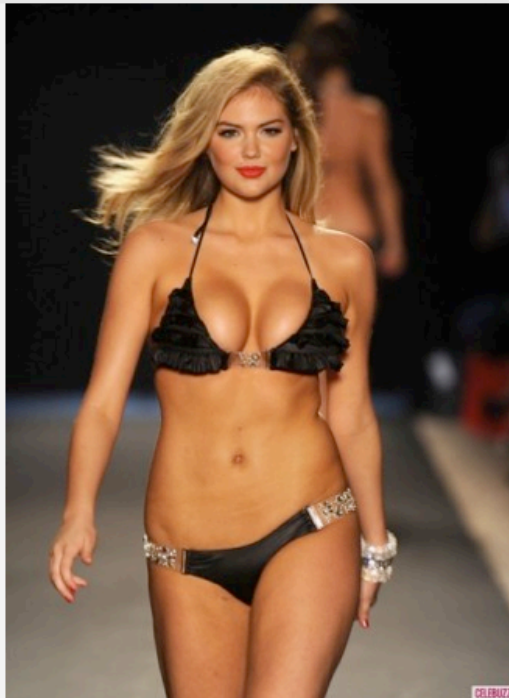




HELLOGIGGLES

- NEW!
 - VIDEOS
 - ARTICLES
 - SHOP
 - AUTHORS
 - WRITE US
 - CONTRIBUTE
 - BFFs
 - FORUM
 - YOUTUBE
- ENTERTAINMENT
 - TREATS
 - BEAUTY
 - FRESH GIGGLES
 - CUTENESS
 - HOME
 - SOCIAL STUDIES
 - RANTS
 - RAVES
 - HOW TOs
 - MOMS
 - HE HAW
 - THE DAILYS



THE FAT-SHAMING OF KATE UPTON; OR WHY I'LL NEVER BUY THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "THINSPIRATION" AND "PRO-ANA" WEBSITES

by Michelle Konstantinovsky

Kate Upton is fat, everyone.

True, the stunning 20-year-old somehow managed to sneak under the vigilant radar of the Skinny Police and land the cover of *Sports Illustrated: Swimsuit Edition*, but clearly this honor was undeserved, if not accidental.

Because if we're to believe the truly motivating, encouraging words of the anonymous, "thinspirational" blogger behind a website called *Skinny Gossip*, Upton looks "thick, vulgar, almost pornographic" (assuming these are negative physical qualities? I think I know a few men and women who would gladly ogle a body fitting that criteria). Upton appears "lazy," and "lardy," has "huge thighs, NO waist, big fat floppy boobs, terrible body definition," and "looks like a squishy brick" (which is a comparison that perhaps stretches the appropriate boundaries of proper simile usage). She's likened to both a cow and a pig and the post itself is titled "Kate Upton is Well-Marbled."

Konstantinovsky

<http://hellogiggles.com/the-fat-shaming-of-kate-upton-or-why-ill-never-buy-the-difference-between-thinspiration-and-pro-ana-websites>

Feeling inspired yet?

If you, like me, feel more inclined to curl up into a ball and cry over this kind of casual cruelty, then perhaps you take issue with the term “**thinspiration**” as well.

It’s tricky to define thinspiration properly without performing an extensive internet search, and innocently typing the term into Google turns up all sorts of results I don’t care to see. But for the sake of clarity, some definitions are in order:

Thinspiration or “thinspo” as the kids call it, involves the use of “motivational” imagery or sayings to supposedly inspire people to achieve or maintain thinness. While some of the popular “encouraging” phrases seem harmlessly health-conscious, others ooze masochistic self-flagellation.

“Do not reward yourself with food. You’re not a dog,” says one particularly uplifting Pinterest message **cited on Jezebel** and the classic “Nothing tastes as good as skinny feels” mantra could practically serve as thinspirational sacred text. The images range from thin runway models to skinny celebrities to *skeletal* girls and women, some of whom have received some Photoshop treatment, and some, undoubtedly and disconcertingly, have not.

