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**THE SELLING OF POSTFEMINISM: *LUCKY* MAGAZINE AND GENDERED
CONSUMERISM**

A Dissertation in

Mass Communications

by

Regina McNamara

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The dissertation of Regina McNamara was reviewed and approved* by the following:

Matthew P. McAllister
Professor
Dissertation Advisor
Chair of Committee
Chair of Graduate Program
College of Communications

Colleen Connolly-Ahern
Associate Professor
College of Communications

John Christman
Associate Professor
Department of Philosophy
College of Liberal Arts

Marie Hardin
Professor and Dean
College of Communications

*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School

ABSTRACT

Since the early days of modern consumer culture, women have been a highly desirable demographic to advertisers given the long-held belief that women make significant decisions regarding spending for households and for themselves. One form of consumption-oriented discourse targeted to women is the fashion and beauty magazine, an enduring and profitable staple of American popular culture that continues to play a pivotal role in focusing consumption trends for millions of women. Through both their editorial and advertising content, magazines such as *Allure* and *Vogue* attempt to present the appropriate hairstyle, skirt length and lipstick shade for women consumers. But they also promote other values. As mainstream women's magazines have long provided a colorful guide for women through fashion must-haves, such magazines also offer advice about or portrayals of career choices, motherhood and socially acceptable gender roles. Such messages may also have demographic variations.

This project attempts to analyze the socio-cultural implications of *Lucky* magazine as a hypercommercialized and women-targeted magazine-catalog hybrid and shopping-oriented media brand. In particular, in drawing on the broad range of commercial culture criticism and postfeminist scholarship, I analyze to what extent and in what ways this hybrid publication may co-opt feminist and class discourses by collapsing consumerism with feminist empowerment and gendered class mobility. In addition, the targeting of the postfeminist woman or at least those with postfeminist values as *Lucky* readers is also addressed in this project. The degree to which social media has extended both the reach and the integration of hypercommercialized, postfeminist messages is also an important part of the project.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION: *LUCKY* MAGAZINE AS SHOPPING, STYLE AND EMPOWERMENT GUIDE FOR THE POSTFEMINIST WOMAN

Since the early days of modern consumer culture, women have been a highly desirable demographic to advertisers given the long-held belief that women make significant decisions regarding spending for households and for themselves. One form of consumption-oriented discourse targeted to women is the fashion and beauty magazine, an enduring and profitable staple of American popular culture that continues to play a pivotal role in focusing consumption trends for millions of women. Through both their editorial and advertising content, magazines such as *Allure* and *Vogue* attempt to present the appropriate hairstyle, skirt length and lipstick shade for women consumers. But they also promote other values. As mainstream women's magazines have long provided a colorful guide for women through fashion must-haves, such magazines also offer advice about or portrayals of career choices, motherhood and socially acceptable gender roles. Such messages may also have demographic variations. Magazine newsstands have become increasingly cluttered as niche titles focus on everything from the growing "tween" market (such as *GL*, for Girls' Life, which constructs a particular image of girlhood) to celebrity-branded versions that appeal to the especially mediated women consumer (one prominent example being *O: The Oprah Magazine*).

Although women-targeted magazines have historically celebrated consumption by often blurring the distinctions between advertising and editorial content, arguably a hypercommercial leap occurred during the millennial decade. In late 2000 a new title entered this crowded marketplace, *Lucky* magazine. Part of the vast and influential Condé Nast publishing group, *Lucky* magazine openly declared itself to be the publication on "shopping and style." While other

publications ostensibly promote fashion and beauty ideals, this publication attempted to introduce a new commercial hybrid to the consumer magazine industry: the concept of magazine as a shopping catalog, further signaling a new influence of advertising over content and spotlighting the celebration of shopping and consumption. In fact, a stated justification of *Lucky* was that traditional fashion magazines – despite their advertising-centered nature - were not friendly enough to easy consumption. Editor Kim France stated the publication intended to reinforce the notion that “catalog is not a dirty word, which made us controversial. I saw these fashion magazines that women were really intimidated by and realized that catalogs are completely accessible. Everything in *Lucky* has got to be worth explaining to your friend why she should buy it” (“The Art of Shopping,” 2006). In press materials released by Condé Nast, executives announced the creation of *Lucky* “was inspired by Japanese publications devoted to shopping” (Ryan, 2000). Editor Kim France states: “We didn’t follow the traditional magazine formula of a serious story, a relationship story, a trend story. In fact, the concept was inspired by a genre of magazines in Japan that focuses on trends and shopping. It’s a very proven commodity there.”

France is aware that this magazine’s hybrid does have its critics. She argues that there is some economic separation of editorial from advertising in the magazine by insisting that “advertisers are not paying *Lucky* to endorse their products on editorial pages” (Ryan, 2000). This, though, is hardly the point as this blurring of the lines makes it difficult to discern the difference between the two. Clearly this publication serves as a conduit for the ultimate expression of consumerism, shopping. As the *Lucky* website touts in its mission statement: “*Lucky* is America’s ultimate shopping and style magazine. The best to buy in fashion, beauty and living. The voice of a friend you love to take shopping. Choices, not dictates. Price points ranging from high to low. Buying info for every item featured” (Condé Nast on-line media kit, 2009). *Lucky* has also been aggressive in its use of digital forms to spread the word of its own brand, its advertising partners’ brands, and the convergence of shopping, promotion, and identity.

This project attempts to analyze the socio-cultural implications of *Lucky* as a hypercommercialized and women-targeted magazine-catalog hybrid and shopping-oriented media brand. In particular, in drawing on the broad range of commercial culture criticism and postfeminist scholarship, I analyze to what extent and in what ways this hybrid publication may co-opt feminist and class discourses by collapsing consumerism with feminist empowerment and gendered class mobility. In addition, the targeting of the postfeminist woman or at least those with postfeminist values as *Lucky* readers is also addressed in this project. The degree to which social media has extended both the reach and the integration of hypercommercialized, postfeminist messages is also an important part of the project.

Lucky magazine's target demographic, 30-ish year-old women, is decidedly too young to have experienced firsthand the hard-fought battles of second-wave feminism. As feminism's popularity waned in the popular press during the 1990s, young women rejected this label for fear that media's representation positioned feminists as "unattractive, unfeminine...they fear it distances them from men, marriage and motherhood." (Rodriguez & Hall, 2003). Arguably this generation of women has been taught by popular culture that "they can have it all." We see then a mix of a cultural stigma attached to the word 'feminism' and a linkage of empowerment with consumption and material choice. Several media forms, including television's *Sex and the City*, reintroduced the accomplished single women, able to buy whatever she wished at a moment's notice and viewing shopping as a form of bonding and therapy. Additional research problematizes this condition even further by exploring the implications of embracing a commodified feminine style, suggesting that "younger women are said to view images identified with hegemonic femininity not as signs of weakness and passivity in women, but as indications of being 'in control' of their sexuality" (Crane, 1999). As commodities promise the means to be 'in control,' postfeminist women become marketers' dream of a target audience. In such ways,

popular press and advertising notions of postfeminism continue to depoliticize the very historical underpinnings of feminism that positioned women as wage earners.

Furthermore, fashion catalogs, like those published by Abercrombie & Fitch and J. Crew, have long presented “aspirational” narratives for the potential shopper. These catalogs “tell a story” to the viewers. The dissertation explores the degree to which *Lucky* magazine presents an “aspirational” narrative to their reader. Perhaps women are more “aware” regarding the air-brushed hegemonic fashion images presented by magazines, but how might we understand “aspirational” buying, a key component of *Lucky*.

Project rationale

My rationale for pursuing this research project is threefold. First, I wanted to examine the popular framing of consumptive practices among the postfeminist generation. While many researchers in both the academic and popular press have written about the harmful effects of fashion magazines imagery on body image, I argue the positioning of woman as consumer is equally problematic. The illusion of better living through shopping and brand acquisition, coupled with the related and overzealous presentation of consumption as identity creator, positions the reader as hopelessly incomplete without the necessary commodity acquisition. In addition, the hypercommercial and hybrid nature of *Lucky* magazine assures the reader will be bombarded with commerce presented as content.

Second, this project allowed me to study a media artifact largely created by and for women. While I have no way of knowing if the media creators self-identify as feminist (although rarely do they publically declare so), I have made the assumption, based on the magazine’s masthead listing, that the majority of the writers and editors are women. In addition, I also know from reviewing the magazine’s media kit that the readership is predominantly female. This presents a vexing dilemma that feminist standpoint theory attempts to address. As Hennessy (1993) argues, simply being a woman does not necessarily mean that the perspective – and the

work produced – will be feminist. Simply put, the dominant structure and ideology, in this case a patriarchal, hegemonic media system, will perpetuate the subordination of the largely female readership. Feminist standpoint theory argues for the inclusion of previously marginalized groups. Swigninski (1993) writes:

Standpoint theory directs researchers to identify research problems within the daily reality of marginalized groups – groups whose life experiences have been put into the margins of scholarly works – and to take these groups, such as women, people of color, the poor, the elderly, lesbians and gay men, person with disabilities, out of the margins and place their day-to-day reality in the center of research. (p. 172).

While this inclusion is imperative and laudable, clearly the mere featuring of one or more of these groups in media -- such as young women -- only scratches the surface of the ideological complexity of popular and consumer culture, nor does it address the systemic forces present that inform media production, including the political economy of advertising and magazines.

This provided an interesting contradiction for this researcher as it harkened back to earlier concerns about enjoyment and feminism. How can I, a feminist researcher, possibly read and enjoy women's magazines when I am all too aware of the hegemonic and patricidal messages being conveyed? This is certainly part of a larger, and potentially more problematic trend. Indeed the word feminist, as I address in Chapter Two, is fraught with contradictory definitions and interpretations. The term postfeminist is even more polemic. While working on this project, there was yet again another *New York Times* feature story on young female celebrities not self-identifying as feminists (Meltzer, 2014). This rejection and negation of the labels feminists and postfeminists, I argue, is exactly what the patriarchal system desires. By inviting women to participate in their own subjugation, the capitalist media system has a guaranteed audience.

Moreover, this cycle of consumptive practices can potentially overshadow any possible social or political engagement. Budgeon (2011) writes:

Buying into feminine empowerment may enhance a sense of agency associated with individualized identities but leaves little room to develop an awareness of the full complexity of self-empowerment or to develop a sustained critical understanding of the social context where female empowerment and feminist values are appropriated in the name of reproducing the status quo at the expense of understanding the classed and ‘raced’ divisions which render empowerment discourse so problematic (p. 287).

Budgeon further asserts that this “project of self-definition,” so dominant in third wave feminism, is celebrated as the ultimate act of liberated femininity and reinforces neoliberal governance (p. 288). While concentrating so intently on this identity creation, I argue, the largely female readership of this magazine are not focusing on the societal expectations that weigh so heavily on women. I contend that *Lucky* magazine positions itself as the must-have guidebook to this project of self-definition and identity creation, so long as it conforms to a very specific set of normative standards of fashion and beauty.

Lastly, this project is focused on a distinctive hybrid media form, magazine as catalog and magazine as a hub of social media activity. As the print magazine industry continues to evolve and redefine its mission and vision, I am interested in examining the ways women are encouraged to engage and interact via social media platforms. A virtual community is created via the Twitter feeds and Pinterest boards. Sharing and commentary is encouraged and celebrated, but in this case the commentary focuses on name brands and is centered on *Lucky* as the sage of the social media salon. Women have historically viewed shopping as a communal, bonding experience. *Lucky* magazine takes that communal experience to a virtual, and perhaps viral,

level. Furthermore, as social media continues to dictate how we communicate, participate and consume in society, I am interested in studying the far-reaching implications for women.

Chapter Overviews

Chapter Two: Literature review and theoretical orientation

This dissertation combines several literatures, as reviewed in Chapter Two. First is the literature on feminism and postfeminism in media studies, including the construction of feminism and postfeminism in commercial discourses. As many scholars have noted, in advertising “readers are not simply asked to buy a commodity, but an associated identity. As we have seen, from the 1970s onward, this identity is the ‘liberated women’ who succeeds in male-dominated pursuits” (Budgeon & Currie, 1995). This chapter briefly reviews the history of media-centered feminist thought, and touches on the influence of the magazine industry in this history. Debates about the multifaceted nature of postfeminism is particularly key -- in some ways the central influence on the dissertation; this work includes nuanced discussions by Gill (2007), Vavrus (2000), and especially that of Sarah Projansky (2001). A final major research literature involves feminist approaches to media studies and advertising, especially work focusing on the role of consumption and individualism in postfeminism. Consumption plays a constant and potentially problematic role in the lives of American women. Andrews and Talbot write, “In westernized capitalist societies it is an inevitable experience that is part of being female. Indeed it is a sphere where femininity is performed, where versions of femininity are legitimated and negotiated, or contested and rejected” (2000). Goldman, Heath and Smith’s research regarding “commodity feminism” (1991) is a related concept to postfeminism. Commodity feminism centers on the “appropriation and reframing of feminist discourse” through the positioning of commodity acquisition (Goldman, Heath, & Smith, 1991). Furthermore, “advertisers assemble signs which connote independence, participation in the work force, individual freedom and self-control”

(Goldman, Heath, & Smith, 1991). In the world of fashion magazines, this performance can be reinforced monthly. Traditional notions of femininity, combined with newer discourses about shopping, play a vital role in the continued success of fashion and beauty titles. I contend this issue of empowerment gained through the acquisition of products is a core message advanced by the messages present in *Lucky*.

The chapter also touches on the "hypercommercialization" of culture, a phrase often attributed to Robert McChesney that draws on several scholars concerned about commercial influences in the modern public sphere (McChesney, 1999). The blurring of lines between content and commerce continues to be an issue studied by political economists and I draw on the research of James Twitchell (1996) and Mike Budd, Steve Craig, and Clay Steinman (1999). One characteristic of modern commercial culture is the cultivation of hybrid media forms that signal advertising influence.

Such hypercommercial hybridity and the critical literature that engages such forms help explain *Lucky*. Previously, catalogs were presented as the clear choice for purchasing merchandise outside of the traditional bricks and mortar store. These glossy pictorials allowed the shopper to pick and chose desired merchandise at the designated price. However, in recent years, on-line shopping and fashion magazines have usurped the role of catalogs. Now, the reader is treated to the latest fashion and beauty offerings as portrayed by the latest Hollywood "it girl." The specific characteristics of *Lucky* in the modern promotional context make it a worthwhile artifact for study for communication scholars. *Lucky* magazine clearly identified a marketing void in this publishing landscape - one that flowed with general trends in the commercialization of modern culture - and added their title, geared toward the fashion-savvy shopper who was not bothered by, and even embraced, this new commercial hybrid. Similar titles like *In Style* and *People Style Watch* are also indicative of this trend.

In addition, critical work on media synergy and branding is influential (for example Meehan, 1991). As a media brand (illustrated by the earlier discussed list of *Lucky* books, electronic outlets, and cross promotions) *Lucky* is also indicative of trends in media synergy and ownership, but giving such trends an overt shopping and consumption niche. Unlike the usual media brand (such as Disney), *Lucky* merchandise and spin-off licensing does not just encourage the purchasing of *Lucky* commodities, but also purchasing generally. We especially see this manifested in Chapter Five, where social media are coordinated to offer different takes on shopping and *Lucky's* brand.

Chapter Three: The development of consumption-based magazines and the political economy of *Lucky*

This chapter provides a broad overview of women-targeted magazines, their relationship to advertising and consumer culture, and the political economic context of *Lucky* magazine. To place *Lucky* in the modern magazine and advertising context, materials such as mission statements, available financial data and information/interviews from trade journal articles are examined.

Chapter Four: Textual and descriptive analysis of *Lucky's* print publication

In this chapter, I offer a detailed textual analysis of advertising and editorial content of the magazine, focusing especially on the hybrid nature of the magazine and its construction of gender and consumption in the context of this hybridity. After a discussion of textual method, and a general description of a typical issue, this chapter investigates the blurring of lines between editorial content and advertising as this publication continues to advance a consumption oriented magazine-catalog hybrid. Specifically, this chapter addresses instances of "product integration" into content, specific types of pro-product and consumption messages found throughout the magazine. As will be argued, many of these messages focus on postfeminist views of consumer agency and establishing *Lucky* as a key authority to achieving this agency.

Chapter Five: *Lucky* as a consumption-promoting digital media brand

As noted earlier, *Lucky* is much more than a magazine: it involves a series of branded print and electronic subsidiaries. *Lucky* magazine is currently active on eleven social media sites, including Facebook, Pinterest, and Instagram. In this chapter, I provide a textual analysis of several examples from these sites and discuss how each social media outlet offers a specific way for *Lucky* to shape and extend its message of shopping empowerment. *Lucky* magazine also offers daily Facebook and email updates, which typically focus on the “deal of the day.” Whereas traditional shopping is typically viewed as a communal activity highlighting female bonding, social media is the new site for connection, sharing and interaction. The implications for engagement in this virtual world are addressed in this chapter.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the major findings of the dissertation. Beyond this, issues specific to the dangers of a hypercommercialized media system, are discussed. What is the future for fashion and beauty publication in an ever-increasing move away from traditional print publications? The magazine industry, similar to many traditional media, is in flux. What are the lessons that the magazine industry may learn from *Lucky*, including lessons about advertising focus, media branding and constructions of audiences as consumption-obsessed? How might *Lucky* be a (quite problematic) model for other media forms desperate for advertising revenue in a competitive digital era?

Moreover, the debate surrounding postfeminism and commodity feminism will continue to evolve as we move into a new media society. As gender roles are defined and redefined in popular forms of media, fashion-oriented media are still cogent. The implications of new images of consumption, class and “aspirational” buying should be examined given the findings of the dissertation. As postfeminist scholarship continues to critique media forms, what is the continuing

role of the fashion media given their changes as signified by the *Lucky* brand? How will feminism adopt and be adopted – is it personal or political, or just plain good business?

CHAPTER 2:
**BUILDING A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK THROUGH AN EXAMINATION
OF THE THREE WAVES OF FEMINISM, POSTFEMINISM, AND
HYPERCOMMERCIALISM**

Introduction

The notion of postfeminism continues to be hotly debated, both inside and outside of the academy. Widely differing interpretations of this highly charged term exist in cultural studies, feminist theory, and mass communication literature. In addition, popular press readings of this term also contribute to the ongoing discussion. I will attempt to outline and situate these arguments within the historical framework of contemporary feminist scholarship. In order to show the progression of this term, I will outline the historical evolution of the feminist movement's three waves, overview the rhetoric of the "I'm not a feminist but..." declaration, and discuss the current understanding of the term postfeminism in both the popular press and academic literature. Furthermore, I will discuss the differences between feminine, feminism and postfeminism. Moreover, I will outline the hegemonic patriarchal culture behind the perpetuation of this term and will elucidate the larger connections to both pop culture and magazine publishing. Finally, the chapter will review another key concept of the dissertation, hypercommercialism. The concepts of feminism, postfeminism, and hypercommercialism will frame the analysis of *Lucky* magazine in Chapters Four and Five.

Feminism, Postfeminism and the Three Waves

The two terms of feminism and postfeminism are fraught with contradiction and controversy. This instability makes a consensus on meaning difficult and is historically situated. As Gerhard notes, “The terms feminism had multiple meanings in the 1920s and 30s but it was not until the 1960s and 70s that it began its frightening accumulation of qualifiers, each attempting to specify and clarify the various political stakes for feminists” (2005). This multiplicity of meaning makes defining not just feminism but also postfeminism a specific challenge for both mass communication and feminist scholars. In addition, eras of feminism have their own terminology, most commonly described as historical moments known as “waves.” Most scholars agree that American feminism can be loosely organized around three waves (at least until a recently claimed fourth wave), although defining the waves and their significance has proved to be problematic as well. In particular the third wave -- often associated with postfeminism -- has proved to be a shifting and amorphous term.

The first wave encompasses the years 1848 to 1920, beginning with the Seneca Falls Convention, and ending with the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, which gave women the right to vote (Siegel, 1997). Largely connected with the suffragette movement, the first wave was important as it laid the ground work for women’s newly gained legal and social status. The political implications are pivotal as women began voicing their opinions through the use of the vote. Some viewed this particular victory as the crowning achievement of the first wave, although it perhaps came at a cost in long-term momentum. Miriam Schneir writes: “Soon after 1920, the main women’s organizations disintegrated, and feminism entered a long period of dormancy...Feminist leaders vanished into virtual oblivion, their struggle nearly forgotten” (p. xi). While many social movements experience a lull after significant advancements, feminism fought to maintain its relevance to the masses after the voting achievement. However, the

upheaval of the 1960s -- 40 years after the end of the first wave -- proved to be a fertile ground for women's rights.

The second wave is commonly understood to begin in 1963 with the publication of the feminist landmark text, *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan, a book that examined social and cultural limitations imposed upon modern women and with considerable discussion of the nature of gendered discourse in magazines and advertising. Significant social and political change in the 1960s contributed to the evolution of the women's movement, as women attempted to gain social, political and economic equality. Many advances were made in the areas of reproductive rights, workplace rights, and the criminalization of sexual violence. In addition, consciousness-raising groups (CR) led to public protests and the adoption of the now-famous phrase "the personal is political." The creation of many university women's studies programs is also a legacy of second wave feminism (Detloff, 1997). (However, this growth of academic feminism is also cited as contributing to the depoliticalization of the movement. Feminism shifted from grassroots activism to academic theoretical debate.)

One oft-cited event is of particular importance to second wave feminism, the 1968 Miss America pageant boycott, again a defining event in which popular magazines made an appearance. As Imogen Tyler writes "Deliberately humorous and media-savvy, the protest symbolically enacted the rejection of oppressive feminist ideals of femininity through tactics which included picket lines, guerilla theatre, leafleting, lobbying visits to the contestants urging them to drop out of the pageant and a 'huge freedom can' into which they threw 'bras, girdles, curlers, false eyelashes, wigs and representative issues of *Cosmopolitan*, *Ladies Home Journal*, and *Family Circle*'. All of these strategies aimed to make sexual inequality visible" (Tyler, 2005). Interestingly, the depiction of women actually burning bras, an iconic "image" of second wave feminism frequently invoked by the popular press when positioning feminists as strident, unfeminine or militant, never actually occurred. In short, the "freedom trash can" was never set

aflame. The telling and retelling of this story in the popular press, labeling feminists as “bra burners,” only furthered to distance the movement from women uneasy to be associated with such an act of blatant defiance. According to Susan Douglas, “the media largely ridiculed the event, promoting the image of the bra burner which has been used to disparage feminists ever since” (1994). The media’s framing of the 1968 Miss America pageant is critical because as Crossley notes, “In the powerful association between the women’s movement and bra burning, feminists may be dismissed not only as irrational, but also trivialized and sexualized” (2010). This framing of feminism is of particular importance to third wave feminists, which I will discuss later in this project.

In addition, the second wave in particular was successful in unifying many women in the pursuit of social change. Consciousness-raising groups (CR) played a vital role. However, there were divisions and even shortcomings of this wave. Critics charged the main elements of the second-wave with class and racial exclusion. Tyler writes: “...this period was predominately a white, middle-class movement and critical differences between women, such as race and class, were often overlooked or dismissed in the rush to affirm a common identity: sisterhood, and a common source of oppression: patriarchy” (2005). In addition, feminist politics were considered threatening the right as this movement challenged established views of gender roles and wanted to dismantle a patriarchy that privileged the white male. Typically characterized as anti-men, anti-child and anti-family, many critics deemed feminism as a “social disease” (Tyler, 2005). This negative positioning would accompany the feminist movement for decades.

Interestingly marketing and advertising executives as early as 1969 chose to capitalize on this new found image of the liberated woman in their advertising and promotional campaigns. The dowdy housewife was out and the sexually liberated, conventionally attractive career woman was in (Tyler, 2005). In particular Revlon and Lancôme designed ads that on the surface celebrated this new-found independence, but in reality, “really reinforced how we failed to

measure up to others” (Douglas, 1994: 247, 248). Most importantly, this was a pivotal step in depoliticizing the woman’s movement (Tyler, 2005). This appropriation of feminist concepts masked as marketing lingo would be evident in many advertising campaigns throughout the 1980s and beyond. This narcissism as liberation encouraged women to “compensate themselves for sexual inequality and the difficulty of lives spent through the competing priorities of work and motherhood through the consumption of scented candles and bubble bath” (Tyler, 2005).

The cooptation of feminism by advertising is highlighted by the concept of “commodity feminism,” coined by Goldman, Heath and Smith (1991). Drawing on Marx’s commodity fetishism, commodity feminism attempts to redefine and reposition feminism in a media landscape. Goldman, Heath and Smith conducted a close reading of a 1987 issue of *Mademoiselle* magazine and concluded that women’s magazines attempt to redefine feminism through commodity acquisition, interpreting the everyday relations women encounter and negotiate those into a series of “attitudes” which they can then “wear.” (p. 336).

Consequently, these signs stand for (or made equivalent to) the feminist goals of independence and professional success. Personality can be expressed and relationships achieved through personal consumer choices (p. 336). Advertising has historically articulated a vocabulary of visual signifiers which define the meaningful universe of femininity. To signify feminism, advertisers now assemble signs which connote independence, participation in the work force, individual freedom and self-control. (p. 337). Moreover, “commodity feminism presents feminism as a style – a semiotic abstraction – a set of visual sign values that say who you are” (p. 337). This notion of style, acquired through commodities, is a perfect synergistic partnership for fashion magazines. Although this concept was introduced largely before scholarly writing on postfeminism, the idea of empowerment being offered through brand meaning is a key one for some definitions of postfeminism, as will be argued below.

Some claim the second wave faltered in the late 1980s and early 1990s as a direct result of the conservative Reagan/Bush era (Siegel, 1997). In addition, the political gravitas of the second wave was seriously questioned after the defeat of the ERA, and with the earlier-mentioned charges of race and class exclusivity. This shift marked a new understanding and positioning of the feminist movement (Siegel, 1997).

New writers emerged, detailing that feminism was changing, along with the changing social and economic conditions for the American woman. With the publication of Susan Faludi's *Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women* and Naomi Wolf's *The Beauty Myth* in 1991, it seemed that feminism faced new challenges. Faludi's clear message was when there is a perception that "Women get too powerful... men, via the hegemonic force of media, launch campaigns to convince women of feminism's failure" (Gerhard, 1995); Faludi then documented the attacks and criticism against feminism and feminist advances in the Reagan and post-Reagan eras. In addition, both authors stressed that "the gains won by first and second wave feminists had left the latest generation of women smug in their conviction of equality" (Gerhard, 1995). However notable their contributions, many still question whether Wolf's ideas really reflected third wave or postfeminist ideas, the latter of which will be deconstructed below (Kinser, 2004).

The third wave is often described as being ushered in 1992 with the creation of the Third Wave Foundation. Founded by author and activist Rebecca Walker, the Third Wave Foundation attempted to dismantle the privileging of white, middle class, heterosexual women as the voice of feminist movement. In response to what was viewed as an exclusive movement, the Third Wave was framed as being more inclusive. Their mission was "to politicize and organize young women from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds" (Bronstein, 2005). Rather than marginalize difference, the third wave attempts to "embrace and these complexities and contradictions" (Bronstein, 2005). Activism is often considered key to the third wave (as it was in the previous ones).

