Word count: 34 864

Forord

Takk til min veileder, Terje Borgersen, for tilbakemeldinger og støtte underveis. Både som veileder og fagansvarlig tidligere i løpet har jeg satt stor pris på din uendelige innsikt innen visuell kultur-faget, som ofte serveres med en god dose spissfindig humor. En mer kunnskapsrik, humørfylt og jovial veileder kunne ikke en masterstudent ønske seg.

Takk til min livspartner og klippe, Jeremy, for kjærlighet og forståelse, samt min yndlingsperson og datter, Eira Grace, som trass i å ha dratt hjem alskens kjente og ukjente barnesykdommer det siste året, egenhendig har klart å endre mitt syn på hva som er viktigst her i livet.

En stor takk til søster Ida og Karl for teknisk assistanse, og til mine foreldre, Helen og Leiv, samt Eiras bonusbesteforeldre, Svein og Unni, som har stilt opp med barnepass og muntre tilrop når det har stormet som verst.

Takk også til livets gjeng, Frikargjengen, for episke pusterom – og for at dere siden ungdomsskolen av har inspirert meg med utradisjonelle kjønnsframstillinger og queerteori i praksis.

Sist; takk til alle som beriker det kroppslige mangfoldet i sosiale medier med sine «uperfekte» selfies.

Trondheim, mai 2017.

Astri Moksnes Barbala

Abstract

This Master's thesis is exploring whether the selfie can be utilised as a political tool in order to challenge the stereotypical ideas of femininity and female beauty that currently dominate the visual social media landscape. Focusing on the photo-sharing application Instagram, the emphasis is here on how the selfie can position the portrayed subject's body as a site of resistance. By publishing images depicting their non-normative physical appearances, social media-participating feminists are challenging gender stereotypes and simultaneously uncovering new feminist ideas and networks that differ from previous feminist activity. The thesis employs Foucauldian categories as a framework and utilises discourse analytical tools in its methodological approach in order to argue that this form of embodied subjectivity within the context of social media is the pinnacle of a new feminist movement; the fourth-wave.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 The Self & the Selfie: New Media, New Feminism(s)

In an exhibition running from February to June of 2016, London's Tate Modern, one of the most visited contemporary art museums in the world[1], explored the relationship between performance and photography. Named *Performing for the Camera,* the exhibition featured work by well-known and highly profiled artists such as Yves Klein, Yayoi Kusama and Marcel Duchamp. Alongside these mainstream names, however, were also lesser known artists and photographers, including the work of self-proclaimed 'Instagram artist' Amalia Ulman. Argentinian-born Ulman's work, gaining notoriety when her Instagram-documented, seemingly lavish lifestyle turned out to be a part of a performance art project commenting on the 'constructions of femininity'[2], relies heavily on self-portraits taken with a smartphone - what we have learned to know as *selfies.*

According to Oxford Dictionaries, a selfie is "a photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a smartphone or a webcam and uploaded to a social media website" (OED Online 2017), and the term selfie has gone from not existing little over a decade ago to becoming a modern-day phenomenon and – for many – even a habitual everyday activity. The inclusion of Ulman's work at the Tate Modern exhibition not only suggested that social media-bred artists can be legitimate participants of the highbrow culture elite, but also that the selfie can be integral to expressing notions of identity and gender. Taking a selfie has been linked to succumbing to social media narcissism (Prøitz 2016), but it is undoubtedly becoming a part of people's everyday lives. Social media users are utilising it as a way of documenting their feelings, achievements and activities, showing that this version of self-portraiture can be a powerful form of modern-day self-expression. A 2014 study conducted by the Pew Research Center[3] showed that 55% of Millennials (those born between 1980 and the early 2000's) have posted a selfie on a social media site, and the number is likely to be even higher now, three years later.

Simultaneously, as communication and forms of self-expression have undergone a rapid overhaul, there has naturally also been a shift in the ways in which activism is conducted. The Women's March, the global anti-Trump protests arranged on 21 January 2017, the day after the presidential inauguration, saw the biggest outcome of protesters in US history, and relied heavily on social media recruiting[4]. The march itself was also documented closely by its participants on social media, many sharing selfies and other camera phone pictures using

hashtags such as #womensmarch, which a week following the protests had close to 1,5 million tags on Instagram[5]. Politicians, too, have discovered the potential reach of the selfie, frequently sharing a picture of themselves on various social media platforms. Indian prime minister Narendra Modi is perhaps the most prominent example, as he has made the use of selfies a part of his political persona, and – although not without critique – a part of his attempt to abolish the discrimination against girls and women[6]. In Norway, too, have we seen in the last couple of years that several politicians representing parties from both the left and the right wing have started including selfies in their social media posts on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, showing the public (and potential voters) their everyday do-goodings[7]. Briefly summed up; the selfie, as with other forms of self-portraiture through history, has undeniably got the capacity to express powerful statements of cultural and political importance, and simultaneously reach – and thus, influence – thousands, sometimes even millions, of people, depending on the size of the sharer's social network.

In this Master's thesis, I am exploring whether the selfie can be utilised as a political tool in order to challenge the stereotypical ideas of femininity and female beauty that currently dominate the visual social media landscape. With 'political', I am here referring to the politics of the personal, and more specifically; the politics of the female body, and the feminist confrontations of the hegemonic neoliberal discourse that has been the dominating ideology in the Western world in the past decades, a political ideology that has extended from being a project based on economic globalisation and free market capitalism to also affect our views on beauty ideals and acceptable bodies through mass media and advertising (Duggan 2003, McRobbie 2009). Focusing on the photo-sharing application Instagram, I will here examine how the selfie can position the portrayed subject's body as a site of resistance, rather than being a mere expression of vanity. By publishing images depicting their non-normative physical appearances, social media-participating feminists are challenging gender stereotypes and simultaneously uncovering new feminist ideas and networks that differ from previous feminist activity. I will in this thesis argue that this form of embodied subjectivity within the framework of social media is the pinnacle of the new feminist movement; the fourth-wave.

1.2. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

The purpose behind this thesis and its analysis is first and foremost informed by recent writing discussing contemporary feminism and how it relates to technological change, particularly the

widespread use of social media, allowing the rise of new feminist networks, forums and activism (Cochrane 2013, Munro 2015). As argued by e.g. Kira Cochrane, who was among the first theorists to utilise the term 'the fourth-wave', neo-conservative attacks on previously taken-for-granted gains of feminism, such as abortion rights, as well as the extreme looks-focused new media platforms have contributed to a feminist awakening in the past few years, and as with any present-day activism, social media has been a vehicle in the shaping of this, debatably, newest global wave focusing on gender equality. Using this as a starting point, I aim to shed light upon the various arguments and forces backing up the idea of a fourth wave within feminism, with the concepts of intersectionality, 'rape culture' and body positivity as central themes. Additionally, I will study how the political climate dominated by neo-liberalist values and the nature of social media, and Instagram in particular, can be said to be the groundwork of this new movement, specifically paying attention to how *mass self-communication* within the social media realm has potentials for counter-power (Fuchs 2014: 75). I will explain these terms in more detail in the following chapter.

The fluidity of power is a common denominator for the majority of the theory utilised in this thesis, both with regards to social media, feminism and methodological theory, all of which relying on the concept of power as defined by French philosopher Michel Foucault. His perception of power did, as I will describe closer in the Literature Review, develop from his genealogical phase with *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1977) to his late ethical period, conceptualised in *The Technologies of the Self* (1988), but consistently centres around the idea of power being a result of *discursive practices* (McLaren 2002). The Foucauldian notion of power is hence closely related to the concept of discourse, that can be described as

> ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and relations between them. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern
>
> (Weedon 1987: 108)

Through discourse, then, power is inscribed on the body and hence produce subjectivities and *docile bodies* (Foucault 1977). Foucault also acknowledges how discourse can be a site of resistance, which will be a focus in this thesis. I here aim to show how Foucault's work is useful for contemporary feminist politics of the body, and for arguing that the Instagram selfie can be a tool for fourth-wave feminist activism. Foucault's perspective is also a defining

factor for my chosen methodological framework, which will be case studies informed by a discourse analytical approach, particularly following Gillian Rose's (2001) account of visual discourse analysis and Norman Fairclough's account of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), both of which relying heavily on Foucauldian categories. The tools and methodology of discourse theory and analysis can be useful for uncovering discursive formations; it allows for various analytical approaches to the material, as well as emphasising a thorough interpretation and explanation of the interconnecting patterns in the analysis (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips 2013). As I, following Foucault, here will refer to bodies being 'shaped' by power relations, I am adopting a social constructivist epistemology, although, as I am explaining in the Methodology chapter, I will be careful to avoid delving into anti-essentialist notions of social constructivism. I will particularly employ the theory of Elizabeth Grosz, Lois McNay and Margaret McLaren here; all of which utilising Foucault to theorise female embodied subjectivity and argue that the gendered self is a social construction – yet nevertheless rejecting the skepticist view of the 'pure', pre-discursive world. Grosz, whose book *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (1994) has been a milestone in the theorisation of female bodily experiences and the body as an 'inscriptive text', will be frequently returned to throughout the thesis, as will McNay (1992), due to her early work on the possibilities of a Foucauldian framework to feminist theory and activism. McLaren's (2002) more recent studies on female subjectivity in relation to the work of Foucault, in which she particularly makes use of his later work on the technologies of the self as a groundwork for looking at the possibilities of feminist agency, will also be a point of return here.

Although stemming from Cartesian thought, which I will explain in order to trace the origin of the tradition, I want to underline that I will not dwell on the philosophical implications of the concept of 'subjectivity', nor other concepts with a purely philosophical grounding, as that would require more space and time than what is feasible in this thesis. However, as philosophy is the basis of which both Foucauldian theory and a lot of the feminist theory I utilise here is built on, I will thoroughly explain central terms where necessary and lay out how they correspond to my analyses. Nevertheless, as illustrated by Albert et al (2013), utilising the methodological tools of discourse analysis, especially when analysing social media as a discursive system, does allow for an interdisciplinary approach, and invites the social media researcher to "bridge [the] theoretical framework with appropriate methodologies and domain theories" (ibid: 6). Furthermore, the Cartesian idea of dualism is another underlying concept here; Descartes' notion of the binary pairs female/male, body/mind and private/public has been

challenged by feminist theorists (i.e. by already mentioned Grosz and Susan Bordo, as will be discussed underneath), and is of particular interest with regards to how social media, and especially the feminist selfie within social media, is moving the borders of notably the public/private dichotomy. The separation of public and private has been a central theme for social media analysts, as the lives we live and portray online are blurring the vision between what is regarded part of the private sphere, and what is considered belonging to the outside world of public affairs. By building on the theories of Jürgen Habermas and Nancy Fraser, new research is re-conceptualising the idea of spheres to fit the media digestions of the 'selfie generation', including Norwegian feminist media scholar Lin Prøitz, whose studies of the selfie's 'spheres' provide considerable insights to this project.

As the focus and material for analysis here is foremost visual content, and I argue that the current wave in feminism is largely dependent on both expressing and challenging visual components related to the female body, visual Instagram content is at the centre of my analysis, yet I will also, where applicable, look to the written caption accompanying the image as it helps further define meaning. As argued by e.g. Roland Barthes (1977), visual connotations cannot be viewed as entirely separate from verbal ones, as they will be 'anchored' in the verbal copy that "remote-controls" (ibid: 38) the reader towards meanings and interpretations. Hence, hashtags and verbal expressions will also be considered as fragments of the fourth-wave feminist discourse, that I will be identifying in this study. My focus here is the selfie itself and what it expresses when observed through the medium of Instagram, however I will also touch upon the meaning of the mere *act* of taking a selfie, as the two aspects, from a perspective of embodied subjectivity and the theory of the gaze, are inextricably entwined. Where applicable and of value to my arguments, I will also consider the audience reception of the selfies under analysis, as the comments underneath each Instagram post are visible when scrolling through the feeds, and are hence integrated into the overall Instagram audience perception of the selfie.

1.3 Purpose Statement: Aims and Objectives

There is a long tradition of constructivist ideas within the fields of feminism and visual culture, the visual culture sphere often being defined as an interdisciplinary study of "the social construction of visual experience" (Mitchell 1995: 540). Addressing the study of social media from the perspectives of feminism and visual culture, this thesis aims to contribute to, and hence

be an update on, previous theory discussing media (self-)portrayals of women with a constructivist outlook.

Considering the impact social media has had on both media studies and people's everyday lives, as well as the rapid changes modern technology constantly brings, there is a need for ongoing analyses studying the ways in which social media networks, and the power relations within these, play out. As a lot of research and media coverage has focused on the harmful effects of social media, both in terms of users encountering potential predators online and the way it affects our psyches and real life social interactions (Albert & Salam 2013), I will argue that it is also necessary to study how marginalized communities can adopt the power of social media as a tool of resistance, and how these online networks can be utilised in positive, rewarding ways.

This thesis' aims are threefold. First, it seeks to provide an analysis of how the selfie can be utilised for feminist activism within the frames of a social media network such as image-sharing application Instagram. Secondly, it is concerned with how the portrayed bodies are challenging traditional notions of femininity, and asks what distinguishes a 'feminist selfie' from a 'traditional selfie'. Here, it is elementary to point at the visual symbols of fourth-wave feminism, and the discursive tools that are utilised in order to classify the self-portrait in question as subversive. Thirdly, it is attempting to provide a Foucauldian account of how the selfies *embody* feminism, particularly, then, segments of fourth-wave feminism. A main argument here, is that the body can be employed for political resistance in the framework of social media, and potentially reach, and hence influence, a very large audience worldwide. Despite this claim, however, I am also including a discussion about the restrictions of social media to feminist activism, considering the real-life implications of online political activity as well as the commercial investors involved with social media platforms, often seeking to censor content viewed as 'inappropriate' to their commercial interests.

Before presenting an outline of the thesis underneath, I want to be clear on my own perspective as a Norwegian, middle class, cis-gendered, white woman, and the accompanying privilege attributing my position. Although one of the parameters of contemporary feminism is its focus on intersectionality, and I incorporate postcolonial feminist theory by i.e. bell hooks and Audre Lorde in the Literature Review as well as women of colour (WoC) in my analysis, Anglo-American feminist theory dominates the groundwork for the thesis, and white, Western women are most prominent in the analysis. Therefore, although aiming to grasp the current feminist social media landscape as accurately as possible, my account of contemporary feminist

selfies will still be a result of my own position and experience, and might have differed in a research conducted by e.g. a queer person of colour located elsewhere in the world.

1.4 Outline

This Master's thesis is divided into four chapters. The subsequent part will be a Literature Review considering the essence and impact of the proposed fourth-wave within feminism and relevant social media theory to back up the claim that current feminist activism is shaped by the occurrence of online social networks. I am here examining the background for the new feminist wave, mainly focusing on the proposed death of the women's movement due to the embracing of neoliberal individualism, dubbed *post-feminism*. An in-depth summary of corporeal feminist theory and the Foucauldian work it draws on will follow, all in order to best shed light on both the fundamentals for the new feminist movement, as well as laying out a comprehensive groundwork for my analysis. Next, in the Methodology chapter, I will thoroughly explain my reason for utilising the tools of discourse analysis as a methodological framework, yet not the actual method of discourse analysis itself, and in detail outline my chosen methodological design. The Analysis chapter follows, consisting of two case studies, each signifying a kind of 'feminist selfie', that I argue present various aspects of contemporary feminism. Each case study will focus on uncovering the visual symbols of the fourth-wave movement, and the discursive tools utilised for constructing alternative, online discursive spaces. Lastly, before rounding up with the conclusion, the Discussion chapter will, with the results of the analysis as a backbone, build on Foucauldian and constructivist feminist theory regarding bodily subjectivity to further discuss the current feminist climate and its restrictions.

2. Literature Review

This Literature Review is naturally coloured by the theory I am 'reviewing', which again is dependent on the subject under research. As the formation of the fourth wave of feminism, as well as the social media revolution that shapes it, is relatively new, and still happening, few 'classic' works on this topic have been produced, although the work of e.g. Castells and Foucault, that I utilise here, will fall under that category. Therefore, I am here conducting a *meta-synthesis* kind of literature review, which per Schreiber, Crooks and Stern "is bringing together and breaking down findings, examining them, discovering essential features and, in some way, combining phenomena into a transformed whole" (1997: 14). A meta-synthesis, then, can be a way of developing a theory of a new research phenomenon, as it identifies core aspects of a broad variety of previous research and analyses key elements of these, and I find this way of categorising literature fitting for the kind of study – and the kind of research questions – I am here imposing. Rather than engaging in a personal dialogue with the work presented, I am focusing on presenting various views of the topics under question, in order to be best equipped for a nuanced, thorough analysis in the coming chapters.

2.1 'Feminism 4.0': Theorising the Fourth Wave

I want to begin this Literature Review with a brief discussion of the 'wave model' for categorising feminisms, and particularly the validity of the term 'fourth-wave feminism', as it, as well as its predecessor, the third wave, is still seemingly a controversial term within feminist circles, especially so to feminist theorists affiliating themselves with the second wave. The argument that feminism, with social media as a vehicle, has entered its fourth wave, is the cornerstone for this thesis, and what I am building my arguments and analysis on. It is essential, then, to give a brief overview of previous 'waves' and what characterised them. Particularly is an understanding of the third wave and its arguably closely related 'movement' – or, rather, counter-movement – post-feminism, vital to attempt on distinguishing the current feminist climate from the previous one. As we shall see, however, a clear divide here is not possible, and there will naturally always be different kinds of feminist activity taking place simultaneously, in different spheres and with different agendas.

2.1.1 Feminist Waves: From Redstockings to Raunch Culture

To divide social or political movements into 'waves' can no doubt be convenient in order to classify both timeline, content and structure. Kira Cochrane argues in her 2013 book *All the Rebel Women: The Rise of the Fourth Wave of Feminism* that describing feminism using the wave model can be useful as a way of defining "the contours of a specific moment at a specific moment, and to recognise a new raft of women rising against sexism" (2013: 209). Nevertheless, she acknowledges how it can be limiting, particularly as different parts of the world do not experience the same awakenings simultaneously, and there are more 'waves' than one taking place at the same time, as movements arise as a response to specific cultural conditions. Someone who has written widely on feminist activity in the past decades, specifically looking at the state of feminism in the UK since the late 1970s, is cultural studies scholar Angela McRobbie, who sees the wave model as stifling the "complex historical genealogy of feminisms" (2009: 156), as it feeds into the simplistic idea of resistance having beginnings and, most notably, endings. As feminism, per bell hooks' simple definition, is a movement to "end sexism, sexist exploitation and oppression" (hooks 2015: 1), and will, in other words, not simply 'end', but be an ongoing battle that will vary in content and form depending on where and when it takes place. The wave terminology might have been accurate for describing feminism's first 'wave', as it ultimately was based on one issue, namely the battle for women's right to vote (hence the first wave is also referred to as the 'Suffrage movement'), and therefore had an ending when the goal was reached. But there were still, of course, other issues that the so-called 'red-stockings' of the late 1800s and early 1900s focused on that are still a focus today, such as a general fight for opening opportunities for women, that also existed long before the 19th century. Hence, following McRobbie, it is with caution I apply the wave model to this project, but as 'the fourth wave' is a well-used classification among contemporary feminist scholars to describe the nature of feminism as it plays out in this moment of time, along with the practicality of operating with a tangible term, I will consistently use it throughout this thesis. It is also, despite debatably being politically reactionary, useful for identifying the broad strokes of the various feminist movements that have played out in different historic eras.

Where suffrage was at the core of the first wave of feminism, the second-wave women's movement is usually categorised as beginning in the early 1960s, growing out of the civil rights movement. The event that often gets the credit for ending the 'feminist latency' period, is the 1963 publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique,* that served as an awakening to

thousands of American housewives feeling undervalued and repressed (Cochrane 2013). Based on a survey conducted amongst her former high school classmates, Friedan describes how women feel trapped in their role as gendered beings, experiencing a lack of fulfilment with few opportunities outside household and mothering duties. The book addresses several of the main causes of what would soon grow into a hard-hitting social and political movement: Equal pay, abortion, better health care and an end to sexual discrimination were among the issues that the second wavers fought for, and many changes, both legal and in public opinion were eventually secured in the coming two decades.

What happened next in the history of feminism, has arguably less to do with established facts and is more a matter of opinion. The 1980s brought Cold War and bourgeoning neoliberalist politics predominantly shaped by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and American President Ronald Reagan, as well as an explosion of the content and availability of media, such as cable networks, blockbuster movies and magazines. This, in turn, brought a plethora of media representations and so-called 'women's genres', and, according to feminist media scholar and Rosalind Gill (2007), a consequence of this was also that feminist theory branched out into several schools with varying perspectives on gender and the goals of the women's movement.

In 1991, journalist Susan Faludi published *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against Women,* in which she addressed how the gains of the second wave once again were under threat, as feminism was now ridiculed and dismissed as being obsolete. The book can be considered the beginning of the rise of a new feminist movement, or rather, as we shall see; new *feminisms.* Two years later, Rebecca Walker, daughter of prominent second-wave feminist Alice Walker, wrote an article in *Ms. Magazine*, titled 'Becoming the Third Wave'. The text was a call to arms for young women fed up with sexist behaviour and discrimination, and ended with the line: "I am not a postfeminist feminist. I am the Third Wave." (Walker, in Cochrane 2013: 332). Referring to how mainstream media had declared the arrival of 'post-feminism', implying an era superseding feminism, Walker hence felt the need to declare that the death of feminism was not a reality. Shortly after, Walker and other feminists associating themselves with the third-wave founded the Third Wave Direct Action Corporation, whose mission was to mobilise social and political action amongst young people. The organisation soon also provided funding for abortion clinics and young-women-led projects (Third Wave Fund 2017).

Although direct political action has indeed taken place under the third-wave umbrella, the term has been controversial in feminist circles, and is seldom, even outside the feminist

academy, referred to without quotation marks or an accompanying discussion about the validity of the movement. A reason for this might be linked to the fact that those identifying with the third wave have had (and still have) varying – oftentimes conflicting – views of feminism, and there has therefore been impossible to pin down a common ground on which to build a movement on. Among the most referenced texts connected to third-wave feminism is a 2004 essay by self-proclaimed third-wavers Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richard, titled 'Feminism and Femininity: Or How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Thong'. Embracing what they see as female opportunities under capitalism, the authors here express their love for 'girliness' and stereotypical feminine products, such as makeup and lingerie. With harsh critique against previous women's movements, Baumgardner and Richard see the third wave as a new type of feminism that offers more freedom than the previous waves, of which they are distancing themselves from: "The barrier to individuality and individual expression was no longer 'the patriarchy', but feminism" (2004: 64).

