Women: Their Lives and Their Loves Since 1945

Kristin Ely
Illinois Wesleyan University

Georganne Rundblad, Faculty Advisor
Illinois Wesleyan University

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WOMEN: THEIR LIVES AND THEIR LOVES SINCE 1945

Kristin Ely and Georganne Rundblad*, Department of Sociology, IWU

This research investigates the advice that women have been given over the past fifty years by the media regarding their relationships with men. Taken from both symbolic interaction and conflict theoretical perspectives, this study involves a content analysis of the popular magazine Good Housekeeping, with special attention to advice columns and feature articles which discuss the ways men and women interact throughout the span of romantic relationships. Looking at the time period between 1945 and 1995, the results suggest that what women are told about how to attract men, and then how to keep them or when to get rid of them, changes in accordance with societal expectations of women. As women are encouraged to have more confidence in themselves and their abilities, they realize they have more control over their lives and their relationships. This knowledge forces them to reconsider how they approach men and how they interact with them when their relationships become more intimate. One can see how authors of advice columns and magazine articles have tried to guide their readers as they flirt with, make up with, and break up with members of the other sex. It is thus concluded that, as the review of literature suggests, this guidance reflects how society has viewed women at different points in this fifty-year time period.