Abstract:

Where does feminism fall in contemporary American culture? Has it lost its relevance as a result of waning interest in feminist politics? In today's feminist troupe, a culture of inheritance has stepped into many of the advantages the Second Wave pushed so hard to acquire. What becomes the point of contention is the approach these inheritors now take to feminism or, more so, the perception of the Third Wave by its predecessors, as well as the persistent misrepresentation of feminism by mass culture. A great amount of speculation exists about the movement of feminism since the heyday of the Second Wave. While the tension between Second Wave and Backlash seems to stem from two conflicting opinions, the tension between Second and Third Wave takes on a parent-child relationship. What seems to have been handed over to the Third Wave is in actuality being dealt with simultaneously by both groups. The difference that seems to create friction is the approach each group takes to these issues, each with differing historical contexts.

The subjects of this discussion of the Third Wave agenda are Bust and Bitch Magazine. While Bust Magazine is a feminist parody of more conventional, mass-media magazines, such as Cosmopolitan, Glamour, Vogue, and, for younger women, Seventeen, Bitch Magazine is a self-titled critique of popular culture that physically stays close to its zine roots. The significance of these two choices is their proximity to both mainstream publications and small press zines. As it blurs the lines between magazine genres, this duality helps to establish a space for feminist growth.

This paper will show that both magazines function within a Third Wave perspective, embody the goals and ideals of the Third Wave, and work as politically
empowering sources for contemporary Third Wave Feminists. They also embody the basic concept of zine feminism in their construction and content. In doing so, these two magazines are in the process of creating an alternative female visual representation through a postmodern fracturing of imagery and also work to create a Third Wave Feminist terminology that, despite existing in the space of media, is actively resisting restrictive patriarchal language.

Linguistically, though Bust and Bitch Magazine may not necessarily offer up new academic terminology in their wordplay, they are resisting the assumed writing standards for magazines. Although, both magazines provide visual aid for their readers, thus perpetuating the process of learning how to "gaze" at oneself, it also functions as a forum for female agency. Women see fragments of the female body and, by virtue of this fragmentation, are forced to put the picture together, hence their own interpretation. They begin to read visualization more actively, engaging in the process of their own bodily socialization.

The feminist significance of these magazines and in this analysis is the attention paid to how each group continues to function as a feminist entity; however, more important is the ultimate discussion of where the feminist movement as a whole needs to go. What seems to continue to be a point of contention for feminists and non feminists alike is the connotation of "feminism" both linguistically and conceptually. For this reason, the greater issue is not whether these publications are truly feminist or if the Third Wave is fulfilling feminist ideals, but how feminism is being presented, where it diverges from Second Wave ideas and the significance of this divergence.
THIRD WAVE LANGUAGE IN BUST AND BITCH MAGAZINE

by

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Establishing a Feminist Reference

Where does feminism fall in contemporary American culture? Has it lost its relevance as a result of waning interest in feminist politics? In today's feminist troupe, a culture of inheritance has stepped into many of the advantages the Second Wave pushed so hard to acquire. What becomes the point of contention is the approach these inheritors now take to feminism or, more so, the perception of the Third Wave by its predecessors, as well as the persistent misrepresentation of feminism by mass culture. While it seems the "F" word continues to retain an unapproachable, if not negative connotation for many, feminism, or more explicitly Second Wave feminism, seems to continue as the immediate association of the term with the agenda of the feminist movement. While not entirely problematic, as there is a great value to a multiplicity of feminisms in contemporary society, failing to recognize or, perhaps more importantly, differentiate other feminisms from the ever-present Second Wave ideals narrows the possibilities of feminist work. This analysis will focus mainly on a Third Wave agenda, yet the interaction of the waves will be considered as a look toward the future of feminisms in American culture.

A great amount of speculation exists about the movement of feminism since the heyday of the Second Wave. Admittedly, it seems rather difficult to clearly label the shifts as well as define their intentions. A very basic breakdown of feminist waves would indicate the Second Wave working through the 70's, a Postfeminist/Backlash Wave initiating and ending within the 80's, and, depending on the source, a Third Wave developing in the late 80's, early 90's through the present.
There is even the discussion of the passing of the Third Wave and subsequent development of a Fourth Wave, but for the purpose of this discussion, I will be adhering to a three wave standard.

Even within the three wave model, conflicting definitions of individual feminist groups, as well as the waves themselves, require clarification prior to any analysis of texts. Amanda D. Lotz, in her essay “Communicating Third-Wave Feminism and New Social movements: Challenges for the Next Century of Feminist Endeavor,” explores the different subcategories of both the Second and Third Wave. In this essay, she establishes three different groups, which she encompasses within the realm of the Third Wave. Her first grouping consists of what is commonly referred to as the Backlash. Lotz attributes the antagonistic view of feminism today to this Backlash movement in the 80's, or what she calls "reactionary third wave feminism," arguing that though there seems to be value to some of the statements made by this group, ultimately the focus is too much on direct criticism of the Second Wave and not a critique of the current problems surrounding feminism. Although, connecting this perspective to the Third Wave does suit my use of Third Wave, Lotz' corresponding groups seem to better embody what I feel are the characteristics of Third Wave feminism.

The remaining two categories are broken into the multi-appellation title, Women-of-Color Feminist/Third-Wave Feminists/Third-World Feminists and the singular, Postfeminism. The former group demands that attention is paid to plurality of feminism within the broader, singular term "feminism"; while the latter, as Lotz states, "is a critical engagement with earlier feminist political and theoretical concepts
and strategies as a result of its engagement with other social movements for change" that "addresses the complicated theoretical developments such as poststructuralism."(5). In this argument, these two groups work as one to reveal and analyze racial, sexual, and social differences within the general Third Wave as well as create a forum for recognition of the multiplicity of Third Wave.

Perhaps what Lotz best reveals is the unfortunate tendency to associate the reactionary backlash with Third Wave. She sees the Third Wave as a valuable resource providing "theoretical tools that allow for multiple and varied feminist positions and activism in the same moment," which is not the function of the highly critical backlash or postfeminism, as it is commonly known. Although her identification of this group is seemingly counterproductive, as it does continue to associate reactionary feminism with the Third Wave, her interpretation of the Third Wave, minus the reactionary group, does offer a more copasetic interaction with the Second Wave. As Lotz points out, "the development of its [the Third Wave] ideals should not be viewed as a backlash against or erasure of various second-wave feminists" (7). Instead, the Third Wave functions perhaps more accurately as the offspring of the Second Wave, which is not to say the backlash has made no impact on the Third Wave. Indeed, it seems that Third Wave is addressing many of the issues brought forth by the backlash; however, the Third Wave perspective, through which these problems are addressed, are more sympathetic than critical to the Second Wave perspective.

At the same time, the tension between the Second and Third Waves cannot be ignored, although I am not going to be placing a great amount of emphasis on it.
While the tension between Second Wave and Backlash seems to stem from two conflicting opinions, the tension between Second and Third Wave takes on a parent-child relationship. In other words, while Second Wavers may be "too quick to dismiss the potential of third-wave thinking," Third Wave/Reactionary Feminists have been "too quick to accept new theories as tools to discredit second wave ideas" (Lotz 7). I would argue that the motivation of the Third Wave is less about discrediting Second Wave ideas and more about establishing the Third Wave as a valid group worthy of serious consideration by Second Wave Feminists.

If the two do occupy a space of parent-child, where there is an underlying amount of mutual respect regardless of generational tensions, then the differences between the two waves need to be considered. The task of definitively identifying differences between the waves at once returns back to Lotz' previous statement on generational differences. However, this poses a problem in that declaring certain agendas and perspectives Second or Third wave seems always to invoke a disagreement by either wave. According to Lotz, "Third-wave feminism departs from what was the core of second-wave liberal feminism on a key ideological issue. Where the second-wave liberal and cultural approaches sought to unify diverse women by appealing to a universal sisterhood, third-wave activists recognize the racist, heterosexist, classist and other implications of the erasure of difference" (6). This statement is in some ways problematic because it seems to ignore any effort on the part of the Second Wave to address issues of diversity, while at the same time implies no possible unification by the Third Wave. Lotz poses an alternative theory in which the major difference in the political activities of the waves is the shift from a singular
representation of women to a seemingly more fragmented, postmodernist approach:

Second, new social movements are often loosely constructed and fragmented rather than centralized and bounded movements. Ruud Koopmans (1996) describes this organization as 'a switch from clustered, unidimensional, but often highly involving patterns of participation to 'post-modern,' more fragmented, multi-dimensional, but also less binding patterns of participation" (p. 28). (7).

