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RESISTANCE AND RESIGNATION AS COMPONENTS OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS'  
TALK ABOUT THE OBJECTIFICATION OF FEMALES

by

RUBY CORBY

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in  
Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University  
of New York

1998

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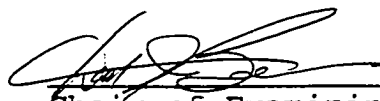
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Approval Page

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

RESISTANCE AND RESIGNATION AS COMPONENTS OF ADOLESCENT  
GIRLS' TALK ABOUT THE OBJECTIFICATION OF FEMALES

by

Ruby Corby

Advisor: David J. Bearison, Ph.D.

Sixty adolescent girls, ages eleven, thirteen, and sixteen, were interviewed after viewing segments from two popular prime-time television programs which featured adolescents as the main characters. The girls' responses were organized around the themes of Resistance and Resignation to the sexual objectification of females. Six subthemes of Resistance emerged from the interview responses: physical resistance, verbal resistance, visual resistance, flee resistance, moral resistance, and ignore resistance. The results indicated that there were age differences within the subtheme of verbal resistance and within resignation. Sixteen-year-old girls and thirteen-year-old girls had a significantly higher proportion of their talk organized around verbal resistance than did eleven-year-old girls. For resignation, thirteen-year-old girls and sixteen-year-old girls had a significantly

higher proportion of their talk organized around resignation than did eleven-year-old girls. The girls' responses to the television programs demonstrate the ability to bring interpretations of their lived experiences to television viewing rather than being passive recipients of the influence of television.

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Dedicated to adolescent girls  
and to my children, McKenzie and James

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## INTRODUCTION

### Organization of Television Research

During the past two decades, great concern has been expressed by psychologists, sociologists, educators, social activists, and others about the relationship between television and its viewers. To date, researchers remain divided about this relationship, particularly the direction of influence between television and viewers (Fiske, 1987; Hodge & Kress, 1988; Hodge & Tripp, 1986). Cultivation theory, for example, posits that the more time spent viewing television, the more likely a viewer is to incorporate images and beliefs reflecting the dominant messages of television about life and society into their general belief system (Rothschild & Morgan, 1987). Within such a framework viewers are conceptualized as receivers of television's influence who are at risk for developing a vision of the world aligned with the television world.

A review of the empirical literature on television from 1967 to 1997 indicates that research on adolescents and television is primarily organized as time-related studies or content-related studies. Time-related

studies are generally descriptive studies documenting the amount of time spent viewing television (e.g., Brown, et al., 1990; Espe & Seiwert, 1987; Gortmaker, 1990; Lawrence, 1986; Sarlo et al., 1988). Within time-related studies is research which explores the displacement hypothesis, for example, whether television viewing takes time away from the use of other media or other activities (e.g., Bordeaux, 1986; Larson et al., 1989; Potter, 1987; Stroman, 1991).

Content-related studies comprise the majority of the empirical research and typically are concerned with whether exposure to television content has an effect on viewer beliefs, attitudes, and behavior (e.g., Atkin, 1990; Liebert, 1986; Steede & Range, 1989; Stipp & Milavsky, 1988; Stroman, 1991; Vetro et al. 1988; Wroblewski and Huston, 1987). The grassroots polemic during the past fifteen years presumes large and direct effects of content (Gore, 1987; Winn, 1977). Supporting evidence for the influence of the media on behavior came from the classic studies on observational learning by Bandura and his colleagues (Bandura & Huston, 1961; Bandura, Ross & Ross, 1961, 1963) who demonstrated that children who observed violent behaviors would readily

imitate those behaviors if given the opportunity. In a typical study of observational learning, children viewed a film in which a model would repeatedly hit an inflatable Bobo doll and the children's behavior was observed afterwards when they were left in a room filled with toys. The children consistently imitated the modeled behavior and the results were interpreted as supporting the position that children's aggressiveness is significantly affected by television content. Milgram and Shotland (1973), however, in an experiment which provided opportunities for adult viewers to imitate violent, destructive behaviors, did not find evidence of television content leading to antisocial behavior. They stated that

"The evidence it has generated must be taken seriously and serve as a constraint on discussion of television's effects...It is possible that people have been entirely too glib in discussing the negative social consequences of the depiction of television violence. Personally, the investigators find the constant depiction of violence on television repugnant. But that is quite different from saying it leads to anti-social

behavior among its viewers. We have not been able to find evidence for this" (p. 68).

#### Sex Roles and Television

The relationship between sex-roles and media content has been another robust area of research. There is well documented evidence that males and females are portrayed stereotypically on television (Courtney & Whipple, 1974; Huston, 1983; Kacerguis & Adams, 1979; Signorielli & Tedesco, 1974); Sternglanz & Serbin, 1974; Tedesco, 1974; Welch, Huston-Stein, Wright, & Plehal, 1979). Correlational studies have shown a relationship between the amount of television viewed and sex-typed preferences (Freuh & McGhee, 1975; McGhee & Frueh, 1980) and experimental studies have found that an understanding of sex-role stereotypes is derived from exposure to sex-typed programming (Davidson, Yasuna, & Tower, 1979; Huston, Greer, Wright, Welch, & Ross, 1984). In a study of 3 - to 6-year olds, Beuf (1974) found that heavy viewers were more likely to stereotype occupational sex-roles than were light viewers. Miller & Reeves (1976) found that children who were exposed to nontraditional female characters on television considered nontraditional occupations more appropriate

for women than children who did not view non-traditional programming.

#### Mediators of Television's Influence

While the majority of studies presumed direct effects of media content on attitudes, beliefs, and behavior, a few studies have explored possible mediators of the influence of television. For example, Huston (1983) reported that Friedrich-Cofer, et al. (1978) found that sex-role orientation (e.g. feminine, masculine, and androgynous) mediated the effect of viewing an assertive female character; positive attitudes were held by female adolescents who scored high on a measure of androgyny, whereas adolescent females who scored high on a measure of femininity more often disapproved of the assertive female character's behavior. Morgan (1982) stated that "...the effects of television need not imply unidirectional causation; amount of television viewing and conceptions of reality may each have independent influences on the other" (p. 948), implying that the effects of television may be mediated by a viewer's concept of reality.

Parental behavior has been claimed to mediate the effects of television (Buerkel-Rothfuss, et al., 1983) by exercising control over how much television children

watch, commenting about television programs, teaching children to watch television programs critically, and participating in all aspects of children's viewing (Leifer, et al., 1974). While specific program content makes a difference whether or not children believe that behaviors of television families reflect real-life families, the children's lived experiences within their families exert an influence on their beliefs. Using survey questionnaires, Buerkel-Rothfuss et al. (1982) investigated the effect of viewing family television programs on children's perceived reality of affiliative family behaviors and how parents mediated the process. Participants were 648 fourth, sixth, and eighth graders living in predominantly working-class, inner city neighborhoods. With regard to the mediation variable of parental control, when control over children's viewing was high, the relationship between children's beliefs about affiliative behaviors occurring in real families and children's viewing of family television was higher than when parents exercised less control. The relationship between children's viewing and beliefs about the perceived reality of affiliative behaviors was also high when mediated by a high level of parental guidance (e.g., recommendations for appropriate

viewing); low levels of parental guidance resulted in a strong relationship between children's viewing and the perceived reality of non-affiliative (e.g., oppositional) family behaviors. Parents' evaluative comments about television families resulted in a stronger relationship between children's viewing of family programs and their beliefs about the perceived reality of real-life affiliative family behaviors than the absence of such comments. Children's direct experience with family members, for example talking and/or doing things with mother or father, mediated the relationship between the perceived reality of affiliative family behaviors and television viewing; when direct experience with family members was high, the relationship between viewing and beliefs was increased. While the results of this study revealed that, in general, "children's viewing of family programs is significantly related to their belief about the occurrence of affiliative behavior in real-life families" (p. 198), the relationship did not operate in isolation. The results also confirmed that the children's lived experience within the context of their family life mediated the relationship between presumed television influences and beliefs.

