

Hegemonic Female Spaces: An Analysis of the Covert Meanings within Ladies Home Journal and Ebony Magazines' Advertisements

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Introduction

Methodologically, this study is simply examining women's bodies in advertisements, but the purpose of our analysis goes much deeper. We use a historical cross-cultural content analysis of women's magazines as a vehicle for understanding the permeation of hegemonic standards by an outlet claiming to provide African American audiences with a distinct space to redefine African American beauty standards. The juxtaposition of a mainstream media outlet (*Ladies' Home Journal*) to a minority-targeted media outlet (*Ebony*) illustrates the power relationship between two seemingly separate cultural products. More specifically, it shows the implicit ability of mainstream culture to determine the extent to which *alternative* cultural messages can deviate from hegemonic standards. We therefore look at the ways in which *Ebony* presents the female body, and how it reflects, or deviates from, the Eurocentric beauty displayed in *Ladies Home Journal*.

Women's magazines are infamous for picturing models with physical features and body sizes that are unattainable for most readers (Allan, 1993; Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2003; Falconer, 2000; St. Jean and Feagin, 1998; Griffith, 2004; Parker, Nichter, Nichter, and Vuckovic, 1995), which then in turn, creates

unrealistic standards of beauty. These standards are particularly harsh and unattainable for women of color. An unfortunate matter of being a woman of African descent in the United States (or of any non-European descent for that matter) is that western standards of beauty have always been exclusionary (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2003; Collins, 2004; Gray-White, 1999).

The social construction of race includes the construction of beauty standards for both the minority and the majority. Contemporary standards of beauty can be traced back to the Victorian era, where porcelain skin, long silky hair, thin lips, and blushed cheeks were ideal. In the latter half of the 20th century, these standards also came to include a slender body and narrow hips (Peiss 1998). These ideals are based in whiteness. As such, although it is difficult for any woman to live up to the ideal version of beauty, it is *impossible* for women of color, whose darkened skin, dark kinky hair, and shapely figures are implicitly and, at times explicitly devalued in the productions of popular culture (Farrington 2003).

Spates (2007) analyzed the bodies in the advertisements of *Ebony* magazine, an African-American targeted publication over a 60-year period. She looked at the ways in which advertisements conformed to or diverged from white western standards. She found divergence from those standards over the years in all areas except for body size (models in *Ebony* remained slender over the 60-year period) (Spates 2007). We seek to expand upon these findings by combining

them with the analysis of advertisements over the same time period in a “mainstream” magazine (*Ladies’ Home Journal*). We will compare and contrast the trends in both magazines over time. More importantly, we will look at the ways in which the trends in a mainstream magazine may permeate into ethnic-oriented magazines, potentially creating constraints upon the extent to which an ethnic magazine can diverge away from white culture and standards.

Many studies have shown the direct impact that unrealistic images have had upon readers. These include low self-esteem, negative body image, and even an impetus for disordered eating (Bessenoff, 2006; Gurari, Hetts, & Strube, 2006). We look now at the extent to which the reinforcement of western beauty standards has permeated into media intended for a non-white audience.

We have established that mainstream depictions of beauty are historically rooted in whiteness. We now explore how this phenomenon has affected model selections for the largest and oldest African-American owned and operated magazine publisher, *Ebony* magazine. Furthermore, how has the reinforcement of Eurocentric beauty standards in *Ladies’ Home Journal* (a mainstream media outlet) impacted the progression towards beauty standards in a “minority space?”

This paper is an analysis of the portrayal of women’s body images and beauty standards within *Ebony* and *Ladies’ Home Journal* during the years 1946, 1976, and 2006. The basis of this paper is centered on a few particular points. The first

is that Johnson's publishing company deliberately sought to provide *Ebony* readers with what authors' Miller, Brennan, and Edgerton-Webster refer to as an *alternate space*. This space represents a physical place in which African American readers could turn to find realistic representations of self. In illustration, the authors' claim:

Upon evaluation we find that *Ebony*... challenges the hegemonic process with the incorporation of cultural artifacts that call upon collective memory to form reader association...also members of a patriarchal society, are offered media messages that may help them to negotiate the dominant ideological position and help them to resist stereotypes and internalized norms. In some cases the magazines actually construct oppositional messages, challenging the dominant hegemony that audience members may embrace as resistant readings (Johnson Publishing Company 2006).

