ADVERTISING DOMESTICITY: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF TRADITIONAL MESSAGES IN SEVENTEEN MAGAZINE, 1946-1948

A Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty of the University of Akron

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

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August, 2008
ADVERTISING DOMESTICITY: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF TRADITIONAL MESSAGES IN SEVENTEEN MAGAZINE, 1946-1948

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ABSTRACT

Americans saw many social changes in the years immediately following World War II. Young women in post-war America looked to magazines for guidance and support, *Seventeen* magazine in particular. This study takes a closer look at the advertisements in *Seventeen* magazine for the years 1946, 1947, and 1948. A content analysis was performed using only full-page advertisements for the months of February, April, August, and November. The advertisements were analyzed according to their target audience, product category, and traditional message sent through the advertisement. Both quantitative and qualitative elements of the advertisements were analyzed.

Through research, both teenage girls (ages 12-16) and coming-of-age young women (ages 17-24) emerged as the target audiences for the advertisements. The groups were close in age, but differed in social, school, fashion, and romantic needs. Traditional messages of ‘looking good’ or ‘finding a man’ were discovered to be predominate in most advertisements. Through close examination, the products advertised were then placed into the six product categories of dress defined for this study: clothing, shoes, lingerie, accessories, cosmetics, or grooming aids. The product category with the highest percentage of full-page advertisements overall was clothing, followed by lingerie, shoes, accessories, cosmetics, and grooming aids.
Overall, the messages focused on beauty and romance, leaving career almost entirely out of the picture. The traditional roles of the new American dream of security, marriage, and home life (even if not for a few years) ran throughout the advertisements. Whether or not the quintessential housewife of the 1950s depicted in women’s magazines was the true result of the grooming of young women in Seventeen in the late 1940s is debatable. If these young women did fulfill the traditional messages sent to them, it is quite possible that the advertisements in Seventeen aided in their decisions to take on such roles.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of my graduate school professor and thesis advisor, Dr. Sandra Stansbery Buckland. Her patience, helpfulness, and assistance to my future success will not be forgotten. I would also like to thank my graduate professors Dr. Teena Jennings-Rentenaar and Dr. Virginia Gunn for their contributions to my education and sharing of their knowledge. In addition, Dr. Catherine Amoroso Leslie, for her continued friendship, guidance, and support throughout my academic and professional career. I would like to send a very special thank you to my fiancé, Patrick Santa Maria, for his patience, encouragement, and continual love. Lastly, I wish to thank my family, especially my parents, Susan P. and Charles F. DeLong III, as they continue to support me, teach me, and love me, always.
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CHAPTER I

AMERICAN LIFE IN THE POST-WAR ERA

Background Information

The years immediately following World War II forever changed the way women felt about their roles in society. It was a time of transition in every aspect of life. A new, improved country was spreading its wings, shedding light on a new way of life. Patriotism was soaring and a nation, both its men and women, had united to successfully accomplish the task of putting an end to the war. American life after World War II transformed the meaning of the American dream.

Survival was not the worry of the American people as it had been in the years of the Depression and the World Wars. Instead, they began filling their lives with the new prosperities that the outcome of the war had brought: money, marriage, children, cars, and a house in the suburbs perfectly manicured both inside and out. With this newly defined dream came newly defined roles for women and their places in society. It was a time of transition in understanding where women stood in society as a whole and where they stood with themselves personally. Confused and frustrated with the multiple demands placed on them in this newly transformed society, women, especially young women, looked to the media, such as fashion, home, and family magazines, for guidance on how to behave and what to wear. An even younger woman, the teenage girl, was
looking to magazines for guidance as well. She was looking for how to behave like the new, ideal lady, differently than her mother or older sister had behaved during the war. This teenage girl turned to one magazine in particular; the magazine designed especially for her, *Seventeen*.

To look at the roles these teenage girls were to take on in their young adult lives, we must first take a closer look at the country in which they were being raised and the national feeling of this country that led to the prim and perfect housewives the teenage girls, ideally, were to become. The United States was forever changed both socially and economically as a result of the war, and the changes that were underway in the years immediately after the war transformed who these young women were to become.


> The majority of veterans were young men eager to make up for lost time. They and their wives gave the postwar era its special character, which was determined by their needs and values, the result of common experiences in war and peace. Optimistic, ambitious, hard-working, determined, they knew what they wanted and, to an impressive degree, secured it.”¹

The author later stated that the war generation wanted to go back to a more secure time of values and traditional practices, back, even beyond their parents. In this they succeeded by creating large, stable, suburban families.²

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²Ibid., 44.
For the first time in almost twenty years, Americans were not held back financially or through war restrictions. Social changes were taking place as men returned home from the war and women returned to the roles of housewives and mothers, roles that had been put on hold as many worked outside of the home for the war effort. Economic prosperity and the help of GI benefits made marriage a possibility and more people married, and at a younger age than ever before. According to Susan M. Hartmann, the median age of first marriages for women dropped from 21.5 to 20.3 in the late 1940s. The median age of first marriages for men also dropped from 24.3 to 22.7 during this time. Marriages by 1946 were at a record high, 2.3 million. It is important to note that divorces were also at a record high of 600,000 in 1946. Though this record leveled off by 1950, the divorce rate was still higher than that before the war. A couple rushing to get married before the man was shipped off was often cited as the cause of this high divorce rate, though most remarried soon after their divorce. These new families were having babies in record breaking numbers. In 1945, 1.212 million births occurred and this number continued to rise every year, except one, until it peaked in 1957. It is also important to mention the stress put on these new families due to the lack of housing available for young married couples after the war. Five million families were looking for housing, having to double up with family and friends or live in makeshift homes on college campuses, or in sheds and boxcars. It was not until the early 1950s that the housing problems started to become resolved with the migration of families to the newly built prefabricated housing, in the new suburbs.3

The end of the war brought new gains as well as new fears. The economy was soaring, but there was also another war taking place, the Cold War, and it had Americans anxious about what the future might bring. Communism was considered the biggest threat of all. The inner belief of total containment within one’s own country was taking hold. Post-war Americans wanted to feel safe and secure in their new lives. In *Homeward Bound: American Families In the Cold War Era*, author Elaine Tyler May wrote about how these young families felt toward the Cold War saying, “They wanted secure jobs, secure homes and secure marriages in a secure country.” She further stated that “containment” would be the “overarching principle” that would guide post-war Americans in pursuit of their personal and political lives.5

A strong economy was a positive result of the war. As stated in *Divided Lives: American Women in the Twentieth Century*, by Rosalind Rosenberg, “a continued level of military spending spurred by cold war tensions, staved off the depression that so many feared would follow World War II.” The American military’s fear of Russian attack was successful for the American economy because the military continued to spend huge amounts of money in anticipation of an attack from the Soviet Union. The continuation of military spending encouraged consumer spending as well, and, for the first time since the early 1920s, Americans had money to splurge. Families banked at least 25 percent of their disposable income during the war, and they were now ready to spend it on new

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5 Ibid.

goods in the post-war years. The average income rose 50 percent between 1935 and 1950. Also, by 1950 the poverty rate declined to 27 percent from 33 percent in 1940.  

The life that this new war generation would lead was different than any American had led in the past. The new values cherished would forever change what American society calls the “American Dream.” A new lifestyle and way of life was born. May described this new lifestyle in *Homeward Bound* as:

The legendary family of the 1950s, complete with appliances, station wagons, backyard barbecues, and tricycles scattered on the sidewalks, represented something new. It was not, as common wisdom tells us, the last gasp of “traditional” family life with roots deep in the past. Rather, it was the first wholehearted effort that would create a home that would fulfill virtually all its members’ personal needs through an energized and expressive personal life.

Though new ways of life were taking shape in what many called positive ways, women seemed to be the most affected by the repercussions of the post-war changes. Some of these changes have taken decades to figure out and, in some cases, to overcome. Grown women, college-age young women, and teenage girls all had to figure out how to live successfully in this new society of the post-war era.

**Adult Women in Post-War America**

Men returning from the war came back to find themselves lost in a life that had been run by women in their absence. It was a difficult time for the returning soldiers as they had to make the adjustment from military to civilian life. Women, too, felt strange in this new time. Many of them had become accustomed to taking care of all the household and financial needs, and they were having difficulties finding a comfortable place in this new era. Gender roles were changing, especially those of women.

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7 May, 140.
8 Ibid., 11.
During World War II, women took on many new roles beyond homemaker, from farmer to factory worker, to help their country and bring its men home. For the first time, they ran the show and were in charge of themselves and their family’s well being. A new sense of power and self-reliance emerged and, with it, new ideas of what women could do. Doris Weatherford stated in her book, *American Women and World War II*:

A woman was - whether she liked it or not - responsible for her own life, while every action her husband took was directed by a commander above. It may be argued that men did not learn true bravery nor develop the self-reliance that their wives did.9

This is not to put down the strenuous efforts given by men, but it is a reasonable call to the attention of this new aspect of women’s roles. It was traditionally the duty of the man to fret over his family and work to make ends meet. Now he was off to war, possibly never to return, and women began to figure things out on their own.

Margaret Barnard Pickel, a women’s advisor at Columbia University and a woman thinking ahead of her time, was wise in telling women the possible woes of post-war employment in her article, “A Warning to the Career Woman” in *The New York Times Magazine*, July 1944. She stated, “We should not take a temporary condition as a guarantee for the future, nor should we take an exception and make a rule for it.”10 She was telling young women to be aware of their education and what types of things to study. She talked of how there were more women in pre-engineering than ever before, but warned women students that after the war there would be no jobs for them. She

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encouraged women students to continue with the traditional studies of home and child care, or possibility venture into teaching, interior design, garden landscaping, or nursing where they would be in demand after the war. When facing reality, she stated, “We can be better prepared for it if we forget our wishes and consult probabilities.”\textsuperscript{11} Pickel was trying to help young women, in a way that foresaw what the future of career women was to become.

Women had been called to men’s work, but they were constantly reminded of the importance of being wife and mother first and foremost. There were three conditions Hartmann noted in her book, \textit{The Home Front and Beyond}, which set limits on social change for women. The first condition noted that these changes were only “for the duration.”\textsuperscript{12} The second condition stated that women should retain their “femininity” while doing masculine jobs.\textsuperscript{13} The third condition noted that the media emphasized, “women took war jobs to bring their men home more quickly and to help make the world a more secure place for their children.”\textsuperscript{14} She went on to state,

Thus as women moved into the public sphere, they were reminded that their new positions were temporary, that retaining the traditional feminine characteristics was essential, and that their familial roles continued to take precedence over all others.\textsuperscript{15}

The end of the war brought several changes, even distress, for women who had gained so much independence and self-reliance during the war years. Keep in mind that

\textsuperscript{11} Pickel, 32.

\textsuperscript{12} Hartmann, 23.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
women were constantly reminded that they were doing war work and that after the war they were expected to jump right back into their domestic roles. So much had changed for women, and with these changes came new feelings about women’s roles. William Henry Chafe described the time saying, “The Postwar years became a period of testing, a time of transition, in which women themselves, and the society at large, sought to determine the proper boundaries of women’s sphere.”

Women were pulled in several directions as to where to go and what to do after the war. Chafe described a term called the “woman problem,” a term used by the media to describe the now, unhappy women after the war. He explained that the feminist view of this idea pointed to the suggestion that women now felt tied to the home. The anti-feminist view was just the opposite. The anti-feminist felt the women were unhappy because they had parted too far from their domestic roles.

The new topic of concern for women was whether they should continue to work after the war (if they were able to keep their current job or find new employment) or whether they should go back to the traditional roles of wife and mother. Though many women were working before the war, most of them were doing so out of necessity. Now, middle class women whose families could financially afford for them not to work began to have the desire to do so anyway. The war years gave them a sense of accomplishment and importance, a feeling many women did not get from an unappreciative husband and children. So what was to happen to these women who wanted to continue working?

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17 Ibid., 200.
Though almost a million women returned to the home in 1946, there were still one million more women working in factories than there had been in 1940. Some chose to do so because they had become accustomed to a new lifestyle that additional income brought. Others did so by necessity due to wounded, distraught, or deceased husbands that were unable to provide after the war.18

If one opted for the life of wife and mother, it, too, was a struggle. Though it was traditionally thought of as a woman’s most important role, the post-war years were a different time than their mothers had known. With the spread of the suburbs, new mothers moved farther away from their families and those they turned to for advice. It was a scary time for these new mothers. They often turned to books, and they raised many “Dr. Spock babies.”19

The definition of “housework” was redefined. The war brought the availability of several home appliances at a low-cost, such as the clothes washer and dryer, dishwashers, refrigerators, and vacuum cleaners. They were now affordable to middle-class homes, and war factories transferred to manufacturing home appliances to meet the demands of growing families. The availability of synthetic fibers made doing laundry “easier” and the new lines of commercially processed food made cooking a breeze, while having your appliances lightened the physical load. Or did these things make the job of housewife harder than ever before? Hartmann expressed the notion that the work was in fact harder as the housewife “was expected to keep her family cleaner and better fed, her house tidier

18 Chafe, 178.

19 Rosenberg, 150.
and more attractively decorated, herself younger- and lovelier-looking, and her children better adjusted emotionally."20 The physical demands may have improved, but the higher standards of what was expected of the wife and mother caused stress for women who wanted more. Social expectations to have the perfectly decorated home, a happy, successful husband, and well adjusted children relied on the wife’s ability to be an excellent wife and mother.

World War II had changed women’s ideals considerably. Confusion about their roles as worker and wife took a toll on their spirits and dreams. Chafe stated, “The debate over a woman’s place in the 1940s and 1950s failed to result in a new definition of women’s identity, as some had hoped.”21 It was not until over a decade after the war that the new ideas that were generated in the 1940s and 1950s would turn into the feminist movement of the 1960s.

The New American Teenage Girl

In addition to the wars’ effects on adult women, young women and teenage girls found the life after war different than anything anyone could remember. Teenage girls, those enrolled in high school, had a very different experience during the war than that of their mothers or older sisters. They were too young to work and too young to worry about marriage. Though their brothers, uncles, or fathers were off to war, they did not yet have husbands to worry about. A new subculture emerged during World War II, the teenage girl, not quite a woman yet, but definitely not a child.

20 Hartmann, 168.

21 Chafe, 225.
After the war, the numbers of teenagers increased overall. As the number of young adults of high school age who were working full time decreased, and the number of high school students increased. By the 1940s, the definition of teenager, which referred to those who attended high school, expanded by including the economic power, leisure activities, and fashions of this group. This new group defined themselves as being different from both school children and adults. This group began to rely more on their peers and commercial popular culture for guidance on fitting in and entertainment. The new market attracted the national media and business attention. 22

Kelly Schrum wrote, “Academics and others involved with youth noticed this growth of mass-produced, group oriented entertainment popular among teenagers and worried over the loss of creative, individual entertainment.” 23 The importance of appearance, getting a date to the soda shop, and fitting in with the girls was higher than ever and defined how well adjusted and liked by others you were. Etiquette books of the time told teenage girls to be different by having a favorite flower, song, poem, author, color, school subject, sport, movie star, or food because one should have a definite personality, not be a copy of someone else. 24 These books also enforced the rules of manners and conformity by telling girls to order their dinners through their dates, and to look nice when walking to school so one could help create a favorable opinion of one’s


school by their manners and appearance. Teenagers were their own group, who desperately wanted to grow up and live the new American dream, but get there in their own way and style, even if it was the same way and style for all. Teenage girls might not want to be married with children right now, but soon. And fitting in and looking good for the boys were the first steps in becoming the new American housewife.

Clothing manufacturers and department stores began to target the high school and college-age girls with more special clothing sizes and departments than in earlier decades. The word teenager usually referred to the girl teenage market as they were seen as a target group for marketing and consumption.

