

Credentials: Breast Slang and the Discourse of Femininity

Diane Naugler teaches in the Sociology Department at Kwantlen Polytechnic University in Surrey, British Columbia.

Abstract

This article situates a thematic discourse analysis of accumulated breast slang within the representational production of ideal female breasts in the service of normative femininity. These ideals also participate in a number of interrelated discourses including race and gender relations.

Résumé

Cet article situe une analyse thématique de discours d'argot accumulé pour décrire les seins contenu dans une production représentationnelle des seins de femmes idéals dans le service de la féminité normative. Ces idéals participent aussi à un nombre de discours corrélatifs qui incluent la race et les relations entre les sexes.

breasts: the girls, the twins, or, if you're my grandmother...the kittens.

hooters, jugs, tits, tatas, bazoomas, bosom, dirty pillows, breastlessness, boobies, boobs, knockers, titties, melons, kasabas, hoojies, knobs, honkers, bonkers, caldoons, mammies. yup. don't ask me why i know all those terms...haha

hahahahahah kittens.

or better yet... sweater puppies!! just to add to you [sic] little lexicon you have going here...¹

Breast slang, the various colloquial namings of female breasts, is a common and popular representational practice. As the Internet chat room conversation excerpted above exhibits, many people enjoy naming breasts, and even those who don't are familiar with a vast lexicon of synonyms for breasts, even though this practice most often goes unquestioned; as one online participant writes, "don't ask me why i know all those terms...." However, this is an important question. In researching my doctoral dissertation on breast reduction surgery, I began to notice a surprisingly large array of slang terms for breasts. Out of curiosity, I began recording these terms, and eventually compiled a list of over 700.² I have concluded that breast slang is symptomatic of the characteristics of the gendered social order, as it reciprocally constructs properly feminine and masculine subjects.

Why breasts? There is, of course, as American playwright Eve Ensler asserts, another female bodily feature available for cultural commodification (1998). However, it is not the vagina but the breasts that have come to operate as the central symbol of femaleness (Naugler 2004; Spadola 1998). As several feminist scholars have reported, in the contemporary Western cultural imaginary, breasts are central markers of femaleness

(Ayala and Weinstock 1979; Latteier 1998; Spadola 1998; Spiegel and Sebesta 2002; Young 1990). Given this culturally inscribed centrality of breasts to femaleness, breast talk, and breast slang in particular, can tell us quite a bit about ourselves and our society. A compelling example of the commonsensical positioning of "breasts" as the essence of femaleness comes from the popular American sit-com *Friends* (now in syndication).³ In an episode entitled, "The One with the Boobies," Chandler accidentally sees Rachel's "boobies" when he walks in on her taking a shower. Since the incident continues to feel awkward it is decided that to even things up, Rachel must see Chandler's "pee-pee."

Ross: Alright, alright. We're all adults here, there's only one way to resolve this. Since you saw her boobies, I think, uh, you're gonna have to show her your pee-pee.
Chandler: Y'know, I don't see that happening?
Rachel: C'mon, he's right. Tit for tat.
Chandler: Well, I'm not showing you my tat.
(Partridge 1997)

The humour here only works if it is understood by the audience that, in the arithmetic of gender, breast is to female as penis is to male. We must accept, as Ross says, that there is "only one way" to understand the gendered bodily correlations represented here. In so far as these body/gender equations are accepted as true and habitually performed, they come to stand for essential femaleness and manhood.

The centrality of breasts to the contemporary discourse of femininity can be explained by considering how central physical appearance is to the social construction of normative gendered meanings. As Susan Bordo significantly notes, "the rules for femininity have come to be culturally transmitted more and more through the deployment of standardized visual images" (Bordo 1989, 17). In contemporary cultural imagery breasts are depicted everywhere and are largely an aesthetic sign. That is, female breasts are not celebrated or scrutinized for what they do, but for how they are supposed to look. As Jana Sawicki observes, "normative femininity... has come to center more on

sexuality and appearance than on the maternal body" (Sawicki 1999). The vagina is not easily seen, and therefore it is the more visible breasts which have become the sign of recognizable femaleness.

This cultural focus on breasts as the defining physical feature of womanhood is shaped by social norms of masculinity and femininity as well as other social norms such as class, sexuality and heteronormativity, the public/private dichotomy, and the racialization of beauty (Hesse-Biber 2007). As expectations that guide our social belonging, social norms are partly communicated and enforced through how embodiment is languaged (Cameron 1992).

