

My Body My Message: Understanding Socio-Cultural Perspectives On Body Piercing In Contemporary Literature

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Abstract

Piercing is an ancient form of body modification that has been practiced by humans for thousands of years. The act of piercing the body involves making a hole in the skin or other body parts and inserting jewelry. This act is a prevalent trend in contemporary culture, and can be associated with the socio-cultural need for self-expression, rebellion, and identity formation. Body piercing thus is no longer an ancient practice for spiritual or tribal initiation ceremonies, or as a sign of personal identity; it has become a way of expressing oneself in this digital world. Through this way, body piercing can be understood as a posthumanist phenomenon that challenges the traditional boundaries between human and non-human. It represents a shift towards embodying posthumanist ideals of fluidity, hybridity, and transformation. The integration of digital technology into the practice of body piercing enhances its transformative potential, allowing for new forms of artistic expression and self-representation. This paper investigates how body piercing is portrayed in contemporary literature and what insights these representations provide regarding the socio-cultural context. The paper also examines the digital implications of body modification, exploring how it is linked to issues such as gender, sexuality, power, and social conformity.

Keywords: Body Piercing, Self-Expression, Identity Formation, Fluidity, Hybridity, Social Conformity, Body Modification.

Introduction

Body piercing has become an increasingly common practice worldwide, with millions of people adorning their bodies with various piercings. To comprehend the significance of body piercing, one must embark on a journey through time, unraveling

its historical tapestry across different civilizations. From the elaborate piercings of ancient Egyptians as symbols of status and spirituality to the septum rings donned by warrior tribes in various parts of Africa, body piercing emerges as a practice deeply embedded in rituals, rites of passage, and cultural identity. The rich history of piercing also extends to indigenous communities across the Americas and Asia, each culture infusing the act with unique meanings and symbolism. The significance of body piercing has also been a subject of literary works since the ancient times, with various authors representing the practice in different ways. For instance, in the Bible body piercing is mentioned in several instances, such as when Moses is instructed to make earrings for Aaron and his sons, and when the Israelites are instructed not to pierce their bodies or cut their hair. In other ancient texts, such as the Epic of Gilgamesh, piercing is portrayed as a form of punishment, with the hero being punished for his defiance by having his ears pierced and wearing a ring “but at her noise Gilgamesh pricked up his ears”(36).

Contemporary literature has portrayed body piercings as a means of self-expression and resistance. However, one influential figure associated with the popularization of modern body art movement is Lyle Tuttle. Lyle Tuttle, an American tattoo artist, played a significant role in the acceptance and mainstreaming of tattoo art. In the 1960s and 1970s, he worked to change public perception by tattooing notable celebrities and promoting tattoo conventions. While Tuttle may not have initiated the entire body art movement, he made important contributions to the growth and acceptance of tattooing as a legitimate form of artistic expression. which proves to be a philosophical treatise of body art. In order to comprehend the diverse historical, cultural, and individual meanings of tattoos, piercings, scarification, corsetry, sideshows, rituals, and other practices, one may consider Tuttle subjective approach to be a starting point. Similar to this, Andrew Beaujon writes in his 2008 book *Body Piercing Saved My Life* on how acquiring body piercings helped him connect with like-minded people and discover his identity. Beaujon combines technology breakthroughs with theological values in his unique examination of the relationship between alternative Christian music and bodily alteration. In Christian rock culture, piercings are a method for people to demonstrate their individuality and share their beliefs in unconventional ways. The book focuses on the ways in which

bodily alteration becomes a sign of defiance against accepted standards in Christian society. A subculture that combines religion with unconventional style may be formed by Christian rock fans who, change their bodies in an effort to set themselves apart from traditional Christian ways of life. The talk addresses the debates in the Christian community around body alteration. It raises questions among the religious community because it sees tattoos and body piercings as being at odds with established religious beliefs. Lodder, in his article "The Myth of Modern Primitivism," articulates this narrative: "A philosophy and way of life based on what they called 'body play,' which they saw as directly oppositional to and as spiritually, ethically and even psychologically preferable to the 'civi-lized' culture of America and the West" (100). Beaujon's work could potentially lend support to the argument that some individuals within the Christian rock culture adopt certain alternative aesthetics without a profound understanding of the associated subcultures. It might question the authenticity of expressions that blend alternative styles with religious themes.

