DOCUMENTING FEMININITY: BODY POSITIVITY AND FEMALE EMPOWERMENT

ON INSTAGRAM

JESSICA CWYNAR-HORTA

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES IN PARTIAL

FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE

YORK UNIVERSITY

TORONTO, ONTARIO

August 2016

Abstract

        Drawing on participatory research, this study examines the body positive community on

Instagram in order to understand how social media platforms enable women to self-present

outside of traditional gender norms and challenge dominant ideals of feminine beauty, including

the demands to produce smooth skin, to adhere to body size norms, and contain bodily fluids.

Although women are experiencing embodiment and agency online, analysis revealed that body

positive members are simultaneously repeating dominant codes and reinforcing views of non-

normative bodies. This was noticeable when analyzing the responses of the female viewers

interviewed for the study who reported visceral feelings of disgust towards the non-normative

bodies on display.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, especially my mother who has always been my personal

cheerleader and a source of continuous motivation, encouraging me to pursue my Master's

Degree and to "never never never give up" when met with inevitable obstacles.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express the deepest appreciation to Professor Anne MacLennan whose patient encouragement and support aided in the development of this research. Her continuous dedication to seeing my project through on a timely manner, and encouragement to seek out related opportunities was greatly needed and appreciated.

I owe my deepest gratitude to my committee members, Professor Natalie Coulter and Professor Ganaele Langlois, for their continued help and advice that guided me through the development of this thesis. I appreciate their excitement and interest in my thesis topic and research findings, reminding me of why I need to do the research that I am doing. Their knowledge and expertise in the field of study helped me think through my research approach and informed by discussion.

I would also like to acknowledge the many family, friends, and teachers who assisted and supported my writing efforts. I would especially like to acknowledge Deborah Clipperton whose passionate interest in feminist theory and cultural studies inspired me to think critically of contemporary culture and interrogate the meaning and politics of the female body.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction

Since 2012 there has been a heightened presence of the body positive movement on Instagram. Women who occupy non-normative bodies use the platform to post selfies to challenge dominant ideals of feminine beauty, including the demands to produce smooth skin, adhere to body size norms, and avoid bodily fluids. This has been accompanied by a barrage of media outlets advising their readers on the top body positive accounts they need in their life to boost their body confidence, and how to be body positive on Instagram for more self-love (*Irish Examiner*, 2016; Burke 2015; Vino, 2015; O'Reilly, 2016). News media circulated articles across social media platforms with stories heralding women who, through the use of selfies, open up about their experiences with eating disorders, shut body shamers down, challenge "bikini body" myths, and confront expectations directed at women's post-pregnancy bodies. Women who share the same experiences of and frustration with dominant ideals of femininity have identified with and participated in this movement through the use of body-positive hash tags, captions, and subject matter. However, this growing movement has attracted a lot of criticism from other body positive members who question its validity and the form it has taken. As a result, this thesis examines the body positive movement on Instagram to determine whether the movement is in fact a transformative experience for both the women involved and for the women viewing alternative depictions of femininity.

To explore this topic, this research employs a mixed methods approach beginning with an ethnographic content analysis of the body positive movement on Instagram to provide a foundation for the analysis of the images. I first undertook a visual and textual analysis of body positive content in order to determine whether the subversive performances of femininity are repeating or rejecting dominant norms of femininity. To further assess their perceived impact interviews were conducted with female users of Instagram selfies to determine how the movement is being perceived and whether it is changing or reinforcing dominant views of non-normative bodies. For the purpose of this study, the term "body positivity" will be defined as any message, visual or written, that challenges dominant ways of viewing the physical body in accordance with beauty ideals and encourages the reclaiming of embodiment and control over one's self-image. Body positivity encompasses any individual or movement actions which aim to denounce the societal influences and construction of body norms, and instead promotes self-love and acceptance of bodies of any shape, size, or appearance; including rolls, dimples, cellulite, acne, hairy bodies, bleeding bodies, fat bodies, thin bodies, and (dis) abled bodies.

In 2012 plus sized model and feminist, Tess Holliday, founded the @effyourbeautystandards Instagram account which launched the campaign #effyourbeautystandards in response to messages across the media telling women that they are not beautiful if they are above a size 10. In an Instagram post (see fig.1) Holliday explained,

> I have always used my career as a way to bring awareness to the lack of diversity in the modeling industry & in mainstream media. Our focus should be on seeing different races, body types & genders when we flip through magazines or turn on our TV's instead of picking apart those who are trying to make a difference. I know one day there will be

people of all sizes standing next to me, changing the world. (Holliday, Tess. @tessholliday, 3 November 2015. Instagram, Inc.)

Tess Holliday's #effyourbeautystandards campaign was as a call to all women to love their bodies and show the world that they can be sexy and fashionable too. To date, Tess Holliday is the most influential body positive advocate with over 1.3 million followers. In 2015 Holliday was signed to one of the leading model agencies in Europe, Milk Management, as their first model over a size 20, which landed her a cover on *People Magazine* in 2015. Holliday has been set on inclusion and representation of fat bodies within the fashion industry. Her personal account on Instagram showcases her edgy and chic sense of fashion. She has even collaborated with U.S brand Penningtons, launching her own clothing collection that is reflective of her style and offers edgier clothing for plus sized women.

Fig. 1 Challenging the representation of fat bodies within the fashion industry; Photograph by @tessholliday; 3 November 2015; Instagram, Inc.

Since then, the movement has expanded, particularly on Instagram. The most popular feature that is used to connect the movement on Instagram is the use of hash tags. Many of the accounts linked with the body positive movement incorporate multiple hash tags into their captions in order to identify the multiple issues their images are attempting to address. The hastag #effyourbeautystandards continues to be the most widely used hashtag by the movement. A quick search of the #effyourbeautystandards hash tag on the platform brings up 1,557,522 posts that have been tagged. Following in its path, additional umbrella hash tags for the movement which encompass all body positive categories are: #bodypositive which turns up 1,274,227 posts, and "#bodypositivity" with 395,167 hash tagged posts by users. Other identifying hash tags include: #bodyacceptance (59,779 posts); #selfiesforselflove (37,854 posts); #radicalbodylove (25,882 posts). What is common amongst the images tagged is a critique of beauty ideals in Western culture and the way in which the female body is presented throughout mass media. Body positive community members address the affect the portrayal of women has had on their self-image and the self-hate they have felt towards their own bodies. In doing so, many women share their resultant experiences with eating disorders and how body positivity and self-love has helped them in recovery. These women encourage thinking positively about the aspects of their bodies that would normally be deemed flawed and imperfect, such as acne, cellulite, stretch marks, and rashes. While they do not yet have a hash tag to identify these materials more broadly, the body positive members instead hash tag the photos with #effyourbeautystandards and #bodypositivity. As well, body positive members discuss the scrutiny and bullying they have experienced due to their appearance, whether it is in regards to their health, body size, shape, or appearance.

While the critique of beauty ideals seems to be the unifying material that is common

amongst body positive accounts, hash tags have developed to address body size more specifically, with the most used hash tag being #plussize with 3,671,560 tagged posts by women who are proudly embracing their plus sized bodies and making them visible. Other women within the movement address the standards of beauty that covet thin bodies and encourage women to diet to resemble these ideals as closely as possible. Many of these members share their experiences living and recovering from eating disorders that influenced by mass media messages telling them that being thin is beautiful. These images are identified through the hash tags #riotsnotdiets (30,494 posts) and #losehatenotweight (32,835 posts). Megan Jayne Crabbe from the account, @BodyPosiPanda, is one of the most prominent influencers in this category with 213,000 followers. Crabbe openly shares her experiences living with and recovering from anorexia in hopes that it will provide other women living with the same experience the support they need. Through body-positive quotes and photos, Crabbe promotes self-love and inspires others to change their mental attitude towards themselves.

Many other body positive advocates are plus sized fashion bloggers, tagging their photos with the hash tags, #plussizefashion (1,095,266 posts) and #plussizeootd (53,489 posts), which stands for 'plus sized outfit of the day'. These members, like Tess Holliday, want to redefine fashion for plus sized bodies and challenge expectations of what fat women are allowed to wear, showing the world that they can be sexy and fashionable too. One of the more influential advocates within this bracket is plus sized feminist, fashion blogger, and designer @NadiaAboulhosn, with 460,000 followers. Aboulhosn's inspiring sense of fashion encourages plus sized women to wear clothing they are told they cannot wear and to think more positively about their body image.

Fitness and yoga inspiration accounts have emerged, as well, that document the yoga

practices and fitness journeys of fat women. These women challenge assumptions that fat bodies are not strong and active bodies, and seek to provide an alternative representation of athletic bodies that are dominant throughout mass media. Body positivity is segmented even further into more specific hash tags that body positive community members use to identify additional issues that their photos address. Body positive members who challenge social norms around shaving by posting images where their body hair is visible, for example, identify with the hash tags #bodyhair (20,413 posts) and #pithairdontcare (6,525 posts). A much smaller section of the body positive community incorporates menstrual blood and hygiene products into their photos to break down taboos around women's biological bodies, and use the hash tags #menstruation (23,674 posts) and #menstrualblood (684 posts). Attention to women's menstruation emerged in 2015 following the photos posted by influencer Rupi Kaur to Instagram that documented a fully clothed woman with blood stain on her pants. Rupi Kaur inspired other women to advocate for the demystification of the female body through the posting of their experiences with menstruation to social media.

Recently, there has been a debate amongst the body positive community regarding the shape that the movement has taken in recent years. Body positivity has its roots in the fat liberation movement (also known as the fat acceptance movement) that began during second-wave feminism in the late 1960s and gained prominence in third-wave feminism, tackling issues of body politics and discrimination against fat bodies. Over the years, the body positive movement has continued to thrive, taking many different shapes and forms. The ultimate goal of the body positivity movement is to address unrealistic ideals about beauty, promote self-acceptance, and build self-esteem through improving one's self-image and learning to love

oneself to the fullest. Marie Denee, founding editor of The Curvy Fashionista and plus size style blogger describes what body positivity means to her:

[Body positivity] means accepting your body, curves, rolls, lumps, bumps, and all and accepting it as worthy. Worthy of love, of existing, of receiving the same level of value placed upon it as the next body. It is radical self love, despite society's ideals of beauty. It is honoring and living life fully rather than waiting until your body becomes an 'after' body. It is throwing out the fashion rules of the past that force or shame us to hide and shrink away. It is no longer apologizing for existing and taking up space. It is daring to allow yourself permission to don that two-piece bathing suit, to slay that downward facing dog position, and learning to stare at your body in all of its naked glory and love on it.

(Dalessandro, "Definitions Of Body Positivity Straight From Influencers & Activists")

However, according to body positive advocates such as Denee, the movement has now come to encompass any individual that exists outside of beauty norms in any way regardless of size, leaving women above a size 14 out of the conversation. Body Positive community members have criticized body positivity for not being inclusive of all identities as the movement has now come to represent conventionally attractive, thin white women who are being positive about their bodies. Ariel Woodson from Instagram account @kiddotrue and co-producer of feminist, intersectional podcast Bad Fat Broads describes this new version of body positivity as "defanged fat activism repackaged suitable only for corporate use and coddling the feelings of thin, able-bodied, cisgender, white women' or 'I'm positive I don't give a damn what you think about my body" (Dalessandro, "Definitions Of Body Positivity Straight From Influencers & Activists"). According to Denee, the body positive movement has become politicized and

7

commoditized by corporations looking to profit off of the growing movement, ultimately changing the structure and goals of the movement.

Indeed, encroaching on the movement, some brands now claim to be body positive by posting makeup-free social media photos, launching plus size clothing lines, and including plus sized models in advertising campaigns. An example of a company that is prevalent on social media is American Eagle, which began incorporating body positive attitudes and approaches to their brand Aerie. Aerie promotes realistic standards for women, banning airbrushing, and featuring body positive influencers in their shoots. Additional brands that have begun including plus sized models into their advertising campaigns and have launched plus sized clothing for larger women use plus sized models such as Ashley Graham, who is closer to the normative "ideal" body. Touching on this very limited representation of plus sized bodies, Marcy Cruz, blogger of Fearlessly Just Me and blog editor of Plus Model Magazine stated: "Body positivity to me means promoting body love to everyone and all bodies, not just ones that the media pushes, which seem to push the message that plus size means a size 14 and that's it" (Dalessandro, "Definitions Of Body Positivity Straight From Influencers & Activists"). Body positive advocates are disgruntled by this change because it does not accurately represent a variety of larger sized women, not to mention that these companies often rely on Photoshop to remove cellulite, stretch marks, and other imperfections. Discussing her dissatisfaction, Alysse Dalessandro, plus size designer of Ready To Stare and freelance writer wrote:

> Body positive was a term that I saw as a way to liberate and free fat bodies from societal stigma, but it has turned into a word to describe a mainstream ad campaign featuring all size 12 cis, white, hourglass women or a straight size celebrity's makeup free selfie. A size eight celebrity does nothing more than exist and she's labeled a body positive icon.

Meanwhile, fat bodies, especially fat bodies over a size 24, are being left out of the conversation completely in order to celebrate the bodies that society deems more acceptable. Body positivity *cannot* be viewed as positive or progressive if it's not for the liberation of ALL bodies. (Southard Ospina, "11 Influencers Discuss the Differences Between Body Positivity & Fat Acceptance")

The representation of plus sized women who are just outside of the beauty ideal once again ignore the experiences of larger bodies, rendering them invisible.

While all lives do matter, body positive advocates believe that the experiences differ greatly between those of thinner woman and larger woman and therefore, they should not be lumped together under one umbrella that erases their experiences. As fat feminist, Aarti Olivia Dubey, claims, "Body positivity isn't #allbodiesmatter. It's about removing the structural inequities that make some bodies worth more than others" (Dalessandro, "Definitions of Body Positivity Straight From Influencers & Activists"). Ultimately, as Dalessandra and Rutter point out that while societal pressures to look a certain way affect woman of all sized, thin bodies do not receive the same degree of stigma, hatred, negative treatment and discrimination that fat bodies do, as fat people are hired less, paid less, have poorer access to medical care, are intensely ostracized in all forms of media, and have their lives threatened and their humanity questioned on a daily basis (Southard Ospina, "11 Influencers Discuss The Differences Between Body Positivity & Fat Acceptance"). Advocates claim that the development of the movement into an "all lives matter" movement has erased the meaningful differences between bodies.

The details on what constitutes the body positive movement and the ongoing debate within the movement provides the context for this thesis, which explores representations of femininity amongst the body positive movement on Instagram and examine the meaning this

movement has for female viewers. This study explores the societal norms that the body positive movement is confronting and questions whether the movement is successfully rejecting dominant codes of femininity or inherently repeating them. Furthermore, through participant interviews this study aims to explore whether this community is truly open to all bodies. As we will see, the female participants in the study viewed the non-normative bodies of the body positive movement with disgust and rejection. Following the study it appears that the movement excludes women who do not explicitly identify with the bodies on display within the movement.

This thesis utilizes critical feminist theory to address ideologies of the body and the ways in which social networking sites facilitate radical forms of self-presentation, agency, and embodiment. For the purpose of this research, women's self-expression on Instagram will be discussed through the lens of both representation and presentation. Scholarly work pertaining to gender and self-presentation on social media provides the context for this study as it considers whether social media platforms have afforded women the possibility to practice meaningful self-presentation, while reaching a global audience. Social media research that has approached self-presentation on social media platforms claims that with the configuration processes provided by online sites individuals experience a greater degree of customization and control over their self-presentation; enabling 'subjectivization' both in the virtual and the fleshy body' (Coté and Pybus 2011; Reichart Smith and Sanderson, 2015). Feminists have argued that the use of the image is particularly powerful as people use photographs for self-representation and to learn about their contacts (Van House et al., 2005; Van House, 2007, 2009; Ames et al., 2010). The ability to instantly take photos that can then be posted online and shared with friends and family has changed the landscape of social media and created the perfect environment for individuals to practice agency and forms subjectivities online. Having a constantly present camera in the form

of the smartphone allowed and continues to allow women to take on their own project at any

place and time and share it through their networks. Feminist scholars such as Minh-Ha T. Pham

in, *I Click and Post and Breathe, Waiting for Others to See What I See': On #FeministSelfies,*

Outfit Photos, and Networked Vanity (2015), have argued that the selfie has allowed for a new

visual paradigm where the relations of power between the object of looking and the looking

subject are significantly more dynamic. In participating in the representational process, Pham

argues that, "individuals who are the objects of the gaze are also co-creators of the interpretative

conditions through which media images of their bodies and selves are seen" (225). The selfie

opens up possibilities for women to transform institutionalized structures of visuality through the

control they are afforded over their self-presentation, selecting which image of themselves they

want to display, how they want to display them, and for what purpose.

However, significant to this study is research that suggests that the increased visibility on

social networking sites, and policies constrain the ability to self-present in radical ways. Social

media studies have found that while choosing to self-present in online spaces individuals'

display the most credible aspects of the self and promote desirable social impressions that are

verified and legitimized through the approval or disapproval of audiences through the social

practices unique to these platforms (Giddens 1991; Manago et al., 2008; Krämer and Winter,

2008; Grasmuck et al., 2009; Hancock et al., 2007; Gibbs et al., 2006; Reichart Smith and

Sanderson, 2015). In addition to audience responses shaping their identity, self-representation of

others functions as a social comparison that is important to identity development. In *Social*

Networking, Mobilities, and the Rise of Liquid Identities (2015), Gössling and Stavrinidi argue

that when users on social media platforms, such as Facebook, are "under surveillance and

exposed to the scrutiny of significant others, pressure arises to create favourable impressions,

presented to an often only partially known audience of 'friends' consisting of strong and, presumably, a greater number of weak ties" (4). Social comparison is made possible by the increased visibility on social networking sites that make practices, norms, and departures from them highly visible (Van House, "*Feminist HCI meets facebook: Performativity and social networking sites*"). As we will see, pressure to perform in an acceptable ways restricts women's desire to participate in the body positive movement and self-represent in non-conforming ways.

Furthermore, as Van House (2011) found in, *Feminist HCI Meets Facebook: Performativity and Social Networking Sites*, the designs on social networking sites both constrain self-presentation by reinforcing dominant societal norms of self-representation through the structure and policies. Women's bodies are regulated on Instagram through the community guidelines and regulations. Many users both within and external to the body positive movement have addressed this issue, stating that Instagram has removed their images for being overtly provocative, sexualized, and "inappropriate". Body-positive advocates such as @Rupikaur_, @bloatedandalone4evr1993, and @arvidabyaytöm use their platform to acknowledge when Instagram removes their images for being inappropriate and not following community guidelines. While Instagram claims to be "an authentic and safe place for inspiration and expression" their 'Community Guidelines' place restrictions on what exactly users can post, asking users to do the following: post only their own photos and videos; always follow the law; respect everyone on Instagram; do not spam people or post nudity; share only photos and videos that they have taken or have the right to share; post photos and videos that are appropriate for a diverse audience; foster meaningful and genuine interactions; follow the law; respect other members of the Instagram community; maintain a supportive environment by not glorifying self-injury, and; be thoughtful when posting newsworthy events. In order to "keep the community

strong" users are encouraged to report images or accounts that violate the Community Guidelines by using Instagram's built-in reporting option to file a report, unfollow or block the content that is in violation of the guidelines, delete inappropriate comments, and set their accounts to private so only a selected audience can view their images. These guidelines restrict the freedom of expression of its users and help the platform to depoliticize and manage any revolutionary content that challenges the capitalist structure. As Standage (2014) demonstrated in, *Writing on the Wall: Social Media - The First 2,000 Years,* there is clearly an evident tension between freedom of expression and censorship of content when using social media. Instagram's guidelines restrict the freedom of expression of its users and help the platform to depoliticize and manage any revolutionary content that challenges the capitalist structure, spurs innovation, and foments revolution. This is a result of advertisers desire to attain capital from what Smythe (2001) calls the "audience commodity". According to Smythe, the audience as a commodity is a static and performed entity that is valuable to advertisers, and therefore, must be managed if capital is to attain desired aptitudes and capacities. As Coté and Pybus (2011) suggest, there is a pedagogical imperative involved in which the "subjects that you become must be compatible with the needs of contemporary capitalist reproduction" (21). In this respect, the structure of Instagram works to manage its community members through the regulation and censorship of its users' content. Users such as @bloatedandalone4eva1993 and @arvidabystrom have begun a project calling for users who have had their selfie's censored to tell their stories of how Instagram has tried to control and manage their self-expression and presentation of their bodies. These examples bring light to the way in which the structure of social networking sites can limit and restrict women's ability and freedom to self-represent.

This thesis is an important contribution to feminist research on the body because as we will see, since feminist theory began discussions of the female body in advertising beginning in the 1970s, little change has been made to the ways women's bodies are represented throughout mass media. Research that addresses the ways in which social movements are mobilizing onto social media platforms have not yet addressed the body positive movement on the social media platform, Instagram. Therefore, my study will consider how, as social media continues to play a significant and influential role in individuals' self-presentation and interaction with others, individuals can utilize these platforms to challenge and shift social relations in a moral and ethical way. By focusing on the radical body positive movement on Instagram, my study uncovers the ways in which women can successfully counteract dominant codes of self-presentation and experience empowerment and agency. The social networking theories of self-presentation that claim that individuals construct their identities through the approval or disapproval of others, as well as through the representations of others, are essential for this examination of how female viewers are affected by the body positive movement.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

For the purpose of this research women's self-expression on Instagram will be discussed through the lens of both representation and presentation. Much research has been conducted on representation in offline spaces, beginning most notably with Erving Goffman's (1959) work, *The presentation of self in everyday life*. With the emergence of digital technologies individuals were provided with greater possibilities and flexibility in self-presentation in online spaces. With social networking sites gaining momentum, prior research on identity and subjectivity construction in online spaces grew, with the focus now on social networking sites. Scholarly work pertaining to gender and self-presentation on social media provides the context for this study as it considers whether social media platforms have afforded women the possibility to practice meaningful self-presentation, while reaching a global audience.

SELF- (RE)PRESENTATON

Representation and presentation are very similar to one another and used within social media studies. Twentieth century linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure (1966), developed the semiotic understanding of representation as a system of signs (sounds, words, images or objects) that signify a concept or a thing. Representations are constructed by the varying experiences, contexts, and cultures that individuals inhabit. Representation, therefore, allows for an analysis of the selfie, specifically the ways in which objects, words, images or objects come to represent a concept or a thing. In this sense, women's bodies (objects) represent signs that are constructed by dominant discourses and associated with negative connotations. An analysis of the connotations of the signs within the images will reveal the common associations (i.e. shared cultural understandings) connected with the signs, rather than one's own individual associations. Alternatively, a denotation simply describes what is shown or the literal meaning of the sign without interpretation. As demonstrated by the body positive yogis whose photos are staged from a distance, even photos that do not appear to be taken by the user because their full body and hands are visible in the shot are still seen as a self-representation because they are deliberately staged, photographed, and posted to their Instagram account.

In comparison, a presentation is an act that conveys and presents oneself to others either verbally or through images. Individuals present an identity that is either consistent with their own self-image or others expectations. Presentation can either match one's own self-image or match others expectations. In *Self-Representation in Social Media (2017),* Jill Walker Rettberg argued that if an image is analyzed as a presentation rather than a representation, then focus would be less on its status as a set of signs, and more on the role the author is performing by posting the image, considering questions such as: the intended audience of the image, where and when it was posted, what responses it received and the authors' motivations for creating and sharing the

image (7). Presentation was useful for determining what motivated the body positive advocates to participate in the movement, how they were presenting the self, for what purposes, and for what intended audience. Furthermore, participant interviews allowed for an understanding of the types of responses the images are met with. The body positive advocates who feel disembodied present defiant presentations of the self that contradict the norms associated with woman's bodies.

Scholarly critiques of self-presentation began with the work of sociologist Erving Goffman whose book, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), is prominently referenced in social media research to discuss how individuals present themselves to audiences of social networking sites. Goffman's focus was on offline spaces and the way in which individuals perform and present themselves in face-to-face interactions, varying on the interactions with different groups of people. Individuals self-expression and performance of their identities, either verbally or nonverbally, was goal driven and determined by both individuals' goals of the self and their audience's expectations (Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Bortree, 2005). According to Goffman, while interpreting their audiences and the contexts, individuals negotiate between front stage and backstage performances during self-presentation. Front stage performances are cautious of the self that they are presenting, whereas backstage performances of the self are less restricted and filtered (Smith and Sanderson, 2015). In offline environments individuals do not have control over their self-presentation as physically present audiences can counteract self-presentation claims (Caplan 2005; Gibbs, Ellison, & Heino 2006; Papacharissi 2002).

Self-presentation research by scholars such as Goffman (1979), Kang (1997), and Lidner (2004) has largely dealt with print advertising, as well as interpersonal contexts such as dating and friendship. Goffman's (1979) analysis of gender in magazine advertising found women to be

depicted as subordinate to men, which led to the term "gender display" (1). The term was used to describe the conventional portrayals of the sexes, whether through biology or learning, that were used to maintain the woman in a position of subordination to man, including; relative size, feminine touch, function ranking, ritualization of subordination, and licensed withdrawal. All five displays serve to frame the female in a subordinate and submissive manner.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Goffman's semiotic research can be applied to digital technology and assist in thinking about the ways in which individuals self-present online. Traditionally, self-presentation unfolded in face-to-face interactions that placed restrictions on a person's self-presentation. However, the configuration processes afforded by online sites offer people a greater degree of customization in this respect and allows individuals greater control over their self-presentation, as Smith and Sanderson (2015) stated that

> with the advent of the internet and online communication, people were afforded more
> control over their self-presentation, with the ability to engage in impression management
> virtually, without an audience being physically present to counteract self-presentation
> claims. (344)

Online communications allow individuals to have more control and customization over their self-presentation in online spaces that may not be possible or desirable to display in offline spaces. Discussions regarding the ability to self-present in online spaces provide the basis for this studies consideration of how women are using the opportunities afforded by social media to generate new subjectivities, self-present outside traditional gender norms, counter mainstream stereotypes directed at the female body, and subvert conventional forms of the male gaze through the use of

the selfie.

Scholarly critiques of social networking sites have suggested that performative practices shape and are shaped by networked digital environments (Friedberg 2006; boyd and Heer 2006; Manovich 2001; Senagala 2001; Slater 2002; Taylor 2002; Van Dijck 2007; Niels van Doorn 2011). In *Digital spaces, material traces: How matter comes to matter in online performances of gender, sexuality and embodiment (2011)*, Neils van Doorn suggests that the immateriality of the virtual is materially actualized through material traces of embodiment in the form of various digital objects, such as texts, images, and cinematics. In this sense, "the performative practices in digital spaces such as weblogs resemble everyday physical experiences in their simultaneous incorporation of virtual and concrete elements to make sense of daily life" (534). Social networking sites are materially actualized through material traces of embodiment such as photos of the self, sharing photos of interest, posting status updates, inserting captions to photos, and commenting on images and status updates. As a result, the digitally virtual spaces of social media platforms have become increasingly difficult to separate from the materiality of user's everyday reality.

More specifically, Van Doorn (2011) and other scholars such as Manovich (2001) have found that digital spaces shape the way that users perform their embodied gender and sexuality. The embodied artifacts that Van Doorn (2011) addresses are employed to articulate gender and sexuality, materializing everyday (inter)actions in digital space. Van Doorn suggests that, "these digital actualizations of embodied subjectivity reconfigure the way that gender and sexuality can be visually articulated, reassembling their relation to one another and the bodies with which they have traditionally been associated" (538). However, Van Doorn found that users reinforce rather than experiment with their embodied gender and sexuality:

The majority of contemporary users mobilize the socio-technical possibilities of these platforms to reinforce, rather than experiment with, established boundaries that designate the 'appropriate' place for bodies and technologies, leaving the changing conditions of embodied gender and sexuality largely uncomplicated. (538)

These common cultural norms are not transparent and re-enacted in a straightforward way, but rather are mediated by new media technologies that translate gender, sexuality, and embodiment onto digital environments in different and unforeseen ways (538). Case studies of Internet Relay Chat (IRC) (Van Doorn and Van Zoonen "Theorizing gender and the internet"), YouPorn (Van Doorn "Keeping it real") and Dutch weblogs (Van Doorn, Zoonen, and Wyatt "Writing from experience"), have supported these findings, concluding that user practices in online spaces remain ardently attached to conventional notions of gender, sexuality and embodiment. Digital media practices do not automatically result in subversive performances of the human body. Immaterial gender and sexuality is reiterated through a circumscribed set of actualizations in both physical and digital space (538).

Scholarly research that has explored gendered differences in Internet use reflects the findings of Humphreys and Orr Vered. Humphreys and Orr Vered, in *Reflecting on Gender and Digital Networked Media* (2014), interrogated the ways in which new media intersect with gendered practices. In an analysis of gender performances in multiuser online gaming, it was discovered that the possibility to explore gender and sexuality through avatars allows for the exploration of identities and troubling of gender norms. However, experimentation and play do not signal the disappearance of gender or gender inequality, as gender norms are policed on these platforms and players move between different performances as the self: "The character a person performs inside a game may be policed into a particular gender performance, but the alignment

of character gender and player gender is not guaranteed and may not correspond" (7). The performance of gender is constrained by the games particular representational scheme of the avatars that may offer only stereotypical and sexist representations of male and female characters and also constrain opportunities to explore an alternate representation. Humphreys and Orr Vered conclude that existing social norms of gender and gendered relations in offline spaces are reflected and extended onto online spaces such as blogs, games, social networking platforms, and mobile phones. Therefore it is important to consider the ways in which the structure of social networking sites constrain, limit, and reinforce dominant presentations of the self.

Other scholarly studies have explored gendered differences on dating sites (Ellison et al. 2006; Gibbs et al. 2006; Toma & Hancock 2010), online community groups (Lampel & Bhalla 2007; Schwammelin & Wodzicki 2012), blogs (Trammell and Keshelashvili 2005), and webcam usage among women (Hillis 2009; Senft 2008; White 2006; Deller and Tiltion 2015). The studies found that, while online spaces provide individuals with more control over their self-image and allow them to self-present outside traditional gender lines, they are at the same time experiencing representation within their prescribed gender norms. Research conducted by Trammell and Keshelashvili (2005) for example, found that men were more likely to maintain filter blogs, whereas women were more likely to maintain diary blogs. Furthering this finding, Weathers et al. (2014), compared the self-presentation of two male and female sports broadcasters, finding that the female broadcaster self-presented along traditional gender lines by centering on fashion and entertainment, in comparison to the male broadcaster who self-presented as a sports expert offering information and opinions. It becomes evident that despite opportunities made available by online platforms to self-present outside gender norms, many individuals do not push those boundaries and perform within gendered expectations of personality.

GENDER, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND (RE)PRESENTATION

 The symbiotic development of smartphones and social media platforms have provided women

with the tools to experience agency online and practice self-representation. As social networking

sites gained momentum, scholars such as Rosenberg & Egbert (2011), Van Der Heide,

D'Angelo, & Schumaker (2012), Vitak (2012), and boyd and Ellison (2007) investigated the

ways in which self-presentation capabilities have increased with the rise of social media. Social

media research has found that social networking sites allow for social and personal identity

construction, self-presentation, impression management, friendship performance, and network

and social capital generation (boyd and Ellison 2007; Steinfield, Ellison, and Lampe 2008; Zhao,

Grasmuck, and Martin 2008).

        Individuals present and perform identities on social media platforms through the

management of profiles and news feeds. In online spaces individuals maintain their virtual

presence by cultivating and updating their profiles on a regular basis in order to remain 'legible'

to others (Coté and Pybus 2011). With very limited research available on the social media

platform Instagram, my thesis will apply scholarly research on the subjectivity and identity

formation on the social networking site, Facebook, to the social media platform, Instagram.

Applying Marder, Joinson, and Shankar's (2012) Facebook findings to Instagram, it can be

argued that self-presentation and social status management on Instagram are facilitated through

photographs, 'likes' (received and awarded), accounts followed, comments made, check-ins, and

other personal information. Individuals represent the self through their own words in captions

and comments, reposting others photos, linking to content elsewhere, hash tags, and images. On

Instagram, users have the option of posting a profile picture that appears next to their postings

and comments. Their membership in groups is acknowledged through hash tags, the accounts that they follow, and the content of their posts. Users are also given the option to share their posts to other social networking sites. Photographs are the most important feature of Instagram, as the platform relies on the sharing of photos and videos. Image presentation is enhanced by the ability of users to check their location in so their followers know where they are, tag their friends in their photos, and share their experiences and interests with their friends. The structure of the platform further constructs individuals' subjectivity by catering the posts on the "Popular page" to users interests based on previous accounts they have followed, images they have liked, and accounts followed by those within their group. On the popular page users are given the choice to "see fewer posts like this" if they do not like the content they are seeing, or block and report photos they find inappropriate.

Studies by such scholars as Marwick (2005), Manago et al. (2008), Lampe et al. (2008), and Lenhart et al. (2010) have addressed how young people construct and maintain online identities, many of which found that the structure of these sites both constrain and encourage user agency in self-representation. Identity formation in these networks involves reflexivity, as individuals negotiate between their internalized construct of identity and performing socially desirable expressions of the self (Gössling and Stavrinidi 2015; Bond and Falk 2013; Andersen and Chen 2002; Hibbert et al. 2013). In line with Goffman's (1959) discussion of self-presentation in offline spaces, social media studies have found that due to the increased surveillance on social media platforms, users display the most credible aspects of the self and promote desirable social impressions that are then verified and legitimized through the approval or disapproval of audiences through the social practices unique to these platforms, such as the 'like' button (Gössling and Stavrinidi 2015; Giddens 1991; Manago et al. 2008; Krämer and

Winter 2008; Grasmuck et al. 2009; Hancock et al. 2007; Gibbs et al. 2006; Reichart Smith and Sanderson 2015). Identity presentations mirrored one's self-perception, the perception of the desirability of one's activities by others, omission of negative communication, and engagement in mobility practices seen as socially admirable, innovative or daring, as well as the public omission of aspects of one's life that are considered to better remain hidden (Balick 2014; Cohen and Gössling 2015). In addition to audience responses shaping their identity, self-representation of others functions as a social comparison that is important to identity development. These studies suggest that the increased surveillance on social media platforms supports social comparison and places more pressure on the individual to perform desirable and favourable impressions, and makes practices and norms (and departures from them) highly visible (Steinfield, Ellison, and Lampe 2008; Gössling and Stavrinidi 2015; Van House 2011).

Social media scholars have argued that online and offline spaces have become increasingly difficult to separate. Sunden (2009) has determined that, "given the portability of these virtual spaces, the digital profile should be understood as a social practice that enables subjectivization both in the virtual and the fleshy body" (qtd. in Coté and Pybus 13). The manner in which users gather meaningful signs together, update their profiles, and upload content connects users to a data flow which confounds the temporal and spatial borders demarcating their body, creating what Coté and Pybus term '(non)locality': "We find ourselves in a radically different ontological realm where our communicative and affective capacity attains an instantaneous and global reach while our material bodies remain stubbornly Newtonian, subject to hyper- locality and sluggish physical movement through time and space" (Coté and Pybus 23-4). In *The culture of connectivity: A critical history of social media* (2013) Van Dijck found that social networking sites bridge both space and time, allowing users to maintain social relations by instantaneously

24

sharing and receiving content with distant others, including family and friends, which Germann

Molz and Paris (2015) argue lead to feelings of immediacy, proximity and intimacy. These

changes in photography have allowed individuals more opportunity to self-present through

images, and more specifically for the importance of this research, take up different forms of

embodiment online that would have otherwise been considered private.

The integration of cameras with smartphone devices has changed the important role

photographs play in an individual's ability to self-represent (Ardèvol & Gómez-Cruz 2012;

Lasén & García 2015; Mendelson & Papacharissi 2011; Van Dijck 2008; Miguel 2016). The

definition of what is considered a picture is always being negotiated due to advances in smart

phone technology. Prior to smartphone technology it was costly to buy and produce film, and as

a result people had to be selective about what they chose to photograph. According to Bourdieu

(1990), photography was reserved for special rituals, occasions, and important moments. In

addition there were no online outlets for individuals to share their photos with others. However,

with advancements in digital photography, the development of the camera phone, and the

opportunities afforded by online communication technologies, individuals are now given more

opportunities to produce their own media and instantly share it with others, changing what is

considered picture worthy. Recent work of such scholars as Okabe and Ito (2003), David (2015)

and Berry (2015) has addressed this shift, stating that users have moved from giving importance

only to special moments such as birthdays or holidays to now placing more importance on

ordinary objects, everyday events, and mundane details of their lives, including where people

walk, what they are eating and whom they are with. In *How and Why People Use Camera*

Phones (2004), Kindberg et al. argued that there are now two reasons for camera phone image

capture, which include the "affective" versus the "functional, and the "social" versus the

"individual" (qtd. in David 23). Van House et al. (2005) and David (2015) have classified the social uses of personal photography as: creating and maintaining social relationships; constructing personal and group memory, and; self-presentation and self-expression.

The camera phone disrupts the boundaries between what has been traditionally viewed as private versus public forms of self-expression. Individuals can now engage in acts of self-exposure that are considered private due to the ability to document everyday life and instantly upload images of the self to the public, which was impossible before the camera phone. In 1980 John Berger distinguished between private and public photography, maintaining that private photography records individuals' experiences, whereas the latter records certain events and scenes, which are 'torn from [their] context,' and 'lend [themselves] to any arbitrary use' (51-52). The public photograph documents an event whose original context and meaning are unknown to the reader. When these photographs of everyday life and self-expression are posted to an individual's profile and circulated online, the boundaries between the private and the public become blurred as personal expressions circulate on public channels. As personal photographs become public, individuals become more conscious and careful of what photographs they will select to show.

Recent work in the field done by Jordán-Conde et al.(2013), Lomborg (2013), and Pedroni et al. (2014) has addressed what constitutes an intimate or private image, finding that sexual behavior, feelings and attitudes towards death, and emotional aspects of the self are considered intimate topics. Other scholars have built on this research and looked at the gendered differences in intimate and private images. Cristina Miguel's study, *Visual Intimacy on Social Media: From Selfies to the Co-Construction of Intimacies Through Shared Pictures* (2016), explores the way users negotiate the disclosure of intimate pictures across two different social

media platforms, Badoo and Facebook. Miguel looks at how social networking sites have radically transformed existing notions and experiences of privacy and intimacy through the use of images. The modes of intimacy developed on social media often involve a bridging of online and offline and public and private realms. Based on the participants' interviews, Miguel identified 'sexy pictures', 'sexual orientation', and 'relationship status' as intimate. The study found that a gender double standard was evident between what is considered intimate for women to post and what is consider intimate for men to post. Pedroni et al. (2014) contributed to the discussion of public and private images, revealing that these excessive expressions of the self and deeply intimate images were considered unacceptable to post online.

In recent years a vast amount of research has emerged on the 'selfie' that encompasses both negative and positive views. Jill Walker Rettberg's, *Self-Representation in Social Media (2017),* looks at selfies as a means of self-presentation and performance, with a focus on three modes of self-representation in social media, including visual, written and quantitative. Individuals self-represent visually through images and icons that express their identity, which, are then shared on social media platforms. Written self-representations include blogs, online diaries, or status updates and comments that are shared on social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The third form of self-representation includes quantified self-representation through apps that allow for more and more opportunities to represent our lives through numbers and graphs:

Quantified self-representation can mean extensive and deliberate self-tracking, as we see in the quantified self movement, or it can be something as simple as swiping right to add a filter to a Snapchat image showing the temperature where we are or the speed at which we are moving. Often the three modes overlap in social media, as with a Snapchat image that

includes numerical information. (Rettberg 1)

The additional means to self-represent through the overlapping of visual, written, and quantitative modes on new apps and devices have enhanced the ways in which individuals can tell their stories. This is evident throughout the body positive movement where women overlap their selfies with written content, such as "let's talk about stretchmark's", "selflovingyogis", or "you are beautiful".

