

“NO, I’M NOT PLAYING ON MY PHONE, I’M TAKING CARE OF
BUSINESS¹”: PORNOGRAPHIC INTERMEDIARIES ON TIKTOK
AND THEIR IDEOLOGICAL AND BODILY IMPLICATIONS IN
THE DIGITAL AGE

by

LUCY ELIZABETH KEANE

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¹ This phrase is a direct quote from the late Eric Mays, autoworker, union organizer, and former member of the Flint City Council: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hltz3a7feAU>

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Title: “No, I’m Not Playing on My Phone, I’m Taking Care of Business”: Pornographic Intermediaries on TikTok and Their Ideological and Bodily Implications in the Digital Age

Approved: Peter Alilunas, Ph.D.
Primary Thesis Advisor

In the wake of rapid technological development and intensifying political polarization in the United States, social media platforms have become key sites for shaping identity and negotiating cultural values. This paper examines the convergence of algorithmically driven, covertly sexualized TikTok content—specifically, pornographic intermediaries—with conservative reproductive health discourse, investigating how such content reinforces repressive gender ideology and upholds biopolitical control of personal expression and reproduction. While existing research has explored cultural and health impacts of social media and pornography independently, a significant gap remains in understanding how these domains intersect, interact, and mutually influence one another. To remedy this gap, I conduct a critical media analysis of *pornographic intermediaries* on TikTok, scrutinizing how internet laborers wield sexualized performances to capture, sustain, and propel consumer attention. I then examine conservative rhetoric on reproductive rights to elucidate thematic overlaps and theorize the pornographic intermediary’s role in constructing norms of domesticity in the United States. Drawing on Jenna Drenten’s theory of digital sexualized labor, Foucault’s definition of biopolitical management, and established pornographic conventions, I demonstrate how pornographic intermediaries

encode and reinforce masculine dominance and feminine disempowerment to serve conservative ends. Intentional or not, the representations in pornographic intermediaries threaten to instill repressive gender ideology in young people. As demonstrated by the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* and subsequent legislative developments in the U.S., when left unexamined, these gendered social norms legitimately undermine human dignity and agency. Ultimately, my research findings emphasize a need for critical literacy initiatives and underscore the importance of digital representations as powerful forces in contemporary political and cultural life.

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Introduction:

“I was freaking out... I brushed her hair while she was getting fucked” (LeClip). Julia Filippo, a popular influencer and OnlyFans creator, shares that she regrets participating in a recent viral Bonnie Blue video. Bonnie Blue, who rose to pornographic stardom and cultural infamy after “reportedly having sex with over 1000 men in 12 hours,” exemplifies extreme, but successful, commodification of feminine sexuality (Amankona). While framed as a juicy, behind-the-scenes look into her and Blue’s titillating collaboration, Filippo’s candid reflection offers a sobering glimpse into the rapidly evolving world of digitized sexualized labor, highlighting the personal cost of commodifying sexuality.

As video-sharing apps like TikTok refine their predictive algorithms, artificial intelligence expands the possibilities for visual representation, and personal devices grant widespread internet access, the production, dissemination, and consumption of sexualized labor becomes increasingly governed by social media. Although platforms like TikTok restrict explicitly pornographic content, sexualized laborers can cash in on their abundant attention resources to strategically develop marketable personas and direct viewers to their subscription-based porn content by deploying content that I categorize as *pornographic intermediaries*.

To most effectively capture attention, many feminine sexualized laborers strategically center heteronormative fantasies of masculine domination to solidify their appeal to the most consistent and therefore, profitable consumers of pornography, young men (Miller et al., p. 4). By aligning their self-representations with popular eroticizations of submission, youthfulness, and emotional availability, these laborers, perhaps inadvertently, affirm patriarchal norms under the guise of innocuous entertainment.

Reinforcing fantasies of feminine submission advances politically conservative, cultural narratives that rationalize infringement on female bodily autonomy by reducing feminine people to unstable, sexually vulnerable dependents in need of paternalistic intervention.

Literature Review:

Capitalist Context in the United States and the Emergence of Attention-Based Business

The 1970s marked an economic regime shift in the United States. The rapid development of technology and pharmaceuticals throughout the 20th century radically redefined capital. Historically dependent on the physical efforts of enslaved people and later, industrial laborers, wealth under the new regime originates from a more transient, internal space: individual bodies, consciousness, and experiences. To attain wealth in the 21st century, capitalists enact what French philosopher Michel Foucault defines as “biopolitical control” by employing a “combination of disciplinary and excitatory practices aimed at each and every body” (Stryker, p. 38). Paul Preciado, a Spanish philosopher, echoes Foucault’s predictions about the trajectory of government, asserting that the modern economy establishes a “government of the living” (*Testo Junkie*, p. 25). Breaking down the mechanisms of modern governance, Preciado references autonomist Marxist philosophers Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, recalling their argument that biopolitical management extends to all “forms of production that are linked to aids provided to the body, to care, to the protection of the other and to the creation of human relations, to the ‘feminine’ work of reproduction, to relationships of communication and exchange of knowledge and affects” (Negri and Hardt qtd. in *Testo Junkie*, p. 37). To politically regulate these intimate and socially constructed outcomes—relationships, reproduction, and bodily autonomy—capitalism must extend its reach into the internal landscapes of individual experience, managing desire and identity in the depths of human subconscious.

In the early 2000s, social media emerged as a successful, productive business model under the new biopolitical regime. Social media companies operate “on an ad-based attention-economy business model” where “the user’s attention is the product,” which is “in turn sold to

advertisers or other buyers” (Bhargava and Velasquez, p. 321). Instead of using physical labor to manufacture a tangible product, social media utilizes an understanding of human neurobiology to consolidate audience attention (the product) and sell it to advertisers and other interested parties. The introduction of high-speed internet and the development of mobile devices during the 2010s accelerated the exchange of information: videos, images, and audio to unprecedented speeds, creating what Herbert A. Simon deemed a state of “information overload” (Simon qtd. in Crogan and Kinsley, p. 4). When overwhelmed with information, individual attention bounces across various sources in a short period of online engagement. The outcome? A contrived scarcity of attention that redefines “the means and rationale through which a given society commodifies and exchanges scarce resources” and translates attention into a “quantifiable commodity” (Crogan and Kinsley, p. 1). With the economic value of attention comes increased capitalist interest in managing where and how consumers direct their attention.

The Progression of Social Media Models, the Influence of TikTok, and the Rise of OnlyFans

Early social media giants (Instagram, Vine, YouTube, etc.) tapped into the human desire for belonging to manage user attention. Their algorithms directed content to users based on the connections they established through their “following” and “followers.” In the late 2010s, TikTok emerged within the social media industry, diverging from earlier social media models in its attention-harvesting methods. For context, ByteDance, a Chinese app developer, launched TikTok (or Douyin, in China) internationally in May 2017. By December 2020, TikTok downloads had “reached 1.5 billion over 150 countries around the world in 39 languages, making it the seventh-most downloaded app of the 2010s” (Wu, p. 12). TikTok introduced a predictive learning algorithm, recording user interaction patterns and demographic data to construct its “For

You Page” recommendations. Through continuous data collection, TikTok aims to connect users with personalized content that the algorithm deems compelling to that individual user.

In 2025, TikTok remains one of the prominent social media apps, but this categorization fails to capture the app’s far-reaching influence. As an attention-powered business, TikTok—like earlier social media models—has a vested interest in managing the attention of its users. The algorithm seeks to maximize individual engagement time to benefit its stakeholders (advertisers and other groups seeking to consolidate attention). A refined manipulation of human neurobiology enables TikTok to generate attention-based capital while shaping social institutions, interpersonal dynamics, and global power structures through digital representation. Given its expansive reach and uniquely effective manipulation of human attention, TikTok content warrants analysis as a legitimate international political force.

While apps like TikTok rely on algorithmic personalization to drive engagement, subscription-based platforms like OnlyFans (OF) have carved out a distinct approach to navigating the attention economy. Founded in 2016, OnlyFans garnered mass attention and secured its success by “[allowing] individuals to cut out middlemen, providing a platform to sell content straight to the consumer” (Pryce qtd. in Tynan and Linehan, p. 2290). While a range of creators use the platform (fitness influencers, musicians, etc.), OF most notably revolutionized sexualized labor by improving access and compensation for “those wanting to broadcast sexual content” (Tynan and Linehan, p. 2290). OnlyFans also created an unrivaled opportunity for the construction and monetization of parasocial relationships, encouraging direct engagement with subscribers through “features such as livestreams, personal messages, and commissioned content” (Tynan and Linehan, p. 2290). Crucially, the OF model depends on the broader

attention economy, relying on platforms like TikTok to generate the visibility, intimacy, and trust that uphold subscription-based interactions.

Managing Attention and Digital Exploitation of the Human Brain

To maximize profit, producers identify vulnerable populations and target them with content engineered to transform them into a lucrative audience. Cocomelon, a television show frequently selected for babies and toddlers by parents, exemplifies the exploitative agenda of media companies. In addition to the typical nursery rhymes and foundational moral teachings of children's shows, Cocomelon contains bright visuals and rapidly changing frames. While the show could be understood as a natural progression of animation style, its implications for the neurological development of young people are much more insidious. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, "just 9 minutes of viewing a fast-paced television cartoon had immediate negative effects on 4-year-olds' executive function" (Lillard and Peterson). Beyond the acute impacts of fast-paced children's content, pediatric research suggests a broader link between increased early exposure to television between the ages of 1-3 and subsequent attention problems (Christakis et al., p. 710).

