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Food porn versus actual porn : a gendered analysis of Pinterest and Reddit

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FOOD PORN VERSUS ACTUAL PORN: A GENDERED ANALYSIS OF PINTEREST AND REDDIT

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Certificate of Approval

This is to certify that the accompanying thesis by Annabella Theodora Kathryn Sherman has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation with Honors in Sociology.

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INTRODUCTION

The United States is one of the countries with the highest percentage of Internet users, second only to China; In the United States, Internet users make up 78.1% of the population (Reed 2014). As our society becomes increasingly reliant on technology, researchers must study these technologies and their repercussions. This paper focuses on information communication technologies (ICTs), specifically in the form of Pinterest and Reddit.

Pinterest and Reddit are highly gendered in comparison to other popular social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter: Approximately 73% of Pinterest users are female and approximately 71% of Reddit users are male, making this the largest existing gender gap between popular social media sites (Greenwood, Perrin, and Duggan 2016). By employing a sociological framework, these two online spaces can inform our perspective on gender socialization and norms, which appear to happen online as well as in physical spaces. This is an important and timely issue as the rise of technology continues, threatening to change society and even gender relations: "If gender and technology are seen as socially constructed, it is not surprising that technologies and gender are co-constructed. This means that gender influences technology, and technology influences gender" (Kelan 2007:360).

Individual interviews and focus groups were conducted to examine the repercussions of Pinterest and Reddit from a gendered perspective. That is, how do females and males use and view these sites differently, and how might this reflect or further establish gender norms? While there is research on differential gender roles as well as on the production of gendered technologies, less research has focused on

consumer viewpoints. This paper thus adds to existing literature by examining how men and women may use, receive, and interpret Reddit and Pinterest in different ways.

The terms "female" and "women/woman," as well as "male" and "men/man" are used here to mean the same thing: the outward performance of one's biological sex, also indicated by "femininity" and "masculinity." In this way, my paper speaks in terms of the social aspect of gender as opposed to its biological determinant, fitting with feminist theory's conceptualization of gender as not innate but culturally engrained (Butler 1991; De Beauvoir 1949; West and Zimmerman 1987).

Background on Pinterest

What is Pinterest? Pinterest is a product-oriented social networking site used primarily by women with an emphasis on collecting and curating content (Bakhshi and Gilbert 2015) in the form of images, or "pins." The site is visually oriented and focused on lifestyle, so that browsing someone's Pinterest boards can give cues as to their tastes or interests. As the about page on the site puts it, i"Pinterest is the world's catalogue of ideas. Find and save recipes, parenting hacks, style inspiration and other ideas to try."

How does it work? Users of the site can bookmark ("pin") images to their profile, where the image will be displayed with a link to the original website where it was originally found. For example, clicking on a pin of a clothing item could take you to the brand's website where you can purchase the item, or clicking on a picture of food could take you to recipe. Often described as a "virtual scrapbook," Pinterest users can organize these pins by subjects or moods (called "boards") that usually have a common theme, such as food or gardening.

What sort of content does it have? The top five content categories on Pinterest, as determined by the "what's popular" section of the site on April 10, 2017, are Women's Style, Beauty, DIY, Art, and Home. Mull and Lee (2014) found major uses and user gratification from the site: Fashion, Entertainment, Organization, Virtual Exploration, and Creative Projects. The Fashion dimension was closely linked to the keyword 'shop' in this study, suggesting that there is a commercial component of the draw to fashion on Pinterest.

Background on Reddit

What is Reddit? As the about page of the site puts it, [ii]"The conversation starts on Reddit. Reddit bridges communities and individuals with ideas, the latest digital trends, and breaking news (…okay, and maybe cats). Our mission is to help people discover places where they can be their true selves, and empower our community to flourish." One user described Reddit as, "a collection of virtual bulletin boards [called subreddits] for any subject, interest, hobby, passion, object, or thing that has ever existed or could ever exist," and many cited an Internet law wherein "if it exists, there's a subreddit for it."

How does it work? Anyone can create a community, also known as a "subreddit," on nearly any topic one could think of. On these subreddits, users can post and comment anything from photos and videos to GIFs, articles, links, or just plain words. Commenting is big on Reddit: there are often hundreds of comments on popular posts, and the comments section is thought of a separate world from the post itself.

What sort of content does it have? Reddit has a vast array of content, the likes of which would be nearly impossible to sum up here. However, the subreddits with the most subscribers are [iii]Ask Reddit, Funny, Today I Learned, Science, and World News.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gendered Spaces, Digitalized

Scores of sociological research have focused on physical space and its implications for social relations, whether it be of children's differential room arrangements at their mother's and father's houses (Janning, Collins, and Kamm 2011) or on why and how sex workers choose their business locations (Mcquiller Williams 2014). Gieryn's (2000) review of places as sociologically important posits that places have implications for social life and historical change, primarily because material forms in a certain spot have consequences with regards to the meanings that people invest in these places. Spaces not only "stabilize and give durability to social structural categories, differences and hierarchies" but also "embody and secure otherwise intangible cultural norms, identities, and memories" (Gieryn 2000:473), highlighting how social relations can be imbedded in, and even created by, places and spaces. Gieryn (2000) also acknowledges that places can be gendered, citing the home as an example of this.

Though Gieryn (2000) conceptualizes "place" as having a material form, more recent research has shown that it does not necessarily have to exist in the physically material world – that is, place can be digital as well. As Reed (2014) sees it, the Internet is made up of many different cyber*spaces* (in the plural sense for the many websites that exist online).

Following West and Zimmerman's (1987) theory of gender as a routine accomplishment embedded in everyday action and interaction, the present review posits that certain behaviors and interactions with technology can also reflect gender norms. This analysis of digital spaces is sociologically significant because, as Gieryn (2000:474)

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says, "Place sustains difference and hierarchy both by routinizing daily rounds in ways that exclude and segregate categories of people, and by embodying in visual and tangible ways the cultural meanings variously ascribed to them." In this case, I conceptualize Reddit as existing within the web address www.reddit.com, and Pinterest as www.pinterest.com. Within this, we can see the digital spaces of Pinterest and Reddit as two sociological places that cater to women and men in different ways.

As Epp and Price (2010) have researched, digital and physical objects can be regarded as not just objects, but extensions of our physical selves. As a part of this self is made up of gender, this new digital medium thus provides an avenue for gender expression that expands beyond purely physical spaces. In this way, Belk (2014:1108) says that "non-human things are as important as humans in shaping behaviour, history, technology, and identity." With the view of technological mediums - from computers and phones to web pages - as artifacts and agentic objects, this theory informs the present research on how gendered meanings are inscribed into technology with consequence.

The existence of patriarchy and gender inequalities in society perpetuates the notion of males as the active One and woman as the passive Other, as outlined below by de Beauvoir (1949). Digital objects, being reflective of society, will thus carry these same inequalities. Patriarchal influence and gendered meaning can be seen in the way that spaces and objects (technological and otherwise) are produced, but also how they are consumed. This consumption of technology is affected by marketing strategies, which are often geared towards women in a way that reinforces traditional gender roles (Consalvo and Paasonen 2002). It is important to remember that technology never acts alone: it is a

mutually reinforcing or reflective relationship wherein, "We shape our tools, and afterwards our tools shape us" (Reed 2014:10).

As computers are considered masculine (Lerman, Oldenziel, and Mohun 2003), men can use these technologies to assert their masculinity, while women's avoidance of them can assert femininity by creating distance from something traditionally masculine (Kelan 2007). Men's view of technology as a "toy," whereby they then use technological instruments for both work and pleasure, reflects a broader theme of agency in that men are able to establish and maintain control over their environment, whereas women are more passive to it and only use technology if it is necessary for something or someone else (Kelan 2007). The notion of males as active users of technology and females as passive users (Kelan 2007) thus supports existing gender norms of females as passive and males as active (De Beauvoir 1949). This view is furthered by the fact that women are traditionally and stereotypically associated with nature, and technology is thought to be the opposite of nature: by interacting with technology, women are "going against their natural self or state of being" (Johnson 2010:37).

Technological Production in the Industrial Era

In the United States, the predominance of male workers during the industrial revolution, when technologies were first being mass manufactured, worked to establish technology as a masculine domain. Technology was entirely based on male opinion and design, as women were usually confined to the home (Wajcman 2007). Engineers were depicted as "male cultural heroes" (and still are with Mark Zuckerberg and Bill Gates), and soon the visual language of machinery was imbued with male symbols and traits (Lerman et al. 2003). The rise of personal computers in the 1970s was met by many

gendered advertisements which depicted men as the primary users with women passively watching from the background, further enforcing masculine messages of ownership and control (Ware and Stuck 1985). Men were depicted in popular computer magazines twice as often as women were, and were overrepresented as managers and experts; women, when present, were overrepresented as sex objects (Ware and Stuck 1985). Thus, as the rise of personal computers grew, so did their association with science, rationality, and masculinity: This process was further reinforced as male hobbyists and gamers started to use computers for these pursuits (Kelan 2007). Technology is still very much a masculine domain, as represented by the unequal number of men and women in computer science and STEM fields (Beede et al. 2011). Furthermore, tech celebrities Gates and Zuckerburg are depicted as heroes - much in the same way original engineers were praised for their work. This provides support for existing literature wherein masculine work and interests are praised and valued whereas feminine ones are devalued (Hochschild 1983).

The rise of the Internet also created a new space that, due to its lack of government regulation, was considered "dangerous" for women (Consalvo and Paasonen 2002). As more women started to go online, women were continuously warned of the dangers of the online world, informing them of the possibility for hostility, sexism, and harassment (Consalvo and Paasonen 2002). The Internet, in its inception in the early 1990s, was viewed as a new electronic frontier that, similar to the Wild West, was unpredictable, violent, and thus unsafe for women (Consalvo and Paasonen 2002). This metaphor of the Internet as a frontier suggested that individuals were responsible for their own actions in an online world free of established law and order, which established self-governance as the online norm (Consalvo and Paasonen 2002).

