coming out* and public discussion of homosexuality existed previously in interactional discourse, Barret Rusty (2017) argues the dominant discourse of the closet at the macro level still "reinforces the "secret" pre-Stonewall homosexual culture, such as the idea that there was virtually no public discourse involving homosexuality in that area" (p. 6). The earlier "closeted" culture still play a significant role in gay political movements whereby being "public" about one's identity is seen as achieving social acceptance (Rusting, 2017, p. 6).

Gutierrez's vitiligo is not visible on camera as his spots are growing in places well hidden. He feels pressure to confess as he is "scared of people finding out" (Gutierrez, 2016b). Especially on social media as a beauty vlogger under the scrutiny of millions of viewers, he doesn't want the inquisitiveness and scrutiny once the vitiligo becomes more visible (Gutierrez, 2016b). This need to confess and to come clean suggests that the secret is dirty and shameful, and a disconnect between the identified self and the materiality of the body. The visible changes of skin are in contention to the corrective discourse that celebrate an unblemished canvas in line with the goals of the cosmetic industry, erased of time, experiences, and impressions. In face of the material changes of the body, Gutierrez has trouble finding his image as attractive as he internalized ideologies of the beauty-industrial complex. Against the beauty boy discourse of the freedom to be who you are, the framing of a smooth, even-toned, and unblemished skin by the beauty industry and corrective makeup as an compulsory ideal makes the uncontrollable discoloration abhorrent. The most unsettling is when one's body changes uncontrollably and unpredictably, met with an un-recognisability of self and others inability to recognize us.

The feeling of shame, fear, and often anger can be compared to Gutierrez's coming out story.

> I was basically a people pleaser child. I always liked making people happy, that was all I cared about when I was younger… Looking back on it, the reason why I was so people pleaser craziest because I always knew something about me was different… I didn't know why I felt different. I don't know why I didn't like to play with the boys at recess, I just liked to play with girls, and why it wasn't really seen as normal for me to play with the girls instead of the boys… And me growing up Mormon, very…sheltered in my household, very much in the church… I was terrified to death of the concept of me liking a boy…Every single night I would pray to please not like boys… and I just wanted to be normal… I would literally try to pray the gay away… [My parents] ask, 'do you want to change? Do you want to become straight?'...I said, 'Yes, I would love to'. I want to be normal. So then, I start going to counseling…this is the anti-gay counseling. I would go every single Monday after school…to try to reverse the effects of being gay…None of my friends knew… And I started to get depressed …and more depressed. (Gutierrez, 2016c)

The repression of needing to feel "normal" and acts of inhibition and secrecy towards family members and friends continued as Gutierrez started to wear makeup.

> On my Instagram I have started in drag…and that became such a confusing time for my mom and my dad. And they were like, 'Are you trying to become a woman?' …They didn't understand what I was doing, and why I thought it was fun and creative just expressing a different form of creativity …I didn't want to

> tell them that I want to play with makeup and working at Sephora because they wouldn't understand. I would jump out my window when I would go to work so they wouldn't see me with makeup on…and then I would have makeup wipes in my car. I would take off my makeup before I went into the house… (Gutierrez, 2018a)

The discourse of shame, secrecy, and inhibition can be seen as a result of the heteronormative matrix of a naturalized and compulsory heterosexuality that requires and produces stable and coherent gendered beings and practices (Butler, 1993) which constitutes everything else as secrets you have to confess (Raun, 2012, p. 172). Feelings of shame can become inevitable for a man wearing makeup in a heteronormative society. Confessing to his parents in his recounting of his coming out story is the effect of the shame and inhibition revolving around sexuality and wearing makeup, but vlogging and self-disclosure to millions of intimate strangers is also a response to such discourses of shame.

Raun argues that the later type of confession runs contrary to the confessional culture in the Foucauldian sense where confession is posed to another who has the power to punish and forgive (Raun, 2012, p. 168). Confessions are submitted to someone of authority, and implies a measurement against the norm, and the confessions to be deviations from that norm (Raun, 2012, p. 168). However, Gutierrez in his vlog confessions, especially in his experience with vitiligo, indulges in a voluntary confessional practice as an effort to overcome shame, guilt and inhibition. Self-speak and self-representation in vlogs are a rejecting of the imperative to confess as deviation from a norm but instead works to better understand the self. Vloggers can get things off

their chest, help them process their experiences, and aid in the process of self-actualization. In another video where Gutierrez is having a hard time with his depression and anxiety, he relates:

> I have just been holding my feelings in for months…and… I just feel like you need to talk about them more or you are going to burst… Talk about your feelings and open up. Be honest with yourself and be honest with others. You will notice so much positivity in your life… I'm sorry if this is triggering in anyway or anything like that, but I just need to do this for myself. (Gutierrez, 2018h)

This account borrows the self-help discourse of American therapy, where personal disclosure and emotional sharing has a therapeutic function. The vloggers can use vlogging as a tool that enables a "invert cathartic release" (Raun, 2012, p. 171) and at the same time vloggers offer support and assistance to the community by sharing their experience and knowledge. As the earlier examples shows, Gutierrez was soliciting advice on how to cope and come to terms with an unwanted skin condition, and always offered advice and support in return by sharing inspirational people, cases, and useful resources. They use their own voices as well as others' comments as therapeutic resources in part of their identity formation. Every exposure of vulnerability is for the purpose of helping others, which in effect also reaffirms one's own identity. Manny started his channel to "help gay men in the cosmetic industry to be who they are" (Gutierrez, 2014d) and his videos goes out

