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(De)Valuing Digital Discourse: A Network of Feminist Rhetoric in Women's New Media Dating Practices

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(DE)VALUING DIGITAL DISCOURSE:
A NETWORK OF FEMINIST RHETORIC IN WOMEN'S NEW MEDIA DATING PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

(DE)VALUING DIGITAL DISCOURSE:

A NETWORK OF FEMINIST RHETORIC IN WOMEN'S NEW MEDIA DATING PRACTICES

Kainat Abidi

Online dating has become part of mainstream culture in the 21st century, yet using media to further or meet an individual's goals of intimacy has been a centuries old practice. Starting in the 17th century, people turned to media to find mates through *Lonely Hearts* advertisements, but as with all rhetoric, the access to voice and agency within this arena has its limitations. This research investigates the landscape referred to here as media intimacy—turning to forms of media, be it print or digital, to find an intimate relationship or partner—to determine if digital settings have provided women with greater agency in finding intimate relationships. After first establishing the feminist inquiry that will be used throughout this research, this dissertation moves through three studies in its analysis of locating and understanding women's voices in media intimacy. First, I take a comprehensive look at *Lonely Hearts* advertisements from the 17th – 20th centuries; followed by an analysis of women's 21st century new media dating advertisements on *Craigslist*; and finally, I examine the community forum ByeFelipe on *Instagram*. I argue that women access the functionalities of the internet to build a complex network of feminist rhetoric in media intimacy compositions. Women negotiate multiple online venues, balancing the tactics of Cheryl Glenn's (2018) concept of rhetorical feminism with technology, multimodality, rhetorical purpose, audience, and community. The inquiry into *Lonely Hearts* advertisements, *Craigslist* advertisements, and the ByeFelipe

community allows us to examine the coalescence of feminism, rhetoric, and new media to create a network of feminist rhetoric, as well as women's rhetorical practices within the resulting network in media intimacy compositions. By locating and understanding these marginalized voices and identities in their different contexts, we uncover a new interaction of feminist and digital rhetorics, where women tap into the complexities and fluidity of the digital to create a networked system across platforms and purposes, exercising rhetorical feminism. Through these networks of feminist rhetoric, we can continue towards a future of reclaimed and equal agency, a future and rhetoric where voices are valued in their digital discourses, both publicly and personally.

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Introduction

Online dating has become part of mainstream culture in the 21st century, yet using media to further or meet an individual's goals of intimacy has been a centuries old practice. Starting in the 17th century, people turned to media to find mates through *Lonely Hearts* advertisements, but as with all rhetoric, the access to voice and agency within this arena has its limitations. This research investigates the landscape of what became thought of in this work as media intimacy—turning to forms of media to find a relationship or partner, including alliance relationships—from 17th century *Lonely Hearts* advertisements to present day new media dating profiles to determine if digital settings have provided women with greater agency to find the intimacy they seek. As we move through the earliest *Lonely Hearts* advertisements, we find that women had limited agency or presence in these compositions, functioning primarily, but not solely, as the objects of men's voices as advertisers. Even in the earliest centuries of personal advertisements, women broke through with advertisements of their own to meet their needs, which was mainly to form alliances. Their voices, however, were devalued by the cultural standards surrounding their compositions, and as such, their agency, while profound in the larger context of gendered limitations, was weighed down with stigma. In the 20th century, women's presence and confidence grew in advertisements, as did their desires as they began to seek relationships of companionship and sex. The 21st century brought forth an abundance of new media dating apps and websites, where women actively compose to meet a wide array of desires.

In addition to supporting women's presence as composers and their vast range of desires, new media has also become a place for women to create their own spaces and

compositions in response to new media intimacy experiences. Women create digital safe spaces, such as the ByeFelipe *Instagram* page, for discourse around and against the harassment they find while engaging in new media dating exchanges. ByeFelipe is a community forum where women share and comment on screenshots of conversations they had with men, known on the site as "Felipes." These conversations show men exhibiting "bad behavior," including insults, threats, harassment, and unsolicited pictures and videos. The ByeFelipe community is built around a concept of safety—a safe digital place to exercise voice—yet, sometimes, the resulting dialogue is shaped by a rhetoric of harassment akin to that which prompted the creation of the page. Judgments guide social interactions to the point of shaming and attacking different opinions, perspectives, or the voicing of questions.

I argue that women access the functionalities of the internet to build a complex network of feminist rhetoric in media intimacy compositions. Women often use new media's functions to serve their purpose—find what they desire and build community, creating a network of feminist rhetoric online. In so doing, however, they sometimes unwittingly reproduce power structures and acts of censorship that led them to build communities and turn to new media in the first place. This investigation moves through three studies in its analysis of locating and understanding women's voices in media intimacy:

- "Seductive Advertising: *Lonely Hearts* Personal Advertisements from the 17th – 20th Centuries" maps the history of media intimacy advertising. This comprehensive look at the history establishes the traditional role of women in the

discourse of media intimacy, where their voices were and were not present over the centuries, and for what function.

- "Self-Fulfillment through WiFi Access: Women's Agency in New Media Intimacy Advertisements of the 21st Century" looks at 25 *Craigslist* intimacy advertisements created by women in July 2017. This qualitative study aims to understand women's current role and expression of voice in new media intimacy.
- "The Power of Dick Pics: Women's Voices and Power Relations within New Media Intimacy Communities" shares the results of a qualitative study on ByeFelipe, an *Instagram* community built in response to oppressive situations and harassment women experience through new media dating.

This investigation tracks the change women are affecting in the landscape of media intimacy. Not only are we mapping the landscape, but a key finding of this study is that women are using new media to *expand* it and *rewire* it. They call on their "feminine" rhetorical strategies, speaking to and from the margins, harnessing the rhetorical techniques and modalities of the medium to enter the public discourse and complicate it. Where media intimacy was once typically "man seeks woman" in a print pamphlet, new media now allows women to express their voice, prioritize their own sexuality, and then screenshot messages attacking them to mock the attacker in a community of their own making. They build and move between different digital venues for various rhetorical purposes, creating a complex network of feminist rhetoric in media intimacy where feminism, rhetoric, and new media coalesce through rhetorical feminist action (Glenn, 2018). Of course, power structures manifest in this investigation at every stage,

attempting to devalue women's voices and deny agency—from men to women and even women to women.

Marriages of Alliance and Companionate Marriages

Before moving further into media intimacy, we must also establish the changing historical and cultural nature of marriages over the course of this study's timeline. For centuries, *Lonely Hearts* advertisements were composed with the goal of entering into marriage. The institution and values of marriage vary by region, and this work will focus on Western marriage and mate-finding practices. Like the majority of marriages worldwide, marriage in Europe and North America does not have its roots in love, but rather in building relationships and family amongst groups of strangers. Eventually, marriage evolved to become a way of building and exchanging wealth and combining resources. Upper classes exchanged wealth through dowries and tributes, whereas lower classes shared wealth through lands and businesses (Coontz, 2005). Further, marriage combined the resource of people, where both husbands and wives worked together, such as in the family business, and produced children to also expand their labor force and ensure inheritance. Marriages didn't make much room for or take into account love. Rather, "for most of history the institutional norms of marriage required women to suffer in silence if their hopes for love inside marriage were thwarted and permitted men to seek love outside marriage" (Coontz, 2005, pg. 21). Alliance marriages were an economic and political move, and given their importance, were not entrusted to the two individuals entering into it; instead, marriages were negotiated by families and surrounding communities (pg. 21).

The 1950s nuclear family of the breadwinning husband and nurturing housewife in a loving marriage was the result of a 150-year evolution to the alliance marriage. The political, economic, and cultural changes of the 17th century encouraged mate choosing for love and began challenging the arrangement of marriages by those outside of the individuals in the couple, but it wasn't until the 18th century that free choice and marriage for love slowly became a cultural ideal. The 19th century romanticized the love-based marriage, and it was during this century that husbands starting becoming breadwinners and wives nurturers. While these roles were introduced during the 19th century, it didn't culturally take hold until the mid-20th century when families could actually be supported by a single income. With the prioritization of love matches, divorce also entered the picture. People questioned whether equal rights for women, who were no longer forced to enter a loveless marriage to be supported financially, might impact marital success and divorce—a question (amongst others like homosexuality and illegitimacy laws) that arose in the 1790s, 1890s, and 1920s (pg. 19). The power dynamic in marriages was strongly tipped towards men. They had the right to beat their wives and forcibly claim their right to sexual relations—whether or not they exercised these rights, their existence for centuries structured the relationship and power dynamic between men and women in alliance and companionate marriages (pg. 21). In the 1950s and 1960s, the companionate marriage became the norm, as did the male and female roles, relationship values, and personal satisfaction ideals (pg. 19).

The ideal of the 1950s and 1960s companionate marriage began to collapse in the 1970s as people could begin to *afford* prioritizing personal fulfillment and love above other considerations (pg. 20). This collapse was strongly impacted by political and

economic changes of the time, as well as the challenging of women's role in society. Women in the workforce, for example, cost less, yet as they married young, laws began to change to allow *wives* and *mothers* from white middle-class families to join the workforce. Wives often had to join the workforce to contribute the additional income to the household (pg. 249). Women also began to want different things for future generations. While they may have shared being happy in their life, role, and marriage, they expressed wanting more options and a change in roles for their daughters—more education, more autonomy (pg. 248).

Another spice in the cultural mix changing the institution of marriage during this time was the contraceptive revolution of the 1960s, weakening the connection between children and marriage, and removing the distraction or cover of children from the marital couple's relationship (pg. 250). The male and female dynamic also changed, where individuals began to openly and publicly express mistrust and hostility about their spouses (pg. 256). People began to focus on self-fulfillment, giving their autonomy more importance than the institution of marriage, and by the 1990s, they were fine being single, childless, living together or having kids out of wedlock (pg. 260). As time moved forward, self-fulfillment continues to be the priority above marriage in the 21st century in Western middle-class society. While people want the protection and rights of the marriage institution, which is still denied to many, people no longer give up love for the sake of entering that institution (pg. 21).

(De)Valuing Digital Discourse

Chapter one of this project, "A Literature Review of Women's Rhetoric," reviews the scholarship in the field of feminist rhetoric. Beginning with its origins and the impact

of historiographies through the works of Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, Andrea Lunsford, Gesa Kirsch, and Jacqueline Royster, I will provide background on the feminist inquiry utilized in this dissertation, as well set the stage for the chapter two examination on the history of *Lonely Hearts* advertisements. We will then transition to feminist scholarship in a digital context, exploring the research of Judy Wajcman, Anne Balsamo, and Claudia Herbst to understand the impact of the digital on women's rhetoric, including the valuation, manifestation, and harassment of offline culture and identities online, to inform our exploration of *Craigslist* and ByeFelipe in chapters three and four, respectively. The final section of this literature review will analyze the work of Cheryl Glenn's tactics of rhetorical feminism, including the strategic use of silence, as we consider gender and women's agency in media intimacy.

Chapter two, "Seductive Advertising: *Lonely Hearts* Personal Advertisements from the 17th – 20th Centuries," tracks the history of *Lonely Hearts* personal advertisements, which originated in the late 1600s. We will follow the evolution of these advertisements to the 1900s, calling on the scholarship of Francesca Beauman and Harry Cocks, to understand women's positionality in these media intimacy compositions. We will examine how women function in advertisements composed by men, as well as women's agency in their own advertising compositions. This chapter will locate women's voices over the course of a 325-year history, the value assigned to them, the nature of relationships and mate-finding (moving from the alliance marriage to companionate marriage), as well as societal contexts surrounding these advertisements in Western culture. This study will build a foundation with which to explore the next generation of media intimacy compositions beginning in the 1990s through new media dating.

Chapter three, "Self-Fulfillment through WiFi Access: Women's Agency in New Media Intimacy Advertisements of the 21st Century," continues the investigation of women's agency in personal advertisements by examining their compositions on *Craigslist*. In this chapter, we will explore women's rhetorical strategies, the continued evolution of relationships and desires, and the agency and value of women's expression of voice. This study will also examine the impact of new media and multimodality on these compositions created by women. I will draw on the works of Cheryl Glenn, Mary Hocks, Elizabeth Losh, Krista Ratcliffe, and others to understand the power and autonomy with which women express their voice in the 21st century media intimacy landscape.

Chapter four, "The Power of Dick Pics: Women's Voices and Power Relations within New Media Intimacy Communities," will investigate women's community rhetoric in the media intimacy landscape. Taking an in-depth look at the ByeFelipe *Instagram* page that is devoted to outing and shaming men's bad behavior on dating apps, we will examine women's rhetoric of community intended to fight against oppressive moments of harassment, as well as the power structures created within this community forum. I will call on the works of Cheryl Glenn and Claudia Herbst to understand the manifestation of women's voice and rhetoric through this social media community. Together with the studies of *Lonely Hearts* advertisements and *Craigslist* advertisements, we will understand the history and present of women's rhetoric in the media intimacy landscape. By locating and valuing their voices in this small section of the greater picture that is women's rhetoric, we can contribute to the larger goal of feminist rhetoric where all voices and rhetorics are valued.

Chapter One:

A Literature Review of Women's Rhetoric

This chapter, "A Literature Review of Women's Rhetoric," opens the conversation on locating voice and understanding women's rhetoric in media intimacy by laying the groundwork of feminist rhetoric. The first section of this chapter will establish the work of Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, Andrea Lunsford, Gesa Kirsch, and Jacqueline Royster to understand the implications of a feminist inquiry, which is used throughout this dissertation, and to inform the investigation into the history of *Lonely Hearts* advertisements. We will then move on to the works of Judy Wajcman, Anne Balsamo, and Claudia Herbst to explore feminist rhetoric in a digital context, building an understanding of identity manifestations, harassment, and the interaction of offline and online cultures, which will inform the studies in media intimacy through *Craiglist* and ByeFelipe. The final section of this chapter will explore Cheryl Glenn's tactics of rhetorical feminism, including strategic silences, that are seen in action through the studies of this dissertation.

Scholarship on identity manifestations in the digital plane is not new. In fact, researchers have looked at different identity characteristics in different contexts online for decades, ranging from blogs to advertisements to video games. Research has considered the larger questions of what is identity online; how is it portrayed and communicated; how is it built; what impact do our offline selves have on our online aliases, and vice versa. While I err on the side of stating the obvious, it is important to recognize that this question is visited time and time again, with different lenses and from different angles. Identity manifestations are simultaneously fluid and limited through new

media. Our exploration is of this contradictory and evolutionary technology, and what it offers for users to possess different avenues and ways of being online. I add to this body of work by establishing the history of feminist rhetoric scholarship, including cyberfeminist work on gender identities online, to ultimately understand women's rhetorical practices through tactics of rhetorical feminism in new media dating. What I will uncover is a history and present of contradictions and evolutions, starting with what the digital can offer gender identities.

Feminist Rhetoric and Historiographies

Women's rhetoric is a history of exclusion from a traditionally male-dominated realm. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell's 1973 landmark essay "The Rhetoric of Women's Liberation: An Oxymoron" (2015) considered the establishment of women's liberation as a movement, which she maintained could not be thought of as such at the time. Women's liberation, at that point, was more a state of mind without defined parameters, policies, or group unification. Further, Campbell recognized the cultural values surrounding gender, which allowed men to be men, but women to be wives. Success for men was out in the world, whereas for women it was within the household. According to Campbell, these concepts of masculinity and femininity needed to be abolished since, even if we took away the outside barriers to success, the "role" and cultural conventions of appropriate behavior would motivate individuals to avoid success for the fear of being unsexed culturally. Individuals were, thus, unable to reach their potential because of the culturally engrained concepts of gender (p. 21).

Women's liberation was a way to abolish masculinity and femininity, and Campbell argued that it came with its own stylistic form of rhetoric, which included

proof, the personal, participation, and the self. She maintained "women's liberation is a unified, separate genre of rhetoric" (Campbell, 2015, p. 27) and should be revolutionary and radical, rather than moderate and reformist. The rhetoric of women's liberation is a paradox as it works quite differently than traditional rhetoric. Many of the concepts of traditional rhetoric fall short when considering feminist rhetorical practices. Traditional rhetoric deals with public problems for social action; feminist rhetoric, on the other hand, deals with public and personal problems, calling on personal experiences, for social and individual actions (p. 27).

Feministic rhetoric is, therefore, not value-free with its inclusion of the personal. It calls on values and experiences to make sense of social interactions and constructs, such as gender, and to call for social change (Carter & Spitzack, 1989; Harding, 1987; Noddings, 1984). A body of work within feminist rhetoric calls on change to establish, as Andrea Lunsford established in her book, *Reclaiming Rhetorica: Women in the Rhetorical Tradition* (1995), the history of women's rhetoric in a male-dominated tradition, which she mapped from Aspasia to Ida Wells. She argued women's voices and silences are woven through the rhetoric of the past, and just as we cannot ignore the past, we cannot ignore women's rhetoric, be it spoken, bodily, silence, or otherwise. Campbell (2010) argued that we need to restore women in history, and Gesa Kirsch and Jacqueline Royster (2012) built on this by establishing women's rhetoric needs to be rescued, recovered, and (re)inscribed. Rhetoric, they maintained, is a social expression, and through the work of restoring women's history, we can engage with women's rhetoric. The historiographies restoring women's voice and history of rhetoric also allow us to resee exclusion and gender in history, and by engaging in such scholarship, we can begin

to explore a future without such exclusion (Campbell, 2010; Glenn, 2010; Jarratt, 2010; Ratcliffe, 2010).

In the tradition of these historiographies, this body of work also aims to resee the history of media intimacy to locate women's voices in *Lonely Hearts* advertisements. As we will see through the analysis in chapter two, *Lonely Hearts* advertisements were not an exception to the male-dominated history of rhetoric. The 325-year history of personal advertisements is heavily male-composed, but women found moments of agency across the centuries. We will explore women's *Lonely Hearts* compositions and how they did or did not function in men's compositions to understand and re-establish the history of women's rhetoric in media intimacy. Ultimately, as the historical data will show, women's voices were given little access to the *Lonely Hearts* arena, and where they did express voice and exhibit agency, their voices were very often devalued and judged for their use until we reached the 20th century and women's presence began to evolve in media intimacy.

As scholars established these historiographies, the question of valued feminist research and value-free traditional research came into play as Cheryl Glenn and Susan C. Jarratt analyzed the rhetoric and gender of Aspasia. Xin Liu Gale engaged in a debate with their analysis, faulting Glenn and Jarratt for their passion in this research. As Patricia Bizzell noted in her work "Feminist Methods of Research in the History of Rhetoric: What Differences Do They Make?" (2010), however, the feminist values exhibited by Glenn and Jarratt are needed precisely to acknowledge emotions, attachments, and even biases. The research of my project takes a feminist approach, and as such endeavors to account for values, positions, and standpoints, but avoids privileging

one over another (Carter & Spitzak, 1989; Naples, 2003; Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). By taking a "value-free" approach while examining women's media intimacy practices from *Lonely Hearts* advertisements, *Craigslist* advertisements, and the ByeFelipe community, we risk generalizing women's practices and downplaying the power relations at work. It would, arguably, be easy to take a value-free approach, removing the gendered implications of the compositions we are reviewing, but in doing so, we fail to reinscribe women's voices in a past and present of women's media intimacy rhetoric. We have to balance the subjective and objective analyses; find the gendered fault lines; establish who can and cannot write and when; who can and cannot listen and when; and how this intersection of gender and agency manifest in this form of discourse, which is only a small meaningful piece of the full picture that is women's rhetoric.

Boundaries, Breaking, and Imbalances

Early feminist scholars of new media explored key aspects that supported the agency women's marginalized identities found through the digital. Of particular interest was how identities, and the boundaries around them, manifested online. A key feature of new media was the breaking down or deconstructing boundaries between categories, and the ability to fuse and recreate offline structures outside of the bound concepts of identity. This hybridity (a concept we will revisit in multiple contexts through the digital) afforded women the ability to move out of the bounds their identities forced them to maintain and push back against masculine autonomy and feminine silence (Harraway, 1985). Seen this way, according to Judy Wajcman in her book, *Technofeminism* (2004), new media offers a post-patriarchal future to women, and because of the nonlinear and uncontrollable nature of the medium, women can thrive in the fluid system and process of digital spaces.