These medical insights call both the content that youth consume and the mechanisms by which they consume it into question. Since the publication of these studies in the early 2000s and 2010s, the progression of technology beyond the television and into the hands of individuals via the smartphone, laptop, tablet, etc. has reshaped the technological landscape, introducing new media-related challenges for young people. According to a survey conducted by Common Sense Media, adolescents in the United States spend "a large proportion of all screen time" on mobile devices (*The Common Sense Census*, p. 20). Given the availability of mobile devices to children and the popularity of social media content in the United States, it makes sense that many children

engage with social media, with or without their parents' awareness. A study conducted by the European Journal of Pediatrics reflects the international reality of pervasive social media usage in young people, reporting that in 2017 in the United Kingdom, 23% of children aged 8-11 and 74% of children aged 12-15 had at least one social media profile (Hadjipanayis et al., p. 1606). Despite attempts by digital technology developers and parents to restrict minor access to social media, children continue to participate, absorbing overwhelming and often conflicting information during crucial developmental stages. To best support children's neurological and social development in the present era, research must look beyond the scope of typical children's programming and evaluate the impacts of media disseminated on popular social media apps like TikTok.

The colorful tactics of Cocomelon represent just one approach to harvesting attention: exploiting the unique impressionability of children. Across different audience demographics, in order to manage attention, producers must first "grab" it. Often, neurobiological processes of excitement can act as attention hooks. Sexual arousal, for example, engages the viewer's senses, directing them towards sustained, and thereby profitable, engagement. Using human sexuality as a powerful attention hook, capitalists equip their businesses with the means to consolidate capital. Historically, those in political and economic power have invested time and resources into cultivating the necessary neurobiological knowledge to do just this. As Philosopher Paul Preciado recalls, the U.S. government substantially invested in human sexuality research during the Cold War period ("Pharmaco-pornographic politics," p. 105). Unfortunately, many of the research findings have been co-opted by producers to further economic interests rather than to promote healthy intimacy. In their pursuit of engagement and profit, producers develop an

interest in controlling the intimate details of human existence: how one spends their free time, how one's body responds to stimuli, and even chemical/hormonal balances within the body.

Positioning Pornography in the Attention Economy, A Motor for Erotic Capital

Among the many strategies producers deploy to manage and monetize human attention, pornography occupies an especially weighty cultural role. In the contemporary internet setting, pornographic producers utilize “immersive [graphic] design and data collection” to convert “the sexed body” into attention-based capital (Keilty, p. 341). To evoke a sense of excitement and draw viewers into a familiar erotic framework, producers employ recognizable narrative tropes, aesthetic cues, and power dynamics to trigger conditioned neurobiological responses, enhance algorithmic visibility, and resonate with hegemonic cultural norms. Not only does porn capture human attention with exceptional efficacy, but it actively molds how viewers perceive and enact intimacy offline.

In the modern internet environment, predictive social media algorithms channels users towards idealized content that aligns with their existing preferences. Digital media expert, Dr. Pedro Alves de Veiga, argues that such algorithms “make people see more of what they like—not what challenges them” (Alves de Veiga et al., p. 224). Although the internet facilitates a global exchange of information, algorithmic narrowing limits exposure to alternative representations. When considering the internet's role as a pornographic directory (as in the case of pornographic intermediaries), this narrowing normalizes and fetishizes specific sexual dynamics characterized by gendered and racialized power imbalances.

The category of “pornography” itself remains contested and fluid, complicating regulation and cementing its central role in shaping culture, even in the mainstream.

Telecommunications professor and author of *Pornography in America: A Reference Handbook*,

Joseph W. Slade, argues that the term *pornographic* “constantly shifts along a vast continuum moving between two equally slippery concepts, the *erotic* and the *obscene*” (Slade). Content deemed “pornographic” in one era of history might later be perceived as “erotic” or simply unstimulating. As digital media expands in its reach and range, the boundaries of “pornography” become further obfuscated, making content moderation increasingly challenging and subjective.

Regulatory challenges become especially evident on the internet, where the sheer volume of content and covert tactics of content creators make enforcement difficult. Many social media platforms attempt to navigate this by establishing “community guidelines,” requiring users to agree to a set of rules to participate. According to a review of the social media sites with the most active users, “all platforms had rules against adult non-consensual intimate imagery... child exploitation imagery... and minor sexualization,” and these guidelines “evolve over time and go through frequent revisions” (Jiang, pp. 289-290). While content regulation processes vary across different sites, most private social media companies employ “machine-based and human-based surveillance systems” and create “enforcement mechanisms” to limit the content and creators they deem to be violating the rules (Tyler et al).

Defining Pornographic Intermediaries, an Emerging Attention-Seeking Strategy

Despite ongoing efforts to improve content regulation, certain types of material continue to evade detection, particularly content that functions as *pornographic intermediaries*. For the purposes of my research, I will use the term pornographic intermediary to describe content, particularly on short-form social media platforms like TikTok, that employs a combination of aesthetic, emotional, connective, and sexualized labor to create and deliver a “pornified” image. Although not overtly pornographic, this content serves as a gateway, directly linking (often underage) users to explicit material via an innocuous platform. Like many hardcore pornography

representations, this content often relies on traditional, repressive ideas of gender and intimacy in order to fuel a masculine fantasy of dominance.

Pornographic intermediaries and their pornified aesthetics reflect a broader cultural trend deeply embedded within the post-Fordist, attention economy. Under the current, attention-based capitalist regime, success as a feminine-presenting influencer requires adherence to sexualized ideals of femininity (Keane, “Instagram Baddies,” p. 9). Dr. Jenna Drenten, a feminist and digital consumer culture expert, argues that “conformance to heteronormative prescriptions of attractiveness and femininity is fundamental in gaining attention” (Duffy qtd. in Drenten, p. 3). In particular, Drenten argues that online environments uplift “‘porn chic’—a style that reflects the mainstreaming of aesthetics of commercial pornography within Western societies” as the feminine paragon (Drenten, p. 3).

The “porn chic” aesthetic specifies and standardizes the demands placed on feminine bodies, referencing an existing cultural awareness of pornographic aesthetics. Rooted in the content from previous eras of pornographic production, “porn chic” content echoes the struggles of feminine laborers throughout human history. On top of traditional forms of unpaid domestic and reproductive labor, feminine bodies are expected to perform sexualized labor to find success in realms like entertainment, social media, customer service, and fashion (Keane, “Instagram Baddies,” p. 9). For feminine-presenting laborers on the internet, fulfilling commercial interests requires marketing their sexuality and capacity for intimacy as products available for purchase (Keane, “Instagram Baddies,” p. 9). Not only must they make their experiences of love, sex, and connection available to the public, but they must remain impersonal and idealized enough that their humanity does not interrupt the viewers’ fantasy. Although the ethical and emotional nuance of sexualized labor should be acknowledged, digital anthropologist and ethnographer of

vernacular internet cultures, Crystal Abidin, reiterates, “influencers are ultimately motivated by underlying commercial interests and expend effort to maintain impressions of intimacies with followers” (Abidin, pp. 11-12).

Parasocial Invitations in Influencer Content and Vulnerable Young Audiences

Unlike television and other traditional forms of celebrity media, influencer content provides an immediate sense of connection and perceived accessibility with its immediacy and opportunity for direct engagement. Many social media influencers take advantage of the built-in sense of connection by playing into parasocial relationships (one-sided social bonds that mimic the experience of real, interpersonal connection) (Bond, p. 656). Some of these creators establish the illusion of intimacy and connectedness by publicizing their private lives: romantic relationships and implied sexual encounters, to construct an engaging narrative and blur the lines between personal and performative behavior. A study of parasocial relationship formation published in *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking* found that “adolescents who had experienced computer-mediated communication with media personae on Twitter... had stronger PSRs than those who had not experienced such communication” (Bond, p. 659). This comparative study demonstrates the reverberating impacts of a single internet interaction on an adolescent’s social identity. Like adolescents, youth of all ages undergo critical development, reckoning with identity, relationships, and constructing a worldview. The social, emotional, and neurological plasticity of children makes them especially impressionable, rendering them vulnerable to exploitation by internet producers that strive to cultivate a loyal, invested audience.

Methods:

Introducing Case Study: The Bop House and Julia Filippo

Recognizing the unique profit potential of young audiences, social media influencers tap into existing fan bases, tailoring their messaging, aesthetic choices, and content to youth. On TikTok, a content coalition referred to as the “Bop House” exemplifies this marketing strategy, successfully merging audiences through collaboration and narrative performance. The “Bop House” is comprised of conventionally attractive young women who gained popularity on TikTok and seem to target a young, predominantly masculine audience. Upon first glance, the “Bop House” TikTok creators appear child-friendly, but looking at the content more critically, it becomes evident that, like many internet producers, they rely on pornified aesthetics to excite and maintain attention despite their underage audience. Additionally, although unclear if established before or after gaining TikTok popularity, many members of the “Bop House” create pornographic content for subscription-based sites like OnlyFans. The merging of youth-facing content with pornified aesthetics within Bop House and Bop-House-adjacent content positions their videos as pornographic intermediaries, using covert sexualization to funnel impressionable viewers towards explicitly pornographic material.

Creator Julia Filippo (@julia_filippo), a prominent member of the “Bop House,” expertly employs this dual-marketing strategy, concealing sexualized performance behind youth-oriented aesthetics while channeling viewers towards explicit content. On TikTok, she has 3.3 million followers, and in her bio links her Snapchat, Instagram, and states “link in [Instagram] bio” (referring to her OnlyFans content) (Filippo). In her TikTok content, she uses diction, visual symbolism, and narrative storytelling to construct a marketable, feminine representation that appeals to the “male gaze,” defined by feminist and film theorist Dr. Mulvey as a “voyeuristic,

fetishistic, and possessive fantasy” (Oliver, p. 453). In addition to the actual content, replies to followers, opportunities for exclusive access, and point-of-view (POV) format invite viewers into imagined, accessible intimacy. Her content encourages parasocial investment, leading many followers to develop a sense of connection to her persona without any real interactions. The comment sections on her videos illustrate these abundant, one-sided relationships, with many viewers expressing fantasies of possessing, protecting, and dominating her. By examining the strategies in Filippo’s internet-mediated self-marketing, we might better understand how producers of pornographic intermediaries commodify femininity, sexuality, and intimacy to harness desire and cultivate attention-based capital. These performances pervade modern media, shaping young people’s view of gender, intimacy, and reproduction.

