THONGING FOR IDENTITY:
LEARNING ABOUT GIRLHOOD, SEXUALITY AND FEMININITY
IN A TWEEN RETAIL SPACE

By

Ralia Koutsogianopoulos

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Department of Integrated Studies in Education
Culture & Values in Education

McGill University
Montreal, Canada

July, 2005

Canada

ABSTRACT

Children learn from a variety of sources. One of the most powerful pedagogical sites for kids is the consumer sphere. Marketers recognize this and have recently carved out a new consumer niche for those between childhood and adolescence, marking them as tweens. La Senza Corporation, which specializes in women's lingerie, responded to this trend by opening a tween store with a name heavily laden with meanings of sexuality: La Senza Girl. This study will apply a textual analysis to the tween retail space, in an effort to understand the informal pedagogy that takes place within this milieu. While La Senza Girl celebrates girlhood by creating a space that tween girls can call their own, it is important to take stock of the meanings of girlhood being celebrated. This study interrogates La Senza Girl's 'pedagogies' of femininity, sexuality and girlhood.

i

RÉSUMÉ

Les enfants apprennent d'un assortiment de sources. Un des sites pédagogiques les plus puissants pour les gosses est la sphère de consommateur. Les chercheurs en marketing reconnaissent ceci et ont récemment créer une nouvelle, et pleine de potentiel, niche pour les enfants entre l'enfance et l'adolescence, les 'tweens'. La corporation La Senza, spécialisée dans la lingerie féminine, a répondu à cet appel en ouvrant une nouvelle chaîne de magasins visant quasi-exclusivement le groupe 'tweens', sous un nom au lourdes connotations sexuelles : La Senza Girl. Cette étude appliquera une analyse textuelle, dans un effort pour obtenir une meilleure compréhension de la pédagogie simple implémentée dans ce milieu 'tween' par excellence. Alors que La Senza Girl célèbre la jeunesse en créant un espace que ces filles 'tweens' peuvent appeler le leur, on doit cependant questionner le sens de la notion 'être fille' qui y est célébrée. Cette étude révèle l'appropriation commerciale de la féminité, de la sexualité, et de la notion d' 'être fille' qu'un espace commercial pour 'tweens' personnifie.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

Note. Figure 2 is taken from Scarborough Town Centre. *La Senza Girl Store.* Retrieved on
February 18, 2005, from
http://www.scarboroughtowncentre.com/04sh_storeindiv.asp?store_name=La_Senz
a_Girl&store =115

Figures 3-6 are taken from La Senza Corporation. *La Senza Girl Website.* Retrieved on
March 28, 2005, from www.lasenzagirl.com

Figures 7-9 are taken from La Senza Corporation. *La Senza Lingerie Website.* Retrieved on
April 15, 2005, from
http://www.lasenza.com/bloorcom.store/bloorcom.store.dynamicIndex.wflash.asp

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. The "Eye" of the Study

Clothes were not simply a necessity during my teenage years; they played an integral role within my social milieu. Calling my friend in order to ask her "what to wear" the next day at school usually resulted in staying on the phone for several hours on end. Such a question served as an entry point for and led into endless conversations. I went through many identity phases and changed my clothing styles continuously. I was the sporty girl, flower power child and of course the rocker chick. I wanted to make sure that everyone knew where my musical loyalty lay when I was wearing my black suede booties, silver belt, faded blue ripped jeans and black t-shirt. Other times, I carefully planned to reject mainstream fashion by wearing jogging pants and t-shirts (my own way of culture jamming). I would 'fashion my appearance to reveal my political and social position through a particular look' (Brooks, 2003: 105-12). Ultimately, my relationship with clothes was not solely a source of self- expression. Clothes were a site of my desire and represented an idealized identity I aspired for. This often occurred, for instance, when I visited the Gap store. Its allure attracted me, yet the clothes were too pricey for my budget. After each visit to the Gap, I left empty handed but with a mind full of wants.

Unbeknownst to myself at that moment, I was engaged in a form of consumption-gazing. As Rosalind Williams (1982) theorized, the gaze informs and forms our desires. Likewise, I created wishes by looking through the images of magazines. Moreover, my fashion wants were even more provoked in the three-dimensional space of the mall. Retail spaces gave me the opportunity to physically, emotionally and intellectually interact with my desires that I generated looking through magazines. I wanted to be the

1

neat, impeccable and smiley Gap girl. As such, I felt closer to being one when I visited the store. Years later, I finally became a Gap girl when I got my first part-time employment, much to my satisfaction, at the local Gap store. The company continued to amaze me with their carefully thought-out marketing techniques and thorough employee training. I was unaware of, or perhaps I even subconsciously ignored, accusations that it maintained sweatshops in third world countries (Klein, 2000).

I kept this part time job and concurrently worked through other employment opportunities, while going to school full time. I did not make any deep connections between consumption and our culture until I began noticing fundamental human interactions and values that were coming into play in this retail setting. At that time, I also worked as a grade five teacher. Children, about my students' age, that were shopping at Gap Kids especially intrigued me. Certain groups of girls made me flinch and feel somewhat uncomfortable, because their allure and manner were characteristics that I only developed at a later age. Thoughts that these children were growing up too young raced through my mind. In the school setting, I witnessed the pubertal transformations of some of my students. A handful of girls wore makeup and stretched the school uniform boundaries. Although they were only eleven, it seemed that within a year, these children had changed into adolescents: the so-called *tween* generation.

1.2. Overview of the Tween Concept

Tweens once regarded as the masters of bicycles and hopscotch have recently undergone a startling shift in attitudes and behaviours- or so it seems. Apart from the domain of education, a less altruistic sector has begun to take notice: the consumer industry. This industry's considerable capital mixed with their emerging interest in youth

has generated substantial research. This stake created the concept of tweens- youth aged nine to 14 years that are somewhere in-be*tween* childhood and adolescence. A term marketers have created identifies the approximately 2.4 million youth living in Canada that are in this transitory age (Steinberg 1998; Turenne 1998).

There have been inconsistent definitions of the word *tween* through the past decade. For example, Publicis (as cited in Lortie, 1995), one of the largest Québec publicity agencies, had referred at one point to tweens being youth aged 12-25 years old. They defined *tweens* as the combination of the words teens and youth in their twenties, whereas, Simpson and Douglas (1998) defined tweens as preadolescents aged 12-14 years old. Henson (2003) furthered this fragmentation by pointing out that tweens should be broken into two subgroups, since "their wants and even alliances are shifting so quickly" (51). Henson contends that 12 year olds have 60 % more life experiences than 8 year olds (2003: 81). Such a rift threatens the notion of tweens and one wonders whether late tweens should be simply treated as adolescents, while early tweens as children. In my view, the more accurate definition is the one most widely renowned in the marketing industry, where tweens represent children from nine to 14 years old.

Clearly, marketing experts believe that tweens demonstrate distinct preferences and behaviours, thus they merit much time, effort and money in studying them. Hence, the potentially huge economic power of tweens has generated much research for this usually ignored age group (Kantrowitz & Wingert, 1999: 63; Lavigne, 1998; Lemieux, 2002; Lindstrom, 2003; Lortie, 1995; Nation's Restaurant News, 2003; Rosenberg, 2000; Roy, 2000; Steinberg, 1998: 60; Youth Market Alert, 2003). After reviewing much marketing research done on tweens, it appears that all major industries are trying to figure

out how to maximize capital gains, even if the money is coming out of the pocket of a ten year old. For instance, La Senza Corporation, a Canadian company that specializes in women's lingerie, responded to these findings by opening a tween store. They named it La Senza Girl, a name that is heavily laden with meanings of sexuality due to the established connotations associated with the corporate brand name La Senza.

To date, marketing experts and marketing firms have contributed the majority of research on tweens. This study will use this information and employ a textual analysis to understand what tweens are learning from consumerism and the identities that are available for sale within the retail milieu. While corporations are concerned about the amounts of goods they sell, this study will concentrate on the messages about tweens that products and the retail space mediate. Ultimately, this is an educational study. Educators should be aware of or become concerned with consumerism when teaching tweens. Consumerism, as expressed through shopping, has become an expected active part of living in today's society. There is much informal learning taking place within shops. Youth are building their ideologies from the messages they are being exposed to. Moreover, tweens are creating ideologies and developing their identities within the realm consumerism.

1.3. Educational Function of Consumerism

Youth learn from various aspects of their lives. Their primary source of learning usually is from their immediate environment, which is the family. Afterward, children are sent to school where they receive a formal pedagogy. However, parents and educators are aware that the popular media, namely through television and music, greatly influences youth. Often, popular culture and these actions are trivialized, while regarded

as being 'just a phase'. Other times, the media is condemned for its destructive influence on children. Regardless, it is a product of our times and reflects societal values.

Through advertisements, the mass media creates a form of learning disguised within the domain of 'wants'. This is often seen through children's emulation of celebrities, for instance. Stars and even minor celebrities enjoying their fifteen minutes of fame can be placed on a pedestal and become recognized, even idolized, for their actions. In addition, the values and ways of being that they represent are not value neutral; rather they can exert a tremendous force on young people's views of the world. For instance, a woman that is publicized and advertised provides images of what it means to be feminine. As such, advertisements do not simply create a desire for particular products but the values, ideologies and lifestyles connoted by them and their association with the desirable images blinking from the television screen.

Tweens are particularly vulnerable to these appeals to be 'hot' or 'cool' (or ultimately 'normal') so they will often imitate and adopt an identity that is popular within their peer group. Tweens crave to belong within a social group and fear rejection. They strive to be normal in order to belong but at the same time want to gain some recognition amongst their peers. A manner in which tweens perform their identity is through their dress. A style that they aspire to is created with the assembling of certain clothes. The clothes may be markers of a style, but style in itself goes beyond material objects. It is an idea created that carries significance.

The focus of this study remains on the visual consumption that tweens do while shopping. Advertisements have been widely scrutinized for the cultural ideologies they promote through the selling of products. They manifest "wants" amongst tweens. The

three-dimensional space of the store provides an area in which tweens can fulfill these wants through purchasing. In addition, they could feel closer to their wants through physical proximity. Finally, shopping can also create new desires. This reveals how tweens are shaping their self-image while interacting with consumption culture, through advertisements and the act of shopping. In order to comprehend the style that is promoted within today's shopping culture, we need to have an understanding of advertising, as the latter creates the initial wants that may bring one to make purchases.

1.4. Femininity and Childhood in Advertisements

Advertisements "are not just messages about goods and services but social and cultural texts about ourselves" (Frith, 1997: 1). Media and advertisements play an increasingly significant role in youth's socialization, hence educators need to assess the role of these mediums and place them under scrutiny, in order to understand students' relationship with consumer culture. According to Kilbourne (2000 & 1987) advertisement is the foundation of mass media, the primary purpose of which is to sell. Along with selling products, advertising sells values, images and concepts. There is no specific advertisement that has the power to establish cultural values, but power resides in numbers and spaces, and the vast dissemination of advertisements portraying similar values, explicitly or within their layers, can create or influence existing ideologies of the societal norms. The ideologies of these advertised images become what people desire through their need for normalization (Kilbourne, 2000 & 1987). Although people want to look normal, ironically, they also want to be singled out as someone who is famous, like the individuals in advertisements. There seems to be two issues that come into play: the need to be normal and the wanting of stardomhood.

Marketers view youth as more technological savvy than their parents (Willis, 1990). Therefore, they see a need to challenge youth or else they will get bored. "[Y]oung people have developed very complex interpretive and creative capacities" (Willis, 1990: 49). Advertisements' use of images to entice youth to buy particular products is manipulative to a certain extent, but the manner in which tweens process them, for meaning and identity construction, should not be underestimated. Advertisements have been closely analyzed for the images that they depict as well as the ideologies that they normalize through their mass production. Traditionally, advertisements have been criticized for the objectification of women. They represent ideal female beauty with certain products, in which people are led to believe that they could achieve this ideal if they buy it. This influences women's self-esteem while it objectifies them and alters men's perception of women (Kilbourne, 2000 & 1987). Advertisers have imposed standards of beauty, which involve physical perfection as an ideal. In addition, advertising encourages competition between women to achieve physical perfection (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 1997).

Children in advertisements have also been closely scrutinized. Usually girls are portrayed as passive, whereas boys take on an aggressive role (Kilbourne, 2000 & 1987). In addition, the sexualization, artificiality and the trivialization of childhood have been promoted in advertisements. Girls, who take on the role of sex objects, are shown to be passive, shallow as well as limited. There are constant messages among advertisements that it is sexy to look like a little girl, where images of looking virginal and experienced collide (Kilbourne, 2000 & 1987). It comes to no surprise, since disturbing images concerning sex have been used to sell products since the dawn of the era of mass media.

However, it becomes alarming when the target audience is increasingly younger- such as the latest tween target. The trivialization of sex within advertisements aimed toward tweens, can potentially shape this culture's attitude toward sex as perverted.

The children that are advertised become ahistorical, and serve as representations of whoever falls within their sameness category. This "erase[s] the complexities and contradictions of place, style, language, and individual histories" (Giroux, 1997: 23-24). The children that are posing in the advertisements represent an ideology of childhood and by default, this ideology becomes commodified through its mass production. The media displays contradicting images of youth, in order to appeal to the various audiences. This in turn, objectifies youth, as their image becomes a commodity to appeal to mass consumerism. This becomes dangerous since the "commodification of children in ads such as those produced by Calvin Klein makes it easier for the public and the fashion industry to believe that the commodification of child labour has little to do with morality because it is about aesthetics, art and fashion" (Giroux, 1997: 26). In addition, the commodification of child sexuality creates a climate where it becomes acceptable to look at children in a sexy way. For instance, promiscuous images of tweens, dressed in Miss Teen (a tween accessory store) fishnet stockings posing provocatively, can be found at any corner bus stop in the city of Montreal.

1.5. The Store as a Research Text

Shopping, a common leisure activity for girls is an example of a "cultural pedagogy that attempts to educate young people about what to think, believe, desire, and feel and how to behave" (Giroux, 1997: 23). There is a plethora of messages transmitted towards the shaping of tweens' identities through desires. Daniel Miller's theory of

shopping drew parallels between shopping and the act of a sacrificial ritual, in which love through desire was the ultimate intention (Miller, 1998). The retail environment displays and sells "wants" that tweens long for. It becomes a three-dimensional space, in which girls can feel a step closer to the desires they have created from their consumption of the mass media. Tweens that are shopping within an environment that embodies, radiates and celebrates an admired style feel closer to belonging to that identity group.

In another light, the store can serve as a space where subordinated social groups, such as tween girls, "can inflict most damage on, and exert most power over, the strategic interests of the powerful" by simply using the retail space without making any purchases (Fiske, 1989: 307). Similarly, Paul Willis described a form of symbolic creativity as the manner in which "'disadvantaged' groups exercise their uses and economies in precisely eluding and evading formal recognition, publicity and the possible control by others of their own visceral meanings" (1990: 3). Likewise, John Fiske focuses on the consumed images of the mall, in order to understand how women and teenagers function within this setting. Fiske explains that 'youths consume images and space instead of commodities' within the mall, which is 'a form of consumption that does not generate profits' (1989: 309). Adolescents use the mall as their space for socializing whereas it becomes a safe meeting space outside of the school environment. However, Fiske's theory supposes that consuming images and socializing within the mall suffices to alleviate youths' desires.

Leaving empty handed may make tweens feel emptier than before since these "wants'" may be further amplified. However, tweens can leave the retail space with a piece of this "want", by purchasing it, thus giving them momentary power over their identity formation. Bowlby and Williamson (as cited in Fiske, 1989) described the

empowerment of shopping in another form, where women gained the role 'manager of the economic' (312). There are various theories that surround shopping. However, this study's focal point remains on the tween store. Since tweens are at a pivotal stage of their identity construction, it is essential to deconstruct a tween space, in order to reveal the values that this particular milieu is educating our youth.

1.6. Focus of Study: Presenting the Tween Space of La Senza Girl

The tween concept was constructed by marketers who were increasing their attention toward children younger of age. As a reaction, tween specific sites are on the rise (Mitchell & Reid-Walsh, 2005). Research needs to be performed in order to develop an understanding of the informal pedagogy these children are receiving, within these spaces that have been specifically created for them. In addition, shopping, consumerism and corporations are all aspects that are increasing and have become markers of today's society. There are but a few cultural studies done on this topic. Moreover, most studies done are within the marketing sphere. There appears to be a dearth of formal inquiry that has been done on tweens that truly holds their interest at heart. Past studies have largely examined related topics such as pedagogy of advertisements and women shopping. This research may have affected the manner in which we educate youth about the media and how to deconstruct advertisements, but fails to associate it with their desires created while shopping. The increasing involvement of consumerism within children's milieus requires educators to pay attention to it. Only then, can educators respond by teaching students about the role of marketing in their everyday lives. Therefore, an examination of a tween retail space is a beneficial area of study. This study seeks to deconstruct the tween girl retail space of La Senza Girl. The aim of this study is to uncover ideological

pedagogical meanings that are embedded within the built fabric of store, concerning girlhood, sexuality and femininity.