Body piercing has also been represented in literature as a form of cultural identity and spirituality in his book *Body Arts*, Gary Lee Heard explains how body art has been used throughout history as a form of cultural identity and spiritual expression. Heard supports the philosophy that body art, a timeless form of self-expression, utilizes the human body as a versatile canvas. Heard claims through a character Nick Giordiano that "I am more than my physical body! My body is a temple. My spiritual temple. And this temple is ornate. This is not a narcissist's quest! This is not a childish rebellion! This is about control of my body and spirit. This is about physical trails, and the resulting spiritual awakening" (48). This practice, ingrained in human history, exhibits a rich diversity reflective of the individuals who actively participate in it. The range of body art spans from temporary manifestations like body paint or henna tattoos to enduring forms such as tattoos and body piercings. However, this distinguishes body art as particularly meaningful. The essence lies in its facilitation of personal expression. The body is a uniquely personal entity, and through body art, individuals can articulate their thoughts, emotions, and life experiences visibly to others. Here's an intriguing historical nugget: Otzi the Iceman, discovered in the Alps with a frozen mummy, boasts the oldest known tattoos dating back more than

5,300 years. His 61 tattoos showcase an ancient embodiment of body art and performance, illustrating the intersection of visual art and human expression in a compelling manner. In contemporary times, body art has evolved into a vast array of styles and mediums, extending beyond conventional tattoos and piercings. The landscape of body art now encompasses diverse practices such as body painting, scarification, branding, and even body modification involving the implantation of objects beneath the skin. Constructively, while acknowledging the richness and historical depth of body art, one could critically engage with the evolving nature of these practices. Considering factors like cultural appropriation, commoditization, and the potential risks associated with certain forms of body modification. A comprehensive critique can provide a balanced perspective on the significance and impact of contemporary body art. For instance, in the Hindu culture, nose piercings are seen as a sign of maturity and marriageability, while in the Maori culture, facial tattoos and piercings are seen as a sign of tribal identity and status.

Through the centuries, piercing has served diverse purposes - a form of body modification, a rite of passage, a mark of rebellion, or a symbol of group affiliation. Understanding the historical context provides a foundation for examining how piercing has evolved from traditional practices to contemporary trends. Meanwhile the digital age has given a new turn where physical body is scrutinized, examining its connection to broader issues such as gender, sexuality, power dynamics, and social conformity. In the realm of social media, body modification becomes a tool for crafting and disseminating personal narratives, blurring the lines between the physical and the virtual. This paper seeks to unravel the posthuman phenomenon embedded in these transformations, shaped by the pervasive influence of digital technology.

The literary world serves as a contemplative mirror, distilling the essence of social mores, cultural customs, and personal encounters. Body piercings appear in literature as a theme that goes beyond physicality into the domains of metaphor and symbolism. Body piercing has been portrayed in works from a variety of eras and genres as a way to exhibit uniqueness, question social conventions, or mark a character's metamorphosis. For example, the scarlet letter 'A' piercing Hester Prynne's chest in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* becomes a potent

emblem of both personal defiance and society censure. In this case, the piercing not only marks the body but also functions as a literary technique to delve into topics of morality, sin, and the fallout from societal expectations. Posthuman authors, who view physical modification as a blending of technology and the human body, have been advancing this trend continuously, making it harder to distinguish between the natural and the artificial.