Data Collection and Sorting:

I employed a time-bound, stratified sampling strategy to assemble a representative dataset of Filippo’s content for my analysis. Influencers like Filippo put out upwards of 4 videos a day, so to keep the dataset manageable and devote the necessary analysis to the content, I only examined content published from April 1 to April 30, 2025. I compiled a list of videos published in this time frame, recording their date, caption, view count, and “engagement ranking” (where the engagement falls relative to other videos in the data set) in Table 1 (Filippo).

After determining engagement rankings, I partitioned the data set (N=38) into three engagement tiers. I defined the High Engagement category cutoff as:

$$\text{CutHigh} = \lceil N/3 \rceil$$

Therefore, videos with ranks (r): $1 \leq r \leq \text{CutHigh}$ were designated High Engagement. To ensure that all 38 videos were allocated, the next $\lceil N/3 \rceil$ videos (with ranks 13-25) were designated Medium Engagement, and the remaining 13 videos (with ranks 26-38) were designated Low

Engagement. The complete dataset (N) is not divisible by three (as sample n=38), so I deliberately chose a smaller High Engagement tier (only top 12, as opposed to rounding N/3 up to 13 data points) because my analytic focus requires that this category consist exclusively of the clearest exemplars of successful marketing within this influencing niche.

Within each engagement tier (High, Medium, and Low), I conducted a random draw of three videos directly in Google Sheets. For each tier's list (e.g., cells H2:H39 for High Engagement), I inserted an adjacent "Random Sample" column and entered the following formula:

```
=ARRAY_CONSTRAIN(  
  SORT(  
    FILTER($H$2:$H$13, LEN($H$2:$H$13)),  
    RANDARRAY(ROWS($H$2:$H$13)),  
    TRUE  
  ),  
  3, 1  
)
```

I referenced my prior experience with spreadsheet and R coding language, and consulted Chat GPT to code the formula above ("In Google Sheets..."). This formula works by filtering out any blank cells in the tier's caption range, generating a uniform random number for each remaining entry (via RANDARRAY), sorting the filtered list by those random values to shuffle the order, and constraining the output to the first three items (ARRA_CONSTRAIN(..., 3, 1)). I repeated this procedure for each of the three tiers. The resulting tier designations alongside the three randomly selected videos per tier are presented in Table 2. In addition to the time-bound,

stratified, random sample, I purposefully collected and analyzed additional videos from Filippo's page that best exemplify the role of the pornographic intermediary, the commodification of intimacy, and the reinforcement of gendered power dynamics.

Table 1. Comprehensive Record of Creator Julia Filippo's TikTok Videos (April 1-30, 2025):
Date, Caption, Number of Views, and Engagement Ranking

Date	Caption	Number of Views	Engagement Ranking
4/1	"check the date... :(love you guys"	2,300,000	14
4/1	"i see u;)"	7,000,000	3
4/2	"i have a nail apt today trust but hope you enoyed! #grwm #stream"	1,100,000	31
4/2	"[palming face emoji]"	1,100,000	31
4/2	"repling to comment: liv"	1,300,000	28
4/3	"[bow emojix3]"	3,900,000	6
4/4	"'I think' [sad emoji] @aishah sofey"	4,200,000	5
4/4	"my head 24/7 @thepneboys @thelannahcherry @alice rosenblum"	1,000,000	34
4/5	"i don't :("	1,900,000	16
4/6	"do you know what's happing..."	1,900,000	16
4/7	"moving to LA?"	1,900,000	16
4/8	"tryouts on @PNE Girls we just wanna party!!"	1,500,000	23
4/8	"loookkk who i'm back with [teary/aw emoji] @lia @mini bop house "	1,500,000	23
4/9	"SO BLESSED ADN THANKFULL LOVE YOU GUYS!!!"	956,100	35
4/9	@TheLanahCherry	2,300,000	14
4/10	"no way bruh... i'm not doing that again... no way i can't count... smh"	2,800,000	9
4/11	"idk how they look so good doing this trend lol"	10,100,000	2
4/12	"easter is my fav holiday :(i'm just a gurllllll"	3,600,000	7
4/14	"you'll never know [covering face emoji]"	1,600,000	21
4/16	"got banned on twitch today but photoshoot coming soon [sticking out tongue emoji] @mckinley richardson"	1,300,000	28

4/17	"the last one [covering mouth emoji, sideways sticking out tongue emoji]"	4,700,000	4
4/19	"...."	1,400,000	25
4/21	"i'm back with my Bops i could cry [heart emoji]"	2,600,000	10
4/22	no caption	2,600,000	10
4/22	"replying to comment: roblox games good morning [sun emoji] @bop house"	1,300,000	28
4/22	"Thank you @yeSloth @CHRISTIAN.ARAUJOI @ava star and more people for nominating me for the USC Speak Your Mind for Mental Health ice bucket challenge! I nominate @Alabama barker @Breckie Hill and @Aishah Sofey"	1,800,000	20
4/23	"just realized ur not supposed to act like ur flying"	1,400,000	25
4/23	"@camila araujo does the BEST planning"	11,600,000	1
4/24	"catch me and her at the club [covering mouth emoji] @Alina Rose"	1,900,000	16
4/24	"Bops for bops, spot who u see [covering eyes emoji] @bop house "	1,600,000	21
4/25	"well i cringed so yall are allowed to cringe 2 @bop house"	810,400	36
4/26	"Bob version"	2,600,000	10
4/26	"guys i'm actually 30% italian @alina rose "	3,200,000	8
4/26	"@Camila Araujo ur fav duo"	1,100,000	31
4/27	"@Bop House finally made it out the group chat [sticking out tongue emoji] ever since the breakins we barely seen each other so its so good seeing them"	686,900	38
4/28	"Bop house view [heart eyes emoji]"	754,900	37
4/30	"IN 23!!!! [party emoji]"	2,500,000	13
4/30	"HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ME!!! So blessed and thank u for all the wishes"	1,400,000	25

Table 2. Stratified Random Sample of Julia Filippo's TikTok Videos by Engagement Tier (April 1-30, 2025)

High engagement:	Random sample	Medium engagement:	Random sample	Low engagement:	Random sample
"@camila araujo does the BEST planning"	"easter is my fav holiday :(i'm just a gurllllll"	"IN 23!!!! [party emoji]"	"tryouts on @PNE Girls we just wanna party!!!"	"just realized ur not supposed to act like ur flying"	"Bop house view [heart eyes emoji]"

"idk how they look so good doing this trend lol"	"The last one [covering mouth emoji, sticking out tongue emoji]"	"check the date... :(love you guys"	"you'll never know [covering face emoji]"	"HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ME!!! So blessed and thank u for all the wishes"	"@Bop House finally made it out the group chat [sticking out tongue emoji] ever since the breakins we barely seen each other so its so good seeing them"
"i see u;)"	"guys i'm actually 30% italian @alina rose""	@TheLanahCherry	"IN 23!!!! [party emoji]"	"repling to comment: liv"	"HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ME!!! So blessed and thank u for all the wishes"
"the last one [covering mouth emoji, sideways sticking out tongue emoji]"		"i don't :("		"got banned on twitch today but photoshoot coming soon [sticking out tongue emoji] @mckinley richardson"	
"I think' [sad emoji] @aishah sofey"		"do you know what's happing..."		"replying to comment: roblox games good morning [sun emoji] @bop house"	
"[bow emoji]x3]"		"moving to LA?"		"i have a nail apt today trust but hope you enoyed! #grwm #stream"	
"easter is my fav holiday :(i'm just a gurl!!!!"		"catch me and her at the club [covering mouth emoji] @Alina Rose"		"[palming face emoji]"	
"guys i'm actually 30% italian @alina rose "		"Thank you @yeSloth @CHRISTIAN.ARAUJOI @ava star and more people for nominating me for the USC Speak Your Mind for Mental Health ice bucket challenge! I nominate @Alabama barker @Breckie Hill and @Aishah Sofey"		"@Camila Araujo ur fav duo"	
"no way bruh... i'm not doing that again... no way i can't count... smh"		"you'll never know [covering face emoji]"		"my head 24/7 @thepneboys @thelannahcherry @alice rosenblum"	
"i'm back with my Bops i could cry [heart emoji]"		"Bops for bops, spot who u see [covering eyes emoji] @bop house "		"SO BLESSED ADN THANKFULL LOVE YOU GUYS!!!"	
no caption		"tryouts on @PNE Girls we just wanna party!!"		"well i cringed so yall are allowed to cringe 2 @bop house"	
"Bob version"		"loookkk who i'm back with [teary/aw emoji] @lia @mini bop house "		"Bop house view [heart eyes emoji]"	
		"..."		"@Bop House finally made it out the group chat [sticking out tongue emoji] ever since the breakins we barely seen each other so its so good seeing them"	

TikTok Close Reading Framework:

To interpret the selected videos, I employed a close reading method grounded in the qualitative content analysis of sexualized labor on Instagram by digital consumer culture expert Dr. Jenna Drenten. I systematically examined each video's diction, visual presentation, audio, narrative structure, and collaborative elements, working to identify patterns in the digital commodification of feminine bodies and intimacy. Informed by the outcomes and methodology of Dr. Drenten's Instagram research, I determined "a priori codes" to guide my analysis: aesthetic labor, emotional labor, connective labor, and sexualization (Drenten, p. 14).

For my research, when analyzing visual presentation and the associated aesthetic labor, I focused on the deliberate use of "embodied aesthetic attributes" (poses, props, clothing, location, and stylistic devices) and the use of "pornified aesthetics" (Drenten, p. 30). Drenten maintains that although pornified aesthetics manifest in a variety of ways in popular culture, "a core element can be understood as making women appear 'fuckable' (Dines, 2015) to a (generally assumed male) audience" (Drenten, p. 3). Given that TikTok videos incorporate sound, often using a snippet of music or popular media (movies, television, live interviews, etc.), I extended my analysis of aesthetic labor to audio analysis. I assessed the connotations, pitch, and emotional affect of background music, vocal tone, and sound effects, working to determine their role in sustaining attention and shaping audience perception.

