REPRESENTATIONS OF THE CHANGING FACE OF THE US:
A CRITICAL INTERPRETATION OF MULTIRACIAL ADVERTISEMENTS
IN SEVENTEEN MAGAZINE

THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the critical interpretation of advertising and its use of multiracial individuals through the examination of advertisements in the popular teenage girls' magazine, *Seventeen*. The purpose of this research is to look at the ways multiracial individuals are represented in the advertisements and to interpret the images through a combination of ideas from critical race theory and the critical interpretation of advertising, embedded within visual culture in art education. This research study critically examines three of the twenty-one advertisements that were personally discerned to involve multiracial individuals.

Looking through a lens of critical race theory, I attempt to interpret, and respond to the representations of multiracial individuals within the advertisements. I proffer possible interpretations of multiracial identity, social status, and group relations. Using a methodology of content analysis, I offer statistics of the total number of advertisements compared to the number of multiracial advertisements within each 2006 edition of *Seventeen Magazine*. Then I thoroughly interpret each advertisement using three main categories: 1) Formal Elements, 2) Social Status, and 3) Appearance.

This thesis suggests that visual culture is important to include within the art education classroom. It also includes possible implications of utilizing the multiracial imagery in the classroom to facilitate discussion on social issues such as: racial relations, stereotypes, and identity.
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INTRODUCTION

Growing up a White female in a very small town in the Midwest colored my existence in multiple shades of ivory. Having little contact with people that were "different" than me, I grew up thinking that nearly everyone was White and that there were few exceptions to that rule other than on TV. The only other types of people I saw were through my institutional interactions at school and church. I remember that there was only one Black boy in my grade at the local elementary school until he transferred out a couple of years after he started. There were varying numbers of Mexican migrant students, who appeared every fall harvest season and left two months later only to, in my mind, miraculously reappear in the late spring, just in time for planting. And there was one Black family at church that attended with the 200+ White folks. When I recall these people now, I realize how I didn't really get to know them: They were a part of my scenery, but not really a part of the interactions of my everyday life. Who were they and what were their stories? And why didn't I get to know them?

For my junior high and senior high school experiences, I was bussed to a larger city nearby. Beginning in seventh grade I saw more Blacks and Hispanics in my classrooms, but still mostly surrounded myself with other Whites. I recognized the greater diversity, but held on to the comfort of my upbringing,
embracing those who looked just like me. However, freshman year that all
changed. A young east Indian girl, Preeti*, moved from New Jersey, bringing with
her a thick East Coast accent and loads of what, at the time, I could only term
culture. She was so amazingly different than I was, and yet we were so much
alike. We immediately struck up an intense friendship and soon became
inseparable, much to the chagrin of my family. To them, I was stepping away
from my solid White upbringing and inviting in people that they didn't know
anything about. "Where is she from? India? That's a long way from Ohio. What
do you know about her family? What do they do?"

Upset that my parents even asked these questions (since they never asked
these same questions about my White friends), I defensively answered, and
immediately began wondering what the problem was. Why were they concerned
about my new best friend? To me, she was the best person in the world, talented,
inquisitive, compassionate, and through her I was learning about new people, new
places, and that a whole other world existed outside of my tiny town in Ohio.
Further, I found myself embracing her culture, which was something that I felt I
had always lacked. Growing up White, and surrounded by Whites, I thought that
my way of life was the way of life and that any other race of people was different
or other than myself, or the norm. They had race, they had culture; I had what
everyone else around me had, which was an "unconsciousness of [my own]
whiteness" (Flagg, 2001, p. 35). As Flagg (2001) describes, "We perceive and
interact with other Whites as individuals who have no significant racial

* All names have been changed.
characteristics... Whiteness is a transparent quality when Whites interact with Whites in the absence of people of color" (Flagg, 2001, p. 35). Because I had been raised around mostly White individuals, I saw myself as having nothing culturally significant about me, or even being of a race.

After bringing Preeti home many times and encouraging my parents to get to know her, they began to accept her as a part of my life. But it still troubled me that there was this underlying racism in my family. To them, "racism [was] ordinary, not aberrational... [it was] the usual way society does business, the common everyday experience of most peoples of color in this country" (Delgado & Stefanie, 2001, p. 7). My family told me that was just the way life was. Racism had always existed and always would, and I would recognize that as I got older, just as they had. But now that I was old enough to think for myself, and decide on my own actions, this conduct was no longer an [un]acceptable behavior. I had to be the first one in my family to break the chain of the misunderstanding of people's differences. I had to begin with myself and unlearn all of the negative ideas that had been uttered throughout my childhood. I had to base my ideas on the merits of each individual person, and not what my family told me to think based on ignorance and stereotyping. I, just like Martin Luther King Jr., wanted people of all races to be judged not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. However, I soon found that I had more to learn about myself, and the privileging prevalent in my own life, before I could fully understand people's differences and treat them with the respect they deserved.
It wasn't until after Preeti, and several other individuals of various races became my closest friends, that I was made aware of the privileging that was influencing the everyday situations in my life. Referred to as "White Privileging," it is recognized by several characteristics common to privileging in general, which according to Wildman and Davis (2001), include:

First the characteristics of the privileged group define the societal norm, often benefiting those in the privileged group. Second, privileged group members can rely on their privilege and avoid objecting to oppression. And third, privilege is rarely seen by the holder of the privilege. (p. 574)

So, in terms of White privilege, Whites defines the societal norm; Whites can rely on the benefits of their privilege; and Whites rarely see their race as one of privilege. I grew up with this being my hegemonic reality, or just the way society functioned, until my friends of color pointed out several instances in my life that they saw as fitting neatly within my privileged Whiteness.

One of the first occurrences of White privileging that two of my Black male friends, Will and Jamal, pointed out was one of the multiple times I have been consciously speeding and yet passed over by the highway patrol. Sharing stories of our recent vacations, Will, Jamal, and I were relating similar situations with wildly varying outcomes. I told them how I was on vacation in San Diego and driving up to Los Angeles to meet a friend for lunch. Running about a half an hour behind schedule, I was trying to make up time by driving about 85 miles an hour on the freeway. Focused on reading my map and memorizing my upcoming
exit number, I looked over to the passing lane and saw a White highway patrol
man passing me without his lights on. Not thinking much of it until I looked down
at my speedometer and saw my high rate of speed, I slowed down and thought
how odd it was that I hadn't been pulled over. However, thankful that I didn't have
to pay a fine, I once again focused on my exit number and thought nothing more
about the situation until I told Will and Jamal about it.

Not sounding surprised, Will told me that, of course that happened,
because I was a White female and I looked like I "belonged" in that type of car.
Will said that if that had been either he or Jamal, they would have been pulled
over right away. To further validate his reasoning, Will told me of a situation that
happened to him around the same time as mine occurred. Will and Jamal were on
vacation in Georgia, in a rented luxury sedan and on the way to a church
convention, when they were pulled over for going two miles over the speed limit.
They were made to exit their vehicle and answer many questions about who they
were, where they were going, where they had gotten the car, and why they were
driving "so recklessly" at two miles above the speed limit. Will and Jamal told me
how they were stripped of their dignity on the side of the road, just because of
their color. Angered and nearly speechless because of this injustice, I rethought
my driving situation in comparison to theirs, and knew that what Will had said
was true. I had experienced a privilege based on my Whiteness, because in the
same situation, or even a much lesser situation, two Black males would have been
immediately pulled over, while a single White female was allowed to transgress
the law.
Another situation, in which one of my friends of color pointed out my White Privileging, was when both she and I received a speeding ticket in the same speed trap near a 20 MPH zone. I was the first to receive the ticket, on the way back to the office from a district meeting. I was going 35 MPH, because once again I was running late, and this time I was rehearsing the lunch order that I had promised to bring back for my coworkers. Once I was pulled over, I asked the officer what the next steps were for taking care of the ticket. He told me that I should do nothing until it was mailed to my home address in a couple of weeks, and then I could either pay the fine or go to traffic school. He made sure to reiterate that I was to do nothing until I received the ticket at home. I thanked him and went on my way. Literally one week later, my Black friend from Eritrea received a speeding ticket in the same area.

After McKayla told me she had also received a ticket, we both lamented over the impending fines that we were going to have to pay, and we waited for the tickets to arrive in the mail. Like clockwork, McKayla received her ticket in less than two weeks after the date of issue. She brought it to me so we could compare, and she asked how much my fee had been. Having forgotten about the ticket, I informed her that I had not received mine in the mail yet. McKayla got upset and said, "Of course you didn't receive your ticket, you're White. You'll probably never get one!" Stopping what I was doing, I looked at her and winced, knowing that she was probably right. Thinking back to the situation with Will and Jamal, once again, it made me upset that my friends were being treated the way they were based solely on the color of their skin. I knew that I couldn't do anything
about the way in which I was treated because I was White, but I knew that I had to do something about the way in which my friends, and people like them, were being treated because of their biological features. These short narratives are only two small instances of a longer history of institutional racism that goes back to the beginning of US history. Since before pre-antebellum times, non-Whites, such as Blacks and Native Americans, have endured situations where they were denied basic human rights because of the color of their skin.

For me, I saw my friends' situations as the very beginning of a life of activism, a life devoted to promoting awareness of and social justice for my friends and all people of different races. In order to reach the most people at an influential age [before racist habits were fully established], I knew I had to become a teacher, and more specifically, an art teacher. It was through my own experience growing up, that I recognized the art room as a safe place where conversation was not discouraged, but encouraged, and thoughts and ideas from both the teacher and students flowed freely. I knew that I could use my own art classroom as that safe environment to promote understanding and acceptance of student's differences through thoughtful discourse and the critical analysis of visual images that students see in their everyday lives. This critical analysis of images is embedded within the field of visual culture studies which encourages individuals to take apart images and look at concepts such as social status or class, make inferences about the nature of relationships between people, and/or consider situations of power that may be present within those images. Freedman (2003) explains:
An education in the visual arts takes place in and through the realm of visual culture, inside and outside of schools, at all educational levels, through the objects, ideas, beliefs, and practices that make up the totality of humanly conceived visual experience; it shapes our thinking about the world and leads us to create new knowledge through visual form. (p. 2)

It would be there, in my art classroom that I could help students shape their thinking about the world and the people in the world. Together with the students, I could create a new knowledge of understanding individuals' differences that are not based on ignorance and stereotyping. I would generate and guide meaningful discussion about some of the struggles that many families and groups of people have gone through just because of the color of their skin. Some of these struggles that people of color have gone through/still go through, include such things as: receiving lower wages than a White person at a job, being declined jobs that they were qualified for, being declined for a loan at the bank, or having their offer on a house refused-all based on the color of their skin or the texture of their hair. Looking at these struggles, and other instances of racism, sexism, etc, that are prevalent in society, can lead the classroom discussion to the concept that the idea of race, and the different implications that it has on people's lives, can be changed because it is a social construction, and not based on biological features. Delgado (2001) holds that:

Race and races are products of social thought and relations. Not objective, inherent, or fixed, they correspond to no biological or genetic reality; rather, races are categories that society invents, manipulates, or retires when convenient. People with common
origins share certain physical traits, of course, such as skin color, physique, and hair texture. But these constitute only an extremely small portion of their genetic endowment, are dwarfed by that which we have in common, and have little or nothing to do with distinctly human, higher-order traits, such as personality, intelligence, and moral behavior... Society frequently chooses to ignore these scientific facts, creates races, and endows them with pseudo-permanent characteristics. (pp. 7-8)

It is this societal tendency to invent racial categories, based on certain physical traits, that leads to the domination of some races and the subordination of others. By encouraging students to consider how there is no scientific [genetic] proof of racial difference, and that those who hold the most power in society [most often White, middle/upper class males] are responsible for characterizing individuals, I can foster students' ability to challenge their own long-standing assumptions of race and people of different races than themselves. Reaching students at an influential age, informing them about the historical roots of racism, and creating in them an empathetic and informed attitude of understanding may lead to a more egalitarian world when they become the primary decision makers in society. I want to teach students to consciously challenge the societal norms, especially those focused on race, and to base their decisions on individuals' merits, not stereotypes. As an educator, I need to assist in "bring[ing] pressure on the power bloc" through understanding, mobilization, and organization in the name of racial

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1 “Power blocs are historically, socially and issue(s) specific as they come and go in relation to changing cultural arrangements. Power blocs are often formed around social formations involving race, class, gender or ethnicity in the pursuit of privileged access to particular rights or resources” (Kincheloe & Steinberg,
justice" (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997, p. 170). In order to facilitate this
mobilization, I must communicate to students about ways to combat the ideas of
the power structures [such as US courts, school boards, etc.] that construct and
maintain the racial categorization in the US.

Besides teaching students to challenge society's categorization of races, I
believe that certain populations of today's society, such as multiracial individuals,
by way of their mixed ancestry, inherently challenge existing racial categories
already formed by society. For example, where does one "put" a multiracial
individual, or an "individual whose ancestry includes persons of different races?"
(Delgado, 2001, p. 151). Since multiracial individuals may have biological
characteristics from more than one race of their ancestral background, they no
longer fit neatly into any one racial category. This group of people tends to
validate the theory of race as a social construction merely because they cannot be
easily placed into existing racial categories already formed by society.

It is this growing population of individuals that I am most interested in for
this thesis, and especially their treatment and representation within US society.
Similar to my friends whose ancestry is made up of only one race [other than
White], I feel that my multiracial friends, students, former employees and
coworkers are even less understood by society because they are often overlooked,
or forced into [or forced into identifying with] one racial category or another.
Furthermore, they are not given many examples/representations of "people like
them" in today's media, including TV, film, and magazines.

1997, p. 77). For a thorough discussion of the "white supremacist power bloc" please refer to Changing
Multiculturalism by Kincheloe & Steinberg (1997).
For example, through a recent casual survey of magazine advertisements at a local grocery store, I can see that, depending on the magazine and its intended target audience, I can now find several races represented, rather than just the White race. However, it does appear by just looking, that it is not an equal representation, either in number or in presentation. Further, I can find that even less represented are those of a growing population from mixed race heritage- or multiracial individuals. While the number of mixed race individuals is increasing in the US, the number of representations does not seem proportionate to their actual growth. For example, "Veteran demographer Barry Edmonston... calculate[d] how intermarriage is changing the face of the United States as part of an immigration study he directed for the National Research Council of the American Academy of Sciences... Edmonston's study projected that by 2050, 21 percent of the US population will be of mixed racial or ethnic ancestry, up from an estimate of seven percent today" (Stanfield, 1997, pp. 1-2). Since this is a profound and significant growth in the US population of multiracial individuals, I believe it is important for individuals to see images of people like themselves [in positive portrayals in the media] in order to help with positive personal identity construction. Similarly, in the classroom it is also important for students of single race and mixed race to see images of multiracial individuals so that they do not feel they are strange or abnormal. "If there is more general knowledge of mixed identity, it is probable that mixed students will feel more confident and accepted amongst their peers, even if they are in the minority" (Chau, 2005, p. 3). Instead of feeling they need to identify with peers of only one of their races or another,
multiracial students may associate with peers from all races, and possibly be an
impetus to cultural mindfulness within their classrooms and communities.

Statement of Problem and Primary Research Question:

My aim in this thesis is to conduct a survey of the 2006 editions of
Seventeen, "the world's most popular magazine for today's teenage girls"
(www.magazineline.com, 2007), through its various magazine advertisements.
Through the general interpretation of all of the advertisements involving
multiracial individuals, and a critical examination of three of them, I will attempt
to determine how the population of multiracial individuals is being represented in
one select magazine that some female teens purchase and access on a daily basis.
Although access to and the means to purchase magazines may be a sign of
privilege and may also limit the audience of this magazine, I chose Seventeen due
to its high circulation numbers of girls aged 12-24. Based on the exponential
growth of this population of multiracial individuals, I want to explore whether
advertising, in particular Seventeen Magazine advertisements, is leading the way
in showcasing this population growth or if it is still using predominately White
individuals to represent the U.S. demographic. However, more importantly than
just sheer numbers, I want to interpret how multiracial individuals are represented
in these advertisements.

My main research question is: Since multiracial individuals appear to be
represented in Seventeen Magazine, what are the attributes of those
representations, and how might they be beneficial in counteracting racism by
cultivating intergroup knowledge and empathy? I will attempt to answer this question through critically analyzing three advertisements utilizing multiracial individuals from the 2006 circulation year of Seventeen Magazine. In order to interpret these advertisements I will ask several subquestions that will guide me in establishing the quality of representation of multiracial individuals. The following questions were adapted from questions by Fowles (1996):

1. What might this advertisement be saying about what it is to be a multiracial female?

2. How is this advertisement conveying social status or class?

3. If more than one individual is present, what might this advertisement be inferring about the nature of relationships between people? (p. 173).

It is through the close examination of each advertisement, with the consideration of each of these questions that I will attempt to determine the qualities of representation of multiracial individuals. While I believe it is very important for multiracial individuals to see themselves represented in magazines, I feel it is equally important for those representations to be shown as positive [i.e. devoid of racist or sexist implications].

Significance of the Study:

Some current visual culture scholarship calls for art educators to "utilize visual culture to explore issues of diversity related to race, ethnicity, gender, age, physical abilities, language, sexual identity, religion, political beliefs, etc... [so
that] students begin to recognize how they can shape, enhance, and construct meaning in their worlds [and so] they assume the roles of socially responsible citizens in our increasingly diverse human community" (Keifer-Boyd, et al., 2003, pp. 50-51). By teaching students to be more empathetic and socially aware citizens, art educators can influence students to develop ways of counteracting and alleviating racism. Informing students of the historical antecedents of racist behaviors may help stop those habits and actions from being repeated or perpetuated. Furthermore, Polaniecki (2006), says that in her classroom, she "includes teaching students to understand how and why visual imagery and objects are created and consumed, and how they influence who we are: our identities, desires, behaviors, and choices" (p. 39). As these art educators agree, we need to incorporate visual culture images, including those from diverse races, into the classroom in order to teach students to become socially responsible citizens who respect, empathize, and value individuals like and unlike themselves.