The second point central to our analysis is the *Ebony's* audience. Despite *Ebony's* attempt to relate to diverse groups of African-Americans, Myers and Margavio (1963) argue that the focus on "achievement, recognition, and respectability clearly reflects a middle-class value system" (Meyers and Margavio 1963). With that in mind, Falconer and Neville (2000) theorize that class differences, along with the amount of exposure to the dominant culture, are likely to influence women's body image perceptions. For that reason, middle- and upper-class African-Americans are more likely to have internalized white standards of beauty.

Third, we look at the corresponding trends in a magazine catered toward predominantly white women (*Ladies' Home Journal*). We know that such trends can have an explicit impact upon its own readers (see, Monro & Huon; 2005, Halliwell ;2005). We look now at the more implicit impacts such reinforcement can have upon a culture as a whole. That is, how the dominant culture may find its way into even those avenues attempting to deviate from it.

Finally, we examine the role of white privilege. This is the privilege awarded to whites, simply on the basis of their "whiteness." White privilege allows majority group members the opportunity to take race for granted (Tatum, 1997; McIntosh 2010). Peggy McIntosh (2010) explores what she references as the notion of "unpacking the invisible knapsack of white privilege." In this analysis, she examines the many unearned assets that she can rely on day after day. Although she references many, a component of white privilege that goes commonly unnoticed is in the advertising industry. To illustrate, McIntosh states, "I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, and children's magazines featuring people of my own race" (p. 174).

Advertisements, particularly those catered toward women, serve as a medium passing beauty standard messages to women worldwide. Therefore, this study will illustrate not only the bizarre role that advertisements play in encouraging white women to maintain strict adherence to ideal European beauty standards,

but we focus on messages targeted toward African-American women that thereby encourage them to consider progressively more extreme measures as an attempt to live up to undeniably unobtainable standards. In comparing and contrasting the two magazines, the issue of white privilege will become abundantly clear.

Literature Review

Womanhood

Womanhood is a fairly complex term. Furthermore, in order to gain a full understanding of the notion of African-American womanhood, it is important to first discuss the construction of womanhood in America. The construction of womanhood in the United States is fundamentally centered on the perception of the Cult of Womanhood. The Cult of true Womanhood was established during the mid-19th century (Welter 1966). Characteristics of true womanhood were instituted to provide the woman along with her husband, her community, and, more importantly, society with principles with which to measure her womanhood. The principles came to be known as the four cardinal virtues. The virtues were piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. This imagery was heavily circulated within the mass media, ranging from magazine articles to religious manuals. And, as one might imagine, there were women that exceeded society's

image of what a woman should be just as there were women who fell short (Welter 1966).

During this era, the only women that measured up to society's standards of "true womanhood" were white middle-upper class women. As a result, African-American women were immediately excluded from any classifications of "womanhood." Around the same time that notions of "true womanhood" were constructed, a conflicting ideology that applied exclusively to African-American women was also emerging. Images of the mammy, the matriarch, and the jezebel, all sought to control African-American women through the process of "othering" (Collins 2000). Therefore, white women were encouraged to live up to the standards of "true womanhood" while African-American women were encouraged to live up to their own physical (i.e. lighter skin, resilient, with a "nice" grade of hair) and psychological standards of what Townsend-Gilkes (2001) refers to as "deviant womanhood." As white women have had to contend assumptions of their passivity and weakness, African American women have had to challenge myths surrounding the strong black woman.

The disproportionate failure of non-white women to live up to the standard of "true womanhood" reifies the issue of "othering." Furthermore, the inability to live up to the majority standards for physical beauty becomes yet another mechanism for categorizing minorities into a low socioeconomic status position.

Not only are the socially constructed beauty standards divergent for white and African-American women, but so is the propensity towards obesity (and so away from the current western standard) (Law, Power, Graham and Merrick, 2007). In high-income countries, such as the United States, there is a positive relationship between poverty and obesity (Law, Power, Graham, and Merrick 2007). Rates of obesity are higher for African-American woman than for Caucasian women (Saxena, Ambler, Cole, and Majeed 2004).

