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Let Me Take a #Shelfie: An Assemblage Explored Through Framing

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Abstract

As emerging technologies rapidly change the way that individuals socially interact, researchers can look back to older theories of social organization in order to apply traditional concepts to new ways of being. A #shelfie is a popular hashtag used on Instagram, a social media application, typically used with a post that consists of any visual media containing book(s) or item(s) related to literature in a physical space within, around, and/or upon a piece of furniture. This thesis is centered around the examination of a data collection that gathered top #shelfie posts on Instagram for the purpose of visual content and textual analysis. I argue that users are performing and constructing identities using curated #shelfies that actually span beyond the original typical bookshelf content, that this particular content is being utilized mostly by users identifying as women, and that it highlights areas of multiple framing occurring at the same time through Instagram and the objects being posted. My thesis is anchored within a multi-disciplinary framework that utilizes Erving Goffman's theories of self and framing, cultural materialism as framing from scholars such as Daniel Miller, and that this analysis can be understood in a Deleuzian lens by examining how assemblage theory can help to navigate what #shelfie is, how it was produced, and what it may mean for future studies of digital media and the self. There will be no pixel left unturned.

Keywords: Instagram, #shelfie, identity, selfhood, framing, assemblage

Introduction

Before I began my time as a graduate student in UNO's sociology program, I was working for a local non-profit sexual assault crisis center in the New Orleans area. I was often confronted with individuals who described their post-assault lives as narratives that had a "before the assault" and "after the assault" timeline. At this time, I was intensely fascinated by how individuals reckoned their senses of selfhood alongside their trauma and how it transformed them. Unfortunately, this also caused me to become quite pompous in my thoughts about the world. I began to distill the morality of the world around me into two stark camps of bad vs. good, illogical vs. logical, etc. These experiences bled over into my personal life. I walked around feeling utterly indestructible with an absolute philosophy, a dangerous but expectable thing from a young twenty-something. Life is much easier to navigate if you believe that you truly know what is wrong and right with no shades of gray in between.

During this time, I accompanied a friend to a mutual acquaintance's house. This acquaintance was nice, but I had labeled him as decidedly un-feminist and problematic in my black-and-white thought process. While he was talking with my friend, I absentmindedly wandered over to his bookshelf, something I often did in people's homes out of habit. I had already gleefully guessed what I would find on his bookshelf because I had a concrete idea about who he was as a person: travel books and old *Maxim* magazines. To my utter surprise, I began discovering that this acquaintance had a small but tidy collection of books that spanned across various disciplines. My ego deflated entirely when I realized that much of his collection overlapped with my own at home.

On the way back, I told my friend that I wanted to study bookshelves from other people because I was shaken by my discovery. I began contacting people through social media, asking if I could come into their homes and interview them about their bookshelves. To my surprise, I easily collected participants. At the time, it was an art project that focused on photography of the bookshelf and an in-depth interview with set questions. As the interview progressed, the photos shifted from the bookshelf and objects to more photos involving the participant without their face attached until finally a portrait shot revealed the owner attached to the bookshelf at the end. I did four interviews, three with individuals and the last with a couple whom lived together. This casual research foray was surprising, but ultimately, reaffirming of my original discovery with my acquaintance: that people possess multifaceted selves and their book collections might serve as an entryway into that exploration. This data, although unsystematic, revealed that none of the five participants had ever read their entire collection (often carrying guilt about this), that they had mixed origin stories about where their physical bookshelves came from (from Target sales to family heirloom pieces), and that they had specific books attached to a great level of meaning for various reasons. These interviews are still live on at thelibriproject.blogspot.com for those interested in reading them.

Research requires systematic investigation. I discovered this during my time at UNO when I was exposed to social science theorists and research methodology classes. In my discussions with my advisor, Dr. Compton, I realized that I was growing increasingly interested with the way that individuals utilized social media for self-expression and identity performance. What began as an art project interest in bookshelves pushed me into the world of the #shelfie, a user-generated post that typically consisted of a person's bookshelf or a specific reading collection. While my art project had been about slinking into people's homes to conduct interviews in their private spaces,

the shelfie occupied a unique intersection of the self, social media, and cultural materialism in which users shared their intimate spaces to the online world. In some ways, it highlights the new areas that researchers can look towards for analysis. In my case, the shelfie existed in a way that was easy to collect data, involved the use of social media, and did not require lugging around heavy camera equipment. The shelfie occupies an important moment in history, one in which individuals are increasingly utilizing technology in ways that are meaningful for the user. This thesis sets out to take a snapshot of this content and understand what is occurring when a user posts a shelfie.

Undeniably, a growing amount of human life depends on technology. The emerging technologies of the last three decades have revolutionized the way that individuals navigate their lives, and this naturally includes social activity. A person in an environment with regular computer access has the ability to connect with a potentially massive network of peers through social media. Friendships and romances are forged within rapid messages exchanged on screens. Deaths are mourned by posting photos and detailing fond memories about the departed in captions. Social media has plucked the most profound human rituals and brought them into a digital space. Understanding the way that technology is changing lives is paramount to social science. We can propose applying foundational theories and adapting them to ever-evolving technological processes which can provide rich areas of research that are rooted in intellectual lineage and informed by modern knowledge. Somewhere in a constellation of variables, shelfies sit at the crossroads of technology, self, and the material world.

This thesis is centered around the multi-disciplinary examination of a data collection in which top #shelfie posts on Instagram were gathered for visual content and textual analysis. I argue that users are performing and constructing identities using curated #shelfies that actually span beyond the original typical bookshelf content, that this particular content is being utilized mostly

by users identifying as women, and that it highlights areas of multiple framing occurring at the same time through Instagram and the objects being posted. My thesis is anchored within a multi-disciplinary framework that utilizes Erving Goffman's theories of self and framing, cultural materialism as framing from scholars such as Daniel Miller, and that this analysis can be understood in a Deleuzian lens by using assemblage theory to help navigate what a shelfie is, how it was produced, and what it may mean for future studies of digital media and the self. We take traditional methods as the jumping off point for digital exploration: to apply and to discover what we can find, what is lacking, and what must be developed for the future.

Literature Review

The Self and Identity

The self is constructed of multiple identities that have been made within social experiences, as individuals both reflect on how they behave in their roles and respond to the reactions of others to their behavior (Mead 1934). Erving Goffman, the late famed sociologist, was well-known for his proposed dramaturgical theory of self: that the self is performed and the performance is maintained through a variety of means (Goffman 1959). The means often included following social scripts that are both formed by individuals and informed by the societal context which they live in. Goffman's ideas about the presentation of self have been expanded by other scholars, but the idea of performance has developed into a strong intellectual thread that spans beyond his original scope.

Perhaps most striking in theories from Mead and Goffman is the idea of collaboration in the process of creating the self. Humans do not exist in a vacuum but are constantly navigating a complex network of social interactions that provide valuable information for identity. The self is a carefully curated performance that is inherently collaborative in nature. Within this notion, researchers have found that these networks have evolved as technology has advanced. As humans interact in the digital sphere, online interactions mimic their real-life counterparts and provide for another layer of authentic self-development. In her work on identity in a networked world, Jenny L. Davis refers to this process as self-triangulation, which is partially "accomplished when online identity performances and offline identity performances point to, and reflect, the same self" (2014, pg. 505).

Based upon the ideas of Goffman's dramaturgical theory, the presentation of self (in his similarly titled book), examined human behavior in social interactions and focused on the appearance of individuals to others (1959). Individuals perform as actors in a play, attempting to influence others' impressions while utilizing various techniques to maintain the performance. Goffman stated that "everyone is always and everywhere, more or less consciously, playing a role" and that these roles inform what individuals know about others and themselves (1959, p. 12).

Anyone familiar with Goffman's work may accuse him of dancing around the concepts that he introduces, a man that weaves a complex tapestry of abstract notions without quite finishing, and those accusers include myself to a degree. A reader may find that *The Presentation of Self* is the easiest of Goffman's book to digest and sit with. In less than three hundred pages, the theorist served up a concise theory that would eventually evolve with his later expansion on frameworks. *Presentation of Self* is a necessary foundation for understanding Goffman's later work, as it tells the reader that there are certain truths and theatrical metaphors that must be understood: a human acts, an actor exists in a context, a performance is always observed (even if only by the self), an actor attempts to control the performance as much as possible based on the situation (1959). The gist of this book was that human existence pulses with possibility and that possibility is only achievable through interaction. His later work would expand upon the contexts in which the interaction takes place and bring about *Frame Analysis*, which will be discussed in a latter section on framing.

The self is collaborative, and identity reflects an individual's connection to their social environment; it is social experiences that shape the self and give a person their idea of selfhood (Cooley 1902; Mead 1934). Goffman developed this idea, of the 'self' as a result of social interactions, further with his dramaturgical theory but these arguments are focused primarily on

individuals in relation with other individuals and society overall (1959; 1986). There is a distinctly muted inclusion of the material world in this argument. A discussion about the importance of physical environment, the actual stage in which an actor performs on, and the objects and props used by an individual will be discussed in a latter section on cultural materialism and framing. Ultimately, this body of work operates off the idea that the self is a collaborative process and that technology has allowed us to understand new aspects and processes that the self may be undergoing in the age of social media, as proposed in the next section.

The Internet, Social Media, and Social Media's Creation of Self

The Internet

Digital work can feel distinctly odd compared to offline research. The researcher instinctively steps into a role of the observer, but there are slices of human life that pull a researcher in as a participant. In some ways, it has never been easier to interact. Henry Jenkins asserts that the age of social media has brought about a "participatory media culture", a culture that offers few obstacles for artistic expression alongside encouragement for creating content (Jenkins et al., 2006; Jenkins 2006). Possession of a smartphone provides a way to create and share content easily. Gone are the days of a family waiting for the money and occasion to arrange pictures in their best Sunday dress. Moments are captured instantaneously, a perfect harmony of the flashing temporary nature of life at the intersection of technological achievement. I selfie, therefore I am.

If you are an American citizen with some financial means, it is likely that you have experienced the Internet as an embedded tool in your life, meaning that the Internet has been built into everyday objects. You can track your package delivery on your phone, your dinner can be delivered through an application, and your thesis citations can be compiled with a convenient

software. If not your personal life then the internet and online technologies are likely part of the modern work life. The promise of this "embedded internet" in everyday life is that it will be a smarter and more efficient way to do things for people (Hines 2015, p. 32). This is the age of Web 2.0, what theorists like Jenkins and contemporaries describe as encouraging participation from users and fostering user-generated content, where technology has seemingly crept into our lives in virtually every facet (Murugesan, 2007).

