

**MORE FATS, MORE FEMMES, AND NO WHITES: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF  
FATPHOBIA, FEMMEPHOBIA AND RACISM ON GRINDR**

by

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## **Abstract**

This is a research project about the pervasive intersections of fatphobia, femmephobia and racism that exists within queer communities. Specifically, I examine the now-popularized expression: “No fats, no femmes, no Asians or Blacks”. I argue that this phrase is perpetuating homonormative ideologies that are furthering a marginalization of fat, femme and/or racialized queer identities and bodies within queer communities. This project aims to deconstruct what I call the “corporate queer man”—that is, the white, masculine and muscular queer man who is often represented as being the “right” kind of queer. This research project employs a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of Grindr, the first and largest online queer social networking application targeted specifically towards queer men. The research surrounding the politics of personal advertisements on online queer social networking applications is limited and therefore, this project contributes to the paucity of literature that is aiming to fill this gap.

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## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to all the queers who have had to learn to play by a different set of rules  
on Grindr.

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## **Preface**

If you have decided to read this thesis, there is something important I need to address before you delve into the convoluted world of Grindr. During my Master's degree, I submitted an academic assignment that incorporated some of my creative writing. When I received the professor's feedback on the work, I noticed immediately that the poem I worked tirelessly on was highlighted. In the track changes, the professor noted that it would be in my best interest to delete my poetry and proceeded to refer to my creative writing as "page filler". Enraged, I made a promise to myself that if I ever decided to pursue a thesis, I would be certain to incorporate as much of my own creative writing as possible. My personal resistance would be to make as many academics as I can to read my creative writing. I am a big advocate of using alternative forms of knowledge (read: stories, poetry, spoken word, art, photographs, paintings) in academia—knowledges that are often deemed "invaluable". I firmly believe that these ways of knowing can act as a site of rediscovery, reflection and empowerment. With this in mind, I have decided to use this preface to begin my resistance.

A few years ago, I came across an anthology edited by Sarah Moon (2012) entitled *The Letter Q: Queer Writers' Notes to their Younger Selves* that asked the following question: If you received a letter from your older self, what do you think it would say? In the anthology, Moon compiled sixty-four letters written by queer authors that addressed some of the advice these writers' would have given to their former selves if they had the opportunity. In the anthology, Moon notes that writing letters to your younger self can be an imaginative journey of healing, rage, understanding, sadness, joy, honesty, and love (Moon, 2012). According to John Evans (2014), writing a letter to your past self can act as a therapeutic way to help "...get beyond what you thought you could not get over". These letters have the potential to become a source of

healing, resistance and most importantly, a reason to hold onto a better future ahead. As I worked on this thesis, I thought about my younger self a lot. There were many times when I asked myself the following: What would I tell my former self if I had the chance? This thesis begins with that letter. It is my hope that this letter will contextualize the importance of my work.

*dear younger matthew,*

*you're going to learn a lot about yourself through **F-WORDS**.*

*and those f-words are going to result in many terrible years.*

*you're going to spend high school having secret crushes on boring straight boys while also trying to simultaneously act like a "straight boy". **FAKE**.*

*in elementary school, the cool boys are going to nickname you **FLAMER** and in high school, you will learn that the nickname doesn't go away, but only gets meaner. **FAGGOT**.*

*you're going to do whatever you can to be someone you are not. and even though it doesn't feel right, you won't question it.*

*all you care about is impressing them and through that process, you are going to forget about yourself.*

*in gym class, the boys are going to make jokes about how they don't want to change around the **FAGGOT**. and the jokes are really going to fuck you up. so you will try even harder to be like them.*

*you will wear your brother's sports hats. **FRAUD**.*

*and listen to the music they like. **FRAUD**.*

*and try to talk like them. **FRAUD**.*

*and even go on dates with girls. **FRAUD**.*

*but what you will soon learn is that no matter what you do, you will always be a **FAG** in their eyes.*

*because when they ask you about the sports hat you're wearing, you won't be able to answer them. and they are going to laugh in your face until you start to feel like a **FAILURE**.*

*and in order to cope with your **FAILING**, you are going to turn to **FOOD**.*

*and before you know it, **FOOD** is going to be one of the only things that can make you feel happy. **FOOD** will never judge you. or call you a name. **FOOD** will bring you instantaneous happiness.*

*until you learn that even **FOOD** has the power to betray you.*

*because you will no longer be just a **FAGGOT** but instead, a **FAT FAGGOT**.*

*the cool kids will soon learn that they can shame you for not only your assumed gayness (read: **FEMININITY**) but also, your **FATNESS**.*

*in your sad times, you will come across this movement called "it gets better".*

*and the movement will tell you that if you can survive high school, it will get better.*

*and every day, you will think about when it is going to get better.*

*how it will get better.*

*why it is taking so long to get better.*

*because before you know it, you're starting university and it is still not better.*

*and you feel betrayed by the thousands of people who made videos of it getting better.*

*and then you're going to download this application called grindr.*

*and one of the first boys you ever meet will tell you that you look **FATTER** in real life than in your pictures. and when he looks at your make up, he will tell you that he didn't realize you were one of those **FAGS**.*

*the boys on grindr will tell you time and time again that they don't like your **FAT** body and that they don't like your **FEMME** identity.*

*and so you will make a promise to yourself to become what they want. and before you know it, you are in high school all over again forgetting about you, in order to impress them.*

*on one particularly sad day, you will step on a scale and read three numbers you didn't think were possible. **FAT**.*

*and you will tell yourself that you don't deserve to eat anymore.*

*and you will starve yourself.*

*because disappearing in real life is better than disappearing in your head.*

*and you will get really sick.*

*and you will start weighing yourself three times a day.*

*because now people are starting to tell you you look good. and before you know it, you are not sure who you have become. **FAKE**.*

*and it still isn't better.*

*it's only worse.*

*and you hate your fucking body.*

*and you want a different identity.*

*and nothing about you feels right.*

*but then you move away from home.*

*and you meet other queers.*

*and you learn that they have similar stories like you.*

*and they will tell you that it hasn't gotten better for them either. and then you all learn to laugh together about how it will probably never get better.*

*and you put eyeliner on them. and they put fake eyelashes on you.*

*and you talk a lot about self-love.*

*and before you know it kid, you're doing an entire master's degree on the boys who fucked you  
up in the first place.*

*and it makes you feel okay.*

*no.*

*it makes you feel powerful.*

*and you start writing poems about how fucking sexy your body is.*

*and you are no longer afraid to tell skinny twinks to fuck off.*

*and you smile every time you kiss a masc boy on the cheek with your brightest red lipstick.*

*and every day when you wake up, you tell yourself that you are fucking **FABULOUS**.*

*and you tell yourself that so many times that you eventually learn you are worth a thousand  
stars.*

*and whenever you feel sad kid, all you have to do is remember that.*

*love always,*

*matthew*

## CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

### The Beginnings: Becoming a Fat and Femme Queer Man

This research project started when I was about 18 years old. I dated this boy who made me hate myself. It was the first time in my life that I understood my queer<sup>1</sup> body as *fat* and my queer identity as *femme*. It was the first time I felt like my queerness was something that could be “wrong”. This boy taught me that my fatness was gross, dirty and unattractive. He continually reminded me that my femininity was a joke, something he could devalue and degrade. I was constantly told by him to “stop acting like one of those fags”. Enraged by the ways he made me feel, I wrote these words for him. These words were the beginning of my thinking and they represent not only my rage, but also my healing. These words are for the boy who taught me my identities:

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<sup>1</sup> When I began this research project, I grappled between using the term “gay” or “queer” to describe users on Grindr. I have decided to endorse the term “queer” throughout this study. “Queer” has been defined and used in many different, often complex, ways in academic literature. As Annemarie Jagose (2009) notes, when “[t]racing the critical trajectory of queer theory [or queer more generally], it becomes apparent that attempts to describe and define it—already a paradoxical ambition for a concept that prominently insists on the radical unknowability of its future formations—occur simultaneously alongside harsher assessments of its limitations or expiry” (p. 158). Queer has been defined as politically progressive—as a critical position one adopts towards hegemonic constructions of gender as fixed, oppositional, and immutable (Elliot, 2009). Queer has been used as a way to define the odd, strange and quirky (Clare, 2001) and to name those who embody a resistance to cultural homogenization, counteracting dominant discourses with other constructions of the subject in culture (Jagose, 2009). Queer is a way to discuss the undiscussed and formulate the unformulated (Landreau, 2011). According to Haritaworn, Tauqir & Erdem (2008), queer is used as an umbrella term to describe those marginalized bodies who do not conform to normative constructions of sexual and gender identity (p. 71). This is the definition that informs my understanding of “queer” in this research project. On Grindr, many users do not exclusively identify as “gay” and there are many other sexual identities that occupy the application (e.g., bisexual, pansexual, polysexual, asexual, and straight men who have sex with men [see Ward, 2015]). As a result of these complexities, I utilize the term “queer” to encompass all sexual identities that exist outside of hegemonic constructions of normative sexuality.

*i was 18 and i gave my youth to you.*

*you compromised all that i was and all that i stood for.*

*i believed that you knew me but how could you know me when i didn't even know me.*

*yesterday. when we met. i was nothing but your imagination. i think i was wearing a sports hat for you because you wanted that. and what you wanted i always gave you. because you. you knew me. you knew that i was too much of a fag to be around your friends. telling me to take the floral clothes off my skin as if my skin wasn't already made of flowers. my skin is where pretty goes to die. and there is no way to take the pink glitter out of the blood that flows through my body.*

*yesterday. when i met you. i was anger. i was rage. i was hail pounding against glass windows. but for some reason. i would still get on top of your body.*

*your body was never composed of a solid foundation.*

*you were made up of only water.*

*you were so clear that i could see through to the bottom of you.*

*but you were also murky. a murkiness that always tempted my conflicting imperfections.*

*i could always taste an ignorance on your tongue. and i could always smell an intolerance in my nostrils when i was around you.*

*with every breathe you took, i could feel your stale cigar and james ready breath move down my neck crawling with a thousand sharp legs. each one cutting into my skin and re-opening scars that i thought healed: telling me to man up. to stop acting so gay. forcing me to shrink my beautiful body away. to take up less space in your bed.*

*you would tell me i was your sissy boy as a form of compliment and my youth never questioned you. where were my questions? why did i take my shirt off for you?*

*slipping my arms out of each sleeve. hoping you would never notice the fat and stretch marks that made my upper arms—my upper arms.*

*i would let my naked chest stare into your hungry eyes. and you. you always feasted. me.*

*and the person you made me become when you refused to fuck me face to face.*

*for you. i was only a fat ass. a body. and yet. i still couldn't do that right.*

*my identities existed at the intersections of two people in one place.*

*i was the boy who could be fabulous. the boy who was a cold glass of crisp lemonade in mid-july heat.*

*or i was the boy you always wanted me to be. the right kind of boy. the right kind of fag. the one you could wear on your dick with pride.*

*you got all of me. every drop of my regrets.*

*all of my remorse was stuck between your front teeth and you would use my naïvety as your floss.*

*deeply striking each one of gums until your tainted blood would drip all over me. on the bed.*

*staining the sheets. smearing the floor. turning your chipped hardwood red. as red as my heart.*

*beating hard and deep as I would cheat on me. and all that i believed in. all that i wanted to believe in. all that i wanted to be.*

*you associated my femininity with powerlessness. and my fat as worthlessness. to you. i was nothing but a dirty bottom. did i know that? i must have known that. but i still unzipped my pants*

*for you. why did i unzip my pants for you. why wouldn't the zipper get stuck. i am always*

*questioning why the zipper would go through each ridge of the rusted metal on my pants so*

*seamlessly. i must have known that you did not deserve what lived beyond my zipper but it was*

*like my hands existed on their own. making decisions without consulting my heart. letting my*

*feminist foundations escape through the cuts of my bitten nails. and you always made me bite my nails more than i normally do.*

*you told me i needed to change to be loved. but i still came around. came on top of you. you came inside of me. i remember feeling you enter into my gentle soul dripping your poison inside my body. but i never welcomed you. or did i? who was i? what did you do to me? you stole my map. and i was lost in all directions trying to figure out how to get back home.*

*but what was my home.*

*if my body was my home then my home was destroyed by you. you turned it into shattered pieces. and you can try to rebuild a structure but everybody knows without saying that when we say "good as new" we are only lying to ourselves. changing a band-aid that wouldn't stick to the skin anymore. until that band-aid does the same fucking thing.*

*why did i always stay quiet. i must have been crying. but you never saw it. no wait. you didn't want to see it. only i saw it. my own internal tears trying to wash away the poison you left in my body.*

*but tears are healing. and rest assured boy. i healed.*

*i wake up everyday with a glitter on my nails so bright that people confuse me for an august sunrise. my fat beautiful body stretches to every corner of a room until i become the fucking room.*

*i deserved better when i met you. but i met you for a reason. you taught me that my identities are beautiful. and special. and fabulous. and valid.*

*if the lights went off in this room right now. i would never panic. i know that i shine. i taught the sun everything it knows.*

*and i'll keep shining. shining so bright. i promise.*

## Introducing Fat, Femme and/or Racialized Queers

In 2010, syndicated columnist and author Dan Savage released a YouTube video with his partner Terry Miller in hopes of inspiring young queer youth worldwide who are facing harassment and violence that “it gets better”. As noted on their official website:

Many young people face daily tormenting and bullying, leading them to feel like they have nowhere to turn. This is especially true for LGBT kids and teens, who often hide their sexuality for fear of bullying... In many instances, gay and lesbian adolescents are taunted — even tortured — simply for being themselves. While many of these teens couldn’t see a positive future for themselves, we can. The It Gets Better Project was created to show young LGBT people the levels of happiness, potential, and positivity their lives will reach – if they can just get through their teen years. The It Gets Better Project wants to remind teenagers in the LGBT community that they are not alone — and it WILL get better (It Gets Better Project, 2016).

While there is no denying the importance of this project, there is a fundamental flaw that needs to be addressed in the “It Gets Better Project”: It does *not* always get better. In fact, it often gets worse. For the “right” queer bodies, perhaps it “WILL get better”. However, the It Gets Better Project conveniently forgets to mention the significant role that queer communities have in furthering the bullying, harassment and violence faced by marginalized queer folks. Dan Savage forgets to note that queer bodies that do not conform to corporate<sup>2</sup> constructions of queerness

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<sup>2</sup> This thesis utilizes the term “corporate” in place of “mainstream” following a lecture given by black and queer activist Kim Katrin Milan (March 17, 2016). During the lecture, Milan notes that an important part of social justice work needs to be about shifting the idea of a “mainstream culture” to a “corporate culture”. She remarks that “... just because a discourse is dominant, does not mean that it occupies *my* mainstream as a black and queer woman... if I do not subscribe to

(read: cis, white, masculine, muscular, thin and able-bodied) often struggle to reach the “levels of happiness, potential and positivity” that he advocates for. Moreover, the discriminations faced by these marginalized queer folks are often the product of queer communities that are continuing to mark and script certain queer bodies as “Other”.

This is a project about the pervasive intersections of fatphobia, femmephobia and racism that exists within queer communities. Specifically, I examine the now-ubiquitous phrase that is often used within queer communities: “No fats, no femmes, no Asians<sup>3</sup> or Blacks”. This phrase is continuing to perpetuate homonormative ideologies that are furthering a marginalization of fat, femme and/or racialized queer bodies and identities within queer communities. This project aims to trouble and deconstruct what I call the “corporate queer man”—that is, the white, masculine and muscular queer man who is understood and represented as being the “right” kind of queer. In order to do so, this research project critically analyzes Grindr, the first and largest online queer social networking application, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the complex ways that fat, femme and/or racialized queer bodies and identities experience their oppressions. This thesis examines the geography of Grindr in order to understand the complex ways that queer identities and spaces are constructed. Furthermore, this thesis also examines the geography of the queer

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it, then it is not *my* mainstream culture. The culture that I practice is not a ‘sub-culture’ or ‘counter-culture’, it is *my* culture [emphasis added]”. The use of “corporate” in this thesis refers to the dominant, hegemonic construction of queerness—that is, a queerness that is white, masculine, muscular, able-bodied, cis and middle-class.

<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that the use of “Asian” within this now-popularized phrase (and throughout this research project) refers to East and Southeast Asian peoples. As Richard Fung (2004) notes, “... in North America, stereotyping has focused almost exclusively on what recent colonial language designates as ‘Orientals’—that is, East and Southeast Asian peoples—as opposed to the Orientalism discussed by Edward Said, which concerns the Middle East. This current, popular usage is based more on a perception of similar physical features—black hair, ‘slanted eyes’, high cheek bones, and so on...South Asians, people whose backgrounds are in the Indian subcontinent and Sri Lanka, hardly figure at all in North American popular representations, and those few images are ostensibly devoid of sexual connotation” (p. 236).

body on Grindr. I will analyze the “body as discourse” (Longhurst, 2005, p. 337)—that is, a symbolic space that is differentiated on the basis of race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, age, size and health. I argue that the body does not exist outside of context and the discursively produced body is written upon, marked, transformed and constructed by social and political regimes (Longhurst, 2005, p. 338). The meanings that are attached to certain queer bodies are located at complex interstices of power and privilege that needs to be deconstructed. Through this project, I will enter into discussions and debates about the politics of identity, oppression and privilege within queer communities.

This thesis aims to further an important dialogue on the exclusive ideologies and discourses that often inform queer communities. I will contribute to the literature that has shifted the dialogue away from the ways that heteronormative cultures are defining and oppressing queer persons and focus on deconstructing and troubling the ways that queers are discriminating and oppressing other queers within their own communities—that is, examine marginalizations from *within* and *between* the marginalized (Cohen, 2005; McBride, 2005; Walcott, 2007; Binnie, 2007; Nero, 2005; Whitesel, 2014). For the remainder of this introductory chapter, I will trace the historical, academic and personal origins of this project, introduce my research questions and set the geographical boundaries of this study. I will then outline my methods and methodologies before finally laying out the map for the rest of this thesis.

### **The “Spark”: Downloading Grindr™**

The first time I downloaded Grindr, I immediately remember feeling like I did not “belong”. My fat hairy body existed amongst a plethora of abs and rib cages and the make up on my face marked my identity as “femme”, which was contrary to the profile descriptions that declared “masculine guys ONLY”. I learned quickly that my identities existed behind the word

“no”: “No fats, no femmes”. I began to question what it meant to “belong” on Grindr and what bodies were afforded a sense of “belonging” in that space.

My feelings sparked a curiosity about the ways that queer spaces are constructed—what queer bodies are welcomed into certain spaces? How do hierarchies of oppressions and privileges unfold within virtual queer spaces and geographies? How are these spaces producing and sustaining complex discriminations? The narratives in these virtual queer spaces left me understanding my *own* queer body and identity as “wrong”. I have internalized a shame for not only my queerness but also, my fat and femme identities. I have spent an entire life engaged in a compulsive dieting cycle in hopes of obtaining the “right” queer body while also trying to act “masculine enough” in order to have the “right” queer identity. My Grindr experiences taught me that there are important “us” vs “them” dichotomies unfolding within queer spaces between those bodies and identities that are accepted as “being queer enough” and those that are not. This spark served as the foundation for this project and has led me to formulate two related research questions:

- I. How is space constructed on Grindr and what are the boundaries of “belonging” and “non-belonging” on this online queer social networking application?
- II. How are users of Grindr producing, sustaining and/or challenging oppressive fatphobia, femmephobia and/or racism found on the social networking application?

The first question examines online queer social networking applications as a constructed space and situates the fat, femme and/or racialized queer within this space. This question explores what this thesis will call the “online corporate Grindr nation” and seeks to further understand what queer bodies are granted a “sense of place” within this online imagined community (Anderson,

1991). This research question aims to address the pervasive homonormative ideologies that are constructing oppressive marginalizations between and within groups of queer persons. The second question explores the complex subjectivities of fat, femme and/or racialized queers on Grindr and seeks to trouble and deconstruct the conception of “no fats, no femmes, no Asians and no Blacks”. This question examines the production of “queers unwanted” (Bell & Binnie, 2004) on Grindr and troubles the complex spaces that fat, femme and/or racialized queers have to navigate when they exist as both the “deviant” and the “fetishized” (Walcott, 2007).

This project builds upon the work of scholars who have examined the politics of racism, sexuality and power in personal advertisements (see Jones, 2000; Churchill, 2003; Lester & Goggin, 2007; Paul, Ayala & Choi, 2010; McBride, 2007). As noted by Churchill (2003), highly charged questions of discrimination and oppression in queer personal advertisements have existed since print ads (p. 114). Churchill makes reference to the infamous case of *The Body Politic*, a Canadian monthly queer magazine that was published actively between 1971 and 1987, where a white man requested “... a young well built BM [Black Man] for houseboy” (Churchill, 2003, p. 114). Churchill argues that personal advertisements, such as the one mentioned from *The Body Politic*, need to be contextualized within a framework of difference, power, identity, and representation (Churchill, 2003, pp. 114-116).

Furthermore, Paul, Ayala & Choi (2010) note that the internet has become a fast and efficient means of accessing sexual partners within queer communities (p. 528). Their research concludes that race and ethnicity are pervasive and powerful factors in facilitating or derailing internet-mediated sexual encounters. The racialized interactions that queers of color report range from simple expressions of race-based preferences (“no Asians”, “no Blacks”), to blatant discrimination or hostile interactions, and demeaning race-based sexual objectifications (Paul,

Ayala & Choi, 2010, pp. 532-535). Moreover, as Jones (2000) notes, queer personal ads used on the internet can be seen as an “island of discourse” that reveals racist stereotypes and ideologies unfolding within queer communities (pp. 33-36). This project seeks to continue questioning social positions, privilege and discrimination within personal advertisements, but through the use of Grindr, an online queer social networking application. The research surrounding the politics of personal advertisements on queer social networking applications is limited and therefore, this project will contribute to the paucity of literature that is aiming to fill this gap.

### **Boundaries of the Research Project**

This is a Canadian research project whose primary site of data comes from Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. I chose Ottawa as my research site for two main reasons: First, it is practical because it is the city where I live and study, which allows me access to Grindr profiles with ease. Second, the project is well situated in Ottawa, Canada’s capital city, because of the large and diverse population of queer persons who use Grindr daily. It is important for me to note that this project is bound within its geographic location. The results of this study should only be applied to other geographic sites with caution. The conception of “no fats, no femmes, no Asians and/or no Blacks” is not a universal phenomenon and thusly, must be understood within geographic restrictions. I do not claim generalizability from this research project and have followed from Corrine Glense (1999) who writes that, “the goal of qualitative research is not to generalize to population[s], but to create in-depth understanding to inform future research” (p. 43). It is my hope that this research will further a dialogue in both queer and academic populations on the pervasive femmephobia, fatphobia and racism in queer communities.

## **Methodological Framework and Data Analysis Strategies**

In this section of the introduction, I outline the methods and approaches I used to conduct my research, namely critical discourse analysis (CDA) and feminist and queer methodologies. It situates my social position within the research and highlights the analytical procedures that I utilized in order to draw conclusions based upon the information I collected.

### *Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)*

There are many models of data analysis to draw upon for qualitative research and, while each of them have their own strengths and weaknesses, critical discourse analysis (CDA) ultimately suits my project. According to Thao Lê and Quynh Lê (2009), “[t]he main mission of CDA is to examine social injustice which is manifested in various social practices and to take a stance against social abuse, racism, social prejudice, and discrimination against dominated or marginalised people with less power” (p. 4). CDA is fundamentally *critical* social research that is aimed at better understanding how communities work and produce both beneficial and detrimental effects, and particularly how to end or mitigate detrimental effects (Thao Lê and Quynh Lê, 2009, pp. 4-5). According to Van Dijk (2004):

CDA is a movement of—theoretically very different—scholars who focus on social issues and not primarily on academic paradigms. We typically study the many forms of (the abuse of) power in relations of gender, ethnicity and class, such as sexism and racism. We want to know how discourse enacts, expresses, condones or contributes to the reproduction of inequality. At the same time, we listen to the experiences and the opinions of the dominated groups, and study the most effective ways of resistance and dissent” (p. 26).

The term “critical” is what marks the difference of CDA from other academic fields or subfields such as discourse analysis, applied linguistics or pragmatics. The “critical” marks a study of power relations and the intent to uncover inequities embedded in society, or in the case of this research, power relations and inequities on Grindr (Thao Lê and Quynh Lê, 2009, p. 7).

My research project follows Fairclough’s (1992) three-dimensional framework for conceiving and analyzing discourse: (i) Discourse as text, (ii) discourse as discursive practice and (iii) discourse as social practice (p. 29). To analyze *discourse as text* is to examine the linguistic features and organization of concrete instances of discourse—that is, the choices and patterns in vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and text structure found on queer social networking profiles. It is important to note that I did not solely restrict myself to analyzing the text of personal advertisements on Grindr but I was also interested in examining profile pictures and images that users choose to display. My analysis adopted Fairclough’s (2001) notion of using CDA to study *semiosis*—that is, all forms of meaning-making which is not limited to only language through text and talk but also, acknowledges the importance of visual images and body language (p. 229). Second, to analyze *discourse as discursive practice* is to examine the ways that discourses are produced, constructed, circulated and consumed by users of Grindr. Last, to study *discourse as social practice* is to analyze the ideological effects and hegemonic processes in which discourse operates on Grindr (Fairclough, 1992, p. 29).

The CDA utilized in this project is informed by three key concepts: Social power, ideology and social practice. This project is concerned with *social power* rather than individual power in an interpersonal relationship (Thao Lê and Quynh Lê, 2009, pp. 11-12). Social power is associated with a group, community, and institution and this project aims to deconstruct power: Which queer bodies hold the most power or most access to power on Grindr? Who suffers due to

a lack of power? How are they treated on this networking application? Ideology is an intrinsic concept in CDA. As Thao Lê and Quynh Lê (2009) note, CDA is meaningless or empty if ideology is absent in it (p. 12). Ideology is inherently encoded in texts and the task of CDA is to connect research to an understanding of power in broader social formations (Thao Lê and Quynh Lê, 2009, pp. 12-13)—that is, what are the ideological beliefs shared by members of a group on Grindr and how do they discursively reproduce social positions and structures? Last, this project is concerned with social practices. As CDA is interested in the concept of “hegemony”, social practices are embedded in hegemony (Thao Lê and Quynh Lê, 2009, p. 13). As a result, social practices are often readily accepted as “obvious” and “natural” in social context. This study aims to deconstruct the socially regulated practices that exist on Grindr and critically examine the ways that hegemonic processes privilege and oppress certain queer bodies. Ultimately, this project endeavours to use CDA in order “...to show the complex, subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, ways in which frequently taken-for-granted... assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, sustained, negotiated and challenged [on Grindr]” (Lazar, 2007, p. 142).

### *Situating the Feminist and Queer in Methodologies*

As mentioned above, CDA emphasizes an analysis of the semiotic dimensions of power, identity politics, and socio-political or cultural change in society. CDA acknowledges the power embedded in texts and images by the discursive choices that are made by the writer (Wodak, 2011, pp. 38-39), but it also stresses the role of the *researcher* in the research and in society. As Van Dijk (2001) argues, CDA insists that a researcher cannot separate themselves from their research: “[c]rucial for critical discourse analysts is the explicit awareness of their role in the society” (p. 353). Critical discourse analysts reject the notion of truly objective science and argue

that knowledge is a part of and influenced by social structures. I wish to emphasize the important role of feminist and queer methodologies in my project, particularly the importance of standpoint theory, reflexivity, and queer praxis.

Feminist standpoint theory aims to develop an epistemology that is centred on and around the experiences and knowledge production of the marginalized (see Smith, 1987, 1990, 1999; Rose, 1983; Haraway, 1991; Harding, 2004). Borrowing from the Marxist and Hegelian idea that individuals' daily activities or material and lived experiences structure their understanding of the social world, feminist standpoint scholars argue that marginalized locations within society provide fuller insights into the society as a whole (Hesse-Biber, 2012, p. 11). Feminist standpoint theorists argue that marginalized groups of persons have access to an enhanced and more nuanced understanding of social realities than privileged folks precisely because of their structurally oppressed location vis-à-vis the dominant group (Hesse-Biber, 2012, p. 11). My project focuses on the voices and standpoints of marginalized queer persons on Grindr—that is, it aims to centre the voices and locations of fat, femme and/or racialized queer persons.

