Bodily Disciplines through Cloth: The Corset and its Legacy

Keywords: body / discipline / corset

Abstract

Commoditisation of the corset in the 18th and 19th centuries allowed for mass control of the female body and by extension the female psyche. The 20th century saw a continued desire to maintain this control. This paper looks at the legacy of the corset for contemporary women; looking at who is controlled and who is controlling. Despite a shift away from the male gaze, and an increase in the influence of women in creating the feminine ideal, the object of the gaze has changed little in the last decades of the 20th and first decade of the 21st century. Foucauldian concepts of discipline provide a framework to explore the notion of bodily control through clothing from a contemporary angle. The slim, well manicured body is a disciplined body, an object of desire. The abject, heavy, untidy and fat body is undisciplined, undesired. Soaring sales of body control garments in present day Australia illustrate the ongoing belief that the body needs to be continually contained and controlled. Magic Knickers, the Wonderbra and high-heeled shoes are all every-day items which contribute to the production of a contemporary disciplined body. Cloth, along with alternatives such as surgery, diet and exercise, plays a crucial role in helping to maintain the objectified and disciplined feminine ideal.

Introduction

The human body is subject to and disciplined by technology. This 'always already technologised' body, whether it is dressed in a primitive fur, or a hi-visibility safety garment, has always been marked physically and socially by clothing technologies. The interfaces between the body, technologies and fashion, connections which have previously been neglected in body and fashion theories, provide a critical point of departure for the future of both fashion and body research; with the emergence of new fields such as *Somatechnics*[1] demonstrating the significance of this area of research to current and future theoretical work.

Michel Foucault's work on the social construction of bodies (1975; 1998) is often cited as a starting point by body theorists (Shilling 1993; Turner 1984) and it is highly relevant to the study of the technologies which both manipulate bodies physically and control them socially. Starting

from his theories of bodily discipline this essay will discuss the role of clothing/fashion and other technologies of the body in the implementation of socially originated physical discipline upon the body. Foucault is often credited as being responsible for reviving interest in body theory in sociological and philosophical circles in the 1970s and 1980s, and since the publication of his work theorists such as Judith Butler and Sandra Bartky have usefully developed areas of perceived weakness in his writing; such as his lack of discussion of the social construction of gender (Butler 2006) and of the role of agency (Bartky 1997). Joanne Entwistle (2007) has questioned Foucault's failure to apply his theories to real life situations, and is one of the few to have applied Foucauldian theory directly to fashion/clothing research, adapting his body theories to a phenomenal clothed body. Entwistle also reminds us that the disciplining of the body is not a new concept.

> "Christianity, for example, has long advocated the disciplining of the body through diet, fasting, penance and so on. However, whereas discipline was employed to mortify the flesh, as a *defence* against pleasure […] in contemporary culture such techniques as dieting are employed in order to *increase* pleasure. Asceticism has been replaced by hedonism, pleasure-seeking and gratification of the body's needs and desires" (2007, p. 238).

The disciplining of the body has been facilitated in many ways by clothing technologies. Generations of women, in particular, have been disciplined physically and socially by the weight (sometimes literal weight) of fashion and fashionable expectations. This paper will provide a brief overview of the impact of lacing on the bodies and minds of women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – in a society where the physical pressure of the corset tightened on the bodies of the 'weaker sex' in line with the social pressures of society – but the main interest of the paper is in the legacy of 'lacing'; looking at the persistence of the feminine ideal of a small waist, and the physical disciplining of the female body, throughout the twentieth century and today. Although the corset, as it stood in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is a rarity today, media fascination with the body and particularly the size zero phenomenon is indicative of the continued pressure that women are under to control their bodies. As the designer body itself, even more than designer fashion, has become the corporeal symbol of success, new forms of disciplinary clothing – magic knickers, modern corsets, support bras and other forms of 'wunderwear' – have been developed and are complemented by more permanent body control measures such as diet, exercise and cosmetic surgery.