To analyze emotional labor, I considered how Filippo engaged with her followers via captions, text overlays, replies, and duets. I transcribed all spoken and on-screen text, recording this in my "content" section in Table 3. I observed symbolism, structure, and diction, paying particular attention to parasocial invitations and transactional framings of intimacy. As a part of my emotional labor analysis, when applicable, I broke down each video's narrative structure,

identifying the attention “hook,” central action/conflict, and resolution (or often, a call-to-action aimed at the viewer). Narrative analysis offers insight into how internet influencers in Filippo’s field perform emotional labor through their short-form storytelling, especially as they construct vulnerability, relatability, and a sense of intimacy. These narrative elements function as emotional strategies that invite interaction, empathy, and loyalty from the audience.

To analyze connective labor, I documented collaborative and intertextual features of the TikTok samples, recording duets, stitches, and references to other influencers or content houses (via “tagging using the @ symbol). Finally, to analyze sexualized labor, I considered its “interconnections” to the other forms of labor (aesthetic, emotional, and connective) using Drenten’s 2019 definition (Drenten, p. 14). Acknowledging the “important tensions” in related academic discourse, Drenten offers a working definition of sexualized labor “as an embodied performance that involves a complex, inter-related dynamic of emotion, aesthetics, and [sexualization] that cannot be separated from where it is placed” which I use as a conceptual framework in my review (Drenten, p. 7).

By synthesizing insights from each layer of analysis, I identified recurring strategies employed by multiplatform influencers and digital laborers like Filippo. I viewed each video multiple times on different days to ensure a consistent and comprehensive review. By identifying the gender roles, cultural norms, and power dynamics that shape the marketing strategies of digital influencers, we can better understand the messaging and representation that young audiences encounter on a regular basis on the internet.

Ideological Foundations of Reproductive Health Policy Reform Close Reading Framework:

Following my digital media analysis, I examined the ideological foundations of modern reproductive health policy in the United States to assess how social media messaging serves to

reinforce or challenge beliefs that conservative, anti-abortion policymakers push. I examined the ethical arguments and ideological underpinnings of legislation, political discourse, and think tank publications in support of the restriction of abortion rights. My analysis included the Texas Senate Bill 8 (SB8, 2021), “The Texas Heartbeat Act,” Republican Senator Josh Hawley’s speech “The Future of the American Man,” and the article “Protect Unborn Life and Family Formation and panel “Dads on Duty: a Father’s Role in Shaping Society” from the Heritage Foundation. I then compared the ideological appeals I identified in these sources with the messaging in Filippo’s TikTok content, particularly her videos that address themes of gender and intimacy. I used this comparative approach to illuminate potential overlaps or contradictions between prominent political rhetoric and the self-commodification strategies employed by influencers.

Results:

Content Analysis of Sampled TikToks:

High Engagement:

1. “easter is my fav holiday :(i’m just a gurllllll”	
Views: 3.6 m	Engagement Rank: 7/38

Content summary: Filippo uses a crying filter to produce an exaggerated sad face. She films the video holding the camera in what appears to be her residence. She implements a sound bite of a girl crying, saying that her mother does not love her anymore because she did not get her an easter basket. She writes, “I’m leaving the bop house... they said i’m 2 old for an easter basket :(”

Analytical commentary: Filippo engages in emotional labor in Video 1, performing dramatized sadness over not receiving an Easter basket. Her use of the crying filter exaggerates her facial expression, turning minor sadness over a childhood tradition into intense, performative grief and inviting the audience to laugh at her hyperbolic performance. Filippo’s choice of audio furthers her emotional labor, cultivating relatability to her young audience. She lip-syncs to a young girl crying over what she interpreted as maternal rejection, literally and figuratively echoing the feelings of disappointment adolescents and young adults face when entering adulthood and leaving childhood tendencies behind.

Filippo’s opening statement, “i’m leaving the bop house,” heightens her emotional performance, causing alarm in Bop House fans and doubling as an attention hook. She follows her statement with “they said i’m 2 old for an easter basket :(” Her statement breaks the narrative tension, and shifts focus to her personal divulgence and presentation. Her use of “2” in place of “too” and a sad face emoji, “:(,” in the text overlay functions as deliberate self-infantilization. Her diction choices mimic the communication styles of adolescents in early internet spaces like

MySpace, making light of her performative sadness and aligning her self-expression with a young audience.

The use of the phrase “i’m just a gurlll” in the caption reflects both emotional and connective labor. On TikTok, the phrase has been popularized by feminine creators as a way to parody sexist assumptions of female incompetence. A creator might use the phrase to playfully excuse behavior seen as irrational or immature, reclaiming stereotypes historically used to undermine women to express self-awareness of a lack of effort or skill². In this context, Filippo uses the phrase to construct an innocent, youthful persona and signal to her audience that she keeps up with social media trends.

Finally, the video engages in subtle forms of aesthetic and sexualized labor through scene composition and emotional expression. The close-up frame positions Filippo’s facial expressions and presentation as the focal point of the video. While she performs “sadness,” an emotion that might inspire discomfort or compassion in others, her carefully groomed hair, makeup, styling, and filters ensure that her persona remains desirable for consumption by her audience. Her writing style and emoji choices create a childlike tone, and her exaggerated disappointment connotes innocence and emotional vulnerability. Comments like “it’s cause julia is just a baby” demonstrate the efficacy of Filippo’s rhetorical self-infantilization.

2. “the last one [covering mouth emoji, sideways sticking out tongue emoji]”	
Views: 4.7 m	Engagement Rank: 4/38

Content summary: Filippo films in front of a white background, using bright ring lighting. She wears a short black dress, and applies the filter “flawless skin” to smooth her appearance and shrink her nose and chin. She lip-syncs to a sound bite of a man saying “approved [stamp noise], approved [stamp noise], [jazz music].” The text overlay reads “what are you doing” (followed by “approved”), “do you wanna hang out” (followed by “approved”), and “come outside” (followed by sultry jazz music).

² For examples of the “i’m just a girl trend” and its use on TikTok, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uNjFVtEZDDQ&t=4s>

Analytical commentary: In Video 2, the setting, lighting, filter, and outfit reflect Filippo's aesthetic labor. The stark white background and bright ring lighting create an artificial, high-definition image. Paired with the "flawless skin" filter that smooths her features and shrinks her facial features, Filippo tailors her appearance and the setting to easy visual appreciation by her viewers.

Filippo performs extensive emotional labor in Video 2, constructing a romantic fantasy around her persona that appeals to a young internet audience. She taps back into adolescent internet culture, using common phrases used by young people when dating or "talking to" romantic interests. Putting the text in quotation marks on the video and responding to each sentence, Filippo invites viewers to imagine themselves in the scenario with her. In this point-of-view (POV) format, she offers a positive response to the phrase "come outside," switching from "approved" to the theatrical sultry jazz music and dancing and posing on the wall. In this POV, the viewer can imagine themselves saying the right thing to woo her.

Her specific affirmation of the phrase "come outside" reflects attempted alignment with the social norms among young people on TikTok. Internet advice for young male audiences regarding self-presentation and romance uplifts a *nonchalant* attitude as desirable to women. The phrase, "come outside," in this case, would be the most nonchalant approach, as it lacks emotional investment and assumes compliance. By responding most positively to this line, Filippo affirms a fantasy many young men engage in: that by being cool and emotionally detached, they might possess a desirable woman's attention.

The responses of commenters once again reinforce Filippo's efficacy in marketing her capacity for romantic and sexual intimacy as a commodity, emphasizing her performance of extensive sexualized labor. Viewers commenting "come outside" illustrate how Filippo's

audience engages with her content to live out fantasies. In this case, the video allows the viewer to step into the role of a nonchalant man who wins affection and validation from a desirable feminine character.

3. “guys i’m actually 30% italian @alina rose”	
Views: 3.2 m	Engagement Rank: 8/38

Content summary: Filippo appears to use a tripod to film her and another Bop House member, Alina Rose, in a high-rise mansion. She leans on a tree as her collaborator approaches her and moves to pull her away. Filippo acts surprised as Rose enters the scene, feigning reluctance and pretending to hold onto the tree to resist being dragged away from her phone. Both creators featured wear form-fitting, light-wash denim and crop tops. She uses a sound popularized in Italian TikTok meme circles, mouthing along as a man softly moans “no... no... no... la polizia... no.” Filippo writes, “when it’s time to do actual work but i’m busy watching italian brainrot” over the video. The comments reflect a collective questioning of her definition of work, saying things like “work is kind of an overstatement” and “what ACTUAL work?”

Analytical commentary: Video 3 exemplifies the aspirational and performative nature of influencer content achieved through aesthetic labor. The high-rise background and tripod set up make the video feel contrived and luxurious, allowing the viewer to digitally step into a vision of wealth and abundance. Filippo and Rose wear coordinated form-fitting outfits—a consistent aesthetic in Bop House content. These outfit choices double as a form of sexualized labor, making their bodies uniquely visible and leading to scrutiny by the public. Comments under these videos frequently focus on individual aspects of the women’s bodies (butt, boobs, face, etc.), reducing their already surface-level online personas to specific body part.

Emotionally, the video cultivates relatability through self-deprecation and subtle vulnerability. Filippo offers a point of connection to her “chronically online” viewers (people, often young, struggling to manage their engagement with digital media). By mentioning her preference for “brainrot” over work, she frames the video as a kind of confession, admitting that she also engages with meaningless internet content. She offers viewers the opportunity to see

their own digital habits reflected back in a humorous yet highly aestheticized, socially palatable lens.