In *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change*, beforementioned McRobbie writes about the state of feminism in the late 1990s and early 2000s, looking at how feminism, with the advent of neoliberalism and individualist politics, are now deemed redundant, and has, in fact, reached the point of post-feminism, both in the sense of common public opinion and governmental policies: Building an academic frame around Faludi's journalistic arguments, McRobbie states that feminist ideas have been incorporated into political and institutional life, but as a form of 'faux-feminism' that draws on elements of feminist activities from the 1970s and 80s, yet at the same time dismisses the emancipatory feminist project as being old-fashioned, unpalatable and obsolete. Participating in capitalism, then, with its neoliberal vocabulary celebrating 'empowerment' and 'choice', has become a substitute for the more radical feminist politics of latter years. Central to the empowerment project, McRobbie argues, is an access to a new form of sexual freedom, which includes embracing the porn aesthetic and 'laddish' behaviour; defined in Ariel Levy's popular feminist bestseller *Female Chauvinist Pigs* as 'raunch culture' (Levy 2005).

Where McRobbie focuses on the UK and the neoliberal, 'woman-embracing' politics under Tony Blair's New Labour, historian Lisa Duggan (2003) looks to the US, pointing at the same arguments in her studies of how the free market economics under neoliberalism seem to have been the basis of which third-wave feminism was built on. Defining neoliberalism as "a new vision of national and world order, a vision of competition, inequality, market 'discipline', public austerity and 'law and order'" (2003: x), Duggan argues that the use of neutral language

in neoliberal policies on social welfare, where elements of leftist, feminist and anti-racist agendas are seemingly included, but 'mainstreamed' and freed of their political impact, makes counter-arguments difficult. This also, in turn, has seen the fragmentation of radical movements into single issue groups instead, which naturally meant that the revolutionary clout of these anti-establishment groupings was lost, whereas neo-liberalist "identity/equality politics" (2003: 44) promote "'colour-blind' anti-affirmative action racial politics, conservative-libertarian 'equality feminism' and 'gay normality'" (ibid). This account of feminism before the entrance of the fourth wave is echoed by feminist philosopher Rosi Braidotti, who, in the same vein as McRobbie and Duggan argues that "post-feminist neoliberalism is pro-capitalist, and hence it considers financial success in the world as the sole indicator of the status of women" (2006: 45).

Although the literal meaning of the term post-feminism would be *after feminism*, all feminist theorists referred to above rather seem to describe it as a 'substitute' for feminism (McRobbie 2009). According to Ann Brooks in *Postfeminisms: Feminism, Cultural Theory and Cultural Forms* (1997), feminism is not in a unique position in its 'out-branching' and development of 'posts', due to the political climate as well as the media revolution (Gill 2007), as other schools of thought also has experienced a dispersing into more, often conflicting, areas of debate. This, she argues, is a common tendency in academic theory, where an interdisciplinary approach is typical, and for example feminism engages heavily with postmodernist and poststructuralist thought and hence moves away from political debates, and towards cultural studies. She mentions Foucauldian discourse theory as one of the areas that particularly has shaped academic feminism, as it has been, as is to this thesis, useful for explaining power relations in contemporary society.

Although post-feminism hence can be argued to be the fourth-wave's predecessor, it is still very much a currently utilised term, usually referring to exactly what McRobbie, Duggan and Braidotti point to: It is a label illustrating that something or someone is 'pro-woman', as defined by the capitalism-embracing language of neoliberalism, yet with a dismissal of feminism *per se*. Further illustrating this is a quote by Donald Trump's presidential campaign manager and counsellor, Kellyanne Conway, in an interview with the Washington Post, January 2017[7]:

I don't consider myself a feminist. […] I feel like the feminist movement has been hijacked by the pro-abortion movement or the anti-male sentiments that you read in some of their propaganda and writings. I'm not anti-male. [...] I consider myself a postfeminist. I consider myself one of those women who is a product of her choices, not a victim of her circumstances.

(Washington Post 2017)

Post-feminism is hence a label embraced by women (and men) who want to underline that they support that both genders have every opportunity at hand to seize the power of personal choice, but simultaneously – and paradoxically – reject the battles of and myths surrounding the 'unattractive' second-wave feminist movement.

Summing up; with the (highly visual) media revolution in the 1980s that grew out of the commercial possibilities of neoliberalist economies, political movements such as feminist 'waves' have become harder to define as a cohesive feminist project. Also, we cannot comprehend the emergence of the fourth-wave of feminism without taking into account the economic system and the media revolution it is operating within, which it is both built on and a reaction to. But although one united, distinguished feminist movement may not be possible to pin down, there will always be counter-political feminist activism taking place at any given time, despite it not being as easily definable as it was during e.g. the suffrage movement. As we shall see, however, with the Internet becoming a major player within political activism, the current feminist movement's activity may be easier to particularise than before.

2.1.2 Fourth Wave Rising

As discussed within various branches of feminist theory, including McRobbie's media studies, Duggan's historical account and Braidotti's philosophical outlook, there is a broad consensus that post-feminism and the third wave are somehow intertwining branches of feminism (or non-feminism), that have been, as other social movements, shaped by politics, economics and general societal and cultural change. With the third-wave movement's arguably 'anti-feminist feminism' being the predecessor of the current fourth-wave movement, what has happened since the early 2000s that has awoken new feminist forces? To answer this, I will here turn to recent feminist writings theorising the new women's movement, utilising Kira Cochrane's beforementioned book as a main source, as it is one of the few book-length publications so far attempting to conceptualise every aspect of the current feminist wave.

14

As Cochrane notes, there has not yet been much theory produced analysing the new tendencies within the feminist sphere (Cochrane 2013), and in terms of academic textbooks, this holds true almost four years since the publication of her book. McRobbie notes that feminism's third wave is "largely untheorized" (2009: 159) within the academic feminist sphere, as most accounts outlining its theoretical framework – if one argues that there even is one – is anchored in journalistic writing. Although this also applies to the fourth wave, there has been an increased interest in the connections between contemporary feminist activism and the use of social media in the past few years, and there is now a growing body of media studies theory on the topic in essay and article form. Alison Phipps, Director of the Centre for Gender Studies at Sussex University, has been among the scholars showing a particular interest for contemporary feminist politics, and she refers to the current feminist scholarship as "'discursive publics'[…] of contemporary Western feminism", which encompass not only published textbooks, but also "academic, activist and public/media discussion" (Phipps 2016: 307). This, she argues, is due to the "permeation of media and social media into scholarship" (ibid), as feminist academics, including herself, is now active in, and communicate on, several social arenas at once, hence will not devote all their time on writing academic papers, as used to be the norm.

The 2013 report #FemFuture: Online Feminism published by Columbia University's Barnard Center for Research on Women states that women between the ages of 18 and 29 are the main users of social networking (Martin & Valenti, 2012). Women are also more likely to have successful petition campaigns online, with two thirds of the biggest victories on petition website change.org, both in terms of signatures and media coverage, being started by women, despite women only starting 46% of new petitions (Cochrane 2013). If we can point to a very simplified conclusion from these numbers, it points to the fact that women, if we here see women as a homogenised, unified group, has a definitive potential impact when it comes to utilising social media for political activism.

According to Cochrane, the summer of 2013 was the defining moment of time when the contours of a fourth wave became properly visible, with several campaigns and demonstrations taking place simultaneously. It saw "thousands of feminists suddenly rising, suddenly angry, ready to strike against an image and treatment of women that no longer felt remotely ironic or funny" (ibid: 397). She points at how the global financial crisis of 2007-2008 turned people's anger towards the financial system allowing this to happen, spurring movements such as Occupy, that started in the US with Occupy Wall Street and quickly spread to cities all over the

world. Soon, feminist issues were a central part of the rising activist spirit: The online anti-sexism campaign Everyday Sexism Project, highlighting everyday misogyny and how it has become normalised, reached over 60 000 tweets within a week of launching. Outside the UK tabloid newspaper *The Sun*, frequent protests were held under the parole No More Page Three, campaigning to put an end to the paper's infamous nude models appearing on page 3 in every issue, something they succeeded two years later. In 2012, the punk activists in Pussy Riot were arrested in Moscow for their anti-Putin demonstrations, and two of the members imprisoned, to global outrage for the following year, until they were released in December 2013. These were among the many and varied issues that were highlighted synchronously, before, during and after the summer of 2013, together merging into what is now frequently labelled the fourth-wave movement. Underneath I will look at three topics that is dominating the current feminist wave, explaining their backgrounds and theoretical anchor points.

2.1.3 Intersectionality

As Kira Cochrane states in the conclusion of her book; although a large body of academic theory on the fourth-wave movement has yet to be produced, the defining framework and common denominator of the movement is *intersectionality* (Cochrane 2015). First defined by law professor Kimberlee Crenshaw, the term was coined in the influential 1989 essay 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics', and conceptualises how experience and privilege is intertwined. She points out how African American women are affected by both racism and sexism simultaneously, and how their experiences cannot find room in an anti-racist movement that neglects gender issues, nor in a feminist movement that neglects racism. Intersectionality, or *intersectional theory*, as it is also known as, hence engages with the idea that instead of thinking about racism, sexism, homophobia and other suppressive attitudes as separate phenomena, the term describes how different systems of oppression function in practice. In other words, intersectionality is a concept theorising the power and hierarchy of privilege.

Although not given a name until the publication of Crenshaw's essay, intersectionality, of course, is nothing new. In *Women, Race, Class* (1983), profiled black feminist Angela Davis wrote about the racist and classist biases of the second-wave movement leaders, who tend to be middle class, white women. Another prominent voice within intersectional theory is bell hooks,

whose phrase 'eating the other' coined in an essay by the same name has been central to recent feminist debates on privilege, as it points at the common practice of 'borrowing' from other, marginalised cultures for one's own personal gain; be it in music, way of dressing, or any other creative expression. This cultural 'devouring' of non-white culture and the non-white body, as seen i.e. by the use of black women 'twerking' in music videos or dressing up in Native American attire for Halloween, is a continuation of racial hierarchy and the associated power structures that for centuries has dominated social and cultural discourses (hooks 1992). What hooks points at here is the act of *cultural appropriation*; to 'borrow' ideas, symbols, objects, images, sounds or styles from the historically oppressed Other. Said cultural aspects are also, if utilised by the people who originally own them, often subjected to racial discrimination or ridicule. The above examples also apply here; the black female body has for centuries been fetishized and degraded by white, Western culture, but is now a hip and cool statement if placed dancing in the background of a music video by white pop star Miley Cyrus. Similarly; the horrid abuse of Native Americans and their culture is a bleak chapter in US history, so wearing their traditional attire, a manifestation of heritage, as a costume, will therefore undoubtedly be seen as extremely offensive by people of indigenous descent.

Questions of race are not the only ones subjected to intersectional treatment, the approach also applies to any other marginalized groups whose voice needs to be heard within an intersectional, inclusive feminism, including LGBTQ individuals, working class women and anyone with a physical disability. Transgender issues have particularly been central to recent feminist debates, as trans women have been extremely vulnerable to abuse; transphobia has also been frequent within the feminist movement (Cochrane 2013). Due to an intersectional approach, however, trans women Cochrane interviewed stated that their situation slowly has improved and gained increased understanding, much by virtue of online forums where trans women and girls can share stories and resources.

Feminist geographer Ealasaid Munro has examined the state of current feminism and how it plays out online, arguing that contemporary feminism, with the fourth wave, is "characterised by its diversity of purpose" (2013: 22). She looks into the feminist tactic of 'privilege checking' that is commonly utilised as a way of avoiding speaking for others and their experience. The expression grew out of Internet chatrooms as a consequence of the frequent critique of earlier feminist movements being dominated by white, middle class, heterosexual women, that tended to speak of women as a homogenous category. In online discussions, then, it can be used as a warning to put one's inherent privileges aside for better

understanding the experiences of others. The fourth wave, Munro suggests, is giving transnational conversation opportunities never before seen, and undoubtedly also contributing to diversifying the feminist movement, which includes bringing about new terminologies that attempt to take marginalized groups into account in a way not done in feminism's previous waves. For example, is cis-normative, a person whose sexuality identifies with the gender the individual is born with, as opposed to someone who identifies as transsexual (or simply 'trans') and WoC, and abbreviation of the term 'women of colour', adopted as part of the new feminist vocabulary, attempting to ensure that all marginalised groups are incorporated into the debate as likeminded individuals. Also, of course, 'cis' and 'WoC' are terms that easily fit into a Twitter post, where the limit of each message is 140 characters.

In an essay, aptly titled 'A Less Toxic Feminism: Can the Internet Solve the Age Old Question of How to Put Intersectional Theory into Practice?', Fredrika Thelandersson looks at how online platforms can contribute to spreading knowledge about how intersectional oppression works, arguing that "social media provides a space where feminists can learn from each other about why things some feminists see as harmless can be hurtful and offensive to others" (2014: 529). I will provide some examples of how fourth-wave feminism incorporates intersectional theory underneath, where I look at how feminist activism plays out on the Internet.

Nevertheless, although social media has opened spaces for women and feminists to share experiences and connecting personal stories to the political status quo, it is not arbitrary which voices and whose experiences are highlighted. Warning of the dangers of "selective empathies" (2016: 304), Allison Phipps addresses the dangers of appropriating stories of abuse and survival, where first-person narratives are not equal. Rather, she argues, privileged voices have more platforms (including online ones) to narrate from, often resulting in marginalised voices being "spoken for" (ibid: 308) and hence commodified as a tool for neo-liberal agendas. She here draws parallels to the second wave within feminism, where the agenda was set largely by white, Western feminists and built on their experience, yet formulated as speaking about a (false) universal 'woman experience'. Although, intersectionality and a focus on privilege is of utmost importance to the fourth-wave, Phipps here stresses an important pitfall for any form of activism taking place online, as although, in theory, every user is equal, discursive formations and power imbalances in 'offline society' are reproduced on the Internet.

2.1.4 Rape Culture

Another phrase that is a central part of the fourth-wave feminist vocabulary is 'rape culture'. According to Kira Cochrane, the implications of the term is among the most commonly cited as a reason for delving into feminist activism by women and men previously not affiliated with feminist activity (2013: 432). Rape culture indicate a culture of which women constantly are faced with the threat of rape, or generally a threat of sexually charged retribution, which hence inhibit their freedom. Describing several incidents and court cases proving how rape has become 'tolerated' and 'accepted' in many parts of society, Cochrane explains the various issues that feminist activists have spoken out against, including evidence of thousands of untested rape kits at American health facilities, t-shirt slogans with 'casual rape' messages and rapists walking free after brutal rapes, besides every piece of evidence proving their guilt.

One of the best-known and most far-reaching campaigns constructed in order to put rape culture on the global political agenda, states Cochrane, is One Billion Rising campaign, on their webpage stated as being "the biggest mass action to end violence against women in human history" (One Billion Rising 2017). Given its name from a UN report stating that one in three girls or women will be raped during her lifetime; one billion in total, the campaign was first launched on February 14, 2012 – Valentine's Day – and has since arranged marches and gatherings on the same date, in 2015 counting 200 countries and millions of participants (ibid).

Cochrane also describes various online campaigns that have circulated widely, gaining widespread engagement both on the Internet and offline. Among them is the Campaign4Consent, started by a group of British teenage girls, focusing on the importance of incorporating education about sexual consent in schools, which shortly after were the focus of a BBC documentary depicting how young girls are arguably victims of a sexually offensive youth culture that legitimises rape. In 2010, one of the biggest petition sites online, Change.org, saw its most popular campaign to date with "South Africa: Take action to prevent corrective rape", urging people to stand up against the extremely wide-spread – and horrific – use of 'corrective rape' of lesbians in South Africa. As a result of the petition and people's engagement, the South African Ministry of Justice computer system crashed, but a public awareness campaign and shelters for LGBTQ individuals were soon set up, most likely thanks to online activists taking action (Cochrane 2013). These two examples are among thousands of campaigns and petitions that exist as a result of feminists speaking out and creating awareness around the issue of sexual violence.

Rape culture, as with intersectionality, is not a new topic within feminist theory. Rape was high up on the political agenda for the second-wave movement, and the term was first conceptualised by profiled second-wave feminist writer Susan Brownmiller. In her 1975 book *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*, she articulated it as 'rape-supportive culture' and argued that because of this culture, men keep women in a constant threat of rape. Rape culture is, however, given new meanings and content in 21st century, within the framework of the Internet. In the essay 'Rape Culture and the Feminist Politics of Social Media', media scholar Carrie A. Rentschler looks at how networks of young feminists take shape on social media due to a common frustration over sexual violence and how sexually violent behaviour have become normalised in popular culture. Social media sites are not only a platform for DIY feminist media activism, but have also become, describes Rentschler, "aggregators of online misogyny" (2014: 65). Online forums have hence given an arena to a plethora of verbal sexual abuse and victim blaming messages, and Rentschler argues that due to this, feminist responses to rape culture is of particular importance in terms of both "networks of feminist affinity" and "affective solidarity" (ibid: 78) against rape culture.

2.1.5 Body Positivity

The last topic I will look at before I go on to study the online platforms of which fourth-wave feminism play out, is 'body positivity'. Particularly is this branch of feminist activism concerned with embracing bodies that differ from the slender, smooth, often white, bodies that are included in the discourses of beauty as presented in mass media texts. Focusing on how these bodies, too, not only deserve a forum of which to be seen and celebrated, but in fact also can be a source of happiness and positivity, body positive feminism has been given a real platform with social media, where hashtags such as #fatactivism, #blackisbeautiful and #bodypositive are used by women posting selfies, in an act of reclaiming their bodies from bodily insecurities caused by i.e. unattainable beauty ideals.

Although little theory is dedicated to studying this part of feminist activism, as it is arguably only lately, with the popularity of visual social media, that it can be pinpointed as a 'movement', I am including it here as it is an essential part of the feminist selfie culture I am analysing in this thesis. A lot of feminist theory since the 1980s has however been devoted to analysing media texts, focusing on how the media, and visual media in particular, presents gender and sexuality in ways that affect bodies in negative ways (most notably Bordo 1993,

Faludi 1992, Orbach, Wolf, 1990). Intertwined with the focus on intersectionality and rape culture is the politics of the body, or rather; the politics of bodies, and which physicalities that are represented by visual media outlets. Feminist theory with a corporeal focus have shown that discourses of beauty are integral to the production and regulation of femininity and the female body, and the female body aesthetic that dominate popular media is loaded with symbolisms that glamorise self-discipline and a strict regime for the care of the self. This is the background for the body positivity movement now spurring out in social media, as a reaction to this 'empire of images' (Bordo 1997) that has become even more extreme with the use of smart phones and social media.

In the recent essay, *Women Can't Win: Gender Irony and the E-Politics of The Biggest Loser* (2016), Bruner, Valine and Ceja investigates what they see as the "structural food oppression" (ibid: 244) women's bodies endure, arguing that the female body, in fact, 'incarnate' – or embody – the politics of food as it plays out in online forums. Taking the TV show *The Biggest Loser* as an example, they study how the contestant – and later, winner – of the 2014 season, Rachel Fredericksson, experienced a "lose-lose situation" (ibid: 253) when first being ridiculed on social network platforms Twitter and Tumblr for being overweight, and eventually, upon losing 60% of her body weight in the weight loss competition which serves as a basis for the TV show, enduring the same amount of body shaming for being 'too skinny'. Thus, the case of the female body, argues Bruner, Valine and Ceja, is more visibly than ever an example of the ultimate catch-22, in which the contradictory conditions of the ideal female body makes it impossible to obtain. Despite their bleak conclusion, however, the authors also include recommendations for how to better the conditions for the negative connotations surrounding women's bodies, including advocating for body positivity: "If social media can lead to government reform, e-politics[9] can also serve as a way to replace the Catch-22 of current female body ideals with positive alternatives" (ibid: 256).

In *Rebellious Bodies: Stardom, Citizenship, and the New Body Politics* (2016), media scholar Russell Meeuf looks at how Hollywood in recent years has included a greater variety of bodies in movies and TV shows, contributing to, as the title suggests, a 'new politics of the body'. His text is interesting to my study, as it gives me a basis for allowing a comparison between commercial mass media's portrayals of various bodies and the way contemporary feminists display their own, often non-normative bodies, in social media through self-portraiture. With identity politics within the framework of neoliberalism as a backdrop for his arguments, Meeuf's case studies exemplifies how popular culture tend to make use of non-

normative bodies in the interest of claiming gestures of inclusivity and individuality. For example, looking at the black, curvaceous actress Gabourey Sidibe, Meeuf states that the body positivity and the fat acceptance movement have been largely dominated by whiteness, whereas black, obese bodies have tended to be the degrading representations when illustrating the American obesity-problem. Sidibe has been allocated a space within popular media because she, argues Meeuf, despite her blackness and fleshiness, transcends self-confident 'girly' femininity and performs within a postracial framework where, similarly to the neoliberal postfeminist equality philosophy, anyone can accomplish their goals despite being marginalised, as only 'bad attitudes' keep individuals from succeeding. Pointing at how Sidibe rarely speaks of race, but is always described in an unthreatening, heteronormative way, Meeuf claims that "normative gender behaviour often functions as a master category that helps assuage the anxieties of non-normative bodies" (ibid: 177). In other words, in order to allow the bodies seen as Other into a popular culture discourse, outside their 'abnormal' bodies, their identities must be oversimplified and 'uncomplicated' in every other sense, particularly when it comes to fitting into cookie-cutter moulded gender roles. In another case study, Meeuf looks to black, transgender actress Laverne Cox, and he argues that the same argument holds true even for transgender women, particularly transgender women of colour, that find a place within Hollywood: Complex issues of identity are ignored, and their characters constantly enhance extreme normative femininity and binary-enforcing arguments of being 'born in the wrong body'. Neoliberal narratives of identity and choice come to play here, too, Meeuf argues, as the media's newfound interest in transgender femininity portrays the "power of normative gender roles" as the defining factor for the trans actors' 'self-made' successes.

Part of the body positive and fat-acceptance activism playing out on social media, is a reliance on *humour* as a tool and a weapon for calling out a neo-liberal Western culture built on body shaming and a general disdain for fleshiness and physical disability alike. Both Cochrane (2013) and Rentschler (2014) find that humour and comedy can work as a survival strategy as well as a way of disarming misogynistic arguments within fourth-wave feminist actions, and Cochrane goes as far as calling it a "defining mark of the fourth-wave" (2013: 54): Despite so many issues of the feminist battle for equal rights and an end to sexism is nothing but funny, humour, Cochrane argues, can function as both a tactic to bring up emotionally distressing topics such as female genital mutilation and rape, and also to ignite a politized spark in girls and women not previously exposed to feminism.

2.2 Activism and Participatory Culture in the Internet Age

So far, I have taken a brief look at the major events in the history of feminism, particularly focusing on the period after the second wave, in order to better understand the currents underpinning the uprising of the new feminist tendencies that we are now arguably witnessing. Following this, I have provided an overview of the three main aspects of the fourth-wave movement as outlined by e.g. Kira Cochrane, each three growing out of the view that the female body is a political body. As stated in the introduction, the internet, and particularly social media, is both a vehicle and a networking tool for the current feminist movement, hence it is crucial to develop an understanding of its role for the fourth-wave of feminist activity, and I will do so in the following section. Here, I will establish how the Internet has given way to new forms of activism, focusing on a central figure of social theory in the information age, Manuel Castells and his concepts of 'communication power' and 'mass self-communication'. Subsequently, I will look at how the selfie has found an integral role within the social media realm, and lastly, study the nature of contemporary online feminist activity.