Three notable nonfiction anthologies, published in the early 1990s, are emblematic of third wave feminism. *Listen Up: Voices from the Next Feminist Generation* (Findlen, 1995); *To Be Real: Telling the Truth and Changing the Face of Feminism* (Walker, 1995); and *Colonize This! Young Women of Color on Today's Feminism* (Hernandez & Rheman, 2002). These texts are known as offering “key articulations of the emerging feminist movement...and offer personal essays in which a substantial number of third wave feminists use their own voices to describe how they understand and practice feminism” (Fixner and Wood, 2005). Moreover, these essays also reinforce the third wave reliance on personal narrative. These narratives, some argue, problematizes how one “does feminism” and help define how this generation negotiates feminism (Kinser, 2004). Individual choices are championed over mass activism.

Third wave activism includes a 1992 voter registration drive, protests against sweatshop labor in late 1990s and many on-campus self-defense programs (Bronstein, 2005). “Take Back the Night” marches on university campus can also be considered third wave activism. In addition, the third wave attempts to address issues relating to multiculturalism, sexual identity, and class divisions.

Bronstein argues that the third wavers position themselves as different from the second wave, “particularly in the areas of sexuality and bodily aesthetics, and in terms of activities that constitute feminist resistance” (2005). A different generation means a different agenda. Furthermore, fashion plays a vital role in their self expression. Bronstein writes: “Third wavers who don high-fashion clothing do so as resistance against a repressive second wave code that stifles personal aesthetic expression...the *fashionista* persona appeals to members of this new generation” (2005). Many writers in the popular press addressed the contradictory relationships young feminists have with the beauty and fashion industries. In short, third wavers believe they can “simultaneously wear make-up and maintain a critical perspective on the cosmetics industry” (Bronstein, 2005). Third wavers claim that what may be seen as choice for one woman may be

considered oppressive to another (Bronstein, 2005). Most importantly, individual acts are privileged as the main form of resistance, as opposed to collective political action (Bronstein, 2005).

Subsequently, Bronstein concluded that many popular press depictions of the third wave repositioned feminism as ‘feminism lite,’ meaning that news stories constructed the third wave as an “apolitical movement whose members have shed the resolute determination and serious issue-based focus of the second wave in favor of the frivolous and light-hearted activity” (2005). Interestingly, Bronstein purports, the media have also “defined the third wave *against* the second wave, rather than through it” (2005). In doing so, this potentially positions the expected binary: second wavers are strident and serious, third wavers are feminine and frivolous.

In addition, Archer Mann and Huffman argue that third wave feminism is a movement that strives to position themselves “against rather than necessarily after the second wave. This new discourse did not seek to undermine the feminist movement, but rather to refigure and enhance it so as to make it more diverse and inclusive” (2005). However, the third wave saw a variation, postfeminism, that took on many of the characteristics of the third wave such as individualism and a distrust of the perceived seriousness of the second wave, and arguably was more hostile to the concept of feminism. If the third wave championed inclusion, as many argue, then postfeminism declared that individual choices and self-fulfillment were framed as the path to self-actualization.

Postfeminism

While the third wave focused on inclusion and multiplicity, postfeminism -- a term used in different ways, including to designate a historical movement, a reaction against second wave stereotypes, a reactionary backlash against feminism generally, and synonymous with third-wave feminism -- perhaps most commonly is positioned as women as having already won the battle

against discrimination (signified by the time-based “post-“ prefix). Centering on agency and individualism, postfeminism continues to be a highly-contested and controversial term.

The first use of the term postfeminism in the United States was used as early as the late 1920s during the conclusion of feminism’s first wave. However, most scholars cite a 1982 use of the term in a *New York Times* article as its first contemporary appearance. Interestingly, the term appears in the article’s headline, yet no comprehensive definition is offered in the text. Writer Susan Bolotin interviewed several women regarding their own self-identification with the term feminist. While agreeing in theory to the tenets of feminism, many of these women rejected the feminist label. Titled “Voices from the Post-Feminist Generation,” Bolotin writes: “What began to worry me was a sense that we feminists who came of consciousness in the 1960s and early 70s had been boring with our stories of how bad it was. Instead of conveying our enthusiasm, perhaps we had sunk into the trap of setting ourselves apart as gurus of liberation” (sect. 6, p. 29). In addition, many of the women interviewed claimed feminism’s perceived connection to lesbian rights tainted second wave feminism for them. Diana Shaw, a 24-year old writer, was quoted in the article: “Think of the ERA situation. You had distinct issues there, but the feminists brought along all of these riders with it. The one that did them the most harm was lesbian rights” (sect. 6, p. 29).

In the popular press, many scholars agree that a watershed moment in the postfeminism movement occurred on June 29, 1998 with the publication of a highly controversial issue of *Time* magazine. Featuring photographic images of Susan B. Anthony, Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem, and actress Calista Flockhart as television alter ego Ally McBeal, the bold red cover line read “Is Feminism Dead?” The layout of the images positioned McBeal/Flockhart as the “the heir of the feminist lineage” (Tyler, 2005). The accompanying *Time* magazine cover story by journalist Ginia Bellefonte argued the death knell of feminism, suggesting that contemporary feminism is “wed to the culture of celebrity and self-obsession” and is characterized by “narcissistic

ramblings of a few new media-anointed spokeswomen” (Bellefonte, 1998; Tyler, 2005). In sharp contrast to the politically charged second wave focused on activism and social changes, this movement was concerned with personal choice, self-fulfillment and narcissism.

Like Anthony, Friedan and Steinem, McBeal was positioned as this generation’s (post) feminist icon, and the character is still involved as a key icon for postfeminism. And also like Mary Richards and Murphy Brown before her, Ally McBeal was a single women attempting to “make it” in a man’s world, but one very appearance oriented and even selfish. This character proved to be a lightning rod for young women and was written about extensively in both the popular and academic literature. During this time period, the television show Ally McBeal was a critical and commercial success. However, series star Flockhart was regularly criticized for her slim build and waif-like appearance, prompting rumors of an eating disorder. Moreover, this character was emblematic of the inherent contradictions of this generation of twenty and thirtysomething women: how does one balance the challenges of work with the growing challenges of being a woman in a man’s world?

Given the importance of the television character and program in definitions of postfeminism, there was a significant scholarly engagement with them. Some of this work especially focused on the concept of “post” in postfeminism, and the implications for the advancement of women and the future place of feminism. In the article, “Victims No More: Postfeminism, Television and *Ally McBeal*,” Ouellette (2002) writes: “*Ally McBeal* constructs postfeminism not as a change in feeling among women who lived through and allegedly rejected feminism, but rather as a flexible subject position for a new era in which the woman’s movement is presumed successful, but feminism is ‘other’ and even threatening to contemporary femininity...” (p. 316). This flexibility of subject position -- individual subjectivity and pleasure as an earned right -- is a key hallmark of postfeminism. Ouellette continues: “On *Ally McBeal*, privileged professional still personify the taken-for-granted gains of the woman’s movement, but

the storylines present feminism as a dates obstacle to a young career women's experiences, choices and desires" (p 317). These televisual depictions of the postfeminist woman were clearly in step with the prevailing narrative.

Contemporary critics of postfeminism as a social and cultural movement highlight several characteristics, many of them problematic for the equality and women-centered advancements that characterize the larger feminism movement and scholarship. Dubrofsky asserts that postfeminism involves the process of looking inward for solutions regarding inequality and identity. In contrast, feminism involves "a more outward looking approach; a look at the social and economic structures that impact on women" (2002).

Gill also stresses the role of individualism, adding that choice and empowerment in postfeminism are framed in very particular ways, and that the popular/corporate media are especially embracing of the movement and help define it. It involves the "total evacuation of notions of politics or cultural influence. This is seen not only in the relentless personalizing tendencies of news, talk shows and reality TV, but also in the ways in which every aspect of life is refracted through the idea of personal choice and self-determination" (2007). In addition, McRobbie (2008) finds this celebration of shopping in particular to be troubling. McRobbie writes, "...there is now, embedded within these forms of feminine popular culture, a tidal wave of invidious insurgent patriarchalism which is hidden beneath the celebration of female freedom" (p. 539). This notion of choice, freedom and agency is pivotal to my exploration of *Lucky* magazine, which will be detailed later in this dissertation.

The intersection of postfeminism and empowerment is clearly at the forefront of this debate. As Kinser notes: "Postfeminism very well may be a voice that is currently rising above the din for many young women. It is seductive. It co-opts the motivating discourse of feminism but accepts a sense of empowerment as a substitute for the work toward and evidence of authentic empowerment" (2004). For Kinser, the postfeminist view of empowerment is rooted in

individualism and a belief in the agentic consumer, ultimately destructive forms to long-term equality when compared to female solidarity, organization, and structural changes. Many cite the ongoing negative portrayals of feminism -- and traditional feminist interventions -- in the media as being partly to blame for the seductive pull of postfeminist appeals (Kinser, 2004).

The very depoliticizing of the women's movement seen in mass media mirrored what was actually happening in the movement itself. Archer Mann and Huffman purport that the women's movement became "more mainstream, more professionalized, more commercialized, and less radical" (2005). In short, it became far easier to mold to a marketer's purpose; this then made postfeminism appealing as a trope to advertisers: embrace pleasure, embrace personal transformation through looks and brands. The growth of self-help and feminist spirituality, they argue, also contributes to the "increasing focus on personal transformation as a means of social change...many strands of the third wave focused more on internalized oppressions" (2005). Personal transformation and betterment, particularly as it relates to normative standards of beauty, will be discussed at length in this project.

Susan Douglas (2009) rejects the term completely, arguing that it can be seen as too benign with the implication that feminism is dead and no longer needed. By including the word feminism in the term postfeminism, Douglas argues, one can infer that postfeminism is concerned with feminism. According to Douglas, the media's use of the term postfeminism really harkens back to what she terms is "good old-fashioned sexism" (Lee and Wen, 2009). She suggests the integration of a new term that embeds what she believes to be at the heart of postfeminism as a trope in popular media, enlightened sexism.

One especially nuanced discussion of postfeminism comes from Sarah Projanksy (2001), who argues for five specific interpretations of this term that integrate many of the points previously made about postfeminism. The first four interpretations, in particular, are especially

useful in this dissertation. (The fifth type of postfeminism, a term less useful in this particular discussion, is postfeminist men.)

The first, linear postfeminism, focuses on the white, heterosexual woman who has achieved full access to the privileges of a patriarchal society and usually has access to a professional, lucrative job. She is educated, conventionally attractive and therefore views society from a privileged position, assuming that gender discrimination no longer exists. This movement largely ignores the questions of race and class and typically purports that goals of second wave feminism have been already been achieved (Projansky, 2001). The character of Ally McBeal, as featured on the aforementioned cover of *Time* magazine is emblematic of linear postfeminism. (In fact, McBeal, a fictional character, is positioned as the daughter and granddaughter of previous feminist wave icons on the cover.) As will be argued about *Lucky*, although the magazine often gestures at an embracing of different budgets and body types, there are also consistent and traditional beauty and class assumptions that flow well with this conceptualization.

The second type of postfeminism is backlash postfeminism. This strand is considered “antifeminist” and concerns itself with an assaultive backlash against feminism. This is seen in the frequently asked question “Is feminism dead?” and implies that feminism, in its current state, has no foreseeable future (Projansky, 2001). The writers Katie Roiphe, Christina Hoff Sommers and Naomi Wolf are most closely associated with this definition. In short, they reject “victim feminism” (Projansky, 2001). Wolf’s book “Fire with Fire,” in particular, advises women to seize power – economic, political and sexual. By placing themselves in the power position, Wolf asserts, woman can disregard the problematic label of victim (Orr, 1997). Orr offers a new label for the aforementioned writers, feminist dissenter (p. 35). She writes: “Convinced that feminism has become the cause of, rather than the solution to woman’s problems, feminist dissenters are entangled in representations of third wave discourse” (p. 34). Projansky interrogates some of the major claims and works in this definition, including Roiphe’s questionable assertions and

sweeping generalizations regarding sexual assaults on college campuses. Similarly, Wolf's argument does not address the existing patriarchal structures which continue to undermine women's political and economic progress. In addition, Projansky stresses that these "antifeminist postfeminist feminists" blame the "oppression of women on a version of feminism they imagine to exist" (2001). These scholars purport that this brand of feminism must be replaced with a better, more fully evolved brand of feminism. Although engagement with feminism in this way is not an explicit part of *Lucky's* postfeminism rhetoric, occasionally feminist icons are mentioned....usually in fashion guides.

Backlash feminism helps us to understand the appeal of postfeminism as a label for identity versus whether or not a woman self-identifies as feminist. Much has been written about how few young women identify themselves as feminists. Many media and feminist scholars have determined that the majority of young women tend to be depoliticized and individualistic (Aronson, 2003). Furthermore, "many of these apolitical women assume that discrimination will not happen to them" and that the lack of a "grassroots mobilization results in no framework for understanding individual experiences in politicized terms and limits 'postfeminists' to viewing gender disparities as illegitimate, rather than in collective terms or in terms of women's shared interests" (Aronson, 2003). Others contradict that notion, claiming that the very individualistic nature of third wave feminism is what makes it so inclusive. According to Aronson, many third wavers embrace hybridity, contradiction and multiple identities (2003). Aronson's 2003 study about women and feminism shows that "more than half the young women approached feminism even more ambiguously than previously reported, especially the 'fence-sitters' who embrace some aspects of feminism while rejecting others and avoid defining themselves in relation to the identity of feminist" (2003). In addition, their viewpoints regarding feminism were also informed by racial and class background (Aronson, 2003). Those who identify as feminist were more likely to be white, college educated and many had taken women's studies classes. In sharp contrast,

those who did not identify with the term were “disproportionately from less privileged racial and class backgrounds” (Aronson, 2003). However, the majority of women studied actually supported feminist goals and ideas, particularly the ideology of equality (Aronson, 2003). Furthermore, third wavers are also more likely to feel responsible for their own personal fulfillment and less likely to feel the need to “shoulder the burdens” (Stugart, 2001) of all women. This act of individualism, therefore, resolves the woman of her responsibility to the collective.

Resistance to the term feminist still exists. A May 22, 2014 article in the *New York Times* titled “Who is a Feminist Now?” asked several young celebrities if they self-identify with the term feminist. Actress Shaliene Woodley, 22-years old, replied, “No, because I love men, and I think the idea of ‘raise women to power, take the men away from the power,’ is never going to work out because you need balance.” Others interviewed in the article dismiss Woodley’s assertions, claiming she does not truly understand the meaning of feminism. However, some claim that the very debate over the meaning of the word is a historic, that instead of consensus building this discussion only serves to widen the gulf between women. I contend the dismantling of the term feminism is critical to examining the rise of shopping as empowerment rhetoric. Moreover, it paved the way for a particular brand of advertising and editorial in fashion magazines which focuses on self-transformation and betterment through the acquisition of products.

The third type of postfeminism is called equality and choice postfeminism. This definition still celebrates white, middle class, heterosexual woman, but is a bit more inclusive than linear feminism. The television character of Murphy Brown is indicative of equality and choice postfeminism (Projansky, 2001). The emphasis of choice -- clearly reflective of the language of reproductive rights -- nevertheless is also one easily coopted by marketers who purport to offer a plethora of product choices.

The fourth type is “choosing (hetero) sexuality” or “masquerade postfeminism” which forefronts consumerism, active sexuality, professional success and personal fulfillment (Projanksy, 2001). Outlining a woman’s choice to engage in heterosexual activity, it focuses on attractive bodily behavior and plays with the concept of the male gaze. The hallmark of masquerade postfeminism is individualism, choice and the notion of personal agency. I will argue this definition of postfeminism is quite useful as I examine *Lucky* magazine’s impact on this generation of young women.

Combining elements especially of these last two definitions, Tasker and Negra outline a postfeminism that “caters to an affluent elite that entails and empathetic individualism” that “confuses self-interest with individualism” and “assumes economic freedom for women” (2007). Their definition stresses the “You go girl” rhetoric and girl power movement (2007). Most importantly, it works to “commodify feminism via the figure of woman as empowered consumer” (2007). As I will discuss at length in this project, the woman is positioned as a willing participating in a “guilt-free consumerism” that celebrates female agency. This willful participation is imperative to the success of fashion publications like *Lucky*. In addition, the emphasis on, and celebration of, shopping and consumerism is the very hallmark of commodity feminism, discussed earlier. Furthermore, as Schor (2000) asserts, there exists what she terms as “competitive consumption.” Competitive consumption occurs when individuals attempt to “keep up” with their peers. However, this process invites constant comparisons, frequently with a demographic group higher up on the socio-economic scale (p.8). *Lucky* magazine, in particular, contributes to that type of comparison.

As Vavrus (2000) purports, women’s magazines are especially visible embracers of this form of consumption-based post-feminism by presenting problems that can be “solved only by the advertiser’s products and these solutions are almost always sexist in nature” (p. 424). In

postfeminist versions of commodity feminism, the word “feminism” may not be found explicitly in advertising, but the notions of empowerment through consumption are.

Many postfeminist third wavers may also believe that by supporting the “politics of appearance” means they can wear fashionable clothing as a mode of resistance against the perceived dogmatic limitations set forth by the second wave which stifled and discouraged personal aesthetic expression (Bronstein, 2005). In short, they contend they can simultaneously wear cosmetics and still maintain a critical perspective on the beauty and fashion industries (Bronstein, 2005).

According to Stugart, Waggoner and Hallstein (2001), empowerment has now taken on new forms as third wave feminism has been commodified, reinscribed and sold back to the audience in a hegemonic fashion (p. 194). This brand of individualistic empowerment means feeling good about yourself and having the agency to make lifestyle and career choices, regardless of what those choices entail (p. 195). However, this focus on hyperindividualism has the potential to undermine any possibility of real feminist activism (Rockler, 2006). With the above debates and discussions in mind, I will focus on postfeminism as a historically situated movement with an uneasy relationship to second-wave feminism, but with a more comfortable relationship to corporate media and advertising. It is especially rooted in the celebration of individual choice, the “right” to beauty and pleasure, agentic consumption, and one that uses particularly playful versions of commodity feminism. Terms like attitude and confidence not only signal the individualistic orientation of traditional fashion magazines like *Mademoiselle*, as well as *Lucky* magazine, they also represent what can be acquired through the right consumer choices. *Lucky* magazine is therefore presented as the ultimate source for this personal transformation via the acquisition of goods. Movements like feminism and postfeminism do not operate in a social and cultural vacuum. Other social dynamics including trends in politics, economics, and technology may affect what particular conceptualizations of feminist thought and

icons prosper or wither. One such dynamic involves trends in media. In particular, in the case of *Lucky's* version of postfeminism, trends in advertising and promotional forms are especially relevant. This next section briefly explores these trends through the concept of hypercommercialism.

The growth of a hypercommercial culture

McChesney contends that contemporary society marks an “age of hypercommercialism” (1999, 2004) and a “commercial tidal wave” (McChesney and Foster, 2003).

Hypercommercialism is defined as the blurring of commercial assumptions, messages and purposes into different cultural forms that have historically not been explicitly commercial in nature (McAllister and Smith, 2013). Hypercommercialism, then, has implications for the cultural volume of advertising imperatives, the influence of advertising and marketing upon cultural forms, the ability of media users to determine influences in media, and the cultivation of consumerist values in society.

The invasion of advertising and promotion in media and cultural forms can be found in many different kinds of media -- newspapers, television, and movies -- and in different genres -- reality television, soap operas (this term itself speaks to the historical influence of advertising), and sports. Certain industry terms signify hypercommercial tendencies, including product placement, product integration, branded entertainment, three commercial activities ranked in order from least intrusive to most intrusive. With television, Budd, Craig and Steinman argue (1999) that the growth of a hypercommercial culture has led to commodity flow. Commodity flow is defined as presenting content that is interconnected with commercial messages, such as product placement and using the same celebrity in advertising and editorial content. These markers of a magazine-version of commodity flow will be discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

The era of digital media may have accelerated trends in hypercommercialism, as websites, email, and social media like Twitter especially blur the distinctions between advertising

and non-advertising, and offer new venues to enact integrated marketing with traditional media content (McAllister & Smith, 2013). As the next chapter explores, Magazines in particular are vulnerable to hypercommercial integration, perhaps even more so as advertising moneys shift to digital media sources. Given that significant revenue is generated by advertising sales and promotions, editorial content is arguably secondary, created to be complementary to the advertiser's messages. This intersection of content and commerce is an integral feature of *Lucky* magazine and will be discussed at length in this project.

The influence and impact of a commercial culture has far-reaching implications. Magazines targeted for women have historically fully embraced advertising influence, and the growing attractiveness of young women as a market make media who target this readership especially vulnerable to hypercommercial tendencies. As discussed previously in this chapter, shopping has been framed as postfeminist empowerment and the acquisition of particular name branded products has been presented as integral to personal identity creation.

These intersections mark present a vexing condition for the postfeminist woman. Charged with creating her identity through commodity acquisition, the postfeminist viewer is framed through the lens of both a patriarchal *and* hypercommercial culture. This postmodern identity creation is marketer's dream. The patriarchal culture sets the unattainable normative standards while fashion editorial and advertising are presented as the solution.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined the historical underpinnings of feminism; described the major benchmarks in the growth of feminism's three waves; and explored the multiple and contradictory definitions of postfeminism. The concept's emphasis on consumption and individualism and variations on commodity feminism, in particular, make it a fruitful concept for understanding post-millennial gendered portrayals in advertising and consumer magazines. Furthermore, I contend there are significant ideological considerations as our contemporary

hypercommercial culture is influenced by these trends, ones that segue well with issues of gender and postfeminism. These concepts will converge in the discussion of *Lucky* as we will see hypercommercialized forms with postfeminist themes.

These issues will be explored at further length in Chapters Four and Five. In the next chapter, I will examine the political economy implications present in *Lucky* magazine.

CHAPTER 3:

PROFITTING FROM GENDERED CONSUMPTION: EXAMINING THE HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS AND POLITICAL ECONOMY OF *LUCKY* MAGAZINE

Introduction

The Managing Editor of *Lucky*, Rick Levine, openly acknowledges that the magazine is celebratory of the products and brands it features, presenting itself as a kind of anti-Consumer Reports: “By and large we don’t put stuff in the magazine we don’t like” (“Media Insight,” 2001). In the highly competitive New York City publishing scene, Levine also stresses that *Lucky* is interested in breaking “exclusive” news about trendy items (“Media Insight,” 2001). Not only does *Lucky* feature fashion and beauty items, the publication covers home décor and technology. In early editions of the publication, editors also featured one particular city as a potential destination and list specific shopping outlets. Later chapters will document the extent to which *Lucky* constructs and perpetuates a very gendered approach to consumption.

But what are the historical precedents and economic incentives for such a magazine? And how has *Lucky* not only embraced, but arguably been a forerunner of, magazines’ movement into the digital age and the revenue possibilities there?

Lucky magazine exists in historical and political economic context. Published by the vast and influential Condé Nast group, *Lucky* promotes a fashionable lifestyle dedicated to shopping and style. This chapter will first briefly survey a history of consumer culture and magazines targeted to women’s consumption, and set up provide a broad overview of the Condé Nast publishing empire and *Lucky* magazine. To place *Lucky* in the modern magazine and advertising context, I will outline and discuss mission statements, press releases, media kits and rate cards,

available financial data and information/interviews from trade journal articles. The chapter will focus on the political economy of *Lucky* by addressing the *Lucky* magazine demographic, circulation figures, advertising revenue and publishing history. This analysis will help contextualize the findings in Chapters Four and Five by attempting to understand how the magazine conceptualizes -- and therefore constructs -- its target market.

A historical overview of women's magazines

Women's magazines have long been a staple of advertisers and marketers and viewed as being receptive to consumerist messages. As Hermes (1995) explains, women's magazines are both accessible and nonthreatening for readers and constitute a genre that they can easily be picked up and put down again. Since readers know magazines will not totally capture us or permanently transfix us, they are quite safe to read (p. 34). This perception of safety is critical for the growth of a consumerist message.

Similarly, Scanlon (1995) argues that magazines reflected much of the logic of modern consumer culture; they are meant to be thrown away and easily replaced with new images the next month (p. 8). But they also played a key role in solidifying elements of consumer culture. Titles like *Ladies Home Journal* helped to establish much of the basic economic logic of national advertising-supported media, including selling consumer-based audiences to advertisers. The content of these magazines were designed to support a consumer mindset that supported their main market, the advertisers.

Ohmann (1996) writes of the rise of mass culture in conjunction with the growth of magazine publishing. For the first time, people came together as specific audiences (p.18) Citing historical references, Ohmann writes that toward the end of the 19th century one could buy cheap finished products through the mail and in stores. (p. 75). During this time, woman's productive activities were devalued and made almost invisible. However, women as consumers were viable. Sears and Montgomery Ward catalogs, being marketed mostly to family farms, were

considered gender-neutral (p. 76). As families gained more disposable income, department stores created a social space for women (p. 76). These stores created elaborate theatrical displays for products, “welcoming shoppers where no steps impeded their entrance and revolving doors eased passage” (p. 78). In addition, during the growth of department stores, marketers framed shopping as a form of leisure, something women did in their spare time and for pleasure (p. 80). As a result, an ideology of freedom grew around consumption and sharpened the division between work and leisure spheres (p. 80). Consequently, advertising attempted to establish brand names and symbolically differentiate products that were very similar (p. 92).

Women-centered magazines did not just promote consumption, but also constructed and propagated middle-class mainstream ideals. Women-centered magazines combined with advertising agencies and other institutions of turn-of-the-century consumer culture, solidified both capitalism and patriarchy (p. 230). They also were very hegemonic in their assumptions of womanhood. Magazines offered women particular kinds of pleasure in exchange for traditionally gendered, but often passive roles (p. 230). Magazines addressed women’s issues in ways that other forms of culture at the time did not, but they had to accept apolitical conceptualizations of womanhood and domesticity as part of this appeal. So while purchasing power would be promised to women in these magazines, this power had to be subordinated to the needs of the family. Satisfaction was thus promised through consumption rather than social change (p. 230).

Women’s magazines and advertising agencies stressed that branded commodities, and not liberated husbands, would assure happiness at home (p. 231). In making these claims, and in couching these offers in the language of choice and progress, advertisers and women’s magazines circumscribed women’s vocalizations and desires for change and their subsequent societal expectations of men (p. 231). Eventually women’s visibility as a key consumer would become naturalized and marginalized. As Scanlan noted, “Women’s role as consumers, once established, would ironically become both more pervasive and less conspicuous in subsequent generations”

(p. 234). Soap operas on radio, for example, were clearly women-centered, but also limited to certain time slots (not prime time, for example). I contend this is the historical basis for the conflation of shopping and empowerment. Now shopping is celebrated, not scorned.

In addition, as Lindner (2004) notes, advertisements of the 1970s did not accurately reflect what was occurring in the women's movement.

Maturation of a consumer culture

Cross's (2000) historical overview of the rise of the consumer culture in the United States throughout the twentieth century provides a comprehensive and cogent analysis that is germane for this project. Cross outlined the distinct intersection of consumerism and advertising while attempting to explore the growth of the American shopper. Most importantly, Cross argues, we cannot ignore the historical moments which provided the stage for this "all-consuming" mindset. I contend this historical analysis is crucial to understanding the co-opting of empowerment discourse aimed at the postfeminist women.

While posing the question of "why do we shop," Cross explores the way social and cultural conditions have contributed to this advertising-saturated world of consumerism. Moreover, in a consumer culture, the ongoing cultivation of a perspective customer is of utmost importance. Without willing participants, advertising would fail miserably. But, Cross stresses, a consumer culture must be created and perpetuated. Furthermore, how these products are presented to the consumer is also worthy of study.

Cross uses a historical timeline to illustrate the progression of the consumer. I contend that two of the most critical periods, the post-war splurge of the 1940s and the introduction of television in the 1950s, were critical to the rise of shopping as empowerment and are particularly relevant to the discussion.

