

# From “the man you love” to “girl boss!”: a critical discourse analysis of feminist ideologies and UK magazine coverlines

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## Abstract

The feminist movement has long been demarcated into “waves” to denote focused periods of activism, each wave foregrounding different ideologies and foci. There is currently regular debate and disagreement between different generations of Western feminists over the movement and what constitutes authentic feminism. In this paper, I posit that exposure to contrasting mainstream feminist ideologies in the mass media, specifically on magazine coverlines, may provide some explanation for this conflict. Magazines were an influential pop-culture medium during the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, and many studies have investigated their relationship with feminism. However, coverlines - the short words or phrases used as a sales tool on their front covers - have not been explored as a unique linguistic tool in relation to communicating contemporary feminist ideologies. I analyse a corpus of UK young women’s lifestyle coverlines from 1977, 1997 and 2017 to align with the second, third and fourth waves of feminism. Using the central ideologies from each wave, I use qualitative critical discourse analysis to explore the ways in which coverlines may or may not have embedded ideologies, looking at linguistic tools, language use and what this demonstrates about the socio-cultural feminist context of that time. I demonstrate that there is an increasing correlation between the feminist waves and coverlines as time progresses: from minimal overlap in the second wave to overall alignment in the fourth, representing diachronic sociolinguistic change. Concluding, I emphasise the need for unity and understanding between generations as the fourth wave faces a backlash and feminism awaits its next iteration.

**Keywords** feminism, women’s magazines, critical discourse analysis, lifestyle magazines, media representation, ideology, media linguistics

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*I declare that the work presented for assessment in this dissertation is my own, that it has not previously been presented for another assessment, and that my debts (for words, data, arguments and ideas) have been appropriately acknowledged. I further declare that the work conforms to the guidelines for presentation and style set out in the relevant documentation.*

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## INTRODUCTION

For more than a century, the feminist movement has worked to rectify gender imbalances and achieve female equality in all areas of society (Mills & Mullany, 2011; Christie, 2000).

However, recent years have witnessed numerous debates between feminists of different generations over what defines feminism, stoking divisions within the movement (Donegan, 2018; Grady, 2018; Edwards, 2018).

Feminism's foci and preoccupying debates have changed over time, giving rise to the assignation of "waves" to broadly demarcate these shifts (Hewitt, 2012; Howard, 2023). Overall, collectivism and consciousness-raising dominated in second-wave 1960s-1970s feminism, third wave (or postfeminism) on individualism and the current fourth wave is focused on personal identity and authenticity (Thornham, 2004; Lazar, 2009; Phillips & Cree, 2014). Although compartmentalising feminism into waves has sometimes been considered a crude tool for a complex movement, they do provide a mechanism to analyse the relationship between gender and language, and how changing concepts emerge through discourse (Grady, 2018; Hogeland, 2001; Mills & Mullany, 2011; Lazar, 2009).

The mass media plays a key role in shaping and reflecting cultural ideologies through public discourse (Conboy & Eldridge, 2017; Cotter, 2010, 2014). Before the digital revolution changed the media landscape, print magazines were a culturally dominant medium: selling 1.6 billion copies in the UK in 2000 (Majid, 2022). Subsequently, women's magazines were instrumental in communicating what constituted aspirational female identities of their time, which often straddled a duality of both feminist and traditional messages (Ballaster, Beetham, Frazer & Hebron, 1991).

The relationship between women's magazines and feminist discourse has been widely studied (Winship, 1987; Forster, 2015; Mendes & Carter, 2008, Keller, 2010). However, one important linguistic element of magazines has often been overlooked from focused analysis: coverlines.

Coverlines are the short phrases and sentences on magazine covers and serve a unique purpose; to attract readers and convince them to buy the magazine. Magazine journalists create coverlines separately to the article-writing process, engaging a different set of linguistic tools. Coverlines offer a distillation of a magazines' projected identity in a mediated discourse with their intended reader (Scollon, 2001). As written discourse creates an ideological framework encoding sociocultural norms and stances, in magazines this would be within the coverlines as well as articles (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010). Furthermore, coverlines will reach many more readers than their magazine circulation suggests; as potential readers scan the newsstands looking for a new purchase, they will read and absorb numerous front covers, not just the one(s) they end up buying. In this way, coverlines are perhaps the most widely-read textual element to any magazine and have a powerful role to play (Colson-Smith, 2005). If different generations of women were exposed to contrasting feminist ideologies via coverlines, it may provide a partial rationale for explaining some of the division evident today.

In this qualitative study, I will explore the relationship between UK magazine coverlines and feminist ideologies, using a corpus of young women's magazines published during the second, third and fourth waves. Using critical discourse analysis, I will examine these linguistically in relation to the prevalent feminist ideologies of the relevant wave.

My research questions are:

- Do lifestyle-focused coverlines align ideologically with the different waves of feminism?
- If so, what linguistic tools and/or features do they use to convey these ideologies?
- What do these findings suggest about perceptions of feminist identity across different generations?

In the Literature Review, I will look at previous scholarly works that examine the feminist waves and their ideologies. I will then look at the role magazines play in society, how they communicate with readers and the relationship between women's magazines and feminism in the UK. I will also explore the editorial process and purpose of coverlines and introduce senior editors who contribute original insight to this study. In the Methodology, I will set out the linguistic analysis framework, and outline criteria for the magazines, years and type of coverlines under study. In the Analysis, I will examine each magazine's lifestyle coverlines chronologically, looking at thematic range, linguistic tools used and tone conveyed. In the Discussion I will take a macro perspective on the Analysis; looking at what it suggests about the socio-cultural messages conveyed to young women and how this may impact perceptions of feminist identity across the generations. The Conclusion will summarise my findings and consider the future.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Collectivism and change: emergence of the second wave*

The impact of Betty Friedan's seminal 1963 work *The Feminine Mystique* sowed the seeds for a new feminist era: the second wave. Positing that sexist oppression in Western societies prevented women's freedom, radical student activism in the 1960s further fuelled the movement (Nava, 2020; Bulbeck, 2010). "Second wave feminism" was coined in an article about the National Organisation for Women in the US (Lear, 1968). It provided a catchy label for the burgeoning UK women's movement, as well as the lexical scaffolding for all further periods of feminist engagement.

"The personal is political" became a second wave slogan: highlighting to millions of women that social and structural inequality lay behind their individual dissatisfaction (Nava, 1992; Mitchell, 1971). Opening women's eyes to this collective subjugation was encapsulated by the term *consciousness-raising* (Mitchell, 1971; Wortis & Rabinowitz, 1971). Second wave feminists argued that sexual difference is fundamental to female oppression, that the patriarchal system divides society along sex lines, leading to "inferiorization" of women by men (Mitchell, 1971, 63; Krolokke & Sorenson, 2006).

In the UK, the second wave was characterised by collective activism: strikes, protests and conferences saw women urged to effect radical change in their lives (Wortis & Rabinowitz, 1971; Rowbotham, 1972; Nava, 1972). During the 1970s, the first women's refuges and publishing house opened, and the passing of the Sex Discrimination Act and Employment Protection Act enshrined women's workplace rights.

However, the second wave splintered into opposing political factions with many feminists frustrated at the lack of fundamental change (Nye, no date). As a new generation came of age in the 1980s, this ideological split found feminism at a crossroads.

### ***Rejection and reframing: the third wave and postfeminism***

Contradictions shroud the subsequent era, even to whether it should be defined by the term “third wave”, “postfeminism”, “grrl feminism” or “neoliberal feminism” (Banet-Weiser, Gill & Rottenberg, 2020). Its roots also spark debate: was it a generational divide, a backlash, a historical shift, or a confluence of all three? (Gill, 2007; Hogeland, 2001). Nonetheless, with the first generation of women born into feminism’s victories, there was a motivation to define themselves by disavowing second wave feminism (McRobbie, 1994, 2004; Baumgardner & Richards, 2000; Cochrane, 2013). Second wavers were criticised for being out-of-date and overly preoccupied with white, middle-class women (McRobbie, 1994; Hogeland, 2001; Mills & Mullany, 2011).

Although writer Rebecca Walker coined “third wave feminism” in 1992, the term that caught the popular imagination was *postfeminism*, first cited by Toril Moi in 1985 - and the term I will use in this study to refer to this era. Postfeminism came to represent a counter-discourse that saw young women both embrace and reject elements of feminism and power femininity (Lazar, 2009; McRobbie, 1994, Gill, 2007). Postfeminists ditched the political focus and realigned the boundaries to embrace a more hedonistic, me-first outlook prioritising individual agency (Harris, 2004; Gill, 2007; Lazar, 2009; Keller, 2010). Focus on self-

definition and personal experience created an identity shift from “we-feminism” to “I-feminism” (Budgeon, 2011; Munford, 2007; Lazar, 2009; Cameron, 2005).

The term “feminism” became unfashionable: many felt the battles had been won, hence “post” feminism (Walter, 1998; Moi, 2006; Cochrane, 2013; McRobbie, 2008). Within postfeminist identity, however, lay a restrictive dichotomy. At its core patriarchal, it reframed highly-sexualised femininity as liberation (Greer, 1999; Zaslow, 2009). It was criticised for creating *raunch culture* - porn culture under a banner of female empowerment - and thus preventing meaningful gender equality (Levy, 2005; Walter, 2011).

Although this era introduced inclusivity and intersectionality - which would become crucial during the fourth wave - it was further criticised for lacking clarity and unity (Donegan, 2018; Bulbeck, 2010). These ambiguities contributed to a lassitude around the movement; a feminism-fatigue. But this would change by the end of the 2000s. The global financial crisis deepened gender inequality, a new generation emerged, and rapid technological developments ushered in a new era of feminist activism (UN Aids, 2012; Sunderland, 2009).

### ***Feminism reclaimed: the fourth wave***

Feminism’s transformation from mocked cliché, to dismissed historicism, to mainstream cultural discourse would not have seemed feasible twenty years ago - but it happened (Nava, 2020; Favaro & Gill, 2018). A new era was first suggested when scholar Martha Rampton wrote “a fourth wave is in the air” (Rampton, 2008). A subsequent confluence of events: numerous marches and protests, plus successful feminist books such as Caitlin Moran’s *How To Be A Woman*, Sheryl Sandberg’s *Lean In* and Chimimanda Ngozi Adiche’s TED talk *We*

*Should All Be Feminists* indicated a renewed appetite for feminism as the 2010s began (Mills & Mullany, 2011, Cochrane, 2013; Forster, 2015).

The fourth wave was distinguished by the medium that powered the message: the internet. It opened new, globally accessible spaces for feminists to gather and enabled faster diffusion of ideas than ever before (Forster, 2015; Favaro, 2022). Feminist groups could also create their own discourse on social media without relying on the traditional media gatekeepers (Favaro, 2022; Cochrane, 2013). UK grassroots campaigns like *Sisters Uncut*, *Everyday Sexism* and *No More Page 3* amplified intersectional voices and effected real change, as did the #MeToo movement, which saw thousands of women share their stories of sexual harassment online (Glozer & McCarthy, 2021; Donegan, 2018). Foregrounding individual experience, it led to many powerful predators facing justice and triggered *call-out culture*, emboldening women to name and shame sexism (Donegan, 2018; Grady, 2018). Feminism had been reclaimed, rebranded and performed an elusive magic trick: it had become *cool* (Favaro & Gill, 2018).

The fourth wave has been accused of forsaking tackling structural inequality in favour of a neoliberalist hyper-individualist “flexible” feminism, where the political only matters if it’s personal (Day & Wray, 2018; Mudge, 2012; Fanshawe, 2023). Subsequent debates between feminists of all ages around issues such as gender identity, opposing responses to #MeToo and what feminism’s purpose should be have fomented divisions along ideological, as well as generational lines (Donegan, 2018; Day & Wray, 2018; Edwards, 2018).

### ***Magazines: their role and influence in society***

Though their influence in these digital-first days is much attenuated, magazines remain a key constituent of the mass media’s goal to inform, entertain and reflect the world around it

(Leitner, 2017; Forster, 2020). Published at weekly or monthly intervals and driven by the twin commercial interests of sales and advertising, it's essential to magazines' survival that they reflect the prevailing cultural climate and social standards (McCracken, 1993; Conboy and Eldridge, 2017; Day, Gough & McFadden, 2007).

They achieve this through magazine discourse - the language used to communicate with the target reader. Magazine discourse reaches large audiences, and through this process of *mediatization*, has considerable influence on the societies and cultures it operates within (Androutsopoulos, 2014; Lundby, 2009). To achieve this, magazine journalists must construct a relationship with their target reader, indexing associations with them through the text and build a recognisable world (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Gee, 1999). Women's magazines forge connection through adopting a conversational linguistic tone and thus create a *mediated intimacy* with their readers (Winship, 1987; Gill, 2009). This relational voice has been dubbed a "synthetic sisterhood" or an "intimate sorority" (Talbot, 1995; Moody, 2006).

This relationship is dynamic; magazines change their stance and adapt their language to ensure they are the first to identify new trends and represent social shifts (Cotter, 2014; Forster, 2020). In this way, magazines are part of the process of sociolinguistic change (Coupland, 2009; Androutsopoulos, 2014).

