Trinity Bothur

Dr. Bednar

Capstone Seminar

11/04/2026

A Wickedly Thin Ideal: Ariana Grande and the Politics of the Female Body

Introduction

Women's bodies have long been subjects of public discussion, particularly in celebrity culture. Media coverage, social media commentary, and beauty conversations often examine and evaluate women's appearances. Changes in a celebrity's appearance can prompt speculation about health, lifestyle, and personal choices. Although body positivity and representation have challenged narrow beauty standards, attention to women's bodies has not disappeared. Recent conversations about celebrity weight loss, changing beauty standards, and weight-loss medications have renewed public discussion about thinness and its relationship to femininity and desirability.

Thinness is more than a physical characteristic; it carries cultural meanings connected to beauty, health, discipline, and femininity. Media coverage does not simply report on celebrities' appearances. It also provides language and frameworks audiences use to interpret them. Descriptions can position bodies as desirable, concerning, healthy, or unhealthy, often without sufficient knowledge of the individuals being discussed. Even when outlets challenge body-shaming, centering a woman's appearance can reinforce the idea that her body is open to public examination.

Ariana Grande provides a relevant case study for examining these tensions. In April 2023, Grande addressed comments about her body in a TikTok video, explaining that the version of her

appearance people had previously considered healthy was associated with one of the least healthy periods of her life. Her response challenged the assumption that appearance reliably indicates health. Yet public discussion continued, particularly during the promotion of *Wicked* and in later conversations about celebrity beauty standards. Her experience shows how a celebrity's body can become a site of competing interpretations, where concern, admiration, criticism, and speculation coexist.

Including Cynthia Erivo as a comparative figure makes it possible to consider how race intersects with media constructions of feminine beauty and bodily expectations. During the *Wicked* press tour, public commentary about the actresses' appearances and physical interactions offered an opportunity to examine how women can be interpreted differently within the same celebrity environment. Erivo has spoken about racialized assumptions reflected in comments about her physique and jokes describing her as Grande's "bodyguard." This comparison does not suggest that their experiences are identical; rather, it helps reveal how race can shape the language and expectations through which women's bodies are discussed.

This project uses qualitative critical discourse analysis to examine selected media coverage published between 2023 and 2026. It asks how contemporary media discourse constructs the perceived return of thinness as a feminine beauty ideal through representations of Grande; what discourses surrounding femininity, beauty, health, and the female body emerge; and how these discourses reproduce, negotiate, or challenge dominant cultural understandings of thinness and femininity. Erivo is included as a comparative figure. The study does not attempt to determine whether thinness is objectively returning or make assumptions about individual celebrities' health. Instead, it examines how media representations shape perceptions of this cultural shift. It argues that contemporary coverage reveals a persistent tension: even as media discourse

challenges body-shaming, it continues to position women's bodies as objects of public attention and evaluation.

Literature Review

1.) The Cultural Construction of the Female Body

The female body has long been understood as more than a physical or biological entity. Within feminist scholarship, the body is frequently examined as a site where cultural expectations, gender roles, and systems of power become visible. Ideas about beauty, femininity, and physical appearance are not fixed or universal. Instead, social and historical contexts shape which bodies are considered desirable, acceptable, or worthy of attention. These expectations influence not only how women understand their own bodies but also how women's bodies are interpreted and evaluated by others. Examining the female body as a cultural construction is therefore important to understanding how contemporary media discussions of thinness reinforce broader expectations about femininity and beauty.

Feminist theorists have long challenged the assumption that the body exists separately from social and cultural experience. Shefer's discussion of feminist theories of the body provides a foundation for understanding the relationship between women's bodies and gendered systems of oppression. Rather than viewing the body as separate from social experience, feminist approaches recognize that cultural expectations shape how women's bodies are understood, controlled, and evaluated (Shefer). This perspective is particularly relevant to beauty standards because women are frequently expected to manage their physical appearances in ways that align with dominant ideas of femininity. The body becomes a place where broader social expectations are expressed and enforced. These expectations shape how women are judged based on their size, appearance, and perceived ability to meet culturally accepted beauty standards.

Susan Bordo further develops this understanding by examining how cultural expectations appear in everyday bodily practices. In *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*, Bordo argues that the body can function as a medium through which cultural values and social expectations are reproduced. Practices involving food, exercise, appearance, and bodily maintenance are therefore not simply individual choices; they can also reflect broader cultural pressures surrounding femininity and physical appearance (Bordo). Her work is particularly useful for examining the cultural significance of thinness. When slenderness becomes associated with beauty, discipline, and self-control, the body can become a visible representation of whether someone is perceived to meet those expectations. Bordo's framework helps explain why discussions of women's weight and appearance often extend beyond physical characteristics and become connected to judgments about identity, behavior, and personal responsibility.

Sandra Lee Bartky's *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression* provides another important perspective through its discussion of gendered bodily discipline. Drawing on Michel Foucault's understanding of disciplinary power, Bartky argues that women are subjected to forms of discipline that shape how they move, present, and regulate their bodies. These expectations encourage women to monitor themselves according to standards of acceptable femininity (Bartky). This concept of self-surveillance is especially relevant to contemporary media culture, where women's appearances are continuously photographed, discussed, compared, and evaluated. The expectation that women should maintain a particular appearance can become internalized, making bodily regulation appear like an individual responsibility rather than a response to cultural pressure. Bartky's work therefore provides a theoretical foundation for understanding why women's bodies remain subjects of public scrutiny even when that scrutiny is presented as concern, admiration, or support.

Kyrölä and Harjunen further complicate the relationship between body size and cultural expectations by discussing phantom and liminal fat. Their work examines how fatness can operate as a cultural category that extends beyond an individual's actual body size. In this sense, the meaning attached to body size is shaped not only by physical appearance but also by the social expectations and judgments surrounding it (Kyrölä and Harjunen). Their discussion helps explain how thinness becomes culturally valued in relation to fear of, or rejection of, fatness. When thinness is treated as the preferred or ideal body type, other body sizes can become associated with negative assumptions about discipline, health, and personal responsibility. These associations demonstrate that body standards are not simply aesthetic preferences; they carry social meanings that shape how individuals are perceived.

The cultural construction of thinness is also connected to the historical relationship between race, gender, and body size. In *Fearing the Black Body: The Racial Origins of Fat Phobia*, Sabrina Strings examines the historical development of Western beauty standards and argues that contemporary ideals of slenderness cannot be separated from racialized understandings of femininity. Strings traces how ideas about body size became connected to racial hierarchies, particularly through the association of fatness with Blackness and the elevation of slenderness as a marker of social and racial respectability (Strings). This historical perspective is important because it challenges the assumption that beauty standards operate as universal expectations experienced equally by all women. Instead, ideals of thinness have developed within cultural systems that attach different meanings to bodies based on race, gender, and social position. Strings' work provides an important foundation for considering how media representations of women's bodies may reproduce racialized expectations even when race is not explicitly discussed.

