

EMBODIMENT AND
REPRESENTATIONS OF BEAUTY

ADVANCES IN GENDER RESEARCH

Series Editors: Vasilikie Demos and
Marcia Texler Segal

Recent Volumes:

- Volume 14: Interactions and Intersections of Gendered Bodies at Work, at Home, and at Play – Edited by Marcia Texler Segal, 2010
- Volume 15: Analyzing Gender, Intersectionality, and Multiple Inequalities: Global, Transnational, and Local Contexts – Edited by Esther Ngan-Ling Chow, Marcia Texler Segal and Lin Tan, 2011
- Volume 16: Social Production and Reproduction at the Interface of Public and Private Spheres – Edited by Marcia Texler Segal, Esther Ngan-Ling Chow and Vasilikie Demos, 2012
- Volume 17: Notions of Family: Intersectional Perspectives – Edited by Marla H. Kohlman, Dana B. Krieg and Bette J. Dickerson, 2013
- Volume 18A: Gendered Perspectives on Conflict and Violence: Part A – Edited by Marcia Texler Segal and Vasilikie Demos, 2013
- Volume 18B: Gendered Perspectives on Conflict and Violence: Part B – Edited by Marcia Texler Segal and Vasilikie Demos, 2014
- Volume 19: Gender Transformation in the Academy – Edited by Marcia Texler Segal and Vasilikie Demos, 2014
- Volume 20: At the Center: Feminism, Social Science and Knowledge – Edited by Vasilikie Demos and Marcia Texler Segal, 2015
- Volume 21: Gender and Race Matter: Global Perspectives on Being a Woman – Edited by Shaminder Takhar, 2016
- Volume 22: Gender and Food: From Production to Consumption and After – Edited by Marcia Texler Segal and Vasilikie Demos, 2016
- Volume 23: Discourses of Gender and Sexual Inequality: The Legacy of Sanra L. Bem – Edited by Marcia Texler Segal and Vasilikie Demos, 2016
- Volume 24: Gender Panic, Gender Policy – Edited By Vasilikie Demos and Marcia Texler Segal, 2017
- Volume 25: Marginalized Mothers, Mothering from the Margins – Edited by Tiffany L. Taylor and Katrina R. Bloch, 2018
- Volume 26: Gender and the Media: Women's Places – Edited by Marcia Texler Segal and Vasilikie Demos, 2019
- Volume 27: Gender and Practice: Insights from the Field – Edited by Vasilikie Demos, Marcia Texler Segal and Kristy Kelly, 2019
- Volume 28: Gender and Practice: Knowledge, Policy, Organizations – Edited by Vasilikie Demos, Marcia Texler Segal and Kristy Kelly, 2020
- Volume 29: Advances in Women's Empowerment: Critical Insight from Asia, Africa and Latin America – Edited by Araceli Ortega Diaz and Marta Barbara Ochman, 2020
- Volume 30: Gender and Generations: Continuity and Change – Edited by Vasilikie Demos and Marcia Texler Segal, 2021
- Volume 31: Producing Inclusive Feminist Knowledge: Positionalities and Discourses in the Global South – Edited by Akosua Adomako Ampofo and Josephine Beoku-Betts , 2021
- Volume 32: Advances in Trans Studies: Moving Toward Gender Expansion and Trans Hope – Edited by Austin H. Johnson, Baker A. Rogers and Tiffany Taylor, 2022
- Volume 33: Gender Visibility and Erasure – Edited by Marcia Texler Segal and Vasilikie Demos, 2022
- Volume 34: People, Spaces and Places in Gendered Environments – Edited by Vasilikie Demos and Marcia Texler Segal, 2024

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Miriam Adelman
Universidade do Paraná, Brazil

Franca Bimbi
University of Padua, Italy

Max Greenberg
Boston University, USA

Marla Kohlman
Kenyon College, USA

Preethi Krishnan
O. P. Jindal Global University, India

Chika Shinohara
*Momoyama Gakuin University,
(St Andrew's University), Japan*

Shaminder Takhar
London South Bank University, UK

Tiffany Taylor
Kent State University, USA

This page intentionally left blank

ADVANCES IN GENDER RESEARCH VOLUME 35

EMBODIMENT AND REPRESENTATIONS OF BEAUTY

EDITED BY

ESTHER HERNÁNDEZ-MEDINA

Pomona College, USA

and

SHARINA MAÍLLO-POZO

University of Georgia, USA



United Kingdom – North America – Japan
India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited
Emerald Publishing, Floor 5, Northspring, 21-23 Wellington Street, Leeds LS1 4DL.

