

THE TEXTUAL CONSTRUCTION OF FEMININITY  
IN WOMEN'S FITNESS MAGAZINES

by

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ABSTRACT

THE TEXTUAL CONSTRUCTION OF FEMININITY  
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Women in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century encounter competing ideologies of traditional femininity and empowered femininity. Language, in particular Discourse Analysis, provides a means for investigating what these ideologies, or discourses, are and how they are perpetuated. One source of language which encodes and perpetuates ideologies of femininity is women's magazines. As pervasive, monthly texts directed specifically at women, women's magazines provide a rich source of contemporary ideologies of femininity. Given the rise of health and fitness magazines over the past 20 years, it appears that one primary focus of contemporary femininity is the body. Previous research has found that the idealized female body today – an extremely thin body –

encodes traditional femininity in that it represents social values of beauty, smallness, and others-orientation, but it also encodes empowered femininity in that it represents will-power, dedication, and strength.

Using one fitness instructional text from eight different women's fitness magazines, an analysis of the rhetorical structure, clauses, and lexicon demonstrates how these texts perpetuate a hybrid discourse which actually integrates traditional and empowered femininity. This hybrid discourse appears as a seamless combination of the two "parent" discourses by placing itself in the middle of a continuum between traditional femininity and empowered femininity: emphasizing achievement but to a limited degree, and celebrating beautification and objectification. The hybrid discourse also supports a sociological trend of many women wanting to balance competing demands of portraying highly valued but traditionally male traits while still being seen as traditionally feminine.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

American women at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are in a unique period in history. In many ways, they are more powerful and seen with more authority than ever before. In political realms, women hold a number of elected and appointed offices. The Center for American Women and Politics reports in 2007, women hold 86 seats in the U.S. Congress: 16 seats in the Senate and 70 seats in the House of Representatives. There are five women in the presidential cabinet and nine female governors (2007). In the business world, there are numerous highly visible female business leaders, with more women running FORTUNE 500 companies than in previous years. As of 2006, 10 FORTUNE 500 companies were run by women, up from 9 in the previous year, and a total of 20 FORTUNE 1000 companies had women in the top job, up from 19 in the previous year (CNNMoney.com 2006). In terms of education, “women continued to earn more degrees than men in academic year 2002–03, about 58 percent of all degrees. Women earned 60 percent of all associate’s degrees, 58 percent of all bachelor’s degrees, and 59 percent of all master’s degrees” (U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics 2005:1).

Furthermore, women have achieved several famous firsts in recent years. In 2006, Katie Couric became the first woman to serve as a solo anchor for an evening

news show, CBS Evening News (CBSNews.com 2006). In 2007, Harvard University named Drew Gilpin Faust its first woman president in the school's 371-year history (CBSNews.com 2007). Also in 2007, Representative Nancy Pelosi became the first woman to serve as Speaker of the U.S. House (Center for American Women and Politics 2007). Thus, women appear to have broken down barriers in every field, from politics to business to the academy, and are flexing their power.

At the same time, more traditional views of women abound. Laura Doyle's 2001 book, *The Surrendered Wife*, captured media attention as it encouraged women to abandon the desire to control their husbands in order to gain romance, harmony, and intimacy. While some claimed the book promoted passivity, others saw the advice as simply showing "the destructiveness of trying to control another human being, particularly your spouse" (Braverman 2001:1). A *New York Times* best seller, the book clearly resonated with many women.

More and more women are also staying home with their children rather than working outside the home. "In 1998, 41.3 percent of mothers with infants stayed home with their children; in 2000, the figure rose to 44.8 percent" (Wen 2003:1). Of particular interest is that "the increase is most pronounced among college graduates" (Wen 2003:1), many of whom have worked a decade or more before taking time off to raise a child and plan to return to work at some point. Many companies are taking notice, and offering flexible hours, part-time work, and "on-ramps" to help women return to the workforce after time off. "Faced with this giant leak in the talent pipeline,

more employers have begun actively recruiting off-rampers, or trying to ensure they never leave” (Stark 2006:1).

Many women also seem to spend more time and money on their appearance than ever before, a trend that appears to be a step backwards for feminism, but which is embraced by women – and men. “At the dawn of feminism, there was an assumption that women would not be as severely judged on their looks in the ensuing years. Phooey. It’s just the opposite. Looks matter more than ever” (Dowd 2005:188). In 2006, the American Society of Plastic Surgeons reports that in 2006 women had 9.9 million cosmetic procedures, as opposed to men’s 1.1 million procedures. Of the procedures women had done, 1.6 million of which were surgical procedures such as breast augmentation or face lifts and 8.3 million of which were minimally invasive procedures such as Botox or cellulite treatments. This represents an increase of 9% since 2005 and an increase of 55% since 2000 (2007). “In all likelihood, this trend will continue, driven by social and technological changes that are unlikely to be reversed anytime soon – changes such as the new ubiquity of media images, the growing financial independence of women, and the worldwide weakening of marriage” (Akst 2005:1). Many people are aware that looks matter: “attractive people are paid more on the job, marry more desirable spouses, and are likelier to get help from others” (Akst 2005:1). What may appear to be a throwback to the objectification of women is seen by some women as a chance to portray femininity and to create opportunities. Even powerful women are not immune to caring about their appearance. In a 2005 visit to the Wiesbaden Army Airfield, Condolezza Rice gained a great deal of attention for

“wearing an all-black ensemble of sleek high-heeled boots, a military inspired coat, and just-above-the-knee black skirt” (Bratskeir 2005:1). The outfit, labeled everything from “sexy” to “powerful” to “dominatrix,” was “striking because she walked out draped in a banner of authority, power, and toughness” (Givhan 2005:1). While many feminists decried the fact that her outfit gained so much attention, others noted that today’s professional women use clothing to show power and femininity, and to display the confidence professional women have to not simply mimic men, but to portray their femininity (Bratskeir 2005). Thus, as surrendered wives, stay-at-home mothers, and appearance-oriented females, some women seem to embrace more traditional notions of femininity.

Since the early 1990s, researchers have been examining the competing and sometimes contradictory ideologies that American women face and enact. Called “third wave feminism,” this line of research examines how women born between 1964 and 1973 (and even later) view the accomplishments and failures of the second wave feminists (those of the 1960s and 1970s), as well as how women deal with the plethora of cultural choices and images bombarding them today (Heywood and Drake 1997).

These contradictions in the choices and images presented to women can create a number of problems. First is that most women (and men) do not fit into only one gender ideology. “Most men and women do not conform to the cultural stereotypes of masculinity and femininity, yet these cultural expectations still serve as standards against which people judge themselves and others” (Basow and Rubin 1999:26). Furthermore, if two competing ideologies are presented as being equally and fully

attainable, individuals may face unrealistic demands to fulfill both, leading to confusion, tension, and even low self-esteem (Basow and Rubin 1999, Phillips 1999).

This study endeavors to examine how competing ideologies of femininity in the U.S. are played out through language. In order to determine what feminine ideology or discourse is depicted in women's fitness magazines, I will examine how feminine ideologies are constructed from a variety of perspectives. First, I will examine linguistic research to demonstrate that feminine ideologies are reflected and constructed through language. Second, I will narrow in on magazines to demonstrate how magazines serve as a source of femininity through both their language and their social and contextual factors. Finally, I will examine why and how the female body has become a source of differing femininities. Throughout, I will focus specifically on how language, magazines, and women's bodies encode traditional femininity and empowered femininity. In my analysis, I examine the language of fitness magazines' workout articles on changing the female body to determine what ideology of femininity they portray. The result will show how many contemporary women are envisioning femininity today as a middle point between the two extremes of traditional femininity and empowered femininity.

### 1.1 Why Study Language?

Language offers a means to examine underlying ideologies. Language is a powerful device, in that it both reflects the ideologies of the producer and reinforces the ideologies through the uttering of them. "Language has a magical property: when we



speak or write, we design what we have to say to fit the situation in which we are communicating. But, at the same time, how we speak or write creates that very situation” (Gee 1999:10). Language, then, reflects and creates ideologies. Language also has the ability to allow us to connect with others. By voicing ideologies that others agree with, speakers create connections and mutually reinforce values.

In using language which evokes a socially recognized ideology or identity, one is engaging in using a discourse. Through the rhetorical devices, syntax, and lexicon one uses, an individual can construct a frame of reference that, if recognized by the addressee, carries deeper meaning because of the discourse it conjures up. “Discourse is socially constituted, as well as socially conditioned” (Wodak 1996:17). Discourses “work” because others recognize and understand not just the surface meaning of the lexicon, syntax, and rhetorical devices, but the underlying social connotations. These social connotations are recognizable because speakers share a frame of reference and draw upon familiar linguistic choices which point to the underlying ideology.

While speakers may enact discourses unconsciously, they are nonetheless conscious of a wide range of value sets and ideologies that they may wish to portray. In some cases, they may even have to choose between competing and contradictory ideologies. For example, it is difficult to use language which points to both pro-life and pro-choice at the same time. Some ideological positions, like pro-life and pro-choice, appear to be polar opposites, but others, like femininity, appear to be more of a continuum, and individuals may attempt to use language to place themselves somewhere along the continuum, rather than at one extreme or the other.

## 1.2 Why Study Femininity?

Many American women feel they are faced with contradictory ideologies of how to portray being a successful woman (Coates 1997, Phillips 1999, Munford 2004, Spencer 2004). For example, on one hand, they want to celebrate their womanliness, and be seen as traditionally feminine, i.e., as kind, sociable, nurturing, equitable and beautiful; on the other hand, they want to be seen as equal to men, and they want to demonstrate their internalization of positive (masculine) qualities such as powerfulness, rationality, assertiveness, and strength (Hare-Mustin and Marecek 1988, Romaine 1999, Johnston and Swanson 2003, Munford 2004, Spencer 2004, Litosseliti 2006). In terms of being traditionally feminine, Spencer writes that there is a “revalorization of all things girly in popular culture,” (2004:10), and Munford points to the “celebration of popular modes of femininity, including the tabooed symbols of female enculturation – Barbie dolls, makeup, fashion magazines, high heels” (2004:144). In contrast, researchers also note the growth of female power and assertiveness. Stasia (2004) notes the “images and labels of the new female action hero is gaining cultural currency” (2004:175) and Dowd writes, “once we got far enough along to see that we could achieve male status and power, we recoiled at the idea of doing it on male terms” (2005:70). As a result, many women may look for ways to integrate conflicting and competing ideologies of femininity.

Two competing ideologies of femininity that this dissertation will examine are what I term traditional femininity and empowered femininity. By traditional femininity, I am referring to ideals of white, middle-class femininity valued through the first half of

the twentieth century, particularly the 1950s, and often still stereotyped as feminine today. These ideals are such characteristics as sociability, humbleness, others-orientation, and domestic-orientation. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, even to the early 1970s, femininity was defined in these ways:

Feminism in the fifties was constructed through dominant notions of femininity...Girls and women were surrounded by representations of themselves which focused on the satisfactions they would achieve through their marriage and their children (Birmingham Feminist History Group 1979:63).

The ideal woman is perceived as significantly less aggressive, less independent, less dominant, less active, more emotional, having greater difficulty in making decisions, etc., than the ideal man (Broverman et al. 1972:69).

Others have used the term “traditional” to describe these qualities. Carty discusses “what are perceived as more traditional feminine qualities (passivity, dependency, sensuousness, and an emphasis on family and relationships)” (2005:133). Hoffman and Pasley note, “women were traditionally viewed as passive, relational, and emotional” (2000:192). Romaine writes “advertising emphasizes the traditional view that women’s place is in the home (most often in the kitchen and bathroom) as wife and mother” (1999:253), and Baker notes, “the images in White-oriented media and the images of White women conformed to the traditional image of sexuality, which is submissive and dependent on men” (2005:25). As such, I will use the term “traditional femininity” to refer to the ideology of femininity which portrays women as sociable, communal, and domestic-focused.

By empowered femininity, I am referring to ideals of white, middle-class women embraced by second-wave feminists. These ideals are such characteristics as

independence, assertiveness, rationality, powerfulness, and strength. Throughout the late 1970s and into the 1980s, femininity was described in these terms:

Women's current role models are strong, independent, and in control. They are tough, smart, and command respect (Doyle 1988:28).

Women's advances had begun to give them the opposite traits – high self-esteem, a sense of effectiveness, activity, courage, and clarity of mind (Wolf 1991:188).

Others have used the term “feminist” or “empowered” to refer to these qualities. Eskes, Duncan, and Miller note that fitness magazines texts construe an empowerment ideology, and that “this empowerment ideology can be described as a feminist ideology because it takes a decidedly pro-woman stance” (1998:319). Carty discusses “feminist goals of independence, self-determination, assertiveness, control, and gender equality” (2005:133). As such, I will use “empowered femininity” to refer to qualities feminists ascribe to women, such as independence, assertiveness, power, activity, and control.

While there may have been other ideologies of femininity throughout the twentieth century, these two are worth examining for a number of reasons. First, this division mirrors the publication of several important books and research on women's rights and roles. Many researchers on femininity point to the 1963 publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* as the start of a shift in broadening the ideals of women (Wolf 1991, Fauldi 1991, Eggins and Iedema 1997). The ensuing women's movement of the late 1960s and 1970s provided a forum for women to fight for change on many fronts, including being seen as powerful, independent, and capable.

The Women's Liberation Movement of the late 1960s and 1970s, which started in the United States and then spread to Europe and other parts of the world, was an important stimulus for cross-cultural research on gender ideologies, and the

politics of the movement significantly influenced this research as it emerged in the early 1970s (Philips 2003:254).

Similarly, many researchers in language and gender point to Robin Lakoff's 1975 book, *Language and Women's Place*, as the birth of feminist linguistics (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003, Bucholtz 2004, Litosseliti 2006). Her research proposed that women's language reinforced traditional femininity because it framed women as uncertain and less powerful. She proposed that changes in language would lead to social changes for women.

Additionally, this division mirrors current research on femininity and language, which examines how women use language to manage what is called the "double bind." The idea of the double bind has been proposed by a number of researchers in feminist linguistics and social psychology to describe the dilemma women face in interactions: if women use a more empowered, assertive style, they are perceived as overly aggressive and unfeminine. Yet, if they use a typically feminine style, they are perceived as weak and ineffective (Lakoff 1975, Romaine 1999, Johnston and Swanson 2003, Litosseliti 2006). Romaine writes "at the moment, there is still a great deal of tension involved when women try to combine femininity and power" (1999:171). Many contemporary researchers in language and gender are examining how women attempt to portray both styles, in order to be seen as traditionally feminine and empowered as well.

Finally, many researchers have dichotomized gender stereotypes, using such characteristics as communal versus instrumental / agentive (Eagly and Steffen 1984), cooperative versus competitive (Tannen 1990), and connected versus autonomous (Josephs et al. 1992). While these polarizations may focus on female versus male

characteristics, for women in contemporary U.S. culture, it appears to be important to display both sets of traits. On one hand, women may feel pressured to behave in traditionally feminine ways because of cultural stereotypes of feminine behavior. They may also appreciate and want to emphasize the unique characteristics and qualities they believe they have as women. Hare-Mustin and Marecek note that “cultural feminism” has encouraged women to focus on their unique qualities as women, and to embrace traditional femininity: “Cultural feminism is a movement within feminism that encourages women’s culture, celebrates the special qualities of women, and values relations among women as a way to escape the sexism of the larger society” (1988:457 – 8). On the other hand, women may feel that the male norm of being independent and assertive is considered to be the norm for all adults, and that they need to enact this gender identity. “In the United States, both men and women are required to individuate themselves from others, to become autonomous, to express one’s self, to promote one’s own goals, and not to be unduly influenced by others” (Josephs et al. 1992:400). Furthermore, women may recognize and appreciate the strides that have been made as a result of various feminist movements, and want to demonstrate that they are powerful and equal to men. However, these two sets of characteristics are often considered to be mutually exclusive (Hare-Mustin and Marecek 1988, Lakoff 2003). “If women adopt the behaviors specified as desirable for adults, they risk censure for their failure to be appropriately feminine; but if they adopt the behaviors that are designated as feminine, they are necessarily deficient with respect to the general standards for adult behavior” (Broverman et al. 1972:75). Therefore, whether women enact one set or the other, or

try to combine the two, and whether the combination of the two is seamless or inconsistent, is worth examining.

### 1.3 Why Study Women's Magazines?

Women's magazines provide an ideal medium to examine discourses of femininity. Identity theory maintains that gender identity is an individual's most significant social identity, and that media are primary resources used by individuals to maintain and validate their identity (Snow 1983). First, magazines are a powerful medium for both reflecting and shaping women's ideas. Ballaster et al. note women's magazines "purport to offer a recipe for femininity itself" (1991:163). Smith concurs, noting "women's magazines are a major source of information about changing images, new tools, materials, and instructions. Young women learn both the arts and doctrines of femininity from such texts" (1988:46). Wolf notes, "the most lightweight women's magazine is a more serious force for women's advancement than the most heavyweight general periodical" (1991:72). Magazines do so by using language to create a personal, friendly relationship of an admirable older sister, or friend giving advice to the reader (Wolf 1991, Talbot 1995). Ballaster et al. concur, noting, "the magazine will be friend, advisor and instructor in the difficult task of being a woman" (Ballaster et al. 1991:125). Women's magazines make women believe they are both an autonomous individual and a member of an elite community of beautiful and successful women (Eggins and Iedema 1997:169). As such, women's magazines serve as a source of information

about how to be feminine and how to live one's life as a woman by creating a personal relationship with the reader.

Second, magazines have a wide audience and demonstrate pervasiveness about their ideologies. "As mass culture texts they are pervasive in modern societies, and, as the studies prove, are a continuing presence in modern women's lives. They have a highly important role in the maintenance of cultural value" (Caldas-Coulthard 1996:250). Major women's magazines (i.e. *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Redbook*, *Glamour*) have circulations of between 2 – 4 million, and sell for less than \$5 an issue on the stands, and less than that by subscription (Magazine Publishers of America 2006). The same magazine is available across the U.S., indicating that they are widely read by American women. While magazines make the reader believe she is an independent individual who is addressing her own problems, they also encourage her to identify with the feminine community, thus creating and perpetuating a "norm" of femininity.

Third, women's magazines are aimed directly at women as a group, meaning their content can be construed as representative of feminine ideals (Ballaster et al. 1991; Caldas-Coulthard 1996, Zuckerman 1998). "Women's magazines are about being female, and the problems of being female" (Ballaster et al. 1991:137). Furthermore, since magazines change over time, they can be taken to reflect and shape contemporary ideals. "Women's magazines are the only products of popular culture that (unlike romances) change with women's reality, are mostly written by women for women about women's issues, and take women's concerns seriously" (Wolf 1991:71). While other



magazines may have wider or narrower audiences, women's magazines are directed at women as a social group, and the ideologies they portray can often be considered to be ideologies of femininity.

As such, this study will use women's magazines as the text for analysis. Such magazines offer articles which are widely read and targeted to an identifiable female audience. Magazines have been the subject of scholarly research on gender and gender representations, and there are a number of approaches to studying magazines as a source of enculturation, depending on the researcher's theoretical orientation and the subject matter of interest.

A great deal of research has been conducted on magazine advertisements and the portrayal of gender. Romaine, for example, finds most advertisers believe sex stereotyping works, and notes that "advertising emphasizes the traditional view that women's place is in the home (most often in the kitchen and bathroom) as wife and mother" (1999:253). She also notes a number the overwhelming use of female bodies in advertising, criticizing the gratuitous display of female bodies in ways that are primarily decorative and unnecessary for the product (1999:263). While she notes a growth in the sexualizing and objectification of male bodies, men, by contrast, are most often portrayed as powerful, predatory animals, conveying power and strength (1999:267). Similarly, in their content analysis of advertisements in *Essence* and *Ladies' Home Journal*, Mastin et al. (2004) find that "print media advertisements more often portray women in traditional roles" and that such images "suggest women are primarily responsible for product purchase decisions for low-cost items that pertain to

the appearance of themselves, their children, and their homes” (238 – 239). Lindner (2004) compared *Vogue* and *Time* magazines’ advertisements, and found that in both magazines women were portrayed in stereotypical ways: either objectified, subordinate to men, withdrawn from the scene, or in decontextualized environments with no real purpose. While *Vogue* portrayed women as more objectified and sexualized, *Time* portrayed women as more subordinate to men (419). Even in *Ms.* magazine, Ferguson, Kreshel, and Tinkham (1990) find that women are portrayed as “alluring sex objects” in many advertisements (40). Baker concurs in her comparison of advertising portrayals of white women and black women in white-oriented and black-oriented men’s and women’s magazines, finding white women were objectified and pictured as submissive and dependent on men (2005:25). In particular, she found white women were often portrayed with their faces hidden, placing an emphasis on their body and physical attributes (2005:21), and white women were found to be pictured sitting or in lower relative positions than men, as having less authority than men, and as soft and delicate (2005:21). Reviews of advertising, then, can offer one approach to studying magazines’ portrayals of gender. This type of research, however, generally focuses more on the analysis of the photos than the text. As a linguistic researcher, I believe there is great value in focusing on language rather than images. Studying language, and in particular discourse analysis, provides an opportunity to examine how multiple speakers/writers and hearers/readers participate in mutually producing meaning and ideology, and how meaning and ideology is perpetuated through repeated use.

A more textual approach is content analysis, and much research on gender identities in magazines has used this framework. Content analysis is a quantitative approach which involves identifying broad themes and counting the number of times the themes arise in the text. Labre (2005) used content analysis to examine *Men's Health* and *Men's Fitness*, and found masculinity in these magazines was portrayed in terms of appearance, in particular leanness and muscularity, rather than health. Johnston and Swanson's (2003) content analysis examined the representation of mothers in magazines, and found a number of contradictions or double binds, such as portraying mothers as selfless versus selfish, successful versus failing, natural versus unnatural, independent versus dependent. Actual portrayals of mothers and women in general depended on the magazine, but generally speaking the portrayals tended to subjugate women to a sole role of mothers and perpetuated patriarchy (262). Carty (2005) conducted a content analysis of textual portrayals of female athletes, and found that athletes willingly display their bodies, both in athletic and feminine ways. Post-feminists believe this shows women as "strong, capable, achievement-oriented athletes who feel good about themselves and act independently" (152), but radical feminists believe "even when women participate willingly in the sexualization and commodification of their bodies, this complicity reinforces the system of male domination through the exploitation of their bodies" (152). Hardin, Lynn, and Walsdorf (2005) also used content analysis to compare photo images in women's sports magazines (*Sports Illustrated for Women*, *Women's Sports & Fitness*, and *Real Sports*) with women's fitness magazines (*Shape*). They found that while *Shape* strongly

reinforces sexual differences and presents women mostly as passive or non-sporting and participating in sports for the purpose of improving appearance, the sports magazines generally depicted women as actively participating in sports, although some images reinforced the stereotype of women in aesthetic, individual sports (113). Content analysis, then, is a popular approach to studying magazines. However it is a quantitative approach that counts the instances of words or phrases which fit broad themes, and misses the finer points of how exactly those themes are produced and perpetuated in language, such as through syntactic structure or relative weighting within a sentence. A more qualitative approach can examine these syntactic and semantic structures in detail.

Discourse analysis provides this qualitative approach. Previous discourse analyses have focused on portrayals of femininity in fashion, domestic and business magazines. Talbot (1995) examined teenage magazines and portrayals of femininity for adolescent and teenage girls, and found that the magazines are successful in perpetuating ideologies of beauty-work and fashion-consciousness because they assume a role of friend or older sister through their language. Caldas-Coulthard (1996) looked at sex narratives in women's domestic magazines and found that women appear to be sexually liberated, but in fact are portrayed in traditional ways through the tone of articles featuring sexual transgressions which condemn such aberrant behavior. Eggins and Iedema (1997) found that women's magazines encourage women to be empowered, but within a limited range of traditionally feminine endeavors, such as bodywork and heterosexual relationships. Machin and Thornborrow (2003) found that *Cosmopolitan*

showed women as having interests outside of the home and family realms, but that women were able to take control and wield power only through their sexuality. Koller (2004) found business magazines describe businesswomen through aggression and competition metaphors, such as warrior or fighters, wild animals, athletes, machines, hard objects hunters, and gamblers. These discourse analyses show that femininity can be portrayed as traditional or empowered, depending on the magazines.

Very little research has been conducted on how magazines portray competing femininities within a single issue or article. One genre of magazines, women's health and fitness magazines, have features of traditional femininity (such as articles on beauty) and features of empowered femininity (such as articles focusing on athletics), but only a handful of studies have examined the discourse of women's health and fitness magazines. Markula (2001) examined *Self*, *Shape*, and *The New Weekly* and found that the magazines appeared to encourage empowered femininity at the same time that it implored women to covet a highly unattainable body type. On one hand, Markula notes, some of the magazines' texts criticize the traditional feminine body and empower women to have a healthy self-image. On the other hand, the magazines continue to publish photos of the very slender body ideal and continue to devote articles to obtaining this body ideal through fitness activities. Similarly, Eskes, Duncan, and Miller's (1998) discourse analysis of women's fitness magazines found an integration of the empowered femininity and the traditional femininity in the texts. Specifically, they note the fitness magazines texts construe fitness pursuits as empowering, and "this empowerment ideology can be described as a feminist ideology because it takes a

decidedly pro-woman stance” (319). However, they continue, this ideology is corrupted by the idea that being ‘fit’ means being sexy, shapely or gorgeous (319). These analyses provides a useful starting point for examining the competing ideologies of femininity in fitness texts; however, they focus solely on the lexicon, ignoring the impact syntax and rhetorical devices can have on the relative weighting and composition of the elements of language. Furthermore, these researchers state specifically that they set out to criticize women’s fitness magazines for misusing the feminist discourse to achieve “sexist” ends (Eskes, Duncan, and Miller’s 1998:340). Such biases may skew results, or at the very least, do not allow for other, more balanced interpretations.

Thus, while magazines offer multiple media, including advertisements, photographs, and articles, of particular interest to this researcher is the language of articles, which are fundamental in perpetuating cultural norms. “‘Femininity’ has been from the outset a discursive phenomenon. Certainly in our time, to address femininity is to address a textual discourse vested in women’s magazines” (Smith 1988:41). Examining the discourse of women’s magazines is an essential method for discovering not only what the ideology is, but how it is perpetuated. Furthermore, contemporary magazines offer an opportunity to examine the competing discourses of femininity. “The magazines’ personalities are split between the beauty myth and feminism in exactly the same way those of their readers are split” (Wolf 1991:71). This research project will examine how the competing discourses of femininity are portrayed in contemporary women’s health and fitness magazines using the linguistic approach of

discourse analysis. Furthermore, this research will examine discourse on rhetorical, syntactical, and lexical levels, and will attempt to do so without bias towards either of the two competing discourses.

#### 1.4 Why Study the Body?

The female body is one site which has received a great deal of attention from sociologists, psychologists, sports psychologists, and feminists because of the competing ideologies one can portray through the body. On one hand, due to the negativity associated with second-wave feminism, returning to a focus on a traditional feminine ideal of beauty allows many women to distance themselves from some of the negative associations of second-wave feminism, such as toughness, aggression, and anti-beauty (Carty 2005). Researchers have noted that the body is the site at which women accept cultural notions of beauty (Bordo 1993, Reischer and Koo 2004), and women may use their bodies to portray their acceptance, even veneration, of ideal beauty. On the other hand, many women want to show that they are equal to men and do not want to be constrained by the stereotypes of a weak body. A woman today can become a professional athlete, firefighter, police officer, or soldier. Carty notes that some media images of women today “embrace new notions of femininity that include muscles, strength, fitness, and competitiveness. This is a move away from traditional depictions of vulnerability, fragility, dependence, and subservience” (2005:137). Even those who do not want to be “tough” may very well want to be seen as capable to act upon the world, and in order to act upon the world they must do so through the medium

of the body. The body is one's active agent in the social world (Reischer and Koo 2004:207).

The female body has also received a great deal of attention because many believe the female body is more sexualized and more displayed than ever before (Lindner 2004, Sypeck, Gray, and Ahrens 2004, Dowd 2005). Some view the use of sex appeal by women as empowering. Carty notes that many athletes display their bodies in media images in order to “demonstrate that they are in fact in control of how the images are projected” (2005:134), and to present their bodies “not as objects to be scrutinized as a commodity of desire but to be respected for what they had accomplished” (2005:138). Others view these sexualized displays as a continuation of the objectification exploitation of women. Carty notes that feminists believe “the willingness of athletes to display their bodies and accentuate feminine traits and heterosexuality takes away from their athletic achievement and status as athletes and problematizes the view of gender as a social construction” (2005:134). Are “women using their bodies as a form of liberation” (Carty 2005:134)? Or have women “traveled an arc from fighting objectification to seeking it” (Dowd 2005:70)? Are displays of the female body and uses of sex appeal by women empowering or patriarchal? Language can help identify the underlying ideologies of the feminine body.

### 1.5 Limitations

There are a number of limitations to this study. Because women's magazines attempt to address women as a singular audience, they often discount the variability in



women's experiences. Numerous researchers have noted that women's magazines ignore differences in socio-economic class, ethnic background, and education levels. Women's magazines construct "an ideal reader which is basically heterosexual, white, and middle class, in other words, women who are interested in and can afford to buy the goods offered" (Caldas-Coulthard 1996:252). Eiggins and Iedema concur, noting, that women's magazines, "separate the world into 'men' and 'women,' but differences in social class, economics or educational background, and ethnicity are not explicitly mentioned" (1997:169).

Likewise, many have criticized linguistic research on women for the same reasons (Romaine 1999, Day et al. 2003, Mills 2003, Morgan 2004, Litosseliti 2006). Most language and gender studies have focused on middle-class, Caucasian, heterosexual women, ignoring research on men and on women of other classes, races, and sexual orientations, or marginalizing these groups by comparing them to the "norm" of femininity or masculinity. In addition, my own cultural biases are oriented around my experience as a heterosexual, middle-class, Caucasian, educated woman. As such, this research will examine traditional and empowered femininities as they are put forward in the texts relate to middle-class, Caucasian, heterosexual women, in part because they are often the femininities perpetuated as the "norm" in U.S. American society.

## 1.6 Summary

This study will use discourse analysis to examine how a norm of femininity is constructed in women's fitness magazines. In Chapter 2, I will examine linguistic research to construct a discourse of traditional femininity and a discourse of empowered femininity. In Chapter 3, I will examine research on magazines to illustrate how differing magazines reflect and perpetuate a discourse of traditional femininity and a discourse of empowered femininity. In Chapter 4, I will examine studies from sociology, psychology, and sports science which demonstrate that women use their body to encode traditional femininity, empowered femininity, and at times, both. In Chapter 5, I will explain my methodology and approach, with Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 explaining in detail how the language of fitness magazines' workout articles creates such a hybrid discourse, which is in the middle of the continuum between traditional femininity and empowered femininity. In Chapter 8, I will show how this discourse reflects the minimization of women's work and power, which I call "limited achievement" and the veneration of beauty, which I call "celebrating objectification," which reflect the way many women try to find balance in their lives today between two competing extremes.

