Doing being an average teenager: Deploying ordinariness as subversive disability performance in presentational media

X I A O W E I   M A Y   L I

The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

A B S T R A C T

Scholars have shown how speakers are inclined to discursively position themselves as 'ordinary' in order to claim and benefit from membership in a socially unmarked category, and that the effect of 'being ordinary' is an effortful communicative achievement (e.g. Sacks 1984). This study re-examines and extends such insight by focusing on socially marked individuals—people with disabilities—and considers the effect of inhabiting a nonnormative body has on the semiotic production of self as ordinary. The multimodal self-presentation of Nikki Lilly, a popular disabled YouTuber, showcases the tension between inhabiting a physically anomalous body and projecting 'an average teenager' persona. The analysis of the vlogger's YouTube and Instagram posts shows that resignifying the nonnormative body and self as symbolically unmarked hinges on recruiting hypernormative gendered resources. I argue that by exaggerating normality, Nikki Lilly's recognized 'ordinary' self-presentation enunciates normalcy as an illusory imperative and materializes as subversive the performance of disability. (Nikki Lilly, embodiment, multimodality, presentational media, disability, ordinariness, normativity)*

I N T R O D U C T I O N :   O R D I N A R I N E S S ,   D I S A B I L I T Y
R E P R E S E N T A T I O N ,   A N D   T H E   R I S E   O F
P R E S E N T A T I O N A L   M E D I A

American sociologist Harvey Sacks was among the first to write about the phenomenon of 'doing being ordinary' as a pervasive communicative practice and a normative self-positioning in social life. Sacks (1984:414–15) notes how, when people recount events, they report not what happened, but the usualness of such occurrences, even when rearticulating extraordinary situations as utterly mundane and unremarkable. He thus conceptualizes ordinariness as a discursive achievement, which requires effortful rhetorical maneuvering. This demonstrates speakers' ritualistic commitment to normalcy and their inclination to conform themselves to established sociocultural norms (Jefferson 2004; see also Goffman 1963). Thus, tropes of ordinariness can be deployed as interactional resources for people to self-present

439

as socially unmarked. This insight is further corroborated with later discourse-oriented studies. For example, Matsumoto (2015) examines conversational narratives by elderly Japanese women and finds that when addressing somber topics like spousal death, interactants routinely recount psychologically intense experiences from a quotidian perspective to construct a normal sense of self and resist interpellation into a socially marked identity (i.e. a widow). The current study extends this body of research on the semiotic construction of ordinariness by incorporating the body as a salient dimension in self-presentation. Specifically, with a focus on socially marked speakers who inhabit nonnormative bodies (i.e. visible impairments), this article offers a case study of Nikki Lilly, one of the world's most followed disabled YouTube vloggers.[1] Nikki Lilly presents a physically distinct or 'extraordinary' body but projects an ordinary persona as 'an average teenager' in her online self-presentation.

Bodily difference has been central to the sociocultural imagination and its representation of disabled personhood (Goffman 1963; Shakespeare, Gillespie-Sells, & Davies 1996; Garland-Thomson 2009). People with visibly nonnormative physicality are stigmatized and identified as socially marked (e.g. Goffman 1963). The ascription of disability as alterity is enacted through discourse, which plays a formative role in constructing recognizable narratives and stereotypes. For example, Grue (2015:7) notes that mass media and popular cultural discourse tend not to address disabled people as addressees or subjects (i.e. speaking agents), but as recipients or spectacles (i.e. being spoken for and talked about). In particular, Grue (2015:109–10) identifies *compensation* and *overcoming* as the two dominant, coercive motifs around the *supercrip*, a mediatized disabled figure. The supercrip refers to people who are physically impaired YET accomplish achievements that require exceptional physical and mental exertion (see also Hardin & Hardin 2004). Such disability narratives valorize impairments in which bodily limitations serve as motivating causes of self-transformation and fulfillment, allowing protagonists to transcend the disabled status and enter the rank of the socially unmarked. Thus, popular representational media discourse (re)produces disability as a social anomaly by enforcing its configurational opposite: hegemonic normalcy (Davis 1995:2).

This mainstream rhetoric of restoring disability to normative ideals is challenged by literary and artistic discourse. Disability scholars David Mitchell & Sharon Snyder (2000) conducted a historical overview of disability representation in European and American narrative discourses, conceived broadly to include literature, art, and cinema. They coin the term 'narrative prosthesis' to underscore how disability serves as a crutch, a pervasive trope and device of characterization, for literary and other representations to develop compelling, tellable narratives (Mitchell & Snyder 2000:6–8). While literary works harness the transgressive potential of unruly bodies to expose imposed ideological prescription of normalcy and proffer unsettling sociocultural commentary, they nevertheless assume a deterministic association between one's physical anomaly and personhood by entrenching

disability as a form of debased humanity (Mitchell & Snyder 2000:5, 49–50). One plausible strategy to redress established associations between disability and deviance is to draw on a queer sensibility to destabilize established social norms and blur the enforced categorical boundaries between humanity and alterity (McRuer 2006). Following queer theory, disability theorist Robert McRuer (2006:197) develops a critically disabled perspective of *crip* theory to expose and contest the hegemonic notion of compulsory able-bodiedness. However, established representational arenas have traditionally rendered disabled people as being spoken of rather than taking on the role of speaking for themselves. As such, the transgressive potential of disability often surfaces but is then submerged to bolster dominant ideologies (Mitchell & Snyder 2000:8; McRuer 2006:149).

Self-PRESENTATION by people with disabilities in participatory media constitutes an alternative context to sociocultural REPRESENTATION (Goggin & Newell 2003:xix). This form of social encounter enables staring, or the visual gesture of intense interpersonally oriented looking (Garland-Thomson 2009:9). Although the normative underpinning of the stare could enforce social boundaries and hierarchy, Garland-Thomson distinguishes stare from gaze (i.e. the oppressive act of disciplinary examination that produces passive, subordinate objects) and maintains that a certain degree of dynamic, communicative symmetry inheres in staring, which affords generative, productive potentials for developing mutual recognition. For example, by way of photography or performance art, disabled artists can recast themselves as subjects, rather than objects, who present themselves to the public eye, instruct and manipulate stares at their corporeal variations on their own terms. That is, the 'starees' can actively stage staring encounters with their 'starers' to inscribe and redefine their selfhood. The development of social networking applications and digital broadcasting—or what new media scholar David Marshall (2010) has termed *presentational media*, such as YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram— marks the era of participative social web (or web 2.0). Their distinctive feature is user-generated content and participation. Unlike traditional representational media such as network television, digital participatory media provides greater access for regular internet users with disabilities to stage public performative engagement, produce cultural discourse around disability, and negotiate viable social identities.

Building on this scholarly trajectory, the current article discusses a case study of subversive, presentational performance in contemporary online disability activism, which draws on normative tropes to destabilize the established notion of normalcy and enact antinormative subjectivities. I examine how, by 'doing being ordinary', a visibly disabled speaker self-presents and is recognized as 'an average teenager' next door, a socially unmarked personhood. I suggest that such transgressive potential is realized through exaggerating verbal and visual normative scripts, in particular, that of embodied gendered performance. By exposing the inherent unattainability as well as the imposed compulsoriness of normalcy, the speaker is able to deflect stigma and subvert the assumed invisible status of 'being ordinary'. In what

follows, I first review theoretical discussions pertinent to my case study, namely, sociolinguistic discussions of discourse and the body, and ordinariness and disability self-presentation. I then offer a biographical sketch of Nikki Lilly. After a brief introduction of my data set and methodology, I proceed to data analysis and illustrate the cross-modal interplay between the discursive and bodily self-presentation by Nikki Lilly: how she discursively self-positions as unremarkable by dramatizing normalcy as an unattainable ideal and visually styling herself as an ordinary girl by drawing on bodily resources of hyperfemininity. I argue that Nikki Lilly's multimodal self-presentation constitutes a subversive performance of 'doing being ordinary'. Rather than signaling a ritualistic commitment to conformity, her deployment of tropes of ordinariness denaturalizes and dramatizes normality, making it hypervisible and excessive, allowing her resignification of physical nonconformity and disabled personhood as ordinary. To conclude, I discuss some of the complexities and implications of semiotic refiguration of disabled personhood and embodiment.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Body, discourse, and personhood