2.2.1 'Web 2.0': New Networks, New Activism, New Power

With social media came the shift from Web 1.0, when the Internet was mainly a source of one-way information, to Web 2.0, bringing about new ways to communicate and participate in online activities, and making the Internet user an active contributor rather than a passive consumer (Fuchs 2014). The term 'social media' has been utilised widely in various disciplines, particularly in the last decade, and can be defined in various ways, depending on the framework of the research in question. For a thorough understanding of the term, a comprehensive immersion into social theory as well as modern communication studies is needed, however I will not have the space for that here. Rather, as described earlier, my focus is narrowed down to the uses of social media, specifically the sharing of visual content for feminist activity. Although all media can be argued to be somewhat social, I am here solely talking about the Internet-based networking sites and apps that allow for both user-generated content to be published and for community-building through communicative processes, such as comment sections, 'like' buttons and private messages between users. Social media scholar Clay Shirky, an often referred-to theorist with regards to the social and economic impact of new technology, describes the term simply yet fittingly as tools that "increase our ability to share, to co-operate,

with one another, and to take collective action, all outside the framework of traditional institutional institutions and organizations" (2008: 20). According to Shirky, the use of social media enhances freedom and allows for the development of political activity. He argues that "[t]o speak online is to publish, and to publish online is to connect with others. With the arrival of globally accessible publishing, freedom of speech is now freedom of the press [which again is] freedom of assembly" (ibid: 172). Shirky, then, not only sees social media as predominantly positive for developing a more democratic society, he also underlines how these new ways of communicating are improving our ability to share and act together, bringing about radical societal change. This optimistic view of the Internet as the future of activism is shared by sociologist Manuel Castells, whose background as an Internet researcher and author of several books on society in the Internet Age has made him an oft-cited source for social media researchers. Castells' work, most prominently the trilogy *The Information Age: Economy, Society & Culture* (2000) and his later book *Communication Power* (2009), attempt to give an insight into communication within the 'network society', a term he uses for describing the structures and dynamics of the world in contemporary societies. These works are also the closest one can get to classic works within social media studies, and are the basis for many later publications' discussions of online activism's transformational capacities. In 2012, he updated his theories in *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age,* where he studied recent activist movements and social media's role in the uprisings, such as the Occupy movement and the Egyptian revolution.

Castells' biggest contributions to the field are his arguments regarding how online networking platforms have the ability to challenge political decisions and shift power structures in societies. Unveiling what he sees as four kinds of power in network-based contemporary societies; network power, networking power, network-making power and networked power, Castells refers to several theorists in his conception of power, including Michel Foucault and Jürgen Habermas, underlining the importance of the normal citizen's, or 'social actor', in his terminology, capacity to influence the "empowered actor" (2009: 10). The main strength of the social actor for influencing societal change, is his or her mass self-communication, according to Castells, as these 'self-generated' and 'self-selected' messages published on social media platforms have the potential to reach a large audience worldwide. This, then, is a form of counter-power, in which people can "overcome the powerlessness of their solitary despair by networking their desire [and] fight the powers that be by identifying the networks that are" (ibid: 431). He also goes as far as claiming that the Occupy movement, the socio-political

uprisings starting in the US as a reaction to financial greed and capitalism, was "born on the Internet, diffused by the Internet, and maintained its presence on the Internet" (2012: 168).

Despite a strong optimism for the Internet Age's enormous revolutionary possibilities for marginalised groups, Castells also acknowledges that the established power elite has an advantage over regular social actors, in spite of their potentially forceful mass self-communication. The empowered actor's privileged position has made it a "priority to harness the potential of mass self-communication in the service of their specific interests" (ibid: 414), he states, yet still argues that those who really profit from big corporations' investment into communication networks, are regular citizens, who then can utilise said networks for mass self-communication and counter-power.

The digitalisation of the 'Fifth Estate', the opinion-makers including bloggers and journalists operating outside the mainstream media, means that the Internet indeed has become a central platform of which to organise political activism. Not everyone shares Shirky and Castells' 'techno-euphoria' (Fuchs 2014), however, and various research done on social media potentials for counter-power has pointed at a few aspects of Castells' work as lacking consistency and relying on observations not grounded in established social theory. In *Social Media: A Critical Introduction*, Christian Fuchs refers to several studies conducted by theorists within the media, cultural studies and sociology fields, and critiques how Castells seem to 'cherry pick' his theoretical framework to suit his arguments, as he leans on theory from widely dissimilar sources, yet also declares that he does not want to 'write books about other people's books', and rather rely on his own observations to base his opinions on. One example Fuchs looks at is Miriyam Aouragh's study of the Arab Spring, one movement Castells celebrates as an example of successful social media activism, and she argues that due to the focus of social media's role, the uprisings gave an impression of being middle class and secular, because of the Westernised stories told through and about the revolts on online platforms. Aouragh's (and Fuchs') points are hence another pitfall to look out for when discussing the role of social media in political movements; not everyone has access to Facebook, Twitter or Instagram and the like, and it is not arbitrary who can reach a large audience on these platforms. Also, the 'digital divide', the fact less than half of the world's population have proper access to internet and this social media, is still very much a reality (Leppanen et al, 2016), and this needs to be deliberated when celebrating the possibilities social media has for grassroots activism.

The term 'slacktivism' has come up in recent years in regard to online activism, referring, of course, to the words 'slack' or 'slacker' and activism, indicating a view of

campaigning and political activity taking place on the Internet as being lazy and actions that will accomplish minimal impact. According to Kristofferson, White and Peloza, authors of the influential paper 'The Nature of Slacktivism: How the Social Observability of an Initial Act of Token Support Affects Subsequent Prosocial Action', online activism merely provides a form of costless 'token support' to a cause, as opposed to 'meaningful support', which they define as "consumer contributions that require a significant cost, effort, or behaviour change in ways that make tangible contributions to the cause" (2014: 1150), including providing money, demonstrating or lobbying. They do not believe that actions such as setting up or signing petitions online or blogging about certain causes can contribute to social change, yet rather are symbolic, individualistic expressions with image-building as the sole aim.

The view imposed by Kristofferson et al, and several other media scientists, are criticised by visual culture scholar and Professor at the University of Richmond, Julianne Guillard in her article 'Is Feminism Trending? Pedagogical Approaches to Countering (Sl)activism'. Although not sharing the solely positivist view of social media as presented by Castells, Guillard notes, based on a study interviewing gender studies students engaging in online feminist activism, that the political activity the students took part in online also reflected their actions and viewpoint in their offline lives and created an awareness they otherwise would not have been wary of. She concludes that, social media, indeed can be "one of many tools for civic engagement rather than to view it as a 'lazy', modern form of feminist activism" (Guillard 2016: 623), and even encourages the use of online networks as a way for students and researchers to gain wide-reaching knowledge, awareness and activist engagement, although as a supplement to offline, face-to-face encounters.

2.2.2 The Selfie: Mass Communicating the Self-Portrait

To the active users of social media, sharing and networking across platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have become an elemental part of everyday life. After the word 'selfie' was used to describe an Australian student's self-portrait in an online forum in 2002, the selfie has become "a global visual phenomenon" (Prøitz 2016: 104) and, states Lin Prøitz, whose book about selfie culture was released late last year, is a result of smart phone technology and the global participation and sharing culture. Particularly Instagram, which is my focus for analysis, has since it first emerged in 2010 influenced the global spread of the selfie

phenomenon, and represents a 24-hour digital public space where users represent and observe themselves and each other (ibid).

As of yet, there is not much literature produced which tackles the possibilities of utilising selfie culture for fourth-wave feminism, rather, the new feminist wave is instead often seen as a *reaction* to the extreme looks-focus that the popularity of the selfie has brought with it. Writes Cochrane: "The last decade has seen an incredible rise in the availability of [...] photography, creating a new landscape of objectification, including self-objectification. People are constantly snapping photos of themselves, honing in on their body parts, as gossip magazines has done to celebrities for years" (Cochrane, 2013: 159). New areas of cosmetic concerns have arisen, Cochrane notes, as a result of selfie culture's extreme focus on zooming in on body parts, creating, she argues, "an obsessive, wildly individualist, destructive focus on physical minutiae. It is a culture which encourages women over to the mirror, to sink into a pool of insecurities and neurosis, as they worry away their troublesome flesh. A generation of feminists are resisting" (ibid).

I do share Cochrane's concerns and criticism of a popular culture that seem to go further and further in its extreme obsessions with bodily aesthetics, yet, I believe that the developments of media technology, with apps, smart phones and interactive networking platforms, making media, and contemporary culture in general, more visual, is not showing any signs of slowing down. Therefore, I am here, as outlined in the Introduction, more interested in looking at the opportunities for feminism to embrace the selfie culture, which I, contrary to Cochrane, argue is not entirely negative, as it allows for a reclaiming of self-representations and presentation of alternative subjectivities.

This view is shared by gender and media scholar Prøitz, who in her book *Self-Image – From Self-Portrait to #selfie* (2016), a collaboration with photographer Kristoffer Eliassen, explores various ways in which selfies express – and form – aspects of our everyday lives. Researching the connection of technology and intimacy, gender and sexuality, Prøitz argues that women (and men) who post pictures of themselves on social media can direct their own self-expressions, yet also are encountering new forms of regulation. Social network communities, she proposes, are extensions of reality where the subject and its body "exists in interaction with the media used" (ibid: 108). Taking the perspectives of Michel Foucault as a basis for her arguments, she looks at how the Foucauldian concept of *governmentality*, how individuals exercise self-control, is at play within selfie culture, for example in a case study of selfie-posting young women, Prøitz argues that they are "disciplined by observing those who

27

observe" them (ibid: 119). This form of disciplining, then, is a new part of the participatory culture that has evolved with social media.

She also, as I will do, links the selfie, as it is a self-centred, self-performing concept, to Foucault's notion of 'technology of the self', a self-reflecting practice meant to develop the individual to become a better citizen of its society. Within the selfie culture, this holds true in the sense that the act of taking and posting a selfie represent a self-evaluating operation we impose upon ourselves and our bodies in order to improve (through i.e. comments and feedback from other users), where we reproduce and perform specific "gender and body practices" (ibid: 122) that is over time part of shaping the norm for behaviour and beauty ideals in social networks. Prøitz here points at the insecurities these technologies reproduce, not unlike Cochrane.

She also, however, consider the options selfies and the platforms they operate on have possibilities for constructing online identities, which enables the user to create subjectivities that differ from those performed in offline spaces. By studying how the selfie and the publication of them on open, online platforms are challenging the boundaries between public and private sphere, she refers to the open social media profiles accessible for everyone to see as 'the digital public sphere'. With her case study of an online dating participant, Prøitz observes how he, in fact, "navigates between the digital and physical public space" (2016: 105), in the sense that he adapts himself and his body to fit the expectations of each specific space he participates in at any given time. This, shows further how the idea of space has extended with online communities, where the "media materiality" (ibid: 127) contributes to producing subjectivities. By referring to established queer feminist media theory, another chapter points at how technology and the public sphere is gendered. Taking Judith Butler's social constructivist-informed performativity concept into account, Prøitz states that although women's selfies on a global basis usually reflect heteronormative, conventional femininity and sexuality, selfies and webcams have been part of challenging what it means to 'perform' gender roles, as women can now be both the object and subject simultaneously – they are "performing for their own gaze" (ibid: 130) in an open, public sphere, previously reserved for expressions of the male gaze. This, in turn, makes room for new ways of conceptualising both the gaze and the understanding of the public/private dichotomy, which I will further discuss underneath.

2.3 Dualism, Gender and Social Media

As exemplified by Prøitz' account of the public/private spaces above, the advent of Web 2.0 and modern social media has shed new light upon the distinction between public and private sphere. The split of other binary pairs has also shifted, and this section will address how dualisms historically have been gendered. I have already touched upon several elements of social media activism and how it can relate to fourth-wave feminist activity, however I here want to elaborate on the subject of the private/public sphere, and look at its relation to other traditionally binary pairs, such as personal/political and body/mind, as these, in the framework of feminist politics, particularly feminist political activity taking place online, have become fluid entities that relate to modern-day self-portraits posted on social networks. I have included a brief introduction to the Habermasian theory of 'spheres' here, as it is a term often utilised in social media theory, often without giving a thorough explanation of its use within political theory. It is useful to include in this Literature Review, as a groundwork for my discussion, in order to determine the nature of the platform the visual material I analyse are anchored to, but also as the question of space is relevant both in terms of discourse theory and for a better understanding of the concept of embodiment.

2.3.1 A History of Dualism and the Gendered Body

The relationship between the mind and the body has been one of the key philosophical questions within Western thought. The mind-body dualism, reducing the body to be the 'lower' part of the binary pair, has been one of the best sustained concepts within both philosophy and other academic disciplines, viewing the body as matter which constantly has to be brought under control of the mind (Blackman 2008). The dualistic position has also been dominant within religion, where the separation of mind and body has meant a distinction between what is mortal and what is immortal; the God-given soul being what is closer to godliness. In Christian tradition, the body has also been directly linked to sin, and particularly the female body, which is paradoxical regarding the fact that the childbearing female is central to the religion, and hailed for its life-giving qualities. Nevertheless, Platonic thought was apparent within Christianity from very early on, and shaped the Christian belief that a woman's 'sinful' body and its erotic powers must be rejected, negated and even tortured to reach the level of spiritual achievement (Baik-Chey 2009).

2.3.2 The Public/Private Dichotomy

As we have seen, with the advent of social media, the boundaries of the private sphere have shifted significantly. The divide between public and private has been a feminist topic since the 1960s and the beginning of the second-wave movement, when women's lives were at home, a traditionally typical private sphere (Gal 2004). With a central fourth-wave concern being lifting out subjective experiences into a public, online discourse, as discussed above, the classic second-wave expression 'the personal is political' is still very much a focal point within feminist activism. A public sphere can in sociological or anthropological terms simply be explained as a geographical place where citizens meet and communicate, however to best understand the theoretical concept of spheres and its redevelopment for social media, we must look to Jürgen Habermas and his notion of 'the public'. According to Habermas' theory, the phrase 'public sphere' is rooted in Marxist thought and refers to eighteenth century bourgeois sites that gather people together in an all-access space where freedom of expression and open debate are of vital importance (Habermas 1989). He stresses that two aspects need to be in place, namely that it is a place of political communication as well as a sphere dependent on the *political economy* of its members; it is a matter of the resources available to the citizens involved. However, as Habermas' original concept[8] focuses solely on the bourgeois movement, neglecting to consider social spaces for other groups, his concept has been both criticised and reworked by other theorists, that in several ways have incorporated marginalised groups into the concept. Critical theorist Nancy Fraser has offered an often-cited feminist account of the public sphere concept to study the relationship between counterculture, particularly feminism, and spatial theory. As women, members of the LGBTQ community and non-Western people would be excluded from Habermas' notion of the public, Fraser offers a gendered aspect and proposes the idea of multiplicity of competing publics, where *subaltern counterpublics* taking marginalised groups into account articulate in between, and as a response to, the public spheres (Fraser 1990). Fraser's theory underlines how public spheres are "institutionalised arenas of discursive interaction" (ibid: 75) where white men are the privileged subjects, whereas subaltern counterpublics offer a space "where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (ibid :123). According to Fraser, not only are publics sites for discursive contestation, but identity also forms through participation in them.

Although Habermas underlines the physicality of the space in his theory of the public sphere, the concept has been useful to social media and Internet researchers with the aim of theorising the meeting and networking spaces that people connect on online. Christian Fuchs (2014) maps out the various views connected to whether or not social media platforms can be considered a public – or counterpublic – sphere, and draws parallels to the discussions around whether or not the Internet or online social networks can constitute alternative – or better, in e.g. Castells view – sites for counterpower and political activity. He argues that the researcher's relation to 'cyber-utopianism' and 'technological determinism' comes to play here; in other words, one's belief in the role of Internet or technology in society. For discussing whether or not Internet platforms constitute a public sphere in the Habermasian sense, one needs to, states Fuchs, ask questions regarding ownership, exclusion, political content production and censorship (ibid: 184).

The separation of public and private, then, has historically been a discussion belonging to the capitalist economy, and the social world has been organised around the contrasting nature of the two spheres (Gal 2004). Feminist theory has been among the critical voices challenging the view of the two as separate entities. Susan Gal, whose linguistic work often has evolved around a critique of the public/private distinction, points at how feminist activism, that declared the personal as being political during the second-wave movement, has made sure that matters such as domestic abuse has become a part of the public legislation, rather than a 'private matter' of the home. Although personal issues, the second wave activists and artists always focused on reflecting *outwards*, showing how the body and subjectivity is shaped by society and the ruling politics of the time. In her influential essay 'A Semiotics of the Private/Public Distinction', Gal argues that the public and the private "coexist in complex combinations in the ordinary routines of everyday life" (ibid: 262), and she proposes to see the binaries instead as discursive phenomena that "can be used to characterize, categorize, organize and contrast virtually any kind of social fact: spaces, institutions, bodies, groups, activities, interactions, relations" (ibid: 264). This view of the public versus the private is of interest to a feminist project interrogating what can be classified as personal, the body, as analysed within the framework of social media, as it allows for a more fluid view of categorising the images, instead of seeing all publications on a social media platform as existing either on a public or a private. Gal's redefinition also opens for a public existing inside a private and vice versa, that can be either momentary or lasting, depending on the nature and arrangements of the context. Furthermore, her approach is in line with the view of the personal as being political, as rejecting the private/public distinction

also enables the idea of shaping embodied subjectivities. This idea is reflected in human rights scholar Robin Redhead's 2014 book *Exercising Human Rights: Gender, Agency and Practice*, in which she uses a visual methodology to study various human rights campaigns and political images to argue that the separation between public and private historically has been detrimental to women's rights and their connection to the private, often placing women in a discourse of victimisation. Women have not traditionally been able to "exercise their rights as empowered agents" (ibid: 42), she states, as they have been minding the home and family life exclusively. Redhead then goes on to argue that agency has solely been connected to the public sphere, where public agency has been associated as having power *over* someone, whereas feminists have connected to empowerment and the 'personal is political' motto, proving that private agency and the power situating within a traditional private sphere also can be utilised for political action. Discourse theory has been useful for feminists as it allows the argument of "rejecting the public/private distinction and maintaining that gender identities are made present through embodied subjectivities" (ibid: 46). She describes this by referring to the work of Vivienne Jabri, who conceptualises identity as articulated through discursive spaces as 'textualised selves', meaning that identities are constructed through language and come into being through somebody reading the said text. This way, an activity taking place within the private sphere – the act of writing – can be immersed within a public space and hence conferring public agency.

Media theorist Erika Pearson (2014) also points at the construction – or, 'performance', as she calls it – of identity at the point where public meets private, yet she is referring to how social media networks combine both the 'stage' and the 'backstage' area for a social media user, utilising the metaphor of a glass bedroom to describe how social media networks is, in fact, are public and private spheres simultaneously**.** The borders of intimacy and distance, friends and strangers, are other binary pairs that in this space are blurred, and Pearson argues that "the fluidity and self–conscious platforms of performance allow individuals and networks of users to play with aspects of their presentations of self, and the relationship of those online selves to others without inadvertently risking privacy" (ibid).

2.4 Foucault and the Socially Constructed Body

The work of Michel Foucault has been of major importance to both media studies, gender studies and sociology, the three academic disciplines I am particularly operating within with

this thesis, and the versatility of his work has resulted in him being associated with several schools of thought, including philosophy, history, Marxism, structuralism and post-structuralism (Martin, Gutman and Hutton 1988). Foucault's work provides a general theoretical framework as well as suitable methodological tools under which to undertake the analyses and discussions fitting for this project. I will therefore provide an outline of his concepts in this section, as well as present the most relevant work of the feminist theorists reworking his ideas. However, I will elaborate on his category of discourse in the Methodology chapter and go into further detail regarding his concepts of power and the 'technologies of the self' in the Analysis chapter, where I will be in consecutive dialogue with these terms.

Foucualt's work is particularly concerned with the different ways power function and how it is vital in constructing people's minds and bodies. In modern Western society, he argues, bodies are both objects and targets of power and therefore become docile, meaning simply; they become easily controllable. A body is within a Foucauldian framework a field of inscription "that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (Foucault 1977: 136). Physical manipulation by authoritative organs are not necessary for disciplinary power to operate its force on bodies, as a socially disciplined body is instead created by a network of power that can exist anywhere; it is a "system of management in which all it touches participate" (Heyes, 2007: 6), be it populations or individual bodies. Foucault's notion of power *(re-)creates*, not imposes itself on bodies, and as I will show, it can be phrased in different ways, and has hence been incorporated into feminist theory (and other disciplines) in conflicting ways.

2.4.1 The Foucauldian Gaze

According to Foucault, the only disciplinary action needed for the creation of docile bodies is "an inspecting gaze [which] each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point where he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against himself" (1977: 155). In other words, the inspecting gaze from an outside force will in turn influence the individual to discipline him or herself.

As argued by feminist science historian Donna Haraway; "vision is always a question of the power to see" (Haraway 1991: 193). The power relations connected to the act of seeing is not arbitrary, but is closely related to dominating forces of power found elsewhere in society. The theory of the gaze (often with 'gaze' written with a capital G) has been of major importance

to both gender studies and film theory, and has especially been vital to feminist, post-colonial and queer film studies, that have utilised the concept for developing alternative cinematic points of view (see e.g. Mulvey 1974/2006; Kaplan 1997; hooks 1999; Halberstam 2005). Originating in the psychoanalytic theories of Jacques Lacan, the concept of the gaze has been defined and utilised in various ways within several disciplines, but Nicholas Mirzoeff's definition applies to most approaches. He states that the gaze is "the sense of being watched that constrains social action" (Mirzoeff 2009: 45). In other words, it is an invisible force that encourage minds and bodies to behave a certain way. Foucault illustrated his idea of the gaze by using the Panopticon, a circular prison developed by philosopher Jeremy Bentham, as an example. The design of the prison allowed for prison guards to easily oversee all inmates simultaneously, while the inmates on their part never knew when they were or where not watched. Thus, they were always expecting to be observed a at all times.

By studying what he saw as "the ideal figure of the soldier" (1977: 135), Foucault described how the soldier's body is transformed and reconstructed through disciplinary practices that are activated by the gaze:

> The soldier has become something that can be made, out of a formless clay, an inapt body, the machine required can be constructed; posture is gradually corrected;[...] mastering it, making it pliable, ready at all times, turning silently into the automatism of habit; in short, one has 'got rid of the peasant' and given him the 'air of a soldier'.

(Foucault 1977:135)

Nevertheless, despite the powerful, all-encompassing forces of the disciplinary gaze, Foucault described it as a non-fixed and fluid entity, leaving it possible for suppressed groups to gain access to it. I will return to the importance of the gaze in the following chapter, in looking at how visual discourse analysis can be useful to fulfilling the aims of this thesis.

