

Docile Femininity: Repression of Fat Female Body Image in Young Adult Literature

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Abstract

Construction of fat bodies in young adult (YA) literature comes up with the interception of cultural negotiation and empowerment of fat female identity. This paper studies the apparatuses that subdue fat bodies in YA novels, examining the fictions published between 2007 and 2019 where fat teens are the protagonists. The study offers a critical reading on eight such novels – *Holding up the Universe; The Upside of Unrequited; Puddin’; Skinny; If a Tree Falls at Lunch Period; By The Time You Read This, I’ll Be Dead; There’s Something about Sweetie; Fat Angie* – and examines individual and social treatments of fat female bodies in association with sexuality, food, and body surveillance. The analysis highlights normative filters that allocate a separate set of ideas regarding the personal relationships of the large physiques. While their eating habits pass through abusive stereotyped filters, the protagonists fall victims to frequent scrutiny from others and surrender to self-surveillance. The paper reveals that even a surge of fat positive fictions could strengthen weight bias if the texts continue to fill up stories with mere descriptions of the characters’ struggle against existing cultural frameworks.

Keywords: fat studies, body representation, body dysmorphia, size acceptance

Women’s self-worth is tied with their perceptions of attractiveness (Patrick et al. 512); thus, bigger bodies struggle to control their own social and cultural experiences against normative female body perception. Back in the medieval period, fatness was appreciated as, in the time of hardship, fatness meant wealth and prosperity. Even the paintings of the Renaissance period recognize large women’s bodies as strong and beautiful. Leonardo da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa* is a graceful woman with a wide figure and thick neck; also, Titian has idealized *Venus* with a rounded shape. The idea of corseted waists and delicate limbs emerged in the late 19th century; as a result, the changed beauty norm of a slim body put women under severe pressure to dedicate efforts to body modification (Striegel-Morre and Franko 183-191). Social substructures push fat bodies to fit into the prescribed practices where, as Susan Bordo highlights, “bodies are trained, shaped and impressed with the prevailing historical forms” (91). Female physiques receive more attention than males where body image and weight are concerned (Cash et al. 30-37). Consequently, regulations of diet, dress, adult scrutiny, relationship concept, surgery, etc. dictate fat bodies into fitting the thin shape standards. Women bend to these disciplinary activities more



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(Crandall 882-94), not only because they face external pressure but also as they try to extract favorable social meanings concerned with assertive sexual choices, desired social group membership, or to block stigma. With low self-esteem, engendered from negative body image (Berry and Howe 207-218), adolescent women strain to ensure representations of contextually accepted shapes.

Body dissatisfaction, concern over precise part or total shape (Slade 497-502), traps young adults in the rat race for attractive bodies. The discussion of fat disapproval intersects body weight with relationship status, food habits, and surveillance. Instead of absorbing all the sanctions passively, a few characters of the discussed texts in this article stand up for body positivity but no one escapes the lashes of the demanding dominant agenda. In their love and sex lives, the protagonists of the fictions do “not feel empowered to make own emotional and sexual needs known in the context of relationship” (Satinsky et al. 719). People around them have often treated fat bodies as nonsexual or undeserving figures. The eating sessions turn into horror shows with free-flowing inspections from all around as if all fat people devour sandwiches “with Krispy Kreme donuts instead of buns” (West 74). Anxiety over approval makes parents and teens critical of food. Constant surveillance from the self and others torment bigger physical figures and thrash them as unacceptable entities. The cultural body discourse subverts diversity, undermining fat teens as subservient agents in YA literature where the dominant matrix operates varied devices of suppression.

In this article, the word “fat” has been used with the meaning as suggested by Health at Every Size (HAES) and scholars of the field. Wann notes that “O-words” might seem politically accurate, but they simply lay deceptive layers of positivity on belittling interpretations of fatness (xii). Though “fat” appears to be defamatory because of its social use, Lyons assures that the community encourages the use of the word to establish its unbiased social meaning (75-87).

In this study, the texts are selected based on online ratings, comments, recommendations, and selling statistics from popular and reputed websites like Goodreads, Booklist, Library Thing, and Barnes & Noble. The selected novels are Jennifer Niven’s *Holding up the Universe* , Becky Albertalli’s *The Upside of Unrequited* , Julie Murphy’s *Puddin’* , Donna Cooner’s *Skinny* , Gennifer Choldenko’s *If a Tree Falls at Lunch Period* , Julie Anne Peters’ *By The Time You Read This, I’ll Be Dead* , Sandhya Menon’s *There’s Something about Sweetie* , and E.E. Charlton-Trujillo’s *Fat Angie* , all of which have been published between 2007 and 2019 where fat female teens are the central characters.