But gender implications are not necessarily destroyed online, and gender still functions as a means to identify, differentiate, and guide practices on new media. Boundaries, while more fluid, never fully leave. Bounded gender still functions as a way to mark people online, never quite leveling the playing field for women (Balsamo, 1996; Wajcman, 2004).

Wajcman's (2004) analysis mirrored Anne Balsamo's in her book, *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women* (1996), in that they agreed there is freedom and agency to be found online, but it comes with its own limitations and connection with offline values. Wajcman (2004), however, took the argument a bit further by revealing a deeper complexity behind online/offline structures. Online manifestations of gender are not a direct reflection or extension of offline gender creations. The internet is a persistent and freeing technology from gender stereotypes, and yet, the new realm has its own values and imbalances. This conclusion is important to bear in mind while moving through this study on new media intimacy since women's agency is not black and white when questioning voice, relation to offline ads, and the impact of technology. New media dating is simultaneously a breakthrough for women in personal advertisements, but it bears characteristics of the genre's history. While women's facility on new media dating shows an upholding of historical ideals, it is not a direct replica of its offline counterpart, *Lonely Hearts* ads, and should not be taken as such lest we fail to see the true impact of the internet on women—and vice versa. Instead, new media dating is its own chapter in this larger story of women's agency through media, both impacting and being impacted by offline realities. Thus, as Wajcman advised in her conception of technofeminism, new media dating in this study will be approached

as concept with its own set of values that show a multi-faceted connection with history, culture, and society.

The internet, as such, carries with it the cultural values and gender hierarchies of offline. Online texts produced for women are limited by offline gender stereotypes that further limit them from accessing culturally male products, like technology and electronics (Paasonen, 2003; Paasonen, 2009). Women are underrepresented as producers in the digital sphere as technology builders and users. Men have dominated the production and creation of technology (Fox, 2006; Herbst, 2009; Kubik, 2012; Stein, 2002; Wajcman, 2006; Paasonen, 2003). This undermines the potential of the internet as an equal information society, and the male relationship with technology is, thus, seen as more natural and legitimate than women's (Kubik, 2012). The basis of this delegitimization is explicitly connected to gender, resulting in power inequalities between genders on new media (Adam, 2002; Kubik, 2012).

The power and gender imbalances on the internet bears with them rhetorical implications. Further discouraging women's involvement on new media are cases of harassment. Women's virtual selves are, essentially, violated publicly through online harassment scenarios that leave them with little access to language or safety with which to fight back. As we will see in chapter three, the technology of new media dating opened up greater instances and impact of harassment, reflecting and magnifying offline gender interactions. Online harassment has become a form of censorship, suppressing the content of the female identity, making women's identity invisible, and silencing the female voice. "The surrendering of one's voice is the emblem of subordination" (Herbst, 2009, pg.

144). Gender has a strong imbalance on the internet, and the harassment of women strips them of their voice and their identity in the digital realm.

Claudia Herbst's argument in her piece, "Masters of the House: Literacy and the Claiming of Space on the Internet" (2009), that the internet holds gender imbalances, discouraging women's involvement through public violation of their identity, presents a key foundation with which to approach the analysis of the *Instagram* page, ByeFelipe, in chapter four of this study. The social media site is a collection of harassment experienced by women on dating sites. While we will see that women have, in a sense, reclaimed their voices through the very creation and community built on this *Instagram* page, and silence is an intricate and elaborate rhetorical concept, it is essential for us to recognize two things. First, in the actual moments of harassment that women screenshot, others were attempting to rob women of their voices, to use harassment as a means to force women to surrender their voice through public violation, as Herbst described. Second, while women maintain their voice on ByeFelipe and take command of the situation, this study will spotlight that we must also recognize women had to *create a separate space* to use their voice against harassment. This community, conversation, and use of voice, is taken *outside* of the dominant space where the initial harassment occurs. As such, we must ask: are women still allowed their identity and voice in their larger, diversified community online, or was Herbst correct in her assessment of an imbalanced internet, where women are safer with their identities kept separate? As we'll see in chapter four, the answer is not clear cut and is an intricately woven and fluid interaction of voice, silence, oppression, and freedom.

Silence and Rhetorical Feminism

The imbalance between men and women is also prevalent in the language online. Access to political deployments of language and voice is historically the arena of men, but this does not limit women in their ability to negotiate rhetoric, voice and silence, to create their own spaces in new media (Adam, 2002; Bowen, 2009; Glenn, 2004). Silence, as Cheryl Glenn argued at length in her book, *Unspoken: A Rhetoric of Silence* (2004), is not necessarily powerlessness, emptiness, or subordinate to speech, nor is speech needed to point out silence. Together with speech, both rhetorical tools are interdependent and reciprocal. Gender, silence, power have an elaborate relationship. Silence by the dominant party can serve as a way to exert control and *force silence* on women, rendering them publicly mute and powerless without language or an audience. Silence, however, can also be a *choice*, a powerful act of rhetoric to resist domination. It is a way to accept control and exercise speech and discourse on *your own* time, according to *your own* agenda (Glenn, 2004).

The internet offers women power and access to its discursive practices, and women use the increased facility offered to them online to develop a new discourse altogether. Women are mixing media and genres to create a new tradition of rhetoric they write simultaneously as individuals and a group in their own digital spaces (Bowen, 2009). The power of the digital comes through writing, individually for the collective, and giving voice to women through developing their own individual style and voice online. By creating digital spaces, new media creates visibility for those who previously, or even simultaneously in online and offline culture, were denied voice and entry into the public sphere.

Expression of voice extends beyond the negotiation of speech and non-speech. The internet is sometimes a silent technology, where literal speech is not necessary to type a message or post an image. This body of research, and the data and compositions within it, are all "silent" compositions; however, they are not "silent" in expression. Digital compositions balance multiple modes and media to communicate and express a message, and in that way, they are highly expressive. In order to communicate effectively in digital spaces, composers consider and utilize the most effective media and modality to "speak" through (DeVoss, Cushman, & Grabill, 2005; Losh, 2009; Sheppard, 2009; Sheridan, Ridolfo, & Michel, 2012). Visual images, an increasingly utilized mode in compositions, are just as complex as verbal discourse (Wysocki & Lynch, 2006). Through a combination of written and visual elements, composers enhance meaning through hybrid digital texts to express their voice and convey meaning in their online "silent" texts (George, 2002; Hocks, 2003; Jewitt, 2005; Kress, 2005; Palmeri, 2012; Rice, 2007).

Before getting too far into the details of this investigation in new media dating, there's one key concept we must marry to our examination, and that is Glenn's concept of rhetorical feminism, which she recently established in *Rhetorical Feminism and This Thing Called Hope* (2018). Rhetorical feminism is, in essence, a tactic with which to meet the goals of feminist rhetoric, a rhetoric free of marginalization, a rhetoric of equality of voice and agency. In order to realize that, rhetorical feminism accesses the rhetoric, vernacular, experiences, and emotions of those in the margins, breaking away from hegemonic rhetoric. With a history grounded in marginalization, where women were not given access or voice, we now find women using the rhetoric of new media to

join the public arena of media dating. The women examined in this study practice some of the key rhetorical feminism practices Glenn establishes. As we begin with *Lonely Hearts* and reinscribing the history of women's rhetoric in media intimacy, we find women speaking to and from the margins in their moments of agency, as well as reclaiming their voice as move into the 20th and 21st centuries. In our examination of *Craigslist*, we find women's strategic use of silence, emotion, and reason to create their own compositions. Lastly, in ByeFelipe, we see the negotiation of silence and emotion to open up spaces of dialogue to and from the margins. Together, these practices outlined by Glenn create opportunities for rhetoric and feminism to coalesce and move to a future of empowerment, action, and hope (pg. 201).

Within the data of this study, we find different types of silence—expressive silence, a form of rhetorical feminism, and censored silence, a manifestation of oppression. Censored silence is the censorship of expression through any modality. As Glenn (2004) described, censorship can be forced or chosen, similar to verbal silence. It can also be a happy accident on the internet when a user simply hasn't logged on and, therefore, hasn't had a chance to express their voice. Of particular importance in this research, moreover, is the interplay of silence as censorship of expressing thought, opinions, response, or voice, and safety. Safety can be a murky term, where individuals avoid confrontation, thus slowing down change (Jung, 2005); yet, censorship may be the only option to avoid harassment. When looking at ByeFelipe, in particular, women created this digital community as a safe space, yet the collective has a tendency to slip back into binaries (Jung, 2005). The individuals that express a perspective other than the one intended, or that the collective community believes, can end up on the receiving end

of their collective abuse. The public forum and openness of digital media then becomes a threat as people have access to individual's personal profiles and pages. The benefits of the internet and community can, thus, take a harsh turn, where self-censorship of expression for safety can be a very real and necessary rhetorical decision.

Glenn's (2004) analysis of the rhetoric of silence serves as an important lens with which to view ByeFelipe. We see multiple purposes and types of silences through the existence and use of the social media site. The images of harassment show the male dominant party attempting to force silence upon women, using harassment as a method to instill fear of further harassment. Yet, their silence is purposeful—a refusal to participate in their own harassment and oppression. Women then turn that silence into speech on ByeFelipe, maintaining power through the interdependent and interwoven use of speech and community they engage in on the *Instagram* page. And yet, as we noted, we will find cases of similar powered harassment take form on this expressive social media page of resistance. We also cannot discount that ByeFelipe takes them out of dominant discourse. The power of the hierarchy needs to be considered when thinking about audience, who is the recipient of silence, and who is the recipient of voice. As the scholars in this section show, when we follow one thread, we move back and forth, round and round, when attempting to locate women's voices and power on the internet. ByeFelipe, as well as women's online dating profiles, are the contradiction of access and limitation in action. An inclusive, exclusive, vocal, silent, communal, individual, resistant, and isolated exhibit of feminist rhetoric chock-full of rhetorical power.

Chapter Two:

Seductive Advertising: *Lonely Hearts* Personal Advertisements from the 17th – 20th Centuries

This chapter, "Seductive Advertising: *Lonely Hearts* Personal Advertisements from the 17th – 20th Centuries," takes a comprehensive view of the 325-year history of *Lonely Hearts* advertisements. Drawing on the scholarship of Francesca Beauman and Harry Cocks, I review the origins of media advertising for relationships ("personals" or "personal ads") in the late 1600s and their evolution to the 1900s to understand the function and interaction of women in these compositions. This research aims to locate women's positionality and value of their voice in *Lonely Hearts* compositions, both those composed by women and men, to reach a broader understanding of women's rhetoric in, what's referred to in this project, as media intimacy. We will consider relationships and societal considerations throughout the centuries, including the institution of marriage, as well as the introduction of media as a means to find a mate in Western culture. This historical sketch provides the foundation for us to move forward into an analysis of new media intimacy advertisements and their intersection with women's rhetoric beginning in the 1990s into the 21st century.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, a respectable relationship, and the goal of most, was marriage, and there were societally acceptable ways with which to find a spouse. Couples predominantly met through connections of families and friends or at social places, such as parties and church. Lower classes and those from rural areas found their life partners through the workplace, fairs, alehouses, market places, local celebrations, and the like. Marriage, at its core, was ultimately a business transaction that involved a

person's family and community (Beauman, 2011, pg. 4; Coontz, 2005, pg. 21; Shepherd, 2016, pg. 27), since not only was your husband or wife the person you'd spend your life with, but the choice of spouse also carried with it strong social and economic implications (Beauman, 2011, pg. 7). As such, parents were often heavily involved in matchmaking these alliance marriages, as were others, including marriage brokers, who brokered acceptable matches as a business (pg. 4). Arranged marriages, however, where families picked partners for their children, only really took place within the aristocratic class at this time. For most other classes, while parents participated in choosing a spouse, young people usually initiated their own match typically for security and alliance (pg. 4). In fact, given high mortality rates, parental influence made no difference for some since parents died before a child reached marital age, leaving their kids free to marry whomever they wished (pg. 6). Regardless of parental presence and influence, finding a spouse was a public event, where couples met and courted in the public eye, chaperoned by the community at large (pg. 4).

Advertising for a spouse through *Lonely Hearts* advertisements was a new method in the late 17th, early 18th century. Because of how drastically different it was, it tried to fit into the societally accepted norms of courtship as much as possible. Even still, it was a controversial method that resulted in gossip and notoriety amongst readers (pg. 2), as well as fake advertisements written as jokes over the next few centuries (pg. 40). The first advertisements were written to be brief and to the point, seeking an alliance marriage (Beauman, 2011, pg. 1; Cocks, 2009, pg. 6; Shepherd, 2016, pg. 31). Sex and marriage were "presented as two entirely separate entities, in no way connected" throughout the early generations of advertisements; meaning that these first ads were

serious and chaste in nature as they sought a spouse (Beauman, 2011, pg. 111). To fit into the culturally accepted norms of courtship, early advertisements were written in third person, as if the editor was the marriage broker on behalf of the seeker. For example, the first advertisement ever published in 1695 was "brokered" by John Houghton, the editor of the London pamphlet, *A Collection of Husbandry and Trade* (pg. 1). Houghton was the first to make money off any form of advertising at this time, and he strategically brokered marriages through print the way marriage brokers negotiated marriages in person (pg. 2). In the advertisements he published, Houghton positioned himself as the "instigator" of the advertisements, rather than the advertiser, thereby fitting into the standards of respectability of a time where even "traditional" relationships outside of advertisements were a family and community event (pg. 3).

Houghton, moreover, made further attempts at building respectability around the *Lonely Hearts* advertisements he published. He prioritized secrecy, maintaining the privacy of those that published through his papers by omitting names and directing responses to be sent to a third location, such as salons, rather than the advertisers' homes. Further, he made sure to guarantee his readers that the proposition and all people associated were honorable in every way. Even with these measures, the stigma surrounding this form of mate-finding was present and heavy (pg. 3), yet the need was greater.

Lonely Hearts advertisements formed out of a growing need people had for help finding a spouse. The increasing population and immigration in London made the traditional route less and less accessible and successful for individuals (Beauman, 2011, pg. 7; Cocks, 2009, pg. 8). For women, especially, the need for *Lonely Hearts*

advertisements was strong as “there was the additional fear of ‘the great Scarcity of good Husbands in these days’, a fear that seems to have afflicted almost every generation in some way” (Beauman, 2011, pg. 6). And with the end of the Licensing Act, editors no longer had to worry about what they printed. Through this combination of need and opportunity, the perfect landscape emerged for *Lonely Hearts*, outweighing the controversy and stigma brought with them.

Even though there was, arguably, a greater need for women to access the benefits of *Lonely Hearts* advertisements, their facility within them was rather limited. That is to say, early advertisements were predominantly written by men, often as a last resort (pg. 36), and women functioned as the readers to these advertisements. Compared to other types of courtship rhetoric, such as love poetry, these advertisements espoused the virtues of the writer, as well as the characteristics of the partners they sought. While love poetry focused its verses on the beauty of their object, the advertising men also used *Lonely Hearts* advertisements to describe themselves (pg. 16). A notable example from the 18th century was written by an older gentleman seeking a wife: “A gentleman who hath fulfilled two succeeding seats in Parliament is nearly sixty years of age, lives in great splendor and hospitality, and from whom a considerable estate must pass if he die” (quoted in Schaefer, 2012, pg. 4). Sixty years of age might not have been the most attractive quality, but the advertisement provides the perspective of a long, successful, powerful career in politics, and living a sophisticated, even glamorous life. The advertisement makes clear that, while this man is older, he has significant wealth he needs to leave to someone after he passes. It was common, even expected, for these early advertisements to talk about money and income in detail, both what was provided by the

advertiser and expected from the reader, which added another, albeit strategic, level to the embarrassment accompanying *Lonely Hearts* (Cocks, 2009, pg. 6). Some were even honest about their financial struggles, such as being behind on debts, needing to pay off their mortgage, or having no money to offer (Beauman, 2011, pg. 33). It does bear noting when considering the self-presentation of advertisements, a theme that emerged, which notoriously carries on across centuries, media, and technologies: love ads lie. Advertising for love, from the start, has been a rhetoric woven with lies and half-truths—rich, handsome, thirty-something. Attributes that would attract a female reader but would not always be true (Beauman, 2011, pg. 16).

Another theme that emerged in early advertisements and has stayed prominent throughout their history is the characteristics men sought in women. To put it succinctly: men want, in order, a young, beautiful, domestic, and compliant woman, hopefully with money. As Francesca Beauman writes in her book *Shapely Ankle Preferr'd: A History of the Lonely Heart Ad* (2011):

> Domestic virtues were increasingly revered….Easily the top priority among almost all the men who advertised was that the successful candidate be aged between twenty and thirty. Being 'respectable' and 'agreeable' were also qualities that recurred frequently. Studies of human courtship have found that social skills (being 'agreeable') have always been of paramount importance in mate choice, perhaps because they suggest the ability to sustain a relationship even in the face of significant challenges. (pg. 27)

It was common for advertisements to go into detail as to what they were looking for in their future wife, including the exact amount of money they needed to bring to the table.

One man, for example, knew exactly what height he wanted in his future partner: “Five Feet Four Inches without her Shoes” (quoted in Sampson, 1875, pg. 486).

During the mid-1770s, romance began to emerge in advertisements in addition to looks, disposition, and finances (Beauman, 2011, pg. 30), but alliance marriages were still the focus. One such individual, for example, wanted respondents from a specific profession, seeking “any Widow having no Children, and keeps a Grocer’s Shop, is inclinable to alter her Condition in the Way of Marriage, to a Widower of the same Business (and one of considerable Fortune)” (quoted in Beauman, 2011, p. 17). This example is particularly interesting since it shows the real versatility and purpose of *Lonely Hearts* from the start. Alliance marriages were, for many centuries, the marrying of economic status, class, and, ultimately, was a strategic contract between life partners. Our widower grocer here sensibly needed a wife, and logically, it made sense to marry a widowed grocer to combine business, wealth, and circumstance with someone in the same stage of their life.

Similarly, there were others who applied this same specificity in mate choice to aesthetics and disposition:

> Good teeth, soft lips, sweet breath, with eyes no matter what colour, so they are but expressive; of a healthy complexion, rather inclin’d to fair than brown; neat in her person, her bosom full, plump, firm and white; a good understanding, without being a wit, but cheerful and lively in conversation, polite and delicate of speech, her temper humane and tender, and to look as if she could feel delight where she wishes to give it. (Quoted in Marwick, 2007, pg. 105)

This advertisement is rather reflective of other advertisements of the time. This man goes into a fair amount of detail regarding the physical characteristics of his potential partner, showing what was considered attractive, physically, in a woman. He highlights good teeth, breath, skin. He wants someone who looks good and tries to look good. After the physical appearance, he details the demeanor this woman should possess, which was also a commonly sought-after demeanor called for in advertisements. Someone delicate, tender, delightful. You can almost hear her soft-spoken voice, sweet giggles, and gentle sighs of understanding, but never a sharp tongue wit. There's an important distinction between "a good understanding, without being a wit"—as if his respondent must be the receiver of *his* wit through her understanding, but not a provider of her own.

This approach to women was not a hard and fast rule; while the bulk of advertisements did want the young, beautiful, rich woman to love, there were those few and far between men that were looking for something else. One man, for example, cared more about demeanor, or personality, than the respondent's looks: "As to person, easy in that choice, preferring a sweetness of temper to any personal appearance so that irregularity in person may be acceptable" (quoted in Beauman, 2011, pg. 30). This advertiser is unique in that, for all intents and purposes, he is saying, as long as the person is sweet in their temperament, he doesn't mind if she is physically irregular or ugly. Most advertisements want the sweet *and* beautiful girl, not picking one distinction over the other. Another advertiser that stepped away from the traditional characteristics was more progressive: "It is requested none will answer this, but who can think and act for herself" (quoted in Beauman, 2011, pg. 27). This man was especially unique for his time since not many 18th century male advertisers looked for responses from the women that could think

and act according to their own minds. Most men opted for delicate, compliant, witless personalities in women. In fact, his phrasing is especially powerful since he isn't simply listing out what he wants, but specifically requesting that no one else responds *except* the women that can think for themselves. It is not only the active request for respondents that fit the checklist, but also an active request for all others to stay quiet.