So what, pray tell, is a “**pro-ana**” website? In an effort to “promote anorexia” (get it?), pro-ana sites often feature thinspiration but also endorse behaviors typically associated with eating disorders, sharing tips for starving, vomiting, or abusing laxatives. Some sites claim to provide a safe, non-judgmental haven for those suffering from eating disorders, while others seek to spin disordered behaviors into positive lifestyle choices.

Here’s where things get tricky. If anorexia truly is a mental disorder (which it is, according to the psychological bible known as the **DSM IV**), and not just a convenient shorthand for one’s physiological and behavioral state, then how can some silly little websites be held responsible for anyone’s disease?

If you ask our anonymous blogger friend who **tore Kate Upton to pieces**, they can’t be. At least *her* site can’t be. In a blog posted shortly after the fallout of Uptongate, the blogger (who claimed to have received death and rape threats for her harsh words) bristles at the suggestion that Skinny Gossip is indeed pro-ana. “Anorexia is not mere dieting,” she writes, “It is not striving for a certain look or to fit into a certain piece of clothing” and “calling every skinny person anorexic doesn’t do sick people any favors.”

And she’s right. But she also notes that her site is built on a community “where we prefer the skinny look, but not at the cost of health.” Oh, really? If health is of the utmost concern here, then maybe it was sheer, selfless consideration for Upton’s cholesterol and blood pressure levels that inspired the snarky post?

Let’s imagine for a moment that Upton’s reaction to the venomous post was to starve

herself to the point of **amenorrheic** emaciation. She'd be sick but less offensively "fat." Would sacrificing her health in favor of avoiding callous criticism mean crossing the line into anorexic territory? Would she then be chastised for stepping over the boundary between thinspiration and pro-ana?

The problem is that the boundary doesn't exist, and if it does, it's been worn away to the point of irrelevance, thanks to sites like Skinny Gossip. Say what you will about the importance of motivation and support for those seeking to drop a few pounds, but what we read on the Kate Upton post was pure, unadulterated body-shaming and uncensored animosity that had nothing to do with building a supportive community. But the blogger isn't wrong when she claims she can't take responsibility for inciting anyone's eating disorder, because eating disorders are the results of complex interactions of genetic and environmental factors...right?

I'm not so sure anymore. While the DSM outlines the specific criteria for diagnosing anorexia and bulimia, I'm finding it harder and harder in my daily life to come across a woman who doesn't exhibit *some* form of disordered behavior around food, exercise, or body image. What constitutes a "disorder" if the majority of the population engages in it? If it's becoming increasingly normal to obsess, restrict, and deny oneself nutrition for the sake of thinness, then what's so disordered about a blog centered solely around starvation tips and skin-and-bones "aspirational" role models?

So is this the new normal then? It certainly will be if thinspirational and/or pro-ana sites posing as innocuous community-based forums continue to proliferate.

Are there, as the Skinny Gossip blogger asserts, actors and models who depend on her site as they "struggle to balance the thinness their jobs demand with the health we all want them to maintain"? Having spent just one month living in Hollywood, I can tell you that this town is absolutely merciless in its body size standards. But will these people find that sought-after balance on a vicious, body-shaming blog? Probably not.

And what about naturally thin women? Should they be denied the right to publicly celebrate their bodies? Of course not. But dishing out unveiled disgust for anyone who doesn't fit the skinny mold and offering up tips and tricks for undereating and overexercising doesn't help anyone. These tactics only encourage a cultural shift toward normalizing disordered behavior which means at this rate, it will not only be normal for the next generation of little girls (and boys) to fixate, starve, and criticize themselves and each other—it will be expected.

So how about we slow that process down (or stop it altogether) and quit pretending that hypervigilant self-monitoring and hateful body critiques aren't inflicting mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual harm on everyone?

And for the record, Kate Upton, you're gorgeous.