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When Celebrity Women Tweet: Examining Authenticity, Empowerment, and Responsibility in the Surveillance of Celebrity Twitter

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by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a textual analysis of stories in online celebrity news articles about celebrity women and their use of Twitter. It adds to the burgeoning discussion about gendered and racialized bodies online using scholarship from critical feminist, surveillance, and digital media studies. Throughout, my work attends to notions of authenticity and surveillance, examining how what I term a "call to authenticity"—the use of technologies of self-surveillance to verify "authentic" displays of the self—serves to animate contradictory post-feminist paradigms of femininity which function together to discipline and subjugate femininity. I ask: How do post-feminist questions of empowerment and responsibility become articulated when individuals operate the technologies that functionally surveil them? What are the particular implications of surveillance for gendered and racialized bodies when thought about in the context of a post-feminist culture? What might a focus on the relationship between surveillance and post-feminist logic uncover?

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

From breaking news of pregnancies, weight gain, or engagements, to speculating on the nature of mental breakdowns, the coverage of celebrity activity on Twitter by online gossip blogs and websites is a large part of the mediation of celebrities in today's media culture. According to the New York Times, more and more celebrities are skipping the tabloids altogether to break personal news and instead address their fans directly through the social networking site Twitter (Holson, 2010). The mainstream tabloid publications and gossip blogs have responded to this pattern by making celebrity tweets a main feature of their publications. Twitter offers these celebrity gossip publications access to information about the everyday activities of celebrities more quickly than ever before. Celebrities now seemingly have the power to carefully craft their own image outside of the paper tabloids on the grocery store magazine rack, but those same publications are capitalizing on the seemingly "real" stories of celebrities that Twitter enables access to.

My thesis is among the first critical feminist analyses of "celebrity Twitter." In this work, I engage the idea that Twitter aids in reconfiguring representations of women that seem more "real" because they are tweeting. I position the celebrity Twitter phenomenon as an important space for examining contemporary, popular sensibilities, as "the [white] celebrity body has become a central means through which contemporary social values are distributed, and through consumption, identification, and mimicry become hardwired into everyday practices of subjectivity" (Tyler & Bennett, 2010). I favor an understanding of celebrity as an unfixed, constructed practice, and

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understand celebrity gossip culture as one of the vehicles through which celebrity is produced. Marshall (1997) discusses celebrity as an "image" informed by the circulation of significant information in a variety of mediums (p. 58). Dyer (2004) adds to this conception, maintaining that celebrity is not confined to professional images of a person, rather, the label is open to everything publicly available about them (p. 2). More recently, scholars conceptualize celebrity as a "practice," and Marwick and boyd (2011) argue the practice of celebrity "involves ongoing maintenance of a fan base, performed intimacy, authenticity and access, and construction of a consumable persona" (p. 140). Celebrity is a fashioned, maintainable practice, and a cultural symbol.

Defining "Race" and "Gender"

I understand gender and race as culturally-determined social constructs, not essential or biologically determined. Taking the lead from Laura Hyun Yi Kang (2002), I consider how ideas about race and gender are constituted within the parameters of the text—how race and gender are constructed through "digital bodies" (boyd, 2007), and then how these are presented in popular gossip magazines. By "digital bodies," I mean online identities, including visible markers associated with "real" bodies, such as a profile picture or "twitpic" (a picture tweeted to followers by a user) that play a part in constructing a person's race or gender. Accordingly, in the following analysis chapters, as the women discussed in the articles are introduced, I will make note of their race and/or ethnicity to contextualize the visible markers that inevitably play a part in their construction, however, my analysis will hinge not on their ethnicity but the way their bodies are particularly "raced."

The work presented in my thesis posits that gendered and racialized bodies are produced by surveillance in the space of Twitter, with particular implications. Online social networks are particularly interesting and complex terrains on which to engage ideas about representation because

of their "democratic" visage. Joel Dinerstein (2006) defines American "technoculture" as possessing six qualities: progress, religion, modernity, Whiteness, masculinity, and the future. He thus extends James Carey's (2008) argument that communication technologies transmit information that is always encoded with beliefs. Carey adds that communication technologies globalize Western ideologies while they simultaneously diminish the amount of participation to discuss them critically (Carey, 2008, p. 136). Thanks to sites like Twitter, Wikipedia, and Youtube (among many others), scholars, media analysts, and pundits claim that online 'peer production' (Benkler, 2006) and the power of 'everybody' (Shirky, 2008) is democratizing economics and politics (Castells, 2007; Jenkins, 2006), as well as culture (Jenkins, 2006; Lessig, 2004). These technologies are often promoted as value-free. While certainly the idea that new and different types of people have access to audiences and modes of performance through various types of networked publics can be (and often is) powerful, transformative, and transgressive, I do not believe that networked modes of social interaction necessarily collapse our lived differences or liberate us from social inequalities that exist in our daily lives. On the contrary, I extend Lisa Nakamura and Peter Chow-White's (2012) argument that "the digital" is actually altering our understandings of race, gender, and other social markers by nurturing new types of inequalities.

Much work has been done previously on the issue of representation with respect to race and gender online (see Nakamura 2008 and Flanagan & Booth, 2002, for detailed reviews), and we know now that computers are not only undemocratic but also produce new forms of inequalities all the time. Accordingly, because the digital identities composed online extend beyond the screen, we must attend to how social markers operate as a set of parameters and affordances when under digital surveillance in ways that indicate we are not "beyond" race or "beyond" the necessity of feminism (Nakamura and Chow-White, 2012, p. 8; Flanagan & Booth, 2002, p. 15).

Twitter and Surveillance

As of May 2013, Twitter has amassed over 550 million users with over 58 million tweets broadcasting everyday ("Twitter Statistics, 2013). According to Nielsen Online, in 2009 Twitter reigned as the fastest-growing social network site in terms of unique visitors, increasing 579% between 2008 and 2009 ("Led by Facebook," 2010). In fact, Twitter is the most popular micro-blog tool among other sites like it and has been featured extensively in the public media; for instance, it is used daily by political campaigns, news organizations, personal communications, business communications, and for public outreach by non-profits and celebrities (Zhao & Rosson, 2009, p. 245). What started out as a very simple platform for podcasting has become a multi-million dollar real-time online social information network which connects users through short messages called "tweets" (Spector, 2010). Generally, people use Twitter as a way to communicate with the public, as well as stay connected to those they know. The interface restricts user posts to short messages (a maximum of 140 characters), or "tweets," which can be read by either the general Twitter public, or the user's "followers" (depending on the chosen privacy settings). Users can tweet photos from a mobile device directly to their twitter accounts, or link to photos uploaded to online photo editing engines such as Instagram. These photos stream on profiles just as regular tweets do, showing either the actual picture or providing a link to click to see the picture in a different page, depending on the device used to upload and the device used to view.

At the same rate that people appear to be integrating digital technologies such as Twitter into their daily cultural routines, their compliance with or lack of concern about surveillance increases (Viseu et al, 2004). Now, these technologies are purposefully situated as useful, friendly technologies in advertising and media discourses (Best, 2010; Browne in Dubrofsky and Magnet, forthcoming; Magnet, 2011). Social networking sites like Twitter, I argue, are a large part of this "friendly" discourse about technology, though the potential implications of the sort of surveillance they entail

has been missing in the academic conversation about the relationship between surveillance and issues of inequality.

Twitter has clearly established itself as a place for self-expression and popular interaction with individuals around the world, whether they are friends, celebrities, fans, or strangers. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to critically examine the vast expanse of Twitter as a media and cultural space. Rather, my focus is on how its function as a platform for both personal branding and public interaction offers the opportunity to think critically about its relationship to surveillance and issues of inequality by looking at its use by celebrities. I follow the call by Dubrofsky and Magnet (forthcoming) for a Feminist Surveillance Studies which brings to the fore the idea that various types of surveillance practices make oppression functional by observing and producing particular visualizations and sortings of gendered, racialized, classed, and sexualized bodies, to highlight the significance of Twitter in circulating contradictory and problematic post-feminist paradigms of femininity. I also look to highlight the privileging of the default "white" body that emerges in this space by discussing how women of color figure in these texts in ways that whiten the available gendered scripts of the women in the articles I examine.

Surveillance Studies and Digital Media Research

The body of scholarship on digital culture is vast. Earlier works focused on the fluid nature of digital identities and the liberatory potential of online interaction (Bruckman, 1992; Burris and Hoplight, 1996; Dickel, 1995; Poster, 1995; Turkle, 1995). More recently, scholars have turned to an investigation of issues regarding ethics and privacy concerns in social media spaces (Acland, 2009; boyd, 2008; Hookway, 2008; Jacobson, 1999; Lenhart & Madden, 2007; O'Neil, 2001; Tyma, 2007). Much SNS research has focused on Facebook: its geography and structure (Papacharissi, 2009), classroom and student use (Mazer, Murphy & Simonds, 2007; Stern & Taylor, 2007; Walther et al.,

2008), and its function in interpersonal relationships (Tong et al., 2008). Few scholars have engaged Facebook's implications for gender, race, and class. Notably, Nicole Cohen and Leslie Shade (2010) conducted focus group interviews addressing Facebook's gender-based commodification and surveillance practices, and danah boyd (2012) explored (also through focus group interviews) how a popular social networking site Myspace, and subsequently Facebook, became organized around and shaped by race and class for American teens.

Other scholars within the small body of critical work on digital media and surveillance have explored the critical intersections of race and digital media (Nakamura, 2002; Nakamura and Chow-White, 2012); racial identities in online games (Galloway, 2006); surveillance and software (Chun, 2006); the "digital divide" regarding race and technology access (Mack, 2001); the use of technology by youth of color and in schools (Everett, 2009; Watkins, 2009); hate groups online (Daniels, 2009); transnational identities and collaborative ownership in digital media technologies (Ghosh, 2005); and how biotechnologies are racialized (Nelson & Hwang, 2012; Chow-White, 2012; Duster, 2012). Each of these works examine how digital and surveillance technologies influence gendered, racial and cultural identities. My project also engages the burgeoning body of work on surveillance practices of televisual bodies (Andrejevic, 2004, 2006; Corner, 2002; Couldry, 2002; Dubrofsky, 2007; Gillespie, 2000; McGrath, 2004; Palmer, 2002; Pecora, 2002). Specifically regarding Twitter, research has focused quantitatively on showing trends in public opinion and behavior (Ahmad, 2010; Dumenco, 2011; Farhi, 2009; Greer and Clark, 2011; Lowery, 2009). Critically, Twitter has been left largely unexamined. For this reason, I see my work as contributing to a better understanding of how technologies like social networks engage and reproduce cultural discourses about gender and race.

Surveillance Studies and Feminist Research

Surveillance studies research has grown exponentially with the influx of new mainstream digital technologies over the last several years, even producing academic journals devoted to the subject matter, such as *Surveillance and Society*, which launched in 2002. Tying surveillance to a number of forms of social control, some studies have focused on the relationship between surveillance and post 9/11 discourse (e.g. Cooper, 2003; Lyon, 2003; Packer, 2006; Staples, 2002), and others have focused on the imbalance of power in access to information (Andrejevic, 2002; Schiller, 1999; Webster and Robins, 1989). Surveillance and its effects on the constitution of citizenship (i.e. how it both enables the enhancement of liberties such as access to better health care or safety and restricts freedom through the creation of new levels of governmental discipline) has also been a large focus of surveillance scholarship (Foucault, 1979; Giddons, 1990; Lyons, 1994; Webster, 1995). Foucault in particular focused on how citizens, aware of these escalating levels of surveillance, engage in forms of self-discipline. He uses the metaphor of the Panopticon: prisoners never know if the guard in the tower surveying the grounds is watching them or not, thus they participate in regulating their own behavior as a caution against punishment. This idea of self-surveillance has been employed in much of the academic work on digital surveillance (e.g. Clarke, 1988; Lyon, 1994; Poster, 1991). More currently, scholars have looked at how new technologies have intensified surveillance (Monahan, 2010; Zureik & Salter, 2005), surveillance on reality television (Andrejevic, 2007; Dubrofsky, 2011; Pecora, 2002), surveillance and privacy (Kerr et al, 2009; Webb, 2007), and surveillance on a global level (Andrejevic, 2007; Elmer, 2004; Lyon, 2003). David Lyon (2003), one of the original surveillance theorists, suggests that research is still needed to capture the varying and dynamic functions of surveillance (p. 20).

One of these dynamics I argue is the relation between surveillance and current feminist issues. While not explicitly defined as surveillance research, feminists have been theorizing about

ways of seeing (or pleasure in looking) for decades. In Laura Mulvey's (1975) groundbreaking feminist critique of film in *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, she contends that popular film serves the political function of subjugating women's bodies to a heterosexual "male gaze." This means that anyone who is deriving pleasure from viewing a Hollywood movie is adopting a patriarchal world view where men look and women are looked at in an objectifying and dehumanizing way. More recent feminist research has theorized surveillance in relation to the workplace and feminized professions (Fisher & Monahan, 2011), biometrics and othered bodies (Gates, 2011; Magnet, 2011; Murray, 2009); the male gaze and racial inequalities in film (Russell, 1991); social and governmental programs (Eubanks, 2006; Monaham, 2010), and the policing of othered communities (Christie, 1994; Parenti, 2003; Zureik & Salter, 2005; Hier and Greenberg, 2009). Following Foucault, Gill (2008) and McRobbie (2007) have suggested that certain self-surveillance regimes function to control women's bodies as culture requires them to strive toward and/or maintain appropriate, culturally legible "sexy femininity", which involves a great deal of self-discipline (and privilege). All of this research, in one way or another, focuses on the ways that different surveillance practices—whether they be governmental, local, digital, or self-engaged—construct the body as always already gendered, racialized, classed, and sexualized. Surveillance is an important concern for critical scholars and a concept I will center in the present thesis.

