FILLERS ARE A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND

How do Hollywood Beauty Archetypes Impact Women's Self-esteem and Identity Formation? (Cross-Generational Focus of Generation X and Generation Z)

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Introduction

Hollywood continues to enforce damaging beauty standards on young women across the world. The phenomenon of 'Beauty Archetypes' from the Hollywood film industry has consumed the minds of youths in a constant battle to achieve utterly unattainable body image and beauty standards. Throughout my Personal Interest Project, I will investigate; *How Hollywood beauty archetypes impact women's self-esteem and identity formation.* The global phenomenon of 'Beauty Archetypes' refers to the idealised standard of beauty that is globally recognised and promoted. The choice to study Hollywood stems from recognising the highly problematic nature of Hollywood and the media, which is often masked behind all the cameras and glamour. The topic of how Hollywood beauty archetypes impact women's self-esteem and identity formation contributes to a better understanding of Society and Culture by developing the understanding of how the consumption and representations of women in the public eye can impact the behaviours and attitudes of young female adolescents.

Throughout the PIP, I will explore a cross-generational study. The impact of Hollywood on Generation X (born 1965-1980) compared to Generation Z (born 1990-2012) will reveal the continuities of beauty expectations throughout time, whilst also conflicting the changes apparent across generations at a micro and meso level. Concepts such as consumption/commodification, mythology, gender and identity will be explored throughout the project. Through understanding Karl Marx's 'Conflict Theory', I was better able to comprehend Hollywood's hierarchical notion of power, and its influence on society and problems it has created. Furthermore, Chapter 1: *The Marilyn Effect: The Creation of an 'Expected' Standard of Beauty*, will explore the continuing influence of Marilyn Monroe in Hollywood and beauty expectations and trends. Finally, Chapter 2: *Is Hollywood and Its Impossible Standard the Key Driver of Body Dysmorphia in Young Women? Is There a Better Option?* Will delve into the dangerous impact of Hollywood on young women, discussing the substantial measures that have been curated for female adolescents to fit the ideal.

I have incorporated the use of both primary and secondary research to synthesise my findings in my PIP. The primary research method of a questionnaire allowed me to gather both

qualitative and quantitative data on the topic of Hollywood and beauty standards, which further revealed cross-generational opinions and experiences with the topic. The second primary research method I used was personal reflection, allowing the assessment of my own experiences and moral principles to show data analysis and interpretation within the framework of my research topic. My final primary research method was a content analysis. I watched and analysed 5 Marilyn Monroe movies which included *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes, How to Marry a Millionaire, Some Like It Hot, Let's Make Love and The Seven Year Itch.* To support my primary research, secondary research was also conducted to help explore the topic of Hollywood beauty archetypes.

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From the beginning of my PIP journey, I had a clear indication of the direction of my research topic. It was important for me to acknowledge my identity as a feminist, as well as my profound interest in Hollywood and media. As a teenage girl in society, this topic is significantly important to me. Like myself and many other young women, I have grown up idolising what I see on the screen in a battle to meet beauty standards set by Hollywood. From the start of my research process, I knew I wanted to explore the 'Beauty Archetype' phenomenon, and the impact the notion has on the identity formation of young women and its consequences on the individual's self-perception. This, in conjunction with my personal outrage regarding the sexualisation of women and double standards in the Hollywood industry ultimately drove me in the direction of my final hypothesis: *How do Hollywood Beauty Archetypes Impact Women's Self-esteem and Identity Formation?*

Through conducting thoughtful secondary research on the topic of Hollywood and beauty expectations, in which I found it curates a market for young women. Alongside secondary research, I conducted 3 primary research methods to direct the research for my hypothesis. My primary research methodologies include a Questionnaire, Content Analysis and Personal Reflection. The use of a Questionnaire gave me valuable qualitative information from different perspectives, including a cross-generational comparison between Generation X and Generation Z as well as quantitative data. Although the use of the questionnaire was valuable, it was important to recognise challenges and biases within the method, as the majority of the participants were female. With a feminist topic researching the impacts on women, I found I was limited in perspectives from the male gaze. The use of a Content Analysis allowed me to closely study 5 Marilyn Monroe films: *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes, How to Marry a Millionaire, Some Like It Hot, Let's Make Love* and *The Seven Year Itch.* The method provided me with an insight into how male validation contributes to body expectations through the Hollywood icon, Marilyn Monroe. My final primary research method used in the PIP was a Personal Reflection. Personal Reflection allowed me to recognise my personal connection with the topic of beauty standards and my experience with conforming to society's standards manifested from Hollywood as a young woman in society. Whilst I was set on a

topic for my PIP, it is crucial to take note that my research process was not always smooth. I found myself struggling with time management and sticking to my timelines.

The PIP process has been a highly valuable experience. The journey allowed me to further my own ethical research skills and progress in my social and cultural literacy skills by recognising the highly flawed nature towards women in Hollywood and the importance of having diversity in the media.

