Fourth-wave Feminism and How TikTok Assists in the Normalization of the Fourth-wave Feminist Notions of Empowerment, Toxic Masculinity and Female Agency Through Virality

Rebecca Nysted Gudmundsen & Stefanie Mae Sejersen

Marianne Kongerslev

Master's Thesis

10th Semester MA English

2 June 2021

Table of Contents

Abstract

The rapid spread of content across the TikTok platform is a result of virality and assists in normalizing several fourth-wave feminist key issues such as sexual liberation and female agency. The examination of the feminist tendencies highly pronounced on TikTok has resulted in thematic conduction of analysis of TikTok content, selected based on themes concerning sexual liberation, body-positivity, and female agency. The structure of the platform and its high number of users, as well as it being one of the most downloaded apps in the latest century, makes TikTok an ideal social platform to examine. The thesis seeks to uncover how TikTok assists in the normalization of several fourth-wave feminist notions through virality. Ultimately, it is found that TikTok manages to transfer several of the sentiments that correlate with contemporary feminist ideology, through the selected data, across the platform. Additionally, the examination of the displayed crowd behavior reveals that several creators of the selected data have assisted in the normalization of feminist key issues by utilizing the TikTok platform.

1. Introduction

Inspired by feminist and crowd theory, our thesis argues that TikTok normalizes some of the core values of the fourth-wave feminist movement. The purpose of our master's thesis: TikTok assists in the normalization of the fourth-wave feminist notions of sexual liberation, toxic masculinity and female agency through virality, is to examine current feminist tendencies that are prominent on the TikTok platform. Specifically, the tendencies that are concerned with sex-positivity, toxic masculinity, empowerment, and agency, as well as body-positivity and discrimination. Furthermore, the distribution of content to users across the platform, as well as the potential to form crowds based on viral content, has piqued our interest. The TikTok platform is interesting due to its structure and algorithms in terms of using hashtags to mass distribute content, ultimately assisting in the rapid spread of viral content. TikTok functions as an app that makes it possible for people to create and share short-video content (Schellewald). Despite being a relatively new social platform (2017), TikTok has managed to be downloaded more than 2 billion times, making it one of the most downloaded apps within the last decade (Schellewald). However, due to its rapid growth TikTok has not only gained a central place in popular culture but has also become a subject of public scrutiny (Schellewald) which is one of the reasons why it is interesting to examine. Additionally, it would be interesting to discuss whether the platform's structure is more useful and effective than other similar social media platforms when it comes to passing on cultural comments on subjects and tendencies such as feminism, sexual liberation, and female agency.

The selected data has been examined with a multimodal approach, applying David Machin's notion of Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen's terms concerned with

multimodal analysis, namely, gaze, angle, and distance. Kress and Van Leeuwen's notion of social semiotics, understanding that multimodality in this sense is concerned with modes constructed from semiotic resources. Le Bon's crowd theory and feminist theory will provide the theoretical framework for the thesis. Crowd theory will function as an analytical tool to identify crowd behavior as well as what constitutes the crowds formed based on the themes of the selected data. Lastly, feminist theory will function as the main tool for data selection as well as identifying and examining the different feminist notions and sentiments within the selected data. Throughout the analysis, it is recognized that each piece of data is aesthetically different, thus there will be both similarities and differences found, despite the data sharing a common theme. The hashtags selected as criteria are: *#feminism*, *#women/#woman, #girl/#girls, #body/#body positivity/#positivity*. Consequently, the videos will be examined individually to establish the different modes of communication, as these will ultimately vary.

The multimodal analysis seeks to unveil how the 'actor in the image' is presented in relation to the viewer. To analyze the cultural messages within the data it is necessary to consider which modes make meaning in the context of the selected data. In terms of the aim of the thesis, the modes that will be analyzed are music, speech, gaze, angle, and distance, posture, and objects such as clothing or make-up. Ultimately the multimodal analysis seeks to uncover the importance of the relations between 'the actor in the image' and the viewer, as this will increase viewer engagement, ultimately assisting in the formation of crowds. As mentioned, the thesis focuses on key issues found in the fourth-wave feminist movement, thus the multimodal analysis will be conducted according to the themes of toxic masculinity, body-positivity, and sexual liberation and empowerment. In order to conduct our analysis, feminist theory will be applied to our evidence to establish how the shared sentiments relate

to feminist ideology and history. Judith Butler's theoretical framework in her works *Gender Trouble* and "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory" will be applied to the analysis, to uncover potential feminist sentiments of gender. Similarly, Susan Pickard's work in A*ge, Gender and Sexuality through the Life Course: The Girl In Time* is applied to the evidence to reveal feminist ideology in correlation to sex-positivity, female agency and discrimination.

The analysis based on Le Bon's notion of crowd theory, seeks to uncover how certain feminist and cultural sentiments transcend on the TikTok platform. The analysis based on crowd theory is highly focused on virality, as viral content is arguably the most contagious to the suggestible viewer. In this sense, the selected data is considered viral content. Furthermore, the accessibility of social media makes interactions between users and creators easy and furthers a rapid spread of content and sentiments. In addition to Le Bon's theory, the research made by Carsten Stage in the article: "The online crowd: a contradiction in terms? On the potentials of Gustave Le Bon's crowd psychology in an analysis of affective blogging" (2013), will be applied to understand how Le Bon's theory applies to contemporary media and when examining the potential of the formation of online crowds. As with the multimodal and feminist analysis, the crowd analysis will be conducted according to the feminist key issues that are central to the thesis. The concept of postfeminism and feminist critique of the fourth-wave movement will be discussed and compared to our analytical evidence, to uncover how the fourth-wave ideology corresponds with feminist or postfeminist ideology. The historical exclusion of feminist ideologies and identities and the wave metaphor will be discussed, in regard to the critique of the contemporary movement.

 2. Multimodal Theory

There are several definitions of what multimodality is as well as how it is used by scholars. "Multimodality is an interdisciplinary approach that understands communication and representation to be more than about language" (multimodality glossary: multimodality). This definition of multimodality explains what multimodality is and how it is generally understood and used. However, to sufficiently account for what multimodality is and how it is used, Carey Jewitt's definition from the work: *Introducing Multimodality* will be applied. Multimodality is a term that is widespread in the academic world. Jewitt explains that the number of publications that feature multimodality as a term has grown exponentially since the mid-1990s when it first originated. Furthermore, written works featuring multimodality have provided platforms for scholars in the academic fields of semiotics, linguistics, media studies and more, by addressing a wide set of different research questions (Jewitt 1). Jewitt also explains that multimodality can be generically defined or described as a phenomenon or object of interest and as such, as stressed by Jewitt, "'We make meaning in a variety of ways', or 'We communicate in a variety of ways'" (Jewitt 1). Yet it is important to note that depending on which academic field or discipline in which multimodality is applied, the articulation of the concept varies. Thus, it can be problematic to talk about multimodality without explicitly defining "one's theoretical and methodological stance" (Jewitt 1). Generally speaking, multimodality is critical to the strict 'division of labor' that seemingly exists among the disciplines that traditionally focused on meaning making, based on the notion that we are seeking to account for, we consider "different means of making meaning" as something that is not separate but "almost always appear together: image with writing, speech with gesture, math symbolism with writing" (Jewitt 2) and the list goes on. Multimodality recognizes "how different kinds of meaning making are combined into an integrated, multimodal whole" (Jewitt 2). Furthermore, it was the recognition of the "need to

move beyond the empirical boundaries of existing disciplines and develop theories and methods that can account for the ways in which we use gesture, inscription, speech and other means together to produce meanings that cannot be accounted for by any of the existing disciplines" (Jewitt 2-3).

2.1. Semiotics

Semiotics is often referred to as "the study of signs" as it is the study of the communicative meaning within signs. The British semiotician Daniel Chandler elaborates on the definition of a sign:

> A sign is traditionally defined as 'something which stands for something else' (in the medieval formula, *aliquid stat pro aliquo*). All meaningful phenomena (including words and images) are signs. To interpret something is to treat it as a sign. All experience is mediated by signs, and communication depends on them. Semioticians study how meanings are made and how reality is represented (and indeed constructed) through signs and sign systems (Chandler 2).

As Daniel Chandler states, the sign is defined by being a meaningful phenomenon, such as images and writing. The study or theory of signs sometimes referred to as "symbols", has its origin in ancient greek philosophy, and consists of influential contributions by philosophers such as Hippocrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Augustine of Hippo. Contemporary semiotics consists of two main traditions, which stem from two theorists: linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (Chandler 2). While Saussure is recognized as the founder of a branch of semiotics, Saussure's scientific tradition has been less relevant, as contemporary semiotics deals less with early semiotic and scientific thought and is increasingly occupied with relevant critique and the representation of reality (Chandler 7-8). Chandler argues that "Semiotics is perhaps best thought of as a way of looking at the production of meaning from a particular critical perspective (Chandler 8). Therefore, the semiotic approach is quite relevant, as our analysis seeks to uncover the signs produced in our selected data. Within the semiotic field, the semiotician Roland G. Barthes has contributed

with a theoretical framework dealing with two concepts of signification, denotation, and

connotation (Machin 21). Drawing on Barthes, David Machin's work in *Introduction to*

Multimodal Analysis elaborates on Barthes' two concepts and deals with four carriers of

connotation (Machin 27). The first level of meaning, denotation can be defined as depiction

and the literal meaning. For instance, when an image denotes, it documents, typically objects,

places, or individuals (Machin 23). However, denotation is not neutral, as denotation or

representations have an effect on how certain things are perceived. Choices of angles,

distance, and objects in the image define what is seen (Machin 24). Machin elaborates:

> Even at the level of denotation, a photograph can define the subject. For example,
> whether we photograph a person alone or as part of a group can influence whether
> they are shown as an individual or a type. … Denoting people in particular places or
> groups, from different angles, in distance, or close up will affect how we see them
> (Machin 24-25).

As Machin argues, it is important to note how denotation is not arbitrary and can carry

meaning, but denotation should not be confused with connotation. Therefore, Barthes

distinguished between the "everyday knowledge" or literal meaning, while connotation deals

with the general sentiment or values that are communicated through representation (Machin

25). The second layer of meaning, connotation, is concerned with the "hidden" meaning

found within the image, in other words, the ideas and values that we associate with an image.

Machin defines and focuses on four elements that carry connotation, based on Barthes'

notion. Machin argues that poses are one of the carriers of connotation. According to Barthes,

the individual has knowledge of poses, which each carry meaning and connotation that is

drawn from associations (Machin 27). Based on Barthes' notion, Machin argues that the

physical placement of the participant is therefore an important carrier of meaning. Machin

elaborates:

> Poses are one important way that such values can be connoted. A search with the term
> "women and freedom" throws up thousands of images. Many of these show women
> jumping, with their arms and legs out wide. This posture - the openness of the body -

and the implied energy are used to connote freedom. Of course, this is not the kind of freedom that involves liberation from military occupation or a political regime, or freedom of thought. This is a freedom from physical restraint which is used as an associational metaphor for freedom from mental restraints or worries (Machin 28).

When examining visual data concerning the participants, it is relevant to examine the communicative potential in the poses found in the selected videos. Similar to poses, the association is important for other carriers of connotation, such as objects and settings. Certain objects are associated with certain groups or places and objects in relation to each other can have certain meaning potential. For instance, Machin mentions an example of a businesswoman, arguing that the laptop "connotes mobility and independence. A large PC would not have the same effect" (Machin 32). Settings are, similarly, connected to an association for the viewer. Machin explains that some settings have the purpose of denoting, as the viewer is able to make out visual details that indicate a certain location. More abstract settings, however, carry connotation, as the viewer does not recognize the setting, while transferring meaning by association and providing symbolic meaning (Machin 24). Machin elaborates with examples of landscapes, and how they can provide connotative meaning: "Both are open spaces without confinement. By association they can connote the lack of confinement in terms of work, financial pressures, etc. Recurrent in the image bank photographs under freedom are coastlines, beaches, and lakes. The settings carry associations of relaxation and free time" (Machin 25).

2.2. Modes

"Mode is a socially shaped and culturally given semiotic resource for making meaning" (Kress 79). In this sense, images, writing, layout, music, gestures, speech, moving images, soundtracks, and even 3D objects are all examples of modes applied in representation and communication. Gunther Kress explains in his work *Multimodality: A social semiotic approach to contemporary communication* that phenomena and objects that are products of

social work, have meaning in their cultural environments. Meaning that even "furniture, clothing and food 'have' meaning, due to their social making, the purposes of their making and the regularity of their use in social life" (Kress 79). The definition of what a mode is continues to be debated, some writers may view color and layout as modes, thus considering writing to be multimodal (because it consists of more than one mode), while others would not make this distinction. In other words, the definitions of mode are subjective to the communities that acknowledge them (multimodality glossary: mode). According to Kress, the introduction of the terms mode and multimodality, produce a challenge to the already established notions of language:

> After all, if all modes are used to make meaning, it poses the question of whether some of these meanings are merely a kind of duplications of meanings already made in, say, speech or writing - maybe for relatively marginal reasons such as 'illustration' or for aesthetic reasons such as 'ornamentation' - or whether they are 'full' meanings, always quite distinct from other modes (Kress 79).

In this sense, it is rather difficult to define mode as a concept, since a mode's meaning is culturally and/or socially given based on its communicative purpose or potential in a given context: "If the latter is the case, then 'language' has to be seen in a new light: no longer as central and dominant, fully capable of expressing all meanings, but as one means among others for making meaning, each of them specific" (Kress 79). In its essence, this is what the social semiotic approach to multimodal representation focuses on, namely that "different modes offer different potentials for making meaning" (Kress 79). These potentials have an essential effect on the choice or choices of mode in specific communicative situations. Kress uses the example of the English written language. English like most languages, consists of words, clauses, and sentences that are organized through grammar and syntax, or in other words, language has rules. In addition to this, written language has graphic resources that include font, size, spacing, color, etc., and lastly, to frame its units, written language has syntactic, textual, and social-semiotic resources: "In writing, the frames use graphic resources

such as punctuation marks, visual means such as space between words or around paragraphs and increasingly, 'blocks' of writing, often in different colors, on surfaces such as pages or screens or others" (Kress 79). Although these resources are found in most written languages and not just English, they have different cultural meanings or specific forms. Essentially, different cultures might use different script systems, which makes it problematic to speak of writing in general terms: "writing in this culture or that, with an alphabetic or a character-based script. What applies in this respect to the mode of writing applies to all modes" (Kress 79).

In terms of the focus of this thesis, the theoretical, as well as methodological approach applied, will be Gunther Kress' and Theo Van Leeuwen's notion of social semiotics. In this sense, multimodality is concerned with modes that are constructed from semiotic resources that make meaning in social and cultural settings, Jewitt elaborates: "If a 'means for making meaning' is a 'modality', or 'mode', as it is usually called, then we might say that the term 'multimodality' was used to highlight that people use multiple means of making meaning" (Jewitt 2). In addition to the multimodality term explained by Jewitt, David Machin's account for the concepts concerned with the positioning of the messenger or 'actor in the image' in relation to the viewer, namely gaze, angle, and distance will be applied in the analysis of the data. In *Introduction to Multimodal Analysis*, chapter 6 "Representation of Social Actors in the Image" Machin explains how different factors such as gaze, angle, and distance play a part in the connection and relation that is created between the actor in the image - in this case, the main figure in the video, and the viewer. Machin explains how alignment is necessary between the actor in the image and the viewer for there to be contact and interaction. 'Gaze' is concerned with the extent of encouragement that the viewer receives from the participant, to engage with them while 'angle of interaction' has the possibility to create power

relationships and involvement, and 'distance' is much like social distance and suggests either intimacy or distance (Machin 110).

3. Methodology

As Kress states "Each mode does a specific thing: image shows what takes too long to read and writing names what would be difficult to show" (Kress and Van Leeuwen 20). As the platform's content is based on the use of several modalities, such as sound, image, text, and music, it is important to consider these when analyzing the cultural messages of the content. To conduct a sufficient analysis while working towards the goal of our thesis, it is necessary to combine multimodality, crowd theory, and feminist theory. Multimodality will function mainly as the methodological approach as the subjects of analysis are multimodal texts in the shape of moving images. In terms of analysis, several modes of communications, as well as semiotic resources, will be analyzed according to how they fit the exact subject of analysis. Each video is aesthetically different, although they share some of the same themes and messages, the overall aesthetic and how each person in the selected data is represented, is different in nearly every video. Consequently, the videos will be examined individually to establish the modes of communication, as these videos vary in content and expression. As the analysis will be conducted based on texts found on the social media platform TikTok, crowd analysis will function as one of the main theories along with feminist theory. Crowd analysis will be applied both to select subjects of analysis based on the potential to form online crowds as the subjects will have received enough views and likes to be considered viral and thus contagious content, as well as examining the potential and how this functions in terms of forming crowds online. To identify crowd behavior, the analysis will include how the message in the video is received and perceived by the recipient, specifically examining the interactive functions of the app, such as liking, sharing, commenting, and stitching. Lastly,

feminist theory will also function as part of the selection process because the subjects of

analysis must center around themes that are part of the feminist ideology and concept. In the

process of selecting the subjects of analysis, different hashtags used on the platform in the

distribution of content, have functioned as criteria for selecting the specific subjects of

analysis, namely, *#feminism, #women/#woman, #girl/#girls, #body/#body*

positivity/#positivity. Some hashtags are combined, as we found that the videos revolved

around the same subject, even though the hashtags consist of different conjugations. As the

different conjugations appear arbitrarily, concerned with the same sentiment, we chose to

broaden our criteria for data by using several hashtags combined. Ultimately each video is

selected based on the hashtags used in the title or description.

Lastly, virality is a term that we wish to define in terms of what we view as viral

content. Although the videos chosen for this project do not necessarily have several million

views each, they are considered viral due to the number of views and spontaneous

interactions they have received according to the amount of time they have been posted on the

TikTok platform. Examples of videos that have different amounts of views but still would be

considered viral are the following: The video by @sixbabiestv (app. 1) that was posted on

December 12th, 2020 and has approximately 1.7 million views and nearly 600.000 likes

(TikTok @sixbabiestv). Although this is not the video with the most views, it has only been

available on TikTok for less than a year, thus it is evident that this video is viral based on the

rapid spread resulting in the number of views, in a relatively short matter of time. In contrast,

the video by @mrvdk was posted on October 28th, 2020, and has 7.3 million views, 2.4

million likes, 44.100 comments and has been shared almost 90.000 times (TikTok, @mrvdk),

which is much more than the video by @sixbabiestv, however, it was also posted two months

before the @sixbabiestv video. In addition to being considered viral based on the interaction

levels, both videos also feature the *#feminism* in the title or description of their video, which

makes them accessible on the same page on TikTok as well as to the people who search *#feminism* on the platform, ultimately assisting in the rapid spread.

4. Multimodal Analysis

When analyzing the selected data, it is important to look at the overall aesthetic and setup of the video as well as how the content creator (the messenger) is positioned within the data. This is where multimodality and the modes of communication come into play. In order to analyze the cultural message within the data, it is necessary to look at the modes that create the meaning as well as how they function in the given context of the video content, which is the subject of analysis. As Gunther Kress explains in *Multimodality: A social semiotic approach to contemporary communication* (2010), it is not only images, writing, music, gestures, speech, and so forth that are considered modes of communication, even phenomena, and objects such as clothes and furniture, are considered to 'have' meaning. Thus, it can be problematic to analyze different modes of communication, as there is no clear definition of what a mode is. However, for the purpose of this analysis, the modes of communication analyzed will be: 1) Music, 2) Speech, 3) Gaze, angle, and distance, 4) Posture, and 5) Objects such as clothing or make-up. When analyzing the position of the 'actor in the image', meaning the person that is central in the video, in relation to the viewer, it is necessary to include the concepts of gaze, angle, and distance, explained by David Machin in *Introduction to Multimodal Analysis* 2016. However, before examining the videos in-depth, it is important to establish who the viewer is. Machin mentions the viewer in his work, but does not explain exactly *who* the viewer is, thus it is necessary to explain who the viewer is according to the purpose of this paper. Keeping in mind that the aim is to examine how crowds are formed based on the content of the selected videos, as well as what constitutes the crowd, the viewer

is considered the subject that will later take part in the crowd. More precisely, the viewer in this sense is the subject that engages with the content and is suggestible to its contagion. Similar to the idea that is central in Stanley Fish's notion of reader-response theory, it is recognized that the meaning is not inherent in the video/text, but in the mind of the reader/viewer. In this sense, the text/video is merely a canvas that the reader/viewer projects their reactions onto - the text/video does not provide one single interpretation but is a cause of different thoughts created by the viewer (Oxford Reference, Reader-response).