> to all those who feel like they're different. Any aspect of your life that's different or seen as different in society's norms. You will get through it, I promise you. And I know people say that it gets better all the time, but truly time does heal all

> wounds. I want you guys to know that you guys will get through it as well whatever kind of struggles you guys are going through…I will definitely be lurking in the comments down below just to comment back because I do want to definitely be there for you guys (Gutierrez, 2016c)…I've been so lucky to have the platform that I have to talk about these kinds of things and for you guys to be able to reach out to me or give you guys resources (Gutierrez, 2018a)

The feedback function of vlogging allows for the community to share advice on how to cope with difficulties which has a communal, didactic, and therapeutic purpose. Manny recounts that "people sending me emails, and DMs of people saying how my story or who I was, was helping them in a way, or … helping other young men who want to wear makeup or who…basically just want to express themselves" made him see who he really was and started living to make himself happy rather than others (Gutierrez, 2018a). This transition to coming to terms with who he is and becoming happier also changed his relationship with his father, who previously wasn't supportive of the LGBTQ community. Manny Gutierrez Senior thanked all of Gutierrez's followers: "I guess you made it possible for him to get through those tough times. I love all your followers. Everybody that's been there to support you, I give you a big thanks.… You were there at a time when he needed you the most. You were there at a time where I should have been there, but I wasn't" (Gutierrez, 2018a). Gutierrez sharing his story helped himself, and further changed his life by affecting the lives of other. It is a type of self-disclosure that not only works in the way of identity formation but also community building.

Audience and community are important in the process of identity construction and representation. Following Goffman's dramaturgic analysis, the self is formulated through

a collaborative process between the performer and his or her audience (Kennedy, 2016). The manifestation of the self is dependent on the recognition it received from an audience which can take the form of comments, likes, or even just views. Knowing there is an audience out there, willing to watch and respond is identity affirming. Self-representation communicates the desire for connection and community, and having an audience watching the vlog is in itself an act of recognition and encouragement.

The vlog allows beauty boys to gain public visibility that is denied of them in heteronormative public settings and their audiovisual presence is itself a sense of empowerment, motivating others to also claim visibility, and to enable self-construction and self-reflection as a beauty boy. Watching other beauty boys on YouTube can motivate and enable other men to realize their passion and recognize their own narrative as a beauty boy (Gutierrez, 2016d, 2018g). The importance of beauty boy visibility is making a particular future plausible and compelling. Since the proliferations of male beauty vloggers in 2014, a new wave of younger male beauty vlogger, such as Charles and Halbert have taken the scene. #beautyboy, #meninmakeup, #malemua are popular network publics consisting of diverse identity formations outside the constrains of the beauty boy discourse. Male makeup artists or everyday people are more keen to practice makeup on themselves. These representations open the space for creating, communicating, and negotiating cultural and collective stories about masculinity.

Chapter 7: Contingencies: emergence of Beauty Boy

Producing knowledge about men is big money. Where once men remained outside the consumer beauty discourse, today they are hyper-visible in popular culture with considerable attention and resources towards analysing, classifying, measuring and monitoring contemporary masculinities to document shifts in men's values, tastes, aspirations, feelings, beliefs and behaviour. Central to these accounts in the production of new masculine subjects over time: the "Fop," the " Macaroni," the "Flaming heterosexual," the "dandy," the "dude," the "Arrow Men," the "Jazz Age Gatsby buck," the "gangsters", the "new man" and the "new lad," the "Renaissance Man," the "Sensitive New Age Guy," the "metrosexual," and now the "beauty boy" are just some of the different ways to categorize apparently novel ways masculinities have been understood and lived.

The aim of this chapter is to explore various reason for the emergence of beauty boys. In line with Foucauldian genealogy, I argue that the emergence of beauty boys is not the outcome of any singular cause but produced through a variety of conflicting and overlapping contingences. I provide a tentative genealogy in the style of contingency mapping (Kendall & Wickham, 1999) of the cultural discourses surrounding beauty boys that does not claim to be exhaustive. Rather I hope to point to various phenomenon that influence the emergence of this cultural construction that draw on my own analysis. I hope to demonstrate the multiplicity of different influences that produce discourses about beauty boys.

1. Femenism

How does one begin to make sense of beauty and boy without reference to feminism? I

have already written exhaustively about beauty and masculinity above and I wish to re-emphasize some key points here. Since the 1960s, feminism has had an impact on every aspect of social life, challenging power relations through the emancipation of women, the move to legislative equality of sexes, and the death of bread winner ideology. Gender divisions in employment are offset by the increasing participation of women in the workforce and the rise of gay and lesbian sexualities are also seen to undermine patriarchal dominance. At the same time, early feminist critiques of hegemonic masculinity also gave rise to new kinds of masculinity in the feminization of men. Edwards (2006) termed fe*men*ism to describe men's exposure, confrontation, and response to second-wave feminism. Small networks of men's consciousness raising groups and other identity-based organizations, various social movements during the 1970s and 1980, men working in political and academic circles confronting feminists in their work or personal lives have sowed the seek for questioning what it means to be a man and informed the contemporary studies of masculinity (Edwards, 2006, p. 22; Gill, 2003, p. 42). Overall, the feminist movement have challenged traditional masculinity and the idea of a unified male subject (Gill, 2003). The influence of poststructural feminist thinkers led extended critiques of the essentialism of the male's body, binary ways of perceiving gender relations, as well as sex and gender (MacInnes 1998, Petersen 1998, Brittan 1989). Promoting a plurality of masculinities and individualities allowed for the emergence of new discourses on masculinity.