After World War II, manufacturers produced clothing lines, jewelry, shoes, barrettes, and even greeting cards marketed to teenage girls. Though the cosmetic industry caught on a little late in the game, they, too, began targeting their products and advertisements toward teenage girls. Teenagers had more spending money than in previous years making them a target market favorable to advertisers and manufactures. Teenagers were willing to spend their money on products designed especially for them. They particularly liked items that gave them the reassurance that they would fit in with the crowd.

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Life on Campus: College-Age Young Women

In addition to teenage girls, college-age girls were beginning to see their place in the world in a new way. They were no longer helping mother get through the days while brother or father was away. Instead, they were on their way to fulfilling the new American dream, and doing that as soon as possible.

Life on college campuses was different than it had been before and during the war. It was no longer a place for the privileged as it had been before the war, nor was it over populated by mostly female students as it had been during the war. It was now a new time, a new atmosphere. More than one million GIs enrolled in college in 1946, and veterans composed almost one-half of all college students. This new college generation was quiet, yet strong. The recent years had transformed them into different young adults. They longed to fit in and feel secure in an insecure world. They chose to do this by conforming, not by conflict. O’Neill described college students as more grown up, “bland and obedient, a ‘silent generation’ who only longed to secure good jobs and revel in domesticity.”

To secure jobs and family, war veterans and their new brides had to get along in this new society. They had to fit in as it was more important than ever to feel secure in both their private and personal lives. In her book, Campus Cues, an etiquette book for college students in the 1940s, Irene Pierson gave the following reasons as to what was important for young adults:

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29 O’Neill, 37.
1. It is only human for you to want to be popular.
2. You want to make a favorable impression.
3. You will want to make a good impression on a second person, your employer.
4. You want to be happy.\textsuperscript{30}

To fit in meant to not only act like, but also look like your peers. In 1946, Anna E. Shively and Elizabeth D. Roseberry performed a study to see how college-aged young women felt about their clothing wardrobes titled, “Adequacy of College Wardrobes Judged.” They noted, “Clothing provides not only personal satisfaction but also a means of gaining social approval.” They continued, “The new student immediately senses this feeling and wants to be ‘one of the group,’ in dress as in other ways.”\textsuperscript{31} The authors examined whether freshmen college girls felt they had an adequate college wardrobe, how they acquired their dress, and how much they paid for it. The researchers reinforced this need to fit in by stating, “Girls living in organized groups (in a residence hall or a co-operative house) more often felt that their wardrobes were inadequate than did girls who lived at home or in private homes.”\textsuperscript{32} Fitting in was most important at this time, especially for girls who yearned to appeal to a man and become his wife.

The added pressure to find a husband was more intense for college-age girls at this time. The presence of married coeds on campus increased the desires of young women wanting to marry. In addition, the post-war society encouraged women to carry

\textsuperscript{30} Irene Pierson, \textit{Campus Cues} (Danville, IL: The Interstate, 1948), 3-4.


\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 82
on the roles of wives and mothers. Women were encouraged by men and traditional women to return to their “rightful place” in the home.\textsuperscript{33}

\textit{Mona Lisa Smile} is a modern movie that depicted the lives of college girls attending Wellesley College in 1953. There, a free thinking art professor, Miss Katherine Watson, played by actress Julia Roberts, tried to get her students to question the traditional societal role of becoming housewives and mothers. Actress Kirsten Dunst played the role of Betty Warren, a student who married during the school year and missed class, much to her professor’s dislike. In reaction, Betty wrote in the school newspaper the following statements, which ran in tune with the true feelings of young women of the early 1950s:

Wellesley girls who are married have become quite adept at balancing their obligations. One hears such comments as, “I'm able to baste the chicken with one hand and outline the paper with the other.” While our mothers were called to the work for Lady Liberty, it is our duty, nay, obligation to reclaim our place in the home, bearing the children that will carry our traditions into the future. One must pause to consider why Miss Katherine Watson, instructor in the art history department, has decided to declare war on the holy sacrament of marriage. Her subversive and political teachings encourage our Wellesley girls to reject the roles they were born to fill.\textsuperscript{34}

It was not a question of if they would marry; it was a question of when. How to behave among, and your attitudes toward, men were also topics of the etiquette books of the time. In \textit{Etiquette}, Emily Post presented instructions on how to behave when asked to a frat house party by “Jim,” should a girl have a few questions on how to behave. She stated, “The questions obviously are those of how to be a credit to Jim and be thought

\textsuperscript{33} Schreier, 40.

\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Mona Lisa Smile}, directed by Mike Newell, Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment, 2003.
attractive by his classmates.” 35 In *Campus Cues*, Irene Pierson answered the question, “How Do Fellows Feel About Going Steady?”:

Most fellows object to girls being too possessive. It cheapens a girl if she shows too much enthusiasm for a man who seems to like her. The man always likes to feel he is the aggressor. It is the man who asks the girl to go steady, not vise-versa. 36

A Mellon Foundation study of Vassar College students taken in the 1950s revealed the belief that not marrying would be a personal tragedy and that offspring were essential to a full life. One observation made through this study stated, “It is natural for a woman to be satisfied with her husband’s success and not crave personal achievement.” Another observation made in relation to roles stated, “A husband is naturally superior in certain spheres but … requires constant and watchful encouragement on the part of the wife to maintain his superiority.” 37 These responses support the importance of marriage among college females.

Marketers and manufactures fed on the need of college-aged young women to get married by offering products that offered solutions. Just as they catered to the teenage market, they were looking at the college-age market as the nearest generation to be their future, if not current, consumers. Advertisements for college-age young women fed on the importance of fitting in by marketing sweaters to make you popular and the right lipstick to make him swoon.


36 Pierson, 75.

37 O’Neill, 41.
Post-War Media for the Female Market

Adult women, college-age young women, and teenage girls experienced life in the years that immediately followed World War II in both similar and different ways. With the new feeling and pressure of a life at home, and their roles at certain stages of life, there is one thing they had in common; their love and use of magazines for guidance and advice. During the war, women’s magazines reminded women of their place in society and how to look. In the March 1942 issue of Ladies Home Journal, Wilhela Cushman told women, “And thanks a million, we say to all the women who want to look their best, as well as do their upmost.” She reminded women to keep up their feminine appearance by stating, “Keep looking like a million-those are orders.” In a reference to war and the importance of beauty and the war effort she stated, “I want to shine like the polish on his boots.”

After the war, articles focused on how to get back to a woman’s respectable life of not working. In an article published May 5, 1946 in The New York Times Magazine entitled, “What’s Become of Rosie the Riveter?,” Frieda S. Miller, Director of the Women’s Bureau, United States Department of Labor, brought questions and possible answers to the state of the women war workers. Her article restated the idea that Rosie was a symbol to all Americans of the effort put forth by women during the war. She then went on to explain the three main places this female war worker might be: taking a break

39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
before seeking new employment, waiting and standing by her war hero to see how he adjusted to civilian life before she decides whether to start a career or have children, or on her way to domestic bliss providing a home and family for her husband.\textsuperscript{41} For women who wished to work, Miller stated that it was important to keep in mind that “industries are closing their doors, for the most part, to the very women they depended on during the war.”\textsuperscript{42} She explained it was “the end of industry’s courtship of women workers.”\textsuperscript{43} She went on to say that only women who needed to work for the well being of their families ought to do so, and they should keep in mind that they would be doing so with less respect and pay than during the war.\textsuperscript{44}

In addition to advice about work during and after the war, women’s magazines such as \textit{Good Housekeeping} and \textit{Ladies Home Journal} filled their pages with articles and advertisements on how to look, what cosmetics to use, and what clothing to wear. The prominent or “in vogue” fashions of the late 1940s and early 1950s were drastically different then those during the war. In 1947, Christian Dior’s New Look emerged with a more feminine emphasis. In actuality, it was not completely new. The fashions directly preceding the war had started to show signs of this style but were interrupted by the wartime’s need for practicality. A June 1947 \textit{Life} magazine article entitled, “Fashion Turmoil” stated, “One thing is for sure however; to be very fashionable in the fall of 1947

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{tabular}{ll}
\textsuperscript{42} & Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{43} & Ibid., 47. \\
\textsuperscript{44} & Ibid. \\
\end{tabular}
\end{footnotesize}
the American woman will have to junk all her last years’ clothes- and thereby give the clothing business its needed boost. 45

This New Look exaggerated specifically female features. Shoulders sloped, busts and hips enlarged, and waists were cinched. Skirt lengths changed from just below the knees to calf length and their volume was drastically increased. Dresses, suits, and separates were very feminine and accentuated a woman’s figure. 46 Women looked for ways to be fashionable and envied by their peers. Young women and teens looked through their mother’s magazines as well, trying to adapt the messages to their own lives. Fashion magazines for young women, such as Mademoiselle and Glamour, devoted their August issues to collegiate dress. Then, both young women and teenage girls had another choice in 1944 with the launch of Seventeen. 47

The first issue of Seventeen, released in September of 1944, sold out its 400,000 issues in just six days. It was the first magazine to successfully target and maintain the teenage girl audience. From its inception, Seventeen has been tailored to the teen girl and young woman aged 12-24. It offers advice, recipes, fashion, and moral fiction. Though over sixty years have passed since its inception, Seventeen is still the most circulated


47 Schreier, 42.
magazine targeted to this market. The actual content has been updated over the years, but in reality, the same themes shine through. They include: how to get the boy, how to be popular, how to look pretty, and how to get ahead in life by having these things. Other publishers in the 1940s attempted to target this market with a comic style magazine called, \textit{Calling All Girls}, and the Girl Scout Magazine, \textit{American Girl}. They did so with no success as their readers’ average age was younger than high school age, and their circulation was much lower than \textit{Seventeen}.

Helen Valentine, \textit{Seventeen}’s first editor, was originally asked to be editor of \textit{Stardom}, a failing women’s Hollywood fashion magazine. Valentine came up with a better idea, to start a new magazine aimed at a much overlooked market, teenage girls. She wanted a magazine that combined, “boys and books, clothes and current events, people and politics, cooking and careers.” In order to make the magazine successful, it needed advertisers willing to place their ads in a magazine geared toward a teen girl. Advertising takes up the majority of space in teen magazines. It is this advertising that the magazine relies on for financial support, and advertising to teens was uncharted territory at this time.

Kelly Schrum stated in “\textit{Teena Means Business}” that, “\textit{Seventeen} was instrumental in developing the teenage girl as a consumer of the magazine and the

\begin{itemize}
\item[49] Schrum, “\textit{Teena Means Business},” 138-139.
\item[50] Ibid., 149.
\item[51] Massoni, “\textit{Teena Goes to Market},” 32 and Schrum, “\textit{Teena Means Business},” 149.
\end{itemize}
products it advertised, but also as a member of society.”\textsuperscript{52} Estelle Ellis, \textit{Seventeen’s} promotion director, was charged with the job of gaining advertising support. Ellis changed the way marketing was done by creating, “Teena, the Prototypical Teenage Girl” to teach advertisers that this was an influential market consisting of girls who could make purchasing decisions. In 1945 and 1946 \textit{Seventeen} hired consultants to survey teen girls and their mothers to find their concerns, likes and dislikes, and demographic information. They then used this information, when necessary, to help advertisers understand “Teena.” \textit{Seventeen} published the survey results in book form in 1945 and 1947, and distributed the results to manufacturers, retailers, and advertisers. These publications told about the life of “Teena” and presented demographic information based on the results of their surveys. According to these results, “Teena” was 16 years old, 5 feet 4 inches tall, and weighed 118 pounds. “Teena” attended public school, then expected to go to college, and then get married and stay home. She came from a white, middle-class family where dad was a businessman/white collar worker. In addition, “Teena” worked after school to make spending money, helped others with their shopping selections, helped mom with domestic activities, used cosmetics, went to the movies, and participated in athletic activities. “Teena’s” favorite magazine was \textit{Seventeen} which she shared with her friends, mother, and sisters (there is even some suggestion that her brother read it).\textsuperscript{53}

In Ellis’s promotional material sent to potential clients she stated, “A dress is a dress is a dress until you see it in \textit{SEVENTEEN}.” \textit{Seventeen} editors though that they had

\textsuperscript{52} Schrum, “Teena Means Busines,” 134.

\textsuperscript{53} Massoni, “Teena Goes to Market,” 33.
figured out who “Teena” was. Ellis further stated, “There’s nothing fickle about our girl Teena…She’s sold on SEVENTEEN- sold on everything in it.” 54 Seventeen was marketing to the teenage girl as one in her own right, with her own mind and money to spend on their consumer goods. Reluctant at first, advertisers began to see the financial benefits of targeting this untapped market. 55

In addition to creating an entirely new market for advertisers and manufactures to target, Seventeen’s board members created an advertising advisory board. It was their goal to encourage age-appropriate advertising. The magazine quickly earned a wholesome reputation for its strict standards regarding advertisements. Advertisements were carefully chosen by the board to reflect the wholesome girl the magazine was targeting. 56

There is no doubt that Seventeen has been a continued success in this appeal to young women and teenage girls. What has held a fascination to me and what I chose to further explore, is the amount of fashion advertising directed toward young women in the post-war era and how this may have influenced who they became as adults. Through my studies and course work, I have found the transitional period after World War II to be overlooked or mislabeled. It seems most literature goes from the war era to the prosperous, gay life of the 1950s, leaving this time of change unexplored. It is time to take a closer look at this young female demographic, using their main source of media influence, Seventeen magazine.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND RESEARCH PLAN

In 1947, Seventeen had a circulation of over one million readers\(^1\) (and that is only
counting paid issues, not those borrowed by friends or passed around the lunch room and
read by several more). It was the only magazine targeted specifically for young and teen-
aged women and its content was a monumental factor in how these young women
perceived themselves in this new era. I began my search by flipping through a random
issue of *Seventeen*, June 1944. After reading fictional stories of the boy next door and
advice on how to make that permanent wave last a few weeks longer, I was struck by the
amount of advertising in the magazine.

My research focuses on the messages advertisers told *Seventeen* readers in the
years immediately following World War II, 1946-1948. This gives an immediate view of
the reactions to the war’s end by the advertisers in their marketing techniques and
audiences targeted in *Seventeen*. The reader was a girl in a new place, different than that
of her mother or sister who may have worked during the war. This girl was now
becoming a woman in her own right, trying to define what it was that she was “supposed”
to do after her high school years. This is the girl who eventually became portrayed as the

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quintessential housewife of the early 1950s in her pearls and heels, children playing in
the lawn, just waiting at the dinner table for her husband to come home to her in the
suburbs.