As the economy improved, the post-war move to the suburbs introduced an entirely new way of life for millions of Americans. Most importantly, this historical moment provided for a

consumer optimism that was largely absent during the turbulent war years. The GI Bill provided for low interest mortgages as soldiers returned from war, married and bought their “dream house.” Cars were needed for the daily commute and women largely returned to the domestic sphere. Women were now viewed as viable consumers as new products were introduced for the home. Cross argues the introduction of the revolving charge plan was a seminal moment. For the first time on a large scale, shoppers could now finance their purchases in department stores. Previously, a cash-based society allowed people to pay for their needs; now charge plans would allow them to finance their wants and desires.

Advertising, a linchpin in a capitalistic consumer society, took on a new life. The advent of television in the 1950s provided another watershed moment. When television became a focal point in living rooms across America, advertising entered the domestic sphere as well. Moreover, many television shows of this time portrayed highly idealized depictions of suburban family and many viewers wanted to emulate their favorite programs by purchasing products.

In addition, when advertising stressed style and appearance over function, the notion of planned obsolescence became very clear. Previous generations only discarded items once they were broken or worn out; now products were discarded to make room for their trendy replacement. Television was at the forefront of this movement, as it showed one disposable product after another through commercials. Moreover, I contend that fashion magazines also rely on planned obsolescence. By presenting the latest and coveted items each season, marketers can guarantee additional purchases.

As Twitchell (1996) asserts, the role of the advertising image in this commercial landscape cannot be overstated. The constant barrage of advertising is an issue of concern for both the lay viewer and the media scholar; as the last chapter noted, this includes when advertising breaks out of its normally contained forms via hypercommercialism. As the

advertising industry becomes more creative in “catching our eye,” it becomes increasingly important to understand the larger cultural implications of this multi-billion industry.

Twitchell writes: “Branding is the central activity of creating different values for such commonplace objects and services as flour, bottled water, cigarettes.... Giving objects their identity, and thus a perceived value, is advertising’s specific value” (p. 13). This ability to link products with meaning and value is truly a fascinating – and highly problematic -- aspect of our life as consumers. Every product is imbued with intangible qualities and it is up to the advertisers to convey these feelings to use via a photograph, layout or a headline. For Twitchell the importance of the photographic image in advertising is especially key. He notes that “If advertising is the sponsored art of capitalism, the photograph is the central medium of display” (p. 227). In short, there exists a blurred line between art and advertising. Twitchell continues, “Far from being a sign of decadence it is actually testimony to the profitable convergence of postmodernist curiosity and aggressive marketing” (p 227). High art has become eclipsed by low art. This argument reminds us that advertising images, frequently hung on the walls as decorations, have become mass produced works of art.

In fact, fashion magazines also forefront the visual image, therefore providing a reliable stage for consumption. As Jonathan E. Schroeder (2004) argues, there are four distinct propositions about visual consumption in an image economy. Those propositions are as follows: 1.) “Advertising is the dominant global communication force.” 2.) Photography frames how the world is perceived and constituted. 3.) Identity is unimaginable without photography. 4.) The image is key for product and service branding. As he argues, “Products no longer merely reflect images – the image is often created prior to the product, which is then developed to fit the image” (p. 234). I contend a visual medium, like fashion magazines, provides the perfect frame for consuming products. Furthermore, *Lucky* promotes itself as the magazine about shopping and

style. A publication that is heavy on images and short on critical discourse is a marketer's dream. The importance and positioning of the visual images will be discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

Women in particular have continued to be positioned as consumers. As Andrews and Talbot purport, in westernized capitalist societies consumption is an inevitable experience that is part of being female. Consuming exists in a sphere where femininity are legitimated and negotiated, or contested and rejected (p. 1). Moreover, this experience also brings women into a community of other consumers (p. 2).

Duffy (2013), citing Bagdikian, writes that during the postwar years, women's magazines shifted even more away from any possible controversial or damaging reviews to featuring inviting articles that would be considered favorable to the advertisers. In order to put consumers in a "buying mood," articles continued to be not overly complicated or critical. In addition, as Lindner (2004) notes, advertisements of the 1970s did not accurately reflect what was occurring in the women's movement. Women were not shown actively participating in the workforce; rather they were usually depicted as being as being completely dependent on a man. Moreover, women were typically featured in products for the home while men were shown enjoying more masculine pursuits, like driving in cars or drinking alcoholic beverages (p. 410). By the 1980s, additional studies concluded that representations of women in advertising more accurately reflected women's role at home and at the office. In Starr's (2004) study of two women's magazine of the 1970s and 1980s, *Working Women* and *Working Mother*, she determined that the magazines contributed to defining the term, working woman. Starr writes, "...they were creating ideas and suggestions that were grounded in existing knowledge and that they thought the readers would find valuable and effective...that is, in *describing* how women could stylize and conceptualize themselves" (p. 297). I contend *Lucky* magazine is operating in much the same way. These pivotal historical moments all serve to lay the groundwork for contemporary magazine publishing aimed at the female reader/consumer.

The mission and vision of *Lucky*

How, then, may *Lucky* be placed in this historical narrative of consumption and women magazines? *Lucky* is a magazine of the large publishing house Condé Nast. Founded in 1909 by Conde Montrose Nast, the company can claim *Vogue* as the first acquisition. Following Nast's death in 1959, Samuel Irwin Newhouse took over the helm. The company is privately owned and headquartered in New York City, and is now owned by Advance Publications, a top-ten media company; aside from its general consumer magazine holdings, it also oversees the fashion company, the Fairchild Fashion Media, published of the influential trade journal *WWD (Women's Wear Daily)* (Duffy, 2013, p. 45). In addition to *Lucky*, Condé Nast publishes *Allure*, *Architectural Digest*, *Bon Appétit*, *Glamour*, *Golf Digest*, *GQ*, *Self*, *The New Yorker*, *Vanity Fair*, *Vogue/Teen Vogue*, *Wired*, *Brides*, and *Details*, among others.

In the tough world of modern magazines, *Lucky* is a triumphant story of profit and growth. Since *Lucky's* debut in December 2000/January 2001 to 2007, circulation increased from 500,000 to over 1 million readers, proving to be one of the most successful launches in Condé Nast history (Condé Nast on-line media kit, 2009; Table 1). In 2003, *Adweek* awarded *Lucky* its "Startup of the Year" award. Moreover, *Lucky* was also named Number One on *Adweek's* "Hot List 10 Under 50," which recognizes business success in the consumer magazine industry ("Lucky Magazine Named," 2003).

As of 2014, *Lucky* publishes 10 print issues yearly. (June/July and December/January are now combined issues.) A 10-issue yearly subscription costs \$15.00 and a 20-issue subscription costs \$19.97. As Tables 1 and 2 show, *Lucky's* circulation has declined since 2007. However, this needs to be understood in the context of the struggles of the modern magazine industry, an industry under siege from digital competition (Duffy, 2013). In fact, although its circulation has declined, it actually has declined less than the magazine industry overall (Table 1). This explains its jump in rankings among all magazine circulation from 82nd place in 2007 to 71st place in

2013. Table 2 shows that *Lucky's* circulation is overwhelmingly female (96%), under 40, college educated, and a comfortable if not wealthy annual income.

Table 1

Lucky Magazine Paid Circulation and Ranking Among US Print Magazines

Year	Paid Circulation	Ranking
2013	1.12 million	71
2010	1.13 million	74
2007	1.15 million	82

Source: Magazine Circulation Rankings Index. Accessed July 30, 2014 at

<http://adage.com/article/datacenter-media/magazine-circulation-rankings-index/106355/>

Table 2

Lucky Circulation Information 2014

Basic Circulation

Paid Verified Circulation	1,022,338
Single Copy Sales	100,063
Total Circulation	1,122,401
Rate Base	1,100,000
Total Audience	2,670,000

Demographics

Median Age	38.1 years
Median Household Income (HHI)	\$86,053
Male Readership	6%

Female Readership	96%
Education – any college	75%
Employment Status – currently employed	71%
Employment Status – professional or managerial	35%
Marital Status – Married	49%
Marital Status – Single	51%

Source: Lucky Print Media Kit. Accessed on August 1, 2014 at

www.condenast.com/brands/lucky/media-kit/print

Given these demographics, the solid circulation, and the advertising friendliness of the magazine (discussed below), the advertising industry loves *Lucky*, according to Scott Donaton, editor at *Advertising Age*. Donaton says: “It has done really well, and I think that surprised some people because its approach was so different. They seem to have found a formula that pleases both consumers and advertisers” (Singhania, p. 2). In addition, retailers claim that having a product featured in the pages of *Lucky* is “almost a sure guarantee of sales” (Singhania, p. 2).

What, then, is *Lucky*’s mission or, to put it more commercially, its market niche? As the *Lucky* website touts in its mission statement: “*Lucky* is America’s ultimate shopping and style magazine. The best to buy in fashion, beauty and living. The voice of a friend you love to take shopping. Choices, not dictates. Price points ranging from high to low. Buying info for every item featured” (Condé Nast on-line media kit, 2009). Later elaborations touted to advertisers, “*Lucky* occupies the specific space where inspiration meets action in personal style. Our editors take readers on an unadulterated, uninterrupted journey. We only cover fashion, accessories and beauty...nothing else! With a mix of high-low products, our pages captivate, and with everything available for purchase, our pages motivate. We inspire readers to buy, making every purchase a *Lucky* moment” (*Lucky* magazine media kit, 2014).

The values of their mission statement are reflected in the magazine itself, a mix of magazine content and hypercommercial forms. The difference between advertising and content is not only irrelevant, it is a characteristic of the magazine's brand as half magazine/half catalog. The departmental offerings in *Lucky* range from endless fashion and beauty sections to “*Lucky Breaks*,” which highlights promotional items available for that month only (a feature discussed in Chapter Four). Not only is the *Lucky* reader invited to be fashionable, she is offered insider information on how to accomplish that task while appearing to be frugal. Previous incarnations of high-fashion titles like *Vogue* and *Elle* privileged striking fashion photography and articles about the latest offerings from Paris; *Lucky* forefronts the individual commodity and brand, artfully stylized but also practically grounded to comprise an idealized but reachable consumer-identity for the reader. It creates the ultimate ad-friendly editorial environment for marketers as well as delivers to them a consumption-oriented readership. The *Lucky* magazine readers shop and shop often. A 2001 poll of 600 *Lucky* readers “indicated that nearly a third bought products they saw in the magazine” (“Media Insight,” 2001).

As Table 3 indicates, *Lucky* is published on a schedule organized by consumption. Made available to advertisers long before the issue is published, this schedule hopes to match the market niche of advertisers with the consumption theme of the magazine.

Table 3
***Lucky's* Editorial Calendar for 2013-2014**

Month	Description
February	Chic Under \$500
March	The Style Issue
April	The Lucky Girls Issue
May	The Beauty Issue
June/July	The Summer Essentials Issue
August	Fall Preview Issue
September	The Personal Style Issue
October	The American Style Issue
November	The Winter Style Issue
December/January	Holiday & Gift Guide Issue

Accessed August 1, 2014 at <http://www.condenast.com/brands/lucky/media-kit/print/calendar>

In addition to its catalog/magazine hybrid nature, *Lucky* also is profoundly gendered -- as its circulation data would indicate -- and assumes particular interests on the part of women. Founding Editor Kim France stated, "We assume women get their information about the world from other places. So why not scratch this one itch? Just like women who love to cook are very gratified by *Gourmet* magazine, and my boyfriend, who loves to golf, loves *Golf Digest*, if you love to shop, you'll love *Lucky*. If you hate to shop, *Lucky* will save you hours at the mall" (Ryan, 2000).

Most importantly in differentiating itself from upper-end magazines like *Vogue*, France stresses that *Lucky* presents an accessible shopping narrative. France claims that “*Lucky* is 80% about the pretty attainable item and 20% about the Chanel bag” (Schnuer, Advertising Age, October 21, 2002).

In the early months and years of the publication, beauty advertisements accounted for 32% fashion accounted for 22% of its advertising revenue. During the early months of the publication’s run, Condé Nast broke a long-standing rule of not negotiating its advertising rates, offering advertisers a free page in December 2000 Holiday Issue for every page purchased in the February and March 2001 issues (Fine, March 5, 2001, p. 34). While some advertising executives acknowledged that *Lucky* would not be the most appropriate medium for marketing luxury goods, they do maintain its value in promoting more affordable products (Lockwood, 2002, p. 31). Table 4 shows that advertisers may pay over \$124,000 for one full page color ad published one time in one issue of *Lucky*.

Table 4***Lucky Print Magazine Advertising Rates (full color)***

Size	1 time	3x	6x	8x	10x
1 page	\$124,131	\$120,407	\$117,924	\$114,201	\$110,477
2/3 p	\$99,245	\$96,268	\$94,283	\$91,305	\$88,328
½ p	\$80,638	\$78,218	\$76,606	\$74,187	\$71,768
1/3 p	\$55,821	\$54,147	\$53,030	\$51,356	\$49,681

Accessed on August 1, 2014 at www.condenast.com/brands/lucky/media-kit

However, Lucky does have its critics, critics who focus on its hypercommercial nature.

Writes Mary Ethridge of *Knight Ridder Tribune Business News*:

Lucky and its ilk are basically magalogs, those curious hybrids of magazines and catalogs pioneered by teen retailer Abercrombie & Fitch. They are filled with page after page of pictures accompanied by gushy prose and product descriptions that offer little assessment or perspective. *Lucky*...has publicly defended their publication, saying they're very careful to spilt advertising from editorial content. 'Big-money advertisers don't influence what's in the pages of the magazine,' *Lucky* Editor Kim France told *USA Today* recently. If that's the case, why is the editorial content so vapid, offering only descriptions like 'drop-dead sexy' and 'kiss worthy' (2006, p. 1).

France has vehemently denied those allegations, claiming that a team of editors carefully selects items monthly based on their own shopping observation and experiences. France says:

"The idea with *Lucky* is that fashion magazines are great resources for fantasy, but they're not a

great resource when you're at the mall about to go and buy. The minute our readers get a sense of we're doing anything to please advertisers, they're not going to buy this magazine anymore" (Singhania, 2003 p. 2). As we will see later, this claim may mean that *Lucky's* readers are sense deprived, given the sometimes obvious signs of advertising-editorial concordance.

Condé Nast was affected by the recession and its subsequent negative impact on the print magazine industry. In 2009, Condé Nast shuttered four titles, *Gourmet*, *Cookie*, *Modern Bride* and *Elegant Bride*, citing an unprecedented downturn in advertising revenue, declining newsstand sales and growing competition from the web (Smith, p. 1). *Lucky*, however, survived. This survival was not just due to *Lucky's* success according to traditional magazine metrics (circulation and advertising), but also because of *Lucky's* success as a larger media and digital brand.

The branding of *Lucky*

Significantly, *Lucky* is now a media brand, both with other print media and advertisers, and with digital media (the latter discussed in the next section). *Lucky* expanding its celebration of shopping via book publishing with the publication of *The Lucky Guide to Mastering Any Style: How to Wear Iconic Looks and Make Them Your Own*, and the best-selling *The Lucky Shopping Manual: Building and Improving Your Wardrobe Piece by Piece* (Condé Nast on-line media kit, 2009). These publications build on *Lucky's* position as both a fashion authority and shopping catalog, as the products are presented in a straight-forward display, sans models.

Cross-promotion is also a key part of *Lucky*. In 2002, *Lucky* partnered with the Discover card and hosted a 12-city national tour dedicated to "providing the latest fashion and make-up information, along with a healthy dose of shopping" ("Discover® card shops," 2002). This mobile shopping experience traveled across the country and offered free consultations by local fashion designers and make-up artists ("Discover® card shops," 2002.) *Lucky* magazine and Discover card executives wanted to "bring the *Lucky* shopping experience directly to the

consumer” as card holders had the opportunity to win a \$5,000 shopping spree (“Discover® card shops,” 2002).

Lucky magazine continued on this synergistic path by partnering with the home shopping channel HSN in creating a “one-of-a-kind capsule collection with seven of the most sought-after designers.” This collection was available during a two-hour primetime television special in October 2009 and consisted of limited-edition clothing accessories and jewelry created by Shosanna, Rebecca Taylor, Tracy Reese, Abbe Held of Kooba, Gerard Yosca, Rebeccas Minkoff, and Helen Ficalora (*Entertainment Weekly*, 2009). In addition, subscriptions of the magazine are available for purchase on the shopping channel.

In 2014 *Lucky* partnered with retail chain Charming Charlie’s to promote the sale of magazine subscriptions. Charming Charlie’s features low-cost costume jewelry and accessories. At the point of sale, customers are asked if they are interested in purchasing a subscription to *Lucky* and sister Condé Nast publication *Glamour* for \$22.00 yearly. In addition, they receive a booklet titled *Lucky* magazine’s “Ten Ways to Wear Accessories Right Now.” The copy reads: “It’s all in the details. It can be as simple as layering three necklaces or substituting bright flats for standard black ones – but the right accessories can transform any outfit...So stack those bracelets, pile on the rings, run toward color. Your new look awaits – as we can’t wait to see it.” While not specifically named in the booklet’s credits, one assumes all of the products featured are available for purchase at Charming Charlie’s.

As a media brand (illustrated by the earlier discussed list of *Lucky* books, electronic outlets, and cross promotions) *Lucky* is also indicative of trends in media synergy and ownership, but giving such trends an overt shopping and consumption niche. Unlike the usual media brand (such as Disney), *Lucky* merchandise and spin-off licensing does not just encourage the purchasing of *Lucky* commodities, but also purchasing generally. All of this synergy dovetails with the postfeminist empowerment message I explored in Chapter Two. Moreover, the

hypercommercial media forms also frame the consumptive messages that are advanced via *Lucky's* extensive social media outlets. That material is examined at length in Chapter Five.

Shift to Digital Focus

Lucky is fully immersed in digital culture, a trend explored by the magazine industry generally (Duffy, 2013). There is a website with plenty of opportunity for web 2.0-style interactivity. A relatively new feature, *Luckystyle* spotter.com, asks readers to “upload their looks, swap secrets, get advice and win prizes.” There is also an iPhone/Tablet app and *Lucky* implementations of virtually every social media outlet, including a Facebook page and a Twitter feed. These social media forms are discussed at length in Chapter Five. But of special interest here is that *Lucky* now offers three different media kits for advertisers: print, web and tablet.

Table 5 reports data from *Lucky's* visitor data from its website. Perhaps reflecting both the increased accessibility of websites versus print magazines, but also the still class-oriented nature of online access, visitors tend to be more heavily male than the typical print reader, and also have a higher household income. The latter especially highlights the increased desirability of web audiences.

Table 5***Lucky* magazine Website Visitor Data**Basic Visitor Metrics

Average Monthly Specific Visitors	1,904,425
Average Monthly Total Visits	8,963,794
Average Monthly Page Views	22,133,000

Source: comScore August 2013 (*Lucky* magazine network)

Demographics

Median Age	32.6
Median Income	\$101,358
Female Readership	68%
Education/Any college	77%
Employed	38%

Source: comScore August 2013 (luckymag.com domain)

Marking another new hybrid marketing venue, myluckymag.com was launched on August 17, 2012. Heralded as user-friendly shopping experience, this site directs readers to buy clothing and accessories from more than a dozen retailers. *Lucky* received 3% to 15% of every sales. This site was upgraded to a rewards program, offering subscribers the opportunity to earn cash back on purchases. Marketed via a paper insert in the magazine's subscription poly bag, the headline reads, "Now get paid to shop." The reader is then instructed to sign up for the program

using a predetermined “lucky number,” shop at participating retailers and then receive up to 25% cash back on purchases. As of this writing, there are over 600 participating stores including Macy’s, Ulta beauty, Saks Fifth Avenue and HSN. Rewards are issued in the form of a Citi Visa card. In addition, readers are offered exclusive sales and the option to comparison shop for the best price.

Furthermore, in 2013, Condé Nast announced a new focus on e-commerce. Hiring Gillian Gorman Round as their general manager in charge of their new e-commerce platform, *Lucky* ushered in a new era in fashion magazine publishing. Reporting directly to Condé Nast President Bob Sauerberg, Round argues for the exploration of diverse revenue streams in a digital media future: “Our advertising revenue will continue to be incredibly important to us, but we are looking at all alternatives and incremental sources of revenue as is appropriate for a modern media model” (*Ad Week* January 16, 2013). In addition, the then Editor-in-Chief, Brandon Holley reported directly to Gorman Round and not the editorial director. While stressing that Holley still maintained “full editorial control,” this marked a significant departure for Condé Nast (*wwd.com*, January 16, 2013) and is perhaps indicative of magazines as no longer print-centric. Impacted by a retail slump and increased competition from publications like *People Style Watch*, Holley was subsequently replaced by Eva Chen as editor in chief in June 2013.

Duffy (2013) notes that distribution of magazine content over smart phones and tablets are increasingly emphasized by the magazine industry. Such trends are not lost on Lucky executives. Their 2014 Tablet Media Kit promises advertisers that, “Since tablet launch, Condé Nast has been leading the industry – both in terms of content development and user engagement insights. In Spring 2012, Condé Nast worked closely with the Magazine Publishers Association (MPA) to develop commonly accepted metrics.” This 29-page media kit represents Condé Nast’s significant commitment to digital content.

Condé Nast has bundled tablet advertising. *Allure*, *Architectural Digest*, *Bon Appétit*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *Glamour*, *Golf Digest*, *Lucky* and *Self* are included in this group. Tablet frequency discounts are available by running in multiple digital editions or running multiple ads. Any combination of ads count across all 2014 Condé Nast digital editions issues, within a given contract year. Investments in Apps (as opposed to digital editions) are sponsorships and do not earn frequency discounts.

Condé Nast titles including *Lucky* also can be “web enabled,” which allows advertisers the ability to connect the reader with the advertiser’s website or the website of a retail partner of the advertiser. In addition, an advertiser in the print edition will appear in that issue’s digital edition at no additional cost. This ad will run as a standard /static advertisement. Condé Nast offers premium packages that feature the ability to enhance the ad with interactive functionality. This provides the advertisers the ability to customize their ad experience. A one-time web enabled ad, according to their 2014 media kit, would cost an advertiser \$5000.

Conclusion

Lucky magazine is embedded in a tradition of a confluence of gender and consumption that has characterized women-targeted magazines since the late 1800s. *Lucky* itself is a hybrid of content and commerce, offering readers the opportunity to try on multiple identities through commodity acquisition. After boasting a very successful – and lucrative – start-up, *Lucky* magazine continues to redefine their place in the digital publishing landscape. Appealing to a young, educated demographic, *Lucky* delivers a highly-desirable demographic to advertisers. Furthermore, by continuing to blur the lines between advertising and editorial, while showcasing complimentary reviews of products, *Lucky* continues to reassert their position as fashion – and shopping – authority. Focusing on multiple revenue streams, Condé Nast and *Lucky* are treading on new ground. Forced to reevaluate an outdated print magazine model, *Lucky* continues to be a dominant presence on multiple social media platforms, as discussed in Chapter Five. In addition,

the launch of interactive shopping sites assures the reader that product acquisition is never too far behind. While the mediums may change, *Lucky's* core mission and vision have not faltered. Providing the postfeminist woman an imperative to shop is crucial to their enduring financial success.

The next chapter explores some of the main themes in the content of *Lucky*, the print magazine. We will see themes that were developed in the first three chapters manifest in the postfeminist, hypercommercial soup that is *Lucky* magazine.

CHAPTER 4:

“THE MAGAZINE ABOUT SHOPPING”: ANALYZING PRINT VERSIONS OF *LUCKY* MAGAZINE

Introduction

Lucky magazine occupies a specific and specific space in the fashion publishing landscape. This title does not shy away from positioning itself as the source not just for fashion, style, and celebrity, but specifically for consumption and shopping. Promoting consumption practices, especially among women, is hardly news; as the last chapter showed, there has been a long tradition of the magazine industry addressing women as consumers. However, *Lucky* is unabashedly straightforward when announcing their authority status about consumption to readers. This publication is a source for fashion, beauty, travel and most importantly, shopping tips. In addition, the conflation of consumption with the postfeminist rhetoric of empowerment makes *Lucky* especially germane for analysis as a popular and economically successful artifact dealing with gender and hypercommercial forms.

In this chapter, I will overview a textual and descriptive analysis of *Lucky* magazine's print edition, focusing especially on two representative issues. I will frame my discussion via the lens of a feminist research methodology. Drawing on the work of Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002), and DeVault (1996), I will demonstrate my position as feminist researcher, reader and consumer. Although many examples will be drawn from the thick descriptions and in-depth analysis of the two issues, I will also draw on ancillary examples from other issues of *Lucky* to further elucidate my argument.

This chapter, then, will attempt to capture what occurs textually and ideologically in the print versions of a *Lucky* magazine, given its characteristic mix of gendered language, consumption appeals, images, and mix of different promotional and mediated forms. The chapter

begins with basic quantitative description of what is in a *Lucky* magazine, using two specific issues, one from early in *Lucky's* run (from 2001) and one much later in run (from 2012). After this, the chapter will engage *Lucky* from a more qualitative perspective, highlighting four themes that are found consistently throughout the magazine: hybridity, postfeminist commodity performance, *Lucky* as fashion authority, and the celebration of aspirational perfection, Youthcentrism, and celebrity. As will be argued, although these tropes are analytically distinct, they also crossover into each other as actually practiced in the magazine. The characteristics of *Lucky* as a popular magazine and its prominent textual themes have significant ideological implications for how women and consumption are symbolically constructed and circulated in commercial culture.

Feminist Research Methodology

First and foremost, I classify myself as a feminist media scholar. In doing so, I contend that the current hegemonic media system typically replicates a patriarchal structure, although there are often instances of counter-hegemonic -- or at least contradictory -- tendencies as well. While there has been considerable research on issues relating to body image and aging, arguably researchers can more fully understand the dynamics and issues relating to consumptive practices and women's magazines, especially in an era of such drastic change as discussed in the last chapter, both in terms of the changing forms of magazines and the changing economic structures and incentives. I contend that meaningful feminist research focuses on the hegemonic structure which dictates the content and form of media artifacts. Moreover this form in question is now economically based. With the particular focus on this dissertation, for example, I argue that readers of *Lucky* magazine are invited to perform this very act of consumption and frame it as empowerment.

While not specifically coded, I have read virtually every issue since the launch of the publication. That extensive and expansive knowledge of this publication additionally augmented

my knowledge of other fashion and beauty titles. I draw on that knowledge, first as reader and consumer and now as researcher, to provide a solid basis for my analysis.

In my doctoral studies, I studied feminist research methods with Marie Hardin. During that graduate summer seminar, I remarked that I felt guilty because I enjoyed reading fashion magazines. I was well aware of the possible negative effects these images had on my identity and self worth, yet I continued to be seduced and mesmerized by their content. Hardin replied that becoming a feminist researcher was not about lessening enjoyment, but rather being cognizant of the patriarchal structures in place that perpetuate the hegemonic system. This was an illuminating moment for me as reader and researcher. During my adult life, I have been the subscriber to as many as eight different fashion and beauty titles. In short, many who know me who classify me as a “media junkie.” I have actively supported this industry with my subscription dollars. In addition, I worked several years in the newspaper and magazine industries prior to my academic career, so I was positioned to approach this project with both a skeptical and discerning eye. Given that feminist methodology embraces self reflexivity and the legitimacy of a researcher’s life experiences and subjectivity (Rushing, 1998), I acknowledge and forefront my position as reader, consumer and feminist researcher. When I returned to graduate school after several years working in the media industry, I did so because I have a true affinity towards media consumption and was interested in studying the enormous impact of mass communication on popular culture with a feminist lens.

