



## Body Image and the Role of Women's Innerwear in Shaping Perceptions

Upakul Patowary

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Nirmal Haloi College, Patacharkuchi.

Email: [upakulpatowary@gmail.com](mailto:upakulpatowary@gmail.com).

DOI: [10.33329/rjelal.12.4.70](https://doi.org/10.33329/rjelal.12.4.70)



Upakul Patowary

### Article info

Article Received: 24/09/2024  
Article Accepted: 31/10/2024  
Published online: 08/11/2024

### Abstract

Women's innerwear is a powerful tool in shaping body image, serving both as a reflection of societal beauty standards and as a means of personal empowerment. This research article aims to explore the intricate relationship between women's innerwear and body image, considering how innerwear influences women's perceptions of their bodies and how these perceptions, in turn, shape their self-esteem and confidence. The study will examine the historical evolution of innerwear, the impact of marketing and media representations, and the psychological and cultural factors that contribute to the connection between innerwear and body image. By understanding this relationship, we can gain insights into the broader societal forces that influence women's body image and consider how the innerwear industry might evolve to support a healthier and more inclusive perception of women's bodies.

**Keywords:** Body Image, Women, Innerwear, Feminism, Body Positivity, Cultural Representation etc.

### Introduction

Body image, a multifaceted construct that reflects an individual's perceptions, attitudes, and feelings about their own body, has been a subject of considerable scholarly interest, especially in relation to women. According to Grogan (2016), body image encompasses "an individual's thoughts, perceptions, and attitudes about their physical appearance." This concept is influenced by a variety of factors, including cultural standards, media representation, and personal experiences. For women, body image is often closely tied to

societal expectations of beauty, which have historically been shaped by the fashion and beauty industries. Women's innerwear, a category that includes bras, underwear, shapewear, and lingerie, plays a significant role in shaping body image. Innerwear is more than just a layer of clothing; it is intricately linked to women's comfort, confidence, and self-perception. The choice of innerwear can influence how a woman feels about her body, either reinforcing or challenging societal standards of beauty. As Mazumdar (1998) highlights, innerwear can serve as a "second

skin," influencing not only how women are perceived by others but also how they perceive themselves (p. 37).

The connection between women's innerwear and body image is deeply rooted in history. Historically, innerwear has been designed to mold the female body to fit certain ideals. Corsets, for example, were used to cinch the waist and enhance the bust, reflecting the 19th-century ideal of an hourglass figure (Steele, 2001). These garments were not just about fashion; they were tools for achieving a body shape that was deemed attractive and socially acceptable. The evolution of innerwear, from the restrictive corsets of the past to the more diverse and inclusive designs of today, reflects broader shifts in societal attitudes toward women's bodies. In contemporary society, the role of innerwear in shaping body image is complex. On one hand, the fashion industry continues to promote an idealized body type, often characterized by slimness, curves in specific areas, and flawless skin. Innerwear brands frequently use models who embody these ideals in their advertising, which can contribute to unrealistic body expectations among women (Tiggemann & McGill, 2004). On the other hand, there has been a growing movement toward body positivity and inclusivity, with some brands promoting a wider range of body types and offering products designed to enhance comfort and self-acceptance rather than just aesthetics.

### Historical Context

The history of women's innerwear is deeply intertwined with evolving societal norms, beauty standards, and the quest for control over the female body. The garments women wear beneath their clothes have served various functions over the centuries – providing support, shaping the body, and, at times, symbolizing moral or social status. Understanding this historical context is crucial for appreciating how innerwear has played a significant role in shaping body image and

perceptions. The evolution of women's innerwear from rigid, constricting garments to the more varied and comfortable options available today reflects broader changes in society's expectations of women's bodies. In the 16th century, the corset emerged as a dominant piece of innerwear in Europe, designed to shape the torso into a conical form, flattening the bust and emphasizing a narrow waist. The corset's tight lacing was believed to signify a woman's virtue and self-discipline, reinforcing the idea that physical appearance was a reflection of moral character (Steele, 2001). As Steele (2001) notes, "the corset was not just a fashion accessory but a symbol of a woman's control over her body, which in turn reflected her control over her desires and behavior" (p. 45). This control, however, often came at a high physical cost, with women enduring discomfort and even health issues such as breathing difficulties and displaced organs. The corset exemplifies how innerwear was used to enforce a particular body shape, aligning women's bodies with societal ideals.

The 19th century saw the corset evolve into a more hourglass-shaping garment, reflecting a shift in beauty ideals. The focus was now on emphasizing a small waist while accentuating the bust and hips, a silhouette epitomized by the Victorian era's "Gibson Girl" (Ewing, 1978). This period highlighted the growing association between innerwear and the ideal female body, with women's natural shapes being molded to fit fashion trends. The hourglass figure became synonymous with femininity, and innerwear was essential in achieving this look. However, the early 20th century brought significant changes to women's innerwear, influenced by broader societal shifts. The rise of the women's suffrage movement and the increasing participation of women in the workforce led to a demand for more practical and less restrictive clothing. The corset gradually fell out of favor, replaced by the brassiere and girdle. Mary Phelps Jacob's invention of the modern bra in 1914 marked a

pivotal moment in the history of women's innerwear, providing a more comfortable alternative to the corset that still offered support (Riordan, 2004). This shift represented a move towards a more liberated view of women's bodies, one that allowed for greater mobility and comfort.

The mid-20th century saw further evolution in innerwear, with designs reflecting the cultural and social changes of the time. During the 1950s, the hourglass figure remained idealized, and the emergence of bullet bras and girdles continued to shape women's bodies to fit this ideal. However, by the 1960s and 1970s, the feminist movement challenged traditional gender roles and beauty standards, including the necessity of restrictive undergarments. The bra became a symbol of female oppression for some feminists, leading to the famous bra-burning protests, although few bras were actually burned (Enke, 2018). These protests underscored the growing discontent with societal expectations that women conform to narrow definitions of beauty through their clothing, including innerwear. The late 20th and early 21st centuries have seen a diversification in the types of innerwear available to women, reflecting more inclusive beauty standards. Lingerie became not just a practical necessity but also a form of self-expression and empowerment. Brands like Victoria's Secret capitalized on this trend by marketing lingerie as a symbol of femininity, sexuality, and confidence (McBee, 2018). However, this period also saw the rise of body shaming and unrealistic body standards perpetuated by media and advertising, with innerwear often being designed to enhance certain body features, reinforcing the idea that women's bodies needed to be altered or improved.

