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A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SEVENTEEN, ESSENCE AND REDBOOK: 1985-1998

By

Allison Daniel Anders

A THESIS

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SEVENTEEN, ESSENCE AND REDBOOK: 1985-1998

By

Allison Daniel Anders

This content analysis evaluated material in Seventeen, Essence and Redbook from 1985-1998, in three time periods: 1985-1989, 1990-1994 and 1995-1998. Using a set of operational definitions selected items were counted and coded to reflect four main categories: “appearance,” “female/male relations,” “self-development” and “political/social issues.” These categories were chosen based on previous research in the area of women’s magazines and utilized to ascertain whether or not a third wave of feminism began in the 1990s. The categories of: “appearance,” and “female/male relations” were combined to reflect “traditional” content and the categories of “self-development” and “political/social issues” were combined to reflect “feminist” content.

The magazines differed significantly from one another in terms of the amount of content present in the categories of “appearance” and self-development,” and the distribution of “traditional” and “feminist” items in Seventeen provided the most support for the assertion that a third wave of feminism began in the 1990s.

To Joyce Vance

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INTRODUCTION

A concern about the messages adolescents received in the mid- to late-1980s was the impetus for this project. Curiosity about the lack of diversified material in magazines targeted at this age group led to cursory research and dialogue about youth, feminism, oppression and the media.

A neophyte to the philosophical discourses on feminism, the author found herself bombarded with liberal, socialist and radical feminist sentiment, anti-feminist backlash, and pejorative denial of- and indifference to- the rights the women's liberation movement sought to gain. Definitions and discrimination grew only more complex as she searched for an operational language on which she could ground her hypotheses.

Researchers Linda Jackson, Ruth Fleury and Donna Lewandowski cite in their study, "Feminism: Definitions, Support, and Correlates of Support Among Female and Male College Students," popular commentary on the demise of feminism. "The new conventional wisdom holds that feminism is dead, and that the feminist movement is over, either because it has achieved its goals or because people no longer value its goals."¹

The National Organization for Women, established in 1966 at the inception of this country's second women's liberation movement, might challenge the contention that the movement's goals have been achieved. "NOW's official priorities are pressing for an amendment to the Constitution that will guarantee equal rights for women; achieving economic equality for women; championing abortion rights, reproductive freedom and other women's health issues; supporting civil rights for all and opposing racism; opposing bigotry against lesbians and gays; and ending violence against women."² These

goals make obvious the reality that this country has many changes left to embrace before all her citizens may equally participate in her social and political institutions.

The latter assertion, that people may no longer value the movement's goals, only illuminates the uneducated inferences some have made about the movement. For liberal and socialist feminists are promoting equality for "choice" and that includes and affects every American family.³

However, much to the convenience of anti-feminists, material reflecting older and radical positions within the feminist movement yield opportunity for debate. In his presentation, "The Decline of Manliness and Femininity," for The Lefrak Forum and The Symposium on Science, Reason, and Modern Democracy at Michigan State University, Professor Harvey Mansfield from Harvard University used conservative rhetoric and selective prose from the late 1960s to chastise feminist philosophy. He implied that all feminism surrounded the quest to make the nature, roles and identities of men and women "exchangeable." He acknowledged that this might well be possible if individuals lived with "perfect flexibility" and "where nothing external influences (their) choice."⁴

Mansfield's position minimizes the scope and depth of women's liberation movement and overemphasizes the implications of language use regarding the term "manliness." However, his focus on external influence and choice is significant. In a country that is saturated by the market and the media, the opportunity for surviving without "external influence" is all but non-existent. Researching content in the media provides data for further inquiry about said content's effects — important analyses, as content may affect paradigms, attitudes and actions.

Researchers, Jennifer Schlenker, Sandra Caron and William Halteman conducted an extension study on Kate Peirce's "A Feminist Theoretical Perspective on the Socialization of Teenage Girls Through Seventeen Magazine," in 1996 and found an increase in what they defined as feminist articles from the content that appeared in 1985 to the material that was published in 1995. They write that as social issues such as "day care, abortion and comparable pay" became more prevalent a third wave of feminism appeared.⁵

Schlenker's research cites three waves of feminism: the first wave reflecting the abolitionist conflict of the late 1930s, the second tied to the social reforms of the late 1960s and early 1970s and the third moving through the 1990s.⁶ This content analysis will document content before and after the early 1990s to provide evidence for discussion about Schlenker's assertion.

The thesis is structured not only to analyze Seventeen in the five year period prior to 1990 and the eight years following (in five and four year sets), but Essence and Redbook as well. A young women's magazine, a magazine for women of color and a magazine whose website states that it is "the married woman's survival guide"⁷ were chosen for their varying demographics of readership. Each magazine will be coded for content based on one of the following categories "appearance," "female/male relations," "self-development" and "political/social issues." Reflecting the structure from Peirce's and Schlenker's research, the former two and the latter two categories will be paired and labeled "traditional" and "feminist," respectively.

In terms of labeling roles and identities, Leslie Feinberg, an author, advocate and keynote speaker for Michigan State University's 1999 Pride Week, spoke of the need to

“respect each other’s right to express gender any way (we) choose.”⁸ She/He talked about thoroughly cleansing the terms “masculine” and “feminine” and embracing women in all their roles. She/he pushed her/his audience to think of traditional women and the culture around their identity. “Feminine women are invisible. They melt right into the patriarchy,” she/he said, and with a sardonic tone added, “And they’re all out there enjoying feminine privileges.” Feinberg also talked about the lesbian community in the early 1990s using terms like, “butch-fem.” In attempt to highlight the acidic relationship between “feminine” and “masculine” and their applications she/he used the following example: “If knowing how to use power tools make someone masculine, then I’m “high fem.”⁹

“No one can claim the mantle of true woman in this society,” Feinberg believes, because “it’s not the lipstick or the tie (that’s) oppressing me,” but the machinery of institutionalized oppression.¹⁰ She/he explained that the women’s liberation movement is about understanding that oppression. Feinberg also, and perhaps much to the disappointment of Mansfield, suggested that “talking about ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ is only helpful when (you are) talking about oppression.”¹¹

This thesis addresses some of the oppression that exists for women, because while the women’s liberation movement has “succeeded to a great degree,” according to Mansfield, there are still many issues with which to contend. For accompanying the most rapid increase in earnings for women from 1979 to 1984 was the Reagan Administration that “staunchly opposed the Equal Rights Amendment, hiring quotas, comparable worth, and most affirmative action programs.”¹²

Institutional oppression, however, is not limited to politics. Susan Faludi, author of Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women, writes that a “widespread backlash against feminism” took place under the surface of 1980s careerism. She notes backlashes: in the media, e.g. Fatal Attraction and “New Traditionalism” and the resurgence of feminine fashions; in popular psychology, e.g. self-help books encouraging “to improve your marriage, change yourself” philosophies; and in the work place, e.g. lack of day care, parental leave, and the wage gap.¹³

The targeted audiences of Seventeen, Essence and Redbook all suffer under the weight of sex-based oppression. In addition, Seventeen’s audience suffers under the oppression of ageism, Essence’s under the oppression of historical and cultural racism and Redbook’s under the manifestations of institutional oppression, as there is an absence of equality in the union of marriage,¹⁴ in the home¹⁵ and in the workplace.¹⁶

One of the purposes of this study is to provide a foundation for future research concerning each of these areas of oppression and how such discrimination might affect young women, women of color and married women.

Adolescence typically ravages the egos of young women and sends them doubting into potentially turbulent years. Researcher P. Orenstein found in a study of 3,000 boys and girls that adolescence was “marked by a girl’s loss of confidence in herself and her abilities. After spending a year with teenagers she concluded that the media and educational system are shortchanging girls by not encouraging self-worth.”¹⁷ Adolescent girls struggle with the messages they receive from their peers and the media, perceiving “the world in black and white terms”¹⁸ and missing the nuances and benefits of

functioning within a continuum of choices. Seventeen has a opportunity to provide a range of choices, ideologies and lifestyles that may enhance this stage of development.

Women of color face “multiple and interlocking systems of oppression.”¹⁹ Not only do they suffer discrimination based on gender identification but in this country they suffer discrimination based on their race, heritage and ethnicity as well. Essence has an opportunity to provide information and resources to combat, among other issues, white privilege, racism and sexism.

Although white women have benefited more from affirmative action than any other targeted group²⁰ all women remain oppressed. Inequality in terms of salaries, benefits and opportunities for advancement still exist, and for the married woman, divorce settlements are often unequal.²¹ Redbook has an opportunity to produce positive messages of empowerment and tangible guidelines that may facilitate independent growth — financially, emotionally and spiritually.

This content analysis will analyze the trend Schlenker et al. documented in their research and seek to document results using these three women’s magazines. Only editorial content will be coded. The analysis does not include advertisements on which the magazines are dependent and over which the editors have no input regarding content. Focusing instead on where editors do have control is important in terms of opportunity for reflection and potential in-house changes.

¹ Linda A. Jackson, Ruth E. Fleury and Donna A. Lewandowski, "Feminism: Definitions, Support, and Correlates of Support Among Female and Male College Students," Sex Roles, Vol. 34, (1996) 687.

² National Organization for Women. (Online) Available <http://www.now.org/>, February 1, 1999.

³ Kate Perice, "A Feminist Theoretical Perspective on the Socialization of Teenage Girls Through Seventeen Magazine," Sex Roles, Vol. 23, (1990) 492.

⁴ In The Lefrak Forum and Symposium on Science, Reason, and Modern Democracy, Michigan State University, Morality and Public Life: Is America in Moral Decline? conference paper, "The Decline of Manliness and Femininity," by Harvey Mansfield.

⁵ Jennifer Schlenker, Sandra L. Caron, and William A. Halteman, "A Feminist Analysis of Seventeen Magazine: Content Analysis from 1945 to 1995," Sex Roles, Vol. 38, (1998) 140.

⁶ Schlenker, 139.

⁷ Redbook. (Online) Available <http://www.redbookmag.com>, February 1, 1999.

⁸ In a speech by Leslie Feinberg.

⁹ *Ibid*.

¹⁰ Institutional oppression occurs when within institutional arrangements of a society one group benefits at the expense of another. Manifestations of institutional oppression appear in language, media, economics, education and religion.

¹¹ Feinberg.

¹² Gary S. Becker, "How the Market Acted Affirmatively for Women," Business Week, (May 13, 1985) p.16.

¹³ "Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women," Kirkus Reviews. (Online) Available, Lexis-Nexis, April 13, 1999.

¹⁴ "Draft Declarations Against Violence Approved by Commission; United Nations Commission on the Status of Women; Includes Related Article on the Rights of Married Women," UN Chronicle, (Online) Available, Lexis-Nexis, April 15, 1999.

¹⁵ Gene Koretz, "Why Married Women Work," Business Week, (Sept. 22, 1997) p.26.

¹⁶ "Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women."

¹⁶ **“Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women.”**

¹⁷ Schlenker, 136.

¹⁸ Mary Pipher, Ph.D., **Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls**, Ballantine Books, New York, (1995) 59.

¹⁹ Susan Stanford Friedman, **Mappings**, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, (1998) 49.

²⁰ **Affirmative Action Myths vs. Facts.** (Online) Available <http://bbcc.ctc.edu/~webb/cabb.htm>, March 24, 1999.

²¹ National Organization for Women.

CHAPTER 1

Literature Review

Valuing the Messages Women Receive

Witch

They told me
I smile prettier with my mouth closed.
They said -
better cut your hair -
long, it's all frizzy,
looks Jewish.
They hushed me in restaurants
looking around them
while the mirrors above the table
jeered infinite reflections
of a raw, square face.
They questioned me
When I sang in the street.
They stood taller at tea
Smoothly explaining my eyes on the saucers,
Trying to hide the hand grenade
in my pant's pocket,
or crouched behind the piano.
They mocked me with magazines
Full of breasts and lace,
Published their triumph
When the doctor's oldest son
Married a nice sweet girl.
They told me tweed-suit stories
of various careers of ladies.
I woke up at night
afraid of dying.
They built screens and room dividers
to hide unsightly desire
sixteen years old
raw and hopeless
they buttoned me into dresses
covered with pink flowers.
They waited for me to finish
then continued the conversation.
I have been invisible,
weird and supernatural.

I want my black dress.
I want my hair
curling wild around me.
I want my broomstick
from the closet where I hid it.
Tonight I meet my sisters
in the graveyard.
Around midnight
if you stop at a red light
in the wet city traffic,
watch for us against the moon.
We are screaming,
we are flying,
laughing, and won't stop.

- Jean Tepperman

i

Seventeen

Mary Pipher, author of Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls addresses the socialization process of young women from a cultural perspective. "It's (Adolescence) an extraordinary time when individual, developmental and cultural factors combine in ways that shape adulthood. It's a time of marked internal development and massive cultural indoctrination."¹

A part of this experience involves the construction of self and gender identification. Pipher cites writer and feminist Simone de Beauvoir to help expound on the complexities within the adolescent development of young women. "Simone de Beauvoir believed adolescence is when girls realize that men have the power and that

their only power comes from consenting to become submissive adored objects. They do not suffer from the penis envy Freud postulated, but from power envy.”²

Perceived or actualized issues of power and control within relationships may influence behavior patterns and relationship dynamics. In this country battering: emotional hurting, threatening, using power or position to hurt, physical beating and sexual abuse, is the single major cause of injury to women, exceeding rapes, muggings and even auto accidents.³ On university campuses nationwide, 25-30% of the college student population is battered.⁴ The reality that women garner less power than men, in terms of employment and advancement opportunities, equal wages, is absorbed by females in messages from mainstream media, social institutions, political platforms and legislation.⁵ These images, hierarchies, campaigns and laws may potentially undermine development and dictate limited identity roles to young women.

De Beauvoir also believes “girls stop being and start seeming.”⁶ During a time when the integration of feeling and acting may not occur, adolescent girls are also not communicating with the support system they utilized most as a child — their parents. The adolescent’s process of seeking independence and pushing social boundaries also includes an element of distancing. Adolescents move away from those upon whom they have been most dependent. Pipher writes that, “just when they (adolescents) need help they are unable to take their parents’ hands.”⁷

“(Parents’) daughters live in a media-drenched world flooded with junk values. As girls turn from their parents, they turn to this world for guidance about how to be an adult.”⁸ The images and language — denoted and connoted meanings of descriptors — about women found in the media only reflects another level of oppression within the

media's projected and often distorted images of feminine women. Young women must become adults in a culture in which feminine is defined as "docile, weak and other-oriented."⁹

Pipher believes girls struggle with mixed messages. "Be beautiful ... — Teenage girls spend an estimated \$4 billion a year on cosmetics¹⁰ — ... but beauty is only skin deep. Be sexy ... — Girls as young as 14 are now seeking surgery to either reduce or enlarge their breasts¹¹ — ... but not sexual. Be honest, but don't hurt anyone's feelings. Be independent but be nice. Be smart, but not so smart that you threaten boys."¹²

Claudia Bepko and Jo Ann Kreston describe the internalization process of these messages as "indocrination into the code of goodness,' which they argue is essentially unchanged since the fifties. The rules remain the same: be attractive, be a lady, be unselfish and of service, make relationships work and be competent without complaint."¹³

Pipher parallels the pressure adolescent girls experience to the pressures described in the writings of Alice Miller. Miller wrote about the pressure some young children experience to deny their true selves and assume false selves to please their parents.¹⁴

"Reviving Ophelia suggests that adolescent girls experience a similar pressure to split into true and false selves, but this time the pressure comes not from parents but from culture."¹⁵ Manifestations of societal demands occur in schools, magazines, music, television, advertisements and movies.¹⁶ Parents are no longer the primary influence on adolescent girls.¹⁷

Media and peers who glean their information from the media may influence the development of adolescent girls. The messages from Hollywood media contain specific

elements. “Adulthood, as presented by the media, implies drinking, spending money and being sexually active.”¹⁸

Mass media is often cited as one of the causes for the increased risky sexual behavior among the young and is criticized for showing sex as glamorous and fun.¹⁹

For children, “(l)earning about sex and sexuality is substantially different than other kinds of learning ... children rarely have first-hand ‘experience’ with sex, either through participation in or observation of sexual activity.”²⁰ Moreover, parents, schools and churches, traditional primary sources of information and modeling for other areas of social learning, are often reticent, if not totally silent about sexual values and behavior.²¹ The lack of alternative sources of information leads many young adolescents searching for information in the media.²²

Pipher believes the ideas Hollywood projects about sexual relations are unsafe, confusing and damaging. “Hollywood lovers don’t discuss birth control, past sexual encounters or how a sexual experience will affect the involved parties; they just do it. The Hollywood model of sexual behavior couldn’t be more harmful and misleading if it were trying to be.”²³

Today both boys and girls are initiating sexual intercourse earlier than ever before, and girls are getting pregnant at greater rates than in any other industrialized country in the world.²⁴

Only one in three heterosexually active adolescents uses any form of birth control regularly, and one in seven sexually active teenagers currently have a sexually transmitted disease. Nearly half of the estimated 20 million sexually transmitted disease patients are under the age of 25.²⁵

Pipher writes that society needs to change if healthy young women are to be produced.²⁶ She believes the media must be a part of that change and emphasizes the importance of changing “the way women are portrayed in the media.”²⁷

Research from M. Brake states that “teenage magazine articles focus on romantic attachment, dependency on men and physical beauty.”²⁸ One might argue that a possible correlation may exist between the need for romantic attachment and sexual relations; dependency on men and giving power to men in relationships; the desire to be physically attractive and pursuing cosmetic and physical alterations to fulfill such desires. These conjectures seem dangerous in terms of simply presupposing their existence. And magazine content that reinforces or fails to offer choices as they relate to these trends seems unhealthy in regards to identity development in adolescence.

Peirce, who conducted the longitudinal analysis, “A Feminist Theoretical Perspective on the Socialization of Teenage Girls Through Seventeen Magazine,” from a feminist perspective, writes about the importance of sending messages that show young readers options in the roles women choose to fulfill.

“Teen magazines have a unique opportunity to shape the world of the teenage girl. There isn’t an overabundance of magazines targeted to that age group so the magazines that do exist are read by hundreds of thousands of girls. Changing their fiction to include more non-traditional messages ... would show readers that there are options that women are not confined to a few limited roles.”²⁹

The teen population is growing at twice the rate of the rest of the country. There are more adolescent readers and consumers between the ages of 13 and 19 than the country has seen in two decades.³⁰ And in 1996 this population spent \$70 Billion.³¹

Seventeen and her advertisers want to keep this generation's interest.³² Targeting these consumers is no doubt a lucrative venture, but at what costs are young women internalizing campaign messages that distort images- and limit roles- of women?

A 1982 study in Britain marks the beginning of research specifically focused on the area of teenage magazines. A. McRobbie used Jackie, a British teen magazine, in a content analysis. She found that a teenage girl's main concerns were romance, beauty, fashion and pop stars.³³

In 1990 using a popular American teenage magazine Peirce also researched content. She documented change in content over the years preceding and following the early 1970s feminist movement. She chose Seventeen and issues from 1961, 1972 and 1985 and found that the women's liberation movement may have had some effect on content.

In 1972 there was an increase in the percentages that reflected content labeled as "self-development" articles and a decrease in "male/female relations" articles. In 1985 the percentage of "self-development" and "male/female relations" articles dropped to 1961 rates.³⁴ Table 1 displays all coded content based on the categories of "appearance," "home," "male-female relations," and "self-development" in percentage form.

