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The National College of Art & Design.

Faculty of Design: Department of Visual Communication.

Fashionable Feminism?

Cosmopolitan Magazine and Women's Politics 1966-1986.

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by Cynthia Milner.

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Visual Communication.

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I would like to thank Trinity College, Dublin,
for allowing me to read and photocopy the early
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for supplying me with a huge stack of *Cosmopolitans*
dating from 1983 - 1986.

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INTRODUCTION:

The main function of the media in contemporary society, according to Australian critic Humphrey McQueen, is to deliver audiences to the advertisers.¹ This definition contradicts the widely held view that the media are first and foremost vehicles of communication, education and entertainment. For McQueen, as vehicles the media operate more like brightly coloured shopping coaches which pick up audiences and deliver them to the pre-arranged market places.

The validity of McQueen's dictum can be tested by considering briefly the relationship between advertising and media products. A newspaper's viability, for example, does not depend on its sales alone. Primarily, it will survive in a highly competitive market if it is able to attract enough advertising to underwrite its production and distribution costs. "The Irish Times" sells less than 80,000 copies a day, compared to over twice that number for the "Irish Independent". However, margins of profitability depend more on the advertising both papers attract, than on the cover price sales. The target audience becomes the crucial factor in the equation towards profitability. The smaller "Irish Times" audience is, in the main, more educated, better off and more potentially consumer orientated than its rival. It can, therefore, attract advertising on a grander scale, offering potential advertisers a more lucrative market. As a rule of thumb, the lower in economic terms a newspaper's audience, the less advertising it can attract and the more dependent it is on maximising sales.

Identifying the target audience is, therefore, crucial for all the media, whether television, newspapers or magazines. This study will, therefore, look at the world of women's magazines, and consider the ways in which, as vehicles for advertising, they try to identify and define their audience.

The main focus of the study will be a detailed look over a twenty year period of one market leader, *Cosmopolitan* magazine. The historical dimension is important. No matter how precisely an audience is targetted, it does not remain frozen in history. That audience is also moving and shifting with changes in economics, politics, education and any medium which tries to address it must also shift and change if it is not to be rendered obsolete.

The study considers the twenty years between 1966 and 1986, two decades of immense importance in terms of women's role in society and in terms of women's economic and political influence. There have been years of debate, agitation and controversy, marked by the rise of the women's movement, changes in women's expectations and demands and significant legislative changes in matters directly affecting women.

And yet, throughout the period, one aspect of women's role has been consistent as far as *Cosmopolitan* is concerned. Women have remained potential consumers. Indeed greater economic freedom has increased their potential buying power, not lessened it. A study then, of the magazine through these years, will show how this consistent view of women as consumers was integrated with the changing view of women in general.

This is, of course, a potential contradiction. The study will show how *Cosmopolitan* has actively constructed its ideal consumer - what the magazine itself refers to as "*Cosmo Girl*" to breach this contradiction. It is a blend of the traditional and the contemporary. This, in turn, leads to a consideration of the magazine's ideological function - that is how it actively promotes a set of values and assumptions about women's role in society.

The operative word in this process is "constructed". In a real sense, identifying an audience is a process of constructing it and this is achieved through the promotion of a set of values which form the deep structures of our society - these values being "ideology" in the sense which Gramsci uses it of "social cement".

The method employed in this study is to analyse the magazine under three broad headings - editorial text and images, advertising text and images and general layout and design. The analysis will then consider how these have been integrated and adapted over the years to promote a consistent underlying image of "*Cosmo Girl*".

1. The First Decade - The Beginnings

The Ladies Bureau, founded by the Independent publisher John A. S. S. in 1842, is credited as being the first journal published specifically for women. Other early publications followed, such as the Ladies' Repository (1847), The Ladies' Magazine (1848), and the Ladies' Journal (1849). The 1850s saw the publication of the Ladies' Journal (1851), The Ladies' Journal (1852), and the Ladies' Journal (1853).

CHAPTER ONE.

The Historical Development of Women's Magazines.

The first decade of the 19th century saw the publication of the first women's magazines. The Ladies' Bureau, founded by the Independent publisher John A. S. S. in 1842, is credited as being the first journal published specifically for women. Other early publications followed, such as the Ladies' Repository (1847), The Ladies' Magazine (1848), and the Ladies' Journal (1849). The 1850s saw the publication of the Ladies' Journal (1851), The Ladies' Journal (1852), and the Ladies' Journal (1853).

2. The Second Decade - The Expansion of the Field

During the 1850s, the number of women's magazines continued to grow. The Ladies' Journal, founded by the Independent publisher John A. S. S. in 1842, is credited as being the first journal published specifically for women. Other early publications followed, such as the Ladies' Repository (1847), The Ladies' Magazine (1848), and the Ladies' Journal (1849). The 1850s saw the publication of the Ladies' Journal (1851), The Ladies' Journal (1852), and the Ladies' Journal (1853).

1. "Ladies" Journals - The Beginnings.

The Ladies Mercury, launched by the independent publisher /editor John Dunton in Britain in 1693 is credited as being the first journal published specifically for women. Numerous publishers followed suit in the 18th. century publishing such journals as the *Ladies Diary* (1711), *The Ladies Magazine or Monthly Intelligence* (1749), *Lady's Magazine* (1770) and *Ladies Monthly Museum* (1798). The journals were predominantly literary and aimed at the leisured and literate women of the upper or upper middle classes. Packaged as educational and entertaining "companions" for gentlewomen, these journals included a broad range of subjects with as much emphasis on news or "intelligence" as on features and fiction. *The Ladies Magazine or Monthly Intelligence*, for example, included poetry, book catalogues, foreign and home news as well as home management, fiction and fashion. Others leaned more towards the maths, providing their readers with problems and conundrums in arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and philosophy with which they would sharpen and improve their "wit". A small amount of advertising appeared in those journals, confined to a small section, in the form of small ads mostly for patent medicines against pestilence and infections and for "cosmatiks" like ointments for the complexion, hair dyes and teeth powders.

2. Women's Domestic Journals - The Beginnings of Expansion.

Until the middle of the 19th. century women's journals continued to be aimed at women of the upper social strata, though literacy and leisure time was steadily increasing amongst the middle-class throughout this period. Publishers, realising the potential of the wider middle-class audience, began to publish cheaper-selling magazines, with contents oriented towards this new market. Two

EIGHTEEN-PENNY WASHING MACHINE.



At most American warehouses may be seen a simple contrivance for saving the knuckles of the washerwoman, which is nothing more than a board about

eighteen inches by fourteen, with the surface cut into smooth ribs on one side. The board is held in a slanting direction in the left hand, the lower portion being in the wash-tub and the ribs extending cross-ways. The clothes are soaked in the usual manner, and then commences the rubbing upwards and downwards across the ribs of the board. It is said to answer well. The same plan is adopted in Germany and other parts of the Continent, and the good wives, both there and in America, marvel that English washerwomen continue to wear off their knuckles, when they might save them at so trifling an expense as eighteen-pence, which is all this article costs.

1. article: *The Family Economist* 1855 (Dancyger, p.64)

PERAMBULATORS.

VISITORS to London and one or two of our largest towns must have seen an improvement which has taken place during the last few months in that small, but not unimportant class of vehicles, children's carriages.



Instead of being dragged along the causeway in no very dignified fashion, the little dears are now propelled from behind, the position of both propeller and propelled being changed considerably for the better. Formerly, a lady, or the semblance of one, would not willingly be seen performing the office of beast of

burden in a public thoroughfare; nor was it always safe to trust this duty to a young nurse, the carriage behind being exposed to sundry mishaps, besides occasional attacks from mischievous boys. The ease, safety and comparative pleasantness and respectability of the whole affair with the improved carriages—perambulators they are called—is seen at a glance. Many a mother may now be seen taking a pleasant walk, with the little one securely placed under her eye, and propelled by a very slight effort. The price of these pretty and useful little vehicles at Burton's establishment, 487, New Oxford Street, is from two to three guineas for "Iron Perambulators lined with chintz for the Million." With additional seats, and more expensive linings, &c. the prices rise to six guineas. An illustrated circular has been sent to us, on application, from the above place, containing a number of designs for children's and invalids' carriages; also trucks for commercial purposes, all of the new construction, which for appearance, and, we should think, use and convenience, will suit the taste and purposes of most persons who require them.

2. article: *The Family Economist* 1855 (Dancyger, p.56)

such 'penny-monthlies' were *The Family Economist* (1850) and *The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* (1856).

The subject matter differed substantially from that of the 18th. century ladies journals, though the successful editorial formula, that of providing "education" and entertainment and a "wide variety" of subjects was retained.

The contents centred almost entirely around the domestic sphere, their "mission", they informed their readers was "to remove the discomforts and enhance the pleasures of the home". News stories of the Royal Family, popular fiction and poetry fulfilled the entertainment requirement. Education took the form of *instruction* in such areas as embroidery, cooking, gardening, family budgeting and *advice* in matters of fashion, women's 'toilette', family health, and etiquette.¹ The wide variety of subjects was thus achieved by dividing the one subject domesticity into its various components. In real terms these magazines were neither educational nor broadening. They effectively served to limit women's sphere of knowledge and expertise to the domestic arena. The overall tone of these magazines extolled the wonders of science - the virtues of industrialisation, advocating the use of new products and new labour-saving inventions. This advocacy function operated both indirectly by repeated mention and by carrying advertisements of the products and directly in editorial articles that served to introduce the products to the readers. These articles explained what the products were, the benefits they provided and how to use them. *Figures 1 & 2* are two articles from the *Family Economist* (1855) advocating two new inventions: a washing machine and a perambulator. Advertisers could not have done a better job of persuasion than either of these articles. The perambulator piece, in particular, could well have been written straight from the manufacturer's circular. Regardless,

the lack of critical assessment of the product in either of the articles demonstrates the industry-supporting function such editorial copy performs and reveals an editorial content and style that is barely distinguishable from advertising. Such editorial copy is still very much in evidence today throughout the commercial media, one has only to look at the travel pages or Sunday colour supplements in our newspapers to find a similar lack of critical distance.

Selling at lower prices, these new journals looked to revenue from advertising to offset some of the production costs. Their editorial tone and domestic orientation offered advertisers an ideal forum in which to advertise domestic products, and their increased readership offered them a larger potential market. Not surprisingly, a substantially greater amount of advertising appeared in these journals, beginning to spread throughout the pages rather than be confined to a special section as had been the case with their predecessors. A spiralling inter-relationship between advertising and publishing was set into motion. Revenue from advertisements increased a publishers profits which allowed him to invest in improved printing technology, reduce sales prices and thereby increase the circulation with which he could attract more advertising. By the end of the 19th. century advertising had become the key to the operation of the women's periodical press, as it had to the print media generally, as the largest generator of its revenue.

3. Turn Of The Century Expansion.

The end of the 19th. century and the early 20th. century was a period of massive expansion for all the print media. Between 1880 and 1900 alone some forty-eight new women's magazines were launched in Britain.² Similarly, this period saw the ascendance of the popular press. A number of factors arising out of the advancing industrialisation of the 19th. century, contributed to this period of rapid growth and commercialisation of the print media.

Towards the end of the 19th. century, methods of industrial organisation and distribution were undergoing radical change initiated by the economic depression that occurred between 1875 and 1894. Small industrial firms manufacturing one product began to combine with other firms, thereby increasing their productive capacity, strengthening their competitive power and expanding their range of goods. The resultant upsurge in industrial productivity created a new imperative - the requirement of a mass domestic market to dispose of the increased output of goods. The necessity for mass advertising came to the fore.

The trend towards urbanisation of the population that occurred alongside industrialisation brought with it a potential mass market. The mobility, anonymity and new patterns of socialisation fostered by urban life prepared the ground for consumption.

Innovation in printing technology, faster presses, faster text composition (linotype typesetting), rotogravure printing which improved graphic reproduction and allowed longer print-runs offered publishers a means of reaching a mass audience cheaply, with a better quality product.

The publishing industry as a whole was thus able to offer advertisers, technologically, a means of tapping the mass urban market set in place by industrialisation and editorially, it could be argued, a "suitably consumptive" environment.³

4. The Early 20th. Century.

The 20th. century ushered in the mass-circulation advertising-based format of woman's magazines that we are familiar with today. A number of women's journals launched in the early 20th. century are still in existence, for example, *My Weekly* (1910), *Woman's Weekly* (1911), *Vogue* (1916), *Ideal Home* (1920) and *Good Housekeeping* (1922). The huge influx of advertising and further graphic reproduction improvements over the first three decades of this century contributed to the transformation of women's magazines into a predominantly visual medium. Visual images, both editorial and advertising, moved (metaphorically) from their peripheral position to a position of central importance. The mode of apprehension was not so much one of *looking* as one of reading. With the introduction of half-tone reproduction methods the dominant mode of illustration changed from line drawings to photographs, colour printing was used increasingly from the 20's onwards and colour photography was introduced in 1929.

In an article on the modernisation of *Ladies Home Journal* over the period 1914 to 1939, Sally Stein ties the graphic changes, particularly the use of colour, to an aggressive marketing strategy, "Once colour's mass appeal had been established, advertising readily paid the higher page rates for this proven method of commanding the reader's attention". She maintains that the success of the use of

colour in ads led to manufacturers' new marketing strategy of producing goods in assorted shades in the late 1920's, and that colour photography technology developed to accommodate this new marketing strategy. The transformation of women's magazines to a predominantly visual format served to draw their audience closer to the market place.⁴

Throughout the period of expansion, the women's periodical press remained stratified by class. The bulk of magazines were domestically or fashion oriented and aimed at the middle-class. Romantic fiction and "true life story" magazines such as *Peg's Paper* and *Red Star* were targetted at the more working-class women. During the 1930's, enterprising publishers launched the mass market weeklies such as *Woman's Own* (1932) and *Woman* (1937) aimed at an audience that spanned both the middle and working classes, employing an editorial formula that combined elements from both spheres. Printed on cheaper paper, more modest in aspiration, this "down market" product climbed quickly to lead circulation figures and continues to do so today.

