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# **The Weight of Images**

## Chapter 1

### Introduction: The Weight of Looks

When we watch television, read a newspaper or a magazine, gaze at the movie screen, browse web pages, we always act, react, and process what we see corporeally, with our bodies—sensually as well as psychically. Simultaneously, when we look at media images, we essentially look at images of bodies. Our bodies become situated and moved in relation to those imaged bodies, partly due to our own conscious efforts, partly in ways we do not actively notice. We may recognize some images as having a deep and lasting impact on our ways of seeing ourselves and others, but most images we probably pass by without reflecting much on the nature of our encounter with them, on why we relate or do not relate to them in a particular manner.

In this sense, encounters with images are perhaps not very different from interpersonal encounters with people. However, media images are “frozen” in a way living bodies obviously are not: the exact same images and narratives are potentially seen by large numbers of people. We can look at bodies in the media more carefully and closely than we could ordinarily do in an interpersonal encounter with a stranger. We may recognize ourselves or something of ourselves and our bodies in images, or we may look because of the strangeness of the image. Media images can show us bodies we would never see in everyday life, thus expanding our perception of what is possible, or exclude bodies we see in everyday life, which can shape our evaluations of what kind of bodies are significant, valued or devalued enough to become stuff of images. The more mainstream and widely circulated media images become, the more societal weight they can carry, making bodies visible and comprehensible as certain kinds of bodies to vast audiences.

Even though viewers might relate to images very differently from each other, they are also addressed and invited into encounters with images in collectively shared ways. Relations between viewing bodies and imaged bodies forge, repeat, and transform relations and materializations of social and cultural power relations. From gut reactions to careful reflections, from feeling haunted by one image and forgetting the next, we move between categorizations and evaluations, difference and similarity, familiarity and strangeness, proximity and distance.

Media images thus weigh on our bodies, invite us to direct our attention towards certain directions rather than others. This weight of images can sometimes appear a burden. However, the ways images press upon viewing bodies can also be light, pleasurable, or fleeting. Media images have no weight on their own: their gravity is materialized only in our encounters with them. Be as it may, we cannot refuse the weight of images, even if we turn our heads and look away, as in that instance we already recognize their potential to move us.

This book scrutinizes the very relations between viewing bodies and media images as weighty, affective engagements in which structures of power materialize and move. As such, this study participates in the long-running debates in media and cultural studies as well as feminist research on how bodies become audiovisualized and media images saturate bodies, and what kind of role media imageries play in deeming some forms of corporeality desirable, acceptable, and pleasurable, others threatening, removable, and shameful. In feminist studies, these questions have most commonly been examined through images of ideal or norm-abiding bodies which dominate western mainstream media imageries.<sup>1</sup> Corporeal forms that are commonly excluded or pushed outside of beauty, ideality or normality have received far less attention.

In today's Western culture, one bodily quality has become perhaps the most central and readily available signifier for loss of corporeal, mental, and moral control, lack of culturally desirable characteristics, and anxieties for excess of various kinds. This quality is fatness. In contemporary media, fatness is claimed as the most serious threat for the health and economy of various western nations, the necessary starting point for heroic transformations into proud and happy slimness, the common corporeal sign of comedy, a signifier of ordinariness as well as sensationalistic tragedy. Bodies are related to, valued, judged, desired, accepted, rejected, and imagined fundamentally in terms of their weight, size, and shape. However, in comparison to many other categorizations that are also understood as embedded in the body and centrally locate

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<sup>1</sup> These include studies on images of dieting, eating disorders and beauty (e.g. Chapkis 1988, Wolf 1991, Bordo 1993a, Kilbourne 1994, Saukko 2006), on images of muscular and surgically modified bodies (e.g. Schulze 1990, Holmlund 2002, Davis 2003), on beauty pageants (e.g. Cohen et al. 1996, Banet-Weiser and Portwood-Stacer 2006), on star and celebrity bodies (e.g. Dyer 1986, Negra 2001), and on makeover television (e.g. Heyes 2007, Gill 2007).

people in cultural hierarchies, such as gender, skin color, or disability, weight and body size are deemed much more easily changeable and mostly one's own fault. Therefore, size hierarchies are often seen as justified, or at least not as problematic as gendered, sexual or ethnic asymmetries although these axes of difference are thoroughly enmeshed. In this study, fat corporeality in the media functions as a specific and previously rather unexplored viewpoint but one which also opens up questions of bodily hierarchies and embodied ways of engaging with media images more generally.

In media studies and feminist theorizing, discussions on corporeal spectatorship and affect have become more prominent than ever during recent years. It has indeed become commonplace to argue for the necessity of addressing viewing, reading, and/or academic research as embodied, material encounters, not only as signification practices, psychical processes, or disembodied rationalizations. In feminist media studies—and in feminist scholarship more broadly—bridging the gap between images and bodies, representation and materiality continues to be one of the most pressing questions (e.g. Shildrick and Price 1999, Thornham 2000: 164). In addressing questions of affect, this book participates in the discussion on a turn in cultural and social studies, named respectively as “affective,” “ontological,” or “new materialist” as references to a renewed<sup>2</sup> interest in bodies, experiences, and materiality in the 1990s and 2000s (e.g. Koivunen 2001 and 2010, Hemmings 2005, Tyler 2008b). I will return to these discussions in more detail later.

Still, there are surprisingly few actual studies of how, exactly, media images may touch, move, and affect viewers corporeally, how viewing bodies may encounter imaged bodies, and how cultural hierarchies become forged and dismantled in the push and pull of these encounters.<sup>3</sup> Media studies have tended to focus either on images or on spectators, in other words either representations or audiences, often employing textual or discursive analysis to both (e.g. Stacey 1993). If studies employ audience ethnography and interrogate viewing experiences, the powerful

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<sup>2</sup> To frame directions of discussion as “turns” is unavoidably a strategic construction (e.g. Koivunen 2008: 5).

<sup>3</sup> Important studies which do address the “how” question in various ways include Williams 1991, Stacey 1994, Pearce 1997, MacCormack 2000, Marks 2000 and 2002, Sobchack 2004, Skeggs and Wood 2012.

pull of affective and narrative positioning implicated in media images may fade to the background. Corporeality of spectatorship has also been approached from the viewpoint of media analysis, asking how images engage viewing bodies. Often in a feminist context this has involved considering the gendering and sexual power of spectator positions. However, variations within and across these positions—the personal, material, and cultural components of viewing experiences—have not been the focus (e.g. Williams 1991, Pisters 2003). In some studies, viewing bodies lose their specificity and “the body” becomes a universalized entity, to the point where particularities or collective differences between bodies fade from view (e.g. Shaviro 1993). Viewing bodies may also appear too specific, accounting for a corporeal viewing experience but failing to analyze what enabled and produced that experience in the wider spectrum of socio-cultural locations and movements (e.g. Kuhn 1992, Sobchack 2004: 53–84).

The research at hand tackles both of these dilemmas and examines how imaged bodies invite viewing bodies into affective engagements in culturally and personally located ways. This means that in order to scrutinize the powerful ways in which images of fat bodies weigh on viewers and viewers weigh on them, media imageries need to be carefully analyzed, but also viewing bodies have to be considered both as specific and as constituted in larger cultural contexts. Encounters with media images of fatness are especially useful in examining spectatorship as affective and corporeal, since viewers are habitually invited to engage with media images of fat bodies in highly charged ways, questions of fat and weight being an increasingly fraught topic today.

The key proposition of this book is that such engagements between imaged bodies and viewing bodies can be most fruitfully approached through the combination of two concepts: *affect* and *body image*. By intertwining these concepts, if understood as I suggest, it is possible to critically unpack the potential effectiveness as well as the apparent ineffectiveness of media images in relation to viewing bodies. Even if viewers would not be affected by watching certain images in an immediately visible way, something about them may still gradually and very materially change. This is where the concept of body image becomes necessary, when seen as a

zone that forms and transforms in the push and pull of affects. Furthermore, the concepts of affect and body image allow interrogating how media images can train viewers into valuing some bodies or bodily characteristics over others, and how viewers themselves can train their bodies to encounter images differently.

In addition, throughout the book questions of affect are connected to media studies discussions on the cultural significance of various media genres and forms, as that forms a crucial part of how images engage viewers audio-visually and narratively. Proposing a shift from images, narratives or discourses to the relations between imaged bodies and viewing bodies, I examine the persuasiveness of various generic modes of addressing viewers, ranging from news to tabloid publicity, from comedy to horror, from internet pornography to makeover television. However, instead of considering genre-specific forms of persuasion, a tendency familiar from much of media genre research, this book focuses on cross-media and cross-genre similarities. Since media images' tendencies of addressing viewers may not follow genre boundaries, overlaps and crossovers highlight important questions of why similar bodies can be viewed as fearsome in one context, but desirable in another.

To unravel the weight of images, we must not place particular affects in particular kinds of images, as if affect was something to be simply excavated, not about relationality. But media images do offer affective invitations that are possible to recognize, even if one's actual reactions do not comply with what is expected. Invitations to affective engagements may partly take the form of explicit suggestions (like encouraging viewers to diet), but even more forcefully images press upon viewers through implicit audiovisual and narrative strategies that may appear to call forth "natural" or unintentional reactions in the viewing body—which are, nevertheless, also a product of how images train bodies to react to and engage with them. The structure of the book points to the forms of engagements I explore: those that call for and build fear; the triangle of shame, disgust, and pride; laughter; stretching; and finally desire. These forms thoroughly interlace and they all are discussed in more than one chapter and context, but with each of them I

ask the crucial question: how do media images engage viewers through affective forms of invitation, and what kind of power relations are at stake?