Further evidence of the context of the adolescent viewer's life mediating the influence of television came from Rothschild and Morgan's (1987) nationwide study in which 888 10 to 14-year old males and females were interviewed to determine whether parental cohesion and control mediated the relationship between adolescents' television viewing levels and their concepts of social reality which supposedly reflected television's messages about social life. Cohesion and control were considered along the two dimensions of general cohesion and control and television cohesion and control. General cohesion was operationalized as amount of affectionate support adolescents reported receiving from their mothers, activities shared with parents, and adolescents' satisfaction with the amount of time spent with their parents. General control was operationalized as parental rules about peer interactions, parental strictness in enforcing rules, and physical discipline. Television cohesion referred to parents and adolescents discussing television programming, and co-viewing with parents. Television control referred to adolescents' awareness of parental rules regarding television and parental involvement regarding amount of television viewed. Results suggested that less parental general

and television control tended to increase the influence of television on adolescents' family attitudes and fear of strangers, particularly when lower levels of cohesion were involved. The results also indicated that adolescents who watched and discussed television with their parents but whose parents did not set rules about programming and amount of television viewed were the most susceptible to the influence of television. The researchers concluded that the combination of low control and low cohesion permitted a stronger relationship between television viewing levels and television's influence on beliefs about reality; the influence of television was stronger when the relationship between adolescents and parents was less supportive and affiliative and when parents exercised loose control over adolescents' lives; and the impact of lower levels of control was heightened when accompanied by higher levels of television cohesion. The findings supported Rothschild and Morgan's (1987) claim that "While television can influence social relations, those relations can also mediate the impact of television" (p. 301).

#### Shift in Media Studies

A qualitative shift is occurring in the methodology of media studies along the same lines as the changes in the social sciences. The research paradigm is shifting away from behaviorist oriented questions of "effects" to a more qualitative, interpretive methodology usually employing interviews. Researchers have moved toward a more interpretive framework which conceptualizes the viewer as capable of a critical, oppositional and resistant reading of television (Fiske, 1987). This new research direction has been influenced by feminist cultural criticism and by the interpretive work of Brown's (1990 a,b,c) studies of women and television; Christian-Smith's (1990) studies of romance literature; Fiske (1987), Hodge and Kress (1988), Hodge & Tripp's (1988) critical television studies; McRobbie's (1991) studies of youth culture; Press' (1990, 1991) studies of women and television; and Radway (1984), and Roman, Christian-Smith & Ellsworth's (1988) studies of romance literature. All of these studies have informed the present study.

#### Media Content

In a review of twenty-one prime-time programs for a content analysis of adolescent girls on television, Steenland (1988a) concluded that the dominant portrayals

of girls and women on television "send damaging messages to teenage viewers" (p.13), that "television...is a powerful shaper of our attitudes, behavior and knowledge of the world" (Introduction); and that the "cumulative result of these skewed depictions is a distorted message about the realities of growing up (p. 1). Press (1991), in her study of gender, class, and television, argued that television, with its confusing and negative messages about girls, women, and sexuality, influences young girls negatively. She stated "that television in particular and the entertainment mass media in general heavily influence women's identities in our culture...it becomes more and more pressing to ask how women in our time use the images and ideas our culture makes available to them as they construct their own identities in the world and as they form their own ideas about what is normal and real outside of themselves. How have individual women's lives and thoughts been influenced by these recent changes and challenges to our cultural consensus about women's identities, roles, and activities?" (p. 3). According to Press, television has power in that it plays a prescriptive ideological role.

The messages about girls and women on television have been considered "negative" (Press, 1991; Steenland, 1988a), however, the concept of "negative" requires further analysis since it could involve a number of meanings with very different social and psychological significance. First, it could be argued that television images could be construed to be negative because their depictions of girls and women could be interpreted as demeaning and degrading in character and intellect. For example, Steenland's (1988a) content analysis revealed that while some adolescent girls on television may occasionally be seen doing homework, the characters' primary activities involved shopping for clothes and talking about boys (Steenland, 1988a). The girls were depicted as shopping mall addicts with little or no interest in the environment, politics, or intellectually stimulating pursuits. Girls were portrayed as overly concerned with their bodies and appearance. In contrast to their male counterparts, the adolescent female characters of prime time television were portrayed as underdeveloped in areas of academic achievement. For example, school scenes which featured girls were often used as backgrounds for coffee shop/cafeteria gossip, problems with roommates, and crushes on various

professors. While there were a few shows featuring adolescent girls who were intelligent as well as well-liked, such characters were the exception rather than the rule. Generally, the intelligent girl was considered unpopular, wore glasses, dressed unfashionably, was clumsy, was desperate to be noticed by boys and to be asked for a date, was insecure and homely. Girls were referred to in the narratives as "sweathogs, geeks, trollettes...[and] premiere pooches" (Steenland, 1988a, p. 11).

It also could be argued that the images of girls and women on television are negative because they are prescriptive. In a study of 20 working-class women and 21 middle-class women ranging in age from seventeen to seventy-eight, Press (1991) found that young working class women took television quite seriously. Using interviews, she found that family television defined their concept of the family. The young working class women were impressed and nostalgic about the idyllic nuclear family portrayals they saw on television. Press suggested that the women from non-nuclear, unconventional families felt deprived when faced with the knowledge that their own families were not examples of the traditional nuclear family model. Furthermore,

viewers sought to duplicate the televised traditional quality of life in their own lives and were impressed with the happiness they saw on television. The manner in which these young women received the television shows was complemented and secondarily supported by the way in which the older women of their mothers' generation (and presumably their mothers themselves) used television as a tool to help them in raising their families (Press, 1991). According to the interviews, the older women supported what they thought to be the proper social and family values shown on television and the younger women desired these family values for their own lives. Images of the traditional textbook nuclear family dominated early television and apparently impressed the older and younger generations as a prescription for happy and healthy living. Similarly, young middle class women also viewed family shows with nostalgia and found comfort in viewing intact traditional families.

Press concluded that "older women...have used early family television to teach their children proper values...younger women...are seeking some clue, some cultural direction from television to advise them in this difficult and increasingly nebulous area of their lives. This is not surprising since, for most younger

women, family television is responsible for much of their normative picture of the family; it tells them what family life should be like. Overall, family television is a source of acute pain for many young women from broken homes, who tend to compare their lives to its pictures" (p. 167). Press concluded that the mass media, and television in particular, has a strong influence on women's developing identities.

Because "television is one of our most powerful cultural institutions" (Press, 1991, p. 8), a central concern of Press' work was with the representation of women in the mass media and women's interaction with that representation. Specifically, she looked for a relationship between women's representations of themselves, which she referred to as "self-image" or "identity" (p. 6), and our culture's mass media representations of women. Press stated that women were exposed to television images from the time they were children and she questioned the role of these images in the development of self-image, as well as the powerfulness of these images as role models. In accordance with the move away from the traditional behaviorist research paradigm, Press (1991) used an interview method which allowed for, and qualitatively

depended upon, the subjectivity of the viewer and the context of their lives. The primary concerns of her research were class and generational differences in women's responses to television and characters.