Surveillance and Post-feminism

Surveillance, generally, is a term used to identify "a systematic and focused manner of observing" (Dubrofsky and Magnet, forthcoming, p. 3) during which personal data is collected "for the purposes of influencing or managing those whose data have been garnered" (Lyon, 2001, p. 2). Dubrofsky and Magnet (forthcoming) propose a feminist conception of surveillance—the production of knowledge about vulnerable bodies which are bound to gendered and sexualized ways

of seeing, which have particular ways of regulating how these bodies (and the women they belong to) are understood. Taking up this definition, I offer that more recent surveillance technologies, specifically Twitter as a technology of self-surveillance, aids in advancing a particular post-feminist logic whereby gender and racial inequalities are concealed by a focus on women's willful subjection to surveillance: Because they display information about and images of themselves, they are responsible for the sexist and racist scrutiny they receive. I ask: What are the implications of surveillance when thought about in the context of a post-feminist culture? What might a focus on the relationship between surveillance and post-feminist logic uncover?

Part of this project involves exploring the ways in which the texts I examine are in fact indicative of a post-feminist logic. Like Angela McRobbie (2008), I submit that post-feminism refers to a cultural and media-controlled environment in which feminism is "taken into account" so it can be marginalized and repudiated as irrelevant. Consequently, the regressive, problematic ways of representing (and understanding) women and girls which feminists have been battling for decades re-emerge. This logic posits that sexist imagery doesn't matter anymore, because equality for women has supposedly been achieved. Feminist theorist Susan Douglas also refers to this kind of post-feminism as "new sexism" (in Lee & Wen, 2009). The major difference between traditional anti-feminist sexism (prejudices based on a person's sex) and post-feminism is a media environment that emphasizes consumerism and hypersexualizes images of women under the guise of liberation or sexual freedom (Lee & Wen, 2009). Twitter is an important space for investigating post-feminist logic. Women (and girls) have been using social media sites to self-represent and engage socially. However, the reinvigorated conditions of sexual objectification that characterize this space as post-feminist needs scholarly examination (Gill, 2008; Gill & Scharff, 2011). In these spaces, rather than being challenged, gender norms are instead fetishized and idealized.

McRobbie (2008) suggests we are confronted in the US with a new sexual contract for girls who must now perform a "post-feminist masquerade" which privileges oppressive forms of idealized white femininity. Women and girls are subject to more intensified technologies of bodily perfection and visual display as "feminine subjects" in order to maintain their participation in civic society with men (p. 71)—they must engage in "sexy femininity" in order to not be too much like men or boys, especially given the increased presence of women in education and workplace spaces (Ringrose, 2007, p. 471, Young et al. 2005). Rosalind Gill (2007, 2008) has theorized post-feminist sensibility as characterized by a "feminist" discourse of women positioned as fully sexually empowered and free, and she suggests that the idea that women are victims of the male gaze has morphed into the idea that women have found freedom through sexual agency.

It is important to make note, however, that this "sexy" femininity is not the only subjectivity that catalyzes post-feminism in contemporary culture. Importantly, Amy Dobson (2012) offers that post-feminism's "sexy" femininity disciplines (and is continually reinvigorated by) the decade-old image of the "laddish girl" or "ladette[1]," who subversively takes on masculine traits in her social performances (loud, excessive, vulgar, promiscuous, wild), ostensibly as a result of perceived increasing gender equality and a desire to distance herself from traditional codes of femininity (Cullen, 2010; Day, Gough, & McFadden, 2004; Harris, 2004; Jackson 2006; Jackson & Tinkler, 2007; Lyons & Willott, 2008; McRobbie, 2007; Muncer et al. 2001). "Ladettes" are perceived to be putting the gender order at risk through their performance of masculine behaviors, and are characterized as "taking advantage of the social freedoms of the past 20 or 30 years" (Ryan, 2011).

Gill (2007) argues that contemporary femininity is now located specifically in the body, where bodily traits (weight, shape, hair, skin, breasts, fashion, etc.) are *the* indicators of femininity, and femininity is no longer determined in psychological characteristics or behaviors (passivity,

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[1] The term "ladette" has origins in the UK, but has been propagated in feminist research in Australia and the US as well in the last decade (Dobson, 2012, p.5).

politeness, mothering skills, etc.) (p. 91). While clearly post-feminism has brought with it an intensification of "sexy" body representations and gendered performances of sexual difference, I do not think we can restrict the surveillance of femininity *only* to the body in a post-feminist cultural context, as Gill seems to suggest. Instead, a more comprehensive approach is offered by Dobson (2012) in her assertion that the images of the (white, hetero) "sexy girl" and the (unfeminine, subversive) "ladette," serve to discipline hegemonic femininity by pointing back to and reaffirming each other:

> In framing contemporary femininity as…only concerning "sexiness," as figured around how a body *looks* rather than what a body *does*, we risk obscuring the ways in which notions of young women as [excessive] in their behavior may serve as a kind of prop-up for ubiquitous, heteronormative [white] sexiness. (p. 11)

Given the myriad of ways and range of spaces in which we display, interact with, and surveil *whole* "digital selves" (body, behavior, emotionality), my analysis will interrogate how what I'll label "feminine excess" manifests itself in representations of the body, behavior and emotionality to create the "authentic," "real" self behind the tweet. Importantly, when I indicate that a text depicts a representation of "feminine excess," I do not offer any evaluation as to whether or not I think the woman referred to was being "purposefully" excessive as if in an act of resistance. Rather, I am only concerned with how the text, as it stands alone, affords a particular representation of its subject. My analysis involves addressing both the visual/corporal (pictures posted on Twitter) and cerebral/behavioral (tweets and alternative sources mentioned), and the way the resulting narratives come to represent the "real" or "authentic" figures.

I use the terms "real" and "authentic" here in a specific way: to indicate the *appearance* of things as authentic, as there is no essential authenticity or realness when we are talking about how ideas and people come to make sense in a particular and contingent context. When I say the articles

I examine present stories about "real" people, who we know are behaving "authentically" on Twitter because they are posting personal things, interacting with us, or even making mistakes (celebrities are frequently "caught" deleting tweets that seemingly get them into trouble[2]), I am referring to a surveilled performance that is judged for its precision (authentic versus inauthentic) based on specific requirements (see Dubrofsky, 2012, p. 20-26). I also suggest that the representations I discuss are "real" in the sense that their presence in our cultural lexicon of contemporary femininities has a discursive and material impact on how women and girls are "publically imagined" (Tyler, 2008, p. 18). I ask: what is the significance of the "voluntary" nature of the tweets that serve to "authenticate" the representations that result from their visibility? How do questions of empowerment and responsibility become articulated when women operate the technologies that functionally surveil them? How does "authenticity" function to symbolically discipline women whose bodies are already coded in a particular way because of their race?

A "Call to Authenticity"

The idea of authenticity is integral to this thesis, with specific implications for gendered bodies, particularly in concert with post-feminist ideas of empowerment. Dubrofsky (2011) situates notions of the real and the authentic as "unstable, contingent, and contextual" (p. 8), which I also take as my approach. I am concerned with how authentic displays of self (under the guise of empowerment through self-representation) in conjunction with surveillance, impacts the way in which gendered bodies are constructed in news coverage of celebrity women using Twitter. This social network functions as a mechanism to verify that women are willfully displaying themselves, embodying and inviting the male gaze: we have their own words (via their tweets) and their own actions (posting of twitpics) attesting to their authentic desire to objectify themselves. The post-

[2] See "Chanelle Hayes Dumps Jack Tweed on Twitter" (2012) as an example.

feminist discourse surrounding Twitter (and other social media use) which positions women as in control of their own image places women in an impossible bind: hailed at once to cooperate in their own objectification, and presented as that much more guilty for doing so willingly.

Marwick and boyd (2011) point out the loss of infrastructure (agents, PR, refutation, and so on) that occurs as celebrities navigate the process of conveying information to their fans (p. 144) on Twitter, though this access to the "real" celebrity is what makes the social network appealing for the average user wanting to "follow" celebrities. Celebrities have hailed Twitter for what I term the "call to authenticity": thanks to Twitter, celebrities can offer tidbits directly to their fans, bypassing the tabloids and other traditional media. By offering tweets, interactions, and twitpics[3] of their own choosing, they can simultaneously help satiate their fans' desire for information about their lives while seemingly controlling how their image is mass mediated. Accordingly, the more "authentic" they are on their Twitter accounts (measured by the frequency of and how personal the displays are), the better Twitter functions for them in maintaining their celebrity.

Making an analogous argument, elsewhere Dubrofsky (2011) contends reality TV foregrounds the notion that "real, authentic, surveilled selves are constructed," while also denying this claim by declaring reality TV can somehow access the real (p. 22), labeling this reality TV's "call to the real" (2011). Twitter's economy of celebrity practice (Marwick & boyd, 2011) hails celebrities (and the public) to use Twitter in a way that creates the same paradox about identity. The "call to authenticity" suggests the more one is seen as disclosing via surveillance technologies like Twitter, the more one is presented as being "real," especially when these acts call attention to the fact of being under surveillance: people who are authentic despite surveillance are presented as most authentic. This "call to authenticity" is integral to celebrity Twitter practices. An example illustrates how the call to authenticity is animated: in one gossip article discussing Miley Cyrus's deletion of her

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[3] Twitpics are pictures uploaded through the Twitter website or, more frequently, via a Twitter application.

Twitter account in 2009, the author states that her Twitter account "humanizes her in ways that no other medium does," and that "she's earned a follower not by being famous, but by being real," citing the personal things she usually tweets (Anderson, 2009). This comment suggests that Cyrus's Twitter posts are indicative of who she "really" is, unlike the "inauthentic" mediums by which a fan can access a celebrity, such as tabloids or paparazzi television shows like *TMZ*. When Cyrus temporarily deleted her account, she stated in a blog post on her website that "Twitter is a beautiful thing if used for the right reason… it was a wonderful way to stay connected to [her fans]" ("Miley Talks About Twitter…AGAIN," Celebuzz.com, October 11, 2009). Her comment implies that she uses the site to maintain her celebrity image with her fans. The goal of this thesis is to add to the rich tradition of scholarship on post-feminism (Dow, 1996; Projansky, 2001; Walters, 1995) by highlighting the ways that Twitter, a popular culture technology, enables the fetishising and celebrating of idealized, binary gender norms and notions of empowerment.

Method

The focus of the research for this chapter is celebrity gossip magazine stories in the popular press, particularly, stories that mention celebrities posting (photographs, statuses, and interactions) on Twitter. Between March 2012, and October 2012, I collected articles from a variety of online celebrity news blogs, mainstream tabloid websites, and the website versions of mainstream celebrity gossip magazines. I did this in two ways: First, I identified the top 10 celebrity entertainment magazine publications in the U.S. using the ShareRanks.com database, which generates ranks for popular publications by genre based on ratings collected by the website's visitors. For the sake of practicality, I eliminated those that did not have a searchable archive or did not focus on celebrity gossip. My list included *US Weekly* magazine, RadarOnline.com (the online version of *Star*

magazine), *In Touch Weekly*, and *OK!* magazine, which yielded between 1,000-3,000 articles for the time frame.

Second, to find the most popular sources for celebrity gossip based on number of hits (not necessarily on mainstream publications), using the Google search engine, I searched for Twitter-related keywords such as "Twitter," "tweet," "twitpic," "hashtag," and "trending" in conjunction with the terms "celebrity" and "star," which yielded articles from various gossip blogs and gossip sites. Using Google as a search tool, I generated sites with more hits on "celebrity + Twitter" than by looking only at the mainstream publications. From both sets of articles (online gossip blogs and celebrity entertainment magazines), I eliminated articles that contained the keywords but did not relate to celebrity Twitter use.

Many of the websites have a "related stories" column adjacent to the articles which identify stories similar to the ones searched. In some cases, my search was expanded by finding relevant articles in these columns. The process produced a set of about 100 articles. I analyzed each for how celebrity women are articulated in relation to both bodily displays on Twitter via photographs, and how their character was constructed based on the content of their tweets. I also looked at the few articles I found on celebrity men and Twitter. Only 14 out of 100 of the articles collected were explicitly about celebrity men, which I examined as a way of accessing the ways in which the stories about celebrity women were gendered.

