'BOYS WILL BE BOYS' AND GIRLS WILL BE GOOD: ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AGAINST FEMALES IN ADOLESCENT BEAUTY/FASHION MAGAZINES

by

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ABSTRACT

Adolescent beauty/fashion magazines, such as *Seventeen, Teen,* and *YM,* are among the top media forms subscribed to by adolescent girls. Along with a concentrated focus on fashion, celebrities, and physical appearance, teen magazines also include information on important social, political, and health issues. This thesis examines how adolescent beauty/fashion magazines address issues of violence against females, specifically rape/sexual assault, intimate partner violence, violence by a non-intimate within the family and sexual harassment. Combining quantitative and qualitative content analysis, this thesis explores the way teen magazines, namely *Seventeen* and *Teen,* disseminate and perpetuate dominant ideologies that promote victim blaming.

Quantitative analysis reveals that teen magazines are frequently discussing issues of violence against females, as well as addressing different types of violence and abuse. Stranger rape is the least discussed type of violence while sexual harassment is focused on the most. The most glaring of the quantitative findings is the frequent failure of both magazines to explain acts of violence against females. A majority of the items do not contain an explanation and when explanations are detailed, structural explanations are seldom relayed to readers.

Through qualitative analysis I found items on violence against females actively and indirectly promote rape myths and victim blaming in both *Seventeen* and *Teen.* Rape myths are not solely promoted in items about rape and sexual assault, but also apply to the depiction of other types of violence named in this study. In addition, analysis revealed an overwhelming emphasis placed on females to prevent and defend against

violence/abuse, as well as to be responsible for informing violent, harassing, and abusive males that their behavior is inappropriate. Finally, material that challenges myths and dominant ideologies appears seldom and is usually reiterated by sources other than teen magazine journalists.

While there are many other forums that teens learn from, the important role that teen magazines occupy in adolescent girls' lives can not be denied. Therefore, it is crucial to educate young females about the truths of violence against females through the forums that they trust and use frequently.

DEDICATION

For my mom and best friend, Marianne Lafleur—the strongest woman I know.

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"*Seventeen* has represented an important rite of passage, helping to define, socialize and empower young women. *Seventeen* has been a significant force for change—creating notions of beauty and style, proclaiming what's hot in music and movies, identifying social issues, celebrating the idols and icons of popular culture" (*Seventeen*, 5/10/2004).

Media permeate our lives. From entertainment to gathering information on current events, mainstream media were a dominant force throughout the last half of the 20th century and remain strong in the commencement of the 21st century. With the growing development of technology and the growth of Internet accessibility, in addition to traditional forms of media, teenagers devote "up to half the time they are awake with some form of media" (Brown, Steele, and Walsh-Childers, 2002: 10). Adolescent girls, a large market for mainstream media, not only are bombarded with media as entertainment, but also are learning from the media more and more. Giroux argues:

> Learning in the postmodern age is located elsewhere—in popular spheres, organized around rap music, daytime television, fanzines, Hollywood films, sprawling shopping malls, and computer hacker culture, that shape young people's identities through forms of knowledge and desire that are absent from what is taught in schools (1997: 32).

Adolescent girls' social 'realities' are shaped by media content. The media, specifically teen magazines, can be viewed as "dominant cultural storyteller[s]," (Brown et al., 2002: 16) that disseminate dominant ideologies and shape what it means to be an adolescent girl in North America today. Adolescent beauty/fashion magazines, such as *Seventeen, Teen,* and *YM*, are among the forms of media most commonly subscribed to by adolescent girls. In an age where print media is assumed to be left behind, teen magazines continue to thrive. In fact, between 1998 and 2001, the number of mainstream teen magazines has more than doubled (Fine, 3/6/2001).

Mainstream teen magazines have been important sources of information for adolescent girls for several decades. While teen magazines tend to focus on fashion, makeup, celebrities, boys, and physical appearance, they also include information on important social, political, and health issues. Since teen magazines are disseminating such information, it is crucial to analyze the messages disseminated in the magazines.

Historically, male violence against females has been of concern for feminists and women. The women's movement of the 1970's and feminism played a role in making male violence against females a public issue. "Largely as a result of feminist politics and research, we are now beginning to recognize and to acknowledge that violence against women is a widespread and pervasive feature of our society" (Comack, 1996: 12). However, even with male violence against females no longer considered a private issue, the victim blaming that occurs in regards to acts of violence against females raises many concerns about people's awareness and beliefs about the issue. Violence committed against females is habitually misrepresented in the media. The representations of the victim, assailant, and the assaults "usually distort the reality of where, when, and by whom women are more likely to be victims of crimes" (Madriz, 1997: 16).

Specifically, the incidence of rape and sexual assault combined with the pervasiveness of blaming sexual assault victims concerns feminists. Tolman notes:

> Sexual violence is now a well-documented feature of girls' and women's lives, and it can severely affect their sexuality and their relationship with their own bodies. It is not only the experience but the constant threat and not always conscious fear of various forms of sexual violation, including sexual harassment, rape, and unwanted sexual attention, that constitute a constant, low-grade trauma for girls and women (2002: 52).

The culture of fear of sexual violence and the threat of being blamed for the violence is unique to females. Blaming females who have been victimized promotes the ideas that females are responsible for preventing assaults and that victims of rape and sexual assault provoke or deserve to be assaulted.

Concurrently, negative constructions of female victims of sexual harassment, intimate partner violence, and violence by a non-intimate within the family persist as well. Myths about violence against females (analogous to rape myths) and media constructions of violent crime against females perpetuate blaming the victim. The notion that females can provoke or deserve their victimization must cease to exist. As long as females are blamed for their victimizations, their assailants, mostly men, will be held less accountable for their actions. As society's dominant ideologies and beliefs are promoted through media, it is essential to deconstruct the messages about violence against females relayed in the media.

In my thesis, I examine how adolescent beauty/fashion magazines address issues of violence against females, specifically focusing on rape/sexual assault, intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, and violence by a non-intimate within the family. The objective of this research was to determine if teen magazines are disseminating and perpetuating dominant ideologies that promote victim blaming about violence against females. I chose to research this area because of the importance of understanding what adolescent girls are learning about male violence against females. Educating girls and young women about the truths of violence against females is crucial in the fight to end the violence. While there are many other forums teens could be learning from (TV,

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parents, school, movies), the important role that adolescent beauty/fashion magazines occupy in teenage girls' lives can not be denied.

Many questions arise in a study addressing media and violence against females. Some of these include: How often do the magazines discuss violence against females? In what type of item are the issues presented: an article, advice column, short blurb, etc? Does the information given promote myths about violence against females, specifically rape myths? How are the victims and assailants of rape and sexual assault portrayed? Do the items address societal causes for violence against females or do they individualize the violence?

This thesis will contribute to the existing body of literature by incorporating topics that have been extensively studied to explore uncovered territory. While teen magazines, female sexuality, and media constructions of rape victims and violence against females have been studied at length, they have never been combined to delve into how teen magazines address issues of violence against females. Furthermore, this research is significant, as there is little research addressing content on violence against females in popular magazines.

Dilemma of Definitions

Numerous definitions and conceptualizations have been used to discuss the targets of male violence against females, the males who commit violence and abuse against females, and the types of violence and abuse committed. As with other work on male violence against females, a dilemma of determining what definitions and terms to use arose in this thesis.

In addressing the females who have suffered violence and abuse, the dilemma typically arises around the use of the terms 'victim' and 'survivor.' The debate about these terms revolves around the concern of projecting passivity onto the females. Some researchers argue that the term 'victim,' creates the image of a passive woman who is nothing more than 'a victim'. On the other hand, the term 'victim' is seen as a word that acknowledges the "complex processes within which women are indeed victimized" (Sev'er, 2002: 16).

The term 'survivor' was adopted to characterize the "resilience of women" (Sev'er, 2002: 17) and emphasize the empowerment and the will of women who have overcome violence and abuse. Debates around this term are sparked from the literal definition of the term and the assumptions attached to it. Madriz argues that the definition of the term adds to the notion of a passive victim, as "to survive means, literally, 'to remain alive or existent'"(1997: 74). Many women who have experienced violence or abuse "do more than just 'remain alive'" (Madriz, 1997: 74). Additionally, as some women do not and can not 'survive' the violence and abuse, some researchers believe the term 'survivor' places a separation between the women who overcome violence and those who do not (Sev'er, 2002:17).

In this thesis, I use the term 'victim' to refer to females who have suffered from violence and abuse by males. In using this term, I do not intend to refer to females who have been abused as passive agents or to negate or disrespect the females who have overcome their victimizations and have 'survived.' I chose the term 'victim' to articulate the great impact of male violence against females and to avoid presenting an "unfair

divide between those who came through the mayhem and those who did not or could not" (Sev'er, 2002:17).

Terminology to describe the males who violate and abuse females is another area of concern for researchers and feminists. The terms "batterer," "abuser," "rapist," and "harasser," all refer to different types of violence and abuse. Terms such as "perpetrator" and "assailant" can be used to refer to all of the above types of violence; however, it can be argued that they do not accurately depict the extent of the violence and abuse that some females endure. In this thesis, I use the term 'assailant' to refer to males who commit acts of violence and abuse against females. An 'assailant' is defined as someone who "attack[s] violently with words or blows" (Merriam-Webster's Dictionary). 'Assailant' was chosen out of ease and is not meant to deny the seriousness or dynamic differences in the types of violence and abuse that will be addressed.

The terms 'violence' and 'abuse' are also contested terms in the debate of definitions. For purposes of this thesis, 'violence' is defined in its broadest context including acts that inflict "emotional, psychological, sexual, physical, and/or material damage" (Stanko, 1995: 209). The term 'abuse' is used to exemplify "a pattern of coercive control that one person exercises over another" (Definition of Abuse, 1/18/04).

Lastly, the term 'violence against females' is used to refer to a variety of different types of violence committed against females. A term which is more commonly phrased as 'violence against women,' has been adapted for this thesis to include female adolescents, not just women. Acts of violence and abuse perpetuated by males against females do not just affect women, they affect all females. Also, I use the terms 'sexual harassment,' 'stranger rape or sexual assault,' 'date/acquaintance rape or sexual assault,'

'intimate partner violence,' and 'violence by a non-intimate within the family' to refer to the different types of violence encompassed in the thesis[1].

Chapter Outlines

This thesis includes seven chapters. A brief description of the organization and content of each chapter is included below.

Chapter two delves into the existing literature and research on media constructions of rape, popular culture, adolescent sexuality, and adolescent beauty/fashion magazines. This chapter provides the reader with general knowledge about the important concepts and topics addressed in my research.

Chapter three outlines the theoretical framework and the methods used. The feminist cultural studies framework is detailed and the research questions, data sources, data collection, analysis, and limitations and strengths of the research are described in this chapter.

Chapter four, Descriptive Analysis of *Seventeen* and *Teen*, details the findings from the quantitative portion of my research. This chapter is structured into three main sections: magazine formats; source formats; and magazine content.

In chapter five, I discuss the dominant patterns and themes distributed through items on violence against females. This chapter is organized into four sections: representations of victims and assailants; explanations of violence against females, responses to violence against females; and resistance to dominant ideologies of violence against females.

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[1] See number nine of the coding manual in Appendix D for the specific definitions of each of these types of violence.

Chapter six, the discussion chapter, addresses the implications and potential impact of my research. This section ties in the existing literature and demonstrates the relation of my research to previous studies and popular culture. In addition, I address the appropriateness of adopting a feminist cultural studies perspective for this research.

As the final chapter, chapter seven highlights the importance of this research and the importance of educating through popular culture venues. In addition, suggestions for future research in this area are presented.

CHAPTER TWO: UNDERSTANDING MEDIA CONSTRUCTIONS OF RAPE VICTIMS AND THE WORLD OF POPULAR BEAUTY/FASHION MAGAZINES— A LITERATURE REVIEW

> "[Seventeen is] marketed at (and read by) the typical teenage girl who doesn't own her sense of self. Who doesn't know who she is or who she truly CAN BE. This is why most teen magazines are so dangerous—they get girls who will listen to them telling them that the most important thing right now is to get a boyfriend and make him happy" (Sara, 16 as cited in Wray and Steele, 2002: 198).

My research is exploratory, as content on violence against females in teen magazines has not been investigated yet. However, several studies have been conducted on media coverage of violence against females. Past studies are distinguished by the use of print news media, a media form that reaches a different reader demographic. Print news media, specifically newspapers, reach a vast range of readers whereas adolescent beauty/fashion magazines target 12-24 year old females.

This chapter outlines the main constructs and themes in the literatures that guide my research. The topics of adolescent girls and violence against females raise many issues: from media constructions of female sexuality and rape victims to popular culture and adolescent beauty/fashion magazines.

Media Constructions of Violence against Females: Victims and Assailants

"Virgin" or "Vamp"?

Myths about rape dominate in our society, despite the effort by many to "explain away" (Benedict, 1992: 13) the myths. While Benedict's work on rape myths was done in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the work of others demonstrates that rape myths are still perpetuated (Higgins and Tolman, 1997; Lees, 1995). Due to the prevalence of rape myths and the importance of understanding the realities of rape and sexual assault, the

myths (as set out by Benedict) are described in Appendix A. In addition, several rape myths besides the ones listed in this study are prevalent, such as: if a female does not fight back then she was not raped; if the victim is not a virgin it is not rape; and the notion that females fantasize about rape (Hamlin, 8/1/2003; Rape Myths and Facts, 8/1/2003).

Rape myths serve to dichotomize rape victims into two images, the "vamp" or the "virgin". The "vamp" is described as, "the woman, [who] by her looks, behavior or generally loose morality, drove the man to such extremes of lust that he was compelled to commit the crime" (Benedict, 1992: 23). On the other hand, the description of the "virgin" victim is associated with the image of an out-of-control male ruthlessly assaulting the victim. "The man, a depraved and perverted monster, sullied the innocent victim, who is now a martyr to the flaws of society" (Benedict, 1992: 23). A victim is placed in one of these two categories based upon the characteristics of the assault and the characteristics of the people discussing the crime. Benedict lists eight factors that influence the media and the public to blame the victim and place her in the "vamp" category (Appendix B). Madriz (1997) also acknowledges the factors that influence the dichotomization of the victim in her typology of the female victim (Appendix C).

These images of victimized women are not new; they can be traced back to the Bible and the Victorian era and can be documented in media portrayals of women throughout history (Benedict, 1992: 18). Benedict argues:

Journalists continue to portray sex crime victims in these two false images because they are forced to by the rape myths. If a reporter publishes less-than-flattering details of a rape victim, then those details are immediately used against her. If a reporter chooses to suppress those details in order to protect the victim from being persecuted by them, then the reporter is buying into the virgin image and committing biased journalism at the same time. As long as the rape myths hold sway, journalists are going to continue to be faced with the excruciating choice between painting victims as virgins or vamps—a choice between lies (1992: 24).

The dichotomization of the victim applies to females of all ages. Victimized young women have been placed in both categories. Since the category of "vamp" is especially harmful and problematic, examples of young females portrayed as "vamps" are discussed below.

The media images of the 1986 rape and murder of Jennifer Levin and the California Spur Posse assaults are the perfect examples of portrayals of teenagers and young women in the constructed category of "vamp". Shortly after 18-year-old Jennifer Levin was murdered, she was blamed for her victimization in headlines such as "Sad Farewell to Sex Victim" and "How Jennifer Courted Death" (Benedict, 1992: 149). The Spur Posse was a group of high school boys who started a sex competition whereby a member gained points for having sexual intercourse with different girls. Several girls were sexually assaulted and raped as a result of this competition. When the females' complaints were finally taken seriously, several of the males were arrested and charged. However, their community overwhelmingly supported the boys, while the girls were regarded as "trash" (Smolowe as cited in Higgins and Tolman, 1997: 178).

Rape myths are prevalent among adolescents as well. Tellijohann et al. found that "almost two thirds (62%) of high school students surveyed believed that a male is not at fault if he rapes a girl who dresses 'provocatively' on a date" (Brown et al., 2002: 6).

Moreover, one fourth of the students felt it was not rape for a male to purposely get his date drunk and have sex with her, even if she said "No" (Brown et al., 2002: 6).

Sue Lees uses Benedict's notion of rape myths and victim dichotomization in her analysis of British date rape trials. Deconstructing media portrayals of date rape victims is especially interesting, because in those cases the victim knew the assailant or, at the very least, was acquainted with the assailant. The term "date rape" in itself perpetuates a rape myth. "The linking of the term 'date,' an event which should be pleasurable, with 'rape' is subtly used to imply that the assault was not really rape" (Lees, 1995: 107).

Through an analysis of news coverage and court proceedings, Lees demonstrates how victims are dichotomized in court and in the media. The victims in the cases analyzed were portrayed as either "drunken temptress[es]...causing trouble," "false accuser[s]," or "slut[s]" (Lees, 1995). In fact, one of the headlines proclaimed, "Student cleared of raping 'slut of the year'" (Lees, 1995: 121). In conclusion, Lees demonstrates how media reporting of rape victims promotes a "totally distorted" (Lees, 1995: 125) image of the victim, which denies the seriousness of the crime.

Victim blaming is not exclusive to sexual violence and abuse. Females are also blamed for sexual harassment and intimate partner violence. It is not clear whether victims of these forms of violence and abuse are dichotomized into the same "virgin" and "vamp" categories as victims of sexual violence; nevertheless, it is apparent that victims are frequently blamed for their victimizations. Stanko writes, "because many women struggle to keep relationships together even in the face of violence [for many different reasons], they are often accused of enjoying it or, in some cases, asking for it" (1990: 107).

Fear of Stranger Rape

Females are more likely to be victimized by males they know, rather than strangers. However, it is common for media to perpetuate the myth that women are more likely to be victimized by strangers (Benedict, 1992: 15). In addition, women are more likely to be victims of property crimes and domestic violence than sexual assault by strangers. The media image of women being sexually assaulted by strangers is prominent, promoting the myth and demonstrating that women are largely viewed in terms of their sexuality (Madriz, 1997: 85; Faith, 1993).

As the media, along with other social systems, overwhelmingly portray women as victims of stranger assault, women fear victimization by a stranger more than victimization by someone they know (Madriz, 1997). Madriz addresses the notion of fearing victimization by a stranger:

> Since we are taught that criminals are the vicious strangers that lurk in the woods—the psychopath, the unemployed, the alcoholic or drug addict who comes from the shadows—we must avoid them as much as we can. Therefore, we are told, stay safe, be a good girl, avoid the woods. Depictions of women as victims of strangers are the lifeblood of the social control that fear of crime imposes on our lives (1997: 90).

By placing an element of fear behind violent acts perpetrated by strangers, as opposed to acquaintances or intimate partners, the media fail to contextualize rape and sexual assault. These images and depictions of strangers, lurking in the woods or in the back alley, waiting to prey on the perfect victim also feed into other rape myths. They insinuate that there is a 'perfect' victim. Furthermore, the idea of the 'perfect' victim fuels the myths that rape is about sex and lust rather than power, control, and sexism.

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<u>Media Constructions of Violence against Females: Causes and Prevention</u>

Sexism—A Societal Reason for Male Violence against Females

Violence against females is usually associated with individuals; "this association limits our thinking" (Stanko, 1995: 209). Focusing on individuals situates blame on individual victims and assailants and fails to recognize societal explanations for the violence that forces females to persistently be concerned for their safety. Females constantly have to be aware of and mediate their safety. Ironically, females are forced to look for safety from the very individuals that they are also taught to fear—males. We must acknowledge that violence against females is not a problem of individual males; rather it is a "component of women's relationships with all men" (Stanko, 1990: 108). Furthermore, learning techniques to avoid victimization is also part of growing up as a female (Stanko, 1990: 85), another form of individualizing violence against females. Explanations of violence against females that do not contain societal explanations and responses based on them, fail to contextualize the extent of male violence against females.

Sexism and patriarchal values are also upheld through systems and institutions that are intended to help female victims of male violence. As patriarchal values are embedded in society, "medical, legal, and social systems to which battered [harassed and violated] women turn for help" (Sullivan, 1997:155) are also entrenched in patriarchal values that serve to support males. These systems often allow the violence to continue because of the actions, or rather inaction, they take in responding to male violence against females. Sullivan asserts:

This collusion takes form through the social customs and mores that expect women to provide more direct care of children and to put the needs of the family above their own, while expecting men to be 'heads of households'; prevalent religious doctrine that upholds and preaches traditional, patriarchal values; and legislation that discriminates against women (1997: 154).

The rape myths and victim portrayals discussed above rely on the notion of individualizing male violence against females. Media typically do not focus on societal reasons for rape. The press tends to individualize male violence against females, failing to relate rape to sexism and the status of females in society. Feminist work on rape demonstrates that: 1) rape is best understood when looking at societal masculine values, rather than as an individualized act; 2) rape is not related to sexual yearning but sexist and misogynist expressions (Benedict, 1997: 267).

By individualizing male violence against females, the root causes of the violence are not addressed. To stamp out violence against females, gender relations and gender socialization must be questioned. Ignoring the role of systems of domination in rape and other forms of male violence against females only fuels myths. It places responsibility on the victims and excuses the males' actions while promoting fear in females. Rape is a violent, extreme form of sexism. "Covering rape without reference to sexism—that is, to societal attitudes toward women—is as absurd as covering lynching without mentioning attitudes toward blacks" (Benedict, 1997: 272).

Racism and Sexism—"Interlocking Systems"

Just as discussing the role of sexism is important to combating the societal reasons for rape and other forms of violence against females, so is addressing the link between racism and sexism. "Racism and sexism are interlocking systems of domination which uphold and sustain one another" (hooks, 1990: 59). These systems exist and

operate together; therefore, discussing one without the other denies the importance of addressing either system. Racism and sexism are intertwined in many ways, some of which include the history between race and rape; blaming the black, female victim; and the myth of the young, black, male rapist (Benedict, 1992; hooks, 1990; Higgins and Tolman, 1997; Davis, 1981; Harris, 1990; Madriz, 1997; Brownmiller, 1975).

The history between race and rape was first noted with North American slavery of black individuals, which condoned sexual violence against black females by white males. "Then, black women's bodies were the discursive terrain, the playing fields where racism and sexuality converged. Rape as both right and rite of the white male dominating group was a cultural norm" (hooks, 1990: 57). In addition, sexism has always been the system that reconciles the tensions between white and black males. Both groups of males share the power to dominate and sexually abuse women's bodies. "It is this merging of sexuality with male domination within patriarchy that informs the construction of masculinity for men of all races and classes" (hooks, 1990: 59).

Press coverage of rape began through the history between racism and sexism. The lynching of black men accused of raping white women initiated the media's fascination with sex crime coverage. Since white women were viewed as the "forbidden fruit, the untouchable property, [and] the ultimate symbol of white male power," (Dowd Hall as cited in Benedict, 1992: 25) white women being sexually assaulted by black men were considered especially horrific crimes. Between 1890-1930, lynching stories were the most frequent way sex crimes were discussed. Moreover, this was the first time the tensions between racism and sexism became apparent in the media. Since then interracial rape has captivated audiences as a crime to fear and a crime worthy of media coverage.

However, "numerous studies have consistently found throughout several decades that the majority of rapes are committed by men against women of their own race" (Benedict, 1992: 27; Madriz, 1997; Brownmiller, 1975).

The erasable history that links racism and sexism has created qualitatively different experiences for black female victims of rape and sexual assault. Portrayed as "sexually voracious, thereby unrapeable," (Higgins and Tolman, 1997: 180; Davis, 1981; Harris, 1990) black female victims are generally blamed for their victimizations because of their race. In addition, white rape/sexual assault victims attract more sympathy from the media and the general public than black victims (Benedict, 1992: 19).

As demonstrated by Lubiano (1992), black women are blamed by being portrayed as either "welfare queens" or "black ladies." Lubiano states:

> The welfare queen is omnipresent in the media—even when (and perhaps especially when) she is not explicitly named...Given a couple centuries...of seeing and hearing the behaviors and economic position of poor African Americans laid at the door of their 'problematic' family structure and/or culture, given the various ways in which every large urban newspaper and most small-town newspapers remind us of the 'blight' (political, social, and economic) of the cities, and given the ubiquity of political and community figures whose commentary focuses on attributing the 'decline of the nation' to the urban poor...the welfare queen is omnipresent in discussions about 'America's' present or future even when unnamed (332).

The "black lady" is a "disproportionate[ly]" successful woman who is viewed negatively because public and private power and success are to be held by males. Therefore, whether an 'under achiever' or a 'successful' woman, the black female is blamed "for the disadvantaged status of African Americans" (Lubiano, 1992: 335).

The constructions of "welfare queens" and "black ladies" aid in the different portrayals of victimized black women. These constructions draw attention away from the

root causes of male violence against females, the position of females in society and the prevalence of sexist and misogynist thinking.

The myth that rapists are typically young, black males predominates in society and the media (hooks, 1990; Benedict, 1992; Benedict, 1997; Bumiller, 1997; Lubiano, 1992). "Images of black men as rapists, as dangerous menaces to society, have been sensational cultural currency for some time" (hooks, 1990: 61). The Central Park jogger[2] case clearly demonstrates how media cultivate dominant ideologies and shape responses to rape cases. Analysis of the media content and public responses to the assault demonstrate victim blaming and the link between racism and sexism (Benedict, 1992). Although the accused have since been exonerated, five minority youths were convicted and imprisoned for roughly 12 years for the attack. Due to the charged racial tension during the time of the assault, the racial component of this crime was at the forefront of discussion (Benedict, 1992: 190). In fact, there were even articles which debated whether the crime was more sexist or racist (hooks, 1990: 61). Furthermore, the brutality of the case and the racial differences between the victim and the five accused assailants were used to fuel the myth of the young, black, male rapist. This case demonstrates the need to understand the link between racism and sexism. hooks argues:

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[2] In April 1989, Trisha Meili (who has recently written a book about her assault) was brutally raped and beaten unconscious in New York's Central Park. Six minority youths were suspected of the assault; five were convicted and sentenced to prison. In 2002, Matias Reyes, an incarcerated male confessed to being the sole attacker of Trisha Meili and DNA evidence confirmed his confession. The five men in prison for the assault were exonerated in December 2002 (Wikipedia, 7/30/2004).

The Central Park crime involves aspects of sexism, male domination, misogyny, and the use of rape as an instrument of terror. It also involves race and racism; it is unlikely that young black males growing up in this society, attacking a white woman, would see her as "just a woman"—her race would be foremost in their consciousness as well as her sex, in the same way that masses of people hearing about this crime were concerned with identifying first her race (1990: 62).

Failing to address the link between racism and sexism promotes misconceptions about rape/sexual assault and other forms of violence against females. Dealing with racism and sexism as two separate systems denies both their prevalence, past and present, and their seriousness.

Popular Culture in the Media

Adolescents and Adolescence

Adolescents are growing up in an age where mass media and popular culture dominate. "In these societies [Western] the sheer volume of popular media culture which is made available gives it a specific significance which needs to be looked at" (Strinati, 1995: xiii). The rise of mass media designed to target youth has brought a growing concern that youth are being impacted by media content. While concern over the impact of media and popular culture is voiced by many, it is questionable to assume the direct impact that media and popular culture have on youth. The possible impact of media is an important notion when studying popular culture; however, the debates on the impact of popular culture will not be detailed in this thesis. This section is designed to give a brief description of adolescence, popular culture content, and cultural representations of teen sexuality in the media.

"The idea of adolescence is a relatively recent phenomenon and to some extent peculiarly American" (Brown et al., 2002: 2). Adolescence is characterized by biological

and social changes, including three stages separated by different age ranges for males and females. Early adolescence includes 8-13 year old females, while middle adolescence ranges from 13-16 and females aged 16 and over are characterized as late adolescents (Brown et al., 2002: 2). During these ages, adolescents experience a number of biological body changes, typically become involved in intimate relationships, and go through changes in relationships with peers, family, and adults. Late adolescence (16 and older) marks the phase where adolescents are becoming more in tune and comfortable with their bodies and their selves, and are planning for their transition into adulthood. Currently, "'adulthood,' as traditionally understood, may not be entered until well into the 20s as educations are pursued and the establishment of new families and partnerships is postponed" (Brown et al., 2002: 2).

Increasingly the body has become the site through which being female is expressed (Duke and Kreshel, 1998: 49; Brumberg, 1997; Bartky, 1990). Bartky notes that females have replaced the traditional sites of femininity, 'home and hearth,' with the presentation of their bodies (1990: 80). Presentation of a culturally appropriate body includes concerns with fashionable attire, make-up, hair, thinness, large breasts, and perfect skin. Appearance dominates adolescent females' lives today[3]. "The body is a consuming project for contemporary girls because it provides an important means of self definition, a way to visibly announce who you are to the world" (Brumberg, 1997: 97).

Adolescent girls not only learn the culturally appropriate image, they also learn to "internalize cultural prescriptions for acceptable feminine behavior" (Duke and Kreshnel, 1998: 50). Adolescent girls learn what they need to do to be liked (by both males and

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[3] Note: Appearance certainly affects adolescent males' lives as well. However, given the target audience of teen magazines, I have chosen to focus solely on the lives of adolescent females in this thesis.

females) and to be seen as feminine: have "trouble-free" relationships with males and females, wear brand names, be nice, receive male attention, and satisfy others (Duke and Kreshnel, 1998: 49-50). In addition, researchers have observed that confidence levels drop among a majority of girls during adolescence (Duke and Kreshnel, 1998: 50; Pipher, 1994; Brown and Gilligan, 1992; Orenstein, 1994). Given these assumptions and the nature of female adolescence today, while some adolescent girls will resist cultural instructions, it is possible to see why others are not able to resist the ideologies and prescriptions that delineate acceptable images and behavior. Cultural instructions are engrained in gender socialization and upheld and distributed through social structures, including the media and popular culture.

Youth are growing up in a marketing age that stresses consumerism. In the early 1990's youth culture jumped to the forefront of popular culture as the brands and companies that survived the recession were the ones that targeted the younger generation. Targeting teens became more prevalent and MTV, designer clothing, and brand names became commonplace (Klein, 2000: 66-68). The "quest for cool" (Klein, 2000: 69) began as youth culture took hold in all spheres, including adult areas of interest. In addition, advertising and mass media emphasized youth culture. Teens were willing to pay the price to be cool, leading merchants to target teenage consumers. As one clothing retailer notes, teen shoppers "run in packs. If you sell to one, you sell to everyone in their class and everyone in their school" (Decoteau as cited in Klein, 2000: 68). The "quest for cool" resonated in adult spheres, with adults and corporate executives clinging onto the culture as well. The necessity to appeal to teen consumers and the "quest for cool" continues today.

Teen sexuality is another dominant theme in popular culture. In the advertising age, sexualized teenage bodies are marketable (Giroux, 1997: 28). Adolescent sexuality is used in many popular culture formats to sell products. Young pop musicians are exposing their bodies and their sexuality more readily and clothing once designed for adult women (thong underwear, mini-skirts, halter tops, lingerie as clothing, showing the mid-riff) is being marketed to teens. The relatively recent fascination with teen sexuality in popular culture furthers the never-ending debate on how to address and educate teens about sex and sexuality. Are adolescents physically and emotionally responsible enough to take their sexuality into their own hands? Or do we, as a society, need to keep them uninformed about the realities of sex and sexuality until they are 'ready'?

"In the present day U.S. there is little differentiation between the developing sexuality of girls and the fully formed sexuality of adult women" (Asher, 2002: 22). Adolescent girls' sexuality is used more and more in advertising, marketing, popular music, television, and the film industry. The marketing of adolescent female sexuality through pop culture places young females in a position of being desired not only by males and females (females desiring to look like the females distributed through pop culture forums) their age, but also by adult men (Asher, 2002: 23). Asher argues that in order for adolescent girls to be comfortable with their sexuality and combat the patriarchal values that allow adolescent sexuality to be propagated through popular culture, females must be educated in schools about the importance of knowing their sexuality and desires as well as understanding the "hazards and hidden pitfalls of sexual empowerment" that exist in North America (2002: 24).