Although throughout her discussions are threads of "effects of" research, particularly when she asserted that television unconsciously structured our conceptions of self and the social world and "that what television portrays impacts heavily on our views of the world and ourselves" (p. 17), she concluded from her interviews that women's responses to television characters and narrative were mediated by generational and class differences. Therefore, television did not serve as a monolithic distribution system of ideology; its messages were not universally received or interpreted. For example, during the interviews, middle-class women exhibited a personal involvement with female television characters. In contrast to the working class women, they were more interested in the personal and relational dimensions of the character and the character's work and family relationships, often relating their own personal experiences to strengthen the similarity between themselves and the female characters. In contrast, working class women related more to a character's

situation and what could be learned from a particular situation rather than being concerned with identifying, or not identifying, with specific female characters. Press concluded that the themes which emerged from middle-class women's talk were more "gender-specific," reflecting concerns about being female, while working-class women's themes were more "class-specific," reflecting concerns about financial and family situations (p. 97). While Press' work could be interpreted as television having 'effects on' viewers and television as a vehicle of cultural ideology, she clearly stated that the influence of television was mediated by the context of viewer's lives (e.g., class and gender). The elegance of Press' work was in the blending of the two premises of the ideologically reinforcing power of television and the active interpretation and reception of meaning by the viewer. For Press, resistance to the status quo, as well as reinforcements for, originated from television. She stated, "...middle-class women at times view television as a cultural source of images of female strength, perceiving certain characters to be extremely feminist and admirable. For middle-class women, therefore, television is both a source of feminist resistance to

the status quo and, at the same time, a source for the reinforcement of many of the status quo's patriarchal values" (p. 96). If non-conformity to a dominant ideology or cultural theme can emerge from a viewing experience, a question to explore is whether a resistant voice develops vis-a-vis television and is that resistant voice different at different periods in the life span?

#### Resistance, the Media, and Girls and Women

Resistance is a relatively new concept in the literature on adolescent girls. It "implies a more explicit confrontation with and rejection of negative stereotypes based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual identity, disability, and other 'differences' from cultural norms" (Schultz, 1991, p. 6). Robinson and Ward (1991) characterized resistance as "self-determination through confrontation and repudiation of oppressive attempts to demean self" (p. 99). The development of resistance may be considered an epistemological turning point in the lives of young girls for it marks the acknowledgement and cultivation of an intellectual capacity which heralds the acquisition of, rather than mourns the loss of, constructed knowledge. Belenky et al. (1986) defined

constructed knowledge as "a position in which women view all knowledge as contextual, experience themselves as creators of knowledge, and value both subjective and objective strategies for knowing" (p.15).

Resistance is directly relevant to adolescent girls' responses to a popular cultural form such as television because resistance implies confrontation and rejection of a particular positioning. Television, conceptualized by some researchers as prescriptive, hegemonic, and pervasive in the lives of adolescent girls (Brown, 1990b; Christian-Smith, 1988; Steenland, 1988a,b), is a point of departure for a voice of resistance and is an area in girls' lives where resistance can be located. In listening to how a young girl interprets, confronts, rejects or accepts a particular position, we can hear how a young girl, developing into a young woman, "with resiliency, creativity, and courage, resists others' expectations of her, explores who she is, names herself...and claims an authentic identity" (Zemsky, 1991, p. 186).

To speak of the power of television is to view television as a strong social force, but this view overlooks the interpretive and generative power of the viewer to resist and develop a personally relevant

interpretation. If some researchers have argued that television serves to strengthen dominant values (Gitlin, 1987), it can also be argued that viewers can resist domination. A contrasting view, incorporated into Press' (1990) work above, does not conceptualize television as an all-powerful manipulative text and argues for the construction of meaning by the viewer (Brown, 1990a,b,c; Christian-Smith, 1990; Fiske, 1987). According to Stockbridge (1990), in an essay on pleasure and resistance in the consumption of rock video, viewers take "elements which produce meanings for them that are not necessarily intended or determined by the texts" (p. 103). In this view, the empowerment and emphasis is moved from the traditional televised text to the polysemous subject (Brown, 1990).

Brown (1990a,b), who asserted that "audiences have a great deal of control over their reading practices" (1990b, p.13), used the genre of daytime television, specifically the soap opera, as a vehicle to understand how women use the elements of popular culture available to them. A central question for Brown was how a popular cultural form like television functioned in women's daily lives - part of the broader question of how women's daily lives were constructed. Brown's object of

analysis was the daytime soap opera and its viewer. Brown argued that soap opera had low cultural capital and its enjoyment has been belittled by both feminists and the popular press (Brown, 1990c). Critics of soap opera may not recognize it as having counterculture capital, recognizing that it existed as women's culture, alongside of and in spite of dominant culture. Brown asserted that women who used the cultural form of soap opera were practicing feminist discourse because of their awareness of the form as 'other than' dominant culture. Taking time out to watch soap opera with other people who found pleasure in the activity had an empowering consequence for women, in as much as it was acceptable behavior within the group to watch soaps. Claiming time for oneself, when there isn't time to claim in the business and demands of everyday domestic life, is a form of resistance in the same way that Radway (1984) discussed taking personal time out to read romance novels was a form of resistance. While soap operas apparently presented cultural stereotypes of men and women, the parodic and ironic uses of soap opera by its fans created a space for resistance to and disempowerment of the status quo so forcefully presented on daytime soap opera. For example, in an interview

with fans of the Australian soap opera Sons and Daughters, adolescent girls aged fifteen to eighteen expressed an appreciation for a character who, as an adolescent girl, was "expected to be nice and silent" (Brown, 1990c, p. 192) but clearly was not. The following excerpt demonstrated how the television character expressed herself in a way that was "in opposition to what nice girls might be allowed to say" (p. 192): "...She doesn't like blend in with the rest of the Sons and Daughters characters, but she uses her language differently...Her character's really outstanding...[She's not] like softspoken and everything, she doesn't care what she says, she's outgoing and...loud" (p. 192). In an interview with a British fan, commenting on British soaps, Brown noted an appreciation for liberation from imposed standards of etiquette: "...the humour is cockney and it's very sharp - in a different way. It's very different, but it's the sharpness of the language that is used there...the way that people talk to each other that is crucial. That's definitely some of the pleasure in watching it. It's the way things are said...the put-downs, the rudeness, all very stylised really. Well, the power of the women seems to have to do with their...their mouths (Laughs)"

(p. 193). Brown's analysis relied, in part, on Mikhail Bakhtin's (1968) analysis of carnival, in that carnival celebrations were actually about the common people relative to the dominant order. Brown concerned herself with the position of women relative to the dominant order of patriarchy.

Resistant interpretations of television is a relatively new concept in media studies, with a precedent in the work on resistant readings of romance fiction (Brown, 1990a,b,c; Christian-Smith, 1990; & Fiske, 1987). Like television, the romance novel is a medium which provides a space where meaning can be negotiated. Christian-Smith (1990) used the genre of the romance novel to illustrate the control women readers had over the meaning and pleasure of romance novels. As a component of popular culture, the romance novel appears to provide support for conservative ideology, given the construct of femininity reified in the novels: "...teen romances center their versions of femininity on devotion to home, heart, and hearth, that a woman is incomplete without a man, that motherhood is women's destiny, and women's rightful place is at home" (Christian-Smith, 1988, p. 78).