Chapter 1

The Marilyn Effect: The Creation of an 'Expected' Standard of Beauty

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The golden age of Hollywood was a period of glamour and beauty, which through film and media, society watched as the spotlight shone on the iconic actress; Marilyn Monroe, and the pedestal in which she was placed. The 'Marilyn Effect' paved the way for Hollywood beauty archetypes, and what it means to be considered 'beautiful' in the male gaze and societal expectations.

Beauty standards are not a new theme in society, and expectations have always been an ongoing issue, specifically prevalent for female adolescents. Beauty standards determine what we consider 'beautiful', from the shape of the body, weight, facial features, height and more.[1] The 'Marilyn Effect' left a permanent mark on old Hollywood in the 1950s and women's perception of beauty across the world. The American actress and model became the world's most infamous 'sex symbol' for her seductive, dumb, blonde bombshell persona, beauty and curvaceous figure. Ultimately becoming one of the most praised influential beauty archetypes in Old Hollywood history. Marilyn Monroe became a key social influence in shaping beauty standards whilst defining confidence and femininity. The Marilyn effect left young women idolising what they saw on the silver screen, finding themselves trying to conform to the new beauty standards of an hourglass figure, platinum blonde hair, and her signature red lip. It wasn't just women idolising Monroe, but men fed into this obsession with the actress. Marilyn's 'damsel in distress' and submissive persona were praised by the male gaze, as the fascination of her sensuality yet innocence left men fixated on the cultural icon, shaping what they considered desirable. Through primary research, I conducted a questionnaire in which I asked "When the topic of "sex symbols" is brought forth, what Hollywood star/icon comes to mind first?".[2] It was no surprise when over 50% of the respondents answered 'Marilyn Monroe', from both Generation X and Generation Z. Marilyn Monroe's lasting impact on society is transparent, as the beauty archetype challenged the current beauty standard of the 1950's to 1960's, as she embraced natural curves in spite of

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[1] Povey, K (*Manifolds.org 2021*)
<https://uw.manifoldapp.org/read/beauty-standards/section/cff23c1e-aced-4e24-b14e-25a2728170d3> (accessed 21 June 2024.)
[2] Primary research: Questionnaire 4

society's obsession with 'thinness'. Marilyn Monroes captivated Hollywood, creating a new genre of 'beauty' that we still see prevalent in society and Hollywood films today.

Unrealistic representations of women through film and media can skew one's own perception of their own beauty and self-identity. Through conducting a cross-generational questionnaire, insight was gained into the beauty standards and expectations that Generation X experienced growing up. The general trend in Generation X responses suggested that this generation feels pressure to conform to standards from previous generations. In terms of ideals and beauty standards, a responder shared that she experienced, *"An expectation & desire to be thin/thinner; Trends such as thin eyebrows; Hair removal (leg, underarm, bikini) from young teen years".* [3] Similar themes were exposed in an exploration of films from the 'Marilyn Monroe' era of Hollywood[4] and through personal reflections on the troubling trends of history e.g. …[5] This phenomenon of being thin, yet still having a curvaceous figure is influenced by the Hollywood archetype, Marlylin Monroe. Through conducting a questionnaire, perspectives were gained on whether or not they believe that the representation of women in film and Hollywood has changed over time. A Generation X participant shared his judgement, "*Yes, it's good to see more women depicted as heroic rather than being the "damsel in distress" waiting for a man to save the day."*[6] This theme of female characters in Hollywood films being naive and incompetent to save themselves without the help of a strong man can be closely tied back to Marilyn Monroe's films. Through a content analysis, this theme of the depiction of women is evident in her films 'Some Like It Hot' and 'Gentlemen Prefer Blondes'[7] Although this common theme can be seen less in contemporary films, this concept of a woman being in need to be saved by a man has been implemented in female adolescents' heads from a considerable young age, through the exposure to Disney films such as Snow White, Cinderella, and Sleeping beauty.

Marilyn's impact across time and space has been seen through the ongoing fascination with her figure, hair and overall aesthetic - this has been particularly relevant for recent generations, such as Generation Z. Perhaps the most impactful part of the Marilyn effect for this generation is Marilyn's figure, a stark contrast to the 'skinny girl' aesthetic of the 2010s.