Many argue that persons of color in the United States continue to face the brunt of discriminatory acts and prejudiced attitudes; however, obesity itself is increasingly being coupled with its own negative connotations. Scientific evidence has shown us that it is clear that bias towards the obese begets unequal treatment. For example, unequal treatment towards overweight individuals has been exposed within employment, medical and health care, and educational settings (Brownell 2001). As a result, women of color, particularly overweight women of color, will likely fall short to society's standards of beauty every time.

Standards of Beauty

Standards of beauty, prior to the 20th century, favored what western beauty standards of today might consider "plump" (Hesse-Biber 1996). In the present day, a more slender, less curvaceous shape seems to be the preference. Growing technological influences of television, radio, magazines, and, of course,

the internet have resulted in virtually limitless distributions of ideal beauty standards worldwide.

Just as the notions of whiteness and African-Americanness are opposite, it is important to remember that within binary thinking it is impractical to consider the blue-eyed, blond, slender white woman beautiful without the other. Accordingly, Collins states (Collins 2000)

White women and Black women as collectivities represent two opposing poles, with Latinas, Asian-American women, and Native American women jockeying positions in between. Judging white women, by their physical appearance and attractiveness to men objectifies them. But their white skin and straight hair simultaneously privilege them in a system that elevates whiteness over Blackness. In contrast, African American women experience the pain of never being able to live up to prevailing standards of beauty –standards used by White men, White women, Black men, and most painfully, one another Collins (p. 89-90).

In addition to physical characteristics, culture has also played a significant role in constructing the ideal appearance for African-American women. The idea that “African-American is beautiful” is a primary demonstration of this. Prior to the civil rights era, darker skinned African-Americans were practically ignored in advertising or placed in inferior positions to fairer-skinned African-Americans. Often times, even in magazines published for an African-American audience

(such as *Ebony* or *Essence*) darker-skinned women were advertised as maids or other roles that perpetuated negative stereotypes. During the 1960's, African-Americans took it upon themselves to reinvent the notion of African-Americanness. As a result, Michelle Leslie (1995) claims that the African-American consciousness movement resulted in a surge in African-Americans present in the media and a reduction of negative stereotyping.

Body Image Disparities

Body Image disparities within the media have been widely studied. Bessenoff (2006) did a study of the impacts of the thin ideal in the media upon young women. One hundred and twelve undergraduate women were exposed to advertisements either featuring a thin woman (constituting a "thin ideal") or not featuring thin women. It was found that exposure to advertisements containing a "thin ideal" correlated positively with body dissatisfaction in these women (Bessenoff 2006). Similarly, Gurari, Hetts, and Strube (2006) found that when exposed to advertisements in beauty magazines (as compared with a control group *not* exposed to advertisements in beauty magazines), women may engage in social comparisons which negatively impact self-esteem. Monro and Huon's (2005) study showed that idealized images in the media negatively impact body image in women. They discuss, however, that this impact is to be understood as occurring in varying degrees depending upon an individuals' psychological susceptibility to the magazine advertisements (Monro and Huon 2005).

Body image studies among African-American women are not as plentiful as those done with white women. However, studies that have been conducted allude to the fact that African-American women typically have a more positive body image than white women. These results have been replicated numerous times. Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2003) claims that this phenomenon may be due to cultural variations in ideal physical attractiveness. Most African-American women prefer to be somewhat “thick” rather than “thin.” The author also argues that a huge part of African-American women’s size preference may be strongly correlated to African-American men’s preference (Beauboeuf-Lafontant 2003). Similar findings were seen in a study conducted by Falconer and Neville (2000). Contrary to their white counterparts, the young African-American women in the study appeared to be very confident despite their physical body size. They spoke about “making what you got work for you” and directed more of their attention toward the idea of “looking good” overall (Falconer and Neville 2000).

According to Falconer and Neville (2000), the one exception to the rule, is likely to occur among middle- and upper-class African-American women. African-American women with higher social status tend to be affected more by mainstream media images of beauty and health, thereby increasing their pressures to be thin (Falconer and Neville 2000). In addition, some believe that the racial gap in body dissatisfaction is not as great as is commonly perceived. Grabe and Hyde (2006) challenge this notion of a wide racial gap in body

satisfaction, finding that, while Caucasian girls did have greater body dissatisfaction than African-American girls, the difference was quite small.