4.1 Toxic Masculinity and Toxic Gender Discourses

Looking at the first subject of analysis, represented in the two images (app. 1), there are two actors in this video, however, the focus lies on the woman who is being shamed by the man. The woman's gaze is mostly directed towards the viewer and only a few times at the man who is shaming her, encouraging the viewer to engage with her, as opposed to the man who is only gazing at the woman. In this sense, the viewer relates to the woman rather than the man. Machin explains how Kress and Van Leeuwen do not "believe that images can realize all of the speech acts. But we can think about images in terms of the two *image acts* 'offer' and 'demand'" (Machin 111). In this sense, the gaze can either demand or offer something to the viewer. When the actor in the image is looking into the camera, the viewer is directly acknowledged, thus demanded to do something. When the actor does not look into the camera, the viewer is not acknowledged, thus rather offered something as opposed to demanded to do something. The demand is not only determined by the gaze of the actor in the image, but by many different factors, such as an inviting smile or an angry expression. Depending on these factors, the viewer might experience different relations with the actor in

the image, for instance if the actor is angrily gazing at the viewer, they might feel inferior to the actor (Machin 111). The woman in the video looks annoyed, she does not smile at any point. Her annoyance is more so directed towards the man shaming her than the viewer. Furthermore, she looks into the camera when she answers his questions, again demanding something from the viewer. Viewer relations are thus determined by the factors of her facial expression as well as her posture. In addition to images having the potential to offer and demand, the angle that a person is viewed from has the potential to offer different relations between the actor in the image and the viewer. In demand images, the viewer is directly acknowledged by the actor in the image, while the viewer of offer images becomes a voyeur. Furthermore, Machin explains how involvement can ultimately be changed by different viewing positions and angles as well as the image acts 'offer' and 'demand' (Machin 113). Consider the difference in effect if we view a photograph of a group of men in ski masks, holding guns, looking towards the frame, directly at us, compared with where we view the same scene from the side. The first is threatening as it suggests involvement. The second is detached and creates objectivity (Machin 113).

Machin distinguishes between different angles, namely, the vertical angle, oblique angles as well as the distance between the actor in the image and the viewer. In the video by @sixbabiestv (app. 1), the woman appears aligned with the viewer, in this sense, the viewer associates her as equal because she is not looked up to, nor down on. Machin also explains how women's lifestyle magazines would often carry sections where the women would be featured wearing very little clothing. Initially, this would make the women look vulnerable and objectified as sex symbols for men (Machin 115), which is interesting when looking at the woman in the video (app. 1) because even though the woman is wearing a low cut top and a short skirt, showing quite a lot of skin, she is not viewed from a vertical angle making her

look like the victim, instead, she is aligned with both the man and the viewer, signifying

equality rather than objectification. Although there is a point to be made about whether this

video was consciously composed or coincidental, the point about the woman being depicted

as superior as opposed to victimized still stands. Even if this video was spontaneously filmed,

it does not change how the woman and the entire situation is being depicted and thus viewed.

In addition to angle, the distance between the actor in the image and the viewer plays

a role in terms of physical proximity and intimacy associated with the actor in the image. "In

images as in real life, distance signifies social relations" (Machin 116). Naturally, we keep a

distance from people we are unfamiliar with and get close to the people we know and like,

such as friends and family. In images, this closeness or farness is translated into 'size of

frame' (close shot, medium shot, long shot, etc.) (Machin 115). Looking at the video (app. 1),

the woman is presented in a close shot through most of the video, making it possible for the

viewer to watch her facial expression while she is talking. This creates intimacy between the

woman and the viewer thus making it possible for the viewer to identify with her on a more

personal level than if she had been further away.

In the video by Jess Megan (app. 2), the woman is looking to the side and away from

the viewer in the beginning, which is different from the video by @sixbabiestv. However, the

gaze does not stay like this throughout the video. When she begins to recite the comments left

on some of her previous videos, she looks straight at the viewer. In this case, she is still

demanding something from the viewer by talking and gazing directly into the camera. She is

encouraging the viewer to listen to what she has to say and engage with her as opposed to

merely looking at her. The fact that she looks away from the viewer in both the beginning and

the end of the video, indicates that she is done talking and now it is up to the viewer to determine what to do next and to what extent the viewer wants to engage with the woman.

In addition to this, the angle that the actor in the image is viewed from is important in terms of establishing a relation between the actor and the viewer. Machin explains how demand images directly engage with the viewer and how offer images make the viewer an observer of the scene depicted (Machin 113). The woman presented in the video by Jess Megan (app. 2) is aligned with the viewer in terms of angle, indicating equality, which is also found in the previous video by @sixbabiestv. Although Jess Megan is not viewed from the front throughout the video, she is mainly viewed from the front, increasing viewer involvement (Machin 113). Lastly, the association of physical proximity and intimacy is determined by the distance between the actor and the viewer. In images, as in real life, distance signifies relations (Machin 116). In terms of size of frame, the woman in the video by Jess Megan (app. 2) would be considered medium-shot, because she is positioned close enough to the viewer to be able to view her facial expression as well as her whole body and thus body language and posture. The ability to watch her facial expression creates intimacy between the actor and viewer as we are able to tell from her facial expression whether she is angry, sad, happy, etc. making us (the viewers) connected to the actor on a more personal level than if she had been further away.

The next video is a response by @mrvdk to another video made by @27relle (a video of a man questioning whether women are in fact being treated as unequal to men), this video by @mrvdk (app. 3) is different from the videos by @sixbabiestv and Jess Megan on several points. Firstly, the actor in the image is a man and secondly, the video setup is different in terms of gaze, angle, and distance. In terms of gaze, the actor does not acknowledge the

viewer a lot, apart from when he reaches the end of the facts that he is reciting. An example

of this is when he says, "women are 47% more likely to suffer severe injuries in car crashes

because safety features are designed for men" (@mrvdk, TikTok). In this example, he is

gazing away from the camera as he states the fact, until the very end when he looks directly

into the camera and encourages the viewer to engage. By mostly looking away from the

viewer, the actor mainly offers information to the viewer rather than demanding a certain

response, which is also indicated by the fact that he is reciting actual facts as opposed to

talking from personal experience, hence why the actor does not acknowledge the viewer

directly, as the information that is offered is subjective to women and not the actor. The actor

looks mostly serious, however, there are moments in the video when he grins sarcastically

while gazing directly at the viewer, to say that the video he is responding to is ridiculous

because the creator @27relle is oblivious to the facts presented. This expression from the

actor is exactly what makes the viewer connect and interact with the actor because factors

such as facial expression determine the extent to which the viewer can relate and engage with

the actor (Machin 111). While the gaze, in this case, does not demand, the angle from which

the actor is viewed changes the level of involvement: "Our involvement in a scene can also

be changed through viewing positions, through the angle of interaction around the horizontal

plane" (Machin 113). Through most of the video the actor is viewed from the side, and the

viewer is an observer, while, at the points where the actor is aligned with the viewer,

involvement is suggested because the viewer is directly engaged. However, for the most part,

the viewer is merely an observer that is being offered information, much like with the gaze.

Ultimately, the fact that the actor is mostly viewed from the side, decreases involvement, and

creates objectivity. In terms of physical proximity and intimacy, it is important to note that

this video was made as a response to another, in which case it is to be examined differently than the ones by @sixbabiestv and Jess Megan. If we assume that this response is being viewed by the creator of the original video (@27relle), the proximity and distance indicate something different than if a random person watches it. The actor is presented in a close-up, which establishes associations of closeness and intimacy (Machin 116). However, close-shots can also suggest a threat (Machin 116), which is interesting because the actor in the video does come very close to the camera very quickly, which could be interpreted as a threat or intimidation. We know from real-life experience that if someone we do not know enters our personal space and comes very close to our face, we become intimidated by it and uncomfortable, as suggested by Machin, we like to keep a distance from people we do not know (Machin 116). In this sense, the message of this video and the relation to the actor in the image can be interpreted in several ways, either as intimidating or as an effort to defend women's rights as feminism is the main theme of the video.

The video by Andrea Areli (app. 4) is titled "Old men got out of their car to slut-shame me! But they couldn't stop me from doing this dance" using the hashtags: *#dance #dancechallenge* and *#girl.* Examining the video by Andrea Areli (app. 4), the actor's (the woman) gaze is directed towards the viewer, only interrupted once when she gazes to the side to look at the people passing by, encouraging the viewer to engage with her. The gaze towards the viewer also furthers the establishment of a connection between the viewer and the actor. Which relates to the image acts 'offer' and 'demand'. In the case of the video by Andrea Areli (@andreaareli_) (app. 4), her gaze demands something from the viewer, by looking directly into the camera. The demand, however, is not determined by the gaze on its own, according to Machin, the demand is determined by other factors such as facial

expression and posture (Machin 111). The woman in the image (app. 4) looks determined, however not in an angry way as she does smile while gazing into the camera for some parts of the video, demanding the viewer to engage with her in a positive, yet serious manner.

In addition to offer and demand, the angle that a person is viewed from has the potential to offer different relations between the actor and the viewer. Naturally, if you look up at someone, they appear bigger than you and might be associated with someone of higher status than yourself, furthermore, this puts them in a physically stronger position than you, generally these associations "influence the way we assess the relative power of the person depicted" (Machin 114). The actor in the image (app. 4) is viewed from the front, although we do not exactly look up at her, her chin is facing upwards and her head is leaned back, making her look slightly down on the viewer signifying superiority. However, her posture does shift later in the video and her face tilts back down into a position that is aligned with the viewer's, signifying equality. In this sense, the actor firstly demands to be taken seriously and viewed as superior to the viewer, while later demanding to be looked at as an equal, making the viewer's associations with her more positive than negative. Her posture and the angle she is viewed from (app. 4) are interesting in terms of what was previously seen on the covers of women's magazines. As Machin explains, these magazines "often carry images of women wearing very little clothing. Such semi-nudity may make them appear vulnerable or objectified as sex objects" (Machin 115). This becomes relevant in this case because the title indicates that the video is concerned with slut-shaming, assuming that the woman in the video (app. 4) is the subject of this slut-shaming, it is relevant to explain how the effect of being victimized is reduced by viewing the actor from a slight upward angle. Which makes the viewer look up to the woman, moving her out of her vulnerable position and instead gives

her power and status (Machin 115). Lastly, the distance between the actor and the viewer has the potential to further either remoteness or intimacy. In terms of the image (app. 4), the actor is presented in a medium shot, she is close enough to view her facial expression however far away enough to view her whole body - meaning that the viewer is neither close nor remote in terms of relation to the actor, suggesting an impersonal relationship. However, by being able to view her facial expression, it does allow for the viewer to have a somewhat intimate relation with the actor as opposed to the relation being solely impersonal (Machin 116).

The next video to be examined is the video by @jewishjasminetea. This video is titled "The 8 Women: part 7" and includes the hashtags *#ihatecapitalism #feminism #men #makeup #activism #democracy #biden #sexism #women #politics #fyp #biden2020 #socialism #sa*, in this case it is the *#feminism* and the *#women* that fills the criteria for selecting the video in general, however, the *#sexism* makes it especially interesting to examine in terms of toxic masculinity. The gaze, angle, and distance in this video is very different from the video by Andrea Areli because the actor in the image (the woman) is not necessarily the focus here, although she is the only person in the video, the voice-over reveals that the video is not actually about her or concerned with her personal experience(s) with sexism/toxic masculinity. The actor in the image also does not engage with the viewer hardly at all, her gaze is turned away from the camera through most of the video, even towards the end when her face is turned towards the camera, she still does not gaze directly at the viewer (app. 5), making the engagement level from the viewer minimal as well as creating remoteness rather than intimacy between the viewer and the actor. The angle that the actor is viewed from is aligned with the viewer signifying equality, however the focus of the video shifts around throughout. In the beginning, the camera is focused on the actor, and then it

quickly shifts to the red lipstick that she then applies to her eyelid. In this sense, the focus

shifts entirely from the actor to the makeup and the act of applying it to her face. In this case,

the angle, much like the gaze, does not demand anything from the viewer, but rather makes

the viewer an observer on the scene. Furthermore, the effect of the angle being focused

mainly on smaller parts of her face, the lips, and the eyes, as well as the makeup itself, the

involvement from the viewer is decreasing and it becomes difficult to establish audience

identification (Machin 113). In addition to this, the direction in which the gaze is directed

does also signify something, as Machin explains: "In advertising and promotional imagery,

and also in many photographs in women's lifestyle magazines, we often see the person

represented looking off frame. In such cases they are more like an exhibit" (Machin 112),

which is an interesting point that is somewhat applicable to the video by Jasmine (app. 5) as

she does not at all look at the camera but rather slightly off frame, and thus as Machin

explains, functions more as an exhibitory object for the viewer to watch. Furthermore,

Machin explains how there is meaning potential in *where* the actor looks. Metaphorically,

looking up is associated with positivity, power, and high status as opposed to looking down,

which is associated with negativity and lower status (Machin 112). In the video, by Jasmine

(app. 5) the actor is looking slightly downwards throughout the video thus signifying

negativity and low status, which correlates with the notion of being watched as an exhibit

rather than being looked up to as an individual.

Although the distance between the actor and the viewer is close-up through most of

the video, it does not exactly further the intimacy between the viewer and the actor, as we

only get to see small parts of her face such as an eyelid. Even when her whole face is in the

shot, the lack of engagement with the viewer through the gaze only furthers remoteness.

However, the close-up does allow the viewer to watch the actor's facial expression. At the end of the video by Jasmine (app. 5) when we get to see her full face, a rather distant or empty expression is revealed, and the viewer is able to establish some kind of intimacy with the actor because the facial expression is associated with individualism and closeness (Machin 116).

The last video to be examined within this section is the video by Clare (@littlecripple) "any guy who says "not all men" is just proving they don't know how to treat women right" (app. 6). Starting with the gaze, the actor in the image (Clare) is looking straight at the viewer throughout the video, directly acknowledging the viewer and thus demanding something. Unlike the video, by Jasmine (@jewishjasminetea) the sole focus in this video is on Clare and what she says, as opposed to what she does while talking. By keeping her gaze pointed towards the viewer, she encourages the viewer to engage with her and demands to be listened to. Furthermore, Machin explains how the right to look at the viewer in itself suggests power (Machin 111). In this case, Clare (app. 6) is in a superior position to the viewer because she keeps looking straight at them. The expression on Clare's face is serious, however not angry, inviting the viewer to engage with her positively yet seriously. In terms of angle, Clare is viewed from the front throughout and is aligned with the viewer, signifying equality. In addition to this, being viewed from the front adds to the demand of the gaze and acknowledges the viewer directly. Furthermore, the viewer's sense of involvement is increased as well as audience identification being established (Machin 113). The associations of closeness and remoteness are also important when examining audience identification, in the video (app. 6) Clare is positioned in a close-up, meaning that the viewer can watch her facial expression as she speaks. This ultimately increases the sense of intimacy and

individualization for the viewer. When we are able to watch people's facial expressions, we

recognize them as individuals with feelings and thus relate to them on a personal level

(Machin 116).

4.2 Denotation and Connotation of Toxic Masculinity

Jess Megan's TikTok video denotes the creator, sitting down in a chair with a glass in hand

(app. 2). The participant is placed in the middle of the frame, drawing the viewer's focus to

her. The communicative potential is, according to Machin, often carried by the participant's

pose and the association drawn from it. In this example, the participant is placed on a chair

with legs crossed, while her arms are resting far apart on each armrest. In relation to

Machin's theory, he argues that crossed legs can be associated with femininity and appear

less aggressive, while the positioning of the upper body can potentially change the values

transported to the viewer (Machin 26). As for the participant and this specific pose, her upper

body rests widely on a chair with an armrest. As Machin claims, the participant's pose may

partially connote a non-aggressive state of mind or femininity, but the space that is taken up

by the rest of the pose is associated with assertiveness and confidence, expressing superiority

rather than vulnerability and delicate femininity. In line with the values transported by the

participant's pose, the objects placed in the frame carry connotations that affect how we

perceive her. Throughout the video, the participant is holding a champagne glass on the right

side of the frame. The slender shape of a champagne glass can connote several things, such as

romance, celebration, or sophistication, depending on the other communicative elements. In

relation to the pose and the champagne glass, the clothes worn by the participant carries

similar values and attitude, amplifying the overall expression of assertiveness, as she appears

sophisticated and unbothered. Arguably, this connotation aligns well with the topic in question and gives the viewer an impression of a non-apologetic standpoint.

As Machin claims, the setting can also carry connotations. As previously mentioned, the participant is taking up a great part of the frame, while the viewer does not necessarily associate the setting with a particular kind of location or individual, as the setting provides limited detail as to where the participant is placed. However, the appearance of the setting does carry some connotation that aligns with the perception of the participant, as the interior design of the room looks elegant and sophisticated, despite being simplistic. Objects such as books connote knowledge and education, transporting the message that the participant is not only concerned with appearance and interior design. These connoted values are further indicated by the creator/participant's voice-over and the comments added to the frame. Examining the comments applied to the frame, these carry connotations regarding our participant. The comments that are added to the clip, additionally carry connotation. The viewer is able to read the negative comments made by TikTok users, while the visual presentation of them strengthens Jess Megan's message. The comments start appearing around the participant as she engages with speech and eye contact while giving an account of an incident between her and the former United States representative Theodore Scott Yoho. The comments stop appearing as they take up nearly the whole frame, and Megan ceases to speak of Yoho. The comments that overlap and eventually rapidly cover the setting around Megan's face connotes aggression towards her, appearing unpleasant and overwhelming to the viewer. While the comments are arguably negative, criticizing Megan's appearance and sentiments, she successfully makes use of them and presents them in this particular way to comment on what she subsequently refers to as "abuse from men" (TikTok @jess_megan_).

The values that are connoted by the participant and objects and the final statement during the video provide the viewer with a sense of who Megan is, her point of view and experience, that goes beyond the use of literal communication.

Similar to Jess Megan, Andrea Areli informs the viewer that she has been a victim of shaming. However, while filming the data in question. The video presents the creator and participant in focus, as she is positioned in the center of the frame and engages with the viewer. Unlike the example with Jess Megan, the TikTok denotes Areli dancing in an urban setting and does not make use of verbal communication. The choice provides little information about our creator and participant; however, the use of dance and music creates association and is read by the viewer. Areli is denoted walking straight towards the camera before dancing, swaying her hips, and resting her hand on her hip momentarily (app.4). As Machin argues, the placement of the hand is read as an expression of femininity (Machin 28). The swaying of hips can be said to connote femininity as well, as women are typically depicted walking in this specific manner (Smith et al.). As the walk comes to a halt and the participant begins to dance, her body language changes, providing a different expression. As presented in appendix 4, Areli stops and strikes a different pose, still resting her hand on her hip, only this time with her legs spread. Like an example presented by Machin, this particular pose signifies more than femininity:

> Here, attitude is depicted not through a person's stance on, say, a particular political issue but rather by the way they stand. Here the physical association could be to do with regarding a person fixedly (head to the side) and making the body take up space with hands placed on hips and legs spread, a gesture associated with aggression, determination, and simply the confidence to take up space (Machin 28).