Scholarly works, such as those of Scott-Dixon (2002), Koskela (2004), Senft (2008) and Reichart Smith and Sanderson (2015), have developed on the discussion of the opportunities provided by social media platforms that empower women to counter mainstream stereotypes directed at the female body and subvert conventional forms of the gaze through the use of the selfie, and self-present outside traditional gender norms. Women now have control over the very highly performative act of presenting themselves in front of the camera, which includes: how they want to appear in the photo; whether or not they wear makeup or have their hair done; whether they are clothed or unclothed; the position of their body in relation to the camera; the distance of their bodies from the camera; whether they take up a provocative, comedic, or sultry pose; whether they filter or crop the photo; if friends are in the photo with them; who they share the photo with, and; which hash tags and captions they want to use. Dong-Hoo Lee (2005) examined the ways in which digital camera phones have been utilized in young women's daily experiences and the degree to which young women can be the producers of their own culture, generating new subjectivities, empowering themselves, and subverting common beliefs in women's ineptitude with regard to new media technology and its function (Dong-Hoo Lee, 2005). Dong-Hoo Lee found that women use camera phones as materials of conversation and to experience a new form of gaze:

The camera phone becomes various tools in turn: a tool for one's own private pleasure, a tool for conversation, a tool to play with acquaintances, and a tool to experiment with ways of self-presentation and self-expression […] The uses of the camera phone seem to affect, to some degree women's receptiveness to new media technology, and the ways in which they present themselves and have relations with others. (Dong-Hoo Lee, 2005)

The camera phone is a tool for self-exploration that provides women more power and control over their bodies through the manipulation of the camera to transform their body image and subvert the conventional patriarchal gaze.

Feminist scholars and communication researchers have addressed the claim that social media platforms and the use of the selfie have created an environment in which practices of narcissism and vanity thrive. Communication scholars, Mendelson and Papacharissi's (2011), found that "while narcissistic behavior may be structured around the self, it is not motivated by selfish desire, but by a desire to better connect the self to society" (270). Other scholars such as, Minh-Ha T. Pham (2015) critically examined post-internet vanity—otherwise termed "digital narcissism"—and the political uses and potential of "networked vanity" through an analysis of the #feministselfie hash tag campaign that emerged on Twitter in November 2013, along with the RAISE Our Story project that brought visibility to the issue of immigration reform. According to Pham (2015), "participatory media allows the networked subject-as-represented object a hand in shaping and controlling their representation" (224). The act of women using their camera phones to photograph themselves disrupts the conventional structure of the gaze that Berger discussed in 1979, in which "men act and women appear, men look at woman and women watch themselves being looked at" (Berger 47). However, Pham found that, in participating in the representational process "individuals who are the objects of the gaze are also co-creators of the interpretative

conditions through which media images of their bodies and selves are seen" (225). One can be the object of the photograph while at the same time can look at oneself as the object. Women become active spectators as they observe themselves through this process, manipulating the image, retouching photos, and positioning the camera phone to create the most ideal and flattering image. Pham develops the idea of "relational vanity" and arrives at a concept she terms "networked vanity" in order to capture the ways "new participatory media and its capacity for self-presentation and self-promotion are being used for purposes beyond self-interest"(224). Participatory media has allowed for a new visual paradigm where the relations of power between the object of looking and the looking subject are significantly more dynamic.

Art historian, Derek Conrad Murray (2015) explored the use of the selfie in the work of young female artists who define themselves as radical feminists and post pictures of their menstrual blood, feminine hygiene products, their bodies either dressed or undressed, engaged in sexual activity, and covered in tattoos to counter hyper-femininity. Murray found that these women were utilizing the selfie as a mean of political empowerment to challenge and resist male-dominated obsession, oppression, and control over their lives and bodies. According to Murray (2015), these images may not seem politically empowering when viewed individually, but are truly significant when viewed together with others: "Viewed individually, they appear rather banal, commonplace, and benign. Taken en masse, it feels like a revolutionary political movement – like a radical colonization of the visual realm and an aggressive reclaiming of the female body"(490). Murray's research provides insights into the ways in which selfies can provide women with a means of representational agency that challenges patriarchal and hegemonic norms and expectations placed on the female body.

However, a vast amount of social media research has shown that selfies are utilized as a

means of control over women's bodies, despite scholarly research that suggests selfies provide women with additional means to self-present and challenge conventional forms of the gaze (Burns 2015; Warfield 2015; Tiidenberg and Gomez Cruz 2015; Tiidenberg 2014; Abidin 2016). Utilizing Foucauldian theories, Anne Burns (2015) found that selfies are a gendered object and practice that "legitimize the discipline of women's behaviours and identities" through the perpetuation of feminine stereotypes (Burns, 1716). Resembling Erving's claim that during face-to-face interactions individuals negotiate between individual goals of the self and their audience's expectations, Katie Warfield (2015) finds a similar form of self-presentation in online environments by women who take selfies, explaining:

> young women mediate between these various subjectivities at once trying to find a balance between an image that presents them as conventionally beautiful (the model), while also being an image that others would want to see (the self-conscious thespian) and finally an image that somehow represents a felt connection to the body and one's authentic sense of self. (qtd. in Rettberg 17)

Young women are influenced by the perception of others when negotiating self-presentation in online spaces, feeling pressured to present conventionally beautiful images of the self while constructing their subjectivity. This is important to this studies consideration of what impacts the content that women post and prevents them from participating in the body positive movement. Applied to the body positive advocates, it allows for the consideration of how the advocates adhere to and reproduce capitalist norms of ideal beauty through their subversive representations of femininity.

Research by scholars such as Bailey et al. (2013), Salter (2015), and De Ridder and Van

31

Bauwel (2013) address the discriminatory standards around public participation. Gaining insight into the perspective of viewers of female self-presentation, Bailey et al. (2013) examined the ways in which young women read the stereotypical representations of girls as sexualized objects seeking male attention on social networking sites. The study found that girls are not only judged much more harshly than boys for the content of their online profiles, but also for their degree of publicness. Stereotypical visual forms of self-exposure by girls are "socially facilitative" symbols of social success and popularity for young women. Girls are expected to be attractive, have a boyfriend, and be part of the party scene but are judged harshly for doing so on their online profiles. According to the authors, girls are apprehended for their public display, "being called a 'slut' for having an open profile, too many friends, or posting too much information" (91). The intense surveillance practice of social networking sites combined with the fear of social repercussions according to familiar stereotypical norms result in an inability to participate in defiant gender performances.

Developing on this research, Michael Salter examined the impact of norms of publicity and privacy on young people in his study, *Privates in the Online Public: Sex(ting) and Reputation on Social Media (2015)*. A focus group study was conducted on young Australians aged 18 to20 years to examine how they negotiate privacy and publicity in their use of online and digital technology. Salter argued that digital images of bodies circulate online in a manner that reinforces gender inequalities, as the public feminine body is conflated with pornography, moral failure, and ascribed as sexually promiscuous, in contrast to the range of meanings that can be applied to the public masculine body. While men engaged in sexual harassment, young people tended to ignore men's participation and instead placed the blame and responsibility on girls and women to manage the risks of online abuse: "norms of publicity and privacy that naturalize male

public participation while marking out girls and women in online publics as highly visible and legitimate objects of public scrutiny and judgment" (14). Due to the history men's participation in the public realm, men's activities have become normalized and go unquestioned, whereas women's historical exclusion has resulted in much more vigorous surveillance practices and scrutiny by others on social media platforms.

De Ridder and Van Bauwel (2013) examine how Flemish teenagers negotiate gender and sexualities when commenting on popular profile pictures in order to demonstrate how hegemonic normativity is produced and at the same time resisted by counterhegemonic production of heteronormativity. The research found that commenting on images is a gendered practice that constitutes the subject and others within the conventional norms of genders and sexualities: comments needed to cohere between "the biological sex, the performative gender and the expected desire" (575). The study found that these gendered practices were strongly intertwined with a continuous representation of heterosexuality that can be understood as the ultimate purpose when commenting on a picture more often than not

However, the same study found that communication rules and practices on social networking sites create an environment for counter hegemony, including dislocations of passive femininity and hegemonic masculinity:

> Passive femininity was abandoned because of girls' high degree of communicative activity […] We noticed a power shift where masculine bodies repeatedly became objects of looking[…] Further, in representing strong and loving friendships between boys, gendered behaviors disrupted traditional masculine hegemony. (580)

Ultimately, however, empowered femininities resorted to self-objectification, and boys

recuperated their heterosexual representation in avoidance of being seen as "gay". This finding

was worth noting, as it demonstration the potential of social media platforms for social change,

regardless of how minor the subversion is.

NETWORKED COLLECTIVISM

Important to this study is the scholarly research that suggests self-presentation in networked

publics allows for group identification, arising in what Baym (2010) terms ''networked

collectivism''(91). The ability to construct a social identity that connects individuals with others

and create associations to groups has been made possible by social networking sites (Manago et

al. 2008). According to Van House (2011), the design of social networking sites "situate one's

work and implicitly oneself in a larger network of people, topics, concerns, and attitudes" (425).

Social media scholars, such as Boyd (2011) have looked at social networking sites as networked

publics and virtual communities. Castells (2010) argues that it is within online communities that

social identities come into existence:

> Virtual communities are different from corporeal communities in that they do not follow
>
> the same communication patterns as physical communities; yet, they are inter-personal
>
> social networks based on reciprocity, i.e. communities offering fora in which social
>
> identities come into existence. (qtd. in Gössling and Stavrinidi, 4)

Individuals come together based on common beliefs, values, and identities. Communities form

through this process, as people who have something in common and belong to a community

whose own interests are recognized through the collectivity. Polletta and Jasper (2001) define

collective identity as "an individual's cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader

community, category, practices, or institution" (285). Through one's social involvement online

and internalized group memberships, collective action becomes possible (Postmes and Brunsting 2002; Sandoval-Almazan and Gil-Garcia 2014), as individuals can come together in this public sphere to form collective identities that freely discuss and identify societal problems, challenge those in power, and influence political action (Hohendahl and Russian, 1974; Taylor and Whittier's 1992).

On Instagram, individuals are embedded in social networks in which they recognize, select, organize, and present information in a meaningful way that brings communities together based on shared values and beliefs (Van Dijck 2013; Altheide, 1987). This is accomplished through posting images, sharing of other users' images, tagging friends in posts, "liking" others photos, and attaching hash tags on images—allowing the image to be easily searchable and accessible. Users can also like and/or comment on other users posts, and follow accounts that share their same interests. Discussing the importance of self-presentation through images, Berry (2015) suggests the selfie acts as a powerful tool in reinforcing individual's connections to their social groups. These theories of networked collectivism can be applied to the body positive movement analyzed for my study. The movement falls under the definitions of a collective that is in opposition to heteropatriarchal power structures that reinforce hegemonic ideals of femininity. Body positive advocates come together based off of shared experiences, such as: the surveillance and scrutiny received from others due to their appearance; body modification practices; battles with eating disorders; frustration with the pressure felt to conform to ideals of beauty; and the rejection of dominant capitalist ideals. These women all have in common the desire to challenge and change the dominant standards of beauty and representations of femininity. During this process body positive advocates form into a collective with other women who share the same experiences, look the same as them, and share the same motivation and desire for social change.

This movement has created a digital space that women did not previously have, where they can come together, support one another, and practice meaningful self-presentation. This movement acts as a support network for girls and women who have gone through the same experiences and can share their stories and talk to others who understand them. There is an overarching theme across the photos that all deal with body image in some way. The way these advocates have formed a movement on the platform is evident throughout the captions, comment section, and photos that serve to keep the members in contact and elicit communication amongst them. Many advocates from different accounts have become good friends, and get together and take body positive photos to post online with corresponding captions that discuss the impact they have had on each other's lives. Noting this finding, participant G stated: "Everyone's so nice in the comments. I liked seeing all the comments, they were very nice… The women in these photos are not the standard Victoria Secret model and yet they will comment very uplifting things". Through the comment section underneath photos women receive positive comments, encouragement, and reinforcement that they would not otherwise receive from elsewhere or from others.

As expressed through the body positive movement, the advent of social media has provided individuals the ability to take more control over their self-presentation and express aspects of their identity that they would otherwise not be able to in offline environments. As a result, social media platforms allow women to experience more agency and control over their bodies and their self-expression. However, it has become apparent that while women are given the opportunity to perform outside of traditional gender norms they typically do not, due to the increased surveillance on these platforms. These findings provide the context for this thesis, which takes this research further to interrogate the ways women are successfully self-presenting

outside of Western capitalist ideals of femininity and presenting subversive representations of the

self that challenge these dominant ideals. This thesis will analyze the signs within the images

more closely to determine whether body positive advocates are successfully rejecting

mainstream images of femininity through counterhegemonic presentations of the self, or whether

they are in fact reinforcing dominant codes around femininity. While feminist research has

explored the mobilization of the fat acceptance movement onto blogging sites, the possibilities

Instagram provides for women to mobilize and challenge mainstream representations of

femininity has not been the subject of much debate due to being a more recent phenomenon.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This research employs a mixed methods approach beginning with an ethnographic content analysis of the body positive movement on Instagram to provide a foundation for the analysis of the images. The ethnographic element to the ECA allowed for human observation, interaction, and feedback through visual analyses. This ethnographic content analysis sought to analyze: 1) the body positive movement on the social media platform, Instagram, 2) how the body positive advocates are rejecting and repeating dominant beauty ideals, and; 3) how the structure of Instagram works to connect the movement. To further assess their perceived impact interviews were conducted to explore the reaction to the images. Through participant interviews, the study sought to examine: 1) how the body positive movement affects female viewers, and 2) how they are responding to the movement. The analysis of the data was guided by and interpreted through the lens of Critical theory and the principles of feminist theory.

Ethnographic content analysis (ECA) was selected since the research requires participant observation in the selection of the topic, method of study, data collections, analysis and interpretation (Cicourel, 1964; Johnson, 1975; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). An

ethnographic content analysis was conducted to describe the operations and belief systems of the body-positive culture on the social media platform, Instagram. I first undertook a visual and textual analysis of the body positive images and captions in order to determine the common themes among the content of the advocates, and whether the subversive performance of femininity are repeating or rejecting dominant norms of femininity. The communication of meaning was documented and the definition of what constitutes the group of people as a movement based on common elements of language and purpose, and provides a detailed description of the belief systems, values and behaviours of the producers of the body-positive imagery. The comments under the images were not included in the analysis, as the project was growing too large for the time constraints placed on the study. In addition, interviews with the body positive advocates were not possible, as the advocates had a waiting list for interviews with no available days in the near or distant future. An analysis of the comments, as well as interviews with the advocates will be undertaken in future research.

In order to complete the visual and textual analysis I viewed and analyzed a non-random convenience sample of all available images on Instagram pertaining to the movement between September 2015 and April 2016. I then employed a non-random critical case sample to systematically select images that would represent adequately the body-positive movement. Within each advocates' account I made sure not to set boundaries as to what images I collected, in order to collect a variety of images that covered all of the themes the advocates addressed. Fifty images were chosen in order to get a large sample that would adequately encompass all of the themes discussed. Ten accounts were chosen based on the amount of followers the users had, with fifty thousand or more being the focus number. Thus, the sample consisted of ten clusters consisting of five images per account. It was also imperative that the accounts were similar in the

quantity and consistency of images, selecting only accounts that were active and avid posters, with a minimum of one post per week. Any relevant images after April 2016 that pertained to the movement and met the criteria were incorporated into the thesis in order to support and demonstrate the findings.

The body positive accounts were found through hash tags collected from the accounts. Following an initial search for body positive advocates through the hashtag #bodypositivity other hash tags were collected off of the images of body positive advocates. As I began analyzing the accounts searchable by the #bodypositive hash tag for additional hash tags, I found additional hash tags that identified other members of the movement. The final collection of hash tags that were used to identify body positive advocates included: #fatyoga, #fatgirl, #fatpositive, #bodypositive, #bodyconfidence, #curvyyoga, #bigandbeautiful, #yogaforeverybody, #yogaforall, #plussizeyoga, #bodypositivity, #selflove, #effyourbeautystandards, #sizedoesntmatter, #lumpsandbumps, #freethefat, selflovingyogis, #fatvisibility, #armpithairdontcare, #effyourbodystandards, #fatkini, #honouryourcurves, #lovethebodyyouarein, #takingupspace, #radicalbodylove, #SupportTheCurves, #ConfidenceIsSexy, #LoveYourCurves, #BodyPositive, #IamMeAndiAmBeautiful, #PlusSize, #RiotsNotDiets, #FatActivism, #SelfiesForSelfLove, #EmbraceYourCurves, #LadyPitHair, #FreeYourPits, and #ArmpitHairDontCare.

When viewing the images I did not follow any predefined and rigid categories for defining what was relevant, allowing my prior research and familiarity with the movement to guide my observations and analyses (Altheide, 1987). I gathered a non-random purposive sample of images based on the following: a) images that identified with the movement through body positive hash tags; b) images of non-normative bodies that challenge conventions of ideal

beauty; c) images in which the individual addresses dominant capitalist ideals of femininity and promotes the reclaiming of embodiment; d) photos that challenge norms around body size and shape; f) Photos where advocates share experiences with eating disorders, and; g) photos containing menstruation. This method provided an opportunity to assess major trends and comparisons.

Although the research relies on a systemic and analytic structure, it allowed for changes throughout the study. The distinctive characteristic of an Ethnographic Content Analysis is the "reflexive and highly interactive nature of the investigator, concepts, data collection and analysis" (Altheide, 1987). While categories and variables guided the study, others were allowed, expected to emerge, accounted for, and incorporated into relevant material (Altheide, 1987). To this end, "ECA draws on and collects numerical and narrative data, rather than forcing the latter into predefined categories of the former as is done in [Quantitative Content Analysis]"(Altheide, 1987). As items and topics were counted and incorporated into emergent categories, ECA provided descriptive information by conceptually coding data so that one item could be relevant for several purposes. Three phases of coding were utilized to analyze data collected during the study, using the qualitative analysis software, NVivo. NVivo was used to organize and manage the material in order to find insights into the data.

The use of Qualitative research in examining the motivation and impact of the body-positive movement made interviews essential. The second method involved in the study was interviews with female participants who engaged with the Instagram platform, in order to elicit a better understanding of how the body positive messages were decoded by female consumers of the images, the affective responses to these images, and the possibilities images such as these had to affect change in the physical, emotional, and psychological behaviour of the viewers. It is

only recently that women have gained agency through the use of media technologies, and therefore, it is important to focus attention on the women's responses to evaluate the ways in which these technologies have impacted their beliefs and attitudes.

The interviews were based on a non-random convenience sample, drawing female participants from York University. Initially no age limit was placed on the study, as differing ages would have provided a variety of responses to the images and contributed to a broader understanding of how women of various ages are affected by these images. However, the sample naturally determined the age range of female users on the platform as 25 to 34 years of age. Participants were recruited through the posting and distributing of flyers around campus, university-wide emails calling for participation, and snowball sampling in order to minimize researcher bias. However, because much of the participant recruiting was done on a university campus a limitation emerged in which the majority of participants were York University students who had a degree of education and knowledge in the field of women's studies.

Participants were required to come in once for a minimum of one hour in order to allow time for an in-depth discussion. The length of the interviews allowed the participants to fully take part in the conversation and express themselves. The structure of the interviews included an introduction to the research, a brief questionnaire, exposure to the visual images, feedback, and a discussion focused around the responses of the participants. The questionnaire provided to the participants required general information including: their identification, social media usage, and familiarity with body positivity. The selected images from the body positive accounts were then displayed on an iPad for the participants viewing. A resulting discussion began regarding the images and captions and the responses of the participants were recorded. Once a dialogue was initiated I encouraged a continuous, casual, free flowing, and open-ended discussion.

Issues related to one's self-image and past experiences can be very personal and difficult for some to discuss. Therefore, the one-on-one interviews created an environment in which the participants were free of judgment or fear of embarrassment, allowing for more open responses. The environment was relaxed and inviting in order for the participants to feel comfortable with me as the researcher and interviewer. In order to increase the participants' level of comfort I drew on my own experiences during the interviews in order to facilitate the conversation and remain relatable to the participants. Furthermore, the anonymity of the participants was assured in order for them to feel comfortable participating in the study. I asked the participants to create a false name for the study, which they wrote down and placed in front of them during the interaction. I recorded the false names in the participants profile in order to identify the results with the correct participants when analyzing the findings at a later time. Recording the interviews allowed me as the researcher and interviewer to engage with the participants and guide the conversation without having to worry about note taking. Furthermore, the participants felt less like they were part of a study by not having me recording their responses.

A constant comparative method was utilized to continually examine emergent data, comparing it with existing data, and interview questions were added or re-shaped in order to incorporate emerging data. Semi-structured interviews can be seen as a strength of the study as it allowed for "the emergence of unanticipated and important data, while also allowing opportunities to further refine interview questions to encompass emergent data" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Three phases of coding were utilized to analyze data collected during the study, using the qualitative analysis software, NVivo. NVivo was used to organize and manage the material in order to find insights into the data.

Multiple theoretical and conceptual frameworks were applied to the research to enhance insights into the phenomena (Grbich, 2013). Critical theory and the principles of feminist theory guided this study in order to consider how the domination and oppression of women's bodies can be challenged and dismantled both at the social and ideological level (Fuchs, 2011). Critical feminist theory was utilized to investigate societal standards, and how women use online platforms to critique the influences on their bodies. In doing so, a better understanding emerged regarding the cause of women's frustration with oppressive powers over their body, and the resulting activities taking place online that allow women to experience their embodiment while simultaneously critiquing and challenging societal standards of beauty. The research challenges dominant ideologies and investigates the ways in which social media brings communities together and offers potentialities for freedom to traditionally oppressed groups. Furthermore, critical feminist theory was used to analyze whether what these women are doing is in fact a rejection of the dominant codes of femininity or a repetition of those very codes. Interrogating how women interpret images of female embodiment allows for a better understanding of whether the viewer's accept these alternative representations or reject them. Using a critique of patriarchy and capitalism unearthed the underlying affects and representations in the images from body positive accounts, as well as in the affective responses of the participants who find themselves in a state of uneasiness when confronted with these images. Critical theory is radical in that it questions structures of domination and offers possibilities for liberation, social change, and opportunities for alternative versions of the world (Fuchs, 2011). A resulting consideration of the forms of freedom and change these movements can have on a large scale and on a smaller, independent, scale was then enacted.

Through an analysis of the body-positive movement, along with corresponding interviews, the research examined the ways in which women are using social media technologies to have their voices heard and address femininity, self-acceptance, body shaming, beauty ideals, and the role of Instagram regulations in controlling content. The interviews allowed participants to expand their knowledge on societal influences, confront their own struggles with femininity and beauty ideals, and learn to be critical of these ideals and practice self-love and acceptance of their selves and others. The interview process forced participants to rethink or reshape their practices of image sharing online going forward, and contributed to a larger discussion on female empowerment and the political uses of social networking sites.

Chapter Four: Fat Activism and Female Embodiment

The body-positive movement on Instagram challenges societal expectations and culturally imposed values around femininity; including body size, body hair, and bodily fluids. Body positive advocates are trying to change the way the natural female body is perceived and inhabited, and are reclaiming control over their own image and refusing to let society dictate what is appropriate and inappropriate for their bodies. They promote the acceptance and reclaiming of natural beauty, bodily hair, menstruation, and appearances of the skin that are considered flaws. Following the content analysis of the body positivity movement, it became evident that the majority of women used their platforms to address fat visibility and discourses around dieting. The dominant representations of fat bodies—and lack of representations—within mass media and popular culture have led women to mobilize on social media platforms and use readily available tools to document and challenge conceptualizations of female bodies— particularly of fat bodies. Through their captions and images they address representations and lack of representation of fat bodies, body modification practices, physical ability, and desirability. However, while the body-positive members do incorporate themes of self-love and resistance into their practices and actively work against the processes of heteropatriarchal white and ablest capitalism, their images reveal and reinforce dominant codes of femininity engrained within female viewers

Women are influenced by idealized societal expectations and cultural values around femininity and adopt, perform, repeat, and reiterate societal expectations around the idealized

norms of femininity that appear to be natural. Feminist thinkers have argued that gender identity

is socially constructed. Following the postulation by Maurice Merleau-Ponty that the body is

"'an historical idea'" (Butler, 416), and the claims of Simon de Beauvoir that "one is not born,

but rather becomes, a woman" (Beauvoir, 301), Judith Butler's (1990) theory of gender

performance argues that gender is culturally constructed through the repetition of regularized and

constrained norms in performativity. Butler (1993) argues that regularized and constrained norms

in performativity enable a subject and constitutes the spatial and temporal condition for the

subject (Pausé et al. 2014: 15). As such, femininity is constructed through the ongoing

performance and repetition of gendered codes and societal norms around beauty, body size,

smoothness of the skin, bodily hair, and bodily fluids. Acts that appear to be "feminine" such as

donning lipstick and wearing beauty products, long styled hair, and smooth and hairless skin, are

not actually feminine but rather have been historically, socially, and culturally constructed as

belonging to the female gender. Accordingly, gender identity is not natural, but rather is

constructed through "a legacy of sedimented acts" (Butler, 418) that constitutes gender.

 Popular culture and the mass media inform their audiences of what an ideal female

should look like through images of white, tall, thin, toned, and graceful women. The body

positive advocates, along with the participants interviewed for the study, revealed that they are

influenced by, and adopt, societal expectations and cultural values around the notions of

idealized femininity. Popular culture and the mass media inform their audiences of what an ideal

female should look like through images of white, tall, thin, toned, and graceful women. In line

with this view the participants stated that the view their own self-image as well as others based

on the ideal of beauty, which they concluded looked like the following: the woman has to have a

symmetrical and happy looking face, pouty lips, wide eyes of any colour, perfectly flawless

white or tanned skin, white teeth, has long hair, wears makeup and fashionable clothing, and is tall with an hour glass figure, while still having slim build. This concept of the ideal female is the dominant representation found throughout most mass media, and it has spread around the globe. The participants were aware of the media's influence on their perception of beauty, stating that they see it through magazines, advertisements, children and adult television shows and movies, their family, and their friends; and yet, despite this awareness the participants have incorporated the idealized notions of beauty into their views of their self as well as of others. During the discussion many participants revealed how controversial and convoluted their definitions of beauty were, as they expected women to be everything all at once. The participants were aware that the ideal was a constructed and highly unattainable image for women to strive towards and emulate. However, despite this awareness they admitted that they compare themselves to these images every day and measure their self-worth against these images.

Feminist theorists have noted that these developments have taken place in the context of consumer culture, in which woman's bodies have become a source of work in a never ending project of self-fashioning, control, body modification, and consumption (Featherstone & Hepworth, 1991; Gilleard, 2002; Gilleard & Higgs, 2000; Twigg, 2004). After the second wave of feminism between the 1960s and 1980s the housewife market began to decline as housewives moved into the workplace. In her book, *The Beauty Myth (1962)*, Naomi Wolf identified the beauty myth as a response to the Feminine Mystique, which arose in order to save magazines and advertisers from the economic fallout of the women's revolution: "there is no legitimate historical or biological justification for the beauty myth; what it is doing to women today is a result of nothing more exalted than the need of today's power structure, economy, and culture to mount a counteroffensive against women"(13). With the rebirth of the women's movement and

the liberation of women, institutional power structures looked to the body as a form of control over women. In response *Vogue* 1969 offered up the "Nude Look" as a form of control, particularly male control over female sexuality and desire (Nead, 1992; Wolf, 1962). Prior to the 18th century women's bodies and sexuality was the source of all social disorder. In *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality* (1992), Lynda Nead (1992) claims that the cultural obsession with the nude that began during the Renaissance has its origins in changing the base of female sexuality into a symbol of control. The female body is transformed from reminders of animality and desire (Willendorf Venus) to the sublime (Chastity). The nude symbolizes the dominance of the body (which includes sexual desire, flesh, blood, death, fluid, and birth) that is outside of male providence into stillness (the sublime, spiritual, orderly, and chaste). The person who transforms this is the artist and Connoisseur (the male) who looks. The male who gazes at the nude is separate from her, disinterested, and unaffected by his own desire. The creation of the nude as the sublime beauty is a way of man distancing himself from his own desire for the female body. The nude transforms the disorderly female body into a form of control by males who control female sexuality and desire.

John Berger, in *Ways of Seeing* (1972), believes there is a cultural distinction between the Naked and the Nude. The distinction is linked between high art and low art, where the Nude has status and signifies high class, whereas the naked has low class. In *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form* (1965), Kenneth Clark was first to discuss the Naked and the Nude, professing: "The naked are without clothes; the nude is clothed in art, reformed and shifted from the actual to the ideal". The Nude comes to symbolize style and form, whereas the Naked comes to symbolize excess, obscenity, and lack of boundaries. Through art, the Naked ordinary embodied woman is transformed into a representation, which becomes the ideal. The base matter (life, death, fertility)

is transformed into form that is controlled and shaped through the masculine mind. In the process, masculine desire is controlled. In the female nude the flesh is high contained and disciplined, and the essentially corrupt female body is transformed into the sublime. A failed nude is one where the artist has failed to control the female body and transform it. The naked is a place of eroticism, desire, incompleteness, and lack of containment

According to John Berger (1972), the Nude is aware of herself being looked at. By getting women to see themselves as displays, they are tricked into treating their own bodies as sights and images for the consumption of men. The position of women as sights informs women that they have a different subject position than that of men, and this difference is that they are the sights and objects of the male gaze. The position of power is the person doing to looking, which is men; men look at women, and women watch themselves being looked at. Embodying different subject positions results in very different social positions. Men have power that is exterior to their bodies—their social presence, whereas woman's power is intrinsic to her body, her physical presence, and how she looks. Under patriarchy men act, whereas women appear. This determines relations between men and women, and the relation of women to themselves. Women willingly turn themselves into objects of vision and sight. Only those who are judged to be beautiful are considered beautiful. When women participate in male culture they have no subjectivity and exist solely for men. Even when a woman is aware of what she is doing, she still participates in an act where she knows she is being used as an object.

Feminist theorists have argued that women are sexually objectified in Western cultures due to the tendency to focus on specific parts of women's bodies in order to sell products. Susan Cole believed that the way to instill social values is to eroticize them. The objectified and eroticized portrayals of women's bodies have emerged in response to women's recent self-

assertion: "They are welcome and necessary because the sexes have come too close for the comfort of the powerful; they act to keep men and women apart, wherever the restraints of religion, law, and economics have grown too weak to continue their work of sustaining the sex war" (qtd. in Wolf 142). Throughout this process, women move from being a subject, to an object of someone else's pleasure and have a different body language than that of men: where women come to represent passivity and men activity. Women position their bodies to appear smaller, to take up less space, and to remain docile and easier to control (Cuddy, TEDGlobal 2012). As a result women do not appear as powerful and are kept in a position of subordination.

Contemporary media including television, film, print, and the Internet, are responsible for blurring the line between products that are needed in order to live a life, and products for which a need is created by commercial images. Advertisers turn women into objects of desire by men, and then in turn sell the women the products to help them achieve desirability. In order to sell products to consumers, advertising agencies manipulate, exploit, and control the female body through the construction of ideal female beauty prevalent throughout popular culture that relies on images of thin, White, beautiful and attractive to confer status and draw attention to their products (Solomon et al.1992; Bissell and Chung, 2009). These images of ideal beauty complicate women's self-image by creating a standard in which they should aspire to. Western culture profits off of women's self-hatred, telling women they are not good enough and have to keep on improving their image, as Wolf states, "in a stunning move, an entire replacement culture was developed by naming a "problem" where it had scarcely existed before, centering it on women's natural state, and elevating it to the existential female dilemma" (67). Advertising agencies have created a market of insecurity for women that encourage them to enhance their physical features for optimal performance in the workforce, in the home, socially, or in their sex

life. The body of the woman becomes an object that can be refined and obtained in order to succeed and achieve femininity. Susie Orbach (1993) contends, the idea that women's bodies are like gardens in need of continual improvement and sculpting is rooted in the recognition of their bodies as commodities as a result of their exposure since childhood to the objectification of the female body prevalent throughout popular culture, which presents the female body as the "ultimate commodity" (17).

Traditionally, Western capitalist cultures have relied on a body-hierarchy that privileges thin—"normal sized"—bodies, regulating larger bodies through discourses that deem their bodies to be unattractive, unfit, lazy, unhealthy, greedy, excessive and lacking in control. Mass media perpetuates the preference for and acceptance of thin bodies, as Redmond (2003) postulates: "The contemporary popular media is saturated in images of thin and healthy and beautiful female bodies who operate under a 'tyranny of slenderness', where thin is beautiful, desirable, and valuable (transfer- ring success onto a range of life goals, practices and products, and women who fit the thin ideal)" (172). The thin body is a coveted cultural standard that has become the idealized norm for bodies to aspire to, affording thin women privileges that others do not have. Kwan (2010) elaborates: "Meanwhile, those without privilege must negotiate daily interactions, sometimes feeling shame, guilt, and anger because of their bodies" (147). Cultural and social structures privilege thin bodies and protect their privilege through structures that idolize a narrow conception of beauty (Bordo 2003; Wolf 1991). Larger individuals are made aware of their bodies' nonconformity as a result of mass media's reliance on slim bodies and lack of recognition and representation of fat bodies.

Feminist theorists have interrogated and traced the history of the thin ideal. Grogan (1999) marked the 1920s as the moment when the preference for the "voluptuous figures

favoured from the middle ages" changes to the "thin body types favoured by the fashion magazines of today" (285). Grogan claims the cultural change in the perception and representation of the ideal female body was first produced and then reproduced throughout the 1900s in the successful marketing strategies of the fashion and cosmetics industry. Bordo (1993) links the shift in the ideology of thin and fat to the Tuberculosis illness prior to the 1900s. Due to the symptoms associated with Tuberculosis, thin bodies became associated with illness, whereas fat bodies were associated with wealth for males, and fecundity and beauty for females. However, beginning in the 1900s Bordo argues the ideology began to shift. Redmond (2003) explains, "the existence, the very appearance of excess flesh comes to be seen as an indicator of a lack of self-control and discipline, an indicator, in fact, of low morality. By contrast, slenderness comes to embody being in control of one's potentially wayward and immoral body, an indicator or embodiment of culturedness and civility"(173). The cultural shift, which coveted the thin body, was symbolized through the representation of the thin body as healthy, beautiful, and successful throughout popular culture and mass media (173). Utilizing Foucauldian theories of power and control Bordo views this shift in the perception and representation of the ideal female body as a result of the discourse and norms that emerge under patriarchy in order to reduce woman's status to a position of inferiority to that of men. The construction of the thin ideal allowed for women's body to be increasingly regulated, controlled, and boundaried—or 'a body that is absolutely tight, contained, bolted down, firm' (Bordo 190). As a result, the thin body has come to symbolize the natural, unpolluted, and pure (Redmond, 178). This view will become evident in the forthcoming analysis of the participant interviews in which it is revealed that the fat body threatens social norms.

Furthermore, other feminist scholars have linked the changes in the perceptions of body size to the obesity epidemic that emerged into public discourse in the 1990s, establishing fatness as a global epidemic, health crisis, and the subject of much concern (Pausé et al. 2). Fat bodies have been associated with health risks such as heart attacks, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, and other weight related illnesses. However, this view can be challenged, as there is no correlation has been at the receiving end of much debate. Drawing on queer studies, Kathleen LeBesco (2001, 2004, 2009) argues that,

> both fatness and queerness are, or have been, medicalized, pathologized, and stigmatized, and are at the centre of moral panics in which they are conceived of as perverse, excessive, unnatural, and a threat to the social order, and targeted by public health campaigns and other interventions that seek to manage, 'cure', or eliminate them. (qtd. in Pausé et al. 3)

Following from this analysis, it becomes clear that medical discourses surrounding health and illness are ideological and function as categories of regulation and control. Discourse always has a vested interest at work that serves a higher purpose.

Furthermore, as a result of the obesity epidemic and the discourses that deemed obesity as a health crisis, misconceptions developed that continue to thrive which suggest that fat bodies are lazy and unhealthy. It is assumed that if an individual is overweight then they are unhealthy, and that if they are thin they are healthy. As a result, fat bodies are seen as diseased and parasitic, and "fat phobia" has arisen in the name of "health", making fat bodies into targets for increased monitoring, surveillance, and intervention:

> The construction of fatness as a global health crisis worked to produced fat bodies and fat subjects as both 'diseased' on an individual level, and as parasitic on a social level, monopolizing healthcare resources while failing – or refusing – their responsibility as good

neoliberal citizens to enact 'proper' self-management through weight loss. Fatness was

thus constructed as moral failing. (Pausé et al. 2-3)

Control over the human body is prized in Western societies. People buy shoes and clothing that

fit in with current trends, remove their body hair, wear makeup to cover up any blemishes or

acne, use hygiene products to contain menstrual fluids, and diet to control the body.

Medicalizing fat as a disability often represents not having control over fate and additional

aspects of the physical body, which is terrifying for the greater able-bodied society. Disability is

framed as lacking, sad and undesirable. The person with a disability represents an uncomfortable

truth that the greater able-bodied society around them does not like to comprehend: that human

life and the privilege of not suffering physical and emotional pain is fleeting at best. The

suffering of physical and emotional pain is a facet of life that does not exist in the constructed

reality experienced in an able body. Furthermore, fat women have often been equated with

fecundity, which, as Julia Kristeva argues, reminds us of our experience in the semiotic and pre-

symbolic stay. The association of the fat body with fertility serves as a reminder of the fragility

of life and impending death.

In addition, ideologies of beauty also shape expectations of an individual's personality

and behavior. Webster and Driskell (1983) stated that different character traits have been

associated with beauty: "[B]eauty functions as a visible status cue that operates in a similar

manner as race or gender and shapes expectations about an individual's personality and

behavior" (qtd. in Kwan 2010 146). According to Dion et al. (1972), "Normal" bodies that

resemble ideals of beauty (i.e. thin, white, able bodied, and conventionally beautiful) have a

social privilege that their counterparts do not. Landy and Sigall (1974) elaborate: "Individuals

often assume that beautiful people are good and/or talented and expect them to be smarter, lead

better lives, hold more prestigious jobs, and have happier marriages" (qtd. in Kwan 2010 146). A number of experimental studies have found that for both men and women, physical attractiveness correlates with desirable social outcomes such as increased popularity and marriage opportunities (Hosoda et al. 2003; Unger 1979; Roberts and Waters 2004). Most importantly, however, beautiful individuals do not experience the same stigma and discrimination that larger bodies do. In comparison, for overweight women size correlates with downward social and economic mobility, discrimination, stigma, physical and emotional injury, and stereotyping in many arenas of social life due to their deviancy (Rothblum 1992; Puhl and Brownell 2001; Sobal 2004; Solovay 2000; Kwan 2010; Young 1990). In becomes apparent that bodies that move along the hierarchy of body size inhabit very different lived experiences, especially in comparison to those of thin bodies.

Women are encouraged to diet and exercise in order to occupy a thin, privileged body, and face scrutiny from others when they fail to do so. Women whose bodies do not meet to societal standards are seen as morally corrupt and failing to enact the proper self-management through weight loss. The increased surveillance of fat bodies is addressed by the body positive advocates who share their experiences receiving unwanted questions about their health and scrutiny from others based on weight related assumptions. The body positive members discuss their everyday experiences and encounters with others, receiving looks of disgust from strangers and comments from others regarding what they eat or what they believe is appropriate for fat women to wear. Through a selfie of herself lying on the beach in a bikini (see fig. 2) @mynameisjessamyn acknowledges the disapproving looks she receives from strangers on the beach for wearing a bikini, ultimately stating that she loves her belly and her body, and does not care about the opinion of onlookers. In a similar photo (see fig.3) in which @mynameisjessamyn

is sitting by a pool in a bikini she addresses the unwelcomed and unwarranted monitoring she receives from strangers who condemn what she eats as a fat woman. The caption reads: "I was absolutely ravenous. And so I sat poolside in my little yellow bikini & devoured a giant club sandwich+fries. I genuinely think we should all mind our fucking business when it comes to the eating habits of others." Moreover, as @mynameisjessamyn addresses, when fat individuals proclaim their acceptance of their bodies and being fat, others come to view this as ignoring health concerns and declaring that living an unhealthy lifestyle is acceptable. Being fat invites insults and disapproval from others who scrutinize the diets of overweight individuals and view it as a moral failing for their presumed lack of control or restraint, whereas the eating habits of thinner individuals go unnoticed and uncriticized. Individuals and situations such as these make fat women aware of their bodies' nonconformity. Larger bodies move through space in very different ways and take up more room than thin bodies do, and their experiences with others and mundane routines differ greatly as they bare the scrutiny of others. As a result, fat women perform body management in order to avoid uncomfortable situations and make their bodies appear smaller—not to take up too much room and encroach on other people's space.

