

Is Fat Queer? Parallels between Weight Loss Surgery and Gender Transition

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Fatness can be considered queer through the lens of fat studies and queer theory. Fatness as queer is explored through looking at bariatric weight loss procedures as a way that fat people may “transition” from fat to thin, much like how transgender individuals transition medically and/or surgically from one perceived gender to another. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: journal@transformativestudies.org Website: <http://www.transformativestudies.org> ©2021 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]*

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This work is a small piece from my Women’s and Gender Studies senior seminar project from spring 2018 that explored fat discrimination and anti-fat biases. Specifically, this piece looks at how fatness can be claimed as queer through a queer theory lens and by looking at similarities between fat individuals and transgender individuals in terms of bodies and transition. What really drew me to this topic is my own lived experiences as both a fat and transgender individual. I have been overweight for my entire life. For years, I struggled with feeling comfortable in my body and various personal issues related to my weight. In the summer of 2015, I had bariatric weight loss surgery – specifically the gastric sleeve procedure, where roughly 80 percent of the stomach is removed. I was ushered through many of the pre-surgery requirements before turning 18 years old, in order to be ready as soon as I was old enough for the surgery. Although I was experiencing several health problems at the time, all of which have now been resolved, the assumed desire to be thin was what was emphasized the most throughout my experience.

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