1.7. Overview of Thesis

This chapter outlined the topics related to the informal pedagogy of the tween space. In the second chapter of this study, a literature review on the concept of tweens, followed by a review of consumption related theories, is presented. Afterward, girlie pedagogical sites, the significance of dress and brand names, are discussed. Chapter three focuses on the methodological framework that is used for this study. There, textual analysis, as a method of study, is thoroughly explained. In addition, the sample, analytical categories and tool are described. In chapter four, a thorough textual analysis of La Senza Girl is provided and the key findings are discussed. To conclude, chapter five gives an overview of this study as well as reflections for educators.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Chapter Overview

This chapter offers a reading on the literature written on tween culture. First, there is an overview of the research done on tweens' economic power, as seen through a marketing perspective. This provides a general understanding of the societal changes that have contributed to the formation of "wealthy" tweens. The following section offers a thorough examination of the theories of consumption. They are either based on the concern that corporations control consumers or that the latter have power over the earlier. Afterward, a paradigm shift toward cultural studies is uncovered. This being said, an explanation of the study of everyday life and the pedagogy of objects is revealed. The subsequent section provides examples of studies that have been done on images, objects, and spaces concerning girlhood. The concept of style and clothes are further explored in the next section, where the significance of dress and brand names in tween culture is shown. The chapter concludes with a mention of the literature review's most leading points.

2.2. Tweens Described as Economically Powerful

The Federal Trade Commission Office of Public Affairs, 1995 (as cited in Simpson, Douglas & Schimmel, 1998) considers the tween market extremely significant since "[c]hildren, preadolescents and teens are the fastest growing market sectors in the United States" (638). In the corporate world and in contemporary society, money carries weight, and the North American tweens carry billions of dollars of economic power. Kid Trends, a U.S. marketing research group, reports (as cited in Rosenberg, 2000) that "tweens spent $55.7 billion in 1999 and influenced another $250 billion in consumer

spending" (40). An international tween study conducted by Martin Lindstrom, a British marketing expert, showed that 'tweens influence spending of up to US $600 billion/ year, and affect close to 60 percent of all brand decisions taken by their parents' (2003:23). Here in the far less populated Canada, YTV, a children's television network (Steinberg, 1998) found that there has been an increase in tweens' spending power. Their 1997 report estimated $1.4 billion worth of spending power for tweens (Steinberg, 1998). Marketers segmented this age group, because of their potentially significant influence on the economy.

Purchasing power is defined by actual spending as well as the influence on money spent. How has this traditionally ignored age group suddenly acquired purchasing power? Tweens' actual spending money comes from doing chores, odd jobs, through an allowance, from gifts or on a needed basis (Rosenberg, 2000: 40; Steinberg, 1998: 63). These amounts may have increased compared to earlier years and although the amount is substantial, it is still less than other age segments (Youth Market Alerts, 2003). Consequently, research examined other societal tendencies, such as tweens' strong influence over parental purchases. As such, this influence can be considered namely responsible for tweens' purchasing power. Upon my analysis of the population by age demographics of Statistics Canada (2001), nine to fourteen year-olds represent 8.22 percent of Canada's population. This makes the tween generation the fourth largest age group, respectively following the segmented age groups of 39-44, 33-38 and 45-50 year olds. In addition, these findings highlight that tweens are likely to influence the purchases of Canada's first and second most populated age groups, their parents.

The contemporary family dynamic includes one and two parent families. In some cases, this dual family income has resulted in parental absence, and thus, certain parents assuage their guilt through the purchase of commodities to please their children (Kantrowitz & Wingert, 1999; Simpson, Douglas & Schimmel, 1998). In addition, this dual-income, combined with the decrease in the birth rate, results in greater disposable income for families that can be offered to children through their allowance, for instance.

There has been an increase in single parent households in Canada. In 2001, ¼ of families with children were of single parents (Statistics Canada). A number of popular commentators have suggested that there is a tendency on the part of single parents to buy products to please their children, due to the lack of time that they spend with them and as a way for reducing their guilt (Kantrowitz & Wingert, 1999; Turenne, 1998). More importantly, single parents cannot benefit from an adult partner's second opinion concerning family purchases, therefore they compensate with their children's feedback (AC Nielson, 2002; Turenne, 1998). In addition, children are viewed as more culturally aware of what is cool. Penn, Schoen and Berland Associates (as cited in Rosenberg, 2000) conducted a poll, which showed that "children influence 40% of parents' purchases, while 65% of parents explicitly solicit children's opinions about products purchased for the entire household", which most can have an enormous economic impact (40). A similar notion supported by Cuneo, 1989, McLaughlin, 1991, Miller 1994 and Rickard 1994 (as cited in Simpson, Douglas & Schimmel, 1998) is that non-traditional families lead to 'greater responsibility being placed upon tweens and teens, thus giving them greater purchasing power and more independence' (638). Additionally, there is a speculation that tweens are bribed by parents in order for them to behave (Kantrowitz &

Wingert, 1999).

All of these factors are related to the increasing trend that children aged nine to 14 years old hold a substantial amount of economic power made through direct or indirect purchases. These contemporary societal changes in the family dynamic, in addition to the developmental attitudes of tweens, combine to create the qualities of an ideal consumer.

2.3. Theories of Consumption

2.3.1. Corporations Have the Power to Create Needs

Critical theories of consumption are often based on political economy. As such, these critiques suggest that capitalism requires consumerism, where profits motivate consumption to no end. Such theories have been developed through the post World War II era. German exiles to America, Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer (1944) painted a grim picture of the consumption machine, fully equipped with a malicious grin and sharp teeth. They thought that factory workers were working mindlessly, in order to make money and spend it on ill-conceived products that were publicized by the media. Although capitalists claimed that products were made and altered for individual tastes, it was truly done under the illusion of contrived differences, where corporations were serving their own profit gaining interests. In addition, the consumption demon creates empty possibilities and "perpetually cheats its consumers of what it perpetually promises" (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1944: 11). Moreover, consumption promises to take away one's problems through a cheated momentary sense of escapism. It is important to note that this consumption theory directs the locus of control toward corporations, being that they are responsible for creating people's needs. That being said, people are treated

15

as unthinking and accepting of whatever the consumption machine feeds them.

Betty Friedan (1963) has taken a different perspective, in which the homemaker is at the centre of the economy. Nevertheless, within this theoretical framework, women become victims of the consumption machine. Friedan's piece, *The Sexual Sell* (1963), blames the delay of the feminist movement on the products that male capitalists sell, which have kept the woman in the home, by playing upon her values as domestic caretaker. "Capitalism needed housewives, stunted in their careers, driven to purchase discerningly, manipulated into channelling their considerable creative potential into cake mixes, washing powders, and the choice of breakfast rather than more significant accomplishments" (Schor & Holt, 2000: xi). Corporations marketed the image that a woman's place was in the household and her creative energies needed to encompass the home as opposed to taking on a career.

Stuart Ewen (1988) provides a less dated view, in which style is treated as something that is being manufactured and sold by capitalists. Consumers become powerless since they "are seduced by sophisticated advertising to adopt a host of superfluous preferences for products" (Schor & Holt, 2000: xi). The focus lies on the fact that advertisers play upon peoples' search for an identity and the mass marketing of styles emphasize that consumers can be whomever they aspire, through their purchases. Yet, this becomes frustrating since the media publicizes styles that are unobtainable (Ewen, 1988). Furthermore, adolescence is the period in which people's search for an identity is at its peak. In this period, teenagers are trying to figure out who they are by trying different identities as expressed by style and dress. This view of consumerism may be more familiar, however, consumers are still treated as victims. Nevertheless, this outlook

of consumerism treats style as 'a visible reference point of life *in progress*' (Ewen, 1988: 54). This allows a space to treat objects and manufactured images as sources of understanding society.

In this light of consumption, advertisers are "able to embed valued meanings in products" and customers accept them eagerly (Schor & Holt, 2000: xii). This is very uni-dimensional way of looking at consumerism in which the power resides with advertisers, corporations and capitalism. The study of anthropology came in confrontation with this ideology, since it is based on the premise that "[g]oods have a symbolic meaning in all societies" (Schor & Holt, 2000: xii). Then, marketers add new symbolic meaning to objects and do not solely create it. Since meaning is in flux, then people have the ability to bring their own meaning to products, and thus can be seen as active agents of consumerism.

2.3.2. Consumers Have the Ultimate Control

Jean Baudrillard (1969) pioneered the notion that consumers have control through the importance of symbolic meaning and the social meaning they attribute to goods. The object is "nothing but the different types of relations and significations that converge, contradict themselves, and twist around it" (Baudrillard, 1969: 57). Although objects carry an inherent meaning of utility, they also carry the meaning of mass production along with the relationships individuals form with those objects. Consumers employ mass produced meanings of objects to classify themselves in different social categories of style. Class distinctions that used to be obvious through clothes have dissolved, whereas now different social styles are central. Within this logic, people are active agents in which consuming objects also becomes a form of cultural expression.

James Twitchell's (1999) notions represent the other end of the spectrum of control, in which consumers have the ultimate authority. His premise lies on the fundamental notion that people love things and their obsession with the material culture defines them. Furthermore, seeing consumption in a negative light is like seeing ourselves in depressing terms. "In demonizing it, in seeing ourselves as helpless and innocent victims of its overpowering force, in making it the scapegoat du jour, we reveal far more about our own eagerness to be passive in the face of complexity than about the thing itself" (Twitchell, 1999: 282). Although many critics may disagree with Twitchell's view of consumption, the essence of his points remains valid: Society needs to accept where it is at, take responsibility and act as an active agent.

2.4. Material Goods Used as Primary Vehicles for Meaning

Cultural studies unites various research theories to the task of examining how people make meaning in, and sense of, their everyday lives. An aspect of cultural studies involves evaluating how material goods and social practices intersect with questions of ideology, race, gender and social class. Many cultural studies researchers analyze the textuality of everyday life, focusing their attention on how people make meaning out of common practices (Hartley, 2003: 122). Practices such as shopping can be closely scrutinized in order to understand why people do certain things, or act in particular ways. Within this theoretical framework, the focus shifts onto the meaning of everyday consumption practices and the context of power relation in which culture manifests itself. There is considerable scepticism of corporate, commercial culture where "profit margins are too important to bother with concerns for the well- being of kids" (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 1997: 10). However, the emphasis remains on how people form culture

through the creation and consumption of everyday objects. Everyday life encompasses symbolic creativity, which is the way people use common and immediate life spaces and practices, to make meaning of their identity (Willis, 1990: 1-2). As such, mass produced objects can reveal the cultural identities of that time period.

Cultural pedagogy "refers to the idea that education takes place in a variety of social sites including but not limited to schooling" (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 1997: 3-4). This is closely linked to the study of everyday life- where informal learning takes place about dominant values and behaviours. For instance, scholar Henry Giroux (1994 & 1997) studied the informal pedagogy of commercialism. According to Giroux, youth depicted in the media, primarily through advertising, are commodified, meaning that the essence of youth becomes something that could be made, bought and sold, like a commodity. Turning the essence of youth into objects allows people to detach themselves from children, tweens and teenagers, along with the problems that they have. As such, Giroux attributes contemporary commercial dynamics to crucial societal situations. He is concerned that issues surrounding child poverty and labour are being overlooked due to the commodification of youth (Giroux, 1994 & 2003). Moreover, people's consumption of the commodified youth as found in mediated messages allows them to create a culture that is devoid of responsibility concerning societal problems concerning children. Thus, images, objects and spaces should be carefully deconstructed to disclose cultural norms as well as embedded mediated meanings that are found in their roots.

2.5. Girlie Spaces as Pedagogical Sites

There is much research done on adolescents and children regarding their cultural consumption of mediated messages, however research done on pre-adolescents, also known as tweens, is limited. Only recently, Claudia Mitchell and Jacqueline Reid-Walsh (2005) edited collections on tween culture within girlhood studies. Mitchell and Reid-Walsh (2005) recognize that the tween phenomenon is a construction of marketing segmentation, however they applaud it because of the tremendous attention it has brought to this most often ignored social group. Given that tween specific cultural studies within the realm of consumption are limited, studies done on informal commercial pedagogical sites involving children and teenagers, specifically related to girls, will be presented.

Friedan's refreshing feminist perspective on consumption (1963) offers key insight on how women evolved as consumers. Although this was not her primary goal, she reveals how teenage girls became targeted as consumers when marketers felt that women did not fit the ideal consumer mould. Women aspired less and less to be the same as others, whereas teenagers were greatly concerned about what their peers thought. One of the marketing reports (as cited in Friedan) recorded:

> Concentrate on the very young teenage girls . . .The young ones will want what "the others" want, even if their mothers don't . . .Get them in schools, churches, sororities, social clubs; get them through home-economics teachers, group leaders, teenage TV programs and teenage advertising (1963: 37).

Marketers had centred upon the notion that teenage girls lacked identity, purpose and creativity (Friedan, 1963). Corporations hoped to fill that identity void by mass-producing identities for them through home-y products.

Images and commodities of popular culture provide direction for girls. They are apt to consult such forms, since they allow girls a safe space where they can explore the boundaries and negotiate meaning of their sexuality as well as their relationship with boys. Girls use images and commodities in a sense to "buy time", until they are ready to deal with real-life situations (McRobbie, 1991). That is, girlie practices such as reading magazines or playing with dolls are not trivial forms of play but rather areas where girls put into perspective their uncertainties, fears and desires of being feminine and becoming women (McRobbie, 1991). In other words, girls are using commodities within the consumption culture, in order to negotiate meaning and soothe their anxiety of the tween transitory period. On one hand, these different leisure forms are either not recognized or under-recognized by the classic measures used by sociologists. On the other hand, as Angela McRobbie (1991) suggests, the construction of these girlie leisure spaces is exclusive to girls, thus resisting the invitation and possibility of being understood. Parents, boys, teachers and researchers are often left out from the structure of such social groups and therefore are not able to understand the makings of them.

Girls occupy a different leisure space than that of boys, therefore not only do their forms of expression greatly vary but also the type of expression in and of itself is different from that of boys. "Some of the cultural forms associated with pre-teenage girls, for example, can be viewed as responses to their perceived status as girls and to their anxieties about moving into a world of teenage sexual interaction" (McRobbie, 1991: 14). Although girl cliques can provide a safe haven for girls, recent findings surprisingly demonstrate that these cliques can also develop into a form of exclusion undertaken through passive aggressive behaviours (Simmons, 2002). Usually this occurs

when a tween expresses her individuality through dress, and it clashes with what is acceptable within the social group. As Entwistle relates "the public arena of the social group almost always requires that a body be dressed appropriately. Bodies which do not conform, risk exclusion, scorn and ridicule" (2000: 7).

Girls not only face the pressure of rejection from their friends because of their clothes but risk becoming stripped of the identity associated with that social group. The identity offered by their cliques gives girls direction and purpose. In addition, puberty can also affect tweens belonging in a group, since their stability is threatened when they begin looking different. Elizabeth Seaton (2005) asserts that puberty starts earlier in girls but ends at the same time it always did, therefore the pubertal period has elongated, coinciding with the tweens years. Furthermore, girls who are rejected from their social groups feel symptoms that are usually associated with severe depression. A negative body image, the lack of self-esteem and teenage suicides are related to peer rejection, thus reminding us that girly spaces should not be disregarded as insignificant, but rather be closely scrutinized.

Tween girls are self-aware and self-conscious about themselves in social settings. According to Kolski (as cited in Youth Market Alerts, 2003), there is a gender distinction where "[t]ween girls are more socially- and image-conscious than boys and more concerned with how they look, how they express themselves and who they hang out with" (1). Tweens put excessive care into their clothes, the main markers of identity (Entwistle, 2000), in order to conform to what has been regarded as acceptable by their social circles. However, tween girls' construction of their identity also involves a sense of themselves, as what they think is normal and of what it means to be feminine (Willis,

1990: 55). At times, fashion media shapes the latter.