## CHAPTER 2

### DOING GENDER: ENACTING FEMININITIES THROUGH LANGUAGE

#### 2.1. Ideology and Critical Discourse Analysis

Contemporary women appear to have many different and conflicting ideologies of femininity available to them. Discovering how women perceive femininity today can be accomplished by studying language, because language is a powerful tool for creating and perpetuating ideologies, through both subtle and overt messages about how to act, what to strive towards, and how to judge others and oneself (Sheldon 1997). Norms concerning attitudes and behaviors for people as individuals and as members of groups in society are shared and reinforced through language – through explicit instructions (as to children) or through discussions, gossip, and critiques of self and others with peers, superiors, and subordinates. Individuals are inundated with messages about what to believe and how to behave in order to fit into sub-cultural or societal groups; whether or not they recognize the impact of these messages, there is no doubt that they are influenced by them. Such messages or ideologies, called *Discourses*, are “conventional ways of talking that both create and are created by conventional ways of thinking” (Johnstone 2002:3). In other words, language shapes and reinforces attitudes and beliefs, at the same time that it is constrained by them. “Discourses represent sets of prevailing ideas or cultural messages about the way things are and the way things

should be” (Phillips 1999:16). They advance certain values and perspectives, while marginalizing others. Discourses both reflect and influence the ways we conceptualize and talk about things, and subtly shape the way we think, speak, and act in ways that identify us as part of some socially meaningful group, such as a “woman,” a “student,” or a “good citizen” (Gee 1999).

Sometimes language can cue more than one ideology, which leads to competing and potentially contradictory discourses or identities. For example, in the United States, “we are not exposed to only one discourse about how to be a ‘successful individual.’ Rather, we are bombarded with conflicting sets of messages about what a ‘successful individual’ is” (Phillips 1999:17). On one hand, being a successful individual can mean following capitalistic norms such as being competitive and individualistic, as well as acquiring wealth and prestige, while on the other, it can mean following benevolent norms of success, such as being compassionate, humble, and concerned with social justice.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides an opportunity to examine not just language itself, but the ideology or discourse that the language reflects and creates. According to Johnstone, critical discourse analysis is an umbrella term often used to refer to a variety of overlapping methodologies which share the theoretical idea that communication is one of the principle activities through which ideology is circulated and reproduced (2002:45). Eggins concurs, noting “whatever genre we are involved in, and whatever the register of the situation, our use of language will be influenced by our ideological positions: the values we hold (consciously or unconsciously), the biases and

perspectives we adopt” (1994:10). At the same time, language also serves to actually create ideologies. As Eggins argues, “language is not just representing but actively constructing our view of the world” (1994:11). Language reflects and (re)creates ideologies, and critical discourse analysis examines how this occurs.

While any piece of language can both shape and be shaped by the participants and situation, a discourse is a socially recognized way of using language to reflect or establish a philosophy, an identity, or a type of activity (Gee 1999:27). Although discourses are enacted unconsciously, they are successful because they can be readily recognized by members of the community. “If you put language, action, interaction, values, beliefs, symbols, objects, tools, and places together in such a way that others recognize you as a particular type of who (identity) engaged in a particular type of what (activity), here-and-now, then you have pulled off a Discourse” (Gee 1999:27). Language, then, is a tool for evoking identities, activities, values, beliefs, and ideologies.

Every individual uses and is able to recognize multiple discourses. “We are all members of many, a great many, different Discourses” (Gee 1999:7), which allows us to engage with others in a plethora of situations. While we can recreate the same discourse again and again, we can also use several discourses simultaneously, which in turn can lead to discourses breeding with each other to create new hybrids (Gee 1999). Discourses blend, intertwine, and evolve, and “if this sort of thing gets enacted and recognized enough, by enough people, then it will become not multiple strands of

multiple Discourses interwoven, but a single Discourse whose hybridity may ultimately be forgotten” (Gee 1999:30).

Examining texts for their discourses or ideological implications requires teasing out the meanings using linguistic tools. Fairclough writes that Critical Discourse Analysis is “as much a theory as a method” and warns against the likelihood of finding a single or specific “technique” for doing CDA (2001:121). Nonetheless, according to Wood and Kroger, “the overall goal of the analysis is to explain what is being done in the discourse and how this is accomplished, that is, how the discourse is structured or organized to perform various functions and achieve various effects or consequences” (2000:95). Johnstone (2002) suggests this can be done by examining the choices the writer has made in producing the text, such as choices about the representation of action, agents, and events; choices about the representation of knowledge status (what the writer assumes the reader knows); choices about naming and wording; and choices about incorporating and representing other voices (46 – 49).

Critical discourse analysis helps us understand how speakers use familiar patterns of lexicon and grammar to evoke familiar lines of thought, while at the same time it shows how this repetition serves to reinforce that line of thought. On a larger level, discourse analysis seeks to identify these lines of thought, or ideologies, as larger sociological ideologies. Through examining language, and uncovering a discourse, one can also identify an ideology.

## 2.2 Gender Discourses

One discourse worth examining is that of gender identity. Many anthropologists and sociologists differentiate between an individual's biological sex and the culturally-taught manifestation of that sex, one's gender. Biological sex is considered innate and determined at birth; "gender by contrast is socially constructed; it is learned" (Talbot 1998:7). While one is born a male or female, one becomes masculine or feminine through socialization. Femininity, for example, "implies a social process in which the female sex is attributed with specific qualities and characteristics" (Betterton 1987:7). The terms "femininity" and "masculinity," then, are culturally-based descriptions of traits, characteristics, and habits that women and men "should" develop through a social process.

Gender ideology is determined by, and modeled and reinforced through society, both through individuals such as parents, family members, and elders, and through social institutions. While fundamentally based on an individual's sex, gender is nonetheless considered to be a learned identity created by a society or culture. "Cultural sex – a gender – takes on a culturally specific form against the background of biological sex" (Wodak 1997:3). While cultures may differ in what behaviors are expected of men and women, "acquiring them is an important part of learning how to behave as 'proper' men and women in a particular culture" (Talbot 1998:6). An individual wanting to fit in acts or performs as is expected of his or her sex in the culture.

As such, some theorists have come to talk of gender as something which is performed or enacted. “Doing gender” is the concept that men or women display a set of characteristics as an integral part of their identity as a man or as a woman (Wodak 1997:13). By considering gender as a characteristic or set of characteristics that are performed, researchers can examine the different characteristics that constitute gender, the multiple ways in which the characteristics are performed, and the degree to which individuals enact their gender.

Femininity, or enacting the female gender, is of particular interest today because of the many different and sometimes competing ideologies that women in the U.S. currently face. “There is no single, unified way of doing femininity, or being a woman. In the contemporary developed world, many different versions of femininity are available to us. Different discourses give us access to different femininities” (Coates 1996:261). At the same time, the femininities available to women are not limitless; there are constraints and parameters to the identities women can enact in order to be seen as feminine.

Since discourses rely on recognizability, interactants work within constraints which help their co-participants recognize the identity they want to portray. At the same time, communication is active and creative, which results in individuals blending and mixing identities, highlighting certain traits of the identity and hiding others, and placing themselves along a gender continuum, such that boys and men can be seen as more or less masculine, and girls and women can be seen as more or less feminine. “Constructing a gendered identity in interactions is an active, on-going creative process,



but it is a process which draws on participants' familiarity with the significance of particular choices" (Holmes 1997: 196). As such, gender and discourse linguists study both the constraints and the fluidity of gender discourses. "It is the interactive, continuously changing ways that people use language to construct their gender identity and relations which provides most insight into the way gender functions in particular communities" (Holmes 1997:217). Studies examining how men and women "do gender" therefore often consider the multiplicity of gender identities.

Linguistic researchers have found that women "do gender" in diverse ways. Linguists investigate the markers of gender on many levels of language: "voice, pronunciation, intonation, choice of words, argumentation, lexicon, syntax, interactional and conversational behavior, as well as visual features and modes and non-verbal communication" (Wodak 1997:11). More important than the markers themselves is what the interlocutors are trying to signal through them – and if the signals are read similarly by all interlocutors. Researchers have found that gender identity is constantly being constructed through language, and that individuals construct a variety of gender identities in various interactions: in some cases reinforcing norms, and in other cases, challenging and contesting them. Given the range of linguistic forms individuals can use to construct their gender identity, and the range of gender identities individuals can enact, it is worth examining more carefully how women signal, recognize, and embrace various femininities, and whether the contrasts between various femininities blend seamlessly or unevenly.

Of interest to me is how women enact two types of femininity – which I term “traditional femininity” and “empowered femininity” – separately and together. By traditional femininity, I am referring to stereotypical characteristics or traits of women which frame them as communal but less powerful, and by empowered femininity I am referring to characteristics or traits that frame women as more powerful or hierarchical. Stereotypes of traditional femininity include socioemotional or communal characteristics, such as being understanding, compassionate, affectionate, kind, helpful, warm, tactful, sensitive to others’ feelings, sociable, concerned with equity, and able to devote oneself to others (Broverman et al. 1972, Eagly and Steffen 1984, Leaper 1995). I term this “traditional femininity” because it reflects norms of behavior which have been considered appropriate for women in U.S. American culture for decades, even centuries, and it continues to inform many of the contemporary stereotypes of feminine behavior.

Many researchers have noted that these stereotypes of women, and the language they often use, portray women as less powerful than men (Lakoff 1975, O’Barr and Atkins 1980/1998, Spender 1980, Fishman 1983, West and Zimmerman 1983/1998, Lakoff 2003, McConnell-Ginet 2004, Hall 2004). These researchers, typically classified as using a “dominance” theory, “assert that there is a characteristic register or ‘women’s language’ consisting of certain linguistic features and connoting tentativeness, deference, and lack of authority” (Cameron 1992:15). Such researchers propose that women should seek ways to incorporate more powerful language and enact a more powerful gender identity. Stereotypes of this more powerful gender identity

include instrumental or agentive characteristics, such as being independent, confident, assertive, aggressive, dominant, competitive, decisive, self-assured, objective, active, logical, worldly, adventurous, and ambitious (Broverman et al. 1972, Eagly and Steffen 1984, Josephs et al. 1992, Leaper 1995). While this more powerful gender identity is often considered to be masculine, they are also traits that are considered admirable for all adult Americans (Broverman et al. 1972, Josephs et al. 1992, Phillips 1999, Lakoff 2003). Because these traits evoke the idea of having power, I term the act of women enacting these traits “empowered femininity.”

Researchers in language and gender have approached their work with various goals, be it to demonstrate how women are powerless, how women are of a different subculture than men, how women struggle to fit cultural norms while resisting hegemony, or how women and men actually use language in quite similar ways. I am interested in exploring what linguistic means these researchers have found women use to portray themselves as traditional, i.e. socioemotional or communal, to portray themselves as powerful, i.e. independent and agentive, or to portray themselves as a combination of the two. In the following review, I categorize those studies which frame women as being socioemotional or communal as portraying “traditional femininity,” those which frame women as powerful as “empowered femininity,” and those which portray women as trying to enact both as “integrated femininity.”

### *2.2.1 Linguistic Research on Traditional Femininity*

Tannen's (1990) work emphasized the difference between women's cooperative approach and men's competitive approach by identifying two different kinds of talk: women's "rapport" talk and men's "report" talk. She notes that women and men use language for different purposes: most women use language to establish connections and negotiate relationships (i.e. to build rapport), while most men use language to exhibit knowledge and skill, to share information, or to hold center stage (i.e. to report information) (77). "To him, talk is for information ... But to her, talk is for interaction. Telling things is a way to show involvement, and listening is a way to show interest and caring" (81). The result of these different approaches is that women use talk to emphasize similarities and establish connections, and that men use talk to preserve independence, maintain status, and exhibit knowledge.

Furthermore, she asserts that women and men talk differently in different settings. Women tend to talk more in private settings, such as the home or in small groups, where they want to focus on creating connections and bonds with family and friends. Men tend to talk more in public settings, such as office settings and public forums. "Men and women often have very different ideas of what's important – and at what point 'important' topics should be raised" (Tannen 1990:80). The result of these different approaches is that in private settings, such as the home or in small groups, women generally talk a great deal, and talk about topics which seem unimportant to men – topics such as feelings, thoughts, details about their day, gossip about others, etc. In the same settings, men seem nearly mute, particularly when they do not have specific

information to impart or a particular need to prove themselves. By contrast, in public settings, men may seem particularly verbose as they use language to grab attention or display their knowledge, while women may seem much quieter, as they may be concerned about the public perception of their ideas and feelings, or they feel the situation does not call for relationship-building talk.

According to Tannen, the use of different styles of communication, different topics of conversation, and different locations for conversation comes from men and women being socialized differently. The result, however, is that women tap into a traditional femininity discourse which frames them as social and communal, concerned with others, and concerned with creating equity, while the men tap into a masculinity discourse which frames them as competent and agentive, competitive, and status-oriented.

Holmes' (1997) proposes that, rather than using masculine and feminine styles unconsciously as Tannen suggests, men and women actively use linguistic devices and strategies that are associated with or symbolize particular stereotypes of feminine and masculine behavior. As such, these stereotypes of linguistic styles and behaviors become recognized as "feminine" or "masculine" and reinforced as appropriate feminine or masculine norms. In other words, showing tentativeness or showing aggression, expressing support or displaying lack of interest become associated with femininity or masculinity "through habitual association with particular social groups" (215). Speakers then choose to use these styles in order to be seen as feminine or masculine.

She examined story-telling, because “telling a story is one means of presenting oneself (and others) as appropriately feminine or masculine in terms of current societal ideology” (1997:204). In terms of the female story-tellers, she notes that women often use language to portray themselves as nurturing, attentive, and concerned to reinforce their gender identity as caretakers. She notes how one subject “presents herself as a good mother, concerned for her children’s comfort and well-being” (1997:207). Specifically, the woman portrays herself as concerned for her children by taking them on outings to the pool and offering to take her children’s friends so they will have playmates at the pool. The woman also portrays herself as a “good daughter” by looking after her father’s needs, such as preparing his meals, going to visit him, and consoling him. In addition, she constructs identities of her daughters as kind and thoughtful, showing both how she teaches them to look after their grandfather, and reinforcing through praise that they exhibit this appropriately feminine behavior. In addition to the content of the stories, the use of pragmatic particles such as “*you know*, *sort of*, *quiet*, and *just* also contributes to the construction of a somewhat conservative, feminine gendered identity” (1997:209). Thus, through the content and style of their stories, women portray themselves as attentive to others, nurturing, and caring.

On the other hand, men use language to portray themselves as competent. “In men’s stories, ‘doing gender’ tends to involve presenting themselves as in control, knowledgeable, skilled, and competent” (1997:209 – 210). The men’s stories revolved around boasting their skills as sportsmen and rising to challenges. Furthermore, the

men used “the distinctive prosody and syntax of a sports commentary,” contributing to portraying themselves as competitive, skilled, and competent.

By portraying themselves as nurturing, attentive, and caring, women are enacting traditional femininity which frames them as social and communal, while the men, in portraying themselves as competent and skilled, are enacting stereotypical masculinity which frames them as powerful and agentive. Furthermore, by using a story-telling analysis, Holmes suggests that the individuals themselves are aware of the stereotypes associated with their gender and are actively indexing these stereotypes through their language in order to be seen as appropriately masculine or feminine.

Rather than focusing on the differences between men and women, Coates’ (1996) proposes there are a number of different femininities women can enact. In her analysis, however, Coates identifies a number different markers for femininity which all point to traditional femininity. First, she finds that women compliment one another, and are concerned about each other’s and their own appearances. Complimenting, Coates notes, “is part of the routine support work that girls and women do with each other as friends” (234). Furthermore, complimenting is often structured around appearance. In one conversation, she finds her subjects “are co-constructing a world in which putting on make-up is a normal part of femininity, and looking nice/looking good is an important goal. In this world, the size of your features – your eyes, your lips – is highly salient, and the fashion model is a significant figure, with high status” (234). In another conversation, she finds that her subjects “draw on an ideology which insists that women

should maintain their bodies at a size which accords with current fashion (these days, meaning slim)” (243).

Second, Coates finds that women sometimes portray themselves as weak and unassertive. In one instance, she notes that the women talk about crying, which they know performs femininity but at the same time performs powerlessness. “Crying here is constructed as a gendered behavior, something girls do at times of emotional crisis...Crying is a stereotypical way of performing femininity” (1996:235). The women also talk about assertiveness training, with Coates noting “there seems to be an underlying assumption here that assertiveness training is for women” (1996:237). She finds that the women struggle with how to appear feminine and at the same time competent. Not only does portraying competence evoke overly-masculine behavior, it also threatens the rapport women develop as equals to one another. “Even with close friends, presenting oneself as competent rather than weak or vulnerable has to be done with care; women have to avoid the accusation of ‘showing off’” (1996:239). To portray femininity and not upset the equity rapport, women must be careful to not appear too capable; showing vulnerability keeps women aligned as peers and friends.

Coates notes while women’s exposure to feminist discourses leads them to try to resist dominant patriarchal discourses, not caring about appearance and being strong too closely approaches masculinity and may lead the women to feel they are not feminine if they enact them. “The dominant discourses in our society teach us to see ourselves in relation to men” (1996:244). As such, if women too closely approximate men, they lose their identity as women.



Furthermore, Coates finds that the traditional femininity discourses are naturalized to such a degree that women feel a sense of personal responsibility if they do not enact them. In terms of concern over their appearance, she notes that women who feel they do not meet societal standard tend to blame themselves. Likewise, women trying to portray themselves as strong end up rejecting the discourse because it triggers an anxiety in the women about weakness in men. She finds that women tend to feel a sense of responsibility to fulfill the traditional femininity ideology.

While Coates suggests that there are multiple discourses portraying different femininities, in her data, the discourse the women primarily enact is that of traditional femininity: women as concerned with being sociable and equitable to others, as caring about their and other's appearance, and as unassertive. The women do attempt to enact resistant, feminist discourses, but ultimately feel a strong sense of responsibility to portray a traditional feminine identity.

Romaine (1999) summarizes much research on both the characteristics of traditional femininity and the ways women use language to portray it. According to Romaine, women generally use language to show solidarity, equality, and agreement, as well as a focus on bodies and beauty. Both the style and the content of their language and activities reflect this.

In terms of style, she notes that women use overlap, story-chaining, compliments, and apologies to build solidarity. For women, overlap, or speaking simultaneously, "may be intentional and may be part of a conversational strategy used to show solidarity and agreement" (Romaine 1999:158). Story-chaining, or following

someone's story with a similar story of one's own, "works as a way of showing support by sharing a similar experience rather than, say, an attempt to top the previous narrator's story" (Romaine 1999:166). She also notes "women offer both apologies and compliments to show solidarity, and hence give more of both to others who are their equals" (Romaine 1999:170). Finally, she notes "the greater number and higher variety of back-channeling signals in the all female group" (Romaine 1999:166). Thus, through overlap, story-chaining, apologies, compliments, and back-channeling, women show solidarity and agreement.

In terms of content, she notes that women use language to focus on creating solidarity and showing care for others. For example, Romaine notes women's stories tend to focus on relationships and feelings. "Some researchers have claimed that girls use language to create and maintain cohesiveness, and their activities are generally more cooperative and noncompetitive" (1999:195). She notes that even when they argue, women keep others in mind, and "tend to phrase their arguments in terms of group needs rather than personal terms" (1999:195). She also notes that others' language, such as fairy tales and magazines, frames women as needing to focus on beauty. "Fairy tales connect youth and beauty with good girls and ugliness and old age with bad girls" (1999:207). Women's magazines teach women to focus on their appearance and their sexuality; implying the "female identity lies in their bodies and popularity with men" (1999:207). Through the content of their stories, women show femininity by creating solidarity, focusing on others, and caring about their appearance, women create a discourse of traditional femininity.

Interestingly, when asked about speech styles, Romaine found that men and women characterized their language in very stereotypical terms. Both women and men see women's speech as soft, sensitive, and simple, while both see men's speech as authoritative and impersonal (1999). These styles reflect not only the characteristics of the language they use, but also the characteristics women and men may be assumed to have or want to portray. Thus, through devices such as overlap, story-chaining, compliments, and apologies, through content focusing on relationships, feelings, and appearance, and through stylistic stereotypes such as being soft, sensitive, and simple, women are framed as being communal, as caring about others, and as being egalitarian.

The discourse of traditional femininity is marked by a number of characteristics. Women may use language to portray themselves as caring, attentive, and nurturing (Holmes 1997, Romaine 1999), as concerned with establishing relationships with others (Tannen 1990, Romaine 1999), and as concerned with personal appearances and not being too powerful (Coates 1996, Romaine 1999). In order to be seen in these traditional ways, women may use talk and gossip to connect with others (Tannen 1990, Holmes 1997, Romaine 1999), give each other compliments (Coates 1996, Romaine 1999), and use apologizes and mitigators to avoid being seen as too assertive (Coates 1996, Romaine 1999). In these ways, according to Tannen 1990, Coates 1996, Holmes 1997, and Romaine 1999, women mark themselves as social, communal, equitable, and concerned with beauty and appearance.

### *2.2.2 Linguistic Research on Empowered Femininity*

In contrast to studies which find women enact traditional femininity, or traits of sociability, equity, emotionality, relationship-orientation, and beauty-orientation, several researchers have found that women enact a more powerful femininity, which frames women as strong, assertive, hierarchical, and agentive. Coates (1999) demonstrates how women contradict the traditional stereotypes about femininity through “backstage” talk. In this talk, women flout conventions of such stereotypes as being nice, being a good wife and mother, and being concerned with appearance. In contemporary western cultures such as Britain and the U.S., “the ideal of femininity ... is the ‘perfect wife and mother’, the epitome of niceness’, and ‘behaving badly’ has negative connotations for women” (66). While women may enact the traditional feminine traits of niceness frontstage or in public, in backstage, informal conversations with close friends women may contradict this, admitting aggressive, violent, and other “unfeminine” traits. Backstage talk is conversations where women divulge a desire to act differently than they do in public: more assertive and more self-centered.

Coates finds in “backstage” talk, women felt a level of comfort and freedom to admit their anger, aggression, and frustration with the persona they had to enact “frontstage.” In particular, she found that frontstage, women are polite, caring, good mothers, and good friends, but backstage, they would express a desire to be rude to customers, a sense of dislike for other and even their own children, and a sense of glee at the misfortune of former friends. “Women take great pleasure in exploring aspects of themselves which cannot normally be expressed frontstage...backstage provides women

with a relatively safe place to express less conventionally feminine, less 'nice' aspects of themselves" (1999:77). Backstage talk provides women not only an outlet to portray less traditionally feminine traits, but also a chance to criticize and counteract themselves when they or others portray these traditionally feminine traits.

At the same time, the women recognize that the images they portray backstage are unacceptable, and they often criticize themselves or others for taking on the unfeminine traits. "In many conversations where we find women performing selves that could be seen as un-feminine and not-nice, the participants themselves comment critically on the behavior they have revealed" (Coates 1999:75). Women walk a fine line between being too feminine and too un-feminine, and are constantly pushing the boundaries, then critiquing themselves. "Our need to position ourselves as relatively 'normal' as well as nice is a constant restraining force. Women continually monitor both their own and other women's performance in a variety of ways. None of us is ever free of the need to keep up some fronts" (Coates 1999:77). Thus, even in backstage talk, there is recognition of its deviance, and a pressure to confirm its unacceptability.

Nonetheless, Coates finds backstage talk to be important to women to counteract the pressure to fulfill certain stereotypes about femininity. "Backstage interaction fulfills a vital need in women's lives to talk about behaving badly, whether this means recounting incidents where we behaved badly, or whether it means fantasizing about such behavior, or whether it means discussing and celebrating the unconventional behavior of other women" (1999:77). While they recognize and condemn themselves

for not being traditionally feminine, Coates finds women appear to relish this time to enact a more powerful gender identity.

Women may also enact a more powerful gender identity in order to mark themselves as members of a different class. Day et al.'s (2003) research proposes that traditional femininity is actually middle-class femininity, while working-class women construct a very different femininity that includes power and aggression. In interviews with working-class women about their nights out, she found that they were prone to be aggressive, to defend themselves and their friends, and to swear and be rowdy. "One feature of the interview texts that became apparent ... was that accounts of women's direct and physical aggression figured prominently in the focus groups conducted with working-class women, often embedded in rich narratives about 'nights out' in local pubs, wherein the speakers featured as principal protagonists" (147). This behavior positions working-class women outside traditional and middle-class definitions of femininity as demure and passive.

The position of working-class women in relation to middle-class women is important. What is considered feminine behavior varies depending on the situation, as well as other characteristics of the woman enacting them. "Context is important in understanding the use of aggressive strategies and the role of physical aggression in the construction of identities (with particular reference here to working-class femininities)" (Day et al. 2003:154). In the case of working-class women, the use of power and aggression is a way to attend to the women's "location in working-class cultural contexts that promote hard reputations, public demonstrations of aggressive prowess

and defending oneself and one's group in an atmosphere of surveillance" (Day et al. 2003:154). It may also, however, be a way of contesting traditional values of femininity, which reflect a middle-class culture. "Such aggression could well be seen in terms of resistance to or rejection of dominant middle-class femininities defined as respectable" (Day et al. 2003:154). In any case, the rowdiness and aggression that the working-class women embraced shows that some women can and do enact empowered femininity.

McElhinney (1995) has also examined how women can enact empowered gendered identities through work in non-feminine fields. Given that police work is typically seen as masculine work, she analyzes the gender performances of female police officers in comparison to their male counterparts. She argues that police work is perceived to be particularly masculine not only because it has been dominated by men, but because it is thought to require them to use strength. "Police work is defined, in public representation and in many male police officers' minds, by the situations in which officers are required to exert physical force to keep the peace" (McElhinney 1995:222). In fact, she finds that many female police officers see the work as bureaucratic. In situations that do require force, all police officers (regardless of gender) have strength in the institutional force they have due to their role. As such, female police officers feel equally capable of doing police work – and sometimes even better at it – because they rely on the network of strength rather than their own personal strength, they tend to stay calm and cool in conflictive situations, and they are detailed and methodical in taking reports.

Given that report-taking is a major part of police work, McElhinney examined how male and female police officers interacted with complainants during a police call which required them to take a report. McElhinney found that the two police officers interacted in a similar way, focusing primarily on gathering the facts for their report, and remaining unemotional and objective. Specifically, she found that the police officers used few, if any, back-channeling remarks such as *umhm* or *right*, they interrupt the complainants and ignore their questions, and they use frame breaks to change the situation from one of a bureaucrat to one of a counselor.

McElhinny proposes that, in order to be effective in the masculine field of police work, female police officers have resisted the assumption that policing is centered on force and have proposed instead that police work is centered on mental ability and cool rationality. As such, they have created an identity for themselves as (non-gendered) police officers by emulating the interaction style of their male colleagues: that of rationality and emotion control. While emotionality is considered a part of traditional femininity, rationality and emotional control are considered more masculine traits (1995:238). In this case, since both male and female officers “resort to the same linguistic style when taking reports” (1995:236), the discourse style evokes a non-gendered, yet powerful identity because of the power behind the police badge. “Their discourse management techniques – long silences, nonresponsiveness, interruptions, frame breaks, and nonproduction of preferred seconds in adjacency pair sequences – mark their language as a sort of bureaucratese, or *facelessness in face-to-face* interaction” (McElhinny 1995:236). While these discourse management techniques are



similar to ones stereotypical of men, in this case it demonstrates that women can and do produce a discourse which frames them as powerful, i.e. empowered femininity.

Empowered femininity is characterized by women portraying themselves as powerful and aggressive, although use of this discourse appears to be selective, for example in secret (i.e. “backstage”), in women who oppose traditional femininity because they see it as middle-class femininity (i.e. working class women), or in certain contexts where women are performing a job (i.e. police work). Specifically, women use language to describe desires to be assertive and unladylike (Coates 1999), to construct stories showing themselves as aggressive and tough (Day et al. 2003), and to remain unemotional and authoritative (McElhinney 1995). In these ways, women construct an ideology of femininity that is more powerful, more assertive, more rational, and less traditional.

### *2.2.3 Linguistic Research on the Integration of Traditional and Empowered Femininities*

A third option for enacting femininity is to find a balance between traditional femininity, or being communal, equitable, and emotional, and empowered femininity, which frames women as strong, assertive, hierarchical, and agentive. Several linguistic researchers have found that women try to integrate aspects of both in order to maintain relationships and sociability while asserting themselves and achieving personal goals. Sheldon’s (1997) research examines how girls perform femininity or niceness in the face of conflict. Because women have a culturally-mandated prescriptive to be nice and sociable, when conflict arises, women need to balance what appear to be opposing goals

of achieving their personal end and maintaining relations. “In communities in which there is a prescription that girls ‘be nice’, and where friendship ties are a crucial source of girls’ social status and inclusion, it is clear that girls must learn to skillfully negotiate ‘niceness’, or risk censure. Being ‘nice’, which for females often means not being adversarial, is a norm that women are expected to adhere to, even if they have achieved institutionally derived status” (227).

Sheldon found that women and girls, as young as preschool-aged, use a complex style of interaction that allows them to be nice and powerful at the same time. In her observation of 36 3-, 4-, and 5-year olds, Sheldon found that “the girls resist without being confrontational, justify themselves rather than give in, and use linguistic mitigators while trying to get what they want” (1997:238). “Girls in this community were extremely skillful in managing dissent. They got their agendas met without running amok of feminine cultural prescriptions to ‘be nice’ and ‘to get along’” (1997:231). Termed ‘double-voice discourse’ by Sheldon, this style of interaction involves the speaker attending to the addressee’s interests and goals and using linguistic mitigators while at the same time working to accomplish her own goals. Because direct confrontation challenges norms for feminine behavior, it is socially risky in girls’ interactions, but double-voice discourse allows girls (and women) the opportunity to address conflict in a less confrontational manner.

Sheldon is eager to point out that by changing the norm of what is considered ‘confrontational’ from the androcentric style of aggression to include this negotiation style of solidarity-based relationships, women can be portrayed as equally adept as men

at conflict resolution. Instead of finding women avoiding conflict or incapable of resolving opposition, she finds that the girls in her study are quite skillful at using language to mediate and overcome opposition, while maintaining sociability. Sheldon's research shows how girls' reaction to conflict is not to be weak or yielding, as cultural stereotypes would suggest. Instead, "girls do resist and oppose one another in order to further their own wishes" (1997:233). Sheldon's research shows how girls and women work to integrate opposing norms of traditional femininity – that of being nice – and empowered femininity – that of being assertive and resistant – into a hybrid discourse she calls double-voice discourse.