Medium Engagement:

1. “tryouts on @PNE Girls we just wanna party!!”	
Views: 1.5 m	Engagement Rank: 23/38

Content summary: Filippo displays scenes from a hilltop mansion, featuring six other female creators and two male creators from the Party Never Ends (PNE) House. She uses the “me” and “flawless skin” effects to smooth and lighten her skin, and minimize her nose and chin. The video begins with Filippo speaking directly to the camera: “guys, as some of you guys know I like to party, and the Bop House girls do not like to party at all. So I’m gonna be doing tryouts to find new girls to party with.” She then introduces two tall, young men, filming them standing cross-armed behind her using the front-facing camera. She states, “I brought some party professionals to help me pick the squad.” The video then cuts to two young women with dwarfism, standing in front of the two young men, providing their reasoning for joining the new party group. They reference a conflict with the Mini Bop House (a content collective that employs a similar dual marketing strategy to the Bop House), emphatically stating, “fuck the mini bop house.” The next two young women express their appeal by saying, “so pick us because we’re hot” and “we can bring all the two mans,” as the young men motion “no” behind them. The two final women confess unrelated reasons for being at the tryouts. At the end of the video, Filippo says she “actually” did love all the girls who tried out, asking the two young men their opinion. She then directs viewers to a link where they can watch the tryouts.

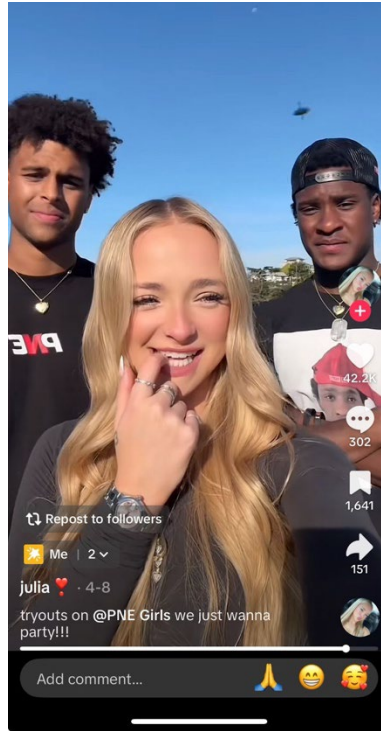


Figure 1. Screenshot at 00:39 seconds

Analytical commentary: In Video 1, Filippo's use of facial filters illustrates her deliberate aesthetic labor in shaping an idealized online image, tailoring her persona for widespread circulation and eager consumption. Facial filters smooth, lighten, and minimize her features, synchronizing her online presentation with limiting, Eurocentric feminine beauty standards. Her consistent facial modification maintains a desirable, easily consumable presentation of femininity, avoiding revealing flaws that could take the viewer out of the delicately constructed fantasy of possessing, engaging, or dominating her online image.

Filippo uses Video 1 to develop a narrative around her character, the Bop House, and adjacent creators, performing emotional labor to sustain audience investment. She frames herself (her online persona) as someone who likes to party, unlike other Bop House creators. By establishing a playful, yet competitive dynamic with other creators in her niche, she facilitates a mutually beneficial flow of engagement between their pages.

All creators featured in Video 1 perform extensive sexualized labor, some overtly marketing their sexual appeal and others subtly invoking pornographic aesthetics to capture attention. Two of the women featured advocate for their inclusion in the PNE house by emphasizing their “hot” physical appearance and their ability to attract “two mans” (a term used in young, digital communities to describe an informal, often hook-up oriented double date). Although Filippo only specified that she wants girls who like partying, these statements frame sexual appeal as a viable form of social currency.

As the women outline their potential contributions to the PNE house, behind them, two male party professionals offer silent judgment. The dynamic of looming male observers approving or rejecting the women normalizes masculine judgment of feminine physical presentation and social belonging, opening the featured feminine creators and women online in general to further scrutiny.

The framing of the opening and closing shots, where Filippo, a petite white woman, stands in front of two tall Black men, recalls a visual trope embedded in racial fetishization and pornographic representations. The composition of the scene subtly invokes a popular genre of interracial pornography that fetishizes contrasts in physical size and phenotype. The pornographic trope—frequently labeled “BBC” (for big black cock) x some white feminine pornographic archetype (cheating hotwife, barely legal teen, etc.)—plays stereotypes of black men as hypermasculine, aggressive, sexually dominant, and white women as fragile, innocent, and submissive. Historically, these stereotypes have contributed to a portrayal and perception of black men as sexual predators, posing a particular threat to vulnerable white women. This racist narrative has been used to justify the violent and unjust prosecution of black men and boys, as in

the tragic murder of 14-year-old Emmett Till³. Although Video 1 does not explicitly reference sex, the scene composition functions as visual shorthand, tapping into a rich history of racial bias and pornographic representations that have simultaneously dehumanized Black masculine bodies and infantilized white feminine bodies.

Finally, the collaboration with other creators and references to other content houses demonstrate Filippo’s connective labor. The tryout narrative invites the featured creators to market their personas to Filippo, the PNE boys, and the viewer, transforming social belonging, normally expressed through friendship and group affiliation, into a performance subject to public validation, and in doing so, offering those platformed an opportunity to expand their audience. Although the inclusion of two women with dwarfism might signal inclusivity on the surface, it ultimately serves to escalate narrative tension between rival content houses. Their inclusion highlights a recurring commodification of difference and creation of competitive dynamics employed by influencers within Filippo’s niche to stimulate viewer engagement. A similar strategy emerged in the founding of the Asian House (featuring Asian creators in Filippo’s niche) and subsequent manufactured conflict between the Bop House and the Asian House.

2. “you’ll never know [covering face emoji]”	
Views: 1.6 m	Engagement Rank: 21/38

Content summary: Filippo sits under a fuzzy white blanket, with a high-rise, luxury apartment as her background. The video is in slow motion, and she applies the “flawless skin” filter to smooth her skin, reduce blemishes, and shrink her nose and chin. She sits with her arms hugging her knees, flipping her long blonde hair so that it shields her face from the camera. The song “Good Looking” by Suki Waterhouse plays, singing “yet you think we’re the same” in the background. In the comments section, many commenters reference her recent collaboration with Bonnie Blue, while others simply compliment her hair, asking her to reveal her haircare secrets.

³ For more information on the history of the murder of Emmett Till: <https://www.loc.gov/collections/civil-rights-history-project/articles-and-essays/murder-of-emmett-till/>

Analytical commentary: In Video 2, Filippo engages in aesthetic labor to produce a curated, desirable image while fostering a sense of intimacy with her audience. Covered with a fuzzy white blanket with a high-rise, luxury apartment in the background, Filippo constructs an intimate, yet aspirational environment. Filming in what appears to be a bed or lounge area, she invites the viewer to join her in a more personal, relaxed space. At the same time, she passively displays wealth, creating a luxurious perception of her lifestyle and fostering a fantasy of influencer success.

Comments complimenting Filippo’s appearance and inquiring about her haircare routine exhibit the effectiveness of Filippo’s self-commodification. Across her content she uses filters, styling, and opulent backgrounds to project unwavering, yet effortless beauty and success, positioning herself as an object of admiration and model for emulation. Her content becomes instructional, guiding viewers in how to perform and reproduce a desirable, internet-optimized performance of femininity. The recurring commentary on her physical appearance displays a sense of audience entitlement to an opinion, underscoring how influencer culture objectifies feminine presentation and normalizes constant judgment.

Finally, references in the comment section to her collaboration with pornography creator Bonnie Blue highlight how Filippo employs connective labor to generate sustained audience engagement across platforms. Prior digital collaborations on OnlyFans and TikTok embed her persona within parasocial storylines, inviting viewers to continue “stay tuned” as platonic, romantic, and sexual relationships play out over the course of a series of multi-platform installments.

3. “IN 23!!!! [confetti emoji]”	
Views: 2.5 m	Engagement Rank: 13/38

Content summary: Filippo crouches in a short black dress, holding a candle, surrounded by black and silver balloons, and black and white images on a white wall. She lip syncs to the sound of a woman. She mouths, “I just realized I’m 23 and not like 15.” She then blows out her birthday candle, looking back at the camera and exclaiming, “what is going on?” Throughout the video, she expresses confusion, looking side to side and shrugging. In the comments, followers and fans wish her happy birthday, while others remark that she looks much younger than her age (23, as of this video).

Analytical commentary: Filippo’s performance in Video 3 exemplifies how aesthetic and sexualized labor intersect to project innocence and commodify youthful femininity. The contrast between her glamorous short black dress and stylized interior decor, with her crouched pose and exaggerated facial expressions, creates a visual tension between girlhood and adult sexuality. Her wide-eyes, tilted head, and shrugging—common gestures throughout her media presence—signal a childlike innocence and vulnerability, performing a sort of subtle sexualized labor.

She also performs emotional labor by publicly celebrating her birthday, inviting her audience into a moment of genuine personal significance. Sharing her celebration, she activates parasocial engagement, allowing viewers to feel emotionally connected to her personal life. By framing a real milestone within curated aesthetics, she blurs the line between authentic and performative aspects of her online persona. In doing so, she cultivates a sense of intimacy that encourages audience retention and strengthens their emotional investment in her image.

Low Engagement:

1. “Bop house view [heart eyes emoji]”	
Views: 754.9 k	Engagement Rank: 37/38

Content summary: Filippo sits on the wall of a pool. She covers her mouth to express amazement, and then gestures to the skyline as the camera pans out over the railing. She wears a form-fitting blue sundress, one that looks like the Skims body con dress popularized on social media. In the background, she plays a woman saying “you look lonely...” and then whispering seductively, “I can fix that” while the ambient, electronic song “Resonance” by Home plays.