Girls' construction of style, identity and body image is influenced, but not limited to, their understanding of fashion magazines (Malik, 2005; McRobbie, 1991; Oliver, 1999). Magazines serve to educate girls of the normalized image of woman. Furthermore, Farah Malik (2005) celebrates this notion, along with girls' desire to be glamorous, given that it encourages girls to be their best, thus reaching their potential. "They can broaden the girls' world-views and sense of place by presenting possibilities for their attainment of success and they provide opportunities for elevation escapism and fantasy" (Malik, 2005: 260). From a different perspective, Rachel Rusell and Melissa Tyler (2002) found that although this empowers girls, they question the confines that define this power. Furthermore, Kimberly Oliver's study (1999) found that the mediated messages in magazines imparts an ill notion of the ideal female body to tween girls, which they largely describe as weak (no visible presence of muscles) and slim.

The Barbie doll is a noteworthy research site that reveals much about girlhood (DuCille, 1996; Mitchell & Reid-Walsh, 2005; Steinberg, 1999). In 2002, Mattel even launched My Scene Barbie, a restyled Barbie with a larger head, as a response to the tween demographic and the successful advent of tween specific Bratz dolls. Both tween dolls have been popularly characterized as being fashion-wise (Thompson, 2005), thus reflecting the importance that dress plays within tween culture. Like other pedagogical consumption sites, Barbie teaches girls how to be and act like women. She also teaches girls about the ritual of sex by wearing lingerie. In fact, Barbie's design traces back to German-made sex toy blow up doll called "Bild Lilli" of the 50s (DuCille, 1996: 261). There is a "blurring of the lines between innocent child's play and adult sexual fantasy

that the Barbie doll itself suggests" (DuCille, 1996: 260). In addition, Barbie commercials, calendars and advertisement have her photographed in a seductive pose-resembling a pin-up girl. In these cases, child sexuality is used to make profits. Giroux (1997) criticizes this occurrence as demonstrated through his analysis of the Calvin Klein advertisements. This ad campaign used children's sexuality as a vehicle for commercialism. The binary distinction between "cute childhood innocence" and "sexy knower" has also allowed the avid success of the innocent looking Hello Kitty cat doll icon among adults (Lai, 2005). In tween specific sites surrounding play, Mitchell and Reid-Walsh (2005) observed a similar ambiguity between the relationship of "wanting to be grown up" and "wanting the security of childhood" (3). For instance, a girl's bedroom can be adorned with pictures of half-naked men while Barbie sits on her dresser (Mitchell & Reid-Walsh, 2002). This ambiguity, in which tweens aspire and actually look older, reflects the notion of the disappearance of childhood.

2.6. Locating Tweens between Childhood and Adulthood

Tweens are undergoing immense physical, emotional and psychological changes, namely characterized by puberty (Henson, 2003:50). There is a recent tendency where such maturing changes are occurring at an earlier age compared to past generations; this has been referred by marketers as the age compression (Lindstrom, 2003; Scally, 1999), and such children have been referred to as 'KGOY, Kids Grow Up Young' (Quart, 2003; Lindstrom, 2003:1). These marketing names denote negative connotations in the media, such as, children nowadays have a different childhood from our own, where the time for play and being yourself, has become shorter (Galipeau, 2003: B1).

24

Neil Postman (1994) offers another perspective and claims that the idea of childhood is a modern creation (15); therefore, its disappearance should come as no surprise. He explains that throughout the course of our history, children were defined by the boundaries that separate them from adulthood. Although those boundaries are growing faint, the ideology surrounding childhood space gains exclusivity through the mass production of specific material culture, such as clothing, furniture, literature and toys (Postman, 1994: 67). Now that children are "growing up younger", there is a need to either redefine childhood or create a new category for these children, hence the notion of tweens, in response to societal changes. To name a few factors, the increasing technological innovation and the fast pace of information dissemination through television and the internet, are popularly referred to as being at least partially responsible for redefining the boundaries of childhood (Scally, 1999).

Tweens' attraction to change is often credited to their being born and living in a world of computers. Lindstrom's (2003) analogy best describes tweens relationship with computers as "the first generation born with a mouse in their hands, and a computer screen as their window to the world" (24). Tweens are part of the generation, as Lavigne (1998) calls it, of the third millennium that has been raised in a society completely immersed in technology. They do not know a life without computers, the Internet, e-mail communication, cell phones, text messaging, easily accessible information, cable television and microwaves (Lavigne 1998; Scally 1999). These technological transformations have created a group of people who are 'interactive and expect instant gratification' (Lindstrom, 2003:24), who are 'infused and aware of everything and everyone' (Lavigne, 1998), and that have an 'appetite for the next big thing' (Steinberg,

1998). Although tweens are highly impressionable (Scally, 1999: 53) by popular culture, they are also aware of the short life span of whatever the next innovation, thus explaining why they are referred to as 'sceptical and cynical of the media' (Scally, 1998: 53) while they 'distrust advertisements' (Steinberg, 1998: 73). Mead (as cited in Postman, 1994) contends that adults are no longer necessary to children for guidance since information has become readily available to them through technological innovations (89). Hence, this recent phenomenon weakens the boundaries that define adulthood and childhood, since "being knowledgeable" no longer separates adults from children. "Changing economic realities coupled with children's access to information about the adult world have drastically changed childhood" (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 1997: 3).

There is this notion of fear that society has built in and around childhood, where children are seen as helpless victims and innocent. However, there are heavy connotations that the word innocent implies: irresponsible, passive and accepting. That is where all the popular notions begin; children are innocent victims of corporations, of the television, the Internet, advertisements, and any other technological innovation. Yet, children make meaning and appropriate knowledge into their reality. Nevertheless, the crisis that is built around childhood should not be altogether disregarded. It "demands that we examine its causes" and the one in particular of "the corporate production of popular Kinderculture and its impact on children" (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 1997: 3). Ironically, it seems that a childhood crisis in which children are acting more like adults is also re-strengthening the notion of childhood, in the sense that they require adult protection to preserve their innocence. Childhood and adulthood also meet through the realm of fashion. The current trend is youthfulness, where the look of early twenties has

become the epitome of cool. The image of youth has become a commodity that could be bought and worn (Brooks, 2003:13; Giroux, 1997 & 1994; Klein 2000). Youthful identities are being fashioned and refashioned within popular culture. This belittles the image of youth and reduces it as a mere commodity to please the corporate mass production of clothes. There is a cultural attempt to preserve the ideology of youth through dress. Children physically begin to look like twenty-year-olds sooner than previous generations as well as aspire to dress like them. Moreover, dress as a marker of identity plays a crucial role in the lives of tweens.

2.7. The Significance of Dress

It is clear to me as a teacher, and a former tween, that tweens pay great attention to the manner in which they dress. They are aware of the significance that certain clothes convey and they are keenly sensitive to that meaning. In addition, tweens use clothes to demonstrate their viewpoints and portray an image to others (Saunders, 1995: 22). They use dress as cultural text for the expression of their desires, confusions and moods. In addition, "[y]oung people learn about their inner selves partly by developing their outer image through clothes. They use style in their symbolic work to express and develop their understanding of themselves as unique persons, to signify who they are" (Willis, 1990: 89).

Some styles originate from youth rejecting the dominant culture, for instance the punk style (McRobbie, 1991:17). Thus, dress also serves as a signifier of a social circle. "In contemporary western culture class is no longer so readily apparent to the eye through dress alone but this is not to say that social divisions are no longer apparent through styles of dress: it is still the case that dress can mark out divisions between different

groups, and this is particularly true in youth subcultures" (Entwistle, 2000: 115). For example, tweens can purchase ripped jeans at thrift shops or buy two hundred dollar label jeans. Styles such as punk, usually seen as cheap through the wear and tear of clothes, have become the latest fashion fad that major brand names have adopted. Although Entwistle (2000) stresses that class distinctions through clothes are no longer apparent, I argue that they still are visible and quantifiable due to the brand name impressed upon clothes.

2.8. Brand Names

A brand name, as represented by a logo, is a constructed corporate ideology. With the surge of branding, more money is invested in creating this ideology rather than the production stage, which is the actual making of the clothes. Furthermore, money is spent to mobilize the meaning of the logo and strategically associate it with a person, who usually is famous (Schor & Holt, 2000: xx). Unfortunately, this branding hype overshadows the people who actually make the clothes. Tweens' relationships with brand names differentiate them from neighbouring age groups. Simpson, Douglas and Schimmel (1998) found that

> tweens were more concerned with style, brand names, and the latest fashion than were older students. This finding was especially interesting, as these attributes all relate to status; the tweens were more interested than the older students were in wearing the latest fashions, being in style, and gaining the prestige of wearing brand-name clothing. This supports previous findings indicating that the tween years are a time when peer pressure and "fitting in" are very important (637).

These findings concur with those of Richard Gallagher (as cited in Beam, 2002), the

director of the Parenting Institute at the New York University Child Study Centre. Children between nine and twelve become more dependent on their peers' opinions rather than their parents' until about the age of fourteen (Beam, 2002). Tweens are still young enough to be dependent on their parents (Lindstrom, 2003: 14), but are old enough to have formed strong opinions on brands (Youth Market Alerts, 2003).

Brand names express a status of worth among tweens. If a tween is wearing a brand name that means they can afford it. Kimberly Oliver (1999) found that "expense" is tweens' main criteria for the "right clothes". For instance, if a tween is not wearing brand name shoes, then they are considered a "fashion out" and will be ridiculed by their peers (Oliver, 1999: 234). Here lies a glaring implication for tweens: Not wearing certain brand names signifies you are not worth as much as those who do. This duality plays a crucial role in tweens' perceptions of self-worth. Naomi Klein (2000) asserts that Tommy Hilfiger is the best brand example that has played upon youth's need to assert their self-worth. Tommy Hilfiger wanted to appeal to the urban hip-hop youth, by altering the brand's style into a baggier fit and by using bold colours. Conversely, this style was advertised by youth in yacht clubs or playing golf, which are leisure activities associated with wealth. Ironically, these yuppie activities are the antithesis of hip-hop culture. Such a tactic was used in order to have "poor and working-class kids acquiring status in the ghetto by adopting the gear and accoutrements of prohibitively costly leisure activities" (Klein, 2000: 76). At the same time, this serves "selling white youth on their fetishization of black style, and black youth on their fetishization of white wealth" (Klein, 2000: 76).

Culture seen through identity and style has become a pawn within marketers' board game. Moreover, tweens' profound reliance on their peers for what is regarded as 'cool' attire creates an environment where brand names' success depends much on whether the popular tweens like them or not. Tweens become interdependent of one another's approval, thus creating a "peer culture".

2.9. Culture Jamming

Marketers have succeeded in having 'brands as symbols for an identity' where they are integral in tweens' method of expression and self-definition (Lindstrom, 2003:13). Even the youth subcultures' anti-brand tactics, involve using the brand context to create a new meaning. This is referred to as Culture Jamming (Hartley, 2003: 119; Klein, 2000: 282; Lasn, 1999). For instance, youths are wearing t-shirts with the Tide logo, but another satirical name would be printed instead of the brand name. In other words, they are using the brand message to create a counter-message. In spite of that, this counter-culture can become marketers' new target group (Klein, 2000).

Culture Jamming is based on a critique of popular culture and the political and economic conditions that enable it. It is a form of demarketing to create awareness. For example, within culture jamming, it is asserted that problems related to body-image distortions are "our responsibility, *but they are not our fault*" since "[t]he issue is primarily cultural and a corporate one, and that's the level on which it must be tackled. We must lean to direct our anger, not inward at ourselves, but outward at the beauty industry" (Lasn, 1999: 429). This perspective is perhaps problematic, since it makes it seem that directing anger toward advertisers will solve serious problems, such as anorexia, but it does correspond to some real conditions facing tweens.

Exploitation of tweens' fear of rejection and a need for self-worth has provided marketers the leverage to create a powerful brand culture. This perpetuates tweens' need to rely on extrinsic validation for a sense of worth. Furthermore, the marketing of 'looking good is feeling good', where an impeccable image equates to emotional well being, creates a narcissist culture. Tween girls, who are already self-conscious, have the courtesy of brand names to further promote their vigilance of their inadequacies. All the while tweens are assured that corporations have commodities to fix their shortcomings.

2.10. Summary of Chapter

The literature review begins with the research done on tweens, from a marketing perspective. This overview revealed that societal changes such as the change in family dynamics have increased tweens' economic power. Within the realm of cultural studies, previous works have explored the topic of informal pedagogical sites from various angles, yet there appears to be a scarcity of information specifically concerning pre-adolescent girls. In consequence, this literature review provides topics that surround consumption, as studied traditionally, as well as through the lens of cultural consumption. A comprehensive background on the theories of consumption lays the foundation of this thesis. Next, the study of everyday life demonstrates how cultural ideologies can be embedded in objects. This is followed by a discussion of how mass mediated messages, which are rooted within images, objects and spaces, shape tweens' ideologies of what is normal. More specifically related to this study, a literature review of girly pedagogical sites indicates the various ways this topic was approached in previous studies. Here, the topic of style and its relation to the identity formation of girls is discussed. Subsequently, dress and brand names are further explored for their role in the lives of tweens. They are

crucial to tweens since they are used as markers of belonging within a group. Tween

girls are faced with numerous mass mediated messages when shopping to fit in, where

they decide "to buy or not to be" (personal communication, M. Hoechsmann: 2005).

CHAPTER 3: THE METHODOLOGY FOR ANALYZING A TWEEN STORE

3.1. Chapter Overview

In this chapter, the methodological approach for this study, which is largely built upon an unobtrusive qualitative method, is described. Furthermore, an explanation is given for the use of a content analysis. Specifically, a textual analysis approach is applied on a lived environment of a commercial context as inspired by scholars Michael Emmison and Philip Smith (2000). In this study, the work on similar multi-dimensional contexts of other visual researchers is described. Borrowing and blending the ideas from Emmison and Smith (2000), a visual eclectic approach is used to conceptualize a framework for the method of analyzing a tween store. Then, the analytical categories are presented and explained, which are worked into an instrument to aid in the construction of a uniform analysis of the data. Next, the chosen sample along with the data generated is rationalized. Following, the framing questions are presented which refocus this study and contextualize it within consumption and the identity formation of tween girls. To conclude, a summary of the overall methodological approach of this chapter is given.

3.2. General Approach

Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Patricia Leavy (2004) provide a clear explanation of various forms of unobtrusive qualitative research. Such practices stem from the quantitative practice of content analysis, where researchers examine patterns and themes over a long period in order to "reveal large-scale, or macro, processes" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004: 303). The expansion of cultural studies, and the use of various research methods within this field, has led to various cultural researchers using unobtrusive methods within their qualitative research (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004). Likewise, the

general approach to this study employs an unobtrusive qualitative method and combines elements of visual research based upon cultural studies traditions.

The unobtrusive approach relies on the content analysis of nonliving forms of data that are referred to as cultural "texts", in the broadest sense of the word, thus including images, moving images and objects (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004: 303). Similarly, visual researcher Malcolm Barnard (2001) refers to the visual as "the enormous variety of visible two-and three-dimensional things that human beings produce and consume as part of their cultural and social lives" (2). However, the examples that Barnard (2001) illustrates remain within the realm of fashion design and the arts, but a practice oriented semiotic study can include objects, interactions and contexts, such as lived environments.

Textual analysis, within visual research, is based upon the study of semiotics. Semiotics is the study of signs, a domain that helps us to decode different levels of meaning that are embedded within the structures of a text. As such, all heterogeneous objects are signs that people naturally read. This reading requires 'a systematic reflection which is called semiology, in order to take into account social, moral and ideological meanings' (Barthes, 1988: 157). Semiotics pioneer Roland Barthes (1988) draws parallels between myth, a type of speech, and signs. At its most fundamental level, this method takes into account the two levels of meaning, the denotative and the connotative. The denotative meaning of a space will reveal the direct meaning it is attempting to communicate, which is fundamentally its literal meaning (Barnard, 2001: 149; O' Sullivan, Hartley, Saunders, Montgomery & Fiske, 1994: 286). Deconstructing the denotative is a first step towards rendering the connotative meaning apparent. Connotation works through "style and form" and "is concerned with *how* rather than

what of communication" (O' Sullivan, Hartley, Saunders, Montgomery & Fiske, 1994: 286). "Connotation is often explained as the thoughts, feelings and associations that accompany one's perception of an example of visual culture" (Barnard, 2001: 149). Marcus Banks (2001), whose visual research centered upon photographs and film, contends that a textual analysis is not only about naming the objects in the image, but rather bringing your knowledge to bear upon the picture (7). There are underlying ideologies that are embedded within the cultural texts, which surround elements of power and knowledge (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004), thus by analyzing these various layers of a text we can uncover hidden meanings about hegemonic structures within our culture. Each level, from general to specific, offers several degrees of meaning from the denotative to the connotative.