Chapters

My thesis as a whole addresses the contradictory—or what Renolds and Ringrose (2011) call "schizoid"—discourses regulating femininity through the lens of celebrity news stories citing Twitter use. In my analysis, I seek to navigate the push and pull between post-feminism's emblematic "sexy" femininity and what I term "feminine excess" to better understand the contemporary struggle with

feminism in a post-feminist, digital context. The two analysis chapters discuss different components, but build upon and inform each other:

Chapter two specifically engages the relationship between surveillance, the politics of the visible body, the post-feminist notions of agency and responsibility, and the parameters of "sexy" femininity. Through an investigation of the discussion in mainstream tabloids of the pictures celebrity women post of themselves on Twitter, this chapter highlights the need to talk about the interanimation of women as producing the images that invite the gaze, and as controlling part of the distribution of these images. This portion of the analysis draws heavily on Shoshana Magnet's (2012) term "surveillant scopophilia" (p. 117), which aligns scopophilia—pleasure in looking—with surveillance practices, insisting we be attentive to the implications of practices of looking across a range of technology, not just those that produce images for mass consumption (such as television or film). Magnet posits biometric technologies that capture images of the body "produce new forms of pleasure in looking at the human body disassembled into its component parts" (p. 17). My analysis uses Magnet's thought to articulate how surveillance practices on Twitter express a particular kind of pleasure in being looked at, in controlling the images that are looked at, and in doing labor to produce those images (to put these on display and to fashion a body to be looked at). The rich body of feminist scholarship on practices of looking has been concerned for quite some time with the gendered implications of surveillance practices, though the term "surveillance" is not explicitly used (Dubrofsky, forthcoming). Building on Mulvey's influential work on the gaze (1975), Berger's (1972) *Ways of Seeing*, Sturken and Carthwright's *Practices of Looking* (2001), Magnet's work on suicidegirls.com (2007) and on biometric technology (2011), I argue in this chapter that visual media technologies are always already part of an objectifying process that has particular implications for gendered bodies. I pay attention to the shifting terrain when it comes to digital media practices where women operate the technologies that put them under surveillance: what are the implications

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when women are presented as complicit in the creation of the images that display their bodies? How does race inform the specific parameters of authentic "sexy" femininity in terms of authenticity?

In chapter three, I interrogate how Twitter informs a particular discourse about authenticity and failure through the surveillance of "feminine excess." While celebrity women's personal disclosure (display of emotions like anger, defensiveness, sorrow; appearing too sexy, too thin, etc.) on Twitter situates them as "authentic," "real" women (see Marwick and boyd, 2012), their tweets are used to create narratives of admonition or concern about their behavior and/or emotional stability. I argue that these regulating narratives articulate the bounds of appropriate feminine behavior and appearance. In doing so, the narratives (re)articulate a specific economy of hegemonic post-feminist femininity, and offer up the figures who do not abide by the unstated economy as a cautionary tale of failed womenhood. Specifically, I discuss the process of "becoming," and the parameters of this process: To not show enough, the woman is an inauthentic celebrity figure; to show too much, she is an authentic spectacle of a failed woman. My analysis explores how notions of authenticity, surveillance, gender, and race work together in this context to summon (and reaffirm) old gender expectations, but with a new angle: the women are constructed as actively damning themselves.

The final chapter of this thesis synthesizes the conclusions drawn by each analysis, points to the contributions made to the field of Feminist Surveillance Studies, and discusses possibilities for future research.

CHAPTER TWO:

TWEETING THE BODY: INVESTIGATING CELEBRITY WOMEN AND THE GAZE[4]

Recent years have seen the emergence and rising popularity of a new media form, the "social networking site" (SNS). Buttressed by a film[5] based on the story of its conception, Facebook, the most popular on the SNS market, presently has over one billion users as of October 2012[6]. While Facebook may currently be the best-known microblogging service, the world's fastest growing SNS is Twitter. With about six million registrations as of October 2012 and 517 million active users (representing nearly 90% of the global internet population aged 16 to 65[7]), the SNS has seen a 714% growth rate increase since July 2009 (McCue, 2013). Twitter's integration of iOS (the ability to access Twitter using a mobile phone application) has drastically increased its number of users who access the site by phone. Its ability to be integrated into mass media by being featured or used for promotion on TV, in films, on the radio, in sports coverage, and in advertising has given Twitter an incredible level of exposure, translating into even more users (McCue, 2013). A wide variety of celebrities are now using Twitter, updating their followers about upcoming events, charitable work, musings, and everyday activities. Twitter's importance as a tool for maintaining one's fan base can be noted in the number of television shows getting in on the action, as well. For instance, late night

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[4] This chapter was written in tandem with a co-authored manuscript lead by Dr. Rachel Dubrofsky, under contract with Duke University Press for the forthcoming book, *Feminist Surveillance Studies,* edited by Shoshana Magnet and Rachel Dubrofsky. Accordingly, some of the language and ideas in this chapter overlap with those in the manuscript, currently unpublished.

[5] *The Social Network* (2010)

[6] http://newsroom.fb.com/Key-Facts

[7] This study did not publish racial or gender demographics in its findings; the users were only classified by country. However, internet use is linked to various socio-economic and demographic characteristics such as race, gender, age, disability, class, and location (Office for National Statistics 2012).

television show host and comedian Jimmy Fallon incorporates Twitter into his show, *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon*, during bits like "The Hashtag Game" where he reads his follower's responses to a given hashtag[8]; *The Rachael Ray Show*, an award-winning daytime cooking talk show on *The Food Network*, has a backstage Twitter room where guest stars tweet about their experiences on the show (while being filmed) right after they leave the stage, and 14 time Emmy Awarded daytime talk show, *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, has a segment called "The Weekly Tweetly Roundup" where Ellen reads some of her favorite tweets from followers[9]. Individual celebrities use Twitter as a means for self-branding or strategic self-representation, as well (Hearn, 2008; Lair et al, 2005). Twitter attracts big time actors like Ashton Kutcher, pop stars like Britney Spears, and various athletes, politicians, and other established famous people (Marwick and boyd, 2011). Using Twitter has become an integral part of "doing celebrity."

Just as the tools being used in current media landscape change as sites like Twitter proliferate, so do the popular media discourses about them. Several scholars have recently examined the shifting discourses surrounding femininity in light of a variety of new media (Dines, 2010; Dobson, 2011; Dubrofsky, 2012; Renold & Ringrose 2011; Walter, 2010; Zaslow, 2009). I am specifically interested here in celebrity women who use Twitter and their terrain of representation. Developing the notion of a "call to authenticity" introduced in the previous chapter, this chapter considers the relationship between surveillance and Twitter use by interrogating the contradictory ways in which celebrity women's bodies are constituted visually, via the pictures posted on Twitter. The analysis demonstrates that while these women are presented as having agency (read: empowerment) by acknowledging that they post the pictures on Twitter, what results is that their

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[8] http://www.latenightwithjimmyfallon.com/blogs/twitter-hashtag-game/

[9] http://www.ellentv.com/2012/09/14/new-segment-the-weekly-tweetly-roundup/

bodies are reconstituted as subject to an oppressive male gaze[10]. They are "authentic" because they are posting these pictures (seemingly) for fun, or for personal gain—in this medium, they are not "selling" images of their body for profit, as they do when they act in a movie or pose for a shoot. What does it mean that all of these women, posting as their "real" selves, are the subjects and objects of their own desiring: "owning" the gaze but still explicitly aiding in reproducing it? The celebrity Twitter user, like the user of suicidegirls.com in Magnet's (2011) analysis, is a "prosumer" (blurring between the roles of consumer and producer: a consumer who is also a producer of the product being consumed) (Tapscott & Williams, 2007). Rather than a location of liberating or feminist sexuality, Twitter significantly reproduces a scopophilic gaze (Magnet, 2011) that reinforces racialized, heteronormative, and oppressive conceptions of women's sexuality.

Surveillance and Celebrity

In this chapter, I pick up the arguments initiated in Dubrofsky and Wood's (forthcoming) chapter "Celebrity Women Tweet: An Invitation to the Gaze." I am interested in the implications of surveillance for gendered and racialized bodies when it comes to Twitter, in particular, how questions of empowerment and responsibility become articulated when women operate the technologies that functionally surveil them. To access popular discourses about women putting themselves on display, my focus in this analysis is the popular tabloid coverage of female celebrities and their use of Twitter, specifically stories about the women posting pictures of themselves on Twitter. I focus on popular constructions of these activities by women—rather than on the actions and intentions of the women who put themselves on display[11]. Celebrities are a particularly salient

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[10] See Chapter One for a nuanced discussion of male gaze theory.

[11] This analysis assumes that perhaps a significant amount of celebrity tweets (including photographs posted on Twitter) are mediated through PR people who work for the celebrity. My interest is not in determining the possible intentions of celebrities in their actions on Twitter, or in ascribing responsibility for actions on Twitter, but rather, in looking at how

focus since the celebrity body, as Tyler (2011) posits, "has become a central means through which contemporary social values are distributed and, through consumption, identification, and mimicry, become hardwired into everyday practices of subjectivity" (p. 24). Discussions of female celebrity bodies is nothing new in the popular press—scantily clad, naked, or pregnant bodies are put on display for consumption, and in online versions of these, there is an endless stream of links to yet more pictures of their bodies on display. Social media, and the increase in data-valance (the tracking of people through data, especially digital data) adds a new twist, with potentially new initiatives for critical scholars interested in the gendered implications of surveillance technologies and practices.

In Schickel's (1985) analysis of the role of tabloids in shaping celebrity persona, he suggests we are fascinated as a culture with the symbol of celebrity because of the "illusion of intimacy" constructed between the audience and the celebrity figure within celebrity gossip culture (p. 4). His claim is even more salient in the realm of social media sites like Twitter. Where once gossip columnists defined and policed the relationship between fans and distant (managed and protected) celebrities, now these same performers and personalities are presented as actively addressing and interacting with fans via Twitter (even if in actuality this is all being managed by a team of public relations specialists), disrupting the expectation of parasociality (one-sided interpersonal relationships) between a famous person and a fan (Marwick & boyd, 2011, p. 139, 156). Fans now have seemingly-direct access to celebrities; celebrities use social networking sites to show us their "real" selves, and the tabloids capitalize on the information already accessible to the fan.

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stories about female celebrities are presented in the popular press when it comes to their Twitter activities. For instance, even if a celebrity may not have herself posted a photograph that appears on Twitter, she is nonetheless constructed in the press as having done so. It is this construction that interests me.

Cyberfeminism and the Post-Feminist Way of Life

A discussion of Cyberfeminism, which is described as a female-centered alternative to the cultural male-dominance in matters of technological agency (Luckman, 1999), highlights the seemingly contradictory nature of women's participation in surveillance online. Cyberfeminist discourse gives voice to a post-feminist way of life in which the internet has no limits for the identity practices of girls and women, a space where they are liberated from the rigid norms that have long constrained female sexuality. Sadie Plant's long-standing (1995) conceptualization of Cyberfeminism centers on the argument "Cyberspace is out of man's control: virtual reality destroys his identity..." (p. 181-182). She contends that computers do not serve dominant men or their interests, predicting a feminine internet revolution of sorts. While their understandings of what constitutes Cyberfeminist ideals radically differ[12], Cyberfeminists like Donna Haraway (1985, 1991), Alice Jardine (1987), and Julianne Pierce (1998), similar to Plant (1996a, 1996b, 1997), seem to agree that the then-incoming digital age should brace for a postmodern future stripped of the hegemonic structures of male dominance (Luckman,1999).

While the dramatic feminine (cyborg) revolution envisioned by Cyberfeminists two decades ago never quite came to fruition, the notion that the internet has democratic and liberatory potential has been buttressed by a reinvigorated cultural context of post-feminism, which first established a correlation between gender-empowerment and consumer activity in the early 1990's, and has since grown to include women and girls being empowered through their use of the Internet for self-expression (Banet-Weiser, 2011; Hollows & Moseley, 2006; Magnet, 2007; McRobbie, 2009; Tasker & Negra; 2007). The problem noted by these scholars, which is also the case with the present analysis, is that while women are constructed by the current media landscape as "empowered" by

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[12] It is not accurate or useful to depict Cyberfeminism as a unified field of views and practices. While Plant is said to have laid the foundations for Cyberfeminism-proper, like all feminisms, the specific ideas and theoretical contributions behind the Cyberfeminist leanings of each scholar mentioned are different and multiple.

acting online (posting pictures, using webcams, running blogs), these same actions are those that define them as particular neoliberal, bodied subjects (see Banet-Weiser, 2011). The characteristics that define the post-feminist subject as empowered, independent, and capable of self-representation are the same characteristics that define the neoliberal subject who is authorized to be responsible for herself (Gill, 2007), working to image herself within the confines of a normative cultural definition of (unachievable) femininity. Particular to celebrity women on Twitter, as they post pictures of themselves for the public to consume for the purposes of controlling their own image (ostensibly), they are presented as subjecting themselves willfully to a penetrating male gaze.

Twitter, Celebrity Women, and The Gaze

The explicit focus on female agency in the gossip articles gathered for this analysis highlights the need to talk about the interanimation of women as producers of the images that invite the gaze, and as controlling part of the distribution of these images. In her influential work *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, Mulvey (1975) introduced the idea that as cinema viewers we engage the images on the screen through the active masculine perspective, or through a male gaze. While Mulvey articulates the experience of film viewers as having "an illusion of looking in on a private world," on Twitter this is not quite the set-up: users actively bring other users into their (private-ish) world. Twitter users are positioned as real people who voluntarily post information and images about their real lives, willingly putting themselves under surveillance. When these women are constructed as bringing others into their private world (by allowing them to gaze upon pictures of their bodies), they are exposing themselves as "authentic" people, rather than staged celebrities who can only be accessed through mediated tabloids. Mulvey's theorizing rests in part on the act of gazing upon a "hermeneutically sealed world," with an explicit separation between the image on the

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screen, the people in the image, the producer of the image, and the viewer consuming the image. These separations are blurred in Twitter practices.