Analytical commentary: The outfits, poses, and setting of Video 1 reflect Filippo’s aesthetic labor, through which she cultivates a consumable, culturally relevant, and sexually desirable feminine image. She wears a blue bodycon sundress, virtually echoing the viral Skims dress silhouette and thereby signaling trend awareness. Beyond communicating a relevant fashion sense, her choice of tight-fitting clothing performs sexualized labor by emphasizing and exaggerating her body shape to attract viewer attention, a visual trope echoed throughout Bop House-adjacent content. In terms of setting, the shot composition directs the viewer towards a panoramic skyline to reintroduce an element of aspirational wealth and an atmosphere of luxury.

Filippo performs emotional labor through her facial expressions and parasocial invitations, staging an emotional experience to share with her viewers. Pointing to the stunning skyline, she covers her mouth in exaggerated awe. This gesture attempts to generate a sense of wonder and emotional alignment with her audience. The grandiose, poolside setting, however, remains unrelatable, and even unimaginable to most viewers. Without a personal or narrative context, the attempt to create a shared emotional experience fails. Rather than cultivating relatability, her expression and gesticulation simply function as visual tools that augment the aspirational aesthetic.

2. “@Bop House finally made it out of the group chat [sticking out tongue emoji] ever since the breakins we barely seen each other so its so good seeing them”	
Views: 686.9 k	Engagement Rank: 38/38

Content summary: Filippo begins dancing in front of the camera. She motions like she is driving a car while moving her hips. The video then cuts to four other members of the Bop House doing the same dance. Finally, the video cuts to all five women dancing in a triangular arrangement with Filippo in front. Each woman wears a long, form-fitting dress. The text “when the bop house plans finally make it out of the group chat” is overlaid on the video. The song “Azul” by J Balvin plays in the background.

Analytical commentary: In Video 2, the choreography and coordinated styling of the group reflect joint aesthetic and sexualized labor from Filippo and the others featured. The triangular

formation creates group cohesion, but positions Filippo at the front, establishing her as the focal point of the video. The use of long, form-fitting dresses aligns with broader Bop House content trends, in which outfit choices function as a tool of sexualized labor by emphasizing body shape and drawing viewer attention to specific body parts. Paired with rhythmic hip movements, the styling introduces sensuality that remains acceptable (both socially and community guidelines-wise) on mainstream social media platforms. The accompanying musical selection, J Balvin’s *Azul*, situates the video and dance within current popular music trends, establishing relevance among a young internet audience.

From a connective labor perspective, the inclusion of multiple Bop House members and direct tagging of the Bop House facilitates audience flow between the respective pages, building a dynamic network of viewers. The overlaid text references an offline group chat, offering viewers a glimpse into the Bop House’s interpersonal dynamics and encouraging parasocial connection by allowing them to feel like they have exclusive insight into the creators’ lives.

In terms of emotional labor, Filippo routinely uses performative vulnerability or openness to cultivate a sense of intimacy, often sharing insight into her personal life to achieve this end (as in the case of her birthday). However, in this video, the only “insight” offered is into the logistics of Bop House collaboration. The lack of narrative or personal context limits the potential for viewers to form parasocial attachment, which might contribute to the video’s relatively low engagement.

3. “HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ME!!! So blessed and thank u for all the wishes”	
Views: 1.4 m	Engagement Rank: 25/38

Content summary: Filippo talks directly to the camera, with the tropical ocean as her background. She wears a crochet bikini top, loose white pants, sunglasses, and a flower in her hair. She shakes her head and uses her arm to express her disagreement with the idea of having a “boyfriend.” At one point, she clasps her hands together across her lap, tilting her head to the

side to address the camera. She lip syncs to a clip of Khloe Kardashian saying, “I don’t wanna be fixed up, I don’t want a boyfriend. I’m young, its fine, I’m 23, I don’t need a man. I’m good.” She dances in a circle, throwing her arms in the air after saying she does need a man.

Analytical commentary: The tropical styling and beach setting in Video 3 underscore the

aesthetic efforts that align Filippo’s persona with effortless, desirable femininity and aspirational wealth. As with the high-rises and striking cityscapes featured in previous videos, the ocean backdrop in this clip visually communicates luxury and leisure, reinforcing the association between Filippo’s image and wealth, and offering viewers an aspirational model of success.

In addition to building aesthetic appeal, Filippo engages in emotional labor by representing a common internal conflict between a desire for love and independence, offering her viewers the opportunity to relate and feel seen. Her headshake playfully communicates her opposition to a romantic relationship, echoing the feelings of many women facing patriarchal pressures to find a boyfriend or husband. After lip-syncing Khloe Kardashian’s rejection of romance, Filippo dances around in a carefree fashion, expressing her joy as a single young woman, and encouraging viewers to join her in her liberation from masculine validation.

Her use of Khloe Kardashian’s quote also functions as a form of connective labor, further cultivating Filippo’s relatability and ensuring her relevance with a young audience. Referencing a well-known media figure from the 2000s and 2010s, Filippo creates an intertextual bridge between internet and celebrity culture and in the process, strengthens her parasocial bond with her young audience by demonstrating a shared cultural memory.

Content Analysis of Ideological Foundations for Reproductive Health Policy:

Texas Senate Bill 8 (SB8, 2021)
“The Texas Heartbeat Act”

Content summary: The Texas Heartbeat Act defines an “unborn child” as a “human fetus or embryo in any stage of gestation from fertilization until birth,” and throughout the document refers to pregnant individuals as pregnant women. It states that pregnancy begins at the moment of fertilization, and gestational age is calculated from the first day of the pregnant woman’s last menstrual period. The law emphasizes the presence of a fetal heartbeat as a meaningful, reliable sign of pregnancy viability. In terms of medical records, the act requires physicians to estimate and record gestational age, fetal heartbeat, and medical details, including the woman’s medical condition, reproductive history, marital status, and residence. While the act denies some defenses for performing an abortion, it specifies that “a person who impregnated the abortion patient through the act of rape, sexual assault, incest...” or other unlawful acts cannot file lawsuits for abortions. If an abortion is deemed necessary to protect the health of a pregnant woman, the physician must provide medical rationale and inform the patient of relevant medical risks, fetal age, and other specified resources. These resources include medical assistance benefits for prenatal care/neonatal care, the father’s financial responsibility, and available pregnancy prevention counseling/care. The person receiving the abortion must receive a free sonogram, and they are required to hear an explanation of the sonogram with the option to look at the image and hear the heartbeat. Exceptions may be granted for sexual assault, incest, minors, and cases where the fetus has a documented medical condition or abnormality.

Analytical commentary: Throughout the act, the legislature centers the well-being of the “unborn child” as the primary concern, reducing the role of the pregnant woman to that of a biological vessel. The act bans abortion after the detection of “cardiac activity,” using it as a legal threshold and citing the increased statistical viability as a justification for state intervention. This logic assumes that women have an obligation to carry pregnancies to term unless a medical emergency would prevent them from having a healthy delivery. In defining this obligation legally, the act does not consider the financial, emotional, or mental well-being of the mother.

The extensive documentation required in this case places a burden on women to justify their reason for ending a pregnancy within a narrow, medicalized framework. In addition to compromising women’s rights to bodily autonomy, this specification fails to consider how other, non-medical conditions might threaten the health and livelihood of the “unborn child.”

The act also demonstrates a lack of trust in the competency and decision-making of women, requiring excessive, emotionally coercive information intended to dissuade individuals from proceeding with an already difficult and deeply personal decision. The condition that

women pursuing abortion undergo and listen to a description of a sonogram assumes that they do not have the capacity to make thoughtful, morally responsible decisions about pregnancy without state oversight. Additionally, the inclusion of scientifically contested ideas in the state-mandated information given to abortion patients, such as the suggestion that abortions increase the risk of breast cancer⁴, works to instill unnecessary fear in women and coerce them into making a decision that aligns with anti-abortion interests.

The legislature only grants exemptions from these medically unnecessary disclosure requirements when the abortion involves minors, rape, incest, sexual assault, or serious fetal health issues. These specifications offer a sort of conditional compassion, where in order to earn relief from invasive and emotionally distressing requirements, an individual seeking abortion must be deemed a “victim” in the eyes of the state. The reasoning driving these exceptions demonstrates that the lawmakers understand that viewing a sonogram might cause additional and undue pain for abortion patients. Yet, they continue to subject women seeking abortion for considered, medically legitimized reasons to coercive measures, implying that because they do not fit a narrow framework of innocence and victimhood, they are less worthy of compassion and trust.

Senator Josh Hawley (R) Speech at National Conservatism Conference 2021

“The Future of the American Man”

Content summary: Hawley criticizes the left for promoting deconstruction, arguing that they aim to “create a world beyond belonging” and “a world beyond men.” He claims that efforts to deconstruct traditional masculinity, especially conversations that highlight harmful aspects of masculine gender presentation throughout history, have created negative outcomes for men. He cites lower workforce participation, mental health challenges, and disengagement from family life, marriage, and education. He asserts that masculine qualities, or “manly virtues,” are

⁴ See the systematic review and meta-analysis of prospective studies that concludes “current prospective evidences are not sufficient to support the positive association between abortion... and breast cancer risk”: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10552-015-0536-1>

foundational to effective self-governance, political liberty, and social stability. Throughout the speech, he suggests that male sexual identity, masculine gender identity, and manhood are interchangeable and interconnected. To solve the problem of purposeless, minimally contributing, mentally ill men, he calls on U.S. society to affirm the value of men, center the nuclear family within political life, and reject the idea that masculine individuals have contributed negatively to society in the past.

Analytical commentary: Hawley uplifts a representation of masculinity based on traditional family structures and limiting gendered roles. He suggests a link between societal decline and the erosion of “manly virtues” by the U.S. political left. In order to revitalize the American male population, he emphasizes the need for a collective return to the nuclear family model (comprised of a husband, wife, and children), where the man occupies an active, authoritarian role in reproductive and domestic life. He argues that these traditional masculine and familial ideals act as the foundation of political liberty and social thriving, suggesting that individual reproductive choices that disrupt these family units pose threats to national well-being. In doing so, he objectifies female bodies and their capacity for reproduction as a tool to be deployed for the sake of U.S. economic, social, and political stability, justifying limitations on female reproductive autonomy for the sake of nationalist interests.