Foucault – The Disciplined and Docile Body

Foucauldian concepts of discipline provide a framework to explore the notion of bodily control through clothing from a contemporary angle. Foucault developed his theories of discipline through observation and historical research into institutions of power such as the penal system, the church and the school. In his genealogy of the development of the modern prison (1975) he looked at the ways in which the bodies of prisoners were disciplined by the 'gaze' of the guards. The prisoner, believing himself to be under constant surveillance, learned to discipline himself physically and socially, thus normalizing his behaviour. Through the discipline of the gaze the prisoner became a "docile body", pliable and manageable. Foucault's theories were based on his conception of 'the body' as a social construct. He believed that "nothing in man – not even his body – is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men" (1984, pp. 77-78).

Judith Butler challenges Foucault's dedication to social construction theory, saying in an early paper that 'the body' "ontologically distinct from the process of construction" must be "prior to construction" or "the site, or the condition of a process of construction only externally related to the body that is its object". She also asks "does the existent body in its anonymous universality [i.e. prior to social construction] have a gender, an unspoken one?" (1989, p. 601). Butler's work on the body goes on to deal largely with the creation/performance of gender as a social construction (1993; 2006). The gender theorists' key criticism of Foucault is his apparent lack of interest in gender issues in his theoretical work.

Of particular relevance to this topic, feminist critics of Foucault have developed an understanding of how his work can be related to contemporary pressure on women to discipline their bodies. Following Foucault's framework, parallels have been drawn between the surveillance of prisoners, and the drive for conformity which the media gaze exerts today on female bodies in society. Susan Bordo, who has written, amongst other things, about body image and dieting/anorexia (1993), comments on the impact of surveillance on women's bodies. "Not chiefly through ideology, but through the organization and regulation of the time, space, and movements of our daily lives, our bodies are trained, shaped, and impressed with the stamp of prevailing historical forms of selfhood, desire, masculinity, femininity" (1997, p. 91). This minute control of bodies is fundamental to their physical construction as well as women's self image and emotional state. She echoes Foucault here in naming these female bodies,

controlled by an external gaze, as “docile bodies”, “bodies whose forces and energies are habituated to external regulation, subjection, transformation, “improvement”” (1997, p. 91). She joins the radical feminists here to imply that if women are spending all of their energy on “improvement” then they will never escape the pressures of patriarchal society and achieve true equality. The strength of feeling of the second wave feminists is also expressed by Sandra Bartky, “In contemporary patriarchal culture, a panoptical male connoisseur resides within the consciousness of most women: [like Foucault’s prison guard observing the prisoners] They stand perpetually before his gaze and under his judgment” (1997, p. 140). This blaming of the male gaze and of patriarchy was central to feminist body theories in the 1970s through to the early 1990s, when the concept of female agency began to be applied more extensively to body control.

The question of agency is linked to the question of free will and selfhood, and the increasing importance of the body and appearance to concepts of self.

> “Selfhood has become intrinsically somatic – ethical practices increasingly take the body as a key site for work on the self. […] Exercise, diet, vitamins, tattoos, body piercing, drugs, cosmetic surgery, gender reassignment, organ transplantation-for “experimental individuals” the corporeal existence and vitality of the self have become the privileged site of experiments with subjectivity” (Rose 2001, p. 18).

Where ‘selfhood’ is increasingly based on conformity to norms and social ideals, rather than individualism, the normalisation of the body is in fact facilitated by discipline and the access to ‘technologies of the self’ (Heyes 2007, p. 8) that discipline enables. Henry Giroux identifies Foucault’s failure to discuss the agency of the individual under surveillance in his comments on the feminist readings of Foucault, and in particular on Sandra Bartky’s “postmodern reading of the politics of the body”. He says that, like Butler, Bartky recognises the increasing importance of the corporeal in contemporary society. “Women are no longer required to be chaste or modest, to restrict their sphere of activity to the home, or even to realize their properly feminine destiny in maternity: Normative femininity is coming more and more to be centred on woman’s body” (1997, pp. 148-149). She is concerned with how “gender is implicated in the production of the body as a site of domination, struggle and resistance” (1991, p. 43). Her vision of agency is as resistance to patriarchy which gives women the freedom to control their own bodies and lives. While the second-wave feminists call to action was for women to use their individual