Given that the body not only projects physiological materiality but also invokes social and symbolic associations (Fausto-Sterling 2005:1496), bodily presentation constitutes a crucial site for identity construction. Sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists have long noted how the body and language are dialectically connected and mutually constitutive in personhood construction (e.g. Coupland & Gwyn 2003; Bucholtz & Hall 2016; Calder 2019; King 2019). For example, Calder (2019) examines how a community of drag queens in SoMa, San Francisco, style themselves as the fierce queen—a locally legible social persona—through both linguistic variation and visual presentation of the body. Focusing on the variable of fronted /s/ as a type of gender performance, Calder demonstrates how the pronunciation of backed /s/ indexes masculinity, while fronted /s/ is ideologically associated with femininity. Calder shows that when speakers present themselves as male-bodied, the production of fronted /s/ is interpreted as inadequately masculine (e.g. 'sissy'). By contrast, when speakers appear in feminine drag, the same feature conjures associations of powerful femininity (e.g. 'fierce'). Calder's analysis illustrates how, on the one hand, the body serves as a semiotic context for language production and may inhibit or facilitate speakers' claim to a certain identity. On the other hand, physical bodies are imbued with sociocultural meanings through semiotic practices, or what Shilling (1993:5) calls, processes of becoming and making.

One major area of bodily signification is associated with body modification, temporary or permanent biosocial processes and practices that alter human appearance or anatomy (Featherstone 1999; Pitts 2003). These typically include dietary regimes, plastic surgery, tattoos, bodybuilding, fashion, makeup, prosthetics, and

so on. By undertaking bodily transformation, social actors agentively and reflexively produce the body 'as a personal projection of the self' (Pitts 2003:31, see also Giddens 1991; Shilling 1993). However, this is not to imply that speakers are free to alter their bodies and selves without constraints. Creative practices to produce the bodily self are bounded by ideological conditions that may sanction or block certain claims to subjectivity (Grosz 1997:239; Calder 2019). The material and symbolic bodily resources are distributed unevenly with varying access to differently positioned individuals in the social structure (Pitts-Taylor 2016:9).

Material and symbolic resources employed to transform bodily presentation and construe identity are referred to as *emblems*, types of social indexicals that conjure associations with recognized social types (Agha 2007:243). Agha (2007:240) has proposed to conceive individuals' bodily appearance and behavior as demeanor indexicals, which are actor-focal and communicate attributes of the actor who reflexively performs the sign through behavioral displays (e.g. gesture, clothing, beauty, content, and form of utterances). Thus, body modifications can be considered as performable demeanor indexicals that position the subject as a specific type of person. For example, trans men may use male terminology in reference to their surgically unaltered genitals to discursively construct their bodies and selves as masculine (Zimman & Hall 2009). Therefore, body modifications are semiotic practices that speakers draw on to construe self-positionings.

'Doing being ordinary' and disability self-presentation

As discussed earlier, tropes of ordinariness can be recruited by speakers in social interaction to demonstrate a discursive commitment to normalcy (Sacks 1984). In social media contexts, where visuality is central to one's persona, speakers with nonnormative physical configurations are compelled to engage in discursive as well as bodily self-presentational work so as to be recognized as 'ordinary'. Such cross-modal enactments of self motivate an analytic engagement with the interactive dynamic between discourse and the body in the semiotic construction of ordinariness. Building on Sacks' original conception, studies concerned with the multimodal construction of ordinariness show how extraordinary occurrences can be rearticulated as unremarkable through a semiotic orchestration between the verbal and visual communication. For example, in his analysis of a contemporary arts program (Art in the Twenty-first Century), Jaworski suggests that the artist Laurie Anderson is presented as 'ordinary'—'artist of the everyday'—through the interplay between the verbal and visual track of the show. Although the visual modality presents the artist as extraordinary, invoking dream-like, surreal imagery, riding on an oversized armchair down the supermarket aisle, Anderson's factual, deadpan spoken delivery and discursive reference to mundane activities in narration serve to reframe visual fantasy through a quotidian lens (Jaworski 2017:177, 183; cf. Matsumoto 2015).

Alternatively, ordinariness and ordinary identities can be semiotically construct-ed through exaggerating and dramatizing the mundane. Examining everyday vlogs, a digital genre that documents daily lives, Choe (2022) shows how vloggers stage a spectacle of the everyday triviality by zooming in on, or visually and discursively amplifying, the utterly unremarkable details in their habitual routines (e.g. explain-ing and filming step-by-step grocery shopping, exhibiting unmannered actions such as failed cooking). Choe argues that these multimodal strategies serve to construct a 'nothing happened' effect (i.e. 'doing being ordinary') and allow the vloggers to claim authenticity. Interestingly, speakers who are generally considered ordinary can also be presented as sensational and socially marked, and editorial techniques of exaggeration are key to such processes of defamiliarization. Focusing on how ordinariness can be staged as watchable performance, Thornborrow (2017:146) examines two reality TV programs and shows how average, non-media personali-ties are construed as exceptionally distinct. The programs employ editing tech-niques, such as ironic voice-overs and direct-to-camera shots, to downplay participants' genericness (i.e. being the same with others) and dramatize their edi-torially inscribed social differences (e.g. being working-class or hockey players) to an extreme. Such heightened stagings serve to mock participants' intensified situ-ated differences, framing such distinctiveness as being excessive and deviant from the unmarked, respectable norm. Thornborrow's findings concur with insights made by scholars concerned with disability representation in mainstream media, where normalcy is often implicitly invoked and largely consolidated as an estab-lished bar against which everyone is measured, and some individuals or social groups will be subsequently and ideologically marked as hypervisible and socially illegitimate for not living up to normative ideals.

Previous studies on disability representation have examined how individuals with visible physical anomalies can be associated with normative subject positions. For example, mediatized figures of the *supercrip* (see above), or elite disabled ath-letes, feature prominently in media representation of disability. Social science liter-ature cautions against the empowering rhetoric around adaptive sports for people with physical disabilities in mainstream media discourse. These studies suggest that such athletic engagement can serve as a means for *passing*, thus reproducing social stigma against disability (Norden 1994; Hardin & Hardin 2004; Lindemann & Cherney 2008; Rembis 2013). That is, remarkable performances in adaptive ath-letics enable physically impaired athletes to overcome their bodily limitations, min-imize their corporeal differences, and be perceived as symbolically able-bodied. For example, Rembis (2013) examines media representations of elite disabled players and argues that adaptive athletes use sports to display physicality and present them-selves as hyper-normatively gendered (e.g. exceptionally aggressive men or attrac-tive women). By 'approximat[ing] the gendered, white, heterosexual, nondisabled norm and meet[ing] societal expectations for conduct, appearance, and perfor-mance', disabled athletes are able to pass in plain sight without physically conceal-ing their bodily differences (Rembis 2013:112–13; cf. McRuer 2006).

However, Rembis' sophisticated conception of passing is misplaced, in that this account establishes the disabled athletes as the agent who enacts passing. In fact, the supercrip persona is a representational construct produced by and embedded in ableist structures and institutions such as editorial offices. Rembis' and others' accounts of passing expose an ableist institutional framework that upholds disability as social deviance that requires restoration. Conversely, shifting the focus to the voice of people with disabilities, Bloom (2019) conducts an ethnography with a community of wheelchair basketball players and makes a targeted intervention into extant research conducted in the representational discourse paradigm. The author documents how, in telling stories about their disabilities, her participants orient to socially valued tropes, such as athleticism and independence, to present themselves as capable. By attending to the genre of presentational discourse, Bloom shows how speakers can recruit social norms not to pass as able-bodied, but to interactionally defy disability stigma and facilitate, even reinforce, their self-identification with being disabled. Bloom (2019:128) argues that the situated invocation of normative tropes in disabled self-positionings should not be interpreted as a form of disability overcoming and passing.

