MEDIA REPORT TO WOMEN

Covering all the issues concerning women and media

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The Final Frontier? Equity in Sports Reporting

Georgetown University's School of Continuing Studies in January 2024 sponsored a conversation that drew a line from the mid-20th century sports reporting of women journalists to the present day, noting changes, improvements and some residual resistance.

The discussants were:

Ruth Bonapace, former journalist, magazine editor, and sportswriter for the Associated Press

Sally Jenkins, sports columnist, The Washington Post

Kayla Key, video producer/editor at the Washington Commanders

Raichele Privette, audio producer and host of Bleeding Green Nation

Carole Feldman, the faculty director of Georgetown master's in journalism program, opened the discussion with her recollection of aiming for her "dream job," a position in the communications department of the New York Mets. She saw it as a steppingstone to a sports reporting job. The Mets saw it quite a bit differently, telling her she could work in hospitality or as a secretary but not in the baseball team's communication department. Feldman went on to a long career with the Associated Press.

Longtime sports marketing and management executive Bobby Goldwater moderated the discussion. Goldwater spent 24 years in various executive positions at Madison Square Garden, among other high-profile venues. He is

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Pew Finds Interest in News Sluggish Across Most Platforms

A declining share of U.S. adults are following the news closely, according to recent Pew Research Center surveys. And audiences are shrinking for several older types of news media – such as local TV stations, most newspapers and public radio – even as they grow for newer platforms like podcasts, as well as for a few specific media brands.

Pew Research Center has long tracked trends in the news industry. In addition to asking survey questions about Americans' news consumption habits, Pew's State of the News Media project uses several other data sources to look at various aspects of the industry, including audience size, revenue and other metrics.

The latest data shows a complex picture. Here are some of the key findings:

—For the most part, daily newspaper circulation nationwide – counting digital subscriptions and print circulation – continues to decline, falling to just under 21 million in 2022, according to projections using data from the Alliance for Audited Media (AAM). Weekday circulation is down 8% from the previous year and 32% from five years prior, when it

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MEDIA REPORT TO WOMEN

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now an adjunct professor in Georgetown's Sports Industry Management Program. His observation about women reporters who began appearing at the Garden to cover sports were that they were "really talented, really dedicated, really determined." Goldwater said he dismissed resistance to hiring a woman for the public relations department with his appointment of Susan Kerr, who went on to become the director of programming for CBS Sports.

The Washington Post's Sally Jenkins, longtime sports reporting star and book author ("I'm 63 and I started doing this when I was 20! I've covered everything but a rodeo and I'm working on that one!") declined to place herself in the "pioneer" category, crediting women who preceded her with kicking the door down. "I came out of school in 1982 – it was the women in the 70s who did the difference-making." She praised sports reporting legend Lesley Visser in particular with groundbreaking work. Visser was the first female NFL analyst on TV, covered multiple sports for television and was the first woman welcomed to the Pro Football Hall of Fame. It wasn't always this way: Jenkins recalled that when Visser once approached quarterback Terry Bradshaw for an interview, he saw her notebook and signed it, thinking she was a fan seeking an autograph.

The discussants noted that evaluating women's success in sport reporting isn't so much about how many there are (though that matters) but what they are doing. Jenkins said that said sports reporting was "a good way to learn how to live in a man's world. You're fighting a constant undertow." With women just a small fraction of sports journalists, even with the law on their side, there were slights. Jenkins recalled arguments about who was "the right person" to write the big story, remembering "being told to hand my notes to someone who hadn't even been in the stadium."

Bonapace recalls being asked in the early 1980s to finagle a shopping trip with pro golfing champion Nancy Lopez to get details on her pending divorce from one famous athlete and expected remarriage to another. Nothing came of it, but it's an example of how female journalists and athletes were being pigeonholed at the time.

Jenkins also credits her bosses at the Post, particularly George Solomon, with giving her crucial support in dealing with owners, coaches and players as women's presence in the press box, on the courts and fields, and in the locker rooms increased. Bonapace recalls less support when coaches and owners complained about providing locker room access to women reporters: "The bosses at the AP basically caved to the team," which for her was the New York Giants. The

team finally agree to begin bringing players out of the locker room to her for interviews, but Bonapace said that as a wire reporter that was a handicap: "It wasn't spontaneous, it was slow when I had to be fast… It needed to be one way for everyone."

Privette says, as a younger journalist, it's stunning to hear the stories of women who had to fight so hard for assignments and access to athletes for interviews, particularly post-game locker room interviews. But she said she does notice if women are sidelined into asking fan questions or producing player features as opposed to "reporting the story line of the game, analysis, breaking down the action."

She also observes that the presence of male athletes at women's sporting events, such as LeBron James in the audience at WNBA events, elevates the visibility of female athletes and the reporters and commentators who cover them and is a motivator for aspiring women sports reporters who see increased opportunities. Privette herself, as well, a Black journalist, says she represents a perspective that informs her work and is valued by her podcast listeners.

Even though she's a sample of one, Key's current assignment on the staff of an NFL team also inspires. Her video reporting and production team consists of six persons. Four are women.

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was over 30 million. Out of 136 papers included in this analysis, 120 experienced declines in weekday circulation in 2022.

While most newspapers in the United States are struggling, some of the biggest brands are experiencing digital growth. AAM data does not include all digital circulation to three of the nation's most prominent newspapers: The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post. But while all three are experiencing declines in their print subscriptions, other available data suggests substantial increases in digital subscriptions for The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal. (Similar data is not available for The Washington Post.) For example, The New York Times saw a 32% increase in digital-only subscriptions in 2022, surpassing 10 million subscribers and continuing years of growth, according to filings with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). There are many reasons this data is not directly comparable with the AAM data, including the fact that some digital subscriptions to The New York Times do not include news and are limited to other products like cooking and games. Still, these brands are bucking the overall trend.

Overall, digital traffic to newspapers' websites is declining. The average monthly number of unique visitors to the websites of the country's top 50 newspapers (based on circulation, and including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post) declined 20% to under 9 million in the fourth quarter of 2022, down from over 11 million in the same period in 2021, according to Comscore data. The length of the average visit to these sites is also falling – to just under a minute and a half in the last quarter of 2022.

Traffic to top digital news websites is not picking up the slack. Traffic to the most visited news websites – those with at least 10 million unique visitors per month in the fourth quarter of a given year – has declined over the past two years. The average number of monthly unique visitors to these sites was 3% lower in October-December 2022 than in the same period in 2021, following a 13% drop the year before that, according to Comscore. The length of the average visit to these sites is getting shorter, too. (These sites can include newspapers' websites, such as The New York Times, as well as other digital news sites like CNN, Fox News or Axios.)

Across several years of data, there has been a drop in audiences for local TV news, affecting morning, evening and late-night time slots alike. For example, the average number of TVs tuning into ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox affiliates for the evening news was just over 3 million in 2022, down from just over 4 million in 2016.

Audience trends are a little more mixed when it comes to TV news on cable and network stations. Prime-time and daytime audiences for CNN, Fox News and MSNBC all grew in 2020, the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, before declining in 2021. Fox News' audiences ticked back up in 2022, while the audiences for the other two channels continued to decline.

Audiences for news programming on ABC, CBS and NBC have been relatively stable in recent years, with some variation depending on the time slot. Audiences for evening news are up slightly since 2016 on all three networks, but they are modestly down for morning news.

The story is mixed when it comes to audio, too. The share of Americans who listen to terrestrial radio has declined in recent years, as has listenership on NPR and PRX. But there has been a clear rise in audiences for podcasts and other types of online audio. Although podcasts often are not news-related, about two-thirds of U.S. podcast listeners say they hear news discussed on the podcasts they listen to.

The methodology Pew used to assess this news media usage is here: https://www.pewresearch.org/journalism/2023/11/10/state-of-the-news-media-methodology/

Taylor, Beyoncé and Journalism: Follow the Market

By Sheila Gibbons, Editor

The creative artists that have given us Swifties and the Beyhive received special recognition last fall when The Tennessean in Nashville, the daily newspaper of Music City, announced that it would be creating a beat dedicated to coverage of Taylor Swift and one to coverage of Beyoncé Knowles-Carter.

The Taylor and Beyoncé celebrity beats that have been created at The Tennessean will share content nationwide via the USA TODAY Network.

In journalism, reporters have long been assigned to beats that cover issues (economics) or an important public officeholder (governor) but not usually an individual. There is a beat covering the U.S. president but it's not the Joe Biden beat; the personality changes with the officeholder. At a time when newsroom staffing is being slashed everywhere, with fewer reporters handling heavier workloads and sharing beats, it's startling that staff-strapped newsrooms would allocate resources this way.

Taylor and Beyoncé

The initiation of personal beats recognizes the extraordinary influence Taylor and Beyoncé have exerted artistically, culturally, and given the enormous revenues their tours and recordings are achieving, economically. Newspapers desperately in search of new readers and advertisers, and the revenues they can bring, are making herculean efforts to increase engagement with potential readers, particularly affluent ones. So why not incorporate news about two cultural juggernauts in that effort?

Both Taylor and Beyoncé have fans that span generations. The youngest cohort – preteen and teen girls -- makes all the noise, but among their fans are upwardly mobile Millennials with jobs and Boomers who can afford the hefty ticket prices for a premium seat at a concert for themselves or a child. Any publisher would drool over those prospects.

So what does the Taylor and Beyoncé coverage look like?

Bryan West got the Taylor assignment in November 2023 (with some grumbling on the internet from those wondering why a woman didn't get the job). Since then, his articles have emphasized Taylor's legendary run ("Taylor Swift and the Grammys: Singer Could Make History this Weekend"; "Taylor Swift Dethrones Elvis Presley at the Top of the Billboard 200 chart"), fan adoration "(Taylor Swift Fan Breaks Guinness World Record for IDing Her Songs"; "Swiftie Recreates Entire ERAS Tour on TikTok"), romance ("Taylor Swift Braves Subzero Temps to Support Travis Kelce in Playoffs" – no dearth of reports about that relationship) and announcements of Taylor Swift courses being introduced at Harvard and the University of Florida.