Giroux argues that "popular culture increasingly teaches kids to gaze inwardly at the body as a fashionscape, a stylized athletic spectacle, or as a repository of desires that menace, disrupt, and undermine public life through acts of violence or predatory sexuality" (1997: 32). Considering this notion that youth are at least in some way impacted by popular culture, then popular culture and the media must act as educators. As youth are learning from popular culture media forms, such as television, magazines, films, and music, it is these forms of media that must educate youth on the realities of sexuality and important social and political issues. As Eurydice contends:

> Millions more kids are abused by silence than by leering pedophiles, and kids who are kept ignorant are kept exploitable. Our society retards the emotional growth of kids so their physical and psychological maturities don't coincide. Instead of scrambling explicit programming on cable and the Net, blocking the distribution of condoms at school, and in every way making it difficult for kids to act responsibly, we should give them charge of their bodies. In the nationwide discussion about protecting kids from the sickos who prey on them, the kids are missing. And by refusing kids our trust, we encourage them to refuse us theirs (as cited in Giroux, 1997: 31).

Although a brief explanation of popular culture, this section demonstrates the role of popular culture in adolescence. While the exact impact of popular culture is not easily answered, research suggests that popular culture and mass media have a great potential to influence.

Adolescent Beauty/Fashion Magazines: Demographics

Adolescent beauty/fashion magazines have been a "rite of passage" (*Seventeen* magazine, 2/1/2003) for young women between 12-24 years old for over 50 years. Teen magazines are a vital force in the 21st century. With the launch of several new magazines in the last six years, the number of magazine choices has more than doubled. A market

that was once dominated by three titles, *Seventeen*, *YM*, and *Teen*, jumped to seven major

titles in three years (Fine, 3/6/2001).

Seventeen magazine, introduced in 1944, informs young women about fashion,

beauty, relationships, social issues, and lifestyle information. Brown et al. found that of

the multiple adolescent beauty/fashion magazines available today, *Seventeen* magazine is

the most read by females (2002: 13). In the early 1990's, *Seventeen* was estimated to

reach "5.13 million girls aged 12-17 and another 2.3 million women between 18-24"

(McCracken, 1993: 143). The circulation has since gone up, resulting in a 2.35 million

paid circulation in 2004 (Echo Media, 4/20/04) with an estimation of reaching 14.45

million readers in the U.S. alone (*Seventeen*, 5/10/2004). *Seventeen* is followed closely

by *YM* with a circulation of 1.5 million and an estimated total audience of 7.9 million

(G+J-Our Magazines-*YM*, 5/10/04).

Teen magazine has been around for 44 years, ranking as one of the top three teen

magazine titles throughout most of those years. However, in early 2001, with the surge

of several new teen magazine titles (*Cosmogirl, Teen People, Teen Vogue, Elle Girl*),

Teen's circulation made "the largest drop of any major consumer magazine" from 2

million to 1.2 million (Fine, 3/1/2002). Therefore, *Teen* ceased regular monthly

publication in May 2002. Although *Teen* was removed from regular publication, it

continues to publish quarterly "themed special issues" (Fine, 3/1/2002).

With the growth and the accessibility of the Internet, teen magazines have also

created websites for their magazines. *Seventeen, YM*, and *Teen* (even though the

magazine is out of publication) all have websites directed to adolescent girls. Figures

from 2003 indicate that *Seventeen.com* has 21 million total page views per month and

618,000 unique visitors. *Teenmag.com* estimates an average of 250,000 unique visitors and 5 million total page views per month (Primedia Teen Internet Group Media Kit, 3/12/2003). Fans and subscribers of adolescent beauty/fashion magazines no longer need to wait for their magazines to arrive each month, they can access ample amounts of information published in the magazines from the websites.

The reader demographics and number of young women purchasing adolescent beauty/fashion magazines alone call for research on the material presented in them. As teen magazines "[touch] the lives of so many adolescents, it is important to consider the kinds of social messages and values young women may derive from the magazine[s]" (Wray and Steele, 2002: 192). To delve into adolescent beauty/fashion magazines further, the next section details some of the studies done on teen magazine content.

Adolescent Beauty/Fashion Magazines: Content

Many studies have been done focusing on adolescent beauty/fashion magazine content. Such studies range from research on feminine hygiene product advertisement to content patterns of the magazines (Evans, Rutberg, Sather & Turner, 1991) and how teenage girls associate femininity with the magazines' advertisements (Currie, 1997). However, studies specifically focused on how adolescent magazines distribute information about violence against females have not been done. A review of related studies on teen magazines is discussed below.

Work on popular female magazines dates back to Betty Friedan's research on women's magazines in 1963. In *The Feminist Mystique*, Friedan noted the representation of females as wives and mothers in women's magazines and asserted that the "representations influence the way in which women are viewed by society, mandating a

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'single, overprotective, life-restricting, future-denying' role for women by tying their

identities to heterosexual romance, marriage, and motherhood" (as cited in Currie, 1999:

23).

McRobbie's study of *Jackie* (1983), an adolescent beauty/fashion magazine

published in the U.K., is arguably one of the first works focusing on qualitative analysis

of popular adolescent females' magazines. McRobbie found that the notion of romance

dominated *Jackie*, "pervade[ing] every story and is built into them [the magazines]

through the continued use of certain formal techniques and styles" (259). Female/female

companionship was not emphasized and was, in fact, seen as threatening. Overall,

McRobbie argued that *Jackie* promoted three images: the notion of the female fighting to

get and keep a boyfriend; females should never trust another female; and "despite this,

romance, and being a girl, are 'fun'" (1983: 263).

In more recent research on teen magazines, using both quantitative and qualitative

approaches Carpenter (1998) analyzed articles on sexuality and romance in *Seventeen*

magazine for the years 1974, 1984 and 1994. Carpenter discovered changes in the

depiction of sexuality across the years, including the transition from depicting adolescent

females as sex objects to agents of sexual desires, a more positive view of homosexuality

and masturbation, and the acknowledgement of fellatio. The increase in material

including masturbation and fellatio was positive; however, the messages distributed about

these acts were typically negative, discussing them as unacceptable (1998: 165).

Moreover, approximately 60% of the 1974 and 1994 items related sexuality to romance

and *Seventeen* frequently discussed the characteristics of what committed relationships

should be like in detail (1998: 165). Carpenter concludes, "These scripts may...enable

readers to resist gender and sexual subordination through agency, traditionally denied to women. At the same time, the potential effects of these new scripts are limited, especially as editors continue to depict dominant sexual scripts as preferable to available alternatives" (1998: 167).

Durham (1998) analyzed content in *Seventeen* and *YM*, focusing on discourses of sexuality and romantic love. Like other researchers, Durham found that sexuality was frequently linked to romance. She also found that sexual feelings were typically linked with male celebrities and individuals that average females would not be in relationships with. "'Real' boys—boys whom the female readers might actually encounter in their daily lives—were idealized as romantic, never sexual, beings" (383). The link between "real" boys and romance versus celebrities and sexuality implies that it is only safe to express sexual feelings and sexuality with males that females will actually never come into contact with (Durham, 1998: 383). Furthermore, Durham discovered teen magazines construct male sexuality as positive and female sexuality as negative (Durham, 1998: 380).

Duffy and Gotcher (1996) identify gaining the "power of attraction" (36) of the opposite sex through knowledge and costuming as key themes in *YM*. By providing knowledge on how to attract the opposite sex, which is made credible by reference statements from supermodels, celebrities, and professionals and educating on how "costuming for seduction," (38) *YM* prepares females for attracting males. Providing the knowledge involves distributing fashion trends, make-up techniques, and information on a wide range of beauty products and techniques, including plastic surgery. "Costuming"

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entails teaching young readers what is seductive through the text as well as through the images and poses of models in the magazines (36-41).

McCracken's (1993) work on popular magazines identifies the messages about sexuality and consumption transmitted through adolescent beauty/fashion magazines. By teaching adolescent girls the accepted social values and role of consumerism, beauty/fashion magazines reaffirm what it means to be an adolescent female growing up in today's society.

Seventeen magazine has a "long tradition of *correctly* socializing young women" (McCracken, 1993: 143; emphasis added). By teaching the accepted social values, *Seventeen* serves to inform young women on what it means to be female. Along with this observation, McCracken found that *Seventeen* conveys mixed messages (1993: 145). The emphasis on being sexually appealing is frequent. However, the magazine also strongly advocates against females being sexually active, an accepted social value. McCracken argues:

> By emphasizing repeatedly the theme that teenagers are not emotionally ready to engage in sex, *Seventeen* helps to socialize its readers according to the predominantly 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 (1993: 146).

Adolescent beauty/fashion magazines serve to engrain the consumerist culture in females at a young age. From advertisements on beauty products to a majority of pieces focused on changing physical appearance, teen magazines "develop insecurities and anxieties" (McCracken, 1993: 137) in young women about their appearance. Thus with the focus on physical change to better one's self, the magazines can then promote products which claim to fix or change physical appearance. This creates a cycle of

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buying the magazines for advice on what products to use and buying the product because the magazine suggested it. "Both the magazine as a cultural commodity and the goods it advertises must never give complete satisfaction or one would not need to buy further magazines or products" (McCracken, 1993: 136).

The studies detailed above demonstrate that adolescent beauty/fashion magazines emphasize the socially acceptable values of female sexuality and focus on physical appearance. Given the types of content distributed, addressing the ways females read and understand the content is also important. The next section will discuss the potential impact of adolescent beauty/fashion magazines.

Adolescent Beauty/Fashion Magazines: Impact

The impact of adolescent beauty/fashion magazines has been explored through interviews by researchers in the area. While the specific area of impact of teen magazines remains underexplored, researchers have set out to establish why and how teen girls read magazines. Research suggests that readers can receive both pleasure and anxiety from their readings.

The high rates of circulation of teen magazines "suggest that they fulfill at least some of their readers' needs and/or desires" (Carpenter, 1998: 160; Evans et al., 1991; McCracken, 1993; Pierce, 1993). Clearly, adolescent beauty/fashion magazines offer readers pleasure. Respondents in interview projects often explain they read the magazines for fun (Currie, 1999; Kaplan and Cole, 2003). Most of the work in this area is focused around the reading of a specific part of teen magazines: advice columns. Winship (1987) explains that the reading of advice columns is a source of pleasure for readers, as the advice "reassures women that they are not alone with their personal

problems" (78). McRobbie (1991) argues that pleasure in advice column reading originates from the nature of listening and responding that occurs (156). While McCracken agrees that teen magazines offer pleasure (1993: 135), she disagrees with Winship and McRobbie arguing that advice columns are a source of anxiety for readers as they encourage "self-criticism" (140).

Early works on the impact of teen magazines had a tendency to argue that teen magazines were a "massive ideological block in which readers [are] implicitly imprisoned" (McRobbie, 1991: 141). However, recent work contends that while some information is read and accepted at face value, other material is negotiated or resisted by readers (Duke and Kreshnel, 1998; Kaplan and Cole, 2003; Currie, 1999). "Girls might read some texts as intended, but so, too, might they negotiate with texts to create meaning quite particular to their lives" (Duke and Kreshnel, 1998: 67). However, the general consensus of recent research concludes that although some resistance to magazine text has been found, the "lived experience[s]" (Currie, 1999: 245) of adolescent girls do not allow females to completely deconstruct the material critically. The following studies demonstrate the meaning and truth readers ascribe to adolescent beauty/fashion magazine content.

Duke and Kreshel (1998) discovered that teen magazines have the potential for influencing what adolescent girls know and understand about males (57). Interviewees were not as concerned with understanding boys as romantic partners, but rather understanding how boys feel about girls in general. Concerns were based around what boys liked in terms of appearance and what behaviors were acceptable for females.

Participants in this study "expected to modify their behavior according to the information they gathered regarding boys' preferences" (1998: 58).

When discussing the distribution of beauty and fashion material in teen magazines, participants were less likely to accept the messages as true and important. Participants understood that magazines reinforce societal expectations of beauty and that the images of models in magazines were not of 'average' females. However, while acknowledging the illusory images, participants still "faulted themselves for falling short of [the expectations]" (1998: 66). Girls are making meaning of the text through their own personal experiences, by relating the ideal image to what they are lacking. Overall, while Duke and Kreshel found girls accepted patriarchal messages distributed about boys, they argue that "girls are actively engaged in making meaning through their everyday interaction with texts, interaction that occur in the larger context of their lived experience" (1998: 66-67).

Dawn Currie's work on teen magazine readers is integral research. Using a triangulated design that included content analysis of teen magazines and interviewing adolescent girls, Currie discovered how adolescent girls are reading and making sense of the magazines' content. Currie argues, "women's magazines mediate our everyday thinking about ourselves as women and about societal attitudes towards womanhood" (1999: 95). Teenage girls were interviewed and considered "meaning-makers" (1999: 97) to determine what they read in the magazines, why they read the magazines, what they find important about the magazines, and how they make meaning of femininity through magazine reading.

Currie demonstrates that adolescent girls prefer the magazines' advice columns, quizzes, and real-life story sections (1999: 163). Readers enjoy reading about real life, as opposed to simply looking at glossy images. Moreover, most girls prefer pieces that address the 'reality' of teenage life, because it gives them a feeling of security that others are going through the same situations and feelings they experience (Currie, 1999: 252).

In addition, young women are reading the magazines' articles and paying less attention to the advertisements. This finding is interesting given that academic work in this area is heavily focused on the advertisements, as opposed to the articles (1999: 162). Adolescent girls are not just buying the magazines for an escape from reality; they are reading and absorbing information distributed in them.

Research demonstrates that adolescent beauty/fashion magazine readers are putting trust and truth in the content they read. Currie found that experiences of adolescents, specifically school experiences and culture, support dominant messages distributed through teen magazines. Adolescent school culture requires fashionable clothing and appearance in order to gain acceptance among peers, reiterating the importance of fashion and beauty emphasized in magazines (245). "Placing oneself outside, or against, the experienced reality of dressing to fit into school culture requires a secure sense of Self, at a time when girls actively seek peer approval" (Currie, 1999: 245). Although females may be resisting some content in magazines, the nature of adolescence gives magazine material truth status and does not permit "critical decoding" (245) of texts for most girls.

Lastly, a study conducted by Treise and Gotthoffer examined female and male adolescents' use of magazines to acquire information about sexual health. Through focus

group interviews, Treise and Gotthoffer discovered that teens (both male and female)

considered adolescent beauty/fashion magazines as "informative and credible sources"

(2002: 177) of information on sexual health. Similarly to Currie, it was found that

teenagers preferred articles on real-life stories (2002: 186). In addition, respondents

stated that they felt they were "learning" from the articles that discussed real-life stories

of teens (2002: 178). Treise and Gotthoffer conclude:

> This study provides a closer look at how teens interpret, use, evaluate, and
> interact with the sexual health information in magazines. As a mass media
> tool, magazines have the power to provide much-needed information to a
> number of target groups and may have the ability to contribute to the
> reduction of unhealthy sexual behaviors (2002: 187).

The research examined in this chapter demonstrates media constructions of

violence against females and the role of adolescent beauty/fashion magazines in teenage

girls' lives. The magazines' vast circulation and potential to socialize females are

important reasons to uncover their themes and messages. In addition, this forum

successfully distributes information to young females about sexuality, sexual health, and

sexual actions. For that reason, it is important to examine how teen magazines address

sexual assaults and male violence against females. Chapter three will detail the

theoretical framework that guides my research and discuss the method of data collection

and analysis.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

"For over a hundred years, feminist scholars have offered extensive social analysis of the politics of women's sexuality: the powerful and persistent tension between sexual danger and sexual pleasure that, while experienced differentially by individual women, is an involuntary aspect of being a woman in a patriarchal society" (Tolman, 2002: 48)

This chapter is broken into two main sections. The first section delineates the theoretical framework underpinning this research. The second section describes the methods used. The sample, data collection, and data analysis will be described in detail. Lastly, the limitations and contributions of this study will be discussed.

Theoretical Framework

As this study focuses on the importance and potential influence of mainstream mass media in young females' lives, a feminist cultural studies approach was adopted. Through this approach, I argue that we are now living in a "media culture" (Kellner, 1995: 1) which warrants educating young females through mainstream media. "A media culture has emerged in which images, sounds, and spectacles help produce the fabric of everyday life, dominating leisure time, shaping political views and social behavior, and providing the materials out of which people forge their very identities" (Kellner, 1995: 1). Since teen magazines are capable of socialization, coupling a feminist lens with an "ideological analysis of popular culture" (van Zoonen, 1994: 26) is appropriate for this study.

Cultural Studies

'Culture' is a widely used term in social science research. For purposes of cultural studies theorists and researchers, 'culture' involves "the conditions and the forms in which meaning and value are structured and articulated within a society" (Corner as cited in van Zoonen, 1994: 6). Cultural studies became known by work done in the U.K

at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies during the 1960's; however, its roots go back as far as the Frankfurt School and Marxism, incorporating the key concepts of ideology and hegemony. Cultural studies takes on many forms in present day research, including feminist and postmodern perspectives, among others. Furthermore, the growth of media culture and technology coincides with the availability of more popular culture and cultural studies avenues, as well as new topics of research.

For this study, the framework of Hall et al. (1978) was adopted. This approach operates on the notion that the "reproduction of the dominant ideologies [in a society] [are] secured in the media" (Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke & Roberts, 1978: 60). What is reported in news media and addressed in magazines is "the end-product of a complex process which begins with a systematic sorting and selecting of events and topics according to a socially constructed set of categories" (Hall et al., 1978: 53).

The perspective of Hall et al. is influenced by the concept of hegemony put forth by neo-Marxist, Antonio Gramsci. Hegemony refers to:

> a cultural and ideological means whereby the dominant groups in society, including fundamentally but not exclusively the ruling class, maintain their dominance by securing the 'spontaneous consent' of subordinate groups, including the working class, through the negotiated construction of a political and ideological consensus which incorporates both dominant and dominated groups (Strinati, 1995: 165).

Hegemony operates in social institutions such as family, school, popular culture, and the mass media. Through hegemony the ideological values and views of the "dominant groups in society" are transmitted to the rest of society via social institutions. Hegemony also functions in the "coercive side of the state" (Hall, 1977: 333), including criminal justice agencies and the law.

Hegemonic values persist due to the consensual nature of society (Hall et al., 1978: 55). Although individual differences in terms of politics, economics, and values exist because of the nature of opinion, overall, society is based upon consensus. Individuals in Western societies have fundamental interests, morals, standards, and concerns in common that unite them. "What unites us, as a society and a culture—its consensual side—far outweighs what divides and distinguishes us as groups or classes from other groups" (Hall et al., 1978: 55). News and information disseminated through the media are often distributed through the framework of consensus, using images and discourse with which general society relates and understands. Media have the capacity to distribute ideological messages because they are often the primary source of information of events "which occur outside the direct experience of the majority of society" (Hall et al., 1978: 56). Therefore,

> the media define for the majority of the population what significant events are taking place, but, also they offer powerful interpretations of how to understand these events. Implicit in those interpretations are orientations towards the events and the people or groups involved in them (Hall et al., 1978: 57).

Further, Hall et al. use the concepts of hegemony and ideology in their perspective by asserting that the dominant ideologies in society are maintained and disseminated in the media. The media do not simply produce news or ideologies; dominant ideologies are maintained through the process that defines what news and topics are worth addressing in the media. What is defined as news, controversial, or 'worth discussion' is decided through a process that involves the media being in a "position of structured subordination to the primary definers" (Hall et al., 1978: 59). The primary definers are considered "spokesmen" for the media. These individuals in

powerful, high-status positions are considered 'credible' and therefore their opinions on controversial topics are accepted "because such spokesmen are understood to have access to more accurate or more specialized information on particular topics than the majority of the population" (Hall et al., 1978: 58). The ideologies of the "spokesmen" are maintained and distributed through mass media. Consequently, the ideas of the powerful "spokesmen" become the ideas of the majority; the ideas are embraced voluntarily, become commonsense, and are therefore not questioned.

Hall (1980) explains how media messages are disseminated through the processes of encoding and decoding. Encoding denotes the meanings reproduced in the media, influenced by production structures and conventions of media. Through decoding, the receiver (reader, television viewer) makes meaning out of the messages encoded in the media. It is important to note that "the codes of encoding and decoding may not be perfectly symmetrical"; (Hall, 1980: 131) "audiences do not need to produce meaning similar to that produced by the media institution" (van Zoonen, 1994: 8). In other words, the reader/viewer does not need to decode the meaning in the same way as it was encoded.

Several meanings can be taken from the message; however, media messages do contain "dominant," "preferred" readings which are encoded with "institutional, political, and ideological" messages (1980: 134). Hall asserts:

> The domains of 'preferred meanings' have the whole social order embedded in them as a set of meanings, practices and beliefs: the everyday knowledge of social structures, of 'how things work for all practical purposes in this culture,' the rank order of power and interest and the structure of legitimations, limits and sanctions (1980: 134).

Through the processes named above, ideology and hegemonic values are distributed through media messages. These concepts set a basic framework for understanding and analyzing messages sent to readers of adolescent beauty/fashion magazines. Now that some basic principles of cultural studies have been detailed, the importance of the incorporation of feminist principles in cultural studies research is addressed.

Feminism

It is not easy to define feminism. A single, unified definition of feminism is not available and different notions of causes and solutions to gender inequality generate debate among feminists. These splits lead "many women [to be] reluctant to advocate feminism because they are uncertain about the meaning of the term" (hooks, 1984: 23). Several feminist perspectives (radical, socialist, liberal, Marxist, postmodern, poststructuralist) thrive in feminist academic theorizing. However, a feminist need not specifically identify with one of these frameworks to connect with and study feminist issues and explanations.

The causes of inequality among the sexes has been a point of contention amongst feminists. Radical feminists argue "women's oppression lies in the sexual dominance of men" (Currie, 1998: 43). Socialist feminists "view women's oppression as primarily economic" (Currie, 1998: 44). Furthermore, bell hooks, a Black feminist, argues that the assertion that "all women are oppressed" denies the fact that women of different class, race, and ethnic backgrounds experience different types of oppression (1984: 5).

Despite these differences, feminisms are linked by the central notion that patriarchal domination is the main source of women's oppression (Currie, 1998: 44), the

desire to raise consciousness (Bartky, 1990), and the fight to end sexist oppression (hooks, 1984). In general, feminism is devoted to addressing gender in social systems and explaining the reality of life as a woman (van Zoonen, 1996: 40). I did not take a specific feminist viewpoint to patriarchal domination in this study; instead, I focus on the subordination of females in general, as well as concentrating on the feminist concepts of gender, power, control, and consciousness raising.

Feminism results from the general desire to raise consciousness about female oppression and patriarchal power and control. Bartky argues that to "become a feminist is to develop a radically altered consciousness of oneself, of others, and of what, for lack of a better term, I shall call 'social reality'" (1990: 12). Since the women's movement in the 1970's and 1980's, feminists have focused their efforts on raising consciousness about patriarchal domination (Franklin, Lury, and Stacey, 1991: 2). Through these efforts, violence and oppression against females which used to be solely categorized as 'private issues' are now more readily seen as public issues. Moreover, women's studies programs and feminist theories have grown across a range of academic disciplines, furthering raising consciousness through academic education (Franklin et al., 1991: 2).

Feminist positions on violence against females differ from other perspectives as they focus on structural and societal explanations. Many specific feminist theories of violence against females exist; however, they all converge "to seek the roots of violence in social structures without disregarding the confounding role of interpersonal or intrapersonal processes" (Sev'er, 2002: 51). Emphasis is placed on the imbalanced distributions of power/control and resources that allow females to be victimized by males (Sev'er, 2002: 51) and often effectively re-victimize females when they attempt to seek

interventions and responses to the violence or abuse. While resources and interventions that are based on feminist principles are available, for various reasons many victims do not have access to those resources or are not introduced to them. Typically, victims of male violence are treated in distinctly negative ways by intervention resources, such as health care workers, criminal justice agencies, and the general public. Victimized females are often viewed as deserving of the assaults and portrayed as "hysterical," "beyond reason," (hooks, 1989: 85) and "vamps" (Benedict, 1992).

Feminist perspectives call for focus to be moved to society and the assailant by inquiring why it is that males are learning and being permitted to victimize females. Examining and challenging the pre-existing patriarchal structure of society that promotes male power, control, and access to resources is essential in the fight against male violence against females.

Feminist Cultural Studies

While the cultural studies approach of Hall et al. was an important turning point in cultural criminology, the framework fails to address how gender plays out in the process of production of mass media content. Feminism contributes to cultural studies by recognizing the importance of studying gender and the role of gender in the production and reproduction of dominant ideologies.

Feminist cultural studies scholars combine the works of male cultural studies academics, such as the Gramscian notions of ideology and hegemony, with feminist perspectives of patriarchal domination to explore gender in culture, media, and popular culture. The feminist cultural studies perspective is grounded on the definition of gender "as an analytic category within which humans think about and organize their social

activity, rather than as a natural consequence of sex difference" (Harding, 1986: 17). Popular culture and media play heavily into the social construction of gender as "all media are among the central site[s] in which struggle over meaning takes place" (van Zoonen, 1996: 43).

Feminist perspectives contribute to the work of Hall et al. by addressing the role of gender in the process of defining content dissemination through mass media. The Gramscian perspective of Hall et al. outlines how dominant ideologies are dispersed in the media through the power of the "spokesmen." It is interesting that the term "spokes*men*" is used, because that is exactly who the powerful are. The dominant ideologies disseminated in the mass media are those of powerful, white males. In Western societies, typically, white males hold the power in social institutions. Therefore, "media fulfill the structural needs of respectively democratic, patriarchal and capitalist society by transmitting its distorted dominant values about women" (van Zoonen, 1996: 40). Even in a female-centered media form, such as women's and adolescent beauty/fashion magazines, the "spokes*men*" that own the publishing and advertising corporations and the accepted societal values about females allow the "distorted" dominant ideologies to prevail.

This perspective demonstrates how the hegemonic notions of victim blaming and rape myths are prevalent today. The dominant patriarchal values of North American society perpetuate rape myths and victim blaming by constructing individuals who don't adopt those values as victims who are not 'credible.' These values include, but are not limited to, what it means to be masculine or feminine; dominant ideas of family and the roles of individuals in the family; and dominant ideas of sex and expressions of sexuality.

Hegemony allows victim blaming and rape myths to continue by perpetuating the dominant values through the media, as well as through the "coercive side of the state" (Hall, 1977: 333). Myths about violence against females are perpetuated by: rape/sexual assault and intimate partner violence laws; the treatment of victims in court and by criminal justice practitioners; the maintenance of sexism and misogynistic thinking; and the dissemination of dominant ideologies that relate to gender and sexuality.

More specifically, in terms of dominant ideologies of sexuality, "we live in a pluralistic culture with contradictory sexual paradigms" (Pipher, 1994: 205). Young females are taught to explore their sexuality and be afraid of it at the same time. Sex and sexuality are associated with so many different emotions and factors (humiliation, excitement, sexually transmitted diseases, adulthood, anxiety, love, reputation, fun), that it is not surprising that confusion surrounds sexuality. Brumberg argues "our society has come a long way in terms of recognizing that virginity is not the highest value in womanhood, and that modern girls—like adult women—have legitimate sexual desires that need an outlet" (1997: 142). However, young North American females are forced to consider the potential for sexual danger when attempting to express their sexuality (1997: 142). Due to the potential for sexual violence and stigmatization, the negotiation between sexual danger, sexuality, and sexual pleasure is unique to females.

Higgins and Tolman argue that the "cultural story" of gendered sexuality is cultivated through media. The "cultural story" reflects society's dominant ideologies of the ways in which females and males are to have and to express sexual desires. Under this story, sexual girls are considered to be harming themselves and society, whereas males are not held responsible for their sexual behavior because their desires are

considered natural (1997: 178). "The cultural story of human sexuality is one that penalizes the desire of girls and women while naturalizing the desire of boys and men" (1997: 190).

The dominant ideologies of gendered sexuality place girls in vulnerable positions. Girls are taught to be "good," which is understood as, not sexual. By denying the sexual desires they may have, girls may feel unclear about their sexual intentions and encounters. This lack of clarity creates vulnerability to violence or coercion into sexual acts. Higgins and Tolman demonstrate that girls who deny the "cultural story" are aware of their desires and are empowered to make a strong statement about those desires, leaving them less vulnerable to coercion and violence (1997: 190). By being aware of their desires, adolescent girls are "less vulnerable to confusion about the boundaries of [their] responsibility and the contours of [their] experience[s]. [They are] better able to know and to speak with clarity about [their] sexual interactions and the social landscape of gendered relationships" (1997: 191).

Controlling only the sexuality of females and not males is a key element in the systematic subjugation of females (Tolman, 2002: 16). In addition, heterosexism is an important part of the "cultural story" of sexuality and violence. The "story" is reinforced because of the traditional feminine and masculine roles prescribed in heterosexual relationships in North America. The "cultural story" serves to uphold patriarchal control. Females must understand the "cultural story" and their sexual desires to be able to fight against the violence and abuse. Females "entitled to their bodies and sexualities...question the 'rights' of male violence. Experimenting with the sexual

sovereignty of their passions, they are refusing the passive position of sexual victim"
(Fine, Genovese, Ingersoll, Macpherson, and Roberts, 1996: 128).

Lastly, it is important to understand that media do not create dominant ideologies, rather they function within society, perpetuating dominant cultural stories (van Zoonen, 1994: 17). The media are "contemporary mediator[s] of hegemony" (van Zoonen, 1994: 24) and dominant ideologies, making dominant ideologies invisible by interpreting them into "common sense" (van Zoonen, 1994: 24).

Working within a feminist cultural studies theoretical framework, I quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed content on violence against females in teen magazines. The next section will detail the methods used in this thesis.

Research Questions

The goal of this thesis was to examine how adolescent beauty/fashion magazines address violence against females. As this specific area has not been explored before, many questions arise around this topic. My research was focused around the following questions:

- How often do the magazines discuss issues of violence against females?
- In what type of item are the issues presented (i.e. advice columns, feature articles)?
- What are the main themes disseminated?
- Does the information given promote myths about violence against females, specifically rape myths?
- How are the victims and assailants of rape and sexual assault portrayed?
- Do the items address societal causes for violence against females or do they individualize the violence?
- What kind of advice, if any, is being offered to the reader?

Quantitative and qualitative approaches were adopted in order to answer the above stated questions. To garner frequencies and information about the extent and

presentation of violence against females content, a quantitative content analysis was conducted. A qualitative content analysis was conducted to assess themes and messages disseminated through adolescent beauty/fashion magazines. A feminist cultural studies approach was taken to go beyond the dominant reading of the texts to "read them in 'subversive ways' by constant rereading and looking for particular clues" (Reinharz, 1992: 149).

The Sample

Given the longevity and vast number of teen magazines in publication, many decisions were made with regard to the sample. Specifically, the decisions addressed the sources, the time period, and the method of gathering the sample.

Relevant items in *Seventeen* and *Teen* magazines from alternating months spanning a decade, from 1992 to 2002, comprise the sample used for both quantitative and qualitative analysis. As I was interested in collecting all items (excluding advertisements) related to violence against females, cover-to-cover searching of the magazines was necessary. To gather a rich sample that exemplifies the main messages disseminated by teen magazines, a search of the Readers' Guide Abstracts[4] database was conducted to access supplementary items related to violence against females for qualitative analysis. Both the items collected from the Readers' Guide Abstracts database and the sample from the cover-to-cover search make up the items qualitatively analyzed.

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[4] The Readers' Guide Abstracts database indexes and abstracts articles from popular general interest magazines.

Seventeen and Teen magazines were chosen for several reasons. First, their vast circulation and rank as two of the top adolescent beauty/fashion magazines are integral to the study. As mentioned earlier, Seventeen and Teen are read by millions of adolescent girls each month. They are two of the longest running and widely circulated adolescent beauty/fashion magazines.