Considered the "shop window" of the magazine and a form of advertising, coverlines aim to connect with potential readers and give them a reason to buy the magazine (McCracken, 1993). They offer a useful insight into a magazine's positioning: who it's talking to, what stance it's taking, what promises it's offering (Winship, 1987).

As sociolinguistics increasingly recognises the fluid relationship between community and media language, magazine coverlines - published in a specific time and cultural space -

therefore present a valuable site for exploring contemporary ideologies (Androutsopoulos, 2014; Machin & Thornborrow, 2003).

### ***The media and feminism in the second wave***

Second wave feminists perceived mainstream women's magazines as reinforcing gender inequalities through promoting stereotypical notions of femininity, and were considered distinct from the movement (Friedan, 1963; Ballaster *et al*, 1991) Subsequently, feminists who enjoyed such magazines saw it as a conflicted, guilty pleasure (Winship, 1987, McRobbie, 1997). The mainstream media of newspapers and television programmes routinely dismissed feminists as “bra-burners”, “man-haters” and objects of comic derision (Nava, 1983, 2020; Gordon & Pollit, 1999).

At the same time, numerous feminist magazines emerged, most notably, *Spare Rib*, in 1972. Published by a collective, it remains the best-known periodical of the British Women's Liberation Movement (Forster, 2015; Delap & Strimpel, 2020). However, with a circulation of 12,000 - when the likes of *Cosmopolitan* were selling 440,000 - it could not be considered a mainstream publication (Winship, 1987; Delap & Strimpel, 2020).

### ***Postfeminism and the media***

From the 1980s, British magazines addressed female sexualities in a franker way. Passive romance stories disappeared in young women's titles and were replaced by a postfeminist-friendly confident consumerism, in which “shagging, snogging and having a good time” were aspirational rights (McRobbie, 1994, 1997; Moody, 2006). Problems were presented as personally solvable: a neoliberalist stance that pressed upon women the need for constant,

intensive self-maintenance (Gill, 2007, 2009). A sexualised ideal pervaded, with young women's willingness to engage with a hypersexualised aesthetic tightly bound to this independent individualist narrative (Dobson, 2014; Walter, 2011; Gill, 2007).

Beyond magazines, the mid-90s to mid-2000s UK media was consumed by the behaviour of *ladettes*. This media-created discourse presented young women as a hybrid of male stereotypes: ladettes drank, smoked, swore and partied, they were cheeky, loud and sexually voracious (Jackson, 2006; Dobson, 2014). Overlapping with the "Girl Power" attitude made popular by the Spice Girls, these postfeminist media representations blended pop-cultural feminine symbols such as makeup and fashion with a fun-loving, can-do attitude (Keller, 2011; Baumgardner & Richards, 2000). UK media outlets often depicted the ladette negatively; the term deployed as a "folk devil" to communicate anxieties about this disruption to young women's behavioural norms and their increasing economic power (Jackson & Tinkler, 2007, 269; Jackson, 2006).

Media depictions of feminism promoted negative perceptions. The *Viz* cartoon Millie Tant presented feminists as humourless and angry, leading to notions of feminism as a "crazy idea spearheaded by hairy hippie women" (Finding, 2008; Zaslow, 2009, 127). Feminism had become so unfashionable, former *Cosmopolitan* editor Marcelle D'Argy Smith called it "one of the most unpopular [words] in the language" and even feminist writers questioned whether the movement was over (Walter, 1998).

### *The media embrace the fourth wave*

Things changed when feminism entered the fourth wave; as young women actively engaged with the movement, women's magazines reflected this shift in the cultural climate (Favaro & Gill, 2018; Favaro, 2022). *Stylist* launched in 2009 with a determinedly feminist stance, and in 2014 *Elle UK* featured scores of high-profile men wearing T-shirts declaring "This is what a feminist looks like" (Cartner-Morley, 2017). Content moved away from porn-influenced raunch culture towards self-acceptance and body-positivity (Walter, 2011; Favaro, 2022).

This shift, however, was underpinned by an existential crisis in magazines. The digital revolution - high-speed internet, smartphones and social media - created a paradigm shift that saw their cultural dominance wane. Between 2000 and 2021, UK magazine circulations plummeted by two-thirds (Majid, 2022). With younger generations living online, print struggled to define itself and numerous young women's titles including *More!*, *Marie Claire*, *InStyle*, *19*, *Glamour*, *New Woman* and *Company* closed down or went digital-only (Heller, 2021; Sweney, 2019).

Surviving titles like *Cosmopolitan* revamped as multi-platform brands, offering readers social, digital and printed content (Tobitt, 2023). The landscape has shifted significantly: with social media enabling a "super-heteroglossia of voices", the public now create their own discourse and have reconfigured the previous top-down, magazine-to-reader dynamic (Kelly-Holmes and Milani 2011: 16; Conboy & Eldridge, 201). To endure, magazines must now vigilantly negotiate their relational practice with the reader and incorporate their voice (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Favaro, 2022).

### *The coverline research gap*

Linguistic studies on women's magazines and feminism tend to analyse the magazine holistically and multimodally, evaluating articles, layout and imagery. (Favaro, 2022; McCracken, 1993; McRobbie, 1991; Tincknell, Chambers, van Loon & Hudson, 2003; Winship, 1987; *etc*). Others have evaluated topic-specific content such as health, or sex and relationships (Hinnant, 2009; Gill, 2009). Coverlines have been examined in a small number of US studies but from an etic perspective, calling them "magazine headlines" or "cover blurbs" (Davalos, Davalos & Layton, 2007; Colson-Smith, 2005). UK coverlines are unexplored from a specifically feminist linguistic perspective.

It is here that I should be transparent about my researcher positionality. I am a former journalist who spent many years as a writer and editor on UK women's consumer magazines. Between 2004 – 2017, I wrote and edited for many publications, from teen magazines *Sugar* and *Mizz*, to celebrity publications *Reveal* and *Now*, to women's title *Good Housekeeping*. I have freelanced for some of the magazines in this study, including *Glamour*, *Stylist*, *19* and *Cosmopolitan*. I have an emic understanding of the entire editorial process and so understand how carefully coverlines are crafted. This ethnographic stance will inform my analysis.

For further insight and information, considering the lack of academic research on coverlines, I will also draw on original interviews conducted with other senior women's magazine journalists. Their credentials are below, as well as our interview dates which correlate with all subsequent attributed quotes:

**Andreina Cordani** held many senior editorial roles on women's magazines, including Features Director of *Cosmopolitan* from 2003-2008. She is now a freelance journalist and author. An interview took place on June 27, 2023.

**Susan Riley** started her career on *Sugar* and *More!* before launching *Stylist* magazine as Deputy Editor in 2009. After becoming Editor, then Commercial Editorial Director, she is now Head of Brand. An interview took place on July 18, 2023.

**June Walton** worked as a local journalist in the 1970s, before freelancing for national UK tabloids and women's magazines in the 1980s. During the 1990s and 2000s she held senior editorial roles at *Today*, *Woman*, *Prima* and *Good Housekeeping* before retiring. An interview took place on July 17, 2023.

### ***Coverlines: the editorial process and purpose***

Coverline ideation varies across titles; at *Cosmopolitan*, Andreina Cordani's editor asked for emailed suggestions from the staff to work on herself, whereas Susan Riley's *Stylist* team collectively create them as part of the cover concept meeting. June Walton recalls sitting with the *Good Housekeeping* editor and other senior staff for hours to create an issue's coverlines. Often, coverlines were suggested at the point of commissioning the article. In all cases, editors and writers strive to create coverlines that tonally hit the right note, aimed at the target reader and their stage in life. (Milani, 2017; Ballaster *et al*, 1991).

Coverlines generate multiple challenges. Space is extremely tight, so every word must earn its place, confirms Susan Riley. Adds June Walton, "it's hard to distill a complex story,

getting that mix of words that will entice the reader.” Another challenge is pitching the tone right, not too predictable, but “not so obscure that the reader thinks, ‘what the hell are you on about?’” explains Andreina Cordani. Coverlines must reflect their reader’s lifestyle, achieving a creative alchemy that “once you’ve got it, you know it,” according to June Walton. Every magazine placed their readers’ desires and interests at the heart of the coverline process, confirms Susan Riley.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Linguistic analysis framework*

I will use a qualitative critical discourse analysis (CDA) in this study. Magazine coverlines serve as a mediated discourse with their intended reader and CDA permits analysis of the relationship between language and social context, emphasising the constitutive relationship between the two (Howard, 2023; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). CDA is also more like a *perspective* than methodology and so allows a variety of analytical techniques (Ehrlich & Romaniuk, 2013).

Central concepts of CDA are big ‘D’ discourse and little ‘d’ discourse: different ways of analysing language from a sociocultural perspective (Gee, 1999). Big ‘D’ taps into wider, underlying ideologies, and little ‘d’ at specific language in use. Using both approaches will enable a well-rounded analysis that considers both language and context.

To mitigate bias, I will use a “bottom-up” analytical approach, letting the data reveal any linguistic patterns, rather than applying pre-prescriptive criteria (Dubossarsky, Tsvetkov, Dyer & Grossman, 2015). Although cover imagery and layout are important constitutive elements, for reasons of space and scope I will not do a multimodal analysis.

### *Data criteria: years and magazines*

The years under study are 1977, 1997 and 2017, chosen as they align temporally with the second, postfeminist, and fourth waves when they were well underway. 2017 also represents the last year when many young women’s magazines published print editions before succumbing to the “ongoing struggle” of the digital revolution (Sweney, 2019).

I am focusing on young women's magazines, as *emerging adulthood* has been identified as a critical period of change characterised by major life transitions (Arnett, 2000). Young women of 18 - 30 are considered a modernity bellwether, leading popular culture where new attitudes and ideologies coalesce (McRobbie, 1994; Harris 2004). For these reasons, young women's magazines would best reflect the most contemporary ideologies of their time.

My selection criteria for the magazines were threefold. They must be:

- aimed at a female audience of somewhere between 18 - 30,
- general lifestyle-focused, rather than on a specific interest (such as fashion),
- mass-market publications with circulations above 100,000 at the point of study.

Applying these criteria, the selected magazines are:

- 1977: *Cosmopolitan*, *Honey*, *19*
- 1997: *Cosmopolitan*, *Company*, *Marie Claire*
- 2017: *Cosmopolitan*, *Stylist*, *Glamour*

Due to publishing's fluctuating trends, only *Cosmopolitan* is published across all time points. This will act as a useful control corpus, as I can monitor if and how their coverline identity shifts over time.

I will examine coverlines on the same three months for all magazines. I selected February, June and September issues to ensure seasonal spread. I was unable to find *Company's* February 1997 issue, so used January 1997 as an alternative. For *Stylist* magazine, I looked at all weekly editions published during the relevant calendar month.

Covers were obtained from the British Library archives, Google searches and industry contacts. I have already established my researcher position. There are no ethical

considerations, as I do not have any participant data and the magazines were published in the public domain. Relevant magazine details are outlined below.

## **1977**

### *Honey* (1960 - 1986; Fleetway/IPC)

With the strapline “for the teens and twenties”, *Honey*’s circulation peaked at 250,000 in the mid-1960s, but by 1978 was selling 195,000 (Magforum.com, 2023). It merged with *I9* in 1986.

### *Cosmopolitan* (1972- present; National Magazine Company (NatMags)/Hearst UK)

*Cosmopolitan* (hereon referred to by its common moniker *Cosmo*) was an instant success (Magforum.com, 2023). Aimed at 16–25-year-olds, it embraced sexually-liberated content (Winship, 1987). In 1978 its circulation was 440,000.

### *I9* (1968 - 2004; IPC)

Aimed at a late-teenage female audience, this title reached a sales peak of 177,000 in 1978. It was an early casualty of the turbulence in women’s print media as consumers migrated online. By the time of closure, its circulation was 81,800 (Gibson, 2004).

## **1997**

### *Marie Claire* (1988 - 2019 IPC/TI Media)

*Marie Claire* positioned itself as the “thinking” young women’s periodical, incorporating in-depth features. Its circulation peaked in the mid-1990s at more than 450,000 but closed its print edition in 2019 when this dropped to 120,000 (Sweeney, 2019).

*Cosmopolitan* (details as above)

*Cosmo* continued its dominance of the market during the 1990s, finishing the decade as ‘seemingly unassailable’ (Campaignlive.co.uk, 2005).

*Company* (1978 - 2014; NatMags/Hearst UK)

Aimed at women in their twenties, this magazine for the “post-liberated girl” peaked above 300,000 during the 1990s but closed in 2014 at 88,059 (Deans, 2014).

**2017**

*Stylist* (2009 - present; Shortlist Media/Stylist Media Group)

*Stylist* aimed at an upmarket 20+ female readership but was not sold on newsstands. Instead, it was freely distributed weekly in metropolitan areas with a circulation of 400,000 (Ponsford, 2017). Following the COVID-19 pandemic, it shifted to a monthly subscription-based model.

*Cosmopolitan* (details as above)

*Cosmo*’s dominance was firstly impacted by *Glamour*’s launch, and then by the digital revolution. In 2017 its circulation was over 400,000 (Ponsford, 2017).

*Glamour* (2001 - 2017 (monthly print); Condé Nast)

After launch, *Glamour* overtook *Cosmo* as the biggest-selling young women’s glossy (Marshall, 2003). Its circulation peaked at nearly 600,000 in 2004, but by 2017 this was this was 275,536 (Ponsford, 2017). It reduced to a twice-yearly print edition in October 2017.

