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UNDER COVER: Investigating *Cosmopolitan* Magazine

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|----------------|-------|
| List of Plates | P.1 |
| Introduction | p.2 |
| CHAPTER ONE | p.6 |
| CHAPTER TWO | p.15 |
| CHAPTER THREE | p. 27 |
| CHAPTER FOUR | p. 39 |
| Conclusion | p. 49 |
| Bibliography | P. 51 |

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CONTENTS

LIST OF PLATES

All illustrations are taken from current issues of *Cosmopolitan* magazine.

- 1) p. 9 November, 1994, p. 113
- 2) p. 9 November, 1994, p. 114
- 3) p. 12 November, 1994, pp. 120-121
- 4) p. 16 January, 1995, pp. 112-113
- 5) p. 18 January, 1995, p. 43
- 6) p. 21 November 1994, p. 89
- 7) p. 25 November, 1994, pp. 76-78
- 8) p. 28 November, 1994, Cover Image
- 9) p. 31 November, 1994, p. 3
- 10) p. 31 December, 1994, p. 3
- 11) p. 32 January, 1995, pp. 3-4
- 12) p. 34 December, 1994, pp. 46-47
- 13) p. 36 December, 1994, p. 67
- 14) p. 40 November, 1994, pp. 38-39
- 15) p. 40 November, 1994, p. 45
- 16) P. 43 January, 1995, p. 54
- 17) p. 45 December, 1994, p. 17
- 18) p. 47 January, 1995. pp. 78-79.

INTRODUCTION

Motivation for this thesis stems from a personal interest in understanding how certain behaviour and attributes have become associated with being female. The media can be looked to as a major contributor in reinforcing these constructs as natural. I have chosen women's magazines as one particular area of the media to concentrate on, as they not only have a history in training women in femininity, but their function has been specifically to instruct women with guidelines on how to maintain and present her femininity.

I have chosen *Cosmopolitan* magazine (The British publication), firstly, because it is the highest selling women's monthly magazine in Ireland, at the time of this study. Secondly because it's very creation (1972) was in direct response to the dissatisfaction women felt with the limited interpretation of the female body which women's magazines of the 1950's designated as natural to women. This thesis investigates wether or not such a departure offers a less limited interpretation of the female body. While this study relies on current issues of *Cosmopolitan* (1994/1995), it is important to briefly discuss this earlier model for the purpose of this argument.

Women's magazines of the 1950's catered to an interpretation of the female body's natural role as within the home. Services, such as 'How-To' articles, followed a step by step format offering guidelines and tips on home management. While this can be viewed as merely a reflection of women's position within the home during this time period, women's magazine's role in training women to understand this as her natural role occurred for a specific

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reason. Women's magazines in the 1950's established a financial partnership with advertisers and it became necessary to train women in attitudes of consumption. Women's magazines reliance on advertisers revenue resulted in the feminization of products for the home. Achieving success was understood to be reliant on fulfilling this natural role through the purchasing of products. Pleasure was offered to women through such fulfillment (Winship 1987)

Through a close examination of some of the services *Cosmopolitan* offers it's readers today, I will acknowledge both how it departs from this traditional model and how it relies on similar strategies to enforce equally restrictive interpretations of the female body. Chapter one focuses on *Cosmopolitan's* work related articles to argue that while their presence reflects a positive change, the content of the articles do not. Chapter Two concentrates on *Cosmopolitan's* replacement of domestic service articles with beauty ones, relying on similar strategies for similar reasons of the 1950's women's magazine. Chapter Three examines what remains characteristic of *Cosmopolitan* since it's creation which is it's emphasis on sex. While it's recognition of women as sexual individuals appears to offer a positive interpretation of the female body, it's role in defining how female sexuality should behave is not. Chapter Four recognizes the power of the magazine as a representation of a culture specific to women offering a forum for women's voices to congregate, but examines the regulation in confining this to the magazine.

Before entering into specific discussion of these services and articles, it is necessary to understand who by and large purchases *Cosmopolitan*, as the magazine caters to a specific grouping of women. *Cosmopolitan* can be seen as catering to an age group of women between the ages of sixteen and twenty five, in a lower middle class economic grouping. *Cosmopolitan* generally caters to an age brackett of working women between the ages of sixteen and twenty five, within a lower middle class economic grouping. This

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can be detected through a common portrayal within women's magazines as presenting an older and higher income than content suggests, in order to create a sense of desire for the representations presented throughout the magazine.

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CHAPTER ONE

Cosmopolitan's work related "How-To" articles attempt to offer practical guidelines to aid women in specific problems that might arise at work, such as in 'Ouch, dealing with mistakes at work' (February, 1995). Other articles encourage self assertion and offer step by step guidelines on how to improve one's career, such as in 'Time to Take Stock' (December, 1994). Articles such as these can usually be found in a section of their own, titled, 'Cosmo Careers'. The decision to place work related problems in a category of their own gives the column a specialised feel, as well as recognising women's work as valid and important. In this way *Cosmopolitan* appears to depart from the tradition in women's magazines representation of women's role as within the home. Such encouragement of alternative roles suggests a feminist out look. Upon closer examination however, *Cosmopolitan's* brand of feminism can be questioned, as well as how alternative the roles it endorses really are.

One such article which encourages women to take charge of their position in the work world is titled 'Join the Teleworkers', and can be found in 'Cosmo Careers', (January, 1995, p. 62), "Stay at home all day and get paid for it," the article entices. This article, while encouraging readers to partake in paid work, suggests working at home as an alternative to the gloom and doom of the work routine. The reference to women staying at home and getting paid for it is particularly enticing, because for centuries women have stayed home doing unpaid domestic work. However, in recognizing that over the past few decades women have successfully fought their way out of the home and into the public work arena, the suggestion to

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"stay home" is regressive as it appears to present women's successful entrance into the public work arena as undesirable.

The articles suggestions become further problematic with the type of job women are enticed into. The teleworker as described by the article, "uses technology, such as computers and fax machines, to do almost any job traditionally done in an office" (p. 62). Jobs done in offices, such as secretarial work have traditionally been defined as women's work. *Cosmopolitan* offers this job as desirable to women by offering a list of the advantages and appears to present a realistic evaluation by also offering the disadvantages. Among the advantages listed in the 'upside' of this career option are savings in time and money, control over the organisation of your day, and according to one Dr. Sylvie Collins, "who has researched the world of the teleworker", a better sex-life. The disadvantages of teleworking, listed in the "Downside", include seclusion, difficulty in separating business from pleasure, and working within the home as distracting.

What remains exempt from the disadvantages is an accurate description of what these distractions entail in relation to *Cosmopolitan's* readers, sixty percent of whom are married (Winship, 1987, p.104). Married women in Britain account for almost half of the work force, yet face double the work load of men, as they remain the primary caretakers of children and the home (Sharpe, 1994, p.52). The absence of a recognition of this in 'Join the Teleworkers' is reflective of *Cosmopolitan* as a whole. In the interest of resonating an attitude of carefreeness, one it associates with being single, *Cosmopolitan* can be seen as selective, and thus limited in which issues regarding women and work it chooses to address. Issues regarding the dual work load women face, simply because they are women rank a high priority in a feminist agenda. *Cosmopolitan's* exclusion of such issues presents them as unimportant, creating an unspoken endorsement for such traditional

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interpretations of the female body.

Even when *Cosmopolitan* appears to address feminist concerns in relation to women and work, its explorations and solutions cannot be considered feminist. Such is evident in another 'Cosmo Careers' article titled 'Get the Best Deal', by Ros Miles (November, 1994, p.113). Without even venturing through the text of this article, *Cosmopolitan*, through its visual accompaniments, establishes this as an article which lends a solution to a struggle for a woman in a man's work world.

The photograph which takes up half of the first page depicts a man in a business suit, surrounded by women, wielding skittles as clubs to threaten him with (see Fig. 1). Rather than attempt to challenge why inequality exists in the workplace, as the image suggests, the article positions the blame on women. This is seen in the subtitle which reads "So many women sell themselves short at work", and again through out the article: "Far too often, women just take what is offered." Proof of this is offered through the use of statistics, such as "Even after 20 years of equal opportunity, women are only getting around two thirds of what an equivalent male is paid. The assumption created is that if legislation has been passed, it must be women's fault that this condition still exists.

The article offers to teach women the necessary skills of negotiation in order to rectify this problem. "Learning the art of negotiation", however translates into adopting male strategies as a solution rather than offer a means to challenge these conditions and the ideology which allows them to exist. Playing the man's game is reinforced through the highlighted lettering which categorizes the suggested strategies: 'Pitch High', 'Play the Game', and 'Talk Tough'. The suggestion is that one should ask oneself, "What am I really worth", and to "check with friends, especially men, who are usually tougher and more realistic about value-for-work issues than women." While this may be a reality, it again suggests a solution by way of adopting