First edition 2024

Editorial matter and selection © 2024 Esther Hernández-Medina and Sharina Maillo-Pozo.
Individual chapters © 2024 The authors.
Published under exclusive licence by Emerald Publishing Limited.

Reprints and permissions service

Contact: www.copyright.com

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without either the prior written permission of the publisher or a licence permitting restricted copying issued in the UK by The Copyright Licensing Agency and in the USA by The Copyright Clearance Center. Any opinions expressed in the chapters are those of the authors. Whilst Emerald makes every effort to ensure the quality and accuracy of its content, Emerald makes no representation implied or otherwise, as to the chapters' suitability and application and disclaims any warranties, express or implied, to their use.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-83797-994-3 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-83797-993-6 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-83797-995-0 (Epub)

ISSN: 1529-2126 (Series)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

CONTENTS

<i>About the Editors</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>About the Contributors</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>Series Editors' Preface</i>	<i>xiii</i>
The Power of Beauty: Intersectional Feminist Approaches to its Embodiment and Representation <i>Esther Hernández-Medina and Sharina Maíllo-Pozo</i>	<i>1</i>
Chapter 1 <i>Mamá Fit</i> Goes to El Salvador: Fitness in a Transnational Society <i>Noelle K. Brigden</i>	<i>13</i>
Chapter 2 Shifting Perceptions of Women's Weight <i>Courtney Dress</i>	<i>33</i>
Chapter 3 Doing Beauty, Doing Health: Embodied Emotion Work in Women Cancer Patients' Narratives of Hair Loss <i>Marley Olson</i>	<i>55</i>
Chapter 4 "How Do They Really See Me?": The Sexual Politics of Multiracial Desirability <i>Julia Chin</i>	<i>73</i>
Chapter 5 Body Image and Sexual Pleasure in Women and Genderqueer Individual's Sexual Experiences <i>Spencier R. Ciaralli</i>	<i>91</i>
Chapter 6 I Don't Wear Black: Professional Muslim Workers and Personal Dress Code <i>Salam Aboulhassan</i>	<i>117</i>
Chapter 7 Millennial Agency and Liberation within Black American Beauty Standards <i>Jaleesa Reed</i>	<i>137</i>

Chapter 8 Ballet Is [White] Woman: Anti-Black Standards of Beauty Within Ballet <i>Sekani L. Robinson</i>	159
Chapter 9 Consuming Beauty, Constructing Blackness: A Constructivist Grounded Theory Analysis of Racialized Gendered Embodiment Practices Through Shampoo Product Descriptions <i>Shameika D. Daye</i>	177
Chapter 10 <i>Mulata</i> in Repose <i>Jennifer Báez</i>	197

ABOUT THE EDITORS

Esther Hernández-Medina is Assistant Professor of Latin American Studies and Gender & Women's Studies at Pomona College. She is a feminist academic, public policy expert, and activist from the Dominican Republic. Her research and teaching revolve around the question of how historically marginalized groups such as women, racial, ethnic, and sexual minorities are able to change public policy in their favor. She has studied the Dominican feminist movement and citizen participation in urban policies in Mexico City, São Paulo, and the Dominican Republic. She was a Humanities Studio Faculty Fellow (2021–22, and 2023–24) at Pomona College, and Open Education Faculty Fellow (2019) at the Claremont Colleges Center for Teaching and Learning and the Claremont Colleges Library. Her most recent publication is the book chapter “The Right to A Complete Life: The Struggles of the Dominican Feminist Movement” in *Women's Rights in Movement: Dynamics of Feminist Change in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Springer, editors Inés M. Pousadela and Simone Bohn). She is also co-founder of the feminist group Tertulia Feminista Magaly Pineda in the Dominican Republic.