Review of Literature

Research on women’s magazine content has been conducted on several levels.
Researchers have looked at the content of both editorials and advertisements of women’s
magazines in several different eras. Marjorie Ferguson researched the effects post-war
magazines had on women in Britain, a country with very similar situations concerning
women’s roles as the United States. Ferguson conducted a content analysis on Britain’s
three biggest selling women’s weeklies: Woman, Woman’s Own and Woman’s Weekly for
the years 1949 through 1974. For her research, she looked only at the sections of
Features, Problem Pages, Beauty Pages, and Fiction. Through her research, she found the
following emerging themes in the pages she studied: ‘Getting and Keeping Your Man,’
‘The Happy Family,’ ‘Heart Versus Head,’ ‘The Working Wife is a Bad Mother,’ ‘Self-
Help: Overcoming Misfortune,’ ‘Self Help: Achieving Perfection,’ ‘Female State
Mysterious,’ ‘The Natural Order,’ ‘Success Equals Happiness, ‘Be More Beautiful,’ and
‘Gilded Youth.’\(^1\)

\(^1\) Marjorie Ferguson, *Forever Feminine: Women’s Magazines and the Cult of
Ferguson concluded her analysis by stating:

It shows the dramatic- and continuing- dominance of marriage and the family within the messages endorsed by the high priestesses of the period. It reveals a disjunction between the social facts such as increased participation in the female labour force and their cultural reflections within the beliefs and practices of the cult. It also points to tensions between individual and group norms, between traditional and emergent female roles, between what women’s magazine words were saying and what women of many different kinds were doing.²

These contradictions in themes led her to continue her research to look at the magazines in the 1970s. Her findings revealed the overall theme of a woman helping herself first, and then helping herself find a man.³

On the American front, researchers Charles Lewis and John Neville looked at the January and October issues of the Saturday Evening Post, Life, and Ladies Home Journal for the years 1940, 1943, and 1945. For this study, they listed two purposes of the research. The first purpose was to help determine whether advertisers made a concerted change in their shaping of women’s images during and after World War II, and secondly, to indicate the need for further research of women and advertising during the war years. The researchers chose the years 1940, 1943, and 1945 because they believed that there was not enough research between the Depression and the post-war years of prosperity.⁴

Lewis and Neville coded the full-page advertisements of the magazines. First, they noted the general depictions of men and women and their gender roles, noting the presence or absence of men or women in the advertisement. Next, they examined the

² Ibid., 77.
³ Ibid.
advertisement’s rhetorical form, whether it appealed to women in general, homemakers or mothers, had no specified appeal to women, or was duty oriented. Third, they noted the depiction of settings, whether it was a wage-earning work environment, a home-work environment, a leisure setting, or “other.” They also recorded the depictions of occupational (work-related) roles. They looked at whether the woman was depicted as a homemaker and/or mother, a wage-earning worker, a member of a volunteer organization or the military, or had no discernable occupational role.5

The results of their research on full-page advertisements in the magazines indicated that images of wage-earning, working women increased significantly from 1940 to 1943. After the war, advertisers depicted women en masse back in their domestic roles at home, and all uniformly happy to do so. Lewis and Neville offered the explanation that:

Women in a male-dominated society were abruptly thrust into new, traditionally male roles during the war, and then cast out of these work roles after the war. Advertising helped to smooth over the uncertainty that accompanied these changes.6

Research concerning teenage girl magazines has also been conducted. Researchers have looked at messages sent to teenage girls through both the editorial and advertising content. Those researching Seventeen are of particular interest as they try to explain the messages sent to the teenage girl using the most popular magazine targeted for them.

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5 Lewis and Neville, 224.

6 Ibid.
Seventeen Research

Kelley Massoni used both quantitative and qualitative methods to locate the occupational messages embedded in Seventeen magazines in 1992 in her article, “Modeling Work: Occupational Messages in Seventeen Magazine.” A close reading of the text revealed four messages about the world of work: entertainment careers are a viable and prestigious option, men are the norm as workers, men hold the power, and fashion modeling is the pinnacle of “women’s work.” Massoni concluded, “In sum Seventeen’s overarching message to girls about work is that it remains a man’s world in which women labor (mostly at being beautiful) as a means to meeting or assisting more powerful men.”

In a closer relation to the historical influences Seventeen had on young women, Massoni researched the marketing and advertising aspects of the magazine from its inception in, “‘Teena Goes to Market’: Seventeen Magazine and the Early Construction of the Teen Girl (as) Consumer.” This article gives a history of Seventeen magazine’s marketing tools and the creation of “Teena, a Prototypical Teenage Girl.” Estelle Ellis, Seventeen’s promotion director, used creative marketing tools to sell her consumer, the teenage girl, to potential manufactures and advertisers. Massoni pointed out four characteristics that made Teena a good buy/buyer; “Teena Has Money,” “Teena is Young,” “Teena is Influential,” and “Teena Needs a Boy.” The creating of Teena was a success and within five years both retailers and manufactures rushed to meet the “needs”

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8 Ibid., 62.
of the teenage girl. Massoni noted that more than fifty years later, Teena and the advertiser are still together and their relationship is stronger than ever.  

Those studying feminism took particular interest in *Seventeen* and the messages, both feminist and traditional, sent to its readers. Shelley Budgeon and Dawn H. Currie thought that little attention had been paid to adolescent magazines in relation to feminist research into magazines as socializing agents. They conducted research on the magazine issues for the years 1951, 1971, and 1991. They defined 1951 as “prefeminist,” 1971 as the emergence and consolidation of feminism, and 1991 as the current context which is described as “postfeminist”. They reported that though *Seventeen* emphasized fashion and beauty, there was also a feminist subtext. They documented the appearance of feminist messages and then drew upon semiotics to understand how the meanings which constitute the subtext were constructed in the advertisements for beauty products. They found that the tensions between traditional and feminist messages were resolved through the construction of meanings which supported the notion of postfeminism. Budgeon and Currie noted, “References to the women’s movement or to issues associated with women’s oppression can be found in texts by editors, readers, and advertisers.”

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11 Ibid., 175.
the emergence of feminism, the late 1960s and early 1970s, the feminist messages were most extensive.\textsuperscript{12}

Looking closer at the messages given to teenage girls in \textit{Seventeen} through the years 1961, 1972, and 1985, Kate Peirce examined the magazine from a feminist theoretical point of view in her article, “A Feminist Theoretical Perspective on the Socialization of Teenage Girls Through \textit{Seventeen}.” Peirce chose the years 1961, 1972, and 1985 as they represented the pre-movement, movement, and post-movement feminist eras.\textsuperscript{13} The focus of this study was to find the feminist ideology vs. traditional ideology of feature articles that highlighted one or the other. The author defined feminist messages as those that emphasized taking care of oneself, being independent, and not relying on a man for fulfillment or identity. Traditional messages included messages that stressed the importance of looking good, finding a man, and taking care of home and children. Pierce discovered that beauty and fashion were the primary focus and appearance made up about 50 percent of editorial content for all of the three years. Home took up 10 percent. This totaled 60 percent, which made the editorial content of the magazine primarily devoted to traditionally feminine subjects of beauty, fashion, cooking, decorating, and crafts. The two categories of male-female relationships and self-development differed by year. The year 1972 showed a significant increase in self-development, 16.6 percent in 1972, compared to 7.5 percent in 1961 and 6.8 percent in 1985. Male-female relationships coverage dropped in 1972 to 2.7 percent from 7 percent

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{13} Kate Peirce, “A Feminist Theoretical Perspective on the Socialization of Teenage Girls Through \textit{Seventeen},” \textit{Sex Roles} 23, no.9/10 (1990): 497.
in 1961, then rose again in 1985 to 6.5 percent. Pierce noted that the difference in the categories showed slight support to the idea that the feminist movement had an effect on *Seventeen*’s editorial content. Feminist messages increased during the period, but paled in comparison to the amount of content devoted to other topics. Also, compared to other media, *Seventeen* followed suit with more feminist-oriented subjects in the late 1960s and early 1970s. When feminist coverage in other media decreased, *Seventeen* returned to the more traditional content.\(^{14}\)

Kate Pierce’s research was continued, to include the years 1945 through 1995, by Jennifer A. Schlenker, Sandra L. Caron, and William A. Halterman in 1998 in their article, “A Feminist Analysis of *Seventeen* Magazine: A Content Analysis from 1945-1995.” Selecting issues of *Seventeen* from 1945, 1955, 1965, 1975, 1985, and 1995 they, too, looked at the editorial content searching for traditional or feminist views. Their results concurred with Pierce that the high percentage of feminist messages occurred in the 1970s. They added that 1945 and 1995 also boasted higher percentages of feminist messages, noting the possibility that World War II and the time the article was written (1998) may have been experiencing feminist waves. The years 1945, 1975, and 1995 had the highest waves of feminism than any other three years. For traditional messages, there was not such a drastic change. They noted almost half in 1945, and over half in 1975 and 1995, of the magazine content was devoted to traditional themes. Further, in 1955, 1965 and 1975, 75 percent of the content studied had traditional messages. Traditional messages outnumbered non-traditional messages in all issues with 64 percent of the total

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 497-499.
In concluding their article, Schlenker, Caron, and Halteman stated their suggestions for further research:

…to date, the content of teenage magazines has not been extensively analyzed. In order to understand the impact of these magazines, we need to first understand their content. While it is known that the media shapes and influences our outlook on the world, teenage publications and their roles as socialization forces have been largely overlooked. However, this does not diminish the importance of such publications.

They went on to express a need for a more complete analysis of Seventeen to include the content of advertisements.16

**Research Plan: Content Analysis**

I agreed with Schlenker, Caron, and Halteman that further research is very important to understanding the social changes young women experienced in the post-war years, and what factors were influential in their choices of dress. I conducted a content analysis of Seventeen magazine advertisements for 1946 through 1948 to answer a number of questions. Seventeen focused its advertising on women between the ages of 12-24, but did they differentiate their advertisements among the various phases of a young woman’s life: teenage girl or college-age young women? What types of messages were being sent to Seventeen’s readers? What types of products were marketed to these consumers? Do the messages in the advertisements reflect or influence women’s new roles in post-war America? The purpose of this study is somewhat an extension of the studies done by Pierce and by Schlenker, Caron, and Halteman. Where they were

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16 Ibid., 146.
looking for both feminist and traditional messages in Seventeen articles over a long period of time, 1945 to 1995, I looked solely at the traditional messages of advertisements for the years 1946, 1947, and 1948.

For my analysis, I followed the practices discussed by Jo B. Paoletti in her article, “Content Analysis: Its Application to the Study of the History of Costume.”\(^{17}\) Paoletti stated that content analysis in the study of the history of costume is possible due to the extensive sources available to research.\(^{18}\) I have taken this suggestion to heart and used the following steps she has stated that all content analysis must have:

1. articulation of precisely stated objectives or hypothesis
2. creation of an instrument or questionnaire designed to measure relevant variables or sort them into predetermined categories
3. unbiased sampling of sources and communication units
4. systematic recording or measuring of variables using the instrument
5. analysis of the data using appropriate statistical procedures.\(^{19}\)

I have combined both quantitative and qualitative analysis into this research.

Quantitative research was used to locate the frequencies in target age, messages sent, and products advertised. The qualitative analysis focused on the meaning, or prevailing theme, of the messages presented in the advertisements. Qualitative research gives the reader a more extensive look at the subject, by taking the subject outside of the numbers of quantitative research and giving them relatable qualities that can be understood on a personal/humanistic level. This combination of both quantitative and qualitative research


\(^{18}\) Ibid.

\(^{19}\) Ibid.
follows content analysis research as it provides a broader view than the hard, statistical numbers of quantitative methods alone.

Coding and Instrument

For this research, only advertisements in relation to dress were analyzed. To define dress, I used Robert Hillestad’s definition presented in “The Underlying Structure of Appearance” along with my own added items (noted in parenthesis) to accommodate the nature of the advertisements being analyzed:

Forms of dress can be classified as:

1. Articles of clothing
   Associated particularly with comfort and protection of the body.
   Gowns, shirts, trousers, and coats (dresses, skirts, suits, blouses, sweaters, lingerie, shoes, socks, fabrics)
2. Articles of adornment
   Associated with embellishment
   Jewelry, cosmetics, grooming aids.\(^\text{20}\)

Each advertisement was placed in one of six product categories based on the type of item of dress being advertised.

1. Clothing (blouses, sweaters, skirts, dresses, suits, slacks/pants, fabric, swim suits, jackets and coats)
2. Shoes (indoor and out, boots)
3. Lingerie (slips, brasseries, panty hose, girdles/shapers, socks, pajamas, robes)
4. Accessories (handbags, hats, gloves, jewelry, scarf, wallets, hair pins, luggage, bags, compacts)
5. Cosmetics (fragrances, make-up, hair curlers)
6. Grooming Aids (soaps, shampoos, deodorants, lotions, hair brush, face wash).

Next, I determined what audience the advertisement was targeting: the teenage girl, or the young women coming-of-age. Advertisements for teenage girls (ages 12-16) were defined as having illustrations showing a younger looking female displaying little

make-up, childish hair style (ponytails, pigtails, braids), wearing concealing, youth styled clothing and flat shoes, straight figure, knock-kneed, hands on face or folded across chest, having big, childlike smiles, playing (roller skating, biking, splashing in the sprinkler, etc.), and in teen associated settings (soda shop, school dance, record party). This teenage girl is concerned with the issues relating to her family, friends, and high school relationships.

Advertisements for the coming-of-age young woman (ages 17-24) were defined as having illustrations showing models with heavy make-up, defined eyebrows, adult styled, sophisticated clothes and high heel shoes, heavy/large jewelry, wedding attire and rings, showing skin (shoulders and midriffs), an adult figure, curvy hips and large bust, seductive eyes, strict posture, seductive seating (leaning, lounging), swooning men, and shown in college dorms, campuses, or sporting events. This coming-of-age young woman is a bit older than the teenage girl and looking towards her next steps in life, college, or better yet, marriage.

The text was taken into account if visual cues were not enough. Mentions of teen-related activities such as trips to the soda shop, or walks to school were categorized as teen, whereas mentions of campus/college life and the like were categorized as coming-of-age young women. Those that targeted both the teenage girl and coming-of-age young woman were placed in a third category of both audiences. Advertisements where the target age could not be determined were placed in a fourth category of no target audience.

I took definitions presented by Pierce and by Schlenker, Caron, and Halteman of traditional messages, slightly altered by myself to account for the differences between content of article vs. that of advertising, and applied them to Seventeen advertisements.
Advertisements were coded into one of the two categories described below.

1. Appearance/ Looking Good: latest fashion trends; shopping for your clothes; hairstyles; make up, beauty products; how you look to others. (Advertisements that hint your appearance will affect how you succeed in life, your popularity, being a polite, sweet young teen/women.)

2. Male-Female Relations/ Finding a Man: dating, how to shop for or please men. (Advertisements that hint the desire to look attractive to attract a man, mention dates, dates, call or letter from a man)\(^{21}\)

A third category of neither message was created for those advertisements that did not indicate ‘looking good’ or ‘finding a man.’ A simple spreadsheet to keep track of the advertisements, their size, target age, traditional message, and product category was created using a computer program, Microsoft Excel 2003.

Sample

Four issues for each of the years 1946, 1947, and 1948 of Seventeen magazine were used to conduct this research. Issues were chosen that proved to be consistent in their monthly content for the three years researched. The months chosen for each year include; February, April, August, and November. February’s issue seemed to have an overriding theme for Valentine’s Day, though they did not title the issue as such. Each year, the April issue was titled “Girl Meets Boy.” August was devoted to “Back to School” and was consistently the largest issue of the year. “You and Your Parents” was November’s issue title. The February issue of 1946 was missing pages 106-107 and the August issue of 1946 was missing pages 140-201 (believed to be editorial content according to table of contents).

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\(^{21}\) Peirce, 497 and Schlenker, Caron, and Halteman, 140-141.
Only full-page advertisements were chosen for this study. Full-page advertisements consisted of those that were either two-full pages or one-full page. All issues of Seventeen needed for this study were only available on microfilm, and microfilm only depicts black and white. Therefore, the use of color in the advertisements could not be determined and was not accounted for in this study. Of the full-page advertisements, only those depicting forms of dress as defined above in the coding section of this chapter were analyzed. In total, 952 advertisements were analyzed for the years 1946, 1947, and 1948. Basic statistics were preformed using the Excel spreadsheet created for the instrument to find the total frequencies and percentages of data researched. All numbers were rounded to the nearest whole number in the Excel program.
CHAPTER III

GENERAL RESEARCH RESULTS AND QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Overview of Results

For the three years 1946, 1947, and 1948 a total of 952 advertisements were analyzed. Overall findings for all 952 advertisements show predominate categories, target ages, and messages sent to Seventeen’s readers. For these years, 939 advertisements were one-full-page and 13 were two-full page advertisements. 1946 had the highest percentage of advertisements with six, two-full page advertisements and 365 one-full page advertisements, or 39% of all advertisements researched (see figure 3.1). For 1947, two, two-full page advertisements and 326 one-full page advertisements were reviewed, or 34% of the total. 1948 had the lowest amount with five, two-page advertisements and 248 one-page advertisements, or 27% of the total advertisements reviewed.