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[3] Primary research: Questionnaire 6
[4] Primary research: Content Analysis of Marilyn Monroe films
[5] Primary research: Personal Reflection
[6] Primary research: questionnaire 7
[7] Primary research: content analysis

Whilst the desire to be thin remains present as a beauty standard in young women, the 'hourglass' figure has taken over. Monroe is frequently hailed as a symbol of body acceptance because of her hourglass figure, which defied the conventionally slender norms of contemporary fashion. Generation Z shared her experience with beauty standards, *"To be skinny, yet have curves such as a large bust and hips with a small waist."*[8] Marilyn is the epitome of the "ideal" woman, according to society: thin but with curves "in all the right places", hence she still remains relevant as a symbol of beauty for women globally for generations after hers.[9] Although Marilyn Monroe is perceived as one of the world's most influential sex symbols and beauty archetypes, Generation Z has also recognised Monroe for her role as a body positivity activist. The star challenged the beauty standards of the Golden Age Hollywood, which has left an evident blueprint for beauty aesthetics for decades after her time. Marilyn Monroe's curves symbolise a more realistic and relevant kind of beauty than the sometimes unrealistic standards depicted by various media, spurring a change towards more varied depictions in fashion, media and film.

Beauty archetypes in Hollywood have, then, shown considerable continuities and changes over time. Marilyn has been a steady constant in the middle of these ebbs and flows. Contemporary Hollywood archetypes have been captivated by Monroe and her dominant influence, defining her own iconic archetype and prototype of 'beauty'. Hollywood from the Golden Age of the 50s to now has substantially changed, however; themes of glamour and beauty continue to stay prominent and relevant. When asked about 'sex symbols' in Hollywood, a Generation Z respondent shared her opinion, "Sydney Sweeney"[10]. With another female Generation Z respondent sharing, "Kim Kardashian".[11] A reporter 'Lucy Morgan' in a Glamour article states; *"If Marilyn was the archetypal beauty of the 1950s, Kim Kardashian surely resembles the modern-day equivalent."*[12] It is evident that there are sheer similarities between the blonde bombshell Marilyn Monroe and the viral modern-day 'sex symbol' Kim Kardashian. Marilyn created the hourglass figure archetype, which has become a global societal beauty standard. Kim Kardashian, on the other hand, is credited for popularising a curveaceous body type through media attention to and acceptance of her shape.

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[8] Primary research: questionnaire 6
[9] Light, A 'Marilyn Monroe: Why Are We Still Lusting After Her Body Shape?' (*Glamour UK* 4 August 2022) <https://www.glamourmagazine.co.uk/article/marilyn-monroe-body-shape-opinion> (accessed 14 April 2024.)
[10] Primary research: questionnaire 4
[11] Primary research: questionnaire 4
[12] Morgan, L, 'Is Kim Kardashian the Modern-Day Marilyn Monroe?' (*Glamour UK* 6 May 2022) <https://www.glamourmagazine.co.uk/article/kim-kardashian-modern-day-marilyn-monroe> (accessed 2 May 2024.)

Marilyn's influence on Kim Kardashian has not strictly been on body type and beauty ideals but on fashion. The controversy of the 2022 Met Gala, stunned the world as Kim Kardashian wore the iconic 'Happy Birthday Mr President' dress, which Monroe wore serenading John F. Kennedy on his 45th birthday in 1962.[13] Objectively, the ethics of Kim wearing the garment was markedly argued in the media, as Monroe's garment was not only seen as a dress, but a historical archetype. Furthermore, the theme of conforming to beauty standards and body expectations was reinforced, with Kim losing 21 pounds to fit into the dress which was sewn onto Marilyn. In a Vogue interview, Kim discussed the physical adaptation she had to endure to fit into the dress, stating; "I didn't starve myself, but I was strict." [14] Overall, the beauty archetypes in Hollywood continue despite the extensive time that has passed since the Marilyn era.

Initial assumptions were found to be correct when contrasting primary and secondary research findings. As expected, the 'Marilyn Effect' remains relevant in society, which the icon endures to be the symbolism of beauty and glamour in which she defined herself. Marilyn's bubbly and flirtatious charisma and confidence, as well as her breathtaking beauty and distinguishable hourglass figure, continues to influence women and their perspective of what it means to be 'beautiful' and self-identity.

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[13] Nnadi, C, 'Kim Kardashian Takes Marilyn Monroe's "Happy Birthday, Mr. President" Dress out for a Spin' (*Vogue*3 May 2022) <https://www.vogue.com/article/kim-kardashian-met-gala-2022>(accessed 2 May 2024.)
[14] Nnadi, C, 'Kim Kardashian Takes Marilyn Monroe's "Happy Birthday, Mr. President" Dress out for a Spin' (*Vogue*3 May 2022) <https://www.vogue.com/article/kim-kardashian-met-gala-2022> (accessed 2 May 2024.)

Chapter 2

Is Hollywood and its impossible standard the key driver of body dysmorphia in young women? Is there a better option?

