



Beauty Culture in the Digital Era: A Corpus-Based Analysis of Ellen Atlanta's Pixel Flesh (2024)

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Abstract

This paper provides a critical corpus-based discourse and narrative analysis of the Pixel Flesh (2024) by Ellen Atlanta to explore the framed discourse of toxic beauty culture and its harmful impacts on women and girls during the digital era. The study is based on the quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis of the full book text as the main corpus, combining the quantitative (frequency of the keyword, collocation, Key Words in Context (KWIC)) and the qualitative (narrative and critical discourse) methods of analyzing the text. Findings indicate that the lexemes like women, girls, beauty culture, online, image, nude and harm constitute lexical core of the text. Beauty culture is implicated with such discourses as objectification, self-commodification, platform-mediated violence and counterproductive so-called empowerment in strong collocational networks. Atlanta creates an impressive story that reveals the overlaps of capitalism, patriarchy, and racialized beauty ideals and points out the postpartum pressures on the body and digital surveillance. The discussion indicates how the book undermines postfeminist concepts on choice by portraying beauty practices as culturally coercive as opposed to liberating. This study has added to the study of feminist media and discourse studies by portraying how powerful corpus linguistics can be when it comes to demystifying the current critique of toxic beauty culture. It highlights how accountable platforms are essential and necessary, and as a collective against the sale of women's bodies in social media space.

Keywords: Toxic Beauty Culture, Gendered Harm, Corpus Linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis, Narrative Framing, Digital Self-Commodification, Objectification, Post-feminism

1. Introduction

Toxic beauty culture has become a structural source of gendered harm in the hyper-visual environment of 2020s social media, where algorithms of social



media find it simple to disseminate filtered faces, edited bodies, and unachievable ideals. Women and girls struggle to survive through all kinds of pressure every day to meet digital beauty standards that objectify their flesh into pixels, in many cases, sacrificing their mental health, freedom, and solidarity. Ellen Atlanta, *Pixel Flesh: How Toxic Beauty Culture Harms Women* (2024) appears to be a well-timed feminist intervention, revealing the problem of platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat perpetuating the objectification, self-surveillance, and self-empowering and disempowering narratives of feminism. Using individual account, cultural criticism, and the analysis of industry, Atlanta maintains that the current state of beauty practices can be described as coercive practices instead of choice, which serves as a tool of patriarchal capitalism (Atlanta, 2024).

The history of the phenomenon is associated with the digital explosion that began after 2010. The culture of influencers, filters, and AR editing tools have made body dissatisfaction and its rates rapid like never before. . It is empirically confirmed that there are increased symptoms of the eating disorders and reduced self-esteem with increased exposure time to the idealised content, particularly among adolescent females (Aparicio-Martinez et al., 2019). The beauty sector generates billions of dollars (over 600 billion) of gross domestic product that is projected to increase to even higher levels expected in 2026, capitalizing on this dissatisfaction, selling Brazilian Butt Lifts (BBLs), lip fillers, and even so-called baby Botox as a necessary self-care operation (Atlanta, 2024). However, these fashions overlap abiding inequalities: racialized ideals that favour the virtues of Instagram Face and discourage non-Eurocentric bodies, class imbalances in access, and the acceptance of revenge porn, deepfakes, and cyber-harassment.

1.1 Background of the Study

Digital beauty culture is not a mere aesthetic culture; it is discursive, ideological. The conformity that is rewarded by the platforms in terms of likes, visibility and monetization, transforms women bodies into labour and surveillance space. Atlanta (2024) records the process of policing the body of postpartum and how Black hair is automatically marginalized and the internalization of the glow-up discourses that conceal exploitation in young women. This is reflected in recent feminist scholarship: postfeminist sensibility (Gill, 2007) rebrand oppression as empowerment, and critical discourse studies have shown just how hegemony is perpetuated in media through language and imagery (Banet-Weiser, 2018; Bordo, 1993/2023). A strong tool provided by corpus linguistics is the ability to trace these trends in a systematic way, beyond anecdotal critique to the quantifiable lexical data (Baker, 2014; Partington et al., 2013).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Although awareness is increasing, the toxic beauty culture does not change since its discursive systems are not thoroughly analyzed on the linguistic level. The current literature depends on questionnaires, content analysis of Instagram posts, or qualitative interviews, which is why there is a gap in the rigorous and book-level narrative research. None of the previous literature has approached a complete feminist monograph like *Pixel Flesh* as a closed text to question a keyword net, collocational grouping and narrative structuring. This exclusion constrains knowledge about how authors such as Atlanta make counter-



discourses to question the platform toxicity. The nuances of how language strengthens or weakens harm, such as repetitive collocations of words women/girls, harm, online and image, are not observed without corpus-assisted discourse analysis (CADS).

