

POST-FEMINISM AND SPECIALIZED MEDIA: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF COSMOPOLITAN HEADLINES

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Abstract

The perspectives on contemporary forms of feminism are often diffuse and lead to various controversies. In the present paper I will approach the differences between the third wave of feminism and post-feminism (and their relation with other 'post' concepts like postmodernism and post-structuralism), also taking into account the first and second wave. The main focus of the article is to identify the trends that postfeminist media promotes as the new values of today's women. In doing so I chose to analyze the contingency of the terms found on the covers of Cosmopolitan magazine, the best-selling women's magazine in the world. The selected units were the issues dating from January 2008 until March 2013 and I have deepened the analysis of two main elements promoted by post-feminism (also found in a significant amount in the magazine according to the data obtained): the beauty and fashion complex and the independent woman. Both come from the postmodern tendency regarding individualization as a primary objective for the individual. This construction of the self is made through economic freedom and this also correlates with the choice to shape one's self through looks and body. On the basis of the two elements mentioned above, the study will try to see in what amount the two hypotheses confirm: 1. the magazine over-promotes beauty and 2. Cosmopolitan magazine also promotes the independent woman (the career woman) and thereby puts on a second place the traditional roles of women (of mothers and wives). Also, two other elements tend to intersect with beauty and independence: pop culture and sex life.

Keywords: post-feminism, backlash, the beauty complex, the independent woman.