### ***Data criteria: coverlines***

In order to keep the analysis on coverline ideology, I excluded those that were not *lifestyle-* focused. I therefore eliminated from study coverlines on:

- Fashion and/or beauty
- Free gifts, offers or competitions
- Food and/or recipes
- Literature

The full list of coverlines including those excluded can be seen in **Appendix A**.

Of the remaining lifestyle coverlines, I categorised them into themes to structure the analysis.

These are:

- *Relationships*: marriage, single life, men
- *Sex*
- *Better You*: self-improvement, personality, health
- *Careers*
- *Reports & Investigations (R&I)*: in-depth features
- *Profiles*: celebrity interviews
- *Real-life*: true stories
- *Friendship*

These colour-coded coverlines can be seen in the Analysis, grouped by magazine and year.

Coverlines are reproduced with the typography as used. The symbol (/) signifies an occasional break between the “head” (main) coverline and the “sell” - a sub-coverline that follows. For reasons of space, I will not analyse each individual coverline.

### ***Data criteria: ideologies***

I have summarised three central ideologies for each feminist wave. These are:

#### *Second wave:*

- Consciousness-raising - how society structurally oppresses women
- Collective action - achieving change through group activism, female solidarity
- Gender binary - women and men as separate and different

#### *Postfeminism:*

- Individualism - “I-feminism”, neoliberalist focus on personal choice
- Hedonism - emphasis on pleasure and fun, “ladette” attitude
- Raunch culture - sexual libertarianism and attractiveness as empowerment

#### *Fourth wave:*

- Identity - personal experience and identity paramount, hyperindividualism
- Authenticity - being “real”, stripping away artifice, self-actualisation
- Inclusivity - diversity of voices, gender fluidity and disruption to heteronormativity

## ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

Individual magazine coverlines have been grouped thematically for each year, using the below colour code. The bracketed number following each coverline refers to its corresponding row number.

### KEY

<b>Relationships</b>
<b>Sex</b>
<b>Better You</b>
<b>Career</b>
<b>Reports &amp; Investigations</b>
<b>Profiles</b>
<b>Real-Life</b>
<b>Friendship</b>

## 1977 Analysis

### *Honey*

- 1 HOW OFTEN DOES THE MAN YOU LOVE IN PRIVATE HORRIFY YOU IN PUBLIC?
- 2 ARE PLATONIC RELATIONSHIPS REALLY REPRESSED AFFAIRS?
- 3 WHY AREN'T MEN LIKE THEY USED TO BE?
- 4 Have sex shops anything to offer you?
- 5 HOW SINGLE WOMEN FEEL ABOUT RAPE & ABORTION part 2 of our nationwide survey
- 6 COULD YOU BEAR TO HAVE YOUR BABY ADOPTED?
- 7 IS SLIMNESS WORTH FASTING FOR? and what's a fortnight's fast like anyway?
- 8 PSYCHO-MAZES some intricate tests for your social judgement
- 9 WORLDLY SUCCESS: have you got what it takes? do you want what it brings?
- 10 Could it make sense to stop work and start studying again?
- 11 A curse on the secretary 'with a sense of humour'
- 12 YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE SUPERWOMAN TO THROW A DINNER PARTY ON A WORKING DAY see page 42 for proof
- 13 Outrage in the King's Road
- 14 Liverpool ten years after the Beatles
- 15 JUST HOW IDENTICAL ARE IDENTICAL TWINS?
- 16 Patti Smith thinks she's rock's new prophetess...

*Table 1*

*Honey* shows a broad spread of themes. All Relationship coverlines are questions; “WHY AREN’T MEN LIKE THEY USED TO BE?” (3) claims all men no longer live up to an unspecified nostalgic norm. The plural third-person and generic gender term positions men as a separate, collective category, also seen in “HOW OFTEN DOES THE MAN YOU LOVE IN PRIVATE HORRIFY YOU IN PUBLIC?” (1). The pronouns in (1) reveal an assumed heteronormativity on the reader’s behalf.

The Sex coverlines are also questioning: “Have sex shops anything to offer you?” (4) and “COULD YOU BEAR TO HAVE YOUR BABY ADOPTED?” (6) give the reader the responsibility of deciding the answer. Second person “you” directly address the reader, using a central tool of *synthetic personalisation* where mass audiences are addressed as if individuals (Fairclough, 1989). A contrasting approach is seen in “HOW SINGLE WOMEN FEEL ABOUT RAPE AND ABORTION” (5). Rather than use the second-person, survey respondents are “SINGLE WOMEN” even though likely to be the readers themselves. This generic term, like “men” above, suggests an essentialising stance to separate them from *Honey* readers. All Sex coverlines take a negative stance, highlighting tragic or risky aspects: rape, abortion and adoption.

In *Better You*, “IS SLIMNESS WORTH FASTING FOR? and what’s a fortnight’s fast like anyway?” (7) taps into the body image ideology equating female attractiveness with slimness (Wykes & Gunter, 2004). Initially presented as a choice, the second clause nullifies this as the reader is invited to imagine fasting. In *Careers*, more questions are asked. “WORLDLY SUCCESS: have you got what it takes? do you want what it brings?” (9) juxtaposes a declarative statement with second-person address and an ambiguous “what it brings” - suggesting positive or negative outcomes. “YOU DON’T HAVE TO BE

SUPERWOMAN TO THROW A DINNER PARTY ON A WORKING DAY” (12) equates reader’s careers with domestic responsibilities.

*Honey*’s regular use of the second-person, informal contractions and emotional verbs use synthetic personalisation to build connection. However, unanswered questions, modal “could” and adverbial “really”, conveys a hedgy tone common to “women’s language” (Lakoff, 1973). They use generic gender terms and ascribe negative judgements to women, as in “Patti Smith thinks she’s rock’s new prophetess.” “Thinks she’s” rather than “is” suggests a judgmental stance that Patti Smith over-values herself.

### *Cosmopolitan*

- 1 How to Survive the First Love Affair After Divorce
- 2 Beware The Apparently Weak Man; He Can Dominate You In The End
- 3 How One Woman Survived The Particular Agony of a Public Breaking Up Of Her Marriage  
Can You Make Rules in Advance About Your Married Life? Couples Tell Why Marriage
- 4 Contracts Work
- 5 Keeping a Happy Relationship When Your Job Is More Demanding Than His
- 6 Men You May Never Have Considered
- 7 What You Are Doing to Men When You Treat Them As Sex Objects
- 8 How Does Your Sex Drive Relate to His? The Truth About The Sexual Diamond
- 9 The Seven-Day Sweet Tooth Diet
- 10 Do You Have Star Quality?
- 11 Learn the Art of Intimate Conversation
- 12 Infatuation Is a Dangerous Emotion: How To Recognise It

	Fed Up With Trying To Be Thin? Learn From Four Girls Who Look Better When They're
13	Plump
14	How Assertive Are You?
15	How to Keep Up Your Morale When You're Young, Female and Unemployed
16	Who Are <u>The Arabellas</u> And Why Are They Doing So Well? The Metropolitan! Page 107
17	Jane Fonda – That Star Who Definitely Knows Where She's Going
18	Sylvester Stallone / The Hero They Couldn't Shut Down
19	Robert De Niro – Moody and Mystifying

**Table 2**

Relationships dominate again, but *Cosmo's* coverage is more diverse, featuring divorce, careers and affairs. “How to Survive The First Love Affair After Divorce” (1) and “How One Woman Survived The Particular Agony of a Public Breaking Up Of Her Marriage” (3) use a survival motif to suggest divorce is a life-or-death scenario. “Beware The Apparently Weak Man; He Can Dominate You In The End” strikes a duality: invoking the gender stereotype that equates maleness with strength, but also cautioning readers against controlling men.

Yet *Cosmo* itself takes a controlling tone: instructing readers with imperatives and numerous *wh-function* words (who, what, when, why, where, how). “Keeping A Happy Relationship When Your Job Is More Demanding Than His” (5) suggests accommodating the male ego is vital. A heteronormative relationship norm connects all Relationship coverlines. They address readers as divorced, married, coupled, or in pursuit of a man: no other option is presented. Men are generically presented as a subject that readers must learn about.

In Sex coverlines, men dominate too. “How Does Your Sex Drive Relate To His?” (8) frames the reader's desires as only relevant as a comparison. “What You Are Doing to Men When

You Treat Them As Sex Objects” (7) suggests female authority with idiomatic *do to*, but generic gendering again essentialises men. “The Truth About” in (7) positions *Cosmo* as a knowledgeable authority, but Sex is overall presented through a prism of constraints.

Better You coverlines demand the reader assess their inherent value: “Do You Have Star Quality?” (10) and “How Assertive Are You?” (14). Mixed messages are conveyed about bodies: readers encouraged to be slim in “The Seven Day Sweet Tooth Diet” (9) but to reject this orthodoxy in “Fed Up With Trying To Be Thin? Learn From Four Girls Who Look Better When They’re Plump”(13). A rhetorical set-up and question/solution structure entices the reader, with the answer lying in satisfying in maintaining *Cosmo*’s subjective validation of attractiveness.

*Cosmo*’s assurance comes through in its prevalence of wh-word *guidance* coverlines where they reveal information (1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17) and *instructive* ones where the imperative directly addresses the reader (2, 11, 13). No other voice is present aside from *Cosmo*’s, even when the story is about individual women’s experiences (3, 13).

19

1	AND HERE'S WHAT MEN REALLY SAY AND THINK ABOUT GIRLS!
	SPECIALS! 50 Exciting Holiday Ideas...How to Up-Date Tired Knits...Pull-Out Cookery
2	Wall-Chart
3	EXPERTLY COMPILED GUIDANCE QUESTIONNAIRE TO HELP YOU FIND YOUR TRUE VOCATION
4	Meet The New Sex-Symbol Rave - ROCKY!

Table 3

Very few *19* coverlines qualified for this study. Once the selection criteria were imposed, only four remained.

‘AND HERE’S WHAT MEN REALLY SAY AND THINK ABOUT GIRLS!’ (1) conveys a *confidante* register: the connective opener, declarative statement and adverbial “really” suggesting truth-revealing. Gender generics again essentialise men as having universal beliefs. The use of “men”, yet “girls” not “women”, potentially reflects the traditional associations with “girl” as an object of male desire (Sigley & Holmes, 2002).<sup>1</sup>

An enthusiastic tone comes across from regular exclamation marks, subject matter and capitalisation. However, with only minimal data available, it’s not possible to create a robust discourse analysis of *19*’s linguistic tone and ideologies.

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<sup>1</sup> Describing their readers as “girls” may also be down to an editorial tone of voice decision on *19*’s part, rather than a wider stereotypical gender ideology.

## 1997 analysis

### *Marie Claire*

- 1 INFIDELITY: SERIAL LOVE CHEATS CONFESS
- 2 WE FIND THE UK'S MOST ATTRACTIVE MEN
- Sex & Passion / Face to face with your first sexual partner / 'We only make love at the weekend' / The woman who tamed a Hollywood Casanova
- 3
- 4 Sex games / How far would you go to satisfy your partner in bed?
- 5 UK FESTIVAL: TOP PROSTITUTES COMPARE NOTES
- 6 WHEN BEST FRIENDS SLEEP WITH EACH OTHER
- 7 How often do you have sex?
- 8 HEALTH: HOW MUCH SLEEP DO YOU REALLY NEED?
- 9 WOMEN WHO CONTROL WORLD LEADERS
- 10 THE BLACK WIDOW: MEN LURED TO THEIR DEATHS
- 11 EL SALVADOR: WHERE BABIES ARE STOLEN BY THE GOVERNMENT
- 12 ARMED IN SUBURBIA: AMERICAN HOUSEWIVES PREPARING FOR WAR
- 13 UK CAMPAIGN WOMEN TERRORISED BY THEIR NEIGHBOURS
- 14 FROM MAYFAIR TO MOSCOW: BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE HAIRDRESSER'S
- 15 SPECIAL REPORT: WOULD YOU WEAR FAKE FUR?
- 16 "THEY TOLD MY MOTHER I WAS DEAD"
- 17 REPORT: "I WENT TO PRISON TO SAVE MY DAD'S LIFE"

**Table 4**

R&I coverlines are the majority theme. They index a global sensibility, covering the UK, North and South America (11, 12) and Russia (14). Although focusing on serious issues, they are framed through a generic gender lens: "WOMEN WHO CONTROL WORLD

LEADERS” (9), “THE BLACK WIDOW: MEN LURED TO THEIR DEATHS” (10) and “AMERICAN HOUSEWIVES PREPARING FOR WAR” (12). This conveys a separateness and thus linguistic distance. Evocative verbs like “LURED” and terms like “THE BLACK WIDOW” strike a sensational, scandalous tone, resonant of tabloid newspapers’ *tabloidese*, an accessible register which uses devices such as alliteration, metaphor and parallelism (Conboy, 2006).