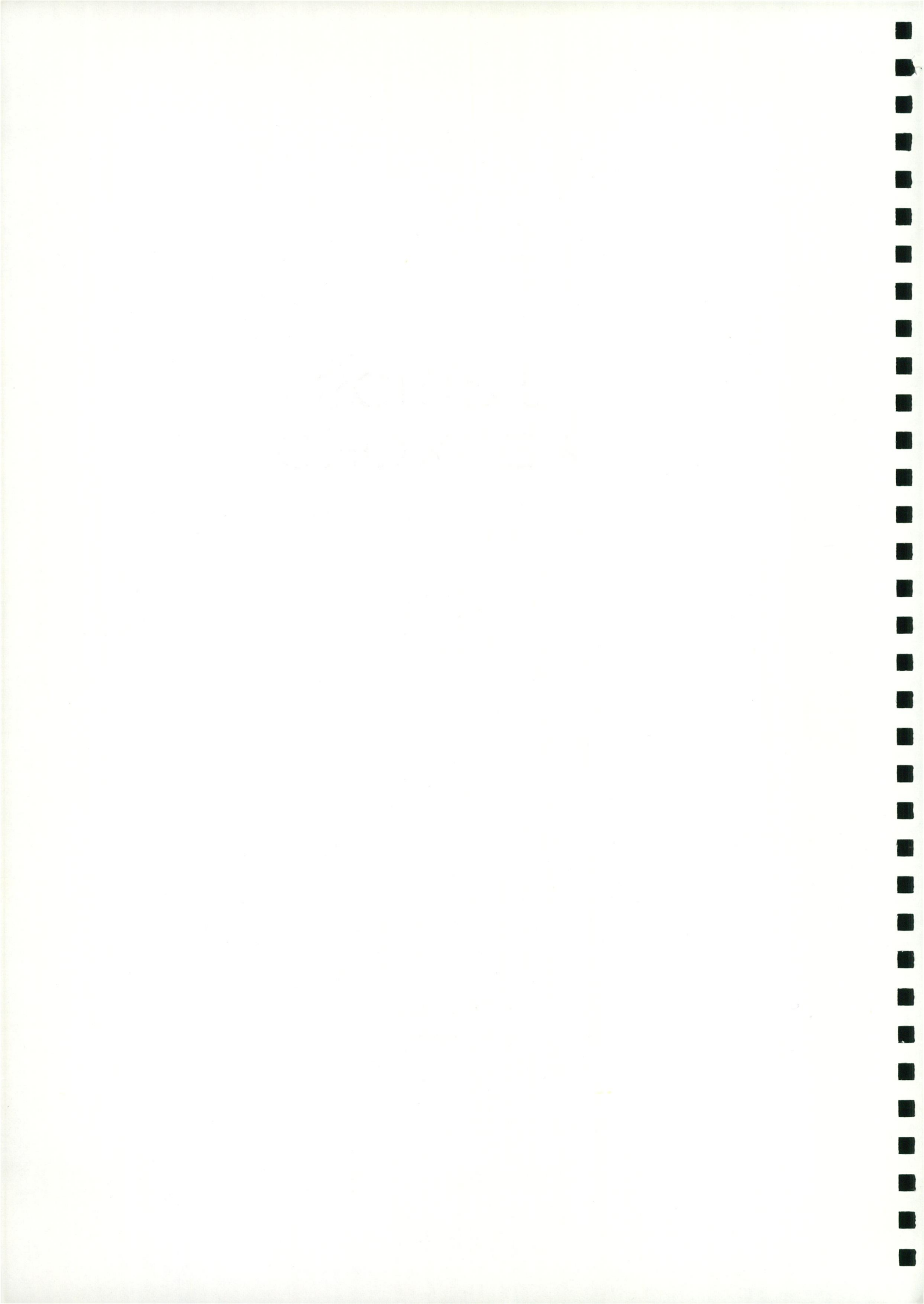
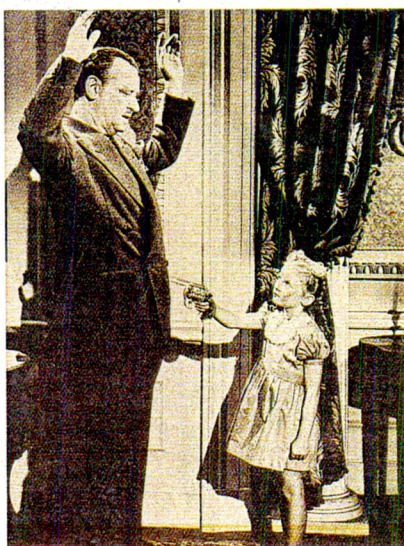


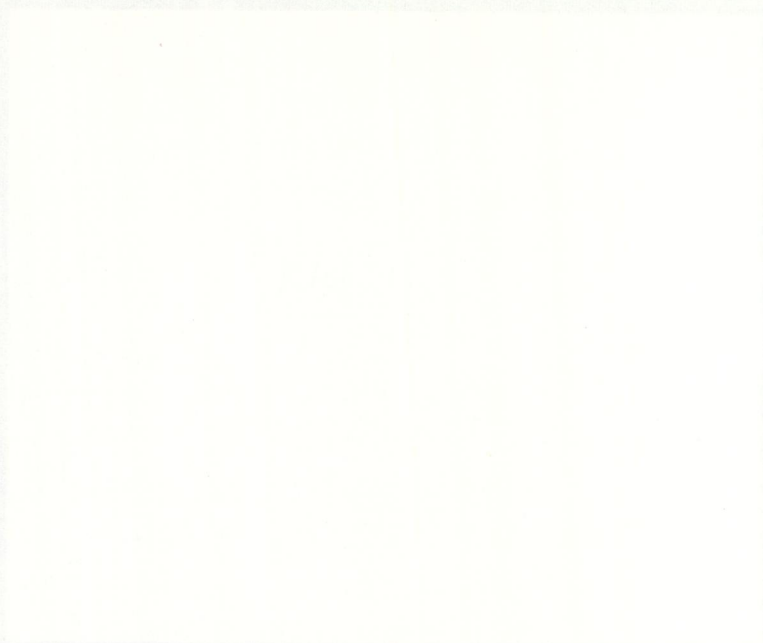


Figure 1.



Seize the chance when it comes. And remember, it's not a popularity contest – your goal is to get the best deal, not to make people like you.

Figure 2.



characteristics associated with men, and asks it's readers to accept this reality rather than question it. *Cosmopolitan's* solutions are problematic as they ask women to conform to rather than challenge systems which do not recognize women as competent and as valuable as men.

Cosmopolitan's visual accompaniments to this article function to transmit messages which can be read as in opposition to feminist solutions. The photograph on the second page of the article offers a theme similar to the first (see Fig. 2). It depicts a little girl holding a man at stick-up, once again reinforcing a message that conflicts with the articles message that women are to blame. What is important to note, however, is that both the photographs have been designed to appear dated. In the first, (Fig. 1), the clothing and the hairstyles of those depicted reinforces this, as well as the choice of black and white photography. The second photograph is again depicted in black and white, once again placing the date on the representation as old fashioned. It is understood through these images that *Cosmopolitan* considers women confronting men, especially groups of women, as an dated and old fashioned tactic.

I would like to make it clear that a feminist solution would not suggest that women take to beating up men, or holding them at gun point in order to be on equal pay. These are assumptions which position women in opposition to men, and paint a picture of feminists as man-hating. *Cosmopolitan* contributes to perpetuating such assumptions. What feminism would endorse is the collective teaming together of women to attack an ideology which places value on women's bodies rather than their minds. Naomi Wolf, in her book, *The Beauty Myth*, offers a feminist exploration into why women's position in work is considered less valuable than men's. She links this condition as stemming from a reaction to women's emancipation in the 1960's: "The young working woman was blocked into a stereotype that used beauty to undermine both the seriousness of the work she

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BOX 15A

was doing and the implications of her new independence." (p. 31). These implications positioned a threat to the previously male dominated work force, and it was necessary to create what can be viewed as a double standard between men and women in the work place.

Beauty has become a necessary qualification for women's success in the work place, and it is a qualification that is not demanded of men. In the value placed on her body, women's success can be seen as reliant on the skilful maintenance of her physical appearance. Such a skill is again not a requirement for men. Wolf claims that this is a necessary qualification because "it gives employers what they need economically in a work force by affecting women psychologically on several levels" (Wolf, 1991, p. 48). In other words if women are kept to equate their worth and success with ideal beauty qualifications they will not demand equal pay to that of men. *Cosmopolitan* contributes to perpetuating this ideology and enforcing this double standard. This is evident in the format of a 'Cosmo Careers' regular feature, titled 'Women Now'.

'Women Now', as the subtitle suggests, offers a glimpse of "What women today are saying, doing, winning and fighting." The language used here again seems to suggest a feminist outlook. The column serves to offer women encouragement and optimism through its paragraph profiles of women which are accompanied by a photograph of the achiever. The presence of real women, as opposed to models, allows the reader to relate herself with the women in the photographs as sharing the potential for success. Women who have started their own business, as well as those achieving advancement in male dominated areas of work are recognized. The paragraph profiles tell each woman's personal story of success. In itself the column can be seen as offering opportunity and aspiration to women. The deliberate placement of advertisements within and around the 'Woman Now' column, however, generate the double standard. The advertisements pertain to cosmetics, and through their

Scrub
CROXSE

women now

Making millionaires

The woman who suggested that the Maple bottle be given an angled neck, she can't believe her luck. At 54, Karen Roberts has been appointed as marketing director of Canada's iconic brand, the Maple Leaf. The brand's logo is a maple leaf, and its slogan is "the taste of Canada". Roberts, who has been with the brand for 10 years, says she is "lucky to be part of a team that is so successful and so loved by so many people". She also says that she is "lucky to be part of a team that is so successful and so loved by so many people".

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the secret of my success

Yvonne Savage
Director of Investment Management Company
Hudson's Bay Company
Responsible for the company's investment strategy and performance.
Salary: \$100,000. Age: 50.

"What's my secret? I would not and I wish I could. I think the right company at the right time is my secret. I was lucky to be part of a team that was so successful and so loved by so many people. I was lucky to be part of a team that was so successful and so loved by so many people."

Women company directors

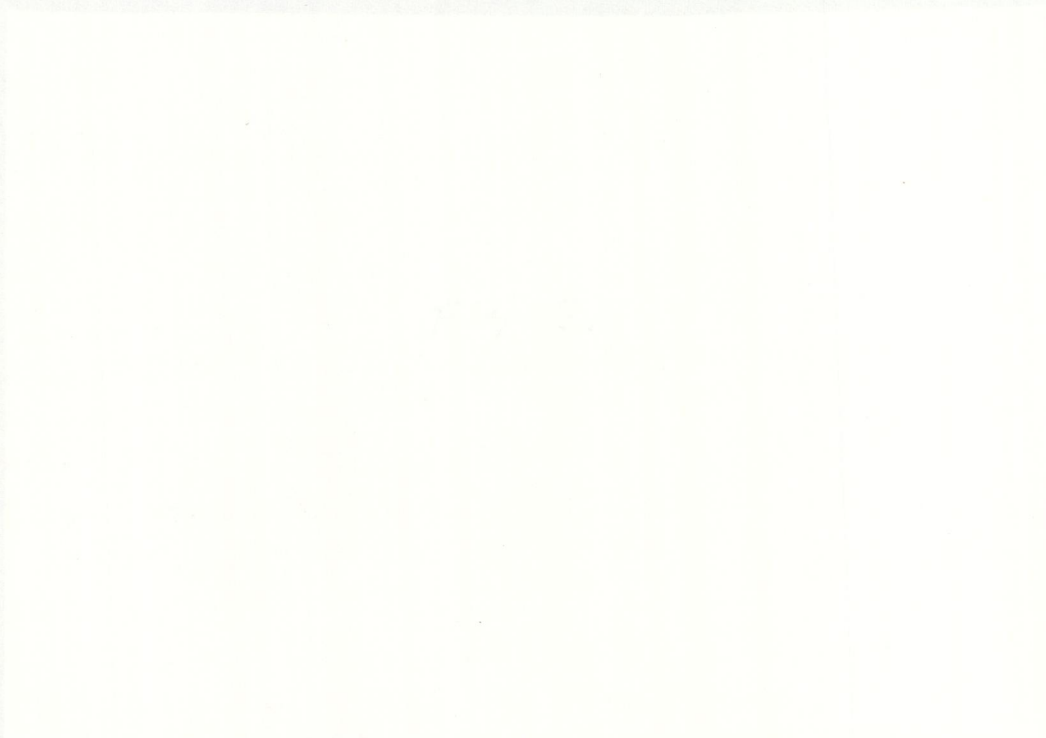
In the most comprehensive analysis of company directors ever undertaken, CCH Business Information concludes: "If you want to be part of the future and experience of the company director you're negotiating with, then make sure it's a woman."