The result in this case is greater empowerment, despite a seemingly less efficient method, because it resists the idealism of one visual/intellectual group labeled feminist and the subsequent alienation of fringe groups who do not feel connected to this agenda. As Lotz points out, "collective actions remain essential to third-wave feminist activism; however an expectation that participants agree on all issues is not part of this construction of collectivity, which is instead based on acknowledging the various positions of power various people occupy" (7).

Jennifer Purvis analyzes unification as well as intergenerational tensions between the waves, but suggests a more utilitarian explanation of contemporary feminism. Although, as Lotz states, "some scholars and activists have considered the transition from second to third wave feminism as defined by a generational shift because many of the women writing as third-wave feminists are too young to have experienced second-wave feminist activism," Purvis sees it more as a body of thought than matter of age (1). For Purvis, feminism needs to break with a chronological
perspective that becomes a critical point of tension and judgment of each wave by the other. Instead, we need to consider the space as a body of thought with the each wave occupying it as differing approaches to the issues surrounding women and feminism today. She states:

By replacing the strict historical categories of first, second, and third waves with strategic positionalities- first, second, and third wave signifying spaces- it is possible to combine the efforts to gain access to the rights and opportunities of existing society (first wave) with efforts to revalorize that which has been previously degraded or relegated to the margins (second wave) in a third space that combines all the useful and meaningful approaches of feminisms in a mutually informed and informing moment (third wave) (Purvis 10).

Purvis' theory of bodies of thought rather than generations alleviates a certain amount of tension when attempting to link certain feminist ideas to a corresponding group. Although it seems to be a valuable method- for resisting categorization, ultimately Purvis' argument still calls for a partitioning of Third Wave from Second.

With this in mind, it is important to establish some of the "inheritance" of the Third Wave. By using the term "inheritance", I am at once invoking both the generational imagery of feminism and Purvis' idea of the various bodies of thought. The Third Wave has inherited "strategies to fight sexual harassment, domestic abuse, the wage gap, and the pink-collar ghetto of low-wage issues" (21). In addition, issues specific to the Third Wave have arisen, such as:
...equal access to the Internet and technology, HIV/AIDS awareness, child abuse, self-mutilation, globalization, eating disorders, and body image (witness the preponderance of Third Wave feminist writing that centers on the last issue, from *The Beauty Myth* in 1991 to *Adios, Barbie* in 1998 and a handful of recently published anorexia memoirs) Sexual health is of special concern to young women, because we now tend to have more partners and to be more sexually active at a younger age (and are more likely than not to have a sexually transmitted disease) The choice of whether to have a baby is under siege for our generation (21).

What seems to have been handed over to the Third Wave, is in actuality being dealt with simultaneously by both groups. The difference that seems to create friction is the approach each group takes to these issues, each with differing historical contexts. At the same time, the inherited issues have not been marginalized as passe or "solved," rather it seems the Third Wave is attempting to continue to address these issues while recognizing the ever-growing complexities of their worlds and confronting the contemporary issues that challenge young women today.

It seems only logical, at this point, to introduce the subjects of this discussion of the Third Wave agenda, which for the purposes of this argument are *Bust* and *Bitch Magazine*. While *Bust Magazine* is a feminist parody of more conventional, mass-media magazines, such as *Cosmopolitan, Glamour, Vogue*, and, for younger women, *Seventeen*, *Bitch Magazine* is a self-titled critique of popular culture that physically
stays close to its zine roots. The significance of these two choices is their proximity to both mainstream publications and small press zines. As it blurs the lines between magazine genres, this duality helps to establish a space for feminist growth.

Mass media, otherwise referred to as “mainstream media,” falls into the position of education as well as entertainment that, in the world of written language, is traditionally light reading. Magazines fit directly into the realm of light reading as well as a form of education, something that I will discuss more in depth in the linguistic section of this argument. Popular culture, on the other hand, is “the result of a continuing interaction between those industries [industries that disseminate cultural material] and the people of the society who consumer their products” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popular_culture). There are elements of each of these in both publications; however, what is more important for this argument is their intended audience: young, feminists. More specifically, the intended consumer is the Third Wave feminist, which in age ranges from early twenties to late thirties/early forties (Baumgardner and Richards). This audience can and does vary to include older, younger, or decidedly male consumers, but the core targeted audience are those women who have been born into the advantages of the Second Wave.

Baumgardner and Richards state that "what young feminist-minded people often lack is a coherent declaration that can connect the lives of individual women to the larger history of our movement" (18). Perhaps what also needs to be considered is the absence of tangible connections for new and young feminists to previous pools of feminist thought. Bust and Bitch Magazine, although considered by as Baumgardner and Richards "Jell-O- shots versions of feminism," seem to be working
to bridge this gap between Second and Third Wave by mixing contemporary issues with historical references to past feminist struggles (xix). In a statement that seems to agree with Lotz, Jennifer Purvis writes, in her essay on the intergenerational tensions between Second and Third wavers, that “the third wave reflects an awareness that any attempts to bring feminisms to totalizing unity are prone to failure because they are annihilating and dishonest” (3). With their diversity in issues and layouts, *Bust* and *Bitch* function as proponents of this idea. Instead of creating one or two kinds of feminism, these two publications work to create a space much like the one Purvis suggests, a space where there is a meeting of the plurality of feminisms.

Both pieces are self-proclaimed Third Wave feminist magazines with Third Wave Feminist zine roots, with *Bust Magazine*, just a step out of zine level and *Bitch*, still hovering in limbo between zine and magazine. This paper will show that both magazines function within a Third Wave perspective, embody the goals and ideals of the Third Wave, and work as politically empowering sources for contemporary Third Wave Feminists. They also embody the basic concept of zine feminism in their construction and content. In doing so, these two magazines are in the process of creating an alternative female visual representation through a postmodern fracturing of imagery and also work to create a Third Wave Feminist terminology that, despite existing in the space of media, is actively resisting restrictive patriarchal language.
Before analyzing the effects of *Bust* and *Bitch*, it is necessary to engage in a discussion of exactly what zines are and where these two publications fit into the spectrum. In "Zine and Heard: Fringe Feminism and the Zines of the Third Wave," drawing from her own experiences as a publisher of her own zine, *Debutante Gone Wrong*, M. L. Fraser works to give a definitive answer to the question: What is a zine? For their tenure in print, *Bust* and *Bitch* are in a space that is slightly closer to the realm of magazines or as Fraser calls it, "big sisters." She differentiates them from newer, smaller zines by labeling them "glossies" or older, more enduring zines; however, in some ways *Bust* and *Bitch* have not broken from their zine roots.

Fraser defines a zine through three criteria: "(1) the writings must be self-published. (2) the slant must be the personal voice remarking on the political; and (3) the subject matter must use pop culture in some way to create a statement of identity. Often the zine has a tongue-in-cheek tone and a 'cut-n-paste' format"(6). If these criteria are applied to *Bust* and *Bitch*, both of them continue to meet all three requirements. An emphasis is still placed on self-generated works and a small-staff. In particular, the voice of the essays, more so the language of the entire publication, is spoken through the personal, the individual voice. At the same time, both publications utilize a patchwork layout that resists those of conventional magazines.

Dana Collins presents a more structurally focused explanation in her essay, "'No Experts: Guaranteed!': Do-It-Yourself Sex Radicalism and the Production of the
Zines are distinguished from conventional publications in that they embrace a rough, self-motivated presentation of ideas and images. They experiment with contents and format to reject conventions of mainstream publications and challenge political orthodoxies of all types (Austin and Gregg 1993; Vale 1996). [...] They experiment with writing styles, cartoons, designs, pranks, and political diatribes that are not intended to please, and in some cases are constructed to shock, the readership (Collins 68).

Collins' explanation begins to think about how zines are effective. Ultimately, she also points out a significant aspect of the zine which is the element of these magazines that reject a please-all agenda. Unlike conventional magazines, zines purposely work to disrupt their readers' awareness and prompt individual action. Collins argues:

In other words, the D.I.Y. [Do-It-Yourself] ethic encourages active participation in the production of critical beliefs and practices in place of passive acceptance or consumption of established political norms or representational media. Zines subvert mainstream publications' focus on commercial images and instead center individual, critical, and/or creative concerns and pose challenges to the boundaries of what is deemed legitimately political (68).
Both magazines use the visual and linguistic components to challenge assumptions of conventional magazines' ideas of the female experience and normative political views. The latter not only emphasizes the lack of political action in conventional magazines, but also challenges the feminist idea of political. As Collins argues, it is not simply the involvement of politics in a magazine, but also engaging the generational assumptions that are being made within the feminist realm which dictate political and apolitical topics.