Fig. 2 On the beach in a bikini; Photograph by @mynameisjessamyn; 3 February 2016; Instagram, Inc.

Women engage in self-surveillance and body modification practices in order to manage and regulate their appearances to resemble a more socially desirable body. In *Navigating Public Spaces: Gender, Race, and Body Privilege in Everyday Life* (2012), Samantha Kwan found that fat bodies experience a heightened awareness of their bodies nonconformity to hegemonic cultural ideals, and engage in physical and emotional body management to cope with body consciousness: "body management is sometimes a way of presenting a different and more socially desirable body—a conforming body that is privy to social benefits and eschews social stigma" (151). Physical management involves managing one's body and appearance through available props (such as clothing, plastic surgery, dieting), positioning the body in a more flattering manner, or changing one's actual behavior to avert uncomfortable situations. In

comparison, psychological management can be a self-directed pep talk that reassures oneself of self-worth, as demonstrated by the women from the body positive movement that reassure themselves of their worthiness, desirability, happiness, love and acceptance of their bodies. Body management is demonstrated in @bodyposipanda's photo (see fig. 18) in which she revealed that as young as five years old she was obsessed with looking making herself appear more flattering by holding her stomach in until it hurt. She now rejects the idea that women have to modify their appearance and find the best angles and outfits to appear more flattering and desirable to others.

Discussing women's physical management of their bodies, Jenny Lee argues that by denying bodily appetite, dieting serves to keep the fat body 'in the closet'" (qtd. in Pausé, Wykes and Murray 8-9). Individuals remain closeted by not disclosing information to others about their bodies and their experiences and deal with it on their own, concealing the hurt and shame about their body size and experiences, their inability to find clothes that fit, health conditions commonly associated with non-normative bodies, and ridicule from others for being fat (Pausé et al 17). Developing the metaphor of the closet, Michael Brown (2000) and Diana Fuss (1991) make similar claims that individuals can be both in and out of the closet simultaneously, as women who are thin also engage in invisible body modification practices, such as excessive dieting and eating disorders. To quote Pausé et al. (2014), the less visible practices of body modification that remain closeted include eating, exercising, purging and surgical practices: "binging, compulsive exercising, using laxatives in an attempt to lose weight, constant weighing of foods and the self, calorie counting, measuring body parts, calculating Body Mass Index" (17). Regardless of an individual's thinness, they fear gaining weight or believe that they are fat and view their body as such due to the images prevalent across mass media of beautiful and happy thin women.

Through sharing stories and images of their experiences with eating disorders and their journeys through recovery, body positive advocates demonstrate the effects that the normalcy of thinness has on women, which is reinforced and perpetuated throughout mass media. In the caption of figure 5, which depicts the before and after photos of @bodyposipanda's battle with anorexia, she identifies magazine and television images of detox diets, photoshopped women, cosmetic surgery, and images of beautiful and happy people who were always thin as factors that contributed to her eating disorder. Acknowledging the influence the mass media has had on her self-image and hatred towards her own body, @bodyposipanda uses her platform to extend an awareness of the societal influences on women's self-image to other women. In figure 4 @bodyposipanda states:

> the majority of bodies shown in the media remain super posed, super Photo shopped, and super unattainable for most of us flawed, normal folk. And since all we see being celebrated is the most flattering angles and flawless figures, we start to see ourselves as wrong. We see our belly rolls as ugly. We see our cellulite as sinful. We see ourselves as worth less, the less we look like the pages of our magazines or the beauties on our screens.

It is evident that @bodyposipanda attempts to create an understanding of where the negative thoughts women have about their appearances are coming from and helps them to realize that mainstream representations of women are unrealistic and should not be held as an example of what women should aspire to look like. It becomes evident that through repeated messages that normalize thinness and encourage dieting, women are guided down a dangerous pathway of self-hatred and body modification practices.

Fig. 4 Side-by-side photographs wearing a bikini; Photograph by @bodyposipanda; 9 March 2016; Instagram, Inc.

In the caption below a side-by-side photo of her living with and recovering from anorexia, @Chooselifewarrior (see fig. 46) states her disgust by weight loss corporations who promise health and beauty through weight loss, relating to her own experiences with body modification due to beauty ideals:

The weight loss companies will roll out another campaign of juice cleanses and promises that you're whole life will be a sparkly safe happiness if only you were smaller. Truth is here on the left is me at 18, I desperately wanted to be beautiful, be everything I "never was". I was tortured with the idea that I was disgusting, fat and on the regular I threw up, I exercised till I passed out and I punished my body for not being perfect. Right is me this year more secure, confident, happy and wanting to live even though I'm bigger […] There is a fine line between dieting and eating disorders and the most common risk factor for triggering an eating disorder or relapsing into a past one is dieting. I don't care if you've

lost weight. I care about your mental health and my transformation is as simple and

beautiful as this.

As illustrated by body positive advocates such as @bodyposipanda (see fig. 5),

@chooselifewarrior (see fig. 6), and @anastasiaamour (see fig. 7), images of ideal beauty have

deep-seated effects on female viewers, often leading to obsessive body modifications practices in

order to achieve ideal beauty.

Fig. 5 Side-by-side photos living with and recovering from an eating disorder; Photograph by @bodyposipanda; 16 January 2016; Instagram, Inc.

Fig. 6 Side-by-side photos of her while living with (left) and recovering from an eating disorder (right); Photograph by @chooselifewarrior; 18 February 2016; Instagram, Inc.

Fig. 7 Before and after recovery; Photograph by @Anastasiaamour; 23 Feb 2016 Instagram, Inc.

In addition to the copious amounts of dieting advertisements encouraging women to lose weight, fitness advertisements contribute to this narrative by communicating exercise to women as a means to lose weight rather than to maintain spiritual, mental, and physical health. Through their comments, members such as @biggalyoga, @mynameisjessamyn, and @glitterandlazers note that they are content with their bodies and do not practice yoga or engage in physical activity as a means to lose weight, but rather to become stronger and maintain their mental and spiritual health. As an example, @biggalyoga advocates for a change in societies perception of exercise through her caption on figure 10, which states:

> I've consistently advocated to just do active things just for the enjoyment of it, and not have to obsess about how many pounds you've lost. The more you obsess, the more expectation you put on yourself. That if you didn't do your physical activity something extremely bad will happen to you. Don't worry you'll be fine! You don't need to beat yourself up about it. Those extra pounds are okay! Be content with your body whether you have time for physical activities or life has to happen. We all have complicated lives. When you know you have the drive and time come back to it and be appreciative of yourself.

This practice challenges the dominant view that women should participate in exercise classes and maintain their own workout program in order to lose weight rather than as a means to maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Other body positive advocates address the pressure women feel to diet and exercise in order to lose weight.

Through the documentation of their yoga practices and fitness routines body positive advocates are challenging the very limited representations of yoga bodies and fit bodies in the media that perpetuate the myth that fat bodies are lazy and incapable of physical activity. Through the documentation of their exercise routines, @biggalyoga, @mynameisjessamyn, and

@glitterandlazers demonstrate that larger bodies are strong and graceful bodies that are capable of moving in the same, or similar, ways that thin bodies do. For example, @Glitterandlazers partially uses her Instagram account as a fitness inspirational (fitspo) account for larger bodies, posting images of herself while out for a run (see fig. 8), or practicing yoga (see fig. 9). Throughout the body positive movement there is also a prevalence of yoga accounts run by fat women who want to demonstrate the abilities of larger bodies. These fat yogis include women such as @biggalyoga and @mynameisjessamyn who post distant, full body images of their partially clothed bodies in a variety of challenging yoga positions that demonstrate their strength and flexibility, some of which include: balancing their bodies on their hands (see fig. 10); balancing on their buttocks and reaching forward to touch their toes (see fig. 11), and; headstands doing the front splits (see fig. 12) or side splits (see fig. 13).

The traditional image of the physically active women is one of a thin, white woman, wearing sports bras, tank tops, and spandex shorts or leggings. Advertisements for active wear covet the thin body and exclude representations of larger women, excluding fat bodies from the active arena. Fat women are never presented in these advertisements due to the stereotypes that present fat bodies as inactive, body modification practices that restrict fat women from revealing their bodies, and fashion standards that exclude fat women from wearing athletic clothing by not providing sizes that would fit their bodies. As a result, a contradiction emerges in which fat women are relentlessly told they need to lose weight and yet are not provided with any options when it comes to athletic wear that is required for them to engage in physical activities. Through the documentation of their yoga practices and decision to wear yoga clothing that has typically only been worn by thinner women and not seen as acceptable for fat bodies, body positive advocates provide an alternative and more inclusive representation of yoga bodies. Many

advocates push the boundaries even further by wearing only their bra and thong while practicing yoga. Wearing a sports bra while practicing yoga (see fig.13), @mynameisjessamyn states:

> I mean, I'm sure @mandukayoga didn't necessarily expect someone with so many fat rolls to get upside down in their sports bra. But the bra is cute and I'll wear it if I feel like it. I don't give a fuck if my belly and back rolls are starring in the photo as a result. Because, regardless of lighting and clothing choices, those body parts are still present. And if I can't accept them when my body is upside down practicing yoga, how the hell will I accept them in other parts of my life?

These body positive advocates are unapologetic of their bodies and comfortable in their skin. This is destabilizing for viewers who are not accustomed to seeing fat bodies exposed or wearing clothing traditionally deemed appropriate for thin bodies.

Fig. 8 Mid-run; Photograph by @glitterandlazers; 2 June 2016; Instagram, Inc.

Fig. 9. Balancing on her hands; Photograph by @glitterandlazers; 3 April 2016; Instagram, Inc.
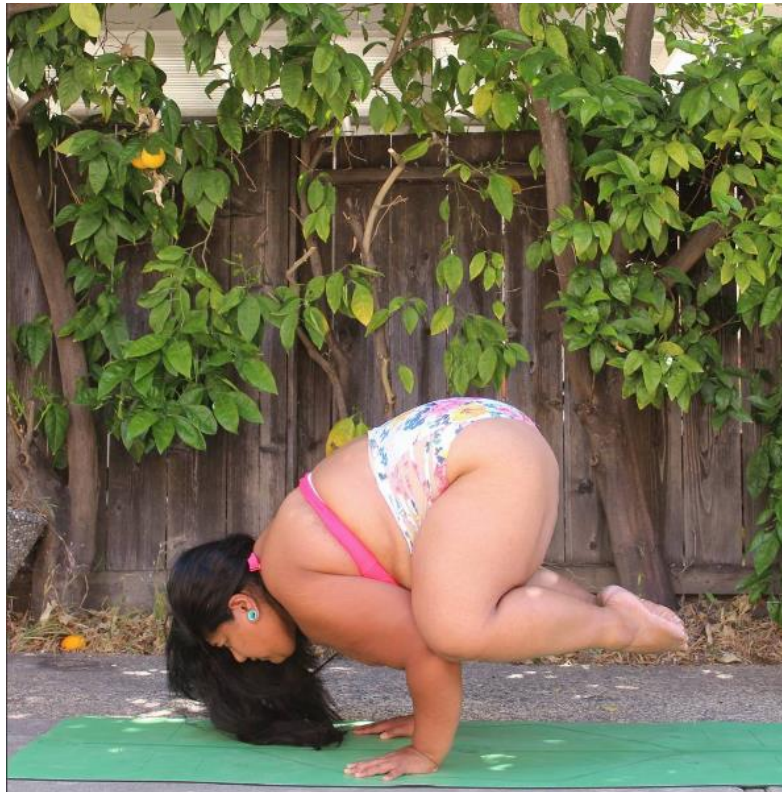
Fig. 10. Practicing yoga in a bikini, balancing on hands; Photograph by @biggalyoga; 3 June 2016; Instagram, Inc.

:;

Fig. 11. Balancing on buttocks while extending arms upwards to touch toes; Photograph by @biggalyoga; 22 October 2015; Instagram, Inc.

Fig. 12. Wearing lingerie while practicing yoga in a headstand; Photograph by @biggalyoga; 15 August 2015; Instagram, Inc.

Fig. 13. Splits while in a headstand; Photograph by @mynameisjessamyn; 28 January 2016; Instagram, Inc.

When asked about their perceptions of fat bodies and their ability to move the

participants revealed dominant perceptions of fat bodies, believing fat bodies to have poor diets,

lack exercise, and incapable of moving. When shown the images of the fat yogis the participants felt that the women were "defying the odds" and were surprised to see larger women exercising, particularly when it came to more complicated yoga moves. Participant E revealed:

> I was impressed by the poses because I've tried yoga and have never been able to do much because I'm not flexible person or strong person. So the first thing I noticed are the handstands and stuff because I can't do that I don't have any balance. It absolutely challenges ideas of what fat women are capable of because you're used to seeing skinny yoga chicks doing those poses and stuff. And I think this is the crow or something which I tried and its insanely hard, I've tried something similar when I've gone to yoga a couple of times, and it definitely challenges the idea that to be strong or to be balanced or to be graceful you have to be skinny or in shape. I think there's that stereotype of the yoga chick that is very skinny and always on some kind of purge or cleanse, but when you do go to yoga there are all shapes and sizes and men and stuff there. I think that they do represent a different side of yoga and positions that are technically difficult really speaks to that.

Due to the dominant perceptions of fat bodies, the participants felt that the larger bodies engaging in physical activity were defying the boundaries placed on larger bodies. Participants went on to disclose that they would not be as equally impressed if it was a thinner body moving in the same way. What made this impressive to the participants was that they were fat bodies that were in these positions. These images challenged the participants' views of the fat body as inactive, do not eat well, are lazy, and incapable of moving in the same ways that thin bodies do.

As demonstrated by the lack of athletic wear for larger bodies, the fashion industry has had a history of excluding fat models and not catering clothing to larger bodies. Women's clothing is meant to show off the body, which often times excludes larger bodies as the clothing

is neither functional nor comfortable for larger bodies, making them aware of their bodies non-conformity. As a result of the exclusion from this area of life women are denied subjectivity. Quoting Sedgwick, Kristjannson argues that "fat women's lack of access to fashion constitutes the 'primal denial' of subjectivity under capitalism: there's nothing here for you to spend your money on" (qtd. in Pausé et al. 10). The disappearance of fat women from the fashion industry perpetuates the idea that fat women cannot wear the same clothing that thin woman can and must engage in body modification practices to hide their bodies. By telling fat women that they need to hide their bodies and wear clothing that makes them appear smaller, fat bodies are not allowed the same opportunities to express themselves and develop their subjectivities through clothing. As a result of the denial of fat women to the full access of fashion, including sexier and more eroticized clothing, fat bodies are established as less desirable than thin bodies and are forced to conform to an ideal body size in order to express themselves through clothing.

In response to their exclusion from the fashion industry both visually and physically, body positive advocates are wearing sexy, fashionable, chic, and edgy clothing that traditionally has been deemed "inappropriate" for their bodies, and posting images to their profiles encouraging women to reject social norms around the fashioning of the body. This is accomplished through engaging in mainstream fashion trends, reclaiming the bikini and challenging norms around the "bikini body", and posting eroticized images wearing lingerie. Fat fashion bloggers, such as @glitterandlazers, challenge these norms through cultivated profiles that depict their mainstream sense of style that has been made available through plus sized clothing companies and popular clothing companies such as Forever XXI that have begun carrying plus sized clothing. Other body positive advocates who engage in similar practices, such as @thechristinecho (see fig. 14), address what is considered appropriate clothing for fat women

to wear. Through a selfie wearing a red crop top and black tight jeans, along with a corresponding caption she expresses her disregard of the approval from other over how she chooses to self-present through clothing, refusing to friends, family, and the media dictate what is appropriate for her to wear.

Fig. 14. Mirror selfie in change room; Photograph by @thechristinecho; 31 January 2016; Instagram, Inc.

Another popular trend occurring within the body positive movement is the use of selfies by body positive advocates to challenge assumptions of what one must look like in order to be able to wear a bikini. Women diet and exercise vigorously in order to look "bikini body ready" for the summer. Women who do not meet the ideal opt out of wearing a bikini and instead wear a full body swimsuit and cover their bodies with wraps and clothing. Drawing on her own experiences, @bodyposipanda addresses the dieting that women engage in out of fear of how

they will appear in a bikini as a result of the very limiting representations of the "bikini body" throughout mass media (see Fig.17):

> I have wasted every summer of my adult life sweating and starving to achieve that vision. Telling myself I didn't deserve the joys of summer if I didn't look like that image of bikini perfection we're all taught to aim for. Torturing myself under the scrutinizing gaze of the size too small swimsuit. But no matter how many times I yoyo-ed back down to that bikini weight, I was never good enough. I was never happy. There was always a flaw to find, a problem area to tone, a dimple to zoom in on or a roll to obsess over. This summer my fabulousness is overflowing in that swimsuit, and I am finally happy in my body. I never needed to lose anything except my brainwashed ideas about 'perfect' bodies.

The notion of the "beach body" is socially constructed and used to regulate women's bodies and exclude those whose bodies do not reflect the dominant representations of "bikini bodies". In the caption of figure 16, @yourstruelymelly proclaims that all women of varying sizes have a "bikini body", and addresses the obsession women feel to work towards having a bikini body: "our only goal all spring and summer is to get and maintain a certain kind of body in order to enjoy our summer". Body positive advocates reject the pressure to conform to these ideals and post images of themselves wearing bikinis that expose their lumps, cellulite, stretch marks, and fat rolls in order to challenge these norms associated with the "bikini body". Through their images and accompanied captions they encourage women to disregard societal rules that fat bodies must wear figure flattering one pieces, and encourage them to ignore the inevitable negative reactions fat women will receive for not conforming societal standards. For example, @chooselifewarrior posted a distant full body photo wearing a bikini and used her captions to address hegemonic ideologies around the "bikini body", and the scrutiny fat women receive for wearing bikinis and

exposing their bodies (see fig. 15). Additionally, @glitterandlazers posts multiple distant full body photos in bikinis with inspirational quotes encouraging women to wear what they feel comfortable in rather than avoiding clothing that society deems unacceptable for fat bodies (see fig. 18). These images are encouraging for women as they inspire them to stop comparing their bodies to others and letting society dictate what they can wear, how they can wear it, and when they can wear it. Women should not have to live with feeling pressured into dieting or not being able to splash around in a bikini at the beach. Interestingly, following from the participant interviews it became apparent that because it is not commonplace to see fat women embracing their bodies and defying societal expectations in this way, most participants immediately viewed these images and these women as ultimately advocating for something having to do with women's rights. In making this observation, participants revealed their own engrained belief that fat women should cover their bodies or wear swimsuits that appeal to their body type.

Fig. 15. Outdoors in a bikini; Photograph by @chooselifewarrior; 28 February 2016; Instagram, Inc.

Fig. 16. Side-by-side photos wearing a red swimsuit; Photograph by @yourstruelymelly; 14 July 2016; Instagram, Inc.

Fig. 17. Three side-by-side photos of her in a swimsuit; Photograph by @bodyposipanda; 27 May 2015; Instagram, Inc.

Fig. 18. In a bikini by the pool; Photograph by @glitterandlazers; 10 July 2016; Instagram, Inc.

Larger women are expected to practice body management by covering their bodies to hide their fat and appear thinner in order to reduce their visibility and hide their flaws. To appear thinner and 'reap the benefits of the body hierarchy an avert social sanction' (Kwan 150), women practice body-management by contorting their bodies and changing their positions to show their bodies in a more flattering way, purchasing body slimming corsets and slips, wearing flattering colours that make one's body appear smaller, wearing clothing that covers their bodies, and tugging at and pulling down clothing to conceal their bodies—physically holding in a concealing the female body. Body positive members such as @micahh_grace, @biggalyoga, @mynameisjessamyn, @bodyposipanda, @thechristinacho, @yourtruelymelly, @anastasiaamour confront dominant ideologies and narratives of heterodesire that are central to

neoliberal capitalism by posting provocative photos in either lingerie or in the nude to destabilize the conventional norms that exclude fat bodies from desirability. The majority of the photos of feminist nudist @micahh_grace are mid-range to up-close photos of her posing erotically in lingerie, bikinis, or in the nude (see list of figures 34-8). In a photo of her nude body with her back to the camera (see fig. 19) she proclaims: "Back fat, rolls, impossibly pale skin. I'm okay with all of it". By revealing their nude bodies body positive advocates are using their bodies to stand in opposition of the dominant narratives of desire that hold fat bodies as deviant and undesirable, demonstrating that fat bodies are desirable bodies and worthy of visibility.

Fig. 19. Nude with her back to the camera; Photograph by @micahh_gracee; Accessed 19 July 2016; Instagram, Inc.

In a similar vein, @mynameisjessamyn posted a distant full body selfie doing a forward lunge with one arm to the ceiling and the other arm to the floor in the nude with stars covering

her nipples and vagina (see fig. 20). The image overall reads as a celebration of her body. The

caption exemplifies her acceptance of her body in its natural state:

> I'm fat. In spite of my regular #core workouts, I have a belly that just won't quit. I'm sure if
>
> I restricted my diet and or bothered to give even an iota of a fuck about the topic, I could
>
> shrink my belly. But nah, I'm good. Also, my breasts sag- though I think that has less to do
>
> with being fat and more to do with the fact that I'm human.

Through embracing their nude, natural bodies these women refute regulations placed on

women's bodies to make them feel shameful and embarrassed by their appearance and suggest

they undertake the work of self-improvement.

Fig. 20. Nude full body shot in a forward lunge; Photograph by @mynameisjessamyn; 28 January 2016; Instagram, Inc.

Attempting to articulate their visceral feelings of disgust, the participants discussed what

is considered appropriate clothing for women to wear, and how much skin is acceptable to

expose depending on the body size. The larger the women were and the fewer clothes they had

on, the more uncomfortable the participants were. Exemplifying the regulation and control over

women's bodies, the participants revealed that women should wear clothes appropriate to their body size and should work to hide their bodies beneath clothing in order to appear smaller, avoid social repercussions, and reflect closer the ideals of femininity. Although participant D follows the body-positive movement online, she discussed the sense of shock she initially experienced when she first encountered the images: "When I first started following the body positivity thing I think I was kind of shocked. Sometimes right at the beginning to see people showing off parts of their body that would normally be hidden". However, she stated that after following the movement for approximately 6-8 months the photos are no longer as shocking to her.

Participant E reported that what made the images difficult for her to accept was that she is not accustomed to seeing fat bodies revealed in this manner, and that created a tension for her:

In terms of the beauty, um you know I'm not accustomed to seeing fat women just being open and uncovered publicly just because it's not something we see a lot. So it's almost like a moment of shock seeing a body you're not used to seeing because you're not used to seeing fat rolls in the media. You're not supposed to be uncovered and stuff like this.

As discussed earlier, fat women practice body management, covering their bodies and engaging in practices to appear thinner. They are to appear smaller and reduce their visibility. Fat bodies are to remain controlled and to see them out of control disrupts the dominant discourses of what bodies are acceptable or unacceptable.

Many participants noted that what added to their discomfort when viewing the images was the positioning of these women's bodies, whether it was images of fat yogis in a headstand with their legs spread open, or posing nude in front of the camera, the participants felt that the way the women were presenting themselves was unacceptable for social media. These non-normative bodies are not desirable according to heteronormative standards of beauty and

femininity. Developing this idea that women's bodies are not to be revealed, many participants felt that these women should wear clothing appropriate to their body size. Participant A stated:

> Okay there's some pictures in here that I'm like okay they're not like crazy, like... I don't think that that's like bad at all […] yes. Not acceptable, but what I would see more negatively […] but it also depends because these ones specifically aren't wearing anything. It's like any person, if they're in a belly top, any size, it's like what the f*** are you doing? It's more about what they're wearing and the way they're showing themselves. If you're bigger like them but dressed nicely and not exposed like that then I wouldn't think of it negatively. The reason I think negatively is when I see something like that, it's like, it's more negative[…] But then there are some that aren't bad and some that are worse[…] it's the way and how much, and the way that they show it. Like if they're wearing a thong with their ass out. But that's anyone. If a random skinny girl was doing that I would be like what the heck! No, I would be like what are they doing, because it's socially unacceptable.

Participant A continued to state that women have to wear clothing appropriate to their body size:

> I think that you have to wear things suitable to your body, no matter what your size is […] that's inappropriate to wear regardless of who you are. I wouldn't be posting a picture like that on Instagram for the world to see. Not wearing anything. It doesn't matter who it is. (@mynameisjessamyn). This one too. The position that she's in is not a position that needs to be posted. Not because of her size but... like look at it! Like yogis don't post a picture in a thong like that.

Participants A revealed that she would screenshot the images and send them to a friend, criticizing the photo and poking fun at the woman's body. She stated that the likelihood of the women being talked about in a negative way was higher than them being talked about in a

positive way.

Other participants contributed their discomfort to a rejection of the nude female body. The female nudity prevalent across the body positive accounts selected for the study disrupted the private/public duality of the body. The participants found these women to be exposing too much of their bodies and showing too much skin in these photos. They believe that exposing the nude female body is inappropriate. Participant C stated: "I just personally don't like the whole idea of naked women. I personally don't like that." The body positive advocates images violated the traditional representations of the controlled and contained female Nude. The participants felt that the very private images of women's bodies should not be on display for friends, family, and strangers to see. The participants concluded that they do not see these body positive advocates as embracing their sexuality through the images of the nude bodies. Many participants suggested that if women were engaging in activities such as these, where they pose provocatively, seductively, in inappropriate positions, or expose their bodies, then they would think the woman is promiscuous and using their profile for attention. The participants classified practices where women pose nude or in a provocative way on Instagram as narcissistic, attention seeking, and leads them to question their intentions. Some participants went as far as to label women who engage in those practices as "sluts" or "scandalous". They believe that the female body is to remain private.

Developing on the idea of acceptable self-presentation, many participants felt that online spaces were inappropriate places for women to be exposing their bodies. Participants explained what they thought was "acceptable" to post on social media, arguing that the images these women were posting were unacceptable. Participant A stated:

I would look at a picture like that and judge it because you're taught your whole life not to post pictures like that on the Internet because the Internet is forever. That's your body; you shouldn't want to be showing it like that. Maybe that's her choice, sure. But you're taught for all of these years that you can't expose yourself like that. It's not her size that's causing the issues it's that she's nude on the Internet.

Drawing on this notion of what is and is not appropriate to post online, the participant was asked to develop further what she considered to be appropriate content for social media platforms:

Pictures of yourself, your friends, going out, going on vacation, hanging out, maybe being at school. Things like that… I wouldn't post naked pictures. It should not be posted; it is just not for the public to see. I think why are they posting this? What is the point? And I think they're a little scandalous. You can do that, but not on the Internet.

Participant A disagreed that the body positive advocates are embracing their sexuality, and believed they should do that in private.

Women's bodies are simultaneously seen as sacred, pure, and private while at the same time are sexualized and objectified throughout mass media to sell consumer products and satisfy the male gaze. As a result men and women are taught to view women's bodies as sexual objects, and women are taught to display their bodies as objects. A contradiction emerged during the study, in which women are conditioned to treat their bodies as objects for the consumption of men, while at the same time being condemned for exploring and embracing their own sexuality. As a result, when women post sexualized images of their own bodies to social media platforms they are judged harshly by both men and women for doing so. An irony emerges whereby women want to empower other women, but then judge women harshly when they do things for themselves and explore, experience, and claim their own sexuality. They are expected to remain

sacred, controlled, quiet, and small. Therefore, the identities that individuals perform on social media must adhere to the conventions of gender, as well as to the standards and structures inherent on the platform that establish what is acceptable to post. According to the participants, images from social gatherings, vacations, and selfies were acceptable as long as the subject of the photo was clothed and not posing in a seductive way. Users must also adhere to the aesthetic of Instagram, "that filtered, shadowed, sharpened, brightened, tilted, faded, structured, saturated way of seeing life through a lens" that has changed the way people portray themselves and see others (Swant, 2015). Due to these posting standards, when controversial images such as these appear on the newsfeed or popular page they disrupt users viewing practices, breaking their attention as they scroll through images.

However, despite the participants reliance on discussions of public/private images and female sexuality, many participants found the visibility of the nude thin body as acceptable, leading to the conclusion that unless a woman's body reflects as closely as possible the ideal of beauty than they should not be sharing images of their bodies within the public sphere. Although participants stated that they were uncomfortable with the body positive images because they are too revealing, they later admitted to following the fitness and yoga accounts of thin women on Instagram. When asked if they took issue with the clothing choices of thin women, all participants stated that they had never been bothered by their clothing choices despite their similar clothing options (sports bras, shorts, and underwear) as the fat body positive advocates. It became clear that what the participants were uncomfortable with, despite their claims that it was the lack of clothing regardless of body size, was the body size of the body positive advocates. The participants were uncomfortable seeing fat bodies unclothed and in provocative positions.

Their distaste for the fat yogis practicing yoga, claiming their poses were too provocative for social media, stems from the idea that fat bodies are not worthy of heterosexual desire.

The difference however, between the revealing images of the thin woman and the fat woman is that the participants would not associate thin bodies as practicing agency and claiming empowerment. Women have become so accustomed to seeing fat bodies covered up that they do not see their nude bodies as erotic as they would a thin body, but rather align it with activist intentions. Drawing on the image of @chooselifewarrior, participant G stated:

> I almost feel like when someone sees a standard image of a skinny model girl in a bikini you thinks he's a slut and want attention. But when you see it from the opposite spectrum you think it's something to do with girl power, body positivity. When you look at the two pictures you'll like "ok fuck her she's a slut", and then you look at the other one and think she's trying to raise awareness or something. When people respond to a thin model type girl they think she wants attention and is a "hoe". They don't take her seriously for body positivity.

Due to the constant policing of fat bodies and the view that it is unacceptable for fat women to wear a bikini or show their skin, when a women chooses to wear revealing clothes or inappropriate clothing for her body it is assumed that she is doing it for activist purposes, rather than wearing what she likes and makes her comfortable.

Participant B believed that fat women who expose their bodies are empowering versus thin women who appear nude on social media:

> I feel like it's more of a political statement when women like this are showing their bodies because it's like they have a purpose that is something beyond getting attention for "the wrong reasons" I don't know if I would even call them the wrong reasons because

everyone has their reasons, but for me I think that's really empowering. Whereas some girl who is classically hot and only takes pictures of her covering just her pictures and captioning them with an irrelevant comment like "new haircut" like that bores me […] its intent and how much respect I have for you like if all you're doing it for is the attention of the male gaze but then it's like... they're conditioned to be that way so who am I to really judge and say their condition is wrong or right, its neither here nor there, it's not my place at that point […] personally I don't like it and find it attention seeking and pathetic.

This statement exemplifies the privilege thin bodies experience as the coveted ideal and desirable body. The female participants viewed fat bodies as undesirable and unable to be eroticized and sexualized in the same way that thin bodies are. Participant D developed this thought by stating that she would find thin women who post revealing photos to be "attention seeking versus trying to change the conversation in any way". Again, this goes back to the difference between the types of bodies that are worthy of heterosexual desire according to heteropatriarchal ablest ideologies. The framing of fat bodies as (dis) abled comes to represent those bodies as lacking, sad, out of control, and undesirable. For these participants the fat body is desexualized and therefore cannot be viewed as "slutty", promiscuous, or erotic in the same way that thin bodies can.

Throughout the visual and textual analysis, as well as through the participant interviews, a tension emerged within the body positive movement. The movement appeared to only empower other female viewers or advocates who can directly identify with the representations on display. The participants who supported the body positive movement and found inspiration in the photos and messages were only those women who could relate to the experiences of the body positive advocates. While body positive advocates addressed the influence of popular

representations of women on the female psyche, they fail to acknowledge that these affects are felt by women of all body shapes and sizes, regardless of thinness. These findings are a result of the movement's failure to represent women of varying body sizes who feel the effects of beauty ideals, as well as through their body positive narratives that put thin women down while trying to promote fat women. The failure of the movement to accept women of all body shapes and sizes erases the experiences of thinner women dealing with a negative self-image inflicted by beauty ideals. Furthermore, the abrasiveness of the photos worked to distant viewers from the movement and move away from accepting the bodies on display, working against the intentions of the advocates. The way the advocates chose to self-represent worked to further "other" these bodies by viewers who found the images disturbing.

Women have to be able to share a common experience with the body-positive advocates in order to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance that they otherwise would not receive in their daily lives. This was exemplified through the responses of the self-identified fat participants in the study who claimed to have shared similar experiences with the advocates and incorporated their inspirational messages into their daily lives. Participants stated that seeing these body positive members love themselves regardless of what society is telling them inspired them and made them feel more accepting of their own bodies. They images are very affective in that they elicit a lot of feelings about one's own self-image and creates a form of support and connection in relation to the shared bodily experiences. When asked how the images made the participants feel in relation to their own body image, those who were of a heavier set revealed that they felt empowered and understood. The images made the participants rethink the way they self-present and wish to change the way they think about their own bodies in order to possess the same confidence and self-love that the advocates emitted.

However, while striving to promote self-love and the acceptance of fat bodies, these women ignore the experiences of varying body types, segmenting the female population and pinning women against each other. As mentioned early in the study, there has been an ongoing debate amongst the body positive advocates regarding who the movement is supposed to include. Many advocates felt that by incorporating thin women into the body positive narrative it erases the very different experiences of fat women. Advocates believe the movement has moved too away from its origins in fat activism. During this process the advocates come to ignore the very real experiences of thin women who suffer just as harshly from the pressures to conform to ideal beauty. In the comments below their photos, body positive advocates such as @mynameisjessamyn explicitly discriminate against thinner bodies, reenacting the very body shaming they reject. In the caption of figure 5, for example, @mynameisjessamyn polices and scrutinizes the bodies of thinner women, claiming their bodies to be unrealistic and the product of rigorous dieting and cosmetic surgery. Noticing this, Participant F questioned the intentions of the movement:

> It seems like she's doing a little bit of policing here which is surprising. She does a lot of this positive body image stuff but then says stuff like "if your tits don't sag chances are you're under the age of 18 and have a picture of Dorian Grey in your closet and have a plastic surgeon on deck". It seems kind of policy, I don't know […] I'm not really interested in her personality. I find her to be a bit aggressive and to be honest it gives me anxiety. Reading the comments made me really anxious […] the whole narrative comes crashing down because [she is] trying to be a voice for women and be a voice for the margins essentially, but then [she does] this thing where [she makes] a general comment about all [women].

Whether or not there is any truth or validity to this statement, thin women feel the effects of societal ideals of female beauty on their psyche and suffer the same conflicting feelings and self-hatred towards their bodies that fat women do. Women who occupy really thin bodies experience similar degrees of discrimination and hate that larger bodies do. However, their experiences come to be ignored because they are thin and therefore closely aligned with the ideal. Reading captions such as these turn women away from the movement, who come to view the movement as not accepting and reflective of the experiences of all women. As a result, the effectiveness of the movement is lost.

Participants elaborated on their feelings that the movement only promoted the acceptance of larger bodies and excluded women of all body shapes and sizes. When asked if she normally associates body positivity with only promoting the acceptance of larger bodies, Participant G stated:

I think stuff like that is tricky because with anybody, any sort of thing, whether it is body positivity or colour, it seems like the alternative is sucky. As someone who has always been super skinny my whole life even back in elementary school they would say 'hey chicken legs!!', like I would always wear sweatpants […] I don't really think they put a light to the alternative getting made fun of […] I just feel like we have to be more like everybody is beautiful and everyone has insecurities, instead of secluding different things. We are all girls and we all want to feel good.

As a thin woman, participant G revealed that she would like to see really thin women represented within the body positivity movement. Since childhood, Participant G has struggled with bullying as a result of occupying a very thin body size. She believes it would be beneficial for women

like her to be able to connect with others who look like her and who have had the same experiences.

Furthermore, the participants were shocked and disturbed by these images. The decision made by larger women to photograph their bodies in the nude or partially nude is unconventional, and therefore the participants were not accustomed to seeing larger bodies revealed in this manner. However, the intentions of the advocates may be to disrupt viewing process and shock Instagram viewers into looking at their bodies, gaining visibility that they did not have before, and hoping that by showing viewers shocking images of their bodies it will desensitize individuals to fat bodies, normalizing and contributing to the acceptance of fat bodies. However, the interviews revealed that this was not in fact how consumers of the images were responding. The participants were instead shocked and disgusted by the advocate's bodies and felt that the advocates should not be exposing their bodies. They thought the body positive advocates were exposing too much of their bodies. The messages were decoding by the participants differently than were expected, and some participants did not accept the inherent message of the body positive movement, which is to love all bodies of any shapes or sizes. Instead participants used their bodies as a point of comparison; comparing their bodies to the bodies of the advocates and feeling thankful and better about their own self-image the less they resembled the advocates bodies. Therefore, the visibility of fat bodies can serve to reinforce dominant ideologies of body size, bodily hair, and bodily fluids. The depictions of natural femininity prevalent across the body positive movement can work to reinforce rather than change dominant ideologies of beauty in the eyes of viewers.

Many participants claimed to be unaffected by this movement. For example, participant E stated:

I don't really get a lot of my validation of my body from comments from strangers because it doesn't really mean anything to me. I don't mean to say that I'm divorced from social expectations and stuff but it's not necessarily something I would seek out. I definitely see the value for other people and I've liked photos with the hash tag #effyourbodystandards and stuff like that, and I really like that hash tag, but it's not necessarily something I would participate in.

Other participants stated that the images did not make them 'feel any differently than they already do' because these are not experiences they live with, while other stated that as thin bodied they did not feel right 'appropriating the experiences of fat women':

I don't know because I don't really feel comfortable appropriating that as a woman who is not fat. I have stretch marks but they don't really bother me. I'm very self-conscious about my stomach and I wouldn't photograph it, but then seeing this woman who looks happy and strong it does kind of make me feel like "you know you got a little belly, so what?

Initially expecting all women participating in the study to be affected by beauty ideals, practice body management, and share similar experiences, it became apparent that the majority of women instead could not relate to the experiences of the body positive advocates and did not feel the same frustration towards dominant capitalist ideologies of beauty,, and therefore did not internalize their messages in a positive way. Many participants felt that they should not appropriate the experiences of fat bodies, as they have never inhabited a fat body, while others felt a sense of relief that they did not look like the bodies on display.

Narratives of empowerment and consciousness raising appeared throughout the study and participants experienced a heightened awareness of, and outrage to, gender norms and expectations. However, participants admitted the limitations of their feminist politics as they

confidently conformed to and embraced societal expectations of femininity. While it was

anticipated that women would feel a sense of frustration at the control and regulation of women's

bodies around societal norms of shaving and menstruating, many women embraced the dominant

ideology of hairlessness and menstruation as dirty. The participants claimed to be content with

the body management practices and did not see a good enough reason to modify their

behaviours. For many participants it would not be worth the scrutiny from their social circles.

While body positive activists do receive positive reinforcement, it becomes evident when

looking at the captions and comment section of the advocates receive a lot of negative feedback

and commentary from body shamers who criticize and attack their appearances. In response,

some of the advocates have used the captions underneath their photos to address the body

shamers. Participants during the study picked up on this activity and felt that the way in which

the advocates would attack body shamers in real life or online conveyed a sense of insecurity.

This led the participants to question how much of the advocates identities are a performance

rather than a true reflection of how these women feel. They felt as though maybe these women

were not as positive about their appearance as they led on to be. However, other participants felt

that these acts were necessary for the security of the women within the body positive movement,

as other members can be made aware of body shamers and block any contact with them to avoid

future harassment.