- The survey found that female directors make up 24 per cent of all directors of listed companies, and that 14 per cent of them have more than one directorship.
- Are far less likely than their male counterparts to have a strong company balance sheet.
- Are much more likely to be found in the South West and are least likely to be found in Scotland or Yorkshire.
- CCH Business Information is Britain's leading source of company information. Contact them on 01202 410000.



You won't believe how effective Lipstick is unless you've tried it. Lipstick is the transparent lipstick that keeps your lipstick in place, what ever you're doing. Eating, drinking, kissing and even kissing keeps your lipstick in place. Not if you use Lipstick. Simply brush it over your lipstick and let it be there. You'll have perfect looking lips and you can be confident they'll stay that way all day and night. It's also multipurpose. So what are you waiting for? If you want perfect lips for Lipstick, you'll be surprised by the results. There's no need to be a Lipstick expert. The results speak for themselves.

Figure 3.



visual impact transmit messages that the success of the women profiled is also due to their use of beauty products to dutifully maintain their physical appearance.

The November 1994 issue of *Cosmopolitan*, offers a clear example of this. One page of it's 'Women Now Column', (p.120), features headlines which read: "Making millionaires", "The secret of my success", and "Women Company directors". It is positioned next to an advertisement for Lipcote, a transparent lipstick sealer. The horizontal positioning of the lipsticks on the left hand side of the page of the advertisement visually point the "Secret of my Success" towards the bottle of Lipcote (see Fig.3).

Through such use of the lay out of the magazine, *Cosmopolitan*, in one foul swoop, can be seen to liberate women by representing their strengths, and negate that liberation by representing their success as reliant on the maintenance of their bodies. The presence of such conflicting representations is vital for economic reasons. Firstly, it must be noted that attaining faithful readership does not serve to finance *Cosmopolitan*, or create it's profits. For example, it has been estimated that to break even, *Cosmopolitan* would have to double it's cover price (Winship 1987, p. 38). Advertisers, through their purchase of advertising space, supply magazines with this necessary revenue. Secondly advertisers rely on the enforcement of double standard in order to create a desire for it's products.

Not only does this economic reliance on advertisers manifest itself in the juxtapositions mentioned with the 'Woman Now' column, but it acts as a form of censorship within the content of articles. Wolf uses this example of the kind of censorship such a partnership produced in it's earlier days:

"In 1956 the first arrangement was made, when a nylon manufacturer's association booked a \$12,000 dollar space in *Woman*, and the editor agreed not to publish anything in the issue which

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prominently natural fibres." (1991, p.81).

This type of censorship is not apparent, as magazines obviously do not publish such confessions. It is a censorship that must be assumed when reading *Cosmopolitan's* work-related articles, because in the interest of attracting potential advertisers, women must not be portrayed as too liberated. For example if women understood their position in the work place as undervalued, not because they lack self assertion (As suggested in 'Get the Best Deal'), but because they are valued for their bodies, they might begin to question the endorsement of beauty products. *Cosmopolitan's* seemingly liberating content borrows the language of feminism as a disguise to hide the magazines true intent, to train women in attitudes of consumption, benefiting both the magazine and the advertisers. *Cosmopolitan's* fashion and beauty features ensure such attitudes, and further negate the positive presence of it's work related articles.

CHAPTER TWO

Cosmopolitan's fashion department usually can be relied upon for three regular features: 'Style Confidence', 'Style Solutions', and 'Style Report', which are published in this order. Similarly, its beauty services can be seen to follow a similar format, offering 'Beauty Scoop' and 'Beauty Treats' as regular columns. Readers can also rely on regular monthly fashion and beauty special supplements, which rely on various themes to introduce beauty and fashion products. The theme aspect offers an element of fun, and the emphasis on a dominance of colour photographs physically serve as a pleasure to the eye. *Cosmopolitan's* services in beauty offer various strategies to hide its true intent of training women in the necessary attitudes of consumption. It is in the ofference of beauty work, as work necessary for success, as well as pleasure, it can be seen to replace the domestic work which dominated women's magazines in the 1950's.

Cosmopolitan's special beauty supplements appear to assist women in targetting specific beauty problems. Through its step by step guidelines it offers readers solutions in rectifying problems. It is important to note however that their underlying purpose is to create problems, and to endorse products which promise resolution. It is through such "How-To " articles that beauty maintenance is difficult to see as anything other than work. *Cosmopolitan* offers beauty work to women under the guise of self-improvement. 'Spring Into Action', a January 1995 beauty special, illustrates such points (p.112). This article offers a "Four week inner and outer cleansing programme". The emphasis on "inner" reflects *Cosmopolitan's* interest in improving the self for the self, and in this way appears to offer a positive service. The article,

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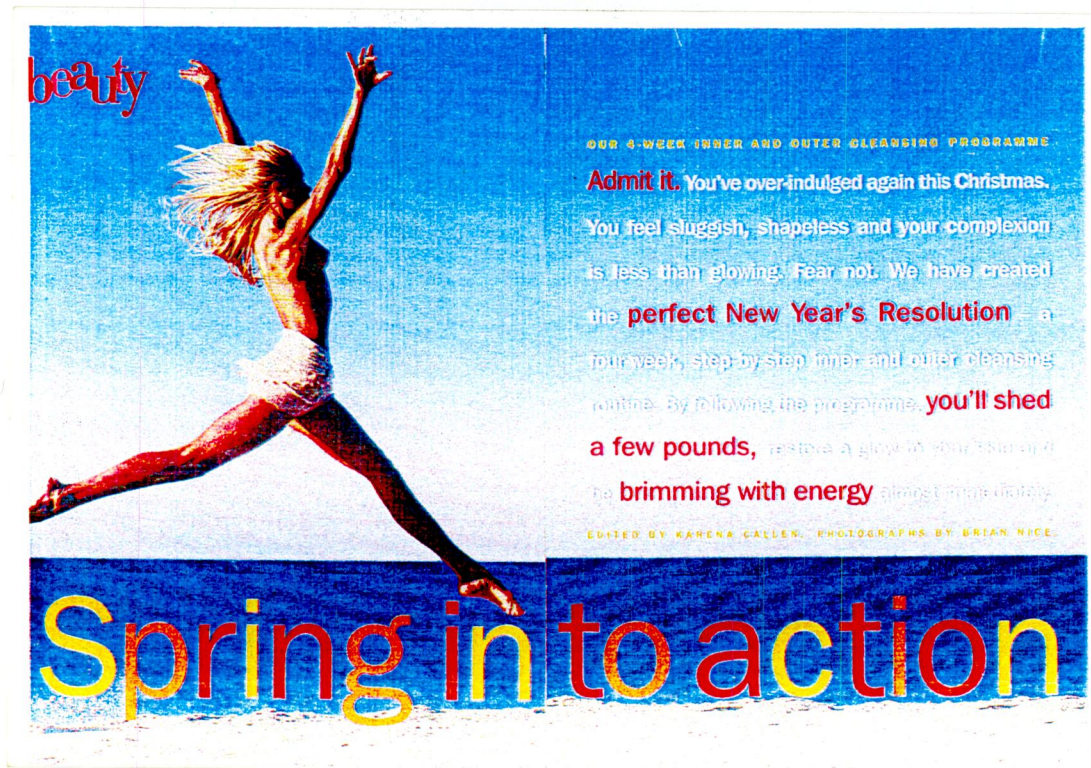


Figure 4.

however, instantly creates a problem, and it's tone suggests that it's simply pointing it out. "Admit it," which is highlighted in red, "You've over-indulged again this Christmas. You feel sluggish, shapeless and your complexion is less than glowing." The accompanying photograph depicts a woman who "springs into action" topless across a beach. Her hair flows back and her arms raise up to the sky. The gesture is one of freedom, one which reinforces the four week plan as a route to freeing oneself, rather than a restrictive regime. (see fig. 4)

What follows is a week by week plan, of daily do's and don'ts. Week one concentrates on inner cleansing through detoxification. *Cosmopolitan* supplies a daily breakfast, lunch, and dinner menu, "to make it easy". Week two concentrates on outer cleansing mostly through attention to the skin, for example "add skin brushing, exfoliate, get your circulation going deep cleanse hair and scalp, and so on. Week three continues suggestions of purification through breathing, cleansing brews. Week four stresses "don't think you can give up now! Use this last week for intensive toe-to-toe pampering."

Just reading through this beauty special is exhausting, it is hard to imagine actually following the plan. It is so intensive, and restrictive, and one might imagine having to take a month off of work to participate properly. The intention however is not to participate in much else other than the purchasing of the many products endoesed throughout the article, and to ensure that women are kept in a frame of mind where they deem themselves imperfected.

In contrast to special beauty features, regular beauty and fashion features appear to recognize the amount of work involved in maintaining one's physical appearance. *Cosmopolitan*, through these features, offers itself as a service to illeviate the burden of beauty work. Such appears to be the intent of a regular fashion feature, titled 'Style Solutions'. This feature usually presents a

Question: How can I make my favourite black suit look really up to date?



Answer: Accessorise
with the season's
hottest colours

The spring collections are awash with bold brights. But not all of us have the figure or the complexion to carry off a lime green trouser suit, nor can we always afford to splurge on a one-season wonder. Fortunately, bright sparks have always known that a black suit is the perfect canvas for whatever designers splash onto their palettes - accessories are all you need to turn your classic suit into a walking masterpiece. ☺ SAMANTHA COOKS

Figure 5.

question or a problem which the reader assumes is one she has, such as in the February 1995 issue: " Which shoes should I wear to update my wardrobe ?" (P. 53). Again *Cosmopolitan* can be seen to create the problem, and these solutions purport to offer a service in economizing both it's readers time and money while urging readers to consume. Such as in the January 1995 issue's 'Style Solution', which offers the question: "How can I make my favourite black suit look really up to date ?" Pictured below this question are four different solutions, and the answer: " Accesiorise it with the season's hottest colours" (see Fig. 5).