Relationships and Sexuality

The fat protagonists in the novels under discussion tussle to be in a relationship

of choice with their non-normative body because social biases judge bigger bodies as unattractive and provide inferior exposure to love life. The perception of an unappealing body lowers assertiveness and does not allow the pursuance of a satisfying relationship. Body aesthetics are endowed with potent meaning regarding socially tolerable shapes, which pressurize females into maintaining specific physical characteristics (Stormer et al. 193–202). In Becky Albertalli's *The Upside of Unrequited*, Molly believes fat girls cannot choose a boyfriend as easily as her slim cousin Abby can. Everyone knows that a thin girl can have a “better” boyfriend if she wants. On the other hand, fat girls do not get to choose; they should be happy with whatever they get (Albertalli 129). Daelyn too, without any attachment to any boy in Julie Anne Peters' *By The Time You Read This, I'll Be Dead*, sounds desperate, feeling as though it is a competition where “every girl in the world had had a boyfriend by then except [her]” (110). As she does not have the opportunity to experience a relationship, asserting her own choice is not an option for her. Cohen and others spot a connection between weight and popularity in school where boys expect thin girls as their peers (69-94). Comparing with her slim twin Cassie, Molly feels she is not fit enough to attract anyone and she needs to “woman up” (Albertalli 12). This feeling certainly puts the definition of a woman within a biased structure, which limits scopes for girls with diverse physical features and thrusts them in the periphery of the “other.” Corresponding to the strict norms pans out as the only path to earn a certificate as a woman. This proposition is a double-edged sword that not only enables the persistence of social coercion but also restricts a teen's love life.

When a boyfriend is a necessary accessory to show off, it becomes a key to smooth social life. Having a boyfriend is a part of the status quo which reveals the worth of a girl in Julie Murphy's *Puddin'*. Millie has heard abundant harsh words for not being able to “manage” a boyfriend. Such weighing makes Ever desperate to get back her ex-boyfriend Jackson's attention in Donna Cooner's *Skinny*. The attention of boys is the recognition of existence for her. It has reached the point when Ever is not concerned whether Jackson thinks well or ill of her; rather, all she cares about is the amount of attention she gets (Cooner 5). When Jackson was thin and unpopular, he was with Ever. His progress towards muscularity has made him a superior option; thus, he has left Ever for another “attractive” girl. Unfortunately, the balance of relationships is attached to the value of body features. As a result, there is a permanent insecurity where fatness wipes out the slightest possibility of relationships entirely. Its effect is not limited to comparisons with slim shapes, but, rather, the extra fat itself is an inadequacy, which dispels other people. This can be seen in Jennifer Niven's *Holding Up the Universe* where Libby believes no boy will touch her, even in a dark room. The number of messages she receives from the eyes around have assured her that she is undesirable. She is convinced that

even the demise of all thin girls in an apocalypse would not bring any boy near her (Niven 56). Libby chooses an imaginary darkness to hide her body, a clear impact of lookism. Without hesitation, she reduces herself to an existence that can only be felt through touches; still, she cannot deem herself worthy of being touched. Hiding her total identity under an imaginary veil does not suffice because her body size stands up as the sole determiner of her essence, which is a barrier to getting a boyfriend.