Table 1

Percentage of Editorial Pages Given to Selected Topics in Seventeen

	<u>1961</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1985</u>
Appearance	48.0%	52.0%	46.0%
Home	9.0%	10.0%	11.0%
Male-female relations	7.0%	2.7%	6.5%
Self-development	7.5%	16.6%	6.8%

Source: Kate Peirce, "A Feminist Theoretical Perspective on the Socialization of Teenage Girls Through Seventeen Magazine," Sex Roles, Vol. 23, (1990) 498.

Peirce also did an analysis of fiction content in Seventeen and Teen magazines in 1993. Results indicated that women characters were portrayed in dependent roles and that occupations were segregated by gender. Peirce argued that Seventeen and Teen have a responsibility to provide information that a young woman needs, including messages that are not steeped in traditional ideology.³⁵

She provides an operational definition of traditional socialization in the opening of her research:

By age 17, the traditionally socialized teenage girl will have learned, from many and varied sources, that how she looks is more important than what she thinks, that her main goal in life is to find a man to take care of her financially, and that her place will be home with the kids and the cooking and the housework, while his place will be wherever he wants it to be. She will have learned, too, that if she has to work (and it would certainly be better if she didn't), her job will not be as important as his, it will not pay as much as his, and she will still be in charge of home and kids. She will have been told that biological differences necessitate these gender differences and her lesser status in society.³⁶

In 1996 Schlenker replicated Peirce's longitudinal analysis, using the same method but the years, 1945, 1955, 1965, 1975, 1985 and 1995. She wanted to extend the research to examine the possible effects of an additional wave of feminism. She hypothesized that there would be an increase in non-traditional messages after the early 1970s movement, a decrease during the conservative 1980s, and a resurgence in the 1990s, where she thought the "topics of day care, abortion, day care, and comparable pay" had become major social issues.³⁷

Schlenker's research shadowed Peirce's definitions of "traditional" and "feminist." Peirce describes "non-traditional" or feminist socialization as the following:

The non-traditionally socialized 17-year-old girl will have learned the basic tenets of feminism — that biological differences don't explain all the differences in social status, roles, and behavior; that these differences are socially created and must be removed; that real differences shouldn't be grounds for assigning a lower status to female attributes; and that women shouldn't be urged to think that they can find fulfillment only in relation to men and that their identity is given to them by their appearance in the eyes and minds of men.³⁸

Schlenker's findings indicated that there was a relationship between the content of Seventeen, in terms of "feminist" vs. "traditional messages," and the women's liberation movement. The percentage of "feminist" content, based on the combination of the items coded in categories "self-development," "career-development," and "political/world issues," increased in 1975 and 1995. The content in 1985, although lower than 1975, did not fall significantly compared to 1945 and 1955.³⁹

Table 2

Content Analysis of Seventeen Magazine: 1945-1995

	<u>1945</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1995</u>
Traditional						
Appearance	23%	43%	48%	35%	42%	45%
Male-female relations	17%	14%	13%	6%	13%	14%
Home	8%	17%	13%	19%	10%	<1%
Total Traditional	48%	74%	74%	60%	60%	65%
Feminist						
Self-development	32%	15%	17%	29%	23%	24%
Career development	13%	10%	8%	10%	12%	14%
Political/world issues	7%	1%	1%	1%	<1%	1%
Total Feminist	52%	26%	26%	40%	35%	40%

Source: Jennifer Schlenker, Sandra L. Caron, and William A. Halteman, "A Feminist Analysis of Seventeen Magazine: Content Analysis from 1945 to 1995," Sex Roles, Vol. 38, (1998) 143.

A 1997 study, “Reflections of Girls in the Media,” conducted by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and Children Now, examining how females are depicted in television, movies and magazines, revealed similar results to research by Schlenker.⁴⁰ Table 3 displays the results of the content analysis that reviewed Sassy, Seventeen, Teen, and YM. The percentages reflect the number of times each category appeared in the magazines.

Table 3

Content Analysis Sassy, Seventeen, Teen, YM

Magazine	<u>Sassy</u>, <u>Seventeen</u>, <u>Teen</u>, <u>YM</u>
Appearance and Looks	37%
Fashion	32%
Dating	35%
Independence	3%

Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to multiple topics covered in a single magazine article

Source: Jennifer Christman, “Teen Zines Some Magazines Aimed at Today’s Youth Are a Little Different From What You Grew Up With,” The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 25 February 1998, p. F1.

In regards to celebrity coverage in the same study researchers found that “20 percent of the articles focused on famous men while 14 percent focused on famous women.”⁴¹ Every article given to coverage about men limits space that may be used to highlight a mentor and role model who is female.

Although Schlenker’s study does not categorize celebrities her results in the area of content focusing on appearance are as disturbing as those found in the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and Children Now research. Both studies reveal alarmingly high percentages of content focusing on appearance, looks and fashion: Schlenker’s 45% in 1995, and H. J. K. Family Foundation and Children Now’s 69% in 1997.⁴²

In a telephone conversation Peirce includes in her 1990 study, Seventeen's managing editor espouses the magazine's commitment to the provision of information that young women need to make educated decisions. "While the magazine is primarily fashion and beauty, (its) editorial purpose is to inform, entertain, and give teenage girls all the information they need to make sound choices in their lives."⁴³ However, the lack of balanced content reflected in Schlenker's study suggests that Seventeen's stated purpose is mere rhetoric.

Seventeen's managing editor also explained that "the fashion and beauty sections are "to make the girls feel good about themselves."⁴⁴ In the last ten years almost well over 40% of Seventeen's content were articles about appearance. More than 90% of the 5 million Americans suffering from eating disorders are adolescents and young adult women.⁴⁵ With such information perhaps Seventeen needs to reconsider the amount of content about "fashion and beauty" with which she provides her readers.

In a study of nine- to fifteen-year-old girls reported by the Harvard Eating Disorders Center, more than 50% reported that they exercised to lose weight, and almost half stated that they ate less to lose weight. One in 20 reported using diet pills or laxatives to lose weight as well.⁴⁶

One reason that adolescents and young women are "particularly vulnerable to eating disorders is their tendency to go on strict diets to achieve an ideal figure."⁴⁷ Research has shown that such stringent dieting may trigger eating disorders.⁴⁸ The Harvard Eating Disorders Center reports that "three percent of adolescent and adult women suffer from anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, or binge-eating disorder ... and

that 15 percent of young women have substantially disordered eating attitudes and behaviors.”⁴⁹

Anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge-eating disorder are diseases that affect both the body and mind simultaneously. “A young woman with anorexia is 12 times more likely to die than other women her age without anorexia,”⁵⁰ and one in ten cases of anorexia does lead to death. Starvation, cardiac arrest, other medical complications and suicide are all potential deterrents in such cases.⁵¹

Researchers have expressed concern about the images the media projects and the potential influence they may have on “normal, healthy teens.”⁵² In Growing Up Female in America, J. Mann discusses the problems of having “anorexic models in fashion magazines and on television.”⁵³ The women who are seen are often far below the normal weight recommendations. “Measurements of Playboy magazine centerfolds and Miss America contestants were compared between 1979 and 1988. While Playboy magazine models remained at the same weight, the Miss America contestants decreased over the decade.”⁵⁴ Mann finds that the media produces images of women in ways that imply value only in terms of sexual objectification. She stresses the importance of communicating the unhealthiness of these societal norms to teenage girls so distortions may be challenged and young women realize the fallacy and connotations in “girls are valued for looks and not for other things.”⁵⁵

At the 1999 Michigan State University Alumni Association’s Kaleidoscope, a conference targeted toward women and women’s interests, Delta Burke lamented over the difficulties that exist when trying “to present teenagers with a sense of reality” when “anorexic 14-year-olds who’ve been airbrushed” are splashed across the media.⁵⁶ Burke

who starred as Susanne Sugarbaker on “Designing Women” spoke of the weight gain America witnessed from their living rooms and of the criticism and discrimination she endured. She was concerned with the slenderness that the media continues to project as the ideal but moreover, feels that, “our society seems to have made it open season on real size women.”⁵⁷

In 1995 Burke launched her own clothing line, the *Delta Burke Collection* and *Delta Blues Jeanswear*, for women who wear size 14 and higher. And although the lines have been “enthusiastically received by retailers and consumers,” they do not include items for young women and children.⁵⁸ Burke shared her own stories of females she hasn’t yet reached — girls who approach her in tears at fashion shows wondering if she has any clothes for them and six-year-olds asking her if they are too fat.⁵⁹ Burke also described her hospital visits to nine- and ten-year-old girls who had tried to commit suicide, because they could no longer face their weight and the disease of anorexia or bulimia nervosa.⁶⁰

She criticized the media and the fashion industry for ignoring the size and needs of women. “We truly live with the tyranny of the minority ... I don’t think the fashion industry is addressing any of us properly.”⁶¹ Concluding her keynote speech, Burke encouraged her audience to be vocal, because she said, the damage of media and the lack of clothing options for real size women is “affecting us and our children.”⁶²

With this testimony and previous research results, editorial staffs for all magazines targeted at young women must reevaluate the potential destructiveness of appearance based content.

For Peirce postulates that teenage girls may indeed be dependent on teen magazines for information, that “girls can’t find as much material targeted to them in any other medium.”⁶³ She believes that teens are still trying to figure out how to live in the world and suggests that the dependency on teenage targeted magazines and a fluctuating social reality may contribute to an increased level of message receptiveness.⁶⁴

Although research does not reflect balanced coverage in terms of content that in study’s were labeled “traditional” and “feminist,” items documented as such are present. There are indications that teen-age girls are receiving both messages, and there is concern at large about what that may mean.

Avoiding a comprehensive semantic debate on positions within the women’s liberation movement and the definition of who “a feminist” is, emphasis instead will be placed on one basic theme that is repeated in feminist literature, and that concerns a woman’s conscious “choice.”

Betty Friedan, author of Feminine Mystique, much to the chagrin of some radical-feminists, acknowledges that the women’s liberation movement must include “family, children, and a woman’s need for intimacy”⁶⁵ in the 1990s, and Susan Bordo, author of Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and The Body, does not believe that feminist cultural criticism should be a “blueprint for the conduct of personal life.”⁶⁶

Feminist cultural criticism, Bordo asserts, “does not empower (or require) individuals to ‘rise above’ their culture or become martyrs to feminist ideals. It does not tell us what to do ... Its goal is edification and understanding, enhanced consciousness of the power, complexity, and systemic nature of culture, the interconnected webs of its functioning.”⁶⁷ Bordo feels the individual must choose “how, when, and where (or

whether) to put that understanding to further use, in the particular, complicated, and ever-changing context that is his or her life and no one else's."⁶⁸ She believes that in this culture of mystification, increasing one's awareness and raising one's conscious is a "tremendous achievement," because feminist cultural criticism can not eradicate the complexities of a woman's role in our society, and it "cannot magically lift us into a transcendent realm of immunity to cultural images."⁶⁹

In her description of feminism and the "liberal feminist" Peirce reflects some of what Bordo contends about the role of feminist cultural criticism. Acknowledging that "feminists themselves do not agree on the definition of feminism, the roots of gender differences, or the solutions to the problems of women,"⁷⁰ Peirce places feminists into three categories: liberal, socialist and radical. She writes that, "the liberal feminist believes that liberation for women is the freedom to determine their own social role and to compete with men on terms that are equal as possible."⁷¹ The liberal feminist is also supportive of- and works for- legislation that creates and changes laws that effect equal pay and employment.⁷²

The socialist feminist, as described by Peirce, is a woman who believes women's oppression is a "function of the socioeconomic system and argues for comprehensive changes throughout society to eliminate hierarchies of value and divisions of labor by class and gender."⁷³

In contrast, the radical feminist believes that "control over women's reproductive systems is the root of women's oppression," and that a "biological revolution" that embraces test-tube babies and sperm banks must take place. Some radical feminists also renounce associations with men entirely and suggest that women must become lesbians.⁷⁴

Whereas radical feminism seems to be less about “choice,” liberal and socialist feminism certainly is. Liberal feminists are more likely to embrace a woman’s conscious choice to stay at home and raise her children than socialist feminists, but the latter does focus on social change as it relates to gender roles, and such emphasis reflects a foundation based on the recognition of the need for options and opportunities, i.e. “choice.” Equal pay and employment, maternity and paternity leaves, and a national day care program would all become decisive elements in a woman’s decision to embrace a career, a family or both.

Author of The Lipstick Proviso: Women, Sex and Power in the Real World,

Karen Lehrman best encapsulates the meaning and living of feminism.

Feminism ... is simply about equal rights and equal opportunities: ‘How women exercise those rights and what they decide to do with their opportunities — these are matters of personal choice’ ... Feminism must treat each woman as a unique individual: She may be a corporate raider or a full-time mother, may ‘wear slinky dresses and heels or baggy overalls and combat boots ... Women don’t have to sacrifice their individuality, or even their femininity — whatever it means to each of them — to be equal.’⁷⁵

In their 1996 study, “Being Female in the Eighties and Nineties: Conflicts Between New Opportunities and Traditional Expectations Among White, Middle Class, Heterosexual College Women, Lesley Novack and David Novack explore the idea that “females are presented with conflicting images which nurture new career-related expectations while simultaneously stressing traditional expressions of femininity, especially, marriage and motherhood.”⁷⁶

Their research investigates “the dynamics of conflicting demands on young women” through a survey about the attitudes college women have gleaned concerning

responsibilities toward young children and perceived degree of liberalism-conservatism pertaining to the place of women in society.”⁷⁷

Novack and Novack believe that, “(m)any young women are exposed to cultural images which support new career-related options while also emphasizing traditional expressions of femininity, especially marriage and motherhood.”⁷⁸ The researchers seem concerned about the experiences women may have because of the possible consequences of this “lag.” They speculate about the conflict women may experience as internal contradictions arise in their own attitudes and expectations. “(Women) may be dedicated to establishing a career but find that their deep moral commitment to staying at home with their new born and young children will jeopardize chances for upward mobility.”⁷⁹

Novack and Novack contend that a woman’s happiness is at least marginally “contingent on society providing a support system” for her if she chooses to earn an income and raise a family.⁸⁰ They cite the lack of a national day care program and established policies that would provide paid maternity and paternity leaves as examples that the American community has yet to embrace the woman who has both a job and children.⁸¹ These support systems are crucial when women comprise of almost 50% of America’s workforce and three of every four married women work outside their home.⁸²

The increased presence of women in occupational and educational environments has changed the landscapes of higher education and corporate America over the last thirty years. In 1950 college populations were only 30% female, but by 1980 the percentage had risen to over 50%.⁸³ This participation in higher education however, does not directly translate to women’s positions in America’s workforce. “Most women, of all racial backgrounds, find themselves occupying service and domestic positions historically

associated with their gender and which, not coincidentally offer the lowest wages.”⁸⁴

Novack and Novack note for an example that, “98% of secretaries continue to be female.”⁸⁵

Of the respondents in this study 80% of the men and women planned on pursuing an advanced degree. This interest by the majority of participants would indicate that these students, particularly women, plan “to take advantage of the opportunities available to them.”⁸⁶

But 97% of the women also intend to marry and most, 72%, plan to have children. Moreover, 67% of the females and 84% of the males believe that the mother should stay at home and care for her child during the “first few months.”⁸⁷ “Not only do two-thirds of the women appear to experience the traditional pull of motherhood, but future male spouses believe even more strongly that the women belong at home.”⁸⁸ Table 4 displays the percentages of the participants’ responses to whether or not the mother should stay at home and/or make her own choice about that decision.

Table 4

Career-Related Attitudes and Gender

	Male	Female
Mother home with child		
Strongly believe should stay home	69.0%	52.6%
Somewhat believe should stay at home	14.5%	14.4%
Somewhat believe should make own choice	8.4%	9.3%
Strongly believe should make own choice	8.1%	23.7%

Source: Lesley Lazin Novack and David R. Novack, “Being Female in the Eighties and Nineties: Conflict Between New Opportunities and Traditional Expectations Among White, Middle Class, Heterosexual College Women,” Sex Roles, Vol. 35, (1996) 66.

In terms of maternal obligations in the context of commitment to marriage and career, responses from the men revealed that 70% (71.8 marriage orientation and 69.3 career orientation) were in strong support of the mother staying at home and not participating in the choice about her child's care. The 70% assigned to "strongly believe (mother) should stay home" are reflective of all the male participants in this study, those of both stated marriage and career orientations.⁸⁹ Responses from study participants about whether or not they would choose marriage over a career (marriage) or a career over marriage (career) established the "marriage" and "career" orientations.

Table 5

Career-Related Attitudes, Gender, and Career Versus Marriage

	Marriage		Career	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Mother home with child				
Strongly believe should stay home	71.8%	65.0%	69.3%	41.5%
Somewhat believe should stay home	10.3%	12.0%	14.9%	16.9%
Somewhat believe should make own choice	9.4%	11.0%	8.2%	9.3%
Strongly believe should make own choice	8.5%	12.0%	7.6%	32.3%

Source: Lesley Lazin Novack and David R. Novack, "Being Female in the Eighties and Nineties: Conflict Between New Opportunities and Traditional Expectations Among White, Middle Class, Heterosexual College Women," Sex Roles, Vol. 35, (1996) 68.

Women who self identified as "liberal" in this study are the ones, Novack and Novack speculate, would be more likely to pursue careers. However, 41.8% of these "liberal" women believe that mothers should stay home and take of their children and "another 13.6% somewhat believe that they should not be given a choice."⁹⁰

Table 6**Career-Related Attitudes, Gender, and Position on Role of Women in Society**
Position on Role of Women

	Traditional		Liberal	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Mother home with child				
Strongly believe should stay home	80.4%	64.6%	50.0%	41.8%
Somewhat believe should stay home	12.9%	13.4%	16.4%	13.6%
Somewhat believe should make own choice	4.3%	11.0%	13.0%	8.2%
Strongly believe should make own choice	2.4%	11.0%	20.6%	36.4%

Source: Lesley Lazin Novack and David R. Novack, "Being Female in the Eighties and Nineties: Conflict Between New Opportunities and Traditional Expectations Among White, Middle Class, Heterosexual College Women," Sex Roles, Vol. 35, (1996) 71.

These results reveal that there are "potential inner conflicts that the females may possibly experience. Many of the women who are oriented toward careers and who view themselves as liberal simultaneously express very traditional attitudes with regard to maternal obligations."⁹¹

Novack and Novack believe that without established social systems, that would provide support for a dual role, young women will find themselves on an "internal collision course"⁹² as they attempt to negotiate a path for both career and family.

"The crucial point that must be made is that modern women receive mixed messages. They are told that they can be whatever they want to be, while they are simultaneously sent subliminal messages espousing the virtues of traditional femininity, which may lead to lower self esteem and less satisfaction."⁹³

The findings in attitudinal survey and magazine content research, the possible internal conflict women may experience over pursuing careers and motherhood, and the relationship of dependency in which women may participate with their magazines, reinforce the need for this analysis.

Those Beautiful Black Pearls

It is through the black woman
that we are able to see the
true reflections of the black man

Her vision becomes his reality,
As we rise together.

The black woman's commitment
has been forever strong in
making the permanent.

Her faith has made him seek
dignity within himself.

Her efforts to uplift him has
made him rise to his greatest strength,

And her love has enshrouded him
in the light of hope destined
for the future of our people.

With the highest gratitude and respect we give thanks and
praise to these beautiful black women who:
motivated us to act,
inspired us to think,
and uplifted us to see
the true reflections of ourselves
as the proud black men of the unshakable race.

Peace unto your hearts, minds and souls.

*- Dedicated by the Mr. University
Contestants, found in the Black
Caucus room, Yakeley Hall,
Michigan State University*

“Until the killing of Black mothers’ sons
becomes as important to the rest of this country
as the killing of white mothers’ sons,
we who believe in freedom can not rest.”