Many Sex coverlines use the second person to directly address the reader. “Face to face with your first sexual partner” (3) implies readers are assumed to have more than one, “How often do you have sex?” (7) underscores regularity, and “WHEN BEST FRIENDS SLEEP WITH EACH OTHER” (6) suggests a sexually liberated attitude. However, a men-first stance is conveyed in “How far would you go to satisfy your partner in bed?” (4). Men are linguistically separated again, this time like animals: “The woman who tamed a Hollywood Casanova” (3).

Real Life coverlines appear for the first time. Both are first-person “I” quotes attributing individual reader voices: “THEY TOLD MY MOTHER I WAS DEAD” (16) and “I WENT TO PRISON TO SAVE MY DAD’S LIFE” (17). This moves synthetic personalisation into a new dimension, where “real people” now speak as themselves. More *tabloidese* tools - direct language, dramatic content, minimal context - are again used to stoke reader curiosity.

*Marie Claire* positions itself as the moral voice of authority: “LOVE CHEATS” (1) judges infidelity, “WE FIND THE UK’S MOST ATTRACTIVE MEN” uses superlative and collective voice to index certainty. Colons create two-part coverlines, linking declarative

openers with explanatory clauses (1, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15). Absence of contractions, exclamation marks and slang terms affords their register an authoritative formality.

### *Cosmopolitan*

- 1 SPECIAL SECTION / MAN HUNT! Where the sharp, smart, sexiest men are - & how to take one alive!
- 2 CASH FOR KISSES / Women who marry for money
- 3 8 Secrets of Happy Couples
- 4 Great at work, lousy at love? Read it - and fax him the details
- 5 WHY MEN LOVE DRINK / The intimate relationship you'll never be part of
- 6 Are you a TESSA, TIC or ABBA? The secret codes men use for women
- 7 "The First Time I Saw Her...: Men tell how they knew it was love
- 8 Your Sexual Style - Is it time you made a change?
- 9 Gotcha! 16 outrageous tales of infidelity...and discovery
- 10 BE A SEXUAL PSYCHIC / Interpret the signs - then decide whether to take him to bed
- 11 Your First Night Together... How to make it go with a bang!
- 12 *smart section* 25 SEX TABOOS Answers to the questions you *did* dare ask (no holes barred!)
- 13 *news bedlines...* GIRL TO WOMAN Sex moves that show you've arrived
- 14 CRUISE TO LOSE All aboard! The world's most expensive way to lose weight
- 15 GROUP ANOREXIA - THE DEADLY WAY WOMEN BOND
- 16 BRITISH WOMEN WHO MARRY STRANGERS FOR MONEY
- 17 SPECIAL INVESTIGATION / GYM-O-CIDE Why it's never been more dangerous to work out

18	WEAR WHITE & BURST INTO TEARS! The new way to win power - and take control
19	True-life report: "I shopped my abusive father"
20	SPECIAL INVESTIGATION: "I HIRED A HITMAN"
21	TRUE STORY The Woman With No Past / "I forgot my name, family, how to speak - and even have sex"
22	<u>Amazing true story</u> "I survived an IRA bomb, but my lover nearly destroyed me"
23	Jennifer Aniston / The best <i>Friends</i> girl talks exclusively to Cosmo

**Table 5**

The dominant themes are Sex and Relationships. Heterosexuality is assumed in (1, 4, 5, 6, 7) and “MAN HUNT! Where the sharp, smart, sexiest men are - & how to take one alive!” (1) positions men as animals to be captured. Informal phrasing, exclamation marks, alliteration and the rule of three create a light-hearted register, a *public colloquialism* that indicates this isn’t to be taken seriously (Leech, 1966; Vasiloaia, 2009).

Marriage is mentioned only once: “CASH FOR KISSES / Women who marry for money” (2). With no elements of synthetic personalisation - no personal pronouns, discourse markers, direct address - and the essentialising gender generic, *Cosmo* take a stance; these women are not like you, the reader.

*Cosmo* positions itself as a vital knowledge repository for relationships; regular wh- function words and terms such as “intimate relationship” (5) and “secret codes” (6) suggest they have access to private knowledge. “Men” are again grouped generically.

Sex coverlines mostly focus on the reader's experience, regularly using direct second-person address (8, 11, 12, 13). Imperative "BE A SEXUAL PSYCHIC / Interpret the signs -then decide whether to take him to bed" (10) shifts the sexual power dynamic towards women initiating. "Your Sexual Style" (8) "Sex moves" (13) and "Your First Night Together... How to make it go with a bang!" imply sex is a skill to be learnt, performed and improved upon. More tabloidese, such as the pun in "*news bedlines*" (13) and vernacular "Gotcha!" (9) set a playful tone.

Real Life coverlines blend first-person quotes with shock-value content: "I HIRED A HITMAN" (20). R&I coverlines deploy similar sensationalism with evocative lexis and invented portmanteaus: "GROUP ANOREXIA - THE DEADLY WAY WOMEN BOND" (15) and "GYM-O-CIDE / Why it's never been more dangerous to work out" (17).

Imperative commands, instructive wh- words and self-assessed brilliance ("outrageous", "smart", "amazing") set a confident tone, made informal and intimate by vernacular tabloidese and synthetic personalisation.

### *Company*

- 1 MEET THE MAN WHO CAN HAVE ANY WOMAN HE WANTS
- 2 CAN YOU FIND LOVE IN SIX WEEKS? / Diaries of a real-life man hunt  
YOUR LOVE HOROSCOPE / When, where and who it's going to happen with this
- 3 summer!
- 4 I LOVE YOU' / When to say it (and when to keep your mouth shut)
- 5 THE MINUTE I SAW HIM, I KNEW...! / *Oooh aaah* stories of love at first sight
- 6 WHEN IT'S NOT FUN ANYMORE / Can your so-so relationship be saved?

7	Should you <i>try</i> to stay friends with your ex?
8	Gay men who have sex with women
9	McSEXY / All you need to know about the cutest Celt actors steaming up our screens (with exclusive new pics)
10	EXTRA! 12-page his'n'hers astrology special SEX & SUCCESS in '97 / <u>EXCLUSIVE DIY STAR CHARTS FOR YOUR BEST NEW YEAR <i>EVER</i></u>
11	NIP & TUCK JUNKIES / Young women £15,000 in debt for cosmetic surgery
12	INSANE FOR IT / What no-one has <i>ever</i> told you about Ecstasy
13	Screwdrivers / Grand Prix girls and the men they put in pole position
14	Your shout! / The new alcohol report that <i>won't</i> ruin your Friday night
15	TRUE STORY / "I only date men who pass my 51 LOVE tests"
16	TRUE STORY / "He was old, ugly and married... but we had great sex"

**Table 6**

Relationship coverlines dominate again, with the majority deploying first- or second-person pronouns to build reader connection. “CAN YOU FIND LOVE IN SIX WEEKS? Diaries of a real-life man hunt” (2) applies the same hunted animals metaphor as *Cosmo*. Generic gender terms in (1, 2, 5) separate men, as does the positioning of the Sex coverlines. “McSEXY / All you need to know about the cutest Celt actors steaming up our screens” (9) uses collective first-person to align with the reader in objectifying men. ‘Gay men who have sex with women’ (8) also strikes a voyeuristic note; no personal address or pronouns, plus generic “Gay men” and “women” create a more distanced stance.

The R&I coverlines are two types: firstly, those that invite readers to gawp at scandalous stories (11, 13). These use generics and vernacular tabloidese, as seen in “NIP AND TUCK

JUNKIES: Young women £15,000 in debt for cosmetic surgery” (11) to essentialise, and thus separate the subjects. Conversely, others (12, 14) draw readers closer, using second-person address, such as in “Your shout! The new alcohol report that *won't* ruin your Friday night” (14). Here, slang, exclamation marks, evocative “ruin” and italics emphasise hedonistic pleasures. This attitude is also evident in ‘INSANE FOR IT / What no-one has *ever* told you about Ecstasy’ (12), where a play on the then-popular slang “mad for it” and drug-culture topic reflects the preoccupations of the ladette era.

*Company's* tone is informal, conveyed by capitalisations, vernacular language and emphasis on fun. This positioning is distilled in the Real Life coverline: “He was old ugly and married...but we had great sex” (16). It lists qualities to provoke a negative response indicated by the conjunction “but”, then revealing an unexpected positive. This juxtaposition neatly demonstrates that *Company's* ideology is really about the opposite - youth, good looks, and singledom.

## 2017 analysis

### *Stylist*

1	LEAN <del>IN</del> Back / Why world domination at work is losing its appeal
2	WE WILL <u>NOT</u> GO QUIETLY BACK TO THE 1950S
3	Have the sweetest British summer
4	Seriously good / Elisabeth Moss on ambition, activism and the joy of a 5pm Moscow mule
5	Ready to rumble / Alison Brie, star of your new favourite wrestling drama (yes, really)
6	Renaissance Man / Why we need more men like Russell Brand
7	We are family / A portrait of the extraordinary Haim sisters
8	Hey! I was thinking of voting Tory tomorrow? What do you think? / Amy has left the conversation / Is politics dividing your friendship?

**Table 7**

*Stylist* sit somewhat apart from the other magazines under study. Due to its “freemium” model, they did not have to compete on newsstands and could afford to take bigger risks, and “let the covers breathe” confirms editor Susan Riley. The editorial team often created the imagery and coverlines simultaneously, necessitating an occasional multi-modal analysis.

This is relevant to “Hey! I was thinking of voting Tory tomorrow?...” (8), where the widely understood semiotics of WhatsApp messaging creates meaning. It moves between registers: firstly, as a sender’s chatty conversation opener, the subsequent grey dots representing an unsent reply, then the phone auto-notifying “Amy has left the conversation” suggesting the friendship is over. The final sell “Is politics dividing your friendship?” is in the magazine’s voice.

*Stylist* explicitly evoke feminist trends. The strikethrough in “LEAN ~~IN~~ Back / Why world domination at work is losing its appeal” (1) subverts corporate-feminist tract *Lean In*, suggesting dissatisfaction with this success model. Plural first-person in “WE WILL NOT GO QUIETLY BACK TO THE 1950s” (2) indexes a collectivist stance with the reader against “1950s”-style female subjugation, with the exclamation mark and all-caps intimating shouting (McCulloch, 2019).

This confident voice is also evident in the qualities the magazine ascribes its cover stars. Haim are “extraordinary” (7), Russell Brand is a “Renaissance Man” (6), Elisabeth Moss is “seriously good” (4). They deploy the rule of three to enhance this positive assessment: “ambition, activism and the joy of a 5pm Moscow mule”. Framing this value judgement through careers, politics and relaxation contrasts with how some 1997 coverlines deployed this technique: as superficial verdicts on men (“sharp, smart, sexiest”/“old, ugly, and married”).

These coverlines are pitched at an intelligent reader, on an encoded insider/outsider axis; readers must know about Sheryl Sandberg (1), feminist movements (2), 90s pop (4) and Italian history (6) to fully ‘get’ them. Statements, wh- words, and limited questions index certainty, and approachable personalisation is created through multimodality, parenthetical asides (5) and collective voice.

*Cosmopolitan*

- 1 SEX WITH PORN STARS / Why even nice guys are at it
- 2 HOW TO BECOME A SUPER BRAND / By those who've done it
- 3 MANSION & PRIVATE JET INCLUDED...! / Why the world's best jobs are looking for you
- 4 ARE YOU IMPRESSIVE? / THE WORLD'S HOTTEST COMPANIES TELL YOU
- 5 UNDO THE DAMAGE! / The workout everyone is talking about
- 6 MEET THE MOST FANCIED PEOPLE ON TINDER\* / \*And find out how you can be one
- 7 HAVE YOU GOT VEGAN WRINKLES? / What extreme diets are doing to our faces
- 8 BEAUTIFUL & DAMNED / The shocking double lives of 'IT' girls
- 9 HEY THERE BIG MOUTH! / What the hell has everyone done to their lips?
- 10 DIRTY DEALS / The influencers turning to crime
- 11 FANCY A STIFF ONE?! / 19 NEW WAYS TO SINK A DRINK
- 12 MY £1200 A NIGHT DATE / One writer road tests male escorts\* / \*From budget to blowout
- 13 I JUST CAN'T STOP MYSELF' / One magazine editor's secret addiction
- 14 EXCLUSIVE: Emma Willis / TOOK US HOME AND GOT US NAKED
- 15 GIRL BOSS! OLIVIA PALERMO / HOW SHE MADE A BUSINESS OUT OF GETTING DRESSED
- 16 JESSICA ALBA / THE LIFE OF A BUSINESS MOGUL

*Table 8*

In contrast to 1997 *Cosmo*, Sex and Relationships coverlines barely feature, replaced by Careers, Better You and R&I. “HOW TO BECOME A SUPER BRAND / By those who’ve

done it” (2) is instructively aspirational, using contemporary buzzwords to ally with the digital age, where commodifying oneself online is a form of strategic self-presentation (Kováčová, 2021). “Why the world’s best jobs are looking for you” (3) and “ARE YOU IMPRESSIVE? THE WORLD’S HOTTEST COMPANIES TELL YOU” (4) use second-person and superlatives to present career goals as glamorously global. *Cosmo’s* knowledgeable register - wh- words, bold statements - is offset here by promoting an external locus of evaluation, also seen in “UNDO THE DAMAGE! The workout everyone is talking about” (5), where social cachet is conferred by “everyone”.