As the emphasis of the research is particularly in the relations that media images of fat bodies pull viewers into, we must also ask quite simply: how are fat bodies represented in the media? Contrary to the studies that place affect outside of representation (e.g. Sedgwick 2003, Massumi 2002), I am interested in how affect circulates, intensifies, and is attached to or detached from bodies through representations. Audiovisual structures and narrative formations, as they are repeated, may connect affects to fat bodies to the extent that they gradually start to appear as if naturally evoking and containing such affects. Images also delineate fat bodies to be recognizable as fat, which often varies and intertwines with other categorizations, such as gender, class, “race,” and sexuality. Simultaneously, hierarchical lines are drawn within imaged bodies, for example to charge some parts of the body with more pressing affective weight or less value than others. In other words, this question concerns boundaries of and within fat bodies in media images.

Approaching relations as engagements—invitations that implicate both parties to a high degree—necessitates looking at imaged bodies and viewing bodies at the same time. Although media images direct viewers’ affective engagements with them to a certain extent, engagements can never be reducible to images. Therefore, we must finally ask: what can happen to viewing bodies when they engage with media images of fat bodies? The concept of body image becomes especially crucial through this question, since it allows conceptualizing ways in which viewing bodies become affected through their relations with media images without reducing those relations to causes and effects, or immediately perceivable changes. Viewing experiences may comply with but also defy and spill over the invitations of images, especially as images of fat bodies often seem to assume that their viewers’ body histories and relations to fat are unproblematic and uniform. Such assumptions might not even become recognizable unless some viewers/readers fall outside or consciously push against the pull of images. In other words, there is no way of studying affective engagements without locating them in embodied experience. To weigh this dimension, I use autobiographical accounts of my own viewing and analyzing

experiences—in other words, a strategic “I”—as a resource for grounding the analysis at the intersection of the cultural and the personal. The aim is to think through ways of looking and processing media images of weight in ethically sustainable and politically fruitful ways.

To summarize the three-fold focus of this book: I scrutinize ways in which media images of fat bodies address and engage viewers affectively and corporeally, and the possibilities of these encounters to fix or open our body images. To formulate this in yet another way: I ask how do media imageries of fat become “sticky” (Ahmed 2004) for viewers both because of components in images themselves and because of particular viewers’ cultural locations and personal history, and with what potential consequences.

As the key emphasis of the study concerns embodied spectatorship I will, towards the end of the introduction, locate my approach more carefully in relation to previous approaches with a similar emphasis as well as to recent feminist debates on representation and embodiment. Through these latter discussions my use of the two central concepts, affect and body image, becomes further motivated. Moreover, concerning the viewing body and actual viewing events, I ponder the possibilities, potential pitfalls, and feminist epistemological background behind my methodological employment of the strategic “I” (Pearce 1997: 25–28, 2004: 85–107). I conclude the introduction by presenting the media material examined and highlighting the specific focuses of each chapter. Before engaging with these tasks, however, I want to contextualize my definition of fatness in this work in relation to critical scholarship on cultural and social constitution of “fat,” namely Fat Studies, as I see this emerging field is and continues to be an important context for my research. While I examine questions of corporeal spectatorship partly on a meta-level, I find it ethically and epistemologically crucial for such an interrogation to be carefully situated and ask questions in the context of specific kinds of bodies—in this case, fat bodies in media images, and my own viewing body—not just on embodiment “in general,” if such embodiment is ever even plausible.



### **What Counts as a “Fat” Body in the Media?**

The focus on various forms of engagement with media imageries of not just any bodies, but fat bodies in specific, makes this book the first extensive study on how fatness is currently represented across different media and generic forms. However, despite the ample amount and diversity of the media material, the purpose of the study is not descriptive, and “fat bodies in the media” are not the research object in a traditional sense. Instead, imageries of fat bodies raise compelling questions on the nature of affective engagements into which they invite viewing bodies. Nevertheless, as “fat” is no simple term to use and can be understood in multiple conflicted ways, I find it necessary to contextualize and justify my employment of “fat”—which also characterizes the political motivations of this research and raises questions on how researchers always participate in outlining, capturing and “freezing” the object of their study, no matter how fluid they try to keep their definitions.

Working with media images of fat bodies, just as working with images of any other so-called social grouping (cf. Dyer 2002: 3–4), is also to study the terms and conditions of defining and recognizing “fatness.” There is no generic fat body in the sense that fatness would be universally identifiable to anyone and in any body under any circumstances. For example, Renée Zellweger as Bridget Jones (*Bridget Jones’s Diary*, 2001 and *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason*, 2004) may look quite average-sized to many, including myself, but her “fattening” process for the role was paraded in entertainment magazines, and her body certainly exceeded the standard thinness of most female actresses in contemporary Hollywood. Furthermore, fat bodies in the media are expected to—and often do—transform in size: therefore it has been of utmost importance to constantly re-evaluate what can pass as fat in different contexts. Fat is not always even represented as a characteristic of a body as a whole, but as a delineator of internal differences within bodies, evident in media formats such as televisual and printed press dieting narratives, where “fat” is that which marks the boundary between essential, “true” parts of embodied selves and removable, alien parts.

“Fat” as a term is constituted through its (fairly recent) history of devaluation, through its opposition to the acceptable and the “normal.”<sup>4</sup> Studies of fatness have long been dominated by medical research which usually sees fatness as first and foremost a problem of health. One of the goals of this book is thus a political one: we need to undo the structures that have automatized the equation between weight, size, and ability, the structures that overall evaluate and value “normality” as a measurable thing which everyone’s well-being depends on. Feminist and queer unraveling of normativities of embodiment is perhaps now more direly needed than ever, as the weight of various body anxieties lies heavy on the shoulders of millions. My research can thus be located within Fat Studies which distinguishes itself from the medically oriented obesity research and builds on histories of feminist and queer studies and activism, as well as critical studies of body norms and the beauty system.<sup>5</sup>

Naming bodies “fat” in contemporary culture is nevertheless easily equated to name-calling and therefore risks reproducing the devaluing legacy, even when the aim is to criticize such a legacy. The sensitivity and relative arbitrariness of “fat” lead me to choose between two basic options in selecting what kind of media images I could look at as “images of fat bodies.” First, there is the option of limiting the analysis to only such media images or texts that explicitly address fat, like press articles discussing fat or films where characters are referred to or refer to themselves as fat. In this approach, the researcher would seemingly not have to carry the responsibility for defining bodies as belonging to a certain social grouping, as the research “objects” would do it for her. However, it would mean losing the possibility to look at implicit and unnamed qualities in an image as important. Bodies can obviously be marked and viewed as, for instance, “women,” “black,” or “gay,” without such markers being expressly named: viewers

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<sup>4</sup> Samantha Murray has insisted on using the “scare quotes” around “fat” as an epistemological and political act: quotation marks dispute the discursive knowingness that surrounds fat in western culture, such as “fat” as a measurable “fact” and a carrier of an already known set of (negative) meanings (Murray 2008: 3–4). In this book, I participate in the deconstruction of the always-already-known fat, but I also trust the reader will remember I do not use the term lightly—therefore I will not use quotes around “fat” unless I want to particularly emphasize its meaning as a term or a name.

<sup>5</sup> For overviews and introductions of fat studies perspectives, see e.g. LeBesco and Braziel 2001, Saguy and Riley 2005, Harjunen and Kyrölä 2007, Solovay and Rothblum 2009.

are expected to see and recognize these representational coordinates (Silverman 1996: 221). Whether or not markers of “difference” need to be named is, as such, an interesting factor in constructing them contextually and culturally as more or less self-evident or meaningful. For example, as Richard Dyer (1997) has shown, whiteness becomes privileged in western visual culture exactly through its seemingly invisible, insignificant status.

In the second option, the one I have chosen, the researcher takes on the responsibility for participating in knowledge production on the issue she studies and relies on her culturally, socially and subjectively informed judgments on what counts as “fat,” using the ambiguity of definitions as material in her research. However, many of my examples do also explicitly address fatness. Overall, defining “fat” according to what I recognize as fat from my cultural-personal viewpoint derives from feminist epistemological demands for a politics of location. The researcher is never innocent or “objective” when choosing names, approaches, and material, and readers will be better equipped to evaluate those choices when their background is made explicitly visible (e.g. Haraway 1991: 183–201).

In fat activism and fat studies, as opposed to medical and problem-centered “obesity research,” “fat” is usually preferred instead of “overweight” and “obese,” and also instead of various euphemisms such as “big” or “plus-size.” “Fat” thus refers to body size that exceeds gendered, western socio-cultural norms and is therefore always explicitly tied to its cultural context. In fat activism, the unapologetic use of “fat” attempts to appropriate the term and turn its meaning into an affirmative one much in the same manner as queer activists have appropriated the word “queer.” Both “fat” and “queer” derive their political force from their very connection to practices of shame and insult, although the strategy of turning a repudiated term into an affirmative one entails risks, and the term may continue to carry hurtful meanings (Butler 1993: 223–229).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> In fat studies, some researchers want to promote the fat activist affirmative meaning of “fat,” whereas others see the term “fat” as a descriptive term for a social and cultural phenomenon, removed from the burden of medical terminology’s health problem viewpoint and claims to “objectivity” implied in the terms “overweight” and “obese” (see e.g. LeBesco and Braziel 2001: 2–8).