Body dysmorphia is a mental disorder prevalent in young women. The complex disorder causes an altered and overly critical perception and judgement of one's own appearance. Hollywood's contribution to body dysmorphia for young women in Generation X has been particularly pronounced. Self-esteem and self-perception have been the primary victims for Generation X. Hollywood's contribution to body dysmorphia for Generation Z has been far more pronounced, and led to even more striking impacts. Problems exhibited in Generation X, have been exacerbated in Generation Z women, for example, there are more eating disorders prevalent, there are obsessions with diet culture and body modifications. The media, including news and social media, has acted as a key driver of this change, often seen in the complex and insidious use of editing software to create false realities. There is a growing and ongoing need to reclaim the social identity and value of women in the public eye. This could best be done through more diverse and accurate representations of real women in film and television.

Beauty portrayed by Hollywood has been hand-picked and selected for generations. Historically, Generation X was exposed to a substantially narrow ideal and perception of beauty, as well as ongoing pressures and expectations regarding preserving a youthful appearance. Typically, Hollywood and the media would feature women who are slim, young, and fit, such as actresses Angelina Jolie, Megan Fox and Brooke Shield, who were praised for their beauty. Contrasting, with the stick-thin appearance, were also ideals of being an 'hourglass figure' or 'blonde bombshell', through the representation of Marilyn Monroe and Pamala Anderson. Both ends of the Generation X beauty expectations are unrealistic and fuel an unhealthy fixation with one's own appearance.[15] Through conducting a questionnaire the intention of gaining the perspective of Generation X participants on whether Hollywood's impossible beauty standards are a key driver of body dysmorphia in young women.[16] A Generation X Participant shared her opinions on the topic; *"I agree because growing up*

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[15] Freedman, C, 'Real Talk: Body Image, Beauty & Hollywood - the YU Observer' (*The YU Observer* 9 May 2017) <https://yuobserver.org/2017/05/real-talk-body-image-beauty-hollywood/>(accessed 22 March 2024.)
[16] Primary research: question 8

watching these women and seeing the attention they got from the way they looked and how I didn't look like them made me feel like I needed to change which made me over analyse everything to do with my body and how I looked which can lead to body dysmorphia." The impact is evident on one's self-perception through what an individual is presented on the screen and media. The trend of basing one's self-worth on what one sees in the mirror remains a relevant trend amongst Generation X. Another Generation X participant shared her personal perspective on the topic of body dysmorphia; *"The inability to age gracefully, needing to be thin, perfect, dressed impeccably and up for constant criticism"*. It is undeniable that in Generation X, women experience more pressure to reject the natural process of aging compared to males. The stigma that 'old equals unattractive' can be seen throughout Hollywood as well as the trends and procedures it has created for women. Smooth skin, firm bodies, and lively features are frequently emphasised as objectives, and the beauty standards of the industry are tightly linked to youth. These criteria are reaffirmed by casting choices and media representation in Hollywood.

It is necessary to acknowledge that Generation Z is a noticeably impressionable age group, thus growing up and developing alongside technology and changing innovations. As a consequence of the access to technology and the media from a substantially younger age on the contrary of Generation X, young Generation Z women have been consuming the Hollywood and beauty industry for as long as they can remember. This generation has been profoundly affected by Hollywood, which has had a substantial impact on their self-perception and body image. Girls get flooded with messages and pictures from an early age that stress the value of appearance.[17] The secondary research exemplifies that Generation Z women have been prompted to dissect their own appearance and insecurities, to see if they align in Hollywood's unrealistic interpretation of 'beautiful'. Thus primary research reinforces this phenomenon, as a Generation Z questionnaire participant shared her experience being a woman exposed to Hollywood and the media; *"Young girls see Hollywood actresses from a young age and it's their first real introduction to teen years."*[18] Hollywood films such as *Clueless* and *Mean Girls* have been pivotal representations for how teenage girls are expected to look and act. Through the primary research of a personal

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[17] Kessler, N, 'How Gen Z Is Navigating Body Image in the Age of Social Media | Lifestyle' (*Wokewaves.com 2024*)
<https://www.wokewaves.com/posts/gen-z-body-image-social-media#:~:text=Negative%20body%20image%20is%20a,group%20experience%20negative%20body%20image.> (accessed 14 June 2024.)
[18] Primary research: question 8

reflection, I found the notion that the 'hot, blonde, popular girl' gets success, and attention and the guy is illuminated through characters such as *Cher Horowitz (Clueless)* and *Regina George (Mean Girls).* Furthermore, with the narrow representation of beauty exposed to the generation and immense pressures to attain the unattainable, picking apart one's own appearance in comparison to what is represented on the screen is a repeated issue in my generation.[19] Likewise, Hollywood is not the only concern contributing to body dysmorphia in Generation Z, in conjunction with social media. Having grown up on platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok has made teens susceptible to the effects of consuming online content. Social media is flooded with carefully curated content, affirming the strict idealised image of beauty and what seemingly society considers 'perfection'.[20] Perceiving images of faultless women with bikini bodies and flawless skin manifests toxic self-talk and harmful comparison culture. Primary research affirms that *59% of female Generation Z questionnaire participants have felt the need and/or considered editing or retouching an image of themselves due to the beauty standards online.* Therefore, the repercussions of social media and Hollywood's impact on body dysmorphia for young women in Generation Z advocate the toxic culture of beauty standards and its continuing impact on self-worth and identity.