As mentioned above, there is more work to be done with studying African-American body image. Another place the literature has yet to go (a place which we here wish to address) is the ways in which images in mainstream media correlate with media images in non-Eurocentric spaces.

Methods

As established early on, a primary objective of *Ebony* was to provide African-American readers with sources to counter oppressive images. This “alternate space” was created to empower African-American readers while simultaneously providing them with an accurate basis to create a new self identity.

This process, however, does not take place in isolation. Rather, *Ebony* is produced, distributed, and consumed within larger culture that preferences whiteness and the physical features of white women. This larger culture, and its’ mainstream cultural productions; therefore have the potential to impact how far an “alternative” depiction of beauty can deviate from the hegemonic norm. We therefore look at the ways in which African-Americans have progressed (or not progressed) away from hegemonic standards of beauty in mainstream society and toward a place of sovereignty most likely to be found within a “minority space.” More importantly, we look at this within the context of reinforcement of white standards in mainstream media (as represented by *Ladies Home Journal*).

Why Ebony and Ladies' Home Journal?

Ebony's attempt to provide America with a more accurate depiction of the African-American community has always been respected. Started by an African-American, by the name of John H. Johnson in 1942, *Ebony* has stood the test of time. *Ebony* was the first magazine that catered to needs of African-Americans and it continues to be run by one of the only African-American-owned and operated publishing companies. Still in a league of its own, *Ebony* has surpassed all other African-American-owned publishing companies and has paved the way for many more to come (Johnson Publishing Company 2006). Its readers tend to be relatively high in socio-economic status, highly educated, and women (Digby-Junger 2005).

Ladies' Home Journal began publication in 1843 (Scanlong 1995). It was selected mainly in relation to *Ebony* magazine. Both cater to audiences of a similar socio-economic status, gender, and age (Scanlong 1995). Such similarities, along with each magazines enduring presence make them optimal for viewing trends and connections.

This research compares samples of African-American women from an African-American target magazine (*Ebony*) and white women from a mainstream magazine (*Ladies' Home Journal*) in advertisements over the course of three time periods: 1946, 1976, and 2006. 1946 was chosen particularly for one of two

reasons: the first being that it was well before the civil rights era yet during the apartheid; the second being that 1946 allowed Johnson publishers, the editor's of *Ebony* magazine the opportunity to find their way in an unfamiliar market. 1976 was especially noteworthy because it provides us with a snapshot of the mass media trends a year or so following the African-American Power movement and women's movements. The prominent years of African-American Power era ranged from the late 60's to the early 70's. This was an era of liberation for African-Americans and women in general. Therefore, 1976 represents a time of transition with these liberation movements directly after their climax. Finally, 2006 was chosen to give us the opportunity to look at more recent body image advertisements. These three time periods should provide an accurate depiction of beauty trend standards dating back over 60 years.

Using the three previous years, we purposefully selected 6 ads out the twelve issues published for the year for both *Ebony* and *Ladies' Home Journal* totaling 36 advertisements. The criteria used for ad selection was based on race, gender, and status. Advertisements were chosen of African-American women in *Ebony* magazine, and white women in *Ladies' Home Journal*. For both magazines, we chose ads with models that were not well-known characters of the time. The rationale behind this decision was to gather a representative sample of the types of bodies that *Ebony* and *Ladies' Home Journal* deemed significant enough to advertise during these years.

Category Construction of Body Image Variables for Ebony

Category construction of body image variables for Ebony advertisements were evaluated based on the following criteria: body size, skin color, hair texture, and the underlying message of the ads. According to societal standards, one of the most important aspects to evaluating individual attractiveness tends to be body size. However, it is important to note that the African-American community's description of attractiveness differs drastically from those of whites. According to authors' Allan, Mayo, and Michel (1993), African-American women's basis for rating attractiveness entails shapeliness, the fit of clothing, some hips and femininity. The authors also maintain that middle-class African-Americans beauty standards more than likely coincide with whites ideals of thinness (Allan, Mayo, and Michel 1993).