“Overweight” and “obesity” are generally determined by calculating the Body Mass Index (known also by its abbreviation BMI, the weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in meters,  $\text{kg}/\text{m}^2$ ) the purpose of which is to measure statistical relations between body weight, ill-health, and mortality. Therefore these terms are poorly applicable in cultural or social studies approaches. Many studies in several fields, medicine included, have questioned BMI’s usefulness even in its original purpose.<sup>7</sup> BMI-based weight categories are also historical, bound to cultural norms and economic pressure. Moreover, BMI is based on an assumption that “average” weight at a very particular time in history is automatically the healthiest or most “normal” weight to everyone always (e.g. Oliver 2006: 16–19). However, while the average weight of western people has increased, the globally used upper limit of “normal weight” has been lowered over the decades without medical or statistical research to justify such a change.<sup>8</sup> Studies also indicate that permanent weight-loss succeeds very rarely, and fast significant weight-loss may damage one’s health more than maintaining the same, albeit higher weight.<sup>9</sup> It has been argued that the categories of “overweight” and “obese” measure social acceptability more directly than mortality or morbidity. New approaches such as Health at Every Size (HAES) have been developed to forward health, fitness, sustainable nutritional values, and quality of life without focusing on weight.<sup>10</sup> Although the number of yearly published articles in medical “obesity research” tripled from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s (Saguy and Riley 2005: 875–876), critical fat studies approaches which address fatness as a cultural and social, power-entrenched phenomenon have also entered the public stage with force, especially in the United States (e.g. Sobal and Maurer,

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<sup>7</sup> E.g. Flegal et al. 2005, Prentice and Jebb 2001.

<sup>8</sup> Medical scientist Kathryn Flegal with her research group (2005) stated that in the BMI range 25–30 (“overweight”) there is no statistically relevant increase in mortality, and nutritional scientist Richard Troiano with his research group (1996) came to a similar conclusion. For an overview on criticism of BMI classifications, see Campos 2004: 3–54, Oliver 2006: 21–28.

<sup>9</sup> On the probability to gain “back” the weight lost in medium to long term, see Kassirer and Angell 1998; Sarlio-Lähteenkorva 1999: 58, 63.

<sup>10</sup> For overviews of HAES viewpoint and its background, see e.g. Campos 2004: 173–179, Heyes 2006: 128–129, Harjunen and Kyrölä 2007: 14–17.

eds, 1999, Braziel and LeBesco, eds, 2001, Campos 2004, Kulick and Meneley, eds, 2005, Oliver 2006, Rothblum and Solovay, eds, 2009).<sup>11</sup>

Although the purpose of my research is not to construct competing truths about fatness or to define what fatness “is” and “is not,” I find the persistent understanding of fatness as self-evidently and before all a problem deeply problematic. I do not study the causes or consequences of fatness, but I do study the potential consequences of popular ways of imaging fat bodies and ways of relating to these images.<sup>12</sup> This research does not treat media images as forces that promote or simplistically signify “negativity” or “positivity” about certain kinds of bodies, but it does assume that images are products and producers of wide-reaching social hierarchies, never “just” images (Bordo 1993a: 39, 275, Bordo 2003: xiv, xxi).

It is obvious that fat bodies are marginal in the mainstream Western mediascape which overwhelmingly features slim bodies. In fact, I rather assume than argue for this relative invisibility—it would not require a book to point that out. However, fat bodies in the media are also marked by peculiar over-visibility: Michael Moon and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick have indeed suggested the stigma of fatness *is* the stigma of visibility ([1991] 2001: 305, see Chapter 6 for more discussion). But if corporeal training in representational coordinates, rather than learning “facts,” is what makes us see and recognize bodies as members of certain groups as I propose, then the “under-representation” or alternatively “heightened visibility” of fat cannot be ontological characteristics of fat but historically and culturally specific ways of looking.

Kathleen LeBesco compares fatness to gender: while gender can be “proved” with “the usually-only-assumed physical presence of a specific set of genitals,” fat is “written on the body for all to see” (LeBesco 2004: 6). Perceptions and assumptions concerning body size also participate in producing bodies as gendered, male and female, masculine and feminine. Fatness

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<sup>11</sup> On the impact of fat studies, see Saguy and Riley 2005: 872, cf. Sobal 1999. For an overview of the Finnish fatness and “obesity” discussions and its comparison to the Anglo-American discussions, see Harjunen and Kyrölä 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Many studies suggest that extreme cultural pressure to diet combined with an extremely high failure rate of diets, in addition to the stress caused by societal discrimination, may actually be more detrimental to fat people’s health than fatness. For overviews, see Cooper 1997: 74–77, Campos 2004: 28–34, LeBesco 2004: 29–39.

can be seen to pose a threat to the naturalization of men and women's bodies as different from each other, oppositional, and complementary to each other (cf. Butler [1990] 1999). For example, fat men may have breasts, and fat women's breasts and other gendered body forms may disappear into other curves of their bodies. Furthermore, fat women can be bigger in size than many men and thereby undermine the naturalized demand for men to take more space corporeally (cf. Gieske 2000). Rigid gender binaries also participate in what gets defined as "fatness" and how body shapes and weight are valued. For instance, women's bodies become easily named as "fat" at smaller sizes than men's bodies.

Meanings of body size also intersect with age, sexuality, ethnicity, cultural location, class: a black woman's bottom is expected to be bigger than a white woman's due to a long history of racial stereotyping; an older man's protruding belly is not frowned upon as much as a younger man's; in hip-hop culture, a non-white or black man's fatness, or "phat," can mean power, masculine street credibility, and attained wealth (Gross 2005). The basic focus of the book obviously places fatness and body size as central issues in any media image I examine, but this does not mean that other characteristics could not become more central in some media images and viewing experiences. Along the way, I will address intersections and interdependence between various axes of difference (Crenshaw 1995), as the role of representational markers like gender, age, class or "race" is crucial in the formations and transformations of bodily morphology, or the culturally specific shapes and forms given to and expected of bodies (see Butler 1993: 64–65, Kinnunen 2008: 38, 310). These intersections are not only crucial in media images but also in modes of address, the locations that are expected or assumed from viewing bodies, and in viewing bodies themselves.

Academic writing on fat bodies in the media and/or visual studies is still relatively scattered. Studies have focused on images of fatness in a particular genre,<sup>13</sup> on a particular actor

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<sup>13</sup> For example, on comedy Hole 2003, Stukator 2001; on pornography Kipnis 1999, Kulick 2005; on advertisements Rossi 2003, Hänninen and Sarlio-Lähteenkorva 2005, Pajala 2007; on exercise videos Losano and Risch 2001.

or figure,<sup>14</sup> or on a particular medium.<sup>15</sup> Overall, most studies address images of fat women<sup>16</sup> or, more seldom, images of fat men.<sup>17</sup> The most expansive study so far is Kathleen LeBesco's book *Revoltin' Bodies* (2004) which discusses images of fat male and female bodies in different media genres and forms as well as the intersection of fatness with gender, ethnicity, class, and disability. Still, LeBesco analyzes relatively few media examples, treating images more as tools to highlight different aspects of fat subjectivity and its disavowals, thereby setting different aims for her study than I have for mine.

It seems, all in all, that Fat Studies has not yet made very thorough use of the theoretical and methodological discussions within media, feminist, and cultural studies—perhaps largely because the field is in the process of establishing itself and there is simply much mapping and ground research to be done. On the other hand, feminist scholars working on embodiment theory and methodology have been overwhelmingly more interested in the slim, toned, normative body, to the extent that they have implicitly maintained the slim body norm by avoiding questions of fatness (Rothblum 1994, Harjunen and Kyrölä 2007, Harjunen 2009). Often studies that consider gendered experiences, cultural history or conceptualizations of fatness frame their arguments through media images, using them as anecdotal examples of wider cultural trends, but do not study the images as such.<sup>18</sup> Fat activist literature (e.g. Millman 1980, Cooper 1998, Wann 1998) habitually criticizes and demands changes from media and other cultural representations of fatness but, again, misses theoretically nuanced tools to examine those images and their potential force. On the other hand in cultural and feminist theoretical contexts, meanings of fatness have been considered as a side path to another thematic focus, such as ethics and politics of eating and food (e.g. Probyn 2000), contemporary idealization of the slender body (e.g. Bordo 1993a), and the cultural, experiential, and historical meanings of eating disorders (e.g. Saukko 1999, 2000,

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<sup>14</sup> See Rowe 1995 and Bernstein and St John 2009 on Roseanne; Moon and Sedgwick [1991]2001 on Divine; Ulaby 2001 on "Fatty" Arbuckle.

<sup>15</sup> For example, Feuer 1999 and Mosher 2001 on television; Sandberg 2004 on newspapers; Braziel 2001, Kent 2001 and Snider 2009 on magazines.

<sup>16</sup> E.g. Rowe 1995, Feuer 1999, Braziel 2001, Kent 2001, Stukator 2001, Hole 2003, Snider 2009.

<sup>17</sup> E.g. Mosher 2001, Ulaby 2001, Gilman 2004.

<sup>18</sup> E.g. Schwartz 1986, Stearns 1997, Johansson 2001, Harjunen 2004b, 2006; Murray 2004, 2005, 2008.

2002). Both of these gaps are in dire need of filling, especially given the justifiably vast feminist interest in questions of the body overall, and the wide-spread public and private urgency of issues of weight today.

As emphasized above, the main focus of this book is beyond simply describing how fat bodies are represented in the media. Identifying genre-related modes of address and representational tendencies is a starting point of interrogation, not an end result. Nevertheless, it deserves mentioning that studies dealing with images of both fat male and female bodies across different media and genres have not been executed before in the same extent as is done here. But while providing an overview of many most popular, widespread or potentially “sticky” media imageries of fatness, my intention is to analyze those imageries in order to dig into the contradictions and self-evidences in the ways they press on our bodies and our bodies lean towards them. The existing studies on fat gendered corporeality in and outside the media have provided great inspiration and points of critical engagement for me, but they have not sufficiently addressed how such images may have material effects in the world and in their viewers.

### **Affect and Body Image—Between Representation and Corporeality**

One of the tensions driving this research has been a sense of discrepancy between critical dissection of media images on one hand and affective engagement with them on the other, or a perception of a gap between rationalization and corporeal appeal. While the audiovisual and narrative structures of images can be critically examined and shown to construct and naturalize boundaries and hierarchical relations between bodies, the draw and persuasiveness of images may still remain firmly in place. Therefore it is not enough to dissect images alone, but it is necessary to also think what pulls viewers to them.