In 2006, *Time* magazine nominated "You" as the person of the year with a shiny cover that was intended to reflect the reader's face onto a graphic of a computer (A Cultural History of Web 2.0). The internet has arisen from a vast collection of individuals and groups, an assemblage of technological and social intersections. In *Ethnography for the Internet*, Christine Hines explores the idea of "embedded" and then pushes past it into the realm of an *embodied* Internet, one in which the Internet exists both theoretically and practically as another sphere of human experience. Drawing from science fiction narratives, Hines points out that this is not a person literally plugging into their computer to be transported physically somewhere (perhaps in the future such technology will be available), but that the identities formed on and through the Internet are increasingly becoming attached to our offline identities. "This notion of multiple ways of being, and multiple notions of physicality, offers a useful way of understanding the complexities of online experience," she explains and cites the example of family member immersed in playing an online game while in the living room, illustrating their physical presence but with a lack of offline engagement that signals to other family members what their priorities are (2015, p. 42). The internet can truly be an immersive place. In their work on virtual experiences, Boellstorff et al. declared that individuals in virtual worlds "perform and cycle through different roles and identities" just as they would in

their nonvirtual environments (p. 1). For social interactions, this means that offline ways of communicating are being translated online through social media.

Social Media

As part of Web 2.0, social media has taken an important role in modern society. Social media can be seen as the collection of "digital interactive tools used for production, consumption, and sharing of user generated content within a network" (Davis, Compton, Farris, Love, 2015, p. 9). Scholars have argued that social media platforms can only be properly understood with an approach of 'polymedia', meaning that one platform is considered as part of collective social media, as each platform's meaning and utilization is relative to the other platforms (Madianou & Miller, 2013). In this approach, one must understand that users utilize platforms such as Facebook or Instagram quite differently. Additionally, some scholars place an importance on rejecting the notion that online interaction is different from face-to-face or offline interaction, arguing that online communication is as meaningful with the internet's embedded presence in human life (Miller et al., 2016, p. x).

Originally launched in 2010, Instagram is a visual content-sharing, social media application (Markowitz, 2012). Instagram is only one of many social media applications, but it remains one of the most popular. What once began simply as a photo-sharing platform has now added video-sharing and temporary daily stories that allow users to share immediate but fleeting snapshots of their lives. With other 500 million active users, the application has garnered appeal on a national and global scale (Flynn, 2016).

Studies of Instagram are particularly fascinating as they must contend with interactions heavily immersed in visual media along with text-based data. These studies are often focused on

identity, social interaction, and how digital spaces are unique from in-person experiences. Researchers have examined how student athletes utilize Instagram for self-presentation (Smith & Sanderson, 2015), how the application's usage can affect image satisfaction and contain potential negative effects for romantic relationships (Ridgway & Clayton, 2016), how adolescents construct identities and how their peers mediate these constructions with potential double-standards for female peers (Mascheroni, Vinct, & Jimenez, 2015), and even how female entrepreneurs utilize aggressive self-branding in order to portray an image of passionate and glamorous work lifestyles (Duffy & Hund, 2015). These studies reflect the growing interactions occurring online and how different groups of people are navigating their digital lives which have become increasingly intertwined with in-person identities. The reality is that social media provides another extension for life experiences but must also be understood for the ways that digital spaces are different and that these differences will continue to emerge as research evolves.

In order to understand Instagram, or any application from the last five years, one must understand that social applications operate using algorithms. An algorithm is defined by Merriam-Webster's dictionary as "a step-by-step procedure for solving a problem or accomplishing some end especially by a computer" (n.d.-a). Applications like Instagram are not currently required to provide technical explanations for how their programs work, although a variety of online publications are constantly attempting to deconstruct how it operates (Carbone, 2018). Due to the nature of the commercial world and the long-term investment costs of academic work, scholarly work on Instagram is largely forced to concentrate on users' actions. The business realm operates at a much faster rate than academia, which depends on aggregated data from long periods of time or small-scale studies focused on a sample. What does this mean for researchers? Instagram can comment on the algorithms that it uses to display posts to users, but it is still a company's

intellectual property, meaning that outside sources are often using educated guesses to make assumptions about algorithmic systems.

This technical understanding of Instagram is necessary as researchers have to acknowledge that they are not accessing data without a structure built for bias. Instagram is foremost a business and has recently rolled out supported content, allowing companies to pay for promotion. This represents a disruption in "organic content" and illustrates the power of algorithmic-based businesses. Such algorithms usually link to a decreased presence of technological agency as users are not inherently interacting with the design "with an agenda" (Milan, 2015, p. 3-4). These structural differences are important for researchers to consider when studying how online environments are different from non-virtual interactions.

Due to all the technological revolutions in the past three decades, researchers have been required to adapt and invent new ways of approaching life as social interactions increasingly take place online. Out of these potential research approaches, digital humanities have emerged as a way to tackle this issue and is described as doing "work at the intersection of digital technology and humanities disciplines" (Drucker et al., 2014). There are debates over whether digital humanities should be considered its own separate discipline or if it is simply a group of methods that have been developed, another way of doing research (Schreibman, Siemens, & Unsworth, 2016). Future work as technology develops will likely see rise to increased amounts of studies within digital humanities.

Social Media's Creation of the Self

How does one participate in a community like Instagram? You can scroll, like, and favorite a post without ever leaving a comment or sending a direct message to the user that posted the

content. Within the confines of algorithmic-based networks, tidily collected through hashtags, certain groups emerge with organized content. This is where my interest lies: the investigation and exploration of a phenomenon known as #shelfie. There is a lot to be said for a picture. Present within each shelfie is a carefully crafted story. Careful because it must be. The user has taken time to frame their physical space, to showcase those certain objects which they find meaningful. Framing is vital to understanding what is occurring in a shelfie, but first, we must answer this question: how do individuals use social media for their collaborative process of self?

If humans are forming selfhood through interaction then logically social media provides extended ways for this collaborative process. The online presentation of self reflects how offline actions have simply come online. Instead of having a conversation with a classmate in a school hallway, a student can send a message to a classmate to discuss homework, form a private or public group for the class, or even make a post about the class. This falls into the theoretical understanding of theorists such as Mead and Goffman. Individuals triangulate the self by trying to get their online presentations to match up to an authentic idea of self in the offline world (Davis, 2014).

I have claimed that shelfie is a careful performance, partially because of the amount of curation inherently involved in social media. The term curation dreams up ideas of art directors staging galleries and indeed, this idea is not far off from what may be happening with users using social media but there is a focus beyond the aesthetic. People curate themselves in complex ways, typically bridging their online personas with their offline experiences and identity. The term digital curation describes the ways in which users locate and acquire attention for themselves in an oversaturated network of content (Davis, 2017, p. 770). Digital curation is about as much as an individual's production as well as their consumption. Davis argued that there is productive curation, what a user is producing and sharing, and consumptive curation, actions taken to engage

with networked contacts and navigate content with discriminating strategies (2017, p. 773). This fits well within Goffman's idea of how the self is performed with collaborative feedback. If this is how individuals use social media to construct self then the next step is to explore what type of individuals are engaging with social media with high participation. Here, the selfie emerges as a North star and points directions towards younger generations for a number of reasons.

Undoubtedly, the shelfie has arisen from the phenomenon of the selfie, which can be deconstructed to understand how this type of post developed. Selfie, which refers to a self-portrait taken with a digital camera or a smart device usually to be shared via some form of social media, was named the word of the year by the Oxford English Dictionary in 2013 (Qiu et al., 2015). The selfie has always been linked to younger generations with research pointing to the millennial generation in the United States overwhelmingly focusing on self in digital networks while older generations participate at a much lesser scale with posts like the selfie (Pew Research Center, 2014). One of the earliest examples of a selfie taken by a teenager was actually the Grand Duchess Anastasia Nikolaevna of Russia at age 13, who managed to take a portrait of herself using a mirror and sent it to a friend via letter (1914).

Age plays a factor in participation with technology. Scholar danah boyd (spelled specifically in the lowercase) has spent most of her career looking at the ways that teenagers use social media. She argued that the term "digital native" is something thrown around with great energy by adults discussing younger generations, insinuating that there is something different about these individuals and their experiences since they grew up with digital technology (2014, p. 22). As boyd points out, many of the experiences or interactions occurring online for teenagers are experiences that also exist in the offline world, and that accessibility of technology varies wildly according to economic means and technical knowledge (p. 23-4). The conversation about

accessibility is a vital one for digital humanities, as Christine Hines suggests that the Internet has largely been popular for North America, Europe, and Australia, citing statistics as late at 2012 (p. 7).

According to social media demographics in the United States by the Pew Research Center, women are more likely to be users of social media, specifically Pinterest, Facebook, and Instagram (Anderson, 2015). Online women were 7% more likely to utilize Instagram than online men, although online forums remained popular for men (Duggan, 2015). Growth on Pinterest and Instagram doubled from the year 2012 to 2015, while other platforms remained more stable; Facebook remains the most popular social media platform but the rates of online adults using Facebook did not significantly change from 2012 to 2015 (Duggan, 2015). While three-quarters of Facebook users visit the site daily, about six-in-ten Instagram users visit the application at the same frequency (Pew Research Center, March 2018). The median American utilized three of the eight most popular social platforms (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube, WhatsApp, Pinterest, and LinkedIn), but a large portion (59%) of social media users claim that it would not be difficult for them to give up social media (Pew Research Center, March 2018). Thus, before one embarks on a study of Instagram, they may assume that their data collection will reflect younger female Western identities and experiences.

Framing and Cultural Materialism

Daniel Miller argues that material things can frame life and often do so in a way that is overlooked by most people which he termed 'the humility of things' due to objects' unprecedented effects on human life (2009). An old souvenir from a vacation is left in a corner to collect dust, but it is proof that one had the time and means to take that vacation, to procure a memory of it in

physical form! Similar to Erving Goffman's idea of frame analysis and Ernst Gombrich's own version of framing, Miller asserts that patterns of objects are central to shaping social order and this type of framing is "that which orders life and behavior without our being aware of it" (p. 4). Indeed, in his own work on creative persons, he remarked that objects and physical environment took an unprecedented amount of meaning for people navigating through life (p. 20). Goffman and Gombrich's approaches represent more of a conceptual framing while Miller argues for a framing structured by material culture.