The Tennessean tapped Caché McClay for the Beyoncé beat. Thus far, McClay's work considers Beyoncé somewhat more as a person than a performer, writing about her family life ("Blue Ivy Carter Turns 12: Take a Look Back at her Top Moments"; "Beyoncé as 'Mother': How She Celebrates Family, Fans in her Work"), personal associations ("Take a Beyoncé -inspired Trip to Houston with this Itinerary"; "Beyoncé Loves Her Frenchy's Chicken. What Makes It So Special?") and fashion ("Meet Designer Behind Bodysuit Beyoncé Wears in 'Renaissance' Poster"; "Experts Decode 'Cozy' Dress Code for Beyoncé Film Premiere: 'I do not foresee simplicity.")

Bryan's and McClay's reporting assignments were announced with great fanfare. "Taylor Swift is a singular cultural force who is shaping our world in arguably unprecedented fashion," said Michael A. Anastasi, Gannett's vice president of local news and the editor of The Tennessean. "Chronicling her story, her impact, her influence takes unique expertise and experience and we're confident Bryan is the right journalist for this moment."

Anastasi's announcement of McClay's appointment as the Beyoncé correspondent was equally effusive: "We are so very excited to launch what will prove to be unparalleled coverage of an amazing businesswoman and artist. Caché is well prepared for this role, and her unique experience will further strengthen our extraordinary team of music journalists."

Click on any of West's and McClay's articles and up pops a page from The Tennessean with subscription pricing options for continuing to read.

It's an interesting experiment in journalism adapting to popular interests and newspaper marketing matching those interests with revenue potential. Where it will lead in terms of a readership and revenue bump for The Tennessean and the USA TODAY Network newspapers, and for the careers of West and McClay, is anyone's guess. Taylor and Beyoncé will be just fine.

Briefly...

Cecilia Vega, appointed in March 2023 as the first Latina correspondent for CBS's "60 Minutes" after pioneering as the first Latina White House correspondent for an English-language network (ABC), reflected on the trajectory of her career in an interview with Washington Post Live's Alexis Hernandez.

Vega

"I think that if I ever decided to go back and be--do the flip and be a newspaper reporter again or writing full-time, I would be a better writer now because of what I have learned from broadcast, which is pictures and textures and sound. And we get lazy as newspaper reporters and making our phone calls from the office, and broadcast teaches you, you've got to leave, and you've got to get out there and see and smell and meet in person. And so for me, it just--the newspapers just really helped create the reporter that I am today."

As far as her notable "firsts" go, Vega says, **"It is a privilege to be the first, and as I say all the time, you don't want to be the last when you're the first.** But with that, I think, comes a pressure--can come a pressure, and I am certainly one to put pressure on myself about a lot of things. You have these expectations of yourself. I think I feel like there is an expectation from others, whether that's fair or not, of what you do when you're the first. And you don't want to screw it up, and I think often when you're the first, you feel like this is self-imposed. I think it's self-imposed. Maybe it's society too. You've got to walk, you know, faster. You've got to be better. You've got to be smarter, and you can't screw it up. Like, we should be past the first at this stage of the game. I would have liked to have thought we would be past the first."

Read her wide-ranging interview here: https://www.washingtonpost.com/washington-post-live/2023/11/09/transcript-race-america-giving-voice-with-cecilia-vega/

In January, Niloofar Hamedi and Elahe Mohammadi were released on bail after 17 months of wrongful detention by Iranian authorities for their reporting on protests following Mahsa Amini's death. Arrested in September 2022, Hamedi and Mohammadi were sentenced to 13 and 12 years in jail, respectively, on charges of spreading propaganda, committing a crime against national security, and collaborating with a foreign state. Despite their release, Hamedi and Mohammadi's fight is far from over. In addition to their remaining sentences, both women were immediately charged for not wearing hijabs while celebrating their release. "This callous charge demonstrates Iranian authorities' determination to silence women's voices and persecute independent journalism, no matter the cost," the IWMF said in a statement. Iran continues to be one of the harshest environments for press freedom, ranking 177 out of 180 countries on the RSF (Reporters Without Borders) Press Freedom Index and currently detaining 21 journalists. Among them is Narges Mohammedi, winner of the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize.

Pierre at the lectern

Karine Jean-Pierre, the White House press secretary, in November 2023 named a new lectern in the White House briefing room for Alice Dunnigan of The Associated Negro Press and Ethel L. Payne, who joined her on the beat a few years later for The Chicago Defender. Dunnigan was the first Black woman to join the White House press corps, credentialed in 1948."The White House lectern is a powerful symbol of freedom and democracy beamed around the world on a regular basis," said Jean-Pierre, who is the first Black woman to serve as White House press secretary. "I can't think of two better people to be associated with that symbol than Alice and Ethel."

Journalists are bringing needed attention to the "diet culture" that targets prospective brides as soon as they begin shopping for their weddings. Online weight-loss pitches find them immediately. A report by Hannah MacKenzie for Glamour UK says that "The #weddingdiet hashtag has 21.7m views on TikTok, personal trainers promote 'bridal fitness packages', and sayings like 'shred for the wed' dominate in bridal magazines. So unsurprisingly, a recent poll of 1,009 Hitched users revealed that 84% said they felt pressure to lose weight for the day, 85% have been comparing themselves to others online since becoming engaged, and 51% don't think their body im-

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The Role of the Anti-Heroine on Fact-Based Television

By Molly Brost

Molly Brost is the author of The Anti-Heroine on Contemporary Television: Transgressive Women (Lexington Books 2021). She currently serves as associate professor of English at the College of Saint Mary in Omaha, Nebraska. She holds a Ph.D. in American Culture Studies from Bowling Green State University, as well as an M.A. in English from Colorado State University and a B.A. in Journalism and English from the University of Nebraska at Kearney.

In the early 2000s, television was rife with anti-heroines, characters who, in the words of Margaret Tally, author of The Rise of the Anti-Heroine in TV's Third Golden Age, were neither "uniformly good nor evil, but [had] qualities that mark[ed] [them] as doing bad things for good reasons" (2016). Scholars and television journalists cast this label on characters as diverse as the morally ambiguous, adulterous political "fixer" Olivia Pope (Kerry Washington) of ABC's Scandal (2012-2018); the alcoholic, traumatized, superpowered title character of Netflix's Jessica Jones (Krysten Ritter) (2015-2019); and the often selfish, often unpleasant aspiring writer Hannah Horvath (Lena Dunham) on HBO's Girls (2012-2017).

The wide variety of characters labeled as anti-heroines meant that this character type defied an easy definition, though important character traits were identified. Media scholar Yael Levy recognized that "an antiheroine can be either 'too much' or 'too little'– if she was 'just right,' she would be a heroine" (2022). Whereas a traditional heroine might be pretty, an anti-heroine might either be too overtly sexy or not take pains with her appearance at all. If a heroine might be expected to be a caretaker to her romantic partner, children, and/or friends, an anti-heroine might be self-centered, needy, irresponsible, or entirely self-reliant.

Others pointed to the fact that there is a gendered component to the standards for hero and heroine, anti-hero and anti-heroine. In their book The New Female Anti-Hero, Sarah Hagelin and Gillian Silverman suggested that because women have not traditionally been cast as the hero, a woman taking on a heroic role is an anti-heroine on general principle: "[…]the traditional heroine is supposed to display and promulgate polite society rather than actively redeem it[…]There is no space for the female hero in this scenario because the woman who rescues the world necessarily disrupts conventional femininity […]The woman who tends toward the male heroic tends toward the female antiheroic" (2022). By this rationale, a female action hero, for example, might be labeled as an anti-hero even if/when she is not operating in the moral "grey area" that anti-heroes typically occupy simply because the action hero role is not traditional for a woman. In my 2021 book, The Anti-Heroine on Contemporary Television: Transgressive Women, I clarify that while "the men who have traditionally been given this [anti-hero] label […] are often criminals," women are just as likely to be given the [anti-heroine] label for simply being transgressive: for not following the transgressive gender roles that are still placed on women; for breaking rules set by their employers; for allowing themselves to be led by their hearts and by their libidos; for behaving in harmful, self-destructive ways; and/or for being unattractive or unpleasant (Brost, 2021, 3).

As Levy, Hagelin and Silverman, and I can agree, a female character does not really have to be that bad to be considered an anti-heroine; she just has to step outside of traditionally acceptable feminine roles, behaviors, aspirations, and appearances.

We can perhaps partly credit the popularity of the anti-heroine character type with television's recent interest in telling—and, at times, retelling—the stories of real-life women who have been embroiled in media and political scandals, who have been revealed as frauds and scam artists. In the first few years of the 2020s alone, multiple real-life "anti-heroines" have seen their stories come to life on cable and streaming services, often after already having been the subject of documentaries and podcasts.

These women include (but are not limited to) former presidential intern Monica Lewinsky, whose story is told in FX's American Crime Story: Impeachment (2021); scam artist Anna "Delvey" Sorokin, the subject of Netflix's Inventing Anna (2022); actress Pamela Anderson, whose sex tape scandal is recreated in Hulu's Pam and Tommy (2022); Theranos founder Elizabeth Holmes, who was ultimately found guilty of defrauding investors and whose rise and fall is chronicled in Hulu's The Dropout; and Michelle Carter, who was convicted of involuntary manslaughter after encouraging her boyfriend to commit suicide via text message, and whose story is told in Hulu's The Girl from Plainville (2022). This article argues that though these series continue the anti-heroine tradition of centering and seeking to understand complex, problematic women rather than maligning them, casting them as the villain, or casting them aside altogether, such series can be problematic for a number of reasons.