agency to reject any pressure to feminise their bodies, the following generation of women turned the concept of agency around to argue that women have the right to choose this feminisation and sexualisation of their bodies as one of the options available to them. They view it as a way to maintain control of their bodies, and to use their bodies as powerful tools and not as submission to patriarchy. As Cressida Heyes has pointed out, “One of Foucault’s key insights was that disciplinary power, at the same time as it manages and constricts our somatic selves, also enhances our capacities and develops new skills” (2007, p. 7). Heyes is positive about the agency of women and their ability to use the skills developed though discipline to their advantage. Thus the discipline can have a positive effect for women. Similar arguments have been made to support women’s extensive use of the corset in the 19th century (Kunzle 1982; Steele 1985). Heyes considers that the media provides the drive for women to conform to feminine ideals, but also acts as an enabler to help women to achieve conformity if that is what they want. She insists on their right to conform if they so desire.

In contemporary society, fashion, and the resultant gaze of both the media and the much criticised male observer, are often accused of forcing the female to self-discipline her own body. Rosalind Gill suggests that the patriarchal male gaze has been “internalised to form a new disciplinary regime” (2007, p. 152). The feeling of being constantly watched and compared to media ideals unquestionably influences women’s decisions relating to their bodies. However, in a consistently feminist stance, women today deny that they act the way they do to please men, rather they do so for themselves, or to compete with other women. Therefore however strong the male gaze remains it is important to remember that the weight of the female gaze can no longer be ignored, particularly the self-critical gaze on the individual. Sandra Bartky uses Foucault’s concept of a dispersed power to help explain the new disciplining of the female body, “By contrast [to schools/prisons etc.], the disciplinary power that is increasingly charged with the production of a properly embodied femininity is dispersed and anonymous, there are no individuals formally empowered to wield it; it is, as we have seen, invested in everyone and in no one in particular” (1997, p. 148). This dispersed power is difficult to track and difficult to resist, it draws its strength from the scattered nature of the observers that hold it.

Foucault’s failure to apply his theories to real life situations is discussed by a number of his critics. Cressida Heyes develops a number of useful case studies around body issues using his theoretical underpinnings (2007). Joanne Entwistle has applied Foucauldian theory to her work on fashion (2007). She criticises Foucault and the social constructivists for their failure to

consider that the social body is almost always dressed, as well as commenting on the neglect that the body has suffered in sociology and philosophy up to the 1980s. As Entwistle points out, even body theorists have long ignored the clothed body (Turner 1984), and fashion theories have avoided the topic of the body, preferring to discuss clothing in a disembodied way. She emphasises that the body is both socially constituted and historically situated, “When we get dressed, we do so within the bounds of a culture and its particular norms, expectations about the body and about what constitutes a ‘dressed’ body” (2007, p. 277). Her work begins to draw together the undressed body and disembodied fashion theories but it is an area where there is room for further research.

The following sections of this paper will look at the way in which the discipline theories discussed here can be applied to the clothed body. From a historical perspective it is useful to consider, as Entwistle has done, that the shift in the way that clothing disciplines the body which occurs from the nineteenth century onwards can be matched with the shift that Foucault notes from the ‘fleshy’ body that was the subject of capital punishment prior to the eighteenth century, to the ‘mindful’ body of the modern watched prisoner (2007, p. 284).