This study aimed to assess how adolescent beauty/fashion magazines, as a whole, address important social issues, not just how one specific magazine disseminates information on violence against females. Given that objective, I decided to include two magazines in the sample. Due to Seventeen magazine's status as the long standing, top ranking teen magazine, it was an obvious choice for this study. The cessation of regular publication of Teen magazine was one reason why I chose Teen as the second magazine. I found it interesting that the circulation of a top ranking teen magazine dropped so drastically in the last half of 2001 that it was forced out of publication. Teen magazine underwent a re-design and reformulation of its layout and content in August 2001, replacing advice columns, quizzes, and confessional pieces with a new focus on "shopping, style and celebrity" (Fine, 3/6/01). By May 2002, the magazine was pulled from regular publication and monthly subscribers of Teen began receiving issues of Seventeen instead. Quarterly issues of Teen are still published but are only available through the 'newsstand,' not by subscription.

Finally, Seventeen and Teen were initially chosen because they were the only adolescent beauty/fashion magazines archived back to 1992 and available in hard copy in the Vancouver area. Collecting hard copies to gain accurate depictions of the layout of the items, the colors, and images was important to the analysis. Other forms of archived

materials (microfiche, c.d.) often lack in providing color, images/graphics, pictures, and the original layout of the magazine. Unfortunately, as data collection began it became apparent that hard copies of most issues of *Seventeen* and *Teen* in the sample were not available. Due to this unforeseen circumstance, all of the *Teen* items and roughly 25% of the items from *Seventeen* were collected from microfiche.

Criteria for determining items related to violence against females were established. All items that addressed rape/sexual assault (stranger or acquaintance), intimate partner violence, violence by a non-intimate within the family, and sexual harassment[5] were collected, regardless of the purpose of the item. Furthermore, any items that described the potential for violence or abuse were also collected (e.g. an advice column including the description of a female's actions by her best friend discussing that she is scared that if her friend's behaviors continue she might be 'raped'). Using the criteria outlined for the quantitative analysis, the cover-to-cover search yielded 114 items, 69 from *Seventeen* and 45 from *Teen*.

In terms of the Readers' Guide Abstracts sample, keywords were entered into the search engine to find relevant items. All items listed under the keywords dating violence, rape, abusive relationship, sexual harassment, and violence against women were collected. The keywords sexual assault, teen violence, domestic violence, abusive partners, and physical abuse were also searched but achieved no results. The search generated 30 items initially; 13 items were removed as they were already captured in the cover-to-cover search. This resulted in a sample of 17 items: 10 from *Seventeen* and 7 from *Teen*. The time frame of the Readers' Guide Abstracts sample ranges from 1988-

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[5] See Number nine in Appendix D for definitions of these terms used in this thesis.

2003[6]. The 17 items generated from the database were added to the 114 items collected through cover-to-cover searching, making the final sample for qualitative analysis 131 items (79 from *Seventeen* and 52 from *Teen*).

Data Analysis

This research contains quantitative and qualitative components to capture the numbers while also deconstructing the text to result in findings that "corroborate each other" (Mason as cited in Silverman, 2000: 98). The triangulated method of quantitative and qualitative content analysis was used to "modify the weaknesses of each individual method and thus greatly enhance the quality and value of [my] interpretative research [project]" (van Zoonen, 1994: 139).

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative content analysis consists of "establish[ing] a set of categories and then count[ing] the number of instances that fall into each category" (Silverman, 2000: 128). Conducting a quantitative content analysis is a common way to obtain "reliable evidence about a large sample" (Silverman, 2000: 128). Given the objectives of this study, a quantitative content analysis is the most appropriate method for obtaining answers to some of the research questions.

Derived from the work of Ericson et al. (1991), a coding manual (see Appendix D) was constructed to analyze the content on violence against females by adapting Ericson et al.'s discussion of news and source formats to the analysis of magazines. Ericson et al. define formats as "the devices by which journalists are able to categorize,

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[6] I decided to include items collected from the Readers' Guide Abstracts database that fell outside of the 1992-2002 time frame established for the quantitative analysis. As the database was searched to include qualitative data, the items from years before 1992 and after 2002 will also give an accurate qualitative picture of the messages disseminated to readers.

choose, organize and represent knowledge as news" (1991: 149). The coding manual

was constructed to determine the frequency of coverage, type of item, source formats,

and other various questions of interest. In addition, categories that Ericson et al. did not

analyze were also included in the coding manual, specifically gender.

The sample captured from the cover-to-cover search was coded into categories

and the data was entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

SPSS was used to determine simple frequencies and percentages.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative content analysis involves the process of "reading the text as

contextual, contingent and socially constructed" (Young, 1990: 158). Meaning is not

concrete; people make meaning and interpret texts differently. By analyzing *Seventeen*

and *Teen* magazine text as discourse, the text is treated as "contingent, allegorical,

referring not to one deep meaning or structure but to a plenitude of possibilities" (Young,

1990: 159). Examining text this way is important in discovering the meanings behind

text and the possible effects of those meanings.

Open, axial, and selective coding are incorporated in the qualitative content

analysis coding process. Through open coding, I examined the magazines' content

related to violence against females, looking for dominant patterns and themes. Three

approaches to open coding are mentioned by Strauss and Corbin: line-by-line, coding by

sentence or paragraph, and looking at an entire document (1998: 119-120). I adopted the

third approach, which involves "perus[ing] the entire document and ask[ing] 'What is

going on here?' and 'What makes this document the same as, or different from, the

previous ones that I coded?" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 120). The second procedure,

axial coding, involved re-coding the general themes through relating sub-themes to themes. This process helps to create a more complete, overall picture to explain the theme (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 124). Selective coding entails "integrating and refining categories" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 143) to further aid in developing a narrative around the data. These coding procedures allowed for constant comparison and asking questions about the data as the key analytic activities undertaken to develop a narrative around violence against females content distributed to readers.

A qualitative data analysis program was not utilized for this part of the analysis. Rather, extensive typewritten notes with extracted themes and sub-themes were compiled to allow for analysis and re-analysis of themes.

Limitations and Contributions

As with most research at this level, I experienced resource constraints. I had intended to collect data from hard copies of *Seventeen* and *Teen*. Unfortunately, this was not possible and a majority of my sample was obtained from microfiche copies of the magazines. Due to this method of data collection, there were five items from *Teen* and one *Seventeen* item containing blurred or darkened areas which were illegible. While it did not occur frequently, there were instances where possibly valuable data was lost due to the nature of the method used to archive the magazines.

Aside from time and resource constraints, the main limitation of this research is the inability to assess the impact of the magazines' material on the reader. "Analyses of content alone can only speculate about what the effects on the viewer might be" (Brown et al., 2002: 16). As an analysis of text that does not incorporate interviewing, it is not possible to assess the impact of the material. So, while I won't be able to demonstrate the

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exact effects or impacts of teen magazine content about violence against females, analyzing the content contributes to the body of knowledge on this subject by assessing the messages relayed to the audience and pointing future research on interviews in a specific direction.

The methodological questions of reliability and validity relate to all research projects. Ideally, content analysis research will involve more than one person coding to establish inter-rater reliability (Palys, 1997: 69). For this study, it was not possible to have more than one person code the data. To address reliability in my position, the documentation of my procedures was the most important. Reliability was addressed by creating a coding manual including specific categories and definitions for those categories. Many hours were spent carefully coding the sample to aim for the most reliable sample available when conducted by an individual researcher. In terms of validity, "sometimes one doubts the validity of an explanation because the researcher has clearly made no attempt to deal with contrary cases" (Silverman, 2000: 176). I addressed validity by analyzing all the data collected, whether it supported or disagreed with my assumptions. In fact, in my case, finding evidence that refuted my assumptions would indicate that teen magazines are discussing and educating about violence against females in positive and empowering ways.

Even with these limitations, my study has potential to contribute knowledge across many disciplines. Past researchers in this area stretch across various different departments and research areas. This study has potential to be valued by not only the discipline of criminology, but also sociology, communication, and women's studies disciplines.

As mentioned earlier, there is a lack of research in this specific area. As the literature review demonstrates, many studies have been done on related areas but the content of violence against females in magazines has gone virtually unexplored. More research is needed in this area. This exploratory study aids in contributing knowledge and demonstrating the need for more research on content of violence against females in the media, specifically in areas where the message may be widely disseminated and received by a potentially non-critical audience, such as the readers of adolescent beauty/fashion magazines.

The triangulated method of quantitative and qualitative content analyses is a strength of my research. "Multiple methods work to enhance understanding both by adding layers of information and by using one type of data to validate or refine another" (Reinharz, 1992: 201). By conducting quantitative and qualitative content analyses, the numbers assist in supporting my qualitative coding procedures and analysis of the text. Through the triangulated form, this study demonstrates how often and in what form magazines discuss violence against females, as well as what types of messages are disseminated to readers.

Chapters two and three have given background knowledge on the literature, framework, and methods of this thesis. With that knowledge in mind, chapter four will now detail findings from the quantitative analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR: DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF *SEVENTEEN* AND *TEEN*

> "Usually I just take it a page at a time. I don't really go to any section in particular first unless something's on the cover. You know, it says something that I'm interested in at the time, like you know, it says inside 'on page whatever,' then I'll go to it [first]" (Seventeen-year-old Roshni as cited in Currie, 1999: 46).

This chapter presents a descriptive overview of the items on violence against females. The discussion is organized into three sections: magazine formats, source formats, and magazine content. The findings demonstrate that adolescent beauty/fashion magazines have been addressing and continue to address issues of violence against females. The distribution of items, the type of items that contain content on violence against females, and the gender of the writers are addressed in this chapter. In addition, the types of sources, knowledge, violence, explanations of violence, and responses to violence will be detailed.

Magazine Formats

As indicated in chapter three, the quantitative analysis draws on a modified version of Ericson et al.'s (1991) coding schema to analyze magazine formats. The following categories were examined: number of items; type of item; gender of writer; item size; and cover advertisement.

Number of Items by Year

The sample for quantitative analysis consists of 114 items: 69 (60.5%) from *Seventeen* and 45 (39.5%) from *Teen*. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 demonstrate the distribution of items for each magazine.

Figure 4.1 *Seventeen*: Number of Items by Year

Seventeen:
Number of Items by Year

Figure 4.2 *Teen*: Number of Items by Year

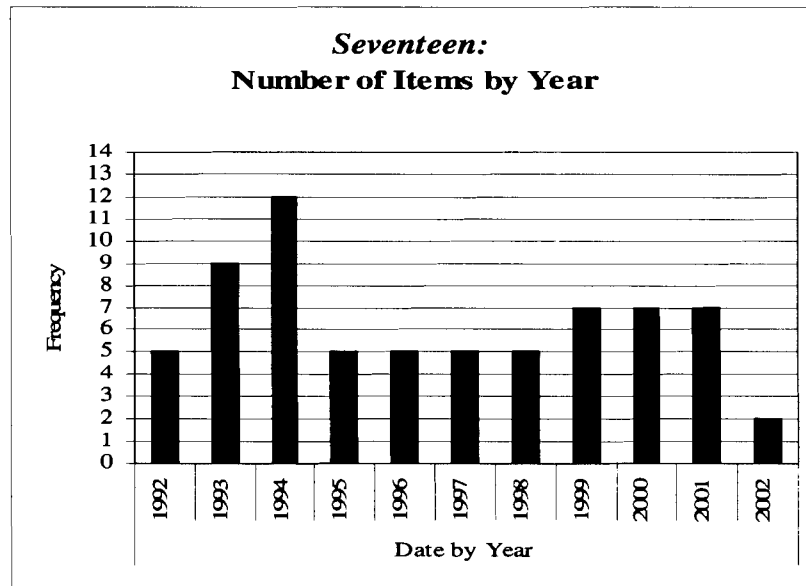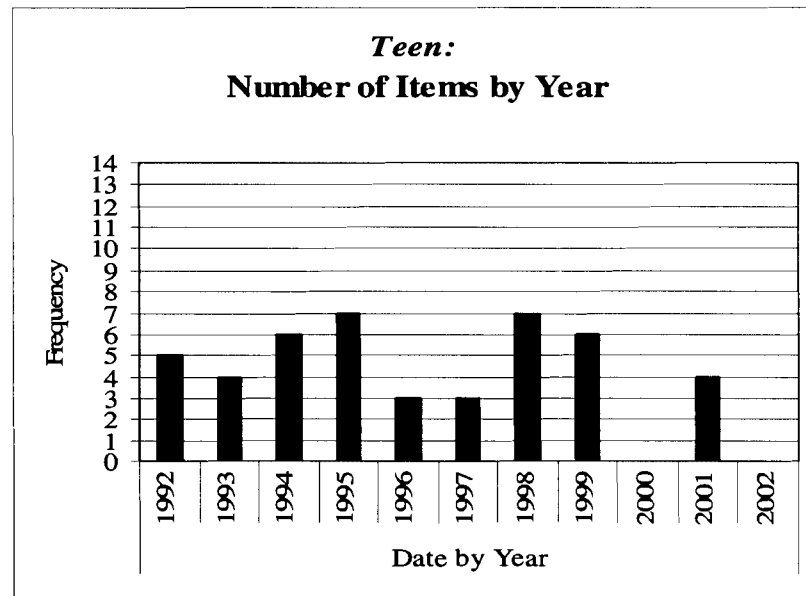

Teen:
Number of Items by Year

The distribution of items in *Seventeen* magazine is relatively stable throughout the

years except for the high frequency in 1994 (12) and a small number of items in 2002 (2).

On the other hand, the frequency of items in *Teen* magazine is more variable during the

1990's with the same dip in items around the early part of the 21st century. While these

numbers are not large enough to make any clear determination on the frequency of items on violence against females, it is interesting to note the decrease in items for both magazines in 2002[7]. For *Teen*, this is presumably due to the drastic change in format beginning in August 2001 (discussed in chapter three), as there were no items collected on violence against females after that time. However, it is not clear why there was such a decrease in items in *Seventeen* magazine.

Type of Item

Table 4.1 displays a detailed breakdown of the types of items used to discuss violence against females in each magazine, as well as in the total sample. Items discussing violence against females in the total sample (114) appeared most frequently in advice columns written by females (28.1%, 32/114), followed by feature articles (21.1%, 24/114) and secondary articles (18.4%, 21/114). In addition, items related to violence against females appeared in the letters to the editor (11.4%, 13/114) and male advice column (10.5%, 12/114) sections.

This finding reveals that adolescent females are curious and asking questions about violence against females. The female advice column category consists of questions from readers, usually detailing a violent or abusive incident, followed by responses from regular, female magazine journalists. The questions range from readers asking for an explanation about the nature of their experiences to asking for advice on what to do about the violent or abusive events they experienced (e.g. how to heal and cope, whether they should prosecute, whether they should tell someone what happened).

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[7] Note: *Teen* magazine went out of publication in May 2002; therefore, this analysis only covers the first half of the year for *Teen*. However, data from *Seventeen* magazine includes both the first and second half of 2002.

The second most frequent type of item in the total sample on violence against females appears in feature articles. This type of item is classified as articles designed specifically to discuss violence against females. These articles include stories written by victims of violence and/or abuse and items intended to educate and inform readers about violence against females. Moreover, a majority of the articles in this category (75%, 18/24) were considered very long, meaning they consisted of over 20 paragraphs.

Secondary articles make up 18.4% (21/114) of the entire sample. This category consists of articles unrelated to violence against females that mention violence against females briefly in some form throughout the article. Some examples of discussion topics in secondary articles include: interviews with musicians/celebrities that include discussion on violence against females (Ethan Brown, *Seventeen*, Sept. 1997: 180-181; Lauren Oliver, *Seventeen*, Sept. 1998: 177-178, 193), articles on African refugees who witnessed violence (in general and against females) (Gayle Forman, *Seventeen*, March 1999: 224-228; Carmen Renee Thompson, *Seventeen*, May 1999, 164-168), and items on topics such as self injury (Cherise Wade, *Teen*, Jan. 2001: 58-60, 94) and teen drinking (Sandy Fertman, *Teen*, March 1995: 42, 44) that address violence against females.

Table 4.1 Type of Item: *Teen* vs. *Seventeen* and Total Sample, 1992-2002

		Breakdown by Magazine				Breakdown by Total Sample	
		Teen (N)	*Teen* (%)	*Seventeen* (N)	*Seventeen* (%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Type of Item	Quiz	1	2.2	0	0.0	1	0.9
	Poll of readers	0	0.0	1	1.4	1	0.9
	Letters to editor	8	17.8	5	7.2	13	11.4
	Blurb	3	6.7	6	8.7	9	7.9
	Advice: Male	9	20.0	3	4.3	12	10.5
	Advice: Female	6	13.3	26	37.7	32	28.1
	Feature article	12	26.7	12	17.4	24	21.1
	Secondary article	5	11.1	16	23.2	21	18.4
	Other[8]	1	2.2	0	0.0	1	0.9
	Total	45	100.0	69	100.0	114	100.0

Table 4.1 exhibits that while content on violence against females appeared most frequently in female advice columns in total, the two magazines differed greatly in the amount that the issue was discussed in this type of item. Female advice column items made up 37.7% (26/69) of *Seventeen's* sample and 13.3% (6/45) of *Teen's* sample. Furthermore, 22.8 % (26/114) of the total sample was comprised of female advice columns from *Seventeen* alone. Whether this is related to the number of questions submitted by readers to each magazine or the content selected by the magazines' staff is unclear. However, given the frequency with which questions about violence against females appear in *Seventeen* and the similarity in the two magazines, in terms of content, rankings, and reader demographics, it is probable that *Teen* magazine receives a similar number of questions from readers.

Both magazines contributed 12 feature articles to the sample; however, feature articles appeared more in *Teen* magazine (26.7%, 12/45) than in *Seventeen* (17.4%,

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[8] The 'other' category was created to include any item that did not fit into the above categories. The item that was placed in this classification was an advice column of which I was not able to determine the gender of the author due to darkened areas on the microfiche copy of the item.

12/69). The presence of content on violence against females in feature articles speaks to the importance teen magazines place on discussions around violence against females. Feature articles are typically long items that are advertised on the cover of the magazine to entice shoppers to buy the magazine.

Information on violence against females often appears in the form of secondary articles. Secondary articles comprise 23.2% (16/69) of *Seventeen's* sample and 11.1% (5/45) of *Teen's* sample. Interestingly, a majority (76.2%, 16/21) of the secondary articles originate from *Seventeen*. *Teen* only contributes 5 (23.8%) secondary articles. The issue of violence against females appears to be brought up in items not intended for such discussion more frequently in *Seventeen*, whereas *Teen* commonly concentrates its violence against females content in items specifically designed to discuss the issues.

Finally, the difference in the number of male advice column items between *Seventeen* and *Teen* deserves discussion. The male advice column items consist of questions from readers, succeeded by an answer from a male journalist. Said advice columns are designed to give the reader a male's point of view on relationships and sex. Male advice columns were found in 20% (9/45) of *Teen's* items and only 4.3% (3/69) of *Seventeen's* items. *Teen* magazine contains more advice columns written by males (20%, 9/45) than by females (13.3%, 6/45), whereas female advice columns comprise a substantial portion (37.7%, 26/69) of *Seventeen's* items. Although the reason for the differences in advice columns between the magazines is unclear, it is interesting to note the dramatic differences in terms of violence against females content in advice column items in *Seventeen* and *Teen*.

Gender of Writer

Females dominated (72.8%, 83/114) authorship in the total sample. Items including both female and male writers were found 11.4% (13/114) of the time. All of the items with both female and male writers were advice columns; 12 were female question/male answer and one was male question/female answer. The sample did not contain any female and male co-authored items. Lastly, items written solely by males appeared 2.6% (3/114) of the time and the gender of the author could not be determined in 13.2% (15/114) of the sample items[9].

Females authored 81.2% (56/69) of items in *Seventeen* and 60% (27/45) of items in *Teen*. These figures are not unforeseen given the target audience of adolescent beauty/fashion magazines. Females, aged 12-24, are seeking advice and information on sexuality and growing up from those who have experienced it and from those who understand growing up as a female.

The total sample contained 31 advice columns solely written by females (female question/female answer). Of those 31, *Seventeen* magazine contained considerably more advice columns (80.6%, 25/31) authored exclusively by females than *Teen* (19.4%, 6/31). However, the majority of advice columns in the total sample with an answer written by a male (75%, 9/12) were located in *Teen* magazine. So, while male written advice columns make up a relatively small portion of the total sample (14%, 16/114), there is a dramatic difference in the number of advice column items written by males in *Seventeen* and *Teen*.

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[9] The gender of the writer could not be determined in 15 items for the following reasons: the item did not identify an author; the author's name was printed in an area that was illegible due to the quality of the microfiche copy; or the item was a letter to the editor that was either anonymous or designated by initials and the item did not give enough information to determine whether a female or male wrote it (although it is likely it was written by a female).

Overall, female authors dominate the total sample, as well as both magazines separately. Furthermore, this analysis clearly demonstrates male authors, specifically male advice columnists, discuss issues of violence against females more often in *Teen* than *Seventeen*.

Item Size

In terms of the size of individual items in the entire sample, short (2-4 paragraphs) items were noted most frequently (33.3%, 38/114), followed by very long (20 or more paragraphs) items at 23.7% (27/114). Medium length (5-9 paragraphs) items occurred 18.4% (21/114) of the time. Finally, 12.3 % (14/114) of the items were blurbs (one paragraph or less) and 12.3% (14/114) were long (10-19 paragraphs) items.

This finding is not surprising given the amount of advice column and feature article items that appear in the total sample. Advice columns are typically short items that involve a quick question from readers with a short, concise answer from the columnists. Usually one or two pages are devoted to advice columns that contain several different question-and-answer combinations. As noted earlier, typically feature articles are very long items with in-depth discussion.

Differences and similarities of size of items between the two magazines are apparent. Proportionately, *Teen* contains twice (48.9%, 22/45) as many short items as *Seventeen* (23.2%, 16/69). Medium items comprise 6.7% (3/45) of *Teen's* sample and 26.1% (18/69) of *Seventeen's* sample. Lastly, 24.4% (11/45) of *Teen's* items and 23.2% (16/69) of *Seventeen's* items are considered very long.

Cover advertisement

The advertisement of an item on the cover speaks to the item's importance. Adolescent beauty/fashion magazines are strategically placed in checkout stands at popular supermarkets and department stores, as well as in several other consumer shopping areas (bookstores, newsstands). "The driving force behind *Seventeen* is profit and maintaining the status quo" (Wray and Steele, 2002: 193). Magazine editors and staff utilize the cover to entice consumers to purchase their product. The items advertised on the covers are selected specifically to promote sales. Therefore, uncovering the way content on violence against females is advertised illustrates the importance of the subject to the magazine staff and the readers.

Overwhelmingly (80.7%, 92/114), content on violence against females is not advertised on the cover. Of the 22 items that are advertised, feature (63.7%, 14/22) and secondary (31.8%, 7/22) articles are advertised on the cover most frequently. Yet, only 21 of the 45 (46.7%) feature and secondary articles are advertised, leaving 24 (53.3%) not mentioned. The only other type of item that was advertised on the cover was a quiz titled, "Is he too Possessive?" (*Teen*, May 1992: 12, 14). Content on violence against females does not appear to be considered content that will entice a potential consumer to purchase the magazine.

Both magazines contribute 11 items with cover advertisements. Cover advertisements appear in 24.4% (11/45) of *Teen's* sample and 15.9% (11/69) of *Seventeen's* sample. *Teen* is proportionately more likely to have cover advertisements; this could be due to the fact that *Teen* also has proportionately more feature articles than *Seventeen*. In terms of type of violence, there is not much variation between the

advertisement of an item on the cover with regards to the type of violence the item addresses. However, there is a disparity regarding date of the issue and advertisement of an item. A majority (72.7%, 16/22) of the items displayed on the cover of the magazine appeared before 1997. The reason for this decrease is undeterminable; however, it does not seem to be related to the total amount of content on violence against females as nearly half (46.5%, 53 of 114) of the sample appears after 1997. This finding coupled with the earlier results that illustrate the decrease in content on violence against females starting in 2000 provide the impression that content on violence against females has become less and less important to teen magazines throughout the years in this sample.

Source Formats

The sources used by magazines distinguish the type of information transmitted to the reader. Magazine journalists, authors, and editors must conform to constraints in the process of composing magazine items. Ericson et al. (1991) considered this notion in their analysis of newspapers, television, and radio. Using a modified version of their constructs, the types of sources, source contexts, and types of knowledge provided by sources were analyzed for adolescent beauty/fashion magazines. Just as it is important for sources to establish authority through news media, access to magazines can be just as critical "to regular sources because it helps them to enact their organizational environments and to constitute their authority" (Ericson et al., 1991: 181).

Types of Sources

Table 4.2 displays the sources used in adolescent beauty/fashion magazines by total sample as well as by magazine. The total sample of 114 items contained 323 sources. Unlike news coverage, the coverage of violence against females in teen

magazines is not dominated by the usual government sources (Ericson et al, 1991: 187). In the overall distribution, *Seventeen* and *Teen* magazine journalists were sources most often (29.4 %, 95/323), items written by victims or that cited victims appeared 25.1% (81/323) of the time, and 22.3 % (72/323) of the sources consisted of individuals without affiliation. The category designated 'individuals without affiliation' denotes 'vox pop' type interviews on the street asking for reactions to issues or events; individuals who write into the magazine to react to an issue, article, or event; and individuals who are named but the item does not mention their affiliation. Individuals (typically, females) who wrote questions into advice columns and letters to the editor form the bulk of the individuals without affiliation category[10].

In news and magazine items, "sometimes the only 'voice' is that of journalists, even though the knowledge they are using has been obtained from elsewhere" (Ericson et al., 1991: 181). *Teen* and *Seventeen* regularly recite knowledge from other sources without referring to the voice of that source. The source of the advice and information disseminated to readers is not cited much of the time, as is demonstrated by the low incidence (23.2%, 75/323 sources) that sources other[11] than journalists, victims, and individuals without affiliation are named. Journalists, victims, and individuals without affiliation make up 76.8% (248/323) of the sources cited. These figures signify that either a majority of the information about violence against females is not being given by sources who may be experts or authorities (i.e. criminal justice professionals, doctors,

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[10] Note: The category of "law/justice-victim" took precedence over the category of "individuals without affiliation." Many times individuals who wrote in to the magazine or were interviewed may also have expressed they were victims of male violence. In those instances, they could technically be placed in both categories. For this study, individuals were only placed in one category and any source who expressed she was a victim was placed in the "law/justice-victim" category regardless of other possible categories the source could be categorized in.

[11] See coding manual in Appendix D for definitions of the types of sources that were coded.

academic experts, psychologists) on the subject or journalists are using information from experts and authorities but are not acknowledging the sources of the information that they present.

Table 4.2 Type of Source: *Teen* vs. *Seventeen* and Total Sample, 1992-2002

		Breakdown by Magazine				Breakdown by Total Sample	
		Teen (N)	*Teen* (%)	*Seventeen* (N)	*Seventeen* (%)	Total (N)	Total (%)
Type of Source	Journalist of organization	34	29.6	61	29.3	95	29.4
	Other journalist	0	0.0	1	0.5	1	0.3
	Law/justice—victim	41	35.7	40	19.2	81	25.1
	Law/justice—other	6	5.3	4	1.9	10	3.1
	Other govt. sources	0	0.0	3	1.4	3	0.9
	Academic experts	2	1.7	12	5.9	14	4.3
	Individual professionals	5	4.3	14	6.7	19	5.9
	Individuals w/out affiliation	19	16.5	53	25.5	72	22.3
	Community-based organizations	1	0.9	4	1.9	5	1.5
	Unspecified sources	5	4.3	5	2.4	10	3.1
	Other	2	1.7	11	5.3	13	4.0
	Total	115	100.0	208	100.0	323	100.0

Seventeen magazine's sample contains 64.4% (208/323) of the sources identified while 35.6% (115/323) are contributed by *Teen* magazine. On average, *Seventeen* contained 3.0 sources per item (69) while *Teen* items contained an average of 2.5 sources per item (45). *Seventeen* journalists and *Teen* journalists are used as sources equally in each magazine (29.6%, 34/115 in *Teen*, 29.3%, 61/208 in *Seventeen*). On the other hand, *Teen* magazine uses victims of violence as sources nearly twice as much (35.7%, 41/115) as *Seventeen* magazine (19.2%, 40/208). Individuals without affiliation made up 25.5% (53/208) of *Seventeen's* sources and 16.5% (19/115) of *Teen's* sources. The difference in the number of individuals without affiliation between the two magazines could be

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related to the difference in the amount of advice columns between the two magazines, as well as because *Seventeen* contains more females writing in for advice but not identifying themselves as victims. Lastly, *Teen* magazine did not contain any journalists from other organizations or other government individuals (other than criminal justice system participants, see Appendix D for further clarification) as sources, while *Seventeen's* sample was comprised of one (0.5%) journalist from another organization and three (1.4%) other government sources.

Source Contexts

Not only are the types of sources used imperative to the knowledge relayed, the context in which the source transmits his/her knowledge is integral. Source contexts can provide knowledge related to the "status" and "character" of the source (Ericson et al., 1991: 200). The extent to which each medium can reveal the source context is related to the organizational structure and the ways that medium transmits knowledge. For example, television news sources have a greater ability to use visuals to show the context than newspapers and magazines. Ericson et al. discovered that across newspaper, television, and radio, the source context revealed most often was 'author,' denoting that the source was the author of the item (1991: 200).

In the total sample, no information was given about the source context 39.6 % (128/323) of the time. This category included individuals seeking advice from advice columns who did not disclose their location, items with no mention of a location, and instances where I was unable to determine how the author obtained the information from the source. The author of the item was identified 34.4% (111/323) of the time and 12.1% (39/323) of the entire sample of sources was comprised of the location not signifying

organizational context category. In this study, the latter category was mostly comprised of items that mentioned the location but it was not relevant to the story, such as an advice column where location is disclosed (e.g. Sleepless in Seattle).

Of the 115 source contexts in *Teen* and 208 in *Seventeen*, authors were identified as the source context 35.7% (41/115) and 33.7% (70/208) of the time respectively. Location not signifying organizational context was identified 25.2% (29/115) of the time in *Teen* and surprisingly only 4.8% (10/208) in *Seventeen*. Once again, this difference may be related to the disparity between the number of advice columns in the two magazines, as well as the way that the two magazines disclose contexts in advice columns. No information about the source context was provided in 31.3% (36/115) of *Teen's* sample and 44.2% (92/208) of *Seventeen's* sample. *Teen* magazine often discloses the location of the female writing in for advice, whereas *Seventeen* magazine typically does not. In addition, although infrequently, *Seventeen* was the only magazine that contained official documents of an organization as a context (3.4%, 7/208).

Many items in both *Teen* and *Seventeen* did not contain enough information to determine how the author obtained his/her knowledge. In fact, as stated above, the author was the source context 34.4% of the time. In cases that a different source was cited, for instance a police officer or psychologist, many times the context was not given. Journalists used other sources at times, but generally did not include how they obtained that information from the source (e.g. book, interview, official document). Discovering that teen magazines lack in describing source contexts is the most noteworthy finding from this analysis in terms of source contexts.

Types of Knowledge Provided by Sources

"News reality depends on how the comments of journalists and sources have been contextualized in the narrative, and ultimately on how this contextualization is visualized by the consumer" (Ericson et al., 1991: 32). This analysis also applies to the types of knowledge that are disseminated in teen magazines.