Following Bloom, I examine the mediated self-presentation by Nikki Lilly, a physically distinct YouTuber who articulates her challenge of claiming a normal sense of self while inhabiting a socially marked body that constantly provokes stares. I show how in the staged performance context (Bauman & Briggs 1990), an ordinary self-positioning deployed by people with disability sheds light on how normalcy can be exaggerated, rendered as excessive, and thus critically contested as an illusory ideal. I argue that such performative enactments allow physically stigmatized speakers to destabilize established notions of, and claim, normalcy.

WHO IS NIKKI LILLY?

A native of London, Nikki Lilly was born Nicole Lilly Christou on 22 July 2004. She is a YouTube personality, television presenter, and charity campaigner. At the age of six, Nikki Lilly started having visible veins appearing on the right side of her face, followed by facial swelling and severe bleeds from her nose and gums. She was then diagnosed with a rare and debilitating congenital condition called arteriovenous malformation (AVM), where a tangle of blood vessels with abnormal connections between arteries and veins disrupt proper blood flow and oxygen circulation.[2] The condition results in expansion and rupture of veins and profuse bleeding. Based on where AVM is located, possible symptoms include heart failure, seizure, stroke, and paralysis. In Nikki Lilly's case, the condition causes facial anomalies, life-threatening nosebleeds, and migraines. In June 2018, she was hospitalized for extensive bleeding and had to be put in what she termed a "sleep-induced coma" for eight days to stabilize her condition. By February 2022, she had undergone ninety-five operations to remove as much of the AVM as possible, and lost vision in her right eye due to the treatment.

At the age of eight, Nikki Lilly started her YouTube channel and covered topics including beauty, disability, mental health, cyberbullying, school life, and baking. She is one of the most followed disability YouTube personalities with around 1.67 million subscribers (retrieved February 2023). When she was twelve, Nikki Lilly made her first television appearance in, and was crowned champion of, *Junior Bake Off*, a popular television baking competition hosted by CBBC (i.e. the BBC's children's channel). She has twice been the subject of CBBC's documentary series *My Life*, which tells stories of children around the world. The two episodes Nikki Lilly featured in were *Born to Vlog* (2016), and *I Will Survive* (2018), which showed her coping with AVM and charted her progress through the three major operations on the condition. Since 2018, Nikki Lilly has started hosting her own CBBC program titled *Nikki Lilly Meets…*, where she chats with public figures, from politicians (e.g. Theresa May) to sports celebrities, and serves her own baked goods. In 2020, she started presenting another CBBC series, *Nikki Lilly Bakes*, where she shares her baking tips and recipes.

With the aid of her parents, Nikki Lilly helped establish The Butterfly AVM Charity to raise awareness and funds for AVM and served as an ambassador for campaigns to de-stigmatize facial distinctiveness and mental health. Recognized for her media influence and charity work, Nikki Lilly has received multiple national and international awards, for example, the International Academy of Television Arts and Science (Emmy) Kids Award for her documentary episode *Born to Vlog* (2019). On December 1, 2019, she became the youngest recipient of the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) Special Award, the highest honor at the British Academy Children's Awards, for her outstanding contribution to children's media. In her mediated performance online, Nikki Lilly explicitly draws attention to her effort and struggle to present herself as a normal teenager with a socially marked body. In this sense, Nikki Lilly engages in what Sacks (1984) called 'doing being ordinary' in her staged self-presentation. Moreover, she is recognized in popular media reportage as just an archetypal 'average teenager' (e.g. BBC).[3] It is in this context that I examine the interactive dynamic between discourse and the body in the construction of ordinariness. Taking her YouTube vlogs and Instagram posts as data sources, I conduct a qualitative analysis of Nikki Lilly's discursive and bodily online self-presentation and show how the vlogger semiotically approximates and dramatizes sociocultural and gendered norms as subversive resources to symbolically modify and rearticulate her body and self as ordinary.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

From May 2021 to February 2022, I collected Nikki Lilly's social media posts from YouTube and Instagram, where she has a substantial following. YouTube and Instagram predominantly present two types of self-presentational posts respectively: vlogs and photos. Vlogs, or video blogs, are an asynchronous and multimodal

form of computer-mediated communication, where users broadcast their opinions and share their lives (Frobenius 2011). Instagram, as a mobile-based social networking application, encourages the sharing of editorially enhanced photographs, especially, the visual genre of well-curated digital self-portraits, or selfies. I archived Nikki Lilly's Instagram posts published before March 2022 (173 posts in total). For YouTube vlogs, which typically last between ten to thirty minutes, I collected thirty-two vlogs based on the selection criteria below.

(i) The self-introduction video
(ii) The top twenty videos sorted by popularity from the channel
(iii) The top five videos sorted by popularity in themed playlists (e.g. beauty, health, school life). After eliminating duplicate videos, I included two videos under 'Makeup', and two videos under 'Health'.
(iv) Videos released from May 2021 to February 2022: there were seven videos covering makeup, school life, and Q&A videos with her followers.

The decision to include two social media platforms is motivated by the analytic focus on both discourse and the body. Although YouTube and Instagram both allow multimodal production of content, they present distinct platform designs and features, which might result in users' adaptive self-presentations being based on media-specific conventions (Gershon 2010). As I discuss in more detail below, the layout of Instagram encourages a predominantly visual presentation of the self. Thus, examining Instagram posts allows for a more focused engagement with the bodily styling of the user, which corroborates and complements my analysis of the YouTube vlogs. Following Sacks' (1984) notion of 'doing being ordinary', I identify discursive tropes of ordinariness in relation to remarkable events and situations in Nikki Lilly's verbal narration and show how the speaker reports and frames extraordinary occurrences as unremarkable. Moreover, following previous multimodal discourse studies using Sacks' conception (e.g. Jaworski 2017), I address the verbal and visual construction of ordinariness. In particular, I address how styling practices of gender (Goffman 1979) feature as a salient dimension of the bodily self-presentation. I show that taking into account bodily contexts in speakers' self-presentation complicates a discourse-centered understanding of 'doing being ordinary' in two ways. First, it illuminates how ordinariness can be recruited as a subversive resource to deconstruct normalcy: for individuals with nonnormative bodies, the commitment to the normal often compels social actors to thematize the hypernormative to produce the effect of being ordinary, which exaggerates normalcy and allows it to be examined critically and contested. Second, the bodily presentation of a normal self is a holistic semiotic achievement involving the intersecting dynamic between different social dimensions of one's perceived personhood. In Nikki Lilly's case, the hypernormative gendered presentation serves to normalize the distinctively shaped disabled body.

DATA ANALYSIS

To unpack Nikki Lilly's embodying ordinariness, the analysis is divided into two sections, which respectively address her discursive and bodily self-presentation. The first section documents how Nikki Lilly discursively constructs her selfhood, her bodily difference, and her condition as unexceptional and banal. My analysis extends Sacks' (1984:414) insights by showing how discursive enactments of ordinariness are achieved by exaggerating normative scripts. The second section draws on Goffman's (1979) discussion of gender display to interrogate how the vlogger recruits hypernormative gender semiotics to normalize her socially marked physical differences.

Discursive normalization through exaggerating normality

Nikki Lilly has made a series of vlogs telling her health stories, which are among the most-watched videos on her YouTube channel. In recounting her illness experiences, she draws on narrative as a resource for sensemaking (Labov & Waletzky 1967; Ochs & Capps 2001) and selfhood (re)construction (Kleinman 1988). People's normal sense of self would be threatened by the sudden onset of illness and diagnosis, which often marks a narrative *turning point*, where they experience an emotionally and/or physically compelling realization and a fundamental shift in the meaning, purpose, or direction of life trajectory (Bruner 1994). Although Nikki Lilly orients to the debilitating illness as a *biographical disruption* (Bury 1982:169), she discursively positions herself as living a normal life despite extraordinary health ramifications (e.g. frequent hospital visits, home-schooling). I begin with the extract from her first health-themed vlog 'My Medical Story'. The example illustrates how the protagonist constructs tropes of ordinariness to resist a socially marked role of the sick and signal her 'commitment to the normal' (Jefferson 2004:154–55). Crucially, normative scripts are deployed and reasserted through a fantastical rhetoric of hyperbole. I suggest that such exaggerated discursive maneuvering helps to establish a new sense of normality, repairing the 'biographical disruption' and positioning herself as ordinary.