Better You coverlines foreground self-improvement. Linguistic tools such as wh-word-plus-second-person-question in (7), imperative commands in (6) and exclamatory statements in (5) directly interrogate the reader. A contemporary stance is indexed by incorporating trends like veganism (7), dating apps (6) wellness (5) and influencers (8, 10) in R&I.

Like *Stylist*, *Cosmo* subjectively evaluates its cover stars, here celebrating business success (“GIRL BOSS!” (15), “BUSINESS MOGUL” (16)). However, Real Life and R&I still use shock-value linguistic strategies familiar to 1997: alliterative tabloidese (“DIRTY DEALS” (10) “budget to blowout” (12)), and scandalous content (“The shocking double lives...” (8), “SEX WITH PORN STARS” (1)). These maintain *Cosmo’s* distinctive tone, designed to attract reader’s attention but also index a shared sense of fun. Audience address sees second-person pronouns (3, 4, 6) feature alongside collective voice (8, 10, 12, 14).

## *Glamour*

- 1 WOW! We're all new / BIGGER / BOLDER / BETTER  
2017 Let's do this! / Our 30-day mission to change your whole year
- 2 #THEPOSITIVITYPROJECT
- 3 Is your FITNESS TRACKER screwing with your mind?  
Go forth. Be Awesome / DREW BARRYMORE and 11 other confidence coaches on how
- 4 to change everything. NOW
- 5 SCREW YOU, ZEN! / Could being a cranky bitch save you?
- 6 HONESTY ISSUE Love / Sex / Religion / Bodies / It's all on the table. And BS-free
- 7 JUST. BE. YOU. / 100% real, happier than ever. P54
- 8 So, is everyone in Britain racist now? / *Discuss.*
- 9 My wife is now my husband' / THIS IS TRUE LOVE
- 10 SURPRISINGLY SWEET LESSONS - FROM MY THREESOME'
- 11 Anna Kendrick / On how she silenced her inner critic
- 12 rosie PLUS one / Babies, business and that thing she won't do with Jason
- 13 Blake Lively / The truth about her 'perfect' life

**Table 9**

Better You accounts for more than half of all coverline themes. “2017 Let’s do this! Our 30-day mission to change your whole year #THEPOSITIVITYPROJECT” (2) uses imperative, collective voice, upbeat tone and alliteration to compel the reader to change, with the inherent implication this is needed. Transformation is also underscored in “Go forth. Be Awesome / DREW BARRYMORE and 11 other confidence coaches on how to change everything. NOW” (4), where instructive and subjunctive commands, wh-words, numbers and capitalisation create certitude.

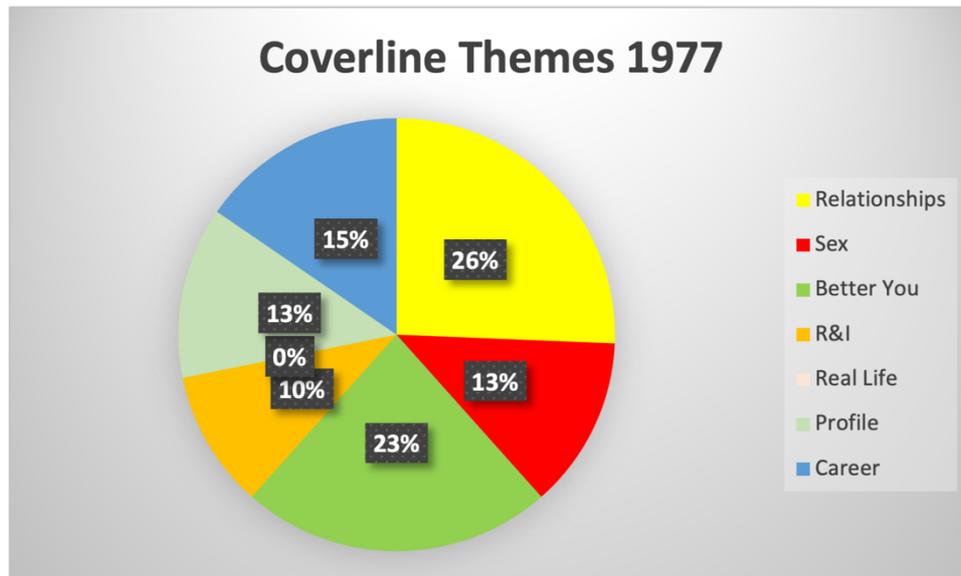
The “HONESTY ISSUE (6)” and “JUST. BE. YOU. / 100% real, happier than ever” (7) highlight an aspirational authenticity narrative. Vernacular “BS-free”, imperative reader register “SCREW YOU”, and internet-speak typography in “JUST. BE. YOU.” index an attitude where stripping away artifice is a viable - and desirable - goal (McCulloch, 2019).

Real Life coverlines disrupt heteronormativity. “My wife is now my husband’ THIS IS TRUE LOVE” (9) supports trans relationships and (10) features threesomes. Profiles commend stars for internal, psychological successes: one “silenced her inner critic” (11), another reveals “The truth about her ‘perfect’ life” (13). Again, realism is presented as an attainable goal.

*Glamour* indexes a constructive optimism, conveyed by its use of declaratives, capitals, exclamation marks and terms like “awesome”, “happier” and “positivity”.

## DISCUSSION

### *1977: linguistic tools, trends and ideologies*



*Fig 1. Percentage breakdown of all 1977 coverlines by theme*

Coverline language in 1977 uses many of the features of synthetic personalisation, with colloquial lexis, direct address and regular use of second-person “you” and possessive “your” constructing the impression of focus on the individual reader (Fairclough, 1989). This informal intimacy is further underscored by lively punctuation (exclamation and question marks, contractions, discourse markers), yet other linguistic tools ensure the relationship is top-down. Prevalence of wh- function words like “how” and “what” and revealing terms (“really” “the truth about”) position the magazine as an expert older sister (Talbot, 1995).

Thematic data reveals that Relationships dominate, accounting for 26% of all coverlines. Repeated citations of “his”, “him” “men” and “they” present men as a separate category the reader must learn about. These terms suggest an *essentialising* approach to relationships, as generic language has been shown to be a powerful tool to create essentialised beliefs about

categories such as gender (Foster-Hanson, Leslie & Rhodes, 2016). They take a heteronormative stance, reinforcing a strong marriage ideology dominant in wider society at the time.<sup>2</sup>

A fear narrative is underscored in this theme: readers must “survive” a split, “beware” a weak man and assess “dangerous” emotions. This is presented as solvable once readers learn of men’s universal behaviours and opinions - becoming an expert in “men-ology” (Gill, 2009). This data supports the gender binary second-wave feminist ideology, reinforcing the differences between the sexes through essentialising language. Yet it is framed from the male perspective, with readers encouraged to bear the emotional load and understand *men* rather than themselves.

Better You coverlines focus mainly on external self-improvement. Internal work is presented as passive self-discovery (how xx are you?) versus active physical enhancement (dieting). This allies with the wider Western 20th century sociocultural standards equating female attractiveness with slimness (Wykes & Gunter, 2004).

The data suggests minimal relationship with consciousness-raising and collectivist feminist ideologies. Consciousness-raising was focused on women sharing experiences of gender discrimination as a galvanising force for change, and such discourse is absent here (Sowards & Renegar, 2004). *Honey* avoids strong stances with regular questions, *19’s* numerous (excluded) fashion and beauty coverlines suggests a non-political focus, and although *Cosmo* covers some convention-busting territories (divorce, sexual pleasure, jobs), it is filtered through a men-first lens.

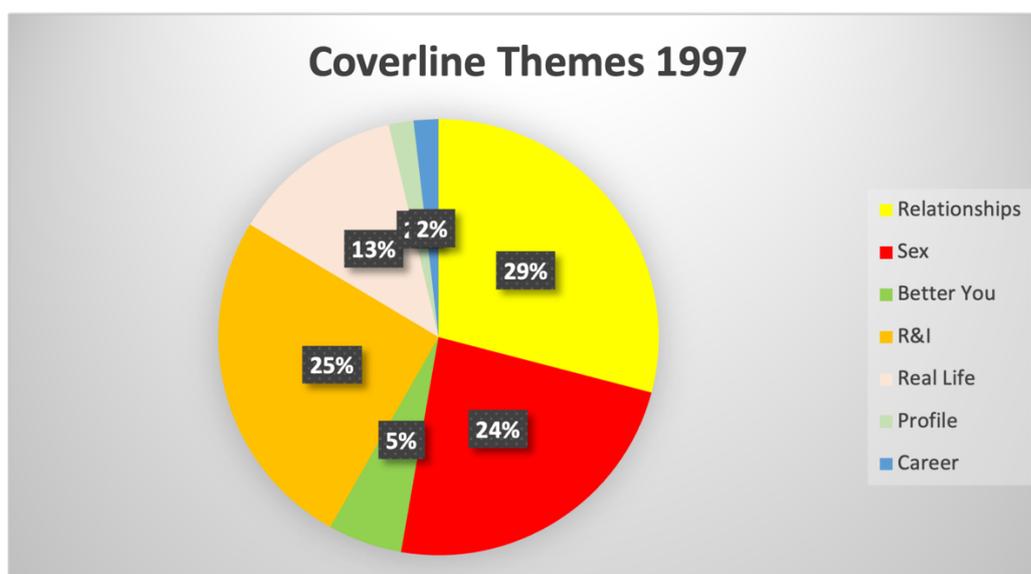
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<sup>2</sup> This is reflected in the official statistics on the average marrying age in the UK. In 1977 it was 26.6 for women. By 2008 it was 33.8 (ONS, 2010).

Collectivism would be indexed through pluralist voices, or coverlines supporting female friendship. These are absent: the reader is only addressed in second-person singular and generic terms essentialise certain women (“single women”) or judge them (“A curse on the secretary...”).

The second wave women’s movement may have been “speaking the unspeakable, thinking the unthinkable, occasionally even doing the undoable” but this coverline data suggests feminist ideologies had not yet permeated mainstream female-focused media discourse (Lakoff, 2004, 17).

*1997: linguistic tools, trends and ideologies*



*Fig 2. Percentage breakdown of all 1997 coverlines by theme*

As with 1977, the magazines in this corpus use bold statements, capital letters, wh- words, imperatives and regular second-person pronouns to world-build with the reader, positioning themselves as friendly truth-tellers. But unlike 1977, tabloidese dominates. Across all themes,

these linguistic tools foreground scandalous content with an informal tone to emphasise excitement, even with serious subject matter.

Former *Cosmo* section editor Andreina Cordani describes the aim of coverlines in this era “to get rid of the boring stuff”, supported by Susan Riley, who confirms that their focus “was very externalised.” The data suggests that 1997 coverlines reflect the postfeminist hedonist ideology, where a playful confidence and pleasure-seeking focus were representative of the contemporary female ladette mindset (Krolokke & Sorenson, 2006; Jackson & Tinkler, 2007).

Sex and Relationship themes combined comprise 53% of all coverlines, demonstrating a dominant focus on reader’s personal lives. As with 1977, men are essentialised but a new hunted animal metaphor in *Cosmo* and *Company* indicates a power shift towards young women. The absence of marriage in this theme reflects the waning societal pressure to marry. Relationships are presented as the responsibility of reader’s singular learning and application, underpinned by neoliberalist values (Gill, 2009).

Sex coverlines also express an ideological realignment, now positioned as an aspirational skillset for readers to learn, perform and measure as proof of one’s femininity (“GIRL TO WOMAN / Sex moves that show you’ve arrived”). There is no emotional element, coverlines instead foregrounding the importance of achieving and maintaining a (heterosexual) sexually-initiative persona (Bailey, Griffin & Shankar, 2015; Dobson, 2014, Gill, 2007). Raunch culture assessed female value in relation to sexual attractiveness and proficiency, something which is borne out in this corpus’s coverlines (Walter, 2011).

Another emergent feature is the first-person quoted reader voice, as seen in Real Life coverlines. Non-existent in 1977, these see the magazine’s “imagined addressee” - the target reader - now speak as themselves (Talbot, 1995, 146). This development in magazines’ synthetic personalisation strategy suggests firstly, a flattening of the hierarchy between magazine and reader - they now share the authorial voice - but also an increasing individualistic focus. This is in line with the postfeminist era’s “I-feminism”, which prioritises individual experience and identity rather than collectivist activism (Lazar, 2009). Highlighting individual reader’s stories validates personal experience; something which would become more central to magazines and feminist ideology as the fourth wave took hold.