Participant B stated that willingness of these advocates to stand in for a community and

share their experiences and bodies with their viewers regardless of the negative reception that

they receive is what makes this movement really meaningful:

Ok say you're like posting some fitness photo of you doing squats... what are people really

going to write that's derogatory... like, put some clothes on slut! Something really stupid

that has no merit. But with something like this I'm sure you're going to see in the

comments: "fat bitch! Put some clothes on! You're so disgusting!" there's so much more

room for bullying and being derogatory. I think that's another tenet that makes it so brave,

courageous and meaningful. Rather than you just posting something with you and your tea,

like nobody cares.

Participants felt that it would be appropriate to respond to body shamers as long as the situation

was handled in an educational manner. Attacking body shamers is not the best response, because

it further creates an 'us versus them' mentality, perpetuating and aversion towards fat bodies.

Individual who are ill informed and do not know any better should be made aware of how what

they say and do affects others and that it is a learned disgust. In doing so, these advocates would

create an awareness of the societal influences on the female body within body shamers, and

perhaps lead them to rethink leaving hateful comments on others images.

Concluding the interviews, 12 of the 13 participants said they would never post body-

positive content in fear of social repercussions. Participants stated that they would never practice

body positivity on social media and take on an active role within the movement, including

posting selfies and captions addressing these issues, hash tag their photos, or follow any of these

accounts. Some participants even said they would unfollow the accounts and talk about them

negatively to their friends. The reason for this was because they feel the need to please other

people through social media and to construct the best version of their selves. The participants

consider greatly how they appear to their viewers. They cover up their bodies or anything they

can be scrutinized for and only post flattering photos, which are then filtered to smooth the

image over and even out their complexion. Many women noted past experiences where they

posted images to Instagram where they obsessed over their appearance, going back at a later time

to delete the photos. Even though the participants noted that they did receive many 'likes' on the photos they said that they did not believe that their viewers actually thought they looked good and believed that noticed their flaws. Participants stated that they filter their images to fit with the aesthetic of Instagram and smooth over their images for a sharper and more flawless look. As long as it's a trend and does not push the boundaries too much then it is acceptable. Showing a side that people never see throughout popular culture and mass media is difficult to do.

The body positive movement challenges culturally dominant views of the body and turns them on their heads. Body positive activists demonstrates through visual and textual self-presentation that fat bodies are physically capable and desirable bodies that deserve acceptance and recognition from society, regardless of the size of their body. These women are penetrating a space where their bodies have previously lacked representation and are getting images of alternative, real bodies, out to the public to normalize fat bodies. In addition, the movement also calls attention to the inability to accomplish ideal beauty. The system is set up so that women can never achieve ideal femininity and have to direct their attention towards performing bodywork. Women reveal the effects of their weight loss, including stretched and sagging skin, which has led them to lose self-esteem and happiness—all in the name of achieving beauty. This calls out the fact that women are lied to when they are told they will be happy once achieving the beauty ideal. The beauty ideal remains unachievable so that women are continuously ruled by their bodies and thus controlled. Discourses of power serve to maintain women's inferiority by reducing them to their physical bodies and bodily functions, whereas men's bodies were ruled by the mind. These women want to revolt, subvert, and do away with these hegemonic and conventional views of the female body.

The women who identify with the body positive movement challenge ideologies around body shape and size, baring their bodies in their natural form for the world to see. The hopes of these women are that by representing and making visible different body shapes and sizes in a society that predominantly covets the thin body, individuals will become accustomed to seeing these bodies included and become more accepting of them. Furthermore, by sharing their stories and providing images of the female body that others can relate to, it can provide women with support and help them negotiate their own images of the self and encourage them to self-present more authentically. However, through participant interviews it became apparent that the increased visibility of the advocates non-conforming bodies can serve to reinforce dominant ideologies of the body within the viewers, rather than change them in any way. Despite the narratives of self-love and acceptance of all bodies, the female participants interviewed in this study experienced nonverbal and visceral feelings of disgust when engaging with the content from the body positive accounts. However, despite their awareness of the pressures placed on women to conform to unrealistic ideals of beauty, most participants embraced the standards of beauty, demonstrating the societal influence over the regulation of women's bodies. While participants understood the reasons why women are using their platforms to talk about issues related to women's bodies, and could themselves relate to many of the body modification practices that the body positive movement addresses, the majority of participants were ultimately shocked by the nudity of the movement and with seeing the fat body uncovered. The participants were not accustomed to seeing fat bodies on display and as a result confronted their dominant assumptions around the natural body. Representations of natural depictions of the body can develop stronger feelings of disgust directed towards future non-conforming bodies. Furthermore, women who do not see their bodies represented among the body positive

movement might move away from the movement due to their lack of representations and

acceptance of female bodies of different shapes and sizes.

Chapter Five: Negotiating the Demands to Produce Smooth Skin

Through the images of the body positive members nude and exposed bodies, these women take on the additional project of negotiating the demands to produce smooth skin. Discourses of beauty work to keep the female body under control and in a position of inferiority by having women consumed by their bodies and constantly working to manage, maintain, and control their bodies. Feeling insecure, women cover up their stretch marks, cellulite, wrinkles, and sagging skin due to feelings of embarrassment. The cosmetic industry has benefitted off of this insecurity, catering many products to women that claim to help reduce visible signs of stretch marks, cellulite, aging, and more. The prevalence of products and cosmetic surgeries aimed at correcting these skin imperfections perpetuate the idea that if women have any of these signs their bodies are ruined and they should feel embarrassed for not being as beautiful as their flawless counterparts. In addition, members of the body-positive movement embrace other parts of their bodies that are also shamed, including acne, eczema, stretch marks, cellulite, dimples, wrinkles, sagging skin, scratches, scars, and bruises.

The body positive agenda involves addressing imperfections of the skin, including eczema, acne, stretch marks, cellulite, wrinkles, sagging skin, and many others. Addressing the reality that women do not have smooth skin, @mynameisjessamyn posted a photo (see fig. 21)

with a caption that acknowledges the comments she receives from others regarding the appearance of her skin:

> Someone posted a comment a few days ago suggesting a solution to the dark shadows under my armpits. When I saw that comment, I chuckled and thought, 'OH MY GOD, THEY THINK I HAVE SHADOWY ARMPITS BUT REALLY I'M JUST SHAMELESSLY HAIRY' Let me clear things up- I respect a human's right to shave and exfoliate til the cows come home, but I'm not about that life don't shave, my belly is always a half second away from hanging out of my pants, my elbows, knee caps, and inner thighs are crisp as burned bacon, & I have stretch marks for days, week, probably years. Maybe I have one stretch mark for every insult that's been hurled at me since I was old enough to wear a bra. It's certainly plausible- if so, fuck yeah. I really am a tiger who has earned her stripes.

@mynameisjessamyn highlights societal expectations to have glowing, radiant, smooth skin, free of stretch marks, acne, cellulite, hair, wrinkles, age spots, and more. This is image of the flawless, glowing, and radiant female body is the result of the market of insecurity developed by advertising corporations looking to profit off of the insecurities of women.

Due to these corporate made insecurities, women have learned to cover up their stretch marks, cellulite, wrinkles, and sagging skin due to feelings of embarrassment and shame. The cosmetic industry has benefitted off of this insecurity, catering many products to women that claim to help reduce visible signs of stretch marks, cellulite, aging, and more. The prevalence of products and cosmetic surgeries aimed at correcting these skin imperfections perpetuate the idea that if women have any of these signs their bodies are ruined and they should feel embarrassed for not being as beautiful as their flawless counterparts. These ideologies are perpetuated by

mass media's representation of flawless, smooth, tanned, and hairless women. In a caption on a photo of her wearing a bikini (see fig.23) @bodyposipanda calls for a change to these unrealistic aspirations:

> It's time for a change. We don't need to be surrounded by photographic lies that distort our self image and destroy our self worth. We can't keep believing that our purpose in life is to emulate some impossible beauty standard, one that doesn't even exist without the editor's wand anyway. We're taught to aspire to a perfection that isn't real. That nobody should have to measure themselves against. We are ready for that to change. So here's to lumpy, bumpy, cellulite, back roll, belly lovin' unedited imperfection. Here's to reality, and here's to hoping that we start to see more of it.

Other women (such as @yourstrulymelly, @bodyposipanda, @anastasiaamour, @micahh_grace, @chooselifewarrior, @rupikaur_) post up-close images of their bodies that display their stretch marks, cellulite, rolls and dimples on their torsos, thighs, breasts, and arms in order to initiate a conversation and end the associated stigma and shame (see figs. 22, 25). In an up-close photo of her stomach @micahh_grace proclaims, "flat bellies, wobbly bellies, taut bellies, freckled bellies are all beautiful. Bellies with rolls, with stretch marks, innie or outie belly buttons, with defined muscle tone or with soft skin are all beautiful"(see fig. 24). Cellulite and stretch marks are often viewed as the result of being overweight despite being a common occurrence in both men and women of various sizes due to increases and decreases in weight or height.

Fig. 21. Practicing yoga in a headstand with back facing the camera; Photograph by @mynameisjessamyn; 4 Nov 2015. Instagram, Inc.

Fig. 22. Chub Love; Photograph by @biggalyoga; 12 May 2015. Instagram, Inc.
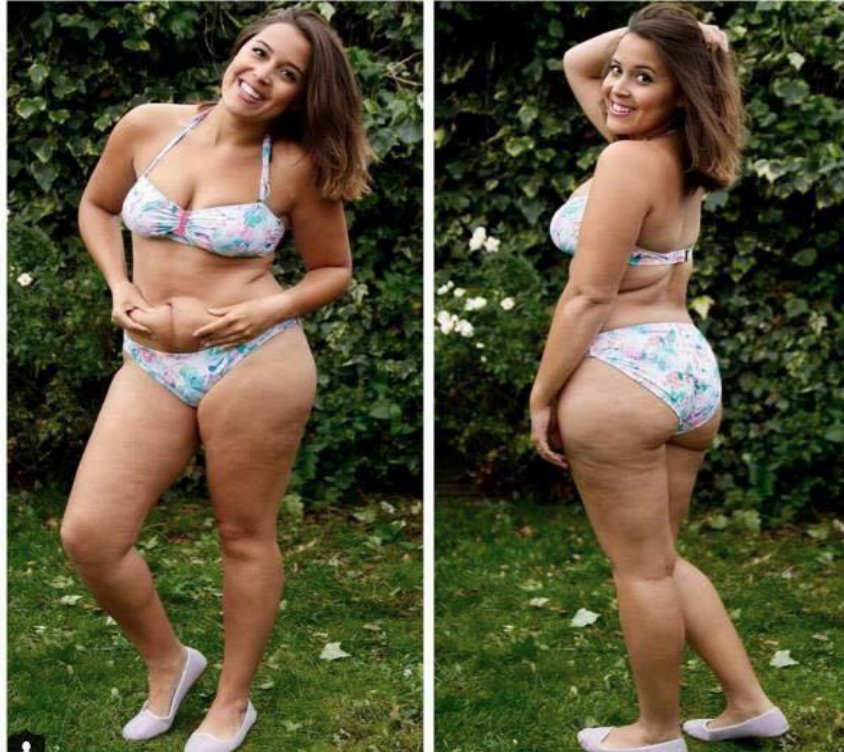
Fig. 23. Side-by-side photographs wearing a bikini; Photograph by @bodyposipanda; 9 November 2015; Instagram, Inc.

Fig. 24. Love of bellies; Photograph by @micahh_gracee; Accessed 13 March 2016; Instagram, Inc.

Fig. 25. Ode to bellies; Photograph by @chooselifewarrior; 1 January 2016; Instagram, Inc.

In addition, body positive advocates perform the routines of femininity in order to demonstrate that ideal beauty does not come naturally, but is in fact cultivated and requires labour on the part of the woman to achieve such beauty. Women manage their bodies on a daily basis in order to achieve and benefit from ideal beauty. As part of what Butler would view as a gender masquerade, @bloatedandalone4evr1993 makes visible the routines of femininity through selfies applying facemasks (see fig. 26) and exfoliates (see fig. 27) in order to remove blackheads. Through this performance @bloatedandalone4evr1993 exposes the body work that goes into performing femininity, which includes modifying and cultivating a more desirable appearance according to dominant beauty ideals. She is reclaiming self-care, exposing the work that goes into looking like a woman, and taking control of how she wants to present herself by picking and choosing what aspects of femininity she wants to accept or reject.

Fig. 26. Removing black heads; Photograph by @bloatedandalone4evr1993; 17 September 2016; Instagram, Inc.

Another body positive advocate, @anastasiaamour, addresses the demand for women to be beautiful and poised at all times. In the caption below an up-close image of her red sweaty face (see fig. 28) she encourages women to not feel ashamed of their bodies while exercising:

> I feel like there's this 'Insta-fitness' perception, where we feel like we're meant to look sexy and attractive while working out. And sure, sometimes we do - sometimes our workouts make us feel like sexpots, and other times, whilst they're amazing... they leave us a big, red, sweaty mess. AND THAT'S OKAY! […] I've always been ashamed of how red I turn when I exercise […] I saw this as a mark of shame but these days? It doesn't bother me! Nor does being sweaty […] I want to remind you all that it's okay if you're not 'attractive' during a workout.

The demands on the female body make it difficult to negotiate daily activities. In this case, women are expected to engage in body modification practices such as exercising in order to lose

weight to remain thin. However, at the same time women are expected to be beautiful and maintain their appearance, which can prevent many women from feeling comfortable engaging in activities that could potentially interfere with their appearance. This exemplifies the way in which women modify their behavior and avoid potentially uncomfortable situations and activities in social settings.

Fig. 28. Post-workout selfie; Photograph by @Anastasiaamour; 28 January 2016; Instagram, Inc.

However, images that addressed cellulite, wrinkles, dimples, skin conditions, acne, and more did not receive feelings of disgust from the participants. In comparison to the more shocking photos prior to these images, the participants were not shocked to see these parts of women. When asked how these images of women's cellulite, wrinkles, dimples, and stretch marks affect their own self-image, most participants were moved, identified with the experiences of the women, and accepted the images. These skin issues were not as repulsing to the

participants who solely viewed the photos as an aesthetically pleasing photos overall. Participant B stated: "I actually think that's a really nice photo […] I think her shape is really nice, and like I don't even think the stretch marks detract from it personally". The participants recognized these are issues that everyone suffers from, sharing personal stories of their own experiences as well as family and friends experiences with various skin issues.

Participants acknowledged the societal pressure to have smooth, unblemished, spotless, and flawless skin and the affect that those norms have on their own self-image. Participant B stated,

I think it's just like seen as like I think a problem like, an impurity, something that's to be ashamed of. As someone with stretch marks I would probably wear some clothes differently if I didn't have stretch marks. I would present myself differently if I felt like I could, but I feel like I can't because it's an issue that I have and something that people would pinpoint and call ugly. It's so bad because so many people have them […] that's a big thing with specifically the male gaze, because let's say you have stretch marks or extra skin, you can cover that with clothes. But when you're with a partner, whoever you happen to be intimate with, it's like, 'are you going to accept my body?' Men are probably looking at these bodies and thinking 'well ya, you're ruined', or 'why doesn't my wife look like that Victoria Secret model?' There are so many images telling you that you can change it and don't have to look like that and like "look at these women, they're perfect!" so it's like we live in this box where we can't be ourselves, but neither can those women because that's not what they look like either. I think that's a big misconception. It's definitely like, oh you get them because you're fatter. And I know with me my boobs are small so people

108

are like 'how would you get stretch marks?' So it's like all of these perceptions of what

should be even though none of them are routed in fact or proper knowledge.

 The participants shared their experiences of feeling shame over their stretch marks, cellulite, and

acne, and felt empowered by these women's rejection of societal norms to have smooth and

flawless skin and were excited by the potential of a movement such as this to work towards

changing the way women's bodies are thought about.

The participants were accepting of what these women are doing and found community in

their shared experiences. Contemplating her acceptance of the women's unsmooth skin,

Participant B wondered if her acceptance had to do with her own experiences with having stretch

marks:

> But then again am I being biased in my own having stretch marks and wanting to accept
>
> myself through her photo? I think also being able to see yourself mirrored in other people
>
> is always important because that's where we get our worth from right. So if were only
>
> looking to unattainable notions of beauty then we are always going to hate ourselves.
>
> Imagine models looked like that though? People wouldn't fucking hate themselves. People
>
> wouldn't hate themselves and be like "well this person has it, and this person has it,
>
> everybody has it so it's fine, right!"

The participants felt that this movement provided a space for women to connect with others who

share the same experiences, and reach out to someone who has experienced the same skin issues.

Participants were surprised to see images of eczema (see fig. 30) and acne (see fig.29) on

the users accounts, as they did not think body positivity included skin issues as well.

Participants I, who struggles with eczema, found the image as well as the captions to be relatable

to the participant

The photo of her hands with really bad eczema, I totally have eczema on my hands and it looks just like that. And it was like, if I was still experiencing that and seeing that photo I would be like ok... I feel comfortable here in this space... this person will understand something about me and that is also really important.

The participant identified with the body positive users experience of living with eczema, particularly with trying different medications, and receiving comments from others who inquired and suggested remedies to cure their eczema. Other participants stated their surprise at the inclusion of acne and eczema in the movement, and participant E stated,

The one with the eczema is interesting because usually when you talk about body positivity you think of shape, but not so much stuff about skin for example. But this person talks about eczema and I've seen some people talk about acne scars and stuff like that. It is also part of acceptance and body positivity.

Occurrences such as acne, scaring, and rashes are so commonplace that they go overlooked, and yet they are experienced by everything and something that individuals work to get rid of through medications and beauty products.

Fig. 29. Mirror selfie of back acne; Photograph by @bloatedandalone4evr1993; 20 March 2016; Instagram, Inc.

It became apparent that issues of the skin were not judged as harshly by participants as body size and menstruation. Most participants were surprised to see issues such as acne and eczema included in the movement. Despite the societal norms that view stretch marks and cellulite as flaws on the body, participants did not view the body positive advocates negatively for showcasing these aspects of their bodies. In most cases the participants drew on their own struggles with their self-image in relation to their stretch marks and cellulite, and provided examples of their family members and friends. The participants identified with and felt a connection to the advocates who shared their experiences with eczema, back acne, and stretch marks.

In response to the societal norms around shaving, body positive advocates post selfies of their bodies that represent their decision not to remove their hair from their bodies. The body

positive movement challenges the ideal around the world that women's bodies should be hairless and smooth. Traditionally men's hair (particularly facial hair) has been linked to virility, power, strength, fertility, leadership, lustfulness, and masculinity, whereas female body hair has been linked to insanity, witchcraft, the devil, female wantonness, and the denial of women's sexuality (Bobel and Kwan 13). However, in African cultures female body hair is seen as a source of power, and the women are eroticized, desirable, powerful, and highly sexed (Bobel and Kwan 13-14). Feminist scholars have argued that in cultures that feel threatened by female power, hairlessness norms have become increasingly prevalent due to the association of pubic hair to womanhood—and therefore gender equality (Bobel and Kwan 14). Basow (1991) determined that body hair has come to signify gender and the differences between genders: to have a hairy body is a sign of masculinity, to have a hairless one a sign of femininity (84). Hair has come to represent the ideal gender as the emphasis on women's hairlessness conveys that, unlike men's bodies, women's bodies are unacceptable in their natural state (Basow 84). Body hair has come to represent different attributes for the sexes, as Toerien and Wilkinson (2003) have noted: "Hairlessness norms mark femininity as clearly different from masculinity; femininity becomes associated with "tameness," docility, and immaturity, while masculinity is associated with power and dominance" (qtd. in Bobel and Kwan 15). Body hair has come to represent the inequality among the sexes. Beginning in the 1930s advertising campaigns promoting hair removal and changes in fashion by beauty experts emerged to establish hair removal as a new social convention (Bobel and Kwan 14). Increasingly, female bodies became reminiscent of prepubescent female bodies, and outfits became more revealing.

Women are conditioned to desire, achieve, and maintain a hairless appearance through waxing, shaving, or laser hair removal. Hairlessness has become associated with ideal

femininity, as Tiggermann and Hodgson (2008) illustrated: "In particular, women shave their legs and underarms to achieve femininity and overall attractiveness, and they shave pubic hair to achieve sexual attractiveness and self-enhancement" (qtd. in Bobel and Kwan 14). Body hair has come to be seen as unfeminine, unattractive and unhygienic. However, body positive advocates are reclaiming control over their own image and refusing to let society dictate what is appropriate and inappropriate for their bodies by choosing not to remove their body hair.

Through the use of selfies, body positive advocates have documented their decision not to shave various areas of their bodies. The explicit rejection of societal expectations to shave by the body positive movement is accomplished through selfies that either directly or indirectly capture their grown in leg, belly, upper lip, underarm, vaginal, and facial hair. Images vary from up-close images that focus on a specific body part, to distant images of their bodies where their choice to embrace their body hair is visible. @bloatedandalone4evr1993 whose profile reads as a performance of subversive femininity explicitly draws attention to her body hair through the following selfies: a full body selfie where she lifts her arm up and over her head to display her grown in underarm hair(see fig. 32); up-close images of her stomach covered in dark brown peach fuzz and longer hair that leads down to her vaginal area (see fig. 31); and an up-close image in between her thighs where her pubic hairs are peaking out of the sides of her shorts. Other women, such as @thechristinecho, have dyed their underarm hair (in this case green) and captured it through up-close photos of their underarms in order to make both a statement and their decision to embrace their body hair more noticeable in both online spaces and offline spaces (see fig. 33). In most cases these images are accompanied by captions that address societal influences on women's bodies and what it means to shave as a woman, along with

accompanying hash tags such as, #bodyhair and #pithairdontcare, in order to identify these

practices with the larger movement.

Fig. 31. Belly hair; Photograph by @bloatedandalone4evr1993; 19 September 2015; Instagram, Inc.

Fig. 32. Mirror Selfie revealing underarm hair; Photograph by @bloatedandalone4evr1993; 30 January 2016; Instagram, Inc.

Fig. 33. Green underarm hair; Photograph by @thechristinecho; 13 January 2016; Instagram, Inc.

The participant interviews revealed that women preferred the hairless look. Participants aligned bodily hair with the masculine and therefore found the sight of women's bodily hair as unfeminine. Conditioned to believe women's bodies should be hairless, many participants were uncomfortable seeing women's unshaven and un-kept bodies. The participants felt that women's skin should be smooth and clean, associating body hair with uncleanliness and poor hygiene. The participants revealed that they engage in hair removal practices and believes other women should as well. Drawing on body hair being aligned with the masculine, participant A stated: "I'm not for it. I don't really like it. They should wax or shave. It's not feminine". When viewing the images participant C stated, "I understand why they do this, but I personally don't like to see that. I like the hairless look", revealing her preference for hairlessness and demonstrating the influence that shaving norms have had on her own views of femininity.

In her rejection of the practice, participants F discussed her own body management practices and her reasoning behind the removal of her body hair:

So like I've had laser hair removal on my under arms, bikini line, on my legs, like I've

done all of that willingly, and I've done all that because one of two reasons 1) I hate

shaving my legs, it's absolutely torture to me, 2) I hate ingrown hairs and get ingrown hairs

nonstop, so like it just became a painful process to me. Could I live without shaving? Of

course I could. Am I comfortable with it? Not really. Full disclosure, right? So I think

about myself and my own practices and if I did this, what would be the repercussion? Well

like I might gross a couple people out. Would I be comfortable? Probably not and I think

that's at the centre. Obviously my own comfort is based on other things as well like the

medias portrayal, and what will other people think, and what will my partner think –which

wouldn't be an issue—but like it's more of like what will other people think and in turn

how will that affect how I think about myself or how I see myself?.

The participant revealed that she feels uncomfortable at the sight of women's body hair. Drawing

on her own experiences she has chosen to remove her body hair due to comfort as well as the

influence of the media's portrayal of smooth and hairless bodies. The social repercussions were

also a consideration for the participant, as she wanted to remain desirable to her partner.

Attempting to rationally explain her feelings of resistance to the embodiment that these

women are experiencing, participant F stated:

It's this bizarre world in which you realize that, you look at these images and they stand

out of the ordinary and not in the way that we are accustomed to, and so it's not like you're

looking at all these images and this is just a selfie of a woman, she uses her body in a way

that she's trying to make very political statements, but I think that these are often—I don't

know how many followers she has but I imagine several—these images start to get put on

the back burner because people are either grossed out of off put by them or you know, they

118

don't fit well with whatever else you have going on in your feed so you're kind of taken

aback.

Considerations for the potentiality of movements such as these came through the participants'

response. Due to the abrasive approach the body positive movement takes to posting this images

online, they might turn individuals off even more from something that they already viewed as

highly gross and disgusting.

Chapter Six: Women Who Bleed on Instagram

The female body is unstable and fluid: leaking bodily fluids and excrement. Western capitalist society is surrounded by images of women's bodies, and women's bodies are used to sell everything. A contradiction emerges whereby women's bodies are seen as desirable and yet the leaky, penetrable, and vulnerable natural body is viewed with disgust. Messages tell women that their bodies are unacceptable in their natural state and need sanitizing, deodorizing, exfoliating, shaving, and denuding, women are also taught from a very young age to conceal menstruation. As self-objectification varies depending on age, younger women have been found to view their bodies through a more self-objectifying lens than do older women, and as a result experience more shame, self-loathing, and disgust in relation to menstruation (Roberts 2000). As a result, the women who are part of the body-positive movement on Instagram are posting photos of their experiences with menstruation in order to demystify the female body and break down taboos that believe menstruation to be dirty and unnatural. These images include articles of clothing stained with period blood, leaking blood on the body, soiled hygienic products, and sexual encounters while on their period.

These views are built on a long tradition in Western philosophy that has deemed women's bodies inferior and men's bodies superior due to woman's reproductive biology. Aristotle's (1984) mind/body duality separated women onto the side of the body, and men on the

side of the mind, and argued that women's inferiority was due to her menstrual blood that he deemed less pure than the semen of men. Women's bodies were ruled by their physical bodies and bodily functions, whereas men's bodies were ruled by the mind and intellect. The fear of women's menstruation can be interpreted as a result of Sigmund Freud (1974) theory of castration anxiety, as women come to symbolize the threat of castration. Early feminist approaches to female embodiment between the 1970s and 1990s sought to liberate women from the positions of Anglo American radical feminism and psychoanalytic feminism, dealing with the works of Freud and Lacan (Irigaray, 1989). Rather than liberating woman from reproductive tasks, Anglo American radical feminism sought to rethink women's sexuality and maternal bodies as a source of power and positive values that provokes pride rather than shame (Lorde 1984, Rich 1980; O'Brien 1981, Rich 1979, Ruddick 1989). In comparison, psychoanalytic feminists such as Irigaray (1989) critique both philosophy and psychoanalysis for presenting man as the universal norm, failing to recognize sexual difference, and conceptualizing woman as the 'maternal feminine' that has been separated from abstract thought.

There is a long history in many cultures that fear menstruation and associate it with uncleanliness. These histories have seen women confined to menstrual huts as women could not sleep in the same bed as their husbands and had to be left alone and untouched because menstruation was seen as unsacred and unholy. Women were then required to have a ritual bath to ensure men's safety. Roberts and Waters (2004) discuss these cultural taboos stating, "From the Bible to the Koran, injunctions against contact with women during menstruation illustrate the cultural belief that women are polluting and that menstrual blood can have a contaminating effect. Many cultures confined women to menstrual huts, or required ritual baths following menstruation, in order to ensure men's safety from contact" (8). These views of menstruation are

121

evident throughout Western capitalist cultures, and continue to thrive as women are expected to refrain from sexual intercourse during their period, and hide that they are menstruating from others through hygiene products that are designed to go unnoticed. A paradox emerges, in which the female body is seen as life affirming, and yet at the same time the menstruation that is required to produce new life is perceived as grotesque and deserving of concealment.

Western culture is founded on the horror of the abject female body that leaks wastes and fluids has a history of being depicted as fluid and unstable; violating the desire for the clean and proper body. In *Powers of Horror* (1982), Julia Kristeva argues that because of its procreative functions the female body has become associated with the intolerable abject body, because unlike the male body, the female body is "penetrable, changes shape, swells, gives birth, contracts, lactates, bleeds" (Creed 112). Due to women's procreative and birth-giving functions that there is a natural connection between the female body and the "primal" elements— especially the earth—threatening to collapse the boundary between human and animal, civilized and uncivilized (Russo 1995; Price & Shildrick; 1999). Kristeva contends that the female body does not "respect borders, positions, rules'… that which disturbs identity, system, order" (qtd. in Creed 45). Accordingly, if woman is most aligned with the animal world than she too has an "insatiable sexual appetite that must be controlled by man" (Creed 118). As a result the abject must be excluded in order for the subject take up his/her proper place in relation to the symbolic (Creed 1996). However, the abject must still be tolerated for although it threatens to destroy life and collapse meaning, it also defines it.

Russo's concept of the female grotesque is related to the abject woman since the maternal body is associated with the grotesque. Works by scholars such as Deborah Caslav Covino (2004) have found that bodily functions, such as blood, tears, vomit, and excrement are aligned with

122

terror and revulsion predominantly on the side of the feminine. The grotesque body, aligned with

the "lower bodily stratum and its associations with degradation, filth, death, and rebirth"

(Bakhtin 8) and has traditionally been devalued by the classical body, which is "transcendent and

monumental, closed, static, self-contained, symmetrical, and sleek . . . identified with the 'high'

or official culture of the Renaissance and later, with the rationalism, individualism, and

normalizing aspirations of the bourgeoisie" (Bakhtin 8). In comparison, Bakhtin (1984) defines

the grotesque body as "open, protruding, irregular, secreting, multiple, and changing, with the

social rebirth and reformation called for by the non- official 'low' culture or the carnivalesque"

(8). The abnormal or perverse, the filthy or tainted, and the earthly or grounded qualities of the

grotesque stand in opposition to the ideals upon which Western subjectivity has relied. Due to its

threatening control over the child, the maternal body is brought under the control of the

Symbolic or Paternal Order, domesticated in the myth of the Holy Virgin, mother of Christ: "the

Christian virginal representation of the maternal satisfies the aims of the (phallocentric)

Symbolic Order because the virgin is the impossible ideal up to which all women are held, and

serves as mother, daughter, and wife to the Holy Son" (Caslav Covino 22). The symbolic order

abjects the mother and represses her power. Reading the images from the body positive

movement through Bakhtin, they disrupt viewer's ideals of Western patriarchal society's cultural

discourses of the body. The body positive members attempt to make their menstruation visible

and mundane threatens the power and control over the maternal body.

Menstruation continues to be very taboo in contemporary Western cultures, and its

effects are evident in the behavior of women who work to conceal and are embarrassed by their

menstruation, as well as in the myths that men and women should not have intercourse during

menstruation. As a result advertisements emerged marketing menstruation as a hygiene crises,

reinforcing taboos around menstruation. According the scholars such as Coutts and Berg (1993) and Roberts and Waters (2004) advertisements for menstrual hygiene products emphasize the ideal of super-femininity, modesty, and decorum and promise young women a sanitized, de-odorized, and "fresh" bodily presentation reinforcing that women's bodies are unacceptable in their natural state. Furthermore, advertisements for menstrual hygiene products reinforce concealment through the marketing of the products packaging as small and easy to hide—especially from males. These advertisements inform women that if they do not manage their menstruation they will experience staining, soiling, odor, and humiliation and will suffer from embarrassment, decline of social status and attractiveness (Havens and Swenson 1988; Roberts and Waters 2004). This management of the body and concealment of menstruation through hygiene products shares many similarities to traditional menstrual huts. This form of body management can be further argued to be "their passage to civilization and social acceptance in cultures that elevate the mind over the body" (Roberts and Waters, 11). Girls are taught to grow up believing they should be ashamed and embarrassed of this very natural bodily function, rather than embracing it. It can become a very uncomfortable experience for girls and women having to hide or talk about their period.

However, Russo (1995) offers a possibility for dislocations from these traditional views of femininity through the 'grotesque performance'. Russo's 1995 *Female Grotesque* conjoins grotesque and abject in the development of a new aesthetic and purposes the "grotesque performance" as a way to subvert dominant ideologies. Russo rejects the history of representation and discourses that reinforces the imperative that women keep themselves small and unseen, that they neither take up too much space in the world, nor make spectacles of themselves. As a subversive alternative, Russo prefers that women make themselves visible and

disrupt long-standing definitions of the ideal woman as restrained and diminutive. The women who take up the practice of normalizing menstruation can be viewed as a Grotesque performer in Russo's terms, defying traditional femininity: "The grotesque performer, because ugly and aberrant according to conventional culture, refuses the imperative that she stay beautiful and domesticated, and seeks the heights of self-fashioning with reference to a body that does not obey prescribed limits" (Caslav Covino, 30). The women who identify with the body positive movement can be considered as 'grotesque performance' for their rejection of traditional femininity through the performances of their defiant bodies according to the conventions of Western culture. @bloatedandaloneforever, @rupikaur, @xxgirlflu, and @menstraul.blood's acts of disclosing the abnormal, perverse, filthy, and tainted female body through images of menstruation stand in opposition to the ideals upon which Western subjectivity has relied.

Molly Soda's account, @blaotedandalone4eva1993, reads as a performance that inertly challenges ideas around menstruation, body hair, and the routines of beauty. Her posts consist of up-close images of segmented parts of her body that narrow in on an aspect of non-conformity through her reclaiming of her natural body through posts of her period blood. Two photos document her experiences with menstruation, including an image of blood stained shorts with dried blood in between her legs (see fig.34), as well as another photo of her wearing white shorts that have a period stain in between her legs (see fig. 35). Molly Soda does not include captions with her photos and leaves it up to the viewer to derive their own conclusions to the photos.

Fig. 34. Leaking menstrual blood on thighs; Photograph by @bloatedandalone4evr1993; 16 August 2015; Instagram, Inc.

Fig. 35. Leaking menstrual blood on shorts; Photograph by @bloatedandalone4evr1993; 5 February 2016; Instagram, Inc.

Rupi Kaur's Instagram account, @Rupikaur, appears as more of an art project that challenges the rhetoric around women's bodies. Rupi Kaur posted a distant full body image of herself lying in bed with period stained sweatpants and bed sheets (see fig. 36). Although the image was staged for a school project and the blood was not real, it still had the same affect. Rupi Kaur acknowledges that while menstruation was once seen as holy, it is now seen as 'dirty', 'unnatural', 'sick', 'attention seeking' and a 'burden' that is shunned by people, societies, and communities. She highlights the evident contradiction that people are more comfortable with the pornification, sexualization, degradation, and violence towards women than they are towards menstruation. Instead she proclaims that the womb is 'divine' and a 'source of life for our species' that is 'strikingly beautiful'. However, Rupi Kaur's photos were removed twice from the platform for violating community guidelines. In following posts of the message she received from Instagram, as well as beneath another reposting of the same image, Rupi Kaur addressed Instagram's decision to remove her photo. The image in question did not violate any community guidelines as the girl was fully clothed, the image belonged to @rupikaur_, it was not attacking any person or groups, and it was not spam. The posts drew attention to Instagram's censorship of her content, which led the company to respond to Rupi Kaur with an apology for "accidentally" removing the image.

Other accounts such as @menstrual.blood, and @xxgirlflu rely on user submitted photos

of their experiences with menstruation in order to post them to their curated accounts that

embrace menstruation. Jennifer Williams' @menstrual.blood celebrates the traditionally shamed

menstrual cycle and wants to promote the acceptance of all bodies. As with the other accounts,

the aim is to demystify the period and make something that is innate 'normal' again. The content

from both accounts are very similar and include images of the following: images of women's

legs with menstrual blood running down their legs (see figs. 37, 38); images of feminine hygiene

products (see fig. 39); woman wearing blood stained underwear or shorts (see figs. 40, 41);

experiences of going to the bathroom while menstruating (see fig.42), and; blood stained

condoms from having sex while menstruating (see fig. 43). In photos on both accounts women

made @rupikaur inspired art by recreating similar images of themselves lying in their own beds

with period stained bed sheets and underwear (see fig. 44). Through these images these accounts

128

attempt to naturalize the female body in all of its forms.

Fig. 37. Menstrual blood dripping down the right leg; Photograph by @xxgirlflu; 16 June 2015; Instagram, Inc.

Fig. 38. Menstrual blood leaking down a womans' legs; Photograph by @menstraul.blood; 30 January 2016; Instagram, Inc.

Fig. 39. Woman with tampon; Photograph by @xxgirlflu; 16 December 2015; Instagram, Inc.

Fig. 40. Menstrual blood on underwear; Photograph by @xxgirlflu; 8 September 2015; Instagram, Inc.

Fig. 41. Woman's underwear with menstrual blood stains; Photograph by @menstraul.blood; 10 July 2016; Instagram, Inc.

Fig. 42. Menstrual blood on thighs and toilet; Photograph by @xxgirlflu; 5 January 2016; Instagram, Inc.

Fig. 43. Used bloody condoms; Photograph by @menstraul.blood; 4 May 2016; Instagram, Inc.

Fig. 44. Leaking period blood on underwear; Photograph by @xxgirlflu; 15 April 2016; Instagram, Inc.

As a result of Western culture's foundational view of the abject body as a site of horror, participants experienced feelings of disgust and rejection of the body positive movement's refusal to conceal their menstruation. The movement's attempts at normalizing the grotesque body was destabilizing for participants who believe that menstruation should remain private. The abject female body and the filthy or tainted, and the earthly or grounded qualities of the grotesque stand in opposition to the ideals upon which Western subjectivity has relied. The images were very jarring and shocking for the participants and disrupted their viewing practices because images of female blood and experiences with menstruation are taboo and not something women are accustomed to seeing and discussing. Participant H acknowledged the societal norms around menstruation, but rather than rejecting those norms she gave into them and incorporated them into her own views on menstruation:

> A lot of people think your period is dirty and I know in certain countries for women who are menstruating they have to stay in the house and they are locked away for that week. I think in a lot of cultures it is seen as gross and dirty and they do not want the women there. I do not feel shameful about it, but I think it is gross… but you have to have one. I think it is gross because I feel like bodily fluids are gross. It is just the bodily fluids thing.

Despite menstruating being an experience that she endured, participant H felt disgust at her own bodies' natural fluids and the fluids of others. Participant C stated:

> I personally don't think it is necessary to post that kind of stuff. It is not something I would really want to see… it's not something I like… I understand why they're doing that and I support that but images of menstruation do not need to be exposed. For me it grosses me out, even if I'm on my period it grosses me out too.

136

Like the other participants, participant C felt disgusted and condemned menstruation for being

"gross", feeling that it should remain private. Other participants did not understand the meaning

of posting images involving women's bodily fluids and could not quite articulate why they had a

distaste for these images: "I didn't even get that from that image. I didn't even know why that

image was in there. I don't think anything of it except for the fact that I wouldn't post it. Ya it

does happen, but do you need to post it? Why?" It is evident that the participant, while trying to

work through the image, felt that women's menstruation should not be made public and was

inappropriate to be posted onto online spaces.

Other participants discussed the myths that women must ultimately hide their

menstruation from men, and that men and women should not have intercourse during

menstruation. Participant B stated:

> I think that's really important because I can't believe were at a point where we have to hide
>
> menstruating […] to see it as unclean. And something that has always bothered me is men
>
> who won't have sex with women who are on their period. It's not that gross, it comes out
>
> of every woman's body. It's a thing, it happens. Just because we have to hide it so you're
>
> comfortable doesn't mean that it's not a real thing. The demystifying of women's bodies is
>
> really important and I think it's like maybe slowly getting better but the fact that it's still so
>
> taboo […] as a woman if you complain about it you're seen as irrational, weak, and
>
> moody.

She concluded however that images involving menstruation "would make people really

uncomfortable and is inappropriate", and she felt as though images like these would get taken off

of Instagram.

In discussing their revulsion at the sight of women's period blood, participants felt that the images were very performative. Participant F stated,

My take on these images is that I'm grossed out, and I'm grossed out on a level that like this, it has nothing to do with her being a woman in all sincerity, and I can understand why it would be interpreted in that way, I think a lot of this is very show beauty. It becomes very performative, and you do this theatre of the absurd thing where your main goal is to afflict a sense of unease in your audience. I don't see these things and think "yay female empowerment!" instead I think it's gross…This is all very performative on a level that's like … I just don't get it. I understand the purpose that she's trying to do. Just like, is that ever necessary? It has nothing to do with her being a woman.