(1) 1 I did feel sorry for myself at first,
     2 but <u>then</u> I realized there is <u>so</u> many things I can do.
     3 So when I was <u>eight</u> I started my YouTube channel,
     4 which I'm talking to you guys on today,
     5 and created <u>tons</u> of best friends.
     6 I've created nearly a thousand best friends which is <u>crazy</u> on YouTube,
     7 even though I can't see you, you can see me and yeah. ((cheering by raising arms))
     8 So you've just become my good good big old best friends and,
     9 that's been a <u>massive</u> confidence booster.

Here, Nikki Lilly engages with the onset of AVM as a narrative turning point and resource to enact post-disturbance self-(re)making (Bruner 1994:50). She reframes

her disrupted biography from a loss to opportunities to establishing new norms (lines 1–2). Crucially, the repairing of biographical disruption depends on deploying tropes of ordinariness: the normative scripts of friend-making and gaining popularity circulated among and about youngsters (lines 5–9). Invoking such sociocultural norms helps Nikki Lilly demonstrate a commitment toward the normal perspective (Jefferson 2004:155). By focusing on the innocuous, ordinary way of living as an alternative to the disturbing AVM-focused circumstances, she is able to present herself as a teenager rather than a patient, anchoring herself in the mundane sphere of life and inhabiting an ordinary self-positioning.

On the one hand, ordinariness is performed as a way of speaking. The nonstandard grammar ('there is so many things'), colloquial expressions (e.g. 'yeah', 'you guys'), and childlike acts and inventive expressions (e.g. throwing arms in the air; 'my good good big old best friends') produce what Goffman (1981:146) has termed conversational 'fresh talk', which is characterized by relative nonscriptedness and a sense of involvement and relational closeness. These semiotic strategies allow Nikki Lilly to mimic ordinary, unmediated communication to engage her imagined recipients (Page 2015:330) and produce the normalizing effect that restores herself as a regular kid. On the other hand, the visual presentation produces a prosaic, everyday effect. With the use of a medium close-up shot, Nikki Lilly is captured from an intimate proxemic distance. She wears a casual cotton dress, sitting on the edge of the bed at home, with the familiar décor and interior of a common, nondescript, middle-class domestic setting. However, Nikki Lilly's proclaimed maintenance of ordinary friendship is also dramatized and articulated in a rather extraordinary fashion. The virtual interaction is parasocial in nature, with the vlogger and the audience each imagining a one-sided connection with the other (lines 6–7), which is anything but ordinary friendship. Despite being couched in an utterly mundane semiotic coating, the vlogger deploys quite fantastic rhetoric, such as making 'nearly a thousand best friends' online (line 6), that exaggerates normative tropes to an extreme, which produces a denaturalized sense of normalcy. In this sense, Nikki Lilly does not merely conform herself to the established notion of normality. Rather, by way of exaggeration, she invokes tropes of ordinariness and discursively constructs a new sense of normality.

In addition to illness-induced lifestyle disruptions, AVM-related impacts also include postoperative complications caused by invasive surgical treatments and visible physical anomalies. Living with conspicuous facial distinctiveness features a prominent theme in Nikki Lilly's videos. Example (2) is taken from the sequel vlog to 'My Medical Story' discussed above. Before the transcribed portion, Nikki Lilly talks about how aggressive medical procedures irritated her vocal cords and caused a temporary loss of her normal voice. Here, tropes of ordinariness serve to frame embodied difference as shared by, and common to everyone, while normative physical ideals as unattainable and elusive.

(2) 1 So: it's been a little bit hard not really having my: you know, <u>loud</u> Nikki confident voice with me,

2 because it kind of made me feel a little bit shy: and unconfident.

3 <u>But</u> life isn't <u>perf</u>ect, perfect is a <u>myth</u> and,

4 anyone that thinks they're perfect, or thinks other people are perfect,

5 you know, <u>no:</u> one is <u>perf</u>ect.

6 And we see people on the TV or people in magazines or people in films or people just (.) everywhere really,

7 that we like to associate with ourselves, and would like them to be (.) us?

8 but those people <u>aren't</u> perfect and <u>no</u> one's perfect.

9 I have days where I'll be watching YouTube videos and or TV, and be like,

10 "Oh my god, she's <u>so</u> beautiful, I wish I was her: I <u>wish</u> I was her, ((palms pressed together in front of chest))

11 she's got <u>such</u> a nice figure". ((palms pressed together in front of chest))

12 <u>But</u> no one's perfect,

13 she's not perfect ((pointing to left)),

14 she's not perfect ((pointing to right)),

15 <u>everyone</u> that you walk past is <u>not</u> perfect ((looking and pointing outside the window)),

16 <u>anyone</u> that you cross in your life is <u>not</u> perfect,

17 <u>no</u> one's perfect.

By employing discursive strategies such as repetition and negation, inclusive pronouns, and extreme case formulations (Pomerantz 1986), Nikki Lilly emphasizes the universality of imperfection and positions her bodily difference as a form of normal variation (see the paradigmatic structure of 'SUBJECT BE not perfect' and extreme formulations of 'everyone', 'no one', 'anyone', 'perfect' in lines 3, 5, 8, 12–17). With proximal and distal deictics (see 'we' versus 'those people' in lines 6–8), the vlogger differentiates regular people from celebrities who represent the epitome of beauty and distances herself from normative ideals. These rhetorical devices collectively strengthen the central motif of the talk (i.e. 'no one's perfect'). Particularly, this extreme case formulation serves to hyperbolize and reframe normative beauty standards as implausible. By disqualifying socially unmarked speakers from claiming normalcy, Nikki Lilly expands the scope of being normal and confers a renewed sense of normalcy to herself as a not-average-looking girl.

Although Nikki Lilly only makes explicit verbal reference to her hoarse raspy voice as an example of imperfection, her facial anomaly is also contextually relevant not only through its salience in the visual modality, but also implicitly through her discursive invocation. The consistent reference to the gendered pronoun 'she' (lines 10–22, 13–14) as well as the evaluative lexis, such as 'beautiful' (line 10), 'nice figure' (line 11), 'perfect' (lines 13, 14), visualize an idealized body (e.g. physical symmetry) as indexes of desirable femininity. Across her earlier vlogs, Nikki Lilly persistently expresses how insecure and self-conscious she feels when people stare and whisper in sight of her facial distinctiveness. Indeed, due to fear of receiving hostile comments on her physical differences, Nikki Lilly's

parents initially turned off the comment section when their daughter first started her YouTube channel.[4] The constructed feminine role model as a point of reference underscores simultaneously how nonnormative bodies undermine femininity as well as the importance of gender for Nikki Lilly to manage her sense of self, which showcases the intricate entanglement between not only body and identity, but also disability and gender, a point to be elaborated in more detail in the next section.

In addition to health-related vlogs, beauty and makeup constitute another major theme in Nikki Lilly's content production. She mostly uses makeup as a means to talk about health and self, and develop bonds with her followers. Example (3) is taken from a video entitled 'The power of makeup', which Nikki Lilly made following the cognominal vlog produced by YouTuber and professional makeup artist Nikki Tutorials, who was inspired by the half-drag, half-au-naturel look of the contestants in *RuPaul's Drag Race*. To accentuate this dramatic presentation of different selves simultaneously, Nikki Lilly experiments with putting makeup only on the left side of her face, which is affected less prominently by the swollen veins. Here, tropes of ordinariness manifest when Nikki Lilly presents her deteriorating physical symptoms as just a banal cosmetic problem, while underscoring and exposing seemingly normative looks as artifice and manipulation.

(3)   1   Okay: so now I'm going to color correct on this side of my face only and, ((picking up the product))
      2   I'm using the LA girl Pro conceal, concealer in green. ((looking down at and reading out loud the label of product followed by showing it to the viewer))
      3   I never used to have this much redness, ((the application process being edited out with product already applied on the face))
      4   I think it's just due to the fact that (.) as my condition has developed on this side, ((pointing to the right side of face, which is physically distinct))
      5   it has kind of changed the way that my left side looks.
      6   Um and I mean it's annoying? ((raised eyebrow with smiling, high-pitched voice))
      7   but it's nothing that a little bit of green color corrector can't fix.