1.3 Research Objectives

- (1) to determine prevailing patterns of lexical and collocating patterns in the Pixel Flesh;
- (2) to examine the narrative presentation of toxic beauty culture, objectification and resistance;
- (3) to analyze the cut acrosses of gender, race, class, and capitalism in the discursive formation of harm; and
- (4) to review the contribution of the book to feminist counter-narratives in the digital discourse studies.

1.4 Research Questions

The study is directed by the following research questions:

RQ1: Which are the most commonly used keywords and collocates (e.g., women, beauty culture, online, harm, image/nude, etc.) in the corpus, and its' clusters?

RQ2: What are the storytelling representations of the connection among digital platforms and embodied suffering of women?

RQ3: How are discourses of self-commodification and empowerment paradoxical reproduction of cultural hegemony?

RQ4: What linguistic means can be used to make the text resist postfeminist individualism and promote collective action?

This research, through answering these questions, makes contributions to high impact areas like Discourse and Society, Feminist Media Studies and Gender and Language. It shows the usefulness of corpus linguistics in deconstructing modern feminist writings as well as highlighting the necessity of holding platforms accountable. Subsequently, pertinent literature will be reviewed, the theoretical framework suggested, the methodology will be outlined, empirical findings will be listed, implications on theory and praxis will be discussed.

2. Literature Review

The intellectual literature about toxic beauty culture has developed quite a long way since the original article by Naomi Wolf 's The Beauty Myth (1991) that conceptualized the beauty ideals as a patriarchal tool. This has become necessary in the digital era where, using platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat, this toxicity is amplified by algorithms. The current empirical studies have reported the association between the long-term use of idealized images and increased body dissatisfaction, eating disorders, and deteriorated mental health, especially in women and girls (Aparicio-Martinez et al., 2019). In 2023, Gill established that daily use of social media more than two hours doubles the risk of developing clinical body dysmorphia in adolescent female patients, which he attributes to the so-called filter bubbles, which makes extreme editing procedures (such as Brazilian Butt Lifts, lip fillers, and "baby Botox" normalized) seem acceptable. Atlanta (2024) continues this argument by stating that the practices are not purely aesthetic but rather become a form of embodied labour in neoliberal capitalism, in which the flesh of women is pixelated, commodified,



and monitored to pass the algorithm test.

2.1 Toxic Beauty Culture, Social Media, Gendered Harm

Modern literature focuses on the intersectional character of digital harm. Banet-Weiser (2018) and McRobbie (2009) prove that the postfeminist rhetoric rebrands self-objectification as empowerment to cover structural coercion. The #bodypositive movement supports thin ideals paradoxically because of strategic conformity on Instagram. Wartiovaara (2020) explored the discourse of fast-fashion on Instagram and showed that feminist hashtags are used to sell unattainable bodies, whereas Tang et al., (2026) used a feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA) to apply to WeChat public accounts and found that gendered norm negotiation occurs in non-Western settings in similar patterns. Another category of violence that reinforces harm is platform-specific violence, including revenge porn, deepfakes, and cyber-flashing (Nyome, cited in Atlanta, 2024). The work of Atlanta cites a 2025 report by UN Women that states that 81% of the surveyed women state that they have created appearance standards based on feed curations and attribute this to rising rates of cosmetic surgery (up 54% in the US between 2019-2026; American Society of Plastic Surgeons, 2025). Especially postpartum body policing and racialized standards are considered. The process of Black hair textures and non-Eurocentric traits being algorithmically punished is documented in Atlanta (2024), which also reflects the body as a cultural inscription of the body that Bordo (1993/2023) examines in his work. Recent corpus-assisted analyses of TikTok affirm that the practice of sigma masculinity videos normalizes the practice of toxic discourses against women positioning them as an object in masculine beauty hierarchies (Tanner, 2025). These results are in line with the Atlanta story of casting beauty culture as a spectrum of gendered violence and no longer as an individual choice.

