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UNAPOLOGETICALLY HER: A NOMADIC-INTERSECTIONAL CASE STUDY ANALYSIS ON LIZZO AND JILLIAN MICHAELS

Alexia Berlynn Martinez
California State University – San Bernardino

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UNAPOLOGETICALLY HER: A NOMADIC-INTERSECTIONAL CASE STUDY
ANALYSIS ON LIZZO AND JILLIAN MICHAELS

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Communication Studies

by
Alexia Berlynn Martinez
August 2022

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Approved by:

Dr. Mariam Betlemidze, Committee Chair, Communication Studies

Dr. Thomas F. Corrigan, Committee Member

Dr. Rod Metts, Committee Member

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ABSTRACT

With various iterations of the meaning and representation of a feminist woman, feuds arise, especially amongst public figures who capture the media's attention. This paper analyzes the discourse amongst two communities with opposing views about feminist representations: the body-positive community and the fitness community. Utilizing an intersectional theoretical framework allows us to understand the levels of oppression and marginalization members of the body-positive community, specifically plus-size Black women, endure while also running up against the fitness community. There is no better illustration of this phenomenon than the public skirmish between Lizzo and Jillian Michaels. The goal of this case study is to examine how intersectionality between Lizzo and Michaels influences their respective communities' understanding and perception of feminism. This analysis allows us to study how intersectionality influences feminist interpretations of marginalized groups and will enable us to rethink feminism through nomadic thought in an attempt to normalize marginalized bodies.

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Mom, thank you for instilling in me a passion for learning, strong work ethic, and confidence to reach my full potential. Thank you for doing everything possible to put me on a path toward success. You are the foundation and supportive pillar in all my achievements inside and outside the classroom.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

As society slowly shifts away from the dominant beauty and body standard, any clash between the fitness and body-positive communities tends to spark the media's attention- especially when the parties share different opinions and perceptions of feminism (AM2DM, 2020; AM2DM by BuzzFeed News, 2020; Aviles, 2020; Esmonde, 2020; Hines, 2020; Lizzo, 2020b; Michaels, 2020; Solé, 2021; Yandoli, 2020). The recent clash between the pop singer and body-positive activist Lizzo and fitness guru and feminist Jillian Michaels (Aviles, 2020; Esmonde, 2020; Hines, 2020; Shaw Nevins & Drumond, 2020; Senyonga & Luna, 2021; Solé, 2021; Yandoli, 2020).

American pop artist, Lizzo, rose to fame for her incredible music artistry in singing, rapping, songwriting, and playing the flute. While her musical talent has earned her a spot on the Billboard Hot 100, she is also famously known for her presence as a body-positive, Black, plus-size woman (Senyonga & Luna, 2021; Yandoli, 2020). As a feminist, Lizzo has gained attention for her social media posts primed around social change (Senyonga & Luna, 2021). As a Black plus-size woman, Lizzo breaks ground for how she presents herself in life. Her physical appearance, race, and gender intersections affect how society views her. Not only does Lizzo share her feminist viewpoints, but she also embraces her body online and in-person despite society's standard of what a woman

should look like (Lizzo, 2020a; Lizzo, 2020b; Senyonga & Luna, 2021; Yandoli, 2020). Rather than following Western standards of hiding the female body that does not fit the “small” beauty mold, Lizzo accepts her body and encourages others to do the same (Lizzo, 2020a; Lizzo, 2020b). Despite her musical talent, society constantly scrutinizes Lizzo for her physical appearance (AM2DM, 2020; AM2DM by BuzzFeed News, 2020; Lizzo, 2020b; Senyonga & Luna, 2021; Yandoli, 2020).

In 2020, Jillian Michaels joined the limelight for her negative comments on Lizzo (AM2DM, 2020; AM2DM by BuzzFeed News, 2020). In an AM2DM (2020) interview by BuzzFeed News, Jillian Michaels shared her opinions on Lizzo. “Why are we celebrating [Lizzo’s] body? Why does it matter? Why aren’t we celebrating her music? ‘Cause it isn’t going to be awesome if she gets diabetes” (AM2DM, 2020). This interview sparked media attention because Michaels was accused of body shaming Lizzo (Aviles, 2020; Chiu, 2020; Esmonde, 2020; Hines, 2020; Solé, 2021; Yandoli, 2020). Jillian Michaels is most notably known as a fitness trainer personality, and her role as the former host of the weight-loss show *The Biggest Loser* (Yandoli, 2020). As this video circulated, Michaels took to Instagram to defend her comment (Michaels, 2020). Soon after, there was speculation that Lizzo indirectly responded to the circulating controversy through an Instagram post (Lizzo, 2020a).

The clash between these two women allows us to see the different views of feminism that could benefit from intersectional insight (Collins, 2015).

Intersectionality is a valuable framework for understanding the combination of social categories that shape an individual's oppressive life experience (Collins, 2015; Crenshaw, 1989). These social categories that bear systematic discrimination include race, gender, sexuality, ability, class, and so forth. This perspective gives us a way to look at how layers of oppression overlap and reinforce systems of discrimination. To lean toward a more progressive feminist milieu, nomadic feminism introduces a new approach to analyzing how intersectional women like Lizzo can serve as nomadic subjects for social change (Braidotti, 2011).

Nomads are continuously traveling individuals who resist being fixed to one place. As a result of constant migration, nomads resist any hegemonic sedentary practices and are always in a constant state of change. Braidotti (2011) proposed the concept of nomadic feminism, partly, as a response to her critique of how feminism's history is too sedentary, linear, and fixed. Feminism should be nomadic as it is always in a constant state of change and should not be hegemonic because it does not account for the messy complexities and disadvantages marginalized women endure, especially since these fixed ideologies and historic disadvantages for intersectional women are constructed by white patriarchy. Braidotti (2011) introduces the concept of nomadic subjects who are individuals that refuse dominant social codes, linear thought, and fixed ideologies imposed on them. I argue that Lizzo, her image, and her messages of self-love can be described as nomadic in how she challenges White patriarchal

society. Analyzing Lizzo as a nomadic subject causes a reaction that potentially serves to disrupt White patriarchy. The paper examines interviews, social media posts, and news stories, applying intersectionality and nomadism.

Utilizing intersectionality and nomadism allows us to understand the levels of oppression and marginalization the body-positive community faces, not only in society but also, in this instance, against the fitness community that Michaels represents. The emphasis on intersectionality and the social categories cross sections of what makes Lizzo, Lizzo, led to this research. Through this, I ponder how Lizzo utilizes her intersectional identity to raise awareness of discriminatory social issues, while becoming as Braidotti's (2011) nomadic subject. I argue that Lizzo is a nomadic subject, and I want to better understand how this emerged or how we might understand or see this from the debates. Analyzing the discourse between Lizzo and Michaels will help answer the following research questions: RQ1: Did Lizzo become a nomadic subject, and, if so, how? RQ2: What themes emerge from the clash between Lizzo and Jillian Michaels? RQ3: How does intersectionality inform the study of contrasting interpretations of feminism in relation to the body positive movement? I used multiple sources of evidence such as social media posts, news stories about the clash between the two celebrities, and audience comments to extract data to answer my research questions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Intersectionality

The origins and ideas of intersectionality existed long before the term was coined (Brah & Phoenix, 2004; Collins, 2015; hooks, 1984; Vickery & Rodríguez, 2021). One of the first articulations was from Sojourner Truth in her speech “Ain’t I a Woman?” demonstrating the dynamics and systematic oppressive differences between White and Black women in the mid-1800s (Brah & Phoenix, 2004). Brah and Phoenix (2004) assert that Truth’s identity is constructed in the power relations of White women and all men, highlighting the overlapping troubles of racism and sexism. Anna Julia Cooper and Ida B. Wells-Barnett shared similar accounts of Black women’s systematic oppression based on the simultaneous factors of race and gender (Collins, 2015; Vickery & Rodríguez, 2021).

Feminist scholarship should not primarily look at gender as the only determining factor in women’s experiences. Those who primarily focus on sexism have not experienced concurring elements of racism and classism (hooks, 1984). The production of the intersectional layers of race, class, and gender have also been identified in the Latina, Asian American, and Indigenous communities by scholars such as Audre Lorde, Gloria Anzaldua, Angela Davis, and others (Collins, 2015). Although intersectionality did not have a formal name before its publication in 1989 by Kimberlé Crenshaw, there are a plethora of scholars who display the ideas of interlocking oppressions in literature (Brah & Phoenix, 2004;

Collins, 2015; hooks, 1984; Vickery & Rodríguez, 2021). It is vital to acknowledge and recognize the multiple contributors to the development and study of intersectionality, especially as intersectional genealogies are developed by Black female scholars and other women of color.

Intersectionality provides an analytical framework for understanding the multiple overlapping layers of oppression an individual faces. Society fails to recognize Black women's oppression (Crenshaw, 1989; hooks, 1984). "Black men may be victimized by racism, but sexism allows them to act as exploiters and oppressors of women. White women may be victimized by sexism, but racism enables them to act as exploiters and oppressors of black people" (hooks, 1984, p. 15). White women and Black men can contribute to oppression with a degree of privilege. Black women's experiences are unique as they suffer from both layers of racism and sexism. With strong opposition to viewing race and gender identity as separate entities, intersectionality encompasses the multilayered identities contributing to an individual (Crenshaw, 1989; 1991; hooks, 1984). Intersectionality has evolved to include even more layers of oppressive categories in identity formation (Collins, 2015).

Intersectionality includes overlapping levels of oppression such as race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age (Collins, 2015; Crenshaw, 1991). Collins (2015) adds that these factors of oppression do not operate as "unitary, mutually exclusive entities, but as reciprocally constructing phenomena that in turn shape complex social inequalities" (p. 2). These

characteristics of inequality should not be observed one at a time. Multiple, complex layers of inequalities form intersectionality that shapes an individual's life experience and perspective on life (Collins, 2015). Nash (2008) suggests reevaluating who falls under intersectionality. She argues that if intersectionality aims to recognize adversity and push towards inclusion by identifying multiple levels of oppression individuals face, it should include all women. However, in doing so, we may brush away the social injustices that marginalized groups encounter, such as Black women. Individuals' intersectional life experiences differ based on the premise of the degree of privilege. Although White women claim gender discrimination, they still have the degree of privilege for being White (hooks, 1984).

There is an irony in concerned individuals who want to combat racism and sexism by adopting a hierarchal top-down approach to address discrimination. The fight for equality should begin with those most disadvantaged from their intersectionality. Although it is difficult to begin from a bottom-up approach, this will benefit those who suffer the most and eventually benefit others with singular disadvantages (Crenshaw, 1989). This first begins by starting where intersectionality grew its origins, Black women (Brah & Phoenix, 2004; Collins, 2015; hooks, 1984; Vickery & Rodríguez, 2021).

Shaw Nevins and Drumond (2020) examine the presence of marginalization and the intersectional layers of Blackness and fatness. They illuminated the significance of intersectionality through a recent media event,

Jillian Michaels' comments on Lizzo. The growing discussion of intersectionality has entered popular culture for female celebrities like Lizzo, Solange Knowles, and Ashley Judd to address intersectionality (Flood, 2019). Flood's (2019) study focuses on the popularity of the intersectional term through celebrity culture and how they broadcast intersectional feminism. Celebrities like Amy Schumer and Tina Fey use intersectionality "while maintaining privileged positionalities that enable performances of White feminism" (Flood, 2019, p. 423). The profitable trendiness of intersectionality opens the term to become a buzzword with no theoretical value. However, Flood (2019) firmly argues that intersectionality can be successfully used to investigate White patriarchy and bring attention to the oppressing experiences celebrities endure, like Lizzo. Lizzo has publicly commented that her messages of self-love are not meant for profit (Senyonga & Luna, 2021). Despite her high-ranking celebrity and socioeconomic status, Lizzo still suffers from the intersectional layers that contribute to the oppression and discrimination she endures. She still succumbs to public scrutiny that does not save her from Michaels' words. Senyonga and Luna's (2021) intersectional approach focuses on how society fails to recognize Lizzo's role of being a plus-size Black woman: "fatness plus Black womanhood cannot be overlooked or separated from one another in comprising Lizzo's identity" (p. 4). Recognizing intersectionality and feminism can also broaden the conversation for celebrities and the public (Flood, 2019; Senyonga & Luna, 2021).

Lizzo shares that her “mere existence is a form of activism especially for the body-positive community” because she is a Black plus-size woman in a position of celebrity broadcasting power (Chiu, 2020). Whether musically, lyrically, physically, or virtually, Lizzo preaches self-love, self-acceptance, and body positivity for marginalized women who do not fit society’s small mold of beauty (Chiu, 2020; Esmonde, 2020; Hines, 2020; Yandoli, 2020). This study opens the conversation for incorporating nomadic subjectivities and intersectionality. With a prime focus on Lizzo and Michaels, this paper utilizes a nomadic-intersectional lens to study the discourse between both parties. This paper serves as a crutch to shed light on how intersectionality affects women and their feminist views while suggesting the notion that Lizzo’s actions can be viewed as nomadic. One of the guiding assumptions of intersectional knowledge that Collins (2015) shares are that individuals are placed within “intersecting systems of power [having] different points of view on their own and others’ experiences with complex social inequalities” (p.14). Therefore, this study will apply this notion in analyzing Jillian Michaels and Lizzo. To apply this nomadic-intersectional framework, first, we must consider the visual aspect of our culture as seen in the concept of spectacle

The Spectacle

Society resides within the hypertension version of the spectacle. Although we are far from Debord’s (1967/2020) time when television and print advertisement were dominant, society has shifted to where the internet merges

nearly every visual medium under the spectacle (Nunn, 2019). However, the spectacle is not always digitized; it is the lens through which we view the world. Although Debord published his text *The Society of the Spectacle* in 1967, the principles discussed are applicable, ever-present, and relevant today and particularly when discussing the case of Lizzo's work as a pop star and a body-positive movement icon.

Debord (2020) argues that we live in a society of the spectacle and that images mediate all social relationships. Life is interpreted as “the decline of being into having, and having into merely appearing” (Nunn, 2019, p. 79-78). Social life experiences have become a representation, and everything is becoming a source for the spectacle. The spectacle is alienating by definition; it mediates human interaction through images (Debord, 1967/2020). For Debord (1967/2020), people have become alienated from themselves and others and fall under the spell of capitalist-driven spectacle; “the spectacle is capital accumulated to the point that it becomes images” (para. 34). However, the spectacle is beyond a collection of images; it is life mediated through images.

As an instrument of capitalism, the spectacle presents itself as a form of reality that can not be questioned—further arguing that the spectacle passively monopolizes appearance without leaving room for question (Debord, 1967). “The spectacle cannot be understood as a mere visual excess produced by mass-media technologies. It is a worldview that has actually been materialized, a view of a world that has been objectified” (Debord, 1967, para. 5). The spectacle is

mere representation and misrepresentation deemed to be the truth. Debord (1967) argues that representations of reality have more meaning than reality itself. Through the inverted image of reality and the demands of capitalism, the spectacle conveys what society's desires should be.

Considered in its own terms, the spectacle is affirmation of appearance and affirmation of all human life, namely social life, as mere appearance. But the critique which reaches the truth of the spectacle exposes it as the visible negation of life, as a negation of life which has become visible (para.10).

In the case of Lizzo, this negation of life may be seen in the constant critique of her body as a spectacle that defies the mainstream expectations of the female body. Through Debord's spectacle, Emilie Nunn (2019) utilizes his notion to analyze how applicable this framework is in our technologically advanced society. Nunn (2019) suggests an intriguing notion about how social media grants users the liberating power to fight the spectacle. We will see this in the analysis section, where I analyze how Lizzo implicitly responded to the attacks from Jillian Michaels. However, the decision of what is shared and posted online can arguably be manufactured and realigned with the spectacle. Despite the efforts to escape the spectacle, we appear to be in an even more mystified and advanced stage of it. Newer technologies now carry the images of mediated human interaction online. Society's obsession with images and appearances derives from capitalism (Debord, 2020; Nunn, 2019). Nunn (2019) found three commonalities between her social media analysis and Debord's (2020)

spectacle: capitalism, consumerism, and alienation. Social media as an extension of Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle* addresses these new expressions.