Building on Mulvey's articulation of the gaze, Magnet (2012) coins the term "surveillant scopophilia" (p. 117), aligning scopophilia—pleasure in looking—with surveillance practices, insisting we be attentive to the implications of practices of looking across a range of technology, not just those that produce images for mass consumption film, television, for instance). Magnet posits biometric technologies that capture images of the body "produce new forms of pleasure in looking at the human body disassembled into its component parts" (p. 17). I use Magnet's idea of "surveillant scopophilia" to articulate how surveillance practices on Twitter animate a particular kind of pleasure in being looked at, in controlling the images that are looked at, and in doing labor to produce those images (to put these on display and to fashion a body to be looked at). In her work on the activities of users on the website suicidegirls.com, Magnet (2007) examines what happens when the "objects" of the gaze are also the producers of the gaze. She notes, unlike in conventional notions of the gaze, where the object of the gaze is not part of the production process, the women who post photographs of themselves on suicidegirls.com are also participants in the process of producing the images. This is similar to what occurs on Twitter where celebrities post photographs of themselves: The women who post these photographs are the producers of them, and so the pictures (and whatever narratives are constructed around them) are perceived to be more authentic because the object is also the producer of the gaze we, the consumers, are taking.

Mulvey (1975) theorized the feminine onscreen as passive (not acting, but acted upon; not seeing, but being seen), though her presence invites the gaze. In contrast, in the articles I looked at, female celebrities are constructed as specifically active and agentic in the act of putting their images on display and in their invitation of the gaze. For instance, in one article, a picture of Miley Cyrus, a young white woman, is accompanied with the caption: "Miley Cyrus may be a taken woman, but

she's showing her Twitter followers what they're missing!" (Eggenberger, 2012). Moreover, female celebrities are presented as *compulsively* posting photographs of themselves on Twitter, overcome by the irrepressible desire to tweet. As Fox News puts it, stars "are unable to just unsubscribe and turn it off" (Murphy, 2002), even when it seems it would be in a celebrity's best interest not to tweet: "despite the dark side of Twitter, celebrities just can't seem to stay away" (Murphy, 2002). While these statements are gender neutral, it is the women in particular who are framed as compulsive in their use of Twitter, especially in their desire to post provocative photographs of themselves. For instance, RadarOnline.com announces "Hollywood stars love sharing their personal photos on social media!" (Ornstein, 2012), and the focus of the articles are the celebrity women who post pix of themselves on Twitter. Fox news notes that LeAnne Rimes "has a habit of posting provocative bikini pictures of herself on Twitter…" (Murphy, 2012), as if, evidenced by the behavior being a "habit," posting photos of herself is something she cannot stop doing.

As discussed by Dubrofsky and Wood (forthcoming), while female celebrities are presented as actively making their own choices about putting themselves on display, there are parameters for appropriate feminine behavior in the space of Twitter: this is a space where some behaviors are privileged over others. Discussions about the activities of female celebrities belie a desired economy in how women should put themselves on display visually (via twitpics), without ever specifying the parameters of this economy—but with clear sanctions for women who exceed this unstated economy. The gossip articles revel in displays that exceed the unstated economy. For instance, Courtney Love, a white woman, is accused of posting photos on Twitter where she is "wearing either too many layers of clothes or not enough" ("Courtney Love goes Twitter mental once more," HolyMoly.com, May 5, 2012), suggesting there is just the right amount of clothing a woman should wear on twitpics, while never actually outlining what constitutes just the right amount of clothing. There is also an economy for the women in their emotional displays with much

discussion of the mental stability and health of the women—a dynamic to be discussed at length in the following chapter.

Women presented as emotionally unstable, mentally troubled, and excessive in the displays of their bodies are framed as physically unattractive, rather than sexually appealing, as is the case for the women who aren't presented as emotionally and mentally unstable. For example, LeAnn Rimes is consistently accused of obsessively posting photographs of herself (the online gossip magazines are, of course, all too happy to feature these), and of being emotionally unstable (she fights with her Twitter followers, is a "home wrecker," and has been institutionalized for emotional issues). Her photographs are framed as grotesque, not suitable for public consumption (the websites nonetheless plaster her photographs all over the place). *In Touch* tells us: "Sadly, she [Rimes] seems to have gone *way* too far" (LeAnn Rimes: Starving for Attention?" In Touch, April 13, 2011). The story details how thin Rimes appears. However, looking at photographs of Rimes, and comparing these to ones of other celebrities and models (not accused of being too thin), one would be hard pressed to determine what "too far" might be when it comes to body weight. Since Twitter enables the women to control the means of display, their active, willful desire to put this body on display is highlighted. This creates a particularly vicious cycle for celebrity women, when paired with the call to authenticity described in the Introduction: in order to maintain their fan base, these women must post, post frequently, and post personal things—what is more personal than an underwear shot from your home bathroom ("Jenelle Evans Posts Racy Bikini Pic," UsMagazine.com, May 31, 2012). In answering this call, the more effort they put into crafting their bodies for consumption, and the more agency they have in displaying this body, the stronger the invitation to gaze upon their bodies. Since Twitter enables the women to control the means of display, their active, willful desire to put their body on display, and the work to prep the body for display, is highlighted as one more

testament to the control and agency they exercise in this process—articulating the connection between neoliberal labor and post-feminism.

Building on the discussion of post-feminism in the previous chapter, I argue that Twitter enables a particular kind of strategic post-feminist ethos in which the women put themselves on display, and in so doing, are framed as behaving authentically, which is important for their reputation as a celebrity who is a "real" person that fans would want to follow on Twitter. Underlying this logic is the notion that feminism is obsolete since the women have full control over the means of objectification: they are not being objectified by patriarchy, they are freely opting to fashion the images of themselves that they put on display. Of course, the images are always already part of a misogynist culture, each image consumed within a misogynist context. The consequence of such logic is that questions of equal access and visibility are divorced from critical questions about representation. This means that only celebrating women's active participation online (such as maintaining a Twitter account) and not questioning how this activity is positioned or represented makes it difficult to pinpoint the ways in which the visual display of female bodies is consistently problematic in a culture where women are disenfranchised.

White Women on Display: Fashioning the Body

Interestingly, a marker of desirability for white women in the articles examined is the effort a woman puts into fashioning her body, through diet and exercise, which is a testament to her desire to be seen: to flaunt the body she has worked so hard to shape for public consumption. Of course, some women, such as Rimes are punished for doing this in excess—having "gone way too far" in disciplining their bodies for display (LeAnn Rimes: Starving for Attention?" In Touch, April 13, 2011), but the women who strike the right balance are framed as not only attractive and highly desirable, but as such because of the *effort* they put into their appearance. This is interesting because

the "effort" and "work" needed—that are consistently mentioned as necessary for celebrity *white* women—to achieve their beautiful bodies implies that labor and hard work are a value particular to the "ideal" upper/middle-class white sensibility—this is consistent with the neoliberal idea that to having the desire and ability to work and labor, to spend, and to consume products that help signify the body as having achieved beauty is to be a valuable and contributing member of society. Nikolas Rose refers to this tacit obligation as "bearing the burdens of liberty" (1999, p. viii). Accepting McRobbie's (2011) premise that popular culture is a privileged terrain for the production of neoliberal values (2009, p. 29), the construction of Twitter pictures posted by celebrity women as a frequent, purposeful display of fashioned, sexual bodies highlights a powerful post-feminist cultural ideal that commodifies women's bodies, subjects them to the male gaze, and contributes to lived gender inequalities.

However, these women are not to labor their bodies excessively by appearing *too* thin, *too* tan, or as wearing *too* much makeup. The efforts the women put into their appearance work hand in hand with the invitation to gaze upon their carefully fashioned bodies: they worked hard to produce this body so it would be attractive to others, and their reward is for us to gaze with desire upon their bodies. Miley Cyrus is a popular focus in the articles I looked at. *US* magazine writes "Miley Cyrus showed off her long and lean stems—sculpted by her daily Pilates sessions—on Twitter Monday" (Finlayson, 2012a). Another story details "the singer has been proudly showing off the results of her frequent workout sessions—and controversial gluten-free diet—by flaunting her abs in midriff-baring tops and her legs in short rompers" (Finlayson, 2012a). In another story, Cyrus is "flaunting . . . her diminishing weight" (Ornstein, 2012). These articles all focus on her diet and workout routine, and imply that her posting pictures of herself is an action she does to "show off" all the hard work she has done on her body for our pleasure in looking. Keep in mind, none of these photos, as far as I could tell when clicking to the source via the provided Twitter URL, contain any commentary by

Miley herself indicating that the purpose of the photos are for us to gaze at her legs as a labor-production for our consumption. RadarOnline.com labels Cyrus's actions as "'Look at me!" moves in yet another story about her posting a Twitter photograph showing her waist and abs (Goodhand, 2012).

US Magazine writes "Miley Cyrus may be a taken woman, but she's wooing her Twitter followers with what they're missing!... The 19-year-old newly engaged star posted a new Twitter profile photo of herself wearing a tight crimson bustier top. The sexy ensemble pushes up her cleavage and flaunts her tiny waist" (Eggenberger, 2012). The story talks of Cyrus "wooing" her followers, titillating them with twitpics of her body. None of the stories state something like "Cyrus posted a photograph of her toned abs," or "Cyrus is wearing shorts in this photograph," that is, describing the content of the photographs without using words which qualify her as boastful—"proudly" presenting her body, "showing off" or "flaunting" her body. Cyrus is consistently framed as voluntarily, enthusiastically flaunting her body, as aware that followers desire her, actively enticing her followers to gaze upon her body in a sexual manner. As well, stories describe Cyrus's posting of Twitter photos as a habit (like Rimes in the example earlier) she can't shake: "Earlier this week Miley posted another self-photo showing off her bare belly" (Ornstein, 2012). The word "another" implies this is an ongoing activity.

A few notable examples of other female celebrities portrayed in a similar fashion as Cyrus are Fergie of the Black Eyed Peas, Britney Spears, and Heidi Klum (all white women). These women are presented as actively engaging the male gaze, proudly showing off their bodies which have been worked into shape, exercised, and dieted to fit the feminine ideal. Fergie, we are told, "showed off her bangin' bikini body via Twitter in Cancun… flaunted major cleavage and proudly displayed her rock hard abs in a printed two-piece" (Johnson, 2012). Klum, "Celebrating Wednesday's Independence Day holiday at the breach, *Project Runway's* sexy host, 39, shared a few photos of her

skimpy bikini bod—and massive cleavage—with her Twitter followers…. [and] revealed her taut tummy and sexy cleavage" (Corneau, 2012a). Spears has "got a bangin' bikini bod!... the pop superstar—flanked by her sons in swim trunks—showed off her toned bikini bod in a purple swimsuit in a photo posted to her Twitter page." ("Britney Spears Shows Off Sexy Stomach in Purple Bikini", UsMagazine.com, July 6, 2012). Notably, the women not only proudly show off their bodies, but the hard work they put into shaping their body for visual consumption through exercise and dieting is consistently referenced, and framed as part of what makes them proud to show off their bodies: they worked hard to arrive at this point, and their reward is to show off their bodies for all to see.

Women of Color on Display: Out-Of-This-World Bodies

How does "authenticity" function to symbolically discipline women whose bodies are already coded as "excessive" because of their race? Building on Dubrofsky and Wood's (forthcoming) argument that women of color are represented differently than white women in the context of celebrity women's Twitter pictures, I point to articles about women such as Kim Kardashian, Armenian American woman. I reiterate here that ethnicity and race are different things: ethnicity is a shared tie to a particular people or culture based upon familial or national relations, while race is a social category with culturally determined value and constituted through physical markers such as skin color, hair, body type, etc. (See Cornell & Hartman, 2007 for an in-depth discussion of the differences between ethnicity and race). How someone is constructed as "raced" is contingent and contextual. Technically, the Armenian ethnicity is central Eurasian, and therefore is typically classified as "white." With respect to Kim Kardashian in particular, however, scholars have agreed that her relationship to race is complicated at best—while she is not black, she does not have white markers, and so she is certainly not considered to be white (see Haltiwanger, 2010; Peterson,

2010). Kim's darker complexion, curvy body, and relationships with black men have all been employed as markers of her as non-white. In the articles I examined, Kardashian, while constructed as willfully displaying her body for the male gaze like Cyrus, is distinctly presented in hyper-sexual terms. Moreover, there is no mention of any hard work that went into shaping her body. This is also the case with Rihanna, a Black Irish woman—the other female celebrity of color most often discussed (but less so than Kardashian).

Kardashian's body is presented as supernatural, exceeding the confines of the feminine human body, but one which also emerges naturally—that is, a body no amount of dieting or exercise could fashion; one that springs forth as a hyper-sexualized body. The English language seems to fail the authors of the articles when trying to describe Kardashian's physical assets: new words (for instance, "boobiful") are created: [describing a Twitpic] "The boobiful reality star shows off her assets in a red bikini top and coverlet, soaking wet with the caption 'Wet & wild'" ("Too Sexy for Twitter? Kim Kardashian Shares REALLY Racy Photos," RadarOnline.com, May 31, 2012). RadarOnline.com seems again at a loss for words in the English language to describe Kardashian ("bootyful"): "Kim Kardashian loves showing off her bikini body—even without any touch-ups! The bootyful reality star posted a pic of her crazy curves poured into a skimpy swimsuit, boasting it was 'Photoshop-free' (Ornstein, 2012). Kardashian is presented as actively and knowingly sexually arousing her followers, but unlike Cyrus and the other white women discussed above, Kardashian is hyper-sexualized, her sexuality instinctive, and her desire to arouse naturalized, in part through the fact that there is no mention of any work she does to fashion her body for consumption. It would seem simply putting her body on display, in its natural state, is enough to drive the public into a sexual frenzy.