My investigation of U.S. advertising, through Seventeen, in relation to multiracial individuals is important. First, according to the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP), there is evidence that "multiracial children are one of the fastest growing segments of the U. S. population. The number of mixed-race families in America is steadily increasing, due to a rise in interracial marriages and relationships, as well as an increase in transracial and international adoptions" (www.aacap.org, 1999). Supporting their claim, the AACAP provides these two statistics:
• About two million American children have parents of different races.
• In the United States marriages between Blacks and Whites increased 400 percent in the last 30 years, with a 1000 percent increase in marriages between Whites and Asians. (www.aacap.org, 1999)

It is these dramatic increases in interracial marriages and the resulting children that make this a growing population that needs to be represented in the media more proportionate to their actual numbers. Though there is a marked increase in population numbers, multiracial individuals have been around for a long time. As Chau (2005) states, "mixed race people are not a new people; however, the identity is one that is just recently gaining some visibility and being deemed more worthy of consideration" (p. 1). So, by utilizing those images of multiracial individuals in the art classroom, they can help build racial identities, foster racial understanding and ensure equal and positive representation of all types of people.

Secondly, since this is a growing population that art educators will be expected to teach in the classroom, they need to be fully prepared to discuss societal changes, positive identity construction, and visual culture images with them. "In order to eliminate the struggle [with identity, fitting in social groups, etc.] a mixed race child may go through, one reasonable response would be to create choice for our children. We would make the effort to show our students that, indeed, they are a part of our society, our world" (Chau, 2005, p. 1). Not to the exclusion of other students, art educators need to fairly and equally represent multiracial students, giving them opportunity for voice in the classroom and a
chance to see images of individuals that are similar to them. "Children soak up messages- both visual and verbal. If we consistently show pictures of families that do not resemble theirs and always discuss identity in very specific and limiting ways, how will they ever feel seen? These messages will tell them that their families are strange and abnormal, a situation which is not the case" (Chau, 2005, p. 2). Art educators need to have an art curriculum that is not Euro-centric, but rather one that more accurately reflects the multiracial demographic of their classroom. "Of the [nearly] 7 million people who reported that they were mixed race in the 2000 Census, (about 42% or 2.9 million) were under 18 (and this is presumed to be an underreporting of the population)... In order to give a fair representation of the landscape of our society, it is important to incorporate mixed individuals and families in discussions of identity" (Chau, 2005, p. 2).

Beyond the actual statistics projecting the growing population of multiracial individuals, there is also personal significance to this study as well. In the future, I plan on returning to teach in California, where I was involved in education for the past four years. Through that experience, I am already well aware of the diversity of races, both single and mixed, in California classrooms of all subjects and levels. "According to Census 2000, of the total two or more races population [multiracial], 40 percent lived in the west" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001, p. 2). Because of this, I firmly believe incorporating images of multiracial individuals into the arts curriculum has relevancy and needs further research and implementation in the classroom. I believe this topic needs further research because I could not find specific information, in articles or Internet sites, that
directly related to multiracial identity/social relations in advertising. Furthermore, the reason I am exploring visual culture is due to its prevalence in many students' lives in the forms of films, TV shows, magazines, and Internet sources, among others. Since students are exposed to thousands of these images daily, I want to help them make sense of them and use the images to elicit discussions on different relevant topics in their lives, such as race relations, identity, and the pursuit of social justice. A plethora of literature written about visual culture, art education, and critical race theory offers discourse about these topics, which I address in the following chapter.
LITERATURE REVIEW

The focus of this thesis is the critical interpretation of advertising and its use of multiracial individuals through the examination of advertisements in the popular teenage girls' magazine, Seventeen. The purpose of my research is to look at the ways multiracial individuals are represented in the advertisements and interpret the images through a combination of ideas from critical race theory and the critical interpretation of advertising. Through this research, I hope to learn about race as a social construction and possibly aid my students in forming their own diverse, yet individual identities. By critically examining these ideas from critical race theory, I can also begin to question the White privileging prevalent in my own life.

In this section I describe how my thesis topic has been informed by literature from three areas of study, including: sociology, critical race theory, and visual culture in art education. Many of the ideologies from each discourse overlap and often complement one another. I will briefly discuss each area of study separately and explain their influences and interconnectedness. As I explore each area, I will formulate questions generated from my critique of the literature. While these questions help guide my research, it is beyond the scope of this study.
to fully answer each one. Additionally, my line of questioning may influence points of departure for my own future research as well as that of other scholars.

Sociology is listed first because I feel it is necessary to establish the importance of why I chose to use *Seventeen Magazine* as the vehicle through which I collect my data. Next, race and White privileging are explained within the context of critical race theory because they are major parts of the structural framework through which I am basing my interpretations. A brief account of visual culture is then provided, for it is through this area of study that art education and advertising coincide. Also, the ideologies and social concerns of visual culture are important in critically analyzing and interpreting the images and relating them to our everyday lives.

*Sociology: Seventeen Magazine*

Teen magazines geared toward girls have existed for over 60 years, often offering advice on such things as what to wear to impress the opposite sex, how to do one's makeup, and even offering basic health tips. The Hearst Corporation (2007), owner of *Seventeen* has reported that prior to *Seventeen*‘s debut in 1944, the only publications geared toward young people were in the format of either a comic book or fanzine. After *Seventeen*‘s beginnings, many other teen magazines targeting the young female demographic, such as *Teen Vogue, Teen People*, and *Cosmo Girl* have hit the shelves of local bookstores and created competition for perceived social relevancy [and hence consumer dollars] from their teen
audiences. The Hearst Corporation (2007) promotes their view of Seventeen's social relevancy by reporting:

Over the past five decades, Seventeen has helped shape teenage life in America. Seventeen has represented an important rite of passage, helping to define, socialize and empower young women. Seventeen has been a significant force for change—creating notions of beauty and style, proclaiming what's hot in music and movies, identifying social issues, celebrating the idols and icons of popular culture. (www.hearstcorp.com)

It seems that a publishing powerhouse such as the Hearst Corporation relies on glittering generalities [emotionally appealing words without supporting information or reason] to sell its magazine to advertising agencies, young girls, and subsequently their parents. Their assumptive statements instantly generate a plethora of questions concerning their proposed ability to empower girls, and shape teenage life in America. First, a critical reader might ask, how does a magazine represent a rite of passage? Does that mean that young girls who do not have access to Seventeen and who have never read its pages have no marked change in their social or sexual status? Does a magazine really have the power to define, socialize, and empower young women? While some of these questions are not possible to answer, they provide an example of critical questioning that students should engage in the classroom and everyday life.

Despite my questioning of the claims of the Hearst Corporation, according to several online magazine statistics tracking sources, such as www.magazineline.com, www.magazine.org, and www.brankweek.com,
Seventeen has the highest circulation numbers of any teen magazine in the US, at over two million copies [with 3.1 readers per copy] sold in 2005. The Hearst Corporation reports "one in every two American female teens- and one in every five American young women, ages 18-24- reads Seventeen" (www.hearstcorp.com). It is because of this popularity among young women and the high circulation numbers that I have chosen Seventeen as the magazine through which I will gather my data in the form of advertisements. Because I may utilize this information in my classroom, I want to study a form of media that is present in many young girls' everyday lives to help add relevancy to this research.

While having the highest circulation rates among female-oriented teen magazines may denote a certain financial success in the magazine world, demographically-speaking who are the young girls accounting for this success by buying the magazines? What is the racial breakdown of the consumers, where do they live, what are their socio-economic backgrounds? Is there equal access to all? According to the most recent media kit (2005), provided through a registration process on the Hearst Corporation's website, the following graph [Figure 1] attempts to figuratively answer some of these questions. As Figure 1 shows, the racial breakdown of readers is skewed toward one race over the others. Of the nearly 6.5 million readers, over 4.5 million are identified as White; while over one million are "Other", roughly 800,000 are Black, and another 800,000 are Hispanic. With a vast majority of readers being White, I want to know if the editorial and literary content, and more importantly, the advertisements in the magazine, are geared toward that White majority. Another question that
immediately follows is whether there is a high propensity of White readers because the magazine's content is consequently geared toward the largest group of readers? Or is it conversely, because White beliefs are portrayed results in more White girls buying the magazine? Further troubling the racial information on the graph, what constitutes "other", and where do multiracial individuals fit within the given categories? Were individuals given the option of choosing "more than one box" to represent their race[s]? Regrettably, I cannot answer these questions. Upon contacting the Hearst Corporation for details regarding this specific

Figure # 1: Racial Breakdown of Seventeen Readers
information, I was redirected to the online media kit, which does not offer background knowledge or interpretations of the data, only the actual statistics listed.

Another statistic that is known about Seventeen readers is their parents' median household income. Based on results found by Media Mark Research Inc.'s latest annual TeenMark study (2006), "Seventeen readers are more affluent than the other two top teen magazines' readers... [with] a median household income of $60,975 (based on their parents' response to a separate survey)" (www.brandweek.com). With the Seventeen readers being the most affluent of the teen magazine buying consumers, who does that leave out of their readership? Who is this magazine speaking to and who is represented within the pages of the magazine via interest stories and advertisements? What are these young girls learning about and from whose point of view?

Some of these questions have been answered by past emerging scholars and their research that involved Seventeen and the exploration of various topical issues such as: gendered identity (Tate, 1999), the social construction of femininity (Huffer, 2001), the content of health messages present in the magazine (Graves, 2006), the sexual mores of religious teenagers (Sivewright, 1994), and the manufacture of whiteness (Muller, 1997). Three of the authors' research dealt with the editorial and literary content of the magazine, such as Graves (2006), whose study used a content analysis to examine the content, communication goal, and tone of health messages present in Seventeen magazine
from 1975 to 2005. Although studies have examined similar topics, including the traditional roles of women, sexuality and romance in magazine feature articles, and health messages in media, there has been no significant research on health messages published in magazines targeted to teen girls. (p. 4)

While Graces' study informed my thesis by analyzing *Seventeen* and especially by utilizing a content analysis methodology, her research provided no data representative of multiracial individuals in advertising. However, it was demonstrative of the changes that have been made in the media [teen magazine] toward women and women's issues, such as sexual health and physical health. Whereas Graves' use of content analysis was highly quantitative, it provided a springboard for my own construction of categories to consider in my methodology.

Similarly, Huffer (2001) analyzed *Seventeen's* editorial content and the social construction of femininity, stating:

Historically, magazines marketed to teenage girls have presented stereotypical roles for women. This study compares the editorial content of two teen magazines directed to different populations of adolescent girls and analyzes the degree of traditional versus feminist role messages for girls. The 1999 issues of *Girls' Life* magazines (for girls ages nine to fifteen) and *Seventeen* magazine (for girls ages fourteen to twenty-two) are compared... The influence of the family, peer culture, school environment and the media is discussed. (p. viii)
Huffer's research, while focused on the literary content of the magazine, discussed the stereotypical roles for women directed toward adolescent females. Specifically, she explored the influence of the mass media in relation to stereotyping, and the portrayal of sex roles in the media. Her research revealed that the 1999 issues of both *Girls' Life* and *Seventeen* are decidedly less traditional than prior issues of both *Seventeen* and *Teen*. Like Graves' (2006) study, Huffer's study did not explicitly consider multiracial individuals, but the discourse concerning stereotypical roles for women did inform my reading of *Seventeen's* advertisements.

Additionally, Sivewright (1994) explores the sexual mores of religious teenagers in his research of Seventeen's literary content. Expanding on previous surveys that questioned teens on sexual attitudes and practices, Sivewright asked a random sampling of Nazarene youth groups to respond to a survey similar to the Barna (1987) survey [which randomly selected 1,100 girls and 1,400 boys ages 13 to 19, to discover where teenagers obtain their information about sexuality, and what or whom influences them] except that [he] sought more details concerning why teens feel the way they do. Through their answers, [he] determined the following: (1) What is the frequency of influential activities by Nazarene teens? (2) What sexual behaviors do Nazarene teens participate in and to what extent? (3) What comparisons can be made between the sexual behavior for youth of the Church of the Nazarene and their sexual influences? (no pagination)
It was beneficial to examine Sivewright's study in order to explore his verbiage and structure in writing about *Seventeen's* content and to consider what influences teens' sexual choices, which may include magazine advertisements.

Whereas the three aforementioned studies were primarily concerned with the written content of *Seventeen*, two of the studies examined various aspects of advertisements and their affects on teen girls. One of the studies by Tate (1999) focused on the interpretive and performative relationship between *Seventeen* and its readers from a critical feminist standpoint within the cultural studies paradigm. Specifically, Tate (1999) said:

*Seventeen* uses the rhetoric of gendered identity to sell products to readers and to provide readers for advertisers... while constructing its readers as consumers [and] shoppers who must use products to solve personal and social problems related to health, beauty and relationships. (p. ix)

While Tate's research explored the topics of gender, identity, and consumerism, it did not touch on the topic of multiracial representation or multiracial identity construction.

Similarly, the study by Muller (1997), which applied "Lacan's social psychoanalytic writings to a critical reading of women and ethnic others" (Muller, 1997, p. 7), focused on the manufacture of "whiteness" or the re-presentation of women and ethnic others in colonialism and women's fashion magazine advertising, specifically in relation to the clothing store Banana Republic®. Muller's research informs my study on advertising and whiteness, by exploring
women's fashion magazine ads and explaining that they must be understood in the terms of the discriminatory construction of whiteness. Her research states that the "racist/sexist violence against the other is disavowed and replaced by a seemingly innocent subtext, which helps to legitimate and perpetuate the injuries whites visit upon others" (Muller, 1997, p. 5). Once again, the study did not touch on the topic of multiracial representation or multiracial identity construction. While neither of these scholars' studies is in direct correlation with my research on multiracial individuals in advertising, their studies did inform my interpretations of advertisements, specifically in regard to reading whiteness and otherness, and the overall writing structure for different sections of my literature review.

Racial Discourse:

Because individuals of multi-race are the primary theme of this research, in this section I explore the issue of race through several lenses within the context of critical race theory (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1996; Roithmayr, 1999). These lenses include the notion of Whiteness (Bell, 1995; Lopez, 1995a; Lopez, 1995b; Flagg, 2001) and White privileging (Blauner, 2001; Harris, 1995; Wildman & Davis, 2001). Each of these concepts of race complements one another and builds the theoretical framework for this study.

First, I begin with a discussion of Critical Race Theory (CRT), its beginnings in the legal field, and its key writers, including: Bell (1995), Delgado & Stefanic (2001), Ladson-Billings (1996), and Lopez (1994). Next, I explore the concepts of Whiteness and White privilege as they are situated within the context
of critical race theory. I define both terms and consider how in the consciousness of most individuals they are often conflated and/or used interchangeably. Then, I briefly examine how both Whiteness and White privilege can be traced to pre-antebellum times in US history. Lastly, I describe how these concepts are connected to visual culture within art education and can be applied to critically interpreting advertising in the US.

In this context, I situate the theory I advance in terms of the epistemological significance of my own race and biography. I write as a White female. The arguments I present no doubt reflect the pronounced role physical features and ancestry play for my perceived Whiteness in society. Possibly, equally as important, I write from a perspective influenced by my biography. Both sides of my family are German-American, almost distinctly so, through the ancestral lineage. A few other Western-European ancestors, such as Irish, and a couple of Native American ancestors, briefly appear further back in my lineage, but I was raised as a purely White [US] American female in the Midwest. I identify as solely White and I am perceived as solely White by society.

Recognizing that this influences my interpretations of the theories of race I outline and subscribe to, I attempt to consider my research from many viewpoints and at the same time remain reflexive about my suppositions.

_Critical Race Theory:_

CRT grew out of critical legal studies in the time shortly after the US civil rights movement of the 1960s and the critical legal studies movement of the late
1970s. However, it did not emerge in legal discourse until the 1980s with the work of Derrick Bell, an African-American legal scholar and law professor. Many other scholars from various discourses, such as law, education, and feminism, have joined the fight against racism and created several spin-off movements utilizing the basis of CRT (Choe, 1999; Hidalgo, 1999; Parker, Deyhle, & Villenas, 1999). Some of these spin-off movements that have developed their own literature and sets of priorities include a Latino-critical (LatCrit) group, a queer-crit group, an Asian American group, and a group of Native American scholars. The CRT movement is composed of

a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power. The movement considers many of the same issues that conventional civil rights and ethnic studies discourses take up, but places them in a broader perspective that includes economics, history, context, group- and self-interest, and even feelings and the unconscious… unlike some academic disciplines, critical race theory contains an activist dimension. It not only tries to understand our social situation, but to change it; it sets out not only to ascertain how society organizes itself along racial lines and hierarchies, but to transform it for the better. (Delgado & Stefanie, 2001, p. 3)

Some of the ideas from CRT that most resonate with me are the interest in transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power, and the activist dimension that sets out to change those relationships for the better. Reflecting back on the introductory narratives of my friends, Will, Jamal, and McKayla, I realize that racism is still a dilemma in the US. However, acknowledging that
there is this problem of racism is only the first step. Educators such as myself need to take the next step and inform our students that racism still exists and teach them about the historical antecedents of this depravity. For example, "from the beginnings of European exploration, white people viewed the 'savages' they encountered in new lands as primitive and inferior" (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997, p. 170). Unbelievably, some of these views are still perpetuated in the US society and its institutions. Educators such as myself must set the precedent for extinguishing these fallacious views and fostering a more critical inspection of our beliefs and surroundings.