Five types of knowledge are distinguished by Ericson et al. (1991): primary, secondary, tertiary, evaluative, and recommendation. Primary knowledge refers to factual information that explains what happened. Secondary knowledge is explanatory knowledge, used to explicate why something happened. Tertiary knowledge includes emotional and descriptive information that asks "what was it like to be involved in what happened" (Ericson et al., 1991: 204). Judging and moral content used to judge whether something was good or bad is grouped into the evaluative knowledge category. Finally, recommendation knowledge offers advice or recommendations about "what should be done about what happened" (Ericson et al., 1991: 204). The type of knowledge included in a magazine item speaks to the meaning of the item. For example, an author may include tertiary knowledge in an attempt to compel an emotional reaction from the reader.

As Table 4.3 indicates, all forms of knowledge were used in the total sample of 114 items. In fact, typically, multiple types of knowledge were used in a single item.

Table 4.3 Total Sample: Types of Knowledge

		Frequency	Percentage
Types of Knowledge	Primary	294	39.9
	Secondary	114	15.5
	Tertiary	134	18.2
	Evaluative	77	10.5
	Recommendation	117	15.9
	Total	736	100.0

Primary knowledge was used most frequently (39.9%, 294/736), secondary, tertiary, and recommendation knowledge were used roughly the same amount, while evaluative knowledge was used the least (10.5%, 77/736). It is not surprising to see that primary knowledge is used the most; however, it is interesting that evaluative knowledge is cited the least[12]. As there were many items in my sample where a person's actions could be judged, it was assumed that evaluative knowledge would be used more often.

In terms of the type of knowledge provided by different types of sources, *Seventeen* and *Teen* journalists offer primary knowledge most frequently (28.3%, 89/314), followed by recommendation knowledge (21.3%, 67/314). Items written by journalists focused mainly on distributing factual information about violence against females and giving advice to readers. Secondary and evaluative knowledge were used roughly the same amount and tertiary knowledge was used the least. A majority of the evaluative knowledge was also distributed by journalists of the magazines (70.1%, 54/77).

Victims provided primary (48.2%, 80/166) and tertiary (31.3%, 52/166) knowledge the most, demonstrating that when victims' voices are heard in items, they are most likely divulging factual information about a violent/abusive event or used to provide emotional and empathetic impact. In terms of type of knowledge offered, individuals without affiliation follow the same pattern as victims. Individuals without affiliation used primary knowledge most often (48.8%, 63/129) and tertiary knowledge was cited

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[12] Note: For evaluative knowledge, I wanted to be able to determine specifically how many times someone's (usually a victim or an assailant's) actions were explicitly judged in teen magazines. Due to the nature of items on violence against females, most items (except for ones that solely produce primary knowledge) offer evaluative material in the way that the actions of the assailant or the victim are described by the victim. For instance, a story written by a victim that details her assault usually contains judging knowledge throughout the description because the article is obviously designed to discuss the trauma of the assault. For that reason, I excluded explanations of an assault by victims from evaluative knowledge.

20.9% (27/129) of the time. It is clear that primary knowledge is used significantly by individuals without affiliation. Given that many of the sources in this category were individuals writing into advice columns, this finding is not unexpected. The questions in advice columns are typically short blurbs detailing the incident the individual is inquiring about, occasionally followed with expression of how the incident made her feel.

Figure 4.3 demonstrates the breakdown of knowledge provided by each magazine.

Figure 4.3 *Teen* vs. *Seventeen*: **Types of Knowledge Provided**
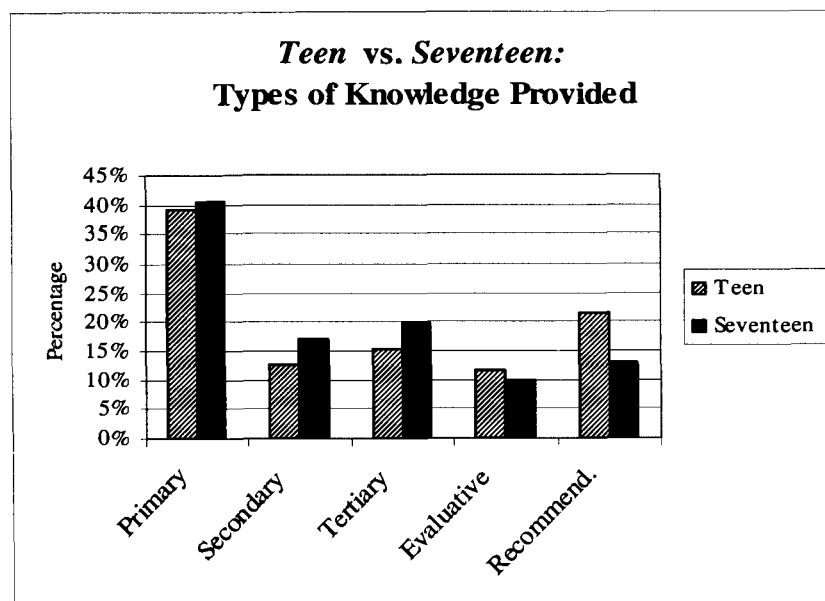
Of the 736 total pieces of knowledge, *Seventeen* contributed 66.3% (488/736) and 33.7% (248/736) came from *Teen*. Both magazines offered primary knowledge the most (40.4%, 197/488 in *Seventeen* and 39/1%, 97/248 in *Teen*). After primary knowledge, tertiary knowledge was offered the most in *Seventeen* (19.7%, 96/488) and recommendation knowledge followed primary knowledge in *Teen* magazine (21.4%, 53/248). This finding is interesting given the disparity in the number of advice columns between the magazines. Although *Seventeen* magazine contained considerably more

advice column items than *Teen*, *Teen* magazine contained more recommendation knowledge. Even with the amount of advice column items in *Seventeen*, it appears that *Seventeen* magazine is more focused on providing primary and tertiary, emotional knowledge than making recommendations. Finally, evaluative knowledge appeared the least in both *Seventeen* and *Teen* at 9.8% (48/488) and 11.7% (29/248) respectively.

Overall, primary and tertiary knowledge are used most often. Teen magazines disseminate knowledge by complementing the factual information with emotional impact. Similar to the news media, teen magazines typically place value on the facts by using tertiary knowledge. "Sources provide 'emotional exhibitions' (Wagner-Pacifici 1986:95 as cited in Ericson et al., 1991: 34) as part of the performance of their authority and how they wish others to value the facts of what happened" (Ericson et al., 1991: 34).

In addition, the distinction between sources used, source contexts, and knowledge is related to the audience of the medium. While not appealing to as vast an audience as 'popular' newspapers, adolescent beauty/fashion magazines contain many of the same elements. "Iconic elements," opinionated advice columns, slang and jargon, and "parochial interests" are used to present the material in a pleasurable and engrossing fashion (Ericson et al., 1991: 35).

Magazine Content

Type of Violence Represented

Adolescent beauty/fashion magazines are addressing several different types of violence against females. Figure 4.4 illustrates the different types of violence against females discussed in the total sample. Figure 4.5 demonstrates the breakdown between the two magazines of the types of violence discussed. Discussion of a type of violence

was the unit of analysis. All types of violence discussed in each item were coded as single instances, as oftentimes more than one type of violence was discussed in a single item[13]. Therefore, the total number of times a type of violence was represented is 147, even though the total sample includes 114 items.

Of the total sample, sexual harassment is the most frequently discussed type of violence (31.3%, 46/147), followed by intimate partner violence (23.1%, 34/147) and date/acquaintance rape (15%, 22/147). The 'other' category contains a notable number of items (14.43%, 21/147). This category was created to include any items that did not fit in the other five categories. Examples of items in this category include: stalking, any item on sexual assault or rape that was unclear as to whether the assailant was known by the victim (10 items), and statutory rape[14]. Interestingly, stranger rape was discussed the least (6.8%, 10/147).

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[13] See number nine of the coding manual in Appendix D for the specific definitions of the types of violence coded in this thesis.

[14] Items on statutory rape were placed in the 'other' category because all of the items involved discussions of the male and female both consenting to sexual activity. In addition, some of the items involved relatively small age differences (ex. one item involves a 16-year-old female asking if it is illegal for her to have consensual sex with her 21-year-old boyfriend [Debra Kent, *Seventeen*, Nov 1993: 98]).

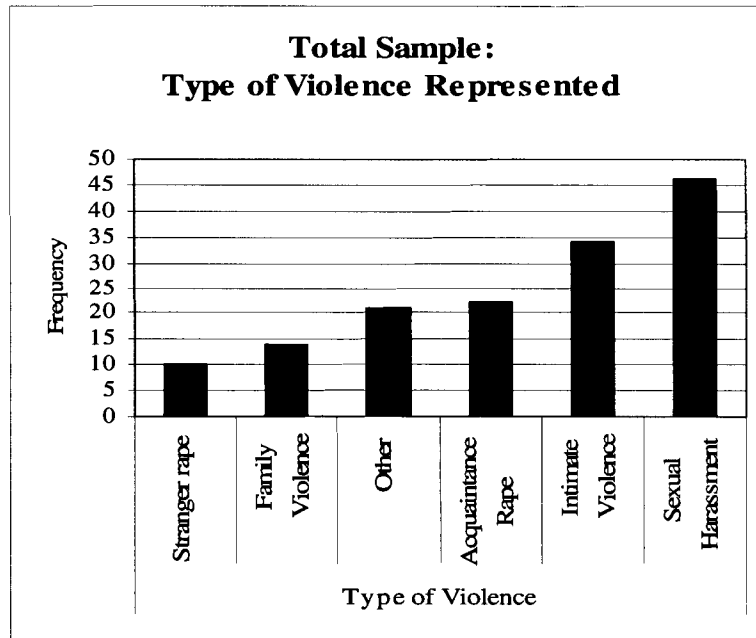**Figure 4.4 Total Sample: Type of Violence Represented**

**Total Sample:
Type of Violence Represented**

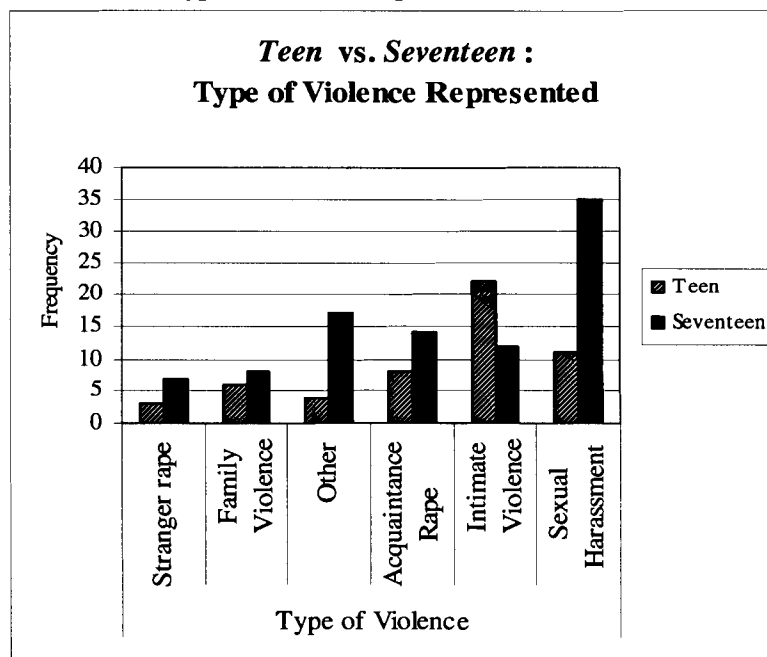**Figure 4.5 *Teen* vs. *Seventeen*: Type of Violence Represented**

***Teen* vs. *Seventeen* :
Type of Violence Represented**

Among the two magazines, 63.3% (93/147) of the types of violence represented

are from *Seventeen* magazine and 36.7% (54/147) are from *Teen*. Of the 93 instances

Seventeen addressed a type of violence, 37.6% (35/93) of the time sexual harassment was

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discussed, while *Teen* only devoted 20.4% (11/54) of their material on violence against females to sexual harassment. *Teen* (40.7% 22/54) discusses intimate partner violence more than twice as much as *Seventeen* (12.9%, 12/93). Also, rape and sexual assault by an intimate partner is addressed one time in *Teen* and five times in *Seventeen*. Both magazines focus on stranger rape the least, three times (5.5%) in *Teen* and seven times (7.5%) in *Seventeen*. *Teen* and *Seventeen* spend considerably more time and space addressing date/acquaintance rape. Of the 54 instances that *Teen* discusses a type of violence, 14.8% (8/54) of the time acquaintance rape[15] is addressed. *Seventeen* also mentions acquaintance rape 15.1% (14/93) of the time. In addition, discussion of family violence (which includes violent or abusive acts of any nature perpetrated by a family member against a female family member) is seen six times (11.1%) in *Teen* and eight times (8.6%) in *Seventeen*. Rape and sexual assault by a non-intimate within the family is discussed four out of the six times family violence is discussed in *Teen* and seven out of the eight times in *Seventeen*.

These findings raise many interesting questions about the types of violence discussed in teen magazines. For instance, why is there such a large focus on sexual harassment and very little material related to stranger rape? It is not possible to determine exactly why sexual harassment is discussed most frequently (overall and/or specifically in *Seventeen* magazine[16]), as it could be related to numerous reasons. Readers could be asking more questions about sexual harassment and/or showing more interest in material on sexual harassment. It could be related to the fact that sexual

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[15] Note: There was one instance where *Teen* magazine referred to an act as 'date rape;' however, the assault was considered 'intimate partner rape' by the definition included in the coding manual. In this instance, the assault was placed in the 'intimate partner violence' category.

[16] It is not related to the number of female advice column items in Seventeen (26/69) as sexual harassment was only discussed in 13 female advice columns in the total sample.

harassment is a type of violence against females that most (if not all) females will experience at one point in time in their lives; therefore, it could be considered a type of violence with which most readers will relate. Moreover, the focus on sexual harassment could also be associated with the ambiguity surrounding acts of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment does not have a universal definition; many individuals define sexual harassment differently. Also, "not every woman classified by social researchers as a victim of sexual harassment would identify her own treatment as harassing" (LeMoncheck, 1997: 2). There is not the same ambiguity around stranger rape (while there typically is guilt, shame, embarrassment); it is likely that most females are aware that they were raped by a stranger, that they were violated, and that it is a criminal offense.

The much greater emphasis on acquaintance/date rape as opposed to stranger rape is an interesting finding that may demonstrate a move away from spotlighting stranger rape as 'legitimate' rape and acquaintance rape as not 'legitimate.' Through quantitative analysis of two Canadian newspapers, Los and Chamard (1997: 303) discovered a decrease in articles on stranger rape after the implementation of Canadian sexual assault legislation in 1983 (from 35 in 1980 to 9 in 1984). A decrease in stranger rape articles in teen magazines was not found in this study, as the 10 instances that discuss stranger rape appeared nearly equally across the 10 year period examined (5 appeared between 1992-1996, as well as 5 instances between 1997-2002). If there was a decrease in stranger rape articles, perhaps it occurred before 1992. Ultimately, the greater emphasis on rape and sexual assault committed by someone known to the victim is a step in accurately discussing rape and sexual assault.

While the meaning behind the statements about different types of violence will more clearly demonstrate the positions of adolescent beauty/fashion magazines, the amount that each type of violence is discussed is also significant. The frequency with which a specific type of violence is addressed exemplifies the perceived importance of discussing that type of violence.

Location of Violence against Females

Adolescent beauty/fashion magazines do not frequently detail the location of violent assaults against females. Of the roughly[17] 117 victims that were discussed in the sample, 67 locations of violent incidents were mentioned. Violence against females at school was addressed most often (28.4%, 19/67). Also, assaults that occurred in a victim's residence were discussed 14 (20.9%) times while assaults in shared residences (residence of victim and assailant) were mentioned 7 (10.4%) times. Other locations cited include violence in the workplace, at a party, or at the assailant's residence.

Of the locations specified, *Seventeen* named 62.7% (42/67) while *Teen* identified 37.3% (25/67). Violence taking place at school was specified the most in *Seventeen* (33%, 14/42), while "other locations[18]" were the most identified in *Teen* (28%, 7/25). Identification of assaults occurring at the victims' residences appeared in 28.6% (12/42) of *Seventeen's* named locations and in only 8% (2/25) of the locations named by *Teen*.

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[17] It is impossible to determine the exact number of victims discussed in the sample due to the way the coding manual was constructed. As few items included more than three victims, the last category was collapsed to denote "three or more" victims. Therefore, it is not possible to determine which items in that category contained three victims and which ones included more than three. There are 13 items in the total sample which contain three or more victims (five in *Teen* and eight in *Seventeen*)

[18] Examples of locations included in the "other locations" category are: in a vehicle, in the street, in a park, in public, at the beach, at a friend's house, and at prom.

Explanations of Violence against Females

In the process of educating teenagers about violence against females, it is necessary for adolescent beauty/fashion magazines to address explanations for the violent or abusive behavior. As content on violence against females occurs most frequently in the form of advice columns, many of these items include questions from readers asking for an explanation of the behavior.

The total sample of 114 items contributed 131 explanations of violence against females. First and foremost, 51.9% (68/131) of the time no explanation was offered for the violent and/or abusive incident(s)[19]. Of the remaining 48.1% (63/131) of explanations given, individual assailant explanations were given 16.8% (22/131) of the time. Next, individualizing the violence as the victim's fault and explicating the violence as a cultural problem occurred equally at 9.2% (12/131) each. Finally, structural explanations comprise 6.1% of the sample (8/131)[20].

The category defined as individual assailant explanations includes the notion of pathologizing the assailant (e.g. he is crazy or perverted); committing the act out of sexual desire or lust; cycle of violence explanations; and blaming the behavior on alcohol/drug use or abuse, self-image problems, and stress. Items claiming the victim provoked the act in some form (e.g. dressing sexy, alcohol/drug use or abuse) were placed in the individual victim category. The cultural explanations classification signifies

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[19] Once again, as more than one explanation can be given per item or per type of violence discussed, the unit of analysis for this section is an explanation, not an item or type of violence. Therefore, the number of explanations given is not directly related to the number of items or the amount of violence discussed. In addition, "No explanation" was coded as a type of explanation, therefore is included in the final total of explanations given (131).

[20] Note: There is a small number of items in the 'other' category. Examples of items in this category include: explaining that a violent incident occurred because the police were notified about the violence but did not act on the warning (*Teen*, July 1995: 42-44) and explaining that the assailant was just "being cute" (Cathi Hanauer, *Seventeen*, July 1994: 52).

addressing cultural values and norms that may help to normalize or promote violence

against females. Finally, discussing the historical tradition of patriarchal domination,

males' position of power in society, the role of power and control in violence against

females, and the perpetuation of misogynistic beliefs and the subordination of females

comprise the structural explanations category.

Figure 4.6 displays a breakdown of the types of explanations distributed in *Teen*

and *Seventeen*.

Figure 4.6 *Teen* vs. *Seventeen*: **Explanations of Violence against Females**
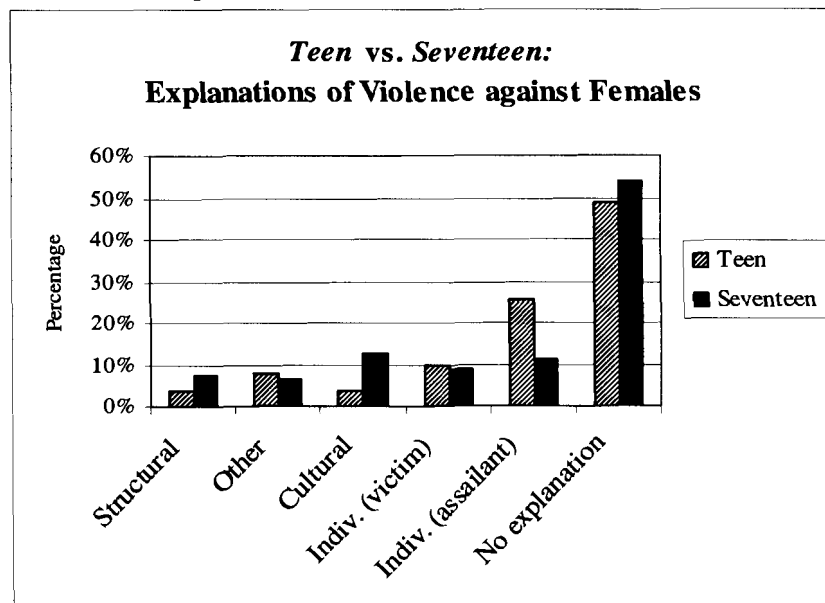
Of the 131 total explanations, *Seventeen* contributes 61.1% (80/131) and *Teen*

adds 38.9% (51/131). *Seventeen* does not offer an explanation 53.8% (43/80) of the time,

while *Teen* fails to provide explanations 49.0% (25/51) of the time. Therefore, a

substantial number of items in both magazines fail to explain violence or abuse.

In the remaining types of explanations examined, 12.5% (10/80) of *Seventeen's*

explanations are cultural and 11.3% (9/80) are individual assailant explanations. *Teen*

focuses on individual assailant explanations at 25.5% (13/51) and individual victim explanations represent 9.8% (5/51) of the explanations. Structural explanations are distributed in 7.5% (6/80) of *Seventeen's* explanations and 3.9% (2/51) of *Teen's* elucidations.

Adolescent beauty/fashion magazines fail to consistently offer explanations about violence against females. Roughly half of the time, no explanations are given. In addition, feminist explanations of male violence against females are rarely offered, while the focus is maintained on individual assailant and victim explanations (in instances when an explanation is actually presented).

Responses to Violence against Females

In addition to asking for explanations, adolescent females ask for advice regarding appropriate responses to violent and abusive behavior. Responses were stated frequently and several times more than one response was given. Only 13.2% (15/114) of the total items did not contain a suggested response to violent and/or abusive incidents. The 15 items were comprised of letters to the editor, a quiz, and secondary articles. Of the remaining 99 items that contain responses, 193 total responses were specified. Individual intervention by the victim was clearly emphasized (42.5%, 82/193), followed by informing parents of the incidents (14.5%, 28/193) and legal interventions (14%, 27/193). Lastly, structural responses occupy 2.6% (5/193) of the total responses given[21].

The individual intervention category denotes the notion of females taking the initiative to help themselves by preventing immediate and future harm, and getting help

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[21] Note: There is also a small number of items in the 'other' category. Examples of responses in this category include: telling the victim not to respond or to ignore the violation, advising the victim to pursue consequences at school (expulsion), and informing victims to tell their teachers or other school officials.

to heal. Self-help, self defense, ending a relationship, and seeking assistance (other than parental help) and/or therapy are included in this classification. Many of the responses suggested informing parents about the incidents. Given that parents could engage in any of the available responses (e.g. legal interventions, forcing an end to the relationship, placing their child in therapy) without the victim's approval or permission, a separate category was made for this response. Legal interventions refer to responses involving the criminal justice system, as well as any civil action taken. Discussion about changing the system through political activism and policy changes; the need for equity between females and males; empowerment of females; and exploring the links between race, culture, poverty, and violence against females signifies classification in the structural responses category.

Responses also varied depending on what type of violence was being presented. Figure 4.7 details the responses given in the total sample by type of violence.

Figure 4.7 Total Sample: Type of Response Given by Type of Violence

Total Sample:
Type of Response Given by Type of Violence
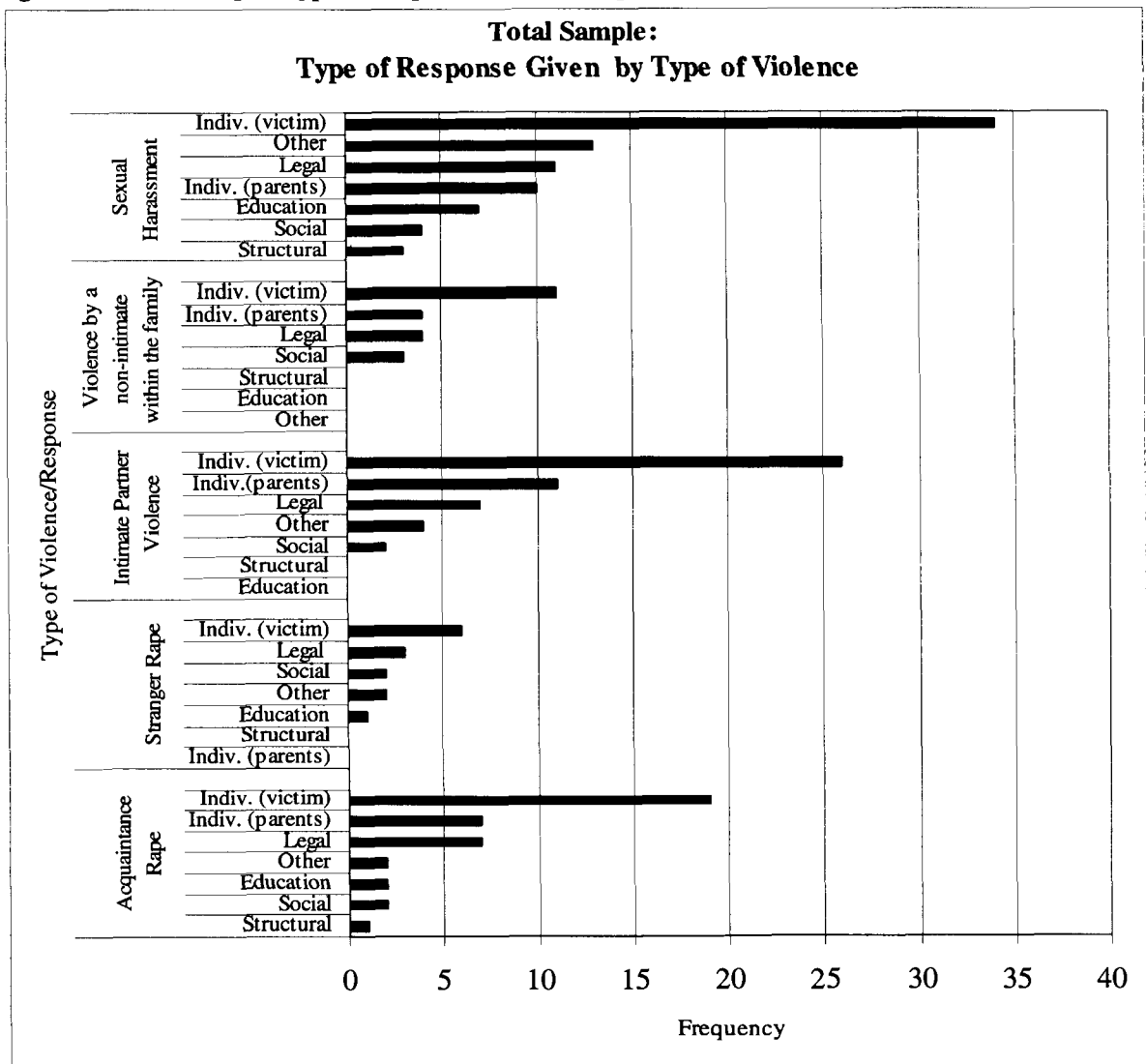
Clearly, individual victim intervention is the highest reiterated response for all of the types of violence. Structural, social, and educational responses are rarely mentioned and not addressed at all when referring to certain types of violence. Only acquaintance rape and sexual harassment responses include structural responses. Moreover, intimate partner violence and family violence responses do not contain any information regarding education.

Of the 193 total responses, 56.5% (109/193) are contributed by *Seventeen* magazine and 43.5% (84/193) appear in *Teen*. Both *Seventeen* (43.1%, 47/109) and *Teen* (41.7%, 35/84) emphasize individual victim responses. Individual parental responses are offered in 17.9% (15/84) of *Teen's* responses and 11.9% (13/109) of *Seventeen's* responses. Lastly, *Seventeen* indicates legal interventions in 14.7% (16/109) of the magazines responses, while *Teen* offers legal interventions in 13.1% (11/84).

Both *Seventeen* and *Teen* are promoting the idea that the victim must take the initiative to protect herself, as well as addressing the need to inform parents of violent/abusive incidents. Items occasionally describe legal interventions as appropriate responses to violent incidents. On the other hand, structural interventions, social interventions, and education are seldom discussed. Furthermore, individual assailant intervention, such as programs that teach violent and abusive males skills to control violence and counseling, were never mentioned.

Additional Topics

Additional topics related to violence against females were discussed frequently (91 instances). None of these other topics were discussed significantly more than others; however, it is interesting to note some of the topic areas addressed in adolescent beauty/fashion magazines. Additional topics at times were related to the explanations and responses reiterated in *Seventeen* and *Teen* (if so, they would also be captured in those samples). The notion of defending yourself/self protection and alcohol/drug use or abuse were each mentioned 14 (15.4%) times, followed by stalking, discussed eight (8.8%) times. In addition, suicide, running away from home, and depression were

addressed seven (7.7%) times each. Some of the other topics mentioned include death threats, adult-minor relationships, prostitution, and kidnapping.

Summary

The quantitative content analysis reveals that teen magazines are discussing issues of violence against females, as well as addressing different types of violence. Surprisingly, stranger rape is the least discussed type of violence while sexual harassment is focused on the most. In addition, acts of violence against females are not explained roughly half of the time. Seldom are structural and cultural explanations relayed to readers. Furthermore, responses to violence against females are typically focused on the victim, lacking in addressing structural interventions.

Seventeen and *Teen* are very similar with typically only small differences in terms of number. However, *Seventeen* does address violence against females more often and there is a large difference between the number of female and male advice columns contributed by the magazines. *Seventeen* contains many more female advice columns on violence against females, whereas most of the male advice columns are found in *Teen* magazine.

While the quantitative analysis establishes the frequency of explaining violence against females, the meaning behind these findings is not complete without textually analyzing the meaning of the statements. Chapter five will focus solely on the meaning behind the discussions on violence against females.

CHAPTER FIVE: DOMINANT MESSAGES AND THEMES IN *SEVENTEEN* AND *TEEN* MAGAZINES

> "What happened to you is an extreme case of the kind of harassment that goes on at a lot of schools, when guys grab girls or say obnoxious stuff about their bodies. If the girls don't mind, it doesn't have to be a problem" (Sarah Duncan, *Seventeen*, Sept 1994: 104)

Chapter five will concentrate on how adolescent beauty/fashion magazines discuss myths about violence against females. By extending Benedict's analysis of rape myths to other types of violence against females, dominant messages and themes were deconstructed to determine if myths of violence against females are being promoted through teen magazines. This chapter is structured into four main sections: 1) Constructions of Victims and Assailants; 2) Explanations of Violence against Females; 3) Responses to Violence against Females; and 4) Resistance to Dominant Representations of Violence against Females.

The extended sample consisting of 131 items was analyzed[22] for this component. While chapter four focused heavily on the differences and similarities between *Seventeen* and *Teen* magazines, this chapter will, instead, discuss the magazines' messages as a whole. Qualitatively, no major differences were noticed between the magazines, with the exception of two areas which will be discussed separately later. As this chapter will show, both magazines actively contribute to the themes outlined below.

Constructions of Victims/Assailants and the Relationship between them

As described in the literature review (chapter two), female victims are typically dichotomized into the "virgin" or "vamp" categories by the media. The grouping of victims into innocence or guilt speaks to the victims' credibility. This section is heavily

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[22] See chapter three for detailed discussion of the extended sample.

focused on items on rape and sexual assault, discussing the items in relation to Benedict's findings. First, the different ways that victims are constructed is discussed, followed by the magazines' constructions of assailants. The section will conclude by discussing the constructions of sexual assault that promote fear and the notion that acquaintance rape is not 'legitimate' rape.

Victims: "Virgin" or "Vamp"?

As mentioned previously, Benedict (1992) discusses eight characteristics of assaults that trigger the media and the public to place a victim in the "vamp" category (Appendix B). For both acquaintance rape and stranger rape, victims were portrayed as either "virgins" or "vamps". The circumstances of the event established whether the victim was portrayed as innocent or culpable. For stranger rape, the portrayals of victims are clearly similar to Benedict's findings. The divergence from Benedict's findings arises when discussing acquaintance rape.