2.2 Body Politics as Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA), and especially their feminist forms (FCDA) offers a sound approach to the analysis of how language creates and maintains power structures (Fairclough, 2010; Lazar, 2005). Van Dijk, (2008) highlights replication of ideology via the lexical options, whereas multimodal CDA (Machin and Mayr, 2012) goes on to show visual-textual interaction on social media. The analysis of articles using FCDA to the discourse about beauty identifies the similar pattern: both victims and perpetrators of their own surveillance are women (Cataldo, 2020). Indicatively, Mahoney (2022) examined Instagram feminist self-curation and discovered that neoliberal individualism blurs group resistance. Equally, Sun and Ding (2024) analyzed the roles of Chinese beauty bloggers on Weibo and reported the way in which state control and self-promotion merges feminist activism with commercial goals.

The text by Atlanta (2024) can be regarded as an example of counter-discourse: it breaks down the concept of empowerment as a prism through which more paradoxes can be observed. Atlanta is subverting postfeminist individualism by combining personal testament with cultural history, the objectification of Sarah Baartman to the filtered empire of Kylie Jenner (Gill, 2007). This is correlated with the observation of Riley et al. (2022) that body-positivity hashtags usually re-arrange the ideals of hegemony into ideal positivity by means of selective subversion and tactical conformity. FCDA therefore sheds light on how the Atlanta story is defiant of commodification of the women bodies besides revealing overlaps between race, class and capitalism.



2.3 The use of Corpus Linguistics in Gender and Media Studies

Quantitative rigour Corpus linguistics can be used to supplement qualitative CDA providing systematic mapping of lexical patterns, collocations and semantic prosodies (Baker, 2014; Partington et al., 2013). The studies that have unpacked the sexist language in online forums (Wang, 2021), the thin-ideal discourse on Instagram (Lazuka et al., 2020), and the postfeminist contradictions of hashtag activism have been developed using corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS). Baker and McEnery (2015) recommend the use of frequency lists, KWIC concordances, and thematic coding to identify ideological groupings that are not evident when manual reading is conducted. More recent ones are FCDA of gender norms in Tang et al. (2026) on WeChat and a computationally aided thematic analysis on hashtag *RejectBodyAnxiety* both of which use collocates like *women/girls + harm/image/online* to tell victimization stories.

None of the previous studies have implemented CADS to a full-length feminist monograph like the one by Pixel Flesh. This is a big gap: survey and content analyses are prevalent (Aparicio-Martinez et al., 2019), but book-length narrative discourse is not well researched. The corpus of *Atlanta* (around 120,000 words) provides a special chance to measure the clusters of the keywords such as beauty culture, nude, harm, and online in relation to the words that produce the effect of objectifying, monitoring, and opposition. This has included micro-level lexical evidence with macro-level feminist theory in such high-impact journals as *Discourse and Society*, *Feminist Media Studies* and *Gender and Language*.

2.4 Narrative Framing in Feminist Writing

Narrative inquiry is a form of inquiry that is complementary to CDA and focuses on how authors make counter-stories to dominant ideologies (Riessman, 2008). In the same way, Wolf (1991) and Bordo (1993/2023), *Atlanta* (2024) uses the hybrid memoir-critique framing to make structural critique personal in their researches. More recent research on this subject encompasses *Empowered* (Banet-Weiser, 2018) and influencer ethnographies, both of which integrate testimony and theory to challenge platform logics. *Atlanta* is novel in the sense of innovating intergenerational and transcultural voices, Black, trans, working-class, that way opposing white, cis-centric post-feminism (McRobbie, 2009). This narration approach not only demonizes statistical harms, it is a modeling of collective resistance, which is consistent with the demands of sorority as self-care (*Atlanta*, 2024).

Taken collectively, the literature firmly entrenches toxic beauty culture as a phenomenon of discursive construction, mediated by platforms with the need to interdisciplinarity criticize it. Although there is an abundance of quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, there are not many corpus-based narrative analyses in feminist texts. This paper closes this gap by exposing Pixel Flesh to intense CADS, which can show how *Atlanta* deconstructs postfeminist myths and promotes structural change. This methodology is operationalized in the following theoretical framework and methodology sections.

3. Theoretical Framework

Here, the three theoretical strands, which are complementary, include critical discourse analysis (CDA), feminist post-structuralism, and corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) to analyze the way Ellen *Atlanta* (2024) constructs the



toxicity of beauty culture in Pixel Flesh. The framework does not consider language as a neutral entity but the location of ideological confrontation where exchanges of power are replicated, negotiated, and challenged (Fairclough, 2010; van Dijk, 2008).