Diet culture establishes a moral hierarchy of body types and sizes, glorifying thinness and fostering hatred and fear about gaining weight and being 'fat'. The culture objectively values the external appearance and 'quick fixes' over physical health and mental well-being.[21] Hollywood's promotion of diet culture has manifested more harmful consequences than what society may comprehend, often marketing towards younger female age demographics. Hollywood and the media have reinforced the idea in young women that there is in fact a 'perfect body', and anything else needs 'fixing', whilst advocating drastic measures to achieve the idealised figure.[22] Through conducting a questionnaire; research revealed that 58% of all participants believed that *Hollywood has promoted diet culture and an unhealthy obsession with appearance for young women.[23]* To exemplify, the promotion of diet culture and glamorising eating disorders can be seen through the model Kate Moss. In an interview

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[19] Primary research: Personal Reflection
[20] amberstudent, 'How Social Media Shaped Gen Z in the Recent Years' (*Amberstudent.com*27 June 2024) <https://amberstudent.com/blog/post/the-impact-of-social-media-on-gen-zs-self-image-and-body-image> (accessed 22 March 2024.)
[21] Beth Sissons, 'What to Know about Diet Culture' (*Medicalnewstoday.com 30* November 2023) <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/diet-culture> (accessed 7 July 2024.)
[22] Primary research: Personal reflection
[23] Primary research: Questionnaire 10

with *Women's Wear Daily,* Moss commented *"Nothing tastes as good as skinny feels."*[24] The promotion and advocacy of food restriction consequently illustrate the societal pressures to be thin, no matter what it takes. Marketing self-malnourishment for the prize of beauty can as well be seen reinforced through the Hollywood star Kim Kardashian. The controversy of Kim Kardashian wearing Hollywood icon Marilyn Monroe's dress to the 2022 Met Gala had Kardashian rapidly losing weight to fit in the garment, losing 16 pounds in 21 days. Kardashian explained to Buzzfeed that she "would wear a sauna suit twice a day, run on the treadmill, completely cut out all sugar and all carbs, and just eat the cleanest veggies and protein."[25] With young women looking up to the stars, the toxic narrative is embedded in society that women should fit in clothes, and clothes shouldn't fit women. Fasting, detox teas, juice cleanses, diet pills, extreme diets, and the newfound trend of ozempic have been advertised to women through Hollywood and the media, demonstrating the shear obsession with appearance and that there is always something that should be changed in one's own body to fit the unrealistic and dangerous beauty standards that exist within society.

The contemporary trend of body modifications and cosmetic plastic surgery has rapidly increased in recent years. Is the industry helping women feel more empowered and confident? Or is it just capitalising on women's insecurities that society has told them needs fixing? It appears clear that a significant amount of body modifications stem from ageism in Hollywood for women. It has been made apparent that women feel a sense of shame with ageing, through botox and facelifts to preserve their youth. [26] Type Casting in films can also be to blame for this issue. Actresses experience immense pressure to perpetuate their beauty, as looking younger means more roles accessible to them, highlighting the double standard between men and women in Hollywood. The beauty trend of the hourglass figure has had an objective impact on the cosmetic surgery industry, having women taking more drastic measures to adhere to the ideal. The Brazilian Butt Lift procedure can be closely tied with the figure Kim Kardashian, gaining widespread attention and discussion. Young women are as

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[24] 'Model Kate Moss Blasted for Promoting "Skinny Feels Good" Motto' (*The Sydney Morning Herald* 19 November 2009)
<https://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/fashion/model-kate-moss-blasted-for-promoting-skinny-feels-good-motto-20091120-ipax.html> (accessed 3 May 2024.)
[25] Jokic, N 'Kim Kardashian Responds to Met Gala Marilyn Dress Criticism' (*BuzzFeed* 2 June 2022)
<https://www.buzzfeed.com/natashajokic1/kim-kardashian-met-gala-marilyn-monroe-criticism> accessed 29 July 2024.
[26] England, A, https://www.facebook.com/verywell, 'Plastic Surgery Is All over Social Media, What Does It Mean for Mental Health?' (*Verywell Mind* 2023)
<https://www.verywellmind.com/normalization-plastic-surgery-social-media-mental-health-7093826> (accessed 3 July 2024.)

well going under the knife for breast implants to achieve the societal standard of a fuller figure. With core beauty expectations, women are taking 'flat stomachs' to the extreme by receiving the liposuction procedure. Across younger generations, lip filler has become the new norm, as seen in pop culture and social media trends such as 'The Kylie Jenner Lip Challenge'. The normalisation of body modifications and cosmetic surgery, demonstrates the highly flawed and extreme pressures put on young women, creating a narrative that if their bodies don't look like what they see on the screen, they should be changed. The cosmetic industry has stripped many women of their natural and unique beauty just to conform to what society defines as 'beautiful'. Whilst women should not feel shame undergoing appearance-enhancing procedures, they should not feel like there is something 'wrong' with their appearance that needs 'fixing'.

