Reading Log #5

DeNara Levin

T00529231

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This reading log is based on the article “‘Let Me Hear Your Body Talk’: Aerobics for Fat Women Only, 1981-1985,” written by Jenny Ellison. The focus of this article is to look at the relationship “between idealized images of women in popular culture and women themselves.” 1 The primary source that this author used is ‘Large as Life’ (LaL), a Vancouver action group whose main focus was to promote self acceptance in overweight women. 2 Aerobics became very popular in the early 1980’s and academic research focused on “its association with femininity rather than its relationship to health and fitness”. 3 The research found that aerobics helped women better understand their identity as a fat women. 4 Although the act of making oneself physically smaller seems to add to the oppression of women, not all people were doing it to lose weight and everyone’s experience with it was subjective. I found this article very wordy and made an interesting topic very difficult for me to focus on. I wish to discuss the overall themes with my classmates to help me get a better understanding of what this article was about.

This reading log is based on the article “The Heterosexual Nature of Health and Hygiene Advertisements,” written by Tracy Penny Light et al. For decades media has been constructing societies views on what is masculine and feminine, especially through the use of health and hygiene advertisements. These advertisements show that men need to obtain the bodybuilder physique 5 and purchase “colognes, aftershaves, deodorants, styling gels and alcohol” to maintain their heterosexual masculine appearance. 6 This article wishes to examine to prove that the male body receives as much scrutiny as the female body and will draw upon evidence from *Playboy* and *Esquire* magazines. These authors found that there were many homophobic undertones in the Cold War era magazines. 7 The two main types of males that appeared in magazines were the womanizer and the sportsman, both which did not include homosexuality. 8 Men still face many issues with the depiction of the male body in magazines and media and this article shows that it is a lot worse than we thought. This article relates to the wider historiography on the topic because it shows that men are being stereotyped just as much as women are. This opens up more knowledge for men that it is okay to feel the way you feel and that you do not need to listen to stereotypes, you just need to accept yourself for who you are. I wish to discuss the impacts of these images on males that see them.

Notes

1 Ellison, Jenny, “‘Let Me Hear Your Body Talk’: Aerobics for Fat Women Only, 1981-1985,” in

Cheryl Krasnick Warsh (Ed), Gender, Health and Popular Culture: Historical Perspectives, Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011: 193.

2 Ellison, Jenny, “‘Let Me Hear Your Body Talk’: Aerobics for Fat Women Only, 1981-1985,” in

Cheryl Krasnick Warsh (Ed), Gender, Health and Popular Culture: Historical Perspectives, Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011: 194.

3 Ellison, Jenny, “‘Let Me Hear Your Body Talk’: Aerobics for Fat Women Only, 1981-1985,” in

Cheryl Krasnick Warsh (Ed), Gender, Health and Popular Culture: Historical Perspectives, Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011: 194.

4 Ellison, Jenny, “‘Let Me Hear Your Body Talk’: Aerobics for Fat Women Only, 1981-1985,” in

Cheryl Krasnick Warsh (Ed), Gender, Health and Popular Culture: Historical Perspectives, Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011: 194.

5 Wendelboe, Thomas, “The Heterosexual Nature of Health and Hygiene Advertisements” in

Penny Light, et.al, “Introduction,” in Bodily Subjects: Essays on Gender and Health, 1800-2000, Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015: 246.

6 Wendelboe, Thomas, “The Heterosexual Nature of Health and Hygiene Advertisements” in

Penny Light, et.al, “Introduction,” in Bodily Subjects: Essays on Gender and Health, 1800-2000, Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015: 247.

7 Wendelboe, Thomas, “The Heterosexual Nature of Health and Hygiene Advertisements” in

Penny Light, et.al, “Introduction,” in Bodily Subjects: Essays on Gender and Health, 1800-2000, Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015: 262.

8 Wendelboe, Thomas, “The Heterosexual Nature of Health and Hygiene Advertisements” in

Penny Light, et.al, “Introduction,” in Bodily Subjects: Essays on Gender and Health, 1800-2000, Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015: 262.

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Ellison, Jenny, “‘Let Me Hear Your Body Talk’: Aerobics for Fat Women Only, 1981-1985,” in

Cheryl Krasnick Warsh (Ed), Gender, Health and Popular Culture: Historical Perspectives, Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011: 193-214.

Wendelboe, Thomas, “The Heterosexual Nature of Health and Hygiene Advertisements” in

Penny Light, et.al, “Introduction,” in Bodily Subjects: Essays on Gender and Health, 1800-2000, Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015: 245-263.