Skin color and hair type, particularly among African-Americans, were selected in part because these features tend to be ethnic specific. Historically, the United States constructed racial categories based on phenotypic characteristics; therefore, skin color and hair type became significant factors in the construction of race. Additionally, according to Miller et al. (1998) further research is needed using body image variables relevant to specific racial groups to assess body satisfaction.

Ladies' Home Journal

Ladies' Home Journal advertisements were analyzed for body size, hair color, and hair texture. These physical attributes were looked at in comparison with what is considered to be the western ideal (thin body, blonde, straight hair). Hair color was simply designated as either blonde or brunette. Hair texture was designated as either curly/wavy or straight.

Body Size

Body size was determined using body silhouettes from the Canadian Dietetic Associations (CDA) scale of Body Mass Index (BMI) as cited in Peterson, Ellenberg and Crossan (2003). This scale contains 4 body silhouettes representing a BMI that would be considered underweight, normal weight, overweight, and obese. Based on these silhouettes, bodies in the advertisements were classified as either Afrocentric or Eurocentric. The social construction of beauty standards for white women is that of a slender build, while the Afrocentric beauty standard is that of a more curvaceous body. This in mind, Afrocentric bodies were coded as anything above the "normal" body size, while Eurocentric bodies were anything at or below "normal".

Two coders separately coded each advertisement and then results were compared. A kappa statistic was used in dealing with reliability. This statistic measures agreement between two coders in categorizing individual subjects into the same category (Chuang 2001). It is an index which "compares the agreement against that which might be expected by chance" (Chuang 2001). Scores run

from -1 (no agreement) to +1 (perfect agreement). A score of 0 indicates no agreement beyond the expected (Chuang 2001). We had Kappa score of .66 (this is .66 above what would be expected by chance), with an agreement of .98. This is considered “almost perfect” agreement (Chuang 2001).

Messages Portrayed in Ebony

Messages portrayed in *Ebony* were revealed by combining an analysis of body images along with the underlying message of the advertisement. This approach allows the authors to offer a more comprehensive breakdown of the advertisement. In doing so, the ad’s message will be separated into two categories. The first category will speak to the advertisements that adhere to the mainstream (i.e. European) standards of beauty. And the second category will consist of advertisements that promote African-American standards of beauty. As you will see in the upcoming section, some messages may indirectly encourage women to alter their natural characteristics to achieve a mainstream standard of beauty. Likewise, there are also ads that encourage women to love their bodies and express confidence with African-Americanness, because “African-American is beautiful.”

Messages Portrayed in Ladies’ Home Journal

Messages portrayed in *Ladies’ Home Journal* could not be analyzed in the same way that ads were analyzed in *Ebony*. Therefore, rather than categorizing messages, we looked at each time period for general themes. Thus, in the

context of *Ladies' Home Journal*, we looked rather at messages about womanhood and feminism in general.

Findings

We first looked at trends found in *Ebony* for skin, hair, and body size and message intent. We looked at how closely models reflect either Euro-centric beauty standards or instead recreate and promote their own ethnic specific standards of beauty. Also, we looked at the message intent of advertisements, differentiating between messages that either promote mainstream standards of beauty or promote African-Americanness. This analysis is depicted in table 1 (tables available at the end of the document).

Each value is seen as a percent. For skin, hair and body size, this number represents the percentage of advertisements which coincide with differing beauty standard (as opposed to the Eurocentric beauty standard). For *skin*, the westernized standards of beauty include lighter-skinned rather than dark-skinned. Straight *hair* is seen as adhering to the Euro-centric standards, while kinky or curly hair is seen as promoting and recreating an ethnic specific standard of beauty. Lastly, slender body size is seen as Euro-centric, while a thicker or curvier *body size* is seen as Afro-centric. For message intent, the number represents the percentage of advertisements which promote a new

standard of beauty. These types of messages give the impression that they are seeking to detach from homogeneous standards of beauty to instead celebrate or recreate their own.

In addition, we looked at the types of products advertised over the years (see table 2). These allowed us some insight into the purpose behind message intent and model choice. Combining the physical appearance of the body in the ad, with the intent of the message, and the product being advertised helps us develop a fuller understanding of the themes and trends.