The distribution of advertisements per month may be in relation to the topic of the issue. The month of February, the Valentine’s Day issue, totaled 199 advertisements for all three years analyzed, equaling 21% of total advertisements (see figure 3.2). The month of April had 189 total advertisements, or 20% for the “Girl Meets Boy” issue. The largest issue, with the most number of advertisements was the August “Back to School” issue for all three years with 356 total advertisements, or 37%. “You and Your Parents”
Figure 3.1. Total full-page advertisements per year. *Seventeen*, 1946-1948.
Figure 3.2. Total advertisements monthly, years combined. *Seventeen*, 1946-1948.
issues for November had 208 advertisements, or 22% of total advertisements for the years 1946, 1947, and 1948.

After the advertisements were chosen based on size, they were further analyzed and placed into six product categories: clothing, shoes, lingerie, accessories, cosmetics, and grooming aids (see figure 3.3). The product category with the highest percentage of full-page advertisements was clothing. Clothing accounted for 62% of the advertisements with 591 advertisements. Lingerie held the second highest percentage with 11% of the total full-page advertisements equaling 105 advertisements. The next highest category is shoes, having 89 advertisements and 9% of the total. Accessories came fourth with the number of advertisements. The total advertisements for accessories equaled 7%, or 64 advertisements. The fifth highest category was cosmetics. Cosmetics carried 6% of the total full-page advertisements analyzed equaling 57. Last, with the least amount of advertisements, was grooming aids. Only 5% of the total advertisements were devoted to grooming aids, equaling 46.

Next, advertisements were analyzed according to the target audiences of teenage girl (ages 12-16) and coming-of-age young women (Ages 17-24). For all three years researched, 1946, 1947, and 1948, a slight majority of the advertisements were targeted to the teenage girl, carrying 435 advertisements or 46% (see figure 3.4). Coming-of-age young women were close behind with 423 advertisements targeting her, or 44% of the total advertisements. Only three advertisements targeted both the teenage girl and coming-of-age young woman, less than 1%. A category of no target audience was created for those advertisements that the target age could not be determined. Ninety, or
Figure 3.3. Total advertisements per product category. *Seventeen*, 1946-1948.
Figure 3.4. Target audience. *Seventeen*, 1946-1948.
10% of the advertisements fell into this category. Distribution of advertisements towards target audiences was consistent across months and years.

The final aspect looked at for each advertisement was the message sent to the reader. Advertisements were analyzed and placed into the categories of Appearance/Looking Good, Male-Female Relationships/Finding a Man, or showing neither of these messages (see figure 3.5). The predominate message for all three years 1946, 1947, and 1948 was that of ‘looking good.’ As defined in Chapter Two, ‘looking good’ referred to advertisements about latest fashion trends, shopping for your clothes, hairstyles, make up, beauty products, and how you look to others. The total percent of ‘looking good’ advertisements equals 81%, with a total of 767 advertisements of the 952 analyzed. Those referring to Male-Female Relationships/Finding a Man, defined as those relating to dating, how to shop for or please men, desire to look attractive to attract a man, mention dates, calls, or letters from a man, were only 148, or 18% of the total advertisements. Those falling in the category neither of these messages equaled 37, or 4%.

**Qualitative Findings**

In addition to the specific elements looked at in this investigation using quantitative analysis, additional themes and elements of the advertisements emerged through qualitative analysis. These include: the issue titles/themes, the model depicted in the advertisements, males in advertisements, fashions of the era, brands, and female roles. Though these elements noticed were not quantified, their presence was additional evidence of the messages sent and audiences targeted. These elements may have a
Figure 3.5. Advertisement messages. *Seventeen*, 1946-1948.
relationship to the outcome of the young women who read the advertisements as adults in American society.

Monthly Issues

Several monthly issues of Seventeen had recurring titles or themes each year. One month of particular interest for this study is April. The April issue was titled “Girl Meets Boy” each year. The title of this issue brings attention to the need for having a boy in the reader’s life. An entire issue devoted to male-female relationships stressed the importance of the need to be desired by the opposite sex at this age. In the table of contents, under the ‘Getting Along in the World” section, there were several editorials on boys. Titles such as, “Let’s Listen to the boys,” “What Makes a Good Guy,” and “What! No Date?” fill the pages of this issue yearly. The fact that the publishers felt the need to have this yearly issue shows the importance of traditional roles in American society at this time. Having a boy in your life would eventually turn into having a husband in your life in future years. The traditional role of homemaker and mother was sure to follow.

The Models: Poses and Looks

The poses of the models in the advertisements were very similar throughout. The pose gave the reader an indication of how she should stand, look, and act in her life to be like the girls in the advertisements who seemed pretty, happy, and adored by men. These poses almost always placed the model in a submissive/passive pose with a happy or amazed look.

The most common pose was of the model standing. Her legs were slightly apart, one foot forward, the other leg stepping to the front or side, foot pointed to the reader.

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1 Table of Contents, Seventeen, April 1946, 2.
Also, there were several where the model’s feet were butted against each other, pointing to the front and side. I have referred to this pose as the ballet pose while conducting my research, as the model had a stance that reminded one of a ballerina when standing still. The model’s weight was shifted on one hip and she looked as though she was leaning back, lower torso pushed forward. The model’s hands were either behind her back, on her hips, or touching her face. Rarely was she doing something with her hands such as holding a book or sewing.

The head position and facial expressions of the model were key factors to the messages sent to Seventeen’s readers. Models’ heads were turned to the side, tilted up, or tilted down. Very rarely was a model facing the reader. Her eyes were looking to the side in several advertisements. Often the models were looking up and to the side, as if gazing at something in great wonder. Big, open smiles showing the model’s teeth were fairly consistent (see figure 3.6). Some models looked silly or unintelligent in a small number of the advertisements where they were portrayed with wide eyes and open mouths. But, some advertisements showed girls holding pencils on their mouths reading a book, looking intelligent.

There were a few advertisements where the model had a closed smile or smirk, usually in a sexual manner, and looking at the camera. The pose of this model was either lying down on her back or leaning against something. Often her hands were touching her mouth or face, or her arms were above her head (see figure 3.7).

There were a few additional elements to be noted in regard to the investigation. First to note is that of lingerie advertisements. Very few showed actual photographed models. Sketches and drawings were used in the majority of the advertisements. Some
Figure 3.6. Model typical head position and facial expression. *Seventeen*, April 1946, 188.
Figure 3.7. Model with sexy pose. *Seventeen*, April 1948, 40.
showed only vague messages of being slim and pretty, while others showed the model in more sexual poses, looking at the reader, with her arms up above her head or at her face. The use of sketches was in line with using sketches or shadows for males in advertisements further discussed below. Lingerie implied sex. Advertisers might have thought that it was best to take the reality of a photograph out and replace it with a whimsical sketch.

Some sketches, used for all types of product advertisements, showed the models featured in a bubbly and cartoonish manner. The sketches showed girls with long, lean limbs, high round cheeks and eyebrows, with big, plump-lipped, open smiles (see figure 3.8). The sketches were taking the realistic, desired features of the target audience and exaggerating them beyond reality, much like the airbrushing of advertisements today.

Males in Advertisements

While looking through the advertisements, I noticed those that fell in the category of ‘finding a man,’ often showed a man in the advertisement. Some were even so bold as to directly tell the readers who they should dress for. For example, all Carole King dress advertisements stated, “Dress for the men in your life.”² The men in the advertisements were depicted only in certain ways. Many advertisements showed the man in the background of the advertisement, usually looking toward the model, alone or with other men, smiling. Frequently, the man was blurred in the background or shown only as a shadow. Some showed the man below the model, never at her level, looking up at her,

² Carole King, “Dress For the Men In Your Life,” Advertisement, Seventeen, April 1946, 47.
Figure 3.8. Cartoon-looking model. *Seventeen*, August 1948, 77.
adoring how she looked. A few times, the man was much smaller than the model, in the palm of her hand or in her thoughts. Often, the man was depicted as only a sketch while the model was a photograph (see figure 3.9), or both were a sketch only. These images of men were telling the reader that, though it was important to have men want you, you must be careful and not be seen with them too openly or often. It was also possible the advertisements attributed looking good and being submissive to getting a man’s attention or companionship. One advertisement in particular, that caused me to look again, was for Toni Peters dresses. The advertisement showed a female model standing, one leg forward, hands in pockets, head turned to the side and looking back at a man. The man was standing behind her looking at her with a smile, holding a tomahawk above her head as if swinging it toward her. The model was simply standing there with a wide, happy smile. There are no other indications in the advertisement as to why he is holding a tomahawk above her head (see figure 3.10).³ Is the girl just supposed to stand there and be happy no matter what this man does to her, as long as she has a man?

There were two very strange advertisements that had men in them. Both are still a little confusing to me as to what their message was to be. One was for Jantzen sweaters. The advertisement was a drawing of two young women in sweaters and skirts, holding books and pens, both looking at each other’s notes. In the background there was a strange man with very exaggerated features, almost clown like, looking at the young

Figure 3.9. Male as sketch in advertisement. Seventeen, August 1946, 245.
Figure 3.10. Male holding tomahawk over model’s head. *Seventeen*, February 1947, 183.
Figure 3.11. Strange male in background. *Seventeen* August 1946, 13.
women with a surprised look on his face, standing on a pedestal. The words of the advertisements said, “princess school daze” (see figure 3.11). The other strange advertisement showed two teenage girls standing in dresses. Between them was an old man with a crazed look on his face behind a box and a small monkey on the ground. The headline of this advertisement for Peggy Paige dresses read, “No Monkeying with this price.” Though the headline and picture tie together, the image seemed very eerie (see figure 3.12). In both advertisements, the models seemed happy and unaware of a strange man in their presence.

Fashions of the Era

Several specific fashion styles were noticed while looking through the magazines. Some continued throughout the years of this study, while others emerged and some faded out. In 1946 the continuation of the women’s styles from the war years, using the military elements, were noticed as suits had wide shoulders and skirts were just below the knee. These quickly began to fade as skirts grew longer and fuller and shoulders softened. Reference to the ‘New Look’ of the post war era, in my research, began in the February 1947 issue of Seventeen.6

Historical influences on fashion elements were also noticed and noted by the advertisers. Several referred to the ‘Gibson Girl’ when advertising blouses with large puffed sleeves and small rounded collars. Neiman Marcus advertised the “GIBSON

5 Peggy Paige, “No Monkeying,” advertisement, Seventeen, April 1947, 79.
Figure 3.12. Strange male in background, monkey. Seventeen April 1947, 79.
GIRL, 1947” showing a model in a plaid blouse with long sleeves wide from shoulder to lose fitting cuff and small, white, rounded collar. Another from Pat Petite stated, “RIGHT OUT OF GRANDMA’S TRUNK, PAT PETITE’S Gibson Girl shirt-waist…" The Gibson Girl, a name given to the fashion styling of models drawn by Charles Dana Gibson, began in the 1900s, while the sleeve styles shown in the 1940s advertisements were more similar to those of the 1890s, before the Gibson Girl’s creation. The advertisers took a catchy name from a style in the past and reinterpreted it to appeal to the new teen market, even though the interpretation was historically incorrect.

The use of the term bustle appeared in several advertisements as well. A Penny Mason suit jacket had an extended and gathered lower back piece, and a dress available from Hudson’s Detroit showed gathered fabric over the longer skirt. Though the bustled style was muted in comparison to the bustle of the early and late 1880s, it was similar to that of the mid 1880s and to suit jackets of the early 1900s.

The use of sloped shoulders and plaid fabrics showed influences of the 1860s in several advertisements for dresses. Fuller Fabrics noted the 1860 influence in their plaid fabrics. Plaids became extremely popular during this time period. Several advertisements showed plaid skirts, blouses, dresses, and accessories. Minx Modes

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10 Fuller Fabrics, “Taffaton 1860,” advertisement, Seventeen, August 1948, 78.
Junior advertised a suit with characteristics of 1860s fashion. The suit was modern in style with historical elements of sloping shoulders and formed sleeves, neckline, and embroidery around the buttons.¹¹

Mexican influences came in the way of color, style, and pattern. Apron skirts and peasant blouses were some examples. Advertisements urged readers to be adventurous in these clothes. The possibility that Europe was unavailable for vacation and trade as they were rebuilding gave Mexico a great advantage as a place to vacation and export their goods, as well as fashion ideas.

The use of combed wool and rabbit’s fur was also popular for coats, trims, and accessories. Fall of 1947 showed wool and rabbit fur coats, hats, collars, and handbags printed in a leopard print. Winter of 1948 showed the emergence of long, soft, white rabbit’s fur scarf, hat, and mittens, a style that continues and gain popularity in the 1950s.

Shoe styles for the time were a mix of casual, comfortable shoes for school and high, stacked heels for dates. Penny loafer styles seemed to be very popular, as well as saddle shoes with different color accents. Ballet flats appeared in advertisements in 1947 and 1948. The flats were in different colors of fabric and leather, and in later issues, of metallic tones, some slip on and others that laced up the leg. For inclement weather, rubber over-boots were advertised. Heel styles continued from the war years, having rounded toes and square heels. Open-toe and peep-toe heels grew in popularity.

Advertisements for high heels lessened in the later issues researched, possibly a result of the teen specific brands and styles with lower heels being offered to the teenage girl.

Branding and Celebrity Endorsements

New brands with names such as Teentimer O'Horiginals, Hi-Ho Juniors, Universiteen, Junior First, Debuteens, and Teenard of Dallas were created to sell specifically to this new market, some with style names such as soda-shop print scarves and campus coordinates. There were even brands for the overweight or short stature girls called, Chubbettes and Hobbettes. Advertisements for these items told the readers their teen-specific items would help them through their teen years and they would become successful young women. As an advertisement for Debuteen stated, “American Debuteen makes you a dress for Graduation Day…and for dozens of days and dates from then on.” Advertisements sold brands through messages such as “getting the boy” and being popular in school. This newly created marketing plan of creating teen and young-woman specific brands was one that proved to be a huge financial success for the designers, retailers, and manufactures. The use of the marketing tactics executed, and the strategy of creating market specific brands, are still highly lucrative to designers, retailers, and manufactures to this day. My findings demonstrate that designing for the teen market grew in popularity shortly after Seventeen sold this customer to advertisers. The number of teen-specific advertisements increased in the few years after the magazine’s inception in 1944. It was the first time both designers and retailers took this consumer group seriously as a target market with spending power and created designs to fit the teenage girl image specifically.

Famous movie stars and beauty queens served as endorsers of beauty products. For example, actresses Betty Grable and Rita Hayworth were spokeswomen for Lux soap. Advertisements stated that “9 out of 10 Screen Stars use Lux Toilet Soap – Lux Girls are Lovelier!” Both actresses were quoted as saying “My Beauty Facials give skin fresh new Loveliness.”\(^{13}\) Ava Gardner was shown in an advertisement for Woodbury Powder and stated, “New Woodbury Powder wins with me- the smoothest, satiny finish my skin has ever known!”\(^{14}\) Using screen stars and celebrities to endorse products was not new to advertising, but it was new to advertise towards teens, a tactic that has continued to this day.