Goffman's *Frame Analysis* is a lengthy 576 pages excluding the introductions and index. It was originally published in 1974 and builds off all the concepts that he had described fifteen years earlier in *The Presentation of Self.* As Miller discusses, in this work, Goffman "argued that much of our behavior is cued by expectations, determined by the frames which constitute the context of action" (2010, p. 109). Goffman attempts to explain how "frames" are used to form an individual's perception of the world around them. In a way, a person uses this conceptual frame as one uses a picture frame: to structure content. Drawing on his foundational dramaturgical theory, using stage and theatre as a metaphor to discuss interactions, Goffman argued that not only do individuals exist in certain roles and act out their existence through curated performances, but individuals use frameworks to understand their experiences (1974, p. 25) Frame analysis is thus, the theory that Goffman used to describe how these conceptual frames are constructed. Every situation that an individual can be in will utilize these frames.

Alford A. Young Jr used frame analysis in his work looking at culture and poverty, using framing as a way to understand how low-income men use and perform images of their experiences. He cited framing as a vital tool for understanding the lives of his participants and how people in general make and respond to choices. Through the scope of framing, he was able to explore the

varied experiences of low-income black men as they navigated their lives and job prospects in an impoverished Detroit. Traditional cultural analyses suggested that men from this socioeconomic and racial background were shoved into the predicament of being expected to aggressively act on any work or educational opportunity that presented itself while simultaneously punishing those men who opted against those opportunities.

Beyond real-life experiences, framing can be especially useful for analyzing images. Visual frame analysis has been used by Goffman himself in works like *Gender Advertisements*. Eeva Luhtakallio from the University of Helsinki used visual frame analysis to look at online images of activism and how activists were being framed in France and Finland. She argues that visual frame analysis does not provide tidy defined framings that can be applied to every situation, but developed her own approach using key concepts of frame analysis to explain how media representation directs framing (2013, p. 34). Indeed, in order to approach images in a systematic way, each researcher must find his or her own method that will be led by the research. For Luhtakallio, this meant looking at the nature of the subjects in her photos. She found that protests were often framed around the male activists and when police were pictured as opposition that they appeared as faceless militarized robots. The performance of these pictures implies an incredible power dynamic between activists and authorities while the author illustrated that the performed gender was male in most cases. In this study, visual frame analysis was utilized to work with a large number of photos and allowed for interpretations by examining the dynamics surrounding how these images were produced and how they are likely to be perceived.

Frames tell us about culture, but culture cannot arise from conceptual framing alone. In his work on social movements, Hank Johnston states that "ultimately frame analysis is about how cognitive processing of events, objects, and situations gets done in order to arrive at an

interpretation" for individuals (p. 218). At any moment, an individual is utilizing frames to understand the world. One must notice that Johnston has specifically called attention to objects as being a part of framing. Where Goffman potentially fails to account for the importance of objects is in part due to his emphasis on human interaction and the sociological trend to attach greater meaning to the actor rather than the actor's culture (Snow & Benford, 2000). Throughout his works, Goffman appears to lump both objects and behavior in the same realm. Riggins (1990) argued that it was necessary for Goffman to do so as he primarily focused on face-to-face interaction that favored the importance of actions over objects in the environment. Riggins points out that Goffman was far from skipping over the potential importance of objects, as the concept of objects conveying prestige was one of Goffman's earlier ideas and "Goffman thought that prestige and self-esteem had to be continually affirmed through public contact with high-status objects" (p. 346). Yet, objects do not place a high importance throughout the theoretical works and instead, take a backseat to the flourishing actions happening upon the stage.

For scholars like Daniel Miller, the magic of framing arises from the physical world, the materials in which we interact with and are structured by. While Goffman's idea of frame analysis allows us to look at interaction, there needs to be a more comprehensive understanding of the physical stage in which events are occurring. If you were to look around someone's home, you might say that humans tend to collect physical objects for reasons like practical utilization, aesthetic decoration, or even symbolic value. Miller certainly found this in his numerous ventures into studying material objects in works such as *The Comfort of Things* and *Stuff.* In the field of examining material objects (an emerging field often known as material culture studies), various branches of social science have continued to study how individuals interact with things in their environment and how this informs culture. Pierre Bourdieu popularized the idea of *habitus* which

described the ingrained rituals and outlooks of people due to their life experiences (1977). Miller builds off this understanding from Bourdieu by calling the intuitive affinity for certain orders of the material world (the normative) an important expression of 'aesthetic' (2008, pg. 19).

Webb Keane summarizes social science's findings on the purpose of material things in relation to individuals quite poetically:

> Material things index the human productive activity that went into them, they materialize social and cosmological structures that would otherwise elude direct experience, they foster the development of the person's sense of separateness from a world that resists its desire and the self-motivated agency that acts on that resisting world, they serve as stable anchors and instigations for memory, feelings and concepts. (Tilley, Keane, Küchler, Rowalands, & Spyer, 2006, p. 201-2)

If the multidisciplinary findings on material objects seem overwhelming in scope, then how are researchers to approach digital objects? In studying the community around #shelfie, theory around material culture helps to navigate how emerging online spaces affect the self. In this case, the importance of objects is two-fold: 1) in the offline content being broadcast virtually, i.e. the individual and their physical space that they are intending to share (for example, a bookshelf) and 2) the digital object that the user then produces and posts to the Instagram audience (the picture of the bookshelf).

Assemblage Framework: Bringing It All Together

What makes a #shelfie? In some ways, #shelfie has been brought about due to a number of reasons: Web 2.0's encouragement for user participation, the accessibility of technology, the popularity of social media, the importance of material objects and physical space. Deleuze and

Guatarri described "assemblage" as a dynamic configuration of individual parts that make up a whole, a heterogenous collection of various entities that assist in explaining non-linear complexity (1988). Assemblage theory is inherently useful in explaining complex systems as the theory emphasizes and allows for fluidity. In their work on exploring eating disorder recovery on Instagram, Andrea LaMarre and Carla Rice based their exploration of posts with eating disorder related hashtags in a Deleuzian feminist frame (2017, pg.1). They describe research as an assemblage in itself, as it describes any and all phenomena that are subject to social inquiry, which includes the subjects of studies alongside the researcher and research methods utilized to produce research (pg. 4). They tackled their examination of this online community by considering the assemblage of "users, images, text, comments, hashtags, digital platforms, audiences, and power structures" as it allowed for deeper analysis beyond a top-down approach that emphasized that these posts were produced in a particular time, space, and physicality (pg.4). In this way, the assemblage of recovery that they explore illustrates that the components (which make up "recovery") are both material and meaningful.

The work on recovery is not the first approach to use Instagram with assemblage theory. Aaron Hess argued that selfies on Instagram occupy the intersection of many assemblages, acknowledging that they are often consisting of contradictory subjectivities, as one would expect with an assemblage approach (pg. 1629) He claimed that the assemblage itself of selfie could be broken down into four main components: "the self, physical space, the device, and the network" (pg. 1632). Along this argument, he contends that selfies are staged performances with a sense of authenticity. This follows along Goffman's dramaturgical theory of self and in fact, the inclusion of physical space and the relationship of self between that space brings up ideas of Bourdieu's *habitus* and Daniel Miller's resulting theory of the 'Humility of Objects' (Miller, 2009).

Furthermore, the inclusion of a discussion on authenticity circles back around to Davis' claims that users are attempting to reconcile their online and offline selves according to authenticity. By using assemblage theory, we can see with a selfie how the user produces content, attaches meaning to material space, navigates networks, and how there is a relationship between the user and the device (pg. 1630). What the works of Hess and researcher team, LaMarre and Rice, highlight is the ability to view a specific phenomenon arising out of Instagram through an assemblage framework.

If assemblage can work to explain selfie and recovery related posts then it stands to reason that one can ground shelfie within an assemblage framework. As this literature review has broken down, the shelfie consists of similar components to the selfie: the user, social media, and the cultural materials within the user's content. However, as opposed to the selfie where the main emphasis is upon the user, the shelfie forces more attention on the physical objects and environment being framed. Within this shelfie assemblage is also how framing is being used in that Instagram frames content within social media and a user frames content within the confines of their physical space. The first part is akin to Goffman's idea of frame analysis and Gombrich's idea of art frames, while the second part emphasizes how theorists such as Miller argue our environments frame our lives by prompting us in unconscious ways. For example, looking at a shelfie, one might find equal meaning in how a user has arranged their books on their shelf while one can also argue the physical structure of the shelf has framed the way the user can arrange those books.

Furthermore, within discussions of digital communities and participatory culture, researchers like LaMarre and Rice have organized their research by themes that have arisen from the data collection. For their work on eating disorder recovery, they explored how recovery was

constructed by users, but also how the online narrative of recovery on Instagram was largely homogenous. For example, users often posting photos of their meals along with discussions about their eating disorder recovery and highly feminized "after" recovery photos that highlighted sexual attraction from men as a potential positive aspect of their "recovering" bodies (pg. 5-8). Here, there is an important implication. While online communities can allow users to express themselves more easily, there is an assemblage of content that arises out of what becomes popular with users. In the case of the shelfie as we will see in the data collection, this means that posts are often quite similar in appearance, but there are other new evolutions of shelfie which are arising to expand the original definition.

All Ideas Assembling to Form an Approach

I hold forth upon agreements with Goffman and Mead that the self is a multi-faceted organism constructed in part by interaction and performance. However, I find their arguments lacking in consideration with how people interact with their environment and even how this physical space may influence a performance. Thus, I find agreement with scholars like Daniel Miller on ideas around cultural materialism influencing the individual to form a more well-rounded approach on selfhood. Finally, I take great consideration from LaMarre and Rice with their approach and interpretation of Deleuzian framework.

Methodology
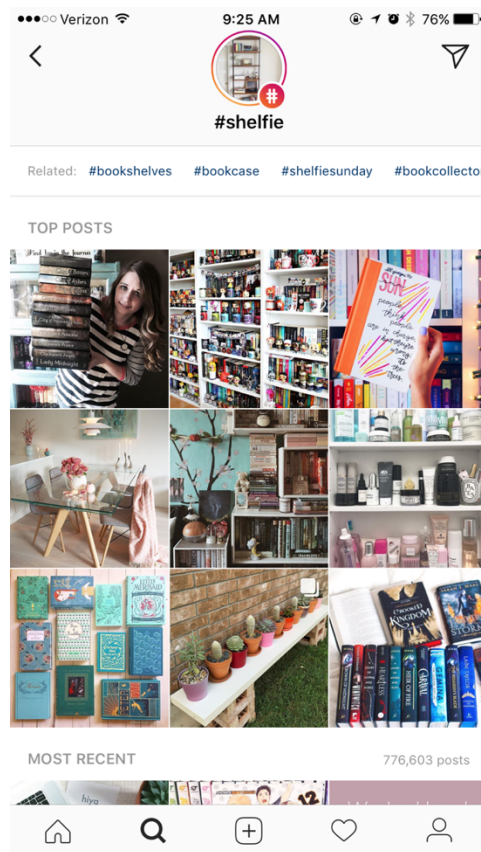
Figure 1. Example screenshot of the top nine posts for #shelfie. Screenshot by author.