It should be noted that some of the series examined can be seen not only as perhaps being inspired or enabled by the popularity of the anti-heroine character type, but as part of a larger recent societal interest in revisiting the stories of maligned women of the past. Some credit the beginning of this trend to writer/podcaster Sarah Marshall, whose essay on the infamous figure skater Tonya Harding led to the podcast You're Wrong About. This podcast began in 2018 and reframes/goes deeper into scandals, historical events, and cultural phenomena that the public may have a wrong or overly simplistic idea about, with examples including not only women such as Harding, Lewinsky, and Princess Diana, but subjects such as afterschool specials, the DARE program, and the O.J. Simpson trial, to name only a very few of the topics covered in the more than five years the podcast has been airing. As Vox's Constance Grady notes,

> Wronged-woman revisitations have been fashionable for a few years now. After simmering under the radar with the success of the popular podcast You're Wrong About since 2018, it came to a rolling boil in 2021 with Hulu and the New York Times's documentary Framing Britney Spears. Pop culture populated itself with stories of the women we loved and despised and raked over the coals, and with eloquent mea culpas on their behalf (2023).

Historically, the media has not been kind to women involved in scandals, including Anderson, Lewinsky, Harding, and countless others, often villainizing them or treating them as a punchline. More recently, podcasters, television producers, and writers have, in the tradition of the anti-heroine drama, become interested in going a bit deeper and humanizing these women.

Reviews of Impeachment and Pam and Tommy support the theory that the appeal of these narratives lies in the desire to reexamine oversimplified stories and look at them from a more sympathetic perspective. As The Guardian's Lucy Mangan argues, "Impeachment offers us the chance to look at ourselves and at pivotal historical moments and re-examine the critical lenses through which we saw them" (2021). Vulture's Kathryn VanArendonk places Pam and Tommy in this context, as well, stating,

> In the tradition of I, Tonya, Free Britney, Lorena, ACS: Impeachment, and the You're Wrong About podcast, Pam and Tommy is framed as a delicious, much-longed-for upending. Inevitably, we will discover our unexamined assumptions about this story were wrong. At the very least, things were more complicated than our highly reflective 1990s lenses allowed us to understand at the time.

One part of the appeal of these narratives, then, is that they allow us to examine past events from a current perspective, allowing their subjects the benefit of more progressive views on gender roles and sexuality. They also give the audience time with these characters that allow

opportunities to better understand and empathize with them.

These narratives, however, are not without their problems. One is that, though they are often sympathetic to their subjects, the subjects have not always asked or consented to have their stories told. While Monica Lewinsky served as co-producer on Impeachment, Pamela Anderson had no such involvement with Pam and Tommy. As The Washington Post's Inkoo Kang argues, "The miniseries doesn't feel like I, Tonya or the Monica Lewinsky and O.J. Simpson/Marcia Clark seasons of ACS, because the women at the center of those stories have processed their pain and were willing to retell them, while Anderson appears not to be." One might argue that this does not necessarily matter, and that it would also be problematic to only be able to tell stories from subjects' direct points-of-view. Indeed, Pam and Tommy director Craig Gillespie makes the case for why Anderson's story should be told: "I felt, for us, what we're trying to do is really change the narrative and your perspective of what happened. And this felt like such an opportunity to do that and to be able to look at the story through today's lens" (Grady 2023). However, Vox's Constance Grady argues that this shows a lack of respect for Anderson:

> The argument here is that Anderson was a wronged woman of the type that was currently fashionable. If she did not agree to her story being retold, it didn't matter. It's the same logic that animated the release of the sex tape in the '90s, the dehumanization at its core disguised with a faux-progressive veneer. The story could go on without her, because she had made herself that kind of woman.

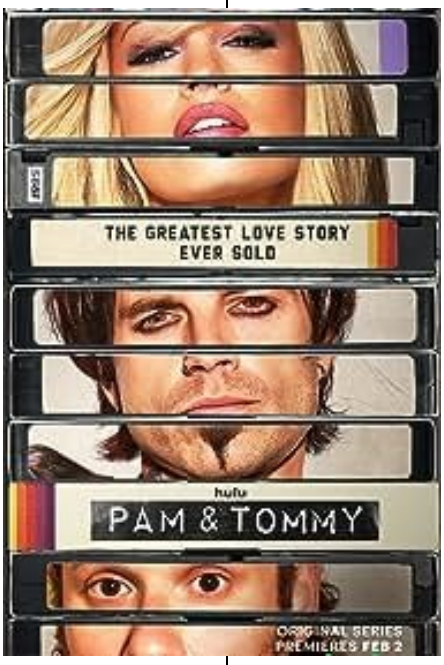
Such retellings, then, have the potential to be just as traumatizing and dehumanizing as the original scandals that the subjects were involved in. Further, it means that the subjects have to continue to be defined by their pasts, and that their pasts are introduced to people who may not have known much, if anything, about the original story in the first place. The fact that the story is told through a new, "more progressive" lens might ultimately not matter much to someone who is simply trying to move on. Critics note that this concern with exposing women's traumatic personal experiences for public consumption is not exclusive to shows based on women whose stories happened decades ago. Of The Girl from Plainville, which chronicles the 2017 case determining Michelle Carter's role in boyfriend Conrad Roy's suicide, The Hollywood Reporter's Angie Han observes, "As with so many others in the growing category of shows that focus on unfairly maligned women, like Pam and Tommy, there's an inevitable discomfort that comes from the realization that we're consuming entertainment built out of the worst moments of real people's lives" (2022). That is not to say that such shows are meant to just function as entertainment; they often provide insight into those involved in a way that a news story or a documentary often does not. They can do so using creative techniques; for example, inspired by the fact that Carter was a big fan of the TV show Glee, particularly its star Lea Michele, The Girl from Plainville stages a few Glee-like musical numbers to show how Carter may have imagined herself and her experiences. However, these concerns about creating entertainment out of traumatizing experiences, along with the more overtly staged aspects of some of these productions such as musical numbers, point to the fact that there is often a fine line between helping viewers to understand someone and trying to find the entertainment value in their experiences. Another problem is that, though the showrunners typically do their best to be sympathetic to the main character, other characters are often not given the same regard. Mangan particularly takes issue with Impeachment's portrayal of Linda Tripp, who infamously betrayed Lewinsky by secretly recording their private phone conversations. As Mangan states,

> Tripp died last year and– whatever your politics or memory of the time – it is hard to watch Impeachment without feeling that this has freed its creators to treat the character cruelly. We are shown her snacking or eating dismal microwaved meals at every opportunity[…]and even with an actor as good as [Sarah] Paulson wringing all available nuance from the script, Tripp remains perilously close to bitter-hag territory (2021).

The creators of such shows, then, are only interested in humanizing characters insofar as doing so

works in the service of the story they are telling.

This can also be seen in Inventing Anna's treatment of Rachel DeLoache Williams, a one-time friend of Anna Sorokin's who helped the police to track her down and testified against her in court after Sorokin left Williams to cover a $62,000 hotel bill on a vacation that the two of them took with another friend. While one could certainly find reasons to sympathize with aspects of Williams's situation regardless of whether they agreed with how she handled things—the average person wouldn't deal easily with suddenly having to come up with $62,000 they had not been expecting to pay-- in Inventing Anna, Williams is portrayed as greedy, opportunistic, and traitorous. As The Independent's Annabel Nugent observes, "Inventing Anna goes beyond the usual parameters of artistic license. It appears to have a personal vendetta against Williams[…]For a show interested in grey areas, Inventing Anna goes out of its way to make us hate Rachel." (There has been some speculation that this may have been because Williams sold the rights to her story to competitor HBO). This highlights a problematic aspect of turning real people into characters in another person's narrative; said characters may be made to look better or worse depending on how it fits the story. Further, such shows are not necessarily interested in being fair, accurate, and compassionate towards everyone involved.



Additionally, even though such series are often praised for the actors' performances, sometimes critics question what the point is, or argue that the filmmakers are trying to force a sympathetic reading on the main character. Critics also sometimes argue that the filmmakers are trying to make these women's stories fit a broader cultural narrative. For example, Vox's Alyssa Wilkinson wonders, "Why tell (and retell and retell)[…]tales of people who defrauded their investors and hurt their friends? What's the point? In the case of Inventing Anna, the answer is some ethically muddled, bizarrely patronizing mumbo-jumbo about how women are punished for doing things that men get away with. Okay? Is that all?" (2022). Similarly, Of The Dropout, The Verge's Charles Pulliam-Moore argues,

> The show uses its supporting cast to illustrate the degree to which people were willing to enable Holmes– sometimes knowingly– in order to feel better about themselves or to support causes larger than any of them as individuals, like the push to combat misogyny in tech. Because of this, though, The Dropout often feels as if it's handling Holmes' story with kid gloves (2022).

Such narratives might treat the woman portrayed with even more sympathy than warranted, then, in order to make a point. While trying to understand such women is arguably admirable, it sometimes may come at the expense of avoiding criticism, which can be seen as just as lacking in nuance as a portrayal that is largely villainizing. As entertainment journalist Melissa Maerz argues, "underestimating a woman's capacity for evil is as insulting as underestimating her intelligence" (Jensen and Maerz, 2013). While "evil" is perhaps a dramatic word to use in this context, the point stands that it is problematic to shy away from trying to make a woman look too bad.