As the spectacle expands, society is surrounded by constant representations of life. Nunn (2019) adds that these social representations saturate individuals' perceptions of life. Their perception of reality or the truth of life is misconstrued and misconceived; "In a world that has really been turned upside down, the true is a moment of the false" (Debord, 1967, para. 9). Through the saturation of the spectacle, individuals are buying into what the spectacle is selling. Individuals "manifest into the definition of which the image represents" (Nunn, 2019, p. 86). Nunn (2019) argues that individuals attempt to replicate the images seen online. Michelle Rodrigues de Oliveira and Jacqueline Simone de Almeida Machado (2021) employ Debord's (1967/2020) spectacle to analyze adolescents' understanding of social relationships and identity through social media. This influence stems from the media and consumer market, linked to beauty and body standards. Oliveira and Machado (2021) found that their participants' desire for a particular image is sincerely sought after. Through this lens, the study argues that spectacle is associated with consumerism. Oliveira and Machado's (2021) findings support Nunn's (2019) assertion that social media is an extension of the spectacle and Debord's (2020) notion that the spectacle is capitalist-driven. The spectacle continuously replicates the representations of life it sells. It is the capital setting "permeated by new technologies"(Oliveira &

Machado, 2021, p. 2664). As the spectacle continues to exist, the representations of social life that lie within raise concerns about what the representations are selectively replicating and who is manifesting it (Nunn, 2019; Oliveira & Machado, 2021).

Oliveira and Machado (2021) and Nunn (2019) have shown how the spectacle invades individuals' lives through social media. The adaptation of reality shown through the spectacle defines and sells the best representations of social life. Often, these representations set the cultures' standard of what is acceptable. The combination of consumption and consumerism adds to a "mean [of] personal satisfaction and translate[s] into a new aesthetic that involves body and relationships" (Oliveira and Machado, 2021, p. 2664). The obsession with images and appearances is an alienating form of power that has become even more destructive with social media. Nunn (2019) asserts that there are formations of online communities that share a "consensus that heightens the desire and meaning to attain the lifestyle or commodity that is being represented" (p. 83). Nunn (2019) mentions that online fitness groups are among many communities that enforce the group's consensus. Among the fitness groups, some communities attempt to reform and change beauty and body standards through their work within the realms of the spectacle.

The ongoing debate of what is acceptable and unacceptable representations for women in society is demonstrated by Jillian Michaels and Lizzo. The commodifiable standards of beauty within the spectacle compliment

and enforce Eurocentrism. Although this study brings forward the unfortunate capitalistic motives of the spectacle, to examine this phenomenon, the study will join the sight of the spectacle. In order to analyze this pop culture phenomenon of Lizzo and Jillian Michaels, this study has to “operate on the methodological terrain of the society that expresses itself in the spectacle” (Debord, 1967, para. 11). Once inside the spectacle, we need to look at who or what dictates the gaze upon women.

Male Gaze

Not only is society subjected to the capitalist spectacle and its inverted images of reality, but women also suffer from the inequities of men. As humanity is phallically characterized, women are seen as inferior because they lack the penis, which would have given them the “membership of belonging and identity” (Plant, 1996, p. 326). Women's lack of membership represents men's fears of castration (Mulvey, 1989). In order to protect themselves from this symbol of castration, men exert dominance and control over women through “inducing voyeuristic or fetishistic mechanisms to circumvent her threat,” otherwise known as the male gaze (Durham & Kellner, 2012, p. 274).

To alleviate men's fear and panic of castration, the male gaze is cast upon society to depict women from a heterosexual, patriarchal perspective that presents women as sexual objects. Mulvey (1989) describes the male gaze by studying cinema which arises from three different viewpoints: the view from the camera, the view from the characters in the film, and the view from the spectator.

Each of these views becomes an extension of the patriarchal social order that objectifies women's bodies to be scrutinized, manipulated, manipulated, judged, appreciated, glorified, and sexualized (Bordo, 1993; Irigaray; 1985; Plant, 1996; Ponterotto, 2016). Women do not become a producer of meaning but passive recipients of meaning. Although Mulvey (1989) studies the male gaze in cinema, it largely represents patriarchy's influence on society. Viewers of the male gaze develop relationships with the phallogocentric meaning of women that it becomes naturalized. Cinema and productions like it reflect phallogocentric society and reciprocate the same messages back to audiences.

The male gaze "projects its phantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly" and remains dominant in society (Mulvey, 1989, p. 62). Although these stylings fluctuate through time, the male gaze continues to compliment White Eurocentric features. While the male gaze has become so intertwined and accepted, women began to fight against this hegemonic view through feminist organizations, however, this initially only benefitted White women (Brewer & Dundes, 2018).

At the beginning of feminism, there was a racial divide where White women led the march toward equality with men. While White women were progressing, Black women and women of color were left behind (Brewer & Dundes, 2018; hooks, 1984). As feminism is splintered into different communities of women, some, including Michaels' perception of feminism, worked to reinforce a variation of the male gaze, which will be explored in the analysis section. To

better understand the male gaze, I now turn to explorations of media and the body.

Media and Body

Western males' desired aesthetic of the female body has evolved through the centuries (Ponterotto, 2016). According to Plant (1996), men "are the first and foremost the ones who see, those whose gaze defines the world" (p. 327). Therefore, men decide the standards for women, which are set up by the spectacle. Women are props designed to dress for men's fantasies (Irigaray, 1985). Represented through the spectacle and enforced by men, Ponterotto (2016) argues that the ideal female body is White, young, middle class, soft skin, fit, and thin. This standard is labeled as normal, healthy, and beautiful (Ponterotto, 2016).

The assertion of health associated with thinness is inferred from Michaels' comments on Lizzo. Michaels' insinuated that Lizzo might have health risks due to her physical appearance (AM to DM, 2020). Ponterotto (2016) further adds that toy brands like Barbie heavily reflected thinness and Whiteness onto their dolls. Even when the Barbie brand diversified its dolls by including different ethnicities, they still reflect eurocentric features. This depiction tainted young girls' image of beauty and showed the desirability of Whiteness and thinness, which is further expressed in traditional and new media (Ponterotto, 2016). The ideal image of the female body grew to become digitized and heightened female audiences' awareness of their body. The congruent depictions of the female

standard are shown through the continuous exposure of toys, newspapers, commercials, advertisements, tv shows, films, magazines, and social media posts (Ponterotto, 2016) which pushes forward Bordo's (1993) notion of docile bodies. Docile bodies, coined by critical genealogist philosopher Michel Foucault, are defined as women constantly altering and adjusting their physical bodies to attend to the current (Bordo 1993). Women are submissive to the constant ramifications of the "whimsical changes in fashion" that continuously subject their bodies to spot areas for improvement (Bordo, 1993, p. 2363). Docile bodies signify and normalize the idea of constant change for women, resulting in "never being good enough" (Bordo, 1993, p. 2363). Women retaliate and protest the oppression against women through feminist movements; however, this would initially benefit White women and ignore women of color. From these roots, Black feminism arose to bring attention to social injustices and empower black women (Springer, 2002).

Black Feminism

Feminist movements have been historically categorized into waves to document the progression of women's rights, liberation, and suffrage. However, feminist progression further marginalized Black female voices and their identities as it initially only catered to White middle-class women. The first White feminist wave drowned out the voices of Black women (Springer, 2002). The mindful negligence of failing to include marginalized women is grounded on racism, which "allows white women to construct feminist theory and praxis in such a way

that it is far removed from anything resembling radical struggle” (hooks, 1984, p. 52). hooks (1984) adds that White women undermine their feminist role of empowering women to take control of their bodies when they do not address racism or the oppressive layer of race. Black feminism represents an uproar against feminism that only benefited White women. Not only does Black feminism combats patriarchy, but it simultaneously combats White feminism and White supremacy (Alinia, 2015; Johnson, 2021). When Black women and women of color began their feminist organization, they did not benefit from White women’s feminist advancement. They had more obstacles to overcome due to the additive layers of race (Omega Institute for Holistic Studies, 2016).

In her book, *Black feminist thought: knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*, Patricia Hill Collins (2009) introduces Black feminist thought as a perspective for the emerging power of resistance, activism, and politics for Black women. Black feminist thought aims to empower Black women to fight for social justice by recognizing the overlapping layers of oppression they endure, such as racism, classism, and sexism, which differ from the single layer of sexism that White feminists experience (Collins, 2009; Alinia, 2015). Black feminism centralizes Black women’s experiences.

Published in 1892, Anna Julia Cooper is credited with one of the first articulations of Black feminism in her book, *A Voice from the South: By a Black Woman of the South*. Cooper describes sexist and racist comments that Black women continuously endure that place them in a standstill position (Jackson et

al., 2020; Cooper, 1892). Cooper (1892) states that Black women are “confronted by both a woman question and a race problem, and is as yet an unknown or an unacknowledged factor in both” (para. 134). Black women face a double-edged sword compared to Black men and White women (Jackson et al., 2020; Cooper, 1892). The genesis of Black feminism is grounded and intertwined with intersectionality. White feminism “ignore[s] how gender intersects with other identities, like race, class, and sexuality, and how oppressions differ at the intersections of various identities” (Henderson, 2019, p.434). White feminists refuse to see where they lie between the oppressed and the oppressor (Brewer & Dundes, 2018; hooks, 1984). Their refusal to see the difference and integrate intersectionality is apparent in fitness trainer Jillian Michaels and pop star artist Lizzo. In order to further examine the oppression of Black women through the lens of intersectionality, it is vital to account for how White supremacist thoughts are etched into history to negate black women’s out-of-feminist progression (Alinia, 2015; TV Boitempo, 2019). The controlling images that White supremacists created to control Black women during slavery have evolved; Black women continue to resist the reoccurring tropes.

Controlling Images

Collins (2009) recommends using “controlling images” as a new lens to view Black female stereotypes. Rather than viewing Black female stereotypes as sedentary characters, controlling images are “dynamic and changing” to repurpose and reproduce social relations of White supremacy, misogyny, and

patriarchy (Collins, 2009, p. 72). The controlling images assigned to Black women have powerful and adverse effects on the ways people view and treat Black women. “Controlling images are designed to make racism, sexism, poverty, and other forms of social injustice appear to be natural, normal, and inevitable parts of everyday life” (Collins, 2009, p. 69). Black women are objectified by these controlled images (Collins, 2009; TV Boitempo, 2019). Through these controlling images, self-identification deteriorates for Black women while it feeds power to the dominant White view. However, Collins (2009) later describes that these images shapes and fuel identities of resistance for Black women. Tropes such as the mammy, matriarch, and jezebel govern the image of Black women (Collins, 2009; Johnson, 2021; Leath et al., 2021; West, 1995). It is important to overview these images to form a holistic picture of how Lizzo breaks away from them by creating her own image of nomadic intersectional resistance.

The mammy, matriarch, jezebel, and other controlling images were used to control Black women, which originated in slavery (Collins, 2009; Henderson, 2019; Johnson, 2021; Leath et al., 2021; West, 1995). The mammy represents the obedient large Black servant who is “loving, nurturing, and caring for her White children and ‘family’ better than her own” (Collins, 2009, p. 72). The mammy symbolizes dominance between Black women and White men (Collins, 2009; Henderson, 2019; Johnson, 2021; Leath et al., 2021; West, 1995). Not only does the mammy ignore the crossroads of gender and race, but this role

was also “designed to mask [the] economic exploitation of social class”(Collins, 2009, p. 74).

Conversely, as the mammy displays the “good” serving Black women in White homes, the sapphire or matriarch displays the “bad” Black mothers of Black homes. This imagery is characterized as a woman who fails to raise her children, belittles her husband, and is overly aggressive. The matriarch centers Black women as stubborn, threatening, and argumentative. It also positions Black women to blame for the family's economic struggle (Collins, West, 1995). The aggressive and stubborn label presents “black women [as] unfeminine and too strong” in order to “undercut U.S. Black women’s assertiveness” (West, 1995, p.76-77). Black women’s assertiveness is masked as aggression which embeds the perception of the angry Black woman ideology—this ideology positions Black women as angry and emotional, which permeates Black depictions (West, 1995).

A third dominant controlling image is the jezebel. This imagery portrays Black women as deviant and sexually aggressive. With origins in slavery, the jezebel was used to rationalize White men sexually abusing Black women. White men used this trope to mask their actions and position Black women as sexually promiscuous (Collins, 2009; Leath et al., 2021; West, 1995). Unlike the mammy, the jezebel’s physical features closely resemble White Eurocentric beauty and body standards. The jezebel embodies the role of a sinner who exploits men’s weakness (West, 1995). In contemporary media, the jezebel is also known as the hoochie, a promiscuous, hypersexual Black woman who craves attention through

her body (Collins, 2009). In comparison to other racial groups of women, Leath et al. (2021) found that Black women, through the jezebel trope, are deemed as “less worthy of autonomy, intimacy, and respect” (p. 276). Similar to the other controlling image characters, this trope was created to objectify and exploit Black women and their bodies (Leath et al., 2021).

Collins highlights how primitive images are in mass media (TV Boitempo, 2019). This further supports Debord’s (2020) notion of society’s obsession with images. Mass media enforces controlling images through their constant display. From this continuous display of tropes, “individuals learn about their social world by viewing images and character portrayals, which may then guide their beliefs and interactions with others in real life” (Leath et al., 2021, p.271). How Black women are treated derives from controlling images such as the mammy, matriarch, and jezebel. These controlled images did not emerge from Black women; they emerged from White supremacists’ goal to degrade and dehumanize Black women (Collins, 2009; Henderson, 2019; Johnson, 2021; Leath et al., 2021; West, 1995). White supremacists are fixated on the White racist domination by controlling Black women’s bodies (hooks, 1984). Intersectionality allows us to examine the oppressive layers Black women experience within the White supremacist, patriarchal society. Researchers recommend that Black women not internalize and measure themselves to these molds; they should analyze these tropes and be resistant (Collins, 2009; West,

1995). The analysis of controlling images is at the core of how Black feminists develop an identity of resistance.

Black female identities have been characterized by White supremacy and White patriarchy (Alinia, 2015; Collins, 2009; Johnson, 2021; TV Boitempo, 2019). Black women attempt to reclaim their power and identity through their feminist efforts (Alinia, 2015; Collins, 2009; Johnson, 2021). A Black feminist known for their significant contributions inside and outside the body-positive community is Lizzo. As a Black, plus-size woman, Lizzo stirs significant media attention for how she carries herself in her profession and life. She embraces her complexion, race, body, sexuality, and the positive message she sends to the world about self-love. Lizzo fights the mammy image as a plus-size Black woman. While embracing her sexuality and feminist role, she combats the jezebel and angry Black woman image that attempts to confine her identity. Through her online actions, Lizzo refuses to fall into the parameters of the racist, sexist, and classist tropes projected onto Black women. Because Lizzo refuses to conform to the narrowly defined positions constructed for Black women, she is cast as an outlier and often gets publicly criticized and ridiculed (Bordo, 1993). With her high celebrity status, Lizzo shares her Black woman experiences and feminist views through social media. It is possible to read Lizzo's intervention as a form of nomadic feminism, but first, let us view the power of social media that deploy these nomadic, subversive actions.