Normative standards of gendered embodiments are important determinants of self-image. While our bodies are read differently in different contexts and their meanings are not entirely constructed by normative standards, the inter-relations of self and society are neither arbitrary nor random. It is hard not to measure one's appearance in terms of its approximation to an ideal feminine or masculine body, even if one does not consciously accept such standards (Rubin *et al.* 2004; Waggoner and Hallstein 2001; Wolf 1990). In particular, women's sense of self as woman is partly conceived of in relation to/with her breasts (Young 1990) and an inevitable evaluation of her breasts' proximity to normative breasted representations. This self-evaluation of one's breasts is exemplified in the following quote from Pamela Brandt, who reconsiders her pubescent body in comparison to the form of a ubiquitous childhood toy:

I cupped my hands over my breasts and felt tears prick at my eyes. I hated my breasts. Unlike Barbie's, the left one was larger than the right. Not only was I asymmetrical, but my nipples were different colors, the left one dark rose while the right one was a lighter shade, almost cotton candy pink.
(Brandt 1999)

Accounts of these kinds of everyday negotiations are readily available. From toys to Hollywood movies and television programs and our various interactions with family and friends, attitudes about our bodies are developed in relation to the breasted feminine, and the

broader bodily discourses in and through which we live (Fredrickson *et al.* 1998; Gapinski 2003). The persuasive influence of these discursive relations is clearly exemplified and reinforced by breast slang.

It is partly through these normative representations of female breasts that prescriptive ideals of femininity and femaleness are constituted. In this way, linguistic and visual representations combine to constitute an ongoing and unrelenting surveillance of the "breastedness" (Young 1990) of femininity. Breasts are discursively figured as central to femininity. They function, as one example of breast slang indicates, as "credentials" (Appendix 1). However, simply having perceivable breasts is not enough to satisfy the standards of normative femininity. Contemporary breast slang reveals the important considerations of size, symmetry, proportionality, shape and colouration that also attend the socially constructed features of feminine breastedness.

An examination of contemporary breast slang offers the opportunity to account for and evaluate the persuasive force of breasted feminine ideals. The first section of this essay outlines my methodological approach to this analysis. In the second section I employ a thematic analysis of accumulated breast slang to discuss the representational production of the ideal female breasts and the demands these breasts necessarily impose on women's bodies. I then discuss how these ideals participate in the interrelated discourse of race as it pertains to the aesthetic norms of femininity. I conclude with a discussion of the antagonistic relations between women and men that are prescribed and authorized through this discursive landscape.

Methodology

As previously noted, as part of the process of thinking through the discursive production of normative femininity, over a four year period from 2002 to 2006 I compiled a list of over 700 slang terms and phrases for female breasts (Appendix 1). Each item on this list was used or heard in everyday conversation by myself and various informants, published in print, or on the web, or uttered in a television

show or movie.⁴ As such, this breast slang list is a snapshot of some of the "naturally occurring" (Cameron 2001, 145) discussions of female breasts and breastedness in circulation in popular culture during the period of collection. My methodology is informed by Deborah Cameron's approach to "penis slang" (1992). In her article, "Naming of Parts: Gender, Culture, and Terms for the Penis Among American College Students," Cameron explored college students' understandings of gender through a thematic evaluation of their interest and pleasure in the production of "penis slang."

In order to develop a sense of the dynamics of the prescriptive content of breast slang I have organized the collected breast slang terms into themes, or semantic categories (Cameron 1992). This organization was accomplished both deductively, by attending to the original context of each slang term (its purpose in speech or writing), and inductively as commonalities emerged across the collection (Dreidger *et al.*, 2004). In some cases the same term connoted two themes (e.g., mosquito bites, connotes both animal and size). In these instances the term was recorded within both themes. The analytic utility of this approach is that, as an undifferentiated collection, the list is overwhelming and difficult to read across in much the same way that it is difficult to read the terrain of the everyday for prescriptions of breasted femininity.

Through categorizing these slang terms by theme, dominant emphases and analogies within the list overall become more readily apparent. Twenty-one categories of over nine terms each emerged through this process. These categories, in order of volume, are: size (110), food (100), things/objects (71), engineered/constructed (44), lactative (35), animal/istic (33), weaponry (32), other body parts (31), his (28), twins (25), common variations (24), actions/actors (21), musical/dances (22), hers (21), places (14), nature/natural (14), explicitly racialized (13), buoyant (11), movement (10), and sport/balls (10). Of the 732 terms, 74 did not fit within any of these theories and were therefore not grouped. Through an analysis of the general list and its emergent themes, this paper explores

the discursive construction of ideal breasts, the mutually reinforcing normativities of race and femininity, and the implications of breast slang for relations between women and men.⁵

The Construction of Ideal Breasts

Self-conscious, you ask? It's true. In a society that reveres the bouncy boob as the all-powerful insignia of femininity, there are women trying to cover it up.