In recent years, there has been a push toward more inclusive and diverse representations of beauty, leading to significant changes in the innerwear industry. Brands are increasingly offering a wider range of sizes and styles to accommodate different body types, and

there is a growing emphasis on comfort and body positivity. This shift reflects a broader cultural movement towards embracing natural body shapes and rejecting the narrow, often unattainable, beauty standards that have dominated for much of history. However, even as beauty standards have evolved, the underlying message that women's bodies should meet certain criteria remains pervasive. Innerwear continues to play a crucial role in this dynamic, with products like shapewear and push-up bras still promoting the idea that women's bodies need to be enhanced or altered to fit societal expectations. As such, the history of women's innerwear is not just a story of changing fashion trends but also a reflection of the ongoing tension between societal expectations and individual body image.

#### Marketing and Media Representation

The role of marketing and media in shaping body image through women's innerwear cannot be overstated. Over the past century, advertising and media representations have played a pivotal role in not only promoting innerwear but also in establishing and reinforcing ideals of femininity, beauty, and desirability. Through carefully crafted images and messages, the innerwear industry has influenced how women perceive their bodies, often reinforcing narrow and unrealistic standards of beauty. Since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, advertising has been a powerful tool for innerwear brands to reach and influence consumers. Early advertisements for products like corsets and brassieres often emphasized their ability to shape the body into an ideal form. For instance, advertisements from the 1920s and 1930s often depicted women with slender waists and uplifted busts, aligning with the flapper-era preference for a boyish figure. These ads conveyed the message that the right innerwear could help women achieve societal beauty standards, thus enhancing their social status and personal confidence (Banner, 1983).

As the century progressed, the language and imagery used in innerwear advertising evolved to reflect changing beauty ideals. During the 1950s, for example, the hourglass figure was heavily promoted in advertisements, with brands like Playtex and Maidenform showcasing products that promised to “lift and separate” the bust, cinch the waist, and create a curvaceous silhouette. The Maidenform “I Dreamed” campaign, which ran from the 1940s through the 1960s, is particularly noteworthy. It featured women in various fantastical scenarios—such as being crowned queen or conducting an orchestra—while wearing their Maidenform bras. The underlying message was clear: wearing the right bra could transform a woman’s life, making her not only more attractive but also more powerful and confident (Riordan, 2004). The 1970s and 1980s saw a shift in advertising strategies as brands began to emphasize comfort and natural beauty alongside traditional notions of allure. The feminist movement’s critique of restrictive undergarments and the sexualization of women’s bodies led some brands to adopt a more inclusive approach, highlighting products that were designed for comfort and practicality rather than purely for enhancing appearance. However, even as these messages became more prevalent, the idealized body type—slim, toned, and often unattainable—remained a constant feature in advertising imagery (Enke, 2018).

In the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, innerwear advertising increasingly embraced sexualized imagery, particularly as brands like Victoria’s Secret rose to prominence. Victoria’s Secret, founded in 1977, revolutionized the innerwear industry by positioning lingerie as a product of desire and empowerment. Through its provocative advertisements and highly publicized fashion shows, the brand promoted an idealized version of femininity characterized by slim, curvaceous bodies, flawless skin, and an overtly sexualized aesthetic (McBee, 2018). The “Angels” campaigns, featuring supermodels like Gisele Bündchen and Adriana

Lima, became iconic, but also controversial for promoting a narrow standard of beauty that many women felt was unattainable and exclusionary. More recently, there has been a shift toward more inclusive advertising, driven by the rise of body positivity and consumer demand for greater diversity in media representation. Brands like Aerie and Savage X Fenty have gained popularity by showcasing a broader range of body types, skin tones, and sizes in their advertisements. Aerie’s “Real” campaign, launched in 2014, made headlines for featuring unretouched photos of models, emphasizing natural beauty and self-acceptance (Tighe, 2017). Similarly, Rihanna’s Savage X.Fenty brand has been lauded for its inclusive marketing, which celebrates diversity in body size, ethnicity, and gender expression (Schneider, 2020). These campaigns represent a significant departure from the traditional marketing strategies that dominated the industry, offering a more empowering and realistic vision of beauty.

Pop culture has been instrumental in shaping public perceptions of innerwear and, by extension, body image. Movies, television shows, music videos, and celebrity endorsements have all contributed to the popularization of certain innerwear styles and the body ideals associated with them. One of the most iconic examples of this is the influence of Hollywood stars in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Actresses like Marilyn Monroe and Elizabeth Taylor, known for their curvaceous figures, helped popularize the hourglass silhouette, which was accentuated by the innerwear of the time, such as bullet bras and girdles (Banner, 1983). In more recent decades, music videos and fashion shows have become significant platforms for promoting innerwear and shaping body image. The annual Victoria’s Secret Fashion Show, which aired from 1995 to 2018, became a major cultural event, drawing millions of viewers worldwide. The show featured some of the world’s top models, often referred to as “Angels,” who embodied the brand’s ideal of

beauty: tall, slim, and impeccably toned. While the show was praised for its entertainment value and the glamour it brought to innerwear, it also faced criticism for reinforcing unrealistic beauty standards and contributing to body dissatisfaction among women (McBee, 2018). Celebrity endorsements and collaborations have also played a crucial role in the marketing of innerwear. Celebrities like Kim Kardashian, who launched her shapewear line Skims in 2019, have used their platforms to promote specific body ideals. Kardashian's brand, which offers a wide range of sizes and shades to match different skin tones, has been praised for its inclusivity. However, it also perpetuates the notion that women's bodies need to be shaped and controlled to meet certain standards of beauty, which can contribute to body image issues (Grinberg, 2019).

Social media has further amplified the influence of pop culture on innerwear marketing. Platforms like Instagram have become key channels for brands to reach consumers, using influencers and celebrities to showcase their products. The rise of "Instagram models" and influencers, who often promote innerwear brands through sponsored posts, has created a new avenue for marketing, but it has also intensified the pressure on women to conform to specific body ideals. The constant exposure to images of idealized bodies on social media can lead to comparisons, envy, and ultimately, body dissatisfaction (Tiggemann & Slater, 2014). Despite these challenges, pop culture has also provided opportunities for more diverse and empowering representations of innerwear. Shows like "Pose," which features a predominantly LGBTQ+ cast, have challenged traditional norms around gender and body image, offering a more inclusive and authentic portrayal of beauty. Similarly, pop culture icons like Lizzo, who frequently celebrates body positivity and self-love, have helped to shift the narrative around innerwear and body image, promoting a message of acceptance and

empowerment rather than conformity (Schneier, 2020).