The suit featured by *Cosmopolitan* is priced for readers at £135. The accessories listed in some cases total more than the cost of the suit, at £249, dispelling it's presumed intent of saving it's readers money. Prices and stockists are listed along side each outfit. What *Cosmopolitan* offers to economise here is the readers time, by showing how to, and where to, they appear to have done all the work for the reader. Now all that is left for her to do, is to make a purchase.

Sometimes the names of the titles of *Cosmopolitan's* regular fashion and beauty services vary to suit the themes of these features, but the formats and expected content remains familiar to the reader. This familiarity, and regularity, establishes *Cosmopolitan's* services as reliable, creating a need for it's trustworthy advice. However, themes and titles also can be seen to change in order to link certain equations to beauty work. Such is seen in the February issues title 'Beauty Intelligence' (p. 130).

'Beauty intelligence', as the title connotes, equates women's intelligence with creating a "must-have" make-up kit for under £30. The article goes on to profile four professional make-up artist's kits and costs. Brands and prices of individual items are conveniently listed, along with each womans proof of intelligence seen in each quote

titled "Her Reasoning". The equation of intelligence in relation to selecting beauty products in an economic and philosophical sense is transferred quite instantly. The relationship between *Cosmopolitan* and advertisers, in these regular fashion and beauty features services is not a subtle one, as names, prices and stockists appear everywhere. *Cosmopolitan*, at the same time, recognizes women's intelligence in detecting these consumer ploys, by providing readers with a subtler version of similar equations in beauty and consumption, without such an obvious presence of product endorsement. This can be seen in another fashion regular titled 'In the Closet'.

This feature offers readers a peek into the closet of someone *Cosmopolitan* deems as an expert on the subject of clothes. They are not only experts but women with incomes that do not limit the quantity and quality of their clothing. In this way a sense of desire and fantasy is introduced. Not only in desiring the clothing, but a life style of glamour, that is reflected through the purchasing of clothes. For example, the November 1994 issue's 'In the Closet' features a look into the closet of Janine di Giovanni, a reporter for *The Sunday Times*. *Cosmopolitan* hides the true intent of the article by profiling a successful working woman. (see Fig. 6)

Janine's job, which at the time of the article places her covering the war situation in Bosnia, is presented as dangerous and exciting, as seen in the articles description: "One week, she'll be risking sniper fire to send news from the front line in Bosnia. The next she may be flying off to interview the minister of Turkey...". It could be said that *Cosmopolitan's* selection of this woman, whose job, through its dangerous aspects might be traditionally defined as male, is progressive and offers a positive role model for women. For example it could be said that *Cosmopolitan* could select super models to portray a glamorous lifestyle as they could be defined as experts when it comes to clothing, and also earn very high incomes.

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in the closet with janine di giovanni

When a top news journalist finds herself in the middle of the action, she needs clothes that pack a punch – but most of all she needs clothes that pack.

As a reporter for *The Sunday Times*, Janine di Giovanni leads a life that's anything but routine. One week, she'll be risking sniper fire to send news from the front line in Bosnia. The next, she may be flying off to interview the prime minister of Turkey.

Whether she's down in the trenches or at a glitzy press conference, Janine's job always requires appropriate dress, as well as clarity of thought and grace under pressure. Her wardrobes neatly reflect this. One is reserved for best winter clothes; one for best summer. And one for her war reporter's equipment. Precious garments are zipped into protective plastic. Delicate fabrics are tucked up in tissue. Shoes are laid out in rows, and graded according to colour. Jackets hang, ready for inspection.

"Because my work is so chaotic, I need order at home," says Janine. "Not just as a contrast, but for practicality too. I may have to pack at a moment's notice to travel abroad to cover a story."

Her wardrobe boasts some of the best designer labels: Gucci, Calvin Klein, Ozbeck, Ferragamo, Valentino, Fendi.

"I spend a lot of my salary on clothes," she says. "But I calculate the cost according to how often I wear something." Her winter coat, by Jil Sander, cost £1,500. "I've worn it for the last five years, and I can wear it for another five." A black silk jacket from Gucci and a white one from Valentino

"I need order at home. Not just as a contrast, but for practicality too. I may have to pack at a moment's notice."

won't give you much change from £1,000. "I wear both of them on a weekly basis. To me, they've been great value for money."

Janine says it was her mother who impressed on her the advantage of buying a few beautiful, expensive garments rather than lots of cheap ones. "I may buy two outfits a season, at £400 each. But they'll last me years. I don't shop in sales – I find I buy things I don't really want."

She's a big fan of Graham & Green, based in west London, which operates a

"finding service" for its clients. They found her last black dress, by French designer Capucine Puerari.

Along with an astrakhan jacket and some antique lace suiting, Janine has inherited from her mother a respect for clothes, and a love of glamorous style and neutral and earthy colours. Her taste in designers reflects her parentage: Italian and American.

Her vast shoe collection might well inspire envy in Isabella Marcos – whom she interviewed once and who told her defensively, "So I bought shoes – I had to look good for my job." Janine collects bags, too. She's bought classic Coach bags for at least ten years, and has a Fendi duffel bag, which she purchased (at a discount) when she profiled Carla Fendi.

Janine has the knack of finding a story in any aspect of her life: an Alaïa suit was bought "as a celebration, when I received the commission for my first book"; a pair of Calvin Klein sandals was retrieved from a photo session with actor Anne

Bancroft. And one jacket tells a rather tragic story. Designed by the German fashion house Rena Lange and found at a market in Sarajevo, it must once have belonged to a chic woman. It had been salvaged from an apartment destroyed by mortar.

Packing has, of necessity, become a fine art. "My clothes must fold up to nothing and be crease-free when I get to my destination. I buy with packability in mind."

Her "best takeaway kit" includes a white trouser suit by Sara Sturgeon, which she wears with a black cropped wool top from John Smedley; a navy blue sheath dress (with matching blazer), bought on assignment in Italy, when Giovanni Falcone was



Top: Janine with the astrakhan jacket inherited from her mother. Above: The "war kit". Left: In her favourite black dress and with Coach bag (on door).

killed": one smart suit, such as her beige Banana Republic one with flirty skirt; a nice wrap, plus a "top-up" of hardwearing gear, such as a black pinafore dress, white T-shirts and big shirts from The Gap.

Her "war kit" includes a flak jacket by Tetranike Armour Systems, issued by *The Sunday Times* for bullet protection, Timberland boots and jeans. Wherever she's off to, she takes two "first-aid kits": one packed with medical supplies; the other with travel-size beauty products from Aveda.

"Being in a war situation has heightened my appreciation of how sweet my life back home is," she says. "It has helped me live for today. So I don't feel guilty about having beautiful, expensive clothes. I remember all the hard floors I've slept on to get a story, and I figure I've earned them."

Janine di Giovanni's latest book, *The Quick and the Dead: Under Siege in Sarajevo* is published by Orion Press, at £12.99.

BEVERLEY D'SILVA

Figure 6.

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However Janine's job is characterized as glamorous because her income allows her to purchase designer clothes. Her success is seen as reliant on the attention she pays to her appearance, which is presented as her true skill, rather than her intelligence.

For example the article interviews her on the important role clothes play in her life. *Cosmopolitan* attempts to pass this off on one hand as a job requirement: "Whether she's down in the trenches or at a glitzy press conference, Janine's job always requires appropriate dress, as well as clarity of thought and grace under pressure." Mentioned twice however is the influence her mother has had in her love of clothes: "Janine says it was her mother who impressed on her the advantage of buying a few beautiful, expensive garments rather than alot of cheap ones, and "Janine has inherited from her mother a respect for clothes , and a love of glamorous style...". It becomes clear through such quotes that it is her love of clothes that makes Janine successful in her job, and success in her job enables her to finance her true passion. "I spend alot of my salary on clothes," she says, and the article goes on to list just some of the designer labels Janines wardrobe "boasts of".

Beauty maintenance is presented as essential not only for her job, but for her life: "Wherever she's off to, she takes two 'first-aid kits': one packed with medical supplies: the other with travel size beauty products from Aveda". As with advertisements placed around the 'Women Now' column, this fashion feature, presents the double standard that is demanded of women in the work force. More successfully it serves the purpose of trivializing this woman's accomplishments.

The following comments are just a sample of how the article's emphasis on Janine's clothes trivializes her job: "... a Fendi duffle bag, which she purchased (at a discount) when she profiled Carla Fendi", "...a navy sheath dress (with matching blazer), bought on assignment in

Italy, 'when Giovanni Falcone was killed'", and a designer jacket "found at a market in Sarajevo...it had been salvaged from an apartment destroyed by mortar". The constant linking of her clothing finds and purchases with Janine's work assignments, present Janine's job as a valuable accomplishment only because it allows her to make such valuable finds and provides her with the income to do so. This is further emphasized in the ending quote: "...I don't feel guilty about having beautiful, expensive clothes: I remember all the hard floors I've slept on to get a story, and figure I've earned them." This quote reinforces Janine's passion of clothes as the reason for her employment.

At other times *Cosmopolitan* can be seen to define such a passion for clothes as a natural source of pleasure for women, rather than a requirement for work. This can be seen in the December issue's 'In the Closet', which offers a less serious tone, through a witty profile of the Barbie doll. Dressing up, and women's seemingly natural attachment to clothes can be seen as all in good fun, rather than a demanding regiment, as reflected in the subtitle "Barbie, who has become a legend in her own playtime, opens her pink wardrobe exclusively for *Cosmopolitan* to reveal why dressing up is just a game." The use of a doll, a childhood toy which is familiar to women, reinforces this game as specifically female.

Dressing up is not only seen as fun but necessary in accentuating one's femininity, "To emphasize those fantastic curves and incredibly long legs, Barbie loves those waist-clinching dresses, cropped bodices, pelmet short hemlines and thigh-hugging trousers." Such accentuation can be seen as pleasing to men, "Doesn't every boy want to get his hands on her?" Barbie's success is attributed to her lack of aging, at 35, not a wrinkle can be detected, her "smooth, smooth, skin, and thick glossy hair are still her trademarks." The tone of the article, through its very focus on a doll is not asking its readers to aspire to be

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like Barbie, but serves to once again define female success, interests, and pleasure, presenting them as natural.