Feminist standpoint theory becomes more relevant for researchers who are members of marginalized or oppressed groups. This is where the importance of *reflexivity* comes into play vis-à-vis standpoint theory because my subjectivities are very closely connected to the research I am conducting. Reflexivity is the process whereby researchers recognize, examine and understand how their social background, location, and assumptions affect their research practice (Hesse-Biber, 2012, p. 17; see also Hesse-Biber & Brooks, 2012; Nagar & Geiger, 2007; Rose, 1997). As Hesse-Biber (2012) writes: “Feminist researchers are continually and cyclically interrogating their locations as both researcher and as feminist. They engage the boundaries of their multiple identities and multiple research aims through conscientious reflection” (p. 17). As

a self-identified fat and femme queer, I experience and am continually caught within the web of fatphobic and femmephobic social structures in queer communities. Discrimination, violence and fetishization on the basis of my fat and femininity are a daily part of my lived experiences. As well, it is important for me to note that as a white queer man, I benefit every day from corporate white queer discourses and systems that privilege the colour of my skin, and I experience my fatness and femininity through whiteness. Thus, the question of where my identities sit in this research project needs to be addressed. As Duncan (1996) notes, a feminist and queer methodology acknowledges that a purely scientific objectivity cannot be obtained because the notion of objectivity can never be separated from its social and political alignment and affiliation to male dominance, heterosexism, cisgender privilege and racial hierarchies (p. 89). The scientific method is hardly neutral or apolitical in its approach (Duncan, 1996, p. 89). To have a so-called “truly positivist methodological approach” would require a distancing of myself as a researcher from the topic of study. Such an approach would deny that my understandings and analyses for this project are always going to come from certain social locations and positions.

Furthering the above ideals on feminist methodologies, this project is also informed by critical queer praxis. Queer praxis in research acknowledges an important messiness in social interactions, lives and experiences and highlights the instability of taken-for-granted meanings and the resulting power relations (Browne & Nash, 2010, p. 4). To *queer* my research is to acknowledge that the persons in my research are not unified and coherent but rather, are multiple and unstable; constituted within historically, geographically and socially specific social relations (Browne & Nash, 2010, p. 4). This project is centred on *deconstruction* and works to actively challenge normativity. My study seeks to subvert, challenge and critique taken-for-granted

“stabilities” in our social lives. Queer praxis invites us to explore the messiness of identities, experiences, power relations and hierarchies (Browne & Nash, 2010, p. 4).

### *Data Collection*

In order for me to effectively answer the research questions I posit above, this thesis critically analyzes Grindr. Grindr was selected as the primary site of data collection because it is the largest and most popular online social networking application used amongst queers. Moreover, Grindr was also the first geosocial networking application to launch for queers. In order to supplement the data found on Grindr, this thesis also collected secondary data from seven other online queer social networking applications that are marketed towards queer men. These other applications were examined alongside Grindr in order to gain a further understanding about the ways that different online queer spaces are constructed, particularly when spaces are created for use by certain queer bodies and identities (e.g., fat queers, Black queers, Asian queers). The seven other online queer social networking applications examined in this study include: Hornet, Scruff, Daddyhunt, GROWLr, BiggerCity, BGay, and Fridae.

Hornet was selected for this study because of its popularity, housing over 9 million users since its launch in 2015. Scruff, Daddyhunt and GROWLr were selected for this project because of their application’s emphasis on traditional masculinity and body size; these applications are targeted specifically towards “daddy” and “bear communities” (see Appendix One). BiggerCity was selected for this thesis because it is an application that is geared specifically towards “chubs” and “chubby chasers” (see Appendix One). BGay, an application geared specifically towards black queer men and Fridae, an application designed for East Asian queer men, were selected for this project in order for me to engage with online queer social networking applications that are created specifically for certain racialized queers. While the focus of this

thesis project is on Grindr, the information collected from these different social networking applications will be used to further complicate, trouble and question ideas surrounding “belonging” and “non-belonging” within a queer space, privilege, oppression, and the construction of online queer geographies and identities.

These eight online social networking applications were downloaded from the iTunes store and data collection took place over a two-month period, running from October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 to December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016. Data was collected once weekly on each social networking application during different days and times of the week in order to ensure a random sample of participants. A total of 1, 478 profiles were collected during the duration of this study, with 284 profiles collected from Grindr (see Appendix Two). It is important to note that certain online social networking applications are not as widely used (such as BGay, Fridae and BiggerCity) and thus, do not have as many users utilizing the applications. All user profiles that appeared on an application during the time that the research was being conducted were selected as a participant for this study. This strategy was used in order to avoid what Wodak (2011) refers to as “cherry picking” in critical discourse analysis—that is, choosing examples (or in this case, user profiles) which best fit the assumptions and theories of the research project (p. 41).

Data was collected weekly to account for new members on each queer social networking application. It is important to note that studying personal advertisements on queer social networking applications has advantages because the participants who are being studied are *unaware* of the fact that they are being studied (Phua & Kaufman, 2003, p. 985). This is significant as it avoids changes in participant’s behaviours, which can occur when they know they are being researched. Personal advertisements are also advantageous because of their anonymity. Users of queer social networking applications are able to choose the kind of

information they want to offer on their profiles. This anonymity allows users to, as McBride (2005) argues, "...be far clearer, more honest, and unapologetically (even if at time brutally) discriminating about what it is [they] want which is not possible... [when] everyone can see [them]" (p. 112).

As noted earlier in this chapter, the geographic location of the data collected for this project was from participants in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. The data collected from Grindr, as well as the other online social networking applications, was sorted and analyzed for patterns and themes using the following guiding questions:

- I. How is the text on a user's queer social networking profile "framed"—that is, how is the text presented and what particular angle does the user take, including the general mood of the text?
- II. What information does the user of the queer social networking application "foreground"—what key words are given textual prominence and which are relegated to the background?
- III. Which social identities and queer bodies does the user of the social networking application welcome in their profile description and who do they exclude?
- IV. Which presuppositions and/or insinuations does the user of the social networking application make?
- V. Who is the subject and who is the object on the queer social networking application?
- VI. What information is omitted from a user's profile on queer social networking applications (e.g., age, weight, height, race, sexual position, interests, etc.)?

- VII. What visual images are used to support the user's queer social networking profile? Does the user's profile picture include parts of the body besides the face? If so, what body parts are the focal point(s) of the picture?<sup>4</sup>

Particular attention was given to the ways that fat, femme and/or racialized queer bodies are written about in profile descriptions. Moreover, this study also examined what marginalized queers write about themselves in their own social networking profiles as well as what they write about the dominant group (read: white, masculine, muscular). The reason for emphasizing the profiles of fat, femme and/or racialized queers is to recentre their voices and experiences. Importantly, all of the queer social networking profiles that were analyzed during this study will remain anonymous.

## **Chapter Outlines**

**Chapter Two** situates the fat, femme and/or racialized queer on Grindr in a multitheoretical framework. This chapter provides an overview of the complex theoretical thinking that informs this project namely, feminist, black and queer geographies, critical race theory, theories of nation and nationalism, feminist fat studies, and queer theory. I contend that these theoretical paradigms, when taken together, allow for a deeper understanding of the marginalizations and discriminations experienced by fat, femme and/or racialized queer identities and bodies on Grindr. This chapter will address many of the complex questions I seek to address throughout this research project: What does it mean to “belong” on Grindr and within corporate queer spaces? Who is excluded and included? How can we begin to understand marginalization from within marginalized groups of persons? What bodies have a privileged

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<sup>4</sup> The guiding questions modified for this project come from Huckin (1995) found in an article by Chong-suk Han (2008) entitled “No Fats, femmes or Asians: The Utility of Critical Race Theory in Examining the Role of Gay Stock Stories in the Marginalization of Gay Asian Men”.

sense of place on Grindr? What bodily landscapes are perverse, wrong, celebrated and recognizable? Who is welcomed into Grindr’s “community” and who are the “queers unwanted” (Binnie & Bell, 2004)? How can we understand resistance on Grindr? Is radical resistance found by integrating into Grindr and demanding equal visibility or by remaking and reimagining new online queer social networking applications? If new spaces are created, does that mean that new hierarchies of privilege and oppression are also bound to be constructed? Is resistance always intentional?

**Chapter Three**, entitled *Constructing Space and Producing Queer Identities on Grindr*, will explore the complex constructions of space, place, and identity on Grindr, as well as many of the other queer social networking applications examined in this study. I will put forth the argument that corporate queer identities actively produce corporate queer spaces and that these newly constructed corporate queer spaces then work to produce corporate queer identities—that is, space and identity exist in a complex two-way relationship (Laurie et al., 1997; Bondi & Davidson, 2005; Fenster, 2005). This chapter will introduce the conception of the “online corporate Grindr nation” and argue that “full access” into Grindr’s community is granted to white, masculine and muscular queer persons. I will outline the ways that the racist, femmephobic and fatphobic discourses found on Grindr form an exclusion of identities from being a part of the online corporate nation. This chapter will take readers through the phases of using Grindr from downloading the application, creating a user profile and entering the space.

**Chapter Four**, entitled *Fucking the Unwanted: Examining Othered and Desired Queer Bodies on Grindr* will examine the body as a geography on Grindr and outline the ways that fat, femme and/or racialized queer bodies are marked, under complex interstices of power and privilege, as both the “queers unwanted” (Binnie & Bell, 2004) and the “queers desired”. I will

outline the ways that fat, femme and/or racialized queers occupy Grindr as a “paradoxical space” where their bodies are scripted as both the outsider and the tastemaker; Othered and eroticized.

**Chapter Five**, entitled *Queering Understandings of Resistance on Grindr*, will explore the notion of resistance on Grindr. I will examine the complex ways that fat, femme and/or racialized queers challenge and resist the current homonormative systems on Grindr that marginalize them. I will argue that we need to queer notions of resistance on Grindr by troubling and complicating what can constitute as an act of resistance on the social networking application. The latter portion of this chapter will work towards recentring the subjectivities of fat, femme and/or racialized queers by examining the “queers unwanted” from their perspectives. In the concluding chapter, I will summarize the information and arguments presented in this research project and outline the limitations to this study. I will conclude this thesis with some final words from a fat and femme queer man.

## **CHAPTER TWO: Situating the Fat, Femme and/or Racialized Queer in a Multitheoretical Framework**

### **Introduction**

This theoretical chapter is the product of my unanswered questions: Why did “beautiful queer” become synonymous with muscular, masculine and white? Why did the fat on my stomach become “wrong” and “abject”? Why did the glitter on my nails mark my identity as “too queer”? Why did the white on my skin become the archetype for the “right kind of queer man”? What does it mean to “belong” in queer spaces and who is excluded and included? How can we begin to understand marginalization from within and between marginalized groups of persons? Which bodies and identities are granted a “sense of place” in corporate queer spaces and who assumes the role of the active subject who defines that space? These questions are rooted in complex discriminations and oppressions that further marginalize certain queer identities; identities that are already at the end of other complex marginalizations from heteronormative society. Fat, femme and/or racialized queer bodies are confronted with a double marginalization—they are rejected from heteronormative society for their sexualities and then shunned from queer communities for their fatness, racial identities and/or gender expressions.

Fat, femme and/or racialized queer bodies radically challenge the notion of a “singular queer community”—the so-called “we” that is often employed when examining and researching queer communities. I argue that this “we” serves an important purpose—that is, to mask the fact that queers, because of our membership to an oppressed group, are incapable of oppressing others. As noted by Chong-suk Han (2008), corporate messages and stories about gays and lesbians continue to paint a portrait of an “inviting” queer community where all people are welcomed with open arms (p. 11). However, counterstories told by queers of colour (as well as

by fat and/or femme queers), continue to portray a corporate queer community that is largely white, masculine, and muscular and where fat, femme and/or racialized queers are relegated to the margins (Han, 2008, pp. 11-12).

The complex marginalizations of fat, femme and/or racialized queers can be examined and analyzed using Grindr, as outlined in the introductory chapter. There is a now-popularized phrase that is employed by users of the application: “No fats, no femmes, no Asians and no Blacks”. The notion of “no fats, no femmes, no Asians, and no Blacks” on Grindr is perpetuating pervasive homonormative ideologies that are marginalizing and erasing fat, femme and/or racialized queer identities. The complex Othering and deviancy of femininity, fatness and/or non-whiteness on this social networking application is continuing to construct an online queer space where a “corporate queer man” is celebrated—that is, the queer man who is white, masculine and muscular. It is the “corporate queer man” who is welcomed and invited into queer spaces without adversity; it is his body that is used in queer media and advertising; it is his body that is accepted at Pride events; it is his body that is sought out on Grindr; and, most importantly, it is his body that is represented as being the “right kind of queer”.

This chapter will provide an overview of the complex theoretical perspectives that inform the thinking behind this project. This study borrows from diverse theoretical frameworks that include feminist, black and queer geographies, critical race theory, theories of nation and nationalism, feminist fat studies, and queer theory. I contend that these theoretical paradigms, when taken together, allow for a deeper understanding of the marginalizations and discriminations experienced by fat, femme and/or racialized queers on Grindr and online queer social networking applications. This project understands Grindr as a constructed space and

geography and situates the intersections of fat, femme and/or racialized queer identities in this space.

First, I will begin by exploring the conceptions of space and place on Grindr. I will situate space and identity in a complex two-way relationship where each constructs and produces the other. Second, I will introduce the conception of the “online corporate Grindr nation” and position fat, femme and/or racialized queers within this imagined community (Anderson, 1991). I will address the pervasive homonormative ideologies that are constructing oppressive marginalizations within and between groups of queer persons. I will explore the notion of the “queer unwanted” (Binnie & Bell, 2004) and examine what it means to embody a subjectivity that is the “right kind of queer”. Third, I will analyze the “paradoxical space” that fat, femme and racialized queers occupy on Grindr. I will outline the ways that these queer identities are simultaneously “desired” and “Othered”. Fourth, I will explore the concept of radical resistance on Grindr and examine the production of “alternative geographies and spaces”—that is, the other online queer social networking applications examined in this thesis. I will conclude this chapter by complicating and troubling the presented theories one step further. I will provide an analysis on the processes of recentring marginalized voices and interrogate the presented theories from the subjectivities of fat, femme and/or racialized queers.

### **Navigating the Unnavigable: Constructing a Sense of Place and Identity in Grindr’s Space**

Feminist geography is concerned with the multidimensionality of embodied experience(s) in spaces. Feminist geographers demonstrate how the intersectionality of multiple oppressions are embedded in, and produced through, material and symbolic spaces and places (Rose et al., 1997; Moss, 2002; Nelson and Seager, 2005). As Nelson and Seager (2005) note, place and space matters (p. 7). The particularities of *where* social processes unfold and how they unfold in

relation to other social, political and economic processes, shape the way in which they do so (Nelson and Seager, 2005, p. 7). Consequently, the project of feminist geography has been about rethinking and reimagining the core geographical concepts of “space” and “place”.

The concept of “place” is often understood as subjective, referring to “... a bounded entity, containing a unique assemblage of characteristics, and within which people forge profound attachments and identities” (Bondi and Davidson, 2005, p. 16). The notion of place is linked to meaningful and emotional experiences (Dyck, 2002, pp. 235-244) and a “sense of place” (Relph, 1976; Eyles, 1985; Bondi and Davidson, 2005) can be felt uniquely in different contexts and geographies. In contrast to the subjective understandings of place, space is often thought of as objective—defined by geometric and locational properties such as distance, latitude, and longitude (Bondi and Davidson, 2005, p. 16).

These understandings of space and place have been heavily criticized by feminist, queer and black geographers who argue that the notion of space as an “abstract geometry” and the notion of place as producing “shared experience” conveniently ignores the complex ways that intersecting social identities—gender, race, class, sexuality, ability—shape people’s lives (Kobayashi, 2005; Browne, Lim and Brown, 2007; McKittrick and Woods, 2007; Twine and Gardener, 2013; Cotten, 2012). Moreover, as Bondi and Davidson (2005) note, these conceptualizations of space and place ignore the important ways that social relations shape geographies (p. 17). To provide an example, one might consider Katherine McKittrick’s (2007) conception of “geographies of slavery” (p. 103). Geographies of slavery were fundamentally spaces and places of brutal black captivity where black bodies were territorialized and deemed property, while white subjects were positioned as property owners. The racialization and ownership in these spaces renders a black sense of place virtually impossible under Eurocentric

geographic arrangements (p. 103). In this example, social positions, locations and relations complexly shape the ways identities and bodies experience certain spaces and define a sense of place. Evidently, space, place and social identities are interrelated concepts and processes, rather than fixed entities. It is important to note that social identities are constructed and produced in and through space and place, and, conversely, space and place construct and produce social identities (Laurie et al., 1997; Bondi and Davidson, 2005; Fenster, 2005).

With this idea in mind, this research contends that space exists in a complex two-way relationship with identity and a sense of place: Identities and a sense of place are created through spaces and spaces create identities and a sense of place. The research begins by understanding Grindr as a virtual space and geography. I critically question the ways that this space and geography constructs and produces identities and a sense of place—which queer bodies are welcomed into this space? How is this space defining, shaping and controlling what identities belong? Conversely, how are identities producing and constructing Grindr’s space and geography? Which identities are defining, shaping and controlling the space? Which bodies and identities hold power in this space? My research argues that Grindr is constructed as a space for white, masculine and muscular queer bodies. By prefacing profiles on these applications with “no fats, no femmes, no Asians and no Blacks”, the space becomes constructed for a specific kind of queer body. The muscular, masculine, and white queer body holds the power in these spaces—they are the active subjects that do the seeing and relegate fat, femme and/or racialized queer bodies to the margins. Conversely, the marginalization and invisibilization of these bodies further constructs a space that is white, masculine and muscular—that is, identities are producing and constructing spaces and contrariwise, these spaces are creating and producing notions of what constitutes “acceptable” queer identities and bodies.

The body itself on Grindr can also be understood as a space and geography. As noted by Robyn Longhurst (2005), the body exists in spaces, but at the same time, *is* a space (p. 337). The body does not have a single location in space—rather, it is a concept that disrupts naturalized dichotomies and embraces a multiplicity of material and symbolic meanings. These meanings are located at complex interstices of power and privilege that are exercised under various guises (Nelson & Seager, 2005, p. 2). To centre the body in research is to map the complex relationships that exist between bodies, identities, places, spaces and power. This research understands the body as discourse (Longhurst, 2005, p. 337)—that is, a symbolic space that is differentiated on the basis of race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, age, size and health. The body does not exist outside of context and the discursively produced body is written upon, marked, transformed and constructed by social and political regimes (Longhurst, 2005, p. 338). As Butler argues, the body is constituted through the compelled enactment of, and repetition of, hegemonic discourses of race, class, gender, sexuality and ability (Butler, 1990). The body is entangled in multiple power relations that are simultaneously real, imagined and symbolic (Longhurst, 2005, p. 343). To understand the body as a space begs the following questions: Which bodies have a privileged sense of place on queer social networking applications? What bodily landscapes are perverse, wrong, celebrated and recognizable? What does it mean to perform the “right” kind of queer body? Grindr is continuing to mark certain queer bodies as “wrong”—that is, to be a fat, femme and/or racialized queer is to embody a geographic space that is outside of the boundary of inclusion. In order to be recognized on queer social networking applications, one must have a body that exists within the discourses of power—that is, one must embody whiteness, muscularity and masculinity. These are the embodiments of inclusion. Fat, femme and/or

racialized queer bodies exist outside of these dominant and hegemonic conceptions of bodily space; they are marginalized, situated at the peripheries and unwanted.

### **Welcome to the Online Corporate Grindr Nation: Situating the “Queer Unwanted” on Grindr**

Grindr’s official website notes that they are a “...global *community* [italics added] for men of all backgrounds to connect with one another. [They] strive to create a safe space where all are welcome to be who they are and express themselves without fear or judgement” (Grindr LLC, 2016). However “progressive” this may read, it is important that we begin to interrogate and deconstruct what it means to be a part of Grindr’s “community”. We must critically ask ourselves a series of significant questions: What does it mean to have a “sense of belonging” on Grindr? What are the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion and who gets to draw these boundaries? Who is welcomed into Grindr’s “community”? And, who are the “queers unwanted” (Binnie & Bell, 2004).

As noted by Yuval Davis (1997), the integrity and viability of a “community” is very much dependent on clear-cut definitions of who belongs and who does not belong to it (p. 217). The community, or rather the “imagined community” (Anderson, 1991) informs the conception of a “nation”—culturally imagined communities predicated on a division of what is “us” and what is “them” (Domosh, 2005, p. 534). The division between “us” and “them” is often a distinction based upon raced, gendered, classed and sexualized hierarchies; hierarchies that exist in pervasive ways in queer communities. The mythical unity of national imagined communities is maintained and ideologically reproduced by what Armstrong (1982) has coined symbolic “border guards”. “Border guards” can identify people as members or non-members of a specific collectivity and are based upon particular cultural codes such as style of dress, behaviour, bodies,

and language (pp. 5-8). To cite a heatedly debated example, one might consider the Muslim woman's choice to veil—a commitment that is often met with moral and coercive pressures from colonialist anti-veiling projects in the name of Western civilization (Enloe, 1990, pp. 223-224). The veil can be understood as a “border guard”, identifying those who wear it as embodying a subjectivity that exists outside of the “colonial nation”. These border guards mark the body as, what Ahmed (2000) calls, the “recognized stranger”: “Strangers are not simply those who are not known... but those who are, in their very proximity, *already recognized as not belonging*, as being out of place” (p. 20). The recognition of a body that is “out-of-place”, allows for the demarcation and enforcement of who “belongs” in a specific community (Ahmed, 2000, p. 20).

This research project puts forth the notion that there is a hegemonic “online corporate Grindr nation” that is creating rigid boundaries of inclusion and exclusion (“us” versus “them”). The online corporate Grindr nation constructs a virtual collectivity where the white, masculine, and muscular queer body is granted “full membership” into the community. As a space, Grindr has been claimed by the corporate queer man (read: white, masculine, and muscular) and, as Yuval Davis (2003) notes, norms of inclusion and/or exclusion form the “boundaries of belonging” (p. 3). Grindr profiles that perpetuate racist, femmephobic and fatphobic ideologies form an exclusion of identities from being a part of the online corporate Grindr nation. The phrase “no fats, no femmes, no Asians and no Blacks” quite literally defines who is welcomed into the community and who is not.

Fat, femme and/or racialized queers using Grindr are not included in the online nationalist definition of “Queer”. As Himani Bannerji (2000) writes in *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism and Gender*, the idea of belonging exists in a paradox of both belonging and non-belonging simultaneously. In her writings about belonging to

the “Canadian nation”, Bannerji notes that non-whites and women (particularly non-white women), are living in a specific territory:

We are part of its economy, subject to its laws, and members of its civil society. Yet, we are not part of its self-definition as ‘Canada’ because we are not ‘Canadians’. We are pasted over with labels that give us identities that are extraneous to us... [t]hey are familiar, naturalized names: visible minorities, immigrants, newcomers, refugees, aliens, illegals... [The] Canadian core community is defined through the same process that others us (p. 65).

In a similar fashion, fat, femme and/or racialized queer identities experience Bannerji’s paradox of belonging on social networking applications. Their identities are used to promote a false-sense of inclusivity and diversity for corporations such as Grindr and Hornet who continue to exclaim that their applications are a space for “men of all backgrounds”. Yet, it is the naming of their differences (“no fats, femmes, Asians or Blacks”) on these applications that continues to ascribe an Otherness onto their bodies. To be fat, femme and/or non-white is to be the “wrong kind of Queer” and thus, exist outside of the online corporate Grindr nation. To name fat, femme and/or racialized identities as “Other” is a way to also simultaneously normalize whiteness, muscularity and masculinity in the queer space. Evidently, the online queer nationalist project is rooted in homonormative ideologies that fundamentally grants “queer citizenship” to the white, masculine and muscular bodies.

Queer is not a homogenous identity and requires a critical deconstruction of the ways social hierarchies (e.g., race and class) come to structure seemingly unitary categories of sexuality. We must critically examine the ways multiple diversities form between those groups who identify as “queer”. I posit that Grindr is a space of pervasive homonormativity—that is, the

queer body in this space is constructed within raced, gendered, and classed norms (Brown, Browne and Lim, 2007, p. 12).

Further, as Binnie (2007) notes:

Heteronormativity has been a powerful concept in challenging the way society is structured along the two gender model—norms that enshrine heterosexuality as normal and therefore [queer] people as Other and marginal. However, I am not so sure about its usefulness now. The notion of heteronormativity tends to lump all heterosexuals [and queers] together in the same box, and can mask or obscure the differences between and within sexual dissident identities and communities (p. 33).

The notion of a “singular queer community” ignores the important oppressions and discriminations that are occurring *within* and *between* queer communities. The notion of homonormativity (Ferguson, 2005; Nero, 2005; Binnie, 2004; Bell and Binnie, 2004; Duggan, 2014) refers to the mainstreaming of queer politics and the increasing visibility and power of affluent white gay men accompanied by the marginalization and exclusion of queer bodies on the basis of race, class, gender identity and expression, body size and (dis)ability (Binnie, 2007, p. 34). These queer bodies become what Binnie and Bell (2004) refer to as the “queer unwanted” (p. 1810).

Homonormative formations in queer spaces have marked the fat, femme and/or racialized queer body as “unwanted” and “undesired”. To embody the “right kind of Queerness” on Grindr is to be what Walcott (2007) refers to as the “archetypal queer”—white, muscular, middle-class, able-bodied and masculine (p. 237). Fat, femme and/or racialized queer bodies have been excised from the “we are a family” discourse (Walcott, 2007, p. 239) of the contemporary gay

and lesbian movement. Fat, femme and/or racialized queer men are “impostures” on social networking applications. To say “no fats, no femmes, no Asians and no Blacks” is to remove the so-called “queer imposture” out of the online corporate Grindr nation.

### **Othered until you are Desired and Desired until you are Othered: Examining Paradoxical Space on Grindr**

Although fat, femme and/or racialized queer identities, or so-called “queer impostures”, are marked as “wrong” and “Other” on Grindr, the spaces they occupy and navigate are very nuanced and paradoxical. As evidenced in the discussion above, fat, femme and/or racialized queers identities are erased and discriminated against on Grindr and yet, these bodies are also being simultaneously eroticized and desired for these same identities. As Rinaldo Walcott (2007) writes in *Homopoetics: Queer Space and the Black Queer Diaspora*, racialized queer bodies (as well as fat and femme queer bodies) in the geographies of online networking and “hook ups” represent both desire and repulsion. These bodies exist in a contradictory site of being both tastemaker and outsider (p. 238).

Furthering these ideas, bell hooks (1992) writes in *Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance* that Otherness has become pleasure (p. 21). She argues: “...Otherness has become so successful because it is offered as a new delight, more intense, more satisfying than normal ways of doing and feeling” (p. 21). Fatness, femininity and/or non-whiteness have become pleasures in corporate white queer culture—“...spice, seasoning that can liven up that dull dish that is mainstream white culture” (hooks, 1992, p. 21). The “real fun” for white queers on Grindr is to be had by bringing all those “nasty” unconscious fantasies and longings about contact with the “Other” to the surface (hooks, 1992, pp. 21-22); that is, being fucked by that “9 inch black dick” or pulling on the “jiggly fat” that hangs from the side of a fat queers stomach. The pleasure of

Otherness is offered up as “new dishes” to enhance the corporate white queer palate—the Other is eaten, consumed and then forgotten (hooks, 1992, p. 39). Black queer bodies are often outsiders until they are desired for their “hypermasculine sex drives” and “big black dicks”. Femme bodies are Othered until a masculine boy declares he needs a “sissy bottom” to bend over for him. Fat bodies are “abject” and “wrong” until a “chubby chaser” wants a fat ass to pound. Fat, femme and/or racialized queer men embody subjectivities that are both outsider and tastemaker; Othered and eroticized; desired for their differences until they are no longer desired.

In his writings on the Asian body in gay pornography, Fung (2004) notes that: “Asians are largely absent from the images produced by both the political and the commercial sectors of the mainstream gay and lesbian communities” (p. 237). However, the gay Asian body is also simultaneously desired for its mysterious exotic and erotic features (pp. 242-243). Fung uses the porn *Asian Knights* to further this point. The pornographic video begins with two Asian men, Brad and Rick, seeing a white psychiatrist because they are unable to have sex with each other. As Brad and Rick begin to sprout erections and make love on the couch, “... the camera cross cuts to the [white] psychiatrist looking on from an armchair. The rhetoric of the editing suggests that we are viewing two Asian men from his point of view. Soon the white man takes off his clothes and joins in...*Asian Knights* is organized to sell representations of Asians to white men” (pp. 241-242). The Asian body is largely absent from Grindr, made invisible by white corporate discourses that assert that “no Asians” should occupy queer spaces. However, the queer Asian body also becomes hypervisible through its fetishization by those same white corporate discourses. The queer Asian body becomes a visible erotic Other (Said, 2000, pp. 67-69) through the normalization of whiteness in these spaces.