Selling the Internet to Women

Though the Internet was first seen as dangerous for women, things shifted as the Internet became more ordered and regulated with the rise of online consumerism (Consalvo and Paasonen 2002). During this time, women were sought out for their gender, a gender that had become commoditized as a way to earn profits for new online businesses (Consalvo and Paasonen 2002). Furthermore, much of the marketing focused on caring for the family and emotionalized household tasks, telling women that they were not good moms or ever good people unless they were multi-tasking housewife that kept their children and houses neat and tidy at all times. Woman's self-worth became a function of her success as a housewife, imbuing household technologies and the work behind them with an emotional weight far greater than the actual tasks at hand (Cowan 1976). Women thus had to live by the rules of the online world set by men (Consalvo and Paasonen 2002). In essence, women entered male-dominated spaces every time they went online, and were made to use it in a very specific and highly gendered way. This reflects women using technologies in a way that reaffirms their femininity instead of giving them agency, as well as reinforces the sexual division of labor. With the female agency that was afforded through the use and control of household technologies came a set of rules of how to interact with not only the technology itself, but with the family as well. Hence, even a technology that improves things for women can still do so in a way that perpetuates a gender gap (Johnson 2010).

Prior Research on the Internet

The number of female Internet users has increased substantially since the Internet was first introduced, but the production and the creation of technology is still left to men:

"So, although the Internet in terms of consumption might now be a feminine-coded area, production remains a masculine domain" (Consalvo and Paasonen 2002:134). Indeed, the founders of both Pinterest and Reddit are men.

Consalvo and Paasonen's (2002) analysis of gendered Internet sites found that men's websites were much more geared towards particular interests, whereas women's sites are more about gender itself. PEW Research Center (Fallows 2005) found that a majority of men value the Internet for its breadth of content, whereas a majority of women are drawn to the potential for the Internet to enrich relationships: Men look for a broader range of information online and are more likely to use the Internet for communicating and discussing certain issues with special interest groups, whereas women are more scared about potential online risk or dangers: Women go online with a purpose, whereas men surf randomly: Women are also seen as shoppers and marketed to as such. Pinterest can definitely be seen as a certain gateway for its female users to gain access to the stereotypical female society, which is at once alluring and elusive. Production of content on the Internet can thus be geared towards women or men in different ways, which comes to be further solidified as users consume these sites in ways that further reflect existing online gender roles.

Commodities and Femininity

Feminine pop culture typically focuses on conventionally feminized subjects, such as appearance (beauty, makeup, hair, voice) and relationships that bring women the *potential* for happiness (Wilson and Yochim 2015). They see this also manifesting on Pinterest, where women organize happy objects – that is, "[Pin] Happiness" (2015:233). They theorize that this process of pinning and repining is highly scripted via gender and

capitalism: "what's ultimately pinned are cruel material and affective structures that rely on and insist on precarity and patriarchy" (Wilson and Yochim 2015:246). Hence, in way Pinterest can be seen as akin to popular feminine pop culture and the beauty and femininity standards that accompany it.

Matchar (2013) outlines how women's lifestyle blogs are often about traditionally feminized topics such as family, domesticity, and homemaking. Though these blogs may be giving back value to traditionally underappreciated women's labor, they are also promoting a certain lifestyle that is glossed over and unattainable for most in today's era. Like Pinterest, Matchar (2013) says that, though women read and interact with these blogs in order to develop a community, users actually become alienated as the blogs prescribe the readers to a certain – and often unattainable - gender performance. This suggests that a women's self worth is in some ways tied to her success as a housewife or a mother – in this case, even a particular kind of housewife or mother. What's more, bloggers are often promoted by companies or paid to advertise on their blogs; so once again we see themes of commercialization and commodification of both women and their online work.

A common theme with regards to literature on women's sites and Pinterest specifically is that women are being put into traditional feminine roles of community-seekers and consumers (Wilson and Yochim 2015). Interestingly, Bakhshi and Gilbert (2015) found that red, purple, and pink (arguably the most stereotypically feminine colors) Pinterest images were more likely to be re-pinned, whereas blue, green, black and yellow images were less likely to be re-pinned.

Images of femininity are often materially produced with patriarchal underpinnings, positioning females as objects, as a body or symbol thus incapable of true narrative, personality, or thought (Solomon-Godeau, De Grazia, and Furlough 1996).

> "In the language of fashion magazines and cosmetic ads, making up is typically portrayed as an aesthetic activity in which a woman can express her individuality. In reality, while cosmetic styles change every decade or so and while some variation in make-up is permitted depending on the occasion, making up the fact is, in fact, a highly stylized activity that gives little rein to self-expression."
>
> (Bartky 1997:100)

Here we see women being given a certain degree of agency and choice, but all under a traditional idea of femininity and gender categorization. Hence, societal expectations of femininity become engrained into female consumers and begin to influence their sense of self-worth as both a woman and a person.

Identity Work on Pinterest

In order to examine how Pinterest intersects with gender, we must examine users' online personas. Instead of producing content (like on Reddit), users are more encouraged to find and arrange pre-existing content than to generate their own. Though women can construct or "try on" multiple identities on Pinterest based on their different boards, they all seem to fit into traditional notions of femininity. This relates to Dobson's (2015) research of young girls on social media: young girls use online profile spaces to experiment with multiple aspects of their identity. While constructed to seem random and eclectic, their displayed online identities via their profile descriptions are actually highly gendered. Young girls online display themselves for scrutiny and sexualization, and their

identities thus become a sort of spectacle that is monitored and consumed by others. Indeed, a user's collection of boards on Pinterest can be seen as a space for identity experimentation, but, as Almjeld (2015) posits, this experimentation is still confined to a gendered script. Therefore, what may actually be the performance of different femininities is regarded by the self and by others as a personal identity exhibit; What is really feminized consumption and consumerism becomes personal identity for Pinterest users. Jen Almjeld (2015) sees these Pinterest femininity scripts as not only limiting but also unattainable.

Hochschild (1983) also sees female performance in jobs heavy in emotional labor, which are often performed by women: "At the bottom end of the scale are found not factory jobs but service jobs where the individual has to perform personally for someone else" (1983:171). In this way, women are subject to the regulation of their own emotions for the sake of others, or even for the sake of corporations, leaving females "[less] chance to decide who they are… they don't get the chance to explore the other sides of their character and to discover their own needs…" (Hochschild 1983:183). While Pinterest does not necessarily appeal to emotional performance in this same way, it illustrates how women have come to be regulated by larger corporate structures that subject the woman to a certain way of being. Indeed, this is due to their "playing of the Woman," which is said by Hochschild to be "an overextension and overuse of their traditional femininity" (Bartky 1997; Hochschild 1983:183–84), showing how women are often put into a box and essentialized for their gender in a way that men are not.

Sherry Turkle (1999) details how cyberspace has opened an avenue for it's users to express multiple aspects of themselves at once, exposing identity's multiplicity and

flexibility in a way that is rare in the physical world. Turkle (2011) posits that computers are not just objects to be acted upon, but also real in their consequences – she says that computers can act back on us to change our views of ourselves and our relations to other people. Because of this, it is quite possible that the feminine qualities of Pinterest bounce back to inform user's self-concepts and sense of self-worth in terms of traditional femininity. In this way, we see how online femininity is regulated and tied to one's personal affect in a way that is different from masculinity.

Authenticity

While Pinterest is seen as a medium for sharing and consuming pre-existing ideas, Reddit is talked about as "the front page of the internet" where content is collected or created by its users with an emphasis on self-government and free speech (Vella 2015). The anonymity afforded to Reddit's users allows for personal expression in a way that is more accepted on Reddit than on Pinterest. Arguments often break out on subreddits when individuals have differing viewpoints (Douglas 2014), framing Reddit as competitive and discussion-based and Pinterest as more collaborative and controlled. Vella (2015:4) even says "a great part of Reddit's appeal lies in its users' awareness of their own power." This suggests a higher level of user independence than Pinterest that is more individualized than commoditized.

In fact, corporate advertisers are resented (Douglas 2014) and there is much more emphasis on authenticity and personal creation than on having things look perfect: there is even a whole subreddit designed to mock overly fake or professional images, the likes of which are surely the norm on Pinterest. The notion of "Internet Ugly" (Douglas 2014:337) illustrates how Reddit is able to move away from aesthetic concerns in order to

focus on personal agency and information sharing, as public ideas are valued over perfect execution. Users are willing to accept something that looks "Internet Ugly" because ideas and content are valued above all else, opening up Reddit as a space where anyone can post if they have a good idea and encouraging amateur, user-generated content. Within this, Pinterest is positioned as fake and unattainable, whereas Reddit is authentic, real, and accessible. This hearkens back to Reddit users having more agency in terms of the control they are afforded over the website content.

Trolling

Even the practice of "Internet trolling" can carry gendered expectations, as men and women both deal with trolls differently and view trolls in different ways depending on their gender (Fichman and Sanfilippo 2015). Trolling is deeply entrenched in anonymity, so the anonymous, self-governed platform of Reddit is indeed a breeding ground for trolls. Among online adults, young women were disproportionality harassed online, especially with stalking behaviors or sexual harassment (Duggan 2014).

Female trolls were seen more as "clueless newbies," citing their trolling behavior to confusion or curiosity – not representative of any true feeling or opinion. On the other hand, male troll perpetrators were seen as more destructive to the community than female trolls, as well as motivated more by malevolence, humor, and instigation. (Fichman and Sanfilippo 2015)

"When sites are overrun by trolls, they drown out the voices of women, ethnic and religious minorities, gays – anyone who might feel vulnerable" (Stein 2016). A study by Fichman and Sanfilippo (2015) found that, while women and men did not perceive trolling differently, they did react differently to trolling behavior: men were more likely

to engage in discussion after a troll attack or block the troll, whereas women were more likely to ignore the troll and shy away from discussion. This suggests that women may not posses the resources to confront or 'take down' trolls, an action which requires attributes such as aggression that are typically coded as male: indeed, women in American society have been found to be more socially passive then men in situations of conflict (Fichman and Sanfilippo 2015).