5. Wartime Women's Press.

World War II brought a check to the expansion of women's magazines. The women's periodical press during the war and immediately afterwards was important, as a demonstration of the way in which messages directed at women and images of women were shaped by the media to meet a particular economic need. Studies have shown how the content and advertising of women's magazines during this period served to mobilise women during the war to fill the jobs men had occupied, and immediately after the war to relocate women back in the home. For instance, articles and advice during the war assured women that creche and

day-care environments were beneficial to a child's development, while afterwards the opposite was stressed. A mother's loving presence in the home was now claimed to be essential if the child was to grow up to be self-secure and well adjusted. Similarly, wartime recipes featured quick and efficient meals, or meals that would cook themselves all day (while mother worked) contrasted with post-war recipes that involved a great deal of time-consuming preparation.⁵ Images of women in advertising reflected the same campaign. Of the numerous examples cited in *Advertising As Communication* by Gillian Dyer. The series of ads for Maclean's toothpaste demonstrates the transition most clearly. "Before the war the image of the woman in Maclean's ads showed her as a docile secretary; during the war she was represented as a munitions worker (replying to the question "Did you Maclean your teeth today?" with "Yes and I always shall"), after the war she was shown looking contented and glamorous, baking a cake."⁶

6. The Expansionist 1950's To the Present.

In the immediate post-war period the upsurge in industrial activity brought about the expansionist and affluent period of the 1950's. People's spending power increased, consumer goods flooded the market, the mass media and advertising expanded. The scores of new domestic products and new convenience goods brought about a boom in advertising directed at women in the home and a parallel boom in women's magazines. Sales of the brand leader *Woman* tripled from the figure of 1 million in 1945 to 3 million by 1953. Advertisement revenue for *Woman* also climbed

significantly from £1.1 Million in 1950 to £2.3 million in 1953 to £5.3 million in 1958.⁷

The introduction of commercial television increased competition for audience and advertising, and can be held partially responsible for the narrowing of focus of the consumer press over the last two decades. Many of the larger advertising accounts for household goods and branded foods switched to the wider audience reaching medium of television, causing the product array in consumer magazines to narrow dramatically. Magazines began to adapt accordingly by specialising, narrowing their content to specialised interests, sport or photography for example and thereby attracting an audience defined by interest that could be offered to advertisers of related products.

The trend towards specialisation in woman's magazines took a slightly different direction than that of the general periodical press. It specialised more along the lines of age and class rather than specific interest. Many teenage and young women's glossy monthlies began to appear on the market throughout the 1960's and 1970's. *Honey* for instance came out in 1960, *19* in 1968, *Look Now* and *Cosmopolitan* (the British edition) in 1972. The post-war baby bulge had reached spending age and constituted a new potential market. The main editorial and advertising focus of these magazines was on fashion and beauty. Magazines within this broad category were directed towards specific classes or sub-classes. Differences in class, however, were not directly addressed, rather, they were, and continue to be, disguised as differences in 'lifestyle' which implies an element of choice.

Another trend that has occurred throughout the media from the late 1950's onwards is the increasing concentration of ownership of the media. Initiated by the cut-throat competition for audience and advertising in the 50's, take overs of flagging publishers and mergers of successful ones have led to the present situation in which the media is controlled by only a handful of companies, most of them subsidiaries of multi-nationals.

Today, four companies effectively control the production of women's magazines in Britain. The International Publishing Corporation (IPC) is by far the largest, producing two-thirds of the total number of women's magazines in Britain. Some of its better known titles are *Woman's Weekly*, *Woman's Own*, *Woman*, *Woman's Journal*, *Woman's World*, *Ideal Home*, *Honey* and *Options*. D.C. Thompson and Co. Ltd. has the next largest market share of 20%. The National Magazine Co. Ltd. and Standbrook Publications have 4% and 3% respectively. The remainder of the market is distributed amongst a number of smaller publishing companies.⁸ Of these four controlling companies, only D.C. Thompson & Co. Ltd is fully independent, the other three are linked to multi-nationals. The concentration of ownership into relatively few corporate hands gives rise to the fear that the range of magazines offered will be considerably narrowed and that it effectively prevents diversity, especially in relation to radical or alternative viewpoints.

The historical development of women's magazines was a dynamic interaction of social, economic and industrial factors. Shifting social patterns,

improvements in printing technology, industrial growth and expansion of advertising contributed to changes in content and structure of the magazines. Advertising became an increasingly significant factor in the profitability of the women's periodical press, emerging in the 20th. century as the largest generator of its revenue. As a result, advertising considerations began to influence the contents and structure of women's magazines and the organisation of their audiences. Publishers began to regard their publications not so much as products sold to readers but more as vehicles that organised their audience into clearly identifiable target groups that could be sold to advertisers. The audience themselves became the 'products' generated by the magazines.

7. The Historical Development of *Cosmopolitan*.

Cosmopolitan was launched in the United States in 1886 as a generalist middle-class women's magazine. Until the 1960's it remained as such, with just enough popularity to allow it to survive. *Cosmopolitan's* subsequent rapid rise to success was initiated by the appointment of Helen Gurley Brown as editor in 1965. She effectively transformed the magazine bringing in a new editorial formula and shifting the focus to the new and rapidly expanding audience of young women. Latching on to the growing sexual permissiveness of the 1960's *Cosmopolitan* under Helen Gurley Brown's editorial direction, pioneered a new line in sexual openness and emotional direction. A formula which proved to be extremely popular.

Cosmopolitan became so commercially successful that the publishers, Hearst Corporation of America, began to franchise it internationally. The first edition published outside the United States was the British edition, launched in March 1972. European editions followed soon afterwards and by 1982 the *Cosmopolitan* empire had expanded to a total of nineteen editions. All the editions use the same *Cosmopolitan* content structure and editorial formula, though cultural variations can be seen. For instance, the Italian *Cosmopolitan* is claimed to be extremely strong on women's rights and takes a pro-abortion stance, whilst the Brazilian edition bans the topic of abortion altogether. Despite these variations, the basic *Cosmopolitan* ideology remains intact and is exported world-wide.

The title of the magazine itself reinforces the universality of its ideology. 'Cosmopolitan' means belonging to all parts of the world, not restricted to any one country. Its use however is meant to suggest that the "Cosmopolitan woman" is sophisticated, worldly and broadminded as opposed to provincial and narrow.

The study looks at the process of constructing "Cosmopolitan Woman" and attempts to assess how this construction has adapted itself to changes in the social and political sphere over the last 20 years, whilst remaining consistent to an underlying ideology.

CHAPTER TWO

The Cosmopolitan Ideology.

1. Studying Cosmo.

There is little doubt that in the world of magazine publishing, women's magazines occupy a low-status position at the leisure end of the market. Indeed, the very term 'women's magazine' has come to signify a set of concerns which is differentiated in two important ways. Firstly, a clear line is drawn between women's interests on the one hand and something else which is characterised as 'male interest'. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, these concerns are also differentiated from areas seen to be important for society in general, including the worlds of business and finance, politics, science and technology and even the arts and literature.

Of course, the demarcation lines are rather blurred. There is an assumption that male interests and the more general social concerns are in fact one and the same thing. Women's interests are, therefore, constructed in opposition to the high status areas mentioned and as such are defined *negatively*. - that is by what they are not.

This relative low status position belies the importance of women's magazines to the world of publishing itself. They account for approximately 30% of total magazine sales in the U.K. and overseas representing an enormous part of any publishing group's profitability.

Furthermore, it is estimated that 48% of women over the age of 15 read or see a copy of a women's magazine each year.¹ This represents a huge potential market for advertisers and confirms the importance of women in general as consumers.

As a magazine's profitability is more dependent on advertising revenue than on income achieved by sales alone, any successful publication must convince advertisers that it has targetted a specific group of potential consumers. Targetting an audience, keeping it and building on it, is a process of *constructing* it. This economic imperative requires a magazine like *Cosmopolitan* to make a broad appeal, offer a predictable list of contents, take no chances or appeal to minority or alternative tastes. In the end, the magazine offers a composite world-view, a consistent set of values - an underlying ideology.

Cosmopolitan magazine has been, for over twenty years now, a market leader in this general process and it is this magazine's deeper set of messages that this study is concerned with. In order, therefore, to understand the kinds of messages transmitted by *Cosmopolitan* it is necessary to examine its contents, structure and the ways in which the reader apprehend these.

Cosmopolitan, like other women's magazines is designed to be read in bits and pieces in the sporadic leisure moments of a woman's day, between domestic chores or office duties or as a means of passing time in waiting rooms and travel to and from work. Magazine reading then is not, as Sally Stein has pointed out, a straight linear process. Women's magazines are constructed to suit this fragmented leisure time. They are not organised along a single continuum.² Thus, within the covers of *Cosmopolitan*, there are a variety of texts that allow women to pick and chose and more backwards and forwards. Advertising and visual images interspersed throughout the text act as diversions along the path negotiated in reading. Clearly, none of the elements

that constitute a magazine, the editorial text, editorial images and advertisements, are apprehended in isolation. The messages received are composite messages derived from the interaction of the various elements. Indeed images and text, ads and editorial matter are designed to work off each other.

This analysis will therefore discuss individual articles, images and advertising in their context of the overall structure of the magazine. It is hoped that in doing so, the analysis will reveal the underlying ideology.

Issues from three years of the magazines were singled out for particular consideration, these years being 1966, 1976 and 1986. The issue for each year was chosen at random. Equally random issues were chosen from the intervening years to provide some sense of historical development. The study of these specific issues is at all times related to the changing political and social environment of the period under discussion. Of specific interest, of course, is the rise and development of women's politics, which one would expect would have a special interest for a study of women's magazines.

The year 1966 was chosen because the revamped *Cosmopolitan* had, by this time, established itself, and the influence of the women's movement was still a number of years off. It is, therefore, a good year to try to establish *Cosmopolitan's* underlying image of women.

4. Cosmopolitan Before The Women's Movement - 1966.

Even in 1966 *Cosmopolitan* was an impressive product. It's glossy cover, slick design and sheer weight holds out a promise of high quality and many hours of pleasure. The cover acts like a poster, advertising the personality of the magazine. The face of the woman on the cover is the 'face' of *Cosmopolitan*. It projects *Cosmopolitan's* ideal image of women for the readers to aspire to or identify with.

The cover image in 1966 was typically a long-haired, beautiful and glamorous, young, white woman. She is typically presented in medium close-up, head, shoulders and breastline, as often as not, revealing some cleavage. Traditionally, the *Cosmopolitan* cover model is either sultry and sexy looking or bright-eyed and smiling. She always looks directly out at the reader. The sultry look invites the reader to share in some promised intimate secrets whilst the smiling model invites the reader to share in the promised joys contained within.

Within the covers, the magazine appears to make good its promise of many hours of reading. The April 1966 issue for example contains 7 articles, 5 features, 3 non-fiction book excerpts, 2 short stories, a complete novel, a 3-article fashion and beauty section and 13 regular *Cosmopolitan* departments.

The departments form a skeleton structure of the magazine, which defines and holds together its area of interest and its central concerns. The articles and features flesh out and develop these concerns.

The departments appear at various points throughout the magazine although the majority are placed together in two blocks, one at the front and one towards the back of the magazine. In this 152 page issue, the first 28 pages are devoted entirely to 6 of the departments, interspersed with advertising. These departments are "Cosmo Goes to the Movies", "Dieter's Notebook", "Analyst's Couch", "Beauty Bar", "Cosmo Reads New Books" and "Cosmo Listens to Records".

If positioning can be read as an indication of priority (the fact that the vast majority of expensive colour ads are located at the front would seem to confirm this) then the "Cosmopolitan Woman's" foremost interests are in her physical appearance, her emotions and in main-stream popular culture.

With the exception of the reviews, this front section, in the form of advice columns, question-and-answer columns and handy hints and tips constructs the idea that being a woman is a set of problems.

The effect of these departments is to promote the notion that a woman needs guidance and direction in making herself more attractive and in dealing with emotional problems (mainly love/relationships). This of course, also reinforces the notion that making oneself attractive and having relationships is necessary and important.

Of the 13 regular departments, there are only 3, "The 5-minute Gourmet Guide", "When No Man is Handy" and "Speak Out" which are relatively progressive in content. "The 5-minute Gourmet Guide" would suggest that the "Cosmopolitan Woman" is too busy or not inclined to cook. "When No Man is Handy" encourages women to perform minor household and car repairs, albeit, only in the absence of a man. "Speak Out" provides a platform

for women to voice their opinions. However, these departments are relegated to the back of the magazine thus reducing their impact and significance.

The middle section, given over almost entirely to the lengthier articles and features, the fashion/beauty section, the book excerpts, fiction and the novel, flesh out the interests and concepts raised in the departments. The contents of the articles adhere to a rough formula - one on social/political concerns, one on health matters, one celebrity profile, one on man/woman relationships and two on emotional concerns. Of course, there is a certain amount of flexibility, the formula is not always strictly adhered to and quite often articles will combine a number of these topics.

What emerges as the main focus of this editorial material and thus "Cosmopolitan Woman's" ultimate interest, is the attainment of a man. Physical attractiveness, achieved by a healthy upkeep of the body, dieting and exercise, the application of beauty products and wearing fashionable clothes and hairstyles are the means to attaining the end - finding a man. Through men, wealth, status and prestige are conferred on women. Women are thus defined in terms of their men.

A sampling of the titles contained in one issue (April, 1966) confirm this emphasis on the attainment of men: "Hifi your way into his Heart", "Marry the man today ... In Rome", and "Make-up to wear in Bed", (the make-up referred to here is mascara, eyeshadow and lipstick which implies she is not going to bed alone).

Defining women in terms of their men is blatantly demonstrated in an article from the same issue, titled "What kind of a Girl are you Anyway?". The article lists the possible options for the reader to supposedly identify with. They are "the housewife", "the girl who marries for money", "the girl who marries a man of destiny", "the corporate wife", "the glamour girl" and "the really rich girl". The really rich girl is the only one who isn't defined by her relationship to a man (or men, as in the case of the glamour girl) as she has an "independant" source of income and wealth - her family.

One might expect that the social/political article or the non-fiction book excerpts would extend the interests of the "Cosmopolitan Woman" beyond her interest in men and its related corollaries; beauty, fashion and emotions. This is clearly not the case. In an article on the Vietnam War titled "War Wives" it is not the war that is discussed but women, how they have dealt with the absence of their husbands or boyfriends. Similarly, the two non-fiction book excerpts in the same issue, are centred on men. The excerpt from "Instant French" is a humorous look at ways of responding to the amorous Frenchman. The excerpt from "Seductive Cookery" is, as its title states, gourmet cookery to get the man.

Celebrity profiles have always been an important feature of women's magazine - from a sales point of view. As almost everyone likes to see into the inner sanctums of the lives of the rich and famous, these profiles are guaranteed to attract sales and provide

engaging entertainment. Their effect, however, is more than mere entertainment. The celebrities are representative of wealth, success and glamour and therefore these profiles act as a means of upholding middle-class values. In the April, 1966 *Cosmopolitan* the profile was on Catherine Deneuve. She herself, was considered to be the symbol of perfection in feminine beauty at the time. The article, describing her successful career as a model and movie star and her glamorous lifestyle, does, of course, operate to satisfy the reader's curiosity about the life of the famous. More importantly however, it acts as a vehicle to promote the values of success, wealth, status and in this case, feminine beauty.

The fashion spread "There is nothing like a Dress" (Figs. 3 & 4) summarises and graphically illustrates the main values and interests promulgated in *Cosmopolitan* in 1966. The byline reads "He admits she's cute in slacks, regal in a coat, chic in a suit ... but when she's in a dress she's an absolute honey-of-a-girl - his honey, his girl, all girl!" This emphatically asserts "Cosmopolitan Woman's" ultimate objective - to get a man by being totally feminine. In the accompanying photographs the poses the female models adopt express this notion of possession. Leaning against or draped over the man, her arm linked through his or around his shoulders, the woman possesses the man. At the same time, the man's position supports the woman physically and by extension economically and socially. The men, all of them famous movie or recording stars, represent the most desired attributes in men - wealth, fame and good looks. The means of acquiring the man, his wealth and status is a dress, itself a symbol of femininity. Not any dress, however, it must be a 'designer' dress, signifier of prestige, high fashion and expense.