**2017: linguistic tools, trends and ideologies**

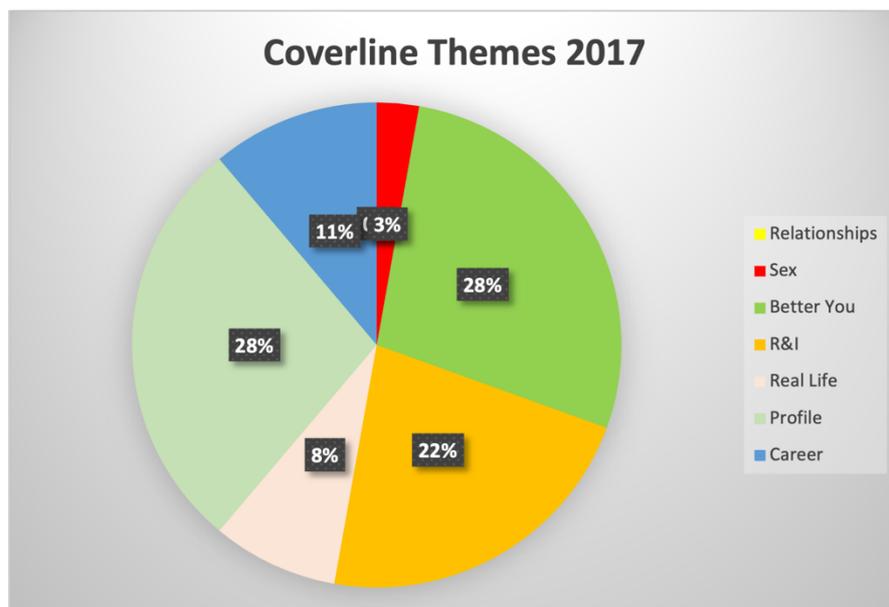


Fig 3. Percentage breakdown of all 2017 coverlines by theme

“Nobody does relationships like *Cosmo* does,” said former editor Linda Kelsey (Briscoe, 2003). That may have once been true, but by 2017 *Cosmo* had changed its focus entirely in line with other young women’s titles. As shown in Fig.3, there are no Relationship coverlines

at all in this data, Sex is minimal and instead themes are overwhelmingly Profiles (thanks to the rise of celebrity culture in the 2000s), Better You and Career-based.

This thematic shift conveys a different priority for 2017 readers: Romantic status or sexual experience is now less important than one's *self* and working on your inner (Better You) and outer (Career) identity. A narrative promoting constant self-improvement underpins these, moving the neoliberalist agenda onto personal "wellness" - the achievement of optimal physical, emotional and mental health that has become unavoidable in media discourse (Kirkland, 2014). In this way, coverlines align with the fourth wave hyperindividualist identity ideology.

Authenticity is also prevalent, most notably on *Glamour* where being "real" is systematically evoked as an aspirational goal. *Stylist's* urge to "Lean Out" could also be interpreted as a call for realism. *Cosmo's* discourse is more geared around external self-improvement, through becoming a "super brand" and landing "impressive" jobs.

Whether framed around abstract authenticity or concrete objective, however, they all promote self-improvement. The success discourse has shifted from understanding men (1977) to sexual proficiency (1997) to career success ("GIRL BOSS!") and internal happiness ("100% real"). This change brings a different set of pressures: young women of the fourth wave must continually work at achieving the superlative self as well as satisfying external barometers of success (Gill, 2009). This suggests coverlines further contribute to what has been called the *mental load* - the unseen, boundaryless combination of physical and emotional labour that disproportionately affects women (Dean, Churchill & Ruppner, 2022).

There are some elements of inclusivity: *Glamour* references trans experiences and heterosexual relationships no longer dominate. But explicitly inclusive coverlines - such as those focusing on issues of race, gender or disability - are not evident. This could be interpreted as lacking inclusivity, or that by being less prescriptive about the target reader, coverlines thus exclude fewer readers and are more inclusive.

Coverlines also use more first-person plural pronouns. On one hand, this could be interpreted as an echo of second wave collectivism as seen on *Stylist's* feminist statement “WE WILL NOT GO QUIETLY BACK TO THE 1950s”. Another understanding could be that it is rooted in print’s declining authority. Instead of setting the trends, by 2017 print publications were now compelled to respond to those set on digital platforms, evinced in the regular use of internet language and content. No longer an uncontested pop-cultural authority, magazine coverlines adapted their register, positioning themselves *alongside* the reader with collective ‘we’ and ‘our’, rather than above them.

## Changes and consistencies

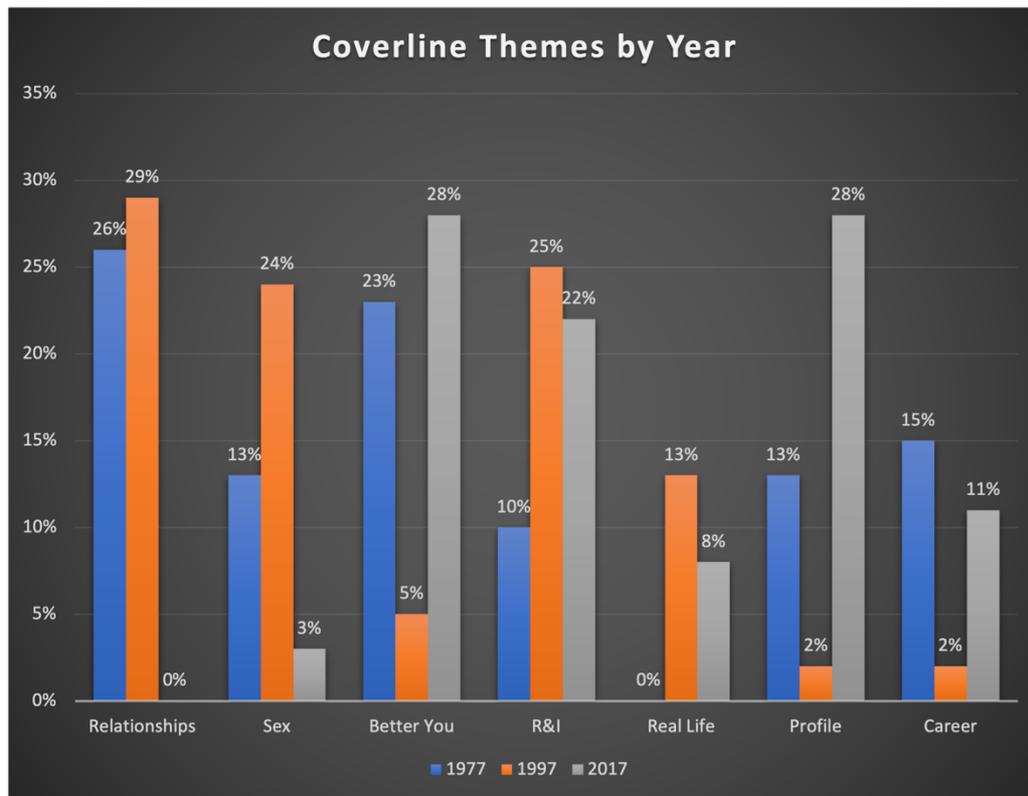


Fig 4. Percentage breakdown of all coverlines by theme and year

Trends come and go, reflected in the changing thematic content of magazine coverlines. As illustrated in Fig. 4, once-leading Relationships have disappeared by 2017, as has Sex; Real Life emerges in 1997, Better You dominates alongside Profiles in 2017. Contemporary wellness discourse is reflected in 2017’s “workout” and “fitness trackers” whereas in 1997 exercising was considered so niche that it could be pitched as dangerous “GYM-O-CIDE”. Vernacular change is evident, too: “PSYCHO-MAZES” of 1977 strikes a confusing note now, which no doubt 2017’s “SUPER-BRAND” or “TINDER” references would be to 1977 or 1997 readers.

These changes are also reflected in shifts in coverline tone, and the linguistic strategies used. Contrasting *Honey*’s questioning voice in 1977 (“Have sex shops anything to offer you?”)

with *Company* and *Cosmo's* innuendo-laden tabloidese (“Gotcha!” “news bedlines”) of 1997, to 2017 *Glamour's* positive-thinking injunctions (“Go forth. Be awesome.”), and it’s clear that magazine coverlines reflect shifts in such social discourse norms (Androutsopoulos, 2014).

Many of the linguistic tools across the corpora remain the same. All magazines deploy the tools of synthetic personalisation - second-person pronouns, direct address, colloquial lexis, discourse markers - to simulate person-to-person discourse and draw the reader in (Fairclough, 2013). Generic gender terms essentialise men (and others), questions stoke curiosity, declarative statements with wh- function words convey a knowledgeable, supportive register.

### ***Relevance of the reader relationship***

From a discourse analysis perspective, coverlines demonstrate not only world-building, but socioculturally-situated identity and relationship-building and connection-building too (Gee, 1999). The goal is to build a personal affiliation and make the reader feel understood (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005).

This is affirmed by journalists’ experiences creating coverlines. Says Andreina Cordani: “It was all about the reader. We wanted them to feel we had their back, so the focus was always you, you, you.” June Walton concurs that the intent was bolstering, and Susan Riley explains that deep and consistent reader research underpins this focus, adding, “You are absolutely consumed with your reader - how they live their lives, how they chat with mates, [it’s] an in-depth analysis.”

This meticulous process suggests a more thoughtful and considered approach than the cynical “bogus community” which women’s magazines have been accused of creating (Talbot, 1995). Indeed, magazines take their responsibility towards readers seriously, all three journalists confirming that maintaining trust was paramount.

### *Do coverlines and feminist ideology align?*

The data demonstrates an increasing correlation between feminist ideologies and magazine coverlines as time progresses. The weak relationship evinced in the 1977 corpus could seem unsurprising, considering many second wavers considered them antifeminist (Winship, 1987). By 1997, there is evidence of a stronger correlation, magazine coverlines embracing postfeminism’s self-liberated freedoms which straddled the dichotomy of simultaneously embracing and rejecting feminism. The 2017 data demonstrates an overall alignment with fourth-wave ideologies, where the importance of personal identity pervades.

This suggests that as feminism has evolved, it has become more embedded in mainstream female discourse, particularly during the fourth wave (Favaro & Gill, 2018). It has not been an uncomplicated progression: editorial staff have had to balance their own, readers’ and society’s changing perceptions. Although *Cosmo* considered itself a feminist publication, Andreina Cordani recalls that during the postfeminist era such messaging needed to be “under the radar” and one particular coverline referenced “the F word” rather than feminism itself. Susan Riley remembers the cultural resistance to feminism at the time of *Stylist*’s pre-fourth wave launch: “We came out as a pro-feminist brand when it was a bit of a dirty word.

There was quite a toxic environment in the media so we had a very clear feminist manifesto of what we *wouldn't* feature: diets, paparazzi imagery, gossip about women.”

Even now some young women express uneasiness with the concept. Susan Riley confirms recent *Stylist* research on 30-year-old readers indicated that some associated the term “feminist” with “bra-burning”: the negative connotations of second-wave feminism still lingering in a generation born decades later.

For journalists writing coverlines, it was necessary to balance the multiple ideologies and voices within this heterogeneous discursive landscape (Favaro & Gill, 2018). Their words needed to reflect social change and appropriately adapt their discourse to where feminism stood within the cultural climate (Cotter, 2010; Day, Gough & McFadden, 2007). Confirms Susan Riley: “Our language has evolved as a direct reaction to the lives of our readers and the culture.”

The study cautiously supports the hypothesis that perceptions of feminist identity differ across the generations, due to the contrasting coverline ideologies expressed. As generations of young women absorbed different messages, dissimilar perspectives are unsurprising and may explain the cross-generational feminist conflict widely covered by the media (Donegan, 2018). Certainly, using a bottom-up data-gathering approach revealed some unexpected elements. It was surprising to note, for instance, how Career content was more prevalent in 1977 than 1997, and how dramatically the focus has transferred from external pleasure-seeking in 1997 to internal self-improvement in 2017.

However, one significant limitation to this theory is that it's not possible to deduce women's individual perspectives on feminism - this study can only analyse how feminism was conveyed to them. Further work, such as a perception study or survey from the readers' perspective would need to be done. The relatively small corpus, especially the lack of data from *I9* magazine, lays bare further limitations, as does the subjective nature of critical discourse analysis. Other scholars could make different interpretations or find other coverlines from the same years that indexed contrasting ideologies.

The data suggests potential avenues for future linguistic study. Coverlines' thematic progression from focusing on marriage and intimacy (1977) to external confidence (1997), to achieving one's inner potential (2017) is indicative of an upwards movement within Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Correlating this psychological ladder in line with generational foci could provide an interesting theoretical point of departure. The 2017 *Glamour* corpus, as well as other more recent data, could also be explored through the discursive construct of *toxic positivity*, where neoliberal affirmative thinking ideologies can result in unreasonable optimism around individuals' control (Lecompte-Van Poucke, 2022).

## CONCLUSION

The increasing correlation between feminist ideologies and magazine coverlines suggests not only the growing mainstream visibility of the feminism movement, but also the dynamic, complex relationship between magazines and reader, with magazines contemporaneously adapting their discourse (Androutsopoulos, 2014).

Conceptualising feminist ideology into waves, and thus being generation-specific has been criticised as needlessly divisive, distracting the movement from its goals (Hogeland, 2001). But there has always been conflict and debate within a movement which attempts to represent half the world's population, and function as both practice and progression (Russell, 2020; Grady, 2018). This research aims to explain the root causes of some of that conflict, by analysing the messages women absorb through a specific media discourse at a pivotal moment in young adulthood.

What next for feminism? The fourth wave is now more than a decade into existence, and the early optimism that characterised the movement has ebbed away; it has been suggested that Western culture is already deep into an antifeminist “backlash” (Donegan, 2022). The future of women's magazines is far from assured, too. As circulations and revenues continue to decline, a “tipping point” has been declared in the magazine industry (Sweney, 2023). It remains to be seen whether any young women's magazines will be in existence to play a key role in such *mediated feminism* in the future (Banet-Weiser *et al*, 2020).