2. The Rise of the Style Press

While men's magazines like *Playboy* and *Esquire* have a longer history dating back to the 1950s and "men's interest" magazines on cars, hobbies, and pornography have an even

longer history, in the 1980s there is a rise of a whole new genre of lifestyle titles. The "style press" was a term applied to three magazines: *The Face*, *1-D*, and *Blitz* that launched in the 1980s which gave rise to the production of new masculine scripts to target the male consumer. These magazines are precisely about men's *lifestyle* as opposed to men's *interest* magazines (Nixon, 1996b, p. 132), magazines about men rather than just for men (Nixon, 1996c, p. 133). One major concern when forming a men's lifestyle magazine is the contradiction in the idea of a magazine that makes public and produces discourses about what it means to be a man, and the norms of masculinity which frame such self-reflection and discussion as unmanly. The case, however, has been made that US men's lifestyle magazines such as *Esquire* and *GQ* have found tremendous success in isolating a specific market of male audience such as the yuppie. Drawn from consumer research and developments within magazine culture, media practitioners, magazine publishing, and advertising saw a shift in young men's values and life-styles (Nixon, 1996c). Both Mort (1996) and Edwards (2006) saw such shifts are purely the outcome of commercial pressures to reconstruct masculinity through consumption for profit, rather than an outcome of sexual politics.

The most famous and successful style press publication, *The Face*, shaped a new market towards innovators and style-conscious young men through promoting style and consumption. These affluent consumers were attractive to advertisers as *The Face* accommodated in format and content a varied range of lifestyle-orientated goods spurred by the production of new products and reframing of old products for male consumption. Nixon (1996c) argued the style press and subsequent UK general interest men's magazine such as *Arena* and *GQ* allowed the entry of style into the vocabulary of men. Style

signified a distinct expression of masculine individuations through dress and appearance. Such emphasis of style was applied to the aesthetic coding of taste, lifestyle, consumption, and representations of male bodies (Nixon, 1996c, p.164). The objectification and erotization of men's bodies, previously reserved for females, signified new visual representations of men's bodies in the media and new politics of looking. The aesthetic expression of masculinity codifying lifestyle, friendship, taste, consumption, appearance, presence, and reputation are especially important in the formation of the beauty boy.

3. Clothing Outlets for Men

The insurgence of men's wear in diploma and degree shows of fashion and arts schools, as well as trade shows focused on men's designer fashion and catwalk collections, testify to a renewed interest in men's wear from buyers and suppliers despite the appearance of shopping being reserved as a feminine activity (Edwards, 2006; Nixon, 1996c). The increase of clothing outlets for men range from high street merchandising, middle range market, and mass market men's wear to target the "new men". By 1980, there is a conglomeration of clothing retail by five high profile designers, controlling high street fashion, leaving the underserviced segment of upmarket, yet affordable middle market in menswear attractive. Most noticeably, Next expanded to menswear in 1984 and differentiated itself in its upmarketness through garment design, attention to detail, and its shop space (Nixon, 1996c). Next created affordable collectables that placed certain items as premium, organized into loose lifestyle collections (Nixon, 1996c, p. 39). Clothes were marketed as aspirational style than signifiers of social locations. Individuals were defined by image and lifestyle than by age or class (Beynon, 2002; Chapman, 1988; Edwards,

2016; Mort, 1996). Thus for beauty boys, more work is invested in the construction of image, partaking in the aspirational style of glamour in hopes of upward mobility.

Nixon (1996) viewed the representation of a number of masculinities as part of the cultural repertoire produced through the logics of flexible segmentations (p. 59). Mort (1988) saw Next as providing a space to try on these identities flexibly without commitment. The images of masculinity at retail sites is imbricated with the construction of visual allure and spectacle that organized ways of looking for consumers. Nixon (1996) drew on the metaphor of the *flâneur* in Benjamin's work to articulate consumer's relationship to the display of commodities and Next's investment in a design-led, segmented mode of retailing as advertisement focused production and materials as indicators of stylishness, exclusivity, and quality. The pleasure of shopping in enjoying spectatorship of goods and of themselves (D. Miller, 1995; Nixon, 1996c) in areas such as Soho in London (Mort, 1996), the overall development of visual culture constructed at the level of retailing, advertising, and marketing (Nixon, 1996), coupled with the development of large themed shopping centers (Gill, 2003, p. 44) speak to the changes of masculinity as increasingly dependent on style, self-presentation and consumption rather than older models of masculinity that are centered on work and production. Increased attention to men's appearances and patterns of exhibitionism and voyeurism, complicates the ways of looking. As Edwards (2006) put it, "masculinity is perceived to be increasingly predicated on matters of how men *look* rather than what men *do*" (p. 97) which for Edwards is understanding masculinity in terms of performativity.

4. Men and the Beauty Industry

Since the gay liberation movement in the late 1960s, magazines aimed at gay men, body building, gay pornography, pin-ups, movie representations, subcultural style within the club scene proliferated, having a profound impact on the representation of masculinity in mainstream advertising (Simpson, 1994). Consumer culture is obsessed with the body, and now increasingly men's bodies. As discussed earlier in the consumption of style, men "are now as much a part of modern consumerism as women. Their construction of a sense of who they are, of their identity as men, is now achieved as much through the style of dress and body care, image, the right 'look', as women's" (Bocock, 1993, p. 102). While men have long relied on fashion and grooming to establish their social positions and relations to others since Ancient Greece, Rome, and Egypt, they have been positioned outside of the discourse of beautification, signifying their consumption as enhancing masculinity rather than distracted from it (Barber, 2016). Still men's grooming and cosmetic options were traditionally limited due to the lack of industrial production.