According to DeVault (1996) feminist methodology can be defined in three ways. First, a feminist methodology attempts to shift focus from men’s issues as it highlights and illuminates the viewpoints and experiences of all women. Second, feminist researchers strive to minimize manipulation and damage when gathering data, and lastly, feminist researchers hope to enable and support social change benefitting all women. This move towards activism is a real material result of feminist research.

Moreover, feminist researchers do not necessarily attempt to introduce new methods, rather they may alter and augment the standards and procedures already present (DeVault, 1996; Harding, 1987). Perhaps most importantly, the subjective role of researcher is acknowledged and embraced. According to Hesse-Biber and Piatelli (2007) this acknowledgement of various standpoints and interpretations can minimize and discourage the preservation of hierarchies, a dominant feature of a hegemonic and patriarchal media system. In addition, Hesse-Biber and Piatelli (2007) argue that my very role as media consumer will support my role as feminist researcher. They write: "Rather than being removed from your passions, your research project may be derived from them, or at least from your interests, which have been shaped by many things" (p.14). I attempt to situate myself as an informed, yet subjective, reader.

Another key issue within the framework of feminist research is that of insider/outsider positioning. Naples (2004) questions whether it is more effective to be an insider analyzing fieldwork in a known community, or be an outsider that can claim unbiased objectivity (p. 373). Most importantly, Naples concludes, a feminist revisiting of insider/outsider status allowed her to appreciate the "fluidity of outsider and insiderness." An insider today can be an outsider tomorrow. Moreover, Naples stresses the importance of self-reflexivity by the individual researcher. This interpretation allows for the evolution of positioning of feminist researcher within the larger social, cultural framework.

These themes -- women-centered concerns, unobtrusive and adapted methods, highlighting inequities to encourage change, and utilizing awareness of insider-outsider statuses -- inform this project. The project analyzes a media text that has been long been criticized as being highly influential in the lives of American women. In deconstructing this text, I contend that fashion magazine are fertile ground for critique. Many scholars have analyzed the media text of women's fashion magazines and advertisements. Some of the most influential gender-oriented work (Goffman, 1979; Kilbourne, 1999; Bordo, 1995; McRobbie, 2000, 2004) analyze issues of

representation, often focusing on print culture. As Gloria Steinem (1990) discovered when launching *Ms. Magazine* in 1972, women's magazines have had an extremely difficult time dismantling the dominant, patriarchal ideology present on Madison Avenue. Products advertised in women's magazines typically involve solving a problem or bettering oneself. However, by celebrating shopping as the activity, *Lucky* attempts to position the reader as always desiring more. In addition to *Lucky's* decidedly women-centered focus, it also has significant potential to be influential to other women-centered texts. This merging of content and commerce makes *Lucky* somewhat of a pioneer in the digital fashion media industry and at the very least a success story in the magazine industry, as Chapter Three discussed. Moreover, the synergistic partnership with other Condé Nast holdings, along *Lucky's* expansion into other media platforms including books, reinforces their position as a revenue-producing fashion authority.

Because of my identity as feminist researcher and a former media professional and because women are the primary readers of *Lucky* magazine, I utilized the feminist research method of textual analysis as my primary research method, supplementing this method with a basic descriptive/statistical analysis. Textual analysis requires a close and detailed, critical reading of the specified media text. For the purposes of this project, I define text as being comprised of any element -- verbal, visual, and format -- present in either the print and on-line edition. Kellner argues that popular texts are polysemic and require "...a set of critical or textual strategies that will unfold their contradictions, contestatory marginal elements, and structured silences" (p. 112). In addition, Kellner suggests the researcher should pay attention "to the margins, to seemingly insignificant elements of a text, as well as to the specific ideological positions affirmed" (1995, pp. 112-113). In my role as self-reflexive subjective researcher, I argue that the "insignificant elements of a text" -- such as word choice in an ad slogan or magazine cover line, artifacts in the background of a photograph, editing style in a video -- are indeed quite significant. These elements, when presented as part of the larger whole, comprise

the multi-layered experience of magazine reader and consumer. In-depth immersion in the three issues involved multiple readings and copious note taking; this immersion was also informed by my knowledge of majority of the run of *Lucky*. As a past subscriber, I had kept many past issues, and had purchased additional back issues from a seller on eBay. The uncovering and grouping of dominant tropes/themes in *Lucky* during the textual analysis was also facilitated by use of “sensitized concepts”: “taxonomical systems that discover an integrating scheme within the data themselves” (Christians & Carey, 1989, p. 370). For this project, sensitized concepts were generated by its basic theoretical orientation as discussed in Chapters Two and Three: postfeminist trends, consumption as agency, and hypercommercialized forms of culture. Empirical elements in magazine that were deemed relevant to such concepts were gathered and clustered together.

Addressing the issue of social change, this project also analyzes a possible site of feminist resistance, *Lucky*’s social media sites. Although as will be argued, such resistance is significantly circumscribed and contained, nevertheless *Lucky* does link its features to action and empowerment in the sphere of consumption. Previous scholars have argued that the consumption sphere can be seen as occasionally progressive and empowering to marginalized groups (Paterson, 2006). Beyond the print version and basic philosophy of the magazine, the democratic sphere of social media allows for a degree of user agency, community interaction and identity creation. As addressed in Chapter Five, this identity creation is a critical and dominant feature of *Lucky*. The reader is invited to share and comment with other like-minded individuals. Moreover, the social media sites provide a space for “virtual dress-up” activities. Not only does *Lucky* provide you with the necessary information to make your informed fashion buying decision, it also provides the means to make that purchase a reality. This is a marked departure from other magazines. Typically, magazines provide the fashion and beauty credit, without offering specific avenues for acquiring the commodity. Again, the actual degree of emancipatory

or resistance potential of such consumer-based agency is quite debatable and, I will argue, is indicative of trends in postfeminist media culture, but nevertheless such discourse is a potential site of gendered empowerment and thus worthy of exploration.

In fact, the relations of power within a gendered society are germane for feminist scholars. This includes the gendered implications of cultural artifacts, including the representation of men, women, agency and other identity categories. But it also includes the popular framing and understanding of feminism itself. van Zoonen (1994) details the political fragmentation of feminism, for example, and concludes that there continues to be debate regarding the meaning and place of poststructuralism, postmodernism and deconstruction within feminist thought (p. 4). As discussed in Chapter Two, postfeminism as a cultural trend and a scholarly position also has sparked debate and additional analysis among feminist scholars. With the constant shifting of identity and experience, the challenge exists to study the relations of subordination (p. 4). Most importantly, van Zoonen quotes the work of Mies (1978) that feminist researchers “should integrate a double consciousness into their research process that is a consciousness of their own oppression as women and their privileged position as researchers” (p. 129). This is an act that requires researchers to be reflexive and aware of their impact, influence, and life position during the research project.

Of special relevance to issues of self-reflexivity of feminist methodology is Harstock’s (2004) contribution to feminist theory and research involving the articulation of standpoint theory. Standpoint theory, heavily influenced by Marxist ideology, is concerned with the specific position of women in a critique of the patriarchal system. Women, like the worker class in Marxist theory, experience a “privileged vantage point” from which they can examine the hierarchy of society (p. 36). Most importantly, Harstock argues, there exists a sexual division of labor that underscores their experiences (p. 36). It also underscores the intersectionality of particular subject positions with specific combinations of such factors as not just gender, but also

class, race, sexual orientation and other social categories involving power inequities. While standpoint theory has been deconstructed and revisited in recent years, many would argue this theory still resonates in a contemporary critique of media images. As media researchers and media consumers, we are a compilation of our specific experiences. Furthermore, the work of contemporary feminist researchers continues to stress the validity of personal experience. Again, then, I attempt to embrace and be aware of the potential perspectives of my own position as a Caucasian woman feminist scholar who has worked in professional media.

However, feminist research also presents certain limitations. Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002) outline several challenges to feminist methodology. First, feminist researchers have been criticized for not producing rational, scientific or unbiased results in their work. However, feminist researchers have often countered that such “objective” measures are not neutral. The patriarchal system supports and rewards scientific-based knowledge acquisition while it marginalizes and dismisses lived-experience, interpretative work. Nevertheless, more objective measures, such as analyzing descriptive statistics, may document the scope of a gendered phenomenon and provide basic statistical profiles of multiply occurring artifacts. Second, it can be quite problematic to assume that women represent one specific, unified group. In short, women’s experiences are diverse and far-reaching and can be difficult to label and categorize. Thus, while a research may embrace their own intersectional standpoint position, it is also a legitimate methodological technique to question to what extent an interpretation may be a widely held one or to reflect on competing views of texts. Third, current Western feminist thought has shifted from liberalism and Marxist ideas to postmodern and poststructuralism thoughts which “question the foundations of feminist knowledge and methodology” (pp. 3-4). This possible rejection of feminist knowledge is especially problematic, and perhaps may make my own commitment to feminist positions vulnerable to charges of essentialism. I considered these

tensions when deciding which categories to code and analyze and which main texts -- and supplemental “paratexts” (Gray, 2010) to critique.

By focusing on a dualistic approach – using both basic descriptive statistical and qualitative research methods -- I contend this analysis will provide revealing and feminist-informed data about *Lucky* magazine. The inclusion of content analysis allowed me to analyze the scope of editorial, advertisements, promotional advertisements, special advertising sections and empowerment themes mentioned in cover headlines, all with generalizable (if simple) data. I contend this mixture of data complements the textual analysis by showing a broader view of *Lucky* magazine. While gathering the information analyzed for the descriptive data, a coding sheet was developed with another researcher to summarize basic elements of *Lucky* magazine, and pilot tested with a portion of one issue of a magazine. In addition, during data collection and analysis, I discussed trends, procedures, results and interpretations with a separate researcher to balance the embracing of a particular subjectivity while also striving for some generalizability of the meaning of at least basic elements. This enabled me to stay focused and, when necessary, redirect my attention to more germane textual examples.

Issue selection

Two issues were selected for textual analysis coding. I contend these issues are critical to this analysis for several reasons. First, I selected September editions which historically are the largest issues of the year. These issues have significant advertising support and reader engagement. The September 2001 issue was early in *Lucky*’s run and September 2012 issue marked *Lucky*’s new digital presence. In short, these issues provide a meaningful and timely content for analysis. In addition, I included examples from the two print issues which coincide with the social media data collection that will be discussed in Chapter Five – May and June/July 2014 issues. This allowed me to examine *Lucky*’s influence via several media simultaneously. This reinforcement of *Lucky*’s message across various platforms also encourages a reader’s

continued participation. In short, Facebook reinforces the print edition, Pinterest reinforces *Lucky's* website and so on. Furthermore, I also included textual analysis from other issues from *Lucky's* run. This provides an overview of the breadth and depth of *Lucky*. This publication has employed three different editors during its run. These editors have exhibited their own aesthetic vision for the title without sacrificing the primary goal; publishing a profitable magazine focused on shopping and style. By including examples from all three editors' oeuvre, this analysis attempts to illustrate recurring themes and tropes as well as points of possible departure. Of course, I also acknowledge the influence and participation of many department editors, writers, art directors, and advertising salespeople in producing *Lucky's* content.

A basic description of Lucky

As a quick review of two issues of *Lucky* indicate, *Lucky* has many characteristics of a typical fashion or consumer magazine, including a cover with a standard nameplate with the magazine's title and featuring a well-dressed, thin, attractive woman smiling at the camera. In the case of the 2001 issue, the woman was a young blonde-haired model (unnamed on the cover; in 2012, it was TV actress Eva Longoria. Cover lines are numerous in both issues, as Table One indicates. A full-page ad is featured on the back cover of both issues (for Liz Clairborne and Maybelline).

But the magazine's heavy and arguably specific focus on shopping and consumption is indicated in several ways. The cover lines focus on commodities and consumption: "Vintage Shopping: We Pick the Greatest Websites" (2001) and "Fall's Smartest Buys" (2012). Both have a cover line about shoes: "Fall Shoe Spectacular" and "Fabulous Shoes at Every Price!" Above the nameplate is the magazine's slogan, which has changed slightly. In 2001 this was "The New Magazine about Shopping" (clearly emphasizing its unknown status) and in 2012 it was "The Magazine about Shopping and Style." The cover lines also emphasize skilled commodity acquisition. Words such as "easy" ("Eye Makeup Made Easy"), "perfect" ("the perfect skirt"),

“best” (“The best stores”), and, in 2012 especially, words signifying economic value: “smartest buys”; “The season’s best looks for any budget,” and the above-mentioned “at every price” shoes.

Turning inside the magazine, the Table of Contents page not only lists several items related to shopping (“Dress Around a Backpack” (2001); “\$50 and Under” (2012)) but also elaborates on the cover model. In this case, it is not an elaboration on who they are (although the 2001 model’s name is listed); Langoria’s photo is featured twice on the Table of Contents pages (two TOC pages for the 2012 issue), but not her name, for example. Rather, the focus is on their accompanying commodities in their cover photo, how much those commodities cost, who makes them, and how to buy them. The 2001 model wore a “Cowl neck sleeveless top, \$238. William B. Fred Segal, Santa Monica, CA [phone number listed]”; Longoria’s was more expensive: “Diamonds by the Yard Necklace, \$8,700, Elsa Peretti for Tiffany and Co.” Seven commodities were listed for the cover model in 2001; Six for 2012. Regular sections in both issues also include guides to the latest shoes, a letters to the editor feature, and “Style Spy” about the latest trends (the latter two discussed later in this chapter).

Lucky is also very advertising oriented. Except for the cover, the first 28 pages for the 2001 issue are advertisements or promotions for *Lucky*; in 2012, it is the first 18 pages in 2012. Ads range in all sizes, but as can be seen, larger (and presumably more eye-catching) ads were characteristic of the later issue and, counter to the trends in the magazine industry, both the number of pages increased over the two years, and the number of advertising pages (with an especially dramatic increase in number of full-page ads). The list of advertisers is formidable in both issues.

Editorial features do not include long verbal elements, but tend to be truncated and mixed with visual elements (usually photos of people or commodities) that complement (and perhaps naturalize) the typical visual nature of the accompanying print advertising. The heavy commodity orientation of the articles (with brands explicitly mentioned) exacerbate the concordance between

editorial and advertising. Other especially notable features that seem prominent in *Lucky* magazine is the emphasis on *Lucky* promotions that encourage you to visit the *Lucky* website (emphasized more in 2012, but still seen in 2001). A regular feature in the more recent issues is “Luckybreaks,” a multiple-paged display of different “free stuff” and discounted prices of brands (Redken, Curel, and Burt’s Bees products, for example), with prices listed, that readers can access by using the *Lucky* app or registering on the *Lucky* website. This feature emphasizes the commodity orientation of the magazine, the “value-added” characteristics highlights that it can offer to potential advertisers (that is, to be included on the Luckybreaks list), the special access *Lucky* has to deals, the connection to *Lucky*’s digital media, and the further cultivation of *Lucky*’s user database. *Lucky* also references itself on both covers, either in explicit naming -- “Take the *Lucky* Poll” (2001) -- or in the use of first-person plural pronouns “We Pick the Greatest Websites” (2001) and “Our Biggest Giveaway Ever!” (2012). Finally, as discussed later in this chapter, *Lucky* is characterized by unusual format techniques, including pages of pull-out stickers that are designed to facilitate shopping and consumption literacy.

Taking *Lucky* as a whole, what lessons about gender, consumption, the good life and *Lucky* itself does the magazine teach? I argue that four tropes or themes are especially prevalent in the magazine (and, as the next chapter will argue, often in its ancillary digital forms as well): hybridity of advertising, promotional and editorial forms, postfeminist commodity performance, *Lucky* as fashion and consumption authority, and beauty perfection as manifested in youthcentrism and celebrity. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list; rather it reflects the dominant trends I contend capture the symbolic and economic tendencies of the magazine. Even though these tropes represent the dominant narratives as identified by this researcher, there are also examples of crossover tropes, when textual examples can be placed in two or more categories. For example, celebrities as spokesperson can be articulated in the hybridity trope and the depiction of youth-centered images and quest for perfection trope. Moreover, the crossover

tropes also represent the very hybrid nature of *Lucky* (and perhaps the hybrid future of magazine publishing). When applicable, I make notations of these crossover tropes as it opens up a space for polysemic interpretations.

Of course, with all qualitative research, subjectivity is involved. I acknowledge the possible limitations of a subjective analysis, yet contend a textual analysis provides rich material for critique. In addition, I also include ancillary examples from other issues of *Lucky* to further illustrate my argument. The next sections detail each of these tropes.

Table 1

	September 2001	September 2012
Issue Page Count	216	238
Inside Front Cover Gatefold*	Yes	Yes
Celebrity on Cover	No	Yes
Two-page advertisements	20	22
Full-page advertisements	27	60
Half-page advertisements	3	0
One-third page advertisements	26	4
Special Advertising Sections	4	0
Inside Back Cover Ad	1	1
Back Cover Ad	1	1
Table of Content Items	14	17
Cover Lines	6	7

*Note: A Gatefold is a fold-out section that typically reveals a three-page advertisement.

Hybridity

As reviewed in Chapter Two, hypercommercialism may affect many different media and take different forms, but one characteristic of many of these forms is hybridity. As a mixing of the commercial into what is normally expected to be non-commercial, hyper-commercialism may mix commercial, promotional, editorial and entertainment forms and genres (McAllister & Smith, 2013). The hybrid nature of hypercommercial forms is reflected in the terms used for such forms: advertorial (paid commercial messages written in the form of print editorials or columns), advertainment (commercial involvement in the production of genres such as reality television), advergaming (games based upon brand icons), and magalogues (half magazine/half catalogues). Hybrid hypercommercialism can thus take on the appearances of both content characteristics (an advertising written in the style of an editorial), and formatting characteristics (an advertisement that appears to look like an editorial, with similar layout and typeface). Sometimes such hybridity is labeled (“Promotion”; “Paid Advertising Section”), but other times these forms may not be labeled as such.

Hybrid hypercommercialism is at *Lucky*’s core. The trope of hybridity is evident in the overall presentation of both the editorial and the advertising content in the magazine. In short, it can sometimes be difficult for the reader to distinguish between the two elements. When analyzing hybridity, I argue the lines between content and commerce are blurred, sometimes beyond recognition. While this not an uncommon practice in fashion and beauty magazines, I argue *Lucky* has redefined hybridity by forefronting the commodity acquisition and further blurring the lines between content and advertising. The trope of hybridity was especially prominent when the following criteria were present: the conflation of advertising and editorial as defined by hypercommercial copy, advertisements designed to look like editorial, and the presence of “commodity flow” (McAllister & Giglio, 2005). In addition, the promotion of

contests and time-sensitive discounts further invite reader participation and is also included under the trope of hybridity.

Ad-like Editorials and Editorial-like Ads

Many of the editorial features in *Lucky* appear, at least at first glance, to be very similar to advertisements. Some of this involves similar use of layout and graphics in stories that are also used in advertising, such as a feature “Four Fall Outfits We Love,” from September 2012. The use of different fonts and arrows highlighting commodities, especially when appearing on an opposite page right next to a similarly multiple-font ad, blends the two forms together. That such features highlight the visual representations of commodities -- also a characteristic of ads, of course -- also solidifies their similarities. Thus “Fall Outfit #1” features a “Nubby knit: Give a dressy outfit a nonchalant twist: Pair it with a casual sweater” on page 59 is opposite the ad for a very similarly styled A/X Armani Exchange outfit on page 58. In many cases, the stories praise brands more explicitly (and shamelessly) than the ads do. In the 2012 Luckybreaks section, Redken “creates the glossiest finish ever and tames frizz with a blend of nutrients, oils and proteins.” Ironically, one element that may signal a non-advertisement in *Lucky* stories is the list of prices next to images of commodities, an element virtually non-existent in national print advertising. (Even in *Lucky* stories, though, this feature is usually in very small print.)

Promotions for *Lucky* ancillary contests or services often appear to be like paid advertising, in part because such promotions often also feature promotional partners. What makes something an ad and something else a promotion is irrelevant. This is especially true when advertisers also mimic *Lucky* editorial features. A two-page advertisement for Marshalls department store (2012, pp. 134-135), with the title “FASHION REPORT” at the top of the first page, uses the same image of an isolated piece of clothing (that is, with no model wearing it) as many editorial features in the same magazine, as well as the same white background. Small descriptions of purchases and shoes next to an image of the commodity is exactly in the style of

Lucky's stories. Although a small label on the top of the second page does reveal that this is an "Advertisement," a closer look notes that this two-page ad is also a *Lucky* tie-in promotion: "Enter for a chance to win a shopping spree!....Enter at luckylookout.com/marshalls." Solidifying the advertising-magazine connection, two of the clothing models in the ad are labeled as *Lucky* creative executives. This ad/cross promotion also appears in a "Style Spy" section of the magazine that features clothing tips, further eroding the editorial/advertising distinction. And, as described later in this chapter as an example of youth culture, cover celebrity Longoria appears on the cover of the 2012 issue, is linked to a L'Oreal "Luckybreak" giveaway contest on the Table of Contents page, is in a feature story in that issue that lists as one of "Eva's Favorite Things" the L'Oreal Parsi Voluminous Million Lashes Carbon Black Mascara ("I obsessed with this mascara. I did the commercial for it"), and, as proof of this latter claim, appears in a L'Oreal ad the page before her feature. L'Oreal thus is connected to the cover, the cover story, the Table of Contents, *Lucky* promotions, and a traditional advertisement.

The stylistic connections between ads and editorial erode the separation between these categories, a separation that, at least traditionally, had been at the core of publically proclaimed values of much journalism and entertainment (Bagdikian, 2004). Arguably, a magazine that purports to help readers with consumption decisions should make this distinction more definitive to add objectivity and credibility to its advice about brands. More importantly, though, the thematic connections between magazine editorial, advertising and promotions extend the themes and tropes discussed below throughout the magazine.

***Lucky* promotional stickers**

One of the key hybrid forms of *Lucky* involved the use of its physical medium: paper. Found in virtually every issue, pages with detachable, self-adhesive "I want it" stickers are a notable feature of *Lucky* magazine. These stickers are not routinely used in other magazines and are a relatively specific feature of *Lucky*. Fashioned to remind the user of a small Post-It note,

these stickers are positioned in the front section of magazine and can be used and reused on the magazine's pages. As readers peruse each section, they are invited to mark desired pages for a return viewing. Similar to what one might do with a print catalog or a coupon packet, the magazine is positioned as a resource worthy of additional shopping attention and consideration, and in fact should be taken with the consumer when shopping. In the September 2001 issue, the beige and mauve stickers included the tag lines of "Yes!" Or "Maybe!" to stick to the most (or less-than-most) brands listed in the magazine. In a limitation of choice that is telling of *Lucky's* consumption orientation, the imperative "No!" was not included as an option. The page's headline reads, "Feeling Lucky? Stick it to your favorites. Mark your must haves (and maybes) with these stickers, pack us along when you shop, and go home with everything you need. Presented by Blue from American Express." There is a small photo, showing the stickers in use, in case the reader needed additional instruction. Signaling the connection between a promotion partner (one in fact motivated to encourage consumption), when the reader removes the sticker for use, a small graphic of an American Express card is revealed, with the word "Forward" printed in blue. On the facing page, there is a full-page American Express advertisement with the headline, "Use it to Build a Shoe Empire" and "Blue from American Express – Smart Chip – No Annual Fee – Pay Over Time – Forward – go to the AmericanExpress.com/blue." This integration of content, *Lucky's* stickers, and commerce, the sponsored nature of those stickers along with a full-page facing page advertisement, is clearly indicative of hybridity. It is not specifically marked as advertising, but it's clearly an economically incentivized partnership. Moreover, American Express is seemingly offering the reader the means to acquire a "shoe empire," although the reader is left to wonder exactly what that entails. In addition, the editorial well of this particular issue also includes several examples of possible shoe purchases.

In the September 2012, issue, these stickers are evident, and they have taken on an even more dominant position in the publication. No longer designed with the *Lucky* branding, now the

stickers are more explicitly sponsored by specific advertisers. In this issue, there are two examples of sticker pages. The first example is sponsored by the celebrity fragrance -- and disturbingly anthropomorphized -- "Justin Bieber's Girlfriend." In this case, the stickers seem to indicate levels of Bieber fan obsession that then may be used to indicate consumer obsessions throughout *Lucky*, serving the same function as the 2001 stickers. On the right page, there are 20 self-adhesive stickers designed with photographs of Bieber's face and a young female. Bieber is shown staring directly into the camera while the young female is depicted as gazing adoringly at Bieber. The stickers have the no-less tag lines of "Must Have," "Love," and "Yes." The copy reads, "Use these to tag your must-haves (and maybes). Presented by Justin Bieber's girlfriend -- the new fragrance for her." When the stickers are removed, various images of the perfume bottle and logo are revealed. The colors used throughout this section are pink and purple, identical to the bottle's logo and packaging. On the facing page, there is a full-page advertisement for the fragrance. On the subsequent page, there is another full-page advertisement with the tagline, "Available at Sephora." (Sephora is a high-end fragrance and cosmetic retail chain store.) The inclusion of a Justin Bieber-branded fragrance is an interesting choice for *Lucky* magazine. While this researcher does not access to sales and marketing data for the fragrance, one can speculate that it is geared towards the teen or young adult consumer. However, the availability of Bieber's fragrance at Sephora, a high-end retailer can perhaps explain that contradiction. In addition, it is also possible the inclusion of this advertisement was part of a larger Condé Nast media buy during that particular month. Most importantly, this example illustrates the specific branding of this feature. Previous issues featured the *Lucky* name, now the commodity is omnipresent.

The second example in this issue is a sticker page is for Dove products. This page is predominantly white, with sixteen self-adhesive stickers. The stickers feature the following taglines: "confident, bold, playful, sparkling, fresh, powerful, brave, classic, bright, graceful, fun,

original, beauty, + strength Dove logo.” When the stickers are removed, a small photograph of Dove clinical protection deodorant. The full page facing page features five small photographs of a woman’s face, a pair of shoes, a white blazer, small clutch handbag and an updo hairstyle. The copy reads, “Complete your look with Dove Clinical Protection deodorant. It is clinically proven to give you powerful protection with 3x the care for your skin, combining the beauty you expect from Dove with the strength you need.” Clearly the adjectives presented on the stickers reinforce the empowered postfeminist woman. She is creating her identity and expressing her stylized individualism. The copy reads, “Use these tabs to mark the products that are your beauty + strength must-haves this season.” Again, the imperative is to shop and shop now. The copy on the facing page reads, “The Look: Beauty + Strength – This season’s style must-haves combine the two. Wear them in a way that expresses your singular mix of beauty and strength.” This juxtaposition of beauty and strength is particularly telling. The postfeminist viewer is exercising her agency and simultaneously completing her identity as both the strong *and* beautiful woman, thereby being rewarded by the patriarchal society for conforming to the standard beauty norms.

A sticker page in the May 2014 issue is more self-contained around a brand, with the stickers designed to facilitate external shopping in a specific retail space rather than marking commodities or shopping tips in *Lucky*. The stickers appear in a two-page ad for Pandora jewelry (pp. 64-65): “Create a Bracelet for Every You.” Here the message of identity creation and individualistic empowerment is linked with a page of 46 different sticker-tabs, each featuring an image of a different charm on one side and the name of the charm on the other; consumers may use these charms to adorn a Pandora bracelet. Some of the labor of shopping may be done in advance, the ad implies, while reading the magazine: choose among the 46 charms “to find the perfect look,” and remove the sticker to “bring your ideas to a PANDORA store.” But even this advance work does not complete the consumption labor: “Maybe we can coordinate them [the

sticker-facilitated charms] with PANDORA rings and earrings for a look, or looks, that are all you.”