Women, as previously noted, were the readers or respondents of most *Lonely Hearts* advertisements in the 18th century. They turned to these advertisements predominantly to find husbands because, ultimately, it was a necessity. During this time, it was exceptionally difficult for women to support themselves without a husband. Unmarried women had few options available to them to survive financially, which included things like owning a shop, prostitution, or working as a governess or teacher (pg. 49). If they didn't have some form of employment or livelihood, they would need to live with parents or a sibling as a dependent in their household (pg. 50). While for many it was just the fiscally responsible thing for them to do, for other women, responding to *Lonely Hearts* advertisements was an ambitious and tactful move. They hoped to achieve drastic financial success and social mobility, thinking that if they had the looks and wit needed to accomplish such a shift, they could snag themselves an aristocrat. Class transgressions were indeed more easily achieved through advertisements than through the traditional means of in-person courtship, and this was actually the source of some of the anxieties and stigma surrounding *Lonely Hearts* (pg. 81). Unfortunately for these women, however, easily jumping leaps and bounds to an aristocratic position was, for all intents and purposes, a myth, and aristocrats were not often composers or consumers of these advertisements (pg. 89).

More often than not, women replied to *Lonely Hearts* advertisements out of need during the first century of their existence (pg. 67). Women, on average, were married in their early twenties, and the older they became, the bleaker their prospects became (pg. 48). As Harry Cocks writes in his book, *Classified: The Secret History of the Personal Column* (2009), "as they have done ever since, these advertisements catered for those slightly at odds with traditional forms of courtship and morality, sometimes women just beyond the customary age of marriage or those distanced from the usual connections of family through the death of parents or by virtue of their own financial independence" (pg. 7). As women aged, lost parents, or became widows, *Lonely Hearts* advertisements served a need in helping women find spouses in what would have been traditionally more difficult situations. Some situations were more dire than others, and *Lonely Hearts* broke additional societal clichés when women pregnant out of wedlock could quickly avoid ruin by responding to an ad and finding a husband (Beauman, 2011, pg. 68).

But, of course, as quick and easy of a fix as they might provide, these advertisements weren't without risk. A common threat lurking in advertisements was the "fortune-hunter" (Beauman, 2011, pg. 74; Shepherd, 2016, pg. 32). The trick to identifying a fortune-hunting advertisement, according to the time, was if the advertisement was too good to be true—such as, the advertiser listed out all his many accomplishments and boasted goals of keeping his wife happy. This may have simply been society's attempt to rein women in, however, rather than a genuine method to avoiding fortune-hunters, since there was "a profound anxiety surrounding women's slowly but steadily increasing empowerment, both sexual and otherwise" (Beauman, 2011, pg. 74).

In addition to "fortune-hunters," there was also the threat of "what sort of man" wrote *Lonely Hearts* advertisements, a thought that became quite literal with the notorious trial of William Corder. Corder killed his first wife, Maria Marten, in 1827 and, while on the run for her murder, published *Lonely Hearts* advertisements. Through his ads, he eventually found his second wife, Mary Moore, before being caught and pleading guilty to murder (Beauman, 2011, pg. 90; Cocks, 2015, pg. 21). While fleeing,

> his announcement, headed "MATRIMONY," described him as a 'A Private Gentleman, aged, 25, entirely independent,' seeking 'any female of respectability, who would study for domestic comfort,' and who was willing 'to confide her future happiness in one every way qualified to render the marriage state desirable.' He was, the ad said, a 'sociable, tender, kind, and sympathizing companion,' and instructed correspondents to write to Mr Foster's stationer's shop in the City, from where he would collect the letters. (Cocks, 2015, pg. 21)

Corder received 53 responses to George Foster's stationary shop, none of which were picked up. Of the responses, only 13 questioned the authenticity of Corder's advertisements (Beauman, 2011, pg. 97; Cocks, 2015, pg. 21). The responses were wide in variety—rich, poor, desperate, respectable (Beauman, 2011, pg. 98), some wanting marriage, others wanting a "tryst" (pg. 100). The newspapers of the time wrote badly about the women who replied to Corder, calling them "indiscreet spinsters, silly boarding-school girls, or wanton widows" (Beauman, 2011, pg. 103). Foster described the women as lacking modesty and intelligence, and asking for danger since "any man depraved enough to use a Lonely Hearts ad to meet women was also the kind of man who probably wanted to murder them as well" (Beauman, 2011, pg. 103). What the

newspapers and Foster's judgments show us, however, is not that women were in danger of those that would do them harm through insincere advertisements, but that honest women, with already limited means and autonomy with which to lead their own lives and find husbands, were the victims of backlash and judgments for exercising the little power they had to simply respond to an advertisement. Women were not only vulnerable to the ill-intentions of an advertiser, but also the society that deemed them stupid whores asking to be murdered for replying to Corder.

Women were not necessarily empowered, moreover, if they were one of the few that composed *Lonely Hearts* advertisements (some of which did, in fact, advertise for sex) (Beauman, 2011, pg. 62; Cocks, 2015, pg.19). As noted, men were mainly the writers of advertisements, while women were mainly the readers and responders, yet there were those few women, more often than not widows, who found agency through *Lonely Hearts* by breaking limitations and actively composing advertisements of their own (pg. 52). When considering the *Lonely Hearts* written by women, we must, in addition to empowerment, acknowledge what society deemed as desperation. *Lonely Hearts* advertisements were controversial to begin with, where many read, and even wrote, these ads in a spirit of jest or mockery. In an era where love advertisements already broke convention due to the desperation to find a spouse, female advertisers broke convention within the unconventional in the hopes to survive in a harsh world, and the resulting "picture that emerges is sad – and, at the same time, amazingly courageous" (Beauman, 2011, pg. 48). It's important to keep in mind that men, historically, have been expected to make the first move, and it took bravery, "even [a] revolutionary act of

defiance" (Beauman, 2011, pg. 59), for a woman in the 18th century to risk her own reputation by taking the first step for herself (pg. 51).

Most of the women who created advertisements were widows since they had the financial independence and autonomy to act outside of the boundaries drawn around them by society, community, and family (pg. 62). Whether a widow or otherwise, themes emerged in women's advertisements, as well, as they had in the advertisements men wrote. The most common theme was that women sought a husband who could be a lover and a protector, such as one young widow looking for "a man of fashion, honour, and sentiment, blended with good nature, and a noble spirit, such a one she would chuse for her guardian and protector" (quoted in Cocks, 2015, pg. 20). While a widow did have a level of independence, it was still expected and perhaps even necessary to have a male partner to be dependent upon that would protect and take care of her. Independent women were not common or accepted members of society in the 18th century. Even advertisements selling sex, rather than marriage, wanted the male protector figure:

> A Lady, whose accomplishments hath acquired the esteem of the *beau monde*, having lately lost a secret friend, is desirous of putting herself under the protection of any person of rank and fortune. Person agreeable; disposition happy; can suit herself either to the sprightly levity of the gay, or the more sedate turn of the grave and wise. Though brought up in the *bon ton*, her reason is not impaired. Her real situation is an entire secret to her acquaintance, which she hopes will apologize for this address. (Quoted in Beauman, 2011, pg. 62)

Similar to the widow, this woman also lost her significant other at the time, but this was not her husband, rather a "secret friend." As a result, she sought another protector. This

advertiser was looking for a bit more than just any man to offer protection—she wanted someone who had status and fortune, who could then financially take care of her. Another interesting aspect of her advertisement is how she presents herself: she could be happy and giddy, or stoic and serious, essentially telling her reader "I'll be whatever you want." Further, she felt compelled to note that, even though she comes from a background in "the fashionable world," she was still a reasonable person. This advertisement is quite secretive, almost playing coy through the written word to attract her next partner.

Yet, as powerful as some advertisements written by women read, showing women taking ownership and control of their own fate, the desperation behind many of these unconventional composers resulted in "pathetically low expectations" (Beauman, 2011, pg. 61). A 25-year old young widow in a "distressed circumstance," for example, with an annual £24 income and £500 in savings was looking for someone to "engage her as the superintendant of his family" (quoted in Beauman, 2011, pg. 61). This widow was still young, had money and a stable stream of more coming in, yet she positioned herself as the potential "superintendant" of the respondent's family. It almost read like she was presenting herself as an employee, rather than a spouse, to gain her reader's attention. And in return for engaging in a relationship with her, "whoever shall think fit to make her the object of his choice may depend on the most affectionate and grateful of returns," but "she is not so vain as to expect a gentleman" (quoted in Beauman, 2011, pg. 61). This young woman was quite self-deprecating in her advertisement, almost like the man that responded and married her would be doing her a favor by doing so. Like many advertisements written by her contemporary female advertisers, the tone of her *Lonely Hearts* ad lets her readers know that she will take whatever it is she can get.

As we move into the 19th century, we see that women's already limited presence in *Lonely Hearts* advertisements shrank even more. Between 1800 and 1870, women continued to reply to advertisements since the pressure to marry at a young age was ever-present. In fact, as Beauman notes, a young woman not engaged by 20 was likely not going to get married (pg. 131). Very few women, however, placed advertisements of their own to find a husband. "This was just one consequence of renewed limitations on female self-determination in this period" (Beauman, 2011, pg. 111). There was, also, a renewed focus on domestic values and chaperones to the courting process (pg. 109):

> Those [women] who actively courted a public existence were deemed by some to be no better than a common prostitute. Thus to place an ad in a newspaper, even an anonymous one, and thereby into the public sphere, was to thumb one's nose at social convention. It required willingness to defy the rules that, understandably, few women found themselves able to conjure up. (Beauman, 2011, pg. 111)

Men, however, were still actively composing advertisements for love and marriage (pg. 112). The qualities of the perfect wife remained much the same, with the desire for an 'agreeable,' 'respectable,' young wife. The omission of sex in marriage advertisements also continued into the 19th century (pg. 119), as did the focus on marriage, rather than any other type of relationship (pg. 121). New themes that emerged during this century were the desired qualities of a religious, pious wife, and a shift to *prioritize* romance and companionship, while still trying to make a strategic, dutiful marriage (pg. 121). A 30-year old lawyer, for example, "weary of leading single life, wishes to meet a Venus who could Love an Adonis" (quoted in Beauman, 2011, pg. 129). Immediately, this young man went straight to a poetic proposition all about love and desire—literally asking for a

goddess of love to love a god of desire. This advertiser was exceptionally direct in showing that his main priority and what he was looking for was romance.

During this century, the structure around advertisements changed as marriage publications emerged. *Matrimonial News* was the first publication to specialize in *Lonely Hearts* advertisements, which charged six pence for forty words (pg. 127). Other publications also popped up, including the *Marriage Gazette* and *Marriage Times* (pg. 128). With the income of the average middle class rising, people were able to afford the cost of advertisements (pg. 132), and a pattern amongst the language developed since composers needed to be concise in their message (pg. 127). One of the rare advertisers not seeking marriage, but rather a date to a ball, wrote a quick advertisement for a "Young lady wanted, about seventeen or eighteen, to go to a ball on the 14th" (quoted in *Every Saturday*, 1868, pg. 480). Short and to the point, he laid out exactly what was important to him (the age of his respondent), as well as the purpose and date of the event. A further rhetorical shift seen in the 19th century was the growing occurrence of the phrase "photos exchanged" in advertisements. "Fairly or unfairly, physical appearance now played a role right at the beginning of any courtship initiated through a newspaper" (Beauman, 2011, pg. 139), a role that has only grown in media intimacy compositions.

In the late 19th century, women made a reappearance on the scene of *Lonely Hearts* advertisements as composers, once again in scarce numbers. The women that turned to advertisements were often "working-class or miserable," such as "A young Jewess (an orphan) wishing to get away from her friends and relatives, who keep her (much against her will) very secluded" and "A Maiden Lady, of middle age [who] has had many cares and worries during her life" (quoted in Beauman, 2011, pg. 138). These

women express the situations they are trying to get out of—friends and family keeping an orphan trapped, a troubled past—adding a tone of desolation to their need for a husband to save them.

Orphaned and middle-aged women continued to turn to *Lonely Hearts* to change their circumstance, upholding many of the themes we saw in the 18th century, but weaving in a stronger element of bleakness:

> Lena, the daughter of a professional gentleman, is between 30 and 40 years of age, not tall, dark hair, pleasant countenance, and possesses a warm loving disposition, but owing to a trial early in life, has only now concluded it is best to marry, as she, like the ivy, requires some thing to cling to and fill up the void in her heart. (Quoted in Beauman, 2011, pg. 130)

Lena, of course, describes herself physically, as well as her personality, but also adds an explanation around why she's seeking a husband at her age. She doesn't go into detail about what exactly happened to her, but she shares in her advertisement that troubles in her life stopped her from getting married earlier, adding in that thread of misery. She also continues the style of writing in third person, thus giving the respectable sense that a third-party person was brokering the marriage. Lena, however, also introduces another new theme from the late 19th century—women started wanting progressive relationships. Rather than a husband to be a guardian, she's looking for a husband to complete her life.

Another contemporary of Lena's followed these same themes in her *Lonely Hearts* advertisement, as well:

> A young lady, aged 22, the orphan daughter of a country gentleman, of old family, would like to marry. She is well-educated, accustomed to good society,

> and has travelled much; is a capital housekeeper; can ride, and drive a pair; is musical, and dresses exquisitely, and wants some one awfully jolly. No clergyman, doctors, or learned men need apply, but an easygoing kind of fellow, with a fairish amount of brains, would suit admirably. (Quoted in Beauman, 2011, pg. 130)

This young lady also described herself and what she brings to the table (educated, domestic, musical, stylish), with a subtle hint of pity (orphaned). And, like Lena, she described what she was looking for in a man, and it was not the protector. This advertiser is more interested in the respondent's personality, wanting someone for what they could add to her life in the form of happiness, not protection. The types of relationships women sought were evolving to companionate marriages, rather than alliance ones (pg. 162). "Free love" was also growing widely as publications emerged, like the *Adult*, "encourage[ing] men and women to break the bonds of custom and meet better partners outside of their class" (Cocks, 2009, pg. 24).

The late 19th, early 20th centuries did still retain other features of early *Lonely Hearts* advertisements, as well, such as the stigma around this form of mate-finding, leading to nefarious behaviors of some disingenuous advertisers. For example, while intentions of many advertisers were genuine, some people published fake advertisements, which became more dangerous in nature. As Beauman (2011) writes:

> If an ad – any – is to fulfill its purpose, it has to contain an element of deception. In this respect, all Lonely Hearts ads constitute identity fraud to an extent. Yet the sort of identity fraud perpetuated in the 1890s was considerably more malevolent than that of fifty years beforehand. Schoolboys who dressed in women's clothes

> for the sake of playing a practical joke on some poor unsuspecting gentleman were now replaced by swindles of a far more criminal nature. Furthermore, these swindles were now almost always aimed at women. (pg. 153)

Men and women would advertise for love and marriage, while asking for money. The respondents, believing that they were soon to be married, gave it willingly to their future spouses. Before long the advertiser would disappear and the respondent would be left alone and robbed (pg. 155). These sorts of criminal acts continued into the 20th century. Notably, Edward Fitzgerald in 1915 lured women in through his *Lonely Hearts* advertisements, such as "Bachelor (35), good income and appearances, wishes to meet refined lady, preferably with a small income or capital. Genuine references" (quoted in Beauman, 2011, pg. 67). His ads seemed genuine, unsuspecting, and were an overall attractive advertisement. Over the course of a year, he "borrowed" £3,455 from various women he found through advertisements and was, ultimately, sentenced to 8 years penal servitude for theft and bigamy (Beauman, 2011, pg. 167; Cocks, 2009, pg. 54).

In the early 20th century, *Lonely Hearts* advertisements continued to experience a bit of a shift. They were still a practical solution to the problem of finding a mate, but they were also a growing means for romance. During this time, women were encouraged to be "in love" from an early age through novels, and advertisements, likewise, continued to increase in their emphasis on romance (pg. 166). A new theme in the 20th century, however, was war and sadness. World War I caused the creation of a brand new type of *Lonely Hearts* advertisement: the Lonely Soldier ad (pg. 167). Lonely Soldier advertisements served as an opportunity for friendship and love, but also as propaganda material to show that soldiers were thinking of the lives and homes they were defending

(Cocks, 2009, pg. 30). Yet, some soldiers wanted a distraction from the war and defense they were engaged in: “Someone, somewhere on active service, would welcome correspondents, opposite sex, in an exchange of opinions, other than war topics” (quoted in Cocks, 2009, pg. 31). More often, these men were looking for someone to simply talk to: “Lonely Young Officer, up to his neck in Flanders mud, would like to correspond with young lady (age 18-20), cheery and good looking” (quoted in Buck, 2017). Even within this subgenre, as we’ll note, the theme of the young, beautiful, pleasantly dispositioned female respondent still persisted from the past 200 years (although, the “delicate” female was now the “cheerful” female).

As many of the same themes survived in the advertisements written from men for women (age, looks, disposition), so, too, did the themes in advertisements women wrote for men. There continued to be a sense of class or rank, that perhaps was the natural progression of the protector quality we observed in prior centuries, since with rank or class came certain power and security to take care of a life partner. Women were also very much involved in the war effort and occasionally looking escape, as well, such as “Two Solitary Sister Susies, tired of sewing shirts for soldiers, would like to correspond with two lonely Colonial officers, or gentleman rankers. Fond of music, country life and sport. Ages 25 and 29” (quoted in Cocks, 2009, pg. 36). These two sisters supported the war by sewing shirts, and their advertisement implies they wanted to get away from it. Further, they were also rather specific in what they wanted—they didn’t want just any soldiers responding, but Colonial officers or soldiers of rank. Other women advertisers at the time also held this sort of specificity in their ads, even insofar as indicating the branch of service they were seeking. One young woman, in fact, requested respondents working

in the Navy, preferably on a submarine (pg. 33). These advertisers were looking for a marriage where their husbands would be out to seas, rather than at home, showing that even with the growing desire of companionate marriage, alliance marriages still very much existed.

With two World Wars, another theme that emerged was one of sadness as nurses and soldiers created their advertisements, and as a result of both wars, there was a severe shortage of husbands (Beauman, 2011, pg. 169). One woman, for example, lost two husbands in the war: "young widowed lady (Scotch), newly arrived in London, seeks matrimony for the third time, having lost first husband in the war and second husband in aeroplane accident" (quoted in Beauman, 2011, pg. 168). But Lonely Soldier advertisements were also a way to hope through the sadness, and perhaps even find a way out. Another young woman exemplified this by writing an advertisement stating "in 1914 I was engaged to a soldier and when he was killed thought I should never want anyone else, not have I until lately" (quoted in Beauman, 2011, pg. 168). This young lady thought she would never marry after losing her fiancée, but *Lonely Hearts* provided her with a way to try to find love again when she was ready. Though there was sadness and loss woven throughout the advertisements of this time, *Lonely Hearts* kept an avenue of companionship, friendship, and love open for those that wanted to find it.

Not all was doom and gloom, though, especially for women. After the war, women's social horizons expanded as there was an increase in autonomy and an end to the Victorian-era demand throughout society (pg. 172). This resulted in an evolution of *Lonely Hearts* advertisements, as well, where marriage was no longer the focus of all advertisements:

> Rather, it was an opportunity for these newly empowered young women to explore their sexuality without having to submit to the shackles of marriage. In a telling shift in semantics, many describe themselves as a 'bachelor girl' rather than a 'spinster', while the term 'sporty' also emerged as advertising shorthand for someone who was urban, modern and open-minded. (Beauman, 2011, pg. 174)

Companionship advertisements were few in the 1920s, and some ads didn't even allude to marriage at all (pg. 173), such as a "Bachelor girl (London W), well-educated, loves books, sunshine, laughter, cinemas, detests Mrs Grundy, orthodoxy, and human cabbages, wants 'really truly' men chums, unconventional, alive. London preferably" (quoted in Cocks, 2009, pg. 11). This modern young girl sounds fashionable, fun, flirty, and is looking for an intimate male friend, rather than a husband. Everything about her advertisement, from the tone to what she's seeking, breaks away from the traditional characteristics of *Lonely Hearts* advertisements, even stating outright that she wants the "unconventional."