For example, even though it is easy to criticize heroic dieting stories for simplistic, asymmetrically gendered and classed promises of eternal happiness in committing to one-directional bodily transformation, the critical dismissal of dieting ideology may not stop their



reader or viewer from wanting the transformation. Or, even though I could show that the “facts” of the grave health and economic threats of fatness are constructed as such through exaggerated, trite threatening strategies, and that these “facts” could also be framed as entirely non-threatening, the recognition of constructedness cannot immediately remove a corporeally gripping feeling of threat.

A similar tension, or even conflict, between the politics and the “seduction” of reading or viewing has been noted by Lynne Pearce in her study on ways of reading as a feminist. Pearce suggests that affective engagements with texts are best explained as structural processes, often experienced to clash with interpretive and more distancing practices (Pearce 1997: 27, 81). In Pearce’s view, and in my own way of approaching dynamics between images and bodies, critical interpretation processes have an impact on what images feel like in the body, as interpretations are a specific way of orienting oneself towards images. How, then, images and bodies are drawn together or pushed apart in affective engagements, and can critical processing intervene in those engagements?

In a feminist poststructuralist context, there is nothing new in the idea that we cannot simply “rise above” the cultural logics of representation that constitute our very ways of living our bodies, as Susan Bordo formulated in her landmark book on western gendered body culture, *Unbearable Weight* (Bordo 1993a: 30). Paula Saukko and Kathy Davis have respectively criticized Bordo for setting the researcher self still eventually above eating-disordered or norm-abiding women who are filled and blinded by culture (Davis 1995: 56–57, Saukko 2002: 250). Traditionally feminist research on body norms and eating disorders (e.g. Orbach 1978, Chernin 1981, Chapkis 1988, Wolf 1991) has focused on representation as a break from “natural” corporeality, as a contortion or a twist, to which bodies form the necessary “outside,” even if we could not access it (Bray and Colebrook 1998: 38). The seeming discrepancy between corporeal engagement and feminist critical interpretation could also be seen to reproduce the binary between matter and culture, bodies and representations. However, in this book I set out to explore the very ways in which critical scrutiny and apparent irrational or pre-rational reactions are interlaced.

The corporeal immediacy and irrationality of viewing, along with its relation to narrative and audiovisual structures, has been analyzed in various frameworks in feminist media studies, for example in Linda Williams's (1991) psychoanalytical theorizations of spectator positions in filmic "body genres" which aim to physically jolt their viewers, in Vivian Sobchack's (1992, 2004) phenomenological understanding of the lived body as a site of vision and consciousness in the flesh, and in film studies inspired by the writings of philosopher Gilles Deleuze that insist on the visceral directness and lack of distance between images and bodies, such as work by Patricia MacCormack (2000, 2008), Patricia Pisters (2003) and Rebecca Coleman (2009). Bodily practices of viewing have also been addressed in ethnographical audience research (e.g. Stacey 1994, Skeggs and Wood 2012), and in combining ethnography with analysis of narrative positioning (Warhol 2003).

While many studies choose to argue for the superior usefulness of one such theoretical approach over others, my aim is rather to see what each of them can or cannot do to help understand different aspects of affective engagements with media images, depending on what kind of images we are talking about. Psychoanalytical spectatorship theories come into use while dealing with the idea of identification as mimicking, a relation that dieting narratives in particular (Chapter 3) explicitly invite viewers into. The psychoanalytical notion of abjection becomes particularly relevant with the fantasies of fat bodies exploding (Chapter 5), and the gendered dynamics of desire, desirability, and identification, so central in feminist psychoanalytical film theory ever since its first steps, persistently live in "positive" images of fatness that center on sexuality (Chapter 6). Sobchack's phenomenological approach to lived embodiment and criticism of the contemporary obsession on visibility, on the other hand, offers useful routes to question the disregarded or taken-for-granted affectivity of especially news imagery (Chapter 2) and "shock" imagery (Chapter 5). In the latter context, a Deleuzian feminist framework eventually proves more adequate to interrogate images of fat bodies which seem to address the viewing body with visceral immediacy, lacking narrative arches or psychological depth, but I address "new materialist" or Deleuzian approaches also in relation to the overwhelming health focus in matters of weight

(Chapter 2) and to the complicated question of laughter which is not an affect per se although an obviously corporeal relation (Chapter 4). Furthermore, the feminist psychoanalytical and Deleuzian views of the concept of desire are compared to each other in Chapter 6. I suggest that my combination of the concepts *affect* and *body image* enables teasing out points of connection between representation-oriented, phenomenological, and so-called new materialist approaches without assuming easy commensurability between them. However, in a sense the whole of the book is informed, in particular, by a phenomenological understanding of embodiment through the focus on relationality and intercorporeality, as well as through choosing the concept body image to conceptualize how we orient ourselves in relation to our own and other bodies (see e.g. Weiss 1999, 7–63, Grosz 1994: 66–77).

On the other hand, understanding corporeality and the spaces between imaged bodies and viewing bodies as affective puts this study in the middle of “new materialist” or affect theory discussions. I propose that the concept affect can be highly useful in emphasizing the materiality and mutual constitutiveness of images and bodies, but it needs to be understood in a way that does not require abandoning post-structuralist analysis of bodies as representations. In fact, post-structuralist, phenomenological, and new materialist approaches could be seen to even necessitate each other, if used carefully and strategically, when the question at stake concerns how images grip bodies and bodies engage with images. The need to find common ground between these approaches is particularly dire from a feminist point of view which aims above all to shake rigid power structures which would hold us in place, not to maintain strict oppositions within feminist thinking. In an era often characterized as postfeminist (e.g. Gill 2007, McRobbie 2009), where most forms of feminist thought and the very word “feminism” are under attack, I see solidarity as more important than internal divisions where calls are made to abandon the “old” in favor of the “new” theories. This does not need to be in conflict with the self-reflexivity and internal criticism that have long been cornerstones of feminist research.

In poststructuralist feminist studies, corporeality has most commonly been addressed as representation, and the focus has been on bodies as textually and discursively constructed.

Theorizing bodies as discursive constructions has enabled radical denaturalization of gender and gendered hierarchies as well as understanding of why it is so hard to contest those hierarchies in our daily lives: what we perceive and live as corporeality can never be reached outside discourse and representation, therefore never escape power that constitutes bodies. Simultaneously, embodied meanings are also culturally and historically specific, changing, and changeable (e.g. de Lauretis 1987, Bordo 1993a, Butler [1990] 1999, 1993).<sup>19</sup> In this way, images of bodies may be analyzed as crystallizations of cultural power structures and connect the micro-level of corporeal boundaries to the macro-level of societal boundaries (e.g. Bordo 1993a, 186–187, Douglas [1966] 2000). However, the focus on bodies as representations has been criticized for losing sight of the living and feeling materiality of bodies, reducing corporeality to an effect of discourse, to sets of signs, words, images, and meanings, paradoxically alienated from concrete fleshiness.<sup>20</sup> Many feminist scholars (e.g. Gatens 1996, Grosz 1994, 1995, and 2005, Braidotti 2002) have argued for the need to radically materialize the body, for the necessity to think through the body, and insist on its tangibility, in order to foundationally dislodge the hierarchical and gendered mind/body binary. As Kathy Davis expresses it, we need embodied theorizing, not only theories of the body (Davis 1997: 14–15). This book aims to do just that.

### *Affect*

One solution offered to move past the said poststructuralist focus on representation is through the concept “affect.” So-called new materialist or ontological thought, exemplified by Rosi Braidotti (e.g. 2002, 2006) and Elizabeth Grosz (e.g. 2005) among others, uses affect as a way to focus on matter, forces, and intensities—to propel transformation and change in ways that move beyond

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<sup>19</sup> In these approaches, one central source of inspiration is usually philosopher Michel Foucault’s work (1978, 1986) on the discursive constitution of bodies, “sexuality” and power.

<sup>20</sup> For example, Bray and Colebrook (1998: 35–55) criticize this as a common 1980s and 1990s feminist tendency in theorizing body norms in general and eating disorders in particular, exemplifying the tendency with Judith Butler’s (1990, 1993) writing on the body as performative and Susan Bordo’s feminist appropriation of Michel Foucault in examining eating disorders. Jackson and Scott (2001: 17–18) direct the lack-of-materiality criticism mainly at Butler. Bordo has also criticized Butler for abstracting the body into a “text” or an effect of textual reiterations (Bordo 1993a: 288–295) and discussed the question of disembodiedness of “theory,” answering some criticisms directed at her work (Bordo 1998).

the dualism of repressive/subversive.<sup>21</sup> Affect, however, has already turned out to be a controversial concept. For instance, Clare Hemmings criticizes two prominent cultural theorists of affect, namely Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Brian Massumi, for creating a simplistic dualism between bad affect/“old” rigid social determinism and good affect/“new” transformative affective freedom, while appreciative of the overall goal of taking materiality seriously. The said contrast, to Hemmings, ignores ways in which feminist writers have been deeply involved in making matter “matter,” and how affectivity has been central in feminist theorizing throughout its history. For example, feminist standpoint epistemology has examined the relationships between ontology, epistemology, and transformation, calling for accountability for emotional and political investments in research (Hemmings 2005: 551–558).

Anu Koivunen further argues that the “affective turn” never happened, if the richness of feminist legacies of intertwining the subjective, personal, and corporeal with the social and political is thoroughly considered (Koivunen 2010, cf. Jaggar 1989). Sara Ahmed points out that one regular “problem” to which new materialism or turn to ontology is offered as a solution is feminism’s anti-biologism, preference for culture at the expense of matter, when so much feminist effort has concentrated on scrutinizing how culture materializes and matter is discursively organized (Ahmed 2008a). Throughout this book, the feminist legacies in dealing with affectivity in one way or another will become apparent, although the terms used in these legacies are often not derivatives of “affect”—however, I use “affect” to glue together various viewpoints, even if temporarily, for strategic purposes.