Sharina Mañillo-Pozo is Assistant Professor of Latinx studies in the Department of Romance Languages at the University of Georgia. She specializes in Latinx and Caribbean literature and culture, with special attention to the cultural production of the Dominican Republic and its diaspora in the United States. Some of her research papers and reviews have appeared in various edited volumes, mid-high tier academic journals. She was a Dominican Studies Fellow (2016–2017), Lilly Teaching Fellow (2019–2021), Willson Center for the Humanities Fellow (2020–2021), and UGA Teaching Academy Fellow (2022–2023). In 2021, she was the recipient of the Sandy Beaver Excellence in Teaching Award at the University of Georgia. She is working on two book manuscripts: *Beyond Borderlands. Popular Music in Contemporary Dominican/Dominicananyork Literature* and *Tracing the Legacy of Camila Henríquez Ureña Through Translation and Beyond* (co-authored with Dr Anne Roschelle).

This page intentionally left blank

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Salam Aboulhassan is a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI, USA. Her current research focuses on the experiences of Muslims within US workplaces and was awarded the National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Improvement grant.

Jennifer Báez is Assistant Professor of Art History in the School of Art, Art History, and Design at the University of Washington. She specializes in the visual, material, and religious culture of Latin America and the African diaspora under the global Spanish empire. She received her PhD in Art History from Florida State University, where she taught courses in museum studies and the history of African art.

Noelle K. Brigden, PhD, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at Marquette University. Her research and teaching interests include gender, human security, international relations, borders, transnationalism, violence, the politics of the body, trauma, fieldwork ethics, and political ethnography. Her book, *The Migrant Passage: Clandestine Journeys from Central America* (Cornell University Press, 2018), won the Yale Ferguson Award.

Julia Chin earned a BA in Sociology with distinction from UC Santa Barbara in 2021. She now works at Over Zero, an NGO which focuses on identity-based and political violence prevention. She is a contributor to the University of Georgia Press edited volume, *Books Through Bars* (2024).

Spencier R. Ciaralli, PhD, is Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology, Augustana University, USA. They work in the areas of sexual behavior, gender, and sexuality, as well as medical sociology. Their publications appear in journals such as *Women's Reproductive Health* and *Consumption Markets & Culture*.

Shameika D. Daye, MPA, is Doctoral candidate in the Department of Sociology, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida, USA. Working at the intersection of race, gender, and embodiment of Black women, she explores how Black women navigate the politics of identity, authenticity, and beauty through the lens of consumerism and the workplace.

Courtney Dress is a Doctoral candidate in the Department of Sociology and Criminology at Kent State University, USA. She studies inequalities, focusing on issues of race and gender, as well as sexuality/asexuality. Her dissertation examines racial, gender, and intersectional disparities in Computer Science education.

Marley Olson, PhD, is an Instructor of Sociology at Walla Walla Community College, Washington, USA. She earned her PhD in Sociology at the University of Colorado Boulder specializing in gender, medicine, health, and disability. Her research examines nonvisible disabilities and contested illnesses, with a focus on gender disparities.

Jaleesa Reed, PhD, is Assistant Professor in the Department of Human Centered Design at Cornell University, USA. Her research focuses on the intersections of beauty culture, identity, and place informed by human geography, feminist studies, and merchandising in the fashion and beauty industries.

Sekani L. Robinson is an Assistant Professor at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona in the Sociology Department. She earned her PhD in Sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her research focuses on race, gender, culture, embodiment, sport, and class.

SERIES EDITORS' PREFACE

We welcome this extensive focus on embodiment and representation to our *Advances in Gender Research* series. The guest editors and contributors from the United States, El Salvador, and the Dominican Republic take intersectional and interdisciplinary approaches to the body and its representation. The research settings are varied from the ballet and the gym to the college campus and media. The authors demonstrate that beauty varies not only with gender, race, ethnicity, class, body configuration, and location but also with one's perception of self and others. The impacts of stereotypes and European norms are evident in everything from the clothing choices of Muslim office workers to the self-images of mixed-race women and non-binary individuals in the dating scene, as is the importance of self-care in the face of such symbolic violence. Hair is a focus not only for women losing theirs during cancer treatment but also for Black women shopping for haircare products and ballerinas. A focus on weight and body type occurs across chapters and countries as well. We hope readers will come away from the volume with new definitions of beauty and a new understanding of embodiment.