The stickers thus combine the “marker” functionality of tear-away, attachable paper with the promotional purpose of sponsored branding (AMEX, Bieber perfume, Dove, Pandora). All are designed to facilitate serialized consumption, either through marking commodity-oriented *Lucky* pages, or by marking “customized” jewelry as a kind of shopping list. And all are framed with the rhetoric of “choice” and individualism since the stickers allow readers to pick and choose among commodities -- as long as “reject” is not the preference.

“Take the *Lucky* poll”

Contests, polls and giveaways are a dominant feature of *Lucky*. These activities invite the reader’s participation and allow for the possibility of further commodity acquisition. A cover tagline on the September 2001 issues reads, “The best stores, your favorite designers: Take the *Lucky* poll.” This tagline is positioned in a dominant location on the cover, in the upper left-hand corner of the page. Interestingly, a page number for the poll is not listed on the cover, perhaps encouraging readers to search throughout the issue for the poll. (Page numbers are provided for two other taglines, “Eye make-up made easy – page 132,” and “NYC Guide – page 195.”) The poll is on page 70 and is integrated as a pull-out gatefold feature with a Herbal Essence advertisement. The introductory copy reads, “Each month, *Lucky* brings you our favorite shopping finds. Now we want to know yours. The jeans that fit so well that you bought four pairs. The mascara that lengthens and thickens, but still stays miraculously smudge-free. The store with the sales associates so helpful you wouldn’t shop anywhere else.” The poll asks readers to name their favorites in 47 different brand categories: best store selection; best service shoe store, favorite nail polish (both company and product name) under and over \$12, among others. They are also asked to list their favorite catalog and shopping website. The poll concludes with questions that assume quantity in brand acquisition: “How many pairs of jeans do you

own?” “How many lipsticks do you own?” *Lucky* asks how much respondents would spend on a pair of shoes and how often they go shopping in a month. Respondents were given the option to mail, fax, or email the survey. In addition, they could also complete an on-line version of the poll. This poll, while not offering any specific incentive, allows for reader participation and the sharing of product knowledge, much like the familiar, helpful tone evident in the pages of the magazine. This poll was conducted early in the run of the magazine, garnering critical information about likes and dislikes of its readers. The poll of course serves as marketing research from some of the most invested *Lucky* readers (how much should lipstick and jeans be emphasized in the magazine?, for example). But also, in later issues, provides an opportunity for commodities to be listed in as the results of the polls are produced.

By the September 2012 issue, a poll had been replaced by a contest: as the cover breathlessly announces in multiple color and fonts, “You could win \$700,000 worth of free stuff! Our biggest giveaway ever!” When the reader goes to page 228, she is greeted with multiple small photos and descriptions as part of the “Luckybreaks” section, each detailing specific giveaways items. These items include brands for a diamond bracelet, a dress, a scarf and a pair of jeans, each includes a praising description of brands included in the giveaways. This contest is not one prize for one winner; rather the reader has the opportunity to win specific, individual items. All of the items *collectively* are valued at approximately \$700,000. Readers can enter the contest on-line or scan the images with their smartphone. An additional section includes a small photo and reader testimonial, “I won a year’s supply of Christian Dior lip balm!” By including this specific reader feedback, *Lucky* is assuring the reader that yes, a real person actually wins these items and that person could be you! The artistic layout of these items mimics that of a catalog. This is also an enduring feature of the magazine. It enables the reader to pick and choose among the options offered. A reader can enter one or more of the contests. The level of interactivity is left up to the individual reader. However, this contest feature in the magazine by

no means negates the larger promotional aspect evident in the publication. Shopping and commodity acquisition is the mission and vision of this publication at all times. But contests support the aspirational narrative present in the editorial section of the magazine: brands promise, and so do the contests. Even if a reader cannot afford a diamond bracelet, she can certainly win one in the pages of *Lucky*.

Postfeminism power through consumption

In *Lucky*, brands are often presented as magical transformative totems, an enduring ideological message found in much of modern advertising (Williams, 1980). As Chapter Two discussed, this brand-based power segues well with individualistic and consumption-oriented themes in post-feminism. The trope of postfeminist power through consumption is evident when the reader is encouraged and instructed to acquire commodities that will transform some element of their lives. I contend this publication, via the advertising and editorial content, co-opts the discourse of feminism while it equates shopping with empowerment. I noted the trope when the following criteria were present: copy that suggests the reader truly has “earned” the commodity acquisition; that she can exercise her agency by making a personalized suggestion based the choices offered; and that shopping is presented as a hyper-pleasurable and necessary activity. I contend the postfeminism concept of agency is dismantled and trivialized as shopping is presented as the preferred -- and perhaps even only -- path to empowerment and self-actualization. In addition, shopping is framed as specifically a female activity, to be enjoyed and pursued. Moreover, class privilege, or perhaps class envy, is assumed as women need to have access to a certain amount of disposable income in order to participate in this consumptive practice. Press (2011), writing about the proliferation of reality make-over television shows, contends that social class is as critical as other societal markers in identity creation. As Press asserts, issues of social class are present in the third wave, yet rarely explained or challenged:

There is an implicitly Cinderella-like feel to the third wave's messages, though the Cinderella invoked has a feminist inflection. Women are promised success, glamour and happiness if only they can get the improvement script right. Prince Charming, plus a well-paid glamorous career, all will follow if you can only pick out the perfect designer shoes, etc. In sum, the road to glamour is also, it is promised, the road to riches (118).

The adoption of postfeminist discourse is a dominant trope in *Lucky* magazine. This language and imagery encourages the reader to perform the hyper-individualized activity of commodity acquisition, provided you have *Lucky's* knowledgeable direction. While ads may often imply brand empowerment through imagery and layout, *Lucky* stories and headlines will sometimes state this outright. The September 2012 issue offers several taglines of empowerment on the front cover. The first tagline of "Real Girls, Real outfits – clothes that fit *your* body" addresses the hyperpersonalized nature of *Lucky's* discourse. Another tagline, "The season's best looks for any budget" implies *Lucky* will help the reader get the most for her shopping dollar. Like the advice from a best friend, *Lucky* will not steer you wrong. This is thus also an example of a crossover trope, *Lucky* as fashion authority.

In the September 2001 issue, this postfeminist power is exhibited in *Lucky* features in several ways. One example is work-based. A cover line reads, "Ready for Work: the essential bag, the perfect skirt, the wear-anywhere jacket." Inside the magazine, the section begins with headline, "4 Steps to a work wardrobe: From tops to skirts to jackets to dresses, we've picked everything you need this fall." The page design, reminiscent of a catalog, highlights each individual commodity along with descriptive copy, often with power-promising language: "look as icy-cool as Mildred Pierce"; "this jacket adds a bit of excitement to your office staples"; "Black leather trim adds excitement to a traditional skirt"; "add a little flash." This section is germane for several years. Clothing and accessories are not just suitable for a job, but "essential" and something women workers "need." It encourages identify creation through fashion

consumption, but a particular feminine identity. That working women desire “excitement”- providing professional outfits is a dubious and more-than-slightly disturbing implication. The reader is warned that one particular dress may not be suitable for everyone. “This classic pinstripe-gone-sexy-isn’t appropriate for a seriously corporate job, but it’s just right for any other settings.” The model is shown standing next to the large drafting table, signifying apparently the “other settings.” Commodity acquisition is positioned as the path to the reader’s metamorphosis as gainfully employed, professionally chic woman. This section also assumes the reader is working a white collar, professional office job.

Empowerment through commodities is a theme in other editorial features, promising to socially elevate the brand possessor and accompanying clothing, and impress those who observe the brand possessor. *Luckybreaks* in 2012 promises that the Blue Nile Diamond Bracelet “is pretty much guaranteed to launch you into a whole new level of sophistication.” In that same issue, in the “*Lucky Guide to Fall Shoes*,” one pair is “made to stop traffic,” another “will make standard black tights look riveting,” and a third “make girly skirts and dresses look about a hundred times cooler.” In all three of the latter cases, the social elevation is decidedly gendered: women (more than men) with a striking look “stop traffic,” wear “riveting” tights, and can make cool “girly” outfits...with the correct branded accessorizing, of course.

The magical power of commodities is also of course found in the ads. An advertisement for the shoe company Aerosoles in September 2001 reinforces this postfeminist empowerment. This two-page advertisement includes one large photographic image of a woman’s feet in burgundy high boots, apparently on a city street, walking a small white and black dog, tethered on a red leash. This leash is coiled around the woman’s calf. The model’s face is not depicted, just the feet and legs. The inclusion of a wool chevron print coat also implies a professional presentation. The headline reads, “Spike enjoyed window-shopping too, but enough was enough. Let yourself go. Aerosoles.” The smaller horizontal photo at the bottom of the page depicts the

profile view of a young, blond woman, embracing her dog. The “let yourself go” tag line equates freedom with shopping, and to an excessive degree that even wears out the dog (a dog who, unlike the freed consumer, is still on a leash). This advertisement therefore simultaneously offers freedom and grants *permission* to the reader. “Let yourself go” implies the viewer should approach this shopping endeavor with a sense of casual release, not careful consideration. This validation is critical to advancing postfeminist discourse framed as empowerment.

Another advertisement in this issue promotes a website, style.com, the on-line home of *Vogue* and *W*, two other Condé Nast titles. This example is indicative of how tropes crossover through hybridity, promoting other publications, and postfeminist power through consumption. This is a two-page advertisement, designed to look very much like a layout pages from a fashion magazine editorial. The image is that of young, slender, attractive female looking directly into the camera. She is shown walking down a street wearing a short, sleeveless black dress, clutching a small handbag. The copy reads, “Runways are everywhere. Style.com – the online home for *Vogue* and *W*. See it. Buy it. Wear it.” The photo credit identifies the outfit’s designer, Narciso Rodriguez and alerts the reader these items are available for purchase at the style.com website. This example advances the notion that the woman is always on display – in this case the “runway” of life – and needs to prepare for that performance. Her overt confidence is also reflective of the postfeminist woman. She has made her fashion selection for her designated role and *Lucky* – via this particular website -- will assist in that identity creation. It should also be noted that *Vogue* and *W* are considered to be high-fashion magazines, while *Lucky* would be classified as a medium-fashion magazine, meaning that the prices of the products featured would be lower than *Vogue* or *W*. Again, this hybridity might be a result of a joint advertising buy as this issue was very early in *Lucky*’s run. Clearly the activity of shopping is first and foremost. In addition, the tagline “See it. Buy it. Wear it” implies a breathless imperative to shop *right now*.

There is no time to spare. Careful and thoughtful decision-making about one's intended purchase is discouraged.

Among the most noteworthy examples of the postfeminist trope of shopping and empowerment is depicted in the multi-page promotional advertisement campaign, titled "Fill the Void." This campaign is introduced with a two-page spread, tagged with header "promotion" at the top of each page. The first left-hand page includes the headline, "My 5-day cleanse if only on day 2. Fill the Void. *Lucky* magazine – shop, sticker, share, buy. Change the way you shop this fall. Luckymag.com/mylucky." The photo is of a green sleeveless dress with fashion credit and price. The right hand page features the following headline: "My boyfriend dumped me via text. Fill the Void." It also includes a photo of a red handbag with designer credit and price. To preview a later trope about *Lucky*'s status as a shopping authority, this particular campaign, while clearly identified as promotional in nature, firmly places *Lucky* magazine as the source of *relief* from life's ills. Moreover, it implies a specific lack in the life of the reader and offers commodities as the perfect antidote for whatever may bother you: a dark void can only be filled with this green dress and red handbag. In addition, it reinforces the breathless imperative viewed in other examples. The *Lucky* mission can be deconstructed into three simple commands: shop, sticker, share, buy. These activities are encouraged and reified across all of *Lucky*'s platforms. This campaign continues with another one-page promotional advertisement with the headline of, "My intern is the only one following me on Twitter. Fill the Void." Again the reader is presumed to be in need of reassurance of comfort. She may be a confident, educated woman on the outside, but on the inside, she has insecurities that can only be addressed with the acquisition of "The Standout Shoe" by Gucci for \$895. The next selection in this campaign features the headline, "My closet will never be at full capacity. Fill the Void." This page features photographs of five specific products: a shirt, a belt, a handbag, a pair of shoes and a pair of pants. In the bottom right hand corner of the page there is the blue American Express logo. My

Luckyshops, launched in fall 2012, was done in conjunction with American Express. *Lucky* magazine will present the reader with usable, accessible options, American Express will provide the means to acquire those goods. It is the perfect partnership. The last promotional advertisement reads, “My beauty routine is getting routine. Fill the Void.” Six products are featured including mascara, lipstick, moisturizer, finishing powder, an eye shadow palette and Unilever products, including Dove. The reader is directed to the myluckshops web site where each of these products has their own space.

Deep in the editorial well of the September 2012 issue is the feature titled, “The 19 Best Hair Tips ever! Shinier, healthier, sexier...without a whole lot of effort. That’s our philosophy, and this is what we know.” It is listed under the tag line of “Beauty Spy Hair Report,” and features a large color photo of an attractive, blond, smiling model sporting large sunglasses. What makes this page remarkable is the inclusion of Jane Fonda’s mug shot from a November 2, 1970 arrest in Cleveland, Ohio. The tagline reads, “Jane Fonda’s perp walk shag is still the greatest.” Fonda is depicted as grinning coyly and looking directly into the camera’s lens. Once vilified for her anti-war stance, Fonda is now celebrated as fashion and style icon in this image. This is law enforcement reframed as fashion. Interestingly, most of *Lucky*’s readers would be too young to remember Fonda’s anti-war crusades; the photo is positioned as a humorous marker from a dark period of American history. Moreover, Fonda was known for her feminist viewpoints during the second wave. The very act of trivializing this image is troubling and further illustrates how *Lucky* co-opts postfeminist discourse as faux empowerment.

Another Unilever product, Degree antiperspirant, is featured in a full-page color advertisement. It features the photograph of a young woman in a black tank top, staring directly into the camera. The copy reads, “Yeah, I Sweat. Women are strong. So is Degree Clinical Protection. The maximum amount of sweat blockers, for up to three times the strength of a basic antiperspirant. Thought women were strong before? Watch out.” Most importantly, the last

tagline reads, “Unapologetically strong.” This is a cogent example of co-opting empowering rhetoric as it relates to physical prowess. The gender dynamics evident in this advertisement are startling, if not entirely predictable. Attempting to challenge the gender norms by positioning the woman as powerful, however, is problematic. The photographic image still adheres to standards set forth by the fashion and beauty industries. The *Lucky* reader is informed that she does indeed, sweat. However, the model is not depicted in exercise or obvious athletic apparel. She is shown wearing a black tank top with large hoop earrings, not terribly practical work out attire. The image is fashionable, not functional while the reader is issued a warning to “watch out” for strong women. The message is confrontational and confident at the same time, but, as with most messages of empowerment in *Lucky*, it is the brand that is the catalyst.

***Lucky* magazine as fashion authority**

From its premiere issue, *Lucky* magazine has established itself as an authority on both shopping and style. Editor Kim France said the publication was modeled after Japanese shopping magazines (Aguilar, 2002). The authoritative voice of *Lucky*’s editors has been a critical component of the magazine since the beginning. In fact, the very title of the magazine, *Lucky*, could signify that readers are in fact lucky to read *Lucky*. Throughout previous sections of this chapter are several examples where *Lucky* self-reflexively refers to itself: “Four Fall Outfits We Love,” and “*Lucky* brings you our favorite shopping finds.” In such cases, *Lucky* offers authoritative guidance to readers; this trope is evident, then, when *Lucky*’s writers, bloggers and editors are positioned as the ultimate shopping and style authority. The experts are there to direct – and redirect – the reader’s focus and attention. In doing so, they question the legitimacy of a women’s (non-*Lucky*-informed) personal style and agency. This trope was noted when editors, blogger or writers self-reflexively exhibit specific product or style suggestions. Like product placement in film and television, the integration and execution of this voice of authority – and commodity positioning -- is critical. Viewed as *too* authoritative and omniscient, the reader

could potentially reject the advice of the fashion leader as being too bombastic. However, when the advice is presented as non-threatening and friendly, the reader is more likely to embrace its message.

A key way *Lucky* establishes its authority is through “Editor’s Picks.” Features will display branded clothing or accessories, and a description/endorsement purportedly from the editor appears in a font that resembles handwriting. In the September 2001 issue, “new arrivals” were touted with script such as “What could be cuter than a calico jacket” and “Wear it with jeans for a modern countrified look.” Other brands were endorsed with “trust us...” (for a leather jacket) and “Editor’s Obsession” (about “tattoo-inspired pendants”) (both from page 58).

How do items become selected as an editor’s pick? There are several examples of an editor’s picks intersecting with paid advertisement in the publication from the September 2001 issue. On page 47, there is an editor’s pick for the cotton camp shirt from the Gap. That very same shirt is depicted in a paid advertisement on pages 5-6. On page 130, an editor-endorsed Gucci fragrance Rush 2 on page 130 is featured in Sephora’s special advertising section on page 133.

Nivea firming lotion is endorsed on page 116, while an advertisement for that product is found on page 131 and another Nivea product is featured on page 96. This intersection is germane for several reasons. First, it reinforces *Lucky*’s position as a hypercommercial media form. What is advertising and what is editorial is clearly called into question. In addition, by mentioning these products multiple times, the editors are assuring “top of mind awareness.” Top of mind awareness is an advertising industry term which means that multiple impressions will ensure that a customer will think of your product first when making a purchasing decision. And, perhaps for especially critical readers of *Lucky*, it may call into question the credibility of *Lucky*’s consumption authority.

This issue also featured an “Ask the Editors” Q & A on page 88. Letters to the editor are of course a standard feature in newspapers and magazines. Normally such sections feature letters from readers commenting on previous issues or articles. Not in the case of *Lucky*, however. Questions in this case are about fashion or shopping dilemmas from readers, searching for authoritative answers. This section is headlines, “Ask the editors: Your pressing style issues addressed by our panel of experts.” Letters include questions ranging from suggestions for growing out bangs, to managing visibly clogged pores, to a maximizing a chipped pedicure. In some responses, the editors offer specific product suggestions (and helpfully including the web address to purchase the product). The tone of the responses is knowing and friendly, like advice from a best girlfriend -- although an extremely fashion- and shopping-savvy friend. One response in September 2012 to a reader who wants to makeover an out-of-fashion friend is, “You keep showing her super-flattering pictures of [model] Alexa Chung, every so often dropping a ‘love her hair, right?’” In later issues, this feature was re-titled “Readers ask: Dear *Lucky*,” in which the headline of the feature privileges the collective knowledge of the Lucky brand identity rather than individual editors.

The cultural status of individual editors and contributors in *Lucky* are reasserted throughout the magazine’s run however. In the May 2014 issue, Editor Eva Chen has positioned herself as a postfeminist fashion authority. Like another Condé Nast editor, *Vogue*’s Anna Wintour, *Lucky* has framed Chen as celebrity style maven. Her editor’s letter features six different photographs from Fashion Week – the annual showcase of designer fashion. Those images highlight Chen’s varied fashion looks in Milan, New York and Paris. Chen asserts she sympathizes with the fashion dilemmas of real women. Chen writes: “Real women, you see, earn their style icon status because each day is a new challenge of taking existing pieces, perhaps well-worn/ loved... and mixing and matching them in endless equation of fashion math.” (p. 36). The section concludes with Chen’s list of “A Few of my (Beauty) Things.” She redirects the

reader to her Instagram page (@evachen212) for more information. In addition, she assures the reader that *Lucky* will help them make informed fashion choices.

A long-time trend in *Lucky* is various sections that use the word “Spy” (“Style Spy,” “Office Spy,” “Beauty Spy”) to signal secret consumption information and gathered intelligence that *Lucky* provides to its readers. The idea of privileged information is also characteristic of a September 2001 section titled “The Editors Tour,” which offers consumption-based guides of geographic areas. Framed as exclusive insider information, the list includes 93 specific shopping includes the following copy: “Ask the most clued-in New Yorkers which little shops should be everyone’s top destinations, and you’ll get the following list of under-the-radar spots.” locations, grouped by consumption-based tours (implying that one is not enough). Shopping tours include, “Never pay retail tour,” “The fabulous tour” (featuring designer goods), “The big gun tour (big box retailers), and “the extra trendy tour.” The sub-headline reads, “Nowhere do trends change faster than in New York. And nowhere are there as many shops catering to the appetites that follow them.” While the very nature of fashion is that it’s ever-changing, this extensive list ensures the dedicated shopper will always have a destination (or, rather, multiple ones). New York City is presented as the shopping Mecca and the *Lucky*’s editors are your eternal tour guides. This position of fashion authority is also evident on *Lucky*’s magazine numerous social media sites. I elaborate on that phenomenon in Chapter Five.

One last way that *Lucky* establishes its authority is through calls for charitable giving, in an especially shopping-oriented version of “corporate social responsibility” (Einstein, 2012). The very next page following the NYC tours is titled, “Where to donate your clothing.” The following lists several outlets in eight different cities that will accept the donation of gently-used clothing. Why does one need to do this? As *Lucky* sympathizes, “Cleaning out one’s closet can be a trial. Uncertainty about whether it’s time to take a favorite item of clothing out of rotation is unsettling.” The tragedy of re-used and donated clothing, then, is not due to the circumstances of

those who will receive the clothing, but those who give the clothing, since it causes stress by challenging the donors' sense of what is fashionable. And not only will *Lucky* tell you where to shop, it will also assist you in donating unwanted, obsolete items, thereby ensuring ample space in your closet for future shopping excursions. Moreover, this act has the potential of alleviating guilt that is so frequently part of shopping discourse.

The last page of this same issue features another advice column titled, "Dr. Shopper." The tagline reads: "Dr. Shopper: Tackling your retail neuroses, one case at a time." Instead of offering relationship or career advice that is common in other publications, *Lucky* positions commodity acquisition as the cure to what ails you. In this issue, a rather lengthy letter from someone named, "Late to the Wedding Outfit," details her harrowing experience with a dry cleaner that damaged her favorite formal skirt. Dr. Shopper responds to her question with the definitive declaration, "If the skirt doesn't fit you, donate it to charity, and quit your whining." While the tone of this page is clearly mimicking traditional advice columns, the headline which reads, "tackling your retail neuroses, one case at a time" reinforces *Lucky's* position of authority and reifies the reader's sense of deficiency and lack (without *Lucky*).

The last page of the May 2014 issue features a column titled "Fashion Addict." The reader learns that this columnist is "addicted to nail polish." The page's background images are comprised of several droplets of nail polish. The copy at the bottom of the page instructs the reader to "see the names of these polish shades – and buy them instantly – download *Lucky* on your tablet." *Lucky* is therefore reinforcing its fashion authority status while also becoming the very site of consumptive act. This is addressed more fully in Chapter Three. In addition, the columnist concludes by mentioning that "Deborah Lippmann's 'Shape of my heart' is a favorite – and it benefits breast cancer treatment." There is connection to corporate social responsible by fashioning commodity acquisition as an activity that will not only benefit you, but will benefit those in need. In short, shopping is framed as being socially relevant, as well as enjoyable and

necessary. Moreover, the use of the word of “addiction” further advances the notion of shopping as a crazed and breathless pursuit, an activity so wonton – and inevitable -- that it has risen to the level of addictive behavior, and undermines appeals to empowerment discussed earlier. In addition, it implies that the woman has no agency; she is swept away by her desire.

The depiction of perfection, youth-centric images and celebrity

This is well-trodden ground in the world of fashion magazines and advertising. However, *Lucky* magazine reimages this trope by offering a hierarchy of perfection. The reader is instructed that she’s operating at one level, and *Lucky* magazine will assist her in rising to the next level in appearance and presentation. While not addressing issues of sexual empowerment like those presented in magazines like *Cosmopolitan*, *Lucky* reifies the never-ending quest for perfection as the path to enlightenment. Perfection, though, is often manifested through the related sub-tropes of youth and celebrity. This trope was noted when the following criteria was present: advertisements or editorial instructing readers on procedures and/or products to look younger; advertisements or editorial instructing readers on procedures and/or products that allow them to copy the look of celebrities; and advertisements or editorial that instructed readers on procedures and/or procedures to attain their best look – the aspirational appearance. This aspirational narrative is present across all of *Lucky*’s platforms and is discussed at length in this dissertation.

Beauty advertisements, with their focus on youthcentrism and perfection, pose a vexing challenge for feminist media researchers. Third-wave feminists, in particular, have attempted to reclaim beauty practices as “enjoyable, self-chosen and skilled feminine pursuits” (Lazar, 2011). These advertisers have responded by advancing narratives which focus on hyper-individualism and perfection simultaneously. As Lazar notes, advertisers have begun to “link the normative practice of beautification with an emancipated identity” (p. 37). Lazar asserts these

advertisements begin by extending a woman's right to beauty as it signifies freedom and liberation. Beauty practices are also presented as offering the woman agency and self-determined choices. These tenets appeal to the depoliticized, highly individualized aspect of third wave feminism. Lazar ultimately concluded that a woman, unless she reaches beautification goals, is not truly emancipated, as framed by these advertisers (p. 40). The notion of choice is also prominent in many of these advertisements. Lazar argues that while choice appeals to a woman's agency, there is no real choice at stake, as most of the products offered are indistinguishable from each other (p. 45). The option of not consuming is not presented as a possible and realistic option.

In the September 2001 issue, there is a dominant two-page advertisement for Herbal Essences hair color. The copy reads, "New Herbal Essences – True Intense Color. Leave it to Herbal Essences to take hair color to the limit. With pure color extracts that ignite the intense color and shine you've only dreamed of until now. Thirty exhilarating shades that hold on and hold true, week after week. And oh, that delicious Herbal Essence fragrance!" The photograph features four models, three females and one male. Each model is showcasing four different hair colors and styles. The bottom headline reads, "Very, very intense. Clairol – a beauty all your own." An impression of a fingerprint is superimposed on the last tagline. This is telling juxtaposition that is present in the pages of *Lucky* – the conflation of agency with instruction. You are free to make a purchase, as long as you accept the knowledgeable and authoritative instruction. This advertisement's message is clear; purchase this product "to take your haircolor to the limit." The inclusion of the fingerprint tells the purchaser this commodity experience will be as individual and specific as one's own fingerprint. Furthermore, in coloring one's hair, you are undoubtedly "leaving your mark." The next two-page spread in the magazine is for another Clairol product, Renewal 5x shampoo, thereby reinforcing Clairol's dominant advertiser position in the issue. The copy reads, "Now give your hair the strength to shine. 5 technologies wash in

strength. Improves hair's health by 88%, gives hair a deep dimensional shine." Even in the hyperbolic world of advertising copy, one wonders whether a shampoo will truly, "wash in strength." Again, this copy reinforces the message that the reader is broken and weak and in need of assistance.

An advertisement for Revlon makeup echoes this sentiment. In this two-page advertisement, a white, young female model is shown raising her sunglasses in order to gaze directly into the camera lens. The copy reads, "We always want to shine, but we never want to shine. Revlon. Introducing Shine Control Mattifying Makeup...Revlon – It's Fabulous Being a Woman." The empowerment rhetoric of "wanting to shine" and the declaration of "it's fabulous being a woman," clearly reinforces the celebration of femininity, while also setting the normative standards for adhering to those preconceived notions of self-improvement.