While some participants believed that the images seemed like too much of a performance, others acknowledged the performativity of the accounts but questioned whether it mattered if they were authentic or performed identities, just as long as the meaning behind their messages remained and continued to affect responses from their viewers.

Posting experiences with menstruation onto public networks is an interesting phenomenon that gained momentum with the postings of Rupi Kaur, propelling the discussion around women's bodies and menstruation. Since then, these accounts have taken up the project of posting images of period blood onto their public profiles in order to initiate a discussion around the traditionally shameful experience of menstruation. While participants understood the reasons why women are using their platforms to talk about issues related to women's bodies, the images of menstruation ultimately shocked and disrupted the female participants' ideals of the body and reinforced narratives of the female body as out of control, dirty, and disgusting. It would be interesting to consider in future research the ways in which these performances of fluid

bodies are occurring on very highly structured online spaces, and how that affects the ability to

self-present in these ways.

Chapter Seven: Repeating Dominant Codes of Femininity

During the analysis of the body positive movement it became apparent that while body positive advocates are attempting to practice meaningful self-presentation, producing images of themselves that do not conform to societies standards of beauty in order to address issues such as objectification, sexuality, body size, ability, beauty, aging, feminine hygiene, grooming, and menstruation they are in fact reproducing many of the dominant capitalist codes of femininity that they claim to reject, bringing themselves back into the capitalist culture industry that controls and exploits women's bodies. Therefore, it becomes evident that although these advocates are attempting to challenge dominant codes of femininity, they are in fact reproducing dominant capitalist ideologies through the commodification process, objectification of their bodies, and acceptance of beauty modification practices.

As the popularity of the body positive movement and the influence of advocates grew, corporations began commoditizing their identities and capitalizing off of the movement. While social media profiles function as a site of becoming for users as they create, maintain, and update their virtual presence on the newsfeed on a regular basis, corporations have become aware of this and are capitalizing of the labour of users. Judith Butler argues that users form their virtual subjectivities on social networking sites, by constantly updating their statuses and profiles, in order to remain 'legible' (qtd. in Coté and Pybus, 2011). Individuals engage in this form of

labour due to the desire to count as a subject and thus become legible for recognition. However, while making themselves legible through their profiles, users make themselves legible to corporations who want to sell their products. Commercial interests hijack these spaces that are meant to be democratic. Mark Coté and Jennifer Pybus (2011), define user-generated individuated archives as the "lucrative lifeblood of surplus value and exchange [...] for users, it is about the production and circulation of subjectivities; for Facebook, it is a political economic imperative" (23). Social networks are a reflection of capitalisms drive for profitability through the immaterial and affective labour of its users that drive the profitability of platforms. Popular culture offers a distraction from work, but in fact causes the worker to fall further into the trap of capitalism and consumerism. Adorno and Horkheimer (1986) claim that as the Culture industry encroaches upon the small distractions of leisure activity, amusement has become an extension of labor under late capitalism. The only freedom the culture industry has to really offer, according to Adorno and Horkheimer, is a freedom from thinking.

The commodification of users followed Instagram's transition into an advertising platform in 2013. The information of user activity has become commodifed and sold to advertisers in order for them to better direct advertisements at specific audiences. Drawing on Dallas Smythe (2001), audiences are the primary commodity of mass media as they are being produced as something that can be packaged and then sold to advertisers. The audience then works for advertisers, laboring by learning to desire, generating demand for, and consuming mass-market goods and services. This process has been amplified through digitized media, with refined commodification able to better package audiences through demographic or personal characteristics. The commodification of audiences, what Mosco (2009) terms "imminent commodification", requires the use of measurement in order to keep track of regular production,

distribution, consumption, and exchange of the audience content, resulting in powerful surveillance practices that threaten users privacy.

Marketers collect consumer data and track the brands and channels consumers prefer. Instagram revealed an hour-by-hour breakdown of when its users are on the platform, allowing marketers to know when consumers are engaging with their content, allowing marketers to know the best times of day to share a message on the visual platform. Targeting criteria on Instagram allows advertisers to get their products or services in front of exactly the right people at the right time (Swant, 2015). Marketers can also quickly track how their campaigns are doing, learn from what is working and what is not, and even use the platform to launch new products. Corporations collect and centralize the data to track what brands and channels consumers prefer in order to push consumer-driven content and video tutorials dedicated to popular products across Web, social, email and in-store channels (Rae, 2015). Consumers are encouraged to post photos or selfies wearing or using the products, along with a corresponding hash tag identifying the brand of the product.

Moreover, marketers achieve direct consumer advertising through content deals with celebrities and Instagram influencers on the platform. Brands, particularly in fashion, spend more than one billion dollars per year on sponsored Instagram posts (Schaefer, 2015). Some brands pay Instagram influencers to post photos attending events while modeling their products, or send users free products to feature in upcoming photos or videos. The cost per photo (or sponsored content) depends on the influencers following, status, and the terms of the deal and can range anywhere from $5000 to $200,000 per post (Heine, 2015; Schaefer, 2015).

Marketing and talent agencies such as the Mobile Media Lab and Next, have launched in order to represent Instagram influencers and connect them with brands who advertise products

on Instagram (Saiidi, 2014). Contracts are negotiated in which influencers agree to feature the brand in a certain number of posts without featuring any other competitors in the same shot or future posts for an agreed upon time (Schaefer, 2015). Other tech companies, such as D'Marie, developed in order to provide brands with a tool for measuring the value of influencers. According to D'Marie CEO Frank Spadafora, their systems have a "proprietary algorithm that takes into account fifty-six factors to determine the marketing success of individual social media posts, including reach, engagement (likes, comments, shares, etc.), clicks and purchases" (Heine, 2015). The system will be able to predict brands sales conversions and find the best person, best social platform, and best message for the advertisers (Heine, 2015).

When looking at the accounts of the body positive movement the branding of influencers becomes apparent. Corporations and audiences who realized the potential of the body positive movement began capitalizing off of the growing popularity and the influence that the body positive movement has, paying advocates to promote and endorse products throughout their images. Users endorse products by either featuring posts where they are using the products, or post professional and staged images of the products. Public Relations firms contact influencers and tell them how to structure their profiles and create an identity in line with the brand. Images and captions are constructed in order to make advocates more relatable to their followers and create a connection to their brand. Influencers work hard maintaining an identity coherent with the brand, creating images that are perfected and fit the aesthetic of Instagram. What followers see in these artificial images is what companies want consumers to see, and is not the real lives of the influencers, but rather a branded identity. Furthermore, in images where they are not endorsing products, users are still performing as audience commodities by creating the content (i.e. preferences, tastes, likes) that is then packaged and sold to advertisers.

Through the commodification process, the body positive narrative throughout the advocate profiles shifts to one that is more conducive to capitalist interests. Initially the accounts analyzed for the study started off as personal accounts with images of the advocate's daily routines, including images of family and friends. A narrative then gradually developed that discussed their experiences with eating disorders, fat shaming, mental illness, and their self-image; reclaiming control over their body, practicing self-love, and exploring their embodiment. The body positive advocates began with one hash tag and then increased their use of hash tags once their followers began to grow and other advocates began taking up the use of the same hash tags within their posts. As their success in self-presentation was reinforced through the increasing 'likes' that their posts received, increase in followers, and growing media attention from magazine and article features, the advocates profiles became a contrived perfection made to continue attracting attention. The advocates began using more hash tags and perfecting the body-positive narrative throughout their images. During this process the accounts attracted the attention of companies looking to profit off of their influence. As a result, the body positive narrative inherent throughout their images and captions shifts to one engrained in consumer capitalist activities in which they promote makeup, jewelry, teas, exercise equipment, and more.

Iqani and Schroeder (2015) theorize selfies as commodities as a result of being enrolled in a corporate owned service, which is ultimately profit oriented and sells advertising space. Selfies are an expressive consumer practice, a branding tool aimed at promoting particular narratives of the self, a market research technique, and a social media content generator. Furthermore, self-portraits turn the image of the self into a commodity that is made public and consumable by others, "projecting personal images into collective space and literally 'sharing'

very widely self-produced messages" (7). Selfies are a part of the capitalist spectacle, as

Borgerson (2013) explains:

> Having cleverly evolved in order to deliver a feeling of empowerment, in that individuals
>
> are generating and sharing their own images of themselves, the spectacle has arguably
>
> completely taken over even self-presentation. Instead of genuine self-expression, of ideas,
>
> debates, arguments (presented in visual form), selfies arguably show how individual
>
> agency has been shaped by the power of consumerist mediation. (qtd. in Iqani and
>
> Schroeder, 7)

This complicates the assertion that selfies are an empowering tool for women. Applying the

claims of Guy Debord in, *The Society of the Spectacle* (1995), that authentic social life has been

replaced with representation: "All that once was directly lived has become mere representation"

(12) to an analysis of the body positive selfies, it can be debated whether the decline of "being

into having", and "having to appearing" (16) is occurring within the images. Immersed within

consumer capitalist culture, agency in self-presentation is limited as the construction of an

individual's identity is mediated through our visually engrained culture and the images that

surround us. These images are produced by, and reinforce, consumer capitalist ideologies.

Individuals construct and present identities that are viewed as inherently acceptable within their

social groupings. Rather than representing the self authentically, individuals represent what they

want their followers to see. Selfies as spectacles can therefore be viewed as a "social relationship

between people that is mediated by images" (12). The selfie comes to represent the self to others.

Following Debord's claim that "passive identification with the spectacle supplants genuine

activity", relationships between commodities have replaced relationships between people.

Individuals come to consume others through their fabricated representations of the self. Human perception and authenticity has been affected by the spectacle of society.

During this process the content of the body positive accounts changes as the advocates focus more on consumption practices—in which case the body positive content virtually disappears, with only the occasional comment or hash tags. Users begin promoting clothing, lingerie, jewelry, teas, cleanses, and makeup brands. Some advocates begin wearing more makeup and attending to their style, posting tutorial videos for their followers to find out where and how to "get the perfect look"(see figs. 45 and 46). Body positive advocates, such as @anastasiaamour, used her influential position to write a book and promote it through her platform (see fig. 48). Other advocates, such as self-loving yogis for example, begin using their platform to initiate sponsored challenges and promote products including leggings, sports bras, and yoga equipment (see fig. 47). They begin frequenting and promoting live classes, their prices, and location through their profile (see figs. 49 and 50). They also began their own yoga tours around North America. Throughout this process their bodies are tamed through their branding and literal restricting of their freedom through clothing. Body positive yogis have begun wearing yoga pants and tops to endorse products, which works to physically hold in and conceal the female body that is out of control. This is also evident in the image of @mynameisjessamyn practicing yoga in a corset and heals (see fig. 51), which slims, conceals, restricts, and covers her fat body that requires controlling. As a result, a contradiction emerges as the body positive activists are brought back into the very capitalist system of consumer culture that they originally rejected.

Fig. 45. Fashion Look book; Photograph by @chooselifewarrior; 5 July 2016; Instagram, Inc.

Fig. 46. Lipstick sponsorship; Photograph by @chooselifewarrior; 15 August 2016; Instagram, Inc.

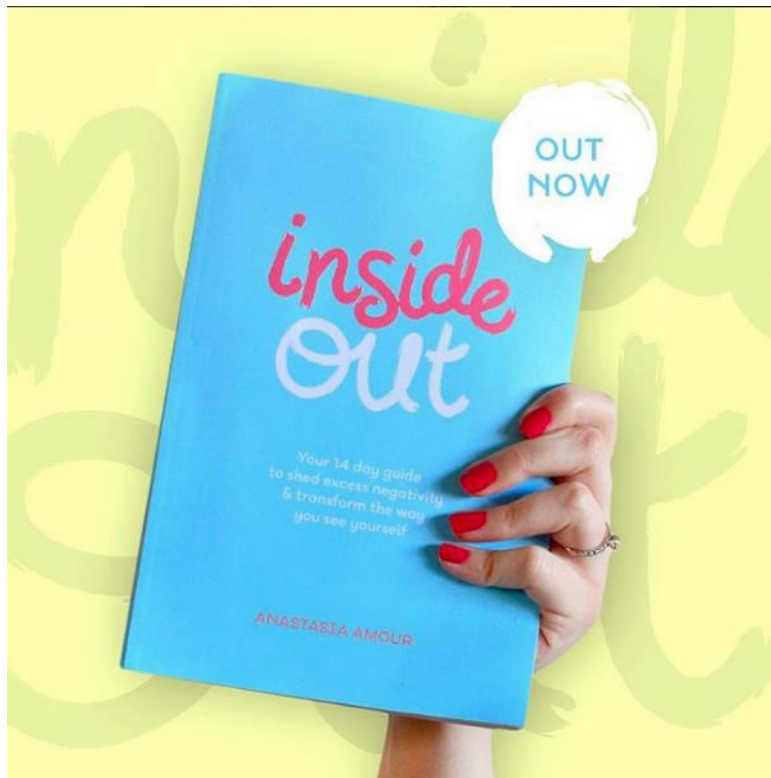Fig. 47. Fab Fit Fun promotion; Photograph by @biggalyoga; 18 April 2016; Instagram Inc.

Fig. 48. Personal Book Promotion; Photograph by @anastasiaamour; 13 November 2015; Instagram Inc.

Fig. 49. Yoga Classes; Photograph by @biggalyoga; 13 June 2016; Instagram Inc.

Fig. 50. EveryBody Yoga bundle sale; Photograph by @mynameisjessamyn; 3 February 2016; Instagram Inc.

Fig. 51. Practicing yoga in a garter, stockings, and high heels; Photograph by @mynameisjessamyn; 7 December 2015; Instagram, Inc.

Furthermore, the advocates reproduce the dominant ideal of the "thin body" through their

promotion of detox teas that assist with weight loss and claim to shed belly fat—a concept they

originally contested in their move towards the acceptance of all body types (see figs. 52 and 53). While some advocates may argue through their posts that they are engaging in diet and exercise to maintain a healthy life style, they are still adhering to a fad constructed within mass media that equates healthy eating with the virtuous, promoting a new form of dieting that continues to control the female body. These diets, for whatever purpose, are used to control women's bodies and have power over women, as Naomi Wolf (1962) argued: "A culture fixated on female thinness is not an obsession about female beauty, but an obsession about female obedience. Dieting is the most potent political sedative in women's history; a quietly mad population is a tractable one" (187). Therefore, while body positive advocates think they are escaping the demands placed on women's bodies to diet for the purpose of losing weight, they have instead become victim to an alternative dieting discourse that promotes diet and exercise in order to maintain a healthy and happy lifestyle. Through this process the advocates are brought back into the very industry they opposed and their bodies are regulated through the maintenance of these diets.

Fig. 52. Sponsorship for Flat Tummy Tea; Photograph by @biggalyoga; 2 November 2015; Instagram, Inc.

Fig. 53. Flat Tummy Tea Sponsorship; Photograph by @mynameisjessamyn; 1 October 2015; Instagram, Inc.

Initially body positive advocates promoted the acceptance of any flaws on the skin or body, displaying their real bodies in all of their glory, and rejecting the ideal feminine beauty. However, the content analysis of the body positive movement revealed that as the advocates refined and developed their profiles they relied on the use of filters and photo editing when posting images. The advocates adhere to the aesthetic of Instagram, which promotes the "filtered, shadowed, sharpened, brightened, tilted, faded, structured, saturated way of seeing life through a lens" (Swant, 2015), that has changed the way people portray themselves, see others, and has impacted brands in the process (Swant, 2015). Through this process the advocates literally smooth over their skin and achieve the plastic Barbie ideal prevalent throughout mass media.

Furthermore, the unattainable ideal constructed by the objectified female body within mass media is aided through photo editing tools such as Photoshop. The use of Photoshop in mainstream advertising has been addressed and opposed by the body positive advocates. However, it became apparent that as the advocates were featured in news media articles, or entered into the fashion industry as plus sized models, they allowed their bodies to be Photoshopped. For example, in the diversity photo shoot for the Dear Scantily campaign that @bodyposipanda participated in there was hardly a "diverse" representation of women (see fig. 54). First and foremost the shoot featured women of an average body size who closely resembled the ideal woman, rather than those bodies that above a size sixteen. The larger women in the photo were placed in the background, with their bodies covered by those of the thinner, more "desirable" bodies. Furthermore, out of the seven women featured in the shoot, only one of those was a visible woman of colour, who was placed in the back row, just peeping out from behind the other six White women. Furthermore, while there was one woman who lives with a (dis)ability featured in the spread, she was photographed in such a way that her (dis)ability was

erased. Therefore, while the campaign claimed to represent a diverse representation of women, they actually provided a very limited variety of representations. Moreover, a topic of concern that @bodyposipanda draws attention to in a preceding photo is the campaigns reliance on Photoshop to smooth over the skin of the participants (see fig. 55):

Because if you're gonna see the posed, polished, professional version, I'm sure as hell gonna make sure you see this one too. Embracing my belly rolls, celebrating my softness. I know the world wants me to value myself higher in one of these pictures, to worship what's 'flattering' and be ashamed of what's not. Well I refuse to feel that shame. I'm worthy of self love either way, and I choose to see the beauty in both. Same body, same underwear, same person underneath - that's the only part that really matters.

Rather than rejecting the use of Photoshop on her image to reduce the appearance of her cellulite and rolls, @bodyposipanda chose to participate in a practice that she claims to reject throughout the body positive narrative on her Instagram account. In her desire for media attention and increased social standing, @bodyposipanda allowed her body to become subjected to the very photo editing practices that she opposes, allowing her body to be misrepresented and her embodiment erased. Through acts such as these, advocates contribute to the misrepresentation of women and erasure of female embodiment that is ever so prevalent throughout Contemporary capitalist society—allowing the "beauty ideal" and the practices that enable it to continue to exist. While body positive advocates claimed to reject dominant codes of femininity, it became evident that they fell victim to the demand placed on women to achieve the appearance of smooth and flawless skin.

Fig. 54. Dear Scantily Diversity Photo Shoot; Photography by @bodyposipanda; 7 July 2016; Instagram, Inc.

Fig. 55. Addressing the use of Photoshop; Photography by @bodyposipanda; 10 July 2016; Instagram, Inc.

Furthermore, while feminists such as Dong-Hoo Lee (2005) argue that women have the

potential to subvert the conventional patriarchal gaze by enacting various self-portraits and

manipulating the camera to transform their body image, the analysis of the body positive

movement found that the advocates are in fact reproducing rather than confronting the

conventional structure of the gaze shaped by patriarchal capitalist society. Through the

positioning of their bodies and inviting gazes while posing to promote clothing, makeup, or

accessories, the body positive advocates demonstrate the arguments of John Berger and Laura

Mulvey, who claim that the conventional structuring of the gaze in mass media has reproduced

man as an 'ideal' spectator and woman as a viewed object and, consequently, makes women

accustomed to looking at themselves through men's eyes and displaying themselves attractively

in order to attain an ideal female body molded by capitalist society and reinforce the conventions

156

of the gaze. When women participate in male culture they have no subjectivity and exist for men. Even when a woman knows what she is doing, she still participates in an act where she knows she is being used as an object. Through the up close images that segment different parts of their bodies, advocates explicitly objectify their own bodies. Moreover, the advocates manipulate their bodies to appear thinner and more desirable by twisting, turning and crossing their arms and legs in order to appear smaller and reflect dominant ways of positioning the female body that invites the male gaze.

Resembling the representation of women in advertising and pornography, the advocates are hypersexualized and pose in welcoming positions, staring directly at the viewer with a sexy and inviting stare that lures the viewer in. Through this process women remain submissive and passive objects that exist for the pleasure of male desire. For women viewing these images it reinforces the relegation of women to the realm of appearance, whose responsibility it is to appear as sexualized and physically attractive. A contradiction emerges in which the images that the body positive advocates produce explore what Tasker and Negra characterize as formulaic female sexualities, as the advocates "enthusiastically perform patriarchal stereotypes of sexual servility in the name of empowerment" (2007, 3). The body positive advocates replicate patriarchal conventions in their quest to achieve desirability. In presenting a more eroticized and desirable image of the self, body positive activists fall back on traditional constructions of desirability.

Moreover, the body positive advocates perform as good capitalist subjects by adopting mainstream beauty trends. The body positive advocates practice body management in order to present a more desirable body that conforms to societal standards of beauty and evades stigma

through their acceptance of beautification practices. Noticing this tendency throughout the movement, Participant F stated:

> Obviously those look very different in the sense of like, okay so she hasn't shaved under her arms in probably ever, but also she's got a ton of makeup on, dyes her hair, it's just like I don't know, it's this middle ground. Even while I'm saying these things I'm realizing that what I'm doing is policing women. So I think this is great. I think it is very much grounded in this idea 'to each is their own'. But I don't know how well it works in terms of the larger narrative of 'just be'. It's really conflicting ideas between the woman whose like 'my body is my own, I'm going to put on makeup' which you should, you should feel empowered enough by your own body to do as you wish with it. But it is very much this juxtaposed political idea to me.

In the interview participant F revealed her conflicting views of what a feminist should look like, insinuating that in their rejection of dominant beauty ideals feminist are expected to relinquish any beauty modification practices they engage in. Feminists are often criticized for wearing wakeup or following fashion trends due to the assumption that in order to identify as a feminist, women must give up any mainstream capitalist and patriarchal conventions, including fashion trends and beauty regimens.

However, the decision to wear makeup and cloth the body in popular dress could be a response to their bodies' nonconformity. Discussing women's engagement in beauty modification practices despite their rejection of them, Bobel and Kwan (2011) believe that violating one social norm may enforce other social norms more intensely, as is demonstrated by the body positive advocates who enhance their outward appearance of femininity by dressing more feminine and wearing heavier makeup in order to compensate for their hairiness or fatness.

This is exemplified in the photo by @bloatedandalone4eva1993 (see fig. 56) in which she is posing seductively in a red one-piece body suit, with her arm bent up over her head to display her under arm hair. While she is challenging norms around shaving, she is maintaining a highly visible feminine appearance through the revealing red one-piece body suit, coloured and styled hair, and heavy eye shadow and lipstick. Moreover, this is demonstrated by fat body positive advocates, such as @glitterandlazers and @chooselifewarrior, who engage in the intense beauty and fashion consumption practices in order to compensate for their transgressive bodies.

Fig. 56. Enforcing social norms more intensely; Photograph by @bloatedandalone4evr1993; 30 January 2016; Instagram, Inc.

This exercise of an individual's freedom to engage in commodity consumption has been connected with contemporary neoliberalism that emerged in the early 1980's as the hegemonic economic, political and social policy of the West (Gill, 2006a, 2007a). With the rise of post feminism and neoliberalism, Chen (2013) claims that a new image emerged of an empowered

159

woman confidently embracing patriarchal heterosexuality and commodity culture. By means of this image, women have been duped into believing they are exercising individual 'choice', 'freedom' and 'agency', which often is measured in terms of commodity consumption. Feminist critics such as Chen, have condemned the rise of the new active female subject as a reflection of the workings of the neoliberal process of subjectification, which is immanent within and responsive to normative power. Brown (2003) notes an increasing trend since the 1990s towards "a celebration of conspicuous consumption and solipsistic individual gratification, embodied above all in the image of the empowered, assertive, pleasure-seeking, 'have- it-all' woman of sexual and financial agency" (qtd. in Chen 2013). Thus, applying Foucault's (2003) theory of freedom, the freedom women experienced from passivity was not truly freedom but rather freedom to be influenced through hegemony and commodity culture. Chen (2013) contends that the neoliberal form of freedom should not be disregarded altogether as false or fictitious altogether, because as a new form of self- governance where the only guiding principle is marketization and self-interest, it encourages individuals to willingly and freely choose the path most conducive to their self-interest and does not operate directly on or coerce these choices in the way that traditional disciplinary power works. The path often turns out to be the normative one, the one for which the state has provided the best conditions: "Thus, instead of being coerced by direct disciplinary surveillance by the state, individuals now willingly and actively self-govern in a climate enabled by the state" (Chen, 444). Performing as good capitalist subjects the women in the body positive movement end up incorporating the patriarchal norms of heterosexual relationships, and the eroticized and fashionably adorned female bodily charm that they initially resisted.

This new image of the neoliberal female subject has been viewed as both anti-feminist,

160

and as an autonomous consuming subject. Whelehan (2000) offers the view of this new femininity as "being constructed in the neoliberal context that addresses young women as autonomous, confident and desiring sexual subjects who actively and knowingly make choices, in stark contrast to women's traditional image of passivity and subordination" (5), which Gill (2007b) has marked as a shift from sexual objectification to sexual subjectification (Gill, 2007b; Gill and Scharff, 2011; Chen, 2013). While postfeminist popular culture is conducive to sexual expression, allowing women to express and discuss their sexuality and sexual orientation, Budgeon (2001) argue that freedom and agency has come to refer to "an individual's voluntary choice of self-objectification, and of willingly participating in and following whatever is prescribed by patriarchal heterosexual norms and capitalist commodity culture" (qtd. in Chen 2013). Thus the 'popularization' of feminism has alienated feminism and reinforced the patriarchal status quo (McRobbie, 2007, 2011). While women contend that they are exercising individual choice, are in control of their lives, and can make their own decisions and choices, they are ultimately utilizing the feminist ideal of female freedom to justify their non-feminist choices and silence disapproval from others.

The goal of the body positive movement is to take up space in an area that their bodies have never been represented before. While it can be argued that the advocates are 'selling out' by being brought into the culture industry and profiting off of this movement, perhaps it can instead be said that this was their intention in the first place—to be represented within mass media, a space where their bodies have previously been excluded. These women are now profiting off of the very capitalist system that previously excluded them, and ultimately, have control over whether or not they profit off of what they are doing or whether they agree to be sponsored. Advocates are experiencing power in the sense that they have gained entry into a marketplace

where they have control over whether or not they sponsor and endorse brands. Women choose to endorse and sponsor brands because it is the most desirable and profitable option. Chen (2013) asserts that women's possible exploitation by capitalist commodity culture where they are lured into full participation collapses as the boundary between the entrepreneur, conventionally coded as active, and the consumer, coded as passive, is erased as they are emphasized to be the producer of their own choices and calculators of their own risks; constituting a new type of subject. Challenging criticism of irrational consumption or manipulation by scheming capitalists, Chen (2013) asserts that women should not be seen as victims of consumerism, but rather should view consumptions practices as building up individual identity, as having the competitive edge in marketized arenas, and contributing to the accumulated human capital of the economic subject who is their own entrepreneur, producer of satisfaction and pleasure, and bearer of her own responsibility.

Drawing on Adorno and Horkheimer (1986), while participatory media provide women with a way of practicing meaningful self-presentation and emphasize salient identities that perhaps are not appropriate or desirable to display in face-to-face contexts (Kim and Papacharissi, 2003), to what degree are these authentic performances of identity? However, is there really such a thing as an "authentic" being, or are we perhaps observing a desire for an authentic, neoliberal, and fragmented body that never really existed. However, while upholding my view of the natural female body, it is important to note scholarly critiques of embodiment, such as those by Blackman and Couze Venn (2010), that reject the assumption that there is an unmediated entity called the 'natural' or 'authentic' body: "the concept of individuation, rather than the individual, refers to the creative evolution at the heart of becoming. In this sense, bodies are always being 'undone' and re-made in the context of 'actual occasions'" (21). Bodies are

involved in a larger process of becoming as they move through actual occasions and micro-events. It is this climate that provides "the medium and practices (corporeal and socio-cultural) which allow or afford the potential for bodies (individual and collective) to take form or move" (Blackman and Venn 21). In this sense, Manning (2007) argues that "the body is always more than human" and an event for affective resonance; obliging us to rethink what it means to be human and what it means to "have a body" (qtd. in Blackman and Venn, 21).

Moreover, what does this mean for the revolutionary opportunities made possible by social media platforms when it seems as though movements opposed to the social order cannot escape the hold of the Culture Industry. Once on the fringe, movements are brought back under the hold of the Culture Industry and exploited for financial gains, reestablishing their power over the masses. However, a consideration should be made of the degree to which these companies are legitimate members of the body positive community, such as companies who make clothing for fat women. Lacking fashionable or athletic clothing for plus sized bodies in the mainstream fashion industry, plus sized clothing companies have emerged that provide fat women with clothing necessary for everyday life, physical activity, and more.

Chapter Eight: Discussion and Conclusion

This research illustrates the ways in which social media platforms have provided women with a greater opportunity to present and explore aspects of their bodies that are not accepted in offline contexts. As a result, women have taken up their own projects by posting selfies of their non-normative bodies in order to challenge conventional and hegemonic norms around femininity and beauty. These selfies address issues such as body size, ability, body hair, and menstruation. These projects have formed into a movement that offers support for other women practicing the same forms of self-presentation, as well as for women who identify and relate to the experiences of the body positive members. However, women ultimately reinforce dominant codes of femininity through their commentary that police thin bodies, reproductions of conventional forms of the gaze, and their commodification by corporations that have brought the body positive movement back into the culture industry and exploited the social influence of the advocates: restricting their freedom and changing their messages for the financial gains afforded by product endorsements.

Following from the analysis of the body positive images, the study also sought to address the effect that the subversive representations of femininity had on the female consumers of the images. It was found that, rather than working as a call to action for other women to reclaim their embodiment and self-represent more authentically, female viewers did not accept these

representations of natural femininity as they conflicted with their socially engrained views of the female body. The participants experienced feelings of disgust when viewing the images and reflected hegemonic norms associated with the female body in relation to body size, nudity, hairlessness, and menstruation. However, the two female participants in the study who self-identified as fat and followed body positive accounts on Instagram, felt encouraged by the representations of larger bodies and found community and support from the movement. It became apparent, however, that the body positive members, who challenge norms around body size and encourage women to love their bodies regardless of their size, do not extend this narrative to thinner women who experience the same self-hate and body modification a result of the societal pressures on the female body.

This study demonstrates the need for research that addresses the ways women are utilizing social media platforms for more radical representations of the self in order to create social change. These findings correspond to the scholarly research concerned with self-presentation on social networking sites that suggests that while social media platforms allow for a greater degree of self-presentation capabilities, women ultimately remain within their gender norms and reproduce the very ideologies around femininity that they reject. However, while previous research looks at the accounts of users independently from one another, this study considers how self-presentation allows for identification within social groupings online. Furthermore, prior research that considers the difference in male and female interpretations of intimacy and nudity online, they lacked a consideration of intersectionality within their studies. While previous research suggests conventionally thin and beautiful women are judged harshly for revealing their bodies on social media platforms, associated as being promiscuous or 'sluts', this research considers how women view the female body and intimacy in female representations

as the self moves across the spectrum of body size. The participant responses to female nudity changed as the body size of the women on Instagram increased or decreased. Rather than viewing the nude female bodies as sexualized and erotic, as they did with thin women, participants felt feelings of disgust in response to the nude fat body and did not view them as desirable bodies, but rather as a means to an end—engaged in a form of activism.

Taken *en masse*, the research illustrates the potentialities of social media platforms as a space conducive for community mobilization that advocates for social change. While a large focus of social media research has addressed the use of social media by political movements such as the Egyptian Revolution (2011), the Occupy movements, Venezuelan protests (2014-2016), and many others, there should also be a consideration of smaller scale movements and how individuals identify with movements through selfies and hash tags in order to create social change through self-representation.

As with any study, this research had limitations. The first limitation was with the sample collection that consisted of mainly heterosexual White women. When searching for samples from the body positive movement, the advocates that participated in the movement were predominantly White women. Furthermore, the interview subjects were middle-class White women, presumably as an effect of recruiting participants on a university campus. An intersectional approach to the research would reveal how self-presentation on social media platforms varies depending on one's experiences of identity (Banet- Weiser 2011; Hasinoff 2013; Schradie 2012; Senft 2012). It would be interesting to consider whether White heterosexual women have more privilege when it comes to representing non-normative bodies than women of other colour, ethnicities, abilities, and sexualities. Furthermore, if men were

166

included as interview subjects it would reveal gendered differences in the responses to the movement.

As research continues to move forward, there are several different directions for future research. One direction would be to interview the body positivity members directly to uncover their motivations for posting, their strategies for posting, and how these self-representations carry over into offline spaces. This would allow for a greater understanding of how these self-presentations affect their offline social interactions; whether their strategy is goal driven versus an authentic representation of the self; how social repercussions affect what they post; and how social media policies and product endorsements influence the type of content they post. Future research can also look at accounts that function more as art projects, in which the users repost other user's images or ask for photo submissions that identify with the body positive movement. In addition, feminist artists who post images of their paintings or drawings that address body positivity should also be recognized.

Works Cited

"Advertising on Instagram." Instagram Inc. Web. December 2015.

Agonito, Rosemary. *History of Ideas on Woman*. New York: Perigree, (1977).

Abidin, Crystal. "'Aren't These Just Young, Rich Women Doing Vain Things Online?':
Influencer Selfies as Subversive Frivolity." *Social Media and Society* (2016): 1–17.

------ "Communicative Intimacies: Influencers and Perceived Interconnectedness." *A Journal of Gender, New Media & Technology 8*, (2015).

Altheide, D.L. "Ethnographic Content Analysis." Qualitative Sociology, 10.1 (1987): Human Sciences Press.

Andersen, S. M., and S. Chen. "The Relational Self: An Interpersonal Social – Cognitive Theory." *Psychological Review* 109.4 (2002): 619–645.

Ardèvol, E., & Gómez-Cruz, E. Cuerpo privado, imagen pública: El autorretrato en la práctica de la fotografía digital [Private body, public image: The self-portrait in the practice of digital photography]. Revista de dialectología y tradiciones Populares, 67 (2012): 181–208.

Aristotle. "Generation of Animals." In J. Barnes (Ed.), and A. Platt (Trans.), *The complete works of Aristotle*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press (1984).

Ayers, Michael D., & Maccaughey, M. *Cyberactivism: Online Activism in Theory and Practice(1st ed.)*. New York: Routledge (2003).

Bailey J., Steeves V., Burkell J., and Regan P. "Negotiating With Gender Stereotypes on Social

Networking Sites: From 'Bicycle Face' to Facebook." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 37. 2 (2013): 91–112.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. Translated. Helene Iswolsky. Bloomington: Indiana UP (1984).

Balick, A. *The Psychodynamics of Social Networking: Connected-up Instantaneous Culture and the Self*. London: Karnac Books (2014).

Basow, Susan A. "The Hairless Ideal: Women and Their Body Hair." *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 15.1(1991): 83-96.

Baym N. *Personal Connections in the Digital Age*. Cambridge: Polity (2010).

Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. New York: Viking (1972).

------ *About Looking*. New York: Pantheon Books (1980).

Berry, Marsha. "Out in the open: locating new vernacular practices with smartphone cameras." *Studies in Australasian Cinema* (2015).

Blackman L and Couze Venn. "Affect." *Body & Society*. 16.1 2(010): 7–28.

Bobel C, and Kwan, S. "Embodied Resistance: Challenging the Norms, Breaking the Rules." Vanderbilt University Press (2011).

Bond, N., and J. Falk. "Tourism and Identity-related Motivations: Why Am I Here (and Not There)?" *International Journal of Tourism Research* 15.5 (2013): 430–442.

Bordo, Susan. *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. Berkeley: University of California Press (1993).

Bortree, D. S. "Presentation of self on the Web: An ethnographic study of teenage girls' Webblogs." *Education, Communication, & Information* 5 (2005): 25–39.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1990. Photography: A Middle-Brow Art. Stanford: Stanford UP.

boyd, danah. "Social Network Sites as Networked Publics: Affordances, Dynamics and

Implications." *In Networked Self: Identity, Community, and Culture on Social Network Sites*,

edited by Zizi Papacharissi. New York: Routledge (2011).

boyd, D. M., & Ellison, N. B. "Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship."

Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication 13 (2007): 210–230.

boyd, D and Heer, J. "Profiles as Conversations: Networked Identity Performance on

Friendster," In *Proceedings of the Hawai'i International Conference on System Sciences
(HICSS-39),* Persistent Conversation Track. Kauai, HI: IEEE Computer Society (2006).

Brown W. "Neo-liberalism and the end of liberal democracy." *Theory and Event* 7.1(2003): 1-
27.

Budgeon S. "Fashion magazine advertising: Constructing femininity in the postfeminist era." In
Gender and Utopia in Advertising: A Critical Reader eds. Manca L and Manca A. Lisle, IL:
Procopian Press (2001): 55–70.

Burke, Livi. "How To Be Body Positive On Instagram For More Self Love On Social Media."
Bustle.com. 27 December 2015. Web. 28 July 2016.

Burns, Anne. "Self(ie)-Discipline: Social Regulation as Enacted Through the Discussion of
Photographic Practice." *International Journal of Communicatio*n 9 (2015): 1716–33.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge (1990).

------ "Performativity, Precarity and Performativity". AIBR. Revista de Antropología
Iberoamericana, 4.3 (2009): i-xiii.

------ *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*. New York: Routledge (1993).

------ "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist

Theory." *Theatre Journal* 40. 4 (1988): 519-531.

Caplan, S. E. "A social skill account of problematic internet use." *Journal of Communication* 55.

(2005): 721–736.

Caslav Covino, Deborah. *Abject: Amending the Abject Body*. State University of New

YorkPress: Albany (2004).

Castells, M. *The Rise of the Network Society*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell (2010)

Chen, Eva. "Neoliberalism and popular women's culture: Rethinking choice, freedom and

agency," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 16.4 (2013): 440–452.

Cohen, S., and S. Gössling. "A Darker Side of Hypermobility." *Environment and Planning*

(2015).

Cohen, Nicole. "Commodifying Free Labor Online: Social Media, Audiences, and

Advertising."*The Routledge Companion to Advertising and Promotional Culture* (2013).

Connell R.W. *Masculinities*. Cambridge: Polity (2005).

Coté, M and Pybus, J. "Learning to Immaterial Labour 2.0: Facebook and Social Networks."

Cognitive Capitalism, Education and Digital Labor, Peters, Michael A. and Ergin Bulut

(Eds.) New York: Peter Lang (2011).

Coutts, L. B., & Berg, D. H. "The portrayal of the menstruating woman in menstrual product

advertisements." *Health Care for Women International*, 14 (1993): 179-191.

Christakis, N. A., and J. H. Fowler. *Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks*

and How They Shape Our Lives – How Your Friends' Friends' Friends Affect Everything You

Feel, Think, and Do. New York: Little Brown and Company (2009).

Clark, Kenneth. *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form*. Princeton University Press (1956).

Creed, Barbara. "Horror and The Monstrous-Feminine: An Imaginary Abjection," (1986).

------ "The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis." Routledge (1993).

------ "Lesbian Bodies: Tribades, Tomboys and Tarts," in *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader*, ed. Janet Price, Margrit Shildrick. Taylor & Francis (1999).

Cristina Miguel. "Visual Intimacy on Social Media: From Selfies to the Co-Construction of Intimacies Through Shared Pictures." *Social Media and Societ*y (2016): 1–10.

Cuddy, Amy. *Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are*. Ted Talks. TEDGlobal (2012).

Dalessandro, Alysse. "15 Definitions Of Body Positivity Straight From Influencers & Activists." Bustle.com. 19 June 2016. Web. 28 July 2016.

David, Gaby. "Processes of Legitimation: 10 Years of Mobile Images," *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales*. Arts et langages 1.2 (2015).

Davis, Kathy. *Reshaping the Female Body: The Dilemma of Cosmetic Surgery.* New York: Routledge (1995).

De Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex*. New York: Vintage Books (1973).

Debord, Guy. *The Society of the Spectacle.* Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. New York: Zone Books (1995).

De Lauretis, Teresa. *Alice Doesn't: Feminism. Semiotics, Cinema*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, (1984).

------ *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film, and Fiction*. Indianapolis, IN:

University of Indiana Press (1987).

Deller, R and Tilton, S. "Selfies as Charitable Meme: Charity and National Identity in the

#nomakeupselfie and #thumbsupforstephen Campaigns," *International Journal of Communication* 9 (2015): 1788–1805.