This research originally came out of an idea for an anthology chapter, but it quickly progressed to my thesis work. In the summer of 2017, I set out to track #shelfie on Instagram using the "Top Posts" feature provided by the application which is powered by an algorithm to sort posts with high amounts of engagement. Over two weeks, I captured just under a hundred images as each day contained nine high-performing photos, resulting in data for ten days during the months of July and August. I copied the information from each user's caption and coordinated it with their responding picture in my research since I was interested in looking at both visual and textual content analysis. Each user's profile was then found and investigated so that the user could

be coded as Female, Male, Commercial (an account cleared stated to be run by a business), or Unknown (an account that could either not be identified as male or female or represented an "aesthetic" account that may be owned by multiple people or one person). Overall, I ended up with 88 pictures to analyze, as one file was unfortunately corrupted, and the OP had deleted this content.

Part of the reason for choosing two weeks as a way to capture data was two-fold: context and resources. In terms of context: I was utilizing the University of New Orleans library's resources to find all of my research articles. While this resulted in being able to find a handful of academic works relating to Instagram which used an image collecting methodology, these papers were largely few and far between. This can be attributed to (as per the discussion in the Literature Review) the simple fact that Instagram is a less popular application to study versus something like Facebook. Furthermore, the visual media requires a time-consuming amount of work since it goes beyond mere textual analysis. In terms of resources: I was a fresh-eyed graduate student and not a team of paired researchers, like in the work of LaMarre and Rice's article from 2017. Most of the recent papers that I have found to be helpful for my research were being submitted in 2017, as referenced by LaMarre and Rice's work, when I was beginning my data collection. I modeled my approach more on a realistic goal that would allow me to deeply examine the images that I collected. In fact, I have spent several hours on each of the eighty-eight images, but this work must be distilled in the confines of a thesis that neither aggravates its readers with gratuitous length while refusing to skimp on the necessary information for a reader to comprehend what is occurring.
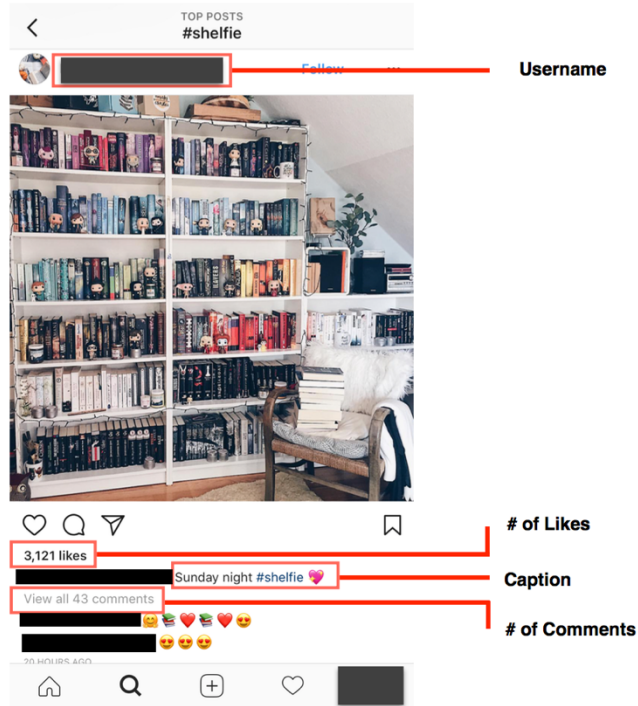
Figure 2. Example screenshot of Instagram with corresponding labels to indicate structure. Screenshot and figure by author.

At this time, Instagram looked differently than it does in 2019. For example, the application had not yet extended their Live option, which now allows for videos filmed live to be posted to a separate section that exists as IGTV (Constine, 2017; "Welcome to IGTV," 2018). As Instagram evolves, it continues adding more extensive options to share media. For example, it has extended the time allowed for videos posted as regular posts and even allowed multiple photos in one post (Strange, 2016). Figure 2 is a screenshot that shows the appearance of a regular Instagram post during the data collection.
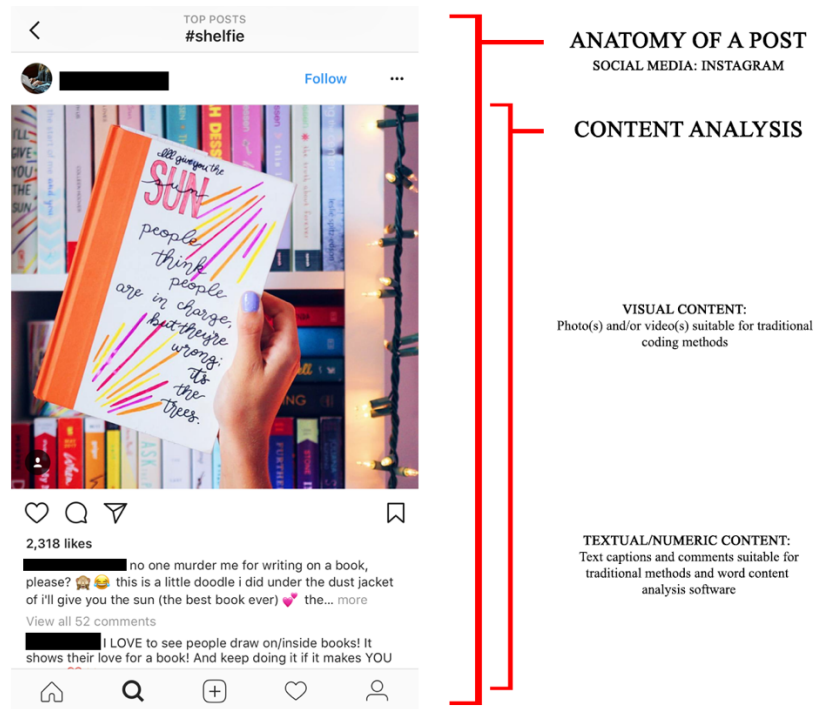
Figure 3. Example screenshot of one of the top nine posts from Instagram for #shelfie. Screenshot and figure by author.

Qualitative analysis with visual content can be difficult, as methods typically involve coding the images with clear recognizable categories, such as: book, shelf, person. These categories can then be described with great detail depending on one's research interest. For the purpose of this research, images are evaluated and described using concise descriptions that explain the content of the image with notes on the perceived aesthetic details, such as amount of color and brightness of the photo.

For the purpose of analyzing visual content, I have coded Instagram images with variables (what categories or types of things are present within the image; ex: shelf, plant, figurine) along with the content of the caption. For a full list of content analysis notes, see Appendix A.

For textual and numerical data, the options are more concrete. In order to understand what I was looking at in terms of the levels of social interactions, I imported my data into Stata to run numbers for a snapshot. I wanted to look at three things with the data: what kind of person was posting, what levels of engagement were happening, and if the original definitions of #shelfie were being used correctly.

When I began my research, I initially defined a shelfie as: any visual media containing book(s) or item(s) related to literature in a physical space within, around, and/or upon a piece of furniture. Despite the use of "shelf", I wanted to include the carefully crafted posts of users who often displayed their current reading choices outside of shelves but still within a curated space and did not want to exclude those with a book collection who may not possess a shelf. However, as the research progressed, I began to realize that another definition of #shelfie would be needed: any visual media illustrating a curated space with personal artifacts that were placed distinctly on shelves, often with an attention to the interior design. I used these two definitions to code the research photos as non-shelfie (0), book focus shelfie(1), and decoration focus shelfie(3). Appendix A contains the visual content descriptions of every image along with their coded definition.

My primary concern for my data analysis was the ability to look at the data (photo and text) to observe what was occurring in these #shelfie posts and what these posts could tell us about culture in the age of social media. My goal was to be able to compile the data and then observe it through the research lens to pick up on any patterns that were occurring. There has been no scholarly work on #shelfie and a cursory search on Google Scholar will only bring up geological papers discussing continental shelves. However, other researchers have looked at certain hashtags and communities on Instagram, such as eating disorder recovery (LaMarre and Rice, 2015). In

their particular approach, they utilized thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2014) to observe patterns and an assemblage approach to discuss their findings with a feminist approach. While I will take into considerations of gender (such as women using social media more than men), this thesis uses the approach of the assemblage framework and analysis that considers the various form of framing occurring in these posts.

The shelfie is fascinating because of what it is and what is represents. It is a digital object produced by users to showcase material items. This type of post expresses aspects of the self and is shared on Instagram, a social media platform, which encourages engagement from other users. Within these shelfies, users tell stories about themselves: about what they find dear, about what they wish to showcase, and about how they are connecting.

Let Me Take a #Shelfie

According to the demographic information available through research sources like the Pew Research Center, one can reasonably expect to find more women posting on Instagram. In fact, this was the case for the shelfie with users being coded as female making up more than half of the posts for the data collection.

Table 1

Summary Statistics with Average Likes, Sorted by Identity Category

Identity	*M* (*SD*)	Frequency	Minimum	Maximum
Female (F)	2666.98 (1565.55)	48	502	7633
Male (M)	1770.5 (862.25)	4	727	2712
Unknown (U)	2749.82 (1492.87)	17	758	6465
Commercial (C)	3723.84 (3395.47)	19	1183	13568

Out of 88 posts, women were by far the most represented identity group for #shelfie usage with 48 "female" coded posts, followed by commercial and unknown at a near tie. The discrepancies between the four means of average likes in Table 1 are interesting, as the commercial identity group has a higher average than any other group although with only nineteen occurrences.

After establishing the definitions for the book focus and decoration focus shelfies, I went through several times to code each of the 88 photos. Out of 88 posts, book focus shelfie emerged as the majority with decoration focus shelfie coming in second. Only nine out of the 88 photos were coded as non-shelfie.