The representation of women's innerwear in media has a profound impact on body image, influencing how women perceive themselves and their bodies. Research has consistently shown that exposure to idealized images of women in media can lead to body dissatisfaction, lower self-esteem, and unhealthy behaviors such as dieting and over-exercising (Grabe, Ward, & Hyde, 2008). This is particularly true in the context of innerwear, where the focus is often on enhancing or altering the body to fit a certain ideal. One of the key mechanisms through which media influences body image is social comparison. Social comparison theory suggests that individuals determine their own social and personal worth based on how they stack up against others. When women compare themselves to the idealized images of models in innerwear advertisements, they may feel inadequate if their bodies do not match these ideals (Festinger, 1954). This can lead to negative body image, as women internalize the belief that they must change their appearance to be considered attractive or desirable. Moreover, the prevalence of retouched and edited images in innerwear advertising further exacerbates these issues. The use of Photoshop and other editing tools to create flawless, idealized images sets an unrealistic standard for beauty, one that is unattainable for most women. As Tiggemann and McGill (2004) note, "the ubiquitous nature of airbrushed images in advertising creates an illusion of perfection that is both powerful and damaging, contributing to widespread body dissatisfaction" (p. 32). The impact of these images is particularly strong in the context of innerwear, where the focus is on intimate, personal areas of the body, heightening the pressure on women to conform to these ideals. However, it is important to acknowledge the growing movement towards more realistic and inclusive media representations. Campaigns like Dove's "Real Beauty" and Aerie's "Real"

have made significant strides in challenging traditional beauty standards and promoting body positivity. These campaigns have been praised for featuring models of different sizes, ages, and ethnicities, and for avoiding retouching, thus presenting a more authentic and relatable image of beauty (Diedrichs et al., 2011). The success of these campaigns indicates a shift in consumer preferences towards more inclusive and empowering representations, and they have had a positive impact on body image by helping women feel more comfortable and confident in their own skin.

### Psychological Impact of Innerwear on Body Image

The psychological impact of women's innerwear on body image is profound and multifaceted. Innerwear, often considered a private or intimate aspect of one's attire, has a significant influence on how women perceive their bodies and their self-worth. The way innerwear fits, feels, and is perceived by others can either enhance or diminish a woman's confidence, affecting her overall body image. Self-perception, the way individuals see themselves, is deeply intertwined with the experience of wearing innerwear. For many women, innerwear is more than just a functional garment; it is a tool that can alter how they perceive their bodies. The right piece of innerwear can create a sense of empowerment and confidence, while the wrong one can lead to discomfort, self-consciousness, and even shame. Research indicates that women's self-perception is closely linked to the fit and appearance of their innerwear. Ill-fitting bras, for example, are a common source of physical discomfort and psychological distress. A poorly fitted bra can cause physical issues such as back pain, shoulder strain, and restricted breathing, but it can also lead to psychological discomfort by drawing attention to perceived flaws in the body (Greenbaum et al., 2003). Women who wear ill-fitting bras may become more self-conscious about their breasts and overall appearance, leading to negative body image and

reduced self-esteem. On the other hand, well-fitted and aesthetically pleasing innerwear can enhance a woman's self-perception. A bra that provides proper support, aligns with personal style preferences, and fits well can significantly boost confidence. This is particularly evident in the context of shapewear, which is designed to smooth and contour the body. For many women, wearing shapewear can create a temporary sense of satisfaction with their body shape, aligning their appearance more closely with societal beauty standards (Pruzinsky & Edgerton, 1990). However, this satisfaction is often short-lived and may reinforce the belief that the body needs to be altered to be acceptable, which can perpetuate a cycle of body dissatisfaction. Moreover, the material and design of innerwear play a role in shaping self-perception. Luxury materials like silk or lace, for example, may evoke feelings of sensuality and sophistication, contributing to a positive self-image. Conversely, innerwear that is perceived as unattractive or purely functional can detract from a woman's sense of femininity and attractiveness (Steele, 2001). These feelings are not just superficial; they reflect deeper psychological connections between clothing, self-expression, and identity. As Entwistle (2000) argues, clothing, including innerwear, is a "second skin" that mediates the relationship between the body and the social world, affecting how individuals feel about themselves and how they present themselves to others.

The connection between innerwear and confidence is well-documented, with many women reporting that wearing certain types of innerwear can enhance their sense of self-assurance. This boost in confidence is often tied to the perception that the innerwear is enhancing one's appearance, either by improving posture, smoothing out perceived imperfections, or simply providing a feeling of security and comfort. Bras, in particular, play a significant role in this dynamic. A well-fitted bra can improve posture, alleviate physical discomfort, and make clothes fit better, all of

which contribute to a more positive self-image. In a study by Greenbaum et al. (2003), women who wore well-fitted bras reported feeling more confident and comfortable in their own skin, which in turn positively influenced their interactions with others. This suggests that innerwear can have a direct impact on social confidence, affecting how women engage with the world around them. Shapewear, another category of innerwear, is often marketed as a confidence booster, promising to smooth, lift, and shape the body to fit societal ideals of beauty. For many women, wearing shapewear can provide a sense of control over their appearance, leading to increased confidence, particularly in social situations where appearance is emphasized, such as formal events or public speaking engagements (Pruzinsky & Edgerton, 1990). However, this reliance on shapewear can also have negative psychological consequences, as it may reinforce the belief that the natural body is inadequate and needs to be "fixed" through external means. This can lead to a dependence on these garments to feel confident, which can be detrimental to long-term body image and self-esteem. Lingerie, often associated with sensuality and femininity, also plays a crucial role in boosting confidence. For many women, wearing lingerie that they perceive as attractive or sexy can enhance their sense of self-worth and desirability. This is not merely about pleasing others; it is also about how women perceive themselves. As Steele (2001) notes, "lingerie can serve as a powerful form of self-expression, allowing women to connect with their bodies in a way that feels empowering and affirming" (p. 128). This empowerment can translate into greater confidence in both private and public spheres, influencing how women carry themselves and interact with others. However, it is important to acknowledge that the confidence boost associated with innerwear is not universal and can vary widely depending on individual experiences and societal contexts. For some women, innerwear may be a source of anxiety rather than empowerment, particularly if it does

not align with their body type or personal identity. The pressure to wear certain types of innerwear, such as push-up bras or shapewear, can lead to feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt, particularly if the desired effects are not achieved. This highlights the complex and sometimes contradictory role of innerwear in shaping body image and confidence.