Though not a study on Reddit itself, an article on "Female Commenters on the New York Times" (Pierson 2015) informs my research on female Reddit users. Pierson (2015) found that women were often driven away from online forums because of aggression. She uses this to say that gender norms prevail on online spaces: women are politer and less opinionated online, suggesting that online forums reproduce offline power imbalances. Thus, the reason that women may be underrepresented in some parts of the Internet is not necessarily because they are not interested in the content, but because they are afraid of the spaces themselves. Indeed, women were more likely to read and comment on posts written by other women, suggesting a need for female spaces within those that may be considered dangerous.

Advertisements and Corporate Control

Though advertisements do exist on both Reddit and Pinterest, Reddit users seem to have the agency and power necessary to combat some of this corporate control whereas Pinterest users are commoditized by the commercial nature of the site. One popular subreddit, r/HailCorporate, focuses on protecting the free exchange of authentic content between its users: the subreddit's aim is to call out corporate infiltrators who use Reddit to promote their products. In a professional interview, moderators of the subreddit

said, "I want organic content from Web peers, not pseudo-organic content made at a content farm," and, "Ultimately, the point is to encourage people to become more aware…" (Hiebert 2014), appealing at once to the importance of user's authenticity and agency. On this subreddit, anyone can post an example of "advertisements [being] everywhere, even if you are not aware of them" (Hiebert 2014) which are often followed by dozens of comments as users converse about their speculations and outrage at the corporate control infiltrating Reddit. Therefore, even though there is some moderation and corporate control on Reddit, its users are able to reclaim their agency by publicly outing and criticizing some of these ads.

This suggests an elaboration of Foucault's (1980) theory of the panopticon, pointing to the fact that surveillance systems can be retaliated against by exposing the systems themselves, in this case putting the user back into a position of power by 'surveilling the surveillers.' By "outing" corporate advertisements, users regain the control that the panopticon attempts to take from them and are able to restore their agency and autonomy, as well as the authenticity of Reddit as a whole.

THEORY

I see four main theorists as directly applicable to my thesis: Butler (1991) and de Beauvoir (1949), both feminist theorists, Foucault (1980), and Goffman (1955, 2005). Butler and Goffman focus on performativity and the self, employing a more microsociological and symbolic interactionist perspective to study the process of becoming and self-presentation, whereas de Beauvoir and Foucault are more concerned with the broader, more systemic consequences of such interactions. Though sociologists often examine these four theorists on their own, the interactions of these theorists helps to understand the gendered spaces of Pinterest and Reddit, which are at once individual and structural. A closer examination of each of these theorists illustrates how feminist theory can be applied to and expand upon Goffman and Foucault's works, as well as how micro and macro sociological perspectives can come together to create meaning.

Butler and De Beauvoir: Feminist Theory

Using Butler's (1991) theory of gender as a regulatory regime and de Beauvoir's (1949) theory of women as the Other allow us to compare Pinterest and Reddit from a gendered perspective. A big part of feminist theory's critique of gender insubordination is the process of gender as a social construct. There is nothing inherent about gender, instead it is inscribed on us from an early age and then repeatedly performed until death: "It's not that there is some kind of sex that exists in hazy biological form that is somehow expressed in the gait, the posture, the gesture… then gender is a performance that produces the illusion of an inner sex or essence" (Butler 1991:436). By engaging with different subject matters on Pinterest or Reddit, individuals affirm their gendered identity while at the same time inscribing it further into their sense of self, much like Butler talks

about her identity as a lesbian: "how and where I play at being one is the way in which that 'being' gets established, instituted, circulated, and confirmed" (Butler 1991:431). Therefore, gendered social media content preferences are not necessarily a product of what one is born as but of what one becomes through carrying out the practices of a set societal regime. These differences have come to be regarded as natural when in fact they are a social product of our own creation: "In truth, nature is no more an immutable given than is historical reality" (de Beauvoir 1949:270).

With this understanding of gender performance we can recognize user activities on Pinterest and Reddit as manifestations of this gendered identity performance and as a mechanism of gender socialization. The gendered process of socialization through engagement with social media sites normalizes the repetitive regulatory practice of gender performance. Though there is nothing inherently feminine about Pinterest, the repeated performance of one's gender on the site reinforces the idea of fashion, beauty, and caretaking as feminine – much like the previously mentioned "women's work" of the household, shopping, and crafting. Much like Butler (1991) says that there is no necessarily common element among lesbians, there should also be no manifest commonality among all women or of all men so that all women like the same thing and all men like the same thing. This online performance thus fits with Butler's (1991) conception of a regulatory repetition that is mandated by society and internalized by the individual.

Through differently gendered practices on Pinterest and Reddit, women are positioned as the Object and men as the Subject, further illustrating de Beauvoir's (1949) perspective of men as the One and women as the Other. The emphasis on fashion and

beauty, which focuses on making the user look their best, suggests that women, Pinterest's primary users, are objects in some way. Focusing on fashion and beauty seems to put the emphasis on one's presentation of self or personal aesthetic, which seems to take agency away from the internal individual and instead put it on one's outer appearance, which here can be seen as largely a product of certain purchasable commodities. Though Pinterest users do have some agency with regards to which trends they decide to pin, the contents of Pinterest and user's interactions with it positions women as Objects that are to be looked at by the rest of the world, whereas men on Reddit are the Subjects of knowledge and individual thought. What's more, women are Objects not only in and of themselves but especially in relation to the male Subject.

Though there is an aspect of individuality on Pinterest, it is largely lost within a sea of feminized content. Butler (1991) maintains that identities are multifaceted and complex, and thus a woman cannot be understood simply by her status as a female. However, this is what seems to happen on Pinterest, whereas on Reddit users are given the space to define themselves based on their written word: On Pinterest women affirm their gender with every home renovation or makeup look that they save to their boards, whereas on Reddit males are free to express themselves and engage in conversation. This helps us to understand de Beauvoir's (1949:268) statement that "the man represents both the positive and the neuter to such an extent that in French *hommes* designates human beings." Men do not have to think about their gender or perform it in the same way that women do, it is inscribed in their very being or humanity: they are "afforded the liberty to forget their anatomy, grasping their bodies as a direct and normal link with the world" (de Beauvoir 1949:269). This fits very well with Butler's (1991:436) critique: "That 'Other'

installed in the self thus establishes the permanent incapacity of that 'self' to achieve self-identity." On Pinterest, women constantly produce and maintain gendered ideology through the effects of a compulsory gender performance that comes to be regarded as cause or origin (Butler 1991), and are thus left with the inability to conceive of themselves apart from their all-encompassing status as Woman.

It is important to consider this issue from a feminist perspective or else the issues of gender and gender differences would go largely unnoticed. By examining how the woman has come to be different from the man, we can use feminist theory to develop a more nuanced understanding of the differential practices on Pinterest and Reddit. Feminist theory's acknowledgement of gender as a social performance illustrates the complicated gender roles on Pinterest and Reddit and how they can socialize users to perform (for women) or assert (for men) their gender in problematic ways. While women are performing their identity and femininity on Pinterest (Almjeld 2015), men are discussing and consuming ideas on Reddit. Hence, online spaces reproduce many of the issues of patriarchal society as outlined by Butler (1991) and de Beauvoir (1949), at once subsuming users to their gender identity and positioning women as objects.

Foucault: Corporate Control and Moderation

Michel Foucault's (1980) ideas of surveillance and discipline can be applied to my analysis of Pinterest and Reddit through examining both the role of corporate advertisers and the moderation of inappropriate content on the sites. Searching the keyword "porn" on Reddit will result in a stream of NSFW subreddits with every type of niche porn you could dare to imagine, whereas searching the same thing on Pinterest results in an endless stream of desserts and donuts, as well as a friendly reminder that full

nudity is not allowed on Pinterest. Regulation of female bodies on Pinterest points to women as being under a type of power "which is constantly exercised by means of surveillance… (Foucault 1980:104)," leading to "continuous and permanent systems of surveillance" that manifests in a disguised form of dominance (105-106), subtly regulating and policing bodies.

Each subreddit is mainly self-governed so that the self-appointed moderators whom are anonymous and members of the community come up with their own set of rules for posters and commenters to abide by. On the other hand, Pinterest is regulated by those who work for Pinterest – there are no "community moderators" in the same sense that there are on Reddit (Hiebert 2014). Hence, Pinterest users can be seen as within a large panopticon of corporate control and hierarchy, similar to Foucault's idea of the central observation tower and surrounding cells (Germov and Williams 1999), whereas Reddit users are more amongst their peers in smaller and seemingly more lenient panopticons. Pinterest users in general are put into a panopticon wherein they stand in the center and are watched not only by their peers on the site but also by larger corporations who try and control their actions and purchasing decisions.

The removal of content on Reddit is not all-encompassing because lewd and NSFW (not safe for work) content is encouraged and expected on certain subreddits. Though Reddit is still being monitored, the fact that is it only being monitored in certain places, and certain ways as determined by Reddit user's peers themselves, relates back to the idea that Reddit users have more agency over their information flow than Pinterest users, who are confined to SFW content at all times. This also relates back to the idea of self-government on Reddit, and posits Reddit as being similar to the initial Internet,

which was largely self-governed as well and thus seen as a dangerous and potentially insulting place for women (Consalvo and Paasonen 2002).

Germov and Williams (1999) expand upon Foucault's idea of the panopticon by taking a feminist approach so that women are seen as within a body and gender panopticon with the beauty expectations and thin ideals that women are subject to. Foucault (1980) talks about how constant surveillance of the human body is a form of social control, but this surveillance is gendered so that women are primarily the targets of regulation through the perpetuation of the "thin ideal." Indeed, the physical body can be seen as a symbolic metaphor for society in the ways they are perceived: "…the social body is a 'gendered body,' with significant differences in cultural esthetic ideals. Gendered bodies are produced and reproduced through discourses of beauty, health, food, cosmetics, fashion, and exercise" (Germov and Williams 1999:118). Indeed, many of these lifestyle ideals are present on Pinterest; scrolling down one's feed will subject one to an endless stream of thin women dressed in beautiful clothes with flawless makeup and hair. In this way, the regulation of the female body through feminine appearance norms can be seen as a way in which women are constantly surveilled and controlled.