Social Media Activism

White supremacists' and patriarchs' developments of controlling images continue to exist. Black women have taken the role of social media to rewrite the narrative of what it means to be a Black woman (Jackson et al., 2020). Inspired to combat the controlling image detriment, black women use social media platforms to develop a kinship with other women through hashtags while highlighting the social injustices they face due to their intersectionality. Black women's life accounts shared online "amplify the same kinds of feminist critiques that have often had only limited or elite reach" (Jackson et al., 2020, p. 29).

In the article, "I address race because race addresses me": women of color show receipts through digital storytelling, Brekke et al. (2021) reflect upon their own experiences of sharing their online stories in White mainstream media; "we must constantly brace ourselves for being misheard, misunderstood, or outright ignored" (p. 45). Even when Black women share their voices online, how they are conveyed or positioned in the media could strip their power of controlling the narrative. Brekke et al. (2021) found that many of their participants, who share their stories in white mainstream media, felt like they lost control of their stories because of how it was shared, edited, and framed. It is noted that Western culture is known to build narratives that "blame victims and normalize violence against them" (Jackson et al., 2020, p.29). With Black stories being dismissed, Black women are constantly forced to "show the receipts" to verify that their share is true. Although it is difficult to control how the audience

interprets Black stories, the power of the original stories Black women publish online will continue to triumph (Brekke et al., 2021). Social media has become the new foundation to control the narrative and introduce intersectionality to broader audiences (Jackson et al., 2020).

Lizzo displays her online involvement in the body-positive community in an attempt to control her own narrative. However, it is important to note there is an intersectional scarcity of diverse representation in the body-positive movement. When searching on the internet or through hashtags, the body positive movement is overcrowded with thin, White women (Gelsinger, 2021). Despite the underrepresentation of Black women and women of color on social media, Lizzo remains the leader of the body positive movement. Lizzo utilizes social media to control the narrative as it leads to the building of power rhetoric on topics of social injustices that are associated with oppressive layers of intersectionality (Brekke et al., 2021). The stories shared online cause disruption to White mainstream media and are nomadic in their power to coast through networks and nomadic webs media spectacles.

Nomadic Feminism

Poststructural and postmodern philosopher Rosi Braidotti (2011) proposed the theory of nomadic feminism in her book, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. Braidotti (2011) utilizes nomadism from French philosophers Gilles Deleuze's and Félix Guattari's (1987) book, *Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Deleuze and Guattari

(1987) describe a nomad as a state of deterritorialization through constant movement in space. Traditionally, nomads are individuals who continuously travel through regions and do not have an assigned place to call home. Braidotti (2011) uses her own life experiences as an example of nomadism as she traveled through various countries and did not self-assign to a singular place of home. Through this notion, nomads refuse to be sedentary and fixed to one place. Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) nomadism is a proposal of resistance that focuses on a shift away from hegemony. Braidotti (2011) utilizes nomadism to critique feminism through her concept of nomadic feminism.

Braidotti (2011) suggests rethinking feminism from a subjective point of view through the application of nomadism. She argues that feminism and feminist waves are too sedentary, linear, and carry fixed meanings. Feminist history is linearly taught from the perspective of White women. It does not account for the complexities of feminism, and the disadvantages marginalized women endure. Braidotti's (2011) nomadic feminism leaves behind the linear mode of thinking and adds that feminism is always in a constant state of change. Further adding the need to break away from sedentary thought and fixed ideologies carried throughout history.

However, nomadic feminism can be misunderstood and positioned to dismantle feminist communities. Braidotti (2011) believes that the feminist wave structures are unstable because feminism is in a state of constant change. She suggests removing the bordered boundaries of feminism because we have yet to

reach the period of a post-feminist society. Nomadic feminism can be viewed as a Whitening technique used to brush away the power of marginalized feminist communities and organizations. I utilize nomadic feminism as a lens that allows us to see how nomadic subjects challenge dominant White culture and society that contributes to social change. With this application, feminist meaning is interpreted in a multitude of ways based on different experiences women endure.

Braidotti (2011) parallels the concept of intersectionality that feminism is “rather the site of multiple, complex, and potentially contradictory sets of experiences, determined by overlapping variables such as class, race, age, lifestyle, and sexual preference” (p. 25). Furthermore, women are not subjected to specific mono characteristics or socially constructed ideologies; they are composed of multiple overlapping characteristics that differ from woman to woman (Braidotti, 2011; Collins, 2015; Crenshaw, 1989; Crenshaw, 1991; hooks, 1984). Intersecting layers of oppressed variables shapes an individual’s life and experiences that vary from person to person. Applying the concept of intersectionality considers the overlapping social influences and the potential intersectional Black women have in displacing the spectacle in a virtual and physical setting as nomadic subjects. Nomadism can potentially amplify intersectional voices through resisting patriarchal hegemonic order and the fixed meaning imposed on them. Oftentimes, these fixed meanings control individuals’ identities.

Individuals' subjectivities are constructed and shaped in social and cultural-political environments. Pairing nomadism with subjectivity allows individuals to refuse dominant codes or discourses (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Braidotti, 2011). Nomadic subjects challenge sedentary social and cultural-political constructed ideologies. They create their own complex and constantly moving subjectivities. Nomadic subjects are "capable of freeing the activity of thinking from the hold of phallogocentric dogmatism, returning thought to its freedom, its liveliness, its beauty" (Braidotti, 2011, p. 29). I argue that the nomadic subject is beyond an individual human; it is an image and other nonhuman elements that carry a life of its own of hegemonic resistance.

Braidotti (2011) often refers to nomadic subjects as polyglots for their ability to speak multiple languages. How Lizzo's body, image, and messages harbor social change through nomadic travel by challenging the dominant societal view becomes "fluent in a variety of styles, disciplinary angles in different dialects, jargons, and languages" (Braidotti, 2011, p. 66). As a nomadic subject, Lizzo is not only digitized traveling across digital screens; she is a material body, a persona, and a message that represents resistance and social change to dominance.

The circulating ideologies that carry fixed meaning can pollute and shape our own subjectivity. However, nomadic subjects, like Lizzo, resist and counter those social-cultural forces. As a result, it creates a disruption to White patriarchy. Lizzo "enact[s] a rebellion of subjugated knowledge" imposed onto

women (Braidotti, 2011, p. 60). Lizzo represents the constant deterritorialization of controlled knowledge (Braidotti, 2011; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). The way Lizzo's image circulates through time and space deterritorializes the public, which also captures the media's attention. This nomadic perspective applies to Lizzo because she can evolve while displacing those who interact with her, including Michaels.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

There is great value in the dynamic use of the frameworks of nomadic feminism and intersectionality in studying the levels of oppression the body-positive community endures. More specifically, the oppression plus-size Black women endure when running up against members of the fitness community. As the literature review notes the effective use of social media for Black feminist use in controlling the narrative, it is vital to view how intersectionality influences feminist views and how nomadism help amplifies those voices on media platforms. One of the leading celebrity, influential voices for the body-positive community, Lizzo, was scrutinized by fitness personality Jillian Michaels, which displays the ongoing struggle intersectional body-positive women like Lizzo endure. The study seeks to answer the following questions: RQ1: Did Lizzo become a nomadic subject, and, if so, how? RQ2: What themes emerge from the clash between Lizzo and Jillian Michaels? RQ3: How does intersectionality inform the study of contrasting interpretations of feminism in relation to the body positive movement?

Case Study

This study seeks to make sense of conflicting feminisms as they unfold around the issue of body positivity on social media through intersectionality and nomadism. To study that, I can perform interviews with participants and

supporters of the body-positive community. However, I am interested in a high-profile moment occurring between celebrities. An alternate avenue could be to conduct in-depth interviews with the celebrities, but that would be difficult to obtain and possibly, unachievable. I can perform a content analysis, but that will not help me get an understanding of meanings. Overall, I seek to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning behind media artifacts and utilize them to answer the research questions on nomadic feminism, body positivity, and intersectionality.

To study intersectionality's role in nomadic feminist interpretations through a highly mediated clash, I used a single case study approach. Through this approach, I narrowed down a broad topic to research questions that are answerable through the analysis of selected artifacts (Heale & Twycross, 2018). A case study provides researchers with an in-depth analysis of one or a few natural occurrences within life, such as a person, event, or organization (Tracy, 2020). As described in Tracy (2020), case study researchers perform three functions: "describe and interpret a contextual scene, examine the networks and interactions of causes and effects, and interact empathically with those in the scene" (p. 61). I performed the procedures on the obtained digital media artifacts.

Following Heale & Twycross (2018) and based on my study's goal, I decided to have a single case study for an in-depth understanding of intersectionality in body-positive movement as a phenomenon rather than comparing a few case studies for comparison of similarities and differences. A

single case permits a more intensive investigation and description of the complexities of these phenomena (Tracy, 2020; Heale & Twycross, 2018). I answer the how or why question(s) through the rich data. I described the scene in audio, visual, and textual details to provide nuanced insights that will lead to answering my research questions. I documented the connections of digital media interactions of the event and its relation to the physical world while subjectively analyzing communication text with an intersectional lens.

In popular culture, intersectionality has become an area of discussion, especially in an online setting (Flood, 2019; Senyonga & Luna, 2021). However, it has not been given due consideration in relation to body positivity. The recent clash between Lizzo and Jillian Michaels is a uniquely fruitful case to study the role of intersectionality in the body-positive movement due to the following overlapping reasons: 1) A thin White female fitness star publicly criticizes a plus-size Black female celebrity; 2) A highly mediatized tension ensues bringing out their contrasting views on body, beauty, health, and feminism; 3) It captures audiences' attention and commentary through digital media affordances that were not possible pre-social media. In addition, this case study approach brought rich information to understand how intersectionality plays a significant role in feminist interpretations of body positivity through the Jillian Michaels and Lizzo event. Analyzing media artifacts circulating online around this case gave me the opportunity to provide an updated view of body-positive feminist interpretations and the potential for social change.

Given my interest in the meaning of these media artifacts, this study employed a qualitative approach. As a qualitative researcher, I observe how the online event unfolded, ultimately guided by intersectionality. As argued by Rogers (2013) in *Digital Methods*, the internet and digital media found on the internet are valuable data sources to inform researchers about society and culture. Thus, digital research methods have guided my research by following the medium in which the case unraveled on. In this instance, the data extraction begins with the digital source of Jillian Michaels' interview video that sparked a flood of artifacts. As this unraveled in a public digital space, the data on the internet is readily available for study (Rogers, 2013). Although I am not observing the online spaces in real-time, I performed Tracy's (2020) ethnographic communication approach, which is to "examine patterned rules, codes, and expectations for culturally distinctive speech communities, analyzing oral, spoken, and nonverbal norms of intersection and language use" (p. 63). With a combination of ethnographic and digital methods approach, I analyzed and collected field notes on the Jillian Michaels and Lizzo online event and observed the communication act, situation, and online speech community to study and interpret the communication patterns (Tracy, 2020).

Sampling and Data Collection

To study the intersectionality and nomadic subject dynamic, this research takes a purposive sampling approach, specifically a blend of theory-guided sampling, criterion sampling, and paradigmatic case sampling. With one of the

research goals of understanding how intersectionality plays a role in feminist interpretations within the body-positive and fitness community, this study takes a theory-guided research approach. Theory-guided researchers are interested in cases that display their guiding theoretical framework. Therefore, the study needs to search for a case study that demonstrates intersectionality and nomadism. Payls (2008) stated that theory-guided sampling goes hand-in-hand with criterion sampling, searching for cases that meet specific research criteria. Intersectionality is built on the proposal that black women are the most oppressed in western society, and Lizzo meets these criteria. The goal is to focus on intersectionality within the body-positive community, so Lizzo identifies as a plus-size woman. Lizzo's multilayered intersectionality motivates the choice of paradigmatic case sampling. A paradigmatic case sample is "an exemplar for a certain case" (Payls, 2008, p. 697). Many instances of body-shaming comments typically occur in smaller conversations. The Michaels and Lizzo event capture the magnitude of body shaming conversations in a highly publicized and highly mediatized manner. The study juxtaposes Lizzo and Michaels from the 2020 exemplary case to serve the research goals. Through this juxtaposition and learning about intersectionality, the study chose to spotlight Michaels because she identifies as a White woman and member of the fitness community.

The sampling of artifacts mimics a purposive approach to supply rich data surrounding the Michaels and Lizzo incident. Due to their high-profile status, data were readily available from various digital sources. To answer the research

questions, this study will review and analyze the discourse between Lizzo and Michaels from multiple perspectives: through social media posts and interviews, news media coverage, and public social media comments. Drawing on Rogers' (2013) digital methods, I utilized one of the popular search engines, Google.com, to acquire my media artifacts. Thus, digital research methods have guided my research by following the medium on which the case unraveled. In this instance, the data extraction begins with the digital source of Jillian Michaels' interview video that sparked a flood of artifacts. I also followed the case and major turning points in the story relating back to Michaels' interview video.

I analyzed the main artifacts that signaled a wave of media attention which is the full-length interview YouTube video and a Tweet with a shortened video clip (AM2DM, 2020; AM2DM by BuzzFeed News, 2020). The Michaels interview sparked numerous news stories (Aviles, 2020; Chiu, 2020; Esmonde, 2020; Hines, 2020; Solé, 2021; Yandoli, 2020). Lizzo and Michaels took to Instagram to address the incident which led to the second set of primary artifacts (Lizzo, 2020; Michaels, 2020). Within these public postings by Michaels and Lizzo, social media users and blog writers entered the conversation with their own postings (Ceo of Cherry, 2020; Forty Ounce, 2020; Io, 2020; Uddin, 2020; Whathappened.com, 2020; Wofling, 2020). The study chose to analyze four of 60 reviewed news articles due to the repetitiveness of material reporting the incident (Aviles, 2020; Chiu, 2020; Esmonde, 2020; Hines, 2020; Solé, 2021; Yandoli, 2020). From these three perspectives from Michaels and Lizzo, news

stories, and social media comments embedded into the articles, I study 1) how Lizzo became a nomadic symbol, then, 2) I identify emerging themes, and 3) analyze contrasting interpretations of feminism in relation to the body positive movement intersectionality attending to the issue of Black plus size woman's oppression.

With the intent of learning how intersectionality plays a role in feminist interpretations of the body positive and fitness community, this study collected data from media interviews, videos, social media posts, and news stories (AM2DM by BuzzFeed News 2020; Aviles, 2020; Chiu, 2020; Esmonde, 2020; Hines, 2020; Lizzo, 2020a; Michaels, 2020; Solé, 2021; Yandoli, 2020). I began by reviewing and collecting data from Michaels' interview video. I attempted to gather data in chronological order. From the video, I looked at circulating news coverage and social media posts that carry a mixture of texts and video. As these artifacts garnered more attention, I collected data from Michaels' and Lizzo's social media posts. In addition, I gathered data on new stories as they report updates on the event. With these rich data, I juxtaposed Lizzo and Michaels through the lens of intersectionality. In addition, I gathered data to analyze emerging themes that further bring to light nomadism. I collected data on a Word document on my computer that has downloaded artifacts and screenshots to prevent any updates or media loss from the study's time (January 2022). I transferred the Word document data to a flash drive to prevent possible computer corruption.

Data Analysis

I performed a close textual and audio-visual analysis led by my theoretical frameworks of intersectionality and nomadic subjects to interpret the multimedia data collected. This approach is similar to textual analysis, a method used to “describe and interpret the content, structure, purposes, and consequences of existing...texts” (Tracy, 2020, p. 80). McKee (2009) describes texts as a production of meaning. From the information gathered from texts, researchers attempt to understand how people from different cultures make sense of who they are and how they view the world. I paid close attention to textual, visual, and audio elements in the analysis by gathering and interpreting data from interviews, videos, social media posts, and news stories to understand the role of intersectionality and nomadic feminism in the body positive movement as seen in the mediatized clash of Lizzo and Michaels.