The global market for male grooming products is now projected to reach 60.7 billion by 2020, according to Euromonitor (Weinswig, 2017). While shaving products and fragrances remains rather stable (Euromonitor International, 2018), it is the area of skin care that is seeing huge growth potential with an increase of 11% (A. Cheng, 2018). Style-conscious men has evolved beyond traditional grooming products, such as razors and deodorants, to anti-aging skincare and even makeup. Men are increasing aware of the ability of skincare to offer targeting solutions that assist common imperfections (Whitehouse, 2017). There is huge potential growth market for men-specific grooming products ranging that spurred major makeup brands creating specific grooming and

image enhancing products for men. More time and more products are utilized by men globally to maintain their personal appearance. Developed nations have all experienced exponential growth in male grooming products and even more so in Brazil, Russia, India, and China. Hall argues that men are now dedicating 83 minutes a day to their personal grooming (Weinswig, 2017).

Reasons for growth have been attributed towards a continuation of the healthy and fitness movements (Sturrock & Pioch, 1998), moves to stay attractive in the marriage market (Firat, 1994), to prevent signs of aging (Sturrock & Pioch, 1998), aggressive marketing by brands (Inkwood Research, 2017), change in gender stereotypes (Kline, 2016), increased engagement with social media (Whitehouse, 2017), and image practices (Sturrock & Pioch, 1998), desire to associate themselves with a lifestyle synonymous with success and well-being (Kline, 2016), growing consumption of luxury barbershops that offer personalized services and pampering (Barber, 2016; Kline, 2016), and an overall pleasure found in grooming and self-care (Sturrock & Pioch, 1998).

Brick-and-mortar is the main distribution channel for men's grooming product globally, and accounts for 81% of total sales in 2015 (Weinswig, 2017). Large multinational companies continue to dominate such as Unilever, Proctor & Gamble, and L'Oréal. While internet retailing accounts for 5% of male grooming product distribution, it is seeing the most rapid growth (Weinswig, 2017). Target and Ulta are seeing a lot of consumer interest in smaller niche branding (A. Cheng, 2018). As such, smaller online brands catered to men's makeup, proponents of MIM discourse are becoming increasingly popular.

Featherstone (2010) stresses the increasing significance of body image and bodily intervention in consumer culture posit an instrumental approach to the body, presuming the body as always/already failing, decaying, and deteriorating found in the corrective discourse. Miller (2005) concludes that men's consumption practices and attention to appearance was brought about by the changing political and economic shift in the labour market. The birth of a corporate white-collar work culture and increase of the service industry means an increase scrutinization of workers' appearances (Barber, 2016). Out of popular physiognomic assumptions that the body and face is the reflection of the self (Featherstone, 2010, p. 195), Miller argues that middle aged men are heavily invested in grooming to avoid hitting the silver ceiling where the effects of aging give off the perception of being "less successful, intelligent, and athletic," hampering career advancement (T. Miller, 2005, p. 113). In a Mintel study released in June 2018, a survey of a thousand male adult users of personal care products show that men ages 35-44, especially dads, will drive the overall grooming market since they have more purchasing power (A. Cheng, 2018). Seventy percent of them uses sun protection and 84% uses facial skincare to prevent the signs of ageing (A. Cheng, 2018).

Featherstone (2010) argues that the central theme of consumer culture is transformation, where the new image and self is seen as having access to better quality of life (p. 197), in other words engaging in a kind of body work on the physical body, the inner body, the psychic body, the affective body, and now more so in the contemporary era, the digital body. Such preoccupation with the body in relation to accessing new experiences and sensations is also seen in our fascination with celebrity culture where ordinary people are cultivating similar celebrity strategies of branding in hopes to venture

in upward mobility. Makeover culture in the form of reality television such as *Extreme Makeover (2002), Queer Eye for The Straight Guy* (2003), *The Swan* (2004) are some of the ways in which consumer solutions are offered as a way to access a better more beautiful you.

5. RuPaul's Drag Race

While drag has been featured in popular culture for decades, nothing has hit critical mass like *RuPaul's Drag Race* (RPDR). In 2009, RPDR launched through LogoTV, a Viacom-owned cable outlet for LGBTQ audience, before switching to Logo's sister programing network VH1 to accommodate the wider audience and interest. Based on reality TV show *America's Next Top Model*, RPDR aims to "celebrate the art of drag" (D'Addario, 2017). Each week, fourteen drag queens compete in competition-based challenges in front of well-known judges, until one remains the winner, taking home the title of "America's next drag super star" and a $100,000 cash prize. Produced by World of Wonder, RPDR generated spin offs such as *Untucked All Stars; Drag U; The Snatch Game,* and into the realms of real life such as Werk the World tour and DragCon in 2015. DragCon now happens twice a year in New York and Los Angeles, selling over eight million worth of merchandise including a forty-dollar entrance fee to its 100,000 attendees in 2017 (Im, 2017).