Even after all the hassle, if a fat girl enters a relationship, it is expected that the boy would be fat too. Harris points out that fatter women are referred to as less attractive, less likely to date, and because of their poorer self-respect, they get fatter, uglier partners (1209-1224). In the fat camp, Millie, from *Puddin'*, dated a few boys and everyone believed that “fat people can only date fat people” (Murphy 308). Even her slim friend Callie admits that she also believes so, as if everyone is meant to be slim (the norm) and those who do not conform to the standard comprise another realm that is separate from the “normal” world. Seeing a fat couple, people heave a sigh of relief thinking, “they’re not contaminating the gene pool with their fatness” (Murphy 308). Cultural hierarchy perceives fat bodies as “the product of their own failed will” and they are understood “as recalcitrant, without conscience or respect for their public duty of controlling their disease” – which is their fatness (Murray *The ‘Fat’ Female Body* 5, 16). A fat couple is a poisonous combination, locked within an imaginary fortified cubicle so that any particle of their anomalous lifestyle does not infiltrate and sabotage the secured standard domain. Willowdean is utterly disgusted in *Puddin'* as she often faces scrutiny regarding her relationship with Bo who is a slim boy. It disturbs people’s judgmental eyes and forces them to figure out “what kind of favor does he owe her to pretend he’s her boyfriend?” (Murphy 308). A large body is an unmatchable insufficiency that must be compensated with something to deserve a thin boy – it cannot be justified in any other way. As will be noticed, Molly’s boyfriend Reid is fat like her. Libby’s boyfriend Jack suffers from prosopagnosia and Daelyn develops a relationship with Santana who is waiting to die from Hodgkin lymphoma. The pattern is repeated through several texts that fat girls cannot have “normal” boyfriends like slim girls.

In the world of constant gazing and judgements, it feels quite challenging to retain a boyfriend when everyone has subscribed to the idea that fat girls having a sexual relationship is unlikely: “Chubby girls don’t get boyfriends, and they definitely don’t have sex. Not in movies – not really – unless it’s supposed to be a joke” (Albertalli 156). Agony stretches to a broader dimension when the sexuality of fat girls is treated as a topic of mockery. In day-to-day discussions, they are dehumanized and their intimacy is dug up as a supply of funny conversation. When Molly goes past boys in school, a few of them make a weird “womp womp” (Albertalli 198) sound implying that Molly’s fat body kills their sexual urge. It drives her to a realm of

anxiety because she can “never get to just be” (Machado). The tension of being a point of gossip and embarrassment deprives her of sexuality. Several theorists have pointed to the tradition in which fat girls have been desexualized (Braziel 292-328; Murray, “Locating Aesthetics”). On the other hand, Molly’s contemplation of having sex with Reid is unimaginable to her relatives and friends because two fat bodies mating does not seem to be an act of normal human beings to them. Instead, it produces an image where two large piles of flesh are just struggling to reach each other properly because of their size. They can strive to carry out usual sexual acts but will end up being a subject of mockery. Similarly in *Puddin’*, Willowdean’s sexual experience is disturbed by the awareness of fatness. Her boyfriend’s intimate touches produce torment instead of pleasure. The most shocking fact is that she does not find anyone else to blame because she is repressed by the burden of self-accusation – “it’s because of me and not him” (Murphy 236). Merrell points out that if society refuses to certify a person’s identity; those feelings of unworthiness affect how they interact with others and conceive other bodies (11). Willowdean admits that she craves the touches but restricts him to block the surge of disturbing feelings. Her body has been alienated from her emotion and it is horrible to discover that she is unable to nurture desirable senses within her own body.

The protagonists of the fictions are often victims of distorted sexual imagination. Fatness is used overwhelmingly to imply corruption of inner character, fragility, silliness, and faults which must be fixed (Rabinowitz 2). There are instances when fat bodies are perceived to have perverse sexual desire. People imagine fat girls as promiscuous characters who have a vulgar sex life. Libby faces a random boy who labels her as a “fat whore” which leads her to think maybe she “should have had sex a thousand times by now” (Niven 45). She is shocked thinking, “Why am I automatically a whore?” (Niven 98). Out of this mess, the rudest irony is that she lives a virgin’s life. Younger notes “in stories, a pattern emerges connecting female sexuality and body image. Promiscuous sexual activity is often linked to a character’s weight and signals the character’s lack of sexual restraint” (4). Even with zero sexual experience, Libby is automatically part of a notoriety based on her large body. In addition, conceiving fat girls as less qualified lures people to target them as easy options. Findings reveal that fat women lack confidence in refusing sex and lower levels of sexual boldness (Wiederman 60-68; Yamamiya et al. 421-27). During Molly’s visit to a bar, a half-drunk boy throws sexually vulgar words to her and claims that to be a compliment for her fat body. He expects Molly to fall for his approach because a girl with a large body must find this effort more than enough. In Michael Flood’s research, participants indicated that they consider fat women as “easy” because of their hopelessness, desire for attention, and insecurity (339-359). These approaches extend to forceful physical abuse sometimes. Toomey and his

gang fantasize about the sexuality of fat girls and assault Daelyn. After satiating their curiosity about “what a fatty paddy looks like naked” (Peters 111), they get away with no consequences. Even Daelyn’s mother suggests that she ignore the incident instead of standing up against it. Fat bodies are such a cheap heap of flesh that their sexuality is often distorted and they are expected to get used to it.