Christian-Smith (1990, p. xii) argued that while the traditional message of the romance novel was a conservative one, "we should not always assume that the message sent is the message received." If romance novels present status quo representations of gender, race, and class ideologies, it does not necessarily follow that readers are completely accepting of and shaped by those representations. Christian-Smith (1990) has shown that girls use these books in different ways and reconstruct the meaning of the novel throughout their reading. The meanings constructed were not solely constituted of the traditional and conservative ideals of femininity which organize the romance novel; oppositional or resistant meanings were often constructed. The construction of alternative and resistant meaning is testimony to what people actually can do with the popular cultural material presented to them in the practice of everyday life. The question then becomes not what can cultural forms do to people but rather how people interact with cultural forms? For example, in a study of 29 middle- and working-class teenage girls' reading of romance novels in schools, Christian-Smith (1990) asserted that "textual meaning is shaped through the knowledge and resistance that readers

bring to reading" (p. 99). The participants in the study were tracked as reluctant readers by school officials and interviews revealed that the girls demonstrated an awareness of the social and academic consequences of placement in low-ability reading classes, as well as an awareness of not being perceived as nice or intelligent by their teachers. The following interview excerpts demonstrated that the girls' interpretations reflected a desire to be seen as capable, competent young women: "That's gotta be Trina Singleton, in Against the Odds. Trina is the kind of person I want to be 'cause she's not afraid to fight for her rights, while another girl might chicken out;" "I've got no patience with girls who let boys walk all over them. Believe you me, no boy mess with me or he be sorry" (p. 109). The interpretations locate where "story-world and lived-experience meet" (p. 109). Consider the following comments from the readers: "Nobody has these neat boyfriends [the boys in romance novels]. I mean, most of the guys boss you around...and bash you if you look at somebody else. But it's fun to read the books and think that maybe someday you'll meet a really nice guy who'll be good to you;" "[The boys in

the novels] treatin' you good. Not bossin' you 'round and tryin' to hit on you all the time" (p. 106).

Christian-Smith (1990) argued that some novels contained "certain blanks that invite completion as part of the developing story and characterization" (p.110). These gaps, or blanks, were the discontinuity of a plot between chapters, or the continuation of a plot in unexpected directions, and provided the opportunity for readers to read between the lines. Christian-Smith observed that when the topic was femininity, readers were presented models of femininity, but the gaps also gave the opportunity to reflect on femininity. These emergent reflections gave rise to the voice of resistance, a marker for the tension between who one is positioned to be and who one would like to be. The readers became not only a subject of the novel, but the heroine as well when they related the events to their own lived experiences and hypothesized about possible courses of action to solve certain situations. For example, the focus of one romance novel was the struggles of four girls who were part of a first group of girls admitted to an all male high school. After enduring harrassment over a period of time, the girls developed a plan to end the harrassment once and for

all. According to Christian-Smith's (1990) structural analysis of the romance novel, the novel's textual structure of gradually unfolding the plan after several pages provided a space within which the reader could hypothesize various plan options. As reflected in the excerpts below, a recurring theme in the readers' imagined plans was girls getting the best of boys and girls being strong enough to keep the boys in line. Christian-Smith concluded from the interviews that the girls' readings were characterized by a "tug of war between conventional femininity and more assertive modes" (p. 113). Although the girls' imaginings involved assertiveness and confrontation, which reflected that girls did not always see themselves as passive victims, the final turn in their own created story lead them down the path of the traditional structure of gender relations; their interpretations were, again, a meeting place for story-world and lived experience and emblematic of the relationship between reader, text, and life experience:

"It was fun trying to figure out what Trina and the other girls would do to get back at those boys. I thought that they would sneak into the boys' locker room and do something to

their sports equipment. Marsha had the guts to do something like that;" Interviewer: "Was that something you might have done?"; "Are you kidding? No way! I'd never have the guts. Well, you'd have to do something that's for sure;" "I figured Trina and Laurie would come up with something fantastic;" Interviewer: "Would you do that, get even in that way?"; "Well, I'd like to do something like that, to get even with some of the boys in my math class who are real pains. But I'd get chicken and probably just fume;" Interviewer: "Can you tell me more?"; "It's kinda difficult, I mean, well, I guess I don't want to be seen as a girl who's too pushy with boys. You have to be careful about that. But then you can't let the boys push you around. I don't know" (pp. 110-111).

For Christian-Smith (1990), there was a relationship between the reader, the text and the context of the reader's life. Although the content of the girls' interpretations were independent of race and class, because of the shared context of their school life - having been labeled as reluctant readers -

Christian-Smith concluded from the interviews that they shared one consistent desire, to be viewed as competent. The interviews reflected that the girls admired the novels' competent heroines who accommodated the girls' expressed wishes of getting the best of boys and keeping them in line, thereby asserting their knowledge of gender tensions and not allowing girls to be passive victims, resisting and resenting the power of men and the subordination of women, resisting the dominant characterization of women in romance novels, and placing their concerns about romance at the center of their constructed meanings.

#### Resistance and Female Adolescent Development

According to Gilligan (1990d), eleven and twelve year old girls are outspoken and irreverent and it is at this moment in their lives when resistance is evident. The resistance revolves around the connection or disparity between inner worlds and outer worlds, what can be let out and what must be kept in, speaking honestly or speaking 'nicely'. For Gilligan, young girls' knowledge was trivialized or viewed as transgressive and consequently they were tutored to be seen and not heard. Their outspokenness is defined as 'not nice'.

At age thirteen, the conversation of eighth grade girls was generously peppered with "I don't know," holding back, and "struggling explicitly with a reluctance to know what she knows and an inclination to suppress her knowledge and go along with the group...But now conformity has a hold...as she begins to feel like a member of her new school...also a part of her class. She watches others to see which way to go and does not, she says, 'massively disagree on anything'...learning to bring herself into line with the world around her, to bring herself into agreement with others so as not to mess up relationships with friends or experience the helplessness of being overpowered by adults" (Gilligan, 1990b, pp. 514-515). Similarly, eighth grade girls' interpretations of romance novel events are structured by the confrontation between hopes and desires "between who she is and who she would like to be" (Christian-Smith, 1990, p. 111). The girls expressed a desire to pursue a particular course of action but instead, opted for conformity because they didn't want to be seen "as a girl who's too pushy with boys" (p. 111), thereby, "learning to bring herself into line with the world around her" (Gilligan, 1990b, p. 514). (Christian-Smith's study, which was not designed to be a

developmental study, cut across age and grade groups. Consequently, the nuances of developmental change were missed).

In ninth grade, a change occurs in fourteen year old girls. Outspokenness resurfaces and conversation is sprinkled with helpings of "you know," and gives balance to the generous supply of "I don't know" phrases. The tendency to drive knowledge underground is being tipped toward a groundbreaking resistance: "an insistence on knowing what she knows" (Gilligan, 1990b, p. 515) and by fifteen years of age, girls question the status quo framework of the world within which they live.

When contrasting the voices of adolescent girls, Gilligan noted a distinct difference between early and late adolescents. Eleven and twelve year old girls in sixth grade were very outspoken, held onto what they knew with recalcitrance and conviction (Gilligan, 1990d, pp. 15, 20). This was in contrast to the response of a high school senior who stated "that it is hard to get the real opinions of teenage girls as young as we are because a lot of girls don't really know what they think" (Gilligan, 1990d, p. 15). The direction was from the strength of one's conviction about owned knowledge to the reflectiveness about what knowledge is,

accompanied by a lack of strength of conviction and then movement in later adolescence, toward the reclaiming of owned knowledge. Gilligan suggested that adolescence may be a time when girls' knowledge goes underground and becomes buried. She characterized adolescence as "the time between the twelve-year-old's knowing and the adult woman's remembering" (Gilligan, 1990d, p. 14). The disconnection of girls, beyond the age of twelve, from their own knowledge was reflected in the persistent prefacing of their observations of life by the phrase, "I don't know." Gilligan (1991) observed that, "Girls often use the phrase 'I don't know' to cover knowledge which they believe may be dangerous, and the phrase 'you know,' correspondingly to discover what is possible for them to know and still be connected with other people" (p. 11).