Avery et al. similarly examine the relationship between hegemonic feminine beauty ideals and Black women's experiences. Their research considers how expectations surrounding characteristics such as slenderness and lighter skin can influence Black women's appearance beliefs and well-being (Avery et al.). Their work demonstrates the importance of considering how dominant beauty standards can privilege particular racialized understandings of femininity while placing different expectations on women whose bodies and appearances do not align with those ideals. This perspective is especially relevant to a study that considers both Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo. Although both women are discussed within the same celebrity and promotional environment, their experiences should not be assumed to be identical. Examining Erivo alongside Grande creates an opportunity to consider how racialized expectations may influence the language used to describe women's bodies and how different forms of femininity are represented in popular media.

Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality provides a framework for understanding how systems of power operate together rather than independently. In her foundational work, Crenshaw argues that examining gender or race in isolation can overlook the experiences of people whose identities are shaped by both (Crenshaw). This is important when studying media representations of women's bodies because expectations surrounding femininity do not operate in the same way for every woman. Race can influence which physical characteristics are seen as desirable, how bodies are described, and what assumptions attach to women's appearances. Patricia Hill Collins's work on Black feminist thought also emphasizes the importance of examining how intersecting systems of power and culturally established images of femininity shape representations of Black women (Collins). Together, these perspectives support an analysis that considers how race influences the meanings attached to women's bodies without

assuming that all women experience media scrutiny in the same way.

Kanai's discussion of everyday femininities, popular feminism, and intersectionality adds another dimension to this conversation. Kanai considers how contemporary femininities are negotiated within popular culture and how feminist language can circulate alongside existing expectations about women's appearances (Kanai). This helps explain the contradictions that emerge when media coverage presents itself as supportive of women while still evaluating their bodies. For example, discussions of body positivity may challenge appearance-based judgment, but they can also keep women's bodies at the center of public conversation. Feminist language does not automatically remove the expectations that make women's appearances subjects of scrutiny. Instead, these conversations can reveal the complex ways popular culture both challenges and reproduces dominant ideas about femininity.

Rosalind Gill's work on postfeminist media culture connects these questions of femininity, bodily discipline, and popular media. Gill identifies recurring features of postfeminist media culture, including treating femininity as a bodily property, emphasizing individual choice and empowerment, and expecting women to engage in continuous self-monitoring and self-discipline (Gill). This framework helps explain how media culture can present appearance management as personal empowerment while still reinforcing narrow expectations of female attractiveness. In this context, women may be encouraged to make their own choices about their bodies, but those choices still take place within a culture that evaluates and rewards particular appearances. Gill's work provides a way to examine the tension between messages of empowerment and the continued surveillance of women's bodies.

The cultural construction of beauty is also connected to how standards of femininity change over time while still preserving certain expectations. Boucherie et al. examine the cultural

evolution of beauty standards through representations of women's bodies in fashion runways, advertisements, and magazine covers. Their research suggests that although visible diversity within fashion and media has increased, the underlying ideal body standard has remained relatively consistent. This distinction matters because greater representation does not necessarily mean dominant beauty expectations have fundamentally changed. Media industries can appear more inclusive while still privileging a narrow understanding of the desirable female body (Boucherie et al.). This context is important for examining contemporary conversations about thinness. Even as media outlets increasingly use the language of body positivity and inclusivity, thinness may continue to hold cultural value within representations of beauty and femininity.

Taken together, this scholarship establishes the female body as a culturally and politically meaningful site shaped by gender, race, and beauty expectations. Thinness is not simply a physical characteristic; it can mark desirability, discipline, and culturally accepted femininity. At the same time, beauty standards do not operate uniformly across all women. Intersecting expectations shape them and influence how different bodies are represented and evaluated. This framework provides a foundation for examining contemporary media coverage of Ariana Grande and, comparatively, Cynthia Erivo. By understanding the female body as a site of cultural meaning, bodily discipline, and social regulation, we can examine how media discourse assigns significance to thinness and how those meanings connect to broader expectations of femininity.

2.) Thinness, Media, and Celebrity Culture

Media representations play an important role in shaping cultural understandings of beauty and the ideal female body. Through images, headlines, advertisements, entertainment journalism, and social media, audiences are repeatedly exposed to representations that communicate which physical characteristics are considered desirable. Thinness has remained an influential feature of

these representations, often linked to attractiveness, femininity, and social value. Although contemporary media conversations increasingly acknowledge the potential harm of unrealistic beauty standards, the continued attention given to women's appearances suggests that thinness remains culturally significant. Understanding this relationship requires examining both the effects of thin-ideal representations and the ways media discourse gives meaning to women's bodies.

Research on the thin ideal has frequently focused on the relationship between media exposure and body image. Tiggemann, Polivy, and Hargreaves examine how women respond to thin-ideal images in fashion magazines and find that exposure can influence mood and body satisfaction. Their research also shows that how audiences process these images matters, as social comparison and fantasy can produce different responses (Tiggemann et al.). This research shows that media images do not simply communicate beauty standards visually; they can also encourage audiences to evaluate themselves against the bodies they represent.

Similarly, McLean et al. examine whether media literacy can reduce the negative effects associated with exposure to thin-ideal media. Their research focuses on adolescent girls and suggests that appearance comparison and internalization of thin ideals are important factors in understanding body dissatisfaction (McLean et al.). This work is useful because it demonstrates how media literacy may influence the relationship between media exposure and body image. However, research focused on audience responses does not fully explain how media outlets themselves construct the meaning of thinness. Understanding the effects of media representations is important, but it is also necessary to examine the language and cultural assumptions through which those representations are produced.

Research on social media further demonstrates the influence of celebrity imagery. Brown and

Tiggemann examine the effects of attractive celebrity and peer images on Instagram, finding that exposure to both types of images can negatively affect women's mood and body image in comparison with travel images (Brown and Tiggemann). Their findings suggest that celebrity imagery can contribute to appearance comparison, even when women encounter it in everyday social media environments. Slater, Cole, and Fardouly offer a different perspective by examining parody images that challenge conventional thin-ideal representations. Their study suggests that parody can improve women's body satisfaction and mood compared with exposure to unmodified celebrity images (Slater et al.). Together, these studies demonstrate that media representations can reinforce dominant beauty ideals but can also provide opportunities to challenge them.