Vasilikie Demos, University of Minnesota, Morris, USA
Marcia Texler Segal, Indiana University Southeast, USA

This page intentionally left blank

THE POWER OF BEAUTY: INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST APPROACHES TO ITS EMBODIMENT AND REPRESENTATION

Esther Hernández-Medina^a and Sharina Maíllo-Pozo^b

^a*Latin American Studies and Gender and Women's Studies, Pomona College, USA*

^b*Department of Romance Languages, The University of Georgia, USA*

ABSTRACT

Contributions to this volume showcase the current state of gender research as it relates to the embodiment and representation of beauty. In particular, the authors highlight a more open-ended concept of beauty that goes beyond esthetics. The authors call our attention to the fact that beauty definitions and standards in any given society closely reflect the distribution of power in it. For this purpose, the authors in this volume share findings of research and conducted in multiple sites in the United States (i.e., Southern California, the Midwest, the Northwest, New York City, Salt Lake City, Houston, Boston, and Washington, DC), El Salvador, and the Dominican Republic. Contributors also use a variety of qualitative and quantitative methodologies to expand notions of beauty and its embodiment across diverse areas and experiences. The authors ask and invite us to ask ourselves how race, class, disability, gender identity or sexual orientation, and other dimensions of inequality inform our definitions of what beauty is and is not. They exhort us to interrogate who defines who and what is beautiful and why. Finally, rather than being problem-oriented, the premise of each study is to effect collective change in the ways we construe, see, represent, and embody beauty.

Keywords: Beauty standards; race; gender; disability; gender identity; body size

Embodiment and Representations of Beauty

Advances in Gender Research, Volume 35, 1–11

Copyright © 2024 by Esther Hernández-Medina and Sharina Maíllo-Pozo

Published under exclusive licence by Emerald Publishing Limited

ISSN: 1529-2126/doi:10.1108/S1529-21262024000035001

Contributions to this volume highlight a more open-ended concept of beauty that goes beyond esthetics. They call our attention to the fact that beauty definitions and standards in any given society closely reflect the distribution of power in it. The authors ask and invite us to ask ourselves how race, class, disability, gender identity or sexual orientation, and other dimensions of inequality inform our definitions of what beauty is and is not. They encourage us to interrogate who defines who and what is beautiful and why. In a time of global political lethargy where public dialog is mostly centered on collective frustration, painful events, and overall disillusionment, the chapters of this volume foreground alternative discussions on beauty that remind us of what and who we are as people and bring us back to our humanity. Borrowing from West's (1993) reflections on race in America, each chapter of *Embodiment and Representations of Beauty* guides us through the process of learning "a new language of empathy and compassion" (p. 8) across different geographical spaces. The research sites include multiple sites in the United States (i.e., Southern California, the Midwest, the Northwest, New York City, Salt Lake City, Houston, Boston, and Washington, DC), El Salvador, and the Dominican Republic. The authors also use a variety of qualitative and quantitative methodologies to expand notions of beauty and its embodiment across diverse areas and experiences.

The chapters in this volume use what C. Wright Mills called the sociological imagination. Wright Mills proposed this concept to help the public at large (not only sociologists) make sense of the uncertain world around them. He defined it as "a quality of mind that will help them to use information and develop reason in order to achieve lucid summations of what is going on in the world and what may be happening within themselves" (Wright Mills, 2016 [2000, 1959], p. 3). The sociological imagination allows us to understand any phenomenon (a date, a microchip, or a religious ceremony) by looking at the general patterns of the society they are part of (for instance, gender roles, the predominance of Western technology, or people's need for shared meaning and symbols).

ON BEAUTY

One of the most illuminating aspects of the studies in this volume is the centering on an inclusive cultural history of beauty that transcends and disrupts US- and Eurocentric beauty standards, especially as they relate to race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality, body image, illness, and new technologies. Through an interdisciplinary approach, the pieces in this volume evince multiple approaches to the understanding of beauty representations and embodiment in popular culture, fitness culture, print and social media, beauty markets, professional environments, and everyday life.