Similarly, Mills (1992) suggests that we should move beyond measuring women's speech against a male norm, and recognize the many ways in which women are assertive, powerful, and self-motivated while still being cooperative and traditional. She finds that women use features which both show concern for others, such as refraining from interrupting and asking leading questions, and features of more traditionally "masculine" speech, such as assertiveness and power. As such, she proposes "the term 'discourse competence' to describe speech that is both assertive (concerned with speaker needs) and cooperative (concerned with group needs). In this way, it is possible to theorize strong women speakers without reference to a system of masculine/feminine opposition" (4). By more thoroughly examining women's speech, it is possible to see how women integrate both a traditional, cooperative discourse and an empowered, assertive discourse in a number of interactions.

Sotirin (2000) also shows how women, through ‘bitching,’ integrate aspects of traditional femininity with more aggressive and powerful aspects typically associated with men. “Like gossip, bitching is informal, intimate, focused on personal experiences, opportunistic (with regard to settings and targets), and it expresses women’s privatized (personal, specific) anger,” but it also is “a reconstruction of events or feelings [with] a tone of moral indignation, and social-emotional stereotyping” (19). Sotirin examined bitching in the workplace and found that this form of talk enacts femininity because women commiserate and share feelings with one another in a traditionally non-powerful way (i.e. talking), while at the same time they enact more masculine traits by suggesting change and proposing or envisioning aggressive or violent action, even when there is no intention of following through.

Sotirin demonstrates that in many ways bitching is representative of traditional femininity. Bitching allows women to open up and share with one another; to seek and receive agreement on frustrations or problems, to share intense emotions like anger and indignation, and to save face and cope with troubles when in less powerful positions when direct confrontation is not feasible. Sotirin remarks that bitching demonstrates “the importance of communicative connections in working women’s lives; the pleasure of getting together to talk about each other’s troubles; the ways bitching can give emotional expression to and some sense of relief from the troubles that preoccupy women at work” (2000:19). Through discussing, sharing, and commiserating with one another, women engage in traditional femininity.

At the same time, Sotirin demonstrates how bitching rebels against traditional notions of femininity. Bitching allows interactants to struggle against hegemonic constraints and to propose and possibly enact powerful opposition. Bitching allows women to suggest and encourage other women to stand up for themselves, address wrongs, and promote change. Even if the suggestions are small movements, Sotirin remarks “small movements toward emancipatory alternatives – even if these small moves don’t culminate in transformative change – can empower women and men in the workplace by expanding on what can be envisioned as possible” (2000:24). Furthermore, she notes that these kinds of interactions mark “a micropolitical struggle over the rights, identities, and normative discourses that constitute workplace selves and possibilities” (Sotirin 2000:24). These small struggles can lead to changes, even small changes, which serve to give women a sense of power and justice.

As such, bitching integrates apparently oppositional gender norms: it allows women to acknowledge their less powerful position and vent their feelings through talk, a common feminine activity, while at the same time encouraging them to challenge the injustice and act upon it, a more masculine trait. “Bitching can both accommodate existing power asymmetries and envision alternatives that resist positions of subordination and disadvantage” (Sotirin 2000:24). Bitching shows agency through communication, in actively engaging in talking and imagining ways to solve problems and exert power. “Women’s office bitching may be a strategy for coping with and accommodating the conditions that disempower women in the workplace. But bitching also enacts communicative resources like emotionality in ways that confront

interpretive limitations and energize political imagination” (Sotirin 2000:22). In this way, bitching provides an opportunity for women to enact traditional femininity, through talking, commiserating and acknowledging their less powerful position, and enacts empowered femininity, through challenging injustices and considering how to act upon them.

Women can also show assertiveness through leadership skills, as Troemel-Ploetz (1994) finds in her study on how women in leadership positions combine traditionally feminine traits of sociability, equity, and niceness with masculine traits of leadership, power, and assertiveness in their directives to employees. In terms of traditional feminine traits, Troemel-Ploetz notes that women’s style of communication typically includes encouraging participation, sharing power and information, enhancing other people’s self-worth, and energizing others by producing enthusiasm (1994:200). In contrast, as leaders in the workplace, women must issue orders, make decisions, and critique others’ work. As a way to manage these conflicting goals, Troemel-Ploetz found that women would go to a great deal of linguistic work to achieve the ‘masculine’ goals while maintaining ‘feminine’ face. For example, rather than issuing orders, women leaders will issue invitations. “By explicitly calling the request an invitation, these undesirable properties of an order are camouflaged” (1994:203). While her position would allow her to issue an order, “she refrains from using authority and rather takes time to convince and persuade. In doing so, she is giving the man more room to voice his objection, treating him more like an equal than a subordinate” (1994:204). By using invitations and allowing for dialogue, the female boss embraces feminine styles of

speech which value equity, sociability, and concern for others' feelings, and at the same time, she continues the dialogue until the employee agrees to do the action, thereby accomplishing her goal of having the employee do as she wishes.

She also finds that female leaders accomplish their goals by using other feminine traits of solidarity, equity, and inclusiveness. Such linguistic mechanisms as giving praise, using the inclusive *we/us*, and asking questions are all typical of traditional femininity. At the same time, the female leader keeps conversation going until problems are resolved and employees are prepared to take action, demonstrating leadership and action-orientation, more typical masculinity traits. According to Troemel-Ploetz, women in leadership positions do not use speech acts that establish their authority over others, but rather ones that establish equity, closeness, and symmetry with others. At the same time, their speech acts do lead to the action of employees and demonstrate the self-assuredness of the leaders, which shows that these women enact both traditional and empowered femininity in their speech at work.

The "integrated" discourse of femininity shows that women look for ways to incorporate aspects of traditional femininity with aspects of empowered femininity to resolve conflicts, demonstrate leadership, and promote their social agenda. To do this, women pay attention to others and use talk to advance their own agenda (Sheldon 1997, Mills 1992, Troemel-Ploetz 1994). They also use cooperative talk to show aggression (Sotirin 2000). In these ways, women combine norms of traditional femininity such as being concerned with others and being equitable with norms of empowered femininity such as being assertive and taking control.

### 2.3. Summary

Recent research in language and gender examines how women enact different femininities, from traditional femininity, i.e. being sociable, egalitarian, and concerned with appearances to empowered femininity, i.e. being assertive, strong, and factual. Many studies focus on ways women integrate competing ideologies into hybrid discourses which encode both traditional femininity and empowered femininity.

The discourse of traditional femininity is marked by a number of features. First, women use language to portray themselves as nurturing, attentive, and concerned with their role as caretakers (Holmes 1997, Romaine 1999), as passive and unassertive (Coates 1996), and concerned with establishing connections with one another while maintaining equality (Tannen 1990, Romaine 1999). In order to portray themselves with these characteristics, they may compliment one another (particularly about appearance) (Coates 1996, Romaine 1999), or they may use story-telling (Tannen 1990, Holmes 1997, Romaine 1999). Sharing stories with friends also allows women to show equitability, allowing everyone a chance to participate and to connect with each other on common ground, rather than trying to one-up each other (Tannen 1990, Romaine 1999).

The discourse of empowered femininity is less prevalent than traditional femininity, but is generally marked by women actively flouting traditional feminine stereotypes, either to break with convention, to differentiate themselves from middle-class femininity, or to perform traditionally male professional duties. Coates (1999) demonstrates how women contradict the traditional stereotypes about femininity



through ‘backstage’ talk. In some conversations with close friends, women contradict the femininity imperative to be nice by expressing a desire to be rude and uncaring. Backstage talk carries a sense of shame as well as satisfaction: the women criticize themselves for acting in unfeminine ways, yet they enjoy this time to enact unfeminine traits. Another case of flouting traditional femininity is seen in working-class women. In interviews with work-class women discussing their nights out, Day (2003) found that working-class women construct a very different femininity that includes power and aggression. Rather than enacting traditional (in their view middle-class) femininity, she found that they were aggressive, likely to defend themselves and their friends, and to swear and be rowdy. Finally, women working in traditionally male-dominated fields may suspend norms of traditional femininity in order to be seen with the authority given their male colleagues. McElhinney (1995) found that male and female police officers interacted in a similar way, focusing primarily on gathering the facts for their report while remaining unemotional and objective. Furthermore, she found that the police officers used few back-channeling remarks, they interrupted the complainants and ignored their questions, and they used frame breaks to change the situation from one of a bureaucrat to one of a counselor.

Recently, researchers have found that women integrate aspects of traditional femininity and empowered femininity for such purposes as to resolve conflicts, assert themselves, and lead others. Sheldon (1997), for example, found that women and girls use “double-voice discourse” in order to resolve conflicts. In double-voice discourse, the speaker responds to her companion’s point of view while using persuasion and

rational argument to pursue her own agenda. Sheldon's research shows how this style allows girls and women to integrate opposing norms of traditional femininity, that of being nice and listening to others, and empowered femininity, that of being assertive and resistant, in order to solve conflicts. Mills (1992) shows that women display "discourse competence" in ways that are different than men, but that still encode both traditional femininity, i.e. being cooperative, and empowered femininity, i.e. being assertive. Another way women have integrated traditional femininity with empowered femininity in language is through bitching. Sotirin (2000) has found that bitching encodes traditional femininity because it is a cooperative style of talk which involves women sharing emotionally with one another and receiving validation from one another. At the same time, bitching flouts traditional femininity by encouraging women to challenge constraints, to promote themselves, to address wrongs, and to propose change. Finally, in terms of leadership, Troemel-Ploetz (1994) proposes that women use aspects of traditional femininity and more masculine styles of interaction. Troemel-Ploetz notes that female leaders promote traditional femininity traits of solidarity, equity, and inclusiveness by using such devices as giving praise, using the inclusive we/us, and asking questions. Furthermore, they engage employees in conversations with these tools until problems are resolved and the employees are prepared to take action, demonstrating more masculine traits of decision-making and action-orientation. As such, she demonstrates how a woman can integrate traditional and empowered styles of feminine discourse.

Researchers have shown how language reflects and perpetuates ideologies of femininity. In particular, ideologies of traditional femininity and empowered femininity, as well as mixtures of the two, have been studied by linguists. Because language is both a reflection of and an influence on society, it is worth examining both language and social issues together. Women's magazines serve as a source both of language and of societal norms, in that they are a print medium and in that the content reflects and shapes women's ideologies. A review of the history of women's magazines and their interaction with these femininities follows.

## CHAPTER 3

### FEMININITY PORTRAYED THROUGH WOMEN'S MAGAZINES

Gender ideologies or discourses are socially-constructed identities, produced and identified in large part through language. On a local level, these discourses are perpetuated through everyday conversations and interactions, as noted in the research in the previous chapter. On a broader scale, one source of enculturation of these discourses is the written texts of magazines. This chapter will focus on how magazines serve as a source of enculturation for femininity, and what discourses of femininity they perpetuate.

#### 3.1 The Making of Women's Magazines: 'A Recipe for Femininity Itself'

Magazines were perhaps the first genre which drew exclusively on readers of one sex, and as such, responded to and shaped interests and ideals for that sex. Prior to the inception of the magazine in the 1700s, print media was intended for all readers. The woman's magazine, however, was created specifically with the female audience in mind, and this has continued through today. "From its first inception, in its earliest form as a single-essay periodical, the magazine's publishers and authors felt obliged to attract the attention of female readers by invoking their interests as discrete and important" (Ballaster et al. 1991:48). Furthermore, as consumers of magazines (both in

purchasing and in reading them), women have been undeniably influenced by their content, and ideologies of femininity have developed because of and through magazines. “Throughout the twentieth century in both Britain and America, the publishing industry has maintained a separate sector producing magazines addressed to women readers *as* women” (Ballaster et al. 1991: 109). In the magazine, the specific needs and interests of women were promoted as important and worthwhile.

Analyzing magazines in their historical context, then, sheds light on the needs and interests of the women of a particular time. “Women’s magazines are attractive to women because they are about being female and the problems of being female” (Caldas-Coulthard 1996:252). In addition, magazines can be said to have created, or at least emphasized, particular needs and interests of women of a particular time.

Ballaster et al. suggest women’s magazines, “purport to offer a recipe for femininity itself” (1991:163). As such, magazines have served to both reflect and actively create ideals of womanhood and femininity. In order to be purchased and read, magazines must speak to women and women’s interests, and are therefore a reflection of current concerns of women. At the same time, magazines provide advice and instructions which help the reader learn how to act, behave, and present herself. In this way, the magazines serve to promote certain issues or concerns (Ballaster et al. 1991:145). As a guidebook or manual, the magazine is a powerful source of enculturation for women. If taken to heart, the instructions of the magazines will inform hundreds, thousands, or even millions of readers, influencing not only how they act but how they think of themselves. Furthermore, since the woman’s magazine is intended to reach women (as

opposed to men, or children), its instructions will influence how women think of themselves *as women*.

As such, an interesting cycle is created. The women's magazine readers identify themselves as women, a prerequisite for purchasing the magazine in the first place, since it is intended solely for women. The magazine then presents information, instructions, and advice about how to be womanly, which encourages the woman to keep reading and keep purchasing the magazine (Ballaster et al. 1991:124). The magazine (through its writers and editors) establishes itself as authority on how to be a woman, and at the same time presents itself as a woman too, one who also experiences the problems of being a woman and is offering solutions. "The idea of the magazine as a friend, giving advice or solution to common problems, implicitly addresses the question of femininity as one shared by all women" (Caldas-Coulthard 1996:259). The woman's magazine, therefore, becomes a reflection of and a vehicle for producing femininity.

A brief history of the development of women's magazines shows how period issues and ideals of femininity are both reflected in and shaped by the magazine. "The history of the women's magazine is intimately connected to a larger history of modern representations and discourses of femininity" (Ballaster et al. 1991:43). In examining the history of women's magazines, both form and content, one can examine social imperatives and ideals for women of the time.

Most historians agree that the first women's magazines in the United States were produced in the late 1700s, and that this publication marked the first medium that

addressed its audience by gender, rather than by status or wealth (Ballaster et al. 1991, Zuckerman 1998). While the magazines of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century were primarily purchased by the elite class, they were also directed at women in general, as there are indications that they were read by domestic staff and other lower-class women. The primary category of the audience, then, was that they were women: “the emergence of the early modern ‘magazine’ as a form went hand-in-hand with the development of a specific address to female readers as a definable ‘special interest’ audience” (Ballaster et al 1991:48). Furthermore, the early magazines not only responded to female interests, but helped to shape them as well.

The interests of women that the first magazines addressed are somewhat similar to those of today, although the magazines themselves were expensive and limited in circulation. From their inception in the late 1700s up to the Civil War, women’s magazines were a collection of miscellaneous items, including fictional stories, advice columns, fashion images, and instructional articles on various etiquette items. Zuckerman indicates the early magazines were “targeted at an elite class of readers, carried little or no advertising, were relatively expensive, and generally contained literary, etiquette, and fashion material” (1998:1), while Ballaster et al. indicate they offered gossip, advice in “the domestic world of love and affection,” and fictional stories (1991:49). The rising bourgeois class separated themselves based on both class and gender, with these elite women having leisurely time to read, dress up, and entertain company in the home, but not having to work. The first women’s magazines both reflected and reinforced this, as “the feminine, newly defined wholly in terms of a

domestic and private sphere [and] the linking of femininity with leisure and ornament came to condition the making of this genre” (Ballaster et al. 1991:74).

One of the first pivotal changes to the woman’s magazine came in the decades following the Civil War, as families lost domestic help, the middle class grew, and printing industries’ innovations allowed mass production. In response, many new magazines cropped up at inexpensive prices, thanks to the help of paid advertisements. Circulations were in the hundred thousands, and the content focused on helping women manage the household and encouraging women to buy products. “The shifts in production, financing, and distribution brought larger audiences to the woman’s journals, which now focused on middle-class women rather than the elite ‘ladies’ targeted in the antebellum years” (Zuckerman 1998:2). While at least fifty new titles appeared between 1870 and 1900 (Ballaster et al 1991:75), six major ones emerged on top, lasting well into the mid 1900s and some through today. The creation and rise of *Delineator*, *McCall’s*, *Ladies’ Home Journal*, *Woman’s Home Companion*, *Good Housekeeping*, and *Pictorial Review* in the 1880s and 1890s marked the birth of the woman’s magazine in form and content as we know it today.

Several corollary factors in the late 1800s and early 1900s led to the end product of the women’s magazine. One, as previously noted, was the changing role of women in the home. With the decline of domestic staff and rise of middle class, more women were taking on the tasks of managing the household, both in terms of managing the staff, doing chores themselves, and making household purchases. In response, advice columns in newspapers grew into magazines which addressed women’s concerns about



managing the home, and reinforced women as centers of the home. “*Ladies’ Home Journal*, *Woman’s Home Companion*, and *Good Housekeeping* started as women’s advice page supplements to newspapers or as publications directed at the home in general, filled with homemaking tips and service departments” (Zuckerman 1998:4).

A second development of this time was the creation of the paper pattern, allowing middle-class women to make or have made for them contemporary fashions. *Delineator*, *McCall’s*, and *Pictorial Review* started as catalogs of patterns to make current fashions, and later expanded to focus on women’s concerns more broadly (Zuckerman 1998:4).

The third development was the idea of national advertising to a growing middle class, and in particular to women who were often charged with managing the purchasing of household goods. Advertising in the back of newspapers had been commonplace since the early 1800s, but in magazines the line between articles and advertising became blurred early on. “Display advertisements and visually exciting promotional material became part of the attraction of the magazine, as well a fundamental to its financial viability” (Ballaster et al. 1991:80). In addition, magazine advertising reinforced the idea of women as the family shoppers: “While women earned less than men, the ideology of the ‘family wage’ ... gave women responsibility (if not always power) over the family purse” (Ballaster et al. 1991:80). As such, the inclusion of advertising in magazines helped lower the prices of the magazines and helped shape women’s role as the purchasers in the household.

While the magazines generally originated with a focus on one topic, by the late 1800s, in an effort to compete with one another, all grew to contain three major subgenres: literary content (such as short stories, poetry), fashion and appearance information, and domestic information. “Each kind of publication influenced the other, with the pattern sheets enlarging to include household advice, stories, and essays, and the home journals forced to add fashion news and patterns “(Zuckerman 1998:4). While each magazine continued to have its own focus and niche, all of the major women’s magazines of the late 1800s contained similar material.

The development of the magazine coincided with the rise of the middle-class and the establishment of the woman as center of the home. Readers sought entertainment and amusement, as well as practical advice to help them in role as the domestic manager (Zuckerman 1998, Ballaster et al. 1991). From the end of the Civil War to the turn of the century, women’s magazines developed into a product that is remarkably similar to the format and the content as many modern women’s magazines: a cross-section of short articles on topics of money, shopping, household chores and management, fashion and beauty, interspersed with advertisements, and presented as a friendly guide for feminine behavior.

### 3.2. Domestic Magazines and Traditional Femininity Ideology

The twentieth century brought some changes to the women’s magazine, but several principles remained constant, specifically that the content was directed at white, middle-class women who were interested in housekeeping, beauty advice, and taking

care of others. First and foremost was women's role as homemakers and household managers. "Women's magazines throughout this century have consistently fought to center definitions of the feminine on the domestic" (Ballaster et al. 1991:121). Fashion patterns and trends, cosmetic advice, and beauty rituals were an essential component of the magazine formula, as were articles on social reforms and feminist issues (Zuckerman 1998). During periods of unrest, particularly the push for women's suffrage, the First World War, the Depression, and the Second World War, the magazines contents' included political issues and advice to women to contribute to the economy and the nation; however, they were generally framed as women helping the greater good. "The publications continued to give their readers substantive material with directives about how to effect change, laced with a strong dose of optimism. These articles typically focused on social improvement rather than individual betterment" (Zuckerman 1998:183). The magazines, however, largely driven by advertisers, have generally focused on "women's role as housewife, mother, and wife, which helped sell products such as food, cosmetics, household appliances, furniture, and clothing" (Zuckerman 1998:179). McCracken concurs, stating that women's domestic magazines "present guidelines for proper consumerism and homemaking" (1993:181). In addition, "advertisements confined women primarily to traditional mother-, home-, or beauty/sex-oriented roles" (Lindner 2004:410). These magazines, through their articles and advertisements, have portrayed women as the domestic centers.

As a result, an ideology of femininity has developed over the last century and a half which defines women in terms of their accomplishments in the home and to others.

The magazines' articles focused on family budgeting, cooking, manners, housekeeping, entertaining, and family relationships and childcare, resulting in an image of ideal woman who focuses on "aesthetically pleasing meals, household décor and personal appearance, successful marriage and childraising" (McCracken 1993: 195). Ballaster et al. concur, noting "the representation of the woman reader as 'housewife' has been closely linked with the representation of the magazine as the work manual" (1991:123). In these magazines, women were encouraged to focus on domestic life and taking care of others, and the magazines' articles provided the instructions for doing so.

This traditional ideology of femininity, which values women's achievements in the home, to her husband, to her children, exists still today. In 1999, Basow and Rubin wrote "For the most part, in the United States, men are expected to be strong in agentic qualities, such as competency, instrumentality, and activity, whereas women are expected to be strong in communal activities, such as warmth, expressiveness, and nurturance" (26). Phillips (1999) concurs, stating that "if we are women, we may be told that to be 'successful' is to be soft and nurturant and to sacrifice our own wants for those of our families" (17). Many modern magazines, including *Good Housekeeping* and *Ladies' Home Journal*, continue to feature articles on these domestic issues, and frame femininity in terms of homemaking (Ballaster et al. 1991:139).

Caldas-Coulthard concurs, noting that many women's magazines represent femininity through discourses of maternity, domesticity and beauty (1996:253). Traditional magazines (like *Women's Own* and *Women's Weekly*) construct women as passive and preoccupied with personal and individual achievements, and place women

in the domestic sphere. “The concept of femininity offered is bound to family ideals of affection, loyalty and obligation and domestic production or housekeeping. That is why features on cookery, decoration, or motherhood are present in most of these texts” (Caldas-Coulthard 1996:253). Her discourse analysis shows that women’s magazines reaffirm traditional values of the role of women in society: as domestic agents, in relation to men and children, and as consumers of products.

In addition to women’s role in creating a happy home, women’s magazines have also traditionally focused on women’s beautification. As noted previously, some of the earliest magazines were fashion plates with paper sewing patterns, which allowed the middle-class woman to create herself the fashions which the upper class were wearing (Ballaster et al. 1991). Throughout the twentieth century, an increased attention was placed on the female appearance, and in particular, the need for women to work on and improve their appearance. While the magazines promoted the message that beauty was natural and essential to femininity, they also appeased their advertisers by encouraging readers to work at their beauty through the purchase of clothes, make-up, and beauty products. “Cosmetic advertisements and advice on their use in advertorials thus brought together consumption and the representation of woman as object of gaze, linking both to the work of femininity” (Ballaster et al. 1991:122). Magazines served an essential role in the ‘beauty as work’ philosophy, presenting images of how women should appear and instructions on how to achieve that look.

The domestic women’s magazine of the twentieth century reflected and shaped an ideology of femininity that focused primarily on women as domestic agents and as

objects of beauty. The articles focused on cooking, household chores, budgeting, childcare, decorating, and self-beautification. The result is a discourse of “traditional femininity” which frames women as household managers whose role is to care for and nurture their family, and as objects of beauty who should attend to and work on their appearance.

### 3.3. Feminist Magazines and Empowered Femininity Ideology

Traditional femininity has been criticized for constraining women in society and objectifying women, and the women’s domestic magazine has been criticized for its role in indoctrinating women to espouse these values. “The feminist movement’s critique of traditional sex roles and women’s exploitation under the free household labor system caused some women to look with disfavor on the standard messages presented” in women’s domestic magazines (McCracken 1993:174). In reaction, waves of feminism have developed, demanding equal access and rights for women and demonstrating that women can be as successful as men in any endeavor.

The first wave of feminism arose in the early 1900s, demanding the right to vote and a more fair and equitable treatment for women in society (Lotz 2003:3). Women’s domestic magazines published articles addressing political issues of the time, but no new magazines developed specific to these needs. It wasn’t until the second wave of feminism developed that women’s magazines would see a dramatic change. “Ever since the emergence of second wave feminism, often dated from the 1963 publication of Frieden’s *The Feminine Mystique*, feminists have questioned the role of women’s

glossy magazines in presenting and maintaining patriarchal definitions of femininity” (Eggins and Iedema 1997:165). The second wave of feminism arose in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and with it came a surge of new women’s magazines to address feminists’ political and social agenda, women’s issues in advancing in the workplace, and women’s sexuality (Lotz 2003:3). Magazines such as *Woman’s News*, *Executive Female Digest*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Ms.*, *Women Sports*, and *The Sportswoman*, were introduced in the early 1970s to address the post-sixties’ emancipated woman (Ballaster et al. 1991, Endel 1991, McCracken 1993). These magazines focused on providing information and instructions to the New Woman, “aimed to break with the traditions of the domestic magazine” (Ballaster et al. 1991:123). These magazines rebelled against the image of femininity depicted in the domestic magazines, and focused on promoting women in the public arena.

These magazines, like many women of the time, claimed that women were as strong, capable, and proactive as men, and that women should be given equal opportunities to men. “In pointing out *Ms.*’s accomplishments, Gloria Steinem notes that hers was the first women’s magazine to employ women ad salespeople; to solicit ads from makers of cars, stereos, insurance, and other ‘male’ products; to refuse to print columns on how to wear makeup; to turn down ads it considered ‘sexist’” (Miller 1981). These magazines addressed women as empowered agents, both by employing women and by producing articles and ads framing women as equals to men. The magazines were incredibly important in popularizing feminist ideals to a wide audience, perhaps more than any other medium (Wolf 1991).

The new women's magazines followed the form of offering manuals and advice to women, but the content shifted to focus on the "new woman's" needs in succeeding in her career, juggling work and family, embracing sexuality, and being socially and politically active. In 1988, Doyle wrote "women's current role models are strong, independent, and in control. They are tough, smart, and command respect ... Women of the 80s should be independent women of action, substance and intensity" (28). As such, magazines grew to include "business and finance, work problems, lifestyle issues, and current events" (McCracken 1993:207); "self-help and sexuality for the single woman" (Zuckerman 1998:225), "social and political issues of importance to women such as the Equal Rights Amendment, child care, women's health issues, financial and employment concerns, women's spirituality, aging, domestic violence, and lesbianism" (Zuckerman 1998:227). Even traditional women's domestic magazines, such as *Good Housekeeping* and *Redbook* "added a few editorial features about jobs, financial management, and new lifestyles" (McCracken 1993:174). The political and social movements beginning in the 1960s and 1970s influenced the discourse of femininity, to represent women in more empowered ways.

Koller's (2004) discourse analysis of business magazines shows how women in the workplace are represented in a more empowered way. Three main metaphor complexes are commonly used – aggression and competition, care and affection, and control and leadership, but "the most prominent metaphor complex is AGGRESSION AND COMPETITION" (13). Within that metaphor complex, Koller found that "businesswomen are more often described in terms of the WAR metaphor than are



businessmen” (12). Specifically, businesswomen are described as warriors / fighters, (wild) animals, athletes, machines, (hard) objects, hunters, and gamblers (14). Koller also notes the use of aggression and competition metaphors can be regarded “as evidence of the changing role of businesswomen as agents in a male-dominated social arena: while still having ‘feminine’ values ascribed to them, they are nevertheless simultaneously conceptualized in ‘masculine’ terms” (16). The changing discourse of femininity in specialty magazines, such as business magazines and feminist magazines, reflected an empowerment for women.

In addition to women’s calls for equality in the public arena and in the workplace was a call for equity as athletes. Representative of women’s desire for equality to men is the rise of female athletes and calls for equality in sports in the late 1960s and early 1970s. “Sport has a very promising liberating and transforming potential for women to discover and reclaim their physical selves” (Endel 1991:10 – 11). With this shift in female interests came the sports magazine directed specifically at women, with *Woman Sports* and *The Sportswoman* debuting in 1974 and *Self* in 1979 (McCracken 1993). The sports and fitness magazines created in the 1970s and early 1980s can be seen as a reflection of women’s desire to be assertive and to gain strength. “The physically empowering potentials of sport and physical activity open up to women new sources of self-esteem, physical strength, and a sense of physical competence” (Endel 1991:10). In these women’s sports magazines, as in many of the women’s magazines representative of the second wave feminist movement, women were portrayed as strong, aggressive, and able to compete with men.

While these magazines focused on women gaining political and social equality in U.S. society, they also focused on women's bodies. These bodies, however, were powerful, athletic bodies. "Images of strong women's bodies are represented by *Women Sports* and these images are antithetical to traditional images of femininity as frailty" (Endel 1991:83). At the same time, magazines of the 1970s and 1980s began to focus on women's bodies and clothes as an expression of their identity as an empowered woman. McCracken notes that *New Woman* included features on 'image-building' and 'power dressing,' (1993:217) and Zuckerman notes that *Working Woman* included articles on health and fashion (1998:231). These magazines tapped into previous femininity discourses focusing on women's appearance, but in this case, the magazines focused on information on dressing for success, discarding traditional femininity restraints (from bras to girdles), and embracing athleticism and strength.

Through magazines and active political agendas, the second-wave feminists of the 1960s and 1970s succeeded in a number of legal and social advances for women, such as protecting women in the workplace, providing new opportunities to women in education and work, and advancing women's concerns in domestic, medical, and social areas. In fact, because of their success, many women today have come to believe that they have the same opportunity as men to become successful in whatever path of life they choose to take, as well as having strong personal relationships and personal fulfillment, as a result of their own efforts and hard work (Phillips 1999:17). Phillips (1999) notes that "the current generation of young women came through childhood and adolescence in a climate where ... where girls were often led to believe that their

society would view and treat them as equals to boys, where women's sexuality was acknowledged, ... and where, in some cases, their own caregivers were second-wave feminists" (10). As a result, an empowered femininity discourse developed, framing women as equal to men in many regards. This empowered femininity discourse draws upon language that women are capable of and should embrace assertiveness, hard work, and strength to attain respect and success.

### 3.4. Fitness Magazines and the Body

A reaction to second-wave feminism has been the perception that women are unattractive and anti-beauty, even manly. "The women's movement often made it seem that liberation meant sacrificing the fun parts of being female" (Doyle 1988:32). As a desire to retain their femaleness, many women have sought to find a balance between traditional femininity and empowered femininity.

The body is the primary area of overlap between traditional femininity and empowered femininity values. The site of traditional femininity was the home and women's beauty, while the site of the empowered femininity was the public and women's presentation of themselves to the world. "These two different representations suggest that what is at stake is a struggle to 'claim' femininity, each side using the image of the women to define the issues in particular ways" (Betterton 1987:10). It is no surprise that the *image* of women – their bodies – has become the site where the two conflicting femininities compete.

Magazines have helped perpetuate this idea in several ways. Through language and advertising, various analyses have shown that women's magazines in the late 1980s and the 1990s portray conflicting, competing ideologies about women and their bodies. Ferguson et al. found that advertising in *Ms.* magazine has increased in its presentation of women's sexuality during the approximately 20-year history of the publication history (1990:47). While Ferguson et al. believe this portrays women as sex objects and is inconsistent with *Ms.*'s advertising policy of avoiding harmful products and sexist advertising, they also note that "in light of the increased interest in fitness and health, greater acceptance of intimacy in persuasive appeals, and greater tolerance of nudity, one can no longer assume that negatives stereotypes characterize advertisements which simply 'focus on the body'" (Ferguson et al. 1990:47). Thus, this focus on sexuality can be seen as both a portrayal of women as sex objects and of women as empowered individuals able to take charge of their bodies and their own sexuality.