With all of this in mind, it is perhaps unsurprising that the message of these stories is often a bit confusing; there is potential for the viewer to walk away wondering how they are supposed to feel about what they have just watched, and who they are supposed to root for. For example, in The Dropout, we eventually follow Theranos employees and eventual whistleblowers Tyler Shultz and Erika Cheung as they work to collect evidence against Holmes and cooperate with Wall Street Journal reporter John Carreyrou; the viewer may very well find themselves looking forward to Elizabeth Holmes being exposed/found out, even after the story has tried so hard to help the audience understand her actions. The same can be said for the aforementioned Rachel DeLoache Williams storyline in Inventing Anna; even as the narrative actively works to vilify her, the viewer may find themselves confused, wondering what was so terrible about her trying to get her money back. While it is not a prerequisite that a viewer have someone to unproblematically root for throughout a series, it can feel confusing to find that one's allegiance has shift-

ed partway through a story, or to feel that they are supposed to feel sympathy for someone they don't.

These narratives do reveal a number of interesting themes, however. First of all, viewers have a fascination with real stories, told in a number of different ways, from a number of different perspectives, and even in a number of different time periods. Elizabeth Holmes has been the subject of a podcast, a Hulu series, and documentaries, and been profiled in countless other articles. Monica Lewinsky's story was told in real time when it happened, and has been endlessly scrutinized since. Viewers have an appetite for picking apart the minutiae of true stories and are not satisfied with hearing just one perspective.

Further, the stories of Lewinsky and Anderson, in particular, reflect a cultural shame with how women have historically been treated by the media. Though, as previously noted, Anderson did not ask to have her story retold, there is something to be said about the fact that the culture as a whole has realized that it is problematic to vilify a woman for making a sex tape with her then-husband in the first place, rather than considering it an invasion of privacy for that tape to be stolen and distributed without her consent.

Additionally, these real-life anti-heroines are often played by acclaimed and up-and-coming actresses, with Amanda Seyfried, Beanie Feldstein, Julia Garner, Elle Fanning, and Lily James playing Holmes, Lewinsky, Sorokin, Carter, and Anderson, respectively. This illustrates that there is an appeal and a prestige to taking on the role of a real-life anti-heroine. Amanda Seyfried won the 2022 Emmy for her portrayal of Holmes; James, Garner, and Sarah Paulson, who played Linda Tripp in Impeachment, were all nominated for Emmys in the Outstanding Lead Actress in a Limited or Anthology Series or Movie in the same year. Even if the series themselves receive mixed reviews, the performances often receive recognition, indicating that there is a perceived difficulty level and respect imbued in playing a real character.

The series further illustrate that not a lot has changed about the types of women that are seen as anti-heroines. While some of the women, such as Holmes, Sorokin, and Carter actually were found guilty of committing crimes, many, if not most, also arguably fit Levy's definition that anti-heroines are often "too much" or "not enough" of something that women are "supposed" to be, with Anderson perhaps being "too" overtly sexual and Holmes being too ambitious. The five of them put together illustrate that "anti-heroine" is perhaps too narrow of a label, as someone who was once involved in a sex scandal (such a Lewinsky or Anderson) is very different from someone who knowingly defrauded others (such as Holmes or Sorokin) and different still someone whose actions directly contributed to someone else's death (Carter). Though these women are not all treated identically in their respective series, their all being considered appealing subjects for based-on-a-true-story limited TV series in the first place is telling in that, at least, we have moved away from needing a woman and/or a female main character to be a traditional heroine or villainess to be placed at the center of a narrative. Ultimately, problematic though they are in various ways, these projects do put women at the center in atypical ways, showcasing women that do not fit a particular "type" and/or arguing that they are more than just that type. In doing so, they often provide unique acting opportunities for their stars and complicate our understanding of women's lives.

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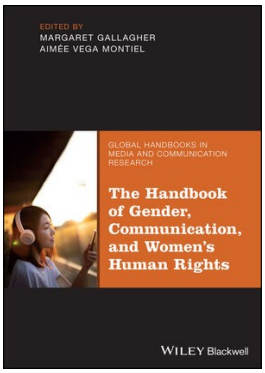
Books Reviewed by Sheila Gibbons

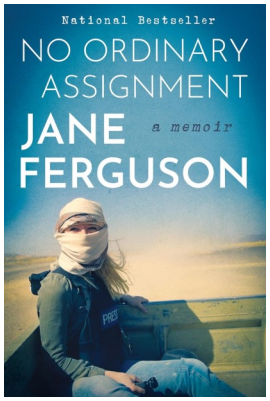
The Handbook of Gender, Communication, and Women's Human Rights. Margaret Gallagher and Aimée Vega Montiel, editors. Wiley Blackwell, 2024.



This new publication exposes readers to contemporary debates about women's rights, democracy, and neoliberalism. Gallagher and Montiel assembled an international panel of academics and feminist activists who examined how media, information, and the digital ecosystem contribute to enabling, ignoring, questioning or denying women's human and communication rights. Divided into four parts, the Handbook covers governance and politics, systems and institutions, defense and activism, and content, rights and freedoms. The first major collection on the subject published in the COVID-19 era, this unique volume addresses both core and emerging topics in feminist media scholarship and research, including intersectionality in communication, feminist activism in digital media, online misogyny and gender-based violence, feminist perspectives on communication governance, gendered disinformation in the platform society, gendered power in Artificial Intelligence, and much more.

But Will You Love Me Tomorrow? An Oral History of the '60s Girl Groups by Laura Flam and Emily Sieu Liebowitz. Hachette, 2023.

No Baby Boomer alive is likely to forget the girl groups of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s who sang about teen angst, budding love, and how much romance (meaning sex) was risky. The prosperous post-World War II era saw the emergence of the consumer market for teens and record companies jumped on board. Laura Flam and Emily Liebowitz, self-proclaimed doo-wop devotees, embarked on an extensive interviewing effort to get the most essential musical artists of that time to recall the way their careers developed at a time when the civil rights movement's objectives were being championed by many and resisted by others. Many of the most successful girl groups and soloists were Black. A number were composed of sisters and other relatives. The names are legendary: Martha and the Vandellas, Diana Ross and the Supremes, The Ronettes, The Shirelles, The Cookies. Their accounts of singing in the American South during that era are sobering, even harrowing. They also discuss competing for premium bookings by promoters and airplay by DJs, fighting to stay in the sights of record company executives, and recalling both contention and camaraderie with white artists. This book shows how tough the music business was and is, but much of it is pure fun, as iconic figures recall their careers, correct each other's memories, and dish more than a little. The book gives them overdue credit for the enormous cultural influence they exerted.



No Ordinary Assignment: A Memoir by Jane Ferguson. Mariner Books, 2023.

Jane Ferguson has covered nearly every war front and humanitarian crisis of our time, reporting from Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan. As a child in Northern Ireland in the 1980s and '90s, The Troubles meant bomb threats and military checkpoints. That was grist for a courageous, scrappy reporting career she takes us into here.

Winning Women's Hearts and Minds: Selling Cold War Culture and Consumerism

By Diana Cucuz

Diana Cucuz (PhD, York University) is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Toronto and Toronto Metropolitan University. She specializes in American, women's and cultural history and the intersections of foreign and domestic policy, and politics and culture. Her research focuses on the Cold War era, and the ways in which the U.S. government and media politicized women, traditional gender roles and consumer culture. Her first book, Winning Women's Hearts and Minds (University of Toronto Press), was released in February 2023.

The intersections of foreign and domestic policy, politics and culture, and the ways in which the U.S. government and media have historically politicized women, gender roles and culture, is not often discussed. It has been researched, analyzed and dissected by historians and political scientists, but rarely so by the mainstream media. During the early Cold War, the U.S. government and media utilized women in order to sell an American "way of life," namely normative gender roles and consumer culture, both at home and abroad.

Even less discussed is Amerika, an American-produced Cold War era magazine, issued in Russia and in the Russian language, that sought to do two things: first, to showcase America to Russian readers, particularly women, in an effort to sway them towards a supposedly superior way of life; second, to gradually undermine and destabilize a Soviet regime that provided few accessible and affordable consumer goods to its citizens. Amerika demonstrates the importance of gender and consumption to international politics, but also the importance of soft power. In contrast to military or economic power, soft power is the ability to shape or persuade people towards a certain way of thinking, or opinion. This article will focus on Amerika, but will briefly discuss the Ladies' Home Journal, from which Amerika's editors obtained inspiration and content.

Amerika was first published by the U.S. State Department between January 1945 and July 1952. It was discontinued in 1952 because of complications with its Soviet distributor, Soyuzpechat, censorship approval and circulation (Office of Intelligence Research, 1948). For example, Soyuzpechat took months to approve articles, delaying issues (State Department, 1951). Further, State suspected that it had been concealing copies beneath counters or withholding them from newsstands entirely, eventually returning them to the U.S. Embassy and reporting a decline in sales because Russian readers had "lost interest" (State Department, 1950). This became known in the State Department as the "Amerika Crisis." Suddenly, America's only method of reaching the Russian people on a sustained basis, with images, was eliminated.

Amerika's Reemergence and Resurgence

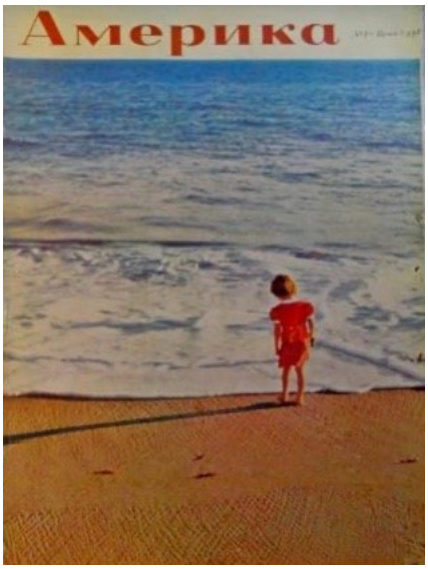
American efforts to reach Russians changed in July 1956 when the U.S. embassy in Moscow proposed to the Soviet Foreign Office the exchange of English and Russian language magazines in their respective nations (United States Information Agency, 1959). The resulting agreement began a decades-long exchange of two magazines: the revitalized Amerika and its Soviet counterpart, USSR, later renamed Soviet Life. This agreement was equitable. Each side would sell fifty thousand copies and neither would be censored. The U.S. government welcomed the opportunity to resurrect Amerika to reach Russian readers, as did the Soviet Union to reach Americans.