In this vein, the pieces in *Embodiment and Representations of Beauty* posit that beauty "is not a frivolous concept nor practice" (Havlin & Báez, 2018, p. 13). Following the footsteps of and in dialog with the 2018 issue of *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly* co-edited by Natalie Havlin and Jillian Báez, the 10 chapters comprising this volume reclaim beauty "by unraveling hegemonic normativities and imagining new liberations through art [and real life experiences]" and

provoke new considerations of beauty as a critical entry point to understanding not only the material and ideological structures of violence and inequity produced through the matrix of hetero-cis patriarchy and racial capitalism but also the radical potential of mobilizing beauty to imagine and create new liberatory practices. (p. 22)

Beauty and Power

The authors challenge and expand our understandings of beauty in a manner similar to the way in which Baldwin (1993 [1963]) and [Camp \(2015\)](#) challenged distorted understandings of it based on race and class. In fact, many of the chapters reminded us of Baldwin's own expansion of the idea of beauty, understanding it not only as a dimension present in all bodies but also as a moral quality of dignity and resilience against impossible odds (Baldwin, 1993 [1963]). He found beauty even in indignity. He found it, for instance, in how working-class Black people swallowed their pride to be able to navigate the white world of their time in order to be able to build their own.¹

The connection between power and beauty is especially visible in dehumanizing social institutions like slavery. Despite Europeans having been both fascinated and repulsed by Africans at the beginning of the fateful contact between the continents, [Camp \(2015\)](#) calls our attention to the fact that: "It was within the context of modern slavery in the Americas that African and black bodies came to be seen as singularly and uniformly ugly" (p. 681). As Anibal [Quijano \(2000\)](#) famously argued, the very idea of race as "the codification of the differences between conquerors and conquered" (p. 533) was a new invention that European empires created specifically in the process of colonizing the Americas. Classifying entire groups of people based on phenotypic features was necessary to coerce free labor from them in the context of the "new global model of labor control" ([Quijano, 2000](#), p. 535) the European powers created.

Moreover, María Elena [Cepeda \(2018\)](#) contends that "the machinations of racial capital – a bodily resource attached to gradients of skin color and phenotype grounded in existing racial hierarchies – proves particularly potent in former European colonies and nations that experience a significant U.S. presence" (p. 125). Along these lines, Alok Vaid-Menon emphasizes that "[b]eauty can be a violent system: one which sanctions whose lives matter and whose do not" ([Berne et al., 2018](#), p. 244) based on how useful they are to capitalism as Malcolm Shanks also reminds us ([Berne et al., 2018](#)). [Hernández \(2018\)](#) makes a similar critique while examining the commodification of the deaths of poor Mexican women in Ciudad Juárez by US-based makeup companies and asks: "How can one woman become beautiful through the death of another?"

Beauty and the Body

Bodies continue to be the central location for defining beauty precisely because of the centrality of sight as a source of knowledge and the obsession with categorization the Western world inherits from the Enlightenment and continues to reproduce today ([Camp, 2015](#)). This is the case particularly in relation to race as it was "through hierarchical visual representations of human bodily difference that the social category of race came into existence" ([Camp, 2015](#), p. 680). Such European

hierarchies were also highly gendered yet with the purpose of ungendering the female Black body as “voluptuous and unwomanly” in order to justify its exploitation as slave labor using the construct of “the thick black woman” (Gentles-Peart, 2018, p. 200). Moreover, they have survived through “controlling images” of Black women like the mammy or the Jezebel as Patricia Hills Collins famously argued and Gentles-Peart (2018) found in her research about English-speaking Caribbean women in New York City. In this volume, the chapter by Sekani L. Robinson showcases similar results as controlling images like the Jezebel, the highly sexualized Black woman, are still used to marginalize Black female dancers in ballet culture.