In *How Not to be Offended by Everything: A Guide for Asian Men*, Viet Dinh (2009)

writes:

Asian Men—feminine, submissive, and well—you know, small... You go up to a guy and he stops you in your tracks: “Sorry I am just not into Asians”. If you’re lucky, it’ll only happen once, but be prepared to hear it again and again... You will likely find yourself staring at someone, wondering, *Will he like Asians?* before you wonder, *Will he like me?* Certainly, you can find men who are particularly attracted to Asians—rice queens, they call themselves...they will wear you on their arms like colourful bangles; they talk about your exotic skin, your body, your lips and you will wonder if you are merely a blank screen upon which they can cast their colonialist projections (pp. 16-17).

The queer Asian body becomes what Eng-Beng Lim (2014) calls the “love object of colonialism” (p. 3)—a nativized spectacle of racialization that infantilizes Asian identities as effeminate, weak and existing only for use by the white man (pp. 5-7). The trope of the “Rice Queen” has been popularized on Grindr (and within queer communities)—that is, the white gay “Asiaphile” whose sole attraction is to the “... nubile, innocent brown boy” (p. ix). Grindr has become a space of orientalist dyadic formations. The queer Asian body exists as a “... sign of conquest, the trope of an Asian male or nation infantilized as a boy, a savage domesticated as a child, and a racially alienating body in need of tutelage and discipline” (p. 9).

The Asian queer is not the only identity that faces this paradoxical space of being both repulsion and pleasure. As Walcott (2007) notes, black queer men’s bodies represent both simultaneous tastemaker and outsider—desired because of the racial myth of the “big black

dick”, but rejected because they do not possess that which is most prized in queer communities—white skin (p. 238). The black male queer body is eroticized for its muscularity, phallus and buttocks (Jackson, 2006, p. 76). As Jackson (2006) notes, “. . .the black body has been forced to carry a shadow of instinct, of unconscious urge, of the body itself” (p. 78). Through a colonial gaze, the black male body becomes a “strange excitement”, a powerful “penis-as-animal” construction devoid of any phallic will and conscious control and therefore, undeserving of respect (Jackson, 2006, p. 78). On Grindr, the black male queer body exists as “penis” rather than person.

As Peques (1998) notes, black queer men are scripted as “super-sexed studs” with an uncontrollable libidinous energy coursing through their bodies (pp. 259-260). Black queer men are pushed to the peripheries of social networking applications until they are wanted for their so-called “big black cocks (BBC)” and “sex drives”. Black queer men have become contextualized within the perceptions of their penises, existing as sexual performance artists on a mythic stage created by racism (Peques, 1998, p. 260). The black male body is ascribed a “hypermasculine black script” (hooks, 2004; Collins, 2004; Snorton, 2014) through colonial projections that have marked the black masculine body as exotic, muscular, hypersexual and violent (Jackson, 2006, p. 75). To have sex with the black masculine body is to have sex with a “real man”. These implications are important for queer male communities that continue to devalue the femme queer body as unattractive and undesirable.

Many queer men on Grindr tend to conform to a heteronormative masculine image, often referring to themselves as “straight-acting”. These “straight acting” queer men are producing and sustaining femmephobic ideologies, identifying the femme queer body as “sissy”, “pissy”, “queen”, “faggot” and “bitchy” (Eguchi, 2011, p. 38). Femininity in queer male communities is

continually degraded and marginalized, and femmephobic discourses are allowing “straight-acting” queer men to justify and empower their masculinity. As Hennen (2008) notes, advertisements on queer social networking applications routinely include phrases such as “straight-acting and appearing”, “no femmes”, and “masculine gay man seeks same” (p. 10). Phrases such as these have led to a wave of anti-effeminacy where a form of hegemonic masculinity is continuing to be celebrated. There appears to be, as Serano (2007) notes, “effemimania” on Grindr—that is, an obsession and anxiety over male expressions of femininity (p. 286).

However, much like the Asian and black queer body on Grindr, the femme queer body is also a site of desirability. The femme queer male body, or femininity, is often fetishized and “admired” for its imagined sexual submissiveness. The queer femme body is positioned as weak and vulnerable, a body that can be dominated and conquered (Serrano, 2007, p. 278). Femininity in queer spaces is often associated with bottoming (see Appendix One) and as a result of this, queer femme identities have become synonymous with “womanhood” (Eguchi, 2011, p. 38). For many “straight-acting” queer men, this discourse is desirable—that is, to fuck a femme, is to somehow fuck a “woman” and therefore, be “less gay”. The femme queer male body is reduced to nothing more than an ass that can be fucked, consumed and then forgotten about when it is no longer needed anymore for pleasure. Femininity is erased on Grindr (“no femmes”) until its presence is “convenient” for the queers who desire it.

In a similar fashion, the fat queer body is also erased (“no fats”) and marginalized on queer social networking applications, until it is desired and fetishized for that same fatness. Fatness is often stigmatized as unattractive, abject and gross on Grindr (Pyle & Loewy, 2009, p. 148). Corporate queer culture is continuing to perpetuate a notion that the fat queer body needs

to be somehow “fixed” and “corrected”. Countless studies have confirmed that queer men are at a particular risk for developing patterns of body image disturbances and disordered eating (Siconolfi et al., 2005; Yelland & Tiggemann, 2003; Duggon & McCreary, 2004; Austin et al., 2004). Queer men are more likely than straight men to fast, vomit, and take laxatives or diet pills to control their weight. Queer men are seven times more likely to report bingeing and twelve times more likely to report purging than straight men (National Eating Disorders Association, 2012, p. 2). Evidently, queer and fat seem to be mutually exclusive concepts—to be queer and fat is somehow wrong.

In his research on fatness among queer men, Wood (2004) introduces the conception of “the gay male gaze” (Wood, 2004, p. 45). Inspired by feminists who fought against a male gaze, queer men are now being forced to grapple against narratives that are marking certain queer bodies as “ugly and inadequate” within corporate queer culture (Wood, 2004, pp. 45-46)—narratives that are routinely found on Grindr when users declare that they do not want to receive messages from “big, fat queers”. Fatness is relegated to the margins in queer communities and the fat queer body is designated with an outsider status. However, much like femininity and non-whiteness, fatness is also fetishized, desired and “admired” for its bodily difference. As noted by Pyle and Loewy (2009), fat queers (often referred to as “chubbies” on queer social networking applications) are continually pursued by queer men who often label themselves as “fat admirers” or “chubby chasers” (p. 147). These queer men are exclusively attracted to fatness and see fat queer men as an “object of desire” (Pyle and Loewy, 2009, p. 147). Fat queer men are continually reduced to nothing more than the fat on their bodies and are “chased” and “admired” not for their personhood but rather, for their fatness. Fat, femme and/or racialized queer identities

exist at the margins of Grindr, only brought to the centre when corporate white queer culture desires something new to consume.

### **Locating Resistance on Grindr**

In *Embodied Resistance: Challenging the Norms, Breaking the Rules*, authors Bobel and Kwan (2011) note that humans can at once be “rule-bound” and also be inventive agents of social change. Humans have the powerful potential to “... enact the mandates—trudging along, submitting and rationalizing—but [they] can also assert [themselves] and break away... the ‘government of the body’ is never fixed, but always contains oppositional spaces” (p. 2). Fat, femme and/or racialized queer bodies navigate spaces where their subjectivities are often the sites of contention. Resistance on Grindr is multifaceted and the faces of resistance can involve lesser and greater intentionality by the queer bodies involved (Bobel and Kwan, 2011, p. 2). This section of the chapter seeks to deconstruct resistance and is guided by the following questions: Is radical resistance found by integrating into Grindr and demanding equal visibility or by remaking new online queer social networking applications? If new spaces are created, does that mean that new hierarchies of oppressions are also bound to be created? Is resistance always intentional? What kinds of negotiations constitute resistance on Grindr? This section aims to show the complexities and nuances that exist in resisting on Grindr and online queer social networking applications.

In *Urban Revolutions and the Spaces of Black Radicalism*, James Tyner (2007) notes that space is not an inert stage upon which society is played out but rather, space is produced through the interactions of discourses and practices (p. 218). Thusly, the hegemonic control of space is always open to exposure, confrontation, reversal, and refusal through counterhegemonic practices (Tyner, 2007, p. 219). Tyner introduces the conception of “black radicalism”—that is,

the remaking and recreating of “alternative geographies”, of social and spatial transformations for black folks. Black radicalism, in effect, is about constructing new spaces through progressive action (Tyner, 2007, pp. 219-220). I contend that the concept of black radicalism can be extended to other marginalized social identities in queer communities—that is, femme radicalism, fat radicalism, Asian radicalism, etc. These radical resistances involve a strong desire to remove oneself completely from oppressive spaces, and reimagine and remake a new geography altogether—that is, a complete separation from white, corporate queer spaces.

Radical separatism on Grindr contends that it is impossible at this point to integrate into the homonormative white queer system and thus, a spatial revolution must ensue if we hope to truly dismantle oppressive structures. As Malcolm X (1965) argues: “[i]t is impossible for a chicken to produce a duck egg... a chicken just doesn’t have it within its system to produce a duck egg... the system in this country cannot produce freedom for an Afro-American” (pp. 68-69). Radical separatism argues that “integration” is a tool of the oppressor (Tyner, 2007, p. 229), one that will continue to retain inequalities. As Tyner (2007) argues:

To integrate into a white supremacist society [is] to negate the spaces of African Americans. If [we are] to adopt the norms, values, and nomenclature of the dominant society, African Americans would cease to exist as people. As such, integration [contributes] to the dehumanization and displacement of African Americans... [a] revolution for black self-determination is required...

(p. 230)

In order to fully achieve social justice, proponents of radicalism argue that new spaces must be created. It is important to note that fat, femme and/or racialized queer folks have begun to create these “new spaces” or “alternative geographies”. There are online queer social networking

applications, such as BiggerCity, Fridae, and BGay, which are geared specifically for fat and racialized queer folks. However, these newly created spaces need to be examined and deconstructed further. While these applications offer a safer space for certain marginalized queer identities, complex hierarchies of oppressions still unfold even in these new spaces.

Humans exist as complex *intersectional* beings with multiple social identities (Combahee River Collective, 1981; Crenshaw 1991, 2005; Luft & Ward 2009; Lorde, 2007; hooks, 2000; Collins, 2000) and thus, while spaces such as BiggerCity may open up a safer platform for fat queers, this space is not exempt from complex racist narratives or femmephobic ideologies. Furthermore, while BGay may be an “alternative geography” for black queer users, fat and/or femme black queers are still relegated to the margins because of their body sizes and gender expressions. Evidently, hierarchies of oppressions will continue to unfold in alternative geographies because of our complex intersectional realities. As Anzaldúa (2009) notes, so-called “Others” cannot be lumped together or have their issues collapsed; complex differences in identities cannot be ignored (pp. 203-204). These ideas inform an important question, a question that perhaps will never have an answer: With the complexities of intersecting human identities, is it ever possible to create a social networking space that is fully free from hierarchies of privileges and oppressions?

I contend that we need to queer the concept of resistance; perhaps the answer to the “resistance dilemma” is more complicated than a binary of integration or radical separation. Perhaps resistance is found in more subtle ways on Grindr—that is, in the profiles of racialized folks who mark their brown and black skin as queer or in the profiles of femmes who write “no mscs” in their bios subverting the dominant paradigm that femininity is wrong. Perhaps resistance is found in blank profiles—profiles that refuse to name themselves as “Other” to a

corporate white queer gaze. Perhaps resistance is in the profiles that enter their weight and show their fat bodies amidst the plethora of abs and ribcages. Perhaps resistance on Grindr needs to be framed and analyzed in a way that is far more nuanced and complicated than simply integration or radical separatism.

### **De/centring Whiteness, Masculinity and Muscularity: Complicating the Theories One Step Further**

While I have detailed the theoretical paradigms that inform the thinking behind this project, it is important to note that the above theories need to be complicated one step further. Quite often, when attempting to centre marginalized identities, critical theorists *only* examine and analyze them from the perspective or gaze of the dominant group, and through this process, decentre the perspectives of the marginalized folks (in this case, the perspectives of fat, femme and/or racialized queers). To provide an example, the “queer unwanted” (Binnie & Bell, 2004, p. 1810) discussed above on Grindr is the fat, femme and/or racialized queer however, these understandings of the “queer unwanted” come from a particular perspective—that is, the dominant, white, homonormative perspective. It is critical that we also consider who the “queer unwanted” is through marginalized subjectivities and by doing so, recentre the perspective of fat, femme and/or racialized queers on Grindr.

These ideas inform a set of critical questions that I aim to address in this thesis: How can we understand the “queer unwanted” through subjectivities other than whiteness, masculinity and muscularity? How do expressions such as “more fats, more femmes and no whites” complicate the politics of preferences? If black queer men write “no whites” on their profiles, does this carry the same meanings as when white folks declare that they “do not want blacks” on theirs? How do colonial histories inform expressions such as “no blacks” and “no whites”? Is it a

privilege to not have identity preferences on Grindr? For example, as a queer femme, I know that I feel safer going on a date with another queer femme—is it a privilege for masculine queer men to not have to navigate these spaces of violence and oppression? If fat queer men are routinely subjected to fatphobia by muscular queer men, is it a different context for fat queers to write that they “do not want muscle boys” on their profiles? While it is imperative to deconstruct white homonormative ideologies on Grindr, it is also important to understand and deconstruct fatness, femininity and/or nonwhiteness from the perspective of marginalized queers and in this process, recentre fat, femme and/or racialized queer voices. As Gloria Anzaldúa (2009) notes, alter-narratives matter. Alter-narratives produce new perspectives on identity; perspectives that can act as a *retelling* of an old story (pp. 214-216). Let the perspectives of fat, femme and/or racialized queers on Grindr be a retelling that this research needs.

## CHAPTER THREE: Constructing Space and Producing Queer Identities on Grindr

### Introduction

*dear twink and muscle boys,*

*you don't know me.*

*and that's fine.*

*i don't care to know you either.*

*but there is a difference between you and me.*

*i don't have a choice but to know you.*

*you consume my mind.*

*my brain is made up of imprints of your rib cages.*

*your muscles.*

*your veins.*

*your abs.*

*all the things my body failed to give me.*

*or as you might remind me. all the things i have failed to give my body.*

*i know what you think of me when you stare at my picture:*

*fat.*

*gross.*

*fat.*

*disgusting.*

*fat.*

*abject.*

*fat.*

*wrong.*

*my body isn't right for you.*

*that's the hardest one to digest.*

*that i am wrong.*

*and for the first time.*

*i can't fix my wrongness. because it is not me who has done wrong. it is you.*

*eat less. starve more. binge. fuck it all up. punish yourself. repeat.*

*eat less. starve more. binge. fuck it all up. punish yourself. repeat.*

*my fat body is in pain.*

*you have broken it.*

*i blame you.*

*if i can't control who i love. then let me control what i eat.*

*let me control how i look so they will accept me.*

*because the only thing worse than not being accepted once is not being accepted twice.*

*so i allow my body to haunt me just so i can feel my thighs melt away.*

*but it is not my physical self who leaves this earth but my spirit.*

*he's defeated.*

*he's exhausted.*

*he's broken.*

*and he cannot feel rejection a third time. because he knows that this rejection. self-rejection.*

*will be the worst one of all.*

*this fat body was my home.*

*and you.*

*you have destroyed my home.*

*you have made me hate my home.*

*my beautiful home.*

*you have turned my walls into a mould so rancid that my sense of smell has become my sixth sense.*

*my ceiling has crumbled into nothing but pieces and decay.*

*you stole the love out of my home.*

*and i want it back.*

*i am the one who gets to make love find its way.*

*these words bloom from my fat heart.*

*these words are my fat rage.*

*i want you to call me angry.*

*i am angry.*

*and my anger has never been more valid.*

*i am tired of running away from my reflection.*

*i want to love my reflection.*

*i want to feel beautiful.*

*i want to feel sexy.*

*i need to be happy.*

*i am done feeling like i don't belong in your space.*

*this is not your space.*

*it never was.*

*and i'll use as much of this fat body as i can to take up the space that belongs to me.*

*i am done looking down at my fat body and feeling disconnected from the one thing that is supposed to be mine.*

*this is mine.*

*every inch of this waist belongs to me. not you.*

*every roll on this stomach is mine. not yours.*

*every pound of this fat fucking ass belongs to me.*

*and if you don't like it. you can kiss it goodbye.*

*but chances are.*

*it is already gone.*

I wrote this open letter to the twink and muscle boys of Grindr when I quickly learned that my fat body did not “belong” in a corporate Grindr queer space. This letter addresses many of the themes that I will be discussing throughout this chapter. Namely, this chapter will explore the conclusions I have drawn from this research project on the constructions of space, place and identity on Grindr. This chapter will outline the process of entering Grindr’s space—that is, downloading the application, creating an online user profile and entering the social networking application. In doing so, I will explore how Grindr, as well as a few other popular queer social networking applications, are marketing their online spaces in a way that associates queer space with whiteness, muscularity and masculinity. I will deconstruct the language and images found on the download pages for these social networking applications. I will highlight the ways that the creators of online queer social networking applications utilize homonormative ideologies in order to sell and market an online queer space that welcomes the most muscular, masculine and white queer bodies.

Furthermore, this chapter will examine the prepopulated identity options available to users of online queer social networking applications. I will deconstruct the often limited options provided to users on these applications and advance the claim that these limitations help to construct corporate queer identities. These corporate queer identities then help to produce a corporate queer space that privileges masculinity and muscularity. I will use my fat and femme queer identities in order to make my analyses of these applications more accessible. I will examine how identities work to produce spaces and explore how these newly constructed spaces then work to produce certain queer identities and bodies. I will outline how Grindr's constructed space creates an "online corporate Grindr nation" where "social capital" (Bourdieu, 1986) is conferred onto the bodies and identities that conform most to the rigid definitions of what it means to "belong" in the imagined community (read: white, muscular and masculine).

### **Constructing Space and Producing Queer Identities Phase One: Downloading the Application**

The rigid constructions of inclusion and exclusion found on Grindr start long before a user even has the chance to create their profile. Grindr, as well as many other popular queer social networking applications including Scruff, GROWLr, Daddyhunt and Hornet, are marketed to users in a way that defines which bodies and identities belong within queer spaces. In *Gay Politics, Urban Politics: Identity and Economics in the Urban Setting*, Robert Bailey (1999) notes that the initial image of a "gay space" was white, male and middle-class (p. 68). He argues that urban gay spaces wanted to project an image that associated gayness with a young, white, masculine, and collegiate look and thus, marketed themselves in a way that would actively discriminate against bodies that did not conform to this rigid image (pp. 68-70). Furthering these ideas, Charles Nero (2005) argues that gay spaces formed in the 1970s, as part of what he refers

to as a “gay territorial economy” that was marked by the spread of gentrification and neighbourhood development, were homonormative gay spaces that celebrated the white, middle-class, gay body (p. 228).

Grindr, the largest and most-widely used queer social networking application, notes in the application store that the newly redesigned Grindr is now faster and hotter than ever before:

Grindr is the #1 FREE mobile social networking app for gay and bi guys to connect. Chat and meet *sexy, attractive and interesting guys* for free, or upgrade to Grindr XTRA for more features and more fun... Create and personalize your profile to include your Grindr tribe, relationship status, what kind of guys you’re looking for, and more. Grindr has someone for everyone: queer, discreet, anonymous, twink, geek, daddy, leather, military, rugged, bear, otter, guy next door, college, muscle, bisexual. No matter what you’re looking for, you can find it here! So whether you’re a versatile twink looking for a queer geek or a discreet leather daddy looking for a date with an otter, the perfect match is waiting for you on Grindr. What are you waiting for [emphasis added] (Grindr, 2017)?

Grindr has outlined in their description, the various identities and bodies that can be found using the application. Conveniently, fats and femmes are not included in their list of “sexy, attractive and interesting” guys that can be found in the space. It is interesting that Grindr writes that it has “someone for everyone”, and then fails to include these identities (or “tribes” to use their problematic language) in their list. Fat and femme become defined as mutually exclusive to queerness, and thusly, are not included in the construction of identities welcomed in Grindr’s online space. Moreover, the images that are used to market the application include no visibly fat

bodies and the men featured on the application page tend to conform to traditional constructions of the masculine body: chest and facial hair, chiselled jawlines, abs and broad shoulders and what Bordo (2000) refers to as facial expressions that illuminate “face-off masculinity”—that is, staring coldly at the viewer and presenting themselves as powerful, aggressive, armored, challenging and emotionally impenetrable (pp. 186-188).

Grindr is not the only queer social networking application to market themselves in a way that works towards an erasure and marginalization of fat and femme queer bodies and identities. Furthering these ideas, Scruff also markets their social networking application in a way that once again pushes fat and femme queer bodies and identities into the margins of their spaces. Scruff writes that “[t]he guys you like are here, 10+ million real guys, all types” and then includes the following in their application description:

SCRUFF is the top rated gay dating app thanks to *rock-solid* reliability, *expressive* profiles, [and] *powerful* chat...[Scruff] has more ways to express yourself and break the ice... tell guys what communities you identify with including: geeks, muscle guys, jocks, bears, twinks, college guys, military servicemen, chubs, chasers, leather guys, daddies, queer guys, poz guys and guys next door [emphasis added] (Scruff, 2017).

Scruff does not include fat and/or femme as community labels, but sells their application as one that includes “all” types of men. Similar to Grindr, the images included on the download page are all visible muscle men and the application is once again promoting a particular form of masculinity—it is not coincidental that the application is described using wording such as “rock-solid”, “expressive” and “powerful”. Scruff is creating a space for the corporate muscular and masculine queer man to dominate. These same images and ideas are also found on the download

pages of two other queer social networking applications, GROWLr and Daddyhunt. Daddyhunt notes that you can use their application to “[e]njoy free gay chat and flirt with guys you like and choose from a variety of types such as: gay bears, scruff, twink, daddy, muscle, silverdaddies *and more* [italics added]” (Daddyhunt, 2017). The “and more” in their descriptive list is interesting as it operates as a way to “other” queer identities (such as fats and femmes) by refusing to name their existence.

GROWLr notes, much like the applications listed above, that it is the space to “find more gays in more places” and then includes a confusing and contradictory definition of the Bears that use their application:

What’s a Bear? A Bear is a *masculine* gay man who belongs to a very *inclusive* part of the gay community. Some are hairy, some are muscular, and some are heavy set... And some are none of those things. Being a Bear is about *being yourself*, and being accepted for it and we are all amazing no matter how we are labelled [italics added] (GROWLr, 2017).

GROWLr notes that a Bear is a *masculine* gay man and then confusingly (perhaps in an effort to try and be inclusive) writes that being a Bear is about being yourself. These contradictions were not uncommon. The applications above tended to market their applications as a place for “all gay men” and then chose very specific imagery and language in their descriptions to construct a space for the most masculine and most muscular queer men to thrive. Furthering this notion, Hornet writes on their download page that their application will enable “you” to find the “right” kind of gay man, and then includes images of the most fit, muscular and masculine men underneath this description indicating that these identities and bodies represent the “right” kind of queerness.

BiggerCity, a social networking application that was created for “gay chubby men and the men who love them” (BiggerCity, 2017) is also marketed in a way that actively avoids “fatness”, despite this application being created as an alternative space for fat queers. The creators of this application write that “BiggerCity is the largest dating service for *gay men of size* and their admirers [emphasis added]” (BiggerCity, 2017). By using ambiguous language such as “gay men of size”, BiggerCity is able to still sell an application to fat folks while also simultaneously distancing itself from fat bodies and identities (Baker, 2015; Ayuso, 2001). It is important to note that the use of ambiguous language on this application—language such as “chub”, “chubby”, “gay men of size” and “heavy set”—operates to sell a particular form of “acceptable fatness” (Poretzky, 2013; Fabello, Bouris & Forristal, 2016) that actively works to separate “queerness” from “fat”. BiggerCity, as well as all the above applications, feature almost all visibly white bodies on their download pages and thus, the applications are presented and marketed as spaces for white, muscular and masculine queer identities and bodies (Nero, 2005; McBride 2007; Whitesel 2014).

The online queer social networking applications examined in this study market themselves in a way that excludes fat, femme and/or racialized queer bodies and identities from their spaces. Power and visibility is given to the white, masculine and muscular body prior to even entering the online queer space. The queer social networking applications above sell a geography that equates queerness with whiteness, muscularity and masculinity. By marketing their applications as spaces for “*all* queer men” and then strategically excluding fat, femme and racialized queer men from these spaces, the creators of these applications have skillfully created an online space that removes fatness, nonwhiteness and femininity from their definitions of queer.

## **Constructing Space and Producing Queer Identities Phase Two: Creating a User Profile**

Once a user has downloaded Grindr from the application store, they are faced with the task of creating what I will call an “online version” of themselves. This “creation process” often involves filling out a list of basic questions about a person’s identity and body—that is, their weight, height, hair colour, ethnicity, relationship status, age, body type, and sexual position. Grindr, as well as most other popular queer social networking applications, also have a section for users to fill out more general information about themselves such as interests, personality, and what they may be looking for on the application that is not restricted to a list of prepopulated answers (see Appendix Three). Lastly, a user is provided with the option to upload an image (some applications allow users to upload multiple images) of themselves to complete their online profile.

On Grindr, as well as the other queer social networking applications analyzed in this study, users are prompted to select the “tribe” or “community” to which they identify. It is important to note that none of the social networking applications examined in this research project allowed users to indicate that they are femme. The prepopulated options provided on the social networking applications used in this study include: Bear, clean-cut, daddy, geek, jock, leather, otter, poz, rugged, trans, twink, muscle, guy next door, discreet, military, chub, bisexual, chaser, muscle bear, silver daddy, sugar daddy, sir, boy, HIV+, trucker, top, bottom, pup, pup handler, and transsexual (see Appendix One). Since the options listed above are prepopulated on the applications, users who would like to identify as femme, such as myself, do not have the option. The creators of these applications have erased femininity as a choice. Thus, since users cannot select femme as an identity, the online queer space will fail to have any identified femmes

(unless they choose to specify this identity in the general information section mentioned above)  
(See Appendix Three).

Interestingly, on the social networking application BiggerCity, users are prompted to choose traits to describe themselves from a list of prepopulated options. Some of the options include qualities such as confident, easygoing, flirtatious, friendly, kind, intellectual and outgoing. Amongst this list of traits, users have the option to select that they are “masculine”. Unsurprisingly, users do not have the option to select that they are “feminine”. The creators of BiggerCity have decided that queerness and femininity are mutually exclusive identities and by doing so, have contributed to the wave of anti-effeminacy where hegemonic masculinity is celebrated as the “right” kind of queer man’s gender expression. As noted by Steven Schacht (2002), femininity in corporate queer male spaces, especially in its extreme manifestations, is understood as the stigmatized other, a burden, harmful and provides the basis for discrimination and subordinate status (p. 156). By erasing “femme” as an identity, the online queer social networking applications in this study have furthered the notion of femme being a “subordinate status”—an identity that is harmful to corporate constructions of queerness (see Appendix Three).

Furthering these ideas, the queer social networking applications in this study also strategically erased fatness and fat bodies from their online spaces. None of the social networking applications analyzed in this study allowed users to identify as “fat”. On Grindr, users are prompted to select what the application refers to as a “body type”. Amongst the list of options, users can choose to describe their bodies as toned, average, large, muscular, slim or stocky. Fat users, such as myself, cannot label themselves “fat”. Instead, Grindr provides a few ambiguous and relative terms, such as “large” and “stocky”, that allude to fatness without having

to name a user's body as "fat". This pattern was common amongst all of the applications in this study. On Daddyhunt, one has the option to describe their body as slim, athletic, average, muscular, "a little extra", bear or big guy. On BiggerCity, queer folks are given the option to describe their build as slim, athletic, bodybuilder, average, husky, chubby, and super chubby. The social networking applications in this study all seem to actively avoid the word "fat" as a body type that can exist in queer spaces, even when those queer spaces were designed as alternative spaces to make room for fat bodies (see Appendix Three). The applications in this study have successfully created online queer spaces where one does not have the option to embody fatness. As Pyle and Loewy (2009) write in "Double Stigma: Fat Men and Their Male Admirers", to deny fatness in queer communities is to ignore the existence of radical fat-positive queer identities and sexualities (p. 149). By failing to name fatness, we are continuing to perpetuate the notion that fat-positivity and fat beauty is deviant and bad. These conclusions then beg the question: What happens to fat and femme queer men on social networking applications?