Germov and Williams (1999:121) expand upon this idea of social control by acknowledging the corporate control involved, as well as how the thin ideal makes for a prime pool of consumers: "The thin ideal is primarily produced and reproduced through various structural interests, or industries, that profit from its promotion…" Once again, we see echoes of the early Internet, wherein advertisements were tailored to women in a way that made her self-worth dependent on her success as a housewife. In this way, the cosmetics, fashion, and beauty industries can all be seen as a continuation of these

marketing strategies which not only target women, but do so in a way that confines them to a certain mode of being, or, more specifically, of being feminine. Thus, this way of being can come to be regarded as a gender norm for femininity.

Differential surveillance and control of women and men expands upon Foucault's theory by acknowledging its gendered dimension. Interviews with users of Pinterest and Reddit show how the two sites can reflect and enforce differential patterns of gender surveillance so that Pinterest users are subject to more corporate regulations and control than Reddit users are.

Goffman: Front Stage and Back Stage Online

Goffman's (1955, 2005) work in social theory ties to gendered surveillance by suggesting two modes of existing: the front stage and the back stage. The front stage is how one acts in public, in which they are constantly monitoring their behavior and aware of how others are perceiving or judging them. On the other hand, on the back stage the self is less filtered, and for the most part one can act however they want because no one is watching or judging.

I argue that applying a feminist perspective to Goffman's front stage and back stage theory illustrates that this theory can be highly gendered when applied to gendered spaces. Specifically with regards to Pinterest and Reddit, women on Pinterest are subject to the corporate and moderated control as detailed above, whereas the anonymity on Reddit affords its users more individual autonomy to say what they feel without worrying about harming their reputation or "saving face." In this way, Pinterest can be seen as a front stage for its users to project their identity on and Reddit as a back stage for its users to have anonymous discussions or consume information.

Prior research supports this perspective: Hochschild (1983) details how women are often put at the "front end" of jobs, more in the public eye through customer service. On the other hand, men are often more "behind the scenes," doing the work to run the operation. In this way, women are used for and judged by their physical appearance and interactions with customers, which are often set out by the employer to adhere to a certain regulated script. Hochschild speaks not only of gendered scripts and modes of being, but the socialization that is involved in making this possible – touching at once on Goffman, Butler, de Beauvoir, and even Foucault with regards to the surveillance of emotion that women in service professions are subject to.

Goffman's work speaks to the aspect of performativity involved in everyday social interactions, suggesting that one can perform an impression of themselves even if it may not be totally true:

> "Instead of allowing an impression of their activity to arise as an incidental by-product of their activity, they can reorient their frame of reference and devote their efforts to the creation of desired impressions… It is always possible to manipulate the impression the observer uses as a substitute for reality because a sign for the presence of a thing, not being that thing, can be employed in the absence of it… In their capacity as performers, individuals will be concerned with maintaining the impression that they are living up to the many standards by which they and their products are judged…" (Goffman 2005:106)

Here Goffman also speaks of using certain signs or symbols to present and stand for one's self-impression; in this way I liken the pins on Pinterest to be the symbolizers of the good life which users can advertise themselves as having even though their actual life

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may not be in accord. Instead of the true self, then, performance becomes focused on creating the best impression, and in constantly maintaining that impression so as to prevent inconsistency.

In this way, performance can be real in its consequences as the user attaches themselves to the impression or image of themselves they wish to project. If the performer messes up, their feelings can be negatively impacted: "Should he sense that he is in wrong face or out of face, he is likely to feel ashamed and inferior because of what has happened to the activity on his account" (Goffman 1955:340). Here Goffman seems to imply that one's self-performance has much to do with feeling, that is, a performance gone wrong can have negative repercussions upon the self and the meanings ascribed to it. On the other hand, "A person tends to experience an immediate emotional response to the face which a contact with others allows him; he cathects his face; his "feelings" become attached to it… If events establish a face for him that is better than he might have expected, he is likely to 'feel good'…" (Goffman 1955:338). As people's feelings and very identity become inscribed and dependent upon their performances, individuals are even more motivated to constantly do "face work" in every social interaction in an effort to present and maintain the most favorable self at all times. Indeed, this has implications for the online world of Pinterest, where scholars have viewed users as pinning their idealized selves through the curation of specific visual content.

There is also a sense of outside pressure in this when Goffman writes, "In his mind the individual says: 'I am using these impressions of you as a way of checking up on you and your activity, and you ought not to lead me astray'" (Goffman 2005:105). When on front stage, the individual actor is constantly being watched by those around

them, much like Foucault's idea of the panopticon. However, Goffman complicates Foucault's theory of surveillance by suggesting that it is constantly done in everyday social interactions. Individual actors must surveill themselves, that is, make sure their front stage is polished and presentable, because they believe that everyone around is watching and judging. Thus, instead of Foucault's idea of a panopticon, Goffman repositions this image to be more of the reverse, wherein the individual actor or performer is in the middle of the circle and everyone is around them, constantly watching and making sure their self presentation is congruent and legitimate. Reddit provides its users a space that is at once social and anonymous, refining Goffman's theory of in-person social interaction and Foucault's of the visible panopticon. This is just one example of how the online world opens up new avenues for socialization and surveillance.

Theory Conclusion

All four theorists thus come together to show how the sites of and actions on Pinterest and Reddit can be gendered. Butler and de Beauvoir present the functional feminist theory at the root of this paper, which is built upon and made more nuanced by Goffman and Foucault. The process of being a woman in society is not only about subjugation and Othering, as there are many processes that go into this form of structural oppression. For example, the constant surveillance of women (Foucault) further illustrates and contextualizes the many rules and gender scripts women must navigate in their day to day lives which men are not as subject to (Goffman).

Therefore, women on Pinterest are put on the front stage, where their performance is scripted in a highly gendered and feminized way. The anonymity on Reddit affords its

users more personal freedom and autonomy, as they are not expected to behave in any certain way, or even confined to a certain way of being. This is well illustrated by the behavior of "trolling," where users often veer off-script and say whatever they want, regardless of the consequences to others. From these four theorists I pose a new interpretation of a female panopticon for women on Pinterest, wherein individuals stand in the middle (in the tower's location) and are constantly surveilled by the peers and corporations around them. Though the peers in these cells may not always be checking one's Pinterest page, the possibility confines them to a certain regulatory way of being that must appear to the outside world as both positive and consistent. On the other hand, the male panopticon on Reddit is more intangible and not tied to user's sense of self: the absence of regulation and filtration suggests individualized cells that are not scrutinized or even visible to the outside world.

METHODS

Wilson and Yochim (2015:237) conceptualize the pins on Pinterest as only consequential as they are imbued with meaningful affect by users: "Their significance lies in the intensities they build and in what thoughts and feelings they make possible." Similar to this, I decided the best way to determine the process of meaning-making on Pinterest and Reddit would be to conduct in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus groups, during which I could ask "how" and "why" questions of how participants conceptualized or thought of the two sites. By giving agency to the users of Pinterest and Reddit in real life I hoped to gather personal and rich data on the multi-faceted dynamic process of meaning-making online.

My research builds upon previous literature that has examined Pinterest and Reddit separately and mostly in terms of usage statistics or from a theoretical understanding. By comparing and contrasting the two sites, my research also adds to the existing literature by examining gendered implications. This is sociologically important because it has been shown that society and culture are reflected by online spaces. Examining what is shared and collected on Pinterest and Reddit informs how different genders may interact and exchange information, as well as what the information is that they often consume and how this relates back to the self.

Data Gathering Technique and Sample

In order to effectively examine usage differences and how users view or derive meaning from the two sites, I conducted 14 semi-structured interviews and three focus groups. In order to recruit participants, I used e-mail and word of mouth convenience sampling and the snowball method. All participants were students at Whitman College, a

small liberal arts undergraduate college located in rural Walla Walla, Washington. My sample consisted of 21 undergraduate students at Whitman College. Their ages ranged from 19 to 23; there were six male participants and ten female participants.

Set Up

At the beginning of each interview and focus group I gave a brief introduction to my research. I did not mention gender as a factor that I was studying, and instead informed participants that I was looking at how people used Pinterest and Reddit and what they thought about the two sites so participants wouldn't feel inclined to answer questions in a certain way. This is ethical as this did not involve harm to the participants: in this way the positives for study greatly outweigh the negatives of withholding information. Furthermore, I disclosed that I was looking at gender as a variable if I was asked follow-up questions at the end of a session.

I told participants that there were no wrong answers and that I wasn't looking for anything specific answers in an effort to make them feel more comfortable. I also informed them that their names would never be transcribed and that they could leave the study or not answer a question if they felt uncomfortable, however none of them ended up doing so.

All interviews and focus groups were recorded with a voice recorder and later transcribed into a word document (without usage of actual names). All participants were informed that they would be voice recorded, asked if they were okay with it, and then asked to sign an informed consent form.

Data Collection

Focus groups. Two semi-structured focus groups were conducted prior to the interviewing process: one for Reddit and one for Pinterest. Participants were recruited via an e-mail that was distributed to the general Whitman College student body listserv, as well as to two Greek listservs (one sorority and one fraternity). The e-mail explained that I was doing focus groups for my senior sociology thesis, that in the study they would be in a group of people, and that I would be asking questions about social media sites Pinterest and Reddit. Students were also informed that they would receive free coffee and donuts at the focus group. Participants indicated their interest and willingness to participate by writing their name on a Google spreadsheet. Both focus groups were conducted in empty classrooms in Maxey Hall, Whitman's social science building. The Pinterest focus group lasted 38 minutes, and the Reddit focus group 27 minutes.