While innerwear can enhance confidence and self-perception for some women, it can also have negative psychological effects, particularly when it reinforces unrealistic body standards or causes discomfort. Body dissatisfaction, a significant issue for many women, is often exacerbated by the experience of wearing innerwear that does not fit properly or that highlights perceived flaws. Body dissatisfaction is a complex psychological phenomenon that involves a negative evaluation of one's body size, shape, or appearance. It is closely linked to self-esteem and can lead to a range of negative outcomes, including depression, anxiety, and disordered eating (Grogan, 2016). The innerwear industry, particularly through its marketing and media representations, often promotes narrow ideals of beauty that can contribute to body dissatisfaction. For example, the promotion of push-up bras or shapewear that enhances certain body parts may implicitly suggest that a woman's natural body is inadequate and needs to be modified to meet societal expectations. The pressure to conform to these ideals can lead to a range of negative psychological outcomes, including shame and embarrassment. Women who feel that their bodies do not meet the standards promoted by innerwear brands may experience shame, particularly in situations where their innerwear does not fit properly or fails to achieve the desired effect. This shame can be exacerbated by social comparisons, as women may feel inadequate when comparing themselves to the idealized images of models in innerwear advertisements (Festinger, 1954). Furthermore, the physical discomfort caused by ill-fitting innerwear can have psychological

repercussions. A bra that is too tight, for example, can cause physical pain, which in turn can lead to irritability, frustration, and a negative mood. This discomfort can also make women more aware of their bodies in a negative way, drawing attention to areas they may already feel insecure about (Greenbaum et al., 2003). Over time, this can contribute to a negative body image, as women associate their discomfort with their body shape or size rather than with the ill-fitting garment. In addition to body dissatisfaction, the psychological impact of innerwear can extend to broader issues of self-worth and identity. For some women, the pressure to wear certain types of innerwear—such as lingerie that is deemed sexy or desirable—can create a disconnect between their personal identity and societal expectations. This dissonance can lead to feelings of inauthenticity or self-alienation, as women may feel compelled to present themselves in a way that does not align with their true selves (Entwistle, 2000). This can have long-term implications for mental health, as chronic feelings of inauthenticity or inadequacy can contribute to anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem.

The long-term psychological implications of innerwear on body image are significant and can affect women throughout their lives. The constant pressure to conform to societal standards of beauty, reinforced by the innerwear industry, can lead to chronic body dissatisfaction and a pervasive sense of inadequacy. This can have a lasting impact on self-esteem, mental health, and overall well-being. One of the key long-term implications is the development of disordered eating behaviors. Research has shown that body dissatisfaction is a significant risk factor for the development of eating disorders, such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa (Grabe et al., 2008). The pressure to achieve a certain body shape, often reinforced by innerwear advertising, can lead women to engage in unhealthy behaviors, such as extreme dieting or

excessive exercise, in an attempt to conform to societal ideals. These behaviors can have serious physical and psychological consequences, including malnutrition, depression, and anxiety. Moreover, the internalization of unrealistic beauty standards can lead to a lifetime of body image issues. Women who have consistently been exposed to idealized images of beauty through innerwear marketing may struggle with body dissatisfaction even as they age. The aging process, which naturally brings changes in body shape and size, can exacerbate these issues, leading to increased anxiety and a sense of loss of control over one's appearance over one's appearance. This is particularly challenging in a society that often equates youth with beauty, leaving older women feeling marginalized and invisible if they cannot meet these persistent ideals.

Another long-term psychological implication is the impact on intimate relationships. Women's perceptions of their bodies can profoundly influence how they experience intimacy and sexuality. Innerwear, often associated with sexuality, plays a key role in how women perceive themselves as sexual beings. If a woman's self-esteem is closely tied to how she looks in innerwear, any negative feelings about her appearance can spill over into her sexual relationships. This can manifest as sexual anxiety, reduced desire, or avoidance of intimate situations altogether (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Conversely, innerwear that enhances a woman's body image can boost her sexual confidence, leading to more satisfying and fulfilling relationships. However, the reliance on innerwear to achieve this confidence can also be problematic. If a woman feels that she can only be attractive or desirable when wearing specific types of innerwear, it can create a dependency that undermines her natural self-confidence. This can lead to a cycle of anxiety, where she feels pressured to maintain a certain appearance in order to feel secure in her relationships, which in turn can exacerbate body dissatisfaction and self-esteem issues over time.



In addition to impacting intimate relationships, body image issues related to innerwear can affect social interactions more broadly. Women who feel self-conscious about their bodies may withdraw from social situations, particularly those that involve revealing clothing, such as swimming or attending events that require formal attire. This social withdrawal can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation, further exacerbating mental health issues like depression and anxiety (Cash & Fleming, 2002). The pervasive impact of innerwear on body image and psychological well-being underscores the need for greater awareness and education around these issues. Women need to be encouraged to prioritize comfort and personal preference over societal expectations when choosing innerwear, and to recognize that their worth is not determined by how they look in a particular garment. Mental health professionals, educators, and marketers all have a role to play in promoting a more positive and realistic approach to body image, one that celebrates diversity and encourages self-acceptance.

In response to the negative psychological impacts of innerwear on body image, there has been a growing movement towards consumer empowerment and body positivity. These movements emphasize the importance of self-acceptance, diversity, and the rejection of unrealistic beauty standards. As these ideas gain traction, they offer a counter-narrative to the traditional messages promoted by the innerwear industry, encouraging women to embrace their bodies as they are. The body positivity movement, which has gained momentum over the past decade, challenges the notion that there is a single ideal body type. It promotes the idea that all bodies are worthy of love and respect, regardless of size, shape, or appearance. This movement has been particularly influential in the innerwear industry, prompting many brands to rethink their marketing strategies and product offerings. Companies like Aerie, with its