The Link magazine, founded in 1915, supported this unconventional new form of advertisements. This publication consisted of advertisements from women wanting to meet men, and vice versa, for friendship, not marriage (Beauman, 2011, pg. 174; Cocks, 2009, pg. 21; Shepherd, 2016, pg. 31). It made love advertisements more lighthearted instead of upholding their history of solemnity and earnestness. The publication was controversial for the time since, as a result of its progressive nature and purpose, there were allegations of indecency against it with its potential for homosexual advertisements, sexual advertisements, advertisements for affairs, and so on. The editor, however, "reassured his readers that he vetted all letters personally" to remove immoral relations

(Cocks, 2009, pg. 18), which feels rather notable. As the nature of advertisements was shifting, we see that an editor had to step in here, similar to Houghton in the early 18th century, to uphold and reaffirm the respectability of the advertisements in the publication. But the line calling for the editor to speak up had very clearly moved—in the 18th century, it was a conversation around an honorable proposal from an honorable suitor; in the 20th century, it was a vetted invitation for friendship, not indecency. Further, with the help of *The Link,* women went from being described by the adjectives of "delicate" and "comely" in earlier generations of advertisements to being described as "sporty" and "jolly" in the 20th century (pg. 11). Photos, of course, continued to be appreciated and requested (pg. 13).

Women's role in society continued to change after the war beyond their presentation in *Lonely Hearts* advertisements. They grew in the work force, with more women acquiring jobs and entering into professions that were previously cut off from them, such as medicine and law. Additionally, the age by which they were expected to marry grew older. The politics of the time also began to change as women rallied for and got the vote. "Coupled with women's greater independence was a growing sexual assertiveness. Respectable women openly wore make-up, adopted androgynous flapper fashions with higher hemlines, cut their hair short and smoked in public" (Cocks, 2009, pg. 51). Hand in hand with all of this, women grew in their use of advertisements (some even arguing that their physical appearance and self-presentation was, itself, becoming an advertisement). By the early 20th century, "women were better than men at writing ads: they understood the nuances of the words they used, particularly fashionable terms like jolly, unconventional, sporty and fed up, which at one level seemed perfectly respectable

or ‘refined’ but, at another, offered hints of sexual availability” (Cocks, 2009, pg. 52). Men were less artful in their advertisements, continuing to compose ads with a tone of seriousness in the tradition of *Lonely Hearts* historically. 20th century men were, however, direct and straightforward about any flaws they possessed, whether it be a sour demeanor or financial hardship (pg. 54). But for women, gone were the days of the desperate, miserable woman, looking for a man to take pity on her by marrying her. The 20th century found the confident, “Charming spinster, really so, age 32, height 5 ft 3 ½ in, dark hair, blue eyes, bright complexion, beautiful voice and splendid pianoforte player, good income from own Studio, Church of England; wishes to meet Bachelor, 32 to 40, with income £600 or over” (quoted in Cocks, 2009, pg. 105), and her contemporaries in advertisements. This woman didn’t offer explanations around her age, nor was she self-deprecating. She was bold in her sharing of accomplishments and strengths, as well as what she wanted. But some things never change, and like the previous two centuries before her, this charming spinster also shared her looks, religion, and money.

By the mid-20th century, marriage still remained a focus of *Lonely Hearts* advertisements, and marriage rates, societally, began to soar since more men were becoming available. As women became more educated and professional, however, their difficulties in finding a spouse increased (Beauman, 2011, pg. 183). Lives were also becoming more private at this time, and people sought out the aid of marriage agencies, rather than turning to *Lonely Hearts*, to keep their personal business out of the public eye (pg. 184). Advertisements did gain traction once again as the sexual revolution started in the later 20th century. Initially, the sexual revolution began with gay advertisements, but the heterosexual community soon joined in with the first swingers’ ads entering

publications in the 1960s (Beauman, 2011, pg. 186; Cocks, 2009, pg. 147). “Although the informal rules of swinging prevented emotional ties – sex was its sole and imperative aim – swinging did allow people to break out of their alienation and to establish friendship networks, however attenuated” (Cocks, 2009, pg. 137). By the 1970s, sex was becoming mainstream in *Lonely Hearts* advertisements (Beauman, 2011, pg. 186), with men looking for “chicks” and “birds” that were “sexually aware” (pg. 187). One sexually liberated young man, for example, was quite direct in his advertisement when he wrote, “Inner-freedom-seeking, radical relationship wanted, aware woman friend sought by young, non-English bachelor guy, for awareness, sharing and sex” (quoted in Beauman, 2011, pg. 188). Marriage was, very clearly, no longer the primary function of *Lonely Hearts*.

Many of the major themes still persisted in the latter half of the 20th century, but there were some changes to *Lonely Hearts* advertisements. To start, advertisements grew in popularity, entering into almost every major newspaper (Theissen, Young, & Burroughs, 1993). In the 1980s, abbreviations began to appear as the language of advertisements evolved, such as GSOH (good sense of humor) and WLTM (would like to meet), a rhetorical tool that has since continued to be a standard in personal advertisements across media (Beauman, 2011, pg. 190). In terms of what people were seeking, we see many of the same themes that have been present since the start of *Lonely Hearts*. Between the 1970s and 1990s, women prioritized financial security in their male partners, as well as sincerity in relationships, whereas men’s primary desire was to find someone young and attractive (Beauman, 2011, pg. 191; Harrison & Saeed, 1977, pg. 263; Lynn & Shurgot, 1984, pg. 355; Sitton & Rippee, 1986, pg. 257). Because of this,

advertisers positioned their self-presentations and what they were looking for strategically—that is to say, men would offer resources for looks, and women would offer looks for resources (Sitton & Rippee, 1986, pg. 258; Thiessen, Young, & Burroughs, 1993). While women emphasized financial security, they did also want physical attractiveness in their respondents. Physical attractiveness, confidence, and companionship were sought by both genders in the position of advertisers or respondents (Sitton & Rippee, 1986, pg. 258). Advertisements from both men and women that described themselves as physically attractive often received more responses, and attractive advertisers were more likely to seek attractive partners (Harrison & Saeed, 1977, pg. 262; Lynn & Shurgot, 1984, pg. 354).

A major finding of our examination at the intersection of women's rhetoric and personal advertisements is success rate of advertisements as related to gender in the late 20th century. Two separate studies, one by Michael Lynn and Barbara A. Shurgot (1984) and another by Del Thiessen, Robert K. Young, and Ramona Burroughs (1993), found that, as a whole, advertisements composed by women received more responses than those composed by men. This shift of the gender implications within media intimacy is profound: in a history of *Lonely Hearts* advertisements composed by men, where women's compositions were few and far between, and weighted by desperation and stigma until reaching the autonomy of the 20th century, we find the late 20th century data showing women's agency and compositions were not only thriving, but were more effective than men's. In a male-dominated history and tradition of media intimacy, women were now the more successful advertisers.

The history of *Lonely Hearts* advertisements reflected the evolution of marriage from the alliance marriage to the companionate marriage to self-fulfillment over the course of the 17th century to the 20th century. While the main consumers or composers of the advertisements were men in the early centuries, women found surprising agency in the 18th and 19th century, composing advertisements to find what they were seeking, even with society's judgement and devaluation of their compositions. Similarly, these advertisements written by women and what they were looking for followed the trajectory of the changing nature of marriage over the course of *Lonely Hearts*' history. In their early compositions, women searched for an alliance marriage, both as respondents and as composers in their own advertisements. The 19th century showed a slight shift as women composed advertisements looking for a companionate marriage, prioritizing love a bit more in their life partnership. By the end of the 20th century, as self-fulfillment was the priority over finding a spouse, women's autonomous, valued, and successful advertisements sought more companionship and love, as well as sexual fulfillment. *Lonely Hearts* compositions provided women with, albeit limited but growing, agency and value over the course of its history, and as marriage evolved, so did their pursuit of personal fulfillment and reclaimed rhetoric through media intimacy.

Chapter Three:

Self-Fulfillment through WiFi Access: Women's Agency in New Media Intimacy Advertisements of the 21st Century

Introduction

Chapter three, "Self-Fulfillment through WiFi Access: Women's Agency in New Media Intimacy Advertisements of the 21st Century," continues our investigation into women's positionality and rhetoric in media intimacy compositions. As we saw in our chapter two historical mapping of *Lonely Hearts* advertisements, men were the primary composers of personal advertisements, but women found moments of agency that grew as we approached the 20th century. Relationships, similarly, evolved in Western culture from the alliance marriage to a growing desire for companionate marriages and relationships. This chapter examines women's new media personal advertisements on *Craigslist* to continue this analysis of women's rhetoric. We will consider their expression of voice; the impact of new media functions and multimodality on the inclusion of pictures; the evolution of relationships for companionship; and the manifestations of sexual desires, calling on the research of Cheryl Glenn, Mary Hocks, Elizabeth Losh, and Krista Ratcliffe. By looking at women's new media intimacy practices in these advertisements, we will find women accessing the power and value of their voice on new media, which builds on our understanding of women's rhetoric in the media intimacy landscape.

As we saw over the course of a 325-year history of *Lonely Hearts* advertisements, rhetoric and mate-finding have a strong relationship. Placing women at this junction becomes a bit more nuanced and complex. Like both men and women over centuries,

they function within the confines of their society, culture, and accepted norms. While men's rhetoric was more often a question of presentation strategies, women often did not get the opportunity to present. Their voice in *Lonely Hearts* advertisements was noticeably omitted, noticeably silent, but not completely. Women found agency and voice at various moments of media intimacy history, which evolved as the nature of marriage evolved. As we saw throughout the 20th century, women gained increased agency and confidence in their advertisements, no longer bearing the desperate or self-deprecating tone of earlier centuries. Even so, women (and men) negotiated society, accepted norms, and hid messages under the surface of their presentations, and the judgment and stigma towards women remained harsh as ever, as did many of the walls around them. This chapter studies the 21st century manifestation of media love on new media, specifically *Craigslist*, a free and public website where people advertise services, products, and themselves. I argue that, through a combination of culture and technology, women's voices are not only reclaimed and present in the public discourse of intimacy advertisements, but they are present with the primary focus on self-fulfillment.

With the advent of the computer and the internet, the bounds around advertising for marriage broke open as media mate-finding found a new home on online dating sites. As these sites grew in users and in number, the success of these sites boasted something their print-based predecessor could not even begin to contend with: sheer volume and no cost. More and more people turned to online dating as advertisers, creating accounts or profiles on one or more of the available sites, and as consumers, searching for their new mate—a function that became considerably easier as online dating sites have actual search functions (Shepherd, 2016). New media dating offers even more functionality than

its print-based counterpart, such as direct communication between individuals and the ability to express interest through different means. With the availability and presence of technology, users can create profiles with ease and at little to no cost. Some websites, of course, do charge fees, alleging greater success with greater investment; however, many sites are, in fact, free and can be created with just a smartphone and WiFi connection. As such, users can create multiple profiles, for a variety of goals, and can often use their profile as "a personal presentation tool….for the sole purpose of constructing an online self" (Shepherd, 2016, pg. 9).

The first modern concept of the online dating site launched in 1994 with Kiss.com (Infographic, 2013). Closely following Kiss.com, Match.com launched in 1996 and grew as an online dating site titan that continues to serve individuals across 25 countries, 5 continents, and in 8 languages, boasting "millions of dates, relationships and marriages…more than any other dating brand" (Matchgroup, 2020). The Match Group further owns multiple other online dating sites and apps, including Tinder, PlentyofFish, and OKCupid (Matchgroup, 2020). While the Match Group is perhaps arguably the lead player in online dating platforms, another top contender, eHarmony, launched in 2000. eHarmony prides itself as the "#1 trusted dating site and the premiere destination for high quality singles looking for real relationships," which it finds for users through a questionnaire of over 400 questions (Who, 2019).

From the online dating websites, a hybrid form of dating technologies began to develop that combined the sites with social networking, online applications (apps), and location-based services. One such dating app, OKCupid, launched in 2004. According to the Match Group, OKCupid's "effective matching algorithm is responsible for more than

40,000 first dates every day" for their 10 million plus users (Matchgroup, 2020). Even more notorious in the world of online dating, however, is Tinder. Launched in 2012, Tinder is the leading online dating app with more than 1.6 billion matches made per day across over 190 countries. Tinder goes beyond the "dating app" by being considered a "lifestyle app" for people to meet others and connect by simply swiping left or right on an individual's picture (Matchgroup, 2020). Since its establishment, Tinder has made 30 billion matches and is designed, ultimately, to be fun and stress-free (What, n.d.).

Online dating services vary in their usage; users turn to these platforms to find intimacy in the form of hookups to long term relationships. In her article "The Joys of Online Dating" (2008), Monica Whitty elaborates the many factors that attract a person to using dating sites and apps as an alternative to finding a mate in a face-to-face setting, including efficiency, convenience, opportunity, privacy, and lack of other options. A study conducted by Danielle Couch, Pranee Liamputtong, and Marian Pitts (2012), however, asked 29 participants about their views of online dating, and all participants saw some form of risk associated with internet mate-finding, such as deception, sexual violence, and emotional risks. Further, in a Consumer Research study, 57% of women admitted to feeling harassed on online dating sites (Burgess, 2016). Women 18-24, particularly, experience disproportionate levels of harassment on online dating sites compared to their male counterparts (Burgess, 2016; Duggan, 2014; Smith and Duggan, 2013). The increased communication allowed by the internet on dating platforms has resulted in negative solicitations and issues of harassment and slut-shaming (Shah, 2015; Webb, 2015), as well as more severe cases of assault, rape, and death (Banks and Gusmaroli, 2016; Lavanchy, 2016; Stolberg and Pérez-Peña, 2016). While safety is not

explicitly within the scope of this study on women's expression of voice in media dating, safety and harassment are intrinsically linked to online dating. In fact, it is this very nature of online dating—as a place of potential risk and harm—that is the stimulus for the creation of ByeFelipe, which will be examined in chapter four.

Online dating platforms, like the internet at large, are highly multimodal tools, where written, visual, and video are inherently linked to further messages composers are aiming to communicate (Brooke, 2009; Hocks, 2003). Yet, rhetorical strategies and modalities are rarely that simple, and the internet is nothing if not complex on all levels. Different online situations call for different rules of rhetoric and multimodality that depend directly on the genre and the platform (Losh, 2009). We will find that the visual doesn't quite function on *Craigslist* composers' profiles at the literal level that we are accustomed to thinking. It would seem rather simple—in a genre where you are trying to sell yourself to snag a mate, wouldn't it make sense to share a picture on a forum built to include pictures, especially when modern identity is so closely linked to the body (Shepherd, 2016)? Not necessarily, as the composers balance this functionality with the purpose of their composition—using technology, the features of the website, and rhetoric to obtain a certain audience reaction, which in this case it to have responses from potential mates or partners of some kind (Sheridan, Ridolfo, & Michel, 2012).

Pictures have become a key part of the "selling" strategy that is the goal of the online dating profiles, and they are a silent form of composition users actively employ online. Silence, moreover, can be a strategic and expressive tool, including the silence of omission, in terms of visual rhetoric and performance on different dating sites (Glenn, 2004; Glenn & Ratcliffe, 2011). By strategically and purposefully omitting or not sharing

photos and, rather, describing themselves through words in their new media intimacy advertisement, composers promise pictures in exchange for pictures from their audience. What's more, this type of presentation (describing oneself physically through writing) is extremely multimodal. Through a creative selection of words, composers turn a physical visual into written word, that the respondent then translates through multimodal thinking back into an image (Palmeri, 2012). The ultimate goal through utilizing these multimodal rhetorics is for audience and composer to reach a point of communication. Composers are looking, like their *Lonely Hearts* predecessors, to use media's various tools and functions to transform their single or, perhaps, lonely status into the form of love and intimacy they desire.

Method

The data for this qualitative study was collected from *Craigslist* in July 2017. Under the personal section, a search was performed for women, ages 25-35, seeking men in the New York City region. These parameters were set to provide a scope to the results as *Craigslist* is an international site available for all individuals to seek out their specific desires. For the purposes of this study locating women's voices in the context of traditional *Lonely Hearts* advertisements, cis heterosexual women provide the best comparative case study. Further research in the field of media intimacy could investigate the rich historical and current landscapes around LGBTQ advertisements, men's advertisements, transnational advertisements, as well as IRB studies on subscription sites like *eHarmony* and *Match*. In terms of this research, *Craigslist* is a free and public site with an unlimited audience. Many dating sites require a paid subscription or free membership, which ensures that users are advertising their profiles to a limited audience

who joined that site for the purpose of finding an intimate connection. *Craigslist*, however, much like the newspapers and pamphlets that housed *Lonely Hearts* ads, is open to the full public that chooses to simply visit the site, even as a one-off situation. Further, given the public nature of the source, the contents of the data falls under Fair Use for reproduction and commentary (U.S. Copyright). While screenshots were taken of all 25 advertisements in this data set, no screenshots will be duplicated in this chapter to ensure anonymity, limit reproduction, and maintain integrity.

Results

One of the features of new media advertising is the ease with which users can incorporate images. As with *Lonely Hearts* advertisements, which stressed the importance of physical attractiveness from the start of relationships in recent centuries, new media took the incorporation of images one step further, almost prioritizing physical attractiveness through the allowability of pictures through this medium (Beauman, 2011, pg. 139). With the inherently multimodal nature of the internet (Brooke, 2009, pg. 113; Hocks, 2003, pg. 629), intimacy advertisements on new media are not only desired, but may even be an expected element. Composers now have specific sections designed to upload photos into their posts. *Craigslist*, like its contemporary sites, allows users to upload pictures on their profiles so audience members can see the object of the advertisement through visual rhetoric. Of the 25 advertisements collected for this study, however, only four composers utilized this feature to share photos (see Table 1). All four

Table 1

Visual Elements of Pictures in Craigslist *Advertisements*

Incl. Pics	Incl. Multiple	Incl. Face	Incl. Body	Sexual*	"Pics for Pics"	Requested Pics
4	1	1	4	2	5	14

* Sexual images showed or emphasized cleavage

composers shared pictures of their body, two of which displayed a sexual undercurrent through the camera angle and exposure of cleavage. Notably, one composer shared a photo of her face, and she was also the only one that posted multiple photos.

While 21 composers did not share pictures, 14 requested pictures from their respondents, even stating "[e]mails with no pictures wont be answer [sic]" (Looking for a friend). While images can be used to help "sell" the composer, attract the audience, and even incentivize audience response to intimacy advertisements, the data showed the *lack* of images was also used for a rhetorical purpose—to prompt a particular response or interaction from their audience. Many women advertisers within this study that did not share pictures demonstrated a different kind of interaction of visual and written rhetoric through their compositions, where their visual silence of omission was used strategically to invite audience participation (Glenn, 2004, pg. 11; Glenn & Ratcliffe, 2011, pg. 93; Hocks, 2003, pg. 631; Losh, 2009, pg. 48). Five composers offered pictures in return for receiving pictures from respondents—a trade, "pics for pics." Through the silence of their visual rhetorical choices, composers withheld pictures to incentivize their audience to perform an action for them.

The primary modality used in the advertisements was, of course, writing. Unlike print based media, new media sites, like *Craigslist*, do not charge advertisers per word, which removes the limitation of length that some *Lonely Hearts* advertisers had to contend with. The majority of *Craigslist* composers in this study, while able to write as much as they wanted, wrote relatively short advertisements (see Table 2). 22 composers

Table 2

Written Elements of Content in Craigslist *Advertisements*

>10 Sent.	10+ Sent.	Self Focus	Partner/Seeking Focus	Self & Partner/Seeking Focus
22	3	5	9	11

kept their advertisement under 10 sentences, leaving only three composers that extended their advertisements to 10 sentences or longer. Similar to the findings of Del Theissen, Robert K. Young, & Ramona Burroughs (1993), who found that men preferred shorter advertisements when they were in the role of reader, these women support the understanding that shorter posts work better to attract men. Whether or not the composers who created short posts were more successful or attracted more male readers, we will not know nor is this research interested in that. What is of interest in this context is what choices the women composers made en route to achieving their goal. We can recognize that, successful or not, women composers in this study preferred creating shorter advertisements, rather than lengthier ones. One woman composer, for example, described herself, the type of relationship she sought, and the characteristics she desired in male respondents, down to his race, in no more than 14 words: “attractive SBF, single and professional seeking a LTR leading to marriage with a SWM” (Single woman seeking marriage). This single black female (SBF) wanted a long-term relationship (LTR) to potentially meet her future husband, who she would like to be a single white male (SWM). This woman got straight to the point, not wasting space or time, and incorporated the use of abbreviations to support her rhetorical strategy in being direct and communicating her message, a tool that has continued and expanded in use from *Lonely Hearts* advertisements (Beauman, 2011, pg. 190).