New York Times has heralded this as the Golden era of Drag (Oliver, 2018) or a "drag renaissance" (Lett, 2018) due to the infiltration of drag representation in mainstream culture. The heart of the show is structured around the theme of transformation, of a man into a queen, of dressing room into a stage, of cloth into costumes. RuPaul refer to drag queens as "shape-shifters" (Wortham, 2018), challenging

the fixity of identity and pointing towards the performative nature of gender and its capacity for reconstruction. “We queens take on identity, and it is always a social statement […] We never believe this is who we are. That is why drag is a revolution, because we’re mocking identity. We’re mocking everyone” (Wortham, 2018). The resistance of drag is about refusing to compromise one’s identity, “conforming or having to choose one identity and sticking with it” (Aitkenhead, 2018). Reminiscent of Star’s refusal of categorization or more so a refusal to compromise one’s identity, RuPaul similarly feels he is beyond categorization, a sort of identity anarchy. “He’s black but he’s not; he’s gay but he’s not” (Wortham, 2018).

Central to RuPaul’s assertion of drag is the discourse of irreverence, with its foundation in camp (Brennan & Gudelunas, 2017), something he gleamed from Monty Python’s Flying Circus of not taking anything too seriously and having fun (Brumfitt, 2015). Yet, camp’s potential for subversion seen perhaps in RuPaul’s earlier career in genderfuck is left behind for glamazon as he became more mainstream, perpetuating a certain type of visibility just like how glamourous makeup aesthetics became normative for beauty boys. RPDR eschews and mocks political correctness and engage in a “sort of word play and free-associative identity play” in order to enjoy “the anarchy of reinvention, co-opting and bending language beyond recognition” after fighting for so hard for visibility (D’Addario, 2017). The current generation however, seems to be defined by naming, and by sharpening categories as a means to demand inclusion and recognition. The emphasis on identity categories and using them to gain recognition in today’s political climate is in contention with the politics of irrelevance.

For drag artists, the point is performance and entertainment, the crafting of a persona for an audience that allows for the freedom to expression and the ability to actively choose how they see themselves in the world, as well as the performative nature of Reality TV itself. The sensibility of shape-shifting and being glamorous in order to arrive at a more confident self is a reminder that “the power you feel in drag is available to you 24/7” (Wortham, 2018) especially in lived realities of bigotry, disenfranchisement, and discrimination. The spirit of drag and what I have argued as the ethos of beauty boy in the MAG discourse can be described as a form of irreverence, such as viewing makeup as a form of performance, transformation, artistry, having fun and not taking anything too seriously. The spirit of drag and the freedom in offers in RPDR and echoed in beauty boys, reflects a kind of identity politics in an era fixated on visibility, attention, and fame. The identity performance of everyday and the crafting of persona as the negotiation of our lived experience are instilled in RuPaul’s most famous quote, “You’re born naked, the rest is drag” (Wortham, 2018):

RuPaul acknowledge the power dynamics of being a man in a male-dominated culture, “where masculinity is a currency that is valued more than gold. For men to do anything with femininity, to use femininity as a palette, it’s basically an act of treason in our culture” (Wortham, 2018). Still, this is predicated on the idea that femininity is malleable. Halberstam notes that there isn’t an interest for a RuPaul’s Drag King. Drag kinging is “equally raucous and raunchy, with lip-syncing and costume competitions” but “masculinity is a protected domain of real power and privilege. It is not transferable or attainable. The public has no appetite for artificial masculinity” (Wortham, 2018). Similarly, the lack of a counterpart for beauty boys such as women beauty vloggers

engaging in gender play with masculinity speaks volumes to the protected status of masculinity in heteropatriarchy.

6. Multicultural Beauty

Market research firm Euromonitor International (2016) produced a key document, "Multicultural beauty: Benefiting from diversity" that called the next wave of growth emerging from non-Caucasian consumers adopting multicultural beauty strategies due to the impact of the dollar value sales of non-Caucasian consumers. Urbanisation in countries of the Middle East, Asia Pacific, and Africa means a change of lifestyle that focuses more on grooming, making non-Caucasian markets among the top purchasers. The top ten projected beauty markets in 2020 are USA, China, Brazil, Japan, India, UK, Venezuela, Germany, Argentina, and France (The Nielson Company, 2015). Along with the flow of tourism and higher income power, the push for diversity realized in targeted marketing strategies to ethnic and cultural backgrounds is an economic incentive.

Rihanna's makeup line, Fenty Beauty, launched in September 2017 had been a wild success most notably for offering a range of forty shades in foundation. With an emphasis on inclusivity and an ad campaign featuring a diversity of models, Fenty Beauty has been named one of *TIME*'s "25 Best Inventions of 2017 (Lang, 2017). In an industry where makeup is predominantly catered to whiter complexions, people of darker skin have trouble finding a shade that matches, often resorting to spending more money and time as a result of being constantly excluded.

The problem with darker skin foundation isn't simply darkening a shade of a formula created for lighter skin. Chemist Balanda Atis, manager of L'Oreal's Global Women of Colour Lab realized the unsatisfactory pigmentation of this method, which

often created colours too red or too black (VOA, 2016). It seems darker skin colour is often equated with blacker pigmentation in the creation process which perpetuates a monolithic dark skin. To understanding the colours that make up the skin, L'Oréal's lab deploys a camera that uses a numbering system to identity the various pigmentation on the skin. Having documented twenty thousand skin pigmentations across U.S and South Africa, the lab came to the discovering that skin doesn't go blacker for darker-skinned people but deeper (L'Oreal Paris USA, 2017). And it's this mystery of "deeper" instead of simply "blacker" that allowed the brand to develop a pigmentation that is close to the colour of the skin. Darker skin also exists in a spectrum of various undertones that is just not factored in when products have limited options for the darker skinned. The time and resources needed for a company to devote to research and development makes the process of creating more inclusive products slow. The absence of a good foundation for darker complexions reflects a cultural aversion to invest in the creation of products for darker complexion consumers, despite the market demand. Nevertheless, the obvious untapped potential of the market has spurred various makeup brands to come out to increase their shade range. Tarte, Makeup Forever, Kat Von D, Bare Minerals, Lançome, Revlon, Estee Lauder, and L'Oreal have all expanded their range of colours.