Promoting an understanding of our differences through critical interpretations of the world around us may begin to alleviate the misconceptions we may have about our peers and each other. One way to ensure critical awareness in our students is by discussing the three major tenets of CRT. Critical race theorists write, "that race is ordinary; … that our system of white-over-color ascendancy serves important purposes; and… the 'social construction' thesis, [which] holds that race and races are products of social thought and relations," (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001 p. 7). Discussing these ideas and how they relate to our lives, students as well as educators, can start to counteract the years of damage that racism, by being considered ordinary, has done to citizens of the US. By creating an awareness of white-over-color ascendancy, White individuals can start standing up against injustices imposed on non-Whites, as opposed to remaining silent, and reaping the benefits of their lack of color.
Whiteness and White Privilege:

To adequately define Whiteness and White privilege, I must first begin by proffering a definition of race in order to contextualize their meanings. While there are many opposing views on the definition of race, I am inclined toward what Lopez (1995a) posits:

Races are categories of difference which exist only in society: they are produced by myriad conflicting social forces; they overlap and inform other social categories; they are fluid rather than static and fixed; and they make sense only in relationship to other racial categories, having no meaningful independent existence. Race is socially constructed. (p. 199)

I employ this definition of race because Lopez does not rely on merely biological features, nor does he attest that race is one concrete entity and uninfluenced by outside factors. Further, I agree with Lopez that races exist only within society and are produced by conflicting social forces.

I provide this foundation because the concept of Whiteness evolves out of the societal perception of there being a White race. Whiteness is more than just having a color, or the absence of a color; it is primarily a social construct and thought process, a function of what people believe. According to Flagg (2001), "Whiteness is the racial norm... once an individual is identified as white, his distinctively racial characteristics need no longer be conceptualized in racial terms; he becomes effectively raceless in the eyes of other whites" (p. 36). A major component of being White is the unconsciousness of being White, that is to
say, an unawareness of having a *race* unless comparing oneself to people of color, or non-Whites. This unawareness often leads to the perpetuation of the social dominance of the White race and the subsequent oppression of the non-White races.

Besides considering what being White means, many times it is beneficial to look at what a term "is not" in order to foster better understanding. Lopez (1995b) says:

"White" is not: a biologically defined group; a static taxonomy; a neutral designation of difference; an objective description of immutable traits; a scientifically defensible division of humankind; an accident of nature unmolded by the hands of people. (p. 547)

In other words, what Lopez and Flagg and many other scholars writing within the framework of critical race theory are saying is that race, *White, Black, Asian, etc.* is socially constructed; a human categorization. Race is not based on scientific proof, rather it is based on what late 19th and early 20th Century courts called *common knowledge*, which I will discuss later in this section.

From this concept of being White, and Whiteness, emerges a tendency for unfair advantage that many scholars refer to as *White privilege*. Blauner (2001) states:

A dominant group, which thinks of itself as distinct and superior, raises its social position by exploiting, controlling, and keeping down others who are categorized in racial or ethnic terms. When one or more groups are excluded from equal participation in society and from a fair share of its values, other groups not so
excluded and dominated are correspondingly elevated in position. The racist restrictions that strike at people of color in America [US] result in a system of special privilege for the white majority. (p. 25)

As Blauner (2001) writes, restricting other races and excluding them from equal participation in society causes Whites [the majority] to have a special privilege, or an unfair advantage. This may develop in the way of preferential treatment at a restaurant, at the work place, at a loan office, at a real estate office, or in a university setting. It may also be a "systematic 'headstart' in the pursuit of social values" (Blauner, 2001, p. 25), which could be money, power, position, learning, and so on.

With a position similar to Blauner, Wildman and Davis (2001) posit that White privileging can be recognized by several characteristics common to privileging in general, which according to the authors include:

First the characteristics of the privileged group define the societal norm, often benefiting those in the privileged group. Second, privileged group members can rely on their privilege and avoid objecting to oppression. And third, privilege is rarely seen by the holder of the privilege. (p. 574)

So, in terms of White privilege, Whites define the societal norm; Whites can rely on the benefits of their privilege; and Whites rarely see their race as one of privilege. A societal norm, or hegemony, "makes the world seem natural, as if it can be explained by a dominant cultural story. Certain stories become privileged
at particular historical junctures because they fit so well with the maintenance of existing power relations" (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997, p. 178). In other words, hegemony is just the way things are and refers to what is deemed normal in society. Those who are normal, or privileged at particular historical junctures, are the ones by which members of society are judged in relation to and discerned to be good or bad, and whether they will fail or succeed. Furthermore, the members of society are measured against the characteristics of the privileged, which then become the norm. If one is perceived to be outside of the norm, then the individual will probably fail in that society.

Relying on the benefits of their privilege can mean many different things to Whites. According to Clark (n.d.), benefits can manifest themselves as "divine dispensations, natural advantages, gifts of fortune, genetic endowments, social relations, etc." (www.whiteprivilege.com). According to Wildman and Davis (2001), this can mean "members of privileged groups experience the comfort of opting out of struggles against oppression if they choose" (p. 45). So as these authors illustrate, the benefits of White privilege can either be a laundry list of pleasantries, and/or it can be a choice to pick one's battles against oppression. Sometimes this "opting out of struggles" may be exercised by silence. Instead of standing up for someone of color, or a non-White, in a particularly oppressive situation, the White person may choose not to say anything, nor draw attention to what was said. This reveals a privilege of not being the one, or group, that is being oppressed.
Because privilege is rarely seen by the holder of that privilege, many Whites do not believe they have White privilege or that such a concept even exists. It is invisible to them because it is just there; it is a part of their world and everyday life; it is a part of the hegemonic society in which they live. This is not to say that all Whites do not recognize their racial privilege and purposely treat non-Whites in racist ways. On the contrary, some Whites acknowledge that they are privileged. However, Jensen (1998) reveals "the ultimate white privilege: the privilege to acknowledge you have unearned privilege but ignore what it means" (www.whiteprivilege.com). So while some Whites acknowledge that they are privileged, they neglect the implications of how it affects those of other races.

Additionally, "the wages of whiteness are available to all whites, regardless of class position— even to those whites who are without power, money, or influence" (Harris, 1995, p. 286). This privilege of White racial identity is extended to even the poorest Whites, which serves as a compensation to those that do not have material wealth. So, regardless of social status or position, poor Whites can still claim membership in the dominant group, which gives them a marked advantage or privilege, over those who are non-White.

While the terms Whiteness and White privileging are two different concepts, I argue that White privilege is a result of perceived Whiteness, but that it is often used in a metonymic fashion. In general, it seems, that some scholars use the terms interchangeably in the discourse surrounding race and race relations in the US. Similarly, it appears that in the consciousness of most individuals, they are often conflated and/or connote an egalitarian existence. Arguably this is
understandable, because in essence, you cannot have one without the other. Where there is Whiteness, there is White privilege, and where there is White privilege, there is Whiteness. However, one should be aware that historically the two terms are indeed separate, with individual, yet associated meanings.

_A Brief History of Whiteness:_

In the US, the idea of what constitutes being White has always been highly contested and problematic in many ways. Almost equally so, being perceived and identified as White has been highly sought after due to the privileges it entails. I examine how both Whiteness and White privilege can be traced to pre-antebellum times in US history.

Beginning with the dispossession of the Native American Indians and the enslavement of the Africans, US courts have tried to establish what constitutes White and non-White. "Between 1680 and 1682, the first slave codes appeared, enshrining the extreme deprivations of liberty already existing in social practice" (Harris, 1995, p. 278). These codes were based on racial identity and further merged with social and legal status. Those who were "Black" were marked for enslavement with no legal rights, while those who were "White" were free, or at least, not a slave, and given legal rights.

Then in 1790, Congress, with its first words on the subject of citizenship, limited naturalization to "white persons". Being White, or having a Whiteness, was a condition for acquiring citizenship in the US for over 150 years, remaining a prerequisite until 1952. These laws were based on what constituted White and
non-White, and caused the courts to struggle on how to define who was a White person. According to Lopez (1995b), the courts had to:

Establish in law whether, for example, a petitioner's race [for naturalization] was to be measured by skin color, facial features, national origin, language, culture, ancestry, the speculations of scientists, popular opinion [common knowledge], or some combination of the above, and which of these or other factors would govern in those inevitable cases where the various indices of race contradicted each other. In short, the courts were responsible not only for deciding who was White, but why someone was White. (p. 543)

Because so much depended on being deemed White [citizenship, civil rights, voting rights, property ownership, etc], the White male judges in the courts were scrupulous as to whom they bestowed the privilege of being White. While these decisions were made on the basis of scientific evidence or common knowledge [popular opinion of the times], the rulings could change from one case to the next based on hair color and texture, or gradation of skin. "In other words, science does not necessarily become freer of ideology but finds new ways to make that ideology less evident and therefore more embedded and insidious" (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001, p. 304). This supports the argument that race is a social construction, since even the courts had a difficult time with the nature of race and the boundaries they put on Whiteness.

Courts have continued to go back and forth over whether to determine Whiteness by scientific evidence [skin color, hair, facial angle, jaw size, etc] or
common knowledge [he looks, acts, and thinks White, etc.]. Even as late as 1988, a statute by Congress explains "the term 'racial group' means a set of individuals whose identity as such is distinctive in terms of physical characteristics or biological descent" (Lopez, 1995a, p. 195). With all of the privileges and status that are associated with being in the dominant circle, i.e. White, it is unfortunate that few in this society seem prepared to repudiate their belief and reliance on notions of biological features to determine race. It is even more lamentable that race has to be something worth "determining" to ensure [in]justice in the US court system, which, as mentioned before, is dominated by White males.

Since racism has historical roots, affects certain policies, and yet still exists today, it needs to be recognized and examined in the everyday images that students see in their lives. By being aware of the past's treatment of individuals of color in advertising and the media, students can be more critical of the images they see today, and help ensure history doesn't repeat itself.

**Visual Culture:**

Critical race theory's emphasis on race, race relations, and social activism complements the discourse involving visual culture within the context of art education. Visual culture, as a field of study, in part, appertains to investigating images (e.g. media images found in advertising, films, on TV, the Internet, etc) that are prevalent in students' everyday lives. Beyond investigating the images, visual culturalists encourage students to challenge social issues, such as race and racial relations, and to become socially active in combating those issues. Visual
culture art educators can make this possible "by choosing films and other media to
study which deal with controversial social issues and by encouraging pupils to
explore such issues when producing these media" (Lanier, 1969, p. 316).

While Lanier made that statement in the mid-twentieth century, visual
culture is a newer discourse that materialized in the field of art education in the
late 1990s, and early 2000s. As Freedman and Stuhr (2004) explain:

The change in art education has historical roots. From the
beginning of public school art education in the late 19th century, a
range of design forms have been included in the field. For
example, early art education focused on industrial drawing and
handicrafts; children's interests became a topic of art education by
the 1920's; art in daily life was a slogan of the 1930's; during
World War II, visual propaganda was taught in school; and during
the 1960's, crafts increased in popularity. In the following 2
decades, a few art educators addressed important issues in the uses
of popular culture and mass-media technologies, contextualizing
these in relation to students' lives (Chalmers, 1981; Grigsby, 1977;
Lanier, 1969; 1974; McFee & Degge, 1977; Neperud, 1973;
815)

The study of [popular] visual culture grew out of the academically structured
discipline based art education (DBAE) of the 1980s and early 1990s, which
centered on art criticism, art production, aesthetics, and art history. As opposed to
pulling from one discipline [art education], visual culture art education is
transdisciplinary, pulling from multiple disciplines such as, media studies, critical
theory, psychoanalysis, feminine studies, and sociology, to name a few.

Furthermore, realizing that the majority of artworks introduced in the classroom were representing mostly White European males, which is not representative of most US classroom demographics, some art educators, such as myself, embraced visual culture and the images of/from multiple ethnicities. This helped contextualize the myriad visual images that are prevalent in our students' lives.

Using films, images, and advertisements that students bring into the classroom, art educators are trying to make learning experiences relevant to the lives of their students. Dealing with relevant social issues that students face in their lives may help them make sense of what is going on and possibly strengthen their skills of coping or overcoming those issues, generating feelings of empathy and compassion, or even fueling a desire and action toward change. Not only might the students' education be more personally gratifying, meaningful and interesting, it may also influence the connections they make between what they learn in school and the lives they lead in society.

By using materials/images from visual culture and informing students of the social implications of time, place, identity, cultural differences, empathy, etc., there may be a socially informed awareness leading to social changes for the overall betterment and treatment of the masses and the oppressed. One art education scholar, Lanier (1976) provides current art educators with ways of accomplishing this, even though he was writing this well before visual culture entered the field of art education.
What is required [for students and citizens of the US] is a critical consciousness, an informed awareness of the social forces which oppress our lives, confine our growth, and define our dreams, and an additional awareness of what we can do to combat them... to clarify the ways in which the social, political, and economic world works and how it can be improved. (as cited in Duncum, 1987, p. 9)

What Lanier is saying is that visual culture in the art classroom might help prepare individuals to take part intelligently in the management of conditions under which they live. By being informed and made aware of certain conditions in life, students will be able to question their circumstances. If the students question their circumstances and find that they don't agree with those conditions, they can act accordingly to change them.

Encouraging students to explore various aspects of visual culture may lead them to identify those individuals that are often not represented, or represented negatively, in different forms of media. Along with TV, films, and the Internet, magazine advertisements offer an area for students to critically interpret the messages and representations that are being displayed before them in their everyday lives. While some scholars (Bauerlein, 2004; Dorn, 2005) would argue that advertisements are a form of "low" culture and should not be included in the art curriculum, other scholars such as Tavin (2003) and Anderson (2003) understand the pedagogical potential that critically interpreting popular visual culture has for students.
"In the terrain of everyday life, popular culture is a significant site of learning that provides substantial experiences for children and youth" (Tavin & Anderson, 2003, p. 21). Children [and adults] often formulate their opinions of people on the representations they see of individuals depicted in the media. Because of this "these representations [particular forms of popular visual culture] are ideological texts... [that] play a significant role in the symbolic and material milieu of contemporary society by shaping, and often limiting, perceptions of reality and constructing a normative 'vision' of the world," (Tavin & Anderson, 2003, p. 21). Various media's portrayals of individuals, often through exaggerations and stereotypes, effects students' formation of individual and collective identities. In other words, these identity formations may not be based on reality, but on fallacious information perpetuated by popular culture. Accuracy aside, these perceptions of individuals' identities and cultures become part of the hegemonic view of society, and ultimately decide what constitutes normal and abnormal. As mentioned earlier in this study, if one falls outside the [White] majority-influenced norm, s/he is often doomed to fail in that society's view. Consequently, entire races of people may be subjected to oppressive situations because of these misconceptions instigated by popular visual culture portrayals.

Because of the power that these images impart on individuals' potential treatment and status in society, art educators' responsibilities involve more than teaching DBAE's art production and lecturing about aesthetics, as in the 1980s and 1990s. "As educators interested in the well being of our students and a democratic public sphere, we have a pressing responsibility to help develop
critical, reflexive, and meaningful approaches to interpreting, critiquing, and producing (alternative) images in visual culture" (Tavin & Anderson, 2003, p. 33). It is hoped that by informing a new generation of students, art educators will be able to create a more socially aware society that will benefit all individuals from all areas of the globe. Through this awareness, students can do their part to alleviate the social injustices caused by misconceptions advanced by the media.

This is important, since on average, students see around 3000 advertisements during the day, some on TV, some on the Internet, and some in magazines (Kilbourne, 2000). Because so many of the images students see on a daily basis manifest in the form of commercial advertising, it is imperative that they understand the many strategies and techniques that advertisers employ to capture their attention. A critical examination of advertising imagery can lead to visual and verbal critiques by students in the art classroom. Anderson (2003) explains:

A frequent end goal of these critiques of visual culture is social reconstruction. That is, the critiques examine the given, socially centered concept that holds the position of social power; deconstructs the assumptions, values, and mores that lie at the heart of these privileged constructions in a quest to find their contradictions, disjunctions, and dysfunctions; and thereby moves them out of their positions of power, centralizing instead values, mores and institutions that were previously peripheralized. (p. 20)

As Anderson states, interpreting advertisements breaks down the previously conceived notions that students may have about themselves, others, possible
power relations, and social mores. Once these ideologies are taken apart, students can begin reconstructing their identities, the identities of others, their communities, and even society.

Several other scholars (Kharod, 2006; Polaniecki, 2006; Chung, 2006; Savage, 2006) also discuss the importance of interpreting advertisements within their classrooms. For example, Kharod (2006) writes about the process critical viewers, her students included, should go through when engaging an advertisement or any visual image:

The image is a language of its own and the job of the critical viewer is to be able to deconstruct the image; to take it apart a piece at a time, an idea at a time, and assess the meanings that are revealed. A critical viewer would begin by a description of the visuals and symbols, followed by an exploration of the inherent meaning and cultural significance of those meanings. (Kharod, 2006, p. 33)

More than just listing the denotations of an advertisement, similar to Anderson (2003), Kharod encourages students to take apart the image and reveal the meanings that are embedded within the symbols located in the frame. Beyond deciphering what the advertisement is trying to sell in the form of a product, Kharod’s students may be able to understand the cultural implications perpetuated by the advertisements.

In furtherance of these ideas, Polaniecki (2006) discusses why cognizance of the interactions that adolescent students have with media culture can be so crucial to their overall educations and daily lives. For instance:
Because of the clever design and rapid turnover of imagery, students often do not realize how these everyday visual experiences effect their constantly evolving understandings of the world. While many of these media influences seem to conflict with many of my students' deeply held religious beliefs, ironically they still look to celebrities as role models of values, styles, and attitudes. Even when they, and we, dismiss such influences, they still exist as part of our social framework, lingering as temptations of who we should or should not be, and how we might be treated if we could live out these roles and possess the characteristics associated with them. (Polaniecki, 2006, p. 40)

As Polaniecki states, adolescents' everyday visual experiences may influence their views of others and the world more than they may be aware. Some of their views may also be manipulated by celebrity endorsements that go against students' deeply held beliefs. By educating students to be more discerning and critical of the visual imagery around them, they may be more able and willing to resist images and messages that demean themselves and/or others.