As Machin mentions, the participant's shift from a feminine, swaying walk to an assertive and aggressive dance signifies the creator's point of view, as the viewer is informed of the

ongoing shaming during filming. The confident and open body language of the participant suggests that Areli does not comply and is unwilling to present herself differently, regardless of the setting's audience and feedback. As a result, the viewer perceives Areli as an unapologetic, assertive woman with a feminist message. The creator's choice of audio of the video is not covered by the theoretical framework, as Machin's examples revolve around images, excluding audio and music. However, in this example, the audio is important, as it too connotes meaning. In the TikTok, Areli wears a pink crop top with the writing "Thank U, Next". The spelling is a reference to Ariana Grande's hit single from 2019 of the same title, which consequently carries meaning by association for the viewer. The song, performed by a famous artist and feminist, while notoriously stressing the importance of relying on your own support and self-love and moving on from the men she has known, provides the viewer with a sense of Areli's personal beliefs and sentiment. In this example, it is evident that the creator has provided scarcely any literal messages while relying on connotation and cultural association to indicate her values and messages.

The American TikTok creator Jasmine (@jewishjasminetea) makes use of verbal communication, as she has added a voice-over to her clip, informing about the personal accounts of workplace harassment. The manner that the participant presents herself, and how the viewer understands the visual expression, is quite relevant for the analysis as it stems from association. While the viewer is informed with a voice-over, the TikTok denotes the participant applying make-up and posing while revealing the final result. As the creator has not made use of a noticeable setting, the viewer is focused on the participant and a few signifying objects. As depicted in (app. 5b, d) the viewer perceives Jasmine after a close-up of her make-up process. Make-up itself is associated predominantly with women and

femininity, which is further suggested by the participant's poses. The participant's placement of hands is associated with models posing for ads and a traditional expression of femininity, suggesting that Jasmine is a feminine individual and relates to a soft expression of femininity (app. 5d). In addition to the feminine expression, a cross symbol is presented as a part of the participant's make-up. The inverted cross, known as the "Cross of Saint Peter", has previously been used as a Christian symbol, however, has been recognized as a contemporary anti-Christian symbol (symbolsproject.eu). As the viewer is aware of the creator's general sentiment provided by the ongoing audio, the symbol is not associated with the satanic ideology, as the literal information concerns a quite different issue. The cross signifies the clash of womanhood and Christian tradition, as it is visually introduced among feminist sentiments. As mentioned earlier, the feminist critique of Christian tradition is similarly present with @sixbabiestv, in which the participant states "God would want me to be whoever I want to be", dismissing the interviewer's opinion of how Christian women are allowed to dress. Circumstances such as the hashtags *#ihatecapitalism* further suggest that the creator is focusing on feminist tradition and sentiment rather than religion. Therefore, the Cross of Saint Peter provides the viewer with an additional association and feminist ideals that are not accounted for in audio.

4.3 Body-positivity

In terms of gaze, angle, and distance, the video by Gen Hayes (@genhayes) is yet again different from the other two videos by @itsmallorypruitt and @..bodyposi. Although there is only one actor in the image, namely the woman (app. 7). The video depicts a reenactment of a situation that has happened before, hence the title of the video "based on a true story. If only I was this fearless in high school", meaning that the scenario concerns more than

one person. Which might change the way the viewer relates to the actor in the image. In terms of gaze, the actor looks in different directions due to the video being composed as if someone is commenting on the actor's body type, thus she looks in the direction of where that person supposedly is positioned. However, as the video moves along, the gaze of the actor shifts to looking straight at the viewer. In this case, the viewer is acknowledged and demanded to do something. In this scenario the viewer is in the position of the person who offended the actor by commenting on her body type, thus the demand is to listen to the actor as she tells you off (app. 7b). Furthermore, this correlates with the idea that looking straight at the viewer suggests power (Machin 111). As previously mentioned, the angle that the actor is viewed from plays a role in the establishment of relations and associations between the viewer and the actor (Machin 113). In the beginning of the video by Gen Hayes (app. 7), she is viewed from the side, addressing someone else on the scene that is outside the frame, at this moment the viewer becomes an observer on the scene as they are not directly acknowledged by the actor. When the angle shifts and the actor is viewed from the front, the involvement from the viewer increases and audience identification becomes easier to establish as the viewer now is acknowledged (Machin 113). Furthermore, the actor stays aligned with the viewer in terms of angle, signifying equality. However, the distance between the actor and the viewer as well as the actor's facial expression (app. 7) signifies a slight contrast. The equality that is established by the aligned angle, is challenged by the fact that the actor moves closer and closer to the viewer towards the end of the video and poses a threat by showing teeth (app. 7c) and moving her face closer to the viewer. The close-up on its own can suggest a threat "if the kinds of people represented are otherwise of a sort that we might not welcome" (Machin 116). The facial expression of the actor along with the physical proximity ultimately poses a threat to the viewer because "We 'keep our distance' from some

people … and 'get close to' people we see as part of our circle of friends or intimates"
(Machin 116).

The video by @..bodyposi depicts several actors, thus the gaze, angle, and distance
might be different from actor to actor. The first woman depicted (app. 8a) is looking straight
at the viewer with a big inviting smile on her face, acknowledging the viewer while
demanding a positive reaction, invited by the smile. The angle that she is viewed from is
frontal but slightly vertical as she is positioned higher than the viewer, making her look
superior as opposed to inferior, based on her size and body type, hence the "every body is
beautiful" narrative. The distance suggests an impersonal relation between the actor and the
viewer, as she is positioned in a medium shot. However, the actor's facial expression is
noticeable and increases involvement. The next actor (app. 8b) is positioned in a long-shot
decreasing viewer involvement. Furthermore, the distance makes it difficult to determine the
gaze as the actor's facial expression is hardly visible. In this sense the acknowledgement of
the viewer is lacking, unlike the previous actor (app. 8a) who looked straight at the viewer
with a smile. Unlike the previous actor (app. 8a) this actor (app. 8b) is not viewed from a
vertical angle but is aligned with the viewer signifying equality. The next actor (app. 8c) is
positioned very similarly to the previous actor (app. 8b), except for her facial expression
being more visible as you can tell that she is smiling, however not as much as the first actor
(app. 8a). The last two actors in the video (app. 8d, e) are similar to each other as well as the
actor in (app. 8a). They are both looking straight at the viewer while smiling, thus demanding
a positive reaction from the viewer and acknowledging them. Unlike (app. 8a) the two actors
in (app. 8d, e) are completely aligned with the viewer, signifying equality. The distance
between the actors and the viewer is translated into a medium shot, where the viewer is able

to view their facial expression, ultimately increasing involvement and intimacy between the viewer and the actors.

Lastly, the video by Mallory Pruitt features two actors (app. 9a-c) namely Mallory Pruitt herself and Ella Halikas, given by the title: "@ellahalikas and me shooting for my swimwear company today!!" (TikTok @itsmallorypruitt). In terms of gaze, both of the actors acknowledge the viewer, however not throughout nor at the same time. There are moments where both actors look straight at the viewer at the same time, such as in the very beginning but for the majority of the video the gaze shifts from one actor to the other, when one of them looks at the viewer, the other one does not. This is quite interesting because it arguably signifies to the viewer that you are only meant to engage with them separately, making the involvement with each person individually increased. Furthermore, it signifies that they are two separate individuals and thus meant to be viewed individually as opposed to one unit. In the first part of the video before the scene is cut and they start walking along the beach, the gaze of both actor's is mostly directed towards the viewer, however, as the scene cuts the viewer is no longer acknowledged by the actors in the same way but rather acts as an observer to the scene. Which leads to the angle that the actors are viewed from. In the beginning, when the viewer is acknowledged by the gaze and the actors are viewed from the front, the angle is aligned with the viewer, signifying equality. When the angle shifts and the actors are viewed from the side, viewer involvement decreases. As previously mentioned, the distance between the actors and the viewer is associated with physical proximity and intimacy (Machin 116). By the actors being positioned in a middle-shot throughout, an impersonal relationship between the actors and the viewer is suggested (Machin 116).

4.4 Denotation and Connotation of Body-positivity

In appendix 9, several elements of connotation are provided in Mallory Pruitt's TikTok.

The choice of setting is a white sand beach, saturated with pink light, which is perceived as a beach at sunset. As Machin claims, settings such as these provide calming, positive associations, as large spaces such as beaches and meadows connotes "relaxation or free time" (Machin 24). The setting and the associations can be said to be useful and favorable when selling bathing suits, as it links the product to positive association, but it also affects how the participants and other transferred sentiments are perceived.

Examining the poses, the women are depicted posing on the beach. Unlike the earlier examples regarding toxic masculinity and gender discrimination, the participants connote a less aggressive point of view. The expression is connoted through the way the two models are presented, walking alongside each other and posing together with hands placed on their hips and heads slightly tilted (app.9). Machin argues that this posture connotes femininity as the legs are not placed far apart, transferring a more traditional feminine expression (Machin 28).

The way that the women are presented connotes femininity and diversity, as they not only transfer a feminine but graceful and diverse message. By using a participant that is traditionally seen in the media, while the other is physically different from the standards of the fashion industry, gives the viewer an impression of these two body types as equally feminine and attractive. This particular sentiment is not only transferred by the use of a plus-size model but by the way they are both presented and therefore perceived, as beautiful and equal models on a photoshoot. The sentiments and associations read by the viewer align with the nature of the body-positivity movement, expressing joyful and embracing attitudes towards physical diversity.

The data collected from @..bodyposi denotes five different women in different settings, dancing and jumping in revealing outfits to an upbeat sound (app. 8). Looking at

settings and associations, they do not provide notable meaning, as the associations drawn from them are informal and simple, resembling rooms of a house and a backyard, suggesting that the settings in the TikTok are of less importance to sentiment. Examining the participants, the body language is strikingly similar, as the five women dance with arms raised, thrusting and moving their arms around in the air (app. 8). As Machin argues, notions such as "women and freedom" are often depicted jumping and raising their arms, as openness in their posture and energy is associated with freedom (Machin 28). The associations of freedom apply to the visuals of the five women, as the women are dancing, smiling, and jumping on the spot in an energetic manner, making the viewer perceive them as free and at ease. The way that the participants vary in appearance, while all being selected to take up their space in the video, with the same light and joyful associations, connotes that the women are equally content, despite how their bodies vary in size and characteristics. The associations ultimately transfer an empowering point of view for women, celebrating diversity. As in the example with Mallory Pruitt, the viewer's associations with the video provide joyful, comfortable, and empowering associations, providing an understanding of diversity as a positive notion.

4.5 Sex-positivity and Empowerment

As the videos by Andrea Areli, @sixbabiestv, Jess Megan, @..bodyposi, and Gen Hayes have all been examined previously in this paper, the only video that will be examined according to gaze, angle, and distance is the video by Kirsten (@kir5t3n) on TikTok. The video depicts a woman in front of a green screen of her bank account transactions, showing how much money goes in and out of her account each month. In the first 6 months, there are no

transactions and then suddenly money starts to appear in her account, revealing that you can make money on the platform 'OnlyFans'.

In terms of gaze, angle, and distance this video is composed very differently from the other videos as you do not get to see the actor in the image as much. With this, the focus of the video lies on the bank transactions as opposed to the individual person. In terms of gaze, the actor in the image does hardly ever look directly at the viewer and we also hardly ever see her entire face, instead, the viewer gets to see either her eyes or the lower parts of her face - the mouth and the chin, thus the viewer is never directly acknowledged by the actor and viewer engagement decreases as the viewer is not demanded to engage, by the gaze just as Machin explains: "Where the represented people do not look out at the viewer there is a different kind of effect. Here there is no contact made with the viewer and no demand made of them. In this case, the viewer can look at the represented person as an observer" (Machin 112). Furthermore, when the demand from the actor is lacking, so is the potential of involvement from the viewer. As opposed to offer and demand, the actor in the image is offering information to the viewer, in this case, the information is that "only fans has been paying off. this is your sign to get started!" (TikTok, @kir5t3n). In addition to gaze, the angle of interaction is an important factor when it comes to viewer engagement and what the actor in the image signifies to the viewer. At the beginning of the video, the viewer is only able to see the eyes of the actor and not the whole face. Although, this would be considered as being viewed from the front, meaning that there is some potential for audience identification to be formed. Later on in the video, the viewer does get to see the actor's entire face and expression. Later in the video, the viewer does get to see the actor's entire face and expression. However, mostly just parts of her face, which ultimately decreases involvement. In addition to this, the actor is positioned in the bottom half of the frame, making her look inferior. She moves upwards in the frame later in the video as the money starts to flow in and

out of her bank account and she becomes more aligned with the viewer, signifying equality.
Lastly, the distance between the actor in the image and the viewer signifies social relations.
Meaning that if the actor is positioned in a close-up, intimacy can be established (Machin
116). At the beginning of the video by Kirsten, the actor is positioned in a close-up making
the expression in her eyes visible to the viewer, suggesting intimacy. Whereas later in the
video the actor moves into a middle-shot position, where it is mostly just her lips and chin
that are visible, suggesting an impersonal relationship (Machin 116). In all, the video offers
information to the viewer by pushing the focus onto the bank account transactions, revealing
how she makes money from having a profile on the OnlyFans platform and that you should
do the same. However, this is a suggestion as opposed to a demand, based on the gaze, angle,
and distance between the actor and the viewer.

5. Judith Butler

Judith Butler's theory regarding gender and identity was first introduced in 1991 in her
theoretical framework *Gender Trouble*, taking on inspiration from earlier post-structuralist
philosophy, queer theory, and feminist theory (The European Graduate School - Judith
Butler). In Butler's work *Gender Trouble*, she seeks to challenge the earlier feminist
assumptions of women as a singular category and identity (Gender Trouble 2). Butler
separates the biological sex and gender identity, arguing that gender is performative, as our
gender is a social construction and repetition, rather than a stable and natural phenomenon,
connected to our biological features (Gender Trouble 8). With the view of gender as socially
constructed, Butler criticizes the binary gender assumption, as the notion suggests that gender
identity is stable and fixed, rather than being fluid and constructed by our culture (Gender
Trouble 8-9). Additionally, Butler states that these expectations are maintained and

compelled by social disapproval and taboo (Butler, Performative Acts 520). In a 2011

interview, Butler elaborates on the performativity of gender:

> We act as if that being of a man or being of a woman is actually an internal reality or something that is simply true about us, a fact about us, but actually it is a phenomenon that is being produced all the time and reproduced all the time, so to say that gender is performative is to say that nobody really is a gender from the start (Big Think - Judith Butler: Your Behavior Creates Your Gender).

Butler's understanding of the performativity of gender aligns with later feminist thought, as

the fluid gender and gender identity contradicts the basis of gender roles, patriarchy, and

inequality. Thus, Butler's theoretical framework is relevant and suitable when examining the

contemporary expressions of feminism, as these are dealing with key issues relating to the

inequal and heteronormative assumptions of gender, such as gender stereotypes (femininity

and masculinity), sexual agency, gender roles, and more issues relating to inequality and

discrimination. In addition to this Butler speaks more of the female experience in her essay

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

Theory. Butler explains how feminist theory often has been critical towards the naturalistic

explanation of sex and sexuality, assuming that "the meaning of women's social existence

can be derived from some fact of their physiology" (Butler, Performative Acts 520). Hence

the notion of gender performativity and the challenging of the binary gender construction.

Furthermore, Butler argues that to understand and describe the gendered body, "a

phenomenological theory of constitution requires an expansion of the conventional view of

acts to mean both that which constitutes meaning and that through which meaning is

performed or enacted" (Butler, Performative Acts 521). With this, the acts that constitute

gender are similar to performative acts. Finally, Butler argues that the view of gender "does

not pose as a comprehensive theory about what gender is or the manner of its construction"

(Butler, Performative Acts 529) and that the category of 'women' is not extensive and

expressive enough. Butler concludes that gender is not "passively scripted" on the body and

also not determined by "nature, language, the symbolic, or the overwhelming history of

patriarchy" (Butler, Performative Acts 531). Gender is what we put on, what we act and

perform with both anxiety and pleasure. However, "if this continuous act is mistaken for a

natural or linguistic given, power is relinquished to expand the cultural field bodily through

subversive performances of various kinds" (Butler, Performative Acts 531).

5.1 bell hooks, Black Feminism and Intersectionality

> To me feminism is not simply a struggle to end male chauvinism or a movement to
> ensure that women will have equal rights with men; it is a commitment to eradicating
> the ideology of domination that permeates Western culture on various levels - sex,
> race, and class, to name a few - and a commitment to reorganizing U.S. society so that
> the self-development of people can take precedence over imperialism, economic
> expansion, and material desires (bell hooks, Ain't I a Woman 194).

hooks is a writer, feminist and cultural critic, she is considered to be one of the African

American frontrunners of her generation in terms of intellect. hooks is known for her works

concerning the modern feminist movement. hooks is especially concerned with the notion

that modern feminism does not pay enough attention to the unique needs of African

American women, who struggle with race and class issues just as much as gender inequality.

The work that sparked her career: *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* published in

1981, "examined the thinking of important African American women of the nineteenth

century and served as an important critique of feminism from an African American

perspective" (Encyclopedia of African American Society - hooks, bell). It was in this book

that hooks first argued that African American women had unique issues that were not

represented in the modern feminist movement, that was mainly concerned with the issues of

white women especially that of gender inequality, hence the movement mainly consisting of white women. In the book *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black* published in 1989, and in *Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics* published in 1990, hooks carried those themes further. *Talking Back* offered some of hooks' personal experiences with marginalization and the struggle of living in a racist and sexist society and in *Yearning* she criticizes the representation of women of color in 'advertisements, rap songs, and film' and continued to do so in the book *Black Looks: Race and Representation* published in 1992, arguing how the representations of people of color "have become commodified as the "other" in a consumer society" (Encyclopedia of African American Society - hooks, Bell).

In *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and feminism* hooks speaks of the issue of accountability in terms of Racism and Feminism and how modern feminism cannot recognize the issues that women of color struggle with other than gender inequality. She argues that "American women of all races are socialized to think of racism solely in the context of race hatred. Specifically, in the case of black and white people, the term racism is usually seen as synonymous with discrimination or prejudice against black people by white people" (hooks 119). Furthermore, hooks explains how the knowledge and understanding that American women have about racism is severely limited, solely due to the extent of black people's victimization. In this sense, American women will never understand what racism is to a black person, not because of inherent differences, but because of the way in which black people have been represented in history. "American women have been socialized, even brainwashed, to accept a version of American history that was created to uphold and maintain racial imperialism in the form of white supremacy and sexual imperialism in the form of patriarchy" (hooks 120).

Mary Romero defines intersectionality in her work *Introducing Intersectionality* (2017), as being a theory or notion that focuses on social inequality and is rooted in social justice research. Romero explains how intersectionality used as an activist project, can function as an analytical tool for framing social justice issues in a way that exposes "how social exclusion or privilege occurs differently in various social positions, and it does this by focusing on the interaction of multiple systems of oppression" (Romero 1). It is however important to emphasize that the notion of intersectionality does not only focus on issues concerning those of lower socioeconomic status, it seeks to further the understanding of "privilege, riches, and access to higher education" (Romero 1). In addition to this, intersectionality explores the issues of race, class, and gender, referred to as the 'holy trinity' in the early 1980s. This phrase called for "attention to the explanatory power gained by analyzing interactions among these three systems of oppression and privilege" (Romero 1). This research established that "the inclusion of systems of power and social location were central to understanding everyday social interactions between individuals in society" (Romero 1). Black Feminists took the lead in establishing a new approach that challenged older theories that were only concerned with analyzing one of the three social categories, namely gender, without acknowledging that the experience of gender is different for a black woman or a woman of color than it is to a white woman (Romero 1). Critical race scholars such as Kimberlé Crenshaw contributed to the "understanding of systems of class oppression by documenting how race had always been a primary division in law, economics, and education in the US - and all other multicultural countries with histories of colonialism, conquest, and immigration" (Romero 2). Although the question of who coined the term 'intersectionality' is still up for debate by some academics, Kimberlé Crenshaw is most often

credited because of her use of the term in the article: "Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics". Crenshaw is mostly recognized for her legal writings of intersectionality that are concerned with "the inability to capture the experiences of Black women in anti-discrimination law" (Romero 39). When Black women went to the court as victims of discrimination, they were unable to prove that they had been discriminated against based on their gender "thus courts failed to recognize Black women's accounts about experiencing race and sex discrimination simultaneously" (Romero 39). Instead, the violence against women of color was marginalized because the court refused to recognize that sexism and racism operate together.

