

# Feminism in Popular Culture and Mass Media

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As far as Feminism in popular culture and mass media is concerned, American culture illustrates the domination of mass media where advertisements control the emotions of young girls. Young girls take inspiration from advertisements that encourage false images, feminism, anxiety, and other psychological and societal problems. Feminism remains one of the popular aspects of mass media culture in modern countries like the United States, and it targets female consumers through the use of provocative techniques. The mass media and advertisements portray males as macho, strong, and successful and females as beautiful, attractive, and sexy. The advertisements adopt the feminist consumerism model to target young girls. The focus on feminism results in the male gaze and double consciousness among young girls which generates psychological influences. The misrepresentation [video highlights the role of mass media](#) and television in the promotion of feminism and sexuality. The media misrepresents females and demonstrates them as symbols of beauty and attraction. The culture of media politics reflects the strategy of portraying men as powerful thinkers and females as only bodies and figures.

## Discussion

Jean Kilbourne's "the more you subtract, the more you add" (1999) discusses the feminist issues that result from culture and mass media. She criticizes mass media's role in influencing young girls' lives as the current generation learns more from media than from parents. Young people and girls face vulnerabilities and threats from the media. Girls are confident and happy but when they reach teenage, they become self-conscious and face problems of anxiety, self-esteem, rage, and eating disorders. Mass media also promotes teenage pregnancy, dates, rape, sexual abuse, and violence. The negative consequences of mass media influence the lives of girls. Kilbourne highlights that advertisements for smoking and alcohol encourage such attitudes among youth and young girls. The author connects the impacts of mass media with the psychological developments and pathology of individuals. Advertising promotes negative attitudes that cause long-term side effects on girls such as eating disorders and toxication. The [negative impacts](#) of mass media also promote feminism among young girls develop self-consciousness about their appearance and encourage them to adopt false appearances. Young girls do many things to attract young boys and find themselves in competition with other beautiful girls. False self results in a double bind that builds consciousness about overt sexuality to become attractive to other girls and passiveness and vaginal (Taylor and Whittier).

Girls who are unable to recognize the conflicting desires undergo pain, confusion, and restlessness. They are in a state of continuous struggle between consciousness and unconscious desires. Girls from monolithic groups also face feminism, which results in uncontrollable eating disorders and psychological problems. The issues are not limited to any particular group, but they influence Native

Americans, African Americans, Latinos, and Hispanics more. The girls from such backgrounds suffer more complexities in addition to feminism due to racial and class differences. Mass media and advertisements dominate American culture, and the main implication of advertising culture is girls' self-esteem. Advertisements and mass media influence young girls more than men as they are new consumers due to the disposable incomes that they earn from work. The magazine is another effective tool that influences the lives of young girls, and the use of provocative logos such as "she's the one you want. She's the one we've got" has a long-lasting impact on their memories. Girls desire to become beautiful, attractive, modern, and sexy. Advertisements target young girls and tell them the importance of being attractive and beautiful as it is the only thing that brings them closer to rich and handsome boys. The advertisements use provocative texts that mention the use of perfumes, clothing, tight jeans, and proper-shaped panties. The advertisements that focus on extra thinness and flawless beauty result in depression and rage among young girls. Girls compare themselves with the models shown in advertisements and desire to become like them.

Advertisements and mass media influence adolescence, resulting in self-consciousness, terror, and shame. Mass media increases vulnerabilities to self-obsession, thinness, flawless beauty, and perfection. Women who are fast, too loud, and heavy feel shameful under the perfection criteria set by the media. Girls feel shamed for fat legs, and fat figures, and society and boys make them feel so. Evidence reveals that around 40- 80 percent of girls in fourth grade undergo dieting to reduce their weight. Advertising increases the habit of alcoholism among young individuals and girls. The study develops a link between media and eating disorders. Girls who find themselves imperfect and fat suffer anxiety and develop eating disorders. Anorexia is a disease that develops from the denial of the real self that a young girl suffers due to mass media and advertisements.