Another theme that emerged was how women functioned when considering the focus or emphasis of the advertisements. As centuries of *Lonely Hearts* advertisements showed, many male composers often wrote their advertisements to detail what they sought in women, thereby establishing for us the characteristics men found attractive in

the ideal woman. Women advertisers of *Lonely Hearts*, while few, also composed with the woman as the subject of the ad, detailing out what they had to offer. Of the 25 *Craigslist* composers, only five focused the content of their advertisements solely on themselves and what they brought to the table. Of the remaining 20, it was almost an even split that focused only on what they sought from the male respondent (nine composers) or that focused both on what they offered and what they sought from the respondent (11 composers). Thus, we see an evolutionary change in intimacy advertisements that, as women are more actively composing, the subject matter is also shifting to be less objectifying of the female.

Another noticeable shift in how women functioned in intimacy advertisements across history and media is that they no longer included reasoning behind why they were turning to media to seek love as composers. The few women that composed *Lonely Hearts* very often explained the circumstance that forced them to turn to this desperate form of matchmaking, and they were considered to be desperate women. Only two women advertisers in this study reflected momentarily that they were turning to *Craigslist* to find a partner. One composer wrote “who better than Craigslist to introduce me to my fantasy man? That was sarcasm, this is embarrassing, especially trying more than twice” (DDLG BDSM LTR), and the other “I figure Craiglist [sic] is no better than any of these other lackluster apps” (quality in an unlikely place). Neither one of these women explained or reflected further, nor was there a heavy sense of desperation or shame in what they wrote. They both simply composed the rest of her advertisements detailing more about themselves and what they sought.

Table 3

Self-Presentation in Written Content of Craigslist *Advertisements*

Location	Name	Age	Gender	Race	Status*	Appearance	Interests	Backstory
22	2	9	11	10	8	12	3	10

* Status refers to sharing of current relationship status of posters at time of composing Craigslist advertisement

Table 4

Self-Presentation in Craigslist *Key Features*

Body Type	Height	Status*	Location	Age
13	14	11	1	25

* Status refers to sharing of current relationship status of posters at time of composing Craigslist advertisement

Whether they focused on themselves or what they were seeking, there was some consistency in the ways the 25 women composers presented themselves in their *Craigslist* advertisements. They shared information in two ways: through the written content of their compositions (see Table 3) and in the key features selections at the bottom of their ad, which also supported their appearance in search results (see Table 4). Some women were very detailed in the information they provided about themselves. One of two women that shared her name, Sally was visiting New York and looking for a long-term relationship. She wrote a longer composition, in which she provided a considerable amount of information and background about herself:

> I was born in Europe, half my childhood in Bulgaria, the rest in England. Then went to school & work in Washington DC and now I work and live in Vancouver since 2009 but am hoping to relocate and change the scenery.
>
> All my friends seem to have found the right person and gotten married, not so lucky for me. My world travels don't make it easy to settle I guess. I would like to meet a man who is ready/wants a commitment. I've never been into random hook

> ups. Not my thing. I spend my free time at work and school and Netflix and more work.
>
> My current job: Clinic Manager (I'm not a Doctor).
>
> Interests: Real Estate. Travel. Hiking. Would love to go see or live in New York, Alaska, California, Hawaii, or Las Vegas. How amazing would that be. Or if anyone wants to visit/move to Vancouver and relocate, we can do that too!! [sic] (34.F. In NYC now)

Sally shared multiple pictures of herself, one of which was in a white coat, similar to a doctor's. In her written composition, she detailed information on what she was looking for and her expectations from respondents. What's striking about Sally's post is the information she shares about herself, which is more about her life story rather than her current situation. Through her message, we learn she is "single never married, no children" (34.F. In NYC now); why she's in New York; where she has lived; where she currently lives; her desire to move; about her friends; she is in school; enjoys Netflix; her job and commitment to her job; that she often gets confused for a doctor; and her interests. She is also "actually very normal [and doesn't] create/need drama" (34.F. In NYC now). Further, in the key features options, she selected to share or reshare her body type, height, status, and age. Sally's self-presentation was, ultimately, thorough and detailed, especially taken in comparison to other women composers in this study that shared very little about themselves, such as one young woman who wrote a two sentence advertisement: "I am going through a break up and looking for similar who wants to chat .I'm free all evening so talk about what ever [sic]" (Kik messenget). All we know about this young woman through her presentation is her current situation: she is located in

Table 5

Characteristics Sought in/from Partner/Reader of Craigslist *Advertisements*

Age	Race	Status*	Appearance	Relationship**	Pictures
9	4	2	7	4	14

* Status refers to current relationship status of partner/reader
** Relationship refers to type of relationship partner/reader is seeking (see Table 6)

Table 6

Type of Relationship Sought by Posters of Craigslist *Advertisements*

Casual	Organic	Long-Term	Not Specified	Drama-Free*
8	5	9	3	5

* Contains overlap with other categories of types of relationships sought by posters

Midtown, which she selected to add in her title (a feature 22 composers utilized); her age, which she selected in *Craigslist*'s key features (a feature 25 composers utilized); and that she's going through a break up.

The *Craigslist* advertisers were also rather specific in what they sought from their respondents, describing the physical attributes they desired similar to the way *Lonely Hearts* composers described the physical characteristics they wanted from their future wives (see Table 5). The types of relationships women sought were diverse in nature, as well, rather than the almost single-minded hunt for a spouse in *Lonely Hearts* (see Table 6). As the nature of relationships changed, the physical attributes listed in advertisements also expanded. Whereas before, sex was not often the sole reason for advertising, casual sexual relationships were the second most sought after relationship in this study at 8 advertisements (the first being a long-term relationship at 9 advertisements). As a result, women advertisers updated the desired physical attributes to include how well-endowed they wanted their casual partner to be, ranging from "I'm looking for a well-endowed attractive black man" (HSV2) to "I prefer 8 inch plus dicks" (Seeking sane guy) and "Packing 8in – 9in….And Yes, you can send me dick pics…That's your resume after all

right [sic]" (Do you hang low). In fact, with the immediacy of new media, a feature not possible in the print-based counterpart, advertisers can now seek immediate casual relationships, such as the woman "prefer[ring] 8 inch plus dicks," who shared "I know it's a Sunday but I had an awful day and just want to get laid" (Seeking sane guy). The limitation of time is removed.

The expansion of relationship types also seems to allow advertisers to design their own relationships, in a sense. For example, the young women wanting the 8 – 9 inch penis with picture applications not only sought a casual sexual relationship, but also wanted the respondent to supply marijuana so they could exchange a "couple to the point emails/pic…talk on the phone a bit and then meetup somewhere public. Then back to my place where we can blaze and get biblical" (Do you hang low). Another woman designing her own relationship wanted something more serious, but also educational, with men of specific races: "I am Caribbean looking for Spanish guy or Italian for a relationship. I want to improve my Italian and I can teach you English or Spanish if you are interested" (Caribbean for European). While these advertisements scatter so largely across the board, we're seeing a few key themes emerge that give us insight into how new media is affecting intimacy advertisements. Where with *Lonely Hearts* advertisements we saw a precision focused theme of marital relationships, new media's theme is a limitless, mix-and-match, create your own relationship. New media, thus, has broken down the boundaries around relationships in media intimacy (Shepherd, 2016, pg. 34), more than just sex, dating, or marriage, but even further to weed and mutual education.

While new media and women composers more commonly advertised for a variety of different kinds of relationships, we do see some of the traditional *Lonely Hearts* themes manifest in the 21st century *Craigslist* compositions. The most sought-after relationship, taking the lead by one in the 25 advertisements of this study, was the long-term relationship. For some, this did mean marriage, for others it was dating on the way to marriage, and still for others it was simply the unspecified long-term. Adetria, for example, was "looking for someone I can trust and love again for serious and long term relationship I'm honest, Caring, and have a great senses of humor I'm not on here looking for one night stand I'm here to find my soul mate to spend the rest of my life with [sic]" (Seeking for love). Her use of "soul mate" rather than "husband" is telling of what marriage looks like in the 21st century. As people get married later in life, compared to the early marriage age expected of women in previous centuries (Beauman, 2011), or others still not getting married at all, the ambiguous soul mate or long-term relationship may well be the modern-day equivalent to marriage. Marriage no longer is a necessity of life for economic status, financial security, or protection—at least not to the extent it was for the many centuries of *Lonely Hearts*. In Western culture today, a soul mate is the priority, a husband may or may not be desired.

The limitless quality of new media intimacy advertisements has further influence through its exploratory potential. Advertisers do not need to know exactly what type of relationship they want, but can advertise to meet people, explore, and see what relationship emerges. New media is open to the no intimacy, intimacy relationships—and it's not abnormal or odd. That is to say, five of the 25 *Craigslist* advertisers didn't necessarily express a specific type of *intimate* relationship they wanted as they composed

their advertisement, while another three composers didn't specify any type of relationship at all. Rather, the women composers seeking an organic relationship shared wanting to see how the relationship evolved into something intimate, if it even did at all. For example, one woman wrote, "been in all day bing watching a few shows. Need to get out. Not looking for sex. Perhaps if we click it could lead to something in the future [sic]" (Any cute guys). This woman just wanted to get out of the house with a companion, not wanting to engage in anything sexual until they saw where it led. Another, similar composition shared "28 Gemini Single just ready to meet someone with a great vibe drama free & see where it goes [sic]" (BBW LOOKING). This *Craigslist* advertiser was the only one of the 25 to share her zodiac sign as she looked for a drama free person (notably, five of the 25 composers mentioned the lack of drama) to also see where it led, without any specifications on what type of intimate relationship she wants. New media allowed these women to search for a companion with whom they could explore and develop a relationship over time.

There is yet another theme we can see emerge through the long-term relationships sought by the 25 *Craigslist* advertisers of this study, and that is, by definition and without judgment, a sense of shamelessness and openness. While not completely stigma-free, and with the growing number of online dating users, media dating is a vastly more accepted norm than its predecessor in print-based media. And while we saw women advertisers for centuries sounding almost apologetic and making excuses for the poor situation that led them to turn to media advertising, new media women composers are, as we noted, unapologetically open about what they seek. This is seen in no better place than the long-term BDSM (bondage/discipline, domination/submission, sadism/masochism)

advertisements on *Craigslist*. Not all were, of course, long-term, such as one woman who shared: “Sometimes I’m so stressed all the time that I desire a man to lead me, take me over his knee and provide some discipline so that I can clear my head” (Seeking stress relief). This woman was direct and seems to write matter-of-factly, without any qualms of what she’s looking for—a therapeutic relationship. In fact, she doesn’t even mention or share a desire for love or sex, at all—just “a spanking or two” (Seeking stress relief). Another *Craigslist* advertiser, in particular, sought support through a difficult time in the form of a long-term, loving BDSM/DDLG (Daddy Dom/Little Girl) relationship:

> I’m leaving a marriage right now, I’m looking for someone who can wipe tears, provide comfort, and who wants me all to himself. I want someone I can BE with, so if you are involved with someone or you are non-monogamous you won’t like me. I am happy to explain my situation further once we converse.
>
> I’m looking for a gentleman who will drop the ‘gentle’ for me and only me. One who embraces DDLG. One who has a substantial amount of attention to give to a woman. One who will treat me like a princess but also be my dominant in whom I can trust to love and care for me in every way he can. I feel like I have so much sexuality left to explore and I need someone to help me, guide me, and make me his. I want this same gentleman to be open to the loving and nurturing relationship that can stem from a dom/sub situation, because they truly are the most intimate relationships (in my humble opinion). [sic] (DDLG BDSM LTR)

This woman is looking for someone who is “daddy-worthy,” that she can become “enamored with,” and to whom she can give the “gift of submission” (DDLG BDSM LTR). In a time where women’s sexuality (beyond the run-of-the-mill, societally

tolerated missionary) is finally making its way to the public arena through bestselling blockbusters like *Fifty Shades of Grey*, new media intimacy advertisements are reflective of women's desires (Brooke, 2009, pg. 120; Shepherd, 2016, pg. 34). And new media very well provides the outlet for people to talk to a screen with unabashed honesty in this confessional and transformational composition (Brooke, 2009, pg. 140; Hocks, 2003, pg. 631; Shepherd, 2016, pg. 93). Women, thus, not only have access to the rhetoric of media intimacy in the 21st century, but their voices express their sexuality, beyond the traditional, to seek out self-fulfillment through new media.

The variety and uniqueness of these advertisements shows women advertisers taking ownership and control of what they want without apology or shame, as well as the further evolution of marriage and the intimate relationship. New media is furthering the goals of self-fulfillment by allowing women to not only compose their messages more readily and openly, but also obtain what they desire without confining it to the marital institution or even the "vanilla" sexual relationship. We've seen women use media in the 20th and 21st centuries to achieve personal fulfillment, but these *Craigslist* advertisements show us a further modernization of intimacy compositions. Women are able to use new media to be specific and open about their intimate and sexual desires, and the types of culturally accepted and normed relationships are continuing to evolve as personal fulfillment remains a priority.

Discussion

The advertisements of this study found less of the themes we saw for centuries in *Lonely Hearts* advertisements as far as stigma and shame, but some traditions may just be timeless in love. In particular: looks and care. Physical attractiveness has been a staple

aspect of media intimacy rhetoric. We do see the language around it change as standards of beauty and desired qualities change (and will continue to change based on time, location, culture). The women of these advertisements, however, did evolve the rhetorical tradition of physical attractiveness to focus mostly on *both* parties—what they look like and, perhaps even more importantly, what they want their respondents to look like. Notably, not a single advertisement boasted domestic prowess, but we do see "delicacy" or "cheerful" perhaps hidden in today's vernacular as "drama-free."

Physical attractiveness in advertisements now have an added layer aided by technology. Pictures play an important part in women's intimacy advertisements, both in their inclusions or strategic exclusion, and the women of these advertisements use their voice *and* their technology to get what they want—"pics for pics" and responses from their audience. Further, we can also see an updated version of the "protector" figure many women historically looked for in the "dominant" some women sought on *Craigslist*. The change in language here signifies a powerful shift in the use of women's voice, showing more agency. Whereas women sought the *protector* in their advertisements in the past (someone on whom they could depend to safeguard their delicate nature), the women on *Craigslist* sought the *dominant*—someone *the woman* could decide whether or not she wants to submit to. The evolution of the word choice, while maintaining much of the essence of care women might seek in their partnerships, shows the shift in who has the ultimate control and agency over that care.

As we saw through the analysis of this *Craigslist* study's results, themes clearly emerged that inform our understanding of the convergence of new media, love (in all its shapes, sizes, and forms), and women's voice. New media dating is the next iteration of

the *Lonely Hearts* advertisements that began in print pamphlets and in newspapers, but rather than mitigating the scandal by using a third party voice, or sending responses to a third party location, media intimacy has intricately woven itself into the fabric of mate-finding practices as a bright, bold color of the design. This study, of course, is interested in the thread that is women's function and agency in this pattern, and what we saw through the 25 bold composers on *Craigslist* is, first and foremost, that *they composed*. While clearly obvious, we must take a moment to pause and recognize how these 25 women, while a small sample size of the unimaginable number of female composers advertising and seeking love across new media, break the tradition of three centuries of composing in media intimacy. Women have sat on the outskirts of public discourse in all genres, and while we've seen women's rhetoric reclaimed (Flynn, Sotirin, & Brady, 2012; Glenn, 2004; Glenn & Ratcliffe, 2011; Jung, 2005; Lunsford, 1995; Ritchie & Ronald, 2001), one of the biggest findings of this work is women's rhetoric autonomously seeking self-fulfillment. *Lonely Hearts* did include women—as objects and subjects of compositions; as shame-faced, desperate, "spinster" composers. The 20th century slowly found women gaining more agency and reclaiming their voice in media love advertisements—but, even still, their voice was hidden behind appropriate, even legally determined "decency," expectations of the culture. The 21st century and the internet showcase a woman's voice unapologetically "indecent" and sexually open. A voice taking control of her relationship status and accessing the new media available to her to transform that status into what *she* wants.

Conclusion

This research, as a whole, is focused on finding and understanding women's voices in media intimacy, and this study of *Craigslist* showed women's voices expressing more of their inner selves and a variety of desires in a rhetorical tradition that was dominated by alliance marriages. Women have a presence in the public rhetoric of intimacy advertisements, but there is a flip side to this body of research that also needs to be considered: while women are breaking through many of the staple limitations on this form of rhetoric, what limitations continue to exist or are newly manifesting through new media that impact women's agency in media intimacy? For instance, the next chapter of this research investigates women's voices responding to harassment experienced on new media dating sites. A separate study focused solely on women's rhetoric in new media intimacy can develop research in between these two chapters to investigate women's compositional strategies in advertisements or profiles to ensure safety, avoid (maybe even invite) harassment, and what this implies for women's agency.

Additional studies, moreover, can expand beyond the question of women's agency in media intimacy. More investigation needs to be done into the rhetorical implications surrounding other identities and intersectionality in new media dating, including first-hand accounts from composers as to the language, decisions, considerations, and strategies they employ in their compositions, and for what purpose. Further research can also take into account rhetoric and identities across or in tandem with different websites, as many composers often utilize multiple platforms to share their message and find a partner. The interplay of identity and rhetoric is a complex, deep, and ever-changing landscape based on the culture of the time, the evolving media, and the

purpose of the rhetoric. As we saw through the *Craigslist* advertisements of this study, new media has a profound impact on a long-established rhetorical concept, the intimacy advertisement, and the identities that operate within it. Women are now exercising their voice in seeking relationships, and while traditional themes are still present and evolved, technology and the internet allow women agency to express their intimacy in a way that was not seen in the history of *Lonely Hearts*.

Chapter Four:

The Power of Dick Pics: Women's Voices and Power Relations within New Media Intimacy Communities

Introduction

This chapter, "The Power of Dick Pics: Women's Voices and Power Relations within New Media Intimacy Communities," examines the rhetoric of support groups created as a result of new media dating experiences, pulling from scholars such as Cheryl Glenn and Claudia Herbst. Another important type of women's rhetoric in the landscape of media intimacy, support groups access the functions of social media to build community, while also implementing power structures within it. This chapter looks specifically at the ByeFelipe *Instagram* page, which endeavors to create a safe and communal forum for women to shame men for bad behavior on dating apps and sites. We will see how users access this social media page to use rhetoric and new media to fight back against their own oppression, but we will also see the power structures develop within the page, itself, and the resulting instances of harassment within the community for opposing views. In addition to women's voices and power relations, we will also consider the location of the community, considering the separation of the ByeFelipe page outside of the larger public discourse arena and the resulting autonomy and ownership women experience. This chapter is the final study of our investigation into women's rhetorical practices in media intimacy, allowing us to locate and value women's voices, agency, and rhetoric as they build and negotiate a network of feminist forums online.

The media intimacy landscape is not limited to the platforms on which women compose to find connections. We must also locate and understand women's voices *after*

they use them to create advertisements and profiles seeking partners. Many women experience negative interactions as a result of their online intimacy pursuits, experiences Claudia Herbst refers to as "online rape." Women's virtual selves are, in a sense, violated, and they are left without access to language with which to fight back for fear of further violation. They are, thus, forced into censored silence (Glenn, 2004; Herbst, 2009). But new media is complex; love is complex; and women's identity is, indeed, complex. Women use the moments of harassment they experience and the facility of the digital to create their own rhetoric, build and connect with community, and turn harassment into a composition that they own. I argue that through their use of new media, women are not only actively using their reclaimed voices, but they are also creating new spaces of support in media intimacy, thereby building a network of feminist rhetoric. These spaces of support are a refuge against the harassment women experience in this landscape; however, they also create power structures mirroring those that initially drove them to create the space. By so doing, these spaces become a place of unsafety and harassment for people expressing thoughts different from the majority in the community.

This study investigates agency and voice on ByeFelipe, an *Instagram* page designed for women to come together and join in a dialogue around the negative experiences they encounter through new media intimacy. Alexandra Tweten created this page in 2014 after experiencing negative, hostile, and unsolicited interactions on dating apps, such as Tinder and OKCupid. Tweten found her experience was common amongst women, as she notes "this is a problem in our society in general, this thing of men becoming aggressive and hostile when they're told 'no,'" (quoted in Barrett-Ibarria). The resulting social media page, ByeFelipe was, thus, built to be a "feminist takedown of the

insidious aspects of online dating" (Barrett-Ibarria). In essence, this social media page is a collection of pictures documenting the negative solicitations women receive from men (referred to as "Felipes" throughout this chapter) as a result of new media dating (About, 2016).