Susan Bordo has offered one of the most cited accounts of how the Foucauldian gaze applies to feminist critiques of female subjugation. Leaning on Foucault's perspective on disciplinary power, she argues that "all human bodies are culturally worked on, adorned, shaped, evaluated" (1997: 17). She is extremely critical to how the culture of "infinitely malleable 'plastic' bodies" (ibid: 9) are shaping ideals of beauty, and links the fear of women's fat to the fear of the power of women. By looking at the disciplinary practices women engage in to shape their bodies, Bordo studies fashion images and diet advertisements to conclude that

restriction of food intake, excessive exercise and constant dieting are keeping women in a constant state of docility (Bordo 2003/1993). She also points at how eating disorders, earlier seen to be a Western problem, now affects women from all cultures and of all ethnicities and races. Further, she suggests that the homogenised images of what is portrayed throughout popular culture as the ideal physical body size and colour *normalise*; they invite for imitation by the consumer and function as "models against which the self continually measures, judges, 'disciplines' and 'corrects' itself" (ibid: 25). Here, she points at another Foucauldian term that has proven useful for feminist theory, namely normalisation, which is a core element of his account of power. Particularly is the term employed in *Discipline and Punish*, where Foucault states that the power to punish is a normative power:

> The judges of normality are present everywhere. We are in the society of the teacher-judge, the doctor-judge, the educator-judge, the social worker-judge; it is on them that the universal reign of the normative is based; and each individual, wherever he may find himself, subjects to it his body, his gestures, his behavior, his aptitudes, his achievements

<div align="center">(Foucault 1977: 304)</div>

The power of normalisation, then, is a disciplinary power that works through the judges of society, which as well as being the teacher, doctor and educator, as mentioned by Foucault, also are society as a whole – including ourselves – whose internalised norms contribute to the way we behave in order to fit in.

2.4.2 Embodied Subjectivity

For Foucault, the body is the 'locus of subjectivity' (McLaren 2002), and he argues that the way power operates on bodies in fact produces subjectivity, hence, subjectivity is *embodied*. So, how can embodied subjectivity be comprehended? In simple terms; as thinking is a subjective action and we use our mind to control our bodies, subjectivity is the cause of our bodily actions. Stemming from phenomenological philosophy, which concerns the study of experience and *how* we experience, at the core of this school of thought lies the idea that psyche and soma (mind and body) are inseparable; to be a subject is essentially to have a body. One of the central developers of the philosophy of phenomenology was Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who Foucault studied under for some time. Merleau-Ponty states that "[m]y body is the fabric into

which all objects are woven, and it is, at least in relation to the perceived world, the general instrument of my comprehension" (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 234). Subjectivity is hence embodied as it cannot be fully grasped without taking the material body into account (Grosz 1994). This view, then, challenges the Cartesian dualist view where the mind and body are entirely separate entities, the mind being considered of higher value than the more 'primitive' body that is connected to nature and feminine traits, and has been the groundwork of Foucault's understanding of subjectivity and bodily experience. Subjectivity is the underlying theme in all Foucault's work, and for his later ethical work, that is considered to have started with the second volume of *The History of Sexuality*, the active self-constitution of the subject is his focus. Foucault here states that he seeks to show how power is connected to the body directly, where what is needed is making it

> visible through an analysis in which the biological and the historical are not consecutive to one another, but are bound together in an increasingly complex fashion in accordance with the development of the modern technologies of power that take life as their objective. Hence, I do not envisage a "history of mentalities" that would take account of bodies only through the manner in which they have been perceived and given meaning and value; but a "history of bodies" and the manner in which what is most material and most vital in them has been invested.
>
> (Foucault 1978: 151)

Foucault, then, rejects the anti-essentialist notion of anti-belief in materiality, yet believes that bodies are (re-)constructed by 'modern technologies of power'. I will elaborate more on the Foucauldian account of embodiment in the next chapter, upon determining the methodological stance adopted in this thesis.

Embodiment can thus be explained, as does McNay (1992), as the physical representation of identity, and Foucauldian notions of materiality and the connection of subjectivity to bodies have given feminist constructivist scholars a language of which to build a theory of exploring how women's bodies are constructed through power relations and historical and cultural influences, viewing the material body as "a crucial site for the exercise and regulation of power" (Nead 1994: 10). As Elizabeth Grosz argues; feminist research has been at the forefront of placing the body at the centre of interest, studying how bodies are vital to the social constructions of identity and "the primary object of social production and inscription" (Grosz 1987: 1). With her work, and particularly her book, *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism* (1994), Grosz confronts dualistic thoughts and its underlying hierarchies that justify gender inequality in looking at how the surface of the body and its

materiality – and the female body specifically – is the place where subjective accounts of ethics, truth, politics and knowledge is produced. Utilising theory from both psychoanalysis, neurology and phenomenology to build her arguments, one of her main statements is that feminism should have as an ultimate goal to develop a thorough account of how mind and body is interconnected; "only when the relation between mind and body is adequately retheorized can we understand the contributions of the body to the production of knowledge systems, regimes of representation, cultural production, and socioeconomic exchange" (ibid: 19). While offering a critique of Foucault's failure to see bodies as gendered, and the different experiences they hence encounter, Grosz still underlines the usefulness of Foucauldian notions of embodiment for a corporeal feminism. Continuously emphasising how male subjectivity and the male body has historically been seen as universal, Grosz is however not considering how e.g. the racial or transsexual body is constructed, which would be an instant fourth-wave objection to her work. Her theory is nevertheless still useful to this thesis as a radical way of placing the body at the very centre of gender studies.

In Foucault's later work, he changed focus from studying how the outside, disciplinary forces produced bodies and identities, to being concerned with the self's active construction of subjectivity, or what he referred to as 'the self's work on the self' (McLaren 2002). As I will discuss underneath, the idea that a person can cease power in order to constitute her or himself as a political subject and hence influence political change has been of interest to various feminist works on embodiment, and also to the analyses in this thesis.

2.4.3 Technologies of the Self

In one of his latest works, Foucault introduced a concept called 'the technologies of the self', which was also the name of the faculty seminars that were to be the basis for a new book project he was working on. Sadly, he died before managing to finish the book, which he in an interview described as being "composed of different papers about the self, […] about the role of reading and writing in constituting the self…and so on" (Martin, Gutman and Hutton 1988: 3). He argued that there are four types of sciences human beings can use to understand themselves, the fourth 'technology', that is his – and my – main focus being the technologies of the self, which, according to Foucault,

permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.

<div align="right">(Foucault 1988: 18)</div>

His six seminar presentations outlining his concept looked to the individual's self-construction in Greco-Roman philosophy in the 1st and 2nd century, as well as Christian spirituality in the 4th and 5th century. Foucault saw these as being in historical continuity (Martin, et al 1988), and discussed his theory in relation to late antiquity practices named "to take care of yourself" or "the concern with self" (Foucault 1988: 19). Interestingly, he here also launches a sort of change of heart with regards to his theoretical work, stating: "Perhaps I have insisted too much on the technology of domination and power. I am more and more interested in the interaction between oneself and others and in the technologies of individual domination, the history of how an individual acts upon himself, in the technology of the self" (ibid). Analysing the relation between care and self-knowledge, Foucault points to how self-care since the 16th century has been obscured by "Know thyself", as a result of established morality's asceticism, seeing care of the self as an immoral, selfish act that should be rejected. However, argues Foucault, self-care is closely related to the self-construction of subjectivity.

Looking at Plato's *Alcibiades 1*, where Athenian statesman Alcibiades, in conversation with Socrates, seeks advice regarding his political and erotic ambition of being a dominant force, Foucault makes the connection between the concern for the self and an active body both politically and erotically declaring that "there is a dialectic between political and erotic discourse" (ibid: 23). Alcibiades soon realises the links between care of the self and political activities, and self-care will in turn lead to him knowing himself. Subsequently, Foucault turns to the Stoics and their tradition of self-exercises; keeping notebooks and notes on oneself being a central activity. Taking soon-to-be Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius' description of everyday life in both letters to his mother and his personal notes as an example, Foucault notes how, despite the Stoic culture in theory is soul-oriented, the writings are almost entirely concerned with his health, what he eats and how he bathed. In other words, his everyday life is, in fact, a matter of care of the self, care of one's body, and as Foucault notes; "these details are important because they are you – what you thought, what you felt" (ibid: 29). This proves that the idea of embodied subjectivity in fact was central in Greco-Roman philosophy, although the dualist view of separation of mind and body were a dominating epistemological principle. Foucault identified three Stoic techniques of the self, and they included the disclosure of self through

notes and letters, examination and reviewing of the self, both explained above, and lastly, *askesis*, a subjectifying process that include

> exercises in which the subject puts himself in a situation in which he can verify whether he can confront events and use the discourses with which he is armed […] It is a set of practices by which one can acquire, assimilate, and transform truth into a permanent principle of action

<div align="right">(Foucault 1988: 35)</div>

The 'confrontation' relied heavily on remembering lessons learned from a master or teacher, with subjectification through truth being the self-mastery goal. This technique of the self, then, is the one that corresponds easiest to his earlier work on disciplinary power, where the body is moulded by power, rather than, such as above, a source of resistance that is pre-dominantly a result of self-creation.

The concept of technologies of the self has been of interest to feminist theory in various ways, however it is still one of the least emphasised Foucauldian concepts within feminist theory. Margaret McLaren is among those who has offered valuable insight into how feminist praxis can make use of the active self-constructing theories of Foucault's latest seminars. She devotes much of her book, *Feminism, Foucault, and Embodied Subjectivity* (2002), to give a systematic overview of various feminist perspectives and their relation to (as well as critique of) Foucauldian viewpoints. Particularly is Foucault interesting to feminist theory and activism, no matter the viewpoint, in the way he provides tools for grounding gender and sexuality politics "in the various material realities that women inhabit" (ibid: 173), she argues. In the book's last chapter, named 'Practices of the Self: From Self-Transformation to Social Transformation', McLaren looks at how Foucault enables a connection between embodied subjectivity and political context, where terms of political agency, how the individual body and its politics and practices of the self extends to "social and cultural factors that have political implications" (ibid: 145). Particularly is she concerned with consciousness-raising through truth-telling – or *parrhesia*, as this act was referred to in Greek literature – and self-writing as ways of feminist practices of the self, and ties these individual experiences with social and political transformation, taking the second-wave's 'the personal is political' slogan and the agendas that grew from it as an example. With his ethical work, she states, Foucault

reveal the normalizing character of the disciplines that constitute subjectivity; this should prompt us to investigate non-normalizing ways of existence. In Foucault's view, refusing what we are would enable us to liberate ourselves from the type of individuality (subjectivity) that has imposed itself on us through the disciplines and practices for the last several centuries. The refusal to be what we are, to be subject and hence subjected, opens up new possibilities for being.

(McLaren 2002: 62)

Thus, McLaren suggests that with the various conceptualisations offered by the technologies of the self, Foucault tied together his genealogical work with studies of the political, ethical subject, which in turn gives feminism tools for looking at identity politics and the politics of the body from different, yet not conflicting, perspectives.

Although being more lightly trodden ground for feminists than other of his works, such as *Discipline and Punish* and *History of Sexuality*, Foucault's notion of self-technologies has intriguingly been employed by some feminist theorists for arguing against other feminist scholars, whose work has also been based on Foucauldian understandings of power. An example is the feminist defence of cosmetic surgery procedures. Where e.g. Susan Bordo utilises the Foucauldian notion of power and discursive formation to argue how the female beauty ideal reflected in society's 'empire of images' (Bordo 1997) function as a disciplining practice, leading women to go to extreme lengths to maintain their bodies by developing eating disorders and undergoing aesthetic surgery, other feminist theorists have made use of the fluidity of Foucauldian power and his arguments of technologies of the self to develop feminist defences of body augmentations. Feminist sociologist Kathy Davis focuses on the subjectivity of cosmetic surgery recipients, and employs the notion of self-technologies to claim that women who undergo beautifying surgery are active and participating agents in the process, and that they choose it for the interest of their own success, job prospects and as a way to increase social approval (Davis 1995). Not only is Foucault's literary referring to "operations on […] bodies […] to transform themselves"; aesthetic surgery can be understood as dominated by the technologies of the self, which he, as outlined above, explains partly by exploring ways in which Christianity and Greco-Roman philosophy has used practices of interrogations and interpretations of the subject to reveal the truth of themselves. Undergoing beautifying surgery, then, is for Davis an empowering experience, and by looking at e.g. French performance artist Orlan, her focus is on how our 'docility' in fact has personally liberating consequences, and even with possibilities of transforming cultural norms. An example she provides is that if a woman post-surgery feel better about herself and get better self-confidence, it can lead to her

landing a high-position job in a male-dominated environment, hence, contribute to the acceptance of female leaders. Davis also focuses on aesthetic surgery as an expression of identity, and suggests it is a way for women to feel 'at home' in their bodies. This is a point that has also been important to Judith Butler (2004) in her theories of gender and performativity, and she has pointed at the difficulties transsexuals and intersex people experience when undergoing medical treatments and wishing to undergo plastic surgery in their wish to 'look as they feel'.

2.4.4 Foucauldian Perils and Feminist Critiques

As I am here attempting to add to theory on the fourth-wave of feminism that is still very much a movement in progress, it is crucial to remain critical of the proposed theoretical framework in use, and be aware that it might pose challenges to the research project. Although Foucault's re-conceptualisation of power, as well as his idea of embodiment, undoubtedly has offered a valuable framework to a significant part of modern feminist theory, I also want to include criticisms of his work by various feminist scholars, that have pointed at his work's restrictions to gender studies. Firstly, however, I want to interpose a brief caution for applying Foucauldian theory uncritically to areas of study that Foucault himself did not engage in. As stated by Foucault researcher Knut Ove Eliassen (2016); the complexity of his concepts, as well as the fact that said concepts changed throughout his theory, has led to them being lifted out of their original, intended context, oftentimes resulting in the constructions of unanalytical characteristics of "intuitive truths" (Eliassen 2016: 9). Another danger when employing Foucauldian theories and approaches, then, is a sort of methodological cul-de-sac, where one is too bound to the correct usage of Foucault's theory to focus on the analysis one is applying this theory to. To avoid this, I want to make clear that it is the feminist theory and activism through the publication of selfies that lay at the core of my study, and Foucault's concepts are hence in that regards a lens through which I can analyse the material through, and, although staying as true to his original concepts as possible, use them as malleable frameworks to fit my research. That said, Eliassen also pinpoints that Foucault did intend his concepts to function as a 'theoretical toolbox', to be applied and borrowed when needed, and he himself was a fan of interdisciplinary approaches. The latter view is what I have emphasised here, and in my opinion, especially with the Internet and social media so fundamentally shaking up our view of power, truth and ethics, that were central themes for Foucault, I will claim that, as long as the researcher

is aware of the original context of the Foucauldian notions utilised and make this groundwork clear, they should be available for application for other areas of study than simply those that Foucault based his studies on.

Let us return to Foucault's relationship with feminism, and how certain feminist theorists have been cautious of applying his theories to gender studies. Philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler is among those who, although including his work as a source of inspiration in several of her books, has stated that Foucault is incoherent in the way he understands the construction of bodies. In *Foucault and the Paradox of Bodily Inscription* (1989), she argues that there is an inconsistency in his view of the body as being culturally constructed, and she elaborates on these ideas in her milestone work *Gender Trouble* (1990/2007). In Foucauldian notions, the 'natural' body can be understood as an 'undisciplined' body, and Butler here accuses Foucault of relying on a pre-discursive body: "By maintaining a body prior to its cultural inscription, Foucault appears to assume a materiality prior to signification and form" (ibid: 130).

The fact that Foucault never actually addressed the issue of gender in his writings, as mentioned earlier in my discussion of Elizabeth Grosz' work, has also been debated by feminist theorists, and one of the first to apply Foucauldian concepts to the feminist debate of embodiment was Sandra Lee Bartky. In her 1988 essay 'Foucault, Feminism and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power' she asks; "where is the account of the disciplinary practices that engender the 'docile' bodies of women, bodies more docile than the bodies of men?" (1990: 95) and criticises Foucault for reproducing "the sexism which is endemic throughout Western political theory" (ibid).

The feminist response to Foucault's later ethical works, such as 'Technologies of the Self', has also been divided, and some have pointed at how the understanding of agency here seem removed from his earlier political genealogies (Heyes 2004). However, as argued by McLaren (2002), who gives a thorough overview of feminist criticism of Foucault's work, the critique is closely related to how his theory develops, and how he hence tended to rework his concepts throughout his working life. Foucault addressed this himself, saying that consistency was not of major importance to his work, but that the shifts in emphasis and definition is a natural result of how the subject – here, himself – is "transformed through writing" (ibid: 5), which also is a central argument, as we have seen, in his latest seminar. McLaren suggests that instead of focusing on the tension between his work on the body as a result of power struggles

and the resistant body, one should see his theories as various suggestive ways of seeing the body in relation to subjectivity;

> as material, with a history, interpreted through discourses, whose interiority is produced through discourses and power, with the ability to self-monitor and self-regulate, and as capable of resistance through producing counter-discourses

> (McLaren 2002: 114)

In this way, she argues, can Foucauldian theory accommodate various subjects within feminism. Lois McNay, another feminist theorist known for reworking Foucault's ideas within a feminist framework, offers a similar account of the tensions between his theories and feminist criticism, and suggests that the shift in theoretical interests with his later works must be seen as "an elaboration of themes that were present in his earlier work, but were never fully developed" (McNay 1992: 81). Also, as all the critics noted above, in fact, seem to still lean on Foucauldian categories or viewpoints in developing feminist accounts of embodiment and power, it is an indication that, despite the absence of gender-specific analyses, Foucault's work is still very useful and provides well-suited tools and framework for various feminist research.

3. Methodology

As outlined in the Introduction, the methodological approach for this thesis will be case studies utilising the tools of discourse analysis. As defining case studies as a method is a somewhat straight-forward task, I will here mainly focus on discourse analysis as a theory, and lay out how the methodology in use is an extension of the project's chosen theoretical framework, which is heavily influenced by the work of Michel Foucault and his notion of discourse. Also, I will elaborate further on the theory of the gaze, as it is central to visual discourse theory, and explain this project's constructivist standpoint, including presenting the 'middle ground' view that I am here adopting as a methodological outline.

3.1 Case Studies

According to Yin (2014), case study research is often a preferred method in studies where the main research questions are "how" and "why", and when a contemporary phenomenon is studied – both of which apply to this project. Yin defines case studies as research investigating exactly contemporary phenomena ("cases") in a real-world context where there are several "variables of interest" (ibid: xix), in other words; it is a method that can shed light upon several aspects of an actuality. Eisenhardt (1989) stresses that the strength of building theories from case study research lies in that it, in fact, generates theory with little researcher bias, due to "the constant juxtaposition of conflicting realities" (ibid: 546). Another strength, Eisenhardt argues, is that case studies likely produce measurable and testable results, which in turn adds professional weight to the research.

The case study approach can be used by various research projects with different aims, such as providing description, test theory and generate theory (ibid). I am here aiming to fulfil all three aims; by utilising discourse analytical tools as part of the case studies, I am describing in detail the images under analysis, I am 'testing' recent feminist theory conceptualising the fourth-wave to see if the issues and nature of the movement as described indeed is included in the visual discourses of feminism put forward by the selfies in question, and lastly, I am also attempting to add to existing theory on the subjects of both contemporary feminist writing and social media studies.

3.2 Utilising a Discourse Analytical Approach

The terms 'discourse analysis' and 'discourse', as outlined in the literature review, are flexible terms and the epistemological framework that are the basis for the research will be of utmost importance for dictating their definitions for the given project. The concept of discourse has since the 1990s transitioned from existing almost exclusively within the academic realm and into everyday conversation and mass media (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2013: 9). Nevertheless, the wider framework of discourse, the theory and analysis connected to the concept, is often not considered, including its epistemological foundation; social constructivism. As outlined in the Introduction, social constructivism, often referred to only as 'constructivism' in order to distinguish it from 'social constructionism', relating to the constructivist school of thought within social psychology (Kjørup 2012). Here, however, I will mainly be utilising the full term 'social constructivism', as I am interested in the philosophical parameters of constructivist epistemology applying to social settings, as is Michel Foucault's discourse theory. It is also vital to explain the relationship between discourse theory and social constructivism here, as although the two are oftentimes regarded as interchangeable terms, it is more correct to view discourse theory as a branch (and method) within social constructivism, which rather is an umbrella term encompassing several schools of thoughts connected to the belief in how the social world shapes reality (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2013).

There exists no strictly Foucauldian discourse analysis; in fact, Michel Foucault showed reluctance to dictating a clear research method based on his work (Foucault 1994). The way he himself utilised his theory on discourse and power to construct arguments, conceptualised by others as a 'Foucauldian framework', has however proven useful for theorists within a variety of fields. Referring to the difficulty of building a thorough methodology around Foucault's work, as it is strictly not a methodological framework *per se*, Linda Graham (2011) proposes a methodology based on Foucault's theories which she names a 'discursive analytic', describing it as "a methodological plan to approach the analysis of discourses through the location of statements that function with constitutive effects" (ibid:1). In theory, her proposed method is another way of for researchers to make use of the theoretical implications of discourses, as defined by Foucault, yet avoiding the discourse methodology, that arguably consists of, as we shall see, a conflicting epistemological groundwork. In this thesis, I am hence adopting Graham's approach, however I will keep referring to the arguments I construct utilising Foucault's work as a 'Foucauldian framework', as it is an established theoretical framework

that several of the feminist theorists I am ascribing in my analyses have utilised as a methodological foundation.

As described, I will be applying the tools of discourse analysis, yet I am refraining from adopting the discourse methodology in its entirety, with its theoretical implications and terminologies. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, I want to be true to study fourth-wave feminist activity and identify a possible theoretical red thread within the movement with an open mind, and hence not be too tied down by the rules and regulations of a theoretical methodological approach. Secondly, with the critique against skepticist and relativist (and other radical) strands of the social constructivist school in mind, I want to avoid building theory on what Søren Kjørup would categorise as mere 'air gestures'[1]; the inability to discuss truth, objectivity and reality as tangible concepts, without using quotation marks. The "obscurities" (Kjørup, 2012: 174) of radical constructivist theories, argues Kjørup, are evident in e.g. the argument that it is impossible to conceptualise a notion of what reality is, as our 'discursively constructed' experiences prevents us from doing so. Kjørup also points to several contradictions of anti-essentialist constructivism, that are often included as an epistemological groundwork for discourse analysis, foremost the implied understanding of a pre-discursive, pre-constructed world as the 'real' essence, which, in fact, is a paradox, as that itself is a fundamentally essentialist argument. By utilising discourse analytical tools, rather than adopting it as an entire framework, that would require comprehensive refining in terms of definitions and conceptualisations, I seek to avoid the potential pitfalls the contradictory philosophical premises of discourse theory may offer. That means declining the Derridean conclusion that "everything is text" (ibid: 173); that reality is constructed through language, but instead, following Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, rather noting that the physical world as existing in a pre-discursive sense, yet gaining its *meaning* through discourse (2013: 17).