Structurally, the excerpt above consists of two different metacommunicative messages, or communicative frames (Goffman 1981:32), that is, the application of makeup (lines 1–2) and narration (lines 3–7). In lines 1–2, Nikki Lilly introduces the preparatory procedure of color correction to eliminate uneven complexion before applying foundation, accompanied by the corresponding illustrative bodily cues (e.g. picking up and showing the product). She then switches to comment on her skin condition and attributes the severity of her redness to her deteriorating health condition (lines 3–5). Ordinariness is first construed through the use of deixis (e.g. 'this side' and 'it', lines 4–7) as a form of euphemism to refer to her AVM-induced complications, which understates physical abnormality verbally as something unremarkable.

After the initial negative appraisal of redness as 'annoying' (line 6), Nikki Lilly immediately changes her exaggerated facial expressions (raised eyebrow) and voice

(smiling, suddenly raised pitch with emphatic stress) to a bland, expressionless face and deadpan voice (line 7), which signal a playful modality (Attardo, Pickering, & Baker 2011:242). The familiar tropes of beauty advertisements (i.e. 'it's nothing that a little bit of green color corrector can't fix') are used to insert the prosaic details of everyday life and disrupt the gravity of progressive medical symptoms. Recounting critical health issues as everyday cosmetic frustrations can be considered a form of quotidian re-framing, which allows the speaker to 'alter expectations and interpretations' of psychologically intense experiences, and re-anchor oneself in the ordinary life (Matsumoto 2015:101). This rhetorical maneuver enables Nikki Lilly to resist the social ascription of deviance by self-repositioning from being chronically ill to an ordinary teenager.

Enacting hyperfemininity as an extraordinary style

In the previous section, I have documented how Nikki Lilly discursively positions her selfhood, difference, and condition as unexceptional through constructing normality as excessive. In what follows, I explore how the bodily presentation of self coheres to the overall construction of an ordinary persona. Given that social media content is characterized by strong visual components, physical self-presentation is essential to a felicitous construction of 'being ordinary'. Particularly, the bodily construction of ordinariness motivates analytic engagement with the interactive dynamic between different social dimensions of one's personhood. Relating to disability studies on how popular sociocultural representations construe disabled people as genderless and asexual (e.g. Shakespeare et al. 1996), gender surfaces as a centrally relevant aspect of Nikki Lilly's bodily presentation that merits interrogation. I show how enactments of idealized, hypernormative feminine figures of womanhood (e.g. beauty vlogger, girly girl, fashion model) serve as semiotic resources for Nikki Lilly to instantiate normality at its extremity and resist social interpellations of being deviant.

When Nikki Lilly first started her YouTube channel, she made a series of beauty how-to tutorials, where she played the role of a beauty guru offering makeup advice on how to create a certain aesthetic look. Example (4) is taken from the video entitled 'Rose gold inspired prom makeup look', which is the first tutorial vlog she posted at the age of eight. In this example, Nikki Lilly animates the prototypical beauty vlogger register, a discursive-embodied way of speaking used by professional makeup artists on YouTube (Bhatia 2018). Such semiotic performance invokes the widely recognized, or *enregistered* (Agha 2003), social type of a beauty guru, which stereotypically affords the established associations with hyperfemininity (Butler 1990), or exaggerated, idealized performance of femininity, a semiotic resource which Nikki Lilly draws on to style herself as ordinary.

(4) 1 So now I'm going to use a product on my eyes, which I got yesterday,
     2 and I'm really excited to use.

3 And this is my By Terry ombre blackstar in Number Five,
4 and it's called Misty Rock, and it's basically,
5 this gray under-toned mauvy rosegold color.
6 And it's really really beautiful just looks like that. ((showing product by putting the palm behind as background))
7 And I'm just gonna apply this all over my lids? on each side, and then just,
8 with a kind of blendy eyeshadow brush,
9 just gonna blend it in all over my lid,
10 so it just kind of has a really slight rosegold canvas.

As a vlog genre, makeup tutorials are typically characterized by a hybrid form of communication (Tolson 2010:283). On the one hand, makeup instructors give pedagogical monologues to establish their professional expertise and offer pointers on the technicality of application procedures (Bhatia 2018). On the other hand, the instructional narrations are heavily interspersed with features of relational talk in order to project authentic personae who are relatable to their (predominantly female) viewers (García-Rapp 2016). Structurally, the beauty how-to tutorials typically develop along a formulaic guiding procedure (e.g. explaining makeup moves, displaying products, giving instruction cues, and demonstrating), with evaluation, sharing of daily life, and personal tidbits inserted spontaneously (Riboni 2017). In addition to the common repertoire of beauty lexicons, cosmetic gurus share some iconic choreographed acts, for example, the classic presentation pose of displaying the product with a palm behind (see Figure 1). This coordinated way of speaking is recognized as the register of beauty vloggers (Bhatia 2018).
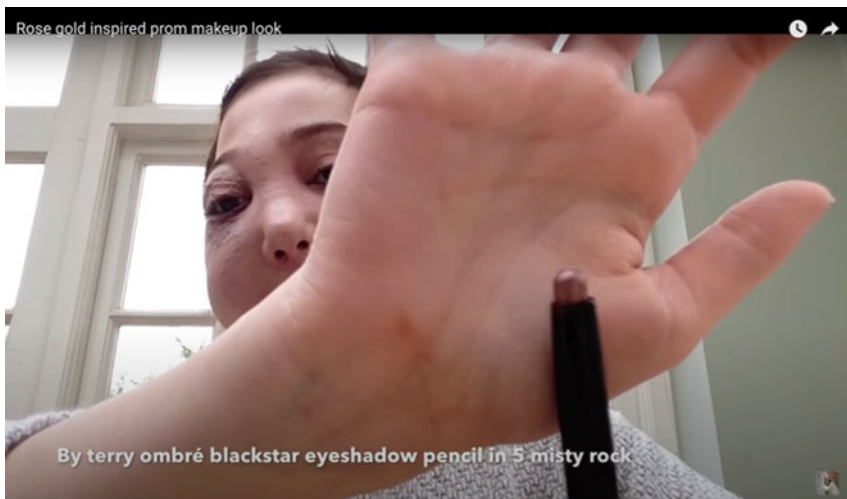

FIGURE 1. The classic presentation pose by beauty YouTubers.

In the selected segment, Nikki Lilly utilizes the beauty-specialized lexicon, rhetorical strategies, and iconic bodily gestures to animate a beauty vlogger's voice and invoke its ideological associations with hyperfemininity. The quotidian experience of wearing makeup, together with its indexical denotation of normatively gendered semiotics, afford the ritual genderization and resignification of Nikki Lilly's non-normative and de-gendered body as ordinary. In terms of lexicon and rhetorical strategies, the beauty vlogger talk is reminiscent of the stereotypically feminine way of speaking, an ideological construct termed by Lakoff (1975/2004) as 'women's language'. The shared linguistic features between the two include:

(i) specific color codes ('gray under-toned mauvy rosegold color', line 5) technical terms for cosmetic practices ('blendy eyeshadow brush', line 8)
(ii) hedging (e.g. 'basically', line 4, 'just', lines 7, 9, 10, 'kind of', lines 8, 10)
(iii) emotional emphasis ('really', lines 2, 6, 10)
(iv) intensive use of 'so', 'and' (lines 2–7)

This ideological construction of women's speech can be mobilized as stylistic resources to index stereotypical femininity (cf. Cameron 2000). Due to its conformity to conventional gender norms and focus on normative female beauty standards, beauty vlogger talk indexically conjures up hyperfeminine associations. The social type of the skilled cosmetic guru is ultimately invoked through Nikki Lilly's generic moves of giving instruction cues and demonstration (lines 1, 7–9), establishing connoisseurship by offering precise description and evaluation (lines 5, 6, 10), as well as her replicating the paradigmatic gestures, such as the iconic display pose discussed above. With its felicitous deployment, the semiotic register symbolically confers the characterological qualities associated with its iconic model speakers on the users of such register. The animation of the enregistered form of talking allows for a semiotic alignment between the speaker and the iconic social type, enabling a ritual inhabitation of the invoked personhood. As such, Nikki Lilly is able to access normative gendered semiotics to counter the social ascription of a disability stereotype, and assert her ordinary self-presentation.