Significantly, the dresses featured come in two price ranges. The very expensive \$120 - \$145 range, completely beyond the reach of the average *Cosmopolitan* reader, suggests the dresses are something to dream about. The still expensive \$45 - \$50 range, requiring a good deal of saving, represents reality, a distinctly middle-class reality.

There is, therefore, a great consistency in the image of women that is promoted through these articles and features. Indeed, the magazine itself refers to this image as "Cosmo Girl" and celebrates her pursuit of feminine beauty, charismatic men, wealth and status.

Even a cursory look at the advertisements confirms the view that there is little or no difference between the type of women constructed through the editorial features discussed above and the women who emerges through the expensive advertisements that give the magazine its financial stability. Indeed advertising and editorial work in tandem to promote this remarkably consistent image of "Cosmo Girl".

The colour advertisements in this issue tend to fall into two categories. The most numerous type of ad is a close-up photograph of a woman's face without any background. The text of the ad links a woman's beauty or glamour or femininity with the use of a product. It often picks up on a current trend as in the following example of an ad for Borne Blonde hair-colouring. The main caption reads "Maybe the real you is a Blond". The text begins with "Every smart woman keeps searching for her identity, the inner woman she really is, and the outward expression of it." By referring to one of the dominant themes of the 60's youth sub-culture, - the search for personal identity, the ad links the

Product with the image of a contemporary, "With it" woman. The immensely ironic contradiction in the suggestion that a woman would find her *real* self by *falsifying* her hair colour makes a parody of this subculture's aims. By doing so it renders harmless any of its radical aspects. (Though it could be argued that the search for personal identity was not in itself radical, the sub-culture as a whole was, in so far as it opposed the status quo). This ad is an early example of advertising's use and subversion of contemporary and potentially threatening social forces, that was to continue through the 70's and 80's.

The other type of colour advertisement in this issue places the woman in a setting in which a man is present or his presence is implied through the props and the direction and nature of the woman's gaze. In an ad for perfume, for example, the glamorous looking woman reclines on a sofa in a fashionable and expensively furnished room. The table in front of her holds two filled martini glasses. She looks seductively out towards the man whose presence is implied by the whole composition of the photograph and indeed, the text. The caption "want him to be more of a man, try being more of a woman" reiterates the central message of *Cosmopolitan* that a man (a manly man) is the desired goal, and that the goal can be obtained by a woman making herself more feminine.

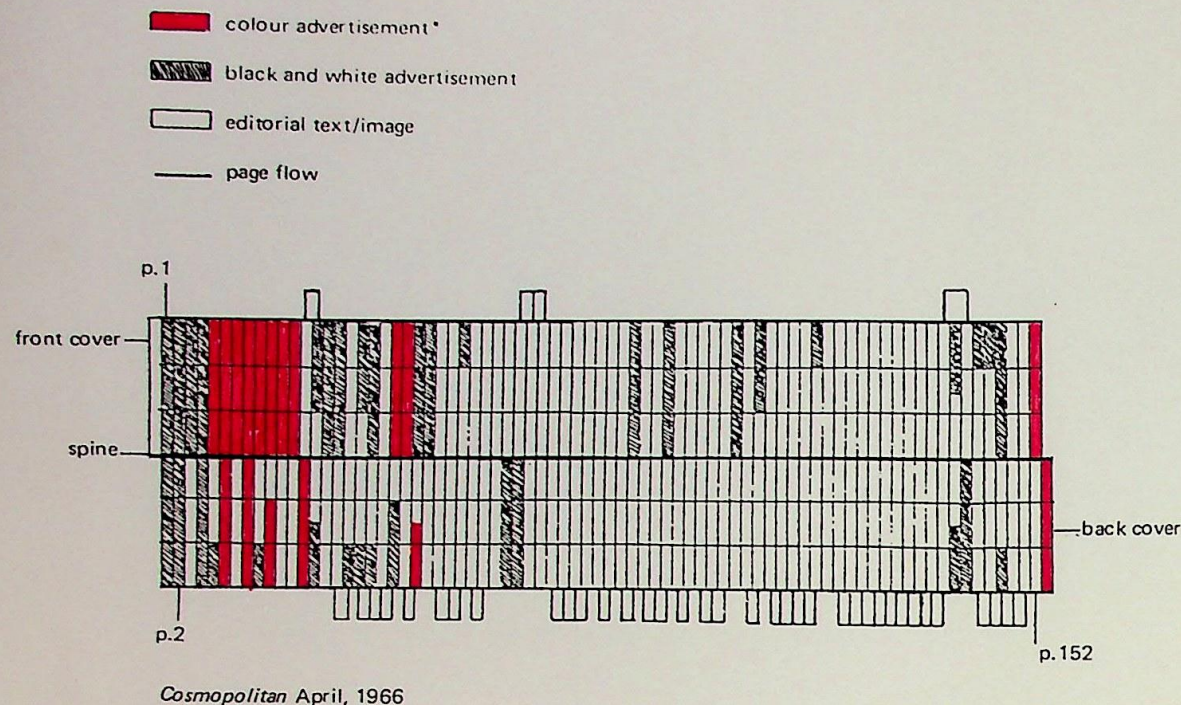
The range of products advertised in *Cosmopolitan* also confirms the emphasis on femininity and physical attractiveness. Of the total $16\frac{1}{6}$ pages of colour advertisements. Those for beauty products occupy $10\frac{2}{3}$ pages, whilst the rest are made up of 2 for liquor, $1\frac{1}{2}$ for

personal hygiene products and 1 each for cigarettes and travel.

The black and white ads show a similar concentration on physical appearance. The vast majority are for make up, perfume, beauty products, dieting aids and mail-away fashions like 'naughty' lingerie. A two-page section of ads listed as an editorial department "Schools and Careers Directory" is made up of small classified ads for courses in areas traditionally occupied by women such as secretarial and clerical jobs. This section represents the only direct mention of the subject of women's occupations. None of the articles, features or other departments in this issue address the topic of work, though there is no doubt that *Cosmopolitan's* targetted audience are working or college girls.

3. The "Cosmo Girl" Ideology.

What emerges then from the editorial text and images interacting with the advertising is a remarkably consistent view of what *Cosmopolitan* magazine calls the "Cosmo Girl". What the magazine chooses to omit is just as illuminating as that which it includes. According to *Cosmopolitan*, it's readers are not interested in national or world politics, in national or world news, in economics or the worlds of science and technology. In her unending pursuit of the perfect man she has time only for her physical appearance and its carallary , fashion and beauty. She is indeed a consumer but she spends her money only on products aimed at fulfilling her desire for glamour and beauty.



Furthermore, the magazine denies its reader any real sense of group identity. She is presented here as an atomised individual pursuing her limited interests in direct competition with other similarly inclined isolated women. The magazine also denies its reader any real sense of pride in her womanhood. Her body is fragmented into a set of problems that are likely to impede rather than aid personal satisfaction and achievement. Her emotions are likely to swamp her capacity for rational or intellectual thought. She achieves any feeling she may have of fulfillment, self-satisfaction and status not in herself but through her man. Her concerns, therefore, are narrowed down to pursuing and holding on to her man and *Cosmopolitan* as a composite set of messages offers her ways of achieving this.

4. The Structure of *Cosmopolitan* -1966.

The image of the "Cosmo Girl" as has been argued, is a composite picture which emerges through the interaction of editorial text, image and advertising. To understand how this interaction works it is necessary to examine the magazine's structure in more detail.

The graph opposite acts like an exploded diagram of the layout of one issue of *Cosmopolitan* in 1966, illustrating the position of colour, and black and white advertisements and editorial matter. The vertical divisions represent each double page. The horizontal centre line represents the spine, the divisions in the upper half of the graph represent the right hand pages and the bottom half, the left hand pages. The arrows represent the page-flow, that is, the path the reader follows to complete any article.

* 4-colour advertisement — consisting of colour photograph or full-colour illustration that require electronic scanning and separation into the 4 printing colours: yellow, magenta, cyan and black.

What is immediately apparent from the graph is the concentration of advertisements at the front of the magazine. Within the first 8 pages, 6 full-page black and white ads virtually bury the 1²/₃ pages of text; the contents page and the editorial. In the following 29 pages, the short (1-page or less) *Cosmopolitan* departments are interspersed with, indeed dominated by predominantly colour full-page, occasionally double-page advertisements. These advertisements are almost entirely for beauty products such as make-up, lipstick, hair-colouring and shampoo. Ideologically, these advertisements act as extended visual arguments for the importance of beauty and femininity stressed in the surrounding editorial text. In a physical sense, they display an array of products that provide the means by which women can achieve this desired state. It is impossible for the reader to ignore the advertisements in this section. Every page-opening has at least one page of advertising and often the reader is forced to flip through a number of pages to find the editorial text. In most cases, when an ad is opposite editorial text, the ad is found on the right hand page. Studies have shown that the reader's eye naturally falls on the right hand page (in western culture, with left to right reading habits). This would suggest that the magazine gives priority page placement to advertising. This suggestion was confirmed in conversation with Eileen Schultz, the art director of the Hearst Publishing Co. Ltd. in which she said that the page placement of advertising *is dictated* by the advertisers, that neither the art director nor the editor have a say in their positioning.³ When advertisers buy a particular page, they are not aware of the actual copy as it usually hasn't been written. They are, however, aware of the structure and therefore are able to place their ads in

close proximity to the "Beauty Bar" or the "Dieter's Notebook" for instance and generally within an editorial section that acts as a conducive environment for their products.

Furthermore, it isn't just the content matter which provides this conducive environment, the form and structure of the text also contributes. Short choppy articles, question and answers, and compilations of brief items provide natural pauses in which the reader's attention can be diverted. The visual impact, then, of a full page colour photograph, placed where the eye tends to fall first and next to text of this nature cannot fail to attract the reader's attention. The front section therefore is the optimum environment for advertising.

The ads become less frequent as the articles become lengthier and more absorbing in content. This middle section is sparsely interjected with one page ads falling between articles, again the points where a reader is likely to pause. The novel which begins in this section is the link to the back of the magazine where there is another concentration of ads, in this case small inexpensive black and white ads. After reading 20 or so pages of the novel the reader is directed to the back and forced to weave through these advertisements in order to complete it.

It is worth pointing out that the distinction between editorial copy and advertising is not always obvious. One example of this is "The Cosmopolitan Shopper". The prestige of the magazine's name is brought to bear on a selected number of products which are recommended to the reader in a series of short items. These editorial

snippets are surrounded by small advertisements of similar length and design. The effect of this double-page spread is to blur the distinction between *Cosmopolitan's* editorial voice and the intrusive voice of the advertisers.

The magazine's physical characteristics therefore, have been designed to maximise the effectiveness of both editorial and advertising copy, to inter-relate them in a coherent way and to achieve the composite image described earlier. There is no contradiction between one and the other.

CHAPTER THREE

Cosmopolitan in the Age of the Women's Movement.

1. The Rise of Women's Politics.

The publication of Betty Frieden's book *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963 and her subsequent establishing in 1966 of the National Organisation of Women (NOW), a women's association that lobbied for legislative reform in the U.S. is often cited as the catalyst and impetus behind the rise of the Women's Liberation Movement. The first whisperings of a women's movement in England were heard in 1967 and by 1968 it was a named and organised movement. In 1970 the first British national conference took place and a new National Co-ordinating Committee was established. A set of priorities was established, a series of demands formulated and a number of demonstrations were organised.

By the early 1970's, the movement was international in scale, embracing nearly all advanced industrial countries. Campaigns focused on all aspects of women's oppression including economic and legal questions, matters relating to sexuality and woman's role in reproduction. Some reforms followed. In Britain, equal pay legislation was passed in 1970 and came into effect in 1975. The broader demands were less easily dealt with.

Particular women's groups, for example, attacked the ideological exploitation of women by the media, which presented them as sex objects and campaigned against entertainment enterprises like the Playboy Club and the Miss World Beauty contests which were seen to be based on sexual exploitation.

Two concepts central to the organisation of the Women's Liberation Movement were the notion of collectivity and the assertion that the personal is political. Women's groups were organised as collectives in which there were no leaders and responsibility was shared. Collectivity countermands both the hierarchical nature of the oppressive society and the isolation (or subserviance) that women experience within the home and within personal relationships. It also refuses competitiveness between women, a result of having been socialised to compete with other women for men and for status.

The "personal is political" concept formed the basis of the consciousness-raising sessions held by women's groups. Through these sessions women developed an awareness that the individual dilemmas in their private lives was a social predicament and hence a political problem.

The theoretical basis of feminism lies in the concepts of male chauvinism, sexism and patriarchy. Male chauvinism refers to a man taking up a position, either consciously or instinctively, of domination over and against women. Sexism has a clear analogy with racism and indicates the inferiorisation either attitudinal or actual, of one sex by another. Patriarchy is not used in the specific sense as the rule of the father but more generally, as the rule of men. Kate Millet, in her "notes towards a theory of patriarchy" from *Sexual Politics* (1970), establishes that "within patriarchy the omnipresent system of male domination and female subjugation is achieved through socialising perpetuated through ideological means and maintained by institutional methods". She identifies the family as the chief institution through which patriarchy is maintained,

as foundations for male domination rely on 'inherited' culture and the training of the young. The patriarchal power system is so well entrenched that it is seen as 'natural' and therefore, unalterable.¹ It is worth pointing out that the media in general, including women's magazines like *Cosmopolitan*, were identified as important cultural channels for this process of socialisation.

The women's movement constituted an important and significant social force which influenced many aspects of the social, political and cultural life of the western world.

How then did *Cosmopolitan*, identified as part of the problem, come to terms with this new social force?

2. Cosmopolitan - 1969-1970.

By 1969 *Cosmopolitan* shows very little awareness of the women's movement. Granted, in the September 1969 issue, there are three articles related to women and work. Examination of these, however, reveals that the image of the "Career Girl" is not that far removed from the image of the 'glamour girl' in 1966.

In the most serious of these articles "Teaching is Terrific", some valid reasons for going into teaching and equally valid issues about teaching are discussed. For instance, it discusses teachers' demands for better working conditions and claims that there had been improvements. It also claims that teachers were commanding greater pay. However, the article ends with the exclamation "and more men are becoming teachers!" as the final and perhaps most attractive reason for women to take up teaching. Whether this final note was

meant to suggest that the influx of men had raised the status and prestige of the teaching profession or, and more likely, that chances for meeting and dating men would be increased, it doesn't represent a very progressive attitude towards women and tends to trivialise the entire article.

Another article "the Organisation S.O.B." is a non-critical look at "bastard bosses" and the women who enjoy working for them. Being treated like dirt, these women claim, makes them work harder. The article promotes the stereotypical image of the man as a tough dominant boss and the woman as the servile subordinate.