The use of a weapon in a stranger rape resulted in the victim being portrayed as a "virgin." In these cases, the victims were attacked from behind, the assailant had a knife, and the females were forced into a secluded area. The innocence of the victims was not questioned and emphasis was placed on the brutality of the assault and the victims' road to recovery paved with sharing their stories with others. As one victim describes, "this is only one of the few times I've told my story. But each time I tell it, I can feel a part of myself healing. And maybe if I tell it enough times, one day, I'll be whole again" (Alison Bell, *Teen*, Nov 1992: 18).

However, stranger rape victims were also portrayed as "vamps". One item in particular demonstrates the characteristics of a stranger rape that led the victim to be

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portrayed as culpable. Walking home alone late one night after a party, the victim was attacked from behind, thrown to the ground, and raped. When the assailant was leaving she heard his voice and thought it was someone she met at the party. The victim went to the hospital, filled out a police report, and never attempted to press charges because when she mentioned it might be the male from the party her boyfriend told her, "to stop and take a deep breath: wasn't it possible that I was really freaked out and looking for someone to blame?" (*Teen*, Oct 1998: 89). In this instance it is not clear whether the victim knew the assailant, or whether she is of the same ethic, racial, or socioeconomic class as the assailant. However, of Benedict's eight factors, the item insinuates that the victim is young and she deviated from the traditional role of a female by walking home alone (1992: 19).

Similarly to victims of stranger rape, acquaintance rape victims are either portrayed as naïve virgins who were taken advantage of or as deserving of the victimization because they did something wrong. Several times victims were portrayed as innocent, naïve females who were violated by males that took advantage of them even when the victim knew the assailant, no weapon was used, and she was young. According to Benedict, these factors would precipitate being placed in the "vamp" category. A *Teen* feature article on date rape includes an example of this portrayal. This item explains the acquaintance rape of Christa, a 14-year-old freshman who "felt comfortable with Jason, and enjoyed kissing and cuddling with him" (Alison Bell, *Teen*, July 1997: 70). Bell explains how Christa resisted and yelled for her assailant to stop. Christa didn't respond to the rape because she "knew what he did was wrong, morally wrong, but [she] didn't think there was anything [she] could do about it" (Alison Bell, *Teen*, July 1997: 70).

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Another exemplar of the naïve victim is illustrated by Lisa, a 13-year-old, who was raped by an acquaintance she met at a party. Lisa explains:

> I thought he was nice, but I wasn't interested in him or anything. And he seemed much too old to be interested in me. But I was flattered that he seemed to like talking to me...Dave asked me if I wanted to keep on talking in the backyard, down the hill. I said sure...Once we walked away from the house, he kissed me. It was scary but also exciting. Then he said, let's go into the barn. Because I didn't expect more than kissing—kissing was as far as I'd gone with any guy—I said okay (Alison Bell, *Teen*, Nov 1992: 114).

After explaining the details of the rape, Lisa elucidates, "I turned all of my anger inward...I started acting loose. I felt so cheap and dirty" (Alison Bell, *Teen*, Nov 1992: 114). The assault in this case is portrayed as a violation that has ruined the victim's naïve, virginal status. Before the assault, Lisa was an average female who had only kissed guys. After the assault, Lisa was defiled, perpetuating the myth that sexual assaults sully the victim.

Although the "virgin" image is displayed, acquaintance rape victims are also depicted as "vamps," a more harmful representation. An example of a victim being portrayed as a "vamp" is illustrated by Ann's story. This item explains, in point form, the "mistakes" that Ann made the night she was victimized by her friend while helping him plan a party. Ann's first "mistake" involved "making excuses" (Elizabeth Karlsberg, *Teen*, Nov 1991: 14) for the assailant's inappropriate behavior, which included answering the door with no shirt on and turning off the outside lights so Ann had to walk up to his house in the dark. Her second "mistake" entailed not listening to her intuition about the behavior and her "third mistake was walking into a dark home" (Elizabeth Karlsberg, *Teen*, Nov 1991: 14). The article continues to describe Ann's victimization and concludes with a statement from Ann explaining if the assault happened today she

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"would have done so many things differently" (Elizabeth Karlsberg, *Teen*, Nov 1991: 14).

Determining the portrayal of victims in adolescent beauty/fashion magazines was not always as clear cut as Benedict's eight factors suggest. Items in teen magazines, while they often detailed the victim's appearance, typically did not present enough information about the victim and the assailant to determine whether the eight factors were involved. Furthermore, at times, victims did not fall distinctly into a category, rather they were "placed between the two extremes" (Madriz, 1997: 82). For example, an article that poses the question, "So how does a date rape happen?" (*Teen*, April 1995: 72), answers the question through a description of Laura's assault. The words speak for themselves:

> Laura was a virgin. She was terrified of sex... Laura intended to wait until she was really in love before having sex. Laura was flattered when Jeremy, a good-looking college freshman invited her to a party at his apartment. Trying to be cool, Laura drank too much, flirted with him and decided to go upstairs with him...He put his body weight on top of her small frame and told her that he wanted to have sex with her. Laura told him "no," Jeremy insisted that she was playing hard to get...The next thing she knew, Jeremy had raped her. Laura never dreamed that it could happen to her (*Teen*, April 1995: 72).

The victim is portrayed both as being violated and as deserving of the violation. She is described as innocent, "small fram[ed]", and "terrified" of sex, but then positioned as a "vamp" because she was drinking and flirting with the assailant. While the victim is not clearly placed in one of Benedict's two categories, she appears to fall somewhere between the two and is still viewed negatively.

The types of violence covered most frequently in my sample could be one reason why items did not always clearly locate victims in the "virgin" or "vamp" categories. As

a large portion of the sample is made up of items on acquaintance rape and intimate partner violence, the majority of the rape/sexual assault victims discussed knew their assailants. The victim dichotomy established by Benedict is more easily and consistently applied when the assault is inter-racial and committed by a stranger, including either a racialized assailant and white victim (virgin) or white assailant and racialized victim (vamp). Definitive evidence to suggest the racial backgrounds of a majority of victims and assailants in my sample was not presented. However, given the target audience of the magazines and the overwhelming amount of material that is targeted specifically to white females, it is safe to assume that most of the assaults discussed are intra-racial, involving white victims and white assailants.

Overall, the victims' race and the differences in treatment dependent upon their racial background were never discussed in adolescent beauty/fashion magazines. In fact, only two items explicitly discussed black females (Gayle Forman, *Seventeen*, March 1999: 224-228; Carmen Renee Thompson, *Seventeen*, May 1999: 164-168), neither of which featured discussions about violence against females. Both items were secondary articles discussing refugees from war-torn countries, which discussed the females as victims of the brutality and violence that encompasses their countries. As the violence that the individuals in those items witnessed or were exposed to has a completely different context, it is inappropriate to discuss those items in terms of the way racialized, female victims are portrayed in Western society. None of the other items contained any information or discussion on or from racialized female victims[23].

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[23] Or at least which explicitly stated the victims' race. Many of the items could have been about females of different racial and ethnic backgrounds; however, their backgrounds were not described.

Additionally, all of the examples in the above section are from *Teen* magazine. The absence of examples from *Seventeen* is not meant to indicate that *Seventeen* does not construct victims in the "virgin" or "vamp" categories. As will be shown shortly, *Seventeen* is active in promoting rape myths and victim blaming. However, *Teen* appears to contain items which include statements that clearly and explicitly dichotomize the construction of victims more frequently than *Seventeen*.

Victims: Constructions of the Average, Teenage Reader

Relating victims to the reader occurs often in teen magazines. Teen magazines relate victims to the reader for all types of violence against females, not solely rape and sexual assault. In addition, journalists also describe victims in terms of their sexual appeal, using terms such as 'pretty' and 'blond.' Below are some examples of victim descriptions designed to induce emotional impact and link the reader to the victim:

> Joelle Stevens just turned 17. She's petite, beautiful and funny. She works at a clothing store and takes full advantage of the 50 percent discount—she dresses well. Two years ago, Joelle was a popular girl in eighth grade at a public junior high school in a small city in the Northeast (Sabrina Solin, *Seventeen*, March 1996: 212).

> Samantha, in fact, looks like an embodiment of the American Dream. Blond and blue-eyed, she has a heart-shaped face that could have made her homecoming queen. And when she talks about horseback riding or getting her new braces or shopping at the mall, her voice brims with hope and happiness, as if she had been blessed with only good fortune in her time (Mimi Swartz, *Seventeen*, September 1993: 182).

> As devastating as Wendy's disappearance has been for her family and friends, it's not all that unusual. Every year thousands of teenagers are reported missing. While the great majority turn out to be runaways who eventually return home, many others—mostly girls—are abducted, then hurt or killed...typical victims are girls who lead regular lives, girls with nice friends, living with normal families in safe neighborhoods (Maria Purdy, *Teen*, July 1999: 86)

Unnecessary information about the victim is detailed to create the image of similarity between the victim and the reader. By creating the impression that the victim is just an average, everyday teenager, the idea that violent assaults could happen to any female at any time is produced. This notion is especially problematic if the magazines state that the assault occurred because a victim (i.e. an average teenage female) did something 'wrong'. For example, in an article explaining abduction and murder Maria Purdy describes one of the murder victims:

> At the time of her disappearance, Wendy was a high school freshman who begged to be treated the same as her older sister. Like lots of girls, she was eager to grow up—so eager it led her to make a bad decision (*Teen*, July 1999: 86)

In this case, the 'bad decision' entailed leaving a party with her male date. Claiming that a victim did something wrong or made a bad decision fuels the good vs. bad dichotomy (Madriz, 1997; Benedict, 1992) used to separate victims from others. By rationalizing and blaming the assault on the victim's 'wrong' actions, the victim becomes 'bad' and others can believe that they are safe from attack as long as they refrain from doing anything 'bad.' "If people can blame a crime on the victim, then they can find reasons why that same crime will not happen to them" (Benedict, 1992: 18).

Victims: Ambiguity and Sexuality

Confusion about sexuality plays a large role in articles about rape and sexual assault. Adolescent girls' concerns about whether they were raped typically invoke discussion about the female victims' sexuality. These discussions range from explaining that it is normal to have mixed feelings about sex and sexuality to declaring that young women should acknowledge their sexual desires and "be comfortable with [their] sexual

feelings" (Debra Kent, *Seventeen*, Jan 1994: 108). Oftentimes, the actions of the female in instances of sexual pressure, assault, and rape are questioned.

This finding is consistent with Higgins and Tolman's notion that the "cultural story" of female sexuality is ambiguous leaving adolescent females vulnerable to rape and sexual assault[24]. However, the magazine content does not make the direct link between being comfortable with sexual desires and vulnerability to sexual assault. Typically, the content reinforces the fact that being confused about sexuality is normal (i.e. part of being an adolescent female).

From the material examined, it is apparent that adolescent girls are confused about their sexuality and sexual experiences. Many of the Q & A pieces contain adolescent girls' questions about whether they were sexually violated and if they are overreacting about the experiences. Questions from readers illustrate the confusion around sexuality well:

> Q: I'd been going out with my boyfriend for about two months when he asked me to go to this party with him. When we got there, we danced, then we walked outside, away from the house. We started kissing, and the next thing I knew we were having sex. I kept saying, "Stop," but all he said was, "I know what I'm doing." Then I started to like it! Was I raped because I told him to stop, or was it just like any other sex because I ended up sort of wanting to do it? (Debra Kent, *Seventeen*, January 1994: 109).

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[24] Note: see chapters two and three for detailed discussion on adolescent sexuality and the "cultural story" of female sexuality.

Q: When I found out that the guy I'd liked for a long time liked me too, I was so excited! One night I invited him over with some friends. We all drank beer—too many for me to realize what I was doing. So when he asked me if I wanted to go up to my bedroom, I agreed that it would be fun. He totally controlled my thoughts. That night I lost my virginity... I totally regret everything I did, and I've decided to take things slower in the future. I've stopped drinking, and I realize now that even though he pressured me, I had every right to stop it. When I told a friend what happened, she said I've been raped. Have I? (Debra Kent, *Seventeen*, January 1994: 109).

These examples demonstrate that adolescent girls may not be fully aware of their sexuality, placing them in vulnerable and potentially dangerous situations and leading them to question whether they are being violated. In addition, teen magazines include items which argue that female teenagers are not ready for sexual experiences. These items typically discuss the importance of abstinence and the dangers of sex. For example, an article titled, "He's Ready, You're Not" states:

For starters, there's the chance you might be one of over one million teens who get pregnant every year. Then there are sexually transmitted diseases to consider...When it comes right down to it, the only safe sex is no sex. The emotional risks can be overwhelming as well. First of all, you could become anxiety-stricken worrying about getting pregnant or all of the physical problems you've opened yourself up to. Becoming sexually active can also be a big blow to your self-esteem. If word gets around that you're sexually active, some people may treat you differently. You could get a bad reputation, which could really feel devastating (*Teen*, Sept 1992: 14).

The discrepancies in addressing sexuality in items on violence against females create confusion around issues of sexual assault, uphold the "cultural story" of sexuality, contribute to the promotion of rape myths and negative constructions of victims, and fail to educate females about their sexual desires. The lack of understanding sexual desire may lead to vulnerability and disempowerment, which is especially evident in cases of

acquaintance rape and sexual assault, as the victim's sexuality and actions are typically questioned.

Assailants: 'Monsters' or 'All American Boys'?

Depictions of assailants vary depending on the characteristics of the assault. Males who sexually assaulted a stranger are typically portrayed as brutal and unstable and features (facial, bodily, attire) of the assailant are described in detail. Males who sexually assaulted someone they knew were described as 'perfect' and desired by females. Often, acquaintance assailants were portrayed as males who did something wrong or turned 'evil' all of a sudden. Moreover, facial and body features of acquaintance assailants are not described in the same detail as those of stranger assailants.

One stranger rape assailant was described as "mid-20s... 5'6" with dark hair, a mustache and acne scars... [wearing] blue jeans and a blue shirt" (Alison Bell, *Teen*, Nov 1992: 18). The victim in this case explains that the assailant was doing strange things while repeatedly assaulting her; "he kept talking to me, telling me about his daughter and complaining about how bad his life was" (Alison Bell, *Teen*, Nov 1992: 18).

Detail that will provoke emotion is included in items on stranger rape. One item describes an assailant as "wearing a ski mask and gloves" (Stacey Colino, *Seventeen*, Sept 1991: 138). These details are not pertinent to the article and only enhance fear. Another item on stranger rape highlights the brutality of the rapist. The rapist is described as having "muscular arms" and the article details the events of the rape, which include: the assailant choking his victim until she passed out; telling the victim he was going to kill her; and repeatedly poking the victim's legs with his knife after raping her (*Teen*, Nov 1994: 40-42, 90).

In contrast, acquaintance rape assailants are typically described as average teenage boys, as desired by many girls, and who, uncharacteristically, did something wrong. Assailants were described as males who are "worship[ped]" (Elizabeth Karlsberg, *Teen*, Nov 1991: 14), "all-American type[s]," loved by everyone (Alison Bell, *Teen*, July 1997: 70). The Spur Posse consisted of the "most popular and athletic boys in the town's high school" (Michelle Stacey, *Seventeen*, Nov 1993: 124) and a sexually and physically abusive boyfriend was described as a "cute, athletic and funny" guy who "had a rep for acting tough and being kind of a jerk" (Sabrina Solin, *Seventeen*, March 1996: 212).

Teen magazine portrayals of assailants feed rape myths. While stranger rape was not discussed as often as acquaintance rape, stranger rape assailants are depicted as brutal, placing emphasis on the 'legitimacy' of stranger rape. Acquaintance and date rapists are represented as average, teen males and discussion about the assaults is not typically accompanied with detailed description of the events that occurred. Some items do contain detail; however, it is never described in the same fear-inducing fashion (Alison Bell, Teen, Nov. 1992: 16, 18, 114; Alison Bell, Teen, July 1997: 70-71).

In addition, as mentioned above, the findings in this section could also be affected by the sample, which includes considerably more acquaintance rape and intimate partner violence items. The frequency of items on these two types of violence presumably results in the sample containing solely[25] items that discuss intra-racial assaults. With regards to the racial background of assailants, the depiction that rape/sexual assaults

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[25] It is assumed that there are some instances of inter-racial sexual assault and rape; however, there are no items which explicitly discuss inter-racial assaults. Due to sample, no determinations on depictions of inter-racial assaults can be made.

typically involve black, male assailants and white, female victims (hooks, 1990;

Benedict, 1992; Benedict, 1997; Bumiller, 1997; Lubiano, 1992) was not promoted in

teen magazine content. Items on stranger rape would be most likely to represent the

black, male rapist depiction as it relates primarily to fearing the young, black male

stranger rapist. As there were no inter-racial rape or sexual assault cases discussed in

the sample, the myth was not directly promoted. Thus, unfortunately, it was not

addressed as being a common myth or challenged in any form.

Acquaintance Rape vs. Stranger Rape: Fear Inducing Constructions and Creating Credibility

Adolescent beauty/fashion magazines contain content on violence against females

that perpetuate fear. The promotion of fear is usually related to the relationship between

the victim and the assailant. Although females are more likely to be victimized by males

they know, it is common for the media to perpetuate the myth of violence against females

by strangers as dominant (Benedict, 1992: 15). Even though the promotion of fear is

typically related to content on stranger assaults, the fear inducing constructions in teen

magazines extend beyond discussions on stranger rape to other types of violence against

females as well. However, it is clear that stranger rape items clearly and consistently

contain fear inducing material.

Quantitative and qualitative analysis demonstrates that acquaintance and date rape

are often addressed as serious social issues. From Q & A sections on sexual violations by

intimate partners to articles on protection from date/acquaintance rape, the issue of being

victimized by someone known to the victim is acknowledged. The extent to which it is

an adequate depiction of acquaintance or intimate partner assault is questionable, as many

times the victim is blamed and/or the male's actions are minimized. However,

acquaintance rape is addressed far more than stranger rape, which is a step in adequately discussing violence against females. Nevertheless, it is apparent that discussion on stranger rape includes detail that creates much more of an emotional impact. The magazines may be incorporating more personal, emotional knowledge in stranger assault items to play off females' fears of being assaulted by a stranger to induce a stronger impact. While this is a probable reason for why teen magazines contain fear inducing constructions, it is not likely that journalists are actively attempting to perpetuate fear. Rather, it is more likely that they are attempting to create an emotional impact to attract readers to the articles.

By placing an element of fear behind stories about stranger rape, the magazines fail to contextualize rape and sexual assault. Below are some examples of how acquaintance and stranger rapes are described:

> As many as one in six college females is a victim of rape or attempted rape each year. Some of these rapes are 'stranger rapes,' where an unknown man **sneaks up on his victim**, but more than half are acquaintance rapes, where the rapist and victim know each other (Stacey Colino, *Seventeen*, September 1991: 140, emphasis added).

> Being **dragged off and raped by a stranger** is a horrible, humiliating experience—but so is date rape. In fact, date rape is often only the start of a girl's troubles (Alison Bell, *Teen*, July 1997: 70, emphasis added).

> Early on the morning of January 17, 1988—hours after the Winter Formal—University of Georgia sophomore Dana Getzinger woke up when a man tried to smother her in bed with a pillow. Wearing a ski mask and gloves, the intruder had broken into the off-campus apartment she shared with her roommates through a sliding glass door. As Getzinger fought him off, she felt what she thought was a punch in the stomach; as it turned out, she'd been stabbed (Stacey Colino, *Seventeen*, September 1991: 138).

> In an item titled "Rape: The Scary Reality," printed in letters that are made to

look like it was printed in blood, the victim describes the assault against her:

I started walking down the road, and even though it was dark, I could still
hear the music from the hotel playing, that's how close it was. All of a
sudden I heard someone running behind me. I turned around, but didn't
even have time to panic, because as soon as I turned around, a man
grabbed me from behind, put a knife to the back of my neck, and told me
to shut up (*Teen*, Nov. 1994: 40).

The above examples illustrate the emphasis placed on describing stranger rape.
The idea of the stranger lurking in the dark and jumping out to attack the victim prevails.
Acquaintance rape is described simply as an assault "where the rapist and victim know
each other." However, stranger rape occurs when someone "sneaks" up on you, "drags"
you off and rapes you. The last two examples stress the horrific events that may occur in
stranger assaults. Emphasis is placed on the intruder as violent, the use of a weapon, and
striking when the victim is not prepared. These characteristics help establish the victim's
credibility, for she is seen to be more credible if these characteristics were part of the
assault.

Victim credibility is also created through distributing mixed messages about
sexual assaults. For example, a feature article titled, "I was Raped", contains "stories of
two teenage girls who were raped by strangers" (Alison Bell, *Teen*, Nov. 1992: 16).
However, one of the victims was actually raped by an acquaintance, not a stranger. The
assailant was a friend's relative that the victim met at a party and the victim willingly
went somewhere alone with the assailant because she "didn't expect more than kissing"
(Alison Bell, *Teen*, Nov. 1992: 16).

Distributing an article including discussion of acquaintance rape is important;
however, masking it as stranger rape perpetuates the dichotomization of the victim. That
is, the victim who didn't know her assailant is seen as more believable than the one who

did. Failing to put acquaintance rape in the correct context is misleading and creates confusion around definitions of rape and sexual assault.

In summary, the characteristics of victims, assailants, and assaults and the "cultural story" of sexuality are inter-related as they combine to perpetuate the constructions of credibility or culpability discussed above. Frequently, the relationship between the characteristics allows the victim to be portrayed as blameworthy. Focusing on victim blaming, the next section will address explanations of violence against females distributed through teen magazines.

Explanations of Violence against Females

As demonstrated in chapter four, teen magazines frequently fail to explain violence against females. Specifically, they either refrain from explaining the violence at all or they give individual (victim and assailant) explanations. This section will begin by demonstrating the rape myths used to justify and explain victimizations. Next, the relation of rape myths to other types of violence against females will be addressed followed by discussion on how violent behaviors are minimized. Lastly, the failure to explain the violence and the use of the 'boys will be boys' cultural narrative are presented.

Promoting Rape Myths

Rape myths are directly and indirectly promoted in adolescent beauty/fashion magazines. The fiction that victims can promote and deserve rape is actively perpetuated. In an article titled "No! 12 ways to make that little word heard," Gayle Forman details how to handle dating scenarios that "turn scary" (*Seventeen*, May 1999: 154) and possibly violent. One section of the article contains statements from males

about dating scenarios and sexual communication. To the question, "If a girl drinks and then comes over to your house alone, is this a sign that she wants sex?" Adam (age 18) answers: "She's coming over alone? That's a definite booty call"(156). Additionally, Foreman explores whether 'no means no:'

> Q: Do you think girls sometimes mean yes when they say no?
>
> A: Of course they do. They're playing hard to get—Adam (age 18)
>
> A: Sure. They don't want to look like sluts—David (age 14)

The above example demonstrates that victim blaming and the notion of females provoking rape/sexual assault pervade teen magazines. In addition, the ambiguous nature of items on violence against females is illustrated through the inconsistent messages distributed. While the article spends a majority of its space explaining techniques to protect against victimization and at one point declares that the victim is not at fault, the above statements negate those efforts and maintain the focus on the victim. Adam's statements, declaring that an intoxicated female going to a male's house is "definitely" provoking sexual intercourse and that females just like to play hard to get, remove the responsibility from the male. Furthermore, the males' victim blaming assertions were never questioned by the author of the item.

Maintaining that rape is about sex and lust is another myth promoted in teen magazines. As the "most powerful myth" (Benedict, 1992: 14), this fiction promotes the notion that rapists act out of lust and sexual desire, denying that rape is a physical attack designed to give the assailant power and control.

The account of the repeated sexual abuse of Samantha Rhodes at the hands of a family member (her cousin's husband) promotes the myth that rape is sex. The article

begins by describing "blond and blue-eyed" Samantha as the "embodiment of the

American Dream" (Mimi Swartz, *Seventeen*, Sept 1993: 182). Samantha's abuser "gave

Samantha a lot of attention. He flattered her, saying she was pretty enough to be a model"

(Mimi Swartz, *Seventeen*, Sept 1993: 183). The article continues to detail the sexual

abuse which occurred over the course of many months but never attempts to explain why

the assailant was repeatedly raping Samantha. Without a clear explanation the reader is

left to believe that it is because Samantha's cousin was attracted to "blond, blue-eyed"

Samantha and could not control his sexual desires.

In addition, an article in *Teen* magazine promotes this powerful myth through

discussion about abduction and murder. Maria Purdy writes:

> "The primary motive for child abduction is sexual assault, and the
> combination of naivete, youth and emerging sexuality makes teenage girls
> a target," says NCMEC [National Center for Missing and Exploited
> Children] spokeswoman Julia Cartwright. Some deviant, perhaps grown
> man who's not successful in relationships with people his own age, may
> take simple "kidding around" as a sign of sexual interest. Without
> intending to do so, you could be flirting with disaster (*Teen*, July 1999:
> 86).

Purdy's explanation of why adult males abduct teenagers not only places blame

on victims, but also explicates that assailants are motivated by lust and raises issues about

adult-minor relationships. The implication that abductions occur because of lust and

'sexual interest' dominates. Propagating this myth denies the brutality of rape. Benedict

(1992: 14) compares rapists to torturers; most beat, torment, and threaten to kill their

victims (whether they know the victim or not). Rape victims fear for their lives and their

safety; they are not merely part of a sex act or a "sexual interest" of the rapist. In

addition, this item conveys to minors that they must monitor their behavior as it could

contribute to sexual assault by an adult.

The belief that females lie about rape or claim they were raped for revenge is a prevailing fiction. The incidence of females lying about rape is over publicized (Benedict, 1992: 17) and "the most bitter irony of rape" (Brownmiller, 1975: 386). Brownmiller explains:

> Fear of false accusation is not entirely without merit in any criminal case, as is the problem of misidentification, an honest mistake, but the irony, of course, is that while men successfully convinced each other and us that women cry rape with ease and glee, the reality of rape is that victimized women have always been reluctant to report the crime and seek legal justice (1975: 387).

An article describing the life of teenage prostitute, Trina, exemplifies the myth. Adrian LeBlanc writes:

> Trina says she was sexually assaulted by her adoptive father shortly before her sixth birthday. He denies the allegation, which he says was dropped after extensive investigation by police and social service agencies—and which left him very bitter... **In any event,** Trina's childhood was tumultuous (*Seventeen*, March 1993: 214, emphasis added).

The article proceeds to explain Trina's drug use at age nine and running away by age 13. The author mentions Trina's sexual abuse, committed by a trusted adult, family member, but undermines it and demonstrates her disbelief of the allegation with the preface, "in any event." This introduction implies that although Trina may be dishonest about the sexual abuse, she still went through much turmoil as a child thereby minimizing the abuse she suffered. Denying Trina's allegations of sexual abuse encourages rape myths and situates the victim in the "vamp" category.

Just as Benedict found rape myths are perpetuated through print news media, my analysis indicates that teen magazines are promoting myths about rape. Rape myths place blame on the victim in order to justify and explain rape, sexual assault, and sexual

abuse. By finding a way to justify rape, people who haven't been victimized are safe

from feeling susceptible to danger (Benedict, 1992: 18). The next section will delve

further into the promotion of victim blaming by relating rape myths to other types of

violence against females.

Blaming the Victim: Relating Rape Myths to Other Types of Violence against Females

Victim blaming is evident among *Seventeen* and *Teen* magazine content. Blaming

was discernible in discussion of all types of violence against females named in this study.

Declaring that a victim sent mixed signals or asked for the violent/abusive event and

questioning why a female didn't leave an abusive relationship are commonly employed to

blame the victim.

An advice column devoted to answering questions on sexual harassment

illustrates victim blaming by claiming a victim can 'ask for' harassment. Debra Kent

asserts:

> If you believe you've been sexually harassed, you have the right to take
> action. Even if you're afraid *you* **"asked for it" by wearing certain
> clothes or doing your makeup a particular way,** you still have the right
> to insist that the harassment stop and to speak up and defend yourself
> (*Seventeen*, Nov. 1991: 48, emphasis added).

This item demonstrates that myths about rape also apply to other types of male

violence against females. The above example implies that sexual harassment is about sex

and lust, promoting the idea that female appearance and apparel can lead to sexual

harassment. Also, the item never addresses the fact that a female never 'asks' to be

sexually harassed. While this statement reinforces that females should speak up, the

assertion is problematic because it insinuates that a female could provoke and deserve

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sexually harassing comments. This item is ambiguous, declaring that sexual harassment

is wrong; yet, a victim may do something to contribute to that wrong.

Victim blaming and myth promotion is also evident in articles on intimate partner

violence. An item titled "When Words Hurt," addresses emotional and verbal abuse in

high school relationships by using commentary from victims to describe their

experiences. A story about a teenage female in a relationship with a verbally abusive and

controlling boyfriend details:

> "Can I go to the mall with my mom?" Tabatha, 14, whispered into the phone from her kitchen in Michigan [to her boyfriend]...On Tabatha's 15th birthday, Alex brought her roses and asked her to come over to his house. When she told him that she was going to a restaurant with her family—a birthday tradition—he got furious. In the end, Tabatha canceled her plans and went over to Alex's...Unknowingly, Tabatha had **opened a door** that **allowed** Alex to make rules about how she could live her life. And then the rules started pouring in (Dana Hudepohl, *Seventeen*, April 2003: 169, emphasis added)

Blaming the victim in abusive intimate relationships is also observable in *Teen*

magazine. In a response to a reader concerned about her controlling and possessive

boyfriend, the male author replies:

> Dear Needs Lots of Help: Without realizing it, you've been *giving* your guy **'permission'** to run your life. Now it's time to take your life back into your own hands (*Teen*, Nov. 1992: 14, emphasis added).

Questioning why the female stayed in the abusive relationship is another method

used to perpetuate victim blaming:

> Her friends and family begged her to break off the emotionally abusive relationship—and she knew something wasn't right. So why did she stay with him? Why do 9 million girls a year stay in emotionally abusive relationships? (Dana Hudepohl, *Seventeen*, April 2003: 169)

> Eventually, we just drifted away from Lisa. She wouldn't go anywhere without Tim, and we certainly didn't want to hang with The Evil Guy. None of us had the nerve to ask her how she got into that situation—and why she didn't just get out (Sabrina Solin, *Seventeen*, March 1996: 212).

These examples demonstrate the view that victims are putting themselves in the violent/abusive situations, rather than addressing why the males were verbally, physically, and sexually abusing the victims. They are accused of 'allowing' this behavior to be part of their relationships instead of being informed that it is not their fault or that their partner's behavior is unacceptable.

In addition, magazines perpetuate the notion of victim blaming by failing to question negative statements made about the victim. For instance, a feature article titled "Mad Love," about a 17-year-old female in a physically, emotionally, and sexually abusive relationship, states:

> Joelle appealed to Mike's sister, Beth, telling her how Mike would punch her and yell at her. 'Beth would say, 'He really cares about you and he doesn't mean to do that—you get him upset sometimes. You get upset sometimes, too. It's a mutual thing.'" (Sabrina Solin, *Seventeen*, March 1996: 215).

The item does not contain any statements that question or address the seriousness behind this statement. The author does not attempt to explain that it is not the victim's fault; therefore, while it does not explicitly blame the victim, it does leave the reader with questions about the victim's credibility. Furthermore, the idea that both individuals should maintain mutual responsibility for assaults against females is promoted. Los and Chamard argue the press has changed their focus in press coverage from sole blame on the victim to placing emphasis on females "interacting with men in producing the final (ambiguous) outcome," (1997: 317) resulting in mutual blame and responsibility.

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Minimizing the Behavior

Violent and/or abusive behavior is minimized repeatedly in adolescent beauty/fashion magazines. Diminishing the act is achieved in a number of ways, such as: choosing to use words that downplay the acts, not explaining the assault, or using the 'boys being boys' cultural narrative to explain violent behavior.

The choice of words used to describe a situation, give advice, or explain what happened to a victim can minimize the violent and/or abusive behavior. Minimizing words appeared frequently throughout the sample and are used for all types of violence against females analyzed.