Analogous to Kharod and Polaniecki, Freedman and Stuhr (2004) synopsize the importance of helping students grasp the complexities of visual imagery, stating:

The great power of the visual arts is their ability to have a variety of effects on our lives; but that power can make them manipulative, colonizing, and disenfranchising. The complexity of this power needs to be considered as part of educational experience. For example, advertising images are produced by artists and are thought of as good for the companies whose
products they are intended to sell, but, they often represent stereotypes and cultural biases that damage viewers' self-concepts. (p. 825)

Because of the overwhelming presence in our daily lives, advertising images need to be closely examined and held accountable for the injurious cultural, racial, and gendered stereotypes that they may employ. These images can become a serious concern if they are seen as reflective of real life. If negative images of individuals and groups of people are constantly repeated in the media, it may affect how students understand and judge their peers and other citizens.

Further echoing the aforementioned sentiments by Anderson (2003), Tavin (2003), Kharod (2006), Polaniecki, (2006), and Freedman and Stuhr (2004), I believe the critical interpretation of advertising images, (in particular for this study, ones involving multiracial individuals), is an essential exercise in the art classroom. Tavin (2003) argues that the critical interpretation of advertising images is important because "the particular images, characters, colors, lines, shapes, and type in the advertisement itself matter, and so too does how the advertisement is embedded within a specific context and how it is taken up within a wider field of experiences and social practices" (p. 40). More than just images of products with accompanying, descriptive text, advertisements demand our time, attention, and money. They inform us of what we must purchase in order to be in-style and up with the latest fashions. They interpret for us what beauty is and isn't; who has it and who needs it. Consequently, "interpretations, then, are as effective as the visual artifacts (such as advertisements or films) that generate
them in influencing a culture's or group's shared world view" (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001, p. 4). Going beyond just influencing individuals' views of themselves and others, advertisements may also affect an entire group or culture and their assumptions of the world and people around them.

Often windows into contemporary [US] American culture, advertisements "influence individuals into accepting certain values and role models and into adopting certain lifestyles" (Kellner, 1995, p. 334). Whether or not we need certain products, we are led to believe our lives will not be as fulfilling or desirable unless we purchase our happiness through the newest items on the market. Regardless of whether we can afford certain products, we will buy them if our favorite personalities or role models are telling us that we need them. We not only buy the products, we also buy into the values and lifestyles implied by the products.

Moreover, we tend to construct our identities through the visual representations we see of individuals like ourselves and of those we desire to be more like. In a consumer culture, such as the US, we see many of these representations in the form of advertising images.

Such advertising images are central to the construction of cultural ideas about lifestyle, self-image, self-improvement, and glamour. Advertising often presents an image of things to be desired, people to be envied, and life as it "should be." As such, it necessarily presents social values and ideologies about what the "good life" is. It is also a central strategy of advertising to invite viewer/consumers to imagine themselves within the world of the advertisement. (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001, p. 189)
Often it is precisely that imagining of ourselves in occupation of the individual in the advertisement that leads us to purchase the product. Desiring the proposed lifestyle, glamour, or status projected by the model advertising a particular product, we then transfer the identity, invoked by the model to the product, and ultimately to ourselves, once we possess the product. "It is through one's purchases, perhaps more than in any other way, that personal definitions are constructed, and it is by means of one's purchases that those definitions are relayed to others" (Fowles, 1996, p. 96)

In other words, through the products and name brands that we purchase, we build part of our diverse identities and present our identities to others, who recognize the implications of the image that we purchased. Likewise, we recognize others by the products they purchase and form assumptions based on the accompanying advertisements' assertions. It is in these situations that stereotypes and biases in advertising may lead to misconceptions of others through repetitious incongruities. Because advertisements hold so much potential power in shaping others' identities, and our own identities, beliefs, and behaviors of what is socially acceptable and/or relevant, we must become more discriminating and critical readers of advertisements. Likewise, as art educators, we should attempt to nurture those evaluative qualities in our students so they are not manipulated into falsely judging others based on fallacious representations.
Conclusion:

All of the aforementioned research has contributed to the theoretical framework upon which I built this thesis, which explores multiracial individuals in advertising. Now that I have examined sociology, critical race theory, and visual culture in art education, and how they overlap and inform one another, I move on to the next section of this thesis, the methodology chapter. In that section I discuss the advantages and disadvantages of content analysis, the materials and process for data collection, and form the categories for data analysis utilizing ideas from the material in the literature review.
METHODOLOGY

My main research question is: Since multiracial individuals appear to be represented in *Seventeen Magazine*, what are the attributes of those representations, and how might they be beneficial in counteracting racism by cultivating intergroup knowledge and empathy? I will attempt to answer this question through critically analyzing several advertisements utilizing multiracial individuals from the 2006 circulation year of *Seventeen Magazine*. In order to interpret these advertisements I will ask several subquestions that will guide me in establishing the quality of representation of multiracial individuals. The following three questions were adapted from questions by Fowles (1996):

1. What might this advertisement be saying about what it is to be a multiracial female?

2. How is this advertisement conveying multiracial social status or class?

3. If more than one individual is present, what might be the nature of relationships between people? (p. 173).

In order to aid me in answering these questions, I will be using content analysis in this study.
Using a content analysis approach involves investigating the parts of the whole to create meanings through identifying patterns, categories, etc. Riffe, Lacy, and Fico (1998) define content analysis as:

The systematic assignment of communication content to categories according to rules, and the analysis of relationships involving those categories using statistical methods... [it] involves drawing representative samples of content... [and] to measure or reflect differences in content. (p. 2)

While I agree with this definition of content analysis in that it assigns categories according to rules, I am not inclined toward the emphasis the authors place on statistical methods. While numerical or quantitative data may add validity to research for some positivist scholars, I believe that more qualitative data, such as thick, rich descriptions, will contribute to a more critical and informative interpretation of the advertisements included in this study. I am concerned that mere quantification of the data collected may lead to trivialization and miss the underlying issues.

Another definition of content analysis, by Miles & Huberman (1984), does not put as much emphasis on statistical methods as it does the importance of qualitative data:

Qualitative data, in the form of words rather than numbers... are a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes occurring in local contexts. With qualitative data one can preserve chronological flow, assess local causality, and derive fruitful explanations. Then, too, qualitative data are more likely to
lead to serendipitous findings and to new theoretical integrations; they help researchers go beyond initial preconceptions and frameworks. (p. 15)

Combining the positive attributes of both of these definitions of content analysis, I have constructed a method that most suits my study. Using the first definition for setting up categories based on a set of rules that I establish and analyzing the relationships between them fits well with the rich descriptions and explanations that I use to initially describe and define the data in the categories. Additionally, my construction of various categories may lead to serendipitous findings and to new theoretical integrations to help me go beyond my initial research question.

Advantages of Content Analysis:

There are several advantages to using content analysis for my study. One of the advantages is that it is a "nonobtrusive, nonreactive, measurement technique... [where] the researcher can draw conclusions from content evidence without having to gain access to communicators who may be unwilling or unable to be examined directly" (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 1998, p. 30). Because I do not have access to large numbers of multiracial individuals, nor to advertising executives, I can draw conclusions based on the data I gather from a popular teen magazine's recent circulation year. Furthermore, while visiting multiple sites and conducting personal interviews with people is ideal, using content analysis alleviates any discomfort that multiracial interviewees may feel when answering questions from a White female researcher.
Besides alleviating possible interviewee discomfort, another advantage of using content analysis in my study is:

The content has a life beyond its production and consumption, longitudinal studies are possible using archived materials that may outlive the communicators, their audiences, or the events described in the communication content. (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 1998, p. 31)

While the authors are referring to the content as the actual materials being studied, it is my hope that my findings from this study will also far outlive me and influence future researchers' studies concerning race, multi race and identity. Even in the distant future, my data collection results could be used as a historical comment on the social issues and times of the early 21st Century.

Finally, although similar to other methodologies, another advantage of using content analysis in my study is that it is "virtually unlimited in its applicability to a variety of questions important to many disciplines and fields because of the centrality of communication in human affairs" (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 1998, p. 31). Not only is the data that I collect concerning multiracial individuals important to the field of art education and visual culture, it may also inform the fields and disciplines of sociology, media studies, women's studies, racial studies, identity studies, and possibly even policy and politics. Since multiracial individuals are a growing population of individuals in the US, new policies may need to be passed regarding their rights and privileges, and quest for equality.
Disadvantages of Content Analysis:

Despite content analysis having its advantages, there are a few disadvantages as well. One such disadvantage is the question of the applicability of the sampling from which I gather my data. In other words, what is the generalizability of the results I gather from my findings? Will the data I collect be indicative of all teen girls magazines in the US? Initially having these questions in mind led me to choose the particular publication that I did. Seventeen has the highest circulation of any teen girls magazine, and according to the publishers, also has a racially mixed demographic. Through those two features, I believe the magazine will be generalizable, at the very least, to the region of the Midwest in the US, from where it was purchased. I say this with the assumption that different regions may receive various versions of magazine editions, and/or included advertisements, based on the target demographic residing within.

Another conceivable disadvantage of utilizing content analysis is the possibility of my own researcher bias. As a White female, I may overlook some nuances of White privileging that may be used in the advertisements involving both multiracial individuals and Whites. Whereas I may view a particular characteristic, such as subject positioning within the frame, as non-consequential or mundane [something that I take for granted as happening in everybody's everyday life], a multiracial individual may see it as an example of privileging of the White[s]. While these two disadvantages have the potential to adversely affect
my study, I view them as enabling me to gain insight on potential problems that may arise and by being consciously aware, preemptively counteracting their influences on my study.

*Rationale for Using Content Analysis:*

My main research question determined my choice of content analysis. Until I develop meaning from setting up categories, the individual advertisements do not convey much meaning in and of themselves. As Hall (1997) states, "It's an absolutely fundamental aspect of human culture to classify things, because until you classify things in different ways, you can't generate any meaning at all" (Jhally, 1997, DVD). Part of the modernist in me likes to have things neatly categorized so I know where they fit and what their indicative qualities are, so in turn I can make associations and better understand the way my world is ordered. I realize that categories are not concrete and that some ideas/concepts fit into multiple categories, or none at all. However, it is not until I categorize concepts that I can begin to analyze these categorizations and move items around, disagree with the groupings, question/critique their placement, and interpret their meanings. It is through this interpretation of the images that I can “examine the assumptions that [I] and others bring to them, and to decode the visual language that they ‘speak’” (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001, p. 41). By doing so, I can contribute to the process of assigning value to the culture in which I and others live.
Utilizing magazine advertisements representing multiracial individuals further led to my choice of content analysis because of its two main research purposes or goals as outlined by Riffe, Lacy, & Fico (1998). The authors write that the two goals of content analysis are "To describe the communication and to draw inferences about its meaning or infer from the communication its context of production or consumption" (p. 26). While most advertisements have an intended meaning given to them by their creators or producers [ad executives], it is not until I engage the advertisement with my own experiences and associations and consider the advertisement's context [or setting] that a meaning or interpretation can be made. Further, I need to consider who produced this particular advertisement and who was the intended viewer or consumer. In other words, there is a complex social interaction of the image to myself [viewer] in context of where I viewed the advertisement [culturally, physically] that ultimately produces the meaning[s]. Put another way, meanings are not inherent in images.

*Materials and Process for Data Collection:*

The beginning process for data collection was determining which magazine to use to collect my advertisements of multiracial individuals. As outlined in my literature review, I chose to use *Seventeen Magazine* because of its popularity with teen girls, a population that I will probably be teaching in the future. I borrowed the entire 2006 circulation period of *Seventeen*, a monthly publication of January-December, from the local public library. I began my data collection by going through each individual magazine and documenting
[Appendix A] the number of pages of advertisements and number of actual pages in the magazine, including the back cover, but not the front cover [the back cover is always an advertisement, whereas the front cover offers a photograph and featured article titles]. Then I went through each magazine and counted the number of advertisements utilizing multiracial individuals. The multiracial individual advertisements were chosen on a basis of individuals "appearing" non-White or racially ambiguous based on my personal discernment of their identity using biological signifiers such as color, hair, and bone (DuBois, 1897).

Once an advertisement was personally specified as containing at least one multiracial individual, it was marked, color-printed and filed. After all twenty-one advertisements utilizing multiracial individuals were printed, I displayed them and began looking for categories and patterns to appear based on the readings that I had been doing of analyzing texts by Riffe, Lacy, & Fico (1998), Messaris (1997), Fowles (1996), and Schillingsburg (1997), and also of critical race theory by Delgado & Stefancic (2001). Then each advertisement was attached to a form [Appendix B] that listed the possible categories that it could be placed into for further interpretation. The concepts for establishing categories are discussed in detail in the data analysis section directly following this section.

Data Analysis:

There are many concepts for establishing the categories that surfaced from the readings of analyzing texts and critical race theory, and some were eliminated or reclassified at the beginning stages of categorization and interpretation, based
on relevancy in reading the individual advertisements. Only the relationships and
patterns most prevalent, or information rich in determining representation, are
explored/interpreted and measured based on relevancy in answering the research
question and due to time restrictions of completing the study. As a result, three
main categories emerge from reviewing the group of twenty-one advertisements.
They are: 1) Formal Elements, 2) Social Status, and 3) Appearance.

1) Formal Elements:

The first category, Formal Elements, includes concepts such as: viewing
distance, time/place, cropping/omission, physical positioning, and viewing angle.
Messaris (1997) provided one of the techniques for interpreting the representation
of multiracial individuals in advertising- that of viewing distance. Messaris
explains:

If a person in a seascape [or any] ad is meant to attract attention
through her or his own sexual qualities, that effect can be
magnified by a closer viewing position... [this] operates by
analogy with interpersonal distance in real-world interaction. In
real life, greater proximity is generally associated with heightened
attention and more intense involvement; the same should hold true
of our reaction to people in images. (pp. 28-29)

So if the advertisements featuring multiracial individuals show a magnified
positioning of the model[s], then I might interpret that as the ad selling the sexual
qualities of the females due to the greater proximity of their bodies [the viewed]
to the viewer.
Fowles (1996) offers the concept of establishing a time and locale for the scene. He has the critical reader consider the following questions: "Where does this happen? Does this locale have any significance for the intended audience? Past, present, or future? What is the temporal location suggesting?" (p. 173). By putting myself in place of the intended viewer or viewing audience, I can uncover more implicit ideas that the advertiser may have targeted at the audience to which I do not necessarily belong [females aged 12-24].

Additionally, the concept of cropping/omission is considered in the category of formal elements. "Sometimes, it is not what is in an ad that pulls people in but what is missing. Is there anything missing in this imagery that consumers would feel moved to supply and thus to be engaged?" (Fowles, 1996, p. 173). From this I consider what is shown in the image frame and what may be cropped out. I contemplate what missing hands, feet, or heads may mean in the context of an ad.

Next, I consider the physical positioning of the individual in the advertisement- in other words, is s/he standing, sitting, lying down, kneeling, in the foreground or background, etc? Art historians and critics [and advertisers, too] have often associated the physical position of the subject/object with relation to the power s/he has or does not have within that context. In classical artworks and advertising alike, men have usually been depicted as "active, adventurous, powerful... [and] women as sex objects who are usually young, thin, beautiful, passive, [and] dependent" (Wood, 1994, p. 235). Underlying questions that may assist in clarification of power relations are: What can be interpreted about the
power to move, to run, to escape, to challenge, or to provoke? And what can be interpreted about power relations if the viewed is in defiance of that positioning?

In direct relation to the positioning of the individual within the frame is the positioning of the camera outside of the frame- or viewing angle. Elements to consider are whether the subject is shown "from below, from above, or in a level view with the subject" (Messaris, 1997, p. 34). Depending on where the camera angle is focused: below, above, or level, may connote different effects, such as a powerful positioning of the subject, a subordinate positioning of the subject, or a possible equality with the subject, respectively.

2) Social Status:

The second category, Social Status, includes concepts such as: White privileging, intersectionality, and group relations. Two of the main concepts originate from critical race theory- White privileging and intersectionality. White privileging, as defined in the introduction of this study "refers to the myriad of social advantages, benefits, and courtesies that come with being a member of the dominant race" (Delgado & Stefanie, 2001, p. 78). This concept informs and constructs a category of how multiracial individuals are represented in relation to any Whites that may be present in the advertisements considered. Information gathered from this category may be useful in answering subquestions 2 & 3 of this study- How is this advertisement conveying multiracial social status or class? If more than one individual is present, what might this advertisement be inferring about the nature of relationships between people?
Intersectionality, as defined by Delgado and Stefanić (2001) is "the examination of race, sex, class, national origin, and sexual orientation, and how their combination plays out in various settings" (p. 51). This concept will be useful in reading and interpreting the overall idea of representation of multiracial females because it is concerned with the intersection of recognized sites of oppression. For instance, being non-White and a female puts an individual in two categories of oppression, which may lead to aspects of disadvantaging. Should each disadvantaging be considered separately, connectedly, or in some unknown manner as yet to be established? Information gathered from this ideology may be useful in answering the main research question of: What are the attributes of those representations [in Seventeen], and how might they be beneficial in counteracting racism by cultivating intergroup knowledge and empathy?

In close relation to White privileging, or White's social advantages, as discussed in critical race theory, is Sturken & Cartwright's (2001) discursive notion of representing others\(^2\) in cultural subordination to the dominant culture, or Whites. As the authors explain:

The category of the norm is always set up in opposition to that which is deemed abnormal or aberrant in some way, hence other. Thus, binary oppositions designate the first category as unmarked (the "norm") and the second as marked, or other... The category of white is understood in Western terms of representation to be the

\(^2\) The notion of other is widely used in a variety of disciplines ranging from Philosophy, and especially Phenomenology, to Psychoanalysis and Post-Colonial Theory. Although the meaning of the term varies considerably, it refers at its most general level, to one pole of the relationship between a SUBJECT and a person or thing defined or constituted as a non-self that is different or other (Macey, 2000, p. 285). In this study, other refers to individuals that are non-White, and/or female.
primary category, while black (or brown, etc.) is understood as other to that category- what white is not. (p. 104)

This concept interprets group relations, or how the multiracial individual, as other, or non-White, is presented in the frame, both solely and/or in a group featuring Whites and other races. Additionally, I consider whether there are any themes of dominance and subordination, superiority and inferiority. Further, I speculate whether the multiracial individual would be presented differently if s/he is a mix of White and another race, as opposed to a mix of two or more non-White races.