Table 2

Frequency of Coded Definitions for Photos

Definition Code	Frequency
Book	54
Decoration	25
Non-Shelfie	9
Total	88

Caption Analysis

While Instagram is naturally rich in visual media, the accompanying captions to user posts are important sources of information. They can aid researchers in understanding a more complex, well-rounded portrait of digital interactions. In the case of #shelfie, all 88 post captions were recorded in order to contribute to a comprehensive analysis. Of the 88 captions, nineteen captions contained a language other than English. Of these nineteen posts with a language other than English, these posts were coded with the following results: seven book-focus, eight decoration focus, and four photos that did not count as a shelfie. The four photos that were coded as not constituting either a book or decoration shelfie were all posted by the same user.

Concerning the English captions, I utilized ATLAS.ti software to use the "Word Cruncher" tool which analyses aggregate text data to reveal the frequency of certain words. I chose to use the option of ATLAS.ti's "stop list" or a list of pre-determined common words that help sort out filler. The free/trial version of ATLAS.ti's software does not allow for customizing the stop list beyond certain measures. With this software, all of the caption information from data collection was compiled in a single text document and emojis were removed for easier analysis. The top twenty

words were ultimately the focus for this analysis. Three of the top twenty appears to be words from the German language, but there was no option to run two stop lists from English and German for one analysis.

Word Frequency of Text Captions

Word	Frequency
shelfie	45
books	28
book	23
reading	20
shelf	18
bookstagram	17
like	17
library	16
read	16
just	15
love	14
one	14
bookshelf	13
good	12
bookworm	11
de	11
ich	11
bookishfeatures	10
en	10
happy	10

The Multiple Framing of a #Shelfie

In theory, Instagram is a perfect application to apply framing theory, as Instagram essentially provides digital picture frames that users look at. This fits well with Goffman and Gombrich's ideas since framing involves conceptual frames that provide meaning and context to situations and these ideas can be applied to applications like Instagram. For example, rather than the stage of the traditional dramaturgical example from Goffman, individuals have the application's user interface, how Instagram looks and operates from the user's end. As individuals scroll, they observe a post with visual media (as of September 2017: an image, multiple images, or a short video clip) that may be accompanied by a text caption. As the visual media is liked or viewed by other users, Instagram updates those statistics to be shown underneath the visual media. Users may also comment on posts unless the poster has disabled this option. Users may also tag other users in the actual visual content or in the corresponding captions.

When one holds their cell phone in their hand, it is a rectangle-shaped device. All of the media, notifications, and actions happening on this device occur on a small screen that weighs less than a pound. If one were to open Instagram or Facebook, this application would launch and fill up this screen. The mobile phone is itself a frame, but the application has opened a new frame with its own primary framework. It is a digital space, populated with algorithmic content tailored by a user's aggregated history of actions on and off the application. On Instagram, the user can now utilize the search function for hashtags, names of peoples, usernames, and even go to a curated "Explore" tab that compiles posts that a user is likely to enjoy based on their past interactions (for example: liking photos within a specific hashtag) (Constine, 2016).

While the issue of algorithmic-based activity has been discussed, it should be noted that users are capable of agency in their own ways. A user can like a particular hashtag and seek out similar content on their own. In fact, hashtags are used to code content much like research. Hashtags can help build digital interactions, a sort of organizing that arises from a user's decision to structure their content around a particular tag (Highfield & Leaver, 2015) A user interested in art can look up popular art-related hashtags until they discover a particular hashtag that contains media with a higher personal relevance. Perhaps this user will then follow another user that produces and posts such content. Brands, artists, and public figures rely on this type of intuitive searching to grow their audience. It should be noted that hashtags are up to users to utilize and with the growing interest in digital marketing, sometimes users will post unrelated hashtags to their content with the goal of increasing overall audience.

Is Instagram's framework as authentic as the conceptual frameworks used in everyday life? A common narrative around social media accuses these platforms of encouraging selfishness and increasing egotism in the digital population. Despite frequent articles emerging to decry Instagram as a motivator of selfies and self-obsession, research has not found significant evidence to suggest that selfies in themselves are encouraging rampant narcissism (Barry et al., 2017). Additionally, if we were to consider the presentation and performance of the self merely translating from real life to the digital sphere, an argument can be made for Instagram's frame merely copying the frames society already has. "Overall, such posts were not associated with narcissism or self-esteem, with some specific themes showing small correlations with narcissism and concerns regarding societal attitudes about appearance. Some aspects of participants' Instagram activity (i.e., number of likes for selfies and posies; number of followers) were significantly correlated with posting posies" (Barry et al., 2017).

SHELFIE DEFINITION: MET

VISUAL CONTENT
ANALYSIS

Visual content:
Shelves filled with books,
user has placed self in picture,
note the variation of color.

Follow ···

1,266 likes

_____ Happy #nationalbookloversday aka best day ever! Might have to swing by a bookstore just to celebrate today... more

View all 12 comments

_____ I spent like an hour sitting in my floor staring up at my shelves this evening. I totally get it. 😂

Figure 4. Screenshot of one of the top nine posts that was positively coded as a shelfie. Screenshot with notes by author.

Figure 4 illustrates an example of a positively coded #shelfie. There are books and personal artifacts on shelves and the user has even placed themselves within the picture. This picture is highly curated: a user has artfully positioned a part of themselves and taken an aesthetically pleasing picture, one that specifically relates to #shelfie that they've utilized in their caption. If social media did not exist, would such a curated image be likely to be shared with a group of strangers? The framing of Instagram exists within the rules of social media, digital tools that allow and encourage a user to construct media to share. For further analysis, one can look at the accompanying caption that the OP used.

Happy #nationalbookloversday aka best day ever! ==Might have to swing by a bookstore just to celebrate today!==
.
.
.
But what better way to celebrate then to lay on the floor and appreciate ==your book collection! Maybe I'm the only crazy one!==
.
.
.
==#shelfie #bookcases #bookshelfs== #appreciation #abundleofbooks #bookishlove #idratherbereading #eatsleepread #booklover #bookworm #bookstagram #bibliophile #books #booksaremyeverything #bookgeek #booknerd #obsessed #lovebooks #bookobsessed #bookishlyunique #bookishmerchfeatures

Figure 5. The corresponding caption to the shelfie from Figure 4. Screenshot and corresponding text emphasis by author.

Figure 5 shows the accompanying caption to the previous photo. I have highlighted sections that are particularly relevant. The OP engages the audience by noting what his or her plans might be for the day, incorporating their visual subject matter (a #shelfie) with an implication that there is an authenticity behind the OP's focus. Note that the user addresses the audience with a familiar tone and then suggests in a light-hearted tone that maybe OP is different from the other presumable book lovers in the community by engaging in the act of laying on the floor to admire his or her own book collection. While the action and words are intended to be relatable, the audience for the OP knows on some level that the user took a significant amount of time to produce the visual content and the corresponding caption. The trailing hashtags at the end are relevant, as the order of hashtags can give information about OP's thought process and strategic intention with

the post as hashtag inclusion reflects a decision upon the part of the user (Highfield & Leaver, 2015). On a surface level, the entire post (image and caption with an interactive commenting section) requires strategy and performance. The user has set up and acted out something while simultaneously transforming a strategic performance into a place of interaction, allowing other users to comment and connect with OP.

I have proposed using framing concepts with Instagram because they can be adapted to the application. From a Goffman approach, the user produces a performance within the Instagram framework to an audience that has the option of interacting. Users, whether they are the content posters or the audience (and they are likely both), engage in strategic methods to create relevant visual media and accompanying captions. Such strategy implies heavy out-of-frame activity for planning and execution, but this seems understood by users of Instagram as it works within the Instagram framework. From a cultural materialist approach, the objects within the shelfies represent meaningful belongings and an environment that acts upon the individual (Miller 2009).

Visual content analysis involves studying a collection of visual media in order to discover patterns. Researchers in various fields have developed ways of performing visual content analysis. For example, Luhtakallio used Goffman's frame analysis in her work on activist images and utilized the concept of *master frame* to describe the way that a cognitive schema about normal phenomena helps individuals form an interpretation of interactions (2013). For Daniel Miller's exploration of thirty people from a particular street in London, he presents each chapter as a portrait as an entryway into understanding how to interpret people through their belongings (2010). I will first discuss shelfies among their three definitions (book focus, decoration focus, and non-shelfie) and discuss the patterns that are arising within these photos as an exploration of the assemblage of shelfie.

Figure 6. A post positively coded as a book focus shelfie.

In this book focus shelfie, three white bookshelves hold an assortment of books and a few decorative items. The shelves are tidy with a spotlight on the left shelf, likely from a natural source of light. Within the caption, the user comments that she could not remember the last time she posted a picture without any significant editing, but this photo only received a cropping before it was posted. "Dream up something wild and improbable" is printed on a pillow, a quote from a popular young adult author, Laini Taylor, from her book, *Strange the Dreamer*. Another pillow on the bottom shelf reads: "The world belongs to those who read." A collection of Funko "Pops!" figurines take up an entire small shelf in the left bookshelf. Funko is a manufacturer of collectibles, most well-known for their "Pops!" line which features large-headed toys from popular fictional works (Ali, 2018). In this shelfie, some of these Funko figurines depicted are from the *Harry Potter* universe, likely signaling that the user is a fan of the books.

"For all that I pose and create images, I walked into this one," the user wrote. The user admits that she poses and produces images in a meaningful way but implies that this particular image has a spontaneous air. The difference is enough to remark upon.

Figure 7. A post positively coded as a decoration focus shelfie.

The user caption for Figure X for this shelfie was posted in Swedish, although it is tagged with the English hashtags of green, shelfie, greenpottery, and mirror. Clearly, these ceramic pieces have been placed strategically on this hanging shelf and organized by their green tones, as suggested by the organized hashtags around green. The plants also take up the lower corners of the photo, providing an organic splash of green that complements the pottery.

Figure 8. A post positively coded as a non-shelfie.

Posts that were coded as non-shelfie are more easily understood. The hardest of these to code were photos that toed the line towards decoration focus shelfies, but ultimately consisted of photos focusing on interior design with little to no inclusion of a shelf being utilized to store or display material objects (see Figure 9 in which the focus is on a dining room table). There were only ten posts tagged with #shelfie that failed to relate to the original understanding of shelfie. That being said, this does

Figure 9. Example of a non-shelfie

not mean that users are deliberately attempting to change #shelfie with a post using this hashtag while depicting content that is not a shelfie. There are a number of reasons that a user may use a hashtag. Usually, it is for the purpose of accurately tagging their content and to be included within a specific community. For example, the users in this data collection with book shelfies were

sometimes using #bookstagram, another popular hashtag that gathers like-minded bibliophiles together online (Hammoudi, 2018). A deeper look at shelfies allows this to be more easily understood.