De Ridder, S. and Van Bauwel, S. "Commenting on pictures: Teens negotiating gender and sexualities on social networking sites," Sexualities 16(5/6) 565–586 (2013).

de Saussure, Ferdinand, "The Object of Linguistics", *Course in General Linguistics*, eds. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, in collaboration with Albert Riedlinger. Tran. Wade Baskin (1966): 37-48.

Dong-Hoo Lee. "Women's Creation of Camera Phone Culture." *Fibreculture Journal* 6 (2005).

Ellison, N., Heino, R., & Gibbs, J. "Managing impressions online: Self-presentation processes in the online dating environment." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 11(2006): 415–441.

Foucault, M. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. New York: Vintage (1990).

------ *Discipline and punish*. New York, NY: Vintage (1979).

------ "The ethics of the concern of the self as a practice of freedom." In *The Essential Foucault: Selections from the Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984* : eds. Rabinow and Rose N. New York: New Press (2003): 25–42.

Friedberg A. *The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press (2006).

Freud, Sigmund. "Femininity," *Women & Analysis*. Ed. Jean Strouse. New York: Grossman (1974).

Fuchs, Christian. *Foundations of Critical Media and Information Studies.* Routledge (2011).

Fuss, D. *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*. New York: Routledge (1991).

Germann Molz, J., and C. M. Paris. "The Social Affordances of Flashpacking: Exploring the
Mobility Nexus of Travel and Communication." *Mobilities* 10.2 (2015): 173–192.

Gibbs, J. L., Ellison, N. B., & Heino, R. D. "Self-presentation in online personals: The role of
anticipated future interaction, self-disclosure, and perceived success in internet dating."
Communication Research, 33 (2006):152–177.

Giddens, A. *Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age.* Stanford, CA:
Stanford University Press (1991).

Gill R. "New femininities?" *Feminist Media Studies* 6.4 (2006): 443–486.

------ "Postfeminist media culture: Elements of a sensibility." *European Journal of Cultural
Studies* 10.2 (2007a): 147–66.

------ *Gender and the Media.* Cambridge: Polity Press (2007b).

Gill R and Scharff. *New Femininities: Postfeminism, Neoliberalism and Subjectivity.*
Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan (2011).

Goffman, Erving. *The presentation of self in everyday life*. London: Penguin Books (1990).

------ *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Anchor (1959).

------ *Gender Advertisements*. New York, NY: Harper Colophon Books (1979).

Grogan, S. *Body Image: Understanding Body Dissatisfaction in Men, Women and Children*.
London: Routledge (1999).

Gössling, S and Stavrinidi, I. "Social Networking, Mobilities, and the Rise of Liquid Identities,"
Mobilities (2015).

Grbich, Carol. "Qualitative Data Analysis: An Introduction." Second edition. London; Thousand
Oaks: SAGE Publications Ltd (2012).

Habermas, J. "The Public Sphere (1973)" In P. Marris & S. Thornham (Eds.) Media Studies: A

Reader. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press (1999) 92-97.

Hampton, K., & Wellman, B. Neighboring in Netville: How the Internet supports community

and social capital in a wired suburb." *City & Community* 2.4 (2003) 277–311.

Harman G. *Prince of Networks: Bruno Latour and Metaphysics*. Prahran, Vic.: Re. Press (2009).

Havens, B. B., & Swenson, I. "Imagery associated with menstruation in advertising targeted to

adolescent women." *Adolescence* 23 (1988) 89-97.

Heine, Christopher. "Instagram Ads Are Getting Instant Recall Taco Bell and Hollister seeing

picture-perfect results," *Adweek.* May 2014. Web. December 2015.

------ "How Celebrities With the Best Instagram Engagement Are Helping Brands

A look at the top 5 stars to partner with," *Adweek.* November 2015. Web. December 2015.

------ "These 4 Celebrity Influencers Can Charge $230,000 for a Single Brand Post

Kendall Jenner is among the leaders," *Adweek*. December 4, 2015. Web. December 2015.

Hibbert, J. F., J. E. Dickinson, S. Gössling, and S. Curtin. "Identity and Tourism Mobility: An

Exploration of the Attitude-behaviour Gap." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 21.7 (2013):

999-1016.

Hillis, K. *Online a lot of the time: Ritual, fetish, sign.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press

(2009).

Hohendahl, P and Russian, P. "Jürgen Habermas: 'The Public Sphere (1964)," *New German*

Critique 3 (1974): 45-48.

Hope, Christine. "Caucasian Female Body Hair and American Culture." *Journal of American Culture* 5.1 (1982): 93-99.

Horkheimer, M and Adorno, T. "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception." *Dialectic of Enlightenment.* W.Y.: Continuum (1986).

Humphreys, S and Orr Vered, K. "Reflecting on Gender and Digital Networked Media." *Television and New Media* 15.1 (2014): 3–13.

Ingraham C. "The heterosexual imaginary: Feminist sociology and theories of gender." in (eds) De Ridder, S and Van Bauwel, S. "Commenting on pictures: Teens negotiating gender and sexualities on social networking sites." *Sexualities* 16.5/6 (2013) 565–586.

"Instagram as a Growing Business," Instagram Inc. October 2013. Web. December 2015.

"Intelligence Report," Instagram Inc. March 2015. Web. December 2015.

"Internet Activism." *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia* (2012) Web. January 2016.

Irish Examiner. "8 body positive Instagram accounts you need in your life." Irishexaminer.com 14 January 2016. Web. 28 July 2016.

Iqani, M & Schroeder, J. "#selfie: digital self-portraits as commodity form and consumption practice," *Consumption Markets & Culture* (2015).

Ito, M., & Okabe D. "Camera phones changing the definition of picture-worthy." *Japan Media Review* (2003).

Jane Bailey, Valerie Steeves, Jacquelyn Burkell, and Priscilla Regan. "Negotiating With Gender Stereotypes on Social Networking Sites: From 'Bicycle Face' to Facebook." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 37.2 (2013): 91–112.

Jones, Stephanie. "The Performance of Fat: The Spectre Outside the House of Desire." in

Queering Fat Embodiment, ed. Cat Pausé, Jackie Wykes and Samantha Murray. Ashgate
Publishing Limited (2014).

Jordán-Conde, Z., Mennecke, B., & Townsend, A. "Late adolescent identity definition and
intimate disclosure on Facebook." *Computers in Human Behavior*, 33(2013) 356-366.

Kang, M. E. "The portrayal of women's images in magazine advertisements: Goffman's gender
analysis revisited." *Sex Roles* 37(1997): 979–996.

Kearney M.C. *Girls Make Media.* New York and London: Routledge (2006).

Kim, H., & Papacharissi, Z. "Cross-cultural differences in online self-presentation: A content
analysis of personal Korean and US home pages." *Asian Journal of Communication* 13
(2003):100–119.

Kindberg, T., Spasojevic, M., Fleck, R. & Sellen, A. "How and Why People Use Camera
Phones." *Consumer Applications and Systems Laboratory*, HP Laboratories Bristol (2004).

Korn, Jenny Ungbha. "Feminist Approaches to Social Media Research: History, Activism, and
Values," *Feminist Media Studies*. University of Illinois at Chicago and Tamara Kneese, New
York University 15.4 (2015): 707–722.

Koskela, H. "Webcams, TV shows and mobile phones: Empowering exhibitionism."*Surveillance
and Society* 2 (2004): 199-215.

Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Translated by Leon S. Roudiez.
Columbia University Press: New York (1982).

------"Freedom and Psychoanalysis" *Canadian Journal of Psychoanalysis* 7.1 (1999): 1-21.

Kristjannson, Margitte. "'Fashion's Forgotten Woman': How Fat Bodies Queer Fashion and

Consumption", in (eds) Pausé C, Wykes J, and Murray S. Queering Fat Embodiment. Ashgate

Publishing Limited (2014).

Kruikemeier, S., van Noort, G., Vliegenthart, R., & de Vreese, C. H. "Unraveling the effects of

active and passive forms of political Internet use: Does it affect citizens' political

involvement?" *New Media & Society* (2013).

Kwan, Samantha. "Navigating Public Spaces: Gender, Race, and Body Privilege in Everyday

Life." *Feminist Formations* 22. 2 (2010):144- 166. John Hopkins University Press.

Lampel, J., & Bhalla, A. "The role of status seeking in online communities: Giving the gift of

experience." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 12 (2007):100–121.

Lasén, A., & García, A. "'. . . but I haven't got a body to show': Self-pornification and male

mixed feelings in digitally mediated seduction practices." *Sexualities*, 18 (2015): 714–730.

Latour B. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*. Oxford: Oxford

University Press (2005).

Lazar M.M. "Discover the power of femininity! Analyzing global power femininity in local

advertising." *Feminist Media Studies* 6.4 (2006): 505–515.

Leary, M. R., & Kowalski, R. M. "Impression management: A literature review and two

component model." *Psychological Bulletin* 107(1990): 34–47.

Lindner, K. "Images of women in general interest and fashion magazine advertisements from

1955 to 2002." *Sex roles*, 51(2004): 409–421.

Lomborg, S. *Social media, social genres: Making sense of the ordinary*. New York, NY: Routledge (2013).

Manning, E. *Politics of Touch: Sense, Movement, Sovereignty*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press (2007).

Manovich L. *The Language of New Media*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press (2001).

Marder, B., A. Joinson, and A. Shankar. "Every Post You Make, Every Pic You Take, I'll Be Watching You: Behind Social Spheres on Facebook." *45th Hawaii International Conference on System Science (HICSS),* (2012) 859–868.

Marx, Karl. *Capital Volume I: A Critique of Political Economy*. Dover Publications (2011)

McCormack M and Anderson E. "'It's just not acceptable any more': The erosion of homophobia and the softening of masculinity at an English sixth form." *Sociology* 44.5 (2010) 843–859.

McRobbie A. "Postfeminism and popular culture: Bridget Jones and the new gender regime." In: Tasker Y and Negra D (eds) *Interrogating Postfeminism: Gender and the Politics of Popular Culture*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press (2007) 27–39.

McRobbie A. "Preface." In Gill R and Scharff C (eds) *New Femininities: Postfeminism, Neoliberalism and Subjectivity*. London: Palgrave Macmillan (2011) xi–xv.

Mendelson, A., & Papacharissi, Z. "Look at us: Collective narcissism in college student Facebook photo galleries." In Z. Papacharissi (Ed.), *A networked self: Identity, community, and culture on social network sites*. New York, NY: Routledge (2011) 251–273.

Menkes, Suzy. "The Circus of Fashion." New York Times Magazine (2013) 91–4.

Miguel, Cristina. "Visual Intimacy on Social Media: From Selfies to the Co-Construction of

Intimacies Through Shared Pictures." *Social Media and Society* (2016) 1–10.

Minh-Ha T. Pham."'I Click and Post and Breathe, Waiting for Others to See What I See': On #FeministSelfies, Outfit Photos, and Networked Vanity." *Fashion Theory* 19.2 (2015) 221-241.

Morgan, K. P. "Women and the knife: Cosmetic surgery and the colonization of women's bodies." *Hypatia* 6.3 (1991): 25–53.

Mosco, Vincent. *The Political Economy of Culture and Communication.* SAGE Publications Ltd; Second Edition (2009).

"Moving Moments: Video Ads Perform on Instagram." *Instagram Inc.* Web. December 2015

Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Screen.* Oxford University Press (1975).

Murray, Derek Conrad. "Notes to self: the visual culture of selfies in the age of social media." *Consumption Markets & Culture* 18.6 (2015) 490-516.

Murray, S. "Digital images, photo-sharing, and our shifting notions of everyday aesthetics."

Journal of Visual Culture 7.2 (2008) 147–163.

Nead, Lynda. "Theorizing The Nude." *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality.* London and New York: Routledge (1992).

O'Reilly, Louise. "10 Instagram accounts to boost your body confidence." Cosmopolitan.com. 26 May 2016. Web. 28 July 2016.

Papacharissi, Z. "The presentation of self in virtual life: Characteristics of personal home pages." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 79 (2002) 643–660.

Pausé C, Wykes J, and Murray S. *Queering Fat Embodiment.* Ashgate Publishing Limited (2014).

Pedroni, M., Pasquali, F., & Carlo, S. "My friends are my audience: Mass-mediation of personal content and relations in Facebook." *Observatorio* 8 (2014) 97–113.

Permanent Culture. "Introduction to activism." Permanent Culture Now (2013).

Postmes, T., & Brunsting, S. "Collective action in the age of the internet mass communication and online mobilization." *Social Science Computer Review* 20.3 (2002) 290–301.

Price, J and Shildrick, P. "Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader." *Taylor & Francis* (1999).

Puhl, Rebecca, and Kelly D. Brownell. "Bias, Discrimination, and Obesity." *Obesity Research* 9.12 (2001) 788–805.

Rae, Haniya. "These Beauty Brands Are Straight Up Owning the Selfie Trend: Taking a snapshot of the industry," *Adweek* (2015). Web. December 2015.

Raz Schwartz, Germaine R Halegoua. "The spatial self: Location-based identity performance on social media." *New media & society* 17.10 (2015) 1643–1660.

Redmond, Sean. "Thin White Women in Advertising: Deathly Corporeality." *Journal of Consumer Culture* 3.2 (2003) 170-190.

Reichart Smith, L and Sanderson, J. "I'm Going to Instagram It! An Analysis of Athlete Self-Presentation on Instagram." *Broadcast Education Association Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 59.2 (2015) 342–358.

Rettberg, Jill Walker. "Self-Representation in Social Media," SAGE Handbook of Social Media, (Eds) Jean Burgess, Alice Marwick, and Thomas Poell (2017).

Poletta, F., & Jasper, J.M. "Collective identity and social movements." *Annual Review of Sociology* 27(2001) 283–305.

Rahman M. "The burdens of the flesh: Star power and the queer dialectic in sports celebrity." *Celebrity Studies* 2.2 (2011) 150–163.

Roberts, T-A. "'Female trouble': Self-objectification and women's attitudes toward menstruation." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association of Women in Psychology, Salt Lake City, UT (2000).

Roberts T-A, and Waters, P. "Self-Objectification and That 'Not So Fresh Feeling'" *Women & Therapy* 27 (2004) 3-21.

Rosenberg, J., & Egbert, N. "Online impression management: Personality traits and concerns for secondary goals as predictors of self-presentation tactics on Facebook." *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication* 17 (2011) 1–18.

Rothblum, Esther D. "The Stigma of Women's Weight: Social and Economic Realities." *Feminism and Psychology* 2.1 (1992) 61–73.

Russo, Mary J. "The Female Grotesque: Risk, Excess, and Modernity," Psychology Press, (1995)

Ryan, Erin Gloria. "Selfies Aren't Empowering: They're a Cry for Help." *Jezebel* (2013). Web. March 25, 2014.

Saiidi, Uptin. "Modeling on Instagram? Don't laugh. It can pay big," *CNBC* (2014). Web. December 2015.

Sal Humphreys1 and Karen Orr Vered. "Reflecting on Gender and Digital Networked Media," *Television & New Media* 15.1(2014) 3–13.

Salter, Michael. "Privates in the online public: Sex(ting) and reputation on social media," *New Media and Society* (2015) 1–17 .

Sander De Ridder and Sofie Van Bauwel. "Commenting on pictures: Teens negotiating gender and sexualities on social networking sites," *Sexualities* 16.5/6 (2013) 565–586.

Sandoval-Almazan, R and Gil-Garcia, R. "Towards cyberactivism 2.0? Understanding the use of

social media and other information technologies for political activism and social movements," *Government Information Quarterly* 31 (2014) 365–378.

Scott-Dixon, K. "Turbo chicks: Talkin' 'bout my generation." *Herizons*, 16.2(2002) 16-19.

Schwämmlein, E., & Wodzicki, K. "What to tell about me? Self-presentation in online." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 17(2012) 387–407.

Siegel D.L. *Sisterhood, Interrupted: From Radical Women to Grrls Gone Wild.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan (2007).

Senagala M. *Production of Digital Space: On the Nature of Digital Materiality.* Proceedings of the eCAADe Conference, Helsinki (2001).

Senft, Theresa M. *Camgirls: Celebrity and Community in the Age of Social Networks.* Peter Lang (2008).

Senft, T. M., & Baym, N. K. "What does the selfie say? Investigating a global phenomenon." *International Journal of Communication* 9(2015) 1588-1606.

Schlenker, B. R., and M. R. Leary. "Social Anxiety and Self-presentation: A Conceptualization Model." *Psychological Bulletin* 92.3 (1982) 641–669.

Shaefer, Kayleen."How bloggers make money on Instagram: Danielle Bernstein of We Wore What reveals all," *Harper's Bazaar* (2015). Web. December 2015.

Slater D. "Making things real: ethics and order on the internet." *Theory, Culture & Society* 19.5/6 (2002): 227–245.

Smythe, Dallas. "On the Audience Commodity and it's Work," in (eds) M.G. Durham and D.M.

Kellner, *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks.* Oxford: Blackwell (2001).

Sobal, Jeffery. "Sociological Analysis of the Stigmatisation of Obesity." In (eds) John Germov and Lauren Williams, *A Sociology of Food and Nutrition: The Social Appetite*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2004) 187–204.

Solovay, Sondra. *Tipping the Scales of Injustice: Fighting Weight-Based Discrimination.* Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books (2000).

Sontag, S. *On photography*. London: Penguin Books (2008).

Southard Ospina, Marie. "11 Influencers Discuss The Differences Between Body Positivity & Fat Acceptance." Bustle.com. July 2016. Web. 28 July 2016.

Standage, Tom. *Writing on the Wall: Social Media - The First 2,000 Years*. Bloomsbury USA: New York (2014).

Stefan Gössling & Iliada Stavrinidi. "Social Networking, Mobilities, and the Rise of Liquid Identities." *Mobilities* (2015).

Steinfield, C., N. B. Ellison, and C. Lampe. "Social Capital, Self-esteem, and Use of Online Social Network Sites: A Longitudinal Analysis." *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* 29 (2008) 424–445.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques* (lst ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage (1990).

Swant, Marty. "How Instagram Is Changing the Way Brands Look at Photography, Online and Beyond: Embracing the 'perfectly imperfect," *Adwee*k (2015). Web. December 2015.

------ "Instagram Partners With 41 Tech Companies to Improve Advertising Experience And looks to add around 60 more," *Adweek* (2015). Web. December 2015.

------ "Why Running Ads on Both Facebook and Instagram Is Likely to Be the New

Normal: Synced promos look inevitable," *Adweek* (2015). Web. December 2015.

Tasker, Y. and D. Negra, Eds. *Interrogating Postfeminism: Gender and the Politics of Popular Culture*. Durham,North Carolina & London, Duke University Press (2007).

Taylor T. "Living digitally: embodiment in virtual worlds." In: Schroeder R (ed.) *The Social Life of Avatars: Presence and Interaction in Shared Virtual Environments*. London: Springer-Verlag, (2002) 40–62.

Taylor, V., & Whittier, N.E. "Collective identity in social movement: lesbian feminist mobilization." In (eds) A.D. Morris & C.M. Mueller, *Frontiers in social movement theories*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press (1992) 169–193.

"The Next Steps for Ads on Instagram: New Formats, Increased Relevance, Broader Availability," Instagram Inc (2015). Web. December 2015.

Tiggermann M, and Hodgson S. "The Hairless Norm Extended: Reasons for and predictors for Women's Body Hair Removal and Different Body Sites." *Sex Roles* 59.11/12 (2008) 889-897.

Tiidenberg, Katrin. "Bringing Sexy Back: Reclaiming the Body Aesthetic via Self Shooting." *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace* 8.1 (2014).

Tiidenberg, K., & Gómez Cruz, E. "Selfies, Image and the Re-making of the Body." *Body and Society* (2015) 1-26.

Toerien, M and Wilkinson, S. "Gender and Body Hair: Constructing the Feminine Woman." *Women's Studies International Forum*. 26.4 (2003) 333-44.

Toma, C. L., & Hancock, J. T. "Looks and lies: The role of physical attractiveness in online dating self-presentation and deception." *Communication Research* 37 (2010) 335–351.

Trammell, K. D., & Keshelashvili, A. "Examining the new influences: A self-presentation study

of A-list blogs." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 82 (2005): 968–982.

Twenge, Jean and W. Keith Campbell. *The Narcissism Epidemic: Living in the Age of*

Entitlement. New York: Simon & Schuster (2010).

Van Der Heide, B., D'Angelo, J. D., & Schumaker, E. M. "The effects of verbal versus

photographic self-presentation on impression formation in Facebook." Journal of

Communication 62 (2012) 98–116.

Van Dijck, J. *Mediated Memories in the Digital Age*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press

(2007).

------ Digital photography: Communication, identity, memory. Visual Communication 7 (2008)

57–76.

------ *The culture of connectivity: A critical history of social media*. Oxford: Oxford University

Press (2013).

van Doorn, Niels. "Digital spaces, material traces: How matter comes to matter in online

performances of gender, sexuality and embodiment." *Media, Culture & Society* 33.4 (2011)

531–547.

------ "The ties that bind: the networked performance of gender, sexuality, and friendship on

My Space." *New Media & Society* 12.4 (2010a): 583–602.

------ "Keeping it real: user-generated pornography, gender reification, and visual pleasure."

Convergence: the International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies 16.4

(2010b) 411–430.

Van Doorn N and van Zoonen L. "Theorizing gender and the internet: past, present, and future."

In (eds) Chadwick A and Howard PN, *The Routledge Handbook of Internet Politics*. London:

Routledge (2008) 261–274.

Van Doorn N, Zoonen L and Wyatt S. "Writing from experience: presentations of gender

identity on weblogs." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 14.2 (2007) 143-159.

------ "A body of text: revisiting textual performances of gender and sexuality on the internet."

Feminist Media Studies 8.4 (2008) 357- 374.

Van House, Nancy A. "Feminist HCI meets facebook: Performativity and social networking

sites." Interacting with Computers, 23.5 (2011).

Van House, N., Davis, M., Ames, M., Finn, M., & Viswanathan, V. "The Uses of Personal

Networked Digital Imaging: An Empirical Study of Cameraphone Photos and Sharing," In

Extended abstracts of the Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems. Portland,

Oregon. New York: ACM Press (2005) 1853-1856.

Velasquez, A and LaRose, R. "Social Media for Social Change: Social Media Political Efficacy

and Activism in Student Activist Groups, Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media 59.3

(2015) 456-474.

Vino, Lauren. "11 Body-Positive Instagram Accounts to Follow Right Now." MTV.com. 4

August 2015. Web. 28 July 2016.

Vitak, J. "The impact of context collapse and privacy on social network site disclosures."

Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media 56(2012) 451–470.

Warfield, Katie. "Digital Subjectivities and Selfies: The Model, the Self- Conscious Thespian, and the #realme." *The International Journal of the Image* 6.2 (2015).

Weathers, M., Sanderson, J., Matthey, P., Grevious, A., Tehan, M., & Warren, S. "The tweet life of Erin and Kirk: A gendered analysis of sports broadcasters' self-presentation on Twitter." *Journal of Sports Media*. 9(2014) 1–24.

Wei Luo. "Selling Cosmetic Surgery and Beauty Ideals: The Female Body in the Web Sites of Chinese Hospitals." *Women's Studies in Communication* 35.1(2012) 68-95.

Whelehan I. *Overloaded: Popular Culture and the Future of Feminism.* London: Women's Press (2000).

------*The Feminist Bestseller: From Sex and the Single Girl to Sex and the City.* Basingtoke: Palgrave Macmillan (2005).

White, M. *The body and the screen: Theories of Internet spectatorshi*p. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press (2006).

Whitehead, A.N. *Process and Reality.* New York: Free Press (1978).

Wolf, Naomi. *The Beauty Myth*. Toronto: Random House (1991).

Young, Iris Marion. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press (1990).

Zhao, S., S. Grasmuck, and J. Martin. "Identity Construction on Facebook: Digital Empowerment in Anchored Relationships." *Computers in Human Behavior* 24 (2008) 1816–1836.

Appendix

APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Current Cell Phone Provider

2. What Brand of Cellphone do you own?

3. Does your data plan affect your social media use?

4. Degree of social media use

5. Please identify which of the following social media platforms you engage with

6. If you selected Instagram, for how long have you had an account?

7. How often do you visit the app?

8. How often do you post photos to Instagram?

9. If you selected 'never', please specify why

10. When posting photos to Instagram, what type of content do you post?

11. Why do you post images?

12. Do you post intimate images of yourself?

13. Do you edit your images? If yes, why? If no, why?

14. Is your account public or private?

15. Who is your audience/who do you want to reach?

16. Who is your target audience?

17. Do you consider yourself as part of the movement on Instagram that challenges feminine beauty ideals and promotes body-positive imagery?

18. Please Identify the accounts that you follow in relation to the previous question

19. Do you follow them or just visit?

20. Why do you follow these accounts?

21. Please Identify the hash tags that you use to identify with the movement

APPENDIX B. SUMMARY OF DATA IN EACH PROFILE

Table 1 presents an overview of the specific cases used in this research, and the basic

information collected from user profiles.

Username	Name	Followers	Posts
Bloatedandalone4evr1993	Molly Soda	58.2k	2,818
Mynameisjessamyn	Jessamyn	172k	722
Biggalyoga	Valerie Sagun	133k	915
Bodyposipanda	Megan Jayne Crabbe	213k	660
Chooselifewarrior	Dani	41.2k	1,043
Anas**tasiaamour**	AnastasiaAmour	42.3k	490
Micah_gracee	Micah Grace	191k	215
Thechristineecho	Christine Cho	20.8k	1,823
Glitterandlazers	Glitter	90.8k	1,518
menstrual.blood	JenniferWilliams	4590	836
Rupikaur_	Rupi Kaur	520k	323
xxgirlflu	Uknown	1001	364

Figure 1. March 19, 2016. Sitting poolside in a bikini; Photograph by @mynameisjessamyn;

Instagram, Inc.; "Today, after teaching a beautiful #inversions workshop at my Dubai home

@voyogauae, I was absolutely ravenous. And so I sat poolside in my little yellow bikini &

devoured a giant club sandwich+fries. I genuinely think we should all mind our fucking business

when it comes to the eating habits of others. As a happy fat athlete, I'm jauntily walking away

from that conversation. Honestly, as a fat human in the stages of body reclamation, I have a duty

to myself to be done with that shit. Suck it, patriarchy. Fat people for the fucking win. #youmad

#jessjetset. Also, this #fatkini (c/o Dubai's @ripemarket) brought to you by the magnificent

@loeybug- I have long been obsessed with this femme, and her open and honest body

acceptance via @youtube bikini hauls are a huge part of why I have claimed this summer as the

year of the beachside belly. Much love and respect, Loey- I bow, and bow, and bow. □□ □-

---

[1] The spelling and text within the captions are consistent with the original text.

@child_ofthe_tropics - @forever21 #effyourbeautystandards #honoryourcurves #nobodyshame #bikini".

Figure 2. November 4, 2015. Practicing yoga in a headstand with back facing the camera; Photograph by @mynameisjessamyn; Instagram, Inc.; "Someone posted a comment a few days ago suggesting a solution to the dark shadows under my armpits. When I saw that comment, I chuckled and thought, "OH MY GOD, THEY THINK I HAVE SHADOWY ARMPITS BUT REALLY I'M JUST SHAMELESSLY HAIRY." Let me clear things up- I respect a human's right to shave and exfoliate til the cows come home, but I'm not about that life.I don't shave, my belly is always a half second away from hanging out of my pants, my elbows, knee caps, and inner thighs are crisp as burned bacon, & I have stretch marks for days, week, probably years. Maybe I have one stretch mark for every insult that's been hurled at me since I was old enough to wear a bra. It's certainly plausible- if so, fuck yeah. I really am a tiger who has earned her stripes. I mean, it's just hard to care. After all these years. Actually, I just felt the greatest wave of love for all the boys who teased me mercilessly in middle school. Their barbs hurt at the time, but they hardly seem to matter now. Boys, y'all don't know it but you made me such a better person.

(This post dedicated to @biggalyoga for reminding me that this topic is forever relevant. Hello, Val- I love you, let's hang out and #headstand all day.) Bodysuit- @dearcurves"

Figure 3. February 9, 2016. Laying horizontally on the beach, in a bikini, facing away from camera; Photograph by @mynameisjessamyn; Instagram, Inc.; "Dear #FatShamer Down The Beach, Sunbathing in my bikini with my belly exposed in all its fat glory made my whole year. Thank god my body has finally been liberated and I can stop giving a fuck about sad people like you. This journey has taken decades, and I'm relishing this moment. And if you don't like it..... xoxo, Jessamyn Swimsuit-@freecountryapparel Sunglasses- @eloquii #aimtrue #iwillwhatiwant #effyourbeautystandards #honoryourcurves #nobodyshame"

Figure 4. December 7, 2015; Practicing yoga in a garter, stockings, and high heels; Photograph

by @mynameisjessamyn; Instagram, Inc.; "I think we're all hungry for other people who look

and act like us. That doesn't necessarily mean we actually look alike, but it does mean that we

can gradually become more accepting of the qualities that make us unique. Those unique

qualities are (actually) opportunities for unity. You don't have to share my thick thighs and jiggly

belly fat to identify with the pursuit of self-acceptance. That's all this is about- self-acceptance.

Finding the courage, gall, and spunk to accept your current perfection. I found this picture tucked

in an old folder. Throwback to that time I practiced #halasana in my garters- yes, I wear

shapewear sometimes. The mid-century femme in me gets off on the subtle sexual structure and

tradition, I guess. This photo is also a quiet homage to one of my yoga icons, Marilyn Monroe-

there's a photo of her practicing #plowpose which literally always makes me smile. Bra + Garter

Belt + Stockings- @hipsandcurves Shoes- @forever21"

Figure 5. January 28, 2016. Nude full body shot in a forward lunge; Photograph by @mynameisjessamyn; Instagram, Inc.; "I'm fat. In spite of my regular #core workouts, I have a belly that just won't quit. I'm sure if I restricted my diet and or bothered to give even an iota of a fuck about the topic, I could shrink my belly. But nah, I'm good. Also, my breasts sag- though I think that has less to do with being fat and more to do with the fact that I'm human. (For the record, if your tits don't sag, chances are you're under the age of 18, hiding the picture of Dorian Grey in your closet, or you have a plastic surgeon on deck.) I think some of my photos or clothes can masquerade my body-I've been asked if I wear waist trainers and I usually nearly cough-choke myself into oblivion as a result because I am way too lazy for that kind of commitment. But no, I'm fat- and learning to embrace it is a daily battle. Some people think calling yourself fat = proclaiming that living an unhealthy lifestyle is a good idea. Since that logic is completely idiotic, I tend to ignore the ramblings of people who don't make sense. Fat doesn't mean being unhealthy- it just doesn't. And I will agree to disagree with anyone who doesn't feel the same way. Photo is by the incredible Substantia Jones of the Adipositivity Project- to see my #nsfw shot, paste this link in your browser: http://goo.gl/0876ed"

Figure 6. February 5, 2016. Practicing yoga in a headstand with back to the camera; Photograph by @mynameisjessamyn; Instagram, Inc.;"When I look at this #headstand during the @mandukayoga clothing line jump off a few weeks back, all I can think is how grateful I am for my chubby back boobs. And how happy I am to have (FINALLY) made peace with my giant ass. I mean, I'm sure @mandukayoga didn't necessarily expect someone with so many fat rolls to get upside down in their sports bra. But the bra is cute and I'll wear it if I feel like it. I don't give a fuck if my belly and back rolls are starring in the photo as a result. Because, regardless of lighting and clothing choices, those body parts are still present. And if I can't accept them when my body is upside down practicing yoga, how the hell will I accept them in other parts of my life?Plus, let's be honest: those are probably the elements that actually make me #madeforyoga, anyway. Strength ain't free, y'all. Top+Bottom- @mandukayoga Photo by @peterruprecht"
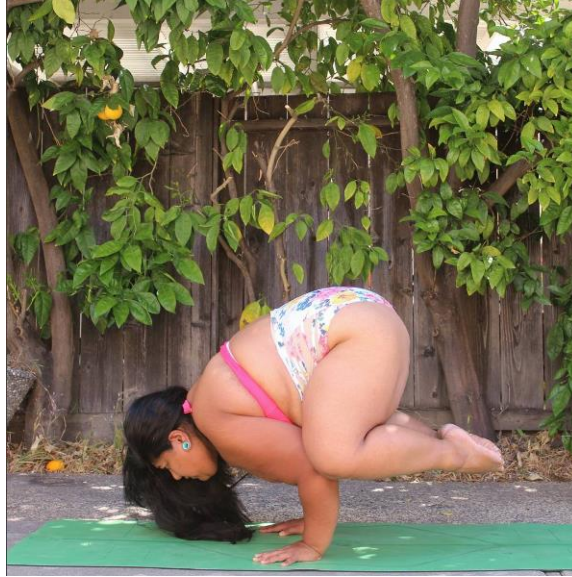
Figure 7. June 03, 2016. Practicing yoga in a bikini; Photograph by @biggalyoga; Instagram, Inc.; "There was a great article my friend @themilitantbaker wrote for @ravishly recently talking about gaining weight. This made me think back to January 2014 when I was practicing yoga the most and felt my most active with biking and practicing. Since then I've definitely gained a lot of the weight back which I'm content with. A lot has happened since then. As Jes had talked about in her article, everything is always consisting changing, one year we can have more time for things, and other years things can take up your time. I know I always get those comments asking why I haven't lost any weight after practicing yoga for the last 5 years. I've never used my practice as a source of weight lose. I personally don't think it should be used for that just because there are so many other elements to practicing yoga. I lost most of my weight back in 2014 because I was biking, which is what I believe was the source of my weight loss, though the reason I biked was because it made me feel free and happy. Losing weight just happened to be a by-product. I've consistently advocated to just do active things just for the enjoyment of it, and not have to obsess about how many pounds you've lost. The more you obsess, the more expectation you put on yourself. That if you didn't do your physical activity

something extremely bad will happen to you. Don't worry you'll be fine! You don't need to beat yourself up about it. Those extra pounds are okay! Be content with your body whether you have time for physical activities or life has to happen. We all have complicated lives. When you know you have the drive and time come back to it and be appreciative of yourself. Direct link in description: http://www.ravishly.com/2016/06/01/so-ive-gained-weight-so-what. Also this bikini pic is for @curvesbecomeher after her article for @wearyourvoicemag talking about a photo of herself and friends in bikinis that was taken down. Big and beautiful women rocking bikinis! Bikini outfit by @torridfashion Mat by @liforme"

Figure 8. February 18, 2016. Posing in lingerie, facing away from the camera; Photograph by @biggalyoga; Instagram, Inc.; "Compassion hurts. When you feel connected to everything, you also feel responsible for everything. And you cannot turn away. Your destiny is bound with the destinies of others. You must either learn to carry the Universe or be crushed by it. You must grow strong enough to love the world, yet empty enough to sit down at the same table with its worst horrors." - Andrew Boyd. Just wanted to let everyone know that I have private individual

and small group classes available. Anywhere in the SF Bay Area, and Skype class if you live far

away. Email me at biggalyoga@gmail.com for availability(limited) and rates (varied).

❤#freethefat #radicalselflove #fuckfatphobia #chublove #mybody #unapologeticallyme

#yogabodyproject #myyogabody"

Figure 9. November 19, 2015. Distant full body shot. Wearing a bra and underwear while in a

front lunge practicing yoga. Body is twisted to reach foot, and face is looking away from the

camera; Photograph by @biggalyoga; Instagram, Inc.; "'There is nothing more rare, nor more

beautiful, then a woman being unapologetically herself; comfortable in her perfect imperfection.

To me, that is the true essence of beauty.' - Steve Mariboli"

Figure 10. October 22, 2015. Distant full body shot. Wearing a bra and leggings while practicing yoga. Side angle of body, balancing on buttocks while extending arms upwards to touch toes; Photograph by @biggalyoga; Instagram, Inc.; "#RedefiningYoga Yoga Challenge Day 11 Paripurna Navasana / Boat Pose with host @dms_yoga Check out Day 12 host @catybethxd with Eka Pada Rajakapotasana / Mermaid Pose Please join us and help in redefining what yoga is and what a yogi looks like. This will not only be a huge step in breaking down the walls of stereotypes but also a wonderful celebration of our own unique bodies! To Enter: 1. Repost this photo and tag some friends to join!2. Follow our hosts: @cheryld126 @nolatrees @mynameisjessamyn @alexisr022 @greenideas80 @dms_yoga @bikram_yogi @simply_lydie @jkserendipityyoga @reesielove1121 @yogineo @catybethxd @supportiveyoga @pesekgp @amber_karnes @goplantyourself @biggalyoga @love_wanderlust02 @gypsetcity @kiyakrier @distinguisheddiva and our sponsors: @lineagewear @fractal.9 @mymanifesta @personalrecordofficial 3. Post a recent photo of the challenge pose each day. 4. Use the tag #RedefiningYoga in your posts and remember to tag the host for that day along with all four sponsors. "Leggings by @zions_den_apparel"

Figure 11. August 15, 2015. Distant full body shot. Wearing lingerie while practicing yoga in a

headstand; Photograph by @biggalyoga; Instagram, Inc.; "Oh, hello all you new followers! A lot

of people have been asking where you can start your own yoga practice. If you go to my website

(www.biggalyoga.com direct link in description) under the FAQ there is a link called 'Getting

Into Yoga' where I have made a blog post for anyone wanting some tips on how to start. This is

the only way I have started so those are the only tips for now that I can offer. I'll update it soon

and look for more videos and recommendations. Some have asked as well if I have a Youtube

with videos. Yes I do have a YouTube, but no I don't have videos to practice. Since I am not

yoga teacher trained I don't feel comfortable yet setting up videos for people to practice yet. Next

year I will definitely start to work with videos there. As for Yoga Teacher Training, I'm looking

up places to do my training. If there are any yogis who are yoga teacher trained, and have any

recommendations on places to get certified, I would love to know! There was a place in Arizona,

that I was thinking of, but I'd love to know more that I can't find on the internet! Comment here

for details or email me at biggalyoga@gmail.com with details. Hopefully trainings that will start

the beginning of next year, from 2 weeks - 3 months time frame. Trying to get trained soon so I can start teaching! Thank you all again for the heart warming comments, and touching words! ❤□❤'

Figure 12. August 15, 2015. Distant full body shot. Wearing lingerie while practicing yoga. Side angle of body, balancing body on hands; Photograph by @biggalyoga; Instagram, Inc.; "'Repetition of the same thought or physical action develops into a habit which, repeated frequently enough, becomes an automatic reflex.'- Norman Vincent Peale I've finally been able to hold my crow pose for a little bit. I just need to find more strength in my arms and core to stay up longer. It's funny how you can practice a pose and fail so hard at it, and then all of a sudden things just click and you find the right groove and tricks of the pose. I didn't understand the lift part of pose till recently, and it all made sense when practicing. Also, I think one thing I'll definitely miss about not having this space to practice yoga is that I can't wear my undies around freely for the time being. Haha !"