3) Appearance:

The third category, Appearance, includes concepts such as: sex appeal, exoticism, and clothing [lack of and/or style]. Sex[ual] appeal is an attractiveness or interest invoked by appearing sexy [stimulating desire], which can evolve from concepts such as exoticism and the presence/lack or style of clothing. Exoticism is often synonymous with otherness, or difference from the established norm-Whiteness and/or the US as a location. For instance, as Sturken and Cartwright (2001) explain:

A white model is unmarked, the normative category, precisely because consumers are not meant to register the face of his/her whiteness, whereas a nonwhite model is marked by race. Traditionally, race has been used in advertising to give a product a kind of “exoticism” and foreignness. (p. 221)
In other words, exoticism can transpire in the use of people of color, or non-Whites or, in the use of diverse locations, such as tropical or desert settings in other countries.

Similarly, “the presence of so many lithe and less-clothed women represents advertisers' attempt to project certain meanings onto their commodities. The objectified women are redolent in possible significations” (Fowles, 1996, p. 153). Some of those significations may be that the women are: vital, accessible, epitomes/exemplars of beauty, or consumable. While these models may be objectified for the heterosexual male viewer, and portray sexual desire, heterosexual women viewers may be drawn toward occupying that portrayal of sexual appeal. The probable implication is that that appeal would then transfer to the product and result in a purchase.

It is with these three categories that I proceed into the next chapter outlining the findings from the data collected. Twenty-one advertisements were marked as involving multiracial individuals; however, after being grouped according to similarities and patterns, only three advertisements that are the most information rich in exploring the possible social implications of multiracial identity, will be analyzed in depth.
FINDINGS/DATA ANALYSIS

The first part of the main research question [RQ1] focuses on the attributes of the representations of multiracial individuals within the 2006 circulation year of Seventeen Magazine. The three supporting subquestions help clarify what these attributes may connote or suggest in terms of multiracial female identity [RQ2], social status [RQ3], and/or interpersonal relationships [RQ4]. This thesis approaches these research questions by analyzing the twenty-one advertisements marked as involving multiracial individuals. General findings of the data are reviewed, and subsequently grouped according to similarities and patterns. Then, three of the advertisements, that are the most information rich in exploring the possible social implications of multiracial identity, are analyzed in depth, utilizing the interpretative techniques outlined in the Methodology [Chapter 3].

This chapter is organized in ascending order, beginning with general information of the whole data collection, to more specific information formulated from a very limited data set. First, basic statistics and denotations are provided, including: the number of pages/advertisements in each of the twelve magazines from 2006, in relation to those ads involving multiracial individuals; the number/gender of the individuals represented in the advertisements; and the types of consumer products being showcased in the multiracial ads. Next, the
similarities and patterns found within the twenty-one advertisements are described, followed by the resulting three categories being listed. Finally, with cognizance of the four research questions, I critically interpret the three ads that I discern to be the most information rich within the group.

General Information:

An initial question that I posited in the introduction of this thesis was whether *Seventeen Magazine* is leading the way in showcasing the population growth of multiracial individuals in the US demographic or if it is still using predominately White individuals in its ads. In order to answer this question, I counted the number of pages of advertisements and the number of actual pages in each of the twelve magazines of 2006. I included the back cover, but not the front cover, because the back cover is always an advertisement, whereas the front cover offers a photograph and featured article titles. Next I went through each magazine and counted the number of advertisements utilizing multiracial individuals. I then calculated the percentage of advertisements utilizing multiracial individuals compared to the total number of ads in the magazine. I found twenty-one separate advertisements involving multiracial individuals, including three of which appeared in more than one issue. These three particular ads were only counted once in the total number of advertisements, but each appearance of the ad was included by month, in Figure 2.

According to the 2000 US Census, there are nearly 7 million individuals that identified as more than one race [multiracial], which is 2.4% of the US
population. Using that numerical value [2.4%] as a benchmark, I measure whether there is at least an equivalent percentage of multiracial advertisements existing within each magazine. The following table [Figure 2] organizes each magazine by month with: the total number of pages per magazine [# Pgs.], the total number of advertisements per magazine [# Ads], and the number of ads involving multiracial individuals [#MR] per magazine. The percentages [%MR], shown in the bottom row of the table, represent the number of multiracial ads as part of the total number of advertisements in the magazines.

It is evident by the numbers in the table that Seventeen's use of multiracial individuals in their ads is not comparable to that of the data collected from the 2000 US Census. However, 50% of the data sample, or six months' issues, January [6.1%], May [2.5%], August [2.7%], September [6.8%], October [5.3%], and November [3.7%] featured ads involving multiracial individuals that were

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<td># Pgs.</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>138</td>
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<td>182</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>212</td>
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<td>1.1</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>6.8</td>
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Figure 2: Breakdown of pages to advertisements to multiracial [MR] ads in Seventeen, 2006.
over the benchmark goal of 2.4% [of US citizens identifying as multiracial]. The other six issues from 2006 have below 1.8% of their ads involving multiracial individuals.

While I am quite dismayed by these numerical findings [I was hoping for at least 80% results], I am relieved that any individuals appearing to be non-White or multiracial are represented in advertisements in Seventeen Magazine. I would like to believe this suggests a consciousness of the changing face of the US, and that a greater percentage of non-Whites will be represented in advertisements in the future. However, as Giroux (1994) states, “regardless of the form it takes, the purpose of advertising is to subordinate all values to the imperatives of profit and commercialization” (p. 11). Hence, the largest numbers of multiracial advertisements appear in both the September and October editions, perhaps the two months securing the largest magazine purchases due to female readers returning to school.

Of the advertisements that involved multiracial individuals, sixteen of the ads spotlight a solo female, while three of the ads exhibit a group of females. None of the advertisements featured a solo male or a group of males. However, two of the advertisements did feature a group of males and females together within the same frame. This absence of males was characteristic of all of the advertisements in the Seventeen Magazines, not exclusionary to the ones involving multiracial individuals. There could be many possible explanations of why males are not utilized in the ads, but I hypothesize that it is due to marketing
to a young female demographic. Teenage girls may have a higher tendency to purchase products if they identify with, or desire to identify with, the female models represented within the advertisements.

With *Seventeen*’s target audience being young women aged 12-24, all of the products showcased in the advertisements involving multiracial individuals fit within one of four categories aimed at this demographic, including: shoes, clothing brands/clothing stores, health/beauty, and perfume. Two of the ads were displaying the same brand of shoes- Ecko Red®, and ten of the ads were retailing different clothing brand/clothing stores, such as [but not limited to], Aeropostale®, Pepe Jeans®, Macy’s®, and Torrid®. Six of the advertisements were promoting health/beauty products, such as: L’Oreal Paris® makeup, Abreva® cold sore cream, Paul Mitchell® hair care products, and three for Playtex® tampons feminine protection. The remaining three advertisements were for perfume, including: Vera Wang®, Ralph Lauren®, and Baby Phat®. I mention the specific product names as a window into contemporary [US] American culture: as what is defining the styles of the times (2007).

*Similarities and Patterns:*

When examining the twenty-one advertisements that involve multiracial individuals, there are several similarities and patterns that emerge upon perusal of the data. First, I notice that the vast majority of individuals represented in the ads are youthful and attractive females, with few, if any, males [see previous section]. Only one plus-size model is spotlighted [for Torrid® clothing store] while the
other twenty advertisements display models in varying degrees of thinness [some appear more healthy and proportionate to their frames and heights; others appear too thin in relation to their frames and heights]. Another discernable similarity amongst the advertisements is that twelve of the twenty-one feature females that have cropped or omitted body parts. For example, three of the six health/beauty ads highlight close-ups of the females' faces, with only a singular ad showing part of a model's arm, and visible only from her shoulder to her elbow, within the frame.

Coincidentally, all three of the perfume ads stress close proximity to the females' faces with only segments of arms and hands visible within the frames; the remainder of their individual bodies are completely missing from the frames. As Messaris (1997) explains, "greater proximity is generally associated with heightened attention and more intense involvement" (p. 29). In other words, by utilizing a magnified view of the model, viewers may pay more attention to the advertisement. Presumably, the advertising executives hope this increased involvement with the advertisement will transfer to a heightened attention/identification with the product, and result in the viewer's acquisition of that product.

Because close proximity to the model often requires body parts to be completely missing from the frames, it may also lead to a possible objectification\(^3\) of the model. Having only certain portions of the models' bodies within the frame

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\(^3\) Objectification is the act of presenting a person as an object of perception (Oxford American Dictionary, 1999, p. 682). Human qualities are disregarded and the human [model] is viewed as an object, devoid of agency, that is only intended for viewing pleasure.
may heighten our attention to those areas, but may also mask the models' ability to register as full humans in our minds [the viewers]. For example, the models may be viewed as merely a beautiful face, a smooth arm, or manageable hair. Further objectifying the females is the similar technique of cropping/omission. By removing necessary body parts enabling movement, the models are rendered stationary and immovable; therefore being interpreted as merely objects, devoid of agency.

Nearly half [10] of the advertisements flaunt the female models as less-clothed, sensual objects. Some ads, such as Paul Mitchell® and L'Oreal®, suggest complete nudity of the models, while others indicate the presence of clothing, however revealing. Of the females that are mostly-clothed, 100% of them are engaged in provocative poses, such as: leaning over with cleavage showing; tilted heads, semi-parted lips, and suggestive glances; seated and standing positions with parted legs; and body posture that implies an invitation [to heterosexual men or homosexual women] for sexual desire. While many of the female models are shown with these sexual implications, the young female readers of Seventeen are not necessarily sexually attracted to these models as objects of desire.

Alternatively, young readers/viewers identify with the female models... By presenting us [them] with models whose sexual or financial or other types of success we [they] may wish to emulate, advertising images draw upon our [their] tendencies for identification in order to strengthen our [their] emotional involvement with ads. (Messaris, 1997, p. 41/44)
In other words, many of the female viewers [Seventeen readers] may desire to occupy that sexual allure, as opposed to desiring the model that is exuding the allure.

Similar to the technique of cropping/omission, physical positioning within the frame may connote a possible objectification of the female, depending on whether she is depicted as passive or dependent, active or resistant. Of the twenty-one advertisements, six suggest a position of sitting; one implies lying down; five feature standing positions; three ads present individuals in action; and six ads present models’ bodies that are cropped to such an extent that actual positioning cannot be discerned.

Another similarity or pattern that emerges is that of the camera angle from which the models are viewed. Twelve of the ads display the individuals at a level view to the consumer; five of the ads capture the individuals at a higher level than the viewer; and four ads feature the individuals at lower levels than the viewer. Depending on where the camera angle is focused: below, above, or level, may connote different effects, such as a powerful positioning of the subject, a subordinate positioning of the subject, or a possible quality with the subject, respectively. The majority of ads [12] display the models at a level view to the consumer. This technique encourages viewers to read the models as equal to themselves. Being able to identify with the model may possibly promote the wantonness to purchase that product or implied lifestyle.

As a result of these similarities and patterns emerging from the aggregate data collection, three main categories transpire: 1) Formal Elements, 2) Social
Status, and 3) Appearance, which are outlined and described within the Methodology section of this thesis. It is with these three categories that I proceed into the next section and critically analyze three advertisements that are the most information rich in exploring the possible social implications of multiracial identity.

*Critical Interpretation of Three Advertisements:*

I chose three advertisements to be critically interpreted, in depth, employing the techniques outlined in Chapter 3. These three ads were determined to be the most information rich of the entire group [21 ads] in answering the three subquestions of identity, social status, and group relations. While many of the twenty-one advertisements involved a solo female and/or excessive cropping of the female's body within the frame, a group setting involving all females, or both males and females, is most conducive to exploring the issues being questioned in this thesis.

In this section I explore each of the three advertisements separately, and with regard to the three content categories of interpretation. Then in the following chapter [five], I attempt to interpret the implications that each advertisement has in determining the attributes and quality of representations of multiracial individuals within *Seventeen* by offering possible answers to my three subquestions. Then, I proffer some generalizations/conclusions of multiracial individuals in advertising based on the entire group of multiracial advertisements
in *Seventeen*. Lastly, I reflect on my findings, and contemplate what this research means to me and the field of art education.

*Playtex® Gentle Glide® Tampons [Beach]:*

The first advertisement that I analyze in depth is of a group of females and males promoting the *Playtex® Gentle Glide® Tampons* brand feminine protection [Figure 3]. Some of the text appears in a dark blue *text box* at the very top of the

![Figure 3: Playtex® Gentle Glide® Tampons [Beach]](image-url)
frame, which asks, “Me? Miss out on the fun? That's not an option with Playtex® Tampons.” Additionally, at the very bottom of the frame, more text is written next to a picture of the product:

Me? Let my period get in the way of my life? You've got to be kidding. Not when I can use Playtex® Gentle Glide® Tampons. They're so comfortable to wear you can't even feel ‘em. And they've got a smooth plastic applicator that makes them easy to insert. Plus I get amazing protection. Miss out ‘cause I'm wearing a pad? No way!

Directly below that text is larger, bold text, that declares, “So comfortable you can't even feel them®.” Immediately to the left of that is the accompanying website address for this product. The text seems to be written from the perspective of a diary entry [font is suggestive of hand writing] from one of the females in the group, although which one is not explicit. Using adolescent vernacular [e.g. ‘em, ‘cause], to mirror the way some teenagers speak, may further encourage more females to identify with the models in the ad.

Some of the denotations of the ad are: there are six individuals that appear youthful, three male and three female; three of the individuals have the potential to be identified as non-White or multiracial; they are situated on a beach; and they appear to be forming a human pyramid. The following interpretations of the advertisement, utilizing the three main content categories, will explore the possible connotations embedded within the frame.
1) Formal Elements:

This category includes concepts such as viewing distance, time/place, cropping/omission, physical positioning, and viewing angle. As previously mentioned, Messaris (1997) explains that viewer attention can be heightened by a closer proximity to the individuals in the advertisement. Messaris' point can be illustrated by examining this group\(^4\) carousing on the beach. The models are positioned in the immediate foreground, which intensifies our involvement in their activities. Although our immediate attention is focused on the group itself, the beach in the background is deliberately incorporated into the frame to enhance the texts' appeal. For example, the text that exclaims, "Miss out on the fun ['cause I'm wearing a pad]?" would conceivably not be as believable to young viewers if the same models were shown in a classroom setting, or completely devoid of context.

As Harris (1989) explains, Playtex® is linking their product with fun. "Photography and copy intertwining good times at the beach, in the ski lodge, or just relaxing at home with friends using the product encourages people to think about that product whenever they have or anticipate such good times" (p. 67). So it is not only the product's association with fun, but also the seductiveness of the beach coupled with the gathering of friends that substantiates the text and produces the viewer's need for the product. However, in this instance, the ad is not

\(^4\) Each model is named to alleviate confusion from copious pronoun usage. They are named left to right, and with a brief description of clothing for further clarification. Bottom row: Billy- shirtless, Zack- gray #4 jersey, Ryan- blue shirt. Top row: Kristin- white hat, Sarah- blue bandana, & Lydia- pink shirt.
necessarily selling the feminine protection product as much as it is endorsing the
lifestyle that a female might miss out on if she didn’t purchase the product.

Cropping/omission, although not a concept that seems apparent at first
Glance, needs to be considered within this advertisement. With the hands and feet
of all the individuals being cropped or covered by another individual’s body, the
models can be interpreted as lacking the agency to run or escape, which is
indicative of possessing power. While it may be assumed that everyone’s hands
and feet are within the frame, and not purposely omitted, only portions of two
females’ hands are actually visible on Zack’s shoulders. All other views of hands
and feet are obstructed by another individual within the ad. Therefore, this group
of individuals can be deemed as an object for us to observe. However, “a
potentially objectifying gaze can be deflected in an image, if the subject refuses to
acknowledge it” (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001, p. 88). Because the individuals are
not directly looking back at the camera, and hence the viewer, they are resisting
the power of the gaze upon them. In addition, the models can be further
interpreted in resistance of objectification, because even though they are lacking
the essential appendages for motion, they are pictured in the midst of movement
within the frame. In other words, the individuals within the advertisement, both
male and female, are "depicted in action… which negates attempts to objectify
them because they are shown as powerfully [sic] within the frame” (Sturken &

Their precarious positioning, and seemingly unbalanced form, also seems
to command our attention, not necessarily as an object to be viewed, but as a
possible invitation to participate in a pleasurable experience. As Tavin (1999) explains, “Many contemporary images... have relied on a lack of balance and disorientation to hold the viewer’s gaze and elicit pleasure and desire” (pp. 15-16). Although possibly not Tavin’s intended meaning, in this case, the lack of balance of the models, and/or our desire to be included in the fun [pleasure] may be partially what beseeches us to gaze upon the group.

Besides balance [or lack of] to capture the viewer’s attention, the vibrancy of the colors in the advertisement also may elicit pleasure and desire. As Bang (1991) explains, we feel differently looking at different pictures [advertisements] because, "we associate the shapes, colors, and placement of the various picture elements with objects we have experienced in the ‘real’ world outside the picture [advertisement]” (as cited in Messaris, 1997, p. 58). For example, the bright/vivid colors, accentuated by the natural lighting of the outdoors, may reference the vibrancy and potency of youth. Further, the warmer, pink hues can be interpreted as inviting and/or seductive, and possibly exuding a femininity. Additionally, the natural hues of the sand, ocean, and sky saturate the background and manifest as the powerful forces of nature, which could be transferred to the potential power of a woman and her body.

Next, I consider the physical positioning of the group and the individuals within the group. The six individuals are stacked together, on their hands and knees, in a human pyramid. The act of being on one’s hands and knees may connote obeisance, worship, and/or acknowledgement of subordination to a dominant power. A critical reader may ask: Who are they bowing to-the viewer
[and the power of youth], or the product [with its conspicuous placement at the bottom left corner]? This structure [pyramid], known for its solidarity due to a larger base tapering to a point, signifies a strength [in their youth, in their friendship] that is not easily toppled. The group seems strong as a whole, greater than the sum of its parts. Individually, however, each member of the group and his/her position connotes something different. This aspect will be discussed in greater detail in the following section pertaining to social status and group relations.