The inside back cover advertisement features Shisedo skincare. The copy reads, "I am your skin's strength. Rely on me." No model is shown; rather two bottles of skincare are predominantly featured. In addition, the copy continues, "...I am a new source of strength for the future of your skin, and, as such, I promise to strengthen your stressed skin and keep you looking younger far into the future." From September 2012, a Lancôme ad promises "Eye luminosity, *the new visible sign of youth* [original italics; a slogan appearing twice in a three-page ad]." The product promises to be an "eye-illuminating youth activating concentrate." Again, these branded commodities are framed as a solution to a *constructed* but often implicit problem: looking non-youthful is bad, is disempowering.

Furthermore, *Lucky's* reliance on young celebrities also reinforces an aspirational narrative. In short, you too can look like your favorite celebrity/singer/reality star with access to the proper products. The 2001 issue offered young actresses who have, 13 years later, become established stars: a pre-*Modern Family* Julie Bowen appears in a Neutrogena ad; a pre-*Sin City/Fantastic Four* Jessica Alba is featured in L'Oreal. Moreover, the celebrities themselves are

presented as brands. As of this 2014 writing, most American fashion magazines no longer feature models on their covers and transitioned to featuring celebrities. As celebrities became more recognizable to the public, their presence on covers became more prominent. Moreover, celebrities have also replaced model as their primary spokespeople for cosmetic and fragrance lines. In addition, the definition of the term celebrity remains flexible and open for multiple interpretations. The framing of celebrities as brand is evident in the pages of *Lucky*.

The September 2012 cover model is actress Eva Longoria. The tagline next to her cover photo reads, “Eva Longoria: What she’ll wear to Michelle Obama’s house.” On the page prior to Longoria’s feature story, there is a full-page advertisement for L’Oreal Superior Preference haircolor. Longoria is the featured spokesperson in this advertisement. The copy reads, “Turn on the light in your brunette. Eva Longoria.” The reader is then instructed to “find your perfect haircolor. Download the iphone app.” The feature story begins with the headline, “Happily Eva After.” The editorial then details Longoria career transition from *Desperate Housewives* star to film actress and Obama supporter – she’s the national co-chair of Obama for America. The article concludes with a pictorial depiction of “Eva’s favorite things,” including a pair of jeans, L’Oreal mascara, the Eva by Eva Longoria fragrance available at Wal-Mart, and the novel *Fifty Shades of Grey*. This textual example reinforces the American emphasis on celebrity culture. Longoria is framed as actress, political activist, entrepreneur, and -- most significant for *Lucky* -- style expert.

Moreover, celebrities have replaced models as the ultimate expression of the perfected, normative standards of beauty. In the May 2012 issue, cover model Olivia Wilde is framed with the headline, “Olivia Wilde: On motherhood, turning 30 and why shopping matters.” The inside editorial not only informs the reader about Wilde’s upcoming acting projects, it also reinforces the latest Hollywood obsession, the baby watch. This attention to a celebrity’s personal life, and personal opinion, only further advances their position as role model. In addition, Wilde also

specifically references Longoria as a style icon. Wilde says, “Eva Longoria always looks so put-together and goddammed adorable. But I can’t imagine walking everywhere in those heels. She goes to the Laundromat with them on! I just don’t; have it in me.” She then goes to explain that her personal style is a “bit messy.” However, there is nothing messy about the accompanying photographs which feature a stylized Wilde enjoying a stroll on a dock. In the “behind the scenes” feature, the reader learns the photographs were taken at the California Yacht Club, a definite marker of social class. Furthermore, a list of products is labeled with the headline, “Olivia’s Do-Good Summer Shopping Picks.” That list includes a hat made by Ethiopian weavers, makeup by Revlon -- a company for which Wilde is spokesperson -- and a bag made with recycled materials. Wilde is offered as a celebrity with a social conscience. The next chapter will come back to this profile of Wilde given its prominence in *Lucky* social media that month.

In addition, that issue also features model/actress Kate Upton’s “Beauty Rules.” The reader learns that “a bold lip makes everything easier,” and “glow is key,” and that “the secret to beautiful hair is moisture.” Each rule is accompanied by the suggestion of a brand name product. These celebrity-branded features have also augmented *Lucky*’s role as fashion authority. Some of their authoritative status has been relinquished to the featured celebrities.

Conclusion

The preceding chapter has provided an overview and analysis of the major tropes present in *Lucky* magazine, focusing on such issues as the magazine’s stylistic and functional hybridity, its postfeminist versions of consumer empowerment, its own shopping ethos, and the celebration of youth, beauty, and celebrity. These themes are often intertwined, and appear throughout multiple textual forms, including advertising, content, promotions, and those that are mixed. In addition, the advancement of a hypercommercial narrative assures that the *Lucky* reader is always

being positioned as consumer. Readers are thus drawn into a world where consumption is celebrated, and *Lucky* is the guide.

In the next chapter, I will analyze *Lucky's* vast social media presence. We will see many of these same themes in the multifaceted forms that *Lucky* -- as an archetype, 21st Century branded "magazine," now take. These trends continue to illustrate *Lucky's* dominant position as the ultimate authority on shopping and style in a media-saturated, hypercommercial culture.

CHAPTER FIVE:
LUCKY MAGAZINE AS A CONSUMPTION-PROMOTING DIGITAL MEDIA BRAND

As discussed in Chapter Three, the influence of digital and social media proved to be a major challenge to the publishing of popular press titles in the post-millennial era, but also offered some additional revenue and promotional opportunities. The rise of digital culture certainly has changed the status quo of media economics and use, threatening the viability of traditional “analog” media, especially print. But social media sites have also proven to be of particular utility to certain consumer-based magazines, especially fashion and beauty publications. Advances in instantaneous image reproduction and distribution, combined with multiple modalities such as “liking,” “fanning,” sharing, and commenting, allow for an immediacy not found in the print publication. Social media can easily be hyperlinked to external websites -- such as those of web sponsors or cross-promotional partners -- that also may be designed for e-commerce and specific brand promotion. Social media thus allow multiple spaces to be designed and coordinated for cross promotion, commodification, reader interaction and real time updates. In short, for image-oriented consumption-based magazines, ancillary branded social media function to reinforce and even extend the ideology set forth in the print publication.

The converged and multi-modal nature of social and digital media fit in well with Lucky as a branded magazine that, even in its print form, embraced hypercommercial hybridity. As of spring 2014, *Lucky* magazine supported eleven social media sites or websites. In addition, they generate daily “lucky breaks” emails for a designed distribution list. The social media sites are Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, YouTube, Foursquare, Pinterest, Google+, Instagram, Etsy, luckymag.com website and an iPhone application. *Lucky* also produces a digital copy of the print

publication available on the iPad and Kindle Fire. Not only does the widespread use of converged social and web media allow a broader extension of the brand and its promotional partners, but in the age of datamining and targeted marketing, it also facilitates the collection of user behaviors to increased selling techniques (for a discussion, see Turow, 2011).

In this chapter, I will critically analyze *Lucky* magazine's social media activity. After a brief description of social media, I will organize my discussion of *Lucky*'s social media use by platform, beginning with *Lucky*'s engagement with Facebook, noting the capture day at the beginning of each section, along with the accompanying URL. For each site, I analyzed a 24-hour period of activity. I used PC screen captures to collect and save the necessary data and images. Since several of *Lucky*'s sites are quite active, one day of data collection provides a rich and prolific snapshot of activity. In addition, the social media sites also correspond with either the May or June/July 2014 edition of the magazine. The May issue of fashion and beauty magazines typically covers the late spring trends of fashion while June/July issues usually present a summer style guide. These *Lucky* issues are emblematic of this trend. Several of the following sites experience considerably more activity than other sites. Whenever possible, I include usage information as self-reported by the sites and/or *Lucky* magazine.

What we'll see in this chapter is a development of many of the same themes deconstructed in the magazine as the previous chapter delineated: a focus on commodity and consumption, an embrace of hybridity of promotional forms (often facilitated by the characteristics of the sites themselves), promises of insider access to shopping secrets and the workings of *Lucky* itself, and endorsements of the individualistic focus that stems from the post-feminist power of explicitly described excessive consumption. As will also be seen, each site is often hyperlinked with the others, but also offers special promotional capabilities, such as the multi-media nature and historical constructedness of Facebook, the declarative power of Twitter, the commodity-image orientation of Pinterest, the "behind-the-scenes" access offered by videos

on YouTube, the e-commerce of Etsy, and the retail space synergy facilitated by Foursquare.

Lucky as a brand takes full advantage of the interactive, linked, and multi-modal nature of these sites.

Social Media and Promotional Culture

Although the exact definition of what makes something “social media” is difficult to pin down, it tends to contrast with the early “Web 1.0” version of the Internet in which homepages featured one-way communication (although with a convergence of modalities including print, graphics, photos, video and sound). As part of “Web 2.0” social media includes such characteristics as a high degree of interactivity, the heavy use by individuals (as opposed to large businesses exclusively), and therefore a “prosumer” or “produserly” element that encourages creation of content by citizens in a non-professional sphere (for a discussion of conflicting definitions of social media, see El Ouiridi et al, 2014). Platforms such as Facebook and YouTube allow the easy posting of user materials that can be widely shared with the public (in the case of YouTube), with only the invited (in the case of Facebook’s “friends”), or both (in the case of Twitter’s “followers” and searchable hash tags).

However, the economics of many social media sites in fact depend on the integration of free labor from users to create and help spread material (and the use of the social media sites). Users are not paid by such sites, but instead are drawn in by the pleasures of creating/posting; new sites hope to achieve a critical mass of users as the early adapters encourage others to join.

Nor are the sites hostile to corporate participation. Companies and brands may have their own Facebook and YouTube pages and Twitter feeds with which users may interact (as will be analyzed below in the case of *Lucky*). Like individual users, branded companies can make full use of the qualities of the site, including posting branded images and videos, information about contests and special offers, and games featuring brand icons. That such sites also serve an

archival function mean that video commercials and other promotional materials have a longer life than when only found on television, radio, newspapers and magazines (McAllister, 2011).

In addition, the most prominent social media sites generate revenue via advertising. This encourages these sites to both place targeted advertising near complementary web content and to match on-line behavior with attractive advertising creates incentives in such sites to partner with advertisers and other brand partners (Cohen, 2013). That such websites can be seamless hyperlinked to each other and that user behavior can be tracked across sites (using either official registrations to such sites or the use of tracking software like “cookies”) also makes such sites attractive to advertisers and other brand promoters. Social media sites have accelerated a massive change in the advertising industry that began with the 1990’s rise of digital culture, as new digital advertising agencies and other datamining companies look to maximize the cross-platform data collection of user behavior and increase the efficiency of targeted persuasive appeals (Turow, 2011).

An implication of the above is that promoters on social media, can construct users as consumers -- and more specifically as fans of particular brands -- in multiple analog media, digital media, and retail spaces. This includes the converged construction of targeted niche consumers, such as the empowered-through-consumption post-feminist consumer that *Lucky* cultivates.

With such characteristics and structural incentives, it is logical that a brand-oriented magazine such as *Lucky* would fully embrace the promotional power of the Internet and social media. Below is a list of its promotional media platforms and a critically analyzed sample of its usage.

***Lucky* WEBSITE**

Capture Date: June 25, 2014

URL: www.luckymag.com

The *Lucky* magazine web site clearly serves as its social media hub. While complementing material presented in the print edition, the web site also serves as a space for virtual connection. *Lucky's* social media sites all redirect traffic back to the *Lucky* website, thereby making it the virtual hub for all of *Lucky's* online activity.

While clearly intended to showcase as many commodities as possible, the design of the site is cluttered, featuring numerous photographs and images. A user must take time and care when clicking throughout the site as it is not always obvious where the content is located. The top row of categories includes the following headers: Subscribe, Fashion & Style, Beauty, Accessories, *Lucky* breaks, Community. In addition, the bottom row features the following headers: sandals, fragrance, accessories, editor's picks. The nature of this web site, a source for an endless array of images and text, also mirror *Lucky's* core aesthetic, present as much merchandise as possible. Most importantly, this site reinforces the hypercommercial messages present across all of *Lucky's* platforms. Across the bottom of the page, a visitor can access the necessary shortcuts to all of *Lucky's* social media sites. In this chapter, I outline and analyze several textual examples from *Lucky's* social media sites. All of those examples are also connected back to the web site.

FACEBOOK

Capture day: April 24, 2014

URL: www.facebook.com/LuckyMagazine

Facebook, designed originally for college students, has grown into one of the most popular social media sites on the internet. With 845 million active users as of 2013, Facebook is

one of the most visited web sites in the world (Schmitt, 2013). Founded by several Harvard University students most notably the web celebrity and billionaire Mark Zuckerberg in 2004, Facebook was initially only available to Harvard students. However, the founders quickly decided to expand its reach and by end of that first year, users numbered more than one million (Schmitt, 2013). Entry into the Facebook world is relatively open; anyone over the age of thirteen can create a profile, upload pictures and personal information such as age, marital status and education. Users can then cultivate their “on-line identity” by providing links to content such as videos, articles and music. In addition, users can also join groups and “like” pages provided by a wide range of businesses (Riggs, 2013). Facebook, of course, is not just a social media platform; it is also a business. Originally it was a privately owned company, one that sought to grow from its modest 2004 beginnings. In April 2012, Facebook acquired the photo sharing web site Instagram for \$1 billion. The next month the company went public by offering shares on the NASDAQ stock market. The company’s estimated value was listed as \$100 billion (Schmitt, 2013). Critics of Facebook have argued that the site fosters false emotional connections among the listed “friends.” Moreover, some cultural critics purport the site has been designed to track users’ every move and click (Schmitt, 2013), a type of data mining that is certainly a very effective, and cost effective, way to both market research and reach consumers and potential shoppers who are valuable to Facebook’s corporate partners. In addition, Facebook also provides cross promotional opportunities with other sites, allowing for message reinforcement.

The data I analyzed was available to all Facebook *Lucky* magazine followers and was available for viewing on April 24, 2014. On that date, visitors to *Lucky*’s Facebook page would see at the very top of the page that it had 460,401 “likes” and list that 12,280 individuals are “talking about this.” For marketers, the first statistic (the “likes”) indicates the popularity of the page, similar to a Nielsen television rating but obviously something that is in itself promotional, given its placement at the top of the page. That this statistic appears twice at the top of the page

signals its promotional function. The “talking about this” metric is potentially even more valuable, as it indicates active involvement with the page by users; this can include “sharing” posts on the page or any other specific user interaction which generates a “News Feed story” on the user’s Facebook feed within the previous week (Campbell, 2013). They listed the most popular age group as being in the 25-34 demographic and the most popular city is New York City. The top of the page is in a banner style that covers the entire page left-to-right, and features the Lucky logo, the web address for the Lucky website (with the description “The magazine about shopping. For daily personal-style and beauty inspiration, visit <http://luckymag.com/>”), a photo of a fashion model, and a link to the Facebook page’s Photo file that features as a thumbnail the cover of the latest issue of *Lucky*. Next to the cover is another thumbnail of a “thumbs up” that invites the user to “like” the page to join the 460K users.

The “About” button is at the bottom of the banner section: clicking on this interesting lists the “Founded” date as “1 September 1846.” Scrolling down the page’s “Life Events” explains this rationale: “A.T. Stewart opens America's first department store in New York City. And although *Lucky* wouldn't be founded until December 2000, this set in motion a shopping frenzy that would pave the way for our magazine and shopping addicts all over the country. Follow the rest of our timeline for bits of *Lucky's* own history and to discover (and of course, shop) shopping and fashion milestones.” *Lucky* thus constructs a history of shopping as its own history, making its own creation a “milestone” in this history and giving the magazine a consumer culture gravitas. Consistent with *Lucky's* brand, this description also reinforces the idea that extreme consumption (“frenzy,” “addicts”) is universal and desirable. Facilitating the user’s ability to “shop shopping and fashion milestones,” events like “1873 Levi’s Founded” list the company’s website in the description of the event, placing *Lucky's* promotional partners also in this larger historical progression. Other Timeline events such as “1976 Liz Claiborne Founded” and “1998 Sex and the City, The Show” include postfeminist themes that link consumption

milestones to women's empowerment. (McNamara, forthcoming 2015). For "1947 Dior's New Look," for example, this event is described as debuting "'a new look' that freed women of post-WWII restrictive dressing." *Lucky* magazine's debut in 2000 is listed in the Timeline, as is *Lucky*'s engagement with other social media, signaling the interconnections of those sites for *Lucky*: "2008 Lucky joins Twitter"; "2010 Lucky joins Foursquare"; "2011 'Lucky joins Tumblr.'" Interestingly, when *Lucky* joined Facebook is not on this timeline, perhaps in an attempt to signal a timeless presence on the most venerable of social media sites.

Below the upper banner section, the layout incorporates a two-column format, with individual images and copy along with the option to comment, give a "thumbs up" and/or share it with users' own Facebook followers. For some larger images, the entire horizontal space on a computer screen is utilized. Users may scroll down the various posted items seemingly infinitely; in fact, with multiple posts being placed on *Lucky*'s Facebook page every day, it is the case that thousands of posts are archived on this site; the handy calendar on the right of the page allows users to jump to earlier posts by year.

Of course, *Lucky*'s Facebook page does not just promote the Lucky brand, but also its promotional partners and specific magazine tie-ins at the time of the user's visit. Below is a description and analysis of two specific hyperlinked and cross-promoted features found on the *Lucky*'s Facebook feed that day, one tied to a specific advertising campaign and the other to that month's *Lucky* magazine cover celebrity who touts shopping as empowering.

Singer Lorde – MAC Cosmetics

On the right hand side of the page, one dominant image is that of the young female pop singer Lorde. This particular entry is indicative of the cross-promotion that is evident in the print publication. The header reads "The first ad for Lorde's moody Mac mini-line is out now!" The photo is a close-up of Lorde in concert. The copy added at the top of the box, apparently from *Lucky*'s editors, reads "And it's stunning," referring not to Lorde, but either to the "mini-line," or,

grammatically at least, to the ad itself (or likely both). When users click on the link provided, they are sent to a article on *Lucky's* website with a large photo of the advertising campaign. The accompanying article was written by Maura Brannigan, Digital Fashion News Writer. A Twitter button is provided for users who want to follow this individual. The copy announces that this particular line of cosmetics will be available for purchase on June 5th. However, the image is not of Lorde or the product per se, but rather a reproduction of the actual advertising campaign. The photo credit is listed as being “courtesy of MAC Cosmetics.” The story mentions specific products and prices in this line (see below). Furthermore, in the article, readers are provided with five separate hyperlinks within the copy of the web story itself, sending them to other supporting materials about these products and Lorde’s music career. These links are marked by red hyperlink text within the article as the two paragraphs read:

Our deep-seated love for Lorde extends far beyond her [musical prowess](#), her refreshingly [grounded attitude](#) and her [low-maintenance haircare routine](#). The world agrees: there's something delightful about the 17-year-old Kiwi songstress—which is why we exploded with happiness when we learned she was [creating a mini-collection for MAC Cosmetics](#). Finally, an opportunity to steal her groovy vampire beauty look!

Debuting online and in select stories on June 5, the limited-edition collaboration features a deep plum lipstick (\$16)—appropriately called "Pure Heroine," otherwise known as the name of her breakout album—and a liquid eye liner (\$19.50). All the better to perfect your [cat-eyes](#) with, my dear! (Brannaigan, 2013).

Link One – “musical prowess” – This links to a separate article, written by a Lucky writer, about Lorde’s Grammy acceptance speech. The bottom of this story invites you to follow Lorde on Twitter.

Link Two – “grounded attitude” – This links to a separate article about Lorde speaking out against digitally altering her images. She describes how two photographic images were released during one day, with one image being altered to show a more pleasing appearance.

Link Three – “low-maintenance hair care routine” – This links to an article outlining a question and answer session with Tavi Gevinson, listed as a “fashion and creative wunderkind” where the two “talk everything from haircare to Beyonce.”

Link Four – “creating a mini-collection for MAC” – This link to a separate *Lucky* article detailing the original announcement about the Lorde and MAC partnership.

Link Five – “cat eyes” – This links to an article featuring a slide show of “25 Ladylike Sunglasses.”

All of the aforementioned links connect the reader to pages under the *Lucky* umbrella. The only link that mentions another publication is Link Three, which also describes a longer version of this question and answer session being available in another publication, *Rookie*.

The end of the original article includes a direct quote from Lorde who says, “I have loved Mac Cosmetics since I was a little kid...MAC has a very clear aesthetic, that has always felt fashion-forward to me. So I was really excited to work with them on these products, which I use pretty much every day and night. I hope you will too.”

Following the quote, this page featured two stark photos of the MAC products in question, the Lorde lipstick and eyeliner used to create her signature cat eye look. As with all stories on the *Lucky* website, users are invited to Tweet it, Facebook Share It, and Pin It. Facebook self-reported that this article -- an article about an advertising campaign -- had 28 thumbs up, five retweets and 41 shares.

This particular example is indicative of the cross promotion and hypercommercialism *Lucky* is known for. First, this article features a young and popular female celebrity. As celebrities have supplanted models as the face of cosmetic companies, Lorde’s recent appearance

at the Grammy awards solidified her as an up-and-coming musical performer with a specific cross-over appeal in the beauty and fashion industries. While celebrity worship is certainly not new, *Lucky* manages to present celebrities as accessible role models, in this case one who also happens to have a distinct look that is easily commodified by MAC Cosmetics and that offers proof of her fashion leadership. The promotional benefit to Lorde is signaled by the shared product line/album name, “Pure Heroine,” a fact helpfully noted by the article. Second, the article is written by a *Lucky* staffer, but it is clearly promoting an advertising campaign. This type of announcement was previously reserved for industry or trade publications, not consumer publications, although such flattering profiles of advertising campaigns in popular and social media venues are increasingly part of modern consumer culture (McAllister, 2011). It provided a specific public relations opportunity for MAC; the chance to announce their new spokesperson and showcase the products, all without paying an advertising premium (although perhaps with the promise of advertising within the magazine). Moreover, *Lucky* does not attempt to masquerade the implied endorsement of this product line (“we exploded with happiness”). This is a recurring hallmark of the *Lucky* brand. Is the brand “cool enough” or “hip enough” to recommend it to a friend? *Lucky* is the ultimate shopping guide. Third, the multiple hyperlinks keep the reader engaged on the *Lucky* site. This delineates a recurring theme I will address throughout this dissertation. These social media sites and links are presented in a synergistic way, continuing to reify the messages set forth in the print edition. Moreover, the multiple hyperlinks present several options to the reader. Keep clicking and the experience continues. The ancillary articles support and reinforce Lorde’s position as a beauty authority and are in turn hyperlinked to other articles. Fourth, the article clearly invites the reader to mimic and recreate Lorde’s signature look and provides the information, and products, necessary for this transformation. This type of identity creation and multiplicity of choices is key to the faux empowerment presented via commodity feminism. Purchase this commodity, exercise your choice, and you can be

empowered, you can “steal her groovy vampire beauty look.” While MAC Cosmetics is considered a prestige brand, it is still a relatively affordable and accessible way to emulate a celebrity.

Olivia Wilde – Lucky magazine May, 2014 cover model

The second Facebook block I analyzed was May cover model/actress Olivia Wilde. Unlike the Lorde example, this particular Facebook block is a direct reference to that month’s print edition. In addition, Olivia Wilde is a well-known young celebrity, but not a superstar like Angelina Jolie or Anne Hathaway. This is reflective of the typical cover model – famous, but not too famous. I argue this supports *Lucky*’s overall mission and vision. In order for readers to “relate” to the celebrity featured, they must remain somewhat accessible to the masses. Wilde is also part of a “celebrity couple” with actor Jason Sudeikis.

This particular block is large, covering both columns horizontally across the screen and serving as a large banner promotion for that month’s issue. It showcases one photographic image of Wilde steering a yacht while wearing a stylish shawl over a swimsuit, with a link to an on-line slide show of eight images of Wilde in various outfits and the feature article. These photographic images are replicated in the print edition and the *Lucky* website. Next to each image, *Lucky* provides a list of products Wilde is wearing, their specific prices and a direct hyperlink to the company’s websites. Unlike the Lorde article, this page features a link to a “behind the scenes” interview with Wilde, conducted the day of the cover photo shoot. In addition, there is a Pinterest button, inviting the reader to “pin your favorites.” Facebook self-reports 123 thumbs up, 19 retweets and 35 shares. Furthermore, two readers have commented directly on this article.

The title of this feature article is “Olivia Wilde at her Most Outspoken,” credited to Leigh Belz Ray, listed as Deputy Editor of *Lucky*. It covers a wide array of topics that such profiles often include, such as historical references to the start of her career, a description of her physical appearance, and her recent pregnancy experiences, especially her pride at showing her “baby

bump” to the world. As expected, the article is also largely promotional in focus as well, beyond the promotion of Wilde herself. The article includes a mention that Wilde is a Revlon spokesperson, a description of her work with the non-profit group, “Artists for Peace and Justice,” (a group dedicated to raising money for medical care, education, and food and water programs in Haiti), her early fashion icons, her current favorite fashion brands, the celebrities she looks to for fashion sense (“a perfectly put-together Eva Longoria”), her skincare routine, and a mention of an upcoming film with actor Liam Neeson. While most fashion magazine feature stories are typically timed to coincide with a celebrity’s television, film or music release, this particular article also coincidentally coincided with the birth of Wilde’s first child. This provided additional media mentions when the actress and her partner announced the child’s birth via their Twitter feeds. While longer in length than the Lorde article, this feature story is still short by most magazine standards, less than 2,300 words. This has been a hallmark of *Lucky* magazine since its inception, cover stories that are universally flattering to the celebrity and relatively short in length. The digital presence of *Lucky* largely replicates what is presented in their print edition.

Like the Lorde article, the mention of the specific products, along with purchasing information, allows the reader to recreate Wilde’s look. Unlike the featured Lorde advertising campaign, Wilde is not a paid spokesperson for the brands mentioned, except for Revlon. An advertisement for Revlon is featured elsewhere in the print edition, as elaborated on that inclusion in the chapter dedicated to the textual and content analysis of the print edition.

TWITTER

Capture Day: June 12, 2014

URL: www.twitter.com/LuckyMagazine

The social media platform Twitter has become famous for its micro blogging in 140 characters or less. These posts, referred to as tweets, are made available through the cultivation of “followers.” Although users can make their Twitter profile private, most users post tweets that are available to anyone, even if that individual does not have a Twitter account (Keeline, 2013). Founded by Jack Dorsey, Twitter gained popularity in 2007 when visitors to the South by Southwest music and film festival in Austin, Texas used the site to post real-time reactions (Keeline, 2013). By 2011, Twitter had generated more than 300 million tweets and hosted more than 1.6 billion search queries daily (Keeline, 2013). Dorsey argues for the site name’s functional accuracy but also signals its brand appeal: “It was just perfect. The definition was a ‘short burst of inconsequential information,’ and ‘chirps from birds.’ And that’s exactly what the product was.” (Keeline, 2013). However, critics charge that Twitter has fostered a platform for sometimes banal and unnecessary observations. Furthermore, it provides an outlet for negative and abusive comments (Keeline, 2013). Celebrities have effectively used Twitter to promote themselves and also to “construct authenticity” by making posts seem to come directly from the celebrity rather than through a publicist; Twitter functionality such as replying and retweeting also seems to add to an air of direct communication from fans to celebrities (Marwick & Boyd, 2011). Similarly in terms of its promotional function, Twitter activity typically spikes during sporting or other pop culture events (Keeline, 2013).

Twitter is not without supporters. The real-time aspect of Twitter has been credited with being an effective and cost efficient way to cultivate grassroots activism, as evidenced by political uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt in 2010 and 2011; others, however, are hesitant to credit too much revolutionary potential to for-profit social media sites (Youmans & York, 2012).