Food Filtering and Adults

The stigma of insatiable hunger is another tool of constant repression that forces the teen characters of the fictions not to eat. Fat people are considered disorderly, wicked, and insatiable; also, their weight is their liability and they are “condemned by the world for being greedy and fat” (Sheppard 26). Their food intake is always under inspection as adults often encourage them to eat less to shed weight. Molly’s grandma explodes with free advice about cutting her food consumption in half, which she believes will help to get a boyfriend. She considers the advice to be a great favor and it will help Molly to release herself from the gulf of unwanted flesh, which has prevented her from being noticed by boys. In Gennifer Choldenko’s *If a Tree Falls at Lunch Period*, Kirsten’s mother is so anxious that she consults a psychiatrist to prescribe a proper diet. Kirsten is encouraged to “play the game” (Choldenko 97) to live a privileged life where she will belong to the elite girl group by conforming to the expected body ideal. Her mother imposes certain food choices on Kirsten to control her weight gain and believes she is playing the role of a savior.

The obsession with body structure can contaminate bonds with adults where diet policing becomes the base of the relationships. Millie’s mother is so obsessed with diet that their bond is built upon discussions of the topic. Millie labels it as their “love language” (Murphy 108) that constructs their connection. From an early age, her eating habit is monitored. She has not grown up with the liberty of exploring foods based on taste and desire. Food is not an item to treat the tongue anymore; rather, it is an indicator of “points systems and calorie charts” (Murphy 108). The desperate persuasion of an appealing body shape has killed the attraction, essence, and taste of food. Practices of the parents and children’s bonding with them correlate to the perception of diet and body maintenance (Hill et al. 346-8; Offer et al. 281-91). Like Millie, Ever has a dieting nexus with her mother as well. Though she was nine by then and did not have a fat body, her mother had imagined her future and joined Weight Watchers together. In Charlton-Trujillo’s *Fat Angie*, Angie’s mother also directly prohibits her from eating. Her mother forces her to stay hungry and reminds her that “no one is ever going to love you if you stay fat” (Charlton-Trujillo 36). The mother’s concern is not limited to Angie’s love life; moreover, she feels embarrassed about her daughter’s body size in front of her relatives. In public functions, she is afraid to be judged as an irresponsible mother when Angie tries to eat a full plate. She almost pleads to Angie to skip dinner as “people have been

staring” (Charlton-Trujillo 69). Surveillance and pressure extend from family and relatives to the public sphere when Sweetie’s mother forbids her to talk about food in Sandhya Menon’s *There’s Something about Sweetie*. To avoid public humiliation, her mother encourages Sweetie to pretend to dislike food so “people will assume ‘Sweetie has’ thyroid problems” (Menon 50). As it stands, the disease is much more acceptable and justifiable than fatness because adults can welcome a disease but the “disgrace” of a hungry fat body punctures their bond in the relationship.

Forced diet is the external pressure that contradicts voluntary choices of life and drives a person to binge eating which causes eating disorders. Kirsten does not bother about her fat body; all she cares about is having the foods of her taste. She affirms that it is “every girl’s dream” (Cholodenko 79) to choose favorite food amounts and items. A woman who likes to eat “spends most of her time thinking about food, anticipating eating, planning her next meal or snack, and, more often than not, worrying about what effect the food she eats has on her weight” (McQuillan15). Unless there are forces to restrict their choices, they are not eager to fall into that cage. Kirsten has to steal food from her own house to fight hunger. Her mother acts as a constant curator who guards Kirsten’s body against unwanted food items. Food restrictions at home forces her to breach codes at the office when she has to sneak out for snacks. Ever’s stepsister believes she is not desperate enough to shape her body. She points out that Ever is not “in a wheelchair or something like that,” so she has the opportunity to exercise and not “have to be fat” (Murphy 156). Ever has to hide food as well to avoid the stain that “fat girl is going to devour the big chocolate sundae with the sprinkles on top” (Cooner 23). The problem with food restrictions is that it causes binge eating disorders, and the person ends up consuming more food within a short period to compensate. Both Kirsten and Ever face restraints from family and they indulge in practices that are akin to symptoms of binge eating. Hudson and others point out that 3%-5% of American men and women are affected by this eating disorder, which is much higher than anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa (348-58). This is responsible for various physical issues along with psychological problems like intense social isolation, depression, and sadness.