A Deeper Look at Shelfie: An Assemblage of Patterns

Figure 10. A book focus shelfie.

On August 15th, 2017, one user wrote, "Hi lovelies! 💖 I hope you're doing well today 🙈 Today I received The Library of Fates in the mail as our August BOTM for @thebookboundsociety and I'm quickly moving through omg it's SO good 📖🌿 What are you currently reading? #shelfies" for her caption on a photo displaying her bookshelf. From a visual perspective, one can note the collection of colors in the bookshelf. From the top, there are warm shades ranging from blood tangerine to pale pastel pink on the top shelf. The middle shelf contains mostly notes of yellow, blue, and black; interestingly, a Hufflepuff (a fictional house from *Harry Potter* represented by the colors yellow and black) mug ties together the unity of the colors on the shelf. On the bottom shelf, the colors are much darker. Funko "Pops" decorate each shelf and correspond in a complementary manner to each of the color schemes (bright warm tones on top, a mixture of yellow and cool tones in the middle, and the dark collection at the bottom).

The user addresses the audience as "lovelies" in her caption and comments that she hopes they're doing well, implying a level of affection. Evidently, this user is connected with another account that holds a BOTM (Book of the Month) selection. She notes that she is moving fast through the book since the material is good. She ends her caption with a question for the audience. It is not unusual for a user to ask about current reading selections or to ask a general question relating to the post, as this occurs a few times throughout the caption. This can be a sign that users want to engage with their audience.

In another book shelfie from July 28th, 2017 a user begins her caption with a question: "Is anyone else guilty of buying books just because they're stunning? 💁 In my defence, I will eventually get around to reading everything I own. At least I hope I will! 🙈 #classics #clothbound #penguinclassics #shelfie #bookstore." This shelfie appears to be taking place inside of a bookstore that the user has snapped a picture of. Although this is not an image sharing her personal bookshelf, a bookstore is a place of interest for her and likely her followers. This users usually depicts her personal bookshelf on her account, often taking great care to rearrange them, but sometimes posts pictures of the bookstores that she frequents.

Interestingly, modern digital marketing literature suggests interacting with audiences by asking questions can improve feedback from customers and that consumers' high engagement to brands remains a focus for future research (York, 2018; Dessart, Veloutsou, & Morgan-Thomas, 2015). In their study on female fashion bloggers, Duffy and Hund found that successful female bloggers were using highly curated sharing on social media to portray an idealized version of self to their followers which required an immense amount of self-discipline (2015). Presumably, users posting book shelfies are pursuing their interests of literature and extending their interests by connecting with other users. There are fascinating elements within these shelfies as they

40

demonstrate a high level of curation and some captions support this with a user explicitly admitting that they curate their photos and even to what extent they curate.

Figure 11: A positively coded book shelfie.

In Figure 4 and X, the user holds a book in front of her bookshelf. She has written on the book and detailed this point in her caption, "no one murder me for writing on a book, please? 🙈😂 this is a little doodle i did under the dust jacket of i'll give you the sun (the best book ever) 💕 the inspiration struck me a little bit ago and i actually compulsively had to do it? it was the weirdest (and best) thing." The user also goes on to mention that she took some photos that she can't wait to share with her followers. Clearly, she knows that people hold strong opinions about writing on a book and since she is sharing a book focus shelfie, it is likely that she has cultivated followers with similar views. As Daniel Miller discussed in his work researching London homes and looking at the possessions of Londoners, each object in a person's home represented a "form by which they have chosen to express themselves" (2008, pg. 13). If we take on the cultural materialist argument then we can interpret the user's post as focusing on something that she found valuable ("the best book ever") and so meaningful, that she desired to impart decoration upon it and then share it online. She also noted that the decoration was under the book jacket, so she has not marred the outside covering of the book, simply added a secret decoration beneath the jacket. The only inclusion of herself is the disembodied hand, acting as a prop to hold up the centerpiece, the book that she has decorated.
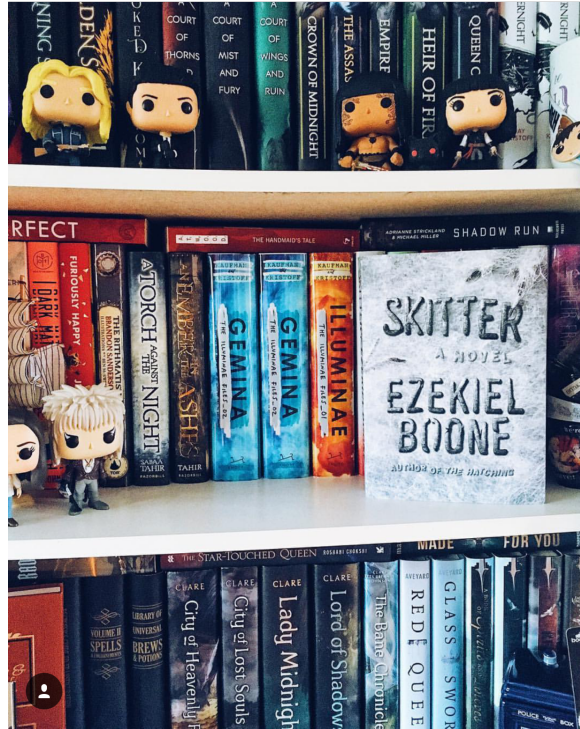
Figure 12: A book focus shelfie.

The Funko "Pop!" figurines appear in nine of the posts in the data collection, all of them being in book focus shelfies. Figure X features a close-up of a user's bookshelf and you can see figurines from various fictional works such as Jareth and Sarah from the *Labyrinth* movie. The middle shelf also showcased a book that the user was currently reading (*Skitter* by Ezekiel Boone) and she discussed it in her caption after asking an attention-capturing question, "Do you guys have any fears or phobia's? Are you afraid of water? Spiders? Ghosts?" She followed this up by describing that the plot of *Skitter* involves spiders as a major component. Most of the books displayed are from a fantasy-related genre. The top shelf actually features Funko "Pop" figurines that are not from the official catalog, likely custom work by the user herself or ordered from a producer of custom figurines online as Funko sells blank, "DIY" dolls for users to customize (O'Brien, 2016; n.d.-b).

Some shelfies come off as more staged than others. For example, Figure X is a repost, meaning it was created by a user and then shared by another account. In this case, a commercial account that represented an online magazine shared the original content and tagged the OP. In this picture, we see that the main focus is on a book (*To All the Boys I've Loved Before* by Jenny Han) which is opened to reveal the title page. The book is framed by an assortment of decorations and a few other open books. Sprigs of lavender sit next to book pages, a cup of liquid (perhaps coffee or dark tea) rests on a slightly disturbed blanket, and there is even a pinecone next to plants on a tray. All of these objects rest upon some sort of white linen surface, possibly the user's bed. While the shelfies that have been discussed earlier certainly have a level of curation to them, this photo is fascinating because it has such a high level of curation. After all, are we to expect that the user sets up her bed like this each time that she enjoys a book and relishes the risk of spilling her drink onto the stark linen while her succulents flank each side? Maybe, but it is not likely. The material objects in this shelfie are artistically curated to focus around the book. The caption opens with: "Summer mornings are to relax with a book and some coffee or tea right?"

Figure 13. A book focus shelfie.

Plants come up again and again in shelfies. You can spot a living plant in 29 of the positively coded shelfies (book and decoration focus). In Figure X, we see a shelfie prominently featuring plants and some Funko "Pop" figurines. The pillow on the chair boasts in script, "Don't let the muggles get you down." This is a reference to the *Harry Potter* universe, as the term "muggle" refers to a non-magic person (Rowling, 1997). Unsurprising, as the books are among some of the best-selling works in the world

Figure 14. A book focus shelfie.

("Pottermore", 2011). Contrasted with the organic life of the plants, the toys and books are linked to realms of fiction, characters that exist within an imaginary realm. It has been argued that adults use toy collecting as a form of play that involves material culture and connecting within fandoms, a group of other fans of some human interest such as a fictional work (Heljakka, 2017; n.d.-c).

Figure 15. A decoration focus shelfie.

Although I decided to focus on what I believed to be the two type of shelfies (book and decoration), a pattern emerged from a few decoration focus shelfies. These were shelfies that featured makeup and skincare products curated in an aesthetically pleasing way. Much like the other shelfies, these posts contained meaningfully displayed objects. Much like the bookshelf in Figure 10, each shelf is organized by a color scheme. Products with cool tones of blue and green are placed on the top shelf, gray and black products are on the middle shelf, and the last shelf is filled with warm-toned bottles and splashes of pastel pink.

Discussion & Analysis

From the data collection, a number of findings emerged from studying this set of photos from the #shelfie community. First, shelfie can be expanded to include newly emerging types of shelfies, in particular one focused solely on products; users construct what a shelfie is in this sense. Second, shelfies are shared mostly by women which suggests a strong gendered relationship to this kind of post. Third, the content of shelfies (photos and captions) represents compelling information about the users: book focus shelfies were more likely to feature popular works of fiction (especially representing the young adult genre) and toy figurines that relate to fandoms while decoration focus shelfies often contained ceramic works with an overall focus on interior design. Book focus shelfies were often crammed with objects unless a user was featuring their current reading selections or a few books for a particular reason. Finally, all of these posts are highly curated (images and captions), suggesting that shelfies are carefully performed and produced by users.

When this thesis began, a shelfie was defined as "any visual media containing book(s) or item(s) related to literature in a physical space within, around, and/or upon a piece of furniture" or in the case of an decoration focused shelfie as "any visual media illustrating a curated space with personal artifacts that were placed distinctly on shelves, often with an attention to the interior design." Through data collection, a third type of shelfie has emerged and become a popular post in online communities such as Instagram or Reddit, an online forum (Blott, 2018). This third type of shelfie is a beauty product focused post in which the user shares and displays beauty products, often skincare related. For the sake of coding, these beauty products shelfies were originally counted as decoration-focused posts in the original data collection.