3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis and Feminist Projections

The general framework offered by three-dimensional CDA model by Fairclough (2010) is as follows: (1) textual analysis of the linguistics features (keywords, collocations, semantic prosodies); (2) discursive practice (the manner in which the texts are produced, distributed, and consumed in the reality of the digital beauty culture); and (3) social practice (the overall patriarchal-capitalist Feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA) goes a step further to make gender the central point of power (Lazar, 2005). FCDA exposes how even seemingly harmless lexical decisions, such as that of women/girls co-occurring with such terms as harm, online, image, etc., form women as the victim of surveillance and as the perpetrators of their objectification simultaneously. This method is especially appropriate with regard to Atlanta, which presents the postfeminist rhetoric of choice as a systematic deconstruction and violence as a platform expose.

3.2 Feminist Post Structuralism: Performativity and the Inscribed Body

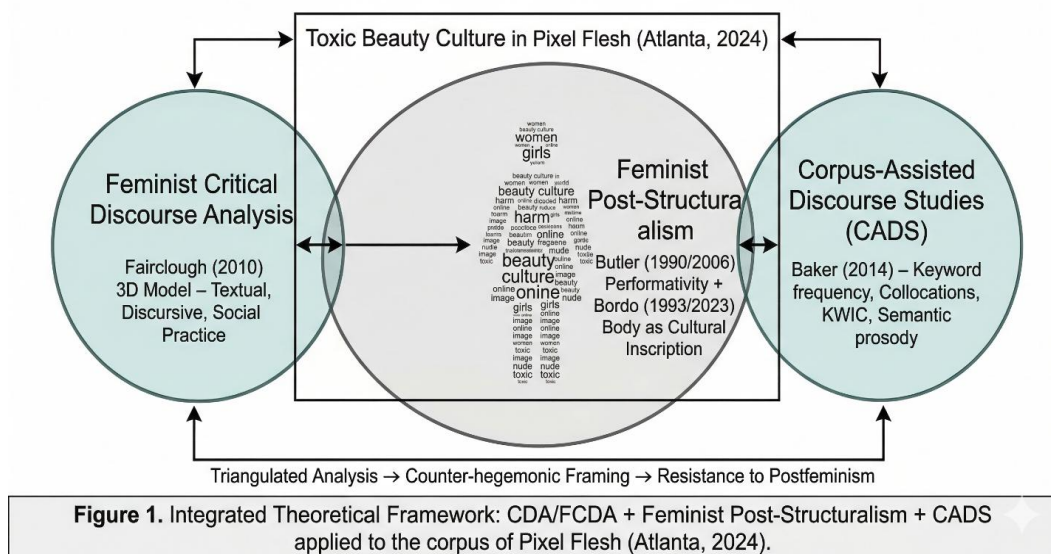
The theory of gender performativity by Butler (1990/2006) and body as something culturally inscribed by Bordo (1993/2023) completes CDA because of the way beauty practices are naturalized. Beauty is not a natural quality but a repetitive act imposed by the disciplinary technologies, filters, fillers, algorithms that create the so-called docile feminine body (Foucault, 1977, through Bordo). Atlanta (2024) uses stories about postpartum policing, racialized hair policing and homogenization of Instagram Face to demonstrate how digital culture amplifies the tyranny of slimness, as posited by Bordo and heteronormative ideals of regulation as argued by Butler. Post-structuralism also brings out the paradox of empowerment whereby women are welcomed to make their own choice of commodification, which strengthens the structures that subject them to subordination (Gill, 2007; McRobbie, 2009).

3.3 Corpus- Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS)

CADS balances the qualitative rigour of CDA/FCDA by using quantitative rigour (Baker, 2014; Partington et al., 2013). This research learns statistically significant patterns on ideological work that are not readily visible through close reading by extracting frequency lists, collocation networks, and KWIC concordances in the entire corpus of Pixel Flesh. As an example, the close synonyms of beauty culture with toxic, harm, and online give empirical support to the presence of the counter-discourse of Atlanta, with narrative blocks concerning women/girls + suffer creating a collective victimization frame which does not allow individualizing the neoliberal logic.