Fat and/or femme queers using these applications are forced to present online versions of themselves that do not match their real life queer subjectivities. It is important for me to note that my body is fat and my identity is femme. However, I am not given the option to embody these subjectivities on queer social networking applications. Upon entering an online queer space, I am unable to present my identities as fat or femme and I have to conform to constructions of queerness that do not truly represent my queer identities—that is, I am unable to be who *I am* as a human being. I am forced to grapple between identities such as a "bear with a little extra build" or a "boy next door who is super chubby" rather than being myself: A fat and femme queer. Since my identity is no longer fat or femme, my newly constructed identities have helped to produce a space where fatness and femininity do not exist. As noted in the previous chapter,

space and identities on queer social networking applications exist in a complex two-way relationship: Identities are created through spaces and spaces create identities (Laurie et al., 1997; Bondi and Davidson, 2005; Fenster, 2005). Online queer social networking applications are created as a space for masculine, muscular and/or thin queer bodies. By actively denying queer folks the right to identify as “fat” or “femme” on their applications, the space becomes constructed for a specific kind of queer body. Conversely, the invisibilization of fatness and femininity further constructs a space where power is given to masculinity, muscularity and/or thinness.

### **Constructing Space and Producing Queer Identities Phase Three: Entering Grindr and Facing the “Online Corporate Grindr Nation”**

On Grindr’s official website, they emphasize:

You can find what you’re looking for on Grindr without stepping on anyone’s toes. We have *zero tolerance* for discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender, race, body type, or age. Basically, we don’t like assholes. *Instead of sharing what you’re not into, share what you’re into.* Let’s work together to make these values a part of everybody’s experience on Grindr. We encourage you to take action whenever you see any of the negative behaviour described above. Report what you see, flag profiles, and speak up. And make sure to do it thoughtfully. Let’s do our part to make Grindr a better *community* now and for years to come [emphasis added] (Grindr LLC, 2016).

While it seems “progressive” to write that their application has “zero tolerance” for identity-based discrimination, it is important to note that what is written is not always the case in practice. As will be outlined in this section of the chapter, it is just as troubling to specify on a profile

what one is “into”, as it is to write what someone is “not into”. I will advance the claim that the act of writing what social identities one “wants” works towards not only an erasure of marginalized queer identities (read: fat, femme, and/or racialized), but also creates an “online corporate Grindr nation” that celebrates a corporate queer body—that is, a body that is muscular/thin, white, and/or masculine. As I will argue, the online corporate Grindr nation confers social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) onto the queer bodies that conform most to the rigid boundaries of what one is “into”. As outlined by Bourdieu (1986), social capital signifies the sum of the resources that accrue to an individual or a group because they have access to a durable network of relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (p. 1). Social capital speaks to the benefits that flow from gaining trust, reciprocity, information, and cooperation associated with a social network and gives value to the people who are connected to it (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 1). This section of the chapter will deconstruct the idea of a singular “queer community” and argue that the so-called “better” queer community envisioned by Grindr is actually a “corporate” queer community that utilizes homonormative ideologies to give power and privilege to whiteness, masculinity and muscularity.

As Yuval-Dais (1997) writes in “Gender and Nation”, the notion of “community” is dependent on clear-cut definitions of what identities and bodies belong, and which ones do not (p. 217). A community, or rather an “imagined community” (Anderson, 1991) informs the conception of a “nation”—culturally imagined communities predicated on a division of what is “us” and what is “them” (Domosh, 2005, p. 534). In *Making it Perfectly Queer*, Lisa Duggan (2006) notes that queer nationalist strategies represent the subject position of the Western white male (p. 213). Furthering Duggan’s idea, this project argues that the online queer nationalist strategy on Grindr takes the subject position of the white, cis, masculine and muscular queer

man. These markers of identity represent the “border guards” (Armstrong, 1982) that maintain, and ideologically reproduce the mythical unity of an online corporate Grindr nation. “Border guards” identify people as members or non-members of a specific collectivity and are based upon particular cultural codes (Armstrong, 1982, pp. 5-8). In this study, I argue that whiteness, muscularity and masculinity are the border guards that are granting certain queer bodies full access to the online corporate Grindr nation. As a space, Grindr has been claimed by the corporate queer man (read: white, masculine, and muscular/thin) and the racist, femmephobic and fatphobic ideologies found on Grindr (as well as on other queer social networking applications) form an exclusion of identities from being a part of the nation. The phrase “no fats, no femmes, no Asians and no Blacks” found on these applications quite literally defines which bodies are welcomed into the online corporate Grindr nation and which bodies are not.

### **Interrogating the Nation: Whiteness as Normativity**

In *FOBS, Banana Boy, and the Gay Pretenders: Queer Youth Navigate Sex, “Race”, and Nation in Toronto, Canada*, author Andil Gosine (2008) notes that queers of colour navigate complicated corporate gay spaces that are *white-centred* (p. 224). Gosine argues that queers of colour often occupy, “spaces of impossibility”, perpetually cast as outsiders for both their racialized and queer bodies (Gosine, 2008, pp. 224-225). In his research on counterstories told by Asian men in gay communities, Chong-suk Han (2008) notes that queers of colour confront racism and racial hierarchies that mirror the straight mainstream, despite common beliefs by white gays that the queer community is inviting of “... all people, regardless of colour... with open arms” (p. 11). White corporate gays have become normalized as the image of the “prototypical queer citizen” (Agathangelou, Bassichis & Spira, 2008, p. 124) and gayness has become synonymous with whiteness.

From the 284 Grindr profiles collected over the two month span of this study, 138 users (48%) identified as “white” under the “ethnicity” section of the application. 21% (62 out of 284) of the profiles on Grindr did not select an “ethnicity” on their profile. However, many of the users with no racial identifiers may be white because, as noted by Dyer (1997), “[t]he sense of whites as non-raced is most evident in the absence of reference to whiteness in the habitual speech and writing of white people in the West” (p. 2). Grindr operates as a site of racial exclusion where whiteness actively seeks other whiteness. Non-white racial identities are frequently prefaced with a strong “no” in a user’s profile description and then often followed with a so-called apologetic “sorry”, “not my type”, or “it’s just a preference”. Non-white queer identities are excluded from the online corporate Grindr nation and are repeatedly told by white gays that their racial identities are “unwelcomed” in the space. One white Grindr user writes in his profile: “Cuddles please.. im craving the man of my fantasies... :( Bttm here. Passionate fun. I cannot host. Please no asians or blacks”. Another white Grindr user notes that they are “[h]orny for love and sex. looking for top masculine man. I’m masculine, bottom, horny, awesome guy, modest, 7unc. No Asian guys. Sorry just a preference”. Racialized queer bodies, particularly Asian and black queer bodies, continue to have their racial identities excluded from Grindr with a strong “no” in a user’s profiles. One white user remarks that he “...tends to go for older hairy daddy type bears. I like manly men, rugged, bearded and muscled/burly. A sucker for a big barrel chest, big arms, big dicks and beards. I won’t respond to messages if you don’t have a pic. Please no asians or black guys. I’m just not interested”. This “no” is important to analyze as it operates as a microcosm for the discrimination and exclusion of racialized queer identities from (white)queer spaces.

As Rinaldo Walcott (2007) notes, the shorthand logic of queer spaces (or gay ghettos) is that they are spaces of “community” based upon sexual practices and thus, other kinds of social categories of identity take a back seat to that of sexual identity. He writes that “... in North America, the category of gay has largely come to stand in as the archetypal white, middle-class male” (p. 237). This understanding has meant that in spaces and geographies of queer identities, such as Grindr, racial as well as gender and class, skirmishes are taking place (Walcott, 2007, p. 237). Queers of colour on social networking applications are trapped within Eurocentric queer histories that evidently aim to deny their presence. As Walcott (2007) argues, queers of colour often occupy (white)queer spaces as “impostures”, rejected because they do not (and cannot) possess that which is most prized within queer spaces—white skin (p. 238).

### **Interrogating the Nation: Masculinity**

Throughout the twentieth century, many queer men relied upon effeminacy to project and reflect their sexuality (Cole, 2000, p. 183). Scientific discourses had advanced the notion that “male homosexuality” was a reflection of a female soul trapped in a male body. These scientific discourses seeped into cultural thinking and led to effeminacy becoming the culturally accepted meaning of gayness (Cole, 2000, p. 183). For many gay men, effeminacy was understood as the way into a “gay lifestyle” and many embraced an overtly feminine style. Becoming a gay “fairy” or a gay “queen” was the most visible manifestation of gayness (Cole, 2000, p. 35). However, these “obvious gays” were often frowned upon by not only straight folks but also, other gay men. As Hennen (2008) notes, many gay men felt no sexual interest in “fairies” or “queens” because they were attracted to “men”, which was associated with a very rigid hegemonic form of masculinity (pp. 33-34). Feminine gay men were often regarded as too campy, too loud, too dramatic and too effeminate (Hennen, 2008, pp. 48-49).

Femmephobic discourses surrounding effeminate gay men often targeted them as being the reason why all gay men had such a bad name. Cole (2000), in his research on fairies and queens, cites one of his participants who notes that “[h]omosexuality is a curse enough (though it has wonderful compensations and noble joys) but it is a double curse when one has effeminate ways of walking, talking or acting” (p. 35). The life of feminine gay men, particularly feminine gay men of colour, was not an easy one. These queers were not only subject to abuse and discrimination but were also liable to arrest on the basis of what was loosely defined as “degeneracy”—gender inflected signs such as campy or effeminate behaviour, the use of rouge or lipstick, the practice of calling each other by camp or women’s names, or other aspects of their dress or carriage (Cole, 2000, pp. 36-37).

As a result of this attack on queer femininity, by the 1950s, in an attempt to “pass” as straight, gay men began to embody (or at least try to embody) an exaggerated form of traditional masculinity. The counterculture movement of the 1960s shifted gayness towards a more masculine look and masculinity became a tool to challenge public attitudes and stereotypes towards gay men (Levine, 1998; Cole, 2000; Hennen, 2008; Sánchez & Vilain, 2012). Unfortunately, this shift came at the expense of feminine gay men. As Tony Diaman argues in *“Macho Man”: Clones and the Development of a Masculine Stereotype*, “[t]he straight world has told us that if we are not masculine we are homosexual, that to be homosexual means not to be masculine... one of the things we must do is redefine ourselves as homosexuals” (Diaman in Cole, 2000, p. 93). This attitude heralded a “masculinization of gay culture” (Cole, 2000, pp. 93-95) where gayness became synonymous with masculinity. Femme gay men were ostracized by many folks in queer male communities for re-emphasising stereotypes that they had been working hard to fight against. This history of ostracization and femmephobia can be found on

Grindr when profiles continue to deny femme queer men a space in the online corporate Grindr nation. Furthering Cole's conception of the "masculinization of gay culture" (Cole, 2000, p. 93), this research demonstrates that there is a "masculinization of Grindr" that celebrates and encourages a hegemonic form of masculinity among queer folks.

On Grindr, one user writes that he is in search of a "[b]ig dick party, looking for masc/tough only". Another user describes themselves as a "[b]ig hung guy into hunting and fishing. Love the outdoors. I'm super easy going and down to earth. I am not into girly guys. Masc ONLY". Another user proclaims that they "...like real men only. Body hair and muscles are a big plus. Not attracted to feminine guys". These examples illuminate the ways that femininity and femme identities are devalued on Grindr. Femmes are left navigating an online corporate Grindr nation that marks their bodies and identities as unattractive and unwanted. One Grindr user notes that "[i]f you're wearing eyeliner in your profile pic, no thanks. No fems". Another user states: "I'll say what I mean and I'll mean what I say. I have no patience for little pubescent sissy boys. Just be a man OK". Femme queers on Grindr are continuing to have their effeminacy marked and labelled as "sissy", "girly" and "faggoty" by users in the space.

Quite interestingly, it also appears that users of Grindr are understanding masculinity and femininity in a rigid binary of either/or. As Killermann (2013) notes, gender expression is fluid and dynamic (p. 88) and it is not always simple to label complex human beings as fully feminine *or* masculine. Oftentimes, folks exist *within* and *between* these forms of gender expression. The discourse emerging from the profiles on Grindr is that a queer user is either feminine or masculine. These findings harken back to the 1970s when John Campbell notes that there were two options for gay men: "... you were either queens or clones" (Campbell in Cole, 2000, p. 38). Femme gay men, as well as those who exist within and between femininity and masculinity, are

invisibilized in queer spaces and masculine men (who also often refer to themselves as “straight-acting”) are normalized as the “right” kind of gay men.

### **Interrogating the Nation: Muscularity and Thinness**

For what feels like the entirety of my life, I have understood my fat queer body as “wrong”; I have internalized a shame for not only my queerness but also, my fat. I have struggled with weight gains and losses and the subsequent social rewards and punishments thereof. As I grew older and gained pounds, my body continued to scold and tease me with images of what I could become if I exercised more and ate less. I have spent an entire life engaged in a compulsive dieting cycle—everything I eat is a source of worry and guilt: How much I eat, how many times I eat, what kind of food I eat, how many calories I consume, and if I really need to eat. I would binge and then starve myself as punishment. My family and friends have encouraged me to lose weight, rationalizing that it will somehow make me “look better”. I have developed a disdain for my fat queer body and oftentimes, I feel miserable in it. My experiences with fatness and body image are not only a personal story, but also an important social and political story. Fatphobia and sizism in countless queer communities are pressuring queer men to take whatever drastic measures necessary in order to obtain an oftentimes unobtainable queer body.

As noted by the National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA), eating disorders and body image disturbances are disproportionately affecting queer men—conditions that have historically been understood as only having the capacity to affect young, middle-upper class, white, heterosexual women (National Eating Disorders Association, 2012, p. 1). Among the men suffering from body image disturbances and disordered eating, 42% self-identify as queer—an extreme overrepresentation (National Eating Disorders Association, 2012, p. 3). Queer men are

seven times more likely to report bingeing and twelve times more likely to report purging than exclusively straight men (National Eating Disorders Association, 2012, p. 2). I contend that these statistics need to be understood within a wider context of marginalization and oppression—that is, we need to deconstruct the fatphobic discourses in queer communities that are putting forth a notion that to be queer *and* fat is somehow wrong.

As Morrison (2004) notes, there is an important “body fascism” present within queer male culture (p. 3). The corporate media has played a significant role in strengthening the desire for a specific (oftentimes unattainable) queer male body. Advertising and pornography targeted towards queer men tends to portray *one* type of body—lean with a defined chest, clear-cut abdominal muscles and the absence of any kind of body hair (Morrison, 2004, pp. 2-3). When fat queer bodies are included in the media, they are most often presented as “flawed” bodies which can be “corrected” through dieting, exercise and surgery. Corporate queer media continues to promote a strong and clear message to queer communities: Acceptance, success and love comes only to those who have the “right” type of body (Morrison, 2004, p. 4). Corporate queer culture is producing queer men who are notoriously body conscious. As William Mann (1998) writes:

...what kind of message [do] we send to our gay youth as images of gay male beauty become more and more precise: hard, chiseled, buff, smooth. Looking out at the hordes of shirtless, pumped-up men, each virtually indistinguishable from the next, it dawned on me just how much pressure is put on young gay men as they enter gay community—more than ever before (p. 346). Fat and obese queer men are relegated to outcast status in queer communities (Blotcher, 1998, p. 359).

As Whitesel (2014) outlines, fat queer men's bodies often exist at the margins of queer communities (p. 52-55). In "Size Queen: A Gay Guy on Girth", author John Chaich (2003) notes that the queer male body has become a site for inclusion and exclusion where *fatness* is often the criteria for those bodies that become excluded (p. 243). There is a pressure for the queer body to be thin, muscular, and attractive by traditional standards. The fat queer body is often ostracized and marginalized by a corporate fatphobic queer scene. The fat queer body is continually stigmatized as unattractive, abject and asexual (Pyle & Loewy, 2009, pp. 144-148).

As Jason Whitesel (2010) notes, the fat queer body exists within bounds (p. 216). Corporate images of muscular and thin queer bodies reify body boundaries (p. 216) and if the queer male body fails to have "proper" height-to-weight proportion, than it exceeds the bounds of how a queer body "ought to look". Corporate queer men continue to marginalize those who do not conform to strict bodily standards and use these boundaries to create and perpetuate inequality within queer communities (Whitesel, 2010, pp. 216-217). These body boundaries are found on Grindr and are defining which queer bodies are included and excluded in the online corporate Grindr nation.

The denial of fatness in queer communities is so pervasive that only three users (1%) on Grindr analyzed in this study named themselves as "fat" in their profile biographies. Instead, there was an acknowledgement of one's fat body through the use of language that does not carry the same negative history and baggage as fatness does: words such as chubby, large, bigger, and husky. While these words acknowledge a push away from muscularity and thinness, they continue to actively deny an existence of fat in an online queer social networking space. The fat queer body is erased from the online corporate Grindr nation and told, quite literally through the use of "no", that a fat body and identity is unwelcomed in the space. On Grindr, a user writes

“looking to be fed... must be slim or muscular”. Another user demands that they are into “...smooth and lean guys ONLY. No fatties please”. One user notes that they prefer “muscles > intelligence. If you don’t have a pic, I’ll assume you are ugly and fat. Send me pics”. There is an erasure of the fat body and fatphobic discourses are encouraging queer men to deny their fatness. Muscularity and thinness are normative in Grindr’s space. The profile images from this study hardly feature visible fatness. Profile pictures overwhelmingly include faceless images of abs, biceps, muscles and gym equipment. I posit that these images are a way to show users on Grindr that “you” possess the “right” kind of queer body and therefore, have the right to occupy the online space—“your” body belongs in the corporate Grindr nation. On Grindr, out of 284 profiles, only 15 users actively selected the option to self-identify as “large” or “stocky” (5%). Only 2 of those 15 profiles included a full body picture as their profile image. The remaining “large” and “stocky” profiles from this study choose images that only showed them from the neck up or their profile picture was blank. These numbers speak volume to not only what bodies feel comfortable being a part of the online space (read: muscular and thin) but also, who feels “entitled” to show their body in the space.

Quite interestingly, another theme to emerge from this study is that the queer bodies that did not identify as muscular or thin on Grindr, often frame their profiles in a way that aims to show the online corporate Grindr nation that even though they are fat now, they are in the process of “fixing” their queer body. For example, one Grindr user who identifies their body type as “large” on the application writes: “Muscle Bear 2 be. I am working hard to be the best me. This means spending time in the gym or outdoors. I am a work in progress, in the gym 6X a week. Down 52/100+ lbs”. Another Grindr user notes that they are a “[c]hubby versatile bi dude (losing weight). Please be discreet and d&df [drug and disease free]”. Another user proclaims

that they are a “Political Science & Canadian History Student @ uOttawa. On a diet & gonna start working out. Anyone wanna show me the ropes”? Evidently, many fat users are cognizant that to be a “worthy citizen” in the online corporate Grindr nation, they need to “correct” their bodies. They must show the nation that they are a “work in progress”, actively trying to “fix” their “flawed” queer body.

### **Strengthening the Nation: Searching for Sameness**

White, muscular and masculine queer identities dominate Grindr’s space. Fat, femme and racialized queers using Grindr are not included in their nationalist definition of “Queer”.

Whiteness, muscularity, thinness and/or masculinity become normative in the space and these normativities actively work together to produce, construct and secure the online corporate Grindr nation. These dominant social identities become the boundaries of *inclusion* into the nation on Grindr. When users proclaim in their profiles, such as this user who writes that they are “looking for top masculine muscle man ONLY. Not attracted to Asian guys”, they not only erase fat, femme and racialized queer identities from the nation but also, mark these identities as the boundaries of *exclusion* from the online space.

The online corporate Grindr nation is strengthened when users of online social networking applications actively seek similarity—that is, muscularity, masculinity, and whiteness seeking other muscularity, masculinity, and whiteness. As many Grindr users note in their profiles, they are: “Masc4Masc” or “Fit4Fit”. On Grindr, one user writes that they are a “[p]assionate, fit, masculine, attractive guy looking for same”. Another user remarks that they are a “straight-acting white dude looking to hook up with the same”. One profile notes that “...[i]f you wear neon underwear or wear makeup I am not interested. I am a masculine man and I like other masculine MEN”. Another proclaims that they are a “muscular white guy here

looking for NSA with same. Vers/bttm. I like masculine muscular/toned or jock types who can host downtown”. The search for sameness on Grindr aids in strengthening the rigid boundaries of inclusion and exclusion (“us” versus “them”) within the online space. Corporate queer men are actively searching for other corporate queer men and through this process, they fortify the online corporate Grindr nation.

As noted by Eriksen (2010), a nation becomes strengthened when it stresses a level of sameness amongst its adherents and, by implication, draws boundaries vis-à-vis others (read: fats, femmes and racialized queers), who thereby become outsiders (p. 47). The search for sameness on social networking applications works to exclude fat, femme and racialized queer bodies and identities from belonging to the online corporate Grindr nation. As Yuval-Davis (2006) notes, the politics of belonging to a nation concerns the “dirty business of boundary maintenance” and deciding which bodies stand inside or outside the imaginary boundary line of the nation (p. 204). The politics of belonging also involves a *reproduction* of the boundaries of community by hegemonic powers and discourses that aim to strengthen who is included and who is excluded (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 205). On social networking applications, the search by dominant groups for sameness is a tool to reproduce the boundaries of which identities belong in the nation. This constructed virtual collectivity by the online corporate Grindr nation grants “full membership” to white, muscular/thin and/or masculine queer identities and bodies. The search for similarity by dominant queer bodies on social networking applications works to grant them “social capital” (Bourdieu, 1986) in the online space. As Bourdieu (1986) writes:

Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to

membership in a group– which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word (p. 1).

Social capital is rewarded to queers on Grindr who embody whiteness, muscularity/thinness and/or masculinity. These embodiments come to represent the “credentials” that grants queers access to the corporate community and provides them with “... the backing of the collectivity...”. Grindr, through the workings of the online corporate queer nationalist project, becomes a space of pervasive homonormativity. The notion of homonormativity, as outlined in chapter two, (Ferguson, 2005; Nero, 2005; Bell and Binnie, 2004; Duggan, 2014) refers to the marginalization and exclusion of certain queer bodies on the basis of race, class, gender identity and expression, body size and (dis)ability (Binnie, 2007, p. 34). These spaces of homonormativity challenge the notion of Grindr being a “singular queer community”. Queer is not a homogenous identity and social hierarchies come to structure seemingly unitary categories of sexuality. Homonormative formations on Grindr have marked the fat, femme and/or racialized queer body as Other.

As Haritaworn (2007) notes, queer spaces most often exist within a homonormative framework that continues to re-centre the position of the most privileged gays (p. 101). Grindr exists as a space where discrimination against fat, femme and/or racialized queers is normalized at the hands of corporate white gays. These corporate white gays are using Grindr to continue to assert the notion that gayness equates whiteness, masculinity and/or muscularity thinness. There appears to be a “corporate panic” amongst users of the application who continue to insist that gayness is a unitary perspective. One white Grindr user writes in his profile that he is “easy-going.simple.no drama. im gay so I like GUYS that are masculine and not effeminate”. Another

user proclaims: “Whats with all these fems invading grindr? its an app for gay guys”! One user notes that they are a “white dude here looking to get fucked. Where are all the sexy gays at? Im looking for a masculine muscle dom top to make me happy”. There is an active denial, as argued by Haritaworn (2007), to acknowledge that queerness, as a positionality, invites multiple perspectives. Homonormative discourses on Grindr are continuing to erase the identities, bodies and perspectives of fat, femme and/or racialized queers.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter explored the constructions of space, place and identity on Grindr (as well as on a few other online queer social networking applications). I explored the process of entering Grindr’s space—downloading the application, creating an online user profile and entering the social networking application—and in this process, outlined how Grindr markets and constructs an online space that positions queerness as synonymous with whiteness, muscularity and masculinity. I highlighted the ways that creators of online queer social networking applications utilize homonormative ideologies in order to sell an online queer space that welcomes the most muscular, masculine and white queer bodies. Furthermore, I advanced the claim that corporate queer identities work to produce corporate queer spaces and contrariwise, these newly constructed corporate queer spaces then work to produce corporate queer identities. I argue that Grindr’s constructed space creates an “online corporate Grindr nation” where “social capital” (Bourdieu, 1986) is conferred onto the bodies and identities that conform most to the rigid definitions of what it means to “belong” in the imagined community.

The next chapter will explore the queer body as a space. I will critically examine the bodies marked as the “queers unwanted” (Binnie & Bell, 2004) and outline the complex positions that these bodies occupy when they exist simultaneously as both the “unwanted” and

the “desired”. Fat, femme and/or racialized queers navigate a “paradoxical space” where their bodies are both the outsider and the tastemaker. I will deconstruct the complex meanings scripted onto queer bodies on Grindr and engage in a discussion on desire, eroticization, and fetishization.

## CHAPTER FOUR: Fucking the Unwanted: Examining Othered and Desired Queer Bodies on Grindr

### Introduction

*how to fuck a FAT person on grindr:*

*first. do not narrow your search results to “large” or “stocky” on grindr.*

*FAT people are not a type you get to select.*

*if you want these FAT asses, you better start searching.*

*i want to see you filter through hundreds of rib cages and muscles.*

*because FAT people don't come easy.*

*you need to spend hours searching.*

*maybe even days.*

*because FAT people on grindr created the expression “needle-in-a-haystack”.*

*and our bodies are worth working for.*

*if you find a FAT person.*

*don't assume that they will be into you just because you're not FAT.*

*Some FAT people don't like you.*

*and we don't have to like you.*

*second. do not ask for a body picture.*

*if there is not one uploaded.*

*there is probably a reason why.*

*you are probably the reason why.*

*FAT people do not need to be rated by you.*

*your opinions are empty.*

*and you do not get to decide if our body is big enough.*

*wide enough.*

*the right kind of FAT you're looking for.*

*third. this FAT is not for your consumption.*

*this embodiment is not your fetish.*

*stop pulling on my stomach.*

*stop yanking on my thighs.*

*stop demanding to cum on my FAT ass.*

*my FAT is not an accessory you get to wear on your cock.*

*especially when your cock is too small to carry all of this FAT.*

*i'm a person.*

*when we fuck.*

*you fuck me.*

*not my FAT.*

*four. stop calling yourself a "chubby chaser".*

*what you're attracted to is called FAT.*

*if you want to fuck a FAT person.*

*acknowledge that you're chasing FAT.*

*you're a "FAT chaser".*

*if that expression embarrasses you.*

*then you don't ever deserve to feel a FAT ass around your cock.*

*five. stop assuming i want to bottom.*

*just because my ass is FAT doesn't mean i want your cock in it.*

*there is too much surface area to be wasted on a skinny boy like you.*

*save us both the embarrassment.*

*skinny cocks are scared of FAT asses.*

*let me fuck you.*

*i can show you what fatphobia really feels like.*

*six. watch FAT porn.*

*if you want to fuck me.*

*you better know how too.*

*if you're going to fetishize my FAT body.*

*learn how the FAT body works.*

*stop trying to bend my body into positions you've seen in skinny porn. it doesn't do that.*

*if that makes you angry.*

*we can be angry together.*

*because I am already angry at you.*

*i'm angry that you've turned my FAT queer body into a lesser-of-two-evils.*

*begging to be fetishized because at least that feels better than being hated.*

*unwanted.*

*seven. FAT people are not your experiment.*

*we didn't sign up to give you a tutorial on FATNESS.*

*we don't care that you "have never slept with a FAT person before".*

*don't tell me that I am "hot for a FAT boy".*

*we don't need validation from macho clones.*

*we never have.*

*last. don't ever assume that my FAT is for you.*

*this is my body.*

*and its beautiful on me.*

*not you.*

*this FAT is mine.*

*it always has been.*

*and it always will be.*

I wrote this advice poem after having sex with a boy on Grindr who was obsessed with my fat. He was the first boy to ever tell me that my body was sexy before he fucked me. He would stare at my body in admiration and tell me how much he loved my fat ass. His favourite foreplay was to yank on my stomach and stretch out the fat on my thighs. For several weeks, we would follow the same sexual routine: He would come over, I would get naked, he would stare longingly at my body, he would pinch the fat on my stomach, he would slap my fat ass, I would pretend to be comfortable having my body pulled on, he would fuck me, he would demand to finish on my stomach, and then he would go home. At the time, I had convinced myself that he was in love with me. For the first time in my life, I felt beautiful. In hindsight, I realize that this boy was never in love with *me* but rather, was in love with my *fat*. I was simply his “type”—I had fat on my stomach, rolls on my thighs and a fat ass that would jiggle when he fucked me. I was never a person to him, but was simply a bottom who had fat that could make his dick hard. I became his kink and his fetish.