Reclaiming the social identity and value of women in Hollywood and the media is crucial not just for the industry, but for the women who consume it. Through addressing the systemic issues embedded in society, it can cultivate a more inclusive and socially literate society and industry. A prevalent challenge is the problematic sexualisation of women in the media. For example, an interview by Chris Van Vliet and Hollywood actress Anne Hathaway reflects the flawed and unprofessional attitude towards women in Hollywood press interviews. Chris Van Vliet invasively asks the actress regarding the Catwoman movie *"How do you fit into that suit?"* and *"How much weight have you lost to get into this shape right now?"* [27] This illuminates the overarching idea of the objectification of female actresses by celebrating their appearance rather than their talents and accomplishments. Furthermore, it emphasises the patriarchal notion of women not being taken seriously in Hollywood. In addition through primary research, the issue is made apparent. Through a questionnaire, participants were asked whether they believe that *interviewers have normalised the sexualisation of women through asking inappropriate questions compared to their male counterparts.* To which a female Generation X participant shared; *"I believe that this is very true for most female stars in Hollywood. I find myself constantly disturbed by the differences in interview questions between male and female stars and think that this is something that has hardly changed in recent years."*[28] Ethical media practices are crucial to reclaim the social identity and value of

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[27] Jones, A, 'Anne Hathaway Called out Reporter Who Asked Offensive Question about Her Weight in Interview' (*UNILAD* 25 April 2023)
<https://www.unilad.com/celebrity/anne-hathaway-weight-chris-van-vliet-offensive-question-091390-20230425> (accessed 13 April 2024.)
[28] Primary research: questionnaire 11

women, as they should be recognised for their work, not appearance and deserve to be taken as professionally as a man would. It is certain that there is a lack of diversity of women in the media. Young women have grown up seeing one idealised standard of beauty on the screen, which is unrealistic and unrelatable. Thus through diversity, women can see that beauty and success do not come in one size. Promoting women in the public eye from different backgrounds, races, ages, abilities and body types can empower women, redefining beauty.

Ultimately, it is made apparent that the impossible beauty standards curated by Hollywood have had a stark impact on young women's self-perception. Through primary and secondary research, the constantly changing and newly developing beauty expectations have driven women to take drastic measures to attain what society has deemed as 'perfect'. As expected, the consequences of Hollywood and the media's beauty standards have created substantial issues and can be a key driver of the increase in body dysmorphia and eating disorders which are seen today in young women.

Conclusion

My PIP was a process that allowed me to embark on a journey of social and cultural literacy. Throughout the project, I explored the hypothesis: *How do Hollywood Beauty Archetypes Impact Women's Self-esteem and Identity Formation?* I investigated the 'taboo' lens of Hollywood hidden by a glamorous facade. As a teenage girl, it was significantly important for me to explore the unhealthy beauty expectations that are imprinted in young women's minds from a young age. My PIP journey revealed the urgency to reclaim the social identity and value of women in the public eye. The unnecessary sexualisation of women in media is made apparent through the use of primary and secondary research, revealing the impact it has had on young women in society.

 My primary research methods, a Questionnaire, Content Analysis and Personal Reflection support my original hypothesis that Hollywood Beauty Archetypes impact women's self-esteem and identity formation by affirming the societal values and expectations placed on young women. My questionnaire allowed me to gather insightful qualitative data which provided different perspectives from conflicting generations (Generation X and Generation Z). I was able to visualise the changing notions of beauty standards whilst highlighting the pronounced similarities in Hollywood across generations. Moreover, personal reflection provided me with a sense of clarity regarding my individualistic connection with my topic. Through content analysis, I was able to grasp the misogynistic and problematic attitudes towards Hollywood actress, Marilyn Monroe from the male gaze through film. The primary research process enabled me to acknowledge Hollywood's role in constructing an idealised version of beauty and the impact it has made on women in society on a global scale.

Through intensive secondary research, my investigation into Hollywood Beauty Archetypes' impact on women's self-esteem and identity formation was further supported. Exploring Hollywood's role in promoting diet culture and appearance enhancement surgeries deepened my understanding of the contribution to eating disorders and body dysmorphia among young women. Thus, research leads me to believe that the lack of diversity in Hollywood has manifested a misrepresentation of what it means to be a woman in the public eye. I furthermore became increasingly aware of the misogyny that is ingrained in the industry, and how it projects onto young women. Hollywood has associated worth with attractiveness

through the curation of archetypal beauty.