In the final career article, a beauty feature, "4 Top Models" describe their lives. The emphasis of the article and the common thread in all four models' descriptions is that a modelling career is an exhausting, but very enjoyable, satisfying and extremely lucrative profession. This feature then promotes the values of hardwork, beauty, glamour and fame, operating in the same way as the celebrity profiles discussed earlier.

In these three articles *Cosmopolitan* has acknowledged the desire of many women, especially within the magazine's targetted audience, for a career and more independence. However, this seemingly progressive aspect of the magazine is undermined by the fact that the articles promote stereotypical images of women and the careers are those that have always been traditionally held by women.

Furthermore much of the magazine's content seems to represent an actual backlash against progressive ideas emanating from women's movement . A number of articles present certain women in a negative light and sympathise with the male point of view. For instance, the non-fiction book excerpt "The Prosecutor V.S. Alice Crimmins" follows the trial of Alice Crimmins, a woman accused, and eventually found guilty, of murdering her two children. The prosecutor's case lacked hard evidence against her and relied heavily on her promiscuous sexual activity. (There is still debate as to whether she was actually guilty). This article takes the prosecutor's side wholeheartedly. It projects the woman as a selfish and demented mother wishing to free herself of her children and revels in her being found guilty. It allows her no sympathy nor does it raise any objections to her sexual history being used as evidence.

Similarly, though on a lighter level, the article "the Girl Don Juan" criticises women who choose to have multiple lovers. Women of the "love them and leave them" ilk are accused of setting out intentionally to mistreat men. These women, the article explains, "abuse men" by hurting their feelings and making them feel insecure and inadequate. Funny that male Don Juan's do not elicit such condemnation in the pages of *Cosmopolitan*. At best, women might be warned against falling for them, if they want lasting relationships. More often, especially in the fiction, Don Juans are the sought after and desired heroes. That men have multiple lovers is seen as evidence of their sexual prowess and renders them even more attractive to women. This is the classic case of double standards and here

Cosmopolitan is just reinforcing them.

Elsewhere in this issue, a more forceful and outright attack is waged against the women's movement, and by implication, against women gaining self confidence and independence. A 4-page colour photo-feature on karate appears at first glance to be a demonstration on self-defence techniques for women. The photos show an attractive model wearing a very short, pink satin kimono, executing various karate techniques on the male model - the comedian Dudley Moore. The captions accompanying each photo, however, provide no information or instruction. Instead, they ridicule the strikes and holds performed by the woman. For example, two captions read "Is that girl going into a flap?" and "Ooh that leg again, it's rather wonderful, but so long". Written as Dudley Moore's comments, they sympathise with his 'unfortunate' predicaments and cast him as the victim. The article's conclusion is most illuminating and deserves quoting in full:

"Claudia's won the battle but lost poor Dudley (under your thumb is fine but under your toe?). Cosmo's recommendation: Get a German Shepherd and a chain lock but leave Karate to the boys"

This expensively produced article (colour photo's, Dudley Moore's fees) demonstrates concerted effort on the part of *Cosmopolitan* to undermine and ridicule the feminist strategy of taking up self defence. By implication, it also undermines the self confidence, independence and sense of power that this strategy encourages in women.

Editorial articles and advertising in this issue continue to construct a woman's body as a set of problems

and thereby instill feelings of inadequacy in women on which both the magazine and advertising can capitalise. The magazine sets up the problem and solves it as in "Help for the Flat-Chested Woman". Advertising feeds off the problems created editorially and generates its own obstacles in the path of beauty like wrinkles, unwanted hair, wrong coloured hair and weight problems. Advertising has a long history of inventing problems by taking natural physical conditions and conceptualising them as disgraceful, offensive and generally, anti-social as in the oft-cited examples of bad breath and dandruff.

In the late 1960's a new product (and problem) was manufactured for the new generation of "sexually liberated" women. The product was feminine hygiene deodorant spray. An advertisement for one brand of the product appeared in the September 1969 issue. The caption in this ad reads "You don't sleep with Teddy Bears anymore" with the sub caption "Your Teddy Bear loved you no matter what..." The text goes on to discreetly describe in a paternalistic tone what the product was and why it was necessary. The effect of this ad, clearly directed at young women (having just graduated from Teddy Bears) is potentially more harmful than most. It hones in on a particularly sensitive subject and plays upon a person's greatest fears those of sexual rejection. Young women, in particular, lacking experience and confidence in sexual relations, are especially vulnerable to messages that inform them that the most intimate part of their body could be offensive to men. It is the ad that is offensive. It effectively makes women ashamed of their bodies. It is worth mentioning that in the early 1970's the Women in Media group launched a campaign against the advertising of feminine hygiene sprays on the grounds that the advertising and the product was offensive and potentially damaging, both psychologically and

physically. They did succeed in getting it banned, however, it was the medical evidence of the product's harmful physical effects that won them the battle.

As in the 1966 *Cosmopolitan* most of the ads in this issue concentrate on physical appearance. The images and text, however, place a greater and more direct emphasis on sex and the body than their earlier emphasis on love and romance. Many more ads are composed of images of naked women (or parts of them) and foster the notion of "the body beautiful". Furthermore, some of these ads situate a woman in private moments, like dressing or in the bath, in which the woman's gestures are self-caressing, stroking her legs or her face. In doing so, these ads construct the image of women as narcissistic. The advertising in this issue therefore sets up two contradictory messages. On the one hand, a woman's body is seen as a set of problems which instills shame and self-criticism and on the other a woman is encouraged to love her body. This contradiction is resolved, however, in the very nature and emphasis of the magazine itself. By taking the advice offered in the pages of *Cosmopolitan* and using the products advertised, a woman supposedly, will overcome her beauty problems and thus be able to take pleasure in her body.

Furthermore, some of the advertising can be seen to directly undermine current progressive trends, a strategy discussed earlier in the Born Blonde example from the 1966 issue. In 1969, advertising begins to apply this to concepts arising from women's politics. One example is an advertisement for Formfit Rogers Slips and Girdles. The full-page photograph is composed of a woman's figure in isolation against a dark background.



The caption below her reads "Be Some Body". This pun twists the feminist assertion that a woman must be considered as a person in her own right, to mean precisely that which it directly opposes, that a woman is seen merely as a sexual object. By ridiculing and trivialising this assertion, the ad effectively subverts the potential threat the assertion and, indeed, feminism in general, pose to the buying of slips and girdles, in particular and to consumerism in general.

The image of women constructed, editorially and by advertising, in *Cosmopolitan* in 1969 is best summed up in the fashion feature "Baby's Little Helpers" (Fig. 5). In the photographs, the models' poses are sexy and provocative and their expressions sultry and invitational. The clothes they wear reveal and display the body. Indeed the whole *raison d'être* of the article is to feature the undergarments that aid in the process of displaying the body. The text reinforces the message of the image with phrases like "dips provocatively" "sexy shaping" and "show off underpinnings extol the body". The text also reinforces aspirations of wealth with mention of "caviar and champagne" and by featuring clothes with a \$275. price tag. At the sametime it doesn't alienate the reader, by including clothes at the affordable price of \$26. As in the editorial departments "Whats New" and "The Shopper's Guide", that list prices, brands and retail outlets, this fashion feature is basically free advertising under the guise of editorial recommendation. To what extent *Cosmopolitan* is influenced or coerced by its advertisers is a matter of speculation. Is it purely coincidental that Formfit Rogers undergarments are featured in the same issue that carries a full-page Formfit Rogers ad? It is, at least, a situation in which *Cosmopolitan* favours its regular advertisers.

In 1969, then, the composite image of women constructed in the advertising and editorial matter of *Cosmopolitan* has not changed remarkably from the image in 1966. Like the woman in the fashion feature the 1969 "Cosmopolitan Woman" displays herself more openly and overtly than she did in 1966 but her intentions remain the same. She may work but her interests don't lie in a lifelong career rather they are still centred on the pursuit of men. She rejects feminism, seeing it as a threat to her femininity which must be preserved at all costs. And costly it is! In this more permissive year she "plays the field" more than she did before but in some senses this makes greater demands on her. She no longer has to worry about just one man's opinion but the opinion of men in general. This makes her even more dependant on the dictates of femininity and is likely to require more effort, time and money.

In 1970, *Cosmopolitan* shows little sign of change despite the fact that it was the year in which the Women's Liberation Movement organised into a cohesive and stronger force and gained nationwide attention. Two short articles in the June 1970 issue feature woman in more high powered jobs than those featured in the late 60's. One article features a fashion designer, an assistant to an industrial designer and a photographer representative. The other article concerns an x-ray technician, a social case-worker and a travel representative. Though these do represent a move out of the female ghetto of secretarial jobs they remain within the sphere (fashion, social work, travel agent) or the positions (assistants and technicians) that would generally be regarded as a woman's domain.

Most of the contents continue to promote physical attractiveness with articles such as "I go to Weight-Watchers", "Get Slim Quick" in addition to the identical

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7. last page: as in fig. 6 (colour)

array of beauty/body/emotion-centred *Cosmopolitan* departments. The beauty feature provides an interesting example of the way in which *Cosmopolitan* integrates the two potentially oppositional subjects of career and beauty.

Figures 6 & 7 are the first and last pages of the feature. The 4 pages omitted consist of illustrated beauty improvement instructions. The feature leads with the caption "So you're too busy to have your hair done? (watch out...you may have plenty of freetime soon!)" The text elaborates, explaining that it is necessary for most career girls to look "pulled together" because, amongst other things they are being paid to promote the company image. It implies that looking good is worth more than conscientious work when it comes to keeping a job. "Nobody ever told them (industrious girls) an hour at the hairdresser might be worth four at the desk".

The two images accompanying the text work in the traditional 'before and after' format. As with all photo-features, the visual impact is more powerful than the text. The 'before' photograph shows a woman looking bedraggled, nevertheless she is shown working. The 'after' photograph showing the same woman now surrounded by men and not engaged in any activity indicates that the main thrust of the message is not so much concerned with the performance of the keeping of the job but with the attraction of men.

This 1970 issue, therefore, does not engage in any real sense with the issues being raised in the same year by the woman's movement. At most it just skims the surface of the issues of equal employment opportunities and equal pay in the short articles that encourage women to seek

more interesting and better paying jobs. However, even this improvement is turned back on itself by the more dominant beauty feature. Its full-page colour photograph places women firmly back into the secretarial position and centres her interests on gaining male approval rather than on work.

Indeed, elsewhere in the magazine there is an article which goes even further than this, by overtly attacking the feminist position, as did the 'Karate' article in 1969. This article is entitled "Don't Be Afraid of Men Who Whistle and Ogle You - Enjoy!" and is self-explanatory. The feminist argument is twofold. Firstly, it argues that while such actions are not, in themselves, harmful, they are, nonetheless, annoying and insulting. They reduce women to the level of public property for all men, in which their appearance is made subject to constant assessment. Secondly, and more importantly, these actions are seen as outward manifestations of the deeper assumptions concerning a woman's role in relation to men. They reinforce the traditional notion that a woman in first and foremost a sexual object for male gratification. It is this ideology of woman-as-sex-object which feminists argue is the central block to woman's demands for equal opportunity, equal pay and equal status with men.

In other words, the logic of this article is in striking contradiction to the concerns expressed earlier in the two short articles. This 1970 issue is an early example of how *Cosmopolitan* begins to take on board the more progressive ideas emanating from the growing woman's movement whilst at the

same time, maintaining its traditional ideology. But *Cosmopolitan* goes even further. The progressive ideas are introduced into the traditional world of "Cosmo Girl" precisely to undermine them and remove them as a threat. This is a process which was to continue throughout the 70's and into the 80's.

3. *Cosmopolitan* the British Edition 1972.

There was one very significant development in the publishing of *Cosmopolitan* in the early 1970's which deserves some attention.

Until 1972, there was only one edition of the magazine published centrally in the U.S. and it is this American edition which has been discussed so far. In March 1972, however, the first British edition was published by the National Magazine Co. Ltd., a subsidiary of the Hearst Corporation of America. This was the first national edition launched and marked the beginnings of a process that would eventually lead to the 19 different editions on the market throughout the world today.

Initially, the graphic standards of the British edition were lower than its American counterpart. It was printed on cheaper paper, the graphics, particularly the use of type in titles and captions looked amateurish and there was less use of colour in the editorial features. This reflected the fact that initially the British edition did not generate the revenue required to maintain the more expensive design standards of its American counterpart.

Nevertheless, the content was the same. The contents page reveals an identical structure, with the same array of articles, features, fiction, beauty and fashion.

The same 13 departments appear, though some have new titles that adopt British idioms. For example "Cosmo Goes to the Movies" of the American edition becomes "Cosmo Sees the Films" in the British.

A cursory look at the titles of the articles and features in the August 1972 (British) issue would suggest that the subject matter adheres to the same formula and therefore constructs a similar image of women. Some of the titles are as follows: "Two Weeks in a Boat with 13 Husky Men", "The Power of Touch", "All you should know about Breasts", "Two Jackals waiting to be Snared", "The Slimming Problem" and "Water-Baby Workout". The interests here remain focussed on a woman's appearance, her body, and the pursuit of men.

It is interesting to note, however, that the reader's opinion column voices a liberal feminist stance, in both the 1972 British and American issues. The American 'Speakeasy' column titled "What's A Nice Girl Like You Doing In Women's Liberation"? (Jan.1972) is a positive though surface, assessment of the woman's movement. The British 'Talkabout' column titled "The Woman In My Life" (Aug.1972) describes a woman's flirtation with lesbianism in her youth. Though she opts for heterosexuality in the end, thus ultimately rejecting lesbianism, she does claim that the emotional and sexual pleasure derived from those affairs had never been surpassed. Both of these articles indicate that *Cosmopolitan* is anxious to create the impression that its readers are progressively minded and liberal and by extension that the magazine itself is progressive. There is, however, a striking contradiction in all this since the vast majority of the magazine's contents

promotes a view of women diametrically opposed to the feminist perspective.

However, it must be acknowledged that even at its most traditional *Cosmopolitan* was always interested in encouraging its readers to improve themselves. The problem is that this positive encouragement operated within an extremely limited view of women's potential. Its message was "Improve Yourself" seemingly implying that the problem lay with women themselves and thus denying the existence of very real social and ideological barriers which impeded women's social progress.

In the 1960's this type of positive encouragement was applied to improving a woman's looks, her body and overcoming traumatic life experiences such as failed love relationships. In the 1970's it extends into the area of work. An example of this positive encouragement in the August 1972 (British) issue is the article "Women in Top Jobs tell you how to get there". The article poses the question "Since women are as brainy and talented as men, why aren't they in the top jobs." The answers put the blame on women, "They don't exploit their brain power", "They're too passive". The readers are advised that the way to get to the top is to "accept that you must start as a secretary and work up" and that a woman "must work extra hours...make herself indispensable" in an effort to "improve our tarnished image". Thus women are told to accept that opportunities are unequal (largely due to women's bad work habits) and through hard and unpaid extra work rise above them. This denies the existence of the discriminatory practices and attitudes that operate in business organisations. Statistics prove that very few women are promoted from secretarial positions to beyond the level of lower management.