> Consider an analogy to traffic in an intersection, coming and going in all four directions. Discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction, and it may flow in another. If an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused by cars traveling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them. Similarly, if a Black woman is harmed because she is in the intersection, her injury could result from sex discrimination or race discrimination (Romero 40).

In this sense, Crenshaw stresses the importance of recognizing the issues found in anti-discrimination law. In earlier cases of discrimination in court, the overall struggles of Black women were not recognized, as the discrimination had to be explained by either racism or sexism and never together, thus overlooking Black women's experience of discrimination.

5.3 Fourth-wave Feminism

Fourth-wave feminism is a relatively new notion within the realm of feminism and feminist theory; thus, it is not explored by decades of research like second-wave feminism. Furthermore, there is no concrete definition of what fourth-wave feminism is due to its lack of proper recognition as an ideology. However, it does share the general beliefs of the feminist ideology that all sexes are equal. Fourth-wave feminism can be problematic to define

but Prudence Chamberlain's account for fourth-wave feminism found in *The Feminist Fourth Wave: Affective Temporality* is found useful. Chamberlain mainly focuses on the British fourth-wave feminist notion, though her research on the fourth-wave feminist movement is considered applicable in terms of this thesis, as the main points that are made in terms of the ideology of the fourth-wave feminist notion, seems to be very similar in the UK and the US. Chamberlain argues that with the emergence of fourth-wave feminism being heavily discussed in the media, arguments surrounding the fourth-wave feminist narrative have been reignited (Chamberlain 21). Debates concerning the feminist waves focus on the feminist narrative's use in general, more specifically, the second and third-wave because of how these two waves, in opposition to the first-wave, occurred in 'quick succession' and created a division between generations of feminists (Chamberlain 21). "While the 'first wave' seemed to span an expansive period of activism in the UK and USA, perceived as ending when women achieved the vote, the third-wave was heralded only decades after the second-wave had begun" (Chamberlain 21). This closeness is what started the debates concerning how the wave narrative raises a range of problems in terms of creating divisions and exclusions among practicing feminists. Furthermore, Chamberlain argues that the fourth-wave, as opposed to the second and third-wave, does not pit different forms of feminisms against each other, but the fourth-wave rather "allows for a revision of the almost dialectical nature to the Western history of feminism" (Chamberlain 21). In this specific kind of fourth-wave movement that Chamberlain speaks of, feminists who identify "as second and third wave are still participating in, and driving, activism" (Chamberlain 21).

Nicola Rivers explains in her work *Postfeminism and the Arrival of the Fourth Wave: Turning Tides* how the fourth-wave, like the previous third-wave, is "fractured and complex,

frequently reinforcing the advancement of the individual and centering the seductive notions of 'choice,' 'empowerment,' and 'agency'" (Rivers 24). These specific ideals are present even in feminist activism "that seemingly undermines or challenges the idea of women - or perhaps more accurately *some* women - as able to make their own choices outside the constraints of an overtly patriarchal society" (Rivers 24). Fourth-wave feminism is mainly practiced on social media because the feminist message and activism are easier to practice online, one of the reasons being that social media are accessible to nearly anyone, thus messages of activism have the potential to rapidly spread across social media platforms, such as TikTok.

5.2 Fourth Wave Feminism

Fourth wave feminism is a relatively new notion within the realm of feminism and feminist theory; thus, it is not explored by decades of research like second wave feminism. Furthermore, there is no concrete definition of what fourth wave feminism is due to its lack of proper recognition as an ideology. However, it does share the general beliefs of the feminist ideology that all sexes are equal. Fourth wave feminism can be problematic to define but Prudence Chamberlain's account for fourth wave feminism found in *The Feminist Fourth Wave: Affective Temporality* is found useful. Chamberlain mainly focuses on the British fourth wave feminist notion, though her research on the fourth wave feminist movement is considered applicable in terms of this thesis, as the main points that are made in terms of ideology of the fourth wave feminist notion, seems to be very similar in the UK and the US. Chamberlain argues that with the emergence of fourth wave feminism being heavily discussed in the media, arguments surrounding the fourth wave feminist narrative have been reignited (Chamberlain 21). Debates concerning the feminist waves focuses on the feminist narrative's use in general, more specifically, the second and third wave because of how these

two waves, in opposition to the first wave, occurred in 'quick succession' and created a division between generations of feminists (Chamberlain 21). "While the 'first wave' seemed to span an expansive period of activism in the UK and USA, perceived as ending when women achieved the vote, the third wave was heralded only decades after the second wave had begun" (Chamberlain 21). This closeness is what started the debates concerning how the wave narrative raises a range of problems in terms of creating divisions and exclusions among practicing feminists. Furthermore, Chamberlain argues that the fourth wave, as opposed to the second and third wave, does not pit different forms of feminist against each other, but the fourth wave rather "allows for a revision of the almost dialectical nature to the Western history of feminism" (Chamberlain 21). In this specific kind of fourth wave movement that Chamberlain speaks of, feminists who identify "as second and third wave are still participating in, and driving, activism" (Chamberlain 21).

Nicola Rivers explains in her work *Postfeminism and the Arrival of the Fourth Wave: Turning Tides* how the fourth wave, like the previous third wave, is "fractured and complex, frequently reinforcing the advancement of the individual and centering the seductive notions of 'choice,' 'empowerment,' and 'agency' (Rivers 24). These specific ideals are present even in feminist activism "that seemingly undermines or challenges the idea of women - or perhaps more accurately *some* women - as able to make their own choices outside the constraints of an overtly patriarchal society" (Rivers 24). Fourth wave feminism is mainly practiced on social media because the feminist message and activism is easier to practice online, one of the reasons being that social media are accessible to nearly anyone, thus messages of activism have the potential to rapidly spread across social media platforms, such as TikTok.

5.3 Female Sexual Agency

The concept of female sexual agency has been a key issue in feminist theory and history. The American feminist and activist Magaret Sanger coined the term "birth control" in 1914 and founded the American Birth Control League, which preceded the American organization Planned Parenthood. As a result of the first-wave movement, birth control was approved as a contraceptive and made accessible to the American woman in 1960. "The pill" became the most favored contraceptive, as millions of American women were benefitting from the contraceptive pill in 1965 (PBS). Women had gained sexual agency, however, contemporary feminists are still concerned with other aspects of female sexual agency.

Female sexual agency is an umbrella term for several key issues within feminist theory, based on the assumption that women's sexual attitudes are limited and affected by society's expectations of female sexuality (Pearson viii). Susan Pickard, American scholar and author of *Age, Gender and Sexuality through the Life Course: The Girl in Time* elaborates on the sentiment and argues that the issue is "...a key factor underpinning the stalling of the gender revolution" (Pickard Preface). Pickard acknowledges that society's expectations vary throughout the woman's lifespan, separating the short-lived expectations of "The Girl" from the rest of her lifetime. Pickard argues:

> The Girl is the emblem for late modern success. She symbolizes all the qualities admired by contemporary culture: diligence, self-surveillance, emotional intelli- gence, sexuality and above all youthfulness. The sign of the times, she is repres- ented by female heroes and icons who are 'leaning in', scaling the heights of politics and the professions and leading the feminisation of culture and society. Yet there is a catch. The clock is ticking and early on, by the time the Girl reaches her late twenties or early thirties, the carriage is already threatening to turn into a pumpkin (Pickard 1).

Arguably, "The Girl" is confronted with new, contemporary conditions, in comparison to earlier key issues. Second-wave feminists dealt with "The Problem that Has No Name",

pressing the issue of the mental health and identity of the housewife, lacking personal and professional achievement as full-time wives and mothers (Friedan 8). The underlying expectations described by Friedan, are present in Pickard's work. Pickard argues that the contemporary young woman, or "The Girl" is celebrated for her social mobility, sexuality, independence, and educational and professional success. Nevertheless, these conditions are not viable for the woman, as they are expected to be temporary, as she is expected to succeed in her private life as a mother and a partner (Pickard 1). Thus, female sexual agency is still a key issue for contemporary feminists, as female sexuality is still challenged by society's expectations of women. Thus, Pickard's work is particularly applicable when examining the message expressed by the sex-positive feminist discourse on TikTok.

6. Feminist Analysis

The videos selected as subjects of analysis have been grouped based on themes. The first theme being toxic masculinity, including the following videos: @jess_megan_ , @mrvdk, @sixbabiestv, @littlecripple, @andreaareli_, and @jewishjasminetea. The video by Jess Megan is concerned with toxic masculinity and especially shaming and discrimination for being a woman, the same goes for the video by Andrea Areli and @sixbabiestv. While the video by @mrvdk and Clare (@littlecripple) is more focused on defending female rights, Clare does this by speaking of the phrase "not all men" in relation to rape, while @mrvdk is defending women's rights by proving someone else wrong, in this case, @relle27, lastly Jasmine (@jewishjasminetea) speaks of sexism and workplace harassment as we watch her apply make-up to end up looking like the devil.

The second theme being body-positivity and counter tropes, including the videos by @genhayes, @..bodyposi, and @itsmallorypruitt who are all concerned with depicting and representing different body types and defying fat-shaming as well as the idealized body and beauty standards.

Lastly the theme of sex-positivity and empowerment, including the videos by @kir5t3n, @andreaareli_, @sixbabiestv @jess_megan_, and @genhayes. The video by Kirsten (@kir5t3n) presents the sex-positive sentiment differently than the other videos in this category, by promoting the platform OnlyFans while the other videos in this category connote empowerment and sex-positivity by defending themselves against discrimination, fat shaming, and slut-shaming.

6.1 Toxic Masculinity and Toxic Discourses About Gender

The three videos that have been grouped based on a common theme are: "Queen" by @sixbabiestv, "Actual comments on my videos. Do not use men's approval as a yardstick for your life. Ever. Make them stay mad" by Jess Megan (@jess_megan_) and a video by @mrvdk (no title). The video by @sixbabiestv depicts a black woman speaking to a black man. The man is continuously asking the woman whether God would want her to dress like a slut to which she keeps defending her right to dress however she wants. Throughout the video they are bickering about how the woman has chosen to dress is not appropriate according to the church and God (app. 1). The video by Jess Megan depicts a woman in a tight-fitting dress, wearing makeup, drinking a glass of champagne, reciting some of the comments that men leave on her videos. The video by @mrvdk is a 'stitch' (a reaction to another video), the video that is reacted to is a video of a man questioning whether there is evidence that women

are treated unequally to men, to which @mrvdk responds by presenting facts that support the

notion that women are in fact not equal to men in several aspects of life. Furthermore, the

videos by Andrea Areli (@andreaareli_), Jasmine (@jewishjasminetea), and Clare

(@littlecripple) have been selected. The video by Andrea Areli is concerned with slut-

shaming and depicts a young woman dancing wearing shorts and a long-sleeved crop top in

the middle of the street in broad daylight, showcasing that she is not ashamed and in control

of her bodily expression. The video by @jewishjasminetea is very different in its

composition, compared to the video by Areli, in this video a woman is applying makeup

while narrating two separate incidents about interns who have been sexually harassed by Joe

Biden while working for him. At the end of the video, she has made herself up to look like a

devil, with dark red makeup around her eyes, red and black lipstick, and a headband with

horns on it. Lastly the video by @littlecripple titled: "any guy who says "not all men" is just

proving that they don't know how to treat women right", is similar to the video by Jasmine by

depicting a woman sitting down in front of the camera and explaining something to the

viewer, throughout the video, the woman explains metaphorically how the phrase "not all

men" is offensive and pointless in many cases.

The clip from @sixbabiestv that is used in her TikTok demonstrates feminist

messages, that are suggested by audio and the communicative elements. The woman in the

video is successfully engaging with the viewer, demanding that they pay attention to what is

said. The woman pulls focus to her, as the interviewer confronts the woman with questions

such as "What makes you dress like this?" and "Would God want you to be a slut?". The

issue of toxic masculinity and gendered expectations are evident, as the woman repeats the

man's comments "You look like a slut" and "What makes *you* dress like this?", emphasizing

and pointing out the personal questions and derogatory attitude towards her are inappropriate. Religion is a great part of the interview, as the interviewer suggests that a Christian woman cannot dress in this way, which demonstrates how religious institutions can expose women to discrimination, as this discriminatory and traditional view on women evidently occurs. The toxic view of gender is highly relevant for contemporary feminism, as these gendered expectations that remain in contemporary culture still affect how women are expected to behave and appear. The woman successfully engages and ridicules the man at the end of the video, moving back into the center of the frame, directly addressing the viewer with her body language and replying "...God believes in choice, and you should know that Jessie. That's why you're wearing this lame ass shirt!". The last point further presses the issue of gender discrimination and gender roles, as she compares the two of them, ultimately focusing on the fact that she is equal to him, a man, and therefore allowed the privilege of choice. The aesthetic, or trend, that the participant expresses with her appearance is similar to current feminist ideology. The contemporary celebration of the hyper-feminine stems from the cultural and religious view of women as inferior and as a consequence women should value womanhood and femininity rather than valuing masculinity (Anderton, Medium.com). Instead of treating hyper-femininity as an obsolete stereotype, the participant is a part of the movement that defends, normalizes, and reclaims this particular expression of gender.

Jess Megan communicates a similar key issue, with a feminine, revealing expression while stressing that she is independent, assertive, and unwilling to accept the oppression she has experienced due to her appearance. The audio, image, and visual effects suggest attempts to transfer the sentiment that women are discriminated against due to their appearance and how frequently this intolerance occurs, as she draws focus to the amount of criticism and

harassment. The derogatory comments are presented in multitudes, with visual effects that make them appear audacious and overwhelming to the viewer, stressing the issue of the hostile outlook on women. @sixbabiestv points out a similar message, as she is verbally harassed by the interviewer, but visually appears equal and demanding. Similarly, to Jess Megan, the audio and visual presentation of the participant denounces toxic gender discourse towards women.

Jasmine's (@jewishjasminetea) audio deals with a similar issue, namely harassment of women. However, while giving a literal account of the incidents, the visuals provide a more abstract, yet seemingly feminist expression. Equivalent to Jess Megan and @sixbabiestv, the participant engages in a quite feminine expression with her body language and grandiose step-by-step makeup, suggesting that she is a part of the contemporary feminist movement that celebrates and reclaims femininity, unlike earlier feminist movements. The use of the symbol regularly associated with anti-Christian sentiments is quite interesting, as it is associated with criticism of Christian tradition that discriminates against women rather than a religious message, as it aligns with the dominantly critical and feminist expression. Andrea Areli's prominent, sexual dance and references to famous, contemporary feminist icons indicate that her ideology corresponds with the feminine, contemporary feminist tendency uncovered in the selected data. The examples with @mrvdk and Clare (@littlecripple) address the key issue directly in audio while relying less on the visual and cultural association. The diversity in the analyzed data reveals different expressions, yet the same core message.

6.2 Body-positivity and Counter-tropes

The three videos that have been grouped based on the theme of body-positivity and the "fat is beautiful" narrative are the videos by Gen Hayes (@genhayes), @..bodyposi, and Mallory Pruitt (@itsmallorypruitt). These videos are all concerned with representations of body-positivity, hence the hashtags *#bodypositivity, #body,* and *#positivity* included in the video titles or descriptions. The video by Gen Hayes depicts a woman reenacting a scenario that is based on fat-shaming, in this case, the woman reads as if someone tells her that she is pretty for a big girl, to which she reacts by telling the person off. The videos by @..bodyposi and Mallory Pruitt are different in compositions, the @..bodyposi video presents different women with different body types, to show that every body is beautiful and worthy, similar to the video by Mallory Pruitt which depicts two women on the beach wearing swimsuits, showing off their different body types.

The videos by Gen Hayes, @..bodyposi, and Mallory Pruitt all represent body-positivity in terms of theme, composition, and actors in the image, exposing core values of the body-positive movement. As stated within the phrase, body-positivity revolves around the concepts of self-love and self-acceptance as well as positive body image. The video by Gen Hayes depicts a real-life situation where a woman who is plus-size or 'curvy' is discriminated against based on her size. The phrase "you're pretty for a big girl" (TikTok @genhayes), suggests that the person commenting is surprised that a big girl is pretty because they usually are not. In this case, fat-shaming becomes very apparent as an issue that the body positive movement seeks to fight. In the Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, the term 'fat-shaming' is defined as "the practice of making unpleasant comments about somebody who is judged to be fat or too heavy" (Oxford Learners Dictionaries, Fat Shaming). Gen Hayes seeks to provide

an example of what overweight or 'bigger' girls struggle with in terms of stigmatization, by enacting a very real situation such as in the video.

The body-positive aspects are showcased by the main character in the video standing up for herself and telling the person who is shaming her off as well as displaying irony by saying "so you think I'm fat? Oh god I never noticed" when it is suggested that she is fat. By being ironic about the situation, Gen manages to shrug off the comment and poses as confident enough to not let it bother her. Furthermore, her confidence is shown through her attitude in what she says later in the video: "It's funny 'cause when I walked in your boyfriend couldn't focus" implying that she is beautiful *because* of her curves and being a bigger girl, furthermore she implies that the girl is, in fact, jealous of her curves: "maybe it's my hips or maybe it's my thighs, your jealousy is showing so you better recognize! I don't care if you switch it up and say "I wear it well", say one more thing about my weight and you can go to hell… bitch!" (TikTok @genhayes). However, it is not only what Gen says that reflects the body-positive aspect, her choice of clothing and the way she presents herself generally, throughout the video suggests that she is confident in her body. She is wearing a tight top as well as tight-fitting jeans, purposely showing off her curvy body, furthermore, she is showing quite a lot of skin on her upper body and does not try to cover up her arms, again, suggesting that she is not ashamed of her body but rather possesses a positive body image. The suggestion that Gen is less pretty because she is bigger, is also shot down by the way she presents herself by wearing makeup and accessories along with her tight-fitting clothing. In all, Gen successfully depicts a real-life situation and showcases the general view of girls who are overweight, pressing that women are not pretty or attractive despite their body type being

categorized as "bigger". Mainly by simultaneously normalizing curves and thus shedding a light on the toxic discourse concerning body image.

The video by @..bodyposi also centers around the theme of body-positivity. However, in another way than the video by Gen Hayes. While Gen Hayes depicts a real-life scenario about a curvy woman suffering from stigmatization based on her size, the @..bodyposi video depicts five different women with different body types, to showcase that every body is beautiful, despite its size. By presenting the viewer or the receiver of the video with different body types, it furthers the understanding that every woman and every body is beautiful. Additionally, the video is normalizing different body types as opposed to what might be considered the ideal body type in contemporary society, namely slim. Ph.D. Alexandra Sastre has written the article: *Towards a Radical Body Positive* focusing on the body positive movement and how it seeks to challenge the normalization of the ideal thin body type (Sastre 929), furthermore, Sastre explains: "positioned against mainstream media images of idealized female bodies, the body positive movement stresses inclusivity, and its related websites showcases bodies of all shapes and sizes" (Sastre 930). This is exactly what the video by @..bodyposi seeks to do by showing different body types within the same video, not only the curvy body but also the thinner body.