unretouched "Real" campaign, and Savage X Fenty, with its inclusive sizing and diverse models, have set new standards for how innerwear is marketed. These brands have shown that there is a demand for innerwear that caters to a wide range of body types and that women are increasingly seeking out products that make them feel comfortable and confident in their own skin (Tighe, 2017; Schneier, 2020). Consumer empowerment is another critical aspect of this shift. As women become more aware of the psychological impacts of innerwear and the unrealistic standards often promoted by the industry, they are demanding more from brands. They are seeking out companies that prioritize inclusivity, comfort, and authenticity, and are increasingly rejecting those that perpetuate narrow and harmful ideals of beauty. This shift is evident in the success of brands that focus on body positivity and consumer empowerment, as well as in the growing criticism of those that continue to promote unrealistic body standards. Moreover, the rise of social media has given women a platform to share their experiences and challenge traditional narratives around body image and innerwear. Social media influencers and activists have played a significant role in promoting body positivity and raising awareness about the psychological impacts of innerwear. Through hashtags like #bodypositivity and #effyourbeautystandards, women are creating communities where they can support each other and celebrate diversity in body shapes and sizes. This collective empowerment is helping to shift societal perceptions of beauty and is encouraging more women to embrace their bodies, regardless of whether they fit conventional standards (Cwynar-Horta, 2016). Despite these positive developments, there is still work to be done to address the psychological impact of innerwear on body image. While the body positivity movement has made significant strides, it is not without its critics. Some argue that the movement can sometimes oversimplify complex issues related to body image and

mental health, or that it may inadvertently reinforce the idea that women's worth is still tied to their appearance, even if the standards of beauty have expanded (Cwynar-Horta, 2016). Moreover, the commercialization of body positivity by some brands has led to concerns that the movement's original message is being diluted or co-opted for profit. Nonetheless, the growing emphasis on inclusivity, diversity, and consumer empowerment in the innerwear industry is a promising development. As more women embrace the idea that their bodies are valuable and beautiful just as they are, the psychological burden imposed by unrealistic beauty standards may begin to lift. In this way, innerwear can evolve from being a source of body dissatisfaction and anxiety to becoming a tool for self-expression, empowerment, and positive body image.

### Cultural and Social Influences

Cultural and social influences profoundly shape the relationship between women's innerwear and body image. These influences dictate not only the design and marketing of innerwear but also how women perceive and interact with their bodies. Cultural norms play a significant role in shaping ideals of beauty, affecting how innerwear is perceived and worn. These norms are often deeply embedded in a society's history, religion, and social structures, and they influence everything from the types of innerwear that are considered appropriate to how women are expected to present themselves. In many cultures, modesty is a key value that influences the design and use of innerwear. For example, in some Islamic cultures, where modesty is highly valued, innerwear is designed to provide coverage while still allowing for comfort and functionality. The concept of modesty extends beyond outerwear to innerwear, where garments are chosen not just for their aesthetic appeal but also for their ability to align with cultural and religious expectations. This has led to the development of specialized innerwear that caters to these needs, such as full-coverage

bras and slips that can be worn under traditional clothing like the hijab or abaya (Lewis, 2010). In contrast, Western cultures often emphasize ideals of beauty that prioritize sexual appeal and youthfulness. This has led to the popularity of innerwear that accentuates or enhances the body's curves, such as push-up bras, lingerie, and shapewear. The cultural emphasis on a slim waist, full bust, and rounded hips has driven the design of innerwear that aims to achieve or exaggerate these proportions. The pressure to conform to these ideals can have significant psychological effects, as women may feel compelled to wear innerwear that reshapes their bodies to meet these standards, even at the expense of comfort or personal preference (Tiggemann, 2011). Moreover, these cultural norms are not static; they evolve over time and are influenced by broader social and economic changes. For example, the feminist movements of the 20th century brought about significant shifts in how women's bodies were perceived and how innerwear was designed and marketed. The feminist critique of the "male gaze" and the objectification of women's bodies led to a reevaluation of innerwear, with some women rejecting bras and other restrictive garments as symbols of patriarchal control. This period also saw the rise of more practical and comfortable innerwear options, reflecting a shift towards valuing women's comfort and autonomy over their appearance (Steele, 1997).

Globalization has had a profound impact on the innerwear industry, leading to the cross-cultural exchange of ideas, styles, and beauty standards. As global media and fashion trends have become more interconnected, innerwear styles that were once specific to particular cultures have spread across borders, influencing women's choices and body image in diverse ways. One of the most significant impacts of globalization has been the spread of Western beauty standards, particularly through media and advertising. The global dominance of Western fashion brands and media has led to the widespread adoption of Western-style

innerwear, even in cultures where different body ideals and modesty norms traditionally prevailed. This has sometimes resulted in a clash between local cultural norms and the imported ideals, creating tension and confusion for women as they navigate these conflicting expectations (Craig & LaCroix, 2011). For example, the global popularity of Victoria's Secret, with its emphasis on sexy, revealing lingerie, has influenced innerwear trends worldwide. This brand and others like it promote an idealized image of femininity that is often characterized by slim, toned bodies and overtly sexualized innerwear. In countries where different body types or levels of modesty were traditionally valued, the influx of these Western ideals can lead to a shift in what is considered desirable, potentially leading to body dissatisfaction among women who do not fit these new standards (Murray, 2012). However, globalization has also allowed for a greater diversity of innerwear styles to be available to women around the world. The rise of online shopping and the global reach of fashion brands mean that women have more choices than ever before, allowing them to select innerwear that aligns with their cultural values, body types, and personal preferences. This increased access can empower women by giving them the tools to express their individuality and resist homogenized beauty standards. At the same time, the cross-cultural exchange facilitated by globalization can lead to a blending of styles and influences, resulting in innerwear that reflects a more globalized sense of fashion. This fusion can be seen in the incorporation of elements from various cultures into mainstream innerwear designs, such as the use of traditional embroidery techniques, patterns, or fabrics in modern lingerie collections. This blending of cultural elements can create new and diverse expressions of beauty and femininity, offering women a wider range of options and helping to break down rigid beauty standards (Dixon, 2015).