The general approach of this methodology is based on a textual analysis, where the denotative and the connotative meanings that are embedded within the fabrics of a lived environment are examined. However, researchers have employed other research techniques, within marketing and scientific paradigms, when studying retail space. Sufficient social science research has been done in stores, for instance, where the researcher's goals centered upon the act of shopping as a ritual (Miller, 1998). These studies have proven to be fruitful in terms of understanding human habits and gender differences associated with shopping, but do not treat the retail space as a site of cultural consumption for tweens. Furthermore, much research has been done on how feminine ideals are constructed in the mass-marketed media, through the form of advertisements, and how adolescent girls are impacted by these ideals, particularly related to their body image (Oliver, 1999). These types of studies absolutely necessitate the involvement of

research subjects since the researcher's goal is to understand the girls' perspectives.

This study centers upon a starting point for understanding how corporations manufacture and sell ideologies of girlhood within the setting of a store, something that has been scarcely studied within the context of cultural studies. This particular study will provide an in-depth analysis of how ideologies concerning girlhood, femininity and sexuality are embedded within a lived environment of a tween store. It aims to better understand how ideologies are re-appropriated, mass manufactured and represented within a commercialized space, which girls visit and interact with during a transitory period of their lives. A textual analysis allows us to uncover deeper political, cultural and social meanings that are found within a commercial context and its texts. The research design and the results of this study can be used to further examine relevant topics. Furthermore, researchers can employ this particular research design as well as the results of this study as a means to a next step: to examine how girls subjectively relate to the retail space or the items found in that space.

3.3. Framework

The foundation of this study's methodological framework is based on the work done by visual researchers Emmison and Smith (2000). They synthesize various visual research techniques that have been done on the lived environment as a cultural text. Their work on lived visual data, specifically related to the built environment and its uses, is largely based on the study of semiotics. The structure of places does not simply reflect imperatives of utility and cost, but has encoded cultural systems within its composition (Emmison & Smith, 2000: 153). Decoding certain elements, which will be described in the following section, makes up most of the analysis instrument. Furthermore, Emmison

and Smith (2000) also touch upon issues of 'vision, visibility as well as invisibility, and how these are linked to power, control and civility', which are based upon Foucault's theory of the Panopticon (182-183). This is all related to the architectural space of the store and how it renders areas of visibility or invisibility. A gaze is encouraged within the shop. Fiske et al. (1987, as cited in Emmison and Smith) stress that shopping is structured around the pleasure of looking and people become "more aware of their bodies, identity and image" (2000: 187). While shopping, people are expected to participate in a narcissistic environment where it is encouraged to look at oneself in mirrors and gaze at the items displayed on mannequins or on other people. The emphasis of this analysis is on the composition of elements that are visually consumed and manipulated, within this three-dimensional space.

3.4. Procedure

This study relies on a commercial context for its information. Unobtrusive methods involving visual research, where the retail space serves as a research text, are used as a starting point. In addition, this store's virtual space in the form of its official website was used in order to emphasize, clarify and illustrate various notions found. This study does not involve human subjects, thus allowing the researcher more choices in terms of selecting her data. This research rests upon a public space where all people are generally welcomed. Although the retail space is referred to as public, it is privately owned thus taking into account that rules and regulations govern it. For instance, taking photographs or writing extensive notes within the La Senza Girl store is strictly forbidden. La Senza Corporation rejected this study's request to formally research its space. For the sake of this study, this is just as well, since the visual field of research will

be similar to the shoppers' one. The focus this study's data analysis lies within the commercial domain as a whole, as opposed to the individuals who are involved with the creation of the context, merchandise and advertisements.

The sample for this study is the standard La Senza Girl store, meaning the conventional store a tween can find in a typical suburban mall. In addition, the La Senza combo store, which combines the tween collection with the women's lingerie, was analyzed as a secondary source. The latter served as source of comparison between the adult and children's store. The contrasts between the two reveal cultural ideologies concerning women and tween dichotomies. The official website also served as part of the sample by providing detailed images and examples of the company.

Eight analytical categories were generated and worked into an instrument of analysis. As mentioned earlier, combining Emmison and Smith's work on three-dimensional and lived visual data created the analytical categories. The retail space was investigated through these concepts and related to girlhood, femininity and sexuality. In addition, applying an instrument of analysis allowed studying the two types of La Senza Girl stores in the same manner, thus placing the data on a similar platform for comparison. The analytical categories are as follows:

1) Overall Feeling of Store

A general description of the store from the outside moving toward the inside is necessary to understand the overall feeling of the store. Katherine Toland Frith (1997) calls this overall general impression a *Surface Meaning* when deconstructing advertisements. This is a necessary first step in order to establish how the store is viewed by the public. Elements concerning light and colour are analyzed in order to understand the overall

impression the store attempts to impart to shoppers. Furthermore, the overall look of shops has been previously studied by Fiske et al. in 1987 (as cited in Emmison and Smith, 2000), along the lines of determinant factors, which are the average price of goods and the inviting impression, that attract different social classes of clientele. The inviting impression of the store is judged by the accessibility and amounts of clothes. For instance, stores that have few clothes on display demonstrate rareness of the clothes thus alluding to the fact that they have a high price.

2)   Music

Music is not visual data but the type of music that plays within the store signifies much about the store's style and serves an integral role in creating the store atmosphere. For instance, the kind of tempo and beat playing can radiate different feelings. An even tempo encourages a relaxed and non-threatening ambience (Emmison & Smith, 2000: 166). Furthermore, music is a form of cultural youth expression. How is the tween store employing this form of expression? What role does music play within this locale?

3) Lighting

This category considers how lighting is manipulated in terms of its color, intensity and direction to create certain illusions (Emmison & Smith: 2000). For instance, in a grocery store, light is manipulated to make meat look redder than its actual color. In addition, the intensity of the light can create various feelings that connote different meanings. Has La Senza Girl manipulated the light to their advantage? What did they choose to highlight or not to highlight with their spotlights? How is the light intensity within the locale?

4)   Ambience

Ambience in the widest sense possible can be defined by the mood created in a space.

However, this analytical category entitled *ambience* is very specific, as described by Emmison and Smith: it is a unique shopping experience. Does La Senza Girl offer shopping as an experience or a task? The main indicator for this factor is whether the store offers other activities in the store other than shopping. Does the store offer pastimes that are considered complementary and/or supplementary to shopping? Are there any themes throughout the store that enhance someone's time there as opposed to the mechanical task of purchasing something? (Emmison and Smith, 2000: 165). Is there the availability of merchandise other than clothes? This analytical category will establish whether the tween store La Senza Girl becomes a meeting spot for tweens.

5) Store Layout

The store layout is a concept developed by Emmison and Smith (2000) to study the shop as a three dimensional space. In this category, a researcher can examine what she/he encounters in the store in basic terms, as they move through it. Although this analytical category still involves looking at the store in general terms, it moves away from the overall feel and moves closer to the objects that are found inside the store as well as the main looks that are presented. It is crucial to mention the divisions of the different sections within the store. It is important to examine the front section of the store since it is highly valued as the space used to attract clientele. In addition, our Western cultured reading patterns suggest that whatever is on our right hand-side holds our attention (Emmison and Smith, 2000). It is important to note the opposing elements, in order to understand the meanings insinuated by this hierarchy.

6) Clothes Layout

The display of merchandise in a store merits greater depth of analysis since it demands

much time from the corporation to determine which tween styles require maximum investment. Case in point, this study will expand this analytical category by using the areas that Emmison and Smith used in their analysis of the mall. A) Right/left side. People tend to move to their right when all other things are equal. What merchandise is displayed on the right side of La Senza Girl? This is essential in the analysis since it places the clothes in hierarchy, and we can therefore ask what character of clothes is more important than others. B) This hierarchy is also apparent when relating the front/ back of the store. The Western reading patterns are from top left to bottom right, so what is displayed in the store in such a fashion? What are people encouraged to look at? This hierarchical structure is often employed as a means to place value upon certain styles of expression.

7) *Examples of Clothes*

This analytical category is essential for an understanding of the type of clothes that La Senza Girl is selling. The La Senza Girl style becomes apparent with the study of a selection of clothes. The clothes that are relevant to this study are examined through their narratives and contexts.

8) *Visibility/ Invisibility*

This analytical category concentrates on issues of vision, visibility and invisibility in terms of space organization and how it is related to power, control and civility (Emmison and Smith, 2000: 183). A shop provides a fallacy: although you travel freely within the store as if it is a public space, ultimately it is not, since there are rules of behaviour that govern it. Issues related to visibility and invisibility influence people's behaviour. Furthermore, private and public spaces are related to aspects of power and control. What

areas within the store are reserved for employees only? Are these areas visible to the shopper's gaze? How does that regulate their behaviour? What are the private spaces reserved for the shoppers? Where are the shoppers least visible? This analytical category will help uncover the areas where customers have ultimate control and whether it is encouraged/ discouraged.

3.5. Instrument

The above analytical categories were worked into an instrument that would assist in the analysis of the lived environment of La Senza Girl. The top of the instrument asks some general identity questions about the store: the store location, store type and the year the store opened. Afterward, eight categories were numbered along with a selection of leading questions. These questions aid in maintaining consistency among the assessments and serve as entry points to generate information on this subject. They do not serve to limit the assessment to them. After taking note of each analytical category, the denotative and connotative meaning of each aspect is recorded. See figure 1, for an example of the instrument.

This instrument helps structure the analysis of the two different types of La Senza Girl stores. It provides a general overview of what becomes apparent at first glance outside of the store, to a far more detailed look of how various elements formulate several messages. Each level of this visual and physical interaction with the environment from general to specific offers several degrees of meaning surrounding the denotative to the connotative meaning. Each area of analysis in and of itself provides a meaning, but

ASSESSING THE REPRESENTATIONS OF TWEEN GIRLS WITHIN THE FABRIC OF THE THREE-DIMENSIONAL SPACE OF LA SENZA GIRL:
Store Information: Store Location_____ Store Type_____ Opening of Store _____
Analytical Categories: 1) *Overall Impression*   - What kind of people is the store trying to attract? How? What look emanates from the store? What is used to get such a feeling?   *Denotative:*   *Connotative:*
2) *Music*   - How is music used to express the character of the store? What is the music's tempo and beat? What role does music play within the store?   *Denotative:*   *Connotative:*
3) *Lighting*   - What kind of character does the lighting of the store promote? Is the lighting manipulated to promote certain items in the store? What are those items?   *Denotative:*   *Connotative:*
4) *Ambience*   - Does the store make shopping an experience as opposed to task? What are the methods that are used in order to inspire such a type of ambience?   *Denotative:*   *Connotative:*
5) *Store Layout*   - What do you encounter as you move through the store? Where is the open space in the store? In what sections is the store divided? Left/ right side?   *Denotative:*   *Connotative:*
6) *Clothes Layout*   - What styles of clothes are displayed on the right side of the store and what styles to the left? What ideologies does their prioritizing reflect? Front/ back. Name the type and style of clothes that are positioned from the front of the store all the way to the back. What ideologies does the positioning of these clothes reflect? Within each section of the store; what type/ styles of merchandise are placed from top left to bottom right? How do you read each section?   *Denotative:*   *Connotative:*
7) *Clothes*   - Describe some the items that are found in the front of the store? What items stand out it La Senza Girl? Why are they important?   *Denotative:*   *Connotative:*
8) *Private/ public*   - What are the areas customers do/ do not have access to? What does that reveal about what power they possess?   *Denotative:*   *Connotative:*

Figure 1. Instrument for the Study

further probing questioning can unveil hidden insinuations. At the end of this assessment, all aspects of the analysis come together as a mosaic and provide a framework for assessing the denotative image of the store as well as the implicit meanings of childhood, femininity and sexuality.

3.6. Sample

While La Senza Girl uses various tactics to increase their sales through the design of their clothes, advertisements and brand name, the core of these strategies comes into play in their retail space. This lived environment of the store becomes an exemplary site to research the visual components that play upon tween girls' wants. The retail space involves the consumption practices, such as the visual consumption that influence tweens' desires. In addition, this locale becomes a learning space where girls' issues with sexuality, femininity, childhood and womanhood come into play as they shop in this transitory phase of their life. The retail space can substantially influence the way tween girls see themselves through their clothes. La Senza Girl relies on shoppers' visual sense, as dressing involves wearing an identity by creating an image. From the perspective of the corporation, much time and money is invested in creating a winning brand name that expresses a contemporary image of what it means to be a girl aged eight to 14 years old. Simultaneously, as Canada's leading retail tween store, it also communicates what it means to be a tween to millions of youth. It brings meaning to this age group and shapes the perceptions associated with it. For instance, the La Senza Girl Spring 2004 Collection portrayed tweens of various ethnic backgrounds with an unnatural golden tan. This communicates to the public a number of ideologies concerning skin color, but above all, it conveys a desire for sameness, beyond clothes, among tweens.

The investigation for this study was primarily done during the Spring 2004 and 2005 Collection, a time where the idea of tween was widely used in popular literature such as newspapers. The lived environment of La Senza Girl was examined, namely because it is one of the leading retail spaces that exclusively professes and takes pride in marketing to the tween demographic. It is impossible to include every article of clothing made, as well as every corporate strategy of this retail space, due to time constraints and the rules that govern the store. Therefore, this study proceeded in the following manner: The researcher visited the store as a shopper, took in as much information possible, and proceeded to write fieldnotes outside the confines of the store soon afterward. These visits were done at least weekly, within a given season, until sufficient information was gathered to complete the instrument for this study. In addition, the study was complemented by the perusal of the official store website to further understand the La Senza Girl style. The focus of this study is the standard La Senza Girl store, which is a regular retail space that is found in the context of the mall. The conventional store is most populous and is opened to a national and international market. In addition, the instrument of analysis was applied to the La Senza combo store, which combines the La Senza Girl collection along with the La Senza Lingerie collection in one locale.

La Senza Girl Spring 2004 and the 2005 Collections were looked at, but this study thoroughly researched the latter season, while the earlier served as a testing ground and for familiarisation. Furthermore, the spring season best reflects the time of change, where fresh ideas are brought to the forefront and are tested. It is convenient to study a retail space after the Christmas holidays as the shopping frenzy has subsided and the store adjusts to the usual flow of customers. In addition, as a retail rule, all La Senza Girl

stores follow a standard store layout established by the corporation. There are minor differences between stores namely due to the logistics concerning space but the bottom line is that they are all fashioned in a similar manner in order to communicate the same messages to their customers. Even the combo stores follow the same stylistic protocol within the tween section.

3.7. Analysis

As noted earlier, the analysis of La Senza Girl was largely based upon the fieldnotes gathered after every visit. The instrument allowed a consistent analysis of the two different types of La Senza Girl stores: regular and combo store. The analytical categories were first applied, in which a reading of the denotative (the literal) description of each category was noted. After deconstructing each element, inferences were made concerning the connotative meaning of each category. The questions listed on the analytical tool example (see figure 1) were used to guide and generate substantial information for each section. After the two stores were evaluated, the results were compared and analyzed namely through differences that were found within the store as well as between the two store types. Meanings within a text may only become apparent when they are in opposition to something else. Likewise, patterns between the two stores were closely scrutinized to highlight the role the tween space plays within this commercial context. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the representations of tween girls within a consumer space. This method of comparing and contrasting the results of each analytical category allowed for the larger structural elements concerning childhood, sexuality and femininity.

3.8. Framing Questions

Examining the retail space as a lived environment in which tween girls are consuming ideologies and identities, which shapes their desires, greatly influenced this research study. There are certain issues that girls undertake when they are in the transitory age of becoming a woman. During this time, girls become acutely aware of what it means to be feminine, as femininity as part of their sexual identity becomes more prominent. Tween girls face a struggle of what it means to become a woman.

Leading questions were created that would encompass these various girlhood issues and help guide this study within the commercial context. The following question shaped the methodology and directed the analysis: Do tween girl retail spaces embody the commercial appropriation of childhood, sexuality and femininity? Furthermore, a secondary question was created that ordered an in-depth understanding of the larger issues concerning the appropriation of girlhood through a commercial context. The secondary question asks: How are these tween elements constructed within the fabric of the store through the a) overall feeling, b) music, c) lighting, d) ambience, e) store layout, f) clothes layout, g) clothes, and h) visible/ invisible areas.