Caldas-Coulthard (1996) also proposes that the discourse of women's magazines (such as *Cosmopolitan*, *New Woman*, *Marie Claire*, *Vogue*, and *Elle*) is based on paradoxes. On one hand, "there seems to have been an acceptance and incorporation of some basic feminist and liberal principles: there is some criticism of misogyny and prejudice, and women are encouraged to stand up for their rights" (253). On the other hand, women are still defined in terms of their relationships to other and through their role as domestic agents (253). In particular, sexuality "is constructed both by a Christian discourse of distaste and fear which makes sex dangerous and punishable, and by the progressive discourses which construct sex as autonomous from other forms of

relationship such as love and friendship” (253). Caldas-Coulthard notes that the feminist discourse of sexual liberation has been misappropriated: while appearing to show women as sexually liberated, they constrain women by judging deviant sexual behavior. While women’s magazines provide a forum for women to explore sexuality and sexual relationships, they perpetuate traditional norms of sexuality (i.e. heterosexuality, monogamous relationships).

Eggins and Iedema found that women’s magazines encourage women to be empowered, but within a limited range of traditionally feminine endeavors, such as body work and heterosexual relationships. In their 1997 discourse analysis of two Australian women’s magazines, *New Woman* and *SHE*, they found that women’s magazines focus largely on women’s appearances as an object of empowerment and of objectification (168). “Both *New Woman* and *SHE* urge women to work on their bodies and to consume beauty-enhancing goods (cosmetics, clothes etc.) to appear attractive to men” (168). They note that despite the proliferation of new titles, women’s magazines offer “largely internally consistent ideology of femininity” (166) and serve to naturalize this single ideology. In one magazine, *SHE*, they note that women are presented as static and are “warned of negative consequences of stepping outside feminine sex roles” (189). In the second magazine they analyzed, *New Woman*, women are presented as dynamic but still compelled not to threaten conventional standards. Specifically, they note that these contradictions arise from the overt messages of change and empower yourself, and the covert messages of maintaining the status quo (191). Furthermore, they found that even though women are often the theme or given in the sentences, they

are framed as the unknowing, incapable, inexperienced woman who needs to be taught what to do or reprimanded for stepping out of line (192). “For *NW* learning and change concern a specified and limited degree of practical change, excluding radical transgressions of patriarchal definitions of womanhood” (192). Ultimately, both magazines, while having different approaches, reinforce the same ideology of femininity: explore change of your body and your sexuality, but do so in conventionalized ways.

Machin and Thornborrow (2001) found although women’s magazines appear to have contradictory images of women’s bodies, in the case of *Cosmopolitan*, these contradictions are blended into a seamless ideology. Analyzing all 44 international versions of the November 2001 issue of *Cosmopolitan* (*Cosmo*), they examined texts representing two domains of female agency, women at work and women in relationships, and found that women’s agency is linked to their sexuality and their bodies. “Although recognizing the inherently contradictory discourses at work in women’s magazines, in our analysis of the *Cosmopolitan* texts we show how there is coherence in the discursive representations of the ‘fun, fearless female’” (462). They found *Cosmopolitan* showed women as having needs and desires outside of the home and family realms, and women were able to take control and wield power through their sexuality. “Women’s sexuality is the source of their power over men and of their success in the workplace” (460). They note that power in *Cosmo* is always connected to the female body, and regardless of whether this is unrealistic or anti-feminist, in *Cosmo* it is a coherent discourse.

The ideology of women focusing on their bodies is also seen in the growth, both in terms of new titles and circulations, of the fitness magazine genre in the 1990s. In 1996, Kelly reported, “magazines about healthy life-styles, fitness, and nutrition ... have emerged as one of the fastest-growing and most hotly contested categories in women’s publishing” (32), and in 1998, Granatstein reported that *Fitness* was increasing the frequency of its issues (from 10-times-per-year to monthly), and *Shape* and *Self* magazines had increased their circulations dramatically. By 1999, Kerwin wrote that health and fitness magazines had moved “out of a niche health category and into the larger rubric of general-interest women’s book” (3). In particular, *Shape* magazine was listed as the “third-largest young women’s publication behind Hearst Magazine’s *Cosmopolitan* and Condé Nast Publications’ *Glamour*” (1). Eager to keep up, other contemporary women’s magazines began including articles on diet and fitness, and Kerwin reported “if you talk to the editor in chief of any women’s magazine and ask them what are the best-read sections in their magazines, it’s very often health columns” (3).

Furthermore, fitness magazines have begun framing their articles and magazines to appeal more broadly to women. Granatstein writes “some titles have expanded their scope beyond the parameters of physical fitness. *Self*, which pioneered the category in 1979, has gradually expanded its fitness coverage in recent years while maintaining its original editorial mission in the service of complete personal fulfillment” (24). Kelly also notes that health magazines “are trying to move away from an image closely aligned with medical health in favor of a softer overall fitness image” (32). A brief look

at some various women’s fitness magazines shows their newness (year of inception), breadth (circulation numbers), and focus (magazine description) based on the magazines’ own media kits and the Audit Bureau of Circulations 2006 six-month circulation numbers (ABC 2007).

Table 3.1: Demographics of Magazines

<i>Magazine Title</i>	<i>Year of inception</i>	<i>Circulation (ABC)</i>	<i>Tag line and description</i>
<i>Self</i>	1979	1,488,868	<p>“You at your best”</p> <p><i>SELF</i> debuted 27 years ago as the first-ever magazine of total-well-being, incorporating beauty and health, fitness and nutrition, and happiness and personal style all in one package.</p> <p><i>SELF</i> inspires, informs, motivates and rewards the individual who wants to challenge herself, grow, and achieve her personal goals.</p> <p>(Condé Nast 2007)</p>
<i>Shape</i>	1981	1,700,232	<p><b>Shape delivers inspiring, trusted editorial.</b></p> <p>Award-winning <i>Shape</i> magazine delivers trusted wellness information, sophisticated beauty and fashion editorial and inspirational steps for positive change in every issue.</p> <p><b>Inspiring</b></p> <p><i>Shape</i>’s mission is to help women create better lives</p> <p><i>Shape</i>’s fundamental message is: “You have the power and strength to achieve what you want through _positive change”</p> <p><b>Trusted</b></p> <p><i>Shape</i>’s Editorial Advisory Board of over 23 medical professionals and industry experts was established in 1981—before any competitive title.</p> <p>(American Media Inc. 2007)</p>
<i>Oxygen Women's Fitness</i>	1997	131,909	<p><i>Oxygen</i> is dedicated to women who wish to better themselves through exercise. The benefits of adopting a fitness lifestyle are many - from a firmer, more shapely physique, to greater energy, self-esteem and overall health.</p> <p>(CanUSA Group Inc. 2007)</p>
<i>Fitness</i>	1999	1,553,545	<p>“Mind, Body, and Spirit ... Get slim and strong”</p> <p><i>Fitness</i> is about reaching your potential, being your personal best. We embrace women of all abilities as they strive to fulfill their goals for their body, looks, life, and well-being. With unique ways for every woman to tailor the magazine to her needs and a voice that understands, motivates, and inspires, we give every reader the confidence to say “<i>Fitness</i> is for me!”</p> <p>(Meredith Direct Response Marketing 2007)</p>



Table 3.1 - *Continued*

<i>Muscle &amp; Fitness Hers</i>	2000	90,439	<p><i>Muscle &amp; Fitness Hers</i> is designed for the active woman who demands more out of fitness. A success coach in print, <i>Hers</i> delivers a competitive edge for expert training, nutrition, health, beauty and fashion tips for today's woman.</p> <p>Our readers work extra hard to maintain a healthy lifestyle that exists not only in the health clubs but extends into their personal relationship as well.</p> <p><i>M&amp;F Hers</i> readers are college educated, professional, fitness enthusiasts. The <i>hers</i> reader is a fashion savvy, trendsetter who invests time and money in brand awareness. (American Media Inc. 2007)</p>
<i>Fitness Rx</i>	2002	307,385	<p>"Your ultimate prescription for the perfect body"</p> <p><i>Fitness RX</i> for Women takes a refreshingly new scientific approach enabling every woman to become the very best she can be. Each issue will feature authoritative well-researched articles on everything from diet, nutrition and exercise to general fitness, health, cosmetic enhancement and sexual fulfillment. (FitnessRXMag.com 2007)</p>
<i>Fit</i>	2004	110,000	<p>"Strong – Smart – Sexy"</p> <p>This award-winning magazine is the popular choice for fitness enthusiasts everywhere - helpful, positive, always light-hearted and fun to read. Filled with workouts, health tips, great recipes and hundreds of ideas to tone your body, mind and soul while it entertains and amuses. (Gorman Media Group Inc. 2007)</p>
<i>Women's Health</i>	2005	648,941	<p>"It's good to be you"</p> <p><i>Women's Health</i> is a fresh and smart magazine that speaks to today's active, youthful women in a way that is passionate, authoritative and relevant to their lifestyles. <i>Women's Health</i> motivates and educates women to take control of their physical and emotional selves so they can live the lives they've imagined.</p> <p>Informative: we deliver the facts, debunk the myths, and divulge the hidden truths.</p> <p>Instructive: we tell you exactly how to solve problems, get results, and be your best.</p> <p>Immediate: we get you started right here, right now.</p> <p>Insightful: we know what your life is really like.</p> <p>Inspiring: we believe you can be and can have anything and everything you want. (Rodale 2007)</p>

Both the recent inception of many of these magazines, and the fact that the magazines see themselves as being new, fresh and contemporary, demonstrates that

they comprise a new trend in femininity. Health and fitness magazines contain a number of different articles: fitness and training, diet and nutrition, health, beauty and fashion, happiness and life, and sex and relationships. Most market themselves as providing holistic advice for the complete woman; however, the majority of the articles focus primarily on fitness and diet. Selecting a single issue in early 2006 from each of these eight magazines, 218 total articles were found. Of those 218, 70 (32%) are fitness articles and 50 (23%) are diet and nutrition articles. Furthermore, within each magazine fitness articles comprised either the highest number or the second highest number of articles. The table below shows the breakdown of articles in each magazine (the highest number of articles is marked by \*, the second highest number is marked by ^).

Table 3.2 Article Topics in Women's Health and Fitness Magazines

<i>Magazine Title</i>	<i>Fitness &amp; Training</i>	<i>Diet &amp; Nutrition</i>	<i>Beauty &amp; Fashion</i>	<i>Life, Happiness, Mind &amp; Spirit</i>	<i>Health</i>	<i>Sex &amp; Relationships</i>
<i>Shape</i>	9^	5	14*	7	3	0
<i>Fitness</i>	9^	10*	6	6	3	0
<i>Self</i>	7*	3	7*	6	3	1
<i>Women's Health</i>	4^	5*	0	5*	3	3
<i>Oxygen Women's Fitness</i>	15*	5^	5^	4	2	0
<i>Fitness Rx</i>	12^	13*	2	3	3	2
<i>Fit</i>	7*	4^	2	4	3	0
<i>Muscle &amp; Fitness Hers</i>	7*	5^	0	1	0	0
<b><i>Totals</i></b>	<b>70*</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>6</b>

Given their high percentage, fitness articles seem to be indicative of the content and nature of health and fitness magazines. Furthermore, at least one fitness article is nearly always promoted on the cover of the magazine, indicating the magazine believes its audience sees these articles as important and will choose to purchase or read the magazine if it has appropriately captured the femininity ideal and drawn in the reader. By selecting and analyzing the fitness article which is featured on the cover of the magazine, then, one could get a sense of the nature of the magazine and potentially of the whole genre. Furthermore, the fitness articles are generally instructional articles in which the writer specifically addresses the reader and calls him or her to action. Instructional texts often begin with an introduction, designed to grab the reader's attention and motivate the reader to follow the ensuing instructions, and then transition into the instructional element (Heinsley and Miller 1996). The introduction in particular provides an opportunity to examine what the values the writer assumes will motivate the reader to keep reading and eventually undertake the activities instructed. While the texts are relatively short (250 – 1000 words), they are rich with information about the ideals of femininity the writers are appealing to. As such, the discourse of the fitness instructional articles portrayed in women's contemporary health and fitness magazines is worth examining to see how it encodes contemporary femininity.

### 3.5. Summary

The relationship between women's magazines and women's ideals of femininity has long been one of symbiosis. In order to appeal to women, magazines must address

women's concerns. At the same time, it has shaped those concerns by the information it presents.

Over the last two hundred years, white, middle-class femininity has been signified by a focus on domestic life. Articles in most women's magazines throughout this time have addressed women as domestic managers of the home, giving instructions on cooking, cleaning, shopping, caring for their husbands and children, and self-beautification. The discourse of these magazines frames women as domestic agents, in relation to men and children, and as consumers of products.

The rise of first-wave and second-wave feminism, however, has countered this ideal by constructing an image of femininity in which women are empowered to succeed outside of the home. The content of these magazines focuses on business and finance, social and political issues of importance to women, workplace issues, self-help, and sexuality. The discourse of these magazines encourages women to take charge, suggesting assertiveness, hard work, and strength will lead to respect and success.

Contemporary magazines appear to have conflicting information on being both traditional and being empowered. The growth over the past 20 years of fitness articles and magazines, both in terms of circulation and new titles, demonstrates that one major focus for contemporary women is on using, changing, and displaying their bodies. However, in these magazines, the female body appears to have multiple ideologies associate with it. The following chapter will examine these various ideologies of the female body, and how the body encodes femininity in divergent ways.

## CHAPTER 4

### IDEOLOGIES OF FEMININITY USING THE BODY

The rise in health and fitness articles and magazines over the past 15 years points to an emphasis on the female body as a way to depict different ideologies of femininity. The body appears to have emerged as the site of contemporary femininity because there are numerous ideologies women can present through their bodies.

Why is the body so crucial to women's representation of their identity? First, the body is the site of the biological differences for men and women. "The body is central to modern conceptions of gender. Components of the gender dichotomy as conceptualized in contemporary Western society – including strength and weakness, activity and passivity, sexuality and neutrality – are linked inseparably to the physical. The very "nature" of maleness or femaleness is intrinsically embodied" (Gimlin 2002:3). Since the body already encases critical biological differences, it is understandable that people may try to enhance those differences to mark their gender.

The body is also symbolically the representation of oneself. "The body is one critical point at which the social meets the individual and from which a self is created. The body is fundamental to the self because it serves to indicate who an individual is internally, what habits the individual has, and even what social value the individual merits" (Gimlin 2002:3). On and through the body, one uses clothes, adornment, and

body movements to indicate social class, wealth, religion, and regional background, among other socio-cultural classifications. Bordo explains, “the body is a powerful symbolic form, a surface on which the central rules, hierarchies, and even metaphysical commitments of a culture are inscribed and thus reinforced through the concrete language of the body” (1993:165). For women, the body is a particularly important symbolic form, because they have traditionally not had other outlets such as financial or political mechanisms for portraying themselves. “The link between the body and identity is more explicit among women because for them, more than for men, the body is the primary indicator of self to the outside world” (Gimlin 2002:4). While men have been able to gain economic or political capital, women have traditionally been denied these opportunities and have had to rely on social capital. For women, then, the body is an important symbol of the self.

Third, the body is the place where one accepts and portrays one’s own culture. Many writers have observed that bodies have the potential to express core social values. Bordo notes that the body operates as a metaphor for culture (1993:165), and Freedman notes that “bodies make social statements” (1986:152). Specifically, researchers note that we (attempt to) shape our bodies to meet social standards, and we use the physicality of our bodies to move and interact in socially acceptable ways. Bordo writes, “we are no longer given verbal descriptions or exemplars of what a lady is or of what femininity consists. Rather, we learn the rules directly through bodily discourse: through images that tell us what clothes, body shape, facial expression, movements, and behavior are required” (1993:170). Reischer and Koo concur, stating, “bodies have

been and continue to be reshaped in a myriad of culturally relevant ways” (2004:297). Thus, through the ways we alter our bodies – such as weight loss or gain, makeup, and adornment – we display our cultural standards through our bodies. In a very important way, the body is the site where women, consciously or not, accept or reject the cultural meanings about ideal appearance.

Finally, the body is the site where individuals are assumed to have the greatest amount of control. While one can attempt to order others or change the world around oneself, he or she can ultimately only control his or her own actions. Furthermore, it is only through one’s own actions that one can try to make others act, or one can try to change and control the world. Lock writes, “the body mediates all reflection and action upon the world” (1993:133). Several anthropologists and philosophers have argued that the body is not simply a reflection of culture, but the agent upon and creator of culture. Termed “embodiment” by Csordas, he notes that a self that acts on the world does so through the medium of the body (1990). As opposed to theories which create a duality between the mind and body or the culture and body, the theory of embodiment views the body as the agent of the mind and culture, and the agent on the world. Bordo explains, “the body is not only a *text* of culture. It is also, as anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu and philosopher Michel Foucault (among others) have argued, a practical, direct locus of control” (1993:165). Through the body, the individual is able to exert action and interact with the world. The body is, necessarily, the agent of the individual on the world.

Thus, there are several orientations to the body: the biological body, the representative body, the socio-cultural body, and the agent body. In their 2004 study, Reischer and Koo examine two primary theoretical orientations to the body, the “symbolic body” and the “agentic body.” The symbolic body is the perspective that the body is representative of social values, while the agentic body is the perspective that the body acts on the world and serves as a mechanism for social power and control. They believe the body does not serve only one role but both simultaneously. They note, “recent investigations of the body beautiful demonstrate the extraordinary capacity of the body not only to symbolize the social world, but also to participate actively in the creation of the world” (Reischer and Koo 2004:315). The body serves to merge both aesthetic and agentive roles. “Because cultural meanings and values reside in and on the material body, the body not only reflects these constructions but also has the capacity to challenge them” (Reischer and Koo 2004:315). Thus, the body serves as a vehicle for social action even as it reflects social realities.

Reischer and Koo also find that women, more than men, have used their bodies to reflect their gender and at the same time to create status. They note,

Responsive to the highly coded nature of beauty, women have learned to appropriate the body’s symbolism to achieve their own ends. Women’s bodies, and social constructions of the ideal female form, do more than reflect women’s position in society: They offer a powerful means for negotiating, redefining, and reconceptualizing that position (Reischer and Koo 2004:315).

Women have historically used their bodies to assure their place in society and to construct new notions of womanhood. To gain status or attention, women can use clothes, constraining devices, and adornment to appear plump, hour-glass-like, thin,



large-busted, small-waisted, rosy-cheeked, and bright-eyed, depending on the beauty norm of the day. From the use of bustles, corsets, hoops, bras, makeup, and jewelry, to the advent of paper patterns which allowed women to create high fashion dresses, women have used their bodies to gain status, by mimicking higher class women, making themselves competitive among other women, and making themselves attractive to suitors. While patriarchal views of these devices may see them as unwittingly degrading women, other views see this as women actively participating in gaining status and stability (Fauldi 1991, Riordan 2004). In addition, women have challenged the status quo by changing their clothes and thus the shape of their bodies to appear less feminine and more masculine, through straighter lines, loose-fitting dresses, and lack of corsets during the first wave of feminism and jeans, trousers, and hippie styles during the second wave (Freedman 1986, Fukai 2006). In these ways, women use their bodies to negotiate and (re)define their position in society.

Of interest to this study is what the body ideal for women today is, and how women see this body ideal as either traditional or empowered femininity. The female body ideal perpetuated in contemporary magazines and media is an incredibly thin body. Today, “women are bombarded daily with images of thin women’s bodies and the message that if they aren’t thin, they should be” (Spitzer et al. 1999:560). Sypeck, Gray, and Ahrens found that from 1955 to 1999, the models portrayed on the covers of *Cosmopolitan*, *Glamour*, *Mademoiselle*, and *Vogue* had not only become increasingly thinner, but the images showed more of the body (2004). In addition, women in magazine covers and advertisements are increasingly sexualized (Lindner 2004). “Such

a message may contribute to the objectification of women, creating additional physical requirements that must be satisfied to merit depiction on a magazine and communicating to American women an increasingly thin feminine ideal” (Sypeck, Gray, and Ahrens 2004: 346-7). Although women’s bodies which are *too* thin are not idealized, the body ideal that is coveted is much thinner than the average woman and often unattainable, and the focus on body size and the display of the female body is a relatively recent phenomenon.

In addition to thinness, the current idealized female form is expected to be toned, likely in response to the rise of women’s sports and fitness magazines during second-wave feminism. In an ethnographic study of more than 200 women, Reischer (2000) found that women who had come of age during the women’s movement of the 1960s and 1970s had quite different notions of the ideal female body than women who had grown up in the 1980s and 1990s. In particular, younger women idealized muscular female bodies, which shows that “women are seeking to embody social values associated with muscles and to demonstrate that muscles – which is to say strength, discipline, and other such socially valued qualities – are equally characteristic of women” (Reischer and Koo 2004: 314). In the late 1980s, marketers started to pick up this trend. One marketing agency suggested that clients appeal to women by addressing their strength: “New style women are juggling family and careers on an everyday basis. The results of that heavy burden are muscles as well as curves. And women are flexing these muscles in the workplace as well as the gym” (Doyle 1988:29). The rise of the

emphasis on the toned and fit body is a reflection of women's desire to show their strength and discipline.

Unfortunately, both the thin body ideal and the toned body ideal are out of reach of many women. Spitzer et al (1999) found that the average size of beauty contestant winners and Playboy models has decreased since the 1950s, while the weight of the average 18 – 24 year old American and Canadian woman has increased. Gimlin (2002) concurs, stating “over the past few decades, the ideal female body has diverged more and more from the average North American woman's physical reality” (5). As such, there is great discrepancy between the ideal body and the actual body of the average woman. Freedman writes, “If there is a great discrepancy between the ideal and the real (for instance, if a cult of thinness defines most women as overweight), then the majority of women will see themselves as misfits and will feel pressured to remodel themselves into the popular mold” (1986:27). Given this great discrepancy between the ideal and the real, and the societal pressure for women to enact femininity through this ideal, an intense preoccupation with the body and with one's ability to change it has erupted. “The body now has become the most significant and the most preoccupying project of American girls” (Reischer and Koo 2004:306). Because the current body ideal is particularly difficult to achieve and maintain, it is widely admired for uniqueness, yet presented as attainable to all women through discipline and hard work.

#### 4.1. Symbolism of the Slender Body Ideal

As noted earlier, individuals use the body to reflect one's acceptance of societal norms. The body also reflects what those societal norms are. "Like language, beauty is a form of communication" (Freedman 1986:58). The current beauty norm for women, the slim and toned body, symbolizes aspects of both traditional femininity and empowered femininity.

##### *4.1.1 The Slender Body and Traditional Femininity*

The role of beauty as representative of femininity is long-standing. "While many roles are denied to females, that of beauty object is subtly as well as overtly encouraged. To enact femininity is to become a kind of exhibitionist, to display oneself as a decorative object" (Freedman 1986:37). Historically, women have gained status and power through their appearance rather than through their intellect or the deeds, as men have. "Whereas men are more frequently judged by their social status, intellect, or material success, women are commonly defined in terms of their appearance and relationship to men" (Betterton 1987:7). Because women have been traditionally judged on their appearance, they have traditionally put more effort into it. "*Beauty work* has historically been the province of women" (Reischer and Koo 2004:298).

In our visually oriented culture, appearance may important to everyone, but women are still judged more harshly than men on their appearance. "Attractiveness has been found to correlate with ratings of masculinity in men and femininity in women. However, the correlations are significantly higher for women, suggesting that beauty is

more salient in the perception of femininity than masculinity” (Freedman 1986:10).

While other researchers acknowledge that men also care about their appearance, they note that men are not nearly as heavily judged on their appearance (Black and Sharma 2001, Lakoff 2003). Certainly, men face pressures to meet certain ideals of masculinity; however, “greater cultural variation is permitted in their physical bodies...women face enormous pressures to match unattainable conceptualizations of beauty” (Gimlin 2002:4). Black and Sharma write, “of all of those who are subject to this valuing of beauty, women are the group most routinely and consistently judged according to aesthetic ideals (2001:104). Women, far more than men, are affected by a preoccupation with appearance (Bordo 1993, Black and Sharma 2001, Gimlin 2002). Females, from an early age, are taught that their appearance matters, and that femininity can be achieved through beautification activities.

For many, then, femininity is constructed through one’s appearance. Betterton writes, “femininity, as defined in western culture, is bound up very closely with the way in which the female body is perceived and represented” (1987:7). Freedman concurs, stating “beauty serves as a strong signal of a woman’s ability to fulfill the feminine role (that is, to be beautiful is to be womanly)” (1986:12). As such, women are much more likely than men to base their self-concept on their appearance (Bordo 1993).

In American culture, beauty is also attributed with other characteristics that women seek. “Beauty is routinely associated with morality, sociability, kindness and other positive characteristics” (Black and Sharma 2001:104). In fact, the ancient Greek word *kalos* and Latin word *bellus* meant both beautiful and good, and “an association

between these two qualities remains strong to this day” (Freedman 1986:7). In numerous studies, attractive people are thought to be kinder, more socially skilled, more competent, more successful, happier, and to lead more fulfilled lives (Miller 1970, Dion, Berscheid, and Walster 1972, Hatfield and Sprecher, 1986, Feingold 1992, Jackson, Hunter and Hodge 1995, Langlois et al. 2000). “Analysis of media images confirms that a very thin body-type predominates and that positive social attributes are related to thinness, whereas negative ones are related to fatness. Women are told that they can only be loved when they are svelte” (Freedman 1986:150). Women come to believe that if they can become slim enough, or attractive enough, their problems will be solved (Freedman 1986, Evans 2003). Reischer and Koo agree, stating that “beauty in America has been so closely linked to character that a beautiful woman is necessarily one who has had the moral uprightness to achieve it” (2004:304). A beautiful exterior is assumed to equal a beautiful interior, all the more reason for women to desire an appearance which is idealized by culture.

While norms of beauty change over time, they are often not arbitrary, but rather a reflection of cultural values of the times. “Cultural ideals of beauty are an index and expression of social values and beliefs” (Reischer and Koo 2004:298). The current ideal of a thin body is no exception. Having a thin body represents traditional femininity in many ways. First, a small body reflects weakness and passivity. Thin bodies take up less space, have less strength, and are more easily dismissed. Bordo (1993) writes that the slim bodies are “docile bodies” (166) and are “childlike, nonassertive, and helpless without a man” (170). Freedman (1986) concurs, writing

“greater weight conveys greater strength, countering the stereotype of a delicate, dependent creature who needs help through doorways and into chairs” (152) and “the current vogue of thinness has been attributed to an underlying fear of female power” (152).

Second, a small body separates women from men. By encouraging women to decrease their size, they remain smaller than men, and distinct from men. While the actual difference between the body size of 18- to 24-year-old North American men and women in the 1990s was quite small, the media and society continue to promote an ideal of huge differences between the two (Spitzer et al. 1997), as a way to promote differences between the sexes. Hare-Mustin and Maracek (1988) call this tendency to exaggerate differences “the alpha bias” and indicate that it ignores the similarities of the sexes and places unrealistic constraints on both men and women. Nonetheless, they continue, “the view of male and female as different and opposite and thus as having mutually exclusive qualities transcends Western culture and has deep historical roots” (457). For many, subscribing to the small female body ideal identifies oneself distinctly as a woman.

Finally, a slim body demonstrates social class. Historically, the middle class and bourgeois were interested in flaunting their wealth, and an overweight body was a sign of having plenty of money to eat well. The elite, ever eager to maintain their status, saw this display as ostentatious, and maintained slim bodies as sign of their control and discretion. Over time, “slender wives became the showpieces of their husbands’ success” (Bordo 1993:192). Freedman concurs, noting “thinness in women

has become equated not only with beauty and sexuality but with status” (1986:150), partly because “obesity occurs seven times more frequently in American women of the lowest socioeconomic levels than in those of the highest” (Freedman 1986:151). The slender body, then, is associated with higher class.

According to this ideology, the traditional femininity ideal is a woman who is fragile and weak, petite in comparison to men, and uses her appearance to demonstrate her class. Traditional femininity encourages women to focus on their own beauty, with the goal of being beautiful for others to gaze upon them.

#### *4.1.2. The Slender Body and Empowered Femininity*

In recent years, a slim body ideal has come to represent empowered femininity in many ways. In fact, today’s body ideal for women is more than simply being thin, it is being toned and fit (Bordo 1993, Guendouzi 2004). First, the toned body represents action, power and strength. By desiring to have muscles, women are seeking to embody social values associated with muscles and to demonstrate that muscles—which is to say strength, discipline, and other such socially valued qualities—are equally characteristic of women (Reischer 2000). While “women must take caution not to develop muscles that are too large or well defined” (Reischer and Koo 2004:314), developing some muscularity equates them with masculinity and strength.

A second reason for desiring a slender body is to take on non-traditional traits. Freedman writes “slimness became a sign of emancipation, a symbol of nonreproductive sexuality and independence” (1986:149). Bordo (1993) concurs,



stating “for many women, disidentification with the maternal body, far from symbolizing reduced power, may symbolize (as it did in the 1890s and 1920s) freedom from a reproductive destiny and a construction of femininity seen as constraining and suffocating” (209). The slender body represents detachment from the reproductive or maternal body.

Third, a slender and fit body represents will-power and control. “The slender body ideal symbolizes not only an aesthetic ideal but also the internal discipline that may be necessary to achieve it” (Reischer and Koo 2004:301). Maintaining a slim body means denying oneself food and compelling oneself to exercise regularly. This taps into the American / Protestant work ethic, according to Freedman, who writes, “the lean image conforms to our American value system, which admires hard work and self-denial” (1986:151). Reischer and Koo agree, writing, “by attaining a difficult body ideal, a woman proves herself able to control the dangers of her own desiring and thus proves willing to forego her own interests in favor of the interests of her society” (2004:310). While obesity has been associated with lack of discipline, laziness, or lack of self control (Freedman 1986, Bordo 1993, Reischer and Koo 2004), thinness represents the opposite. Of course, excessive thinness, i.e. anorexia, is also possible but even this has been linked to women wanting to show achievement and control (Freedman 1986). Thus, for women who meet the high standards of thinness, it shows a level of discipline as well as conformity.

In addition, to many, a slim body symbolizes a healthy body, which in turn symbolizes energy and success. “Current societal definitions of health, success, and

beauty are intertwined: cultural images of healthy, energetic, and successful working women are, for the most part, young, white or Anglo-featured, thin, and made-up” (Dellinger and Williams 1997:159). Many women believe that “improvement in appearance leads to self-improvement in other areas of life” (Ballaster et al. 1991:151), and will portray other positive impressions. “The firm, developed body has become a symbol of the correct attitude; it means that one ‘cares’ about oneself and how one appears to others, suggesting willpower, energy, control over infantile impulse, the ability to ‘shape your life’” (Bordo 1993:195). In Black and Sharma’s 2001 study of why women visit beauty salons, they found that busy working women felt a particular need to look adequately groomed for their jobs. Dellinger and Williams concur, noting that “because their coworkers constantly monitor and evaluate their appearance, responding most favorably when women wear makeup, it is not surprising that some report feeling more confident and productive when they are wearing makeup” (1997:159). Having a certain appearance conveys success, confidence, credibility, and carefulness.