(Saunders 2006, 13)

In Westernized cultures no other aspect of female embodiment is as scrutinized and as emblematic of femininity as breasts (Spadola 1998) and very specific norms of breastedness function as an inescapable element of what it means to be female. Not only does "society...revere the bouncy boob," but for these breasts to match their owner, said owner must approximate powerful companion physical and behavioural signifiers of ideal femininity. That is, the ideal breasts simply cannot stand, or sit, on just any body. They can only exist on a body rigorously disciplined and managed in concert with the standards of normative femininity (Bordo 1995).

In perusing these expressions of breast slang it is illuminating to consider their prescriptive imperative. Exemplary of the operation of power central to normalizing discourses, the list is overwhelmingly negative. Terms such as beavertails, cantilever bust, hemispheres, mammoth mammary, two raisins on a bread board and others (Appendix 1) concern themselves with the abnormal, the excessive, the lacking, the unattractive and unruly (Foucault 1991). By contrast, only twenty-one terms, or just under 3%, are directly associable with a positive valuation (happies, love muffins, way to bliss, etc.). In drawing our attention to the supposedly negative or undesirable qualities of female breasts, the discourse of breasted femininity instructs us on the narrow parameters of normal or appropriate feminine display. Terms such as love, happiness and bliss may connote positive attributes of breastedness but, upon closer inspection across breast slang terminology, denote a very specific pair of female breasts. As cultural commentator Natalie Angier writes of North America's breast obsession, "What we

love is not the breast *per se* but the fantasy breast, the aesthetic breast of no practical value" (Angier 1999, 128).

I use the term "pair" here quite deliberately. The insistence on paired breasts is, perhaps, the most taken for granted aspect of the complex breasted standards of normative femininity. There is, as evidenced in the representational practices of breast slang, an overwhelming insistence on the duality of feminine breastedness. This prescription is evident in two complementary gestures across the representational landscape of breast slang. First, breasts as "twins" is a clear theme within the list. Twenty-five terms explicitly cultivate and reinforce the necessity of a woman's body presenting two breasts (chee chees, Mary Kate & Ashley's, twins, yin & yang, etc.) (Appendix 1). Second, when considered in the context of the list overall, the foundational construction of paired breastedness is evident. There are 662 terms evidencing breasts as plural, double or twinned. This emphasis clearly indicates that in order to be perceived as properly feminine one must possess (and display) two breasts. This insistence is foundational to the companion prescriptions of size, symmetry, and overall proportionality with which norms of feminine embodiment are more conspicuously concerned (Hesse-Biber 2007).

The material significance of this prescription is perhaps most apparent in the experiences of, and social supports for, women who have undergone a mastectomy. Testimonial literature by breast cancer survivors and medical practitioners offers evidence of the emotional prominence of the feminine norm of breasted duality in their experiences (Hewitt 2004). Western medical practitioners widely recognize the significance of psycho-social distress at the prospect of bodily disruption in post mastectomy health outcomes (Wong 1995). In Canada, breast reconstruction and/or augmentation for female mastectomy patients is a covered medical benefit in all provincial and territorial jurisdictions (Thunder Bay Breast Health Coalition 2006). In the United States "federal legislation requires insurance carriers who cover the cost of a mastectomy to also provide coverage for post-mastectomy breast reconstruction surgery" (Einstein Medical 2006).

These institutionalized considerations indicate that women's sense of themselves as women is common-sensically understood as "breasted." Therefore, prostheses and surgeries that restore women's embodied proximity to this two-breasted norm are understood as "medically necessary."

It is no surprise that the most populated theme amongst the collected slang terms is "size," given that proportionality is also a central concern of feminine embodiment. One hundred and ten terms relate to the size of women's breasts (abbondanzas, bazoom(s), hemispheres, plumpies, Winnebagos, etc.) (Appendix 1). This concern with size quite clearly indicates the discursive dynamics of normalization as proposed by Foucault (1991). That is, we understand the normal through attention to the abnormal. Specifically, these slang terms evaluate women's breasts as either "too big" or "too small." A woman whose breasts are labeled "hemispheres," or a woman whose breasts are termed "niblets" are both being compared to a breasted standard that they do not meet.

The breasted standard embodied by this specifically sized and symmetrical pair are, in keeping with the broader aesthetics of femininity (Bordo 1999 and 1989), an impossible ideal. The contradictory prescriptions for ideal feminine breast are as follows: voluptuous but perky, soft but firm, round, and symmetrical.⁶ Simultaneously, this ideal is necessarily the product of discourses of race, class and age as they coalesce around and through female breasts (Bartky 1990). Normative breasts are only ideal when they exist on ideal female bodies and, as a corollary, women who don't have ideal breasts can never have ideally feminine bodies (Hesse-Biber 2007). Women who display ideal breasts but fail to exhibit other status markers and behaviours of normative femininity are routinely labeled deviant and worthy of ridicule. That is, she can have "a nice rack" (set, pair, etc.) and still be deemed insufficiently feminine. On elderly women such breasts are systematically lampooned. On women of colour they are often read as evidence of sexual availability. On women with physical disabilities they may be, quite offensively, read as "a waste" in the

context of a society that routinely views differently abled women as asexual (Doucette 1990). And, particularly for white women, the stereotype of "the bimbo" specifically equates big breasts with limited intelligence.