In July 1956, Fyodor Konstantinov, head of the Soviet Union's Department of Propaganda and Agitation, made it clear that he signed the agreement for two reasons. First, after Joseph Stalin's 1953 death, the government wished to show the world that it was making an effort to establish contact with the West. Second, it wanted to counter U.S. propaganda by issuing its own magazine informing Americans of the Soviet "way of life" (Konstantinov, 1956). Beginning in October 1956, newsstands began selling each of these magazines. Amerika's second run was now published by

the United States Information Agency (USIA), established in 1953 (until 1999) as America's first and only peacetime propaganda agency devoted to spreading "cultural information," or propaganda. The USIA preferred the term cultural information because it seemed less manipulative than the propaganda associated with Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. This article focuses mainly on the years between 1956 and 1960, pivotal ones for America's overseas cultural information program. In contrast with other administrations, cultural information had the full support of President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Congress. It was skillfully led, well-developed, and had substantial funding. It benefitted from the newly emerging thaw in the U.S.-Soviet relationship after Stalin's death and under Nikita Khrushchev's leadership. Finally, these were also years where normative gender roles and consumption dominated American discourse, and thus, the magazine.

When Amerika re-emerged, the USIA had high hopes for its success. The U.S. government had moved toward a form of public or cultural diplomacy that focused on forging relationships with people, rather than governments alone. Prior to the appearance of its first issue ,USIA Deputy Director Abbott Washburn articulated the magazine's goals:

America Illustrated [sic] will provide the Soviet reader with a continuing portrait of life in America. The first issue, and succeeding ones, have the goal of giving the reader the next best thing to an actual visit to the US. It will take him through our schools, to our farms and factories, theaters and art museums, into many different families – wherever he can see for himself what Americans are thinking and doing and feeling. It will not preach. It will present the facts (United States Information Agency, 1959).



Amerika, October 1956

Amerika became central to the USIA's overseas cultural information program. It emulated the most popular magazine of the postwar era: Life. It was a glossy magazine that had information about American culture, society, institutions and ways of life. Unlike American magazines, it had no editorials or advertisements, for fear of aggravating the Soviet government. Historian Walter Hixson refers to Amerika as "polite propaganda" because it did not include hard-hitting political news stories or critiques of the Soviet regime (Hixson, 1998). There were occasional stories written specifically for Amerika that focused on the structure of the U.S. government, the roles of elected officials and the press, and the electoral process. However, for the most part, it contained soft news stories about everyday life. It rarely showed science and industry, but did show consumer technology, such as cars and household appliances, in the context of how they improved the lives of Americans. Fittingly, Amerika focused on the most active consumers, women. Articles that pertained to women and consumerism mainly consisted of reprints from nationally circulated women's magazines such as the Ladies' Home Journal. Amerika drew inspiration from and mimicked the idealized images of American women seen in the Journal --the feminine female, wife, mother and homemaker -- depictions that defined mid-twentieth century womanhood.

The Ladies' Home Journal: Pitting the "Modern Woman" against the "Babushka"

During the early Cold War, a common journalistic approach in the Ladies' Home Journal was to contrast the "freedoms" and "liberties" that characterized America with the "oppression" of the Soviet Union. In juxtaposition to these images of the "modern American woman," women's magazines also depicted the "other," the "graceless, shapeless and sexless" Russian woman (Griswold, 2012) -- in other words, the unappealing image of the Russian "babushka." She was the hardworking but unhappy victim of an oppressive communist regime that provided her with few privileges. She was a figure with whom American women could sympathize, because they never wanted to have her life. These contrasting images reflected and popularized postwar notions of women, signified the use of women for political purposes, and demonstrated the relationship between politics and culture. Ladies' Home Journal editors attempted to show the inadequacies of a Soviet system that supposedly deprived its women not just of freedom and liberty, but also of the ability to appear feminine, stay home, care for their families, and consume. They

only intended to evoke anti-communist sentiments in readers, making them feel "lucky" to be American, but also force them to sympathize with the plight of Russian women.

Americans were indeed curious about life behind the Iron Curtain. Possibly the most notable account of post-war Soviet life emerged from John Steinbeck and Robert Capa. During the summer of 1947 they traveled throughout Russia and Ukraine to be able to report to Americans that "Russians are people, too." In February 1948 a 16-page article titled "Women and Children in Soviet Russia" appeared in the Ladies' Home Journal (Steinbeck and Capa, 1948).

Steinbeck and Capa were critical of what they called a totalitarian regime, but their forays into the countryside to observe farm life and interview ordinary Soviets resulted in an account that showcased the "real Soviet Union" and the human effects of war. February 1948's cover image alone indicates the power of this work: a Russian woman working on her hands and knees on the farm, with an aging face, arms that appear to have worked a great deal in their lifetime, and dressed in peasant garb (Steinbeck and Capa, 1948). Both Steinbeck and Capa were struck by how hard women worked. They wrote that "In cities, women rebuilt infrastructure, drove trucks, buses and streetcars, and worked in factories." On farms, they "ran the house, did the cooking, took care of the chickens, pigs, goats and cows….They traded and bought and sold" (Steinbeck and Capa, 1948). The majority of these images depicted only women, reflecting the male losses of the war, as well as the fact that women needed to work to ensure survival.

Steinbeck and Capa portrayed American and Soviet women as sharing two basic characteristics: the desire to be feminine and to consume. This was another common theme in depictions of Soviet life: the lack of consumer goods to allow women to properly fulfill their feminine roles. They lived under a regime that trumpeted gender equality, but denied women the "privileges" considered commonplace in America. Steinbeck and Capa were amazed at how in spite of their work conditions, they still managed to appear feminine, "neat and fresh" (Steinbeck and Capa, 1948). Their account reflected a daunting existence for these women, who still hoped that tomorrow would be a better day. Since accounts and images of Soviet women were difficult to obtain, those that existed were impactful. Steinbeck and Capa's sympathetic account depicted the ramifications of war, but also the humanity of Soviet women, who worked tirelessly and endlessly for the good of their nation.

As the Cold War escalated, accounts became increasingly political, emphasizing the bleak conditions that existed behind the Iron Curtain. They continued to depict women as hardworking, but instead of hopeful, they were now shown as living unhappily under a repressive regime. Images of "graceless, shapeless and sexless" Russian women dominated the Ladies' Home Journal, and American mass media in general. These images became embedded in the American psyche and they shaped popular conceptions of what it meant to live as a female under communism. Russian women, apparently, were unfeminine, unfulfilled, unhappy, and overworked, all of which were evidence of the dangers of communism to the social order and to the privileged position of American women. In reading the repressive conditions of a proud Russian people, American women could sympathize, but also fear the potential repercussions of communism.

Amerika and "the Fashionable Female"

When the USIA re-launched Amerika, its goal was to contrast the American way of life with that of the Russian "babushka." As the USIA articulated in 1959, it was to portray the American woman as "characterized by devotion to family, womanliness and industriousness." She should be shown as" human and hard-working, a conserver of values, and possessing the almost universal feminine characteristics with which women throughout the world could identify and respect" (United States Information Agency, 1959). USIA officials believed that Russian women, like American women, were drawn to glossy magazines filled with color images of people enjoying consumer goods. These depictions would win the "hearts and minds" of the Russian women who yearned for a domesticated, comfortable, even fashionable lifestyle that could only be found in capitalist countries. The idea was that in obtaining a copy of Amerika, they could be transported into a distant land of consumer culture and abundance, one that offered a glimpse into an alternative way of life, a hope for happiness, and a better future for themselves and their families. According to Amerika's first editor, famed journalist Marion Sanders, the magazine appealed to people because it resembled a Sears Roebuck's "mail order fairyland" (Sanders, 1959). The structure and content of Amerika's first issue was reflected throughout subsequent issues. Its 64 pages set the stage for how American women would be portrayed in the magazine for the remainder of the decade. Its cover

had a lone little girl, in red, gazing before a large body of water. Its editors described Amerika as a: Magazine about the people of the United States - how they live, work and play. It will try to capture their moods and aspirations, their concerns and their light moments of relaxation…We shall attempt to portray what Americans are thinking and doing, what they are reading and saying (Editors, 1956)

They used the lure of clothing and accessories to appeal to Russian women and their supposed desire to be more feminine. Each issue had at least fashion layout with minimal text and many color images, all of which showed tall, thin and attractive white women wearing skirts and dresses, rarely pants. This contrasted with the drab, shapeless and heavy clothing Russian women were shown wearing in American women's magazines. For example, February 1958's "College Girls Dressed Up" showed the casual yet stylish clothing American college girls wore during the day, and the dresses they wore for a night out. It showed images of girls in dresses that were "easy to pack for a week-end getaway and made doing new dance crazes, like the bunny hop, easier" ("College," 1958). Other articles depicted fashions for special occasions or life events, such as a day in the city (Tailored," 1957), the summer ("Summer," 1956), "round the world vacations" ("Holiday," 1957) and maternity wear ("Wardrobe," 1959). They always pointed out that they were affordable and practical, but in reality, these fashions were both unrealistic and unobtainable for ordinary Russian women who experienced harsh winters and clothing shortages. In many cases, they consisted of what would be luxuries for the average Russian.