The video by Mallory Pruitt (@itsmallorypruitt) also presents more than one person and thus more than one body type. The title of the video: "@ellahalikas and me shooting for my swimwear company today!!" states that the two women are modeling for a swimsuit campaign. By placing two models with two different body types, one that physically aligns with the traditional editorial swimsuit models and the ideal body image and one that is considered to be "plus-size" or curvy, the video manages to present a nuanced picture of the

female body in fashion. Furthermore, the inclusivity that is a core value in the body positive

movement, is represented by the two women being included in the campaign suggesting that

they are equally attractive. Generally, the video by Mallory Pruitt as well as the video by

@..bodyposi have an aesthetic that connotes well-being and positive body image as well as a

positive attitude towards different body types, whether it be skinny or curvy. This furthers the

idea that the videos are part of the discourse that challenges the notion that there is only one

ideal body type. Furthermore, all three videos demonstrate that all bodies are beautiful and

that 'bigger' or curvy women are as attractive as thinner women. In the video, by Mallory

Pruitt, this notion is established through the use of two different women, with different body

types, to sell swimwear that reveals the bodies of the women. Ultimately this furthers the

normalization of different bodies within popular culture and contemporary society.

6.3 Sex-positivity and Female Agency

Within this section of analysis, several videos have been grouped together based on the theme

of sex-positivity. Specifically, the fourth-wave notion of female agency and power that is

related to sexuality, and empowerment that is shown through representations and narratives

about how the video producers view themselves as empowered in terms of the fourth-wave

feminist notion. The videos are made by the following creators: Kirsten (@kir5t3n), Andrea

Areli (@andreaareli_), @sixbabiestv, Jess Megan (@jess_megan_), @..bodyposi, and Gen

Hayes (@genhayes). Although all of these videos do not share the same hashtags, they do

share similar messages, whether it be empowerment rooted in body-positivity or in

withstanding discrimination based on sex or sexuality.

The videos each represent certain parts of feminist ideology, including the fourth-

wave feminist notion by presenting themselves in roles that depict sex-positivity and sexual

liberation as well as empowerment and female agency. Starting with the video by Kirsten (@kir5t3n), the creator suggests that earning money through the OnlyFans platform is acceptable despite the content being of erotic and even pornographic character. On the OnlyFans website's 'about' page it is explained that the mission of the platform is to revolutionize creator and fan connections and that the site is "inclusive of artists and content creators from all genres and allows them to monetize their content while developing authentic relationships with their fanbase" (onlyfans, about). The platform was founded in 2016 by Tim Stokely and since then the platform has become one of the leading social platforms globally (onlyfans, about). While it does not directly say so in the description of the platform, it does say that it is inclusive of all artists and genres, thus it is safe to assume that this includes pornography and different kinds of erotic content. When Kirsten promotes OnlyFans by saying "this is your time to get started" (@kir5t3n, TikTok), sex-positivity and sexual liberation are implied. As previously mentioned, the concept of sexual liberation and agency has been a key issue in feminist theory and history since the term 'birth control' was coined in 1914 (PBS), giving women the opportunity to choose to have sex for other purposes than those of reproduction. The notion that women have a right to choose to have sex for pleasure as well as having control over one's own body correlates with the fourth-wave feminist notion that is concerned with sexual liberation.

As mentioned by Nicola Rivers, the fourth-wave feminist movement is fractured and complex and centers around the seductive notions of choice, empowerment, and agency (Rivers 24). The video by Kirsten implies this sexual agency and liberation by suggesting that it is acceptable to 'sell' sex and sexual content to make a living on a platform such as OnlyFans, furthering the notion that women have the freedom to choose to do what they want

with their own body, whether it be selling nudes on a social platform or having multiple sexual partners.

Similar to the video by Kirsten, the video by Andrea Areli (@andreaareli_) carries suggestions that relate to sexual liberation and empowerment. By dancing in the middle of the street in shorts and a crop top, Areli signifies sexual liberation by showing off her body and her confidence without allowing people to slut-shame her, as suggested by the title: "Old men got out of their car to slut shame me! But they couldn't stop me from doing this dance!" (TikTok, @andreaareli_). Furthermore, Areli's general demeanor and attitude throughout the video, correlates with the fourth-wave feminist notion that women should be able to do what they want, wearing what they want without being discriminated, in this case, slut-shamed by men. In addition to Areli's expression, the audio that she uses furthers the notion of agency and empowerment as Beyoncé would be considered a fourth-wave feminist. In the book *The Beyoncé Effect: Essays on Sexuality, Race and Feminism,* Adrienne Trier-Bieniek explains how Beyoncé has a "desire to change gendered norms" (Trier-Bieniek 1) and how she has embraced feminism by introducing to a large audience through her music which lyrics are concerned with topics like independence from men, healthy sexuality, feminism, and identity (Trier-Bieniek 1). By Areli using a song by Beyoncé in the background of her video, she implies that she is empowered and sexually liberated and thus will not let herself be slut shamed. In addition to using a song by Beyoncé, Areli is wearing a pink crop top that says "Thank U, Next" on it, referencing Ariana Grande's hit single from 2019 of the same title. Like Beyoncé, Ariana Grande would be considered a fourth-wave feminist as implied by this quote on Twitter from November 2018: "I use my talent AND my sexuality all the time because I choose to. Women can be sexual AND talented. Naked and dignified. It's OUR

choice. & we will keep fighting till people understand. I say this [with] all due respect but

thank u, next" (Twitter @ArianaGrande). The reference to Ariana is indeed associated with

feminism, as she is recognized as a feminist and regularly expresses these values on social

media (People.com), hence the Tweet she posted in November 2018. Furthermore, the sex-

positive sentiment expressed by Areli aligns with the issue expressed in Pickard's work. The

sex-positive expression sheds light on the issue of women's limitations, as a result of the

public's expectations. As Pickard claims, the young woman's independence is considered

positive, but with limitations. The Girl is in touch with her sexuality, however, expressions of

sexual liberation and positivity can be scrutinized if considered to be "too sexual", as the

girl's reputation is harmed if she is to be considered too sexually liberated, in other words,

considered a "slut" (Pickard 11).

The theme of slut-shaming repeats itself in the video by @sixbabiestv where the

woman is defending her choice of clothing to a man who is insisting that she dresses like a

slut. By responding to the man's discriminating comment "you look like a slut!" with the

response "YOU look like a slut!", she suggests that it is unacceptable for him or anyone to

judge or shame her based on how she chooses to dress, furthermore the sexual liberation that

is one of the major focus points within the fourth-wave feminist movement is implied by the

woman acting on her freedom of choice. The freedom to choose what she wishes to do with

and to her body, including how she chooses to dress: "I dress like this because I can dress

however I want to". The man brings the aspect of religion into the discussion by asking her:

"would God want you to be a slut?" to which the woman responds: "God would want me to

be whoever I want to be" (TikTok @sixbabiestv). When bringing the aspect of religion into

the discussion, the man speaks from gendered expectations rooted in religious traditions and

society that do not align with the fourth-wave feminist notion of female rights and liberation. In this sense, the woman is not only slut-shamed, but it is suggested that she is a disgrace to God by not acting and dressing like a 'proper' woman according to the traditions that the man believes in and stands by. In addition to the gendered stereotypes presented by the man, Judith Butler's notion of gender performativity challenges the inequal and heteronormative assumptions of gender such as the question of what is feminine and what is not. In addition to this, the sexual agency and the slut-shaming is present in the video correlates with Butler's notion of heteronormative assumptions. When confronting the man in the way that she does, the woman presents an attitude that aligns with the fourth-wave feminist notion that challenges how women used to be perceived in society and defend their rights, suggesting female agency and empowerment. The assertiveness presented is furthered by the demand for space in the frame, specifically towards the end of the video when she steps back into frame to finish her sentence, insisting on not being removed from the scene.

As with the video by Andrea Areli and @sixbabiestv the videos by Jess Megan (@jess_megan_) and Gen Hayes (@genhayes) are also concerned with shaming, agency, and liberation. The video by Jess Megan is concerned with both slut-shaming and fat-shaming as revealed by some of the comments popping up in her video: "Actual comments on my videos. Do not use men's approval as a yardstick for your life. Ever. Make them stay mad." (TikTok @jess_megan_) while some comments are concerned with her weight: "how the fuck is the floor not collapsing under her" (app. 2.c), others are concerned with how she presents herself such as: "respect yourself" (app. 2c). Jess Megan's response to these comments is assertive and filled with attitude, aligning with the unapologetic notion found within the fourth-wave feminist movement. It is especially her pose and her appearance that suggest that she is

assertive and unapologetic in terms of being shamed and not allowing people's comments to matter to her. Furthermore, the video acts as a confrontational video to all the people who have left mean-spirited and discriminating comments on her videos in general. The purpose of the video is to tell people: "I am here, because I have to show my parents that I am their daughter and that they did not raise me to accept abuse from men" (TikTok @jess_megan_). With this comment at the end of her video, Jess Megan suggests that she is better than the people who shame her, she has been raised and taught better than to be shamed by men, ultimately suggesting agency and empowerment. This idea is furthered by her appearance and her posture, signifying superiority and empowerment.

Much like the video by Jess Megan, Gen Hayes seeks to confront fat shamers in an assertive manner that suggests empowerment and liberation. The video by Hayes is similar to the video by Jess Megan, meant to be a confrontational video. However, it is composed a bit differently. The video by Hayes depicts a real-life situation where Hayes is being shamed for being a big girl to which she responds by suggesting that the shamer is jealous of her curves and that she is sexy despite her size. This alone suggests sex-positivity and empowerment because Hayes recognizes that she is just as sexy and strong as any other woman, no matter size or body type. Furthermore, Hayes' appearance and the way she carries herself throughout the video suggests agency and empowerment. By wearing makeup and tight-fitting clothing she suggests that she is not ashamed of her body and that she is allowed to wear whatever she wishes, big girl or not. She also walks straight towards the person that fat-shamed her and tells her off to her face, looking her straight in the eye as opposed to looking down or not confronting the person at all, again, suggesting empowerment. The sexual liberation aspect is found by Hayes' suggesting that the shamer's boyfriend could not focus

on anything but Hayes as she walked into the room as well as the shamer being jealous of

Hayes' body and curves. Ultimately Hayes challenges editorial beauty standards and body

image by presenting herself in a way that connotes confidence and empowerment.

7. Crowd Theory

Gustave Le Bon's theory of the crowd is interesting to apply to the selection of data,

as the TikTok platform and the content itself has the potential to form crowds. The editing

and communicative functions provided by TikTok allow viewers to share a sentiment in

multiple ways, which are interesting to examine as they reveal how the platform's functions

allow a variation of content and different expressions of crowd behavior.

7.1 Collective Unconsciousness and The Psychological Law of Mental Unity

To account for Le Bon's notion of the crowd, it is important to note that the work by Le Bon

that the following is based on, *The Crowd: A study of the popular mind* was first published in

1895, thus it is necessary to be critical towards his assumptions and the arguments made. The

issue of older, traditional sentiments that diverge from contemporary values will be further

reflected upon in the discussion section of this thesis. According to Le Bon the entity that he

calls the psychological crowd emerges from incorporating the assembled population and

forms a collective unconsciousness. As a group people gather to form a crowd that is treated

as a unit that shares a group mind. To understand the unconscious aspect and mentality of Le

Bon's notion of crowds, it is important to establish what constitutes a crowd from his

psychological point of view. A crowd is not defined as an arbitrary gathering of individuals,

but rather as a psychological crowd, which is only formed under certain circumstances (Le

Bon 15). Le Bon argues:

> Under certain given circumstances, and only under those circumstances, an
> agglomeration of men presents new characteristics very different from those of the

individuals composing it. The sentiments and ideas of all the persons in the gathering take the same direction, and their conscious personality vanishes. A collective mind is formed, doubtless transitory, but presenting very clearly defined characteristics (Le Bon 15-16).

As Le Bon explains, the formation of the crowd and the collective mind is an unconscious process, separating his notion of the crowd from what he refers to as a "gathering", also commonly referred to as a "crowd" in a general sense. Furthermore, as the separation from the conscious mind is crucial to the formation of Le Bon's psychological crowd, a crowd can not be consciously formed, due to its unconscious nature. Le Bon points out that the acts of the crowd are more similar to the nature of primitive beings, as it is essentially unconscious and directed by the body rather than the mind (Le Bon 23). After the formation and the separation from the conscious mind, the collective unconscious exists within the crowd. The crowd acts on its impulses, unlike the individual, that is able to withhold any act with the interest of remaining safe (Le Bon 23). Certain sentiments and ideas of the isolated individual are therefore never realized or transformed into acts unless the individual becomes a part of the psychological crowd (Le Bon 18). As the crowd is driven by impulses, it is considered to be intellectually inferior to the isolated individual that is dictated by the conscious (Le Bon 21). However, the crowd can be considered preferable and even heroic depending on the circumstances, depending on the morality of the shared sentiment, as it acts while the individual is likely to yield (Le Bon 21).

Elaborating on the idea of the collective unconscious existing within crowds, Le Bon's theoretical framework provides the term "the Psychological Law of Mental Unity of Crowds." Le Bon argues that the individual is, inevitably, subjected to this phenomenon as he or she becomes a part of the collective, as they merge and become a "single being" (Le Bon 16). Le Bon's definition of crowds and the law of mental unity is dominated by the idea of the "single being", frequently comparing his notion to metaphors within chemistry and

particularly the biology of the human body and the function of cells, that take on different

and additional functions as a part of a larger whole (Le Bon 18). The cooperating cells within

a body are a metaphor and correlate to the mental unity of the crowd and the metamorphic

unfolding involving "the disappearance of conscious personality and the turning of feelings

and thoughts in a definite direction" (Le Bon 16). Elaborating on the notion, Le Bon argues

that three key processes create the psychological crowd: anonymity, contagion, and

suggestibility.

7.2 Virality, Crowd Contagion, Suggestibility and Anonymity

When examining how crowds are formed through virality and contagion on social media

platforms, it is nearly impossible not to consider the aspects of affect and appeal. Crowds are

made up of individuals that share the same ideas and thus become a collective with a shared

mindset, but this collective cannot be formed without some sort of affect or contagion that

draws individuals to the idea that they will later share as a crowd. As Le Bon mentions, there

are several causes that determine the appearance of crowds, the first being anonymity:

> The first is that the individual forming part of a crowd acquires, solely from numerical
> considerations, a sentiment of invincible power which allows him to yield to instincts
> which, had he been alone, he would preforce have kept under restraint. He will be less
> disposed to check himself from the consideration that, a crowd being anonymous and
> in consequence irresponsible, the sentiment of responsibility which always controls
> individuals disappears entirely (Le Bon 20).

Additionally, contagion is one of the causes that determine the appearance of the

characteristics of the crowd. Le Bon argues that contagion "intervenes to determine the

manifestation in crowds of their special characteristics, and at the same time the trend they

are to take" (Le Bon 20). Furthermore, Le Bon expresses that contagion as such a

phenomenon that makes the establishment of the presence easy, however, hard to explain (Le

Bon 20).

Every act that is found in a crowd is contagious, and contagious "to such a degree that an individual readily sacrifices his personal interest to the collective interest" (Le Bon 20) in this sense, an individual loses his own instincts to the crowd's shared instincts and interests. This is an "aptitude" that stands in contrast to the nature of the individual, as well as something that the individual is scarcely capable of doing, except when being part of a crowd (Le Bon 20). In other words, Le Bon considers crowds to be dangerous because they make individuals give up personal instincts to favor the crowd that they become part of, furthermore, contagion is to be understood as a negative term. In addition to contagion, suggestibility is another phenomenon that describes certain characteristics of the crowd. According to Le Bon, suggestibility is by far the most important because it determines the characteristics of crowds that are contrary to those "presented by the isolated individual" (Le Bon 20), meaning the individual that exists before becoming part of a crowd. Le Bon explains how it is important to consider recent physiological discoveries when trying to understand suggestibility as a phenomenon. One being the notion that an individual, through various processes, "may be brought into such a condition that, having entirely lost his conscious personality, he obeys all the suggestions of the operator who has deprived him of it, and commits acts in utter contradiction with his character and habits" (Le Bon 20). Furthermore, Le Bon explains:

> Careful observations seem to prove that an individual immerged for some length of time in a crowd in action soon finds himself - either in consequence of the magnetic influence given out by the crowd, or from some other cause of which we are ignorant - in a special state, which much resembles the state of fascination in which the hypnotised individual finds himself in the hands of the hypnotiser (Le Bon 21).

Like contagion, suggestibility is to Le Bon, a bad thing. It deprives the individual of its own nature to favor the crowd. Le Bon explains suggestibility as something overpowering to the individual almost like being seduced or captured by someone or something that you cannot escape from, hence the hypnotized and the hypnotizer (Le Bon 21). The hypnotized brain is

paralyzed and becomes subordinate to the unconscious, directed by the hypnotizer, thus "the conscious personality has entirely vanished; will and discernment are lost. All feelings and thoughts are bent in the direction determined by the hypnotiser" (Le Bon 21). Similarly, to anonymity, suggestibility makes the conscious personality disappear entirely.

Although the crowd is often considered to be bad, it all depends on the essence of the suggestion that the crowd is subjected to, which is something that is commonly misunderstood by scholars that have only examined crowds from a criminal point of view. In essence, crowds are made up of individuals that share a certain ideology, whether this ideology is considered bad or good, is determined by who experiences or is exposed to the crowd, as Le Bon concludes "the crowd is always intellectually inferior to the isolated individual, but that, from the point of view of feelings and of the acts these feelings provoke, the crowd may, according to circumstances, he better or worse than the individual" (Le Bon 22). As mentioned, crowds consist of individuals that share the same ideology, ideas, and thoughts on a certain topic, however, for the crowd to be formed, there must be some kind of appeal that speaks to the individuals on a certain level and/or something to create affect. In the case of social media, TikTok and its platform's viral and activist potential plays a huge role in distributing certain content to users across the platform. To be able to examine this potential of social media, it is necessary to account for what virality is as well as how something becomes viral and thus effective in terms of forming crowds online. Considering that Le Bon's work is from 1895, it is not odd that he does not mention virality or even online crowds; however, it is necessary to include when examining cases found on social media, seeing as viral content is what you are highly exposed to as a user of social media. As Le Bon focuses on physical crowds, it is necessary to include some theoretical framework that is concerned with online crowds. In this case: "The online crowd: a contradiction in terms? On the potentials of Gustave Le Bon's crowd psychology in an analysis of affective blogging" by

Carsten Stage. Stage's research aims to "investigate whether the concept of the 'crowd' as developed by Gustave Le Bon can help us understand the new types of affectively charged collectivities created via spontaneous interaction on various social media platforms" (Stage 1).

According to Stage, online technologies such as mobile devices, make it possible for new types of "affectively charged collectivities to emerge on social media platforms through spontaneous interaction" (Stage 1). Although Le Bon focuses on the physical crowd as well as the crowd being mostly bad and dangerous, his theory is open to the idea that crowds can form in a non-physical setting. Stage argues that Le Bon's notion of the crowd applies to an online setting because of its ability to highlight how "new media alter the formation of publics and crowds" (Stage 2). Furthermore, it allows "for moments of intense mediated affect in relation to specific online events and spaces" (Stage 2). In this sense, Le Bon's concept furthers the understanding of different kinds of online practices in general as well as certain types of "affective clustering" on certain sites at certain moments (Stage 2).