Figure 13. May 12, 2015. Up-close photo of torso wearing lingerie. Both hands grabbing her stomach fat; Photograph by @biggalyoga; Instagram, Inc.; "Chub Love □I debated to post this or not, and had a long post that sounded controversial. Then it just came down to showing my chubby body up close, and appreciating my body now. All of us have body issues whether you are big or small, but it's good to just take the time to look at yourself and just love it as it is now. Whether you are on a weight loss journey or just learning to love yourself slowly. I don't think I've ever hated my fat, but it's nice to have a good relationship with it now. I hope that everyone can take the time to look at themselves and see such a beautiful human being. #LoveTheBodyYouAreIn #SelfLovingYogis #PracticeRadicalSelfLove #freethefat"

Figure 14. July 7, 2016. Distant photograph of eight women posing in lingerie; Photograph by @bodyposipanda; Instagram, Inc.; "Surrounded by megababes for @dearscantilly's campaign 🥰 I had such a brilliant day strutting my stuff for this diversity shoot, and I'm honoured to have been part of something celebrating so many kinds of women we rarely see being celebrated in the media. Transgender women (the glorious @stephaniaeffie), disabled women (the badass @reallifepirate), women with alopecia (the wonderful @instabytess), and curvy anorexia conquerors (yours truly 🙋). As well as fabulous plus size bloggers @fullerfigurefullerbust and @gracefvictory 🙌 @makeupfairypro and @lottelouisewilliams 👑and I'll be honest - we still need more diversity than this, we need ALL sizes, ALL skin colours, ALL abilities, ALL ages, ALL genders to be truly represented, we can always do better. But what Curvy Kate created here gives representation to so many women who've probably never seen themselves reflected in the mainstream fashion industry before, and that's a beautiful thing."
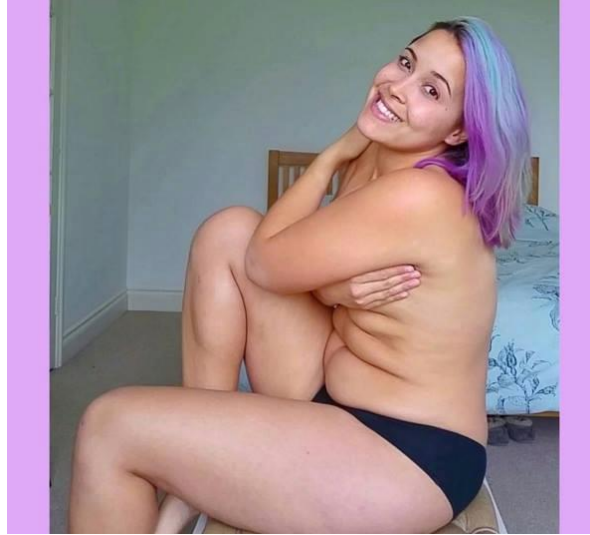
Figure 15. February 15, 2016. Distant photo of her sitting down, with her body turned sideways and her head turned to face the camera. She has underwear on with no bra, only her arms crossed in front of her body to cover her breasts; Photograph by @bodyposipanda; Instagram, Inc.; "It is possible to love your belly rolls. It is possible to have a favourite spot of cellulite.It is possible to throw away the scales. It is possible to recover. It is possible to love a body you never thought you could. And if I can get here, then you can too. I believe in you. "
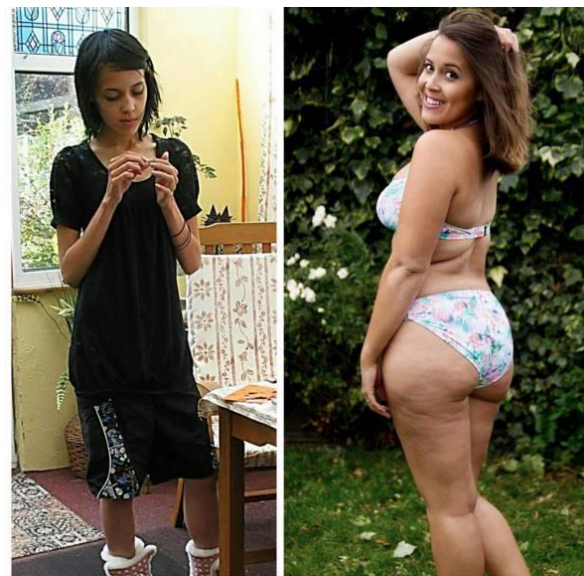
Figure 16. January 16, 2016. Side-by-side distant full body photos. The one on the left is while living with an eating disorder. The photo on the right is during recovery from her eating disorder; Photograph by @bodyposipanda; Instagram, Inc.; "When I've told people over the years about my eating disorder, they've all had the same question - why? What caused it? Expecting me to pinpoint a time, an event, a specific moment to blame for it all.And maybe some people have those. I once had a therapist who brought my whole family together to try and get to the root of it all, he was so busy searching for the flaws in my family, that he missed the flaw in the whole world. He didn't see the magazine pages that poisoned my mind with 10 day detox diets and smiling pictures of photo shopped women, 'finally happy!' after cosmetic surgery. He wasn't looking for the problem on his TV screen, where exciting things happened to beautiful people, and beautiful always meant thin. He was blind to our entire culture teaching us that our value as human beings depends on how well we emulate the ideal, or die trying.

Now I know where to place the blame. And most importantly? I know not to place it on myself. Those negative thoughts you have about yourself? You didn't create them, you were taught them. We live in a world that profits from our self-hatred, and that is not our fault. We didn't ask for this, and we don't deserve it. Believe me, sweet girl, none of this was ever your fault. 'I can say finally, for myself at least: at thirteen, to starve half to death? Not guilty. Not that child. There is certainly a charge of guilt to be made, long overdue. But it doesn't belong to me. It belongs somewhere, and to something, else.' - Naomi Wolf"

Figure 17. December 23,2015. Distant full body shot of her sitting on the bed wearing white lingerie and facing the camera; Photograph by @bodyposipanda; Instagram, Inc.; "To anyone who comments on my pictures saying 'body goals' or 'I'd kill for that body'. You are breaking my heart. Because that is the opposite of what I want you to feel when you look at my profile. I'm not trying to turn my body type into the new 'ideal', I'm trying to show you that there is no ideal. That we all have the power to break free from the beauty standards that have kept us in mental chains for so long. That's why I celebrate my cellulite and bask in the glory of my belly rolls. To show you that it's possible for you to love YOUR body, no matter how far it deviates from the current idea of perfection. So please, use the energy you spend wishing for other people's bodies, on learning how to love your own. It is so worthy of your love, exactly the way it is."

Figure 18. March 9, 2016. Side-by-side distant photographs wearing a bikini. The photo to the left is of her standing to face the camera, and the photo to the right is of her sitting down on the bed with her legs bent horizontally and her body is turned to face the camera; Photograph by @bodyposipanda; Instagram, Inc.; "BREAKING NEWS! BODIES CHANGE SHAPE IN DIFFERENT POSITIONS! Reportedly, this phenomenon occurs to every human being on the planet, and yet the majority of bodies shown in the media remain super posed, super Photoshopped, and super unattainable for most of us flawed, normal folk. And since all we see being celebrated is the most flattering angles and flawless figures, we start to see ourselves as wrong. We see our belly rolls as ugly. We see our cellulite as sinful. We see ourselves as worth less, the less we look like the pages of our magazines or the beauties on our screens. I used to hold my stomach in until it hurt. 5 years old and already obsessed with flattering. Already brainwashed into believing that I needed to look as thin as possible at all times to be worth something. To anyone. You know what? Fuck flattering. We are all wonderful and worthy however our bodies look. At any angle, in any outfit, posed or not, you are good enough. You are

valuable. So let yourself breathe, and laugh, and live, without worrying how you look through everyone else's eyes. You're not here for them. "
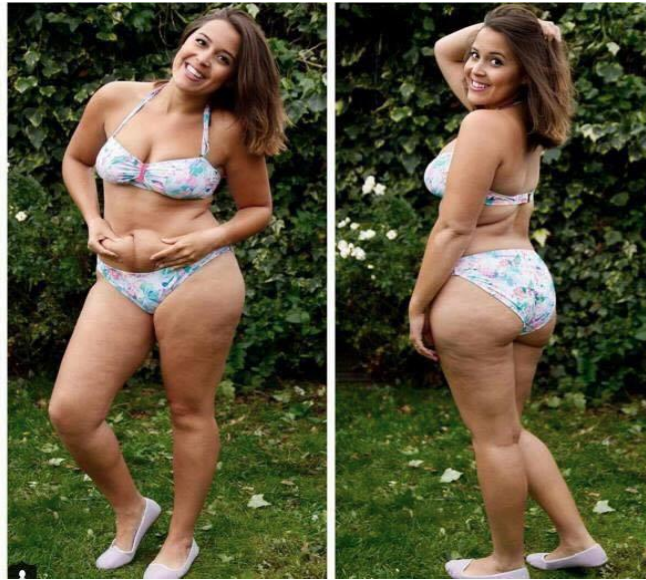

Figure 19. November 9, 2015. Side-by-side distant photographs wearing a bikini. The one on the left she is facing toward the camera and grabbing her belly fat. The photo on the right her back is to the camera and her face is turned to the camera; Photograph by @bodyposipanda; Instagram, Inc.; "A couple of shots from the amaaaazing body positive photoshoot I did with @hbuxtonphoto Hollie told me this shoot was the opposite of every one she's ever done. Over the years she's been told to only shoot the flattering angles, direct to avoid any rolls, disguise a million different 'flaws' and then still edit them out further, in case any semblance of reality remained. She's even seen people request that entirely different body parts be photoshopped over their own.It's time for a change. We don't need to be surrounded by photographic lies that distort our self image and destroy our self worth. We can't keep believing that our purpose in life is to emulate some impossible beauty standard, one that doesn't even exist without the editor's wand anyway. We're taught to aspire to a perfection that isn't real. That nobody should have to measure themselves against. We are ready for that to change. So here's to lumpy, bumpy,

cellulite, back roll, belly lovin' unedited imperfection. Here's to reality, and here's to hoping that we start to see more of it."

Figure 20. December 9, 2015. Side-by-side distant photographs of her while living with an eating disorder(left) and in recovery (right); Photograph by @bodyposipanda; Instagram, Inc.; "Do you know why I started posting my before/after recovery pictures? So that nobody else like me would have to feel alone.I spent years believing that I was the only ex-anorexic turned chubby girl on the planet. I convinced myself that I was a complete failure - a girl who nearly starved herself to death and now couldn't even stick to a diet. Worthless. A disgrace.It took me a long time to realize that those thoughts were the voice of my eating disorder, still plaguing me after all those years. Now I know that I was a warrior all along. That every pound gained was a demon vanquished. That the belly rolls I thought were so disgusting were soft and beautiful reminders of battles fought and won. That the body I had tortured for so long had done everything it could to keep me alive, and for that it deserved my love, no matter what the outer shell looked like.To those of you whose recovered body is miles away from what you thought it would be, to ANYONE who's ever felt like a failure because of their body - you are not alone. And take it

from me, you're doing just fine. More than that, you are doing spectacularly, and you are perfect just as you are. Keep fighting, my warrior friend."

Figure 21. September 8, 2015. Side-by-side distant photographs wearing a bikini bottoms and a crop top. In the photo on the left she is facing the camera with her legs crossed, and in the photo on the right her body is turned away from the camera but her face is turned to look at the camera; Photograph by @bodyposipanda; Instagram, Inc.; "Working my bumpy thighs ✔working my chunky calves ✔working my chubby belly ✔working my bopo magic and not caring how many trolls try to bring us down ✔#effyourbeautystandards"

Figure 22. June 1, 2015. Mirrored mid-range photo of her sitting on the ground horizontally, in underwear and no other clothing, with her arms crossed to cover her breasts, and her head turned to face the camera; Photograph by @bodyposipanda; Instagram, Inc.; "Hey, you. I hope you know how beautiful you are. I hope you know how much light you put into this world. I hope you are proud of every smile that you've caused. I hope you are aware of every life that you've touched. I hope that you realize your worth extends so far beyond your body. And because of that there is no reason not to accept your body. Every part you've been made to think is a flaw. Every bump, every roll, every scar. Because trust me, those parts are beautiful. But they don't begin to encompass all the beauty that exists in you, far, far beyond your body."

Figure 23. May 27, 2015. Three side-by-side mid-range photos of her in a bikini. In the photos on the left she is facing the camera with her legs crossed, in the photo in the middle her body is twisted towards the camera, and in the photo on the right her back is to the camera and her face is turned towards the camera; Photograph by @bodyposipanda; Instagram, Inc.; "THE 'MOTIVATIONAL' SWIMSUIT. The one that you buy a size too small. The one that you hang up in sight so that it stares accusingly every time you walk by. The one that you envision looking flawless in, carefree and finally happy in yourself. I have wasted every summer of my adult life sweating and starving to achieve that vision. Telling myself I didn't deserve the joys of summer if I didn't look like that image of bikini perfection we're all taught to aim for. Torturing myself under the scrutinizing gaze of the size too small swimsuit. But no matter how many times I yoyo-ed back down to that bikini weight, I was never good enough. I was never happy. There was always a flaw to find, a problem area to tone, a dimple to zoom in on or a roll to obsess over. This summer my fabulousness is overflowing in that swimsuit, and I am finally happy in my body. I never needed to lose anything except my brainwashed ideas about 'perfect' bodies. So

cheers to my first summer of true happiness, body positive and free. That swimsuit is bloody painful anyway."
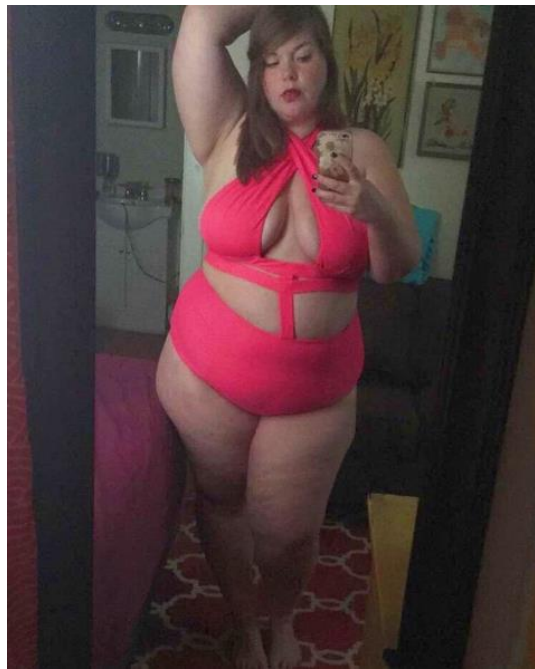

Figure 24. May 22, 2016. Distant full-body shot taken in the mirror while wearing a swimsuit. She is looking down into her phone; Photograph by @yourstruelymelly; Instagram, Inc.; "I caught a glimpse of myself. Just showered Naked Alone Doing the daily motions of running around my apartment, finding underwear, my hair wrapped in a towel I wished I hadn't seen it. Did I want to look again. Not today. Everything already seemed a little worse than usual. I didn't want to have to think about how I felt about my body today. I'm not supposed to feel this way. So I look, as a challenge maybe, or more likely a sick mind game, I want to prove to myself, I'm ok with my body. I still feel sexy and somehow can see its beauty. I look... ...I see my belly...it sags more now. ...I see my waist and think it's not defined. ....I see my arms and my breasts I turn side to side. Squeeze and tuck and fold and pull Maybe a different angle will make me feel better...."oh god, my chin" I'm blemished and scarred. I feel heavy.....I think how can anyone see beauty in this? I look away. The words pop into my head. "If only this were smaller, more perky,

less wide. "....the comparison begins, "at least I'm not this, but then again I'm not that" ....

Maybe next time will be different... These events have happened more often then I would like to admit in recent weeks. Life it seems has worn me down. And although I have a lot to celebrate, the end of a very successful semester, new friends, spending more time with old ones, the possibility of summer adventures, I've also felt a whole slew of emotions and I've felt exhausted. Jes Baker shared this thought a few days ago: "A lot of my bad body days may just be bad SELF days (brain/circumstantial etc) BUT because society has created such a direct line between "feeling shitty" and "our bodies" I, without thinking, am quick to fall into the path of last resistance and find the flaws in my physical appearance which then engulfs me in the shame I've spent my entire life learning how to feel.Maybe, sometimes... I'm just down. And maybe, sometimes... I don't need to blame my body so I can have "a reason." I don't think I really got what she was saying until this moment, but I've been living it all along.The uncertainty and emotions I've been feeling, have manifested in unhappiness with my body. My body has been the easy scapegoat for me feeling down and exhausted. My body is the same body that I've admired, been grateful for and loved many times in the reflection of this same mirror. So today, with this in mind. I will be kind. I put on this swimsuit to try it on. Dream

Of my coming Florida vacation, just a few weeks away. The emotions I feel are real and yes they manifest themselves in body hatred at times. But there is hope. We are not alone. We are imperfect, not broken. I'm feeling down, but I'm still capable. For now, I'll keep these wise words in mind, when I look in the mirror. Be kind to your body."

Figure 25. March 16, 2016. Distant side-by-side full-body shots taken in the mirror, while wearing a swimsuit. In the photo on the left she is looking down into her phone, and in the photo on the right she is confronting the gaze; Photograph by @yourstruelymelly; Instagram, Inc.; "When someone conflates your self love to vanity or conceit it's their way of bringing you down, silencing your power, holding up the status quo, the way we have been taught to hate ourselves so we kide away and keep our mouth shut. Our self love is powerful in a world where those in power profit off of our insecurity, our body hate, thinking that we have nothing to contribute and that we can never be or do enough. It's exhausting and it takes away the power we have to speak up and fight for what we know is right. Self love intimidates those people in our lives that rely on our hatred of ourselves to make them stronger. It terrifies those who profit off the marketing tactics that make us hate ourselves so we will buy their BSbeauty and diet products and procedures instread of caring for those we love and channeling our money and time into those that actually need to be changed."

Figure 26. May 5, 2016. Mid-range full body shot facing the camera, while wearing lingerie;

Photograph by @yourstruelymelly; Instagram, Inc.; "#effyourbeautystandards #bodypositivity

#bodypositve #honormycurves #radicalbodylove #riotsnotdiets #nobs #nobodyshame
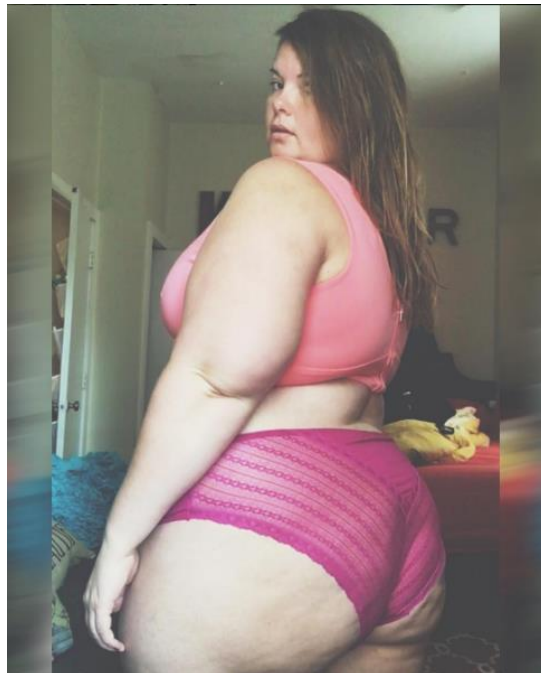
#takingupspace #fierce"

Figure 27. April 26, 2016. Mid-range photo of her body while wearing a crop top and underwear. Her back is towards the camera and her head looking back over her shoulder to face the camera; Photograph by @yourstruelymelly; Instagram, Inc.; "I may just surprise you #sexyatanysize #bodylove #bodypositive #bodypositivity #pizzasisters4lyfe #effyourbeautystandards #takeupspace #takingupspace #honormycurves #nobs #nobodyshame #fatbabe #radicalbodylove #pink"

Figure 28. March 9, 2016. Side-by-side mid-range photos in a bathing suit. In both photos her back is to the camera and her head is looking over her shoulder to face the camera; Photograph by @yourstruelymelly; Instagram, Inc.; "#Flawless and #Inspired We teach girls to shrink themselves To make themselves smaller We say to girls "You can have ambition But not too much You should aim to be successful But not too successful Otherwise you will threaten the man" Because I am female I am expected to aspire to marriage I am expected to make my life choices Always keeping in mind that Marriage is the most important Now marriage can be a source of Joy and love and mutual support But why do we teach girls to aspire to marriage And we don't teach boys the same? We raise girls to each other as competitors Not for jobs or for

accomplishments Which I think can be a good thing But for the attention of men We teach girls

that they cannot be sexual beings In the way that boys are Feminist: the person who believes in

the social Political, and economic equality of the sexes You wake up, flawless #inspired

#bodylove #radicalbodylove #effyourbeautystandards #takingupspace #honormycurves #plussize

#bodypositive #bodypositivity #fatbeauty #fatbabe #magical #fierce #confidence #nobs

#nobodyshame"

Figure 29. April 13, 2016.Side-by-side photos wearing black lingerie. The photo on the left is a

distant full-body shot taken in the mirror, looking into her camera. The photo on the right is a

mid-range photos of her kneeling on a bed, with her body facing towards the camera; Photograph

by @yourstruelymelly; Instagram, Inc.; "My body does not simply exist in the most flattering

angles. With every move I make its falls in a different way. My body is not stagnant, it jiggles,

and wiggles, and flops. These pictures, taken just minutes apart from each other, show that my

fat body is malleable and contort-able. If I were to sit cross legged it would look even more

different as my fat is pushed to a different side or more closely together. My body is beautiful,

standing tall or sitting down. It is strong, it is unique, it is soft, and it is good. My body moves.

219

Every move deliberate. The extra sway is something I cannot hide.It is also something I am not ashamed of. My fat body is alive, it is not broken, it is not disgusting, or diseased.We need to stop being afraid of the fat, afraid of the extra, afraid of our bodies in certain positions or doing certain movements. Because the truth of the matter is, my body is the exact same body in both of these pictures, just as capable, just as strong, just as lovely, and just as much me as the picture before. My body falls in different ways as I move, it wiggles, it jiggles, and it finds new ways to rest. But that does not mean my life is any less fulfilling, any less exciting, any less full. I am not less because of the way my body falls and moves and neither are you.So let us enjoy our lives today, in whatever position or movement we find ourselves. Lets celebrate each other no matter where our extra falls. Let's begin to free ourselves from the fear of having fat or gaining fat or seeing fat or loving someone who has fat. That fear is misplaced and oppressive, whatever your extra is (and it doesn't only come in fat) love it, it doesn't change or define you. It simply is a part of you. And you are magic! #bodypositive #bodypositivity #NoBS #NoBodyShame #fatgirlscan #honormycurves #effyourbeautystandards #takeupspace #takingupspace #mybodymoves #fatbabe #radicalbodylove #losehatenotweight #plussize #selflove"

Figure 30. June 5, 2016. Distant full-body photo on a beach in a green bikini with her back to the camera; Photograph by @yourstruelymelly; Instagram, Inc.; "When we stop worrying about how the world sees us, the world opens up to us. When we stop comparing ourselves to others, our lives begin to be ours again. You only add to the beauty in this world. #bodypositive #bodypositivity #bopo #effyourbeautystandards #honormycurves #nobodyshame #nobs #bigandblunt #bigarmnoharm #bootyrevolution #plussizeswimwear #bikinibody #goldenconfidence #fatkini #bikini #beachbabe #takingupspace #radicalbodylove #feminism #feminist #gabifreshxswimsexy #gabifresh #fatbabe #fortmyers #florida #beach #vacation mellyinflorida"

Figure 31. April 3, 2016. Distant full body photo taken in the mirror while wearing black lingerie. She is looking into her phone; Photograph by @yourstruelymelly; Instagram, Inc.; "Loving our bodies is the greatest rebellion we could ever wage, the greatest fight we could ever fight, and the greatest inspiration we could ever be for each other. Be radical. Be a rebel. Be a warrior. Love every inch of your body not because it is good or bad, but because it is the body you have and you really are something else. □□□ #bodypositive #bodypositivity

#honormycurves #plussize #fullfigured #bodylove #loveyourbody #nobs #nobodyshame

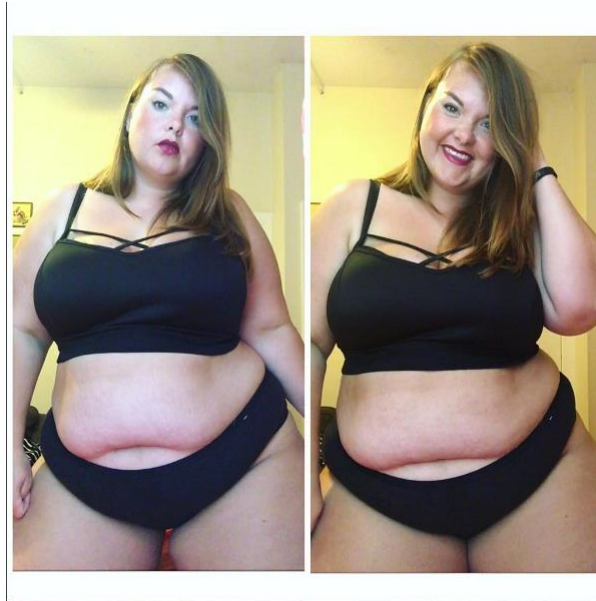#riotsnotdiets #losehatenotweight #feminism #feminist #takingupspace"

Figure 32. June 21, 2016. Distant mid-range photos facing towards the camera while wearing

black lingerie; Photograph by @yourstruelymelly; Instagram, Inc.; "Just a reminder that our

"imperfections" are badass. They aren't anything we need to apologize for or cover up. I've got

almost everything the world tells us I should hate about my body, but I don't hate it. Because god

damn it's beautiful, capable, and strong! #perfectlyimperfect #stretchmarks #fatbabe

#bodypositive #effyourbeautystandards #honormycurves #takingupspace #nobs #nobodyshame

#radicalbodylove #bodylove #plussize #fat #bigarmnoharm #goldenconfidence #hereiam #misfit

#feminist"

Figure 33. July 14, 2016. Distant side-by-side photos wearing a red swimsuit. In the photo on the left she is facing the camera, and in the photo on the right her back is to the camera and she is looking over her shoulder; Photograph by @yourstruelymelly; Instagram, Inc.; "I have a beach body. I have a pool body. I have a swim body. I have all along. And so do you! @swimsuitsforall has kicked off a campaign this summer called the #MySwimBody movement that encourages women of all ages, body sizes, shapes, and ability to ditch their coverups, beach towels, and clothes and flaunt there perfectly amazing bodies in swimsuits and bikinis. With the the media all around us that tells us our only goal all spring and summer is to get and maintain a certain kind of body in order to enjoy our summer, this movement is fighting back! We deserve to splash around in the water and play in the sand with our friends, family, and loved ones (you know, that cute person you've had your eyes on). So here is #MySwimBody!!!! Now let me see yours! ***If I tag you I'd love to see your post using the #MySwimBody hashtag*** If I haven't tagged you, I'd love to see it as well!!! This is a movement for all of us. Let's celebrate our bodies, self live, and summer!!!***"
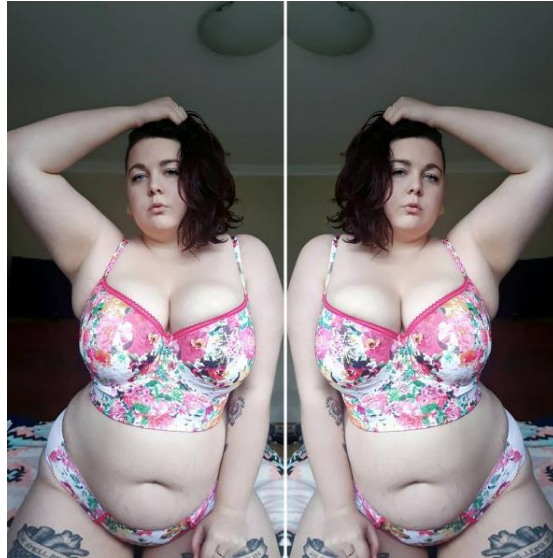
Figure 34. July 16, 2016. Mid-range photos facing towards the camera while wearing lingerie; Photograph by @micahh_gracee; Instagram, Inc.; "Totally fine with having a belly. Totally fine with having stretch marks. Totally fine with being soft, cuddly, curvy. Totally fine with being fat. If you're not totally fine with me, then its totally your problem not mine.#effyourbeautystandards #honormycurves#fatbabe #fatpositive #bodypositive #bbw"

Figure 35. Mid-range side-by-side photos of her in the nude with her back to the camera;

Photograph by @micahh_gracee; Instagram, Inc.; "Back fat, rolls, impossibly pale skin. I'm okay

with all of it. #bodypositive #fatpositive #bbw #effyourbeautystandards #honormycurves

#fatbabe"

Figure 36. Distant side-by-side full body photos of her in the nude while looking up and away

from the camera. Her hands are covering her nipples; Photograph by @micahh_gracee;

Instagram, Inc.; "Being a woman is a beautiful, powerful, spiritual and honored experience. I

revel in my femininity, my strength, my awakening. I choose to love myself as the higher power

loves me, as she loves the trees, the soil, the birds. What an honor, what a priviledge, to be a

woman. #internationalwomensday #effyourbeautystandards #plussize #curvy #biganfblunt

#honormycurves"

Figure 37. Mid-range photo of her body facing the camera. The photo is of her breasts down to her , while wearing a blue bikini; Photograph by @micahh_gracee; Instagram, Inc.; "Had some bad news today so did what I always do in times like these. Bought a bikini. The lady in the store tried to direct me to more 'figure flattering one pieces' but #fuckflattering I will wear what I want. #effyourbeautystandards"

Figure 38. Mid-range photo of her torso facing towards the camera while wearing only bottoms; Photograph by @micahh_gracee; Instagram, Inc.; "Flat bellies, wobbly bellies, taut bellies, freckled bellies are all beautiful. Bellies with rolls, with stretch marks, innie or outie belly buttons, with defined muscle tone or with soft skin are all beautiful. #loveyourbelly"

Figure 39. July 3, 2016. Up-close photo of side of unclothed torso and visible stretchmarks, with head over breasts; Photograph by @chooselifewarrior; Instagram, Inc.; "Me placing my big fat body on social media HAS TO HAPPEN. It just has to. Being fat and visible is important. Being vocal and proud is a necessity. It isn't about me per-say but the tone in which I post. It isn't about being naked, becoming viral or even being noticed by "popular" opinion. It is unconsciously allowing normality of different bodies and imagery of those bodies without a stereotyped story but an authenticity that can co-exist. It isn't a "I don't like what they say about people who look like me" it's a "This is who I am and how beautiful my life, my body, my existence is". By allowing people to see me, truly see me, my experience, my honesty, my story as a 23 year old female I am telling my story rather than being led into a media driven one which I do not see

myself in. My fat is incredibly important to who I am. As is my mental health, sexual assault

history, eating disorder, favourite colour, outfit, opinions and crucially important truth. It's

important because while social media is seen as a flawless image perfecter to obtain likes,

follows and standing. To me it's a vehicle I can use to tell the truth about what it's like to have

gone through the things I have, how that affects me, how that affected my life. So in to inspire,

connect and try to help others who like me did not want to live. Who like me have felt alone or

unworthy or disgusting. This social media is a weird beast with untouched potential. This is

bigger than my fat. My mind. My life. This is about having a platform I otherwise would not, and

sharing my truths, sharing my story. To break ceilings and moulds. Smash stereotypes and pain.

My message might not resonate or be important to everyone but hell yeah me and my fat we god

damn are important. #chooselifewarrior"

Figure 40. April 19, 2016. Distant side-by-side photos of her body (left) and the body of the

fitness and weight loss coach Michelle Bidges; Photograph by @chooselifewarrior; Instagram,

Inc.; "So last night @mishbridges was on Australian Story, there was a quote that pissed me off

"Honestly if you are happy where you are, genuinely, more power to you. But I can tell you now,

I am yet to have met someone who is morbidly obese & happy." It wasn't really all that controversial considering she is a trainer on The Biggest Loser which promotes rapid, unsafe, statistically unattainable weight loss. I'd like to officially meet Michelle so she could meet me I'm fat & I'm also so so happy. At 23 finally not stuck in an eating disorder, I'm not depressed, on another diet or hating myself. Her words last night didn't help anyone. It promoted to buy her programs to lose weight, being fat is bad & of course go to extreme measures such as TBL to not be "unhappy". It spun the once again lie that EVERY fat person is unhealthy & furthermore unhappy. It's interesting that her health empire addresses losing weight as one of the greatest achievements even though healthy eating & exercise will not always result in weight loss, or even ridding a person of their fatness. I sat thinking if I should write this post all day. Wondering if perhaps I'm just asking for even more fat shaming, health concern trolling & people who think they are the resident health IG doctors to come out and slam me. Yet then I remembered who I am. A young girl who had an eating disorder grew up watching TBL and idolising women like Michelle who continued to tell me I'd never be happy or worthy or healthy unless I looked thinner. Guess what I am. I freaking am. I don't need to buy another weight loss plan, start a diet or hate my body to be happy. I read quotes from @chrissieswan & @meshel_laurie reminded me that they are not afraid to really stop the stereotyping and shaming when it comes to their weight. So while people might tell you, you have to lose weight. Let me remind you the billion dollar industry that Ms.Bridges works for & promotes is there to make money & make you think you HAVE to change to be accepted, healthy and happy. Exercising & Eating Healthy doesn't mean you aren't fat. You can be fat & still do those things. ALSO HELL YEAH YOU CAN BE FAT & HAPPY!"

Figure 41. Feb 28, 2016. Distant photo of her body facing the camera while outdoors in a bikini; Photograph by @chooselifewarrior; Instagram, Inc.; "You are always Bikini Body ready □! Always! Your shape, weight, size, colour or age should not stop you from celebrating your body. Today I swam in an extinct volcano and reminded myself what a beautiful amazing place Australia is. I've been having a few body image low months, but we are continually going through metamorphosis and change. Having Body Positivity injected into my life has made the dark days brighter and my gratitude for life & beauty so much deeper. I hope that body positivity can enrich your life too and remind you that every body soul and flesh should be celebrated ✌□ #ChooseLifeWarrior #LakeEacham"

Figure 42. May 27, 2016. Mid-range photo of her body, from her breasts down to her knees. She is facing the camera and wearing only underwear, with her hands covering her breasts; Photograph by @chooselifewarrior; Instagram, Inc.; "Weight loss isn't a neutral subject, it is seemingly always positive. It's always met with congratulations & #goals. It's always linked with words like willpower and happiness! Losing weight is a magical achievement & something to look up to. Yet what if it wasn't. What if we didn't hold weight loss to such an incredible wonderful human goal. Especially as women we are told that if you lose weight that's ALWAYS a great thing (with a few tiny exceptions). Yet what if it was just another thing. What if it didn't receive such a glowing review? Would we feel less pressure to be smaller. Would the diet industry stop. Weight loss in my opinion is a personal thing, if you get a sense of achievement or happiness for what ever reason that's your business. Yet what I think is interesting is the way we view weight loss within communities, within friendship groups, within schools & online. If weight loss was neutral not good or bad, simply a thing that sometimes happens to people - would beauty be so tied down in this notion that skinny is gorgeous? Alternatively most weight gain is always met with negative connotations. Can't we all just be happy. In the moment. In our

lives. If weight loss is your journey cool bananas, if you've gained weight no problem. If you're healthy whatever healthy means to you awesome, if you're unhealthy you're still an awesome & a worthy person. Bodies are beautiful regardless of what weight you are. You know what else is great our brains, ideas, dreams, hopes and relationships. Our life shouldn't be determined by a scale, by a measurement, by a number. Our life should be lived in happiness and it should be lived in the best way you know how. So if you feel the pressure to lose weight or gain weight to be perfect, to be beautiful, to be deemed better. Boo trust me when I say you can love you now, the entirety of you including that body you seem to hate. #ChooseLifeWarrior □□□Don't forget the #CLWSELFLOVEBOOTCAMP starts on YouTube in June, learn some great tips, tricks and inspiration to assist in your self love journey. Subscribe now to not miss it I've been working so so so hard!!!! (link in bio)"

Figure 43. January 20, 2016. Mid-range shot of her wearing a crop top and underwear while facing the camera; Photograph by @chooselifewarrior; Instagram, Inc.; "Thighs & Bellies & Stretch Marks oh my! This #bodypositive journey comes with triumphs and discoveries, celebrations and happiness. It comes with downfalls too don't you worry. Yet when I wake up happy within myself, yet when I log on and see women supporting each other, yet when I close

my eyes at peace I remember why it's all worth it. Why it's such a hard road and yet so rewarding. I am 23 and I am only now at peace most days with myself, imagine if we all kept promoting, learning & encouraging the younger generation to do this too. How many young girls would we save from #eatingdisorders ? How many young men would we save from #suicide ? How many people could live a life with a higher level of self worth! How many people could be happy?! This week I've watched some dear friends feel overwhelmed & attacked in their earnest amazing effort to spread positivity. They are dealing and will not be knocked down forever. I am thankful for them, plus every positive interaction and comment I get on social media. I will and always will stay strong in the face of adversity because my voice, experiences and mission is about love. Love triumphs all. #chooselifewarrior"

Figure 44. January 1, 2016. Up-close photo of her stretch marked torso, with her hand resting on her belly; Photograph by @chooselifewarrior; Instagram, Inc.; "An ode to bellies, The first thing I was aware of when I was younger that was "wrong" with me,Was my belly,It didn't look like the other little girls,It stuck out,Was pudgy and not flat in the slightest. I hated it !My then mission turned into a 12 year self destruction path,All against my belly.It was enemy #1,Now at 23,It's still not flat,It has stretch marks,So often celebrated by mothers who have given birth &

RIGHTLY SO,Yet some of us have stretch marks pre babies too, And is still yes pudgy.What's changed is my mind, My declaration of war,Because I realized that I could go my whole life with this type of belly,And still be happy, valued, smart, kind And loved. So now I pat my belly,and say I am sorry.For hating it all these years,Because it is my belly and I love it. #belly #bellies #tummy #losehatenotweight #chooselifewarrior"

Figure 45. March 1, 2016. Up-close photo of her hand covered in eczema; Photograph by @chooselifewarrior; Instagram, Inc.; "I'm always honest about insecurities, beauty and myself. So here it goes. Pictured above is my less than smooth, less than manicured, eczema & psoriasis covered skin. I have suffered from eczema since I was a child, I have extremely sensitive skin. At 16 my flare up got so bad it covered my arms, legs, neck & chest - it was months of waiting to see a dermatology specialist while waiting I was placed on steroids. This was during my eating disorder stressed with exams, mental health issues & my itchy crazy skin would leave me crying in cold showers at 2am most mornings. I finally saw a specialist after my dad called the office every day for two months seeing if we could get into any cancelled appointments. That's when I was told I have psoriasis and eczema. My specialist put me on medication used to stabilize my

immune system and within a month I saw results. I was on the medication for a year prolonged use of this medication can have side effects. Compared to steroids it was a dream I wasn't angry, moody, depressed, gaining weight while starving, not sleeping, I was finally happy. My skin went into remission for the past few years until the last two months so many things can trigger a flare up stress, anxiety, bad diet, weather, sweat, heat, cold & some beauty products. Well I live in Cairns which is a hot tropical place sweat is often at times unavoidable. My anxiety had been through the roof and I am working on that with my mental health team. I think the hardest part of dealing with my skin is of course the irritation, never feeling fully smooth and clean. Sometimes it can be embarrassing currently it's affecting my hands, chest, my face, my forearms and upper arms and a lot of people always comment "What is that?!?!" With Body Positivity I try to remind myself I am more than my skin. There are treatments but there isn't a cure. I try to be as proactive as possible but it is difficult sometimes. Today I am honestly really down about it all wait lists where I live are so long for dermatology and the cost of appointments go over $200 every 20minutes. I can do this though and if you suffer with skin disorders I am standing with you."
#ChooseLifeWarrior

Figure 46. February 18, 2016. Distant side-by-side photos of her while living with and eating disorder (left) and while in recovery from her eating disorder (right); Photograph by @chooselifewarrior; Instagram, Inc.; "So sick of the promises people will make to obtain beauty through weight-loss. Some hiding through the lens of "health" but a deep seeded thought that with that "health" will come beauty, acceptance, forgiveness & perhaps even love. The weight loss companies will roll out another campaign of juice cleanses and promises that you're whole life will be a sparkly safe happiness if only you were smaller. Truth is here on the left is me at 18, I desperately wanted to be beautiful, be everything I "never was". I was tortured with the idea that I was disgusting, fat and on the regular I threw up, I exercised till I passed out and I punished my body for not being perfect. Right is me this year more secure, confident, happy and wanting to live even though I'm bigger. See these transformation photos get so many likes when someone simply loses fat from their body but WHY? Why do people obsess over not only their own weightloss but praise others despite the means. I often get health haters telling me I'm going to die. Yet if this photo transformation was the other way I suppose FAT to slimmer, even through the means of a secret eating disorder. I would be praised no questions. The idea of losing weight is more profitable, positive and promoted in people's eyes than the means. There is a fine line between dieting and eating disorders and the most common risk factor for triggering an eating disorder or relapsing into a past one is dieting. I don't care if you've lost weight. I care about your mental health and my transformation is as simple and beautiful as this • LEFT an 18 year old girl who thought about taking her own life frequently! She thought the world would be better off without her, she had battled for years with an eating disorder • RIGHT I want to live. That's a celebration, that's a resolution of recovery and transformation I can get behind • Weight loss may not always be an unhealthy practice, but praising all weight loss despite knowing the

236

reasons behind or even perhaps the eating disorders lurking that to me makes me sad. Weight

loss isn't always good. #chooselifewarrior"

Figure 47. February 23, 2016. Distant side-by-side photos of her while living with and eating

disorder (left) and while in recovery from her eating disorder (right); Photograph by

@Anastasiaamour; Instagram, Inc.; "This photo shows nothing more than the fact that I've

gained weight -- but the mental transformation has been profound. It's been 7 years since I made

the decision to start recovering. In 2009, I hadn't had a period in over two years, I existed solely

on a few cans of Red Bull a week, abused laxatives & had crippling stomach cramps most of the

time. Coughing up blood was becoming commonplace - in my heart of hearts, I knew that was a

bad sign but the little voice in my head told me that I'd lose at least a few grams with every bit of

blood that I coughed out. My arms, legs and lower back had become a home to lanugo. I barely

slept. And going to the beach that day, I had such intense anxiety about being unable to weigh

myself for a few hours. I was miserable. I wanted to stop existing. But I didn't. I didn't stop

existing. I instead made the decision to recover... and although those first steps were hard (like,

really fucking hard), I tried. The decision to try sparked change, and profound understanding of

myself. Now, standing here, as a woman who has accepted her flaws, conquered her demons and made the decision to nourish every word, movement and action from a place of self-love.... This is what it feels like to truly live. And it changed everything. Grass is greener. Birds chirp in beautiful harmony. My thoughts are unclouded and I can enjoy exercise (rather than punish myself with it) and I can eat dessert without shame, guilt and fear. I can confidently reject people and messages that serve only to bring me down and I can stand up for my worth, because I know that I'm the only one who can define it. Are you truly living right now? If you're spending your time hating your body, feeling crazy around food, obsessing over your flaws, suffering from an eating disorder like I was or stuck in a cycle of yo-yo dieting (I've been there too!)... this is a call to arms. I want you to raise your voice, and say it with me loud and clear: "I make the choice to make self-love my priority." The time has come to start loving your body - fearlessly, authentically and without apology. Are you in? http://www.anastasiaamour.com/InsideOut"

Figure 48. February 1, 2016. Up-close photo of her hip with her bottoms pulled down, revealing her underwear and stretchmarks; Photograph by @Anastasiaamour; Instagram, Inc.; I spent so long lamenting these stretch marks - viewing them as hallmarks of failure, a sign that my body

had become bigger and thus I should be ashamed. I rubbed them with creams and potions and tried to wish them away... Just think of all the better things I could've done with that time! These days, I see them for what they are - victories. I grew. I got stronger. I matured. They're not ugly or gross - they're beautiful, badass little lightning tattoos that nature has kindly gifted me with! □□□ □ Learn to love, nurture & cherish your body... 'flaws' and all! Get Inside Out here □□ http://www.anastasiaamour.com/InsideOut"

Figure 49. January 28, 2016. Up-close photo of her face turned away from the camera, post-workout, red a sweaty; Photograph by @Anastasiaamour; Instagram, Inc.; "SWEAT! □Don't mind me, just chillin' over here after some hard cardio looking like a beetroot with a human face! I feel like there's this "Insta-fitness" perception, where we feel like we're meant to look sexy and attractive while working out. And sure, sometimes we do - sometimes our workouts make us feel like sexpots, and other times, whilst they're amazing... they leave us a big, red, sweaty mess. AND THAT'S OKAY! □□ You don't have to be perfectly poised in your LuLu Lemon pants and Nike Air's hashtagging "#gymlife, can't wait to go home and have a green smoothie!" - that can be awesome (I love me some green smoothies! □□) but it's equally important not to shun the impact of a workout just because it's not Instagram worthy.I've always been ashamed of how red

I turn when I exercise. I'm pretty pale skinned (as you can see) so it doesn't take me long to go red, either. I saw this as a mark of shame but these days? It doesn't bother me! Nor does being sweaty. I know that my workouts are no less 'moral' or 'good' if I do them in my man's old, hole-filled sports tshirts vs. my expensive fitness gear. I know they're no less challenging whether I'm Zumba-ing like a maniac at home or sweating it out at the gym.□□ And I know that this photo isn't necessarily the most attractive.... but I'm okay with that! And I want to remind you all that it's okay if you're not 'attractive' during a workout. You do you - feel good, sweat it out, turn red, move your body like a maniac. Move how it feels good to YOU, and don't let aesthetics hold you back! #NFF #workout #fitness #exercise #healthy Get body positive and embrace self-love with my PROVEN guide that's helped 1000s of women already! Link in my bio, or get it here http://www.anastasiaamour.com/InsideOut NOW SHIPPING WORLDWIDE! ✈"

Figure 50. January 23,2016. Distant full body photo facing the camera, sitting on the floor in the nude, with her legs bent to the side to cover her body; Photograph by @Anastasiaamour; Instagram, Inc.; "Here I stand, a fearless woman.A woman who has learned the true value of myself - it comes from within.A woman who has learned that those dimples on my thighs - they don't need to be photoshopped out. Nor do my wonky ears or the creases in my elbows or my big

feet or the scar on my stomach. They're all part of my story.A woman who has learned that it's possible to accept yourself, wholly - despite what I always thought, what I always read, what I always felt I knew to be true.The hardest part about loving yourself is loving ALL of yourself. Not just the good hair days and the features that everyone compliments you on - but the features that no one says a word about, the features that others have put you down for, the features that you want to change.You don't have to love yourself first to be worthy of self love."