3.9. Summary of Chapter

The methodology for this study is based upon an unobtrusive qualitative method, in which a content analysis was used as a means to explore how the retail space conveys meanings of what it entails to be a tween girl. Inspired by visual research models done on three-dimensional objects and lived environments, a textual analysis is applied to explore the meanings embedded within commercial contexts that manufacture social norms of being a girl, discovering femininity and sexuality. An instrument of analysis

was created and applied on a lived environment. This is a space where tweens could purchase as well as assemble their identity, while creating and making sense of their desires acquired through the visual consumption of this retail environment. The instrument was used to analyze two types of La Senza Girl stores in a systematic fashion and supported a uniform analysis. This study serves as a starting point in this field of inquiry, where other researchers can uncover other forms of tween consumption, such as the actual buying of clothes. Moreover, this study could serve as a means to investigate how these mediated messages are actually interpreted by tweens and their role in the commercial appropriation of girlhood. Additionally, this study could inform other researchers who are interested in understanding the ideological meanings that are embedded within consumer culture, as well as the concept of tweens as a manifestation of the corporate world.

CHAPTER 4: A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF LA SENZA GIRL

4.1. Chapter Overview

This chapter introduces a textual analysis of the retail space, La Senza Girl, frequented by, and targeted to girls aged 8-14 years old. It has been described as a shopping destination for 'nymphets' (Galipeau, 2003: 81) and a 'lively attractive environment, which explicitly caters to distinct tween preferences' (La Senza Corporation, 2002-05). The synchronic snapshot presented is centred on the Spring 2005 Collection. This analysis begins with background information of the La Senza Corporation, a brief description of its history, website and brand name. This is followed by an examination of the two contexts where La Senza Girl stores are found- the mall and the power centre. Next, the analysis of La Senza Girl is presented, focusing on the standard store type, in addition to the combo store, which combines the tween apparel with the women's lingerie collection in one locale. In this part, the denotative and the connotative meanings are blended into a narrative framework. The similarities and the differences between these two main store types are highlighted. Images were taken from various Internet sites to illustrate certain observations. To conclude, there is a discussion of the main findings from the analysis. The main ideologies about girlhood, femininity and sexuality that are woven within the fabric of the store are revealed.

4.2. La Senza Corporation

4.2.1. History

La Senza Corporation has undergone immense changes in the last five years in order to become the company that it is today. Its main retail chain store, La Senza Lingerie, thrived uniquely for the selling of lingerie. After a certain level of success, Lawrence Lewin, the president of La Senza Inc. focused his attention on creating La Senza Girl- a store for the tween market. As quoted in Olijnyk (2002), Lewin felt that tweens "needed a place of their own" to meet their shopping needs (52). The Online Manager (personal communication: March 15, 2004) notes that La Senza, as "Canada's leading retailer of fashion lingerie", "recognized that no retailer was addressing the complete needs and demands of the Canadian "tween" market and conducted extensive research" in order to create an exclusive space for tweens to shop. Hence, the corporation was well aware of the economic potential of the newest consumer group. "Tweens have now become the newest influential consumer group to emerge in today's retail milieu. In 1997, there were 1.6 million girls in this age group and they spend an average of $906 on clothes each year" (personal communication, Online Manager: March 15, 2004).

Unlike its mother store, La Senza Girl sells girls' clothing including accessories, toys and cosmetics instead of only undergarments (Olijnyk, 2002: 49 & 52). According to the Online Manager (personal communication: March 15, 2004), part of La Senza Girl's mission statement "is to provide young girls with fashionable [and] affordable apparel in a fun environment that promotes self-esteem". In April 1999, the first three La Senza Girl stores opened in Ontario and by November there were seventeen stores across

Canada (Weil, 1999). Presently, there are eighty La Senza Girl stores that operate across Canada while twenty stores are operating in other countries, such as in the U.K., under license (World of Garment, Textile & Fashion, 2005). Although it caters to an international market, La Senza Girl maintains the same design concept for all its stores. The experience of walking into the La Senza Girl store in Malaysia, for instance, would be the same as visiting a store in Montreal.

4.2.2. The Official Website

Like many retailers who are trying to stay current with new technology, La Senza Girl has created an official website. According to the La Senza Girl Webmaster (personal communication: March 2, 2004) 'the website is designed by their Marketing Department and it is pre approved by a group of kids that come in their office and let them know if they like it'. This website does not sell merchandise and is a place where girls can socialize virtually. The website's purpose is to complement the in-store experience as well as play an integral role as part of the store's advertising. In fact, the La Senza Girl website does not allow tweens the freedom to mix, match, and create an outfit. There is not much leeway for personal control; all choices lead to the same exact outfits that are heavily advertised. Furthermore, on the website, all of the in-store promotions are replicated and emphasized with the use of repetition. In addition, these promotions are labelled with special names, such as "polo perfect" and "sweet tweed", to appeal to the tween market. The language used on the website could be referred to as SMS (short message service) slang language, which is widely used on mobile text messaging. The lack of space for characters on cellular phones has resulted in the chopping up of words into a few letters and symbols. For instance the word 'your' is

written as 'ur' as in 'what's ur spring thang?' (La Senza Inc: Girlscoop, 2005). In addition, the website uses word plays to promote their clothes such as the slogan 'girl-ify ur look by adding the sweetest TWEED-erific styles' (La Senza Inc: Tweed, 2005). In addition, SMS language and word plays have been used on MSN Messenger as an innovative and quick way of writing messages. Today's technology has enabled the use of the written word as a form of instant communication and has resulted in the development of this new language, and is often evident on tween made websites and Internet blogs.

4.2.3. Brand Name

The brand name La Senza carries meaning, therefore even before setting foot on the premise the shopper has established an understanding of the store. When thongs began becoming fashionable sometime in the mid-90s, Lawrence Lewin, the president of La Senza Inc. adopted them even though he knew that such garments might connote a 'sex shop' meaning (as cited in Olijnyk, 2002). Teitelbaum, "wanted a store that could walk the fine line between how men see lingerie-racy and exotic-and the way women view it-something that should be pretty but comfortable" (Olijnyk, 2002: 49). La Senza thrived as the popularity of the thong underwear grew immensely.

La Senza's successful sales of thongs and other intimate apparel identify its brand name with sexy underwear. In fact, La Senza's string panty is its most popular item and is widely recognized on a national as well as an international level. There is a worldwide recognition that the La Senza brand name means revealing underwear. As Olijnyk (2002) stated "[t]he store is the brand and the brand is the store" (48), thus the name La Senza has become synonymous with women's lingerie, more specifically g-strings. Evidently,

the brand name "La Senza" is predominant within the tween store. Adding the word "girl" at the end of the brand name is similar to saying lingerie store for girls. Accordingly, La Senza Girl implies a store image that capitalizes on selling sexy undergarments, namely g-strings, for tween girls. However, this impression is far from the truth since thong underwear is not available for sale within the tween store. Although undergarments are sold, the store is mostly composed of girls' clothing, such as shirts and pants. Thanks to the success of its brand name, La Senza creates an impression for the public that La Senza Girl is a lingerie store for girls.

4.3. The Locales

4.3.1. The Mall vs. the Power Centre

Several factors come into play within the construction of a La Senza Girl retail store, which influence its design. The standard La Senza Girl retail stores are generally found within the larger public space of the mall. The architecture of the mall reflects cultural ideologies of the time it was built or was renovated (Morris, 1998). For instance, shopping malls have grown out of a perceived desire for escapism and are mostly found in the suburban areas of cities. Usually they contain large department stores, which are the anchor franchises along with shops carrying a variety of products from fashion accessories to electronics. According to Emmison and Smith (2000), malls are updated with cultural trends more quickly than any other public institutions because the large sums of money invested in these private, corporate spaces allow such changes to occur (6). Furthermore, this is part of a much larger phenomenon of capitalism, in which seasonally changing fashions keep people buying.

The La Senza combo store combines La Senza Lingerie and La Senza Girl in one locale. These store types are built within the context of Power Centre, which is a shopping area, where stores have their own architectural structures and are aligned neatly, like little shopping villages. Boase (2003), the market analyst for the mall centres Cadillac Fairview (one of North America's largest investors, owners and managers of commercial real estate), contends that Power Centre provide "a shopping environment that allows [people] to shop efficiently and effectively" whereas the mall focuses more "on marketing, customer service, and retailers to make it a desirable shopping experience" (J. C. Williams, 2003). In addition, consumers "expect to see lower prices at the Power Centre" (Boase, 2003: 2).

Brieg (2003) calls the La Senza combo store as a "ladies and girls' lingerie store" and declares that it provides a "'safe environment' where mothers can buy silky undergarments while their daughters shop nearby" (FP6). Furthermore, Irving Teitelbaum, chairman and chief executive of La Senza Inc., believes that the combo store idea is a success, because it is safer than allowing tweens to shop in a mall with their friends.

4.3.2. The Locales Used for this Study

The stand-alone La Senza Girl store that was examined for this study is located in Carrefour Laval mall. In addition, three other La Senza Girl stores were visited. Unlike other post-modern malls, which include spaces for other leisure activities, such as a skating rink, Carrefour Laval has created a more innovative natural feeling environment. Its recently renovated face exhales freshness as characterized by its botanical garden and its sky windows. The changes of Carrefour Laval transformed this shopping area and

have shifted its emphasis on comfort - creating a shopping atmosphere of leisure, relaxation and where people come together to meet. This is best reflected by its numerous sitting areas, in which comfortable couches and coffee tables are strategically placed in L- shapes, facing another, almost like sitting in a living room. During this period of expansion, La Senza Girl opened (lot 10A), in the old location of La Senza Lingerie. It maintained its 1, 981 square feet, with 19-foot window facing.

The other main locale used for this study, is one of the six La Senza combo stores in Canada. This 15,000-sq. ft. outlet is located at the Power Centre named Marché Central and is closer to the heart of the city of Montreal. As a flagship store, it serves as a testing ground for the opening of other combo stores, where mothers and daughters can shop concurrently (fieldnotes; Saturday May 8, 2004).

4.4. Data Generated from the La Senza Girl Locales

The generic store design that is displayed in various store locations around the world represents ideologies and themes that are predominant in Western American culture. Most obvious with La Senza Girl is the various looks depicted that are geographically specific, such as the California surfer girl. Other store characteristics are less evident and require a thorough analysis, for instance their illustration of girls as vibrant, loud, and knowledgeable regarding the latest fashions. As such, meanings of the built fabric of the store become apparent through a close investigation of the eight analytical categories described in the methodology section of this study. These categories are overall impression, music, lighting, ambience, store layout, clothes layout, clothes and areas of visibility/invisibility.

4.4.1. Overall Impression

To begin with, the overall impression of the conventional La Senza Girl store gives off a sense of vibrancy. Even before one enters the store, one senses that it is fresh and youthful because of its futuristic appeal created through the manipulation of light and colour. This is not a traditional store, but rather a power girl store, as suggested by its brightness. In contrast, there is no apparent emanating effect in the La Senza combo since the natural light overpowers their artificial lights. In consequence, the combo store uses two speakers playing loud music outside of the store as a method of attraction.

Next, as seen from the outside (see figure 2) the standard La Senza Girl store emits the colour of pale green. Light green is an androgynous colour, which is preferred by parents who do not want to know the sex of their unborn child. In addition, pastel colours such as baby pink and baby blue are acceptable colours for girls to wear. These colours are an indication of how girls have traditionally been socially positioned as more infantile than boys have. The latter, may be

Figure 2.
A La Senza Girl conventional store.

encouraged to grow up wearing more mature and powerful dark colours. These pale colours cater to the traditional role of girls sitting around being pretty, which keep the

colours nice and clean, while boys can wear black, dark blue and army-green to cover up the stains from their rugged playful nature. In addition, pastel colours accentuate a happy good mood, emphasizing that girls have a duty to conceal their real emotions with baby pink clothes.

The La Senza Girl store sign is of a vibrant blue. The "girl" is in larger point size than the "la senza" and appears to be leaning toward the right, as an attempt to differentiate it from the lingerie store's name (see figure 2). The letters are capitalized creating an impression of urgency and loudness. In addition, the large and bold font style of "girl" gives the allure that it is always on the move as well as on the edge of what is to come. Moreover, the larger print of the word "girl" highlights for whom this retail space is for. It screams out the "girl power" and fits in with the whole phenomenon that surged a few years back with the popularity of the Spice Girls, a British musical group that capitalized on Girl Power.

Again, the adult store sign, which is written in tall thin graceful letters, is strikingly different from the vibrant look of the tween store sign. When the store signs are displayed next to one another, like on the combo store, the tween store attracts all the attention, whereas the adult sign fades somewhat in the background. A reading of this suggests the cultural ideology in which parents' focus is on their children who are of utmost importance. Another reading is that the younger female generation is the one that becomes responsible for changing unequal opportunities for women. They have energy and withhold power to initiate change.

In the conventional La Senza Girl, the storefront displays the primary trends through two main poster advertisements. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Western society's right-hand tendencies tend to focus our lasting impression on the right side. That being said, a hierarchy of importance is created between the right and left side of the store.

The poster on the left-hand side depicts a girl screaming or singing loudly, thus hinting that it is a marker of girl power (see figure 3). However, its position on the left suggests that it is less valued than the poster displayed on the right. This latter advertisement illustrates a pristine feminine image of a girl submissively posing looking over her shoulder,

Figure 3.
Advertisement depicting
"Power Girl"
La Senza Girl, Spring 2005.

showing her back (see figure 4). The rainbow and butterflies representing the childlike association of happy symbols, also the big open bright blue sky with picturesque fluffy white clouds suggests optimism. Furthermore, this latter advertisement, which is larger, is displayed within the widow display case highlighted by spotlights (see figure 2). Hence, what are emphasized within the overall impression are the traditional oppressive

Figure 4.
Advertisement depicting
"Pristine Girl"
La Senza Girl, Spring 2005.

58

qualities of what it means to be feminine whereas the outgoing qualities are secondary. This impels a contradictory feeling where girls can be loud, as suggested by the overall feeling of the store, but not too loud, as shown by the quiet girl on the display podium.

The La Senza Girl combo store displays to its right the La Senza Girl window facing, the La Senza Lingerie is to its left. Their contrast reveals different display techniques used for each store. La Senza Girl doubles its display through a sliding movement. To understand, you need to visualize the window facing divided in two parts by an invisible line. Whatever is displayed on the right side (mannequin, clothes, and poster) is transposed. This can be compared to someone taking one big step to his or her left. However, La Senza Lingerie employs a mirror image technique. This means that the window facing is divided in two, by an imaginary mirror, and both parts of the display case depict the same exact mannequin, clothes and poster. This technique suggests a movement where an image eternally mirrors on to itself. As such, this image becomes static and devoid of progress. Conversely, within the girls' display case, the sliding action demonstrates a forward movement, suggesting a progression. This implies the cultural ideology that tweens change and are constantly trying new identities, but their mothers are seen as unvarying.

To continue, although the overall impression of La Senza Girl emanates a glitter like effect, the corporation aims to attract middle-class parents. Once the initial effect of the shimmer passes, the customer instantly notices the sale clothes and signs placed at the storefront. In the case of the La Senza Girl conventional store, the sale prices and the abundance of clothes promoted at its entrance suggest that affordable clothes are available. This principally characterizes middle-class stores, where parents are interested

in low prices. Although abundant clothes are typically a trait of thrift shops, the neat order in which the clothes are placed distinguishes its look as a middle-class store. However, the combo store looks more immaculate, since there is no spilling of the clothes toward the outside. To compensate, its location within a Power Centre connotes bargain warehouse prices. Other details suggest that it receives clients from different socio-economic classes. For instance, bike stands are available outside the combo store, suggesting people without cars are welcomed.

4.4.2. Music

Music is not a visual element, but it helps promote fashion and style. In addition, music plays an integral role within tweens' lives. They listen to musical artists and imitate their style and fashion in order to adopt a particular identity. Hence, it merits a close examination as an integral part of this tween space.

The music heard in La Senza Girl has been carefully selected and distributed for all the stores to play. It is typically a variation of upbeat music from popular female artists. The La Senza combo store receives seasonal CDs for both the La Senza Lingerie and La Senza Girl collections. During the times that the combo store was visited for this study, only the adult CD was heard. Highly contrasting the tweens' music, it sounded lounge-like with steady mellow medium beat and subtle mysterious sounds. This reveals the cultural notion that tweens are associated with popular music, whereas the adult figures listen to something mysterious and exotic.

Visually, music has a strong presence within the tween section of the combo store. The combo store's VIP Lounge, which is exclusive to tweens, has a DJ booth at the centre fully equipped with turntables. Additionally, this whole tween area is

decorated with hundreds of CD mobiles (CDs attached with transparent thread). These visual signs of music further insinuate that this area that is reserved for fun and dance, which are elements closely related to the disco ball nightlife of youths aged in their early twenties. Moreover, the meaning of "lounge", in itself is closely associated with sitting on comfortable couches smoking and drinking cocktails. Notions of early adulthood are rooted within this tween space.