Intertwining Discourses: Race and Femininity

The problem of the narrow standard of breasted femininity is a problem of the politics of representation, a problem of whose breasts get normalized and why. It is important to question the ideals of social reality that are supported by the language of breastedness. The coherence of characteristics attributed to and valued through the ideal or fantasy breast is a blatant contrast to the diversity of women's breasted embodiments. As noted by Angier,

On real women, I've seen breasts as varied as faces: breasts shaped like tubes, breasts shaped like tears, breasts that flop down, breasts that point up, breasts that are dominated by thick, dark nipples and areolae, breasts with nipples so small and pale they look airbrushed.

(Angier 1999, 128)

The problem with the breasted ideal is not simply its physiological (and gravitational) rarity but its insistence on the discursive situation of woman as other and the hierarchal valuation of these others across differences of race, class, age and abilities. That is, through the discourse of breasted femininity women and their bodies are produced as both spectacle ("Show us your tits!")⁷ and object of an evaluative gaze that categorizes with institutional authority, as indicated by the rising popularity of cosmetic surgical interventions on female breasts.

Gender is not the only discourse which shapes the normative representation of breasts and other meanings of female and male embodiments. Race is also a foundational component of breasted norms. Specifically, the whiteness of Western cultural standards of breasted femininity functions in concert with broader cultural discourses of race. Though it often remains unsaid, there is no doubt that the ideal breasts are white breasts. Only fourteen terms on my list (alabaster mounds, big brown eyes, casabas, Cheta & Carmelina,

chichibangas, chimichangas, chiquitas, Hottentots, Irish evidence, maracas, Montezumas, Tahitis, Tetons, and tooraloorals) explicitly reference breast colouration or ethnicity. Whiteness, or the socially constructed privilege in Westernized societies of living a non-racialized life (Frankenberg 1993), does indeed function as an unremarked structuring expectation throughout breast slang. In much the same way that perfectly sized breasts are constructed through discursive attention to "over-" and "under-sized" breasts, normalized racial privileges underlie specific attentions to colouration. However, a cursory scan of the landscape of popular culture will confirm this relatively unspoken insistence. Even the mainstreaming of hip hop culture does not reliably provide diverse representations of ideal femininity as is evidenced by the skin "lightening" controversy over the image of American recording artist Beyonce which appeared on the cover of the October 2005 issue *Vanity Fair* magazine.⁸

The continuance of racial/racist ideals and norms of feminine embodiment are also evidenced by the preponderance of animal imagery evident in the breast slang list. Thirty-three terms go so far as to explicitly analogize breasts as animals/of animals (bee stings, kittens, puppies, whales, etc.) (Appendix 1). These terms reproduce women as pets, kittens and puppies, in need of domestication. Such images serve to position women's breasts and, by extension, women as uncivilized. As such, animalistic breast slang trades on tired Western discursive legacies which historically positioned women and non-Caucasians as less human than, and in need of supervision by, white men. These associations within breast slang are examples of how, as Iris Marion Young notes, "...racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism and ableism, have not disappeared. Instead, they 'have gone underground, dwelling in everyday habits and cultural meanings of which people are for the most part unaware'" (Longhurst 2001, 121). In these ways, the hegemonic form of feminine breastedness can be seen as an example of the broader discourses of race and femininity which have historically "othered" women by representing

them as closer to nature than to culture (Ortner 1974).

Women, Men and Breasts: The Battle of the Sexes

In various presentations of this research, audiences commented upon the militaristic overtones of many of the entries. While many people are aware of the penchant of World War Two fighter crews for decorating their planes and munitions with the likenesses of popular pin up girls (Speiegel and Sebesta 2002) this practice seems an insufficient explanation for the militaristic theme in breast slang. Indeed, thirty-one entries (Antiaircraft guns, double barrel, torpedoes, 44s, etc.) (Appendix 1) equate women's breasts to weapons. One may wonder where such associations come from. It is not as if breasts are about to leap or, more precisely, launch themselves off women's torsos anytime soon.