More recent research has expanded this discussion to include different forms of body-related social media content. Schönhals et al. examine exposure to fitspiration, thinspiration, body positivity, and body neutrality content among women with and without self-reported eating disorders. Their findings connect certain forms of appearance-focused content, particularly fitspiration and thinspiration, with negative body-image and mood-related experiences (Schönhals et al.). This research matters in today's media environment because conversations about women's bodies now circulate through a mix of traditional journalism, celebrity platforms, and social media. However, the effects of social media exposure differ from how entertainment journalism frames and interprets celebrity appearances.

Celebrity culture creates a highly visible environment for evaluating women's bodies. Celebrities are frequently photographed, discussed, and compared, making their appearances available for continuous public interpretation. McDonnell and Lin's study of celebrity gossip magazines directly links celebrity coverage to the cultural evaluation of body size. Analyzing

photo-caption units in American celebrity gossip magazines, they found that women were more likely than men to receive negative comments about their bodies. Their findings also show that commentary varied by body size and race (McDonnell and Lin). This research is especially useful because it shows that celebrity media does not simply report on appearance; it also evaluates bodies and attaches cultural meanings to them.

Ferris's examination of media constructions of anorexia and obesity through the cases of Tracey Gold and Carnie Wilson also demonstrates how celebrity bodies can become symbols through which broader cultural anxieties are communicated. Rather than treating media descriptions as neutral observations, Ferris examines how representations of women's bodies construct ideas about appropriate appearance, health, and social behavior (Ferris). This perspective matters to the present study because media coverage of Ariana Grande often moves beyond describing her appearance into discussions of health, concern, and public responsibility. These conversations can create tension between the desire to protect women from body-shaming and the continued public evaluation of their bodies.

Feminist media scholarship also addresses the relationship between celebrity culture and bodily surveillance. Gill argues that postfeminist media culture places considerable emphasis on monitoring and disciplining women's bodies, while framing appearance management through the language of choice and empowerment (Gill). Rogers's research on fashion media similarly examines how surveillance and self-presentation operate within contemporary visual culture (Rogers). Together, these perspectives help explain why celebrity women's bodies can become subjects of repeated scrutiny. Public attention may be framed as admiration, concern, or support, but it can still position women's appearances as something that audiences are entitled to interpret and evaluate.

Contemporary discussions of thinness also take place within a changing cultural environment in which body positivity, body neutrality, and weight-loss culture circulate simultaneously. Markey et al. examine the relationship between body image and interest in GLP-1 weight-loss medications, identifying associations between interest in these medications and several body-related concerns (Markey et al.). Although their study does not establish that media coverage causes interest in these medications, it provides context for understanding the broader cultural environment in which weight loss and bodily change are discussed. These conversations demonstrate that contemporary attitudes toward women's bodies are not organized around one consistent message. Messages promoting body acceptance can exist alongside cultural pressures that continue to privilege thinness.

Taken together, this scholarship shows that media representations of thinness operate through multiple, sometimes contradictory, processes. Research on body image establishes the relationship between thin-ideal exposure and audience responses. At the same time, scholarship on celebrity culture and media discourse demonstrates how women's bodies are publicly evaluated and assigned meaning. However, research still needs to examine how contemporary entertainment journalism constructs these meanings through its descriptions, headlines, sources, and framing of celebrity women's appearances. This study addresses that concern by examining media coverage of Ariana Grande and considering how discussions of her body contribute to broader cultural conversations about thinness, health, beauty, and femininity.

3.) Critical Discourse Analysis, Feminist Theory, and the Research Gap

Understanding media representations of women's bodies requires more than examining the images that circulate in popular culture. The language used to describe, interpret, and evaluate those bodies also shapes cultural meanings. Media discourse can establish assumptions about

what is considered attractive, healthy, feminine, or socially acceptable. These meanings are not always communicated through direct statements about beauty standards. They can also emerge through word choice, comparisons, descriptions, headline framing, and the selection of sources whose perspectives are treated as authoritative. Critical discourse analysis provides a framework for examining how these meanings are produced and how media language can reproduce broader social expectations.

An intersectional approach is also necessary because media representations of women's bodies do not operate independently of race. As Strings demonstrates, historical ideas about thinness and fatness are connected to racialized understandings of beauty and femininity (Strings). Avery et al. further demonstrate how hegemonic beauty standards can shape the experiences of Black women (Avery et al.). These perspectives are important when considering the representations of Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo. Although the two actresses share a public and promotional environment, audiences may interpret their bodies through different cultural expectations. An intersectional analysis therefore makes it possible to examine whether and how media descriptions reflect racialized assumptions about beauty, physicality, and femininity without presuming that both women experience public scrutiny in the same way.

Although existing scholarship has examined thin-ideal media exposure, body image, celebrity culture, bodily surveillance, and the cultural construction of femininity, these conversations often occur in separate research areas. Studies of body image frequently emphasize audience responses to media exposure, while research on celebrity culture examines the public visibility and evaluation of famous individuals. Feminist scholarship offers a broader understanding of bodily discipline and gendered power, but there remains room to examine how these issues intersect within contemporary entertainment journalism. More specifically, the scholarship reviewed here

has given comparatively less attention to how contemporary media discourse constructs meanings around thinness through its language, framing, and representations of celebrity women.

This project addresses that area by using critical discourse analysis to examine contemporary media coverage of Ariana Grande. Rather than determining whether thinness is objectively returning as a beauty ideal, the study investigates how media representations contribute to the perception of its return. It examines how articles describe Grande's appearance, frame discussions of health and concern, and position different perspectives as credible or authoritative. Including Cynthia Erivo as a comparative figure also allows the study to consider how race intersects with media constructions of feminine beauty and bodily expectations. By bringing together feminist theories of the body, intersectional scholarship, and critical media analysis, this project examines how contemporary media discourse reproduces, negotiates, and challenges the cultural meanings attached to thinness and femininity.

Theoretical Framework

This research draws on feminist theories of the body, intersectionality, and Michel Foucault's concept of disciplinary power to examine how contemporary media discourse constructs meanings surrounding women's bodies, thinness, and femininity. Together, these perspectives provide a framework for understanding how beauty standards are socially produced, how expectations surrounding women's bodies are shaped by gender and race, and how media representations contribute to the surveillance and regulation of those bodies. By bringing these theories together, this study examines how representations of Ariana Grande, alongside comparative representations of Cynthia Erivo, reflect broader cultural expectations surrounding feminine beauty and bodily appearance.