Body Image and Surveillance

People consider weight as a fundamentally wicked feature and it is widely believed that denouncing fat bodies is a way to save them from downfall. Along with that, the role of gender identity in a social framework also pulls strings to impose certain meanings on body image (Wertheim et al 345-355). Millie’s mother, having spent one year in Daisy Ranch and shed forty pounds, believes that her life has changed. Consequently, though Millie is quite positive about fatness, her mother keeps pushing her to join a fat camp. In aerobic classes at church, Millie faces people who believe keeping the body slim is a part of serving God. As the body is a temple

and gift from God, He likes to see the devotees treat the gift properly. Millie's fat body represents her as a "bad Christian" (Murphy 384) who has failed to serve God because she has neglected her own body because "fatness 'means' excess of desire, of bodily urges not controlled, of immoral, lazy, sinful habits" (Farrell 10). Religious practice combines with communal belief in knocking fat bodies off the edge. Besides, Angie's mother pressurizes her with the threat that if she does not shed twenty-nine pounds, she would not buy her any new pants. She even refuses to hang up Angie's class picture because of her obvious double chin. The woman finds it hard to recognize Angie as her daughter publicly because the picture, "makes [her] look so wide" (Charlton-Trujillo 18). Cecilia Hartley argues that western cultural morals believe "beautiful equals thin" (64) for a woman's body. Briella encourages Ever to have surgery to get rid of the fat body though she is well aware of the risk of the blood clot and other threats. Ever feels humiliated by the comment on her body when her stepsister suggests that taking a death risk in surgery would be better than living with fatness (Cooner 33). As Weinstein puts it, "The pressure to be thin is overwhelming. The devastation that is happening to kids because of weight is ever-growing" (11). Sweetie's mother, on the other hand, promptly turns down Sweetie's dating offer saying, "Sweetie is simply not at Ashish's level right now" (Menon 56) because her daughter is fat and the boy is slim. The cultural paradigm concerning which bodies are to be appreciated and which are to be criticized is strongly rooted in mass conscience. Thus, the fat characters are constantly hammered with the prescriptions of "better" life in their familial and social sphere.

Dress is a powerful expression in communication and the lack of desired dress options engender low self-esteem and self-surveillance in the selected fictions. Molly rates herself ill-suited because she is not appropriate to the dress trial of "single-digit sizes" (Albertalli 69) like Cassie or Mina. She invests plenty of time sorting out how to camouflage her size with the layers of clothes. Kirsten also detects restrictions in dress choice because fat bodies possess nothing much to show. She envies Rory, who is in a tight dress "with a lot more skin showing – the kind of clothes fat girls can't wear" (Choldenko 123). Aunt Tina also certifies, "one has to have the body for" revealing dresses (Menon 48). All bodies are not worthy of attractive dresses; therefore, ineligible for a similar amount of attention in the public eye. Virgie Tovar recognizes that "fashion has so much to do with freedom and visibility" – the freedom to "feel good" and to be visible (177-78). Thus, large bodies are treated as a minority group that is stereotyped to have similar costume choices, and the production system does not care to meet the customized requirements of these physiques.

Thin bias influences people to maintain surveillance of their own bodies. Bouson debates that women adopt fat-phobia where to feel fat is to feel embarrassed (106).

In the bar, Molly panics after taking off the jacket because, with its removal, she unravels all of her insecurities in front of Will. The thought of fat visibility drowns her in the pond of fear that Will might reject her. The domination does not start from “physical restraint and coercion ... but through individual self-surveillance and self-correction to norms” (Bordo 27). Kirsten finds her “giggle and the extra forty pounds” (Choldenko 21) as barriers to be the most attractive girl in her class. She even avoids mirrors, refusing to look at her own body so that it becomes easier to believe that her fat version has never existed. From the tension of fatness, Ever has grown a secondary personality named Skinny that whispers in her brain “the world doesn’t care if you’re kind and good. It only cares that you’re fat. Nothing else matters” (Cooner 12). The anxiety over her body image has given birth to a distorted alternative consciousness that continually surveils her physical structure.