This poem and story outlines many of the themes that I will be exploring in this chapter. Namely, this chapter will begin by deconstructing the body as a space on Grindr—I will critically examine how fat, femme and/or racialized queer bodies on Grindr are simultaneously

marked, under complex interstices of power and privilege, as both the “queers unwanted” (Binnie & Bell, 2004) and the “queers desired”. I will argue that fat, femme and/or racialized queer folks navigate a complex queer space on Grindr where discourses script their bodies as both “outsider” and “tastemaker”—a space I will refer to in this chapter as “paradoxical space”. I will engage in a critical conversation about desire and explore the ways that fat, femme and/or racialized queer bodies on Grindr are fetishized and eroticized. Black queer bodies on Grindr are often marked as outsiders by a corporate white queer culture until they are then desired for their “big black cocks” and so-called “hypermasculine sex drives”. Femme queer bodies are Othered on the application until a masculine boy declares he needs a “sissy bottom” to bend over for him. Fat bodies are thought of as abject and wrong until a chubby chaser needs a fat ass to pound. I will argue that fat, femme and/or racialized queer bodies exist at the margins of Grindr, only brought to the centre when corporate white queer culture desires something “new” to consume (hooks, 1992).

### **Understanding the Body as Space on Grindr**

The body exists as an analyzed, theorized, politicized, and sensationalized entity, concurrently functioning as a medium for physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual transformations (Winge, 2012, p. 1) Everyone has a body (in fact, *is* a body), but bodies are differentiated on the basis of age, ethnicity, sex, sexuality, gender, size, ability, and health. The body exists in spaces, but at the same time, *is a space* (Longhurst, 2005, p. 337). As Robyn Longhurst (2005) notes:

Bodies are conundrums, paradoxes, riddles that are impossible to solve. They are deeply embedded in psychoanalytic, symbolic, and social processes yet at the same time they are undoubtedly biological, material, and “real”. Bodies are

an effect of discourse but they are also foundational. They are referential and material, natural and cultural, universal and unique (p. 337).

Bodies cannot escape their political, economic, cultural and social settings—there is no body outside of its context. The body is a space on which power, privilege, value, morality and oppression are etched (Longhurst, 2005, pp. 338-341). As Butler (1993) writes, “...what constitutes that fixity of the body, its contours, its movements, will be fully material, but materiality will be rethought as the effect of *power*, as powers most productive effect [emphasis added]” (p. 2). The materiality of a body is not, in itself, absolute but rooted in a matrix of origination and composure that is influenced by European rationality and power (Butler, 1993, pp. 31-32). Thus, the meaning of a body is not a given but rather, is *produced*—“...to know the significance of something is to know how and why it matters” (Butler, 1993, p. 32).

The body does not exist outside of context and the discursively produced body is written upon, marked, transformed and constructed by social, cultural and political regimes (Longhurst, 2005, p. 338). The body is constituted through the compelled enactment of, and repetition of, hegemonic discourses of race, class, gender, sexuality and ability (Butler, 1990, 1993). The body is entangled in multiple power relations that are simultaneously real, imagined and symbolic. The body does not have a single location in space—rather, it is a concept that disrupts naturalized dichotomies and embraces a multiplicity of material and symbolic meanings. These meanings are located at complex interstices of power and privilege that are exercised under various guises (Nelson & Seager, 2005, p. 2).

As Ronald L. Jackson II (2006) notes, the body is *scripted and inscribed*—the body is a socially discursive text that can be read by interactants (p. 2). There are various meanings attached to “bodily texts” that can inspire individuals to behave differently to foreign or

unfamiliar bodies when encountering them (Jackson II, 2006, p. 2). This chapter is concerned with the discursive meanings and scripts that are attached to queer bodies on Grindr—that is, deconstructing the scripts attached to certain bodily landscapes. Which queer bodies are understood as perverse, wrong, celebrated and recognizable on Grindr? This research argues that to be a fat, femme and/or racialized queer on Grindr is to embody a geographic space that is outside of the discourses of privilege and power. Whiteness, masculinity and/or muscularity compose the dominant and hegemonic conceptions of bodily space; fat, femme and/or racialized queer bodies are marginalized, othered, situated at the peripheries, and scripted as the “queers unwanted” (Binnie & Bell, 2004). These ideas are further complicated, as will be explored later in this chapter, when fat, femme and/or racialized queer bodies are also simultaneously scripted as the “queers desired”—erotized for the same differences that mark their bodily landscapes as “unwanted”.

### **Scripting the “Queer Unwanted” on Grindr**

Homonormative formations on Grindr that actively celebrate white, masculine and muscular queer bodies have scripted fat, femme and/or racialized queer embodiments as “unwanted”. As Binnie and Bell (2004) note, many popular gay spaces (including Grindr) are bounded communities that operate and thrive on the basis of exclusion (p. 1810). A boundary of “unwantedness” is often drawn in queer spaces that works to push out certain queer bodies that are not included in corporate images and constructions of gayness (read: able-bodied, white, masculine, muscular, middle-class, monogamous, heteronormalized). These queer bodies are theorized by Binnie & Bell (2004) as the “queers unwanted”: embodiments that exist outside of commercialized manifestations of “acceptable” gayness. In *The Queer Unwanted and Their Undesirable ‘Otherness’*, author Mark E. Casey (2007) notes that sexual identity is but one of a

number of identities or “criteria” that influence feelings of inclusion, belonging or comfort in commercialized gay spaces such as Grindr (p. 130)—exclusions on the basis of race, gender expression, body size, ability and age have been intensified as the boundary lines that keep out certain queer bodies that are deemed as “unwanted” (Casey, 2017, p. 134).

The boundaries of “unwantedness” found within corporate queer spaces inform Rinaldo Walcott’s (2007) notions of the “queer imposture” (pp. 238-240). As Walcott (2007) notes, corporate queer spaces, such as Grindr, are used to control black queers, queers of colour, poor queers, femme queers and other “undesirable” queer bodies with the aim of continuing to position the archetypal gay white middle-class male figure as normative (p. 238). Walcott argues that some queer bodies are understood as “acceptable” and others are not (pp. 238-239). For example, Walcott notes that “...the idea of the black gay man as an imposture... [is] central to how the lives of black men are circumscribed or pushed outside of gay neighbourhoods” (Walcott, 2007, p. 239). The marking of certain queer bodies as “unwanted” in corporate queer spaces scripts their bodies as “imposturous”.

Fat, femme and/or racialized bodily landscapes are inscribed as being exclusive from queerness. Their bodies become excised from the “we are a family” discourse of the contemporary gay and lesbian movement (Walcott, 2007, p. 239). As Charles Nero (2005) notes, white masculinity is understood as being the condition that purportedly *produces* gayness (p. 235). Borrowing from Patricia Hill Collin’s notion of “controlling images”, Nero argues that the black queer man is scripted as an “impostor” in white queer discourses (Nero, 2005, p. 235). He writes:

Collins points out that in white discourses about black women, controlling images help to make racism, sexism, and poverty appear to be natural, normal,

and an inevitable part of everyday life... [l]ike the controlling images of black women as mammy, jezebel, and welfare queen, the ubiquitous image of the black gay man as an impostor or a fraud naturalizes and normalizes the exclusion of black gay men... [t]his controlling image of black gay men, which is produced by straights and gays, provides ideological support for the exclusion of black gay men from full participation in queer cultures (pp. 235-240).

Black queer men's bodies are scripted through controlling images that mark them as "imposturous queers". As Patricia Hill Collins's (2004) argues in *Get your Freak On: Sex, Babies and Images of Black Femininity*, black deviance has been constructed on the backs of a white Western normality (p. 120). Furthering the above ideas of Nero and Collins, I argue that there is a "queer deviancy" found on Grindr that is constructed on the backs of a commercialized queerness that normalizes gay whiteness, muscularity and masculinity. Profiles on Grindr act as "controlling images" that further script fat, femme and/or racialized queer bodies as imposturous or fraudulent—existing outside of Grindr's boundaries of queer normality.

On Grindr, one white user notes in his profile: "Hot guy here looking for other hot gay guys for right now. ONLY MESSAGE ME IF YOU ARE WHITE OR SLIGHTLY OFF-WHITE PLEASE. All other profiles will be ignored. Happy Grinding ;)". Another user writes: "What's with all these sissy fags using Grindr? I thought this was supposed to be an application for gay MEN". Another profile remarks: "Where are all of these fatties coming from? Looking for JOCK types ONLY. No pic, no chat"! These Grindr profiles, which actively question why certain queer bodies are using the social networking application, work to control and sustain an image of fat, femme, and/or racialized queers as "impostor" and "unwanted" on Grindr. Femmes, fats and/or

queers of colour are marked by Grindr's commercialized gayness as having embodiments that exist outside of queer normality. The users quoted above utilize their profiles to remind fat, femme and/or racialized queers that Grindr is an application for "gay men" and through this process, script queerness as synonymous for whiteness, masculinity and muscularity. These profiles can be understood as sites of oppression that rework white queer histories of racism, fatphobia, femmephobia and exclusion. These scripts are made more complicated however when the queer impostor also becomes the queer desired—fetishized for the same "queer deviancies" that marked their bodies as unwanted.

### **Fucking the Unwanted: A Discussion on Desire, Fetishization, and "Paradoxical Space" on Grindr**

Fat, femme and/or racialized queer bodies represent bodies that exist as sources of tension in corporate queer spaces because they represent that which could expect rejection but also, fetishization (Winge, 2012, p. 59). In *Homopoetics: Queer Space and the Black Queer Diaspora*, Rinaldo Walcott (2007) notes that in the geographies of online social networking and "hook ups", racialized queer bodies (as well as fat and/or femme queer bodies) represent both *desire* and *repulsion* (p. 238). He explains that:

“[t]his dynamic is in part the contradictory impulses of the place that black queer men hold in economies of desire in queer communities, where the myth of the ‘big dick’ still rules even while black queer men are rejected because they do not possess that which is the most prized possession in queer settings—white skin” (Walcott, 2007, p. 238).

Fat, femme, and/or racialized queer bodies exist in a contradictory site of being both tastemaker and outsider (p. 238). Fat, femme and/or racialized queer bodies are left to navigate a complex

queer space online—a space I will refer to as “paradoxical space”. As evidenced in the previous section, the bodies of fat, femme and/or racialized queers are marked as “imposturous” and “unwanted” however, these bodies are also being simultaneously eroticized and desired for these same differences. The “Otherness” of fat, femme and/or racialized queer bodies becomes a form of *pleasure*—fatness, femininity and/or nonwhiteness become what hooks (1992) refers to as “enjoyment” (p. 21).

hooks (1992) argues that Otherness has become so successful “...because it is offered as a new delight, more intense, more satisfying than normal ways of doing and feeling” (p. 21). For corporate white queer bodies, the “real fun” is to be had by bringing to the surface all their “nasty unconscious” longings and fantasies about sexual contact with the Other (hooks, 1992, pp. 21-22). The corporate white gay may contemplate: What is it like to fuck a fat person? What would it feel like to be pounded by a “big black cock”? How tight is a sissy boy’s asshole? How would it feel to have my cock blown by a “submissive” Asian boy? For many corporate white queer bodies, fucking is a way to confront the Other—to leave behind their corporate white queer “innocence” and enter the world of “experience” (hooks, 1992, p. 23). Fatness, femininity and/or nonwhiteness become embodiments that are *fetishized* on Grindr—bodies that are sought after for consumption.

As noted by José Muñoz (1999) in *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*, race, because of white normativity, becomes a new form of sexual practice (p. 88). To expand on Muñoz’s idea, I argue that fatness, femininity and/or nonwhiteness on Grindr, because of their nonnormativity in the queer space, become embodiments of a “new” sexual experience for corporate white queers. Fatness, femininity and/or nonwhiteness on Grindr can be understood through a corporate white queer lens as kinks,

fetishes and fantasies. Fat, femme and/or racialized queer folks embody subjectivities that are marked by a commercialized queer culture as “tastemakers”—that is, “new dishes” to enhance the corporate white queer palate (hooks, 1992, p. 39).

The corporate white gay marks the black body as outsider until he becomes curious about the “big black cock” myth. The fat queer body is disgusting and abject until a chaser wants to know what a fat ass feels like around his dick. Femme queers are deemed as unwanted until a masculine gay is interested in pounding a “sissy bottom”. Fat, femme and/or racialized queer bodies on Grindr are scripted with sexual fantasies by users of the application. As noted by Zeb Tortorici (2008) in *Queering Pornography: Desiring Youth, Race, and Fantasy in Gay Porn*, sexual desires are often dichotomously predicated on white bodies or on the exoticism of a racial, linguistic, cultural, and sexual “Other” (p. 208). Corporate white queer culture has projected erotic narratives onto fat, femme and/or racialized queer bodies (hooks, 1992, p. 62). Fat, femme and/or racialized bodies are often reduced to their parts on Grindr and these embodiments are often not noticed as *whole* human beings (hooks, 1981; hooks, 1992; Collins, 2004; Rao & Pierce, 2006). These bodies *become* their fat, their cocks, their asses, their clothes and their skin.

### **“Black Lover Here”: Examining the Black Queer Body on Grindr**

In *Queer Race: Cultural Interventions in the Racial Politics of Queer Theory*, Ian Barnard (2004) argues that while there is a self-evident form of racism from white gay men who will not consider a relationship with a person of colour (“no blacks”), there is also a tradition of racist representations by white men who solely desire black bodies (also known as “dinge queens”) (p. 37). The most blatantly racist of these representations take the form of ritualized fetishizations of black identities. These racist articulations are readily available on Grindr where

whiteness is normalized either through the exclusive attention to white men (as discussed in the previous chapter) or by the reduction of black queer men to stereotypes (e.g., all black men have huge cocks) (Reid-Pharr, 2001; Barnard, 2004; Petin, 2011).

Barnard (2004) notes that black queer men, in the context of racist social structures, are rendered as objects to be selected by a white fantasy or desire, and provides the example of “blackness” often being a fetish category of pornography that can be selected alongside “leather”, “BDSM”, “cream pie” and “orgies” (p. 38). In the context of gay pornography, Barnard notes that viewers are assumed and positioned as white and pornographic videos often emphasize the centrality of white fantasy and agency on the basis of racial stereotypes: “Do you fantasize about mean, huge-cocked black studs cramming their giant black cocks up your ass” (Barnard, 2004, p. 39)? These pornographic films are best understood as a microcosm for a continuum of primitivist stereotypes and so-called “wishful” representations of black availability at the whim of the white fantasizer. These (mis)representations and stereotypes can also be found on Grindr, where (white)users continue to write about the black body through a colonial gaze that contextualizes black men within the perceptions of their penises. Black men on Grindr exist as sexual performance artists on a mythic stage created by racism (Peques, 1998, p. 260).

On Grindr, a white user writes: “Bottom here. HIV poz and undetectable. Prefer to be fucked hard by a big blk man”. Another white user remarks: “Black men hit me up <3. Looking for a black guy to pound my ass with his big fat cock. Total btm”. Another white profile notes: “Bruuuuh, why is it so hard to find some sane, fine as hell, laid back men. You black men score big points with me if you’re big ;)”. Evidently, black queer men on Grindr are scripted as hypermasculine tops by a white desiring gaze and are reduced to their “big black cocks” and sex

drives. In *Piece of Man: Redefining the Myths Around the Black Male Phallus*, Pesques (1998) writes:

Within the confines of homosexual desire, the black penis is still seen as representing a super-sexed stud who is ever ready to please any white male takers; every black man's penis is huge and simply waiting to burst forth from briefs or boxers at any moment for the sake of another's pleasure (p. 260).

Black men on Grindr *become* their penises. White users of the online social networking application desire black men as *myths*. As Poulson-Bryant (2005) notes, black men exist as racial myths in the eyes of white people—big-dicked beasts on the lookout for vulnerable white folks to purloin them of their purity (p. 11). The black body on Grindr is imposed with racist projections of sexual fantasies (hooks, 2004, p. 97)—the big black cock that can pound the white ass. Through the myth of the big penis, black queer men become hypermasculinized and hypersexualized (Jackson II, 2006; Snorton, 2014). This is evidenced by the expressions used on Grindr profiles that desire black gay men; expressions such as “wanting to be fucked hard” or “pounded” by a black guy. The black masculine body is scripted as innately sexual: “...the penis-as-animal, powerful and exciting by virtue of brute strength and size...” (Jackson II, 2006, p. 78). Black bodies on Grindr are still being understood through a colonial gaze that represents them as what Petin (2011) coins a “monolithic black male”—that is, a one-dimensional, homogenous, conservative, stylized black masculinity (p. 96). Users of Grindr are reluctant to acknowledge any semblance of black plurality on the application and continue to script the black body as phallic, hypermasculinized and hypersexualized.

## **“Looking for an Asian boy to Submit to my Cock”: Examining the Asian Queer Body on Grindr**

In “No Fats, Femmes or Asians: The Utility of Critical Race Theory in Examining the Role of Gay Stock Stories in the Marginalization of Gay Asian Men”, Chong-suk Han (2008) critically examines a number of counterstories told by gay Asian men on the racism they confront daily in queer communities. In particular, Han cites the story of one gay Asian man who speaks about his experiences of alienation and sexualization by white gay men. He writes:

The pain of being a gay Asian, however, is not just the pain of direct discrimination but the pain of being negated again and again by a culture that doesn't acknowledge my presence. I remember when I came out, I didn't even know I was 'Asian'. I thought I was like everyone else—just gay... Alienated from our own sexuality, the only way we become sexualized is through the predatory consumption of a rice queen [White men who prefer Asian men as sexual partners]. With little presence in the Western erotic imagination, we find we have even less power when it comes to our presence on the sexual menu, except as 'boy toys' for White men... While white men cruised looking for their prey, most Asians stood back, lined up against the wall like beauty pageant queens waiting to be chosen... With all the attention focused on white guys, I instinctively knew that as a gay Asian, I rarely had the power to choose and would always be the one chosen (Han, 2008, pp. 17-18).

The Asian queer body, despite being virtually invisible within corporate queer culture, is often represented as a commodity for consumption by white queer men (Han, 2008, pp. 845-846). Their bodies are often scripted as feminine, passive, and submissive—existing for the

pleasure of white men (Han, 2008, p. 846). Their bodies come to represent what Veit Dinh (2009) notes as "...a blank screen upon which they [white men] can cast their colonialist projections" (p. 17).

In *Looking for my Penis: The Erotized Asian in Gay Porn*, Richard Fung (2004) argues that stereotyping surrounding the gay Asian body has focused on what recent colonial language designates as "Orientals"—that is, East and Southeast Asian peoples (p. 236). The gay Asian body is most often positioned as "bottom"—the receiving position in anal sex—and Asian and anus are often conflated (Fung, 2004, p. 240). In his writings on gay pornography, Richard Dyer (1985) notes that "... although the pleasure of anal sex (that is, of being anally fucked) is represented, the narrative is never organized around the desire to be fucked, but around the desire to ejaculate...the eroticism of the anus in our pornography takes a back seat" (p. 28). Thus, the queer Asian body, scripted as "bottom", is designated as passive Other, existing merely for the pleasure of others. The queer Asian body is represented by corporate queer culture as the submissive, exotic bottom waiting to be fucked (read: chosen) by a white man (Fung, 2004, pp. 240-241). The gay Asian man is scripted with a baggage full of "oriental" woes: He is the exotic houseboy, bound up and sexualized by his traditions; a "boy toy" and trick to the "rice queen" in need of a white, paternal discipline (Lim, 2014, pp. 161-162). Through a white colonial gaze, gay Asian men are never the narrators of their sexuality and rather, are the *narrated* (Han, 2008, p. 846). The queer Asian body exists as an exotified object of sexual gratification for the assumed white male subject (Han, 2008, p. 846), and these ideas presented above can be found on the profiles of white Grindr users.

On Grindr, one user notes that he is "[l]ooking for love in all the wrong places. Loves country music, cowboy boots, jeans and camping. Love brown skin. Total top here. Any Asian

boys who want to get fucked by my cock, hit me up”. Another user writes in his profile that he is a “[g]ay, discreet professional. Love Asian boys. Top guy here, well-endowed and I love to fuck hard ;)”. Another profile states: “Looking for an Asian boy to choke on my hung cock. 8 inches here. Guaranteed to make you want more. No pic. No chat”. As evidenced, the queer Asian body is scripted on Grindr as the passive bottom, fetishized because of its brown skin and “guaranteed” to be gratified sexually by the white man’s penis. In *Undressing the Oriental Boy: The Gay Asian in the Social Imaginary of the Gay White Male*, Paul EeNam Park Hagland (1998) argues that queer communities reproduce an “orientalist discourse of power” in which the Asian man is “constructed” or scripted as an exotic, but ultimately pliant, sexual creature whose sexuality is directed outward toward gay white men (p. 277). The discourse that informs Grindr is a part of a “social imaginary” (Hagland, 1998, p. 277) of a gay white world in which Asian men are imagined and then reified as the “exotic Other”, excluded from queer communities if they do not conform to the reified image.

### **“Bend your Fat Ass Over for Me”: Examining the Fat Queer Body on Grindr**

Fat: one of the most feared three-letter words in contemporary culture. Fat is often scripted as repulsive, funny, abject, ugly, obscene, and unclean (Richardson, 2010; LeBesco, 2009; Fraser, 2009). Fat is seen as abhorrent, disgusting, evil, and above all, something we should *lose* (p. 75). However, very few popular representations, as well as limited academic investigation, acknowledges that fat itself is often a form of sexual interest. Fatness is often admired and eroticized in a body, particularly in queer male bodies (Richardson, 2010, p. 101). As Richardson (2010) notes, “...gay culture has always been more openly fetishistic [about fat] than its heterosexual counterpart. Gay men have always been keen to identify (unashamedly) in

terms of their fetish for physical features...” (p. 102). The fat body in queer communities often represents a supreme, erotic indicator (Richardson, 2010, p. 102).

As noted by Pyle and Loewy (2009), fat queers are continually pursued by queer men who often label themselves “fat admirers” or “chubby chasers”. Within gay culture, the terms “chubby chaser” or “fat admirer” are utilized to describe queer men whose sole attractions are towards “chubs”. Chubby chasers tend to have slim-build bodies and are devoted to the admiration of fatness (Whitesel, 2014, pp. 5-6). Fatness is fetishized, desired and “admired” because of its bodily difference in a culture that tends to only represent and celebrate a slim and muscular queer body. Chubby chasers and fat admirers are exclusively attracted to fatness and see fat queer men as an “object of desire” (Pyle and Loewy, 2009, p. 147). One Grindr user writes in his profile: “Love to fuck fat and chubby dudes with my big cock”. Another user notes: “Looking for a fat guy to sit on my face. I love to rim for hours”. Fat queer men are continually reduced to nothing more than the fat on their bodies and are “chased” and “admired” not because of their personhood but rather, because of their fatness.

Fatness in the queer male body has become associated with effeminacy (Whitesel, 2010, p. 216). The fat queer body lives in historically constituted and highly gendered communities where the physicality of hegemonic masculinity remains under constant surveillance. The embodiment of fatness within the queer male body produces stereotypical feminized features such as breasts, hips and the diminishment of visible genitals that threaten masculinity and the archetype of the disciplined muscular body that exists in queer communities (Whitesel, 2010, pp. 216-217). The fat queer body, scripted as feminine, comes to represent an embodiment that is seen as passive, weak, submissive and soft—an embodiment that can be controlled and dominated because of its assumed subordinate status. One Grindr user writes: “Chubby boys

hmu. 8'' hung4now. Thick cut masc dude who loves to pound a fat ass or receive head''. Another user's profile states: "24 year old student here. Love to play with chubby boys. If im online im most likely looking to fuck a big ass. Your pics get mine". As Whitesel (2014) notes in *Fat Gay Men: Girth, Mirth, and the Politics of Stigma*, fatness in queer men is scripted as a degradable femininity—an easy fuck, a big ass that will bend over for sex, and a suitable target for lewdness (p. 43) (as evidenced in the Grindr profiles above). As Ganapati Durgadas (1998) writes:

[Fat queer men] are visibly, palpably soft and round, neither lean and lithe, nor robustly muscular, enjoying a physically questionable male status, upholdable only through boisterous clownishness or blustering bullyhood provided by sheer girth... Fat men are suspiciously womanish... One's womanishness is confirmed, meaning you can be fucked, in more ways than one, within the patriarchy hierarchy as your relative male status is revoked (p. 368).

Fatness is represented as being equitable to a denigrated feminization of the body and is positioned on Grindr as a sexual fetish that can be "chased".

### **"Looking for a Girly Gay for Fun": Examining the Femme Queer Body on Grindr**

In July 2006, Lance Bass, famously known as the bass singer in the boy band NSYNC, publicly announced through a *People Magazine* interview that he was gay (Laudadio, 2006).

During the interview, Bass remarked:

I want people to take from this [interview] that being gay is a norm. That the stereotypes are out the window... I've met so many people like me that it's really encouraged me. I kind of call them the SAGs—the straight-acting gays. We're just normal typical guys. I love to watch football and drink beer" (Bass in Laudadio, 2006).

Bass' interview with *People Magazine* can be read as a perpetuation of the notion that something is “wrong” with effeminate gay men (femmes) and further plays into sexist and misogynistic ideologies and discourses that denigrates femininity. The interview is a microcosm for the value afforded to traditional notions of hegemonic masculinity in queer communities that marginalizes effeminate gay men (often also referred to derogatorily as “fags”, “sissies”, and “queens”) (Bergling, 2001; Eguchi, 2011; Vilain & Sánchez, 2012; Poole, 2013). The discourses surrounding “straight-acting gays” (SAGs) or “masc gays” produces and reproduces anti-femininity and femmephobia (also referred to as sissyphobia).

Femininity, as outlined by Julia Serano (2007), is positioned as inferior to masculinity, and any man who appears effeminate or feminized in anyway will drastically lose status (p. 285). There is “effemimania” in queer communities—an obsession and anxiety over male expressions of femininity (Serano, 2007, p. 286). Femmes are viewed far more negatively than the masculine clones produced by corporate queer culture and femininity is scripted as synonymous for “weakness” and “passiveness” (Serano, 2007, p. 341). The femme body, despite its subordinate positioning by corporate queer culture, is also “admired” and fetishized for its imagined sexual submissiveness. Femme embodiments are hypersexualized, and are often sought after for their presumed sexual availability. As Serano argues, femininity is seen as something to be taken control of; positioned as powerless (Serano, 2007, p. 254).

Femmes on Grindr are scripted as sexual objects and commodities, rather than fully formed human beings. Their embodiments are hypersexualized in our culture because they are viewed as “enabling” their own sexual objectification by virtue of the fact that they are willingly embracing femininity (Serano, 2007, pp. 253-260). One user writes in his profile: “Straight-acting guy here. Need a hot bj from a sissy/twink/cd [cross dresser] in your car right now”.

Another user proclaims that he is “[f]it and in-shape. I work out 5+ days a week. Mostly looking for twink and fem boys to pound hard”. Another user notes that he is a “[r]ugged guy. looking for a girly gay for fun. I love to have my cock deep-throated”. On Grindr, femininity, and those who embody it, are positioned as object and prey—a subordinate body that exists to be fucked and conquered by the straight-acting gay man. The femme body is understood as a sex object available to give pleasure and their identities become reductions of their asses and mouths.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter explored the body as a space on Grindr. I put forth the claim that the body does not exist outside of context and the discursively produced body is written upon, marked, transformed and constructed by social, cultural and political regimes (Longhurst, 2005, p. 338). The body is scripted and inscribed and fat, femme and/or racialized queer bodies on Grindr embody a geographic space that is outside of the discourses of privilege and power. Whiteness, masculinity and muscularity compose the dominant and hegemonic conceptions of bodily space. Fat, femme and/or racialized queer bodies are marginalized, othered, situated at the peripheries, and marked as the “queers unwanted” (Binnie & Bell, 2004). This chapter complicated these ideas even further by arguing that fat, femme and/or racialized queers on Grindr navigate a paradoxical space, where their bodies are simultaneously unwanted and desired; both Othered and eroticized. Fat, femme and/or racialized queer embodiments exist at a complex intersection of being both the outsider and tastemaker.

Thus far, the research has explored the ways that fat, femme and/or racialized queer folks on Grindr are marginalized, oppressed, fetishized and excluded from the online corporate Grindr nation. The next chapter seeks to explore how fat, femme and/or racialized queers resist and challenge the corporate constructions of queerness found on Grindr. I will critically queer (read:

deconstruct and complicate) resistance on Grindr and explore the production of alternative online queer geographies and spaces. The next chapter seeks to push the research and theories one step further by aiming to recentre the subjectivities of fat, femme and/or racialized queer identities: Who is the “queer unwanted” from the fat, femme and/or racialized queer perspective? How do expressions on profiles like “no whites please”, “chub4chub”, and “ONLY femmes” complicate the politics of identity preferences? The next chapter aims to further understand and deconstruct the notion of “no fats, no femmes, no Asians or Blacks” and corporate white gay ideologies and discourses from the perspective of marginalized queer folks.