Research on female fashion bloggers argued that femininity and a woman's self-expression can be highly commodified to be geared towards personal branding (Duffy & Hund, 2015). High levels of curation were often present in shelfies, sometimes accompanied by a user discussing said curation or lack thereof in a photo, as in Figure six's example. Women have historically been blocked from the intellectual realm through lowered accessibility of education and overall gender inequality, although recent years has seen women surpassing men in college education attainment in the United States (Solomon, 1985; Lopez & Gonsalez, 2014). Does this finding argue for a Virginia Woolf-esque statement about women creating spaces of their own in order to produce creative content (Woolf, 1929)? Or does it fall more in line with female-leaning fandoms simply utilizing Instagram more? This may be an interesting pursuit for future analysis.

User captions were a multi-faceted assemblage of self-presentation and interaction. Users often engaged in self-expression by discussing things about themselves (a favorite book of the moment or a story pertaining to the shelfie being posted) and sometimes asked their followers about their reading interests or personal lives. Users showed an interest in sharing their passions, especially concerning reading and books when the users were posting book focus shelfies. Although some users indicated that they were working or interacting with other accounts (for example, forming a book of the month group), most users geared their captions towards their overall followers for interaction.

Problems & Limitations

There is a limited amount of analysis that can be done just through screenshots. Ideally, this study could be reproduced again to tackle another online community organized by a hashtag on Instagram while recruiting members from this community, i.e. sending interview requests out to users actively archiving their posts with a particular hashtag. This may be problematic however as a researcher would likely need to start a separate research Instagram account for this purpose. Furthermore, Instagram's default privacy settings are arranged so that unknown user messages will be sent to a special filtered inbox. These messages are not always shown to a user unless they are in their message inbox, meaning that they may be easily overlooked and participation efforts may be weak compared to other studies. A comprehensive picture is needed to understand how online interactions differ from in-person interactions, while simultaneously establishing their common ground. Scholars in fields like digital humanities are continually marching forward in this respect now.

This work originally came out of the idea for a chapter proposal which would focus on emerging methodologies for the modern age. Applying traditional methods to digital humanities is only one avenue of the potential future. Naturally, the hope was that applying these traditional methods would lead to questions about how old methods fit with new technologies. In this way, a researcher can discover new ways of thinking and analysis by seeing what is lacking in the analysis. Thus, we create and continually improve upon methods as we move forward. Perhaps not by the pace of technology itself, but by a pace that aims to keep up with the innovation of the human spirit and mind.

Conclusion

A shelfie embodies an assemblage of things: the self, Instagram, and material objects. It is only possible in the world of Web 2.0, in which user-created content is highly encouraged and allows for easy sharing among a network. The shelfie can be understood through framing, both cognitive framing (from scholars such as Erving Goffman) and framing from cultural materialism (from scholars such as Daniel Miller). It is necessary to consider both the actor producing the content and the content that they are including within their posts. For shelfie, this generally signifies material objects that are meaningful to the user and curated to appear aesthetically pleasing with common patterns, such as the inclusion of Funko "Pop!" toys among book shelfies or the presence of organic plant matter among all positively coded shelfies. Shelfies represent a fascinating snapshot of the digital age, a virtual object that conveys physical space and forms of self-expression.

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Appendix A

The following is a list of the visual content analysis of each picture. For most documented days, there are nine photos within each day to represent the top nine photos of that day. Some days have been edited to reflect if an OP has since deleted their content. Photos coded as officially meeting the #shelfie definition will state whether the photo is a "book focus" or an "Decoration focus" at the start of the description.

Note: Decoration focus typically involves objects displayed in an aesthetically pleasing manner in a home setting. Shelves can have the sole focus of artifacts such as ceramic pieces or even beauty products. Additionally, pieces of furniture can act as makeshift shelves themselves for displaying these personal artifacts. After the initial research analysis, I have added in the discussion section that beauty products are another emerging #shelfie that will likely require a separate definition.

July 25, 2017

1. Book focus. Three books laying on a white blanket with four plants, three candles, and a cup of a dark liquid (presumably coffee or tea)., along with one wooden cutting board. The objects are arranged in a highly aesthetic manner. REPOST
2. Decoration focus. A photo displaying a water tumbler (subject of the caption) with a few decorations: a container of face cream, a small bottle of tobacco sauce, a tote bag product, a VHS tape, and a decoration in a snowball.
3. Book focus. A book wrapped in string lights on a blanket. In the background, blurred, is a bookcase.
4. Book focus. A person stands in front of a bookcase. They are holding a stack of books, all from the Harry Potter series in German. There are others Harry Potter-related artifacts on the bookcase. The caption is in German
5. Book focus. A picture of a cashier at a book store. She sits beside a computer. There is a dog near her. A few people are shopping in the aisles surrounding the cashier's section. Assorted posters, cards, and books are placed around the store and cashier area.

6. Not shelfie. A vase sits along with a smaller glass receptacle filled with petals alongside a lit candle. There is a couch in the background with a blanket thrown on one of the arms. There is a lit lamp in the background.
7. Not shelfie. Repost of an illustration of a shelf depicting various plants and coffee/tea mugs.
8. Book focus. Three large bookcases are depicted. Most are filled with books. There are also two pillows and a shelf of just toy figurines.
9. Not shelfie. A man fishing and holding a large blue eye fish. The #shelfie hashtag has been rarely seen with photos relating to fishing. This photo was thrown out as not counting as a shelfie.

July 28, 2017

1. Decoration focus. A desk with a shelf sitting on it and a shelf hung above it. There are toys filling the shelves and on top of the shelves. Most of them are related to the Disney picture, Toy Story.
2. Not shelfie. Two vases (one filled) sit on a table with a lit candle. There are three tall candles further back on the table that are also lit.
3. Book focus. A close-up picture of a shelf. There are stacks of books on top of the shelf and within the shelf. The book covers are highly decorative.
4. Decoration focus. This photo depicts a workspace or indoor space with a table/desk. There are three books on the tabletop. There are a few photos lying on the tabletop. There are two framed photos. A smaller set of shelves is on the wall. There are several small plants everywhere: table, on the floor, in the small shelves, and on top of a shelf at the very top of the image.
5. Book focus. A picture of a book lying next to a notebook There are a stack of color-sorted books (red-yellow-blue) beneath the book and notebook. There are two rolls of washi tape near the main book and open notebook.
6. Book focus. A chair nestled into the corner with bookshelves behind it. On the nearest bookshelf is an assortment of plants. The other two larger bookshelves contain books, figurines, and art decorations.
7. Decoration focus. A highly curated photo displaying various makeup products with a few personal decorations. Most of the products are beauty products, consisting of various tubes and containers.
8. Book focus. Six books positioned on a white blanket. They are spaced to clearly illustrate their covers.
9. Book focus. Two bookcases filled with brightly colored books and figurines decorating all six displayed shelves.

July 29, 2017

1. Book focus. One large bookcase that takes up the entire photo. This photo appears to be from a bookstore, potentially a "repost" from another user shared by a more commercial account.
2. Book focus. A woman stands behind a stack of artisticly displayed books that are taller than her (due to her being bent down). Behind her are black bookshelves filled with books in every space and a few assorted personal artifacts. The picture overall is rather dark in terms of brightness.
3. Book focus. A shelf filled with books and decorated with various personal artifacts. There are decorations on the wall next to the bookcase. Each shelf edge has a row of small artistic depictions of cartoon figures, presumably made from paper.
4. Book focus. The focus of the photo is a corner of the room which largely consists of a white bookshelf juxtaposed with a wide assortment of artistic decorations and personal artifacts. The photo is bright and filled with variation of colors.
5. Deleted by original poster.
6. Decoration focus. Three minimalist wooden, floating shelves that hold various ceramic pieces. No books. White, black, and tan are primary colors.
7. Book focus. A corner of a room with the focus overwhelmingly focused on a filled bookshelf that contains tightly stacked piles of books and materials. There is a chair with a briefcase and various personal artifacts on a nearby table and a map on the wall.
8. Book focus. A corner of a room with the focus primarily on a filled white bookshelf that has most of the books stacked so that the paper sides are being displayed to the viewer. There is a small wooden table with a branch hanging above it and singular light bulb hanging from the branch. There is a book and a pitcher with a flower in it on the table. The picture is overall bright.
9. Decoration focus. A side of a room, perhaps a living room or bedroom. There is a small wooden bookshelf farther off in the room with a few books, pieces of art, and various artifacts. It does not appear to be the main focus of the image, as the eye is drawn to an open set of white double doors.

July 31, 2017

1. File corrupted.
2. Decoration focus. A photo of one side of a room. There is a focus on two chairs set up in an aesthetically pleasing way with a focus on the Decoration. There is a small

black bookshelf in the corner, but there appear to be no books, only a few personal pieces of art and ceramic pieces. There is a large vase with blooming flowers on the top of the highest shelf.

3. Decoration focus. A photo of cabinets (lower and upper) with a countertop surface in the middle, serving as a bar with a plant and a few assorted pieces of art. There are two books on a small circular table next to a chair or couch, but the focus is largely on the cabinets and bar behind the table.

4. Book focus. A cat outreaches its paws to touch a cup, filled with a dark liquid, and is presumably reclined on a blanket. There is an open book next to the ca with a fanning display of various books with similar black and white cover from a specific publisher series.

5. Not shelfie. A city landscape with dark clouds overhead, presumably created with some grapic effects using an application or software. This photo was thrown out as not counting as a #shelfie, much like the fishing picture from the first data collection day on July 25th, 2017.

6. Book focus. Three simple white shelves with a stack of horizontally displayed book stacks on each shelf. On the top shelf, there is a white sign with black lettering reading: "sweetbookobsession, July bookhaul or → oops, need more shelves".

7. Book focus. A picture of a room with a large expanse of bookshelves in the background. In the foreground, a sectional couch is positioned with an open book. Behind the couch is a table with a cup and a coaster. The bookshelves in the background are tall, reaching all the way to the ceiling. The bookshelves are filled with mostly books and virtually no artistic personal artifacts.

8. Book focus. A horizontal stack of books displaying the spines of each volume. The books consist of a constructed rainbow, starting with red at the top and running to purple/black towards the bottom. A hand holding an ice cream cone with four scoops of ice cream, arranged in a similar rainbow pattern, is next to the stack. The arm appears floating from out-of-frame and the book stack has just a white material underneath.

9. Book focus. A stack of books displaying spines, positioned so that the spines are closest to the viewer and the opening of the book is positioned downward on a white blanket. The books are wrapped in thin string lights. The book covers are shades of various blue.

August 2, 2017

1. Decoration focus. A close-up of a mirrored tray containing beauty products.
2. Book focus. A picture of a bookstore, displaying five black shelves filled with books. There are various tags to indicate categories.
3. Book focus. A stack of books positioned spine-up is wrapped on string lights on a white blanket. There are three closed books around this stack. An open book is

underneath one of these single closed books. A small bouquet of purple flowers is placed on the first page of the open book.