The magazine cleverly offered alternatives by providing Russian women with sewing patterns. For example, December 1959's Amerika included "A Smart Coat You Can Make Yourself" (Souvaine, 1959). It provided a "versatile" pattern that assisted Russian women in making a garment that, if accessorized with a belt or scarf, could (rather miraculously) act as a raincoat, a hostess robe, an evening gown or even a beach dress. These articles demonstrated to Russian women that with the right pattern and material, anyone could learn to sew and appear fashionable, even by Western standards. By bypassing the Soviet government, which normally produced clothing for the entire country, and by appealing directly to women, Amerika's editors prevailed, and, by proxy, so too did the U.S. government, in the battle for cultural supremacy. If women could not directly purchase this clothing, they could, and did, attempt to copy the "looks" they saw in the magazine (Zakharova, 2013). They could then take their newfound tastes and styles to the streets of Moscow, spreading them, and in the process subtly breaking down barriers between East and West.

Amerika and the "Happy Housewife and Homemaker"

Just as Amerika's editors promoted the materialistic world of women's fashion and femininity, they also adopted an alternate approach in portraying American women. They went to great lengths to convey a wholesomeness in American life intended to defy stereotypes of American women as "irresponsible glamour girls" or "materialistic" (United States Information Agency, 1959) A domestic, pronatalist ideology was well represented in the pages of Amerika. Articles on family life emphasized gendered customs and traditions, and introduced girls and women to their ultimate Cold War role: the happy housewife and nurturing mother.

For example, June 1958's "A Young Couple Gets Married" attempted to bridge the gap between the lives of American and Russian women by emphasizing that everywhere in the world a young girl's wedding provided her with joy and hope for the future. The article showed the planning and wedding of 18-year old Jenny Peters and her high school sweetheart, Bud, including writing the wedding announcement, opening presents, packing for her honeymoon and attending her wedding rehearsal. The article culminated in the couple's church wedding, happily surrounded by family and friends (Campbell, 1958). These types of articles focused heavily on customs and traditions surrounding dating and marriage. Religion consistently played a prominent role.

The creation of a nuclear family was another popular topic. Even for those who could not have children in the traditional way, there were alternatives. March 1957's "Adopting a Five-Year-Old" told the story of John and Mary Walker, a couple who decided to make their familial dreams come true through adoption. The article captured the Walkers' years of applications and interviews, their first meeting with Billy, and taking him home. It described his new family and suburban surroundings, including riding his tricycle, going grocery shopping, eating Mary's cooking, playing with his toys, and being read a bedtime story ("Adopting," 1957). Amerika was saying that children made family life complete.

Central to this vision of domesticity was a home in the suburbs filled with modern household technology. Amerika portrayed American women as possessing strong values and a solid work ethic, yet able to take advantage of the modern-day conveniences and consumer goods that made lives easier. The magazine showed that American women worked hard but still had leisure time. This work-life formula was something USIA officials believed Russian women lacked. In fact many Russian women did face a double burden, participating in the workforce but under a government that failed to fully socialize childcare.

7-Corners Pylon Designed by Federal Sign and Signal Corporation, Chicago

Instead, in America, the magazine illustrated how modern technology was intended to improve woman's lives and ease work-life conflicts. For example, March 1958's "Kitchen Appliances: Today and Tomorrow," demonstrated how time-saving devices and modern appliances could eliminate "hard and boring work," and make the kitchen, larger, cleaner and brighter for the woman who was using it. It included the General Electric "Family Kitchen," designed to maximize space, reduce clutter and improve efficiency. It showed a housewife seated in her nook, where she could (stereotypically) talk on the phone, listen to the radio, read cookbooks, and create budgets and shopping lists. She had additional time not just because her kitchen was easy to clean, but also because capitalism afforded her these luxuries. Her kitchen was now a place where she wanted to be ("Kitchen," 1958). The difference between the amenities enjoyed by American and Russian women could not have been more glaring. These kitchens could have been commonplace in white, middle-class, suburban homes, but may have been unattainable for urban Russian women who frequently shared communal kitchens.

Amerika and the Female "Consumer"

Amerika's editors assumed that all women enjoyed shopping and as a result, placed an importance on showing outlets for consumption. Countless articles focused on consumption itself. For example, June 1960's "Give the Lady What She Wants" featured the department store as a distinctly female space. It depicted a rural woman who, for her seventieth birthday, requested that her daughters turn her "loose for a day" in Marshall Field's, Chicago's largest department store. It stated that a visit to Marshall Field's was a special event. It had four hundred departments and a large selection of consumer goods in one stop. It also had services to ensure a comfortable and enjoyable shopping experience, such as personal shopping, package delivery, seven restaurants, a beauty salon and fashion shows (Wood, 1960) Throughout these years, Amerika had pieces on J.L. Hudson's (Montague, 1959), Sears, Roebuck and Company (Mahoney, 1959) and Woolworth's House of Pennies (Wood, 1960). It also showcased the emergence of the suburban shopping mall, through Seven Corners Shopping Center in Fairfax County, Virginia, which included forty-seven stores and 2,500 large parking spots - because women were thought to park poorly! (McKenna and Cook, 1958).

Consumption also included the supermarket. Amerika showed its readers that access to plentiful, healthy and delicious food concerned both American women and Russian women, as the main purchasers of household items. February 1960's issue devoted 10 articles to food production, distribution and preparation. The longest was a seven-page spread channelling the postwar American obsession with the modern supermarket. By that year, there were 33,000 of them. "The Supermarket in an Age of Distribution" showed a modern supermarket that differed from Russian government-run food stores. It typically consisted of up to 20,000 square feet of clean, brightly lit aisles with stocked shelves and a staff of 100. The shelves included convenience foods said to "liberate" American women: Betty Crocker cake mixes, Minute Maid frozen orange juice and Swanson TV

dinners. The article noted that the supermarket was a symbol of an efficient and streamlined distribution system that offered food at affordable prices. It also eased the homemaking experience, thanks to its self-service format and convenience. The article mentioned that foreign leaders had requested to tour them, even Khrushchev during his 1959 visit to the United States (McEnroe, 1960). In depicting both department stores and supermarkets, with their abundance of products, Amerika attempted to convince Russian women that mass consumption made women's lives easier; and further, that the same could not be said of their own shopping experiences.

Amerika's Impact: a U.S. Perspective

These articles are just a small sample of what was presented in Amerika throughout its long existence. However, when brought together and critically analyzed, their importance becomes clear: they presented Russian woman with an idyllic image of American life during a time when the U.S. government had limited access to and influence with those women. By the end of the decade, the magazine had accomplished broader goals. Journalists and USIA officials boasted about the mass appeal of Amerika. They noted long lines of people waiting to buy the magazine and recalled visiting Russian homes where they saw worn copies. Sanders observed Amerika had an enormous pass-along readership; Russian readers shared issues widely with colleagues, family and friends, with a single copy reaching as many as 20 people (Sanders, 1959). If all 50,000 copies of a single issue sold, its monthly readership could reach one million.

Khrushchev visiting Quality Foods, San Francisco, 21 September 1959. Subject Files, 1953-2000, Record Group 306, United States Information Agency.

U.S. Foreign Service Officer Yale Richmond called Amerika a "minor expense, but a major success, in the cold war of ideas" (Richmond, 2003). In fact, Soviet officials banned its circulation in the many U.S. exhibitions that took place in the country throughout the remainder of the Cold War. By 1959 U.S. embassy diplomats reported that "with the exception of personal contacts, Amerika made the greatest contribution to the better understanding of America by the Russians and to the provision of accurate information about the U.S." Many historians agree with these assessments. Laura Belmonte calls the magazine one of the U.S. information program's earliest successes (Belmonte, 2008). Hixson says officials credited Amerika with diminishing the effectiveness of Soviet internal propaganda (Hixson, 1998).

Journalists and USIA officials began to notice changes in the Russian people, as well as a government interest in accommodating them. For example, A December 1959 New York Times article (rather condescendingly) titled "New Soviet Plan – Feminine Females" argued that regardless of political ideology, Russian women were still women at their core, and desired to be appreciated for their femininity. The article implied that all women strove for a beautiful appearance and attractive home. Their desire to own quality consumer goods and be well dressed and charming were as "enduring as their natural desire to bear children." According to the Times article, Russian women had begun imitating American styles. They waited in long lines at beauty salons to dye their hair, replace their old-fashioned braids and buns with modern cuts, and have their nails done (Frankel and Frankel, 1959). USIA officials noted that fashion models at GUM, Russia's largest department store, were wearing bright colors, shorter skirts and western-style shoes. Most importantly, the Times article said that Russian citizens and the Soviet press had become emboldened in their critiques of Soviet production (White House Staff Research Group, 1960). USIA reports noted that the Russian national newspaper Isvestiia called for clothing improvements, claiming that workmanship was poor, clothes did not fit properly, and styles were unimaginative and limited to dull, dark colors (Office of Research and Analysis, 1960). Both the U.S. media and USIA officials noted that the Soviet government responded with planned increases in the volume and variety of goods available to Russian women, as well as a new emphasis on style and quality (Frankel and Frankel, 1959). For the USIA, this appeared to be an astounding accomplishment, particularly since neither the Russian people nor the media had ever been known to outwardly question governmental priorities.

In effect, whether Russian women knew it at the time, Amerika, in providing its subtle critiques of the Soviet government, accentuated its strained relationship with female consumers. The USIA wanted Russian women to develop a gradual and deep dissatisfaction with their lives, both because of their limited access to consumer goods and services, as well as their status as employed women unable to care for their families on a full-time basis.