Furthermore all the women featured in the top jobs and who were handing out these gems of advice came from priveleged environments. For example, the "successful economist" came from a family in which the father himself was a "famous economist" and the mother a lecturer in statistics. Coming from a middle-class, highly educated environment with the bonus of having a financially independant mother lecturing in a male dominated discipline, for a role model, it is not surprising that this woman made it "to the top". The articles ignores the fact that the class and education of these women put them in a position of advantage over the vast majority of women in general and a large part of the readership of *Cosmopolitan* in particular. By doing so it glosses over class differences and thus renders them non-existent. The whole "Improve Yourself" thrust of the magazine reinforces the individualistic notion "you can make it if you try hard enough" that is central to the middle-class ethos which underpins society in general.

Ironically, *Cosmopolitan* does not seem to practice what it preaches. While it is constantly featuring these "women in top jobs" the magazine refuses to use women doctors and psychologists in its expert advice columns. By doing so it continues to promote the notion of the male voice of authority, thereby undermining any progressive intentions of these articles and of the magazine itself.

The British edition, as noted above, begins to address its audience in a particularly British way, and this was, of course, one of the main reasons for establishing a national version of the original

3

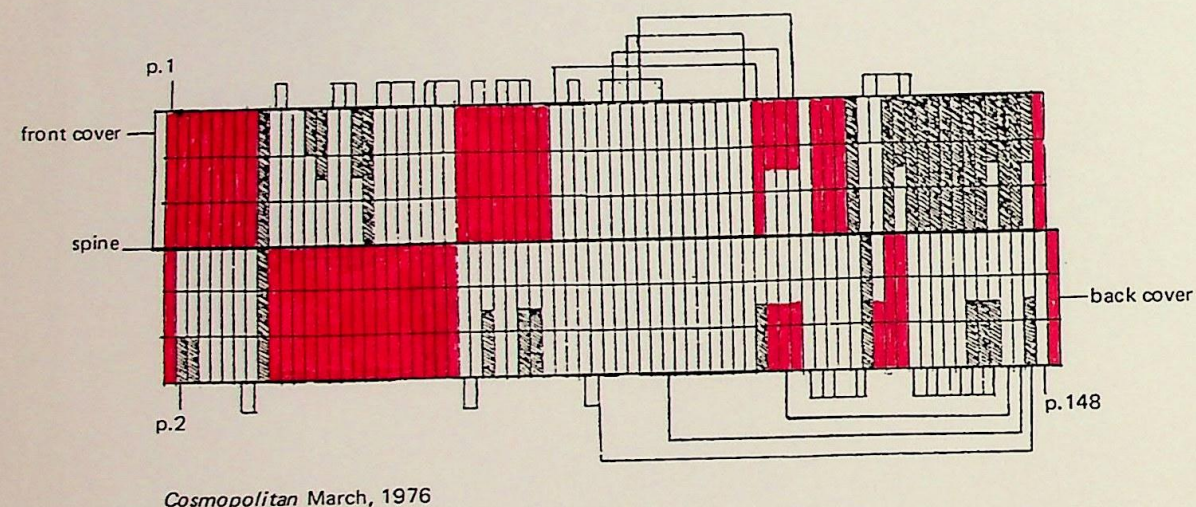
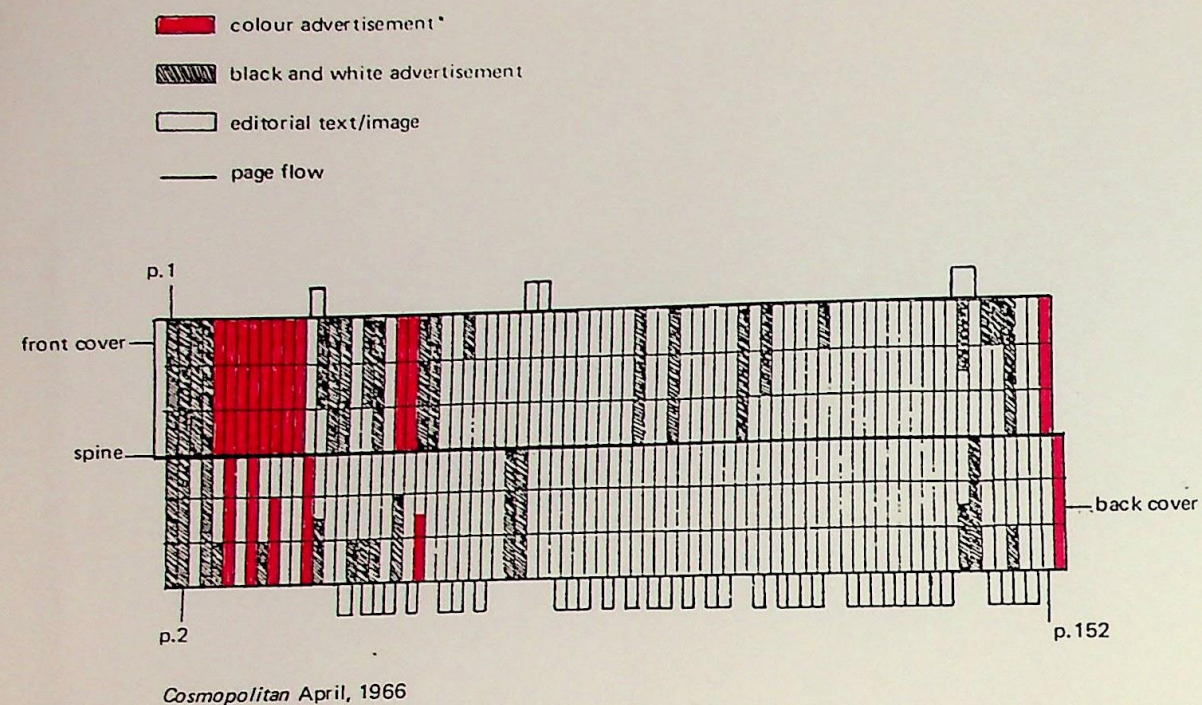
HOURS sewing and you have this stunning dress that fits more like a swimsuit. Simplicity pattern 5037 gives you a great exit line, right, in a pink Rose & Hubble fabric, and a good opening gambit, below, in Laura Ashley's printed cotton. His shirt (you can use the same pattern for yourself another time) is Simplicity 9435 in Rose & Hubble cotton and polyester. By Christian Dior.



"parent magazine" in the first place. It was not, however, only in its use of idioms that it did this.

Two striking examples of this process of 'ethnocentrism' are found in the August 1972 issue. The fashion feature titled "Sew and Go" and the "Cosmo Offer" a new item not found in the American edition, address themselves to an obviously less affluent reader than would normally be assumed by the magazine's American counterpart. The emphasis here is on economy rather than luxury. In fact the "Sew and Go" feature (Fig. 8) bears striking resemblance to the lower market appeal of traditional British women's magazines like *Woman* and *Woman's Own*. In "Sew and Go" the emphasis is on the comparatively less expensive means of making oneself fashionable - the good old British tradition of "Sewing Your Own". The articles of course, gives this traditional activity, a typically upbeat *Cosmopolitan* sense of glamour. The "Cosmo Offer" is again more typically British than anything found in the American magazine. Here the readers are invited to mail *Cosmopolitan* for the item of dress featured. The emphasis is again on economy and more significantly, versatility, implying as this does, that the reader will get extra value from an item that can be worn in a variety of situations. Again this type of offer is a traditional feature of more down market British women's magazines.

Two features, then, have been noted in this early edition of the British magazine. Firstly, it continues the process already discussed in relation to the American *Cosmopolitan*, of taking on board some of the



* 4-colour advertisement — consisting of colour photograph or full-colour illustration that require electronic scanning and separation into the 4 printing colours: yellow, magenta, cyan and black.

political issues being raised at the time by the women's movement, but inflecting these to suit the *Cosmopolitan* ideology. Secondly, this ideology is itself rendered more identifiable to the British audience by being inflected to take account of the different economic and social situation of British women.

The August 1972 issue was, of course, an early example of the first attempt to give the "Cosmo Girl" ideology specifically national characteristics. By 1976, the process was completed and the obvious success of the venture can be noted in both its more confident less tentative style and by the fact that its graphic design and use of colour was up to the standard of the American edition.

4. *Cosmopolitan* 1976.

What is immediately apparent from the comparison of the two graphs opposite is the extent to which advertising has encroached upon editorial over the intervening 10 years. This demonstrates a number of significant changes.

Firstly, the reading pattern has been dramatically altered. In the 1966 issue there is a highly concentrated section of the bulk of the editorial matter. The articles, features and fiction, with the exception of the novel, are presented in their entirety, one after the other. This 91 page section (from pg. 48 to 139) has only $6\frac{1}{3}$ pages of advertising and these occur between articles.

In the 1976 issue however, this editorial section has been reduced to 33 pages in which the only feature that appears in its entirety is the fashion spread. The rest of the articles are each allotted a double-page opening and then the reader is directed towards the back of the magazine where the article is completed. This requires the reader to negotiate pages of advertising to find the spot where the article she has been reading is continued. (This well known device has been beautifully parodied in the satirical magazine *Private Eye* in its famous instruction to readers "continued on Page 94"!)). When the reader eventually finds the continuing article she is, needless to say, confronted with yet another advertisement.

The graph also demonstrates a considerable increase in the total amount of advertising, as well as a significant increase in the number of full-page colour advertisements. In 1966, 26% of the contents were devoted to advertising. In 1976, in a magazine with 4 fewer pages, the amount of advertising has jumped dramatically to an astonishing 45% of the total contents. In terms of the proportion of colour advertising to total advertising, the jump is from 39% in 1966, to 66% in 1976. A number of conclusions can be drawn from this. In economic terms it seems reasonable to assume that the advertising base of the magazine has broadened considerably, perhaps reflecting the increasing importance of advertising to the print media in general. (It must be pointed out that a 45% advertising content does not represent a 45% advertising-generated revenue. The revenue from such a figure is, of course, much higher).

In terms of conception of the average *Cosmopolitan* reader it would also seem reasonable to assume that in 1966 the magazine considered that its average reader was more inclined to read, and in a more concentrated manner than was her 1976 counterpart. Furthermore, if it is argued, that to some extent all magazines construct their audiences, it can be seen from these statistics that *Cosmopolitan* has constructed a more affluent and even more consumer-oriented reader. The range of products advertised would seem to verify this. In 1966 the expensive colour advertisements fell into 5 categories - beauty products, liquor, personal hygiene products, cigarettes and travel. In 1976, these also feature prominently and in a similar ratio, however, there is a significant increase in advertising of luxury products like cars, hi-fis and even family size freezers.

All this is especially surprising in view of the fact that in the previous 10 years, but more so in the previous 5, there had been considerable debate about the role of women in society, that implied a criticism of precisely this kind of image.

These are conclusions, of course, which are drawn from the abstract information provided in the graphs. They suggest that despite greater affluence a woman's interests have not broadened in the intervening 10 years. Does an analysis of the contents bear this out?

On the credit side, it must be admitted that the contents reveal a number of items of a kind not found in the 1972 issue and which are positive, even

politically progressive, in their own terms. Four short items from the July 1976 issue are of particular interest here. An article titled "Reporting on the Pill NOW" assesses the arguments for and against the use of oral contraceptives. The article is not, however, moralistic in tone. It clearly concerns itself with the possible medical problems which can result from long term usage of the Pill and discusses the latest medical research on the topic. It is a positive contribution to the continuing debate over women's health and medical issues and is admirably serious in tone.

On the lighter side, the article "Could you make a pass at a Man?" does, at least, acknowledge women's sexuality in a more positive way and implies that in their relationships with men, women need not be so passive and should, in fact, take more control. Again, "Farewell to Machismo" anticipates and celebrates the passing away of at least one form of male dominance and superiority (even if this might be a bit optimistic of *Cosmopolitan*!)

A fourth short item continues the tradition, already noted, whereby *Cosmopolitan* encourages women to be more positive in themselves and indicates ways in which the reader can gain "total confidence". To these four items could be added a feature on women in top jobs which is an updated version of the 1972 article discussed earlier.

All these items reflect the greater influence the women's movement has had by this time. They are, however, undermined in three crucial ways, again a process

ARE YOU IN SHAPE TO SHINE?

To shine in the new sleek-as-skin swimsuits—whether it's a tiny string or a taut strappy one piece—you must be in perfect shape. Anything less, in fact anything *more*, won't do. There's time before summer to hone down your silhouette with diet and exercise—turn to pages 96 and 97 for encouragement. The chemistry of bare skin plus the shimmer of a clingy swimsuit works a special magic. Swimsuits as beautiful as these deserve to do a bit of moonlighting. Slip into one for that midnight dip. And see how you shine.

ΦΩΝΟΝ

ΟΤΕ ΥΠΕΡΑΣΤΙΚΟΣ
ΝΟΜΙΣΜΑΤΟΔΕΚΤΗΣ

FASHION BY LIZ SMITH
PHOTOGRAPHS BY
STEVE HIETT

noted earlier in relation to the 1970 American and 1972 British edition.

Most obviously, the "top jobs" feature and the encouragement to greater confidence, continue to be undermined by the male voice of authority, found elsewhere in the magazine. The expert advice in the medical and psychological columns, areas so crucial to women's general well-being, and jobs presumably which women should be encouraged to move into, are still being written by men. Secondly, the positive articles in the magazines are undermined by the other editorial items which surround them. These continue to reinforce traditional attitudes and such is their number that they reduce any progressive ideas to the level of "tokenism".

Finally, and most importantly, any progressively critical ideas expressed in the magazine are removed from the context which raised them in the first place the context of women's politics, where, as has been argued earlier, they are seen as surface manifestations of deep structural problems facing women in society. In the context of *Cosmopolitan*, swamped as they are by advertising, they appear as merely superficial irritants in an otherwise ideal, optimistic up-beat world. Indeed, compared to the world of 1966, this advertising world view is even more pervasive, more colourful and more seductive.

There is also a remarkable consistency in the ideal images offered by 1976. In the March issue, the fashion and fitness feature "Are you in shape to Shine?" (Figure 9) is dominated by a full colour, double-page photograph showing the expected results of the advice

offered. The woman, clad in bathing suit and looking "sleek and honed down" is surrounded immediately by three "ideal" men while a queue of others are lining up for the pleasure. In overall impact and in its implications, the photograph is remarkably similar to the 1970 "before and after" beauty feature discussed earlier. This is fairly representative example of the way in which *Cosmopolitan* in general and the advertising in particular continues to promote the notion that a woman's interests are and should be mainly her looks and the pursuit of men.

CHAPTER FOUR.

Contemporary *Cosmopolitan*
Something Old Something New...

1. *Cosmopolitan* 1981.

The July, 1981 cover of *Cosmopolitan* features Paula Yates (described as the "Princess of Punk") in typical head and shoulders medium close-up. She is wearing a revealing pale-blue dress tied over one shoulder only. Despite the description, her appearance is more soft feminine, than hard punk. She is wearing pink lipstick, her eyes are made up to suggest softness and the only recognisably "punk" aspect of her appearance is her starkly white hair. Even this, however, is controlled by being more traditionally styled than the spiky-topped punk look would be.

