



The Construction of Feminity in 'The Australian Women's Weekly' of 1962, 1982 and 2009: Research Essay

Annika Onken

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Seminar paper from the year 2009 in the subject American Studies - Culture and Applied Geography, grade: 78% = deutsche 1-2, University of Queensland, course: AUST 6120 Nation & Culture, language: English, abstract: The first edition of the magazine 'The Australian Women's Weekly' was published in 1933 and continues its publications till today. Therefore the magazine offers a long history of being, also advertising, medium for ideas, opinions and reflections about feminity. The subject matter and advertisement the magazine addresses its readers with constitutes the fields of interest those women might be attracted towards. At the same time it excludes certain fields of female interest.

In this research essay I will examine how feminity is constructed in 'The Australian Women's Weekly' from three different time periods by having a closer look at the fields of 'The Domestic Sphere', 'Beauty and the Body', and 'Progression of the Self'. I will have a look at the construction of the domestic sphere portrayed as being an inherent responsibility and centre of female existence. Are broader political and social topics addressed; and in what way? How is women's position in society understood? Furthermore, I will ask how the depicted ideal feminity is linked to body looks and sexuality. In a third step I will examine the emphasis put on inspiration as being an integral part of feminity. What functions are served by the printing of celebrity life stories, the responses of 'agony aunts' and romantic fiction?

The investigation of editions from 1962, 1982 and 2009 will focus on whether and how ideologies of feminity have changed during the decades and if there can be detected certain recurring ideological fragments. Does the representation of maternity and Australianess evolve during the decades? In what way do these magazines adjust to changing reader's needs? Which female ideologies are we facing today?

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