The Corset

Although early examples of corset like garments have been traced to Minoan Crete (Kunzle 1982, p.43), the corset as a body control technology was applied to the female body in Europe and America primarily between the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries. The corset became essential to the artificial construction and discipline of a socially acceptable ‘normative’ feminine body shape. As mass production techniques developed and marketing opportunities increased in women’s journals and newspapers the corset became a commodity item, like the bra today, which helped women to create the desired body shape and improved the fit of fashionable clothing. After many years as a simple foundation garment attracting little attention, the increase in the extreme practice of ‘tight-lacing’ of the corset, which “effectively crushed the body, from armpit to hip, reducing the waist and compressing the ribs and chest in the process, rendering the wearer almost immobile” (Davies 1982, p. 616), practised by a only a minority of women prior to the late nineteenth century, lead to the conception that all corseting was dangerous and damaged the garment’s reputation beyond repair leading to its eventual downfall. Tight-lacing was suspected to be the culprit in various ills associated with the feminine body; fainting, weakness, hysteria and miscarriage amongst others. The dependent position of women in nineteenth century society was such that a strong link developed between these

physical ills and the feminine ideal. This is described by Leigh Summers who comments that, “it was held that tight lacing actually increased among women as its ill effects became more widely known. This may have been because ill health, or at least an appearance of ill health, was fundamental to the mainstream construction of nineteenth-century femininity” (2001, p. 107). In other words, women used the corset to create the feminine ideal.

The longevity of the practice of corseting is often attributed to a patriarchal desire to see women as the accessories of a successful man’s leisured lifestyle, coupled with a more disturbing wish to keep women physically in their place, by physically weakening and restraining them and rendering them unfit to work, or run away (Davies 1982; Daly 1990). Veblen in *The Leisure Class,* written in 1899, talks about women’s “visibly increased expensiveness and infirmity,” leading to a “gain in reputability” of the male provider. Veblen was amongst the many anti-corset reformers, considering the corset “substantially a mutilation, undergone for the purpose of lowering the subject’s vitality and rendering her permanently and obviously unfit for work” (1993, p. 121). The argument around patriarchal dominance is countered but never successfully overturned by a number of writers (Kunzle 1982; Steele 1985) who argue that the sensuality of the corset and the feeling of control and power that it gave to women, as well as its usefulness as a ‘tool’ to win a husband were equally important in its longevity. Whether the corset was an anti-women technology or a tool which enabled women to achieve their aims, the commoditisation of the corset in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries allowed for mass control of the female body and by extension the female psyche. The twentieth century saw this control maintained. The next section of this paper looks at the legacy of the corset for contemporary women; the legacy of a desire for an impossible ‘Barbie’ shaped body, with a tiny waist, but ample breasts. Susan Bordo describes the hourglass figure created by the corset in the nineteenth century as a ‘symbolic’ form ‘representing a domestic, sexualised ideal of femininity’ (1997, p. 103) emphasising the contrast between male and female and the division of society into two separate spheres. The corset’s emphasis on the waist is still visible in fashion today. The waist is critical to the presentation of the body in fashion; and crucial to the construction of a feminine body shape. It is a symbol of femininity mediating between the breasts and the buttocks, creating movement and enabling the shape of the female body to be put on show or de-emphasised.

Body Control Today: The legacy of the corset

Despite a shift away from the male gaze, and an increase in the influence of women in creating the feminine ideal, the object of the gaze has changed little in the last decades of the 20th and first decade of the 21st century. Clothing, along with alternatives such as surgery, diet and exercise, plays a crucial role in helping to maintain the objectified and disciplined feminine ideal. Elizabeth Wilson (1992, p. 20) argues that the whalebone corset of the nineteenth century has now been replaced by a modern corset of muscle. The external discipline of the corset has been replaced by a self-imposed discipline of diet and exercise.

The rise in popularity of personal gyms and trainers promises another avenue for controlling body weight and shape. Exercise can be a cheap way of recreating the body to meet the ideal. The idea that 100 or 1000 stomach crunches each day will lead to a flat stomach is attractive. However obsessive exercising is as damaging to the body and joints as the tight-laced corset was, leading to injury and fatigue. An addictive dedication to exercise and diet is required in order to gain or maintain the coveted skinny ideal that we see constantly represented in women's and gossip magazines.