There could be no more appropriate cover image for *Cosmopolitan* as it stood in the early 1980's than this marriage of two cultures. On the one hand, Paula Yates is associated with the youth sub-culture of punk, in its time aggressively anti-establishment, angry and challenging. On the other hand, she is softened into a princess-like image of traditional feminine beauty, glamour and sex-appeal. The threat of punk is rendered harmless by being rendered familiar.

Paula Yates appears on the cover because the magazine contains two consecutive articles which feature her in different capacities. In the first, she interviews romantic novelist, Barbara Cartland, and in the second she writes about body-building for women. This latter article trades slightly on the aggressive connotations of punk but in fact, follows very clearly *Cosmopolitan's* tradition of urging women to improve themselves - in this case, slimming and fitness through weight-lifting.

Much more important for understanding *Cosmopolitan's* ideology, however, is the interview with Barbara Cartland. The article is titled "Barbara Cartland: In the Royal Pink" but it is the by-line which is most illuminating. It is worth quoting in full-

"A feminist's nightmare, romantic novelist Barbara Cartland comes out with statements like 'men have superior strength, and in most cases, superior intelligence...' Yet Paula Yates is an ardent fan".

As this by-line suggests, the ensuing interview is both friendly and supportive. The "Princess of Punk" and the "Queen of Romance" agree to agree, the new and the old find common ground.

This article, and the way in which the magazine projects Paula Yates, neatly incapsulates *Cosmopolitan's* whole ideology. The issues of the magazine in the 1970's discussed earlier, have indicated the way in which this ideology works - here it comes into full focus. Just as Paula Yates here has been plucked out as the acceptable face of the punk counter-culture so the magazine has consistently plucked out the less contentious concerns of the women's movement to render them equally harmless. Just as Paula Yates is used here to bridge the gap between the old and the new so the magazine re-inserts these feminist concerns into an underlying conservatism.

There can be no doubt, for example, that compared to 1976, the editorial content of this issue of *Cosmopolitan* is liberal, even progressive. It engages

with more feminist issues than it has done previously.

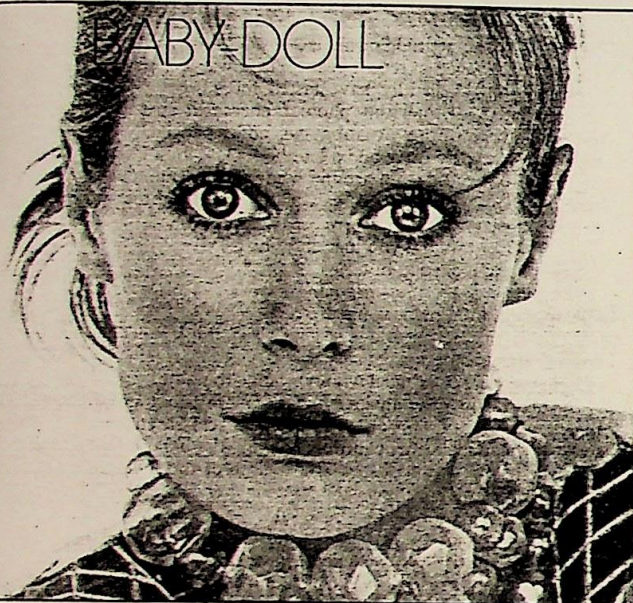
Most obviously, "Watch those Days - and make the most of your sexuality" encourages a positive attitude towards menstruation. "When a girl comes out" discusses in a liberal and understanding manner a heterosexual woman's response to discovering her friend's lesbianism. In the article "Stop Pleading Guilty" the reader is encouraged to ignore the traditional response which women are conditioned into when confronted with social or personal problems.

Generally, these editorial articles promote notions of assertiveness, confidence and persistence and even on occasions, address the readers as "Sisters". Furthermore, some of *Cosmopolitan's* more traditionally oriented regular features (departments as they were previously called) have been replaced by more progressive items. For instance, "the Beauty Bar" and "The Dieter's Notebook" have disappeared and have been superceeded by new regular columns - "Your Body" on matters of health and sexuality, "Health Reports" dealing with more general medical issues and especially, the "Live Issues" pages. This latter feature is described as "the pages that keep you up to date with all the news, views and campaigns that affect you". In this July issue, "Live Issues" dealt with the exploitation of strippers in terms of pay and conditions and the right of women to know the content of prescribed drugs. Finally, there is a new section called "Working Women" dealing with aspects relevant to women in generally middle-class type jobs.

The undermining of these progressive stances has become generally a little more sophisticated. For a start, the male voice of authority in the expert advice columns

r Faces

New Yorker Way Bandy is king of the visagistes, the make-up artist who transforms the faces of the rich and famous. Here, he talks to Pattie Barron about his technique and puts together four different looks for you to try yourself.



BABY DOLL
Outdoor Girl cosmetics, listed below, can be used for the Baby-doll face: the foundation should be one tone lighter than your own skin tone; Creme Silk Finish Powder; Powder Blusher in Pink Haze; Superpearl Shadow in Gold and Matte Shadow in Dove Grey; Browony Black Luxury Lash Make-up mascara; a light application of Cameo Pink Lipstick. The 'Twenties' Poster can be styled using the following Lancôme cosmetics: Maquillage foundation in Beige Ivoire; Maquillage Transparente Matte powder; Noir Crayon Kohl pencil; Noir Immencils mascara; Vermillon Crayon Contour des Lèvres lip pencil; Rouge Rouge Lipstick.



'TWENTIES' POSTER

outwards with soft brown pencil; add a stroke of dusky pink shadow under browbone. Curl lashes and apply several coats of black mascara. With a clear coral lipstick and lipbrush, define peaks of mouth to echo brow shape; lift corners slightly with outline for a smiling, sexy mouth. **Tip:** use baby talcum powder, applied with a big, soft brush, to set make-up.

Tropical blossom

The Tropical Blossom look shows how colours of ripe fruits and flowers flatter a rosy skin tone. Use a pink-toned foundation, buffed with translucent powder. Peach powder blusher should be applied to apples of cheeks to add colour only. With a sponge-tipped applicator, apply violet shadow around the eye and blend with fingertip. Stroke a touch of chalk-white shadow on to browbone and blend well. Add a little mascara and keep brows natural. Lips are unlined, merely coloured with creamy apricot lipstick. **Tip:** add a touch of peach blusher across bridge of nose to suggest a slight sunburnt look.

Baby-doll

Rosy cheeks and huge eyes have the appeal of a fragile, porcelain Baby-doll. Apply a foundation that is one tone lighter than your

own skin tone and buff with fine powder. Circle rosy blusher low down on face, like a doll's cheeks. Blank out brows as much as possible by covering them with foundation and shading with corn-coloured powder shadow. Gently smudge a little transparent grey shadow around the eye. Curl eye lashes and coat with mascara. Powder and blot lips and apply the palest lip colour—lighter than your natural lip colour. **Tip:** comb through eyelashes with a fine lash comb to give them a fringed effect.

'Twenties' poster

The 'Twenties' poster effect is created with palest skin, using no blusher or contour. Begin by applying an ivory liquid foundation and blending out carefully to neck. Buff on a light coating of chalk-white loose powder, dusting off excess from brush before applying. Use just one soft black pencil to shade eyes, outlining them with pencil and blending colour over lid and towards brow. Apply several coatings of mascara, allowing each coat to dry before applying next coat. Define lip shape with a bright red lip pencil then fill in with matching red lipstick. To add depth, apply lipstick over pencil outline. **Tip:** for ivory-pale skin, mix clear eyedrops into your foundation.

has been reduced by the fact that the medical doctor is now a woman. Secondly, because there are now so many relatively progressive editorial articles, these are no longer surrounded or swamped by the more traditional features. However, the regular beauty feature is particularly at odds with these more progressive attitudes. "The Super Faces" feature (Fig.10) presents stereotyped images of women, subtitled "Smokey-Eyed", "Tropical Blossom", "Baby Doll" and "Twenties Poster".

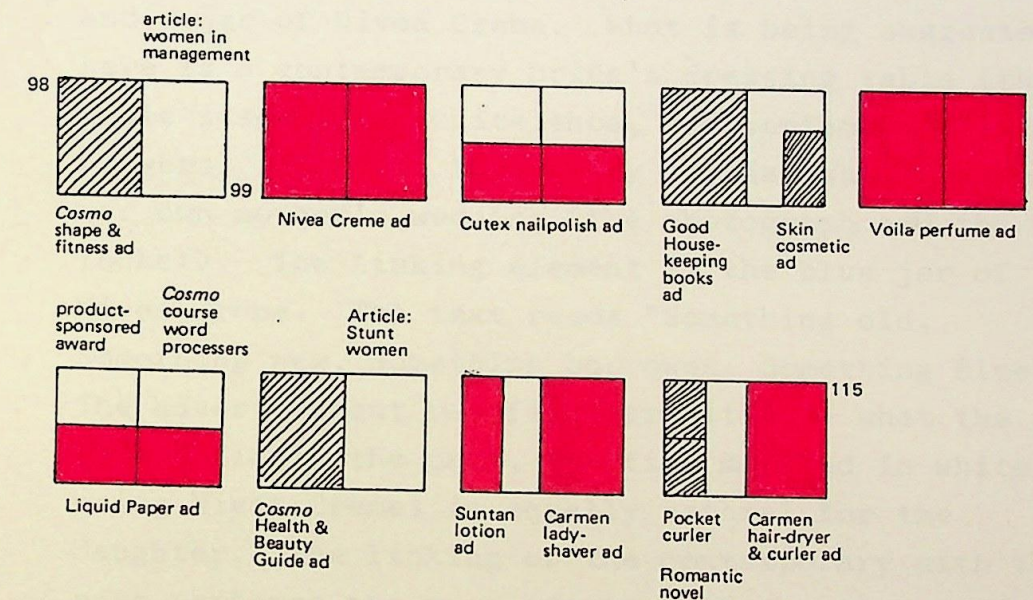
These images are, it has to be said, rather blatant and unsophisticated contradictions to the progressive intentions of the other articles. A more subtle form of undermining is found in two articles which consider the plight of men in the age of the "liberated woman".

"The Plight of the Unmarried Father" sympathises with the man who, under the law, has no guaranteed right to access to the child born of a failed relationship. In a familiar vein, in the "Talkabout" column, there is an embittered account by a man who was ditched by a former lover which invites sympathy for his plight.

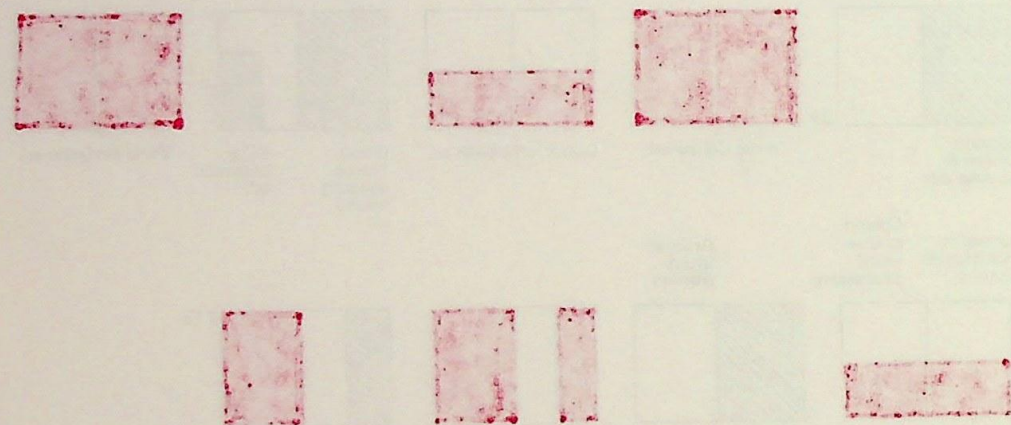
The main process of undermining progressive stances, however, occurs in two ways which are familiar from the study of *Cosmopolitan* in the 1970's. In the first place, these progressive ideas are still being discussed outside of the context of feminist politics where they are related to deeper structural problems. Their radical implications are, therefore, missed. Secondly, they are placed within the world of advertising which renders them relatively harmless, even manageable. Advertising does not just imbue the whole magazine with a certain aura, but it actually intrudes in a

very direct way into the progressive articles, setting up very contradictory messages for the reader. This is most obvious in the "Working Woman" section and happens in two clearly distinct ways. Firstly, the advertising copy intrudes in such volume and with such regularity that in terms of layout and design, the editorial copy is almost swamped, as illustrated in the diagram below.

Working Women Section— double page layouts



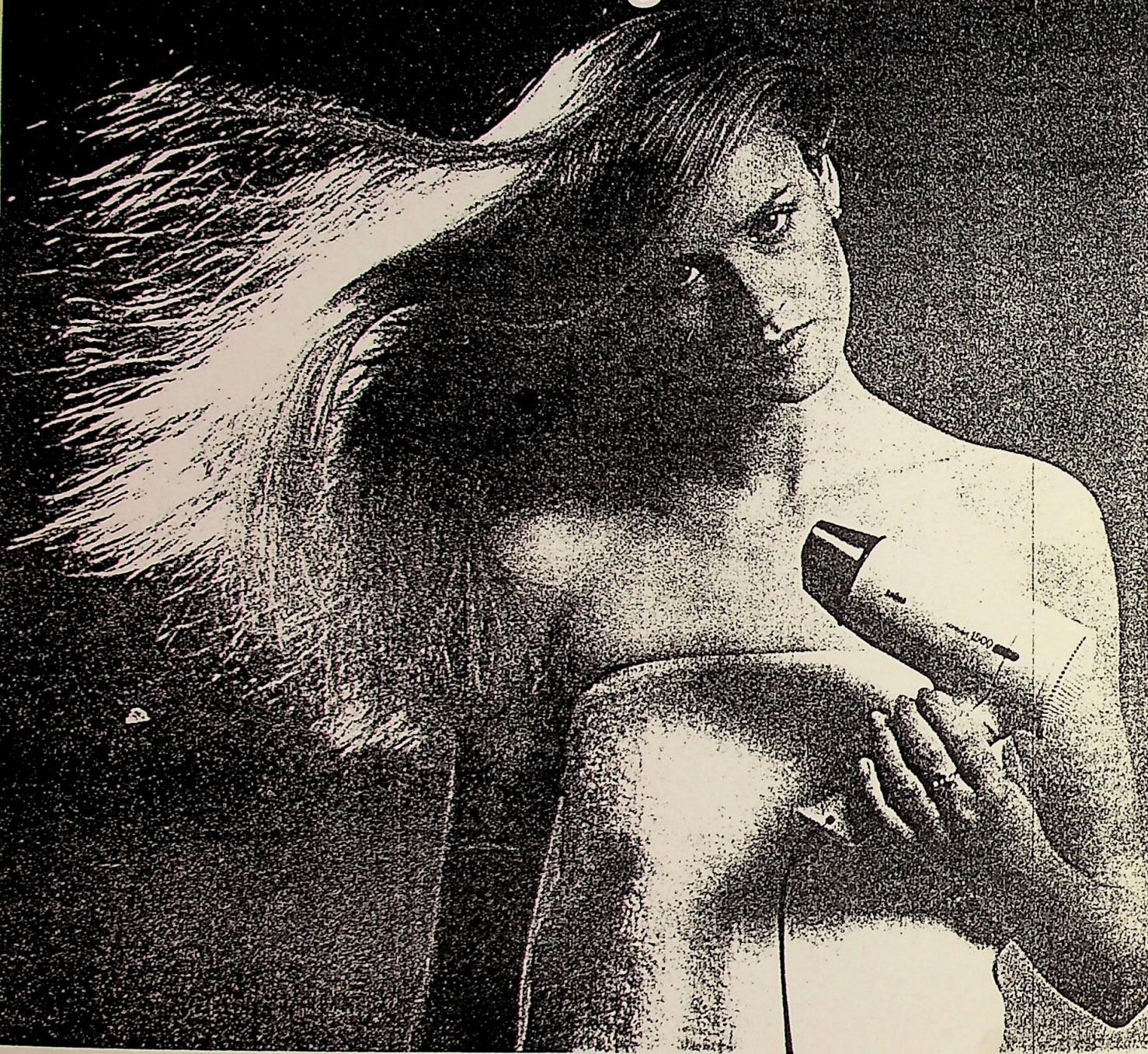
Secondly, the products being advertised operate another level of undermining. They are almost entirely advertisements for beauty products, the only exceptions being an ad for Good Housekeeping books and Liquid Paper "for secretaries who sometimes muddle their words". Therefore, a very traditional image of women is being interjected into a feature which supposedly concerns itself with a more progressive image. The contradiction is immense and the battle is unequal.