The empowered femininity body represents action, strength, non-traditionalness, will-power, control, meritocracy, health, energy, confidence, and success. Women who embrace this body ideal may be thought to have the power to overcome the odds, the assertiveness and work ethic to pursue goals, and the confidence to be noticed.

#### 4.2. Managing Competing Ideologies of the Body

The thin, toned body, then, appears to house two different orientations: that of traditional femininity (which relies on objectification and others-orientation of women), and that of empowered femininity (which relies on empowerment and assertion of women). These two competing discourses of objectification and agentiveness can be managed on women's bodies in many ways. A woman can take control of her body and shape it into a socially-mandated form through exercise, dieting, makeup, clothing, hair-removal, and cosmetic surgery. Exercising, however, is an activity worth examining because there are many well-known and well-documented benefits other than aesthetics for undertaking it. Physical and health improvements from exercise include strengthening the heart, bones, muscles and joints, and reducing the risk of diabetes, high blood pressure, and cancer; mental health benefits include reducing feelings of depression and anxiety and promoting psychological well-being; social benefits include developing camaraderie and a healthy sense of competition (National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion 1999). It appears, however, that none of these benefits is as powerful as the benefit of changing one's appearance (Rhodes and Courneya 2000).

Various studies on the language used about women, by women, and to women on appearance, body modification, and exercising examine the motivations and implications, although little analysis has been done from a linguistic perspective. I have interpreted these studies as under my dichotomy of traditional femininity / empowered femininity, examining whether the results point to women using body modification for

traditional or empowered femininity reasons, and what implications the research has on whether women in U.S. culture are perceived as traditional or empowered.

Freedman's groundbreaking work in 1986 shows the dissonance women face between trying to be seen as pretty and trying to be seen as powerful. She emphasizes that appearance is still the primary basis on which women are evaluated, but acknowledges that more and more women are seeking to embody traditional male characteristics, such as aggressive action. In response, she finds that women have begun to spend more time focusing on changing their appearance to meet a socially acceptable norm. In some ways, this is simply a result of women wanting to take control but feeling limited as to the arenas in which they can do so. While men are encouraged to strive for political, material, and intellectual success, women are discouraged from being competitive and are encouraged to be sociable and beautiful. Freedman notes, "the narcissistic pursuit of beauty thereby provides achievement satisfaction while reducing both fear of success and fear of failure" (143) and "the pursuit of beauty provides a safe achievement goal for girls who experience fear of success. Rather than risk social rejection for competitive behavior, they concentrate on perfecting their appearance" (159). She also argues, though, this quest for a perfect body is a direct result of feminism's call to action. "Today a young girl...is socialized to believe that she can and should take control of her life. Yet she also gets conflicting messages about woman's body and woman's place from a culture in the throes of gender upheaval" (168).

As a result, she has found that many women have come to believe that looking attractive makes them feel more confident and prepared, even accomplished. Freedman expresses criticism and disappointment at the continued focus on women's beauty, as well as the message that achieving beauty is a worthwhile endeavor for women. She argues that society's focus on women's beauty, and the imperative for women to work towards achieving it, creates inequity and powerlessness for women, despite many women's belief that they are gaining self-confidence and power by expending energy on creating an attractive self.

Bordo (1993) also examines how preoccupation with women's beauty, and in particular the slender body ideal, has affected women. She proposes that the pursuit of beauty, and in particular the slender body which is difficult to attain, takes women's time and energy away from focus on other endeavors. "Through the exacting and normalizing disciplines of diet, makeup, and dress – central organizing principles of time and space in the day of many women – we are rendered less socially oriented and more centripally focused on self-modification" (Bordo 1993:166). While men also spend time on their appearance, she indicates that the culture's preoccupation with appearance still affects women more than men, reinforcing a hegemonic disparity. Furthermore, she suggests that the glorification of a slender female body in particular represents women as smaller and less significant in society.

At the same time, Bordo recognizes that exercise symbolizes many of the male traits praised in U.S. culture, traits women feel they need to take on in order to succeed in today's world. She notes, "our bodies, as we trudge to the gym every day and

fiercely resist both our hungers and our desires to soothe ourselves, are becoming more and more practiced in the 'male' virtues of control and self-mastery" (1993:171-2). While she observes that masculinity and femininity have traditionally been mutually exclusive, many women today are looking for ways to incorporate both. A solution is the slender, toned body. "The ideal of slenderness, then, and the diet and exercise regimens that have become inseparable from it offer the illusion of meeting, through the body, the contradictory demands of the contemporary ideology of femininity" (1993:172). By pursuing slenderness, a woman can portray a socially approved female body and at the same time embody the masculine values of self-control and assertiveness. "In the pursuit of slenderness and the denial of appetite the traditional construction of femininity intersects with the new requirement for women to embody the "masculine" values of the public arena" (1993:173). She concludes that women aspire to have a slender body because it allows them to portray both the masculine trait of assertiveness (necessary to control and contain one's weight) and the feminine trait of the attractiveness.

Both Freedman and Bordo take a critical approach to body modification, indicating that pursuit of beauty and thinness appears to encode empowerment but actually serves to reinforce patriarchal notions of feminine beauty. Many academic researchers have pursued this by talking with women to see how the women themselves perceive bodywork. The results have found women have both traditionally feminine and empowered feminine motivations for exercising.

In a comparison of attitudes and beliefs of exercising men and women, Davis and Cowles found both men and women wanted to lose weight; “women, however, were more dissatisfied with their bodies and placed greater importance on their appearance as an influence on their feelings of well-being” (1991:33). They found that women were more likely to covet an unrealistically thin body size, and that women were more likely to exercise for pursuit of appearance rather than health concerns (1991:40). They comment, “in Western societies, beauty has been traditionally a feminine attribute, and its pursuit, a female responsibility. Therefore, women’s well-established pre-occupation with their physical appearance is consistent with the conventional feminine sex role stereotype” (1991:41). In sum, this attitudinal study indicates women’s goals and motivations for exercising are to fulfill traditional feminine roles of being attractive.

In contrast, in Gimlin’s 2002 study on women’s motivations for body-work, Gimlin found that women use body-work both to change their appearance and to embrace other characteristics of aerobics exercise, specifically the discipline and hard work. She attended aerobics classes for two and a half years, attending university class five times a week and gym-franchise class once a week, and observed and talked to class members during and outside the sessions. She notes that the women negotiated new identities for themselves “not necessarily by changing the body itself, but by distancing identity from the body and aligning it with the personality characteristics (like willpower and perseverance) that strenuous body work implies” (2002:50).

She notes that most women today cannot attain the body glamorized by media and our culture, yet not attaining it is seen as evidence of weakness, so women struggle to maintain a positive self-esteem in the face of this seeming failure. Instead, she found the women focused on the positive characteristics of exercising – demonstrating willpower and perseverance – rather than focusing on the negative characteristic of failing to change their bodies to meet the cultural standard. She notes, “I learned that arenas of body work provide women with ‘socially approved vocabularies’ that explain their failure to accomplish ideal beauty and thus serve to neutralize the flawed identity that an imperfect body implies in Western society” (Gimlin 2002:15). Furthermore, aerobics provided the women with “alternative conceptions of beauty and the social context to support those ideals” (Gimlin 2002:51). In addition, she found that the women believed by exercising, they accumulated the positive characteristics associated with exercise, such as confidence, empowerment, tough-mindedness, self-sufficiency, assertiveness, autonomy, and emotional stability, and the ability to distance themselves from their imperfect bodies. As such, she has demonstrated that women acknowledge that exercise actually allows them to resist the objectification of their bodies and instead focus on gaining empowered traits.

A third, similar study by Chapman (1997) found that female athletes pursue both traditional femininity and empowered femininity through athletics. Chapman examined the conversations of female lightweight rowers to see how they address the tension between becoming strong and athletic while losing weight to stay in their lightweight rowing bracket. In examining the dialogues of the lightweight rowers, she found that



the women constantly monitored themselves and each other in terms of their food intake, exercise habits, and dieting practices. While on the surface this appeared to fit with the women's desire to be healthy and athletic, and to subscribe to a "discourse/knowledge system that emphasizes the relationship of health and life-style," she also found that the women were far more interested in being physically active and eating a healthy diet "in order to produce and maintain a healthy body, which is defined primarily in terms of its appearance: A healthy body looks "good" by being thin, muscular, and fit" (213). Furthermore, she found that while the women enjoyed the competition and assertiveness of sports, the primary goal of many of the women athletes pursuing sports was the attainment of a specific body image. This demonstrates that for these female athletes, sports and exercise have two benefits: that of participating in competition and that of attaining a fit, slim body.

Moving from attitudinal studies to more linguistic studies, similar contradictions appear. Guendouzi (2004) examines women's talk about diet and body size to study whether the social pressure to conform to a particular body size is part of everyday speech, and whether talking about body size constitutes a face threat to the speaker's positive self-image. Recording the conversations of women, she found body-size to be a frequent topic of conversations. She notes, "body-size is a topic that is important enough to warrant frequent comment; more specifically, weight loss predictably elicits compliments" (Guendouzi 2004:1641). She also found that women compared themselves to other women and frequently felt threatened by another woman's body-size. The women's talk demonstrates they are "subject to social pressure in relation to

attaining perceived ideals of body-size” (Guendouzi 2004:1649). Furthermore, to these women, body-size eclipsed other achievements, and the thin woman’s body demonstrated her social status and accomplishments. While the women may talk about other characteristics and features of other woman, both physical and personal, “size is the salient physical attribute cited when comparing themselves to ...other women” (Guendouzi 2004:1649). The thin body-size is admired because it is considered socially attractive, but it also seems to indicate to these women that the thin woman has accomplished certain goals, attained a certain social standing, and has rid herself of other life problems.

While she does not identify it as such, Guendouzi’s results indicate that talk about body size encodes both discourses: a discourse of traditional femininity, in which the female body encodes attractiveness, and a discourse of empowered femininity, in which the body encodes accomplishment. “In controlling their own bodies and appetites ... women gain social capital in a social ‘marketplace’ that offers admiration and ‘self’-validation on the basis of their physical appearance rather than of their actual achievements” (Guendouzi 2004:1651). However, Guendouzi’s study focuses on politeness strategies rather than discursive strategies.

Another approach to examining the discourse of femininity is to look at women’s magazines. Sonnet and Whelehan’s 1995 analysis of women’s magazines finds women’s magazines have “hijacked” the language of empowered femininity to promote traditional femininity values. Specifically, they note, in women’s magazines “the discourse of feminism is turned against itself and mobilized to often anti-feminist

ends, so that oft-used terms associated with feminism – such as ‘liberation’ – are hijacked for quite other purposes” (1995: 82). In essence, they find that magazines link the attainment of female beauty to success in life. “What the mainstream glossies are out to sell is a feminine power which can be located in both the escapist and pragmatic elements of the magazine; and this particular notion of ‘power’ seems to reside in the female body and the female heterosexual response” (1995:83). Women’s magazines, according to Sonnet and Whelehan, perpetuate the traditional femininity ideals – those of fashion and beauty – by using empowered femininity’s language of liberation. However, Sonnet and Whelehan do not specify in detail how the discourse of empowered femininity is used to perpetuate traditional femininity.

Markula’s 2001 study of the discourse of women’s fitness magazines also finds some contradictions. While these magazines encourage active criticism of the traditional feminine body by empowering women to have a healthy self-image and encouraging women to embrace activism and awareness, the magazines continue to publish photos of the very slender body ideal and continue to devote articles to obtaining this body ideal through fitness activities. Thus, while they proclaim they embrace feminist values because they encourage women’s activism, they also feed women’s concerns with body image by highlighting all the ways women need to improve their bodies. “The magazines are founded on the premise of providing exercise and diet advice for women who struggle to achieve this unobtainable body” (158). Knowing that women suffer low self-esteem from disappointment in their body image, and knowing full well that the images portrayed in their magazines are unobtainable,

they offer advice to women to love their bodies. Yet, the purpose of the body love is to ultimately be motivated to change the body and try to perfect it.

Throughout the magazines she examined (*Self*, *Shape*, and *The New Weekly*), Markula found the magazines appeared to encourage empowered femininity at the same time that it implored women to covet a highly unattainable body type. On one hand, the magazines appealed to the women's intellect and rationality, encouraging them to ignore the societal projections of the ideal body image. "Women's body satisfaction depends entirely on individual women's desire to remain levelheaded about the ideal body image. With enough willpower, women can resist societal discourses promoted, for instance, by the magazines" (172-3). On the other hand, the magazines promote these exact images, and subtly encourage the women to embrace them. "These magazines unmistakably construct a woman's worth based on her looks...Moreover, the magazines prefer to compartmentalize the female body through exercise that promise to transform the problematic body parts into sleeker form" (166). As such, this research highlights and criticizes the contradictory messages about women's body images that women's fitness magazines portray. By encouraging women to either disregard unrealistic beauty standards or to actively make a change to their bodies, the magazines appear to encode empowered femininity, but by encouraging women to covet the beauty standard and to base their self-esteem on their looks, the magazines appear to encode traditional femininity. However, it does not examine the specifics of the discourses.

In a similar vein, Carty's 2005 study examined the contradictory portrayals of female athletes in media. She finds that "female athletes combine contradictory

stereotypes, thereby renegotiating dichotomous traits of strength-objectification and athleticism-passivity” (2005:133). By portraying their bodies as objects of desire, they project images of traditional femininity. For some female athletes, this is deemed necessary to counteract negative stereotypes of homosexuality and feminism, and to gain support from both a male audience and a female audience. However, she notes, “when women explicitly promote and play into the image of glamorous, sexy, and objectified female body to gain financial rewards and prestige on the basis of their looks, they may hinder institutional and societal advances for women as a minority group” (2005:140). Thus, by portraying themselves as sexy individuals, they are criticized for contributing to the continued objectification of women’s bodies.

At the same time, it is clear that the women believe they are portraying their bodies as signs of their emancipation, strength, hard-work, and athleticism. “Although women’s bodies are still a main focus of attention, their bodies represent a new kind of self-discipline – one in which the body is trained to be used for performance rather than as an object of desire” (Carty 2005:137). Several famous athletes portrayed in magazines, including those who had posed nude, “claimed their bodies were not objects to be scrutinized as a commodity of desire but to be respected for what they had accomplished” (Carty 2005:138). In putting their bodies on display, then, these women are hoping to portray themselves as empowered women, women whose muscled bodies represent the hard work and training they have accomplished.

Carty suggests that there are two forms of feminism today which see these displays of women’s bodies differently. Radical feminists, who believe there is still

much work to be done to equalize the genders, believe that by displaying their bodies to accentuate their feminine traits, female athletes actually diminish their athletic achievement, reinforce objectification and exploitation of women, and contribute to unequal gender norms. “From a radical feminist point of view, though women gain some individual material benefits by using sex appeal, this is within the confines of a male-dominated system that determines what is feminine and appealing. Therefore, the system will remain unchallenged, and the goal of gender equality is undermined” (Carty 2005:134). On the other hand, postfeminists, who believe that women have made the necessary strides in society to be seen as equal to men, see the use of women’s bodies and even women’s sex appeal as empowering to women. “From a postfeminist stance, women are using their bodies as a form of liberation, and their own decisions to display their bodies demonstrate that they are in fact in control of how the images are projected” (Carty 2005:134). Rather than seeing the system as confining, these female athletes recognize and capitalize on the opportunity to display themselves as strong, talented, and yet feminine.

In the end, she concludes that female athletes’ displays of their bodies can be seen in two different ways. “At issue is whether this is merely a new way to sexualize women’s (now toned) bodies or whether a new gender paradigm may be emerging – one that redefines femininity in which girls can be strong and feminine simultaneously” (Carty 2005:137). She does not endorse either of the femininities, and she does not examine the discourses linguistically.

Eskes, Duncan, and Miller's discourse analysis of women's fitness magazines does begin to address the language of fitness and how it addresses the two conflicting ideologies. They analyzed articles from women's fitness magazines in 1995 and found an integration of the empowered femininity and the traditional femininity in the texts. While they admit that their stance is based on a desire to criticize the fitness magazines, their data nonetheless highlight how the texts "construct and maintain an image of the ideal feminine body (e.g. slender, muscular, and curvy; attractive to men) while using words, phrases, and ideas that urge women to pursue this ideal to empower themselves (1998:319). Specifically, they noted that the fitness magazines texts construe fitness pursuits as empowering, and that "this empowerment ideology can be described as a feminist ideology because it takes a decidedly pro-woman stance" (1998:319). However, they continue, this ideology is corrupted by the idea that being 'fit' means being sexy, shapely or gorgeous (1998:319). In sum, they argued that "the discourse of feminism, embedded in words such as *strong*, *choice*, and *empowerment*, and other words that denote action, vitality, force, and aggressiveness, have been co-opted and used as a device to convince women of the necessity of bodywork, all the while citing the future gains in health, and more important, beauty" (1998:341). Their analysis provides a useful starting point for examining the dual femininities of empowerment and traditionalness in fitness texts, but their focus only on the lexicon ignores the influence of other linguistic components that contribute to meaning, and their decidedly critical approach does not consider other interpretations.

### 4.3. The Missing Piece: Linguistics

It appears, then, that in women exercisers' conversations and in fitness magazines there is a tension between empowered femininity and traditional femininity, but little analysis has examined on a linguistic level how the discourses are both manifested in these conversations and texts.

Given that language reflects and reinforces ideologies, identities, and social phenomenon, "the goal of CDA is thus to uncover the ways in which discourse and ideology are intertwined" (Johnstone 2002:45). As a discourse analyst, my contribution to the research discussion is to describe the language of fitness texts, considering the competing discourses of empowered femininity and traditional femininity. This study will examine whether fitness magazines perpetuate two conflicting discourses or one heterogeneous one.

Discourse analysis is an important, but thus far missing, component of examining women's relationships to their bodies and their identity as women. Discourse analysis allows examination not only of how the ideology exists, but how it is perpetuated. Looking at theory, as Freedman (1986) and Bordo (1993) did, or images, as Carty (2005) did, or attitudes, as Davis and Cowles (1991), Gimlin (2002), and Chapman (1997) did, or at broad themes in language, as Guendouzi (2004), Sonnet and Whelehan (1995), and Markula (2001) did shows only how the ideology exists statically. Through a discourse analysis, we can see how language simultaneously reflects and creates the ideology. "An important *reciprocity* between language and 'reality': language, simultaneously *reflects* reality ('the way things are') and *constructs*



(*construes*) it to be a certain way” (Gee 1999:97). Furthermore, a discourse analysis should take into account more than just lexicon, as Eskes, Duncan, and Miller (1998) did, but should examine syntax and rhetorical devices, to see both how they encode the two femininities separately, but more importantly, how they merge the two. “Speakers and writers use the resources of grammar to *design* their sentences and texts in ways that communicate their perspectives on reality, carry out various social activities, and allow them to enact different social identities” (Gee 1999:5). What is lacking is a discourse analysis of lexicon, syntax, and rhetorical devices, which will show how the competing discourses of traditional femininity and empowered femininity are perpetuated in women’s fitness magazines.

## CHAPTER 5

### METHODS AND MAIN FINDINGS

#### 5.1 Goal of the Project

Taking critical discourse analysis' perspective that text reflects and shapes discursive ideologies, I will examine how the competing discourses of traditional femininity and empowered femininity are encoded in women's fitness magazines.

#### 5.2 Selection of Texts

As noted in Chapter 3, women's fitness magazines offer a variety of articles, but instructional fitness articles constitute the core of the magazines, comprising, on average, 30% of the magazine. Using the eight women's fitness magazines identified in Chapter 3, I examined one instructional fitness article from each of the magazines. I selected the issue which was available on the shelf in mid-January 2006; for some magazines, this was their December 2005 issue; for some magazines, it was their January 2006 or early spring 2006 issue.

The articles selected were those which were featured on the cover of the magazine and which were specifically instructional exercise articles. For magazines which had only one fitness how-to article featured on the cover, that article was used. For those with multiple articles, one was chosen at random.

### 5.3 Method of Analysis

The articles were examined with a discourse analysis approach, which is an interpretive approach. The overall objective of discourse analysis is to provide a description of the discourse that native speakers recognize as true (Gee 1999, Johnstone 2002, Sutherland 2004). To accomplish that, according to Wood and Kroger, the analysis should “explain what is being done in the discourse and how this is accomplished, that is, how the discourse is structured or organized to perform various functions and achieve various effects or consequences” (2000:95). Because discourse analysis is interpretive, “validity is not constituted by arguing that a discourse analysis ‘reflects reality’ in any simple way” (Gee 1999:113). Instead, discourse analysts should strive for validity based on the following four elements:

1. *Convergence*: a discourse analysis is more, rather than less, valid, the more the answers to the questions *converge* in the way they support the analysis.
2. *Agreement*: answers to the questions are more convincing the more ‘native speakers’ of the social language in the data and ‘members’ of the discourse implicated in the data agree that the analysis reflects how such social languages actually can function in such settings.
3. *Coverage*: the analysis more valid the more it can be applied to related sorts of data.
4. *Linguistic details*: the analysis is more valid the more it is tightly tied to details of linguistic structure.” (Gee 1999: 113 – 114).

Therefore, the analysis involves a holistic approach, which can cause several dilemmas. First is that examining the linguistic details entails dividing up the data, which potentially changes the discourse. “Any analytical move that involves drawing boundaries, pulling out chunks from the flow of experience and treating them as wholes, is somewhat artificial” (Johnstone 2002:20). Second, it is not possible to

completely dissect the discourse. “No piece of work can, or should, cover all the data conceivably related to the data under analysis, or seek to deal with every possible relevant linguistic detail” (Gee 1999:114). In fact, discourse analysis cannot rely solely on linguistic detail. “Discourse analysts have often drawn on disciplines other than linguistics for possible ways of explaining things, and we should continue to search as widely as we can” (Johnstone 2002:238). Specifically, Johnstone notes the roots of discourse analysis are in the analysis of traditional texts, such as literary criticism, and that this approach to research is based on the belief that “analyzing human life is a matter of open-ended interpretation rather than fact-finding, more like reading than identifying data points that bear on pre-formed hypotheses” (2002:20). Finally, Gee notes “validity is social, not individual” (1999:114). The researcher is striving to describe the themes which recur throughout the texts and which ring true to native speakers’ understanding of the text.

Although, there is no single or simple methodology for discourse analysis, nevertheless, the researcher can be systematic in approaching the data, by using some heuristics and examining how the linguistic data support the answers to those heuristics. “A heuristic is a set of discovery procedures for systematic application or a set of topics for systematic consideration” (Johnstone 2002:9). In other words, the analyst considers questions or themes about how the discourse works, and uses linguistic details support the answers to the question (Gee 1999:110). Some models of heuristics include Gee’s model, which considers seven aspects of language that may impact the way a text came to be the way it did:

Significance: How does this piece of language being used make certain things significant or not and in what ways?

Activities: What activity or activities is this piece of language being used to enact?

Identities: What identity or identities is this piece of language being used to enact?

Relationships: What sort of relationship or relationships is this piece of language seeking to enact with others?

Politics: What perspective on social goods is this piece of language communicating (i.e. what is being communicated as to what is taken to be “normal,” “right,” “good,” “correct,” “proper,” “appropriate,” “valuable,” “the way things are,” “the way things ought to be,” “high or low status,” “like me or not like me,” and so forth)?

Connections: How does this piece of language connect or disconnect things; how does it make one thing relevant or irrelevant to another?

Sign systems and knowledge: How does this piece of language privilege or disprivilege specific sign systems or different ways of knowing and believing or claims to knowledge or belief? (1999:10 – 15).

And Johnstone’s model, which outlines six aspects of context that a discourse analyst can consider in explaining how a text came to be the way it did:

Discourse is shaped by the world, and discourse shapes the world.

Discourse is shaped by language, and discourse shapes language.

Discourse is shaped by participants, and discourse shapes participants.

Discourse is shaped by prior discourse, and discourse shapes the possibilities for future discourse.

Discourse is shaped by its medium, and discourse shapes the possibilities of its medium.

Discourse is shaped by purpose, and discourse shapes possible purposes.  
(Johnstone 2002:9).

These heuristics encourage the discourse analyst to look for broad themes in the discourse, and how those themes are perpetuated through the language of the discourse.

These themes are perpetuated through the choices language users make.

Discourse analysts believe language users have choices in lexicon and grammar, and that the choices are meaningful, indicating that such things as lexical choices (especially repeated lexical choices), social agents (e.g. in noun phrases), and grammatical features

can all characterize and differentiate discourses (Sutherland 2004: 32). To conduct a discourse analysis, then, a researcher should consider both the broad heuristic and the linguistic details which support the answers to the heuristics. For example, Gee suggests a researcher should “pick some key words and phrases in the data, or related families of them, and ask what *situated meanings* these words and phrases seem to have in your data, given what you know about the overall context in which the data occurred” (1999:115). Next, “pay particular attention to where answers to several different questions seem to converge on the same point or theme” (1999:116). Finally, Gee suggests the researcher look to linguistic details to describe these themes or meanings. Therefore, to conduct discourse analysis, the researcher should consider the broad questions of the heuristics which are relevant to the texts and examine how the language choices (lexical and syntactical) contribute to the answers to those heuristic questions.

#### 5.4 Research Heuristics

With this in mind, I designed four heuristics, developed from both Gee’s and Johnstone’s models and which were relevant to my research:

1. What identity or identities is this discourse being used to enact, and how does that reflect one or the other of the femininity discourses?
2. What activity or activities is this piece of language being used to enact, and how does that reflect one or the other of the femininity discourses?
3. What purpose, goals and motivations are used in the discourse to encourage the reader to act, and how does that reflect the discourse’s perspective on femininity?
4. How does the discourse connect or disconnect various elements, and how does that reflect one or the other of the femininity discourses?

I first examined the articles as a whole, keeping in mind these heuristics. I looked for key or repeated words and phrases that that encoded the traditional femininity or the empowered femininity discourses I identified in chapters 2, 3, and 4, listed below in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Heuristics of Traditional Femininity and Empowered Femininity

<b>Heuristic</b>	<b>Traditional Femininity</b>	<b>Empowered Femininity</b>
<b>Identities:</b> What identity or identities is this discourse being used to enact?	Communal, nurturing, attentive, and concerned with their role as caretakers (Eagly and Steffen 1984, Holmes 1997, Romaine 1999) Unassertive (Coates 1996) Concerned with establishing connections with one another while maintaining equality (Tannen 1990, Romaine 1999)	Flouting traditional femininity (Coates 1999, Day et al. 2003) Being assertive (Coates 1999) Being aggressive, self-defensive and rowdy (Day et al. 2003) Being unemotional and objective (McElhinney 1995)
<b>Activities:</b> What activity or activities is this discourse being used to enact?	Domestic chores (with explicit instructions) and self-beautification (Ballaster et al. 1991, McCracken 1993, Zuckerman 1998, Lindner 2004) Complimenting one another (particularly about appearance) (Coates 1996, Romaine 1999)	Political and social issues which lead to equality for women, respect for women, and acknowledgement of women's strengths (Ballaster et al. 1991, McCracken 1993, Zuckerman 1998, Endel 1991)
<b>Motivation</b> What purpose, goals and motivations are used in the discourse to encourage the reader to act?	Maintain equality (Tannen 1990, Romaine 1999) Rely on others' evaluation of her appearance in order to define herself (Betterson 1987, Bordo 1993, Black and Sharma 2001, Gimlin 2002) Be equitable (Coates 1996)	Be assertive, hard working, and strong (Ballaster et al. 1991, McCracken 1993, Zuckerman 1998, Endel 1991) Be active, controlling, healthy, energetic, and successful (Freedman 1986, Bordo 1993, Dellinger and Williams 1997, Black and Sharma 2001, Reischer and Koo 2004)

Table 5.1 *continued*

<p><b>Connections:</b> How does the discourse connect or disconnect the two discourses of femininity?</p>	<p>Recent linguistic researchers suggest women integrate aspects of both traditional femininity and empowered femininity in order to be seen as traditional but to accomplish empowered goals, i.e. be hard-working, strong, and successful but minimize threat by being communal and unassertive, and demonstrating heterosexuality through focusing on appearance (Sheldon 1997, Mills 1992, Sotirin 2000, Troemel-Ploetz 1994)</p> <p>Some researchers believe women use beauty work as a way to integrate traditional femininity's beauty-orientation with empowered femininity's achievement-orientation (Freedman 1986, Bordo 1993, Sonnet and Whelehan 1995, Gimlin 2002, Guendouzi 2004)</p>
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Upon initial inspection, I found that rather than encoding either traditional femininity or empowered femininity, the discourse appeared to encode aspects of both. In order to systematically identify how it encoded both, I began by looking at the overall structure of the texts. I looked for phrases and sentences that semantically signaled the identities, activities, and motivations of traditional femininity and empowered femininity. I then looked more narrowly at where these phrases and sentences occurred, in terms of the overall structure, and I found that there was a general ordering to the traditional femininity and empowered femininity elements, which I explain in Chapter 6.

As I examined these phrases and sentences in more detail, I found that the traditional femininity and empowered femininity elements intersected within the sentences as well, and so I examined clause by clause how they intersected, which I explain in chapter 7, sections 7.1.1 Clauses in the Process and 7.2.1 Clauses in the Product.



Finally, I looked more closely at the phrases for ways the grammatical and lexical choices contributed to the hybridity, and I found a number of syntactic and semantic elements recurring. In particular, I looked at sentence subjects and objects, and semantic agents and patients.

From syntactician to semanticists to discourse analysts, linguists have examined the idea of agency, a semantic notion separate from the grammatical notion of subjecthood. Fillmore first identified the concept of covert categories of case, including “agentive, the case of the typically animate perceived instigator of the action identified by the verb” (1968:24). Haegeman, a syntactician, indicates the agent is “the one who intentionally initiates the action expressed by the predicate” (1994:49). Johnstone, a discourse analyst, indicates agents are noun phrases “which represent who or what initiates, controls, or is responsible for the action of the verb” (2002:239).

Essentially, the agent is the “doer” of the action of the verb. Because “agency is very much tied up with issues of power” (Wood and Kroger 2000:102), I examined whether the agents did or did not index empowered femininity.

Patients, on the other hand are the participants affected by the action of the verb (Haegeman 1994, Berk 1999). Because “the designation of a person as the object of a verb (action) rather than as the subject (i.e., the agent of the action) can serve to position the person as dependent, as a patient” (Wood and Kroger 2000:101), I examined whether the patients did or did not index traditional femininity.

In addition, based on what I found recurring, I looked at the verbs, adjectives, and qualifying expressions. I explain in chapter 7 how these elements co-indexed the two femininity discourses.