The equation of pleasure as a natural female reaction to the maintenance of her body, stems from eighteenth century notions of femininity, which defined women as objects of leisure and ornament for men. (Craik, 1991, p. 89) Because women's role was to be on display, it became a natural assumption that her concern over her appearance was natural, and therefore pleasurable. *Cosmopolitan* can be seen to use this ideology to directly serve the interests of advertisers. Such as seen in the November 1994 issue's regular fashion feature, 'Style Confidence'. This month's is titled 'More Dash than Dosh', and relies on a theme based on transportation : "Need easy directions to chic success? Dash down the High Street for outfits that detour designer prices without bypassing style" (p.76). As with most fashion features the text is minimal, and serves mostly to inform about prices and products. This month's spread relies on two women, pictured skipping, and jumping on and off buses, assumably off on a shopping spree. (see Fig. 7)

Cosmopolitan supplies it's readers with the women's names as a friendly gesture. The women's smiling faces, ecstatic poses and affectionate gestures, reinforces a pleasure that is equated with shopping. Shopping here, specifically for that of clothes, is seen to create friendship with other women. *Cosmopolitan* supplies names for the women to include it's readers in such a friendship, Directions to success, and the confidence to get there as the column's name suggests, are also supplied.

The equation of female pleasure with clothing, opens up a vital door in reaching the potential female consumer as it diminishes the work aspect of beauty work. Consumption is seen as a source of pleasure through self-indulgency. The self indulgent purchasing and usage of beauty products can be seen to be reserved as a pleasure

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Figure 7.

reserved specifically for that of women. *Cosmopolitan's* regular beauty features, 'Beauty Scoop' and 'Beauty Treats', function in such a way. Included on occasion are some of the Beauty editor's favourites, such as in the November 1994 issue. Here a voice of expertise as well as friendship is offered in sharing secrets. Pleasure is equated in the subtitle: "the luxuries in life that make us smile". The word "us" invites the reader into a personal relationship with the beauty editor.

'Beauty Treats', offers readers a similar review of beauty must-haves, stressing the benefits of their use. Prices are listed but the treat aspect is in that *Cosmopolitan* has a certain amount to give away to a stated number of callers. It again can be seen as a friend, not only sharing tips and secrets but sharing "luxurious beauty treats". The pleasure ploy introduced to women in relation to beauty rituals, clothing, and consumption, introduces an aspect which lightens a demanding work load. It is important for *Cosmopolitan* to offer its readers an equal balance of both service and pleasure throughout the context of the magazine as a whole, and the offering of pleasure is emphasized through the format of the magazine.

Pleasure can be seen to be found in the design of the magazine itself, which allows readers to dip into the magazine for lengthy periods, or brief moments of relaxation. Its physical aspects, such as its slick, colourful images, offer a vehicle for escape. While such aspects serve a pleasurable function, they are also available from many other sources outside of the magazine. Television, for example can be seen to serve a similar function. It is thus necessary for *Cosmopolitan* to offer a service of pleasure which caters specifically to women, and one that through its dominance, becomes typical of the magazine.

CHAPTER THREE

Characteristic of *Cosmopolitan* is its emphasis on sex. Since the magazine's early days, this has proved to be one of its biggest selling points (Winship, 1987, p. 106). Articles which service women in a pleasure that is specific to female sexuality, such as 'Sex, the secrets of women who love sex' (February, 1995, p. 78), and quizzes such as 'How Much Do You Love Sex?', recognize women as sexual beings possessing sexual needs and desires. Through such recognition, *Cosmopolitan* can be said to function positively, as it challenges ideology which has reserved sexual pleasure for men. However, *Cosmopolitan's* emphasis on sex is problematic as it serves to define female sexuality as heterosexual, a construct which relies on male dominance and female subordination. Starting with the cover image, *Cosmopolitan* defines whose pleasure it is really servicing.

Women's magazines rely first and foremostly on their cover image in attracting potential readers (Winship, 1987, Wolf, 1991). The posed models who dominate covers serve to lure women into noticing the magazine through their engaging stare. Through the cover image, a variety of identifications and expectations between the potential buyer and the model are made almost instantly. The cover of the November 1994 issue of *Cosmopolitan* offers a clear example of how its cover image functions to identify the magazine as a service to female sexuality.

The model who dominates this month's cover, can be seen to engage readers in a confident and serious stare (see Fig. 8). Her parted lips establish her as sexually aroused, and her zebra printed coat defines her sexuality as animalistic and instinctual. Her confident stare defines her as being in control of her sexual instincts. Surrounding her,

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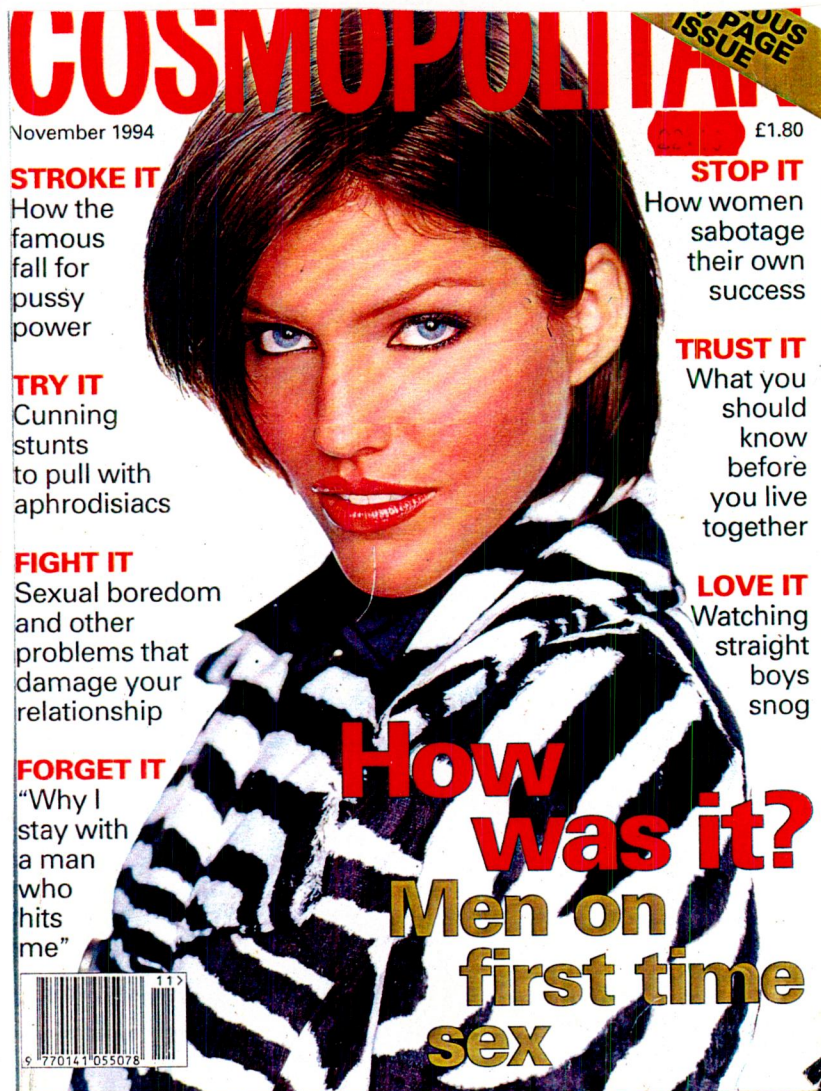
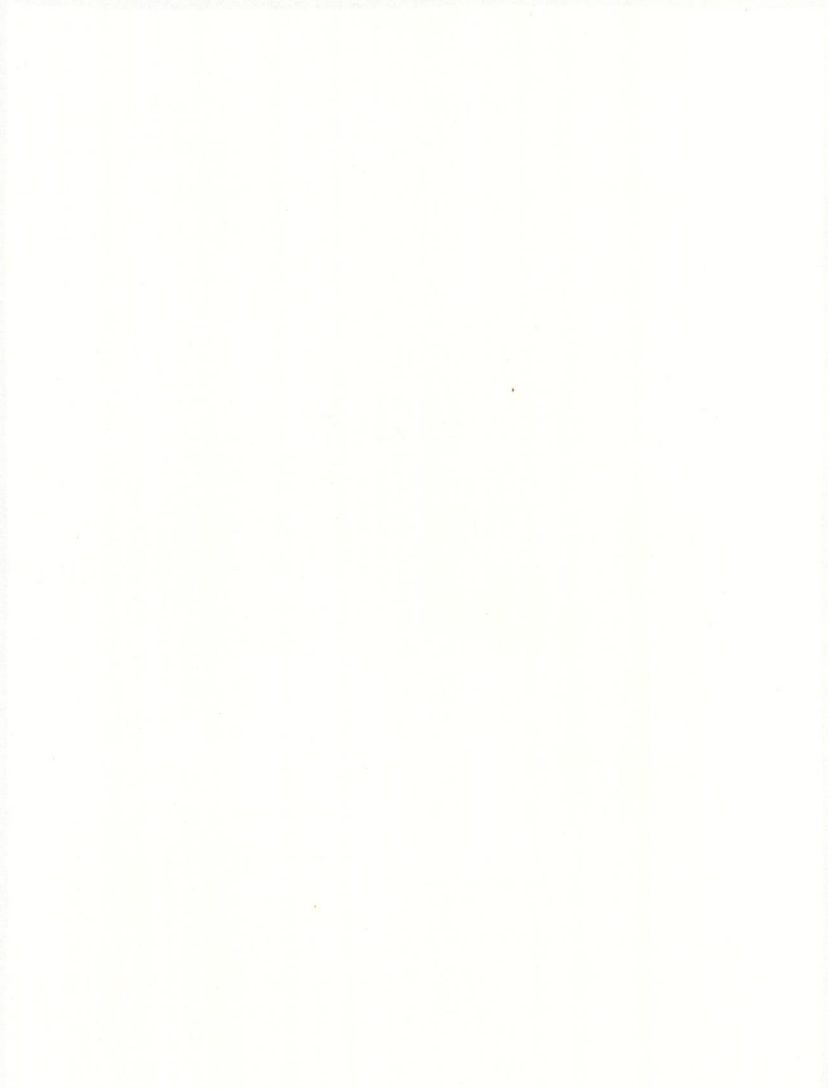


Figure 8.



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highlighted in bold red print, are the following captions: 'Stroke it', 'Try it', 'Forget it', 'Stop it', 'Trust it', 'Love it', and 'How was it?'. While these captions refer to the content of November's articles, they have been appropriated to impact a sexual emphasis. For example, 'Stroke it, How the famous fall for pussy power', refers to an article about cats, but the use of the words stroke and pussy in the same context make reference to female sexual pleasures. The woman on the cover seemingly encapsulated by such inuendos is further defined as sexual. Simultaneously, however this model's sexuality is defined as a pleasure for men, and this is reinforced through the images associations with a service which is aimed specifically in catering to male sexual pleasure, that of pornography.