2) Social Status:

This second category includes concepts such as: White privilege and group relations. Beginning with the males at the bottom of the pyramid, I consider each individual's positionality in relation to his/her other group members. For example, Billy and Ryan, the two White males on each end of the bottom row, serve as anchors and support for the pyramid. Each male only balances one half of a female's weight on his back. Being at the bottom of the pyramid, with others' weights on top of them, both Billy and Ryan are seen as strong, solid, and supportive. However, oppositional to this strength is their fixedness in the supportive positions as anchors.

Both Billy and Ryan focus their gazes on Zack, who is in the middle of the bottom row of individuals. Zack, who appears to be non-White and/or multiracial, is one of the main foci in this ad [possibly due to the many lines, formed by human arms and legs, pointing in his direction]. Positioned in the middle of the
bottom row of the pyramid, Zack supports a majority of the weight. Bracing the weight of half of both Kristin and Lydia, plus the full weight of Sarah [on top], Zack represents solidarity and immense power [both physical and metaphorical] within the context of the pyramid and within the advertisement. Paradoxically, wedged in his supportive position, Zack represents physical power, yet, similar to Billy and Ryan, is powerless due to his fixedness as an anchor. He is subordinate to the females and oppressed: both by the weight of the females on top, and by being constrained between the two White males.

Next, I consider the positionality of the females within the frame. On the left, Kristin is kneeling and dividing her weight between both Billy and Zack. This can be interpreted as exerting power over the two males that she rests upon. Forcing them to be immovable because of her weight on top of them, Kristin has more power [of potential movement, not necessarily physical strength] than the males. Similarly, on the right, Lydia is kneeling on both Zack and Ryan. This, too, can be interpreted as exerting power over the two males she leans on, forcing them to be immovable from her weight.

Lastly, in regard to positionality, I consider Sarah, the White female at the very top of the pyramid. Like Kristin and Lydia, she exerts superiority over the males by rendering them immovable from her weight on top of them. However, Sarah also exerts this same power over Kristin and Lydia, by leaning on and resting her weight on both of them, too. Sarah, by her very station at the top, and her seemingly semi-standing position, is granted the ultimate privilege of potential agency or activity. She oppresses everyone else in this ad: physically, on
account of her weight, and metaphorically, in terms of her White privilege over non-Whites. Because of this, Sarah may be understood to be dominating the whole group of individuals in the pyramid.

Besides considering group relations to interpret social status, there are several other properties in this visual image that connote a proposed social class. First, the individuals in the advertisement are presumably from a middle/upper-middle class because they are able to spend leisure time at the beach, instead of working to help support themselves or their families. Similarly, they [their parents] must be of higher financial standing [than a working class citizen] to afford a home by the beach, or to afford travel to the beach. The individuals are displayed in nice, clean clothes, unsoiled by hard physical labor. Equivalently, the individuals themselves have smooth, clear skin that lacks evidence of outside labor in the sun. The individuals seem to be experiencing a privilege of the middle/upper-middle class in that they may take part in pleasurable activities at a desirable location.

3) Appearance:

The third category includes concepts such as: sex appeal, exoticism, and clothing [lack of and/or style]. The Playtex® group doesn’t seem to immediately produce an overtly sexual desire. The models are mostly-clothed and none of them appear to be exuding a conspicuous exoticism, nor utilizing a predatory or seductive gaze. Instead, their facial expressions, large smiles, and glittering eyes connote a fun, carefree event being spontaneously captured by a photographer.
Rather than enticing the viewer with sexual desire, the group seems to be inviting the viewer to desire in joining the harmless fun.

However, “more generally, though, sex and status tend to work together. Aspects of physical appearance and behavior that function as sexual signals also convey messages about social standing” (Messaris, 1997, p. 49). For example, several categories of different female looks have been established by editors of women’s magazines, including “classic beauty”, “sensual/exotic”, and “girl next door” (Solomon, Ashmore, & Longo, 1992). These categories are described in dimensions of physical beauty, but also have class connotations as well.

“Girls next door” are more respectable and middle class than “sensual/exotic” types, but less upper class than “classic beauties”... Furthermore, these physical characteristics also have ethnic associations. In particular, as the second part of its name implies, the "sensual/exotic" category tends to be more strongly associated with those ethnic groups that traditionally have held a lower status in American [US] society. (Messaris, 1997, p. 49)

So, in terms of the Playtex® advertisement, the females represented seem to connote an overall reading as “girls next door”, due to their sporty-type clothing that mostly covers their bodies. This, in conjunction with their pleasant smiles and well-kempt, but not overly coiffure hair, would make them more “respectable” and situate them within the middle class, as suggested by the interpretation in the preceding social class category of this thesis. The males, although not examined under the same categories developed by editors, also seem to connote an equivalent “boys next door” appearance by their clothing and facial
expressions. This also situates them within the middle class as proposed in the preceding section.

However, three of the individuals in the ad that may be identified as non-White or multiracial, could also fall within the “sensual/exotic” category, which tends to be more strongly associated with those ethnic groups that traditionally have held a lower status in American [US] society. With this consideration, the three non-White or multiracial individuals, by their physical appearances and ordained categorization as other [by those in power in society in the US], could be situated within a lower social class than their White counterparts.

Playtex® Gentle Glide® Tampons [Bowling]:

The second advertisement that I analyze in depth is another group of females and males promoting the Playtex® Gentle Glide® Tampons brand feminine protection [Figure 4]. Beginning with a brief consideration of the text, some of it appears in a hot pink text box at the middle of the frame, which says, “Spare me!” For most US readers, this is a pun that represents an obvious reference to the bowling scoring system where a bowler knocks down all the pins within two consecutive tries. Williamson (1978) explains, “Puns provide a short cut between a product and a referent system-- we do not have to ‘get through’ the product to the reality it connotes, because the elision in language of the product and world brings them into a frame of reference simultaneously” (p. 86-87). Besides being a short cut to meaning between the photograph of models and the text, understanding the pun may make the viewer feel a semblance of witty
intelligence because she recognized the intended connection and cynical wit of the advertisers. Being drawn in with the recognition of the pun, the viewer’s eyes move down to the next hot pink text box which states, “Using a tampon’s easy when the tampon is Playtex®.” Possibly also a reference to the ease of playing a game, or in this instance, bowling, the viewer further attends to the next piece of text, at the very bottom of the frame, written next to a picture of the product:

Spare me the lectures. I wanted to use tampons. But I was scared they would hurt. Then Jen told me about Playtex® Gentle Glide®

Figure 4: Playtex® Gentle Glide® Tampons [Bowling]
Tampons. They've got a smooth pearlescent applicator that makes them easy to use. And they're so comfortable to wear you can't even feel 'em. Plus I got great protection. So even with gutter balls, I was a winner last night!

This dense paragraph of text, which similar to the first Playtex® advertisement, resembles the diary entry of a teenage female [using teenage vernacular and fragments of speech], coheres all of the text together. Utilizing the bowling referents “Spare me”, “gutter balls”, and “winner” connects the photograph with the text, and endorses a lifestyle that a female might miss out on if she didn't purchase the product. Lastly, similar to the other Playtex® ad, directly below that text is larger, bold text, that declares, “So comfortable you can't even feel them®.”

Some of the denotations of the ad are: there are six individuals5 that appear youthful, three male and three female; four of the individuals have the potential to be identified as non-White or multiracial; they are situated in a bowling alley; three individuals are visibly holding bowling balls; and they appear to be in the midst of a bowling game. The following interpretations of the advertisement, utilizing the three main content categories, will explore the possible connotations embedded within the frame.

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5 The models in this ad are named left to right, beginning in the foreground, Jason & Celia; middle, Troy; then background, Jen, Sherri, and Paulo.
1) Formal Elements:

This category includes concepts such as viewing distance, time/place, cropping/omission, physical positioning, and viewing angle. In this frame, there seems to be three discernible planes: an immediate foreground featuring a White male and a multiracial female; a middle ground featuring a solo Black male; and a distant background featuring an out-of-focus view of a White female, a Black female, and a multiracial male. Because of their close proximity to the viewer and focused clarity, Jason and Celia attract the most attention and implore a more intense viewer involvement than their fellow counterparts in the advertisement. It is here that viewers focus their initial gaze/attention and subsequently may assume that Celia is the written voice they read within the accompanying text.

Similar to the Playtex® beach advertisement, this ad displays nearly every individual with his/her feet cropped out of the frame [a slight portion of Troy's foot is barely visible]. This technique of cropping/omission renders the individuals stationary or as objects to be gazed upon. However, in direct resistance to that immovability, the individuals refuse to acknowledge the viewer's gaze and equivalently, they are depicted in action, in various stages of bowling. While the individuals in the middle and background appear to be waiting for their opportunity to bowl, their potential for movement is implied by the possession of a bowling ball that is needed for the pending activity. Also, Jason appears to be actively instructing Celia on the proper techniques of bowling, of which she is in mid-motion.
The six individuals are part of an unbalanced composition that seems to be more heavily weighted toward the left side of the frame. This compositional imbalance tends to be more indicative of youth-oriented advertisements, as Messaris (1997) points out, “Ads for high-status, luxury products occasionally feature a spare, tightly ordered style, whereas the style of youth-oriented ads is often deliberately loose and anarchic” (p. 82). This lack of balance, including large shapes in the background being slightly askew, coupled with areas in and out of focus, could be transferred to the metaphorical imbalance often experienced during adolescence. Furthermore, as explained with the Playtex® beach ad, “images… have relied on a lack of balance and disorientation to hold the viewer’s gaze and elicit pleasure and desire” (Tavin, 1999, p. 16). This concept can be dually illustrated by this advertisement.

Next, I consider the camera angle and in relation to the individuals in the advertisement. The camera angle is at a level view, which helps the viewer identify with the model[s]. Sturken and Cartwright (2001) explain, “when we say that an image speaks to us, we might also say that we recognize ourselves within the cultural group or audience imagined by the image” (p. 45). In other words, being able to identify with Celia, a female viewer can imagine herself in a bowling establishment and potentially using the advertised product, given the same situation. This may lead to a heightened desire to purchase this product. Lastly, the positionality of the individuals is considered in the following section, social status, as it assists in determining group relations.
2) *Social Status*:

This second category includes concepts such as: White privilege and group relations. First, I consider the physical positioning of the individuals within the group in relation to White privilege. But before I consider this attribute of the advertisement, it is important to mention “the relative classlessness of [US] American advertising does not capture social reality, for every [sic] American senses that different social classes do exist” (Fowles, 1996, p. 152). With consideration of this point, I begin in the background with the small assembly consisting of Jen, Sherri, and Paulo, who are standing, presented as out-of-focus, and as a result, seem to be less important or merely acting as supporting characters to Jason and Celia. Of the three, the White female is standing in front of the Black female and the multiracial male, connoting a possible White privileging or unspoken White-over-color ascendancy that may also exist within the hegemony of White US society. Next, Troy, a Black male, is standing in the middle ground, in front of the aforementioned group, but directly behind Jason and Celia. This may connote Troy having more societal significance than the Black female and multiracial male, but less of an importance to the White male and his companion. It can also be interpreted as a false equality or as racism as being ordinary and not an aberration. Meaning that even the advertisers may not have considered what it may insinuate having Troy in a position behind a White male. Lastly, in the immediate foreground, Jason, a White male, and Celia, a multiracial female, are both slightly bent over and preparing to bowl. Whereas Celia, the multiracial female, is in front of Jason, and ultimately the main focus of
this advertisement, she is under his supervision and tutelage. As Fowles (1996) explains, “women are seen as dependent on men and needing their protection” (p. 40). Because of this act of support given by Jason, Celia does not dominate the frame as she possibly could do, if she were alone in the foreground, and not dependent on Jason. So in regard to status within the advertisement, Jason seems to unknowingly utilize his Whiteness and maleness to dominate the females and non-White individuals.

Another attribute in this visual image that may insinuate a proposed social class is their use of leisure time. The individuals in the advertisement are presumably from a middle class because they are able to spend leisure time bowling, instead of working to help support themselves and/or their families. However improbable, they may also be from a working class, which tends to choose bowling as an activity, as opposed to a higher class’ choice of an activity such as yachting, traveling, or croquet. Another aspect of the individuals’ social class can be interpreted through the style of clothing that they are wearing. I address this in the following section, *appearance*.

3) *Appearance*:

The third category includes concepts such as: sex appeal, exoticism, and clothing [lack of and/or style]. The Playtex® group seems to be exhibiting both an exoticism, by the inclusion of two multiracial individuals and two Black individuals, and sex appeal, by clothing style and physical positioning. First, the inclusion of two multiracial individuals and two Black individuals, exhibits an
attempt at alluring the viewer through exoticism, or at the very least, multiculturalism. Because those four individuals are other to the White norm in advertising, their very existences suggest difference, and quite possibly an assumed awareness, to the White viewer. “Increasingly, markers of ethnicity and race are used in advertisements to demonstrate social or racial awareness and to give a product an element of cultural sophistication” (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001, p. 221).

There are several attributes that make this advertisement exhibit signs of sexual allure, both through clothing and positioning. First, there is a multiracial female in the foreground, and she is slightly bent over with a bowling ball held between her legs. While this is a seemingly normal part of the bowling activity, it can also, by substitution, give the perception of sexual activity. Having the White male standing directly next to her, leaning over, with his hand in mid action as if to grab her, also adds to the sexual implications and overtones.

Second, the sexual allure and appeal also manifest through the clothing differences in the males and females present in the ad. The three males are all attired in two separate shirts. Each one has on a T-shirt, short sleeved or long sleeved, underneath another button down shirt. This would suggest that the weather might be a bit cold outside of the bowling establishment. However, each of the three females wears a tank top or an arm-baring shirt. In this instance, they may be “portraying sexuality as a weapon of power” (Harris, 1989, pp. 40-41) through their absence of clothing in comparison to the males. If the males’ clothes are indicative of the weather, and it is cold outside, then the females’ lack of long
sleeves or two shirts, suggests that they are dressing this way to attract attention from the males and/or to be in style.

While the females appear to be involved in this activity for the sake of the males' admiration and attention, the males "are seen as calm and cool, self-confident, decisive, and emotionless" (Harris, 1989, p. 41). That self-confidence in a male can be sexually alluring to females and even other males. Whereas the females depicted in the advertisement need to be less-clothed than the males to elicit attention, the males, by their very being, as calm, cool and self-confident, fully-clothed individuals, can achieve the same heightened attention and involvement as the females.

Aeropostale®:

The third advertisement that I analyze in depth is a group of females promoting the Aeropostale® brand of clothing and/or store [Figure 5]. Beginning with a brief look at the text, the clothing brand name is emblazoned in bright orange across the top of the frame. Directly underneath in dark blue is the word "Congratulates" which is syntagmatically connected to the accompanying text near the bottom of the frame. Next is, "Seventeen's BEST", [missing the word "DRESSED", which is on the following page and completes the phrase], followed by two of the individuals' names, Arielle, and Catherine [Alyssa, the name of the third individual is on the following page, too]. At the near bottom is "Get Best Dressed! Shop online at www.aeropostale.com and find a store near you." At the very bottom is a barely readable text that confirms, "ADVERTISEMENT". So all
together, the text reads, Aeropostale® congratulates Seventeen's best [dressed], Arielle, Catherine, [Alyssa], etc...” Much of this text is very problematic; for instance, a clothing brand- Aeropostale® is congratulating the magazine’s readers for being the best dressed [in Aeropostale® clothing?]. In addition, the text at the very bottom aims to convince the reader that this is indeed an advertisement. Without attempting to further decipher the meanings of this problematic text, I move on to the denotations in the advertisement.

Figure 5: Aeropostale®
Some of the denotations of the ad are: there are three female individuals, one of which appears to be multiracial or non-White, two of which appear to be White; they are situated on a sofa in a space devoid of time and context; two of the females are wearing jeans; one female appears to be wearing a jean skirt or shorts; the camera angle seems to be directly in line with the individuals’ faces; and the ad appears to be advertising the Aeropostale® clothing brand. The following interpretations of the advertisement, utilizing the three main content categories, will explore the possible connotations embedded within the frame.

1) Formal Elements:

This category includes concepts such as viewing distance, time/place, cropping/omission, physical positioning, and viewing angle. In this frame, the individuals⁶ are in the immediate proximity of the viewer. Without a background to suggest a locale or to distract the viewer, all attention and interaction is focused on the three females. That, coupled with a level camera angle, a female viewer can gaze directly into the faces of the three females. Adding an element of authenticity, as real readers of Seventeen pose for the photograph and not paid models, viewers may potentially find it easier to identify with them. Believing that other readers like themselves can make it into a magazine, and be showcased as having style sense, viewers may equate that with wearing Aeropostale® clothing.

⁶ The individuals in this advertisement are actual Seventeen readers, and their names appear on this page and on the following page. From left to right, they are Arielle, Catherine, and Alyssa.
In this advertisement, unlike the previous two, these individuals are not cropped in any way. None of their body parts are omitted from the frame, and they are therefore capable of movement if so desired. However, also unlike the previous two advertisements, the three females are posed, sitting on a sofa, and not shown in action. So, while they have the necessary body parts needed for agency, they are offered as stationary objects for the viewer’s gaze. Further rendering Arielle and Alyssa stationary is Catherine, who is stretched out across the laps of the two females.

The colors throughout this ad seem rather muted and unobtrusive to the focus on the females. Most of the colors are flesh tones and denim blues, surrounded by a large background of plain white. The only colors that really stand out in this frame are the bright orange and yellows used in the text overlaying the group. One noticeable use of repetition, in the form of horizontal lines, may be used in the ad to signify a unity or uniformity amongst the females. All three of them are wearing shirts with the same horizontal line pattern. However, I will further discuss their clothing, and the possible connotations, in the third category section, appearance.