While I engage in discussions on affectivity and new materialism, I also use the concept of affect undutifully, drawing extensively on feminist poststructuralist work on bodies as representations. Although “representation” has become a curse-word of sorts in some new materialist theorizing, I propose that important aspects may be lost, if bodies and images are seen as transforming and moving freely on an affective plane of immanence. If media images are

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<sup>21</sup> Koivunen (2008) addresses the various theoretical and philosophical backgrounds of uses of “affect” and “emotion” in social and cultural studies in general and in Finnish media studies in particular.

essentialized as if they were material in the same sense as bodies,<sup>22</sup> it would be easy to lose sight of the specificity of media images, moreover different kinds of images: structures of audiovisual, visual, and textual narration and address in different genres and contexts. We might also lose sight of the collectivity, repetitiveness, and gradual processes of change in media images, which are addressed, for example, in media research employing the concept of performativity (e.g. Koivunen 2003, Pajala 2006) and narrative structures (e.g. Warhol 2003). Encounters with media images may appear and feel different from one viewing to another and from one viewer to another, but images also remain the same in a way that no living body can (cf. Sobchack 1992: 162–164). Therefore, I insist on examining images and bodies as analytically separate entities, and images as having both a representational function and a more directly affective function. Furthermore, when forms and structures of affectivity are analyzed as culturally and historically specific, it does not necessarily make them less material—it can also make them more material.

According to Hemmings, affect as an analytical concept does not have to celebrate “pure freedom”: she maintains that this results from misreading Deleuze whose theorizations are often used as reference points for such celebration. Affect, in Hemming’s reading of Deleuze and Baruch Spinoza, is not a free force of intensity but refers to the very ability of bodies to function in the world and reach outside themselves. Affective connections between bodies, images, and matter can fix and widen, increase, and decrease these abilities. In this understanding, affectivity is central to the workings of power, not outside power (Hemmings 2005: 559–565). Similarly, Moira Gatens emphasizes the political aspect of understanding the body as affective, drawing on Spinoza. In her view, the affective body is made stronger and more alive through its ability to reach outside itself, while subordination materializes in actions, habits, and relationships that reduce the mobility and openness of the body (Gatens 2000). The definition of bodies as affective forms a common theoretical thread in this book throughout different materials and frameworks,

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<sup>22</sup> Ironically, “essentialization” of media images and fictitious characters is also a critique against stereotype analysis, where media images of a marginalized group are compared to their “reality,” and to which a discursive approach has been seen as a solution (e.g. Shohat and Stam 1994: 214–215).

particularly in terms of asking what bodies can do instead of what they are like (see e.g. Colebrook 2002, Tiainen 2012): how they open up, turn onto themselves and move within images and in relation to images. Thus, affects cannot be understood as static connections. Instead, I see them as routes of relating that are constantly reforming, but not taking just any forms or proliferating freely—affective routing and rerouting necessarily happens within certain boundaries.

“Affect” is often contrasted with “emotion” in recent academic discussions: for example, Elspeth Probyn sees “emotion” as referring to cultural and social expression whereas “affects” are physiological and biological. Drawing on psychologist Silvan Tomkins’s ([1962] 1995) studies of affects as basic forces in human existence, she argues the differentiation is important in order to avoid emptying affectivity to culture and politics (Probyn 2005: xv, 10–11). For Sara Ahmed (2004), the differentiation between “emotion” and “affect” is unimportant, as her understanding of both concerns their power to move and shape bodies and objects—as such, this view comes very close to the Spinozist view of affectivity.

Ahmed (2008a) has expressed her deep concern about the simplification of previous feminist research in “new materialist” thought, and her methodological propositions for the analysis of emotions (Ahmed 2004) are crucial in my understanding of how viewing bodies relate to images affectively. I employ “affect” to conceptualize and examine particular modes of address and forms of attachment between images and bodies. “Emotion,” for its part, I use when referring to works that expressly use that term themselves, or in the everyday sense. Following Ahmed’s more terminologically lenient approach, my interest in affect lies most importantly in ways of creating and unraveling deeply felt, complex boundaries between and within the subjective and the social as well as bodies and images.

If affective relations move bodies concretely, not just symbolically or discursively, then could they also halt, produce lack of change in viewing bodies, even in the face of most pressing, threatening, shaming or idealizing images? Although fat imaged bodies are under constant corporeal transformation: reducing, gaining, tightening or bulging—and in many images in the material, viewers are directly encouraged to follow the lead of these images—viewing bodies do

not necessarily transform, at least not in immediately visible ways. However, as image cultures are central in our ways of seeing and valuing ourselves and others, analytical tools are needed in order to conceptualize potentially invisible changes as still material and deeply felt. Even if viewing bodies are not transformed visibly, or what is generally perceived as visible, our abilities of living our bodies in relation to others can still be affected, and the way we see ourselves and others can still be affected—in other words, body images are shaped in relation to media images.

### *Body Image*

The concept “body image” has been used in media studies mostly either in its common sense meaning, especially in the context of eating disorders and in psychological or social studies of media effects where body image measures body dissatisfaction or “distortions” of self-perception.<sup>23</sup> A similar view of body image appears in some of the ways of addressing viewers that I examine. For instance, it is treated as a battleground: “harmful” images are assumed to grip vulnerable viewing bodies, distorting their self-perception, or stubborn viewers/readers seem unable to adopt a “healthy” body image despite encouragement. Also the core narrative tension of much of the media material I explore builds on a conflict between a fat person’s self-image and how other people see her or him, and a yearning to match one’s body with one’s body image.

My use of the concept “body image” differs considerably from the way questions of body image are addressed both in my media material’s modes of address and in media effects research. I draw my understanding from feminist philosophy (Gatens 1994 and 2000, Grosz 1994, Weiss 1999) and suggest that the notion of body image can be especially fruitful in examining the particular shapes and morphologies of affective dynamics between viewers and images. In this sense, body image refers to the boundary where viewers’ histories and shifting positions meet affectively condensed modes of address and structures of audiovisual and textual narration.

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<sup>23</sup> These directions have their own fundamental epistemological problems: media effects research on body image tends to see the relationship between (women’s) bodies and images as linear and victimizing: images enforce normative ideas of beauty and femininity on vulnerable bodies of viewers. Second, the approach relies on an assumption that viewing bodies would be fundamentally separate from images, not constructed through them. Furthermore, it is highly contestable that the effects of images on viewers’ body images could be measurable in any meaningful way. (See e.g. Coleman 2008: 164–166.)



To be more precise, I employ body image on two levels which are important to distinguish from each other even though they are intimately connected. First, there is body image as a theme that the media material explicitly or implicitly refers to, and second, there is body image as an analytical concept which enables tapping into the actual and potential engagements between imaged and viewing bodies.

Feminist philosophers such as Moira Gatens (1994), Elizabeth Grosz (1994), and Gail Weiss (1999) have considered body image a useful concept in overcoming the gendered mind/body, culture/matter dualisms. Drawing on their writings, I see body image as something that is not the same as but nevertheless draws on the actual physiology of a gendered body and is inseparable from it. Thus, we are talking about something that is not the same as cultural body norms or ideals but brings together norms and lived experiences. Changes in the body affect body image; changes and trends in the surroundings, including media imagery, affect it as well. Summing up, body image is fruitful to see as an interface of sorts, a dynamically forming zone of postures that we take towards images and the world, postures we take towards ourselves and others in ways that are informed by media imageries around us.

In Grosz's (1994: 66–77) reading, body image has come to refer to a continuously changing but somewhat coherent model of the body we need in order to function in space and position ourselves in relation to our own body, other bodies, objects, and the environment. We constantly reorient ourselves not only in terms of things outside our body but also within our bodies. Body images are simultaneously images of the body as a whole and constellations of context-specific cultural privileging of some bodily zones over others. According to Moira Gatens (1994: 31–37), body image should be seen as “a double of sorts” which enables self-reflection, seeing or imagining ourselves in the past, present, and future. This otherness within ourselves can feel especially vivid when our body or mind is perceived to fail us in one way or another (e.g. mental or physical illness), or when we feel objectified, alienated, or rejected by our social and cultural surroundings, of which media is an important part. Body images are fundamentally intercorporeal, continuing processes of relating to others. Things we experience, feel, see, and do always leave

marks in our body image(s), although these marks may transform through time. Accordingly, I use body image to address questions of acceptable, idealized, reproached or overall imaginable bodily morphologies and temporalities as they are shaped in media images in relation to viewers.

Furthermore, the concept of body image is combined with the view of the body as affective and may thus be seen as a platform directing that affect. Body image functions as a way to grasp the “how” question in analyzing the mutual constitution of images and bodies, for exploring what sensitizes some bodies or circumstances to certain kinds of images (of certain kinds of bodies), and why some images, or circulating imageries, tend to “stick” to viewing bodies more than others. Even if bodies are not visibly affected, images still always leave traces in our body images, traces which layer through time and are every bit as material as images and bodies—although not material in the same manner.

My understanding of body image comes close to but also differs from the way Rebecca Coleman (2008, 2009) defines the concept “body” in her study on how young girls’ bodies become, or are constituted through, their relation with media images. Drawing on Deleuze’s formulation of bodies as relational becomings, Coleman understands a body as a relation between what is traditionally understood as a body of a human subject and a media image as an object. She studies this relation by interviewing girls as viewers and producers of images. However, I prefer the concept “body image,” since it emphasizes a critical feminist stance towards the dualism between representation and corporeality without prioritizing either one, and captures the interlacing of bodies and images better than the extension of the term “body” to include images. Whereas Coleman is interested particularly in the limiting or enabling actualizations in the becoming of viewing bodies through images, I am more interested in the possibilities and potentialities that images limit or enable for viewing bodies—the choice of words is in part a question of emphasis. However, and more importantly, body image highlights one of my main points in this study: that visceral corporeality cannot be detached from the realm of images, and that politics of representation matter profoundly for contemporary bodily existence.