- Ella Baker

Essence

In Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body, Bordo also explores the multiple layers of oppression that women in the African American community endure. “The black woman carries a triple burden of negative bodily associations.”⁹⁴ By virtue of her sex, she represents the temptations of the flesh and the source of man’s moral downfall. By virtue of her race, she is instinctual animal, undeserving of privacy and undemanding of respect. And by virtue of her history a slave — a piece of property “to be taken and used at will.”⁹⁵

The “jezebel” and the “mammy” are two images of the stereotyped African American woman that are reflective of this multi-layered system of oppression. The “jezebel,” usually a fair-skinned or mulatto woman depicted as “a shapely seductress who uses her sexuality to get her way,” and the “mammy,” a woman who is usually a “servant responsible for domestic duties and rearing children”⁹⁶ and portrayed as the “antithesis of American standards of beauty — overweight, with exaggerated buttocks and breasts and wearing a head rag,”⁹⁷ are products of the media and institutional oppression.

Institutional oppression occurs when within institutional arrangements of a society one group benefits at the expense of another. Manifestations of institutional oppression appear in language, media, economics, education and religion.⁹⁸

The Aunt Jemima trademark with a life span of over one hundred years is an illustration of institutional oppression. Black women in America have been represented by this “mammy” image for decades.

Co-owner of Pearl Milling Company, Chris L. Rutt, developed the idea for Aunt Jemima after seeing Baker and Farrell, a team of black faced comedians, perform “a jazzy, rhythmic New Orleans-style cakewalk”⁹⁹ to a tune originally called “Old Aunt Jemima.” The comedians wore aprons and red bandannas, items “reminiscent of the traditional southern cook,”¹⁰⁰ in their number. From 1890 when the trademark was registered to 1964 the image of “mammy” was perpetuated through Aunt Jemima products and integrated¹⁰¹ into the culture of American consumers.

During this time period four women portrayed Aunt Jemima to promote the company’s product line. At the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago Nancy Green “sang songs and told stories of the Old South while greeting fair visitors.”¹⁰² She served more than a million pancakes and generated 50,000 orders for Aunt Jemima Pancake Mix.¹⁰³

In 1926 the company was sold to Quaker Oats who kept the Aunt Jemima trademark and in 1933 found 350-pound Anna Robinson in to impersonate “mammy.” Photographs of Robinson making pancakes with “the stars” were used to promote Aunt Jemima. The campaign was so successful that officials at Quaker Oats decided to commission “Haddon Sunblom, a nationally known commercial artist”¹⁰⁴ to paint Robinson. The new portrait featured a heavier and darker Aunt Jemima, and the Quaker Oats’ Aunt Jemima product line was then redesigned to reflect the new likeness.¹⁰⁵

From 1948-1964 Quaker Oats used Edith Wilson to continue their advertising campaign, this time utilizing radio and television along with personal appearances to promote their product line across the country. Wilson was the last portrait on Aunt Jemima products that reflected a real person.¹⁰⁶

Concurrently, from 1957-1964 Aylene Lewis was playing “mammy” at Disneyland in the Aunt Jemima Kitchen. “Clad in her bandanna and matching skirt and shawl, Lewis posed for pictures with many visitors,”¹⁰⁷ and received letters ““from all over the world, in all languages and from all races and creeds.””¹⁰⁸

This “mammy” image was used until the mid-1960s and recognized worldwide. Blacks may have been freed from slavery for 100 years but here they still “found themselves bound by invisible chains forged by distorted images”¹⁰⁹ that Pearl Milling Company and Quaker Oats projected about them. The manufacturers saturated the market with images of Aunt Jemima and Americans internalized her as a symbol reflective of African American women.

This integration “had a profound impact on the image that blacks had of themselves and of the image whites had of blacks.”¹¹⁰ Black women identified themselves within the confinements of a low economic status “ — though free they were slaves to a symbol. The ‘mammy’ phenomenon kept black women in the plantation kitchen.”¹¹¹

In her dissertation, “An Analysis of the Visual Development of a Stereotype: The Media’s Portrayal of Mammy and Aunt Jemima as Symbols of Black Womanhood,” assistant professor of sociology at Ohio State University, Karen Jewell, asserts that “these images perpetuated stereotypes that have ultimately been assigned to all black women regardless of social class, financial stability or age.”¹¹²

The Aunt Jemima product line was discontinued during the Civil Rights Movement “because of objections made from blacks who viewed the images as virulent. These items of material culture gave a physical reality to ideas of racial inferiority. They

were props that helped reinforce the racist ideology that emerged after Reconstruction.”¹¹³ The products had contributed to the relegation of “blacks to subservient positions in society and promulgated the fact that not only were blacks second class citizens, but proud of it, documented by the black, clownlike caricatures who were always smiling.”¹¹⁴

Noted columnist William Raspberry appears skeptical about the reality of such institutional oppression. He does observe that if the Aunt Jemima trademark were introduced in contemporary society opposition would be present and the image would “probably be labeled as offensive,”¹¹⁵ but states that, “the trademark was never that terribly offensive in the first place.”¹¹⁶ Raspberry also notes that Quaker Oats has adjusted to changes in society and modified the symbol when black consumers objected to it.”¹¹⁷

The opposition during the Civil Rights Movement resulted in a younger Aunt Jemima who was 100 pounds lighter and whose bandanna was replaced with a headband.¹¹⁸ However, not until 1989, one hundred years after the concept was developed, was Aunt Jemima raised from the Reconstruction period and placed in Contemporary society. In April of 1989, finally, all reminders of a “mammy’s” “kerchief to hide her nappy hair”¹¹⁹ were removed and in its place soft, gray-streaked hair appeared. Pearl earrings along with a lace collar were added as well.¹²⁰

Over the years most consumers did not even consider the potential ramifications of the image, the myth it perpetrated or its sequential effect on the psyche and status of black women.¹²¹ The images were “so familiar that few people had any notion that they degraded black Americans.”¹²²

Rasberry contends that one of the reasons for the product's longevity was the logo's life span. He purports that because Aunt Jemima was so familiar to the American consumer its distorted image of African American women was never deliberated. Rasberry explains that with familiarity comes "innocuousness."¹²³ Familiarity, however, does not excuse a century of subconscious discrimination.

Joseph Borkin, a noted historian, asserts that "once a stereotype of a group is solidly etched into American folklore, it becomes permanently 'imbedded in people's minds and profoundly affects thoughts and actions.'"¹²⁴ The chief problem with stereotypes of ethnic and racial groups is that "one character is allowed to stand for a whole diverse collection of human beings."¹²⁵

Although advertisers perpetuate this process they are also products of its influence. Writer Marilyn Kern-Foxworth asserts that for years advertisers, conditioned to view all African American women through the "mammy" image, dismissed a "potentially lucrative market — black women/women of color."¹²⁶ Kern-Foxworth explains that "(Advertisers) didn't think black women had enough money to purchase the products being advertised ... and ... they didn't think black women were pretty enough to be used in advertising campaigns."¹²⁷ Not until the 1980s were black women used to "advertise mainstream health and beauty aid products."¹²⁸ An interesting oversight when "black women currently spend \$600 million annually on color cosmetics and foundation"¹²⁹ and spend five times more than the average consumer on personal care products. Kern-Foxworth believes that this market remains untapped. She asserts that myths about black women have superseded market research that would study this target audience.¹³⁰

This example seems to be a manifestation of Kern-Foxworth's contention that, "(s)tereotypes associated with blacks, earlier versions of Aunt Jemima among them, may have been influential in developing behavior patterns exhibited by dominant groups toward blacks ... the only contact many whites had with blacks was their exposure to these advertisements. Such depictions perpetuated discrimination against blacks and the 'mammy' image reinforced by Aunt Jemima offered a one dimensional view of black women."¹³¹

Offering multi-dimensional views of black women and transcending institutional oppression is a role Essence has an opportunity to embrace for the stereotypes of "mammy" were not perpetuated by Quaker Oats alone.

With the medium of television the image of "mammy" jumped from the grocery store shelves into living rooms, and "jezebel" joined her.

The physical manifestation of "mammy's" role changed in size from sitcom to sitcom but the nature of her role did not. "Good Times", Esther Rolle played by Florida Evans was originally responsible for the domestic duties of a white household; "Gimme a Break's" Nell Carter was a live-in housekeeper for a single white father and his children; and although, Marla Gibbs worked for other African Americans on "The Jeffersons," she was still their housekeeper and embodied the image of "mammy" — a nurturing woman "good at comforting and taking care of others, but also verbally aggressive."¹³²

The image of 'jezebel appeared in sitcoms as well. Sandra Clark played by Jackée Harry on "227" exemplifies the stereotyped image of the "jezebel." The image Jewell believes, reinforces "cultural stereotypes regarding the supposed hyper-sexuality of African-American women."¹³³

White producers, Jewell notes, are not the only ones exploiting this myth. Keenen Ivory and Damon Wayans's comedy show "In Living Color," contains negative imagery of African-American women as well.¹³⁴

Jewell contends that the media's stereotypical portrayal of these women has "real-life consequences. 'It affects how the majority culture treats black women. As a result of media images, many people have inaccurate and negative expectations about how African-American women should act and look. Only when these stereotypical images are replaced with more accurate representations will we see changes in societal perceptions and expectations of African-American women.'"¹³⁵

Jewell does cite examples of television series that provide a "new and positive image of African-American women."¹³⁶ "The Cosby Show," "The Fresh Prince of Bell Air," and "Roc" are programs that do not "demean black females," however, she feels the new roles and images on these shows are still "overshadowed by the traditional, negative images which remain."¹³⁷

Jewell does not mention "Living Single," which Jet magazine touts as the first sitcom to showcase "four upwardly mobile Black women, who provide positive images by displaying their professional, elegant and intellectual sides while keeping the laughs going."¹³⁸ The program is set in New York City and stars Kim Fields, Queen Latifah, Kim Coles and Erika Alexander. Alexander in an interview with Jet said: "All the woman are professional or entrepreneurs. We've never seen a show where women are all young and making it in New York City. The characters dress well and are well spoken and intelligent."¹³⁹

Whereas consensus may be absent in terms of unilateral agreement with Jewell, an obvious need for more positive role models in the media for African American women is apparent if a century of stereotyped image based discrimination is to be countered.

In terms of physical appearance some black adolescent females embrace the black images they see on television, because viewing women of all sizes in the media reassures them about their own bodies.

Ayanna Dorns, a young black student told interviewer John Stossel in the ABC report, “Common Sense with John Stossel,” that “she and other young ladies like her have a greater comfort level with their bodies because of black images on television. ‘We just see people like Oprah and Kim Fields from “Living Single” and people who are just naturally bigger ... and plus we get that positive energy from Black males.’”¹⁴⁰ Full figure model Lisa Scott, agreed with Dorns’ comment on the opposite sex, “African-American guys don’t mind a little meat on the bones. They love it.”¹⁴¹

ABC’s report highlighted research that recently concluded, “Black female adolescents are happier with their bodies than their White counterparts.”¹⁴² The study, “Body Image and Weight Concern among African American and White Adolescent Females: Differences that Make a Difference,” conducted by researchers at the University of Arizona found that “Black women, who tend to be ‘thick,’ or well endowed with ample hips and thighs, were happier with their bodies than White woman who often starve themselves bone thin.”¹⁴³

Results of the study revealed that “while ninety percent of White teen-age girls were unhappy with their bodies, Black girls weren’t,” and that 70% (of the black adolescent females) “liked the way they looked.”¹⁴⁴

The white girls in the study perceived dieting and being thin as the “ideal” method “to achieving a more perfect life” which included “winning friends and getting attention from boys.”¹⁴⁵ Conversely, the black girls who participated in the study perceived achieving a dynamic personality, rather than particular physical attributes, as the “ideal” method “to achieve a more perfect life.”¹⁴⁶

Reports of positive self-images from African American girls are encouraging, but Bordo maintains that eating disorders transcend ethnic and racial boundaries. She confronts eating disorders from multi-ethnic and multi-racial perspectives. “The equation of slenderness and success in this culture continually undermines the preservation of alternative ideals of beauty. The legacy of reverence for the zaftig body has not protected Jewish women from eating disorders; the possibility of greater upward mobility is now having a similar effect on young African American women, as the numerous diet and exercise features appearing in Essence magazine make clear. To imagine that African American women are immune to the standards of slenderness that reign today is, moreover, to come very close to the racist notion that the art and glamour — the culture — of femininity belong to the white woman alone ...”¹⁴⁷

Bordo illuminates the struggle one African American woman endured as she fought her weight and body image:

‘Fat is a black woman’s issue, too,’ insisted the author of a 1990 Essence article, bitterly criticizing the high-school guidance counselor who had told her she did not have to worry about managing her weight because ‘black women aren’t seen as sex objects but as women. So, really you’re lucky because you can go beyond the stereotypes of woman as sex object ... Also, fat (women) are more acceptable in the black community.’ Apparently, as the author notes, the guidance counselor had herself not ‘gone beyond’ stereotypes of maternal desexualized Mammy as the

prototype of black womanhood. Saddled with these projected racial notions, the young woman, who had struggled with compulsive eating and yo-yo dieting for years was left alone to deal with an eating disorder that she wasn't 'supposed' to have.¹⁴⁸

The guidance counselor mentions that “fat (women) are more acceptable in the black community,” and Bordo concedes that “a case could once be made for a contrast between (middle-class, heterosexual) white women’s obsessive relations with food and a more accepting attitude toward women’s appetites within African American communities.”¹⁴⁹ However, in the 1990s, she states, that articles on dieting and exercising and “body-image problems” have become more prominent in magazines targeted toward African American readers.¹⁵⁰

Bordo feels that this growth reflects “the cultural reality that for most women today--whatever their racial or ethnic identity, and increasingly across class and sexual-orientation differences as well — free and easy relations with food are at best a relic of the past. (More frequently in Essence than in Cosmo, there may be a focus on health problems associated with overweight among African Americans, in addition to the glamorization of slenderness.”¹⁵¹

Whereas Essence is marked in these excerpts as a medium that provides information on dieting, exercise and problems with body image, the magazine also provides content that reflects positive diversified messages about black women. Unfortunately, the messages of self-acceptance that Essence tries to send and reinforce are often undermined by the advertisements on which it is dependent:

Essence magazine has consciously and strenuously tried to promote diverse images of black strength, beauty, and self-acceptance. Beauty features celebrate the glory of black skin and lush lips; other departments feature interviews

with accomplished black women writers, activists, teachers, many of whom display styles of body and dress that challenge the hegemony of white Anglo-Saxon standards. The magazine's advertisers, however, continually play upon and perpetuate consumers' feelings of inadequacy and insecurity over the racial characteristics of their bodies. They insist that, in order to be beautiful, hair must be straightened and eyes lightened; they almost always employ models with fair skin, Anglo-Saxon features, and "hair that moves," ensuring association of their products with fantasies of becoming what the white culture most prizes and rewards ... This invitation to cognitive dissonance reveals what *Essence* must grapple with, in every issue, as it tries to keep its message to African American self-acceptance clear and dominant, while submitting to economic necessities on which its survival depends.¹⁵²

Battling the messages of advertisers appears to be an inherent struggle for the black community. Advertising's assault on the black community fires from grocery shelves and glossy pages, but even as consumers can avoid food products that exploit their heritage or magazine content that sparks cognitive dissonance, they can not dismantle giant billboards that saturate their neighborhoods. "Black neighborhoods are rampant with billboards and a probe of the Detroit Planning Commission found that 55 to 58 percent of billboards in poor neighborhood(s) advertise two substances, cigarettes and alcohol."¹⁵³ Manufacturers of these substances have been targeting the black consumer for years and promoting their products through "contributions to black social, cultural and community-oriented events, issues and causes. Philip Morris and R.J. Reynolds gave over \$2.4 million and \$1.9 million respectively, in 1987 to minority groups."¹⁵⁴

Black community members find themselves in a bind, because "most black publications would have to cease publication if they denied these advertisers access to their periodicals."¹⁵⁵ Publications are often the most utilized resource by black

individuals to gain information about important issues and events in their community. Contentions have been made that because of such tenuous business relationships and the correlations between blacks and “incidences of tobacco related cancer and cirrhosis of the liver caused by alcohol consumption at rates 25 to 58 percent higher than whites, support given by these firms to black organizations amount(s) to ‘philanthropic genocide.’”¹⁵⁶

A seemingly much less harmful advertising campaign, the “‘Jell-O’ Heritage” series, created by General Foods to reach African American consumers by promoting historically black colleges with their product, still damages members of the black community. With its total lack of gender equality the advertising series becomes another example of institutional oppression. This potentially positive campaign becomes disturbing when no females are portrayed as the “students discovering their black heritage (or learning how to rely on convenience foods!) at college.”¹⁵⁷ Bordo recognizes the possibility that the “‘Jell-O’ Heritage” series may be “exploiting contemporary notions that the ‘crisis in black manhood’ is the fault of black women and identifying its products with an imagined world in which opportunities for black men go hand in hand with ‘natural,’ prefeminist gender relations. Black men will find their way to college, it is suggested, so long as women remain in the background, encouraging and supporting rather than competing and undermining.”¹⁵⁸

The absence of females speaks as loudly to women as those images that are distorted representations of their culture. And the implications surrounding the forfeit of a woman’s chance to pursue a higher education so that her male counterpart may instead are terrifying.¹⁵⁹



Figure 1

“‘Jell-O’ Heritage” Series Advertisement by General Foods

In 1993-94 a nationwide survey found that “20 percent of blacks believed that black women should eschew positions of political leadership so as not to ‘undermine’ black men. And whereas 63 percent supported black feminists, 29 percent thought that ‘feminist groups just divide the black community.’”¹⁶⁰ Even with the lack of representation in the “‘Jell-O’ Heritage” campaign and lack of support for the advancement of women from their own community black women are graduating and are succeeding.

More black women than black men attend college and work as professionals. “An analysis of data from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission by The Wall Street Journal in 1992 put the ratio at 1.8 to 1.”¹⁶¹ However, the wages black women are making are disconcerting.

The National Organization for Women President Patricia Ireland explains that after years of trying to “break through the glass ceiling, women are still working more than three extra months to catch up with men.”¹⁶² Ireland believes that as women move onto the “top floors of major cooperations” and into “skilled craft positions, the gap will finally close.”¹⁶³ Among other official priorities the National Organization for Women campaigns for “an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that will guarantee equal rights for women” and for “economic equality for women.”¹⁶⁴ The organization has also been working actively to end wage discrimination since the organization’s inception in 1966, but the closing of the gap over the last thirty years is attributed mostly to men’s falling earnings rather than an increase in women’s earnings.¹⁶⁵ Table 7 shows the 1996 median annual earnings for full-time female employees who work year-round.

Table 7

Women's Pay in the USA

1996 Median Annual Earnings of Year-Round, Full-Time Workers

Women earn	\$.74 for every \$1.00 earned by men
African American Women earn	\$.67 for every \$1.00 earned by men

Source: National Organization for Women. <http://www.now.org/>

Examples of institutional and economic oppression through advertising and television images, and wage discrimination offers compelling evidence for the investigation into a black woman's reality. Her survival and the resources to which she turns while living under these multiple layers of oppression are significant. Black publications, like Essence may block new discoveries with traditional rhetoric or link women to innovative avenues of liberation.

This analysis will offer insight into the content with which Essence fills her pages and the hearts and minds of her readers.

But let there be spaces in your togetherness,
And let the winds of the heavens dance between you

Love one another, but make not a bond of love:
Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores
of your souls.
Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup.
Give one another of your bread but eat not from the
same loaf.
Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let
each one of you be alone,
Even as the strings of a lute are alone though they
quiver with the same music

Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping.
For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts.
And stand together yet not too near together:
For the pillars of the temple stand apart,
And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in
each other's shadow.