In partial answer to this question, Michael Kimmel argues that, in a hyper-masculine sexual imaginary, men perceive women's beauty as "an act of aggression." He writes that women's beauty "invades men's thoughts, elicits unwelcome feelings of desire and longing, makes men feel helpless, powerless, vulnerable" (Kimmel 2004, 281). Drawing on the work of Beneke (1982) Kimmel argues that these feelings of masculine vulnerability in the face of female breastedness are apparent in the language used to describe women's sexuality. "A woman is a 'bombshell,' a 'knock out'... [or] 'dressed to kill'" (Kimmel 2004). When such metaphors are directed toward breasts specifically, said breasts are "guns," "cannons" or "field artillery." In this way, women's breasts are targets of the male gaze but this gaze is uncertain and, seemingly, intimidated. In a mainstream culture which remembers second wave feminism as engaged in the battle of the sexes, it comes as no surprise that women's breasts are conceived as weaponry. The sad implication of this theme for male-female social relations is the adversarial mistrust this language simultaneously instantiates and reinforces.

Conclusions

The ubiquity of slang for female breasts reinforces Foucault's understanding of normalization as an "effective exercise of power" in that, as suggested by sociologist Mary Louise Adams, "[a]s a form of social regulation, normalization defines and limits the choices that are available to us...The point is not that we simply try to meet social norms, it's that we *want* to" (emphasis in original, Adams 1997, 13). The norm of female breastedness presents women with an impossible standard, but it is a standard that is routinely experienced as desirable.

Undoubtedly, female breasts are a powerful symbol. But it is important to understand that, discursively, this power is a power of limitation. Feminine power is constructed only as the power to attract, rather than the power to act. The persuasive action of the heteronormative imperative is in the surveillance, as exemplified in breast slang, through which femininity is constituted (Wolf 1990; Young 1990).

To return to the questions of why and how it is that we all know a startling number of these terms, it is because they are examples of the surveillance created by and operated through the discourse of breasted femininity. Breast slang instructs all members of society in the narrow norms of femininity. Achieving the constructed pleasures of normative femininity never silences and, in fact, only adds to the adage that the measure of a woman is in the measurements of her figure. Ideal breasts do not reproduce ideal women, but rather construct ideals of breastedness for all women.

Appendix 1

abbondanzas, abundance, accoutrements, airbags, airports, alabaster mounds, angel cakes, ant bites, anti-aircraft guns, apple-dumpling shop, apples, areola borealis, artillery, assets, avocados, B-52s, babaloos, babies, babs, baby bumpers, baby's public house, balboas, bags, balangas, balcony, balls, balloons, bambas, bananas, bangers, bangles, baps, basketballs, bassoons, baubles, bazongas, bazonkas, bazookas, bazookers, bazoom/bazooms, bazoomas, bazoombas, bazoongies, beacons, beamers, beanbags,

beautiful pair of brown eyes, beauts, beaver-tails, bebops, bee bite(s), bee stings, beerglass(es), begonias, bells, belugas, Berks, Berkeleys, berries, Berthas, Betty Boops, big boppers, big brown eyes, bibble chunks, big McDuffs, big ones, bikini stuffers, billibongs, binoculars, biscuits, blamps, blinkers, blouse bunnies, blubber/blubbers, blubber bags, bobbers, bodacious tatas, bolt-ons, bombers, bombs, bombshells, bon bons, bongos, bonkers, boob, boobage/boobages, boohahs, boobers, boobies, boobs, boobus, boondogglers, booper, boops, bops, Bordens, bosom/bosoms, bouncy castles, boulders, bouncers, bowling balls, (the) boys, boy toys, bra buddies, bra stuffers, brace and bits, Bradford cities, Brad Pitts/bradleys, breastices, breasticles, breastworks, brisquets, Bristol bits, Bristol City, Bristols/bristols, B.S.H.'s (British Standard Handfuls), bronskis, bubbas, bubbies, bubbles (feminine celluloid bubbles), bubbly, bubs, buckets, buds, buffers, bulbs, bulges, bullets, bumpers, bumps, buns, buoys, bushel bubbly, bust, busters, busties, butterbags, butterballs, button/buttons, cabman's rests, caboodles, cachongas, cahongas, cakes, caldoons, cams, cannonball(s), cannons, cans, cantaloupes/cantaloupes, cantilever bust, cartons, carumbas, casbas/casabas, cat and kitties, catheads, cazongas, cazoombies, cha chas, chabbies/chabs, chabobs, challoopahs, chalubbies, champagne glass(es), chapel hat pegs, charlies, Charlie Wheelers, charms, chebs, chee-chees, cherry/cherries, cherry blossoms, chest, chest flesh, chestnuts, Cheta & Carmelina, chichibangas, chihuahuas, chickadee eggs, chimichangas, chiquitas, choozies, chubbas, chubbies, chugs, clackers, cleavage, cleave, cliff, coconuts, columns, cones, congas, co-ops, corkers, cow-tits, creamers, cream jugs, cream pies, credentials, Cupid's kettledrums, cupcakes, cups, curves, cushions, dairy arrangements, dairy/dairies, Dairy Queen, dangleberries, décolletage, diddies/diddys, dinner at Mom's, dingers, dinghies, dingleberries, dinner/dinners, dinner buckets, dirigibles, dirty pillows, ditties, dollies, Dolly Partons, domes, doodads, doorknobs, doozers, doozies, double barrel, Double Lotus Peak, double whammies, doughnuts, droopers, droppers, dubbies, duds, dueling banjos, dugs,