More broadly, scholars and activists alike have shown how marginalized communities that do not conform to dominant social expectations about race, gender, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other identity markers have “been positioned to be in conflict with our bodies” in the words of Patricia Berne, co-founder of the disability justice Sins Invalid collective (Berne et al., 2018, p. 241). For instance, the chapter by Courtney Dress in this volume shows how pervasive and acceptable anti-fat biases still are, particularly when directed toward women. In a similar manner, Noelle Bridgen demonstrates how the new standard for feminine beauty related to a fit body in El Salvador reinforces traditional gender roles and creates a market for thinning products. Conversely, Berne et al. (2018) advocate for a more holistic understanding that resonates with Baldwin’s idea of beauty as dignity: “a beauty based in our integrity, our lineages, our aesthetics, in self-possession of our sexualities and being desirable to ourselves; a beauty that radiates from our hearts, not from symmetrical bone structure” (p. 241); an invitation the authors in this volume clearly accepted.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, an increased focus on the body became even more crucial as potential explanations about human behavior moved from emphasizing environmental factors to internal ones. As Camp (2015) highlights in her seminal article about the history of the relationship between blackness and beauty:

This modern rethinking of race in ever more biological and physiological terms deepened the importance of looks. For if race arose from and was reflected in human physiognomy, physical appearance did more than embellish biologically distinct “varieties” of mankind: *beauty and ugliness defined one way of thinking about the world’s people and human inequality.* [p. 682; emphasis added]

Moreover, the “body is also both a medium of culture and a metaphor for culture” (Anastasia, 2010, p. 17) as it reflects and recreates the social norms of its time. In this sense, the body “can also be viewed as a locus of social control” (Anastasia, 2010, p. 17) following the works by Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault. A social control that is reinforced through the daily practices of those involved since their participation in “beauty practices has played a crucial role in their embodied experience of femininity” (Vanderberg, 2018, p. 170) and those practices vary greatly over time. Nonetheless, as Vanderberg (2018) also reminds us, not paying attention to individuals’ agency and participation in manipulating their bodies while enacting beauty practices can end up overlooking “the capacity of individuals and groups to resist, challenge, and expand beauty norms, as well as the potential for women to engage in beauty practices as part of an expression of

selfhood and individual identity” (p. 173). The centrality of the body in the constant negotiation of these norms is evident in all the chapters herein, for instance, in those by Jaleesa Reed on millennials’ perspectives about Black standards of beauty, Sekani L. Robinson’s chapter on the anti-Black standards of beauty prevalent in ballet, Julia Chin’s analysis of the desirability of multiracial people, and Shameika D. Daye’s take on the important role of Black hair products.

Beauty and Rebellion

The chapters in this volume show that, even when we understand beauty in the narrow sense of physical representation, it still holds possibilities for agency and rebellion. Similar to [White’s \(2018\)](#) exploration of makeup online tutorials’ potential to empower women echoing Lorde’s definition of self-care as “an act of political warfare,”² Salam Aboulhassan analyzes the ways in which Muslim women strategically use clothing to navigate the tensions between the very different yet equally gendered understandings of beauty and honor in their two cultures. The study also reveals how Muslim women and men negotiate the biases and unspoken rules concerning how they, as racialized subjects, should look in the workplace. Along the same lines, Marley Olson examines how white breast cancer survivors redefine their relationships with their own physicality and self-presentation in an attempt to retain some degree of control in their profoundly disrupted lives. And similar to [Gentles-Peart’s \(2018\)](#) analysis of the voluptuous Black female body as a disruptor of beauty standards based on whiteness, Shameika D. Daye’s chapter shows how Black hair products still mirror Eurocentric beauty standards yet allow Black women to embody their own definitions of beauty.

Indeed, women and gender non-conforming individuals can use beauty to challenge societal norms and other people’s attempt to control their destinies and their bodies. For instance, [Anastasia \(2010\)](#) found that the women she interviewed wore tattoos as a way to increase their own self-confidence and sense of beauty. However, they also did it to challenge collective expectations related to beauty and femininity and what is considered appropriate for women to do with their bodies. In their own words, they didn’t want to be “placed into a box” and wanted to be free to be “themselves” instead. In fact, the main result from [Anastasia’s \(2010\)](#) study was that her participants held an “entirely different definition of beauty than society’s ideal” (p. 30). We found a similar theme in several of the chapters in this volume. Nonetheless, Spencier R. Ciaralli’s chapter in this volume also highlights that breaking away from narrow and patriarchal standards of beauty is a complicated venture. Even the women and genderqueer people in Ciaralli’s study show ambivalence in attempting to do so when it comes to the connection between their body image and their sexual pleasure.