- *Kahlil Gibran, The Prophet*

iii

Redbook

Fifty years ago many companies refused to hire married women “as a matter of policy.”¹⁶⁶ Between the 1950s and 1980s minimal change occurred in the nature of work experience for married women and the wage gap remained fixed. Additionally, breadth of occupational segregation in 1970 mirrored the divide in 1900.¹⁶⁷ At the turn of the century women comprised only 15% of the labor force and barely over 25% in 1950.¹⁶⁸ And long after women gained the right to vote they still found themselves excluded by schools and labor unions.¹⁶⁹

A disturbing court case tried in 1994 exposes the discrimination that married women have suffered and continue to face in the culture of America's workforce and the power prejudice holds over them, altering careers and changing lives.

Eleanor Jackson Piel, a solo practitioner from New York, "never doubted that Vassar College had denied tenure to her client, assistant biology professor Cynthia Fisher, because Fisher was a married woman."¹⁷⁰ Her concern rested in whether or not a court would accept that "the denial violated federal civil rights law."¹⁷¹

On May 16, 1994, New York senior U.S. district judge Constance Baker Motley believed Piel's contention and issued an order establishing that "if sex plus some other characteristic results in discrimination against one sex, then Title VII (of the Civil Rights Act of 1964) is violated."¹⁷² Judge Motley's order also criticized Vassar College's biology department for accepting the stereotype and bias that "a married woman with an active and ongoing family life cannot be a productive scientist and, therefore, is not one despite much evidence to the contrary."¹⁷³ Piel presented comparisons of classroom teaching reviews, published scholarly articles and grant applications — all of which revealed Fisher's achievements "to be equal to or better than those of the tenured professors."¹⁷⁴

In her opinion, Judge Motley declared that Fisher was entitled to reinstatement at Vassar. A social worker at the time of the decision, Fisher commented that she intended to return to the college. Unfortunately, Piel's and Fisher's struggle against institutional oppression may not end with Judge Motley, for Vassar's regular counsel, John Donoghue of New York's Anderson, Banks, Curan and Donoghue, said he is "relatively certain" that Vassar College will appeal the judge's "stunning order, which he asserts is

‘inconsistent with what Vassar is.’¹⁷⁵ Donoghue seems incredulous of Vassar’s discrimination against Fisher. His denial that oppression exists, even at Vassar, is as disheartening as the reality that discrimination exists.

Today, although more than 50% of all married women are working,¹⁷⁶ and some external barriers to advancement are splintering, many women are confronted with other forms of discrimination: “... dirty jokes at the office¹⁷⁷ ...”; “... conceptions of female workers as marginal and transient¹⁷⁸ ...”; “... social norms which dictate what jobs are deemed appropriate¹⁷⁹ ...”; lack of opportunities in job placement and advancement that require a commute¹⁸⁰; and internal conflict or cognitive dissonance, because of “gendered familial roles”¹⁸¹ and their dual commitment to a career and family.¹⁸²

Research indicates that the proportion of working married women with children under the age of six has increased from 16% in 1956 to 54% in 1998.¹⁸³ As married women continue to join the workforce the bi-directional relationship of work-life and family-life acquire new practical and theoretical significance. The importance of this transition and its occupational and familial relationship rests in the assigned responsibilities of new and old obligations. Although women are pursuing the demanding new role of ‘employee,’ they are typically not experiencing any freedom to relinquish their traditional role. “For instance, the major responsibility for household work and parenting chores still appears to be the province of women and the cultural definition of women’s primary role as that of ‘mother’ is as much a reality today as it was in 1979 when Russo discussed the ‘motherhood mandate,’ the notion that women are seen as fulfilled adults only when they have children.”¹⁸⁴

Consequently, many women confront what Donald Campbell, Kathleen Campbell and Daniel Kennard call in “The Effects of Family Responsibilities on the Work Commitment and Job Performance of Non-Professional Women” “role expansion.” Campbell, Campbell and Kennard contend that “such expansion has potential repercussions for the women themselves; their families; and for their employing institutions.”¹⁸⁵ Their research suggests that the women suffer from varying degrees of role conflict and stress as “they struggle to fulfill multiple obligations.” Families as well are “often subject to increased stress as new role relationships have to be negotiated and refined.”¹⁸⁶

Researchers are finding that while married women put more total work hours in both their jobs and their home, “than they used to, their husbands don’t.”¹⁸⁷ Economist Allen M. Parkman of the University of New Mexico asks, “If wives are working harder why aren’t their husbands helping out more at home?”¹⁸⁸

Lehrman believes that working through personal relationships with men is as important to the advancement of women and the feminist movement as social and political change. “The primary problem for most American women today isn’t how society deals with women, it’s how individual men do — and how women let them get away with it.”¹⁸⁹ Women, Lehrman writes, should demand equality, emotional support, and balanced and equitable housework and child care.¹⁹⁰

These issues are affecting the majority. In a 1990 Virginia Slims poll, 57% of the women respondents stated that they preferred a lifestyle that included a career, marriage and children.¹⁹¹ Also, statistics from the 1992 Bureau of Labor Statistics indicated that in

55% of the 52 million married couples in the United States “both spouses worked outside the home.”

Preference and increased family income have been reasons attributed to women entering the work force by increasing degrees, but Parkman believes that the high incidence of divorce in this country is related to women’s work decisions.¹⁹² The economist notes that “many working wives now come from higher-income households, and a big chunk of their added earnings is often eaten up by taxes, child care, and work-related expenses — sharply reducing the immediate economic gain.”¹⁹³ His research indicates that a correlation exists with the advent of no-fault divorce. He argues that prior to 1970 needing cooperation from a spouse to obtain a divorce “provided nonworking wives with strong leverage to secure decent divorce settlements.” However, by 1985 every state had adopted a no-fault, unilateral, non-consensual divorce laws, and “many wives losing that ‘leverage’ “sought outside work to protect themselves from economic hardship in the event of a divorce.”¹⁹⁴

Analyzing nationwide survey data from 1981 helped Parkman form his conclusion. He found that not only were women who lived in states with no-fault divorce more likely to work outside the home, but they also invested significantly more hours of total work per week.¹⁹⁵

William Galston, a professor in the School of Public Affairs and Director of the Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy at the University of Maryland, asserts that these no-fault divorce laws and their consequences are negatively affecting “women who’ve made long term commitments to traditional marriages.”¹⁹⁶ In 1999 during his presentation on “Marriage and The Family” at The Lefrak Forum and The Symposium on

Science, Reason, and Modern Democracy at Michigan State University, Galston stated that this “new regime” of divorce law favors the economically independent more than the dependent, and that the former position translates most often to that of the man and the latter to the woman. He believes that “low barriers to exit produce a larger number of departures.”¹⁹⁷ With well over 40% of all marriages in America ending in divorce,¹⁹⁸ Galston’s observations seem to be substantiated.

Questions about the possibly inferred defeatist nature of this dialogue within a larger discussion of marriage might have validity; however, if one truly considers the reality of America’s alarmingly high divorce rate such challenges become moot points. For if a married woman thinks of herself and her two closest friends, she will realize that at least one of their marriages, perhaps her own, will end in divorce. Galston adds complexity to the issue by asserting that for families to merely survive economically in the 21st century they will need two incomes. A two-parent household will become a necessity.¹⁹⁹

With the oppression and potential instability women face on the job and in the home, one would hope that magazines dedicated to serving women in these positions would provide them with information about resources promoting alternatives, embracing choice and advocating change. Unfortunately, research focusing on women’s magazines found other messages.

Brake’s findings, that teenage articles focus on romantic attachment, dependency on men and physical beauty,²⁰⁰ are not unlike those found in a 1975 content analysis by Helen Franzwa. After reviewing 122 stories from Good Housekeeping, Ladies Home Journal and McCalls Franzwa found two major themes:

1. marriage is inevitable for every normal female and for those who want to bring it about more quickly
2. to catch a man you must be less competent than he, passive and virtuous

“Specifically, the only pursuit a woman was interested in was finding a husband.”²⁰¹ A few articles portrayed talented, successful women, but the protagonist was unfulfilled, because she didn’t have a man. There were no stories of what Franzwa called a “well-adjusted woman.”²⁰²

Other research, particularly a study conducted by Virginia Kidd, provides little evidence of change over the past thirty years where roles of women were concerned. Kidd’s research documents two “visions” concerning interpersonal communication, both of which oppress the woman in her role as homemaker and wife. Kidd opens her study, “Happily Ever After and Other Relationship Styles: Advice on Interpersonal Relations in Popular Magazines, 1951-1973,” by acknowledging the power of media messages. “Mass media (has) become the ‘authority of the transcript’; they provide what Walter Lippman termed ‘pictures in our heads — pictures which are representations of the real world.’”²⁰³ Through these representations a composite image of ‘reality’ is constructed, a rhetorical vision which has its base not so much in ‘reality’ as in rhetoric.”²⁰⁴ Kidd contends that popular magazines play an important role in projecting and reinforcing “rhetorical visions.”²⁰⁵

Two rhetorical visions were documented in her study. Vision I dramas communicated traditional ideology concerning sex roles, presenting “the woman as the passive homemaker and the man as the aggressive breadwinner.”²⁰⁶ Vision II dramas presented readers with negotiation techniques for relationships, rather than “specific standards” of roles that would produce amicability in relationships.²⁰⁷

Vision I dominated content in the 1950s and early 1960s but also appeared throughout the study which ended in 1973. Vision II emerged sporadically in the early 1960s, gained prominence in the late sixties and held a 'major position' in the early 1970s.

The magazines Kidd analyzed included but were not limited to the following: Coronet, Cosmopolitan, Ebony, Esquire, Newsweek, New York Times Magazine, Redbook, Reader's Digest, Seventeen, and Life.²⁰⁸ Kidd found that the dramas in these magazines reflected the ideology that the man should be the breadwinner and the woman the home- and peace- maker, in Vision I and Vision II, respectively. Vision I dramas dictated that females and males "behave according to traditional patterns, and when one did not do so it was not the pattern but the individual's sexuality that was at fault."²⁰⁹

"So pervasive was this standard as a basis for relationships that Robert Coughlan could write in Life, 1956, of the violation of the norm. In New York City the 'career woman' can be seen in fullest bloom and it is not irrelevant that New York City also has the greatest concentration of psychiatrists."²¹⁰ Responding to this commentary, Kidd writes that during this time any deviation from traditional roles "literally communicated emotional problems."²¹¹ Coughlan also assigns²¹² a mental health position to the woman who is a working wife. "She may find many satisfactions in her job, but the chances are that she, her husband and her children will suffer psychological damage, and that she will be basically an unhappy woman."²¹³

The emotional welfare of the entire familial unit seems to be the responsibility of the female in the household. This implied unilateral responsibility only reemerges in a more covert forms in the quasi-progressive dramas of Vision II. In the dramas the "we

can talk it out” theme becomes paramount.”²¹⁴ Vision II also equated “talking about problems with resolution of problems,”²¹⁵ — a dangerous misrepresentation of conflict in reality.

Magazine content targeted women as the initiators in these supposedly bi-directional exchanges. And in doing so assigned the role of accountability to women, and therefore, implicated them in communication failure if compromise and/or resolution were not reached. Responsibility for initiating conversations about relationship problems was clearly ascribed to the woman.

Articles were generally slanted toward the woman reader, accenting the woman’s role in the dramas presented. The extension of this journalistic slanting is that articles taken as a whole seem to be suggesting that the woman bears a greater responsibility in human relations than does her male counterpart. Dramas in both visions featured examples of how women could resolve problems and how women could interpret behavior. The modeling process provided by these dramas left little doubt as to who bore the responsibility for solving relationship difficulties or enhancing relationships in general, and implied by the absence of modeling examples that the male’s responsibility was negligible.²¹⁶

A 1977 study on the portrayals of women’s roles in non-fiction in Mademoiselle, Ms. and Redbook by Carole Newkirk yielded similar results. There were few changes in the roles and interests of the women who were portrayed in non-fiction articles.²¹⁷ Newkirk designed the study to review two separate time periods, 1966-1971 and 1972-1974. Her interest rested in the postulation that media reflects societal issues.

Mademoiselle, Ms. and Redbook claimed to “portray today’s woman,” and Newkirk, questioning their purported inclusiveness chose for her analysis a time period that spanned the inception and growth of the 1960s women’s liberation. As the first

publication of Ms. did not appear until 1972, only Mademoiselle and Redbook were reviewed in the first sample.²¹⁸

Newkirk used the following labels and activities to help her code the roles of women: Women portrayed as “wives, mothers and/or homemakers,” were coded “domestic.” Women who were employed in either part or full time positions as volunteers, social activists or paid workers were coded “non-domestic,” and women who were “pursuing their own goals and ambitions,” were coded “self identity.”²¹⁹

From 1966-1971 and 1972-1974 Redbook more consistently generated content that portrayed women in domestic roles than Mademoiselle. Table 8 reflects the number of items found in each category: “non-domestic,” “domestic,” “self-identity,” and “professional and managerial,” for each specified time period.

Table 8

Roles of Women in Mademoiselle and Redbook during 1966-1971 and 1972-1974

	1966-1971		1972-1974	
	<u>Mademoiselle</u>	<u>Redbook</u>	<u>Mademoiselle</u>	<u>Redbook</u>
Non-domestic	19a	8a	9	9
Domestic	5a	45ac	2b	19bc
Self Identity	7	10	6	10
Professional and Managerial	12a	1a	8	2

Note: Values with same subscript, as you read horizontally, are significantly different from each other.

Source: Carol Newkirk, “Female Roles in Non-Fiction of Three Women’s Magazines,” *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 54, (1977) 780.

However, Redbook led the other two magazines in content reflecting women in “self-identity” roles. Perhaps not as surprising, Ms. which was created as a “cause” magazine produced the most content on women in the role of social activist.²²⁰

Overall, Newkirk’s findings show that, “Mademoiselle has most consistently presented a balanced image of woman as homemaker, career person and individual. Ms. definitely supports employed women, social change and self-identity. Redbook is most conservative and most supportive of motherhood.”²²¹

Table 9

Frequency Distribution of Roles Appearing in Mademoiselle, Redbook, and Ms. During 1972-1974

Roles	1972-1974		
	<u>Mademoiselle</u>	<u>Redbook</u>	<u>Ms.</u>
Non-domestic	9	10	37*
Self Identity	6	10	8
Social Activist	<u>Mademoiselle</u> and <u>Redbook</u> 5 combined total		32*
Professional and Managerial	<u>Mademoiselle</u> and <u>Redbook</u> 10 combined total		9

*p<.01, using Chi Square test.

Source: Carol Newkirk, “Female Roles in Non-Fiction of Three Women’s Magazines,” *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 54, (1977) 781.

Based on Newkirk’s results these magazines failed to accurately reflect the traditional and expanding roles of women in the late sixties and early seventies. If Mademoiselle and Redbook wanted to provide content applicable to the needs of “today’s

woman” then they needed to increase their portrayals of the “non-domestic” role and Ms. needed to include material for women who choose²²² to participate in a “domestic” role.

Finally, in a review of fiction and advertising in Ladies Home Journal, N. Roberts compared early 1960s issues with issues from the late 1970s (before and after the feminist wave of the early 1970s). “Results indicated that fiction remained the same between the two periods, while advertising showed a change with more non-domestic, active, nontraditional portrayals of women in the second period than the first.”²²³

Contemporary feminism seems to embrace all roles women consciously choose to adopt, however, research on women’s magazines reveal a much less inclusive agenda. Redbook as well as Seventeen and Essence have the opportunity to truly celebrate all women and their personal and role identities.

Identity

Since the late 1960s research on self-esteem, self-concept and positive self-identities has revealed that, “positive self-regard and a valued personal identity are critical components of a well developed person.”²²⁴ Researchers purport that attaining a positive and valued self-concept may be “more difficult for women and minorities because of the negative portrayals of these groups in the media, unequal educational and business opportunities, disproportionate representation in the government, and the like.”²²⁵

In their study “Feminist Identity Development: Psychometric Analyses of Two Feminist Scales,” Elena Gerstmann and Deirdre Kramer documented the reliability and validity of feminist identity scales by administering questionnaires to students in a general psychology and women’s studies class. The questionnaires measured the Downing and Roush Feminist Identity Development Model.²²⁶

The five level model moves from a position of *passive acceptance* in viewing society to one that involves “an *active commitment* to feminist ideals.”²²⁷ Consistent with other models the Downing and Roush model assumes points of regression will occur where movement through previous levels begins to affect further advancement and/or analysis of prevenient positions may need to be addressed and then processed in order to progress. Additionally, progression from stage to stage is determined “not only by the woman’s readiness, but also by the unique interpersonal and environmental context of her life.”²²⁸

Passive Acceptance is the first level of the Downing and Roush model. A woman at Level One does not perceive the sexism that exists in society. “She either does not recognize it or she denies that discrimination and prejudice exist at the individual, institutional, and cultural levels of society.”²²⁹

Level Two, *Revelation*, “begins with crisis, or a set of crises, about reality and gender issues that are inconsistent with her view of reality and can no longer be ignored.”²³⁰ Anger is the feeling most associated with this stage for as a woman confronts her reality she feels disillusioned and “misled by society.” Her anger may lead her “to view most men as negative and most women as positive.”²³¹

Level Three contains two phases, *Embeddedness* and *Emanation*. The definitive element of embeddedness is a woman’s attempt to “embed” herself in the culture of women. A woman identifying with this stage may take a women’s studies course or explore manifestations of women’s oppression in art, theater or music. The second phase of this stage, *Emanation*, “involves the realization that one’s total withdrawal from mainstream society may have little effect on the dominant culture.”²³² Also, during this phase a woman may realize the rigidity of her past belief system in the *Passive Acceptance* stage and of her current system of thought in the *Emanation* phase.²³³

Synthesis marks Level Four, and reflects women who unite the “positive aspects of being female” with “authentic, comfortable feminist identity.”²³⁴ (“Comfortableness” seems to imply an absence of the cognitive dissonance experienced in Level Two and Level Three or at least the existence of conflict within an experience of less intensity in terms of the dissonance. Although in our culture “female” is often linked ²³⁵ to

femininity. This stage of managing dissonance subsequently allows a woman to embrace these two potentially dichotomized positions, “female,” and “feminist identity.”²³⁶⁾

A Level Four woman “begins to make decisions based on a new value system that can incorporate both the positive and negative values and intentions embedded within existing social structure.”²³⁷ She perceives both the individual and the system as well as their co-existence and can evaluate people within that structure.²³⁸

The final level, Level Five, is *Active Commitment* in which the woman commits herself to the process of actively pursuing and creating a more egalitarian society.²³⁹

These levels of feminist identity are reflective of similar changes that occur in social-cognitive development models. William Perry’s theory of intellectual and ethical development mirrors to some degree the cognitive development model that Kramer constructed. Kramer believes “an individual proceeds through the following levels of thought: Absolute, Relativistic, and Dialectical levels, which correspond roughly to Perry’s dualistic, multiplicity, and commitment within relativism phases.”²⁴⁰ Kramer offers operational definitions for the intellectual development stages of her model:

Absolute thinking is both reductionist and dualistic. It rests on the belief that reality is a stable and knowable entity. An absolute thought pattern would involve the search for the ‘correct’ answer that can be found when the person, problem or scenario is broken down into its raw components and put into its proper category and/or studied in a reductionist manner. *Relativistic thinking*, on the other hand, assumes reality cannot be construed or constructed in an absolute manner because it is always changing and knowledge of it does not exist apart from its context. The world is seen as potentially unstable and inherently unknowable through direct perception. Thus, knowledge is inherently subjective and existing in a state of flux. Lastly, *Dialectical thinking* develops out of the previous two cognitive levels and addresses the need to commit, despite pluralism, to a framework that one can evaluate on different

levels. Knowledge is seen as continually evolving as contradictions in one's experience are synthesized into dialectical wholes characterized by emergence, reciprocity, and interdependence.²⁴¹

Gerstmann and Kramer explain the related shifts in Downing and Roush's feminist identity development model, Kramer's cognitive development model and Perry's intellectual and ethical development theory. "Absolute thinking, by definition, underlies the *Passive Acceptance* and *Revelation* levels, Relativism begins to emerge within and further fosters *Embeddedness-Emanation*, and Dialectical thinking allows for the dialectical synthesis necessary to achieve a synthesis in one's feminist identity."²⁴²

In Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years - A Scheme Perry writes that "(a) sense of identity seems to require some feeling of continuity in what 'I' know and what 'I' value ... If one comes to look upon all knowing and all valuing as contingent on context, and if one is then confronted with an infinite universe of potential context for truth and care, one is threatened with loss of identity ... If one construes knowledge and values as relativistic, one is therefore threatened with the possibility of humanly unbearable disorientation."²⁴³ His study follows the intellectual and ethical development of students over a four-year period through annual interviews. He documents their movement along his model²⁴⁴ as they struggle to advance from dualistic thinking patterns to ones requiring commitment and the acknowledgment of multiplicity and relativity. Without this commitment to identity, Perry postulates, that an individual may remain an opportunist who manipulates the reality of relativism.