These ways of framing women of color gain salience within a larger historical context. Patricia Hill Collins (1990) argues the subjection of Black women's bodies on the auction block

during the nineteenth century haunts current depictions of Black bodies. Similarly, Katherine McKittrick (2006) discusses how the auction block is one of the founding surveillance technologies of the white supremacist US state, in which Black women's bodies were looked at as items for sale, valuable for their physical assets. It seems the dominant gaze that has perpetually constructed women of color as naturally excessive and hypersexual has reproduced itself in the surveillance of women of color online, in this case: women of color start from an animal status, not a human one, unlike the status of white women.

Collins (1990) looks at controlling images of people of color and hypersexuality in contemporary forms of racist practices, arguing "The new racism also relies more heavily on mass media to reproduce and disseminate the ideologies needed to justify racism" (2004, p. 34). The hypersexualizing of Kardashian works to position her as *not* human, as a sexual animal that cannot be contained or controlled. For instance, we are told "Kim heated things up by sharing beyond racy photos of herself and RadarOnline.com has the scandalous snaps" ("Too Sexy for Twitter? Kim Kardashian Shares REALLY Racy Photos," RadarOnline.com, May 31, 2012). There appear to be no limits to the lengths Kardashian will go to titillate her fans with her naturally-sexual, racialized body, and no limits to her ability to arouse—following the above quote, RadarOnline.com tells us: "Less than a day later, Kim daringly posted a sexy snap of herself down on all fours and flaunting her bombshell booty in what appears to be a black thong, thigh-high boots and a cropped and fringed leather jacket" ("Too Sexy for Twitter? Kim Kardashian Shares REALLY Racy Photos," RadarOnline.com, May 31, 2012). Kardashian's body is characterized as surreal—it does not exist in nature, but, paradoxically, also cannot be fashioned through diet and exercise (and no mention of surgery). It is wild, animalistic, and out of bounds; it cannot be tamed by a bikini, a thong or any other skimpy clothing, arousingly spilling out all over the place with her "crazy curves" and "beyond racy" photographs that require invented words to describe. While Cyrus and Kardashian both

willingly and actively invite the gaze, Cyrus is in control of her body, "flaunting" it. Contrastingly, Kardashian's body controls her, irrepressively sexual no matter what she does. Nevertheless, both women are called to post these photos as authentic displays of self in order to "do" celebrity effectively on Twitter. Kardashian is constructed as still answering the call to authenticity by choosing to post photos of her body to Twitter for the consumption of her followers: Labor or not, she chooses to give us images of her body to gaze at to appear more authentic, and in turn, she is responsible for the gaze.

There were fewer stories about Rihanna, and she is framed in less sexually explicit terms than Kardashian. However, similar to Kardashian, there is no emphasis on any work she does on her body, rather, as with Kardashian, the emphasis is on how outrageous her displays are, and on her out-of-this-world body (not natural, but naturally occurring). Discussions also focus on Rihanna's "rock n' roll lifestyle" ("Pal's Urging 'Out Of Control' Rihanna to Enter Rehab," RadarOnline.com, June 12, 2012) and on how she is "frequently tweeting images of herself enjoying the nightlife and all of its temptations" ("Pal's Urging 'Out Of Control' Rihanna to Enter Rehab," RadarOnline.com, June 12, 2012). Rihanna is a temptress, and tempted by a wild lifestyle. RadarOnline.com tells us "The scandalous singer took a break from taking racy self-portraits and partying at nightclubs into the wee hours of the morning and shared a photo of her naked face with a bottle of beer…" (Ornstein, 2012). Her body is constructed as effortlessly sexually attractive: "In a photo shared via Twitter late Wednesday night, the singer, wearing large bangle bracelets covered up her flawless, shirtless bod with her arms… 'Where have you been all my life?! she posted along with the provocative photo" (Finlayson, 2012b).

Male Celebrities

The discourses about female celebrities in the tabloid articles, particularly regarding the "provocative" and "revealing" photos they post of themselves, outline limited roles for the women as agentic beings. Looking at these constructions alongside the ways in which *male* celebrities on Twitter are constructed, highlights the gendered ways in which the women are framed by a focus on their bodies and their sexuality, in contrast to the articles about celebrity men.

The first and most striking thing I noticed is in the quantity of stories about female celebrities and Twitter, and the scarcity of ones about male celebrities and Twitter, even though some of the most famous Twitter celebrities[13] (Ashton Kutcher, Charlie Sheen, Justin Bieber—all white—and Kanye West, who is Black, to name a few) are male. As stated in the previous chapter, only 14 out of 100 of the articles collected are explicitly about male celebrities; 24 additional ones mention male celebrities, but focus on celebrity women. While celebrity women are consistently judged by a set of paradoxical female norms[14] (Dyer, 1979, p. 49), possible stories about male celebrities are either sidelined altogether, or focus on an event or career move. Male stars, in contrast to their female counterparts, are *not* articulated by a focus on their sexuality.

Many of the basic details in the tabloid stories about men are similar to the stories about the women (quitting Twitter, making social mistakes), but there is no focus on the willful display of their bodies through photographs posted on Twitter, and no concomitant objectifying discussion of their bodies. There was only one instance of a shirtless male torso picture being the subject of an article (white Italian-American Pauly D of Jersey Shore), tweeted by Pauly D. This was also the only time a male body was on display. His posting of the picture was discussed as a reaction to an unflattering

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[13] A list of the top 100 most followed Twitter accounts, which is refreshed daily, can be found at http://twittercounter.com/pages/100.

[14] For a fuller discussion on the paradox of femininity, see Stacey, 1994.

photo leaked to the Web earlier—he posted the picture to "prove the unflattering photo…was not how he normally looks" (Eggenberger, 2012a). In other words, he was not "exposing," "flaunting," or "showing himself off" in a way which reveals his desire for sexual attention, rather, he "snapped a photo" of himself to "prove" (read: control) representations of his appearance.

Twitter enables the verification and authentication of women in ways that construct them as sexual objects, while it serves as no more than a professional tool for celebrity men. Men are given license to "rant and rave" (Corneau, 2012a), "apologize" and "joke," "misfire" (Dobuzinskis, 2011) and be "misconstrued" and given the chance to "explain," such as when actor/comedian Louis CK "explain[ed] Daniel Tosh rape joke" (Corneau, 2012b). The discussions about male celebrities and Twitter do not have the same packaging of sexual objectification in the guise of sexual empowerment (Levy, 2005) as do the ones about celebrity women. Their Twitter activities are not conflated with ideas about authentic displays of self, endemic to the stories about female celebrities. For men, their authenticity and their sexualization is not a focus. Their disclosure is treated as reactive—that is, a reaction to a specific set of circumstances. In contrast, the majority of tweets by celebrity women are prescriptive of deeply-seated personality flaws, emotional and mental instability, and/or indicative of a deep desire to attract the male gaze.

Twitter, Surveillance, and the Male Gaze

On Twitter, the production of the gaze is by the objects themselves—helping the site to meet E. Ann Kaplan's (1983) call for women to "own the gaze[15]" (p. 96). In the context of this analysis, this act is indicative of the post-feminist sensibilities that favor flaunting one's sexuality

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[15] Here, Kaplan (1983) is building on Mulvey's (1975) assertion that the male gaze ties women to their meanings, rather than allow them to make meanings of their own (p. 6), by clarifying that while the bearer of the gaze (the one looking) doesn't actually have to be male (it can be a woman embodying the male gaze), given our language and the structure of the unconscious, to activate the gaze is to always be in the masculine position (p. 30).

because feminism already supposedly eradicated women's oppression. The women are "acting" and not "passively appearing," (Kaplan, 1983, p. 26) by posting pictures of themselves, thus welcoming the male gaze.

The women are portrayed as autonomously objectifying themselves (these aren't photos stolen by paparazzi, they are freely uploaded by the celebrities themselves), and because what celebrities tweet are their "authentic" presentations of self online, celebrities cannot claim that they are being wrongfully objectified by others (SHE tweeted this. We took this picture from HER Twitter account and SHE uploaded it). This bind enables a logic whereby female celebrities are agents in the stories produced about them, and one that dislocates them from a cultural context in which women's bodies are fetishized—from a corporate/economic context in which they are required to maintain a certain level of celebrity for their career to survive, and a digital context in which Twitter (and the Twitter public) hails them to perform celebrity in a particular way (through disclosure and "authentic" interaction). As agents, female celebrities are subject to the old interlocking systems of oppression, in a post-feminist manner: women have the power to and are encouraged to sexualize themselves as a way to control their own image, but are relegated to a sexist context where doing so reproduces the male gaze.

CHAPTER THREE:

AUTHENTICITY AND FEMININE EXCESS: TWEETING FAILED

HEGEMONIC FEMININITY

Beginning in 2008 when Myspace pictures of then 15-year-old Miley Cyrus sharing a Twizzler with a female friend roused suspicion about her sexuality (Handy, 2008), Cyrus has seen quite a bit of negative press, much centering on her social media activity as evidence of the "transgressions of a childhood icon" ("Miley Cyrus," Huffington Post, November 27, 2011), citing her transition from adolescence to adulthood as a loss of innocence. More recently, several tabloid articles claimed that the pictures on Cyrus' Twitter account of her new haircut were, as one author put it, the "latest sign that the teenager could be suffering from some form of emotional trauma" (Emery, 2012). Cyrus has consistently been constructed as a good girl gone wild by celebrity media (see Silverstein, 2012). Many white celebrity women, like Cyrus, are the subjects of scrutiny by mainstream celebrity gossip writers. The articles about them unrelentingly highlight the ways they are "acting out" (celebitchy.com, 2010) and "spinning out of control" (Adam, 2010). Scholars have noted an apparent media panic surrounding girls and young women with regard to their increasing sexuality and behavioral "freedom" (Day, Gough, & McFadden, 2004; Jackson & Tinkler, 2007; Lyons & Willot, 2008; Redden & Brown, 2010). At the same time, we continue to see the "sexually excessive," "wild," and "up for it" (see Gill, 2008, p. 53-54 and Dobson, 2012, p. 7-8) woman-figure prominently on display in popular media texts, contemporary fashion, and advertisements, offered up to women and girls as "an 'aspirational' powerful and bold young femininity that promotes

willfulness, self-display, and self-gratification (linked to feminized commodity consumption) as something…to aim towards" (Dobson, 2012, p. 6).

In fact, Emma Renold and Ringrose (2011) observe that popular media texts (TV shows, movies, books) focusing on young women's sexualization "has itself emerged as a growth market (p. 390). It seems that in post-feminist popular culture, femininity is increasingly defined by competing notions of (white, heteronormative) femininity: women are at once called to cultivate a very narrow hyper "sexy" feminine image (Dines, 2010; Gill, 2007; 2009; Hamilton, 2008; Paul, 2005; Walter; 2010), yet also maintain a "respectable," "worthwhile," and appropriate gender subjectivity (Dobson, 2012; Harris, 2004). What this means is that they are barraged from two sides with a set of rules if they are to achieve ideal femininity: they must be sexy, but a particular kind of sexy. They must be "real" and "authentic" by disclosing themselves to us, but not show too much or too little.

I begin this chapter by referencing Cyrus to initiate a discussion of how U.S. celebrity women's use of Twitter animates a problematic discourse about women and "excess." It is nothing new that the media are fascinated with the celebrity woman's body—how it is put on sexual display, how it changes, and how it is a spectacle that transgresses hegemonic femininity. Women are expected to strive toward achieving abstract notions of beauty, and when they fail, popular media and its constituents are there to both scorn (Brown, 2005) and help them transcend their imperfect performance through self-improvement and professional assistance (Marwick, 2010). I'm interested in the way Twitter facilitates a public marking of white celebrity women as symbols of woman who are objectionable and threatening to dominant norms because of what they tweet—in other words, my focus is on how the women are constructed in popular gossip magazines, not in ascertaining whether or not the portrait painted is "accurate" or not.

White celebrity women tweeting is a relatively new tabloid spectacle, one that makes the rules and boundaries of culturally acceptable femininity clear: the tabloid articles I analyze

consistently position the women in terms of their transgressions from hegemonic femininity. As a result, the women are framed in ways that invite the reader to share in a public evaluation of their mental and emotional stability. I seek to bring into conversation feminist, critical race, and digital media theory with surveillance and celebrity studies to examine how the use of Twitter animates post-feminist ideas of empowerment and agency to discipline femininity. The stories in the articles examined are not just about the troubling or eccentric lives of celebrity women, they are about the strict rules for appropriate white, post-feminist femininity. This is a story of failure: all the ways in which the women do not measure up to heteronormative conventions of white femininity.

Surveillance and Authenticity

The turn to social media sites like Twitter by celebrities as a tool for enacting authenticity facilitates a reaffirmation of gendered and racialized scripts. As Holmes and Negra (2011) stress, the discursive production and consumption of women in the contemporary celebrity landscape needs more attention from feminist scholars, with particular consideration for how discourses of post-feminism intersect with celebrity and the gendering of fame. I build on Elizabeth Boosalis' and Kim Golombisky's (2010) observation that "mediated images of women's bodies are manufactured ideals… designed to produce 'guilt and shame' among real women who inevitably fail in comparison" (p. 25). I argue that white celebrity women who tweet are authenticated through their failure to achieve these manufactured ideals via the tabloid coverage of their tweets, thus equating "real" women with the failure to achieve ideal femininity. The women are not portrayed as performing, instead, their tweets are used to authenticate that they are "troubled" woman who have "gone awry in a whirlwind of excess" (Samaniego, 2011). These women come to function as a collective cautionary tale that reinforces cultural standards of normalization. I use Susan Friedman's (1995) understanding of intersectionality which considers both dominant and oppressed identities to

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be situationally constructed, multiple, and interlocking in order to highlight how whiteness and patriarchy function together, through the punitive surveillance of white women's displays on Twitter, to characterize a particular white hegemonic femininity.