4. Not shelfie. A picture of a kitchen with a focus on a white island with two stool chairs tucked underneath it. There is a wine rack underneath the kitchen island. On top of the island is a variety of candles and vases filled with flowers. In the background, there is an oven, another appliance, and a few other vases with plants.

5. Book focus. A picture of a small tall white shelf in between a white door and white slide closet doors. There are colorful books displayed on the top three shelves and there is a large amount of artistic artifacts, a few plants, and cartoon figurines.

6. Book focus. A picture of a library with a woman studying at a desk in the background. There are a few bookshelves in the background in the dark shadows of the room. The overall picture is dark.

7. Book focus. An open notebook with the following written on the first page: "august, 30 sunday, monday, tuesday, wednesday, thursday, friday". On the second page, there is a hand-drawn box for weather with a list of capital letters to indicate days of the week. There is a small drawing of flowers and a bumble bee. Beneath the flower drawing is a box labeled "tasks" and underneath in larger script "braindump". Underneath the open notebook is a stack of books, spine-side up, arranged in a rainbow spectrum.

8. Book focus. In the forground, there is a sectional gray couch with a couple reclining on it. The man is looking over the woman's shoulders at an open book that she is reading. Behind them, in the background, is a row of tall white bookshelves that stretch to the ceilings and are filled with books.

9. Book focus. A picture of a bookstore. The foreground and background reveals a row of tall bookshelves organized by the alphabet. There is a woman and another figure in the far background at the end of this aisle of books.

August 4, 2017

1. Not shelfie. A photo of an ornate purple crib with a matching foot stool. There is a table with various vases filled with flowers positioned behind and beside the crib.

2. Book focus. A girl with long hair and a flower crown holds a book in her hand. She is holding it up to display it and is smiling at the camera.

3. Decoration focus. Three wooden shelves displaying only ceramic pieces.

4. Not shelfie. A photo of a bedroom. The bed has been slightly disturbed and has a tray with flowers and a flower mug on it. There are various vases with flowers placed throughout the room. There are two side white tables with matching black lamps. A large mirror and string lights hang over the bed.

5. Book focus. A blue self-standing shelf filled with books. On the top of the blue shelving furniture displays a bright book with the cover: "Hello Sunshine" and has a plant resting on top of it and another plant beside it. The blue shelf sits in front of two

white shelves filled with a colorful display of books. There is one mug on the right shelf.

6. Book focus. A dramatic picture of a library's architecture with a specific focus on the ceiling arch that hangs over the first floor's table that runs down the middle of the room. There are various bookshelves hidden in small slips of the revealed rooms from the second floor.

7. Book focus. An open book that displays the title page on top of a white blanket. In the bottom of the picture, there is a small tray made from a wooden log that holds a candle. On top of this is a sprawling gray blanket that contains dried lavender, a succulent, and open book with rifled pages, and a mug containing a dark liquid. In the top of the image, there is another wooden tray containing candles, succulents, and a single pine cone. In the top left corner is two open books stacked on top of each other with lavender on the top of the first open book.

8. Book focus. A woman holds a large stack of books next to her body while flexing her bicep muscle on the right side. She is smiling at the camera. There is a shelf of books barely visible behind her.

9. Book focus. Two white shelves. On the left shelf, there are a few books displayed cover-side up in an artful manner with string lights. In the right shelf, the books are stacked normally with the spines facing the viewer. There are a few string lights visible in this shelf as well.

August 7, 2017

1. Book focus. A woman holds a stack of books next to her in a demonstrative manner. She is smiling at the camera but her brow is furrowed. Behind her, there is a turquoise bookshelf with books. On top of the shelf, there a few personal artifacts for decoration.

2. Book focus. Four white bookshelves packed with books and art figurines along with other various artifacts. The shelves are extremely colorful and varied in presentation.

3. Book focus. The user holds up a book that she has written and drawn on. Behind her hand and held up book is a a bookshelf with two shelves visible. There are dangling string lights running alongside the shelf. The photo is packed with a variation of bright colors.

4. Not shelfie. An interior-design focused photo with a glass dining table and its accompanying chairs as the main focus. There are various planters filled with flowers throughout the room.

5. Book focus. An assorted white stack of shelves filled with books and personal artifacts. The shelves are arranged in an unconventional manner, with the tops of three shelves being used as counterspace to display personal objects.

6. Decoration focus. A close-up of the shelf inside a bathroom cabinet. The shelves are filled with various skincare products, grouped by color scheme. On the top shelf, the bottoms are mostly cool-toned blues and green. In the middle shelf, the products are various shades of black and white. The last and bottom shelf is filled with mostly pink and red-toned products.
7. Book focus. Eleven books are placed cover-side up, some vertical and other horizontal, arranged in a pattern. Most books lean towards green or blue, but all have a distinct cover. They appear to be sitting on top of some wooden furniture or perhaps a wood-paneled floor.
8. Decoration focus. A photo of an outside area with a closeup of a single shelf that only contains planters filled with various types of plants.
9. Book focus. At the bottom of the photo, a stack of books with spines facing upward are sitting on a white blanket. They are relatively dark in color. Behind them, out of focus are three closed books and one open book beneath one of these closed books on the left.

August 9th, 2017

1. Book focus. A photo taken from below, photographing a series of black bookshelves as they rise upward in the photo. This picture is likely from a professional library.
2. Decoration focus. A close up of a corner shelf filled with various coffee and drinking mugs, mostly from famous animated films or series.
3. Book focus. A repost from another user. It shows a young woman, her back facing the camera, looking at a bookstore front, which has a bookshelf filled with various books next to the front door.
4. Decoration focus. A white enclosed bookshelf filled with various personal artifacts, largely cramic works. Next to this piece of furniture, there is a white hanging shef filled with mugs and a small piece of framed art.
5. Book focus. A close-up of a white bookshelf with a focus on the middle shelf. The main shelf is filled with books but has a particular book on prominent display. The top and middle shelves contain cartoon figurines for decoration.
6. Book focus. A picture of a bedroom, displaying a portion of the bed in the left bottom corner, and then going on to show a set of various white bookshelves. The bookshelves are arranged in an unusual manner, some stacked on tops of books and reaching towards the ceiling. The shelves are completely filled and also contain various personal artifacts.
7. Book focus. A picture of a corner of a room, framed by a slanting ceiling. There are four bookshelves, two shorter ones on the slanted side of the room to accommodate for space and two tall shelves that are closer to the viewer. The shelves are filled with books and decorated with various figurines and personal artifacts.

8. Decoration focus. A close-up of three white shelves that all contain Chanel purses.
9. Book focus. User is laying on the ground and taking a picture of bookshelves in the room. The user's legs are in the shot in the foreground. In the background, five white shelves reaching to the ceiling are filled with books. The corner shelf, which is thinner than the others, are particularly filled with personal artifacts.

August 14, 2017

1. Decoration focus. A close-up of a corner of a room. There is a vanity with a chair nearby it. Assorted vases with flowers, lit candlesticks, and beauty products are on the top of the vanity along with a round mirror.
2. Decoration focus. A close-up of kitchen wire shelves hanging above a sink and counter area. They are filled with various cooking and food preparation utensils. There are two plants in the picture.
3. Book focus. A grid-style bookshelf that also serves as an entertainment center, likely for a living room. The bookshelves are filled with books, personal artifacts, and two houseplants.
4. Decoration focus. Likely a repost. It displays a part of a room that has a set of cabinets acting as counterspace for personal artifacts, a vase with plants, and lit candles. There are framed pieces of art on the wall. Two pillows sit in the chair beside the cabinets.
5. Book focus. A close-up that contains the user. The user is sitting on the ground with a variety of book surrounding them. They are holding a mug of dark liquid in one hand and displaying a book with the other. Near the edge of the frame is evidence of a bookcase.
6. Decoration focus. The photo is of two people, one is the user, clinking two mugs together. Only their hands are visible. Behind them, a kitchen with two shelves. The shelves contain ceramic mugs, utensils for cooking, and a small houseplant.
7. Decoration focus. The photo is of a child's bedroom in varying shades of gray. There are four shelves, only one containing books near the bedside.
8. Decoration focus. The photo is of three shelves on a wall. Each shelf is stocked with ceramic pottery pieces all in varying shades of green. Two houseplants frame the photo.
9. Book focus. An open book with a pair of folded glasses sit atop a bed. Near the book is a bowl of fruit.

August 15, 2017

1. Book focus. Photo is from a professional library. In the foreground is a statue enclosed in a glass case, there are stacks of books outlining the revealed part of the room. Just behind the statue is a tall bookshelf filled with books.

2. Decoration focus. Same photo as #1 of August 14th. A close-up of a corner of a room. There is a vanity with a chair nearby it. Assorted vases with flowers, lit candlesticks, and beauty products are on the top of the vanity along with a round mirror.
3. Book focus. A close-up of a white bookshelf. There are three visible shelves filled with books, character figurines, and coffee mugs. The top shelf is organized by book covers with warm colors, the middle shelf is organized by cooler shades, and the bottom shelf has books with covers leaning towards much darker shades or black.
4. Decoration focus. Same photo of #2 of August 14th. Decoration focus. A close-up of kitchen wire shelves hanging above a sink and counter area. They are filled with various cooking and food preparation utensils. There are two plants in the picture.
5. Book focus. A large bookshelf in the background filled with books of mostly red shades. It is framed by two lamps and the top of a couch in the foreground
6. Not shelfie. A video of a user, a popular interior design blogger, discussing the behind the scenes actions of a #shelfie shoot which had an interior design focus.
7. Decoration focus. Same photo as #8 of August 14th.
8. Book focus. Same photo as #3 of August 14th. A grid-style bookshelf that also serves as an entertainment center, likely for a living room. The bookshelves are filled with books, personal artifacts, and two houseplants.
9. Book focus. A book is shown, standing upright, on top of a shelf. The cover reads: "I'd rather be reading." Behind this standing book is a pile of books arranged horizontally to reveal their spines. There is a ceramic piece beside the book stack and two house plants, one of top of the frame and one of on the bottom, framing the books.

Vita

The author was born in Atlanta, Georgia and was raised in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She obtained her Bachelor's of Science in psychology from Louisiana State University in 2015. In 2016, she started the graduate program in sociology with University of New Orleans and focused on studying identity in digital spaces. She now lives and works in France