One advertisement in particular demonstrates this contradiction clearly. In the middle of an item on women in management, there is a double-page colour spread advertising Nivea Creme. The photograph is shot in soft focus monochromatic blue tones and reveals a dressing table on which there is an old-fashioned wedding photograph, a white high-heeled shoe, a locket showing a photo of a bride and groom, a bottle of perfume, a silver vase of flowers and a jar of Nivea Creme. What is being suggested here is a contemporary bride's dressing table (the table itself, the white shoe, the perfume and the flowers) linked to the memory of the past, presumably her own mother's wedding (the photograph and the locket). The linking element is the blue jar of Nivea Creme. The text reads "Something old, Something new, Something borrowed, Something Blue". The advertisement reaffirms tradition - what the mother did in the past, (getting married in white, using Nivea Creme) is equally natural for the daughter. The linking of the contemporary with the past performs the same ideological function as the linking of Paula Yates and Barbara Cartland. What is affirmed is not the break from the past which contemporary women might, or should, strive for but precisely the integration of the contemporary with the traditional. Again, this could sum up *Cosmopolitan's* overall function.

Not all the advertisements in the 1981 *Cosmopolitan* celebrate their basic traditionalism as overtly as the Nivea ad does. Many ads for beauty and cosmetic products play on the contemporary notion of the independant woman. A process noted earlier in the advertising in the 1970's.

**More power than ever before.
Without losing control.**



The new powerful Braun compact P1500 is likely to remind you of the professional dryer used by your hairdresser.

It has three settings to control heat and airflow.

To put you in charge of the power and save you drying time.

And the compact P1500 weighs a mere 12 ounces, too.

Powerful, manageable, controllable. Three important demands neatly taken care of for you, by Braun.

The New Braun Compact P1500.

Make the most of your hair.

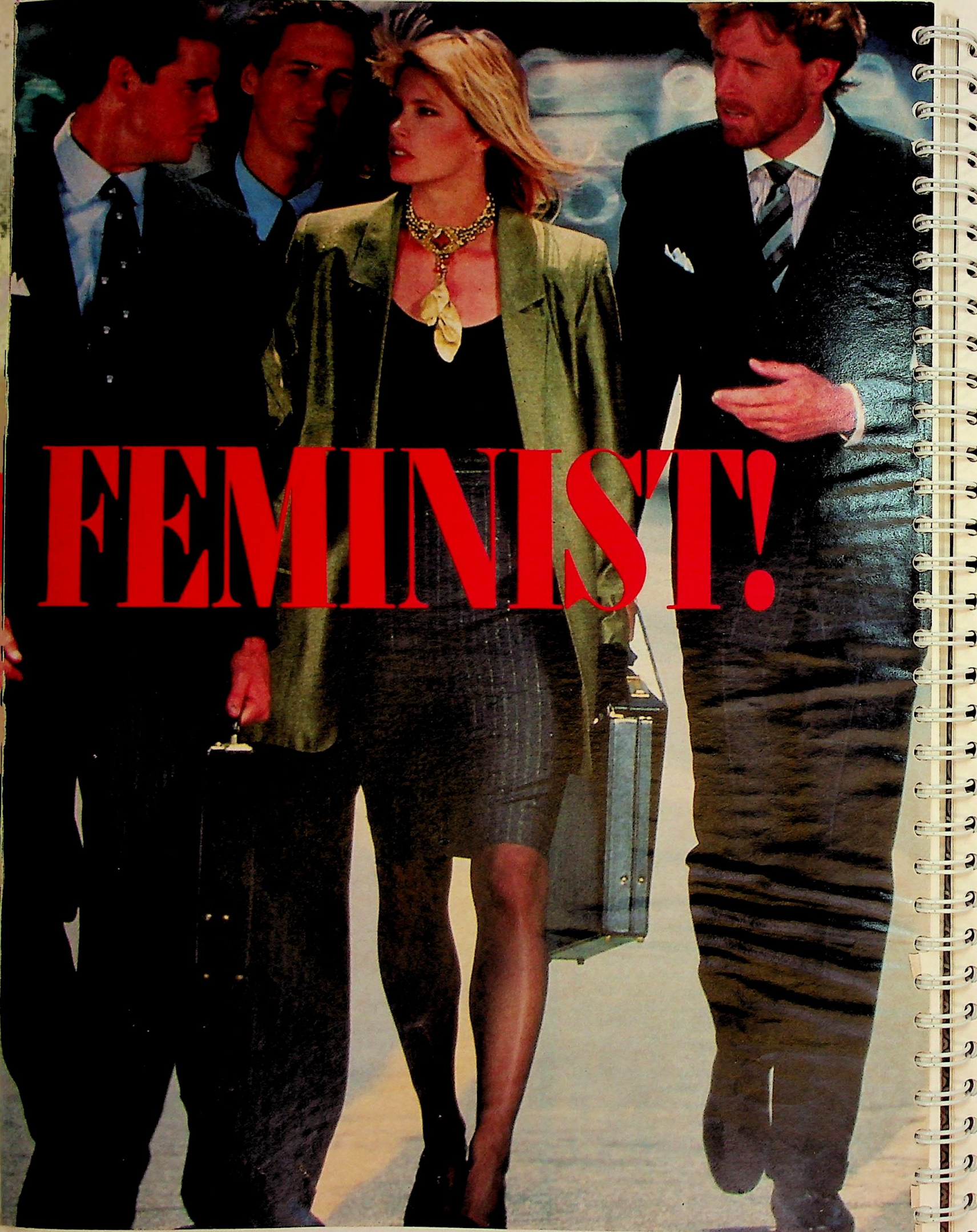
BRAUN

A good example here is the ad for a Braun hair dryer (Fig.11). The caption reads "More power than ever before. Without losing control". The colour photograph shows a woman dressed only in a bath towel, drying her long blonde hair. Her stance, expression and the way she holds the hair-dryer all suggest a woman who is immensely self-confident, challenging and defiant in ways which deny the vulnerability of her meagre dress. The text further emphasises these notions of power and control. It goes further, however. In summarising the advantages of its product, it proclaims - "Powerful, manageable, controllable. Three important demands neatly taken care of for you, by Braun". This is a parody of feminist demands. The whole ad works to trivialise the rhetoric of women's politics in favour of a product designed to promote traditional notions of beauty. Or as the ad itself says - "Make the most of your hair".

It can, therefore, be argued that this issue of *Cosmopolitan* demonstrates a total and consistent response to feminist politics. In its articles, its layout and design and in the advertising pages, the magazine fights a complete battle against the radical demands of the women's movement. By bringing on board some elements of these politics, it works to trivialise them or reduce their impact.

2. *Cosmopolitan* 1986.

If *Cosmopolitan* in 1981 can be seen to be fighting a rearguard action against the radical implications of feminism, by 1986 the magazine gives the impression that the threat to "Cosmo Girl" has receded and that



it is time to go on the counter-offensive. This is clearly demonstrated in an article in the April 1986 issue, titled "Cheers for the Capitalist Feminist!" The article is an unapologetic celebration of Thatcherite philosophy (Margaret Thatcher is mentioned as an exemplary "Capitalist Feminist") and is an all out attack on the kinds of feminist demands which would threaten the political and economic status-quo.

The by-line reads "Why can't a woman reach the top, earn big money, dress to kill and still be loved by the sisterhood?" The writer, Dr. Leah Hertz, argues the case for the self-made woman (whether in entertainment, business or politics) who makes it to the top *within* the system. It is Conservative in politics and right-wing in ideology. For Dr. Hertz "feminism is simply a matter of equality: women's financial and social equality with men". The problem with feminism is, she argues, that it has been "hi-jacked by the left". Her ideal "new woman" emerges clearly. Why, she asks, can't a woman be a high achiever as well as good looking?

The article conveniently ignores the fact that feminism grew out of an oppositional stance in the first place and was built on the assumption that "the person is political", that women's oppression runs much deeper than the problems of equal pay and equal opportunity.

This article (*Fig.12*) is illustrated by a full-page colour photograph of the new "capitalist feminist", blonde, beautiful and confident. She is wearing a scoop-necked black top and a heavy, jewelled choker-necklace with suspended gold leaves that conveniently cover her cleavage. Her tight-fitting pin-striped skirt and dark stockings complete the overall impression

of success in business coupled with sexual allure. She is surrounded by three young, extremely smart and trendy, business men. Her brief-case and her general air of confidence, suggest her equality with the men. Their looks and the composition of the shot suggest her attractiveness and sex appeal. As Dr. Leah Hertz says in the article of the capitalist feminist - "on the one hand they are good looking, softly spoken and alluring, and on the other they are capable and assertive, know what they want and how to get it."

This image of the woman surrounded by admiring men is a remarkably consistent one. It has been discussed earlier in relation to the 'before and after' image of the secretary from the 1970 *Cosmopolitan* and the bathing suit and fitness feature in the 1976 magazine. That it should appear again in 1986 confirms that, despite some superficial changes, *Cosmopolitan* has peddled a consistent image of women for over 20 years.

This feature sums up *Cosmopolitan's* contemporary image. Its celebration of the individual and her unlimited freedom of choice is a consistent theme which is echoed throughout the magazine. The "style" fashion feature in this issue, subtitle "Showzones" is of particular interest. The whole feature celebrates the "return" of "the body in all its parts". The fashions discussed and shown are designed to show off the figure and those parts of the body which a woman considers to be her most advantageous "erogenous zones". The four photographs illustrating this article show the woman breaking through the boundaries of the page (or double-page) in ecstatic celebration of the power of her sexual attractiveness (Fig.13).

bathing suit, with a
down like a vest over
with the cut-away leg-
waist or the perennial

significance in fash-
? Costume historian
that waists rose and
position in times of
came back to base
ed. Financial gurus
that the hemline fol-
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re out to prove that
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longer fashionable to
predatory female beats
f joining him. In
male is spreading his
brighten up.

lift of fashion's pulse
more than a desire
understanding that
notice. If you want to
o excite, and that
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men and their sexual-
own out of that kind
have we? In her last
Westwood put hooped
lly dresses, claiming
omen's bodies from
the weird Westwood
ape of fashion, con-
eaving a lot of leg
ey are ever made
at for women,
ve win. ☑

Than The
selection at
on p217.

“Fashion moves
round the body
making a peep show
of our parts”

style

All four women are framed, (on separate pages)
against a white background which makes them stand
out in visual terms and emphasises their individ-
uality and uniqueness. The assumption behind
this new liberation is explained in the text "Now
Sociologists are out to prove that fashion's return
to fit and shape signifies a new perception of
womanhood in the wake of liberation" (my emphasis)

There is, here, a bogus appeal to academic research
to justify the assumptions of the feature. These
assumptions are based on a notion that emancipation
has been achieved - it is the age of post-feminism.
The striking visuals are used to connote a new found
power and liberation. As the quote from *Figure 13*
clearly shows - "fashion moves round the body making
a peep-show of our parts".

This "new liberation" is equally bogus. As was the
case in *Cosmopolitan* 20 years ago, it is men who are
doing the peeping. The women are displaying their
bodies for male gratification. The new found freedom
is only to carry out the age-old role.

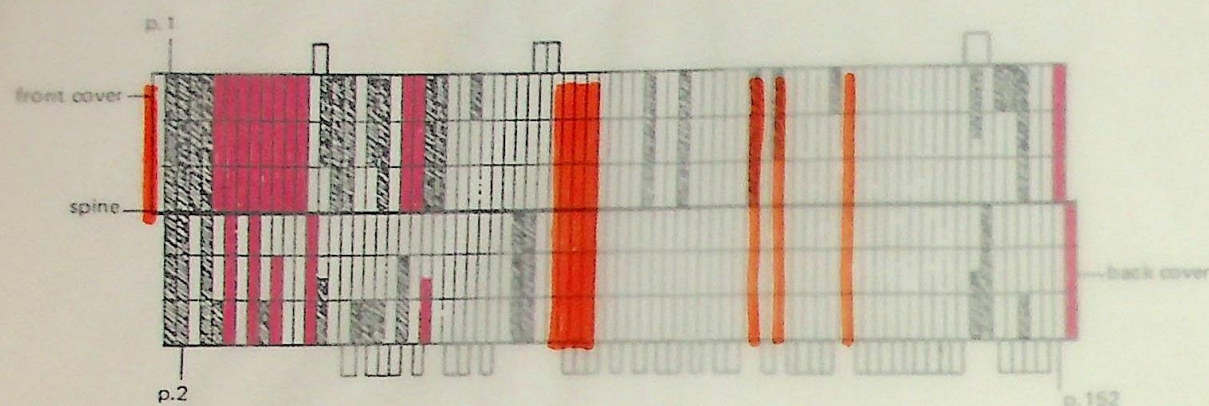
This idea of post-feminism with its celebration of a
conservative, right-wing ideology, inflects the whole
of contemporary *Cosmopolitan*. The range of articles,
features and advertising now address the reader from
the assumption that she has been emancipated and is
free to choose her own lifestyle. In this April 1986
issue, for instance, the articles cover such topics as
divorce, controlling emotional problems at work,
reviewing finances (mortgages and investments!),
what mothers want for their daughters, gourmet pizzas
and potted plants for backgardens and bedsits. The
Cosmopolitan reader who has matured with the magazine
into the "Cosmo Woman" is addressed in her diversity -

as single woman, or married woman, as career woman or mother or any combination of these - without any feeling of contradiction or that social structures as may present a present a problem. "The world is her oyster."