As of June 12, 2014, *Lucky*'s Twitter feed lists the following information: 36,300 tweets since joining the site in August, 2008; 308,000 followers, 2,542 posted videos or photos; 178 favorites; and they follow 1,663 Twitter accounts. On the day of data collection, *Lucky* posted sixteen tweets to their followers. This reflects a typical day of activity for *Lucky*.

Of the 16 tweets analyzed, 11 provided a hyperlink to the *Lucky* web site. Those articles were relatively short in length, usually only a paragraph or two, and again invited the reader to retweet or post the links to their Facebook page. Of the remaining five tweets that day, one tweet included a link to *Lucky*'s Instagram page and another to its YouTube site, one asked the question to followers, "Who is currently your biggest style inspiration?"; one linked to the "Lucky Breaks" giveaway; and one linked to two other companies, @Essie, a nail polish company, and to @flowergirlnyc, a New York-based florist.

The first analyzed tweet mirrors the instructional or informative style of the print magazine's cover lines: "Summer Friday Style: What to wear to tomorrow's half day." This tweet was retweeted six times and favored six times. It is a link back to the *Lucky* website, which includes an accompanying photo and "how-to" article. Clearly, *Lucky* is attempting to provide a solution to a problem by offering a stylish and practical alternative for the reader but also, as noted earlier, driving readers back to their main web page.

The second analyzed tweet, "Style blogging has become a million dollar business" was retweeted 14 times and favored 17 times. The influence of fashion and beauty blogs continues to redefine the publishing industry. Interestingly, this article argues that many bloggers have cultivated a significant following and a few major players have been able to secure a six-figure income, a theme consistent with the postfeminist notion of agency through consumption (or, in this case, agency through writing about consumption). In this tweeted article, the dilemmas of blogger are framed as it being too lucrative, too much of a sellout. *Lucky*'s Associate Digital Editor Alison Syrett Cleary writes:

Even still, it can be frustrating to feel like a blogger is plugging something just for the paycheck—it doesn't seem genuine. That's one of the reasons why Rebecca Minkoff has cooled off on paying internet influencers for their support. This spring, she chose to gift a select few her new Perry Satchel instead, in hopes they'd post some pictures on Instagram. Calvin Klein, too, took this approach by launching its #mycalvins campaign by sending some of the biggest names in fashion some old-school CK undies. Whether the blogosphere's major players are being compensated in money, free clothing or trips, though, one thing's for certain: Instagramming, tweeting and posting outfit pictures has become a legitimate career. And as for whether that's worth paying someone nearly \$1,000,000 to do? That's completely up to you. So long as you want what these bloggers are wearing, brands will keep vying to get into their closets.

This particular tweet is germane for several reasons. First and foremost, a *Lucky* editor presents a somewhat vexing dilemma. The very nature of *Lucky* revolves around recommendations. The notion that blogging can potentially present a more direct line to a “paid” endorsement is viewed as disingenuous and problematic. Like product placement in film and television, the endorsement cannot be too obvious or it ceases to be meaningful and genuine. Moreover, some view fashion and beauty bloggers as direct competition to the established fashion journalism “old guard”. By offering a critical view of bloggers as inauthentic, *Lucky* is attempting to reinforce their position as a fashion authority. The message is a reader can turn to a blog, but *Lucky* has creditability and gravitas. This writer/editor does not shy away from the fact that blogging can be quite lucrative and if positioned strategically, can lead to the launch of a more comprehensive web presence. Syrett Cleary continues:

The most successful bloggers out there right now aren't well, *bloggers* anymore. Many of them, such as *The Man Repeller's* Leandra Medine and Emily Weiss of *Into The Gloss*, have parlayed what started as a personal website into a full-fledged online publication.

That means a good portion of their profits are more likely to go toward renting an office space and paying employees than toward Prada heels and PS1 bags. Because they're essentially mini start-ups, reinvesting is essential to growth.

Lucky, however, has established their reputation over the past decade and will continue to offer advice and shopping tips, via multiple platforms. Bloggers may come and go, but *Lucky* is a constant and consistent presence. Interestingly, though, the issue of exploitative or “aspirational” labor is not highlighted in the article. Fashion bloggers often engage in this activity hoping to be fairly compensated, but many are not, a trend that signals both the precarious status of “monetization” of labor in social media and gender inequalities, given that most fashion bloggers are women (Duffy, 2013). By highlighting the issue of “authenticity” rather than labor equity, *Lucky* also flatters their most social-media oriented fans who are active with *Lucky*'s various outlets (such as those who went to the article from this tweet) but receive no compensation for their participation, thus avoiding the danger of “plugging something just for the paycheck.”

Another tweet features a photo of breakthrough reality star Kim Kardashian and her new baby daughter, North West. The accompanying photo credit lists Kardashian's own Instagram account. The editorial copy explains that this photo, featuring Kardashian, husband Kanye West and daughter North, is from their recent wedding celebration. Kardashian includes the caption, “My everything.” While not directly supporting a shopping directive, this photo is reflective of the celebrity culture that *Lucky* endorses. Certainly Kardashian has been branded a “wanna be celebrity” by some, and highly influential pop culture figure by others, but she arguably is also a brand herself with many Kim Kardashian product lines (TV shows, books, perfume, clothing), as is her musician-husband West. In this way, her inclusion in *Lucky*'s Twitter feed integrates well with its brand focus. But her status as a celebrity (B-List? C-List?) is still controversial. When Kardashian was featured on the cover of Condé Nast's sister publication *Vogue* in April, 2014, Editor-in-Chief Anna Wintour was criticized for stooping so low as to put a reality star on the

cover of the renowned and respected fashion magazine. To combat any negative rumors about the collaboration, Wintour wrote a preemptive editor's letter in the issue. Wintour writes:

Part of the pleasure of editing *Vogue*, one that lies in a long tradition of this magazine, is being able to feature those who define the culture at any given moment, who stir things up, whose presence in the world shapes the way it looks and influences the way we see it. I think we can all agree on the fact that that role is currently being played by Kim and Kanye to a T. (Or perhaps that should be to a K?) As for the cover, my opinion is that it is both charming and touching, and it was, I should add, entirely our idea to do it; you may have read that Kanye begged me to put his fiancée on *Vogue's* cover. He did nothing of the sort. The gossip might make better reading, but the simple fact of the matter is that it isn't true.

Vogue's defense of Kardashian thus evokes empowerment as a justification for her cover placement: she has "created a place for herself in the glare of the world's spotlight" (with the help of being born in a wealthy family, however). This mindset is also reflected in the pages, and social media sites, of *Lucky*. This tweet is symbolic of the reader's continued interest regarding any morsel of information about this packaged celebrity/reality star and former *Lucky* magazine cover model. Moreover, Kardashian in particular is present in many of the analyzed social media sites covered in this chapter. This further speaks to the blurring of lines between actress/celebrity/model/reality star. While some of that coverage was undoubtedly driven by the recent media interest in her marriage and this particular retweeted image constructing her motherhood could be a softened version of her image, it is clear that Kardashian represents an aspirational narrative to the *Lucky* reader.

Another *Lucky* tweet declares, "You can now customize your very own Fendi Baguette." The Fendi Baguette handbag was popular during the 1990s, shown frequently on *Sex and the City*, and has recently been reintroduced. The tweet is linked both to Fendi's Twitter feed and to

a story at the *Lucky* website. *Lucky's* Associate Digital Features Editor Hilary George-Parkin writes there:

What better blank canvas is there than a Fendi Baguette? The diminutive handbag has played host to more than a thousand different designs since it was launched in 1997, from sorbet-colored sequins to psychedelic fringe—many of which famously landed on the arms of Sarah Jessica Parker and her *Sex and the City* alter ego, Carrie Bradshaw. Now, the company has opened the floor up to its fans to create the next generation of styles with its myBaguette app, launching today for Android and iPad. The app allows users to custom-design their own handbag from start to finish with the aid of an impressive array of tools, colors, and—Instagram addicts, take heed—even photo filters.

After you've made your masterpiece and blasted it out to your social-sphere, you can upload the image to the community gallery, where it will be available to view alongside other users' creations. Every month, Sylvia Venturini Fendi, the brand's creative director, will select one design as "Baguette of the Month"—a high honor indeed from the handbag's original creator.

This tweet and its linked story is telling for several reasons. First, a Fendi handbag, which can retail for thousands of dollars, is clearly not part of the usual *Lucky* shopping experience. Priced far out of reach for the average reader, a Fendi bag is considered a luxury purchase. Advertisements and editorial mentions of Fendi bags would more likely be featured in an upscale publication like *Vogue*. However, this article is promoting an application, not the actual bag. When used correctly, this app will allow for the virtual creation of a bag. The message is, if you cannot afford the real bag, you can create a virtual one; in fact, you can create and “blast out” “your masterpiece.” It thus plugs into the same “produserly” sense of empowerment that social media claim to offer (and is referred to specifically in the article: “Instagram addicts take heed”). It also reinforces the postfeminism identity creation seen

throughout *Lucky's* social media sites. Aspirational buying is a critical part of commodity feminism. Buy the commodity, buy the associated identity. In this case, the associated identity is claimed through the creating of a virtual commodity, one that Fendi and Lucky can tout as a contest and as a creative activity. Furthermore, it also promotes the communal experience by encouraging users to share your creation on other social media sites. As seen earlier, the tropes of *Sex and the City* as a key consumption marker and the casual endorsement of consumer “addiction” also calls back to similar tropes on Facebook and throughout *Lucky's* branding.

As seen from these examples, the Twitter feed largely supports and reinforces much of the branded content available on the other social media sites. This continues to be a recurring theme in *Lucky* magazine. These multiple channels allow for a constant reminder of the hypercommercial messages.

PINTEREST

Capture Day: June 18, 2014

URL: www.Pinterest.com/luckymagazine/

Pinterest offers a new level of engagement for the *Lucky* reader. Designed to replicate a virtual bulletin board, readers are invited to “pin” or save their favorites images based on preselected criteria which allows for a hyper-customized experience. The pinning of images of things on Pinterest, including commodities such as fashion and celebrity looks, and the site’s easy search protocols, also complements *Lucky's* mission. Moreover, the site segues well with *Lucky's* reader demographics; 83% of global users are women; one writer described the typical Pinterest user as “hyperengaged young women in their prime buying years” (Roose, 2013). Industry studies have shown that Pinterest is more effective at driving sales than other forms of social media and Pinterest users are more likely to engage in e-commerce (Roose, 2013). In addition, many businesses have also migrated to Pinterest with its catalog-like display and ease of use.

Pinterest also asks for continued viewer involvement as the user is allowed to follow certain boards and pinners, and comment on images. Pinterest is thus seen as also very advertising friendly. In May 2014 it began accepting advertising (called “promoted pins”), and was valued at that time at \$5 billion (Roose, 2013).

Pinterest will modify and customize users’ home page to reflect their selected interests. While pinning the desired images, Pinterest will then present the user additional suggestions. Subsequent suggestions will also be emailed to the user. This researcher found the dizzying array of options to be at times overwhelming and engrossing. Once a user begins selecting their board categories, the choices of possible images are endless. In addition, once users determine that a particular board shares similar themes, they can then analyze *those* images as well. A user can also search for friends via their Facebook and Twitter friend/follower lists. It can appear to be a virtual black hole for the novice user.

Since Pinterest operates as a specific space for identity creation, *Lucky* and other promoters strive to be a key source for such creation for users. Not only are users invited to view *Lucky*’s preselected images, they can also pin images directly from the magazine, and other web sites, if desired. Moreover, users can arrange and organize these images in a myriad of ways. One can name and design particular boards, mix the images with other fashion photographs, share the images with your followers and comment on individual pins. Unlike Facebook, which focuses on a predetermined and screened list of friends, family members and co-workers, much of Pinterest’s sharing occurs between strangers but strangers who share the same interests, often focused on particular kinds of commodities or consumption. This virtual community is built on the concept of shared interests. When I find a user whose pins I find desirable, I can choose to follow their boards. Pinterest also frequently sends their users email recommending possible pins they might like. In addition, users have the option of including a link to their blog or website,

listing their physical location, and uploading a photo. (If a follower is threatening or abusive, a user can request to have that person blocked.)

While Twitter focuses on the brevity of the written message, Pinterest privileges the visual image. This emphasis on the visual is the perfect synergistic fit for fashion publications. Since many of these images have already been reproduced in the print publication, Pinterest allows for additional exposure at little or no additional cost. Furthermore, it continues to encourage the hypercustomization and personalization. Users can get quite specific in their search requests; “red leather vintage handbags,” for instance. This focus on the individual commodity also reinforces the “wish list” mentality. As a user, I do not have to do anything with the images once they are pinned; I can gaze upon my carefully constructed boards or do nothing at all.

On the day of data collection, June 18, 2014, Pinterest reported the following information regarding *Lucky*. It lists 131,285 followers, 27 boards, 12,740 pins, 190 likes; Lucky in turn is following 497 other Pinterest boards. The tagline at the top of the screen reads “These are a few of our favorite things.” This particular line reinforces the highly personal, customized nature of both *Lucky* magazine and Pinterest. The reader is reminded that these choices are special and worthy of attention (although the “our” could refer both to the magazine staff as a collection, but also, *Lucky* no doubt hopes, a collective “we” that involves *Lucky* and *Lucky* readers/fans).

One particular block includes the subhead of “*Lucky* Girls” with 34 pins. The June/July cover model Miranda Kerr is featured prominently on the left. In addition, May cover model Olivia Wilde is featured in pins further down the page. Reinforcing the visual images presented in the print and on-line editions, Pinterest presents one larger image of Wilde with four smaller images focusing on four individual products. This allows for the reader to pin (and covet) each item in order to complete Wilde’s look.

Another board features the label “Bag Lust.” The tagline lists 922 pins and 96,956 followers. The headline, “bag lust,” is clearly invoking sexualized fetishism and once again highlights the desirability (so to speak) of extreme consumptive behavior. In addition, the isolation of the product (s) also invokes a catalog-like layout and presentation. No model is featured in several of the photos; therefore it is an invitation to project oneself into the space. Tying in with Twitter, many of the pins feature images with the tag of “Customize your own Fendi Bag with the mybaguette app.” But unlike on Twitter, on Pinterest one can “try on” the identity associated with a high-end bag, with absolutely no cost involved. This is a new category of shopping: “virtual commodity acquisition,” facilitated by the playful and nonthreatening environment of the app and pin. Furthermore, Pinterest offers an intriguing blend of the familiarity of Facebook and anonymity of Twitter. One can follow, comment and interact with anyone who shares their interests and pins. The hyper-specificity of Pinterest also encourages extended visits on the site. One can create a board with a topic as esoteric as “watch fobs” and as broad as “European travel.” A user can customize this experience to their every whim and desire.

Furthermore, Pinterest has recently become even more user friendly. Many catalog and retail web sites now include the small red Pinterest link in the upper left corner of their posted image, including stories on the *Lucky* website. A user can then seamlessly click on the link and pin the image without even having the Pinterest site open. This process is very user friendly, and very fast, thereby encouraging continued engagement.

TUMBLR

Capture Day: June 25, 2014

URL: luckymag/Tumblr.com

Tumblr was founded in 2007 by David Karp and is currently owned by Yahoo. This microblogging platform allows users to post content to a short-form blog. In addition, users can

follow others. Much of the data and images can be accessed through the user's "dashboard." A dashboard is a live, real time feed of the blogs a user follows. Users can then comment and like posts. In addition, a user can post media content to their own blogs. Furthermore, a user can link their Tumblr blog to their Twitter and Facebook accounts. Like Twitter, users can include a hash tag in order to tag images in regards to their content. Tumblr self-reports the following information in reference to their entire readership: 188.5 million blogs and 83.1 billion posts. As of June 1, 2014, over 90 million posts were created on the site daily. (Tumblr.com/press. retrieved June 1, 2014).

Similar in style and content to Pinterest, Tumblr showcases multiple images with links to the *Lucky* website. *Lucky's* Tumblr home page welcomes users with "Here you will find bits of inspiration from our editors, bloggers and friends. Join us on your lunch hour, a rainy day or whenever you have a few spare moments to yourself. We're always here." The comforting words offer a relaxing and welcoming virtual experience. If the user has a few minutes or a few hours, she/he can peruse Tumblr at their leisure.

The *Lucky* Tumblr page features the cover of the latest issue on the right, and links to other social media on the top. On capture day, the first posted image -- a large image of "30 Perfect June Outfits" -- includes an active link to the *Lucky* web site that draws the clicker into a vortex of *Lucky*-branded consumption. The featured outfit is a colorful, floral print jumpsuit, complemented with a long necklace, metallic sandals, handbag and sunglasses. Clicking on the image takes the user to the other twenty-nine outfits on *Lucky's* website ("one for each day of the month, and their shoppable counterparts, too!"). This image, the accompanying article and other 29 June-associated images is reflective of the consumer "choice" postfeminist rhetoric that *Lucky* employs: "As one of the year's most consistent months weather-wise, June provides each and every woman with her own particular style uniform...." The reader has clearly turned to *Lucky* magazine as the source for information about "shopping and style." This article clearly fulfills

that mission and vision. However this very notion of perfection is perhaps one of the most problematic aspects of all fashion magazines and fashion advertisements. In order to achieve this mythical idea, one must keep purchasing products. Fashion is certainly one of the most obvious modes of self-expression. These intersections with the themes of empowerment present in postfeminism create a specific dilemma for the *Lucky* reader. While there are some examples of resistance on *Lucky's* social media sites, the vast majority of the content reinforces the hypercommercial aspect of this brand of consumerism. As I discuss in the analysis of Instagram, some viewers took issue with the possible inclusion of digitally-altered image images. While this can be expected, given the viewer's contemporary understanding of digital reproduction, it was still a rare occurrence during my data collection. In addition, I found no examples of resistance as it relates to consumerism, product acquisition or identity creation.

Posted on June 24, 2014, the next block features a stark photograph of gold cocktail ring featuring clear crystals priced at an affordable thirty dollars. "A Nautical Jewelry collaboration we are loving right now," the copy reads. Again, this link connects the reader back to the *Lucky* website. The headline exudes, "We've Just Discovered The Nautical Jewelry Collab Of Our Dreams—And Everything's Under \$40!" The story continues,

We've been following BaubleBar's stellar social media director Grace Atwood since she joined the jewelry e-commerce giant (as its fifth hire ever!) more than three years ago. As our resident DIY expert and go-to fashion blogger (find her at Stripes & Sequins!), Atwood's long been making us swoon with her personal style—jewelry, of course, included. Today, BaubleBar launched a brand-new collection inspired by—what else?—Atwood's life: from a bracelet inspired by her years growing up on Cape Cod to a necklace based on an antique from her grandmother's jewelry box, the collaboration is as fresh as it is classic. But with BaubleBar, what else would you expect? Click through the

slideshow above to shop BaubleBar's new capsule collection with Stripes & Sequins' Grace Atwood.

This example features a relatively unknown site, BaubleBar, and their "stellar social media director Grace Atwood." Atwood's aesthetic is presented as being both fresh and classic, a perfect fit for the *Lucky* reader. Moreover, the description is highly complimentary, a virtual ringing endorsement for this brand. It encourages shopping as means to celebrate Atwood's designs, which are inspired by her grandmother's designs. The jewelry is also introduced as a capsule collection, a small but carefully culled selection of items available for a limited time period only. The language style of the article also flatters the reader with insider-sounding, jargon ("collab") as well as insider information about the "social media director," information that again would in the past have been seen in trade journals. That the article also evokes enthusiasm -- "making us swoon"; the liberal use of exclamation points -- is another example of *Lucky*'s hybridity: insider access of a trade journal combined with the breathless style of a fan magazine.

YOUTUBE

Capture Day: June 25, 2014

URL: www.youtube.com/user/LuckyMagazine

YouTube, the video-sharing site, was founded in February, 2005 by Chad Hurley, Steve Chen and Jawed Karim. It rose in popularity quickly; by the end of 2005, YouTube web pages were visited 50 million times daily. Like other social media sites, YouTube allows users to post content for mass distribution. Search engine Google acquired YouTube in 2006 (Fundukian, 2012). However, saddled with problematic copyright and distribution issues, YouTube still has not been successful in effectively monetizing the site and, as of 2012, has yet to turn a profit (Fundukian, 2012). However, as a promotional venue, YouTube was quickly adopted by brands

who use the site to create coherently branded “channels” to post promotional videos which include television commercials, “behind-the-scenes” access to events, and “the making of” features about the creation promotional texts such as television commercials (McAllister, 2011).

Lucky magazine has its own YouTube channel, with 5,477 subscribers. Subscribers are especially loyal fans of *Lucky*, since this means that they have to register with YouTube and choose *Lucky* as a source for videos on their personal version of YouTube when they login. *Lucky* videos also will be viewed by many more visitors who are not subscribers. The *Lucky* channel also includes links to Google+, Instagram and Pinterest.

One strong theme in many of the promotional videos is the promise of “behind the scenes” or special access to *Lucky*. This includes background on features that appear in the magazine or interviews/tutorials of key members of *Lucky* editorial staff. For example, the first video featured is that of behind-the-scenes footage of that month’s cover shoot: “Behind the Scenes with Miranda Kerr” lists 10,914 views. The video was posted four weeks prior and runs an allotted time of two minutes and thirteen seconds. The copy reads: “Model Miranda Kerr takes us behind the scenes of her cover shoot with *Lucky* magazine and shares some of her favorite summer activities, foods and advice on staying grounded.”

This video is indicative of the representation *Lucky* is known for: the friendly, accessible celebrity cover model (although the photo shoot location is a very opulent luxury beach resort). The footage features Kerr posing for photographs that were later used in the magazine’s print edition. In addition, she is also shown in the same outfit I analyzed previously in the Instagram section. These images are intercut with interview footage where she reveals her preferences. Many are generic: “Swimming in the ocean,” is her favorite summertime activity; “fresh papaya,” is her favorite summertime food; “You should wear something that you feel really comfortable and confident in” on a first date; and her go-to summertime outfit is a “vintage maxi dress.” Others are more branded; The Beatles “Here Comes the Sun” is her favorite song. Her advice is

offered in a friendly manner, as if Kerr was the viewer's best girlfriend, as opposed to a celebrity cover model at a photo shoot. However, the visuals sometimes betray her casual, down-to-earth advice: while saying "you should wear something comfortable," the camera pans along rows of high-end shoes, outfits, and jewelry. As she talks about drinking water and "putting her feet in the grass" to get over jet lag, one resource that she has that most visitors do not is the Porsche (with the logo shot in close-up) she gets into as part of the photo shoot.

Another video is emblematic of *Lucky's* focus on shopping as is indicated by the straightforward title of the video, "*Lucky's* Managing Editor Goes Shopping In Brooklyn, NY.". By July 7, 2014, this video had 489 views and 15 likes. The copy reads, "Caryn Prime, *Lucky* magazine's managing editor, visits some of her favorite spots in Park Slope, Brooklyn including A. Cheng and Bhomki for print dresses and also Blok Hill for jeans." Park Slope, a gentrified neighborhood, is an ideal site for this shopping excursion. Prime is not visiting high-end boutiques on the Upper East Side, rather she is shown shopping at small boutiques that sell products that *Lucky* readers should covet. The video features her interacting with the merchandise while offering editorial comments on the perfect dark washed denim and pant length. Even though the viewer may never visit Brooklyn, this video is the perfect "virtual" excursion. Moreover, it contributes to the postfeminist identity creation discussed previously in this dissertation. Choice and empowerment are implied in this shopping experience. The editor-shopper tells the viewer about one venue, "I recently bought this dress here, and every time I wear it I get compliments, superduper flattering..." Moreover, YouTube also offers moving pictures. While many of the aforementioned sites can offer the user the opportunity to fetishize the commodity, YouTube offers a more filmic experience to celebrate and instruct about a process: choosing the right commodities in retail settings. It is still personal as Prime is shown speaking directly to the viewer. Perceived intimacy, the hallmark of parasocial interaction, is implied in many of the informal and personal methods of communication utilized by *Lucky*.

Another featured video, running over 5 minutes, is titled, “A Day with Eva Chen: Condé Nast’s Youngest Editor-in-Chief”; YouTube self-reports 4,241 views and 79 thumbs up. Here again the viewer is given a purported insider view. Articulate and personable, Chen explains her early career success at *Harper’s Bazaar* and *Teen Vogue*. In addition, the viewer is told that Chen integrates social media activity into daily life. On her way to work, Chen will post a tweet and post images on Instagram. She is never too far away from her identity as fashion authority. During the interview, a graphic appears on the screen which announces Chen’s financial compensation. The copy declares that \$108,900 is the average salary for an editor. This graphic is not explained, nor referenced again in the interview. Chen goes on to explain that media depictions of fashion editors in films like *The Devil Wears Prada* are largely stereotypical and do not reflect her personal reality. She then explains that she values her virtual connection with readers. Chen announces she posts pictures of beauty products she has previously used and is interested in hearing the feedback from followers. Interestingly, Chen also potentially relinquishes her position as fashion authority when she asserts that “our reader doesn’t want to be told last season’s jacket is out.” The *Lucky* reader is presented as being too sensible, and pragmatic, for such advice. In addition, Chen explains she personally mixes her fashion choices; her wardrobe consists of a mix of both “high and low fashion.” She concludes by espousing the importance of the ever-changing fashion industry as “digital informs fashion in a new way.” This narrative continues with the statement, “We are always changing, always developing what the reader wants.”

This video is a compelling media artifact for several reasons. First and foremost, *Lucky* is attempting to brand Chen as the approachable, affable, and youthful fashion and beauty authority. Her youth is referenced in the title card of the video and in a screen announcement during the interview. Chen’s relatively low salary is presented as evidence that she is like the *Lucky* reader, an ambitious career girl trying to make it in New York City. Second, her

description of social media use reifies its importance in *Lucky's* overall mission and vision. If Chen is texting, tweeting and Instagramming during the cab ride while traveling to the office, clearly social media is the medium that never sleeps. *Lucky* certainly has taken social media hybridity to an elevated stature and serves as a model for its social-media savvy readers. Chen concludes by reinforcing yet again the importance and influence of digital integration. Third, her pronouncement that the *Lucky* reader doesn't want to be told last season's jacket is out" solidifies *Lucky's* position as the shopping source while also flattering the reader with their agency over content (and the insider access the video offers). In short, the reader does not have to purchase this season's jacket, but *Lucky* will show her how it can work with a brand new pair of sandals.

The Editor in Chief is featured in several videos that promote *Lucky* and its partners, emphasize both special access to her consumer preferences as well as background about her as a professional, serving to position the viewer to both be tutored in shopping and style and to identity with her as a shopping and promotional professional. Other titles include "100 Perfect Outfits: Eva Chen's Style Inspirations," and "A Peek Inside Eva Chen's Closet: Moto Jackets."

INSTAGRAM

Capture Day: June 25, 2014

URL: [Instagram/luckymagazine](https://www.instagram.com/luckymagazine)

The mobile-photo and video-sharing platform Instagram was launched in October, 2010 and is now owned by Facebook. Like Twitter and other social media, it is heavily promotional and an established part of celebrity culture.