Amerika: 1960 and Beyond

The 1960s are associated with the rise of a liberal agenda, and a tumultuous domestic landscape that included the emergence of a woman's movement. Coincidentally, the nature of Amerika's content began to change, including its approach towards women. As early as January 1961, when the newly elected U.S. president, John F. Kennedy, graced Amerika's cover, its content began to reflect a changing mood. Amerika became more ambiguous in its approach to women. Articles devoted to women's traditional roles were shorter and less enthusiastic. In general, articles on women were less frequent, and towards the end of the decade they were almost nonexistent, as if the magazine's editors were unsure of how, or even if, to address the women's movement. An area that remained consistent was a focus on fashion, which appeared to reflect the democratizing power of clothing. By the end of the decade the magazine began to highlight modern, and more controversial, fashions. For example, May 1966's "No Blues for Jeans" showcased the casual trend that American, and even Russian youth, had embraced. The inclusion of jeans in Amerika was noteworthy, as it reflected an acceptance of at least some elements of Western culture. The article noted that jeans were the "Great American Leveler," as they were worn by "millionaires, movie stars and mechanics alike." It stated that they were a favorite souvenir of visiting foreigners. Historian Kristin Roth-Ey writes that Soviet officials feared "Americanization," but found it difficult to control the impulses of Russian teenagers who appropriated U.S. culture (Newman, 1966). For Amerika's editors, and the Soviet government as well, it was clear that clothing, while seemingly innocent, posed a threat to Russian culture.

Amerika, October 1994

It was not until March 1971 that Amerika finally acknowledged the existence of a women's movement, a seemingly intentional move. The Cold War still raged, and if the magazine devoted space to the gender inequality that existed in the country, it could have the effect of highlighting the nation's weaknesses. Just as it took the magazine years to acknowledge the Civil Rights Movement, it was slow in acknowledging that American women, who supposedly had "special privileges," were dissatisfied and had begun advocating for equal rights. March 1971's issue consisted of a "special report" on the "ideas, look and role of American women" (Editors, 1971). In their introduction, Amerika's editors acknowledged that changes were taking place:

> We live in a time of accelerating change, a period in which old values are being tested against the realities of the present. This search for "identity," for a meaningful lifestyle, is one in which everyone is involved. The quest is particularly noticeable in the cases of racial or ethnic groups or students, but there is another group which is equally determined to bring about a better way of life for itself. This group is American women. Comprising 51 per cent of the population, the women, like their sisters in many lands, are moving toward a new definition of just what being a woman should mean (Editors, 1971).

However, the magazine still approached the movement with trepidation. While Amerika's editors never referred to the movement directly, its contributors did. The issue included notable authors such as Sanders (Sanders, 1971) and anthropologist Margaret Mead (Mead, 1971), although they too provided mixed messages about the movement's members, goals, and outcomes. These articles were interwoven with the stories of ordinary women experiencing its effects on their daily lives. The perspectives in this issue provided a distinct divergence from the articles that had appeared when Amerika was re-launched during Eisenhower's administration. A previous focus almost solely on traditional

gender roles and domestic consumption gave way to a more complex understanding of the diversity of American women's lives, as they were shown in different ages and life stages, embracing new roles and experiences. As the government became increasingly aware of the extent of women's discontent and responded to it (in part because feminists forced them to respond to it), so, too, did Amerika. In other words, by 1971, the time was finally right for this special report.

In contrast, almost one decade earlier, in March 1962, USSR had produced its own special issue on women. Because Russian women experienced gender equality, at least in theory, it never discussed a feminist movement, but it did discuss their diverse working roles. Rather importantly, it contained articles on the "Beauty Salon" (Vasilyeva, 1962), the modern department store (Beletskaya, 1962), and "Spring Fashions" (Raizman, 1962), highlighting the impact of Western culture on media output. From this point on, each issue included one article on fashion.

The End of Amerika and the Importance of Soft Power

Amerika folded in October 1994 (Soviet Life had done so in December 1991), 38 years after its first issue, with the same little girl overlooking the water on its front cover, now an adult. The Cold War was now an event of the past. Communism had collapsed, and the broader mission of the USIA, and Amerika, had seemingly been accomplished. There appeared to be many who did not want to see the magazine end. Its contents were a glimpse into a way of life that many Russian people, and even their government, had now embraced. "Housewife" Katya Chizhova, 34, noted that she had looked forward to reading the magazine. According to her, it was "interesting to read about scientific achievements and in general, about the American way of life." She lamented that it would no longer be published and wrote to the USIA, "I can tell you that for many, it meant a lot. People had very little information about life abroad, and their interest in America was great" (Griffin, 1994).

What ended the Cold War? We tend to attribute it to the Soviet Union's military and economic decline, as well as the strength and strategies of leaders such as Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan. But the answer is more complex. Unlike military initiatives whose successes or failures can be gauged almost immediately, cultural diplomacy can take years, even decades to reveal its efficacy. This certainly proved to be the case for the USIA's information program in Russia. By the end of the decade under discussion, due in part to Amerika magazine, a newfound cultural outlook had emerged. During the summer of 1959, the USIA held a six-week long exhibition in Moscow most remembered for its "Kitchen Debates' between then U.S. Vice-President Richard Nixon and Khrushchev. Russian women were able to see and interact with American women for the first time, and directly observe and touch the consumer goods they had seen in the pages of Amerika. They began to demand these products for themselves. In September 1959, Khrushchev embarked on a two-week tour of the United States, the first by a Soviet leader. He came with a 54-person entourage. While in San Francisco, his wife Nina and her children "escaped" to Sears and Macy's, and he spontaneously visited a Quality Foods supermarket (Asbury, 1959). When Khrushchev returned home, he began to recognize the demand for, and power of, consumer goods and made frequent declarations of his government's desire to increase production and availability. Years later, his government's failure to provide its citizens with a similar scale of consumer goods as in the US bred widespread discontent. However, these first glimpses of American style capitalism, as shown in Amerika, set the stage for increased demands for consumer goods moving into the following decades. As the USIA boldly declared in reference to Russia in 1959, "It is not likely that this buying public will ever be the same again" (Office of Research and Analysis, 1960).

Discussions of women, normative gender roles, and the "American way of life" (namely consumer-oriented capitalism) in relation to early Cold War foreign policy and diplomacy in Russia are important ones to have. Also integral to a full understanding of the decline of the Soviet Union are broader discussions about the effectiveness of cultural diplomacy that illuminate the impact of "soft power," and Amerika's important role in it.

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For the Record

Best comment yet on Academy Award snubs of "Barbie" director Greta Gerwig and actor Margot Robbie:

No Oscar nomination for Greta Gerwig.

No Oscar nomination for Margot Robbie.

Ryan Gosling gets an Oscar nomination.

This is actually the whole plot of "Barbie."

Posted by Facebook user Greg Castanias, Jan. 23, 2024

Briefly, from Page 5

age is represented in wedding content enough." The New York Times' Aamina Inayat Khan found a similar pattern, with wedding planners telling her "a large part of the pressure to lose weight comes from the fact that weddings are photographed and documented on the internet more now than ever before. Weight loss still remains a common aspiration in the wedding industry and the quiet voice of a targeted ad doesn't help."

The pained accounts of young brides are evidence of how destructive the notion of the willowy bride has become. Ahead of International "No Diet Day" May 6, and the traditional summer wedding season, the National Eating Disorders Association is sounding the alarm with important information and this testimonial: https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/consequences-diet-culture-weddings/

More at https://www.glamourmagazine.co.uk/article/wedding-diet-culture and https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/19/fashion/weddings/brides-weight-loss-ads.html

Leslie Horton, a Canadian broadcaster for Global News Calgary, had had enough. A man who had sent her harassing emails for four years sent a real zinger on Nov. 29 during a commercial break: "Congratulations on your pregnancy; if you're going to wear old bus driver pants, you have to expect emails like this." Right after the break, Horton went back on camera and addressed him directly, noting that she'd lost her uterus to cancer. **"This is what women of my age look like. So, if it is offensive to you, that is unfortunate."** Viewer behavior like his is not uncommon. Here's Horton's response: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cLfEcgowJSY

This wonderful video tribute to pioneering women film directors was created last year by the Association for Women in Media for the annual AWM Gracies Awards. With the conversation still heated after director Greta Herwig was overlooked for an Oscar nomination for "Barbie" — the blockbuster movie of the year — this **retrospective of women who contributed to film innovation from its earliest days is inspiring.** Here it is – ideal for media history and film classes: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pe_6LoqLf2k

Feminist news and commentary web site Jezebel is back online after going dark Nov. 9 when previous owner G/O Media closed it, citing "economic headwinds." Paste Magazine stepped in and bought Jezebel, now being edited by Lauren Tousignant, who said, ""Jezebel will continue to be a platform that aims to highlight the experiences of women and marginalized communities, and I'll be dedicated to bringing in as many new, familiar, and disruptive voices as possible. Starting today, our focus will be on revitalizing the website and working to grow and expand Jezebel's readership."

The Collective® – the women-focused practice within Wasserman, a global leader in sports, music, entertainment and culture – in October 2023 released a study substantiating the growing media representation and cultural impact of women's sports in the context of the larger sports media ecosystem. A key figure: women's sports comprise on average 15% of total sports media coverage, with increased content notably driven by the growth of streaming and social media. The study gathered figures from across the industry in partnership with ESPN Research, which funded and supported the research.

"**This data powerfully begs a reassessment of the opportunity around women's sports** – to meet fans where their passions live and their consumption habits converge. New perspective can perpetuate a growth cycle that will result in greater economic growth for players, leagues, brands, properties and audiences alike," said Wasserman Executive Vice President Shelley Pisarra. "Persistent, incorrect assumptions of lower media representation for women's sports have created hesitancy around investment, whereas truth will spark opportunity. Coverage of sports has definitely evolved across platforms, requiring new approaches to and support for women's sports advancement."