La Senza Girl featured hip-hop Canadian artist Keshia Chante, by selling her latest album in the stores. Also on the official website, customers could listen to a sample of her self-titled album as well as view one of her music videos. Through this promotion, Chante becomes a national role model for tween girls. Hence, her music merits a closer investigation. There are three different songs that you can sample from the La Senza Girl website (La Senza Inc., 2005). In Does He Love Me, Chante stresses her confusion about the boy she is crushing on whether he really 'loves her' or is he 'leading her on to get with her'. During the song Foxy Brown, a featured artist, sings about Keshia' s preppy dress style and that she wears "Jacob" on her neck. Jacob Inc. is one of La Senza Inc.'s major competitors. It is obvious that La Senza Inc. did not thoroughly sample the music themselves in order to discover this slip up. One does question the thorough care that La Senza Girl puts into this tween space. In the next song, Bad Boy, Chante expresses that her boyfriend is "smothering" her by "bringin her flowers, singin love songs" and always phoning her, all of which are signs of affection. She threatens that she will leave him if he does not go back to being himself, which is the "thug" that "was rollin wit the hood, and up to no good". There is a striking contrast between the two songs, in terms of what Chante is looking for in a guy. Placing these songs side-by-side reveals the cultural

notion that tween girls are defined as being confused when it comes to relationships. In Let the Music Take You, Keshia grooves about going out to a club, where it is 'crowded inside and there is a line up outside'. The main theme of the song is "bumpin all night" until "daylight" and "having a good time" because "everybody's out to play". Something tweens can aspire to do when they are of age. This party theme coincides with the store's built-in 'nightlife' through the VIP lounge. La Senza Girl is placing the 'going out' nightlife on a platform, instead of other activities such as going to university.

Chante's hip-hop style is far from the tweed jackets being sold as well as the sunny California surfer t-shirts. This suggests that tweens that shop at La Senza Girl admire this edgy teenage hip-hop style, yet maintain a Barbie look. This is reminiscent of the wholesome suburban youth culture that admires the urban culture. This becomes apparent through Tommy Hilfiger advertisements, which depict youth wearing baggier jeans, a hip-hop marker, taking part in preppy activities. There, the white fetishization of black youth becomes an image that can be bought and is sold through Tommy clothes (Klein, 2000). La Senza Girl inversely demonstrates girls wearing preppy clean clothes but partaking in urban activities by listening to hip-hop music. Another reading is that middle class girls are expected to have a sparkling personality and a bubbly attitude and can only envision having another look. Within this tween space, the urban hip-hop culture is embedded within the realm of fantasy, whereas the Barbie girl look becomes the preferred reality. This reflects how society associates the hip-hop look with bad, and is afraid to be associated with it. As such, La Senza Girl further propagates the message that urban fashion is associated with negative characteristics.

4.4.3. Lighting

The significance of lighting in a tween space is crucial since it creates an essential mood within the environment. Lighting was mentioned earlier in this discussion; specifically how the outside lighting contributed to the overall impression of the store, therefore this section will concentrate on the interior light. Inside the La Senza Girl store, chrome walls reflect light in various patterns, which creates an illusion of photographic flashes. There are two rows of spotlights placed on either side of the store ceiling, starting from the front of the store and going all the way to the back. The combination of the 'flash photography' effect and the spotlights creates an illusion of a fashion show runway with the exception that the spotlights are fixed on the ceiling, as opposed to the floor, and are pointed toward the walls. This forms a 'being looked at' feeling in the environment, where one should look her best at all times. Again, looks become vitally important within this tween environment where girls are suppose to look great within social environments. Unfortunately, other aspects of tweens' girlhood, such as the mind, are eclipsed in this mind-numbing milieu.

In both store types, the spotlights highlight the posters that are on display as opposed to the clothes. This emphasis creates a hierarchy, where the advertisement, a representation of an established style as promoted by the brand name, is more important than the clothes, which represent labour. In addition, clothes, in themselves can be symbols of liberation. They allow a space for tweens to assemble and re-assemble their visual identity. Although this seems to be done under the umbrella of La Senza Girl style, tween girls have the power to oppose it by altering their clothes, assembling them with clothes from another store or simply by not buying them. In the retail environment,

clothes become the essence of tween action, thus becoming symbols of power. The advertisements depict the clothes in an established manner, thus stunting the possibility of assembling them. By emphasizing the advertisements with their lighting, La Senza Girl seems to be emphasizing passivity amongst tweens where style is already set out for them- all they have to do is look and absorb it. Thus, the possibility of agency is overshadowed.

4.4.4. Ambience

The analytical categories discussed earlier hint at the general atmosphere of the store. However, the store ambience as specified within its own analytical category helps raise questions as to whether the store is offering something more than a mere shopping experience. The main indicators of such are the presence of comfortable spaces, which allow the customers to spend time in the store that does not involve shopping. On one hand, the conventional La Senza Girl store offers no sitting areas, or other leisure activities such as Internet stations and magazines. On the other hand, they offer contests for events, in which tweens can spend time socializing with nine of their friends at the movies courtesy of La Senza Girl.

Alternatively, the La Senza combo store, greatly promotes ambience within their locale. It has an exclusive tween lounge area, named the VIP Lounge. Here, tweens can celebrate their birthday parties, for a minimum of two hundred and fifty dollars, with ten selected friends. This "McBirthday" like, two-hour event, includes on-hand animators who assist the guest girls choose clothes to wear on a fashion show parade, which is done during peak hours. The music volume is increased; the animator introduces the girls using a microphone and a small mob of people congregate around to watch all the hype.

Afterward the girls gather in their exclusive private lounge to enjoy birthday cake. The transparent lounge curtains are drawn closed, demonstrating that this is a restricted area. Everybody who is shopping at that moment could see the fun that these girls are having but they are not allowed to enter. Within this party modeling, which involves walking down a pretend runaway and ultimately using one's body to attract attention, is salient. In addition, exclusivity becomes ultimately important and a desire. La Senza Girl is playing upon the cultural notion of girl cliques and is using them as a commodity to be sold. Exclusiveness, elitism and instant popularity can be bought within this space. While girls are celebrated with a fashion show, other girl shoppers stand back watching, wanting to belong.

Upon the investigation of the Malaysian store website, a conventional La Senza Girl store offers a multitude of in-store events apart from shopping (La Senza Girl Malaysia, 2005). To name a few: nail painting event, Lizzie McGuire Contest, Easter Bunny and the Cinderella contest. Among these events, there was the most recently posted Wannabe Contest, where La Senza Girl VIP Club Members (a club one can join with the purchase of a 10% discount card- another exclusive sign) were invited to a party held by the store where the final for their "Look Like a Celebrity Contest" contest was held. Twenty-five tween girls imitated celebrities, such as Britney Spears, and competed with one another on who is going to look best like someone else (La Senza Girl Malaysia, 2005). Popular culture figures become important to girls when they are seeking to identify with someone. Celebrities are treated as vitally important and are reason to compete for within this tween space.

The excessive amounts of lights, the chrome walls, their emphasis on image, and their type of contests demonstrate that La Senza Girl underlines stardom. Glamour is associated with shopping at this locale, where wearing these clothes ultimately means becoming a La Senza Girl. The assumption is created that when tweens shop in this store, then they become someone else. There is a hierarchy presented, where looking good, being glamorous and being someone else are essential parts of femininity. Thus, La Senza Girl through their contests delivers the message to tweens that it is more important to become a "wannabe" rather than who they are, in order to become a woman. One must keep in mind that the central theme of contests is to promote competition, and in this case girls are competing against each other by measuring their looks. This defines the tween culture as being narcissistic, where tween girls not only aspire to look beautiful, but also look better than anybody else.

4.4.5. Store Layout

The La Senza Corporation develops looks for each season. Superficially, these seasonal trends seem different but fundamentally, they all work within the realm of the La Senza Girl image. For each season, they create various looks that become apparent through the investigation of the store layout. Furniture is placed in such a manner that it distinguishes one section of the store from the next. The way in which the corporation displays its clothes throughout the layout places them in an order of importance. For instance, what is displayed in the front of the store is most valued since it serves to attract the tween clientele. Thus, the front of the store merits a closer investigation.

As mentioned earlier in chapter three, people in Western culture tend to focus on what is on their right-hand side because of their right-handed tendencies. Although this

movement (looking left to right, focusing on the right and then down on the table) is instantaneous, this analysis breaks down this motion in order to examine the context. Within the conventional La Senza Girl store, the items displayed on the right wall are short jean skirts placed in a repetitive pattern next to an advertisement poster (see figure 5).

Moving forward within the store, attention is drawn to the table in the middle, where "glamour t-shirts" (as indicated by a sign on the table) are folded neatly. These t-shirts characterized by the various prints and girlie words such as 'shopping', 'love' and 'lipstick' (for further detail see figure 11) . In this case, the short jean skirts are closely associated with glamour.

In order to understand the value of the above look, an investigation is

Figure 5.
Advertisement depicting "Scooter Stylin'"
La Senza Girl, Spring 2005.

necessary of its opposing side. Unlike the right side where the short jean skirt dominates the wall space, the left-hand side has a variety of clothes displayed. The long sleeved paisley print tops and the calf length jean skirts primarily characterize the "folkie fun" look (see figure 6). It is more conservative than the other look as measured by the amount of skin that these clothes reveal when worn. A comparison of the two looks reveals a dichotomy, in which the short skirt opposes the long skirt. The short skirt

carries negative connotations, namely because of its history. This meaning is revealed when in opposition with the long skirt. Nevertheless, tweens decide to wear revealing clothes without considering or understanding the sexual connotations that they inherent through our socially constructed ideology. Tweens wearing a short skirt does not mean that they are sexually promiscuous. In fact, they are just following the latest fashion that has been popularized through music, for instance. La Senza Girl is aware that skimpy clothes are in and may attract tweens to shop there. Nevertheless, they also need to satisfy the parents, thus having on display the folkie girl look.

Figure 6.
Advertisement depicting "Folkie Fun"
La Senza Girl, Spring 2005.

The layout of the La Senza combo store has a basic apparent dichotomy: left-hand side of the store has the adult collection and the right-hand side has the tween collection. A reading of this layout connotes that tweens occupy the valued space in their mothers' lives. This reflects the ideology that children come first. This further propagates and teaches the notion that children are central and thus require the adult utmost attention as well as protection. In this space, women could buy for themselves but the focus remains on the purchases they make for their children.

4.4.6. Clothes Layout

The various looks for the Spring 2005 Collection become visible through the clothes themselves as well as the manner in which they are displayed. Since the brand name La Senza is synonymous with lingerie, the placement of the intimate apparel throughout the standard La Senza Girl store deserves a thorough analysis. The logistics of the locale determine the placement of the cash area. However, in all the stand-alone stores observed, the undergarments are located in close proximity to the cash register, thus not allowing much room to access them. After all, this area could become cluttered by clients who are waiting to pay. In a sense, shopping for undergarments is hurried, showing that they do not want tweens thinking about it too much. Although the underwear is next to an important area of the store, their placement also devalues them. This structural opposition creates a binary distinction between the cash register, being a valued area of the store, and the underwear as unimportant. This greatly contradicts the essence of the store, where it capitalizes on the brand name that connotes underwear. Another reading is that within this standard store type, girls shop with their mothers; therefore, they trivialize their sexuality in front of an adult figure. However, in the La Senza combo store, where tweens can shop by themselves, underwear has its own exclusive section.

To continue, within the stand-alone La Senza Girl store the undergarments, which include bras, juxtapose items that are clearly part of child's play culture, such as Bratz dolls. Mature items are found in the area of the store that is most recognized as infantile. Inversely, La Senza Inc. is creating a space for child culture within an adult space by selling child-like materials in the lingerie store. To illustrate this, part of the

Spring 2005 La Senza Lingerie Collection includes Mickey Mouse, Looney Tunes and

Sponge Bob undergarments. (See figures 7-9).

Figure 7.
Advertisement depicting a
Sylvester the Cat underwear
La Senza Lingerie, Spring 2005.

Figure 8.
Advertisement depicting
Mickey Mouse pyjamas
La Senza Lingerie, Spring 2005.

Figure 9.
Advertisement depicting Sponge
Bob pyjamas
La Senza Lingerie, Spring 2005.

Within the La Senza Girl combo store, next to the racy underwear, one finds

cartoon characters, such as Sponge Bob. Similar cartoon characters are found on the

tweens' undergarments. For instance, there is Sponge Bob underwear available for

tweens and women. An extra-large for tweens, and ironically fits a size small for women.

The boundaries between adult and child's wear are diminishing. This growing trend of

one style available in all sizes is also seen in other stores, such as the GAP where the

same sweatshirt style is available for babies and men (Mitchell & Reid-Walsh, 2002).

However, La Senza Inc. is selling another line of clothes that are intimate. Images that we

identify with childhood have found themselves within a sexual space. In addition, the

manner in which these cartoon characters are advertised is very sexual. For instance, in

figure 7 a model poses, holds and covers her breasts seductively, while wearing

underwear that can very well belong in a child's store. Images such as these connote

meanings of the infantilization of women as sexually appealing. Girlie "cute" as expressed with kiddie cartoons, becomes erotic within male fantasies (Lai, 2005). The combo store serves as a physical attestation to the diminishing boundaries between adult and child wear within the corporate realm. Moreover, this corporation is attempting to weaken the disparities between the styles that characterize sexual adult wear from children's wear.

4.4.7. Clothes

An investigation of a selection of the merchandise sold during the Spring 2005 Collection will provide detailed examples of the La Senza Girl style. The previous analytical section mentioned "glamour t-shirts" (see figure 10). What defines these t-shirts as being glamorous? The t-shirt itself is plain with pink trimming, giving the illusion that there is an undershirt. Furthermore, the word "shopping" is printed across the chest in purple velvet

Figure 10.
Photograph of Glamour T-Shirt.
La Senza Girl, March 2005.

letters. Within "shopping", the words such as "skirts", "cool", "shoes" and "lipstick" are written in sparkles or hot pink. The word "love" on the left hand topside alludes to a "love for shopping". A plain white t-shirt is dressed up and accessorized with velvet, sparkles, loud colours and "material" narratives, in order to become glamorous. This teaches the notion that anyone who is ordinary could become striking by shopping, loving clothes and getting dolled up. Like the white t-shirt, the plain white tween can be dressed

up to assume an identity that surrounds materialism. This image is a recurring theme throughout the store, where the ideal tween shopping space capitalizes on the presumption that glamour is epitome to all.

A closer inspection of the skirts that are highly emphasized on the right wall near the entrance is merited (see figure 11). These dark denim pleated skirts are relatively short, and well above the knee. What is particular is that they have an adjustable waist; therefore, in reality it could fit girls younger than five years old.
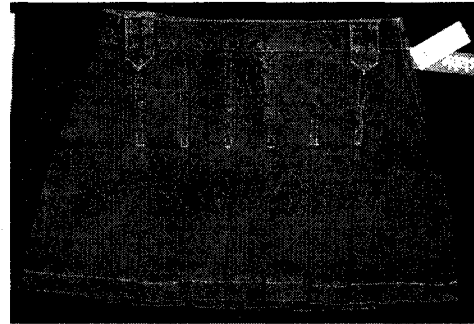
Figure 11.
Photograph of Short Jean Skirt
La Senza Girl, March 2005.

The pleated look of the skirt closely resembles the schoolgirl uniform style. This look has been taken out of the Catholic private school and altered to fit daily wear. This skirt style carries numerous sexual connotations that are based on male fantasy. Popular images have played with this schoolgirl image and have mass-produced it as a sexed up male desire. For example, the image use of the sexy schoolgirl look is seen in Britney Spear's "Baby One More Time" video. "The video begins in class, emphasizing her youth. The camera scrolls up her body, seated in a chair, from feet to head. The legs are uncovered in a skirt, inviting themes of sexuality, but her hair is pigtailed" (Evemag, 2005). The above jean skirt juxtaposes childhood innocence and sexuality, and turns it into a meaning attributed to tweens. Nonetheless, tween girls may admire Britney Spears and may emulate her look without considering these socially constructed notions about the fetishism of the Catholic girl skirt. They will wear such skirts, because they are celebrated within popular culture and are stylish.