2) Social Status:

This second category includes concepts such as: White privilege and group relations. First, I consider the physical positioning of the individuals within the group in terms of possible White privilege. Then I consider their overall group relations. First, while Catherine, the multiracial female, is the individual in the
closest proximity to the viewer, she is also lower in the frame than the two White females. Additionally, their heads are positioned higher in the frame, and they are shown sitting upright, which may connote a formality or higher class. Catherine is in a reclining position with her head braced by her arm, which may connote a leisure activity or lower class.

Additionally, the two White females physically surround Catherine and support her weight on their laps. Arielle and Alyssa may be interpreted as being stronger and able to withstand more, whereas Catherine may be seen as weak and in need of support. Conversely, the two White females seem to be uncomfortable with Catherine on their laps. Arielle seems to be pulling on the sofa arm to escape from Catherine, or minimally, to separate herself from her. Similarly, Alyssa seems very uncomfortable, and forced, with her hands resting on Catherine’s shoulder. Alyssa could also be interpreted as preparing to push Catherine off her lap at any moment. When interpreted through a social class lens, the higher class Arielle and Alyssa, are trying to separate themselves from the lower class, Catherine.

However, the usual relationship of White dominance and non-White subordination is momentarily reversed if viewed from the perspectives of positionality and potential agency. Catherine is in the closest proximity to the viewer and therefore obtains the most viewer attention and interaction. Furthermore, while Catherine is in a reclining position, she is physically on top of the two White females. She holds the greatest potential for movement, whereas
Arielle and Alyssa are oppressed by her weight on top of them. Catherine would have to move first in order for either White female to be able to relocate within the frame.

Further reversing White dominance in this advertisement is the accompanying text that implies that everyone is equal because they are all best dressed. The three of them are being congratulated on the same merits of fashion sense, and for reading the same magazine. “The muting of class information in advertising serves to eliminate an unpleasant social reminder from the messages” (Fowles, 1996, p. 152). Because the three females are portrayed in similar clothing, sitting in the same conceptual space, and seemingly devoid of any physical signifiers of social status, we do not need to be concerned with the possible class differences amongst the females. We can interpret this as an egalitarian co-existence and not be bothered with the underlying issues that the advertisement dismisses.

3) Appearance

The third category includes concepts such as: sex appeal, exoticism, and clothing [lack of and/or style]. Beginning with the stretched-out, reclining pose of Catherine, she may be interpreted as possessing a type of power gained from emitting a sexual allure or exoticism. “Sometimes the power that women do exercise is used in very underhanded and conniving ways, often directly or indirectly involving sexuality” (Harris, 1989, p. 40). Catherine’s pose, when considered with her seductive gaze, and pressed lips, may be interpreted as
exuding an allure or exoticism involving her sexuality. She is also seen as exotic because she is in opposition, as other, to the two White females.

Arielle, the White female wearing a blazer, striped shirt, and short skirt/shorts, seems to be the most formal in appearance. Her toes are pedicured, her hair is braided to one side, and her makeup seems minimal and complementary, not overdone. Arielle has a look that connotes a more grown-up and business like appeal, or as mentioned in the Playtex® ad, she seems similar to a “classic beauty”. However, her long, bare legs, crossed over in a playful manner, may be sexually appealing to some heterosexual males, or to females imagining themselves in her place.

Catherine, the multiracial female wearing a striped shirt, a long sleeved Aeropostale® T-shirt, black vest, and jeans, seems to be the most childlike, and yet, exotic in appearance. Her hair is styled in punk-like shag and her eye makeup is hot pink, purple, and appears to be a bit overdone. Along with her multiple necklaces, Catherine’s sloppy, layered look connotes a less grown-up and more leisurely/sensual appeal, or as mentioned in the Playtex® ad, she seems similar to an “exotic/sensual” female.

Alyssa, the White female wearing a striped, low cut V-neck shirt and jeans, appears more formal than Catherine, but less business like than Arielle. Similar to Arielle, her hair is also modestly styled and her makeup seems minimal and complementary. However, her toes are not pedicured or painted, as are Arielle's toes. Alyssa has an appearance that seems to connote a look that is somewhat sophisticated, yet suggestive, since her aqua bra strap is showing on her
partially exposed shoulder. However, Alyssa seems similar to the “girl next door” because of her modestly styled hair and minimal makeup. All three females appear to be fashionably dressed for the times (2006), and as the advertisement states, they are in fact, Seventeen's "best dressed".

**Conclusion:**

Now that I have explored each of the three advertisements separately, and with regard to the three content categories of interpretation, I segue into Chapter 5: Conclusions. There I attempt to interpret the implications that each advertisement has in determining the attributes and quality of representations of multiracial individuals within Seventeen. I begin by offering possible answers to my three subquestions. Then, I proffer some generalizations/conclusions of multiracial individuals in advertising based on the entire group of multiracial advertisements in Seventeen. Lastly, I reflect on my findings, and contemplate what this research means to me and the field of art education.
CONCLUSIONS

In this section, I present responses to the research questions that I proffered in the introduction to this thesis. First, I consider my three subquestions recognizing that they will be efficacious in answering my primary research question concerning the attributes of the multiracial representations. Second, I extend some generalizations of multiracial individuals in advertising with regard to the similarities and patterns found within the definitive group of twenty-one advertisements. Third, I consider how the multiracial advertisements may be able to counteract racism by cultivating intergroup knowledge and empathy. Lastly, I reflect on my findings, and contemplate what this research means to me and to the field of art education.

Implications of Three Research Subquestions:

In this section, I attempt to interpret the implications that each advertisement has in determining the attributes and quality of representations of multiracial individuals within Seventeen by offering possible answers to my three subquestions. As stated previously, I recognize that my three subquestions will be efficacious in answering the first part of my primary research question concerning
the attributes of the multiracial representations. Therefore, I will not address that portion of my primary research question in a separate section.

Subquestion One: Multiracial Female Identity

The first subquestion that I attempt to answer in this thesis is: What might this advertisement be saying about what it is to be a multiracial female? First, it is important to note, “the influence of visual culture on identity occurs on personal and communal levels… Far from being a unified whole, any particular identity is a combination of others, with its resulting contradictions and incongruities” (Freedman & Stuhr, 2004, p. 817). In other words, identity is not something we are born with, but that we develop through the influences of many extraneous factors, such as, environment, spiritual beliefs, friends, family, and popular culture. This is one of the primary reasons that positive representations of multiracial individuals in advertising are so crucial. Because students may build their identity through the visual images that they see around them, negative representations of individuals like themselves may lead to contradictions with how they understand who they are or want to become. Additionally, negative representations may also lead students to construct fallacious or illogical identities of others.

In the first and second advertisements, with the Playtex® groups that are carousing on the beach [Figure 3] and bowling [Figure 4], the multiracial female identity could be interpreted as multifaceted. First and foremost, the females that can potentially be identified as multiracial are portrayed as fun, adventurous and
similar to everyone else [in a White majority society]. In this case, the females within the ad do not produce an overtly sexual desire; they are mostly-clothed “girls next door,” and none of them appear to be exuding an exoticism, nor utilizing a predatory or seductive gaze. The females are engaged in a normal event that could possibly happen on any given day and they are shown right in the midst of the fun. The multiracial females are neither excluded from the activities, nor are they offered as merely decorative elements. Of the three advertisements, I perceive these to be the most positive in portrayal of multiracial identity because they do not exoticize or overly sexualize the females.

The third advertisement [Figure 5], with the Aeropostale® group that is sitting on the sofa, is similar to the other ads, in that Catherine is portrayed as normal and equal to the two other females in the frame. She, too, can be chosen as one of Seventeen's best-dressed readers. However, unlike the Playtex® ads, Catherine seems to be exuding an exoticism and utilizing a seductive gaze toward the viewer. She is playfully displayed in a reclining position across the laps of the two White females and appears to be offered up for our viewing pleasure. While she is mostly-clothed and not overly sexualized, her facial expressions exude an oppositional interpretation, which is significant according to Messaris (1997). “In our interactions with other people, we tend to be especially responsive to visual cues coming from relatively narrow zones encompassing their eyes and their mouths” (p. 23). So, despite her being fully attired, Catherine's eyes and slight smirk may suggest sexualized visual cues.
While being sexually appealing or desirable is not necessarily an unacceptable behavior or characteristic, it is important that young multiracial females [and all males/females] understand that they do not need to be overtly sexual to attract attention/affection. Instead, their identities should be partially constructed by positive role models in their families, communities, and in [popular] visual culture. Furthermore, educators should assist young females' positive identity construction by fostering the females’ strengths and building their self-confidence in their personal abilities, thoughts, and talents.

Subquestion Two: Multiracial Social Status

The second subquestion that I attempt to answer in this thesis is: How is this advertisement conveying multiracial social status or class? First, as I quoted previously, “the relative classlessness of American advertising does not capture social reality, for every American senses that different social classes do exist, nor does it parallel popular culture offerings, where class placements and class markers are frequently conspicuous” (Fowles, 1996, p. 152). While many advertisements do not appear to convey any outright portrayal of the categorical impositions of work or social status and class, there are unspoken signifiers of class that can manifest themselves, no matter how covertly, in contemporary advertising. One of the foremost signifiers of class may be the type of product being advertised, the target audience, and in what caliber of magazine [demographically speaking] the advertisement appears. Additionally, the types or styles of clothing the models are wearing within the ad, as well as the location and
activities they are partaking in, all connote a social status or class, whether immediately discernable or not.

People often identify with what they consume, and perhaps equally so, people identify others by what they consume. Williamson (1978) furthers this thought:

We are made to feel that we can rise or fall in society through what we are able to buy, and this obscures the actual class basis which still underlies social position. The fundamental differences in our society are still class differences, but use of manufactured goods as means of creating classes or groups forms an overlay on them. (p. 13)

In other words, social class and position can be socially constructed [as with race] based on the products that one chooses to purchase. In consideration of the products sold in the three multiracial advertisements that I interpreted, the individuals represented are presumably from a middle class. First, an upper class female, while still biologically necessitating the feminine protection products, would probably not encounter that type of advertisement in a publication geared toward her demographic. Furthermore, Aeropostale® is not an upper class clothing brand, such as Armani® or Dolce & Gabbana®, nor is it affordable to the lower or working class consumers. Therefore it is presumably directed toward the middle to upper-middle class youth.

Within the three advertisements, the multiracial females’ physical appearance and behavior can function as sexual signals and may also convey
messages about their social standings. After interpreting the trio of advertisements separately, I found that the multiracial females were mostly portrayed as “girls next door” which, as stated previously, are more respectable and middle class than “sensual/exotic” types, but less upper class than “classic beauties.” The only exception was Catherine within the Aeropostale® advertisement. She seemed to be presented as more of a "sensual/exotic" type, and her potential sexual appeal may deem her as having a lesser social status amongst women. However, her confidence in her appearance added to the stated textual equality [best dressed] negates her lower status.

While being portrayed as “girls next door,” “classic beauties,” or even “sensual/exotic,” are not necessarily unfavorable classifications, it is important that young multiracial females [and all males/females] understand that multiracial individuals are situated within every class in American society, and they are not necessarily indicative of a lower or lesser class. Whereas Seventeen is a magazine that is targeted toward a particular middle/upper-middle class demographic, and so therefore present models from that social status, I portend that multiracial individuals would be utilized in upper class publications, as well.

*Subquestion Three: Multiracial Group Relations*

The third subquestion that I attempt to answer in this thesis is: If more than one individual is present, what might this advertisement be inferring about the nature of relationships between people? This question can be contemplated from various angles and with respect to several different types of relationships.
For instance, it can be considered in regard to the relationships between males and females that are repetitiously portrayed in popular visual culture. “For example, women may expect men to dominate them and be relatively insensitive, or men may expect women to be submissive to them and preoccupied with their appearance” (Harris, 1989, p. 44). However, in keeping with the theoretical framework of this thesis, I will consider the group relations through the lens of critical race theory, with particular reference to White privileging.

It is important to remember that critical race theorists write, “racism is ordinary; ...that our system of white-over-color ascendancy serves important purposes; and... the ‘social construction’ thesis, [which] holds that race and races are products of social thought and relations” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 7). I think it is beneficial to reiterate this point, which was originally discussed in the literature review of this thesis, because the multiracial advertisements embodied these very concepts.

In all three of the advertisements “the harmony and consensus implied in these ads often mock concrete racial, social, and cultural differences as they are constituted amid hierarchical relations of struggle, power, and authority” (Giroux, 1994, p. 7). At first perusal, the ads appear to imply an egalitarian relationship and existence between all represented within the frame. However, amongst closer scrutiny, instances of racism and White-over-color ascendancy can be determined amidst the White individuals and the non-White individuals.

For instance, in the Playtex® beach ad, Sarah, the White female is the most privileged, residing at the top of the human pyramid. Dominating the frame,
she exerts superiority over the two females and three males by rendering them immoveable from her weight on top of them. In my mind, this is indicative of the statement that racism is ordinary and that white-over-color ascendancy serves important purposes. For example, one of the multiracial females could have just as easily been positioned on the top of the pyramid; however, even in a seemingly mundane activity being photographed for an advertisement, Sarah, the White female, is positioned as superior. The three non-White individuals are all subordinate to her. All of the individuals, male and female, behave as if they are bowing to Sarah in obeisance to her Whiteness and privileged position.

These privileging considerations are carried over to the second Playtex® ad situated within a bowling establishment. In this particular advertisement, Jason, the White male shares the dominating physical positionality in the frame with a female, Celia. However, because the multiracial female beside him is under his supervision and tutelage, she is not interpreted as exuding the most power in the frame. Additionally, in the middle ground is Troy, a Black male, and in the very background are a White female, a Black female, and a multiracial male. Once again, the racism and white-over-color ascendancy are ordinary. Troy, or the multiracial male in the far back, Paulo, could just as easily have been positioned in the foreground assisting Celia with her bowling stance. Instead, Jason, the White male, was positioned in the immediate proximity of the viewer and therefore elicits the most viewer attention and interaction. He occupies the dominating position within the advertisement [and society?].
Similarly, the third advertisement, for Aeropostale®, also exhibits these same racial overtones. Whereas the textual implications are that everyone presented is equally “best dressed” and shown in relatively the same style of clothing, the physical positioning of the three females suggests something different. The White females’ heads are positioned higher in the frame, and they are shown sitting upright, which may connote a formalness or higher class. Catherine is in a reclining position with her head braced by her arm, which may connote a leisure activity or lower class. When interpreted through a CRT lens, the higher class and White, Arielle and Alyssa, are trying to separate themselves from the lower class and non-White, Catherine, which reads as a form of racism and/or sexism.

So, what I conclude from these advertisements is that while being portrayed in negative racist, classist, or sexist positions and relationships is not acceptable or empowering, it is important that young multiracial females [and all males/females] understand that races are social constructions created by humans. With cognizance of this concept, coupled with knowledge of the racist antecedents prevalent in US history, multiracial individuals, Whites, and non-Whites can begin to build intergroup knowledge and foster empathy amongst those like and unlike themselves. They can break apart the socially constructed racial categories and organize others based on individual merits.
Generalizations of Multiracial Individuals in Advertising:

In this section, I extend some generalizations of multiracial individuals in advertising with regard to the similarities and patterns found within the definitive group of twenty-one advertisements. While this study was limited in scope and should not be generalized to all advertising published in Seventeen Magazine or any teen magazine, it provides new and interesting insights into the use of multiracial individuals in Seventeen's advertisements published over the course of one year [2006].

First, I notice that the vast majority of individuals represented in the ads are youthful and attractive females, often depicted in leisure activities. Beyond being a magazine geared toward the 12-24 year old female demographic, Fowles (1996) offers a further explanation:

The imagery depicts young people because youth is the stage most given over to the formation of self-identity. It shows leisure activities because those are the hours devoted to the self. It is gender-ridden because gender lies at the core of self-identity. (p. 157)

Because visual imagery, especially in the media and popular visual culture, contribute so much to identity formation in young females, I think it is imperative that they see themselves portrayed in positive and empowering ways. Being youthful and attractive does not transmit negative connotations, but only seeing young, beautiful, overly sexualized females might.
Another similarity that I noticed amongst the twenty-one advertisements was that nearly half [10] of the advertisements flaunt the female models as less-clothed, sensual objects. Also exuding a type of exoticism, many of the multiracial females were spotlighted for their sheer physical beauty and attractiveness. Of the females that are mostly-clothed, 100% of them are engaged in provocative poses; this is further delineated in chapter four of this thesis.

One generalization that I can make from these attributes is that advertisers are not necessarily incorporating multiracial individuals to keep up with the changing demographic in the US. As stated earlier in this chapter, and with reference to the table in chapter four [Figure 2], advertisers appear to be capitalizing on racial ambiguity and attractiveness because the actual numbers of multiracial individuals were not consistent across the 2006 circulation year, nor were they increasing in frequency by the end of the year. Young females may want to occupy that attractiveness and unfortunately, “advertising imagery fixes on what individuals fix on, converting their needs into forms in the hope that acceptance of these figurations will lead to acceptance of the commodities offered” (Fowles, 1996, p. 157).

Another generalization that I can make from these attributes is that advertisers are not necessarily aware of the racist implications of their decisions with regard to what individuals to include in an advertisement and how to portray those individuals in relation to others. While the advertisements could be argued to be egalitarian in individuals’ treatments, and inclusive of non-Whites [by their very presence], advertising, in this instance, does mirror society, in that racism is
ordinary, and just the way things are. Simple compositional decisions of whom to place in the front, and whom to place in the back, at a higher level, or at a lower level, have all contributed to a perpetuation of the societal injustices prevalent in the US society.