### **The “I” of Viewing and Images of Weight**

Although my main set of material consists of media images, I use autoethnographical accounts and narratives of mainly my own viewing experiences as a resource to introduce, imagine, and analyze different possible viewing experiences that may or may not actualize. These accounts form an essential backbone to my methodological explorations in each chapter.<sup>24</sup> A strategic “I” allows thinking corporeally through affective modes of address and the possibilities of being pushed or pushing oneself to other directions than those modes suggest.

The use of the strategic “I” is rooted in early stages of my research process, when I noted that my relationship to the analyzed media images changed through the interpretation process. In addition, my political and ethical concerns about ways of viewing some images could evolve drastically over time. I had to ask: if even the same person viewing the same images from the same methodological perspective produces different readings at different times, then how different might analytical processes and readings become from different bodily and cultural viewpoints? The need to account for the specificity—predictability as well as unpredictability—of viewing and analyzing, as temporal processes originating from personal but socially located, shifting, and corporeal points, became pressing.

The demand for accountability for one’s process of analysis and culturally as well as subjectively located viewpoints derives centrally from feminist standpoint epistemology and the call for situated knowledges (e.g. Haraway 1991: 183–201, Grosz 1993, Harding 1993, Skeggs 1995). Donna Haraway (1991), among others, has criticized traditional male-stream knowledge production for removing the researcher’s corporeality and necessarily specific entry points from the research, creating the illusion of a gods-eye-view from the above, or constructing the “objective” position of nowhere in relation to the object of study.

The use of autobiographical rhetoric and anecdotes has long been employed in feminist thought to not only account for the situatedness of research but to produce new ways of knowing

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<sup>24</sup> For a more detailed discussion on the benefits and limitations of different forms of self-reflexive inquiry, see Saukko 2003: 74–95.

in the intersections of experience and theory, as well as bringing motivation and gravity for analyses (e.g. Lorde 1984, Stacey 1997, Ahmed 1998, Saukko 2002, 2003). Lynne Pearce suggests that the value of the strategic use of first person rhetoric, or first person strategic as opposed to first person personal, lies not simply in bringing the personal into the political, but in its effectiveness in exploring the conditions of reading and viewing as a dialogical, mutually constitutive relation between readers/viewers and texts/images (Pearce 1997: 25–28, 83–84, 2004: 16–17). Pearce draws on Elspeth Probyn's (1993) use of "experience" and "autobiography" as ways of connecting ontological and epistemological levels of analysis. Pearce aims "to explore and chart the processes of reading as a 'felt facticity' at the same time as evaluating the politics of reading practice at an epistemological level" (1997, 26), a goal that describes also my explorations in corporeal spectatorship and strategic use of the "I."

On the other hand, Margaretta Jolly (2005) suggests that the autobiographical trend in social and cultural studies at large has sometimes lead to confessional demands and gratuitous reveling in extraordinary experiences which echo the wider cultural demand to work endlessly on the self. Paula Saukko (2002: 246–248) points out that emotional autoethnography risks losing sight of the wider discursive tapestry that interlaces any experience of the self. Saukko proposes what she terms "agonistic dialogism," which connects the specificities of subjective experiences and the commonalities of social structures, and which is not necessarily consensual negotiation between the researcher and her material but tries to do justice also to ambiguous, unacceptable, or incomprehensible encounters (Saukko 2002: 252–256, Saukko 2003: 176–197). Although my intention in using strategic first person accounts of viewing experiences is to examine potential complexities as well as simplicities in the shifting affective relations between images and bodies, I also accept that the line between the confessional and strategically relevant may, for different readers, appear drawn in different places—as Pearce (1997: 27) states, "any address may, at any time, alienate some or all of its addressees."

The pull of the confessional expectation and the cultural tendency to press any autobiographical account into the format of either heroism or victimhood (Jolly 2005: 219) has

followed me during my research. Most pointedly it has come to the fore in the label of the “skinny girl doing fat studies” I received early on. I have found myself repeatedly facing the question “why?” which seems to carry with it at least two assumptions: that a feminist researcher should somehow embody her research interest, and if such an embodiment is not immediately visible, then there must be some secret she harbors. One of the most memorable incidents which awakened me to think through the implications and backgrounds of (at the moment) having the “wrong” kind of body to match my research happened in a media studies conference in the United States some years ago. At a conference dinner, I introduced myself to a prominent scholar with an interest in fat studies. After I had told her my research topic and complemented her on some of her work, she looked at me from top to toe and blurted: “But you’re skinny!” Unfortunately this reaction threw me off-guard to the extent that I took it as the end of our conversation and retreated.

More often I have been simply questioned on what my motivation could be for choosing such a topic, which I have interpreted as a longing for a meaningful, personal connection to one’s research topic, preferably a traumatic one. As it happens, I have been able to tell a story of a personal and potentially traumatic connection, that of bulimic behavior that lasted many years, in my past. Telling of such a past has satisfied my interrogators: my research is suddenly understandable, since I have a personal interest in unraveling the ways in which fat becomes a sign of loss of control, a sign of threat—after all, a fear of fat has constricted (although also perhaps expanded) my ways of living my body dramatically. But what if I could or would not have expressed any such connection? Would it have de-legitimized my work? Or what if I were fat? Would my research interests then be simply obvious and a traumatic connection evident, as fat bodies in today’s western culture are habitually perceived to carry a narrative of trauma? Furthermore, the seeming validation of interest in images of fatness by bulimic history might suggest that eating disorders and fatness were somehow commensurable, a reduction I have forcefully tried to avoid.

One of the obvious pitfalls of using my bulimic body history as a reference point for my analytical and corporeal relation to images is that I risk reducing the discursive construction of my body to one characteristic which represents the bottommost truth, just as fat so often becomes the one characteristic through which images of fat bodies are defined. Lauren Berlant (1997) has criticized the way that feelings, especially “bad” feelings, seem to produce an illusion of truth in today’s western culture. This has become an ambivalent component in my use of autoethnographical accounts: in a way, I can strategically use the truth value while simultaneously contesting it. Making claims about viewing as a woman, for example, would be easy to criticize, as “woman” is such a multifaceted and questionable category. However, as an ex-bulimic, feminist researcher woman, I can suddenly say a lot more: my voice has more authority and affective power due to the specificity and truth value of assumed pain and ability to overcome it. I cannot be contested, because I supposedly “know” and have “felt.” Still, the specificity or personal nature of bulimia is highly contestable: it is a diagnostic category, a cultural narrative, a product of a certain time, context, and situation of economic wealth, as is evident in the media narratives of “power-bulimics” such as the late Princess Diana (see Saukko 2006). On the other hand, I may also appear less authoritative to some readers, because I have a personal investment in seeing and interpreting images in a particular way. In feminist situated epistemologies, this is however an inevitability which can be fruitfully employed in the research, rather than a pitfall.

Thus, I have paid much attention to trying to avoid locating any final truth or burden of validation on the strategic “I” of the book. I have taken my cues from works such as Jackie Stacey’s (1997) intertwined examination of her own experience of and cultural meanings and discourses on cancer, and Ien Ang’s (2001) use of her experiences of ambiguous privilege as a Chinese-looking woman in multicultural Australia. One of the strengths of Stacey’s and Ang’s respective projects is their insistence on ambiguous relations between subjective and social, experience and theory, and the refusal to reduce their “Is” into singular entities.

Accordingly, my strategic “I” probes the limits of body image while processing corporeally through various affective engagements with media images. By dissecting these processes and

looking at them as practices, I tease out points of distance and proximity, conflict and persuasion between viewing through a bodily history of “eating disordered” behavior and being addressed affectively as a generic or assumed viewer. In some accounts, I specifically use bulimic body history as the primary reference point for suggesting alternative and potentially unexpected ways of reading, but in other accounts, the same history functions as an incentive for almost over-obedient affective encounters with images. In some accounts, the strategic “I” is a feminist media researcher, a professional viewer and reader who is trained in certain analytical and academic practices, who may be angered or bored by asymmetrical gendered structures and naturalized body size hierarchies, who may feel disturbed or relieved by laughter or pleasure, who processes her viewing practices painstakingly in a very different manner than a casual viewer, but who cannot simply change her mind about images even if she tries, as her corporeal viewing experiences sometimes appear to happen against her will (cf. Pearce 1997: 27–28, 41–50). Hence, the autobiographical rhetoric is not meant to validate or not validate certain spectator positions—nor is it a form of the oppositional gaze (e.g. hooks 1992: 115–131). It does not celebrate the active resistance of the audience, or “read against the grain” with an extra spice of corporeal and personal verification (for further discussion, see e.g. Stacey 1994: 36–39, Hollows 2000: 190–204). The strategic, corporeally viewing “I” is a political project in the sense that it insists on identifying structures of power and is committed to transformative struggles. However, the “I” is not a fully rational or volitional subject but an embodied, animated, slippery self who cannot move freely in the affective and narrative pulls of body size hierarchies and gendered conventions.

Another obvious way of scrutinizing how viewing bodies relate to images would have been audience research (e.g. Coleman 2009, Skeggs and Wood 2012). However, studying viewers and viewing practices empirically does not necessarily make the research any more tangible, corporeal or “true” than studying images in relation to strategic autobiographical accounts. As Jackie Stacey has argued, the move from the “textually produced spectator” of psychoanalytical media studies tradition to the “spectator as text” of audience research can disregard the specificity of spectator accounts in comparison to media texts. While “real” audiences and spectator accounts may not

give entry into truths about spectatorship any more than media images themselves, they nevertheless provide viewpoints into the personal and social workings of media imageries in a way that analysis of media images alone cannot offer (Stacey 1993: 267–269).