In the next set of examples, I focus on the stylized photos of Nikki Lilly on Instagram. The architecture design of Instagram is distinct from that of YouTube, which gives rise to different platform-specific affordances and constraints. For example, optimized for mobile digital devices, Instagram presents a standard vertical user interface and up-and-down scrolling features for viewing and revealing new content on smartphones, which contrasts with that of YouTube. Moreover, Instagram is promoted and recognized as an image-centered platform. Although texts also feature prominently in Instagram posts through various forms, such as typed captions in or beneath the visuals, tags (or keywords), audience comments, and reactions (Figure 2), the visual components are perceived as the defining feature of Instagram (Adami & Jewitt 2016; Ross & Zappavigna 2020:2). Compared with YouTube vlogs which are typically more than ten minutes, the concise self-performances

FIGURE 2. Snapshot of Nikki Lilly's Instagram post.

enabled on Instagram—photography and short videos within a sixty second time limit—affords little space and time for detailed verbal narration and encourages heightened visual enactments of the self (e.g. Ross 2019:363; Smith 2021:606). In this regard, for Nikki Lilly's self-presentation on Instagram, my analytic focus is on the visual semiotic mode.

The technological features afforded by media platforms exert influence on users' beliefs and strategies about their use of different media sites, or what Gershon (2010) called 'media ideologies'. These material and ideological variations subsequently shape people's adaptive and strategic self-presentations on different media sites (Jerslev & Mortensen 2018; Ross 2019). However, this is not to say that people necessarily fashion drastically different selves on different social media sites. Indeed, particularly for media personalities, since the key to garnering attention and recognition lies in projecting a distinct persona (Gershon 2016:239), they are committed to constructing a coherent presentation of self (e.g. Johnstone 2009; Valentinsson 2018). As I show below, when posting on Instagram, Nikki Lilly consistently foregrounds her hypernormative gendered self through enacting idealized feminine figures of womanhood such as girly girls and fashion models. Moreover, given the distinct affordances of the photographic genre in staging as well as imposing an atomic yet aggressive lens on reality (Frosh 2003:123), the hyperfeminine performance in Nikki Lilly's self-portraits is further amplified in the context of Instagram, which emphasizes the visual styling of the bodily self.

To examine Nikki Lilly's visually gendered presentation systematically, I refer to Goffman's (1979) discussion of gender semiotics in print advertising. Goffman proposes that women and men are represented in diametrically opposed ways and identifies six categories of embodied displays that are typically associated with women. These include relative size, function ranking, the family, the ritualization of subordination, licensed withdrawal, and the feminine touch. As the first three characteristics typically involve a juxtaposition of men and women, I mainly engage with the latter three dimensions, where the co-presence of different genders is not a prerequisite.

A ritualized subordinated position is stereotypically constructed through a posture of deference, that is, the lowering and/or shrinking oneself physically in a standing, sitting, or prostrate position. Other classical acts of performing submission or appeasement include the head or body canting, smiling, and frivolous behavior, such as childlike guises, clowning, and pouting. Licensed withdrawal positions women as symbolically cared for by men and thus they are granted a right to absent themselves from the immediate environment around them. This is often signaled through an else-oriented gaze away from the here and now or retreating behind objects to conceal their emotional state. Feminine touch signifies a tactile relationship between women and objects when examining or engaging with them. In advertising, women are typically represented as touching objects gently, rather than holding or grasping them in a utilitarian manner like men, as well as ritually caressing their own bodies with fingers and hands.

In the Instagram posts presented below in example (5), Nikki Lilly's habitual poses are reminiscent of the gendered representational tropes discussed above. In particular, ritualized subordinated acts such as head and body canting (5a, 5b), lip pouting (5b), and feminine touch are coupled with licensed withdrawal (5c). Moreover, her fashion and grooming practices adhere to conventional feminine styles (dyed and stylized hair, makeup, manicures, and jewelry, all in bright colors). These resources taken together index an urban middle-class girly girl's style. In addition, in (5a) and also across her Instagram posts, she repeatedly does foot popping, a widely circulated visual trope of hyperfemininity in photography, movies, and television. This gesture is widely recognized as a socially scripted feminine expression of passion and affection, as it is often staged stereotypically to characterize an attractive female protagonist, usually wearing stiletto pumps, in a passionate smooching scene (e.g. see *The Princess Diaries*). The indexical links between the foot pop and hypernormative femininity are also referenced in online sources, such as the Urban Dictionary. Its definition—this is when a guy holds a girl by her waist while her hands are around his neck and they kiss, then she feels good inside and her foot pops up![5]—discursively positions the man as the actor who initiates the kissing, the woman being a passive undergoer of the sexualizing act, a hallmark description and amplification of heterosexual femininity. With the head cant and the sporting of casual sartorial items, such as baggy slacks and sneakers, Nikki Lilly's adoption and adaptation of the pose builds on this emblematic image, adding a sense of youthfulness and contributing to her construction of a petite girl style.

(5)


a   b   c
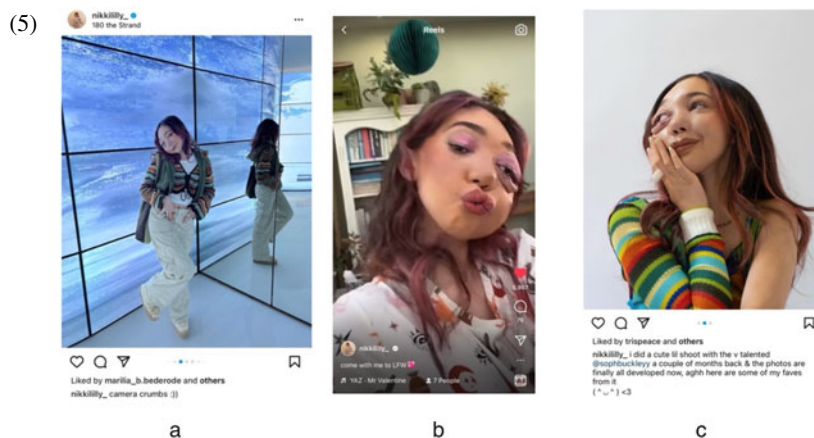
Nikki Lilly also stages her choreographed postures in mimicry of the bodily comportment of fashion models, another hyperfeminine figure of womanhood (see example (6)). Here, the ideological gendered associations are drawn on as a stylistic resource that disrupts the stigma against the disabled as being genderless and

asexual (Shakespeare et al. 1996; Ramanathan 2009; McRuer & Mollow 2012; Kulick & Rydström 2015).[6] For example, as an established gendered semiotic resource, feminine touch is a recurrent self-genderizing strategy deployed by Nikki Lilly to create the 'barely touching' effect of hands on the clavicle (6a) and hair (6b, 6c), which are both highly feminized body parts. Together with head canting and lip pouting, Nikki Lilly poses herself as a conventionally attractive young woman. By recontextualizing the embodied semiotics stereotypically associated with the hyperfeminine personhood, Nikki Lilly harnesses their gendered meaning potentials to combat disability stigma.