Contemporary literature

Body piercings are portrayed in literature in a way that changes with time. The advent of posthumanist books adds a fresh perspective to the conversation. Books like *Neuromancer* by William Gibson and *Snow Crash* by Neal Stephenson examine the piercing as essential to the characters' relationships with the digital world as well as being purely aesthetic decisions. Traditional ideas of embodiment and identity are being challenged by the fusion of technology and the human body. Here, piercings represent the meeting point of the real and the virtual, resonating with posthumanist notions of flexibility and metamorphosis. Piercing is utilized as a metaphor of emotional suffering and trauma in Ryu Murakami's 2008 novel *Piercing*. Through his character Kawashima Masayuki, who sets out on a voyage of self-discovery via unusual means, as through the character of Kawashima, Murakami says "As if the particles of air were turning to needles and piercing him all over. A prickling pain that spread like goose bumps over his skin until he wanted to scream. Sometimes a white mist clouded his vision and he could actually see the air particles turning into needles" (11). Murakami explores the dark corners of the human psyche. The narrative explores the complex relationships between identity, desire, and the fallout from defying social standards. Murakami attempts to defy social norms and follow the literary trail of cyborgs in order to highlight the fragility of the posthuman era. Murakami In doing so questions accepted ideas about human narratives and proposes a connection between humans and technology that is both interrelated and flexible. In light of this viewpoint, bodily alteration in Kawashima Masayuki's persona might be interpreted as an effort to embrace a posthuman identity and overcome conventional human constraints. It is possible to understand Kawashima's trip as an attempt to redefine who he is and go against social norms. Piercing might represent a want to escape the limitations of a fixed human

form. The narrative might be examined via the prism of how technology broadens the posthuman experience if the protagonist interacts with digital platforms or navigates virtual environments. A new way of being outside of the physical body might be symbolized by the story's incorporation of technology. Piercings are utilized to express identify or subvert societal standards in other literary works. For instance, the protagonist Jean Baptiste Grenouille, in Patrick Suskind's book *Perfume* uses his pierced nose to sniff and concoct the ideal perfume. Suskind through the protagonist states "actually he required only a moment to convince himself optically - then to abandon himself all the more ruthlessly to olfactory perception. And now he smelled that this was a human being, smelled the sweat of her armpits.....smelled it all with the greater pleasure" (48) This olfactory sense of the Grenouille, represents the defiance of social standards. There is a desire to transcend human constraints in the posthuman period. It is possible to see Grenouille's pursuit of the ideal perfume as a type of bodily alteration meant to beyond the typical human experience. His infatuation with smell transcends social conventions in search of an elevated and remarkable sensory experience. Grenouille's quest to create and maintain his identity through smell manipulation is a response to posthumanism's critique of the fixed nature of identity. He turns into an olfactory artist, playing with his own body and other people's bodies to create the right smell. This is in line with the posthuman ideal of manufactured and flexible identities. Grenouille's contempt for conventional moral bounds is consistent with posthumanism's critique of conventional wisdom. His readiness to murder in order to get the ideal smell is consistent with the posthuman inclination to challenge and reinterpret social conventions and represents a deconstruction of ethical and moral boundaries. Suskind expands human senses through the 'Perfume' itself. Grenouille's elaborate method of extracting and combining smells is akin to the posthuman era's technical breakthroughs. His figure reflects the erasing lines between the technical and the biological by fusing parts of both nature and artificiality. Grenouille might be seen as a usurper of posthuman transcendence in terms of corporeal restriction. His unwavering search for the ideal scent reflects the posthuman desire to transcend the constraints of the human body in order to achieve a more refined, almost technical experience. This technical symbiosis is well supported by the

cyborgian concept of Harraway where she claims that the posthuman age is hence a “technologically mediated societies” (8). Suskind investigates the technological enhancement of human senses in perfume. Grenouille attempts to improve and manipulate his olfactory sensitivities beyond what is possible for a normal human being, and his manipulation of fragrances is an example of this kind of sensory augmentation. In this situation, manipulation serves as both a tool for deconstruction and a means of reconstructing the altered person. Grenouille’s creation of a scent-based world reflects the posthuman desire to shape personal experiences, challenging the conventional understanding of a shared reality. Similarly, in the digital age, the surge in body piercing serves as another avenue for individuals to customize and express their identities. In Grenouille’s pursuit of a unique sensory world, we observe a parallel to the modern phenomenon of curated online personas. Social media platforms, especially Instagram, have become spaces where individuals showcase their body piercings not just as a fashion statement but as a means of personal branding and self-expression. Much like Grenouille’s scent world, these curated online identities represent an individual’s quest for a personalized and subjective experience.