dumplings, dunes, dynamic duo, earmuffs, éclairs, eggplants, elders, enchiladas, equipment, Eve's peaks, eye-pokers, eyes, fainting fits, falsies, fast food outlets, fawns, feeding bottles, field artillery, filthy pillows flapjacks, flappers, flesh bulbs, flesh melons, fleshy bagpipes, flight deck, flip-flops, flatsie(s), floaters, floats, floppers, floppies, fondles, food-catchers, fog lifts, forebuttocks, fried eggs, front, front porch, fruppencies, fuck udders, (happy) fun bags, fun cushions, funnies, fun sacks, ga gas, gangsters, garbonzas, garbos, gazingas, gazombas, gazongas, gazonkas, ganzungas, gel-packs (implants), giganzos, (the) girls, gland canyons, glands, globes, globes of joy, globlets, globs, gobdobblers, goblets, Gobstoppers, golden bozos, golden orbs, golf balls, golf balls in socks, gondolas, gongas, goodies, goombas, Grammies, grandstand, grapefruit/ grapefruits, grapes, grillwork, guavas, gumdrops, guns, ha has, (a) handful, handles, hands, handsets, hand-warmers, hangers, happies, happy bags, happy mints, Harry and Junes, headers, headlamps, headlights, headphones, headrests, headsets, hefties, heifers, hemispheres, hills, Hindenburgs, hogans, honeydews, honkers, Hoo-has, hotcakes, Hottentots, howitzers, hubcaps, huffies, huge tracts of land, humdingers, hummers, hush puppies, ICBMs (inter-continental ballistic missiles), ice cream scoops, infected mosquito bites, Irish evidence, ironing board, jalopies, Jane Russells, jars, jawbreakers, Jell-O molds, Jerseys, Jersey Cities, jibs, jigglers, jiggly bits, jobbers, johnsons, Johnny Yellows, joy boys, joy toys, jubblies, jugs, jukes, jumbos, jujubes, kahoona/kahunas, kajoobies, kalamazoos, kanakas, kasongas, kazoos, kettledrums, (the) kittens, kittens' noses, knickknacks, knobs, knobbers, knobbies, knockers, kongas, kumquats, lactallickas, lactoids, (the) ladies, (the) larder shelf, lemons, Lewis & Witties, life preservers, light and bitter, lils, lollies, lip fodder, llamas, loaves, loblollies, lollipops, lollos, lotties, love bubbles, love fruit, love melons, love muffins, love pillows, lulus, lumps, lunch counter, lunch pail, lunch wagon, lungs, lung shot, lung warts, Madeline & Vera, mamajamas, maracas, macaroons, mamae, maboos, mammies, mammaries/mammories,

mammoryglands, mammoth mammary, mams, Manchester Cities/manchesters, mangoes/mangos, maracas, marangos, maraschinos, marbles, marimbas, marshmallows, marshmallow mountains, Mary Ellens, Mary Kate & Ashleys, Mary Poppins, mausers, meatballs, meat loaves, meat market, melon/melons, mezzainines, Mildreds, Miss/Mrs. Van-Neck, milk bar, milk bottles, milk cans, milk factories, milk fountains, milk jugs, milk shakes, milk shop, milk walk, milk wagons, milkers, Milky Way, Minneapolis/Saint Paul, missiles, mods & rockers, molehills, mommas, mondos, Montezumas, monuments, moo moos, mosquito bites, mother lode, mothers, mounds, mountain peaks, mountains, muchachas, muchachos, muffins, mulligans, mushmellons, nancies, nards, nature's founts, nay nays, nectarines, (les) nenes, niblets, nibs, nice ones, nice pair of eyes, nice pecs, ninja turtles, ninnies, ninny jugs, nippers, nipples, nipple holders, nippleoons, nippleos, nipples, nippons, nips, nippular area, nodes, nodules, noogies, norgs, norgies, norks, norkers, nose cones, nose warmers, nubbies, nubbins, nubs, nuggies, nugs, num-nums, nungas, nungers, nurples, oboes, oompahs, orbs, ottomans, overripe mangos, pair, pancakes, panthers, paperweights, paps, pasties, peaches, peaks, pears, pecs, pfd (personal floatation devices), pillows, pimples, ping pong balls, playground, pleasure pillows, plumpies, pomegranates, poonts, porcelain teacups, porch, prize faggots, promontories, prunes, PT boats, pumpkins, pumps, puppies, puppies with pink noses/pink nosed puppies, pylons, rack, rack(s), racks of meat, rack & pinion, raisins, rascals, raspberries, rib balloons, rib cushions, rib rack, rivets, (les) Roberts, rockets, (les) roploplos, rosebuds, roundies, rude parts, ruskin potatoes, sacks, sandbags, satellites, saucers, schooners, scones, scoops, second pair of eyes, set, shakers, shebas, shelf, shermans, shimmies, shirt puppies, shit-bags, shock absorbers, ski slopes, slugs, smiddys, smoothies, snack trays, snuggles pups, soccer balls, softballs, spaniels's ears, spark plugs, specials, spheres, sponge cakes, spuds, squirt guns, stack(ed), stacks, structural engineering, stuffing, sugarplums, sweater kittens, sweater meat, sweater mittens, sweater puffs, sweater