In addition to sharing these images, ByeFelipe also posts advertisements for one particular dating app, *Huggle*. *Huggle* was created by Valerie Stark and Stina Sanders in 2016 as a result of their own negative experiences on dating apps and sites. Their goal was to create an app that eliminated these experiences for women (Huggle). This app connects people with others to build platonic friendships based on the places they visit with the logic "that guys are less likely to send dick pics to people they see in real life" (Tweten). Due to its commitment to safety and friendship, the ByeFelipe *Instagram* page advertises *Huggle* as a different dating app for their followers to explore that will not produce the harassment they experience elsewhere. As we will see shortly, however, the ByeFelipe followers are neither happy with this use of the *Instagram* page for advertising, nor are they in agreement that *Huggle* is a safer alternative to other dating apps.

As a social media site, *Instagram* is exceptionally multimodal, a quality the ByeFelipe team and its followers continuously use to their advantage. The images posted by the team are often screenshots of written phone messages or multimodal memes, or even compositions of multimodal images within multimodal images. The ByeFelipe team negotiates the technology and medium to create hybridity across modalities, but it doesn't stop there (Sheridan, Ridolfo, & Michel, 2012). ByeFelipe is a community of women's voices, and they are constantly interacting and composing on the page as submitters and

commenters of posts, thus creating hybridity between the author and the audience (Hocks, 2003; Losh, 2009; Palmeri, 2012). Often, the women that experienced the negative interactions aren't shown responding much in the conversation posts, but they participate in the community by using their voice in submitting the post to ByeFelipe. Said another way, they censor themselves in the conversation with the Felipe and then turn that conversation into a screenshot that they re-compose by posting on ByeFelipe to disrupt and resist an oppressive structure, as well as to interact with a community (Banks, 2011; Bowen, 2009; Glenn & Ratcliffe, 2011; Naples, 2003). Women are mixing media, genres, and even silences (the silence of censorship and the silence of modality) to create a new tradition that they write, simultaneously, as an individual and a collective and that centers around space, style, and a safe medium to feel vulnerable (Blair, Gajjala, & Tulley, 2009; Gajjala and Ju Oh, 2012; Levine, 2015).

Method

The data for this qualitative study was collected from the ByeFelipe *Instagram* page between January 1, 2017 and February 4, 2017. Screenshots were taken of all posts and accompanying comments from this five-week (35-day) period in July 2017. Comments made after July 2017 are not included in this study. Further, images originally posted between January 1, 2017 and February 4, 2017 that were removed from the account's page after July 2017 are included in the results analysis of this study. ByeFelipe's posts and accompanying comments are free and open to the public, regardless of having an *Instagram* account. Screenshots of images posted by ByeFelipe will be included throughout the results analysis, which falls under Copyright Law of the United States, Title 17, Section 107, Fair Use. Reproduction of images in this chapter is

done so for the purposes of "criticism, comment,…scholarship, [and] research" (U.S. Copyright). Further, the "amount and substantiality of the portion" duplicated in the results analysis is minimal "in relation to the work as a whole," nor will this reproduction bear any effect "upon the potential market for or value" of the material (U.S. Copyright). Quotes will also be used throughout this analysis, but all usernames have been removed to preserve anonymity. For some examinations, pseudonyms have been placed in lieu of usernames to support the clarity and readability of the analysis.

Each posted image was coded into an overarching category and then type within each category. Categories and types were determined from the content present in the data set. Images were first divided into two categories: posts composed by ByeFelipe or posts submitted by ByeFelipe followers. Posts composed by ByeFelipe were then coded based on the purpose and content of the post, which fell into three types: advertisement for an event; advertisement for the *Huggle* dating app; commenting on issues, such as politics and gender. Posts of ByeFelipe follower submissions were similarly coded based on purpose and content, which fell into three types: flirting for sex, harassment, and sour grapes. With each image post, there was an accompanying set of comments that were coded into two categories: supportive comments showing community ("positive") or unsupportive comments engaging in argument ("negative"). The terms "positive" and "negative" are used to signify a community dialogue in support of the post's intent ("positive") or a negative community dialogue, including arguments with both supportive and unsupportive sides in conversation, in response to a post's intent ("negative"). Data was also tracked by image on how many likes the post received, the total number of comments in entirety, and the number of comments that tagged other users.

Results

Over the course of the five-week period during which *Instagram* posts were collected from ByeFelipe, the account posted 27 images (see Table 7). These 27 posts fell into two categories of compositions—posts composed by ByeFelipe designed to convey their own message (11 posts) or images submitted by ByeFelipe followers of interactions they experienced as a result of new media dating (16 posts). The real meat of the ByeFelipe *Instagram* page is in these 16 submissions meant "to call out and shame men for sending unwanted, unsolicited dick pics" (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 1). The 16 posts were screenshots of a message conversation between the post-submitter and a Felipe that took place directly through the tools of the dating site or through text message. These posts fell into three subcategories (see Table 8), one of which was a conversation where the Felipe was trying to flirt for sex (two posts). One image, for example, showed a text message

Table 7

ByeFelipe Instagram *Posts and Comments from January 1 to February 4*

Type	Number	Likes	Pos. Comm.	Neg. Comm.	Total Comm.	Tagged Comm.
ByeFelipe Composition	11	134,338	739	168	907	1,059
Follower Submissions	16	63,031	1,884	484	2,368	1,327
Total	27	197,479	2,623	652	3,275	2,386

Table 8

Posts and Comments Submitted by ByeFelipe Followers

Type	Number	Likes	Pos. Comm.	Neg. Comm.	Total Comm.	Tagged Comm.
Flirting for Sex	2	11,541	122	27	149	228
Harassment	2	4,579	118	22	140	75
Sour grapes	12	46,911	1,644	435	2,079	1,024

from a Felipe, where he wrote:

> Roses are Red,
>
> Violets are Blue,
>
> We're a match on Tinder,
>
> So I think we should screw. (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 11)

This Felipe met the post-submitter on *Tinder*, a free dating app where men and women get a suggestion of matches from the application, and they either swipe left or right to accept or reject the match. In the conversation, after this Felipe suggested sex since they both matched on *Tinder*, the post-submitter wrote back:

> Roses are red,
>
> I'll go with the flow,
>
> you seem like a douche,
>
> how about no! (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 11)

The conversation didn't seem to continue after this, or if it did, it was not included in the image. What is important is that after responding with a rejection that matched the wit of the Felipe's original text, the post-submitter sent the screenshot of her response to ByeFelipe. Not only did she stand up for herself in the situation, ByeFelipe provided an avenue for her to share this experience and her voice out into a larger public, and for the ByeFelipe community to engage in a conversation around the experience.

The most unsettling of exchanges shared on ByeFelipe were conversations that showed a Felipe harassing the post-submitter by sending an unwanted photo or video. As we saw in our analysis of *Craigslist* advertisements in chapter three, pictures play an important role in mate-finding practices on new media. Women advertisers controlled

their use of images in their media intimacy advertisements, using their agency to solicit an audience response ("pics for pics"). Pictures, however, can often be used for harassment in media intimacy. Conversations that ensue as a result of matches made through dating apps notoriously result in men sharing unsolicited pictures known as "dick pics." A distinctly different use of images from what we saw on *Craigslist*, we find that, on the one hand, where women strategically utilize images for their own rhetorical purpose, on the other, they are victims of harassment through images resulting in media intimacy.

Of the 16 conversation posts submitted by followers, two of them were screenshots of a conversation where this harassment occurred. One particularly notable post had text providing context from the submitter at the top of the image that read, "Sent me a video of him jacking off and told him I was disgusted, then this," and the rest of the screenshot showed a text message from the Felipe saying, "[laughing my fucking ass off] haha. I'm fine babe im just glad I haven't had a fatty like you before. You'll squash it damn women stop eating you fat thing [sic]" (ByeFelipe, 2017, Feb. 2a). The Felipe's response was a show of what is referred to in this study as sour grapes behavior where he insulted her for "rejecting" his advance, but more significant in this post is his advance was actually a case of harassment. In fact, four followers that commented on this image suggested to the post-submitter that she report this exchange to the police—an unsolicited video message of someone masturbating is assault. All of the 73 comments on this post, moreover, were positive, showing support and community around the post-submitter, except one, where the commenter wrote, "it could always be worse" (ByeFelipe, 2017, Feb. 2a).

Figure 1. Sour grapes post with the most positive comments from ByeFelipe followers. From ByeFelipe [@byefelipe]. (2017, Jan. 31). Will do! ✌😊 #byefelipe [Instagram photograph]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/BP8W1J9jLnd/

The type of posts with the most comments (2,079) across the board were posts submitted by ByeFelipe followers that showed a conversation where the Felipe exhibited a behavior of sour grapes and insulted the post-submitter when the conversation did not go as they wanted. In fact, sour grapes had significantly more posts (12); likes (46,911); positive comments (1,644); negative comments (435); and comments tagging other users (1,024) than any other subcategory in follower submissions or ByeFelipe compositions. One post, in particular, had the most positive comments (447) than all 27 images in this study (see Figure 1). This post showed a conversation with the post-submitter and a Felipe, where they were engaged in a normal conversation until he wanted to move the

conversation outside of the dating app they were using. She responded with “I’d rather not give out my number for now if that’s okay” (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 31). The Felipe replied to her polite message with “That’s cool. But if you’re awful at checking this app, and you won’t give out your number, then enjoy fingering yourself you stupid bitch [sic]” (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 31). While the messages do attract our attention in terms of the nature of new media dating, the question for this research is around women’s voices and agency in media intimacy.

The post-submitter’s voice is present in the choosing of this screenshot and submission of it, and the voice of the female community is present in the overwhelmingly positive comments that were posted in response. Some expressed wanting the Felipe’s number so they could “harass this fucker” (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 31), while many commented on the silver lining that he didn’t have her number to bother her. What is especially interesting, though, is the comradery that developed as followers tried to understand how the Felipe thought “fingering [her]self” (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 31) was an insult to the post-submitter. One wrote, “like that’s an insult. The best sex I have is with myself;” another wrote “jokes on him, we usually do enjoy that;” and still another wrote “why wouldn’t she enjoy fingering herself? It ain’t a punishment, puppy” (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 31). Not only were the commenters vocal about women’s sexuality in a community forum, but the comments were also condescending towards the Felipe for thinking he was being insulting. Some commenters went further to turn the insult back on the Felipe, such as one that said “[laugh out loud] he acts like masturbation is wrong, when you know this dude hasn’t ever made a woman cum” (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 31). We don’t know if the Felipe saw the insults directed at him, or even if the post-

submitter saw the support building around her, but what we do know is that these commenters collectively formed a positive community where they came together, openly talked about their sexuality, and laughed at the presumptuousness of a male Felipe, when, really, "who needs his dick anyways" (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan., 31)?

As there were positive, supportive comments in response to posts on ByeFelipe, there were also negative, unsupportive comments, or comments that engaged in an argument. The post with the most comments (109) of this nature was also a sour grapes post (see Figure 2). It bears noting that the classification of "negative comments" also includes those comments that supported the post-submitter by engaging in an argument with an unsupportive commenter, thereby contributing to the "negative" community dialogue. The post shows a screenshot of a conversation where a Felipe messaged the post-submitter "praising" her body, and the post-submitter replied with "please do not

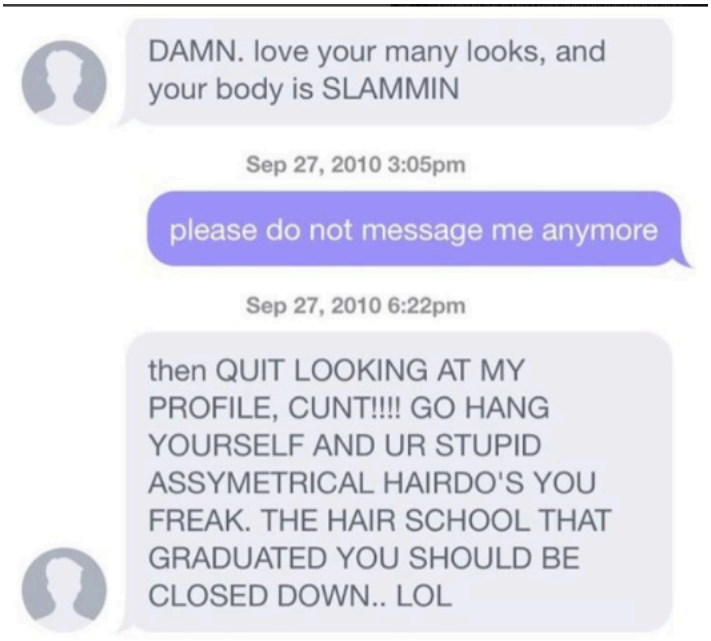

Figure 2. Sour grapes post with the most negative comments from ByeFelipe followers. From ByeFelipe [@byefelipe]. (2017, Jan. 4). Assy-metrical hairdos! 🍑🍑🤦‍♂️ [Instagram photograph]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/BPdj8ZdBVD9/

message me anymore" (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 4). In response, the Felipe wrote: "then QUIT LOOKING AT MY PROFILE, CUNT!!!! GO HANG YOURSELF AND UR STUPID ASSYMETRICAL HAIRDO'S YOU FREAK. THE HAIR SCHOOL THAT GRADUATED YOU SHOULD BE CLOSED DOWN.. [laugh out loud] [sic]" (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 4). The content of the screenshot posted, while remarkable in its own right, isn't what we'll focus on here; what is of interest are the community comments. There were a few arguments that occurred in the resulting dialogue of this image, but the one that we will discuss included 30 different followers and 66 total comments.

There are multiple things at play in this conversation (see Appendix A for full transcription of the argument), but for our purposes we will concentrate on a few of the more prevalent themes that arose. The entire dialogue was in response to one user, herein referred to as Alpha, who commented on the post: "I don't think his response is appropriate but is there more to this conversation than shown? Why does she respond with such a curt 'don't message me anymore' response? It does come across as quite rude on her part" (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 4). The conversation that ensued involved a lot of hurt and angry messages in direct response to Alpha because, as one vocal user, Gamma, wrote: "[a]s if we don't have our hands full with men thinking this behaviour is ok. Always baffled by the females looking to excuse it. It's the online equivalent of 'but what was she wearing'" (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 4). This comparison resonated with a lot of other users. Other women provided evidence for Gamma's analogy by recounting instances of rape threats and attempts they experienced off line, situations people responded to with questions like "'Well what were you wearing?' 'Did you provoke them

somehow'" and so on (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 4). One user with this experience, Echo, offered "[t]his was not the first time nor the last time this [threatening experience] has happened so I see why people may have flown off the handle at you when you said well we don't know the whole story" (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 4). Users provided support to each other, both to those for and against Alpha, as well as expressing sadness for others' experiences and thanks for the argument, support, and sharing that was occurring.

Alpha, throughout, maintained that her line of inquiry was valid and she was being taken out of context or misunderstood. Further, she couldn't understand why she was meeting such resistance when she should be allowed to ask questions. She was attempting to look at things objectively and thought people shouldn't be "flying off the handle." Tau, another user, tried to call Alpha in, rather than call her out, and enlighten her:

> people are flying off the handle at you because when you say 'maybe there's more to the story' you are implying that what you see here isn't enough. It's not your story or your experience to share nor is it your business to know more. Whatever happened before or after this is irrelevant to the last message that made this conversation a ByeFelipe post. It's apparent that you made a comment without thinking about what you were implying, imitating the patriarchal culture we are all used to, and now that you've been called out you're trying to back track and say everyone else is jumping down your throat and all you wanted to know is the whole story. Sis, just take this [lesson] and admit you got caught up in the patriarchal thinking that we all have been poisoned with. It's ok. That's why we are here. To illuminate each other. It's not your original comment that's so

> upsetting it's your refusal to acknowledge it implied the girl was some how asking [for his] response..whether or not that's what you meant to imply [sic]. (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 4)

Alpha did not respond, and the conversation soon ended after Tau's message. Echo did respond, however, and thanked Tau for communicating through this message what she had been attempted to convey through her own experience. Other users, such as Golf, also replied to Echo sharing their own stories of near rapes as Echo had shared. What we see emerge here is a colorful argument of blame and support through the ByeFelipe post. Women were triggered and angry, using this medium to argue against each other. We also see women using this as a safe space to share traumatizing experiences (Bowen, 2009, pg. 325) and as an avenue to discuss and inform. But we should make note as Tau did that what we also see happening through Alpha's original question is blaming and questioning of the post-submitter. An argument centered not on the Felipe's response, his insults and aggressive comments suggesting the post-submitter hang herself, but rather, the simple message from the post-submitter: "please do not message me anymore" (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 4).

We've only scratched the surface of the rich dialogue that occurred. The argument around Alpha's comment didn't just result in a gathering of community, sharing of experiences, and enlightenment, but also "harassment and bullying" towards Alpha (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 4). One user, Kappa, was supportive of Alpha's act of asking questions, while also trying to broaden her understanding of people's reactions, as she wrote, "when people get emotional about these posts (they're very triggering) it's hard to see anything but their emotions in the moment too [sic]" (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 4). Alpha

communicated back to Kappa “to the point some are going on my instagram and commenting on my pictures spouting all sorts. In my day people were encouraged to ask questions, look at things from all sides and evaluate as such. Feminism was about equality between both sexes. Now apparently it’s something else entirely [sic]” (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 4). Because of the open, public nature of *Instagram*, anyone can access and interact (like images and post comments) on a user’s page if it isn’t private. From Alpha’s comment, we understand that those angry with her questions to this ByeFelipe post were going onto her personal page and writing negative, “abusive” comments. Kappa expressed sadness for what Alpha was experiencing, sharing that Alpha was being treated in a way that went against the purpose of ByeFelipe. The site was a place to bring harassment out into the open, not cause it, as it was for Alpha. And so, we see a repeat of abuse in the very space meant to be a refuge from abuse, and this abuse is not from men to women, but from the women to women in their own community.

The final topic we will discuss from this argument exchange is another suggestion from Alpha she repeated throughout the conversation that caused significant uproar in response, as well. As she tried to provide clarification around why she was pursuing her line of inquiry, Alpha wrote, “the response to forward messages like those [from the Felipe] is either reply and educate them, block or ignore” (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 4). This is a sentiment she repeated a few times that many users spoke up against. Pi, for example, wrote “it’s not any woman’s obligation or responsibility to ‘reply and educate’ OR ‘ignore and block’ a man if he sends a message like that, it’s problematic that you’re stating that those are the only two options. It is that woman’s right to respond as she did

[sic]" (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 4). Just as we noted previously that the conversation was focused on how the post-submitter had responded, Alpha's argument here is also notable in terms of what it implies for how the woman functioned in the new media dating interaction, and how it was perceived as she tried to reclaim her voice by submitting on ByeFelipe. Thus, the post-submitter's interaction with the Felipe is not only questioned, but also why she didn't behave in a societally appropriate way—use the "right" and accepted voice to educate without seeming curt, or if she did not want to do that, then stay silent. Either say the right thing politely or say nothing at all (Glenn, 2004, pg. 61). Otherwise, she is prompted to explain herself as to why she went against this protocol, which is the source of this entire discussion.