Using my own accounts of my body history and affective viewing experiences rather than other people's accounts as research material and methodological strategy has certain advantages. I am not ethically accountable to myself like I would be to other interviewees or respondents—I do not have to worry about staying true to myself (cf. Saukko 2000: 299–301). However, having implicated myself in my research through what tends to be seen as a traumatic connection, I am also pulled into a cultural narrative of truth, where the cultural and social locatedness of my viewing experiences and affective postures may easily become emptied into the one past personal experience of bulimia and read as symptoms of it (see Berlant 1997, Illouz 2008). On the one hand, this narrative is a great resource: viewers “such as I” are curiously addressed as the most vulnerable ones in the face of “negative” images, such as those that make fun of weight and eating disorders (see Chapter 4), and “we” are also the ignored readers and viewers, those whose potential presence is conveniently forgotten when telling heroic tales of emerging from shame and self-disgust to pride and happiness through dieting (see Chapter 3). Furthermore, a bulimic body is a body potentially saturated by fear, (self-)disgust, and shame, which are some of the most pressing affective modalities attached to and moving fat bodies in media images. However, the bulimic body lacks representational coordinates which would demarcate it as visibly and publically saturated with these affects, unlike fat bodies are in mainstream imagery—thus a bulimic body can be used as a route to examine how circulation of affect constitutes bodies as more or less visible and charged.

My study is not audience research or ethnography in terms of systematic ethnographic observing and/or interviewing viewers or audiences, and thus it necessarily lacks the kind of complexities that differently positioned viewers would provide. To bring variability and alternatives to the “I” and to poke at my own possible blind spots, I have occasionally showed some of my image materials to test groups in seminar or conference situations or test persons like



my sister, and used my observations of and discussions with them to highlight the specific corporeal and academic locations of the strategic “I” which limit the potential encounters with images. But as Laura U. Marks has emphasized, viewers also leave marks to images. Using what she calls intercultural films as examples, Marks argues that images gather traces of viewers’ reactions and impressions which move with images into new viewing situations, somewhat like a transferring series of touches (Marks 2000: xii, cf. Sobchack 1992: 162–247). The researcher is also always a viewer who moves through and with the imageries she analyzes and leaves her traces on them, affecting future viewers. Therefore, I have paid attention not only to my own and other viewing situations I have observed and created, but I compare them to other researcher analyses, viewer accounts, and journalist reviews of the same or similar images.

Although I do suggest ways in which viewers who share a similar cultural background and environment with me may be likely to relate to images similarly, it does not really matter for my arguments whether my affective, corporeal, and analytical relations with images are similar to the readers’: the moments of un-recognition are just as important as the moments of overlap. Any viewer can and is in some situations likely to relate to images affectively in ways that do not fit images’ modes of address, but the pull of implicated of “preferred” viewing positions is nevertheless felt and recognizable. These positions necessarily participate in forming body images as affective fields between images and bodies. The goal is to invite readers and viewers, including “I,” to question naturalized stances towards various kinds of fat bodies as well as “normality,” to open up for multiplicities within one’s body and in relation to other bodies.

One instantly recognizable difference between the viewing “I” of the now and the “I” that started this research in the early 2000s concerns what feels “normal.” During the time of the research project, reality television shows like *The Biggest Loser* and *You Are What You Eat* were launched in the United States and the United Kingdom, and subsequently spread to many other countries, including my home country Finland, in their original as well as locally produced versions. I distinctly remember first hearing about the format of *The Biggest Loser*, a show where participants compete at losing as much weight as possible as quickly as possible on camp, and

that I laughed, first in disbelief, then dismissively. I was sure such a dangerous sounding series, that to me clearly just glorifies behavior more commonly known as eating-disordered, could never live long, even less land in Finland. Obviously I was wrong. Reality television dieting series are now a mundane, daily part of television programming throughout western countries, and variations of the format have multiplied in recent years.

On the other hand, the high rates of “body dissatisfaction,” impossible standards of beauty, and eating disorders have started to raise increasing concern in the media—especially when it comes to the fashion industry—although those concerns still clearly play second fiddle to the “obesity” concerns.<sup>25</sup> One of the best-known examples is the *Campaign For Real Beauty* by the multinational cosmetics company Dove, featuring “real women” as models. Achieving a healthy (as in not “low”) self-esteem and feeling and being seen as beautiful “inside and out” have become not only things everyone should be entitled to but things everyone should struggle towards.

The material whose weight I consider encompasses a varied selection of media images of fat bodies. Some sets of media material have been collected systematically during a certain time period, such as all articles mentioning fatness during a 10-year period in the Finnish weekly tabloid entertainment magazine *7 päivää* (*7 days*), and all articles during two and a half years in the biggest Finnish newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* (*Helsinki Gazette*). Some sets of material began to form rather randomly since, when I started my research, I collected films, television programs, printed press articles, and websites quite indiscriminately, obtaining any and all media material I encountered that featured fat bodies, and I continued this sampling throughout the research, although not all material has ended up being explicitly analyzed in the book. In this way I was eventually able to identify repetitive as well as marginal features and themes, and construct a conceptualization of the modes of address dealt with in the chapters.

As regards television series, I viewed, recorded from Finnish television channels, and purchased as many episodes as I could. In the case of repetitive and long-running format

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<sup>25</sup> For an overview of (often psychology based rather than drawing from media or cultural studies) research on “body dissatisfaction” and the media, see e.g. Wykes and Gunter 2005: 1–3.

programs, such as reality TV dieting series, I viewed and analyzed one or two seasons in detail, plus some random episodes, but in the case of fictional series that have only been produced for a few seasons I viewed the whole series. Sometimes random viewing experiences lead me to look for more information on a particular phenomenon on the Internet and other resources: for example, this is what happened with weight-gain pornography (Chapter 6). Sometimes friends and colleagues gave me hints on what they had seen and thought I might find interesting.

In each chapter, the routes of encountering, collecting, and dealing with different kinds of material are explained in more detail, since they form a part of the chapters' arguments. As the focus shifted during the research process towards the dynamics between imaged bodies and viewing bodies rather than only fat representations, some groups of images have been pushed together, some have been separated, and image materials have expanded both in terms of amount and variation.<sup>26</sup> I have chosen to interrogate more closely some articles, scenes, figures, and images as well as certain moments of affective engagement that are either very typical and condense repetitive structures, or somehow exceptional or surprising.

Since the research has been conducted primarily in Finland, the examples are drawn mostly from British and American media products that have landed on Finnish television or in Finnish film theatres (with a few exceptions), thus being likely to be available also in many other western countries or globally. Some media examples are Finnish, particularly most of the newspaper and magazine articles. However, the representational tendencies and modes of addressing viewers in Finnish examples are by no means exclusive or even particular to the Finnish cultural situation, although I would certainly invite any reader to compare them to their own cultural context and see what carries over and what does not. The focus on cross-national similarities rather than differences derives not only from the repetitiveness of narrative and audiovisual structures in much of the material, but it is also a methodological choice. Taking similarities as the starting

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<sup>26</sup> The goal in selecting media image material for closer analysis has not been to include everything or to be all-encompassing, as that would be an impossible task, but to map out the most central tendencies of affective viewer address in media images of fat bodies today.

point helps examine how images and bodies relate to each other collectively and how commonalities are formed in engagements with images.

Most of the examples are drawn from the mediascape of the 2000s and, to a somewhat lesser degree, the 1990s, as I wanted to explore images and imaging tendencies that are potentially familiar to large contemporary audiences across national differences. Since the study interrogates in part how cultural hierarchies become affectively embedded in our bodies so that they begin to feel natural or unavoidable, the focus is mostly on mainstream images of fat bodies, those that are circulated widely in the media. Towards the end of the book, however, particularly in chapters 5 and 6, some marginal sets of images are included in the analysis to grasp the limits of familiarity and strangeness, acceptance and rejection in facing images of “extreme” bodies.

Overall, the structure of this book reflects the ways I see a set of media images calling upon viewing bodies. My interest in the particular modes of engagement that are more closely interrogated in the book—fear, shame, disgust, pride, laughter, stretching, and desire—derives at least as much from theoretical discussions as the media material I use as examples. These forms of attachment or detachment have been much pondered on in academic research and especially in feminist thought in inspiring ways, but previous discussions do not yet adequately address the questions I am interested in.

For instance, in discussing news and public health policies and campaigns on fat (Chapter 2), I draw on feminist research that has long unraveled underlying power structures in producing truths about health, as well as how a future-oriented and fetishistic politics of threat, familiar also from the war on terror discourse, is employed in the “war on obesity.” Far from unemotionally informing, I show how images portrayed as informative are actually most efficient in calling forth a body image organized by fear for the readers. This way, fat is “phantomized”—and this conceptualization of the “phantom of fat” develops and carries through the whole book—as corporeality that persistently haunts all bodies although, and because, it is so forcefully denied the right to exist. Dieting narratives on TV and in magazines, while certainly following the logic of phantomizing fat quite concretely, do that instead in a pointedly dramatic way and aim to call

forth affective reactions. They build on a triangular invitation of shame, (self-)disgust, and the promise of pride, which might not always fully succeed in convincing viewers but has still become the definitive way viewers can expect to be addressed when encountering fat bodies in the media. While reality TV's dieting series often adopt a half-mocking, light tone mixed with a more melodramatic pull, one of the most classic ways of engaging with media images of fat bodies is through laughter (Chapter 4). The commonness of fat in comedy works, in my view, as a type of corporeal training in acceptable bodily boundaries, as they become drawn and shattered in laughter. However, laughter is highly unpredictable, as we all know, and entails the possibility of re-training bodies in shamelessness and even anger. Laughter is also often enough a reaction to discomfort or anxiety, never far from a scream. Some fat bodies in the media do indeed address viewers first and foremost through corporeal intrusion and unbearable proximity, as elements of destruction, tragedy, or disgust—more specifically as seemingly explosive (Chapter 5). Such dead, dying, exploding or imploding images of fat bodies may force the viewer into a mode of bodily stretching, probing the boundaries of what is human, and facing the inevitable mortality of flesh that is pushed unfairly on some bodies to procure a desperate illusion of safety for others. Entry to and inclusion in this world of safe bodies has, unsurprisingly, been a key theme in popular fat and body activist discourse as well as fat studies scholarship that call for more “positive” images of fatness (Chapter 6). However, the overwhelming majority of media images framed as such “positive” representations equate positivity to beauty and sexual desirability of women. But what is assumed of viewers then? Can “positive” images that center of normalcy, beauty, and desirability actually open up viewers' body images to multiple possibilities, or do they still hold gendered power relations in place?