It is this issue of content that prompts analysis of *Bust* and *Bitch* as active Third Wave productions. How is it that the individual voice and D.I.Y. aspects promote the politics of the Third Wave? Focused on feminist-oriented zines, in particular *Bust* and *Bitch* magazines, Fraser argues: "A true zine is serious about the issues, yet also has a sense of humor and fun. It is a reclaiming of girlhood and an examination of what it can mean to be female. In these zines the rage and anger we feel as gendered individuals are allowed to mix with laughter and joy" (Fraser 6). Collins takes this one step farther, arguing that:

Zines grapple with the fact that strategies of representation can neither effectively represent the real nor be relied on to promote cohesive political projects, and zine producers turn instead to the representational strategies developed through the youth culture interventions, anarchist, and 'Do-It-Yourself' (D.I.Y.) zine production projects..."(67).

What seems to be a prominent factor of both of these explanations is the idea of the
individual "writing" her experiences. Whereas Fraser seems to focus more on the integration of positive and negative female experience, Collins tackles the complex issue of representation. In this analysis of *Bust* and *Bitch Magazine*, both elements are essential to the overall interpretation of the works. The collage of the visual and linguistic attempts to balance the multiplicity of the female experience, while at the same time works to provide a more accurate representation of the Third Wave woman.

Fraser's final criteria about forming an identity through the use of pop culture, brings attention to the political element of these publications. *Bust* and *Bitch's* heavy focus on pop culture seems to devalue their status as feminist; however, in actuality, it is the manifestation of the Third Wave as a political function. Fraser states that:

> American women are fighting a battle on two fronts, and the one being fought here is in response to the dominant pop culture. The popular is presented as political, too. We don't just want to throw out 'girly' things because feminists have seen them as subversive; we want to recycle and reclaim those 'female' things that are pleasurable. Thus, 'girl pleasure' and feminism don't have to be seen as dissonant.

By integrating political with feminine issues that have been viewed in the past as apolitical, *Bust* and *Bitch* are asking their readers and feminists in general to reconsider their concepts of political. By doing this in the realm of popular culture and media, they are working to claim privileged space within the media culture that
has functioned thus far as an oppressive, and as the backlash has proven, dangerous force for the feminist movement.

Content is the focus of this analysis because as both Fraser and Collins have indicated, it is the content that acts "as an interrogation of accessibility to 'truth' by explicitly questioning how truths are represented, read, and policed" (Collins 84). More specifically for this discussion, it is how the content functions together to create a Third Wave feminist dialogue within the pages. For this purpose, the analysis of these two magazines will be divided into two parts: visual and linguistic. Within these two sections, this analysis hopes to reveal how the visual elements "are sites of confrontation, exploration, and change" and how the linguistic elements, "expose the contradictions inherent in experience and in reflexive negotiations of identity and politics"(Collins 80). Finally, I hope to prove that within the visual elements of *Bust* and *Bitch*, there is a deconstruction of the female image, which results in a fragmentation that eliminates dominant female magazine imagery, and through language, the magazines resist dominant assumptions of the female experience by creating a female language through wordplay.
Female Representation and the Visual Effect of Bust and Bitch

"The point of feminism's third wave, is that our comfortable assumptions ought to be destabilized, opening up our thinking" (Lynn 214).

In multiple ways, both Bust and Bitch work to destabilize the very nature of magazines. They work from their zine backgrounds, together as whole works to challenge the function of a magazine as well as our assumptions. The disruption of the comfort level with a magazine and ultimately readers' assumptions about the content begins with the visual affect of the magazine. Susan Sontag indirectly interrogates the visual parts of these magazines in her essay, "Against Interpretation," where she addresses the power of the visual image. She states that "real art has the capacity to make us nervous. By reducing the work of art to its content and then interpreting that, one tames the work of art. Interpretation makes art manageable, comfortable" (430). Bust and Bitch although perhaps not serious works of art, function in the same space in that their effectiveness as disruptive entities lies in their untamed presentation. Through interpretation, they become a secure feminist space. Simultaneously, the very process of interpretation causes the reader to think/rethink preexisting assumptions.

For this discussion of visual culture in general and the visual images created by these two publications, I turned to theorist Susan Bordo and her work Unbearable Weight. Despite her specific focus on such body altering diseases as anorexia and bulimia, Bordo's general focus is the female body as it is influenced by the media.
What stands out as an important message in her work, one that ultimately connects directly to my analysis of the visual aspects of *Bust* and *Bitch*, is her refusal to write women as passive victims of visual media. Bordo acknowledges both the inclination to view women as receptacles of social input, as well as the subsequent need not to further marginalize women by removing them from the socialization process. In other words, although it seems that women are passive receivers of social conditioning, they are a part of a socializing system, in which they need to be *active* participants not *absent* entities. Instead, Bordo posits that women should be aware of their position within socialization so to better their ability to control how their identities are subsequently formed.

In addition, Bordo discusses a victimization of women by dominant culture via media while at the same time expressing the agency that this process offers women. Far from claiming idealism with active participation, she recognizes both the advantages of women’s involvement in their identity as well as a continued need to alter the system. There is the need to both *include* and *activate* women’s roles in visual culture. The “goal is edification, an understanding, enhanced consciousness of the power, complexity, and systematic nature of culture, the interconnected webs of its functioning” (Bordo 30). By raising their awareness of the possible use and/or manipulation of their bodies through visualization, women will better be able to make their decisions.

In the Third Wave zine realm, active female involvement and awareness seems to have more to do with a postmodern fracturing of the singular image and revealing multiplicity than it does playing with complete images of women. It is not
just a matter of filling in the missing blanks, whether that be racial or bodily. Instead, it seems to want to take on popular culture’s fracturing of the female body by asserting this process as a possibility for empowerment.

This splintering effect is significant for the visualization of the Third Wave feminist body because it delves into a space where women are taught about the social expectations of themselves and their bodies: “through routine, habitual activity, our bodies learn what is 'inner' and what is 'outer,' which gestures are forbidden and which are required, how violable or inviolable are the boundaries of our bodies, how much space around the body may be claimed, and so on” (Bordo 16). Changes can be made by using the visual media the same way it is potentially used against them because of the duality of the space. What has now become a space of social dictation may also have the possibility for being a place of education and awareness. Routine here becomes the constant participation in media culture, the constant infiltration of visual musts.

The visual media is a central element in this process because it has infiltrated as many public and private spaces as economically and technologically possible. In the past, Bordo suggests that this conditioning process could be directly linked back mainly to personal interactions a.k.a. a caretaker or educator. Today, she insists that this role has been taken over by visual culture: "We are no longer given verbal descriptions or exemplars of what a lady is or of what femininity consists. Rather, we learn the rules directly through bodily discourse: through images that tell us what clothes, body shape, facial expression, movements, and behavior are required" (170). Magazines are now a vast resource for visual instruction, thus also a space for
resistance against normative images. For the Third Wave, this medium provides an effective forum for resistance, despite concerns in the beginning of the movement of whether or not feminists had learned how to harness the power of technology, particularly that which is used against them. Arguably effective media manipulation remains to be a problem, though *Bust* and *Bitch*, in particular, seem to be making vital progress in the world of print media.

Instead of demanding a separation from popular culture, these magazines work within the system to create a space that women can look to for better awareness in their decisions, which may begin with fashion but ultimately shift toward more politically-minded subjects. These publications also offer up the "could" in the equation of the female experience, contrasting the instructive nature of popular visual media with the open-ended quality of zines.

Bordo’s analysis of general magazine images needs to be considered in order to investigate how *Bust* and *Bitch* are in turn resisting normative images. She examines the two prevalent issues of visual culture, which are relevant to the work in *Bust* and *Bitch*, concluding that representations in everyday media homogenize the female image:

In our culture, this means smoothing out all racial, ethnic, and sexual 'differences' that disturb Anglo-Saxon, heterosexual expectations and identifications. Certainly high-fashion images may contain touches of exotica: collagen-plumped lips or corn rows on white models, Barbara Streisand noses, 'butch' styles of dress. [...] But such elements will either be
explicitly framed as exotica or, within the overall system of meaning, they will not be permitted to overwhelm the representation and establish a truly alternative or 'subversive' model of beauty or success. (White models may collagen their lips, but black models are usually light-skinned and Anglo-featured.) a definite (albeit not always fixed or determinate) system of boundaries sets limits on the validation of 'difference' (25).

Second, representations normalize, "that is they function as models against which the self continually measures, judges, 'disciplines,' and 'corrects' itself" (Bordo 25). What then needs to happen inside Bust and Bitch is a resistance to both the homogenizing and the normalizing of the female image. Though I argue that both magazines fulfill each of these requirements, counteracting the homogenization and normalization of standard fashion magazines, each publication accomplishes this by targeting a different audience. The more academically oriented Bitch presents a decidedly different female display of sketches and black and white photography, while the more fashion-savy Bust is front to back glossy color.

How do Bust and Bitch create a feminist body of text that resists normative images? How does this text, in turn, function as a destabilizing agent? The fragmentation of the female image, the entwining of object and sexuality destabilizes socially established gender roles and expectations. As one image can no longer stand for many, it is left to the individual to create her image. Bordo defines postmodernism as "the contemporary inclination toward the unstable, fluid, fragmented, indeterminate, ironic, and heterogeneous, for that which resists definition, closure,
and fixity" (38). As Third Wave productions, both *Bust* and *Bitch* embody a postmodern imagery of fragmented, yet fluid female imagery.

The body, according to Bordo, is the text that is read culturally, while at the same time, it is always a space written by culture. She writes that, "it seems, the body that we experience and conceptualize is always mediated by constructs, associations, images of a cultural nature" (Bordo 35). Similar to Camilia Paglia’s theory that women have resisted bodily objectification, turning it into empowering "subjectification," these two publications resist the normative and homogenizing fragmentation of fashion magazines by integrating positive female imagery with pro-women content. Also like Paglia, who states that, “showing herself in sexual ways makes a women feel powerful and men powerless, there are positive examples of women’s ‘subjectification.’ These women aren't objects, because they hold the power,” *Bust* and *Bitch* embrace sexuality in a way that encourages personal fulfillment through involvement with the process of writing their bodies and sexuality.

Foucault’s theory of power helps to understand how the images of the magazines resist because he addresses how media influence and power is so pervasive. His theory is significant because it places power and the possibility for resistance in the hands of the individual:

For Foucault, modern [...] power is non-authoritarian, non-conspiratorial, and indeed non-orchestrated; yet it nonetheless produces and normalizes bodies to serve prevailing relations of dominance and subordination. [...] First, we must
cease to imagine 'power' as the possession of individuals or groups-- as something people 'have'-- and instead see it as a dynamic or network of non-centralized forces. Second, we must recognize that these forces are not random or haphazard, but configure to assume particular historical forms, within which certain groups and ideologies do have dominance (Bordo 26).

In other words, power is not enforced from the powers above, but instead is from below where, according to Foucault, individuals discipline themselves with "an inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorizing to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual this exercising this surveillance over, and against himself" (Bordo 27). The personal gaze then becomes the power in charge, the dictating force manipulating the individual and at the same time singular power is diffused into multiple sources, like the many locations of visual culture. As readers of these images, we internalize the information given to us both consciously and unconsciously and then act upon them. The advantage of this visual synthesis is that it creates a variety of places for resistance to emerge. For the a Third Wave feminist, it works with the fractured, fluidity of postmodernism developing a space for possibility and empowerment, where the individual can actively participate in the creation of her social bodily text. For *Bust* and *Bitch*, this theory recognizes how shifting the visual message can foster a resistant gaze.
Location: Where is this happening?

Looking now at the work being done in *Bust* and *Bitch Magazine*, there are two major visual techniques found: photographs and sketches. Seen in both essay layouts and advertisement sections, these two representations of women encompass not only the bodily form, but also interests. The reader is infiltrated with the female physical form, the many variations of femininity in clothing and fashion accoutrements. It isn't, however, a number of full pictures that asks the reader to interpret, but is rather a mishmash of fragments that one must piece together. *Bust* and *Bitch* take the little pieces of women, female sexuality and feminism and toss them into layouts. The result seems to be a resistance against a uniform reading. The fragmentation of the female experience as well as the female image does not lend itself to being rearranged in a "correct" manner. Instead, the reader sees the variety in the whole female experience, the multiplicity of the Third Wave perspective.

Photographs offer up a seemingly "real" encapsulation of the female experience. Essays as well as advertisements seem clarified by pictures of products and the woman involved. The photo offers up a frame of reality insofar that it is an imprint of life on film, captured as the subject and photographer would like it to be. Sketches function in much the same way; however, they provide a more zine-like, rough quality in their appearance. The cartoon or sketch brings in a different type of reality of female representation. It allows for more than just the physical form of a woman in its "homemade" interpretation.

While sketches may seem to have a more authentic personal female
perspective, both photographs and sketches work to create a female image. More importantly, the work of visualization is a creation of art, which as Sontag has pointed out is an object subject to reduction and interpretation. It is necessary that both photographs and sketches work to resist norms and disrupt the comfort levels of their readers, thus forcing them to interact with the content of the magazines.

Visual disruption seems to be the rationale behind the layouts of *Bust* Magazine. As it actively attempts to mimic standard fashion magazines, there is a mixture of the political, the personal, and the sexual with the seemingly frivolous and ultra-feminine. The table of contents page of *Bust* includes a fashion model shot of an Asian women in a retro skirt outfit and, just above a black and white photo of the actress Sandra Oh, a color, scenic mountain shot with a yellow sketch superimposed over it, an independent Grrrl Band, a girl who climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro and out of her depression in the process, and finally a middle-aged female truck driver with her truck. On the next page, there is a shot of a woman's torso, leg and arm. Covering her midsection is a skimboard and, in the background, a beach. Underneath this color photo is a color sketch of Kirstie Alley as "Fat Actress." She is sitting in a bra with a look of determination, eating two people on a plate. The essay on Alley is featured opposite a Hawaiian shirt turned skirt recipe and an insert with a color sketch of a red-headed lawyer, talking about how to deal with customer service issues and big businesses.

A different layout mixes a color shot of "literary aerobics," a group of college girls sporting pink hair, eighties-style pink tights and legwarmers, arm warmers, and bandanas. Underneath is a black and white shot of Greta Garbo, with a coinciding
Greta pop quiz. Opposite is a color photo of singer/songwriter, Aimee Mann.

Following that layout is an essay about female blue-collar worker rights with a color sketch of a fierce-looking girl in a hardhat and tools; a hand-colored black and white photo of a woman in the bath that asks "Are you confident?" about your cruelty-free bath products; an advertisement for a kitschy gift emporium; and one for a Laura Cantrell album. One spread offers up safety jewelry with a color photo of a fist displaying their version of brass knuckles that also functions as a silver ring.

A political sketch of a Muslim woman covered except for her eyes shows a thinking bubble of the woman as superwoman in a black head covering. Next to it is the history of rouge with a colorful array of rouges. Then, there is a color sketch of a woman flying her couch across the major international sites in the travel section.

Later a forensic scientist poses above a color sketch of legs running from bugs in the DIY bug spray section, while next to it a naked, except for a necklace, woman's neck and chest sells jewelry. A collage sells homemade clothing and accessories, in particular naughty latch hook kits alongside a sock advertisement featuring socked feet and legs. Finally, a woman in a plain white t-shirt with a hanger on it boasts "all handmade! all handloved baby!"

I have documented the selections as they are seen in an effort to recreate the somewhat chaotic organization, which is the very site of disruption for the readers. As a whole, this is a list of all things female and feminist, but to "organize" these or reduce them to easily managed parts requires that the reader first begin to think about the reasoning for their placement, the significance of each picture or sketch and how they connect to their written counterparts.
A look at the fashion section of June/July 2005 offers up a plethora of model body types and races. A short Asian woman models in the street and, once again, against a wall while a white girl, with a noticeable belly, poses barefoot on a fountain next to a tall, skinny model-like woman. The April/May 2005 issue presents an even more resistant visual body. Both models, one black one white, seem to be at least a size 10, full-figured with definite "curves." In other words, they are full-breasted with wide shoulders, hips, and rounded stomachs. By mixing these female bodies, Bust works to present the many differences of the natural female form, and this eliminates the hierarchy of thinness and reduces it to an equal plane. By including the typical sized model, it isn't a backlash against the standard image of women in fashion. Instead of condemning thin, white woman by failing to represent them within the pages of Bust's fashion sections, it instead asks the reader to consider all women in fashion and the unease that is experienced with seeing a larger body type or different racial model.

Bitch employs a similar mishmash of pictures and sketches, although the focus is not as much the visualization of women in the photographic sense, but a recreation and distortion of the female image via sketch. Truer to its zine personality, this magazine contains some black and white photos, but more emphasis seems to be placed on hand-drawn images. Beginning with its cover in issues 22 and 27, Bitch presents a collage-like imagery. Issue 22 is themed "Family," so on the cover there is a simulated scrapbook format. Two family pictures are displayed prominently, one white family from the early 1900's and one Indian family from the 1970's. Framing the families are fragmented pictures of a school picture torso, a couple's bodies from
the neck down, and half of a child's head. With the theme "Home and Away," issue 27 pieces together a house with vintage slide discs for picture viewers, pictures of people and homes, as well as a map.

Each theme seems to be asking the reader to think about her own conceptions prior to opening the magazine and reading the selected topics. Once inside, the black and white layouts, which are no different than Bust’s with the exception of the addition of academic journal advertisements, do not draw attention as unconsciously as the color photos of Bust.

Bitch seems to rely on its verbal imagery to create its representation of female identity and sexuality. While there is certainly not an absence of photographs and sketches, the majority are not features in and of themselves. Rather, they function as small snips of clarification for the reader. It would seem that this would not be a significant factor in representing women, but where the visual imagery invokes the female body in its physical and emotional manifestation, the verbal imagery politicizes the female body. It creates an ever shifting, border-free female body that speaks as a bodily figure as well as an intellectual. What is the advantage of the lesser play? As previously stated, the verbal imagery allows a reader to form the body in her own way, but perhaps it also allows a better appropriation of the ideas presented in the essays. Without a face placed there to guide the reader, the female image takes on an omnisexual, omnipresent form.
The Ads: how do they contribute to the creation of this image of Third Wave?

Fraser addresses a major concern for most zine producers: the financial aspect of business. Advertisements are normally a definitive method for raising money, but as Fraser points out, "many zinemakers refuse advertisers who they feel are subversive or anathema to the zine's political views." In other words, unlike conventional magazines where ads represent a flow of money to the publication and can dictate the contents of the publication, zines do not function as moneymakers. Rather, they are idea mediums; therefore, advertisements must reflect the politics of the publication and not necessarily support the zine. In fact, zines function as free resources or on a minimal surplus budget. Like most zines, *Bust* and *Bitch* maintain a certain variety of advertisements within their pages. Although not completely ad free, these two publications stay close to their zine roots, featuring only academic presses, indie businesses. As well, their advertisements are not the major financial resource of the publication and so function fully within the overall visual image of the magazine.

The difference between the two is the amount of ads found as well as the use of color. *Bitch* seems to maintain closer ties to its zine origins by keeping the cover completely black and white. The result is a more homemade, self-processed look, but how does this in turn affect the perceptions of the complete magazine? *Bust*, on the other hand, is a full color print, including most of the advertisements, although, as I have previously stated, the actual ads do not vary much from one publication to the other.

The advertisements do keep with the fragmentation of the female image, even
in the sections completely dedicated to advertisements. In fact, these sections perhaps may fragment femininity, politics, and sexuality better because they include minimal writing for clarification. As a result, the interpretation of their layouts rest mainly on the piecing together of their photographs or sketches.
Seeking a Suitable Language of Expression: Third Wave Feminism and Zine Language

It is here that this discussion of Third wave feminism needs to continue as it pertains to the representation of women within Third Wave magazines. This paper has thus far analyzed how women are represented visually within these two magazines; however, there is another form of representation that is crucial to the vitality of the Third Wave movement and to the success of these two magazines. *Manifesta*, the self-proclaimed Third Wave feminist book, presents an issue of contention in the beginning of its discussion of the new feminism saying that, "To a degree, the lack of a Third Wave feminist terminology keeps us from building a potent movement, which is why we need to connect our pro-woman ethics to a political vision. And yet, even without the rip-roaring political culture that characterized the sixties and the seventies, Third Wave women are laying the groundwork for a movement of our own" (48). Linguistic representation is perhaps the most important function of the zine/ zine originated magazines for the advancement of the Third Wave movement because they work, in their small press productions, mainly with language. Like *Bitch Magazine*, academic or verbalized issues take precedent over the visualized women in fashion magazines. The visual aspect of these publications supplements the written one and helps to investigate how women are verbalized within these magazines.

In the scope of this discussion of Third Wave feminist zines, the writing of *Bust* and *Bitch* seems to be answering the call for a Third Wave language that, in a
very substantial way, differentiates from the Second Wave. The benefits of the development of such a language, as Manifesta points out, would be a clear distinction of the Third Wave as a legitimate and significant function within the greater feminist movement. At the same time, the development of a Third Wave female language would seem to support the Third Wave's claim to political potency by demonstrating an active resistance to the predominant social constructions of gender.

Deborah Cameron, in her work *Feminism and Linguistic Theory*, articulates the need to address linguistic difference, power, and the opportunity it affords the feminist movement, particularly the current Third Wave. As she discusses the lack of interest in the linguistics of feminism, she delves initially into the basic differences of gender and sex in language, explores the historical issues feminism has taken with language, and analyzes the possible solutions, which in this case center on her debate of an exclusive female language or action within the existing dominant language. For the purposes of this analysis, the focus will be mainly on Cameron's discussion of grammatical standards and the power implications. Also, I will utilize her historical information as a comparison with the language presented in *Bust* and *Bitch Magazine*.

Cameron seems to agree with the Second Wave emphasis on developing a dominant language that is more encompassing of female perspective, although she does not seem to want to pursue the extreme idea of an entirely female language that would exist separately from male language. In fact, she promotes almost the opposite, a female language that is derived from the existing structure, which is created by working to change existing conceptions and definitions. For this reclaiming of linguistic power, she suggests that:
Perhaps we can change the structures of subjectivity by changing the language through which subjectivity is constructed. Or, failing wholesale linguistic revolution, we can at least subvert the structures from within by placing more value on the 'marginal' in language. Thus a number of feminists who develop their theories from Lacanian ideas have called for women to speak and write in a way that emphasizes and celebrates their difference from men— a call which is sometimes expressed metaphorically in the idea of 'writing the body'. Implicit in this is the notion that marginality gives women who embrace their non-mainstream position a privileged access to novel and creative forms of expression (164).

Like Bordo’s call to recognize women as a part of the functioning of visual culture, Cameron acknowledges that we must work in some ways within the dominant language. More importantly, from this passage, the idea of “writing the body” seems to be the exact function of language within Bust and Bitch, third wave feminist language. Through the use of wordplay, both magazines utilize a linguistic method to disturb their readers' processing of the signifiers/signified relationship, while at the same time putting into existence the very bodies that seem to get lost in the gender neutrality favored today.

Barbara Johnson states in a discussion of feminism that "the question of gender is a question of language" (Lynn 37). In adopting the term "linguistic," I am applying the study of linguistics from a sociolinguistic perspective as well as that of a
stylistic linguistic. In other words, the way in which the language of the these publications will be interpreted is through a sociolinguistic lens, one that looks at "the effect of any and all aspects of society including cultural norms, expectations, and context, on the way language is used" and through a stylistic lens, which focuses on "the effect the writer/speaker wishes to communicate to the reader/hearer" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sociolinguistics). More specifically, it attempts to explain why certain language choices are made by groups and individuals, particularly for the production and reception of meaning.

Key to the analysis of the actual words used in Bust and Bitch, and ultimately the source of subjectivity, is a look at the power components that have been woven into language. Initially, feminists focused on the use of masculine pronouns and masculine-indicative words and phrases to suggest all genders, which addresses the assumption that it is not offensive or sexist. Or perhaps more accurately, that it is easier to simply insert masculinity as a broad term encompassing everyone's experience: "usages were thought to be in need of reform if they were blatantly offensive [...] or else androcentric, implying that the norm of humanity is male [...]. Reform usually meant avoiding offensive expressions and recasting androcentric ones so they become neutral (thus 'mankind' becomes 'humanity' and so on)" (Cameron 6). The erasure of the female experience by this linguistic habit needed to be reformed, and the solution at that point in the process was gender-neutral references. Although this change does correct the assumption that all that is powerful and important is male, as Cameron points out, it did not completely alleviate the issues of representing the female experience in language, "while neutral language may be less overtly
offensive than the kind it replaces, there is reason to suppose that it is often ineffective, in the sense that is does not really bring women into people's mental landscape at all" (120). Neutrality in many ways brings to language a similar ignorance as a male-favored language. It seems that the these two zines turned magazine have taken the need for specific female-created and female-indicative usage for the purpose of giving a name to the experiences of women and actively inserted it into their publications. This act of naming, or wordplay, in itself requires a recognition of uniquely female experiences by popular culture and by media culture because it refuses to comply with normative grammatical rules.

The use of wordplay itself is not a new method and in the instance of the third wave zine/zine turned magazine, it is manipulated into more than a simple call to attention to the prejudices of contemporary language. In one simultaneous motion, these magazines are infusing a Third Wave female experience into contemporary language and forcing readers to question established grammatical rules that are used to control language usage, and ultimately the power play in language, and their own preconceived definitions of words. The resulting friction that develops stems from the discomfort created in the disruption of the known. As Cameron points out, "It is an uneasy feeling that your words are not yours at all-- they have been somehow co-opted or taken away and turned against you. The feminist view of language has something in common with the feminist view of sexuality: it is a powerful resource that the oppressor has appropriated, giving back only the shadow which women need to function in a patriarchal society. From this point of view, it is crucial to reclaim language for women" (8). The function of Bust and Bitch's wordplay seems to fulfill
this need to reclaim language for women, but also to in turn present the general audience with that same feeling of unease, where they must confront a language that may not necessarily reflect their own experiences and process their own assumptions. By literally writing their own grammatical rules and definitions, these magazines are rejecting some of the usurpation of the female experience in language. Thus, they are working against the appropriation of the female experience by dominant culture.

What seems to be the common reaction to this bending of linguistic laws is the rejection of the legitimacy of the alterations made with the words. Cameron indicates the power play involved in this process, writing: "resistance to linguistic change is related to the way people think of language as a fixed point in the flux of experience, and cling to the certainties they feel are embodied in language" (23). A privileging of what is viewed, or referred to as, formal language puts the "informal" wordplay into an inferior role, where the work being done with the language seems to be seen merely as playing or fun. Only the security of the fixed language can be viewed as formal language that is to be read seriously. However, this in itself reveals a Foucaultian idea of power which asserts that the individual polices herself instead of a prevailing top-down power structure. Wordplay is rejected not necessarily by those who take a stance of expertise, but by individuals who adhere to the security of a seemingly stable language system. The “play” that is offered up with wordplay is the freedom to recognize language as it exists in more realistic, minority spaces. Wordplay then decenters the power structure, allowing us to express, as Cameron points out, what language actually does or means instead of what we are told it is supposed to do and how it is supposed to function.
To better understand how wordplay functions in the Third Wave space, it is important to consider its past influences, such as consciousness raising (CR). The political value of these zines' manipulation of language seems to have its roots planted firmly in the Second Wave's CR groups:

One of the most fundamental and most innovative feminist political activities of the time, consciousness raising (CR), was essentially a linguistic practice in which women talked to one another about their experiences. The idea behind CR is that when women come together to articulate personal experience they will discover common threads and come to perceive what they have thought of as personal problems and inadequacies to be shared conditions determined by social structures. This is the meaning of the famous feminist slogan 'the personal is political'" (Cameron 7).

The initial attacks on the exclusionary nature of standard language were an important aspect of Second Wave work. As it has been previously discussed, wordplay has not lost its relevancy in today's language. What we see among the pages of *Bust* and *Bitch* is this same process of CR in written language. Particular to the Third Wave and the zine, is the embodiment of the commonalities and the idiosyncrasies of the female experience that conventional fashion magazines either avoid completely or manipulate in a way that places the female reader into a space of bodily "needs improvement." Value is placed on the type of seemingly "informal" language, in the eyes of formal linguistics, as mere "'gossip', 'chit-chat', 'girls talk'" and written off as
such. But as Cameron points out, "Since in fact most women in most cultures interact primarily with other women, I think [it] must mean that women have been taught not to value this kind of interaction [...] It becomes threatening only when they do begin to value it" (Cameron 210). Thus, recognizing that within female language lies a great amount of power potential and this is accomplished mainly through the active valorization of the personal use of language. Adhering to their zine pasts, *Bust* and *Bitch* recognize this linguistic capability and capitalize on its effective impact on readers.

In *Bust*, the main examples of CR can be found within the essays, which are not as much playful linguistically as they are essential for establishing a female dialogue and community. Feature essays broach political and personal topics that are already familiar in addition to those that are less well known, but of potential interest to their feminist readership. For instance, Fiona Ng's essay "Shojo Girls" is about the possible obscure subgenre of the Japanese manga industry that explores the female experience:

For lovelorn girls, there's *Happy Mania*, a story about being single in the city. *Paradise Kiss* is a coming-of-age story about a girl who unwittingly becomes the center of the high-fashion world. Tackling social issues, *Confidential Confessions* is the *After School Special* of shojo: each volume deals with a different subject such as suicide, sexual harassment, or being HIV-positive (67).
Unlike the American comic book industry, which tended to encompass the "by guys for guys" mantra, in shojo "many of the struggles are depicted have to do with day-to-day issues of love, family responsibility, and identity" (Ng, 69; 66). The significance of this piece is more than just that this genre has been a part of Japanese anime and manga culture since the 1970's. Rather, the popularity of this culture in America has now prompted a surge in female-centered comics here in the U.S., and this essay in *Bust* brings recognition of both shojo and the U.S. version to the readership.

The mixture of topics is where a Third Wave ideology sets in. In *Bust*, the articles range from the lighter exploration of past social rules in Monica Hesse's "Etiquette Rules," to the religious realm in Amanda Coyne's more serious discussion of the current trend where American women are turning to a Muslim faith in, "Women Under Cover," and Sara Cook's experience with Christianity in contemporary society in "Who's Down with G.O.D.?" The conversation moves from Sharon Levine and her personal struggle with depression in "High Anxiety" to the informative historical essays such as: Colleen Kane's historical piece on female truck drivers in, "Mother Truckers," and Amy Dotson's historical piece on the All-American Women's Baseball League, "The Girls of Summer."

In between these conversations of perhaps more serious experiences are the highlights of famous feminists like comedian Amy Sedaris, actor Sandra Oh, and Comedian/Actor Rosie Perez, as well as new indie feminist artists. In addition, there are DIY subjects such as: Heather Menicucci's "Camping it Up," a guide for the female outdoor getaway; Jennifer Knapp's holiday recipes for homemade gifts in "Truly Gifted;" and ideas for day-jobs for aspiring female artists in Michelle
Goodman's "Wage Slave." What ultimately declares this mishmash of topics, Third Wave, is at once the focus on serious and humorous female experiences, as well as political and seemingly apolitical topics; but what makes this collage of stories a Third Wave version of CR is the personal perspective of the writer or subject and the focus on female agency. The women in the essays are actively doing, creating their own identities and taking control of their lives.

Though *Bust* is not as critically analytical of its subjects as *Bitch* tends to be, in *Bitch* the same mixed format can be found. There are the more serious essays, such as: Anna Clark's "Sentenced to Obscurity," which details the lives of female inmates; Danya Ruttenberg's look at the many meanings of religious clothing in, "Change of Dress;" an analysis of the pro-choice battle in Rebecca Hyman's "Tee and Sympathy;" Lily Devilliers' "Hitting Where It Hurts," which delves into domestic abuse and pop psychology; and finally Margaret Price's essay on the mainstreaming of gay parents in "Queer and Pleasant Danger."

There are also the more humorous essays such as: Melissa Morrison's essay, "Three's Company," on the phenomena of women in powerful groups of three in television and movies and from the masculinity issue; Judith Halberstam's "It's Reigning Men," which examines "Sausage-party politics and the rise of the dude, a panel of men and women discussing masculinity in "Five Conversations About One Thing;" and "Aimee Dowl's "Growing Pains," which discusses female facial hair. Yet, what seems to be found in smaller amounts, in the essay section, is the DIY element. This analysis of *Bitch* editions turns up just one DIY essay, "Wish You Were Here," which features five writers sharing their personal experiences with travel
and agency.

Despite the difference in length, these sections of the magazines provide the most crucial spaces for resistance. Nonstandard language is the ground of resistance for feminist wordplay as it involves a reclaiming of power infused in linguistics. The fact that *Bust* and *Bitch* place significant emphasis on wordplay reflects the need to break from what Muriel Schultz calls "the semantic derogation of women" (Cameron 108). The greater impact of this wordplay is ultimately the revaluation of women's culture, a reiteration of the significance of their experiences, and a reclaiming of once female-friendly, now pejorative words. According to Schults, "many insult terms for women have developed from originally unisex words (thus *harlot* once meant 'a young person') or endearments (*tart* was once as 'innocent' as *honey* or *sweetie*). But when words become associated with women, they take on negative and often sexual connotations. This kind of asymmetry can even be seen in pairs of originally parallel male and female terms, like *bachelor* and *spinsters* or *courtier* and *courtesan*. In each case (others would include *governor/governess, master/mistress*, even *tramp* (homeless man/loose woman)) the masculine term remains neutral while the feminine form undergoes derogation (Cameron 108).

The most obvious distortion of words within the pages of *Bust* and *Bitch* may seem to be the article titles, and they do play a significant role in the overall function of the magazine. It is the smaller details, the lesser reflected sections, aptly titled "Regulars" in *Bust*, that are a more significant factor in the creation of a new terminology for this feminist wave. Titles such as: Boy Du Jour, Shebonics, Broadcast, Eat Me, Herban Legend, Fashionista, BUST Test Kitchen, Sex Files,
News from a Broad, Museum of Femoribilia, Around the World in 80 Girls (Cop a Feel for the Girls of Copenhagen), Ask Aunt Betty, One-Handed Read, and The Last Laugh play off of double entendre, providing a dose of humor. More importantly, they walk the line between acceptable conversation topics and cross over ever-so-casually into what may seem to be inappropriate language and public discussion topics.

Shebonics, Broadcast, News from a Broad, Around the World in 80 Girls, and The Last Laugh take the initial steps into claiming linguistic space for female use. Each title plays off established definitions and known conceptions and makes the reader rethink her assumptions in terms of female agency. However, it is titles such as Eat Me, Fashionista, Sex Files, Museum of Femoribilia, One-Handed Read, and the titles included with Around the World in 80 Girls (Cop a Feel for the Girls of Copenhagen) which not only disrupt definitions, but also mix sexuality with formal language as well as everyday topics. Eat Me is a column centered around a food theme complete with recipes, while Around the World in 80 Girls is a two-page spread on a particular travel interest that caters to a female-oriented trip.

Some may contend that "the problem of women's speech is not so much how it is as how it is valued" (Cameron 73). In the context of women's written language, I would argue that at this point for both Second and Third Wave feminists, it is both how women's language is and how it is valued. The actual physical alterations of words and language have to take place in order for feminists to push the visual culture to acknowledge female presence in language because "publishing and the mass media can popularize a word, or conversely, fail to legitimate it..." (Cameron 113). It is the
either/or possibility that makes me push both the *is* and the *value* of women's language. Because visual culture and media can birth and sustain a word as easily as destroy it, it is important that this wordplay has its foundation in a source where it is strongly *valued*. *Bust* and *Bitch*, being of zine origin and ultimately aimed at a contemporary feminist population, put into question how language should be as well as how that in turn changes the way in which we value it.

In this analysis of language, the *is* in women's language is its visual effect on the reader, which is possibly where the Third Wave politics is best revealed and resistance accomplished. Within the pages of *Bust* and *Bitch*, women's personal sexuality and sexual satisfaction are infused with "regular" aspects of typical fashion magazines. The disruption breaks the normally homogenizing aspects of conventional magazines that manage to collapse a female multiplicity into a white, tall, skinny generalization, whose sexuality is established as a means for male satisfaction. *Bust* and *Bitch* must then reverse this process, bringing difference back into a female language and diffuse a male-only emphasis on sexuality. The result is the seemingly racy, perhaps verbally contentious wordplay that unabashedly references sex, the female body as a sexual entity for herself first, and female agency.

*Sex Files* and *One-Handed Read* directly address women's sexuality and sexual satisfaction. Although it is a heteronormative reflection of sexuality, it does move into a space where the importance of sexuality activity is on a more equal setting with male partners. *One-Handed Read* defies the assumption that sexually-explicit material and female lifestyle must be relegated to separate publications. Porn is most definitely an ongoing feminist debate of female subjectivity. In these short, 2-
3 page sexual excerpts, the main character is female who confidently seeks out sexual experiences.

The essence of Cameron and Sontag’s statements is embodied in phrases such as “Museum of Femoribilia.” What at first strikes the eyes as an inappropriate, perhaps vulgar topic turns out to be an edgy way of introducing female interest products. In the June/July 2005 issue, the Femoribilia topic is called: “Born to Rouge: For centuries, women have been harnessing the power of pink,” which in itself harks a discussion of racial implications. Although the topic is focused on the very girlie interest of makeup, the essay mixes in a historical introduction of the rouge itself with the historical perspective of a woman who wore this makeup, “The Girl of the Period...with her false red hair and painted skin, talking slang as glibly as a man, and leading the conversation to doubtful subjects.” And to bring it around a full feminist circle, the piece ends with the introduction of blush, the more socially acceptable facial painting: “If rouge was an ancient harlot, the, ‘blush’ was the acceptably feminine new kid on the block.” (19). As the section title disrupts the idea of memorabilia, the article embraces femininity in Third Wave style, infusing power into the act of creating a look while establishing an awareness of the previous social implications of face painting.

Despite its more academic orientation, Bitch Magazine also stimulates its readers with such “regulars” as Love It/Shove It, a section dedicated to the analysis of such popular culture occurrences as Beyonce Knowles’ Grant’s Tomb exhibition; Where to Bitch, a list of places to direct your complaints as well as a place to raise awareness of issues such as Gay Marriage and Sex-Worker’s Rights; The Bitch List,
which is basically a listing of anything of interest to the Bitch writers; and Dear Bitch, which mimics mainstream magazines’ forum for readers to air their support or distress over a Bitch topic. These titles do not push the linguistic envelope as much as Bust; however, they do weave commonly found components of mainstream magazines with their own Third Wave sass.

Another seemingly contentious space is the titling of articles. Essays like “Mother Truckers” pick up on a pejorative term, yet present an informative article on a little-known aspect of the female working world- the world of female truck drivers. Once again, the reader is confronted with historical awareness as well as the reality of this still minority female group. More importantly, Bust offers readers women’s experiences in their own words, thus giving linguistic space to minority experience.

Bitch seems to utilize its linguistic space better as it relates to its articles. Essays sport titles like “Telegentics: A Brief History of TV Families;” “Unmarried...With Children: The trials of the silver-screen mom;” “Hitting Where It Hurts: The Uneasy Marriage of Domestic Abuse and Pop Psychology;” “Three’s Company: A look at Sisterhood in Triplicate;” and “Queer and Pleasant Danger: What’s Up With the Mainstreaming of Gay Parents?” Clearly, the last entry edges the most into Bust’s more sexually provocative material. However, similar to Bust, “Sex and the Sexagenarians: High Heels vs. Bunions in Sitcomland,” as a column analyzes important shifts in female sexual awareness through two unrelated sitcoms- “The Golden Girls” and “Sex in the City.” Arguably, all of these titles are performing the same function of wordplay on commonly known phrases with a feminist twist.

The language of these magazines may seem mere cleverly concocted or witty
titles; however, it functions in a much more influential space in the scope of Third Wave. It is the cleverly put together language of women, about women, and in reflection of female experience. The hypersexualized and often contentious language of the articles and sections breaks, "eroticizes," and ultimately distorts our almost unconscious processing of words in magazines. They question the standardization of magazines, the uniformity across the rack that even *Bust* claims to strive for in its pro-feminist endeavor and ultimately, are the ways in which the language works as art, the kind that distorts our perceptions of "regular" words and decenters our possibly homogenized perception of the female experience. The significance and subsequent success of *Bust*, in particular, but also *Bitch*, is the way in which it disturbs the serenity of magazine print. As a whole, these magazines are more than simply content.

The linguistic representation of women in these magazines demands that the readers "see" a different type of woman from heteronormative fashion magazines. Cameron states that "there is also a good deal of feminist work emphasizing the importance of cultural representations of gender- men and women as they appear (or in the case of women, don't appear) in stories, pictures, textbooks, scholarly articles, and so on- in forming the identities of real women and men, their notions of masculinity and femininity, their expectations of what is possible and their ideas of what is normal" (5). Once again, the *is* and value of language is called into play. In one move, the language of these Third Wave zine/magazines infuse female presence into the overall linguistic representation; in the next move it works to change the image that has been created by fashion magazines. The women in the articles are
girlie's embracing travel, sex and sexuality, and politics. The intellectual and frivolous intermingle in a significant process that seems to hark back to Bordo's discussion of visual image.

Conventional fashion magazines seem to ask women to market themselves for cultural consumption, which is not to assume that *Bust* and *Bitch* are not selling an image of women. The difference between the two magazine genres is, as Bordo has suggested, a split between an awareness of the implications of one's culturally influenced body, thus an empowering manipulation on the part of the individual, and a blind following of the whims of social fancy. Yet, to reject the necessity of femininity or the importance placed in it, would cause the magazines to fail to conceptualize the Third Wave woman as a complete entity. In some respects, though, they do not fully accomplish this representation of women. While *Bitch* addresses what is a necessity for a complete feminist representation, *Bust* seems to fail to adequately address issues of lesbianism within the magazine, though the online chat does broach this subject in one of the lounge's chat lines. In many respects, the chat embodies the act of CR better than any of the essays within either magazine could, but this remains to be a much desired whole of *Bust*'s representation of the Third Wave feminist.

The writing within *Bust* and *Bitch*, attempts to address the idea of linguistic representation as well as linguistic actualization. By referencing these linguistic images as "cultural representations," Cameron recognizes the multiplicity of female representations as well as the manipulation of image that is an intricate aspect of the creation process in culture or, more specifically, a media culture that is so pervasive,
it is inextricably linked to the creation of female identity. Because media culture is such an influential factor in women's lives, it is necessary to understand the power indications of language and the methods for manipulation. It is also important to recognize that these two productions do not satisfy completely the plethora of images of women in the Third Wave, which seems to be a direct result of their intended audience.

Cameron writes that, "more radically still, feminists like Dale Spender proposed that there is no reality outside its linguistic representation. The language you use affects what you perceive as real" (13). Through this lens the wordplay utilized in *Bust* and *Bitch* is working to create a new reality, a third-wave perspective. Although I wouldn't go as far to say that there is no reality outside of linguistic representation, in fact doing so would conflict with my examination of visual representation, what I find significant in that statement is the possibility of creation that linguistics offers. It seems to legitimize feminist wordplay; however, it also sets up a conditional atmosphere that places reality in the hands of the individual. While there lies the possibility to alter the reality of language to encompass female experience, does it also allow this wordplay/ female language to be marginalized as a language only used by a certain group?
Conclusion

Linguistically, though *Bust* and *Bitch Magazine* may not necessarily offer up new academic terminology in their wordplay, they are resisting the assumed writing standards for magazines, which I would argue eventually will trickle into academia by virtue of their feminist focus if only via analysis of them as spaces for feminist voices. However, the space that this is being performed in holds more value as an influential Third Wave Feminist factor than it may seem.

These publications, and arguably other similar ones, question "rightness" in the language, albeit merely in the realm of zine/magazine. True to their zine origins, they begin to challenge standard magazine language through wordplay. Unlike standard fashion magazines, *Bust* and *Bitch* challenge social rules by bringing overt female sexuality into magazine conversation in such a way that is women-centered and empowering for women.

In this questioning, these two publications are asking their readers to reevaluate socially established notions of language as well as their personal assumptions. At once, dominant words and meanings must be identified and analyzed. The advantage of such work for academia and the overall Third Wave movement is a language that better encompasses the female experience. By integrating "incorrect" or nonsense words into formal, accepted language, a female perspective may have a greater chance to be integrated into dominant language and as Cameron points out:
The alternative meanings and the linguistic creativity of our culture represses cannot be suppressed altogether and if feminists choose to uncover these submerged elements of language, that is a form of resistance to the status quo. It shows that people who insist 'that's not what it means' or 'you can't say that' rest their case not on the facts of language, but on the arrogance of power" (112).

By questioning linguistic assumptions and definitions, women are challenging the notion of authority, the power source that establishes one perspective over another. At the same time, this process seems to answer directly to Foucault's belief that is it the individual who enforces these assumptions of right and wrong. By performing wordplay in the personal space of a magazine, readers are asked to rethink their assumptions and their own roles in maintaining them. Readers must not only recognize the greater social structure, but also their place within it.

In addition to challenging the structures of power, wordplay and visual manipulation are two powerfully positive exercises for women. As Cameron states, "It is liberating to be able to put into words experiences which had previously seemed nebulous and vague, or else shameful and unmentionable; it is empowering to find other women sharing, understanding and collectively reinterpreting such experiences" (7). Equally as important as elevating personal awareness, these publications allow women to voice themselves, to come together conceptually in a space that allows them to write their experiences in and on their own terms, visually and verbally.
As Bordo points out, "the body is both construction and resource," for the media as well as for women and for the feminist movement as well (36). There is potential in these magazines for the recreation of woman as the media writes her. In *Bust* and *Bitch*, the body as a unified, whole entity is challenged both by postmodernist fragmentation and Third Wave feminism. The body within the Third Wave rejects unification in terms of female multiplicity. It is seen "as the vehicle of the human making and remaking of the world, constantly shifting location, capable of revealing endlessly new points of view" (Bordo 237). What is seen is the body being written as a visual text, that is in turn written and interpreted by the individual, that is more fluid than established text.

Although, both magazines provide visual aid for their readers, thus perpetuating the process of learning how to “gaze” at oneself, it also functions as a forum for female agency. Women see fragments of the female body and, by virtue of this fragmentation, are forced to put the picture together, hence their own interpretation. They begin to read visualization more actively, engaging in the process of their own bodily socialization. As Bordo emphasizes, this is essential to fostering more female-oriented imagery in visual culture. Taking control of this process, women are able to actively involve themselves, becoming the authors of their own written body: "What, after all, is more personal that the life of the body? And for women, associated with the body and largely confined to a life centered on the body (both the beautification of one's own body and the reproduction, care, and maintenance of the bodies of others), culture's grip on the body is a constant, intimate fact of everyday life" (Bordo 17). By weaving the visual work with the wordplay
in the articles with the content of the articles, *Bust* and *Bitch* also decenter this focus on the female body as representative of women. The resulting fragmentation takes emphasis on solely the body and displaces it to reveal women's thinking as well as their actions. Any focus on the body seems to place women in control of their image, active participants in their visual sexuality.

Perhaps the most significant function of *Bust* and *Bitch Magazine* is their ability to celebrate the multiplicity of women and the female experience. According to Cameron's theory, female representation deploring difference falls into the heteronormative space of conventional fashion magazines, such as Cosmopolitan and Vogue, that limit and exoticize differences in body shape, skin type, and ethnicity. Difference within these publications become a seasonal trend or complimentary to the white, thin norm. Celebrating difference, on the other hand, finds a place in the space of *Bust* and *Bitch* where not only does it appear visually, but it seems to be actively sought out in the content of discussion. Inside the pages of *Bust's* fashion section, there is no average in terms of body type and race. Each issue presents a group of "photogenic" women, according to *Bust* editor, Debbie Stoller. The very general nature of the explanation leaves model choice open to a variety of options that are represented in the various issues.

Difference is not relegated to models alone, it is embraced in the articles that showcase the individual feminist's DIY skill or business and once again in its feature essays that look at women as individuals. What is not presented to the readership are the advice articles on how to please sexually or how to tone media-centered body parts, which are in themselves not entirely non feminist topics. Rather, the
overlapping of these issues by the majority of conventional magazines at once turns these issues from possible feminist endeavors to exoticized or fetishized sexuality, placed outside the realm of normal female practice and marketed as a method of dressing up oneself for the opposite sex.

The issues of publications, such as *Bust* and *Bitch*, decenter our focus on the female experience; therefore opening up representation to recognize in full the multitude of feminist issues. Through celebration, *Bust* and *Bitch* work to deconstruct dominant visual images as well as dominant language. No longer is there a model of femininity or woman that turns articles of difference into article of exotic. What they are working toward seems to be the initial step toward a multidimensional female representation.

Cameron points out that in visual culture it has seemed to be thought that "women should be treated equally only to the extent that they resemble men" (37). When considering the visual and linguistic aspects of this argument, it seems as though her statement is pertinent to both. Both *Bust* and *Bitch* resist this requirement that all things masculine are the pinnacle of value and to “earn” value is to conform to masculine standards. Linguistically, they ask women to infuse female perspective and subjectivity into language, while visually they play with all things “feminine.” It is here that reclaiming stereotypically girlie attributes is an asset to these publications as well as the feminist movement. More importantly, there is value placed on feminine, being feminine, expressing the feminine, and embracing differing definitions of feminine. This focus on the feminine may seem to be a step away from “real” feminist work, until the importance of asserting feminine value along side masculine
The feminist significance of these magazines and in this analysis is the attention paid to how each group continues to function as a feminist entity; however, more important is the ultimate discussion of where the feminist movement as a whole needs to go. I do not presume to have covered all feminist groups or even the Second Wave thoroughly, nor am I claiming a position of expertise, yet the significance of this work needs to be assessed on a larger feminist level. What is the point of all of this work?

What seems to continue to be a point of contention for feminists and non feminists alike is the connotation of "feminism" both linguistically and conceptually. For this reason, it seems to me that the greater issue is not whether these publications are truly feminist or if the Third Wave is fulfilling feminist ideals, but how feminism is being presented, where it diverges from Second Wave ideas and the significance of this divergence. To question the validity of these publications as feminist works seems to be taking steps back instead of toward a better feminist future. Instead, what needs to be asked is: where can this Third Wave input take feminists, including the Second Wavers, at a time when revisions seem most necessary in order to reclaim the term feminist for a new generation of women?

How do we go about advertising feminism to young women today that will introduce them to the feminist successes they have inherited and enjoyed without including the detrimental man-hating, rigid feminist stereotype? Indeed, more young women need to be involved in the activism of the feminist movement, but arguably this is not happening to the extent that perhaps older feminist think they should in part
because they need to identify themselves in the movement. I think magazines like 
*Bust* and *Bitch*, while perhaps not perfect examples of the Third Wave ideals, are 
valuable for their accessibility to a broader audience. Additionally, as Bordo 
explains, these publications function as informants or instructors for new feminists, 
teaching them how to write themselves on their own terms. They offer up examples 
of women doing, being active participants in their lives and invite their readers to do 
the same.

What the Third Wave can best offer right now, particularly in the form of such 
publications as *Bust* and *Bitch*, is a place for young women to reconnect with 
feminism on more positive terms. These magazines provide a space for young 
women to find themselves in feminism, a space where they can see something in their 
lives that has benefited from past feminist work or something that is in its essence a 
feminist act. More so, they may be successful in encouraging young women to 
connect their actions and ideas to feminism. *Bust* and *Bitch* may seem frivolous or 
less political than their predecessors, *Ms. Magazine* and *Off Our Backs*; however, 
they are asking women to think or rethink their positions in today’s world, logically 
with a great emphasis on the influences and uses of women by the media in popular 
culture.
Works Cited


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