Perry, Gerstmann and Kramer imply through their studies that accepting and creating an identity is important in terms of self-development. Results of Gerstmann's and Kramer's study indicate that the two feminist identity scales, the Feminist Identity

Development Scale and the Feminist Identity Scale, they analyzed revealed “high internal consistency, high test-retest reliability and (were) free of social desirability influences.”²⁴⁵ More importantly however, is the difference their study revealed between the general psychology students and the women’s studies students. What Gerstmann and Kramer used merely as a tool to measure the scales’ effectiveness in terms of construct validity, is of the utmost importance to women’s roles of identity and this thesis. Over the course of a semester the women’s studies students increased their levels of feminist identity — the general psychology students did not.²⁴⁶

The exposure to women’s and issues and the education about women’s history appear to have affected the cognitive and identity development of the students in the women’s studies course. The power of this information seems apparent.

Seventeen, Essence and Redbook garner the same power as that collegiate classroom. Each magazine purports to provide useful information for women. But how much of their content reflects the needs of a woman’s holistic development, which includes her identification process as a feminist? For claiming such an identity at Level Four, *Synthesis*, facilitates an understanding of her self, her community and her choices.

Seventeen, Essence and Redbook need not establish campaigns that tout self actualization in terms of *Active Commitment* (Level Five), but they should move toward creating more inclusive content to offer more perspective on identity development.

A wonderful and powerful opportunity exists for all these publications but in particular Seventeen. In their study “Adolescent Female Identity Development” L. Jean Lytle, Linda Bakken and Charles Romig present substantive reasoning for the struggle women face in cultivating an identity. “Adolescents have been reared by parents and

media that continue to reinforce sex-typed behaviors of aggression and autonomy for boys; nurturant, emotional, and passive behavior for girls. This gender-role stereotyping instills the fear of social isolation and abandonment in women which exacerbates the difficulties of achieving a balanced identity.”²⁴⁷

If women can face the crises within the *Revelation* stage during adolescence or young adulthood, their chances for completing *Synthesis*, and internalizing a comprehension of “choice” and “roles” increases exponentially as they encounter new experiences. The question is whether or not the content in these women’s magazines is inclusive enough to facilitate such intellectual development.

Gertsmann has acknowledged that the context of a woman’s life also influences her movement through these stages. Using content as a catalyst to develop a working vocabulary for young women, women of color and married women will only empower them and lend them insight into their current position and opportunity for change and/or re-commitment.

One of Lehrmans’ major themes addressed in The Lipstick Proviso concerns the personal choices of the women and their choice about identity within feminism.

“(C)ompleting the feminist revolution is largely up to women themselves: it primarily involves completing their own personal evolutions.”²⁴⁸ Personal evolution may include a marriage, or a career or both. Lehrman also stresses the importance emotional independence and self-confidence, the very entities that Gerstmann and Kramer stated may be undermined in the culture of minorities and women because of the negative messages they receive about themselves from the media. This process, however, will only

come to fruition if women are “actively committed” to their own journeys and not “passively accepting” the ones assigned to them.

Seventeen, Essence and Redbook must aid women in the process of developing and nurturing healthy identities. If these magazines truly serve their women in the way Redbook’s editor-in-chief Lesley Jane Seymour wants, “as a girlfriend,”²⁴⁹ then they assume a responsibility and an obligation to support, not undermine, the development of a woman — including her self-esteem, self-concept and self-worth.

Hypotheses

The purpose of this content analysis is to document the type of material that structures Seventeen, Essence and Redbook and to evaluate any changes that may occur in that content over time and among the three magazines.

Schlenker, who did an extension study based on Peirce's research cites three waves of feminism: the first wave reflecting the abolitionist conflict of the late 1930s, the second tied to the social reforms of the late 1960s and early 1970s, and the third moving through the 1990s, "where topics of abortion, day care, and comparable pay have been major social issues."²⁵⁰ My hope is to document Schlenker's assertion with evidence that supports her hypothesis of a third wave of feminism.

The hypotheses state that there will be a higher percentage of "feminist" items after 1990 in the two latter time periods, 1990-1994 and 1995-1998, when compared to "feminist" items in the first time period, 1985-1989. The following eight statements are the hypotheses for this study:

1. An analysis of the percentage of items about appearance, (traditional items,) in Seventeen, Essence and Redbook will yield a statistically significant higher percentage in the first time period, 1985-1989, when compared to the results of the latter two time periods, 1990-1994 and 1995-1998.
2. An analysis of the percentage of items about female-male relations, (traditional items,) in Seventeen, Essence and Redbook will yield a statistically significant higher percentage in the first time period, 1985-1989, when compared to the results of the latter two time periods, 1990-1994 and 1995-1998.

3. An analysis of the percentage of items about self-development, (feminist items,) in Seventeen, Essence and Redbook will yield a statistically significant lower percentage in the first time period, 1985-1989, when compared to the results of the latter two time periods, 1990-1994 and 1995-1998.

4. An analysis of the percentage of items about political and social issues, (feminist items,) in Seventeen, Essence and Redbook will yield a statistically significant lower percentage in the first time period, 1985-1989, when compared to the results of the latter two time periods, 1990-1994 and 1995-1998.

The expectation is that a predominantly white, heterosexual, married women's magazine (Redbook) will follow and reinforce trends in content that a predominantly white, heterosexual young women's magazine (Seventeen) establishes. Although Essence addresses women of color, expectations that content will differ significantly from that which will be documented in Seventeen and Redbook are not present.

5. An analysis of the percentage of items about appearance, (traditional items,) in Seventeen, Essence and Redbook will not yield a statistically significant differences in a tri-magazine comparison.

6. An analysis of the percentage of items about female-male relations, (traditional items,) in Seventeen, Essence and Redbook will not yield a statistically significant differences in a tri-magazine comparison.

7. An analysis of the percentage of items about self-development, (feminist items,) in Seventeen, Essence and Redbook will not yield a statistically significant differences in a tri-magazine comparison.

8. An analysis of the percentage of items about political and social issues, (feminist items,) in Seventeen, Essence and Redbook will not yield a statistically significant differences in a tri-magazine comparison.

¹ Mary Pipher, Ph.D., Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls, Ballantine Books, New York, (1995).

² Pipher, 21.

³ Michigan State University Safe Place, The Dating and Domestic Violence Program.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Elena A. Gerstmann and Deirdre A. Kramer, "Feminist Identity Development: Psychometric Analyses of Two Feminist Identity Scales," Sex Roles, Vol. 36 (1997) 328.

⁶ Pipher, 22.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid*, 66.

⁹ Pipher, 258.

¹⁰ Sarah Means, "Teen Magazines Challenge Sex Obsession; New Publications Echo Right and Left," The Washington Times, (Sept. 11, 1997) p. A2.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Pipher, 36.

¹³ *Ibid*, 39.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 22.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 38.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 82.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Jane Brown, Kim Walsh and Cynthia Waszak, "Television and Adolescent Sexuality," Journal of Adolescent Health Care, Vol. 62, (1990) 62.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 63.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Pipher, 224.

²⁴ Brown, 62.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Pipher, 253.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 42.

²⁸ Jennifer Schlenker, Sandra L. Caron, and William A. Halteman, "A Feminist Analysis of Seventeen Magazine: Content Analysis from 1945 to 1995," Sex Roles, Vol. 38, (1998) 136.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 138.

³⁰ Jennifer Christman, "Teen Zines Some Magazines Aimed at Today's Youth Are a Little Different From What You Grew Up With," The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 25 February 1998, p. F1.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Kate Peirce, "A Feminist Theoretical Perspective on the Socialization of Teenage Girls Through Seventeen Magazine," Sex Roles, Vol. 23, (1990) 496.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 491.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Schlenker, 139.

³⁸ Peirce, 491.

³⁹ Schlenker, 143.

⁴⁰ Christman, F1.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid*, and Schlenker, 143.

⁴³ Peirce, 497.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*.

⁴⁵ Mental Health Net. (Online) Available
<http://www.mhnet.org/>, April 20, 1999.

⁴⁶ Harvard Eating Disorders Center. (Online) Available
<http://www.hedc.org/>, April 20, 1999.

⁴⁷ Mental Health Net.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*.

⁴⁹ Harvard Eating Disorders Center.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*.

⁵¹ Mental Health Net.

⁵² Schlenker, 136.

⁵³ *Ibid*.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*.

⁵⁶ A speech by Delta Burke.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*.

⁶¹ *Ibid*.

⁶² *Ibid*.

⁶³ Schlenker, 146.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Peirce, 494.

⁶⁶ Bordo, 30.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Peirce, 492.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Peirce, 493.

⁷⁵ Cathy Young, "The Lipstick Proviso: Women, Sex and Power in the Real World," Reason, Vol. 29, (1997) 52.

⁷⁶ Lesley Lazin Novack and David R. Novack, "Being Female in the Eighties and Nineties: Conflict Between New Opportunities and Traditional Expectations Among White, Middle Class, Heterosexual College Women," Sex Roles, Vol. 35, (1996) 57.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 62.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Novack*, 61.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Robin Widgery, Madhuker G. Angur, and Rajan Nataraajan, "The Impact of Employment Status on Married Women's Perceptions of Advertising Message Appeals," Journal of Advertising Research, Vol. 37, (1997) 54.

⁸³ *Novack*, 59.

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- ⁸⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁶ Novack, 65.
- ⁸⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁹ Novack, 66.
- ⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 70.
- ⁹¹ *Ibid*, 72.
- ⁹² *Ibid*, 74.
- ⁹³ *Ibid*, 73.
- ⁹⁴ Bordo, 9.
- ⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 11.
- ⁹⁶ "Black Women on TV Still Stereotyped," USA Today (Magazine), (July 1993) p.7.
- ⁹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁹⁸ Michigan State University Department of Residence Life Training Manual for Lesbian, Bi-sexual, Gay and Transgendered Concerns, 1998-99.
- ⁹⁹ Marilyn Kent-Foxworth, "Plantation Kitchen to American Icon: Aunt Jemima; Publicity and American Culture," Public Relations Review, (Online) Available, Lexis-Nexis, April 13, 1999.
- ¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰¹ Please read "insidiously integrated," author's bias.
- ¹⁰² Kent-Foxworth, 55.
- ¹⁰³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² "Black Women on TV Still Stereotyped," p. 7.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ "TV's 'Living Single Gives Positive Image of Black Women," *Jet*, (Oct. 4, 1993) 57.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ "A Study Reports Black Women Like Their Bodies and White Women Are Unhappy," *Jet*, (July 31, 1995) 12.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ Bordo, 63.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 103.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

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- ¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵² Bordo, 263.
- ¹⁵³ Kern-Foxworth, 55.
- ¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵⁷ Bordo, 125.
- ¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵⁹ Also infer “terrifying,” author’s bias.
- ¹⁶⁰ Ellis Cose, “Black Men and Black Women,” Newsweek, (June 5, 1995) p.66.
- ¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶² Christina Sciammacco. “Feminists Call for Closing of Wage Gap: Equal Pay Day Shows Women Still Behind.” (Online) Available <http://www.now.org/nnt/05-98/wagegap.html>, April 15, 1999.
- ¹⁶³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶⁶ Young, 52.
- ¹⁶⁷ Sue Bowden, “Understanding the Gender Gap: An Economic History of American Women,” Business History, Vol. 33 (1991) 122.
- ¹⁶⁸ Gary S. Becker, “How the Market Acted Affirmatively for Women,” Business Week, (May 13, 1985) p16.
- ¹⁶⁹ Marianne A. Ferber, “In Defense of Affirmative Action,” Industrial and Labor Relations Review, Vol. 50 (1997) 516.
- ¹⁷⁰ Vera Titunik, “Exposing Discrimination Against Married Women,” The American Lawyer, (July 1994/Aug. 1994) p. 33.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ Becker, 16.

¹⁷⁷ Young, 52.

¹⁷⁸ Titunik, 33.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ Thomas J. Cooke and Adrian J. Bailey, "Family Migration and the Employment of Married Women and Men," Economic Geography, Vol. 72 (1996) 38.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² Young, 52.

¹⁸³ Daniel Seligman, "The Day Care Follies," Fortune, (Feb. 15, 1988) p.123.

¹⁸⁴ Donald J. Campbell, Kathleen M. Campbell and Daniel Kennard, "The Effects of Family Responsibilities on the Work Commitment and Job Performance of Non-Professional Women," Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, Vol. 67 (1994) 283.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ Gene Koretz, "Why Married Women Work," Business Week, (Sept. 22 1997) p.26.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ Young, 52.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ Widgery, 54.

¹⁹² Koretz, 26.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ In The LeFrak Forum and Symposium on Science, Reason, and Modern Democracy, Michigan State University, Morality and Public Life: Is America in Moral Decline? Conference paper, session: Love and Marriage, by William Galston.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ Schlenker, 136.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 137.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ Virginia Kidd, "Happily Ever After and Other Relationship Styles: Advice on Interpersonal Relations in Popular Magazines, 1951-1973," Quarterly Journal of Speech, Vol. 61, (1975) 33.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ Kidd, 33.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 35.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 33.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² Infer, "insults," not "assigns," author's bias.

²¹³ Kidd, 33.

²¹⁴ *Ibid*, 36.

²¹⁵ *Ibid*, 37.

²¹⁶ *Ibid*, 38.

²¹⁷ Carol Newkirk, "Female Roles in Non-Fiction of Three Women's Magazines," *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 54, (1977) 780.

²¹⁸ *Ibid*.

²¹⁹ *Ibid*.

²²⁰ Newkirk, 782.

²²¹ *Ibid*.

²²² "(C)hoose" is reflective of my idealistic hope that every woman will choose her own path, instead of following, often submissively, one that has been chosen for her. I am, however, aware that the reality presented to women in this country and around the world is not congruent with my vision.

²²³ Schlenker, 137.

²²⁴ Gerstmann, 328.

²²⁵ *Ibid*.

²²⁶ *Ibid*.

²²⁷ *Ibid*.

²²⁸ *Ibid*.

²²⁹ *Ibid*.

²³⁰ *Ibid*.

²³¹ *Ibid*.

²³² *Ibid*.

²³³ *Ibid*.

²³⁴ *Ibid*, 329.

²³⁵ Read “often ‘corrosively’ linked,” as discussions about “femininity” and “masculinity” according to Leslie Feinberg, with whom I agree, are only useful when discussing oppression. Linking or associating “female” with “feminine” only erodes the advancements the women’s liberation movement has made — author’s bias.

²³⁶ Author’s note.

²³⁷ Gerstmann, 329.

²³⁸ *Ibid*.

²³⁹ *Ibid*.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid*.

²⁴¹ *Ibid*.

²⁴² *Ibid*.

²⁴³ William Graves Perry, Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years: A Scheme, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, New York (1970) 134.

²⁴⁴ Please see Appendix A.

²⁴⁵ Gerstmann, 347.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid*.

²⁴⁷ L. Jean Lytle, Linda Bakken and Charles Romig, “Adolescent Female Identity Development,” Sex Roles, Vol. 37 (1997) 182.

²⁴⁸ Young, 52.

²⁴⁹ Lisa Granatstein, “A New Redbook Juggler,” Mediaweek, (Online) Available, Lexis-Nexis, February 1, 1999.

²⁵⁰ Schlenker, 139.

CHAPTER 2

Method

Peirce describes a liberal feminist as one who believes that “liberation for women is the freedom to determine (her) own social role and to compete with men on terms that are as equal as possible.”¹ She defined feminist messages as those that emphasize “taking care of oneself, being independent, and not relying on a man for fulfillment or identity.”² These concepts help define the category, “feminist.”

The “traditional” categorization is also based on Peirce’s conception and used by Schlenker as well. Peirce defines traditional messages as those that concentrate on appearance, looking good, and finding a man.³

Traditional messages stress the importance of appearance, beauty, finding a man and being responsible for the maintenance/development of the relationship, being identified as a unit of a relationship instead of an individual, being fulfilled solely by the man in the relationship and what a woman can do for the man in the relationship.⁴ Kidd’s observations are also incorporated in this description.

“Self-development,” conversely, stresses the importance of independence, self-fulfillment, self-identity, taking care of oneself, and emphasizing shared responsibility in the maintenance/development in relationships — a “feminist” concept.⁵

The spirit of these definitions dictates the structure of the four main areas of this analysis. Schlenker’s research also prompts the combination of “appearance” and “female/male relations,” and “self-development” and “political/social issues,” into two

categories — the former combination receiving the label of “feminist,” the latter, “traditional.” Tables for each time period will reflect this structure.

The following questions and operational definitions will be applied in the coding process:

Coding Questions

1: This item is primarily, but perhaps not exclusively about:

0= appearance

1= female/male relations

2= self-development

3= political/social issues

4= other

2: This item is from the following magazine:

0= Seventeen

1= Essence

2= Redbook

3: Record the magazine’s date and month of publication.

4: Record the total number of items listed in the magazine’s table of contents.

Operational Definitions⁶

Appearance: makeup; hair, hair-cuts, hair-styles, nails; beauty products; accessories; fashion, “Hollywood” fashion; fashion tips; newest trends in accessories, fashion, decorating; shopping for clothes; how you look to others; dieting, exercising to lose weight.

Female/Male relations: advice columns on female/male relations, finding a boyfriend, dating, sex; fiction stories about female/male relations, dating, sex, love; feature articles about female/male relations, dating, sex, love; how to articles: how to please a boyfriend - emotionally, sexually, through planning, developing and maintaining a relationship; how to keep a boyfriend; how to shop for a boyfriend; entertaining a boyfriend; romance woes, how to evaluate a female/male relations, development of female/male relations, (not quizzes) tips on how to improve, change, fix female/male relations; feature article on a male in the entertainment industry, “Hollywood” men, all men.

Self-development: mental, spiritual and physical health articles; personality quizzes; best friend quizzes; familial and platonic relationship feature articles; familial and platonic relationship fiction stories; entertaining family and friends; mentors: leaders in a community or abroad, famous women; education: getting good grades, studying, going to college; career: choices, changing jobs, getting jobs; money: investments, finances, management; lifestyle: hobbies, cooking (not recipes), exercising (not to lose weight), reading, books to read (not reviews); films to see (not reviews), travel, volunteerism, community service; time/impression management.