Roles: The Career Girl and the Domestic Goddess

In researching the fashion advertisements for the years 1946, 1947, and 1948, I feel it is important to point out the number of advertisements directed toward women and careers. In my investigation, only one advertisement mentioned the aspect of a young woman having a career. In the American Girl Shoe advertisement in August of 1947 the tagline stated, “headin’ to COLLEGE or CAREER” and showed one young woman in a sweater and one in a suit.\(^{15}\) This is in contradiction to the ideas of the magazine’s first


editor, Helen Valentine, to combine “boys and books, clothes and current events, people and politics, cooking and careers.”\textsuperscript{16}

While career was left out in advertisements, messages of cooking and home were not. Several advertisements directed \textit{Seventeen}’s readers to specific brands of household dishware, fabrics, flatware, food brands, furniture, and rugs. This implied to the readers that their future careers would be in the home, not in the office or factory. These messages were very different than advertising in the few years before, because they were placing females back in their societal roles of wife and mother.

Overall statistics tell us the readers of \textit{Seventeen} magazine in the post-war years of 1946, 1947, and 1948 were exposed to a variety of advertisements targeted to both teenage girls and coming-of-age young women. These advertisements sold items from dresses to face cream, all the while telling the messages of the importance of ‘looking good’ and ‘finding a man.’

Additional aspects of the content of the advertisements showed us what types of women were depicted in the advertisements and how they were posed, reflecting a certain attitude or suggestion. Men in advertising showed the importance of having a man in your life. Fashion trends changed from the look of the war years to that of the ‘New Look’, along with special teen only fashions. New brands were created and some were endorsed by celebrities. Roles in the workplace and home in advertisements painted a picture of the life \textit{Seventeen}’s readers were to live.

Taking a closer look at each of the target markets, teenage girls and coming-of-age young women, give us a better understanding of this female in the post-war years. Looking at what the advertisements were trying to sell her, and the messages they told her will give us a better idea of how this woman placed herself in this newly created post-war American society and in this newly defined American dream.
CHAPTER IV

TEENAGE GIRLS

The Real Teena

Through the coding process described in Chapter Two, it is evident that Seventeen magazine advertisements in the late 1940s targeted two separate audiences. The first audience was the teenage girl, and the second audience was the older, coming-of-age young woman. The teenage girl, according to the editor of Seventeen of the time, Helen Valentine, was the primary target of the magazine.\(^1\) While in this research two distinct audiences were discovered, Seventeen may not have recognized the differences in the audiences. Regardless, Seventeen managed to tell both audiences what to wear, how to behave, how to feel, and how to get the boy.

The teenage girl was the first audience examined in this study. While the two audiences were very close in age, both the audience and the advertisements directed toward them had several differences. The teenage girl of the post-war era was living in a new America, different in social and cultural norms experienced by her parents and even her older siblings. As mentioned in Chapter One, the definition of teenager expanded from only the high school age population, to recognition that they had their own

economic power, leisure activities, and fashions. Many teenage girls had similar dreams, to one day grow up and get married. This was the beginning of the teenage culture, doing things the same by all within the teenage crowd, but different from other age groups. Now, this group had more than popularity with their peers, they had popularity with retailers, manufactures, and advertisers, all wanting to get their piece of the teenage spending pie. They designed specifically for this market, items just for teenage girls. The teenage girl was willing to spend her money on the new products designed for her, especially the products that promised good looks and the looks from boys.

The fashions of the teenage girl during the late 1940s were in some ways similar to that of her mother or older sister. Fashionable styles were predominately dresses, suits, blouses, and sweater sets, like those of the older women. Through the years, a twist on these garments took hold, a special ‘teenage’ look, designed by manufactures to sell more items to this profitable market, which grew in popularity.

Teen-specific fashions were also different from those of their mothers. Dresses were more casual, looser fitting, and made of lighter and brighter fabrics. Two-piece dresses gained popularity, with matching tops and skirts. In addition, sweaters and sweater sets grew in popularity. Thin or thicker knits were available in a number of colors, and some had whimsical jacquard patterns such as cowboys or music notes. The styling of clothes often gave a child-like appearance. Items such as ruffles, eyelet, short puffed sleeves, apron-style skirts, high necklines, small Peter Pan collars, and ribbons or bows at the neck were often observed in teenage girl clothing. In addition, popular shoes had lower heels. Now penny loafers, ballet flats, and saddle shoes dominated the teenage shoe advertisements. The model’s make-up was soft, though noticeable, and her hair was
usually off her face, sometimes in pigtails, braids, and bows. As for accessories, several models wore charm bracelets in the advertisements. Large ribbons in their hair or around their necks were also noticed. Items with words on them, such as blouses with your high school’s name in your school colors, or scarves with your birth month or school spirit, were also advertised. These items were created and marketed specifically for teenage girls; who else would wear a blouse and scarf with a high school logo on it?

**Teenage Girl Quantitative Research Results**

Through the content analysis described in Chapter Two all of the advertisements researched were placed into four categories according to the target audience: teenage girl, coming-of-age young woman, determining neither audience targeted, or targeting both audiences. The predominate age group that was targeted in *Seventeen* magazines’ advertisements was that of the teenage girl. This audience was defined as having illustrations showing a younger looking female displaying little make-up, childish hair style (ponytails, pigtails, braids), wearing concealing, youth styled clothing and flat shoes, straight figure, knock-kneed, hands on face or folded across chest, having big, childlike smiles, playing (roller skating, biking, splashing in the sprinkler, etc.), and in teen associated settings (soda shop, school dance, record party). This teenage girl is concerned with the issues relating to her family, friends, and high school relationships. The advertisements for Junior First and Heart Throb dresses are examples of advertisements targeting teenage girls (see figures 4.1 and 4.2).

**Advertisements**

In total, 436 advertisements targeted the teenage girl audience. This equals 46% of the total 952 advertisements analyzed for the years 1946, 1947, and 1948. Of the 436,
Figure 4.1. Teenage girl target audience advertisement. *Seventeen*, April 1946, 61.
Figure 4.2. Teenage girl target audience advertisement. *Seventeen*, August 1947, 30.
only four, or 1% were two-full page advertisements and the remaining 432 were one-full page, equaling 99%. In 1946, there were 166 total advertisements, all one-full page, equaling 38% of the total for all three years (see figure 4.3). In 1947, 147 advertisements targeted the teen audience. One two-full page advertisement, and 146 one-full page advertisements combined equaled 34% of the total teenage advertisements for all years studied. One-hundred and twenty-three were found for 1948 amounting to 28%, of which three were two-full page advertisements, and 120 were one-full page. The fact that the first year analyzed, 1946, had the highest percentage of advertisements was interesting as the teenage culture was just starting to spread its wings according to historians. This showed the effectiveness of the marketing of “Teena” by Seventeen to the advertisers. By using their promotional materials, Seventeen was able to persuade advertisers to target this age specific market.

For all three years combined, according to the issues examined, the majority of the teenage-girl-focused advertising was in August, as this was the largest issue yearly and focused on “Back to School” (see figure 4.4). August accounted for 36% of the total advertisements equaling 156 of the total 436 teenage girl advertisements. Next, both April and November equaled 22%, each having 95 advertisements in their month’s issues for all years studied. February had the least amount with 90 advertisements, equaling 21% of the total teenage advertisements for 1946, 1947, and 1948. These figures show a relationship with the overall pages and advertisements in each issue. August overall had the most advertisements and the largest center section devoted to advertisements for

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Figure 4.3. Total teenage girl advertisements per year. *Seventeen*, 1946-1948.
Figure 4.4. Total teenage girl advertisements monthly, years combined. *Seventeen*, 1946-1948.
“Back to School.” It was expected that this issue would yield the highest number of advertisements as it was the largest issue in size and for the new “Back to School” season which usually meant shopping for new school clothes.

Product Category

After determining the advertisements targeting teenage age girls specifically, the types of products that were being sold to this market were placed into one of the six product categories; clothing, shoes, lingerie, accessories, cosmetics, and grooming aids (see figure 4.5). Overall, clothing was the category with the most advertisements, 331 or 85%. The remaining categories were each less than 10%. Lingerie had 38 advertisements targeting teens equaling 9%, shoes had 30 advertisements, or 7%, grooming aids had 19, or 4%, accessories had 13, or 3%, and cosmetics had 5, or 1% of the total advertisements targeting the teenage girl. The distribution of categories among the years was consistent within 5% between all years with no large flux except that of lingerie which rose 18% and clothing which fell 19% from 1947 to 1948 (see figure 4.6).

The clothing category held the highest percentage of advertisements overall. This may be an indication of the industry catching on quickly to this defined market and placing specific advertisements for the teenage girl. Clothing was always worn, and looking good in your clothing was important. Now, advertisers had developed teen specific brands and used advertising to get their names out. Lingerie helped one achieve the desired body shape by defining the waist and hips and perking up the breasts. It is logical that the category of lingerie had the second most advertisements as it was needed to achieve the appearance of the models in the clothing advertisements. New, lower heeled shoe styles were becoming more popular for the teenage market and advertisers
Figure 4.5. Total teenage girl advertisements per product category. *Seventeen*, 1946-1948.
Figure 4.6. Teenage girl advertisements by category per year. *Seventeen*, 1946-1948.
designed shoes especially for them. More advertising may have been devoted to these new styles to get readers’ attention and promote sales. The fact that grooming aids, accessories, and cosmetics had the lowest number of total advertisements for teenage girls may be due to the fact that these products had already established themselves with the adult female market, and had not yet revamped their advertising towards teens. The overall distribution seems to be logical as the categories relate with the messages discussed below.

Message

The final aspect of the teenage advertisements analyzed was the message being sent to the teenage girl audience. The messages of ‘looking good’ or ‘finding a man’ were determined for each advertisement. This is possibly the most important factor to look at as it is what the advertisements are telling the reader what to do, and how to accomplish this by using their products. It is possible that these messages and the products they advertised with the messages influenced the future lives the teenage girl readers were about to lead.

‘Looking good’ included advertisements that showed fashion trends, shopping, hairstyles, beauty products, how you look to others, how your appearance will affect how you will succeed in life, your popularity, and being polite and sweet in nature. For example, in April 1946, Bloomingdale’s advertised a dress with the tagline, “Ruffles for Spring TO MAKE A GIRL FEEL AND LOOK HER BEST.”2 The advertisement for Friendly “Sports” saddle shoes told Seventeen readers, “You stand out in any crowd with

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2 Bloomingdale’s, “Ruffles for Spring,” advertisement, Seventeen, April 1946, 146.
Friendly ‘Sports’ in your school colors” (see figure 4.7).³ In an advertisement for Joan Miller Juniors the text read:

all right, so I’m egotistical! If caring what people think of me is egotistical—I am! I want everyone to think I’m terrific! Inside I’ve got bubbles and they want out. Now do you see why I wear Joan Miller Juniors?⁴

Advertisements sending the message of ‘finding a man’ included: dating, how to shop for or please men, hint at the desire to look pretty to attract a man, or mention dates, telephone calls, or letters from a man. The advertisements for Ipana Toothpaste consistently told a story of a girl who has no man in her life due to poor teeth. The Ipana Cupid informed her, “Don’t you know a sparkling smile gets more men than home cooking?” (see figure 4.8).⁵

Overall, 371 of the 436 total advertisements for teenage girls reflected that of ‘looking good,’ equaling 85% (see figure 4.9). Sixty-four of the advertisements focused their messages on ‘finding a man,’ equaling only 15% of the advertisements targeting teens. One advertisement fell into the category of neither message as it could not be placed into the two categories explored. The high percent of ‘looking good’ advertisements may be attributed to the growth of the teenage culture. Placing high school and popularity first was most important, while then saving ‘finding a man’ for later years.


⁴ Joan Miller, “I’m so egotistical!” advertisement, Seventeen, April 1948, 163.

⁵ Ipana Toothpaste, “Gonna Send it to yourself, Sugar?” advertisement, Seventeen 1946, 1.
Figure 4.7. Example of teenage girl ‘Looking Good’ message in advertisement. *Seventeen*, August 1947, 33.
Figure 4.8. Example of teenage girl ‘Finding a Man’ message in advertisement. *Seventeen*, February 1946, 1.
Figure 4.9. Messages sent to teenage girls. *Seventeen*, 1946-1948.
In 1946, there were 166 advertisements devoted to teenage readers, 38% of the total for all three years. Of the 166 advertisements, 136 were devoted to the message of ‘looking good’ while 29 advertisements focused on ‘finding a man.’ One advertisement for this year showed neither message. These results show that 82% of the advertisements for all issues in 1946 represent the message of ‘looking good,’ while 17% represent that of ‘finding a man.’ The last 1% represents the one advertisement of telling neither message (see figure 4.10). For 1947, 123 advertisements focused on ‘looking good’, 84% of the total 147 advertisements for that year. Only 24, or 16%, were devoted to ‘finding a man.’ In 1948, 91% of the teenage girl advertisements aimed at the message of ‘looking good,’ equaling 112. The amount sending the message of ‘finding a man’ dropped to only 11 advertisements equaling 9%. The amount of advertising towards teens with the message of ‘looking good’ rose 9% from 1946 to 1948, while the number of messages of ‘finding a man,’ dropped 8% from 1946 to 1948. This may be an indication of the further separation of the teenage culture from the young woman. The growth of the teenage market in the post-war years gave further separation on the wants and needs of this group. As the results indicated, a larger number of advertisements were devoted to ‘looking good’ as the years progressed. This may be an indication that the teenage girl culture of the time was more focused on looking pretty, fitting in, and being popular. The advertisers may have caught on that this market was not ready to focus all their efforts on ‘finding a man.’
Figure 4.10 Teenage girl message sent per year. *Seventeen*, 1946-1948.
When examining the issues monthly, results showed that the August issues had the largest number of advertisements equaling 36% for all years combined, followed by April and November with 22%, and February with 21% as discussed above. Taking a closer look at each month, the topic of the issue and the number of advertisements for all three years per month gave a closer look into the types of messages sent with each of the different types of issues. This information indicated whether or not the advertiser took the issue themes into account. One might expect the issues of February, near Valentine’s Day, and April, the “Girl Meets Boy” issue to have a higher percent of advertisements following the message of ‘finding a man.’ It might be expected that the months of August, the “Back to School” issue, and November, the “You and Your Parents” issue, near the holiday season, would focus on ‘looking good’ for the upcoming school year and holidays. The actual results are discussed below.

Upon closer examination, February overall carried 21% of the total advertising for the teenage girl audience for all three years equaling 90 advertisements. Of these 90 teenage girl advertisements, 73 were devoted to ‘looking good’, equaling 81% the months combined total for all three years researched (see figure 4.11). Sixteen advertisements focused on ‘finding a man,’ equaling 18%, while one was placed in the category of neither message. April represented 22% of the total teenage girl target audience advertising for all three years. April had 95 advertisements. Eighty-six were devoted to ‘looking good,’ which equaled 91% of the advertisements focusing on ‘looking good’ for all years combined. Nine advertisements sent the message of ‘finding a man,’ only 9% of the total for April issues 1946, 1947, and 1948. The largest issue, August, represented 36% of the total advertisements towards teenage girls. August had 134 advertisements...
Figure 4.11. Teenage girl messages sent monthly, all years combined. *Seventeen*, 1946-1948.
that told the message of ‘looking good,’ equaling 82% of the total advertisements for the combined years. The message ‘finding a man’ had 22 advertisements, equaling 14% of the teenage girl advertisements for August. The final month analyzed, November, had a total of 95 advertisements targeting the teenage girl audience, 22% of the advertisements for all years. Seventy-eight advertisements were devoted to ‘looking good’, 82% of the total advertisements for November for all three years 1946, 1947, and 1948 combined. The category of ‘finding a man’ had 17 advertisements, 18% of the advertisements for November for all years targeting the teenage girl audience.