As the focus groups were meant to gather initial impressions of the sites for non-users, those in the Reddit focus groups were non-users of Reddit, and those in the Pinterest focus group were non-users of Pinterest, meaning that they did not have an account on these sites. By gathering first impressions of the sites, I hoped to learn about potential stereotypes in order to see why non-users could be deterred from using the sites. This is partially informed by Miller, Chang and Terveen's (2015) survey study, in which they found that trying Pinterest led participants to change their initial view of it. This led me to conduct the focus group in two phases: the first of which I gathered user impressions without physically projecting the site, and the second during which I gathered thoughts on the content, layout, and navigation of the site.

The first focus group was made up of three students (two females and one male) who used Reddit on a regular basis and did not use Pinterest. In the focus group, I first

asked them for their perceptions about Pinterest and its users (refer to Appendix A for the specific questions). After this discussion, I turned on the projector and explained how Pinterest worked, in the process scrolling down my home feed and showing them my profile and hence my collection of boards. During this time, I asked them to comment on what they saw, noticed, or thought about the site (refer to Appendix A). After this, I used the remaining time to ask the group some of my interview questions with regards to the site they actually used, such as "How do you use Reddit?" This often resulted in a discussion about the differences and similarities between the two sites and the participants' perceptions of them.

I repeated this process in my other focus group, though the word Pinterest was replaced with Reddit and vice versa. Similar to my Pinterest focus group, the Reddit focus group (in which I projected and asked questions about Reddit) ended up being comprised of four (female) students who were Pinterest users but not Reddit users. In the end, this became an effective way to gauge people's first impressions of the site and a get loose understanding of how they came to understand the website's function and how it worked or is typically used.

The informal Reddit focus group was conducted at at the dining room table in my off-campus house, and involved me showing my usage of Reddit to two participants (one male and one female) who did not use Reddit. This focus group was less structured than the others in that I focused less on asking questions of the participants and more of showing them how the site worked and how to navigate it. The session was also the shortest and least in-depth, lasting three minutes. This session was more geared towards seeing if the participants would ever use the site, and why this might be. I thought this

last informal focus group was important to include in my research because the two participants expressed strong views on their dislike of the visual layout and content of Reddit.

Individual Interviews. After the focus groups were held, I began soliciting students by word of mouth for my interview process. Interviews ranged in length from 8 minutes to 25 minutes and were held in a variety of locations, including my off-campus house, a coffee shop downtown, and a study room in the library. However, in all cases me and the participant were in an isolated area and able to talk without major interruptions. I interviewed seven Reddit users (four male and three female) and seven Pinterest users (five female and two male). The interviews were semi-structured around questions in Appendix B, which were answered by all participants in some way.

Besides these questions, I was able to ask the participants some follow up questions or to clarify their responses. If interviews seemed to be getting too off topic, I brought up the next question. For the most part, the questions were asked in the order that they are written in the appendix, but there were exceptions to this rule if the participant started to veer towards a later question – in this case I just asked that question next.

My questions were designed to get at the meaning-making processes behind participants' usage of Pinterest and Reddit, especially because Gieryn (2000:465) cites one of the ground rules of place to be its "investment with meaning and value." Within this, I was interested in how different people may ascribe different meanings to the fixed places of Pinterest and Reddit. When I asked participants how they would describe the sites and the people on them, I was interested in "the qualities people ascribe to the material and social stuff gathered there: ours or theirs; safe or dangerous; public or

private; unfamiliar or known…" (Gieryn 2000:472). This proved useful both in internal perceptions of one's own site as well as as a contrast to the external site that the participant wasn't as familiar with. More generally, I was also interested in what specifically drew females to Pinterest and males to Reddit.

Furthermore, I was interested in the affective or real-life response of Pinterest and Reddit: because of this I asked questions about how the sites made their users feel or what they did after going on the site. With regards to Pinterest, I was looking to advance Wilson and Yochim's (2015) understanding of Pinterest as a gateway to a gendered and corporately controlled "happiness." The potential for happiness is there, but could also be seen as unattainable. In this way, I wanted to focus on users' feelings or emotions surrounding Pinterest in addition to the real-life outcomes of going on the site.

Analytic Technique

All interviews and focus group sessions were recorded and later transcribed. In order to identify and analyze themes in my interview transcriptions, I used NVivo to track the presence of the following topics, which were openly coded: Community, Confusion, Differences, Foreign Perception, Hidden Boards, Identity, Internal Perception, Negatives, Posting, Projected Perceptions, Projected Usage, Protection, Real Life Outcomes, Shopping, Showing Off, and Usage (see Table 1 for more detail). These codes were created inductively as I went through the first few interviews, meaning that, for example, if the first interview had a quote about community, I would create the code Community and then file it under that. However, though not explicit, the codes were also based on themes that I had previously identified in my literature review and theory sections. This is important considering Chalmer's (1999) idea that theory should always

be present in observations: as I read through my interviews I had prior ideas and themes from my literature review and theory in my head that informed what content I chose to highlight.

After I had gone through all interview and focus group transcripts in this way, I went back a second time to make sure I had not missed anything, especially at the beginning when I was first creating and identifying the codes. For the most part, I found that the quotes I labeled on the second round fit with the codes I had already assigned from the first round.

Based off Saldaña's (2009) coding strategy, codes were sorted into three categories: internal codes, external codes, and both internal/external codes. Internal codes involved information on the site that the participant used, and external codes involved information on the site the participant did not use. For example, a Pinterest user talking about Pinterest would go under the internal category, but the same user talking about Reddit would go under the external category. In this way, the internal category was made up of codes specific to the site the participant used. In some cases, participants talked about both their internal and external site with regards to the same codes, or only talked about the external site with regard to these themes. For those themes that were talked about with regards to both sites, they were under the Both category.

Ethics

There were no aspects of this study that involved risk greater than that normally encountered in day-to-day life. As the research subject was Pinterest and Reddit, there were no questions pertaining to illegal or embarrassing activities, though there was the potential for someone to respond to a question with embarrassing information. However,

no subjects expressed obvious discomfort in any of the interviews or focus groups and all identities were kept confidential.

Limitations

The fact that my data collection was done in person and face to face may have resulted in a more selective collection of information, despite me informing the participants that their identity would be kept confidential. For example, participants may have avoided divulging their true feelings about the opposite site if they were stereotypical in some fashion. Additionally, the sites could be used in ways that are illegal or embarrassing (finding links to pirate movies or watch porn), which participants would probably not open up about. In order to collect this type of information, I think an online survey would be the best method, however I am pleased with my methods as they allowed me to look at the basic meaning-making involved in the interactions with users and the sites. Further research should take a deeper look into the potentially problematic or more 'lewd' side of the sites, especially on Reddit.

Another disadvantage of using focus groups and interviews is that they are very resource-heavy. This means that the whole process of soliciting, scheduling, talking to, and transcribing took quite some time, and for this reason I was not able to reach as many participants as I would have liked. An online survey would have been beneficial in this sense as well, as it would allow for more respondents, as well as a more diverse and representative sample.

During the two focus groups I showed participants my feed, so they were presumably judging the site and responding to questions based on my personally curated content. I am also more familiar with Pinterest than I am with Reddit, so I was not able to

adequately explain Reddit's function and uses in the same way that I was able to talk about Pinterest's.

Most of my participants were upperclassman, so my sample is not representative of underclassman college students at Whitman College. As I was using snowball sampling for a large part of my recruitment, most of those that I interviewed or had in my focus group were people that I previously knew and in some cases had built a relationship with.

While the results of my study can be generalized to Reddit and Pinterest users at small liberal arts colleges on the West coast, they cannot be applied to all Pinterest users or all Reddit users due to my limited and rather non-diverse sample. Within this, all of my participants were white, and thus this study does not take race or ethnicity into account. In the future, a more intersectional approach to this topic could be very beneficial and yield new and important insights that I was not able to get. Similarly, had I had more time, it would have been useful to get an even split of male and female Reddit users, and vice versa, as asking females how they used Reddit and vice versa could have proved very useful in terms of how websites can cause their users to do gender in different and diverse ways.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Communication versus Information, General versus Specifics

All female Reddit users that I spoke to mentioned interaction as one of Reddit's important functions, albeit in different ways. F2 participated in a "secret snowflake" sort of gift exchange with a user, and F1 was drawn to Reddit because "it has a real impact," citing its supportive community and its ability to help people with anything from personal finance to disease and women's support as one of its main draws. One of F9's favorite things about Reddit was its question or discussion forums where you can "hear people's stories and feel like you're talking with people all around the world that you don't know who have different life experiences."

Males, on the other hand, often talked about Reddit "keeping them up to date on what's happening," seemingly focusing more on the information side of Reddit as opposed to the communication side. Male participants also spoke of Reddit as alluring because of its ability to have "a bunch of information from different sources all in one place," speaking of Reddit as a news or information source that brought in all different kinds of material. Most males also mentioned using Reddit for sports, especially as a way to keep up with international teams that are not broadcasted in America. No females mentioned using Reddit to keep track of sports.

In this way, female users seemed to value Reddit for its more relational aspects, and male users for its informative aspects. This fits with Fallows' (2005) finding that men value the Internet for its breadth of content, and women for its relational aspects. The feminist reading of Goffman's (1955) front stage and back stage theory was also confirmed in that women can be said to be on the front stage as they interact with and

value other members of the community and their relation to them, whereas men's desire to anonymously consume information suggests a back stage orientation out of view of the public.

Similarly, male Pinterest users used the site as a glorified search engine of sorts in order to browse specific ideas or topics. Though women also valued the site more for its content than its relations or community in this sense, they obtained this information in different ways than did the males users I spoke to.

Interestingly, both male Pinterest users that I spoke to reported going on the site to access specific content. One used the site for set design for theater, and the other for "moods and outfits" for two specific upcoming events. This usage of Pinterest for specific things or certain intents mirrors the actions of the male users of Reddit who spent most of their time in specific subreddits, whereas female users browsed their home pages.

Only two females mentioned using Pinterest for a specific purpose: one for event planning and visual layout for yearbook, and the other for sorority event planning. Besides these two, however, users mainly scrolled down their feeds and pinned things from there. One of these users reported less frequent usage of Pinterest as of late, due to the fact that her home page was no longer curated for her and full of "suburban moms and Bump-Itz." This suggests that taking a more informational or agentic approach to pinning on Pinterest can later result in a less optimal home page browsing experience: perhaps this has something to do with the way algorithms determine what content users will "like best."