Gilligan concluded from her studies of adolescent school girls that "the time between ages eleven and sixteen is an especially critical one in girls' lives (1990c, Note to the Harvard Edition) and described adolescence as "a situation for epistemological crisis, an age when issues of interpretation come to the fore" (1987, p. 64). According to Gilligan's observations, adolescent girls' interpretations of their experiences

change with age. Adolescent girls' resistant interpretations to romance fiction and resistant interpretations constructed by adult women readers and viewers has been a consistent finding within the romance fiction and interpretive television research. However, the developmental aspects of these interpretations have not been addressed and noted for the age-related changes similar to those observed by Gilligan in her participants' interpretations.

### Age-related Changes During Adolescence

An understanding of the age-related changes observed in adolescent girls' voices is incomplete without an awareness and appreciation of the changes which adolescent girls experience in other areas of their development. Researchers are in general agreement that adolescence is a period of significant biological, psychological, and social changes; a time of transition when critical issues of self-identity and self-understanding come to the fore (Brooks-Gunn & Reiter, 1990; Elliot & Feldman, 1990; Entwistle, 1990; Erikson, 1968; Harter, 1983, 1990; Hauser & Bowlds, 1990; Kagan, 1972; Lerner & Foch, 1987; Petersen, 1981, 1987).

Pubertal Processes. Among the factors which have been identified as influencing adolescent development, pubertal changes are among the developmental challenges adolescents must face. The adolescent's construction of self changes to accommodate the internal and external bodily changes being experienced and they learn to cope with their own and others' responses to their developing bodies (Brooks-Gunn & Reiter, 1990). For example, upon menarche and breast development, girls change their definitions of themselves (Brooks-Gunn & Warren, 1988). Unlike the other pubertal events of pubic hair growth

and menarche, breast development is easily observed. Breast growth, which begins at approximately 10.5 years for American adolescent girls (Brooks-Gunn & Reiter, 1990; Tanner, 1972), is the most important pubertal event to girls because of its high visibility. Brooks-Gunn and Reiter (1990) surveyed adolescent girls' reactions to pubertal events and found that 82% of the girls responded that breast development was of greater significance to them than pubic hair growth because "other people can tell" (p. 39). Breast development has also been associated with the heightened awareness of the association between sex roles and reproduction (Brooks-Gunn & Warren, 1988) and is linked culturally to sexuality (Brooks-Gunn, 1987). The culturally mediated significance of pubertal development is further illuminated by studies which have shown that people's responses to girls are influenced by girls' pubertal status (Blyth, Simmons, & Zakin 1985), lending additional support to the argument that pubertal "changes are not only biological but also carry psychological meaning to the young person experiencing them and have social stimulus value to others" (Brooks-Gunn & Warren, 1989, p. 41).

Social-conventional factors have been found to play a role in girls' responses to puberty and in the meaning of a pubertal event (Brooks-Gunn, 1987; Brooks-Gunn & Reiter, 1990). Brooks-Gunn and Reiter (1990) stated that "perhaps the most maladaptive response to pubertal growth involves the devaluation of the mature female body" (p. 45). Faust (1983) found that slender, lean, prepubertal body shapes were preferred by young women in Europe and the United States and this pursuit of the ideal body, fueled by the societal and cultural preference for slimness and the emphasis on a prepubertal look in advertisements (Faust, 1983), affected self-perceptions (Brooks-Gunn & Reiter, 1990). According to Brooks-Gunn and Reiter (1990), "poor self-images increase as the body develops" and the cultural preference for slimness pressures girls to maintain their prepubertal body which may account for "the emergence of dieting at the time of puberty" (p. 45). Puberty has also been found to have different meanings for girls than for boys (Petersen, 1979; Petersen & Taylor, 1980). Boys' more developed pubertal status is related to a positive body image and feelings of attractiveness (Tobin-Richards, Boxer, & Petersen, 1983). In contrast to boys, who view puberty more

positively because they become bigger and stronger (Petersen & Taylor, 1980), puberty has some negative aspects for girls. Girls do not welcome the changes their bodies undergo and the fatty deposits which develop, nor do they welcome their new reproductive potential (Petersen, 1979; Petersen, Sarigiani, & Kennedy (1991). Compounding the adjustment task of the pubertal girl, being teased has been found to be related to pubertal growth (Brooks-Gunn, 1987). In a survey of 140 fifth- and sixth-grade girls about the meaning of breast development, Brooks-Gunn (1984) did not find any girls who indicated they were pleased about the teasing they received about the onset of breast buds: 8% reported being upset, 22% were embarrassed, 27% were angry, and 42% said they did not care. Thus, girls' breast changes are "not only biological but also carry psychological meaning to the young person experiencing them and have social stimulus value to others," (Brooks-Gunn & Warren 1989, p. 41).

Self-esteem. Changes in self-esteem during adolescence must be negotiated concurrently with other changes that occur during adolescence. Lower self-esteem has been found to be significantly related to the number of changes experienced during adolescence

(Simmons et al. (1987). For girls, there is evidence that "girls are at risk for developing depressed affect by 12th grade because they experienced more challenges in early adolescence than did boys...the negative effects observed in early adolescence persist into middle adolescence" (Petersen, et al., 1991). Research has shown that beginning at age eleven, self-esteem begins to decline and by the ages of twelve and thirteen self-esteem has reached a low point (Harter, 1990; Rosenberg, 1986). The following narrative of a fifteen-year-old "prototypical adolescent" girl, culled from several adolescents' self-descriptions, demonstrates the persistence of low self-esteem at age fifteen, which was quite noticeable as early as age twelve, (Harter 1990, pp. 352, 365): "...But what's really important to me is how I look. If I like the way I look, then I really like the kind of person I am... There's another thing about how much I like the kind of person I am. It matters what other people think, especially the other kids at school. It matters whether they like you. I've also changed. It started when I went to junior high school. I got really depressed...It's what all the other kids think and want that counts...my brother...he likes himself fine. But I really don't, not right now"

(p. 365). The American Association of University Women (1991) self-esteem findings corroborated the narrative of Harter's (1990) prototypical adolescent girl which reflected that for girls in middle school, a period of significant decline in self-esteem, physical appearance was of paramount importance (AAUW, 1991). For example, "girls are nearly twice as likely as boys to mention a physical characteristic as the thing they like most about themselves" (p. 7). The narrative of this "prototypical adolescent" girl also reflected that friends were particularly important to young adolescents during this period and it was also during this time that peers of the other sex became more important (Crockett, Losoff, & Petersen, 1984). Costanzo and Shaw (1966) noted a marked increase in conformity to the peer group during early adolescence, as did Gilligan et al (1990), in their interviews with thirteen-year-old girls. This was consistent with the claim of Hauser and Bowlds (1990), study of stress, coping, and adaptation skills of adolescents, that, "Beginning in the early adolescent years, and especially prominent by middle adolescence, is the mounting pressure to conform. This does not necessarily mean that parents lose their influence. More accurately, friends gain significantly more

importance during this period" (p. 393). Harter's (1990) prototypical adolescent girl's statement that "It matters what other people think, especially the other kids at school. It matters whether they like you," supported Mead's (1934) position that the self is a social construction comprised of attitudes of significant others. In this case, the significant others were her classmates and classmate support has been found to be predictive of self-esteem (Harter, 1989). The increasing importance of others' evaluations of the self is due, in part, to the cognitive changes during adolescence. Evaluations of the self, premised upon others' evaluations, is evidence of the formal operational thought which becomes developed during adolescence (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958). With the advent of formal operational thinking comes the acquisition of recursive perspective taking which permits the adolescent to be aware that others are observing and evaluating them. The adolescent is then able to observe, reflect, and evaluate themselves from the perspective of the observing other (Harter, 1990; Selman, 1980).

