

Discussion Questions

1. What does Naomi Wolf mean by her use of the term “the beauty myth”? How, according to Wolf, has the “beauty myth” been commodified and industrialized? Give some examples you have observed recently of the general understanding of a physical ideal.
 2. How, according to Wolf, does “the beauty myth” change the way women feel about themselves and about other women? Besides belonging to the patriarchy by virtue of their gender, discuss ways you think this myth might influence men as individuals. How do you think Gergen would respond to Wolf’s argument?
 3. Amy Alkon, who writes a popular newspaper advice column, asserts that Wolf is wrong because she fails to consider that female beauty presents opportunities for women in many areas. What opportunities might Alkon have in mind? List as many as you can think of, and explain how they might contradict Wolf’s claims about male power and control.
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