Further assessment indicated that the month of April devoted the highest percentage, 91%, of advertising overall to ‘looking good’, followed by August with 86%, November with 82%, and February with 81%. The months February and November both devoted 18% of their total advertisements towards ‘finding a man’, followed by August with 14% and April with 9%. These findings indicated that the emphasis to look good to get ahead and be accepted by your peers shined through for April and August. Though it was expected that the “Girl Meets Boy” issue would have had a higher number of ‘finding a man’ advertisements, results may be demonstrating that to get the man you have to be popular and pretty (‘looking good’), then you will be desired by men. The August issue of “Back to School” appropriately had a high percentage of ‘looking good’ advertisements as teenage girls were starting the new school year and wanted to fit in. It may be more than coincidence that the months closest to Valentine’s Day, February, and the winter holidays, November, devoted a higher percent to ‘finding a man’ over other issues as having someone to send you a Valentine or give you a holiday gift may have been important to the teenage girl.
Advertisements that ran side-by-side in some issues may have caused confusion for the teenage girl reader. One advertisement told her to look young and sweet, while the advertisement directly beside it told her to be aggressive and get the boy (see figure 4.12). The advertisement on the left for Dancing Twins Seam-Free nylons showed a teenage girl wearing a tight top and short plaid skirt, blowing kisses to a male waving at her with the tagline, “Jack was nimble, Jack was quick, to make a date with this cute trick.”\(^6\) The advertisement by Marshall Field & Company for a Teena Paige dress on the right-hand side shows a teenage girl in a modest plaid dress and straw hat holding on to a carousel horse.\(^7\) This second advertisement portrayed the model as a teen, looking pretty and participating in an activity for younger people. While both advertisements were directed to the teenage girl reader, both sent very different messages. This may have been very confusing for a teenage girl. Knowing how to look and act was very important to her success in high school. Being labeled too sweet or too sexy could have been detrimental to a girl’s reputation. These advertisements may have led to the confusion on how to behave as teenage girls at the time and as young women in the near future.

**Qualitative Results**

The messages of ‘looking good’ and ‘finding a man’ were the prevailing messages of this investigation. Through qualitative research, additional pressures towards teenage girls were noticed that further enforced the messages, pushing them to extremes. The additional pressure of being thin shined through in the look of models and

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Figure 4.12. Teenage girl advertisements sending both messages, side-by-side. Left ‘finding a man,’ right ‘looking good.’ *Seventeen*, April 1947, 66-67.
the messages of the advertisements, further defining ‘looking good.’ In November 1947, an advertisement for a Derby skirt stated, “So Little In The Middle! So Round Around The Hips!”\(^8\) An American Debuteen advertisement showed a sketch of a teenage girl in a plaid dress. The waist of the girl in the sketch was extremely thin, unrealistically so (see Figure 4.13). On the other side of the weight issue, an advertisement for Chubbettes dresses in April 1946 showed a girl in a dress holding a box of chocolates and told Seventeen readers, “Candy’s Dandy when CHUBBETTES trim you down” (see Figure 4.14). The advertisement went on to say, “They tease the eye… please your yen for slimness! ‘Specially the CHUBBETTE shown here, with its pert hoop-holed neckline, its linex deftly planned for figure-whittling.”\(^9\) It is as if the advertisers were telling the reader to give up and be overweight while you wear dresses that will try to “whittle” your figure down. This advertisement is one of the very few that addressed any type of weight other than the very thin, lean models of most advertising. Tying into the message of ‘looking good,’ a girl’s appearance, including her weight, seemed to be a very important message of the advertisements.

Teenage girls as sexual objects were also apparent in advertisements. Models were shown touching their faces or running their fingers through their hair while standing, legs apart, with their hips to one side. Often the model was looking at the reader, head down, looking up, or out of the corner of her eye. In an advertisement for Junior First dresses, the model was standing in a modest plaid dress. She was holding a

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\(^8\) Derby, “So Little In The Middle,” Seventeen, November 1947, 52.

\(^9\) The Hub, Chubbettes, “Candy’s Dandy,” Seventeen, April 1946, 80.
Figure 4.13. Teenage girl audience, very thin model sketch. *Seventeen*, February 1947, 171.
Figure 4.14. Teenage girl advertisement for overweight girls. *Seventeen*, April 1946, 80.
pencil in one hand and had the other end of the pencil in her open mouth, looking sexually suggestive. In an advertisement for Fortuna girdles, the model was standing with her arms at her neck, and head down with eyes raised and looking at the reader (see Figure 4.15). While the majority of teenage girl advertisements showed the model in a more wholesome teenage setting, it is still very important to discuss the times when the advertiser felt it necessary to add sexual indicators to the advertisement. This may be due to the lack of experience creating teen specific advertisements, as they were used to targeting adult women. It may also be thought that the majority of workers in advertising were men, thus creating a sexual fantasy for themselves.

The teenage girl of the post-war era had a definite life of her own. Advertisers had a new demographic to market and advertise their products to. The teenage girl, in turn, was given a variety of new products and fashions designed especially for her. Advertisement numbers were highest for the “Back to School” issue as it was the largest issue overall and devoted several pages to back to school fashions. The product category of clothing carried the most advertisements overall with much higher percentages than any other product category for the teenage girl. A large rise in lingerie advertisements occurred in 1947. Fashions of the time may have been the reason for such changes.

Messages telling the teenage girl to ‘look good’ or ‘find a man’ were located throughout the years researched. It is no surprise that ‘looking good’ was the overall message sent to teenage girls. The teenage girls were in high school, a place where fitting in was crucial to one’s self esteem. Attention to ‘finding a man’ was evident, but in a much smaller number of advertisements and this number decreased each year.

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10 Junior First, “MAKE UP YOUR MIND LASS,” Seventeen, August 1947, 71.
Figure 4.15. Teenage girl, sexy pose. *Seventeen*, April 1948, 31.
These results told us that the teenage girl of the late 1940s was a definite consumer market with her own advertisements influencing what products she was to purchase and how to behave in school and around boys.

Only a slight majority of the total advertisements analyzed favored the teenage girl as the target audience, 46%. The coming-of-age young woman followed closely behind with 44% of the advertisements. This group also deserves close attention to the types of advertisements targeting this audience. The next chapter will focus on this separate, yet equally important, *Seventeen* reader, the coming-of-age young woman.
CHAPTER V
COMING-OF-AGE YOUNG WOMEN

The College Years

Life for the college-age young woman was also different and new in post-war America. Life on campus had changed as more and more G.I.s returned from duty and joined the college ranks. The need to feel secure in an insecure world gave pressure to these young adults to marry. For a young woman, it was most important to get the eye of a man and make him your own. The pressures to secure a husband coincided with the pressure to fit in. Not only would one feel secure by fitting in, she would be noticed by the men who ran with the group. Post-war American society pressured women to return to the traditional roles of wife and mother. Young women of this time felt the pressure to appease those who pushed the issue of marriage as they wanted to feel safe and secure.

Young women were not overlooked by manufacturers, retailers, and advertisers as they, too, recognized the pressure on the group of young women to get married. The advertisers fed into this insecurity. In Seventeen, the advertisements for the coming-of-age-young woman focused on adult-looking and sophisticated clothing and lingerie, wedding rings, food products, and home furnishings to prepare this young woman for adulthood as wife and mother.
The fashions of college-aged women were a mix of those of older women and the teenage girl. Skirts and sweater sets were as popular for the campus coed as they were for the high school girl. However, the young women were given more sophisticated and sexual styling in their fashions than their teenage counterparts. Sweaters and skirts were tighter, curves were more defined. Necklines were lower and the bust was sized larger. The frilly, girlish details of the teenage fashions, such as ruffles and bows, were gone as young women’s styles were more tailored with sophisticated lines. More suits were advertised in plainer colors and sturdier fabrics. Formal dresses with low necklines and bare shoulders were also targeting this audience. While the lower shoes were popular for running around campus, high, stacked heels were also in style for this group. The young women wore more make-up than teenage girls and their hair was usually down. For accessories, large costume jewelry was worn, it seems, for any occasion. The fashion overall was that of a young woman, not a girl. She was on her way to becoming an adult; she was coming-of-age.

**Coming-of-Age Young Women Quantitative Research Results**

The audience that held the second highest advertisements in *Seventeen* was for the coming-of-age young women. This audience was identified as having illustrations showing an adult figure, curvy hips and large bust, swooning men, showing skin (shoulders and midriffs), high heels, strict posture, seductive seating (leaning, lounging), heavy make-up, defined eyebrows, wedding attire and rings, seductive eyes, heavy/large jewelry, shown in college dorms, campus, or sporting events. This coming-of-age young woman was a bit older than the teenage girl and looking towards her next steps in life, college, or better yet, marriage. The Jonathan Logan dress advertisement showed a
young woman with older make-up and high heel shoes (see figure 5.1).\textsuperscript{1} The Penny Mason dress advertisement showed a young woman in a sophisticated suit (see figure 5.2). The emphasis on a thin waist and large hips, as well as the high heel shoes reflected the older, coming-of-age group. This model was even wearing an engagement or wedding ring.\textsuperscript{2}

Advertisements

In total, 423 advertisements targeted the coming-of-age young woman. This equals 44\% of the total 952 advertisements analyzed for the years 1946, 1947, and 1948. Of the 423 advertisements, nine, or 2\% were two-full page advertisements and the remaining 414 were one-full page, equaling 98\%. In 1946, there were 163 total advertisements, six two-full page advertisements equaling 1\% and 157 one-full page, equaling 39\% of the total for all three years (see figure 5.3). In 1947, 150 advertisements targeted the coming-of-age young woman, one, two-page, and 149 one-full page, combined equaling 35\% of the total teenage advertisements for all years studied. One-hundred and ten advertisements were found for 1948 amounting to 26\%, of which two were two-full page advertisements, and 108 were one-full page advertisements.

The year 1946 held the most coming-of-age young woman advertisements of all the years, only three advertisements less than that for the teenage market. The high number of advertisements showed that this was a definite target age for advertisers. Advertisers may not have been completely aware of the differences between the


\textsuperscript{2} Penny Mason, “capelet captivator,” advertisement, \textit{Seventeen}, August 1948, 192.
Figure 5.1. Coming-of-age young woman target audience advertisement. *Seventeen*, August 1947, 119.
Figure 5.2 Coming-of-age young woman target audience advertisement. *Seventeen*, August 1948, 192.
Figure 5.3. Total coming-of-age young woman advertisements per year. *Seventeen*, 1946-1948.
coming-of-age young woman and teenage girl, but their advertising definitely indicated differences. The older-age advertisements may also be high in numbers because the teen market and advertising techniques were just starting to grow. Advertisements for young women had already been in full use in existing popular women’s magazines for several years before Seventeen was published. Advertisers may have simply thought that the advertising tactics would work the same, since all the readers were female. The advertisers may not have taken Seventeen’s advice on how to advertise towards “Teena,” and they continued to use methods they felt comfortable with. As the years go on, the figures show the number of advertisements towards the coming-of-age audience decreases every year. I do not think the decrease is because advertisers who previously ran coming-of-age advertisements pulled their advertising from Seventeen. These numbers may have lowered as a result of the advertisers finally recognizing the teenage girl as a specific market and changing their advertisements to target the younger audience.

The majority of the coming-of-age young woman advertisements for all three years combined were in August. This was the largest issue yearly and focused on “Back to School” (see figure 5.4). August accounted for 41% of the total advertisements equaling 174 of the total 423 coming-of-age young woman advertisements. Coming-of-age young women, too, were headed back to school and needed to look nice for the envy of friends and looks from the boys. Making a good first impression was important. February had the second highest number of coming-of-age young woman advertising equaling 22% with 94 advertisements for all three years. This number may have been high because advertisers were focusing on Valentine’s Day and advertisements may have
Figure 5.4. Total coming-of-age young woman advertisements monthly, years combined. 
*Seventeen*, 1946-1948.
been a bit more sexual in nature, like those of older audience’s magazines. November came third with 84 advertisements equaling 20%. This number, close to February in percentage, may have held slightly less importance to the coming-of-age young woman as the holiday season may not have been as exciting as it would be for a younger female. April had the least amount with 71 advertisements, equaling 17% of the coming-of-age young woman advertisements for 1946, 1947, and 1948. These results were a bit surprising. The April issue was titled “Girl Meets Boy,” and I expected advertisements to focus on this older group as the wedding season was just around the corner. Advertisements about going steady and marriage were expected for this older audience. Wedding rings were the only item in this research that seemed to visually push the idea of marriage and these advertisements were spread among the months researched.

Product Category

The next element of the study looked at was the category of the products advertised; clothing, shoes, lingerie, accessories, cosmetics, or grooming aids. The items for the coming-of-age young woman advertisements were placed into these categories (see figure 5.5). As with the teenage girl audience, clothing was the category with the most advertisements, 242, or 57%. Lingerie had the second highest number of advertisements with 53, 13% of the total 423 coming-of-age young woman advertisements analyzed. The third highest category was cosmetics accounting for 10% of the advertisements for coming-of-age young woman for all three years. The final three product categories all held less than 10% of the total advertising. Accessories had 32 advertisements, or 8%, shoes had 29 advertisements, or 7%, and grooming aids had 26 advertisements, or 6%. The distribution of categories among the years was consistent
Figure 5.5. Total coming-of age young woman advertisements per product category. *Seventeen*, 1946-1948.
within 5% with no large fluctuation except that of lingerie rising 11% and clothing falling 11% from 1947 to 1948 (see figure 5.6).

The categories of products advertised to teenage girls and coming-of-age young women showed differences overall. Clothing held the highest percentage for both audiences, 76% for teenage girls, and 57% for coming-of-age young women (see figure 5.7). The 19% lower percentage for the coming-of-age young woman in the clothing category was made up in other categories that had a lower percentage targeted to teenage girls. Cosmetics had the highest percent difference for the coming-of-age young woman over the teenage girl. Cosmetics held 10% of the total advertisements for the older audience, while only 1% to the younger audience. Lingerie held 13% of the coming-of-age young woman audience and 9% for the teenage girl. Accessories held lower percentages, 8% for the coming-of-age young woman, and only 3% for the teenage girl. Shoes tied for both audiences with 7%. Grooming aids held 6% for the coming-of-age young woman, and 4% for the teenage girl. Grooming aids had the smallest difference between the two audiences of 2% fewer advertisements for the teenage girl.

Clothing and lingerie held the highest percent of advertisements for the coming-of-age young woman as they had for the teenage girl. This may be because the clothing market was the largest market at the time selling to women. Clothing advertisements were consistently higher for all years and all audiences. Advertisers focused their advertising efforts on clothing and the importance of looking pretty. The new styles of 1947, introducing the “New Look,” may have been the reason for the rising number of lingerie advertisements for that year as a female would need foundation garments, such as a girdle, to achieve the cinched waist, and pointed cup bra for the preferred bust line for
Figure 5.6. Coming-of-age young women advertisements by category per year. *Seventeen*, 1946-1948.
Figure 5.7. Product categories compared for each audience. *Seventeen*, 1946-1948.
that style. Cosmetic advertisements for women had been around for several years, targeting an older market than the teenage girl. This may be evidence that explains why there were more cosmetic advertisements for the coming-of-age young woman than the teenage girl, as this market was already established in cosmetic advertising. Accessories advertisements for the coming-of-age young woman included wedding rings which added to the pressure of the age group. Also, new teenage-related accessories were gaining popularity as more accessory advertisements focused teens. Shoes lowered in heel height. Advertisers took hold of the newer styles for their advertisements, not the high heels worn by the older audience, possibly causing the fall in shoe advertising for the coming-of-age young woman.

Message

The nature of the message sent to the coming-of-age young woman was the final aspect of this investigation. Each advertisement was examined for the messages of ‘looking good’ or ‘finding a man.’ Again, this topic may be of most importance as it told and showed readers what to do, how to look, and how to act. It is also possible that these messages and the products they advertised with the messages influenced the future lives the coming-of-age young women readers were about to lead.

