

dating and relationships. Ellison further complicates the question by introducing the idea of “fat pride” to argue that rejection and isolation still exist even as fat discrimination is identified. Moreover, a shift to fat acceptance and concrete strategies that allow individuals to feel accepted are needed to fully engage in the notion and practice of fat pride.

Lastly, the concepts and experience of fatness in everyday life were thoroughly discussed in the remaining chapters. These chapters critiqued the fashion, medical, and fitness industries for not catering to fat people and often engaging in harmful practices against them. Folks engaged in the work of fat acceptance and fat liberation resisted the over-prescription of addictive drugs by physicians, the constant pressure to exercise despite the fact that exercises and exercise classes for fat bodies hardly exist, and the belief that fat people should only dress in drab billowing sacks, among other issues.

Although this text is an historical analysis of one twenty-year period, it convincingly argues that the body positivity and fat acceptance movements have not depoliticized the fat activism movement, but instead offer an important addendum to naming and organizing around fat oppression. More than this, Ellison explores and troubles the taken-for-granted notions of fat pride and inserts an intersectional critique to show the limitations of this movement during the 1977–1997 period. The book also offers an avenue for further research into what she refers to as the “silences” and “missing histories” of the fat activism movement.

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FAT STUDIES IN CANADA: (RE)MAPPING THE FIELD

Editors: Allison Taylor, Kelsey Ioannoni, Calla Evans, Ramanpreet A. Bahra, Amanda Scriver, and May Friedman.

Toronto: Inanna Publications, Forthcoming May 2023.

REVIEWED BY ANDREA LAMARRE

In the Canadian context, Fat Liberation as a movement and Fat Studies as a discipline embed rich histories and deep connections between academic, activist, and artistic, community-based work. From *Pretty Porky and Pissed Off's* stage-setting work on fat representation (Taylor & Mitchell) to interdisciplinary scholarship exploring fat body stories (e.g., Andrews & Friedman), pushing back against alarmist “obesity epidemic” discourses (e.g., Ellison et al.), and thickening connections between fatness and social justice (e.g., Friedman et al.), Fat Studies continue to offer vital perspectives that centre and celebrate fatness. *Fat Studies in Canada: (Re)Mapping the Field* collects and extends a body of scholarship and activist art around fatness in Canada. The volume features chapters that build on each other to weave a tapestry of theoretical, personal, and embodied responses to the provocation of what it means to be fat in Canada. I was compelled by the resistance this volume offers to calls for easy answers—how it pushes into and embraces complexity and asks critical questions.

To position myself as a reviewer, I am an early career academic and eating disorder researcher; I am a white, thin, cisgender woman with lived experience of an eating disorder. I do not claim expertise over what it means or feels like to be fat—those

who are best equipped to teach and research in this area are fat people. This volume is an incredible resource that centres the vitality of fatness and that generously invites the reader into various lived experiences of fatness. Importantly, the book offers a balance between deconstruction and hope, offering meditations on potential future directions for fat activism and communities in Canada.

Throughout the volume, creators offer artistic interventions, including poems and visual art, echoing the importance of art to fat activism both in and beyond Canada (Edison and Notkin; Jones and Pausé; Taylor and Mitchell). These contributions are interspersed with rich prose offerings that bring together academic and personal, lived, embodied experiences. Essays and articles draw on a body of research from across the social sciences and humanities. Together, the collection speaks on multiple registers to its readers.

The interdisciplinary nature of the volume is a key strength. Literary analyses, including an exploration of the constructions of fatness and slimness in Anne of Green Gables (Bruusgaard) and an analysis of fatness and social class in Québec (Laurin), anchor the volume in Canadian popular culture. A critical policy analysis (Ioannoni) and response to the 2020 Obesity Canada Guidelines (Carson) offer clear policy suggestions and directions grounded in fat studies. Particularly relevant to the pandemic landscape in which the volume was written is Tidgwell and Shanouda's reflection on COVID-19 triage protocols, which lays bare the horror of hierarchizing bodies in COVID-19 responses and offers concrete strategies for re-imagining an ethical response.

Another key strength of the volume is its engagement with social justice across various spaces of belonging. For instance, in a duoethnographic contri-

bution, Adodo and Warsame bring to life the ways in which “[f]or fat Black people in both Africa and the diaspora, the power-knowledge relations of fatness, gender, and Blackness takes multiple forms” (109). The authors highlight how layers of cultural expectations in Africa and diasporic contexts generate a web of power relations overlaid onto and in interaction with the body stories they tell. Reflecting on generating an archive of trans experiences of weight stigma, Rinaldi et al. share how participants in their work “confront body policing that they experience at the intersection of their gender identity and their body weight, shape, or size” (183). Through these and other pieces, authors invite rich, nuanced discussions of how fatness is not experienced or interpreted in a silo of its own. Theory is woven through the contributions; from engagement with Puar’s debility politics (Bahra) to Berlant’s cruel optimism (Crawford) to theorizing joy and vitality around fatness (Munro), authors generate deep analyses of fat experiences. This engagement provides fertile ground for continued theoretical and methodological exploration and thoughtful approaches to blending theory and lived experience.

The afterword not only brings the various threads of the volume together and also situates all of this within the particular temporality of pandemic life. This piece also invites the reader to continue asking questions—rather than offering full closure, it invites an opening to difference and engagement. It offers questions about how we engage with fatness, with “Canadianess,” and with normativity. These openings are so welcome.

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FEARING THE BLACK BODY: THE RACIAL ORIGINS OF FAT PHOBIA

Sabrina Strings
New York: NYU Press, 2019

REVIEWED BY KRISTEN A. HARDY

Feminist scholars have devoted significant attention to exploring how the present-day cultural preferences for female thinness, as well as the myth of the “obesity epidemic,” have arisen out of highly gendered historical and contemporary discourses and practices.

In her debut monograph, *Fearing the Black Body*, Sabrina Strings, an

Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Irvine, brings an intersectional, racially attuned perspective to this conversation. Through her meticulously researched and carefully argued study, Strings examines the role of white supremacy (and, specifically, anti-Black racism) in the historical trajectory of contemporary obsessions with weight, size, and bodily form. While not the first scholar to reflect on the role that racialization has played in fatphobia, Strings’s book offers a particularly sustained, detailed, and nuanced account of the mutual constitution of raced, gendered, classed, and sized understandings of humanity, which have emerged over the past half-millennium of Western thought.

Strings deftly moves through a wealth of written and visual archival materials that gesture toward an early modern “predilection for plumpness” (24), followed by an increasingly complex Western cultural relationship with fatness that emerges and transforms over time. Focusing her study around the views of key figures in philosophy, art, literature, media, science, and medicine, the author takes her reader on a winding journey through European and, subsequently, American attitudes, which cannot simply be reduced to a unidirectional path toward valorizing thinness and demonizing fatness. Rather—and this is the book’s most significant and game-changing contribution—Strings considers how these perspectives emerged in ongoing interaction with white populations’ changing beliefs about, and relationships with, racialized people, especially Black Africans and African Americans. Unsurprisingly, women’s bodies, both Black and white, dominate the desires and anxieties of the mostly male artists and authors discussed throughout the book.