The way surveillance and authenticity function together is central to my analysis of how the celebrity women in the articles I examine are constructed. By authenticity, I am referring to the ways in which performances of identity, manifested through tweets or pictures posted on Twitter (twitpics), become "understood as evidence of backstage behavior and a 'true' personality [in the] seemingly authentic and socially connected context of online social media" (Ellcessor, 2012, p. 60). Dubrofsky and Hardy (2008) note in the context of reality TV that "Good reality TV (RTV) participants perform not performing" (p. 378) to achieve authenticity while under surveillance. In the same vein, I posit that white celebrity women who post frequently about their lives on Twitter are constructed as not performing, because their bodily or emotional displays (pictures of themselves and tweets they post) are offered in a seemingly unscripted way, unmediated by a PR team (the appearance is that they are unmediated, but a PR team may in fact be part of the process), and are often perceived as "slip-ups."[16] Celebrity tweets might be posted by a member of a celebrity's PR team rather than by the celebrity, but my concern is with the ways in which Twitter privileges the notion that tweets are immediate and authentic, and how this seeming authenticity is used to legitimize claims about the mental or emotional health of the women tweeting.

Much like RTV, surveillance of the self on Twitter (knowing people are "following" your posts) is desirable because it can be used to prove one's authenticity (Andrejevic, 2004, p. 145; Couldry, 2002; p. 287; Dubrofsky, 2011, p. 19; Pecora, 2002, p. 348). Celebrities who seem more authentic on Twitter are more "worth" following, and so the site works better as a fame-

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[16] Sometimes celebrity women's tweets are deleted after they receive negative feedback from followers, or after a particularly controversial interaction or "outburst," but the tweets are rarely deleted before the tabloid media call attention to them, archiving them for all to see and read about. Because they cause controversy or are quickly deleted, the tweets are constructed as authentic "slip-ups" by the celebrity.

building/maintaining tool (see Marwick & boyd, 2011). Building on Marwick and boyd's (2011) idea that Twitter's structure fosters a space of individuality, where, in terms of celebrity practice on Twitter, the focus of those "looking" is on making sense of the actual "real" person behind the tweet, I posit a relationship between celebrity Twitter practice and a "call to authenticity": As described in the Introduction to this thesis, the "call to authenticity" involves a structure wherein celebrities (women) must "practice celebrity" on Twitter (Marwick & boyd, 2011) by tweeting increasingly personal information and pictures that point to a "true, inner-self" in order to be deemed more "authentic" and "real." The catch with such surveillance is that one doesn't necessarily have control over how that authentic self is mediated, in turn.

Hegemonic Femininity and Authenticity

As recent scholarship suggests, ideal femininity is defined by a particular economy of characteristics that make up the ideal woman: she is white (Charlebois, 2010), slim (Gill, 2007; Wolf, 1991)[17], youthful (Dull & West, 2002)[18], heterosexual (Tolman, 2002), able-bodied (Batacharya, 1994), middle-to upper-class (Cole & Zucker, 2007; Pietsch, 2009), her personality is nonassertive and underconfident (Schippers, 2007), her body is fashioned and manicured, is adorned with just the right amount of clothing (Gimlin, 2002; Marwick, 2010), and is sexually appealing but not overly sexual (Brown, 2003; Eder, 1995; Tolman, 2002)[19]. Moreover, the labor involved in this process of fashioning the body is evident but not excessive or unnatural (see Bartky, 1990; Dow, 1992; Gimlin, 2002; Marwick, 2010). Women are hailed to regulate their physical bodies and behaviors according to this ideal.

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[17] Naomi Wolf (1991) argues insightfully that the cultural idea of thinness is a marker of feminine obedience, a symbol of self-control, discipline, and conformity to the standards of hegemonic femininity.

[18] Dull and West (2002) point to a troubling double standard where age markers such as wrinkles or grey hair make men more distinguished and respectable while they serve to marginalize women.

[19] The idea that women must strike a balance between not sexual enough and too sexual is referred to as the virgin/whore dichotomy (Allen, 1983; Rushing, 1989; Millet, 1970).

In addition to having the ability to properly regulate the display of her *physical* self, the ideal woman must also discipline her *emotional* displays. The ideal woman is appropriate in her public displays of emotion (she shows some emotions in particular, appropriate ways) (Dubrofsky, 2011; Weedon, 1987) yet is sure to keep any "excessive" thoughts and feelings (unwitting, out of control displays of anger, sensuality, sorrow, depression) to herself to present herself to men as non-confrontational (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 53), and predictable. In terms of excessive displays of emotion on Twitter, any woman conveying too much anger, too much sadness, or who posts on Twitter without proper emotional restraint is portrayed as irrational or out of control. However, the amount of emotion that is acceptable, yet still authentic, is never specified. The women must comply with a certain unstated economy in their bodily and emotional displays: not too much, and not too little (Dubrofsky, 2010, p. 53). This combination of physical and emotional requirements creates a "normative yardstick for all femininities" (Cole & Zucker, 2007) in which non-conforming women are judged by others for their (in)ability to measure up. In its normalization, the ideal woman has learned to properly regulate herself, appropriately presenting herself under surveillance. If she doesn't, she is consequently rendered "unfeminine" (Halberstam, 1998; Sturken and Cartwright, 2001).

Moreover, because we are seeing transgressions of these ideals on Twitter (while the woman is knowingly under surveillance by followers), the mental or emotional instability implied by the "excessive" tweets is confirmed as authentic. For example, white country singer LeeAnn Rimes took to Twitter to defend herself regarding tabloid criticism of her "skin and bones" body weight after she sang at the NCAA basketball championship in April 2011 by tweeting: "Good lord! I do not work out too much nor do I starve myself. I'm so over this and moving on" (LeAnn Rimes: Starving for Attention?" In Touch, April 13, 2011). The article mentions that Rimes also tweeted a picture of her torso in an effort to substantiate her defense. One article called upon "relationship expert Dr.

Gilda"[20] to pathologize Rimes's tweets as "bizarre," stating that "she must prefer the public focus on her body instead of her personal life," (LeAnn Rimes: Starving for Attention?" In Touch, April 13, 2011). Rimes had recently had a publicized affair with a married man, and, drawing on the "too skinny" picture Rimes posted, the assumption made here was that through her excessive tweeting, she was starving for a "different kind of attention" (LeAnn Rimes: Starving for Attention?" In Touch, April 13, 2011). Why would she post her "too thin" body on Twitter, under the glare of public scrutiny? Why would she spend an "excessive" amount of time defending her image on Twitter against the one constructed by mainstream tabloids? If she were well, she would be *above* such criticism, right? The assumption made by this article is that she must be mentally or emotionally unwell, exceeding the bounds of "hegemonic post-feminist femininity," authenticated through her failure.

In her analysis of rape narratives in film and television, Sarah Projansky (2001) argues that hegemonic femininity, or the normalized and invisible standard of ideal femininity, is secured in post-feminism by an emphasis on women's "choice" in striving for it (p. 80). Furthermore, notions of hegemonic post-feminist femininity are inherently white, and so such this discourses are about white women, accessible to white women. It is only the white celebrity women who are portrayed as transgressing the hegemonic boundaries of femininity and thus in need of regulation. I consider whiteness as a seemingly natural, "authentic" set of characteristics (not necessarily physical ones) that provides symbolic and material benefits for those inside its invisible, yet defined, boundaries (Dyer, 1997; Nakayama & Krizek, 1999). I emphasize conceptualizing whiteness as a regulating mechanism that "functions to reinforce a system of domination" (Nakayama, 2000), because the issue is less about whiteness as an attribute and more about "what whiteness is used to do" (Projansky and Ono, 1999). For this reason, I point to Projansky and Kent Ono's (1999) notion of

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[20] Dr. Gilda Carle is a TV personality and self-proclaimed "relationship expert to the stars," according to her website http://www.drgilda.com/.

"strategic whiteness," which is situated in popular culture as a white "common sense" against which everything is positioned. I highlight the way whiteness is deployed to shape popular understandings of hegemonic femininity through representations of celebrity women who tweet.

While women of color were present in the sum of the articles I collected for this analysis, they were virtually absent from the articles which discussed excessive displays (either through the body in pictures or in emotional tweets) as troubling, positing the white women as in need of mental or emotional help. I argue that this absence serves to strategically center whiteness by highlighting excess as a white woman's "problem," to be pointed at and regulated in order to protect the boundaries of hegemonic femininity (and by default, whiteness). Furthermore, because of their absence in the narrative, women of color are basically irrelevant in this context. In other words, they are not only absent, but need not apply for hegemonic femininity because they simply don't even qualify. Considering the extensive existing critical race research which posits women of color as always already physically, emotionally, and mentally unstable or out of control (Allard, 1991; Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1991; Davis, 2006; Goodmark, 2012; Madriz, 1997; McCaughey, 1997; Meyers, 1994, 1997; Mukhopadhyay, 2008), their absence in this context implies that we are not to be *concerned* with the intentions behind anything *they* post—they are naturally and always excessive and, most damning for their chances to be hegemonically feminine, not white.

"Hegemonic Post-Feminist Femininity"

Because of its emphasis on individual empowerment, post-feminism provides a productive context for analyzing the construction of celebrity women on Twitter, since the dominant communication practices on Twitter involve individuals maintaining a customized profile and addressing a large public. As discussed in the Introduction, feminist media studies scholars have recently produced an extensive body of work that maintains post-feminism as a contemporary

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popular culture sensibility (Gill, 2007; Gill & Schraff, 2011; McRobbie, 2009; Negra 2009; Projansky, 2001) that permeates understandings of gender and technology (Banet-Weiser; 2011). Post-feminism advocates for the so-called "empowerment" of women as a replacement for feminism through an emphasis on consumer citizenship, self-representation, and sexual expression as progressive and liberating. At the same time, post-feminism continues to celebrate idealized hegemonic femininity. Women are positioned as individuals participating in society, responsible for their own success and actions. Under post-feminist logic, women are rallied to "choose" to adhere to the norms of femininity in order to be marked as empowered and desirable subjects (McRobbie, 2009). In this sense, women have the *illusion* of empowerment: As Sarah Projansky (2001) argues, the focus on individual rights by post-feminist discourses hide how racism, sexism, and cultural assumptions about femininity make the relationship between "choice" and "empowerment" an oxymoron (p. 79).

Post-feminism's emphasis on the individual, paired with the normative standards of femininity inscribed on celebrity women, highlights an important way that surveillance functions: Surveillance exercises control over even the most intimate of personal behaviors and beliefs of individuals through processes of self-regulation. As Foucault (1977) articulates, there "is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorizing to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against himself" (p. 155). Efforts to discipline women by inscribing standards of beauty and behavior, and concurrently enforcing that women are the sole bearers of this burden in a postfemininst context, are simultaneously efforts to normalize unequal hierarchies of race and gender. In the case of my analysis, the displays of women—pictures of their bodies and the content of their tweets—are used to both tell us stories about their emotionality and judge them against an unfeasible hegemonic post-feminist femininity.

Susan Bordo (1993) argues that the body functions as "a symbol for the emotional, moral, or spiritual state of the individual" (p. 193). Because their celebrity marks them as public property for our (the public's) surveillance, when a celebrity woman does not adhere to the particular economy of bodily and behavioral rules of hegemonic femininity, this failure is interpreted as a threat that must be openly and actively addressed. These are the women that can, more than any other women, achieve hegemonic femininity (Brown, 2005, p. 82). When they actively "prove" to us on Twitter that they aren't hegemonically feminine, the default response seems to be to pathologize those moments of excess in an effort to point them out as transgressive. A focus on the mental or emotional state of celebrity women evidenced by their Twitter activity is a prevalent trope in the articles I collected, which indicates that these women, through participating on Twitter, have all in some way ventured too far out of the contained, "ideal" feminine space they are supposed to inhabit. Some transgress by their inability to properly regulate the displays of their bodies in twitpics, and others transgress by their inability to contain their emotions through their tweets. While these types of excess (bodily displays, emotional displays) manifest differently, the consequence is the same: each woman is pathologized, discussed as mentally or emotionally unstable, and in need of help.

Pathologizing Excessive Displays of the Body

In a post-feminist context, women are encouraged to locate their "self" in the body, and become good citizens by involving themselves in the process of "becoming" the ideal woman (Jones, 2008). "Becoming" is a state in which one is hailed to engage in practices that are understood to improve (or maintain an ideal version of) both the inner and outer self, and the physical appearance of the ideal body serves as a marker for the mental and emotional self (Brown, 2005, p. 79). When the body doesn't measure up, and particularly when the woman chooses to display the

body despite its transgression, the mental and emotional stability of the woman is also confronted. In the case of Twitter, claims about a white celebrity woman's mental stability are made when she tweets pictures of her body that don't conform with the ideal feminine image she is hailed to convey. Cyrus serves as a fitting example of how this works: An avid Twitter user who currently has almost 12 million Twitter followers, Cyrus was the subject of several articles I found. One article tells us about her "rapidly vanishing waist and rock-hard abs" which she achieves through "exercise and diet." This story is paired with a twitpic posted by Cyrus of her wearing baggy pants and a cropped t-shirt that shows her midriff (Goodhand, 2012). By mentioning exercise and diet along with Cyrus' photo share, the article implies that Cyrus does work on her body for our consumption, which would typically be appropriate labor for the ideal body, but only if it remains within the appropriate economy of visibility: Here, she is showing us *too* much of her process of becoming—by posting pictures of her (too-)toned midriff, she shows us that she is fixated on her own looks (the article tells us Cyrus's "outlandishly skimpy outfits" attest that she is "screaming out for attention"), and that she has gone too far in her dieting and exercise because she is "struggling to avoid feelings with an exercise and dieting obsession that often leads to compulsive behavior and results in an eating disorder" (Goodhand, 2012).