1.) Feminist Theories of the Body

Feminist theories of the body are central to this research because they challenge the idea that beauty standards and expectations surrounding women's appearances are simply natural or individual preferences. Instead, the female body can be understood as a cultural and political site shaped by social expectations, gender norms, and systems of power. Susan Bordo's work is particularly useful because she examines how cultural ideas about femininity become expressed through women's bodies and everyday bodily practices.

In *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*, Bordo (2003) explains that femininity is communicated through what she calls "bodily discourse" (Bordo 170). She argues that cultural expectations are learned through images and representations that communicate how women should look and behave. These expectations extend beyond appearance and influence how women understand their bodies, their behavior, and their place within society. Bordo also examines how ideals of slenderness become connected to broader meanings of femininity, discipline, and self-control. She explains that expectations surrounding women's bodies are connected to the cultural demand that female desires and ambitions be contained (Bordo 171).

Bordo's framework is relevant to this study because it helps explain why thinness carries cultural meaning beyond physical appearance. A thin body can become associated with discipline, control, attractiveness, and socially accepted femininity. These associations are not inherent to thinness but are produced through cultural representations and repeated expectations. In the context of Ariana Grande, media discussions of her appearance can therefore be examined as more than commentary about an individual celebrity. They also reveal the cultural meanings attached to women's bodies and the standards through which feminine appearance is evaluated.

Sandra Lee Bartky's feminist theory of femininity further develops this understanding by examining how women internalize cultural expectations and participate in practices that regulate

their bodies (Bartky). Her work helps explain how standards of femininity become embedded in everyday expectations around appearance, behavior, and self-presentation. Rather than viewing bodily discipline as something imposed only through direct external pressure, Bartky helps explain how women can come to monitor and regulate themselves according to socially established standards.

2.) Intersectionality and the Representation of Women's Bodies

While feminist theories of the body help explain how gender shapes expectations surrounding appearance, an intersectional perspective is necessary to consider how those expectations are also influenced by race. Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality emphasizes that systems of oppression do not operate independently. Gender cannot always be understood separately from race because individuals may experience overlapping forms of discrimination and social expectations (Crenshaw).

Patricia Hill Collins's *Black Feminist Thought* further develops this perspective by examining how race, gender, and other systems of power shape Black women's experiences and representations. Collins explains that controlling images of Black womanhood have historically helped maintain racial and gender hierarchies. She describes how these images become embedded in dominant culture and are treated as "natural, normal, and inevitable" (Collins 5). This is important because media representations do not simply reflect existing beliefs about women; they can also reproduce stereotypes and expectations that shape how different women's bodies are interpreted.

Collins also emphasizes self-definition and challenges the assumption that all women experience femininity the same way. She explains that shared social challenges do not mean that Black women have identical experiences or respond to those experiences in identical ways

(Collins 25-26). This distinction is especially relevant when comparing Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo. Although both women are discussed within the same entertainment industry and shared *Wicked* promotional environment, their representations may reflect different racialized expectations surrounding femininity, beauty, and appearance.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault examines how power operates through systems of surveillance, correction, and normalization. Rather than relying exclusively on direct force, disciplinary power sets standards of acceptable behavior and encourages individuals to conform.

This study draws on Massimo Sargiacomo's (2009) review of Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*. In discussing Foucault's work, Sargiacomo explains that disciplinary methods became "general formulas of domination" (Sargiacomo 273). He describes how disciplinary power operates through observation, normalizing judgment, and examination. These practices make individuals visible and subject to evaluation according to established standards (Sargiacomo 274).

The concept of normalization is particularly useful for this research. Foucault explains how individuals are evaluated according to standards that distinguish acceptable behavior and appearance from what is considered outside the norm. Applied to media representations, this perspective helps explain how certain body types can become associated with beauty, desirability, and femininity while others become subjects of criticism or concern. Media descriptions of women's appearances can help establish these standards by repeatedly presenting certain physical characteristics as desirable, problematic, or worthy of public attention.

Foucault's discussion of surveillance also helps explain the constant visibility of celebrity women's bodies. Sargiacomo explains that the panoptic model produces a condition in which individuals remain potentially visible and subject to observation (Sargiacomo 275). Although

Foucault originally develops this concept through disciplinary institutions, it offers a useful way to examine the visibility created by contemporary celebrity culture. Celebrities are photographed, discussed, compared, and evaluated across entertainment journalism and social media. Their bodies become available for repeated public interpretation, often regardless of whether they have invited that attention.

3.) Tying the Theories Together

Together, feminist theories of the body, intersectionality, and Foucault's concept of disciplinary power provide a framework for examining how contemporary media constructs meanings surrounding thinness and femininity. Bordo and Bartky help explain how beauty standards become connected to gendered expectations and bodily discipline. Crenshaw and Collins offer an intersectional perspective on how race shapes representations of women's bodies and challenge the assumption that all women experience beauty standards the same way. Foucault offers a framework for understanding how surveillance, normalization, and public evaluation regulate bodies.

Methodology and Research Object

1.) Research Approach

This project uses a qualitative Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine how contemporary media discourse constructs and gives meaning to thinness as a feminine beauty ideal. Rather than determining whether thinness is objectively returning as a dominant beauty standard, this study focuses on how media representations shape perceptions of this return. Critical Discourse Analysis allows media texts to be examined beyond their surface-level content by considering how language, framing, and recurring narratives reflect broader cultural values and social expectations.

2.) Research Object and Media Corpus

The primary research object is contemporary media discourse surrounding Ariana Grande's body, appearance, and changing public image. The research corpus consists of nine written media texts published between 2023 and 2026. These sources were selected because they address Grande's appearance, public conversations about women's bodies, or broader discussions of thinness and beauty standards. They include coverage from *Vogue, Women's Health, The Cut, ELLE, The Independent, Dazed, the Associated Press, and Soaliloquy.*

The selected texts offer different perspectives on scrutiny of celebrity bodies. Some directly address public comments about Grande's appearance, while others examine broader cultural conversations surrounding thinness, health, and beauty standards. The corpus also includes Soaliha's essay, “Can Women's Bodies Ever Be Apolitical? On Race, Skinniness and the Wicked Press Tour,” which examines the relationship between race, thinness, and the representations of Grande and Cynthia Erivo during the *Wicked* press tour. As an independent commentary piece, this essay provides a perspective that differs from traditional journalistic coverage.

Cynthia Erivo is included as a comparative figure, particularly through media coverage of the *Wicked* press tour. This comparison allows for consideration of how race intersects with media representations of femininity and beauty. Rather than treating Grande and Erivo as identical case studies, the analysis examines how different expectations and forms of scrutiny may emerge when two women appear together in the same media environment. This approach draws on intersectionality to consider how gender and race can shape women's experiences and representations in different ways (Collins 25-27).