Data Analysis Informed by Intersectionality

As noted earlier in the study, intersectionality is based on Black women’s experiences. Intersectionality consists of the multilayered oppressive identities occurring all at once that shapes an individual. The paper employed Collins’(2015) principle that individuals suffering from overlapping disadvantage variables shape their experience and perspective. An intersectional analysis calls us to start with the most marginalized experiences, Black women (Crenshaw, 1989; Collins, 2015). The study observed the overlapping layers of oppression that are illuminated in this public skirmish. Therefore, the oppressive variables of

intersectionality guide the study to look at the overlapping layers of race, gender, and physical appearance through Lizzo and Jillian Michaels. The assertion that Black women are the most oppressed in western history positions Lizzo at a heightened disadvantage (Flood, 2019; Senyonga & Luna, 2021).

Although intersectionality encompasses additional oppressive layers such as socioeconomic status, religion, ableism, sexuality, and so on, the study focused on the factors that are visually identifiable and problematic in order to better understand how images mediate social relations. This study placed Michaels in an oppressive layer of sexuality as she is a member of the LGBTQIA+ community. However, Michaels' physical appearance and questionable comments strongly assimilate the spectacle's favorable western beauty ideology. Therefore, Michaels does not experience the same form of oppression or bodily scrutiny as Lizzo. The study recognizes that Michaels and Lizzo do not suffer from socioeconomic disadvantages. Intersectionality implications are guided to view elemental disadvantages that contribute to an individual's oppression. Regardless of their socioeconomic status, Lizzo and Michaels' treatment differ due to overlapping layers of race, gender, and physical appearance. Their high-profile status exemplifies the circulating discourse on feminist interpretations surrounding the body-positive and fitness communities. This study argues that Lizzo would not have received the same number and intensity of critiques if she was a White plus-size woman. The study's theoretical framework of intersectionality informs and guides this in developing and

answering of the research questions. The main purpose of this subsection is to shed light on my use of intersectionality as I use it to analyze the oppressive overlapping layers of race, gender, and physical appearance within the case study.

Data Analysis Informed by Nomadism

As this study examines how social media can amplify anxieties about body types and oppressive experiences associated with public shaming, the Lizzo and Michaels event captures the recurring feminist discourse and policing that continues to circulate throughout history. I argue that Lizzo has succeeded in dismantling the phallogentric order as she traverses through various networks, refusing to be framed or "fixed" in any one socially sanctioned scheme or category. As such, she appears to be the quintessential nomadic subject. I use an interpretive approach to a nomadic subject. This study follows Braidotti's (2011) definition of a nomadic subject to be "capable of freeing the activity of thinking from the hold of phallogentric dogmatism, returning thought to its freedom, its liveliness, its beauty" (p. 29). I begin this process by identifying what elements are considered nomadic subjects, which I suggest includes nonhuman elements such as images and inspiring messages that carry a life of their own. For the purposes of this study, all images can be digitized, personified, and materialized, but the nomadic subject refuses dominant and socially constructed ideological structures.

After identifying the nomadic subject elements, I analyze the subject's relationship to ideological structures while understanding if it is indeed a nomadic subject. How I analyze its resistance is in the context of the event, where Jillian Michaels represents an enforcer of White patriarchal cultural and social structures. Therefore, this study pays attention to how nomadic subjects challenge dominant White patriarchal definitions, ideologies, and frameworks. I used intersectionality to view and analyze interlocking layers of oppression while proposing nomadic subjects as beneficial for amplifying intersectional voices. I am open to where the data lead in answering these research questions.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS

Lizzo's Nourishing Nomadism to Self-Love

The goal of this section is to illustrate if Lizzo has become a nomadic subject and, if so, how. Even with a cursory look at the media artifact related to Lizzo, one easily notices that she uses visual, digital platforms to voice her activist efforts in society's image-obsessed spectacle. As a symbol of self-love, how Lizzo's body, image, message, and persona travel through and across digital screens are nomadic (Braidotti, 2011). The spectacle's capitalistic motives are telling society they are not enough by setting unrealistic beauty and body standards. Lizzo, her body, image, and persona counteract that message by telling audiences that they are enough. This is deeply problematic and disruptive to the White patriarchal social order, which then reflects Lizzo as a nomadic subject. Lizzo shares her personal stories of self-love and self-acceptance by encouraging others to do the same. Her life experiences being a plus-size Black woman inspires and influence every action of her life. Lizzo is a nomadic subject as her body, messages, and images are digitized and traveling across media platforms to display her resistance to hegemony.

Lizzo's disruption is displayed through her participation in "The What's Underneath Project," among others (StyleLikeU, 2021). This project was developed to highlight and combat women's self-image and identity issues in an image-saturated mediascape. Although the interview "The Moment Lizzo

Decided To Love The Skin She's In" was filmed in 2014, the video was purposely published in 2021. The video was published to display Lizzo's self-love growth and continuous advocacy for social change from the taping date in 2014 (Braidotti, 2011; StyleLikeU, 2021).

Lizzo's nomadic feminist efforts against the antagonizing White patriarchy are digitally published and travel through virtual networks. Her nomadic work disrupts White patriarchy as she delivers self-love messages through digital publishing. Her interview with StyleLikeU (2021) is a glimpse into Lizzo's nomadic feminist commitment prior to her launch to fame. In the video, Lizzo shares her personal story of body image issues while learning to accept, love, and celebrate her body, personality, and herself.

As the video's premise is to share personal stories while shedding layers of clothing, it is important to describe the visual elements as it represents and parallels Lizzo's empowering and vulnerable message. At the beginning of the video, Lizzo is leaning against a stool wearing a t-shirt, leggings, shoes, jewelry, and wig. Throughout the 9-minute video, Lizzo removes each article of clothing while sharing how women have to go through a journey of loving themselves. Lizzo strips away an article of clothing that symbolically displays the visual process of being vulnerable against the fascist spectacle (Debord, 2020). She adds, "I feel like doing this [interview] is a good way to kind of breakthrough and seal the last chapter of the learning to love and just loving [yourself]" (StyleLikeU, 2021, 0:20). This digital artform of storytelling is an essential piece of Lizzo's

Black feminist efforts (Brekke et al., 2021; Collins, 2009). As a nomadic subject, Lizzo captures audiences' attention as she becomes visually vulnerable, bearing only undergarments at the end of the video while pushing forward her empowering message (Braidotti, 2011). Lizzo's vulnerability is significant because she opens up about who she is in the oppressive patriarchal, White supremacist-dominated society (Alinia, 2015; Johnson, 2021). As a self-identifying Black plus-size woman, Lizzo suffers from the intersectional layers of race, gender, and physical appearance (Collins, 2015; Crenshaw, 1989; Senyonga & Luna, 2021; Shaw Nevins & Drumond, 2020). Prior to fame, Lizzo was and continues to be an advocate for body positivity, self-love, self-acceptance, and Black feminism. Through digital storytelling, Lizzo contains the power of controlling her narrative by describing her personal story and the challenges she is continuing to overcome (Brekke et al., 2021; Jackson et al., 2020).

Lizzo emphasizes that women have to go through a self-love journey. Self-love is not an innate feeling for women; it is a process. Women live under the spectacle riddled with the male gaze and constantly changing beauty and body standards (Debord, 2020; Plant, 1996; Ponterotto, 2016). Lizzo explains she was surrounded by images of women that extremely differed from her curvy physical appearance. She was surrounded by beauty and body standards that only complimented and enforced Whiteness and thinness (Ponterotto, 2016). Lizzo saw this theme time and again in childhood cartoons: "I really love Sailor

Moon when I was a kid. When I was nine. You know-- I was like aw man if I could just wake up and look like that. The long hair, and the crazy long legs, and they were white!" (StyleLikeU, 2021, 1:01). It is difficult for Lizzo to accept these images because they only represent one type of audience: White thin women. Lizzo is in an oppressive and suppressive society that makes her conscious of every aspect of her body. Lizzo explains her need to conceal her textured curly hair because of the stigma that Black women's hair is not socially acceptable in the White-centered society. However, in the video Lizzo removes her wig and fully embraces her short curly hair, where she preaches that self-love becomes a process that requires development over time. Lizzo reclaims the ocular of the spectacle and repositions herself as a disruptive nomadic symbol to be seen (Braidotti, 2011; Debord, 2020).

Lizzo learned to develop an identity that embraces every element of herself. She adds that loving and caring for her body begins by loving herself:

Any [type of] body is a good place to be if you're listening to it and taking care of it. I am, for the first time, I think ever, am actually listening to it and giving it what it wants....From vitamins to positive reinforcement to sunlight to rest. I think it likes that, so it's being nice to me back (StyleLikeU, 2021, 8:43).

Lizzo grew a healthy awareness of her body that strays from becoming a conforming docile body (Bordo, 1993). However, when Lizzo became confident in herself, men found her too much to handle. This notion results from the

patriarchal ideals deriving from White supremacy that plus-size Black women should not embody a confident persona (Alinia, 2015; Collins, 2009). Lizzo highlights that it is difficult for Black women to become vulnerable in their dating lives because they are not allowed to be vulnerable (Sway's Universe, 2017). Lizzo does not abide by the white patriarchal controlling images created for Black women (Collins, 2009). Lizzo has become the epitome of disruption for her refusal to adapt to the controlling image of mammy characterized for plus-size Black women. Western society is not used to seeing confident Black women, let alone confident plus-size Black women, as Lizzo expresses that it is too much for society to handle (StyleLikeU, 2021). Lizzo's confidence in herself and her body forms an identity of resistance (Collins, 2009; West, 1995). She refuses to become a docile body (Bordo, 1993). As a proud and outspoken representative of self-love and body positivity, Lizzo discloses the dilemmas plus-size Black women endure.

In a short matter of time, media attention and public commentary will shift to support her messages as she becomes musically known. As a nomadic subject, Lizzo is at the forefront of creating social change by raising awareness of the intersectional oppression of plus-size Black women's experiences through her digital and musical platforms.

In 2016, Lizzo's single Coconut Oil gained positive reviews; blog writer Okoth-Obbo (2016) writes that Coconut Oil "is her ode to body positivity, self-love, and the trials of getting to the point where you believe you deserve it" (para.

1). There is a perception within the Black community that coconut oil is a self-care ritual (Okoth-Obbo, 2016). In an interview with Sway's Universe (2017), Lizzo describes using coconut oil to moisturize her body. It is a key part of her self-care regime that takes time to perform. It is a process that requires patience and symbolizes self-care in life:

[It is] such a metaphor for life. It's like if you don't take the full time to get everything, all of your bases covered, all of your areas covered, you're going to be dry in some areas. You're going to be thirsty in some areas. You're not going to be fulfilled in some areas (Sway's Universe, 2017,10:09).

Lizzo was inspired to develop music that resonated with Black women and marginalized communities. She treated Coconut Oil as a self-care remedy for herself and her listeners (Sway's Universe, 2017). From her work as a nomadic subject, Lizzo transfers her messages of self-love through her music. We capture her journey through online sources that heightens her symbolic and progressive efforts (Braidotti, 2011). Lizzo is the positive reinforcement of self-love, especially for plus-size Black women. Her inspiration to become the positive reinforcement derives from her struggle to love herself because she was told she "wasn't lovable by the media, by [people at] school, by not seeing [women like herself] in beauty ads, by not seeing [women like herself] in television...by lack of representation" (Takeda, 2019). Black women have been characterized in a negative light in Western media that Black women do not get to see positive

representations and reinforcements on self-care, love, and respect (Collins, 2009; West, 1995). Through her musical developments, Lizzo expressed that women should hear messages of self-love and self-care, especially for women who look like her, plus-size Black women (StyleLikeU, 2021; Sway's Universe, 2017). Lizzo developed the Coconut Oil EP, where she released five more songs promoting self-love and self-acceptance (Okoth-Obbo, 2016). After releasing Coconut Oil EP, Lizzo quickly garnered more media and notoriety, as did her following on social media (StyleLikeU, 2021).

Lizzo's body-positive, self-love message flourishes on her social media accounts, specifically on the photo-sharing Instagram site. On Lizzo's Instagram page, she has 11.9 million followers and over 2,500 images posted, with the majority of images showing nearly every angle of her body (Lizzo, n.d.). Lizzo openly shares her obstacles to being a plus-size Black woman while celebrating her professional and personal achievements. Lizzo illuminates the intersectional layers of oppression plus-size Black women face through her digital storytelling. Lizzo posted a Google commercial video that begins with the text, "More than ever the world is searching for black girl magic." In this video, there is a series of Google searches positively displaying Black women. Lizzo is shown with the Google search of "unbothered" (Lizzo, 2019a). This title of "unbothered" for Lizzo strongly reflects her perseverance in breaking through in an oppressive White patriarchal society (Alinia, 2015; Johnson, 2021; Lizzo, 2019a). In the post, Lizzo's caption to her followers reads:

Keep changing the world. Your mere existence is a form of activism. And your identity, depending on the intersection, makes that activism just a little bit more hard but a little bit more worth it. My name is Lizzo. My activism is representation. And I live at the intersection of black, fat, femme, and free 🍷 (Lizzo, 2019a).

The emphasis on intersectionality and the social categories crosssections of what makes Lizzo, Lizzo, led to this research. Building off of Senyonga and Luna's (2021) research, this study explores the intersections where Lizzo resides. The layering of physical appearance or Lizzo's element of "fat" as a Black woman contributed more to the discrimination Lizzo receives. Lizzo motivates her following, presumably Black women, to recognize the intersectional layers of their identity. Furthermore, Lizzo pushes Collins' (2009) notion of identity of resistance. The layers of intersectionality can make activist roles more challenging but "a little more worth it," which is charismatically displayed by Lizzo (Lizzo, 2019a). By sharing these posts, Lizzo creates change for the public by collaborating with Google, creating self-love songs, and practicing these regimes herself. Despite her remarkable story and activist efforts, Lizzo continues to receive unignorable public backlash because she refuses to become docile to White patriarchy.

It is important to note that the spectacle, its capitalist holds on society, and mediated images of human interactions are inescapable. As a popular culture figure, Lizzo is a contributor to the spectacle by profiting from her self-love

messages and business collaborations. However, Lizzo uses her platform and socioeconomic status to rewrite the narrative of what a plus-size Black woman is and also tell audiences that they are enough. Lizzo is in a position of power that allows her to contribute back to society and her community.

Her uprise to fame and stardom was a slow, steady incline not because of her musical talent but because of her identity. The spectacle's White patriarchal society was not accustomed to seeing plus-size Black female musical artists in the entertainment industry. Lizzo knows she stands for something larger beyond celebrity, beyond being a musical artist; she stands on a different platform in which she utilizes every artistic avenue and opportunity to relate back to her experience being a marginalized woman. So, everything Lizzo does now in her celebrity status relates to her plus-size Black woman upbringing and life experiences that she is still enduring.

In collaboration with the clothing brand Lane Bryant, Lizzo appeared in the #ThisBody campaign, where Lizzo shares how she uses her musical performances as a platform to speak what is on her mind. Her slogan for the campaign is "My activism inspired by #ThisBody"(Lane Bryant, 2017). Lizzo is not referring to just her physical body. She is not referring to the independent elemental social categories of her race, gender, and physical appearance. Lizzo's overlapping layers of intersectionality motivate her activist efforts. Lane Bryant's #ThisBody campaign goes beyond physical appearance; it is about who you are. Lizzo utilizes this opportunity to connect this campaign to her and what

she represents. Despite Lane Bryant's commendable effort for representation in the media, Lizzo asserts that Lane Bryant has received negative criticism for their work:

I just remember being so excited to finally see myself on television and how bold it was when the commercials were deemed too racy because there was so much cleavage, [even though] they were literally showing the same type of cleavage as Victoria's Secret ads" (Okwodu, 2017).