(6)
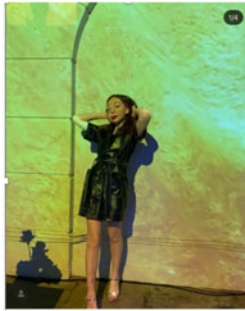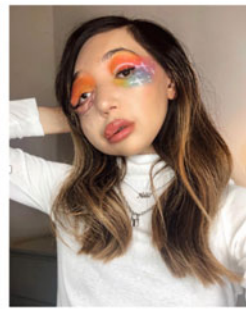
a   b   c

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Sacks' (1984) observation that 'doing being ordinary' is a pervasive phenomenon in everyday interaction offers valuable insights into understanding the discursive construction of social life. It also underscores how ordinariness functions as a critical interactional resource for speakers to claim normalcy. In this article, I have applied and extended this insight to examine the multimodal self-presentation by a socially marked speaker—the disabled media personality Nikki Lilly—who projects an ordinary persona with visible physical anomaly. I suggest that the body-discourse dialectics are key to understanding the tension between 'being (extra)ordinary' and 'doing being ordinary' in the materialization of an ordinary persona. Given the visibly distinctive body, the felicitous deployment of an ordinary self-presentation requires mobilizing hypernormative resources to symbolically de-stigmatize the disabled body, and rearticulate the perceived nonnormative self into being socially unmarked. In this regard, I argue that 'doing being ordinary' not only involves reframing the exceptional as unremarkable, but for visibly nonnormative individuals, it crucially and paradoxically hinges on mobilizing extraordinary resources to be recognized as being 'normal'. Moreover, I suggest that 'doing being ordinary' can carry subversive potential, rather than merely allowing for a ritualistic commitment to normalcy (cf. Jefferson 2004). Nikki Lilly's deployment of ordinariness thematizes extravagant exaggeration of normative scripts,

which serves to expose normalcy as an unattainable and illusory ideal. Very much akin to how drag performance exposes gender as performative (Butler 1990), a reflexive ordinary self-presentation in staged performance contexts allows Nikki Lilly to unveil how 'ordinariness' is a performative achievement that can be simultaneously invoked and contested (Bauman & Briggs 1990:60). In this vein, 'doing being ordinary' performs a transgressive identification against, and an inversion of, the compulsory ableist rhetoric of normalcy. For example, Nikki Lilly's claim 'no one's perfect' underscores normalcy as an enforced, excessive ideal that everyone is destined to fall short of (Davis 1995; McRuer 2006). Thus, 'doing being ordinary' serves to destabilize and subvert the ideological valuation of normalcy as the cultural majority, as anonymous and as unmarked, as well as humanizing disabled subjectivities.

In addition to the mutually constitutive dynamic between the body and discourse, my analysis showcases the tension and entanglement between two salient aspects of the bodily self: gender and disability. Scholars have long recognized how disabled subjectivities can be articulated through and transformed by gender-based terms. As discussed earlier, Rembis (2013) argues that socially privileged gender norms serve as pivotal resources for disabled athletes to pass in plain sight without physically concealing their bodily differences. This observation illuminates how a nuanced understanding of holistic personhood and body requires a consideration of the multi-dimensional, mutually constitutive aspects of social differentiations (Choo & Ferree 2010; Levon 2016). In other words, a disabled body and self are not just defined by bodily impairments but acquire their situated social meanings through their relationship with other contextually relevant, or intersecting, categories (e.g. gender). Moreover, Rembis' insights highlight how normativity can be harnessed as a central means 'of individuals' self-validation' (Yanovitzky & Rimal 2006:1) and 'of social exclusion and stigmatization' (Motschenbacher 2014:51). However, the disability passing account upholds a binary demarcation of the normative and the antinormative, presupposing that negotiation and construction of normalcy, or ordinariness, for socially stigmatized individuals necessarily involves conforming themselves to hegemonic ideals. Despite their seemingly antithetical nature, the normative and the antinormative are not absolute and static bars or opposing poles on a spectrum but are dialectically related with fuzzy boundaries in between, each carrying plural meaning potentials that are contextually determined (Hall, Levon, & Milani 2019:485). As my study has shown, seemingly normative acts and stances can be drawn on by social actors to destabilize the normative paradigm.

Finally, I have shown how addressing disability in the presentational media complements disability representational studies. Traditionally, literature on disability discourse has been predominantly conducted in the representational arena (e.g. TV, newspaper), which is, to a large extent, structurally programmed to (re) produce ableist narratives about disability. Opting to center the voices of people with disabilities in the presentational media contexts, such as YouTube or

Instagram, will facilitate engagement with disabled people as speaking subjects, rather than being spoken for by traditional media institutions. This would enable a novel perspective in (re)examining previous understandings of the relationship between disability and normalcy. Rather than tweaking her corporeal differences in conformity to normative ideals and de-emphasizing her disability, Nikki Lilly's ordinary self-positioning is achieved through exaggerating normality to an extreme and illuminating its unattainable nature for everyone. Hypernormative tropes of normality are deployed to exert subversive agency, emphasizing resistance against being interpellated into the genderless disabled Other. Such semiotic dramatization renders normalcy excessive and hypervisible, and undermines the basis and distinction between normalcy and deviance. My case study of Nikki Lilly is but one instance of how presentational enactments of seemingly normative disability performance can yield subversive potentials, which confound paradigmatic passing narratives examined in the representational media contexts.

APPENDIX: TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

(adapted from Ochs & Capps 2001)

(.)	'micropause', ordinarily .5 seconds or less
,	'continuing' intonation
.	falling, or final, intonation
?	rising intonation
<u>Underline</u>	emphatic stress
:	lengthening of the preceding vowel or consonant
" "	reported speech or thought
(())	transcriber's comments or descriptions of conduct

NOTES

[1]I am aware of the debate in the disabled community on the use of person-first language or identity-first language to emphasize personhood (i.e. people with disabilities) or group membership (i.e. disabled people) respectively. Such distinctions between the two variations are sometimes challenging to maintain, as some speakers might also see disability as centrally relevant to their personhood and not a mere reduction of the person. In my text, I use the former term as much as possible, and refer to the latter term in instances where the social construction of disability as a category is emphasized.

[2] https://metro.co.uk/video/influencer-nikki-lilly-explains-life-changed-rare-diagnosis-2602915/
[3] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-50418569
[4] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-50418569
[5] https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=foot%20pop
[6] Scholars have also noted how disabled people may be characterized as hypersexual (Kulick & Rydström 2015:6–7).

REFERENCES

Adami, Elisabetta, & Carey Jewitt (2016). Social media and the visual. *Visual Communication* 15 (3):263–70.

Agha, Asif (2003). The social life of cultural value. *Language and Communication* 23(3–4):231–73.

——— (2007). *Language and social relations*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Attardo, Salvatore; Lucy Pickering; & Amanda Baker (2011). Prosodic and multimodal markers of humor in conversation. *Pragmatics & Cognition* 19(2):224–47.

Bauman, Richard, & Charles L. Briggs (1990). Poetics and performances as critical perspectives on language and social life. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 19(1):59–88.

Bhatia, Aditi (2018). Interdiscursive performance in digital professions: The case of YouTube tutorials. *Journal of Pragmatics* 124:106–20.

Bloom, Molly (2019). Liminal spaces, titanium braces: Narrative tropes of competence among wheelchair basketball players. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 29(1):119–37.

Bruner, Jerome S. (1994). The remembered self. In Ulric Neisser & Robyn Fivush (eds.), *The remembering self: Construction and accuracy in the self-narrative*, 41–54. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bucholtz, Mary, & Kira Hall (2016). Embodied sociolinguistics. In Nikolas Coupland (ed.), *Sociolinguistics: Theoretical debates*, 173–97. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bury, Michael (1982). Chronic illness as biographical disruption. *Sociology of Health & Illness* 4 (2):167–82.

Butler, Judith (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge.

Calder, Jeremy (2019). From sissy to sickening: The indexical landscape of /s/ in SoMa, San Francisco. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 29(3):332–58.

Cameron, Deborah (2000). Styling the worker: Gender and the commodification of language in the globalized service economy. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 4(3):323–47.

Choe, Hanwool (2022). *Performing everyday authenticity in online vlogs. Paper presented at the Sociolinguistics Symposium 24, July 2022*. Ghent, Belgium.

Choo, Hae Yeon, & Myra Marx Ferree (2010). Practicing intersectionality in sociological research: A critical analysis of inclusions, interactions and institutions in the study of inequalities. *Sociological Theory* 28(2):129–49.

Coupland, Justine, & Richard Gwyn (eds.) (2003). *Discourse, the body, and identity*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Davis, Lennard J. (1995). *Enforcing normalcy: Disability, deafness, and the body*. New York: Verso.