Rosalind Coward, in her book, *Female Desire: Women's Sexuality Today*, claims that the look of the cover model of women's magazines stems directly from pornography. Through her description of how female models in pornographic images are depicted in order to offer sexual pleasure to men, she could almost be seen to describe the woman on the cover of the November 1994 issue:

"It's quite clear that the photographs are posed, framed and lit according to certain codes: the eyes are narrowed to denote sexual interest, the mouth slightly opened to denote sexual arousal. Then the woman's body is arranged in ways to expose parts to the camera as if it were making love to her. The look of the porn model to the camera puts the viewer in the position of lover confronting a stare that is simultaneously inviting and challenging." (1984, p. 58)

In pornographic images women are not only defined as objects servicing men in sexual pleasure, but through it's reliance on violent and degrading sexualized images of women, they are defined as subordinate. Men, through such images are taught to equate sexual pleasure with such dominance. Television, film and advertising, in their borrowing of gestures, postures, and expressions from pornography, train women on a daily basis, in what her sexuality should look like and how it should behave. Women

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approaching *Cosmopolitan*, due to such trainings, automatically read the model image through the eyes of a male gaze. The model, appropriated for such a gaze, defines sexual attractiveness. Being a woman's first encounter with the magazine, it transfers a set of messages which the reader continues to interpret throughout the magazine in relation to her sexuality.

The cover image represents what women can become through the purchase of *Cosmopolitan*. In order to recreate such attractiveness, one need just turn three pages of the magazine, where *Cosmopolitan* supplies it's readers with details of the clothing, and beauty products necessary to attain the cover models look. This reinforces women's sexual success as reliant on their attention to beauty maintenance, again referencing eighteenth century notions of femininity, which defined women as objects of display for men. While the advertisements in *Cosmopolitan* alone rely on similar representations of women to sell products, they also work in combination with *Cosmopolitan's* imagery to construct specific messages and linkings in relation to women's sexuality.

In looking simply at the lay out of the table of contents such linkings are seen to be made. *Cosmopolitan* usually places an image from it's fashion features along side the right hand side of the table of contents. In contrast to the preview boxes running along the left hand side the woman is depicted free standing (unboxed) and in a size comparable to the length of the table itself (see Figs. 9, 10). In both these examples the model's stance and gestures placed alongside the table of contents, present her as reacting to the contents itself. She is read as a product of *Cosmopolitan*, in the same way that the cover image is read. Opposite this page usually lies an advertisement and the model becomes sandwiched in between the two. In this way she can be seen to simultaneously become a product of what is being advertised. The January 1995 issue provides a clear example, not only of this type

Figure 9.

November contents



4
Sex games: why if you're not it's best to have a rule.



3
With Kyle: what went for my woman Julia Roberts?



70
See Brandy? The aphrodisiacs I put into my love life.

FEATURES

- 16 News report **Work in the 90s**: Going for the bailout — why the new way of working is very, very bad for you. Emily Scott
- 28 The trouble with Jane: Is she mad or just getting a bad press? David Fennell
- 51 How you stop yourself succeeding: Many women sabotage their own success without even realizing it. Dr. Raj Persaud
- 62 Your guide to moving in together: Everything you need to know before you share the same address. David Shannon
- 151 Sexual problems that damage your relationship: What to do when you don't, he won't and it can't. Philip Hudson
- 158 Dear Woman: A fan letter to Winona Ryder from Emma Forrest
- 164 Routine junkies: Won't go out because it's Brookside? Get a life! Charlotte Lohrbach
- 170 Love potion number 9 (and numbers 2 to 8 work pretty well, too): What, letting the bottle and paying pills can do for your sex life. Terri Unsworth
- 174 Cat people: The singular pleasures of moggysitting. Clive Boylin
- 176 Girls want to see straight boys: smug. The attraction of man-to-man attraction. Emma Forrest
- 180 A world of fashion: The hottest accessories at work all around the globe.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- 38 When the punching starts: What makes a man lash out at a woman? Tom Cusack
- 44 Why I stay with a man who hits me: One woman's tale of a violent relationship. Dr. Rebecca Meville

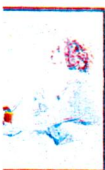
FASHION AND BEAUTY

- 76 Style confidence: More dash than dash
- 85 Style guide: Supporting roles
- 87 Style report
- 88 In the closet with Jimmié di Giovanni
- 92 Enter our model competition
- 186 Nights in bright satin
- 192 Elizabeth Hurley's star ratings
- 206 Cover story
- 204 How is the time to...
- 208 Beauty scoop
- 212 Beauty treats
- 214 Health & fitness
- 216 Personal trainer



186
Satin is right: know your rights.

December contents



1
Is black underwear? Gold: that's your reason to beg.



1
In the big and small: was Gold's new girl.



16
and go with you: the new girl's new look.

FEATURES

- 17 News report **Our Cosmo world**: the end-of-year report: What Cosmo women like you are thinking about the globe. Cosmo exclusive: Michael and Lisa Marie's first Christmas at home with the newly married Jackson in their fantastic new mansion, Rockwood.
- 34 Get in the mood for winter: With the right attitude, you can conquer the cold snap. Tom Cusack
- 38 **Moderne Sans Frontières**: Bachelors who? Meet the world's hottest physicians. Jay Rucker
- 41 The most questions women ask men: Don't hesitate: marriage, girlfriends or mistresses. Will Buckley
- 100 **Pretty competition**: Details: Read the winners
- 124 **Cosmo quiz**: How much do you love sex?
- 132 Measure your hormonal feelings: The new virgin births and other miracle babies
- 137 The magical fertility treatments that deliver the most precious gift of all. Emily Scott
- 142 Should you tell him about your sexual history? Think before you reveal every detail. Emily Scott
- 146 Why men like cheating: The truth about men's high-tech tech. Susan Shapiro

SEASON'S MEETINGS

- 89 Let's party: Our kind and beautiful guide to making, making, drinking and getting out of it. M. Tardieu
- 94 Struck dumb by desire: Meet I. Honey
- 96 Have we speeches: says Gwyneth Paltrow
- 99 What makes a man make a move: It's not just about courage and spiders. Women. Michael Kuper

FASHION AND BEAUTY

- 64 Style confidence: Turn it up!
- 71 Style solutions: the night rings
- 73 Style report
- 75 In the closet with Barbie
- 180 White Christmas
- 186 Simply red
- 192 In the black
- 197 60 minutes to femininity!
- 178 Beauty scoop
- 192 Beauty treats
- 194 Health & fitness
- 200 25 facts you should know about a year
- 206 Personal trainer: Target training



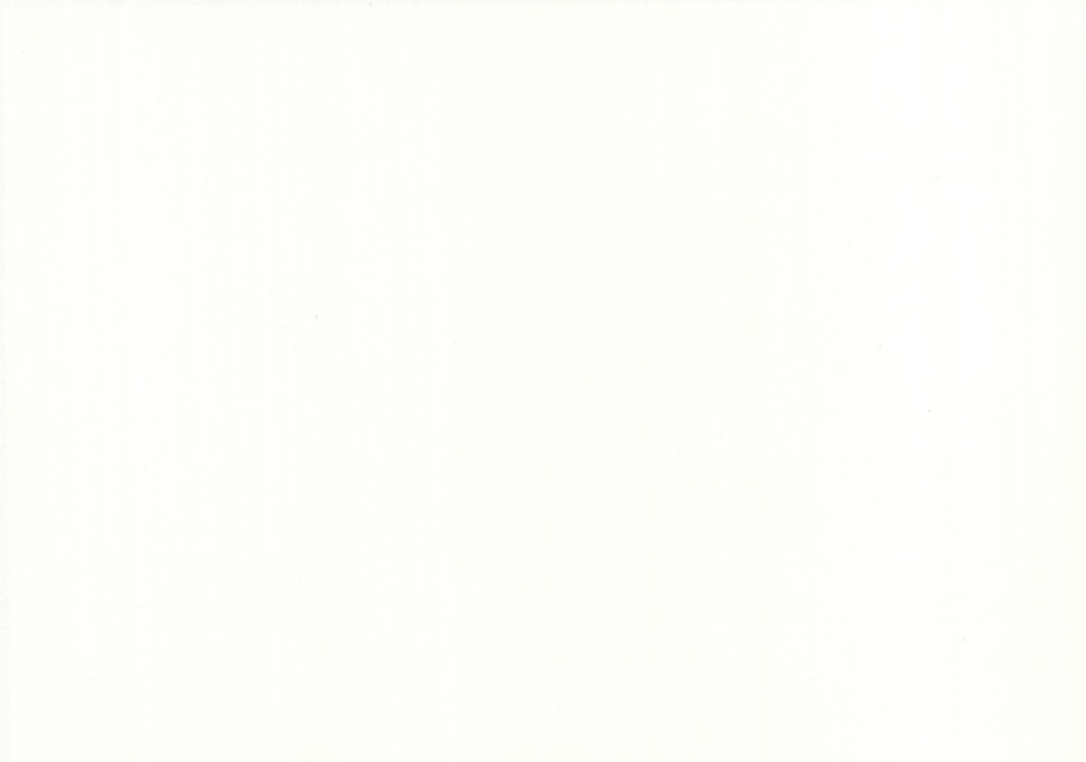
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Black is beautiful.

Figure 10.





Figure 11.



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of lay out, but the strong message it presents, equating female sexuality with the maintenance of her appearance. (see Fig. 11)

The woman running alongside of the table of contents is seen like the cover image discussed to express her instinctual sexual desire through her wearing of animal print. Her pose is one of self consciousness as she clutches her breasts looking down towards the table of contents. Pictured on the opposite page is a Clinique advertisement which depicts three jars of cream. The advertisement itself is stark and quite directly, through the depiction of only the jars of cream, appears to be selling nothing other than it's cream which label reads : "Clinique turnaround cream". Seen in placement to the model, the label acts as a voice, permissing the model to to turn around. Women's sexuality is seen as being serviced both through the contents of *Cosmopolitan*, and the use of beauty products.

The placement of such messages next to the table of contents is deliberate, as it allows these messages to be transferred over and over again, as women refer to the table of contents. With both the cover image, and the constructions discussed here set an understanding through which the beauty and fashion articles discussed in chapter two, as well as it's servicable sex articles will be read in reference to. In order to assure readers of exactly what it is that men find sexually pleasurable, *Cosmopolitan* provides articles which specifically cater to this.

