



Body Shots: Hollywood and the Culture of Eating Disorders

Emily Fox-Kales

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Combining the analytical tools of cinema studies with insights from clinical practice focused on eating disorders, Body Shots offers a compelling case for widespread media literacy to combat the effects of the “eating disordered culture” represented in Hollywood productions and popular images of celebrity life.

How do movie star bodies and celebrity culture influence the way *real* girls and women feel about their own size and shape? What effect can popular films have on everyday eating behavior and exercise rituals? *Body Shots* shows how Hollywood films, movie stars, and celebrity media help propagate the values of an “eating disordered culture” that promotes constant self-scrutiny and vigilance, denial of appetite and overcontrol of weight in the compulsive pursuit of an eternally elusive body ideal of slenderness and fitness. In a unique approach that merges the disciplines of film analysis, gender studies, and psychology, clinical psychologist and cinema studies scholar Emily Fox-Kales demonstrates how the body narratives of such Hollywood celebrities as Lindsay Lohan, Gwyneth Paltrow, and Oprah Winfrey and their battles with bulimia, post-maternal weight gain, and yo-yo dieting not only serve as public enactments of the same eating and weight struggles their fans endure, but create a “new normal” which naturalizes and even valorizes the chronic body dissatisfaction and weight obsession that are established risk factors for eating disorders in women and girls. Written for students of cultural and gender studies, parents, media literacy educators, as well as film buffs everywhere, this book aims to provide the moviegoer with the critical tools necessary to develop a resistant gaze at Hollywood productions and make healthier choices among the many viewing screens of our super-mediated world.

Emily Fox-Kales is Clinical Instructor in the Department of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, Harvard University, and Academic Specialist in the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies at Northeastern University where she teaches film and psychology. She is also Clinical Associate at McLean Hospital/Harvard University and Executive Director of the Feeding Ourselves Program.

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