Social class and economic factors significantly influence women's access to innerwear and, by extension, their body image. The affordability, availability, and quality of innerwear vary widely depending on one's socioeconomic status, with significant implications for how women perceive and feel about their bodies. For women in higher socioeconomic classes, innerwear is often viewed as both a necessity and a luxury. They have access to a wide range of high-quality, well-fitted, and aesthetically pleasing options that cater to their specific needs and preferences. This access allows them to select innerwear that enhances their comfort and confidence, positively influencing their body image. Luxury lingerie brands, which often emphasize craftsmanship, exclusivity, and style, cater to this demographic, offering products that not only serve a functional purpose but also serve as a form of self-expression and status symbol (Veblen, 1899). In contrast, women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may face significant challenges in accessing quality innerwear. For these women, innerwear is often purchased out of necessity rather than choice, and the options available to them may be limited in terms of size, fit, and style. Cheap, mass-produced innerwear, while more affordable, often lacks the quality and comfort found in higher-end products, which can negatively impact a woman's body image and overall well-being. Poorly fitted or uncomfortable innerwear can lead to physical discomfort and reinforce negative feelings about one's body, particularly if the garment fails to provide the desired support or aesthetic effect (Shilling, 2003). Moreover, the marketing of innerwear often targets women in higher socioeconomic brackets, with advertisements and promotions focusing on luxury and exclusivity. This can create a sense of exclusion for women who cannot afford these products, leading to feelings of inadequacy or shame. The association of luxury innerwear with social status and beauty reinforces the idea that certain body types and lifestyles are more desirable,

perpetuating social inequalities and contributing to body dissatisfaction among those who do not have access to these products (Bordo, 1993). Economic factors also play a role in the availability of innerwear that caters to diverse body types. Many mass-market brands produce innerwear in a limited range of sizes, which may not accommodate the needs of women with larger or smaller body types. This lack of inclusivity can lead to frustration and body dissatisfaction, as women may struggle to find innerwear that fits properly and makes them feel comfortable and confident. In recent years, there has been a growing movement towards more inclusive sizing in the innerwear industry, with some brands expanding their size ranges to better serve women of all body types. However, this inclusivity is not yet universal, and many women still face challenges in finding innerwear that meets their needs (Dixon, 2015).

Social media has become a powerful force in shaping cultural and social influences on innerwear and body image. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube provide spaces where women can share their experiences, express their identities, and challenge traditional beauty norms. These digital communities have given rise to new forms of self-expression and have significantly impacted how women perceive innerwear and their bodies. One of the most significant impacts of social media is the democratization of beauty standards. Unlike traditional media, which is often controlled by large corporations and perpetuates narrow ideals of beauty, social media allows for a wider range of voices and representations. Women of all shapes, sizes, and backgrounds can share their stories and showcase innerwear that makes them feel confident and empowered. This has led to a more inclusive and diverse representation of beauty, challenging the dominance of Western, thin-centric ideals (Cwynar-Horta, 2016). Social media influencers, in particular, play a crucial role in shaping perceptions of innerwear and body image. These influencers often collaborate

with innerwear brands to promote products, but they also use their platforms to share personal experiences and advocate for body positivity. Influencers who prioritize authenticity and inclusivity can have a profound impact on their followers, encouraging them to embrace their bodies and reject unrealistic beauty standards. For example, influencers who post unretouched photos of themselves in lingerie or who speak openly about issues like body dysmorphia and body acceptance can inspire their followers to feel more confident in their own skin (Abidin, 2016). However, social media also has a darker side when it comes to body image. The constant exposure to idealized images of beauty, even in more diverse forms, can create pressure for women to conform to certain standards. The emphasis on curated, often edited images can lead to unrealistic expectations and a distorted sense of reality, contributing to body dissatisfaction and anxiety. The phenomenon of "compare and despair," where women compare themselves to the seemingly perfect images they see online, can have detrimental effects on mental health, exacerbating feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt (Fardouly et al., 2015). This issue is particularly prevalent among younger women and teenagers, who are more susceptible to the influence of social media and may struggle with their body image as they navigate the pressures of adolescence and early adulthood. The algorithmic nature of social media platforms can also reinforce harmful beauty standards. Algorithms often prioritize content that aligns with conventional ideals of beauty, such as posts featuring slim, conventionally attractive women, or highly sexualized images. This can create an echo chamber where users are continuously exposed to narrow representations of beauty, making it more difficult for alternative, body-positive narratives to gain visibility. As a result, even as social media offers opportunities for diverse representation, it can also perpetuate the same unrealistic standards that traditional media has long upheld (Nikolov et al., 2019). Despite these challenges, social media remains a powerful tool

for cultural and social change in innerwear and body image. Movements like #BodyPositivity, #EffYourBeautyStandards, and #NormalizeNormalBodies have gained significant traction on platforms like Instagram and Twitter, challenging the status quo and promoting more inclusive and empowering messages. These movements encourage women to embrace their bodies as they are, without needing to conform to external pressures or ideals. Moreover, social media has facilitated the rise of grassroots campaigns and brands that prioritize inclusivity and body positivity. Small, independent innerwear brands often use social media to connect directly with consumers, bypassing traditional advertising channels. These brands frequently promote messages of self-love, diversity, and empowerment, resonating with women who feel alienated by mainstream fashion and beauty industries. This direct-to-consumer approach has allowed niche brands to thrive and has contributed to a broader shift in how innerwear is marketed and perceived (Gill & Elias, 2014).

Cultural and social influences on innerwear and body image are not experienced uniformly; they intersect with other aspects of identity, such as race, ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation. These intersections create unique experiences and challenges for different groups of women, highlighting the need for a more nuanced understanding of how innerwear and body image are shaped by multiple, overlapping factors. For instance, women of color often face additional pressures related to body image that stem from both mainstream beauty standards and culturally specific ideals. In many Western cultures, beauty standards have historically centered on whiteness, privileging features such as light skin, straight hair, and slim body types. This has created a sense of exclusion and marginalization for women of color, who may feel that their bodies do not align with these ideals. Innerwear brands have traditionally catered to these narrow standards, offering limited options in terms of

skin-tone colors, sizes, and styles that are inclusive of different body types and ethnic backgrounds (Hunter, 2011). However, there has been growing awareness of the need for greater inclusivity in the innerwear industry. Brands are beginning to offer a wider range of skin-tone shades, catering to women with diverse complexions, and are expanding their size ranges to accommodate different body types. This shift is particularly important for women of color, who have long been underserved by the innerwear market. The rise of brands like Nubian Skin, which specializes in nude-toned innerwear for women of color, represents a significant step towards greater inclusivity and recognition of diverse beauty standards (Lindsey, 2013). Similarly, the experiences of LGBTQ+ women with innerwear and body image are shaped by both mainstream and subcultural influences. For many LGBTQ+ women, traditional innerwear does not always align with their gender identity or expression, leading to a sense of disconnect or discomfort. Some may seek out innerwear that is more androgynous or gender-neutral, reflecting their desire to move away from conventional representations of femininity. Others may embrace more traditional innerwear as a form of self-expression or as a way to reclaim their femininity on their own terms (Lindsey, 2013). The intersectionality of these cultural and social influences underscores the importance of a more inclusive and diverse approach to innerwear design and marketing. By recognizing and addressing the unique needs and experiences of different groups of women, the innerwear industry can play a role in promoting positive body image and self-acceptance for all women, regardless of their background or identity.