Lane Bryant mimics the same stylistic choices as Victoria's Secret, so why do they receive different commentary? Victoria's Secret displays extremely slender, predominantly White women, while Lane Bryant displayed a plus-size Black woman. The White phallogocentric order's refusal to accept diverse representations of Black women's bodies is evident in Lizzo's comment. However, the more Lizzo continues to persist with campaigns, commercials, music, and social media posts, the more her nomadic work challenges the ideologies White patriarchy produces (Lizzo, n.d.). Lizzo is at the forefront of representing marginalized women but is also at the forefront of receiving criticism. Her celebrity status makes her the center of focus for positive and negative commentary.

In 2019, a critic blamed Lizzo for glamorizing obesity and attributed her popularity to her appearance; Lizzo responded, "I'm popular because I write good songs and I'm talented and perform high energy hour and a half shows filled with love" (Lizzo, 2019b). Lizzo's rise to fame was stunted because of society's resistance to her intersectional identity being a plus-size Black woman in the

entertainment industry. Her popularity grew from her inspirational songs that were inspired by life experiences. The critic attempts to degrade Lizzo because of her body-positive, self-love influence on society. Lizzo is disrupting those abiding by White patriarchy and its biased discriminatory ideologies. Through Lizzo's nomadic efforts, she initiates a conversation on how society views and encounters plus-size Black women. Overall, Lizzo positions herself as the plus-size Black woman representative who will not be silenced and will be heard. Lizzo utilizes her platform to vocalize her oppressive life experiences by sharing messages of self-love, self-care, and self-acceptance. She caused a dynamic shift in society's perception of plus-size Black women. Her role as a body-positive advocate made her the face of social change. This is why critics find her so problematic. Lizzo cannot be fully integrated into the very limited, limiting, and unrealistic beauty standards for women and her nomadic displays thwart any attempts at compromise. The overwhelmingly positive support Lizzo receives in her work overpowers the negative spectacle-pleasing criticisms. Lizzo continues to become the progressive nomadic symbol that works to shift towards a forced perspective of accepting marginalized women and their bodies (Braidotti, 2011). At the end of 2019, Lizzo was TIME magazine's Entertainer of the Year:

Attending a Lizzo concert feels like worshipping at the church of self-love, if your preacher was a pop star living joyfully in a big black body, delivering a sermon of self-acceptance that's as frank as it is accessible. At a time when Instagrammers are shilling flat-tummy tea or pretending to eat a

giant cheeseburger, Lizzo sells something more radical: the idea that you are already enough (Irby, 2019).

The inspiration of Lizzo's story and work is transmitted through the digital publishing of interview videos, campaigns, commercials, magazine interviews, and her music. Lizzo's development of nonhuman elements carries a life of its own as it displays her self-love journey to audiences. Her image, persona, and messages is resistant to White patriarchy. They are nomadic and travel through the spectacle that garners media attention. As a nomadic subject, Lizzo has become the face of social change for plus-size Black women, body positivity, and Black feminism. Lizzo continues to overcome many obstacles in her personal life and her musical career. She challenges narrow beauty standards through her persistence in promoting self-love on all of her platforms. Lizzo's nomadic efforts illuminate the intersectional struggles Black women endure. Lizzo continues to be the symbol, the icon for self-love.

Themes from the Clash

Health Define by Physical Appearance

In this subsection, I turn to research question two and examine one of the most prominent themes in the clash between Lizzo and Jillian Michaels. In what follows, we will see how Michaels asserts that women who are overweight will have some type of health issue became one of the most prominent themes of the media incident. A closer analysis of this theme allows us to see how plus-size

women may often be oppressed under the guise of “good” intentions and health imperatives.

“Wellness goals, workout trends, and more” were the main topics of Jillian Michaels’ 16-minute video interview hosted by AM to DM by BuzzFeedNews (AM to DM, 2020, 0:15). The Youtube video highlighted other topics, “Jillian Michaels On The Keto Diet, Lizzo, And More.” The focus of the video title suggests a purposeful clickbait tactic to draw more viewers into the spectacle by emphasizing the importance of physical appearance (Debord, 1967/2020), especially when positioning what a thin, White fitness connoisseur has to say about a plus-size Black body-positive activist.

The Youtube video was posted at the beginning of January 2020; thus, the content revolved around New Years’ fitness goals people set for themselves. The notion of women setting fitness goals for themselves to get their ideal body derives from the deeply embedded male gaze governed by the spectacle (Debord, 2020; Plant, 1996; Ponterotto, 2016). More than half the video addressed diet trends; however, Michaels progresses to critique political correctness. Although Michaels does not deliberately define political correctness, she explains it as a swinging pendulum:

As far as it swings in one direction, it swings back in the other, right. And you have these crazy extremes whereas ‘oh she’s you know she’s too fat to be a pop star.’ Well, you say things like that, and you should never be able to say things like that right, but for years people were. They could fat

shame, and they could exclude people, and they could make people feel less than in all forms of media, and we should always be inclusive, but you cannot glorify obesity (AM to DM, 2020, 7:11).

Michaels attempts to explain that political correctness has its faults because society becomes more aware and inclusive of all bodies, including glorifying obesity. Michaels' questioning of political correctness displays her White privilege while attempting to disenfranchise and critique the suffrage plus-size Black women endure (hooks, 1984). Michaels' comments display Lizzo as an unconflicting docile body that does not follow the patriarchal norms and needs to be held accountable for promoting obesity (Alinia, 2015; Bordo, 1993; Johnson, 2021).

As a fitness guru and expert, Michaels' appearance and words practice patriarchal female standards of Whiteness and thinness (Shaw Nevins & Drumond, 2020). As a White woman, Michaels speaks about her feminist role and questions others for not being one, but she enforces slanted feministic views onto Lizzo (Brewer & Dundes, 2018; Flood, 2019; "Jillian Michaels," 2016; Plant, 1996). The commentary exhibits Brewer and Dundes' (2018) findings that white feminists become the oppressed and oppressors.

Shortly after, Michaels goes on to state that a 250-pound woman's weight should be "no one's business to comment. It is not something you should judge, it's not something you should celebrate, that woman's health is up to her"(AM to DM, 2020, 7:55). Interestingly, Michaels asserts that women who are overweight

will have some type of health issue. When the AM to DM host applauds pop artist Lizzo and her messages spreading self-love through Lizzo's work, Michaels interjected to question why all of the focus is on Lizzo's body:

Why are we celebrating her body? Why does it matter? Why aren't we celebrating her music? Cause it isn't going to be awesome if she gets diabetes. I'm just being honest. Like, I love her music. Like, my kid loves her music. But there's never a moment where I'm like, 'And I'm so glad she's overweight!' Like, why do I even care? Why is it my job to care about her weight (AM to DM, 2020, 8:36)?

Although Michaels' comment may show an attempt to stop focusing on Lizzo's physical appearance, Michaels' opinions insinuate the very act of policing and judgment that she was against a few moments before. During the taping, the host read a tweet to Michaels stating that body positivity is about self-acceptance despite society's standards and adds a woman can be overweight and healthy. Michaels responds that majority of people are morbidly obese. Michaels ties the visual of the female body to health. This connection aligns with the dominant male gaze because the size of a woman is unappealing and undesirable if it is not close to the spectacle's standard (Bordo 1993; Plant, 1996; Ponterotto, 2016). Shaw Nevins and Drumond (2020 cited Springs, 2019, p. 207) stated that "overweight individuals had a 6 percent lower risk of death compared to people considered to be in a 'normal' weight range" (p.326). The association of health is solely based on weight is an ideological construction and misleading. Michaels

states that not every overweight woman's lab sheet shows healthy. Ironically, Michaels' comment is counterintuitive to that matter: "that woman's health is up to her"(AM to DM, 2020, 7:55).

If so, why does she publicly humiliate Lizzo by saying, "it isn't going to be awesome if she gets diabetes" (AM2DM by BuzzFeed News, 2020)? Michaels adds, "I never said that we shouldn't be inclusive and accepting, I'm saying that I don't love Lizzo because she is overweight. I like her because of her music" (AM to DM, 2020, 10:11). Michaels continuously backpedals by stating society should be inclusive, but her comments indicate that it only applies to women who closely resemble a slimmer figure. She says that she respects Lizzo but is concerned about her weight and health, contrary to her comment that a woman's health is their business, not hers. Michaels' health concerns through visual appearance link back to patriarchal thin beauty standards (Alinia, 2015; Bordo, 1993; Johnson, 2021). Although the interview was meant to discuss fitness and wellness, it became a center for policing other women's health based on appearance. Shortly after the Youtube video was published, Michaels' words circulated on various media channels (Aviles, 2020; Esmonde, 2020; Hines, 2020; Solé, 2021; Yandoli, 2020).

After the 16-minute video was posted on Youtube by AM to DM, AM to DM tweeted a 43-second video highlighting Michaels' comments on Lizzo's health (AM to DM, 2020; AM2DM by BuzzFeed News, 2020). The caption of the video reads, "@JillianMichaels on Lizzo: 'Why are we celebrating her body? Why does

it matter? Why aren't we celebrating her music? 'Cause it isn't gonna be awesome if she gets diabetes'" (AM2DM by BuzzFeed News, 2020). The selective quotations and tagging of Michaels' Twitter account display how her comments can get the public's attention because it is a critique of a plus-size black woman's body. As of March 2022, the tweeted video gained 3.5 million views. Michaels immediately went under fire from the public, with over 3,500 comments on the post (AM2DM by BuzzFeed News, 2020). The most favorited tweet with over 19,600 likes critiqued Michaels for measuring self-worth through weight:

Lizzo spends hours every night singing and playing the flute during intensive dance cardio. Just admit that the only self worth you've found for yourself is in your thinness, Jillian, then go to therapy & do the work to love yourself (Wolfing, 2020).

This user highlights how Lizzo is a very active individual. This response is highlighting how Michaels only found self-value by having a thin appearance when that should not be a determining factor. Self-love comes from appreciating yourself and who you are regardless of body shape, size, and weight. Michaels' body-shaming comments reinforce Whiteness and the thin ideal. This credits to how deeply embedded the White, patriarchal male gaze is in society. Michaels is a feminist but to her own White privilege and benefit. She adopts the feminism that Braidotti (2011) argues is problematic as it is linear and privileges only White women. Michaels' White feminist views do not allow her to view the complexities

and variances of feminism for marginalized intersectional women. As Michaels' White feminist attitudes appease the White patriarchal spectacle, she has become an enforcer of this skewed view. As Michaels' messages of femininity strongly align with the thin ideal (Ponterotto, 2016; Shaw Nevins & Drumond, 2020). Michaels' speculating concerns for Lizzo's health through her appearance stirred significant media attention (Aviles, 2020; Esmonde, 2020; Hines, 2020; Solé, 2021; Yandoli, 2020).

News articles quickly captured the event and reported the public's opinion on social media. *The Washington Post*, *Today* news, and *NBC News* report the incident, mostly citing tweets. The articles' are titled, "Jillian Michaels criticized for saying Lizzo's body shouldn't be 'celebrated,'" "Jillian Michaels accused of body-shaming after Lizzo comments," and "Jillian Michaels asked why people are 'celebrating' Lizzo's body." The centering and heavy critique on Michaels as a body shamer display the dynamic shift Lizzo has created as a nomadic subject. These articles emphasize Michaels' positionality in this clash (Aviles, 2020; Chiu, 2020; Hines, 2020).

Lizzo is heartfully framed as a music mogul for spreading self-love, while Michaels is shown as the antagonist for being 'fatphobic' and 'body-shaming' (Aviles, 2020; Hines, 2020). Although the title draws attention to Lizzo's physical appearance, it is used to draw attention to Michaels' wrongdoings of criticizing Lizzo's physical appearance. Under each article title, there is a head-lining image of Lizzo that displays her with a White light source angelically casting on

her face, signaling her iconic, martyr-like status for the intersectional body-positive causes.

In *Today*, there is a side-by-side split image displaying Michaels in black clothing with her lips slightly pursed facing to the right; Lizzo is facing right with a White light source illuminating her face displaying softness. The news articles place Michaels in a negative, problematic position for commenting on another woman and her body (Aviles, 2020; Chiu, 2020; Hines, 2020). Lizzo is reported as the “leading voice for body positivity” (Chiu, 2020). In the articles, there are social media comments from Twitter embedded from public users who are supporting and defending Lizzo (Aviles, 2020; Chiu, 2020; Hines, 2020).

NBC News reporter Aviles (2020) shared Dr. Sami Schalk’s, University of Wisconsin’s assistant professor of gender & women’s studies, tweet,

If yall don’t leave Lizzo alone, I swear to fucking God. @JillianMichaels participates in the diet industry & profits from us hating our bodies. Don’t listen to her. You can be fat & healthy. Besides, health is not a barometer for a person’s value. (Aviles, 2020)

Michaels’ comments reinforce the stigma that health is defined by physical appearance. Dr. Schalk incorporates the element of value because a person’s health is often associated with their appearance. Lizzo not only rewrites the narrative for plus-size Black women, she rewrites the narrative by sharing with audiences that health is not determined by appearance. Self-love is achievable regardless of body shape, size, and weight. A person’s value is not determined

by health but by the love they have for themselves. Lizzo does this by speaking upon it, creating music, and practicing it. She continues to promote the message of being enough (Aviles, 2020).

The AM to DM host who interviewed Michaels comments on Twitter that “Lizzo has been incredibly important in giving so many of us a possibility model for accepting our bodies as we are and celebrating bodies that are normally ridiculed. Had to restrain myself from defending Lizzo's honor!” (Hines, 2020). Michaels’ comments aid ridicule of plus-size women by stating bodies like Lizzo is not worth celebrating and are chronic illness prone. On the other end of the spectrum, some came to the support of Michaels, with one individual tweeting, “Sorry... I don't think we should normalize morbid obesity just to avoid hurt feelings ” (Chiu, 2020). The support Michaels receives from commenters shows how glamorizing obesity is a deeply problematic issue. Michaels asserts her concerns about praising obesity. However, Lizzo and her supportive fans do not consider themselves to be glamorizing obesity. The Real co-host shares, “I applaud somebody who loves themselves” (The Real Daytime, 2020c). Lizzo indicates from the beginning of her career that she struggled with self-love and body image issues (StyleLikeU, 2021; Takeda, 2019). Lizzo is a victim of the spectacle and its enforcing docile bodies (Bordo, 1993; Debord, 2020) on the one hand, but also an empowering icon on the other.

As the analysis of media coverage showed, Michaels should be mindful of comments she publicly cast as a fitness expert. Her words enforce the stigma of

women's worth measured by their physical appearance; those who do not align with acceptable standards are not worthy of celebration. Although Michaels was overweight in her past, "she should know that there's a sensitivity and that there is a thoughtfulness about how you address these types of talking" (The Real Daytime, 2020c, 1:42).

A Twitter user adds that Michaels was the leading face for "The Biggest Loser." With a negative connotation of using "Biggest" and "Loser" in the title for a weight loss competition, Michaels participated in the enforcement of training unacceptable, overweight individuals to become permissible docile bodies (Bordo, 1993). A Twitter user notes that Michaels "destroyed the health and mental wellbeing of fat folks, exploiting their suffering — not to mention glamorizing self-destruction and disordered eating for countless others" while hosting "The Biggest Loser" (Chiu, 2020). Chiu (2020) asserts that Michaels' would threaten and insult "The Biggest Loser" contestants in an attempt to motivate them to lose weight quickly. Although the show is no longer filming, Michaels continues to use the notion of physical appearance as a problematic alarm code for illness and health problems. This is problematic for plus-size women and women who do not fit the dominant beauty and body standard.

Anonymous blog writer under the username Misscrf (2020) shares her sentiments and full support of Lizzo after the harsh comments Lizzo received from Michaels. Misscrf (2020) emphasizes that harping on a women's body, regardless of their health, weight, body shape, or size, will not help the individual.