Next, is an examination of the famous La Senza Girl grown-up bra, as mentioned on CBC Marketplace's documentary entitled "Buying Into Sexy: The Sexing up of Tweens" (CBC Marketplace, 2005). This bra style is identical to the 5-way bra available for women at La Senza Lingerie (see figure 12). As mentioned earlier, La Senza Girl promotes providing fashion for girls aged eight to 14, however their selling size begins at five years old. This bra model has about 0.4cm thick foam padding and in relation to a five-year-
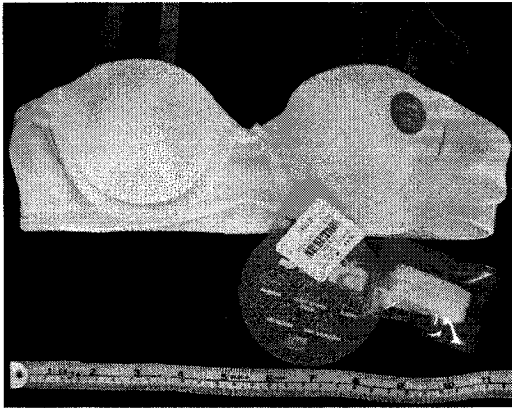
Figure 12. Photograph of 5-Way Bra La Senza Girl, March 2005.

old' s body, could be considered as excessive. The bra has plastic see-through straps, which you can take out or wear in four other ways, such as around the neck. The purpose is to be at ease with wearing revealing clothes, such as tube and halter-tops. Having such a bra available for tweens suggests that they are likely to wear provocative clothes that require these specific undergarments. Even if girls are wearing tube tops, and may require a bra at age ten, why would they require a bra with foam padding? This suggests that girls aspire to have larger, developed breasts and are becoming aware that their bodies are sexualized. Furthermore, despite the recent cases of early puberty, it is extremely rare that a girl as young as five would develop breasts. This is another example of an article of clothing that sells the notion of the fading boundaries between child and adult styles. In addition, this teaches girls that bras are no longer a necessity, but have become fashion accessories. This defines tweenhood as a culture that agrees with the sexualization of childhood and invites meanings of infantile eroticism.

4.4.8. Areas of Visibility and Invisibility

The final analytical category examines areas of visibility and invisibility within the store. In La Senza Girl, the only area where customers can have complete control is in the dressing room, where they are not being watched. Even though the corporation publicizes a look with the assemblage of specific clothes, the customer can shut out these images by simply closing the dressing room door.

Interestingly in the store there are surveillance cameras, which tweens may only realize when they reach the cash area and notice the suspended televisions that show the recorded parts. La Senza Girl has taken a "nothing to hide" approach and chooses to make this "watching" visible to tweens. However, if tweens are absentminded they may miss the surveillance equipment altogether. Given that, the angle of the televisions makes it difficult to see and even grasp what is going on. Customers are simply left with the feeling that someone is watching them. This "knowing you are being watched feeling" regulates tweens' behaviours. Their subtle approach suggests that La Senza Girl wants to diminish negative violating feelings that are associated with being watched. However, this creates an opposition between tweens and the company, where the latter stands on top controlling tweens through this watching. Within the store structure, the corporation attempts to dominate tween culture space, in which tweens can only exercise their power of decision when they are left alone, unseen behind the dressing room door.

4.5. Key Findings of the La Senza Girl Analysis

On the surface, as shown from their brand name, La Senza Girl bridges the gap between childhood and adult sexuality. When people first consider La Senza Girl, they think "lingerie store for girls". The corporation uses this shocking element to widely

popularize its brand name. Concurrently, its name widely advertises and creates a social discrimination toward tween culture as being sexually promiscuous. Although girls buy into the style, it does not mean that they are necessarily buying into sex. However, the lingerie store name does not keep customers away. Middle class customers are attracted to this retail space due to the availability of clothes at relatively low prices.

In order to promote their brand name, La Senza Girl brings into play various societal and cultural norms, while attracting tween girls as well as middle-class parents, thus increasing sales within their space. It is probable that the actual shoppers are aware that this store is not a lingerie store. The customers are likely to gain an authoritarian sense knowing that this retail space is for tweens' clothes as opposed to a sex shop. Without actually involving tween girls in this study, it is difficult to say whether the tween girls themselves are aware of La Senza Girl's explicit association with sexuality. La Senza Girl interplays and displays various looks, such as the "pristine girl" and "reckless girl" image, to attract both tweens and parents. Throughout the layout of the store, these contradictory images overpower one another in different instances. This reflects the popular notion that tweens and their parents struggle over what the other wear, as well as how each generation has different styles in mind. The locale creates a space for mothers and daughters to bond while shopping. This technique proves to be effective as it plays upon key emotions that are associated between mothers and daughters. However, other meanings become evident when one analyzes the connotations that are hidden within the store fabric.

Various mediated messages were embedded within the stand-alone store, the combo store and the website. The celebration of glamour, fantasy and exclusivity were

recurring throughout La Senza Girl's décor, in addition to its promotional features. The store constantly drew on elements conveying glamour both within the narrative and images found in their store atmosphere. This store one-sidedly defines tweens as being primarily concerned with becoming a star, glamorous and the centre of attention by using their looks and body. The store created a sense of "always being looked at" and promotes tweens to be looking at themselves. In this case, La Senza Girl teaches tweens to objectify their body by giving it the utmost attention.

This environment informs tween culture how to be narcissistic. This is best exemplified by its stylish allure that the light fixtures create within the standard store, as well as the actual tween birthday fashion parades that occur within the combo store. Girls are taught how to walk down a runway and are given a chance to "strut their stuff" during the peak store hours, when the maximum amount of people can look at them. Although this seems to celebrate and provides a space for girlhood, I question this particular definition of girlhood. As this retail space capitalizes on looks, it teaches tweens to do the same as they consume the store image. Girls consume the notion that in order to be feminine, they need to be narcissistic. They are constantly reminded that girlhood can only be celebrated within the realm of looks.

However, there are other qualities that surround girlhood, such as intellect and athletic ability, which become overshadowed by the excessive glamour lights. Part of La Senza Girl's mission is to support girls' education through assistance in fundraising campaigns, scholastic incentives and community events (personal communication, La Senza Online Manager: March 15, 2004). However, there is no evident funding for educational programs that is in place. Only on the rare occasion do they have a

promotion such as a passing report card will allow one to have a ten percent discount. Such a superficial act is hardly reflective of the initiative they set out in their mission statement. La Senza Girl's mission statement emphasizes their aim to celebrate girls' creativity of looking glamorous in the hopes of increasing girls' self-esteem (personal communication, La Senza Online Manager: March 15, 2004). However, girls' creative sense is solely confined within the domain of "looks". Moreover, although tweens may seem to have the freedom to create through the realm of fashion, it is under a contrived illusion, since La Senza always promotes what to wear and how to look.

La Senza Girl creates a space in which exclusivity is emphasized primarily through store promotions. For instance, one can purchase a VIP member card and receive special invitations to parties, as well as a discount on purchases. Furthermore, the La Senza Girl store fabric teaches and encourages this notion of exclusivity among girl friendships. Girls get to "choose" friends to attend the birthday parties. This promotes cliques and rejection amongst the uninvited. It also plays upon tweens' desires to belong in a social group. In addition, this store commodifies the feeling of longing to be someone else by selling and promoting this notion. The notion of "wannabe" is embedded throughout the store. Consequently, this creates an atmosphere where being oneself is not good enough and using commodities to fix that is celebrated.

Cultural differences were not critically analyzed within this tween milieu because it is quite impractical to think that their merchandise could target each cultural nuance. While this may be true, it is still important to question to what extent this store can propagate ideas concerning the disappearance of childhood and the development of child sexuality. Undoubtedly, this store's goal is to sell clothes and make money and in the

process they serve to popularize ideologies at least on a national level concerning girls as sexual accessories, and may even inspire other retailers to follow this lead. Although girls' attitudes toward sex may not have changed, society's fear of the disappearance of childhood is reinforced. The cultural notion of the disappearance of childhood becomes apparent through the fading boundaries between child and adult fashions. Similar fashions are found within the lingerie collection and the tween apparel. Adult cartoon character pyjamas and underwear connote elements of childhood nostalgia and the sexiness of cuteness. The use of sexuality in order to sell clothes is a successful tactic within the retail industry. However, one must question the overall value of such techniques when used in the context of childhood. Juxtaposing elements of childhood play and innocence with sexual objects constructs the idea that children are "knowers" of practices related to sex. In addition, tween girls may long to look "sexy" in accordance to the meaning of sexy that has been created among their peer group. Although tween girls may identify with a style, they may be simply wearing it because it is popular within their social group, not knowing the depth of the sexual meaning this style has for the general public. Yet, this issue becomes complex when the style is "to be sexually available", given that this invites the unwanted gaze of sexual predators toward tween culture.

La Senza Girl teaches tweens an ill conception of sexuality, one of which is embedded in fantasy. Within this retail space, girls are consuming images where cuteness means being sexy, and being sexy is treated as a desirable trait of becoming a woman. Primarily within the combo store, girls consume images of the sexual appeal of the infantilization of women as well as the objectification of sex. Sexual appeal becomes an accessory that could be bought within this retail space. In this context, girls can learn

how to objectify their bodies and play upon male sexual fantasies by wearing certain types of clothes. Girls learn to use their body as a sexual tool, in order to draw attention to them. Within La Senza Girl, tweens are consuming ideologies of the possible power they can have, however they are solely learning to use their bodies and their looks in order to control their identity.

La Senza Girl defines and propagates the notion that tweens are sexually aware. The tweens are the main characters within this locale that reshape these elements of fear and attitudes that are associated with 'kids are growing up too fast'. Although tweens may shop there because of the affordable prices or through the illusion of glamour, they are also buying into the La Senza Girl ideologies. Tweens popularize a shop that is full of connotations surrounding the infantilization of women, child sexuality and the accesorization of sex. During this transitory time to teenagehood, girls become acutely aware of femininity, since their sexual identity becomes more prominent. Tweens struggle to understand what it means to become a woman. While shopping, tweens consume notions about femininity, sexuality and girlhood. La Senza Girl identifies glamour, looking good and appearance as key elements of becoming a woman. In addition, tweens can learn how to objectify their bodies in order to become sexual accessories. Although, La Senza Girl provides a space that celebrates girlhood, their definition of girlhood needs to be redefined to fit all of the characteristics of the lives of girls.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1. Chapter Overview

There are various lessons about girlhood, femininity and sexuality that are built into the fabric of a retail space. Child sexuality becomes a vehicle for commercialism and profits, while tween girls are taught that the commodification of their bodies is acceptable and it is okay for children to look 'sexy'. Sexuality is tied in with glamour as well as being an essential part of girlhood. Within the retail space, girls consume images where cuteness means being sexy, and being sexy is treated as a desirable trait of becoming a woman. Moreover, within their exclusive retail milieu, tweens consume notions concerning the sexual appeal of the infantilization of women. In this context, girls learn how to objectify their bodies and play upon male sexual fantasies by wearing certain types of clothes. Moreover, the commercial space teaches an ill conception of sexuality, one of which is embedded in fantasy. These meanings become normalized, celebrated and fashionable within the tween retail space. However, the commercial milieu does not teach girls what the social implications of these meanings are; it is too busy trying to sell the seductress identity to tween girls. Furthermore, tweens struggle to understand what it means to become a woman and within the confines of the commercial space, glamour, appearances and exclusivity are identified as key elements of femininity.

This concluding chapter summarizes the study by presenting its significant points and making suggestions for educators as well as subsequent research undertakings. First a summary of the study is given, followed by a mention of its limitations. Afterward, based on the findings of this analysis, recommendations are given to teachers who seek to improve education for their students. Here, examples for classroom activities are

mentioned. This is followed by suggestions for future research concerning tweens' retail space. To conclude, general remarks are given about the societal changes occurring due to the commercial mainstream and specifically the use of sexuality to sell to children.

5.2. Summary of Study

This study was contextualized in the first section with a brief explanation of my own relationship with clothes growing up, as well as how my desires were shaped through image consumption and shopping, during this most pivotal time of my identity formation. In addition, I briefly mention my inspiration for this study- my past students. Given that it is impossible to have a cultural study done free of certain biases, I felt it was important to share my "eye" with the reader.

As shown in the first section of this paper, marketing experts have identified tweens as a target market. As such, they began the process of defining tween culture. Being that this is an educational study, a general overview of the educational function of consumerism was given. Advertisements and shopping are closely linked, since the latter explores the mediated messages of the former within a three-dimensional space. That being said, research in the field of the representation of women and children in advertising is offered. It is revealed that feminine ideologies, relationships, sexuality and children become objectified through their mass idealization and reproduction as commodities to be bought. Furthermore, the act of shopping allows tweens to explore and interact with their desires, thus providing an opportunity for them to achieve their identity wants. However, there is little research done on the messages that are mediated through a retail space.

Since there are few cultural studies done on a tween retail space, the literature review provides other relevant areas of study. An overview of tween research done through the marketing lens as well as background information concerning the theories of consumption is presented. This provides a bit of history and lays the foundation of this thesis. Research in the field of cultural consumption explores the meanings that are embedded in material goods that surround our everyday life. That being said, various cultural sites can be examined in order to reveal ideologies that reflect the times they were made. However, when cultural objects as well as images are mass-produced and sold, they gain additional meanings of commodities and exemplify meanings of normalization. Afterward, the literature review explores studies done on girl-targeted texts. What have been usually regarded as leisure activities for girls, are also pedagogical sites, in which girls explore their identities and test the boundaries of what it means to be feminine. This research shows that the identity formation of tweens within the realm of consumption involves several influences and proves to be multifaceted. Within this section, the cultural notion of the fading boundaries between childhood and adulthood is introduced and associated with tweens' culture. This notion was a recurring theme throughout the analysis and plays a role within the conclusion. The second chapter concluded with the integration of the marketing and cultural studies that have been done on dress as well as brand names.

The analysis aimed to reveal the notions surrounding girlhood, femininity and sexuality that are embedded within a recent retail environment for tweens- La Senza Girl. For the methodology, analytical categories were devised and applied through an innovative textual analysis process on three-dimensional lived data, also referred to as the

locale. This constructed instrument proved to be useful in creating an excellent starting point in deconstructing a retail environment. Also, applying the same instrument skeleton on both store types allowed the analysis to remain uniform, as well as limit the researcher's subjectivities.

A historical background on the corporation was given in order to contextualize this tween space. Afterward, the denotative and connotative meanings of the store were combined in a narrative form, in which cultural notions reflecting our society were revealed. In tandem, mediated messages that define tween culture were discussed. The celebration of glamour, fantasy and exclusivity were recurring throughout the La Senza Girl conventional and combo store as well as on the website. Tweens are labelled as material beings who are primarily concerned with becoming popular and alluring by using their bodies. This study also revealed that La Senza Girl promotes that being someone else means being exclusive. Inversely, being oneself and ordinary, is devalued. Unfortunately, this encourages being unhappy and critical with one's self. This tween space it makes it appear that girls are not special until they shop at La Senza Girl. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that La Senza Girl serves to propagate ideas concerning the disappearance of childhood. They are popularizing the notion that tweens are sexually promiscuous, through their brand name and through the selling of certain clothes. In addition, they are effacing the lines between adulthood and childhood by bringing children's culture within the domain of women's lingerie, thus defining tween culture somewhere in between. Although girls may not be buying into sex, simply wearing the clothes of La Senza Girl regularizes and normalizes child sexuality. That being said, the limitations of the study will be discussed next.

5.3. Limitations of the Study

This study proved to have certain limitations given that it is a synchronic piece, where one season of La Senza Girl was thoroughly examined. La Senza Girl develops a different store look for every season. All of their stores implement this new design, altering it to fit the logistics of their particular store shape and size. However, the small nuances that are apparent from store to store can reveal much about the clientele of that geographic region. In addition, during the season's collection, the store changed frequently; therefore the store layout examined for this analysis has changed.

Another limitation was the exclusion of girls' responses to this study's findings or their feedback on the La Senza Girl store. Analyzing tweens' shopping habits or feelings toward this exclusive tween space could have helped to better situate this analysis within their lives. Nevertheless, this study's aim was to create a starting point for other researchers who wanted to examine tween spaces. In consequence, this study also omitted girls who are not economically able to shop at La Senza Girl. As Sylvie Paradis, (as cited in Turenne, 1998) senior consultant of a Québec strategic and marketing firm, reminds us that we cannot lose sight that the tween phenomenon is born out of middle and upper class families, where money is more available. In 1999, there were 1, 298,000 children under 18 that were living in poverty in Canada (Canadian Council on Social Development). In addition, Henry Giroux (2003) has stated that there are "over 13.3 million children, who live in poverty in the U.S.", and poverty is more dreadfully apparent among racial and visible minorities. The objectification of youth makes it easier to separate society's emotional responsibility for children. In addition, mediated messages of happy children found in advertisements make it easier to forget the

unfortunate ones.