Moreover, the accessibility and mainstream acceptance of body piercing in contemporary society further echo Grenouille’s ambition to reshape reality according to personal preferences. The increasing number of piercing studios and the diverse array of services they offer exemplify a society that encourages the customization of one’s physical appearance, mirroring Grenouille’s endeavor to craft a world uniquely tailored to his senses. In both cases, whether through scent-based worlds or body piercings, there is a shared theme of individuals seeking to redefine reality on their terms. This inclination toward customization and personalization reflects broader societal shifts towards valuing subjective experiences and challenging traditional notions of a uniform, objective reality. In the vein of similar tales, J.C. Mells’ novel *Pierced* mirrors the exploration of resilience amid adversity. The protagonist, *Pierced*, undergoes profound physical, emotional, and sexual trauma. Turning to the adornment of jewelry and metal on her face, she transforms these symbols into expressions of identity and defiance. Mells, through *Pierced*, expresses this transformation “My current pinched look is further accentuated by the sheer amount of metal currently embedded in my face...my

name is Pierce and it sure does fit me now that I don't use it in any legal identification capacity, trust me when I say the irony is not lost on me" (3-4). The metal on the face of Pierced becomes a symbol of strength. Pierced further escapes tormentor's ten-year-old daughter, seeks solace in Seattle, embarks on a journey to rebuild her life. Amidst grappling with her haunting past, she emerges as a character embodying both vulnerability and power. Her unwavering commitment to safeguarding the young girl propels her into a realm of danger and intrigue, unveiling a community of survivors united in resistance against their oppressors. The novel unfolds as a fast-paced thriller, exploring themes of survival, redemption, and the resilience of the human spirit. Mells aligns the story with the posthuman turn, presenting body piercing as a transformative act that embodies rebellion and self-discovery. The protagonist, Pierced, utilizes piercing as a tool to break free from societal norms and uncover her true identity. This shift is not only evident in literature but reflects broader societal changes, where body piercing becomes a symbol of defiance and a means of personal exploration. In both the fictional world of Pierced and the contemporary context, the act of body piercing serves as a powerful metaphor for breaking free from constraints and seeking one's authentic self. Within the context of posthumanism, the story echoes the theme of transformation and fluidity, wherein Pierced adapts and evolves in response to her traumatic past. The act of piercing becomes a metaphor for her resilience and strength, indicating a departure from her previous self.

Moreover, the community of survivors in the novel adds another layer to the posthuman narrative. The collective struggle against oppressors aligns with posthuman ideals of shared experiences and collaborative resistance. The characters, navigating a world of danger and intrigue, collectively redefine their identities beyond the constraints of their past traumas. The fast-paced thriller nature of 'Pierced' contributes to the posthuman narrative by emphasizing the dynamic and unpredictable nature of personal and collective transformations. The exploration of survival, redemption, and resilience aligns with the posthuman notion of embracing change and adapting to evolving circumstances.

In nutshell Mells provides a narrative that resonates with posthuman ideals, depicting body piercing as a symbol of rebellion

and self-discovery within a context of trauma, survival, and communal resistance. The novel portrays the characters' transformative journeys, echoing the fluid and evolving nature inherent in the posthuman turn. Ina Saltz a modern philosopher distinguished graphic designer and typographer, provides perceptive commentary alongside the crisp images, capturing the burgeoning trend of 'message tattoos' and offering profound insights into the human experience. Distinguished by various categories such as literature, poetry, lyrics, typography, self-expression, love, and homage. Saltz's in her book *Body Types* articulates that "this tattoo means more than what most people associate with the word 'create'.....so, for me this tattoo represents my belief that we all should take the advantage of lifestyle we have" (132). Saltz refurbishes the conventional views of body piercing as a mere aesthetic choice. Instead, she positions body piercing as a dynamic form of communication, a mode of self-expression, and a canvas for cultural dialogue as. This book serves as a visual and intellectual exploration of body modification in the context of the posthuman turn. The diverse categories demonstrate how tattoos extend beyond mere aesthetic choices, becoming a medium for literary and artistic expressions, self-affirmation, and cultural homage. Saltz's insightful commentary adds depth to the tattoos, transforming them from visual adornments to narratives etched in flesh. In supporting the posthuman turn, the book challenges traditional views of body modification by emphasizing its role as a form of communication and self-expression. The tattoos, spanning various categories, underscore the fluidity and hybridity of human identity, as Haraway claims "we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism" (05). Aligning with posthuman ideals, Saltz seems to advocate this posthuman hybridity through the convergence of traditional and contemporary forms of expression.