*Primary Research Question: Cultivating Intergroup Knowledge and Empathy*

In this section, I consider how the multiracial advertisements may be able to counteract racism by cultivating intergroup knowledge and empathy. I begin with a dictionary definition of empathy, which is: the intellectual identification with or vicarious experiencing of the feelings, thoughts, or attitudes of another (dictionary.com). Harris (1989) expands that definition by dividing empathy “into cognitive and emotional components. Cognitive empathy involves the ability to readily take the perspective of another, while emotional empathy involves readily responding at a purely affective level” (p. 29). While it may not be possible or even desirable to respond to racism at a purely affective level, I believe having more than just a cerebral understanding of human injustice/suffering may lead to heightened action on the behalf of others. So in this instance, empathy represents an attempt to understand the antecedents of racism in the US, and to contemplate how that causes our peers, classmates, and fellow citizens to still be considered within our society.

As we are at the beginnings of the 21st Century, “we can state with equal confidence what a central task for all of us in the years ahead will be to find ways of erasing the many lines that still divide people of different colors, cultures, and
nationalities” (Messaris, 1997, p. 119). I believe that one way we can begin erasing the lines that divide us is by cultivating intergroup knowledge and empathy. This may sound overly simplistic or idealistic, and it is; but I must "retain the ability to envision a better day, to dream social dreams” (Kinchenlo & Steinberg, 1997, p. 178).

I believe the first step in cultivating intergroup knowledge is admitting that racism is still a problem and then subsequently bringing it to the forefront of conversation. Denying that it exists only perpetuates the very attitudes, behaviors, and thoughts that oppress individuals. Furthermore, as Kinchenlo and Steinberg (1997) explain, critical multiculturalists and educators must appeal to the best instincts of their students, colleagues and communities; that is, they must appeal to their compassion, sense of justice and empathy...Until such empathy is engendered, the possibility of dialogue and unity among individuals victimized by viral forms of racism, sexism and class bias cannot be realized. Such empathy will lead to dialogue and unity; and such unity will form the basis of a pro-democracy movement- an inter-racial, inter-ethnic struggle for political and economic justice. (pp. 177-178)

By displaying, analyzing, and critiquing images from visual culture, such as the advertisements from Seventeen involving multiracial individuals, educators can stimulate critical conversations about diverse racial groups. Stereotypes and misconceptions can be addressed and corrected based on the actualities of individuals that are situated within those racial groups under consideration.
I hope that presenting the positive portrayals of multiracial individuals would logically lead to discussions that are beneficial and constructive, to both multiracial students and students of all races. Informing students that individuals of all races may be similar to themselves in a lot of ways, including their everyday activities, hopes, goals, basic needs, etc., should foster a heightened understanding of diversity and acceptance. Furthermore, regardless of the actual races constituting the multiracial individuals’ heritages, I believe that by introducing these images into the classroom, intergroup knowledge can lead to empathy, or at the very least, an understanding of others.

*Implications for Myself and Art Education:*

In this section, I reflect on my findings, and contemplate what this research means to me and to the field of art education. First, I reflect on how this thesis writing process has influenced my views on race, and specifically the White privileging prevalent in my own life. Next, I ponder the possible implications this research may hold for the field of art education. Lastly, I end with a brief concluding statement about educators’ responsibilities.

*Implications for Myself:*

When I initially began this research process, I thought of myself as being very tolerant and accepting of other races, with the majority of my closest friends being non-White. Additionally, as a White female, I had never before considered that some of the privileges I experienced in life were not so much the result of my
hard work, as they were on account of the color of my skin. Beginning by reconsidering some basic activities in my life, I soon realized that I was indeed the recipient of White privileging.

For example, when I went to the local library to borrow the entire 2006 circulation year of Seventeen for this thesis, I was informed that no one is permitted to check out past editions of magazines. They are only allowed to be referenced within the confines of the reference section of the library, and returned before a patron's departure. If I wanted to borrow any periodicals, they would have to be from the current circulation period of 2007, which at the time were only two magazines. However, the librarian, recognizing my dilemma, contacted another nearby library and arranged for me to borrow the entire 2006 collection for four weeks, four times longer than the normal check out time for current periodicals. As I was reading the literature on CRT and specifically White privileging, this situation immediately came to mind, and I reflected on it in terms of my Whiteness. Coming to terms with that concept was very difficult, and as a result, I took a lot of time being reflexive about many other circumstances in my past.

Beyond coming to terms with my own Whiteness and White privileging, I also became more critical of seemingly banal advertisements. Now, instead of just flipping through a magazine haphazardly, I stop and examine advertisements and the techniques that were employed by the advertisers, as well as the implications of those techniques. “Learning how to read advertising critically thus provides individuals [myself] with important tools for interpreting contemporary American
culture and avoiding manipulation” (Kellner, 1995, p. 334). While I don't feel that I was ever completely manipulated by advertisements before this research, I do believe that I am now more aware of advertising methods that attempt to seduce the unknowing consumer.

*Implications for Art Education:*

“Media present us with often overwhelming amounts of information and images, about ourselves and about other people. They serve to define what is of political concern of economic importance, of cultural interest to us” (Downing, et al., 1995, p. xvi). This is one of the many reasons that introducing visual culture, including imagery involving multiracial individuals and other non-White individuals, into the art classroom is so important. The media and visual imagery we ingest help define what is of political concern to us. These images come at us from all directions and in overwhelming amounts. In order to make sense of, and to sort through, the copious amounts of imagery that is continually advancing toward us at every waking moment, we must teach our students how to be critical of this barrage of information.

Being critical clearly involves posing questions, including awkward and unpopular ones. It means not merely taking information for granted, at face value, but asking how and why these things came to be, why they have the shape and organization they do, how they work and for whose benefit. Thus thinking about something in a careful, reflective way is the start of a critical orientation. (Downing, et al., 1995, p. xx)
Some educators may scoff at this approach to art education, saying that it has nothing to do with art [production] and that being critical implies just being overly negative. Being critical of advertisements and other media images does not mean just being negative and just picking apart what the image “means” to us. Being critical is making sense of our world and uncovering the underlying issues that perpetuate injustices.

It is important to move away from the idea of being critical as being something bad. 'Being critical' often carries the implication of just being negative, of being hostile, of putting something or someone down, of angry reactions... 'being critical' is positive and constructive, and that 'being in the middle' is often the easy way out-- a way to avoid thinking hard or taking a stand. Criticism is necessary for knowledge to advance, because posing questions and trying to understand the world better and from different viewpoints are what create the dynamic of science and rational knowledge in the first place. (Downing, et al., 1995, p. xxviii)

Posing questions and trying to understand our world through the imagery we see everyday is an integral part of every educator’s responsibility and it has its place in art education. The implications of introducing advertisements into the classroom are that we must be critical images and ourselves; we must figure out where societal ideas come from, and we must try to curb social injustices.

We also must help build positive racial identities, foster racial understanding, and ensure equal and positive representation of all peoples. By introducing imagery involving diverse groups of people, we cannot only
understand them better; we can also understand ourselves better. “A recognition of our own sociocultural identities and biases makes it easier to understand the multifaceted identities of others. It also helps us to understand why and how students respond to visual culture as they do. (Ballengee-Morris & Stuhr, 2001; Freedman & Wood, 1999)” (Freedman & Stuhr, 2004, p. 817).

Suggestions for Implementation in the Art Classroom:

In order for a lesson involving the ideas outlined in this thesis to be implemented in an art education classroom, there are several concepts that educators and students would need to know. First, art educators would need to have at least a basic knowledge of the historical antecedents of racism in the US and the three basic tenets of critical race theory [outlined in Chapter 2]. This information could be gathered from a fellow colleague whose focus is US history, or this could be an impetus for proposing integrated curriculum within the educator’s institution. After the educator has a basic [or thorough] knowledge of racism and CRT, s/he must impart that information to the students, whether it be via handouts, assigned readings/reports, Internet research, educational movies, or a guest speaker/instructor.

Following a foundation of a historical knowledge of both CRT and racism in the US, students would also need to have an understanding of the elements of figurative pictures [such as viewing angles, framing, lighting, depth of field, body language, and linguistic messages] which are briefly discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis. Once the students have the historical knowledge and artistic
knowledge needed, it would be beneficial for the art educator to model the expected behavior by critiquing an advertisement using her intended criteria [for students’ behavior]. Further aiding students’ understanding would be for the educator to explain each step as she is modeling the action of critically interpreting an advertisement. It would also be important for the educator to note how these images have been informed/influenced by other images, both traditional and contemporary.

In summation, art educators would need to inform their students on the basic tenets of CRT and historical racism in the US. Understanding could be further developed by having volunteers share instances of racism in their lives or the lives of people they know. This activity could instigate critical discussion of the implications of those narratives. After learning about the elements of figurative pictures, the educator should model the anticipated behavior while critically analyzing an image, and simultaneously explaining each step as she demonstrates it. Lastly, a set of the educator’s criteria for students’ anticipated behavior should be discussed before students engage in critically analyzing and interpreting their own images, individually and in a class setting.

A Very Brief Concluding Statement:

As educators, we have the ability to transform our lives and the lives of our students in meaningful and thoughtful ways. What better privilege can we as educators share with the future generations?
EPILOGUE

Analysis Convention:

Recently, while commiserating with a small trio of fiends from graduate school, I decided to share some of the Seventeen advertisements from my thesis that I had discerned to involve multiracial individuals. Displaying ads that were not marked for inclusion in the critical interpretation section of this thesis, I began by asking my friends what they thought of the advertisements. I was hopeful that they would interpret the ads differently [from myself and each other] and lead me in multifarious directions that could potentially provide me with insight into the advertisements that were included in the study. With each of the four of us representing a different race, I wondered whether we would interpret the same images in the same ways. I also wondered if they could help me see instances of White privileging that I may have overlooked initially. The results of our brief analysis convention were far more enriching that I had initially hoped for.

One of the first concepts that emerged from our conversation was that we were all in agreement on which particular individuals were discerned to be multiracial. However, after this initiatory concurrence, I was astonished at the responses each individual offered. With regard to one particular advertisement selling clothing, each of my friends interpreted the multiracial female to be
partially White, and partially from their own respective race. For instance, my friend from Hong Kong identified the female as “half White, half Chinese”, whereas my friend from South Korea disagreed, and said, “No, I see her as half White and half Korean.” To further complicate the female's identity, my friend from Jamaica said she “definitely saw some Black in her.” Awestruck and completely perplexed, I shrunk away from the conversation and pondered what had just transpired. Recognizing that this situation and these insightful commentaries from my friends were potentially going to influence my personal conclusions, I mentally took note of the responses and revisited them immediately upon their departure from my house.

At first, I thought their responses could be solely based on our social and cultural differences. Ultimately, the four of us were born and raised in separate countries, and had experienced diverse childhoods and grew up with equally diverse cultural codes. This concept is further explained by Sturken & Cartwright (2001):

The criteria used to interpret and give value to images depend upon cultural codes, or shared concepts, of what makes an image pleasing or unpleasant, shocking or banal, interesting or boring… these qualities do not reside in the image, but depend upon the contexts in which it is viewed, the codes that prevail in a society, and the viewer who is making that judgment. (p. 48)

While this statement from Sturken & Cartwright affirms my belief that our social and cultural differences certainly impacted the way we interpreted the
advertisements, I still hypothesized that, metaphorically speaking, there was another piece of the media puzzle that was missing. Why had this seemingly mundane activity struck me as so monumental, and in effect, serendipitous? What was it that I had just stumbled upon?

"A-ha " Moment:

After making a concentrated effort to determine the implications of my friends’ interpretations, I was suddenly reminded of an idea that is woven throughout several of the texts I have been reading, which analyze the media and consumer culture. As I quoted in chapter four, “Regardless of the form it takes, the purpose of advertising is to subordinate all values to the imperatives of profit and commercialization” (Giroux, 1994, p. 11). Advertising executives and/or producers are trying to appeal to the greatest number of consumers in order to procure the most substantial financial gain possible, while at the same time, expending the least amount of capital to accomplish this. By utilizing models or actors that can give the impression that they are representational of more than one race [either one or more separate, individual races or actual mixed race individuals], advertisers can attract more consumers without necessitating the employment of additional models. Wilkins (n.d.) explains that the ad agencies that hire those models and actors “are not idealistic people... They are out to sell stuff, and they study trends very carefully. So, what they see is a big market out there that is reached by beautiful people who are not exactly white, or who are yearning for a melting pot America” (as cited in Stanfield, 1997, p.4).
This realization, that advertising executives are not necessarily keeping up with the changing demographic, but seemingly, capitalizing on ambiguity, appears to be supported by the table in chapter four [Figure 4.1]. It shows the largest numbers of multiracial advertisements appear in both the September and October editions, which I surmised were, perhaps, the two months proffering the largest magazine purchases due to female readers returning to school. Because the actual numbers of multiracial individuals were not consistent across the 2006 circulation year, nor were they increasing in frequency by the end of the year, it could be presupposed that the advertisers were attempting to appeal to the most female consumers when the opportunity was at its highest [circulation]. Knowing that more female readers [and assumably more demographically-diverse female readers] would be viewing their ads in those two months, advertisers probably utilized the racially mixed or racially ambiguous models to enable the most females’ potentialities for identification within the advertisement. The more females that identify with the models represented in the advertisements should logically, in the minds of the advertisers, materialize into higher profits for more products sold. So, in effect, the responses from my racially diverse friends were the ideal and exact responses that advertisers hope for—several races potentially seeing themselves within only one model.

*Reflexive Moment:*

After completing my initial research, I wondered if my conclusions could really be this obvious and simplistic. *Advertising’s primary goal equals profit*
maximization. After all, I have heard this repeated ad nauseam in my visual culture classes at grad school. And, I do agree it is an important idea that needs to be reiterated periodically. The vast amounts of literature on advertising and media culture echo the same sentiments. However, like most concepts, I need to prove it to myself for me to fully invest in it. Through this process of analyzing Seventeen’s advertisements and talking with my graduate friends, I was able to witness this very concept firsthand in my everyday real life. “ADVT= MAX$” was no longer just an equational statement that I wrote down in my notes, highlighted, underlined, and drew stars around every time it was reiterated in class. It was now an actual result, a logical conclusion, and I came to it on my own through my research process. “ADVT= MAX$” was never a concept that I held in disbelief, but it was a concept that I had to prove personally so that I could endorse it with confidence.

Problematic Moment:

While I made some interesting discoveries regarding Seventeen and its advertisements, and I was able to prove an oft-repeated concept concerning advertising, I also experienced some problematic moments in my research process that caused some concern. Most notably was my choice of critical race theory (CRT) as my theoretical framework. While I appreciated learning about this discourse that evolved from critical legal studies, and I ended up subscribing to the basic tenets of the theory, in retrospect, I don’t feel it was a perfect fit to the advertisements that I chose to include in my thesis.
This is not to say that CRT is not an acceptable theoretical concept to use in analyzing advertisements. To the contrary, it is redolent in its critical possibilities. However, I feel that CRT may be utilized to a fuller extent when applied to imagery that is already suggestive of racial overtones. The advertisements from Seventeen were not necessarily the most appropriate images to explore to showcase the potentiality of CRT as a theoretical framework. However, I continued with the original idea of using CRT to analyze the advertisements that I selected from Seventeen in order to discover what I could potentially conclude from them. I continued with Seventeen because I liked the idea of analyzing a magazine geared more toward my student population as opposed to myself. I felt that using teen-centered materials could possibly foster heightened relevancy and interest in the minds of the students. So in other words, I continued with CRT and Seventeen for the sake of the process [as opposed to the product] and what I could glean from the very act of.

**Final Conclusions:**

To put it more succinctly, my conclusions are that CRT is an excellent theoretical framework to use in critically analyzing advertisements that seemingly already have racial overtones. Additionally, I believe analyzing Seventeen advertisements is beneficial because of its perceived relevancy in some students’ lives. Beyond being part of the imagery that they see everyday, I think it is imperative to consider advertisements in the art education classroom that seem overly simplistic and/or banal at first glance, and do not beg to be analyzed. It is
there, in those seemingly innocent advertisements, that some of the most profound racial, social, and sexist implications can be uncovered. Visual culture imagery in its most blatant forms, may cause individuals to immediately respond and take action; however, it is the seemingly covert and repetitious messages that may perpetuate the most flagrancies by way of their subtlety. Awakening students to this concept through critical discourse and exercises may be just as/ or even more valuable than educating them on how to respond to blatantly demanding imagery.

Furthermore, the activist element of CRT does not resound as prominently in my critical interpretations as I would have anticipated and/or hoped for. While difficult to respond to the advertisements themselves, in an activist writing format, I believe the activist dimension can be incorporated at the classroom level. On the part of the teacher, activism may be realized by displaying, analyzing, and fostering critique of images in the art room. On the part of the students, activism may be actualized by discussing the cultural and societal implications of the messages that may be embedded within the images. If the students then decide that the conclusions they have drawn from the images are negative, biased, and/or stereotypical, they can individually or collectively take action against those perpetuations. This action, or activism, could take many forms such as boycotting, letter writing, demonstrating, or lobbying, etc. The degree to which, or format of, the action that is taken is not my primary concern as an educator. Rather, it is promoting awareness and inciting critical thinking in my students that is my
utmost concern. Instilling critical thinking skills in my students and influencing future generations’ decision making, are to me, two of the most powerful forms of activism that I can possess as an art educator.

\footnote{(Lopez, 1995a, p. 193)}
\footnote{(Lopez, 1995b, p. 542)}
\footnote{(Lopez, 1995b, p. 542)}
LIST OF REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

Seventeen Magazine  Month________ 2006

Number of Pages [including Back Cover] = ______
Tallymarks

Number of Advertising Pages = ______
Tallymarks

Number of Multiracial Advertisements = ______
Tallymarks

Seventeen Magazine  Month________ 2006

Number of Pages [including Back Cover] = ______
Tallymarks

Number of Advertising Pages = ______
Tallymarks

Number of Multiracial Advertisements = ______
Tallymarks
APPENDIX B

Multiracial Advertisement

Seventeen Magazine  Month[s] ___________ 2006
Page Number[s] ___________

Product Name: ____________________________  [check one]  Female Group  ○
Product Type: ____________________________  Female Solo  ○

Criteria for Determining Multiracial:
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________

Brief Description of Advertisement:
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________

Techniques to Consider for Interpretation: [Circle all that apply]

Formal Elements  Social Status  Appearance