These articles are usually written by men, offering first hand information on what exactly it is men desire. Such pleasures are presented as mysteries, and the author's appear to be disclosing secret information. Such is seen in an article titled 'Why Men Like Stockings', by Sean Thomas (December 1994, p. 46). The article promises to reveal "the truth about men's thigh high fetish." The first two pages of the article are dominated by a woman dressed to what can be presumed is the 'ideal' male fantasy (see Fig. 12).

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Through the image the reader learns that this is how her sexuality should display itself in order to please men. Success in sex is seen to be achieved through such attention, as implied by the highlighted quote: "Stockings make dinner party fore-play a possibility. Many a relationship have been carnally kicked off by...a hot pair of hold-ups." Articles such as these present women's sexuality as yet another form of "work", one that is specifically required of women and not of men.

As with fashion and beauty features, *Cosmopolitan* finds it necessary to somewhat disguise who it is really servicing, by offering an article here or there which seem to recognize the objectification of women's bodies and the lack of recognition for their intelligence. However, rather than offer these articles as serious explorations into why this type of thinking exists, *Cosmopolitan* trivializes the issue through its witty manner. Solutions are offered by way of "turning the tables". An example of this can be seen in the January 1995 issue of *Cosmopolitan*, in one of its regular sex features: 'Sex and the Single Girl'. This month's issue provides readers with an article titled 'Why Every Woman Needs a Bimboy' (p.67.)

The article serves to recognize a stereotypical male interpretation of the female body: the Bimbo, a sex toy without a mind. Through statements such as: "Women are supposed to regard the male species with a combination of respect and awe. We are used to thinking they are smarter than us.", and "Some of the cleverest men I know will still run a mile from any woman whose brain consists of anything more than candy floss" offer recognition of the divide between male intelligence and female bodies. However, the article's endorsement is simply to adopt this way of thinking, and associate it with men.

The emphasis in 'Why Every Woman needs a Bimboy', is to "turn the tables", and objectify the male body. The choice of the word 'Bimboy' references a popular computer game, 'Gameboy', reinforcing the use of the male body as a

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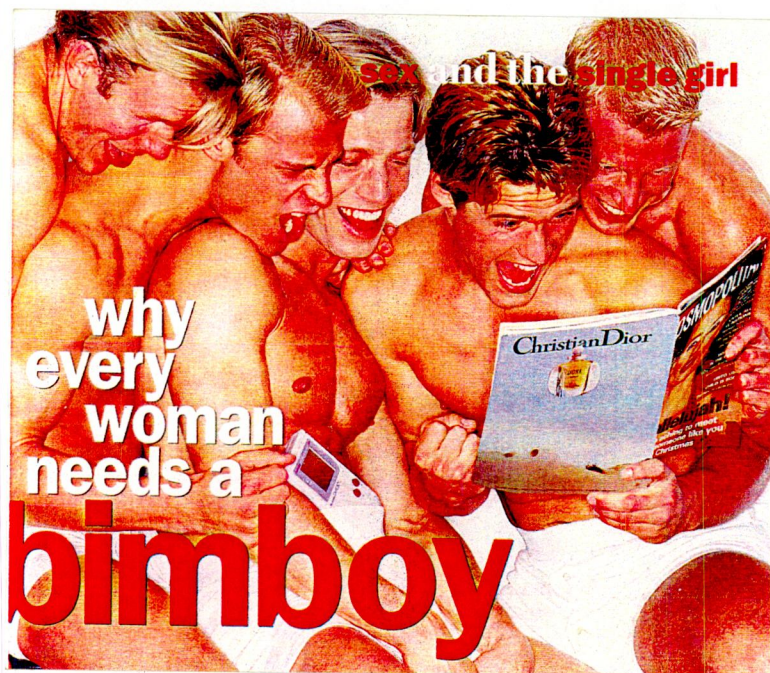


Figure 13.

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sex toy for women. The accompanying photograph offers women a position to gaze at male bodies (see Fig. 13)

Characteristic's associated with the male sex drive, and behaviour associated with men are seen to be adopted in the following quote: "For seven weeks, three days and two hours, I kept a Bimboy in my home. Tez...was the nicest pet I ever owned. It had taken me exactly ten minutes to get to know him." Such strategies are promised by the article to improve the self: "One of the biggest reasons I can think of for developing an interest in stupid men is to avoid becoming a bimbo yourself... Choosing a man who is your intellectual inferior promotes a brand new level of self confidence in your own abilities."

At times *Cosmopolitan* appears to offer an examination into the power structures which create the heterosexual relationship, and women's position in them, yet refuses to treat the matter seriously. Such is seen in an article titled, 'Sexual Problems That Damage Your Relationship', by Philip Hodson (November 1994, p. 151). Here, an attempt seems to be made in understanding men's associations with power in regards to sex. The subtitle of this article reads: "Freud was wrong-relationship problems are never about sex. What makes the world go round isn't lust, it's lust for power. What prevents people from being happy in love is what prevents nations from living in peace: most of us want alot more territory than is good for us." Again the article adopts a witty tone, and the comical illustrations reinforce a fun and unserious attitude, diminishing the serious tone of the excerpt at the beginning.

Women, presented with such an article percieve themselves as naturally responsible for the recognition of male emotional and sexual problems, as the article's "Sexual Problems" discussed are that of men's. The presence of all *Cosmoplilitans* "Relationship" articles can be seen to present this role to women. Because such a resource is not available to men, such a role becomes cumpulsory for women.

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Cosmopolitan's Agony Column functions to reinforce this role as a natural one. By offering a distinct place for women to collectively confide their sexual concerns, the perception is that this is normal behaviour for women. While offering to solve problems and act as a confidant, which in some cases may really assist women, this is not the column's sole function. Contrary to the reference of "pain" in the column's title, it can be seen to offer a source of pleasure to women.

The emphasis on sex in the 'Agony Column' can be seen to provide women with a source of sexual fiction. Rosalind Coward draws this comparison between the 'Problem Pages' found in women's magazines, and sexual fiction, as resulting from the type of narrative they rely on: "They incite women to read about how an individual reached a certain point in her life, what the options are before her; they invite us to speculate on the causes and outcomes of sexual relations." (Coward, 1991, p. 42)

The 'Agony Column' offers women pleasure by way of permitting them to be curious about their own sexuality, as well as that of others. However, as discussed with *Cosmopolitan's* recognition of female sexuality through its sex articles, it simultaneously serves to regulate this pleasure. The advice given in the 'Agony Column' serves this purpose. Its authoritative, yet friendly tone serves to present its responses to the sexual narratives as appropriate and normal behaviour of the female sexual body. Not only does the 'Agony Column' serve to regulate female sexual pleasure, but in its creation of a distinct place for women to discuss and discover sexuality, it permits such discussion only within the confines of the magazine. *Cosmopolitan*, uses such regulation, to appear to offer women something attainable only through the magazine itself. *Cosmopolitan* in order to link the purchasing of the magazine with permission to speak.

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CHAPTER FOUR

In contrast with the regulations discussed with the permission to speak in the 'Agony Column', *Cosmopolitan* offers women permission to speak in what appears to be a positive context. For example, The presence of regular features such as 'Dear Cosmo', publish readers responses, negative and positive, to articles in previous issues. In this way *Cosmopolitan* recognizes women as informed, intelligent and concerned individuals. To further this recognition *Cosmopolitan* offers special features, relating to women's issues, encouraging reader participation and response. Sometimes special features are offered concentrating on current issues. Since it's publication in the 1970's *Cosmopolitans* inclusion of articles on rape, domestic violence, and abortion have served to popularize feminist issues, and position the magazine as a forum for women to converse and discuss such issues. (Wolf, 1991, p. 69).

Cosmopolitan continues to offer such a forum, however it's articles pertaining to women's issues today offer little more than an awareness that women already possess. Inclusion of such articles in today's *Cosmopolitan* can be seen to borrow feminist issues and language, encouraging reader participation in discussions and solutions as a way of keeping women reliant on the magazine in order to connect with other women, rather than as a tool for social change. Such evidence can be found in the November 1994 issues special column, titled 'Domestic Violence', consisting of two articles.

Recognition of this issue as an important subject is implied by the decision to place the two articles in a column of their own. The first one is titled, 'When the Punching Starts', by Tom Crabtree (p.38). The visual accompaniments which dominate the first two pages of this article depict a woman as victim of male violence, establishing the article as one which will accurately address women's position in relation to this issue. (see

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Figure 14.

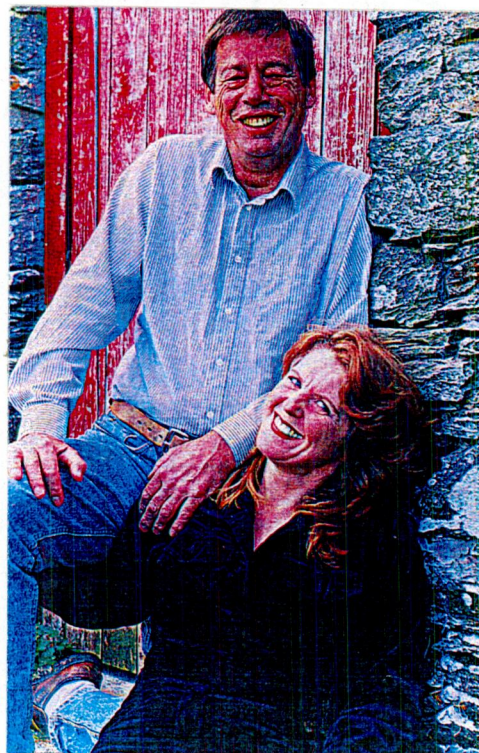


Figure 15.

Fig. 14). While the article itself does at times consider the power structures in our culture which position men as dominating, the excerpt which occupies the space of the depiction, defines men as victims, and places a blame on women:

"Confused by a society that rewards bullying in business but demands caring and sharing at home, some men can't work out what to do. Frustrated, they hit out. They hit women. And too many women put up with it."

