



Bodies out of Bounds: Fatness and Transgression

From University of California Press

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Bodies out of Bounds: Fatness and Transgression From University of California Press

Since World War II, when the diet and fitness industries promoted mass obsession with weight and body shape, fat has been a dirty word. In the United States, fat is seen as repulsive, funny, ugly, unclean, obscene, and above all as something to lose. *Bodies Out of Bounds* challenges these dominant perceptions by examining social representations of the fat body. The contributors to this collection show that what counts as fat and how it is valued are far from universal; the variety of meanings attributed to body size in other times and places demonstrates that perceptions of corpulence are infused with cultural, historical, political, and economic biases. The exceptionally rich and engaging essays collected in this volume question discursive constructions of fatness while analyzing the politics and power of corpulence and addressing the absence of fat people in media representations of the body.

The essays are widely interdisciplinary; they explore their subject with insight, originality, and humor. The contributors examine the intersections of fat with ethnicity, race, queerness, class, and minority cultures, as well as with historical variations in the signification of fat. They also consider ways in which "objective" medical and psychological discourses about fat people and food hide larger agendas. By illustrating how fat is a malleable construct that can be used to serve dominant economic and cultural interests, *Bodies Out of Bounds* stakes new claims for those whose body size does not adhere to society's confining standards.

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Editorial Review

Review

"The author's voice is nuanced by her wide knowledge of Islam, of feminism, and of life. One comes to know these women well, and to care about them. I was often deeply moved, and I was also often moved to laughter by the zany, Marx Brothers-like collisions between the registers of East and West, or medicine and religion, or just between the wits of these gutsy, self-aware women and the flat-footed male establishment." - Wendy Doniger, author of *The Bedtrick: Tales of Sex and Masquerade* "Malti-Douglas crosses linguistic, cultural, national, and religious frontiers; she gives consistency to an Islamic revival differentiated from Islamic fundamentalism, challenging methods, programs, and problematizations of the social and political sciences applied to the study of the contemporary Islamic textual corpus." - Mohammed Arkoun, editor of *Arabica*

From the Inside Flap

"This is an exceptional collection—the subject is of obvious importance, yet terribly undertheorized and unexamined. I know of no other work that offers what this collection provides."—Marcia Millman, author of *Such a Pretty Face: Being Fat in America*

". . . A valuable contribution to scholarly debates on the place of excessive bodies in contemporary culture. This book promises to enrich all areas of inquiry related to the politics of bodies."—Carole Spitzack, author of *Confessing Excess: Women and the Politics of Body Reduction*

"This anthology includes a wide range of perceptive and original essays, which explore and analyze the underlying ideologies that have made fat "incorrect." Echoing the spirit of the nineteenth-century adage about children who should be neither seen nor heard, some of the authors powerfully remind us that we keep "bodies out of bound" silenced and unseen-unless, of course, we need to peek at the comic or grotesque."—Raquel Salgado Scherr, co-author of *Face Value: The Politics of Beauty*

"Through textual analyses, video/film analyses, television theory, and literary theory, this collection demonstrates the various ways in which dominant representations of fat and corpulence have been both demonized and rendered invisible. . . . This volume will be a crucial corollary to work on the tyranny of slenderness; a collection of different perspectives on the fat body is sorely missing in women's studies, communication, and media studies."—Sarah Banet-Weiser, author of *The Most Beautiful Girl in the World: Beauty Pageants and National Identity*

From the Back Cover

"This is an exceptional collection--the subject is of obvious importance, yet terribly undertheorized and unexamined. I know of no other work that offers what this collection provides."--Marcia Millman, author of "Such a Pretty Face: Being Fat in America

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