Arguments in the comments section of the 27 ByeFelipe posts were quite common, but they didn't always function or end in a stand-off or impasse we saw with Alpha and the other 29 commenters. In fact, an argument that occurred in response to another sour grapes post on February 2, 2017 (see Figure 3) ended in a successful calling in and understanding amongst the followers engaged (see Appendix B for full transcription of the resolution). The argument, which is not the purpose of this discussion, began when India suggested in the comments that shaming men on how well-endowed they were was body shaming, which no one, including women, should engage in. This resulted in another example of community dialogue and engagement. Unlike Alpha, who we saw get agitated but not back down, India got agitated, but resolved the argument. After a few disgruntled messages in response to the pushback she received, India wrote:

> At any rate, In the spirit of solidarity, your feelings, ideas and experiences are valid. I think being self critical is valuable, and as a woman, I think I deserve a

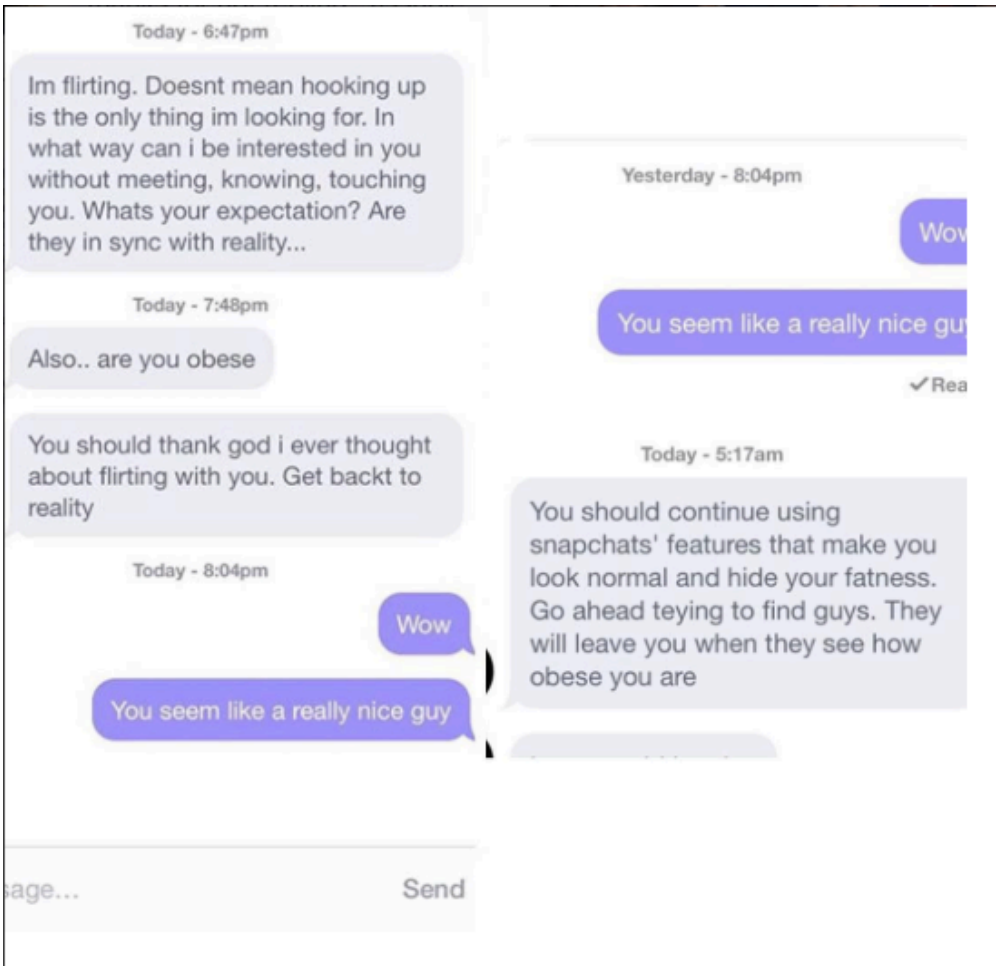

Figure 3. Sour grapes post that resulted in a comments argument that was successfully resolved by ByeFelipe followers. From ByeFelipe [@byefelipe]. (2017, Feb. 2b). GROSS. #byefelipe#byeeeeee [Instagram photograph]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/BQOUY8mBgvU/

> voice in this conversation. Apologies if I have come across as angry condescending or unsupportive, I didn't like being accused of participating in a system that I have been marginalized by [sic]. (ByeFelipe, 2017, Feb., 2b)

Juliett then responded to India and explained how the comment India originally posted came across to the followers arguing against her. India, then, took ownership that she had been unclear and proceeded to reframe her message, ending with a summation of her point: “dicks are stupid, let’s be friends” (ByeFelipe, 2017, Feb., 2b). Although this interaction may not occur often, the followers in this argument used this avenue to speak

to each other and connect through and across their differences, sharing personal experiences and understandings, to arrive at a shared understanding (Glenn, 2018, pg. 46) in a "space made for open dialogue," where every woman "deserve[s] a voice" (ByeFelipe, 2017, Feb. 2b).

The posts composed by ByeFelipe were comparably less controversial for audiences. These compositions similarly fell into three subcategories in terms of their purpose. The ByeFelipe composers posted three types of messages (see Table 9), the majority of which were advertisements for the dating app, *Huggle*, which they portrayed as being better than other dating apps by eliminating the harassment situations that drove users to post on ByeFelipe. These advertisements were problematic—many users expressed discontent over the focus of the ByeFelipe site shifting to advertisements rather than staying centered on the interactions with Felipes. Notably, however, ByeFelipe compositions had significantly more likes (134,338), as a whole, than the posts of images submitted by followers. Moreover, the subcategory of *Huggle* advertisements received more likes (84,609) than any other subcategory across all types of compositions by almost twice as much.

Table 9

Posts and Comments Composed by ByeFelipe

Type	Number	Likes	Pos. Comm.	Neg. Comm.	Total Comm.	Tagged Comm.
Event Ad	2	3,230	48	18	66	45
Huggle Ad	5	84,609	145	50	195	218
Commentary	4	46,609	546	100	646	796

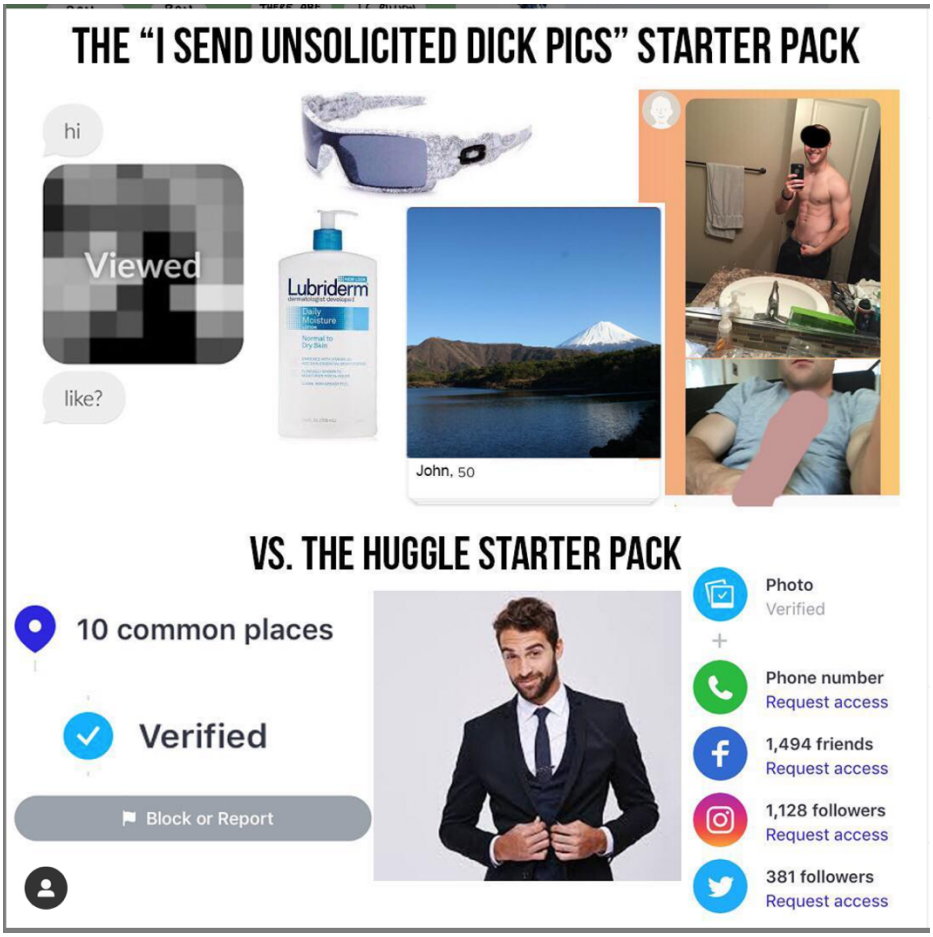

Figure 4. Advertisement for *Huggle* dating site composed by ByeFelipe. From ByeFelipe [@byefelipe]. (2017, Jan.19). I'd rather take @huggle [Instagram photograph]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/BPdmdcMBseJ/

We must also consider the rhetorical strategies the ByeFelipe composers employed in their advertisements. The chief issue with the composer's use of the page as an advertising hub, as we saw, was many felt (and promised to unfollow the page as a result) it was becoming an advertisement site, rather than a community page "meant to out disgusting behavior by men" (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 1). That said, the composers did very much include that disgusting behavior, but in a way to support their message. One particular image, posted on January 19, 2017, exhibited just such a rhetorical strategy amongst others (see Figure 4). To start, ByeFelipe created a hybrid text, combining written and the visual images to enhance the message they were trying to communicate

(Losh, 2009, pg. 63; Palmeri, 2012, pg. 111). The written text ("The 'I send unsolicited dick pics' starter pack vs. the Huggle starter pack" [ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 19]) needed the imagery, and vice versa, to understand the full intended message (Hocks, 2003, pg. 631).

The images meant to demonstrate the "'I send unsolicited dick pics' starter pack" (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 19) include screenshots and images ByeFelipe followers submitted of their own experience for ByeFelipe's posting and use—thereby also causing a hybridity between author and audience (Hocks, 2003, pg. 635). ByeFelipe repurposed their audience's submitted screenshots for their advertisement. While the followers submitted these images for the purpose of comments and to "out" bad male behavior in a like-minded community, the ByeFelipe composers instead used these images not as a subject, in itself, but support for their message—evidence of bad behavior on other sites. By contrast, the images used to demonstrate the "Huggle starter pack" (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 19) showed screenshots of a "verified" status and a photo of a man, not only fully clothed, but well-dressed to boot. The selling point, thus, is *Huggle* is safer—not just anyone with a mountain profile picture uses the site, but rather men that are verified. Men that won't send you pictures of themselves without clothes (be it a shirt or pants). The men on *Huggle* are 3-piece suit wearing gentlemen. And, yet, the second largest issue the followers of ByeFelipe had to posts advertising *Huggle* (after the misuse of the page's purpose) was that the *Huggle* ads were wrong. Even though ByeFelipe advertised that the dating site offered "good" men, it didn't actually do so. Some of the comments shared that *Huggle* still had men engaging in "bad behavior," sending unwanted messages and images just like the other sites (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 19).

Discussion

This ByeFelipe study looked at 27 images and their comments posted on ByeFelipe's *Instagram* page over the course of a five-week (35-day) period, from January 1, 2017 to February 4, 2017, in the continued attempt of this research to find and understand women's voice in the landscape of new media intimacy. Women turned to ByeFelipe as a place of community when they experienced negative interactions or "bad behavior" from men as a result or as part of their new media intimacy experience. By creating profiles and communicating with men on dating sites, women experience cases of harassment, unwanted images, abusive messages, and more. Through ByeFelipe, women are not rendered powerless victims by this behavior, but rather, they turn these interactions into compositions that they can submit to ByeFelipe to post. Women exercise their voice by taking control of an oppressive situation and changing the story around it, making it into a new composition to share with other women, where they are not the victim, but rather, the Felipe is the subject of ridicule. Women build a community around each other that has the potential to build each other up through ByeFelipe, as well as push each other, enlighten each other, and engage in discourse to further understanding of women's agency through the exercising of it.

While *Instagram* and ByeFelipe's page are public, moreover, it can still be considered a silo. The community that forms is often of like-minded individuals that converse amongst themselves. There are two sides to the implications of this siloed, public community. It can provide safety for women to share their experiences with others who understand, but it also keeps the conversation (and women's voices) separated from the larger public sphere. In a history where women's voices are kept in the margins, we

see a similar manifestation of this structure existing in this slow crawl towards public forums, resulting in an imbalance on the internet (Herbst, 2009, pg. 144). It begs the question, is this silo-ing women's choice or is it continued marginalization taking place on new media? While this is a complex question with a complex answer, likely that it's a nuanced combination, one thing feels certain: the agency that women have and the assertiveness with which they exercise their voices on ByeFelipe, as individuals and as a community, would likely not occur if this community didn't build itself in a place of access for all women, while still maintaining safe separation to be free enough to use their voice without fear (Glenn, 2004, pg. 57). The ByeFelipe *Instagram* page is, in a sense, wholly owned and built by women's voices.

Yet, of course, it is not a utopian social media site. While it is predominantly a community of like-minded individuals with the potential to build a safe and open community, there are also cases of individuals tearing each other down precisely because of the like-mindedness. Those that express a different voice or that push thought and conversation end up victims of harassment and marginalization. ByeFelipe could be a safe space, but as the data of this study showed, people are not safe or free to express any opinion, especially opinions opposed to the majority of the community. The overwhelming responses to posts were of support, with many rallying to defend the post-submitter, but it was a common occurrence throughout the ByeFelipe comments that, rather than the Felipe's over the top, aggressive response, the onus was put on the woman for potentially provoking the response or not handling it in a "lady-like" manner. Some of these read as an echo of the rhetorical and cultural history of women, and the commenters focusing on the woman's response were often attacked. Experiences were called on to

guilt and blame commenters with opposing and questioning views, and they were also attacked to the point where people of the community went to the opposing commenters personal page and wrote negative messages on their personal images. Women are using new media to exercise their agency and voice as fully as they can, pushing back against harassment they experience in media intimacy, but the spaces they create can emulate that harassment, and thus create and uphold power structures in these "safe" spaces.

Conclusion

While this work was focused on locating and understanding women's voices in the landscape of media intimacy, the study on ByeFelipe opened up more avenues for further research to be conducted. In fact, further lines of inquiry presented themselves as a direct result of the content from ByeFelipe compositions. For example, specific research can be done just on the power structures present on this page. We already identified some manifestations through this study, but there are other presentations that uphold a history of women's marginalization and objectification, such as one male commenter who wrote, "your being very judgemental its not hot [sic]" (ByeFelipe, 2017, Jan. 1) to a fellow commenter. Another line of work can be done into the safety, or lack thereof, that results from this page, such as cases of trolling when post-submitters share the Felipe's contact information for the community to message and harass him (ByeFelipe, 2017, Feb. 2b).

Yet another avenue of research could be done into the implications of United States politics on new media dating and the role of women. A sour grapes post from this ByeFelipe study, for example, displayed a Felipe's message "[d]on't worry, I got Trump to put you wanna be stuck up girls in your place. You not a real WOMAN. A real woman

will tell a man how she feel. Yes trump gone reach you it's a man's world and I'm the King b**** [sic]" (ByeFelipe, 2017, Feb. 4). One commenter wrote in response to this post:

> This is sad on so many levels. Wants to fuck a woman, assumes she is a liberal feminist because she's on a dating site and women are supposed to be in the kitchen. Gets rejected by normal woman because he lacks game and reeks of virginity, invokes dumb sexist Trump because he DREAMS of a world where women HAVE to sleep with a guy simply because he asks for it. Can't believe he was rejected by a "liberal" woman because he is a privileged white male, who has every single advantage society has to offer, yet even with no limit to his wealth or power, he cannot force her to fuck him. Emboldened by recent rise of white supremacist to power, hopes Trump will restrict the rights of women to the point where they are desperate enough to fuck the first loser that sends them a [direct message], ie himself. Needs the entire American social structure to revert back to Victorian-era just so he can get his dick sucked without paying for it. Intuitively senses his personal shortfall, lashes out at all women for it. Hopefully his luck keeps up and he will die without ever impregnating a woman, so his sad pathetic beta kind will not pollute the gene pool. Calls other men "cucks…" yet this is projection. Should he ever get married he will be repeatedly cuckolded by his wife because of his weak dick game, insecurities, and infatuation with fascism and white supremacy movements [sic]. (ByeFelipe, 2017, Feb. 4)

Further research can be done to build on my work here to understand how the politics of the nation are impacting the function of women in new media intimacy, as this

commenter suggests. How are the landscape and rhetoric of media intimacy changing, if at all, as a result of the political ideologies of the time; how are people of different identities impacted; and how are people exercising their voices and where? New media, as we saw through this ByeFelipe analysis, has the potential to provide safe spaces and communities for people to use their voice, but also the potential to reflect and uphold power dynamics that result in the marginalization of others. While there is still a world of questions that need answering and contexts that need understanding in rhetoric, new media, and identities, some things are clear. First, in a genre where women were kept in the margins, they now actively use their voice to participate in the practice of finding a partner through new media. Second, new media has also allowed women to transform the landscape of media intimacy by creating their own spaces and communities. And third, while the potential for rhetorical feminism is high in these spaces, providing an escape for women from marginalization and harassment, the resulting power structures that develop can uphold the practice of marginalization.

Conclusion

Women, historically, lived in the margins of media intimacy rhetoric. *Lonely Hearts* advertisements began in the late 17th century as a way for desperate individuals (according to society) to find spouses and partners, and it wasn't until the 20th century that women began making their way into the public arena of this genre. For almost the entirety of its 325-year history, women's voices were devalued and not given a prominent place in the rhetoric. Men were the main composers of advertisements, but women did find moments of agency. Further, we see themes emerge in these compositions, such as physical attractiveness and disposition, that have lasted throughout the centuries, even to the present, in different forms. Women that were able to exercise some semblance of voice through breaking cultural norms in an already norm-breaking genre by composing advertisements were often women that were independent, such as widows. When they did so, their compositions shared a tone of shame and desperation, needing to explain the sad circumstance that led them to such an indecent form of partner-finding. What's more, *Lonely Hearts* advertisements were originally interested in predominantly one kind of relationship, an alliance marriage. Over time, advertisements changed as the nature of marriage changed to the companionate marriage and, eventually, to the fulfilling relationship, which prioritized love, made room for sex, and didn't necessarily include marriage. When trying to locate women in the centuries-long history of media intimacy, we see them in the margins, with limited but clear moments of agency, that grew over time.

With the turn of the century and the explosion of new media, online advertisements and dating have become mainstream and have slowly broken away from

their associated stigma. That's not to say that it is gone completely, since we can hardly speak for each and every composer, their reasons, or their feelings, but rather that it is no longer societally a form of gossip or mockery. New media intimacy compositions have become a main form of mate-finding with different platforms to meet different goals. One platform is quite akin to *Lonely Hearts* in that it is a larger site full of advertisements of all different kinds, *Craigslist*. As we saw through the 25 advertisements of women composers seeking men, the tactics of rhetorical feminism are at a play as women are now speaking from and to the margins that they have been kept in since the 17th century in this genre. They are accessing and unapologetically expressing their voices to find exactly the partnerships they are looking for, from marriage to friendship to sex to BDSM. Women are showing and communicating their own emotions and experiences rather than providing excuses for turning to this form of mate-finding or hiding their intents subtly into societally appropriate language (Glenn, 2018). Through their use of these rhetorical feminism tactics, women are not only reclaiming their voice, but they are vocal in the public arena of media intimacy. Some traditions do live on—such as the attention to physical attractiveness and demeanor—but rather than focusing on what they offer, women focus also on what they seek, no longer taking whatever they can get, but looking for what they want. Women are composers, using their voice to be open about their sexuality, their past, and their desires.

By opening themselves up to be full participants as composers in media intimacy, women have experienced resulting instances of harassment. Through new media messaging, people can text and communicate not just through their phone numbers, but also separately through the apps or sites they are using. With the multimodality of the

genre, women are on the receiving end of unsolicited pictures of men, as well as insults and attacks if they are not interested in communicating with a respondent to their advertisement or profile. Women on the ByeFelipe *Instagram* page don't use these cases as a way to be censored, which is the intent of these harassment messages, but rather to take control of the situation and change the composition by turning it into a way shame the harasser within a community of other women and men. Women are assertively vocal on this social media page, using their voices to speak from their own experiences, "disidentify[ing] with hegemonic rhetoric" (Glenn, 2018, pg. 4), to shame men and fight against their attempted oppression in media intimacy. Users of this site, however, sometimes revert back to power structures where one group is right and one group is wrong. Rhetorical feminism calls on experiences and speaking to and from the margins to expand knowledge and create equality. The community on ByeFelipe, however, sometimes used experiences to shame and blame those with opposing views or questions, and thus created margins where individuals in power often attacked others within the community dialogue and on their personal pages. The potential of the community to be a safe space, a space of rhetorical feminism in action, is strong—but as this research showed, its potential for recreating power dynamics, marginalization, and harassment is equally as strong.