The full text of the eight articles appears in Appendices A – H. Sample selections from the texts are numbered with the Appendix letter first and the sentence number second.

Through this investigation, I found that the discourse of women's fitness magazines encodes both traditional femininity and empowered femininity on several levels. The fact that the linguistic aspects on several levels point to a similar phenomenon demonstrates Gee's validity about points of convergence, agreement, coverage, and linguistic details.

In the following two analysis chapters, I will present the analysis of the process and the product sections each in turn. In Chapter 6, I will show the ways that the process section broadly portrays empowered femininity and the product section broadly traditional femininity, and how the two sections are merged rhetorically. In Chapter 7, I will show the ways that the process and the product sections each encode both traditional femininity and empowered femininity through the lexicon and clauses.

## CHAPTER 6

### RHETORICAL AND TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

The fitness articles selected are primarily instructional texts, a genre which sits at the junction between verbal action and real world action (Adam 2001:26).

Instructional texts, such as recipes, guides, how-to manuals, training manuals, and advice columns, are based on the idea of the writer telling the reader how to conduct a transformation over an object in the world or over him/herself (Adam 2001:12).

While all instructional texts rely on the reader understanding the verbal action and turning it into real world action, the fitness texts I examined are particularly interesting, because they begin with an introductory “Call to Action” to motivate the reader to follow the verbal actions and turn them into real world actions. An introduction to an instructional text is not uncommon, but the length and purpose of the introductions in these texts are unique. In giving advice on writing a how-to article, writers Dennis Heinsley and Holly Miller suggest writing a short introduction to grab the reader’s attention, create a bond with the author, and introduce the goal of the article (1996:2). However, in the fitness texts examined, the introductory Call to Action is long (ten to twenty-five sentences) and persuasive, serving to motivate and encourage the reader to take up the activities.

In the fitness texts examined, this Call to Action can be divided into two elements: one element focusing on the nature of the fitness activities themselves, which I call the Process, and one element focusing on the end result of doing the activities, which I call the Product. An example of this Call to Action section follows. In this example, the Call to Action ends with “so that you make 2006 the year you get the body you’ve always wanted,” and the actual exercise instructions begin with “Winter.”

**1** f you never changed, you'd still be sporting a feathered perm, purple leg warmers, and those Phil Collins concert tees. Change—in work, in style, in life—is good. It's no different for your year-round approach to fitness: Without some seasonal variations, you could be forever stuck with a body that's never quite where you want it to be. "When you alter your routine every 8 to 12 weeks, you're more likely to overcome plateaus, because you're providing ongoing physiological stimulation," says Ronald Deitrick, Ph.D., an exercise scientist at University of Scranton. With frequent changes, you'll also avoid burnout, reduce your risk of injury, and prime your body for the best year it's ever had. So for 2006 build the foundation by exercising three to five times a week for at least 30 minutes (make at least two of those workouts strength training). After that, just fine-tune your routine with the seasons—so that you make 2006 the year you get the body you've always wanted.

**WINTER**  
base-building and boredom-busting

Your resolutions probably came with a regular gym membership and not-so-regular motivation. But this is when you need a schedule most. "You have to build a solid foundation of strength and cardiovascular health before you can move on to more intense—and more fun—activities," says Tom Holland, an exercise physiologist in Darien, Connecticut. If you haven't exercised regularly, start with 2 days a week. Hit 6 weeks, and it's a habit. **Start here.**

**stay low**  
 ▶ **Keep your cardio intensity lower** than Beyoncé's pants—about 60 to 70 percent of your maximum heart rate, or a 5 on a scale of 1 to 10. "If you push too hard, you'll peak early and burn out," Holland says. Plus, you'll burn fat by doing 30 minutes at 60 to 70 percent. "When you train at lower intensities, you're teaching your body to use fat rather than carbohydrates," Holland says.

**be spontaneous**  
 ▶ **Every once in a while, choose exercises** the way you'd browse through a bookstore—go in without a plan. "You can do anything, just whatever you feel like, for 30 minutes to an hour," Holland says. "It's a great way to avoid boredom, and you don't have to wait for machines." For cardio, follow the

guidelines outlined above. For strength, keep your weights low (low enough so that you can complete two to three sets of 10 mildly challenging reps), or just do one set of each exercise, mixing them as you please without thinking about what's coming next.

**schedule breaks**  
 ▶ **The key to long-term success** in a workout is the same as it is at work: Avoid burnout. Every 4 weeks ease up during the last week. "That will give your body time to absorb the work you've been doing," Holland says. "Your muscles get time to repair themselves, and you'll be more ready for the workouts to come." Do it by scaling back the number of workouts by one session (if you normally do three or four) or two sessions (if you do more)—and by easing up on the intensity.

Illustration 6.1 “The fittest year of your life,” *Women’s Health*, January/February 2006

Because these Calls to Action provides insight into the motivations and encouragements which appeal to the reader, and because these Calls to Action focus both on the Process involved and the Product resulting, the language of these Calls to Action provides an interesting part of the texts to examine.

I propose that the two sections, process and product, merge the two femininity discourses. The process section of the Call to Action, focusing on the nature of the fitness activities, encodes the assertiveness and activity orientation of empowered femininity, while the product section of the Call to Action, focusing on the end result of the fitness activities, encodes the communal nature and appearance orientation of traditional femininity. Generally speaking, the title, teasers, first two to three sentences and the last two to three sentences of the Call to Action focus on the product, while the middle of the Call to Action focuses on the process. In the next sections, I will examine how the process section encodes empowered femininity and how the product section encodes traditional femininity, and how the structure of the texts creates a merging of the two femininity discourses.

### 6.1 The Process

The process appears to encode empowered femininity, as it generally refers to the strength, discipline, and action required to complete the fitness routine. Through sentences and phrases, the process seems achievable and controllable, encoding empowered femininity's calls for women to be strong, competent, dedicated, and concerned about health.

In terms of being strong, the texts refer to the work the exerciser does and the muscles and strength of the woman. For example, in the sentence

F-17. *but with a band **you're doing all the work***

the woman-reader, *you*, is clearly specified as *doing all the work* of exercising.

Similarly, the texts specify the *muscles* and *strength* of the woman, as in the following sentence:

E-12. *every Pilates exercise begins by engaging the core center, while simultaneously activating a combination of **muscle** groups, resulting in better overall tone and **strength***

By focusing on the woman's work, muscles, and strength, the process section encodes empowered femininity.

In addition, the process section of the texts portrays the woman as being in control, such as being able to make choices or make her own decisions. For example, women are given choices about how to tailor the workout for themselves, through the use of such words as *or*, *even more*, and *really*, as in the following examples:

E-14. *this routine is great to supplement another activity, such as running or cycling, **or** it can easily be used alone to firm your physique and sharpen your focusing skills*

D-12. *start doing this workout today (**or** cherry-pick some to add to your regular routine)*

B-13. *to tone your tush **even more**, face backward on the StairMaster*

F-7. *But to **really** sculpt and tone, Summer recommends doing some lighter leg-shaping exercises in the same week.*

They suggest the woman can make choices, by listing options separated by *or*, or by suggesting there are more difficult methods for doing the exercise, which will create *even more* or *really* impressive results. The process section can also make the woman appear to be knowledgeable and make her own decisions, as in.

H-30. *eating right is not really all that complicated, since **most people really know what's good for them.***

Telling the readers they already *know what's good for them* encodes women as competent and in control.

In terms of being dedicated, the texts refer to the difficulty of the workout, the length of time it takes to achieve, and the commitment required, all of which encode empowered femininity. For example, in noting:

E-11. *They [these exercises] also demand the **highest level of concentration and control***

the text indicates those doing the exercises must be dedicated and show a *high level of concentration and control*. Similarly, in highlighting the long amounts of time required to achieve the results, the texts show women's dedication. For example:

F-20. *I stretch **twice daily** with bands and they've helped me so much with my flexibility.*

G-10. *With **years of weight training** neatly tucked under her 23-inch belt, Melissa focused on shaping and toning her muscles rather than adding size and mass.*

show that tremendous dedication is required to accomplish the results, namely stretching *twice daily* and even taking up to *years* to achieve desired results.

Furthermore, the texts highlight the commitment required through such comments as:

G-23. *hiring a personal trainer is an **investment** in your **health***

By making an *investment*, women show their commitment to their health and themselves.

Finally, the process sections of the texts encode empowered femininity's focus on health by presenting holistic or internal motivations for working out. This can be seen in the following examples:

G-27. *it's also important to train your back to **prevent injuries***

E-14. *it can easily be used alone to firm your physique and **sharpen your focusing skills.***

C-9. *you're providing on-going **physiological stimulation***

By focusing on non-beautification outcomes, like *preventing injuries*, *sharpening focusing skills*, and providing *physiological stimulation*, the process sections encode the health focus of empowered femininity.

Thus, the process appears to encode empowered femininity, as it generally refers to the strength, discipline, and action required to complete the fitness routine. The process seems achievable and controllable, encoding empowered femininity's calls for women to be strong, competent, dedicated, and concerned about health.

## 6.2 The Product

In contrast, the product section appears to encode traditional femininity, appealing to traditional femininity's portrayal of women as beauty-oriented, communal, concerned with others, and equitable.

The product appears to encode traditional femininity as it generally focuses on enticing the woman to objectify her body and focus on the beautification of her body.

For example, in

A-2. *Get **slim***

F-2. *5 moves to **great legs!***

H-7. *Her **body** was **definitely the real thing***



the text focuses on the woman's body parts, such as *great legs*, the body image, such as *slim*, or the overall outcome, the body being *real thing*. These phrases imply that the goal of exercising is to create a sexualized body. Furthermore, only one body type is encouraged, one which all women appear to already know about and recognize as the *real thing*.

The product also appears to encode traditional femininity as it portrays the woman as concerned with others, in particular, with others' views of and suggestions for her body. For example, the texts refer to others observing and judging the woman's body, or others deciding on what the right body type is.

- G-4. *The thought of wearing a bathing suit (let alone a bikini) **in front of thousands of spectators would make most women shudder.***
- H-8. *Although Alexander **wanted her to look 'natural'** for the role (i.e. not like she'd been working out)*

Apparently, women *shudder* at what others think of their bodies, unless their bodies meet a societal standard. In some cases, that societal standard is specified in the text through the voice of trainers, such as *Alexander*, who want women to look *natural*, although actually being natural is not good enough, as implied through the quotations around the word. By portraying the woman as needing the approval of society, and lacking that approval right now, the fitness magazine sets itself up as being able to help the woman create the body that society wants for her.

Finally, the product appears to encode traditional femininity by portraying the woman as dependent on others.

- E-3. *Pilates instructor Lara Hudson **leads** you.*
- C-12. *So that you make 2006 the year you **get the body***

In these sentences, women need to be *led* or given instructions about how to exercise. Furthermore, the new body is portrayed as something women simply receive or *get*, rather than something they work at achieving.

In these ways, the product section focuses on objectifying the woman by focusing only on her body, and portraying her as communal by showing her as concerned with others and dependent on others, all encoding traditional femininity.

### 6.3 Hybridity on the Rhetorical Level

The texts all follow a very similar rhetorical structure, which merges these two goals and thus the two discourses of femininity. The texts begin with the product, enticing the woman to desire an objectified body type determined by society and setting up the method as one that does not require a lot of work, so the woman does not have to be competitive. The first third of the text generally makes up the product section. The text then moves on to the process section, where it begins to describe the work involved in doing the workout. This section stresses the strength and discipline required, and often portrays other, more holistic outcomes of doing the exercise, appealing to the empowered femininity discourse. However, the text then moves on to end on the note of traditional femininity, focusing during the last one or two sentences on the product or objectified body outcome again, as one final enticement to encourage the woman to exercise. The flow from product to process and back to product demonstrates a merging of the traditional and empowered femininity discourses on a rhetorical level. Table 6.1 shows a general rhetorical ordering of the articles.

Table 6.1 General Rhetorical Structure of Articles

<b>Sentence</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
1. 2. 3.	Enticing statements about end result: a new body	Describe the product (a new body)
4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9.	Informative statements about what exercises to do and how to perform them	Describe and explain the process (the exercises)
10. 11. 12.	Enticing statements about end results: a new body	Describe the product (a new body)

This enveloping of the instructional part of the text (the process) by the results part of the text (the product) signals an intermingling of the two femininity discourses, like a pendulum swinging between two extremes: focus on a woman's body, focus on a woman's hard work, focus on a woman's body. A sample text follows.

**THIS MONTH'S  
GUARANTEE**

## Get a rear to rave about

This workout sculpts a firm butt, a strong back and sexy, shapely legs.

By Holly St. Lifer

**Download this!**  
Remember to track your progress on the printable log at Self.com.

**THE TRAINER** Franco Zuccoli, owner of Franco Fitness in Boston, created this routine to make your bottom—and the rest of your rear view—look tighter, sexier and stronger. His moves target your back, glutes, hamstrings and the oft-forgotten calves. Instead of relying on the stability ball simply as a way to work your core, he uses it to provide leverage for his supereffective back and butt toners.

**THE PLAN** Do the exercises three times a week on non-consecutive days. All you need are a pair of 3- to 10-pound weights and a stability ball. Perform two sets of each move.

**YOUR MISSION THIS MONTH** Top off each strength session with 15 minutes of cardio, preferably on a bike, aerobic step or StairClimber for extra leg sculpting, Zuccoli says. Complement this program with at least three additional 30-minute heart-pumping workouts a week; do them on days you're not strength training. To tone your tush even more, face backward on the StairMaster (hold on!), or choose a path for your run or walk that includes lots of hills. Sure, it's tougher. Is it worth it? Butt of course!

Turn the page for **tear-out cards**

Illustration 6.2 “Get a rear to rave about,” *Self*, January 2006

In this article, the text can be divided as follows:

Table 6.2 Rhetorical Structure of Sample Text

Sentence	Goal
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This month's guarantee. Get a rear to rave about.</li> <li>2. Improve Your Rear View.</li> <li>3. Tone Your Butt, Back &amp; Legs.</li> <li>4. This workout sculpts a firm butt, a strong back and sexy, shapely legs.</li> <li>5. The Trainer. Franco Zuccoli, owner of Franco Fitness in Boston, created this routine to make your bottom – and the rest of your rear view – look tighter, sexier and stronger.</li> </ol>	Product
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. His moves target your back, glutes, hamstrings and the oft-forgotten calves.</li> <li>7. Instead of relying on the stability ball simply as a way to work your core, he uses it to provide leverage for his supereffective back and butt toners.</li> <li>8. The Plan. [pro] Do the exercises three times a week on non-consecutive days.</li> <li>9. All you need are a pair of 3- to 10-pound weights and a stability ball.</li> <li>10. [pro] Perform two sets of each move.</li> <li>11. Your Mission This Month. [pro] Top off each strength session with 15 minutes of cardio, preferably on a bike, aerobic step or StairClimber for extra leg sculpting, Zuccoli says.</li> <li>12. [pro] Complement this program with at least three additional 30-minute heart-pumping workouts a week; [pro] do them on days you're not strength training.</li> <li>13. To tone your tush even more, [pro] face backward on the StairMaster (hold on!),</li> <li>14. or [pro] choose a path for your run or walk that includes lots of hills.</li> <li>15. Sure, it's tougher.</li> <li>16. Is it worth it?</li> </ol>	Process
17. Butt of course!	Product

The product section focuses on objectifying the woman and diminishing her work, through the naming of body parts (*rear view, butt, back, legs*), the use of beauty adjectives (*sexy, shapely*), and the identification of the trainer creating the routine for

the woman. In contrast, the process section refers to the strength, discipline, and action required to complete the fitness routine, specifically referring to *strength training*, *heart-pounding* and *tougher* routines, technical needs (*weights, stability ball, cardio*), and tenacity (*three times a week*). By starting with the product, the text draws the reader in by appealing to her desire for traditional femininity, then the text switches and focuses on the process, appealing to the reader's desire for empowered femininity, and finally ends on a light, fun note, again appealing to traditional femininity. While this is not a deeply integrated hybridity, it does demonstrate a merging of the two femininity discourses.

On closer examination, however, there is also a merging of the two discourses *within* the process and the product sections. Next, I will examine how each section encodes both discourses on clausal and lexical levels.

## CHAPTER 7

### CLAUSAL AND LEXICAL ANALYSIS

In addition to the rhetorical hybridity, in which the texts move from sentences encoding traditional femininity to sentences encoding empowered femininity, and then back to sentences encoding traditional femininity, the texts also contain hybridity on a clausal and lexical level. Within the sentences, there are clausal relationships, syntactic elements, and semantic choices which do more than simply “swing” back and forth between the two discourses, as the rhetorical analysis showed. In this analysis section, I will show how in these elements there is a blending of the two discourses which creates this new, hybrid discourse.

#### 7.1 Hybridity in the Process

While the process section focuses on the instructions and actions of the exerciser, appearing to encode empowered femininity, upon closer examination, the process encodes both traditional femininity and empowered femininity. While instructions appeal to empowered femininity’s desire to achieve goals through their own strength, competence, and dedication, the process is presented as only achievable through specific steps, which constrains women in traditional ways, and the process presents the goal of this hard work and dedication as the beautification outcomes of

traditional femininity. The clausal relationships, the agents and the verbs show this hybridity.

### *7.1.1 Clauses in the Process*

As noted earlier, the process appears to encode empowered femininity, as it generally refers to the strength, competence, discipline, and health orientation of women. Upon further examination, however, we see opposing clauses which encode traditional femininity.

For example, in terms of strength, the text refers to the work the exerciser does, using words and phrases indicating she is working hard at her *mission*:

B.11 *Your Mission This Month: Top off each strength session*

But when viewed in a broader context, these words and phrases often contain elements of traditional femininity as well. In the above example of B-11, the initial phrase encodes empowered femininity, but the sentence continues by specifying exactly what work the woman should do, constraining her:

B-11. *Your Mission This Month: Top off each strength session with 15 minutes of cardio, preferably on a bike, aerobic step or StairClimber for extra leg sculpting*

By telling the woman specifically to do 15 minutes of cardio, and furthermore, which types of cardio would be best (*bike, aerobic step, or StairClimber*), she loses some of her volition.



Similarly, the texts appear to put the woman in control of making decisions, such as indicating the option of working harder to achieve more results (*even more, really*).

- B-13. *to tone your tush even more, face backward on the StairMaster*  
F-7. *But to really sculpt and tone, Summer recommends doing some lighter leg-shaping exercises in the same week.*

However, the results of the more difficult methods are beauty oriented – *toning the tush* or *sculpting* and *toning the legs*. The process section can also make the woman appear to be knowledgeable, as in:

- H-30. *eating right is not all that complicated, since **most people really know what's good for them.***

But this statement is also condescending towards women, since *most people really know what's good for them*, but women still can't seem to lose weight, so they must be incompetent – and need the assistance of the trainer or magazine.

In terms of being dedicated, the texts refer to the difficulty of the workout and the commitment required, all of which encode empowered femininity. For example, in:

- E-11. *...they also demand the **highest level of concentration and control***

the woman is showing dedication to concentrating and controlling in order to perform the exercises. The full sentence, however, shows a broader picture:

- E-10. *These exercises are not only incredibly effective for **slimming and toning just where it counts (the waistline, upper arms, and upper thighs),***  
E-11. *but they also demand the highest level of concentration and control.*

While the main clause focuses on woman *concentrating* and being in *control*, the first clause focuses on the beautification outcomes of the exercise, *slimming and toning* the

most important (and often sexual) body parts – *the waistline, upper arms, and upper thighs*.

Finally, the process sections of the texts appear to encode empowered femininity's focus on health by presenting holistic or internal motivations for working out, such as *sharpen your focusing skills, boost your metabolism, and feeling good*, but they also encode beautification reasons for working out, such as *firm your physique, sculpt every inch, and looking [good]*:

E-14. *it can easily be used alone to **firm your physique and sharpen your focusing skills**.*

A-6 ***boost your metabolism, and sculpt every inch in less than a month with this total-body plan.***

G-24 ***Looking and feeling good is priceless!***

By joining the two phrases with *and*, the discourse makes them of equal weight and equal importance, creating a parallelism between the goals of beautification and health, traditional femininity and empowered femininity.

In these ways, the clausal structure shows the integration of traditional femininity and empowered femininity in the process section.

### 7.1.2 Agents in the Process

As noted earlier in section 5.4, agents are noun phrases which represent who or what does the action of the verb. However, upon examining the data, I have found that agency is not a monolithic notion. In fact, the agent is responsible for the action of the verb at different levels. Drawing a parallel with Goffman's discussion (1981) of the "production format" in speaking, principal, author, and animator, I have identified three

types of agents which are responsible for the action of the verb at varying levels: the agent-principal, the agent-instigator, and the agent-executor. The **agent-principal** carries the conviction and full volition for the action of the verb; the **agent-instigator** selects and initiates the actions; the **agent-executor** is the body in motion that executes the actions directed. By looking at the placement of the agent in the sentence and at the verb it governs, the degree of agency and the implications for the agency of women in this discourse can be identified.

I have identified the **agent-principal** as an agent which carries the conviction and full volition for the action of the verb<sup>1</sup>. Generally speaking, this agent can be identified in syntactic terms, as the agent of a finite verb. For example, *Mary plays tennis* shows *Mary* governing a finite verb. As an agent-principal, the woman is fully volitional and responsible for the action of the verb, indicating empowered femininity (Bordo 1993, Reischer 2000).

I have identified the **agent-instigator** as someone who selects and initiates actions<sup>2</sup>. Generally speaking, this agent again is the agent of a finite verb, but semantically speaking, the agent governs verbs of instigation. For example, in *Mary shows Joan how to play tennis*, *Mary* is the agent of the independent clause and governs a verb showing her as an instigator of Joan's actions. As an agent-instigator, the woman appears to be directing the actions of others. She is responsible for her own action of instigating or directing, and to a certain degree, she is responsible for initiating

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<sup>1</sup> Similar to Goffman's *principal*, "someone whose position is established by the words that are spoken, someone whose beliefs have been told, someone who is committed to what the words say" (1981:144).

<sup>2</sup> Similar to Goffman's *author*, "someone who has selected the sentiments that are being expressed and the words in which they are encoded" (1981:144).

the actions of others, which encodes empowered femininity. However, in this discourse, the woman instigates with hedges (i.e. recommending, rather than telling), which shows the woman is communal, encoding traditional femininity (Tannen 1990, Coates 1996).

Finally, I have identified the **agent-executor** as the agent executing the actions directed, i.e. the body in motion<sup>3</sup>. While this agent governs verbs of action, the actions are instigated by someone or something else, evidenced by embedding, infinitival structures, or imperative structures. For example, *Mary shows Joan how [pro] to play tennis*, the [pro] (referring to Joan) is the agent-executor, playing tennis based on Mary's showing. As an agent-executor, the woman is doing actions directed by others, and thus is the less volitional and more communal, encoding traditional femininity (Freedman 1986, Betterton 1987, Bordo 1993, Black and Sharma 2001, Gimlin 2002).

The agents in the process section are hybrid in that we see all three types of agents, and the woman's degree of volition varies depending on the type of agent she is.

In cases where the woman is a trainer or a success story presented to the reader, she is an agent-principal. As the agent-principal, she is fully volitional and responsible for the action of the verb, indicating empowered femininity.

E-13. ***I've** created this dynamic sequence of activities to give you a total body Pilates workout.*

F-8. ***I** do my hard routine on Tuesday, then on Friday or Saturday **I'll** do some non-weighted leg work like lunges and squats between upper-body exercises, or plyometrics using my own bodyweight such as jump-squats, where you squat down and explode up into a jump, then land in a squat.*

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<sup>3</sup> Similar to Goffman's *animator*, "the talking machine, a body engaged in acoustic activity" (1981:144).

By *creating* and *doing* of her own volition, the woman presented here is an agent of action, encoding empowered femininity. Furthermore, she is also acting as a mentor or role model for the reader, suggesting that the reader follow her actions to achieve the same results. As a mentor or role model, she is portraying leadership and encoding empowered femininity.

In cases where there are multiple agents, the complexity of the degree of agency is more apparent. In these sentences, the agent-instigator is the agent of the finite verb, giving the instructions or instigating the action, while the agent-executor is embedded within the sentence, following the instructions.

G-29. *Here, **Melissa** demonstrates how [pro] to sculpt your back in four easy steps.*

F-7. ***Summer** recommends [pro] doing some lighter leg-shaping exercises in the same week*

In these sentences, the agent-instigators (*Melissa, Summer*) are role models or mentors, modeling behavior for others. These instigators encode empowered femininity, in that they are initiating, controlling, and responsible for their actions (*demonstrates, recommends*) and initiating the actions of others (*sculpt, doing*); however, the use of less direct verbs of instigation (*demonstrates, recommends*, rather than, for example, *directs, tells*) shows the woman as hedging, and so in this way they are communal, encoding traditional femininity as well. The agent-executors (*pro*), on the other hand, are doing actions directed by others, and thus are the even less volitional and more communal, encoding traditional femininity.

In imperatives, where the agent is [*pro*], a woman is present or implied (as in an imperative) as responsible for, in control, or initiating action. However, she is actually

an agent-executor, following the directions of the unnamed agent-principal (the writer / editor of the magazine).

B-10. *[pro] Perform two sets of each move.*

G-33. *[pro] Start with two sets of 12 to 15 reps.*

Once again, while the agent-executor is controlling a verb of action and activity, this agent is less volitional and more communal than an agent-principal or an agent-instigator, because the agent-executor is responding to the requests of others. In these sentences, the woman is being instructed what workouts to do, when to do them, and what areas of her body need improvement. While the nature of instructional texts is to give instructions, the style of this sentence is different from more rare sentences such as

G-31. *If you're new to working out, **you** can train your back twice a week on nonconsecutive days.*

where the woman **you** is an agent-principal. When the woman is an agent-executor, doing the specific bidding of the magazine writer, she is less volitional than when she is an agent-principal.

In the process section of the texts, the woman is often presented as an agent, but the degree of her independence and volitional varies. As the agent-principal, she is fully volitional, encoding empowered femininity, while as the agent-executor, she is less volitional, and more communal, following the instructions of others, encoding traditional femininity. As the agent-instigator, she is fully volitional over the primary verb she governs, but only partially volitional over the secondary verb she governs; she is reliant on the agent-executor to actually follow through with the actions of the

secondary verb. Therefore, the agents in this section encode both empowered and traditional femininities in many ways.

### 7.1.3 Verbs in the Process

The verbs in the process section alternatively encode achievement and instruction. Verbs that demonstrate the success and hard work involved in performing the exercises encode empowered femininity (Freedman 1986, Bordo 1993, Gimlin 2002, Reischer and Koo 2004). At the same time, verbs indicating that women need assistance or direction show the passivity and reliance on others of traditional femininity (Freedman 1986, Betterton 1987, Bordo 1993, Coates 1996, Holmes 1997).

When the woman is portrayed as the agent, the verb of the sentence encodes the action-orientation of empowered femininity, such as *concentrate*, *alter*, and *start*. However, many of the verbs the sentences mitigate this action by showing the woman as needing assistance from the trainer, who demonstrates or suggests what to do. This encodes traditional femininity, in which women rely on others. As such, the verbs overall show the accomplishment is available only through relying on others.

The verbs which encode the accomplishment and action of performing the exercises are common when the woman is the agent or *pro* of the sentences, as in

- E-15 [pro] **Concentrate** on performing the exercises so that they are smooth, flowing, and continuous.
- C-9 When you **alter** your routine every 8 to 12 weeks, you're more likely to overcome plateaus.
- D-12 [pro] **Start doing** this workout today.
- B-11 [pro] **Top off** each strength session with 15 minutes of cardio, preferably on a bike, aerobic step or StairClimber for extra leg sculpting.

In these sentences, the woman-agent is seen as accomplishing the tasks through her own volition.

In other sentences, however, the verbs encode the need for women to rely on the instructions of the magazine or trainer.

G-29. *Here, Melissa **demonstrates** how to sculpt your back in four easy steps.*

F-7. *But to really sculpt and tone, Summer **recommends** doing some lighter leg-shaping exercises in the same week.*

H-38. *She **paid close attention** to her trainer's instructions*

These sentences mitigate the volition of the woman-agent by indicating that her activity is only accomplished through the assistance of others.

In some sentences, the connection between following the instructions of others and achieving results is clearly laid out through clause dependency.

H-37. *Jessica's success in **achieving** a "Hollywood Hot Bod" was due in part to her willingness **to do everything asked of her.***

The woman-agent *achieves* the body (empowered femininity) because she *does everything asked of her* (traditional femininity).

In these verbs, the woman appears to have action-orientation (*start doing, concentrate, achieve*), but she also being assisted in what she should do through the trainer, who *demonstrates, suggests, or leads*. As such, these verbs encode both the action-orientation of empowered femininity, and the reliance on others of traditional femininity.



#### *7.1.4 Summary: the Process*

The process section focuses on the action and instructions of doing the workout, appearing to primarily encode the strength, dedication, and healthiness of empowered femininity. In fact, the clausal relationships, the agents and the verbs all show aspects of hybridity. The clausal relationships show a parallelism of traditional femininity's beauty-orientation and communal-orientation with empowered femininity's power-orientation and independence-orientation. The agents and verbs show a balance of the assertiveness and will-power of empowered femininity with the constraints and reliance on others of traditional femininity.

In terms of the degree to which the process section is empowered or hybrid, 60% of the agents can be considered hybrid agents; the rest either encode empowered femininity or do not point to any femininity discourse. About 57% of the verbs can be considered hybrid verbs, and the rest either index empowered femininity or do not index any femininity discourse.

### 7.2 Hybridity in the Product

The product section focuses on the incentive for doing the exercises, and generally that incentive is the body. This appears to encode traditional femininity's focus on women's objectification. Upon closer examination, however, the product encodes traditional and empowered femininities through the clauses, as well as through agents, verbs, patients, and qualifying expressions.

### 7.2.1 Clauses in the Product

As noted earlier, the product appears to encode traditional femininity, as it focuses on objectifying the woman's body, encouraging her to rely on the opinions of others, and making her appear communal. Upon further examination, however, we see opposing clauses which encode empowered femininity.

While the product does objectify the woman's body, through such clauses as *Get slim, 5 moves to great legs!*, and *Her body was definitely the real thing*, the product also encodes empowered femininity by showing the woman's strength or hard work in achieving the body results, as in the following examples:

A-2. *Get slim & strong!*

H-7. *Her body was definitely the real thing and she **earned** every curve*

In the first sentence, getting *slim* is the first enticement for doing the exercise, but getting *strong* is given equal weight through the use of *and* as a connector. In the second sentence, the focus again starts on the body, but it acknowledges that the woman had to work at achieving the body: *she **earned** every curve*.