A similar level of complexity can be found in the relationship between beauty and race including a dimension that is less often studied: the perspectives of multiracial individuals in the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean as shown in Julia Chin’s and Jennifer Báez’s contributions. Julia Chin’s study argues that there is a gap in the studies of multiracial individuals and desirability. Rather than focusing on the perception of external groups, Chin examines how mixed-raced women and non-binary people perceive their own desirability. Through

an intersectional approach to mixed-race studies that consider race, sexuality, and gender, Chin shows the impact of these interactions on the sexual politics of dating for multiracial people. Jennifer Báez's intersectional approach to the historical misrepresentation of *mulatas* (half Black, half white women) shifts the conversation toward the ways mixed-race women do not question their desirability, rather they embrace their beauty, sensuality, and race. Through the analysis of Josefina Báez's *CarmenFotonovelArte* and performance pieces by Joiri Minaya, Báez argues that the *mulata* in the works of both Afro-Latina artists disrupts traditional constructions and misperceptions of beauty as they relate to mixed-race women, thus offering new pathways toward the liberation of Afro-Latinas.

CHAPTER DESCRIPTIONS

In “*Mamá Fit Goes to El Salvador: Fitness in a Transnational Society*,” Noelle K. Bridgen traces the racialized and gendered practices of fitness in El Salvador in a diasporic context by analyzing print and social media. Bridgen takes the *Mamá Fit* memes, other social media phenomena, and popular print media to trace the racialized and gendered practices in new fitness cultures in El Salvador. Bridgen argues that the word *fit* in English illustrates a crucial cultural change in conventional understandings of the body in a Spanish-speaking society. By charting the emergence of this new beauty and health norm in a transnational domain, Noelle examines the relationship between shifting patterns of gendered corporeal discipline and changes in El Salvador's location within the global political economy. She argues that fitness discourse in El Salvador has become a subtle but powerful conduit for coloniality during a renegotiation of the meaning of gender to fit a neoliberal reality. Grounded in feminist textual analysis, this chapter shows the role of mainstream media in constructing standard sexual politics as it pertains to the public presentation of female bodies and embodied beauty. Bridgen's piece demonstrates this politics of national rebranding through fit culture.

Courtney Dress' chapter “Shifting Perceptions of Women's Weight” presents the results of a quantitative online study on the ways in which people's ideas about women's weight are starting to change in the context of the US Midwest. Based on a sample of 320 mostly female, white and college educated respondents, the author found that anti-fat biases continue to be acceptable to the general public. Even though both thin and fat women were perceived less favorably than average weight women, fat women were perceived less favorably than both average and thin women. Interestingly, in a trend that seems to be consistent with the gendered dimensions of beauty examined in this volume, men were harsher than women in their evaluations of only fat women. As the author highlights in the chapter, her findings add to the emerging evidence that women's weight standards are in transition although not necessarily in favor of overweight women. The study also underscores the need for more extensive research on attitudes of people across the entire weight spectrum.

In “Doing Beauty, Doing Health: Embodied Emotion Work in Women Cancer Patients' Narratives of Hair Loss,” Marley Olson addresses the role of hair loss

in women's illness narratives of cancer using in-depth interviews with 16 white women in the US Northwest. Interviewees varied in age, marital status, diagnoses, and treatments yet all the women in the study went to great lengths to emotionally manage the effects of their appearance. By examining hair loss, a relatively less studied impact of cancer on women, Olson is able to analyze the features and depth of the emotion work these women engage in. As the author highlights in the chapter and confirmed in her findings, hair loss provokes an explicit and direct confrontation with the gender system and the complex dynamics underlying the accomplishment of proper femininity, including emotions and health. In particular, using Hochschild's concept of gendered emotion work, Olson found that women are taught to be emotion managers and prioritize others' wellness, yet they also must do emotion work on themselves when faced with a cancer diagnosis.

Julia Chin's "'How Do They Really See Me?': The Sexual Politics of Multiracial Desirability" focuses on the experiences of mixed-race women and non-binary people. Chin examines how multiraciality, sexuality, and gender affect self-perceptions of desirability among women and people who identify as non-binary of three multiracial combinations (Black/white, Asian/white, and Latinx/white) at a Southern California public university. The study demonstrates that for mixed-race women, situating into just one racial identity becomes a point of contention with romantic partners and themselves. Moreover, it shows the impact of racial expectations of others and the constant fetishization of mixed-race women and non-binary individuals on their confidence levels, self-esteem, and sense of belonging and authenticity. The findings of this study contribute to research on desirability and critical mixed-race studies. They also open dialogs about the possibility of mixed-race women finding joy through accepting aspects of their mixed-race identities or being open to dialog about their race with their partners in a positive light.