One of the key findings of a nationwide study on the self-esteem of 3,000 girls and boys, ages 9 - 15

(AAUW, 1991) was that "As girls and boys grow older, both experience a significant loss of self-esteem in a variety of areas; however, the loss is most dramatic and has the most long-lasting effect for girls" (p. 3). The results indicated that elementary school girls, ages eight and nine, were confident and assertive, however, they leave adolescence with a lower self-image, less confidence in themselves and their abilities, and less confident about their place in society. For example, on a core measure of self esteem, "I am happy the way I am," 60% of elementary school girls agreed with the statement compared to 67% of the boys. By middle school, 56% of boys agreed with the statement compared to 37% of girls; by high school, 46% of the boys agreed with the statement compared to 29% of girls (pp. 3-5). Another key finding of the self-esteem report was that declining self-esteem constrained girls' actions, particularly the verbal action of speaking out. For example, "boys are more likely than girls to speak up in class alot and to argue with my teachers when I think I'm right" (p. 6).

#### Conclusion of Literature Review

An assumption of the present study was that children have not arrived at adolescence as passive

receivers of television and that critical, resistant readings of television to varying degrees will be present. The inquiry was further broadened by investigating whether a particular reading was experientially located and by being sensitive to any changing or enduring qualities of the interpretations - if resistant interpretations emerged, they did not emerge from a void, rather they were a product of the interaction between the person and the conditions against which they were resisting, conditions which were available to them through their social history and television's representations of social reality. Thus, the interpretation of a television program for a viewer is a situated interpretation. The present study departed from traditional television research by proceeding from the premise that the viewer is a socially and historically located producer of meaning who brings an experientially based perspective to his or her understanding of television and whose life experiences mediate his or her relationship with television.

Conceptions of television, both as a functional, prescriptive tool which influences women's developing identities, and television as a conveyor of negatively

influencing and damaging portrayals, assumes that the message sent is the message received and conceptualizes the viewer as a passive, non-interpreting recipient of televised images and information. While research about the media forms of romance literature and daytime television on adolescent girls' understanding of and resistances to social representations of reality has been carried out within the interpretive framework, to date little is known about adolescent girls' understanding and interpretation of other popular media forms, specifically prime-time television episodic situation comedy. This is a noteworthy area for investigation considering the Nielsen ratings indicate that nearly one million adolescent girls watch prime-time television nightly (Steenland, 1988a). Inasmuch as romance fiction and television are different media forms, the question remains as to the affordances of a specific media form and the interpretations such form may or may not engender. Television, as a form of pictorial representation, has an authenticity which romance fiction does not. Romance fiction may lend itself to a more oppositional reading because it is so clearly marked as fiction and, as such, is open to a polysemic restructuring which may be precluded for

non-fictional literature. Similarly, episodic situation comedy is a particular media form within television which is more or less open to resistant readings. This form of television is of a mixed nature and consequently does not fit into a neat category of fiction or non-fiction.

If a rich and informative picture of adolescent girls' understanding of television programs and character portrayals is to be attained, the content of the girls' talk about the television programs they watch must be held to the same close examination as the programs themselves have been in television content analysis research. With the exception of a few studies (e.g., Bearison et al., 1982 on developmental changes in how children understand television; Collins, et al., 1982 on social scripts and developmental patterns in comprehension), the overwhelming majority of studies have used children to examine the effects of media content rather than using television as a vehicle to examine and understand how a particular moment in child development may influence children's interpretation of television content. The present study departed from typical behavioral studies of television by proceeding "from the recognition that [female] adolescence locates

interests, needs, perspectives, and tasks that are uniquely relevant to how [female] teenagers use and respond to media (Fine, et al., 1990, p. 250). The pilot interviews for the present study indicated that television was a useful device for highlighting the interests, needs, and perspectives that adolescent girls brought to their understanding of television content. The present study was undertaken to: (1) categorize adolescent girls' responses to and interpretations of selected prime time television programs which feature adolescents, (2) to identify the social experiences related to their responses and interpretations, and (3) to identify and explain age-related changes in adolescent girls' responses and interpretations. The presence or absence of resistance was observed and described.

In summary, the literature reviewed indicated the existence of resistant interpretations to different media forms, namely romance fiction and television. The documentation of reader/viewer produced interpretations indicated that media produced messages were not uncritically received. Gilligan's (1990b) work explored more deeply the development of resistance in adolescent girls, and through her observations of adolescent girls

across different settings, located the eleven year old girl as the site of nascent resistance to others' expectations. The present study attempted to unite these separate lines of research and create a more complete understanding of adolescent girls' critical, oppositional readings of television, and to document the development of their critical voices. It was expected that the present study would support the claims of resistant interpretations to the media as well as the presence of resistance in the life of adolescent girls, and it would provide support for Gilligan's age-related changes in interpretations.

In Press' (1990) research, reported as "Class, Gender, and the Female Viewer: Women's Responses to Dynasty," a study involving 20 working class and 21 middle class women, an open-ended interview style was employed. Although she used an interview schedule as a guide, which also was used in the present study, she found that asking her informants to talk about television and their lives, in an unconstrained manner, yielded revealing information about the women's interests and views. While this method also yielded information not apparently relevant to the immediate

focus of the present study, it should also be respected that a more closed and structured interview format may preclude obtaining valuable information gleaned from the girls' own telling.

In an analysis of laughter and television viewing, Hodge and Tripp (1986) observed a distinct difference in the frequency of laughter between the informal small group discussion and the adult interviewer-child interviewee conditions. The children in the small group discussion where the interviewer remained in the room, but at a distance from the group, laughed continuously. In contrast, substantially less laughter occurred during the interview situation. Hodge and Tripp attributed this difference to "the degree of formality of the two situations, and likelihood of counter meanings being expressed" (p. 148). Similarly, pilot data collected for the present study reflected a higher rate of talking among subjects in pairs and triad conditions than in the adult interviewer-child interviewee condition. The responses of the more formal interviewer-interviewee situation were more limited to single words or phrases and it seemed difficult for the subject to develop a topic and package her talk for adult consumption. In

marked contrast, the subjects in dyads or triads had a higher frequency of talk and spontaneous talk partly because the form of the sentence derived from within the pair or triad and not entirely from the adult interviewer. Subjects responded to peers' comments which generated further comments. Considerably more social experiences were communicated in the pairs and triad conditions. Thus, the pilot data implied that different interviewing situations mediated responses to television. Accordingly, in the present study, subjects were interviewed in pairs.