Through exploring different concepts throughout my PIP, I was able to sophisticatedly apprehend my research topic. Consumption and commodification were exemplified through the construction of beauty archetypes. The concept of Mythology through the 'Marilyn Effect' revealed the pivotal impact on an idealised standard of beauty. Notions of Popular culture can be seen throughout my project, revealing the contribution to social change and Identity. I found through my research a sense of continuities regarding the expectations and the mistreatment of women in the public sphere. Women were, and are still objectively ridiculed about their appearance, ultimately impacting their sense of self-worth. However, I found the changes across Generation X and Generation Z evident. With Generation Z growing up in the digital age with early consumption of online media, escaping these standards is unavoidable. With advancements in technology, attaining the ideal image has become increasingly unrealistic and impossible.

Annotated Reference List

Primary Research

Questionnaire

I chose to conduct a questionnaire as I wanted to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data from a cross-generational perspective of Generation X and Generation Z. Through this method, I was able to ask both open-ended questions and close-ended questions on my topic of how Hollywood beauty archetypes impact the self-esteem and identity formation of young women. I carried out this method by creating 14 diverse questions and sending it out to members of Generation X and Generation Z who were willing to participate. However, it was important to recognise a bias within the results, as the majority of the participants were female, limiting my access and understanding of the male perspective on my subject. My Questionnaire was used throughout the entire project, by quoting nuanced responses.

Personal Reflection

I decided to conduct a personal reflection to better my understanding of my own personal connection to my topic. Through expressing my experiences as a young woman from Generation Z, I was able to recognise some societal challenges faced which is helpful due to the cross-generational focus. I carried out the method by sharing my concerns and experiences with beauty standards from Hollywood. As this was me sharing my personal experience, there are obvious bias', as my own experiences cannot speak universally for every other Generation Z woman. My personal reflection can be seen throughout my chapters to further support my other research findings.

Content Analysis

A content analysis was chosen as a research method so I could better understand the characters that the actress Marilyn Monroe would play in her films and how it contributed to expectations of women in society. I carried out this method by watching 5 Monroe films: *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes, How to Marry a Millionaire, Some Like It Hot, Let's Make Love*

and *The Seven Year Itch.* I made a table to tally every time I see one of the following: *Every time a man comments on Marilyn Monroe's body, every time a man comments on the beauty of Marilyn Monroe's face, Every time a 'dumb blonde' joke is made* and *Every time another woman is compared to Marilyn Monroe.* The analysis provided me with an insight into the sexualisation of Monroe and the influence she had in Hollywood and setting beauty standards. However, this method is extremely time-consuming, due to having to pause and rewatch the films to catch the data. The content analysis can be seen in chapter 1, as I discuss the 'Marilyn Effect'.

Secondary Research

amberstudent (2024). ***How Social Media Shaped Gen Z In The Recent Years*. [online] Amberstudent.com. Available at: https://amberstudent.com/blog/post/the-impact-of-social-media-on-gen-zs-self-image-and-body-image [Accessed 22 Mar. 2024].**

The source outlines how social media has shaped Generation Z whilst discussing beauty standards, editing and filters, comparison culture, cyberbullying and ultimate contribution to mental health. This secondary source was used in chapter 2 of my PIP, to help recognise the media and technologies contribution to body dysmorphia. This source was limited as it did not give a Hollywood perspective but solely focused on social media.

England, A (2023). ***Plastic Surgery Is All Over Social Media, What Does It Mean For Mental Health?* [online] Verywell Mind. Available at: https://www.verywellmind.com/normalization-plastic-surgery-social-media-mental-health-7093826 [Accessed 3 Jul. 2024].**

The source discusses the increase in plastic surgery and how celebrities and influencers promote various cosmetic surgeries and procedures through the media. Adam England discusses that the rise in cosmetic surgery has also promoted disordered eating which affirms the beauty ideals in society. This source was used in Chapter 2 to explore the craze of body modifications and Hollywood's role in promoting it to women. However, the source was limited in the fact there were no examples of real celebrities promoting this phenomenon.

FREEDMAN, C. (2017). *Real Talk: Body Image, Beauty & Hollywood - The YU Observer.* **[online] The YU Observer. Available at: https://yuobserver.org/2017/05/real-talk-body-image-beauty-hollywood/ [Accessed 22 Mar. 2024].**

The source discussed the issues of an 'ideal body' represented in the entertainment industry, and how unrealistic these standards are for women. Freedman shares her experience as a Millennial woman with the issue. This source was useful in the first Chapter, as the source discusses Marilyn Monroe specifically. There are biases in this source, as it was written by a Millennial, and my cross-generational focus is on Generation X and Generation Z.