As stated in the introduction of this chapter, discourse theory and the term discourse itself are flexible terms that can be made use of within several disciplines, and be approached with an interdisciplinary outlook, considering theories from various disciplines and drawing on linguistic principles from e.g. structuralism (ibid). The interdisciplinary approach is fitting here, as this thesis can be described as existing on the intersection between media studies, feminist theory and sociology, all of which having frequently relied on building theory upon the studies – and deconstructions – of discourses. In accordance with Foucauldian beliefs, I am here looking to the cause and effect of power structures at play in the text as a means to identify them. In *Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault describes discursive formations as such:

Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statements, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations), we will say, for the sake of convenience, that we are dealing with discursive formation.

(Foucault 1969/2008: 38)

In the Foucauldian line of thought, then, discourses can be argued to constitute objects, experience and subjectivity; formations of the human subject are hence associated with theorisations of power (Probyn 2005). Nevertheless, Foucault's view of the relationship between language and power suggest that there are no total discourses, but rather, that discourses are sites of contestation. This means, then, that no one can hence have total control over discursive formations, but that everyone, in theory, can adapt and implement language in their own way. Discourses in a Foucauldian framework are thus theorised around 'statements' – or *texts* – and what constitutes elements of these (Fairclough 2003).

Among the most prominent theorists of discourse analysis, that states the work of Michel Foucault as a defining force, is Norman Fairclough, who is particularly famed for defining and developing a form of discourse methodology named critical discourse analysis (CDA). According to Fairclough's theory, a qualitative discourse analysis should aim to do a close reading of a text, identify semantic blocks, i.e. units of meaning, identify the sequence of discourse elements and key concepts, and how these are represented. In this view, it is not the creations of meaning per se that are of interest to a discourse analysis, but rather how they function, their effect and how they operate in relation with other discourses. Fairclough identifies three stages of critical discourse analysis: description, interpretation and explanation. The three stages model is useful as principles for studying, identifying and examining the elements of fourth-wave feminism playing out in social media, that together construct new discourses of contemporary feminism.

Fairclough's analysis is however focusing on textual analyses, so I have looked to Gillian Rose (2001) for a description of visual discourse analysis. She views visuality as a form of discourse, arguing that "[a] specific visuality will make certain things visible in particular ways, and other things unseeable, for example, and subjects will be produced and act within that field of vision" (2001: 137). Identifying two different ways of conducting a visual discourse analysis, Rose defines the first one as paying more attention to how discourses are articulated through the image in question, rather than the practices of discourse, i.e. the methodology of

discourse theory, and the second version focusing on the formations of discourse through institutions, underlining how formations of truth and power are related to the discourses in question. Although Rose stresses that the two ways of conducting a visual discourse analysis are closely related and overlap, it is the first version that is the most compatible with research adopting the tools of discourse analysis, as it regards the "production and rhetorical organization of visual and textual material" (ibid: 164), and it is hence the most fitting for this study.

Rose credits feminist film critics for their conceptualisations of a methodology around the power imbalances of seeing, as they developed alternative discourses around 'the gaze' to challenge the traditionally gendered, phallocentric theory around the concept, as touched upon in the previous chapter. Discourse analysis, she argues, can be utilised "to explore how images construct specific views of the social world, in which case […] visuality is viewed as the topic of research" (ibid: 140). To conduct an analysis based on visual discourse analysis, then, she states that the re-theorisations of the gaze as presented by feminist and queer film and media studies, are interesting as it provides a way of seeing that is critical; a gaze that is resistant. As discussed by Rose, a researcher must identify key themes, such as recurring images, and although the Foucauldian discourse analysis framework inspires a certain approach to the study, let the material under analysis lead the research. For my study here, the idea of the gaze, and especially the Prøitz, taking a selfie is a way of controlling the way you and your body is seen. However, as the theory of the gaze is first and foremost rooted in psychoanalysis and Lacanian theory, I will mainly utilise the term 'gaze' in relation to the visual discourse analysis, as laid out by Rose, and Foucault's idea of the gaze. Michel Foucault was also strongly resistant to psychoanalysis, and saw it as part of modern society's disciplinary, normalising instances (McNay 1992), so an emphasis on psychoanalytically-informed theory on the gaze would be problematic in order to keep a consistent theoretical framework. As we have seen, Foucault's work is heavily reliant on the power of seeing, and as I will get back to, corresponds directly to the study of the selfie. For example, in relation to how self-writing is an aid in the moulding of the self, he argues that writing letters and notebooks "is a matter of bringing into congruence the gaze of the other and the gaze which one aims at oneself when one measures one's everyday actions according to the rules of a technique of living" (1997: 221).

The way this thesis utilises the tools of Foucauldian discourse theory for a visual analysis, yet avoiding what could be categorised as the 'ideology' of discourse analysis, is here particularly inspired by Susan Bordo's attempt to 'reconceptualise' the female body in *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture & The Body*, where she is concerned with

reconstructing the feminist discourse of the body by analysing contemporary popular culture. Bordo's aim in her book is to conceptualise a feminist discourse that theorises power in a way that avoids "a framework of oppressors and the oppressed, villains and victims" (Bordo 1993/2003:26), namely making use of Foucault's fluid notion of power, useful to feminist agency as it is "non-authoritarian, non-conspirational [and] non-orchestrated" (ibid). Nevertheless, as well as utilising discourse theory and places herself within a social constructivists tradition, she is also rejecting the anti-essentialist school under the social constructivist umbrella, as her focus first and foremost is embodiment and the materiality of the female body. In a similar vein, Lois McNay (2000) is another feminist social constructivist who has built a considerable amount of her work on Foucauldian insights on discourse, but concerned with 'looking beyond the discourse' as a radical discourse analysis within an anti-essentialist framework might offer limited consideration to the materiality of the body (and the material world in general). Agency, McNay argues, require embodied subjects, and she suggests a two-fold account of embodiment, that "expresses a moment of indeterminacy whereby the embodied subject is constituted through dominant norms, but is not reducible to them" (2000: 32). Thus, she rejects material determinism, yet refrains from believing that discourse is that which constitute all social practice, as language is too narrow for explaining every aspect of reality, including the physicality of bodies. McNay's account of embodiment and subjectivity, as shaped but not created by discursive formations, is hence of major value to this thesis' epistemological framework.

3.3 Methodological Challenges

As with any method, be it qualitative or quantitative, there are weaknesses that point to what the certain study most likely will not reveal. As case studies usually studies a vast array of data, argues Eisenhardt (1989), one pitfall of the approach is attempting to include as many details as possible, resulting in a lack of overall perspective and simplicity. Another weakness is that studying chosen cases can produce narrow theory, as the researcher might not be able to raise "the level of generality" (ibid: 547) of the chosen cases.

Some of the potential challenges of utilising discourse theory as part of a methodological framework have been discussed above, and in particular it is vital to be clear on one's view regarding the belief in discursive formations; whether or not they are all-encompassing in constructions of subjectivity and bodies (which are the elements first and

foremost in focus here). As stated, I am rejecting the anti-essentialist stance that has tended to be dominant within discourse analysis, believing in the 'pure', pre-discursive body and mind, where nothing exists prior to discursive formations. I am hence adopting a form of 'middle-way' approach to social constructivism, where I, following Bordo and McNay's studies on gendered embodiment and subjectivity, believe that are largely products of society and the power relations at play. This is also in line with Foucauldian thought, as Michel Foucault also insisted on a belief in essence and the corporeality of bodies, as discussed in the previous chapter.

As I am relying solely on qualitative methods in this thesis, there is, of course, also an underlying fact that the study will be coloured by my subjective opinions and experiences – which is also a principle of discourse analysis. However, as I seek to develop theory that is not merely seen as a description of my point of view, despite not being able to claim it is a solely objective study, I will here follow Søren Kjørup's guidelines for a "pragmatic constructivism" (2012: 183): Kjørup outlines an approach that insists on 1) choosing a theory and method that corresponds to and complement each other, 2) being clear on one's subjective perspective, 3) any and all research result is ultimately a relativist construction, in that it is "an attempt to, with given resources and given conditions, both conceptual and theoretical, economic and practical, to provide true statements which satisfy certain cognitive interests". (Kjørup, 2002: 185). With this in mind, I aim to undergo a study as useful to other readers as possible, without compromising on my methodological and theoretical approach.

3.4 Methodological design

The design of the analysis will naturally be characterised by the nature of the material analysed. For a thorough understanding of the methodological design, I will first give a brief introduction to the media platform the research is based on. Since Instagram was launched as a photo-sharing application in 2010, it has slowly grown into becoming the main social media platform that focuses on visual expressions. As opposed to Facebook, which always has been constructed as a network of friends (and friends' friends) offering a myriad of textual discussions, status reports detailing the whereabouts of your 'friends', Instagram lets you choose who to 'follow', with the person's published pictures then becoming part of your Instagram 'feed'. This way, there is more distance between users, and the Instagram platform hence operates more as a community

than a narrowed-down social network (Prøitz 2016), making the user more of an observer than a part-taker. The application advertises itself in the following way:

> Instagram is a simple way to capture and share the world's moments. Follow your friends and family to see what they're up to, and discover accounts from all over the world that are sharing things you love. Join the community of over 500 million people and express yourself by sharing all the moments of your day—the highlights and everything in between, too.
>
> (Instagram 2017)

Using Instagram is hence intended as an easy-to-use visual diary online, accessible – that is, if you choose to have an open profile – to people worldwide.

Discourse analysis has in the last few years been utilised as a tool to research within social media studies, with Albert & Salam (2013) describing social media as a discursive system reflecting social practices and a social movement, where "social issues [are] enacted through textual discourse" (ibid: 6). As previously implied, an important aspect of social constructivism is language, which is analysed with the purpose of discovering underlying meanings (Burr 1995). This thesis is thus viewing Instagram posts as a discursive system and a form of language, and will attempt to uncover the embedded discourses of fourth-wave feminism within the predominantly visual language of Instagram. By understanding the selected selfies as a systematic language, I will be able to utilise discourse analytical tools in order to deconstruct the notions of feminism that are reflected on the coded Instagram posts. I am hence concerned with revealing the conceptual underpinnings shared by the online feminist discourse community, and the multiplicity of meanings that attach and divide them. Although my analysis will first and foremost be based on the visual content in the Instagram profiles, I will also, as previously explained, include the textual material (hashtags and/or subtitles) present in the post, if relevant to my discussion. This will help suggest the linguistic techniques utilised by fourth-wave feminism, which might support my arguments constructed from the coding of the visual material. As Rose (2001) argues, research based on analysing discourse can be summed up as a study of the strategies of persuasion laid out by a certain discursive community. Doing a study based on discourse analytical principles, means to be concerned with discursive productions of an "authoritative account" (ibid: 142), looking at how that account is contested, fixating on how the implications of social practices embedded in the discourse as well as the social practices it produces. My sole focus here, then, is briefly summed up to lay out the persuasive strategies of the selfies produced by Instagram users I have identified as parts of the fourth-wave feminist

movement, studying the social practices embedded in and produced by fourth-wave feminist discursive communities. The Analysis section will where applicable bring examples of how the cases respond to the theoretical framework presented in the Literature Review, but that a more thorough discussion of the connections between theory and analytical findings will be presented in the Discussion chapter.

As outlined, I am conducting two case studies here, which are a result of a selection made after following online feminism for several years. To be clear on my own role as a researcher here, I am not a particularly active user of social media myself, however I would consider myself an 'active observer', and through my interest in feminist theory and politics, I have long been intrigued with how outspoken social media participating feminists have utilised selfies as part of their activism. Some of the profiles analysed here have been known to me for several years, yet most I became aware of after I began researching for this Master's project. After reviewing around 70-80 accounts, that I found either through profiles I knew already, by reading about them on online feminist platforms or after actively searching the Internet for 'feminist selfies', I made a selection based on relevance (feminist-related content and the use of selfies being central criteria), themes (for identifying common subjects), and a sense of community with other Instagram users with an obvious feminist outlook, for a chance to group them together into 'cases'. I want to underline here, though, that there is significant overlapping between some of the profiles I have identified as belonging to separate groups, but the similarities of central themes and communities, as well as the most obvious visual tools, nevertheless made it somewhat easy to identify two different cases, that each represent certain traits of the fourth wave of feminism as enacted through the selfie. The whole feed of each account has been studied for content, and I have selected the selfies based on their analytical possibilities, uncovering embedded discursive symbols and Foucauldian underpinnings.

The first case study will focus on what I have named The Pink Revolutionary. Often with a connection to the art and fashion industries, the young women behind these selfies often take performance-based, sexually explicit self-portraits that tend to feature stereotypical feminine symbols, such as pink clothing, high heels and heavy makeup. However, as I will lay out, this is usually done making use of irony and humour as means to question gendered stereotypes. I will here particularly focus on the performative aspects of the selfie and draw parallels to the personal, yet highly political, art coming out of the second-wave feminist movement, as well as look at Instagram's censorship policy, that this group of young women are in constant conflict with.

The subsequent case study will first and foremost consider how contemporary feminism's 'body positivity' and 'fat activism' movements play out within the framework of Instagram, and I have named this type of feminist selfie The Body Warrior. Focusing on conceptualisations of embodied subjectivity, I will here draw on feminist theory utilising Foucauldian notions of disciplinary power to state how these women use the selfie as a weapon against the normalised, extremely narrow ideal of female beauty that are presented by media and advertising, and then look at the formation of political consciousness through feminist 'selfie activism'.
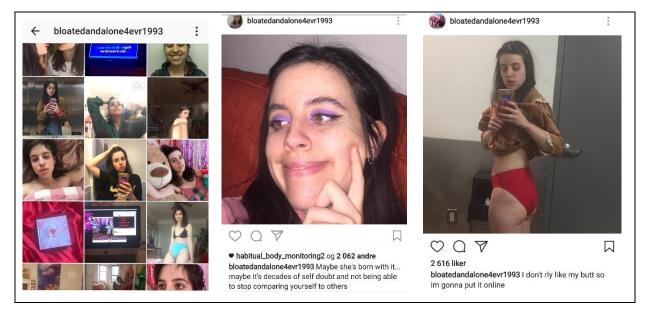
.

4. Analysis

4.1 Case Study: The Pink Revolutionary

That 'The Pink Revolutionary' is the first case study in this thesis is not arbitrary. I first had the idea for this Master's thesis several years ago, before front-facing cameras was a normalcy and the word – and the act of taking – "selfies" was still ironical, and written in inverted commas. Through online fashion and lifestyle magazines such as *Dazed Digital*, I became aware of how a group of young women photographers and artists loosely bound together by an all-female art collective named The Ardorous[1], were utilising stylised web cam and smart phone self-portraits to document themselves on the blog platform Tumblr, often directly from their bedrooms. The images reflect on the relationship between modern technology, intimacy and femininity, often combining traditionally 'girly' symbols with a subversive detail, such as body hair, acne, period blood or cellulite, that seemed to not as much be an inadvertent error, but rather the self-portrait's subtle, yet still obvious, main focus. According to Gillian Rose, this is often how a visual discourse analytical study starts; that the researcher "stumbles across" (2001: 143) key sources that inhabit obvious traits for an interesting study, and these sources again refer to other important sources, which is how the work on this thesis originally begun, and eventually panned out.

Among the women in this group, has Molly Soda, born Amalia Soto, been particularly profiled. Posting her first Instagram photo on September 2, 2012, Puerto Rican Soda, whose username is @bloatedandalone4evr1993, has since posted photos almost on a daily basis, a majority of these being selfies (fig. 1). Before joining Instagram, Soda utilised a variety of Internet-based platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook and, in particular, Tumblr, to showcase her art, which includes web-cam videos (such as *Inbox Full* from 2013, an eight-hour long webcam video of her reading messages from her Tumblr inbox, sold at the first ever digital art auction in 2013[2]), collages combining selfies with typical early 2000s DIY blog items, such as flashing error messages and glitter, and also installations, transforming gallery spaces into typical teenage girls' bedrooms complete with technical devices, invoking the contradictory feelings of private/public and intimacy/alienation.

Molly Soda's selfies, as posted on Instagram, are an extension of her art and performances on other Internet platforms, and it is hard to tell whether her self-portraits are simply random everyday snaps, which they ultimately appear to be, or if she is also utilising

Instagram as an 'artistic space', where her selfies instead are stylised images that function as a commentary on contemporary notions of narcissism, femininity and techno-dependency. The captions she uses to accompany her selfies also pose that question, as they are often of a sarcastic or ironic nature, or comment on the feelings around the act of selfie-taking, pointing at the insecurities, narcissism and fear of negative feedback that people experience when taking and uploading a selfie to an open Internet platform. With the caption "Maybe she's born with it… Maybe it's decades of self-doubt and not being able to stop comparing yourself to others" underneath a selfie of herself wearing purple eyeshadow (fig. 2), with an intentional 'unflattering' facial expression, Soda is referring to the infamous tag line of makeup brand Maybelline ("Maybe she's born with it, maybe it's Maybelline"). With a sarcastic remark aimed at the beauty industry's normalising, to use the Foucauldian term, beauty ideal, Soda's selfie is here clearly commentating on how these ideals have been imposing self-doubt in female consumers, such as herself, "for decades" in order to sell 'beautifying' products, such as the purple eye shadow she is here wearing. The grimace she is giving the camera while looking into the distance, her hand holding her face to insinuate thoughtfulness, further underlines her mocking attitude, as the pose, apart from the facial expression, is a typical pose a fashion model be instructed to strike for a beauty advertisement photoshoot. The way she nonchalantly rests her head on what appears to be a sofa behind her, as if watching TV, her phone camera is angled upwards, almost directed up her nose, also adds to her disdain for the sexism of the beauty industry, and seems to symbolise how she has developed a sort of *laissez-faire* attitude towards its ideals.
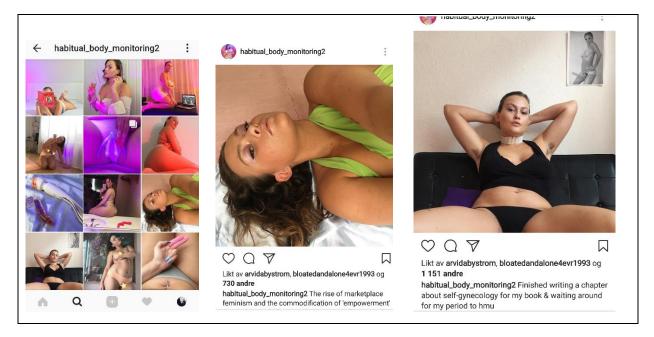
From left: Figures 1, 2 and 3: Screenshots from Molly Soda's Instagram profile, April 2017.

The reflection around the act of selfie-taking is common among Molly Soda's Instagram selfies. On a photo taken in front of what appears to be a public bathroom mirror (fig. 3), Soda has pulled her dress up to reveal her red underwear-clad bottom, writing "I don't rly [sic] like my butt so I'm gonna put it online". Compared with other Instagram selfies with the same motif; a woman lifting up her dress to show off her bottom, Soda's photo stands out in the sense that it is non-posed and non-sexualised, almost exaggeratingly so. She seems to be making no efforts whatsoever to look desirable for the male gaze, as defined by Mulvey (1974/2006); the act of lifting the dress up to show what is underneath is done in a matter-of-factly way, and the photo is apparently taken as a snap without much consideration, such as one would take a picture of the damage on a car for insurance purposes, or a recipe in a food magazine. Also of interest is that she is here, seemingly, located in a public bathroom; a place that is open for anyone to visit, yet simultaneously is a place for people to perform one of the most private acts of our everyday lives; going to the toilet. This adds another meta-perspective to the public/private distinction, with the selfie already positioning itself between what is considered public, as it on an open social media platform operates within digital public spheres accessible for everyone, and the private and hence corresponds to Claudia Gal's (2004) idea of a more fluid notion of public/private, where private and public spheres overlap and exist within each other at a given point in time. On another selfie taken in the mirror, Soda writes the caption "It's funny how the Internet sees a face I never do IRL [in real life] unless I look in a mirror", referring to the poses and expressions people normally adopt when looking at themselves through the mobile camera

57

lens resembles the way we 'monitor' our bodies when looking in the mirror; we lift our eyebrows, maybe pout slightly, suck our stomachs in, adjust our clothing, straighten our backs.

The way women – and an increasing amount of men – are constantly self-monitoring out of habit, in front of mirrors, reflective windows, through their smart phone camera, is often referred to in feminist online spaces as 'habitual body monitoring'. Behind the account of the same name, @habitual_body_monitoring2 – the number 2 signifying that this is her second account under this name as the first one was shut down due to Instagram's strict censorship rules, which I will get back to underneath – is Danish 24-year-old Maja Malou Lyse, who in the 'About' section of her profile refers to herself as "Unrepentant femme.[3] Your part time performance artist and aspiring gynaecologist". Often wearing clothing reminiscent of sex workers' traditional uniforms; low-cut glitter tops, G-strings and extremely long, painted nails, Lyse's Instagram consists mostly of full-body selfies, usually taken with self-timer (fig 4), and is, as Molly Soda's, seemingly an extension of her art as produced on or through other platforms. Despite referring to herself as 'performance artist' in her Instagram bio, and the fact that her selfies usually seem like staged photoshoots, Lyse's Instagram account nevertheless comes across as more personal than Soda's 'snap shot' selfies, mainly because of the personal texts often added in the caption underneath the image. As well as writing about self-gynaecology and body representation/objectification, Lyse is vocal in her critique of the patriarchal structures that she relates directly to neo-liberalist politics and the free market. Under a selfie taken from above, where she is seemingly laying on a bed, wearing a green halter neck top and lilac eyeshadow, her head arching backwards (fig. 5), Lyse writes the following caption:

> The rise of marketplace feminism and the commodification of 'empowerment' is just the good ol' [sic] patriarchal regime in disguise […], still rooted in exploiting people and labor. Commercializing […] social movements for their own freakin [sic] financial benefit. Reducing huge subjects and all its complexities into the most digestible and package-able version so it becomes sellable, it becomes their profit. A symbol of how identity politics can too often get distracted by those with the loudest voices [and] it will never be intersectional nor inclusive. […] Capitalist corporations exploit you […] and this shouldn't be normalized
>
> Lyse, 2017

From left: Figures 4, 5 and 6, screengrabs from @habitual_body_monitoring2's Instagram account.
Accessed May, 2017.

The aesthetic typical of 'cam girl' adverts, that often dominate Maja Malou Lyse's selfies, is especially prominent in this photo; by the way her arms are stretched out towards the lens, it is obvious that she is the one holding the (phone) camera, so that besides who would be watching her besides herself, she is the one in control of what is seen and what is not. Although it by first glance looks like the kind of selfie that models and porn stars post of themselves on social media in order to gain followers and/or sponsors due to their stereotypically 'flawless' looks, be it through makeup, clothing and poses, photoshop or a combination of these, if inspecting the photo, it is obvious that Lyse has taken no precaution to conceal or retouch the acne on her cheeks, and she is also making no attempt to show the contours of her breasts, as 'squeezing' the breasts together to make them visible for the viewer would be a usual gesture for a cam girl in this position. A small Venus symbol tattoo is also visible on the inside of her left arm, common within the feminist community.