puppies, sweet rolls, swingers, tat as, tabs, Tahitis, tale of two cities, tamales, tater tots, tats, tattlers, teacups, teardrop(s), teat(s), testicles, tetons, thangs, thingamajigs, thirty-eights, thousand pities, threateners, thr' penny bits/three penny bits, thrups, tibbits, tidbits, tit bits, tit/tits, titskis, titters, tittie/titties, tomatahs, tomatoes, tom-toms, Tommy knockers, torraloorals, tooters, top ballocks/bollocks, top buttocks, top set, top 'uns, topside, torpedoes, tortillas, Totos, town and cities, tremblers, Trey-bits, trumpets, twangers, tweakers, tweedle-dee and tweedle-dum, tweeters, twin beds, twin mounds, twin peaks, (the) twins, t.b. (two beaubs), T.N.T. (two nifty tits), two puppies in a sack, two puppies fighting in a bag, two raisins on a bread board, twofers, tympanis, U-boats, udder(s), umlauts, upper deck, upper frontal superstructure, veiled twins, voos, wacky-wackys, wah wahs, Waldos, wangdoodles, wallopies, walnuts, waps, wap waps, water balloons, watermelons, water wings, way to bliss, well endowed, welts, whales, whamdanglers, whoppers, wind-jammers, wine glass(es), witless daughter, willets, Winnebagos, wollopies, woofers, yabos/yabbos, yams, ya yas, yin & yang, you know whats, Zeppelin race, Zepplins, 44s...

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers of *Atlantis* whose comments greatly improved and helped focus this piece. Thanks also to Kate Campbell for her encouragement and keen editorial eye.

Endnotes

1. Excerpts from a chat thread at <http://saycellardoor.livejournal.com/74349.html>.
2. For a fully referenced version of this list, see: Naugler, "To Take a Load Off: A Contextual Analysis of Gendered Meaning(s) in Experiences of Breast Reduction Surgery," York University, 2004.
3. Throughout the mid to late 1990s this show was among the highest rated prime-time television programs. It continues to garner large audiences in syndicated distribution.

4. My list is not exhaustive and there are longer published lists of breast slang. See "Joe Bob's Canonical 'Hooter' List" at www.joebobbriggs.com/list/hooter.txt.

5. It is not the goal of this paper to offer a systematic analysis of these categories, rather they are presented as an illustration of the tool set through which the contentions of the paper have been built. In future work in this area I hope to explore further the themes that emerged across this list and their role in constructions of normative femininity.

6. This conception was developed in discussions with approximately 800 students in various undergraduate Women's Studies and Sociology classes at York University, the University of Alberta, the University of Lethbridge, and Acadia University from 2001 to 2006.

7. The cultural legibility of this exhortation remains a potent repudiation of women's decision-making and intelligence. It is a statement of patriarchal authority which acknowledges women's bodies but not our minds.

8. This absent/present structuring of whiteness into feminine normativity is fundamental. For example, an Internet search under "breasts" will reveal a wide array of subjects from the medical to the pornographic. But, if one wants to see/read about non-white breasts one must qualify such a search with identifiers such as 'black' or 'Asian'. In which case, not coincidentally, the ratio of pornographic to other materials increases dramatically!