Table 2 illustrates two important points. The first is the trend of acceptance concerning African-American beauty standards over time. We can see in all categories that 1946 represents a time of the greatest conformity to white western standards. All models in the sample have straight hair, light skin, and slender bodies. No advertisements in *Ebony* magazine during 1946 presented an environment that attempted to recreate positive notions of the common African-American female body. On the contrary, the ads upheld mainstream beauty standards except for the fact that they included African-American women.

In the United States, 1976 was the peak for embracing African-American culture. For all categories, 1976 has the highest percentage of ads which are conducive to recreating African-American standards of beauty. This is the only year in which a model is displayed who deviates from the western slender body size.

Furthermore, 83 percent of messages in 1976 are promoting appreciation for African-American beauty rather than mainstream beauty standards. Finally, 2006 represents somewhat of middle ground. Acceptance and promotion of African-American culture is less than it was in 1976, but exceeds that of 1946.

The second point is that throughout all 3 years, body shape remains virtually unchanged (and conforms to a slender white standard). Out of all of the advertisements, only a single one portrays a model with an Afrocentric body style (this is in 1976). In two of the three years, there are no models that deviate from the slender white body standard.

We looked next to why this particular characteristic (body shape) has remained static, while others (hair, skin, message etc.) have been dynamic over the 60-year period. In examining this, we looked at the trends of bodies in advertisements in *Ladies Home Journal*. We sought to examine the relationship between these trends seen in *Ebony* and the trends in a more mainstream publication.

Reinforcement of Eurocentric Beauty Standards

Reinforcement of Eurocentric beauty standards, illustrated above by means of skin and hair have progressed (to some degree) in *Ebony* magazine from a Eurocentric standard towards an Afrocentric standard (darker skin, kinky hair).

We will look now at if (and how) these Eurocentric standards are being reinforced in mainstream magazines.

Straight, blonde hair is the Eurocentric standard of beauty. The advertisements in *Ladies' Home Journal*, however, are not consistent with this standard. That is, white models are seen with as much with blonde straight hair as they are with dark curly hair (see table 3). This does not change much through the years. Overall, 50 percent of the models have curly or wavy hair and 50 percent have straight hair. Furthermore, 65 percent of the models are brunettes. These advertisements, then, are not reinforcing the Eurocentric standard of beauty as much as in other categories. We can connect this back to see that the models in *Ebony* have been able to progress away from these particular Eurocentric standards. This is the case particularly for *Ebony* in 1976.

The Eurocentric standard of beauty designates a thin body as an attractive body. The importance here of this particular beauty standard is that body size is the one place *Ebony* magazine has never able to diverge from Eurocentric standards. While models in *Ebony* magazine have progressed into a more Afrocentric beauty standard with darker skin and textured hair, the body size of models has remained slender (consistent with the Euro-centric standard).

Table 4 shows the body sizes portrayed in advertisements of *Ladies' Home Journal* for 1946, 1976, and 2006. Perhaps the greatest observation here is the

lack of any change over the past 60 years. Consistently, the models in *Ladies' Home Journal* have been adhering to the slim standard. Not shown in the table, but of significance, is that while there are no overweight models over this 60-year period, 12 percent of models in 1946, and 12 percent of models in 1976 are classified as underweight. This is a clear demonstration of the reinforcement of Eurocentric ideals. Perhaps, this reinforcement is part of the barrier for progression in body size towards an Afrocentric standard.

Messages, products, and white privilege

Messages, products, and white privilege differences among the two magazines do not allow us to compare the messages in *Ladies' Home Journal* with those in *Ebony*. In analyzing messages for *Ladies' Home Journal*, it is impossible to directly compare the findings to those from *Ebony*. Our inability to compare messages between the two magazines is an important finding in itself. Advertisements in *Ebony* are analyzed by their *rejection* or *promotion* of Eurocentric (i.e. mainstream) beauty standards. In *Ladies' Home Journal*, there is no mention of race, let alone messages which reject or promote whiteness. Here, we have an issue of white privilege. That is that the privileges received by the majority race only for being of the majority race (Tatum 1997). More importantly, white privilege means not having to take race into account. Whiteness is a privilege because it is a taken for granted state (Tatum 1997).