This 'posed naturalness' is the foundation of Lyse's selfies. Although she is often dressed in the gear worn by women whose jobs are to please the male gaze with their appearance, she is not adopting the bodily behaviour of said women, whose facial expressions and poses carefully enhance some body parts – by e.g. wearing push-up bras and arching their backs as to exaggerate their behinds – and hiding others – such as sucking in the stomach for a slimmer

waist – Lyse always looks comfortable and relaxed, and, such as Soda, rarely smiles or makes any attempt to meet the viewer's gaze with a sexually charged facial expression. On the contrary, the look on her face usually reveal little emotion whatsoever, such as the perceiving look one adopts when glancing at oneself in the mirror, that, although a recognising gaze, as it is a sight observed so many times previously, is still a monitoring gaze that checks that the reflection of the body in the mirror is presenting itself correctly.
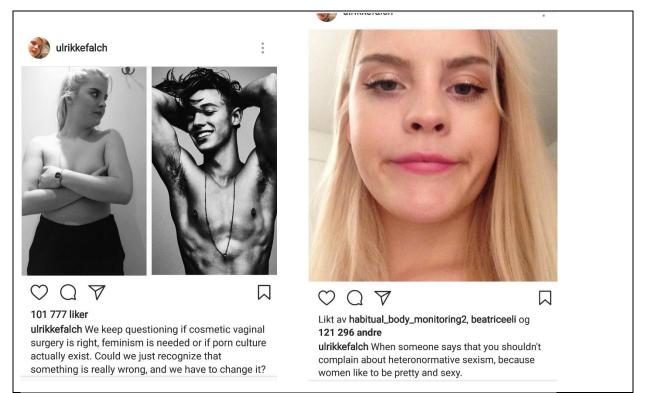
And this is of course a central aspect of the selfie: While taking it, you watch yourself photographing yourself. Through her selfies, Lyse is symbolising how the mobile phone camera is an extension of ourselves, one that through our own gaze 'habitually monitors' our bodies and poses, bringing to mind Foucault's statement in *Discipline and Punish*, where he refers to how an individual exercises "surveillance over, and against himself" (1977: 155). However, Lyse's selfies are simultaneously showing how one can fight back against the internalised gazes that have shaped and normalised the traditional views of beauty and femininity, through playing with stereotypical gender roles. In a photo seemingly taken by self-timer, she is seen sitting on a black sofa, wearing a glitter choker necklace, black underpants and a black low-cut top (fig. 6), her stomach and belly piercing exposed, arms resting behind her head revealing her armpit hair, legs spread, showing off her unshaven bikini line. This relaxed, yet dominance-asserting pose with legs wide apart has become a symbol of men's privileged position in public spaces, where 'manspreading'[5] in the past couple of years has been a term describing how some men occupy space on public transport by sitting with their legs spread, preventing others from sitting down. The pose and the camera angle, with the lens situated right in front of her crotch, makes it look like she is looking down upon the viewer, both literally and figuratively, who is situated on the floor, between her thighs. Prominent is also her body hair, which she is purposely showing off for the camera. Plastered above her to the right, like a religious icon or household deity, is a print-out of the infamous portrait of sculptor and visual artist Lynda Benglis posing with a dildo[6], that was printed as an ad for one of Benglis' solo exhibitions in art magazine Artforum, November of 1974. As a caption for this selfie, Lyse writes: "Finished writing a chapter on self-gynaecology for my book and waiting around for my period to hmu [hit me up]", indicating that what we see is how she – or her body – relaxes until her menstruation and the bodily changes it brings in some way or other will make an end to the situation pictured here.   The incorporation of Benglis' picture on the wall, as well as the focus on themes such as menstruation, sexual liberation and the gendered opposition of public and private spheres, shows the obvious affiliation of the Pink Revolutionary selfies to the second-wave feminist

movement. The themes summed up by Angela McRobbie in her explanation of the second-wave's politicisation of the personal; "autobiography, testimony, narration of the self, the woman's body, sexual abuse, rape, menstruation, mental illness, suicide attempts, the sexual double standard, abortion, pleasure, danger and desire" (2009: 121), are an accurate description of the subjects referred to in these selfies. Contemporary feminist expressions are hence following the second-wave in conceptualising the personal as political, however this time utilising different mediums and platforms, that allows, to follow Prøitz (2016), the navigation between digital and physical public spaces, which in turn makes room for new discursive spaces and the performing of more complex gender roles. The performative possibilities of the selfie have paved way for a kind of 'gaze of the self', that also invites for drawing parallels to the art as produced through the second-wave feminist movement: The confrontational attitude as inhabited by Soda and, in particular, Lyse's selfies, the upfront way they present, almost 'offer' their bodies through the Instagram application for anyone to devour through the screen of their phone, is a form of digital version of the way performance artist VALIE EXPORT in her performance 'Action Pants: Genital Panic'[7], invited strangers to engage with her body as she walked by them wearing crotch-less trousers. Although exposed, however, this way it was herself that was in control of what the audience sees, and how, just as with the Pink Revolutionaries; they have taken the power of the gaze, quite literally, into their own hands. Similar to VALIE EXPORT and other women artists operating in the 1960s and 70s identifying themselves with the second-wave, the Pink Revolutionary selfies have also been subject to heavy censorship. Especially so by Instagram, whose strict community guidelines have resulted in frequent removing of photos, even non-explicit content, and moderators have shut down accounts (including Lyse's first account by the name @habitual_body_monitoring) after they have, supposedly, been reported by other users who have deemed their photos – often selfies – offensive. What is interesting, however, and that is frequently discussed in the comment sections of the Pink Revolutionary Instagram accounts, is that this form of content monitoring seldom affects the profiles of individuals posting explicit selfies that can be classified as traditionally attractive, in the mainstream sense, such as models and actresses. The Free the Nipple campaign[8], gaining notoriety after the hashtag #freethenipple 'trended' on Twitter and Instagram in 2012, was an answer to this censoring of non-pornographic depictions of women's bodies, and drew attention to the way 'natural' female bodies are connected to shame and abjection.

Simultaneously as drawing on second-wave themes and tactics, the Pink Revolutionary's frequent inclusion of hyper-feminine details such as the colour pink and stereotypical sexy clothing also suggests ties to the third-wavers, whose devotion to e.g. the 'thong', to follow Baumgardner and Richards (2004), was one of the ways they attempted to reclaim the femininity that had previously, in their view, been undermined and undervalued by the radical feminists of the 1960s and 70s. That said, a recurring pattern while looking through the various accounts I categorise within the Pink Revolutionary group, is that if there is an overtly traditionally feminine trait, or an obvious symbol of stereotypical beauty as defined by the profit-making beauty and advertising industries (and praised by the, arguably, post-feminism-informed third-wave) in use within the selfie, there is without exception also present a subversive detail of revolt against said symbols, be it a hairy armpit, an ironic facial expression or a hard-hitting political commentary in the accompanying caption. Examples from the case study here, is the overtly anti-capitalist texts of Lyse′s – and the subtler, yet still unequivocal critique from Soda′s – selfie captions, are unambiguous, and so are their frequent visual statements highlighting body hair and 'unattractive' feminine features and poses. Judging from this, then, the Pink Revolutionary selfies are a reaction to the previous feminist wave, which thus makes possible the suggestion that there, in fact, is a new movement within feminism that has a different message, and the more obvious, utilises a new medium (i.e. social media), than the third-wave.

A voice – and body – that has become a prominent example of the Pink Revolutionary in the Norwegian media landscape anno 2017, is that of Ulrikke Falch, who plays the role of Vilde in the NRK youth series *Skam*. As well as using her voice as a young celebrity with a previous history of eating disorders to speak up on unattainable body ideals and rape culture, both on talk shows such as *Lindmo* and in her speech held at the 8 March arrangement in Oslo, she has recently been utilising her Instagram account, under the username @ulrikkefalch, as a channel for expressing her feminist activism through selfies. In one split screen image (fig. 7), we see a picture of her to the left of the frame, undressed from her waist up and purposely covering her breasts, her face, wearing a seemingly displeased expression, turned towards the insert of what appears to be a photo of a male model, possibly from an advertising image, whose bare torso is exposed and his arms raised. The latter, of course, is a picture that is completely acceptable within the Western public sphere, both the physical and the digital, as part of a media or advertising discourse. Had Falch posed in the same way, her arms behind her head, exposing her torso, however, the picture would be considered pornographic, and 'too explicit' to be

utilised for any advertising or mainstream media illustration, unless it was censored. And, had she posted the same image on Instagram, her nipples uncovered, it would have been removed from the platform immediately, possibly would she also experience the erasure of her entire account.

The image itself expresses clearly what she intends to criticise, namely the sexist double standards of nudity and the sexualisation of women's breasts, that even extends to images of breastfeeding[8], and bodies in general, resulting in heavy social media censorship and the general consensus that women's bodies are of private matter belonging to intimate and sexual contexts. The caption under the picture illustrates it even further: "We keep questioning if cosmetic vaginal surgery is right, feminism is needed or if porn culture actually exist. [sic] Could we just recognize that something is really wrong and we have to change it?"

In another selfie, Falch, wearing glittery eyeshadow and pink lipstick, looks down into the camera lens with a discontent facial expression (fig. 8), the cation reading: "When someone says that you shouldn't complain about heteronormative sexism, because women like to be pretty and sexy". This selfie, then, intendent as the 'answer' to said quote, articulates how ridiculous she deems the saying, which is a common counterargument – particularly from men – when critiquing the beauty industry's ideal of femininity. Falch wearing makeup and hence 'prettifying' herself while simultaneously criticising the culture of female beautification, not unlike Soda in fig. 2, points to how contemporary feminism is also carving out a new feminist direction that differ from what defined previous waves. Her selfie declares a kinship to the second-wave's rebellion against commercial agents profiting on women's insecurities and patriarchal notions of a universal femininity as built on aesthetics, but where feminists of the 1960s and 70s made bra-burning, Birkenstocks and the refusal to wear makeup a part of their image, social media-participating feminists in 2017 are less dependent on a specific image *per se*, yet signifies that one can participate in the performative playfulness offered by fashion and makeup, but without conceptualising it as 'female liberation', as do neoliberalist-based post-feminism, yet at the same time realising its potential disciplinary power over women's bodies.
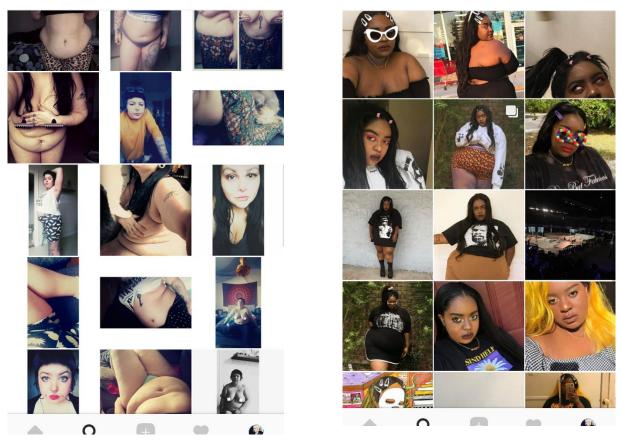
From left, fig. 7 and 8, screenshots from the Instagram account of Ulrikke Falch, accessed April 2017.

4.2 Case Study: The Body Warrior

The second and last case study in this thesis I have named The Body Warrior, as the focus for the women in this group is first and foremost the body itself – their own bodies – and their critique of the slim, white cis-gendered body ideal, as well as their fight for both societal and self-acceptance because of their physical appearances. Although sharing a common ideological platform, this selfie category differs from the Pink Revolutionary in both their visual expressions, their dominating visual and textual tools, and to some extent also their aims; what the women behind the Instagram accounts seek to achieve by posting their selfies. Where the previous case study often relied on expressive self-portraits seemingly existing on the intersection between art, fashion and feminism, making frequent use of humour and irony, the Body Warrior is more to the point and has one sole focus: Bodily representation. This selfie is usually less stylised than The Pink Revolutionary's, and appears to aim at placing itself within the tradition of documentary photography: The typical Body Warrior selfie comes across as purely documentational; a straight-forward, unposed selfie taken with the intention of producing more pictures of a certain body type – i.e. the 'non-perfect', non-normative female body – on a platform, Instagram, that has become a breeding ground for an extreme body focus (Prøitz 2016).

This case study will first and foremost use examples from the Instagram account @kropps_positiv, meaning 'body positive' in Swedish, that is run by two women, Anna and Emelie, who are not disclosing their last names, and that of 20-year-old La'Shaunae Steward from Charleston, USA, who posts under the profile name @luhshawnay; two Instagram accounts that in various ways exemplify the Body Warrior selfie's objectives and its underlying discursive dynamics. Towards the end, I will also look at the selfie picturing the trans body and the Muslim woman's body, which I will argue can function as a subversive photo operating within a political context, despite not showing any nudity in any form.
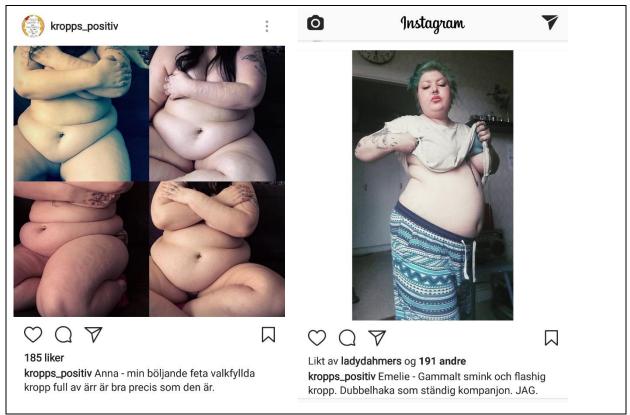
From left, fig. 9, an overview of @kropps_positiv's and fig. 10, an overview of @luhshawnay's Instagram feed. Accessed May 2017.

The main theme of the account @kropps_positiv is stated already in the profile name: The focus in the images posted here is body positivity. The sole purpose, one is soon aware of when scrolling through their feed (fig. 10), is that this account is a place where the two women behind it post selfies, and write about their relationship to their bodies and their mental health situation, which is, we learn, closely related to their feelings of embodiment. Each Instagram post starts with stating the name of the woman who is posting and writing the accompanying caption, which describes the selfie in question, and often also her feelings about her body or her mental health situation at the time the selfie is taken. Often, the picture only focuses on certain body parts, how said body parts behave when lying down or when moving. Both women are vocal about their overweight, and how this is affecting their lives and relationships with their bodies. Particularly is Anna writing about this, and she is also mostly taking selfies that display mainly her body parts, not her face.

The two very first pictures in their Instagram feed, each a selfie of the two women both of them undressed apart from black underwear, showing only their bodies from their thighs to their necks, describe the purpose of this account in detail. Emelie writes under her introductory

66

selfie: "fat and attempting to be proud. It is hard, but I don't mind fighting." Anna's selfie, the second image in their feed, has the following caption: "Hi, this is Anna. How I have hated this body, abused, drugged, damaged it in every way. It is time for some self-love [despite it being hard]. It shall work. I am fat and 'fucking fab'" (my translations). After the caption follows several hashtags, mostly in English, further underlining how they intend to make their Instagram account available to as many as possible, seeing as hashtags 'categorise' the different posts in the Instagram archive, such as; #bodypositive, #fatandfab, #fatpositive, #fuckbodyshaming and #effyourbodystandards [fuck your body standards]. Starting an Instagram account with the purpose of publishing selfies of their bodies, is hence seen as a way for them to be proud of, and show love to their bodies, while simultaneously criticise the hegemonic discourse of the body beautiful.

One selfie that is a typical representation for the photos posted by Anna is illustrated in figure 11; four almost similar selfies showing her body from slightly different angles, her body is undressed apart from underpants, and she is covering her breasts with her arm. The caption reading: "My jiggling, fat, roll-filled body full of scars is good exactly as it is". The repetitive pattern of images exposing herself, like visual mantras, usually with accompanying captions describing what we see, what her body feels like, and make *her* feel like, at that given day, evoke obvious parallels to Foucault's theory regarding the technologies of the self, in particular the Stoic tradition of *askesis*; confronting the truth about yourself, or as Foucault simply stated: "a process of becoming more subjective" (Foucault 1988: 35). This kind of self-care through confessional rituals, then, leads to knowing yourself, and they are "symbolic, ritual and theatrical" (ibid: 43) acts. The links between the Body Warrior Instagram account of Anna and Emelie and Foucauldian notions of technologies of the self are further illustrated by looking at Foucault's example of Marcus Aurelius, whose diary keeping and detailed physical descriptions in his letters to his mother underlined Stoic culture's emphasis on embodied subjectivity – just as Emelie and Anna's selfies of their bodies express, confess and develop truths about themselves through bodily agency. This can be exemplified by studying Anna's selfie in fig. 10, in which she looks down at the camera – likely, as many other selfies under analysis here, taken by setting the smartphone camera on the self-timer function – lifting her t-shirt up to reveal her belly. It is obvious that she feels in control here, both over her body, what she chooses to show off, and of the gazes that meet the sight of her body through their Instagram application.

Her stance and facial expression also hints at pride – the perspective and her stance makes her look authorative, and almost superior to her viewers.
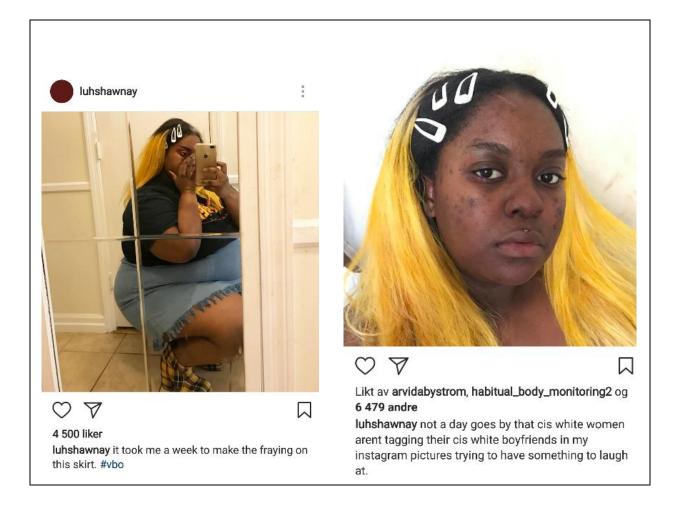

From left: Figures 11 and 12, taken from @kropps_positiv's Instagram account, May 2017.

As Anna and Emelie's Instagram account is open and accessible to anyone, it is not just themselves that correspond to their selfies, naturally. As mentioned in the Introduction, an analysis of selfies cannot completely ignore the audience reception, despite focusing on the actual selfie's expression. Especially is this the case for Instagram accounts that have made it a focus, such as the Body Warrior has, to post selfies of themselves that fundamentally differs from the ruling ideal of female beauty, as these, as well as praise, also receive an overwhelming amount of criticism. After the research done for this thesis, I will argue that selfies, in fact, often are created as a *response* to the emotions deriving from comments by the public, either on Instagram itself or in in non-digital publics, and I will discuss this further underneath.

Here, I want to turn to the Instagram account of La'Shaunae Steward. As an overweight, black woman who enjoys fashion and dressing up and posting selfies of herself, she is subject to a lot of ridicule online – and probably also offline. Often posting pictures of her handmade clothing – due to most clothing shops not stocking her size – Steward utilises Instagram

seemingly first and foremost to express her love of DIY fashion. A representative picture here is figure 13, where she is crouching down to what seems to be get a better view in the phone lens, of showing Steward wearing patterned high heels, a black t-shirt and a frayed denim skirt, the caption reading: "It took me a week to make the fraying on this skirt", accompanied by the hashtag #vbo, usually being an abbreviation of 'very best of', indicating the skirt is one of the items of clothing she has made that she is the happiest with. Steward hence makes use of Instagram as a channel to show the world, her followers, her creative creations. In her self-portraits, she focuses on showing fashion, her body seemingly being a secondary aspect, although she particularly seems to love making and wearing skimpy outfits, such as short skirts and bikini tops. However, as she is painfully aware, her body differs fundamentally from those bodies that usually get to participate in the neoliberal discourse of fashion and beauty, so to anyone whose internalisation of these ideals in same way or other is provoked by Steward's body situated in a fashion context, she is an easy target, and frequently experiences receiving hateful comments about her looks. As a response to this, then, she on 9 March, 2017 posted a selfie of herself, showing just her, seemingly makeup-free, face and revealing her acne (fig. 14). In most of the selfies in her Instagram feed, Steward is seen with obvious playful makeup and a content facial expression, whereas in this picture she appears 'naked' and vulnerable, possibly as a way of expressing that she has nothing to hide, with regards to her body or her opinions.

Under the selfie, the caption reads: "Not a day goes by that cis white women arent [sic] tagging their cis white boyfriends in my Instagram pictures trying to have something to laugh at". She is underlining, then, that those who most frequently 'tag' others in her pictures as a notification for other users to be aware of the tagged image in question, are cis-gendered (non-trans), white women. Why that is, I will not speculate upon here, although it would be an interesting topic for a different analysis, but it is nevertheless signifying that women of colour are, despite an increased focus on intersectionality both within and outside the feminist academy, seen as of less value; something to laugh at, because of her overweight and blackness, usually reserved for exactly the "cis white women" that Steward refers to in her selfie caption.

From left: Figures 13 and 14, both screenshots from @luhshawnay's Instagram account, accessed May, 2017.

As outlined by Russell Meeuf in his study of actress Gabourey Sidibe, the body type that she represents evokes feelings of "fascination and disgust" (2017: 69) in film critics who are not able to move past her appearance, as they are usually almost without exception only presented with the normalised thin, white ideal that we constantly are surrounded by on our screens, including our phones, on advertising brought to us by social media channels such as Instagram, Facebook and YouTube. However, where Meeuf describes Sidibe as a symbol of post-racial America, due to her 'bubbly' personality and failure to address e.g. issues of race and fat phobia, Steward is refusing to play into the idea of post-racialism, as she on a daily basis, under every selfie, is experiencing the racialized sexism that black women, through the Western gaze's fetishisation of their bodies, have lived through for decades (Mirzoeff 2009). Steward's body as presented through her selfies, represents an Other in more than one way; she is both overweight and black, and she is also, unlike Sidibe, vocal about her feminist, queer and

anti-racist politics. In order for non-normative bodies to get access to the media spotlight, Meeuf claims, they firstly need to be *depolitised*, such as the case with Gabourey Sidibe.

Steward hence represents what Sara Ahmed (2010) refers to as a 'feminist killjoy', both within a discourse of fashion, that usually focuses on the joyfulness of participating in the fashion masquerade, as well as in a social media context, where most users tend to post pictures that sugar-coat everyday life; i.e. stylised food pictures, smiling children and beautiful nature – as well as selfies portraying them as 'good looking' as possible. This 'killjoy', represented by every individual whose Instagram I have analysed for his thesis, has in the past few decades been attached to the 'angry women' of the second-wave movement (Cochrane 2013), and as we have seen, for instance from the Kellyanne Conway quote in the Literature Review, been one of the of the laughing stocks of neoliberal post-feminism. For the contemporary feminist movement, then, a common denominator seems to be a return to politics, particularly the politics of the personal and the body, such as issues regarding rape culture, intersectionality and beauty ideals, and a return to addressing topics deemed 'uncomfortable' for the general public.