So, if you are expecting a book that will “point out” that fatness is stigmatized in contemporary media, and that this devaluation fuels body anxieties—think again. Such a conclusion would not demand another study. Although I have chosen mostly media materials that I expected already beforehand to be compulsively repetitive and potentially

offensive, this book goes a leap further and asks how and why such media images manage to still engage viewers despite of this—or because of this. Furthermore, I examine what potential or actual consequences may emerge from these engagements in terms of our abilities to affectively relate to our bodies, reach out to other bodies and to the world. Indeed, any fixed or preconceived idea of the “negativity” or “positivity” of images will be immediately put into question when approached as a relation and an engagement rather than a quality. I would encourage readers accordingly to practice feeling through their reading experience as well as their responses to some perhaps familiar examples addressed in the book, and compare their reactions as well as reflections to mine. This book is as much an invitation to affective engagement as any media image it dissects.

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### Feature Films

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*Blade* (dir. Stephen Norrington, USA 1998). Amen Ra Films / Imaginary Forces / New Line Cinema. Actors: Wesley Snipes (Blade), Kris Kristofferson (Abraham Whistler), Stephen Dorff (Deacon Frost), N'Bushe Wright (Karen Jones), Pearl (Eric Edwards).

*Blood Moon* (dir. Thom Fitzgerald, USA 2001, UK title *Wolf Girl*). Kushner-Locke Company / Sunfilm Entertainment. Actors: Victoria Sanchez (Tara, the Wolf Girl), Darlene Cates (Athena the Fat Lady), Grace Jones (Christoph/Christine).

*Bridget Jones's Diary* (dir. Sharon Maguire, UK 2001). Little Bird / Studio Canal / Working Title Films. Actors: Renée Zellweger (Bridget Jones), Colin Firth (Mark Darcy).

*Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason* (dir. Beeban Kidron, UK 2004). Working Title / Universal / Miramax. Actors: Renée Zellweger (Bridget Jones), Colin Firth (Mark Darcy).

*Monty Python's The Meaning of Life* (dir. Terry Jones, Terry Gilliam, UK 1983). Celandine Films. Actors: Graham Chapman, John Cleese (maître d'), Terry Gilliam, Eric Idle, Terry Jones (Mr. Creosote), Michael Palin.

*Norbit* (dir. Brian Robbins, USA 2007). Dream Works Pictures / Davis Entertainment / Tollin/Robbins Productions. Actors: Eddie Murphy (Norbit / Rasputia / Mr Wong), Thandie Newton (Kate Thomas), Cuba Gooding Junior (Deion Hughes).

*Nutty Professor II: The Klumps* (dir. Peter Segal, USA 2000). Imagine Entertainment. Actors: Eddie Murphy (Sherman Klump / Buddy Love / Granny Klump / Mama Klump / Papa Klump / Ernie Klump / Lance Perkins), Janet Jackson (Denise).

*Se7en* (dir. David Fincher, USA 1995). New Line Cinema. Actors: Brad Pitt (Detective David Mills), Morgan Freeman (Detective Lt. William Somerset), Kevin Spacey (John Doe), Gwyneth Paltrow (Tracy Mills), Bob Mack (gluttony victim).

*Shallow Hal* (dir. Bobby and Peter Farrelly, USA 2001). Twentieth Century Fox. Actors: Gwyneth Paltrow (Rosemary Shanahan), Jack Black (Hal Larson), Jason Alexander (Mauricio).

*Super Size Me* (dir. Morgan Spurlock, USA 2004). The Con. Actor: Morgan Spurlock. Documentary.

*The Nutty Professor* (dir. Tom Shadyac, USA 1996). Imagine Entertainment / Universal Pictures. Actors: Eddie Murphy (Sherman Klump / Buddy Love / Grandma Klump / Mama Klump / Papa Klump / Ernie Klump / Lance Perkins), Jada Pinkett Smith (Carla Purty).

*What's Eating Gilbert Grape?* (dir. Lasse Hallström, USA 1993). J&M Entertainment. Actors: Johnny Depp (Gilber Grape), Juliette Lewis (Becky), Leonardo DiCaprio (Arnie Grape), Darlene Cates (Bonnie "Momma" Grape).

#### *Short Films*

*Hard Fat* (Canada 2002). Writer and director: Frederic Moffet. Available at: <http://vimeo.com/10307976> [accessed November 5, 2013].

#### *Television Documentaries*

*Big Love: Fat Girls and Feeders* (UK 2003, in Finnish 4D: *Iso rakkaus—lihavuuden ihailijat*). Aired in Finland on Nelonen, March 16, 2004 and August 2, 2005.

*Larger than Life: 33000 Calories a Day and Counting* (UK, in Finnish 4D: *33 000 kaloria päivässä*) Endemol UK. Aired in Finland on Nelonen, March 20, 2007.

*Larger than Life: Miss Big and Beautiful* (UK, in Finnish 4D: *Miss XXL*) Endemol UK. Aired in Finland on Nelonen, March 20, 2007.

*Supersize Kids: On a Diet* and *Under the Knife* (UK, 2005, in Finnish 4D: *Lihotetut lapset*) RDF Media Ltd. A two-part documentary. Aired in Finland on Nelonen, January 24 and 31, 2006.

*The Incredible Shrinking Woman* (USA, in Finnish 4D: *Uskomaton kutistuva nainen*). Aired in Finland on channel Nelonen, April 3, 2007.

#### *Television Series*

*The Biggest Loser* (USA 2004–). NBC. Season 14 runs in the USA in 2013. First aired on NBC, USA. Coaches: Bob Harper, Jillian Michaels, Kim Lyons. Hostess: Caroline Rhea (2004–2006), Alison Sweeney (2007–). Aired in Finland on MTV3. Example episodes from Season 1.

*The Biggest Loser Finland* (*Suurin pudottaja*, Finland 2006–). Solar Films. A fourth season at production stage in 2013. Aired on MTV3 and Sub. Coaches: Jani Sievinen & Eva Wahlström. Hostess: Eeva Jaakonsaari. Example episodes from Season 1.

*The Drew Carey Show* (USA 1995–2004). Warner Bros. Television / Mohawk Productions Inc. First aired on ABC, USA. Actors: Drew Carey (Drew Carey), Kathy Kinney (Mimi Bobeck). Aired in Finland on MTV3.

*Extreme Makeover* (USA 2002–2007). ABC. Four seasons. Aired in Finland on Nelonen (in Finnish *Hurja muodonmuutos*).

*Fat Actress* (USA 2005). Production Partners / Showtime (US). Seven episodes. First aired on Showtime, USA. Director: Keith Truesdell. Actors: Kirstie Alley, Bryan Callen (Eddie Falcon), Rachael Harris (Kevyn Shecket). Aired in Finland on Nelonen in October–November 2006.

*Fat Club* (UK 2002). ITV. First aired on ITV, UK. Aired in Finland on Nelonen in 2003 and 2004 (in Finnish *Painopartio*).

*Fat Friends* (UK 2000–2005). Tiger Aspect Productions. Four seasons. First aired on ITV, UK. First season aired in Finland on TV1 in August–November 2002. Example episodes mainly from Season 1.



*How to Look Good Naked* (UK 2006–). Maverick Television / Channel 4. First aired on Channel 4, UK. Host: Gok Wan. Aired in Finland on Nelonen.

*How to Look Good Naked* (USA 2008–). Maverick Television / RDF Media. First aired on Lifetime, USA. Host: Carson Kressley. Aired in Finland on Nelonen.

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*Sopranos* (USA 1999–2007). Brad Grey Television/HBO/Chase Films. First aired on HBO, USA. Actors: James Gandolfini (Tony Soprano), Edie Falco (Carmela Soprano), Lorraine Bracco (Dr Jennifer Melti). Aired in Finland on Nelonen.

*The King of Queens* (USA 1998–2007). Columbia TriStar/Sony/CBS. First aired on CBS, USA. Actors: Kevin James (Doug Heffernan), Leah Remini (Carrie Heffernan), Jerry Stiller (Arthur Spooner). Aired in Finland on Nelonen (in Finnish *Kellarin kunkku*).

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*The Practice* (USA 1997–2004). Warner Bros. Television/David E. Kelley Productions. First aired on ABC, USA. Actors: Ellenor Frutt (Camryn Mannheim).

*Two Fat Ladies* (UK 1996–1999). Optomen Television/BBC. First aired on BBC Two, UK. Performers: Clarissa Dickson-Wright and Jennifer Paterson. Aired in Finland on TV1.

*You Are What You Eat* (UK 2004–2007). Celador International / Channel 4. Three seasons. First aired on Channel 4, UK. Nutritionist: Gillian McKeith. Aired in Finland on MTV3 and Sub. Season 1, Episode 3, aired 13 March 2007 on MTV3: example on Angela and Allyson.

*You Are What You Eat* Finland (*Olet mitä syöt*, Finland 2005–). Solar Films. Three seasons by the end of 2008. Nutritionist: Hanna Partanen (first two seasons), Anette Palssa (third season). Aired on MTV3. Season 1, Episode 3, aired 4 October 2005: example on Liisa.

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