For those who cannot maintain such a punishing schedule, soaring sales of body control garments, with figures of up to 300% increase for the industry quoted in newspaper articles, (Coursey, 2005), illustrate an ongoing belief that the body needs to be continually contained and controlled. Magic Knickers™, the Wonderbra™ and high-heeled shoes are all every-day items which contribute to the production of a contemporary disciplined body. Women still use clothing to force their bodies into shape; control stockings and girdles, and indeed the return of the corset in couture fashion and even on the high street all betray a continued, narcissistic desire to create a perfect silhouette. Trinny and Susannah, in their popular UK TV show *What Not to Wear* (2003-2007), advocate figure control garments, encouraging women who don't have the required self-discipline to develop the 'corset of muscle' to use cloth to mould their bodies into an acceptable form on a daily basis. This quick fix, no exercise/no diet method is appealing, but not always successful, and *What Not to Wear* has been followed by a swathe of programmes promoting even more extreme forms of body modification from diet contests such as *Biggest Loser* (US/UK/Australia) (Slobotkin, 2005-2008) to shows glamorising plastic surgery such as *Ten Years Younger* (UK) (2004-2005) and *The Swan* (US) (Galan, 2004).

Beauty practices in general and cosmetic surgery in particular have been condemned by second wave feminists, such as Sheila Jeffreys, who says, “In the last two decades the brutality of the beauty practices that women carry out on their bodies has become much more severe. Today's practices require the breaking of skin, spilling of blood and rearrangement or amputation of body parts" (2005, p. 1). Jeffreys refers to the UN concepts of "harmful cultural/traditional practices" (UN, 1995) and suggests beauty practices should be included. However the rise in popularity and acceptability of cosmetic surgery, as the new corset, the new solution to body image issues, may well eventually supersede physical manipulation through clothing. As costs continue to decrease and disposable incomes continue to rise the radical feminists are helpless to prevent it from happening. Today plastic surgery is seen as a quick-fix solution to body image issues, 11.8 million procedures were carried out in the US in 2004 at a cost of $12.5 billion – a 44% increase on the previous year (American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery 2006). A corresponding 30% rise was seen in the UK in 2005. (Devine 2007). The popularity of radical makeover shows on TV has glamorised procedures entailing considerable surgical risks and encouraged women to take a chance to achieve their feminine ideal. Liposuction of the abdomen, buttocks and thighs top the list of most popular procedures. Breast augmentations, liposuction and abdominoplasty, have superseded the nose job as the graduation present of choice (Boodman 2004). Plastic surgery sites sell the perfect waist through images of models who probably never needed surgical enhancement, and before and after pictures of so-called ‘ordinary’ women. In her Washington Post article, Boodman cites psychologist Ann Kearney-Cooke, who blames the glorification of the ‘rail-thin’ large breasted women, for the desire in young women for this unnatural body type and says, "It's as though the question 'Who am I?' has been replaced with 'What image do I want to project?'".

The projection of an image, and the treatment of the body itself as a project, are key to the construction of contemporary body image. The social construction of bodies follows the evolution of bodily ideals. The cult of the size zero, which has received increased media attention over the last few years, reiterates the emphasis on the project of thinness as a current feminine ideal. Rory Freedman and Kim Barnouin begin their aggressively titled Diet Book, *Skinny Bitch* with the words, ‘OK. Use your head. You need to get healthy if you want to get skinny. Healthy = skinny. Unhealthy = fat.’ (2005) Today skinniness is glorified and fatness is vilified; the ideal is now a healthy, sporty, but extremely thin and difficult to attain physique. A number of recent (UK) TV ‘shock-you-mentaries’ such as *Superslim Me* (Phillips, 2007) and *Superskinny Me* (Larkin, 2007), have investigated the demands and effects of the ‘zero’ diet;

with already slim celebrities garnering phenomenal media attention by attempting to achieve size zero in a limited period of time. Louise Redknapp, wife of British soccer player Jamie, opened her home and slimmed down for the TV cameras. Inviting the world into this intensely private area of her life, she admitted that despite her original intention to find fault with the size zero concept, she could understand the appeal; that the buzz of being thin and the constant feeling of emptiness became addictive after a while, but that she was glad when the experiment was over. Dawn Porter reported in her *Daily Mail* column of her own size zero experience "What they're doing to achieve this kind of thinness isn't healthy. The Hollywood size zero is just a designer label for an eating disorder" (2007). The whole exercise, with young influential media stars, demonstrating on TV the power of the media gaze, exposes the impact and strength of that gaze, and the extent to which young women's bodies are influenced by the disciplining gaze of others.