Although focusing on the fashion aspect of her selfies, *bodily representation* is hence a central aim for Steward, whose non-normative body is rarely featured, as she points out, in fashion advertising and editorials. Simply by representing her body type, she is also simultaneously resisting the "structural food oppression" (Bruner *et al* 2016: 244) conveyed by the e-politics of food. Steward has a passion for expressing herself through clothing and accessories, not unlike how the Pink Revolutionary selfies often utilises 'girly' clothing in performative ways. As a caption for a selfie showing just her eyes, her lids clad in bright pink glitter eyeshadow and with hair clips in her hair, she writes: "I want to be proof that fat girls who aren't a size 14 or smaller and fat girls with no a** or with actual big tums ['tummies'] can be featured modelling for stores and for magazines, and I will one day, no matter how long it will take". Here she points to how commercial agents have commodified the body positivity movement's celebration of a variety of bodies, making use of so-called 'plus-size' models, that, although wearing a bigger clothing size than the typical fashion model, rarely displays bodily 'flaws' such as cellulite, stretch marks or pimples, let alone proportions that differ from the hourglass ideal. A prominent example here is the skin care brand Dove, whose "Campaign for Real Beauty" was launched in 2004, having so-called 'real women' fronting their campaigns instead of professional models and utilising a quasi-feminist language of empowerment[10] – yet still staying inside of the narrow frame of acceptable bodies.

A commonality in the comments section of typical Body Warrior Instagram accounts, is that anyone commenting on the bodies or 'attractiveness' of the selfies posted often are quickly shut down by other commenters, arguing that this is not the sort of feedback the poster seeks; that the selfies are rather protests against the constant competition for 'likes' and confirmatory comments on the looks of the person portrayed in the selfie. A more common, and appreciated, reaction from followers, however, seem to be expressions of recognition and gratefulness, praising the selfie-poster for her participation in a fight for wider bodily acceptance and daring to show what the mainstream media, and mainstream Instagram selfies, never do; bodies that have other aesthetic expressions than simply looking beautiful to the mainstream (male) gaze. One commenter, @marire writes under one of the selfies posted on @kropps_positiv: "Describing and sharing these [feelings of bodily inadequacy] is activism, so we together can see how it is the norms of society that make us feel this way" [my translation].

Although I have here focused on the Body Activist as a type of selfie that exposes the body as a way of representing the unrepresented within a popular media discourse, resulting in a focus on the nude or partially undressed body, the representational aspect is for some bodies all that is needed for a selfie to appear subversive. When researching for this thesis, I intended to make a bigger emphasis on non-gender conforming individuals, such as trans women, however I could not find many Instagram accounts that were applicable in the sense that they both focused on selfies as well as gender politics; this combination being the very groundwork of my starting point here. But an important point to consider is that the more deviant from the normative body, the more abusive comments and online threat are you also likely to receive, if you keep an open profile on Instagram. Considering the horrendous experiences many trans women have endured[11], the fact that there is not an abundance of accounts by trans women utilising selfies as a way of conducting activism, putting them in a vulnerable position for more verbal abuse than in their offline lives, are quite understandable.

One trans woman that is active on Instagram and often post selfies from her everyday life, is Hari Nef, who has become a high demand model and actress, even in the commercial sense[12]. Although not normally utilising her Instagram for political purposes, she writes as a caption under a photograph of herself from a magazine editorial on January 10, 2017: "Images of trans femmes [...] rarely exist outside pornography. We tend to be hyper-sexualized and objectified within the cisgender gaze. Either that or we are dehumanized as scum or (just as bad) untouchable goddesses." So, although she mainly posts 'normal' selfies of herself, often in

glamourous outfits at a fashion shoot or with her friends, the selfies of Nef, inhabiting a non-normative, trans body, can still be said to challenge the gender political status quo.

Other bodies that are restricted to certain, extremely narrow, gender roles, are for instance Muslim women's. An example here is Miski Muse's Instagram account, a Muslim woman wearing a hijab, who posts pictures, mainly selfies, under the account @musegold. Last Novermber, Muse posted a picture of herself, fully clothed, to show off her newly bought jeans (see fig. 15), however realised several weeks later, when looking for said picture to show to a friend, that it was removed from Instagram, supposedly after being reported by another Instagram user finding it offensive. In an interview following the incident, Muse said: "I come from a community where [people] who look like me are not visible and are constantly shamed […] You don't often see a curvy, Black hijabi. For me it's more about saying, 'Hey, we exist. Point blank. Period.'"[12]. Some bodies, then, are sexualised by default when they do not meet the cis-normative beauty standards, as the only ʹboxʹ to put these bodies in, is in that of porn and the various fetishisations that industry inhabits. The selfie, then, can hence be a way for the individual to place her body in a different context – a context chosen by herself – and, simply by representing herself in a picture that circulates within the digital public sphere, contribute to a wider distribution of a variety of images depicting otherwise ʹinvisibleʹ bodies outside the stereotypical context. This example also points at how individuals inhabiting non-normative bodies often are considered *more embodied* than those resembling the ideal; the more a person differs from the normalised body, the more she is reduced to nothing but, to utilise a Foucauldian term, undisciplined flesh, that is not succumbing to social norms on bodily conduct. Susan Bordo underlines this argument by stating that bodies not resembling the female ideal are seen as disturbing because they "embody resistance to cultural norms" (2003: 203).

Fig. 15, screenshot from @musegold's Instagram, accessed May 2017.

5. Discussion: The Selfie as Fourth-Wave Feminist Activism

As we have seen from the conducted case studies, the current wave of feminism, if one chooses to use the wave terminology, comes to fruition in various ways through selfies on image-sharing application Instagram. I have for both case studies shown how utilising discourse analytical tools to study said selfies can unveil certain aspect of contemporary feminism that, as a whole, make up the fourth-wave movement as a discourse community. I will here follow up some of the main points and observations from the analyses, and on more a general basis look at how selfies can be utilised as a political – or rather; *counter*-political – tool for online feminists.

However, the ʹfeminist selfieʹ, which I will further try to define underneath, is not the norm on Instagram, or any other social media platform that accommodates the posting of self-portraits taken with your smart phone or web camera. Rather the contrary; social media is largely dominated by selfies ʹbeautifiedʹ with filters, colour correction and Photoshop, in order to produce images of the self that resembles the current beauty ideal as much as digitally possible. The fact that Instagram has visual expressions as a focus, and users can easily scroll through one's feed, image by image, without being 'distracted' by lots of textual posts, as is the case with Facebook, might possibly have contributed to Instagram now being a major target for advertisers who seek out users with a large following to promote their products. Instagram has facilitated a growing number of so-called Instagram celebrities and 'Insta-girls'[1], that, usually due to their aesthetically pleasing imagery (usually connected to the account owner's stereotypically beautiful looks), have gained huge followings worldwide devouring their self-portraits, causing admiration, jealousy and – for various reasons – indignance. An obvious example here, is of course Kim Kardashian and the rest of the Kardashian clan's selfies, that as well as existing on the social media platforms they were posted, also make it into the tabloids and gossip websites, that daily indulge in analysing their bodies and speculate around whether or not the selfie-taker in question has used Photoshop or even undergone cosmetic surgery to achieve her smooth skin, voluptuous curves and symmetrical features.

In a sense, then, the feminist selfie can be classified as the ultimate ʹanti-selfieʹ, in that it utilises the self-portrait as constructed through a smart phone or web camera, to protest against what we can call the ʹmainstreamʹ selfie's core values, both in terms of *why* it is taken and *how*. In this chapter, I will build on results from the case studies and further discuss what, in fact,

theorises a 'feminist selfie'; what is its *raison d'être,* as well as its possibilities and restrictions for building a strong case for contemporary feminism.

5.1 Embodied Feminism: I Take a Selfie, Therefore I Am (a Feminist)

A common social media phrase, usually posted as a comment under textual statements detailing more or less sensational experiences, is "pics or it didn't happen". This exclamation, of course, emphasises the importance of visual expressions in order to thoroughly construct a believable version of reality within the framework of the digital public sphere, where who you are is dependent on what you share with your social network.

The creation of self through social media is naturally a new phenomenon, as the advent of Web 2.0 is merely two decades old (Fuchs 2014). This points to that there is an obvious age group that has or is growing up with this relationship to the Internet, and that also share selfies of themselves on social media platforms. The individuals I have found to best represent the previous case studies are hence also women in their 20s or early 30s. However, self-exploration as a way of examining identity has been, as pointed out by Foucault's studies of self-technologies, a commonality since the early Greeks, but with the 'alternative' reality available with the Internet, there are new approaches and aspects needed to consider. The Cartesian fundamental principle of *Cogito ergo sum* – I think, therefore I am – has largely, for the Millennial social media user, been interchanged with 'I take a selfie, therefore I am'; who we are online is to a larger and larger extent defining the general idea of our subjectivities. As everything we post online, be it selfies on Instagram or status updates on Facebook, contribute to conveying a multifaceted image of who we are, it is quite self-explanatory if young people are utterly immersed in the culture of self-expression - and the self-monitoring practices belonging to it.

5.1.1 The Selfie and Technologies of the Self

How this possible scope of agency can be theorised by utilising the concepts of Michel Foucault has been touched upon earlier in this thesis, and I will build on these arguments here. In Lois McNay's feminist framework, Foucauldian notions of self-technology have been applied in order to look at how women can resist normalising procedures. She offers a woman-centred version of Foucault's self-constructing rituals – as he only makes use of examples of men in the

76

Greek and Stoic tradition. McNay argues that "in terms of overcoming the limitations of present social conditions [it] makes Foucault's idea of practices of the Self of interest for feminists" (McNay 1992: 91). Although built on male definitions of reality, according to McNay, who provides different examples of this, feminist theorists can build on Foucault's idea of ceasing the power of corporeal agency to develop versions of it that centres around the female body, e.g. theories of the 'mothering' body and the possibilities of empowering feminine bodily transformations. This is also the background for Kathy Davis' (1995) study of performance artist Orlan, as described in the Literature Review, who in concerned with how women can 'redo' their appearances to be more accurate presentations of their 'inner' subjectivities. In the context of the selfie, then, which inhabits normalising procedures of 'correct' poses, angles and, not to speak of, bodies, it would be an argument that women can make use of it in alternative ways, as the case with Orlan's use of cosmetic surgery, in order to construct self-identities through their own gaze. As well as a tool of resistance, the selfie can then also function as a vehicle for self-construction, highlighting the chosen attributes or values (e.g. feminist values) the selfie-poster herself chooses to convey.

Anna and Emelie's Instagram account @kropps_positiv, as analysed in case study 2, often touch upon how the selfie can function not only as a way of presenting their bodies to the world outside the self; the digital public sphere, but also, judging from the captions accompanying and 'anchoring' the images, selfies are to them also 'showing them themselves' and give them a new perspective, or gaze, of their corporeality, in order to gain (back) confidence and love for their own bodies. Anna writes on 5 May 2017, under a picture of her body from the neck down, wearing only underpants and socks: "this is the first time since opening the account that I actually like a picture of myself, so apparently publishing pictures of [my body] from different angles [help my self-confidence]" [my translation]. This form of visual mass self-communication, to utilise Castells' term, can then be compared to what Foucault deemed as self-writing or *parrhesia*, a consciousness-raising act that through truth-telling was an aid in knowing – and loving – oneself. Foucault argues of the details one expresses through this ritual, that might for some seem banal, both today and in Ancient Greece; "these details are important because they are you" (1988: 29). Through selfies, then, one can be an active part of constructing and transforming one's subjectivity through the portrayed body. As argued by McLaren; "Technologies of the self, aim at self-transformation. Self-

transformation is to become other than what one is, […] it is the creation of new possibilities, new forms of life achieved through the technologies of the self" (McLaren, 2002: 146).

Several of the images on Maja Malou Lyse's Instagram account @habitual_body_monitoring2 include pictures of sex toys or instruments used for gynaecological examinations that women can perform on themselves, although never in an overtly sexual setting. An oft-repeated message in her Instagram caption is that of urging women to know their bodies, both in order to know their sexual preferences, and for medical purposes. This further underlines the connection between Foucauldian notions of self-constructions of identities through the body and fourth-wave feminism, as he states, in regards to Plato's notion of care of the body: "One must become the doctor of oneself" (Foucault 1988: 31) and know oneself, in order to *construct* oneself.

5.1.2 Performing Feminism

Central to the nature of the selfie, is also a notion of performativity. No matter how natural the facial expression or surroundings are; when capturing a self-portrait with a camera, one is indulging in a performance for the lens – and for your viewers, in this case; first for yourself, and then, when published, your Instagram followers. As pointed out by Erika Pearson (2014), the performative aspect of the selfie exists, as we have established through both Prøitz' theory and the analyses in this thesis, at the intersection of the public and the private, which makes the selfie change context and content as soon as it is given life on a platform intendent for a public sphere. Especially the Pink Revolutionary's Instagram self-portraits, combining aspects of art, fashion and feminism into contemporary feminist expressions, are bridging the gap between performance and 'normal' selfies as taken by the general (female) population; they make you wonder where the performance art ends and 'real life' begins. This is of course not a new topic within art, as discussed previously by looking at second-wave performance artists such as VALIE EXPORT, but with the widespread use of the selfie, and the typical angle, lighting and facial expression used when taking becoming almost a universal code of conduct, the question of authenticity and subjectivity has become an even more relevant question to reflect around with regards to online self-presentations.

From being merely a natural 'snapshot' in the comfort of your own bedroom, a selfie showing e.g. period blood-stained clothing, cellulite or hairy armpits will seem more like a performance once displayed for an audience other than yourself. As these perfectly natural, but,

in a public discourse; private and abject, traits of the female body are so rarely displayed visually, selfies picturing these things will come across as a performance conducted in order to shock the audience. The hyper-femininity of Lyse combined with hairy armpits, as an example, comes across as an aggressive parody of stereotypical femininity, in that it is usually combined with a stern facial expression (as opposed to the typical 'come-hither' looks of traditional fashion and porn imagery) once displayed in an online public setting. Although the shock-value is likely intentional at times, especially for the oftentimes sexually confrontational Pink Revolutionary selfies, I will argue that it is clear that the intention is not to 'shock for the purpose of shocking', as it the issue for overtly sexualised or violent advertising, for instance, but rather to make the audience think about *why* he or she is taken aback by the selfie in question. By exposing aspects of the 'inexposable'; the imperfect, flawed female physique usually connected to feelings of shame and disgust, these selfies are then attempting to legitimise the female body, to remove the stigmas surrounding it and make it a part of the public discourse.

It is not simply the selfie itself, and what is portrayed in it, that is of interest to the women whose selfies I have looked into; they also seem concerned with analysing the sole act of taking the selfie, and reflect around why and how a selfie is taken. Social media, paired with the front-facing mobile camera, have become the personal extension of the beauty and fashion industries, in the sense that they have provided the tools to make ourselves both the model, photographer and gaze-provider (audience) of the photo shoot, yet, judging from the most popular Instagram accounts, such as that of Kim Kardashian, despite the supposed freedom the selfie provides for self-expression it is usually with the values and ideology of the neo-liberalist notions of beauty and gender intact. A feminist selfie, then, can be argued to both rebel against the patriarchal system and the traditional – if one can use that word to describe a contemporary phenomenon – norms of the selfie itself, as the Instagram user, with her own body and values, try to reclaim the selfie and its abilities as political tool. That said, as we have seen, selfies are also not just self-portraits taken with the aim of influencing others, be it challenging their notion of acceptable bodies or motivating them to take political action, they can also be part of an individual's path to self-acceptance. As argued by Arvida Byström, a close collaborator of both Maja Malou Lyse and Molly Soda, and whose Instagram account @arvidabystrom makes use of typical Pink Revolutionary expressions such as hyper-feminine clothing combined with bodily 'flaws: "Taking selfies helped me come out of an eating disorder, because I dared to be more playful with my body. It let me question what I thought was pretty and ugly and why I

thought so, and then I'd do the opposite or change things a bit and try out different ways of taking my own picture."[2]. The self-therapeutic aspect of the feminist selfie, and the way it can be utilised for claiming bodily agency, suggests that it can also can be integrated into a process of *becoming*; a way to explore, express and develop subjectivities through the body.

5.1.3 Re-Conceptualising the Docile Body

As Grosz (1994) suggests in her essay "The Body as Inscriptive Surface", feminism's engagement with Foucault's theory of disciplinary bodies moulded by societal factors needs to be based on a critique of patriarchal structures, where the corporeal surfaces must be reconfigured by feminists. With the selfie, and our relationships with our mobile phones as 'body monitors', there is a need for an updated theory on embodiment that is tailored to relate to our contemporary world, where we can construct a separate identity, or rather*; identities*, online. Merleau-Ponty argues the following about not being able to take up a perspective on our own bodies, simply because it is from there, our body, our vantage point of perspective lays: "As for my body, I do not observe it itself: in order to do that it would be necessary to have the disposal of a second body which itself would not be observable" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 107). Although, of course, we still do not inhabit more than one body, there is, as stated by Prøitz (2016), with the popularity of the selfie and other technological advancements shaping our ways of seeing, a need to rethink the theory of the gaze, which is closely related to the idea of embodiment. As Grosz puts it; "it is by means of my body that I am able to perceive and interrelate with objects; it is my mode of access" (Grosz 1994: 92).

If utilising Susan Bordo's feminist reconceptualising of Foucauldian theories of power, one can argue that contemporary feminists, through their selfies, are challenging the disciplinary powers that shape women's bodies into docile bodies, and the normalisation of this 'docile body ideal', that with its slender limbs and polished looks dominate both the traditional media and the social media landscape. In a time of mobile phone hacking and 'revenge porn', where images of sexual nature – especially women's – are spread on the Internet without the portrayed person's consent, then, the only way we can be in total charge of our own bodies is to expose them online on our own terms, on platforms of our choosing.

As argued by McLaren (2002); individual bodies are the groundwork for the possibility of forming political action. As we have seen, Foucault provides a way of looking at the body as a resistant force that resists normalised corporeal norms. As McLaren states; "What besides

bodies can resist? It is my body that that marches in demonstrations, my body that goes to the polls, my body that attends rallies" (ibid: 116). This argument is reflected in Maja Malou Lyse's caption under one of her Instagram pictures, where also she, in an online context addresses the link between power, embodiment and politics argues for "critical thinking through embodied knowledge that comes from the experience of each body and ancestral wisdom; gaining autonomy and radical-self-power" (Lyse 2017).

Another way of merging the idea of the body-as-discourse with social media theory, is by applying modern theorisations around the public/private dichotomy, in order to suggest that feminist selfies focusing on the body represents in themselves miniature 'subaltern counterpublics' within the platform on Instagram. Nancy Fraser conceptualised the term as being "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter-discourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (1992: 81). Although Habermas, as discussed in the Literature Review, underlined that one of the main principles of the sphere theory was that it is a space where people meet physically, I will argue that, as well as the original theory being both conceptualised before the advent of Web 2.0 and focusing on the bourgeoise society, the body within the context of subversive selfies, are vehicles for organizing activism and political activity, in an extended version of Fraser's theory. Further suggesting this is the way the Instagram selfie allows, even invites, other users to post comments underneath the image, allowing for, as we have seen, fruitful discussions and networking possibilities. By incorporating theories around the public/private dichotomy, then, there is possibilities for suggesting that the body itself can function as a miniature public, as it is a site for the contestation of counterpower and political activity

5.2 Mass Self-Communicating the Selfie: Seizing the Power of Social Media

Where I have previously focused on the actual selfie and its underlying meanings and possibilities for a feminist project, I will now briefly turn to the medium said selfies are published through, and look at how contemporary feminism can utilise social media for feminist activism, and discuss Instagram's potential as political platform.

Although I am focusing on looking at the ways of which the body inhabits and displays societal inscriptions of gender and power, and the case studies I have presented in this thesis have hence concerned activism that is focusing on personal politics and less

measurable forms of activism, it is still vital to gain insight into how selfies can be an aid for feminist mass self-communication as a political project. The 'invisible' consequences of online feminist activism, the kind that cannot be measured in signatures or political bills, such as personal changes of attitude and emotional (dis)satisfaction are also still important – even fundamental – as a foundation for socio-political change.

5.2.1 'Girl-Claimed Territories' and Affective Solidarity

No matter if you are 'techno-euphoric' (Fuchs 2014) or not, there is no doubt that the Internet has made available many more possibilities for contributing to political activism, and has opened new spaces, for women, arguably safer spaces than offline ones, to participate in discussion and political debates. Allowing the ability of decentralised participation, with the Internet, anyone can now be involved in politics, as long as the possibility of getting online is in place. That activism with the advent of social media has become more 'low-threshold' also means that women that must stay at home, either tending to kids and family members or due to a disability, can participate in the feminist debate although they do not have the ability to engage in person.

As a result of the anonymity the Internet provides, making possible the explosion of online misogyny (Cochrane 2013), women have often found the need to create spaces for themselves, by setting up closed Facebook groups or invite-only Instagram accounts. This however also results in many women not getting access to these spaces, and all Instagram accounts I have focused on here, stress the importance of open, accessible accounts, where the alternative instead is to block potentially abusive users. Maja Malou Lyse behind @habitual_body_monitoring2 refers in an Instagram post to what she calls "girl-claimed territories online", and how "techno-utopian thinking" can be of use to contemporary feminism. The Internet, she argues, has "revealed itself to be a catalyst for patriarchal structures, but I do believe we can critique this within the framework; generating community, resistance, dialogue and education" (Lyse 2017). Lyse, then, places herself within the tradition of Castells (2009) and Shirky (2008), although with a different terminology, refers to what Julianne Guillard has dubbed "virtual safe spaces" (2016: 612), that allow for the expansion of traditional face-to-face feminist activity, to fit the technological times.

The "affective solidarity" (Rentschler, 2014: 78) taking place between the users, by supportive comments both from followers of the account holder in question and from third parties regarding a common theme discussed, are common in the comments sections on Instagram, and an important way of networking and spreading the feminist message. Almost without exception, in the comments section under every selfie of the women analysed for this thesis, there are always several comments praising the selfie-taker for her bravery or honesty around body issues and feminist struggles, making them become more aware of feminist politics of the body, as well as coming to peace with their own bodies. One commenter posting under a profile named @hilary_banksy writes the following under one of Lyse's selfies: "You're helping me work through my body issues and I am so grateful. No matter how many times your page gets taken down, please keep putting it up" (Lyse 2017). This also underlines how important social media interaction has become, and how it directly affects our 'offline' lives, both in terms of body image and political enlightenment, and poses the question of the legitimacy of these two separate lives; which are the most 'real' and available for cultivating political agency. As we have seen, there are various opinions here, but if following selfie researcher Prøitz, social media should be seen as merely an "extensions of reality" (2016: 108), rather than representations of it, where the body operates as existing in interaction with the chosen media platform.