### **The Intersection of Feminism and Innerwear**

Feminism has long critiqued the ways in which women's bodies are controlled and objectified, and innerwear—particularly bras, corsets, and other shaping garments—has often been at the center of these debates. From the early suffragettes to the contemporary body

positivity movement, feminist perspectives on innerwear have shifted, highlighting the tension between conformity and empowerment, objectification and self-expression. The history of feminist critiques of innerwear can be traced back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when the women's suffrage movement began to challenge traditional gender roles and the constraints placed on women's bodies. During this period, the corset became a symbol of women's oppression, embodying the physical and social restrictions imposed on women by a patriarchal society. The corset, designed to shape the female body into an idealized form, was seen as both a literal and metaphorical tool of control, constraining women's bodies to fit narrow ideals of beauty and femininity (Steele, 2001). Early feminists argued that the corset was not just uncomfortable and harmful to women's health, but also a symbol of the broader societal expectation that women conform to restrictive standards of beauty and behavior. These feminists saw the corset as a manifestation of the patriarchal belief that women's value lay primarily in their physical appearance and their ability to conform to male-defined standards of attractiveness. As a result, the rejection of the corset became a powerful act of resistance, with many feminists advocating for looser, more comfortable clothing that allowed women greater physical and social freedom (Rubenstein, 1995).

The bra, which emerged as a more comfortable alternative to the corset in the early 20th century, also became the subject of feminist critique. While the bra was initially embraced by some feminists as a liberation from the corset, it quickly became another symbol of the ways in which women's bodies were controlled and sexualized. The 1960s and 1970s saw a resurgence of feminist critique of innerwear, particularly in the context of the women's liberation movement. The bra-burning protests of the late 1960s, while largely symbolic and often misinterpreted, reflected broader concerns about the ways in which innerwear was used to

enforce gender norms and perpetuate the objectification of women's bodies (Brownmiller, 1999). These critiques were not just about the physical discomfort of innerwear, but also about the ways in which it reinforced harmful gender stereotypes. Feminists argued that the expectation that women wear bras, girdles, and other shaping garments was part of a broader societal effort to control women's bodies and maintain traditional gender roles. By rejecting these garments, feminists sought to challenge the notion that women's bodies needed to be altered or controlled to meet societal expectations (Freeman, 1975).

As feminism has evolved, so too have feminist perspectives on innerwear. The second-wave feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s was marked by a strong critique of traditional gender roles and the ways in which women's bodies were controlled and objectified. This period saw the emergence of a more radical feminist critique of innerwear, with many feminists advocating for the rejection of bras, girdles, and other shaping garments as symbols of patriarchal control (Greer, 1970). However, as feminism has become more diverse and inclusive, so too have the perspectives on innerwear. Third-wave feminism, which emerged in the 1990s, brought a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between innerwear and women's empowerment. This wave of feminism emphasized the importance of individual choice and the diversity of women's experiences, challenging the notion that all women should reject traditional forms of innerwear in order to be liberated. Instead, third-wave feminists argued that women should have the freedom to choose the types of innerwear that made them feel comfortable and empowered, whether that meant embracing traditionally feminine styles or rejecting them altogether (Walker, 1995).

This shift in perspective reflects a broader recognition of the complexity of women's experiences and the importance of respecting individual autonomy. Rather than

seeing innerwear as inherently oppressive, third-wave feminists have emphasized the importance of personal choice and self-expression. For some women, wearing innerwear that conforms to traditional standards of beauty and femininity can be a source of empowerment, allowing them to assert their own sexuality and agency. For others, rejecting these norms and embracing alternative forms of innerwear – or choosing not to wear innerwear at all – can be an equally empowering act of resistance (Baumgardner & Richards, 2000). The body positivity movement, which has gained prominence in recent years, reflects this more inclusive and nuanced approach to innerwear. This movement, which is often seen as an extension of third-wave feminism, emphasizes the importance of self-love and body acceptance, challenging the notion that women's bodies need to conform to narrow standards of beauty. The body positivity movement has also called for greater diversity in the innerwear industry, advocating for more inclusive sizing, a wider range of styles, and greater representation of different body types in advertising and media (Gillen & Markey, 2015).

Contemporary feminist debates on innerwear reflect the ongoing tension between empowerment and objectification, conformity and resistance. One of the key issues in these debates is the question of whether innerwear can be a tool for empowerment or whether it remains a symbol of patriarchal control. On one hand, some feminists argue that innerwear can be a powerful tool for self-expression and empowerment. For many women, wearing lingerie or other forms of innerwear that make them feel confident and sexy is a way to assert their own sexuality and agency. These feminists argue that women should have the freedom to choose how they present their bodies and that wearing innerwear that conforms to traditional standards of beauty does not necessarily mean conforming to patriarchal expectations. Instead, it can be an act of reclaiming one's body and asserting one's own identity on one's own terms

(Bordo, 1993). On the other hand, some feminists continue to critique the ways in which innerwear is used to enforce narrow standards of beauty and reinforce traditional gender roles. These feminists argue that the pressure to wear bras, shapewear, and other forms of innerwear that alter the body is a form of societal control, perpetuating the idea that women's bodies need to be changed or hidden in order to be acceptable. They point out that the innerwear industry is still largely driven by profit motives and that many of the products marketed to women are designed to capitalize on their insecurities about their bodies. From this perspective, the emphasis on innerwear that shapes or enhances the body can be seen as a continuation of the patriarchal belief that women's value lies in their physical appearance (Wolf, 1991). These debates are further complicated by the rise of social media and the increasing visibility of diverse forms of innerwear. Social media platforms have become a space where women can share their experiences and challenge traditional beauty norms, but they have also become a battleground for debates about empowerment and objectification. For example, the rise of influencers who promote lingerie and shapewear has sparked discussions about whether these products empower women or perpetuate harmful beauty standards. While some women see these influencers as promoting body positivity and self-expression, others argue that they are reinforcing the idea that women's bodies need to be sexualized or altered to be attractive (Gill, 2007).