Conclusion

Foucault's discipline theory is still applicable today; the observation of a person's body, or even the threat of observation, precipitates a regime of self-discipline. The application of this theory to the contemporary female body offers a framework to investigate the changing ways in which the body has been disciplined by cloth and other technologies. From the patriarchal politics of eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe and America, to the challenge to patriarchy presented by the radical feminists of the 1980s, a fundamental shift occurred in attitudes as to who had the right to control women's bodies. It is necessary now, however, to move on from the radical feminists approach to the body. Where the second-wave feminists positioned women as victims of patriarchy who needed to use their bodies to resist oppression, contemporary women in Western societies reject the label of victim (Crawford, 2006; Levy, 2005), claiming the right to choose which ideals they wish to conform to and the technologies that they use to achieve those ideals.

The critical shift in the disciplining of the body from the external application of cloth, to making physical changes to the body itself has begun to erode the role of cloth and fashion as part of the disciplining process. It is as though the body itself has become the cloth to be moulded to suit the prevailing fashion. Body control through cloth today is based on the use of hi-tech fabrics and garments which hug the contours of the untidy frame creating a so-called 'natural' body on which to hang fashion items. Fashion today is designed to show the body, not to conceal and remodel it.

The technologies disciplining the body are constantly evolving, from the corset to breast augementation, but not only have the technologies changed, the whole understanding of body discipline has changed. Modern self-discipline needs to be "more powerful, more demanding" (Entwistle, 2007, p. 284) than the corset because it cannot be simply laced tighter, or padded to create the desired shape, the modification of the body itself has become the project. It is the body itself that fascinates the modern media – not the 'fashions' which cover it. The body has become the show, rather than the frame on which to hang the fashion. The true legacy of the corset is the desire for an implausible body shape, and an attitude towards the body which, despite the odds, encourages women to believe that they can attain the new feminine ideal. This continued belief in the possibility of change is amply demonstrated by the increased popularity of cosmetic surgery and other body modifications. Through women's magazines and reality TV, the media as the key 'observer' of women's bodies in the early 21st century, is also a key driver of the disciplining of the body; influencing women's perceptions of their bodies and the actions that they take to control them.

Endnote

[1] "Somatechnics" is a newly coined term used to highlight the inextricability of soma and techne, of the body (as a culturally intelligible construct) and the techniques (dispositifs and 'hard technologies') in and through which bodies are formed and transformed. This term, then, supplants the logic of the 'and', indicating that techne are not something we add to or apply to the body, but rather, are the means in and through which bodies are constituted, positioned, and lived.
http://www.somatechnics.org/content/section/4/26/

Bibliography

American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, 2006, *Quick Facts: Highlights of the ASAPS 2006 Statistics on Cosmetic Surgery*. Viewed November 15, 2007, from The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, http://www.surgery.org/download/2006QFacts.pdf

Bartky, S L, 1997, 'Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power', in K Conboy, N Medina, & S Stanbury (eds.), *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory,* Colombia University Press, New York, pp. 129-154.

Biggest Loser, 2005-2008, television program, Reveille LLC, 25/7 Productions, 3 Ball Productions and NBC Universal Television.

Boodman, S, 2004, *For More Teenage Girls, Adult Plastic Surgery: Rise in Breast Implants, Other Procedures Raises Doubts About Long-Term Effects*. Viewed November 14, 2007, from Washington Post, http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A62540-2004Oct25?language=printer

Bordo, S, 1997, 'The Reproduction of Femininity', in K Conboy, N Medina, & S Stanbury (eds.), *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory,* Colombia University Press, New York, pp. 129-154, pp. 90-110.

