

Public Abstract

First Name:Elizabeth

Middle Name:Anne

Last Name:Castle

Adviser's First Name:Jennifer

Adviser's Last Name:Rowe

Co-Adviser's First Name:

Co-Adviser's Last Name:

Graduation Term:SS 2015

Department:Journalism

Degree:MA

Title:Unapologetically Elle: How personal experience in Elle contributes to the magazine's third-wave feminist identity

Women's magazines have traditionally used a combination of audience, advertising, and editorial to create an individual identity that distinguishes their publications from other women's magazines. That identity, or brand, is supposed to represent the magazine's values and its mission. Yet, despite the differences among women's publications, previous literature has shown them to promote unrealistic portrayals of women, both in terms of their achievements and their physical appearance. This study looked at how Elle magazine used one of its brand components, its editorial voice, to frame women's personal experiences in terms of third-wave feminist themes. It looked at how language in editor's letters, personal essays, and profiles used themes of independence, assertiveness, personal choice, and diversity as well as acknowledgement of the existence of a patriarchal society to create the feminist ideology of an Elle woman. The researcher discovered that magazine's editorial content depicted feminist values in degrees of third-wave feminism and postfeminism: editor's letters presented an ideal for women's lives, profiles tested and sometimes failed to achieve that ideal, and essays criticized the patriarchal society that obstructs those achievements.