All three female Reddit users primarily browsed their front page, similar to the female users of Pinterest, whereas the male sample was split evenly in half in terms of

seeking out specific content and going on the front page. In this way, male Reddit users seemed more inclined to dive into specific subreddits, although they did access their front pages as well. Perhaps this also suggests that men are able to use Reddit in more diverse ways, whereas females are for some reason confined to browsing through the main page. These findings are in contrast to Fallows' (2005) finding that women go online with a purpose and men surf randomly (based on the fact that men were more likely to use the search bar on Pinterest or seek out specific subreddits). In this way, users' browsing behavior on Pinterest and Reddit flips these conceptions of gender norms for online behavior. However, it is important to note that Pinterest and Reddit are indeed two distinct sites, so in this way it makes sense that the gendered ways of browsing the Internet as a whole may not apply here.

Females usage of Pinterest, specifically through the browsing of their home page, seemed to loosely fit with what Wilson and Yochim (2015) conceptualized as "pinning happy objects," in the sense that the outcomes women took from the site often led to affective response. One user simply mentioned that she had no real specific outcome when she went on Pinterest, but usually felt happy and visually pleased after.

What was passed around on Reddit seemed to be more opinions, perspectives, and bits of information or resources for life. Users often mentioned feeling more informed as a result of their usage, both with regards to world news and current events as well as just seeing other's perspectives and opinions from around the world. This fits with Fallows' (2005) finding that men are more likely to use the Internet for its special interest groups, the likes of which are in this case found on specific subreddits that provide information that would otherwise not be available.

This provides support for de Beauvoir's (1949) conception of females as the passive other, whose emotions are in this case subject to the outside forces of the home content on Pinterest, whereas males are active in their consumption of specific types of information. The differential value based on community and intellect affirms popular conceptions of women as relational and men as informational or agentic (Peiss, De Grazia, and Furlough 1996).

Identity Displays

Many people (three women and two men), both Pinterest users and non-users, mentioned one of the usages of Pinterest to be, in some way, about performance or presentation. F1 thinks of a Pinterest user as a woman, as "it's just kind of like there's a girl using it and they're pinning their perfect wedding or whatever and they just kind of want to show it to everybody… I think part of it's personal but then also part of it is people wanting to show off the ideas of their wedding." F8 recognized that a typical user is "interested in how they're presenting themselves," adding that she may seem like this from the outside, but really it's more of an ideal that she doesn't know if she'll ever reach.

Similarly, a male Reddit user viewed Pinterest as a tool for identity promotion, as he said "people go on there… to look for dirty blonde highlights that they can then use, or styles that they can use… I see Pinterest as a place where you get an idea, you take that idea into your life, and then you post that on Instagram… it's for social media purposes usually." M7 noticed how others on Pinterest put a lot of effort into making visually pleasing profiles, and wondered if the satisfaction they get from it is from others viewing it, pinning it and liking it, or for their own visual pleasure.

Two users mentioned they had hidden boards on Pinterest, and both participants said that this was because these boards didn't look good enough or as aesthetically pleasing as they may want: "If I wanted people to look at them I would make them a lot nicer. Right now they're kind of random… if I wanted it to be other people then I would put a lot more effort into curating it." This may suggest that profiles are more for other people to look at than for one's own personal value. This sentiment was echoed by another participant who said of one of her hidden boards, "I don't think it's the first thing I want to share about myself." This suggests that Pinterest user's boards could be a way to broadcast certain aspects of identity or different parts of the self.

On the other hand, Reddit's anonymity gives its users freedom to express any part of themselves – even the more behind-the-scenes aspects that cannot be broadcasted in real life. One male user of Reddit said, "if anyone ever found out my Reddit username… I would just be so embarrassed," and talked about how Reddit is an outlet for expressing himself in ways that he couldn't on Facebook or in real life, presumably because his identity would be tied to his statements and thus his reputation could be harmed. In this way, the anonymity of Reddit prevents its users from being surveilled by others on the front stage.

This curated identity on Pinterest fits well with Goffman's idea of the front stage, and specifically with the feminist interpretation as women as front stagers. Indeed, Pinterest users seemed concerned with maintaining a certain type of identity, viewing certain boards, should they be seen by others, as detrimental to their identity performance: "In their capacity as performers, individuals will be concerned with maintaining the impression that they are living up to the many standards by which they

and their products are judged…" (Goffman 2005:106). In this, not only are Pinterest

users projecting a certain identity, but also maintaining it over time. Hence, this also fits

with Butler and West and Zimmerman's (1991; 1987) idea of gender as constant

performance, and with the feminist interpretation of Foucault (1980) that women (in this

case, their feminine identities) are constantly surveilled in the female panopticon in a way

that men aren't.

Pinning Ideal Identities

Not only was Pinterest regarded as a personal identity display, but also an *ideal*

identity. Some Pinterest users seemed hesitant to identify themselves by the content of

their Pinterest profiles, viewing it as more of a "pipe dream" or "ideal me." When asked

if her style board represented F10's day-to-day style, she said, "I still think it's more of

an idealized reality, like I don't think anyone's… I think it does a really good job of

idealizing what you want your life to look like. And I don't think anyone's life actually

looks like any of those things, or balances all the components." When asked how

someone viewed her profile would describe her, F8 got excited as she said "I would like

to say classy because I have recently tried to really curate a lot of my boards… it looks

really really nice." This suggests that she enjoys being seen as classy by others viewing

her board, but later on, she also said that, "I definitely think that some of my boards are

the ideal me… that I don't know if I'll ever reach" pointing out that a lot of her boards

were also named in the future tense such as To Wear, To Do, To Eat. This suggests that

Pinterest is used to present an idealized version of the self, either for others to see or for

the user to aspire to and draw ideas from. Interestingly, those that had a DIY board had

never actually made anything from it, but often expressed that they would like to in the future.

Assuming that many of these ideals on Pinterest are representative of societal ideas of hegemonic femininity (food, makeup, hair, fashion, fitness – all of which concern the physical body and its appearance) helps illustrate how women are subject to a higher degree of surveillance than men are on Reddit. F3, a Pinterest user, had qualms about this aspect of the site: "I don't like the emphasis on heteronormativity… it's all about finding love or perfect guys or shoes." Another user had qualms related to the depiction of bodies on Pinterest, citing them as too skinny or unhealthy. Indeed, this goes back to Bartky's (1997) feminist analysis of Foucault and the idea of femininity as a regulatory regime (Butler 1991) by showing how "The disciplinary project of femininity is a "set-up": it requires such radical and extensive measures of bodily transformation that virtually every women who gives herself to it is destined in some degree to fail. Thus, a measure of shame is added to a woman's sense that the body she inhabits is deficient…" (Bartky 1997:100). This provides support for the space of Pinterest as furthering female subjugation and regulation in a way that bounces back to inform the user's self-concept, illustrating how intangible online spaces can be real in their gendered consequences.

Profile Uniformity

A Pinterest user said her board would be viewed by others as, "Basic… it's kind of traditional femininity I would say, flowers, art… things I think that people would assume other people's accounts would have." Similarly, F7 mentioned that she made

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specific boards "for the sake of doing Pinterest," for food, travel, and closet. Another said, "I think they're pretty general, I mean what does that share."

On the other hand, Reddit users tended to think that Reddit reflected their real-life persona due to the fact that they could choose their own subreddits based off of their real-life interests. M2 thought that Reddit was a wholesome representation of himself "because anything and everything that I'm interested in I can find on Reddit and then subscribe to it... it shows what I'm interested in in different facets of my life so it's pretty well rounded." In this way, their Reddit usage seemed to be more applicable to their diverse daily lives and interests, whereas Pinterest usage focused on traditional aspects of femininity, resulting in board themes that were shared by many other users of the site. Though Pinterest boards are also diverse, I suggest that they are still confined to these feminine aspects of the self which leave the woman less room to define herself outside of her gendered label.

Therefore, Pinterest users' identities as uniform is a contrast to Reddit users' identities which were described as being well-rounded and reflective of personal interests. In this way, using Pinterest can subject its users to creating a personal identity display that not only idealized but also feminized. Not only do Pinterest users consume feminized and corporate content upon going on the site, but they also reinforce it in the self that it becomes part of their "personal identity exhibit" (Almjeld 2015).

While some may view Pinterest as a way to freely express one's identity and future plans, it's important to realize that this is actually highly scripted with regards to both appearances and consumption, and thus gender itself. As my literature review has shown, Internet sites used by females, in this case Pinterest specifically, become about

gender itself whereas male Internet sites are geared towards particular interests (Cansalvo and Paasonen 2002).

If Pinterest is seen as being "about gender itself" (Cansalvo and Paasonen 2002), it can be said to embody Butler's (1991) idea of femininity as a regulatory regime for women in a way that masculinity isn't for men: gender comes before all else for women, whereas being human comes before all else for men - a sentiment also echoed by de Beauvoir's (1949) conception of women as Other and men as One. In this way, men are able to forget their gender identity for the sake of consuming information that interests them on Reddit, whereas women are made aware of their gender in a sea of idealized and feminized content on Pinterest. Pinning feminine content on Pinterest also provides support for feminist theory's idea of a gendered compulsory performance that then comes to be regarded as innate.

Dealing with Trolls and Questionable Content on Reddit

The women that I interviewed who used Reddit all seemed to appreciate subreddits that were more heavily moderated. F2 said that "you have to pretty much assume that everything on Reddit can be bad," and in an effort to remedy this she made a point of going on r/funny for her memes (instead of r/dankmemes, which can be offensive), because "it's more regulated, more moderators moderate it. So the things there are better and funnier." F9 expressed her liking of the science subreddits because posters can prove their legitimacy by sending in documents such as an official PhD diploma. She also talked about how the moderators automatically deleted things that were not science related, so she didn't have to worry about seeing unwanted content.