## CHAPTER FIVE: Queering Understandings of Resistance on Grindr

### Introduction

This chapter is concerned with resistance. It would be a disservice if my research only examined the ways that users on Grindr produce and sustain oppressions without analyzing the complex ways that fat, femme and/or racialized queers also challenge and dismantle them. When I consider the now-ubiquitous expression “no fats, no femmes, no Asians or Blacks”, I am often left wondering *how* to approach challenging fatphobia, femmephobia and racism. There are many profiles I came across during my research that sought to challenge the online corporate Grindr nation. For example, one Grindr user proclaims that he is “[n]ot the big black top thug you white people are looking for. Just a regular guy. No racists Plz. Looking for dates, sex, and friends. Please go play your unconscious racism ‘preference’ game with someone else”. Another profile writes: “Just moved from Alberta, looking to meet nice people. Be kind to your fems #masc4mascara”. Another user remarks that he is “[n]ot interested in gays who body-shame. If you don’t like fat, than block me”. Grindr profiles such as these actively call out homonormative ideologies, something I used to do quite frequently when I first began using the social networking application.

At the time, I thought that if I reached out to enough users, I would be able to work towards dismantling Grindr’s oppressive structures that privilege whiteness, masculinity and muscularity. In most circumstances, users would tell me to either “fuck off” or block my profile, and it was in those moments that I started to consider if resistance on Grindr was going to be found by either: (1) demanding integration into the online social networking application, (2) radically separating from it and creating new spaces, or (3) neither. In this chapter, I queer (read: trouble, deconstruct and complicate) notions of resistance on Grindr. I argue that resistance

needs to be understood in complex and nuanced ways that can be found beyond the integration or radical separation binary. I will critically examine the clever and complicated negotiations that fat, femme and/or racialized queers use to resist and challenge corporate white queer ideologies on Grindr. In doing so, I aim to recentre fat, femme and/or racialized queer subjectivities on the social networking application.

### **Locating Resistance on Grindr: A Discussion on Integration, Radical Separation, or Neither?**

In *Embodied Resistance: Challenging Norms, Breaking the Rules*, Chris Bobel and Samantha Kwan (2011) argue that human beings have the complex capacity to be at once rule-bound—trudging along and submitting to enacted mandates—but are also capable of being wonderfully inventive and creative agents of social change (p. 2). Human beings often have the capacity to assert themselves and *resist* complicated structural forces that constrain their agency (Bobel & Kwan, 2011, p. 2). These ideas prompt me to consider the following critical questions: What is resistance, anyway? What kinds of negotiations constitute resistance? Is resistance located in demanding integration into structures or perhaps, by radically separating from them? Is resistance always necessarily intentional? This section of the chapter explores these critical questions and examines the debates on integration and separatism within the context of Grindr. I also highlight the complexities and nuances associated with resistance on Grindr.

The notions of integration and separatism are at the core of the discussion on resistance, particularly as it pertains to Grindr. The dialogue is often framed in a way that places social change as something that can be achieved either from *within* Grindr's space through integrationist ideologies that demand equal access and visibility or by radically separating from the space and remaking new alternative geographies (Rimmerman, 2008; Tyner, 2007). As noted

by Joseph Healey (2010), the traditional integrationist perspective seeks to bring different groups of persons together to create a new common culture and unique society (an inclusive and reformed Grindr). Integration is understood to be benign and egalitarian, a process that emphasizes sharing and inclusion (pp. 49-50). Integrationists typically embrace a rights-based approach and “fight for a seat at the table” with the dominant groups (Rimmerman, 2008, p. 5). In doing so, integrationists seek to work within the system (in this case, Grindr) with the intention of reforming it in order to achieve social and political changes. Integrationists typically espouse a “let us in” approach to activism and resistance, rather than the “let us show you a new way of conceiving the world” (Rimmerman, 2008, pp. 5-6). Integrationists are more likely to accept that social change will have to be incremental and assert that gradual progress is the best way to reform oppressive structures (Rimmerman, 2008, pp. 5-6). With these ideas in mind, the integrationist on Grindr seeks to reform the social networking application as an “insider”—that is, challenging the power structures from *within* the application in order to demand fair access and visibility in the space. Grindr integrationists demand an *equal* “seat at the table” on the application and assert that change will occur only once they have the same rights and privileges that masculine, muscular and white Grindr users have in the space.

The traditional integrationist position has been heavily critiqued by critical race and queer scholars (see X, 1965; Fanon, 1967; Tyner, 2007; Lorde, 2007; Portes & Zhou, 2011; Conrad, 2014). As James Tyner (2007) radically declares in *Urban Revolutions and the spaces of Black Radicalism*:

To integrate into a white supremacist society [is] to negate the spaces of African Americans. If [we are] to adopt the norms, values, nomenclature of the dominant society, African Americans would cease to exist as a people. As

such, integration [contributes] to the dehumanization and displacement of African Americans just as strongly as segregation policies. In neither case [are] African Americans in control of their own communities and hence, their self-determination (p. 230).

Proponents who seek to challenge integrationist ideologies acknowledge that a radical revolution for self-determination is required—that is, only through the separation and remaking of *new* spaces can it be possible for marginalized groups to achieve self-development (Tyner, 2007, p. 230). As Healey (2007) notes, despite the efforts of integrationists, hegemonic corporate white supremacist ideologies still persist, and thus, the goal of radical separatists is to sever all ties (political, cultural and geographic) with the dominant society (p. 56). Separatists assert that we cannot work within the space (read: Grindr) to reform it because we cannot reverse the oppressive histories that created the space to begin with. Separatists (also sometimes referred to as liberationists in the literature) favour radical cultural change that is transformational in nature and occurs *outside* of the system (Rimmerman, 2008, p. 5). Separatists assert that it is not enough to simply have a “seat at the table” and argue that we must aim to fully *subvert* the hierarchies of the hegemonic order and remove the privilege of innocence from dominant groups (Rimmerman, 2008, pp. 5-6).

In *Against Equality: Queer Revolution, Not Mere Inclusion*, Ryan Conrad, Karma Chávez, Yasmin Nair, and Deena Loeffler (2014) argue that the most dominant conversations surrounding queer resistance have been co-opted into meaningless support for “gay rights” at the cost of furthering neoliberalism (p. 4). Radical queer histories that have pushed to subvert dominant paradigms are actively erased by a re-writing of recent integrationist events into a “narrative of progress” (p. 4), one where queers flock towards marriage equality, military service

and hate crime legislation (Conrad et al., 2014, pp. 4-7). The rise of queer resistance being framed around integrationist discourses that demand the “equal privileges” granted to hetero-folks has worked to erase the social, political, and economic rights of the most marginal (Conrad et al., 2014, pp. 2-4). For example, in *Is Gay Marriage Black???*, author Kenyon Farrow (2014) argues that equal access to gay marriage, in and of itself, is not a move towards real and systemic liberation (Farrow, 2014, p. 43). Gay marriage is in fact anti-black as it is built upon white, Christian capitalist patriarchy that has been used to justify violence and discrimination against black people (Farrow, 2014, p. 42). As Cathy Cohen (2005) notes, the institution of marriage has a history of white supremacist ideologies that designated which individuals were truly “fit” for full rights and privileges of citizenship: “... the prohibition of marriages between black women and men imprisoned in the slave system was a component of many slave codes enacted during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries” (p. 38). Marriage, as viewed through the lenses of domination and profit, as well as the ideology of white supremacy, was used to justify the exploitation and regulation of black bodies. As Farrow notes, queer inclusion into marriage laws and policies will do nothing to address the most critical needs of black queer men to be able to walk down the streets of their communities with their lovers without being ridiculed with assault, harassment, or even murder (p. 43).

Furthermore, in *Against Equality, Against Marriage: An introduction*, Yasmin Nair (2014) notes that the dialogue surrounding “gay marriage rights” has furthered the neoliberal state’s most efficient way to corral the family as a source of revenue and to place upon it the ultimate responsibility for guaranteeing basic benefits (p. 18). The integrationist demands for marriage equality have actively put forth the notion that the solution to oppressive cis-hetero

structures is to ensure that queer folks can appear “normal” via gay marriage (Nair, 2014, p. 17).

As Ryan Conrad (2014) radically notes:

Let’s be clear: the national gay marriage campaign is NOT a social justice movement. Gay marriage reinforces the for-profit medical industrial complex by tying access to health care to employment to relational status. Gay marriage does not challenge patent laws that keep poor/working-class poz [HIV positive] folks from accessing life-extending medications. Gay marriage reinforces the nuclear family as the primary support structure for youth even though nuclear families are largely responsible for queer teen homelessness, depression, and suicide. Gay marriage does not challenge economic systems set up to champion people over property and profit. Gay marriage reinforces racist immigration laws by only allowing productive, ‘good’, soon-to-be-wed, non-citizens in while ignoring the rights of migrant workers. Gay marriage simply has nothing to do with social justice (p. 59).

Gay marriage discourses provide an example of the ways integration into a system of domination needs to be critiqued and critically questioned. Similarly, we must consider if resistance on Grindr is going to be achieved by integrating into an application that is already built and structured on oppressive histories. If equality within the application is being demanded, we must think through which bodies will benefit most from the changes? Radical separatists on Grindr note that it is impossible at this point to integrate into the homonormative white queer space and thus, a spatial revolution must ensue if we hope to truly dismantle oppressive structures and systems.

As Tyner (2007) notes, to integrate into a system that has its foundation built on oppressive corporate white queer ideologies, is to adopt the values and norms of that system. Integration and inclusion without a change to the underlying racist, femmephobic and/or fatphobic systems is a hollow prospect. Inclusion can often serve as a symbolic function that simply reproduces oppressive corporate white queer ideologies (Tyner, 2007, p. 228). As Henri Lefebvre (1991) argues in *The Production of Space*: “A revolution that does not produce a new space has not realized its full potential... [a] social transformation, to be truly revolutionary in character, must manifest a creative capacity in its effects on daily life, on language and on space” (p. 54). In order to achieve revolutionary social change, proponents of radical separatism argue that new spaces must be created—that is, fat, femmes and/or racialized queers ought to sever any ties they have to Grindr and remake and reimagine new alternative geographies.

It is important to note that there are “alternative” spaces that exist for fat, femme and/or racialized queer identities and bodies. As discussed in Chapter Three, there are online queer social networking applications (for example, BiggerCity, Fridae, and BGay) that were created as a specific “alternative space” for fat and racialized queers. However, these new spaces need to be critically analyzed and examined. While these online social networking applications offer a safer space for certain marginalized queer identities, hierarchies of oppressions and privileges can be seen unfolding even within these new spaces. For example, on BiggerCity, an application created for fat queer folks, racist and femmephobic ideologies are still unfolding. One user on the application writes: “Looking for occasional play. Must be masculine-acting as I am also masculine”. A white user notes: “Passionate here—love kissing and cuddling. A perfect date is wrapped in each other’s arms watching a movie. I prefer to date white guys ONLY pls”. On BGay, a social networking application created for black queer users, femmephobic and fatphobic

discourses continue to persist. One profile proclaims: “Looking for some safe fun. Hung, passionate, fit and in-shape, masculine dude here and would prefer it if you were the same. Please no chubby guys. Sorry just a preference”. The profiles within these “new” spaces seem to echo many of the same oppressive themes found on Grindr. Evidently, radical separatism also needs to be troubled.

Humans exist as complex, *intersectional* beings with *multiple* social identities on the basis of gender identity, gender expression, race, ethnicity, age, body size, ability, class, religion, and sexuality (Combahee River Collective, 1981; Crenshaw 1991, 2005; McCall, 2005; Luft & Ward 2009; Lorde, 2007; hooks, 2000; Mohanty, 1991; Collins, 2000). Moreover, social identities can be contradictory, composed of more than one discourse, developed in the silence of, or in opposition to, “other” identities, and subject to contestation (Gilroy 2007; Hall 1991). As Hall (1991) argues, individuals and groups are composed of differences that both influence and inform their positions in the social world. In recognizing that we are all composed of multiple social identities, Hall contends that “...we are complexly constructed through different categories, of different antagonisms, and these may have the effect of locating us socially in multiple positions of marginality, [privilege], and subordination...” (p. 58). Thusly, with the complexity of multiple social identities in mind, it is important to see how difficult and complex it can be to resist the oppressive structures found on Grindr by remaking and creating “alternative spaces”. For example, while BGay may seem like a radical “alternative geography” for black queer men, fat and/or femme black queers are still relegated to the margins because of their body sizes and gender expressions. BiggerCity may seem like a revolutionary space for fat queers, but this space is not exempt from complex racist narratives and/or femmephobic ideologies. Ultimately, it seems as though hierarchies of oppressions and privilege will continue

to unfold even in alternative geographies because of our complex intersectional realities. This realization prompts me to consider an important critical question, a question that may never have an answer: With the complexities of intersecting human identities, is it ever possible to create an online queer social networking space that is fully free from hierarchies of privileges and oppressions?

I argue that we must complicate the notion of resistance on Grindr and look beyond this binary of resisting through either integrationist or radical separationist ideologies. I contend that we must queer the notion of resistance—that is, critically question and deconstruct (Brown and Nash, 2010, p. 4-8) what resistance is and can look like on Grindr. As noted by Chris Bobel and Samantha Kwan (2011), resistance is best understood as multifaceted and “... is not an either-or story” (p. 2). Resistance can have many faces, involving lesser and greater degrees of intentionality. My research puts forth the notion that at times, resistance on Grindr is a clever and complicated dance of negotiations. I contend that we must frame resistance on Grindr in a way that is far more nuanced and complicated than simply integration or radical separatism.

### **Deconstructing Resistance on Grindr: A Critical Examination of Embodied Resistance, Visibility, Faceless Images, and Blank Profiles**

On their blog entitled *Bridging the Gap*, activist and artist Kieryn Darkwater radically argues that embodying queer, trans, and racialized identities, in a world that actively proclaims that they should not exist freely, is a form of resistance. They write: “Existing as myself every day is an act of resistance” (Darkwater, 2016). Furthering these ideas, Bobel and Kwan (2011) radically argue that we have the potential to *embody* resistance—that is, when the body takes up space in a geography where it is scripted as wrong, abject, or even grotesque, the body itself can become a site of resistance against oppression (p. 5). When fat, femme and/or racialized queers

on Grindr assert their presence in the space, their bodies and identities exist as a form of resistance that disturbs the entrenched definitions of corporate white queerness found on the social networking application. I argue that to simply *be* fat, femme and/or racialized on Grindr is, in and of itself, a radical form of resistance. The fat, femme and/or racialized queer body, named and displayed on Grindr, can become an instrument of social and cultural change. When the fat, femme, and/or racialized queer bodies and identities that are relegated to the margins of the application take a bold step into the centre, they command that the space also belongs to them—they fatten the space, feminize it, and racialize it.

As Nathaniel Pyle and Noa Logan Klein (2011) note in *Fat. Hairy. Sexy: Contesting Standards of Beauty and Sexuality in the Gay Community*, the public presence of fat queer men (as well as femme and/or racialized queers) “... is an embodied contestation of queer power relations...” legitimizing the existence of these queer identities (p. 79). These bodies and identities challenge corporate white queer ideologies that define who gets to be coded as the “right kind of queer”. As Pyle and Klein argue, the everyday existence of fat, femme and/or racialized queers within public queer spaces, such as Grindr, can be read as a form of “embodied protest”, a direct disruption against white queer aesthetic and sexual codes simply by asserting their visibility (pp. 81-82). Fat, femme and/or racialized queer embodiments and subjectivities have the radical potential to undermine the online corporate Grindr nation that dominates gay culture. Their bodies become the direct tools used to pursue this social and cultural change. By embodying a counter-hegemonic queer aesthetic within Grindr’s space, fat, femme and/or racialized queers contest oppressive white queer discourses that often preface their identities and bodies with a “no”. Their visibility on the social networking application actively defies the profiles that proclaim that there should be “no fats, no femmes, no Asians or Blacks”.

For example, on Grindr, one user writes in their profile: “Black sissy dude here. Sexy and smart. Don’t bother asking for more pics, I’ll send them when I want too. I am NEG [HIV Negative] and on PrEP as of Nov ‘16”. Another user notes: “Fat and hot af [as fuck] if u can’t handle all this bod [body] than u can’t handle me. Body + ppl ONLY PLEASE”. These profiles assert the existence of fat, femme and/or racialized queers on Grindr. As Chong-suk Han, Kristopher Proctor, and Kyung-Hee Choi (2013) note in “I know a Lot of Gay Asian Men who Are Actually Tops: Managing and Negotiating Gay Racial Stigma”, visibility<sup>5</sup> can be resistance. As one participant states in their study: “Being Asian in the gay community, you need to be visible. If you aren’t visible then they do not acknowledge that you are there. It’s important for me to identify as a gay Asian male... There are issues and problems that need to be addressed...” (p. 228). Fat, femme and/or racialized queers who make themselves visible on Grindr exist as a re-working and re-framing (Asbill, 2009, p. 304) of what it means to be queer on the social networking application. Thus, resistance can be found in the fat queer profiles that enter their weight on the application as well as in the profiles that upload images that actively embrace and celebrate femininity and fatness. Resistance can be found when racialized users take up the space that also rightfully belongs to them. As Nguyen Tan Hoang (2014) notes, the gesture of declaring and embracing abjected fat, femme and/or racialized queer identities—the act of making oneself visible—constitutes a politically meaningful assertion that challenges corporate virtual whiteness and the legibility of marginalized queer bodies in sexualized online environments (pp. 196-197).

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<sup>5</sup> I would also like to acknowledge that being “visible” within queer communities is often a form of privilege as various social, cultural and economic conditions can prevent certain folks from “coming out” and declaring their queerness.

Quite interestingly, while fat, femme and/or racialized queer embodiments and visibility on Grindr can be read as a form of resistance, I also wish to put forth the notion that faceless images and blank profiles on the social networking application can also constitute a form of “creative resistance” (Hoang, 2014, p. 196). On Grindr, when user’s declare, for example, that they are “not into fat, femme, Black or Asian guys” they position these bodies as simultaneously visible and invisible; acknowledged and then made to disappear. I argue that when fat, femme and/or racialized queer bodies upload blank profiles or faceless images, they are playing on the idea of disappearing and being “seen through”—positioning their bodies as “unreadable” and destroying the scripts that are often written *onto* their bodies by corporate white queer ideologies. Faceless images and blank profiles can be read as a “creative strategy” to maintain a sense of control over one’s identities without exposure to corporate white users (Hoang, 2014, pp. 197-198). Profiles that post images on Grindr that are blurry; exceedingly small in size/resolution; taken from unique, complimentary angles; tight close ups; extreme long shots; carefully cropped; digitally altered; or simply remain blank can be read as a strategic way to navigate the oppressive corporate white gaze.

Although blank and faceless profile images are utilized by many users to remain anonymous, I argue that a more critical analysis of these profiles are required. As Hoang (2014) notes, anonymity for fat, femme and/or racialized queer folks is not only about protecting one’s privacy but also has to do with an anonymity from corporate virtual whiteness (p. 198). The faceless images and blank profiles on Grindr can be read as an exemplification of self-effacement and radical “decapitation” (Hoang, 2014, p. 198) that refuses to make fatness, femininity and/or nonwhiteness knowable to the oppressors and thus, something that can be easily seen, ignored, blocked and deleted. This self-invisibilization is a way to challenge and

eliminate the oppressive “all-knowing” and “all-assessing” gaze of the corporate white queer user as they cannot know the bodies and identities that remain anonymous. Faceless images and blank profiles allow fat, femme and/or racialized queers to utilize online control and as Gosine (2007) notes, experience the material and cultural privileges afforded to white people since blank profiles on Grindr are often assumed to be corporate white gay men (pp. 146-149).

### **“Chub4Chub”, “No Whites Pls”, and “Femmes ONLY”: Re-Centring Fatness, Femininity and/or Non-Whiteness on Grindr**

While writing this chapter, I entered a thesis competition at Carleton University that challenged competitors to present their thesis to a panel of judges in three minutes or less. As outlined on the official Carleton website under the rules and eligibility section of the competition, participants are “...permitted one static PowerPoint slide with text and/or images to accompany... [their] 3MT [3 Minute Thesis] presentation. Slides may not have video, audio, or animated text” (Carleton University, 2017). For my static PowerPoint slide, I included a condensed version of my thesis title: “More Fats, More Femmes, and No Whites”. The day before the competition, the organizer of the event reached out to me via email and asked if it would be possible to use the full version of my title on the PowerPoint slide as he was worried that it was missing “context”. He then proceeded to tell me that my title may make “the audience and judges feel uncomfortable”. It was in that moment that I realized the organizer did not care about “context” but instead, was disturbed by the fact that my title had said “no whites”.

The remainder of this chapter explores the profiles of fat, femme and/or racialized queer users on Grindr. In this particular section, I examine the profiles on Grindr that aim to flip the dominant narrative of “no fats, no femmes, no Asians or Blacks”. In doing so, I centre the voices of fat, femme and/or racialized queers on Grindr. As noted in the theoretical chapter, quite often,

when attempting to centre marginalized identities, critical theorists only examine and analyze them from the perspective or gaze of the dominant group, and through this process, decentre the perspectives of marginalized folks (in this case, the perspectives of fat, femme and/or racialized queers). For example, it would be a disservice if my research project only examined who the “queers unwanted” are from the dominant, corporate white perspective. It is critical to also explore who the “queers unwanted” may be for fat, femme, and/or racialized queer users on Grindr and to deconstruct expressions such as “no whites” on Grindr. In the following paragraphs, I will provide an analysis of two Grindr profile biographies. The first one is written by a self-identified Black user and the other, by a user who labels themselves as fat and femme. I will suggest that these profiles not only represent a form of resistance by flipping the oppressive dominant narratives but also, exemplify a privilege granted to white, masculine and/or muscular Grindr users who do not have to have “preferences” when they use the social networking application.

The first profile from Grindr proclaims: “20 year old student here at OttawaU. Looking for whatever comes my way. I’m into hook ups, dates and friends. Only looking to meet other BLACK GUYS aka if you are white, don’t hmu [hit me up]. I don’t got time for your racism”. The second profile reads: “YES FATS, YES FEMMES. Fat and femme boi here looking to meet up with other fats and femmes. ‘No offence’ 2 the masc and muscle dudes on here but I don’t really feel like being invalidated or body shamed”. I argue that these profiles represent a form of radical resistance on Grindr. These users take the oppressive normative scripts used on the application and flip them. As Prince (2017) notes in “Dear Gay Men of Color: Stop Begging Racist White Gay Men to Love You”, profiles in sexualized online environments that flip the oppressive white discourses actively distance the corporate queer white gaze and white

supremacy (p. 1). Prince argues that in a gay world that often "...prioritizes White Frat Boys with blond hair and chiseled abs" (p. 1), fat, femme and/or racialized queers can resist racist, femmephobic and/or fatphobic ideologies by saying "no" to these prioritized identities and bodies in queer spaces, as seen in the two profiles above. When fat, femme and/or racialized queer identities mark white, masculine and/or muscular bodies on Grindr as the unwanted queers, they disrupt the hegemonic white queer discourses that marginalize them—they temporarily push whiteness, masculinity and muscularity into the margins.

These profiles demonstrate how loving fatness, femininity and/or nonwhiteness can be, in and of itself, a form of social, cultural and political resistance. As hooks (1995) notes in *Killing Rage: Ending Racism*, loving and celebrating blackness is often read as a so-called form of "anti-white racism", when it is really an attempt by black people to challenge and escape white domination (p. 155). Black folks who actively love blackness can work towards decolonizing their minds and break free from the white supremacist thinking that suggests that black folks are "... inferior, inadequate, [and] marked by victimization..." (hooks, 1995, p. 158). To love fatness, femininity and/or nonwhiteness on Grindr, a space that actively works to erase and marginalize these identities, is a way to practice a "...revolutionary intervention that undermines practices of domination" (hooks, 1995, p. 162). Fat, femme and/or racialized queers on Grindr who script corporate white queer bodies and identities as "unwanted" radically transform the ways of looking and being on the social networking application and create the conditions necessary to move against forces of domination; they actively reclaim fatness, femininity and/or nonwhiteness. In their research on the negotiations of racial stigma by gay Asian men, Han et al. (2014) conclude that Asian men loving and fucking other Asian men can be read as a political action (p. 229). They write: "It's like telling the world that Asians are attractive, that we don't all

want to be with only white men, it's a way to elevate the entire group" (Han et al., 2014, p. 229). The research concludes that when fat, femme and/or racialized queers on Grindr actively seek each other out and use their profiles to mark corporate white queerness as "unwanted" and "wrong", they not only make themselves visible, but also viable.

Interestingly, the Grindr profiles quoted above not only demonstrate a form of resistance, but also reveal important insights into the privileges granted to white, masculine and/or muscular queer users on Grindr surrounding the politics of dating and hook-up "preferences". During an initial meeting with my thesis supervisor, I was asked if as a white person, I have any racial dating preferences. Unaware at the time of the privileges afforded to me to *feel safe* on any date because of my white skin, I responded with a confident "of course not". As I sat with the question longer, I began to notice a pattern in my own dating history: I have always felt most comfortable going on dates and fucking other fat and femme queers, as I know that these are the folks who are least likely to mock my femininity and script my fat body as "gross". The initial conversation I had with my thesis supervisor prompted me to realize that there is in fact a privilege in being able to say "I do not have dating and hook up preferences" and this is seen in the Grindr profiles above when the users proclaim the following: "I don't got time for your racism" and "...I don't really feel like being invalidated or body shamed". In "Decolonizing My Desire", author Jeremy Harris (2016) notes that the reason he actively chooses to not date white queers is because he wants to distance himself from the oppressive white bodies that have colonized his mind from birth (p. 1). Harris (2016) writes:

I can place the exact moment when white bodies colonized my subconscious, and when blue-eyed men with sun-kissed arms began to hold my desires upon their shoulders like Atlas. I was nine, wandering through a JCPenny with my

mother, when my stomach dropped upon the sight of row after row of decollated white bodies in tight black briefs. By the time she reached out to pull me away, I had already been seized—taken to a place where my black body was the brief that hugged the waist of faceless white men, accessorized by muscles in all the right places...With each new white body I fell for, I distanced myself a bit more from the body I saw in the mirror each morning, bodies that looked like mine in my home and in the halls of my school...The white boys I wooed lit up around the fires built by the art of my forefathers. It became the lubricant for our hookups—yet once the lights were back on and they looked me up and down, they still shied away from my gaze. My conquests began to feel fatalistic; they saw me as part of a lineage of queer black excellence that they could quantify and consume...Today, I write to will myself into existence, and reshape the world in my image—not for white people, but for myself. To retell the grounds of my subconscious that have been home to violent bodies for much too long, and to find a way to scribble a being onto white paper in black ink (pp. 1-3).

When fat, femme and/or racialized queers on Grindr actively seek other fat, femme and/or racialized queers it is not merely a “preference” (or “reverse racism” or “reverse body-shaming” as many white queers might proclaim) but rather, it can be an important safety from violence. It is a refusal to put oneself in a position where they will have to act as a race relations professor in a relationship or defend their fat body and/or femme identity. As Prince (2017) argues, “I want to experience: love, joy, sex, and romance in a relationship, not block microaggressions that will inevitably occur” (p. 1). It is critical to debunk the delusion that corporate white queers, who are

excluded from heteronormalecy, “get” what fatphobia, femmephobia and, importantly, racism are and how they work. In speaking particularly to whiteness, it is important to note that white gay men are still first and foremost, white and they cannot be removed from this identity and privilege. White queers grow up in the same white supremacist culture as their heterosexual counterparts. When fat, femme and/or racialized queers on Grindr actively search for other fat, femme and/or racialized queers, they detach themselves from the oppressive white queer ideologies that harm them. They actively avoid the “I am not racist but...” statements and distance themselves from corporate white queers who narrow their identities to just their “big black cocks”, “fat asses” and “exotic skin”.