Cyrus posting the picture on Twitter, because it shows us too much of her process of becoming, indicates she is in excess of the limited bounds of the standards of hegemonic femininity. Cyrus's example is troubling because of the contradictory relationship between agency and representation highlighted in this set up: She is surveilled and constrained by old gender expectations of beauty, but the articles construct her as failing those standards of her own accord (*she* chose to fashion her body in a particular way and then post pictures of it; *she* is therefore responsible for how they reflect on her), while also raising concerns about her mental stability (in this case, an impending eating disorder). Unlike other candid photos that are sold to magazines by paparazzi photographers

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and published in the same gossip media, this particular image of Cyrus taken from her Twitter account is not disputed for its authenticity. Since the photograph was allegedly not cropped, edited, or taken against Cyrus's will, the author can imply with more certainty that Cyrus is in need of mental and emotional help. The same media that recently held Cyrus up as a picture of healthy female beauty ("Top 10 Beauty Tips from Miley Cyrus, Post24.com, February 8, 2012), in an instant, portrays her as facing a serious eating disorder. This example shows how hegemonic post-feminist femininity serves as (white) women's paradoxical privilege: they are authenticated through their performance of the process of "becoming" by posting pictures for the public's consumption, but that very process is disempowering, as it subjects them to a punitive surveillance that labels them as authentically failed women.

Other articles also illustrate this post-feminist double-bind, where celebrity women are pathologized in the disclosure of their process of "becoming." One article tells us that Courtney Love, a white woman, is "going Twitter mental, maybe for the last time" based on an assessment of the seven photos she posted "wearing either too many layers of clothes or not enough" ("Courtney Love goes Twitter mental, maybe for the last time," HolyMoly.com, May 1, 2012). Her "crazy" posting of "semi-naked" pictures to Twitter, we are told, is an "addiction" for which she needs "help" to overcome ("Courtney Love goes Twitter mental, maybe for the last time," HolyMoly.com, May 1, 2012). Similarly, LeAnn Rimes is said to have a "habit of posting provocative bikini pictures of herself on Twitter" in an article that again discusses her Twitter use as an addiction and her Twitter behavior as predictive of mental instability (Murphy, 2012). The photos posted by Rimes are framed as grotesque and inappropriate for public consumption (ironic, as the websites nonetheless plaster her photographs at the top of each article). "Sadly, she [Rimes] seems to have gone *way* too far" (LeAnn Rimes: Starving for Attention?" In Touch, April 13, 2011), *InTouch* tells us, detailing how thin Rimes appears. The wrong body, or too much body, signifies a personal and public failure

to achieve hegemonic femininity. But, these women have not only transgressed the bodily ideal, they committed a more significant transgression: they are showing it to us by willfully posting pictures of themselves for public consumption. Because their "crazy" posting of pictures on Twitter are conveyed as "addiction[s]" for which they need "help" ("Courtney Love goes Twitter mental, maybe for the last time," HolyMoly.com, May 1, 2012), the women are positioned as unaware that the pictures they've posted are so egregious in their depiction of hegemonic femininity. Therefore, by posting photos that do not conform, they must be authentic women who are suffering from mental breakdowns. Based on a few pictures they posted on Twitter, these women are judged as out of control, unstable, broken, and "ultimately unfeminine" (Brown, 2005, p. 82).

Ella Shohat (1991) describes inferential ethnic presences as the various ways ethnic cultures are present in a mediated context without always literally being represented by racial markers or ethnic characters. Dubrofsky and Hardy (2008) discuss that on white-centered RTV shows, an inferential ethnic presence[21] of whiteness is indicated in the way that white subjects appear to achieve authenticity more easily under surveillance than participants of color. We are invited to be concerned with white celebrity women on Twitter who are deemed authentic through of their inability to conform to hegemonic femininity. While the bodies of women of color are a focus of the articles[22], when the articles suggest we should be *concerned* about how excessive the displays are, the concern is only for the *white* women. People of color—particularly women of color—have historically been represented as inherently emotionally, mentally, and physically unstable and out of control (Allard, 1991; Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1991; Davis, 2006; Goodmark, 2012; Madriz, 1997; McCaughey, 1997; Mukhopadhyay, 2008), and are consistently framed as irrevocably sexually, physically, and emotionally excessive. Therefore, concern over the excesses of women of color is

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[21] Ella Shohat (1991) describes inferential ethnic presences as the various ways ethnic cultures are present in a mediated context without always literally being represented by racial markers or ethnic characters.
[22] See Chapter Two for a full account of how the bodies of women of color were discussed in the articles

unnecessary, because they are naturally deviant in a white racial frame. White women, however, because of their whiteness, should be able to find a balance between too much and too little.

Pathologizing Excess Through Emotional Displays

The tabloid stories about photos posted by celebrity women aren't the only way the women are damned--their displays of emotion are used to pathologize them as well. Several television scholars have noted the way that contemporary media set ups often rely on emotional mechanisms that function to reveal an authentic "true" self. For instance, Brenda Weber argues that makeover-based RTV shows rely on the "before-body to after-body" model where only reinvention, empowerment, and surrender to experts can uncover your "true" self, Amy Dobson (2008) discusses in her analysis of girls' webcam use how the exposure of their "private" selves are positioned as paths to success and self-realization, and Laura Grindstaff's (2002) work recoups the term "money shot" from pornography to describe moments on RTV talk shows when guests lose control and express joy, sorrow, rage, or remorse on camera. These mechanisms, as each of these scholars articulate, serve to reproduce old forms of cultural hierarchy and inequality, even while seeming to challenge them. Building on Grindstaff's (2002) RTV "money shot," Dubrofsky (2009) makes a poignant argument about a particular narrative of the display of emotion in her analysis of the RTV show *The Bachelor*: "the occurrence of the money shot, where white women express emotions so overpowering they are beyond a person's control [and] …in a way that is unexpected and breaks social norms" (p. 356) cues the woman's exit from the show, and signifies her failure to be the right woman for the bachelor—failure to find love. Her elimination serves as a "cautionary tale about the dangers of losing control of one's emotions" (p. 366). Dubrofsky argues that surveillance serves here to regulate the gender scripts one must follow (a particular economy of emotion, specifically) to even entertain the possibility of finding love.

Similarly, I argue a particular narrative is outlined about the women who tweet in the articles I analyzed that hinges on their displays of emotion when they tweet a reaction to an event, interact with others, or post some inner musings—particularly when such displays seem unwitting, capricious, or excessive. One article tells us that white *Real Housewives of New Jersey* star Jacqueline Laurita has "lost her mind" as a result of an angry "Twitter exchange" with another white co-star Danielle Staub ("Jacqueline Laurita Has 'Lost Her Mind,'" UsMagazine.com, June 18, 2012). While no details of the "massive blowout" were given, Laurita's behavior (which the article implies correlates with events involving Laurita on *Real Housewives of New Jersey*), is labeled "crazy" ("Jacqueline Laurita Has 'Lost Her Mind,'" UsMagazine.com, June 18, 2012). Soon after, another article references Laurita's Twitter activity, opening with the sentence, "The looney bin is baaaaaaackkkkk!" about Laurita's tweet ruminating over her relationship with her ex-friend: "*U can 4give a person&start over or 4give them but choose2keep that toxic person out of ur life while they look 4 their table flipping moment. When u argue w/a moron,u become a moron.U have2rise above&remember who &what is really important in life.Some things don't matter.Let it go*" ("Jaqueline Laurita Calls Teresa Giudice A Moron! Goes on a Crazy Twitter Rant!" Allabouttrh.com, February 9, 2013). The discord between the economy of emotion these celebrity women are supposed to confine themselves to and their expression of strong emotions like anger, sadness, or betrayal through their tweets, points both to their authenticity and their concomitant failure to achieve a hegemonic post-feminist femininity. As Dubrofsky (2011) articulates with regards to women's displays of emotion under surveillance, there is a required balance that few women actually achieve: "not too much, not too little" (p. 53). On Twitter, they are authentic by showing us emotion, but they are transgressing the appropriate economy of displaying the "right" kinds and amount of emotion, which raises concerns about their mental stability.

When tweets make up the majority of a person's presentation of self, the story constructed around the tweet is the "real" story about the woman's supposed emotional trouble. For instance, a young white RTV star who was on the series *Big Brother* in 2007, Chanelle Hayes, is described as "mental" when she tweets angrily about the behavior of her long-term boyfriend Jack Tweed, after he allegedly texted her a picture of himself "giving the middle finger to the camera, while up against a busty blonde girl in a nightclub." She uploaded the photo to Twitter "telling Jack to 'go and enjoy himself'" (Ferrell, 2012). The article focuses on the ways in which Hayes's "unacceptable behavior" exceeds the bounds of what "every other normal [woman should do]" ("Chanelle Hayes Dumps Jack Tweed on Twitter," HolyMoly.com, August 29, 2012). The author effectively frames her "choice" to address Tweed's indiscretion on Twitter as shameful, referencing her tweeting things like "Some people in this world make me sick. To think I shared my life with one of those people for nearly 3 years turns my stomach. #scumbag." Her emotional outburst, posted for all to see, is described as "mental" ("Chanelle Hayes Dumps Jack Tweed on Twitter," HolyMoly.com, August 29, 2012). Moreover, the article makes a point to discuss how the tweets were quickly deleted, further verifying the authenticity of the outburst. Lynne Arnault (1989) argues that when women express strong emotion, such as anger in response to perceived discrimination or unjust treatment, they are often discredited as overly or excessively emotional and excluded from public discourse (p. 201). Even though Hayes and Laurita's emotional displays are angry responses to specific events, these women are portrayed as losing control over their emotions—the focus is on the emotion behind the tweet, rather than the incident the tweet refers to. Because they are displaying emotion under surveillance in the public space of Twitter, their "loss of control" over their emotions is pointed to as an individual inability to conform to the standards of hegemonic post-feminist femininity by adhering to a particular, unstated economy of emotion. The articles tell a misogynistic

narrative of failed womanhood (they either sacrifice authenticity by not tweeting to us in a way that shows "real" emotion, or they do, and those displays transgress hegemonic femininity).

The authenticity of the excessive, unwitting, out of control nature of emotional displays is most apparent when it is clear that the woman *acknowledges* her desire to (but inability to) control their emotions. According to Dubrofsky (2011), in the context of *The Bachelor*, the inability to control emotional displays leads directly to the women's failure to find love on the show. A correlation between this admitted "loss of self-control" and authenticating failed hegemonic post-feminist femininity is apparent in the portrayals of celebrity women who tweet. Rimes serves as a fitting example in that her construction as failing to meet the standards of hegemonic post-feminist femininity relies on her Twitter use being positioned as the root of her problems. Seemingly the victim of an irrepressible desire to tweet, Rimes, we are told, is "unable to just unsubscribe and turn it off" (Murphy, 2012), and her tweeting is a "habit" (Murphy, 2012), suggesting that her Twitter activity is compulsive, like an addiction she can't kick. The articles make clear connections between her Twitter behavior and her mental stability. While the articles about her are in agreement that "Hollywood has changed her for the worse," her need for professional emotional help is framed as having been "caused" by her Twitter activity, in particular, as the result of "a series of exchanges with Twitter users critical of how she and husband Eddie Cibrian hooked up during his marriage to ex Brandi Glanville" (LeAnn Rimes' Childhood Mentor: 'Hollywood Has Changed Her For the Worse," RadarOnline.com, September 7, 2012). Another article mentions how Rimes has sued two women for invasion of privacy in relation to Twitter, in conjunction with how she cannot control her need to address the "bullying" she faces on Twitter. The article tells us that Rimes feels like "it's been difficult to tune people out" on Twitter (Murphy, 2012), suggesting that she knows it is her Twitter behavior, which she cannot help, that aids in her failure to stay within the bounds of appropriate feminine behavior, because the more she addresses it the more she is displaying herself

as unstable. This construction is important in that it highlights how Twitter can be framed as a dangerous activity for the women because in using it they do not keep their emotions in check, but at the same time the labor they are doing by tweeting is necessary for their authenticity.

In some cases, the articles I analyzed use "experts" who serve to verify that the women's emotions (manifested in their tweets or twitpics) are excessive or worthy of concern in order to predict larger emotional trouble and mental disorders. These often unidentified "experts" (doctors, therapists, concerned friends, or anonymous witnesses) are presented as authorities, subjecting the tweets to a pseudo-psychological evaluative gaze, which positions the celebrity women as deviant, out of control, and in need of help. Referring back to the articles about Cyrus, we are told that an "expert" who analyzed her Twitter behavior advises that "The Disney star's flaunting of her diminishing weight is far from the only red light that suggests deep underlying issues. She appears obsessed with talking about what she eats, perhaps in an effort to prove she is not counting calories. 'up all night eatin chicken&waffles/making beats,' 19 year old Miley tweeted on Thursday. Last month she complained about her incredible hunger, writing: 'thinking about eating ziggys dog food I'm so hungry'" (Goodhand, 2012). According to this logic, Cyrus's posting about what she ate while working on an album one month and posting about being hungry in another instance is evidence that she is obsessed with talking about her diet in an effort to hide an eating disorder. This construction simultaneously capitalizes on her failure to perform hegemonic femininity (both because her body is too thin and bare, and because she is talking about food too much—which healthy women do not do). Here, the picture she posts of herself and the two tweets the article references become evidence out of a cry for help. I want to note that Cyrus has never been, as far as the public knows, professionally diagnosed with an eating disorder, nor has she ever "confessed" to having diet/body image issues.