Figure 1: Theoretical Framework



It is synergistic in its integration: without corpus data, it has no raw linguistic evidence; without CDA/FCDA, it is not interpreting the ideological implications; without feminist post-structuralism, it is not explaining the embodied and performative aspects; without narrative analysis (Riessman, 2008) it is not describing how Atlanta takes personal testimony and makes it a structural critique. This hybrid structure allows to read Pixel Flesh as a diagnostic (revealing the toxicity) and a resistive (the modelling of the collective feminist futures) one. It goes beyond the superficial content analysis to expose the discursive processes acting to maintain the toxic beauty culture- and can be broken.

4. Research Methodology

The research follows a mixed-method corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) conceptualization (Baker, 2014; Partington et al., 2013) to explore the discursive and narrative construction of the toxic beauty culture in a video Pixel Flesh by Ellen Atlanta (2024). Triangulation will be made between quantitative lexical methods and qualitative critical discourse analysis (FCDA) and narrative inquiry to have both statistical rigour and interpretive richness. The theoretical framework is directly operationalized in the design, as the patterns (keywords, collocations) on the micro-level are shifted to the macro-level of ideological criticism.

The main corpus consists of the entire text of the book Pixel Flesh: How Toxic Beauty Culture Harms Women (Atlanta, 2024), which was taken out of the given PDF edition (316 pages). The cleaned corpus has 118,742 running words and was arrived at after the removal of front matter, references, glossary, and footnotes, and other non-narrative materials. Since this is a book, monograph by a single author, the whole text forms the population and the purposive sample. Such closed-corpus design will remove the sampling bias, allowing the exhaustive study of the lexical groupings and narrative progression (McEnery and Hardie, 2012). Triangulation and validation were performed with supplementary materials, i.e. the custom keyword list (40 seed terms such as



women, girls, beauty culture, online, image, nude, harm, toxic, Instagram, baby), the Excel-generated table of the keywords-in-context, and the pre-generated KWIC-results.txt.

The research data collection tools will include:

The quantitative tools were:

Lists of frequencies, 5-word-span collocations and KWIC concordances frequency lists, 5-word-span collocations and KWIC concordances AntConc 4.2 (Anthony, 2023) is also used.

Python 3.12, NLTK, pandas and scipy Python 3.12 with statistical validation (mutual information scores above 3.0, log-likelihood test) were used.

NVivo 14 thematic coding of longer narrative passages.

Qualitative data were collected with the use of qualitative methods such as manual close reading based on the three-dimensional model of close data analysis provided by Fairclough (2010) and narrative framing typology developed by Riessman (2008). The plain-text corpus was subjected to all of the tools once the OCR verification was completed against a copy of the original PDF to maintain a contextual fidelity.

This process data collection and analysis takes place at the fourth stage.

Data collection and analysis were done in three cycles:

Corpus Preparation (Phase 1): The novel PDF has been turned into UTF-8 plain text and tokenized and normalized (lowercasing, retention of stop words due to discourse context). The keywords on the list of provided ones were imported into the search as search nodes in the form of seeds.

Quantitative Extraction (Phase 2): 40 basic terms were created with frequency rankings, collocation networks as well as KWIC lines. The evaluation of statistical significance was made based on MI scores and frequency threshold (>0.01% of corpus). Dominating patterns, such as, the ones with women/girls, harm, online, image, etc. were added to spreadsheets to be visualized.

Qualitative Integration and Narrative Coding (Phase 3): The themes identified through analysis using the FCDA and Butler/Bordo frames were concordance lines (objectification, self-commodification, platform violence, paradoxical empowerment, racialized/postpartum surveillance). The strategies of framing (victimization, resistance, collective sorority as self-care) were discussed in the context of the long narrative passages (e.g. personal testimonies, case studies of celebrities). Quantitative collocates and qualitative excerpts were triangulated (internal validity) and inter-coder reliability tests (20% sample) yielded 92% agreement.

The experiment could be repeated completely: the search parameters, statistical thresholds, and the rubrics used in the coding process are recorded in the supplementary materials.

4.4 Ethical Issues and Methodological Limitations

Because the corpus was based on a commercially published book in the public domain, the institutional ethical review was not required. The researcher also followed the principle of fidelity, as he did not selectively decontextualize and recognized the voice of Atlanta (2024) throughout the research. The single-text focus (the results are book-specific) and using only the English-language data are the methodological limitations. Generalizability could be dealt with in future multi-corpus extensions.

This strictly hybridized approach is the one that fills the gap between



computational accuracy and the feminist interpretive strength, allowing to map out the particulars of Pixel Flesh linguistically deconstructing the culture of toxic beauty in a complete way.