Spencer R. Ciaralli's chapter "Body Image and Sexual Pleasure in Women and Genderqueer Individual's Sexual Experiences" analyzes the relationship between body image, sexual behavior, and pleasure among women and genderqueer or non-binary individuals who are all assigned-female-at-birth with 26 out of 30 participants identifying as LGBTQIA+. The author used a life history method, which highlighted participants' voices and used stories to draw out the social processes being discussed. Ciaralli also employed grounded theory methods in order to identify themes and concepts emerging directly from the data. The first finding points to the presence of genital panic among participants as they experienced anxiety regarding their bodies that impacted their fulfillment in sexual experiences. A related theme was the connection between genital panic and embodied racism, and the aspiration of thinness. Through a very detailed analysis of the data, and in particular of five life stories selected as a panoramic view of the rest, Ciaralli found that participants are both resisting notions of ideal feminine beauty, while reckoning with its tight hold on their actions. Even though they are aware of the patriarchal nature of impossible beauty standards, they often found themselves attempting to embody those standards.

In "I Don't Wear Black: Professional Muslim Workers and Personal Dress Code," Salam Aboulhassan analyzes qualitative data to examine the experiences

of Muslim women and men in diverse workplaces in the United States. Grounded in theories of orientalism and social identity, the study interrogates hegemonic representations of organizational power using the context of dress. It considers the interconnections between beauty, work esthetics, hegemonic structures, and systems of marginalization. Furthermore, Aboulhassan shows how Muslim women and men, as well as other racial/ethnic minorities, are marginalized in the workplace while also highlighting the negotiation strategies they use to fit in US work environments. The findings of the study showed gender discrepancies between Muslim men and women in US work settings. In the case of men, they could employ masculine practices to navigate anti-Muslim discourse and foster a sense of belonging at work. At the same time, women tend to face cultural backlash for appropriating Western styles considered immodest within immigrant-centered workplaces. Yet, the study also revealed that while working outside their community, women who wore hijabs emphasized their femininity through softer colors, makeup, or “unpinning” their veil to offset the visceral reaction to their hijab. In sum, this chapter demonstrates how the intersections of gender, religion, and workplace location affect how Muslim men and women dress in their workplaces.

Jaleesa Reed’s “Millennial Agency and Liberation within Black American Beauty Standards” examines millennial Black women’s relationship with beauty standards in the United States. Through a quantitative analysis, Reed looks at how millennial Black women define Black, the United States, and millennial beauty standards. The findings reveal that participants described these three standards of beauty distinctly. Whereas US beauty was associated with mainstream media representation and Eurocentric features, millennial beauty standards were aligned with tolerance and political consciousness. Conversely, Black American beauty standards were described as an alternative to US beauty conventions and more accepting of the wide range of Black hair textures and skin hues present in the African diaspora. The study demonstrates that millennials value the representation of different gender, racial, and sexual identities in beauty while continuing to engage in beauty practices that require significant time and financial investment. In this sense, the findings showed that beauty can also be construed as a form of capital and a commodity that, at times, can express the interviewees’ creativity or a means to achieve professional success. Despite some of these contradictions, one thing is clear: millennials favor a Black American standard of beauty within their community.

Sekani L. Robinson’s chapter “Ballet Is [White] Woman: Anti-Black Standards of Beauty Within Ballet” examines the problematic relationship between race, gender, and beauty within the ballet industry. The author highlights the challenges that Black women experience and the anti-Blackness that takes place within the discipline due to enduring Eurocentric beauty standards. Robinson employs Patricia Hill Collins’ concept of controlling images to analyze the ways in which those associated with Black women limit the roles and opportunities available to them even today. By delving into the emphasis on hair texture, flesh-tone tights, pointe shoes, and the racist history of the United States and ballet, the chapter demonstrates how ballet continues to discriminate against and marginalize Black