Kavin A Martin and Emilly Kayzak (2009) illustrate heteronormativity encourages heterosexuality among the young population that privileges heterosexuals. Movies and media that portray young love between men and women as the perfect life encourage sexuality among people of different genders. The hetero-romantic love encourages youth by portraying exceptional relationships, power, and magic. Heterosexual exceptionalism promotes heterosexuality pervasiveness. Disney movies influence children's thought processes, and studies reveal that elementary school children can understand heterosexuality. Heteronormativity involves mundane ways that reflect the overwhelming image of heterosexuality. Heteronormativity reflects represents heterosexuality as the privileged sex. The motive pictures present censored content to children. However, the G-rated movies do not include elements of sex and nudity. The G-rated movies still promoted heterosexuality through hetero-romantic love and interactions between males and females. Online culture and [social networking](#) also play an effective role in promoting feminism and sexuality. Social networking influences young women and encourages them to take [gender roles](#). Social networking has a useful role in conventional politics.

Female chauvinist pigs highlight the model of perfection for feminists in American culture. The movie "Sex and the City" portrays perfect feminism, which includes a slim body and a beautiful figure that grabs the attention of handsome boys. The television and media present women more as a model

that acquires all possible traits of sexuality and beauty. The mass media portrays the wrong side of the story and ignores the right aspects that need concentration. The media is more concerned with showing girls in fewer clothes than highlighting the societal issues that women suffer such as workplace harassment and gender inequalities. Nevins highlights' the issues that females face due to the prevalence of double consciousness. Women encounter the male gaze that wants to see the sexy and bold. The societal approach towards males and females depicts the status quo. She draws the line between the male chauvinist pigs and female chauvinist pigs.

Male chauvinist pigs are represented more as enlightened rubes and female chauvinist pigs experience exalted status. The media portrays males as machos and females as symbols' of sexism. Nevins highlights' that television does not present women as success symbols who achieve status through their struggles but only focuses on sexuality. The world represents male dominance in careers, politics, and every aspect of human society. Women have to undergo more complications to open doors to careers and present themselves as strong women. Mass media also depicts gender biases, as Nevins mentions the existence of females in top positions, with only 17 percent of women serving as executive producers, directors, writers, editors, and cinematographers. The male dominance over industries and media is a depiction of women's loophole that results in an unearned advantage for males in society.

Judith Taylor (2005) illustrates misrepresentation in "feminist consumerism and fat activist" and compares the campaigns of Dove's real beauty. The concept encourages the democratic vision of feminism and beauty. The Dove beauty campaigns used advertisement tools that included billboards, television, and magazines that portrayed women as fat ladies with pregnancy stretch marks and achieved high sales. The marketing strategy became popular in many parts of the world. The media campaign involved huge amounts of money and challenged the hegemonic [beauty standards](#). The women develop feelings of self-consciousness and low self-esteem that find them fat. The feminist activist developed the PPO against such exaggerated advertisements that result in emotional and psychological disturbances among females in society. The popular queer activists that challenged the misogynists' attitudes focused on the burgeoning politics of marketers to target females in society. The Dove beauty campaigns reflect the progressive women's force that discouraged using the feminist concept to influence females and young girls. The assessment of the cultural politics in feminist consumerism illustrates the capitalist society that targets maximum revenues and neglects the societal values and implications it generates on society.

## Conclusion

Media consolidation promotes 'feminist consumerism' that disrupts societal norms. The broader cultural ideology of consumerism is represented by the Dove beauty campaigns that portray the negative role of exaggerated advertisements and provocative messages. The [media literacy](#) movement is the result of feminist activists recognizing beauty advertisements' implications. The feminist beauty ideology involves a combination of cultural politics, political economics, and feminist

awareness of social change. The beauty ideology highlights the counter-hegemonic actions that are against the oppression of feminist beauty standards. The political culture of feminist consumerism depicts the capitalist incentives to sell beauty products in the global economy. Corporate feminism and celebrity feminism are other effective tools adopted by marketers to influence sales

## Bibliography

Taylor, Verta A. and Nancy Whittier. Feminist Frontiers. McGraw-Hill, 1983.