References

- Adams, M. *The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997.
- Angier, N. *Woman: An Intimate Geography*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999.
- Ayalah, D. and I. Weinstock. *Breasts: Women Speak About Their Breasts and Their Lives*. New York: Summit Books, 1979.
- Bartky, S. "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power," *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology*

- of Oppression. New York: Routledge, 1990, pp. 63-82.
- Beneke, T. *Men on Rape: What They Have to Say About Sexual Violence*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982.
- Bordo, S. "The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity: A Feminist Appropriation of Foucault," *Gender/Body/Knowledge: Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing*, A. M. Jaggar and S. R. Bordo, eds. New York: Routledge, 1989.
- _____. *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995.
- _____. *Twilight Zones: The Hidden Life of Cultural Images from Plato to O.J.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999.
- Brandt, P. "Barbie Buys a Bra," *The Barbie Chronicles: A Living Doll Turns Forty*, Y. Z. McDonough, ed. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999.
- Briggs, J. "Joe Bob's Canonical 'Hooter' List." www.joebobbriggs.com/list/hooter.txt. November, 11, 2006.
- Cameron, D. "Naming of Parts: Gender, Culture, and Terms for the Penis Among American College Students," *American Speech* 67 (1992): 367-82.
- _____. *Working with Spoken Discourse*. London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2001.
- Doucette, J. "Redefining Difference: Disabled Lesbians Resist," *Lesbians in Canada*, S. Stone, ed. Toronto: Between the Lines Press, 1990.
- Driedger, S., V. Crooks and D. Bennett. "Engaging in the Disablement Process over Space and Time: Narratives of Persons with Multiple Sclerosis in Ottawa, Canada," *Canadian Geographer* 48:2 (2004): 119-36.
- Einstein Medical. "Breast Removal and Reconstruction After Mastectomy." www.docshop.com/education/cosmetic/breast/reconstruction. Accessed December 17, 2006.
- Enslar, E. *The Vagina Monologues*. New York: Villard Books, 1998.
- Foucault, M. "Introduction," *The Normal and the Pathological Zone*. New York: Zone Books, 1991, pp. 7-24.
- Frankenberg, R. *The Social Construction of Whiteness: White Women, Race Matters*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.
- Fredrickson, B., T. Roberts, S. M. Noll, D. M. Quinn, J. M. Twenge, "That Swimsuit Becomes You: Sex Differences in Self-Objectification, Restrained Eating, and Math Performance," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 75.1 (1998): 269-84.
- Gapinski, K. "Body Objectification and 'Fat Talk': Effects on Emotion, Motivation, and Cognitive Performance," *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research* (May 2003): 377-88.
- Hesse-Biber, S. *The Cult of Thinness*, 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2007.
- Hewitt, M. *Meeting Psychosocial Needs of Women with Breast Cancer*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2004.
- Kimmel, M. *The Gender of Violence, The Gendered Society*, 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Latteier, C. *Breasts: The Women's Perspectives on An American Obsession*. New York: The Haworth Press, 1998.
- Longhurst, R. "Managing Managerial Bodies," *bodies: exploring fluid boundaries*. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Naugler, D. "To Take a Load Off: A Contextual Analysis of Gendered Meaning(s) in

- Experiences of Breast Reduction Surgery." Ph.D. dissertation. York University, 2004.
- NBC. "Did *Vanity Fair* Lighten Beyonce's Skin?" www.msnbc.msn.com/id/9745324. October 6, 2006.
- Ortner, S. "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?," *Women, Culture, and Society*, M. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere, eds. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974.
- Partridge, D. "Synopsis: The One With the Boobies." www.friends.tv.org/zz113.html. 1997. accessed December 11, 2006.
- Rubin, L. R., C. J. Nemeroff and N. F. Russo. "Exploring Feminist Women's Body Consciousness," *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 28 (2004): 27-37.
- Saunders, S. "Off Her Chest: One Student Explains Why She Chose Breast Reduction Surgery," *The Athenaeum* (23 November 2006).
- Sawicki, J. "Disciplining Mothers: Feminism and the New Reproductive Technologies," *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader*, J. Price and M. Shildrick. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- "saycellardoor: breasts:" <http://saycellardoor.livejournal.com/74349.html>. November 8, 2006.
- Spadola, M. *Breasts: Our Most Public Private Parts*. Berkeley: Wildcat Canyon Press, 1998.
- Spiegel, M. and L. Sebesta. *The Breast Book: An Intimate and Curious History*. New York: Workman Publishing, 2002.
- Thunder Bay Breast Health Coalition. "Cost of Reconstructive Surgery." www.breasthealthnw.ca. as accessed December 7, 2006.
- Waggoner, C. E. and D. L. Hallstein. "Feminist Ideologies Meet Fashionable Managing the Agency/Constraint Conundrum," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 21 (2001): 26-46.
- Wolf, N. *The Beauty Myth*. Toronto: Random House, 1990.
- Wong, A. "The Inhumanity of Fairness: Rationing Resources for Reconstructive Breast Surgery," *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 152 (1995): 577-79.
- Young, I. "Breasted Experience: The Look and the Feeling," *Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays in Feminist Philosophy and Social Theory*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990.