Fausto-Sterling, Anne (2005). The bare bones of sex: Sex and gender. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30(2):1491–527.

Featherstone, Mike (1999). Body modification: An introduction. *Body & Society* 5(2–3):1–13.

Frobenius, Maximiliane (2011). Beginning a monologue: The opening sequence of video blogs. *Journal of Pragmatics* 43(3):814–27.

Frosh, Paul (2003). *The image factory: Consumer culture, photography and the visual content industry*. Oxford: Berg.

García-Rapp, Florencia (2016). The digital media phenomenon of YouTube beauty gurus: The case of Bubzbeauty. *International Journal of Web Based Communities* 12(4):360–75.

Garland-Thomson, Rosemarie (2009). *Staring: How we look*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gershon, Ilana (2010). Media ideologies: An introduction. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 20(2):283–93.

——— (2016). "I'm not a businessman, I'm a business, man": Typing the neoliberal self into a branded existence. *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 6(3):223–46.

Giddens, Anthony (1991). *Modernity and self-identity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Goffman, Erving (1963). *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

——— (1979). *Gender advertisements*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

——— (1981). *Forms of talk*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Goggin, Gerard, & Christopher Newell (2003). *Digital disability: The social construction of disability in new media*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Grosz, Elizabeth (1997). Inscriptions and body maps: Representations and the corporeal. In Linda McDowell & Joanne P. Sharp (eds.), *Space, gender, knowledge: Feminist readings*, 236–51. London: Arnold.

Grue, Jan (2015). *Disability and discourse analysis*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Hall, Kira; Erez Levon; & Tommaso M. Milani (2019). Navigating normativities: Gender and sexuality in text and talk. *Language in Society* 48(4):481–89.

Hardin, Marie, & Brent Hardin (2004). The 'supercrip' in sport media: Wheelchair athletes discuss hegemony's disabled hero. *Sociology of Sport Online* 10. Online: http://physed.otago.ac.nz/sosol/v7i1/v7i1_1.html.

Jaworski, Adam (2017). Art on television: Television as art. In Janus Mortensen, Nikolas Coupland, & Jacob Thøgersen (eds.), *Style, mediation, and change: Sociolinguistic perspectives on talking media*, 165–95. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jefferson, Gail (2004). 'At first I thought': A normalizing device for extraordinary events. In Gene, H. Lerner (ed.), *Conversation analysis: Studies from the first generation*, 131–67. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Jerslev, Anne, & Mette Mortensen (2018). Celebrity in the social media age: Renegotiating the public and the private. In Anthony Elliott (ed.), *Routledge handbook of celebrity studies*, 157–74. New York: Routledge.

Johnstone, Barbara (2009). Stance, style, and the linguistic individual. In Alexandra Jaffe (ed.), *Stance: Sociolinguistic perspectives*, 29–52. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

King, Brian W. (2019). Language and embodied sexuality. In Kira Hall & Rusty Barrett (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of language and sexuality*. Oxford University Press. Online: https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190212926.013.30.

Kleinman, Arthur (1988). *The illness narratives: Suffering, healing, and the human condition*. New York: Basic Books.

Kulick, Don, & Jens Rydström (2015). *Loneliness and its opposite: Sex, disability, and the ethics of engagement*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Labov, William, & Joshua Waletzky (1967). Narrative analysis. In June Helm (ed.), *Essays on the verbal and visual arts*, 12–44. Seattle: University of Washington Press. [Reprinted in the *Journal of Narrative and Life History* 7:3–38.]

Lakoff, Robin (1975/2004). *Language and woman's place: Text and commentaries*. Ed. by Mary Bucholtz. New York: Oxford University Press.

Levon, Erez (2016). Conflicted selves: Language, religion, and same-sex desire in Israel. In Erez Levon & Ronald B. Mendes (eds.), *Language, sexuality, and power: Studies in intersectional sociolinguistics*, 215–39. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lindemann, Kurt, & James L. Cherney (2008). Communicating in and through 'Murderball': Masculinity and disability in wheelchair rugby. *Western Journal of Communication* 72(2):107–25.

Marshall, P. David (2010). The promotion and presentation of the self: Celebrity as marker of presentational media. *Celebrity Studies* 1(1):35–48.

Matsumoto, Yoshiko (2015). The power of the ordinary: Quotidian framing as a narrative strategy. *Journal of Pragmatics* 86:100–105.

McRuer, Robert (2006). *Crip theory: Cultural signs of queerness and disability*. New York: New York University Press.

———, & Anna Mollow (eds.) (2012). *Sex and disability*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Mitchell, David T., & Sharon L. Snyder (2000). *Narrative prosthesis: Disability and the dependencies of discourse*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Motschenbacher, Heiko (2014). Focusing on normativity in language and sexuality studies: Insights from conversations on objectophilia. *Critical Discourse Studies* 11(1):49–70.

Norden, Martin F. (1994). *The cinema of isolation: A history of disability in the movies*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Ochs, Elinor, & Lisa Capps (2001). *Living narrative: Creating lives in everyday storytelling*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Page, Ruth (2015). The narrative dimensions of social media storytelling: Options for linearity and tellership. In Anna De Fina & Alexandra Georgakopoulou (eds.), *The handbook of narrative analysis*, 329–47. Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons.

Pitts, Victoria (2003). *In the flesh: The cultural politics of body modification*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pitts-Taylor, Victoria (2016). *The brain's body: Neuroscience and corporeal politics*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Pomerantz, Anita (1986). Extreme case formulations: A way of legitimizing claims. *Human Studies* 9 (2):219–29.

Ramanathan, Vaidehi (2009). *Bodies and language: Health, ailments, disabilities*. Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters.

Rembis, Michael (2013). Athlete first: A note on passing, disability, and sport. In Jeffrey A. Brune & Daniel J. Wilson (eds.), *Disability and passing: Blurring the lines of identity*, 111–41. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Riboni, Giorgia (2017). Languages for specific purposes on YouTube: A cross-cultural and cross-linguistic analysis of English and Italian makeup tutorials. *Lingue e Linguaggi* 21:231–49.

Ross, Scott (2019). Being real on fake Instagram: Likes, images, and media ideologies of value. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 29(3):359–74.

Ross, Andrew, & Michele Zappavigna (2020). My sport, my perspectives: Intersubjectivity in cyclist Instagram posts. *Discourse, Context & Media* 34:1–13.

Sacks, Harvey (1984). On doing 'being ordinary'. In J. Maxwell Atkinson & John Heritage (eds.), *Structures of social action: Studies in conversation analysis*, 413–29. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shakespeare, Tom; Kath Gillespie-Sells; & Dominic Davies (1996). *The sexual politics of disability: Untold desires*. London: Cassell.

Shilling, Chris (1993). *The body and social theory*. London: SAGE.

Smith, Sean P. (2021). Landscapes for 'likes': Capitalizing on travel with Instagram. *Social Semiotics* 31 (4):604–24.

Thornborrow, Joanna (2017). Styling the 'ordinary': Telefactual genres and participant identities. In Janus Mortensen, Nikolas Coupland, & Jacob Thøgersen (eds.), *Style, mediation, and change: Sociolinguistic perspectives on talking media*, 143–64. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tolson, Andrew (2010). A new authenticity? Communicative practices on YouTube. *Critical Discourse Studies* 7(4):277–89.

Valentinsson, Mary-Caitlyn (2018). Stance and the construction of authentic celebrity persona. *Language in Society* 47(5):715–40.

Yanovitzky, Itzhak, & Rajiv Rimal (2006). Communication and normative influence: An introduction to the special issue. *Communication Theory* 16(1):1–6.

Zimman, Lal, & Kira Hall (2009). Language, embodiment, and the 'third sex'. In Dominic Watt & Carmen Llamas (eds.), *Language and identities*, 166–78. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Address for coorespondence:
Xiaowei May Li
School of English, The University of Hong Kong
Room 7.46, School of English, Run Run Shaw Tower,
Centennial Campus
The University of Hong Kong
Pokfulam, Hong Kong
mayxw51@connect.hku.hk