Sexual abusers and harassers, as well as a physically abusive boyfriend who once slapped his girlfriend when she wouldn't let him put his hand up her shirt were referred to as "bullies" (*Teen*, March 2001: 40; *Seventeen*, April 1999: 100; Sarah Duncan, *Seventeen*, July 1995: 42). Also, in an article about the murder of a teenage female by her abusive ex-boyfriend, Elizabeth Karlsberg states:

> But all too frequently, guys who can't take No, it's over! for an answer, do some pretty **harassing or menacing things** (*Teen*, February 1989: 37, emphasis added).

Referring to intimate partner murder as a "menacing thing" is minimizing and inappropriate. While the article contains much informative information on intimate partner abuse and the seriousness of such abuse, the choice of words to refer to the homicide diminishes the importance of the article. The last example in this section involves a Q & A column regarding acquaintance rape, the words speak for themselves:

Q: Three months ago I invited one of my guy-friends over. At first we just stayed up and talked, but then we started kissing. Then things went further, and he put on one of my condoms and entered me. At first all this was consensual, but then I told him that I thought we should stop. He didn't listen to me and kept going. Was this rape?

A: ...It doesn't matter whether or not it was technically rape... Every guy should understand the word no, and it's inexcusable that many still don't...It's not your fault that he didn't stop, but for your own future protection, **you need to think about exactly what happened**... avoid getting into an intimate sexual situation with someone if you are reluctant to hurt his feelings... lots of girls get depressed about **bad sexual experiences** (Rebecca Barry, *Seventeen*, May 1996: 60, emphasis added).

The most problematic part of this advice is the author's reference to rape as a "bad sexual experience." Rape is not a 'sexual experience,' whether it starts out as consensual sex or not. Barry doubts the victim's actions and while she explains that the male's behavior was "inexcusable" she does not address it any further. The rest of the item is devoted to teaching the victim how to avoid future "bad sexual experiences."

'It was wrong but... boys will be boys'

As demonstrated in chapter four, adolescent beauty/fashion magazines often neglect to explain the violent and/or abusive actions of males. Typically, items inform females that the behavior was wrong and unacceptable, but fail to give an explanation about why it is wrong or why females are violated and abused. The failure to explain violent behavior is evident across all the types of violence against females analyzed in this study. Myriad examples of this finding exist, only a few will be discussed in this section.

An article detailing specifics about sexual harassment explains, "sexual harassment makes you feel unsafe, frustrated, misunderstood, angry, annoyed and powerless, many times to the point of physical distress" (Dr. Ferne Cherne, *Teen*, March

1996: 55). The three page article contains more information on particulars of sexual

harassment as well as advice about how to take action. However, the article does not

contain any information on why males sexually harass females and why harassment

persists.

To further illustrate this point a Q & A combination from *Seventeen* is a good

example of the failure to address explanations of violence against females. A victim

wrote in asking how to "deal with" being raped by her boyfriend's best friend while

another one of his friends watched. To this question, Francesca Delbanco replies:

> First of all, know that what happened to you is one of the most serious
> offenses that can be inflicted on a woman...You really need to talk to
> someone as you go through the recovery process... You don't *have* to tell
> your boyfriend, although you may want to so he knows that the people he
> thought were his friends aren't (*Seventeen*, May 1999: 82).

These statements about the seriousness of the offense and informing her boyfriend

are the only acknowledgement that the assailants' behaviors were actually criminally

wrong. The column continues to explain to the victim what she will experience if she

reports her victimization to the authorities. While that is useful information, the author

fails to adequately address the behavior of the assailants. In fact, the assailants are barely

discussed and are referred to as 'not friends,' while the focus is maintained on the victim.

Additionally, teen magazines also minimize violent behavior by explaining the

behavior as 'boys being boys'. This theme speaks to the "cultural story" of the

stereotypical male role that allows and encourages sexual assertiveness. A Q &A from

the male advice column (female question/male answer) illustrates this theme best (*Teen*,

July 1998: 33):

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Q: Suddenly, wherever I go, guys either honk, wink, wave or shout something. What's the deal?

A: You're going from childhood to adultsville, and guys are noticing. Often, that kind of honking, winking, waving stuff is just **a normal guy reaction—we do it to any woman who crosses our line of vision!** But it could mean more. If you're interested, smile and he may be bold enough to talk to you. If you find the attention offensive or annoying, just ignore it—Most guys will take the hint and leave you alone (emphasis added).

Not only is the underlying "cultural story" that permits sexual harassment not addressed, the harassing comments are not even regarded as wrong. Many questions arise from this Q & A duo, including the fact that readers are told to approach their harassers if they are "interested;" yet, the predominant theme is the explanation of sexual harassment as a "normal guy reaction", just 'boys being boys'.

Female journalists also perpetuate the 'boys being boys' explanation. In response to a reader's question about how to respond to the males who incessantly gossip about her breasts, Sarah Duncan replies:

This is such an obnoxious guy thing... There's not much you can do about guys talking behind your back... But if they ever do it to your face, I'd tell them to give it a rest... don't let it make you too self-conscious...For one thing, it wouldn't stop the talk—guys would talk about you even if you wore a sleeping bag to school (*Seventeen*, Nov. 1994: 54).

In these examples, harassing, violent, and abusive behavior is excused as a natural part of being male and males are not held responsible for the behavior. Promoting the 'boys will be boys' explanation aids in continuing to allow young females to be "valued in terms of their sexual desirability" and teaches females "that their own desire makes them vulnerable" (Higgins and Tolman, 1997: 179).

In summation, this section on explanations has demonstrated the promotion of rape myths in cases of rape and sexual assault, as well as sexual harassment, intimate

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partner violence and sexual violence by a non-intimate within the family. Rape myths are powerful, minimizing the responsibility of violent and abusive males and influencing the way all types of violence against females are represented. The next section will continue to discuss the ways teen magazines disregard male responsibility by addressing the advice distributed to readers.

Responses to Violence against Females

The advice given by teen magazines also contributes to the magazines' portrayal of victims and assailants and promotes myths about violence against females. As demonstrated by the quantitative findings, readers are frequently given advice about how to respond to violent and abusive situations. Findings revealed both *Seventeen* and *Teen* focused most on individual victim interventions, placing the emphasis on victim self-help and talking to parents. The most common advice stated by teen magazines revolves around the victim actively attempting to stop or avoid violence/abuse. This section will delve into the different themes and messages distributed through advice given to readers. In addition, the use of fear inducing images and language is addressed.

'You' Tell Him—CLEARLY

An overarching theme in magazine content on violence against females is the need for the female to tell the male when he has 'stepped out of line.' The female is made to feel responsible for stopping the male from acting inappropriately. Whether referring to responding to an unacceptable, harassing comment or reacting to being emotionally or physically pressured into having sexual intercourse, the female is instructed to voice her feelings clearly, and sometimes kindly.

While some may see encouraging adolescent females to clearly state their feelings as positively addressing the issues, putting emphasis on the communication from females fails to address the underlying problem of the males' actions because it is constructed as 'her' problem, not his. In addition, it excuses the adolescent males' behaviors and reduces their responsibility for those actions. The idea of clearly telling males is seen frequently in both magazines, but is typically stated in the advice columns: 'Relating,' 'Sex and Your Body,' and 'Ask Jack.'

The 'Relating' and 'Sex and Your Body' sections are female question/female answer, monthly advice columns in *Seventeen*. An example of the emphasis on clearly informing the male when he has 'gone too far' emerges in the Relating section. One Q & A from this section exemplifies this best (Cathi Hanauer, *Seventeen*: July 1994: 52):

> Q: One of my teachers is always telling me he "loves me" and "worships the ground I walk on." It's really starting to scare me! Do you have any advice about what I can do?
>
> A: You're totally right to feel freaked about this...I think you have two options. The safer is to report this to an adult... The other option is asking Mr. Worship to stop saying these things *yourself...* Tell him you don't like him saying personal things to you—it's not flattering, it's embarrassing— if he keeps it up you'll tell school authorities. Maybe he just thinks he's being cute and he'll stop when he realizes you don't like it.

The notion of the female expressing her feelings to her teacher dominates, while the actions of the teacher, who occupies a position of trust and authority, are never concretely questioned anywhere in the answer. In fact, it is suggested he is just "being cute." Failing to question the actions of the teacher is an especially important finding as this example involves a minor-adult, student-teacher relationship based on differences in power and authority. The only statement that questions the teacher's behavior comes from the author validating the victim's feelings of being scared. This item is ambiguous.

It declares that the teacher's actions are worthy of a response by the victim but also takes the responsibility off of the male by not concretely questioning or attempting to explain the seriousness of his inappropriate actions. The emphasis is placed on the female's role to be responsible for stopping the teacher's aggressive actions.

The Dear Jack and Ask a Guy sections in *Teen* magazine also emphasize the responsibility of females to communicate. These sections are also monthly segments; however, they are written by male columnists (and sometimes include comments from male teenagers), designed to give the reader the male viewpoint on relationship issues. In response to a reader's question about a male who was "making passes" at her and making her feel "uncomfortable" the male advice columnist writes:

> This might have been a one-time deal...take a wait-and-see approach. "Then if he continues to do it, tell him to back off because you don't want to do anything with him," says Alex R., 18... Be nice but firm about it, and reassure him that you still want to be friends (*Teen,* July 1999: 49).

This story demonstrates the emphasis on the female to tell the male when he has 'crossed the line.' Furthermore, the male's aggressive actions are minimized while the responsibility is placed on the female to *nicely* explain that he is sexually harassing her.

This section, along with the above sections, demonstrates the similarity between the advice distributed and items written by male and female authors. Quantitatively, female authors dominate the sample. However, qualitatively, there does not appear to be any major differences between the advice and information given by male and female journalists. Items written by both genders are saturated with myths, blaming language, and advice that focuses on victims' actions.

Take Action

Readers are directed to take action against the violence and/or abuse in many different ways. Being assertive and taking active measures to stop the violence is commonly emphasized. Depending on the context of the violence and whether the author explained why the violence occurred, advising assertive behavior by victims can be positive and empowering. However, without full knowledge of why they are being violated, educating females to be responsible for taking action furthers victim blaming.

Articles about date/acquaintance rape explain females must "be assertive" (*Teen*, April 1995: 73) and not "be intimidated just because he's a guy" (Elizabeth Karlsberg, *Teen*, Nov. 1991: 15). Similarly, items on sexual harassment claim:

> Ideally, you don't excuse catcallers with silence. Tell them you don't appreciate their comments. Speaking up may be tough, so start small (Rebecca Barry, *Seventeen*, Sept 1994: 145).

> Be straightforward and let him know you aren't interested... If he still won't leave you alone, ask your brother to talk to his friend... and avoid him completely if he still won't quit his comments (*Teen*, July 1998: 26).

Often items on intimate partner violence reiterate the need to "get out of [the] situation" (*Teen*, May 1995: 14) and make it a clear and "clean" break (Elizabeth Karlsberg, *Teen*, Feb 1989: 50). Arguments that the "physical abuse will only escalate" (*Teen*, May 1995: 14) are presented, as well as reporting about the importance of having other people around when ending the relationship (Sarah Duncan, *Seventeen*, July 1995: 42).

Blaming the victim is often disguised by advice that is intended to be in the 'best interests' of female adolescents. For example, one *Teen* article on acquaintance rape addresses the notion of females monitoring the clothes they wear. The article discusses

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self protection/defense techniques used to avoid assaults. Some of the techniques

include: "avoid being alone with a guy you don't know well or trust 100 percent,"

"discuss your policy on sex before the date," "follow your instincts," and:

> Think twice about the type of clothes you wear. Dressing in skimpy or
> tight outfits is by no means an invitation to rape, but use discretion. Some
> men think it is OK to take advantage of a woman according to what she's
> wearing (Alison Bell, *Teen*, July 1997: 71).

Further, in an item that advises a reader with a physically and sexually abusive

boyfriend to get out of the relationship Debra Kent writes:

> Counseling will help you understand why you stayed with this guy. It
> may be because you're afraid of being alone and abandoned, or afraid of
> not having the "status" that comes with having a boyfriend (*Seventeen*,
> January 1994: 109).

In both of these examples blame is situated with the victim while the males who

think it is "OK" to harass and abuse females are decentered. Through advising readers

how to take action and avoid harassment and abuse, the females are viewed as

blameworthy.

Reiterating self protection/defense techniques are common in teen magazines,

specifically for rape and sexual assault. However, sometimes items about acquaintance

assaults offer conflicting and confusing advice on fighting back and taking action. In

fact, oftentimes, the protection techniques recommended are to be used in case of a

stranger assault. An item about abductions and murder explains that victims of abduction

are mostly females "abducted, then hurt or killed, often by people they know or

mistakenly trust" (Maria Purdy, *Teen*, July 1999: 86). The item then continues to discuss

different cases of abduction by someone known to the individual. The conflict arises in

the self protection techniques outlined. The item suggests, "vary[ing] your routine,"

"don't talk about your plans where strangers can overhear you," "never let strangers into your home to use the phone," "if people in a car ask for directions, tell them from the sidewalk," and "if someone grabs you from behind, force your chin down and toward his elbow to relieve the pressure on your windpipe" (Maria Purdy, *Teen*, July 1999: 87).

These self protection techniques are designed to keep females safe from assaults by strangers, not abductions or assaults by someone known to the victims. Failure to contextualize advice promotes confusion around violence against females. Females must also know how to look for warning signs and defend themselves against assaults by individuals they know.

Overall, the general consensus of teen magazines on responding to violent and abusive behavior is summed up quite clearly in this one statement:

> You're going to have to take some action to force him to stop (Francesca Delbanco, *Seventeen*, March 2000: 146).

As the advice given varied depending on the specific circumstances of the violence or abuse, it is impossible to give a complete picture of the advice reiterated in teen magazines. However, it is important to note two aspects from this discussion: 1) the onus is placed on the victim and 2) explanations of why victims are being violated are imperative when giving advice on how to cease the violence.

Tell Someone

Telling someone, typically an adult, about the violence or abuse is another common piece of guidance distributed to readers. Both *Seventeen* and *Teen* actively advise females to seek support through telling a trusted individual. Adolescent females are commonly instructed that they should not attempt to tackle the violence and/or abuse

alone. Parents, teachers, principals, counselors, friends, and other trusted adults are among the list of individuals suggested for consultation.

The importance of "talk[ing] to an adult you trust" (*Seventeen*, Nov. 1997: 98) is emphasized, as well as the need to inform someone of the violent incident while "go[ing] through your recovery process" (Francesca Delbanco, *Seventeen*, May 1999: 82). In addition, items discuss the need to contact authority figures. An item addressing emotional abuse states (*Teen*, Sept 1998: 36):

> Q: I want to break up with my boyfriend, but I'm afraid to because he said if I ever left him, he'd kill himself! What should I do? –Stuck with him, 15, Mich.
>
> A: Don't hesitate to inform people in positions of authority about his intentions. Tell a school counselor who's trained to deal with suicide threats. Inform your parents and ask them to speak to his parents.

In extreme cases of violence/abuse, magazines advise, "your school, your parents and your local police force should be involved immediately to protect your safety—both emotional and physical" (Francesca Delbanco, *Seventeen*, Sept 2001: 150). Finally, the necessity of parents' help to respond to the violence is reiterated habitually. An item about sexually abusive intimate partners contends:

> Go to a parent or another adult you trust and ask them to help you untangle yourself from this guy (*Teen*, March 2001: 40).

Informing parents about violent incidents is important, as it is assumed that parents will not blame their children and will act in their children's best interests. However, it is also important for teen magazines to address the possible outcomes of informing parents. Parents can initiate any of a number of responses to violence without their children's consent. They could contact criminal justice authorities, place their children in counseling and treatment, and confront the assailants or the assailants' parents

against their children's will. While it can be argued that adults, and especially parents, may know what is best for the victims, it is important that the victims' voices are heard and taken into account. If the victims want to be involved in legal and counseling responses, then the support of their parents will be essential. However, if the victims are not comfortable with those responses, forcing them to engage in them may impose another trauma on the victims.

Don't React Assertively

Recommending that victims should not react assertively was also expressed. While this response did not occur as frequently as the other mentioned responses, it has repercussions and serves to disempower females.

The only quiz in the sample exemplifies this theme. Titled "Is he too Possessive?," this quiz is designed to determine if the readers' partners are controlling and possessive. Upon tallying up the score, the readers' partners could fall in one of three categories. Controlling and possessive partners appear in the category labeled, "You Belong to Me," which states:

> Your boyfriend's behavior may be crossing the line from a little possessive to way too obsessive. **Be aware of his tendency to control you** in the name of coupledom. Despite your relationship with him, you're still an individual who has a right to your independence (*Teen*, May 1992: 12, emphasis added).

Readers are told that they should simply be conscious that they are being controlled. There is no explanation of the behavior and no attempt at advice that will help them get out of the situation. The choice of words in this statement insinuates that "being aware" is enough.

Recommending that victims avoid violence and/or abuse by making up excuses is another way that readers are advised to react non-assertively. Rather than responding to the assailant, females are told to make up a lie or an excuse to get out of the situation. For example, a blurb which defines intimate partner sexual abuse, as "he won't stop kissing you when you ask him to, he apologized for doing something you didn't want him to by saying stuff like, 'But I need you so badly…' and he acts caring sometimes but other times he's totally cold" states:

> Make him stop with a little white lie…If you find yourself in a compromising situation, it's best to say something that's not an obvious rejection of his advances, like you started your period and need to find a bathroom (*Teen*, March 2001: 40).

In certain instances making up an excuse may be the safest way to get out of the situation, but it also does not hold the male responsible for his actions. The female is still responsible for taking some form of action and by making an excuse she also holds the burden of the act. Since the male is not told that he is violating her, he can continue to do so for as long as the victim continues to make up excuses. Information teaching readers to lie to get out of the situation must be contextualized to the type of violence they are discussing.

Interestingly, all except one item that promotes unassertive reactions to violence are from *Teen* magazine. While overall advice advocating unassertiveness rarely appears (6 instances), it is interesting that most of them are in *Teen* magazine. Whether this means that *Seventeen* reiterates more empowering advice is unclear, as *Seventeen* is actively involved in promoting the other responses discussed as well as in using scare tactics in responses. The remaining portion of this section on responses is devoted to discussing the scare tactics used in teen magazines.

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Scare Tactics in Responses: Images

The images used in several of the items specifically designed to give advice suggest fear, the need to constantly be alert, and being assaulted by a stranger. These images reiterate the myth of stranger assaults as dominant, speaking to the notion that items on stranger assaults are designed to create more emotional impact. While pictures and images, other than pictures of victims who have come forward with their stories, did not appear frequently, the fear inducing nature of some of the images deserves discussion.

For example, an item titled, "You Have the Right to Remain Safe," discusses techniques to stay safe from "crime" on college campuses (Sarai Walker, *Seventeen*, January 2001: 66-67). In actuality, the article is discussing ways for females to avoid being sexually or physically victimized by males on campus. The white and blue text is set against an all black background to demonstrate the appearance of night. Set in the middle of the page is an image of a female in a red skirt, carrying a bookbag, walking alone on a sidewalk slightly looking over her shoulder. She is obviously frightened as she is clutching her bag and appears to be looking cautiously at something to her side. The facial expression and body language of the female suggest she is not simply looking over her shoulder out of self-protectiveness; she is frightened, looking over her shoulder out of fear.

Another feature article (Shellie Frey, *Teen*, March 1994: 40) displays the same type of fear inducing imagery. Once again, the article is designed to teach self protection techniques, explaining that being aware of your environment and visualizing how to react to assaults beforehand will aid in staying safe. The large image on the first page

illustrates a young female being attacked from behind while unlocking her car door. A man is grabbing her shoulder from behind and her head is turned around looking at him in fear.

Lastly, another item on campus crime exemplifies the notion of distributing alarming pictures and images. This item, once again, discusses techniques to stay safe from physical and sexual assault on campus. Across the four page article is a series of disjointed images that begin with a female walking on a college campus, move to police caution tape, and from there move to images of a chalk outline of a body drawn on pavement. Positioned next to the last image of a chalk outline of a body is the statement, "girls who are the last to leave a party are at increased risk for rape" (Stacey Colino, *Seventeen*, Sept 1991: 138-141).

The images of a chalk outline and police caution tape create thoughts of homicide and death. The item is largely devoted to discussing rape and sexual assault, not murder. In fact, only one paragraph of the four page item discusses murder, in it the sexual assault and murder of a female student is mentioned (Stacey Colino, *Seventeen*, Sept 1991: 139).

Scare Tactics in Responses: Fear Inducing Language

Emphasizing the need to constantly be on alert to prevent an assault is another tactic that promotes concern through advice. The idea that any female could be assaulted anywhere at anytime induces fear, rather than educates about preventing violence against females. *Seventeen* magazine warns "wherever you are, don't let your guard down" (Allison Aguado, October 2001: 100) and "you are always a target" (JJ Despain, March 2001: 230). In a letter to the editor section in *Teen* magazine, two readers responding to an article that provided advice about rape stress:

Your article "I was Raped" [October 1998] really scared me because it could happen to anyone, including me. Reading it made me more conscious of who's around me and where I am (J.R., *Teen*, Jan 1999: 14).

That story really hits home for a lot of people. It makes you think about how unsafe our world is. Even in your own community, where you feel safest, you're still in danger (A.K., *Teen*, Jan 1999: 14).

In addition, adolescent beauty/fashion magazines use alarming terminology and language to describe assaults. Referring to assailants as "monsters" (Whitney Woodward, *Teen*, April 1990: 12) and "animals," and females as "prey" (Michelle Stacey, *Seventeen*, Nov. 1993: 124) feeds the fiction that assailants are "crazy," (Elizabeth Karlsberg, *Teen*, Feb 1989: 37) rather than address the structural and societal reasons for violence against females. Such terminology creates the image of assailants as the 'other,' misrepresenting the truth that most victims know their assailants.

Teen magazines also use fear-provoking language to stress the idea that violence against females can happen to any young female. In an article titled, "Dangerous Decisions," that is filled with information and advice on stranger and acquaintance abductions, Maria Purdy exclaims:

> Every year, **teenage girls** take off—with a guy they met at a party or a normal looking adult who offers them a ride—only to be **found dead...** if they're found at all (*Teen*, July 1999: 85).

> Thirteen-year-old Christina Williams disappeared on June 12, 1998, while walking the family dog in her Fort Ord, Calif., neighborhood. The dog came home, but Christina didn't. Her remains were found earlier this year (*Teen*, July 1999: 85).

The above statements relate abduction and murder with average activities to produce emotional impact. Journalists' motivations for promoting fear are unclear. It is likely that they are not deliberately attempting to promote fear, rather they may be using emotionally laden content to make an impact in an effort to protect females from male

violence. However, using fear inducing language creates misrepresentations of the realities of violence against females.

In addition, the practicality of the advice given (advice that induces fear, as well as advice that falls into the other categories in this section) is questionable. Specifically, many of the self-protection tips given are clearly impractical. For instance, the following are a variety of unrealistic, self-protective techniques distributed in *Seventeen* and *Teen*: "always check inside and underneath your car when you return to it...when walking through parking lots, avoid getting too close to the parked cars because attackers sometimes hide underneath them;" "avoid walking alone. There is safety in numbers;" "always drive with your car locked, your seat belt fastened and your gas tank at least half full;" "consider carrying noise makers, whistles, or air horns for your protection" (Shellie Frey, *Teen*, March 1994: 41); "avoid drinking or being alone with a guy who is drinking;" "avoid being alone with a guy you don't know well or trust 100 percent;" (Alison Bell, *Teen*, July 1997: 71); "don't let anyone go upstairs alone with a guy (even if she thinks she knows him really well)" (Gayle Forman, *Seventeen*, May 1999: 157); and "have a friend wait outside [of a community bathroom] while you lather up then do the same for her" (Sarai Walker, *Seventeen*, Jan. 2001: 67).

Many of these pieces of advice are not practical to everyday life. While it is necessary for teen magazines to give advice because young females are undeniably asking for guidance, perhaps a more balanced discussion on violence against females, in terms of addressing the males' behaviors, would aid in reiterating advice that is practical and not fear inducing.

To summarize the responses section, both *Seventeen* and *Teen* promote individual victim interventions the most through advocating informing males when their behavior is inappropriate and taking action in some form. *Teen* magazine encourages non-assertive reactions and both magazines are involved in promoting fear through advice. The last section in this chapter will shift focus to address the challenges and resistance to the dominant ideologies of violence against females.

Resistance to Dominant Representations of Violence against Females

While the above findings demonstrate mostly negative themes, not all magazine content promotes rape myths and dominant ideologies about violence against females. The sample includes items that address the realities of violence against females, items that challenge rape myths, and although infrequently, items that discuss the structural reasons for male violence against females. Furthermore, some answers to the questions posed by readers address the seriousness of the issues involved.

That being said, the overall content of the article is crucial. Stating a truth of violence against females in an item that later blames a victim, uses scare tactics, or promotes myths does not make an empowering article. Many of the items that will be discussed below contain resistant material but further myths and victim blaming at some point in the item. This analysis only revealed three items that remained resistant throughout the entire item (Cathryn Jakobson, *Seventeen*, Oct. 1993: 134-137,153; Darcy Jacobs, *Seventeen*, June 2000: 92; *Teen*, January 1997: 12).

Realities of Violence against Females

Numerous items expressed that females are more likely to be victimized by someone they know (Gayle Forman, *Seventeen*, May 1999; *Teen*, April 1995; *Teen*, Nov.

1994; Alison Bell, *Teen*, July 1997; *Teen*, March 2001; *Seventeen*, Nov. 1997; Carmen

Thompson, *Seventeen*, July 1999). In addition, readers are notified of statistics on the

prevalence of violence against females. A blurb in *Seventeen* states "20 percent of girls

under 15 say their first time wasn't voluntary" and "one of out 10 girls ages 15 to 18 say

they've been sexually abused" (Nov. 1997: 106).

Some items address realities of intimate partner violence, directing victims of the

importance of completely breaking off communication with the abuser (Dana Hudepohl,

Seventeen, April 2003; Elizabeth Karlsberg, *Teen*, February 1989; Sandy Fertman, *Teen*,

Sept. 1994). Also, an item titled "Black and Blue" explains that violence against females

crosses racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic boundaries pervading "all segments of society,

regardless of wealth, race or educational level" (Tina Kelly, *Seventeen*, August 1998:

250). The notion of intimate partner violence crossing all social boundaries is an

important truth to discuss as historically the belief that only individuals in lower

socioeconomic classes were susceptible to intimate partner violence prevailed (Moore,

1997: 91). Several studies have indicated that socioeconomic status has "little effected"

the possibility of victimization (Moore, 1997: 90; Straus et al., 1980; Hotaling and

Sugarman, 1990). This item also addresses dominant ideologies of intimate partner

violence by refuting victim blaming. Allan Creighton, director of the Oakland Men's

Project, asserts:

> The first question people ask is, 'Why does the girl stay?'... and if we're
> lucky, somebody finally asks, 'Why's he hitting her? What's his problem?
> (as cited in Tina Kelly, *Seventeen*, August 1998: 251).

Items on street youths and prostitution included quotes from sources regarding

some reasons why females may turn to the streets. Academic expert William Darrow

explains that most prostitutes and street youths were "sexually abused at a young age, often by a family member" (as cited in Adrian LeBlanc, *Seventeen*, March 1993: 214). This fact is reiterated in an article about a runaway teen, which states "99% of all teen prostitutes were sexually abused as children" (Sandy Fertman, *Teen*, Nov. 1995: 60).

Explaining realities of violence against females is a form of resistance to dominant ideologies that promote victim blaming and rape myths. While many of the items listed above also contained victim blaming material, the effort to provide truths is worthy of discussion as it demonstrates an attempt in the endeavor to educate readers about the context and realities of violence against females.

Challenging Rape Myths

While the promotion of rape myths in teen magazines is evident, myths are challenged as well. As already addressed, some items explain the reality that females are more likely to be assaulted by someone they know. Informing readers of the truths behind the demographics of assailants challenges the myth that promotes rapists as the 'other'.

In addition, some items challenge the myth that females can promote or deserve rape or sexual assault. In response to a reader's question about how to overcome shame and guilt after being raped by a family friend, the advice columnist replies:

> I know you feel ashamed, but you haven't done *anything* wrong. You were raped. The only person who should be feeling ashamed right now is the man who raped you... No one deserves to be raped. It doesn't matter if you wore certain clothes or heavy makeup. It doesn't matter if you flirted, kissed, or touched. It doesn't matter if you got a little tipsy and passed out on his bed. The rapist is always wrong. The victim never is (Debra Kent, *Seventeen*, March 1994: 164).

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This statement strongly reinforces the idea that females can not provoke rape. While many of the advice columns in the sample state that the female is not at fault, they tend to stop at that statement and do not explore the myth any further. Furthermore, many state that the victim is not at fault but then proceed to question the victim's behavior (Alison Bell, *Teen*, July 1997; Rebecca Barry, *Seventeen*, May 1996; Debra Kent, *Seventeen*, January 1994; Shellie Frey, *Teen*, March 1994; *Teen*, May 1995; Gayle Forman, *Seventeen*, May 1999).

The myth that rape defiles victims is also disputed at times. Items that actively challenge the idea that sexual assault and rape victims are sullied are typically written by victims and reinforced with information about the well being of the victims. All of the victims demonstrate how they are not just victims, but rather survivors who fought back against their victimization by using their stories to educate others (*Teen*, Nov. 1994; *Teen*, May 1995; Darcy Jacobs, *Seventeen*, June 2000). Items that exhibit the ways in which victims cope and move forward demonstrate that rape and sexual assault victims are not "spoiled" or "dirtied" (Benedict, 1992: 17).

Challenging rape myths is a step in eradicating violence against females. By disputing the myths, victim blaming and the social stigma surrounding rape and sexual assault can be also be challenged. However, simply refuting rape myths is not sufficient, structural explanations of violence against females also need to be addressed to appropriately contextualize the violence.

Structural Causes of Violence

"Violence and intimidation work because as a society we do not take collective responsibility for it—we blame it on individuals" (Stanko, 1995: 222-223). Focusing on

violence against females at an individual level denies the root causes of male violence against females, supports victim blaming, and results in advocating individual responses. As mentioned above, adolescent beauty/fashion magazines typically individualize male violence against females. In spite of this, some items incorporate information about societal and cultural causes for male violence against females. Such explanations include information on how gender socialization contributes to the violence, explanations that violence against females is based on power and control, and structural causes and responses to violence against females.

An item devoted to explaining the behavior of the Spur Posse and the Glen Ridge Boys[26] includes information about structural causes and responses to violence. One female teen stresses:

> I think the only answer to this [male violence against females] would be some sort of massive change in men, in the way they're brought up to view women and the way that men treat women (Hammond as cited in Michelle Stacey, *Seventeen*, Nov. 1993: 127).

Furthermore, social psychologist Chris O'Sullivan suggests the focus on advising females may not be the best solution:

> To outline a set of rules for girls' behavior—never get into an unsupervised or party situation where you're the only girl among several guys, be extra alert, and avoid getting 'out of control'—is to suggest a return to a traditional ethic where the boy's job was to try to get sex, and the girl's job was to keep him from getting it, where the girls were the moral and sexual gatekeepers, and the boys the irresponsible hormone-driven animals. It is, perhaps, to lose sight of the fact that it's really the boys' problem (as cited in Michelle Stacey, *Seventeen*, Nov. 1993: 139).

While giving females self defense advice, Ruth Ann Koenick, director of the Rutgers University Department of Sexual Assault Services and Crime Victim Assistance,

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[26] See chapter two for a description of the actions of the Spur Posse. The individuals known as the Glen Ridge Boys were 13 boys who sexually assaulted a mentally handicapped female from their school.

stresses, "women are socialized to ignore their intuition...If it doesn't feel right in your

gut, it isn't" (as cited in Gayle Forman, *Seventeen*, May 1999: 156). Koenick continues:

> So girls—not wanting to be rude or uncool, or to embarrass boys—don't
> always get out of a situation when it feels dangerous, which can lead to
> trouble (as cited in Gayle Forman, *Seventeen*, May 1999: 156).