Fenty Beauty isn't the first makeup line to position itself as an inclusive beauty line for all skin tones. L'Oreal have made some major moves to present itself as an inclusive brand. For the promotion of the brand's True Match foundation, L'Oreal has changed its tagline from "Because you're worth it" to "We are all worth it" in the campaign #YoursTruly to celebrate diversity. The campaign includes 23 individuals starring celebrities and influencers, each representing one of the 23 shades. One of which

is makeup artist and beauty blogger Gary Thomspon.

During the 2017 Golden Glober, L'Oreal debuted a new True Match foundation campaign called, "Your skin, Your story", starring actress and transgender activists Hari Nef. With an increase to 33 shades, True match features a variety of people each of whom talk about their unique heritage and skin story. L'Oreal USA has formed the Multi-Cultural Beauty division to fulfill the call for diversity and inclusion of multicultural beauty consumers and produced: Dark & Lovely, Optimum Salon Haircare, SoftSheen-Carso Professional, Magic Shave, and Carol's daughter brands. The discourse of multicultural beauty is pushing international beauty leaders to create campaigns with claims of equality and diversity.

This move in global beauty industry emerges from the rise in emphasis in diversity in beauty due to the increase purchasing power of ethnic groups, creating marketing strategies as brand awareness towards a more inclusive beauty industry. Multicultural consumers are characterized as millennials who are socially conscious, tech savvy, trendsetters and tastemakers (in other words influencers) across a broad range category especially beauty products (The Nielson Company, 2015). As empowered cultural-driven consumers who value inclusivity and diversity, they are also ripe to establish long time brand loyalty. In terms of market strategy, it involves in developing targeted lines and marketing strategies for consumers of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

7. Dove Campaign for Real Beauty

In October 2006, the release of the promotional video "Evolution" for Dove showcasing an "ordinary" woman undergoing elaborate technological transformation to become

billboard ready model is intended to ignite “social change and act as a catalyst for widening the definition and discussion of beauty” (Banet-Weiser, 2012b, p. 39). Much research has been done on Dove’s Campaign for Real Beauty (CFRB) as a proponent of the LYB discourse and its subsequent Self-Esteem Fund. Dove’s CFRB is an example of the success of using commodity activism as a branding strategy, allowing consumers to act politically through consumer behavior, and establishing brand loyalty to Dove products. In this case, Dove’s CFRB’s challenge to the dominant ideology of beauty produced by media is merged with consumer behavior.

Dove’s CFRB aligns itself with feminist objectives to empower woman in cultivating healthy self-esteem. Feminism is presented as a trend and commodity (Favaro, 2017, p. 295). Garnering partnerships and support from nonprofit organizations and female-focused groups helped spread this easily digestible populist feminism into communities (Murray, 2013), while Unilever continued to produce products like Slimfast and Axe alongside Dove. Companies like Unilever involved in promoting LYB discourse are the ones that are also involved spearheading women’s insecurities in order to sell their products (Favaro, 2017; Lynch, 2011; Murphy & Jackson, 2011). Essentially, companies are ironically selling the very products that produce hegemonic beauty discourse. Similarly, Coty in the #lashequality campaign hopes to dispel the notion that makeup is only for woman, nevertheless is comprised of one of the most male centric executive teams.

Such contemporary forms of commodity activism can be seen in Starbucks coffee and fair trade, Product RED Gap T-shirt and fighting AIDS in Africa, and MAC Cosmetics Viva Glam and providing support for HIV/AIDS. Political action is framed as

a competitive edge in a consumer landscape. While commodity activism did not arise from a neoliberal economy, its current relationship to neoliberal capitalism reflects a particular "kind of 'brand strategy' in its production of goods, services, and resources that manages, contains, and actually designs identities, differences, and diversity as particular kinds of brands" (Banet-Weiser, 2012b, p. 42).

CoverGirl's move to sign Charles as an ambassador for the new mascara can also be seen as a conceptual apparatus of neoliberal capitalism. As moves to destabilize the traditional notions of gender has been traditional understood as development of political and cultural identity outside of consumer culture, the success of Dove's CFRB makes clear that social activism has become an important element of the market, which has the effects of restricting and managing of identities and social relations for the sake of the capital.

As contemporary brand culture is increasingly supported by interactive, networked media technologies, and an increase participation by consumers, the move for influencer marketing to build long-term brand loyalty has been on the rise as an in between of mass consumption and niche marketing. The use of social change rhetoric as part of promotional culture not only represent individualized acts of self-promotion of community building; rather it makes a remark on the larger historical shifts within contemporary culture (Banet-Weiser, 2012b, pp. 44–45) in the process of creating monetary value out of knowledge/culture/affect.