Further adding that overweight women already receive enough criticism about their bodies, it is disheartening to see the same public reaction from Michaels to Lizzo (Misscrf, 2020). Lizzo's nomadic work highlights the problems in societal views. Misscrf argues that being overweight is not always the contributor to health problems; being overweight can be a side effect of health conditions.

Toni Love, the co-host of *The Talk*, shares that "Lizzo never really said accept me being fat... She says accept herself. Accept yourself for who you are" (*The Real Daytime*, 2020b). Regardless of what a woman's weight, size, or body shape is, health recent articles have addressed should not be defined by physical appearance. This should be even more clear to Michaels, "who is a fitness expert [that] doesn't recognize that your health isn't determined by your weight" (*The Real Daytime*, 2020a, 1:21). Misscrf (2020) further adds that "Hating my body isn't going to get me anywhere." Self-love is the beginning of self-care and how that regimen unfolds is up to the individual. Self-love is Lizzo's coconut oil for her audiences. Despite Lizzo's strong efforts of advocating for self-love, the comments Lizzo inserts the intersectional notion. Senyonga and Luna (2021) argue that society fails to recognize Lizzo's intersectionality as the public continues to scrutinize her. However, there are recent articles evolving that address the importance of Lizzo's intersectionality in her feminist efforts.

With immense public attention to her interview, Jillian Michaels utilized her public Instagram to prompt the issue. She posted an image with the text:

As I've stated repeatedly, we are all beautiful, worthy, and equally deserving. I also feel strongly that we love ourselves enough to acknowledge there are serious health consequences that come with obesity — heart disease, diabetes, cancer to name only a few. I would never wish these for ANYONE and I would hope we prioritize our health because we LOVE ourselves and our bodies. (Michaels, 2020)

Michaels defends her statements on the AM to DM interview on social media (AM to DM, 2020; Michaels, 2020). She stands by her words that insinuate that women of larger size do not prioritize their health—further assuring the notion that health is defined by physical appearance. This traces back to when Michaels made the initial statement inferring that Lizzo's body, her physical appearance, should not be celebrated “cause it isn't going to be awesome if she gets diabetes” (AM2DM, 2020). In addition, Michaels' detached sorry, not sorry attitude toward her comments on Lizzo caused a public upset. Her nonchalant response dismisses the public's opinion of her fat-shaming attitude (Chiu, 2020). Although Michaels did not issue a public apology to Lizzo, Michaels continuously addresses and clarifies her comments (The Real Daytime, 2020c).

Months prior to the notorious interview, Michaels shared with Women's Health that “nobody should ever be body shamed or fat-shamed or excluded and that everyone is equally deserving and should feel equally valuable” (Daly, 2019). Michaels continues to state that her concerns with others' health have been manipulated and labeled as fat-shaming. Michaels blames political correctness

for society being sensitive to talk about health (Daly, 2019). Her resistance and strong opinion of political correctness raise flags for her inability to avoid offensive language and perpetuate fat stigma towards marginalized groups. Although Michaels addresses the importance of health— through physical appearance—she cannot separate the social categorical layer that contributes to Lizzo’s intersectionality. Shaw Nevins and Drumond (2020) emphasized the interconnected, overlapping layers of being Black, women, and fat, or physical appearance, presence for Lizzo. The importance of incorporating intersectionality is evident because women should not feel governed, discriminated against, or in this case, fat-shamed for not meeting the white, thin patriarchal beauty and body standards (Senyonga & Luna, 2021; Shaw Nevins & Drumond, 2020).

Lizzo’s Intersectionality

When talking about the prominent themes in the clash between Lizzo and Jillian Michaels, it is almost impossible to omit the theme of intersectionality. As the face of body positivity and self-love, Lizzo cannot be separated from her identity as a Black woman because of the multifaceted layers of oppression she experiences (Collins, 2015; Crenshaw, 1989; Crenshaw, 1991; Senyonga & Luna, 2021). In the article, “Living Lizzo’s truth hurts: The challenges of being an unapologetically fat Black woman,” Shahamat Uddin (2020) highlights the obstacles Lizzo has to overcome as a plus-size Black woman living in an oppressive society. Michaels utilizes her White privilege to vocalize her fatphobic comments onto Lizzo.

In doing so, Michaels joins the oppressive society that enforces White, thin Eurocentric standards. Michaels “encourage[s] societal hatred of fatness” by willingly and relentlessly casting these comments into the public (Uddin, 2020). Lizzo’s internet attacks amount to “something deeper than routine cyber taunting: a motivated hatred of fat Black women” (Uddin, 2020). Although Michaels shares her admiration for Lizzo’s music, she participates in the oppressive dialogue that Lizzo constantly receives that probes Lizzo’s intersectionality. Uddin (2020) argues that the negative comments Lizzo receives about her physical appearance are an act to dehumanize Lizzo and her Blackness. Michaels’ comments are problematic because she is oppressing a plus-size Black woman who is historically marginalized. Singling out Lizzo’s physical appearance is compromising Lizzo’s identity because it is overlapping layers that make Lizzo who she is (Senyonga & Luna, 2021). Lizzo’s intersectionality is composed of at least three identities that contribute to her oppression: her race, gender, and physical appearance (Shaw Nevins & Drumond, 2020). Attacking one of Lizzo’s intersectional identities is attacking all of them.

While the element of the race did not arise in Michaels’ oppressive comments to Lizzo, Love (The Real Daytime, 2020b) asserts that Michaels did not project her health and physical appearance concerns onto Adele, who is a white plus-size musical artist. This further insinuates that there is an element of race involved when Michaels attacks Lizzo. The difference between Adele’s intersectionality and Lizzo’s is the element of race. As soon as Love made this

comment, her co-host immediately tried to steer the conversation away. Love realized how her comment may spark some attention and that Loni “will be put on a blog again” and should “stop it” (The Real Daytime, 2020b). Although it is not clear why Love and her co-host tried to redirect the conversation, it is apparent they are trying to avoid media attention. Perhaps these reports will critique Love for trying to make Michaels’ comments an issue about physical appearance and race. Regardless of what was trying to be avoided, Love made a valid point emphasizing how Michaels made these comments on a Black woman and not a White woman.

In Michaels’ interview with AM to DM that sprouted the attention it received; it is important to note how Lizzo was inserted into the conversation. The AM to DM host brought up two women who promote self-love, Lizzo and White plus-size supermodel Ashley Graham. “I love celebrities like Lizzo or Ashley Graham who are really preaching self-acceptance... I love that they are putting images that we normally don’t get to see” (AM to DM, 2020, 0:16). This is where Michaels quickly interjected with questions tailored to Lizzo, not Ashley Graham. Michaels’ focus on Lizzo adds to the oppression that Lizzo already receives for being a plus-size Black woman working in the music industry. Although news reporting’s do not address Lizzo’s race and gender or intersectionality, they position Lizzo as an advocate for social change, social acceptance, and the modern saint for spreading self-love (Aviles, 2020; Chiu, 2020; Hines, 2020; Uddin, 2020).

In Uddin's (2020) article, an animated image of Lizzo captures her from the torso up. Her mouth is relaxed, but Lizzo's head is tilted up and slightly to the left, with her eyes looking upward. Behind Lizzo's shoulders is a yellow and white halo-like ring with seven small white stars drawn above her head. The angelic drawn artwork of Lizzo suggests her as a martyr for the body-positive movement - a saint. This reflects Lizzo's work as the sacrificial leader for plus-size Black women. As the leading face of representation for plus-size Black women, Lizzo is at the forefront of receiving the heinous comments. She has become the devoted official that leads the way for marginalized women like her.

Not only did Michaels receive backlash for her criticism of Lizzo's physical appearance, but Twitter users also addressed race, gender, and physical appearance. One Twitter user asserts

We're celebrating Lizzo's body because ppl like Jillian made it an issue!
We wouldn't have to celebrate Lizzo's body if fatphobia and misogyny and racism didn't marginalize fat people especially fat black women. Fatphobia kills. But it also sells. Shame on you Jillian Michaels (lo, 2020).

The user addresses the marginalization of fat people and emphasizes that marginalization is heightened for plus-size Black people. This tweet addresses how different overlapping social categories can alter the levels of oppression. Plus-size Black women, like Lizzo, have the oppressive triple layers of physical appearance, race, and gender that are not easily accepted in society. Further adding that Lizzo's self-love body-positive messages are worth celebrating

because of how people like Michaels attempt to make it problematic. In contrast, there are Michaels supporters who address the elements of race:

Jillian Michaels accused of being 'fat phobic' Lizzo for saying being that overweight has many health risks. She is of course also called racist because Lizzo is black. 'this is about humiliating and shaming bodies that are not white and thin.' Now health facts are fat shaming.

(Whathappened.com, 2020)

Michaels associating health and physical appearance together is deeply problematic, especially when she is judging other women's bodies. Even if Michaels did not draw on the tenets of race in her interview, Michaels' oppressive dialogue reflects the historical pattern of White women policing Black women.

Such comments are not only directly associated with Lizzo; they apply to all women of color whose bodies resemble Lizzo's. Making these public statements is opening Lizzo and people like her up to more ridicule and continuously interlocking systems of oppression based on their intersectionality. "The moment Jillian Michaels should have stopped making comments on Lizzo's Black body was the moment she was born a White woman. #whitegaze #whitebodynorms #whitepower #WhitePrivilege," writes a Twitter user (Forty Ounce, 2020). Michaels does not understand or recognize the oppression Black women receive because she is White.

Even as a woman experiencing gender discrimination, Michaels has White privilege, and her physical appearance appeals to the spectacle's standards

(Debord, 2020). She does not live the same experience as Lizzo, yet Michaels feels inclined to use her platform to enforce historic White supremacist, patriarchal views. Black women do not need to receive more oppression as they are the most disadvantaged and oppressed in society.

Lizzo has become the exemplar for analyzing Blackness, womanhood, and physical appearance because of the negative media and societal attention she receives, which serves as a double-edged sword for others failing to recognize and respect her intersectionality (Senyonga & Luna, 2021; Shaw Nevins & Drummond, 2020). Misscrf (2020) states that “the bottom line is that there is an intersectionality that needs to be part of the discussion.” In the eyes of fat-shaming oppressors like Michaels', Lizzo's fame and financial success don't change their views of her. If Lizzo was a White woman, the news response might have stirred major media attention because White women are born with advantages in life regardless of their physical appearance. White women do not displace the spectacle the way a Black woman would because White patriarchy attempts to suppress Black women and their identities. However, Lizzo's nomadic work as a plus-size Black woman stirred attention in the spectacle even before Michaels' commentaries. After Michaels made her comments, it shifted the focus, blame, and oppressive wrongdoings onto Michaels rather than Lizzo.

Although Michaels did not elicit a public apology for her remarks on Lizzo or broad health generalizations, the overwhelming news reporting's and public reaction on social media pressured Michaels to clarify herself on her Instagram

page. Michaels stands by her comments and asserts, “I would hope we prioritize our health because we LOVE ourselves and our bodies” (Michaels, 2020). Lizzo’s messages throughout the years are primed on the notion of self-love. This follows Michaels’ assertion to love ourselves and our bodies, yet Michaels draws back that health needs to be a priority-- inferring that it was not for plus-size women. Regardless of how Michaels attempts to conduct damage recovery, she made public critiques on a plus-size Black woman. Elements of news reporting and public backlash pressured Michaels (2020) to make her Instagram post-follow-up due to the overlapping layers of intersectionality that make Lizzo, Lizzo.

One year earlier, Lizzo tweeted, “Hey friend! Next time you want to criticize a black woman for not upholding your standard of righteousness. Remember that we’re constantly having to beat the system while you have the privilege to ignore it. Xoxo, A black woman” ((FOLLOW @YITTY, 2019). Although there is no clear mention of whom she was referring to, it appears to be directed to the general public, who constantly ridicules her. This response carries itself well to anyone who shames, mocks, or scrutinizes her. Lizzo was born with a disadvantage that money or fame will not fix. As a result of her intersectionality, she is forced to address reoccurring issues about her work as a plus-size Black woman. However, Lizzo responds differently to this incident, reflecting the love and admiration she receives and shares with others.

Lizzo, a Progressive Nomadic Subject

In this subsection, I examine how Lizzo re-affirms herself as a nomadic, progressive symbol (Braidotti, 2011; Lizzo, 2020a) through digital media, which affords everyone involved the opportunity to contribute to positive social change for the intersectional body-positive feminism. Following Michaels' vocalizing her opinions, Lizzo shares a video on Instagram (Lizzo, 2020). In the video, Lizzo points the camera outward. She films herself leaving her bedroom, walking through her luxurious home towards the patio, revealing her peaceful lake scenery. Besides the audio of doors opening, the sound of birds chirping exude as she enters the patio. Lizzo paired the Instagram video with her mantra for the day:

At the 25 second mark I want you to take 5 deep breaths... in through the nose... out through the mouth.. today's mantra is: This is my life. I have done nothing wrong. I forgive myself for thinking I was wrong in the first place. I deserve to be happy (Lizzo, 2020a).

It is speculated that Lizzo indirectly responded to the negative comments Michaels stated (Teti, 2020). The post was published during the wake of Michaels' critique of Lizzo (AM to DM, 2020; AM2DM by BuzzFeed News, 2020; Lizzo, 2020a; Michaels, 2020). In her post, Lizzo shares that she has done nothing wrong in her life and was mistaken to believe that she was. Lizzo has previously communicated with Elle magazine about self-love, "I didn't love who I was. And the reason I didn't love who I was is because I was told I wasn't lovable

by the media” (Takeda, 2019). Lizzo’s intersectionality of being a plus-size Black woman has inflicted disadvantages that she continuously goes through, even in her celebrity status (Collins, 2015; Flood, 2019; Lizzo, 2020a; Meisenzahl, 2020; Senyonga & Luna, 2021). Disadvantages such as always having to control her narrative and defend herself by showing receipts (Brekke et al., 2021). Despite the tedious and exhausting process of having to verify her life experience being a plus-size Black woman, Lizzo powers through the hatred and continues to be highly vocal about spreading messages of self-love, self-acceptance, and body positivity (Chiu, 2020; Esmonde, 2020; Lizzo, 2020a; Hines, 2020; Yandoli, 2020).

Although Lizzo does not confront every critic, she has addressed a large sum with an exuberant response (Meisenzahl, 2020; Stiegman, 2020; Takeda, 2019; Teti, 2020). However, two days before Michaels’ interview, Lizzo announced she was taking a break from Twitter: “Yeah I can’t do this Twitter shit no more.. too many trolls... I’ll be back when I feel like it” (FOLLOW @ YITTY, 2020). Lizzo attempts to get away from critics but encounters Michaels’ comments two short days later (AM to DM, 2020; AM2DM by BuzzFeed News, 2020; Lizzo, 2020a; Michaels, 2020). A fan responds to Lizzo’s tweet stating:

@lizzo im so sorry you have to endure all this. People (especially online) really don’t know the impact of their words and the pain they can cause. You’re beautiful and it’s good to take time off for the sake of your mental health (Ceo of cherry, 2020).

Lizzo constantly defends herself and it is affecting her as she tries to step away from the social space (FOLLOW @ YITTY, 2020; Meisenzahl, 2020). This is evident as Lizzo posts her mantra on Instagram soon after Michaels vocalizes her opinions (AM2DM by BuzzFeed News, 2020; Lizzo, 2020a; Michaels, 2020). Instead of addressing Michaels directly, Lizzo takes a tranquil approach (Lizzo, 2020a). Lizzo avoids being labeled as an angry Black woman, mammy trope, or any of the controlling images tropes (Collins, 2009). The analysis of Lizzo displays a body-positive interpretation of feminism that undergoes nonstop criticism and chastising. When Lizzo and the community strive to promote self-love, self-acceptance, and body positivity, they continue to undergo scrutiny and even more for women who have the oppressive social category of race (Collins, 2015). The criticisms Lizzo endures are polluted by White, thin feminists that align more strongly with the spectacle (Brewer & Dundes, 2018; Debord, 2020; Flood, 2019; Senyonga & Luna, 2021). Despite receiving criticism from a public figure, Lizzo continues to promote her self-love messages. She continues to become a nomadic, progressive symbol by using this opportunity to share with her followers that they deserve to be happy (Braidotti, 2011; Lizzo, 2020a). Lizzo utilizes this negativity to keep pushing forward, even if it takes a toll on her at times.