Jokic, N. (2022). *Kim Kardashian Responds To Met Gala Marilyn Dress Criticism.* **[online] BuzzFeed. Available at: https://www.buzzfeed.com/natashajokic1/kim-kardashian-met-gala-marilyn-monroe-criticism [Accessed 29 Jul. 2024].**

The source discusses the controversy of Kim Kardashian wearing Marilyn Monroe's dress to the Met Gala in 2022 and the weight she rapidly lost to fit in the garment. The source was helpful in both chapters of my PIP as the promotion of diet culture was discussed, as well as Marilyn's lasting relevance in Hollywood. The source was limited in that it did not provide enough information about young women's responses to the controversy.

Jones, A. (2023). *Anne Hathaway called out reporter who asked offensive question about her weight in interview.* **[online] UNILAD. Available at: https://www.unilad.com/celebrity/anne-hathaway-weight-chris-van-vliet-offensive-question-091390-20230425 [Accessed 13 Apr. 2024].**

The source recounts an interview between Chris Van Vliet and actress Anne Hathaway in which he proceeds to ask Hathaway unrelated and inappropriate questions about her weight. The interview was used in Chapter 2 to discuss the issues of the mistreatment of women in media. The interview was limited in that it did not discuss the normalisation of sexualising female actresses compared to their male counterparts.

Kessler, N. (2024). *How Gen Z is Navigating Body Image in the Age of Social Media | Lifestyle.* **[online] Wokewaves.com. Available at: https://www.wokewaves.com/posts/gen-z-body-image-social-media#:~:text=Negative%20body%20image%20is%20a,group%20experience%20negative%20body%20image. [Accessed 14 Jun. 2024].**

This source discusses the issues of poor body image in Generation Z and the impact of social media. This source was helpful in chapter 2 of my PIP to navigate the discussion of body dysmorphia in adolescents. The source was limited as Hollywood's contribution was not argued.

Light, A. (2022). *Marilyn Monroe: Why Are We Still Lusting After Her Body Shape?* **[online] Glamour UK. Available at: https://www.glamourmagazine.co.uk/article/marilyn-monroe-body-shape-opinion [Accessed 14 Apr. 2024].**

The Glamour article considers the cultural influence of Marilyn Monroe, and how she paved her archetype of beauty through her figure decades after her time. This source was helpful in Chapter 1 as Marilyn's influence on beauty for younger generations was examined. The source did however have limitations, as the article wasn't generation-specific.

Morgan, L. (2022). *Is Kim Kardashian the Modern-Day Marilyn Monroe?* **[online] Glamour UK. Available at: https://www.glamourmagazine.co.uk/article/kim-kardashian-modern-day-marilyn-monroe [Accessed 2 May. 2024].**

The article discusses the connection between Marilyn Monroe and Kim Kardashian in Hollywood and the influence both figures have had on society. This source was used in chapter 1 to help me consider the Marilyn Effect and the creation of an archetype of beauty.

Nnadi, C. (2022). *Kim Kardashian Takes Marilyn Monroe's 'Happy Birthday, Mr. President' Dress Out for a Spin.* **[online] Vogue. Available at: https://www.vogue.com/article/kim-kardashian-met-gala-2022 [Accessed 12 Apr. 2024].**

The Vogue source documents the 2022 Kim Kardashian Met Gala controversy. Proving the lasting influence and continuing relevance of Marilyn Monroe in Hollywood. This source was used in chapter 1 of my PIP to consolidate Marilyn Monroe's impact on Hollywood and celebrities in today's modern society. The source was limited however in providing insight into Marilyn's impact on other Hollywood celebrities.

Povey, K. (2021). *Beauty Standards.* **[online] Manifoldapp.org. Available at: https://uw.manifoldapp.org/read/beauty-standards/section/cff23c1e-aced-4e24-b14e-25a 2728170d3 [Accessed 21 Jun. 2024].**

This source explores the evolution of beauty standards in society. This source was used in chapter 2 of my PIP to discuss the pressures of conforming to a certain ideal. The source was limited as it did not explore Hollywood's contribution.

Sissons, B. (2023). *What to know about diet culture.* **[online] Medicalnewstoday.com. Available at: https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/diet-culture [Accessed 7 Jul. 2024]**.

This source discusses the phenomenon of diet culture and the dangerous impact it has on the health and well-being of individuals. This source was beneficial in Chapter 2 as I discussed the rise in diet culture and how it can lead to eating disorders and body dysmorphia. The source is limited in the fact it does not discuss how Hollywood has promoted diet culture for young women.

The Sydney Morning Herald. (2009). *Model Kate Moss blasted for promoting 'skinny feels good' motto.* **[online] Available at:**

https://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/fashion/model-kate-moss-blasted-for-promoting-skinn
y-feels-good-motto-20091120-ipax.html [Accessed 3 May. 2024].

The source discusses the controversial quote made by model Kate Moss: *"Nothing tastes as good as skinny feels."* The source was used in Chapter 2 of my PIP to explore the promotion of eating disorders to look a certain way, reinforcing the idea that the only way to be pretty is to be thin. Limitations in this source include the impact on generations.