What is troubling in the tabloid stories featuring white women celebrities is the implication that the women are, as a result of their Twitter behaviors, dangers to themselves or to others. Because they are considered "out of control," we should be wary of the potential effects of their emotional outbursts at all times. Several feminist scholars have noted a white masculine anxiety over the infiltration of feminine emotions in public spaces, drawing attention to the ways women's embodiment of emotion (both in how their bodies exude it and how they publically express it) is constructed as threatening to men because of its (inherent or biological) instability and unpredictability (Dale, 2001; Grosz, 1994; Kristeva, 1980). This construction of unpredictable excessive femininity affords the articles license to predict larger emotional trouble and in some cases mental disorders.

Male Celebrities

While a number of the articles I found about the women discuss their mental and emotional states, this was not the case in the articles about celebrity men. When Charlie Sheen (who made headlines for much of 2011 for drug and alcohol abuse and marital problems) deleted his Twitter account, *TMZ* reported it was "because he just didn't feel like he was getting anything out of the Social Network anymore" ("Charlie Sheen Flip-Flops," TMZ.com, 2012 August 14). When he reactivated his account, the emphasis of the article was not speculation on why he quit or if he was mentally stable (as was the case with the women in these situations), but on his "upcoming episode of 'Anger Management'" (his new TV show) and how he intends to keep his tweeting "professional" ("Charlie Sheen Flip-Flops," TMZ.com, August 14, 2012; "Charlie Sheen—Twitter Sucks," TMZ.com, 2012; "Charlie Sheen Quits Twitter," UsMagazine.com, July 14, 2012). Similarly, Kanye

West's[23] Twitter activity is characterized as "always entertaining, often outrageous musings about life on the A-list," complete with a "signature" all-caps typing style ("Kanye West Returns to Twitter," UsMagazine.com, 2012). His tweeting is deemed noteworthy as zealous commentary on style and fashion—as a service he is rendering—rather than as a reflection on his character or personality. *US Magazine* tells us in one of his "notorious Twitter rants" that he was "passionately sharing his fashion pet peeves and used New Yorkers as his inspiration" (Eggenberger, 2012c). This article about Kanye is accompanied by a picture of him walking purposefully wearing a large fur coat, with a caption noting his appearance at Fashion Week. The picture and caption clarify that Kanye's "rants" on fashion are part of his professional celebrity fashion duties.

In another instance, Ashton Kutcher received some negative press after the Pennsylvania State University child sex-abuse scandal broke in 2011, when Penn State football coach Jerry Sandusky was accused of sexually assaulting at least eight underage boys on university property. Head football coach Joe Paterno was fired after information came to light that he knew of Sandusky's behavior and didn't report it. During the thick of the coverage, Kutcher tweeted comments defending Paterno, expressing outrage over Paterno's firing. His followers admonished his support of Paterno. Kutcher quickly followed up saying he did not know the context of Paterno's dismissal from Penn State when he sent the tweet. He then made it known that he would be handing over his Twitter account to a PR team. In the articles that covered the story, Kutcher was presented as able to disassociate from his Twitter "mistake" by handing over his account, with related articles centering on him as a "master of Twitter" based on his number of followers and his unrelated career advancements (Dobuzinskis, 2011). Had this been a story about a female celebrity, she most likely would have been constructed as crazy for her outburst, or at the very least, somehow out of touch with reality for not knowing the details of the Paterno story. The articles are only

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[23] Because the focus of this piece is on female celebrities, I have not parsed out the ways in which racialization functions when it comes to male celebrities.

concerned with the mental health of women. Mental distress for men is something that occurs as a result of an event and is overcome (Harper, 2009, p. 189).

The Twitter activities of celebrity men are presented as celebrity performance, not conflated with ideas about authentic displays of self, as is endemic to the stories about celebrity women. When it comes to notable twitter behavior by male celebrities, the discussion centers on how the Twitter accounts are constructed as professional extensions of a celebrity career with a focus on content, rather than indicative of a troubled emotionality. At worst, the men have momentary lapses in judgment, and at best, their tweets are intentional performances.

Authenticating (Failed) Hegemonic Femininity

In this chapter, I have sought to interrogate the ways in which Twitter offers a new twist on validating discourses about white women and their individual (post-feminist) failure to perform hegemonic femininity. Their personal disclosure, the means by which they "achieve" an "authentic" (celebrity) identity, is also used by the tabloids to construct them as excessively emotional or out of control. The public consumes oppressive images of these women, presented via their "real" displays, which lend authenticity and thereby confirm that women are irrational, excitable, and unstable, while men only enact emotional labor as a means to an end (Knights & Surman, 2008, p. 3). This conception of women does not align with a hegemonic post-feminist femininity which posits women as "passive" in her public displays of emotion (Weedon, 1987), in control of her feelings (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 53), and compliant with a certain economy of emotion in her displays of it: not too much, and not too little (Dubrofsky, 2010, p. 53). Instead we see women who are emotionally and physically excessive, showing us too much of the process of "becoming." To not show enough in her Twitter displays, she runs the risk of being deemed an inauthentic celebrity figure; showing too much presents her as an authentic spectacle of a failed woman. Notions of

authenticity, surveillance, gender, and whiteness work together in this context to summon (and reaffirm) a particular and enduring narrative: women are punitively surveilled and constrained by gender and race expectations. What is new is that they are constructed as actively damning themselves. The public spectacle of celebrity women on Twitter may be characterized by the tabloids as troubling, individual cases of "la condition feminine," but the pattern and pervasiveness of the narrative reveal the inner-workings of normalization as facilitated by surveillance in a post-feminist context.

CONCLUSION:

WHERE DOES TWEETING LEAVE CELEBRITY WOMEN?

This thesis critically analyzed mainstream "gossip" coverage of US celebrities on Twitter to highlight the significance of the use of Twitter by celebrities to authenticate and reproduce gendered and raced ways of seeing. The ideas produced about women in the articles I examined generated several questions about authenticity, surveillance, race, and gender: How do post-feminist questions of empowerment and responsibility become articulated when individuals operate the technologies that functionally surveil them? What are the particular implications of surveillance for gendered and racialized bodies when thought about in the context of a post-feminist culture? What does a focus on the relationship between surveillance and post-feminist logic uncover?

Bringing into conversation notions of authenticity and surveillance, my thesis observed how what I term a "call to authenticity"—the use of technologies of self-surveillance to verify "authentic" displays of the self—serves to animate contradictory post-feminist paradigms of femininity which function together to discipline and subjugate celebrity women on Twitter. In Chapter Two, I considered the contradictory ways in which US celebrity women's bodies are constituted visually, through the pictures they post on Twitter. My analysis demonstrated that while the women are presented as "empowered" through the act of using Twitter, their bodies are reconstituted as subject to an oppressive male gaze. I employed the "call to authenticity" to articulate the post-feminist bind Twitter enables: The more frequent and "personal" their posts are, the better Twitter functions for them in maintaining their celebrity. In answering this call, the more effort they put into (crafting, and then) displaying their bodies, the stronger the invitation is to gaze

upon them. If they are white women, their displays are bound up in neoliberal notions of labor, where the hard work they put in through diet, exercise, and fashion is consistently referenced as a prerequisite for their reward—the "privilege" of showing off their bodies for all to see (see "Britney Spears Shows Off," UsMagazine.com, July 6, 2012). If they are women of color, there is no mention of any hard work that went into their bodies; rather, their bodies are presented as emerging naturally, and hypersexually—no amount of diet or exercise could fashion their "wild" bodies (see "Too Sexy for Twitter?" RadarOnline.com, May 31, 2012). Both white women and women of color are presented as answering the call to authenticity by choosing to post photos of themselves on Twitter, for our consumption, in the name of post-feminism's "sexy" femininity. Meanwhile, possible stories about male celebrities are either sidelined altogether, or focus on an event or their career, with next to no mention or scrutiny of their bodies, despite that male celebrities, too, post pictures of their bare bodies on Twitter (see Eggenberger, 2012a).

In Chapter Three, I went further into my discussion of the call to authenticity by showing how Twitter animates a problematic discourse of women and feminine "excess," focusing on how Twitter's privileging of immediate and "authentic" tweeting is used to legitimize claims about the mental or emotional health of white celebrity women who belie an unstated standard of feminine appearance and behavior. When white celebrity women do not adhere to the particular economy of bodily and behavioral rules of hegemonic femininity, their failure is interpreted as a threat (to femininity, and to whiteness) that must be addressed. These moments of "excess" (showing too much—or not enough—body, body labor, emotion, etc.) are pathologized, and point to the consequence of the misogynistic narrative of failed womanhood: when you are "crazy," you are undesirable. Woman of color are always already sexually, physically, and emotionally excessive, and therefore always already are failed women by the standards of hegemonic post-feminist femininity. There is no mention of concern over the emotional or mental state of women of color as indicated

by their Twitter activity; they are inherently undesirable. Again, despite similar Twitter activity by celebrity men (see Charlie Sheen Flip Flops," TMZ.com, August 14, 2012), the emphasis in the articles I examined was not speculation on behavior and mental or emotional health; rather, connected, however vaguely or abstractly, to their careers.

The Parameters of "Ideal" Femininity

Exploring a text that demonstrates the impossible and frustrating push and pull between post-feminism's emblematic "sexy" femininity and what I term "feminine excess" highlights the ever-changing and never-ending to struggle of performing femininity. At a given moment in a given context, for whom are we performing, how, why, and with what risks?

Ralina Joseph (2009) argues that with its reliance on what are assumed to be biologically-based performances of heterosexuality, femininity, and whiteness, post-feminism is also a politicized notion informing everything from attacks on Title IX, to rape laws (p. 240). I propose that the issue of post-feminism is also illustrated in how we characterize celebrity women who tweet. Post-feminism incites celebrity women to tweet to maintain their celebrity on Twitter, under surveillance, but with rules: they must express emotion in a particular way, present themselves to be visually objectified in a particular way, and otherwise constrain themselves to rigid, fundamentally impossible gender expectations to not "fail" at womanhood. Being perceived as a "real" person by your followers in this set up (celebrity Twitter) is all about disclosing personal pictures and information (ostensibly for personal pleasure), slip-ups (tweeting things one shouldn't or didn't mean to), posting "unedited" photos, and otherwise unscripted, unregulated behavior (see Marwick and boyd, 2011). This sort of "real" woman activity aligns with post-feminism's "brand" of femininity (Banet-Weiser (2011) that promotes sexual initiative, exhibitionism, self-gratification, and "sassiness" (Dobson, 2012; Gill, 2011; Harris, 2005). However, because tweeting means one is not simply *being* "sexy" but

rather is actively *showing* us all the sides of "sexy femininity" (the labor involved in fashioning the body, an acknowledgement of the process of "becoming," and the general impossibility of achieving the standards of ideal femininity), the women who tweet are instead often constructed as "excessive," and therefore disciplined. Bev Skeggs (2005) argues when media discourses call out (admonish or express concern over) women's appearance and behavior when it exceeds the unstated economy of appropriate femininity, the boundaries of femininity are remarked (p. 974) and the limits of proper, respectable gender subjectivity are re-constituted (p. 977). The problem, when these displays are positioned as authentic, is that they become more available and normative scripts in what is continually a sexist and racist media landscape (Dobson, 2012, p. 13).

I contend that the repetition of the problematic images depicted of these celebrity women have significant social and politic impact on what the "public imagines" femininity and womanhood to be (Tyler, 2008, p. 19)—as Gill suggests, media representations don't just represent the world, but they constitute and generate it (Gill, 2009, p. 142).When celebrity women are presented as "agents" in the stories produced about them, they are dislocated from a cultural context in which women's bodies are fetishized, from a corporate/economic context in which celebrities must do things (like use Twitter) to maintain their fame, and a digital context in which the architecture of technologies like Twitter enables a surveillance that interpolates them into a reproduction of cultural discourses about race and gender.

My goal with this thesis was to engage in a critical conversation about Twitter, surveillance, celebrity, race, and gender, employing Bryant Keith Alexander's (2006) line of inquiry: "Who gets to tell the story—why, how, and with what consequences?" (p. xiv). The articles used in my analysis are mainstream US publications, covering US celebrities. Twitter is a tool used worldwide, and so culturally, my critique was limited to observations about US popular culture. Subsequent research might approach the questions posed here transnationally, to explore ideologies and social conditions

dialogically and comparatively (Marciniak, 2007; Mohanty, 2003; Shohat, 2002). There are endless other negotiations, mediations, and stories to be told about how we perform, authenticate, appropriate, and exploit intersectional identities (Johnson, 2013) on social media sites like Twitter. Carolyn Nielsen (2011) calls for a focus on the complexities of identities, as well as the ways we evaluate, interpolate, and embrace identity as multiple, fluid, and difficult to define. I argue that sites like Twitter afford us this kind of investigation, as people insert themselves and their "data" (bodies, performances, narratives) into these spaces. It is my hope that this work helps to generate these types of critical conversations in a variety of contexts.

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