8. Cultural Intermediaries

The emergence of beauty boys can be in part due to the rise of culture intermediaries that are "devoted to discovering, measuring, interpreting and mediating a nexus of

psychological and cultural question about who we are, how we live and what we want" (Gill, Henwood, & McLean, 2003). As the ideas of influence and visibility become economic value, the attention economy function on immaterial labour that construct our identities and sociality. Social media intensifies self-branding strategies as public presentation of the self and engages in the production and aggregation of information to sell as metadata to companies such as Sysomos, Radian6 or Bazaarvoice (Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2015). Users are subjected to control by proprietary algorithms and protocols that work to comprise virtual categories of identity for behavioral understandings to effectively target advertisements, content, and services based on our algorithmic identities (Cheney-Lippold, 2011). The management, measurement, and optimization of our sociality becomes a profitable area. Agencies like Klout, Kred, Peerindex have been aggregating and processing data to measure the value of micro-celebrities by monitoring user's online presence, engagement and interacting through the company's proprietary metrics (Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2015). While visibility and attention might seem to provide conditions of possibility, producing value from visibility and attention can give rise to fame, valorization of attention in the form of economic capital is still in part dependent on these cultural intermediaries (Gill et al., 2003).

Previously DIY celebrities have been studied through the discourse of authenticity and the ordinary persona, presented as being outside traditional media production. But as recent scandals on YouTube's beauty community reveal, there is a constellation of cultural intermediaries at work in a similar fashion as traditional celebrity, challenging performances of authenticity. The rise of influencers as an industry and its viability as a career are in part due to the increase of UGC, the ability for creators to monetize their

videos, successful influencer narratives, and conferences and workshops. Influencers are found in the midst of talent agencies, MCNs, public relation specialists, personal assistants, gym trainers, managers, video editors, video production teams, grooming specialists, and dentists just to name a few.

Throughout my research on beauty boys I have touched upon several key documents such as Euro RSCG reports on metrosexuality, Marie Claire's article on beauty boys, Euromonitor's report on multicultural beauty, and other marketing research companies especially engaged in producing reports about men's grooming behavior, all producing information of commercial value to their clients. As we have seen in the sample size of a thousand participants in Mintel's research on men's grooming consumptions, and an unknown sample size of J. Walter Thompson Intelligence report on Generation Z's attitude towards gender and sexuality, these findings of unknown methodology (unless paid for) are re-produced through media outlets as evidence for new changes in society.

When Charles was first announced to the public as a CoverGirl ambassador, news outlets, smaller blogs and online publications picked up the story and reinforced a rather homogenous discourse of CoverGirl's push for diversity. Detailed commentary and pieces emerged later to discuss the moment of men in makeup in the fashion of the "media echo chamber" (Faludi, 2009). These discourses produce observations on contemporary masculinity as truths. As such, my own position as a researcher, while trying to trace the discursive formations and power relations is also implicated in the production of discourse, using these materials as reasons for further research and analysis.

> Journalists, researchers, think tanks, marketing people, futurologists or trend spotters, and even academics, increasingly generate knowledge and discourses that come to produce – or at least become part of -- the phenomenon that they are trying to explain. This can be seen very clearly in relation to contemporary debates about masculinity. (Gill et al., 2003)

During this time, retailing companies have implemented changes such as store layouts, attracting smaller brands catered to men, tailoring products to these truth productions. The production of knowledge is not just describing and representing the world but actively producing it.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

My work on beauty boys has been centering around the theme of transformation: the transformation of an ordinary persona to a celebrity through microcelebrity practices, the transformation of the physical and digital body through glamour labour, the aesthetic transformation of beauty boys in four makeup registers, identity exploration and transformation through the practices of vlogging. Featherstone argues that transformation is central to consumer culture and has a long history in Western modernity. He cited the cultural notion of America as the land of opportunity, the self-help tradition, and themes of transformation in early Christianity which propel our obsessive quest for self-invention. Consumer culture of the 20th Century's focuses on transformation, stylized appearance, new experiences and sensation merged with Hollywood in the fascination with the star image. The spread of celebrity value coincides with larger political and economic changes, spurring the adoption of self-branding and performance strategies by business people, politicians, fashion models and sports stars alike. In addition, the cultivation of ordinary people as celebrities through similar strategies of presentation have come to the forefront to media audiences in the format of Reality TV and social media networking platforms.

The transformation of appearance, lifestyles, and attitudes of ordinary people has become a cultural interest in the many makeover reality TV productions. In the form of commodity activism, consumer culture adopts a populist notion of feminism in promoting the empowerment of woman, healthy body image, self-love, and confidence. The intensification and extensification in the cultivation of appearance is highly gendered, with a scrutinizing gaze on women's bodies and psychic life. Yet, it can be argued that

men's bodies and subjectivities are slowly drawn into consumer culture, spurring the production of men's lifestyle magazine, clothing outlets for men, and a growing consumption of grooming products. While Simpson categorization of metrosexuality has been adopted into popular discourse as a new phenomenon of masculinity being rooted in consumption and vanity, Osberby's work reminds us that men's interest in fashion and beauty is not a new phenomenon. Kristen Barber (2016) in her detail of men's grooming history also informed various strategies of corporate culture to sell men's beauty products as a way to maintain men's heterosexual identities despite this consumer behaviour, reproducing power through seemingly subversive activities, often at the expense of objectifying women in magazines. While the start of the beauty industry begins with woman concocting creams and lotion in kitchens, and the force of immigrant women and women of colour entrepreneurs who framed beauty practices as a signifier of wealth and status, men with education, social networks, and financial means ultimately commercialized beauty through mass production and produced the market-driven beauty industry we know today (Barber, 2016). Women as consumers and the majority of the beauty service workforce conceal the concentrated ownership of men as owners and managers.