Self-surveilled docile bodies often indulge in constant comparison with other slim figures and are locked in permanent unhappiness. On the very first encounter with Mina, Molly notices only the physical details of her body. When she describes her twin sister Cassie, again she focuses only on her bodily features. She strongly believes that her own “body is secretly all wrong” (Albertalli 48). Molly becomes unsatisfied with her cleavage when she compares herself with a model from a magazine and concludes that it makes her body unattractive to the boys. Similarly, Ever is enthralled seeing the “confidence of beauty” (Cooner 12) of the senior cheerleaders when they walk past her with their slim waists. The flamboyant shoulder and backs of the girls almost immobilize her. Her craving to have a similar body for “a day ... an hour ... a minute” (Cooner 12) shows how deeply she adores those shapes. Though she has similar boots, she ditches them because they would not fit in the same way as they fit Briella’s small calves. The uneasiness from the comparisons activates fountains of low self-esteem that choke these characters’ confidence.

The protagonists often surrender to the pressures and take desperate measures to shape their bodies according to norms. They often “come to understand that their happiness must be addressed by action on their part” which drives them to “the exercise of strength and determination” (Glessner et al. 120). Millie has spent two months of the last eight summers in a fat camp meeting her family’s demand. In her account to the psychiatrist, Ever reveals that she has been with Weight Watchers and fat camp since middle childhood. She intentionally skips details of “the cabbage diet or the lemon water diet or the cayenne pepper diet, because that’s just crazy” (Cooner 50). Though the doctor warns of all the life-threatening risks including “infection, suture leaks, and blood clots, changes to the digestive tract which may cause ulcers, bowel obstruction, or reflux” (Cooner 53), Ever decides to endanger her life through obesity surgery because she is desperate to shed body fat, which has taken over her life, making her permanently wary. Body dissatisfaction outweighs

the risks of perilous surgeries. Internalization of thinness as an ideal puts the protagonists in an antagonistic relationship with their own body which drives them to opt for desperate transformations.

Conclusion

Historically, female bodies have always been a part of the cultural hierarchy in defining feminine identity. As a cultural component, YA novels possess tensions of femininity construction and contribute to the social portrayal of normative and non-normative appearance. In the last few years, fictions, not being afraid to hit weight bias, are addressing the fat positivity issue. In *Puddin'* and *The Upside of Unrequited*, the protagonists do not retire after describing the experiences of attacks and struggles; rather, they push for their desired choices, countering the pre-determined concepts of their family, friends, and classmates. The characters respond in Marilyn Wann's way by changing their attitude instead of their weight (ix). In *Skinny*, after losing 117 pounds in a desperate gastric bypass surgery, Ever understands that the real change happens when she starts to believe in herself – it is in the mind, not in the body. Losing weight does not free a woman from the trap of being seen primarily through their bodies; instead, weight loss removes the stigma from one individual but leaves it in place for others (Couser 34).

Still, there are holes to fill in the plots of the YA fictions. The psychological maps of the characters need more exposure and exploration rather than their physical shapes. Moreover, no character leads their day-to-day life without being concerned about fatness. Either they are under stress about their body or the people around them press heavily for a transformation. Be it fat positive fictions or not, no one comes up with an atmosphere where fatness is not identified as a notable feature. If fictions keep on portraying such an environment where fat stigma is necessary, fat-shaming thoughts will have auto-promotion. The authors need to treat slim boyfriends for the fat girls more casually without making it a gesture of favor. Instead of associating nastiness, social constructions of fat people's sexuality need to possess a charming ambiance. As it undermines other essential identities, authors should check the tendency to focus on body size as the key marker when introducing a character. Authors certainly have the challenge to resolve the automatic expectation of a thin protagonist which Beth Younger has mentioned, if there is no description of weight, the "reader assumes a 'normal' weight" (5) – namely a thin body. The presence of a bigger body in a suppressing cultural matrix is not enough anymore for body positivity; therefore, the characters should get the space and scope to exhibit their achievements and casual daily lives like women of any other size. As an imperative artifact, the fat fictions have a responsibility to challenge collective consciousness instead of filling up the story with the details of an individual's transformation journey. Comprehensive positioning of the characters like Molly, Sweetie, and

Millie at the helm of mainstream YA literature can be the one step forward in fat normalization.

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