Furthermore, her views contribute to the posthuman discourse by acknowledging the human body as a canvas for diverse messages and narratives. The crisp photographs not only showcase the intricate details of the tattoos but also emphasize the fusion of human and technological elements, reflecting the evolving relationship between the body and modern forms of communication. Essentially, Saltz provides a thorough examination of body piercing as a socio-cultural phenomena, supporting

posthuman ideals via highlighting the practice's significance in cultural narratives, self-expression, and the changing dynamic between the body and modern modes of communication. Proceeding with the theory of non-verbal narrative, Heather Morris' novel *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* reveals a distinct viewpoint within the Foucaultian notion of panopticism. The story of body piercing emerges as a monument to the human spirit's tenacity and perseverance in the horrific socio-cultural setting of Auschwitz-Birkenau. Lale Sokolov's role as the camp's tattooist, marking prisoners with identification numbers, becomes a poignant metaphor for the ways in which individuals use their bodies to convey message or surveillance their bodies. The exploration of love and connection between Lale and Gita within the confines of the concentration camp underscores the socio-cultural complexities of body piercing as a form of self-expression, identity even in the face of unimaginable adversity. As Morris through the Lale states that "pepan doubles back and guides him to some small tables with tattooing equipment. Those who have passed selection are guided into a line in front of their table. They will be marked. Other new arrivals—the old, infirm, no skills identified—are walking dead" (31). As the characters navigate the challenges of identity in imprisonment Morris offers insights into the lasting impact of trauma and the importance of preserving one's identity. Through this bodily narrative *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* serves as a compelling literary lens through which to understand the socio-cultural dimensions of body art in the contemporary narrative landscape. Within the realm of body art the human tendencies are also portrayed in the novels of posthuman age. The exploration of socio-cultural perspectives on body modification and its contemporary literary role is evident in Stieg Larsson's *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* also. In the novel, characters like Lisbeth Salander challenge societal norms through nose and nipple piercings. As protagonist Salander delve into the investigation of Harriet Vanger's decades-old disappearance, the narrative intertwines with Salander's unconventional appearance, turning her body into a unique canvas for self-expression. As Larson says that "She yawned and unscrewed the stud she had had through her tongue for seven years. She put it in a bowl on the shelf next to the sink. Her mouth felt empty. Apart from the rings in her earlobes, she had now only two piercings left: a ring in her left eyebrow and a jewel in her navel" (664). This rebellion against

social conformity reflects the complexity of identity and societal expectations, making Salander a symbol of defiance within the story.

As Blomkvist and Salander navigate the intricate mystery, the socio-cultural backdrop of family dysfunction, corporate corruption, and abuse of power adds layers to the exploration of body piercing within contemporary literature. The characters confront personal demons and societal injustices, highlighting the intersections between body modification and the broader socio-cultural context.

Larsson frames a compelling exploration within the framework of Foucault's biopolitics of how individuals, through their bodies and choices convey messages that challenge societal norms and expectations. The story contributes to the study of body piercing as a rich and multifaceted form of self-expression within the modern literary scene. As in Katherine Dunn's 2010 novel *Geek Love*, which explores the bizarre life of the Binewski family; a traveling carnival dynasty headed by Al and Lil Binewski. The story goes deep into their bizarre world. In an attempt to improve their carnival performance and draw in crowds, parents experiment with different medications and radioactive materials, as in the novel Lil says that:

The girls were Siamese twins with perfect upper bodies joined at the waist and sharing one set of hips and legs. They usually sat and walked and slept with their long arms around each other.....I was born three years after my sisters. My father spared no expense in these experiments. My mother had been liberally dosed with cocaine, amphetamines, and arsenic during her ovulation and throughout her pregnancy with me. It was a disappointment when I emerged with such commonplace deformities. My albinism is the regular pink-eyed variety and my hump, though pronounced, is not remarkable in size or shape as humps go. (17)