Political/Social Issues: AIDS; environment; welfare; homophobia, heterosexism; ageism; racism; relationship violence; international relations; war; political articles; news items; articles on women abroad.

Each item will be coded using these definitions. Only editorial material will be evaluated, therefore, advertising, horoscopes, recipes, reviews and any reader submitted material, including letters, poetry and prose, will be excluded.

Seventeen, Essence and Redbook were chosen because of the spectrum of readership they represent and the common bonds of oppression their readers endure.

The study is designed to document the content of women's magazines in the 1990s, and to discern if a change occurred in the content from the politically conservative 1980s to the 1990s. Perhaps results from this analysis will substantiate Schlenker's assertion that a third wave of feminism began in the 1990s.⁷

The fourteen years, from 1985-1998 are divided into two five-year and one four-year period for analysis.

In terms of selecting the magazines for the analysis, Lacy's, Riffe's and Randle's "Sample Size in Multi-year Content Analysis of Monthly Consumer Magazines," helped dictate decisions. Their study compared simple random samples to stratified samples and

evaluated increasingly larger simple random samples by comparing them to calculated population parameters, statistically.⁸

In the stratified sampling method, they took one issue randomly selected from all issues of a particular month, and repeated the process until one issue over a five-year period was randomly selected for each month. They created a sample size of 12, and a constructed year.⁹ They found that this “constructed year sampling technique provided a better estimate of magazine content from a five-year period than did the simple random sampling.”¹⁰ In fact, “samples did not begin to consistently approximate the levels predicted by Central Limits until the sample size reached 16.”¹¹ Not only does the stratified sample yield a better estimate of content, but takes fewer issues to do so.

Stratified sampling is used in this analysis to achieve a representative content sample by constructing a year within each of the three time periods. The following table reflects each constructed year for each magazine by time period:

Table 10

Items from **Seventeen** were selected from the following issues:

1985-1989

1985: April, June, November

1986: January, May

1987: July, August, September

1988: October

1989: February, March, December

1990-1994

1990: December

1991: March, November

1992: January, September

1993: February, April, May, July, August

1994: June, October

1995-1998

1995: January, March

1996: February, April, June, July, August, November, December

1997: May

1998: September, October

Items from **Essence** were selected from the following issues:

1985-1989

1985: January

1986: March, July

1987: February, November

1988: April, August, October, December

1989: May, June, September

1990-1994

1990: April, May, July, October

1991: December

1992: February, March, June

1993: January, August, November

1994: September

1995-1998

1995: January, February, March, April, June, July, January

1996: May, October

1997: August, November

1998: September

Items from **Redbook** were selected from the following issues:

1985-1989

1985: March, April

1986: July, November

1987: January, February, August, October

1988: June

1989: May, September, December

1990-1994

1990: February, June, August, November

1991: January, May, October, December

1992: March, April

1993: July

1994: September

1995-1998

1995: April

1996: October

1997: May, June, July, August, November, December

1998: January, February, March, September

The author and one independent coder completed all data collecting and coding. To assess coding reliability sample issues were randomly selected using a random digit table. This analysis strove for an 85% or higher intercoder reliability rate in the coder-sample of magazine items. Coding followed each question in a series, with answers recorded in numerical form. Coders applied the definitions from APPENDIX B to establish reliability with a pretest of 59 sample magazines.¹² The final analysis reflected the coding of 108 magazines.

After establishing simple agreement, Scott's Pi, "a test that looks at category values and 'corrects' for chance agreement in computing a reliability assessment,"¹³ was applied to the data to establish agreement including consideration of 'chance.' "Simple agreement figures may be criticized as possibly over-inflating reliability because the chances of accidentally agreeing increase as the number of coders decreases,"¹⁴ so

solving for the expected agreement by chance is important when only two coders are present.

Table 11

**Simple Agreement and Agreement with Scott's Pi on Content in
Seventeen, Essence and Redbook with Two Coders and Five Variables**

Number of Units=59

Variable	Outcome		Agreement	
	Agree	Disagree	Simple	Scott's Pi
v0: Appearance	51	8	.86	.77
v1: Female/Male Relations	52	7	.88	.80
v2: Self-Development	56	3	.95	.92
v3: Political/Social Issues	55	4	.93	.89
v4: Other	54	5	.92	.87
Total	268	27	.91	.85

$$EA = .39$$

The coders achieved an 85% overall reliability rate. Three variables “self-development” (92%), “political/social issues” (89%), and “other” (87%) had an agreement of over 85%. “Appearance” (77%), and “female/male relations” (80%), however, did not. The coder and author discussed the discrepancies and decided that some careless referrals to the operational definitions had occurred on the part of the coder. Upon reviewing the definitions the coder conceded to having consistently misinterpreted data that concerned the categories of both “appearance” and “female/male relations.”

Confident in the definitions and their future application, and having established an overall reliability rate of 85% and higher with three of the five variables, the author moved forward to code the remaining of the 108 magazines.

In this analysis Z-tests were also applied. They were used to establish whether or not the findings from the coding responses were statistically significant or due to sampling error. Sampling error was calculated for each category, magazine and time period. Z-tests were applied to each variable with each coded magazine so that the process of analysis would include all possible pairings. Confidence intervals were established for each of the categories: “appearance,” “female/male relations,” “self-development,” “political/social issues “ and “other.”¹⁵

Results that might reflect Peirce and Schlenker would be both reinforcing and disturbing; reinforcing, because the chances of misinterpreting data would be less, but disturbing, because of the absence of messages that would portray women as independent, self-identifying individuals with choice.

¹ Kate Peirce, "A Feminist Theoretical Perspective on the Socialization of Teenage Girls Through Seventeen Magazine," Sex Roles, Vol. 23, (1990) 492.

² Peirce, 497.

³ *Ibid*, 491.

⁴ *Ibid*, 497.

⁵ *Ibid*.

⁶ This set of definitions is incomplete and only includes the four main areas in the prevenient discussion. Please see Appendix C for the entire list.

⁷ Schlenker, 139.

⁸ Stephen Lacy, Daniel Riffe and Quint Randle, "Sample Size in Multi-year Content Analysis of Monthly Consumer Magazines," Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, Vol. 75 (1998) 408-417.

⁹ *Ibid*.

¹⁰ *Ibid*.

¹¹ *Ibid*.

¹² Daniel Riffe, Stephen Lacy and Frederick G. Fico, Analyzing Media Messages Using Quantitative Content Analysis in Research, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, New Jersey, (1998) 127.

¹³ Riffe, 129.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 128.

¹⁵ Confidence intervals were established in each category as follows: "appearance," with agreement at .77 had an interval of $\pm .066$, or 70.3-83.6, "female/male relations," with agreement at .80 had an interval of $\pm .063$, or 73.6-86.3, "self-development," with agreement at .92 had an interval of $\pm .042$, or 87.7-96.2, "political/social issues," with agreement at .89 had an interval of $\pm .049$, or 84.0-93.9, and "other," with agreement at .87 had an interval of $\pm .053$, or 81.6-92.3.

CHAPTER 3

Results

Created to substantiate Schlenker's assertion that a third wave of feminism exists,¹ the following eight hypotheses were applied to this content analysis. The hypotheses state that overall, a higher percentage of feminist items will be present after 1990 than before, i.e. 1985-1989.

This study provided data on magazine content in percentage form. Each item listed in the table of contents of each magazine, Seventeen, Essence and Redbook, was counted and then, those items that were congruent with the descriptions in the coding procedure were documented and labeled as "appearance," "female/male relations," "self-development," "political/social issues," or "other."

To assess statistical significance Z-tests were used. A Z-test was applied to every variable with every magazine so that a three by three system would compute all possible combinations. A sampling error or margin of error for each magazine in each category from 1985-1989, 1990-1994 and 1995-1998 was also calculated.² Sampling error is the difference between the characteristics of a sample and the characteristics of the population from which the sample was drawn. Sampling error determines how close results from a sample are to a whole population.

From 1985-1989 Seventeen's standard error for "total traditional" was $\pm 6.02\%$, Essence's $\pm 9.18\%$, and Redbook's $\pm 8.25\%$. For "total feminist" the errors were $\pm 9.22\%$, $\pm 8.25\%$, and $\pm 8.53\%$ respectively, (See Table 12).

Results in “total traditional” from 1990-1994 produced a standard error of $\pm 7.85\%$ in Seventeen, $\pm 10.27\%$ in Essence, and ± 8.17 in Redbook. For “total feminist” Seventeen yielded a standard error of $\pm 9.8\%$, Essence an $\pm 8.31\%$, and Redbook a $\pm 7.9\%$, (See Table 13).

From 1995-1998 the standard error for “total traditional” for Seventeen was $\pm 6.86\%$, for Essence $\pm 9.14\%$, and for Redbook $\pm 7.65\%$. For “total feminist” Seventeen’s standard error was $\pm 9.14\%$, Essence’s was $\pm 7.98\%$, and Redbook’s was $\pm 7.61\%$, (See Table 14).

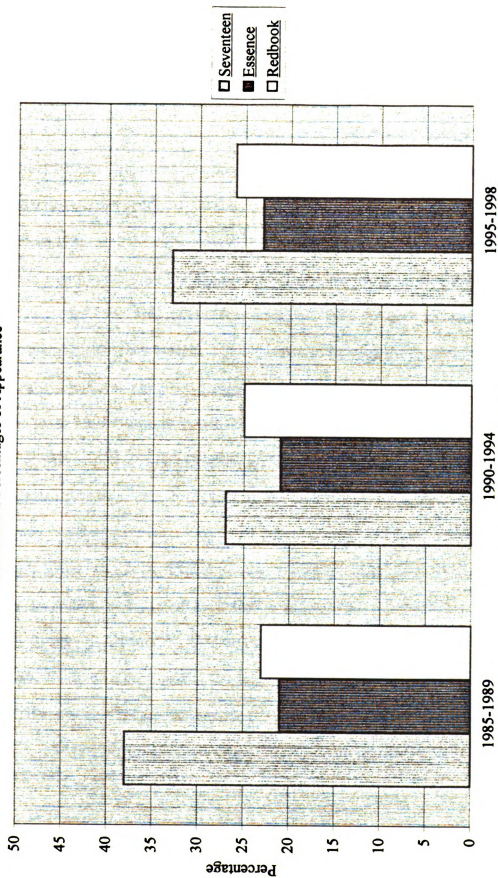
Tables 12, 13, 14 and Figures 2, 3, 4, and 5 were constructed to complement the summary of results. The hypotheses of the analysis and their corresponding results are presented as follows:

The first hypothesis states that an analysis of the percentage of items about appearance, (traditional items,) in Seventeen, Essence and Redbook will yield a statistically significant higher percentage in the first time period, 1985-1989, when compared to the results of the latter two time periods, 1990-1994 and 1995-1998.

The total percentage of messages about “appearance” in Seventeen from 1985-1989 was 38%, from 1990-1994, 27% and from 1995-1998, 33%, (See Figure 2). The results support the first hypothesis. Although from 1995-1998 a marked increase was shown in items about “appearance,” the percentage, 33% is still lower than the figure from 1985-1989, 38%.

The content reflecting “appearance” in Essence was 21% from 1985-1989 and 1990-1994 and 23% from 1995-1998, (See Figure 2). The hypothesis is not supported by

Total Content Percentages of Appearance



Magazines by Time Period

Figure 2

the findings in Essence magazine. Essence maintains the same percentage of items about “appearance” over the first two time periods and then increases coverage.

From 1985-1989 Redbook’s result reflecting content about “appearance” was 23%, from 1990-1994, 25%, and from 1995-1998, 26%, (See Figure 2). Results from Redbook also do not support the first hypothesis. Redbook displayed a steady increase in items reflecting content about “appearance.”

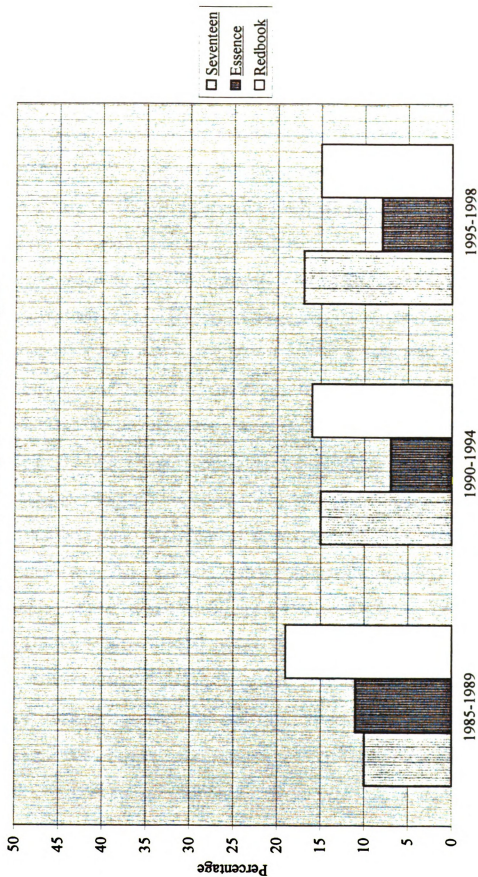
From 1985-1989 the differences in the category of “appearance” were found to be statistically significant between Seventeen and Essence and Seventeen and Redbook.

The second hypothesis states that an analysis of the percentage of items about female-male relations, (traditional items,) in Seventeen, Essence and Redbook will yield a statistically significant higher percentage in the first time period, 1985-1989, when compared to the results of the latter two time periods, 1990-1994 and 1995-1998.

For total percentage of messages about “female/male relations,” Seventeen’s results yielded 10% from 1985-1989, 15% from 1990-1994, and 17% from 1995-1998, (See Figure 3). Seventeen’s percentages do not support the second hypothesis. The magazine’s content rose in the number of items reflecting content about “female/male relations” from 1985-1989 to 1990-1994 and from 1990-1994 to 1995-1998.

In Essence the category of “female/male relations” showed a result of 11% from 1985-1989, 7% from 1990-1994, and 8% from 1995-1998, (See Figure 3). Results from Essence do not support the second hypothesis, as “female/male relations” items decreased from 1985-1989 to 1990-1994, and increased by 1% from 1990-1994 to 1995-1998.

Total Content Percentages of Female/Male Relations



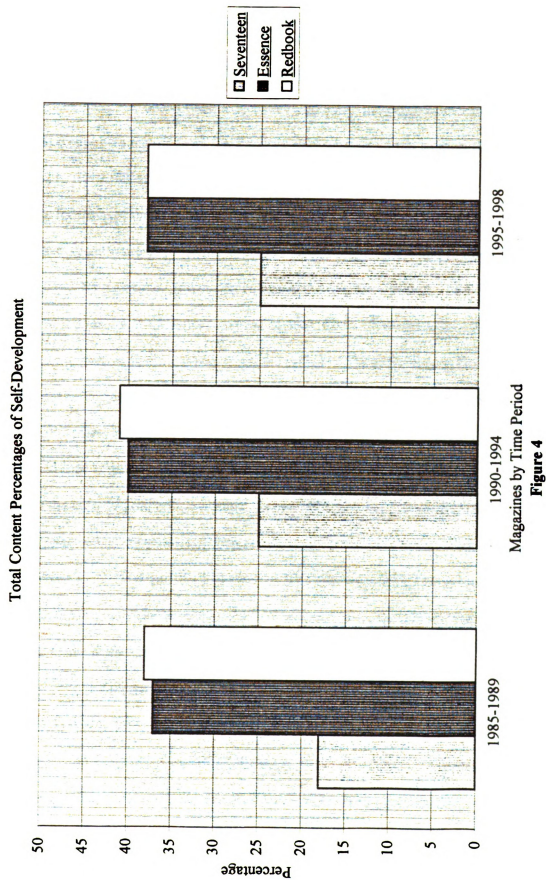
Magazines by Time Period
Figure 3

“Female/male relations” totals for Redbook were 19% from 1985-1989, 16% from 1990-1994, and 15% from 1995-1998, (See Figure 3). The second hypothesis is not supported by the percentages in Redbook. There is a decrease in percentages about “female/male relations” from 1985-1989 to 1990-1994 and from 1990-1994 to 1995-1998, but the decline is not statistically significant. Statistically significant differences in the category of “female/male relations” were not found among Seventeen, Essence and Redbook in any time period.

The third hypothesis states that an analysis of the percentage of items about self-development, (feminist items,) in Seventeen, Essence and Redbook will yield a statistically significant lower percentage in the first time period, 1985-1989, when compared to the results of the latter two time periods, 1990-1994 and 1995-1998.

From 1985-1989, 18% of Seventeen was coded “self-development,” from 1990-1994 and from 1995-1998, 25% of the magazine was coded “self-development,” (See Figure 4). Although Seventeen’s items about “self-development” were lower in the first time period than in the latter two time periods, the differences from 1985-1989 and from 1990-1994 are not statistically significant. The third hypothesis is not supported.

“Self-development” yielded a percentage of 37% from 1985-1989, 40% from 1990-1994, and 38% from 1995-1998 in Essence, (See Figure 4). Essence’s findings do not support the third hypothesis. The number of items reflecting content on “self-development” was lower from 1985-1989 than from 1990-1994, but the results are not statistically significant . Essence also experienced an decrease in the same type of content from 1995-1998, but her percentage still remains higher than the one recorded from the first time period.



Content reflecting “self-development” in Redbook was 38% of the magazine from 1985-1989, 41% from 1990-1994, and 38% again from 1995-1998, (See Figure 4). Even though the percentage of content about “self-development” increases from 1985-1989 to 1990-1994, Redbook’s results from the first two time periods do not support the third hypothesis, as the differences were not statistically significant.

The fourth hypothesis states that an analysis of the percentage of items about “political and social issues,” (feminist items,) in Seventeen, Essence and Redbook will yield a statistically significant lower percentage in the first time period, 1985-1989, when compared to the results of the latter two time periods, 1990-1994 and 1995-1998.

The category of “political/social issues” reflected 3% of Seventeen from 1985-1989, 2% of the magazine from 1990-1994 and 3% as well from 1995-1998, (See Figure 5). The results from Seventeen do not support the fourth hypothesis. The findings show a decrease and then regression to the first period’s percentage. Also, the differences in the findings in the category of “political/social issues” were not statistically significant.

Essence reflected “political/social issues” with 2% of her content from 1985-1989, 3% from 1990-1994 and 3% from 1995-1998, (See Figure 5). The percentages reflecting content about “political/social issues” in Essence do not support the fourth hypothesis, as the differences were not statistically significant.

In Redbook the percentages of “political/social issues” were 1% from 1985-1989, 3% from 1990-1994, and 4% from 1995-1998, (See Figure 5). There was a lower percentage for items about “political/social issues” from 1985-1989 than from either 1990-1994 or 1995-1998, and these findings from Redbook might appear to support the

Total Content Percentages of Political/Social Issues



Magazines by Time Period

Figure 5

fourth hypothesis, however, statistical significance was not found in any results from the “political/social issues” category; consequently, the fourth hypothesis was not supported.

Although no corresponding hypothesis exists, the following are the results of the category, “other,” which includes e.g. car tips, “Hollywood gossip” and gift making ideas and guides, and in-house contests, surveys and results. “Other” was 8% of the Seventeen from 1985-1989, and 6% of the magazine from 1990-1994 and 1995-1998.

In Essence “other” was coded as 1% of the content from 1985-1989, 2% from 1990-1994, and 1% from 1995-1998.

The category of “other” comprised 4% of Redbook from 1985-1989, 3% from 1990-1994, and 3% from 1995-1998.