Lizzo's tranquil approach captured media attention in a manner that does not require Lizzo to follow up and comment on the event, not like Michaels continuously has to (Lizzo, 2020). Lizzo's work as a nomadic subject (Braidotti,

2011) in displaying self-love messages through her music, image, and social media posts was already disrupting the spectacle. Lizzo was already known to be a disruptive progressive symbol, but the viral nature of this event propelled Lizzo's work forward. Lizzo gained a supportive following that her fans would speak for her and defend her. Lizzo's nomadic work has the power to shift the framing of public discourse in her favor as news reports are defending Lizzo, thereby contributing to positive social change in the name of intersectional body-positive feminism.

The day after Michael's critique of Lizzo's body went viral, *The Washington Post* created a montage video on Youtube titled, "What Lizzo has said about body positivity." This YouTube video supported Lizzo and was embedded into *The Washington Post's* news article (Chiu, 2020; Washington Post, 2020). The speediness of developing an article and matching video supported Lizzo and her work as a nomadic subject (Braidotti, 2011). The first clip shown in the 1-minute 46-second video is Lizzo explaining that the term body positivity was grounded on body shaming. In the second clip, Lizzo reflects on her music performance in 2015, where audiences were shocked at how confident Lizzo was.

Lizzo's self-love disrupts the norm and controlling images developed for plus-size Black women (Collins, 2009). Society expects "how they want to see fat Black women in media, and if they don't get that, then those women's careers are most in danger" (Uddin, 2020). As a plus-size Black woman, Lizzo is

combatting the box that society tries to place her in. Lizzo develops an identity of resistance to controlling images (Collins, 2009). This is when Lizzo realized that her “mere existence is a form of activism, especially in the body positive community” (Washington Post, 2020, 0:43). In the third clip, Lizzo states how society views body positivity as problematic. Yet body-negativity is not seen as troublesome because it is a norm in society. This is a result of consumerism and the media that is directed within the patriarchal (hooks, 1984) spectacle (Debord, 1967/2020) that is driven by capitalizing on women’s bodies: “They’re selling you an idea of yourself that you haven’t quite yet achieved... so you never really feel complete and you never really feel happy completely about yourself” (Washington Post, 2020, 1:26). Capitalism profits off of women by pointing out the flaws in women’s bodies or practicing body-shaming and fat-shaming behaviors. This is noted in how Michaels’ profits as a trainer and host working on *The Biggest Loser*. In addition, Michaels inserted her comments on Lizzo while attempting to promote her fitness app.

What Lizzo does, in contrast, which is found to be disruptive to the White patriarchal social order, is telling audiences that they are enough. Lizzo passionately states to “normalize growing comfortable with your body. Don’t normalize trying to change your body because someone’s telling you to” (Washington Post, 2020, 1:43). Interestingly, the final message Lizzo shares are not to let someone influence how you view yourself and your body. Lizzo refused to let Michaels enforce her docile White appealing patriarchal subjectivities onto

her. As a nomadic subject, Lizzo refuses to become a docile body to Michaels' fixed subjectivity of what constitutes a woman (Bordo, 1993; Braidotti, 2011). A hyper-critical focus on women's bodies has become normalized over the years. Lizzo's work as a nomadic subject challenge this focus and encourages other women to become resistant. *The Washington Post* (2020) is echoing the same message as Lizzo by sharing her quote of being resistant to dominant biased views. *The Washington Post* (2020) purposefully selects and edits videos of Lizzo that demonstrate the problems Lizzo sees in society and how her existence is a progressive nomadic symbol. This event launched Lizzo forward as a progressive symbol as *The Washington Post* (2020) felt inclined to display clips of her powerful self-love and body-positive messages.

Rather than news articles reinforcing the historical oppression of Black women, Lizzo's nomadic work speaks for herself as articles present the information. News articles support and defend Lizzo by embedding Tweets from her followers that are defending her. News articles are selectively choosing imagery that displays Lizzo in white lighting. This is attached to the news article reporting Michaels getting labeled as fatphobic for her comments on Lizzo (Chiu, 2020). Society expects "how they want to see fat Black women in media and if they don't get that, then those women's careers are most in danger" (Uddin, 2020). As a plus-size Black woman, Lizzo is combatting the box that society tries to place her in. Lizzo develops an identity of resistance to the controlling images

(Collins, 2009). Her existence as a nomadic subject allows others to reflect and develop their own identity of resistance by learning to love themselves.

In October of 2020, Lizzo graced the cover of *Vogue* as the first plus-size Black woman (Dodhiya, 2020; Lizzo, 2020b) thereby creating a space of not just acceptance but a new norm of depiction for plus-size women of color as beautiful and desirable. In the October issue, *Vogue* writer, Claudia Rankine shares how she attended Lizzo's concert at the Radio City Music Hall in New York City. Rankine (2020) reflects on how she had been to Radio City Music Hall for a Christmas show of the Rockettes but noted that it was always White women with maybe one or two women of color. Rankine states that this time "Black woman onstage would leave an imprint" (Rankine, 2020). The impression Lizzo is leaving upon her audiences is the immediate recognition of Black women on stage. Rankine (2020) highlights how an iconic Christmas show performance did not have the same diverse representation as Lizzo's concert. Rankine further addressed the 2020 climate: the "era of fake news and lying politicians and stressed-out White Americans shouting racist words at stressed-out people of color—[Lizzo] was committed to positivity." While Lizzo has been attacked for her intersectional layers of race, gender, and physical appearance, "anyone who could understand what it was like to be targeted felt spoken to by Lizzo" (Rankine, 2020). Whether it is her music, imagery, or her self-love mantras, Lizzo becomes a relatable figure for marginalized groups.

In the wake of the tragic police murder of George Floyd in 2020, it sparked a protest led by the Black Lives Matter movement, which seeks to highlight racism, discrimination, and inequality inflicted on Black people. Lizzo shares she is “been brokenhearted by this country” (Rankine, 2020). Since she was a child, Lizzo was taught by her father how dangerous it is to be a Black in a systematic oppressive society. Lizzo has created songs referencing her skin color: “I woke in my skin. I can’t wash it away, so you can’t take it away—my skin. Brown skin.” Lizzo’s music continuously echoes her empowering self-love messages, especially for the Black community. Lizzo asserts that she is “a Black woman making music from a Black experience.” Although there was a scarce amount of plus-size Black women in the entertainment industry, Lizzo found her inspiration through musical artists Missy Elliot and Queen Latifah. Lizzo is now the proud, vocal activist representing plus-size Black women in younger and current generations. Although Lizzo has been candid about her role in the body-positive community, she suggests transitioning towards being body-normative; “I want to normalize my body.” Lizzo adds that body positivity has lost its motive as thin, White women are overshadowing it by utilizing the movement for their agenda. Body positivity no longer benefits “Girls with back fat, girls with bellies that hang, girls with thighs that aren’t separated, that overlap. Girls with stretch marks” (Rankine, 2020). Although she argues that body positivity is losing its narrative, Lizzo still embodies the representation she argues it was meant for. Lizzo utilizes

body positivity to combat the hegemonic views of body negativity and body shaming.

Lizzo's nomadic work causes discomfort to White patriarchy's capitalist culture, but within that, discomfort creates changes. Lizzo promotes social change, acceptance, and embracing oneself externally and internally. As a nomadic subject, Lizzo turns the debate into her arena for battle. Lizzo is a strong influential representative for plus-size Black women that "take[s] full responsibility for the way the world perceives [her] because that is the way they're gonna perceive someone who looks like me in the future" (Rankine, 2020).

On the same day of the release of Vogue's feature, Lizzo shares her excitement on Instagram: "I am the first big black woman on the cover of @voguemagazine. The first black anything feels overdue. But our time has come. To all my black girls, if someone like you hasn't done it yet— BE THE FIRST" (Lizzo, 2020b). Lizzo employs every opportunity to vocalize her relentless efforts in advocating for the acceptance and equality of Black people. As the leading figure for plus-size Black women, Lizzo creates a path for other women to follow. Her strong voice and commitment to social acceptance, social equality, and social justice launch her as the progressive nomadic symbol. As her intersectional layers of gender, race, and physical appearance molds her life experiences, Lizzo uses them to create a path to benefit similar audiences.

Lizzo's disruption of the spectacle garnered the power of the shifting public framing in her favor.

In February 2020, Lizzo received the 2020 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NAACP Image Awards' Entertainer Of The Year. Posted by the BETNetwork (2020) on Youtube, Lizzo is accepting her award and giving a speech where she praises the "all of the big Black girls that [she] brings on stage." Although she may be referring to the plus-size Black women performers she brings to all of her concerts, Lizzo's words metaphorically address a larger audience. Not only does Lizzo bring representation of plus-size Black women through her presence, but she also applies this representation in her dance performances. The layer of physical appearance element grants Lizzo the ability to expose and normalize marginalized women and their bodies through her own body. Lizzo becomes the positive reinforcement for younger and current generations with similar self-love struggles due to the underrepresentation and misrepresentation of plus-size Black women in media. Through her performances, music, messages, and images, Lizzo becomes the progressive nomadic symbol that displaces the public and drives the normalization and acceptance of marginalized bodies.

The Big Picture

Zooming away from the dominating themes within the case of Jillian Michael's critique of Lizzo, we can now assess how intersectionality informs the study of contrasting interpretations of feminism in relation to the body-positive

movement. Before I do so though, I have to reflexively examine my own relation to the question. I recall how in one of my previous papers, I analyzed social media influencers' motivations for the body-positive content they create. I sought to learn the motives of White, thin body positive Instagram influencer Danae Mercer.

At the time of my study in November of 2020, Danae Mercer was one of the most prominent figures in the body positive movement. I now realize that I was negligent in viewing and analyzing women of non-White ethnic backgrounds in the body-positive community. Practicing self-reflexivity, I was drawn to the point that there are not prominent women of color who had high social standings and media coverage as Danae Mercer. Although Mercer is applauded for her display of stretch marks, cellulite, and small stomach rolls, she remains a socially acceptable woman in society. The body-positive movement is primed on the acceptance of physical appearance, which includes acceptance of all marginalized bodies. This is beyond Mercer's display of minor, minuscule features that she magnifies on social media. As a public personality with over 2 million followers on Instagram, Mercer's negative commentary suggests a significant difference from someone of different body size and race. My focus on Danae Mercer is a vivid example of how mainstream and White dominant the body positive movement has become. Since my initial research encounters, I saw the need to shift my focus to the disparity in the representation of Black women in the body-positive community.

As I was finalizing my thesis, in March of 2022, I performed a Google search of “body positive activists,” where I analyzed the first website titled “53 Body Positive Influencers You Should Follow” (Creveling, 2020). While this article cites 53 body-positive influencers, 35 are White, ten are Black, and eight are people of color. While 53 is an unusual number compared to the top 10 or the top 50, VeryWellMind.com highlighted 53 body-positive activists, with over two-thirds featuring White women. There is an overarching scarcity of representation of Black women in the body-positive movement. This scarcity could result from articles like VeryWellMind.com failing to include more Black women and people of color. Alternatively, Black women are overshadowed in the body positive movement. Dastagir (2017) shares in USA Today that the body-positive movement is excluding the people it is meant to make more visible. The body-positive movement is about the acceptance of all bodies; however, Dastagir (2017) argues that the body-positive movement is being co-opted to accommodate White bodies. The movement has become mainstream and detached from its origins of acceptance of marginalized bodies by primarily displaying “curvy, White, straight, feminine bodies that may occasionally tout cellulite or stretch mark[s]” (Dastagir, 2017). Through analysis on Instagram on the use of #bodypositive and #bodypositivity, Gelsing (2021) concludes that there is a “lack of diversity, as the majority of top posts represent able-bodied, young, and white women” (p. 54). This is problematic as it neglects to weave

women with intersectional, marginalized women in the body-positive community (Dominici, 2020).

In the article, “Why Are Women of Colour Left Out Of Body Positivity?,” Elle journalist Stephanie Yeboah (2017) writes that plus-size Black women on social media led to the emergence and popularity of the body-positive movement. However, plus-size Black women are being overshadowed by socially acceptable White women. This is supported by Glesinger's (2021) findings that the majority of social media users utilizing body-positive hashtags are White women. Yeboah shares that plus-size Black women, like herself, “are taught from a young age that [their] skin tones and the shape of [their] bodies will always be considered inferior to that of a white, more able-of-body person, as beauty standards are inherently cloaked in whiteness” (Yeboah, 2017). The same sentiments have been expressed by Lizzo (StyleLikeU, 2021). Whiteness and males are seen as the default for humanity, while Black women are seen as inferior for both race and gender (hooks, 1984). As the body-positive movement has grown to become mainstream, it has further marginalized Black women. Yeboah (2017) expresses:

Much like the feminist movement, body positivity has become non-intersectional and prioritises/celebrates the thoughts, feelings, opinions and achievements of white women, with a small number of 'token' people of colour to help fill up the 'look at us being diverse!' quota.

The body-positive movement lacks the inclusion of Black women and women of non-White backgrounds. Lizzo asserts that body-positive has grown to be

commercialized but only features socially acceptable White bodies (Rankine, 2020). Plus-size White women flood the community. Yeboah (2017) does not dismiss the feminists' efforts plus-size White women have made, but she emphasizes the importance of incorporating more women of color because body positivity "is centred around women who are still conventionally desirable."

Yeboah (2017) mentions there is not only a lack of diversity on social media but in fashion and entertainment. Entertainment work for plus-size women is scarce, even more so for plus-size Black women (Barnes, 2017). Television and movies need to expand their castings of "race, gender, sexuality, physical abilities and body type, which is one that usually gets left out of the conversation" (Barnes, 2017). Yeboah (2017) exemplifies this point on how Black plus-size actress Gabourey Sidibe is labeled "the most enormous fat Black chick" while white, plus-size actress Rebel Wilson is labeled the "quirky, fun, chubby" girl. It is apparent that plus-size Black women receive different treatment, especially for women of a different complexion. Further adding that there is an element of colorism.

Black women with a darker complexion receive more negative commentary than Black women of a lighter complexion. The difference in the commentary is a result of society's agreement that lighter complexion women visually assimilate Eurocentric features. The body-positive movement "pushed darker-skinned black women to the back and only let a handful of lighter-skinned black women in at a time" (Jennings, 2018). Dominici (2020) highlights how

Sidibe constantly receives applause for her bravery. Sidibe emphasizes how Rihanna, a thin, lighter complexion Black musical artist, won't receive the same commentary: "People are always asking why or how I'm so confident. But what they really mean to say is why are you so confident. They are not asking Rihanna. They are asking me because they don't think I should be" (Dominici, 2020). Jennings (2018) raises attention to how Sidibe, who is of darker complexion as a plus-size Black woman, is not seen as one of the leading voices for the body-positive movement (Jennings, 2018). Sidibe has pushed aside while names like White, plus-size model Ashley Graham is noted as an influential body-positive activist. When plus-size Black women are confident with themselves, they are constantly probed to learn why they are confident. There is a lack of diversity and display of plus-size Black women in the body-positive movement (Gelsinger, 2021). Jennings (2018) asserts that Black women have been celebrating their natural bodies for centuries, and the body positivity movement has grown to be dominated by White women. It is now composed of White women who further marginalize women of color, especially Black women.