### **“Sissy gay boi looking to be dominated by hung tops. Cum dump here”: An Examination of Exaggerated Tropes and Stereotypes on Fat, Femme and/or Racialized Grindr Profiles**

In the previous chapter, I put forth the notion that fat, femme and/or racialized queers occupy Grindr as a “paradoxical space”—that is, their bodies are both Othered and eroticized on the social networking application. In this section of the chapter, I want to continue centring the profiles of fat, femme and/or racialized queers on Grindr by exploring the following critical question: How are we to understand the profiles of fat, femme and/or racialized queers on Grindr who adopt the stereotypes and tropes that exist about their bodies and identities? For example, on Grindr a Black user writes in his profile: “BESTBLKTOPHERE. 27. Sexy. Cute. Ripped af [as fuck]. naughty, greedy, kinky, fancy and HUGGGE. I’m very dominant, a selfish top but I will please you to the max. Straight forward arrogant but real. I can be sweet but not often”. Another profile reads: “CUSlut. Femme submissive bottom here. The more hung and thick you are the better!!! NEG on PrEP love to get pounded n filled up by hung BB [bareback] tops. U need to be 8+ n host”. Another user declares in their profile: “23. Exotic goods imported straight from

Asia”. When I first came across these profiles, I was immediately drawn to the notion, like many critical feminist and race scholars have suggested, of “internalized oppression” (see hooks, 1992; hooks, 1995; Freire, 1970; Tatum, 1997; Young, 1990; Pyke & Dang, 2003). As noted by Mark Tappan (2006), internalized oppression is used to describe and explain the experiences of those who are members of subordinated, marginalized, or oppressed groups who have, both intentionally and unintentionally, adopted the dominant group’s ideologies and have accepted their own subordinate status as something that is “natural and inevitable” (pp. 1-3).

Internalized oppression is understood as the acceptance and incorporation by members within an oppressed group of the negative messages and prejudices about their own abilities and intrinsic worth within the dominant society (Tappan, 2006, pp. 1-3). For example, theories surrounding “internalized racism” assert that in the dominant society, white people have the power to define the socially acceptable, appropriate, or “normal” roles for people of colour while people of colour lack the power to define what is acceptable, appropriate or “normal” for themselves (Williams, 2008, pp. 1-4). Provided the minimal amount of power afforded to people of colour within the dominant society, people of colour often defer to the roles that have been delineated for them by those who hold most the systemic power (read: white folks) (Williams, 2008, pp. 1-4).

With this in mind, it seems sensible for one to assert that since fat, femme and/or racialized queers on Grindr are afforded minimal amounts of power on the social networking application, they simply defer to the roles delineated to them by the online corporate Grindr nation and internalize white queer ideologies. However, I want to trouble and complicate this notion. To assert that fat, femme and/or racialized queer users on Grindr have simply “internalized” their oppressions is a too-ready and too-simple supposition that positions

corporate white queer supremacy as so totalizing that marginalized bodies do not have the capacity to think for themselves. As Simidele Dosekun (2016) argues in “The Weave as an ‘Unhappy Technology’ of Black Femininity”, simplistic claims to internalized oppressions psychopathologies marginalized bodies as damaged “... and presumes gross delimitations of [their] capacity for self-reflexivity...” (p. 64). These claims are irresponsible in their simplicity and they tend to re-centre corporate white queer ideologies in order to understand fat, femme and/or racialized queer subjectivities on Grindr. Instead, I aim to argue that the use of stereotypes and tropes by fat, femme and/or racialized queers on Grindr, as exemplified in the profiles above, can be read as a form of radical resistance.

In his article about 2 Live Crew and their controversial hit recording “As Nasty as They Wanna Be”, Henry Louis Gates Jr. (1990) argues that in the face of hegemonic racist stereotypes about black sexuality, you can do one of two things: you can disavow them or explode them with exaggeration (p. 1). These exaggerations can take on the form of a *mockery*; a parody of the ways corporate white discourses represent black bodies and identities (Gates Jr., 1990, p. 1). I assert that the Grindr profiles above can be read as a parodic exaggeration of the stereotypes and tropes often scripted onto fat, femme and/or racialized queer bodies. As Ariane Cruz (2016) argues in *The Color of Kink: Black Women, BDSM, and Pornography*, exaggerated racial stereotypes can be understood as a potential parody or mimetic reiteration that exposes the fabrication of race and challenges racism (p. 56). Exaggerated stereotypes become a clever way for marginalized identities on Grindr to mock and undermine corporate white queer discourses through a reclamation and exaggeration of the tropes often used against them (e.g., “HUGGGE”, “VERY dominant”, “selfish top”, “CUSlut”, “love to get pounded n filled”, and “exotic goods imported straight from Asia”). These exaggerations become a creative strategy to not only mock

corporate queer whiteness but also, ensure that fat, femme and/or racialized queers are seen within the space; it is way to make oneself hypervisible. When we understand the profiles of fat, femme and/or racialized queers as parodic exaggerations, we acknowledge that these bodies have the agency to make their own decisions rather than simply existing through “internalized oppressions”. We move beyond the analytic claim that fat, femme and/or racialized queers simply defer to the roles delineated for them and acknowledge that perhaps, they cleverly and strategically play with the tropes often used against them in order to ridicule corporate white queerness.

### **A Conclusion on “Unhappy” Resistances**

In this chapter, I have advanced the claim that resistance on Grindr needs to be understood in more complicated and nuanced ways. I have argued that resistance can be found beyond the binary of either integrating into the application or radically separating from it and creating alternative geographies. I have queered understandings of what resistance can look like on Grindr and have presented some of the creative negotiations undertaken by fat, femme and/or racialized queers in order to challenge and resist corporate white queer ideologies. I have provided detailed analyses on the ways that faceless and distorted images, blank profiles, exaggerated stereotypes and tropes and the reversal of oppressive hegemonic scripts can act as a radical disruption to the online corporate Grindr nation.

I have used the latter portion of this chapter to push the research and theories one step further by aiming to re-centre the voices of fat, femme and/or racialized queer subjectivities. I have explored the “queer unwanted” from the fat, femme and/or racialized queer perspective on Grindr and argued that white, masculine and muscular queers are afforded a privilege when they do not have to consider their safety when dating or fucking other queers. Fat, femme and/or

racialized queers on Grindr find creative ways to take up space, assert their presence and fuck up the corporate white queer discourses that mark their bodies and identities as “unwanted” in the space. Fat, femme and/or racialized queers can be seen challenging oppressive structures on Grindr, in creative and complex ways, in order to will themselves into existence on the social networking application and reshape queer ideologies in *their* images.

It is important to understand that resisting corporate white queer discourses on Grindr will always be a complicated process, particularly because we cannot change the much less than happy histories that have marked fat, femme and/or racialized queer bodies as Other within queer communities. In her writings on black femininity and the weave, Simidele Dosekun (2016) proposes that the weave is best understood as an “unhappy” technology of black femininity—that is, while we can depathologise and de-psychologise the weave from whiteness, we cannot overlook what we might refer to as the “unhappy histories” of black hair (p. 68). She writes:

My standpoint, then, is to conceptualize the weave as an unhappy technology of black femininity. This standpoint allows us much. It allows us to admit the weave into black femininity; to depathologise and de-psychologise its place there; to decentre whiteness from this aspect of black women’s beauty practice; but in all the foregoing, to not forget or wish away the fact that race is both founded in and a form of structural and symbolic violence. Understanding the weave as an unhappy technology allows us to keep white supremacy firmly in view yet without reducing blackness and black subjectivity to it (p. 68).

Much like the weave as an “unhappy technology of black femininity”, I argue that the complicated forms of resistance undertaken by fat, femme and/or racialized queers on Grindr represent “unhappy” forms of resistance. While fat, femme and/or racialized queers are able to

navigate and negotiate the corporate white queer discourses that marginalize them on Grindr, it is the complicated nature of these navigations and negotiations that act as strong reminders of the oppressive queer histories that we cannot wish away with happiness (Ahmed, 2010, p. 159). The “unhappy” forms of resistance used by fat, femme and/or racialized queers on Grindr critically challenge and disrupt the online corporate Grindr nation; de-centre whiteness, masculinity and muscularity; but in all the foregoing, keep the oppressive corporate white queer histories firmly in view. It is important to understand that when fat, femme and/or racialized queers use Grindr, they do so in a space that is certainly not of their choosing (Dosekun, 2016, p. 68).

## CHAPTER SIX: Conclusion

This thesis has presented a way of thinking critically about the pervasive intersections of fatphobia, femmephobia and racism found within queer communities. Specifically, this thesis has examined Grindr, the first and largest online queer social networking application geared specifically towards queer men. I have explored the now-ubiquitous phrase often utilized on the social networking application: “No fats, no femmes, no Asians or Blacks”. I have argued that this phrase is best understood as a perpetuation of homonormative ideologies that are furthering the marginalizations of fat, femme and/or racialized queer identities and bodies *within* and *between* queer communities. It is critical to acknowledge that many of the complex oppressions and discriminations faced by fat, femme and/or racialized queers are the direct product of queer communities, which are often represented as a so-called “singular community” or “family” (Walcott, 2007, pp. 236-240). This project has critiqued and deconstructed what my research has called the “corporate queer man”—that is, the white, masculine, and/or muscular queer man who is understood and represented as the “right kind of queer”. It is the corporate queer man who is welcomed into queer spaces; it is his body that is used in queer media, advertising, and pornography; it is his body that is accepted and celebrated at corporate Pride events; and, importantly, it is his identity and body that is sought after on Grindr.

This research project has explored how space and identity are complexly constructed on Grindr. I have examined the boundaries of “belonging” and “non-belonging” on the social networking application. This thesis has garnered a more nuanced understanding of the ways users on Grindr produce, sustain and/or challenge oppressive fatphobia, femmephobia and racism on the application through a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of Grindr profiles. This project has built upon the work of critical scholars who have examined the politics of racism,

sexuality and power within personal advertisements and queer communities. There is a paucity of research that examines online queer social networking applications. As noted by *Queerty* (2014), online social networking applications, such as Grindr, represent the “next wave” of dating and hook-up possibilities. They write: “The next wave of hook-up facilitators took advantage of improved technology in ways we never would have imagined, changing the lexicon of the gay community and altering the ways in which we socialize” (pp. 1-2). This project has aimed to continue critically questioning social positions and identities, privilege, oppression and discrimination within personal advertisements and queer communities, but through the use of Grindr and online queer social networking applications in order to contribute to the gaps in the current literature.

This thesis began by situating the fat, femme and/or racialized queer within a multitheoretical framework. This research project borrowed from diverse theoretical frameworks including feminist, black and queer geographies, feminist fat studies, critical race theory, theories of nation and nationalism and queer theory. I contended that these theoretical paradigms, when taken together, allow for a deeper understanding of the marginalizations and discriminations experienced by fat, femme and/or racialized queer identities and bodies on Grindr. I explored the conceptions of space and identity on Grindr putting forth the argument that Grindr produces a corporate space that actively welcomes and celebrates certain bodies and identities while simultaneously marginalizing and rejecting other ones (read: fats, femmes and/or persons of colour). I argued that corporate queer identities and bodies actively produce corporate queer spaces and that these newly constructed corporate queer spaces then work to produce corporate queer identities and bodies—that is, space and identity exist in a complex two-way relationship (Laurie et al., 1997; Bondi & Davidson, 2005; Fenster, 2005). The research reveals that Grindr’s

constructed space is creating an “online corporate Grindr nation” where social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) and acceptance is rewarded to the bodies and identities that conform most to the rigid definitions of what it means to “belong” in the imagined community on Grindr (read: whiteness, masculinity and/or muscularity). The online corporate Grindr nation grants white, masculine and/or muscular queers “full access” into the community and the racist, femmephobic and/or fatphobic ideologies found on Grindr form an exclusion of identities from being a part of the nation. Fat, femme and/or racialized queers experience Grindr through homonormative ideologies that continue to re-centre the position of the most privileged corporate white gays.

Fat, femme and/or racialized queers are marked, under complex interstices of power and privilege, as the “queers unwanted” (Binnie & Bell, 2004) on Grindr. A boundary of “unwantedness” is often drawn in queer spaces that works to push out certain queer bodies that are not included in corporate images and constructions of gayness (read: able-bodied, white, masculine, muscular, middle-class, monogamous, heteronormalized). However, this research has argued that fat, femme and/or racialized queers navigate Grindr as a “paradoxical space” where their bodies and identities are simultaneously scripted as both the “queers unwanted” and the “queers desired”.

The final analysis chapter of this thesis explored the notion of resistance on Grindr. I examined the complex ways that fat, femme and/or racialized queers challenge and resist the current homonormative systems on Grindr that marginalize them. I argued that we need to queer notions of resistance on Grindr by troubling and complicating what constitutes an act of resistance on the social networking application. I contended that resistance needs to be understood in more nuanced ways on Grindr and suggested that perhaps resistance is found beyond the binary of either demanding integration into the application or radically separating

from it and creating new spaces. I complicated the theories and research I presented one step further by recentring the subjectivities of fat, femme and/or racialized queers on Grindr. I critically explored the “queer unwanted” from the perspective of fat, femme and/or racialized queers on Grindr and put forth the argument that white, masculine and muscular queers are afforded a privilege when they do not have to consider their safety when dating or fucking other queers. This thesis argued that fat, femme and/or racialized queers on Grindr find creative ways to take up their space, assert their presence and radically resist the online corporate Grindr nation.

### **Future Research and Limitations to this Study**

There are important limitations to the particular scope of this study. First, despite the successful research presented in this thesis, CDA is certainly not without drawbacks. There are definitely a number of advantages to using CDA as a methodological choice. For example, the techniques of CDA, as seen in the above research, can reveal many unspoken and unacknowledged aspects of human behaviour and therefore, make salient the hidden or dominant discourses that sustain and maintain marginalized positions in society (Mogashoa, 2014, p. 8). As well, CDA can help to reveal and construct a variety of new and alternative social positions that are available within any given community and help to recentre the voices of the most marginalized persons in those communities (Mogashoa, 2014, p. 8). CDA provides the opportunity to critically examine and question oppressive phenomenon under the gaze of the researcher. It is important to note that the “gaze of the researcher” in CDA is a potential limitation. As Mogashoa (2014) notes, “meaning is never fixed” and thus, we must acknowledge that CDA relies on the interpretations and negotiations of a researcher.

Furthermore, it is also critical to acknowledge that CDA cannot adequately explain the ways oppressions are *felt* by persons. Rather, CDA focuses on locating the discourses within a given community and the implications that these discourses might have for certain identities and bodies. Due to time constraints, I was unable to conduct interviews for this thesis project. Thusly, I was only able to focus on the discourses found on Grindr and cannot explain the ways marginalizations are felt by fat, femme and/or racialized queers on the social networking application. Future research would benefit from conducting interviews with fat, femme and/or racialized users of Grindr. Interviews would allow researchers to investigate the nuances and complexities that are not readily available to them via the profiles of Grindr users. Interviews would offer a more detailed look into the subjectivities and practices of fat, femme and/or racialized queers within queer communities.

Second, it is important for me to affirm that this project is bound within its geographic location, which can be read as a potential limitation to this study. A broader geographic sample would provide me with the opportunity to make claims about other Canadian cities, which would help to place Ottawa, Ontario into a broader Canadian context. As someone who grew up in Toronto, Ontario—the largest city in Canada—I am particularly interested in the types of discourses that would emerge from Grindr in this geographic location. As noted on Toronto’s official tourism website, Toronto is home to Canada’s *largest* gay community (The Toronto Convention and Visitors Association, 2017). I am interested in expanding the geographic locations of this study in order to explore if the size of a particular queer community has an influence on the discourses that emerge on social networking applications.

Third, I would like to acknowledge that there is a potential race and class gap in this research. In order to have access to online social networking applications such as Grindr, users

must have access to a cellphone. We need to be critical of the fact that the most marginalized queer bodies often do not have access to a functioning cellphone and therefore, do not have access to Grindr. As important research by Abramovich (2012) confirms, there is an over-representation of queers of colour, particularly Indigenous queers, who make up the high numbers of queer persons experiencing homelessness and poverty (pp. 31-40). Moreover, queer queers of colour are likely to experience their poverty and homelessness for longer (Lolai, 2015, p. 43). It is important for me to acknowledge that many queers do not have access to Grindr and therefore, were not a part of the data collected for this research project.

Last, I want to acknowledge that this thesis was in part the result of the now-popularized expression found on Grindr and within queer communities: “No fats, no femmes, no Asians or Blacks”. As a result of this, my research project has only focused on the specific social identities found in that expression—i.e., fats, femmes, Asians and/or Blacks. However, it is important for me to acknowledge that many other queer identities experience complex marginalizations not only on Grindr, but also within queer communities (see Kafer, 2013; McRuer, 2006; Hames-Garcia & Martínez, 2011; Driskill et al., 2011; Hines, 2013; Serano, 2007; Nestle, Wilchins & Howell, 2002) . I contend that future research would greatly benefit from a critical examination of the discourses surrounding trans bodies and queers with disabilities who use online social networking applications such as Grindr. It speaks to a particular level of invisibilization when one considers the fact that these bodies and identities are not even included in the popularized expression that is marking certain queer bodies as “unwanted”. Although my research greatly contributes to furthering the knowledges on fat, femme and/or racialized subjectivities on Grindr, my thesis could serve as a starting point for a multitude of other research projects that aim to explore the marginalization of certain queer bodies and identities who engage with online queer

social networking applications. Particularly, it would be interesting to further explore the other seven online social networking applications—Hornet, GROWLr, Fridae, BGay, Scruff, Daddyhunt and BiggerCity—mentioned briefly throughout this thesis in more depth.

### **Final Words from a Fat and Femme Queer Man**

My thesis has aimed to radically challenge corporate white gay propaganda in queer communities that have constructed gayness as synonymous with whiteness. My research project has worked towards disrupting the notion that fatness in queer communities is “abject” and “gross” and that femininity is “weak” and “lesser-than”. As I wrote this thesis, I thought about all the queer folks, myself included, who have been told countless times in queer spaces that our bodies need to be fixed and corrected. My research implores queer folks to radically reconsider the implications of their words on Grindr. I contend that words matter and words have important consequences. And to the queer folks who do not think so, you can stare at my glittery middle finger and kiss my big, fat, queer ass. This thesis concludes with a poem I wrote entitled *young queer kid*:

*young queer kid.*

*remember how you always wanted to dance on the rings of saturn.*

*and you would picture your legs transforming into this sexy see-through lace.*

*and you would imagine the way your feet would burn in the best way possible from all of your carefree dance moves.*

*and you would smile.*

*a smile so radiant and infectious that it would be confused with the prettiest and brightest purple lilacs that ever bloomed.*

*and then you stopped smiling.*

*and you stopped dancing on saturn's rings.*

*because that straight parent told you to act like the boy you were supposed to be.*

*and that straight friend was too embarrassed to be around you because your voice was too high and too loud.*

*and the speed and the frequency at which you talked was too over-whelming.*

*and they marked you a sissy. a fag.*

*and questioned you.*

*turning your identity into an examination you had no way of ever studying for.*

*you failed them. and you thought you failed yourself.*

*because those straight institutions never told you that you could exist.*

*the hetero love that you learned was a prized display for the world.*

*it was 14 carat gold love.*

*and you. you were somehow wrong.*

*always changing the pronouns in your poems and pretending that your high school love letters didn't exist because of him.*

*invalidating the ways you loved as if they ever existed in your embodiment.*

*but don't worry. they will tell you it gets better.*

*you will be welcomed into a community of love and acceptance.*

*but then you do worry.*

*because you learn it doesn't get better.*

*it only gets worse. meaner.*

*because you will finally be at an age where you will have the vocabulary to name your discriminations.*

*and this time.*

*it won't be the straight system who tells you are wrong.*

*but rather your queer friend. your queer lover. your queer communities.*

*they will tell you that you are the worst kind of fag.*

*your femininity will be their joke.*

*your gapless thighs will make them vomit corporate rainbows.*

*you'll plant your identities into the earth.*

*equal parts soil. equal parts water. equal parts naivety.*

*you'll think that their love will nourish your roots. but no flowers will ever bloom.*

*they will always forgot to tend to your garden.*

*they will forgot about you.*

*and you must learn young queer kid.*

*that you can forget about them.*

*the same way they forgot about the femmes who were throwing bricks at stonewall,*

*while masc boys were fucking in parks moaning over the chants for revolutionary*

*freedom.*

*the same way they forgot to represent your body in any queer spaces making your*

*identity the new "in" that prefaces "visible".*

*the same way they forgot to tell you that you are beautiful while young queer boys*

*starve themselves following an instructional manual that is written in a language they*

*can't read.*

*young queer kid. it is okay to bloom on your own.*

*to bloom as beautifully and dangerously and loudly as you have to for them to see you.*

*let your radical self-love be your resistance.*

*young queer kid. dance on the rings of saturn until your feet are filled with big beautiful blisters.*

*then bloom.*

*bloom into the biggest and prettiest flower you can be.*

*grow and grow and grow and grow until you have grown so tall that you can't see or hear the people who told you that you are not valid.*

*young queer kid. you are valid.*

*you are special.*

*and you are loved.*

*if not by other people. then by you.*

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## **Appendix One: The Grindr Cheat Sheet**

**Bareback:** A term used within gay communities to describe anal sex without the use of a condom.

**Bear:** The most common definition of a “bear” within gay communities is a man who is hairy, masculine, has facial hair, and a “cuddly” body. The “bear body” emerged from a combination of leather men and chubby men who “...have cast off the shackles of hiding and insecurity and now revel in their proudly accepted identities” (Monaghan, 2008, p. 149).

**Blowjob (BJ):** Oral sex on a guy, usually involving someone’s mouth around someone’s dick. However, remember that not all guys have penises, and not everyone who has a penis is a guy.

**Bottom/Bottoming:** Being the partner who “receives” during anal sex.

**Chubby Chasers:** Chubby chasers are persons who are often of smaller body size and/or stature who are sexually and/or romantically attracted to chubs.

**Chubs:** Chubs are a part of a subculture in gay communities that are often referred to as “chubby communities”. Chubs are gay men who are large, overweight or obese (“superchubs”). There are bars, organizations and social events that specifically cater to this subculture (see Whitesel, 2014).

**Coming Out:** The process by which one accepts and/or comes to terms with their own sexuality and/or gender identity (to “come out” to oneself). Furthermore, it is also the process by which one shares their sexuality and/or gender identity with others (to “come out” to one’s family, friends, etc.). It is important to note that “coming out” is a continual, life-long process; one is constantly evaluating and re-evaluating who they are comfortable coming out to, if it is safe, and what the consequences might be.

**Cream Pie:** A slang term used in gay communities for internal ejaculation in the anus—that is, cumming inside the asshole (by one or multiple partners) resulting in visible seeping or dripping of cum from the anus.

**Cross Dresser (CD):** Someone who wears clothes that have been traditionally constructed or scripted for another gender.

**Cum Dump:** A slang term, often used derogatorily, to describe a gay man who enjoys having semen (or “cum”) deposited into their body via their mouth and asshole.

**D&DF:** An acronym used on Grindr for “drug and disease free”.

**Daddy:** A “daddy” in gay communities refers to a (typically) older man who is sexually involved in a relationship with a younger gay man. The age gap may differ, but the relationship tends to involve the traditional parental hierarchy of “father-son” dynamics—that is, the daddy providing emotional support and guidance along with sexual encouragement and nurturing to the “boi” or “son”.

**Dinge Queen:** A gay slang term to denote (white) gay men who prefer to exclusively date or fuck black gay men. The term is often considered derogatory and offensive.

**Fairy:** A term, sometimes used derogatorily, to describe someone who is very campy and effeminate.

**HMU:** An acronym used on Grindr for “hit me up”.

**Hung:** A term used to describe someone with a large dick.

**Jock:** A slang term used within gay communities to refer to gay men who tend to be masculine with an athletic build and enjoys watching and participating in sports.

**Leather:** A sub-community of gay men who have a fondness for leather gear and fetish/kink play.

**Military:** A sub-community of gay men who serve or have served in the armed forces (and those who are fond of them).

**Muscle Boy:** A slang term often used to describe gay men who tend to be masculine and muscular. The term also tends to denote gay men who are bodybuilders.

**Neg:** A slang term for a person who is HIV negative.

**NSA:** An acronym used on Grindr for “no strings attached” (casual sex).

**Otter:** A gay slang term often used to describe gay men who are hairy all over however, unlike bears, they tend to be smaller in frame and weigh considerably less.

**Power Bottom (“Pwr Bttm”):** A power bottom is a bottom who can “power through” lots of sex for a long duration of time. They tend to want to take charge and assert “power” during a sexual encounter and often play a more dominant, aggressive and commanding role during sex.

**Poz:** A slang term for a person who is HIV positive.

**PrEP:** “PrEP” or Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis, is an anti-HIV medication that keeps HIV negative people from becoming infected. PrEP is approved by the FDA and has been shown to be safe and effective. PrEP involves taking a single pill once daily and it is highly effective against HIV when taken every day. The medication interferes with HIV’s ability to copy itself in your body after you have been exposed to the virus (Aids Committee of Toronto, 2017).

**Rice Queen:** A gay slang term to denote (white) gay men who prefer to exclusively date or fuck East Asian gay men. The term is often considered derogatory and offensive.

**Rimming:** Licking someone’s ass.

**Top/Topping:** Being the partner who “gives” during anal sex.

**Twink:** “Twink” is a term often used within gay communities to describe effeminate, thin, youthful, (white) gay men with little-to-no body hair.

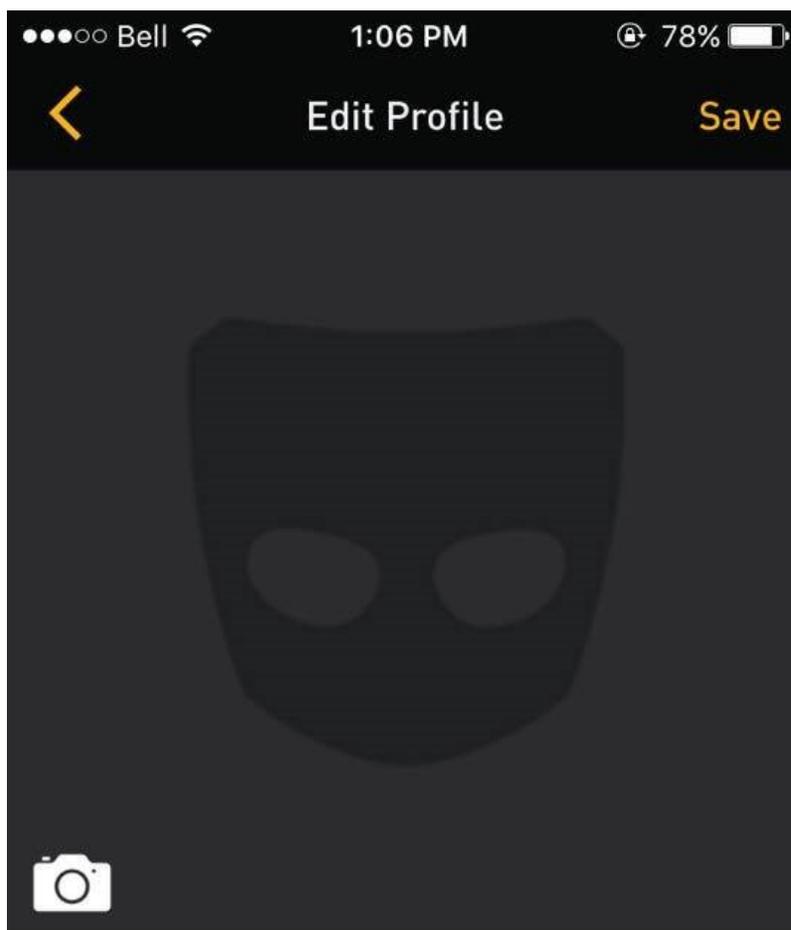
**Vers/Versatile/Versatility:** A person who is enjoys *both* topping and bottoming—that is, “giving” and “receiving” during anal sex. As Steven Underwood (2003) notes: “Versatility is a unique and important feature of male anal sex. Some men consider it liberating... Versatility to them is akin to speaking two different languages. It requires a special kind of playfulness, creativity, curiosity, and coordination” (p. 9).

**Appendix Two: Number of Profiles Collected from Each Online Queer Social Networking Application**

Queer Social Networking Application	Number of Profiles
Grindr	284
GROWLr	224
Daddyhunt	182
Scruff	208
BiggerCity	167
Hornet	257
Fridae	96
BGay	60
TOTAL:	1,478

## Appendix Three: A Closer Look at the Online Queer Social Networking Applications

### A. Grindr profile set-up page:



#### INFO

---

**Display Name**

0/15

Other guys will see this on the grid...

---

**About Me**

0/250

What should people know about you...