Bordo, S, 1993, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body,* University of California Press, Berkeley.

Butler, J,1993, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex".* New York: Routledge.

Butler, J, 1989, Foucault and the Paradox of Bodily Inscriptions. *The Journal of Philosophy*, *86/11 November 1989*, 601-607.

Butler, J, 2006, *Gender Trouble,* Routeledge, New York.

Coursey, M, 2005, *Cautionary note as the corset makes a fashion comeback*. Viewed January 20, 2008, from www.nzherald.co.nz, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/category/story.cfm?c_id=42&objectid=10455848.

Crawford, K, 2006, Adult Themes, Macmillan Australia Pty Ltd, Sydney.

Daly, M, 1990, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism,* Beacon Press, Boston.

Davies, M, 1982, 'Corsets and Conception: Fashion and Demographic Trends in the Nineteenth Century', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, *vol. 24. no. 4*, pp. 611-641.

Devine, M, 2007, *They're so beautiful they could just die*. Viewed November 15, 2007, from The Sydney Morning Herald, http://www.smh.com.au/news/opinion/theyre-so-beautiful-they-could-just-die/2007/02/02/1169919532260.html

Entwistle, J, 2007, 'Addressing the Body', in M. Barnard (ed.), *Fashion Theory: A Reader*, Routledge, Abingdon, pp. 273-291.

Extreme Makeover, 2002-2007*,* television program, Endemol USA for ABC.

Foucault, M, 1984, 'Nietzsche, genealogy, history', in P Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault reader,* Pantheon, New York, pp. 77-100.

Foucault, M, 1975, *Surveiller et Punir.* Gallimard, Paris.

Foucault, M, 1998, *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality:1,* Penguin Books Ltd., London.

Freedman, R, & Barnouin, K, 2005, *Skinny Bitch,* Running Press Book Publishers, Philadelphia.

Gill, R, 2007, 'Postfeminist media culture: Elements of a sensibility', *European Journal of Cultural Studies, Vol. 10, No. 2*, pp. 147-166.

Giroux, H, 1991, *Introduction,* State of New York Press, Albany.

Heyes, C J, 2007, *Self-Transformations: Foucault, Ethics, and Normalized Bodies.* Oxford University Press, New York.

Jeffreys, S, 2005, *Beauty and Misogyny: Harmful Cultural Practices in the West,* Routledge, Hove.

Kunzle, D, 1982, *Fashion and Fetishism: Corsets, Tight-lacing and Other Forms of Body Sculpture,* Rowman and Littlefield, Totowa.

Levy, A, 2005, *Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture,* Schwartz, Melbourne.

Porter, D, 2007, *My quest for size zero*. Viewed November 14, 2007, from Daily Mail, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/femail/article.html?in_article_id=432939&in_page_id=1879

Rose, N, 2001, 'The Politics of Life Itself', *Theory Culture and Society, Vol. 18 No.6*, pp. 1-30.

Shilling, C, 1993, *The Body and Social Theory.* Sage Publications, London.

Steele, V, 1985, *Fashion and Eroticism: Ideals of Feminine Beauty from the Victorian Era to the Jazz Age,* Oxford University Press, New York.

Summers, L, 2001, *Bound to Please: A History of the Victorian Corset,* Berg, Oxford.

Superskinny Me: The Race to Size Double Zero, 2007, television program, A Betty Production for Channel 4.

Superslim Me (My Quest for Size Zero), 2007, television program, Mischief TV.

Ten Years Younger (2004-2005), television program, Maverick TV.

The Swan, 2004, television program, Galan Entertainment.

Turner, B S, 1984, *The Body and Society,* Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

Veblen, T, 1993, 'The Theory of the Leisure Class', in R Tilman (ed.), *A Veblen Treasury: From Leisure Class to War, Peace and Capitalism.* M. E. Sharpe, New York.

What Not to Wear (2003-2007), television program, BBC Production.

Wilson, E, 1992, 'The Postmodern Body', in E Wilson, & J Ash (eds.), *Chic Thrill,* Pandora, London.