## PRESENT RESEARCH

Pilot Data

The pilot data revealed that issues of sexuality, and the physical, visual, and verbal objectification of females were salient issues and of concern to adolescent girls ages eleven through sixteen. The sexual theme was revealed by general talk about, and reactions to, secondary sexual characteristics, the treatment of females by males and vice versa, and relationships with the other sex. Specific sexual themes were represented by specific statements or stretches of talk, for example, "Whoa, look at that girl's chest!," "Miss October's boobs are so disgusting...huge!," "They're looking at girls' boobs," "They [boys] ask stupid questions like, 'Oh, do you like have your period' and all that stuff," "...girls...they like have more problems, like they have to wear a bra, or they have to have like a period or something like that." Themes of the objectification of females were revealed by general talk about how males treat females. Specific themes of the objectification of females were represented by specific anecdotes, statements, and opinions, for example, "They [boys] go around snapping your bra...they do it to me all the time, they unsnapped it," "It's

always nice to have something nice said about you, but it's another thing to have somebody look at [body] parts or something like that," "They [tv programs] want to make a good point, not that women are like just here for...sex objects." The salience of themes organized around sexuality and objectification was further supported by the actual proportion of talk that directly expressed concerns about sexuality and objectification, making indirect references to issues of sexuality and objectification, or explicit agreement with another's comments about those issues. In accordance with Gilligan's (1990a) findings, the results of the pilot study showed different levels of interpretive sophistication among participants. The occurrence of particular themes differed among age groups, with the voices of eleven, fourteen, and sixteen year olds resounding themes to varying degrees. For 11-12 year old girls (N=3), 53% of responses, (coded as a word, sentence or phrase, agreement with or acknowledgement of a sexual/objectification-related word, sentence, or phrase), were organized around sexuality and objectification; for the only 13 year old girl, 16% of responses were organized as such; for 14 year old girls (N=3), 57% of responses; for 15 year old girls (N=2),

76% of responses; and for 16 year olds (N=2), 42% of responses. Accordingly, segments from two prime-time television shows involving issues of sexuality and the objectification of females were used to focus the research on the variety of girls' experiences which involved sexuality and objectification, and to gain insight into adolescent girls' responses to particular presentations and treatments of females on television.

#### Explanation of Empirically Derived Categories

In the present study, the following terms and definitions, with supporting examples, applied:

Objectification of Females. The physical and/or non-physical positioning of a female which emphasizes and embodies her sex, gender, and sexuality, thus granting her sex, gender, and sexuality a material reality to be acted upon by an acting subject. The female is positioned as an object to receive carnal attentions based on an acting subject's desire for aspects of the female object's sex, gender, and sexuality. Treatment of a female as a non-person and "not formally acknowledged as a co-participant in social interactions; and her sexuality, as opposed to personal or professional characteristics, is the topic of discourse" (Gruber, 1992, p. 457). According to Bartky,

"a person is sexually objectified...when her sexual parts or sexual functions are separated out from the rest of her personality and reduced to the status of mere instruments, or else regarded as if they were capable of representing her...Such parts are not regarded as aesthetic objects, of intrinsic, not instrumental value...the sex object is not an aesthetic object, since her value is in her instrumental ability to sexually stimulate or attract others...taking the sexual part of a person for the whole" (Lemoncheck, 1985, p. 107).

Categories of the objectification of females in the present study were:

Physical. Sexual touching, for example males attempting to touch females on the chest area, buttocks, and external genital area. "Violations of personal space and attempts to...have physical contact" (Gruber, 1992, p. 457).

Visual. Males staring at females; females being the general object of male gaze or specific parts of the female anatomy being the specific object of male gaze. Examples of visual objectification in the present study were the use of sexual materials such as calendars

with pictures of unclothed women or women in bathing suits; Playboy centerfolds - "...like all she resembled was her nakedness." "...like she wasn't a person, she was just a naked person in a magazine."

Verbal. "Comments or questions of a nonsolicitory nature...includes jokes, teasing, questions about sexuality or appearance" (Gruber, 1992, p. 457); Unauthorized references to female anatomy and biology, for example, "Have you had your period, yet?," "They'll like go ahead and say like something like about boobs," "Did ya see her, did you see her shirt, see her chest?"; Sexual directives such as "Let's talk about sex, baby," "My friend wants a blow job"; Wolfcalls "made by a man to express his admiration of a sexually attractive woman" (Guralnik, 1972, p. 1635); An adolescent girl's comment about male's discussion of a nude centerfold model, "He was talking about her like she was...an object...rather than a person...he was just thinking about her body." Use of diminutives is another form of verbal objectification, for example, "Hey, chiquita;" "baby."

Resignation. Resignation referred to the submission to a particular circumstance, condition, or event, for

example, "That's just the way things are," "There's nothing you can do about it."

Resistance. Resistance referred to a confrontation with, and/or rejection of, behaviors reflective of a negative stereotype based on sex, gender, sexual identity or other differences from cultural norms. "Self-determination through confrontation and repudiation of oppressive attempts to demean self" (Robinson & Ward, 1991, p. 99). An example of a physical act of resistance would be to "...slap him across the face..." Verbal acts of resistance include saying, "Get away," "Leave her alone, if you like her, talk to her, don't be like whistling at her, looking her up and down, head to toe." Visual acts of resistance involve glaring or rolling eyes upward. Less direct forms of resistance would be to ignore or assume a moral posture. For example, "I just try to ignore, if you pay attention to it, the more they'll do it;" "It's a little degrading."

The themes which emerged from the pilot interviews and which guided the participants' interpretations of the television programs had their bases in social experiences and shared socio-cultural understandings.

Thus, an understanding of adolescent girls' interpretations of television is incomplete without an awareness and appreciation of their social experiences.

## HYPOTHESES TESTED AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

### General Hypothesis

Based on Gilligan's (1990) findings of different levels of interpretive sophistication among her adolescent participants, it was expected that adolescent girls' reactions to, and talk about, the objectification of females would be qualitatively different at ages 11, 13, and 16; that their themes and sub-themes of talk would vary significantly as a function of age.

An additional analysis was performed to identify the social context of adolescent girls' experiences of objectification, resistance, and resignation.

### Specific Hypotheses

1. The theme of resistance to the objectification of females will emerge with greater frequency from the talk of eleven year old girls than from thirteen year old girls. There was not an a priori hypothesis regarding sixteen-year-old girls.

2. The theme of resignation to the objectification of females will emerge with significantly less frequency from the talk of eleven year old girls than from the talk of thirteen and sixteen year old girls.

3. Girls with a higher self-esteem index will have significantly higher rates of resistance than girls with a lower self-esteem index.

#### Research Questions

The following were questions of interest for which there was no basis for prediction at the time the study was being developed and, therefore, were not put into formal hypotheses:

1. Girls who have entered into a level of social involvement with boys will be more likely to engage in resignation: The greater the social involvement with boys, the greater the resignation.

2. Adolescent girls who select a non-stereotypical, non-gender-specific occupation, will be less likely to engage in resignation than girls who do not select a stereotypical, gender-specific occupation.

## METHOD

Participants

Sixty adolescent females were interviewed, divided equally across ages 11.0 - 12.0, 13.0 - 13.11, and 16.0 - 17.0, twenty participants in each group. Participants for the present study were from racially and socioeconomically mixed communities in suburban and upstate New York. According to the participants' self-identification, they had the following racial/ethnic composition: 1 Asian, 6 African-Americans, 4 American Indian-African-American, 1 Hispanic, 1 Slovenian, 3 Italians, and 44 Caucasians. Although the majority of participants resided in the same county, these participants represented a variety of socioeconomic levels ranging from lower-class to upper-middle-class and represented an economic cross-section of the New York suburban area population. The county is not comprised of a homogeneous socioeconomic status and is not comprised completely of white, middle class families. Twenty percent of the sample in the present study was comprised of other than white American middle-class girls. Fifteen percent of all students enrolled in Suburban or Rural New York State Public School Districts are other than white (1997, State Education Department).

All participants in the present study attended New York State Public Schools.

Participants were obtained through a local YWCA, which conducted athletic, after-school, and camp programs for adolescent girls, and a daycare center which provided names of local highschool girls. Additional participants were obtained through snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is a means of finding participants for a study whereby one starts with a member of a targeted group and asks that person for the name of a friend, neighbor, relative, or colleague. To avoid the bias sometimes inherent in this sampling method where all the snowballs and participants within a snowball are somewhat connected, more than one snowball was used to create a group. Some girls were located through friends of participants located through the daycare center, the school honor roll honorees list published in the newspaper and their schoolmates, and adolescent girls who signed up, with parental permission, on a sheet of paper posted in a doctor's office soliciting participants. Some of the dyads consisted of girls who knew each other through school and were friends who shared the same social circle or they knew each other from being involved in the same

athletic activity. Other girls within dyads knew each other peripherally from school or athletic activities.