The growing male "grooming" industry rather than "beauty" industry evidence the ways men engage in the labours of beauty to carve out social identities and access social rewards. In viewing the body as the access to identity, the discourse of transformation is predicated is some ways of a flawed/failing body unable to express the true self, though this true self is often normalized according beauty norms. In my case studies of Gutierrez and Charles, I showcase the danger of such discourse of

transformation when the body ventures into a grotesque body that readily hovers over the beautiful. Thus, body interventions are linked to our psychic inner body of producing a more confident self as seen in the corrective makeup discourse. Such view of the body convey that bodies can be upgraded, improved, and optimized. On the other hand, the pliability of the body speaks to its level of indeterminacy, instability, and erasure of any pre-defined entity. As seen in the glamourous, drag, and creative discourses, bodies a seen as sites for identity expression. Such bodies try to erase the lived inscriptions marked by time and experiences, for a blank, unmarked, and unblemished surface ready for inscription. The body is at once coherent and whole, and at once open and rearranged. The implications of race and ability in the states of transformation should be drawn out in further research.

Bodily interventions in the contemporary age framed in the theory of glamour labour showcase the various sites of management, especially that of our digital reputation, sociality, and lifestyle. Digital, biological, and machinic actors come to implicate our embodiment, bodily affectivity, and identity formation. Vlogging is another example in which machine and human co-produce the process of constructing, producing, and exploring the self. In a network culture, the ethos of transformation offers a template for others to recognize their own narrative as one of empowerment. Beauty boys emerge as a story of transformation, from ordinary to celebrity and wealth, to becoming culturally valorized and rewarded masculinities of the select few. Yet, the lived vulnerabilities of beauty boys belie the dominant discourse of destabilizing traditional gender roles or offer ways to reimagine this social cause outside the constrains of corporatization and commercialization.

In the intensification and multiplication of knowledge about men, a specific kind of representational practice has emerged for depicting our physical, digital, and affective body. Beauty boys, I argued, are distinct from the metrosexual despite obvious similarities of engaging in traditionally feminine practice of putting on makeup, instead they are drawn from the discourse of transformation in drag culture. This new phenomenon in its cultural and historical specificity in which the male body is understood, used, presented, and co-produced with technology as a site of identity formation and transformation, which in turn guides viewers on how to deploy the same kind of labour on their own bodies. Men's bodies have previous been "coded in ways that give permission for it to be looked at and desired" (Gill et al., 2003). This desire for visibility within contemporary neoliberal culture, driven by aspirations for social and economic capital have coded, quantified, and systematized practices of looking, engaging, and interacting. Beauty boys are as much about masculinity as they are about the wider political economy marked by promotional capitalism and the attention economy.

As such, they reflect the power relation of gender and race within a larger political economy and the ways capitalism drives gender identity. As beauty boys depend on the structures of the YouTube platform and the attention economy for self-actualization, the viability of their identity becomes dependent on the success in the marketplace. Beauty boys can comfortably wipe off the makeup at the end of the day and return to a confident boy, because wealth, power, and status still affirms their masculinity, and any gender play with masculinity is protected by the wider heteropatriarchal culture.

Beauty boys are part of a sixty-billion-dollar industry through the production of a certain form of queer aesthetic, that of glamourous makeup which still maintains a version of beauty grounded in whiteness. Their queering identities is subsumed as corporate identity in the form of neoliberal queerness, a queering of gender without the queering of politics. While beauty boys seek to challenged traditional gender roles, the question of gender relation and their homonormative position as white, young, middle-class, English speaking, gay men overshadow the various other queer identities and people of colour as the agent of change. While beauty boys celebrate the notions of empowerment, positive attitude, and playful subversion, they also cut off the root of often political feelings such as the anger and frustration towards inequality. By presenting solutions to socio-political issues as within consumers themselves dissolves any differences of class, race, and its potential. Hence, we do not question the broader socio-cultural context and its institutional underpinnings of patriarch capitalism. This universal standardized solution of makeup as gender play is applied to us all with individuating consequences, including painting both the problem and the solution as a personal responsibility found within our bodies that erases histories of struggles.

While I touch upon the issues of race, age, and class as material limitations of the body, as perpetuated by glamour labour, as rendered invisible, my work is limited in it engagement with the intersectionality of race, decolonize and transnationalize beauty studies. I excluded male beauty influencers from other regions such as in Korea, China, and Japan due to the scope of this paper, but they can be trajectories for further research. For example, we see in Korea the aesthetics of “flower boys” from the influence of Korean popular culture that espouses similar notions of destabilizing gender binary. And

in Japan, we see the rise of genderless subculture “jendaresu-kei” in the Harajuku district. These genderless styles which have very diverse aesthetics, are sprouting similar discourses of gender fluidity, and renouncement of rigid gender binaries. As such, the configuration beauty boys as a form of microcelebrity and commodity activism centered on themes of transformation through glamour labour is very much a Westernized phenomenon, born out of a specific socio-political culture.

My paper can only afford two case studies, and could benefit from more focus on more radical and racialized beauty boys such as Patrick Star and Jeffrey Star, or transgender beauty vlogger Nikita Dragun. And benefit even more so from attention to male micro-influencers, or beauty boys from sub-groups of the beauty community such as the Spanish, Korean, or Chinese communities which are quickly growing traction. As I mainly focused on beauty boys on YouTube, I shifted attention away from the many smaller beauty boys on Instagram that have a much more diverse profile and aesthetics, which one can divulge from a simple #beautyboy search. There is much more work to be done before any outcry of genderless makeup.

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