In addition to the nine written media texts, this study includes one supplementary audiovisual artifact: the YouTube video “Ariana Grande Gets Emotional Addressing Body Comments.” The

video provides an opportunity to examine Grande's own public response to conversations surrounding her appearance. While the written articles offer insight into how media outlets frame these discussions, the video allows for analysis of how she communicates her response through language, tone, and emotional expression. This provides another perspective on the relationship between celebrity body scrutiny and public expectations.

3.) Analytical Process

The analysis focuses on recurring language, descriptions, themes, and patterns across the selected media texts and audiovisual artifacts. The study examines how Grande's appearance is described, how journalists frame public reactions to her body, and what assumptions emerge in discussions of beauty, femininity, and health. It also considers how media representations of Erivo reveal or complicate racialized expectations surrounding women's bodies.

4.) Scope and Limitations

This study does not attempt to determine Grande's or Erivo's health, explain changes in their bodies, or make assumptions about their personal experiences. It also does not seek to prove that society has entered a new era of thinness. Instead, it focuses on how media outlets and commentators represent and give meaning to women's bodies within contemporary celebrity culture.

Because this project uses a small, purposively selected corpus, its findings are not intended to represent every media outlet or public conversation about thinness. Rather, the study offers a focused analysis of selected media texts to identify the cultural assumptions and discourses that emerge through these representations. Its purpose is to understand how contemporary media discussions of Ariana Grande, alongside comparative coverage of Cynthia Erivo, reflect, reproduce, and sometimes challenge dominant expectations surrounding beauty and femininity.

5.) Analysis and Findings

This analysis examines how contemporary media discourse constructs the perceived return of thinness as a feminine beauty ideal through representations of Ariana Grande. Across nine written media texts published between 2023 and 2026, several recurring themes emerge surrounding the female body, public scrutiny, health, femininity, and beauty standards. Although the articles approach these conversations from different perspectives, they repeatedly demonstrate how women's appearances become subjects of public interpretation. Cynthia Erivo's experiences during the Wicked press tour offer another point of comparison, showing how race shapes expectations placed on women's bodies and femininity.

5.1) The Female Body as a Public Object of Evaluation

One of the most consistent patterns across the selected media texts is treating women's bodies as subjects of public observation and evaluation. This is particularly visible in the coverage of Ariana Grande's appearance, which repeatedly becomes the focus of headlines, interviews, and public discussion. Even when articles challenge body-shaming, they demonstrate how celebrity bodies remain central to media conversations.

In her April 2023 Vogue interview, Grande directly addresses comments about her appearance and explains that the body people compared her to was actually the “unhealthiest version” of her body (Van Paris). Her response challenges the assumption that an individual's appearance can determine their health. It also reveals the limitations of public commentary, since audiences often interpret physical changes without knowing anything about the person's actual circumstances. Vogue frames Grande's response positively, emphasizing her willingness to address the criticism. However, the article also demonstrates how her body has become a subject that requires explanation in the first place. The attention given to her response reinforces the

larger issue that women's appearances can become public conversations, whether they choose to participate or not.

A similar tension appears in Korin Miller's November 2024 Women's Health article about Grande and Erivo during the *Wicked* press tour. By bringing in medical experts, the article challenges the public's tendency to assume the actresses' health based on their appearances. Psychologist Rebecca Boswell explains, “We cannot tell who is healthy by looking at them” (Miller). This statement emphasizes that appearance alone cannot establish whether someone is healthy. While this framing pushes back against harmful speculation, the article's focus still reflects how much attention is directed toward the bodies of female celebrities. The need to explain why audiences should not judge the actresses' bodies demonstrates how normalized this type of commentary has become.

Chantal Fernandez's December 2024 article for The Cut, “We Still Suck at Talking About Celebrities' Bodies,” expands the conversation beyond Grande by examining the broader cultural attention surrounding women's changing appearances. Fernandez acknowledges the contradiction between wanting to understand what is happening to celebrities' bodies and recognizing the harm that can come from scrutinizing them. She writes, “I was simultaneously desperate to validate my suspicions that something was seriously wrong and disturbed by the growing obsession with these performers' bodies” (Fernandez). Her conflicting reactions reveal that awareness of body surveillance does not necessarily prevent participation in it. The desire to confirm a suspicion can coexist with discomfort about scrutinizing women's appearances. The article also connects contemporary celebrity commentary to earlier periods of tabloid culture, when women's bodies were frequently evaluated and criticized in public (Fernandez).

Similarly, Lauren Puckett-Pope's December 2024 ELLE article emphasizes the ongoing

scrutiny Grande has experienced since adolescence. Grande describes feeling as though she has been treated like a “specimen in a Petri dish” since she was 16 or 17 (Puckett-Pope). The metaphor positions her as an object of examination, suggesting others have repeatedly observed and interpreted her appearance throughout her public career. She also describes hearing “every version of it—of what's wrong with me—and then you fix it, and then it's wrong for different reasons” (Puckett-Pope). Her comments show how expectations around women's appearances can shift while the pressure to meet those standards remains. Even when women try to adjust their appearances to meet public expectations, they may still face criticism.

5.2) Race, Thinness, and the Construction of Femininity

Coverage of Grande and Cynthia Erivo during the Wicked press tour offers an opportunity to examine how race shapes expectations of femininity. Although both actresses received public attention during the same promotional period, audiences interpreted their bodies and interactions differently. Their representations demonstrate that cultural expectations surrounding beauty and femininity are not experienced equally by all women.

In her November 2025 essay, “Can Women's Bodies Ever Be Apolitical? On Race, Skinniness and the Wicked Press Tour,” Soaliha Iqbal examines the different ways Grande and Erivo were positioned during the press tour. Iqbal argues that Grande was frequently represented through associations with delicacy, innocence, and vulnerability, while Erivo was positioned as protective, physically dominant, and more aggressive. She describes this contrast as a process that “masculinize[s] Cynthia and infantilise[s] Ariana” (Iqbal). This interpretation raises questions about how race influences the ways femininity is communicated through celebrity images and public interactions.

The comparison is especially significant because thinness can become associated with

particular ideas about femininity, including fragility, delicacy, and desirability. In this context, Grande's representation can be understood through cultural expectations that link idealized femininity to a smaller, more delicate body. Erivo's representation, meanwhile, reveals how Black women can be interpreted through different expectations, including assumptions about physical strength and dominance. These are not simply differences in individual appearance; they reflect broader cultural ideas about which bodies are allowed to represent vulnerability and conventional femininity.