5.4. Recommendations for Educators

Educators must first recognize and take seriously that their students receive informal education from popular culture. Children may negotiate and create meanings in the classroom, but the same is done when they are watching television, reading magazines and shopping. Teachers need to partake in an informal study of their everyday life in order to realize for themselves the way in which mass mediated messages hold us in their sway. Only then can educators truly comprehend the pedagogy of everyday life. That being said, educators can teach students how to become conscious of these messages. For instance, they can carry out activities surrounding the deconstruction and even the reconstruction of advertisements. I also encourage teachers to take fieldtrips with their students to the mall, where they can analyze stores with one or various analytical categories discussed in this study, similar to Barry Duncan's "mall crawl" (2001). Exercises such as these can create awareness in children that their "wants" do come from somewhere, often from corporations wanting to make a profit.

5.5. Suggestions for Further Research

The majority of previous studies done on tweens were within a marketing research framework. This initiative is applauded since it is bringing attention to a usually ignored group: pre-adolescent girls (Mitchell & Reid-Walsh, 2005). Furthermore, there have been studies done that focused on the retail environment as a site that reflected cultural ideologies of our times and focused on habits of shoppers (Miller, 1998; Paquet, 2003). However, cultural studies research done on the mediated messages of stores has been limited (Malik, 2005; Russel & Tyler, 2002). Based on these findings, this study sought

to expand previous research done on commercially mass-produced messages by examining another context, the locale. Concurrent with other research on tween retail spaces (Malik, 2005; Russel & Tyler, 2002), this study found that the tween retail site celebrates glamour and exclusiveness. In addition, it erases the boundaries between women's sexuality and childhood while propagating messages that "kids are growing up fast". Unlike Malik (2005) this study questions the boundaries in which girls are defined, as Russel & Tyler (2002) did in their investigation of the U.K. store "Girl Heaven". Further studies can examine this phenomenon from various angles in order to comprehend the importance of the learning that takes place outside of the classroom.

Ongoing research involving tweens' shopping space would provide a more global perspective on these issues. As such, the actual degree of influence that these mass mediated messages have on our youth can be revealed. For instance, one can conduct research through participant observation, interviews and/ or case studies by taking girls shopping to a La Senza Girl store. In addition, a concentrated examination of tween girls' relationship with the La Senza Girl official website can also reveal much about tween culture's relationship with the Internet. Along with the research done with participants, an examination of the production stage of La Senza Girl would provide a more thorough understanding of the background labour that the store relies on. This would reveal the various ethical concerns that one should have when shopping. All stages of the corporation need to be analyzed in order to achieve a global understanding of the issues at hand (McRobbie, 1981).

5.6. Conclusion

As global corporations continue to aim to make profits, marketers will continue the segmentation of age groups and the construction of new target groups based on the premise that they have distinct consumer preferences. As seen with the tween mania, these new target groups seem to be growing downward. Concepts surrounding sex have been used to sell to a broad market, and as this study has shown, are continuously used even if it means to a younger audience. It is increasingly central for elementary educators to become aware and encourage awareness among their students concerning the marketing tactics aimed toward them. While there are a number of factors that influence the identity formation of children, the mass mediated messages as found within retail environments help shape their desires as well as create a concept of what it means to be normal. In addition, the commercial mainstream also defines and propagates this definition of tween culture. These commercial changes are helping shape societal and cultural norms. As such, it is imperative for cultural researchers as well as educators to keep up to date with what is current in the lives of children, to better understand and educate them.

AC Nielson. (2002). AC Nielson Shopper Trends. *Retail World: 2002 Annual Report*, 55(24), 16.

Adorno, T. W. & Horkheimer, M. (1944). The Culture Industry: The Enlightenment as Mass Deception (J. Cumming, Trans.). In J. B. Schor & D. B. Holt (Eds.), *The Consumer Society Reader* (pp. 3-19). New York: New Press.

Banks, M. (2001). *Visual Methods in Social Research*. London: Sage Publications.

Barnard, M. (2001). *Approaches to Understanding Visual Culture*. New York: Palgrave.

Barthes, R. (1988). The Kitchen of Meaning. In *The Semiotic Challenge* (pp. 157-159). New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Baudrillard, J. (1969). The Ideological Genesis. In J. B. Schor & D. B. Holt (Eds.), *The Consumer Society Reader* (pp. 57-80). New York: New Press.

Beam, C. (2002, November). Trendaholic tweens. *Parenting*, 197-199.

Boase, S. (2003, December). Malls vs Power Centres. *Space: Modern ideas for a retail World*, 2.

Brieg, P. (2003, September 12). La Senza's mother and daughter experience: 'Power Centre' expansion: Retailer banks on 'safe environment' to boost sales [Second quarter results]. *National Post*, pp. FP6.

Brooks, K. (2003). Nothing Sells like Teen Spirit: The Commodification of Youth Culture. In K. Mallan & S. Pearce (Eds.), *Youth Cultures: Texts, Images, and Identities* (pp. 1-16). Westport, Connecticut London: Praeger Publishers.

Canadian Council on Social Development. (1999). *Poverty Statistics*. Retrieved March

    25, 2004, from http://www.ccsd.ca/factsheets/fs_pov9099.htm

CBC Marketplace. (2005, January 9). Buying into Sexy: The sexing up of tweens.

    Retrieved March 18, 2005, from http://www.cbc.ca/printablestory.jsp

DuCille, A. (1996). Selection from Skin Trade. In J. B. Schor & D. B. Holt (Eds.),

    The Consumer Society Reader (pp. 259-278). New York: New Press.

Duncan, B. (2001, January). Toys: A Study in Popular Culture. In *Barry's Bulletin: A*

    popular digest for media educators. Retrieved May 15, 2004, from

    http://www.education-medias.ca/english/resources/educational/

    barrys_bulletins/2001/barrys_bulletin_jan_2001.cfm?RenderForPrint=1

Emmison, M. & Philip, S. (2000). *Researching the Visual.* London: SAGE Publications.

Entwistle, J. (2000). *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, dress and modern social theory.*

    Cambridge, Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Ewen, S. (1988). . . . Images Without Bottoms . . . In J. B. Schor & D. B. Holt

    (Eds.), *The Consumer Society Reader* (pp. 47-54). New York: New Press.

Evemag. (2005). Britney Spears: Innocent School Girl OR Cunning Seductress? *Boy's*

    Eye View by Dave G.. Retrieved April 20, 2005, from

    http://www.evemag.com/issue5/spears.html

Fiske, J. (1989). Shopping for Pleasure: Malls, power, and resistance. In J. B. Schor &

    D. B. Holt (Eds.), *The Consumer Society Reader* (pp. 306-327). New York: New

    Press.

Friedan, B. (1963). The Sexual Sell. In J. B. Schor & D. B. Holt (Eds.), *The Consumer*

    Society Reader (pp. 26-47). New York: New Press.

Frith, K. T. (1997). Undressing the Ad: Reading culture in advertising. In K. T. Frith
(Ed.), *Undressing the Ad: Reading Culture in Advertisement* (pp. 1-17). New
York: Peter Lang Publishing.

Galipeau, S. (2003, May 6). Bebe Lolita. *La Presse*, pp. B1.

Giroux, H. A. (2003). *Higher Education, Youth, and the Crisis of Intellectuals.* In B.
Barnett & R. Koutsogianopoulos (Co-Chairs), *Doing, Knowing, Sensing...
Creating Webs of Learning.* Conference conducted at the Faculty of Education on
the behalf of the Education Graduate Student Society, Montreal, Canada.

Giroux, H. A. (1997). *Channel Surfing: Race talk and the destruction of today's youth.*
New York: St. Martin's Press.

Giroux, H. A. (1994). *Disturbing Pleasures: Learning popular culture.* New York:
Routledge.

Hartley, J. (2003). *A Short History of Cultural Studies.* London: Sage Publications.

Henson, M. (2003). Stuck in the Middle: Tweens search for identity- Products give
tweens identity on the rocky road from childhood to teen. *Household and
Personal*, 40(7), 50-1.

Hesse-Biber, S. N. & Leavy P. (2004). Unobtrusive methods, visual research, and
cultural studies. In S. N. Hesse-Biber & P. Leavy (Eds.), *Approaches to
Qualitative Research: A Reader on Theory and Practice* (pp. 303-315). New
York: Oxford University Press.

J.C. Williams Group. (2003, December 22). October 2003 Retail Sales. *National Retail
Bulletin*, 1-5.

Kantrowitz, B. & Wingert, P. (1999, October 18). The truth about tweens. *Newsweek*,

    62-72.

Kilbourne, J. (Creator) & Lazarus, M. (Producer/ Director). (1987). *Still Killing Us*

    Softly: Advertising's image of women [documentary].   Cambridge, MA

    : Cambridge Documentary Films.

Kilbourne, J. (Creator) & Jhally, S. (Producer/ Director/ Editor). (2000). *Killing Us*

    Softly 3 [documentary]. Northampton, MA : Media Education Foundation.

Klein, N. (2000). *No Logo: Taking aim at the brand bullies.* Toronto: Vintage Canada.

La Senza Corporation. (2002-2005). La *Senza Corporation Official Website: Our*

    Brands.   Retrieved March 30, 2004, from

    http://www.lasenzacorporation.com/en/brands.html

La Senza Girl Malaysia. (2005). *La Senza Girl Photo Gallery.* Retrieved February 6,

    2005, from

    http://www.metrojayaonline.com/jpg/lasenzagirl/lasenzagallerymain.htm

La Senza, Inc. (2005). *Girlscoop.* Retrieved April 15, 2005, from

    http://www.lasenzagirl.com/spring2005/en/content/style_file/girlscoop.htm

La Senza, Inc. (2005). *Tweed.* Retrieved April 15, 2005, from

    http://www.lasenzagirl.com/spring2005/en/content/style_file/tweed.htm

Lai, A. (2005). Consuming Hello Kitty: Tween icon, sexy cute, and changing meaning

    of 'girlhood'. In C. Mitchell & J. Reid-Walsh (Eds.), *Seven Going on Seventeen:*

    Tweens studies in the culture of girlhood (pp.235-248). Manuscript submitted for

    publication.

Lasn, K. (1999). Culture Jamming. In J. B. Schor & D. B. Holt (Eds.), *The Consumer Society Reader* (pp. 414-432). New York: New Press.

Lavigne, L. (1998, October 28). La marketing attaque les 7-14 ans. *La Presse*, pp. D24.

Lemieux, J. (2000, October 3). Les femmes-enfants. *Le Soleil*, ppA5.

Lindstrom, M. (2003). *BRANDchild: Remarkable insights into the minds of today's global kids and their relationships with brands.* London: Kogan Page Ltd.

Lortie, M-C. (1997, October 22). Un paradoxe sur deux pattes. *La Presse*, pp. D20.

McRobbie, A. (1991). *Feminism and Youth Culture: From 'Jackie' to 'Just Seventeen'.* Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan.

McRobbie, A. (1981). A New Kind of Rag Trade? In J. B. Schor & D. B. Holt (Eds.), *The Consumer Society Reader* (pp. 433-445). New York: New Press

Malik, F. (2005). Mediated Consumption and Fashionable Selves: Tween girls, fashion magazines, and shopping. In C. Mitchell & J. Reid-Walsh (Eds.), *Seven Going on Seventeen: Tweens studies in the culture of girlhood* (pp.249-268). Manuscript submitted for publication.

Miller, D. (1998). *A Theory of Shopping.* Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

Mitchell, C. & Reid-Walsh J. (2005). Theorizing Tween Culture Within Girlhood Studies. In C. Mitchell & J. Reid-Walsh (Eds.), *Seven Going on Seventeen: Tweens studies in the culture of girlhood* (pp.1-20). Manuscript submitted for publication.

Mitchell, C. & Reid-Walsh, J. (2002). *Researching Children's Popular Culture: The cultural spaces of childhood.* London: Routledge.

Morris, M. (1998). Things to do with shopping centres. In *Too Soon Too Late: History in popular culture* (ch. 2). Indiana: Indiana University Press.

O' Sullivan, T.; Hartley, J.; Saunders, D.; Montgomery, M. & Fiske, J. (1994). *Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies*. London: Routledge Press.

Olijnyk, Z. (2002). Va va va boom: Thong underwear and other lingerie put La Senza on the map. *Canadian Business*, 75(9), 48-53.

Oliver, K. L. (1999). Adolescent Girls' Body-Narratives: Learning to Desire and Create a "Fashionable" Image. *Teachers College Record*, 101(2), 220-246.

Paquet, L. B. (2003). *The Urge to Splurge: A social history of shopping*. Ontario, Toronto: ECW Press.

Postman, N. (1994). *The Disappearance of Childhood*. New York: Vintage Books.

Quart, A. (2003). *Branded: The buying and selling of teenagers*. New York: Basic Books.

Restaurant News. (2003, August 11). Dairy Queen target's 'tweens' in ads for new Blizzard treats. *News digest*, 14.

Rosenberg, J. (2000, February 14). Tweens mesh latest fads, moms & dads. *Advertising Age*, 40.

Roy, V. (2000, October 10). Les petits rois de la consommation. *La Presse*, pp. B1.

Russel, R. & Tyler, M. (2002). Thank Heaven for Little Girls: 'Girl Heaven' and the commercial context of feminine childhood. *Sociology*, 36(3), 619-637.

Sanders, S. (1995, April 3). Kids & teens show who's boss in purchasing power. *Discount Store News*, 22.

Scally, R. (1999, October 25). The Customer Connection: The Tweeners. *Discount Store News*, 33-35.

Schor, J. B. & Holt, D. B. (2000). Introduction. In J. B. Schor & D. B. Holt (Eds.), *The Consumer Society Reader*. New York: New Press.

Seaton, E. (2005). Tween Social and Biological Reproduction: Early puberty in girls. In C. Mitchell & J. Reid-Walsh (Eds.), *Seven Going on Seventeen: Tweens studies in the culture of girlhood* (pp.21-42). Manuscript submitted for publication.

Simpson L., Douglas S. & Schimmel, J. (1998). Tween consumers: Catalog clothing purchase behaviour. *Adolescence*, 33(131), 637-644.

Simmons, R. (2002). *Odd Girl Out: The hidden culture of aggression in girls*. New York; London: Harcourt.

Statistics Canada. (2001). *Census 2001*. Retrieved March 19, 2004, from http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/standard/themes/RetrieveProd uctTable.cfm

Statistics Canada. (2001). *Census 2001*. Retrieved March 19, 2004, from, http://www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/famil50a.htm

Steinberg, S. (1998). Have allowance will transform economy. *Canadian Business*, 71(4), 58-71.

Steinberg, S. R. (1997). The Bitch Who has Everything. In S. R. Steinberg & J. L. Kincheloe (Eds.), *Kinderculture: the corporate construction of childhood* (pp. 207-218). Boulder, Colo.: WestviewPress.

Steinberg, S. R. & Kincheloe, J. L. (1997). No More Secrets- Kinderculture,

Information Saturation, and the Postmodern Childhood. In S. R. Steinberg & J. L.

Kincheloe (Eds.), *Kinderculture: the corporate construction of childhood*

(Introduction). Boulder, Colo.: WestviewPress.

Thompson, H. (2005, May). Doll Wars. *Business Life,* 39-44.

Turenne, M. (1998, July 4). Les 8-13 ans influencent les achats de toute la famille: Les

tweens sont la plus importante cohorte depuis les baby-boomers. *Les Affaires,*

pp16.

Twitchell, J. (1999). Two Cheers for Materialism. In J. B. Schor & D. B. Holt (Eds.),

The Consumer Society Reader (pp. 281-305). New York: New Press.

Weil, M. (1999, July 7). Suzy Shier Plans Expansion of La Senza Girl. *The Globe and*

Mail, pp. M2.

Williams, R. H. (1982). *Dream worlds, mass consumption in late nineteenth-century*

France. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Willis, P. (1990). *Common Culture : Symbolic work at play in the everyday cultures of*

the young. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

World of Garment, Textile & Fashion. (February 23, 2005). *USA : Major lingerie maker*

La Senza Corporation to shut five stores in America. Retrieved February 26,

2005, from

http://www.fibre2fashion.com/news/NewsDetails.asp?News_id=13167.

Youth Market Alert. (2003, August). Interactive lifestyles, pester-power set tween

consumers apart from other age segments, 1.