‘Looking good’ advertisements included messages that showed fashion trends, shopping, hairstyles, beauty products, how you look to others, how your appearance will affect how you will succeed in life, your popularity, and being polite and sweet in nature. In an advertisement for B. F. Goodrich boots in August of 1947, the tagline stated,
“Campus leaders a girl can cheer…” (see figure 5.8). This emphasized the popularity tie with ‘looking good.’ An advertisement for Tussy face powder in February 1948 told readers they would look, “Lighter than a breeze, lovelier than moonlight.”

Advertisements sending the message of ‘finding a man’ included: dating, how to shop for or please men, hint the desire to look pretty to attract a man, or mention dates, telephone calls, or letters from a man. An advertisement for Revlon nail enamel, lipstick, and face powder in April 1946 told the reader, “he has his eye on the girl in the ‘BACHELOR’S CARNATION’ Revlon’s new color that breaks all the rules” (see figure 5.9). The advertisement showed four young women begging for a man’s attention and implied that using the product in the advertisement will get men to notice you, too. The advertiser sent the message of ‘finding a man’ with its product.

Overall, 340 of the 423 total advertisements for coming-of-age young women reflected that of ‘looking good’, representing 80% of the total (see figure 5.10). Eighty-three of the advertisements focused their messages on ‘finding a man,’ or 20% of the total advertisements targeting the coming-of-age young woman. Though ‘looking good’ was the message with the highest number of advertisements, 80%, it was lower than the 85% given to teenage girl advertisements. The ‘finding a man’ message advertisements was higher for the coming-of-age young woman, 5% higher than for the teenage girl (see figure 5.11). These differences may be because of the stage of life the readers were in. While the teenage girl may not have been ready for men in her life, this was the step the

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Figure 5.8. Example of coming-of-age young woman ‘Looking Good’ advertisement. *Seventeen*, August 1947, 37.
Figure 5.9. Example of coming-of-age young woman ‘Finding a Man’ advertisement. *Seventeen*, April 1946, 68-69.
Figure 5.10. Messages sent to coming-of-age young women. *Seventeen*, 1946-1948.
Figure 5.11. Messages sent per audience overall. Seventeen, 1946-1948.
coming-of-age young women were looking to take. Having more advertisements on ‘finding a man’ would be expected for the coming-of-age young woman audience.

There were 163 advertisements devoted to coming-of-age young woman readers in 1946, 39% of the total for all three years. Of the 163 advertisements, 122 were devoted to the message of ‘looking good’. Forty-one advertisements focused on ‘finding a man’. These results show that 75% of the advertisements for all issues in 1946 represent the message of ‘looking good’, while 25% represent that of ‘finding a man’ (see figure 5.12). In 1947, 123 advertisements focused on ‘looking good,’ 82 % of the total 150 advertisements for that year. Twenty-eight advertisements, or 16% were devoted to ‘finding a man’ for 1947 coming-of-age young woman advertisements. In 1948, 86% of the coming-of-age young woman advertisements aimed at the message of ‘looking good,’ equaling 95 advertisements. The number sending the message of ‘finding a man’ dropped to 15 advertisements equaling 14%. The number of advertising towards coming-of-age young woman with the message of ‘looking good’ rose 11% from 1946 to1948, while the number of messages of ‘finding a man’, dropped 11% from 1946 to 1948.

While the overall rise of 11% of ‘looking good’ advertisements, and the drop of 11% ‘finding a man’ was not entirely expected, it leads to the conclusion that the category of clothing may have had some influence on the message of ‘looking good.’ Higher numbers overall were for the clothing category and associations with looking pretty and fitting in. The percentage dropped more than that of the teenage girl for ‘finding a man,’ which dropped 8% overall. This drop was hard to explain as it was thought the older audience would be looking for a man in this stage of her life. The percentages of ‘finding
Figure 5.12. Coming-of-age young woman message sent per year. *Seventeen*, 1946-1948.
a man’ advertisements were higher than that of the teenage girl audience for the coming-of-age young woman for all years as expected.

Monthly message results showed that the August issues had the largest number of advertisements equaling 41%, followed by February with 22%, November with 20%, and April with 17%. Taking a closer look at each month, the topic of the issue and the number of advertisements for all three years per month gives a closer look into the types of messages sent with each of the different types of issues.

February, overall, carried 22% of the total advertising for the coming-of-age young woman audience for all three years equaling 94 advertisements. Of these 94 coming-of-age young woman advertisements, 74 were devoted to ‘looking good’, equaling 79% the months combined total for all three years researched. Advertisements that focused on ‘finding a man’ for February equaled 20, or 21%, of the total for February’s issues (see figure 5.13).

April represented 17% of the coming-of-age young woman target audience advertising for all three years. April had 71 advertisements. Fifty-nine advertisements, or 83%, were devoted to ‘looking good,’ for all years combined for April. Advertisements that sent the message of ‘finding a man’ for April equaled 12, or 17%.

The largest issue, August, represented 41% of the total advertisements towards the coming-of-age young woman with 174 advertisements. One-hundred and thirty-eight were devoted to ‘looking good,’ equaling 79% of the total advertisements for August for the combined years. The message ‘finding a man’ had 36 advertisements, equaling 21% of the coming-of-age young woman advertisements for August for all three years.
Figure 5.13. Coming-of-age young women messages sent monthly, all years combined. *Seventeen*, 1946-1948.
November, the final month analyzed, had a total of 84 advertisements targeting the coming-of-age young woman audience, 20% of the advertisements for all years for November issues. Advertisements that were devoted to ‘looking good’ equaled 69, 82% of the total advertisements for November for all three years combined. The category of ‘finding a man’ had 15 advertisements, 18% of the advertisements for November for all years targeting the coming-of-age young woman audience.

Further assessment indicated that April had the highest percent, 83%, ‘looking good’ advertisements, followed by August with 82%, and February and November with 79%. For both February and August 21% of their total advertisements had ‘finding a man’ messages followed by November with 18% and April with 17%. Though it was again expected that the “Girl Meets Boy” issue, April, would have had a higher number of ‘finding a man’ advertisements it is understandable that the coming-of-age young woman may focus on ‘finding a man’ in February with Valentine’s Day and August with the start of the new school year. The April issue of “Girl Meets Boy” seems to appropriately have a high percentage of ‘looking good’ advertisements as this is also important to fitting in and getting the man, though it was thought that ‘finding a man’ would hold the highest percentage for this issue as it is about male-female relationships.

When looking at the overall monthly comparison of both the teenage girl and coming-of-age young woman and the messages sent to the two audiences, both similarities and differences occur (see table 1). The months of February (Valentine’s Day issue) and November (“You and Your Parents” issue) for each message devoted similar percentages, within 2%, of advertisements for the teenage girl and coming-of-age young woman among the messages of ‘looking good’ and ‘finding a man.’ For April and
Table 1. Monthly message sent for both audiences, all years. 
*Seventeen*, 1946-1948.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>February</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>August</th>
<th>November</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Looking</td>
<td>Teenage Girl</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Coming of age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Young Woman</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding a</td>
<td>Teenage Girl</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Coming of age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Young Woman</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
August, the teenage girl audience had a higher percentage of advertisements than the coming-of-age young woman devoted to ‘looking good.’ For the message of ‘finding a man,’ coming-of-age young women advertisements held an overall higher percentage than teenage girls for all issues. This may have been in relation to the issues’ themes. August “Back to School” for teenage girls may have found more importance in looking good and fitting in, whereas for coming-of-age young women, ‘finding a man’ on campus may have been of more importance. Also, the April “Girl Meets Boy” issue may have held more importance to coming-of-age young women ‘finding a man’ as it was close to the wedding season and though they may not get married this season, they were feeling the urge to get married and settle down.

**Qualitative Results**

As discussed in this section of Chapter Four, advertisers added additional pressure to the messages of ‘looking good’ by stressing being thin. They also added appearing sexy to ‘finding a man.’ Additional, qualitative research located advertisements that reinforced these issues. The Beaunit Fabrics advertisement showed a coming-of-age young woman sitting on a globe. The waist of the model was extremely small, reiterating the ‘looking good’ message by being thin (see figure 5.14). In an advertisement for the Flexaire lift brassiere by Flexees, the model was leaning back in a very tight sweater. A long strand of pearls had fallen between her emphasized breasts. The model had her eyes almost closed and her hand on her pearls, leaning as if she were waiting for something to

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Figure 5.14. Coming-of-age young woman, very thin model. *Seventeen*, August 1947, 18.
happen (see figure 5.15). The tagline stated, “not nature’s gift but the flexaire lift.” This advertisement was an example of the sexual nature that appeared in some of the coming-of-age young women advertising.

**Additional Audience Categories**

Throughout this investigation additional differences were noticed in targeting the magazine’s audience in some instances. Some advertisements targeted both the teenage girl and the coming-of-age young woman. In total, three advertisements were observed targeting both audiences, all of them occurred in 1947, having one advertisement each in February, April, and November. These advertisements showed images of both the teenage girl and coming-of-age young woman, possibly sisters. In an advertisement for Lenbarry and Lenbarry Junior in April 1947, the advertisements stated, “TWO SISTERS FROM LENBARRY” (see figure 5.16). The advertisement noted that Lenbarry Junior was for little sister, while Lenbarry was for big sister. This advertiser was smart to catch on to the two distinct readers of *Seventeen*.

In addition to having both audiences as the target market, advertisements where the target audience could not be determined were placed in a category of no target audience. These advertisements did not show a female model or sketch in them, nor did

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9 Ibid.
Figure 5.15. Coming-of-age young woman, sexy pose. *Seventeen*, February 1948, 43.
Figure 5.16. Advertisement for both teenage girl and coming-of-age young woman. *Seventeen*, April 1947, 25.
their messages imply the target age of the audience. Advertisements for stockings and shoes were noticed most often for not identifying a particular audience (see figure 5.17).

In total, 90 advertisements were placed in this category of neither audience, equaling 10% of the advertisements for the years 1946, 1947, and 1948. For each year the following number of advertisements were placed in the category of neither target audience; 1946, 42 advertisements, or 47%, 1947, 28 advertisements, or 31%, and 1948, 20 advertisements, or 22%. (see figure 5.18). The product category totals for the advertisements placed in the category of no target audience had shoes as the highest category with 34%, followed by accessories with 20% of the total advertisements for this category (see figure 5.19). These results are quite different than for the teenage girl and coming-of-age young woman where results indicated higher percentages for the product categories of clothing, lingerie, and cosmetics. ‘Looking good’ was the overall message in advertisements with no target audience with 60% of the total, followed by no message with 38%, and ‘finding a man’ with 2% (see figure 5.20). These results may be because several of the advertisements targeting no audience only showed the product and text, not giving a visual image of possible messages.

Inappropriate Models

While it was possible to determine the audience for most advertisements, some researched caused a bit of confusion. When placing them into the category of teenage girl or coming-of-age young woman, it was difficult to tell what age group the model fell into according to her looks and the product being advertised. In some cases, the models or sketches depicted a teen, while the item being advertised was for an older audience such as shoes with extremely high heels. Conversely, some advertisements showed
Figure 5.17. Advertisement with no target audience. *Seventeen*, April 1946, 74.
Figure 5.18. Neither audience advertisements per year. Seventeen, 1946-1948.
Figure 5.19. Neither audience advertisements per product category. *Seventeen*, 1946-1948.
Figure 5.20. Messages sent to neither audience category. *Seventeen*, 1946-1948.
coming-of-age models for teenage girl products. In the Betty Barclay, the model was wearing a very modest, teen style dress with a high neck, small collar, short sleeves, and smocked shirt (see figure 5.21.) When looking at the model’s face, you notice a more mature face with full make-up, unlike that of a teenage girl.\textsuperscript{10} These advertisements were placed in the audience category of teenage girl or coming-of-age young woman according to the appearance of the model and calculated in the results discussed previously for those audiences.

Some advertisements showed models older than the target audiences. These models look much older than the target age of the \textit{Seventeen} readers, 12 to 24. The advertisement for Sacony-Palm Beach suits shows a model that looks much older and more sophisticated than the possible target audience (see figure 5.22).\textsuperscript{11} In addition, advertisements for cosmetics seemed to have the most advertisements with models older than the target audience. This may have been because the cosmetics industry lagged in teen specific advertising and continued to use the advertising techniques they used for their older audience magazines.

The coming-of-age young woman of the post-war era was also experiencing the social changes taking place. In a time of societal changes and pressure, she looked to magazines and the advertisements in them for guidance. Similar to the results of the teenage girl, coming-of-age young women, too, had advertisements in \textit{Seventeen} directed at them. Their monthly numbers showed August, the “Back to School” issue to be the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{10} Betty Barclay, advertisement, \textit{Seventeen}, February 1948, 61.
\item \textsuperscript{11} Sacony-Palm Beach, “Icy Cool,” advertisement, \textit{Seventeen}, February 1948, 151.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Betty Barley's molded short dress of Dan River gingham is capped with snappy piping. And look, lady, at you look at that three-fanned skirt! The dress is red, brown, or black. The sizes 12 to 16. The price, about $15.00.

At your favorite store or write BERNAD, 40 North Sixth Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Figure 5.21. Coming-of-age young woman modeling teenage girl dress. *Seventeen*, February 1948, 61.
Figure 5.22. Model too old for both target audiences. *Seventeen*, February 1948, 151.
issue with the highest number of advertisements. Again, the product category of clothing had the highest number of advertisements overall. Different than the teenage girl product category distribution, coming-of-age young woman advertisements were spread out among the categories with higher numbers devoted to other product categories and less to that of clothing overall.

Messages telling the coming-of-age young woman to ‘look good’ or ‘find a man’ were located throughout the years researched. The results of these findings came as a bit of a surprise. ‘Finding a Man’ was expected to have results showing a significantly higher number of advertisements devoted to the coming-of–age young woman, when in fact they did not. Though the numbers were slightly higher for this message than the teenage girl, the added pressure to be soon married for the coming-of age young woman was thought to possibly raise this number even more. Overall, ‘looking good’ had the most advertisements. It is possible that ‘looking good’ was most important as it was necessary to remember that you need to ‘look good’ to ‘find a man.’

Seventeen magazine’s advertisers took several approaches in targeting specific audiences through their product categories and messages. It is the research presented in this paper that will bring together the relationship of the advertisement to its reader and the relationship of the reader to her view on the world.
CHAPTER VI
RESEARCH SUMMARY

Through research of *Seventeen* magazine in the years 1946, 1947, and 1948, I discovered several interesting pieces of information that will help future researchers understand the magazine’s advertisements, products, the target market of the magazine, and the messages sent through the advertisements to *Seventeen* readers. This research took a deeper look into what young American females were reading at the time and how *Seventeen*’s advertisements may have influenced who they wished or were to become as adults.

**Comparison with Previous Research**

Looking at others’ research on the general subject of women in magazines in the post-war era, as well as research focusing specifically on *Seventeen* magazine, aided in my research plan. Through this investigation I expanded on previous research by applying some of its concepts with my own to help understand young women in the post-war era.

Charles Lewis and John Neville looked at the January and October issues of the *Saturday Evening Post, Life,* and *Ladies Home Journal* for the years 1940, 1943, and
The results of their research on full-page advertisements in the magazines indicated that images of wage-earning, working women increased significantly from 1940 to 1943. After the war, advertisers depicted women en masse back in their domestic roles at home, and all uniformly happy to do so. While my research was on a younger target market reading *Seventeen* magazine, I would have to agree that from 1946-1948, the roles of females in the advertisements were submissive and domestic in nature. I found little reference to the war and career. Looks, popularity, men, and being feminine were predominate.