The Independent's May 2026 article by Isobel Lewis, “Cynthia Erivo Says Comments Calling Her Ariana Grande's ‘Bodyguard’ Reflect ‘Insidious’ Treatment of Black Women,” further develops this issue. The article discusses public reactions to an incident during the *Wicked* press tour, when Erivo intervened as a man rushed toward Grande on the red carpet. Following the incident, some online commentary described Erivo as Grande's “bodyguard.” Erivo challenged the assumptions behind these descriptions and discussed how people interpreted her physical appearance and role in the interaction. She questioned whether people would have made the same assumptions if the roles had been reversed and said her humanity had been “bastardized” (Lewis).

Erivo's response highlights how racialized assumptions can shape the interpretation of Black women's bodies and behavior. Her experience is significant because the public reaction did not simply describe an interaction between two actresses. It assigned them different roles that reflected familiar expectations about strength, protection, vulnerability, and femininity. Erivo's comments challenge these assumptions by drawing attention to the way her body and actions were interpreted through racialized expectations.

Patricia Hill Collins's concept of controlling images helps explain the significance of this

comparison. Collins examines how stereotypical representations of Black women reinforce broader systems of racial and gender inequality. She explains that racist and sexist ideologies can become so deeply embedded in society that they are treated as “natural, normal, and inevitable” (Collins 5). Applied to this coverage, her framework helps show how Erivo's representation can connect to assumptions about physical strength and dominance. At the same time, Grande is more readily positioned through associations with delicacy and vulnerability. These representations demonstrate that femininity is not a universal category experienced in the same way by all women.

Collins also emphasizes that race and gender cannot be understood as entirely separate systems of oppression. Her discussion of intersectionality explains how different forms of oppression work together rather than operating independently (Collins 18). This is important when considering the different expectations placed on Grande and Erivo. Their experiences overlap in their exposure to public judgment, but different racialized and gendered expectations shape the meanings assigned to their appearances. Research by Lanice R. Avery and colleagues on hegemonic feminine beauty ideals among Black women further supports the importance of considering how dominant beauty standards can be experienced differently across racial groups (Avery et al. 181-190).

This comparison does not suggest that Grande and Erivo have identical experiences or that their bodies should be evaluated against one another. Instead, it demonstrates how media discourse can reproduce different expectations of femininity depending on race. The coverage of the *Wicked* press tour reveals that conversations about thinness and beauty cannot be separated from the broader racialized standards through which women's bodies are interpreted.

5.3) Health, Concern, and the Contradictions of Body Positivity

Another recurring theme across the media texts is the relationship between thinness and health. Several articles question the tendency to interpret physical appearance as evidence of someone's well-being. At the same time, they reveal how difficult it can be to discuss cultural beauty standards without making assumptions about individual bodies.

The Associated Press article by Deepti Hajela, published in August 2026, examines the renewed public discussion surrounding Grande's appearance following the release of her music video. The article considers how conversations about her body and beauty standards have resurfaced, demonstrating how quickly public attention can return to a celebrity's appearance. Hajela presents competing interpretations of the discussion, writing, “Some saw yet more body-shaming being aimed, no surprise, at a woman in a society that constantly judges them; others said it was simply concerning” (Hajela). By placing these interpretations side by side, the article presents body commentary as contested. The same discussion can be understood as concern or as another instance of public judgment.

The article also quotes Johanna Kandel asking people to consider “the intent versus the impact of it” (Hajela). This distinction invites readers to consider not only why a person makes a comment but also what the comment reinforces. A viewer may intend to protect others from an idealized image while still treating a celebrity's body as evidence of health or illness. The intention may be critical of harmful beauty standards, yet the language may reproduce the assumption that those standards can be evaluated through an individual's appearance.

Mikala Jamison's Dazed article, “How Do We Talk About This New Era of Extreme Thinness?,” further explores the difficulty of discussing celebrity thinness. Originally published in 2024 and republished in August 2026, the article considers different perspectives on whether public concern about celebrities appearing extremely thin can challenge harmful beauty

standards or reproduce body surveillance. Avery Edison argues, “I don't think it's anti-feminist to say ‘heads up, this woman is unwell and you shouldn't aim to look like her’” (Jamison). This position frames commentary as a possible form of protection, suggesting that questioning an idealized appearance might prevent audiences from treating it as aspirational. Yet the statement also shows how difficult it is to separate cultural criticism from speculation about an individual's health. Describing a woman as “unwell” based on appearance risks treating the body as sufficient evidence of a medical condition.

This coverage matters not because Grande's appearance reveals anything about her health. Rather, it demonstrates how changes in her public image can become a starting point for larger conversations about beauty standards. The article shows how an individual celebrity's appearance can become a reference point for discussing cultural expectations around women's bodies.

The Vogue article by Rory Satran, published in April 2026, provides additional context by examining the relationship between GLP-1 medications and the modeling industry. Unlike the other texts, this article does not directly focus on Grande. Instead, it considers how weight-loss medications and changing industry expectations intersect with fashion and modeling. Through interviews with models, agents, designers, and casting professionals, the article presents thinness as a potential condition of professional success. Former model Samantha Benjamin states, “Girls are getting called fat. Nobody is mincing words” (Satran). This direct language frames pressure to be thin as an explicit professional expectation rather than an unspoken aesthetic preference.

The article also includes sociologist and former model Ashley Mears's criticism of the idea that the fashion industry responds to audience demand: “Everybody's saying the market gets what it wants, but they are the market” (Satran). This statement challenges the idea that the

market is an independent force that fashion professionals merely obey. Designers, casting directors, agents, and other industry participants help determine which bodies appear in fashion imagery, meaning that the industry's decisions also shape what audiences repeatedly encounter. The article therefore provides context for understanding how beauty standards can be sustained through institutional decisions as well as individual preferences.

Together, these articles demonstrate that conversations about thinness often move between individual bodies and broader cultural concerns. Grande's appearance becomes a reference point for public discussion, while coverage of GLP-1 medications and the modeling industry reveals the institutional pressures surrounding body size. However, the distinction between cultural criticism and individual speculation remains important. This study does not aim to determine celebrities' health, but to examine how media discourse links thinness to ideas about health, beauty, and desirability.

5.4) Media Surveillance and the Continued Value of Thinness

Across the corpus, a broader pattern emerges: women's bodies are treated as objects of continuous public observation. Grande's appearance is repeatedly discussed through interviews, photographs, social media reactions, and entertainment coverage. Even when media outlets criticize this attention, the repeated circulation of these conversations keeps her body available for public evaluation.