These items address root causes of violence against females and focus on larger

society's role in perpetuating male violence against females. Unfortunately, both of these

items were discussed earlier in this chapter, meaning that they contribute to victim

blaming in some form (one uses scare tactics and the other promotes rape myths). Still, it

is important to acknowledge the material that attempts to halt male violence against

females at the source.

Challenges to the dominant cultural beliefs about female sexuality are evident as

well. Resistant content advocates being comfortable with natural and healthy sexual

desires. Resisting items state:

> They've [parents] let you know that it's normal and okay to have sexual
> feelings and just as okay to reject inappropriate or unwanted sexual
> advances...Human beings are sexual from birth to death...The thing to
> remember is that sexuality is a natural part of being human (Debra Kent,
> *Seventeen*, March 1992: 143-144).

> It's up to you to decide how *you* feel about your sexual identity. It
> belongs to you, and no one else has the right to define it (Leora
> Tanenbaum, *Seventeen*, January 1997: 58).

Although these examples demonstrate some resistance to the dominant ideologies

of female sexuality, the content typically revolved around the confusion of sexuality.

Desire and sexuality were infrequently discussed positively in items on violence against

females.

Some items explain that male violence/abuse against females is used to gain power and control. Explication of violence as power aids in stamping out myths by denying explanations that violence is the victims' fault or that violence is about sex, lust, or love for the victims. One female advice columnist responds to a victim's question about a male who is sexually harassing her by clarifying:

> He hopes that by creating fear in his victims he will feel more powerful; this is the most cowardly way of trying to create strength in oneself (*Teen*, January 1997: 12).

In addition, a few items address the importance of education and awareness as responses to violence against females. Tackling victim blaming and myths by educating about gender socialization and violence and/or abuse is an imperative step in fighting violence against females. One rape victim declares:

> Girls need to be educated about rape—no one talks about it. Teachers and parents try to protect us from the cruel, cruel world...I can tell you from the bottom of my heart that I didn't hear one thing about rape when I was in high school...I'm not saying live in fear—to go out thinking, Oh, my god, I'm going to get raped tonight. I'm just saying, make yourself aware (Brzonkala as cited in Darcy Jacobs, *Seventeen*, June 2000: 92).

Brozonkala touches on the importance of educating and advising females without frightening them. Educating without promoting fear will help facilitate breaking down the dominant ideologies that declare 'good' girls will not get victimized. Education through schools, parents, criminal justice agencies, and social service agencies is imperative to help violated and abused females, as well as to prevent the abuse before it occurs through educating males and females about the realities of the violence.

This final section on resistance demonstrates the messages behind the structural explanations discussed in teen magazines. While demonstrating the resistant material,

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this chapter also illustrated the ambiguous and vague nature of adolescent beauty/fashion magazines. Some of the articles that were used as examples of promotion of victim blaming provide truthful knowledge about violence against females.

In addition, the challenging material is typically coming from sources other than *Seventeen* and *Teen* journalists, specifically academic experts, experts from community based programs, psychologists, female teens, and victims. Also, some of the expert sources who challenge material are male. Furthermore, the bulk of challenging material originates from *Seventeen* magazine. It is unclear why *Seventeen* contains more challenging material than *Teen*. One possible explanation is simply that *Seventeen* contributes more items to the sample.

Summary

Qualitative analysis of items on violence against females illustrates the active promotion of rape myths and victim blaming in both *Seventeen* and *Teen*. Rape myths are not solely promoted for acts of rape and sexual assault, but also apply to items on sexual harassment, intimate partner violence and violence by a non-intimate within the family. Females are taught to take action to prevent violence and to be in charge of informing violent, harassing, and abusive males that their behavior is inappropriate. This chapter demonstrated that the "cultural story" of sexuality is promoted through the negative representation of the victim and the promotion of the myth that females can provoke assault. Finally, material that challenges myths and dominant ideologies appears seldom and is usually reiterated by sources other than teen magazine journalists. Chapter six will combine the findings from this chapter with the quantitative findings to detail the implications and potential impact of the messages distributed in teen magazines.

CHAPTER SIX: ADOLESCENT BEAUTY/FASHION MAGAZINES—BLAMING, AMBIGUOUS, PERPETUATING DOMINANT IDEOLOGIES—DISCUSSION

"If the screaming pink and orange cover lines on mass-circulation teen magazines don't get to you, the mixed messages inside will. Has there ever before been a flood of such contradictory, confusing high-pressure 'advice' directed at teen girls that serves their interests less?" (Gibbons, 10/29/03, WomensNews).

This chapter will address the implications of both the quantitative and qualitative analyses of *Seventeen* and *Teen*. The findings will be discussed in relation to other research and literature on this topic. In addition, the appropriateness of adopting a feminist cultural studies perspective for this research will be discussed.

Representation of Violence against Females in Adolescent Beauty/Fashion Magazines: Onus on the Victim

Personal, Individual Level

This research illustrates that adolescent beauty/fashion magazines directly and indirectly perpetuate rape myths and victim blaming through items about stranger and acquaintance rape/sexual assault, intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, and violence by a non-intimate within the family. The constructions of the victim, explanations of violence, and responses reiterated to readers focus on the victim and her actions, thereby individualizing the event and failing to contextualize the issues.

The quantitative findings demonstrate the high frequency of items which contain either no explanation or an individual explanation for violence against females. Also, findings in chapter four indicate the focus of responses to violence on the victim in both magazines. Qualitatively, the lack of contextualization, various types of blaming statements, focus on the victim, and use of fear inducing language indicate the tendency

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of teen magazines to place the onus on the victim to be responsible and not get victimized.

Quantitatively, my findings reveal the frequency of teen magazines to discuss types of violence other than rape and sexual assault. The qualitative analysis demonstrated how rape myths and victim blaming also apply and are being upheld for other types of violence against females. Just as Benedict argues for print news media journalists to offer context to articles on rape and sexual assault, this analysis demonstrates the need for other mainstream media journalists to contextualize items on **all** types of violence against females. Teen magazine journalists should set all stories on violence against females "in a context that will inform the public of the reality of the crime and help people protect themselves, rather than feeding fears, myths, and misconceptions" (Benedict, 1992: 261).

The fiction that females can provoke or deserve an assault seems to be the most prevalent myth distributed. Discussion about provoking attack crosses over all of the types of violence named in this study. As mentioned earlier the work of Tellijohann et al. demonstrates that high school aged students believe the dress and drinking behavior of a victim determines the victim's credibility (Brown et al., 2002: 6). Adolescent beauty/fashion magazines rarely challenge these notions. The failure to take a strong stance against rape myths and question males' actions promotes myths and negative representations of victims.

Adolescent beauty/fashion magazines portray victims and assailants in distinct fashions. While some of the victims were manifestly placed in Benedict's (1992) "virgin" or "vamp" categories, images of victims in teen magazines also support

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Madriz's (1997: 82) notion of a victim portrayal continuum. Madriz asserts that different

characteristics of the victim, assailant, and the assault can place an individual into both of

the categories[27]; therefore, victims are "placed along a continuum, with one end

representing the good, innocent victim who deserves our tears and the other representing

the bad, culpable victim who does not deserve our tears"(1997: 82). For example, Trisha

Meili, the Central Park jogger, was constructed in the "virgin" category because she is a

white, upper-middle class woman. In addition, she was also seen as a "vamp" due to her

actions of running in the park alone at night (Madriz, 1997: 82).

My research has implications for the use of Benedict's eight factors (Appendix B)

as strict characteristics to determine the portrayal of victims, specifically in teen

magazines and possibly other types of magazines as well (e.g. popular women's

magazines). Benedict's analysis was based on case studies including several articles

from many different newspapers, allowing for a collection of extensive information on

each case. Teen magazines rarely publish more than one item or follow-up items on the

same case[28]. Given the nature of distribution of information in magazines, an in-depth

depiction of the cases is not provided. The implications of the lack of detail on the eight

factors in teen magazine items are not necessarily negative. Ultimately, the fact that

many items did not contain enough information to apply most of Benedict's eight factors

to the construction of the victim is positive. It is possible, but unlikely, that my findings

demonstrate the deliberate intention of journalists to refrain from detailing characteristics

of assaults. It is more likely that my findings are affected by the sample which includes a

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[27] Madriz does acknowledge that victims are placed into one of two categories, innocent or culpable. However, she also points out that at times characteristics position victims into both categories placing the victims somewhere in between the two categories, hence the idea of a continuum.

[28] There were no follow-up items about a specific case in my sample. However, it is assumed that there are times when teen magazines may write follow-up items, possibly in response to letters to the editor.

small number of items on stranger rape and no items related to inter-racial assaults. In addition, due to race, class, and sexuality, it is often more complicated than just portraying a victim in one of two categories. Many of the victims in my sample are not encompassed in the "virgin" and "vamp" categories as the sample is dominated by discussion about white, middle-class, heterosexual victims who were assaulted by male acquaintances or intimate partners who were also likely white, middle-class, and heterosexual. The number of items discussing assaults on this demographic of females is presumably related to the fact that teen magazines are aimed at that particular group of young women.

While many of the eight factors were not detailed in the items, my findings demonstrate that the physical appearance and actions of victims are still being described in detail, frequently with the type of vocabulary Benedict argues must cease to be used in sex crime stories (1992: 259). Vocabulary such as "attractive," "pretty, "blond," and "had sex" are used in teen magazines in reference to rape and sexual assault. My findings imply that journalists and "editors must be more responsible for their vocabulary" (Benedict, 1992: 259).

That being said, the eight factors unquestionably still affect the portrayal of the victim. The use of a weapon and deviation from the conventional role of a female were important factors in the magazines' depictions of victims. While the eight factors are still an influence and still promote victim blaming, it is not clear that they are all always used to position a victim in one of two distinct categories. Overall, what is clear, and most important, is that the two categories still exist and details of assaults, victims, and

assailants are used by the media to depict the victim in a certain light, whether it is as a "virgin," "vamp," or somewhere in between.

Explanations: Fear of Feminism

When both the quantitative and qualitative findings are considered, perhaps the most glaring finding is the failure of teen magazines to explain male violence against females and to challenge the myths associated with violence against females. Such behavior is typically regarded as wrong through statements that explicate the victim is having "a legitimate reaction to the horrible experience," (*Teen*, Nov. 1993: 6) or "ha[sn't] done anything wrong" (Debra Kent, *Seventeen*, March 1994: 164). At times, individual or cultural explanations are given, explaining that the assailant was 'crazy' or 'just a boy, doing boy things.' Rarely are structural explanations detailed.

In addition, discussion on power differentials is absent in teen magazines. Gender inequalities were addressed in a small number of items; however, the content in these items rarely challenged the power differences between males and females that are perpetuated through socialization and social institutions. Furthermore, some items that addressed minor-adult, and in some cases student-teacher, relationships which inherently involve power, authority, and trust differentials maintained the focus on the victim, minimizing the differences in power and authority that shape the relationships.

While it is not likely a calculated plan among journalists and editors to exclude structural explanations, these findings raise questions around whether teen magazines want young females to understand violence against females. Failing to provide explanations, specifically structural explanations, about why violence against females persists is another way that teen magazines are promoting the dominant standard of

femininity. Young women are being engrained with the same messages about femininity and masculinity that they receive in content on beauty and fashion in a different format (items on violence against females). They are learning their roles as females, which in the case of content on violence against females includes not questioning the actions of males and not expressing their sexual desires.

Benedict (1997) found that sexism and societal reasons for violence against females are not reiterated in the news media, my analysis extends that finding to incorporate adolescent beauty/fashion magazines. Mainstream media's failure to adequately address societal causes for the violence corresponds to their fear of feminism (Benedict, 1997). "Essentially, the mainstream press is so afraid of feminism that it is covering rape without reference to feminist research, theory, or to the association between rape and sex roles—in other words, without understanding" (Benedict, 1997: 267). My research expands this notion to another form of mainstream media, as well as to other types of violence against females. Societal explanations in teen magazines are lacking across all types of violence named in this study, all of which are permitted to persist due to patriarchal dominant ideologies and societal misogynist thinking. Violence against females "cannot be understood without mentioning the role of women and the way men are trained to see them as objects of prey" (Benedict, 1992: 266).

The only discussion on feminism in my sample refers to the Riot Grrrl "underground feminist movement" in the early 1990's (Nina Malkin, *Seventeen*, May 1993: 80-83). The article details the tenets of the movement which were based on the notion of females "believing" each other. One Riot Grrrl member clarifies, "If you say you've been raped, harassed, abused,…I believe you, and I will support you in your fight

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to correct those things" (Maffeo as cited in Malkin, *Seventeen*, May 1993: 80). However, the article shifts focus to the inequalities and "internal rift" in the movement, discussing the disputes between "Riot Grrl's vehemently militant faction and the less hard-core groups" (Nina Malkin, *Seventeen*, May 1993: 80-83). Ultimately, the only article addressing feminism in the sample depicts feminists in a negative fashion, asking whether the movement will "refocus feminism or fry in its own fury" (Nina Malkin, *Seventeen*, May 1993: 80). Clearly, feminism and feminist explanations of violence against females are not considered valuable content in teen magazines.

Responses: Failure to Empower

Prevention of and responses to violence against females also maintain the focus on the victim. Rarely do adolescent beauty/fashion magazines suggest structural and societal responses to fight violence against females. Rather than assuming a collective responsibility by attempting to combat the violence through providing more resources and services (in terms of quantity and quality) for females, or suggesting policy changes and education that will attempt to achieve equality between the sexes, teen magazines promote individual responses to violence and abuse.

Teen magazines are failing to empower readers through their consistent advice about self-protection and informing the assailant his behavior is unacceptable. They are attempting to construct an empowered female who: 1) takes steps to prevent an assault; and 2) stands up to her assailant and actively works on healing and 'helping' herself (e.g. self-help, counseling, talking to her parents). According to this advice, the 'Seventeen and Teen female' is strong, self-reliant, and responsible. Nonetheless, teen magazines construct the violence and abuse as the female's fault. So, a female is only strong and

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responsible if she prevents assaults through various self-protection techniques (e.g. dressing appropriately, not walking alone at night, not drinking at a party). However, if she does something 'wrong' (i.e. dresses inappropriately, goes upstairs alone with a male she met at a party, does not make him stop harassing her the first time) that 'led' to her victimization, she is no longer the strong, self-reliant female. She is no longer 'responsible'; she is guilty.

This is unacceptable for two reasons. First, it denies the seriousness of the assailant's behaviors and minimizes the assailant's responsibility. Second, there will be many occasions when a female can take all the necessary precautions possible and in spite of this, she may still be assaulted. In instances when the victim takes all the necessary safety measures, teen magazines shift the focus from the victim to the assailant, who is then portrayed as a 'culpable, crazy monster'.

So, as shown by the constructions of the victim and assailant, the focus on the victim, and the lack of structural explanations and responses, teen magazines present the message that it is important to be empowered, strong, and self-reliant; however, not empowered enough to question society's role in violence against females. The magazines consistently promote the idea that individuals (victims or assailants) are responsible for the violence, not society. Therefore, it is okay to be an empowered female, so long as society is not blamed when a female is victimized.

These messages do not challenge patriarchal structures; they feed directly into traditional notions of femininity. These distributed standards of femininity do not advocate females as equal members of society. The underlying idea is that females are 'going to be victimized' by males so they should take steps to try to prevent it.

These particular perspectives of femininity are not just transmitted through teen magazines, they are engrained in our society, and so deeply entrenched that they are not even questioned[29]. Teen magazines are perpetuating traditional notions of femininity and advocating for a female who must protect herself, be fearful, and be responsible for the violence and abuse. They are advocating for the "good" girl.

In addition, it is important to note that responses and explanations are inter-related. The dominant explanations perpetuated give rise to the dominant responses used against violence against females. If individual explanations are central in society's understanding of violence, then individual responses will also prevail. These two components must be discussed and challenged together, as a unit. Through quantitative and qualitative analysis, my study illustrates teen magazines are ambiguous in describing explanations and responses. For the most part, individual explanations and responses are the most frequent and fundamental messages sent to readers. Discussing steps to take action and be assertive is not necessarily negative; however, these efforts ought to be united with an understanding of societal reasons for violence and societal responses to that violence, in order to contextualize violence against females. Just as young females must be informed about the "cultural story" of sexuality and desire (Higgins and Tolman, 1997), they must also learn about the "cultural story" of violence against females.

Education about the realities of violence against females coupled with advice on how to take action and be assertive empowers females to fight against the violence. Separately, education about the structural reasons for violence and advice on protection and assertive responses are useful. However, education and protective measures given

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[29] See section on feminist cultural studies framework starting on pg. 149 for more discussion on this notion.

solely do not fully equip or empower females. Females must understand why they need to break the silence, speak up, and take action; otherwise the perception that it is the individual assailant or victim's fault will prevail[30]. In addition, females must feel like it is not their fault if they do not or are not capable of speaking up and taking action. Combining education on societal reasons and advice on assertive reactions will better prepare and educate females on appropriate, empowering responses. Furthermore, magazines must contextualize the violence when teaching non-assertive reactions, such as making up a lie or an excuse to remove oneself from abusive situations.

While it is necessary for victims to take some form of action to respond to the violence, placing sole responsibility on them denies the importance of the other responses. A combination of legal, social, educational, and structural interventions are crucial in the fight to eradicate violence against females. Adolescent girls must be aware of the importance of the other responses and not made to believe they alone are responsible for taking action.

Stanko argues, "at least the feminist communities, with their networks of shelters and rape crisis centers, attempt to intervene on collective bases in the daily devastation of men's violence to women" (1995: 222-223). However, more than just shelters and crisis centers must take the responsibility; many agencies and social institutions must also engage and accept collective accountability. Educational and familial institutions, agencies (criminal justice, health care, advocacy) involved with violence against females, mass media, and pop culture sites must also join forces and accept responsibility.

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[30] Moreover, it is not just females who need education about the realities of violence against females. Males must also understand the realities to effectively stamp out the myths. However, I am discussing my findings in terms of the target demographic of teen magazines, 12-24 year old females.

Sexuality: Ambiguous Messages

A full picture of how adolescent beauty/fashion magazines discuss sexuality can not be established from this study alone due to the sample collected. Since only items on sexuality as it related to violence against females were collected, a vast number of items directly and indirectly related to sexuality are missing from this discussion. That being said, my study does address hegemonic ideas about female and male sexuality and, therefore hegemonic ideas about femininity and masculinity in North American society.

Seventeen and *Teen* paint a confusing picture around sexuality. Readers are directed to embrace their sexual identity and questioned about their sexual experiences at the same time. One paragraph may discuss the importance of knowing sexual desires while another will warn females about "putting [themselves] in situations where a guy could take advantage of [them]" (*Teen*, Sept 1992: 16), declare that "some guys have reason to be confused" (Gayle Forman, *Seventeen*, May 1999: 155) when females tell them 'No,' or suggest females should "avoid being alone with a guy [they] don't know well or trust 100 percent" (Alison Bell, *Teen*, July 1997: 71).

Carpenter notes the ambiguity of teen magazines, "*Seventeen* offers not only traditional sexual scenarios urging that young women refrain from sexual intercourse but also recreational scenarios recommending the opposite" (1998: 158-159). Additionally, Carpenter found that 62% of her sample revolved discussion of sexuality around discussion of male victimization (1998: 162). Discourse on sexuality is often linked to male victimization, specifically around in-depth discussion on individual instances of victimization.

Other studies on sexuality in teen magazines address the link made between romance, romantic relationships, and sexual experiences (McRobbie, 1983; Carpenter, 1998, Wray and Steele, 2002; Durham, 1998). Female sexuality is presented as only valid in regards to romance, rather than physical need. Male sexuality is discussed in terms of physical need and teen magazines present romance as the "girls' reply to male sexuality" (McRobbie, 1983: 264).

It is clear from this and past studies that discussion of sexuality sends mixed and contradictory messages. To further this already researched discussion, I will focus on what adolescent beauty/fashion magazines fail to explain. What is obviously lacking from discussions on sexuality is information about sexism and gender stereotypes that feed the way females understand their sexuality. Information on structural explanations of violence against females and dominant ideologies about gender are needed for females to fully understand their desires and the "cultural story" that allows the confusion around sexuality to continue. "Telling a [reader] that she should be entitled to her sexual subjectivity, without identifying the societal forces that work against her doing so, is not enough" (Tolman, 2002: 197). In an effort to protect young females from the realities and dangers of sexuality, they are continuing to be placed in unsafe situations and are then typically blamed for their victimizations.

As Asher writes, "girls are not immune to popular culture, nor are they willing to hold themselves outside of it...they need both the base of resistance and the supporting arguments to remain strong [in the face of harassing, violent situations]" (2002: 26). They must not only be taught about their desires and sexual health, they must also be

taught about the "cultural story" of sexuality and gender stereotypes that allow the dangers of sexuality to prevail.

Mainstream Magazines: Mainstream Ideologies

Ultimately, despite some differences[31] in format and content on violence against females, *Seventeen* and *Teen* both represent violence against females similarly. Several examples of myth promotion are evident for both magazines, as well as several illustrations of the similar types of explanations and responses distributed to readers. In addition, both magazines distributed ambiguous messages. Ambiguous items typically included an underlying explanation that the males' behaviors were inappropriate but that the victims were either responsible for the behaviors in some way or responsible for making the behaviors stop. The magazines also both linked rape myths with other types of violence against females and failed to contextualize their items. Victim blaming, the "cultural story" of sexuality, and myths about violence against females are actively distributed in both *Seventeen* and *Teen*.

Considering the quantitative findings denoting the high frequency of failing to explain violence and individualizing violence; the depiction of victims and assailants; the individual victim responses reiterated; and the promotion of rape myths, victim blaming and fear, teen magazines address violence against females at the individual level. Power differentials are not discussed and although there are some challenges to the propensity to highlight violence against females as an individual issue, the challenges are muted by the overwhelming material that upholds the dominant ideologies.

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[31] The quantitative and qualitative differences between the magazines were detailed in chapters four and five.

Clearly, teen magazines are "dominant cultural storytellers," (Brown et al., 2002: 16) perpetuating dominant ideologies of female sexuality and violence against females. The mainstream magazines promote mainstream notions of females provoking assaults while maintaining the focus on the victim and depoliticizing the issues. Past research has demonstrated the ambiguous nature of teen magazines (Carpenter, 1998; McCracken, 1993) and the ways teen magazines "uphold patriarchal articulations of girls' sexuality and reaffirm cultural hegemonies" (Durham, 1998: 386) with regards to the messages of adolescent sexuality, romance, relationships, and femininity (Duke and Kreshel, 1998; Wray and Steele, 2002). This study adds to the literature on the promotion of dominant ideologies in adolescent beauty/fashion magazines by extending the analysis to the messages disseminated about violence against females.

Violence against Females in Mainstream Media: Potential Impact

While the actual impact of teen magazine messages is debatable and can not be determined from this research, past research summarized in the literature review has demonstrated the significance of teen magazines in adolescent girls' lives. This section will address the potential impact of teen magazine content and my findings, highlighting the inducement of fear, the use of male advice columns, the potential decrease in items on violence against females, and the influence of teen magazines on popular culture.

Inducing Fear

Qualitative analysis revealed that both *Seventeen* and *Teen* contain scare tactics that may induce fear. Through numerous strategies, teen magazines emphasize fear around assaults, specifically stranger assaults. The items in teen magazines are designed

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to inform readers about violence against females through fear inducing words, images, and promoting the notion of always being on alert.

By generating fear around violence against females, teen magazines are serving to socialize females into the 'good' girl and 'bad' girl categories. Madriz argues that creating fear around crime is a means used to control females (1997: 34). "Its influence is masked by the common belief that fear of crime imposes limitations upon women's lives 'for their own sake'" (Madriz, 1997: 34). Madriz's notion of creating restrictions for the sake of the victim speaks to my findings on scare tactics in teen magazines. Much of the fear induced through teen magazines is done in the form of self protection/defense techniques claiming readers should vary their routines; "avoid walking alone;" "avoid jogging, bicycling, rollerblading, speedwalking or any similar activity after dark;" and "always check inside and underneath [their] car[s] when [they] return to it" (Shellie Frey, *Teen*, March 1994: 41). The fear is allowed to prevail due to the central ideologies about violence against females that promote victim blaming. In other words, if a female remains fearful and abides by the rules set out in the self protection techniques, then she will either 1) not get victimized or 2) will not be at fault if she is victimized.

Teen magazines also promote fear through constructions of the victim as the 'average, teenage female'. Oftentimes, unnecessary description of the victim or the assault are detailed to demonstrate that the victim was an average female doing everyday activities when she was assaulted. The idea of an average teenage female going out for a walk and never returning (Maria Purdy, *Teen*, July 1999) is fear provoking and a misrepresentation of the extent of violence against females.

While many items that induce fear contain 'true' statements and statistics, the factual information is presented in a way that may frighten readers into changing their routines and constantly being alert to fend off an assault. "Fear of crime is indeed an extremely dominant force in the control of women's lives" (Madriz, 1997: 40). Fear inducing images, language and other tactics serve to demonstrate to females what "their place is" (Madriz, 1997: 41). Females who step out of those boundaries or make 'bad decisions' are seen as subject to and deserving of violent assaults. Furthermore, the emphasis on female self defense minimizes the violent and abusive behavior of males.

Ask Jack or Ask Jill

Through quantitative analysis, the advice given by male authors was distinguished from that of female authors. Analysis revealed that 12 of 114 items were advice columns with answers written by male columnists. Qualitative analysis of these advice columns revealed that several items individualized violence and were imbued with rape myths and victim blaming. As female advice columnist responses in the sample were also saturated with these characteristics, my findings suggest there are no clear cut differences between the advice reiterated by male and female columnists. One possible explanation for the similarity between male and female journalists is simply that they are writing and working for the same magazine (whether it is *Seventeen* or *Teen*), they are working under the same management, and ultimately are attempting to achieve the same goal—profit.[32].

Although clear cut differences between the journalists' gender were not found, advice columns written by males must be differentiated as they bring up a different set of questions. Do readers place special emphasis on advice from males? Duke and Kreshel

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[32] See section on feminist cultural studies framework starting on pg. 149 for more discussion on the focus of teen magazines.

(1998) provide evidence that adolescent females specifically look to "reports of boys' voices" (57) to learn how to behave and react in romantic relationships. "One reason for this may be that the teen magazine is used by early adolescent girls as a singular source of information on boys" (Duke and Kreshel, 1998: 57). If teen girls are turning to items written by males for advice on relationships, they are also receiving advice on violence against females from males. There is no evidence in this study to suggest that advice from males is trusted more than female advice and should be monitored more; however, Duke and Kreshel's findings illustrate that advice from males is trusted and sought out by teen magazine readers.

Decrease in Items on Violence against Females: Falling out of the Public Eye?

Figures from my quantitative analysis illustrate a decrease in items on violence against females in 2002 for both *Seventeen* and *Teen*. For *Teen*, the decrease is most likely related to the format change made in August 2001 and the suspension of publication in May 2002. However, it is not clear why the decrease occurred in *Seventeen*. Since items from 2003 and 2004 were not collected, it is impossible to determine if the decrease was random or due to a format change. While it could be due to sheer chance, it is interesting to note that in the ten year sample, the lowest frequency of items for *Seventeen* came from the 2002 sample. Also, the extended sample collected from the Readers' Guide Abstracts database does not contain any items from 2002 and only two items from 2003.

Considered together these findings indicate a possible shift away from writing about violence against females in teen magazines. One possibility of this shift is the recent rise of the teen magazine market, creating more competition among mainstream

teen magazines. This competition may lead magazines to experiment with new formats, layouts, and content in order to attract readers, as evidenced by *Teen's* shift in layout and content in 2001. While conclusions about this subject can not be made from this analysis, the findings regarding a possible decrease in content on violence against females warrant discussion and attention to be brought to the potential impact of a shift away from discussing violence against females in teen magazines.

Influence of Pop Culture and Teen Magazines

The teen magazine market has exploded since the beginning of the 21st century. The blueprint for teen magazines, including glossy images, flashy text, advice and quizzes, is not solely restricted to magazines. In the summer of 2003, *Revolve: The Complete New Testament*, a flashy Bible directed to teenage girls, was released to educate girls and "fire up its audience and prompt them to actively spread the Gospel" (Bader, 11/26/2003: 1). Modeled after suggestions from a focus group of 1,000 girls, *Revolve* is equipped with advice columns, quizzes, and beauty tips, along with a contemporary translation of the Scripture written specifically for teenage girls. Teen magazines are a force in popular culture, shaping not only young females through the content they disseminate, but also other markets, forms of media, and even religion.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that "mass culture abounds with sexist and otherwise problematic representations of adolescent girls" (Durham, 1999: 211; Duffy and Gotcher, 1996; Durham, 1998; Pierce, 1990). My study adds to this body of knowledge by demonstrating the representations of young, female victims as blameworthy. Do these representations distributed through pop culture mediums have an impact or are readers capable of resisting such images? Interview research done on other

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facets of teen magazines and adolescents show it is safe to assume that while some readers may resist the material, some will also trust it.

Adolescent girls do not obtain their information about social events and issues from the same sources as adults. While adults use television and newspapers as key sources of information, McRobbie found that teen girls seldom watched television news programs and their "only prolonged contact with the written word [is] at school and through their own and their mothers' magazines" (1983: 256). Triese and Gotthoffer also discovered that the use of magazines for information was high among females (2002: 177). Past research has established that adolescent females deem teen magazine content "credible" (Treise and Gotthoffer, 2002: 177; Currie, 1999; Kaplan and Cole, 2003), as well as described the ways in which young females go to adolescent magazines for answers to questions about sexuality, femininity, and relationships. In addition, Kaplan and Cole found that adolescent girls were interested in articles about violence against females, specifically about abusive intimate relationships (2003: 150).

With that in mind, it is important to assess how teen magazine content is reaching readers. This study found that content on violence against females is most frequently distributed through advice columns, feature articles, and secondary articles. Adolescent girls prefer these sections of teen magazines as they discuss "real-life" situations (Currie, 1999: 162). McRobbie argues that teens prefer advice columns because they provide "an open forum for an audience with little or no access to conventional therapeutic venues" (as cited in Currie, 1999: 163). Although a debate exists over the purpose of advice columns (whether they induce pleasure or anxiety), what is apparent is that young females find advice columns valuable and turn to them for guidance.

Content on violence against females appears in highly read areas of magazines, typically explaining "real-life" situations that young females have experienced. Findings from past interview studies reveal that teen girls are learning from adolescent beauty/fashion magazines. These findings alone are enough to justify exploration of messages sent through adolescent beauty/fashion magazines.

Adolescent Beauty/Fashion Magazines and Violence against Females: Through a Feminist Cultural Studies Framework

The importance of examining content on violence against females through a feminist lens cannot be overstated. Feminist theories and perspectives of violence against females focus on the root causes of violence and the social structures of gender, power, and control, attacking the subordination of females at the source. All forms of violence against females include the key elements of gender and power, necessitating a feminist lens. Although males are more likely to be victimized than females, females are more likely to be victimized by male intimate partners (Stanko, 1995). "For women the meaning of violence is interwoven with their experiences of *being women*" (Stanko, 1995: 219). For that very reason, it is essential to apply feminist underpinnings and perspectives to studies on violence against females.

In addition, this study was focused on the messages disseminated to readers about gender, power, violence, and abuse through a popular culture site aimed at young females. Through a feminist cultural studies framework, meaning is able to be made out of the vast and differently focused items on violence against females in teen magazines.