Kelley Massoni, in her article, “‘Teena Goes to Market’: *Seventeen* Magazine and the Early Construction of the Teen Girl (as) Consumer,” studied the history of *Seventeen* magazine’s marketing tools and the creation of “Teena, a Prototypical Teenage Girl.” Estelle Ellis, *Seventeen*’s promotion director, used creative marketing tools to sell her consumer, the teenage girl, to potential manufactures and advertisers. Massoni pointed out four characteristics that made Teena a good buy/buyer; “Teena Has Money,” “Teena is Young,” “Teena is Influential,” and “Teena Needs a Boy.”

My research differed from Massoni as I did not look at the historical aspect of the magazine’s creation and marketing as much as I looked at how that marketing strategy was used to advertise to the reader. Through my research, I must agree that I, too, found overall themes or characteristics of the *Seventeen*. Massoni’s characteristics of “Teena is

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Influential” and “Teena needs a boy” were definite messages noticed throughout my research. These messages go along with the messages used in my research of ‘Looking Good’ (popularity and looks are influenced by advertising and your peers) and ‘Finding a Man.’

A majority of researchers of Seventeen magazine looked at it from a feminist point of view. Shelley Budgeon and Dawn H. Currie conducted research on Seventeen issues for the years 1951, 1971, and 1991 in relation to feminist research into magazines as socializing agents. They found that the tensions between traditional and feminist messages were resolved through the construction of meanings which supported the notion of postfeminism.\(^3\) They found that during the emergence of feminism, the late 1960s and early 1970s, the feminist messages were most predominate.\(^4\) Their research looked at years later than my focus for this research. The year 1951 was in close proximity to my last year of research, 1948, and their results seem to coincide with my own. While I did not look at the results from a feminist point of view, I found all of the advertisements I looked at focused more on traditional roles, and not on feminist roles.

Kate Pierce chose the years 1961, 1972, and 1985 to examine Seventeen as they represented the pre-movement, movement, and post-movement feminist eras.\(^5\) The focus of this study was to find the feminist ideology vs. traditional ideology of feature articles that highlighted one or the other. She found editorial content of the magazine was


\(^4\) Ibid.

primarily devoted to traditionally feminine subjects of beauty, fashion, cooking, decorating, and crafts.

Jennifer A. Schlenker, Sandra L. Caron, and William A. Halterman selected issues of *Seventeen* from 1945, 1955, 1965, 1975, 1985, and 1995. They, too, looked at the editorial content searching for traditional or feminist views. Their results concurred with Pierce that the high percentage of feminist messages occurred in the 1970s. They added that 1945 and 1995 also boasted higher percentages of feminist messages noting the possibility that World War II and the time the article was written (1998) may have been experiencing feminist waves. The years 1945, 1975 and 1995, then, had the highest waves of feminism, more than any other years. For traditional messages, there was not such a drastic change. Traditional messages outnumbered non-traditional messages in all issues with 64% of the total pages devoted to articles about appearance.6 While again, different years were the focus of this research, 1945 was in close proximity to the years for my research and may have provided key evidence to the results found in my study. There are both differences and correlations to my research. The research presented in my paper looked solely at advertisements while Schlenker, Caron, and Halterman looked only at editorial content. The research presented in this paper was looking at the traditional messages in the advertisements for only the years immediately following World War II. The researchers of the feminist article were looking at both feminist and traditional messages over a much longer period of time, fifty years. While our intentions were different in our research objectives, there are some differing and corresponding

results for 1945 within our research. The year 1945 was during the war and the feminist researchers’ results showed a higher feminist message rate during this year. This may be in relation to women joining the workforce during this time. The years I researched were after the war, and traditional messages were predominate in these years as American society was emphasizing traditional roles. While 1945 was high in feminist messages, traditional messages still accounted for almost half during 1945 in their research results.

**Points of Interest**

While conducting the research several interesting results in the data emerged. Results that were thought to have a particular outcome, in actuality went in another direction. The findings led to thought-provoking theories as to how the data presented itself. All aspects of the advertisements researched had outcomes of particular interest, some easily explained, others not.

**For the Teenage Girl**

The fact that the first year analyzed, 1946, had the highest percentage of total advertising is interesting as the teenage culture was just starting to spread its wings. The distribution of product categories among the years was consistent within 5% with no large flux except that of lingerie rising 18% and clothing falling 19% from 1947 to 1948. Though it was expected that the “Girl Meets Boy” issue would have had a higher number of ‘finding a man’ advertisements, it may be assumed that to get the man you have to be popular and pretty (‘looking good’). The August issue of “Back to School” seems to appropriately have had a high percentage of ‘looking good’ advertisements as teenage girls were starting the new school year and wanted to fit in. It may be more than coincidence that the months closest to Valentine’s Day and the winter holidays devoted a
higher percent of advertisements to ‘finding a man’ over other issues as having someone to send you a Valentine or give holiday gifts to may have been important to the teenage girl. The high percent of ‘looking good’ advertisements may show the growth of the teenage culture and its desires, placing high school and popularity first, and saving ‘finding a man’ for later years.

For the Coming-of-Age Young Woman

Advertising targeting the coming-of-age young woman showed results that were both expected and surprising. The distribution of categories among the years was consistent within 5% with no large flux except that of lingerie rising 11% and clothing falling 11% from 1947 to 1948. While the overall rise of 11% of ‘looking good’ advertisements, and the drop by 11% ‘finding a man’ advertisements was not entirely expected, it leads to the conclusion that the category of clothing may have had some influence on the message of ‘looking good.’ The 11% drop of ‘finding a man’ advertisements was more than that of the teenage girl for ‘finding a man’, which dropped only 8% overall. The percentages of ‘finding a man’ were higher than that of the teenage girl audience for the coming-of-age young woman for all years.

Though it was, again, expected that the “Girl Meets Boy” issue, April, would have had a higher number of ‘finding a man’ advertisements, it is understandable that the coming-of-age young woman may focus on ‘finding a man’ in February with Valentine’s Day and August with the start of the new school year. Both February and August had 21% of their advertisements devoted to ‘finding a man.’ The April issue of “Girl Meets Boy” seems to appropriately have a high percentage of ‘looking good,’ 83% of all advertisements, as this is also important to fitting in and getting the man. It is surprising
that ‘finding a man’ did not hold the highest percentage for this issue as it is about male-female relationships.

Comparison of Both Audiences

When looking at the overall monthly comparison of both the teenage girl and coming-of-age young woman and the messages sent to the two audiences, the results showed that the two audiences had both similar and different results for the issues. The months of February (Valentine’s Day Issue) and November (“You and Your Parents” issue) for each message, ‘looking good’ and ‘finding a man,’ devote similar percentages, within 2%, of advertisements for the teenage girl and coming-of-age young woman. For April and August, the teenage girl audience had a higher percentage of ‘looking good’ advertisements than the coming-of-age young woman. However, the coming-of-age young woman had a higher percentage of ‘finding a man’ overall. This may be in relation to the issue’s themes. The August “Back to School” issue for teenage girls may find more importance in looking good and fitting in, whereas for coming-of-age young women, ‘finding a man’ on campus may be of more importance. Also, the April “Girl Meets Boy” issue may hold more importance to coming-of-age young women for ‘finding a man’ as it is close to the wedding season. Though they may not get married this season, they are feeling the urge to get married and settle down.

Qualitative Importance

In addition to the specific elements looked at in this investigation using quantitative analysis, additional themes and elements of the advertisements emerged through qualitative analysis. April’s annual issue entitled, “Girl Meets Boy,” told us that romantic relationships may have been important to the Seventeen reader of the time.
period. The model poses in advertisements showed submissive ways young women were portrayed. Male presence in the advertisements gave a clear look into how men were possibly seen in the eyes of young women. Having them as a part of the advertisements, but not actually fully pictured may indicate the desire for a young woman to have a man, but to have sweet and polite manners and keep him at a distance. Several factors affecting fashions of the era were noticed including historical and geographical influences. Shoe styles lowered in heel height for this new, younger market. Celebrities endorsed products for the Seventeen reader. The roles of the models in the advertisements told us that traditional messages were predominately in the advertisements where career roles were only mentioned once.

In addition, the themes of weight and sexuality were noticed as important factors. Advertisements seemed to focus on being thin and petite. Advertisers also portrayed the model in a sexual manner at times. Both of these factors may have caused stress and concern to a young female trying to find her place in the world. Using models that were too old or too young for the product’s target audience, and having advertisements with sweet looking models next to sexy advertisements in the magazine could be confusing to the readers on what their expected role was. Although these elements were not quantified, their presence is additional evidence of the messages sent and audiences targeted. These elements of the advertisements may have a relationship to the outcome of the young women who read the advertisements as adults in American society.
Formal Response to Research Questions

This research was designed to answer questions about *Seventeen* magazine and the young women who read it during the years 1946, 1947, and 1948. The following questions and explanations given will help in providing a clearer understanding of the lives of young women in post-war America.

Target Audience

The first question stated that *Seventeen* focused its advertising on women between the ages of 12 and 24, but did the magazine differentiate its advertisements between the various phases of a young woman’s life; teenage girl or college-age young women? In response, I say with great certainty there are two distinct target markets for the advertisements. Through research, both teenage girls and coming-of-age young women (college-age) emerged as the target audiences for the advertisements. The groups were close in age, but differed in social, school, fashion, and romantic needs.

The teenage girl, ages 12-16, was found to be depicted in the most advertisements, 46% of the advertisements. She was shown participating in activities such as hanging with the gang at the soda shop, or telling secrets in her bedroom with her girlfriends. There were new product lines designed especially for this market to make teenage girls feel they needed the products to fit in with girls as well as boys. This teenage girl was concerned with the issues relating to her family, friends, and high school relationships.

Second, the coming-of-age young woman, ages 17-24, had 44% of the total advertisements targeted to her age group. Most of these advertisements still followed the importance of looking pretty, but in a more sophisticated way than the teenage girl. Also,
a higher percentage of these advertisements depicted male-female relationships, showing the possible difference in life and social settings than the younger group. While some college-specific products were advertised for this group, several were aimed at being an adult, not a student. For young women, it was most important to get the eye of a man and make him your own. The pressures to secure a husband coincided with the pressure to fit in. Post-war American society pressured women to return to the traditional roles of wife and mother and the messages in the advertisements in Seventeen corresponded with these pressures. Young women of this time felt the pressure to appease those pushing the traditional role of marriage as the young women wanted to feel safe and secure.

In addition to the two distinct target audiences, 10 percent of the advertisements showed no distinct audience for the product. In most cases the product advertised was pictured with the brand name and possibly a brand tagline. No specific indicators to a specific audience, such as mentions of college or high-school-age activities, were detected. This may have been the intention of the advertiser who noticed the differences in the groups and wanted to advertise to both.

Traditional Messages Sent

The next question for exploration asked what types of messages were being sent to Seventeen’s readers? This question asked if certain types of advertisement messages or themes emerged during research. The definition of traditional messages described in Chapter Two was used to discover whether the message of each advertisement told the reader to follow the message of ‘looking good’ or ‘finding a man.’

Research indicated that 81% of the advertisements were devoted to ‘looking good’, 16% to ‘finding a man’, and 4% sent neither message. This research was broken
down further to see results for each audience targeted. Overall, ‘looking good’ was the predominating message for both the teenage girl and coming-of-age young woman. The message of ‘finding a man’ was second. It is important to note the differences for each group. The teenage girls had a higher percent overall of ‘looking good’ and the coming-of-age young woman had a higher percent overall for ‘finding a man.’ The category of neither audience, too, had its majority devoted to ‘looking good,’ followed by neither message, and then a small percent to ‘finding a man.’ These results tell us that there were, in fact, traditional messages being sent to the readers of Seventeen in the years immediately following World War II.

Products in Advertisements

The third question asked what types of products were marketed to the readers of Seventeen in the years 1946, 1947, and 1948? Through close examination the products advertised were then placed into the six product categories of dress defined for this study: clothing, shoes, lingerie, accessories, cosmetics, or grooming aids. The product category with the highest percentage of full-page advertisements overall was clothing, followed by lingerie, shoes accessories, cosmetics, and grooming aids. For each of the audiences targeted, product category results differed for some categories. Clothing held the highest percentage for both audiences. Lingerie, cosmetics, and grooming aids had a higher percentage of advertisements for the coming-of-age young woman over the teenage girl. Shoes had the same number of advertisements for both audiences. Teen and college-age specific products were developed and marketed in some of the advertisements, further defining the “type” of product advertised.
Influence on Young Women’s Roles

The final question for this research asked if the messages in the advertisements reflected or influenced women’s new roles in post-war America? New roles for the time may be hard to indicate. This was a time of transition, a time where adult women had to choose whether to work or stay home. I looked at the combination of the products advertised, the audiences targeted, and the messages sent to the audiences to answer this question.

I believe the advertisements in Seventeen had an effect on the adult women the post-war young ladies were to become. The content of popular magazines held importance in women’s lives and they were looked to for guidance when things seemed confusing or social ideas needed reinforcement.

Overall, the messages focused on beauty and romance, leaving career almost entirely out of the picture. The traditional roles of the new American dream of security, marriage, and home life (even if not for a few years) ran throughout the advertisements. The need for teenage girls to feel accepted and popular led to their insecurities of the possible doom of not getting married in the future. The advertisements for college-age young women told her to get a man’s attention and marry soon. While these young women were about to enter a new decade, the 1950s, they needed reassurance and guidance on how to behave. Whether or not the quintessential housewife of the 1950s depicted in women’s magazines was the true result of the grooming of young women in Seventeen in the late 1940s is debatable. No one can say for sure if there was a direct relationship between Seventeen advertisements and the young women, though one must admit it is possible. If these young women did fulfill the traditional messages sent to
them, it is quite possible that the advertisements in Seventeen aided in their decisions to take on such roles. The insecurities of a new generation and changing society may also be the reason for this depiction of the perfect (in theory) 1950s woman. The young women of the post-war era may or may not have developed into this woman, but research shown here gives great evidence to support the possibility that they could have.

**Significance of This Research**

While research on Seventeen magazine has been done in the past, certain aspects of this research, in particular, will add to the literature of the post-war American women, advertising techniques in Seventeen magazine, the target audience of the magazine, and the message sent to the reader.

This research focused only on the advertisements in Seventeen magazine for 1946, 1947, and 1948. No prior studies were found on advertisements in Seventeen for these years. While others looked at the editorial content of the era, the research in this study looked solely at full-page advertisements. The research presented looked at the sample for traditional messages sent through the advertisements, while others have looked at the Seventeen from a feminist perspective. Only the advertisements that featured items of dress were used for the results. This was the only research that focused solely on dress. While preparing for this research clear definitions of dress, product categories, target audience, and traditional messages were carefully described. These definitions could be used in further research of Seventeen or any other similar woman’s magazine regardless of era.

When looking at who the advertisements were for, two distinct target audiences were discovered and clearly defined; the teenage girl and the coming-of-age young
woman. In no other literature were these two age groups discussed as having separate social, school, fashion, and romantic needs in relation to *Seventeen* magazine or its advertising. During this research it became clear that advertisers possibly fed off the differences of these groups and targeted their products towards one or the other, or in some cases, to both audiences. The results showed that there is a difference in the product categories advertised to the two audiences. Also, the messages sent to the groups differed in the amount of advertisements devoted to ‘looking good’ and ‘finding a man.’

It is hoped that this research contributes to the understanding of the young woman of the late 1940s: what she was reading, what products were being advertised to her, and what the advertisements were encouraging her to do. This research is a possible answer to why these young women became the stereotypical 1950s housewife, or at least, wanted to appear that way. It is also a possible answer to the influences *Seventeen* magazine may have had on the transition from child to adulthood for young women in the post-war era.
REFERENCES