Through Instagram, one can combine the power of the visual image with the power of the written word, which also lets the user utilise different means at once. Thus, an Instagram post, in theory, has the possibility of providing complex expressions making use of visual as well as textual tools. In this sense, second-wave feminist artist Barbara Kreuger's work is also relevant to mention here, as her images, often in black and white with red details, are not unlike how a post on Instagram looks when laid out, where a short text and/or hashtags describing the poster's thoughts around the image, is either written underneath or across the picture chosen for publication.

Although the selfie and Instagram is the focus in this thesis, other online-based ways of conducting activism can provide more 'direct action' than the selfie often has the possibility to. Single-issue campaigns and awareness through e.g. 'trending' hashtags seemingly dominate the new Internet-based activism, and although dismissed as 'slacktivism' (Guillard 2016) by some techno-scepticists, they can undoubtedly be of use to feminist activism. An example here is the hashtag #YesAllWomen, a Twitter-campaign focusing on how all women are, or potentially are, victims of misogyny (Baer 2016). Three years after it was first

launched, the hashtag is still in use and with millions of posts, and has become a prominent example of how the personal not only is political, but also a powerful way to highlight the intertwining of body politics and Internet activism.

5.2.2 'Hashtag Empowerment': Commodifying Feminist Politics

Before rounding this thesis up with the conclusion, I want to point at a possible pitfall for a political project utilising the Internet as its main platform for activism, and particularly for feminism, that has a history of being commodified for commercial interests (McRobbie 2009). A prominent example from the pre-Internet era, is the way the Riot Grrrl movement, a feminist movement growing out of the music scenes of Seattle and Portland in the early 1990s, based on DIY principles and hard-hitting, radical feminism, soon saw their very particular aesthetic of 'babydoll' dresses and child-sized clothing sold in fashion stores emblazed with quasi-political slogans of capitalist empowerment. With girl groups such as Spice Girls also adopting a sellable version of both their aesthetic and message ('girl power' being the pop group's call to arms), the Riot Grrrls themselves soon called a media blackout in order to preserve their activist message within their extended underground community[2].

The word 'activism' itself, has, likely in tune with the growth of social media as spaces in which we both gain information and communicate with others, seemingly been watered down in the past few years, where now 'everyone' claiming the activist title as a commodity, particularly on social media profiles. A question of interest is here, then: Do all potential participants of the online feminist movement stand completely equal in engaging in the online activism taking place within the framework of Instagram and other social media platforms? The answer is simply; of course not. Firstly, as pointed out by Leppanen et al (2017), accessibility to Internet need to be in place, as well as access to the right technical equipment, and these are not a given for most people in the world. Claiming that every user of cyberspace is equal and that everyone has the same opportunities to seize its potentials for counter-power, is also buying into the neo-liberal language of post-feminism, as discussed in the Literature Review, and ignoring the power structures at play even there, although the Internet technically is a space for everyone to utilise on an equal basis. It is also the most normative bodies that tend to be the ones with the most followers and hence the most political power to influence the 'empowered actors', to use Castells' (2009) expression. From a social constructivist perspective, the fact that society shapes us is a given, and in that sense, we have

also internalised the rules of what an attractive body consists of, and our gaze, whether intentionally or unconsciously, will hence be attracted to such bodies, even within the frames of open, digital public spheres.

Although a focus on intersectionality is apparent amongst the contemporary feminist wave, the research done for this thesis also made it apparent that the traditional patterns of power is present, even within a subversive community devoted to challenging the traditional discourses of gender and feminism. Despite attempting to include a variety of backgrounds in my analyses, it was obvious that a vast majority of the Instagram accounts that were devoted to selfies in a feminist context were held by white, slim and cis-gendered women. This observation is however not a critique towards the fourth-wave itself, yet more underlining that intersectional approaches is highly necessary for feminism today, exactly because of the fact that women of colour and women experiencing othering in other ways than gender are less visible in social media spheres, which also reflects e.g. representations of women in mainstream media (Gill 2007).

It is necessary, also, to pose the question of *which* body is a feminist body: Is a female body resembling the ideal of female beauty less feminist than a body that deviates from the norm, as seen in this thesis' case studies? And, to turn it around; are selfies portraying 'non-beautiful' women with obvious 'flaws' necessary feminist selfies? All these questions, of course, are a matter of definition and will first and foremost rely on the context of the selfie, and depend on whether the individual herself will label herself 'feminist'. A selfie is merely a *tool* for expressing feminism, as it is, ultimately, a picture that may or not be labelled 'feminist' dependent on the person portrayed. However, what is more interesting is how the selfie makes *the individual* feel, both in the act of taking the selfie and the *gaze* that the portrayed person, and the selfie's audience thereafter, lay upon it when it is published on a platform such as Instagram. The same goes for an image for instance labelled #bodypositive, as many commercial actors nowadays utilise in order to gain female costumers and make money, which does not mean the image is automatically feminist, at least not the type of feminism that challenge sexism and gender norms and has the end of the patriarchy as an end goal. So, although the label 'feminist' is of course free for anyone to use, what potentially connects the selfie to feminism is its possibility for political agency; technology and hashtags are merely accessories to the type of online-based feminism that I have been theorising in this thesis.

6. Conclusion

In this thesis, I have, by analysing the digital self-portraits of a selected group of Instagram users, shown how selfies can reflect a feminist project that both in message, form and content differ from earlier feminist movements and how these are defined in a historical context. By utilising a discourse analytical approach to the material, I have been able to point at various aspects of this new feminist 'wave', that I have argued relies heavily on projecting the politics of the body through embodied subjectivities.

By analysing the feminist networks on Instagram as a discourse community, I have, by focusing on two distinct types of selfies dubbed The Pink Revolutionary and The Body Warrior, exemplified how contemporary feminist expressions inhabit their own language and ways of contextualising meaning around specific words and objects, underlining the importance of bodily representation and projecting the need for a new public discourse on the female body. Social media platforms such as Instagram can hence be useful for a feminist project in carving out discursive spaces that enable networking through "affective solidarity" (Rentschler 2014), and for embodied subjects to facilitate social change. Selfies can hence also be considered as part of the "discursive publics" (Phipps 2016) that define and develop contemporary feminism.

In his work, Michel Foucault theorises a network of disciplinary agents and technologies that in various ways shape – or in Grosz' (1994) words, inscribe themselves on – bodies, and construct subjectivities. I have in this thesis attempted to show how Foucauldian theory and categories not only have been useful to previous feminist writing on the body and embodiment, but they also construct a valuable framework for studying contemporary feminism and its activism, such as through the Instagram selfie, as researched here. The politics of the body, and how it relates to themes such as intersectional theory, the body positivity movement and 'rape culture', is at the very core of the feminist agenda in 2017, and as the fourth-wave movement is concerned both with theorising the powerful, neo-liberal agenda's 'docility' of women's bodies as well as presenting ways to resist it, I have argued that present-day research of feminism can make use of various Foucauldian definitions of power, both the version conceptualised during his genealogical phase, through e.g. *Discipline and Punish*, but also his later, ethical writing, focusing on bodily agency, in *The Technologies of the Self*. Following feminist interpretation of Foucault's work, his theory is useful as a way of exploring notions of gender and sexuality, as he, according to McNay, "frees the body from the regulatory fiction of heterosexuality and

opens up new realms [for exploration]" (McNay 1992: 30). For this thesis, then, this 'new realm' is the selfie.

By building on a diverse literary framework, I have attempted to be part of conceptualising a foundation of which to place the contemporary feminist wave. Although multifaceted, I have tried to string together the various theoretical areas, in order to show how they directly relate to each other through the selfie and the new wave of feminism, both still arguably existing in their defining phases. Concluding from the analyses conducted here, there is no doubt that there are now new currents of feminism taking place, carving out a space of its own within the modern history of gender theory and activism. Nevertheless, as discussed in relation to the definitions of the third-wave, the proposed fourth-wave is still so young and seem to reflect such diverse struggles and objectives, that the 'movement' term is terminologically speaking not entirely fitting, although I have consistently utilised it here in the absence of a more precise term. However, instead of using this as an argument against the formation of a feminist fourth-wave, I rather see it as a reflection of how the feminist project is now more interdisciplinary than ever before, thus engages and embraces several cultural and political viewpoints.

As I here have attempted to follow Søren Kjørup's guidelines for a pragmatic constructivism, it must be stated that for this project to avoid accusations of 'under-analysis' based on small samples, more case studies and/or aspects of the feminist selfie could have been analysed, had there been space for that. Also, within the media studies field, the studies of discourse can also be combined with a more tangible form of analysis, to avoid being dismissed as ambiguous or too subjective by social constructivist critics. Quantitative analysis, such as content analysis, could also have been utilised here as a supplement, in order to provide an even more comprehensive study.

Before rounding up, I want to suggest two alternative studies of the feminist selfie, that can shed light upon other aspects of both the materiality of the selfie itself and the digital, female body, as well as explore other elements of contemporary feminism. For instance, applying a psychoanalytical framework, focusing on the Lacanian notion of the Gaze, would be of interest, and especially if also considering Julia Kristeva's idea of abjection; a theory built on psychoanalytical principles that tackles the issue of bodily traits as being 'revolting'. Another interesting study would be researching women's selfies through a class perspective, by employing sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's extended concept of capital to the analysis, looking at both his established notion of 'body capital' – also referred to as 'physical capital', the capital

which is embodied – and the possibility for arguing for a new addition to his theory, namely 'technological capital'; the power inhabited in the knowledge of computer technology, allowing you to manoeuvre your way through the various social media networks in order to reach as many 'friends' or 'followers' as possible, which in turn would open doors to traditional forms of capital and possibilities of gaining access to a 'higher' class.

Notes

Chapter 1:

1. 'Visitor Figures 2014: The grand totals: exhibition and museum attendance numbers worldwide', *The Art Newspaper*, International Edition, April 2015.

2. Sooke, A. 'Is this the first Instagram masterpiece?' The Telegraph, 18 January 2016. Available at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/photography/what-to-see/is-this-the-first-instagram-masterpiece/ [Accessed 19.1.2017]

3. Taylor, P. 'Millennials in Adulthood: Detached from Institutions, Networked with Friends', Pew Research Center 2014. Available at: http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2014/03/2014-03-07_generations-report-version-for-web.pdf [Accessed 30.1.2017]

4. Acharia, N. 'The Women's March After Trump's Inauguration Is A Perfect Example Of Social Entrepreneurship'. Forbes, 19 January 2017. Available at: https://www.forbes.com/sites/nishacharya/2017/01/19/womens-march-is-social-entrepreneurship-at-its-best/#63bc2c5548f7 [Accessed 3.2.2017]

5. Numbers from Instagram's search function, as displayed on 5 February, 2017.

6. Fraser, S. 'Selfie diplomacy: How Indias prime minister Modi became such a hit on social media'. The Telegraph, 12 November 2015. Available at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/india/11986187/How-Indias-prime-minister-Narendra-Modi-became-such-a-hit-on-social-media-selfie.html [Accessed 30.1.2017]

7. See e.g. Esperås, Eirik Nymark (2013) 'Utanfor massemedias filter? Ein analyse av norske partileiarars facebooksider', The University of Bergen.

Chapter 2:

1. Heim, J. ʹʺThey never saw this comingʺ: A Q & A with Kellyanne Conway on Trumpʹs victoryʹ. Washington Times, 26 January 2017. Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/magazine/they-never-saw-this-coming-a-qanda-with-kellyanne-conway-on-trumps-victory/2017/01/26/2bf64c10-da96-11e6-9a36-1d296534b31e_story.html?utm_term=.92fce3a45f48 [Accessed 1.3.17]

2. SAGE knowledge defines e-politics as ʺthe embedding of political activity within the Internet, one that includes public activity as well as established political organisationsʺ Available at: http://sk.sagepub.com/books/key-concepts-in-political-communication/n15.xml [Accessed 30.3.2017]

3. Habermas redeveloped his concept of the public sphere in his later works where he also took self-criticism on the limitations of his original 1962 concept, such as in ʹFurther reflections on the public sphere and concluding remarksʹ, in *Habermas and the public sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun, 421-479. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

Chapter 3:

1. Kjørup elaborates on these arguments in his article ʹIs Truth Merely a Social Construction? A Critical Presentation and Discussion of Discourse Analysis and Particularly of Its Social Constructivist Foundationʹ, in Metoder i Medievitenskapen, Nr. 2, 2000.

Chapter 4:

1. For further information, see: http://www.theardorous.com/

2. The first digital art auction called ʹPaddles On!ʹ was held by art auction house Phillips in collaboration with Tumblr in New York, October 2013.

3. ʹFemmeʹ is an often-used term in the queer community signifying a 'feminine' lesbian or trans woman.

4. ʹCam girlʹ is a so-called web cam model performing, often sexual acts, in front of a web cam or mobile phone camera.

5. For further explanation of ʹmanspreadingʹ, see: http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/i-need-to-sit-that-way-because-of-my-balls-and-6-other-misguided-defences-of-manspreading-on-public-9976792.html [Accessed May 3, 2017].

6. For further information on Lynda Benglis, see e.g. http://www.theartstory.org/artist-benglis-lynda.htm [Accessed April 18, 2017].

7. For more information on VALIE EXPORT's performance, see e.g. http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/export-action-pants-genital-panic-p79233 [Accessed April 6, 2017].

8. Facebook lifted its ban on images depicting breastfeeding in 2014, but is keeping its policy with regards to women's nipples in other contexts. See e.g. https://mic.com/articles/124146/here-s-what-the-free-the-nipple-movement-has-really-accomplished#.qBmZ7rKcm [Accessed May 3, 2017].

9. See McCleary, Caitlin M., 'A Not-So-Beautiful Campaign: A Feminist Analysis of the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty' (2014). University of Tennessee Honors Thesis Projects. Available at: http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_chanhonoproj/1691 [Accessed May 4, 2017].

10. For further information on trans women and assaults, see e.g. http://www.hrc.org/resources/sexual-assault-and-the-lgbt-community [Accessed March 13, 2017].

11. For instance was Hari Nef named as he face and ambassador for skin care brand L'Oréal Paris in January 2017.

12. For the full interview with Miski Muse, see:
http://www.revelist.com/religion/instagram-removed-muslim-woman-selfie/7096/but-muse-said-her-message-is-about-more-than-just-instagram-she-told-revelist-she-wanted-to-speak-to-the-more-widespread-constant-erasure-of-bodies-like-her-own/4. [Accessed May 13, 2017].

Chapter 5:

1. See e.g. Shenn, K. ʻKeeping up with the Insta-girlsʼ i-D magazine, 19 April 2017. Available at: http://i-d.vice.com/en_gb/article/keeping-up-with-the-instagirls [Accessed May 16, 2017].

2. Carlson, C. ʻPhotographer Arvida Bystrom on Selfies and Gender Identityʼ. 30 May, 2014. Available at: http://www.coolhunting.com/culture/photographer-arvida-bystrom [Accessed March 13, 2017].

3. More on the Riot Grrrl movement, see e.g.
http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/RiotGrrrl [Accessed March 23, 2017].

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ahmed, S. (2010) *The Promise of Happiness.* New York: Duke Univeristy Press Books.

Baer, H. (2016) 'Redoing feminism: digital activism, body politics, and neoliberalism', *Feminist Media Studies*, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 17–34.

Barthes, R. (1977) *Image Music Text*. New York: Hill and Wang.

Bartky, S. (1990) 'Foucault, Femininity and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power' in S. Bartky (ed.) *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression*. New York: Routledge.

Baumgardner, J., & Richards, A. (2004). 'Feminism and femininity: Or how we learned to stop worrying and love the thong.' In A. Harris and M. Fine (Eds.), All About the Girl, pp. 59-69. London: Routledge.

Bordo (1997) *Twilight Zones: The Hidden Life of Cultural Images from Plato to O.J.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Bordo, S. (2003) *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body*. London: University of California Press.

Butler, J. (1989) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge.

Butler, J. (2004) *Undoing Gender*. Oxfordshire: Routledge.

Castells, M. (2012) *Networks of outrage and hope: Social movements in the Internet age.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Cochrane, K. (2013) *All the Rebel Women: The Rise of the Fourth Wave of Feminism.* Guardian Books.

Covino, D. (2004) *Amending the Abject Body: Aesthetic Makeovers in Medicine and Culture*. Albany: State University of New York.

Crenshaw, K. (1989) ʹDemarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politicsʹ, in *University of Chicago Legal Forum:* Vol. 1989: Iss. 1, Article 8.

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

Davis, K. (1997) ʹʺMy Body is My Artʺ: Cosmetic Surgery as Feminist Utopia?ʹ in K. Davis (ed.) *Embodied Practices: Feminist Perspectives on the Body*. London: Sage.

Dutton, W.H. (2009) 'The Fifth Estate Emerging through the Network of Networks', Prometheus, vol. 27, no. 1, pp. 1–15.

Eisenhardt, K. (1989) ʹBuilding Theories from Case Study Researchʹ in The Academy of Management Review, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Oct, 1989), pp. 532-550

Eliassen, K. (2016) *Foucaults begreper*. Scandinavian Academic Press, Oslo.

Elliott, A. (2008) *Making the Cut: How Cosmetic Surgery is Transforming our Lives*. London: Reaktion Books.

Faludi, S. (1992) *Backlash: The Undeclared War against Women*. London: Vintage.

Foucault, M. (1994). An Interview with Michel Foucault. In J. D. Faubion (Ed.), Power (Vol. 3, pp. 239-297). New York: The New Press.

Foucault, M. (1977) *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. A. Sheridan. London: Penguin.

Foucault, M. (1980) 'History of Sexuality' in C. Gordon (trans. and ed.) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings by Michel Foucault 1972-1977*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1988) 'Technologies of the Self', in L. Martin et al. (eds) *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

Fraser, N. (1990) 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy', in Social Text, No. 25/26 (1990)gla. Duke University Press

Gal, S. (2004) 'A Semiotics of the Public/Private Distinction' in D. Keates and J.W. Scott (eds) *Going Public: Feminism and the Shifting Boundaries of the Private Sphere*. Urbana and Champaign: University of Illinois Press.

Grosz, E. (1994) *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Guillard, J. (2016) 'Is feminism trending? Pedagogical approaches to countering (Sl)activism', *Gender and Education*, pp. 1–18.

Halberstam, J. (2005) *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives.* New York: New York University Press.

Hall, S. (2001) 'Foucault: Power, Knowledge & Discourse' in Wetherell, M. *et al*, *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader.* London: Sage.

Haraway, D. (1991) *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. London: Free Association Books.

Hayes, C. (2007) *Self-Transformations: Foucault, Ethics and Normalized Bodies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

hooks, b. (1992) *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. New York: South End Press.

hooks, b. (1999) "The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators" i S. Thornham (ed.) *Feminist Film Theory: A Reader.* New York: New York University Press.

hooks, b. (2015) *Feminism Is for Everybody: Passionate Politics.* New York: Routledge.

Kant, I. (2003) *Observation of the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, trans. J. Goldthwait. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kaplan, A. (1997) *Looking for the Other: Feminism, Film and the Imperial Gaze.* Routledge, London.

Kjørup, S. (2008) *Menneskevidenskaberne. Humanistiske forskningstraditioner*

Bd. II. Roskilde: Roskilde universitetsforlag.

Kristofferson, K., White, K. and Peloza, J. (2014) The Nature of Slacktivism: How the Social Observability of an Initial Act of Token Support Affects Subsequent Prosocial Action', in Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 40, No. 6 (April 2014), pp. 1149-1166

Lauretis, T. (1987) *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film, and Fiction (Theories of* Representation & Difference). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Leppanen, S.,Westinen,E., Kytola, S. (2017) *Social Media Discourse, (Dis)identifications and Diversities.* New York: Routledge.

Levy, A. (2005) Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture. New York: Free Press.

Maclaren, P. (2015) 'Feminism's fourth wave: A research agenda for marketing and consumer research', Journal of Marketing Management, 31:15-16, 1732-1738, DOI: 10.1080/0267257X.2015.1076497

Martin, L., Gutman, H. & Hutton, P. (eds) *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

Martin, C. and Valenti, V. (2012) New Feminist Solutions Volume 8. #FemFuture: Online Feminism. New York, NY: Barnard Center for Research on Women, Columbia University.

McLaren (2002) *Feminism, Foucault and Embodied Subjectivity*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

McNay (2000) *Gender and Agency: Reconfiguring the Subject in Feminist and Social Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

McNay (1992) *Foucault and Feminism: Power, Gender and the Self.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

McRobbie (2009) *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change*. London: Sage.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962) *Phenomenology of Perception.* London: Routledge.

Mirzoeff, N. (2009) *An Introduction to Visual Culture. 2ⁿᵈ ed. New York: Routledge.*

Mitchell, J. (1995) ′The Interdisciplinarity of Visual Culture′, in *Art Bulletin*, 77(1995), 542.

Mulvey, L. (1974/2006) ″Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema″ in M. Durham & D. Kellner (eds.) *Media and Cultural Studies: Key Works.* London: Blackwell

Pearson, E. (2009) ″All the World Wide Web′s a Stage: The Performance of Identity in Online Social Networks.″ *First Monday* 14 (3). Available at http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/viewArticle/2162/2127 [Accessed April 19, 2017].

Probyn, E. (2005) ′Sex and Power: Capillaries, Capabilities and Capacities′, in C. Calhoun, C. Rojek and B. Turner (eds) *Sage Handbook of Sociology*. London: Sage.

Prøitz, L. (2016) *Selvbilde. Fra selvportrett til #selfie*. Universitetsforlaget, Oslo.

Ramazanoglu, C. (1993) *Up Against Foucault: Explorations of some Tensions Between Foucault and Feminism.*, London: Routledge.

Rentchsler, C. (2014) ʹRape Culture and the Feminist Politics of Social Mediaʹ, *Girlhood Studies 7*, no. 1 (Summer 2014): pp 65-82. doi: 10.3167/ghs.2014.070106

Schreiber, R., Crooks, D., & Stern, P.N. (1997). Qualitative meta- synthesis; Issues and techniques. In Morse, J.M. Ed. *Completing a qualitative project; details and dialogue*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

ʺSelfieʺ, *n*. OED Online. March 2017. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/11125 [accessed 18 April, 2017].

Shirky, C. (2008) *Here Comes Everybody*. London: Penguin.

Thelandersson, F. (2014) 'A Less Toxic Feminism: Can the Internet Solve the Age Old Question of How to Put Intersectional Theory into Practice?', *Feminist Media Studies*, vol. 14, no. 3, pp. 527–30.

Third Wave Fund (2017) http://thirdwavefund.org/index.html [Accessed 12 March, 2017]

Weedon, C. (1987) *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Winther Jørgensen, M. & Phillips, L. (2013) *Diskursanalyse som teori og metode*. Roskilde: Roskilde universitetsforlag.

Yin, R. (2014) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 5th ed. London: SAGE.