Adolescent beauty/fashion magazines perpetuate dominant ideologies of gender, sexuality, and violence against females through items on rape/sexual assault, intimate

partner violence, sexual harassment, and violence by non-intimates within the family. Other researchers have used the term "missing discourse" to discuss the failure to address desire and sexuality in teen magazines and school education (Durham, 1998; Fine, 1988; Higgins and Tolman, 1997). My analysis demonstrates a "missing discourse" of realities, dynamics, and societal explanations of violence against females.

A feminist cultural studies framework aids in situating teen magazine content within its institutional context. Mainstream teen magazines are located within "powerful, privately owned publishing apparatus[es] which [produce] a vast range of newspapers, magazines," and television programs (McRobbie, 1983: 256). These corporations are focused on profit through selling the magazines, as well as advertising space in the magazines. As Cathleen Black, President of Hearst Magazines and the only woman out of ten individuals on the executive of Hearst Corporation, stated when they purchased *Seventeen* magazine for 182.4 million dollars, "the *Seventeen* acquisition enhances our standing in the teen marketplace and makes us an exceptional value for advertisers looking to tap into this growing market" (Hearst Corp. to buy top teen magazine, April 25, 2003). Carpenter notes:

> Because selling magazines and advertisements are their overriding concerns (McCracken, 1993; McRobbie, 1991), the owners and editors of teen magazines need to attract and maintain large audiences over time. To accomplish this, they must not only provide content designed to appeal to a wide variety of potential readers but also take precautions not to alienate advertisers, readers, or the parents who financially underwrite many readers' purchases (Fiske, 1989 as cited in Carpenter, 1998: 160).

My findings demonstrate that teen magazines promote status quo notions and that dominant ideologies are encoded in material on violence against females. These dominant ideologies uphold traditional values of femininity, as well as the myths around

violence against females that promote victim blaming and dichotomization of the victim. The roles of masculinity and femininity; dominant ideas of family and the roles of individuals in the family; dominant ideas of sex and expressions of sexuality; and the responsibility of females and males in acts of violence against females and responses to such violence and/or abuse are some of the ideologies which are distributed through teen magazine content on violence against females.

Further, advertising space and the "spokesmen" (Hall et al., 1978) of the corporations that own adolescent beauty/fashion magazines also affect the material produced in teen magazines. Teen magazines must generate material that will 'please' advertisers, as well as the individuals (mostly men) who own and work in top positions of the corporations that are ultimately focused on "profit and maintaining the status quo" (Wray and Steele, 2002: 193). Challenging the dominant ideologies of violence against females is not widely accepted in society, as it challenges society's dominant ideas and roles of masculinity and femininity in general. This is clearly seen by the fact that feminist explanations and responses to violence are still resisted and that "society often colludes in woman battering [and other types of violence against females] by tacitly allowing and, in some ways encouraging, men to maintain power over their female partners" (Sullivan, 1997: 154; Breines and Gordon, 1983; Goodman, Koss, Fitzgerald, Russo, and Keita, 1993). If teen magazines were to actively challenge myths of violence against females and take the focus off of the victim, they would also be challenging greater society's notions of what it means to be male and female in North America.

Challenging these notions could ultimately affect the circulation of the magazines. Therefore, it would likely be unprofitable for teen magazines to challenge engrained

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notions of violence against females, as they may lose advertisers who rely on those embedded concepts of femininity and masculinity to sell products (i.e. beauty products, clothing). It is more profitable for teen magazines to maintain the status quo notions of femininity, masculinity, and violence against females and present ambiguous messages about violence against females as they are more likely to be accepted by readers and readers' parents, and there is more possibility of attracting advertisers. This concept also relates to the notion of teen magazines fearing feminism. Actively disseminating material based on feminist concepts of gender, power, and control would also necessitate the challenging of engrained societal standards of masculinity and femininity. By distributing ambiguous material, teen magazines can appear to be offering a number of viewpoints while still presenting one (usually conservative) viewpoint as the best option (Carpenter, 1998: 161).

Adolescent beauty/fashion magazines are what Althusser termed "ideological state apparatuses" (van Zoonen, 1994: 24), disseminating ideological positions of the powerful. Teen magazines are socializing agents; they have the ability to educate young readers about important social issues. However, without recognizing and incorporating the "missing discourse" around violence against females, they will continue to promote rape myths and sustain patriarchal ideas about femininity and violence against females. Lastly, it is important to point out that teen magazines are not "solely responsible for nurturing this ideology of femininity. Nor would such an ideology cease to exist should [they] stop publication" (McRobbie, 1983: 252). These are ideas that are engrained in our society.

Chapter six has summarized and detailed the implications and potential impacts of my research, focusing on the individualization of issues of violence against females. The next and final chapter will sum up the importance of education through popular culture venues, detail my intentions with this research, and conclude with suggestions for future research in this area.

CHAPTER SEVEN: EDUCATION THROUGH POP CULTURE OUTLETS—CONCLUSION

"Your article gave me the hope and inspiration I needed to get out of my abusive relationship. I knew if Jennifer could get out, then so could I. These kinds of stories give inspiration to girls everywhere..." (K.J, 14, as cited in *Teen*, July 1999: 18)

Teen magazines are a "privileged site" (McRobbie, 1983: 256) with the capacity to create and change readers' understanding of violence against females. Educating the younger generation about sexism through popular culture sites is needed to aid in the fight to break the system that promotes myths of violence against females, victim blaming, and the conspiracy of silence.

It is not my intention to negate the positive information that teen magazines disseminate to young readers about violence against females. It is important to learn self protection techniques and to think about fighting back in case of an assault. It is important to understand that brutal assaults by strangers do occur. It is probably even important to have a bit of fear about male violence against females. However, it is harmful to impose these concepts upon adolescent readers without placing them in their social and cultural contexts.

Adolescent girls must be educated about the realities of violence against females. It is important for them to understand that they are more likely to be assaulted by someone they know and that an assault by an acquaintance, date, boyfriend, lover, husband, or family member is just as serious, brutal, and traumatic as an assault by a stranger, if not more so. They must understand that nothing a female does is justification for an assault; that dressing sexy, walking at night, and drinking are not reasons to be assaulted. Nothing justifies violence against females. It is essential that teenage girls

understand that violence against females is about power and control, not love, sex, or lust. Educating about these realities is an important step in combating the myths, victim blaming, the 'good' vs. 'bad' dichotomy, and the violence and abuse.

We must be educating female teenagers about the structural domination as well as teaching them how to protect themselves from violence. Simply promoting self protection supports the idea that a victim can deserve or provoke violence. It is imperative that the onus be taken off of the victim. We have to stop asking, "Why did **you** stay in that abusive relationship?" and "Why were **you** walking home alone at night?"

However, educating about the realities of violence against females through merely changing the content of articles on violence against females is not enough. The frequent messages promoted about finding, needing, and keeping a boyfriend; the need for fashion and beauty; and the sexualized image of young females have to change as well. While it may be argued by some that teen magazines are just providing the young readers with what they want to read (which would serve the purposes of both the readers and the publishers), it is apparent that *Teen* magazine's circulation dropped drastically after the revamping of the magazine to remove advice columns and real-life stories to focus more on fashion and celebrities. Young teens want information about events that are going on in their lives, as well as information about fashion and celebrities.

A collective response from social, legal, and educational interventions is necessary to combat violence against females. Most importantly, it is essential that adolescents are educated and taught to educate (their friends (male and female), family members, boyfriends) about the truths of violence against females. Furthermore, teenage

girls have to be educated through forums which they enjoy, trust, and use often. Teen magazines must be part of this collective response, for they are an active part of female adolescents' lives.

Future Research

The nature of research always raises more questions about the issues analyzed. The topic of violence against females could be approached from many different angles and below are some suggestions for future research in this area.

Certainly, interviewing adolescent girls about how they interpret material on violence against females in teen magazines is essential. Several interview studies on teen magazine content have been conducted; however, none have focused on how readers are interpreting material on violence against females. As I only examined content, I was only able to make informed speculation on the potential impact of the content on violence against females. Along with analyzing the content, we must also have a grasp on how adolescent girls are consuming and understanding the mixed messages about violence against females sent through teen magazines.

Continuing a quantitative and qualitative content analysis on items on violence against females to determine if the decrease in frequency of items in 2002 was random or the result of a shift regarding items on violence against females would be interesting. The findings suggest that with the decrease in frequency and the decrease in advertising items about violence against females on the cover, content on violence against females may not be considered as important as it was throughout the 1990's. Given the recent surge of new mainstream teen magazines in the last three years, the teen magazine market may see changes in the upcoming years. The recent changes have already affected *Teen*,

one of the long-time, top ranking magazines. Assessing any shifts in format or differences in messages disseminated would be an important addition to research in this area.

Material on violence against females in teen magazines is set out in ways that induce fear about being victimized, specifically material on stranger rape/sexual assault. While much of the content is informative, it frequently crosses the line from informative to possibly promoting fear in readers. This thesis raises questions about boundaries in informing adolescent girls about violence against females. What is the boundary between informing girls about protecting themselves from violence and inducing fear about being victimized? Also, if there is a boundary, how often do teen magazines cross that boundary? A project involving content analysis and interviews with readers would effectively demonstrate the potential impact of content that induces fear.

Analyzing the production processes in magazine compilation would be an interesting angle to research in this area. Many questions about the promotion of victim blaming and media cultivation of dominant ideologies in teen magazines could be addressed by examining magazine staff, from the journalists to the executives, and asking who is writing the articles, why those articles are being written, and how decisions are made in the production process.

The content examined in this thesis demonstrates a need to address the power of law and legal language as it relates to violence against females. Many of the items gathered address sexual violations that are not considered 'legally' sexual assault or rape. As the language of sexual assault and rape laws and court proceedings perpetuate the "cultural story" of sexuality (Higgins and Tolman, 1997: 179), it would be interesting to

analyze how the language of rape law is represented in teen magazine content on violence against females. Do the magazines address the myths that are provided by rape law and rape court proceedings? Do they address the language of rape law and how that language causes confusion for young women about sexual violations? Conducting an analysis from this perspective would address systems other than the media that perpetuate dominant ideologies about male violence against females.

As an exploratory study, this thesis contributes to the fields of criminology, sociology, cultural studies, women's studies, and communication. The findings have demonstrated the importance of research in this area as teen magazines are addressing issues of violence against females and a vast number of adolescent girls are reading teen magazines.

APPENDIX A: RAPE MYTHS

1. Rape is sex—as the most powerful myth, the idea that rape is a sexual act denies the elements of power, control, and aggression that are involved. "Rape [is] an act of violence in which sex is used as a weapon" (Benedict, 1992: 14). This myth denies the seriousness of an act that is aggressive, humiliating, painful, and traumatic.
2. The assailant is motivated by lust—ignoring the anger and aggression behind rape, this myth perpetuates the belief that rape is about attraction and sexual desire.
3. The assailant is perverted or crazy—this myth hides the fact that women are more likely to be sexually assaulted by someone who is known to them. Covering the truth, this myth perpetuates the dominant notion that a potential rapist is lurking in the dark alley waiting to attack.
4. The assailant is usually black or lower class—perpetuated by the press, this myth provides the perception that most attacks are by black, low socioeconomic class males against white women. In actuality, most rapes do not cross socioeconomic or racial borders.
5. Women provoke rape—based on the idea that women who dress sexy are provoking sexual reaction by males, this untruth denies the fact that rape is typically a crime of opportunity as opposed to a pre-meditated assault.
6. Women deserve rape—similar to the fifth myth, the misconception that women deserve rape revolves around the notion that women should constantly be "protecting" themselves and avoiding doing anything that may provoke males to assault them.
7. Only "loose" women are victimized—promoting the myth that "only overtly sluttish women are raped," this myth denies the innocence of the victims
8. A sexual attack sullies the victim—rape is seen as sexual as opposed to violent; therefore, it promotes the notion that the victim is tainted or dirty, portraying the victim in a negative image.
9. Rape is punishment for past deeds—also common to crimes other than rape; this myth leads people who are 'good' to rationalize the rape for the victim and to believe they are invulnerable to sexual attack because they haven't done anything 'wrong'.
10. Women cry rape for revenge—denying the innocence of the victims, this myth promotes the image of women as vengeful, manipulative liars who would go through the humiliation and embarrassment of a rape trial to retaliate or get attention.

*Benedict, H. (1992) <u>Virgin or Vamp: How the Press Covers Sex Crimes.</u> New York: Oxford. Pp. 14-19.

APPENDIX B: THE "VAMP" FACTORS

1. If the victim knows the assailant—the victim is more likely to be blamed when she knew the assailant
2. If the assailant did not use a weapon—an assault where a weapon is used is more believable
3. If it was an interracial rape—the victim receives more sympathy when she is white and the assailant is black
4. If the victim and the accused are from the same socioeconomic class—the victim is more credible when she is assaulted by someone of a lower class than her
5. If the victim and the accused are from the same ethnic group—the victim is represented positively if the assailant is of a different ethnic group
6. If the victim is 'young'—a younger woman is seen as more provocative
7. If the victim is 'pretty'—the victim receives more sympathy if she is considered attractive
8. If the victim has strayed from the traditional female sex role—the victim receives more sympathy if she abides by the traditional role of staying at home with her family. The victim tends to be blamed more if she was at a bar or a party when she was victimized

*Benedict, H. (1992) Virgin or Vamp: How the Press Covers Sex Crimes. New York: Oxford. Pp. 19.

APPENDIX C: TYPOLOGY OF FEMALE VICTIMS

The Innocent Victim

1. She is a respectable women
2. She was attacked while she was engaged in a respectable activity
3. The place and time of her attack are considered appropriate for a woman
4. She is weaker than her attacker
5. She wears conservative or modest clothes and jewelry
6. She associates with other respectable women and men
7. She was attacked by an "ideal criminal," a stranger
8. The attack was vicious, resulting in serious injury or death

The Culpable Victim

1. She is a woman of dubious reputation
2. She was attacked while engaged in an activity considered improper for women.
3. She was at a place and/or a time considered unsafe for women
4. She is strong and she could have protected herself
5. She dresses in a provocative or revealing manner, improper for a decent woman
6. She associates with the wrong crowd
7. She was attacked by one of her disreputable friends or by a disreputable stranger
8. Even if she was hurt, she exaggerated or fabricated the nature of the attack

* Madriz, E. (1997). Nothing Bad Happens to Good Girls: Fear of Crime in Women's Lives. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pp. 88.

APPENDIX D: CODING MANUAL

1) Item number: Indicate the three-digit number assigned to the item

2) Magazine: Indicate which magazine the item is in
   1. Teen
   2. Seventeen

3) Date: Specify date in the following format: mmm yy (e.g. jan 99)

4) Gender of writer(s):
   1. Female
   2. Male
   3. Male and female (if co-written)
   4. Advice column: female question, female answer
   5. Advice column: female question, male answer
   6. Advice column: male question, female answer
   7. Don't know/not applicable

5) Type of Item:
   1. Blurb—short piece designed to inform readers about an issue involving violence against females
   2. Advice column written by a male (ex. Dear Jack)
   3. Advice column written by a female (ex. Dear Jill)
   4. Letters to the editor
   5. Letters to the reader—from the editor
   6. Quiz—a quiz designed to discuss aspects of violence against females
   7. Poll of readers: readers are asked a question and the magazine publishes the questions with varying answers from the readers
   8. Feature article—article designed to discuss violence against females
   9. Secondary article—article unrelated to violence against females but mentions violence against females briefly in some form throughout the article (e.g. article about a singer/songwriter who founded a rape abuse hotline; however, most of the article is devoted to discussing the singer's new album).
   10. Other, Specify

6) Types of Sources (List the first five that apply): modified from Chunn, D. and Faucher, C. (2003). Coding Manual for "Feminism, Law and Social Change in Canada." (SSHRC Women and Change Strategic Grant). Burnaby, BC and Ericson et al. (1991).

1. Journalist of organization—journalist that provides knowledge without attributing it to a source, advice columnists
2. Other journalist—journalists who do not work for the magazine in which the item appears
3. Law/justice—victims of any form of violence against females
4. Law/justice—includes all types of legal participants and criminal justice system participants (except victims): law enforcement agencies; lawyers; judges; jury members; correctional officers; prisoners; citizens who were witnesses or informants, suspects, offenders, accused; family and friends of criminal victims, suspects, offenders, accused
5. Other government sources—public administration (individuals involved in administrative branches of government), politicians, civil servants, and all other govt. sources foreign or domestic (ex. U.S. Dept. of Heath and Human Services)
6. Academic experts—affiliation to a University is mentioned, may or may not be talking on behalf of the University
7. Individual professionals—individual professionals with and without affiliation (teachers, school administrators/authorities (includes school authorities who are members of School Boards), psychologists, doctors, social workers, counselors), if article mentions a specific person but does not mention their name, they should be counted here, not as 'unspecified'
8. Individuals without affiliation—vox pop, interviews on the street asking for reaction to issues or events, or individuals named with no mention to their affiliation or affiliation is not important to their statement
9. Community-based organizations—formally organized, non-profit groups such as religious organizations, citizen reform groups focused on a single issue, women's shelters, programs for sexual assault victims
10. Unspecified sources—unnamed sources ('experts', 'observers', 'analysts', 'authorities', 'specialists'...)
11. Other—any other type of source not listed above, Specify
12. Don't know/Not Applicable

7) Source context (List the first five that apply): Indicate the context in which the sources are mentioned as described by Ericson et al. (1991). The item may either explicitly state the context or infer that the reporter was there.

    1. Author—source identified as the author of the item itself, typically includes author's name and organizational affiliation (journalists, persons identified by name, place, and/or organizational affiliation as the authors of letters to the editor or advice columnists)

    2. Interview—source depicted in a one-on-one interview with a journalist (vox-pop interviews when people are asked to give a response to a question, or if there is information that clearly states the reporter was there when the person spoke)

    3. Document—official documents of source organizations

    4. Location not signifying organizational context—a field location in which the source is providing knowledge, but the organizational context in which the source is speaking is not evident; unrecognizable places (on street, anonymous building); when location is mentioned but not relevant to the story (advice column where location is disclosed e.g. Lost in L.A.)

    5. Other—Specify (e.g. book)

    6. No information/Not applicable: person seeking advice from advice column that does not disclose his/her location; location is not mentioned; unable to determine how author obtained information from source

8) Knowledge (List the first five that apply): Indicate all the types of knowledge offered as identified by Ericson et al. (1991). Combine the numbers below to create new code when more than one type of knowledge is offered by source (ex. if source offers primary and evaluative knowledge the code would be 14, 1=primary and 4=evaluative)

    1. Primary—factual, asking 'what happened?'

    2. Secondary—explanatory, asking 'why did that happen?'

    3. Tertiary—emotional, empathetic, asking 'what was it like to be involved in what happened?'

    4. Evaluative—judging, moral, 'was what happened good or bad?'

    5. Recommendation—suggesting, 'what should be done about what happened'

    6. Not applicable—(ex. poll or survey of readers)

9) Type of Violence/Abuse discussed in item (List all that apply): For the purposes of this study, violence is defined in its broadest context including acts that inflict "emotional, psychological, sexual, physical, and/or material damage" (Stanko, 1995). Abuse is defined as "a pattern of coercive control that one person exercises over another" (Definition of Abuse, 1/18/04).

1. Date rape/acquaintance rape—rape or sexual assault by an individual known to the victim, excluding intimate partners and other family members
    1) Yes
    2) No

2. Stranger rape—rape or sexual assault by an individual not known by the victim
    1) Yes
    2) No

3. Violence/abuse by an intimate partner (Specify which type(s) of violence/abuse—e.g. physical, emotional, etc.)—violent or abusive acts by an individual in a romantic relationship (dating, common law, or marriage) with the victim. Includes physical, verbal, emotional, sexual (including rape/sexual assault), economic, and symbolic (indirect abuse, ex. breaking something special to the victim but never actually physically harming the victim) abuse.
    1) Yes, specify
    2) No

4. Violence/abuse by a non-intimate within the family (Specify which type(s) of violence/abuse—e.g. physical, emotional, etc.)—violent or abusive acts of any nature (physical, verbal, sexual [including rape/sexual assault], symbolic, or emotional) perpetrated by a family member against a female family member.
    1) Yes, specify
    2) No

5. Sexual harassment—inappropriate, threatening, and harassing behavior (verbal comments or behavior) by any individual, especially someone in a relationship of power over the victim (e.g. teacher/student relationship). Includes harassment that takes place in a setting where sexual harassment policies are enacted (e.g. workplace, school) or in settings in which there are no policies (e.g. street, parties).
    1) Yes
    2) No

6. Other
    1) Yes, specify
    2) No

10) Other topics discussed in the item (List the first three that apply):
  1. Homicide
  2. Suicide
  3. Kidnapping
  4. Depression
  5. Running away from home
  6. Alcohol/drug use and abuse
  7. Stalking
  8. Death threats
  9. Defending yourself/how to protect yourself
  10. Adult-minor relationships with large age difference (e.g. teenage female and 30 year old male or student/teacher relationships)
  11. Other-specify
  12. Not applicable

11) Cover: Is the item advertised on the cover of the magazine?
  1. Yes
  2. No

12) Size of the item: Select the size of the item according to list below.
  1. Blurb—one paragraph or less
  2. Short—2-4 paragraphs
  3. Medium—5-9 paragraphs
  4. Long—10-19 paragraphs
  5. Very long—20 or more paragraphs

13) Images: Are there images/photos in the item? If so, describe them.
  1. Yes, describe
  2. No

14) Does the item title adequately indicate the main focus of the item?
  1. Yes
  2. No
  3. Partly—if the title is related to issues addressed in the item but not the main focus or main topic of the item
  4. Not applicable—if there is no title or if it is a section/generic heading

15) Does the item title on the cover adequately indicate the main focus of the item? Some items are advertised on the cover of the magazine; however, many times it is not the same title. Indicate whether the title on the cover reflects the main focus of the item.
  1. Yes
  2. No
  3. Partly—if the title is related to issues addressed in the item but not the main focus or main topic of the item
  4. Not applicable—if there is no title or if it is section/generic heading

16) Location of the assault (List the first three that apply):
1. School—any type of school (elementary, high school, college, University,...) and any activity related to school activities (school trips, school sporting events, in class ...)
2. Workplace
3. Party
4. Residence of person responsible for/accused of assault/harassment
5. Residence of victim of assault/harassment
6. Residence—shared by both victim and person responsible for/accused of assault/harassment
7. Other—specify
8. Don't Know/Not Applicable

17) Number of victims discussed in the item:
1. One
2. Two
3. Three or more
4. Not applicable

18) Rape Myths: Does the item reiterate rape myths? Specify which of the rape myths distinguished by Benedict (1992) and listed below are reiterated in the item (List all the rape myths that apply). Reiteration includes statements that directly or indirectly discuss the rape myths without challenging them (e.g. "Rape is about sex," discussion that may state a woman could get raped because she is dressing provocatively, an item that specifies the demographics [race, age, socioeconomic status] of a rapist/alleged rapist but does not specify the demographics of the victim).

A) Rape is sex—as the most powerful myth, the idea that rape is a sexual act denies the elements of power, control, and aggression that are involved. This myth denies the seriousness of an act that is aggressive, humiliating, painful, and traumatic.

B) The assailant is motivated by lust—ignoring the anger and aggression behind rape, this myth perpetuates the belief that rape is about attraction and sexual desire.

C) The assailant is perverted or crazy—this myth hides the fact that women are more likely to be sexually assaulted by someone who is known to them. Covering the truth, this myth perpetuates the dominant notion that a potential rapist is lurking in the dark alley waiting to attack.

D) The assailant is usually black or lower class—perpetuated by the press, this myth gives the perception that most attacks are by black, low socioeconomic class males against white women. In actuality, most rapes do not cross socioeconomic or racial borders.

E) Women provoke rape—based on the idea that women who dress sexy are provoking sexual reaction by males, this untruth denies the fact that rape is typically a crime of opportunity as opposed to a pre-meditated assault.

F) Women deserve rape—similar to the fifth myth, the misconception that women deserve rape revolves around the notion that women should constantly be "protecting" themselves and avoiding doing anything that may provoke males to assault them.

G) Only "loose" women are victimized—promoting the myth that "only overtly sluttish women are raped," this myth denies the innocence of the victims

H) A sexual attack sullies the victim—rape is seen as sexual as opposed to violent; therefore, it promotes the notion that the victim is tainted or dirty, portraying the victim in a negative image.

I) Rape is punishment for past deeds—also common to crimes other than rape; this myth leads people who are 'good' to rationalize the rape for the victim and to believe they are invulnerable to sexual attack because they haven't done anything 'wrong'.

J) Women cry rape for revenge—denying the innocence of the victims, this myth promotes the image of women as vengeful, manipulative liars who would go through the humiliation and embarrassment of a rape trial to retaliate or get attention

1. Yes, specify
2. No
3. Not applicable—item not related to rape/sexual assault or not enough information

19) Rape Myths: Does the item challenge rape myths? Specify which of the rape myths distinguished by Benedict (1992) and listed above are challenged in the item (List all the rape myths that apply). Challenging a rape myth includes statements that directly or indirectly contest the rape myths (e.g. "Rape is not about sex and lust, it is about power and control," not including the demographics [race, age, socioeconomic status]of a rapist/alleged rapist in the item).

    1. Yes, specify
    2. No
    3. Not applicable—item not related to rape/sexual assault or not enough information

20) Virgin or Vamp (List the first three that apply): Does the item portray the victim(s) in either the virgin or vamp categories as established by Benedict (1992). Specify which factors are discussed or implied in the item (List all the factors that apply). According to Benedict, a victim is typically placed in one of these two categories based upon the characteristics of the assault and the characteristics of the people discussing the crime. Benedict lists eight factors that influence the media and the public to blame the victim and place her in the "vamp" category.

a) If the victim knows the assailant—the victim is more likely to be blamed when she knew the assailant
b) If the assailant did not use a weapon—an assault where a weapon is used is more believable
c) If it was an interracial rape—the victim receives more sympathy when she is white and the assailant is black
d) If the victim and the accused are from the same socioeconomic class—the victim is more credible when she is assaulted by someone of a lower class than her
e) If the victim and the accused are from the same ethnic group—the victim is represented positively if the assailant is of a different ethnic group
f) If the victim is 'young'—a younger woman is seen as more provocative
g) If the victim is 'pretty'—the victim receives more sympathy if she is considered attractive
h) If the victim has strayed from the traditional female sex role—the victim receives more sympathy if she abides by the traditional role of staying at home with her family. The victim tends to be blamed more if she was at a bar or a party when she was victimized

    1. Yes, virgin, specify
    2. Yes, vamp, specify
    3. Yes, 2nd victim, virgin, specify
    4. Yes, 3rd victim, virgin, specify
    5. Yes, 2nd victim, vamp, specify
    6. Yes, 3rd victim, vamp, specify
    7. No, but item is about rape/sexual assault
    8. Not applicable, item not about rape/sexual assault, item about rape/sexual assault but no victim involved, or less than three victims discussed in the item, or not enough information

21) Explanations of violence against females (List the first three that apply): Indicate which explanations listed below are used to explain the violent and/or abusive acts against females discussed in the item

1. Structural—historical tradition of patriarchal domination, male's position of power in society, sense of male entitlement, perpetuation of misogynistic beliefs, subordination of women in society, power/control (act committed to exert power and control over the victim because male feels he has a right to abuse given his 'status' as male)
2. Cultural-- cultural values and norms that may help to normalize or promote violence against females, includes the notion that 'boys will be boys' or it's a 'guy' thing as these are cultural stories that permit males to be sexually and physically aggressive.
3. Individual (Assailant)—sex/lust (committed out of sexual desire or lust), pathology (idea that assailant is 'perverted', 'crazy', suffering from a mental/psychological disorder), cycle of violence (abusive males who came from an abusive family), alcohol/drug use or abuse, self-image problems, stress
4. Individual (Victim)-- provoked act in some form (idea that a women provoked the act in some way, e.g. dressing sexy, not having dinner ready on time), alcohol/drug use or abuse—article states or infers that incident occurred because victim was under the influence (includes articles that state assaults are more likely to happen when the female is intoxicated; does not include cases when victim is drugged unknowingly by assailant)
5. Other--Specify
6. Don't know/Not applicable-- items that are unable to distinguish the explanations or items not addressing explanations of violence against females

22) Responses to violence against females (List the first three that apply): Indicate which responses listed below are stated in the item as ways to respond to or prevent violence against females.

1. Legal Interventions/Criminalization—arrest, swift intervention, strictness in punishment, consistency in punishment/treatment for all groups, any other way that the criminal justice system is involved. Also includes civil court suits, proceedings and all the actors involved in such proceedings.

2. Social Interventions—provide resources and services for females (e.g. shelters, job readiness programs, counseling), support groups, community responses, support through religion and church

3. Education—educate about the structural inequalities between females and males, history of violence against females, gender socialization, power and control involved in violence against females in schools and/or through media

4. Structural Interventions--change system/political activism/policy changes; more equality between females and males in society; explore links between race, culture, poverty and violence against females; empower females

5. Individualized Intervention (Victim)—self-help (females take initiative to help themselves, prevent immediate harm, therapy), self-defense (females learning to protect themselves physically from attack), talk to him about his behavior (tell him it bothers/scares you), break up, leave him, divorce

6. Individualized Intervention (Victim) cont.—informing parents of incidents of violence against females [separate category because parents may engage in any of the responses listed here with or w/out victims approval/permission]

7. Individualized Intervention (Assailant)—programs that teach violent males skills and abilities to control violence, counseling

8. Other—Specify

9. Don't know/Not applicable—items that are unable to distinguish the suggested responses or items not addressing responses to violence against females

APPENDIX E: LIST OF ITEMS

Teen

1) Is he too Possessive?, May 1992, pg. 12, 14

2) Dear Jack: Scared for Her, May 1992, pg. 50

3) He's Ready, You're Not, September 1992, pg. 14, 16

4) Dear Jack: Out of Control, November 1992, pg. 14

5) "I was Raped: Two Teens Tell their Terrifying Stories, November 1992, pgs. 16, 18, 114

6) Ask Juli, March 1993, pg. 22

7) "I was Sexually Abused", May 1993, pgs. 22, 24-25

8) Meet these Extraordinary Teens, September 1993, pgs. 126-127

9) Ask Juli, November 1993, pg. 6

10) Dating Dilemmas: Are you a Prisoner of Love?, January 1994, pg. 49

11) On the Defensive, March 1994, pgs. 40, 42

12) Ask Jack, July 1994, pg. 8

13) "He Stalked Me:" Love that Wouldn't go away, September 1994, pg. 73-74, 76-78

14) Ask Jack, November 1994, pg. 14

15) Rape: The Scary Reality, November 1994, pg. 40, 42, 90

16) The Highs and Lows of Teen Drinking, March 1995, pgs. 42, 44

17) Your Letters: True Believers, May 1995, pg. 10

18) Ask Jack, May 1995, pg. 14

19) True Stories: Boyfriend Abuse—Troubled Love, May 1995, pg. 52-53

20) "My Stepfather Murdered My Mom", July 1995, pg. 42-44

21) Your Letters, September 1995, pg. 6

22) Diary of a Runaway, November 1995, pg. 58-61

23) What You Should Know about Sexual Harassment, March 1996, pgs. 54-55, 112

24) Real True Story: My Boyfriend Kidnapped Me, May 1996, pg. 50, 53-54

25) Your Letters: Notes and Quotes from You, September 1996, pg. 8

26) Ask Juli: Take her Advice, January 1997, pg. 12

27) The Slant on Sexual Harassment, March 1997, pg. 62

28) Date Rape, July 1997, pg 70-71

29) Your Letters: Notes and Quotes from You, January 1998, pg. 11

30) Halt Harassment, January 1998, pg. 28

31) Your Letters: Notes and Quotes from You, March 1998, pg. 12

32) Ask Juli: Take her Advice, July 1998, pg. 26

33) Ask a Guy, July 1998, pg. 33

34) Ask Juli: Take her Advice, September 1998, pg. 36

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