Throughout his speech, Hawley advances gender essentialist ideology, positioning masculinity as a biological reality and societal necessity. Not only does this ignore the medical and scientific recognition of the gender spectrum, intersex individuals, and the positive outcomes of non-traditional child-rearing models, but it reinforces gendered expectations of reproductive and domestic labor. While he uplifts virtues of traditional masculine gender presentation like courage and innovation, his persistent focus on men’s duty to “shoulder responsibility” and “start and provide for families” overlooks women’s reproductive agency and active familial roles, implicitly characterizing women as passive followers of the male leadership within the family and household.

The Heritage Foundation
“Protect Unborn Life and Family Formation”

Content summary: In the commentary, “Protect Unborn Life and Family Formation,” the authors promote a society centered on the nuclear family and rooted in gender essentialism. They argue that personal freedoms, including reproductive autonomy, should be limited to strengthen and revive traditional family structures. Framing abortion as a threat to national moral authority and strength, the authors push to reduce its availability and demand by promoting marriage, invoking beliefs about the sanctity of “innocent human life” and gender roles to support their solution. Additionally, the authors oppose federal abortion funding and support conditional funding for foreign nongovernmental organizations based on their compliance with anti-abortion expectations, despite their organization’s emphasis on the importance of small government and states’ rights in other political domains.

Analytical commentary: The article explicitly calls for limitations on reproductive freedoms, arguing that abortion bans will facilitate a return to traditional gender roles and familial values.

In the opening sentence, they falsely correlate the presence of heterosexual parents to a stable, loving childhood, ignoring the reality that many children have positive outcomes and upbringings in non-traditional familial structures. Additionally, the authors appeal to an interest in building national “strength” and maintaining “moral authority,” justifying their subversion of longstanding medical and legal protections of bodily autonomy and a right to privacy in the interest of national security.

The Heritage Foundation
“Dads on Duty: A Father’s Role in Shaping Society”

Content summary: The discussion between Matthew Mahen, Delano Squires, and Dr. Bradford Wilcox emphasizes reconnecting marriage with fatherhood, presenting fathers as central to family stability and the thriving of children. They link the decline of marriage and other traditional family structures to the increase in “male despair,” also citing negative outcomes for children in households without fathers. Squires describes fathers as “the beating heart” or “backbone” of the family, and does not acknowledge the role of mothers. They frame marriage as supportive of effective child-rearing, arguing that it binds men to their children and stabilizes sexual relationships. They also specify the role of fathers and husbands, arguing that fathers should deliver tough love to their sons to cultivate resilience, and mothers can offer their sons comfort in these moments. Finally, they reference a “crisis of manliness,” arguing that

deconstruction and criticism of traditional masculine values have led young men to lash out in an “unmanly” way, see Andrew Tate listeners, for example.

Analytical commentary: Throughout Mahen, Squires, and Bradford’s discussion, they promote gender-essentialist ideology and a singular view of the family, underlining the unique importance of fatherhood and overlooking the important roles and rights of mothers. Like the Hawley speech and other Heritage Foundation articles, they position a return to traditional family structure as the solution to the very real concerns about the “male despair” epidemic and the lack of men in the workforce and education. Although they speak directly to men and their challenges, this reasoning introduces a sense of national and moral obligation to women and men, creating pressure to engage in heterosexual marriage and reproduction in order to get our country back on track. The lack of attention to women’s roles and experiences in the family unit again works to objectify female bodies, positioning them as a means to the end of providing men with purpose without regard for their right to reproductive freedom.

Discussion:

Trends in Filippo's TikTok content and What Pornographic Intermediaries Communicate about Gender, Intimacy, and Relationships:

Filippo's TikTok content deploys aesthetic, emotional, connective, and narrative labor to construct a digitally transportable, sexually desirable, parasocially available product: the persona and image, Bop House member Julia Filippo. Ultimately, her labor strategies reflect a larger pattern in social media influencing where algorithmically-developed marketing tactics both influence and affirm social constructs to produce a desirable, validating, and non-challenging product. People from all across the gender spectrum consume pornographic intermediary content, but the representation of feminine people as submissive and childlike has specific ramifications for female and feminine individuals. Such content advances patriarchal beliefs, subverting the agency of females over their reproductive anatomy and subjecting feminine-presenting individuals at large to scrutiny, comparison, and objectification.

One recurring pattern in Filippo's content is her construction of an available, approachable persona. Using narrative storytelling, she creates a digital environment of comfort and perceived connection—undertaking emotional labor to strengthen her parasocial connection with her viewership. References to “brainrot” internet culture and POV-style structure invite the viewer to imagine themselves in personal and romantic scenarios with her. In her storytelling, she affirms qualities like emotional detachment and assertiveness, aligning the values of her online persona with fantasies of a cultural return to traditional masculine presentation. Although the fantasy resonates across age groups, Filippo's specific language and reference choices draw on discourse playing out in young, internet-mediated masculine spaces where conversations

center on disillusionment with modern romance, “looksmaxxing⁵,” aesthetic standards for hypothetical partners, and a desire to reassert masculine control over sex and relationships. These strategies require consistent emotional labor and ultimately produce a sense of connection that sustains engagement and taps into a lucrative population of disenfranchised, emotionally and sexually frustrated young masculine individuals.

Another consequential pattern in Filippo’s content is her deliberate, aesthetically driven, self-infantilization. Although Filippo publicly expresses discomfort at being mistaken for a child, her continued use of pigtails, high-pitched tones, and exaggerated emotional performances suggests a strategic reliance on the “sexy girl” trope. Psychologists Marty Machia and Sharon Lamb highlight the myriad of ways that producers pose women as “sexy girls” for marketing purposes, stating that as a result, “girlhood itself has become sexualized in American society” (Machia and Lamb, p. 15). While an effective attention-generating tactic, the finding “that exposure to sexually explicit depictions of underage looking models results in viewers being more likely to associate sex and sexuality to subsequent nonsexual depictions of minors” highlights the serious consequences of the “sexy girl” method (Machia and Lamb, p. 17). Filippo’s “sexy girl” strategy not only leaves actual children vulnerable to sexualization but also reinforces sexist beliefs about women’s cognitive and decision-making limitations. These stylistic choices, especially when situated within an explicitly pornographic context, reproduce familiar power dynamics that eroticize submission and youth. Filippo taps into the emotional commodification of innocence as sexually desirable, reinforcing the perception of her persona as “barely legal” to make her image more exciting to consumers.

⁵ For a definition and associated risks of “looksmaxxing”: <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/looksmaxxing>

In terms of sexualized labor, her content repeatedly employs what Drenten identifies as “porn chic,” invoking pornographic tropes by creating and displaying encoded, visual cues (Drenten, p. 3). For Julia Filippo’s persona, these visual cues often revolve around what Abdul JanMohamed calls “racialized sexuality:” the intertwined “deployment of sexuality” and “deployment of race” (Gates and Ganes, p. 72). Throughout her content, she frequently features Black masculine creators. While diverse representation in media is undoubtedly important, the constant visual framing of Black masculine people looming over her emphasizes stark size contrasts. This repeated aesthetic choice echoes fetishistic racialized visual rhetoric found in “BBC x white feminine archetype” pornography, where racial and gender dynamics coalesce to reinforce notions of dominance and submission.

These dynamics of racialized sexuality in her content, furthered by her public expression of a preference for “BBC,” feed into what American literary critic Henry Gates Jr. describes as “hypersexualization of the black body” and the concurrent “‘hysterization’ of the white woman’s body” (Gates and Gaines, p. 72). The hysterization of the white feminine body refers to the historical perception of feminine sexuality as inherently pathological, volatile, and fragile—as theorized by philosopher Foucault (Foucault, p. 11). Within this context, Filippo’s sustained construction of an innocent, childlike persona serves a dual purpose: it both victimizes and further sexualizes her. On one hand, her performative naivete positions her as innocent and in need of protection, aligning with longstanding cultural preconceptions of white feminine vulnerability, especially to racialized others perceived as sexually threatening (particularly Black men). On the other hand, by actively engaging in the eroticization of interracial dynamics, she positions herself as a willing, yet endangered victim, generating excitement and engagement by representing racial and sexual taboos. Through the reproduction of interracial pornographic

aesthetics, her content capitalizes on cultural narratives that portray Black masculinity as hypersexual and aggressive, while idealizing white femininity as passive and erotically vulnerable.

Across all her content, Filippo's flawless, curated physical presentation—paired with comparative narratives and visual framing—helps flesh out the pornographic intermediary niche. These aesthetic efforts simultaneously position her persona as a paragon of desirable femininity and expose her, along with other feminine creators, to objectifying scrutiny. Filters smooth her skin and shrink her features, maintaining her self-infantilization by hiding marks of aging processes and physical maturation. This filtered perfection, in combination with intentional styling choices and contrived emotional expression, produces a seemingly effortless alignment with traditional, Eurocentric standards of femininity and beauty.

While one might think Filippo's visually appealing, digitally translatable physical appearance would shield her from public scrutiny, the narratives and visual conventions guiding Bop House interactions actually render Filippo—and feminine creators generally—vulnerable to audience criticism and comparison. The repeated motif of multiple women in coordinated formations wearing tight-fitting clothes not only communicates physical desirability but also facilitates direct comparison by the viewer. Presented side-by-side, the viewers can easily evaluate the performers' bodies against one another. The comparative setup reinforces a competitive dynamic inherent to influencer culture, especially in media niches like that of the Bop House that prioritize physical appearance and sexual appeal. The dynamic mimics the logic of consumer selection in physical marketplaces, like selecting fruit in a grocery store—further objectifying the personas of these laborers and reducing their bodies to interchangeable commodities.