As consumption habits have shifted dramatically since the advent of digital and social media, and rights holders have awarded more opportunities to streaming platforms, a more inclusive, realistic look at the position women's sports holds in the general sports conversation is warranted, the Wasserman report says. For perspective, in the U.S., women's sports comprise roughly half of the total competitions played across collegiate, professional and national sports events, while only receiving 15% of the coverage. However, removing collegiate competition from the mix, professional women's sports make up only 8% of available competition inventory.

Not surprisingly, as consumption habits have shifted, streaming and social media platforms offer the highest share and fastest growth of women's sports coverage. An average of 26% of studied streaming coverage has been dedicated to women's programming since 2018.

The study summary can be downloaded at https://www.wearethecollective.com/15-percent

From Mystique to #MeToo: Sexual Violence in Women's Magazine Fiction

By Bailey Dick

Bailey Dick, Ph.D is an assistant professor in the School of Media and Communication at Bowling Green State University. As a historian and critical media scholar, her research examines the power of personal stories to disrupt systemic inequities, including the long history of #MeToo-style writing, as well as how women writers integrate their experiences with trauma in their work.

As Betty Friedan recalls in the early pages of The Feminine Mystique, she, in 1957, was "getting strangely bored with writing articles" and "put an unconscionable amount of time into a questionnaire." (Friedan, 1963) It's good to know that, nearly seven decades later, I'm in good company with her.

Like Betty, I was in a mindset last year where I was "strangely bored" with an in-progress journal article. So I turned to an entirely different piece of research that began as a "ran-out-of-time-and-funding" leftover portion of my dissertation and morphed into a paper that did, indeed take an "unconscionable amount of time."

While several periodicals turned down Friedan's boredom-borne questionnaire, I'm grateful to have been asked to discuss my own labyrinthine project here. Like Betty, I fear I'll "have to write a book to get this into print" (Friedan, 1963) in its entirety–more so because of the project's size and scope, rather than because of horrified male editors.

Yet, Betty Friedan and I are tackling similar issues: the portrayal of women in women's magazines–specifically in their fiction. In The Feminine Mystique, Friedan laments the disappearance of the fictional female heroines she once saw in the pages of magazines she read as a young woman. That heroine was "less fluffily feminine, so independent and determined to find a new life of her own," "passionate in involvement with the world, her own sense of herself as an individual her self-reliance." (Friedan, 1963) But as Friedan saw in the magazines she both subscribed to and wrote for, the "image of the American woman, and in the boundaries of the woman's world" shifted profoundly as she sifted through the pages of two decades' worth of American women's periodicals at the New York Public Library. The "New Woman"-style heroine who reflected "the sense of possibility that existed for women," as Friedan wrote, gave way to a new-old style of woman following World War II–one who was only able to find fulfillment as a "housewife-mother." According to Friedan, these fictional heroines, and indeed the magazine fiction where they could be found, were the primary vehicle for spreading the concept she dubbed "the feminine mystique."

But let's back up. There was certainly fiction published in women's magazines before the late 1950s, even before the New Woman-centered fiction of Friedan's youth. Understanding that fiction and its history is crucial to getting a big-picture understanding of how this fiction has evolved over time.

The middle of the nineteenth century was the "Golden Age of Periodicals," and more women writers were penning stories -- both fiction and nonfiction -- for magazine readers that featured "virtuous young female heroines who successfully circumvent hardships." (Molin, 2007) Following the 1891 International Copyright Act, the "Fiction Craze" boomed as a result of lower magazine costs, (Hamilton, 2014). More women were reading "sex problem stories"-- a major draw for working-class Victorian Era readers (Mullen, 1995). In subsequent decades, women were subscribing to both highbrow magazines publishing stories aimed at intellectually underwhelmed "happy housewives" described by Friedan (Hamilton, 2014), and more working-class women were subscribing to publications like Cosmopolitan and Redbook (Flora, 1979, Fowler, 1979 and Thornton, 1998). In the latter portion of the twentieth century and in recent years, more magazines have stopped publishing fiction entirely, citing cost (Peirce, 1997, Heath, 2018, and Hamilton, 2014).

Like Friedan, I spent time digging through women's periodicals, though via ProQuest's Women's Magazine Archive, which houses digitized, keyword-searchable issues of Cosmopolitan, Chatelaine, Essence, Good Housekeeping, Ladies' Home Journal, Redbook, and Woman's Day from 1846-2005. But unlike Friedan, I was not searching for "the problem that has no name." I was searching for manifestations of rape culture, a concept that emerged during the Second Wave feminist movement, was crystallized in Susan Brownmiller's 1977 work, "Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape," and further theorized by Martha Burt (1980) and others in the subsequent decades with an increasingly intersectional viewpoint. Rape culture is theo-

rized to include "a number of rape-supportive attitudes, including traditional gender roles, hostility toward women, and acceptance of violence." (Johnson & Johnson, 2021) Particularly, I was searching for how rape culture manifests in response to first-person accounts of sexual violence –think #MeToo-style disclosures – in women's magazine fiction. When fictional female characters in women's magazines disclosed that they'd experienced sexual violence, what did that look like? How did other characters respond? And was the author of each work reflecting and perpetuating rape culture norms, themes, and tropes in the way they crafted these fiction pieces?

I found 165 total articles within the archive that contained #MeToo-style, first-person disclosures of sexual violence; 12% of the articles were fiction pieces. While most of us are familiar with the short story-style fiction pieces found at the back of magazines like Cosmopolitan, I also found #MeToo-style fiction writing in the form of entire novellas, chapters or excerpts of longer novels, or serialized works that ran across multiple issues. The fictional works were all published between 1913 and 1988, with half of all the fiction pieces published during the 1980s.

Now, those of us who care deeply about, research, and indeed consume media aimed at women, often know what we'll find when we examine these artifacts. In some ways, the way my research findings seldom come as a surprise or are not what I hypothesize they'll be is one of the more disappointing aspects of the work I do – and I'm sure you do, as well. This isn't to say our work isn't important or worth doing; rather, our continued work to point out what we know to be true from our own lived experience is the crux of feminist research praxis. And that's no exception here. I assumed that I'd find predictable iterations of rape culture in each of the artifacts I found in the archive. And indeed, I did.

The earliest published fiction I found in the Women's Magazine Archive with first-person accounts of sexual violence were more likely to use language that obscured the violent act itself, such as, "he forced himself upon me," thus reflecting a cultural norm of sexual violence as a private, taboo matter that isn't to be discussed – or depicted. Similarly, any mention of the term "rape" was found only in fiction pieces published after 1950, with the majority published during the 1970s and 1980s – after the Second Wave destigmatized usage of the term. Interestingly, if unsurprisingly, phrases characters used to describe their own experiences with sexual violence only used the pronoun "I" once – in a 1988 piece, which was the latest article found. Rather than a pronoun that would inherently assign blame via linguistic construction (e.g. He (the subject) + a verb + the narrator as object/victim), the perpetrator is left out of the description, and the victim's victimhood is centered (e.g. I (the subject) was raped (verb). These linguistic constructions serve – if subliminally–to reinforce power structures and norms inherent in the social systems and culture of the time each piece was published.

It's not just linguistically that social and cultural norms about sexual violence appear in these fiction pieces – it's in the plot structures and devices in the stories as well. Common in these stories are the assigning of blame and responsibility to the victims insinuating that they're somehow responsible for what happened to them. Several stories also either take place outside of the United States, or feature non-American perpetrators, reinforcing not only xenophobia, but casting foreign lands and peoples as inherently dangerous and violent. Similarly, some of the stories are set amid the backdrop of war, and serve as vehicles for nationalist propaganda, as the perpetrators share identities with U.S. military adversaries, and the women who intrude in the masculine space of armed conflict place themselves in a position to be victimized. Additionally, multiple stories include victims who are either divorced or who were unfaithful in a monogamous relationship, which positions monogamous, heterosexual relationships as morally superior, and those who deviate from those norms as deserving of violence. Lastly, several stories utilize tropes of memory lapses and mental illness to rationalize, infantilize, and belittle female victims – themes that are still present in media portrayals of sexual violence victims today. Each of these themes and tropes serves to reinforce harmful narratives about gender and violence and are the building blocks of rape culture still present in our media today.

While it may be unsurprising that decades of media coverage–even media aimed at a female audience–would contribute to rape culture, this research builds upon the work of so many other women's media scholars – people like Betty Friedan, and likely you, too! The hard work of establishing just how media functions to maintain male supremacy and points of view – even in media created for, or even by women – is just getting started. We must hold women's media and women authors accountable for their role in perpetuating patriarchal norms and rape culture and recognize that rape culture is still alive and well in today's media as well.

Take the 2021 New Yorker article by literary critic Parul Sehgal, "The Case Against the Trauma Plot." Sehgal cautions against one-note plots in media artifacts of all stripes, be they novels, TV shows, films, or even magazine fiction. Rather, Sehgal advocates for telling stories where "the trauma plot is taken only as a beginning—with a middle and an end to be sought elsewhere," and where traumas like sexual violence

are placed within "generational, social, and political" contexts, thus becoming "a portal into history and into a common language." (Sehgal, 2021). Narratives that contain traumatic events – including sexual violence – have the potential to shift social and cultural conversations, and perhaps even combat the ugliest narratives about systemically marginalized individuals. In the paper I presented at AEJMC last year, I described the depictions of sexual violence I found in the women's magazine fiction I read as "talismans of a society confronting mass trauma via cultural artifacts." In deft hands, it's possible to process, and even combat rape culture via the media – even in the short stories hidden in the back of magazines we grab with a bit of shame in the grocery store checkout line. I'm hopeful, as I continue to expand this research and examine multiple forms of media for historical examples, we'll be able to better see, understand, and combat the harmful narratives that have been constructed over time, and in so doing, be better prepared to tell better stories about ourselves and our experiences in the future.

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