The product also appears to encode traditional femininity as it portrays the woman as concerned with others, in particular, with others' views of and suggestions for her body. Once again, though, connecting clauses indicate the work involved in achieving the body. For example, in

G-5. *The thought of wearing a bathing suit (let alone a bikini) in front of thousands of spectators would make most women shudder. But for those who have trained and dieted, it's an opportunity to showcase **all their hard work**.*

most women *shudder* at what others think of their bodies, unless their bodies meet a societal standard, but some women do a great deal of *hard work* (*train* and *diet*) to achieve a desirable body. While the work is focused on achieving a body to *showcase* (encoding traditional femininity), the text does acknowledge there is *hard work* involved, appealing to empowered femininity. Likewise, in

H-8. *Although Alexander wanted her to look ‘natural’ for the role (i.e. not like she’d been working out), it required three **grueling** months of hitting the gym **six days a week for about an hour and a half per session** to get those great legs and rounded booty.*

While the text portrays the male trainer, *Alexander*, as the person in power of judging the woman’s body, and sexualizes that body through comments such as *great legs* and *rounded booty*, the text also acknowledges that the woman’s body required a great deal of hard work: *required three grueling months of hitting the gym six days a week for about an hour and a half per session*. As such, the body is recognized as not ‘natural,’ but in fact the results of *grueling*, long, consistent work, encoding empowered femininity.

Finally, the product appears to encode traditional femininity by portraying the woman as dependent on others, in that she is being *led* or told what to do, or she is simply receiving or *getting* her body. However, the sentences also show empowered femininity in a number of ways:

- E-3. *Pilates instructor Lara Hudson leads you through a **dynamic series of exercises** guaranteed to slim and tone your body in all the right places.*
- C-12. *After that, just fine-tune your **routine** with the seasons – so that you make 2006 the year you get the body **you’ve always wanted**.*

These sentences show empowered femininity in that the woman-exerciser is being led or mentored by another woman, who can serve as a source of empowerment to her. In addition, the woman is instructed to be active in order to achieve her body, by doing a *dynamic series of exercises* or a *routine*. Furthermore, in the second sentence the body type is portrayed as one that the woman herself, not society, has *always wanted*, also encoding empowered femininity. As such, the sentences merge clauses which refer alternatively to traditional femininity and empowered femininity.

Thus, on an interclausal level, the discourse of the product encodes both traditional and empowered femininity. While the product primarily focuses on objectifying the woman and portraying her as dependent on others, it does acknowledge in some ways the hard work involved in her achieving the objectified body.

### 7.2.2 Agents in the Product

As noted earlier in section 5.4, agents are noun phrases which represent who or what does the action of the verb. Of interest is whether the woman, who is responsible for the action of exercising, is represented semantically as the agent of the sentence (as agents typically occupy subject positions), and furthermore, what kind of agent she is. In traditional femininity discourse, the woman agent is communal and unassertive (Eagly and Steffen 1984, Tannen 1990, Bordo 1993, Freedman 1993, Holmes 1997, Coates 1997), while in empowered femininity discourse, the woman as an agent is aggressive (Coates 1999, Day 2003) and shows will-power and control (Freedman 1986, Bordo 1993, Reischer and Koo 2004). In the product section, the woman-agent is

portrayed somewhere in the middle, as one who is doing some hard work, but not so much that she threatens others or comes across as aggressive. In some cases, the woman who does the exercise does not appear as the agent of the sentence, thereby deviating from the typical, unmarked agent-as-subject pattern, even though she is doing the work. In other cases, the amount of work involved is hidden by making the workout sound leisurely and easy.

One primary way the woman's agency is hidden is through statements in which woman is not indicated as the agent of the sentence, even though she is the one doing the work. Instead, the woman is portrayed as the beneficiary. In many cases, the sentence is structured so that the workout is in the subject position, and the woman is merely indicated as the recipient of the workout's benefits. Even though it is the woman who will be doing the actions of the workout, by not having the woman as the agent, her work is masked. In these sentences, the woman appears as a recipient or beneficiary of the actions: the workout promises her a new body. For example:

A-8. ***This intensive cardio/strength program** promises to blast fat, boost metabolism and sculpt your abs, arms, thighs and butt.*

B-4. ***This workout** sculpts a firm butt, a strong back and sexy, shapely legs.*

Of course, the woman herself has to do the actions of the workout in order to have that body, and this is implied, but not stated overtly. Thus, although she is not presented as an agent in the sentence, she actually needs to do ***the intensive cardio/strength program*** or ***the workout*** in order to gain the results presented in these sentences. Likewise, when the magazine or the trainer is presented as the agent-principal and the woman is portrayed as the beneficiary, the work of the woman is again masked. The only action

that appears to be happening is the magazine or editor *giving* and *helping* the woman reader. For example:

A-7. *This year, **we**'re really giving **you** something to celebrate: a lean, firm, totally toned body in four weeks.*

Once again, though, the woman reader knows she will have to do the work in order to receive the promised body, she is not the agent of the sentences; she is instead the beneficiary.

When the woman does appear as an agent, her agency is mitigated. Rather than showing her as an agent of action and hard work, she is shown as an agent of leisure and simple work. Rather than showing her as an agent who makes changes, she is shown as an agent of a resultant changed body. For example, when the woman is an agent-principal, even though she has clearly devoted a great deal of time to exercising and attaining her body (doing *weight training each week*, with *extra cardio sessions*), she hedges, simplifying the amount of work she has done (*only two days a week*).

G-9. *"I did **only** two days of weight training each week, along with **extra** cardio sessions."*

The adverb *only* implies a minimal amount of effort, in contrast to *extra cardio sessions*, balancing the non-competitiveness of traditional femininity with the strength of empowered femininity. In other cases, the magazine may mask the hard work of the woman by making it easy, such as instructing the woman to

E-18. [**pro**] *Have fun!*

C-12. [**pro**] *Just fine-tune your routine.*

As an agent-executor, the woman's actions are already mitigated by the instruction of the magazine. Furthermore, by instructing the woman to *have fun* or *just fine-tune* her

routine, the woman's work is diminished, focusing instead on the giving her agency over leisure (having *fun*) or using the adjective *just* to imply minimal work. Finally, the woman's agency is mitigated by focusing on the result of having a new body, rather than focusing on the work involved.

A-19. ... *and you'll drop five pounds or more by the Super Bowl!*

F-5. *If it's strong, lean legs you yearn for, then you can have them*

While *you* is an agent-principal, she is not the agent of strong, action verbs, rather she is the agent of non-work verbs (*drop, have*). Furthermore, the use of future tense (*will, can*) in these sentences implies a certainty that the body will be attained, encoding the equality of traditional femininity and minimizing the amount of work required to achieve the resulting body, as well as the possibility that the results may vary from woman to woman.

By hiding or minimizing the actions of the woman-reader, she is presented as a hybrid of traditional femininity's communal woman and empowered femininity's assertive woman. While the woman-reader is the one who must do the fitness activities, in the product section of the article she is either not present as an agent, or she is presented as an agent which is communal, dependent on others, and inactive.

### 7.2.3 Verbs in the Product

Many of the verbs also disguise the woman's work. In traditional femininity, women are concerned with solidarity and equity (Holmes 1997, Coates 1997, Tannen 1990, Bordo 1993), and being too competitive or aggressive can be a threat to relationships. In contrast, in empowered femininity, women understand that hard work

and strength lead to respect and success (Freedman 1986, Bordo 1993, Dellinger and Williams 1997, Ballaster et al. 1991). In the hybrid discourse, the verbs more often are found in the middle of this continuum by indicating there is some work involved, but diminishing the level and commitment involved, so that women do not seem too competitive.

Some of the verbs diminish the work involved by implying that the steps of the exercise are easy and simple, or the weight will easily be lost. Some of the verbs also diminish the work of the woman by implying that the results of the work are given to her. Finally, some of the verbs diminish the woman's work by implying that the woman has a natural, feminine shape that will simply emerge, and by focusing on the aesthetic outcome of the exercise, rather than the work itself.

Some of the verbs minimize the work of the exercise by implying the body will simply morph into a new, ideal form easily.

- G-3. *Ms. Bikini Universe Melissa Hall lets you in on her top-secret tips to **melt** away love handles and sculpt a gown worthy back in four easy steps.*
- A-16. *To **zap** body fat*
- A-19. *you'll **drop** five pounds or more by the Super Bowl*
- A-6. ***blast** fat*

Even though performing the workout will take dedication and consistency, the verbs imply that the body will easily and instantly take its new shape, and the fat will simply *melt* or *drop* away, or be *blasted* or *zapped* away. The work of the woman is masked through these verbs.

Some verbs minimize the work the woman does by indicating that she is receiving the benefits of the workout without actively acknowledging the work she will



put into doing the workout. In some cases, there is no mention at all of the work the woman does; instead, the trainer or workout *gives* the reader the body:

- E-13. *I've created this dynamic sequence of exercises to **give** you a total body Pilates workout.*
- F-14. *Unlike machines or dumbbells, these handy bands **give** you constant resistance during both the eccentric and concentric phases of a move.*

These cases appear to only encode traditional femininity, in which women are encouraged to be dependent on others. In other cases, though, the woman *gets* or even *achieves* the body, but with the *help* of the trainer or magazine, as in:

- D-7. *Over the past 25 years, Shape has created and tested countless moves, with one objective in mind: to **help** you **get** your fittest, sexiest body.*
- F-4. *This fitness pro **can help** you **achieve** the shapely legs you desire with one intense workout per week.*

Finally, some verbs focus on the resulting beauty of the body rather than the work of the exercise. Emphasizing how the body *looks*, or indicating that the body is on display (*showcase*, *shine*) highlights the body as an object of display and minimizes the work involved in the exercise, encoding traditional femininity. However, the verbs also indicate that the body is worth admiring, indicating there is something special about the body, which encodes empowered femininity.

- D-13. *Soon your arms, abs, legs – all of you – **will look** better than ever.*
- G-5. *But for those who have trained and dieted, it's an opportunity to **showcase** all their hard work.*
- G-6. *For veteran competitor Melissa Hall, the 2005 Ms. Bikini Universe Pageant, held in Miami Beach, was her time to **shine**.*
- G-26. *"I love how a nice, fit back **looks** in a low-cut dress," she says.*

The body is not just on display, it is admired, although whether it is admired simply for its appearance or for the work it takes to look that way, is unclear. One statement indicating the body *wowed* the audience is particularly representative of this ambiguity.

H-6. *Her physique **wowed** fans and critiques alike in her movie debut as Daisy Duke in “The Dukes of Hazard,”*

While simply putting the object on display encodes traditional femininity, admiring the body for its uniqueness encodes empowered femininity, which encourages individuality.

In addition, there are verbs of aesthetics which encode both traditional and empowered femininity by encoding both the work and the aesthetic outcome. *Sculpt* and *tone* are common verbs in the product section, which indicate the work of the exercise and highlight the attractive body outcome.

- D-4. ***Sculpt** your best body with Shape’s all-time greatest exercises*
- B-13. *To **tone** your tush even more, face backward on the StairMaster (hold on!)*
- A-8. *sculpt your abs, arms, thighs and butt*
- F-7. *But to really **sculpt and tone**, Summer recommends doing some lighter leg-shaping exercises in the same week.*
- G-10. *Melissa focused on **shaping and toning** her muscles rather than adding size and mass*

*Sculpt, shape* and even *tone* are artistic terms, but they encode the active work involved in creating an art object. As such, they encode the work of the exerciser, pointing to empowered femininity, but they mitigate the work by also focusing on the aesthetic outcome, pointing to traditional femininity.

The verbs in the product section place women in the middle of a continuum of activity and self-promotion, with one extreme being traditional femininity’s humility and the other extreme being empowered femininity’s aggressiveness. By minimizing the amount of work involved in weight loss, by indicating the woman is the recipient of the body (rather than the active changer of the body), or by focusing on the aesthetics

outcome of working on the body, the discourse encodes both the active nature of empowered femininity and the communal nature of traditional femininity.

#### *7.2.4 Patients in the Product*

As the patient, the woman is the creation, the product being affected by the actions of the verb. According to Berk, the patient is the participant that is affected by the action of the verb (1999:19). When the woman is a patient in traditional femininity, she is concerned with her body as an object of beauty (Freedman 1986, Betterton 1987, Bordo 1993, Black and Sharma 2001, Gimlin 2002). When the woman is a patient in empowered femininity, she is celebrated for her unique strengths and her equality to men (Ballaster et al. 1991, McCracken 1993, Zuckerman 1998, Endel 1991).

In the hybrid discourse, the woman's body is presented as a unique, celebrated patient, as in empowered femininity, but in fact it is objectified patient, as in traditional femininity. The idea that the perfect body is an achievable goal, possible through certain easy steps, is reflective of the traditional femininity discourse, in which domestic magazines are full of recipe-like instructions for cooking, cleaning, and beautifying oneself (Ballaster et al. 1991, McCracken 1993, Zuckerman 1998), while presenting the perfect body as difficult project encodes aspects of empowered femininity, which focuses on long-term projects such as how women can succeed in their careers, juggle work and family, embrace their sexuality, and be socially and politically active (Ballaster et al. 1991, Endel 1991, McCracken 1993, Dellinger and Williams 1997, Zuckerman 1998, Black and Sharma 2001, Reischer and Koo 2004). Because changing

the woman's body appears to be a celebration, but is also objectified, it is a hybrid patient.

In some sentences, the woman-patient is presented simply as the "body." While the body is presented as something which is being constructed and celebrated, as in *your best body*, it also reduces the woman to focus only the display of her body (rather than the well-being of her body or other aspects of herself such as her mental health).

A-7. *we're really giving you something to celebrate: a lean, firm, totally toned body in four weeks.*

A-6. *Sculpt every inch in less than a month with this total-body plan*

C-12. *So that you make 2006 the year you get the body you've always wanted.*

D-4. *Sculpt your best body with Shape's all-time greatest exercises*

Furthermore, it is celebrated only when it fits traditional standards of being *lean, firm, totally toned*. While the woman-body patient appears to be constructed, the woman is also being deconstructed into only the outward appearance of her body.

In some sentences, the body is dissected or deconstructed into sexualized body parts. Body parts which are not considered sexual, like hands, knees, and feet, are not mentioned. Only those body parts which are considered attractive to men are mentioned, like *legs* (often further dissected into *thighs* and *calves*), *butts*, *abs* or *belly*, and *arms*. These are the parts that need to be "fixed" by the workouts.

A-8. *this intensive strength program promises to blast fat, boost metabolism, and sculpt abs, arms, thighs, and butt*

F-4. *This fitness pro can help you achieve the shapely legs you desire with one intense workout per week.*

B-4. *This workout sculpts a firm butt, a strong back and sexy, shapely legs.*

D-5. *No need to try thousands of exercises to find the top arm-dejigger, belly flattener, and butt firmer –*

F-5. *If it's strong, lean legs you yearn for, you can have them – with just one hard leg workout per week.*

At the same time, the objectification of these body parts is masked, by making it appear that the woman-reader, not the male observer, desires them (*the shapely legs you desire, strong, lean legs you yearn for*), or that the body parts are not sexual but strong (*firm, strong*). In this way, the achievement of these body parts appears to be a worthwhile, constructive goal, encoding empowered femininity. As such, the woman-body patient is objectified and celebrated at the same time.

In some sentences, the body parts being focused on are internal, but they are body parts which aid in having an attractive outside.

- A-8. *this intensive strength program promises to blast fat, boost metabolism,*  
G-10. *With years of weight training neatly tucked under her 23-inch belt, Melissa focused on **shaping and toning her muscles** rather than adding size and mass.*

Having less *fat* and a higher *metabolism*, and *toning muscles*, appear to encode a constructive goal of taking care of the body. However, these features lead to a leaner body, creating the objectified body ideal. In this way, internal body parts patients are celebrated objectifications.

The woman as a patient presents the woman as a mixture of empowered femininity and traditional femininity. While the use of positive reinforcements such as *strong* and *best*, the use of presenting the goals as one the woman wants such as *you desire* or *you yearn for*, and the use of internal body parts such as *metabolism* and *muscles* appear to celebrate the body and encode empowered femininity, the focus on body and body parts also objectifies the woman, encoding traditional femininity. The woman as patient is at the same time a celebrated and unique being and an objectified deconstructed body.

### *7.2.5 Adjectives in the Product*

As an additional part of speech that affects the discourse, the adjectives encode both the objectification/beautification of traditional femininity and the celebration of hard work of empowered femininity. Many of the adjectives describing the woman's body encode traditional femininity by focusing on the objectification of the body and the single standard for feminine beauty. Focusing on one's appearance and shape, particularly through positive reinforcements or compliments, is typical of the traditional femininity discourse (Coates 1996 and Holmes 1997); and the standards used to determine the natural or normal feminine form come from the narrow, unrealistic cultural standards of beauty, typical of the traditional femininity discourse (Freedman 1986, Betterton 1987, Bordo 1993, Black and Sharma 2001, Gimlin 2002). Conversely, some of the adjectives describing the woman and the workout encode the idea that getting in shape requires dedication, reflecting the empowered femininity discourse. The empowered femininity discourse proposes that athleticism, assertiveness, hard work, and strength will lead to respect and success (Ballaster et al. 1991, McCracken 1993, Endel 1991, Zuckerman 1998). By celebrating the results, i.e. the objectified, but hard to attain, female body, the hybrid discourse encodes both traditional and empowered femininity.

Through the adjectives, women are objectified and celebrated at the same time. All the adjectives are positive, admiring ones, but what is in question is whether they are admiring the woman's body or the woman's work. Some adjectives focus on objectifying and sexualizing the woman, encoding traditional femininity, but some also

focus on admiring her strength and endurance, encoding empowered femininity. In many cases, they admire the fact that her body is the result of hard work.

Through adjectives that focus on appearance, women's bodies are admired for both objectification and work-ethic reasons. Much of the time, the adjectives modifying the woman's body are sexual adjectives, such as *sexy* or *shapely legs*, which appear to only objectify the woman. However, other cases focus only on the strength of the body, as in *a lean, firm, totally toned body, a firm butt, or a strong back*.

Of particular interest are phrases where the woman's work and strength is highlighted and juxtaposed with the objectification of her body, as in *a strong and shapely back, or your fittest, sexiest body*. While the resulting body is objectified, it is recognized as an achievement, as something *not many women* have, through sentences such as:

H-5. ***not many women, let alone many Hollywood actresses, can look as good in short shorts as Jessica Simpson.***

Many adjectives focus on the work of the woman. While this hard work encodes empowered femininity, it also encodes traditional femininity, because the purpose of the hard work is to create a beautiful body to be admired or put on display.

G-5. *But for those who have trained and dieted, it's an opportunity to **showcase all their hard work.***

H-9. *In fact, once Jessica saw the results of **her hard work**, she asked wardrobe to **make those short shorts even shorter.***

While *the hard work* is worthy of admiration and reflects the value of work ethic of empowered femininity, the purpose of doing the hard work is to *showcase* their bodies, such as showing off their legs by wearing *short shorts*, reflecting the objectification of

traditional femininity. As such, the women are admired for both their hard work and the implied resulting beautiful body.

One final trait is to describe the workout, rather than the woman, as hard, strenuous, and intensive. The activity and work is spelled out in such qualifying expressions as *one **hard** leg workout* and *this **intensive** strength program*. By focusing on the workout being the hard, strenuous part, the discourse encodes the value of hard work of empowered femininity but does not contradict the value of traditional femininity to be soft and demure.

The adjectives celebrate and admire women for their hard work, but at the same time mitigate women's strength by focusing on their appearance. In some instances, the writers actually demonstrate the internal juxtaposition of this characteristic. In one case, the author uses *although* to set up the contrast.

H-8. *Although Alexander wanted her to look '**natural**' for the role (i.e. not like she'd been working out), it required **three grueling months of hitting the gym six days a week for about an hour and a half per session** to get those **great legs and rounded booty**.*

By distinguishing the first clause with *although*, the writer is setting the reader up for a contrasting clause. In addition, by distinguishing the word *natural* with quotation marks and providing a definition in parenthesis (that natural means women should look like they have not had to work at their bodies), it becomes clear the woman is not supposed to appear as if she has worked too hard, because that threatens her being able to embrace traditional femininity, although it is clear that she has worked hard. As such, the adjectives encode admiration, but it is a balanced admiration for both the body and the work involved.



### 7.2.6 *Qualifying Expressions in the Product*

Finally, many of the qualifying expressions in the product section disguise the woman's work. The adverbs and prepositional phrases often imply that the desired feminine shape is a result of simple and short steps, implying they are easy, although the steps have to be repeated perpetually, implying they are difficult. Proposing that achieving the form is a matter of easy steps implies that everyone can do them, and thus is a sign of egalitarianism, a common trait of traditional femininity discourse (Coates 1997). On the other hand, indicating longer durations and more dedication to the project indicates the competitiveness representative of empowered femininity (Freedman 1986, Bordo 1993, Reischer and Koo 2004).

The discourse minimizes the work involved by using a balance of qualifying expressions that indicate both minimal steps or minimal time involved, along with the intensity of doing the steps or the durative nature required to keep the results. By indicating that there are only a few steps, or one only has to workout a few times, the discourse encodes the simplicity of the actions, which reinforces the modesty associated with traditional femininity. Comments such as *in less than a month* and *in four easy steps* demonstrate this. At the same time, the discourse acknowledges that the activities are *hard*, or *intense*, and often include this in the description of the steps, encoding the goal-oriented aspect of empowered femininity. Comments such as *just one hard leg workout* encodes passivity with *just one* and dedication with *hard*. Some comments even indicate the long-term nature of the workout, such as *the only way to change your*

*body is to keep changing your routine.* *Keep* indicates the durative nature of exercising, encoding the dedication of empowered femininity.

In using qualifying expressions that minimize the number of steps or the amount of time, yet recognize the difficulty of the work or the durative nature of exercising, the discourse encodes both the modesty of traditional femininity and the competitiveness of empowered femininity, and portrays hybrid femininity along the middle of this continuum.

#### *7.2.7 Summary: the Product*

The product part of the article focuses on the end result or the motivation for doing the fitness activities. While it clearly focuses on the body as the product, and can be seen as primarily encoding traditional femininity on a rhetorical level, on many smaller linguistic levels it encodes traditional and empowered femininities.

First, the clauses combine elements which allude to the beautification and objectification of women's bodies, encoding traditional femininity, but at the same time discuss the work involved in producing this outcome, which encodes empowered femininity.

Second, the product section of the discourse uses agents, verbs, patients, adjectives, and qualifying expressions to place women in between traditional femininity and empowered femininity. As an agent, the woman's work is either not overtly present or is not fully recognized, so as not to appear too hard-working. The verbs also mask the work of the woman by diminishing the amount of work involved in weight loss, by

indicating the woman is the recipient of the body, or by focusing on the aesthetics outcome of working on the body. As a patient, the woman is portrayed as her body or her body parts, encoding traditional femininity, yet that body is presented as a celebration worthy of admiration, encoding empowered femininity. In the adjectives, the woman is celebrated for her hard work, yet she is objectified because her hard work results in a new appearance. Finally the qualifying expressions strike a balance between presenting the woman as competitive or as modest by presenting the steps or time involved as both easy and short, yet intense and durative.

In terms of the degree to which the woman is portrayed as a hybrid, 78% of the agents can be considered hybrid agents, 61% of the verbs can be considered hybrid verbs, 75% of the patients can be considered hybrid, 77% of the adjectives can be considered hybrid, and 80% of the qualifying expressions can be considered hybrid. The product section, then, can be considered highly hybrid.

### 7.3 Summary

While the process section primarily focuses on the work and dedication involved in exercising, encoding empowered femininity, on many linguistic levels it also encodes traditional femininity. Likewise, while the product section primarily focuses on the outcome of the objectified body, encoding traditional femininity, it also encodes empowered femininity on many linguistic levels. On a clausal level, I found that while the process primarily encodes empowered femininity, and the product primarily encodes traditional femininity, there are clauses within both the product and the process

which juxtapose traditional and empowered femininities. Similarly, on a lexical level, I found that the agents, patients, verbs, adjectives and modifying expressions encoded both empowered and traditional femininity.

While the two discourses of empowered femininity and traditional femininity are both recognizable in the fitness texts, they also seem to have merged to such a degree that the fitness texts are themselves a new, hybrid discourse. This new discourse has synthesized elements of the parent discourses in such a way that the new discourse has its own characteristics and themes, which the final chapter will discuss.

## CHAPTER 8

### CONCLUSION: A HYBRID DISCOURSE OF FEMININITY

In my analysis, I have shown how the discourse of fitness articles encodes aspects of both traditional femininity and empowered femininity discourses on rhetorical, clausal, and lexical levels, despite the contradictions between them. The result is a new hybrid discourse which is more than just a simple mixing of the traditional femininity and empowered femininity discourses. In fact, it is a synthesis of the two, which allows it to be a seamless discourse. Rather than espousing one or the other of the values of the two competing discourses, the new femininity discourse tries to meet in the middle. These linguistic results point to larger sociological themes which show how fitness magazines strive to portray women as accomplishing empowered goals through changing themselves, but remaining within certain constraints of traditionally femininity such as focusing on beauty and being communal.

#### 8.1 Coverage and Linguistic Details

Following Gee's assertion to show validity by demonstrating coverage (i.e. to apply analysis to different sorts of data) and linguistic details (i.e. to tie the analysis to details of linguistic structure ), I have examined the data on rhetorical, clausal, and lexical levels and found the two discourses of femininity mix on all of these levels. On

a rhetorical level, the fitness text discourse merges the two femininity discourses through encoding two motivations or goals. The first goal is to describe the *process* of getting fit. The process section of the Call to Action focuses on the nature of fitness activities themselves, appealing to women's identities to be assertive and flout traditional femininity (Coates 1999, Day et al. 2003), and encouraging women to perform activities which require strength, will-power, and discipline, which encode both the activities and the motivations of empowered femininity (Freedman 1986, Ballaster et al. 1991, Endel 1991, Bordo 1993, McCracken 1993, Dellinger and Williams 1997, Zuckerman 1998, Black and Sharma 2001, Reischer and Koo 2004).

At the same time, the texts also describe the end result of the exercises or the *product* of doing the exercises, appealing to traditional femininity's identities, activities, and motivations to be concerned with their appearance and self-beautification (Betterton 1987, Ballaster et al. 1991, Bordo 1993, McCracken 1993, Coates 1996, Zuckerman 1998, Romaine 1999, Black and Sharma 2001, Gimlin 2002, Lindner 2004), and to be communal, equitable and relationship-oriented (Eagly and Steffen 1984, Tannen 1990, Holmes 1997, Romaine 1999).

Thus, within this Call to Action, the texts merge the process and the product, demonstrating the hybridization of the discourse. The first three to five sentences focus on describing this product. The next part of the Call to Action describes the process of getting fit, which typically involves the strength, dedication, and hard work of the woman. The Call to Action then ends on a lighter note, again reminding the woman

that the result of this dedication and hard work is the idealized, objectified body-product.

Furthermore, within the process section and the product section, there is an intermingling of the empowered femininity discourse and the traditional femininity discourse on clausal and lexical levels. The clauses show both parallelism and dependency relationships between the two discourses, such as indicating a motivation for obtaining the body which indexes both the competitiveness of empowered femininity and the body objectification of traditional femininity, or indicating that the action of empowered femininity results in the achievement of a body shape revered by traditional femininity. The lexical items of agents, verbs, patients, adjectives, and qualifying expressions index the two discourses syntactically and semantically, such as agents which have limited volition, and verbs which imply both action and easiness. These linguistic elements, textual structure, and clausal and lexical choices, create a hybrid discourse that indexes both traditional and empowered femininity, but is its own, solitary discourse.

## 8.2 Convergence

Claiming the fitness texts analyzed constitute a solitary, yet hybrid discourse, is a significant assertion, one that is based on the idea that “a discourse analysis is more, rather than less, valid, the more the answers to the questions *converge* in the way they support the analysis” (Gee 1999:113-114). In my analysis, the answers to my heuristics (what identities are being portrayed, what activities are being enacted, and what

purpose/goals/motivations are used) all point to the same phenomenon: women trying to enact both traditional femininity and empowered femininity. Furthermore, I propose that the discourse of women's fitness magazines is a solitary, yet hybrid discourse because the two "parent" discourses are recognizable, but they merge into the new discourse which has its own themes and ideologies, showing a unification of the parent discourses. These themes are *limited achievement* and *celebrating objectification*. Limited achievement is a fusion of the communal-orientation of traditional femininity and the action-orientation of empowered femininity. While traditional femininity encouraged women to be non-competitive and more concerned with others, and empowered femininity encouraged women to be more active and independent, this discourse places women more in the middle, in encouraging them to be active but to a limited degree, or within a limited range of traditionally-approved activities. Likewise, celebrating objectification is a blending of objectifying women and admiring women. While traditional femininity portrayed women as objects of beauty, empowered femininity portrayed women as unique and admirable. In this discourse, women are portrayed as admirable, but they are admired for their bodies, and at times for the work involved in producing those bodies.

### *8.2.1 Limited Achievement*

The theme of limited achievement uses traditional femininity's values of passivity and egalitarianism to minimize the amount of hard work empowered femininity encourages. Women have been taught, through empowered femininity, that



hard work leads to success (Day 2003, Coates 1999, Freedman 1986, Bordo 1993, Reischer and Koo 2004). But they have also been taught, through traditional femininity, to not appear overly competitive (Holmes 1997, Coates 1997, Tannen 1990, Bordo 1993, Freedman 1993). In the hybrid discourse, women are encouraged to work hard, but to mask their work so that the results of the hard work seem be natural. The result is that women are encouraged to be assertive and competitive, yet to mask their competitiveness and not upset the status quo.

Appealing to empowered femininity's desire to show women as successful and deserving of recognition, the hybrid discourse encodes the success women have in achieving the exercises and resulting body. At the same time, the success is presented as only achievable through specific steps, or her success is limited to achievement of only one arena, the objectified body, which constrains women in traditional ways. This characteristic is revealed in many ways.

In the process section, the inter-clausal relationships show this limited achievement. For example, in terms of strength, the text refers the work the exerciser does, but they often continue by specifying exactly what work the woman should do, constraining her. The texts also appear to put the woman in control of making decisions, however the results of her decisions are oriented around her improving the appearance of her body. Similarly, the texts refer to the difficulty of the workout and the commitment required, but the outcome again is beautification purposes. In these ways, the clausal structure shows the integration of traditional femininity and empowered femininity in the process section.

The agents in the process section also encode this duality. While in some cases the woman agent is portrayed to be aggressive, strong, in control, and responsible for the acts of exercising, in other cases she is responding to others, and not in control or not initiating the action of the verb. As an agent-principal, the woman is fully volitional over her actions, representative of empowered femininity. However, as an agent-executor, the woman is responding to the instructions and instigation of others, typical of the communal nature of traditional femininity discourse. As an agent-instigator, the woman is volitional over her own actions of teaching or demonstrating, typical of empowered femininity, but she hedges her authority over others, typical of traditional femininity.

Third, the verbs in the process section alternatively encode empowered femininity achievement or traditional femininity's need for instruction. When the woman is portrayed as the agent, the verb of the sentence encodes the action-orientation of empowered femininity. However, there are many verbs which mitigate this action by showing the woman as needing assistance from the trainer, who demonstrates or suggests what to do. This encodes traditional femininity, in which women rely on others. As such, the verbs overall show the accomplishment is available only through relying on others.