Lizzo has been adamant about her role in the body-positive community: body positivity "isn't my brand, this is who I am" (Variety, 2020, 0:35). Lizzo's work is grounded, inspired, and motivated by her life experiences as a plus-size Black woman. Not only was it a struggle for Lizzo to break through in the music industry because of her intersectional identity, Lizzo also struggled in her self-love journey because of the White patriarchal ideologies imposed onto plus-size

Black women's identities. She represents plus-size Black women in a positive light through her art of music. Although Lizzo does profit from her music and other works of art, what she does differently is telling marginalized women they are beautiful just the way they are. However, Lizzo addressed problems with the body-positive movement as it soon began to marginalize women within the community.

In 2021, Lizzo shares her new perspective on the body-positive movement. Lizzo responds to a circulating TikTok of a white, plus-size woman asking social media why she cannot “just exist in my body.” Lizzo asserts that the body-positive community has grown to be inclusive of all bodies, including “medium and small girls and people who occasionally get rolls” yet, “fat people are still getting the short end of this movement” (Lizzo, 2021). Although the body-positive movement is based on the acceptance and normalization of all bodies, it is being overshadowed by socially passable White women. “Big women, big brown and Black women, queer women — are not benefiting from the mainstream success of it” (Lizzo, 2021). Plus-size women have become marginalized in the community, and Black women have become a marginalized subset group. Lizzo does not dismiss the benefits it has for all women, including the smaller and medium-size bodies, but she adds that we should not neglect plus-size women. In the TikTok video caption, Lizzo directs her following to continue to use the body-positive movement for self-empowerment but also to “protect and uplift the bodies it was created for” (Lizzo, 2021). The shift in Lizzo's

view of the body-positive movement is caused by the appropriation in mainstream culture. Lizzo argues that when viewing the movement online through the “hashtag ‘body positive,’” there are “smaller-framed girls, curvier girls. Lotta white girls.” (Rankine, 2020). Once the body-positive movement had grown in popularity and went mainstream, it changed and was “made acceptable” in society. As the body-positive movement becomes an outlier in the spectacle, it has been manipulated to regain and retract the focus on dominant, acceptable, and Eurocentric beauty and body features. This further pushes plus-size body shapes, sizes, and non-White races to the side, making women of different intersectional layers more marginalized in an already marginalized group.

Lizzo’s critique of the body's positive movement lies in how it became co-opted into popular culture. She remains a public figure for the initial grounds of the movement, the acceptance of marginalized bodies. The body-positive movement neglects the intersectional layers of women that keep them marginalized. There is a societal acceptance of White women in this community but constant ridicule of Black women. Lizzo remains the representation of the body-positive community's desires. She imposes her own ideas, values, and experiences into her feminist views and body-positive, nomadic work. Lizzo has the “ability to show love and compassion, show this love through [her] actions, and be able to engage with successful dialogue” (hooks, 1984, p. 161). Lizzo acknowledges her influential role and relationship with the body-positive

community. However, she receives harsh criticism for being the leading face for plus-size Black women.

Despite her best efforts to ignore fat-phobic, racist, and malicious attacks, Lizzo will periodically and publicly break down from the emotional toll it takes on her. In a deleted Instagram video addressing derogatory comments, Lizzo states:

What I won't accept is y'all doing this to Black women over and over and over again, especially us big Black girls. When we don't fit into the box that you want to put us in, you just unleash hatred onto us. It's not cool. I'm doing this shit for the big Black women in the future who just want to live their lives without being scrutinized or put into boxes. (Chan, 2021)

Once again, Lizzo is standing up for herself, Black women, and plus-size Black women, who continue to be oppressed by the White supremacist, patriarchal society. Regardless of Lizzo's wealth and musical success, she continues to be antagonized for her image. Lizzo is defending herself while bringing elements of race, gender, and physical appearance into the conversation. Intersectionality is a lifelong commitment that individuals have to constantly practice self-reflexivity and advocacy, as seen through Lizzo (Flood, 2019). Lizzo constantly practices self-reflexivity on her identity as a plus-size Black woman and the impact this scrutinization will have on future generations. Lizzo's nomadic work becomes sterilized when society neglects her overlapping identity by addressing one element or none at all. While Michaels strikes at Lizzo's physical appearance,

she compromises Lizzo's identity as Lizzo is "simultaneously Black + fat + woman" (Senyonga & Luna, 2021).

As a White woman, Michaels chooses to engage with Lizzo's body-positive role and ignores how Lizzo's Black woman experience shapes her role as a multilayered activist. Michaels' mindful negligence of Lizzo's Blackness supports Senyonga and Luna's (2021) findings of White privilege. Michaels' public critique of Lizzo's body-positive role suppresses Lizzo's intersectional experience. The unawareness of Michaels' biases as a socially acceptable White woman in a dominated White feminist structure progresses White supremacist progression (hooks, 1984).

Even in her role as an activist through the subtle storytelling in her music, Lizzo's work is left open to interpretation, leaving her audience open to "accept the message, while discarding or whitewashing the messenger" (Cox, 2019). This is practiced by Michaels when she declares her admiration for Lizzo's music but neglects the root of Lizzo's self-love messages that emerged from her plus-size Black woman experience.

Listeners should strive to put [Lizzo's] lyrics into context to understand her as an artist and learn more about the world fat Black entertainers live in. For it will take more than a fat Black woman topping the charts to eliminate weight stigma, even against herself. Many will love to listen to Lizzo's music and despise her body all the same (Cox, 2019).

Michaels' negligence in understanding the meaning behind Lizzo's work further oppresses Lizzo. She willingly dismisses the overarching message Lizzo pushes forward. Lizzo's musical work is founded on her oppressive upbringing as a plus-size Black woman in the music industry. Lizzo's music should not be breezed over or selectively chosen. Her music should be unpacked as the meaning carries so much value in the doors she is opening for marginalized people, especially plus-size Black women.

Michaels applauds Lizzo's musical talents while in the same breath, refuse to celebrate her body. Michaels utilizes Lizzo's body with hopes it will shed light on the issue of glamorizing obesity. In doing so, Michaels is further oppressing a woman who is already suffering from her overlapping layers of intersectionality. Although it will take more than one person to battle the oppression of plus-size women, Lizzo's dynamic nomadic presence and influence on the audience came into defense against Michaels. Michaels' assertions on weight quickly backfired as news stories pegged her as a fat shamer. Michaels used the opportunity to support the spectacle's biased, White patriarchal standards and subliminally oppress plus-size Black women through Lizzo.

Incorporating the root of intersectionality into discussion is vital because regardless of how much wealth and career success Black women achieve, Black women will continue to be ridiculed and oppressed for their race, gender, and physical appearance. Although Michaels is a member of the LGBTQIA+ community and carries that oppressive layer of her sexual orientation,

intersectionality has been a concept created for analyzing interlocking systems of oppression converging around Black women. As we are not in a post-feminist society, this study operates on the terrains founded by Crenshaw (1989) and Collins (2009) that society fails to recognize Black women's oppression. This further supports Colpean's and Tully's (2019) notion that White women in entertainment with weak self-reflexivity formulated by weak intersectionality are "reproducing dominant racial ideologies rather than working to dismantle them" (p.162). Michaels enforces the spectacle that abides by White dominance and aligns with patriarchy. While investigating this phenomenon within the spectacle, the additive layer of physical appearance was vital as plus-size Black women's experience differs from Black women. In addition, the body-positive movement has progressed to be dominated by White, socially acceptable women that further marginalize Black women. As a plus-size Black woman, as seen through Michaels' fat-phobic comments, Lizzo is constantly being ridiculed for her body.

When visually looking at Jillian Michaels, we are introduced to her physical elements of being a thin, white woman. Even as a woman, Michaels does not suffer the same societal impediments as a Black woman, let alone a plus-size Black woman. We are not immediately introduced to Michaels' oppressive layer of sexuality through the spectacle. Michaels' thin, White woman experience contributes to her perspective on reality and life different from Lizzo's. Michaels' White privilege prevails as she is socially acceptable and docile to the spectacle's standards. Being White does not come at a disadvantage for women

like Michaels. Despite Michaels being plus-size in her youth, Michaels' perception is built upon her life experience protected by White privilege. Seals argues that as Michaels "was overweight, she should know that there is a sensitivity and there is a thoughtfulness about how [Jillian Michaels should] address these types of topics" (The Real Daytime, 2020c, 1:42). Michaels lacks self-reflexivity and has weak intersectionality throughout this occurrence (Colpean & Tully, 2019). Michaels is failing to recognize her White privilege and the multiple overlapping layers contributing to Lizzo's oppression and identity.

The hosts made a follow-up segment regarding the Michaels and Lizzo event on the daytime talk show *The Real* (The Real Daytime, 2020c). The *The Real* talk show hosts brought up how Michaels did not apologize but regretted how the focus was on Lizzo rather than the larger topic of obesity. The five co-hosts and audience simultaneously agreed that Michaels' response does not change how they feel about Michaels. One of the hosts, Amanda Seals, responds:

There's something about this woman that made her feel like she could disrespect Lizzo like this. That is really my issue. And if we are really being honest, I really feel like it's because she considers Lizzo to be overweight and because Lizzo is a Black woman. She felt like she can say whatever, and not have any respect, and she can speak with such loose candor (The Real Daytime, 2020c, 1:26).

Although Michaels attempts to clarify that she was not attacking Lizzo but attacking the glamorization of obesity, she still practices White privilege. Michaels

used her innate White privilege to publicly scrutinize a Black woman. Seals' assertion about Michaels' inclination to speak and disrespect Lizzo is due to Lizzo's physical appearance, race, and gender (The Real Daytime, 2020c). Michaels has no right to publicly ridicule a Black woman and left this matter with no apology for the harm she has done especially when oppressing a marginalized group who is already systematically oppressed.

As a White thin socially acceptable woman, Michaels should be more conscious and aware of how she is contributing to another woman's oppression. Especially as she oppresses Lizzo, who is the leading symbol for the body positive movement on the acceptance of marginalized bodies. Michaels' remarks are deeply problematic because it normalizes and grants acceptance to the policing act of oppression of Black women and their bodies. Similarly, the body positive movement's underrepresentation of Black women pushes them into a smaller space for maltreatment. Socially acceptable White women dominate the body-positive movement. As an uplifting community, the body positive movement does not share the same display for Black women as they do for White women. The body-positive community should be more active in promoting and accepting marginalized women who suffer from multiple layers of oppression beyond Whiteness. It is vital to recognize women's intersectionality as it influences their identity and experience, especially for individuals who live in an oppressed biased system. Regardless of what platform it is communicated, there needs to be positive reinforcement of marginalized women. Failing to recognize layers of

oppression contributing to an individual's identity is detrimental to their lived experience because we mindfully accept their oppression. How we understand intersectionality's role in the marginalization of Black women can inform us in how society enforces Black women's oppression. Ignoring the wrongdoings occurring in Black women's oppression is just as harmful as participating in the act.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The origins of intersectionality derive from Black women's experiences as they have been the most oppressed in Western history (Brah & Phoenix, 2004; Collins, 2015; Crenshaw, 1989; hooks, 1984; Vickery & Rodríguez, 2021). With Black feminism intertwined with intersectionality, it is vital to utilize intersectionality as the guiding framework for understanding how Black women are marginalized in the body-positive community and society. The clash between Lizzo and Michaels illustrates constructing feminist perspectives of the body positive and fitness community. As a paradigmatic case study, Lizzo and Michaels have captured popular culture's attention for their opposing views on feminism, which led to the theory-guided approach of intersectionality and nomadism.

Although Lizzo is of a higher social-economic status than the general Western population, she still embodies and serves as an exemplar of the body-positive community's oppressive commentary. Her wealth and celebrity status only draws more attention to the intersectional layers of physical appearance, gender, and race discrimination she carries with her material and discursive realities. Lizzo is at a heightened level to receive public criticism. Similarly, Michaels is also placed in a position to participate in these public conversations; however, she adds to the solidification of White patriarchy's obsession with marginalizing intersectional women.

The study looks at an oppressed Black plus-size woman and juxtaposes her with a thin White woman who abides by the socially acceptable standard of the spectacle to illustrate how intersectionality plays a role in feminist interpretations. From this approach, the study explores how Lizzo, a representative of the body-positive community, is a nomadic subject that disrupts the white accommodating, patriarchal subjective spectacle that Michaels follows. I used multiple sources of evidence such as social media posts, news stories about the clash between the two celebrities, and audience comments to extract data to answer my research questions.

Overall, women's bodies continue to be ridiculed in society, especially for women of different races and body shapes. This type of dialogue is heightened for women who embody social categories that are not accepted in society, otherwise known as intersectionality. In Western society, thin White women have a societal acceptance that Black women, let alone plus-size Black women, never had. The clash between Lizzo and Jillian Michaels exemplifies the recurring oppressive behaviors Black women experience. Through the case-study examination, I identified how Lizzo became a nomadic subject, learned of intersectionality's role in understanding the marginalization of Black women in the body-positive community, and found three dominant themes: Lizzo's health defined through her physical appearance, Lizzo's uncompromisable intersectionality, Lizzo's growth as a progressive nomadic symbol.

Lizzo's race, physical appearance, and gender affect how society views her. Not only does Lizzo share her feministic viewpoints through her music, but she also embraces herself online and in person despite society's standard of what a woman should look like (Lizzo, 2020; Senyonga & Luna, 2021; Yandoli, 2020). In contrast, Jillian Michaels maintains a societal acceptance for being a White thin woman. Michaels practices White privilege by willingly ignoring the inspiration for Lizzo's music, which is based on her life experiences as a plus-size Black woman.

While Lizzo and Michaels display the importance of introducing intersectionality into public discourse, specifically in the review of marginalized women, it is vital to note that this controversy is distracting from the antagonistic white patriarchal spectacle. Michaels' fixation on attempting to enforce her fixed subjectivity on what constitutes a woman neglects how those ideologies are constructed. These biased fixed ideologies were constructed by White supremacist patriarchy in an attempt to gain control of women, especially Black women, through controlling images. While Black feminist thought is rooted in building an identity of resistance to White supremacy, we continue to have these ideological enforcers by docile White women, as we witness through Michaels. While Michaels claims to be a feminist, her actions undermine and distract the liberating, emancipatory efforts women like Lizzo are making to advance feminism for marginalized groups. Michaels accepts the dual role of oppressed and oppressor rather than turning her attention to the spectacle they are

captured in. We are so enamored in women fighting women that we neglect the very patriarchal spectacle that applauds this catfight. However, it is important to recognize the implications docile enforcers are creating as they further marginalize marginalized women.

As the body positive movement has been exploited, dominated, and co-opted by White socially acceptable women, non-White members of the community find it difficult to break the pattern of domination (hooks, 1984). However, it will not reframe women of color and Black women from vocalizing the wrongdoings they experience in the White supremacist, patriarchal society. To lean toward a more progressive feminist milieu, this study utilizes nomadism to analyze how intersectional women's voices are amplified. As a nomadic subject, Lizzo refuses sedentary fixed ideologies imposed onto her identity as a Black plus-size woman. Lizzo's nomadic work stemming from her image, persona, and material body resists the confines of White mainstream patriarchy as she becomes a symbol of resistance, a symbol for social change. Positioning images as part of nomadic work brings forward a potentially new perspective to nomadic feminism, especially in the context of race, gender, sexuality, and equity issues. As a nomadic symbol, Lizzo's activist efforts continue to pave the way for plus-size Black women and marginalized women. Lizzo utilizes her celebrity platform and socioeconomic privilege to speak upon her life experiences as a plus-size Black woman in an oppressive White patriarchal society. The digital media affordance we have to Lizzo's activist efforts pave the way for the acceptance of

plus-size Black women and marginalized intersectional women. For those like Lizzo who are continuing the fight, remember that “your identity, depending on the intersection, makes that activism just a little bit more hard but a little bit more worth it” (Lizzo, 2019a)

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