Moreover, white privilege is seen in the designation of *Ebony* as an African-American oriented magazine. *Ladies' Home Journal* need not emphasize (nor even mention) the race of its readers. Because of white privilege, race is not a salient aspect of *Ladies' Home Journal*. *Ladies' Home Journal* is simply a home journal for *Ladies*. On the contrary, race is so salient in *Ebony* magazine that they must go as far as to name the magazine after the skin color of its targeted readers.

Because we cannot compare products and messages directly, we have rather laid out corresponding trends between time, products, and messages. Products advertised are conducive with the trends in *Ebony* magazine. We can see in *Ebony* that 1946 holds the heaviest Eurocentric promotion, followed by the heaviest liberation in 1976 and somewhat of a middle ground in 2006. While advertisements in *Ladies' Home Journal* do not speak to race in this same way, they do show similar trends for oppression and liberation for women in general.

In 1946, advertisements are heavily geared towards family work, care for others, and personal beautification. For example, a woman is shown saying "I did a very smart thing today" with a picture of silverware that she purchased. Another advertisement (for rayon fabric) shows a woman wearing a blouse and wondering how it will look after it has been washed.

In 1976, advertisements move away from traditional mothering roles and emphasize independence, strength, and self care. One advertisement for deodorant shows a woman who is nervous about going back to work after 12 years of being a stay at home mom. Another advertisement for tampons tells the reader to “trust yourself.” Along with the trend of 1976 being the height of women’s liberation, it is the only year with no advertisements for diet products.

2006 advertisements are for personal care and family care. The culmination of the two types of messages can be seen in one advertisement with a (covered) naked woman holding a baby, promoting a skin soap that is gentle enough for a baby’s skin, but used on an adults.

Conclusion

Ebony magazine designates itself as an alternative space for African-American women. It has been, at certain points, successful in providing this space through the promotion of Afro-centric beauty for skin and hair (particularly in 1976). The one place where *Ebony* has never left the Euro-centric beauty standard is in the area of body size.

These issues can be seen as being reinforced by the mainstream media. While *Ladies’ Home Journal* does little to reinforce the standard of blonde straight hair, they consistently display models of a slender body size. There may then be a connection between the reinforcement in mainstream media of Eurocentric

beauty standards and the ability for ethnic oriented media to diverge from this standard.

In connecting the two types of magazines, the issue of white privilege becomes very prominent. While *Ladies' Home Journal* acts as the standard, *Ebony* is portraying the "other." It is because of *Ebony's* "otherness" that race must be such a salient aspect of the magazine. Furthermore, it is this idea of "otherness" and white privilege that prohibits researchers from making certain direct comparisons between the two magazines.

Table 1

Percentage of Ebony Ads Promoting African-Americanness and the Afro-centric Standard

Period	skin	Hair	Body Size	Message intent
1946	0%	0%	0%	0%
1976	67%	33%	16%	83%
2006	50%	16%	0%	33%
Total	39%	16%	5%	39%

Table 2

Analysis of Products Advertised

Product	1946	1976	2006
Diet	17%	17%	0%
Hair Straighter	33%	0%	33%
Cosmetics	0%	50%	33%
Cigarettes	0%	0%	17%
Skin Bleacher	17%	0%	0%
Personal Hygiene	17%	0%	17%
Small Business	17%	0%	0%
Encouragement	0%	33%	0%
Ads			
Total Ads	6	6	6

Table 3

Ladies Home Journal Ads Classified by Hair Type*

Period	Blonde	Brunette	Straight	Curly/Wavy
1946	37.5%	62.5%	37.5%	62.5%
1976	33%	67%	67%	33%
2006	33%	67%	50%	50%
Total Ads	7 (<i>n</i>)	13 (<i>n</i>)	10 (<i>n</i>)	10 (<i>n</i>)

* The number of advertisements exceeds 18 due to multiple bodies in a single ad.

Table 4

Ladies' Home Journal Classified by Body Size*

Period	Euro-centric	Afro-centric
1946	100%	0%
1976	100%	0%
2006	100%	0%
Total Ads	20	0

*The number of advertisements exceeds 18 due to multiple bodies in a single ad.

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