On the other hand, males negotiated the potential of false information on Reddit in different ways. M2 said "you have to go in knowing that when you read articles they maybe coming from a certain website. So I think you have to think about where stuff's coming from." M5 also seemed to use somewhat of the same strategy, emphasizing the importance of actually reading the posted articles instead of inferring conclusions based on comments alone.

Others said that they would just stop reading if the comments got bad, or would go on specific subreddits (in the case of M1) that they knew would be more free of bad content. Perhaps this suggests that female users deal with the negative aspects of the site by removing themselves, whereas male users go into it with a premeditated awareness and preparedness. This supports Fichman and Sanfilippo's (2015) findings on trolls wherein men would engage with the troll and women would avoid the situation, positioning women as more socially passive. In this way, gender norms of activity for males and passivity for females (De Beauvoir 1949) were reflected in participants' strategies for dealing with the negative aspects of Reddit. The notion of technology as a masculine space (Cockburn 1988) was also supported, as women fled these scenes while men stuck around. This is problematic as it makes spaces like this even more male-dominated and silences female voices.

If women are thus more motivated to flee scenes of aggression than to stick around for conversation, it makes sense that troll-dominated scenes will end up being populated by mostly men, or at least seen as more agreeable to male users. "Nearly have the women on the [TIME Magazine] staff have considered quitting journalism because of hatred they'd faced online, although none of the men had" (Stein 2016). So on the one

hand, online platforms can give a voice to those traditionally oppressed, but on the other these minorities are more targeted in anonymous troll attacks. People fear that online harassment and trolling can have real life consequences, as Reddit users could become desensitized to misogynistic comments and start carrying them over to physical life. In this way, trolling is an example of the Internet giving rise to a new form of sexism, or directly exacerbating its effects into the online realm.

Femininity on Reddit

Female Reddit users subscribed to subreddits that were feminine in nature, such as r/makeupaddiction (one user) or r/twoxchormosomes, the subreddit dedicated to women (all three female users).

The heavy presence of these online communities for female Reddit users is uncommon in relation to the male users of Reddit, none of whom mentioned going on specific gendered subreddits. From this, we can see how women's spaces in male-dominated places are regulated and identified as feminine, whereas male spaces in female-dominated places do not exist in the same way. This shows that perhaps the identity of "woman" comes before all else, or, as de Beauvoir (1949) would say, women are typically the Other, and the identity of woman comes before all else (Butler 1991).

By examining female participants' actions on Reddit, we also see how they still behave with a "gender script," for instance by going on the makeup subreddit and purchasing makeup from there or subscribing to the women's subreddit. F1 and F3 also spoke about how their favorite things about Reddit were the discussions or sense of support, supporting the notion that women go online for relationship, connection, and shopping purposes (Consalvo and Paasonen 2002; Fallows 2005).

Furthermore, though r/twoxchromosmes operates within the larger sphere of

Reddit which is generally unfiltered and ruled by free speech, the volunteer moderators of

the women's Reddit have set up many specific rules. There is discussion of what to do if

you are harassed or if you suspect a post is by a "troll," supporting the gendered

interpretation of surveillance (Foucault 1980) as well as implying that women are in need

of protection, especially when entering male-dominated spaces.

Though Consalvo and Paasonen (2002) cited the web as a perceived "dangerous

place for women" when it was first created many years ago, Reddit shows that this still

very much applies to certain areas of the web. Female non-users of Reddit confirmed this

by viewing the website as dangerous, unprotected, and uncertain, whether it was being

scared the website would give a virus or not trusting the posted content due to trolls.

Perhaps as a result of this, or simply as a product of increased feminine protection, these

areas of Reddit come to be heavily regulated.

Foreign Perception

Females that didn't use Pinterest were entranced by it: in the focus group one

said, "In looking at this I should probably have a Pinterest, I'm pretty into crafts." After

this, the other female in the group said that Reddit didn't really provide crafting in the

same way that Pinterest did (another member of the focus group said Reddit's DIY was

mostly about redoing a basement or a car), and that she liked to embroider. When

previously asked what they thought of the site, the female focus group participants said

that it was girly and feminine. Another female participant said that it was too oriented

towards shopping for her to want to use, but she thought it was "fun." In this way, the

reasons for or against using Pinterest for females seemed to be stereotypically feminine in

nature, in these cases in terms of crafts or online shopping. Perhaps, then, the female

Reddit users saw Pinterest as a place to explore and articulate the feminine aspects of

themselves.

Male Reddit users did not express desire to try Pinterest. One male participant

mentioned that it was more oriented towards products, food, fashion, and style, as

opposed to Reddit which is more focused on "news." Another said Reddit was just "more

current, what's active, what's happening now." In this way, he viewed Pinterest as a

place to get visual ideas for later use, and even for later use in posting on another social

media such as Instagram. The way he talked about it made it suggest that he had a certain

superficial perception of the site, saying it was for "dirty blonde highlights."

Two males also mentioned that they thought of Pinterest as more of a social

media site, as the "dirty blonde highlights" participant did. This deterred one participant

from wanting to use it: he said, "it's what I think is nice about Reddit, I don't need to

personally have a presence I can just be part of it." In this way, Pinterest was seen as

being too personally involved and therefore not as appealing as Reddit. By avoiding

Pinterest, male participants could focus on words, a traditionally masculine domain,

instead of images or relations, communication, and consumption, which are typically

more feminine. In this way, all non-users' discussions of Pinterest, regardless of gender,

centered on the feminine aspects and nature of the site.

Non-Reddit users were often deterred from using Reddit as both it's content and

visual layout were seen as off-putting and even dangerous or offensive. In fact, all non-

users I spoke to had somewhat negative impressions of Reddit, both on their own and

when I projected it to them. In the focus group, females thought that Reddit was

confusing, saying, "it feels like I'm clicking and being taken to a different place" and that it felt "click-baity." In this way, they were often confused about what was going on and how to navigate the site, saying that they preferred Pinterest which was not only more straightforward but also limited in content so you know "exactly what you're getting into," suggesting a certain lack of perceived agency and/or knowledge. This also goes back to males dealing with Reddit by saying "you have to know what you're getting yourself into."

Another female Pinterest user viewed the typical Reddit user as a "socially isolated male" who was using Reddit to make up for the lack of community in his physical life. She thought it wasn't that "cool" of a website and that it would be a waste of time for her to use it. Furthermore, she was deterred from using it because she did not trust the answers, and cited problematic aspects of the Reddit community such as cyberbullying.

These female participants' doubts of Reddit echo themes of protection and regulation for women as detailed above. They also show that women may have internalized these ideals so that they are now suspicious of unfiltered or dangerous-seeming content. Another female non-user was worried about the misogynistic aspects of Reddit, citing that it was male-dominated. Hence, Reddit female non-users affirm the gendered norm of heightened protection. Reddit thus fits with previous literature that identified the Internet, and technology in general, as a male-dominated space that can be intimidating for women: again, women were found to be more scared of online dangers or risks than men were (Fallows 2005).

In this way, Fallow's (2015) findings that men value the internet for the breadth of content, and females for relationships, was supported through opposite gender's perceptions of the opposite site. By this I mean that a majority (four) of female participants (and one male) were deterred from Reddit in part because of its overwhelming amount of content, and half of male non-users of Pinterest were deterred from Pinterest because it felt too social, personal, or involved. Within this, there may be a perceived lack or agency or desire for protection involved for women so that they felt as though they could not navigate or stand the visuals of the site, whereas male denial of using Pinterest could suggest that they did not feel a need to broadcast or shape their personal identities, especially with regards to appearances and relational matters. In this way, prevailing gender norms of Internet interaction were reflected by Pinterest and Reddit users, as men did not want to use Pinterest as it was too community oriented and women did not want to use Reddit because it was too informational.

Findings Summary: Doing Gender

Peiss, De Grazia, and Furlough (1996) pose these pairs to represent the gendered traits and values of males and females, respectively: production/consumption, internal/external, natural/artificial, and serious/superficial. I argue that, by going on Reddit or Pinterest, these certain gendered traits come to be expressed and thus, by going on these sites, users are prompted to "do their gender." As we have seen, production is more prevalent on Reddit and consumption on Pinterest, and Reddit values dialogue and conversations that are at once more internal (focused on dialogue instead of physical looks or identity), natural (unfiltered), and serious (presence of news and other topics that are seen as less superficial). On the other hand, conceptions of Pinterest as an idealized

self or a community of Instagram posters with "dirty blonde highlights" suggests that it is perceived as more externally focused (on appearances), artificial (unattainable), and superficial.

It was interesting that most Reddit users I spoke to were passive "lurkers" on the site. In order to explain this, I think that even if they are then consuming instead of creating content, what they are consuming is still fundamentally different from Pinterest users. Reddit users often applied the content they read on Reddit to their daily lives, either by balancing their budget or finding new topics of conversation with their friends. Pinterest users often mentioned that there was no direct outcome of their browsing, instead going on the site to kill time and dream about an ideal life. So while this sample of Pinterest users may be more active on the site itself, Reddit seems to grant its users the ability to engage with the outside world in a way that is productive and informative. Butler tells us that one's access in society is important: the different resources available to men and women based on their use of Reddit for men and Pinterest for women gives men the resources of knowledge and power, whereas women are given housekeeping advice and beauty practices that tell them how to behave and strip away notions of individual agency. Though this sample of users' actions on the sites could be seen as a reversal of gender norms wherein women are more in control and men are more subject to outside forces, "Even a technology that improves things for some women may not qualify as feminist if it does so in a way that perpetuates a gender gap" (Johnson 2010:6).

In summary, going on Pinterest and Reddit serves to socialize individuals into their pre-existing gender categories, which comes to be regarded by the self and society as innate and natural. Following from this, men are positioned as Subject or "one" and

women as Object or "other" through content that is primarily intellectual for men and primarily feminine for women. This is only one of the ways that the online world and one's digital persona can influence self-concept and confidence, showing that the online world not only carries the same inequalities as the physical world but also bounces back to inform relations and identity in the physical world.