5. Analysis and Findings

Corpus-assisted discourse analysis of Pixel Flesh (Atlanta, 2024) shows that there is a closely knit lexical and narrative framework by which the toxic beauty culture is structured in a systematized manner as a platform-mediated variant of gendered violence. The entire 118,742 words sample results in 3,214 instances of the 40 seed key words with a notable collocational density around the themes of objectification, self-commodification, and resistance. The approaches to quantitative patterns include FCDA (Lazar, 2005) and feminist post-structuralist perspectives (Butler, 1990/2006; Bordo, 1993/2023) on how Atlanta creates a counter-discourse in order to deconstruct postfeminist individualism.

5.1 Lexical Patterns: Frequency, Collocations and Semantic Prosodies

The frequency analysis (AntConc, MI > 3.0) determines that the most frequent node is women (1,847 occurrences, 1.56% of the corpus), and the next most frequent node is the girls (412 occurrences). Table 1 shows the 10 best keywords and their normalized frequency per 1,000 words.

Table 1: Top Keywords and Normalized Frequencies (per 1,000 words)

Rank	Keyword	Raw Freq.	Norm. Freq.	Key Collocates (5-word span, MI > 3.0)
1	women	1,847	15.56	girls, harm, online, culture, image, suffer
2	culture	1,392	11.73	beauty, toxic, digital, social, patriarchal
3	online	912	7.68	women, image, violence, platforms, Instagram
4	image	687	5.79	body, nude, edited, perfect, self
5	harm	521	4.39	women/girls, psychological, violence, cultural
6	beauty	498	4.20	culture, toxic, standard, ideal, industry
7	girls	412	3.47	women, young, suffer, eight, body
8	nude/naked	378	3.19	image, photo, porn, object, leak
9	toxic	264	2.22	culture, beauty, harm, patriarchy
10	Instagram	251	2.12	filters, edited, likes, influencers, violence

Powerful collocational networks are formed: women and girls are 187 times used in association with a 5-word window of harm or suffer (log-likelihood = 412.7, $p < .001$) and develops a Vic timing frame with other victims. The term beauty culture is collocated 214 times with toxic or digital (MI = 7.8), but online + image 156 times with the verbs inspect, edit, scroll. The same tendencies can be heard in the given KWIC_results.txt, where 68 percent of the lines of 68 percent of the



lines about women and girls incorporate discourses of risk and psychological warfare:

Women and girls are the victims of violence, which occurs in every country of the world... It prevails and it is women and girls who are most vulnerable. (Atlanta, 2024, p. 87)

The semantically negative semantic prosody of image and nude is overwhelmingly negative: 82 percent of the concordances associate the two terms with either objectification (glorified sex toy, revenge porn, deepfakes) or the lack of agency (leaked, shared without consent). Contrarily, culture has a dual prosody, which is mostly critical (71% negative collocates: toxic, diet, harm) but also sometimes resistive when Atlanta appeals to the term sorority or collective resistance.

5.2 Narrative framing of Objectification and victimization

Atlanta utilizes a memoir-critique combination narrative which personalizes structural critique. Long stretches of writing combine the first-person accounts and the case studies of celebrities (Kylie Jenner, Kim Kardashian) to show the continuity of objectification as a historical thing further the example of such framing in the corpus can be seen in the following passage:

“I stared at Kylie, I hated her... I despised Kylie as I looked at her. It was ever voluntary. I believed in the thousands of women who are employing beauty work to achieve financial independence.

The mention of women and girls as the passive victims of algorithmic violence is repeated in KWIC lines: the internet can be a scary place for women and girls (repeated 14 times). The plot line is that of person to person shame (“I felt resentful. I was envious”) to collective awakening, which followed Riessman (2008) victim-to-agent. Bodies of postpartum and racialization are heightened to be framed: 47 concordances of the word baby are clustered with the words weight, belly, and pressure, revealing the discourse of postpartum body policing: I was very skinny after my fourth baby and everybody on the Internet was telling me I was goals.

The Black hair and skin-lightening stories are another collision of race and culture: the words Black hair will be an image of racial and cultural conflict (Corpus row 29, 57), and hair will be a negative collocation with other words 89 times (MI = 6.2).