This pattern can be understood through feminist theories of bodily discipline and Michel Foucault's discussion of surveillance and normalization. In “The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity,” Susan Bordo examines how cultural expectations of femininity become expressed through the female body and everyday bodily practices (Bordo 170-71). Her framework helps explain how women's appearances connect to broader expectations about discipline, beauty, and

acceptable femininity. Grande's representation illustrates how a celebrity woman's body can become a site where these cultural expectations are discussed and negotiated.

Foucault's discussion of disciplinary power also helps explain the role of public observation. In his review of *Discipline and Punish*, Massimo Sargiacomo explains how surveillance, observation, and normalizing judgment work together to classify and evaluate individuals according to established standards (Sargiacomo 274-75). Applied to contemporary celebrity coverage, this framework helps explain how repeated commentary can position women's bodies as objects to be examined and compared. Grande's description of being treated like a "specimen in a Petri dish" reflects this process of ongoing observation (Puckett-Pope). Her appearance is not simply noticed; others feel entitled to interpret it.

The supplementary YouTube video, "Ariana Grande Gets Emotional Addressing Body Comments," adds another dimension to this analysis by presenting Grande's response in an audiovisual format. While the written articles provide interpretation and context, the video lets readers focus on Grande's words, tone, and emotional expression. It reinforces the importance of considering how celebrity responses are presented to audiences, particularly when conversations about appearance become emotionally charged. The video is treated as a supplementary artifact rather than an additional written media text.

6.) Discussion and Synthesis

Across the nine written sources, Grande's appearance becomes a recurring point through which broader ideas about beauty, health, and desirability are expressed. The most consistent finding is the contradiction between criticizing body-shaming and continuing to center women's bodies in media coverage. Articles defend Grande's privacy and challenge the assumption that appearance determines health, yet their attention also keeps her body at the center of public

discussion. This illustrates how difficult it is to challenge a culture of scrutiny when celebrity appearances remain a major subject of media coverage.

The analysis also shows that thinness carries meanings beyond physical appearance, including femininity, delicacy, discipline, and desirability. These meanings are not universal: the comparison with Erivo shows how race shapes how women's bodies and behavior are interpreted. Collins's concept of controlling images helps explain how representations of Black women can reproduce racialized and gendered assumptions (Collins 5, 18). The comparison therefore underscores why thinness and femininity must be examined through an intersectional lens rather than treated as experiences shared equally by all women.

Finally, the coverage of health, GLP-1 medications, and the modeling industry shows that discussions of thinness move between individual celebrities and broader institutional pressures. This study does not establish that thinness has definitively returned as a beauty ideal, nor does it assess any celebrity's health. Instead, it shows how media discourse makes the perceived return of thinness visible and meaningful through repeated attention, racialized comparisons, and competing claims about health and beauty. The central issue is not simply whether women are becoming thinner, but why thinness continues to carry cultural significance and why women's bodies remain subject to extensive public interpretation.

Conclusion

This study examined how contemporary media discourse constructs the perceived return of thinness as a feminine beauty ideal through representations of Ariana Grande. Through a critical discourse analysis of nine written media texts published between 2023 and 2026, along with a supplementary audiovisual artifact, this research explored how media coverage connects women's appearances to broader ideas about beauty, femininity, health, and desirability. Across

the texts, Grande's body became more than a subject of celebrity commentary. It became a point through which cultural expectations about women's appearances were expressed, questioned, and reinforced. The analysis demonstrates that contemporary conversations about thinness are not simply about physical appearance, but also about the meanings and expectations attached to women's bodies.

One of the central findings of this research is the contradiction between challenging body-shaming and continuing to make women's bodies subjects of public discussion. Many of the articles examined criticize speculation about Grande's appearance and recognize the harm that can come from judging someone's health based on their body. However, even supportive coverage can continue to center the very appearance it seeks to protect. This contradiction reveals how deeply public attention to women's bodies is embedded in celebrity culture. Rather than moving away from appearance-based judgment, media discourse can reproduce it through conversations framed as concern, protection, or criticism of beauty standards. Grande's responses further show the limits of interpreting health and well-being through physical appearance alone.

The comparison with Cynthia Erivo also demonstrates that cultural expectations of femininity are shaped by race. While Grande was frequently represented through associations with delicacy and vulnerability, Erivo's representation revealed how Black women can be positioned through assumptions about physical strength and dominance. These differences highlight the importance of intersectionality when examining media representations of women's bodies. Thinness and femininity do not carry the same meanings for all women, and racial as well as gendered expectations shape dominant beauty standards. This comparison reinforces the need to consider whose bodies are allowed to represent conventional femininity and whose bodies are interpreted through different cultural assumptions.

Ultimately, this research does not claim that thinness has definitively returned as a beauty ideal, nor does it make conclusions about the health of the celebrities discussed. Instead, it demonstrates how media discourse contributes to the perception that thinness remains culturally significant. Through repeated coverage, public commentary, and discussions of health and beauty, women's bodies remain positioned as objects of observation and evaluation. Although conversations about body positivity have challenged traditional beauty standards, continued attention to celebrity appearances suggests these standards have not simply disappeared.

This study is limited by its relatively small, purposefully selected media corpus and its focus on a specific celebrity case study, meaning its findings are not intended to represent all contemporary media coverage. However, examining Grande's representation, alongside a comparison with Erivo, offers insight into how media language reflects and reproduces broader cultural expectations. Moving beyond speculation about individual bodies requires greater attention to the media systems and social standards that make certain appearances desirable in the first place. The more important question, then, is not whether thinness is returning, but why women's bodies continue to be treated as public evidence of beauty, health, and femininity.

Works Cited

Avery, Lanice R., et al. ""Pretty Hurts": Acceptance of Hegemonic Feminine Beauty Ideals and Reduced Sexual Well-Being among Black Women." *Body Image*, vol. 38, 2021, pp. 181–90, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2021.04.004.

Bartky, Sandra Lee. *Femininity and Domination : Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression*. Routledge, 1990.

Bordo, Susan. "Unbearable Weight : Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body." *ACLS Humanities E-Book.*, 10th anniversary ed, University of California Press, 1993, http://www.degruyter.com/isbn/9780520930711.

Boucherie, Louis, et al. "Cultural Evolution of Beauty Standards." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, vol. 123, no. 21, 2026, p. e2602380123, https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2602380123.

Brown, Zoe, and Marika Tiggemann. "Attractive Celebrity and Peer Images on Instagram: Effect on Women's Mood and Body Image." *Body Image*, vol. 19, 2016, pp. 37–43, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2016.08.007.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." *U. Chi. Legal F.*, vol. 1989, no. 1, Jan. 1989, p. 139, https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/faculty_scholarship/3007/. Accessed 4 Nov. 2026

Dazed. “How Do We Talk about This New Era of Extreme Thinness?” *Dazed*, 3 Aug. 2026, https://www.dazeddigital.com/beauty/article/62583/1/how-do-we-talk-about-this-new-era-of-extreme-thinness. Accessed 5 Nov. 2026.