Figure 51. October 2, 2015. Mid-range photo in lingerie with her back to the camera, arms up over her head; Photograph by @Anastasiaamour; Instagram, Inc.; "My body is not beautiful despite its flaws... it's beautiful INCLUDING its flaws. The cellulite. The wobbly bits. The uneven skin. The curves in the "wrong" places. The stretch marks. Everything I used to tell myself so passionately was bad and unlovable about my body... those are now part of the things that I love about myself."

Figure 52. May 18, 2016. Mid-range photo in lingerie with her back to the camera, arms in up on the side of her body; Photograph by @Anastasiaamour; Instagram, Inc.; "I used to be a real bitch to myself.Around 2 years into my self love journey, I thought I'd mastered it. I'd stopped judging other women, I was celebrating their beauty and uniqueness and flaws... but myself? Not so much.I still nitpicked at my hair. My skin. My fat. My bones. My wrinkles. My scars. And I nitpicked at them, finishing them with "but it doesn't matter because I love myself" - as if that was some sort of overrider that completely discounted the fact that I'd just punished myself to the point of tears for not being like someone else.But I'm done with that. I'm done with comparisons and judgements. I still celebrate the beauty and power of other women, but now I celebrate my own, too.A post-workout picture like that would've brought me to tears 5 years ago with all the flaws I'd pick at myself -- thinking that I didn't work hard enough, I wasn't good enough, nothing I ever did was enough.But today? I see a strong, badass, powerful woman who has worked damn hard to be here. My body isn't perfect but it keeps her healthy and strong and she nourishes it and it THRIVES! And sure, I haven't got 'Madonna arms' but my god they're strong. And sure, my booty jiggles and my cellulite makes itself known and I've got a little roll under where my sports

bra sits... but I am good enough, right here and right now. Imperfections included. This is my reminder to be nice to myself. Always. This is YOUR reminder, to be nice to yourself too. You deserve your own kindness. Start your journey here: anastasiaamour.com/INSIDEOUT"

Figure 53. April 13, 2016. Mid-range photo in a black crop top and pants, facing the camera but looking away, with her arms up over her head; Photograph by @Anastasiaamour; Instagram, Inc.; "Your body is not a constant - it's a variable. It can (and will) change. It's changing every second. Instead of using negative energy to talk about your body and comparing yourself to your past/future self by looking back on yesterday's body with disdain and tomorrow's body with "motivation", start by working instead towards a healthier mindset that doesn't link your self-acceptance and self-worth with what your body looks like that day."

Figure 54. February 5, 2016. Distant full body shot of her sitting on a back drop with her legs spread open, in a purple turtleneck and white shorts, with her hair and makeup done. She had a red stain from menstrual blood on her shorts, and her vaginal hair is peeking out from the sides of her shorts; Photograph by @bloatedandalone4evr1993; Instagram, Inc.

Figure 55. October 19, 2015. Up-close overview of her sitting on the toilet with her underwear down between her thighs; Photograph by @bloatedandalone4evr1993; Instagram, Inc.

Figure 56. September 19, 2015. Up close photo of her torso, showing slight underboob and her belly button with a belly button ring. Her torso is covered in dark brown peach fuzz and longer hair that presumably leads down to her vaginal area; Photograph by @bloatedandalone4evr1993; Instagram, Inc.

Figure 57. August 16, 2015. Up-close photo of her legs spread open, in plaid shorts, with dried period blood on her inner thighs; Photograph by @bloatedandalone4evr1993; Instagram, Inc.

Figure 58. January 30, 2016. Distant full body photo in the mirror, posing seductively in a red one-piece body suit, with her arm bent up over her head to display her under arm hair. Her hair is coloured and styles, and she is wearing heavy makeup; Photograph by @bloatedandalone4evr1993; Instagram, Inc.

Figure 59. September 17, 2016. Up-close photo of her face looking away from the camera, with a blackhead removing nose strip; Photograph by @bloatedandalone4evr1993; Instagram, Inc.

Figure 60. January 19, 2016. Up-close photo of her head facing the camera, with a facemask on her nose; Photograph by @bloatedandalone4evr1993; Instagram, Inc.

Figure 61. March 20, 2016. Mid-Range photo of her back in the mirror with looking over her shoulder, revealing her back acne; Photograph by @bloatedandalone4evr1993; Instagram, Inc.

Figure 62. May 18, 2016. Side-by-side mid-range photos of her in lingerie. In the photo on the left she is facing the camera, and in the photo on the right her body is turned to the side and her head is turned towards the camera; Photograph by @thechristinecho; Instagram, Inc.; "There's nothing like a new set to make you feel good and boost your #confidence. (CHECK TAG FOR SET INFORMATION) I've been having some really good #bodyimage days lately. I'm adapting to this blonde look, not feeling compelled to hide my thighs in shorts, and I walked around a good stretch of crowded central London in a tank top and didn't panic about people judging my arms. I had a moment the other day when I said to Jack "Look at my stretch marks." For some reason at that moment I realized how pronounced they'd become on my stomach. And in return he said, "Look at mine." As if to say "So what? No big deal." It didn't seem like much, but it meant a lot to me. Even if I waiver in my confidence for a moment he props me back up and makes me feel perfect the way I am. He has never once been unkind or criticized my looks and has shown me unconditional love throughout every rough patch I've ever had mentally or

248

physically with myself.So shout out to all the things on display in this picture that I've disliked about myself at one point or another. Hello stretch marks on my stomach, the cellulite on my thighs, the scar on my right arm, mole on my neck, dark spots all over, and back rolls. We've been together a long time, and we'll be together a while longer so I might as well learn to love you. Life is too short and I will not spend it hating myself. #effyourbeautystandards #honormycurves #bodypositivity #bodypositive #bopo #plussize #curvy #fatbabe #fatshion #elomi #mentalhealth #mentalillness #anxiety #inspiration #psblogger #plusmodelmag #bustle #buzzfeed #buzzfeedhealth #celebratemysize"

Figure 63. January 13, 2016. Side-by-side up-close photos of her facing the camera in a white bra with her arms over her head, revealing her green underarm hair; Photograph by @thechristinecho; Instagram, Inc.; A #rebelliousselflove compliment for moi: Girl, I'm proud of you! You have been listening to people give you shit for not shaving for at least six months now, but you didn't bend to public pressure and societal expectations that women's bodies need to be

hairless from head to toe. Oh no, you're letting your body exist in its natural form. Scandalous!

You've been walking around in tank tops and shorts and you've ignored the dirty looks and rude

comments. It's your body, not their's and there's nothing wrong with you. You'll shave when you

want to, because it's your body and you make your own grooming decisions."

Figure 64. January 31, 2016. Distant selfie in a mirror while looking into her phone, wearing

black jeans and a red crop top; Photograph by @thechristinecho; Instagram, Inc.; "DID YOU

MISS ME? I've had quite a few people make comments on my decision to re-shave my head.

Most comments are nice, but some are negative and sometimes it's not even a comment, but

rather THE look. It's like part horrified, part disgusted. Let's get something out of the way: I don't

need your approval when it comes to the decisions I make regarding my body or appearance.

When people say "Who told you/What made you do that?" my answer is "No one/Nothing. I'm a

grown woman who can make my own decisions and I like it." But honestly I more than like my

haircut. It makes me feel strong, defiant, and independent when I do it. I like defying people's

ideals of what I should look like (*cough* family). I like challenging people's ideas of what

constitutes beauty because there's not one standard or definition of what it is. It's entirely subjective. And some people may think I look ugly. Well done. Good for you There's hundreds more people who will find me beautiful, but more importantly I find me beautiful. This haircut is just one more thing that makes me feel #bodypositive. Do whatever makes you feel good and gives you good vibes."

Figure 65. September 11, 2015. Mid-range photos wearing black lingerie. In the one on the left she is standing anf facing the camera, while in the one on the right she is sitting with the side of her body to the camera and her head looking over her shoulder; Photograph by @thechristinecho; Instagram, Inc.; "I 'm not offended by my body so sorry about it if you are. I'm sure I'll get some mean comments on this picture but I don't really care. I'm good with me so it doesn't matter if you aren't. #effyourbeautystandards #honormycurves #selfie #selca #bodypostive #bodylove #plussize #plussizeblogger #curvy #fatbabe"
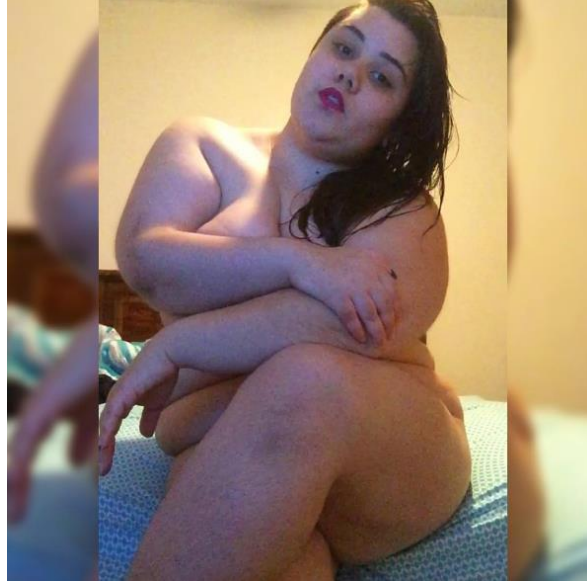
Figure 66. November 27, 2015. Mid-range photo of her facing the camera in the nude with her arms and legs crossed to cover her body; Photograph by @thechristinecho; Instagram, Inc.; "I always get asked, 'Where do you get your confidence?' I think people are well meaning, but it's pretty insulting. Because what it means to me is, 'You, Mindy Kaling, have all the trappings of a very marginalized person. You're not white, you're not skinny, you're a woman. Why on earth would you feel like you're worth anything?'" BARE BEAUTY: My body has been through a lot. I used to intentionally harm it and not too long ago I accidentally harmed it in my car accident. But it's withstood all the pain and kept me here, scars and all, and trust me I have my fair share of mental and physical ones. I sometimes get down that my right arm will never been 100% mobile, but I I will never go back to the kind of self loathing I used to partake in. This is me, bare and beautiful. Rolls and lumps. Flaws and perfections. I've come too far to ever think so lowly of my body again. I am comfortable with my "flaws" and couldn't care less about sharing them with the world. If it helps show someone with a similar story or body that they also have worth then I've done pretty well, I'd say. #effyourbeautystandards #honormycurves

#thechristineproject #bodypositivity #bodylove #bodypositive #celebratemysize #nofilter

#plussize"

Figure 67. August 20, 2015. Side-by-side mid-range photos of her in black lingerie facing the

camera(left) and with her back facing he camera while looking over her shoulder (right);

Photograph by @thechristinecho; Instagram, Inc.; "Sorry not sorry. Felt good, looked good. The

thigh highs were not worth the struggle in the back though. #effyourbeautystandards

#honormycurves #bodypositive #bodylove #sideshave #undercut #curvy #curvygirl #plussize

#plussizeblogger #selfie #selca #fatshion #alternativecurves"

Figure 68. July 15,2016. Mid-range photo of the side of her body sitting on a chair, wearing a

bikini, and looking away from the camera; Photograph by @glitterandlazers; Instagram, Inc.;

"What's the point of flattering photos? This is me. All the rolls all the sass all that ass. Its my

body. Saying it should look a certain way in photos just reinforces that there is an ideal body

type. That's there's an acceptable fat. Nope. Not playin along. I don't have time for that

shenanigans. Being perfect takes too much time for way too little payback. People won't

remember how good I looked in photos, they'll remember how often I made them smile, or laugh

or held them when they cried. That's what I want to be remembered for. #inspiration #instalife

#bodypositive #fatkini"

Figure 69. April 3, 2016. Distant photo fully clothed, balancing on her hands while practicing yoga; Photograph by @glitterandlazers; Instagram, Inc.

Figure 70. July 10. Distant full body shot, facing the camera in a bikini, with her legs crossed and one hand on her hip and the other on her head; Photograph by @glitterandlazers; Instagram, Inc.; "If I waited until my body was perfect to live I'd be waiting forever. The joy of life isn't a limited access perk. It's a right we're all entitled to receive. I have lose skin. I have cellulite. I have hips.

I have thighs. I have brains. I have strength. But I'm not composed of positive and negatives.

Every attribute carries its strengths and weaknesses and I will not live trying to balance myself

on an undefined scorecard of worth. Because living isn't something you earn, it's something you

choose. The only one holding you back is you. Get. Out. Of. Your. Own. Way. The world is

waiting for you. #bodypositive #selflove #inspiration #happiness"

Figure 71. June 2, 2016. Distant full body image of herself mid-run; Photograph by

@glitterandlazers; Instagram, Inc.; "There's two hours of sun, hurry up! Run. Run. Run. I had a

deep thought on today's run. See I was thinking about this academic study I read (I know super

geek) about how the brain cognitively reacts to people that are different. See a team of scientists

tracked brain functioning of people of various races when they were shown someone of an

opposite race. No matter how non-racist a test subject claimed to be in the pre-testing survey,

when shown someone different than them the brain fired in the parts of the brain related to fear,

anger and disgust. However when the same participants were shown videos of these same people

talking about things that were comfortable to them, immediately the brain positively reacted and

the activity in the negative brain quadrants lessened and in many cases ceased all together. So

here was my thought. It's easy to be different, it's harder to expose yourself to what makes you

common. I don't mean we're all best as a faceless army of sameness. To me being common

means you have to open up and find those similarities between yourself and others. If you can do

that, you have a better chance of building lasting relationships with others. So being unique is a

blessing, but finding a way to connect yourself to others is the true gift. #fitspo #running

#inspiration #plussize"

Figure 72. April 24, 2016. Distant full body shot wearing a bikini, facing the camera with her

legs crossed and one arm on her hip and the other on her head; Photograph by @glitterandlazers;

Instagram, Inc.

Figure 73. June 26, 2015. Mid-range photo of hair legs; Photograph by @Rupikaur_; Instagram, Inc.; "hairful model: anonymous shot by: rupi kaur if you're interested in being a model for the project and you are from Ontario or London, uk please email info@rupikaur.com. all colours genders body types wanted. 'hairful' is a new photo project i've taken up to document the growth and nature of hair on human bodies through photography. with a special focus on brown bodies. as these bodies deal with a unique set of battles and face intersectional struggles that have been kept virtually invisible and non existent within our contemporary media's. from bushy brows to knuckle hair to hair on the rest of the body and face. i look forward to presenting an honest truth of the struggles one goes through to deal with western societal pressures + eurocentric beauty standards of staying naked and 'neat'. how they hurt us. how they come to define us. and how we can move towards a much more positive and accepting view of the nature of our bodies. although i won't be releasing this project online, i look forward to sharing bits and pieces of it here with you from time to time. stay beautiful and shining sweetloves"

Figure 74. November 26, 2014. Up-close photo of her legs, revealing her stretchmarks;
Photograph by @Rupikaur_; Instagram, Inc.; "like the rings in the wood below my feet, the
stretch marks on my knees breasts thighs hips are my connection to nature and i thank it for
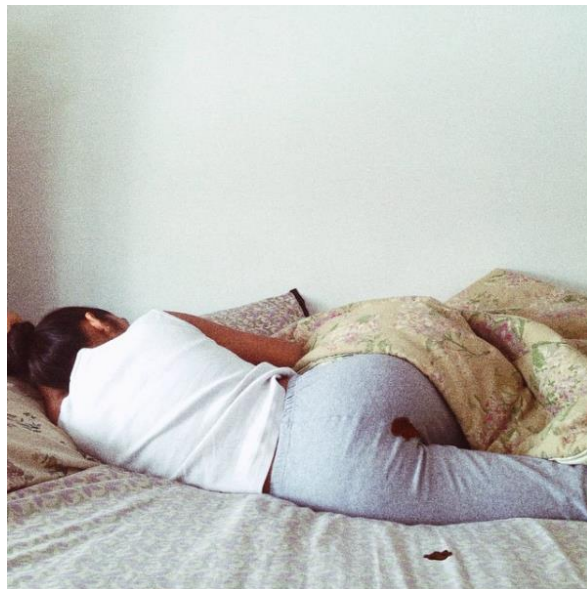allowing me to be a part of its art #loveyourlines"

Figure 75. March 25, 2015. Distant mid-range photo of her lying in bed with her back to the
camera. Her body is visible and she is wearing sweatpants with a white shirt. On her sweatpants
there is visible stains from menstrual blood and her bed is also stained with menstrual blood;

Photograph by @Rupikaur_; Instagram, Inc.; "thank you @instagram for providing me with the exact response my work was created to critique. you deleted a photo of a woman who is fully covered and menstruating stating that it goes against community guidelines when your guidelines outline that it is nothing but acceptable. the girl is fully clothed. the photo is mine. it is not attacking a certain group. nor is it spam. and because it does not break those guidelines i will repost it again. i will not apologize for not feeding the ego and pride of misogynist society that will have my body in an underwear but not be okay with a small leak. when your pages are filled with countless photos/accounts where women (so many who are underage) are objectified. pornified. and treated less than human. thank you. this image is a part of my photoseries project for my visual rhetoric course. you can view the full series at rupikaur.com the photos were shot by myself and @prabhkaur1 (and no. the blood. is not real.) i bleed each month to help make humankind a possibility. my womb is home to the divine. a source of life for our species. whether i choose to create or not. but very few times it is seen that way. in older civilizations this blood was considered holy. in some it still is. but a majority of people. societies. and communities shun this natural process. some are more comfortable with the pornification of women. the sexualization of women. the violence and degradation of women than this. they cannot be bothered to express their disgust about all that. but will be angered and bothered by this. we menstruate and they see it as dirty. attention seeking. sick. a burden. as if this process is less natural than breathing. as if it is not a bridge between this universe and the last. as if this process is not love. labour. life. selfless and strikingly beautiful."

Figure 76. December 1, 2015. Up-close photo of her hip, revealing stretch marks; Photograph by @Rupikaur_; Instagram, Inc.; "shot by: rupi kaur i like the way the stretch marks on our thighs look human and that we're so soft yet rough and jungle wild when we need to be i love that about us how capable we are of feeling how unafraid we are of breaking and tend to our wounds with grace -excerpt from page 169 (milk and honey)"

Figure 77. April 15, 2016. Mid-range photo of girl laying down on bed, with her waist down to her ankles facing away from the camera, and wearing period stained underwear; Photograph by

@xxgirlflu; Instagram, Inc.; "When life gives you lemons, make @rupikaur_ inspired art. A scene familiar to almost every woman. I think it's important to normalize our bodies. Bodies can sometimes be gross, but that doesn't make us disgusting. We're beautiful in our natural forms and what ever other form we decide to chose."Thank you @artmoran For the submission! #menstruation #cozy #tgif"

Figure 78. January 5, 2016. Four side-by-side up-close photos of a girl sitting on and standing over a toilet covered in menstrual blood; Photograph by @xxgirlflu; Instagram, Inc.; "Thigh prints! regram @drunk_jawer my rap floe still heavier than my menstrual floe doe. womb on #fleek #menarchy #matriarchy #carnage #ilovemyperiod #feminism #blood #moon #sharkweek #menstrualart #menstruationnation #menstruation #stain #pov #rose @broadcity #stormofthecentury between my thighs"

Figure 79. December 16, 2015. Up-close photo of woman's face, holding a used tampon beside her head; Photograph by @xxgirlflu; Instagram, Inc.; "Thanks for the submission, @jennanull ! Send in more #period pix, yall!

☐ #selfie #tampon #menstruation #blood #community #cheeky"

Figure 80. September 8, 2015. Up-close photo of woman's legs with pants and underwear down around her ankles, with menstrual stains on her underwear; Photograph by @xxgirlflu; Instagram, Inc.; "It's so freaking hot out- take your pants off ! Thank you @plantsaremybestfriends and @amonkii for the submission! #selfcare #nopantsdanceparty #cooloff #lemonade #iceicebaby #chillin #menstruation #period"

Figure 81. June 18, 2015. Up-close photo of woman's legs with underwear down around her ankles, and menstrual stains on her underwear; Photograph by @xxgirlflu; Instagram, Inc.; "Thank you @annie_hayes_88 for the submission! #undies #redshoes #bathroom #selfie #stained #surprise #leak #pretty #sexy #hottie #behindcloseddoors #secrets"

Figure 82. June 16, 2015. Up-close photo of woman's legs with menstaul blood dripping down the right leg; Photograph by @xxgirlflu; Instagram, Inc.; " Instagram disabled my account for 24 hrs because of this picture so I am reporting it tehe. #censorme #menstrualblood #areyouscared #love #pretty #bodypositive #legs #feet #toes #drip #leak #instagramsucks"

Figure 83. July 10, 2016. Up-close photo of the crotch of a woman's underwear, with menstrual

blood stains and pubic hair coming out from the sides of the underwear; Photograph by
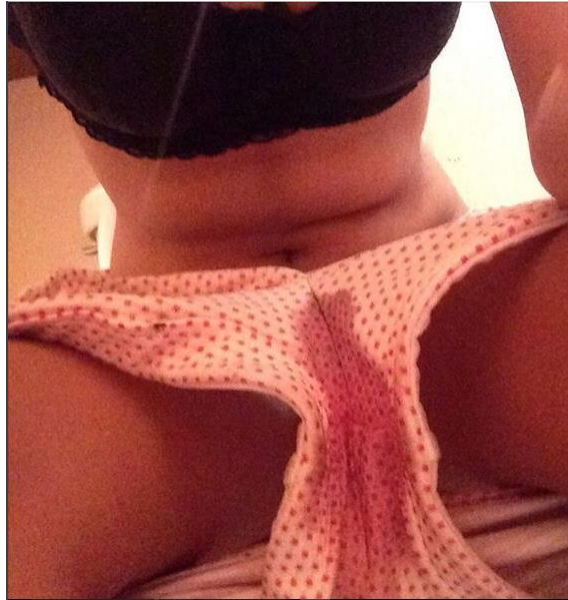
@menstraul.blood; Instagram, Inc.

Figure 84. May 29, 2016. Up-close photo of a woman sitting down with her menstrual blood

stained shorts around her thighs; Photograph by @menstraul.blood; Instagram, Inc.

Figure 85. May 4, 2016. Up-close photo of two bloody used condoms; Photograph by @menstraul.blood; Instagram, Inc.

Figure 86. May 20, 2016. Up-close photo of woman's lower body, with menstrual blood on her thighs and bed sheets; Photograph by @menstraul.blood; Instagram, Inc.

Figure 87. January 30, 2016. Up-close photo of woman's legs with menstrual blood running down her legs; Photograph by @menstraul.blood; Instagram, Inc.

Figure 88. November 3, 2015. Mid-range black and white photo of her body; Photograph by @tessholliday; Instagram, Inc.; "I've heard that I don't "represent" plus bodies a lot recently & it makes me sad. Unfortunately, I'm literally the ONLY visibly FAT plus size mainstream model. Do I have a small face? Yes! Blame it on genetics But the rest of me is big, fat & all of that. I don't have toned arms, stomach, butt, belly or thighs.. Far from it- my body jiggles when I walk, PROUDLY. In photos yes, things are smoothed, I'm under good lighting with a talented team like this photo. However I constantly post photos without all of that & at the end of the day I'm still the shortest (5'5) & biggest (US 22) working plus size model doing the best I can. I have always used my career as a way to bring awareness to the lack of diversity in the modeling industry & in mainstream media. Our focus should be on seeing different races, body types & genders when we flip through magazines or turn on our TV's instead of picking apart those who are trying to make a difference. I know one day there will be people of all sizes standing next to me, changing the world. #effyourbeautystandards □ by @catherineharbour #milkcurve"

Figure 89. Body Shaming; Photograph by @littleblackfox; 20 December 2015; Instagram, Inc.;

"littleblackfox: @artsnthrashh (my best friend □□□) I posted this photo on Twitter and in under

24 hours it got 6,500 likes and 2,700 retweets and guess what? 75% of the mentions and retweets

were from males hating on my body. I made the caption "Confidence is sexy" and these were

some of the comments (made from males) - "Confidence is sexy? So is cardio", "Did you get

mauled by a tiger? Wtf happened to your stomach?", "Disgusting", "Looking at this made me

want to throw up", "No, this is not confidence this is ugly" and "Look, an obese Adam Family

member". The funny thing is, even though they hated on my photos, they still retweeted them /

gave them attention. I've been using social media since I was 14, so I've learned to not let

negative, rude comments about me / my body get to me. But wow, I cannot believe that people

can be that rude. And males wonder why woman need feminism so much....? Hating on someone / bringing people down because of their appearance makes you a shitty person, period. This is what I've learned- people only hate on other people because those people have what this person wants.. People who hate on people will disagree with this but when it comes down to it, it's the truth. I'm not going to apologize for being confident. Last time I checked, confidence IS a good thing and it IS sexy. It's sad that people get offended by a strong, confident woman who loves herself. And; I'm so sorry that society has ruined your minds and outlook on beauty, making it so you only think you can think a certain body type is considered 'attractive'. I hate to break it to you but we aren't photoshopped in real life (if you can't look in the mirror and realize that, you have another thing coming). EVERY ONE OF US WOMAN (and men) have stretch marks, cellulite and fat - which are all NATURAL 'flaws'. If you think we're all photoshopped like the woman in magazines that you drool over, you're sadly mistaken. We have flaws and we're all hot. Deal with it. I want to ask one thing to the people who hate on me and my body - Why does my confidence offend you? Is it really that scary that chubby girls are confident? Confidence is for EVERYONE, not just runway models and gym rats."

Figure 90. Fab Fit Fun promotion; Photograph by @biggalyoga; 18 April 2016; Instagram Inc.;
"Sponsored by @fabfitfun Tons of goodies in this adorable Spring Fab Fit Fun box I got! I loves
me some goodies! Totally stoked for the bath bombs in here, they smell sooooo good! There's
also this interesting mat strap that I tried out on one of my big mats. It slides easily on and feels
pretty good, even though it's pretty stretchy. Can't wait to try out all the other products as well. I
don't really have a green thumb so I hope that these herbs don't die on me hahaha □. If you guys
would like to try out a box for yourself you can use the code 'Yoga10' for 10% off your purchase
at www.fabfitfun.com #fabfitfun #fffpartner"

Figure 91. Personal Book Promotion; Photograph by @anastasiaamour; 13 November 2015;

Instagram Inc; "YOU GUYS, IT'S HERE! Go check it out on the link in my bio ☺ □□□ Thank

you all so much for your support in this, I'm crying and tingling and just a nervous ball of

excitement and terror... I'm all over the place right now and I just can't believe that this is finally

real □ #InsideOut #FearlessBodyConfidence"

Figure 92. Yoga Classes; Photograph by @biggalyoga; 13 June 2016; Instagram Inc.; "Hey everyone, if you are in the the Bay Area, I will be teaching again at Curvy Girl Lingerie May 22nd! Happy to bring back the Yoga for All Bodies class! It doesn't matter what size, so come on over to Curvy Girl Lingerie to practice some yoga! Check info for more info! Due to the limited spaces, only 12 places are open so grab a spot! Check out the direct link in my description to sign up! http://goo.gl/ArN3Bh"

Figure 93. EveryBody Yoga bundle sale; Photograph by @mynameisjessamyn; 3 February 2016;

Instagram Inc.; Hey ya'll! I've put my @codyapp EveryBody Yoga bundle on sale for the next

48 hours! Each day I interact with new Every Body Yoga students who have grown their yoga

practice in ways they never expected. It is incredible to see how the transformational quality of

this program has made students across the globe expand their physical and emotional horizons.

This 60-day series is all about helping you establish a rewarding yoga practice so that you can

transfer your revealed confidence, commitment and inner strength to your life outside the mat!

With over 7 hours of instructional and class content, the purpose of this series is to help you feel

comfortable in your skin, no matter your size or age or life experience. Yoga is meant for

EVERYBODY, and I can tell you that the impact yoga has across all areas of your life is both

beautiful and profound! I can't wait for you to join me and over 1,000 EveryBody Yoga

students- click the link in my Instagram header for more info! Here's the link, @ravenhaired12:

codyapp.com/everybody Leggings-@lineagewear Top- @vonscher_active (PS HELLO I LOVE

YOU to all my @codyapp students, and especially my #mynameisnola+ @codyapp students. The fact that I get to practice with you guys both online AND in real life is a true dream come true. Plus, all of y'all are on that neat, tight, & fiery vinyasa game and it makes your yoga mama SO EFFING PROUD AND HAPPY FOR YOU! Keep it up, warriors!"

Figure 94. Sponsorship for Flat Tummy Tea; Photograph by @biggalyoga; 2 November 2015; Instagram, Inc.; "@flattummytea Sponsored Post Let me just start this off by being as real as I can. This is just tea. You know what tea is? It's leaf and/or flower water. I wouldn't consider myself a tea snob, but I like to try different teas for taste or if it has a benificial properties. I'm definitely into making myself feel better through digestive drinks. I'm only interested in if this actually does something with "bloating". Which I have no fucking clue what that really means. Though I have drank tea to see if it would help with arthritis before. Which I'm still not really sure, but it was damn good tea. This tea tastes good. Very minty tea.The big issue with this tea is mainly the name. "Flat" is the big trigger word that people assume it deals with weight loss. I

will tell you now that you can drink this tea everyday and your weight loss probably won't be affected. Again it's leaf water. It's not a miracle drink. With anything, even yoga, there is no one thing that will make you magically lose weight. Another issue is that there was no label of ingredients of what is actually in the tea. I like to know what specifically is in my teas because I can be picky. I will give this tea a chance though and see how I feel at the end of the month."

Figure 95. Flat Tummy Tea Sponsorship; Photograph by @mynameisjessamyn; 1 October 2015; Instagram, Inc.; It should surprise no one that I've been lazy about drinking my @flattummytea-I'm so bad at sticking to "plans". I've only ever been marginally successful at sticking to any dietary regulations- if anything, trying a new "plan" just makes me end up at Cook-Out slamming cheesecake milkshakes even faster than I would've been otherwise. Even being the laziest tea drinker in town, I'll tell you one thing: I am way more regular than I was before I started drinking this stuff. Yes, regular. I'm talking about #2. If you feel weird talking about the

other thing we all do besides pee, it's probably time to skip over this post. But before you do, let me remind you that literally everyone reading this post right now goes #2. So it's cool, no one will tell on you. Anyway, that's a good thing, right? I mean, my mom has been heralding the benefits of colonics for ages. However, my reaction to this increased regularity has been to drink way more water than usual- which reminds me that we're supposed to be drinking water to do the job that this tea does. So maybe if I just drink more water, I can give the detox tea game a rest? HOWEVER, if I'm being completely honest, I do feel a lot less bloated than I did last week. This is a god send because, while I've been practicing and teaching yoga more than I ever have in my life, I've actually ALSO consumed more fast food in the last three months than I did in the seven months before it (#travelworklife, amiright?) Anyway, part of why I was down to give this tea a try is because I feel a sticky saline layer on top of my skin that makes me feel like a human french fry. It has nothing to do with my fat body- I still love the way I feel in my skin. But I don't like feeling like a french fry, so it's nice to get a little relief this week. Whatever, it's probably a combo of tea+ water + unspoken other factors. but it's definitely worth mentioning. Sports bra- @fullbeautystyle This post sponsored by @flattummytea, but all opinions are my own."

Figure 96. Fashion Lookbook; Photograph by @chooselifewarrior; 5 July 2016; Instagram, Inc.;"LOOKBOOK LIVE NOW! So very excited to announce my @lisakerrdesigns inspired LOOKBOOK is now live on my channel. Link is in bio. I'm really proud of this video. Worked hard to get it done. Outfits from left to right - 'Sunday Brunch' 'Fleetwood Winter' 'Inner City Boho' 'Summer Daze' ▢. Check it out don't forget to like, subscribe and comment what outfit you like the best! #lisakerrdesigns #chooselifewarrior #lookbook #ootd #plusootd #plussizefashion #plussizestyle ▢ALSO I HAVE A 15% OFF CODE FOR YALL FOR ANY LISA KERR DESIGNS 'CLIFEWARRIOR'▢ Go bananas I loved the items I received from Lisa, also there will be a review up later this week regarding the items too!"

Figure 97. Lipstick sponsorship; Photograph by @chooselifewarrior; 15 August 2016; Instagram, Inc.; "LIVE NOW - See me review and try on some of the #nyxsuedelipstick & #nyxlingerieliquidlipstick By @nyxcosmetics @nyxcosmetics_australia and Savvy lipliners by

@db_cosmetics. Not paid or sent product, genuine self brought reviews. Current LIVE on my

YouTube. My YouTube is linked in my bio, don't forget to like & subscribe. Any requests for

videos of any kind let me know below. I love you all xoxo #chooselifewarrior #youtube #nyx

#nyxlingerie #nyxliquidsuede #nyxmattelipstick #review #mattelipstick #matte #lipsticks"

Figure 98. Dear Scantily Diversity Photo Shoot; Photography by @bodyposipanda; 7 July 2016;

Instagram, Inc.; "Surrounded by megababes for @dearscantilly's campaign ☐☐ I had such a

brilliant day strutting my stuff for this diversity shoot, and I'm honoured to have been part of

something celebrating so many kinds of women we rarely see being celebrated in the media.

Transgender women (the glorious @stephaniaeffie), disabled women (the badass

@reallifepirate), women with alopecia (the wonderful @instabytess), and curvy anorexia

conquerors (yours truly ☐). As well as fabulous plus size bloggers @fullerfigurefullerbust and

279

@gracefvictory ☐ @makeupfairypro and @lottelouisewilliams and I'll be honest - we still need more diversity than this, we need ALL sizes, ALL skin colours, ALL abilities, ALL ages, ALL genders to be truly represented, we can always do better. But what Curvy Kate created here gives representation to so many women who've probably never seen themselves reflected in the mainstream fashion industry before, and that's a beautiful thing."

Figure 99. Addressing the use of Photoshop; Photography by @bodyposipanda; 10 July 2016; Instagram, Inc.; "Because if you're gonna see the posed, polished, professional version, I'm sure as hell gonna make sure you see this one too. Embracing my belly rolls, celebrating my softness. I know the world wants me to value myself higher in one of these pictures, to worship what's 'flattering' and be ashamed of what's not. Well I refuse to feel that shame. I'm worthy of self love either way, and I choose to see the beauty in both. Same body, same underwear, same person

underneath - that's the only part that really matters. I'm wearing @dearscantilly by @curvykate

for #thenewsexy campaign"