Several understandings of the crowd, including Le Bon's, emphasize the importance of "physical co-presence … in the formation of crowds" (Stage 3). However, some understandings distinguish between the crowd as being "a collection of psychic connections produced essentially by physical contacts" (Stage 3) and the public as being a "dispersion of individuals that are physically separated and whose cohesion is entirely mental" (Stage 3). In other words, this understanding distinguishes between the crowd and the public as two separate concepts - while the crowd is considered transient and impulsive, the public does not display emotional intensity and lack of impulse control. Furthermore, according to this notion, the public is not considered to have potential in terms of being a site of affective investment, however, Stage stresses that "the public does not rely on unmediated bodily encounters as crowd affectively does" (Stage 3). Although this notion does not resemble that

of Le Bon, his concept of the crowd can still be useful when trying to understand the social dynamics of mediated collectivities, which leads to the concept of the online crowd.

As implied by the term, online crowds typically form through social media platforms, and online in general, meaning that the emphasis on a shared geographical space is not as important as with the traditional crowd, which is created and based on a shared physical space. Although Le Bon's theoretical framework is based on the traditional crowd, his concept might be the most open to suspending the notion of a physical co-presence as a premise for the formation of crowds. As Stage explains, Le Bon argues that: "media technologies intensify, rather than prevent, crowd behavior" and that "the 'weakening of general beliefs', 'the extreme mobility of ideas', and the 'recent development of the newspaper press'" (Stage 4) made crowds even more important than before. Le Bon's concept of the crowd is essentially about "sharing affective processes and becoming a mental unity" (Stage 4). In this sense, media technologies can function as tools that enhance the formation of crowds by "spreading and modulating affects" (Stage 4).

As mentioned, viral content on social media platforms is what is arguably the most contagious and persuasive to users of social media. Considering Stage's examination of how Le Bon's concept of the crowd applies to the concept of the online crowd, the internet's ability to make something rapidly spread and become viral, will be considered a tool to enhance the formation of crowds online. Virality is defined as "the condition or fact of being rapidly spread or popularized by means of people communicating with each other, especially through the internet" (Oxford Reference, Virality). In addition, the technological devices that make social media platforms such as TikTok available to common people furthers the exposure and distribution of certain content ultimately enhancing the viral potential.

8. Crowd Analysis

So far, the analysis has uncovered that the selection of videos varies in expression, while all contain shared sentiments regarding toxic masculinity, body-positivity and perceptions of gender. The next part of the analysis will further examine shared sentiments, and how these transcend on TikTok. The comment, stitch, and share functions as well as the content will be central for this particular analysis, to uncover evidence of Le Bon's notion of crowd behavior on the social platform.

8.1 Crowd Formations Rooted in Toxic Masculinity and Counter Discourses

In terms of virality and the potential of content going viral on the TikTok platform, hashtags are used to distribute content in such a way that anything that is being hashtagged with e.g., *#girl* can be found in one spot, in other words, if you click the *#feminism* on the platform, you are immediately redirected to content that has the *#feminism* in the title or the description. In the video by @sixbabiestv (app 1.), the title included the hashtags *#samirah #foryou #parati #fyp #enpowerment #sixbabies #queen* and *#feminism*. In this case, the hashtag *#feminism* is the most valuable in terms of examining the formation of crowds based on aspects of feminist ideology, as it indicates that the theme of the video is concerned with feminism and feminists. When examining virality and the potential of content going viral on the TikTok platform, hashtags play a huge role in making content accessible to users of social media, additionally, the ability to have specific content grouped in one place furthers the distribution and thus virality of content. People with different interests can search nearly anything such as *#feminism* or *#women*, and loads of content concerned with the specific theme or interest will appear on the platform. Although content spreads rapidly across the social media platform, it is nearly impossible to watch every single piece of content that comes up when searching *#women* or *#feminism,* thus there needs to be some sort of appeal or affect created by the

viewer when watching the content, in order to form an online crowd that is centered around the theme or ideology that is presented in the selected content. The availability of social media makes interactions between individuals very easy and happens very fast, as Stage puts it, media technologies enhance the formation of crowds by "spreading and modulating affects" (Stage 4). The affects that Stage mentions are what furthers the formation of the online crowd, by affect and reactions spreading across social media platforms thus furthering the distribution of viral content. Furthermore, affects in this sense, appear in the shape of especially comments or other reactions to videos, this could for instance be a reactional video response, (a stitch on TikTok) like the video by @mrvdk - by making a reaction video to the original video by @27relle, @mrvdk displays and spreads affect across the social media platform and enhances the formation of an online crowd consisting of users that agree with his response and share the same sense of affect created by watching the video by @27relle. As Le Bon explains, every act that is found in a crowd is contagious and dangerous, in this sense, Le Bon considers the crowd to be bad because it deprives individuals of their own instincts and interests to favor the crowd. In addition to contagion, Le Bon speaks of suggestibility as one of the main concepts that describe certain characteristics of the crowd and determines characteristics that stand in contrast to what is presented by the isolated individual before joining the crowd. In terms of social media and the online crowd, this notion that the individual gives up their own instincts to join a crowd might still be valid to some extent. However, the crowds that are formed online on social media are different from the physical crowds that Le Bon mentions in his work. In terms of online crowds, some aspects of Le Bon's theory are applicable.

The videos by Jess Megan (@jess_megan_) and by @sixbabiestv are different in terms of the potential to form online crowds because they are not meant to be direct responses to another video, however, more so directed towards the entirety of users that search for

#feminism on the platform. In this case, the affective reactions are found in the comments assuming that the majority of users watching the video share the same affective reaction, one would argue that these users are gathering as an online crowd by sharing affect and behavior in a unified way. In this case, Stage also mentions how the crowd might only look unified from the outside, while the individual experiences may differ in terms of intensity and content as explained by Stage: "To identify an online crowd would then imply finding symptoms of a shared suggestive quality" (Stage 11), which in this case presents itself as compassion to the issue that is presented by Jess Megan in her video. This suggestive quality would have to be found among a group of users, "rather than verifying the existence of the exact identical affective state in everybody involved" (Stage 11).

In the video by Andrea Areli (app. 4) the *#girl* is used in the description, furthering the distribution of the video, and making it accessible to every user on the platform that searches for the *#girl*. However, for a crowd to be formed based on content that is concerned with a specific theme or notion, there needs to be some sort of appeal to the video or affect created by the viewer when watching the video. In addition to the *#girl* Andrea Areli also includes *#dancechallenge* in the title of her video, although this does not have as much relevance in terms of feminism, it does add to the viral potential of the video because challenges on social media tend to spread rapidly, (such as the infamous "ice bucket challenge") and causes affect in the sense that other users tend to participate by creating their video. However, the main focus remains on the *#girl* and the affective reactions made by the viewer. Again, the affective reactions are most evident in the interactions made to the video such as likes, shares, and comments. This is where the viewers that share the same affective reactions to the video by Andrea Areli will form an online crowd-based on these spontaneous interactions rather than physical presence. As previously mentioned, Le Bon considers every act that happens within the crowd to be contagious. Contagious in the sense that the

individual readily sacrifices their personal interest to favor the collective interest (Le Bon 20).

In terms of the TikTok platform and the content that is rapidly spread across it, it is especially

hashtags that not only makes content viral but suggestible to the viewer that then performs

contagious acts, constituting the formation of the online crowd as explained by Le Bon:

> The first suggestion formulated which arises implants itself immediately by a process
> of contagion in the brains of all assembled, and the identical bent on the sentiments of
> the crowd is immediately an accomplished fact. As is the case with all persons under
> the influence of suggestion, the idea which has entered the brain tends to transform
> itself into an act (Le Bon 26).

Like the video by Andrea Areli, the videos by Jasmine (@jewishjasminetea) and Clare

(@littlecripple) feature hashtags that are concerned with women and feminism in the title or

the description. In this sense, all three videos share the same viral potential and thus the same

conditions for there to be formed an online crowd based on affective reactions made by the

viewers of the videos. The affect that spreads rapidly through impulsive interactions, makes

the viewers or participants of the crowd that is formed, suggestible to the contagious acts that

are made within the crowd. In this sense, the viewers that will form or participate in the

crowd, sort of hypnotized by the contagious acts found in the crowd and the participants

surrender their individual instincts to favor the collective mind of the crowd. The mentality of

these crowds that are formed based on the three videos' content and themes are especially

evident in the comment sections and the reactions made to the videos such as likes and

shares.

8.2 Toxic Discourse and The Power of Crowd Mentality

Examining the comment section by @sixbabiestv's video, the like function indicates crowds,

as these simply indicate how many TikTok accounts acknowledge a particular comment or

statement. Appendix 10 a-f depicts the video comments that have received the greatest

amounts of likes and interaction. Looking at the variety of viral comments, the amount of

likes suggests that the majority of those who engage with the content share the same opinion as the participant featured in @sixbabiestv's video. The most viral comments acknowledge and agree with her point of view and attitude, referring to her as a "queen", a contemporary slang derived from the LGBTQIA+ community that is used to refer to an individual as flamboyant, feminine, or in high regard (NLGJA). In this example, the term "Queen" and the other popular comments such as "She didn't stutter " and "omg i love her" refer to the participant's assertive statements, which implies respect, admiration, and a shared sentiment. The number of empowering comments, that often are very similar in sentiment or vocabulary, further suggests a crowd formation. As Le Bon points out, every act or sentiment is contagious within the crowd and even to such a degree that the individual will make sacrifices for the collective interest (Le Bon 20). The amount of interactions, comments, and somewhat homogenous expression exhibits what Le Bon's defines as crowd mentality, suggesting that these TikTok users share a sentiment that is contagious and therefore spreads within the crowd. Additionally, Le Bon defines the crowd as "CREDULOUS AND READILY INFLUENCED BY SUGGESTION", which can result in the unanimous expression and definite direction in the comments on a social media platform as "images evoked in the mind of crowds are accepted by them as realities" (Le Bon 23). Furthermore, (app. 10 a-f) depicts three separate and viral comments by the users Bimba, Milena Rayt, and Lionie. The translations of Spanish, Russian and German reveal similar comments such as "She is a Goddess", "I admire how calm she was able to remain calm", "Oh my god, this does not happen to them. Men.", suggests that it is a heterogeneous crowd, providing homogenous sentiment and arguments equivalent to Le Bon's notion of crowds and crowd mentality (Le Bon 16).

According to Le Bon, basic characteristics of the individuals becoming a crowd involves "The disappearance of conscious personality and the turning of feelings and

thoughts in a definite direction" (Le Bon 16). Examining the popular comments posted by various accounts, they appear quite similar, as directed towards the same characteristics that are considered positive or favorable. The comments correspond with Le Bon's theory, as they are displaying the unity of crowd mentality, and are generally focused on the same sentiments and choices of words, indicating contagion and a crowd (Le Bon 21). In appendix 10 a-f, contradicting sentiments are also present in the comment section and interacted with by TikTok users. However, the number of interactions is few compared to the comments aligning with feminist sentiments, which are interacted with and "liked" on a much larger scale. The limited evidence for interaction and contagion with sentiments that criticize the participant suggests a lack of crowd behavior, unlike the crowd that has emerged from the feminist sentiment.

A notable difference is that @deja_foxxx last text added to the visuals reads "abuse from men and white women" while Jess Megan's did not include the latter. The tendency to use Megan's sound and nearly identical expression suggests that the creator shares her sentiment and as a consequence has acted as a result of crowd mentality, making the viewer transform suggested values into acts, unlike the individual, which is hesitant to act out the sentiment (Le Bon 21). As the viewer uses an identical expression, she is using comments from her TikToks, which include both men and specifically white women. The addition to @deja_foxxx' video is different from the specific video by Megan, however, Megan does connote different feminist values in her TikTok's, such as body-positivity, in which racial discrimination is considered problematic (app. 12b).

@deja_foxxx's use of Megan's sound and visual expression, while providing comments and visuals aligning with the original video and creator, suggests that @deja_foxxx is a part of the crowd reacting and reproducing Jess Megan's sentiment. Appendix 12 c, d depicts another TikTok creator, @taylor._.garner using the sound in

question. The participant and creator's expression align with Jess Megan's, as she too has added pictures of hateful comments to the frame and in-frame text identical to Megan's (app. 12 c, d). Additionally, Taylor's body language is equivalent to Jess Megan's assertive sitting pose. The comments are much similar to Megan's, as they revolve around the participant's body and how she is considered to be obese and therefore less attractive. Examples that highly indicate critical opinions of the participant's appearance similar to the original video, is a comment containing three emojis, depicting a pregnant woman and whales and the comment "I can't tell what you do more, eat or use makeup" (app. 12). Aligning well with crowd psychology, more than 200 users have chosen to produce their videos using Jess Megan's audio (app. 12). Users that have produced TikToks based on Jess Megan's voice-over and message provide an understanding of how a member of the online crowd is prone to act on a suggested and shared sentiment and can do so in several ways on the social platform. Additionally, in relation to the video responses, it is evident that Le Bon's notion of anonymity is present. As Le Bon argues, the individual within the crowd has "… a sentiment of invincible power which allows him to yield to instincts which, had he been alone, he would perforce have kept under restraint. He will be the less disposed to check himself from the consideration that, a crowd being anonymous, and in consequence irresponsible, the sentiment of responsibility which always controls individuals disappears entirely" (Le Bon 20). The manner that the women take on Jess Megan's sentiment, despite the discrimination and hateful feedback she shares with the viewer, suggests that the anonymity of the crowd allows the viewer to expose themselves to the toxic discourse without hesitation. Ultimately, the empowering sentiment and crowd behavior have resulted in several examples that exhibit crowd mentality.

The example with @mrvdk provides further evidence of how crowd behavior is expressed through the various TikTok functions and interactions. As depicted in appendix 14,

217 videos have been posted using the particular sound, with the majority of them using a split-screen and footage of themselves provided by TikTok's "Duet" function. The first example depicts the original video and a video response from @valeriesophiaa_. Valerie is depicted responding with her facial expression and hand gestures, and the text "cc: Thank you" added to the end of the TikTok. This expression is repetitive throughout the examples, as @rhema.thaddeus and @smoochasaurus are similarly acknowledging the sentiment with text and a visual depiction of their reaction (app. 14). The example with @smoochasaurus further strengthens the connection, as she too has added facts concerning female oppression in the text (app. 14). Indicated by the general tendency with the "Duet" function and the manner that the viewers are applauding and reproducing the sentiment corresponds with Le Bon's term contagion, providing similar, almost identical expressions and displaying the crowd's tendency to act on a suggested sentiment (Le Bon 20-21).

An example in which the interactions are quite different is by content posted by Jasmine (app. 15). The video by Jasmine has 70.000 views compared to the data from Jess Megan (5,6 million) and @mrvdk (7,4 million), which is important to note, as it is considered viral but consequently provides fewer comments and interactions. However, the viral comments, all vary in expression. In appendix 15, it's evident that a great amount of the comments provides different sentiments than the creator. The comments are not expressing full unity while many even question the feminist message by distancing themselves from the notion of toxic masculinity. The comments that describe Biden as merely lacking "boundaries" or being "too affectionate", undermine the message regarding harassment and toxic masculinity transferred by Jasmine (app. 15). The lack of interactions on either of the viewpoints does not suggest crowd behavior as a response to the sentiment, despite the video being viral and providing the possibility of interaction.

The data selected from Clare (@littlecripple) has considerably fewer views compared to Jess Megan and @mrvdk with 1,6 million views. However, in this example, many comments suggest that many users are sharing the sentiment, as they all object to the phrase "not all men", similarly to the creator in the video (app. 16). The amount of these comments and how they acknowledge the sentiment with interactions are important characteristics of crowd behavior, displaying the urge to act on the shared sentiment. Comments that confront the sentiment are too present, however, the interactions with these are generally different or lacking (app. 16 d, e). The comment by @fenmore is quite interesting, as over 600 people have liked his counterargument while receiving more than 400 replies almost exclusively from the creator or users sharing her feminist sentiment. Additionally, the comments "not all men" (app. 16) and the lack of interaction further suggests that fewer people share the sentiment and therefore lack evidence of crowd behavior. The replies to the comments from the creator, however, are acknowledged to a higher degree (app. 16).

Like Jess Megan and @mrvdk's sounds, Clare's sound has been reused (app. 17). The first example by the creator @power.to.her, the creator uses the audio contains Clare's arguments and sentiment, while providing hashtags such as *#feminism #patriachy* and *#notallmen*. In the video, by the use of the "Duet" function, the creator is depicting nodding and clapping, and ultimately acting on their shared sentiment. Similar to @power.to.her, the example with a duet by the user @frogsracoonminions serves the same purpose, as the video depicts the phrases "This!" and "Listen and Learn!", letting the original video carry the shared sentiment (app. 17). Lastly, the examples from the users @artsimps0n and @castellyaya.art have a different visual expression, as they are not making use of the original video. However, the sound is added to their own footage, in which they are depicting women by painting them (app. 17). The visual expressions are arguably distinct from Clare's, while

the audial expression is identical. Despite variation in visual expression, the visuals still align with the sentiment, as the creators are using female figures as motives.

8.3 Crowds Constituted by Body-positivity

The body-positive movement is highly pronounced online on websites and social media. On a social media platform such as TikTok where affects and content spread rapidly through spontaneous interactions, content that is concerned with body-positivity has a high potential of going viral. The videos by Gen Hayes, Mallory Pruitt, and @..bodyposi all include *#bodypositivity* or *#positivity* in the title or description, meaning that they can be found all in one place on the TikTok platform and thus available to billions of users (TikTok, *#bodypositivity*). As mentioned, affects are transmitted through spontaneous interactions. These spontaneous interactions and the availability of social media all enhance the formation of online crowds (Stage 4). However, for a crowd to be formed, it needs to be based on something, in this case, the formation of the crowd is based on a common theme or a movement such as the body-positivity movement. Furthermore, the crowd is constituted by people or users spreading affects and these affects are created by watching certain content. Arguably, viral content has a larger potential to constitute crowd formation due to its high number of viewings and interactions such as comments, likes, and shares. In the article "What Makes Online Content Viral?" by Jonah Berger and Katherine L. Milkman, it is stated how "sharing online content is an integral part of modern life" and that "decades of research suggest that interpersonal communication affects attitudes and decision making" (Berger et. al 192). This correlates well with what Le Bon mentions about an individual being suggestible to joining a crowd based on certain characteristics that stand in contrast to those presented by the isolated individual (Le Bon 21) as well as the individual giving up personal instincts to favor the crowd based on shared affects (Le Bon 21).

In terms of the three videos mentioned above, they would all be considered viral content based on the number of views, likes, comments, and shares on each video. The affects that are spread and shared in this case, would be the most pronounced in the comment sections of each video. However, this will be examined later in terms of crowd mentality and behavior. Although the three videos share a common theme, namely body-positivity. They are different in composition and thus the potential to constitute an online crowd varies. The video by Gen Hayes is composed as a response to fat-shaming, kind of similar to the reaction video (stitch) made by @mrvdk previously examined. By acting as a direct response to a comment such as "you're pretty for a big girl" the affect created by watching Gen Hayes' video is different from the affect created when watching the videos by Mallory Pruitt and @..bodyposi as these videos are composed differently. While the video by Gen Hayes seeks to confront fat shamers and encourage people to not be discouraged by degrading comments, the videos by Mallory Pruitt and @..bodyposi are much less direct as they depict different body types in a more subtle way, encouraging everybody to love and accept their bodies despite size and body type. Furthermore, there is no speech audio included in those two videos, only music, furthering the different functions of the videos.

Nonetheless, the videos each serve contagious content that is available to the suggestible viewer. Hashtags do not only make content go viral, but it makes content suggestible to viewers that will form an online crowd. As Le Bon explains, suggestion is the first part of the process of contagion, as for every person that is influenced, this suggestion will later form into contagious acts (Le Bon 26). It is this contagion that is dangerous because it deprives individuals of their natural instincts to favor the crowd that they participate in.