Instagram self-reports that on the day of data collection, the Instagram *Lucky* page has 2,694 posts, 182,997 followers and that the page is following 888 others on Instagram. Like Pinterest and Tumblr, Instagram is heavy on photos images and light on editorial copy. The first *Lucky* image features a photograph of a model wearing a cinched red sweater, over a bikini top,

paired with a light blue skirt. The copy reads: “So retro-sexy @angelcandices wears a printed bikini and crop top with a full aquamarine skirt (from @assos!) in our June/July issue. Photographed by Patrick Demarchelier.” This image has 2,155 likes and helpfully links to both the Twitter account of both the celebrity-model -- Candice Swanepoel is a famous Victoria’s Secret model, hence the double-promotional Twitter handle that combines her name and “[Victoria’s Secret] Angel” -- and clothing brand she is wearing. It is the only image that listed as being posted on June 25, 2014. The page, however, featured scores of additional photos posted on earlier days. In sharp contrast to the highly promotional copy evident on other sites, this particular image has generated several negative comments. Like Facebook and Pinterest, Instagram allows users to post comments. This particular image has proven to be fertile ground for resistance to the hegemonic ideals set forth in fashion magazines. Viewers speculate that the image has been digitally altered. One poster comments: “I agree with the photoshop comments, her shoulders look huge compare to the waist that was edited just below the boobs. It doesn't even look human.” Another poster observes, “The majority of her right boob isn’t even attached to her rib cage. Hmm.” “I don’t believe it’s photoshop, just the way she’s standing/leaning,” another protests. Yet another poster offers this observation, “It could be the way the sleeves are cut, but my initial thought was photoshop fail. I think the extra material in the armpit area makes it awkward.”

Clearly these readers have been exposed to the frequent debates surrounding the use of digital alteration in photographs. Readers today are savvy regarding the endless possibilities in reproduction. These comments indicate that some readers believe that the model’s waist and torso appears to be out of proportion with the rest of her body. While the traditional mode of resistance has historically been seen in the letters to the editor section, these on-line comments provide real-time feedback. In addition, the community aspect of on-line comments allows for a dialogue and debate among the viewers.

Another posted image offers participation and inclusion to the viewer. This block lists 1,195 likes. The copy announces, “Our reader #regram of the week comes from @beautylookbook. Tag your *Lucky* pics @luckymagazine and you too may be spotlighted on our Instagram.” In this case, the *Lucky* page promises the possibility of an officially posted “regram” to readers who not just submit photos, but do so in a way that successfully mimics the consumption style of *Lucky*. But also in this case, “beautylookbook” is not an average reader, but an example of a fashion blogger mentioned earlier, with a benefit of being “regrammed” to implicitly endorse and promote the blog. The photographic image features that month’s cover along with beauty products from Chanel and Nars. These products are placed next to a pair of sunglasses and a bouquet of pink flowers. One user comments, “Beautiful layout.” This particular image reinforces the catalog nature of *Lucky* magazine, while offering an aspirational narrative to the reader. While she may not be able to afford a Chanel dress, a Chanel face cream might be a bit more accessible. In addition, these products are positioned in a highly-idealized presentation, thereby continuing to fetishize the commodity featured.

Another image is that of cover model/actress Miranda Kerr, tying in with the same *Lucky* photo feature and interviews discussed earlier with Pinterest and YouTube. Kerr is featured sitting down, wearing a summer dress and sunglasses. Her head is tilted slightly in a provocative pose. The copy reads, “June/July outtake. Poolside with @mirandakerr.” Posted comments are complimentary and effusive, and indicate the effectiveness of promoting both Kerr as a celebrity and commodities she is displaying. One visitor comments, “I absolutely love her.” Another writes, “Chic! Love the hat.” When another comments that they “love these sunglasses,” another responds, “Ooh nice! I want them.” This last comment is reminiscent of previous print editions of *Lucky* which featured “I want it” adhesive tabs for the magazine’s pages, where readers were asked to mark the pages which featured desired items. Whether coincidental or not, it reflects the

individualist neo-liberal orientation of consumer culture; this interaction between viewer and commodity also reinforces the aspirational narrative advanced by *Lucky* on all platforms.

ETSY

Capture Date: June 25, 2014

URL: www.Etsy.com/pages/luckymag

Etsy, headquartered in Brooklyn, New York, is an on-line marketplace emphasizing handmade products like jewelry, art, cosmetics and house wares. Founded in 2005 by Robert Kalin, Etsy's stated mission is to "enable people to make a living making things, and to reconnect makers with buyers" (Dinger, 2011). Etsy serves 5 million buyers and sellers in more than 150 countries. Revenue is generated when individuals sell their items on the site and Etsy retains a percentage of the total amount sold (Dinger, 2011). It is thus both a promotional and an e-commerce site with a visual emphasize that complements *Lucky's* mission well.

Etsy self-reports that *Lucky's* page has 106,289 followers. It also features an active link to the *Lucky* web site. With a layout similar to both Pinterest and Instagram, the *Lucky* magazine Etsy page features 24 thematic photographic blocks with individual sub heads. On the day of data collection, some of these sub heads included "Friendship Bracelets," "Summer Show Stoppers," and "Edgy-Cool Ear Cuffs." Clicking on the above takes users to pages with several photo-linked examples of specific small-retailers; clicking on a retailer then displays their particular wears where a visitor may purchase the displayed item. In this way, literally hundreds (maybe thousands) of individual products are featured, and for sale, on *Lucky's* Etsy page.

Lucky chooses its Etsy images to converge with features about these commodities on their website. A link to the *Lucky* website is provided for each block. When clicked, the "Ear

Cuffs” link takes the viewer to the *Lucky* webpage slide show featuring thirteen ear cuffs. *Lucky* writer Hillary Daniels writes:

We may be running around snapping behind-the-scenes shots and oogling at our favorite New York Fashion Week street style, but that won't keep us from sharing one of our newest editor obsessions—ear cuffs! According to our accessories editor Melissa Lum, ‘An ear cuff is an easy way to make a punk statement—without having to actually get a ton of piercings. I’d wear a single sparkly crystal design to a dressy cocktail party or mix a metal style with my other earrings for a more relaxed, casual look.’ Click through the slideshow above to see a couple of Melissa's favorites—as well as a few of our own, all of which we found on Etsy. (Because if you're going to make a statement, you might as well be original!)

The copy is personal, non-threatening, and offer accessible, mainstream solutions to the reader’s possible fashion dilemmas: punk without piercing. Or in this case, the article perhaps creates a fashion dilemma: the “newest” “obsession” with ear cuffs!

Unlike many of the other sites analyzed in this chapter, this platform allows the reader an opportunity to actually acquire the commodity. The e-commerce nature of Etsy makes it specifically qualified to serve the *Lucky* reader. Like the other content detailed previously, *Lucky* provides seamless integration with their Etsy’s listings. While not necessarily featured in the print edition, these items still clearly fit the mission and vision of *Lucky*.

However, unlike the clean and spare presentation of Pinterest and Tumblr, Etsy’s site is a visual jumble of images. This particular presentation is reminiscent of a poorly designed catalog, intent on featuring multiple items on every page. A plethora of images implies a multitude of choices, but the viewer must wade through many blocks of listings to potentially reach one desired purchase. When one clicks to the list of retailers, at the bottom of the page is “More Lists by *Lucky* Magazine” such as “Stationary Finds” and “Personalized Jewelry.” Fortunately, then,

the links to *Lucky*'s shopping advice coordinated with the Etsy jumble of images serves as a guide.

FOURSQUARE

Capture Day: July 2, 2014

URL: www.foursquare.com/luckymag

Owned by Google, the Foursquare app/site allows the user to “check-in” with friends at a variety of physical (not virtual) locations. Launched in 2009 by founders Dennis Crowley and Naveen Selvadurai, Foursquare is a location-based social network site, primarily geared to mobile services. Using GPS functionality, Foursquare locates the user and announces his/her location (Kincaid, 2009). It also encourages sharing on Twitter and Facebook, so that your friends on those sites may know where you have “checked in.” The site also rewards location diversity and loyalty: those who visit different sites may be rewarded “badges” and those who return to the same site several times can even be designated a “mayor” of a location. As would be logically inferred, for-profit retail spaces have especially embraced Foursquare. Marrying promotion, shopping, and surveillance, this site allows users to search for nearby dining, entertainment and cultural attractions. In addition, this app is also individualized for each featured city.

For *Lucky*, the linkage to physical shopping site again adds another social media niche to their brand. The link to Foursquare is available at the bottom of *Lucky*'s main web page. *Lucky*'s Foursquare main page self-reports that they have 210,597 followers. *Lucky* has fully embraced the logic and language of Foursquare. The copy reads: “Shop Your city with *Lucky* and Foursquare. Shop where *Lucky* editors shop and get exclusive insider tips and deals! Plus: Visit our favorites and you'll unlock the *Lucky* Elite Shopper badge.” The *Lucky* Foursquare page features hundreds of retail and location-based event photographs and well over 1,000 “tips” about location-specific consumption. Consistent with the logic of Foursquare, the tips are arranged by

location and feature quotes from *Lucky* magazine about each. About one gift shop in San Francisco, for example, *Lucky* magazine writers promise another problem solved through consumption: “The colorful selection of initial pillows, forget-me-knot rings and Bourbon perfume oil means you never have to give another boring housewarming (or hostess, or just-because) gift again.” At the bottom of the Foursquare page are “*Lucky* Magazine Lists,” or links to *Lucky* stories that are especially location-based: one is titled “Our ‘Young Guns Favorite Shops in NYC.’”

Lucky has been partnering with Foursquare since at least 2010. Once tech writer described their cross-promoting initiative:

In time for New York Fashion Week, Foursquare and *Lucky* are partnering to allow Foursquare users who are attending the event (show-goers, party-goers, designers, etc) with tips for the best places for a cocktail, WiFi, coffee, etc, near all show locations. So if you check into a show location on Foursquare, *Lucky* will give people tips on where to go near these big venues in-between shows. Each location will be hand-picked and recommended by *Lucky* editors. But the meat of the partnership is in a long-term deal where Foursquare users can check into stores in *Lucky*’s coveted “Shopping Directory,” which includes nearly 700 stores in 30 states and 72 cities, and earn the “*Lucky*” badge. Once users check-in to a *Lucky* recommended store, users can read tips from *Lucky* editors about each boutique or store. The idea is to give users editorial insider scoop, a.k.a. incentives, to check-in. Users who check-in to these boutiques may also receive discounts and or deals at some locations. *Lucky*’s long-term strategy is compelling; they want to co-sponsor “boutique crawls” (similar in idea to pub crawls) for users to earn deals and badges (<http://techcrunch.com/2010/02/12/foursquare-gets-lucky-magazine/>). *Lucky* thus uses its connection with Foursquare to promise special deals and direct users to “favorites” (which of course means their promotional partners). But the logic of the

“elite shopper badge” encourages if not spending, then at least visiting several retail sites where spending may occur: badges are won when the *Lucky* Foursquare user reaches critical mass of the sanctioned *Lucky* retail sites. The idea of the Foursquare facilitated “boutique crawl” evokes once again the language of excess (using the “bar crawl” drinking metaphor) and implies a group activity. Taking their on-line interactivity to this level promises that *Lucky* readers can truly engage in the communal shopping experience and achieve an elite status.

Like Pinterest, this strategy allows both interactivity and sharing. Moreover, it reinforces the position as fashion authority. The editors have already laid the groundwork for the reader; they have already discovered the cool shopping haunts and they are sharing this information with you, the *Lucky* reader.

GOOGLE+

Capture Day: June 30, 2014

URL: www.plus.google.com/+LuckyMagazine/about?hl=en

The large social networking site Google+ is that company’s competitor to Facebook, but also touts a range of authoring tools for users. As a part of the Google empire, it is designed to seamlessly interface with other Google properties such as Gmail and YouTube. The *Lucky* Google+ site self-reports 560,967 followers with 2,668,363 views. The copy reads: “*Lucky*, the award-winning magazine about shopping and style, showcases what to wear and how to wear it, making fashion and beauty fun and accessible. For the latest news from *Lucky*, log on to www.luckymag.com.” In addition, this page includes the tagline that reinforces the brand: “The magazine about shopping and style.” The layout and overall presentation of material on this site is quite similar to Facebook and Tumblr. Privileging the photographic image, there is very little type. The four main headers are “About,” “Posts,” “Photos,” and “YouTube.”

Under the tab “Posts” there are blocks of photographs, each with their own sub head, a space for comments, an opportunity to share the posts with others, and opportunity to “like” each individual post. A post on the right hand side of the page reads, “Hump Day treat – This Marc Jacobs satchel we’ve been drooling over is over 50% off! Because where there’s a sale, there’s a way.” The block also includes a small photograph of the bag, a small, brown leather satchel. Posted on May 28, 2014, this item has 11 likes and one share.

This particular example is emblematic of the language of resolve and problem-solving that is evident in shopping rhetoric. When a user clicks on the image of the handbag, they are redirected back to the luckymag.com website. Headlined, “Hump Day Treat: This Marc Jacobs Satchel We've Been Drooling Over Is Over 50 Percent Off!,” the copy there is as follows:

Wednesday is called Hump Day for a reason: you're at the peak of being tired from the work week, but the weekend is still just so far away. Treat yourself to a little Hump Day surprise because, well, you deserve it! This Marc Jacobs Resort 2014 satchel is over 50 percent off...and if that isn't a great deal, what is? Its shape is endlessly versatile, thanks to that top handle and long strap, which make it perfect for cross-body wear.

Mini Metropolitan Leather and Suede Perforated Bag, \$750 (was \$1,495),

ModaOperandi.com

A prominent image of the purse is on both the Google+ and *Lucky* webpage; Moda Operandi is an online retail space where one may buy the satchel (and other high fashion items). Clearly shopping is about choice; postfeminist shopping is presented as the ultimate expression and reward of the “you deserve it” rhetoric. This particular choice also reflects *Lucky*’s recent attempt to feature more luxury brands. A \$1,495 handbag would be financially out of reach for many readers; a \$750 is still considered an expensive, albeit, slightly more manageable alternative. However, the obsession-endorsing “where there’s a sale there’s a way” to achieve the “drooling over” commodity, given the still very pricy half-off sale, implies a willingness to

accrue debt which is troublesome. The financial realities of such a purchase for the average *Lucky* reader is mitigated by framing the commodity as a “little” “treat” and “surprise.” In addition, this copy flatters the reader by contrasting their shopping/buying leisure with their work life: the hard-working, and exhausted, *Lucky* reader. She has worked hard, made it to “hump day” and thereby deserves a reward. The reward is presented as a commodity acquisition, a purchase to further her identity creation as an empowered woman.

The next analyzed image also reinforces *Lucky*’s reliance on celebrities. Cover model Miranda Kerr -- clearly ubiquitous in *Lucky* social media at this time -- is shown in a video link to “behind the scenes” footage, referenced in an earlier section of this chapter. The text reads: “Enjoy every day. Don’t sweat the small stuff. Behind the scenes with Miranda Kerr.” One is left wondering exactly what “small stuff” Kerr references, especially again for a supermodel who marries Hollywood stars and is photographed in a Porsche. In addition, this marketing synergy also continually reinforces what the *Lucky* reader has potentially already experienced on other *Lucky* sites. For example, visitors read the cover story, click on the individual commodities presented on Pinterest, comment on Facebook, and now watch the YouTube generated video either on YouTube or on Google+.

“*Lucky* Breaks” DAILY EMAIL

Capture Day: July 2, 2014

Social media are generally considered “push” forms of communication: the user has to go to the social media site itself to receive messages. But there are other, arguably more aggressive forms of marketing, and these include “pull” techniques and media. Pull-oriented communication is when the message is placed in front of or sent to the audience. Social media alerts are one form, but one of the earliest forms of digital pull media is e-mail. *Lucky* and other marketers still use e-mail messages as a key part of their strategy.

For *Lucky*, the daily emails are generated from viewers submitting contact information on the web site. On most days, the user will receive one general update email and one specifically geared toward “*Lucky Breaks*,” the shopping discount program. The general email contains basic fashion or beauty tips and many of the messages are seasonal in nature. In contrast, the *Lucky breaks* email list specific, time sensitive promotions from a variety of retailers. The following is an example of a typical *Lucky* break email.

***Lucky Breaks* email:**

Mink Pink, Dolce Vita, CC Skye and More

From Just \$9!

COLLECTIVE HABIT Sitewide (Includes Sale Items!)—50% Off

Collective Habit is one of the coolest e-boutiques we’ve seen in a very long time, thanks to its finely tuned selection of highly covetable pieces by some of our favorite indie lines and established designers. From graphic tees to pleated skirts, if there’s a summer trend you’ve been contemplating but not yet tried, now’s the time to pull the trigger—everything is 50 percent off! Or just head straight for the accessories, where you’ll find classic-with-an-edge jewelry from coveted lines like CC Skye and In God We Trust. The steals get even crazier when you consider that yes, sale items are included—these chic Schutz sandals are just \$18.75!

REGULAR PRICE: \$17.40 to \$398

LUCKY BREAKS PRICE: \$8.70 to \$199

The reader is then guided to “get the code” by clicking on an active link in the email.

This email reinforces many of concepts discussed earlier in this chapter. First, a stylish commodity is presented for possible purchase by the *Lucky* reader. The implication is that editors have carefully selected the item and it is now available to the discerning reader; the commodities have cultural and social currency, given their “coveted” status (emphasized twice in the Break).

In addition, it reflects the *Lucky* aesthetic because it is “classic with an edge,” trendy but accessible. Furthermore, it is now a “steal” because you, the *Lucky* reader will be rewarded with a discount purchase price for this item.

Conclusion

It is significant is that, for many of these sites, *Lucky* is not just the creator or partner of the *Lucky* pages, but also serves as an advertiser. Either on the sites themselves or when clicking directly to a third-party site from a *Lucky* page triggers the placement of web ads for *Lucky* magazine subscriptions (“ONLY \$3. 6 months of Print and Tablet Access -- Plus Our Free Shoppers Tote”). Often, when leaving the sites, a popup ad for the *Lucky* subscriptions also appears. Clicking on the ads takes the user directly to the subscription page where user information may be added (“Save over 87% off the newsstand price”).

A clue to *Lucky*’s economic model is hinted at in the extreme savings of \$3 for six months: they are in the business of selling *Lucky* readers to advertisers, a very lucrative product given the consumption mindset that *Lucky* cultivates. *Lucky* social media is likely increasingly key for this model: specific user web behaviors can be tracked and datamined to determine the degree of *Lucky* “buy-in,” web use, and consumption patterns, data very valuable both to *Lucky* and especially its promotional partners. Most of the social media require or encourages user registration, facilitating such data tracking; subscribing to the magazine and e-mail alerts clearly contributes to this as well. Once marked as such, targeted sales messages can follow users throughout their Internet use, and can lead to email offers (such as from *Lucky* itself), and even direct mail. Here, then, the labor of *Lucky* social media users is not just in commenting, liking, fanning, pinning or sharing, but in allowing themselves to be watched and monetizing self disclosure (Andrejevic, 2002).

CHAPTER 6: *LUCKY* MAGAZINE AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MEDIA INDUSTRY

In this dissertation, I have examined a specific, early 21st century media artifact, *Lucky* magazine. Not unlike many other fashion magazine, *Lucky* is a source of information about the latest fashionable must-have products. This publication, promoting a lifestyle focused on shopping and style, has been emblematic of a hypercommercial culture, geared toward promoting consumption at all costs. Using the glossy pages of a fashion and beauty magazine as a delivery system, Condé Nast and the forces behind *Lucky's* creative content have succeeded in making consumerism fashionable. Supported by an extensive presence on social media sites, *Lucky* also serves as a mobile resource for women.

In addition, the postfeminist woman is specifically positioned as reader/consumer. As I have argued in Chapter Two, the highly contested nature of the terms third wave feminism, feminism, and postfeminism continue to make consensus difficult. Furthermore, as Showden (2009) notes, “Critical commentary on new feminisms has often accused this work of conflating consumerism with political action, personal change with political change, and cultural and cosmetic accommodations with economic and political restricting” (p. 166). Showden continues, “Today’s young feminists see little need for collective action – and the sacrifice that comes with it – when all that is left to achieve is a proper psychological orientation towards one’s own political and economic opportunities” (p. 174). This emphasis on hyperindividualism contributes to the belief that virtually any action can be interpreted as empowering.

By conflating postfeminist empowerment discourse with a consumer-friendly message, *Lucky* has been successful in carving out very specific niche. In addition, by designing a publication that ultimately mimics a catalog, *Lucky* presents commodities in a friendly,

approachable and accessible manner. Furthermore, the easy-to-understand, non-critical editorial also supports *Lucky*'s mission and vision. As discussed in Chapter Four, *Lucky* magazine still presents normative standards of beauty for its readers. Madison Avenue has only been too willing to sell women products that are designed to "fix them." However, *Lucky* has taken that message to the extreme with the message that shopping – not personal betterment – is the only path to fulfillment. Because of this very intersection, I contend that a feminist analysis is critical to analyzing *Lucky* magazine's influence of this particular generation of women. Only by critically dissecting third wave feminism, postfeminism and this theory of shopping as empowerment can we, as readers and scholars, hope to understand the very power the hegemonic system asserts.

In addition, the multiple hypercommercial forms that *Lucky* utilizes also further to enhance their influence. The seamless integration into book publishing, home shopping channels, and partnerships with ecommerce sites have positioned *Lucky* as the ultimate shopping and style authority, as I have outlined in Chapter Three.

Lucky also supports our culture's ever increasing obsession with celebrities. *Lucky* has been successful in presenting celebrities as their own specific brand. As outlined in Chapters Four and Five, this establishes the celebrity as fashion and style authority, a figure to be emulated.

From an editorial perspective, *Lucky* has been known for its brief, highly complimentary copy. Photographs, mimicking those found in catalogs, are presented to show the product in the most favorable view possible. Moreover, Editor-in-Chief Eva Chen has introduced a more sophisticated aesthetic to the publication. Under the careful tutelage of *Vogue*'s Editor-in-Chief, Anna Wintour, Chen's vision for the magazine includes more fashionable photography and the reintroduction of models. In short, this marks a return to the look and feel of traditional fashion magazines. However, this should not be interpreted as a move towards embracing the past. The

publication has made significant strides in social media visibility. As discussed in Chapter Five, eleven social media sites guarantee that *Lucky* will always be at the forefront of the readers' consciousness. By continuing to provide direct access to product acquisition, *Lucky* assures the reader that their attainment is critical to identity creation.

Lucky magazine presents a vexing challenge for the consumer *and* media scholar. How does a publication stay relevant and financially viable in this age of short attention spans and digital downloads? *Lucky* is certainly not immune to financial setbacks. Industry trade publications report that *Lucky's* ad pages for the all-important September 2014 fashion issue amount to only 90 pages, a sharp 34% decline from the September 2013 issue (O'Shea, 2014). Clearly many print publications are struggling to maintain their position in the cluttered landscape of magazine publishing.

Is a feminist fashion magazine even possible in a cluttered commercial landscape? That certainly remains to be seen. Once advertising is accepted, the magazine content is impacted. Articles and commentary must be presented in a positive light as to remain advertiser friendly to the media buying firms on Madison Avenue. As I have discussed at length in this dissertation, the very blurring of the lines between advertising and content is certainly a dominant feature of *Lucky* and other magazines, including *People Style Watch* and *In Style*. The internet offers a possible forum for a true feminist fashion magazine. Bloggers like *The Man Repeller* have attempted to open up an alternative space. However, commercial concerns are never that far away. Are not all fashion magazines attempting to "sell us" the very fashions they feature?

As I was completing this dissertation, news broke about an announcement from Condé Nast concerning *Lucky's* future. On August 11, 2014, Condé Nast announced they were spinning off *Lucky* into a newly formed company, The Lucky Group. Partnering with ecommerce site, BeachMint, this new company will retain *Lucky's* current management and editorial personnel, including Round and Chen. However, the Lucky Group will be led by BeachMint CEO Josh

Berman. (BeachMint owns private label online brands JewelMint and StyleMint.) This new “economic destination” is scheduled to launch in 2015 (Bazilian, 2014). This partnership will further strengthen *Lucky*’s position as a shopping authority by now providing a dedicated site for shopping. (Previous versions of Luckyrewards, for example, directed the user to a third party site for the consumer transaction.) While claiming no further management changes will be made, this partnership is a watershed moment in magazine publishing. By placing the BeachMint CEO in charge of this venture, the message is clear. Ecommerce is of utmost concern and importance to the future viability of *Lucky*. Condé Nast will retain a major stake in the company (O’Shea, 2014), but a new era in magazine publishing has dawned. While print is certainly not dead, it is changing dramatically as more readers turn to their mobile devices for news and information. Many publications, including the venerable *Time* and *Newsweek* were unable to adapt to the changing mores. As I have outlined in this dissertation, *Lucky* is a true success story in the industry. While some critics wondered if readers would embrace a magazine as catalog hybrid, the financial success of the publication proved them wrong. As I have outlined in the Chapter Three, by branding *Lucky* as the authoritative, yet friendly voice of fashion and style, the media creators have assured the readers an easy – yet potentially problematic – experience. As postfeminist women are continually told they need to shop and consume in order to fully participate in a patriarchal, hegemonic society, women are left wondering if they are nothing more than the clothes they wear.

In addition, by continually offering the reader content that blurs the lines between advertising and editorial, *Lucky* is contributing to the growth of an ever present hypercommercial culture. There are enormous implications for media literacy. If everything is a persuasive commercial message, where can the readers go for information and personal edification? Furthermore, as marketers continue to target younger consumers – the “tween” demographic – one wonders if a *Lucky* magazine for girls is next.

Future Research

As I have noted previously, this is a pivotal moment in the history of magazine publishing and advertising. I contend that industry leaders will be watching the newly formed Lucky Group to monitor its progress. As digital media continues to alter how we receive our information, it clearly has already altered how we are marketed to. This presents a potentially problematic model. There exists opportunities for media scholars to study other media forms and genres to examine the impact on the reader and consumer. Research methodologies should include both textual analysis and media effects. Much information can be gained by studying both the content and reception of media artifacts. By including audience studies into the methodological mix, I argue we can augment our understanding regarding both the production and reception of media. In addition, continued studies are warranted regarding the identification with the terms feminist and postfeminists. While some critics argue that labels are not important, I contend that how we self-identify is crucial to any critical discourse. Finally, social media sites targeted to women should be researched more fully. There exists enormous potential for these sites to be both transgressive and transformative. Tweets and retweets could be utilized as a means of resistance and are deserving of additional research.

As I conclude this project, I am reminded that new media forms are created daily. I am assured – at least for the time being – that new copies of my favorite magazines are available for my consumption. Every month offers a new opportunity for enlightenment and enjoyment. However given all of the ideological implications analyzed in this dissertation, I remain hopeful that as women we can maintain a critical distance from the enduring message that shopping is the most desirable path to self-fulfillment and identity creation. Only by recognizing that mode of resistance, can we possibly work towards creating media forms suitable for this era.

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VITA
REGINA MCNAMARA

EDUCATION

Ph.D. (2014) Mass Communications, The Pennsylvania State University

M.A. (2004) Communications, Duquesne University

B.A. (1990) English, The Pennsylvania State University

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

McNamara, G. (2015). "Coveting Sarah Jessica Parker: When Commodity Feminism Meets Postfeminism." In A. Trier-Bieniek (Ed.), *Fan Girls and the Media: Consuming Culture*. Scarecrow Press.

McNamara, G. (2015). "Commodity Culture" In J.M. Ryan (Ed.), *Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality Studies*. Wiley-Blackwell.

SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

"Fashion Meets Form: *Lucky* magazine, Technology and the Millennial Shopper," presented at the National Women's Studies Annual Conference, San Juan, Puerto Rico, November 13-16, 2014.

"Is Postfeminism Fashionable? An Analysis of *Lucky* magazine," presented at the National Women's Studies Association Annual Conference, Atlanta, GA, November 10-13, 2011.

EMPLOYMENT

2014 – present, Assistant Professor of Media Studies, Marietta College.