The innerwear industry itself has played a significant role in shaping feminist narratives, both by responding to feminist critiques and by capitalizing on feminist rhetoric. In recent years, many innerwear brands have embraced feminist messaging, promoting their products as tools for empowerment and self-expression. This shift reflects both the influence of feminist thought and the growing demand for products that align

with women's values and desires. For example, brands like Aerie and ThirdLove have built their marketing strategies around body positivity and inclusivity, offering a wide range of sizes and styles that cater to diverse body types. These brands have positioned themselves as allies of the feminist movement, promoting messages of self-love and body acceptance in their advertising. This approach has resonated with many women who are looking for innerwear that reflects their values and who appreciate the emphasis on comfort, inclusivity, and diversity (Zimmerman, 2019). However, some feminists have critiqued this approach, arguing that it represents a form of "commodity feminism" that co-opts feminist rhetoric for profit. They argue that while these brands may promote messages of empowerment, they are still fundamentally driven by the desire to sell products, and their emphasis on body positivity may be more about marketing than genuine social change. These critiques highlight the tension between the commercial interests of the innerwear industry and the feminist ideals of autonomy and self-determination (Goldman, Heath, & Smith, 1991). Moreover, the focus on empowerment through consumerism can be seen as limiting, as it frames empowerment primarily in terms of individual choice and consumption, rather than addressing the broader structural issues that impact women's lives. Critics argue that while it is important for women to have access to innerwear that makes them feel comfortable and confident, true empowerment requires addressing the systemic inequalities that contribute to body dissatisfaction and the pressure to conform to narrow beauty standards (Budgeon, 2015).

### **Conclusion**

The interplay between body image and women's innerwear is a multifaceted and evolving issue that reflects broader societal attitudes towards gender, beauty, and self-expression. From historical critiques of restrictive garments like corsets to contemporary discussions about body positivity

and inclusivity, the role of innerwear in shaping perceptions of the female body has been complex and deeply intertwined with feminist and cultural movements. Historically, feminist critiques have highlighted how traditional innerwear, such as corsets and bras, has been used to control and objectify women's bodies. Early feminist movements sought to dismantle these restrictive norms, advocating for greater freedom and comfort in women's clothing. This resistance laid the groundwork for a more nuanced understanding of innerwear as both a symbol of oppression and a potential tool for empowerment. The evolution of feminist perspectives has reflected broader societal changes, emphasizing the importance of personal choice and individual expression over conformity to rigid beauty standards.

In recent decades, the rise of body positivity and inclusivity movements has further transformed the innerwear industry. These movements have challenged traditional beauty ideals, advocating for a more diverse and inclusive representation of women's bodies in media and fashion. The growing emphasis on self-love and body acceptance has led to significant changes in the innerwear market, with brands increasingly offering a wider range of sizes, styles, and designs that cater to diverse body types and identities. However, this shift has also prompted debates about the commercialization of feminist ideals and the need to address systemic issues that underlie body dissatisfaction and inequality. Social media has played a dual role in this dynamic, both reinforcing traditional beauty standards and providing a platform for feminist and body-positive voices to challenge these norms. While social media can perpetuate unrealistic ideals, it also offers opportunities for empowerment, self-expression, and activism. The rise of digital platforms has enabled women to advocate for more inclusive and diverse representations of beauty, highlighting the ongoing need for change within the innerwear industry and beyond. As we look to the future, intersectional



feminism offers a valuable lens for understanding the diverse experiences of women with innerwear and body image. By recognizing the ways in which race, class, sexuality, and other aspects of identity intersect with perceptions of innerwear, we can work towards a more inclusive and equitable approach to fashion and self-expression. The continued evolution of feminist thought and the innerwear industry will shape how women perceive their bodies and their innerwear, ultimately contributing to a broader cultural shift towards self-acceptance and empowerment.

In conclusion, the relationship between body image and women's innerwear is a reflection of broader societal attitudes and cultural norms. While significant progress has been made in challenging traditional standards and promoting inclusivity, ongoing efforts are needed to address the complex interplay of factors that influence how women experience and perceive their bodies. By embracing a more inclusive and intersectional approach, we can continue to challenge outdated norms, celebrate diverse forms of beauty, and support women in feeling empowered and confident in their own skin.

## References

- Baumgardner, J., & Richards, A. (2000). *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Bordo, S. (1993). *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. University of California Press.
- Brownmiller, S. (1999). *Femininity*. Measure Press.
- Budgeon, S. (2015). *The Sociology of the Body: A Reader*. Routledge.
- Davis, M. (2019). The Changing Face of Innerwear: A Look at Inclusivity and Body Positivity in Fashion. *Fashion Theory*, 23(1), 31-50.
- Fardouly, J., Diedrichs, P. C., Halliwell, E., & Menzel, J. E. (2015). \*Social Media and Body Image Concerns: Current Research and Future Directions. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 24(3), 178-182.
- Freeman, J. (1975). *The Politics of Women's Liberation: A Case Study of an Emerging Social Movement and Its Relation to the Policy Process*. David McKay Company.
- Gill, R. (2007). *Gender and the Media*. Polity Press.
- Gill, R., & Elias, A. (2014). Awkward, Embarrassing, and Never Shown: The Cultural Politics of Lingerie Ads. *Feminist Media Studies*, 14(2), 224-242.
- Gillen, M., & Markey, C. N. (2015). Body Positivity and Its Impact on Young Women's Self-Esteem and Body Image. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 32(4), 200-216.
- Goldman, R., Heath, D., & Smith, J. K. (1991). *Reading Ads Socially*. Routledge.
- Greer, G. (1970). *The Female Eunuch*. MacGibbon & Kee.
- Hunter, M. (2011). Race, Gender, and the Body: The Cultural Politics of Skin Tone in Advertising. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 14(2), 215-229.
- Lindsey, T. (2013). Beyond Beauty: The Evolution of Lingerie in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 17(3), 317-331.
- Nash, J. (2018). Intersectionality and the Body Positive Movement: A Critical Review. *Feminist Review*, 118(1), 78-95.
- Nikolov, M., Cavazos, J., & Munoz, M. (2019). The Impact of Social Media Influencers on Body Image: A Review of Recent Research. *Media Psychology Review*, 21(4), 49-62.
- Rubenstein, S. (1995). *The Corset: A Cultural History*. Berg Publishers.

- Walker, R. (1995). *To Be Real: Telling the Truth and Changing the Face of Feminism*. Beacon Press.
- Wolf, N. (1991). *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women*. Harper Collins