8.4 Crowd Mentality and the Body Positive Sentiment

As depicted in appendix 20, quite a few of the comments are empowering and applauding the women's appearance and self-love. Mallory Pruitt's comment section exceeds 10.000 comment entries, while the comments are quite similar in expression, several of them calling the two women "Beautiful", "Babes", "Gorgeous" etc. (app. 20 a-d). As evidence has suggested in the visual analysis of the data, the creator has transferred the body-positive sentiment, and through visuals connoted sensual and pleasurable associations and presented the women as attractive and equal, which reflects in the empowering comments. The repetitive and similar comments depicted in appendix 20 suggest that the creator's sentiment is shared with the viewers, and the repetitive comments indicate contagious behavior among the crowd as it displays "the turning by means of suggestion and contagion of feelings and ideas in an identical direction, the tendency to immediately transform the suggested ideas into acts." (Le Bon 21) The comments appear in multiple languages, while the translations reveal equivalent sentiment, further displaying how the sentiment deriving from the crowd is contagious, even across different nationalities and therefore languages (app. 20). Much similar to comment entries on Mallory Pruitt's body-positive video, the comments for @..bodyposi's video exhibit an encouraging tendency (app. 21). Like earlier evidence suggests, many of the comments are focused on describing the women as "Beautiful", "Gorgeous", "Perfect" and "Queens" (app. 21). The comment section indicates how these acts themselves are contagious within the crowd, as they seem repetitive while expressing the same point of view. In correlation with contagious crowd behavior, the name "Brooklyn" appears repetitively, which refers to and "calls out" the last woman in the video for a scandal (ikTok: @xobrooklynne). Another interesting point is the way that Brooklynne's name is misspelled in the majority of the comments, suggesting how the questions and criticism involving "Brooklyn" spread throughout the crowd as a result of the crowd's unconscious

behavior (app. 22 a-g). The comments display crowd behavior, however, it is unclear whether this crowd shares sentiment transferred by the creator. Sound provides several examples of body-positive sentiment, however, the 2.2 million videos made vary in message and sentiment, as the dance challenge did not stem from a body-positive point of view. However, among these videos is quite a bit of data that seems to stem from @..bodyposi's video rather than the dance and sound itself (app. 23). The first five videos in appendix 23 are either using body-positive hashtags or providing a much similar expression to the @..bodyposi video. The videos are quite similar to the original video, as they express self-love and happiness by dancing and showing off their figures, in revealing outfits (app. 23). The sentiment has seemingly become contagious, as the sound functions provide a general tendency, making the viewer act on the shared sentiment, almost reproducing how the participants carried themselves in @..bodyposi's video. The virality and the repetitive expression of body-positivity suggest crowd behavior, not only in relation to the body-positive sentiment, showing contagious behavior as viewers repeatedly makes others aware of the participant Brooklynne's scandal and the original viral dance challenge (app. 22 a-g).

Lastly, the example with Gen Hayes video has nearly 9.5 million views and 2.2 million likes, which suggests that the content has gone viral (app. 18). Examining the comments, the viral comments revolve around empowering statements that applaud Gen Hayes' argument, and additionally her appearance, which corresponds with the creator's comment on beauty standards. The empowering comments, and slang "period" or "periodt", derived from the LGBTQIA+ community (Tenbarge), and similar vocabulary such as "Queen" or crown emojis are repetitive throughout the comment section, as depicted in appendix 18. The tendency in the comment section suggests behavior related to Le Bon's crowd characteristics, as the many similar comments suggest that the act and language are contagious. The use of the sound is much similar to Jess Megan and @mrvdk, in which the

sound is used in a way that successfully transfers the sentiment by using the original audio. The viewer's tendency to choose a nearly identical visual expression as with Jess Megan's content, is displayed by the creator @kiaraxdiamond. Kiara is depicted as in Gen Hayes' content, as she acts out a scene, mouthing the lines of the audio as if she was conversing (app. 18). The creator Kiara can be considered curvy and similar to Hayes' appearance and racial descent, which carries out the same message as the original video. Consequently, this content provides identical sentiments. However, Le Bon's notion of contagion is difficult to establish with the videos using the sound, as the function is not included in the original video but subsequently in another, distinctively less viral video (app. 18). Among the few entries, particularly the selected examples by @kiaraxdiamond, @daliaa245, and @stephiemurdock, show similar tendencies as the interactions with Jess Megan and @mrvdk's content, on a smaller scale. However, the issue of the sound provides difficulty for a crowd to create content without a direct "Use this sound" function.

8.5 Crowd Formations Based on the Sentiments of Sexual Liberation and Female Agency

In terms of virality and the potential for crowds to form based on contagious content, the video by Kirsten (@kir5t3n) is a good example of a video that has gone viral. The hashtags *(#januarytodecember #foryou #fyp #foryoupage #onlyfans #money #girls #greenscreen)* used in the title and/or the description suggests that the video is concerned with girls/women, money, and the OnlyFans platform. However, the *#onlyfans* is not a hashtag that you can click on, on the TikTok platform, thus this hashtag does not play into the rapid spread of this exact video or other videos concerned with OnlyFans. Arguably, this is because the creators of the TikTok platform are against the promotion of pornographic content. However, the only thing that is written on the TikTok 'about' page is: "TikTok is the leading destination for short-form mobile video. Our mission is to inspire creativity and bring joy" (TikTok, about).

Which does not say a lot about their policies on what content is allowed on the platform and what is not. Although the *#onlyfans* is not a 'proper' hashtag on the TikTok platform, the *#girls* and the *#money* is available for gathering content in one spot on the platform, again, suggesting that the video is concerned with girls earning money. The idea of sexual liberation and freedom of choice in terms of agency are notions that are found within the fourth-wave feminist movement. Furthermore, female sexual liberation, like body-positivity, is highly pronounced on social media platforms, including TikTok. Thus, content that is concerned with these themes is contagious to the suggestible viewer that resonates with the feminist idea of sexual liberation and female agency. In addition to this, affects spread through spontaneous interactions that then enhance the formation of online crowds (Stage 4). As Le Bon explains, every action that is made within the crowd is contagious and dangerous because it leads individuals to leave their individual instincts and thoughts behind to favor the crowd (Le Bon 21). The video by Kirsten suggests that women are allowed to make money on the OnlyFans platform, connoting sexual liberation. The affect that is transmitted based on the theme of the video can either be positive or negative, depending on the viewer. One either resonates with the idea that it should be acceptable for women to earn money on a platform such as OnlyFans that allows users to distribute pornographic or erotic content, while another might think that it is repulsive or distasteful. While the video would be considered viral content based on the number of views, the crowd formation potential is lacking due to the low engagement and thus low activity in terms of spontaneous interactions.

8.6 The Absence of Crowd Mentality

The data collected from @kir5t3n has 412.500 views and consequently fewer interactions than some of the previously examined videos. The TikTok does not provide a sound function, further limiting evidence of crowd behavior. However, the video has 673 comments and

therefore interactions that are relevant for analysis. The comments provide different tendencies compared to previous analytic evidence, predominantly comments that promote their accounts or ask for advice due to a lack of success on Onlyfans (app.25). The comments are notably different compared to the other videos, however, the lack of evidence of crowd behavior aligns well with the visual expression, which is as previously mentioned, lacking viewer engagement. The fact that many comments promote their own OnlyFans accounts, suggesting a shared sentiment of sex-positivity, instead of engaging in crowd behavior highly indicates that the video by Kirsten does not appeal to the viewer to the same extent.

9. Discussion

Throughout the composition of the analysis, several points of discussion have piqued our interest. The first point of discussion is of the notion expressed by Le Bon, which can be viewed as rather problematic in contemporary society, namely that men are more likely to be ruled by their sentiments as opposed to women, expressing a binary understanding of gender.

Le Bon's theory corresponds well with the analytic findings, as the general characteristics of anonymity, contagion and suggestibility are present in the examined interactions. While Le Bon's work was published in 1895, before the online crowd was a concept, the characteristics are much present in the different communicative and creative functions that contemporary society provides online. However, Le Bon's view provides a problematic notion, as he points out that some individuals evade the defined standards. He distinguishes between the standard of the isolated individual, and other individuals, arguing that men are more likely to be ruled by their sentiments, due to their "inherent essence." (Le Bon 18). Le Bon's binary understanding of gender is arguably outdated compared to the contemporary view of gender as a spectrum (usd.edu). Additionally, based on the examined data, the view of women as passive and reluctant to act on their sentiment is not evident in our data, as the women present themselves as non-apologetic, assertive, and verbally aggressive, as displayed by the participant in @sixbabiestv's video. This leads to the second point of discussion regarding the OnlyFans platform and whether it in fact assists in providing the sex-positive notion that is found within the fourth-wave feminist movement or not. Why does TikTok ban and/or exclude users that are also apparent on OnlyFans from the TikTok platform?

As previously mentioned, the OnlyFans platform seeks to make the connection between creators and fans easily accessible and further the connection between user and viewer, by allowing content creators to monetize their own exclusive content (onlyfans, about). Furthermore, the platform is exclusive to subscribers making it more exclusive than a free site such as TikTok or Instagram. However, the content that is available on OnlyFans is predominantly of erotic or pornographic nature, and thus not comparable to social media sites such as TikTok and Instagram. In addition to this, a huge factor and goal of OnlyFans is for creators to make money selling pictures, videos, or other messages of themselves to 'fans'. On the OnlyFans website's "How it Works" page it says: "Anyone can earn: As far as we're concerned if you use social media and produce your own content, you should be using OnlyFans. Whether you're uploading tutorials, tips, behind-the-scenes footage, or just endless selfies, a lot of your followers would be willing to pay for them!" (OnlyFans, how it works). With this, the people behind OnlyFans are encouraging anyone to join and make money off of their 'fans' and 'followers' because it is an easy way to make money. No description claims that the content needs to be erotic or pornographic, however, it is stressed that OnlyFans is inclusive of all creators, of all genres (OnlyFans, about). On social media platforms such as Instagram, activists and feminists are allowed to promote their own OnlyFans page by linking to it via stories or in their bio on their profile, an example of this is the user @larissalimareal on Instagram (app. 24). Arguably, female users on OnlyFans seek to normalize sex work and might view it sexual liberation and empowerment. Author and journalist Julie Bindel (The Spectator) would disagree - in the article "There is nothing 'empowering' about sex work on OnlyFans", Bindel argues why sex work online does not make you empowered as a woman. OnlyFans is promoted as being a safe, consequence-free

way of selling sex and home-grown porn that empowers women (Bindel). Those who earn

the most money on the platform are women with mainly male subscribers who willingly pay

quite a bit of money to be able to view images and videos that would be considered too

pornographic or erotic to be found on the Instagram and TikTok platform (Bindel).

Additionally, subscribers can 'order' specific videos or photos from the female creators in

exchange for a larger fee, depending on the sexual taste of the 'fan' (Bindel). Bindel also

refers to OnlyFans as "a huge money machine" that is, unlike pornhub, "putting the money

back in to porn" (Bindel) and concludes that it is neither safe nor empowering for women to

be or become creators on OnlyFans: "Whilst the money pours in to OF, and young, broke and

often vulnerable women are drawn to this sanitised version of prostitution, men that subscribe

have found yet another platform to treat women as little more than their own personalised sex

toy" (Bindel).

As opposed to Bindel's negative view on the OnlyFans platform, Olivia Olphin (the

focus) presents OnlyFans in a different light in the article: *Is OnlyFans feminist? The power*

of owning your image. OnlyFans, unlike pornhub, "allows users to monetise their own

content, whether this is behind the scenes videos, racy photos or even straight-up porn"

(Olphin). Ultimately, the decision to create and sell specific content is the creator's choice, as

they can choose what they want to post and simply deny requested content if it crosses any

boundaries. Furthermore, the increase of revenge porn makes it more important than ever for

people to take control over their images (Olphin). An example of a celebrity that feels in full

control of her own image on OnlyFans is Disney star, Bella Thorne. As part of a trend of

women taking back control, she joined OnlyFans: "OnlyFans is the first platform where I can

fully control my image; without censorship, without judgment, and without being bullied

online for being me" (Olphin). However, does OnlyFans actually empower women, or does it merely add to the ongoing notion of female objectification? Furthermore, OnlyFans provides not only the possibility of empowerment for the sex worker but also complete agency. The price for a subscription is administered by the performer and as a result of the pandemic, "a wave of former low-wage workers" has turned to OnlyFans (GQ.com). Ultimately, the feminist movement and empowerment are a great part of the OnlyFans, while the general prosperity of the social platform can be ascribed to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, TikTok creators have documented an issue coined as 'Shadowban', which occurs not only in relation to spam but also as a sanction to TikTok's definition of inappropriate content (Cortés). This proves to be problematic for influencers, as it prevents an account's content from becoming viral. Concerning other platforms such as OnlyFans and the sex-positive message, the platform's censorship and sanctions are obstacles that decrease the chances of transferring the sex-positive sentiment with TikTok content. In an article written by Joshua Espinoza at Complex, it is explained how OnlyFans creators have been 'purged' from the TikTok platform. Several TikTok users claim that their TikTok account has been deactivated because they (apparently) have violated TikTok's sex and nudity policies (Espinoza). In the article: *TikTok Reportedly Banning Accounts Belonging to OnlyFans Creators* a content creator speaks about how they had gained 100.000 followers on TikTok before their account was suspended for having a link to her OnlyFans page via Linktree in her TikTok bio (Espinoza). Another creator explains how the same thing had happened to her due to her being a user on OnlyFans as well. What remains strange is the fact that these creators were kicked off the TikTok platform, while users like Bella Thorne are allowed to stay on TikTok, despite her presence on OnlyFans (Espinoza).

As Prudence Chamberlain claims, the debate concerning contemporary feminism versus postfeminism has been revived as a result of the fourth-wave feminist movement. Therefore, we seek to discuss the notion of postfeminism and whether the notions and concepts within the fourth-wave feminist movement would be considered postfeminist or not. In the article "Postfeminism, popular feminism and neoliberal feminism? Sarah Banet-Weiser, Rosalind Gill, and Catherine Rottenberg in conversation" it is explained by Rosalind Gill how the term postfeminism was coined in the media as "a way of making sense of paradoxes and contradictions in the representation of women" (Banet-Weiser et al. 4). In 90s media culture, the celebrations of 'girl-power' and the succession of the female sex were set in line with the intense adverse scrutiny of women. Announcements of gender equality were paired with "assertions about the redundancy of feminism paired with an intensified interest in sexual difference" (Banet-Weister et al. 4-5). What was meant by this assertion, was that any of the remaining inequalities concerning these sexual differences, were not the result of sexism but of "natural differences and/or of women's own choices" (Banet-Weister et. al. 5). Furthermore, it is explained by Sarah Gamble in the *Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism* chapter 4, that in relation to popular culture the term postfeminism relates to the Spice Girls and Madonna. Ultimately Gamble explains how women dress like bimbos while still claiming male privileges and attitudes (Gamble 36). Generally speaking, the postfeminist debate tends to:

> crystallise around issues of victimization, autonomy and responsibility Because it is critical of any definition of women as victims who are unable to control their own lives, it is inclined to be unwilling to condemn pornography and to be sceptical of such phenomena as date-rape: because it is skewed in favour of liberal humanism, it embraces a flexible ideology which can be adapted to suit individual needs and desires. Finally, because it tends to be implicitly heterosexist in orientation, postfeminism commonly seeks to develop an agenda which can find a place for men, as lovers, husbands and fathers as well as friends (Gamble 36).

Thus, postfeminism can be generally defined as an ideology that ignores or rejects feminist ideas found in the 1960s and the following decades (Gamble 37). With this in mind, the concepts of toxic gender discourse, body-positivity, and sex-positivity can be said to be closely connected to earlier feminist critique. The movement valuing sex-positivity and sexual agency is consequently in line with earlier feminist thought of women's sexual liberation, as the main goal is to practice and normalize female sexuality, as a response to a culture that obsolete perceptions of gendered behavior (Pickard 135). The revealing, hyperfeminine aesthetic, however, is an expression that can be perceived as commenting and normalizing female sexuality and agency, while hyper-femininity can also be considered to reinforce female stereotypes and gender roles. Defining the movement as being a post-feminist expression, however, provides challenges. The notion of postfeminism suggests that all or nearly all feminist goals have been achieved and occurs as a result of said achievements. As Barbara Molony and Jennifer Nelson argues in *Women's Activism and "Second Wave" Feminism*, the contemporary movement can be said to criticize especially second-wave feminism as the movement was dominated by white women, arguing that "women of color and working-class women merely react to an already constituted set of white and middle-class feminist demands" (Molony et al. 2). In the article "How Second-Wave Feminism Forgot the Single Woman", Rachel F. Moran argues that the American second-wave and the key issues were dominated towards white, married women, much like first-wave feminism, which was characterized by a trivial amount of unmarried women (Moran 3). The third and fourth-wave of feminism, however, provides criticism of "binary notions of gender toward consideration of the multiple identities of age, class, race, and sexual preference" (Molony et al. 2). As the earlier feminist movement has excluded multiple

identities in their demands, it is problematic to assign the current movement to postfeminism, as feminism cannot be said to have "a singular voice or articulated a set of homogenous demands" (Molony et al. 2), which suggests that demands and oppression still do exist for multiple individuals that have previously been insufficient and marginalized (Molony et al. 2). Additionally, the notion of feminist movements as "waves" is problematic, as it suggests that the feminist movement constitutes a distinct phase and homogenous view of feminism (Molony et al 2-3). Concerning to the critique of postfeminism, bell hooks has expressed similar criticism in relation to the artist Beyoncé Knowles and her feminist ideology. Describing Beyoncé as "anti-feminist" and a "terrorist" for younger generations, bell hooks criticizes Beyoncé's status as a fourth-wave feminist icon, as she perceives Beyoncé to align with the postfeminist notion of "enslaving themselves" sexually and to patriarchy (Gay, The Guardian). However, similar to the general critique of fourth-wave feminism, Beyoncé criticizes the historical and systematic oppression in her film and album "Lemonade" and celebrates African culture, ultimately transferring the message regarding the complexity of oppression and intersectionality (Howell 44). Consequently, Beyoncé's work does express feminist core issues, especially concerning Black feminism and intersectionality, which suggests that Beyoncé's work is neither terrorist nor anti-feminist, but in correspondence with the fourth-wave feminist ideology. In correlation with bell hooks, the African American creators in our data are not concerned with race and intersections while expressing their ideologies. According to hooks, it is a problematic development, as she argues that racial discrimination is a key issue and that American women "maintain racial imperialism in the form of white supremacy" consequence of the historical representation of African Americans (hooks 119-120). hooks' criticism of later feminist movements (third- and fourth-wave

feminism) aligns well with our data, as the women does not directly address the issue of race

and intersections. However, looking at the fourth-wave movement and feminist

representations and icons, diversity is a focal point, not only by the means of body-positivity

but also by the voice that African American women possess in the current movement.