The expectation that there would be no statistically significant differences among the three magazines in the aforementioned areas of study dictated hypotheses five through eight. Although targeting different audiences, Redbook was expected to reinforce trends in Seventeen as both magazines focus predominantly on white, upper to middle class, heterosexual women. Essence although focused on women of color in a similar socioeconomic status was expected to follow a similar trend.

Z-tests were applied to each variable with each coded magazine so that the process of analysis would include all possible pairings and confidence intervals were established for each category.

Table 12

Total Coded Content in Percentages from Seventeen, Essence and Redbook During 1985-1989

	1985-1989		
	<u>Seventeen</u>	<u>Essence</u>	<u>Redbook</u>
Traditional Appearance	(210) 38%<i>ac</i>	(76) 21%<i>a</i>	(76) 23%<i>c</i>
Female/Male Relations	(55) 10%	(38) 11%	(65) 19%
(S.S.) Total Traditional	(265) 48%<i>g</i>	(114) 32%<i>gi</i>	(141) 42%<i>i</i>
S.E.	(±6.02)	(±9.18)	(±8.25)
Feminist Self-Development	(97) 18%<i>jl</i>	(134) 37%<i>j</i>	(127) 38%<i>l</i>
Political/Social Issues	(16) 3%	(7) 2%	(5) 1%
(S.S.) Total Feminist	(113) 21%<i>pr</i>	(141) 39%<i>p</i>	(132) 39%<i>r</i>
S.E.	(±9.22)	(±8.25)	(±8.53)
Other	(43) 8%	(5) 1%	(13) 4%

p<.05

Notes: Percentages do not total 100% because only items perceived to be editorial material were considered for this analysis.

Values with the same subscript are significantly different from each other when read horizontally.

“S.S.” denotes Sample Size and “S.E.,” Standard Error.

Table 13

Total Coded Content in Percentages from Seventeen, Essence and Redbook During 1990-1994

	1990-1994		
	<u>Seventeen</u>	<u>Essence</u>	<u>Redbook</u>
Traditional			
Appearance	(99) 27%	(67) 21%	(87) 25%
Female/Male Relations	(57) 15%	(24) 7%	(57) 16%
(S.S.) Total Traditional	(156) 42%<i>g</i>	(91) 28%<i>gh</i>	(144) 41%<i>h</i>
S.E.	(±7.85)	(±10.27)	(±8.17)
Feminist			
Self-Development	(92) 25% <i>jl</i>	(130) 40% <i>j</i>	(143) 41% <i>l</i>
Political/Social Issues	(8) 2%	(9) 3%	(11) 3%
(S.S.) Total Feminist	(100) 27%<i>pr</i>	(139) 43%<i>p</i>	(154) 44%<i>r</i>
S.E.	(±9.8)	(±8.31)	(±7.9)
Other	(24) 6%	(5) 2%	(12) 3%

p<.05

Notes: Percentages do not total 100% because only items perceived to be editorial material were considered for this analysis.

Values with the same subscript are significantly different from each other when read horizontally.

“S.S.” denotes Sample Size and “S.E.,” Standard Error.

Table 14

Total Coded Content in Percentages from Seventeen, Essence and Redbook During 1995-1998

	1995-1998		
	<u>Seventeen</u>	<u>Essence</u>	<u>Redbook</u>
Traditional			
Appearance	(134) 33%	(87) 23%	(104) 26%
Female/Male Relations	(70) 17%	(28) 8%	(60) 15%
(S.S.) Total Traditional	(204) 50%_g	(115) 31%_{gh}	(164) 51%_h
S.E.	(±6.86)	(±9.14)	(±7.65)
Feminist			
Self-Development	(103) 25%_{jl}	(141) 38%_j	(152) 38%_l
Political/Social Issues	(12) 3%	(10) 3%	(14) 4%
(S.S.) Total Feminist	(115) 28%_{pr}	(151) 41%_p	(166) 42%_r
S.E.	(±9.14)	(±7.98)	(±7.61)
Other	(25) 6%	(3) 1%	(12) 3%

p<.05

Notes: Percentages do not total 100% because only items perceived to be editorial material were considered for this analysis.

Values with the same subscript are significantly different from each other when read horizontally.

“S.S.” denotes Sample Size and “S.E.,” Standard Error.

The fifth hypothesis states that an analysis of the percentage of items about appearance, (traditional items,) in Seventeen, Essence and Redbook will not yield statistically significant differences in a tri-magazine comparison. This hypothesis is not supported by the results of this study, as results from 1985-1989 showed the differences in the category of “appearance” to be statistically significant between Seventeen and Essence, and Seventeen and Redbook. The fifth hypothesis is supported by results from 1990-1994 and 1995-1998.

The sixth hypothesis states that an analysis of the percentage of items about female-male relations, (traditional items,) in Seventeen, Essence and Redbook will not yield a statistically significant differences in a tri-magazine comparison. The sixth hypothesis is supported by the results. Statistically significant differences in the category of “female/male relations” were not found among Seventeen, Essence and Redbook in any time period.

The seventh hypothesis states that an analysis of the percentage of items about self-development, (feminist items,) in Seventeen, Essence and Redbook will not yield a statistically significant differences in a tri-magazine comparison. The results between Seventeen and Essence, and Seventeen and Redbook from 1985-1989, 1990-1994 and 1995-1998 in the category of “female/male relations” revealed statistically significant differences; thus, the seventh hypothesis is not supported.

The eighth hypothesis states that an analysis of the percentage of items about political and social issues, (feminist items,) in Seventeen, Essence and Redbook will not yield a statistically significant differences in a tri-magazine comparison. The eighth

hypothesis receives support, as differences in this category were not found to be statistically significant.

The study's first and second hypotheses stated that the percentage of items about "appearance" and "female/male relations" would be higher from 1985-1989 than from 1990-1994 and 1995-1998. Although percentages might appear to support both hypotheses, the differences were not statistically significant, except from 1985-1989 in the category of "appearance."

The third and fourth hypotheses stated that percentages reflecting the categories of "self-development" and political/social issues" were to be lower from 1985-1989 than from 1990-1994 and 1995-1998. Results showed some support in the category of "self-development," however, none in the category of "political/social issues" as there were no statistically significant differences present in any of the time periods among any of the magazines.

In addition, the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth hypothesis stated that there would not be any statistically significant differences among the three magazines when compared to one another by each variable: "appearance," female/male relations," "self-development," "political/social issues." Statistical significance, however, was determined by a series of Z-tests, and results indicate that there are statistically significant differences in the categories of "appearance" and "self-development."

Tables 12, 13 and 14 combine the first two categories, "appearance" and "female/male relations" under the label of "traditional," and the latter two categories, "self-development" and "political/social issues," under the label "feminist." These

pairings are consistent with those created by Schlenker in her study “A Feminist Analysis of Seventeen Magazine: Content Analysis from 1945 to 1995.”

Schlenker asserted in her research that a third wave of feminism might be present in the 1990s. (The first and second occurring in the 1940s and the 1970s.³) The structure of this content analysis allowed for a five- and four-year period to straddle the inception of a third wave. Figures 2, 3, 4 and 5 and Tables 12, 13, 14, show that although there were higher percentages in the categories of “appearance” and “female/male relations” from 1985-1989 than from 1990-1994 in Seventeen, in Redbook, the percentage actually increased from 1985-1989 to 1990-1994, and in Essence the same percentage was maintained over time. All three magazines experienced an increase in percentages from 1990-1994 to 1995-1998.

Percentages reflecting content in the category of “self-development” were expected to be lower from 1985-1989 than the percentages from 1990-1994 and 1995-1998. Seventeen, Essence and Redbook all increased in “self-development” percentages from 1985-1989 to 1990-1994. However, Seventeen maintained the 1990-1994 percentage to 1995-1998, and both Essence and Redbook declined from their respective 1990-1994 percentages.

The category of “political/social issues” was predicted to follow the same increase from 1985-1989 to 1990-1994, and both Essence and Redbook showed increases; however, Seventeen’s percentage on “political/social issues” actually fell. Seventeen did match the percentage from 1985-1989 to that from 1995-1998 though — returning to her original percentage. Essence maintained the same percentage from 1990-1994 to 1995-1998, and Redbook steadily increased over time from 1985-1989 to 1990-1994 and from

1990-1994 to 1995-1998. Statistical significance of the differences was not found in this category, though.

Overall, from 1985-1989 to 1990-1994 Seventeen's percentage of "traditional" content decreased by 6%, Essence's by 5%, and Redbook's by 1%. From 1990-1994 to 1995-1998 Seventeen's "traditional" content rose by 8%, Essence's by 3%, and Redbook's by 10%. However, when comparing "total traditional" content to "total feminist" content over time, Essence provides more "feminist" material than either Seventeen or Redbook.

From 1985-1989 Seventeen provided readers with 27% more "traditional" content than "feminist," and Redbook 3% more. Essence, in contrast, offered readers 7% more "feminist" content than "traditional." From 1990-1994 Seventeen experienced a decline in "traditional" content, but "traditional" content still harnessed 15% more of the magazine's content when compared to "feminist" content. Essence continued to rise in "feminist" content in the bi-content comparison. The differential between "feminist" and "traditional" content was 16%. Redbook's readers received 3% more "feminist" content than "traditional." From 1995-1998 only Essence continued to provide readers with more "feminist" content, 10% more, than "traditional" content. Seventeen and Redbook both fell to providing more "traditional" than "feminist" content to her readers — by 22% and 9%, respectively.

Table 15 provides selected titles from each time period that reflect each of the five categories used in the coding process.

Table 16

**Selected Articles from Tables of Contents in Seventeen, Essence and Redbook
From 1985-1989**

Seventeen

- 1985: November: Glorious Gifts to Treasure
Whitney: Stunning, Stylish ... A Star <Whitney Houston>
- 1986: May: Can You Stay Friends with Your Ex?
Test Your Tobacco Smarts
- 1987: September: Can Weather Effect Your Mood?
How to Handle a Picky Boyfriend
- 1988: October: How to Stand Out on Your College Applications
When Three's a Crush
- 1989: March: Moonlighting: Nighttime Make-up
The Agony and Ecstasy of First Dates

Essence

- 1985: January: How a Woman's Body Ages
Food: Saltbusters
- 1986: July: Games Lovers Play
Armageddon Is Now
- 1987: February: Remembering Malcolm X
Wedding Day Beauty Blunders
- 1988: December: Sexual Ease
Cut Holiday Calories
- 1989: September: Alice Walker
Finance Your Dreams

Redbook

- 1985: March: How the Stars Lose
Sexuality "Why Isn't He a More Aggressive Lover?"
- 1986: November: Present the Best: 51 Gifts from a Southern Kitchen
Have You Talked to Your Kids about Crack?
- 1987: February: What Your Husband Is Afraid to Tell You
Pep Up! or Calm Down! Mood Foods to Raise or Lower Your Stress
- 1988: June: Dr. Ruth Asks: Is Your Husband a Hit and Run Lover?
A Parents' Guide to the Tween Years
- 1989: December: Dolly Parton and Sally Field – Straight from the Heart
Celebrate and Decorate with Martha Stewart

**Selected Articles from Tables of Contents in Seventeen, Essence and Redbook
From 1990-1994**

Seventeen

- 1990: December: Boy Eau Boy! What Guys Really Think of Your Fragrance
Winona Ryder
- 1991: November: Love and Sex in the 90s: Our National Survey
Things That Make You Go Hmmm ... about Keanu Reeves
- 1992: January: It's Not Black and White
Other People's Problems: How to Help a Friend in Need without
Hurting Yourself
- 1993: May: Way to Glow
Harassment at School: The Truth Is Out
- 1994: October: Is He Yours?
Is Your Best Friend a Witch?

Essence

- 1990: July: Fat War
Top Women Designers
- 1991: December: They Call It Buppie Love
The New Nationalists
- 1992: June: The Taming of Eddie <Eddie Murphy>
Summer's Hair
- 1993: August: Straight Women/Gay Men: A Talk Between Friends
Full-Moon Madness
- 1994: September: Should Children Be Tried as Adults?
Update Your Style

Redbook

- 1990: February: Always Be Lovers First
Kissable Lips
- 1991: December: Food Gifts Sent by the Stars
What's So Good about Sex after 30 (Plenty)
- 1992: April: Susan Sarandon: Rebel with 100 Causes
The Diet Women Need Most
- 1993: July: Tough Love <Meg Ryan>
New Ways to Heal
- 1994: September: Picking the Right Diet
The Families Who Are Dying For Our Country

**Selected Articles from Tables of Contents in Seventeen, Essence and Redbook
From 1995-1998**

Seventeen

- 1995: January: 17 Guys to Watch in 1995
Are You a Slacker?
- 1996: March: Do Your Friends Rule Your Life?
Mad Love <Domestic Violence>
- 1997: May: The Boyfriendless Wonder
3 Celebs: 9 Great Workouts
- 1998: September: Famous Amos <Tori Amos>
15 Cool Ways to Hang with Your Boyfriend after School

Essence

- 1995: March: Proud Mary <Mary J. Blige>
Black Power
- 1996: May: Surround Scent
Toni's Second Take <Toni Braxton>
- 1997: November: The Many Ways of Looking at Black Men
The Bad Boy <Sean "Puffy" Combs>
- 1998: September: Mission Impossible: You Can Meet Your Soul Mate
Parenting: Race in Their Face

Redbook

- 1995: April: "I'm So Fat!" When Kids Hate Their Bodies
What I Got When I Acted Like a Guy
- 1996: October: 10 Myths about Breast Cancer
Love Your Hair Again
- 1997: November: How to Turn \$50 into \$100,000
Love Lessons: What Couples Learn at Marriage School
- 1998: September: 12 Secrets of Women Who Always Look Fantastic
Kathie Lee: How She Found the Courage to Forgive

¹ Jennifer Schlenker, Sandra L. Caron, and William A. Halteman, "A Feminist Analysis of Seventeen Magazine: Content Analysis from 1945 to 1995," Sex Roles, Vol. 38, (1998) 142.

² Please see Appendix D for a complete listing of standard error by category, magazine and year.

³ *Ibid.*

Chapter 4

Conclusion

Susan Taylor, senior vice president and editor-in-chief for Essence magazine, stated that “Essence has always been a reliable source of information and guidance for black women.”¹ The statistics generated from this study reveal that Essence provided 7% to 16% more information on issues of “self-development” and “political/social issues” than “appearance” and “female/male relations.” Providing information that is inclusive of women interested in both “traditional” and “feminist” content is important. Exposing her readers to varying information Essence reinforces the “liberal” and socialist” feminist ideology that emphasizes “choice.”

The managing editor of Seventeen as documented by Peirce’s study also espouses a commitment to giving young women “the information they need in their lives.”² However, in contrast to Essence, Seventeen shares 15% to 27% more content reflecting “appearance” and “female/male relations.” These percentages closely mirror those in Schlenker’s study where “feminist” messages increased between 1985 and 1995. Schlenker’s findings are reinforcing but also disturbing as one notes that even when “feminist” content increased from 35% in 1985 to 40% in 1995, “traditional” content still remained 60% of the magazine.³

Former YM Editor-in-Chief Lesley Jane Seymour would argue that issues centering on appearance are important as young women worry about how they are seen by others. She feels concerns over appearance must be addressed in magazine content.⁴

Editorial staffs in support of Seymour's contention might join her in stating that magazines are simply giving readers what they want. Unfortunately, without a deliberate and monitored in-house change in magazine content, such an assertion remains inconclusive. Only a cyclical discussion may result, as responsibility may be shifted from the media to the audiences that support her. This "bi-directional"⁵ flow of information and the possible effects particular information may have on an audience is not limited to these publications. And this is why:

1. a. Information – Audience – Magazine
 b. *Magazine* – Information – Audience
2. a. *Magazine* - Information – Audience – Magazine
 b. *Magazine* – Information – Audience

The arguments appear simple, but a resolution seems far from being so.

Does existing information influence an audience, and does that audience then dictate editorial agenda, (1a)? Or does the media, a magazine perhaps, generate editorial content based on an internal agenda, disseminate that content and possibly influence audiences, (1b)? The media and, in this study, the magazines may be placed in a position of responsibility regardless of where one resumes this argument, (2a). This is important.

"Culpability" remains illusive. But in light of that reality, why wouldn't magazines that claim to offer information that is needed embrace an opportunity to broaden their scope? Revenue and profit are valid responses, but maintaining such high percentages of "traditional" content doesn't enable young women to break through existing barriers of institutional oppression.

Novack and Novack were concerned about the potential “internal conflict” that many self-identified “feminists” might experience due to the overwhelming amount of “traditional” messages that are presented without equal representation of options. Dissonance will occur during a lifetime of development regardless of any percentage comparisons displayed in a content analysis, but why not create dissonance about not being *active enough* in the community rather than reinforce “traditional” rhetoric about not being *pretty enough for* the community?⁶

Redbook offers a bit of relief, as differences between paired “traditional” and “feminist” combinations for ten years are less substantial. From the 1995-1998 time period though, a greater disparity between total “traditional” and “feminist” categories appeared.

The results overall show an increase in “feminist” issues from 1985-1989 to 1990-1994, but not so much from 1994-1998. The trend to increase content in the categories of “self-development” and “political/social issues” did not last. And quite clearly, numbers from 1995-1998 are gravitating back toward those from 1985-1989. Schlenker’s assertion is reflected in Redbook’s development, but describing the change as a “wave” may be overstating the reality of the content that was present in the magazine. A “trend” more than a “wave” of feminist messages may more accurately describe the application of the results found in this study.

Essence, however, appears to be a bit of an anomaly. With higher “feminist” percentages than “traditional” percentages from the beginning, 1985-1989, the magazine challenges the research previously conducted on women’s magazines. With so much of the focus in past research centering around “traditional” and “feminist” rhetoric and roles,

perhaps an analysis of the culture reflective of- and publications targeted toward- women of color is needed. Their history and oppression is not the same as the dominant culture. Although the feelings of oppression do not change from the teen-ager to the spouse, the manifestations of the discrimination are different — journeys are different.

Feminist, activist, author and educator, Angela Davis might chortle at the emphasis placed on the “internal conflict” some women may experience while pursuing a career and raising a family. In Women, Race and Class, Davis explores the history of the black woman’s role. “During slavery, women toiled alongside their men in the cotton and tobacco fields, and when industry moved into the South, they could be seen in tobacco factories, sugar refineries and even lumber mills and on crews pounding steel for the railroads ... as a direct consequence of their outside work — as ‘free’ women no less than as slaves — housework has never been the central focus of Black women’s lives.”⁷ Davis explains that the “housewife” was “rooted in the social conditions of the bourgeoisie and the middle classes,” and “nineteenth-century ideology established the housewife and the mother as universal models of womanhood.”⁸

Although not interested in “housework,” women of color, and particularly black women have none-the-less been tied to home — just not necessarily their own. “In 1910, when over half of all Black females were working outside their homes, one-third of them were employed as paid domestic workers. By 1920 over one-half were domestic servants, and in 1930 the proportion had risen to three out of five.”⁹ The irony is painful. As white women received acceptance and most likely positive reinforcement for accepting the position of perceived “universal motherhood,” the black woman found her role as a “housekeeper”¹⁰ distorted and exploited by mainstream America, e.g. Aunt Jemima. No

wonder Essence appears ahead of her predominantly white pseudo-counterpart and leagues beyond the content in Seventeen. Perhaps all women would do well to peruse an issue of Essence for her celebration of “self-development” is unequalled in this study.