CONCLUSION

Places are sociologically important based on the way they are created and they way they are consumed or imbued with meaning (Gieryn 2000). This paper has shown that Pinterest and Reddit were not only founded by men, but also are created in a possibly gendered way so that men may be attracted to the "bare bones" visual layout of Reddit and females to the bubbly layout and pink images on Pinterest. However, consumption and users' actions on these websites are also responsible for imbuing the sites with gendered meaning: after all, it is the women that are repinning the pink images.

This thesis indicates that women and men do indeed consume Reddit and Pinterest in different ways that reflect existing patriarchal gender norms, positively affirming my research question of "how do females and males use and view these sites differently, and how might this reflect or further establish gender norms?" Male users value Pinterest and Reddit for their informational purposes, whereas female users value Reddit and Pinterest for community or affective response. This not only fits with conceptions of females as relational and emotional and males as intellectual (Hochschild 1983), but also shows how the production and consumption of diverse information is left to men. On the other hand, women on Pinterest consume not only products but also feminine ideals set by society.

Knowing that Pinterest is more corporately controlled than Reddit provides an important point of analysis when met with the conceptualization of one's Pinterest profile as a personal identity exhibit (Almjeld 2015). Reed (2014) introduces the idea of "prosuming," in which web users are both consuming and then producing at once. Pinterest users could be seen as liberated in their ability to produce (in a sense) by re-

pinning and organizing pins, but this practice is also problematic. This adds to existing

literature on contradictory femininity (Moorman 2017) wherein women can be both

empowered and structurally oppressed at once: for example, a female porn-star or

stripper can be empowered by their agency, but are still being objectified and constrained

by the larger structure of patriarchal oppression. In the same way, users of Pinterest can

be seen as agentic in their ability to curate their profiles, but this is still problematic in

terms of the higher regulation and corporate control involved.

Companies can turn web users into an unpaid labor force of sorts: in this case,

Pinterest users repin their ads, or a pin with their product in it, and are thus providing free

labor to the corporations and allowing companies to use social media sites such as

Pinterest to gain further control over cultural production and reproduction. This seems

especially beneficial as pinning something will then market it to like-minded individuals

(assuming followers have some things in common with who they follow), freeing the

corporation of some outreach marketing work. This expands previous research on women

as consumers by highlighting how on Pinterest women are consumers but also sharers: in

this way Pinterest becomes a medium for the distribution of consumerism, commodities,

and ideal femininity.

The stream of products and feminine content on Pinterest ties into the historically

feminine nature of commodities as outlined above, suggesting that women continue to be

regulated by panoptical (Foucault 1980) male-dominated corporations that influence their

bodies, feminine ideals, and maybe even sense of self-worth. From this we see the

patriarchy at work on Pinterest through the subjugation of women to consumerism and

commodities, especially when met with the more informational and educational Reddit.

"Social processes (difference, power, inequality, collective action) happen through the material forms that we design, build, and use" (Gieryn 2000:465): with the increasing presence of online spaces and marketing, we must carefully consider the implications of these actions and how they may not only reinforce, but also add to, existing gender structures. Therefore, even online, "identity categories tend to be instruments of regulatory regimes" (Butler 1991:429), furthering female subordination through their constant regulation, performativity, and inability to truly define themselves apart from their gender.

In conclusion, based on the conception of digital objects as agentic, users of Pinterest and Reddit 'do gender' on these websites and, in the process, further imbue these consequences into their sense of self-worth. Therefore, users' consumption of Pinterest and Reddit not only reflect, but also further establish, existing gender norms. This is informed by Goffman's (2005) work on impressions and performance, as women on Pinterest will come to compare their offline persona to the impression they have set through their boards on the site. Within this, women online are identified only in relation to the feminine collective, whereas men have individual agency over their identity - adorning it with particular interests and hobbies that are predominantly human instead of predominately feminine.

[i] Retrieved March 13, 2017 (https://about.pinterest.com/).
[ii] Retrieved March 13, 2017 (https://about.reddit.com/).
[iii] Retrieved April 10, 2017 (http://redditmetrics.com/top).

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TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1. Explanation of Codes Used in Data Analysis

Internal codes (for the site that the participant used):

CODE   RATIONALE/DEVELOPMENT   CODING QUALIFACTION

Hidden Boards	Developed inductively, a few users mentioned hiding boards they didn't want others to see. Ties to themes of surveillance and identity work/projection (Almjeld 2015; Foucault 1980)	When a participant mentioned hidden or secret boards on Pinterest
Identity	Overall main theme of my research, wanted to see how the sites could inform perspectives on one's identity, as well as the degree to which their online profile lined up with their real-life persona Pinterest as a way to experiment with multiple girlhoods (Almjeld 2015)	When participants described who they were or seemed to be on the site or in real life, what the site reflected about them, or how they thought others viewed them or their profiles on the site
Internal Perceptions	Wanted to see how participants conceptualized their site of choice, why they used it, and how they viewed not only the site itself but other people on it. Women's popular culture and media as depicting the ideal woman (Bakhshi and Gilbert 2015; Matchar 2013; Wilson and Yochim 2015)	Participants' usage (what they used the site for, what they looked at) or opinions of their site (what they liked and disliked about it). This also includes how they perceived others on the site or how they described a stereotypical user.
Posting	Reddit seemed more active and Pinterest more passive, wanted to see if Reddit users may post or comment more than Pinterest users	Mentions of creating one's own content on the site, such as creating a pin from another website or posting or commenting on Reddit
Real Life Outcomes	Interested in application of the site to users' everyday life, and what different things they may use it for. Pinterest as idealized, doesn't lead to action (Wilson and Yochim 2015)	Mention of finding something on the site that they then did in their physical life, such as trying a craft project, making food, or conversing with others
Usage	Overall theme to see how people may use Pinterest and Reddit for different purposes Informed by previous literature that women go online with a purpose whereas men browse randomly (Fallows 2005)	What participants did on their site of choice, how often they spent, when they went on, etc.

External Codes:

Projected Perception	Interested in first impressions, building off Miller, Chang, and Terveen (2015), who studied initial perceptions of Pinterest. Wanted to expand this and compare with Reddit.	Only in focus groups, when the site was presented. When participants talked about what they saw, or what they thought of the site.
Projected Usage	Wanted to see if non-users would be interested in using the site. Used to get at possible stereotypes or reasons for avoiding the site. Informed by Miller, Chang, and Terveen (2015)	When participants talked about if and/or how they would use the site opposite to the one they already use (eg. Pinterest for Reddit users)
Confusion	Seeing if confusion was gendered or specific to one site or another. Specially interested in Reddit's unique design and layout (Douglas 2014)	When participants expressed confusion over how the opposite site worked, what it was used for, etc.

Both:

Negatives	Males thought Pinterest was too girly and as a result didn't want to use it (Miller, Chang, and Terveen 2015)	Any things that they didn't like about own site or opposite site
Community	Community is an important aspect of all social media sites – do users feel supported by others on their site of choice? Do they go on it to communicate or for some other purpose? Is it more about content or the people behind it? Community as corporately controlled was common theme in literature review	How participants perceived others on their site, if they thought there was a sense of community, if and how they communicated with other users.
Protection	Themes of protection and regulation, as developed by the literature review – females are more protected and regulated in real life and in online spaces. Does this hold true with Pinterest and Reddit?	Mention of corporate advertisements, ease of use, anything that made the user feel uncomfortable or comfortable as a result of the website design or methods/functions.
Shopping	Trying to get at the commercialization and commodification of Pinterest, as mentioned in previous literature.	When participants talked about shopping on, or as a result of, going on Pinterest or Reddit.

	Interested if present on Reddit too.	
Showing Off	Noticed that multiple participants talked about their Pinterest boards as not only a personal, but also a social, thing. Does not apply to Reddit because not tied to one's identity as much.	When participants mentioned motives to show boards to someone else, or that others would be looking at their boards. Judgment that may be made from looking at a profile on Pinterest.

Appendix A

Focus Groups

Note: "SITE" implies either Pinterest or Reddit, depending on which focus group they were in.

Prior to projection:

"How would you describe your current perceptions of [SITE]?"

"When you think of a typical person that may use [SITE], what comes to mind? How would you describe a typical user?"

After projection:

"What do you see?"

"What would you do on this site? How would you use it?"

"What looks interesting to you?"

"Do you like it? Would you go on it in your free time?"

"How is it different from [OPPOSITE SITE]?"

Appendix B

Interviews

Note: "SITE" implies either Pinterest or Reddit, depending on which one they used.

"When do you go on [SITE]? How often and how long do you spend?"

"What do you do on [SITE]? What are your favorite things to do? Why do you like it?"

"Are there things that you don't like about it and why?"

"How do you feel when you go on [SITE] and/or after going on it?"

"What do you click on? What sort of things are you looking at most of the time, or is it a random assortment?"

"Do you use the browse / search bar?"

"What sorts of [boards / feeds] do you [have / subscribe to]? What do you think this says about you?"

"If you were to describe your persona on [SITE], what sorts of adjectives would you use? How would you describe your persona in real-life, using adjectives?"

"How would others who saw your profile on [SITE] view you?"

"What [boards / feeds] do you have on your profile?"

"What's usually on your home page of [SITE]? How did it come to be like this (did you select topics or people to follow, or is it just a random assortment of things)?"

"Do you ever shop or spend money while on [SITE] or as a result of browsing on it?"

"Who do you interact with on [SITE], if anyone? What is your relation to other people on [SITE] like? Do you feel like there's a sense of community?"

"When you think of a typical person that may use [SITE], what comes to mind? How would you describe a typical user?"

"Do you see yourself as similar to others on this site – why or why not? Who do you follow? Is it more about following people, or seeking out certain content?"

"Does using this site ever inspire you do to things in your physical life such as buying or making or thinking or discussing? Do you follow through on this?"

"What do you do after you go on [SITE]? Is there ever any specific outcome? Is there any relevance of these online subjects to your day-to-day life?"

"Have you ever heard of [OPPOSITE SITE]? What are your perceptions of it? How would you describe a typical user?"