Feminists such as Gen Hayes and Samirah (from @sixbabiestv's content), are vocal and

important for the movement, as they have created viral and popular content, stressing

feminist issues while simultaneously taking up space on popular media. Even more so in the

case of Beyoncé Knowles, who evidently embodies the role of a powerful, Black feminist

with a considerable voice. hooks is partially accurate as to the fact that the women do not

explicitly address oppression of Black women, while the African American feminists are in

fact using their platforms in a manner that showcases power and progress as opposed to

regression. As Chamberlain argues, feminist ideologies in earlier movements were more

exclusive of each other, while fourth-wave feminism embraces different feminist ideologies

and "allows for a revision of the almost dialectical nature to the Western history of feminism"

(Chamberlain 21)

Elaborating on the question of whether the notion of sexual liberation comes across as

empowering or merely adding to the ongoing notion of female objectification, the notion of

'the male gaze' needs to be explained. The term 'the male gaze' stems from film theory and

is used to describe how women are sometimes subject to objectification when viewed from

the angle of a male prospector. Oxford reference defines the male gaze as: "A manner of

treating women's bodies as objects to be surveyed, which is associated by feminists with

hegemonic masculinity, both in everyday social interaction and concerning their

representation in visual media" (Oxford Reference, male gaze). From this definition, it

becomes clear how the male gaze is not only a term used within film theory but is also

applicable within modern society as the objectification of women remains an ongoing issue. Thus, it is valid to ask the question of whether the sex-positive representations of women are empowering or adding to the objectification of women. The representations of the women examined in the conducted analysis reveal a representation of women seeking to take control over their body and sexuality by calling e.g., slut-shamers out and choosing to present themselves wearing whatever they want, how they want to, and where they want to. An example would be the video by Andrea Areli (@andreaareli_), Areli takes control over her own body, dancing in public wearing shorts and a crop top, furthermore, she makes clear references to both Beyoncé and Ariana Grande, connoting empowerment. Although she might still enable the male gaze and become sexually objectified by men, it is the choice to present herself in a certain way that is empowering and reveals female agency. Ultimately, she takes away the power from the men desiring and objectifying her, by practicing her freedom of choice. The example with @sixbabiestv provides another example, in which she is confronted with her clothing by a male interviewer, as the participant stresses that her appearance is determined by her expression and not by how she is expected to present herself. The sexual representation of the woman and the agency that lies within this notion is different from the second-wave feminist notion. The second-wave feminists sought a different kind of female agency than what is found within the fourth-wave.

10. Conclusion

The analytic findings have revealed several feminist sentiments which have been transferred through our selected data. The perception of the movement as postfeminist is problematic, as our analysis reveals several key issues relating to earlier feminist movements and their exclusion of several identities. Arguably, the sexual and revealing aesthetic of fourth-wave feminists can result in sexual objectification, especially with individuals that are prominent on social media. However, as the ideology behind these sexualized expressions stems from feminist core issues such as sexual liberation and agency, suggest that these women are neither antifeminist nor postfeminist. The movement takes on oppressive discourse and culture that resides and is closely connected to feminist history, the evidence does not suggest that the movement is postfeminist, as the core sentiments align with feminist theory, suggesting that the "wave" metaphor should be reconsidered, as it excludes other feminist ideologies and prevents them from being acknowledged as a part of feminist history. Additionally, the analytic findings suggest an ideology, which has been criticized by other feminists such as bell hooks in recent years. Our analytical evidence, however, has provided an understanding of the fourth-wave movement that suggests that their key issues and ideology are closely related to preceding movements. The evidence suggests that the contemporary movement should not be considered anti-feminist due to their dissimilar approach, while the dialectical nature of Western feminist history should be reconsidered. Consequently, we claim that the fourth-wave movement stems from the previous exclusion of multiple identities and feminist ideals, resulting in an expression unique to feminist history. Key issues regarding toxic gender discourse, body-positivity, agency, and empowerment have been read by the viewer and have resulted in several examples of crowd behavior. These

examples vary in pervasiveness, as the creators have chosen a variety of expressions, while the communicative functions that TikTok provides are not always available, as these are optional for the creator. As a result of the content by creators such as Jess Megan, @sixbabiestv, and @..bodyposi, their content and sentiment are shared in comments, videos, and "duet" responses, which is subsequently criticizing oppressing tendencies in society and normalizing sexual agency and physical diversity. Creators such as this have made communicative choices, visually and in relation to social platforms, that benefit their cause, while less effective examples such as Kirsten's video are lacking the communicative and visual conditions that intrigue the viewer and provokes crowd behavior. Additionally, the sex-positive sentiments regarding OnlyFans are not easily transferred, due to the platform's censorship and regularly enforced nudity policies. The data selected from Gen Hayes was one of the most viral examples with 9.5 million views and 2.2 million likes, however, compared to other equally viral videos, the TikTok provides notably fewer video responses as a result of the "sound" option not being available in the original post. The virality of the data and the extent of crowd behavior has revealed that sentiments are shared to a greater extent if the creator allows the viewer to use the various communicative functions.

In terms of multimodality and the examination of the visual engagement received from the viewer, different findings have been made. For each video, there have been found similarities and differences in the way Machin's terms gaze, angle, and distance are represented. Generally, it is found that the creators that choose to acknowledge the viewer directly through the gaze receive more spontaneous interactions from their viewers, adding to the formation of online crowds, as well as showcasing crowd behavior. An example of a video where the actor in the image acknowledges the viewer thus demanding something from

them, which most likely is to listen to what they have to say, is Jess Megan. Although she starts by looking away from the viewer, she immediately engages with the viewer when she wants to put her point across. Furthermore, it becomes evident in the crowd analysis that Jess Megan's video is one of the videos with the highest number of spontaneous interactions as well as reactions in the shape of comments and video responses. In contrast to the video by Jess Megan, the video by Kirsten has received the least amount of spontaneous interactions and responses. Arguably this is due to the lack of acknowledgement of the viewer from Kirsten's side, leading to decreased involvement and identification from the viewer. Evidently, the videos that directly acknowledge the viewer will ultimately receive more responses and thus showcase stronger crowd behavior. While less successful attempts do exist, our analysis suggests that many creators have assisted in normalizing several fourth-wave feministic core issues by utilizing the social platform, as TikTok provides ideal conditions for virality and crowd behavior.

11. Works Cited

"A brief history of the birth control pill". 11 May 2010. PBS. Accessed 8 April 2021

Anderton, Katie. "The Denigration of the Hyper-Feminine Woman." Medium, Fearless She Wrote, 12 Aug. 2020.

Banet-Weiser, Sarah, et al. "Postfeminism, Popular Feminism and Neoliberal Feminism? Sarah Banet-Weiser, Rosalind Gill and Catherine Rottenberg in Conversation" Feminist Theory, vol. 21, no. 1, Jan. 2020, pp. 3–24. Web.

Bell, Leslie C. Hard to Get: Twenty-Something Women and the Paradox of Sexual Freedom. 1st ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013. Web.

Berger, Jonah and Milkman, Katherine L. What Makes Online Content Viral? Journal of American Marketing Association, 2012. Web.

Bindel, Julie. "There's nothing 'empowering' about the sex work on OnlyFans". April 2020. The Spectator. Web.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 2007. Print.

Butler, Judith. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." Theatre Journal, vol. 40, no. 4, 1988, pp. 519–531. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/3207893. Accessed 4 May 2021.

Butler, Judith. "Your Behavior Creates Your Gender" | Big Think. June 2011. YouTube. Accessed April 12, 2012.

Chamberlain, Prudence. *The Feminist Fourth Wave: Affective Temporality*. Royal Holloway, University of London, 2017. Web.

Chandler, Daniel and Munday, Rod. *A Dictionary of Social Media*. Entry "Viral". Oxford University Press, 2006. Web.

Chandler, David. *Semiotics: The Basics*. Taylor and Francis, 2017. Web.

Cortés, Michelle Santiago. "What Is Shadow Banning & Why Are TikTokers Complaining About It?" *What Is Shadow Banning?* July 17, 2020. Refinery29. Accessed May 27, 2021.

Docterman, Eliana. "Beyoncé: Lessons in Modern Feminism". December 17, 2013. Time.com

Espinoza, Joshua. "TikTok Reportedly Banning Accounts Belonging to OnlyFans Creators". Complex. December 2020. Web.

Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique.* W.W. Norton & Company, 2013. Print.

Gay, Roxane. "Beyoncé's control of her own image belies the bell hooks 'slave' critique" May 12, 2014. The Guardian.

Howell, Alexandra L. et al. "Appearance, Clothing, and Fashion for Teaching Intersectional Identity: Examining Beyoncé's Lemonade" *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences,* vol. 111, no. 3, American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences, 2019, pp. 38–44.

Jaynes, Gerald D. *Encyclopedia of African American Society*. Entry: hooks bell (1952-). SAGE Publications, 2005.

Jewitt, Carey. *Introducing Multimodality.* 2016, Routledge

Kress, Gunther. Multimodality: *A social semiotic approach to contemporary communication.* Routledge, 2010.

Le Bon, Gustave. *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind.* Project Gutenberg, 1996. EPUB.

Machin, David. *Introduction to Multimodal Analysis*. Bloomsbury, 2016. Print.

Molony, Barbara, and Jennifer Nelson. Women's Activism and "Second Wave" Feminism: Transnational Histories. Bloomsbury Academic, 2017.

Moran, Rachel F. "How Second-Wave Feminism Forgot the Single Woman." Hofstra Law Review, vol. 33, no. 1, Hofstra University, Law Review, 2004.

multimodalityglossary.com, entry: "mode". Web. Accessed April 23, 2021.

multimodalityglossary.com, entry: "multimodality". Web. Accessed May 5, 2021.

Olphin, Olivia. "Is OnlyFans feminist? The power of owning your image". The Focus. October 2020. Web.

OnlyFans.com: "Our Team and Goals" Web. Accessed May 28, 2021.

Oxford Learners Dictionaries, entry: "fat-shaming". Web. Accessed May 10, 2021.

Oxford Reference, entry: "male gaze". Web. Accessed May 28, 2021.

Oxford Reference, entry: "reader-response theory". Web. Accessed May 8, 2021.

Oxford Reference, entry: "virality". Web. Accessed May 8, 2021.

Pickard, Susan. *Age, Gender and Sexuality through the Life Course: The Girl in Time*. 1st ed. Vol. 1. Milton: Routledge, 2018. Web.

Price Lydia. "Ariana Grande Turns 26! Look Back at Her Most Badass Feminist Statements". June 26, 2019. People.com.

Rivers, Nicola. *Postfeminism and the Arrival of the Fourth Wave: Turning Tides*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

Romero, Jane. *Introducing Intersectionality*. Newark: Polity Press, 2017. Print.

"St. Peter's Cross." *Symbols*, SYMBOLS, symbolsproject.eu/crosses/st-peters-cross.aspx.

Sastre, Alexandra. "Towards a Radical Body Positive, Feminist Media Studies", 14:6, 929-943, DOI: 10.1080/14680777.2014.883420. 2014. Web.

Sauers, Jenna. "I Made $100,000 in a Month": 7 Performers on How OnlyFans Changed Their Lives. February 18, 2021. GQ.com.

Schellewald, Andreas. "Communicative Forms on TikTok: Perspectives from Digital Ethnography", International Journal of Communication 15. 2021, 1437–1457. Web.

Smith, Lynnelle K, et al. "Gender Differences in Pelvic Motions and Center of Mass Displacement during Walking: Stereotypes Quantified." Journal of Women's Health & Gender-Based Medicine, U.S. National Library of Medicine, June 2002, pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12165162/.

Tenbarge, Kat. "From 'Periodt' to 'and I Oop,' the Most Common Stan Culture and VSCO Girl Slang Is Rooted in Cultural Appropriation." January 27, 2020. Insider.com

"The Spectrum Model of Sex, Gender and Sexuality." University of South Dakota, www.usd.edu/diversity-and-inclusiveness/office-for-diversity/safe-zone-training/spectrum-model.

Twitter.com. Ariana Grande: "I use my talent…". November 21, 2018. Web. Accessed May 20, 2021

"Queen." *Stylebook on LGBTQ Issues*, NLGJA: The Association of LGBTQ Journalists, www.nlgja.org/stylebook/queen/.

11. 1 Data Selection

@sixbabiestv

https://www.tiktok.com/@sixbabiestv/video/6911733372796554498?_d=secCgYIASAHKAESMg owFgeW8AVn7O2LRtmExmDd%2B7EaLnuLgB6WlIeFMpQO8myW2Ww%2B29PQeVuph0qn2 RpwGgA%3D&language=en&preview_pb=0&sec_user_id=MS4wLjABAAAAJMhzXjJd_B0qhbd Lmz-0_1AZToZeqZ_CX63_PS7aGDrdui71km_JAQhNE27gDC7y&share_item_id=6911733372796554 498&share_link_id=36C03D6D-25DC-489F-8B55-CC21270A3CB5&timestamp=1614766503&tt_from=copy&u_code=dbhf750h3ack9d&user_id=68 10365739641472006&utm_campaign=client_share&utm_medium=ios&utm_source=copy&source =h5_m

@andreaareli_

https://www.tiktok.com/@andreaareli_/video/6869199387524943110?_d=secCgYIASAHKAESMg owNLGwc044tdmNmzK9lYK8bnJ1d4mHCHLJLqGjZsa0b9JYzJFJTZATe8zG9Z2wfixrGgA%3D &language=en&preview_pb=0&sec_user_id=MS4wLjABAAAAimDkoUyEeGhNUKz5Q2gMls7n cbf-xWa4TTVxuUvYAe3mKa8WTRq0aME4aNXtCUl2&share_app_name=musically&share_item_id =6869199387524943110&share_link_id=2dd39a59-d549-451c-a2aa-f357da6947d2&timestamp=1614766411&u_code=db0amj73b6k5g0&user_id=6793988976656319 493&utm_campaign=client_share&utm_medium=android&utm_source=messenger&source=h5_m

@jewishjasminetea

https://www.tiktok.com/@jewishjasminetea/video/6932582659629600006?_d=secCgYIASAHKAE SMgowEhvvAikVTr4MBs9yKyGw%2Bvbte4Z15b56mz0ALcUvD54kutR0pM5KdiLsamax7SIoG gA%3D&language=en&preview_pb=0&sec_user_id=MS4wLjABAAAAJMhzXjJd_B0qhbdLmz-0_1AZToZeqZ_CX63_PS7aGDrdui71km_JAQhNE27gDC7y&share_item_id=6932582659629600 006&share_link_id=711DB341-D5EF-4141-BBE2-558F7142FE47&timestamp=1614766539&tt_from=copy&u_code=dbhf750h3ack9d&user_id=681 0365739641472006&utm_campaign=client_share&utm_medium=ios&utm_source=copy&source= h5_m

@itsmallorypruitt

https://www.tiktok.com/@itsmallorypruitt/video/6903327117774261510?_d=secCgYIASAHKAES
Mgowi2Bg1eZwClszUKcD%2B%2BUgsZ%2B8oOW%2BLw%2BALrylDxEnAGmwhkyYzdDs
NUosnISVsj3aGgA%3D&language=en&preview_pb=0&sec_user_id=MS4wLjABAAAAJMhzXjJ
d_B0qhbdLmz-
0_1AZToZeqZ_CX63_PS7aGDrdui71km_JAQhNE27gDC7y&share_item_id=6903327117774261
510&share_link_id=F473FD2A-7F1B-4C00-9940-
C68EC3C324CC&timestamp=1614770480&tt_from=copy&u_code=dbhf750h3ack9d&user_id=68
10365739641472006&utm_campaign=client_share&utm_medium=ios&utm_source=copy&source
=h5_m

@kir5t3n

https://www.tiktok.com/@kir5t3n/video/6916765681421700353?_d=secCgYIASAHKAESMgowe
4DdD%2BPHNaTXMeIJZTEErWaRubwWze5%2Fcr0%2FH3FeVfsK8uH2yCbV4fuWrwrQlzkiG
gA%3D&language=en&preview_pb=0&sec_user_id=MS4wLjABAAAAimDkoUyEeGhNUKz5Q
2gMls7ncbf-
xWa4TTVxuUvYAe3mKa8WTRq0aME4aNXtCUl2&share_app_name=musically&share_item_id
=6916765681421700353&share_link_id=393c898b-2cc8-4261-afb5-
0ad6a459e1e4&timestamp=1614766344&u_code=db0amj73b6k5g0&user_id=6793988976656319
493&utm_campaign=client_share&utm_medium=android&utm_source=messenger&source=h5_m

@jess_megan_

https://www.tiktok.com/@jess_megan_/video/6919880385199459585?_d=secCgYIASAHKAESM
gow4JZn2Byv2BXHX3MeosoWx%2BMjFpDrr6x0FuKZW8xK3w%2BRnxfKG38YdE4pH%2Fe
WC9N3GgA%3D&language=en&preview_pb=0&sec_user_id=MS4wLjABAAAAJMhzXjJd_B0q
hbdLmz-
0_1AZToZeqZ_CX63_PS7aGDrdui71km_JAQhNE27gDC7y&share_item_id=6919880385199459
585&share_link_id=04E5A747-FF66-4B29-BA45-
9C850EA1ADD4&timestamp=1614766676&tt_from=copy&u_code=dbhf750h3ack9d&user_id=6
810365739641472006&utm_campaign=client_share&utm_medium=ios&utm_source=copy&sourc
e=h5_m

@mrvdk
https://www.tiktok.com/@mrvdk/video/6888789760144428294?_d=secCgYIASAHKAESMgowV
QYlUuFRUFU%2FEAf%2FzljlBi%2F59tsBfHcExjWQQ2EVAnoJm0NNneQWj8oa4F7TSHOiGg
A%3D&language=en&preview_pb=0&sec_user_id=MS4wLjABAAAAJMhzXjJd_B0qhbdLmz-
0_1AZToZeqZ_CX63_PS7aGDrdui71km_JAQhNE27gDC7y&share_item_id=6888789760144428
294&share_link_id=96462805-2086-44F3-BBCB-
1B6AEEF8E5FB&timestamp=1614766698&tt_from=copy&u_code=dbhf750h3ack9d&user_id=68
10365739641472006&utm_campaign=client_share&utm_medium=ios&utm_source=copy&source
=h5_m

@littlecripple

https://www.tiktok.com/@littlecripple/video/6933690666002189573?_d=secCgYIASAHKAESMg owIetmbEkWLR2rPKScaIRRrSJJQiAXkOIGsRpc%2BWv3OVMcoNANwd3QivY%2FxpmVW8s rGgA%3D&language=en&preview_pb=0&sec_user_id=MS4wLjABAAAAJMhzXjJd_B0qhbdLm z-0_1AZToZeqZ_CX63_PS7aGDrdui71km_JAQhNE27gDC7y&share_item_id=6933690666002189 573&share_link_id=984724CD-FF77-4A4E-A059-F28468B374EF&timestamp=1614766756&tt_from=copy&u_code=dbhf750h3ack9d&user_id=681 0365739641472006&utm_campaign=client_share&utm_medium=ios&utm_source=copy&source= h5_m

@..bodyposi
https://www.tiktok.com/@..bodyposi/video/6927601162879274246?_d=secCgYIASAHKAESMgo wKzmwfD53xhE%2BvhoUUkOlaBr99U2wDCIV%2FDugb9w%2FNsu2YqQQRcRwFx8LrxbeQu b%2FGGgA%3D&language=en&preview_pb=0&sec_user_id=MS4wLjABAAAAJMhzXjJd_B0qhb dLmz-0_1AZToZeqZ_CX63_PS7aGDrdui71km_JAQhNE27gDC7y&share_item_id=6927601162879274 246&share_link_id=89537F7D-5C74-4687-99C5-CB04C8CCF1F8&timestamp=1614766789&tt_from=copy&u_code=dbhf750h3ack9d&user_id=68 10365739641472006&utm_campaign=client_share&utm_medium=ios&utm_source=copy&source =h5_m

@genhayes

https://www.tiktok.com/@genhayes/video/6881737032696089861?_d=secCgYIASAHKAESMgow 8ChzQ4oheih6659aTppu66WLpD4sPj8NQm5ERbzb6fOhGFJPZRZNz%2B5TraPlHtdnGgA%3D &language=en&preview_pb=0&sec_user_id=MS4wLjABAAAAimDkoUyEeGhNUKz5Q2gMls7n cbf-xWa4TTVxuUvYAe3mKa8WTRq0aME4aNXtCUl2&share_app_name=musically&share_item_id =6881737032696089861&share_link_id=9b6f5af4-579f-43a2-bd72-b98958b40f4d&timestamp=1614770190&u_code=db0amj73b6k5g0&user_id=6793988976656319 493&utm_campaign=client_share&utm_medium=android&utm_source=messenger&source=h5_m