While it may be a reality that many women stay in violent relationships, there is little offered to explain why. What is instead offered is the authors lamentations on the sate of manhood and solutions which reflect wishful thinking rather than tools for changing these conditions, as seen in the statement: "The solution is simply for men to grow up. The template will alter towards intelligence, cooperation and gentleness..." What remains unanswered in this article is what women in violent situations are to do while they're waiting for men to "grow up". The blame placed on women in further emphasized in the second article, which is titled, 'Why I stay with a man who hits me', by Dr. Arabella Melville.(p. 44)

As the title suggests the article tells the author's story of her decision to stay in a violent relationship. In contrast with the violent relationship depicted in the first article, the images accompanying this article reinforce women's endorsement for male violence by depicting the authour "standing by her man". (see Fig.15) Throughout the article, she readily admits to her husband's violent behaviour towards her:

"He held me by the hair...It hurt....I told him it hurt...The next day my hand was badly swollen, my finger immobile. My scalp was red and sore."

These statements coupled with her open admittance to putting up with his violent behaviour, as admitted in the title, position her as responsible for his behaviour. At the end of the article *Cosmopolitan* states: "This is a personal account of how one woman dealt with living with a

violent man and is not a guide on how to handle this type of relationship." It urges readers to write to *Cosmopolitan* in response to this article. Absent from both these articles is a directory of phone numbers or organizations that might provide women with a concrete source of help.

Many women who remain in violent relationships do so for a number of reasons. Some, for example, are economically tied to a violent relationship and do not feel they can leave. The choice to profile an assumably intelligent woman, (she is a doctor), one who we assume would be able to financially stand on her own two feet if she left her husband, could be used as a topic for discussing the often debilitating effects domestic violence has on women's self esteem. However *Cosmopolitan's* inclusion of such a woman in the 'Domestic Violence' special is merely a ploy to provoke reader reaction.

Two months later, excerpts from a selection reader's responses appear compiled in the January 1995 issue (p.54). "The response was staggering", *Cosmopolitan* remarks, it's role as instigator becomes evident here. Through the response they have succeeded in bringing women together to discuss the issue of domestic violence for themselves. Many make more insightful remarks on the reasons for male violence than the first article provided, and the response is an over all is one of anger. While such results can be considered positive, the anger that is expressed is directed towards Dr. Arabella Melville herself, not towards the treatment she receives (See fig. 16).

Listed at the end of the letters is a directory on where to find help. Phone numbers are listed as well as an assurance that ringing the police is permissible. The inclusion of this directory now, two months after the special on domestic violence illustrates the point that *Cosmopolitan's* ploy in discussing such issues is to keep women reliant on the magazine. If it's true intent was to offer these articles to effectively aid women, such a list would have been published along with the 'Domestic Violence' special.

“I am horrified at Dr Arabella Melville's attitude. What is she a doctor *of*? She seems pretty mindless and stupid to me and her partner is ugly, mean, vicious, a bully and a coward. Arabella should go on an assertiveness course. Reading this piece has made me the angriest I've been in years.”

Jacqueline McCann, Glasgow

“I would certainly not adopt Arabella Melville's conciliatory measures. I think she is raving mad. Any woman who lets a man hit her should herself seek counselling. Victims of violence should report their abusers, humiliate them and leave them.”

Jane Evans, High Wycombe, Bucks

“I have just read Dr Arabella Melville's account of why she chooses to stay with Colin, that spoilt, selfish child she calls a man. I feel like shaking her until she wakes up to the fact that, as long as she acts as his counsellor, mother and slave, she is absolving him of the responsibility for his behaviour. Whatever she may say, Arabella *is* a victim, tolerating a stressful, dangerous and intimidating way of life. She should get out now, while she's still sane – and still alive.”

Jane Robinson, London

Figure 16.

Cosmopolitan can be seen to use the connection it offers readers with other women present itself as a culture for women. In a culture dominated and represented by men, this function seems to offer a positive force. Published in nineteen different countries, *Cosmopolitan* appears to offer women a connection to a world wide culture for women. This is emphasized in the editors address at the beginning of the magazine, which is titled 'Our Cosmo World'. The December 1994 issue's regular 'News Report' feature offers a special article, titled, 'Our Cosmo World, End-of-the-year-report'. This article serves the purpose of informing women of this world wide culture which *Cosmopolitan* seemingly provides, as seen in the following: "What were *Cosmo* women thinking in 1994?, With 19 international editions, no other women's magazine is more in touch with women around the globe." Further reinforcing *Cosmopolitan's* role in this provision is the depiction of the nineteen different covers of *Cosmopolitan* surrounding a globe. (see Fig. 17) The article consists of a five page questionnaire which serves the purpose of providing each countries women with voices, and the effect created is that *Cosmopolitan* represents all women.

Contrary to these assumptions it would like it's readers to make, *Cosmopolitan* does not accurately represent all women, as it excludes many through out the context of it's magazine. For example, in returning to *Cosmopolitan's* services which cater to women's sexuality, the heterosexual emphasis excludes alternative interpretations of women's sexuality, such as lesbianism. By it's presentation of heterosexuality as normal, it not only excludes but alienates lesbianism, and homosexuality. Even when the occasional article is published addressing such choices, their infrequency in the dominating heterosexual context serve to define them as abnormal. They are not included to cater to servicing lesbians, but to offer it's heterosexual readers a voyeuristic peek. Thus specials such as 'Woman to Woman', (January 1995) in comparison to the 'Domestic

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news report
What were *Cosmo* women thinking
in 1994? With 19 international editions, no other women's
magazine is more in touch with women around the globe.



So, here's our report on what's exciting in Europe,
what's hot in Latin America and Africa, what's going down
Down Under and the state of play in the States.▶

Figure 17.



Violence' special, resonate an air of abnormality rather than importance. 'Woman to Woman', for example consists of two articles, the first one titled Bisexual Etiquette"(p.78)

The first two pages of this article are dominated by a photograph of two women engaging tongue to tongue (see Fig. 18) The size of the women's faces are proportionate to life size, and this serves to impact the feeling that the reader is there witnessing them. The pierced tongue of one of the women reinforces notions associated with lesbian sex as rough and exotic. The photograph over all resonates pornographic associations, which offer women engaged in lesbian sex as a turn on for the heterosexual man. Women approach this photograph with this knowledge. The emphasis on bisexuality, as read in the title, permittes sexual interaction with other women, as long as you remain sexually interested in men.

The second article reports on a visit to Los Angeles' all girl bars. The trip to a different country to witness women intereacting with one and other sexually, reinforces such behaviour as foreign. The authour seems to take quite a critical stance in the behaviour she witnesses. It is information usually left undiscussed in *Cosmopolitan's* pages in relation to heterosexuality:

"In a corner of this ludicrous setting were two identikit luscious haired babes. One was pouting out of her leather waistcoat, the other, out of a denim one. Heaps of hard cleavage, monotone tanned flesh bosoms, slim waists and pert bottoms, very tight jeans. These two mirror images started necking like they did it for a living, all lip gloss and no passion....they were the embodiment of the L.A Lipstick lesbian: not free, not existential, but a token, if not an echo, of testosterone inspired behavioural patterns. (p.84-85)

Contradictory messages seem to be in place quite clearly hear on appropriating male behaviour to service female sexual desire between lesbian and heterosexual women. This being the same issue which 'Sex and the Single Girl', urging women to get themselves a 'Bimboy', as

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Figure 18.

discussed in chapter three. *Cosmopolitan* shows it's capability of using a critical eye on the subject of bisexuality and lesbianism, and unable to when addressing heterosexuality. The lack of a representation of lesbians seen in a positive light anywhere in *Cosmopolitan*, such as those outside of the lipstick lesbian culture, provides it's voyeuristic readers with a very limited interpretation of lesbianism. Not only does *Cosmopolitan* exclude alternative sexual preferences, but in addressing current issues pertaining to women, it caters to a culture consisting only of white women.

This is reinforced through the lack of visual representation of women with a different ethnic background. Black women for example are only occasionally spotted throughout the magazines pages. Issues regarding racism are not touched on in the magazines pages. What remains to define *Cosmopolitan's* culture of women, is white heterosexual women. These are qualifications that have been traditionally necessary to gain entrance to male dominated culture. White and heterosexual in male dominated culture are perceived as normal. *Cosmopolitan* relies heavily on the ideology of a male dominated culture to define one for women. In it's defining of itself as a club, which is emphasized throughout the magazine, it can be seen to reserve admission.

SECRET
CROSS

CONCLUSION

What can be concluded from this investigation is that without a doubt *Cosmopolitan*, through it's many services, appears to depart from the traditional women's magazine of the 1950's, and it's function in designating restrictive interpretations to the female body. This departure, however cannot be considered to be anything more than that of an apparition and not a reality. *Cosmopolitan* has merely covered up, and disguised it's intentions which designate, different, but equally restrictive interpretations of the female body.

The presence of service articles catering to women and work function to emphasize *Cosmopolitan's* departure from the traditional women's magazine, whose function was to confine women to the home. *Cosmopolitan*, however in the exclusion of articles which recognise the compulsory role which women continue to face within the home today does not serve to accurately represent women's position in relation to work. Its inclusion of issues regarded as feminist concerns pertaining to women and work can be seen as yet another disguise, as it merely borrows, not uses the language of feminism. The tradition *Cosmopolitan* follows in it's partnership with advertisers counteracts with the positive elements its work related articles have potential for. Such as seen with the 'Woman Now' Column.

Due to *Cosmopolitan's* reliance on advertisers for their revenue, it has been necessary for it to train women in attitudes of consumption. It is necessary to present these attitudes as essential for success in order to disguise it's true intent. In the interest of keeping women consuming beauty products, it is essential for *Cosmopolitan* to minimize the work aspect of beauty work, offering it to women as a source of pleasure that is percieved as natural.

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In this way *Cosmopolitan* mimicks the traditional women's magazine quite directly, swopping household goods for beauty products. What remains unchanged is the femininization of these goods.

Cosmopolitan can be seen to offer sexual freedom to women through it's recognition of women as individuals possessing sexual needs and desires. However it's imagery defines female sexual pleasure as that of men's. Its sexual hype can be seen to cover up this regulation of the female body. *Cosmopolitan's* problem page, the 'Agony Column' serves this purpose indirectly, and confines women's sexual curiosities to the context of the magazine. Its attention to current issues regarding women can be seen to serve this purpose also. Their construction can be seen to enforce a reliance on the magazine for discussion of such topics, but the content of articles do not function to change oppressive conditions for women.

In un-covering *Cosmopolitan's* true intents from those of which it appears to present, it can be concluded that what the magazine offers is a negative rather than a positive influence influence to women. *Cosmopolitan* as a culture for women remains one area of the magazine, which while problematic in that it excludes many women, remains one of the only claims women have to a culture which recognizes them and attempts to cater to their needs and desires.

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