---

STATS

Show Age



Age

None

Height

Weight

Body Type

Position NEW

Ethnicity

Relationship Status

My Tribes

None >

I'm Looking For

None >

SEXUAL HEALTH 

---

HIV Status

---

Last Tested Date

---

Sexual Health FAQ 

Learn more about HIV, PrEP, getting tested, and other frequently asked questions

---

SOCIAL LINKS

---

 **Instagram**  
Enter your Instagram username

---

 **Twitter**  
Enter your Twitter handle

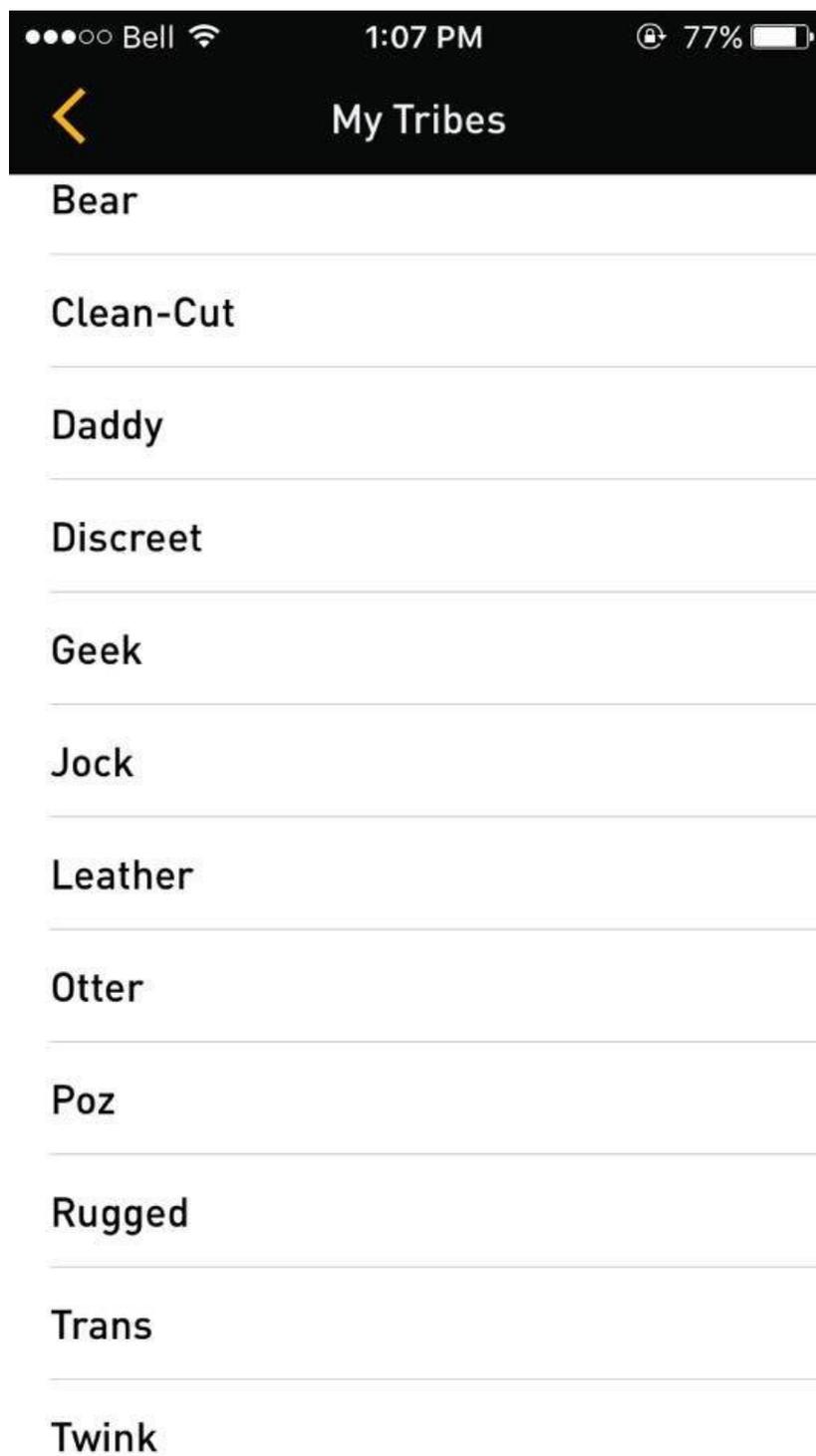
---

 **Facebook**  
Enter your Facebook username

---

**B. “Tribe” or “Community” Selection Options on Grindr, Scruff, and GROWLr:**

Grindr:



Scruff:

●●●○ Bell  1:11 PM  76% 

[Cancel](#) I am [Done](#)

Select up to 5 communities with which you identify.

Bear

---

Muscle

---

Guy Next Door

---

Geek

---

Jock

---

Daddy

---

Poz

---

Leather

---

Discreet

---

College

---

Military

---

Cancel

I am

Done

Select up to 5 communities with which you identify.

Poz

---

Leather

---

Discreet

---

College

---

Military

---

Queer

---

Chub

---

Chaser

---

Twink

---

Bisexual

---

Transgender

---

GROWLr:

●●●○ Bell  1:14 PM   75% 

I Am Done

---

**Bear**

---

**Cub**

---

**Muscle Bear**

---

**Chaser**

---

**Chub**

---

**Super Chub**

---

**Polar Bear**

---

**Otter**

---

**Daddy**

---

**Silver Daddy**

---

**Sugar Daddy**

---

I Am

Done

---

Leather

---

Sir

---

Boy

---

HIV+

---

Trucker

---

Top

---

Bottom

---

Versatile

---

Transgender

---

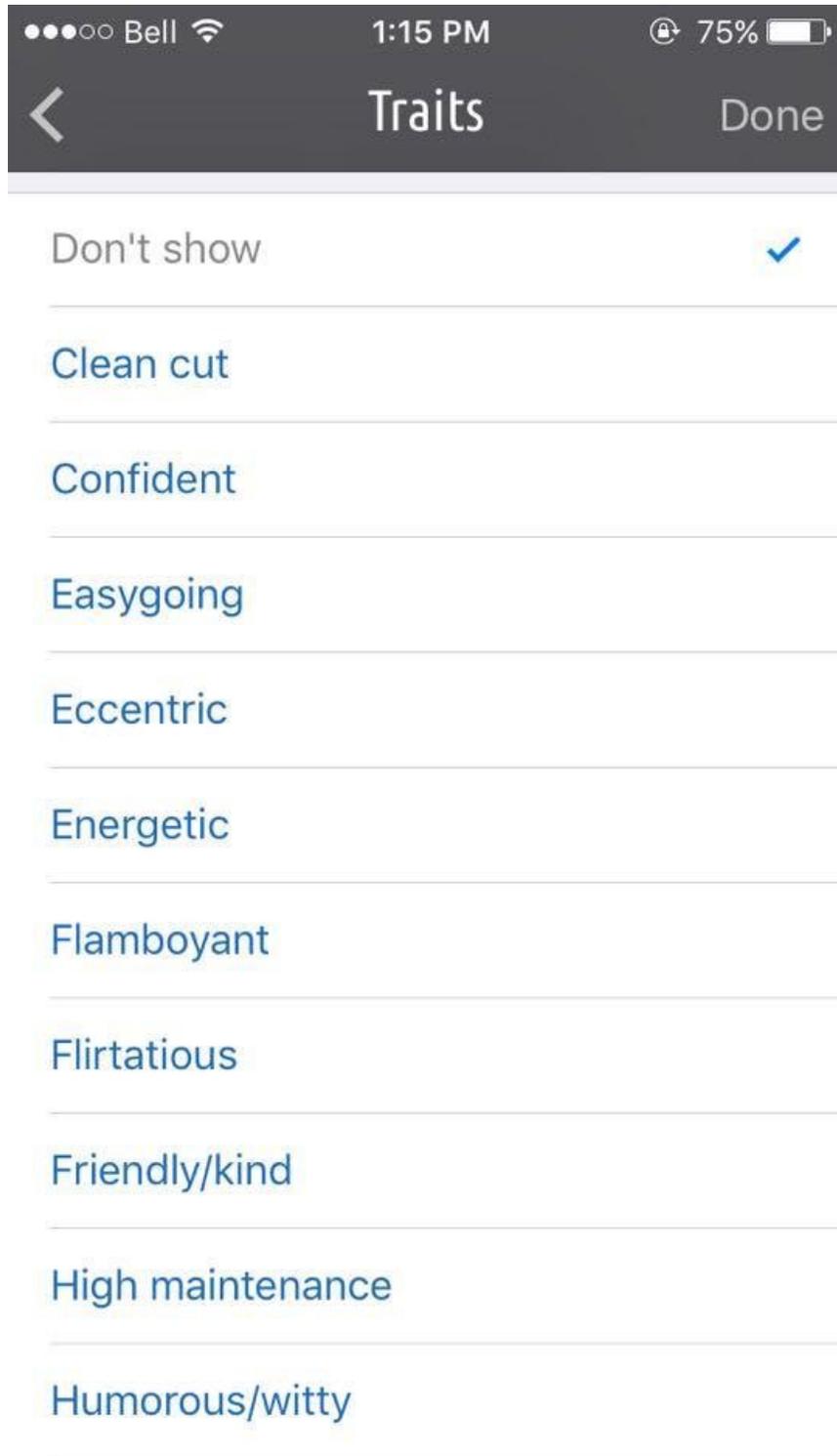
Transsexual

---

Pup

---

### C. "Trait" Selection on BiggerCity



Humorous/witty

---

Intellectual

---

Masculine



Open-minded

---

Outgoing

---

Quiet/shy

---

Romantic

---

Sensitive

---

Spiritual

---

Spontaneous

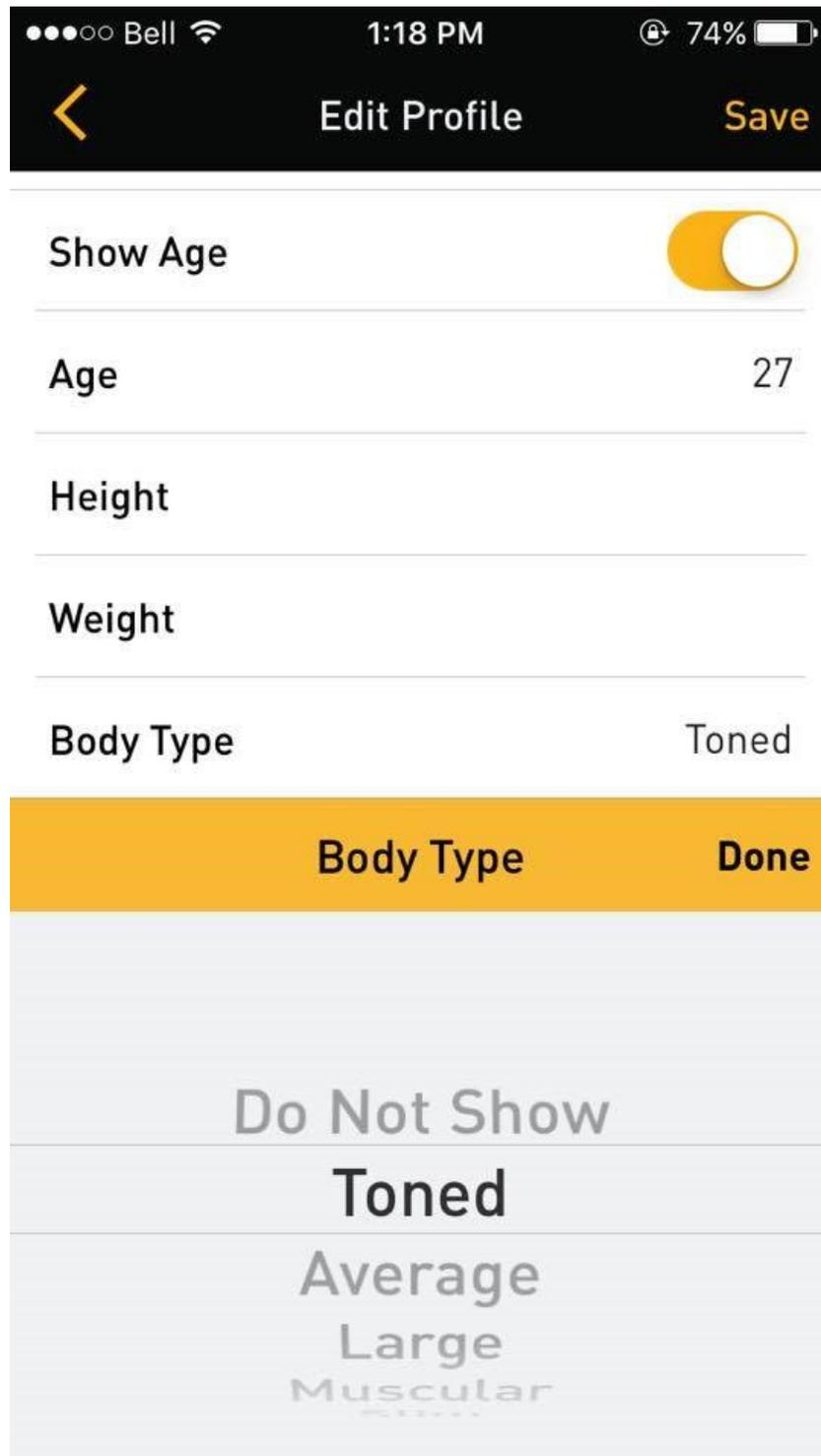
---

Talkative

---

A. "Body Type" Selections on Grindr, Daddyhunt, BiggerCity, Fridae, and BGay

Grindr:



Show Age



Age

27

Height

Weight

Body Type

Large

**Body Type** **Done**

*Do Not Show*  
Toned

Average

**Large**

Muscular

Slim

*Stocky*

Show Age

Age 27

Height

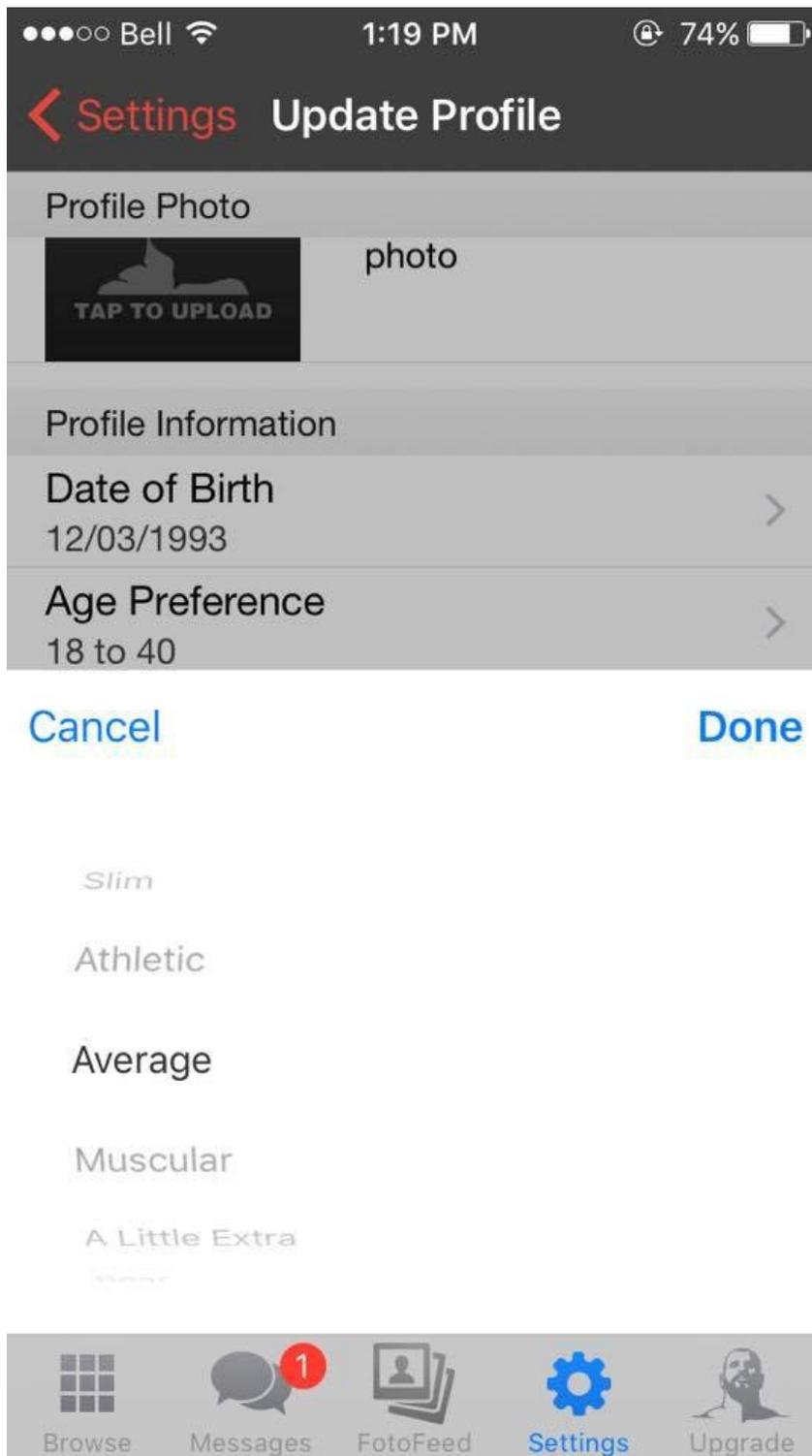
Weight

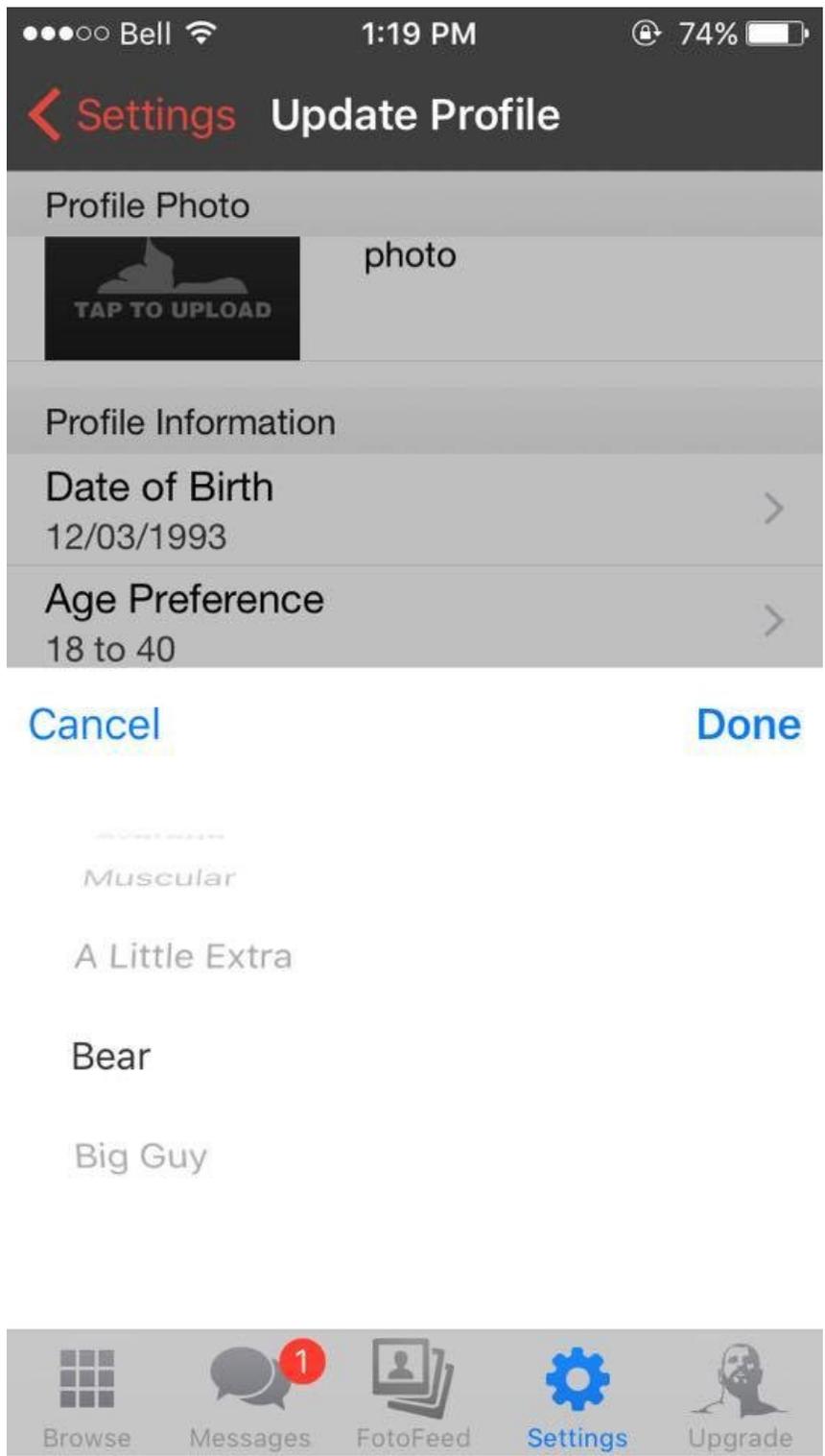
Body Type Stocky

- Body Type Done
- Average
- Large
- Muscular
- Slim
- Stocky**

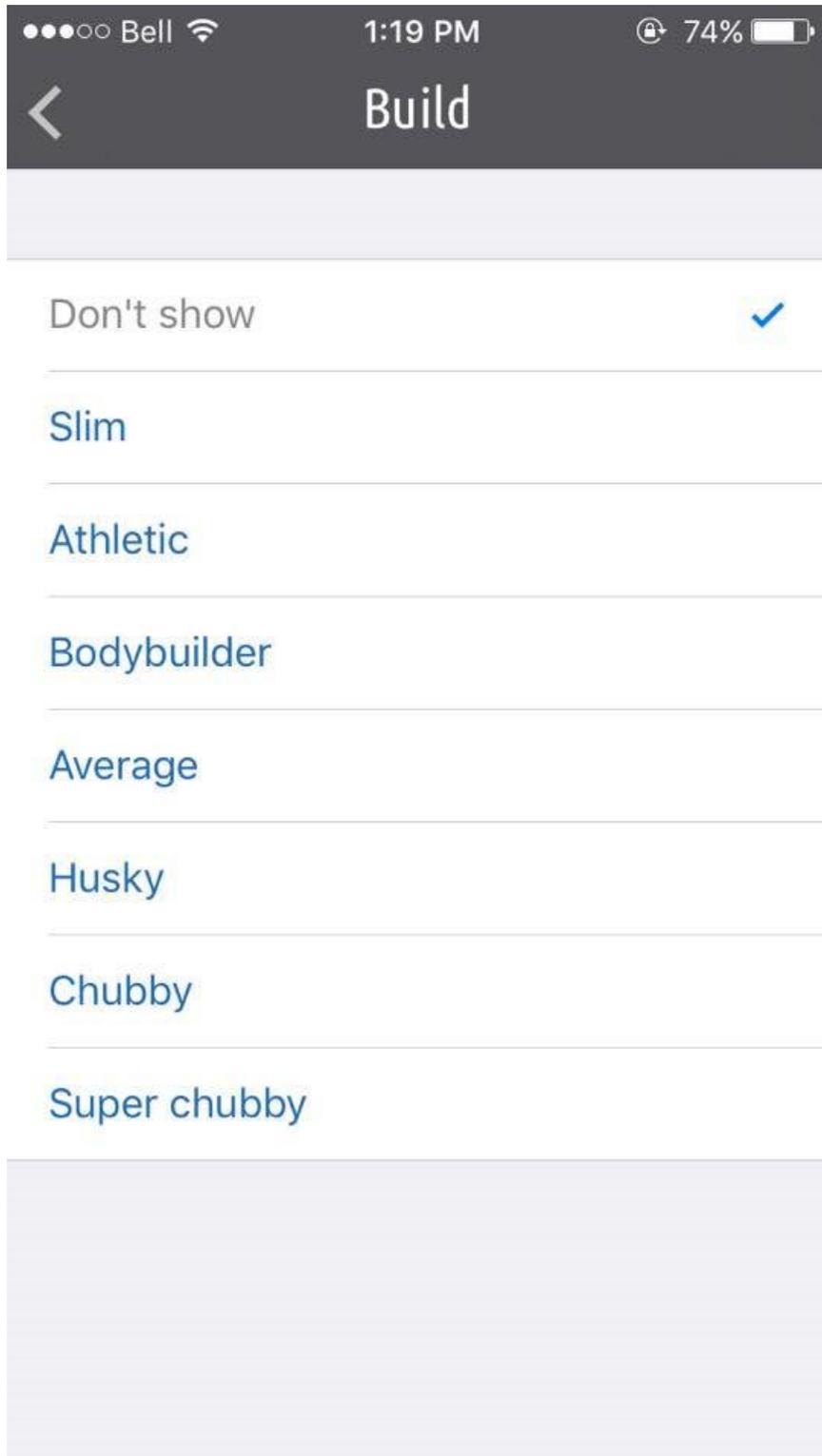
Daddyhunt:



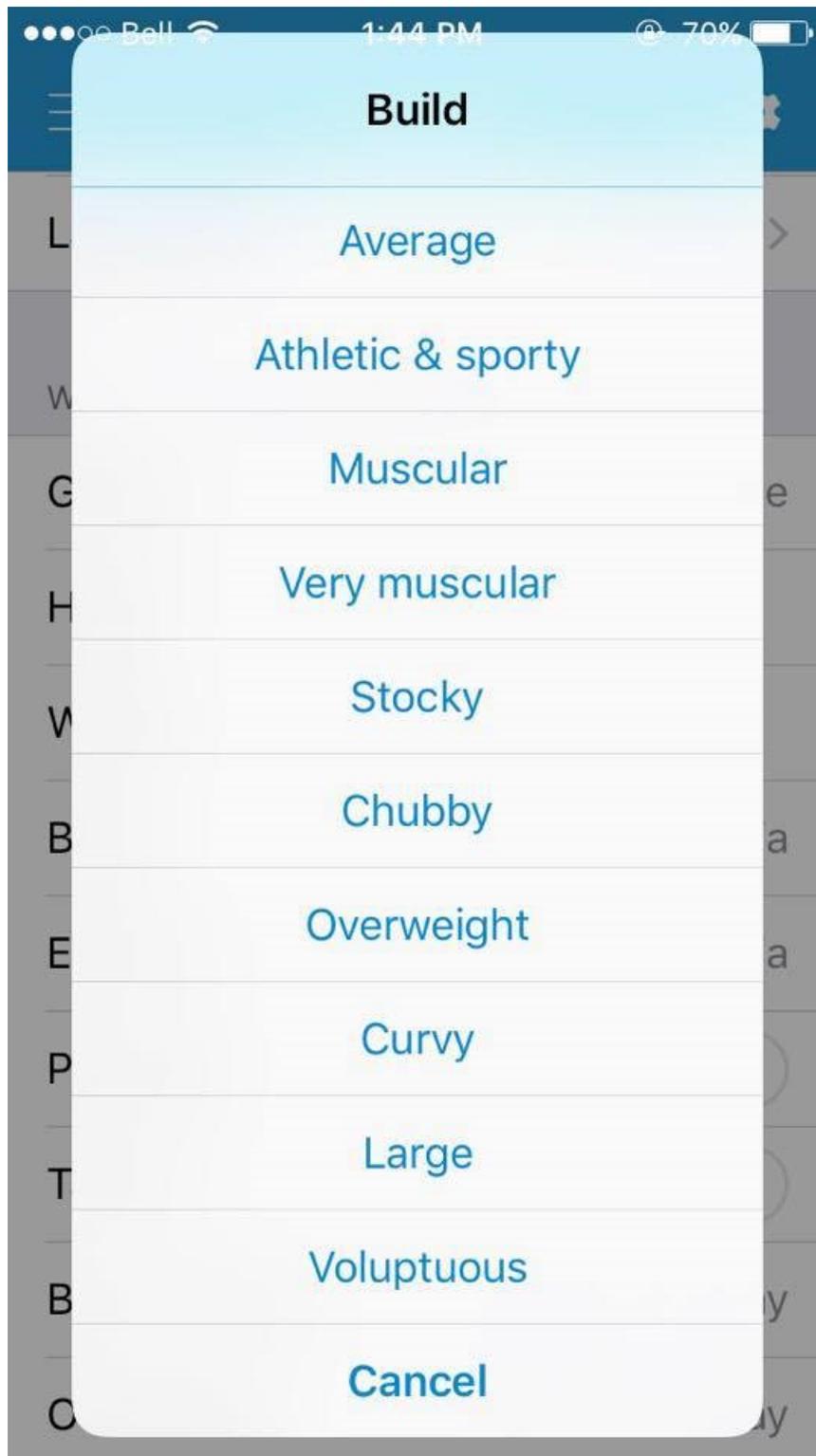




BiggerCity:



Fridae:



BGay:

