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"Seventeen" Magazine as a Manual for "Doing Gender"

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SEVENTEEN MAGAZINE AS A MANUAL FOR "DOING GENDER"

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Sociology
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by

Amy N. Vreeland

1996

APPROVAL SHEET

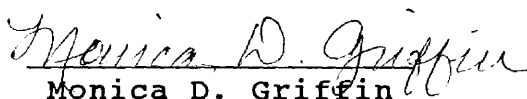
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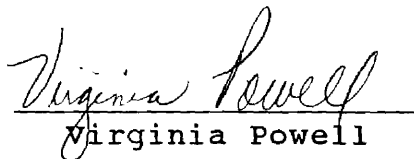


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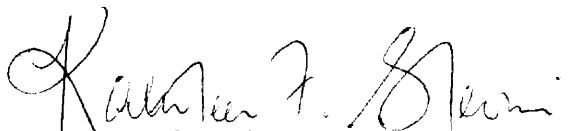
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine *Seventeen* magazine as a site for "doing gender." *Seventeen* and similar publications provide cultural "scripts" that fuel, shape and maintain normative conceptions of appropriate teenage "femininity" in order to guide the creation of gender identity along dominant ideals. Hence, *Seventeen* can be considered a "gender manual."

The study is exploratory in nature and involves both content analysis and semiotic, intertextual deconstruction of *Seventeen's* primary texts. Covers, articles, photographic features and advertisements were analyzed in order to uncover the normative conceptions of adolescent female gender as provided by *Seventeen* from 1970 to 1995. Feminist analysis was used to determine both explicit and implicit, or overt and subtextual, narratives and depictions within the magazine.

The results suggest that despite a 25-year span, the normative conceptions of gender provided by *Seventeen* are exceptionally rigid or overdetermined. Five of *Seventeen's* most frequently depicted conceptions are drawn out for analysis here (whiteness, thinness, narcissism, heterosexuality, and consumption) because they best illuminate the magazine's version of "appropriate" teenage femininity.

SEVENTEEN MAGAZINE AS A MANUAL FOR "DOING GENDER"

One is not born a woman, but rather becomes one.
--Simone deBeauvoir

Gender: a routine accomplishment embedded in everyday interaction (West/Zimmerman 1987).

Manual (n.): a handy book for use as a guide, reference, etc. (Webster's 1990); a small book, especially one giving information or instructions (Random House Unabridged Dictionary 1967)

INTRODUCTION

Becoming a regular reader of any magazine is similar to initiation into a secret membership, as if the magazine were a "club"; as Susan Douglas says, "I don't 'read' [magazines]; if you'll pardon the masculine metaphor, I enter them" (Douglas 1994, p.251). Within the glossy pages of a mass-market women's magazine, feminine arts both obscure and mundane are passed from generation to generation. The process of becoming "feminine," and the corresponding indoctrination into the world of feminine consumerism, begins at an early age. The desired result of this process is the maintenance of a clear gender identity.

Gender identity is instituted through interaction (Butler 1990; Eder 1995; Lorber 1994; Thorne 1993; West, Zimmerman 1987): between girls and their parents, amongst girls in school, or through a cultural product such as the magazine.

Considered here, such interaction takes place through the "gender manual" that is *Seventeen* magazine. *Seventeen* presumes to provide "practical help" in the matters of "attractive" feminine appearance and proper behavior within male-female relationships for young women. But to say that *Seventeen* is "just a magazine" is akin to saying that Barbie is "just a doll." It is an institution, one that teaches girls how to "do" the female gender while reinforcing the "essentiality" of that gender category.

"Gender" cannot be understood simply as one's biological sex or just an aspect of what one is, but is something that one "does," recurrently, through interaction with others (West, Zimmerman 1987). "Doing gender involves a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine 'natures'" (West, Zimmerman 1987, p.126). "Doing gender" can be further defined as the process of directing conduct along the "normative conceptions" of proper or appropriate attitude and behavior for one's sex category (West, Zimmerman 1987, p.127). *Seventeen* is a gender manual because it furnishes these normative conceptions. Considered as a manual, it provides instructions or a "how-to" in the art of becoming feminine. But what exactly is "feminine," according to the normative conceptions supplied by *Seventeen* magazine? I plan to uncover these normative conceptions, and analyze how *Seventeen* creates -- and, more

importantly, maintains -- such conceptions over a 25-year span. Before launching into a description of *Seventeen* and a profile of the magazine's readers, further elaboration regarding the acquisition of gender status is required.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Normative conceptions are "less a consequence of our 'essential sexual natures' than interactional portrayals of what we would like to convey about sexual natures, using conventionalized gestures" (West, Zimmerman 1987, p.130). Thus *Seventeen* really says little about the "essential" natures of actual girls as much as it represents what society -- and the magazine's publishers and advertisers -- expect to be the gendered nature of young women. And while individual girls do gender through interaction, the enterprise of doing gender is fundamentally institutional in character: "accountability is a feature of social relationships and its idiom is drawn from the institutional arena in which those relationships are enacted" (West, Zimmerman 1987, p.137). In other words, gendered "scripts" for individuals are assigned via institutions such as the family, school, religion, and mass culture.

The social construction of gender begins in infancy, when children are raised to reproduce the social conceptions of either "boy" or "girl." This division is believed to be rooted in the sexual division of labor. "The division of labor by sex can ... be seen as a 'taboo': a taboo against the

sameness of men and women, a taboo dividing the sexes into two mutually exclusive categories ... which exacerbates the biological differences and thereby creates gender" (Rubin 1975, p.178). In Western, post-industrial societies, women's devalued role as caretakers of children, when combined with their lack of ownership of property, the means of production or the products of their labor, produces gender inequality (Lorber 1994). The social order in this type of society is reliant upon such sexual inequality, as it is upon racial, class and ethnic inequality, and the convergence of all these inequalities.

Furthermore, where sexual statuses are unequal, the purpose of assigning gender identity is to reproduce this structure of gender inequality. This involves the "traffic in women" (Rubin 1975): within a patriarchal society, a man needs to secure a permanent relationship with a woman in order to obtain such services as food preparation, home maintenance, the bearing of children (and the passage of patrilineal heritage), sexual services and so forth; women can be exchanged within such a society because they are reliant upon men for economic security (Rubin 1975). Thus, the "continuing purpose of gender as a modern social institution is to construct women as a group to be the subordinates of men as a group" (Lorber 1994, p.35). Generally, this social organization by gender depends on "obligatory" heterosexuality and the control of female sexuality (Rubin 1975).

Gender difference, and the corresponding inequality that results from this difference, is constructed (and reconstructed) within social practices and institutions such as the family. "It is a truism to say that societies will inculcate in their young the character traits appropriate to carrying on the business of society" (Rubin 1975, p.189). This is inimical to popular belief, which has often suggested a direct biological causation between gender and behavior. Because of the sexual division of labor

... girls and boys had to be taught not only how to work as women and men but how to behave toward girls and boys their own age and toward women and men ... They also learned how women and men were supposed to act toward each other ... In the process, the children identified with the members of their gender category, and because they were rewarded for it, they came to want to act in the prescribed ways. In this way, gender statuses were reproduced in daily activity (Lorber 1994, p.130).

The transition of children to adulthood through contemporary adolescence can be considered likewise. "Adolescence," like other age categories, is intensely cultural: "collective beliefs and practices organize and give meaning to bodily changes, and they redefine the contours of gender" (Thorne 1993, p.138).

Most children share the experience of being predominately raised by women (Chodorow 1989). However, while there exists a "cultural universal" of initial identification and strong attachment with the mother by both boys and girls, development of self is especially difficult for girls because they share gender with their mothers. As boys separate from their

mothers, they begin to devalue things considered "feminine." Girls, on the other hand, share a feminine identity through identification with their mothers, but must come to accept their mothers' -- and all women's -- devalued positions within society (Chodorow 1989).

This process of gender identity formation also involves the division of female and male identities into spheres of "being" and "doing." Culturally, because "maleness" is not explicitly defined, boys are encouraged to "do": create, take risks, develop projects. Girls, assigned the attainable feminine ambition of marriage and motherhood, are trained to "be": "A girl's natural inclination would also be to 'do,' but she learns to make herself into an object, to restrict herself to the sphere of immanence" (Chodorow 1989, p.33). More specifically:

The tragedy of women's socialization is not that she is left unclear ... about her basic sexual identity. This identity is ascribed to her, and she does not need to prove to herself or to society that she has earned it or continues to have it. Her problem is that this identity is clearly devalued in the society in which she lives (Chodorow 1989, p.44).

The social construction of gender, therefore, follows a cultural "script" that defines sexuality. A culture organizes sexual practices into

approved, permitted and tabooed patterns that are internalized by individuals ... Approved practices are actively encouraged; permitted practices are tolerated; and tabooed patterns are often stigmatized and punished. ... All sexual desires, practices and identities are not only gendered but reflect a culture's views ... (Lorber 1994, p.56).

Individuals raised to follow a cultural sexual script can be said to be "doing gender."

Seventeen is an example of a contemporary cultural product that incorporates a predetermined sexual script and that legitimizes the gender order, rendering it "natural" and "normal," as if the differences between men and women (or boys and girls) were completely fundamental and irrefutable: "the social order being an accommodation to the natural order" (West, Zimmerman 1987, p.146). When a manual such as *Seventeen* does gender correctly (and shows readers how to do gender correctly), it can "simultaneously sustain, reproduce and render legitimate the institutional arrangements that are based on sex category" (West, Zimmerman 1987, p.146). If biological imperatives for sexual behavior were intrinsic, it would be unnecessary to ensure girls' "appropriate" behavior through socialization, repetition, instruction, or graphic depictions, such as those found in magazines like *Seventeen*.

'YOUNG AMERICA'S FAVORITE MAGAZINE'

Seventeen is extremely successful at doing gender, and at a remarkably sophisticated level. No magazine has been or remains as popular and successful with adolescent and teenage girls as "Young America's Favorite Magazine."¹ Launched in

¹ This slogan appeared on all *Seventeen* covers from May 1969 until May 1987, when it was replaced by "It's Where the Girl Ends and the Woman Begins." That rather ominous slogan

1944, with a circulation of 400,000 (Hudson 1987), today *Seventeen's* circulation is 2,172,923 (*Advertising Age*, February 19, 1996, p.29). According to its editors, while *Seventeen's* editorial content is mostly fashion and beauty (approximately 50 percent of all editorial content, Peirce 1990), its purpose is to

inform, entertain, and give teenage girls all the information they need to make sound choices in their lives. The fashion and beauty sections ... are to make girls feel good about themselves (Peirce 1990, p.497).

Despite this proclamation, any successful magazine must craftily shroud its main objective: to act as a vehicle for the deliverance of advertisers' messages and the social values, norms, and expectations expressed through their advertisements. (In the words of Sandra Lee Bartky, "in modern advertising, the needs of capitalism and the traditional values of patriarchy are happily married" (Bartky 1990, p.28).) However, it must manage to do this while simultaneously appealing to its readers:

Readers are not force-fed a constellation of negative images that naturalize male dominance; rather, women's magazines exert a cultural leadership to shape consensus in which highly pleasurable codes work to naturalize social relations of power (McCracken 1993, p.3).²

was dropped as well, exactly two years later (May 1989). Since that time, no other slogan or motto has appeared on *Seventeen* covers.

² Although this quote refers to "women's magazines," *Seventeen*, along with other teenage-market magazines (like *YM*, *Sassy* and *'Teen*) were considered in McCracken's *Decoding Women's Magazines*. For more information on McCracken's research, see the literature review.

The fiercely competitive political economy of advertising forces magazines to deliver demographically-identified segments of the market better than its competitors. Consider this 1984 description of *Seventeen* magazine, from the impartial guide *Children's Periodicals of the United States*:

*Seventeen ... has always been tied to popular culture, and this is immediately obvious from even a cursory glance of any randomly selected issue. To the non-initiate *Seventeen* may seem to be only an advertising medium -- pushing upon young teenage girls, their hands stuffed with their parents' dollars, page after page of new fashions, new personal care products, and every sort of new entertainment form available. **The magazine could easily be dismissed, by the outsider, as an advertising rip-off that covers itself with a few articles and fiction entries. But that would be to miss the mass appeal of *Seventeen*.** *Seventeen* must be understood from its audience's point of view ... the average reader is 16.7 years of age. Most are urban or suburban, fairly affluent, and conversant in the language of popular culture, for whom the reading of *Seventeen* is an invitation to participate in an easily gained, popularly understood, identity. If they choose they can adopt, or adapt, the *Seventeen* way of life and turn to the periodical and its auxiliary publications not only for advice on what to wear and how to be well mannered in every possible situation but also for dialogues and answers to common teen problems, interpretations of world events, and even for inspiration (Kelly 1984, p.398. Author's emphasis.).*

Seventeen's publishers, editors and advertisers deliver clear social standards, norms and expectations to the magazine's readers, a specifically defined demographic group.³ This is immediately apparent from the advertisements *Seventeen* places in trade magazines, which presumably few readers ever

³ I was unable to obtain further empirical breakdown of *Seventeen's* readership by race, age, parents' economic status, and so forth.

see. "Today, 40 [percent] of all first marriages happen before her twentieth birthday[,] " intones one 1982 *Seventeen* advertisement that labels the reader a "Calculating Consumer":

And with marriage and family life on the rise, look out for bridal purchases to be on the increase. That means more of everything. Crystal. Glassware. Hope Chests. Table Linens. Sheets. Decorative Fabrics. And once she decides to marry, you can be sure she'll decide which diamond solitaire engagement ring is for her (*Advertising Age*, May 17, 1982. p.13.)

Other similar advertisements have characterized the *Seventeen* reader as "Born to Shop": "She is the American teenage girl and there are over 13,000,000 of her ... it all adds up to tens of billions of dollars every year" (*Advertising Age*, March 8, 1982). By 1988, the reader was being called "the other woman":

She ... bakes cakes, brownies and pies. Something mother doesn't have much time for now that she's working. ... She's one of the 80 [percent] of young women who shop for family food ... The *Seventeen* woman. If you're not reaching her, you're missing the other female head of the household (*Advertising Age*, February 1, 1988. p.5).

These advertisements reveal the ways in which "contemporary consumer society [has] chosen to see women in order to sell more goods and services" (McCracken 1993, p.37).

Given that the magazine's primary focus involves the construction of adolescent female gender identity through the acquisition of fashion, beauty and other products, one might wonder if *Seventeen's* encouragement of its readers to be preoccupied with appearance -- and the romance promised to girls with an "attractive" appearance -- is so terrible.

However, adolescent girls' "preoccupation"⁴ with appearance, comportment, and sexual success is not so benign. Adolescent and teenage girls, set in motion by pervasive cultural and commercial forces that sexualize them, learn to turn themselves into -- and eventually regard themselves and other girls as -- objects (Thorne 1993). It is during this transition that girls begin to negotiate the "forces of adult femininity, a set of structures and meanings that more fully inscribe their subordination on the basis of gender" (Thorne 1993, p.170).

For girls wishing to be socially successful, this objectification is hardly a choice: much of the status of girls with each other in school is determined by their popularity with boys (Eder 1995; Thorne 1993). Therefore, during adolescence, appearance and romantic male-female relationships take on primary importance to girls; they are forced -- presumably against the will of some -- to "define themselves and other girls in terms of their positions in the heterosexual market" (Thorne 1993, p.170; Eder 1995). While the social status of girls is increasingly linked to their romantic success with boys, the same does not hold true in reverse (Holland et al. 1990; Thorne 1993). Thus, girls find themselves pressured to be "attractive" in order to get (and

⁴ I place this word in quote because, as will be made clear from the results of this study, *Seventeen* and magazines of its type encourage something more akin to "obsession" or, at the very least, "imperative."

keep) both friends and a boyfriend. In other words, "when girls act on behalf of others, seemingly at the expense of themselves, they gain in socially desirable ways" (Brown and Gilligan 1992, p.177).

College women's "attractiveness" -- determined by both physical appearance and their success in attracting high-status college men -- has been considered a form of "symbolic capital" for women (Holland et al. 1990, p.102). This capital can be "traded" upon, enabling women to further their attractiveness in the market: "For women, good treatment from attractive men provides prestige and status" (Holland et al. 1990, p.104); the reverse -- bad treatment marking a woman's low status -- is true as well.

These efforts to be "attractive" and to succeed within the "culture of romance" cause many young women to lower their ambitions while perpetuating male, heterosexual privilege (Thorne 1993). Also, when girls are depicted as sexual objects at an early age, they risk internalizing these images and making them principal aspects of their identity. After such internalization

it becomes extraordinarily difficult for them to move beyond this self-image to develop a greater sense of their own erotic potential as well as their general creative life force. ... Through objectification, women are denied their sense of totality (Eder 1995, p.147).

This objectification also reinforces Chodorow's explanation, described earlier, of the division of sexual identities into restrictive spheres of "being" for girls and "doing" for boys

(Chodorow 1989). Further, as Eder says:

Women who are evaluated primarily on the basis of being objects lose a sense of themselves as actors in the world. Even when they do develop some sense of agency through the knowledge that they can alter and 'improve' their appearance, they have less energy and time to invest in other aspects of self-definition. This keeps their sense of worth attached to how they look rather than what they do. It also reduces the energy available for social change by failing to address the underlying problem of female objectification. Being viewed primarily as objects makes it easier for women to be the targets of other forms of abuse and mistreatment, since their full humanity is ignored (Eder 1995, p.152).

Therefore, the question posed above should be reconsidered (again, "Is an adolescent girl's preoccupation with her appearance and her subsequent status with boys really such a damaging enterprise?"). The amount of time, money and mental energy spent on such pursuits must be measured against the possible result if there was no such undertaking expected of girls.

Nevertheless, while objectified images and ideals of feminine behavior and appearance are pervasive in popular culture and can be restrictive and possibly damaging, it is important to remember that adolescent girls do not exist in a cultural vacuum, slavishly following mass-media images. These images often reflect a backlash to girls' changing roles and a world where women continue to have increasing power and voice. *Seventeen*, while an obvious and potent symbol of current cultural ideals of appropriate appearance and behavior for young women, cannot be treated as a complete manual of "female":

The use of any such source as a manual of procedure requires the assumption that doing gender merely involves making use of discrete, well-defined bundles of behavior that can simply be plugged into interactional situations to produce recognizable enactments of masculinity and femininity. ... doing gender is not so easily regimented. Such sources may list and describe the sorts of behaviors that mark or display gender, but they are necessarily incomplete. ... marking or displaying gender must be finely fitted to situations and modified or transformed as the occasion demands (West, Zimmerman 1987, p.135. Emphasis in original).

Girls (and women) are not simply brainwashed consumers helplessly caught inside the beauty-industrial complex. Accordingly, gender cannot be analyzed without context, without considering both the cultural constraint of the sphere of ideals of "appropriate" femininity and how girls negotiate their behavior within it. Thus, neither *Seventeen* nor this analysis can provide the final word on the behavior or thought of the "average" American girl. Most girls -- and I would imagine this is more true of each successive generation in a media-saturated society -- are not "cultural dopes." (Also, male -- and here, boys' -- culture is not inherently superior to that of girls, and pathologizing or trivializing of girl culture erases the importance of girls' reactions to the media-constructed images of American female experience.)

By segregating a specific adolescent demographic as its focus of interest, *Seventeen* assigns particular ideological meanings to teenage femininity. Thus, within its pages, "female adolescence" is analogous to *Seventeen's* definition of it. Dissenting views, ideas or depictions of female

adolescence are rendered obsolete by their exclusion from the magazine. But as the roles of girls within society change over the course of 25 years, so must *Seventeen's* subtext become increasingly subversive and sophisticated, or the magazine presumably could not maintain its level of readership.

I surmise that *Seventeen* codes social expectations and conflicts, which derive from the process of doing gender (and becoming appropriately "feminine"), into rigid images and fantasies. In order to better understand the process of doing gender, I propose to examine one component of the social construction of gender: the production of gender imagery found in a cultural product, which encourages gendered behavior through symbiotic, artistic, and literal representations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A previous study (Peirce 1990) analyzed *Seventeen's* editorial content for the years 1961, 1972 and 1985. The author found that while the amount of coverage given to "traditional socialization" articles, such as those concerning "male-female relationships," decreased in 1972 as compared to 1961, the number of articles dealing with "feminist"-oriented "self-development" topics increased. By 1985, however, representation of the two types of articles had returned to 1961 levels (Peirce 1990). In the study, "traditional" messages were defined as being located within articles that dealt with fashion and beauty, dating behaviors, sex, relationship problems, and household activities. "Feminist" messages, on the other hand, were found in articles that emphasized education, vocations, avocations, and physical and mental health.

I find this method of analysis too limiting and simplistic for two reasons. First, the criteria for inclusion in either the "traditional" or "feminist" category is unclear. What if a relationship article is entitled "My Boyfriend Got Violent -- and I Got Out" (*Seventeen*, March 1996, p.212.)? Is

this "traditional" or "feminist"?⁵ This inconsistency is related to the second reason why Peirce's method of analysis is inadequate. Although Peirce may have found an increase in "feminist"-inspired articles in 1972, at no time can the magazine be called truly feminist, and those looking for feminist ideology are foolish to seek it within the pages of *Seventeen*.

Seventeen sustains sexualized difference and "femininity" through its unyielding emphasis on beauty, fashion and heterosexual romance. This sexualized difference, taking the form of exclusive gender identity, suppresses the natural similarities between males and females: "A major purpose of femininity is to mystify or minimize the functional aspects of a woman's mind and body that are indistinguishable from a man's" (Brownmiller 1986, p.59). Conversely, the liberal concept of feminism asserts that the intent of feminism is to gain political, economic and social equality for women and girls. *Seventeen's* ideology is also incongruous with the radical feminists' point of view (whose dominant ideology involves cultural eradication of gender identity and the dismantling of patriarchal systems), as well as the Marxist feminists' ideology (which focuses upon women's status as an

⁵ For another example, the November 1995 issue of *Seventeen* includes an article entitled "Water World," which provides a swimming workout regimen. According to Peirce's criteria, this physical health article would be considered "feminist." However, the article's first reason why readers should try some "serious swimming" is "You'll feel more confident in a bathing suit" (p.50). Again, feminist or not?

exploited class as the determinant of their social and economic status) (Lorber 1994; Whelehan 1995). Even when individual items within the magazine may seem feminist (or quasi-feminist) in tone (such as the November 1995 marketing of Susan B. Anthony coin pendants along with women's "Vote Facts"), *Seventeen's* true purpose is to guide its advertisers' and publisher's -- not necessarily women's, and certainly not feminists' -- particular notions of appropriate "feminine" behavior, appearance and concerns. (This appropriation of feminist themes may involve the magazine's attempt to appear more relevant and progressive, or, similarly, to present "commodity feminism" (Goldman 1992), which will be discussed further later.)

Furthermore, doing gender with the aid of a sophisticated gender manual such as *Seventeen* is an experience unique to females. Although *Seventeen* is only one of several magazines aimed at the teenage female market -- along with competitors *Sassy*, *Teen*, and *YM* -- there is currently no mass-market magazine whose sole purpose is to instruct boys in the art of being "masculine," to teach them how to "do male gender." Successful young men's magazines tend to be topic-oriented, such as skateboarding, car or music magazines. (One boys' magazine which attempted to encompass several interests, *Dirt* -- itself a *Sassy* spin-off -- failed within a year.) "The medium is still a message in itself -- that women are uniquely different, they require separate treatment and instruction in

ways that men do not" (Ferguson 1983, p.190).

Thus simply counting the number of (questionably) "feminist" articles within *Seventeen* over any period of time and then drawing conclusions is ineffective; the magazine, according to the priorities expressed by its own editors and publishers, is a reinforcer of the "essentiality" of feminine beauty and preoccupation with fashion and romance, among other things. Of course *Seventeen's* focus is primarily "appropriate" young, female appearance; the insecurities of typical teenage girls are not invented by *Seventeen*, but they are shaped and legitimated by the magazine. Thus dividing individual texts within the magazine as either "traditional" or "feminist" sets up a false dichotomy. Both orientations can involve doing of gender, albeit from wholly different ideological positions.

Another study (Holm 1994) analyzed the way education was portrayed in *Seventeen* articles from 1966 to 1989. Three discernable trends were found to run through the articles: "activism" in education articles of the 1960s, "feminism" in the 1970s and "narcissism" in the 1980s. However, Holm also found an unwavering counternarrative which offered "a consistent pattern of messages which trivializes education and its ideal of full human development and wide opportunity for girls." The trends toward feminist messages during the 1970s were found to have no long-term impact on this counternarrative (Holm 1994).

Evans et al. (1991) performed content analysis on three American magazines aimed at the teenage female market -- *Seventeen*, *YM* and *Sassy* -- to uncover the major patterns of explicit and implicit messages in the magazine, as well as to explore the relationship between feature article content and adolescent identity formation. The researchers examined 10 issues of each magazine from 1988 and 1989, and analyzed primary articles, regular columns and fiction, advertisements, and photographics.⁶ They found three "major and interrelated conclusions about the general state of content and symbolism" of the three magazines (Evans et al. 1991, p.110).

First, while all three magazines alleged to be directed by the theme of adolescent self-improvement, the magazines approached this task mainly through recommendation of physical beautification. The researchers found that articles and advertisements mutually reinforced this theme, especially as it pertained to girls' desire to attract boys' romantic attention. Second, the type of identity-formation or

⁶ The primary articles, regular columns and fiction were content analyzed for ideology (moral/ethical, religious and political issues); education and career issues; interpersonal relations (family, peer and dating relationships, and sexuality issues); and issues pertaining to identity formation (self-esteem and body image). Advertisements were analyzed by product orientation (beauty/cosmetic, clothing/fashion, feminine hygienic, education/career, health, personal service or entertainment related); format display; and space allotment. Finally, photographics were analyzed for subject color (Caucasian or non-Caucasian) and gender (male or female) (Evans et al. 1991).

achievement-related articles that dominated the magazines emphasized a similar theme of heterosexual adjustment and personal interaction. Few career articles appeared in the magazines; the most prominent career featured was fashion modeling. Articles pertaining to political and social issues, intellectual pursuits, athletic activity, and education (except for two articles on "practical tips for college") were virtually nonexistent. Third, the researchers found a bias toward Caucasian models in both advertisements and photographic features. Of total model presence, only 10 percent were non-Caucasian, in comparison with the 30 percent of non-Caucasian adolescents in American secondary school enrollment (Evans et al. 1991).

McRobbie (1991) examined *Jackie*, a weekly British periodical aimed at adolescent females, using semiotic analysis. McRobbie found a large range of "codes" to be operating within the magazine during the 1970s: the code of romance, the code of personal and domestic life, the code of fashion and beauty, and the code of pop music. Through these codes, she found that within the pages of *Jackie*

the world of the personal and of the emotions is an all-embracing totality, and by implication all else is of secondary interest. Romance, problems, fashion, beauty and pop all mark out the limits of the girl's feminine sphere (McRobbie 1991, p.131).

Further, she found romantic individualism to be *Jackie's* prevailing ideology during the 1970s; female solidarity and friendship had no existence in the magazine, and self-respect

was contingent on acquiring a boyfriend. McRobbie describes *Jackie's* theme of romance as a "suffocating embrace" that encourages girls to do nothing else but think about, pursue and maintain heterosexual romance.

When she reexamined *Jackie* (along with several other publications) in the 1980s, McRobbie had found that the magazine's focus had moved away from romance. Instead, the emphasis had shifted, encouraging "personal choice and the creation of a 'beautiful' individual identity" (McRobbie 1991, p.175). The *Jackie* of the 1980s combined beauty and fashion features with themes of fun, experimentation and expression of individuality. However, the "undeniable element of regulation," embodied in the "extremely thin and conventionally beautiful" models in the regular beauty features, remained. Thus, the explicit suggestion that beautification is a standard part of a girl's identity, despite a greater amount of attention paid to the intelligence and social conscience of its readers, remained unchallenged (McRobbie 1991). Unlike *Seventeen*, *Jackie* is a weekly publication, marketed to working-class girls; it is not principally a fashion magazine, nor is it glossy or artistically slick in design. However, McRobbie found that *Jackie* constructs male and female roles to be clearly separate and distinct, regardless of a change in the magazine's emphasis over a decade (McRobbie 1991).

Ferguson (1983) examined women's and teenage girls'

British and American mass-market magazines to see how individual magazines responded to the social, economic and cultural changes of women from the 1950s to the 1980s.⁷ She considered the magazines and their versions of womanhood -- which she terms the "cult of femininity" -- at the macro level, by analyzing the magazine editors and publishers and their "journalistic traditions" and production methods. She explained the role of women's magazines in society in this way:

In promoting a cult of femininity these journals are not merely reflecting the female role in society; they are also supplying one source of definitions of, and socialization into, that role (Ferguson 1983, p.184).

She calls the magazine editors "high priestesses" of the cult, who "help to sustain the faithful in their beliefs, and to attract new followers to worship its totem: Woman herself" (p.184). Further, she considers magazines to promote a collective female "reality" which rests upon "conformity to a set of shared meanings where a consciously cultivated female bond acts as the social cement of female solidarity" (p.185). She uses the sociology of religion and Emile Durkheim's definitions of the elements of the cult to provide insight to her concepts:

In so far as cults have members, required rituals, explanatory myths or parables, visible 'badges' of membership, an object of veneration, high priestesses and status or esteem conferred by membership, so do the followers of women's magazines share in these things. ... elevation of Woman to the status of a totemic object fits

⁷ Seventeen was not included in Ferguson's study.

well with Durkheim's view of a cult as a social institution. This is "not simply a system of signs by which the faith is outwardly translated; it is a collection of the means by which this [system] is created and recreated periodically." Recreation presents no problem here. The collective means of worship, the shared system of signs is literally recreated at fixed periods. The ritualistic aspects of production and purchase are reinforced by weekly or monthly deadlines and weekly or monthly spending habits (Ferguson 1983, p.11-12).

Over the 30-year period Ferguson studied, she found both changing and unchanging messages fostered by the cult; however, while the magazines' content indicated that they had changed, the magazines' form remained mostly the same. "Overtly and covertly the dogma remains," she said. "Its maxims still rest on the premise of biological predestination and gender determinism and the 'woman-to-woman' approach" (p.189). She also considered these maxims within a social/cultural context and found that economic changes, magazine-industry competition, married women's increased entry into the workforce, increasing rationalization of housework and chores, and the cultural climate for women post-1970 all had an impact on the messages and images imparted by the magazines. Nevertheless, she concludes by saying "... the impact of changing social conditions on the cult's message is one of *plus ca change* ... everything changes and nothing changes" (p.190).

Finally, McCracken (1993) studied American women's mass-market magazines, including *Seventeen*, by using semiotic analysis to uncover structures of contradiction within both

purchased and "covert" advertising⁸ and editorial features. She also examined magazines by genre, such as beauty/fashion, minority-directed, special-interest, and magazines addressed to the "working woman." Her study was "text-centric," examining the magazines rather than the readers; however, she consistently emphasized the "positive pole of desire" that draws the reader to the magazine. Terming this "commodified desire," she explained:

... commodified desire is an important semiotic tool whereby the encoders of magazine texts strive to anchor a preferred social accenting in the grand tale they construct about reality. The commodity base of the pleasure [derived from reading the magazines] must be so pervasive that it appears to be an essential characteristic of contemporary feminine desire. ... But the ostensibly agreed-upon values that underlie this "common-sense" articulation of pleasure to commodities at the same time constitute a pseudo-consensus that, precisely because of its consumer base, turns on a spurious sense of solidarity and conformity with the values of one's peers. If women ... experience a sometimes real and sometimes utopian sense of community while reading these texts ... they are at the same time learning consumerist competitiveness and reified individualism (McCracken 1993, p.299).

Regarding *Seventeen* in particular, McCracken found that the magazine provided, like its brethren *'Teen* and *Young Miss*, an "exaggerated emphasis on physical appearance and feelings

⁸ "Covert" advertising refers to the "promotions disguised as editorial material or hidden in some other form so that they appear to be non-advertising" (McCracken 1993, p.38). She makes a comparison between advertisements on television (which are typically regarded by the viewer as an interruption) and advertisements in magazines (which typically strike the reader as a "natural and logical extension" of the editorial copy and photographs): "Covert advertising extends structural links to the purchased advertising, creating a harmonious, integrated whole" (p.38).

of insecurity as a means of integrating young girls into the consumer society" (p.147). She found that an "aura of childishness" pervaded the magazine; for example, she cites an article on baking "teddy-bear bread," and a typical fashion layout that "shows girls in awkward positions of exaggerated playfulness" (p.144). However, "these images of childishness coexist with messages that encourage a sexual self-positioning" (p.144); McCracken found that fashion and beauty features explicitly and implicitly allude to the "male gaze."

Furthermore, McCracken found additional contradictions in the sex advice the magazine provided to readers in columns such as "Sex and Your Body." For example, McCracken notes that despite a 1983 *Seventeen* poll that revealed that 63 percent of its readers approve of premarital sex, the columns "subtly and sometimes openly discourage girls from having sex" (p.145):

By emphasizing repeatedly the theme that teenagers are not emotionally ready to engage in sex, *Seventeen* helps to socialize its readers according to the predominately accepted values. Nonetheless, the magazine continues to contradict this message by publishing ads and features that encourage girls to be both childish and sexually alluring (p.146).

It is these consistent patterns of contradiction that endure over time, such as the ones uncovered by McRobbie, Ferguson and McCracken, that need to be drawn out from the pages of *Seventeen*, and that is the research proposed here.

The conclusion reached by previous studies of *Seventeen* (and similar publications) is essentially that magazines of its type are often powerful reinforcers of femininity.

However, I have attempted to explain precisely how *Seventeen* recreates the normative conceptions of "femininity" for each new generation of its readers. Specifically, I examined how *Seventeen* has upheld an ideology of femininity and gender difference while adapting to the changing roles of girls and women over 25 years, and further, how doing gender, as laid out by *Seventeen*, has contributed to the subordination of girls and women by patriarchy.

The purpose of this research was to explore *Seventeen* as a manual for girls' adolescent process of becoming "feminine" through doing gender. *Seventeen* magazine, like most cultural products, is not innocuous or devoid of symbolic meaning, nor can it be said to absolutely depict the truest desires and most cherished wishes of girls. Instead, it is an advertiser-driven media outlet; as an elementary textbook of femininity, its purpose is to begin girls down the road to adult-level spending, both of money and time, in the world of fashion and beauty. Beauty magazines targeting teenage girls prime them for full-fledged indoctrination into the world of femininity and feminine consumerism. As the publisher's editorial profile betrays: "*Seventeen* is a young woman's **first** fashion and beauty magazine" (SRDS 1995. Author's emphasis.).

RESEARCH DESIGN

Feminist content analysis and intertextual deconstruction allows the researcher to focus on these combinations within *Seventeen's* entire context. This means seeking the contradictions "within or between texts that illustrate the pervasive effects of patriarchy and capitalism" (Reinharz 1992, p.149). Considered here, the different "texts" are the different components of the gender manual: covers, editorials, articles, fiction, fashion layouts and advertisements were considered and deconstructed as separate and interrelated texts. Feminist analysis also encourages a "subversive" reading of texts through "constant rereading and looking for particular clues" (p.149):

Dominant readings need to be deconstructed in order to make sense of the specific ways texts teach their audiences to structure personal systems of meaning. Through deconstruction, readers can find in each text the information to construct oppositional readings ... By finding the points of discontinuity between the texts, one can illuminate the mythologizing strategies and tools unique to that text (Laurel Graham, from Reinharz 1992, p.149).

As Reinharz says, "feminist ... analysis is a study both of texts that exist and texts that do not" (p.163). Strict content analysis, such as the type critiqued in the literature review, involves simple counting of the number of times a

particular depiction occurs, such as an article on vocations, or an appearance by a non-Caucasian model. However, content analysis, when combined with semiotic analysis and deconstruction, moves the focus of the research to the combinations and structures of meaning (Reinharz 1992). This level of analytical meaning is lost in simple content analysis; here, the meaning of units of information *sui generis* must be tied to the context in which they reside to have scientific merit.

Therefore, provided here is exploratory research of *Seventeen* magazine from the years 1970 to 1995. This particular span of time is culturally relevant: the cultural images generated during the 1970s are especially pertinent because of the period's proximity to the decade of the women's liberation movement, the 1960s. Similarly, the post-Reagan 1990s, three decades after the women's movement (and after the well-documented feminist backlash of the 1980s)⁹, are another crucial marker. Essentially, I sought the prevailing standards of femininity presented by the magazine to adolescent girls despite the passage of time. The primary purpose of the research was to expose *Seventeen's* instructions or guidelines, through an evolution or mutation of images, of reproducing adolescent female gender and femininity. I also examined existing contradictions within the magazine's pages, through

⁹ See Susan Faludi's Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women. New York: Crown Publishers, 1991.

analysis of the subversive, and often overt, messages the magazine provides.

Specifically, during adolescence, both boys and girls become aware of their roles as sexual actors. However, girls are continuously more "sexualized" than boys (Brown and Gilligan 1992, Eder 1995, Thorne 1993). Feminist researchers have also shown that females are encouraged toward identity establishment through beautification and heterosexual romance (Bartky 1990; Brownmiller 1986; Eder 1995). I wanted to see precisely how *Seventeen* reinforces these notions. Regarding the idea of success within the "heterosexual market," feminists have also argued that there is an asymmetry between males and females in heterosexual relationships (Holland et al. 1990; Lorber 1994). Again, I wanted to find if the magazine reinforced that asymmetry, and if so, how.

Black feminists have argued that "no other group in America has so had their identity socialized out of existence as have Black women" (bell hooks, in Whelehan 1995, p.106). Thus, I felt it important to examine how, and how often, *Seventeen* depicts Black, as well as other minority, adolescent females. Moreover, I wanted to see if the magazine attempts to obscure racial and class differences by offering a idealistic notion of community among teenagers; if there existed a "tacked-on" quality to minority model representation within the pages of *Seventeen*; and, similarly, if there was an overrepresentation of a thin, blonde, blue-eyed archetype.

Further, feminists have criticized the assignment of certain emotions as inherently feminine traits, such as excitability and illogicality (Brownmiller 1986), passivity and compliance (Chodorow 1989), or the ideals of "nice and kind" (Brown and Gilligan 1992). I sought to uncover such dominant emotions as they may have been presented by *Seventeen* editorials, articles and fashion layouts. Conversely, I also explored the types of behavior that were discouraged or possibly stigmatized by the texts.

Finally, I wanted to see how any appropriated or commodified "feminist" messages rendered by the magazine were undermined by its other editorial content. Similarly, I sought out ways in which the magazine addressed social and political, mental health, and educational development issues. For example, if careers and vocations were presented, which are emphasized, and which are deemphasized, and does this change over time?

Specific parts of *Seventeen* that I thought were especially important to examine included the articles featured on the magazine's cover, textual examinations of the cover model,¹⁰ and the creation and subsequent omission (or possible

¹⁰ McCracken believes that the magazine cover is a semiotic system unto itself, as well as the magazine's first true advertisement:

More crucial than the label of most products, covers must attract audiences not only in order to sell the magazine, but so that the latter can succeed in its important function of selling other commodities (McCracken 1993, p.14).

I agree, and that is why I examined the cover more frequently

"morphing") of certain columns or features over time. Intertextual deconstruction combined with content analysis allowed me to unmask the discontinuity and mythologizing strategies within *Seventeen's* systems of meaning. I suspected that the individual purposes of feminism and *Seventeen's* version of femininity would prove incompatible. Thus I expected to find that *Seventeen* incorporates both cultural expectations and existing female identity conflicts, stemming from gender inequalities, to generate a system of overdetermined images of the "perfect," feminine teenage girl.

than other texts.

FINDINGS

For the most part, *Seventeen* is exceptionally repetitious; over the 25-year span, several themes echoed throughout, with only minor revisions and updates. Certain headlines and phrases (e.g., "Get Him to Notice You" or "Fight Freshman Fat") remain literally unchanged over decades. Other *Seventeen* texts have been completely eliminated (e.g., elaborate recipes, crafts and sewing instructions); similarly, a few completely new features have been created (e.g., the 1994 introduction of "School Zone," a feature modelled by non-professional, multiracial American and Canadian high school students).

Still other parts of *Seventeen* have experienced the most subtle change, wherein the focus of the feature has been updated, but the subversive messages and themes remain the same (e.g., replacing a seasonal emphasis on bridal registry and newlywed life with prom preparations; "fitness" and exercise routines replacing 1,000-calorie diets). Since the primary purpose of this research is to uncover the magazine's subtext, it was this indirect type of change that I found most intriguing. In the words of McCracken:

... because of publishers' reluctance to deviate from techniques that have brought financial success and

despite the appearance of change and innovation, there is a strong structural continuity in these magazines (McCracken 1993, p.2).

All of the above changes will be given further examination below.

Seventeen and similar publications comprise an institution (girls' mass-culture magazines) that fuels, shapes and maintains these conceptions of femininity in order to guide the doing of gender along dominant ideals. Essentially, the dominant, normative conceptions of the ideal teenage girl, according to the various texts of *Seventeen* over time, are that she is *white, invariably thin, narcissistic, relentlessly heterosexual, and addicted to consumption*. The following are examples of how *Seventeen* upholds these normative conceptions over time. While the major themes delineated below are all powerfully represented in the pages of *Seventeen* from 1970 to 1995, they do not constitute an exhaustive list of dominant ideals. Many additional themes could be used as examples (and a short discussion of such examples will be provided in the conclusion). However, I feel that the following themes best illuminate the magazine's commitment to the normative conceptions described above.¹¹

¹¹ Lists of indicative headlines for each theme can be found in the appendix.

WHITE: *Seventeen*, Race and Multiculturalism

While *Seventeen* has periodically run articles and columns dealing with racism and race relations, the magazine continually reinforces the idea of African-Americans and other minorities as "Other." This occurs when people of color are described only in ways that "define [their] relationship to those who are subject" (bell hooks in Collins, p.69). In other words, the articles address the reader in a way that assumes she is white. Perhaps this is best exemplified by a article such as "Growing Up Black" (December 1990), since at no time has *Seventeen* featured an article entitled "Growing Up White." This is because whiteness is assumed on the part of the reader. Like "femininity," "whiteness" can also be considered as a social construction (Frankenberg 1993); here, *Seventeen* helps to define whiteness by showing what it is not. Other examples include "How to Spot Your Own Prejudices" (December 1970) and "White Loves Black: A Real-Life Christmas Story" (a rather sanctimonious article about a white girl providing volunteer services to a poor black child, December 1971). Both the text and the infrequent appearance of these articles -- even when they are written by people of color -- help to enforce the idea of minorities as "Other." Thus, an article

such as "Black Beauty" (March 1981), though featured on the magazine's cover, becomes "Other" because of its rarity (and further reinforces the idea that normative -- unspecified -- "beauty" is white).

Again, a magazine's cover is its first advertisement, "a structured system of verbal and non-verbal signs" (McCracken 1990, p.19). One of the most potent signs *Seventeen's* cover yields is that of whiteness; *Seventeen's* rate of African-American cover model representation is low enough to merit special scrutiny.¹² African-Americans appeared on 16 covers out of 300, or 5.3 percent of all covers studied. In addition, African-American cover models shared their covers with whites 18.75 percent of the time. This is most significant in the case of the first African-American Cover Model Contest Winner, Carol Monteverde (October 1995), who is the only winner in the contest's 11-year history who shared her cover with anyone (Carol was embraced by white actor/singer Jamie Walters). *Seventeen* also seems more comfortable in recent years with African-American cover models who are also celebrities (actor Will Smith, July 1992; vocal group En Vogue, December 1992; pop singer Brandy, April 1995).¹³

¹² For a list of all African-Americans to appear on *Seventeen's* cover over the 25-year period studied, see appendix A.

¹³ While *Seventeen* has also put several white celebrities on its cover in recent years -- such as actors Clare Danes (September 1995), Drew Barrymore (May 1993) and Andrew Shue (February 1993) --it has a history of occasional placement of white celebrities on the magazine cover throughout the 1970s

In fashion layouts, *Seventeen* embraces the practice of "tokenism," allowing for one African-American model among (usually 3 or 4) white models. One African-American model at a time seems to become the favorite of *Seventeen's* editors for any given period, judging by the frequency of her appearance in monthly fashion layouts (for example, Joyce Walker in the early 1970s; Whitney Houston in the early 1980s; Kersti Bowser in the mid-1980s). But even the African-American models who become in-house *Seventeen* favorites do not enjoy cover status more than once; of all African-American cover models, only Kersti Bowser graced *Seventeen's* cover twice, in February 1982 and July 1984. Conversely, *Seventeen* puts its same favorite white models on the cover over and over again, sometimes for two months in a row (e.g., white models Jayne Modean, on the covers of April, July, August and December 1977; Heather Kampf on April, June and August 1985; Niki Taylor on August, October and November 1989, March 1990, January 1992 and January 1993. For more examples of cover-model repetition, see Appendix G).¹⁴

and 1980s (for example, gymnasts Olga Korbut, February 1975 and Mary Lou Retton, January 1985; actor Diane Lane, May 1980).

¹⁴ Caroline Miller, *Seventeen's* editor since 1994, says "There's a traditional expectation that African Americans don't sell magazines" (Miller, as quoted by Higginbotham 1996, p.84-85). Furthermore, in the words of Higginbotham, "Granted, there is that one light-skinned black girl in every fashion layout. But she's just as thin as the white girl standing next to her, and that white girl is always there -- like a chaperone. ... Maybe they think that if they surround her with enough white people, no one will notice she's black" (Higginbotham 1996, p.86. Emphasis in original.).

Hispanic American and Latina cover models appear occasionally, especially beginning in the late 1980s (e.g., Jacqueline Crevatas, May and June 1987; Jacqueline Santiago, March 1989; Miana Grafals, April 1990). However, as *Seventeen* does not explicitly provide the ethnicity of its cover models, it is difficult to ascertain the frequency of their appearance empirically. Cover models of "obvious color," however, remain rare; for instance, Latina Cameron Diaz, who appeared on *Seventeen* covers in July and September 1990 and February 1991, is a blue-eyed blonde. Another early cover, which featured Chicana Becky Ronquillo and three white models, showed all four girls in full-face "mime" makeup (March 1972).

A Native American cover girl was featured once, in January 1973: high school student Lucy Paul, from the American Navajo Reservation.¹⁵ Asian American cover models are virtually nonexistent (the only exception I was able to uncover was four-time cover model Phoebe Cates -- April and June 1979, April and November 1980 -- who is one-quarter Chinese). Even when *Seventeen* covers exhort "The Oriental Look" (September 1975) or celebrate "Multicultural Beauty" (December 1991), editors fail to place corresponding models on these covers, instead using white models.

Multicultural issues in *Seventeen* are treated mostly in

¹⁵ Considering Paul's particular ethnicity, the fact that she was not a professional model but a "real" girl, and the rate of minority model representation at *Seventeen*, the idea of another such cover seems nearly impossible today.

crass, commodified form. Like feminism (which will be discussed below), multiculturalism is treated as a "look" or "style," commodified and packaged for the express purpose of generating sales of "ethnic" clothing, jewelry, and so on. Readers are encouraged to "[Go] Native" via "Exotic Hair and Makeup" (May 1987) or have a "Fashion Fiesta!" to develop "Salsa Chic" (June 1988). These themes often occur on covers in the summer; perhaps *Seventeen* finds that "exotic" people, clothing, and so forth are more acceptable in the "tropical" months (see Appendix B).

Articles or features on foreign travel are rarely serious (e.g., "On the Road to Red China: I Was a Ping-Pong Diplomat," October 1971). Furthermore, articles pertaining to a reader's potential "semester abroad" experience (itself an elitist -- meaning class-defined -- activity) are typically from the point of view of the white, upper-middle-class traveller and can offer a perspective that is so unreflective it borders on bizarre:

[Katy] ... a slim, blonde high school senior from Portland, Maine [who was visiting Japan] ... never counted on being "treated like a freak" as she describes it, because of her fair skin and hair and her all-American, lanky good looks ... "I cried for the first three days."¹⁶ ("I See London, I See France," January 1988, p.44-45.)

Similarly, another feature on foreign travel in Japan began, "I stood pale-faced and curly-haired, a head above the crowd

¹⁶ Ironically, Katy was participating in an exchange program called "Youth For Understanding" (YFU).

..." ("When In Japan," March 1986, p.156.).

Additionally, race issues tend to be considered as black/white conflict only, and issues of class, as it intersects with race, are nonexistent. However, while articles pertaining to racial issues are still infrequent in current *Seventeen* issues, the magazine has created a new feature, entitled "School Zone," begun in September 1994. This is a photographic feature depicting real-life high school students, wearing their real-life clothes, and offering short thoughts on what's "cool" in style, music, and leisure at their school and in their hometowns. This feature is popular with *Seventeen* readers (Higginbotham 1996), and does provide a multiracial cast of "characters," who are often embracing one another. However, since "School Zone" simply shows various students posing and is concerned mainly with the clothes they wear, and because *Seventeen* has no commitment to articles that discuss race within a social context, "School Zone" is a progression only because it allows for more faces of color within the magazine's pages.¹⁷ Therefore, a void of minority

¹⁷ It is also possible that *Seventeen*'s editors chose to add a feature such as "School Zone" to its monthly repertoire in order to make the magazine seem more socially progressive or relevant to its *white* readers. Additionally, by making whiteness a normative conception, and therefore a requirement for successful femininity, *Seventeen* is an example of a cultural product that, in the words of Susan Bordo, "homogenizes":

this means that they will smooth out all racial, ethnic and sexual "differences" that disturb Anglo-Saxon, heterosexual expectations and identifications.. Certainly, high-fashion images may contain touches of exotica ... Consumer capitalism depends on the continual

representation in *Seventeen* has been replaced by a feature which promotes a type of racial utopianism, where "the people are very diverse ... [giving] you a good outlook on the world" ("School Zone," November 1995, p.116). The Black, Hispanic and other teens of color who are featured in "School Zone" are free to espouse their views on "places to chill" or clothing trends, but their unique voices and perspectives remain largely unheard (and segregated from the magazine's primary texts).

production of novelty, of fresh images to stimulate desire, and it frequently drops into marginalized neighborhoods in order to find them. 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 (Bordo 1993, p.24-25. Emphasis in original.).

**INVARIABLY THIN: The 'Freshman 15'
and Other Forms of Weight Control**

It would not be an exaggeration to say that "fatness" or even slight overweight is pathologized, both implicitly and explicitly, in *Seventeen*, and this is true at virtually every point in the 25-year span studied. Certain weight control behaviors, such as the fight against the "freshman fifteen,"¹⁸ were glorified so frequently that they are basically *Seventeen* tradition. (For an example of the repetition of themes, see the list of representative headlines, Appendix C.)

The May 1972 *Seventeen* featured two extremely specific, different diet menus, one a 600-700 calorie per day diet, the other 1,000-1,100 calories. An example from the 600-700 calorie diet:

WEDNESDAY. Breakfast: 1 vitamin-mineral tablet. 1/2 cantaloupe (or other melon). 1 egg, as you like it, no fats in cooking. 1 glass skim milk. Lunch: 1 cup beef bouillon. Salad plate of 1 medium-size tomato, 1 carrot,

¹⁸ The "freshman fifteen" refers to the weight a freshman [sic] woman can expect to gain in her first year of college. Usually blamed on late-night pizza binges in the dorm, a more sedentary lifestyle, and the consumption of beer, the freshman fifteen is never considered by *Seventeen* as "normal," i.e., weight that females naturally acquire as they leave their teenage years and become adult women. Certainly a case could be made for the gaining of the freshman fifteen as normal and natural, especially considering the endurance of the experience among women over several generations.

1 cucumber and 1 hard-cooked egg on lettuce bed. 1 serving of low-calorie gelatin dessert. Beverage. Dinner: 1 cup chicken broth. 3 oz. steak. 1 medium-size broiled tomato. 1 cup brussels sprouts. 1 serving of low-calorie gelatin dessert. Beverage (May 1972, p.128).

The most impoverished women in India, one of the world's poorest nations, eat 1,400 calories per day (Wolf 1992), or 800 calories more than the 1972 *Seventeen* reader inspired to diet by this article. Similarly, a 900-calorie diet was "scientifically determined to be the minimum necessary to sustain human functioning" at Treblinka during World War I (Wolf 1992, p.195). The president of the National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders says that dieting is "rampant" in girls by the fourth and fifth grades (Wolf 1992). It is believed that 5 to 10 percent of all American girls and women have anorexia, and that 20 percent are bulimic on a regular basis; these percentages are even higher on college campuses (Brumberg 1988).

While it seems that *Seventeen* has dropped its emphasis on "diets" (or at least the word "diet"), to say that it has stopped its coverage of weight control methods is wholly inaccurate. The 1995 *Seventeen* has a regular monthly feature called "Bodyline," which provides an exercise workout (e.g., "... try some serious swimming ... You'll feel more confident in a bathing suit. And not just because you spend so much time wearing one. Swimming will help tone your legs, butt, back and shoulders" ("Water World," November 1995, p.50).). The exercise instructions are as explicit and specific as the

Seventeen diets of the 1970s and 1980s:

Workout #1 Warm-Up: Swim 100 yards freestyle, 50 yards with kickboard, rest 45 seconds, 50 yards any stroke. Workout: Swim 25 yards freestyle, rest 20 seconds, 50 yards, rest 20 seconds, 75 yards, rest 20 seconds, 100 yards, rest one minute. Cooldown: Swim 50 yards any stroke ("Water World," November 1995, p.52.).

Fatness is pathologized in *Seventeen* whether it is the reader's fat or not. Examples include "When Your Mom is Fat" (November 1987), the similar "Shape Up With Mom" (July 1986), the male-authored "Big: Life in the Fat Lane" (August 1990) and "Being Heavy in a Skinny World" (August 1987) -- the last which, curiously, assumes that the "world" beyond *Seventeen* is also skinny! Readers are also subjected to paradoxical diet advice: warned to "Beware of Fad Diets!" in August 1973, they are yet exhorted to "Start a Diet" on the October 1973 cover, a mere two months later.

This is a theme of special importance because of the arguably epidemic proliferation of eating-disordered behavior through the 1970s and 1980s to the present (Brumberg 1988; Pipher 1994; Wolf 1991). Weights considered anorexic in the 1970s are likely regarded as simply culturally desirable today; Wolf reports that the "anorexic patient herself is *thinner* now than were previous generations of patients" (Wolf 1991, p.183. Emphasis in original.). *Seventeen* reports on eating disorders and girls' distorted body image on occasion ("Why Some Girls Starve Themselves," June 1978; "Why I Starved Myself," November 1995). However, it fails to place these

problems in a sociocultural context, usually ascribing an individual girl's struggle with, for example, anorexia on low self-esteem or perfectionism (see "I Was Dying to Be Thin," November 1995, p.124). It is even occasionally critical of such "cultural standards" of thinness; Brumberg discusses in one article her belief that girls are tortured by this "menacing fixation" because of a "preoccupation with appearance occurring earlier and earlier" ("Why Are Girls Obsessed With Their Weight?" November 1989, p.145). Yet *Seventeen* stops short of claiming any culpability for the way it shapes and exacerbates these existing cultural standards.

Consider the contradictions between texts on a cover featuring both a "Head-to-Toe Body Guide" and the headline "Why Some Girls Starve Themselves" (June 1978). Even more explicit are two covers that ask "Are You Obsessed With Your Weight?" and "Body Obsession: Why Are Girls Worried About Their Weight?" (July 1982 and November 1989). Both covers feature full-length body shots of very thin models; typical *Seventeen* covers during both time periods, however, were usually head or three-quarter shots (for example, 5 of 6 covers preceding the July 1982 cover, and 8 of 10 covers following it, featured head shots). *Seventeen's* rare expressions of concern for the eating-disordered lives of its readers, when considered against the simultaneous and uncritical cultural standards the magazine itself glorifies, is an example of hypocrisy at its most irresponsible.

NARCISSISTIC: The Cult of Models and Modeling

Before the 1980s, models and modeling as a vocation were featured on *Seventeen's* pages, and occasionally the cover. The explicit message was rarely that the reader *should* aspire to this career; instead, models within the magazine were treated more as celebrities. Early examples include "What It's Like to Be a Model" (March 1974), "What It's Like to Be a Teen Model" (March 1975), "Diet the Way Models Do" (July 1975), "Top Models: What Happens to Them" (March 1976), "3 Top Models and Their Careers" (October 1976), "How Seven Models Turn Flaws Into Assets" (October 1977), and "Modeling in Your Hometown" (June 1979).

However, a "model fetish" kicked into high gear in the 1980s, launched with the announcement of the Cover Model Contest on the February 1984 cover, and again on the next month's cover ("Cover Girls Off Camera," and "Enter Our Cover Model Contest" with an infrequently supplied "See page 181" below it, March 1984). Sponsored by various department stores throughout the country, the Cover Model Contest (CMC) was purportedly begun in 1984 to celebrate *Seventeen's* fortieth birthday. From its inception, it has generated pages and pages of advertising (for example, the March 1984 issue featured 27

pages of advertisements for local department stores such as A&S, Dayton's, Jordan Marsh and Leggets); today, the contest is sponsored exclusively by JC Penney.¹⁹

Certainly, given the number of young women who flock to, and are recruited by, various modeling agencies worldwide every year (Gross 1995), *Seventeen* is finding no shortage of potential, professional models to put on its cover. Instead, one could argue that a main purpose of the CMC (besides the opportunity to generate revenue from JC Penney and other sponsors) is to perpetuate a belief that every girl -- with enough will and determination, and the right products at hand -- has the potential to become a model²⁰. The CMC's purpose is

¹⁹ The CMC can also be considered as the site of another type of covert advertising: "Contest, sweepstakes and promotions are another group of special hybrid forms that mix the characteristics of advertising and editorial material and are ultimately covert ads" (McCracken 1993, p.55).

²⁰ Eileen Ford, former president and founder (in 1946) of the Ford Modeling Agency (Gross 1995), described the necessary requirements for a potential model in the March 1985 *Seventeen*:

Q: What do you look for in a new model?

[Ford]: The first thing is height; now the minimum for our agency is 5'8". Then I look at a girl's bone structure ... Finally she must have big, wide-set eyes, a straight nose, a long neck, and full lips that don't disappear when she smiles. Q: What's your advice for girls who want to break into modeling?

[Ford]: *Know your physical limits, and when people promise you the moon, don't listen* ("Focus on Modeling," March 1985, p.143. Author's emphasis.).

In other words, the physical requirements for a successful modeling career cannot be acquired by shopping at JC Penney. If a girl has what it takes to be signed by Ford, she wouldn't need to be bothered with these indirect, consumerist pursuits -- or, presumably, *Seventeen's* Cover Model Contest. Significantly, with the exception of 1990 winner Limor Luss, no CMC winners ever graced *Seventeen's* cover after their win,

to help foster a dream in girls of being the prettiest -- the fairest in the land, one of the "chosen few." This desire is rooted in insecurity -- since extremely few girls or women meet the modeling agencies' physical requirements²¹ -- which fuels narcissism and the subsequent purchase of beauty products.

More specifically, by making the "model" something to which girls can (and should) aspire, *Seventeen* fosters a sense of "anomie," as described by Durkheim:

No living being can be happy, or even exist, unless his [sic] needs are adequately related to his means. In other words, if his needs require more than can be allocated to them, or even merely something of a different sort, they will be under continual friction and can only function painfully (Durkheim 1972, p.174).

Whenever there is a chronic discrepancy between the needs (e.g., the desire to "be a model") and means (e.g., inadequate physical requirements) of an individual, she will become depressed or anomic; this is because she is not well integrated into a set of values, rules or laws beyond the self. This type of narcissistic anomie is particularly modern, because in the contemporary world, needs, wants and desires are no longer morally regulated; the "collective consciousness" has been replaced by the cult of the individual and thus produces an inherently frustrating "infinity" of

nor did any become successful professional models, to this researcher's knowledge.

²¹ The average model is also thinner than 95 percent of the female population (Wolf 1992).

desire and dreams (Durkheim 1972).

Without a limit on what she wants (even when it is completely out of her reach), the individual is left with a chronic desire, which can be temporarily sated through consumption: "... an action which cannot be effected without suffering tends not to be reproduced" (Durkheim 1972, p.174). Purchase and consumption of beauty and diet products can provide relief, albeit impermanent, to an individual's anomie. Of course, when the consumption of products fails to earn the individual the means to meet the needs, the anomie -- this sense of never being closer to a goal -- returns. While this interpretation may seem abstract, the narcissism fueled by *Seventeen's* fetish for models and the CMC motivates its readers to spend money on beauty products;²² thus, if a girl cannot buy her way to becoming a model, at the very least, she can attempt to "just look like one."²³

Again, if we consider that the popularity and heterosexual social success of girls are directly linked to their appearance and subsequent popularity with boys (Eder 1995; Holland et al. 1990), and that very few girls are actually "model material," it is no wonder that *Seventeen* is

²² To quote Wolf (paraphrasing Betty Friedan), "... why is it never said that the really crucial function that women serve as aspiring beauties is to buy more things for the body?" (Wolf 1991, p.66. Emphasis in original.).

²³ This is the famous slogan of the Barbizon "modeling schools," whose advertisements, notably, can be found in the back-advertising pages of *Seventeen* from 1970 to the present.

so successful at breeding anomie and insecurity via the model fetish. The idea of a model "fetish" and the anomie that I argue it seeks to produce is best exemplified by two *Seventeen* covers, October 1991 and January 1994. The first depicts that year's Cover Model Contest Winner and states, "How to Be a Model: Advice From the Pros." The other features the unusually enormous headline: "Want to be a Model? The Inside Scoop."

Seventeen's recent attempts to be inclusive -- i.e., all girls, no matter what color, are potential model material -- was insidiously depicted on the cover of the October 1992 issue, featuring that year's contest winner, Lillian Martinez. Martinez, a Hispanic-American 21-year old, was the first contest winner of obvious color; previous winners had often been blue-eyed (e.g., Katherine Gingrich, September 1989) or blue-eyed blondes (e.g., Rachel Dillman, September 1984; Chandra Zinn, October 1985). Under Martinez' cover photo was the unprecedented quote, "I'm a Model" (perhaps meant to convey incredulousness or at least surprise) and, to further drive the multicultural point home, "8 New *All-American* Faces" (Author's emphasis.). And again, the first African-American contest winner, 1995's Carol Monteverde, had to share her cover with white actor Jamie Walters. For further documentation of the model fetish and the CMC, consider the list of cover-featured, modeling-related articles of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s (see Appendix D).

RELENTLESSLY HETEROSEXUAL: The Sexual Auction Block

The progression from child to adolescent in American society has been described as a passage of "entry into the institution of heterosexuality" (Thorne 1993). Much of the beauty and fashion copy is explicitly provided by *Seventeen* in order to help the reader improve her status and worth within the heterosexual market. Implicit themes, on the other hand, tend to echo the idea that pursuit of the male -- and maintenance of a relationship once earned -- is a girl's primary function.

As in McRobbie's study of *Jackie*, I found that *Seventeen* "construct[s] male and female roles ensuring that they are separate and distinct as possible. ... any interchange between the sexes invariably exudes *romantic* possibilities" (McRobbie 1991, p.102. Emphasis in original.). According to *Seventeen*, pursuit of the male is a girl's fundamental calling; explicit, repetitious examples include "How Can I Get Him to Notice Me?" (May 1970), "How to Make Him Notice You" (April 1980), "Get Him to Notice You" (October 1984), "How to Get Him to Notice You" (February 1995), and "How to Be a Guy Magnet" (September 1995). Possession of a male partner has been shown to confer prestige upon young women (Holland et al. 1990), and this

pursuit, attainment and maintenance of a heterosexual relationship is the purpose -- again, sometimes stated implicitly, sometimes explicitly -- of the fashion and beauty advice (e.g., "Dreamy Dresses That'll Sweep Him Off His Feet," November 1986).

Readers are constantly encouraged to monitor the reactions they elicit from boys: e.g., "Is He Crazy About You? Find Out" (November 1984), "Love Signs: How to Tell If He's Attracted To You" (June 1986), "How to Know if He Likes You" (August 1993). Seventeen also recommends romantic self-assessment whether the reader is currently in a relationship ("Major Quiz: What Kind of Girlfriend Are You?" (November 1995)) or not ("Are You Loveable? Rate Yourself" (July 1976)). Furthermore, girls finding themselves romantically unsuccessful are problematized by the magazine; for example, consider "The Dating Scene: 'Why am I a Loser?'" (April 1974) and "Don't Be a Loser in Love" (October 1985). Finally, the occasional article that questions this compulsion toward obligatory heterosexuality treats the issue in a non-serious manner, making it clear that being "single" is a source for amusement, a novelty, but not a state that any "normal" girl would want to find herself in for long:

While other girls are out having incredibly romantic times with their boyfriends, you sit home ... talking back to Alex Trebek ("I'll take 'Spinsterhood' for a hundred"). ... Even Roseanne Barr has a better half. ... [Yet] Look at what you gain -- and all the hazards you avoid -- by flying solo. ... he'll confess that he listens to the Carpenters when he's down or wet the bed until he was fifteen. ("Ten Reasons to Be Glad You Don't

Have a Boyfriend. Seriously." September 1989, p.102-103)²⁴

If this weren't enough, *Seventeen* has also maintained a healthy subgenre glorifying the "male gaze." At different times, there have been columns devoted to the male perspective on girls and women (e.g., "Him" by Gil Schwartz, which ran in the mid-to-late 1980s; "Guy Talk," later retitled "Bob Love," by Robert Love, running from 1992 to the present). Other features have shown more explicitly how the reader's appearance is for the male gaze, best depicted by the truly horrifying "Guys Spy: They Rate Your Outfits" (January 1988), wherein four young men discuss whether or not they find certain outfits acceptable on *Seventeen's* models, and hold up *scorecards* (from 1 through 4) to specify their individual levels of approval. "If my girlfriend wore it, I'd be really embarrassed," says Doug, describing models who are defined as "Good Sports" and "Playthings." "Would I mind a date wearing this?" ponders Josh, who rated the model a "3." "Maybe not at

²⁴ This article alludes to male-on-female violence for reason number five:

Jealousy -- Pure and Simple. You know the story. He hates it when you flirt with other guys. You're not particularly pleased when he lets other girls grope his biceps. People get possessive. *And sometimes, even in the most innocent of situations, things get out of hand. You've got an active imagination, he's got a bad temper, and ... well, I don't have to explain. We've all seen episodes of Hard Copy.* (p.103. Author's emphasis.)

One wonders how wise it is for *Seventeen* to refer to such a serious issue in this off-hand way; even if this was meant to be sincere, its placement among the other foolish reasons (i.e., number three, "The Buddy System"; number seven, "There's More to Life Than *Happy Days* Reruns") fully negates its impact.

a party where no one knew who we were ..." ("The Rating Game," Jan. 1988, p.64-72).

This reinforces the notion that a girl's femininity and appearance are for others, especially males, and thus should be displayed; the reader is encouraged to place herself on the heterosexual market or sexual auction block as early and often as possible. It also echoes Rubin's concept of the "traffic in women"; patriarchal social systems depend upon this obligatory heterosexuality to ensure that women, or girls, will be socially constructed as the subordinates of men. Further, this obligatory heterosexuality teaches girls to restrict themselves to Chodorow's "sphere of immanence." Since the basic sexual identity of a girl is specifically assigned to her, she therefore has no need to "do," or prove herself; rather, she can simply "be" this devalued, culturally constructed version of femininity.

Whether it is hordes of boys "rating" the singularly-addressed reader (e.g., "The Male Mystique: 500 Boys Rate You, Your Clothes, Your Looks" (March 1971); "Quiz: What Do Guys Think of You?" (April 1994)), or one particular boy's opinion presumably speaking for all (e.g., "How He Knows He's In Love: One Guy Spills It All" (October 1991)), the girl reader is never allowed to forget that the male eyes of the world are watching and assessing her body, her clothes, her face, her behavior, and so forth, ad nauseam. Moreover, according to *Seventeen*, the opinions of these anonymous, faceless boys (and hence, by extension, the opinions of boys and men the reader

encounters in her day-to-day life) are important and will determine her worth and social success. Thus, the obvious answer to "Who Says I Have to Have a Boyfriend?" (September 1989): *Seventeen*.

ADDICTED TO CONSUMPTION: The Newlywed and the Prom

Betty Friedan first asked in 1963, "Why is it never said that the really crucial function, the really important role that women serve as housewives is *to buy more things for the house?*" (Friedan 1984, p.206. Emphasis in original). To this end, the *Seventeen* of the 1970s reads much like a *Ladies' Home Journal* for the junior set, filled with recipes, party and entertaining suggestions that will knock the fiance dead, and instructions for knitting and sewing the latest fashions. Advertisements for china ("Love Leads to Lenox"), silverware (Oneida), linens (Wamsutta), furnishings (Lane Cedar Chests) and food products (Campbell's Soup) ran regularly, helping the reader to select all the products she would need for her anticipated future life as a wife and homemaker.

Seventeen's special supplement and advertising section, "One Plus One," directed at "nearlyweds and newlyweds," ran twice a year from 1972 to 1975, and bridal and premarital features and supplements continued to be featured on the magazine's cover in May 1976, February 1977, February 1978, February 1979, February 1980 and February 1981.²⁵ Judging from

²⁵ I assume that *Seventeen's* annual February release of bridal-supplement issues was effected in order to help brides-to-be get all their shopping done in time for a June wedding;

their frequency and size, these supplements were popular and successful; the February 1972 "One Plus One" supplement ran from pages 165 to 236 (72 pages) and featured more than 42 pages of special advertising. Again, to quote Friedan, "the perpetuation of housewifery ... makes sense (and dollars) when one realizes that women are the chief customers of American business" (p.206-207).²⁶ (This concept is also echoed in the *Seventeen* advertisements, discussed earlier, that can be found in the pages of trade publications like *Advertising Age*. See page 9.)

By February 1980, however, "Wedding Belles" were relegated to the page three index; similarly, "Marriage, The Greatest Adventure of Your Life: Start it in Style" (February 1985) was not featured on the cover. "One Plus One" did have a brief resurgence in February 1986 and February 1987 -- although not on the magazine's cover. Further, the February 1987 "One Plus One" ran only from pages 89 to 94 (6 pages), and featured just two special advertisements (for Oneida and

it also neatly coincides with Valentine's Day.

²⁶ Friedan also explains the genesis of this concept: In the fifties came the revolutionary discovery of the teenage market. Teenagers and young marrieds began to figure prominently in the surveys. It was discovered that young wives, who had only been to high school and never worked, were more "insecure," less independent, easier to sell. These young people could be told that, by buying the right things, they could achieve middle-class status, without work or study. ... The main point now was to convince teenagers that "happiness through things" ... can be enjoyed by all, if they learn "the right way," the way others do it, if they learn the embarrassment of being different" (p.218-219).

Maurice's formal wear store). As young women increasingly prolonged entering into first marriage throughout the 1980s,²⁷ *Seventeen* could no longer rely on bridal features to arouse reader interest and generate special advertising sections. Indeed, by 1988, bridal features in *Seventeen* had bit the dust. So what of all that lost advertising revenue?

If *Seventeen* could no longer convince its readers to aspire to the dream world of the bride -- and to fulfill their destiny as America's greatest consumers via this path -- what product-driven fantasy could replace the cult of "nearlyweds and newlyweds" in *Seventeen*? A possible solution: the quasi-"bride for a day" consumerist frenzy of the American high school prom. Several parallels, such as the seasonality of the event or the emphasis on the "virginity issue" (i.e., "Sex and the Prom: What Really Happens On the Big Night," May 1991), can be drawn between the "nearlywed"/newlywed experience and the prom. However, the strongest correlation between the newlywed and the prom relates to the pre-event, consumerist preparation and advertising similarity.

Both newlywed and prom supplements or issues rely heavily on special advertising sections and "advertorials," or advertisements that take the form of features: "advertiser-paid blocks of pages that combine clearly identifiable

²⁷ The median age for women's first marriage was 20.8 in 1970, 22 in 1980, 23.3 in 1985 and 23.9 by 1990. 1992 World Almanac and Book of Facts. New York: Pharos Books, 1991, p.943.

advertising with simulated editorial text" (McCracken 1993, p.54). Examples include "Bridal Brunch," a two-page advertisement for Kraft food products that is nearly indistinguishable from *Seventeen's* regular food and recipe features (February 1975, p.112-113); and "Find Your Perfect Match," an 8-page special advertising section from *Cover Girl*, that showcases prom fashion and makeup application in a photographic style that is virtually identical to *Seventeen's* own beauty features (March 1992, p.61-68).²⁸ In the magazine, both events are also the site of substantial covert advertising through a string of product-driven, editorial and photographic features: for example, "Three Heavenly Honeymoons," "It's Just What We're Looking For!" (table- and housewares), "Guide to Better Buymanship" (flatware, stemware) and "... And We Assembled It All By Ourselves!" (furniture) (February 1978, p.138-148).²⁹ Similarly, the March 1994 prom

²⁸ Another bridal advertorial featured in the February 1975 *Seventeen* was "The 'Get to Know Him Better' Test" from ArtCarved jewelers. It is remarkably similar to typical *Seventeen* quizzes (e.g., "Quiz Fun: Is He For Me?" (June 1970)), except for the test's last question: "Three ArtCarved rings and three wedding rings are shown on the opposite page. Select one of each that has the most appeal to you." Readers are then told to send the "test" to ArtCarved, who will presumably send a catalogue in return (p.120-121). (How exactly this helps the reader "get to know him better" is unclear.)

²⁹ This is in addition to "Getting Ready for the Wedding" (a beauty feature, p.46), "Country Elegance" (a bridal fashion feature, p.62), "Home Hunting" (p.92 and 97), "Let's Make It a Spring Wedding: How to Pick Out the Perfect Ring" (p.134-135) and "I'm So Glad We Decided on Bermuda" (a honeymoon fashion feature, p.136-137). Bermuda, by the way, is the first "heavenly honeymoon" profiled on the next page.

issue includes "Beauty Workshop" (pre-prom "spa works", p.27-34), "Prom Makeovers" (p.36-49), "Beauty Marks" ("model-perfect" prom hairdos, p.52-62), "Oh What a Night" (prom fashion, p.174-183), "A Perfect Match" (prom makeup, p.184-187), "Prom Portraits" (fashion, p.188-195) and "The Perfect Pre-Prom Party" (recipes, p.214).

While prom features and prom fashion were present in *Seventeen* in the 1970s, they generally spanned only a few pages, and mostly featured simple cotton dresses, many of which the reader could sew herself (e.g., "The Soft Prom Look: Romantic Dresses to Buy and Sew," May 1977, p.136-143). They were given approximately as much advertising and editorial space as the dwindling bridal supplements and features of the 1980s. However, every March issue of *Seventeen* since 1990 ("Our Biggest Prom Issue Ever") has been almost exclusively devoted to the inevitable pre-prom shopping spree ("Prom Special," 1991; "Best Prom Ever," 1992; "Prom Passion," 1993; "Great Prom Dresses Under \$100"³⁰ and "Head-to-Toe Prom Makeovers," 1994; "Prom Countdown," 1995), just as every February issue of *Seventeen* was once assigned to the

³⁰ This is not necessarily typical; judging from recent prom-featured pages of *Seventeen*, the consumerist ante gets upped every year. Dresses costing several hundred dollars (Loralie Originals dress, \$340, March 1992, p.154; made-to-order Jessica McClintock dresses, \$400, \$700 and \$890, March 1993 cover and p.188, respectively) and equally expensive accessories (\$150 Nathalie M shoes, March 1993, p.194; \$250 Erickson Beamon necklace, March 1996 cover) are not uncommon.

newlywed's need for products.³¹

While it cannot be definitively said that *Seventeen* (and similar publications) is directly responsible for the increasingly expensive, consumerist American high school prom experience, it surely provides a yearly, explicit manual or instruction booklet to guide teenage female spending habits, just as "One Plus One" did for so many years. When properly manipulated by magazines such as *Seventeen*, the teenage girl "can be given the sense of identity, purpose, creativity, the self-realization, even the sexual joy they lack -- by the buying of things" (Friedan, p.208). To put it bluntly, *Seventeen's* promotion of "happiness through things" serves to indoctrinate girls into the world of feminine consumerism.

³¹ Again, the March release of prom issues, like the February release of bridal issues, provides a girl with two whole months to shop before the prom. In the 1970s, before the prom became such a celebration of consumption, *Seventeen* usually ran prom-related fashion and beauty features in April and May issues (e.g., May 1973, May 1977).

CONCLUSIONS

Today's *Seventeen* is the magazine at its most sophisticated and formulaic. As an advertiser-driven media outlet and introductory text for femininity, its mission is to start its readers toward a lifetime of culturally-approved spending, which handily reinforces accepted feminine gender ideals. *Seventeen* now addresses young women who assume as undeniable the liberal feminist gains -- such as equal opportunity and equal pay -- of the 1960s and 1970s. *Seventeen's* brand of feminism, however, has been "fetishized" or turned into what Goldman calls "commodity feminism":

Mass media advertising to women represents an aesthetically depoliticized version of a potentially oppositional feminism. It is a feminism tailored to the demands of the commodity form (Goldman 1992, p.130).

This appropriation of feminism turns feminist ideals into a "look" or a "style" -- a semiotic abstraction (or "shorthand") "composed of visual signs that 'say who you are.'" (Goldman 1992, p.133).

So while the 1995 *Seventeen* might appeal to its readers' intelligence through the use of slogans such as "girl power!" its true intent is belied by an ad, placed in a October issue of *New York* magazine, and directed to potential advertisers. Under the banner "Cool. Totally cool. Totally smart. Totally

hot" an Asian model is quoted as "saying":

Yeah, I wish. This year is big time for me. It's do or die. Make or break. *So if I don't look just right*, I'm doomed. Or worse. A weirdo. A nerd. Or maybe *just another girl in the crowd*. (Author's emphasis.)

Beneath this is the phone number for the magazine's vice president of group publishing, and the words, "Seventeen. The most influential fashion and beauty magazine a young woman will ever read in her lifetime."

Moreover, when considered along with the magazine's beauty photographs and advertising copy, it is difficult to take any of *Seventeen's* "positive" or informative messages seriously. For instance, *Seventeen* has necessarily integrated specific social issues into its regular monthly features: examples include the "Sex and Your Body" column, begun in August 1982. Yet McCracken showed how "the magazine continues to contradict ... by publishing ads and features that encourage girls to be both childish and sexually alluring" (McCracken 1993, p.146). Dominant themes which I did not discuss here -- such as regulation of sexuality, or the ways in which girls are taught to do the "emotional labor" in relationships -- are doubtlessly the site of further contradictions.

Despite a commodified feminism, *Seventeen's* governing emotional sphere can best be described as "schizophrenic." Attempting to fit *Seventeen's* conception of "ideal" would prove impossible for even the most compliant girl; the reader is urged to be simultaneously young and cute, but suave and

sophisticated. Sexy, yet chaste. Imperialist and elitist, yet multicultural. Feminist in spirit, but not in name (or action). Beautiful, yet "natural" and unobsessed with appearance. All girls are told that, if they try hard enough, they can fit this dominant ideal, despite obvious differences in race, class, weight, physical appearance, and so on. All attempts to achieve this ideal are presented as "normal" and "naturally" of interest to girls.³² (This reflects again Ferguson's statement that "the medium is still a message in itself.")

That girls might feel "fat" or "ugly" after viewing unusually thin and beautiful models on magazine cover after cover, page after page, month after month, year after year, is hardly news. Girls see this overdetermined image of the "perfect" feminine girl -- white, thin, compulsively heterosexual, narcissistic, addicted to shopping -- not just in *Seventeen*, but in hundreds of cultural products aimed at them -- as children, adolescents and teens. From animated Disney heroines to "Saved by the Bell," from Barbie and *Sweet Valley High* and back again, female adolescence in the United States is a "time of marked internal development and massive cultural indoctrination" (Pipher 1994).³³

³² The performance of, for instance, beauty rituals "reaffirms a common femininity and shared group membership" (Ferguson 1983, p.184).

³³ This indoctrination is occurring at earlier and earlier ages; consider the 1983 creation of *Barbie* magazine, a beauty and fashion magazine aimed at 4- to 11-year-old girls

At this stage of life, parents are no longer the primary influence on girls' thoughts and behavior. The influence of popular culture through mass-media products forces girls to confront enormous and pervasive cultural notions about what it means to be "feminine." In the words of Brown and Gilligan

In ... this edge between childhood and full-blown adolescence, girls' minds may grasp the meaning others make of their changing bodies and they may feel themselves moving from flesh to image in an eroticized and frightening, tantalizing and ultimately terrifying fall (Brown and Gilligan 1992, p.168).

How girls react to these depictions, and how they maneuver their behavior within the sphere of cultural femininity, are questions beyond the scope of this particular study.

It may be that *Seventeen* remains successful despite the changing lives of girls and young women over time because it does not deviate from the formula:

For those females who seek the original, undiluted gospel, women's magazines still offer the most comprehensive and authoritative voice on the mainstream practices and beliefs of the 'true' cult (Ferguson 1983, p.192).

But the pleasure, or what McCracken calls "the positive pole of desire," derived from reading magazines exists alongside of the authoritative voice of consumption; readers must be able to find pleasure and shared female identity³⁴ within the pages of *Seventeen*. Otherwise, why would they read it?

Seventeen's strict and conflicting standards of

(McCracken 1993, p.135).

³⁴ Albeit a "spurious sense of solidarity and conformity with the values of one's peers" (McCracken 1993, p.299).

femininity, at any point during the 25-year span studied, are hardly new. Writes Wini Breines of 1950s, white girl culture

As educational and occupational opportunities grew, the mass media exacerbated girls' double binds and doubleness by promoting oppositions: domesticity and glamour, virginity and sexuality, romance and sexual negotiation.

However, she continues:

While the terms and products with which to construct new versions of femininity were not of their making, by choosing from and embellishing products and looks, girls were engaged in creating new feminine meanings (Breines 1992, p.125).

This last point is undoubtedly true of girls today. Though girls and their culture may be devalued (or ignored completely) within the larger society, the culture between the covers of *Seventeen*, however inaccurate or contrived, is for girls and girls alone.³⁵ There are comparatively few other popular culture outlets where this is the case.

The *Seventeen* audience is, after all, adolescent and teenage girls, many of whom might use the magazine as an escapist -- though likely anxiety-producing -- form of entertainment (and also may be reading it because they see their sisters, mothers and friends reading similar publications). Further, a girl can be a feminist and read *Seventeen*; after all, *Seventeen* readers are *young* women, who may be just beginning to develop feminist consciousness. Given

³⁵ Admittedly, my research would have moved much faster if I hadn't stopped to read so many articles and look at so many fashion and beauty features. I believe that I was even able to locate my very first *Seventeen* (November 1981)!

time, it is likely many will (and may even find that years of reading a product such as *Seventeen* will sharpen their perceptions about how gender is constructed). I think that the problem is less that girls gain any pleasure from reading *Seventeen*, and more that this enjoyment is "harness[ed] ... to consumerism" (McCracken 1993, p.135).

As stated above, I feel that examination of girls' reactions to the restrictive -- especially for girls of color -- images they see within their culture, and the larger American popular culture, would be repetitious.³⁶ The level of analysis must be moved from the social psychological (asking girls how popular culture products designed for them make them "feel") to the macro/organizational level. Precisely whose purposes are ultimately being served by the creation and distribution of a product such as *Seventeen*, and how? Furthermore, how do corporations, such as publishing companies, intersect with other corporate entities, like cosmetics companies and advertising agencies, to create and market specific products? Finally, what are the links between capitalism and patriarchy as they relate to corporate girl culture? (I noticed during my research that General Motors had been a sponsor of the Cover Model Contest, that the United

³⁶ *Seventeen* is a tool used to guide and reinforce the doing of gender along socially approved ideals. Yet it is important to point out that *Seventeen* is just one of many corporate girl-culture products which sustains the social construction of gender by providing sexual "scripts" for behavior and appearance. I chose it over other magazines because of its enduring success and popularity.

States Army was a regular advertiser at *Seventeen*, and that the National Rifle Association had advertised in the magazine as well.) Doing gender, by following the sexual scripts provided in the gender manual *Seventeen*, makes a great profit for many institutions one would not automatically link to a product such as *Seventeen*.

APPENDIX A
AFRICAN-AMERICAN COVER MODELS

July 1971	Joyce Wilford (with Bonnie Lysohir)
Jan. 1972	Pamela Jones
Nov. 1972	Joyce Walker
May 1977	Cassandra
Dec. 1978	Bill and Erika Cosby
Sept. 1980	Amy Lumet
Nov. 1981	Whitney Houston (with Diane Leicht)
Feb. 1982	Kersti Bowser
July 1984	Kersti Bowser
Dec. 1987	Rochelle Hunte
May 1989	Beverly Peele
May 1991	Tatiana Englehart ³⁷
July 1992	Will Smith, Shireen Crutchfield
Dec. 1992	En Vogue (Maxine Jones, Terry Ellis, Dawn Robinson, Cindy Herron)
April 1995	Brandy
Oct. 1995	Carol Monteverde (Cover Model Contest Winner, with Jamie Walters)

³⁷ Englehart is Brazilian.

APPENDIX B
INDICATIVE HEADLINES ³⁸

RACE AND RACISM

Dec. 1970	How to Spot Your Own Prejudices
Aug. 1972	Today's Black/White Mood: Students Speak Out
Jan. 1973	Special Report: Today's Young Navajos
Dec. 1975	Black and White Teens
Nov. 1987	Campus Racism: A Special Report
Dec. 1989	Anatomy of a Racial Murder: The Bensonhurst Incident
Dec. 1990	Young, Black and Female in America
Oct. 1995	Is Your School Divided by Race?

MULTICULTURALISM

March 1970	Joyride to Japan for Expo '70
Jan. 1971	The Dating Scene Around the World
Oct. 1971	On the Road to Red China: I Was a Ping-Pong Diplomat
April 1972	Far East Influence: How to Wear It, Taste It, Live It
May 1972	Europe on the Cheap
April 1973	My Two Years in Uganda
July 1973	Getting to Know China
Feb. 1974	Summer Study in Europe
Sept. 1975	The Latest Fashion: The Oriental Look
Oct. 1975	Fashion Goes Latin-American
May 1987	Gone Native: Exotic Hair and Makeup
June 1988	Fashion Fiesta! New Salsa Chic
June 1989	Jungle Fever Fashions
June 1990	Rave Up! Reggae Looks
Aug. 1990	Global Style 1990
Dec. 1991	Multicultural Beauty: African American, Asian, Hispanic, Native American Makeup Tips
June 1993	You Are So Beautiful: Celebrate Your Heritage, Celebrate Yourself

³⁸ All headlines listed here and in appendices C, D, E and F are taken from *Seventeen's* cover unless otherwise noted.

**APPENDIX C
INVARIABLY THIN**

May 1971	The Unmaking of a Fat Girl
Aug. 1971	Body and Skin: Battles You Can Win
Sept. 1971	How to Fight Collegiate Fat (not on cover)
March 1973	"Why Do I Make Myself Fat?"
June 1973	Notes From a Diet Freak ³⁹
Aug. 1973	Beware of Fad Diets
Oct. 1973	Chart Your Figure, Start a Diet
Sept. 1974	Dance Away Your Flab
March 1975	"How Dieting Nearly Killed Me"
June 1975	A Teen Tries a Flab Factory
July 1975	Diet the Way Models Do
Feb. 1976	Win Prizes for Diet Tips!
March 1977	How to Avoid Freshman Weight Gain
June 1978	Why Some Girls Starve Themselves
Jan. 1979	Cutting Calories Without Starving
Feb. 1980	Secrets of <u>Staying</u> Thin
May 1980	The Easiest-Ever Teen Diet
July 1982	Are You Obsessed With Your Weight?
Jan. 1983	15 Diet Myths
Oct. 1984	Fight Freshman Fat (not on cover)
June 1985	Weight-Loss Success Story: "How I Dropped 20 Pounds"
April 1986	Exclusive: A Diet Even YOU Can Stick To
Sept. 1986	Anorexia: One Girl's Ordeal
May 1987	Meet 10 Weight-Loss Winners
Aug. 1988	Fighting the Freshman 15 (not on cover)
Aug. 1989	Fighting the Freshman 15
Nov. 1989	Body Obsession: Why Are Girls Worried About Their Weight?
Dec. 1989	How to Avoid Holiday Weight Gain
Jan. 1991	Diet That Works: Our Weight Loss & Fitness Plan
Jan. 1995	High-Energy Diet and Workout
July 1995	Do You Hate Your Body? How to Stop

³⁹ Despite the fact that this article described a young woman (the "diet freak") who was concerned with the calories in her toothpaste, *Seventeen* felt it necessary to provide diet tips along with the confessional.

APPENDIX D
THE CULT OF MODELS AND MODELING

Feb. 1972	Beauty: Models Share Their Secrets
March 1974	What It's Like to Be a Model Plus Special Model Makeover
March 1975	What It's Like To Be a Teen Model
March 1976	Top Models: What Happens to Them
Oct. 1976	Three Top Models and Their Careers
Oct. 1977	How Seven Models Turn Flaws Into Assets ⁴⁰
Jan. 1978	Three Top Models: How They Live
June 1979	Modeling in Your Hometown
May 1981	Starting a Modeling Career: Meet Cusi
July 1981	What Models Love to Wear
Sept. 1984	Meet Our Cover Model Contest Winner
June 1988	Modeling: The Inside Story
July 1988	Beauty Secrets From the Models
Oct. 1988	Model Perfect Hair, Makeup (CMC)
Sept. 1989	What a Face! (CMC)
Dec. 1989	Model-Perfect Haircuts
Oct. 1990	8 Finalists Model Great Looking Clothes (CMC)
Nov. 1990	Model Makeover: Clarka Gets a New 'Do
Oct. 1991	How To Be a Model: Advice From the Pros (CMC)
Jan. 1992	Niki and Krissy Taylor, Model Sisters
Jan. 1993	Niki and Krissy: This Year's Models
Aug. 1993	Sisters Who Model: Two Rising Stars
Sept. 1993	An American Model in Paris
Oct. 1993	The Making of a Cover Model (CMC)
Nov. 1993	Find Your Style: Two Models Show You How
Jan. 1994	Want to be a Model? The Inside Scoop
Feb. 1994	Model Couples, Backstage Beauty
Nov. 1994	Model in the Making: Melissa's Our Youngest Cover Model Winner Ever!
Aug. 1995	Model Hair: How to Get It

⁴⁰ These "flaws" include things such as freckles, a front-tooth gap, close-set eyes, braces, glasses, and a small, faint scar.

APPENDIX E
RELENTLESSLY HETEROSEXUAL

Feb. 1970	How to Get Along With Boys
May 1970	How Can I Get Him to Notice Me?
July 1970	To Find Your Future, Read His Palm
Sept. 1973	Can the "Wrong Man" Be Right For You?
Nov. 1973	The Boy Problem: "What Do I Do About Two?"
April 1974	The Dating Scene: "Why am I a Loser?"
July 1976	Are You Loveable? Rate Yourself
May 1977	Why Do Boys Hide How They Feel?
May 1978	"Why Does He Treat Me This Way?"
Sept. 1978	Are You Too Pushy With Boys?
March 1979	What Girls Really Look For in Boys
April 1980	How to Make Him Notice You
Oct. 1980	He Drops You: How to Cope
Aug. 1981	Expect Too Much From Your Boyfriend?
Jan. 1982	Test Your RQ (Romance Quotient)
Feb. 1982	Unmarried Princes to Dream About
April 1982	WHY Doesn't He Call Back?
Feb. 1983	Boys Boys Boys Boys Boys Boys Boys Boys Boys Boys ⁴¹
June 1984	Boys: How to Meet Them
Oct. 1984	Get Him to Notice You
Nov. 1984	Is He Crazy About You? Find Out
June 1985	Do You Act Like a Fool in Love? Find Out!
Sept. 1985	Is it Love -- or Obsession?
Oct. 1985	Don't Be a Loser in Love
June 1986	Love Signs: How to Tell If He's Attracted To You
Jan. 1987	Dating Games: Boy Ploys That <u>Never</u> Work
Aug. 1987	How to Talk to a Boy
Sept. 1989	"Who Says I Have to Have a Boyfriend?"
Aug. 1993	How to Know if He Likes You
Nov. 1993	Can You Read His Romantic Signals?
Feb. 1995	How to Get Him to Notice You
April 1995	How to Dump Him
May 1995	Guys and Sex: How to Tell If He's Using You
June 1995	Boyfriends: Five Things That Freak them Out
Aug. 1995	How to Tell If He's Using You
Sept. 1995	How to Be a Guy Magnet
Nov. 1995	Major Quiz: What Kind of Girlfriend Are You?
Dec. 1995	How to Fight With Your Boyfriend

⁴¹ Also on this cover: "Can you love two at once? Do opposites really attract? What are they thinking? Plus clothes and makeup to wow 'em."

APPENDIX F
THE MALE GAZE

March 1971	The Male Mystique: 500 Boys Rate You, Your Clothes, Your Looks
Oct. 1974	A Boy's Advice to Girls About Phone Calls, Dates ... and Boys!
Nov. 1974	Panel Report: Boys Sound Off About Girls
Oct. 1975	What Makes a Boy Ask You Out?
Jan. 1977	How Girls Get Good & Bad Reputations
July 1977	Do Boys <u>Really</u> Like Independent Girls? ⁴²
March 1978	Exclusive Survey: What Boys Really Look for in Girls
Jan. 1980	What Foreign Boys Think of American Girls
May 1983	How Does a Boy in Love Feel?
June 1983	Boys: What Signals Are You Sending to Them?
Aug. 1983	The 10 Questions BOYS Ask About Girls
Oct. 1986	What Boys Really Talk About
April 1987	The Secret Life of Boys
Jan. 1988	Guys Spy: They Rate Your Outfits
July 1989	Guys Talk About: Being Popular, Sexual Pressures, Your Makeup
July 1991	Why He Loves Your Long Hair
Oct. 1991	How He Knows He's In Love: One Guy Spills It All
May 1992	First Date: What's Really On His Mind
March 1993	What Do Boys Really Think?
Sept. 1993	Do You Come On Too Strong? What Guys Think
April 1994	Quiz: What Do Guys Think of You?
May 1994	When His Friends Hate You
Sept. 1994	Why Guys Can't Stop Talking About Your Body ⁴³
Nov. 1994	Kissing: Guys Say What They Love ... and Hate

⁴² The answer, by the way, is thus: "According to our findings, [boys like girls who are] independent enough to make their own decisions about how to spend their time -- but not so independent that they completely forget their boy friends. Just pursue your own interests, and the boys will be pursuing you!" (The findings came from a "study" consisting of a "recent check of a number of teen-age boys across the country" and a discussion with New York City psychiatrist Dr. Robert Willis.) July 1977, p.51.

⁴³ This somewhat innocuous-sounding title actually represents an article, featuring male panel-type responses, on the serious topic of sexual street harassment.

APPENDIX G COVER MODELS ⁴⁴

1970

Jan. Melissa Babish, 17, Miss Teenage America 1969
 Feb. Lucy Angle
 March Leone James
 April Bonnie Lyschir
 May Leone James
 June Susan Dey, 18
 July Pia Buggert; Harold Grant
 Aug. Jamee Tucker; Connie Wardrup
 Sept. Barbara Rix
 Oct. Bonnie Lyschir
 Nov. Shelley Hack
 Dec. Leone James

1971

Jan. Sally DeWitt, 18, National Merit Scholar
 Feb. Debbie Biernacki; Jill Twiddy
 March Shelley Hack; Harold Grant
 April Ann Simington, 18
 May Diane Wilkinson
 June Ann Simington, 18
 July Bonnie Lyschir; Joyce Wilford (African American)
 Aug. Rachel Eriksson
 Sept. Shelley Smith
 Oct. Suvi Luk, Keith Gog
 Nov. Sunny Redmond
 Dec. Melissa Weston

1972

Jan. Pamela Jones, 18, Featured Dancer, Dance Theater of Harlem (African American)
 Feb. Beshka
 March Lynn Carruthers, 18; Suzanne Olson, 17; Gaye Nelson, 19; Becky Ronquillo, 15 (Chicana), all wearing heavy face-paint as mimes.
 April Betsy Cameron
 May Betsy Cameron
 June Mona Grant
 July Mona Grant
 Aug. Darlanne
 Sept. Kathy Morris; Vicky Overton
 Oct. Ingrid
 Nov. Joyce Walker (African American)
 Dec. Mick Lindberg, Mick Curtis

⁴⁴ The age of the cover model(s) is provided whenever available.

1973

Jan. Lucy Paul, 15, high school student from Arizona Navajo Reservation
 Feb. Darlanne
 March Patti Hansen
 April Patti Hansen
 May Deborah Raffin, 20
 June Irja
 July Lynn Kellner
 Aug. Becky Aleu
 Sept. Pam Erikson
 Oct. Bonnie Lysohir; Robert Redford, 36
 Nov. Jane Gill
 Dec. Holly Colburn

1974

Jan. Lori Nieno, Minnesota's Junior Miss 1973
 Feb. Debbie Bruce, 17
 March Melanie Cain, 19
 April Patti Hansen
 May Pam Erikson
 June Jane Orman
 July Linda Blair, 15
 Aug. Kathy Phillips
 Sept. Debby Boone, 17, and Pat Boone
 Oct. Various models (1 large photo of white model, 6 smaller inset photos, 1 African-American model)
 Nov. Princess Caroline of Monaco
 Dec. No Model (Christmas Tree)

1975

Jan. Various models (5 inset photos of white models, 1 African-American model)
 Feb. Olga Korbut
 March Deborah Raffin, 22
 April Susan Ford, 17 (President Ford's daughter)
 May Cheri LaRocque, 16
 June Liz, Faith, Nancy, Diedre and Megan Savage, 13-19
 July LeeAnn Wilson, 17
 Aug. Carrel Meyers, 15
 Sept. Chris Evert, 20
 Oct. Sarita Gilason
 Nov. Hope Sheridan, 16
 Dec. Cheri Marteau

1976

Jan. Jeani Soares
Feb. Cheri Marteau
March Tawny Godin, 19, Miss America 1976
April Barbara Elliot
May Linda Holmstrom; Henry Winkler, 31
June Maggie Fahy
July Jane Cullen
Aug. Margie Swearingen
Sept. Brenda Meads, 18
Oct. Dorothy Hamill
Nov. Sarah Forristal
Dec. Kathy Modeau

1977

Jan. Cathie Johnson, 15
Feb. Micaela Sundholm
March Mariel Hemingway, 15
April Jayne Modean
May Cassandra (African American)
June Micaela Sundholm
July Jayne Modean
Aug. Jayne Modean
Sept. Patty DuBrul
Oct. Dolly Matthews, 19
Nov. Julie Foster
Dec. Jayne Modean

1978

Jan. Kim Charleton
Feb. Helen Gleason
March Donald McLean, 18 and unidentified white model
April Alexandra
May Alexandra
June Cheri LaRocque
July Cheri LaRocque
Aug. Lari Jane Taylor
Sept. Susan Scannell
Oct. Brooke Shields, 13
Nov. Helle
Dec. Erika Cosby, 13, and Bill Cosby (African Americans)

1979

Jan. Lari Jane Taylor
Feb. Lisanne Falk
March Nancy DeWeir
April Phoebe Cates, 16
May Kristian Alfonso, 14
June Phoebe Cates, 16
July Cheri LaRocque
Aug. Tara Fitzpatrick
Sept. Nancy DeWeir
Oct. Tara Fitzpatrick
Nov. Aly
Dec. Willow Bay

1980

Jan. Tara Fitzpatrick
Feb. Nancy DeWeir
March Caitlin Abramovitz
April Phoebe Cates, 17
May Diane Lane, 15⁴⁵
June Tracy Austin, 17
July Tara Fitzpatrick, 16
Aug. Sarah McClintock, 17
Sept. Amy Lumet, 16 (African American)
Oct. Sara Duffy, 16
Nov. Phoebe Cates, 17
Dec. Pam Adomyetz

1981

Jan. Tracy Fitzpatrick, 16
Feb. Lisanne Falk
March Pamela Gidley, 15
April Caitlin Abramovitz
May Cusi Cram, 13
June Tracy Fitzpatrick, 16
July Pamela Gidley, 15
Aug. Christine Brett
Sept. Cusi Cram, 13
Oct. Willow Bay
Nov. Diane Leicht; Whitney Houston, 18 (African American)
Dec. Tara Fitzpatrick, 16

⁴⁵ Although *Seventeen* gives Lane's age as 15, the 1992 *World Almanac* lists Lane's date of birth as January 22, 1963 (which would make her 17). Also see February 1984.

1982

Jan. Nicolle Ward
Feb. Kersti Bowser (African American)
March Brooke Shields, 16
April Marilyn Clark
May Tara Fitzpatrick
June Pamela Gidley, 16
July Sydney
Aug. Jodi Mallinson
Sept. Tara Fitzpatrick
Oct. Wendy Rossmeyer
Nov. Janet Rooney
Dec. Hillary Young

1983

Jan. Pamela Gidley
Feb. Clay Tucker
March Wendy Rossmeyer, 17
April Pamela Gidley
May Tara Fitzpatrick, Marilyn Clark
June Pamela Gidley, 18
July Jeanette Schaefer
Aug. Tara Fitzpatrick
Sept. Pia Lind, 17
Oct. Wendy Rossmeyer
Nov. Jodi
Dec. Sophie Ward

1984

Jan. Beth Rogers
Feb. Diane Lane, 19
March Jeanette Schaefer
April Trudi Dochtermann
May Leslie Lorenz
June Beth Rogers
July Kersti Bowser, 20 (African American)
Aug. Courtney Wolfsberger
Sept. Rachel Dillman, 18 (first Cover Model Contest Winner)
Oct. Kristina Haraldsdottir, 15
Nov. Anna Magnusson, 19
Dec. Kristina Haraldsdottir, 15

1985

Jan. Mary Lou Retton, 16
Feb. Terry Farrell, 20
March Anna Magnusson, 19
April Heather Kampf, 15
May Heather Kewn
June Heather Kampf, 15
July Jeanette Schaefer
Aug. Heather Kampf, 15
Sept. Isabel Gillies
Oct. Chandra Zinn, 16 (Cover Model Contest Winner)
Nov. Kristina Haraldsdottir
Dec. Tracy Fitzpatrick

1986

Jan. Jill Sorenson
Feb. Alison Cohn, 19
March Molly Ringwald, 18
April Jennifer Connelly, 16
May Tiina, 22
June Tiina, 22
July Michael J. Fox, 25; Jennifer Connelly, 16
Aug. Jennifer Connelly, 16
Sept. Debi Small, 16
Oct. Holly Bolles, 16 (Cover Model Contest Winner)
Nov. Debi Small, 16
Dec. Claire Warner, 18

1987

Jan. Cara Leigh, 21
Feb. Heidi Abra
March Rebecca Schaeffer, 19
April Jennifer Connelly
May Jacqueline Crevatas, 17 (Hispanic American)
June Jacqueline Crevatas, 17 (Hispanic American)
July River Phoenix, 16
Aug. Debi Small, 17
Sept. Meighan Williams Leibert, 20
Oct. Angie Harmon, 15 (Cover Model Contest Winner)
Nov. Joann Richter, 19
Dec. Rochelle Hunt, 19 (African American)

1988

Jan. Debi Smallback, 18
Feb. Meighan Williams, 20
March Meighan Williams Leibert, 20
April Sara Richmond, 19
May Renee Jeffus, 15
June Milla Jovovich, 12
July Chynna Phillips, 20
Aug. Renee Jeffus, 15
Sept. Jennifer Barragan, 16
Oct. Amy Elmore, 17 (Cover Model Contest Winner)
Nov. Isa
Dec. Jennifer Connelly, 18

1989

Jan. Jennifer Barragan, 16
Feb. Alok Kloppeberg, 13
March Jacqueline Santiago, 20
April Erin Payne
May Beverly Peele, 14 (African American)
June Jennifer Barragan, 16
July Milla Jovovich, 13
Aug. Niki Taylor, 14
Sept. Katherine Gingrich, 15 (Cover Model Contest Winner)
Oct. Niki Taylor, 14
Nov. Niki Taylor, 14
Dec. Lora Egri, 19

1990

Jan. Various models (4 different panels, all white models)
Feb. Shannon Kirby, 19
March Niki Taylor, 14
April Miana Grafals, 14 (Hispanic American)
May Corey Reed, 16; Shannon Flaherty, 15; Emma Snowball, 16
June Barbara Kowaleski, 18
July Cameron Diaz, 17 (Latina)
Aug. Clarka Loeschner, 16
Sept. Cameron Diaz, 18 (Latina)
Oct. Limor Luss, 16 (Cover Model Contest Winner)
Nov. Clarka Loeschner, 16
Dec. Winona Ryder, 19

1991

Jan. Clarka Loeschner, 16
 Feb. Richard Grieco; Emma Snowball, 17; Cameron Diaz, 18 (Latina)
 March Emma Snowball, 17; Limor Luss, 16
 April Milla Jovovich, 14
 May Tatiana Englehart, 15 (Brazilian)
 June Emma Snowball, 18
 July Christian Slater; Emma Snowball, 18
 Aug. Laura Kale, 17
 Sept. Dorothy Barrick, 18
 Oct. Elissa Chaney, 16 (Cover Model Contest Winner)
 Nov. John Peacock; Camille Bancroft, 20
 Dec. Shannen Doherty, 20

1992

Jan. Niki, 16 and Krissy, 13 Taylor
 Feb. Emma Snowball; Lucas, 21
 March Jennifer Massey, 18; Ryan Elliot, 19
 April Limor Luss, 18
 May Kristin Klosterman, 15
 June Samantha Mathis, 21
 July Will Smith, 23; Shireen Crutchfield, 18 (African Americans)
 Aug. Luisa Norbis, 21
 Sept. Luisa Norbis, 21
 Oct. Lillian Martinez, 21 (Cover Model Contest Winner)
 Nov. Liv Tyler, 15
 Dec. En Vogue (Maxine Jones, 26; Terry Ellis, 26; Dawn Robinson, 24; Cindy Herron, 21+; all African Americans)

1993

Jan. Niki, 17 and Krissy, 14 Taylor
 Feb. Andrew Shue, 25
 March Vinessa Shaw, 17
 April Kristin Klosterman
 May Drew Barrymore
 June Alexa Lixfield
 July Bridgette Wilson, 19; Jeremy London, 20; Jamie Walters, 24; Chad Lowe, 25
 Aug. Lori Herbert, 15
 Sept. Leilani Bishop
 Oct. Jaime Seyfert, 15 (Cover Model Contest Winner)
 Nov. Krissy Taylor, 15
 Dec. Alice Dodd, 17

1994

Jan. Emma Snowball
Feb. Ali Larter; Chris O'Donnell, 23
March Alice Dodd, 17
April Mariah Carey, 24
May Claudia Schiffer, 23
June Felicia Suarez (Hispanic American)
July Niki Taylor
Aug. Katherine Heigl, 15
Sept. Jaime Rishar, 18
Oct. Laetitia Casta, 16
Nov. Melissa Brown, 13 (Cover Model Contest Winner)
Dec. Samantha Mathis, 23; Christian Bale, 20

1995

Jan. Ketuta
Feb. Antonio Sabato, Jr., 23
March Laetitia Casta
April Brandy, 16 (African American)
May Lindsay Allison, Scott Wolf
June Laetitia Casta
July Alicia Silverstone
Aug. Penny Pickard
Sept. Clare Danes, 16
Oct. Carol Monteverde, 15 (Cover Model Contest Winner and African American) and Jamie Walters
Nov. Natalie Portman, 14
Dec. Maayan Keret, 19

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