Constant audience comparison and commentary reflect a cultural sense of entitlement to women's bodies. Although increased scrutiny poses harm to influencers via digital harassment, creators like Filippo often begin to tailor their content around these features to optimize engagement and maximize profit. By creating comparison and tension between internet personas, creators facilitate a continuous flow of attention throughout a network of associated laborers, providing mutual economic benefit by boosting visibility despite the potential emotional cost. Over time, catering to this attention upholds a vicious, self-reinforcing cycle, where feminine creators ultimately digitally transform their own bodies into segmented commodities available for comparison and purchase.

Finally, her constant displays of wealth define another central aspect of the pornographic intermediary content category. In the background of coordinated dances and scripted interaction, visual cues like high-rise penthouses, infinity pools, trendy fashion, and skyline views attract the attention of audiences drawn to luxury. For young, impressionable viewers, the emphasis on wealth can shape their developing aspirations and value systems. Without representing the challenges of sexualized labor, the recurring displays of wealth suggest, especially to young, feminine people, that self-commodification and beauty provide viable, effortless paths to economic mobility.

Ideological Parallels in Conservative Rhetoric on Reproductive Health Policy:

Although TikTok content and conservative political rhetoric operate in different spheres of influence, they rely on similar ideologies about gender and intimacy to enact control over viewers' attention and energy. While previous generations got their information from television, radio, and print media, young people "born after 1995" who have "never known a world without the Internet" increasingly rely on social media as a primary news source (Swart, p. 506). To

understand the current cultural trajectory of the United States, both social media and traditional media must be evaluated as legitimate forces in shaping the beliefs and lived experience of all citizens—posing particular risks to the dignity of feminine individuals and reproductive rights of biological females.

Recent conservative political discussions of domestic life and reproduction mirror many of the themes present in Filippo's content, revealing the persistence of antiquated and repressive gender roles in contemporary digital expression. Both conservative rhetoric and pornographic intermediaries on social media construct an idealized and controllable vision of the feminine body—a desirable, submissive performance of femininity that ultimately serves masculine interests. Conservative calls for a return to the nuclear family model uplift the role of men as initiators, leaders, and disciplinarians in domestic life. They claim that familial responsibility and heterosexual marriage provide men with a necessary purpose, arguing that the nuclear family can remedy modern masculine social and economic problems like “idleness,” mental illness, and low workforce participation (Hawley).

While concerns for men's wellbeing are rooted in real demographic and economic patterns, the proposed solution depends on a return to traditional gendered dynamics of masculine dominance and feminine submission. Across the political media analyzed, when discussing the benefits of family life and marriage, the speakers neglect to include the experiences and contributions of women. This logic treats female bodies and feminine social roles as tools to be deployed to achieve masculine purpose and maintain social order—treating them as “merely a means to be used” and not an “end in itself,” and violating what philosopher Immanuel Kant deemed an ethical obligation to respect the absolute worth and dignity of all of humanity (Mikkola, p. 105).

The same objectifying logic is present in pornographic intermediary content on TikTok and other social media apps. Creators like Filippo perform aesthetic, emotional, and sexualized labor to produce a curated, submissive, and publicly moldable image of femininity that users can interact with and purchase access to. These digital representations amplify fantasies of masculine dominance to capture attention and build a loyal audience, reinforcing the gendered expectation that feminine bodies exist primarily to support and pleasure men.

Beyond enforcing traditional gender roles, the reactionary nostalgia for the nuclear family covertly reinforces a reductive, transactional view of intimacy that pornographic intermediaries on TikTok also capitalize on. By positioning heterosexual marriage and fatherhood as cures to the “male despair” epidemic, speakers like Sen. Josh Hawley and institutions like the Heritage Foundation impose disproportionate reproductive and emotional demands on female bodies. Rather than encouraging relationships grounded in love, reciprocity, and mutual support, this rhetoric frames relationships as a series of exchanges and obligations. In doing so, it politicizes intimacy itself, suggesting that feminine bodies have a moral and biological responsibility to provide men with purpose and stabilize the nation through extensive emotional and reproductive labor. These expectations mirror the transactional logic of the TikTok intimacy economy, where feminine-presenting creators perform emotional, aesthetic, and sexualized labor in exchange for masculine attention and support.

Reproductive health policy enacted in conservative states further underscores the morally inconsistent and politically motivated objectification of female bodies used to rationalize restrictions on bodily autonomy and privacy. The Texas Heartbeat Bill exemplifies this ideology, prioritizing the “unborn child” over the autonomy of the pregnant person. Combined with an utter lack of consideration for the circumstances of conception (rape, incest, etc.) and the realities

of the pregnant person’s life (economic, mental, etc.), the legality of an abortion hinges solely on the biological viability of the pregnancy. In the eyes of the legislature, as long as the physical environment for the fetus remains intact, the consent and interests of the pregnant person are completely irrelevant—reducing the female body from an autonomous person to a vessel used as a means to literally birth a biological end.

The moral reasoning used to justify such state intervention often lacks coherence, especially when juxtaposed with the very same conservative lawmakers’ refusal to support social services, healthcare access, and humane immigration policy⁶. As Catholic Cardinal Joseph Bernadin points out, “we cannot urge a compassionate society and vigorous public policy to protect the rights of the unborn and then argue that compassion and significant public programs on behalf of the needy undermine the moral fiber of the society or are beyond the proper scope of governmental responsibility” (Kelly, p. 104). Bernadin’s critique exposes a core contradiction in conservative policymaking: abortion restrictions are not grounded in consistent moral concern, but rather function as instruments of surveillance and reproductive control.

The treatment of the female body as a site of political regulation in conservative discourse echoes the patriarchal logic that guides infantilizing portrayals of femininity on TikTok. These ideological overlaps do not arise coincidentally; they cement and normalize a gendered power imbalance that legitimizes state and masculine control over reproduction. Together, these cultural and legislative forces shape a manageable, biopolitically useful version of femininity. By promoting compliance and performing objectification, these influences politically undermine bodily autonomy and socially prime feminine bodies to be treated as

⁶ See extreme immigration bill: https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/12/21/texas-governor-signs-extreme-immigration-bill?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=16363698676&gbraid=0AAAAADrFXcgHvohSSoymqADtp77OhlGRs&gclid=CjwKCAjw56DBBhAkEiwAaFsG-gSTfQB2tbF6TZKYTy_jxS2QcRiFpWdfUeFmxhpaa7BfB2NtYwplmRoCPlkQAvD_BwE

instruments in achieving political, social, reproductive, and sexual ends. While this most immediately and violently affects female and feminine bodies, this ideology ultimately hinders the freedom of all people by upholding rigid, socially constructed gender norms.

Conclusion—Pornographic Intermediaries, Cultural Control, and the National Stakes for Feminine Agency:

The significant ideological convergence between pornographic intermediaries on TikTok and mainstream conservative political discourse underscores the deep interconnection between cultural and political control in the United States. Though often dismissed as entertainment, TikTok's ubiquity and growing role as a primary news source amplify its influence on cultural norms and power structures, especially among young audiences.

Within this technological landscape, mainstream portrayals of femininity can challenge or perpetuate preexisting gendered power imbalances. Unfortunately, the emergent pattern of self-infantilization in TikTok pornographic intermediaries provides support for political infringement on female bodily autonomy by framing them as unfit for self-governance and in need of paternalistic intervention. Racialized sexualization often underpins these portrayals, invoking stereotypes of Black masculine sexual dominance to cast white feminine sexuality as fragile and in need of protection; beyond threatening reproductive rights, these attention-harvesting tactics reinforce racial prejudice and fetishization.

The shared messaging across mainstream social media and conservative political spaces produces a collective, unjust expectation of feminine bodies that reverberates across unprecedented demographic scales. In order to attain economic, domestic, and/or social stability, social media audiences and conservative ideals demand feminine compliance, passivity, and public surveillance. This transaction—where feminine people exchange adherence to gender roles for social validation and material stability—sustains a broader system of political management. These cultural scripts exert biopolitical control, not just in legislation, but through the constant shaping of feminine behavior and bodies. The notion that, through childbearing and

marriage, female bodies stabilize society and imbue masculine people with purpose frames reproductive labor as a national duty, ignoring the deeply personal and essential question of consent.

While creators like Filippo may not intentionally produce regressive depictions of femininity, algorithmic selection shapes their marketing strategies, entrenching a feminine presentation that centers masculine desire and engagement in feminine influencer content. Often, the references to pornographic tropes and dominant gender roles in intermediary content remains relatively subtle, making its regulation difficult. The dynamic, covert nature of regressive TikTok messaging renders reliance on community guidelines and parental supervision to weed out harmful content completely insufficient.

The reality is that technology is widely accessible and anonymous, and both children and adolescents will have unrestricted access to the internet, whether for a fleeting moment or constantly. In order to create meaningful change and prevent a regressive cultural trajectory, we must acknowledge the widespread presence of this content. From there, educators and parents must teach and encourage self-reflection and critical media literacy from a young age. By equipping young people with tools like literary analysis, we can foster a critical awareness that empowers future generations to identify, resist, and transform political forces that limit gender expression and subvert bodily autonomy.

To foster a future that resists biopolitical control and supports diverse gender expression, special attention should be given to the media literacy and identities of young men in the United States. While the conservative narrative of a “male despair” epidemic is often weaponized to justify regressive gender politics, it also speaks to real feelings of social and economic disenfranchisement expressed by masculine people in the U.S. To combat this condition, we

must support masculine people in finding purpose and connection beyond traditional familial models and gender roles. Successful adaptation to evolving, modern society, depends on the continued deconstruction of rigid gender ideology—an effort made difficult by the relentless stream of gendered misinformation young men encounter on their digital devices. To make meaningful progress, we need compassionate masculine role models who can foster honest conversations about the appeal and consequences of online misogyny—whether it manifests as seemingly lighthearted objectifying comments or more extreme involvement in incel (meaning involuntarily celibate) communities.

Ultimately, media literacy education and critical reflection not only safeguard feminine autonomy but also represent essential steps towards a more equitable, healthy, and socially conscious cultural future.

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