The product section also shows this theme. The agents in the product demonstrate limited achievement in the ways that the work of woman-reader goes unnoticed. While the woman-reader is the one who must do the fitness activities, in the product section of the article she is either not present as an agent, or the amount of work

she has to do is not fully recognized. In some cases, the woman does not appear as the agent of the sentence, even though she is the one initiating, controlling, or responsible for the action of the verb. In other cases, the amount of work involved is hidden by focusing on the easy or fun nature of workouts, or on the resulting body.

The verbs in the product section also imply there is little work going on. In some sentences, the verbs diminish the amount of work involved in exercising by implying the changes to the body will happen easily. In some cases, the verbs hide the fact that the woman-agent will be doing work in order to gain the results, by implying that the results are simply given to her. Finally, in some cases the verbs hide the work by focusing only on the aesthetic outcome of the work.

Finally, many of the qualifying expressions in the product section disguise the woman's work. The adverbs and prepositional phrases often imply that the desired feminine shape is a result of simple and short steps, implying they are easy, although the steps have to be repeated perpetually, implying they are difficult. Proposing that achieving the form is a matter of easy steps implies that everyone can do, and thus is a sign of egalitarianism, a common trait of traditional femininity discourse. On the other hand, indicating longer durations and more dedication to the project indicates the work orientation representative of empowered femininity. In using qualifying expressions that minimize the number of steps or the amount of time, yet recognize the difficulty of the work or the durative nature of exercising, the discourse encodes both the passivity of traditional femininity and the work-ethic of empowered femininity, and portrays hybrid femininity along the middle of this continuum, with minimized work.

Appealing to empowered femininity's desire to show women as successful and deserving of recognition, the hybrid discourse encodes the success women have in achieving the exercises and resulting body. At the same time, the success is presented as only achievable through depending on others, which constrains women in traditional ways. In these ways, the theme of limited achievement is common in this hybrid discourse.

### *8.2.2 Celebrating Objectification*

The second theme, that of celebrating objectification, is seen in the ways the woman is celebrated for subscribing to the objectified feminine form. The theme celebrating objectification uses empowered femininity's value of goal-orientation with traditional femininity's value of beautification. Women have been taught through traditional femininity to focus on domestic and beautification tasks (Freedman 1986, Betterton 1987, Bordo 1993, Black and Sharma 2001, Gimlin 2002). But they have also been taught, through empowered femininity, to focus on broader goals of gaining recognition, improving themselves, and being seen as equal to men. In the hybrid discourse, women are encouraged to deconstruct themselves into body parts in order to achieve a construct a new, worthy self. Many linguistic aspects of the process section demonstrated this limited achievement.

First, the process section of the texts draws on this theme by appearing to encode empowered femininity's focus on holistic or internal motivations for working out, but they also encode beautification reasons for working out. The clausal

relationships show that the woman is strong, dedicated, and concerned with her health, but also concerned with beauty.

Second, the product section encodes this theme in the patients and adjectives. In the hybrid discourse, the woman's body is presented as a unique, celebrated patient, as in empowered femininity, but in fact it is objectified patient, as in traditional femininity. While the use of positive reinforcements, of presenting the goals as ones the woman wants, of internal body parts appear to celebrate the body and encode empowered femininity, the focus on body and body parts also objectifies the woman, encoding traditional femininity. The woman as patient is at the same time a celebrated being and an objectified body.

In addition, the adjectives encode both the objectification/beautification of traditional femininity and the celebration of hard work of empowered femininity. All the adjectives are positive, admiring ones, but what is in question is whether they are admiring the woman's body or the woman's work. Many of the adjectives describing the woman's body encode traditional femininity by focusing on the objectification of the body and the single standard for feminine beauty. Conversely, some of the adjectives describing the woman and the workout encode the idea that getting in shape requires dedication, reflecting the empowered femininity discourse. By celebrating the results, i.e. the objectified, but hard to attain, female body, the hybrid discourse encodes both traditional and empowered femininity.

Encoding traditional femininity's focus on women's beauty and objectification, the hybrid discourse focuses on the beautification outcomes of exercising. At the same

time, the outcomes are recognized as the result of hard work, and are admired for their uniqueness, encoding empowered femininity. As such, the theme of celebrating objectification encodes objectification and admiration.

### 8.3 Agreement

The final test for any discourse analysis is whether “‘native speakers’ of the social language in the data and ‘members’ of the discourse implicated in the data agree that the analysis reflects how such social languages actually can function in such settings” (Gee 1999:113-114). In fact, the results of this research are confirmed by a number of sociological and linguistic trends.

First, many linguistic researchers note that women use language to portray complex identities. While some language and gender researchers have found that women do enact different but singular femininities, from traditional femininity, i.e. being sociable, egalitarian, and concerned with appearances, to empowered femininity, i.e. being assertive, strong, and factual, many recent studies focus on ways women integrate competing ideologies into hybrid discourses which encode both traditional femininity and empowered femininity. “Identities are now seen as plural and potentially conflicting even within a specific individual in a particular interaction” (Mills 2003:3). Rather than presenting themselves as singular, many women want to portray the complexity and diversity of their lives and their identities.

The fact that the more recent research in language and gender – those studies published in the last ten years – focus on this integration is a reflection of contemporary

women's ideologies. "It is the interactive, continuously changing ways that people use language to construct their gender identity and relations which provide the most insight into the way gender functions in particular communities" (Holmes 1997:217).

Researchers today are interested in the ways that women – and men – use language to create complex personas to reflect more than the bipolar feminine and masculine stereotypes.

Second, others note that contemporary women are using their bodies as the site of the integration of traditional and empowered femininity, perhaps because the body is the only area of overlap between traditional and empowered femininity. "High-fashion culture ended, and the women's magazines' traditional expertise was suddenly irrelevant. The Feminine Mystique evaporated; *all that was left was the body*" (Wolf 1991:67). In addition, many women acknowledge that attractive appearances imply additional characteristics. In one study of women's own body images, Rudd and Lennon (1999) state "they recognized that an attractive appearance could confer power" (169). Dowd also claims that "now beauty is linked to time and money" (2005:235). Whatever the reason, Bellafonte seems to state it best: "Want to know what today's chic young feminist thinkers care about? Their bodies! Themselves!" (1998:54). The body as the site of contemporary femininity reflects traditional femininity's emphasis on beauty and empowered femininity's emphasis on power and control.

By focusing on the body, women can portray acceptance of a cultural norm for women as petite and beauty-oriented at the same as she portrays her will-power and hard work in achieving that body. Root notes

Dieting appears to be a strategy women rather than men use to increase self-esteem, obtain privileges, increase credibility in the workforce, and contend with conflicting gender-role prescriptions. In essence, dieting is a strategy many women attempt to obtain power and acceptance. Although this strategy appears to be superficial, mythology, fairy tales, television, movies, and advertising lead women to believe that thinness is beauty, success, power, and acceptance, and therefore dieting is a viable strategy (1990:526).

Likewise, by using language which encodes both objectification and admiration, both achievement and constraint, women's fitness magazines place themselves in the middle of the continuum between traditional femininity and empowered femininity, encouraging women to pursue goals and prove themselves as equal to men, but not **AS** men – instead as women. The theme of celebrating objectification resonates with many women because they find focusing on their bodies, through body modification and adornment, “is an enormous – and often pleasing – part of female culture. And there is nowhere else where they can participate in women's culture in so broad a way” (Wolf 1991:75). Similarly, the theme of limited achievement resonates with many women, who feel they must mitigate their achievement because “women's assertiveness is depicted as potentially off-putting; there are limits, beyond which women are seen as aggressive, manipulative and threatening (Litosseliti 2006:101-2).

#### 8.4 Future Research

This research project has raised as many questions as it has answered. In suggesting that hybridity occurs, both on a discourse level, and on a lexical level in terms of the agents, this research will likely serve as the impetus to study hybridity and agency in more detail.



#### *8.4.1 Examining Hybridity*

Discourses analysts have noted that discourses have no discrete boundaries, and discourses can blend together, either intentionally, as individuals attempt to portray multiple ideologies, or unintentionally, as discourses influence one another and breed. However, very little research has been done to determine when a discourse is a simple mixing of multiple discourses, and when it is a new, hybrid discourse. One solution is to propose that there is a continuum of hybridity, from random mixing to complex interweaving. On the one end, random mixing, there may be simple switching or borrowing of words or ideas from one discourse into another. Gee calls this style “intertextuality” (1999:46). On the other end is complex interweaving, where discourses have bled together to such a degree that the new discourse becomes seamless and recognizable as a solitary one.

You can get several of your Discourses recognized all at once...If this sort of thing gets enacted and recognized enough, by enough people, then it will become not multiple strands of multiple Discourses interwoven, but a single Discourse whose hybridity may ultimately be forgotten (Gee 1999:30).

While this dissertation has indicated that the texts examined comprise a hybrid, albeit seamless, integration of the two parent discourses, little work has been done in the field of discourse analysis to determine how discourses borrow, intertwine, and bleed into new discourses, and how to determine hybridity on a theoretical level. In future research, I would like to examine how the degree of hybridity can be determined.

#### *8.4.2 Examining Agency*

This dissertation has proposed that the dichotomy between agent and patient in this discourse is problematic, on both a linguistic level and an ideological level. I have briefly proposed that agency is not absolute, but rather that there are varying levels of agency. On a linguistic level, it appears that agency is tied to a number of linguistic elements, including syntax (whether the agent governs a finite or an infinite verb), semantics (whether the agent governs a verb of direct action or indirect action), and perhaps other issues as well. This idea merits much further research, to see if agency varies in other discourses, and to see how the degree of agency can be tied to syntactic and semantic elements.

#### 8.5 Implications for Women

The results of this dissertation show both disappointing and promising trends for women. The “paradox of agency” mentioned above exists not only on a linguistic level but on an ideological level, in that the discourse is constructed not only within the genre of women’s fitness magazines but also within a contemporary consumerist society. The ideological paradox for femininity in this discourse involves the fact that these magazines convey the notion that a woman can be empowered by actively making choices about her body, but she can do so by “buying” into and “selling” aspects of both traditional and empowered notions of femininity, particularly due to the portrayed need

for women to subordinate individual agency to expert knowledge in women's fitness magazines.<sup>4</sup>

Of concern is whether this is evidence of true empowerment or whether this further recycles traditional, patriarchally defined definitions of femininity is. On one hand, the body and the beauty women are empowered to strive for is so narrowly defined in this culture that it is destructive to women. It is unattainable by a majority of women, but is presented as achievable in this discourse. This can result in low self-esteem for women who fail to achieve it, or even hazardous behaviors such as eating disorders. Furthermore, hiding the amount of work involved in achieving this body type, as this discourse does, can be psychologically and physically damaging to individual women, but it is also damaging on a larger level in terms of how women are perceived in this culture. If women continue to hide the amount of work they do, they will not be treated with the same authority and power as men. Likewise, if women continue to celebrate their own objectification, they will continue to perpetuate the stereotype that they must conform to a beauty standard.

There is hope, however. The integration of multiple femininities is a step towards envisioning gender as a continuum, rather than a polarity. In promoting a range of behaviors, attitudes, and ideologies for both men and women, rather than a single set of oppositional ones, individuals will be able to embrace their own strengths and fulfill their own potentials.

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<sup>4</sup> I thank Mark A. Ouellette for his observation on the paradoxes in this discourse.

In addition, there are trends towards promoting various beauty ideals. Desiring to be beautiful is not bad, unless the standard of beauty is an unrealistic ideal. Recently, the beauty industry has begun promoting multiple beauty ideals. Dove has taken the lead by showcasing women of all ages, sizes, and complexions in their *Campaign for Real Beauty*. Slim-fast has begun promoting realistic weight loss goals, with the catchphrase “We believe in hips, not hip bones.” Even the modeling industry has been to take notice of the destructive dieting practices of both models and the women who see them, and have begun offering assistance to models who having eating disorders (in Spain, the industry has gone as far as to ban models with a Body Mass Index which is dangerously low). By encouraging a wider range of beauty ideals, more women can feel confident and content with themselves.

Finally, the rise of the fitness industry is valuable particularly if fitness activities are promoted for health benefits rather than weight loss alone. As our society as a whole leads more sedentary lives, has more abundance of food, and lives longer than people 100 years ago, it is important to take care of our bodies and live healthy lives. Even though weight loss appears to be the primary motivator for exercise, many people are familiar with the other benefits of exercise, and it is hoped that whatever the incentive, people will integrate exercise into their lives.

This research proves the power of language to reflect and perpetuate ideologies, and in particular, to merge conflicting ideologies. This research also reinforces the trend in language and gender to show how individuals portray their gender through their

language in complex and multiple ways, and reinforces the agenda of third-wave feminists, who believe women should be able to enact and express complex identities. Finally, this research shows that with this complexity come paradoxes. In reconciling the competing discourses of femininity, a woman's body becomes the “discursive space” for these tensions to play out, a space that is both public and private in nature. It is the object of desire and public display (as perhaps a piece of art) and it is the object that she herself has to control and shape. In this sense, the hybrid discourse can be characterized by a paradox: the more agentive and empowered a woman becomes as a visible public force, the more one needs to reconcile such agency with the ever-present traditional ideology of femininity, an ideology that is essentially private.

The double bind still exists: many women feel the need to portray both traditional femininity and empowered femininity, and at first glance they appear incompatible. But through the hybrid discourse of women’s fitness texts, women are attempting to tie these binds into a solitary bow: a pretty bow, that brings harmony between conflicting ideologies, but which has taken strength, determination, and self-promotion to pull together.

APPENDIX A

*FITNESS* JANUARY 2006:  
DROP 5 POUNDS IN 4 WEEKS

1. Drop 5 pounds in 4 weeks
2. Get Slim & Strong: Our 28-day plan
3. Sculpt your abs
4. Burn extra calories
5. Have more energy, too!
6. [pro] Blast fat, boost your metabolism, and sculpt every inch in less than a month with this total-body plan.
7. This new year, we're really giving you something to celebrate: a lean, firm, totally toned body in four weeks.
8. Based on the just-released 28-Day Body Shapeover (Human Kinetics; December, 2005) by fitness expert Brad Schoenfeld, this intensive cardio/strength program promised to blast fat, boost metabolism and sculpt your abs, arms, thighs and butt.
9. "The workouts are designed to maximize the afterburn effect – the amount of calories your body burns after your work-out is finished," says Schoenfeld.
10. "The more intense the exercise, the higher the metabolic bump."
11. You'll do three strength workouts a week, each one focusing on a different area of the body.
12. The first concentrates on shoulders and arms; the second on the legs and butt; the third works the back, chest and abs.
13. You'll also vary the number of sets and reps weekly, building strength with heavier weights and fewer reps during weeks 1 and 3
14. and increasing endurance with lighter weights/higher reps in weeks 2 and 4.
15. ([pro] See "The 28-Day Get-Slim Guide," page 91).
16. To zap body fat, [pro] complete three calorie-blasting interval routines a week.
17. If weight loss is your goal, Schoenfeld recommends following a diet of about 1,500 calories a day: about 700 calories from complex carbohydrates, 500 calories from lean protein and 300 calories from healthy fats.
18. [pro] Follow these dietary changes and the accompanying fitness plan
19. and you'll drop five pounds or more by the Super Bowl!

APPENDIX B

*SELF*, JANUARY 2006:  
THIS MONTH'S GUARANTEE. GET A REAR TO RAVE ABOUT



1. This month's guarantee. Get a rear to rave about. (Self, January 2006)
2. Improve Your Rear View.
3. Tone Your Butt, Back & Legs.
4. This workout sculpts a firm butt, a strong back and sexy, shapely legs.
5. The Trainer. Franco Zuccoli, owner of Franco Fitness in Boston, created this routine to make your bottom – and the rest of your rear view – look tighter, sexier and stronger.
6. His moves target your back, glutes, hamstrings and the oft-forgotten calves.
7. Instead of relying on the stability ball simply as a way to work your core, he uses it to provide leverage for his supereffective back and butt toners.
8. The Plan. [pro] Do the exercises three times a week on non-consecutive days.
9. All you need are a pair of 3- to 10-pound weights and a stability ball.
10. [pro] Perform two sets of each move.
11. Your Mission This Month. [pro] Top off each strength session with 15 minutes of cardio, preferably on a bike, aerobic step or StairClimber for extra leg sculpting, Zuccoli says.
12. [pro] Complement this program with at least three additional 30-minute heart-pumping workouts a week; [pro] do them on days you're not strength training.
13. To tone your tush even more, [pro] face backward on the StairMaster (hold on!),
14. or [pro] choose a path for your run or walk that includes lots of hills.
15. *Sure, it's tougher.*
16. Is it worth it?
17. Butt of course!

APPENDIX C

*WOMEN'S HEALTH*, JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2006:  
THE FITTEST YEAR OF YOUR LIFE

1. The Fittest Year of Your life
2. [Cover tag: The Best Shape of Your Life! A Flat Belly • Trim Thighs • Toned Arms]
3. Doesn't matter whether your goal is to be 10 pounds lighter, 10 minutes faster, or stretch into the deepest down dog you've ever done.
4. As you enter a new year of fitness goals, the only way to change your body is to keep changing your routine.
5. If you never changed, you'd still be sporting a feathered perm, purple leg warmers, and Phil Collins concert tees.
6. Change – in work, in style, in life – is good.
7. It's no different for your year-round approach to fitness:
8. Without some seasonal variations, you could be forever stuck with a body that's never quite where you want it to be.
9. "When you alter your routine every 8 to 12 weeks, you're more likely to overcome plateaus, because you're providing ongoing physiological stimulation," says Ronald Deitrick, Ph.D., an exercise scientist at University of Scranton.
10. With frequent changes, you'll also avoid burnout, reduce your risk of injury, and prime your body for the best year it's ever had.
11. So for 2006 [pro] build the foundation by exercising three to five times a week for at least 30 minutes (make at least two of those workouts strength training).
12. After that, [pro] just fine-tune your routine with the seasons – so that you make 2006 the year you get the body you've always wanted.

APPENDIX D

*SHAPE*, NOVEMBER 2006:  
FIRM UP FAST

1. Firm up fast
2. [Cover tag: Drop inches all over. Our no-fail 28-day plan]
3. Totally toned in 9 moves
4. [pro] Sculpt your best body with Shape's all-time greatest exercises
5. [pro] No need to try thousands of exercises to find the top arm-dejiggler, belly flattener, and butt firmer –
6. we did it for you.
7. Over the past 25 years, Shape has created and tested countless moves, with one objective in mind: to help you get your fittest, sexiest body.
8. These nine exercises are the most effective we've ever printed.
9. Some use resistance bands, others dumbbells,
10. and a few nothing but your own body weight.
11. And while you'll find old favorites here, you'll also spot some fresh takes on familiar moves.
12. [pro] Start doing this workout today (or cherry-pick some to add to your regular routine)
13. and soon your arms, abs, legs – all of you – will look better than ever.

APPENDIX E

*FIT*, DECEMBER 2005:  
TOTAL BODY PILATES CHALLENGE

1. Total Body Pilates Challenge
2. [Cover tag: Pilates Power. Slim and tone your entire body in 7 simple moves]
3. Pilates instructor Lara Hudson leads you through a dynamic series of exercises guaranteed to slim and tone your body in all the right places.
4. If you haven't already tried Pilates, I'm sure you've heard all the great things about it –
5. that it builds core strength and good posture,
6. that it stretches and lengthens your muscles,
7. and that it helps heal injuries.
8. Pilates does all these things...and more!
9. This unique body conditioning form contains some of the most challenging exercises designed to strengthen the whole body at once.
10. These exercises are not only incredibly effective for slimming and toning just where it counts (the waistline, upper arms, and upper thighs),
11. but they also demand the highest level of concentration and control.
12. Every Pilates exercise begins by engaging the core center, while simultaneously activating a combination of muscle groups, resulting in better overall tone and strength.
13. I've created this dynamic sequence of exercises to give you a total body Pilates workout.
14. This routine is great to supplement another activity, such as running or cycling, or it can easily be used alone to firm your physique and sharpen your focusing skills.
15. [pro] Concentrate on performing the exercises so that they are smooth, flowing, and continuous.
16. [pro] Make sure to breathe deeply throughout, and always focus on pulling your abdominals in and up, in order to center your body and protect your lower back.
17. [pro] Do this exercise series once, or repeat the series a second time for extra challenge.
18. [pro] Have fun!

APPENDIX F

*MUSCLE & FITNESS HERS*, NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2005:  
GREAT LEGS BY SUMMER



1. Great Legs by Summer
2. [Cover tag: Proven results: 5 Moves to Great Legs]
3. Summer Montabone, that is.
4. This fitness pro can help you achieve the shapely legs you desire with one intense workout per week.
5. If it's strong, lean legs you yearn for, then you can have them – with just one hard leg workout per week, says fitness competitor Summer Montabone.
6. “The types of muscle fibers you have in your legs require more rest than some other muscle groups, so training the legs once a week is sufficient,” says the Ohio-based certified strength and conditioning specialist.
7. But to really sculpt and tone, Summer recommends doing some lighter leg-shaping exercises in the same week.
8. “I do my hard routine on Tuesday, then on Friday or Saturday I'll do some non-weighted leg work like lunges and squats between upper-body exercises, or plyometrics using my own bodyweight such as jump-squats, where you squat down and explode up into a jump, then land in a squat.”
9. The program she outlines here is one example of the intense leg workout you need each week.
10. As for Summer, she shakes up her routine every time she works a muscle group.
11. For instance, she may mix up her exercises in various combinations, perform more or fewer repetitions or do alternate moves altogether.
12. To wake up your own leg program – or if your gym doesn't have all the machines you need – [pro] use different tools.
13. “My gym didn't have an adductor machine, so I substituted resistance bands for that,” Summer says.
14. Unlike machines or dumbbells, these handy bands give you constant resistance during both the eccentric and concentric phases of a move.
15. “When my clients use a band, they're always surprised at how much harder it is than it seems,” Summer says.
16. “It's a different kind of resistance:
17. With a dumbbell, you can let gravity take over during parts of the move, but with a band you're doing all the work.”
18. This professional fitness competitor uses them in all of her stretching exercises, too.
19. “I've always struggled with flexibility,” she notes.
20. “I stretch twice daily with bands
21. and they've helped me so much with my flexibility;
22. I can use the whole length of the muscle I'm working.
23. I've been getting better results and better lines.”
24. Summer's mantra is: “If you train the same, you stay the same.
25. Variety is the key to keeping the body guessing”.
26. One way she achieves this variety is to incorporate bands in her strength work as alternatives to dumbbells or machines and even in cardio.

27. She might use them for squats or put them under a bench for sit-ups – anything to make her program different each time.
28. And if you travel a great deal, they're small and fold up so you can take your workout with you.
29. Bottom line, says Summer: "The bands are a great supplement to a training program, whatever (or wherever) your goals are."

APPENDIX G

*OXYGEN*, MARCH 2006:  
BLAST STUBBORN BACK FLAB

1. Blast stubborn back flab
2. [Cover tag: Melt back flab in 4 moves. Ms. Bikini Universe shows you the ropes]
3. Ms. Bikini Universe Melissa Hall lets you in on her top-secret tips to melt away love handles and sculpt a gown worthy back in four easy steps.
4. The thought of wearing a bathing suit (let alone a bikini) in front of thousands of spectators would make most women shudder.
5. But for those who have trained and dieted, it's an opportunity to showcase all their hard work.
6. For veteran competitor Melissa Hall, the 2005 Ms. Bikini Universe Pageant, held in Miami Beach, was her time to shine.
7. With her slender, fit physique, vivacious personality and dazzling smile, it's no wonder that Melissa placed first in the tall class and also won the overall title of Ms. Bikini Universe.
8. What may be surprising, however, is how she prepared for the show.
9. "I can easily add muscle," explains the Minneapolis native, "so for this competition, I did only two days of weight training each week, along with extra cardio sessions."
10. With years of weight training neatly tucked under her 23-inch belt, Melissa focused on shaping and toning her muscles rather than adding size and mass.
11. One thing that remained constant was her competition diet.
12. Melissa usually eats five or six small meals a day consisting of protein, unprocessed carbohydrates, a moderate amount of healthy fat and plenty of green vegetables.
13. "As my diet progresses, I slowly begin to limit things like peanut butter, sugar, alcohol and diet colas to get better results."
14. But even as competition approaches, Melissa still practices moderation.
15. "I do cheat on select foods like peanut butter and the occasional Nitro-Tech protein bar," she admits.
16. "But if you vary your protein choices and add seasonings to your food, you'll be less likely to cheat."
17. So what's the extra edge that helped her win the Ms. Bikini Universe title?
18. "I enjoyed every moment while on stage," she recalls.
19. "When you start to worry about winning, it can take a way from your ability to shine."
20. And shine she did.
21. This former cheerleader and dancer loves to perform and cuts no corners when it comes to contest preparation.
22. "When I first started out, I hired YoungQuest Fitness to learn how to do things the right way," she explains.
23. "Hiring a personal trainer is an investment in your health.
24. Looking and feeling good is priceless!"
25. One of Melissa's standout features is her strong and shapely back.

26. "I love how a nice, fit back looks in a low-cut dress," she says.
27. "It's also important to train your back to prevent injuries.
28. Many people encounter back problems as they age, but weight training can be a preventative measure if you do it properly."
29. Here, Melissa demonstrates how to sculpt your back in four easy steps.
30. The bent-over exercises work the lower back more extensively, so Melissa recommends starting with these first while the lower back is strong and fresh.
31. If you're new to working out, you can train your back twice a week on nonconsecutive days.
32. Melissa suggests doing deadlifts and pull-ups on day one and good mornings and bent-over rows on day two.
33. Start with two sets of 12 to 15 reps.
34. Another option is to superset, or alternate between two exercises with little or no rest.

APPENDIX H

*FITNESS RX*, DECEMBER 2005:  
THE JESSICA SIMPSON HOT BOD WORKOUT

3. The Jessica Simpson Hot Bod Workout
4. [Cover tag: Exclusive! Jessica Simpson Hot Body Workout. Get in the Best Shape of Your Life!]
5. Not many women, let alone many Hollywood actresses, can look as good in short shorts as Jessica Simpson.
6. Her physique wowed fans and critiques alike in her movie debut as Daisy Duke in “The Dukes of Hazard,” causing some green-eyed gossips to suggest she padded her shorts.
7. According to her personal trainer, Mike Alexander, her body was definitely the real thing and she earned every curve.
8. Although Alexander wanted her to look ‘natural’ for the role (i.e. not like she’d been working out), it required three grueling months of hitting the gym six days a week for about an hour and a half per session to get those great legs and rounded booty.
9. In fact, once Jessica saw the results of her hard work, she asked wardrobe to make those short shorts even shorter.
  
10. Down Home Connections
11. And that’s exactly why Jessica hired Mike in the first place.
12. “For someone in such a high profile position, to hand over their trust in you to prepare them for a movie role is exciting, but it puts a lot of pressure on you too,” says Mike.
13. “We talked about how she envisioned Daisy Duke, what she wanted to look like and what her concerns were. We tailored the workout around that.”
14. Born and raised in Dallas, Texas, this 27-year-old certified fitness trainer, who currently works out of Los Angeles’ hottest gym, Sports Club L.A., has known Jessica since they were in junior high school together.
15. Her father, who was Mike’s youth minister, is the one who convinced Alexander two years ago to move to Los Angeles after the Simpson family had already relocated there, even offering him a place to stay until he got settled.
16. “No question about it.
17. Jessica and her family have been a huge blessing to my career and my life.”
18. Evidently, Jessica feels the same way about him, because he’s already in the budget as her trainer for an upcoming movie, which can’t be talked about just yet.
19. (Remember, you heard it here first).
20. But for this role, she’s going to have to be more ripped, even buffed.
21. “She made tremendous strides for the last movie,” Mike exclaims, “so it will be fun to see what we can do for this one.
22. I would love to prove we can do all sorts of things with her physique.”
  
23. Going for the Goals

24. Alexander is on a mission to debunk several of the myths people hold as truth regarding getting in shape.
25. The first one is that you're stuck with only one possible body shape.
26. "Don't get me wrong, genetics plays a part.
27. But I think a lot of people believe that if they work out, there's only one potential body you can have.
28. Whatever your goal, be it lean or muscular or full-bodied, you can have it with the right workout."
29. The second one is about dieting.
30. According to Mike, eating right is not really all that complicated, since most people really know what's good for them.
31. "I just tell Jessica, 'If you think something's not good for you, don't eat it.'"
32. He did offer Jessica basic guidelines of eating mostly grilled chicken, fish and green vegetables, which he says is just common sense.
33. Mike doesn't believe in measuring quantities, counting calories or even weighing yourself, however, because it just makes you obsessive and ultimately, overwhelmed and discouraged.
34. "If you're eating the right things, it's really hard to over-eat them."
35. In fact, he dubbed his diet plan for Jessica the "Don't Eat Crap" diet.
36. Sounds pretty self-explanatory, doesn't it?
37. Jessica's success in achieving a "Hollywood Hot Bod" was due in part to her willingness to do everything asked of her.
38. She paid close attention to her trainer's instructions and, according to Mike, her form was impeccable.
39. But above all else, consistency was the key in getting in such great shape.
40. "Our goal was to work out six days a week.
41. You know, if you meet that goal, the other goals take care of themselves."
  
42. Daisy Duke Workout:
43. (Note: Mike wants to make clear this is just a sample of one session, which might be used for one week.
44. The routine varied from week to week.
45. Most weeks were high-rep routines (20 to 24), but some weeks utilized lower reps (eight to 10).
46. This was specifically designated for Jessica and her goals for "The Dukes of Hazzard."
47. If Mike were training you, the regimen would be tailored to your needs and goals.)



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## BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Tracy Rundstrom Williams graduated magna cum laude from Texas Christian University in Fort Worth Texas in 1996, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in French and Phi Beta Kappa honors. Tracy studied abroad several times, including her junior year of high school in Belgium as a Rotary exchange student and a semester at Kansai Gaidai University as TCU's first exchange student to Japan. She also received a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship to study at the University of Nice, France, from 1996 – 1997. In 2002, she completed her Master of Arts degree in Communication Studies from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. She then accepted a position as the Study Abroad Coordinator in the Center for International Studies at TCU, and was later promoted to Associate Director.

During her tenure at The University of Texas at Arlington, Tracy received numerous awards, including the UTA University Scholar Award, the UTA Dean of Liberal Arts Graduate Oral Presentation Award, the Yumi Nakamura Memorial Prize in Linguistics for Outstanding Paper at UTASCIL, the Department of Linguistics and TESOL Award for Outstanding Performance on the Diagnostic Exam, and Who's Who Among American Graduate Students. She has presented and published several linguistic papers, and has been active in the professional association NAFSA: Association of International Educators. Upon completion of her doctorate, she plans to continue her career in higher education and to pursue research and teaching interests.