So these experiments resulted into genetically modified children with peculiar physical characteristics. The narrative is told from a variety of viewpoints, focusing on the lives of the Binewski children, who were all born with abnormalities or unusual powers as a result of their parents' research. Lil, who possesses telekinetic talents, transforms herself; the twins, Electra and Iphigenia, are linked at the waist; and Arty, also known as Arturismus, has flippers

for limbs. Through the story of body alteration through various forms, Dunn asks important concerns relating the morality of changing one's body to suit one's wishes or conform to society's norms in relation to posthuman ideals of body modification. The Binewski children are drastically altered from birth, questioning accepted ideas of normalcy and beauty. Through genetic modification, the story investigates the repercussions of pushing the frontiers of human life and how these changes affect the protagonists' sense of self and interactions with others. Dunn's examination of posthuman aspirations in *Geek Love* prompts readers to consider the intricacies of self-identification, the ramifications of drastic physical alteration, and the social influences that mold our ideas of normalcy and beauty. In the end, the novel asks readers to think about the possible costs of seeking an idealized version of the human form by offering a distinctive prism through which to examine the hazy boundaries between the naturally occurring and the technologically modified being. This technologically mediated identity and the philosophical arena is seen in Junot Diaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, which investigates body modification within the Dominican-American cultural context. The protagonist Oscar de Leon's struggles to intertwine identity, societal expectations, and historical trauma against the backdrop of the Dominican Republic's socio-cultural complexities.

Oscar's story becomes a focal point for examining the multifaceted aspects of body modification and its socio-cultural implications. The novel navigates identity formation and the impact of political oppression, notably during the Trujillo regime. Characters marked by authoritarian experiences parallel those opting for body modifications, both grappling with personal and collective identity complexities. As narrator in the story says that Belli "For it was the Great Eye himself who granted the Gangster authority over a number of the Trujillo family's concessions in Venezuela and Cuba, and under his draconian administration the so-called bang-for-the-buck ratio of Dominican sex workers trebled" (135). The power enigma of sex workers on their body is clearly supporting the Foucault's emphasis on sexuality where Foucault says "Power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society" (HOS, 93). In the realm of body power characters confront

societal expectations, masculinity, and the pursuit of individuality, echoing the gist of this research Oscar's atypical interests, like science fiction, signify his attempt to construct a narrative beyond societal norms, akin to those engaging in body art. Within a posthuman context, the novel explores identity and the impact of historical trauma on the body, challenging conventional boundaries with fluidity, hybridity, and transformation. Oscar's journey, influenced by his Dominican heritage and political history, mirrors posthuman ideals of individuals transforming in response to external pressures. The *Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* portrays characters asserting control over their bodies, aligning with posthumanist ideals challenging norms. Oscar's narrative reflects the posthuman notion of the body as a canvas for self-expression, resisting societal constraints.

In conclusion, this paper explores the multifaceted implications of body piercing, particularly in the digital age, through the lens of posthuman theorists. Drawing on Foucault's panopticon metaphor and Haraway's concept of technology as an extension of the self, the characters in the selected works navigate societal norms, reflecting the posthuman condition. Engaging with science fiction and fantasy genres, these narratives metaphorically delve into the complexities of the posthuman experience. Examining body piercing as a form of challenging societal norms and asserting agency, the paper considers the influence of digital communication on this practice. In the age of social media, body piercing becomes a tool for online self-presentation, contributing to the formation of subcultures and communities.

Furthermore, the study parallels the anthro-kinesic morpheme of an individual's body in the digital age, focusing on the language and gesture components employed in body modification. Through an analysis of contemporary literature, the paper explores themes of identity, agency, and power, emphasizing how body piercing serves as a powerful tool for unraveling these complexities in the digital age. Within this context, body piercing emerges as a potent symbol of self-expression, rebellion, and identity construction in contemporary culture. Examining its representation in fictional literature provides insights into the cultural significance of this practice and its impact on social and political realities.

The exploration extends to the ancient practice of body modification, where piercing becomes a tangible form of

resistance against conformity, fostering a sense of empowerment. The characters engage in piercing as a transformative experience, challenging traditional boundaries between human and non-human in a posthumanist ethos. The digital influence is evident in the characters' use of social media platforms, turning body piercing into a performative art that extends beyond physical boundaries. This intersection of body piercing with the digital realm becomes a means of renegotiating societal norms related to gender, sexuality, power, and social conformity. Ultimately, the paper argues that body piercing, as an anthro-kinesic morpheme, serves as a dynamic tool for exploring identity and power complexities in the digital age, shedding light on the transformative nature of this practice within the broader cultural landscape.

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