Debate and disagreement are a consequence of incorporating heterogeneous voices, which the feminist movement has always done. But rather than feminists use these differing

perspectives as tools to criticise each other with, it's more important each generation recognise the others' achievements and the different cultural contexts within which they took place (Grady, 2018; Donegan, 2018). I agree. One of the second wave's most esteemed writers, Juliet Mitchell also urges unity:

*I don't think there's one feminism and I believe it's both a political movement and a theoretical endeavour. I think we're still working on the theory, as we are on the political movement...But, actually, our endeavour is the same, which is to combat inequity, to combat oppression and to analyse the patriarchy... Let women care, and everybody care – and nobody fight (Mitchell, 2021).*

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## APPENDIX A: Raw coverline data

Greyed out texts denotes coverlines excluded from main study

1977

### *HONEY*



February 1977

HOW OFTEN DOES THE MAN YOU LOVE IN PRIVATE HORRIFY YOU IN PUBLIC?

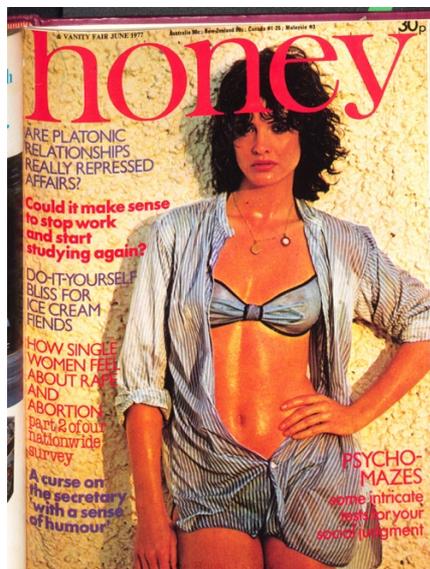
Patti Smith thinks she's rock's new prophethess...

IS SLIMNESS WORTH FASTING FOR? and what's a fortnight's fast like anyway?

Have sex shops anything to offer you?  
WORLDLY SUCCESS: have you got what it takes? do you want what it brings?

Outrage in the King's Road

Liverpool ten years after the Beatles



June 1977

ARE PLATONIC RELATIONSHIPS REALLY REPRESSED AFFAIRS?

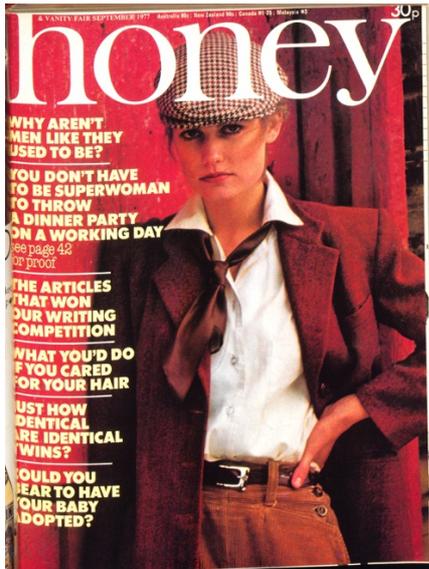
Could it make sense to stop work and start studying again?

~~DO-IT-YOURSELF BLISS FOR ICE CREAM FIENDS~~ (food)

HOW SINGLE WOMEN FEEL ABOUT RAPE AND ABORTION part 2 of our nationwide survey

A curse on the secretary 'with a sense of humour'

PSYCHO-MAZES some intricate tests for your social judgement



September 1977

WHY AREN'T MEN LIKE THEY USED TO BE?

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE SUPERWOMAN TO THROW A DINNER PARTY ON A WORKING DAY see page 42 for proof

THE ARTICLES THAT WON OUR WRITING COMPETITION

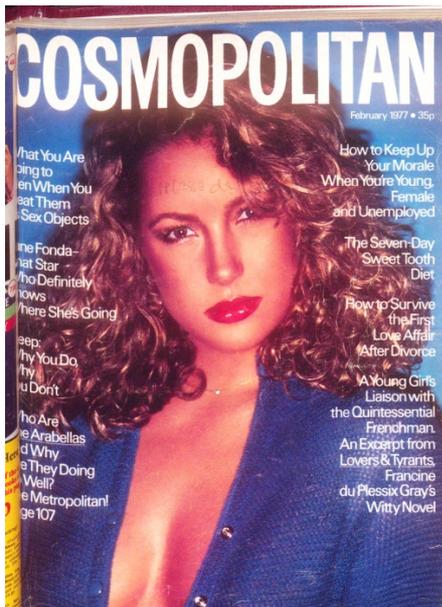
*(competition)*

WHAT YOU'D DO IF YOU CARED FOR YOUR HAIR *(beauty)*

JUST HOW IDENTICAL ARE IDENTICAL TWINS?

COULD YOU BEAR TO HAVE YOUR BABY ADOPTED?

## COSMOPOLITAN



February 1977

What You Are Doing to Men When You Treat Them As Sex Objects

Jane Fonda – That Star Who Definitely Knows Where She's Going

Sleep: Why You Do, Why You Don't Who Are The Arabellas And Why Are They Doing So Well? The Metropolitan! Page 107

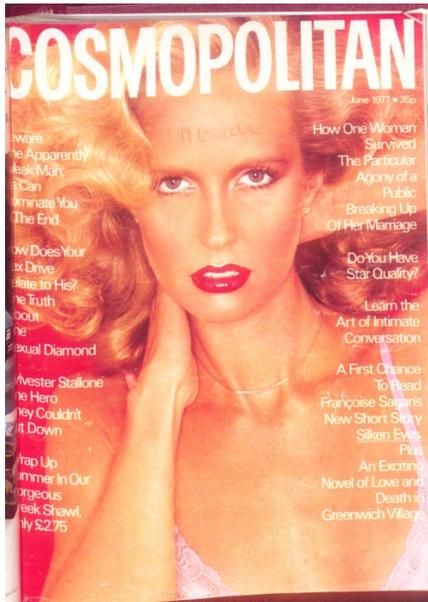
How to Keep Up Your Morale When You're Young, Female and Unemployed

The Seven-Day Sweet Tooth Diet

How to Survive the First Love Affair After Divorce

A Young Girl's Liaison with the Quintessential Frenchman. An Excerpt from Lovers & Tyrants, Francine du Plessix Gray's Witty Novel

*(literature/culture)*



**June 1977**

Beware The Apparently Weak Man; He Can Dominate You In The End

How Does Your Sex Drive Relate to His? The Truth About The Sexual Diamond  
Sylvester Stallone / The Hero They Couldn't Shut Down

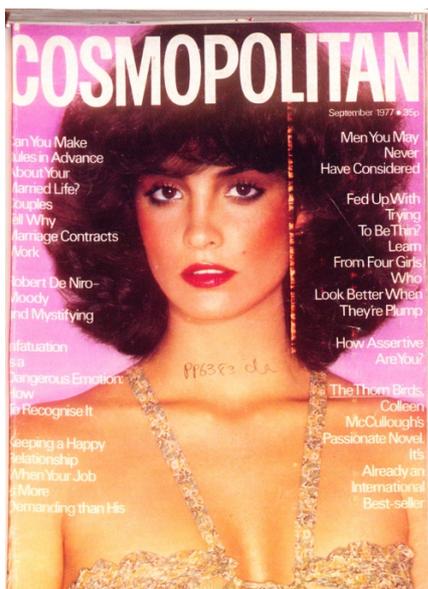
Wrap Up Summer In Our Gorgeous Greek Shawl, Only £2.75 (*fashion*)

How One Woman Survived The Particular Agony of a Public Breaking Up Of Her Marriage

Do You Have Star Quality?

Learn the Art of Intimate Conversation

A First Chance to Read Françoise Sagan's New Short Story Silken Eyes. Plus, An Exciting Novel of Love and Death in Greenwich Village (*literature/culture*)



**September 1977**

Can You Make Rules in Advance About Your Married Life? Couples Tell Why Marriage Contracts Work

Robert De Niro – Moody and Mystifying Infatuation Is a Dangerous Emotion: How To Recognise It

Keeping a Happy Relationship When Your Job Is More Demanding Than His  
Men You May Never Have Considered  
Fed Up With Trying To Be Thin? Learn From Four Girls Who Look Better When They're Plump

How Assertive Are You?

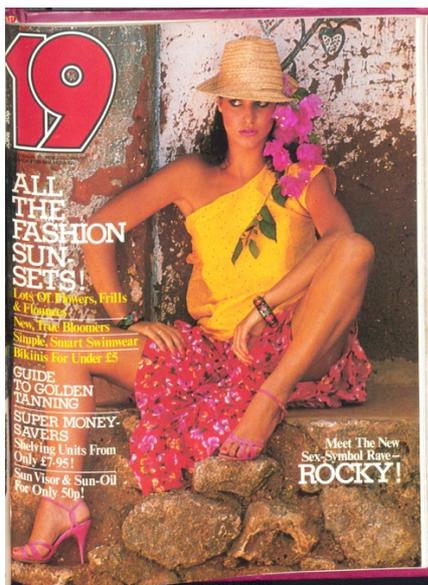
The Thorn Birds, Coleen McCullough's Passionate Novel. It's Already an International Best-seller (*literature/culture*)



19

February 1977

**FASHION'S GOT YOU ALL COVERED!** Soft & Sensuous Dresses / Cute & Classy Tomboy Togs / Bright & Carefree Casuals / High-Fashion News & Views from Paris/ Plus! The New Punk Looks (*fashion*)  
**HOW TO MAKE UP YOUR FACE LIKE A MODEL!** Step-By-Step Tips & Techniques (*beauty*)  
**SPECIALS!** 50 Exciting Holiday Ideas... How to Up-Date Tired Knits... Pull-Out Cookery Wall-Chart...  
**AND HERE'S WHAT MEN REALLY SAY AND THINK ABOUT GIRLS!**  
**EXCLUSIVE TO YOU!** 'Charlie' Cologne Spray In A Velvet Hanging Pouch **FOR ONLY £1.18!** (*offer*)



June 1977

**ALL THE FASHION SUN SETS!** Lots Of Flowers, Frills & Flounces / New, True Bloomers / Simple, Smart Swimwear / Bikinis For Under £5 (*fashion*)  
**GUIDE TO GOLDEN TANNING** (*beauty*)  
**SUPER MONEY SAVERS** Shelving Units From Only £7.95! Sun Visor & Sun-Oil For Only 50p! (*offer*)  
**Meet The New Sex-Symbol Rave - ROCKY!**



September 1977

FASHION FIT FOR AUTUMN! The Tailored Look From Jackets To Jodhpurs / Mix'n'Match

Knits & Cords / Satin-Look Suits Sweet'n'Simple Dresses AND How To Add Fun To What You Already Have (fashion)

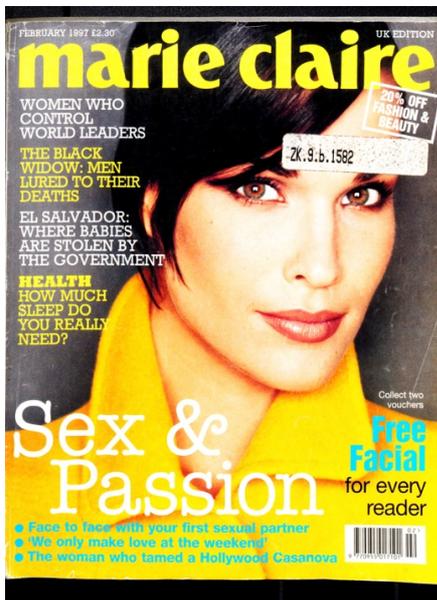
GET YOUR EYES RIGHT! Make-Up Tips To Suit All Shapes (beauty)

EXPERTLY COMPILED GUIDANCE QUESTIONNAIRE TO HELP YOU FIND YOUR TRUE VOCATION

FASHION OFFER! Tweedy Look Hacking Jacket In Three Colour Choices FOR ONLY £12.99! (offer)

1997

**MARIE CLAIRE**



February 1997

WOMEN WHO CONTROL WORLD LEADERS

THE BLACK WIDOW: MEN LURED TO THEIR DEATHS

EL SAVADOR: WHERE BABIES ARE STOLEN BY THE GOVERNMENT

HEALTH / HOW MUCH SLEEP DO YOU REALLY NEED?

Sex & Passion / Face to face with your first sexual partner / 'We only make love at the weekend' / The woman who tamed a Hollywood Casanova

Collect two vouchers / Free Facial for every reader (offer)

20% OFF FASHION & BEAUTY (offer)



**June 1997**

ARMED IN SUBURBIA: AMERICAN HOUSEWIVES PREPARING FOR WAR  
 INFIDELITY: SERIAL LOVE CHEATS CONFESS

UK CAMPAIGN WOMEN TERRORISED BY THEIR NEIGHBOURS

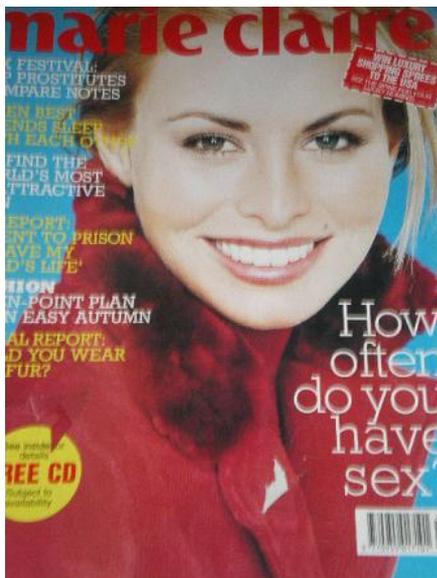
FROM MAYFAIR TO MOSCOW: BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE HAIRDRESSER'S

'THEY TOLD MY MOTHER I WAS DEAD'

~~FREE SHOPPING CARD~~ (offer)

Sex games / How far would you go to satisfy your partner in bed?