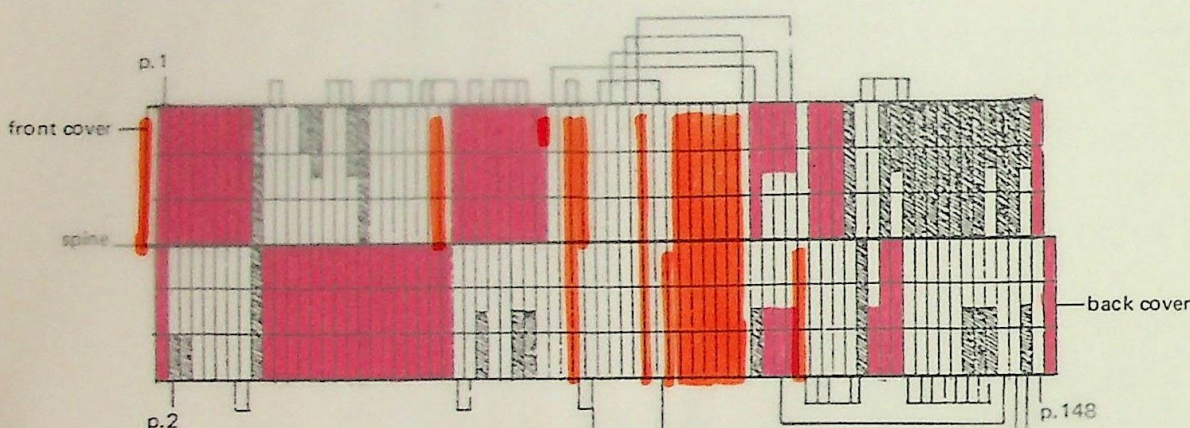
The new emancipated woman need not concern herself with feminist issues, to her they are out-dated, misguided and irrelevant. This is clearly revealed in this issue's *Cosmo* review of Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. The book paints a bleak picture of a totalitarian male-ruled society of the future of arises from the puritanical, right-wing backlash of the 1980's. The review, whilst it admits the book is thought provoking, ultimately criticises it for portraying the 20th. century (1980'S) as "clouded with a sense of doom" with "none of the sense of exhilaration of living in a liberal society."

Furthermore, the campaigning feminist edge of some of the more progressive items discussed in relation to the 1981 *Cosmopolitan* has seemingly disappeared in 1986. "Live Issues" in April 1986 complains about pollution on Britain's bathing beaches, reports on the benefits of office gossip and gives advice on how to jump the long queues for National Health operations. Feminist concerns simply do not feature in the entire April issue. The July 1986 issue, however, did include an article on rape, that deplored the fact that the rape victim is put on trial along with the accused rapist. Though this article clearly agrees with the feminist position, it is a position that virtually every woman would agree with. Furthermore it appears in isolation, surrounded by articles that flaunt the new woman's confidence, success and equal status with men, thereby suggesting that the

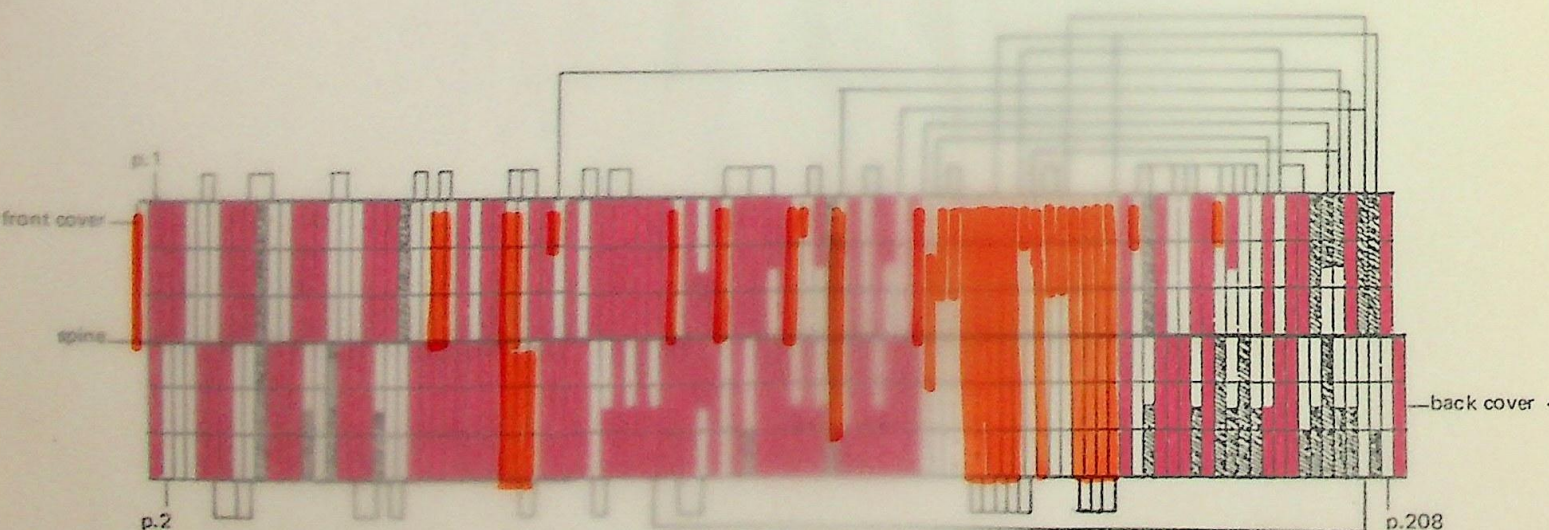
colour advertisement*
 black and white advertisement
 editorial text/image
 — page flow



Cosmopolitan April, 1966



Cosmopolitan March, 1976



Cosmopolitan July, 1986

* 4-colour advertisement — consisting of colour photograph or full-colour illustration that require electronic scanning and separation into the 4 printing colours: yellow, magenta, cyan and black.

question of rape represents one of the rare blights on this emancipated woman's otherwise comfortable world.

The real liberation is that *Cosmopolitan* has been liberated from Liberation. The process of containment identified in the 1970's and early 80's is virtually over. The magazine is now an unabashed vibrant, colourful celebration of the world of fashion, beauty products and luxury consumer goods.

The graphs opposite illustrate just how effectively the magazine now operates as a market place for consumer goods. It confirms the trend noted in discussion of the 1976 magazine that an increasing proportion of its contents is being devoted to advertising. In 1966 the proportion of advertising to the total content was 26%. By 1976, this had risen to 45% and in 1986 it has reached 54%. This represents a considerable encroachment on the editorial copy. As can be seen from the graph, this encroachment operates at a physical level. The blocks of editorial copy have now been eaten into by the advertising, bringing about a more complete integration of one with the other. This makes the process of negotiation for the reader more difficult which favours the advertisers even more and further enhances the composite nature of the *Cosmopolitan* message. If one takes into account the continuing difficulty of differentiating some of the editorial copy from the advertising (as in the product-naming fashion features) the proportion of advertising would be greater.

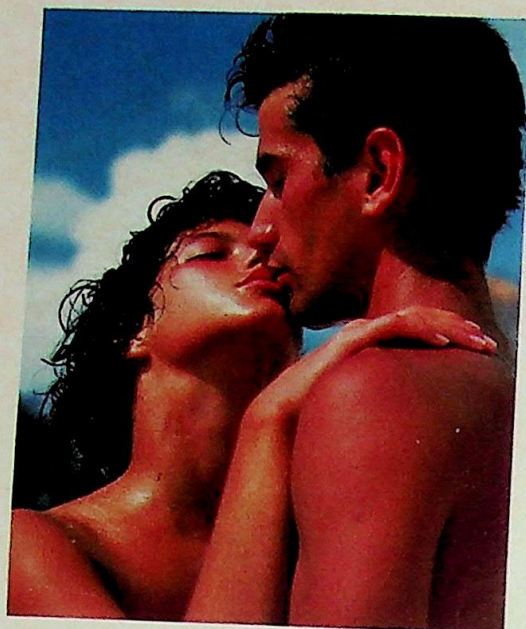
The use of colour advertising has also greatly increased. It has risen from 39% of total advertising in 1966, to 66% in 1976 and 83% in 1986. This gives the contemporary magazine a greater visual impact,



Give skin an inner and outer glow. Try a tinted moisturiser with cell energising properties: Clarins' new Revitalizing Tinted Moisturiser, £9.50; Prescriptives Sun Tint Moisture Make-up, £16.50.

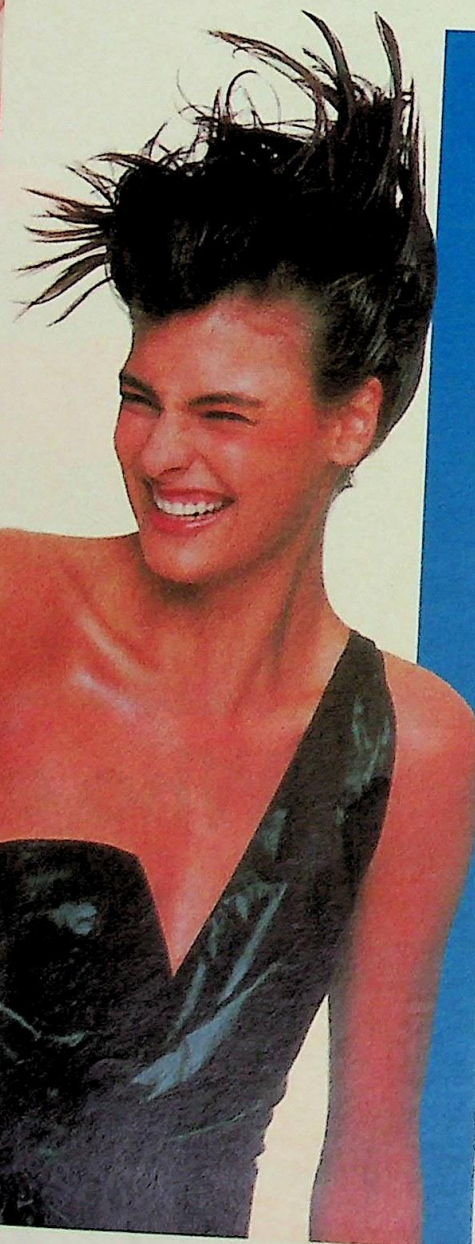
BEST BEAUTY BET + BEST BEA

Foam foundation for a light, fine finish.
Simply Perfect Mousse Make-up by Elizabeth Arden, £9.50, from 7th April.



WHAT'S NEW

Have a sun-kissed summer. Almay's new Total Bloc Lip Protector, SPF 15 is in tube form—no melting sticks to fall into the sand! Priced around £1.95.



Skin tricks: Zip up circulation with a spray of ice cold water. Then moisturise skin while it's still damp. Try Vichy's moisturisers for free—they're offering Cosmo readers sachets of Equalia, Equalia 2000, Early Wrinkle Cream, Wrinkle Treatment and Firming Cream, Les Lumineuses, Nutritives 1 and 2, and Body Milk. Send a postcard to: Vichy, 15 Nuffield Way, Abingdon, Oxon OX14. ☐

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a fact also reflected in the editorial use of colour. On the overlay demonstrating this it can be seen that in 1966, 4-colour photographs or illustrations were used in the fashion features and as introduction to the fiction and novel only. In 1976 their use had been extended to illustrate the travel and home-decorating features and one article. In 1986, however, the use of colour is much more widespread. In addition to those features mentioned above, colour photographs now illustrate many of the main articles. The *Cosmo* world has indeed become a vibrant, up-beat world of colour.

Furthermore, this greater use of editorial colour blurs the distinction between editorial and advertising, previously more discernable from the contrast of black and white versus colour. Of particular interest are those features which under the guise of information, endorse named products. The fashion feature has always been in colour, however, in 1986 the new style section ('Show Zones') discussed above represents an expansion of product-endorsing pages as well as a greater emphasis on fashion and beauty. As the editor herself claims "well to take your mind off serious things... we now feature more fashion and style pages than ever before"! "What's New" (Fig.14) an item that recommends new products to the readers, had previously been in black and white. - Now it has been expanded to two full pages and made extremely colourful, trendy and eye catching. This further confuses *Cosmopolitan's* editorial voice with the intrusive voice of the advertisers.

There is nothing surprising in this. *Cosmopolitan's* function as a market place for products and its consistent endorsement of the image of women reflected in advertising has always been its main characteristic. In 1986, it seems to positively revel in it.

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CONCLUSION:

This survey of *Cosmopolitan* established the underlying ideology behind "Cosmo Girl" as the magazine constructed her in 1966. Her interests were confined to those traditionally assigned to women. In her unending pursuit of men, she was interested only in her physical appearance and its corollary fashion and beauty. She achieved feelings of fulfillment, self-satisfaction and status through men.

By tracing her development in the pages of the magazine throughout the period of the Women's Liberation Movement, it has been shown that she developed only to stand still. The magazine did encourage her to seek more independence and thereby gain satisfaction through her own merit, however, male approval remained as her ultimate goal.

Furthermore, the study shows that at its best *Cosmopolitan* only addressed the issues raised by women's politics the more to undermine and contain them. At its worst, the magazine actively campaigned against women's politics, and today celebrates what it sees as their contemporary lack of relevance. It is not surprising that *Cosmopolitan* should function to eliminate feminist politics. On one level feminism threatens the very existence of a woman's magazine such as *Cosmopolitan*. On a more significant level feminist demands for a fairer distribution of resources and power in society threaten the current socio-economic structure, which

the publishing industry depends upon and plays a vital role in upholding.

Throughout the 20 years of this survey, *Cosmopolitan* has performed its function as a market place for consumer products with increasing effectiveness and played an important ideological role in the maintenance of patriarchal concepts of a woman's role in society.

REFERENCE NOTES.

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1. Humphrey McQueen quoted by Len Masterman in Teaching the Media London: Comedia 1986.

Chapter 1.

1. For a detailed description of the contents of women's journals see Irene Dancyger, A World of Women.
2. Marjorie Ferguson, Forever Feminine p.16
3. J.K. Galbraith's notion that advertising keeps the atmosphere "suitably consumptive" cited by Gillian Dyer in Advertising as Communication, applied here to the media in general.
4. Sally Stein 'The Graphic Ordering of Desire.'
5. These examples and others are cited in the film Rosie the Rivitter directed by Connie Field, 1980.
6. Gillian Dyer, op.cit., p.52.
7. Copy documents from Woman quoted by Marjorie Ferguson op.cit., p.23.
8. Audit Circulation Bureau, Figures 1980, listed by Marjorie Ferguson, ibid., pp.24-25.

Chapter 2.

1. National Readership Survey, Jan-Dec. 1981, and Audit Bureau Circulation Jan-Dec. 1981, listed by Marjorie Ferguson, op.cit. p.3.
2. Sally Stein, op.cit.
3. Eileen Schultz, personal conversation during her visit to NCAD March 3, 1987.

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1. Kate Millet's 'Notes towards a theory of Patriarchy' summarised by Juliet Mitchell in Woman's Estate.

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