There are many limitations to this analysis. The following briefly addresses a few of them. This analysis only concentrates on editorial content; advertisements were not included. A more complete analysis of one or all of these publications would include an analysis of their advertisements. For example, Seventeen’s editorial content refrains from overtly endorsing teen-age sex, but the magazine displays provocative advertisement.¹¹

In addition, magazine publications must court their advertisers. “An aggrieved advertiser can withdraw from virtually any magazine and put ads elsewhere without risking the loss of a significant number of customers.”¹² With all the competition between the “fashion/beauty/lifestyle” magazines, appeasing advertisers is a real concern. In women’s magazines the boundaries between editorial and advertising copy are often blurred. Many advertisers routinely insist on “complementary” copy to accompany their ads. And some businesses, according to Gloria Steinem, founding editor of Ms. magazine, refuse to advertise unless “compatible” editorial materials are placed next to their ads.¹³

Ms. took an unusual step in 1990, banning advertising and raising her cover and subscription prices. Functioning on circulation-based revenue alone Ms. only remained profitable for five years and was sold in 1998 to Liberty Media for Women. A “new” issue is expected in Spring 1999.¹⁴

Although Ms. will resurface, the dependency on advertisements is real and editors may find themselves altering content to mollify their advertisers. “Glamour and Allure

magazines are placing free samples from companies such as Estee Lauder and Revlon on their editorial pages.”¹⁵ Magazines are in a vulnerable position due to these relationships, as editors are faced with difficult decisions regarding content and censorship.

Limitations in terms of audience diversity are also an issue. Seventeen is geared toward white upper to middle class girls. The magazine fails to address the concerns of the general population, including girls of different races, ethnicities, and social classes and sexual orientation.

Essence and Redbook are just as specified: Essence targets women of color and Redbook, white married women.

Future research needs to be more inclusive, by age, race, status, education, special interest and especially, sexual orientation as all this material is heterosexist. Designing a similar study with the same areas of analysis plus “female/female relations” and “male/male relations” might lend insight into the content that’s projected into the Lesbian, Bi-sexual, Gay and Transgendered community where issues of “feminist/progressive” and “traditional” rhetoric are also a concern.

Future studies need to explore the mediums — from oral histories to electronic chat rooms — utilized to disseminate information for women, too. For example, the home-based magazine, Blue Jeans, created by feminist Sherry Handel, focuses on community service and environmental issues and boasts “14 teen editorial board members” and “six teen correspondents.” These teenagers produce over 90% of this 30,000 reader worldwide magazine and without advertisements or fashion tips.¹⁶ In addition, Hues, a magazine dedicated to “promoting self-esteem and sisterhood among women of all sizes, ethnic backgrounds and lifestyles,” was created from frustration with

mainstream women's magazines.¹⁷ Opheira Edut and Dyann Logwood started the magazine, because they seldom saw ethnic women in magazines.¹⁸ These magazines are not mainstream and therefore, problematic when trying to establish comparisons with publications that report larger circulation numbers. None-the-less, they are areas worth exploring in future research.

A final recommendation includes a continued analysis of Redbook. In November 1998 Lesley Jane Seymour took over the magazine as editor in chief and her goal was to "jazz up the magazine, make it more energetic and a little younger."¹⁹ Both design and content changes in Redbook may be assessed in the future.

Content that possibly influences self-concept and shapes self-identity should not be limited to communications. This relationship between information, education and identity development harnesses the potential to ignite interest through inferential research in psychology, sociology, cultural anthropology, women's studies and American studies. — for these three publications are only part of our multi-media society and only a part of the socialization process for some teen-age girls, some women of color and some married women. More studies in this area and others, like, television, on-line magazines, and movies will provide further insight into mass media's influence.

¹ "60 Seconds with Susan Taylor, Senior VP/Editor in Chief, Essence and Recipient of a 1999 Henry Johnson Fisher award," Mediaweek, (Online) Available Lexis-Nexis, January 25, 1999.

² Peirce, 499.

³ Jennifer Schlenker, Sandra L. Caron, and William A. Halteman, "A Feminist Analysis of Seventeen Magazine: Content Analysis from 1945 to 1995," Sex Roles, Vol. 38, (1998) 143.

⁴ Christman, F1.

⁵ Author questions whether this relationship is truly bi-directional.

⁶ Obviously, this is the author's bias.

⁷ Angela Y. Davis, Women, Race and Class, Random House, New York, New York, 1981 p.230.

⁸ Davis, 229.

⁹ Davis, 237.

¹⁰ Read "mammy," author's note.

¹¹ Sarah Means, "Teen Magazines Challenge Sex Obsession; New Publications Echo Right and Left," The Washington Times, (Sept. 11, 1997) p. A2.

¹² David Shaw, "Magazines Feel Increased Pressure from Advertisers; Publishing: As More Firms Threaten to Cancel Ads If They Dislike Story Content, Fear of Self-Censorship by Editors Grows," Los Angeles Times, (Online) Available, Lexis-Nexis, May 10, 1999.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Skip Wollenberg, "Ms. Magazine Sold to Group Including Gloria Steinem," (Online) Available, http://www.seattletimes.com/news/lifestyles/html98/mizz_120398.html, May 10, 1999.

¹⁵ Tara Parker-Pope, "Publishing: Smudging the Line Between Ads, Editorial," Wall Street Journal, (Online) Available, Lexis-Nexis, May 10, 1999.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Lisa Granatstein, "A New Redbook Juggler," Mediaweek, (Online) Available, Lexis-Nexis, February 1, 1999.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A



APPENDIX B

Content Analysis Coding Protocol

Universe

The publications chosen for this content analysis were Seventeen, Essence and Redbook. The coding of these three magazines covered the years 1985-1998. The fourteen year analysis was divided into two five-year spans, (1985-1989, 1990-1994) and one four-year span, (1995-1998).

All content, except advertising, horoscopes, recipes, reviews and reader response letters, including editorials, poetry and prose, was potential material for analysis. This material was coded into four main categories: “appearance,” “female/male relations,” “self-development” and “political/social issues.” There was a category of “other” for the coder who does not know how to categorize material in a way that would reflect the proceeding operational definitions and/or found material the author had not considered.

After the material was identified as reflecting one of the aforementioned categories, the coder marked the magazine’s date and month and counted the total number of items listed in the magazine’s table of content. This analysis was designed to assess the amount of content that would reflect the preceding definitions. The purpose was to document the type of material that structures Seventeen, Essence and Redbook and to evaluate any changes that may occur in that content over time.

Content Analysis Coding Protocol continued

Coding Procedures

All items, except advertising, horoscopes, recipes, reviews and reader response letters, will be coded regardless of the item's length. Code answers according to the questions by marking the response form. Refer to the operational definitions provided as often as is necessary for clarity. Read the entire question and answer set before marking the response form. If multiple answers seem applicable, please choose the best one. This study is concerned with overall content, coding all items specifically into four categories: "appearance," "female/male relations," "self-development" and "political/social issues." To determine whether an item reflects one of these categories, carefully study the definitions provided.

APPENDIX B

Coding Questions

1: This item is primarily, but perhaps not exclusively about:

0= appearance

1= female/male relations

2= self-development

3= political/social issues

4= other

2: This item is from the following magazine:

0= Seventeen

1= Essence

2= Redbook

3: Record the magazine's date and month of publication.

4: Record the total number of items listed in the magazine's table of contents.

APPENDIX B

Operational Definitions

Advertising: copy and illustrations selling a product or service from an outside vendor/company or in house advertising or promotional material. Advertising is not included in the coding procedures.

Appearance: makeup; hair, hair-cuts, hair-styles, nails; beauty products; accessories; fashion, "Hollywood" fashion; fashion tips; newest trends in accessories, fashion, decorating; shopping for clothes; how you look to others; dieting, exercising to lose weight.

Female/Male relations: advice columns on female/male relations, finding a boyfriend, dating, sex; fiction stories about female/male relations, dating, sex, love; feature articles about female/male relations, dating, sex, love; how to articles: how to please a boyfriend - emotionally, sexually, through planning, developing and maintaining a relationship; how to keep a boyfriend; how to shop for a boyfriend; entertaining a boyfriend; romance woes, how to evaluate a female/male relations, development of female/male relations, (not quizzes) tips on how to improve, change, fix female/male relations; feature article on a male in the entertainment industry, "Hollywood" men, all men.

"Hollywood" Men: Items that primarily although perhaps not exclusively portray male actors, models or musicians in a way that does not emphasize their respective crafts.

Individual Items: count the number of items that receive their own page number in the table of contents

Other: e.g.: car tips; gift making ideas and gift guides; "Hollywood" gossip; in-house contests, surveys and results.

Political/Social Issues: AIDS; environment; welfare; homophobia, heterosexism; ageism; racism; relationship violence; international relations; war; political articles; news items; articles on women abroad.

Operational Definitions continued

Self-development: mental, spiritual and physical health articles; personality quizzes; best friend quizzes; familial and platonic relationship feature articles; familial and platonic relationship fiction stories; entertaining family and friends;
mentors: leaders in a community or abroad, famous women;
education: getting good grades, studying, going to college;
career: choices, changing jobs, getting jobs;
money: investments, finances, management;
lifestyle: hobbies, cooking (not recipes), exercising (not to lose weight), reading, books to read (not reviews); films to see (not reviews), travel, volunteerism, community service;
time/impression management.

Sex: behavior that includes but is not limited to one of the following: heterosexual and/or homosexual kissing, petting, anal sex, oral sex, intercourse and/or mutual masturbation.

APPENDIX C

Coding Results

Seventeen

1985-1989

date	Jan-86	Feb-89	Mar-89	Apr-85	May-86	Jun-85	
toc total	30	29	57	60	47	52	
0	7	7	22	30	20	20	
1	2	7	6	5	2	5	
2	9	2	9	7	12	12	
3	1	1	2	2	1	0	
4	2	2	6	4	1	2	
	Jul-87	Aug-87	Sep-87	Oct-88	Nov-85	Dec-89	
	33	74	47	34	44	40	547
0	11	32	18	12	15	16	210 38%
1	6	7	6	3	5	1	55 10%
2	5	11	9	8	9	4	97 18%
3	0	3	1	2	2	1	16 3%
4	5	10	4	2	2	3	43 8%
							77%

1990-1994

	Jan-92	Feb-93	Mar-91	Apr-93	May-93	Jun-94	
	*16	37	45	24	26	25	
0	5	11	10	4	5	7	
1	2	4	3	3	2	5	
2	4	6	11	8	10	6	
3	1	0	0	0	1	2	
4	0	2	2	3	1	0	
	Jul-93	Aug-93	Sep-92	Oct-94	Nov-91	Dec-90	
	26	28	30	40	38	36	371
0	8	8	12	14	6	7	99 27%
1	6	8	6	8	4	3	57 15%
2	8	9	9	7	5	10	92 25%
3	0	0	2	0	2	0	8 2%
4	2	1	3	2	5	3	24 6%
							75%

Seventeen**1995-1998**

date	Jan-95	Feb-96	Mar-95	Apr-96	May-97	Jun-96		
toc total	17	31	37	35	34	31		
0	3	12	6	12	9	12		
1	4	6	6	6	3	5		
2	8	10	6	12	6	7		
3	0	0	0	0	1	2		
4	0	0	4	5	2	0		
	Jul-96	Aug-96	Sep-98	Oct-98	Nov-96	Dec-96		
	35	38	39	41	36	32	406	
0	11	18	12	15	12	12	134	33%
1	6	7	7	6	6	8	70	17%
2	10	7	12	14	8	3	103	25%
3	0	1	2	2	2	2	12	3%
4	1	3	1	2	4	3	25	6%
								84%

* Denotes a potentially inaccurate count in the 1992 January edition of Seventeen as only half of the "table of contents" was present. Items were counted page by page to assess the total number.

Coding Results continued

Essence

1985-1989

date	Jan-85	Feb-87	Mar-86	Apr-88	May-89	Jun-89
toc total	32	36	32	25	33	24

0	7	6	7	3	6	5
1	1	4	4	1	4	2
2	13	10	14	10	14	9
3	0	0	0	2	1	1
4	0	0	0	0	1	1

Jul-86	Aug-88	Sep-89	Oct-88	Nov-87	Dec-88
31	28	29	32	33	26

361

0	6	9	8	8	8	9	76 21%
1	6	2	1	4	8	1	38 11%
2	10	12	13	14	7	8	134 37%
3	0	1	2	0	0	0	7 2%
4	0	0	0	0	2	1	5 1%

72%

1990-1994

Jan-93	Feb-92	Mar-92	Apr-90	May-90	Jun-92
28	26	24	30	35	28

0	7	5	5	6	6	3
1	0	7	1	1	1	2
2	9	6	10	12	13	11
3	2	0	0	2	0	0
4	0	0	0	0	1	0

Jul-90	Aug-93	Sep-94	Oct-90	Nov-93	Dec-91
30	26	28	31	32	29

323

0	8	5	6	4	6	6	67 21%
1	3	2	1	0	3	2	24 7%
2	11	10	12	13	14	9	130 40%
3	0	0	1	1	1	2	9 3%
4	0	0	0	3	0	1	5 2%

73%

Essence**1995-1998**

date	Jan-95	Feb-95	Mar-95	Apr-95	May-96	Jun-95		
toc total	27	27	29	27	32	28		
0	5	6	5	8	8	7		
1	0	3	1	1	1	3		
2	12	9	12	11	8	12		
3	1	2	2	0	1	0		
4	0	0	0	0	0	0		
	Jul-95	Aug-97	Sep-98	Oct-96	Nov-97	Dec-95		
	27	33	40	35	34	32	371	
0	6	11	10	9	5	7	87	23%
1	4	3	3	1	8	0	28	8%
2	8	11	17	16	13	12	141	38%
3	0	0	2	0	0	0	10	3%
4	0	1	0	1	1	0	3	1%
								73%

Coding Results continued
Redbook 1985-1989

date	Jan-87	Feb-87	Mar-85	Apr-85	May-89	Jun-88	
toc total	22	23	34	30	27	26	
0	4	4	8	7	9	4	
1	3	3	6	4	3	2	
2	8	9	11	12	12	14	
3	1	0	0	0	0	2	
4	1	0	0	1	0	0	
	Jul-86	Aug-87	Sep-89	Oct-87	Nov-86	Dec-89	
	26	26	29	29	30	32	334
0	9	6	8	6	7	4	76 23%
1	4	2	4	3	2	2	65 19%
2	7	11	8	10	13	12	127 38%
3	0	0	2	0	0	0	5 1%
4	1	1	0	4	2	3	13 4%
							85%

1990-1994

	Jan-91	Feb-90	Mar-92	Apr-92	May-91	Jun-90	
	26	28	32	26	26	25	
0	6	9	8	6	8	7	
1	2	4	3	3	3	2	
2	8	7	15	13	8	9	
3	0	0	1	1	0	1	
4	1	1	1	2	0	0	
	Jul-93	Aug-90	Sep-94	Oct-91	Nov-90	Dec-91	
	29	32	32	33	27	30	346
0	6	8	7	8	9	5	87 25%
1	2	4	3	2	1	1	57 16%
2	19	12	15	14	9	14	143 41%
3	2	0	3	1	2	0	11 3%
4	0	1	0	1	2	3	12 3%
							88%

Redbook**1995-1998**

date	Jan-98	Feb-98	Mar-98	Apr-95	May-97	Jun-97
toc total	32	30	39	30	33	35

0	8	9	9	5	10	10
1	6	5	5	4	3	5
2	12	10	11	15	15	12
3	0	2	1	2	1	2
4	1	0	3	0	1	3

Jul-98	Aug-97	Sep-98	Oct-96	Nov-97	Dec-97
36	28	35	30	39	30

397

0	8	9	9	8	11	8	104 26%
1	5	5	5	4	6	7	60 15%
2	11	11	13	12	17	13	152 38%
3	2	0	0	0	2	1	14 4%
4	1	0	0	2	0	2	12 3%
							86%

APPENDIX D

**Total Coded Content in Percentages and Standard Error
from Seventeen, Essence and Redbook
During 1985-1989**

	1985-1989		
	<u>n</u> <u>Seventeen</u>	<u>n</u> <u>Essence</u>	<u>n</u> <u>Redbook</u>
Traditional Appearance	(210) 38%<i>ac</i> (±6.76)	(76) 21%<i>a</i> (±11.24)	(76) 23%<i>c</i> (±11.24)
Female/Male Relations	(55) 10% (±13.21)	(38) 11% (±15.9)	(65) 19% (±12.61)
Total Traditional	48%<i>g</i>	32%<i>gi</i>	42%<i>i</i>
n=	(265)	(114)	(141)
Standard Error	(±6.02)	(±9.18)	(±8.25)
Feminist Self-Development	(97) 18%<i>jl</i> (±9.95)	(134) 37%<i>j</i> (±8.47)	(127) 38%<i>l</i> (±8.7)
Political/Social Issues	(16) 3% (±24.5)	(7) 2% (±37.04)	(5) 1% (±43.85)
Total Feminist	21%<i>pr</i>	39%<i>p</i>	39%<i>r</i>
n=	(113)	(141)	(132)
Standard Error	(±9.22)	(±8.25)	(±8.53)
Other	(43) 8%	(5) 1%	(13) 4%

p<.05

Notes: Percentages do not total 100% because only items perceived to be editorial material were considered for this analysis.

Values with the same subscript are significantly different from each other when read horizontally.

APPENDIX D

Total Coded Content in Percentages and Standard Error from Seventeen, Essence and Redbook During 1990-1994

	1990-1994		
	<u>n</u> <u>Seventeen</u>	<u>n</u> <u>Essence</u>	<u>n</u> <u>Redbook</u>
Traditional			
Appearance	(99) 27% (±9.85)	(67) 21% (±11.97)	(87) 25% (±10.51)
Female/Male Relations	(57) 15% (±12.98)	(24) 7% (±20)	(57) 16% (±12.98)
Total Traditional	42%	27%	41%
n=	(156)	(91)	(144)
Standard Error	(±7.85)	(±10.27)	(±8.17)
Feminist			
Self-Development	(92) 25% <i>jl</i> (±10.22)	(130) 40% <i>j</i> (±8.6)	(143) 41% <i>l</i> (±8.2)
Political/Social Issues	(8) 2% (±34.65)	(9) 3% (±32.67)	(11) 3% (±29.55)
Total Feminist	27%<i>pr</i>	43%<i>p</i>	44%<i>r</i>
n=	(100)	(139)	(154)
Standard Error	(±9.8)	(±8.31)	(±7.9)
Other	(24) 6%	(5) 2%	(12) 3%

p<.05

Notes: Percentages do not total 100% because only items perceived to be editorial material were considered for this analysis.

Values with the same subscript are significantly different from each other when read horizontally.

APPENDIX D

Total Coded Content in Percentages and Standard Error from Seventeen, Essence and Redbook During 1995-1998

	1995-1998		
	<u>n</u> <u>Seventeen</u>	<u>n</u> <u>Essence</u>	<u>n</u> <u>Redbook</u>
Traditional			
Appearance	(134) 33% (±8.47)	(87) 23% (±10.51)	(104) 26% (±9.61)
Female/Male Relations	(70) 17% (±11.71)	(28) 8% (±18.52)	(60) 15% (±12.65)
Total Traditional	50%	31%	51%
n=	(204)	(115)	(164)
Standard Error	(±6.86)	(±9.14)	(±7.65)
Feminist			
Self-Development	(103) 25%_{gi} (±9.66)	(141) 38%_g (±8.25)	(152) 38%_i (±7.95)
Political/Social Issues	(12) 3% (±28.29)	(10) 3% (±30.99)	(14) 4% (±26.19)
Total Feminist	28%_{pr}	41%_p	42%_r
n=	(115)	(151)	(166)
Standard Error	(±9.14)	(±7.98)	(±7.61)
Other	(25) 6%	(3) 1%	(12) 3%

p<.05

Notes: Percentages do not total 100% because only items perceived to be editorial material were considered for this analysis.

Values with the same subscript are significantly different from each other when read horizontally.

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