~~20% FASHION DISCOUNT~~ (offer)



**September 1997**

UK FESTIVAL: TOP PROSTITUTES COMPARE NOTES

WHEN BEST FRIENDS SLEEP WITH EACH OTHER

WE FIND THE UK'S MOST ATTRACTIVE MEN

REPORT: 'I WENT TO PRISON TO SAVE MY DAD'S LIFE'

~~FASHION: TEN-POINT PLAN AN EASY AUTUMN~~ (fashion)

SPECIAL REPORT: WOULD YOU WEAR FAKE FUR?

~~See inside for details FREE CD~~ Subject to availability (offer)

How often do you have sex?

~~WIN LUXURY SHOPPING SPREES TO THE USA~~ (competition)

## COSMOPOLITAN



### February 1997

SPECIAL SECTION MAN HUNT! Where the sharp, smart, sexiest men are - & how to take one alive!

GROUP ANOREXIA – THE DEADLY WAY WOMEN BOND

Your Sexual Style – Is it time you made a change?

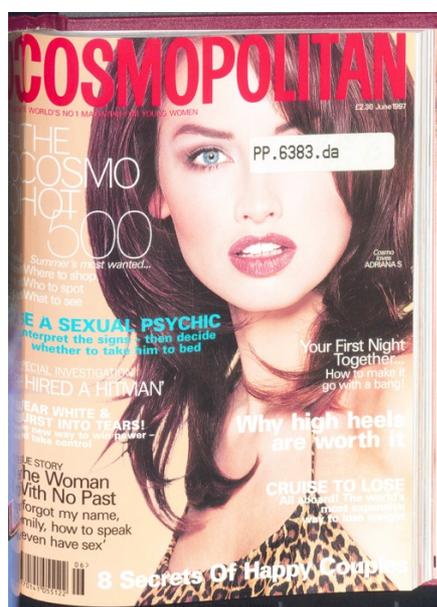
True-life report: ‘I shopped my abusive father’

CASH FOR KISSES Women who marry for money

Gotcha! 16 outrageous tales of infidelity... and discovery

FASHION EXTRAVAGANZA BRIT HOT Home is where the smart is / 28 page of non-stop shopping (fashion)

Great at work, lousy at love? Read it – and fax him the details



### June 1997

THE COSMO HOT 500 Summer's most wanted... Where to shop / Who to spot / What to see (fashion)

BE A SEXUAL PSYCHIC Interpret the signs – then decide whether to take him to bed

SPECIAL INVESTIGATION ‘I HIRED A HITMAN’

WEAR WHITE & BURST INTO TEARS! The new way to win power – and take control

TRUE STORY The Woman With No Past / ‘I forgot my name, family, how to speak and even have sex’

8 Secrets of Happy Couples

Your First Night Together... How to make it go with a bang!

Why high heels are worth it (fashion)

CRUISE TO LOSE All aboard! The world's most expensive way to lose weight



September 1997

*smart section* 25 SEX TABOOS Answers to the questions you *did* dare ask (no holes barred!)

BRITISH WOMEN WHO MARRY STRANGERS FOR MONEY

SPECIAL INVESTIGATION GYM-O-CIDE Why it's never been more dangerous to work out

Jennifer Aniston The best *Friends* girl talks exclusively to Cosmo

WHY MEN LOVE DRINK The intimate relationship you'll never be part of

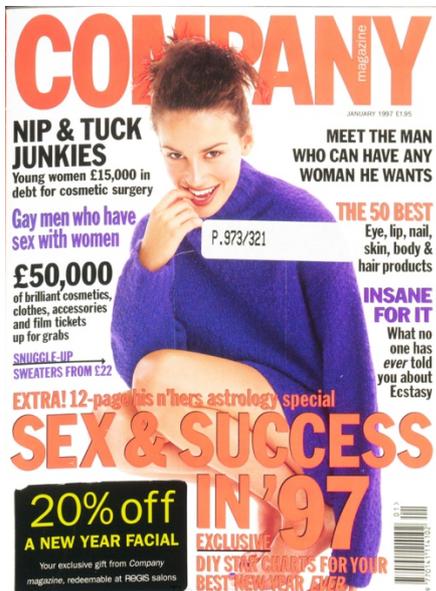
Amazing true story 'I survived an IRA bomb, but my lover nearly destroyed me'

Are you a TESSA, TIC or ABBA? The secret codes men use for women

'The First Time I Saw Her...' Men tell how they knew it was love

*news bedlines...* GIRL TO WOMAN Sex moves that show you've arrived

**COMPANY**



January 1997 (substitute for missing Feb issue)

NIP & TUCK JUNKIES Young women £15,000 in debt for cosmetic surgery

Gay men who have sex with women £50,000 of brilliant cosmetics, clothes, accessories and film tickets up for grabs (*offer/competition*)

SNUGGLE UP SWEATER FROM £22 (*fashion*)

EXTRA! 12-page his'n'hers astrology special SEX & SUCCESS IN '97 /

EXCLUSIVE DIY STAR CHARTS FOR YOUR BEST NEW YEAR EVER

20% off A NEW YEAR FACIAL (*offer*)

MEET THE MAN WHO CAN HAVE ANY WOMAN HE WANTS

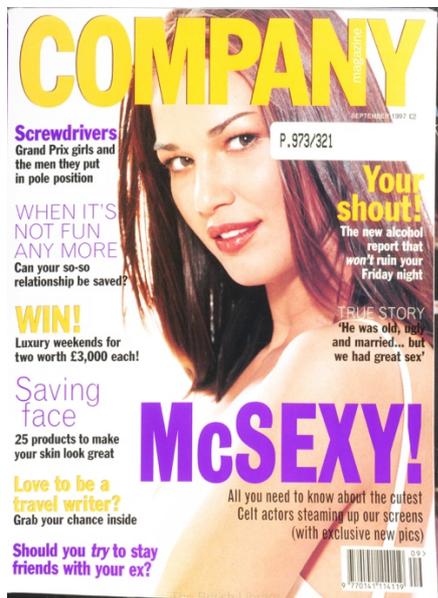
THE 50 BEST Eye, lip, nail, skin, body & hair products (*beauty*)

INSANE FOR IT What no one has *ever* told you about Ecstasy



**June 1997**  
**(SPECIAL LOVED-UP ISSUE)**

CAN YOU FIND LOVE IN SIX WEEKS?  
 Diaries of a real-life man hunt  
 YOUR LOVE HOROSCOPE When where and who it's going to happen with this summer!  
 BEAUTY EXTRA! Get ready for love with our 22-page better body special (*beauty*)  
 'I LOVE YOU' When to say it (and when to keep your mouth shut)  
 LOVE WEEKENDS! Two nights for the price of one at 25 luxury hotels around Britain (*offer*)  
 GETTING HITCHED? Win a £6,000 Caribbean wedding (*competition*)  
 'THE MINUTE I SAW HIM, I KNEW...'  
 Oooh aaah stories of love at first sight  
 TRUE STORY 'I only date men who pass my 51 LOVE tests'  
 LINGERIE YOU'LL LOVE (and so will he!) (*fashion*)



**September 1997**

Screwdrivers / Grand Prix girls and the men they put in pole position  
 WHEN IT'S NOT FUN ANYMORE Can your so-so relationship be saved?  
 WIN! Luxury weekends for two worth £3,000 each! (*competition*)  
 Saving face / 25 products to make your skin look great (*beauty*)  
 Love to be a travel writer? Grab your chance inside (*competition*)  
 Should you try to stay friends with your ex?  
 Your shout! The new alcohol report that won't ruin your Friday night  
 TRUE STORY 'He was old, ugly and married...but we had great sex'  
 McSEXY All you need to know about the cutest Celt actors steaming up our screens (with exclusive new pics)

2017

**STYLIST**

**February 2017**



- (1/2) LEAN IN Back / Why world domination at work is losing its appeal
- (8/2) WHY UNINSPIRING BREAKFASTS ARE TOAST (food)
- (15/2) THE FASHION ISSUE: SPRING/SUMMER 2017 / Femininity reclaimed (fashion)
- (22/2) WE WILL NOT GO QUIETLY BACK TO THE 1950s

**June 2017**



- (7/6) [speech bubble] Hey! I was thinking of voting Tory tomorrow? What do you think?
- [three grey dots speech bubble]
- [notification] Amy has left the conversation
- [message bar] Is politics dividing your friendship?
- (14/6) Seriously good / Elisabeth Moss on ambition, activism and the joy of a 5pm Moscow mule
- (21/6) Ready to rumble/ Alison Brie, star of your new favourite wrestling drama (yes, really)
- (28/6) Have the sweetest British summer

## September 2017



- (6/9) Touchy Feely / Jourdan Dunn reveals how to wear this season's new trends (fashion)  
(13/9) THE SEPTEMBER FASHION ISSUE 2017 / braver / stronger / wiser(fashion)  
(20/9) Renaissance Man / Why we need more men like Russell Brand  
(27/9) We are family / A portrait of the extraordinary Haim sisters

## COSMOPOLITAN



## February 2017

UNDO THE DAMAGE! The workout everyone is talking about  
MEET THE MOST FANCIED PEOPLE ON TINDER\* / \*And find out how you can be one  
HAVE YOU GOT VEGAN WRINKLES? What extreme diets are doing to our faces  
'I JUST CAN'T STOP MYSELF' One magazine editor's secret addiction  
HOW TO BECOME A SUPER BRAND By those who've done it  
EXCLUSIVE / Emma Willis / TOOK US HOME AND GOT US NAKED



## June 2017

~~SUN'S OUT! What to wear! Where to party!~~ (fashion)

BEAUTIFUL & DAMNED / The shocking double lives of 'IT' girls  
 'MANSION AND PRIVATE JET INCLUDED...' Why the world's best jobs are looking for you

HEY THERE BIG MOUTH! What the hell has everyone done to their lips?

SEX WITH PORN STARS Why even nice guys are at it

GIRL BOSS! OLIVIA PALERMO / HOW SHE MADE A BUSINESS OUT OF GETTING DRESSED



## September 2017

~~SECRET STYLE BUYS / SHOP IT. WEAR IT. GRAM IT.~~ (fashion)

DIRTY DEALS The influencers turning to crime

ARE YOU IMPRESSIVE? THE WORLD'S HOTTEST COMPANIES TELL YOU

FANCY A STIFF ONE?! 19 NEW WAYS TO SINK A DRINK

MY £1200 A NIGHT DATE One writer road tests male escorts\* / \*From budget to blowout

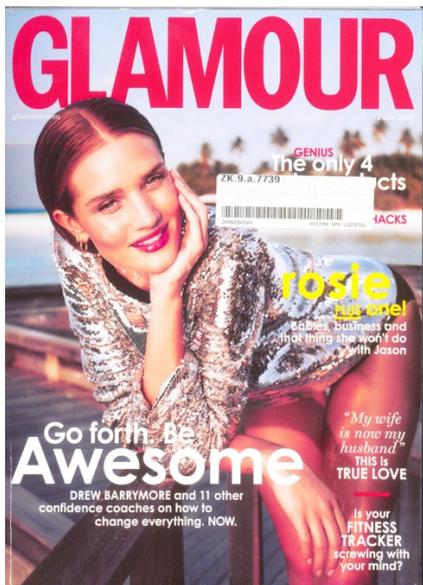
JESSICA ALBA / THE LIFE OF A BUSINESS MOGUL

**GLAMOUR**



**February 2017**

WOW! We're all new / BIGGER / BOLDER / BETTER  
WIN! 10 x £1,000 TOPSHOP GIFT CARDS (We'll even close the store while you spend!) (competition)  
Anna Kendrick / On how she silenced her inner critic  
2017 Let's do this! Our 30-day mission to change your whole year  
#THEPOSITIVITYPROJECT



**June 2017**

GENIUS / The only 4 beauty products you'll need (beauty)  
rosie PLUS one / Babies, business and that thing she won't do with Jason  
'My wife is now my husband' THIS IS TRUE LOVE  
Is your FITNESS TRACKER screwing with your mind?  
Go forth. Be Awesome / DREW BARRYMORE and 11 other confidence coaches on how to change everything. NOW



**September 2017**

Blake Lively / The truth about her 'perfect' life

SCREW YOU, ZEN! Could being a cranky bitch save you?

564 New Looks / Glitter for grown-ups + everything else you need to crack AUTUMN FASHION (fashion)

HONESTY ISSUE Love / Sex / Religion / Bodies / It's all on the table. And BS-free JUST. BE. YOU. 100% real, happier than ever. P54

'SURPRISINGLY SWEET LESSONS - FROM MY THREESOME'

So, is everyone in Britain racist now?

*Discuss.*