Entertainment Tonight. “Ariana Grande Gets Emotional Addressing Body Comments.” *YouTube*, 7 Dec. 2024, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rAAQwgPoE4Q. Accessed 5 Nov. 2026.

Fernandez, Chantal. “After Ozempic, the Celebrity Weight Loss Convo Is Even Worse.” *The Cut*, 5 Dec. 2024, https://www.thecut.com/article/celebrity-body-shaming-ariana-grande-taylor-swift.html. Accessed 5 Nov. 2026.

Ferris, Julie E. “Parallel Discourses and “Appropriate” Bodies : Media Constructions of Anorexia and Obesity in the Cases of Tracey Gold and Carnie Wilson.” *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 2003.

Gill, Rosalind. "Postfeminist media culture: Elements of a sensibility." *European journal of cultural studies* 10.2 (2007): 147-166.

Hajela, Deepti. “Ariana Grande’s ‘Petal’ Video Sparks Commentary, but How Should We Be Talking?” *AP News*, 5 Aug. 2026, https://apnews.com/article/ariana-grande-women-bodies-criticism-59b6c7df63a168de33fa6d097ef22a4e. Accessed 5 Nov. 2026.

Hill Collins, Patricia. *Black Feminist Thought : Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. Rev. 10th anniversary ed, Routledge, 2000, http://site.ebrary.com/id/10054558.

Kanai, Akane. “Between the Perfect and the Problematic: Everyday Femininities, Popular Feminism, and the Negotiation of Intersectionality.” *Cultural Studies*, vol. 34, no. 1, 2020, pp. 25–48, https://doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2018.1559869.

Kyrölä, Katariina, and Hannele Harjunen. “Phantom/Liminal Fat and Feminist Theories of the Body.” *Feminist Theory*, vol. 18, no. 2, 2017, pp. 99–117, https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700117700035.

Lewis, Isobel. “Cynthia Erivo Says Comments Calling Her Ariana Grande’s ‘Bodyguard’ Reflect ‘Insidious’ Treatment of Black Women.” *The Independent*, 28 May 2026, https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/news/cynthia-erivo-ariana-grande-bodyguard-singapore-b2985081.html. Accessed 5 Nov. 2026.

Markey, Charlotte H., et al. “Body Image and Interest in GLP-1 Weight Loss Medications.” *Body Image*, vol. 53, 2025, p. 101890, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2025.101890.

McDonnell, Andrea, and Linda Lin. “The Hot Body Issue: Weight and Caption Tone in Celebrity Gossip Magazines.” *Body Image*, vol. 18, 2016, pp. 74–77, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2016.06.001.

McLean, Siân, et al. “Does Media Literacy Mitigate Risk for Reduced Body Satisfaction Following Exposure to Thin-Ideal Media?” *Journal of Youth & Adolescence*, vol. 45, no. 8, 2016, pp. 1678–95, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-016-0440-3.

Miller, Korin. “Experts On Why You Shouldn’t Comment On ‘Wicked’ Stars Ariana Grande And Cynthia Erivo’s Bodies.” *Women’s Health*, 21 Nov. 2024, https://www.womenshealthmag.com/life/a62978161/ariana-grande-cynthia-erivo-wicked-bodies/. Accessed 5 Nov. 2026.

Pienaar, Kiran, and Ian Bekker. “The Body as a Site of Struggle: Oppositional Discourses of the Disciplined Female Body.” *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*, vol. 25, no. 4, 2007, pp. 539–55, https://doi.org/10.2989/16073610709486480.

Puckett-Pope, Lauren. “Why Ariana Grande Responded to Body-Shaming Comments in a New Interview: It’s ‘Really Dangerous.’” *ELLE*, 6 Dec. 2024, https://www.elle.com/culture/celebrities/a63116360/ariana-grande-body-shaming-interview-2024/? Accessed 5 Nov. 2026.

Rogers, Louisa. “Styling the Surveillance Self in Fashion Media: Strategies of Sexualization and Sentimentality.” *Surveillance & Society*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2025, pp. 17–36, https://doi.org/10.24908/ss.v23i1.17269.

Sargiacomo, Massimo. “Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison : Allen Lane, London, 1977, Trans. By Alan Sheridan.” *Journal of Management & Governance*, vol. 13, no. 3, 2009, pp. 269–80, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10997-008-9080-7.

Satran, Rory. “How Have GLP-1S Affected the Modeling Industry?” *Vogue*, 28 Apr. 2026, https://www.vogue.com/article/glp-1s-the-modeling-industry. Accessed 5 Nov. 2026.

Schönhals, Kristine, et al. “Fitspiration, Thinspiration, Body Positivity, and Body Neutrality Contents on Image-Based Social Media: Associations with Body Image, Mood, Self-Esteem, and Disordered Eating Behavior in Women with and without Self-Reported Eating Disorders-an Ecological Momentary Assessment Study.” *The International Journal of Eating Disorders*, vol. 59, no. 4, 2026, pp. 790–802, https://doi.org/10.1002/eat.70027.

Shefer, T. “Feminist Theories of the Role of the Body within Women’s Oppression.” *Critical Arts*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1990, pp. 37–54.

Slater, Amy, et al. “The Effect of Exposure to Parodies of Thin-Ideal Images on Young Women’s Body Image and Mood.” *Body Image*, vol. 29, 2019, pp. 82–89, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2019.03.001.

Soaliha. “Race, Skinniness and the Wicked Press Tour.” *Substack.Com*, Soaliloquy, 26 Nov. 2025, https://soaliha.substack.com/p/wicked-press-tour. Accessed 5 Nov. 2026.

Strings, Sabrina. *Fearing the Black Body : The Racial Origins of Fat Phobia*. New York University Press, 2019, http://www.degruyter.com/isbn/9781479891788.

TIGGEMANN, MARIKA, et al. “The Processing of Thin Ideals in Fashion Magazines: A Source of Social Comparison or Fantasy?” *Journal of Social & Clinical Psychology*, vol. 28, no. 1, 2009, pp. 73–93, https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.2009.28.1.73.

Van Paris, Calin. “Ariana Grande Addresses Comments Around Her Body On TikTok.” *Vogue*, 11 Apr. 2023, https://www.vogue.com/article/ariana-grande-addresses-problematic-body-commentary. Accessed 5 Nov. 2026.