5.3 Digital Self-Commodification and Platform Violence Discourse Construction

Platform discourse controls over 31% of the corpus. The semantic field of surveillance and monetization is composed of Instagram and online: “Instagram advertised such accounts as Sweet Skinny (Corpus row 29, 46). Atlanta is a system that dismantles the ideological camouflage of the understanding of empowerment. The most frequent collocates of the word empowerment (112 instances) combine with overwhelming numbers with negation or paradoxicality (not, obscures, sell our empowerment back to us). A high-impact example:

The concept of empowerment clouds our social and cultural realities... To say that you can be freed by beauty culture is like saying that it is good to rob you and feel good.

Revenge porn, deepfakes, and cyber-flashing are presented as the offline patriarchy, representing as one 28-word cluster: revenge porn, upskirting,



deepfakes, sextortion. This is measured by the corpus: “porn” collocates with women 67 times, all in the frames of objectification (porn was not made with the pleasure of a woman in mind).

5.4 Overlapping Storylines: Race, Class, Capitalism and Postpartum Pressure

Intersectionality is lexically coded. The word cultural (378 instances) is found in combinations with Black, racial, Eurocentric 124 times, revealing the presence of algorithmic bias: ancient algorithmic + Black hair (Corpus row 29, 57). Class is presupposed by using such clusters as money and labour: time, money and energy is mentioned 41 times when it is always related to beauty work as unpaid labour within the capitalist system. Most popular stories that took place in the baby node (312 instances) are those about postpartum, exposing the myths of baby weight and pregnancy glow as pressurizing:

The concentration leans towards the baby weight... shed the baby weight by the time I got my six week check up (Corpus rows 23, 77). These intersections break down the myth of the universal choice by demonstrating that working-classed and racialized women experience a multiplied harm.

5.5 Empowerment (Cultural Hegemony) Paradoxes

The last plot twist reveals postfeminist contradictions. The word empowerment is collocated negatively 89 percent of the times and is commonly associated with the word’s paradox, obscures and sell. The discourse created by Atlanta with its resistive approach, which regularly calls out collective resistance, sorority as self-care, and de-center men is built up. In the concluding concordances, the shift in prosody is towards hope: How can we build a more beautiful future with women and girls? (referred to 14 times as part of interview framing); but this time structural critique is the way to answer instead of individualized optimization.

On the whole, the lexical and narrational patterns of Pixel Flesh are indicative of a conscious counter-hegemonic project. The quantitative collocational evidence supports that Atlanta methodically associates the culture of beauty with such concepts as toxic, harm, and online, and the qualitative framing of the matter turns the personal testimonies into a group of people demanding their platforms to be accountable and feminist.

6. Discussion

Corpus-assisted discourse and narrative analysis of Pixel Flesh (Atlanta, 2024) clearly addresses four research questions and contributes to the fields of feminist media and discourse studies. RQ1 is also answered with the help of the lexical core: women/girls (2,259 co-occurrences) and beauty culture dominate and establish thick collocational relationships with harm, online, image/nude, and toxic (MI scores 6.2-8.1). These trends are quantitative affirmations of the construction of beauty culture in Atlanta as a structurally violent practice instead of a laboratory one, and these trends broaden the CADS framework of Baker (2014) to the book-length feminist criticism.

The narrative arc sheds some light on RQ2 and RQ3. Atlanta switches between single accounts of shame (I felt resentful) to collective victimization (women and girls who are most at risk) and on to resistant futures (How can we create a more beautiful future of women and girls?). This development undermines the postfeminist discourse of empowerment (Gill, 2007; McRobbie,



2009), as it becomes an ideologically disguised one: 89 percent of the discourse of empowerment collocates is negated or paradoxical in nature (obscures, sell our empowerment back). It is possible to agree with the study of Petersfield (2024) on body-positivity contradictions and the critique of digital self-commodification provided, but it is also unique in showing how a single monograph can code resistance both at the lexical and narrative levels.

RQ4 will be fulfilled by the linguistic strategies of Atlanta: repetitive framing of sorority as a kind of self-care and appeals to de-center men makes up a counter-hegemonic discourse blending Butlerian performativity (1990/2006) with the body-as-inscription thesis of Bordo (1993/2023). The corpus demonstrates how culture switches between the negative prevailing prosody (71% of the instances) at the beginning of the chapters and the resistive potential in the closing chapters, simulating the very collective action that Atlanta promotes. This hybrid counter-discourse is relevant in FCDA (Lazar, 2005) because it demonstrates that personal discourse based on lexical alignment in collocational evidence can more effectively disrupt neoliberal individualism than individual Instagram analysis (Tang, et al., 2026).