This research was focused on locating women's voices and how they were functioning in media intimacy. We tracked a history of marginalization and moments of agency for women's voices; a present autonomy to find self-fulfillment; and a creation of community and power dynamics in media intimacy. We see women reclaim the value of their own voices on new media, but also devalue each other's voices. The greatest finding

of this project, however, is the network women created online through the platforms and rhetoric they use in media intimacy. The inquiry into *Lonely Hearts* advertisements, *Craigslist* advertisements, and the ByeFelipe community allowed us to examine the coalescence of feminism, rhetoric, and new media to create a network of feminist rhetoric through Glenn's (2018) concept of rhetorical feminist action, as well as women's rhetorical practices within the resulting network in media intimacy compositions. Women negotiate multiple online venues, balance the tactics of rhetorical feminism with technology, multimodality, rhetorical purpose, audience, and community to build a complex digital form of feminist rhetoric. As we saw through the compositions and fluid interconnectedness of *Lonely Hearts, Craigslist*, and ByeFelipe, women have created a network of feminist rhetoric in the landscape of media intimacy.

We've also opened the door to locate new places of limitations. Further research areas have been identified in the two qualitative studies within this work; the larger implications of this research can look into the limitations of valued voice we identified here. One such limitation can delve into the compositional strategies women employ to maintain safety in media intimacy, either in their interactions on dating sites or on community sites. Additionally, research can also explore the location and rhetorical strategies of other marginalized groups on media intimacy and, thus, build on our understanding of the landscape presented here. By locating and understanding these marginalized voices and identities in their different contexts, we uncover a new interaction of feminist and digital rhetorics, where women tap into the complexities and fluidity of the digital to create a networked system across platforms and purposes, exercising rhetorical feminism. Through these networks of feminist rhetoric, we can

continue towards a future of reclaimed and equal agency, a future and rhetoric where voices are valued in their digital discourses, both publicly and personally.

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Appendix A

Transcription of one argument in response to ByeFelipe's post from January 4, 2017 involving 30 different ByeFelipe followers and 66 total comments. All identifying characteristics, including usernames, have been removed for anonymity and replaced with aliases for readability. No further edits, including grammar corrections, were made. From ByeFelipe [@byefelipe]. (2017, Jan. 4). Assy-metrical hairdos! 🍑🍑💇 [Instagram photograph]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/BPdj8ZdBVD9/

Alpha	I don't think his response is appropriate but is there more to this conversation than shown? Why does she respond with such a curt 'don't message me anymore' response? It does come across as quite rude on her part.
Beta	@Alpha exactly my thoughts.
Gamma	@Alpha does it matter?
Alpha	@Gamma Well yes as it doesn't seem to be the full story.
Gamma	@Alpha nah
Alpha	@Gamma 🙄👍 very mature
Gamma	@Alpha Irrelevant to me, she was polite and straightforward in her response. I can't imagine a scenario where his response would be in the realm of appropriateness.
Delta	@Gamma Exactly. He's a piece of shit. End of story. What more background history, do people need?
Alpha	@Gamma Yes to you it may be, but I and others have noted they were curious as to the context of it all. Nobody has said he was appropriate. Her comment however seemed very curt and out of nowhere. So the query was what is missing from the story here to warrant such an abrupt comment from her. Is no one allowed to query that just because YOU find it 'irrelevant'?
Epsilom	@Alpha She didn't need any other explanation for her curt reply other than that she doesn't want anyone commenting on her body.
Gamma	@Delta Right? I love this account AND the comments because it's always a good reminder of far we have to come when we've got WOMEN lining up to defend this behaviour. As if we don't have our hands full with men thinking this behaviour is ok. Always baffled by the females looking to excuse it. It's the online equivalent of "but what was she wearing".

Gamma	@Epsilom Truth.
Alpha	@Epsilom Do you know her, is that the exact reason for that response. This is the point. What else has been said. And yet again I'll state I'm not condoning his behaviour as someone else is insinuating on here - I think they enjoy drama
Alpha	@Gamma Who is defending his behaviour?
Zeta	@Alpha Yeah, I'm sure he would have been so much better after a "I don't think we're a match" response.
Eta	@Alpha You can't argue with the bleeding heart fems on here, trust me I've tried. If a woman is rude to a guy "it's her right" and if a man retorts with something rude back, we're raving, unhinged lunatics.
Theta	@Alpha Her response to his sexual harassment is completely within a polite range. Any man who said that to me in public would get worse than a please. You think his message was appropriate and deserved her to be more polite than please don't message anymore? Holy crap, there's always one that want to call the woman rude when the man was being pushy and awful to begin with.
Iota	@Theta Like she was as nice and succinct as fucking possible lol. Is this a another case of needing to send rejection flowers?
Alpha	@Eta I'm liberal but I think the world has gone mad. All I did was ask is there more to the story and now I'm being painted as condoning his behaviour and that I'm some poor brainwashed woman who agrees with the patriarchy! Dear God how dare I ask questions! 😅
Iota	@Alpha You literally have this exact kind of interaction posted on your IG page, where some guy calls you stunning and your caption is "wtf" "ByeFelipe" ... But you're pressed about this overly polite woman after way more direct objectification? Wtf
Iota	You IMPLIED there was greater context as if this couldnt possibly be the whole interaction. You said she was "curt" (when she was super polite) "out of nowhere", as if he comments on her body were not reason enough to reject him. 🙄 @Alpha
Kappa	@Eta so would you respond like that if a woman told you to please stop messaging her? I mean do you honestly feel like his response was warranted? I literally want to know your answers to both of those questions. Not even bullshitting right now.

Alpha	@Iota No I didn't imply at all if you read my original message I merely asked if there was more to it than the three short messages. I did think her response was rather abrupt although I don't condone what he has written. The response to forward messages like those is either reply and educate them, block or ignore. As for you creeping on my page and stating that I posted hash tagging the ByeFelipe tag for this page, so what? I do find those posts amusing and guess what I did? I blocked the guy. There was no more to the story, I wasn't offended. I didn't feel sexually harassed. If someone makes comments in real life like that I follow the same protocol as online, respond and try and educate them or laugh it off and hopefully they feel foolish and realise the error of their ways. Now tell me why is it wrong to merely ask if there is more to the image than the three posts?
Kappa	@Alpha you made it clear that you didn't condone his behavior. You're definitely allowed to ask questions. I don't find her response rude but that's me. I think women are very much on edge these days, myself included. But it's not an excuse to stifle questions or differing opinions. I don't mean to wax philosophical here, but it seems like everyone is just holding on to their values for dear life and they're not able to be open minded anymore. It's happening on all sides too.
Iota	Verbatim you wrote: "I don't think his response is appropriate but is there more to this conversation than shown? Why does she respond wth such a curt ' don't message me anymore' response? It does come across as quite rude on her part. " 👀👀👀👀👀👀🙄 @Alpha
Kappa	Also - when people get emotional about these posts (they're very triggering) it's hard to see anything but their emotions in the moment too.
Iota	You question why she was "curt" (she wasn't). You *don't understand* why she doesn't want to talk to him anymore, as if his objectification isn't enough. You call her RUUUUDE (she wasn't in the most reachy reach of places). Girl, bye. 👋
Alpha	@Kappa To the point some are going on my instagram and commenting on my pictures spouting all sorts. In my day people were encouraged to ask questions, look at things from all sides and evaluate as such. Feminism was about equality between both sexes. Now apparently it's something else entirely.
Lambda	Moral of the story: nobody is obligated to be courteous to somebody just because of a compliment. There, I just solved every argument on this thread.
Mu	Sometimes and not sometimes @Alpha the intent is there but the message

	gets a little garbled. ☹️
Kappa	@Alpha see that's really not ok. I'm really sorry. I read the stuff you said and it truly didn't sound like you condoned it. If they're going on your page and being abusive that's harassment and bullying - exactly what we are supposed to be against. It's the whole point of this account.
Nu	@Alpha we are experiencing the third wave of feminism. Whis
Alpha	@Kappa Exactly. Such is the Internet though! 🖖
Nu	Whilst the first and second were about equality, this one has been categorised as "man hating". I do love this posts, as a guy, but to simply get attacked for asking questions... Well that's the SJW reality nowadays. You either agree with the mainstream ideas or you're a racist/sexist/homophobe etc. My advice, don't even try
Xi	@Eta Uh, not to state the obvious but, there's a huge difference between this woman's perceived "rudeness" and this man's response. Because there are no "ifs" here like you wrote, it's there for us to read...her response may have been curt (or rude, whatever) but his response was actually that of a raving/unhinged lunatic. You created a false equivalency in your argument and I think it's pretty obvious that you can't equate their responses because...well...I mean, look at what he wrote. He sounds insane.
Omicron	@Eta it's more of what men usually say in their rude comments back. They are often threatening, and insulting and calling of names. Even if a woman says "go fuck yourself" doesn't warrant a response of "I hope you get raped you fat cunt". Do you see the difference?
Pi	@Iota Wholeheartedly agree. @Alpha It's not any woman's obligation or responsibility to "reply and educate" OR "ignore and block" a man if he sends a message like that, it's problematic that you're stating that those are the only two options. It is that woman's right to respond as she did and I don't see the point in judging or questioning her perfectly justifiable reaction, particularly when it wasn't overly nasty or rude.
Pi	@Lambda Exactly. So frustrating that people can even find something to argue over this response.
Rho	@Alpha OK so I have to respond. I am no longer on dating sites, thankfully! However, I can tell you that most likely he has sent her several messages and wouldn't stop. I would get to the point where I would send someone a message like that too. ignoring him wasn't working so she had to do something. It's no surprise that he didn't take it well. Funny how he

	liked how she looked until she rejected him.
Sigma	She...said...please. That's not curt, that's polite af. Male entitlement is really and truly some next level bullshit.
Tau	@Alpha I think it's implied that he's been messaging her a lot because she's asking him to stop. It seems from that response she's asked him before.
Upsilon	@Lambda Thank you!!!
Phi	Shoutout to @Iota for coming armed with receipts 👏🙏
Chi	How can anyone imply there is more to the story!?! Of course there is, she didn't want him messaging her. GASP. Every woman should have the right to stand up for herself, polite or not! There is no woman on this earth that owes a single man anything!!!
Psi	@Tau yup, and he's probably shown this kind of instability before, which is probably why she wants nothing to do with him smh
Omega	@Alpha wild concept: WOMEN DO NOT OWE MEN A POLITE RESPONSE. If I don't want to talk to a man, then I don't want to talk to a man. I don't have to be nice. I don't have to avoid bruising his massively fragile ego. Women not bending over backwards to honor fragile masculinity is not rude.
Alpha	OK, apparently no one is allowed to ask questions anymore and all women are meant to follow this SJW new fem code. FYI to all those going on and on, 👏 I'm a woman 👏 I've already said I don't condone his messages 👏I never once said she owes him any kind of response 👏 I said her response came across as short/abrupt/curt which can seem/be interpreted as rude because it's online and there is no tone in text so text can be interpreted in many ways. Also 👏the only fragile thing I'm seeing here is not masculinity, it's femininity, the amount of women I'm getting for jumping down my throat for asking a mere question is ridiculous. Women should build each other up not tear each other down. Anyway thank you to those who were kind and understood my original comment and who stuck up for me, who knew by wanting to know all sides of the story you'd be unintentionally kicking the hornets nest?
Bravo	@Alpha from someone who started a page like this unfortunately whether you respond politely, rudely or not at all, a man that wants to tell a woman off will. I started my page for my own sanity. I'm sorry so many women got upset with you. I think we just get frustrated because no matter what we do (response or not) as I said from this type of man we'd get told off.

Bravo	Hope that helps and have a good night!!
Charlie	@Alpha using "SJW" gets major side eye
Alpha	@Bravo I know some men will, I've experienced it first hand myself, especially when i was younger and modeled and it's not right (albeit funny at times in my opinion). I just think as I said in another message the only options are to educate, ignore, or block. Or of course pop their comments up on places like this to laugh at them. Unfortunately when you put yourself out there you're open to all types, good and bad. That's why it's always good to have a good sense of humour. Life is too short to get angry over everything.
Echo	@Alpha The problem is that whinging that "you just want know all sides of the story" sounds an awful lot like "well what was she wearing when she got raped?" Or "how did she turn him down, what did she say? Maybe if she'd be gentler he wouldn't have shot her on the way to her car".
Bravo	@Alpha I totally agree! I try to use humor (often) it's just that people feel that the internet is an excuse to act however they want and it's really not acceptable. I had a guy send me a message awhile back when I used to be online saying "okay? No hello back?" I never saw his first message. So I told him "Hi, I never saw your first message. I'm not interested, I hope you have a great evening though." I should have just ignored him because suddenly I was "a bitch and he was just saying hi and didn't want to fuck me lol" right?! I guess that's the point I was trying to make. Just because we put ourselves out there doesn't make it acceptable or we should ignore it/just take it. Things should change. It's cyber bullying. That's just my opinion though. Maybe I am an SJW, but people kill themselves because off assholes like him and that's not okay in my book
Bravo	@Echo good for you. People need to be held accountable. It's too bad we have to block names on here
Alpha	@Echo Did you seriously just compare my asking if there were any more messages he'd sent to rape? 😐
Alpha	@Bravo Like I said, we have options in how we respond to comments like that. We can ignore them or if we feel as if we are able to we can respond and educate them. It's not acceptable to receive messages like those, however we should be aware that it is an inevitability to encounter people like that from time to time, the world unfortunately isn't perfect. When we put ourselves out there sadly we may not receive entirely courteous comments. I've never heard of anyone killing themselves over unwarranted messages from men/women coming onto them however.

Online bullying however.... eesh... it needs to stop.

Foxtrot @Alpha did you seriously just skip the context? Why does a woman need justification when she just doesn't want to talk to a guy? Where does this entitlement come from?

Alpha Clearly you did as you continue to insinuate that I believe she has to justify herself. I asked if there were more messages, if there was more to it than the three messages. Had he previously sent other messages? - because some guys will send thirty odd 'hey gorgeous/baby/beautiful' etc messages and still not get the point. Jumping straight to rape comparisons because you have failed to understand my comment really is jumping the gun and quite frankly a bit sick. I do have to wonder if the woman who received the message pictured was as offended as a lot of women here are, or if perhaps she received the comment, laughed about it and sent it to ByeFelipe. I'm sure she would probably just answer my question with a yes or no as well rather than the barrage of hate and vitriol on here.

Echo @Alpha No, what I'm talking about is what it might have sounded like to other people when you said well we don't know the whole story. A couple of years ago I was standing in the center of what's considered to be a safe city, at around 8 am in the morning, waiting for my carpool. Two drunk guys in their early twenties asked me for the time. I tried to ignore them and they started bothering me for my number. They got in closer and closer and I told them I wasn't interested and was not going to give them my number. They kept bothering me. I caved to saying that my boyfriend wouldn't like that, because a lot of times if a man doesn't respect that you're a person he'll respect the idea that you're someone else's property. He told me since my boyfriend was a Spaniard he must be cheating on me anyway. I still refused to give them my number. They finally left but not before telling me they were going to follow me home later and rape me. You know what everyone asks when I tell this story? "Well what were you wearing?" "Did you provoke them somehow?" "Maybe it was your tone?" Because for some reason my version of events can't be trusted so they had to ask follow up questions to know the whole story. People also ask "well weren't there police in the plaza as well? Why didn't you go to them?" Because those two had boxed me in to a building corner. "Well why didn't you push them out of the way?" Because there were two of them. Because maybe they had knives. Because they maybe could have and would have beaten me to death. This was not the first time nor last time this has happened so I see why people may have flown off the handle at you when you said well we don't know the whole story.

Alpha @Echo I'm sorry that happened to you but asking if there were more messages isn't really a true comparison as I wasn't saying 'Well there MUST be more to the story' I was merely asking if perhaps he had been

	pestering her. As I said previously, text can be interpreted differently than the tone of how it would have been said had it been spoken. That's why it's important for people to not 'fly off the handle'. It's important to look at things rationally from all angles like a judge would in a court of law for example.
Tau	@Alpha people are flying off the handle at you because when you say "maybe there's more to the story" you are implying that what you see here isn't enough. It's not your story or your experience to share nor is it your business to know more. Whatever happened before or after this is irrelevant to the last message that made this conversation a ByeFelipe post. It's apparent that you made a comment without thinking about what you were implying, imitating the patriarchal culture we are all used to, and now that you've been called out you're trying to back track and say everyone else is jumping down your throat and all you wanted to know is the whole story. Sis, just take this L and admit you got caught up in the patriarchal thinking that we all have been poisoned with. It's ok. That's why we are here. To illuminate each other. It's not your original comment that's so upsetting it's your refusal to acknowledge it implied the girl was some how asking forth is response...whether or not that's what you meant to imply. @Echo oh my! So sorry that happened to you.
Golf	@Echo I agree with you. It doesn't matter what you did, said or what you were wearing...threatening rape is never ok and no one is ever asking for it. I was hanging out with a guy friend and we started kissing. I didn't want it to go any further, but he persisted. I kept pushing him away and he became forceful. He tried to rape me and I fled. People tell me it was my fault because I lead him on by making out with him. No way! I said no...after that...it's his fault. #sorrynotsorry
Echo	@Tau THANK YOU. This is what I was trying to get across.
Echo	@Golf I'm sorry that happened to you :(. No means no, whenever you say it!
Hotel	@Echo I'm so sorry that happened to you.
Echo	@Hotel Thank you for your kind words

Appendix B

Transcription of a successful resolution to an argument in response to ByeFelipe's post from February 2, 2017. All identifying characteristics, including usernames, have been removed for anonymity and replaced with aliases for readability. No further edits, including grammar corrections, were made. From ByeFelipe [@byefelipe]. (2017, Feb. 2b). GROSS. #byefelipe#byeeeeee [Instagram photograph]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/BQOUY8mBgvU/

India	At this point it seems like my comment is being intentionally misread in order to create an opportunity to share "more enlightened" feminist insight and challenge the patriarchy. I'm happy I provided a launch pad for idea de for a situation that actually needs thi
India	Oops, idea sharing for a situation that actually calls for it.
India	@Juliett At any rate, In the spirit of solidarity, your feelings, ideas and experiences are valid. I think being self critical is valuable, and as a woman, I think I deserve a voice in this conversation. Apologies if I have come across as angry condescending or unsupportive, I didn't like being accused of participating in a system that I have been marginalized by.
Juliett	@India I don't think we mis-read anything. What you essentially told us (in so many words) was "rise above it" and don't "stoop to their level". What's profound or innovative about that? My mom told me that in kindergarten about school yard bullies. The problem with that mentality is that it never really calls the perpetrators to task. But it tone policies the victim (as I mentioned earlier).
Juliett	*polices
India	Ok, then I wasn't clear, and that's my fault. I don't like when some checks my 👧 card so my 😾 came out. The problem I was pointing out didn't have anything to do with being a better person, rather when you respond to body shame with body shame, you internalize and perpetuate a message that is damaging to yourself. I'm sorry if that wasn't clear. It's in the same ballpark as telling someone who is overweight "You're not overweight, you're beautiful!" It still equates value with appearance. When you say someone who is a misogynist has a small dick it implies that small dicked people are misogynists because their bodies are inadequate and that men with average or big dicks are not misogynistic because their bodies meet a standard. You can have a magnificent cock and still have zero value as a human to all women. And I think it reduces the complexity of female sexuality and attraction to "Big dick is everything!" That's a male message and I don't want to perpetuate it. I feel similarly (though not as strongly) when women talk about how big their dick is as a sign of strength or

	superiority. I probably dont care so much about that one bc my wife is fond of saying it and she gets a free pass 😉 I didn't think that was tone policing but pointing out how we are internalizing and sharing a damaging message. Thanks for pointing out how my comment came across, obviously if you heard something other than what I intended, I don't get to blame you for that, they were my words and they were said quickly without considering how it woukd be construed. Can we still be sisters?
India	TL;DR sorry, dicks are stupid, let's be friends.
Kilo	@India i also very much dislike this trend of "shutting down" anyone who comes across as 'compromising.' I get it shows us just how FED up we are and therefore just how much pain we have endured to have been pushed to this rabid state; but when the dust's all settled; maybe there will still be spaces made for open dialogue. Binary opposition is what got us here in the first place; man woman, right wrong. Speak your mind- who gives a fuck what others think.

Vita

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