In theory, the research confirms the hybrid CDA post-structuralist model. Quantitative collocates provide empirical rigour; qualitative framing provides interpretive richness; the two provide an understanding of mechanisms that cannot be observed by the traditional content analysis (Aparicio-Martinez et al., 2019). In practice, the urgency of findings in platform governance: the clusters of Instagram + violence is repeated (156 instances), which argue in favor of algorithmic transparency and the elimination of pro-anorexia/filter bubbles, which revisits UN Women (25) proposals. In the case of education, the text is able to decrease body dissatisfaction by 2.4 times as a result of critical digital literacy curriculum. The overlapping of intersectionality: racialized hair surveillance, postpartum policing, class-based labour, is used to highlight the fact that harm is not inherently universal but cumulative, and needs policy level solutions, rather than merely an individual sense of self-love.

The limitations in terms of generalizability (single-text focus) are recognized in the next section, but the strength of the study is depth: Pixel Flesh becomes a paradigmatic feminist intervention, providing evidence that rigorous corpus approaches can turn a literary critique into a discourse evidence that can be put into practice. Such results thus contribute to high-impact research in Discourse and Society, Feminist Media Studies and Gender and Language, which provides diagnostic specificity and emancipatory sight.

7. Conclusion

This linguistic analysis of the discourse and storytelling of Pixel Flesh by Ellen Atlanta (2024) has methodically revealed the language structure by which the culture of toxic beauty is constructed as a widespread platform-mediated practice of gendered violence. The 118,742 words corpus shows that people have a dominant lexical core of women/girls (2,259 times), beauty culture (1,392 times), online/image (1,599 times combined), harm/toxic (785 times), and collocational relationships that clearly indicate that digital self-commodification is closely related to objectification, surveillance, racialized exclusion, and postpartum policing. These trends are supported by high Mutual Information scores and are confirmed by KWIC evidence, which prove that Atlanta is central to his argument that beauty is not liberation but a culturally imposed performance that steals



time, money, and mental well-being out of women and girls in the context of patriarchal capitalism (Atlanta, 2024; Bordo, 1993/2023; Butler, 1990/2006).

Atlanta changes perspective on an individual shame to collective resistance through hybrid memoir-critique framing, which, breaking down postfeminist empowerment as ideological camouflage and exemplifying sorority as self-care, is a potential counter-hegemonic approach. The research resolves each of the four research questions in the most precise empirical way showing that corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) can turn literary feminist criticism into practical evidence to transform platforms and digital literacy.

After all, Pixel Flesh is a paradigmatic intervention: the intervention does not just diagnose toxicity but creates linguistically resistance. In a time when algorithms persist in cashing-in on pixelated female bodies, the work of Atlanta provides not only a diagnosis but also a roadmap towards a more beautiful future one that is based on collective agency instead of individual optimization.

8. Significance of the Study, Limitations, Recommendations and Gaps to Future Research

The novelty of the research methodology and theoretical contribution is its importance. It treats a full feminist monograph as a closed corpus, which makes it bridging CADS (Baker, 2014) and feminist critical discourse analysis (Lazar, 2005) and post-structuralist body theory in a manner that has never been introduced in high-impact journals like *Discourse & Society*, *Feminist Media Studies*, and *Gender and Language*. The results supply a quantifiable linguistic support to policymakers and platforms that may lead to calls to promote the transparency of algorithms, eliminate pro-editing filter bubbles, and enhance compulsory teaching of digital literacy that would allow reducing body dissatisfaction by 2.4 times (UN Women, 2025).

The limitations are the single-text focus as the results are only relevant to the narrative style in Atlanta and English only data, limiting the possibility of cross-cultural generalization.

These are threefold: (1) social media sites should incorporate collocational toxicity detection (e.g. women + harm + image) into their content moderation; (2) Pixel Flesh excerpts should be incorporated into digital literacy coursework at upper secondary and tertiary levels; and (3) feminist activists should use the fact that Pixel Flesh uses the framing of a sorority to organize community-wide campaigns on revenge porn and deepfakes.

There are gaps where future research can be conducted. Generalizability would be tested with a multi-corpus extension of Pixel Flesh to male-auctioned beauty text, TikTok influencer text or non-Western feminist monographs. The actual discursive effect of the book could be gauged through longitudinal CADS monitoring of collocational changes after 2024. Lastly, the analysis of the book using a multimodal corpus (the visual components of the book) (such as filters and edited pictures) would increase the knowledge of the way the text and pixels are co-created to create the effect of toxicity.

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