Participants were asked to note their ethnicity. Ethnicity refers to social and cultural characteristics, for example, shared cultural activities. Race refers to a group with specific physical characteristics. The girls chose to identify themselves as either Asian, African-American, American Indian-African-American, Hispanic, or Caucasian, which would all be considered both ethnic and racial categories. The other categories the girls chose for self-identification were Slovenian and Italian, which would be considered ethnic groups.

Prior to participation in the current study, written informed consent was obtained from each participant's parent or legal guardian. A parent or legal guardian was given a written statement which disclosed the various aspects of the study and the purpose of the study.

The present study was conducted in a private, quiet office of the YWCA, private medical doctor's office, or the researcher's private office.

### Measures

The girls responses to and interpretations of selected prime-time programs, were categorized along the

dimensions of resistance or resignation. Their social experiences were identified and age-related changes in responses and interpretations were identified.

According to Brown (1990b), "Feminist researchers, theorists, and critics favour research methods which empower the subjects, which are often non-quantitative and which avoid hierarchies" (p. 16). Accordingly, a semi-structured open-ended interview of pairs was developed and used to allow the girls to tell their own story. This method respected each girl's personal experience, their own telling of their experiences, their constructed meanings, however complex and contradictory, and was the basis for any analysis and conclusions. The interviews lasted approximately one and one-half hours.

How television programs related to the lived experience of adolescent female viewers could not be surmised from the programs alone. Thus, to obtain a richer view of this relationship, it was important to enter the worlds of the adolescent girls who watched television. Several measures were employed. The first measure was a verbal open-ended Interview Guide consisting of eight questions designed to measure responses to television portrayals. Appendix A is the

Interview Guide that was used in the present study. Questions ranged from general questions regarding the television program and progressed to more specific questions regarding details of the program, and culminating with a question assessing the subjects' specific thoughts and feelings about her observations. The literature on television, adolescent girls and resistance, conformity, and self-esteem served as a guide for the construction of the open-ended interview questions. The questions were intended to uncover changes in interpretive voice which co-existed with changes in other areas of adolescent development and to illuminate the socially mediated aspect of the interpretation of television content. Other researchers have concluded that an instrument of this design is well suited to this age group. One of the main values of this type of interview instrument is the possibility it opens of tapping into personal and observed lived experience.

The open-ended interviews were transcribed verbatim and the transcripts were coded and scored. Pairs of participants received one point for each turn of talk coded as variable-supporting. A turn of talk was defined as when a participant stopped speaking or her stream of talk was interrupted. Each score corresponded

to one of the variables listed below. The frequencies of utterances identified as supporting a variable were tallied and divided by the total number of all coded variable-supporting turns of talk to derive a proportion score. For example, if a pair had 63 coded variable supporting turns of talk and 12 of those turns of talks were identified as Verbal Resistance, then the Verbal Resistance score was a proportion score of Verbal Resistance turns of talk/Total Coded turns of talk, in this example the score was 19.16. The mean proportion scores were used in the statistical analyses of variance. The range of proportion scores for each variable were as follows:

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
Physical Resistance	.00	7.41
Verbal Resistance	.00	19.16
Visual Resistance	.00	4.35
Flee Resistance	.00	5.31
Moral Resistance	11.48	41.67
Ignoring Resistance	.00	4.00
Total Resistance	16.07	52.36
Resignation	.00	14.69
In-school Personal Experience	.00	11.13
In-school Observed Experience	.00	17.68

Non-school Personal Experience .00	6.18
Non-school Observed Experience .00	4.35

The second instrument was a written questionnaire consisting of three questions which measured self-esteem. Appendix B is the self-esteem questionnaire that was used in the present study. The questions were adapted from the American Association of University Women Report (1991) on self-esteem entitled How Schools Shortchange Girls; A Study of Major Findings on Girls and Education. These core questions were chosen because their responses showed marked differences across ages in self-esteem and because they dealt directly with self-acceptance and self-appreciation, perceptions of personal physical appearance, and perceptions of the quality of personal emotional state. The pencil-and-paper forced-choice responses were scored on a Likert scale with scores ranging from one to five. The responses, with corresponding scores in parenthesis, consisted of Always True (5), Sort of True (4), Sometimes True/Sometimes False (3), Sort of False (2), Always False (1). The mean of the two scores for each pair of participants was used in the analyses and entered as either a high or low self esteem score. The median score was used as criterion for determining whether a self esteem score was categorized as high or

low. A score at or above the median point was entered as high self esteem; a score below the median point was entered as low self esteem. If two answers were circled for the same question, the mean of the two answers was used.

The third instrument was a written social questionnaire consisting of seventeen questions. As there did not exist a social questionnaire suitable for use in the present study, it was necessary to design one. Appendix C is the social questionnaire that was used in the present study. It was expected that the written responses to the social questionnaire, entitled, "Who Are You Socially," would provide a context of the girls' social life. Girls were asked questions about their social activities, social companions, location of social activities, and the perceived quality of their social interactions and experiences. The questionnaire consisted of a combination of paper-and-pencil forced-choice response questions and pencil-and-paper essay type open-ended questions. The movement of the questionnaire was from the general to the more specific beginning with questions regarding their social life in general, moving toward questions regarding specific social activities to opinions regarding specific

activities. To answer the research questions, four questions were chosen for analyzing girls social involvement with boys. Two questions dealt with "hanging out with boys" and two questions dealt with "intimacy with boys." Responses to each of the four questions were scored one point for indicating hanging out with boys or intimacy with boys, or zero points for the absence of hanging out with boys or intimacy with boys. Scores ranged from 0.00 - 4.00 for "Hanging Out with Boys;" 0.00 - 4.00 for "Intimacy with Boys;" and from 1.00 - 8.00 for "Total Social Involvement" combination score. Pairs of participants were categorized as Level I (No Hanging Out with Boys; No Intimacy with Boys), Level II (Somewhat Hanging Out with Boys; Somewhat Intimate with Boys), or Level III (Total Hanging Out with Boys; Total Intimacy with Boys).

The fourth instrument was an Occupations/Activities Survey generated from the questionnaire question "What would you like to be when you become an adult?" The various responses to this question were put in list form and twenty high school students in grades nine through twelve, ten males and ten females, rated the occupations as either a primarily male or female occupation. The ratings were used to categorize each pair's responses to

the original questionnaire question into one of the three following categories: Female only (Category 1), Partial female (Category 2), Non-female (3). For example, if both girls in a pair stated an occupation choice that was considered by their peers to be performed primarily by females, the pair was placed in Category 1. If one girl in a pair stated a choice that was considered to be performed primarily by females and the other girl in the pair stated a choice that was considered to be performed primarily by males, the pair was placed in Category 2. If both girls in the pair stated a choice that was considered to be performed primarily by males, the pair was placed in Category 3. The three categories were then reduced to two categories by characterizing the Partial-female category (2) as a Female-only category (1), thereby collapsing Categories 1 and 2 into one Female-only category.

#### Materials

Equipment included one portable 13 inch color television, one video cassette player, one high output high resolution TDK VHS video cassette containing a sixteen minute composite of two prime-time television programs, one two-track portable tape recorder and player with two external Omni collar microphones.

At least one study (Christian-Smith, 1990) has shown that the content of girls' interpretations to romance fiction was independent of race and class, however, Press (1991) found that women's responses to television characters and narrative were mediated by class differences. The findings from these two studies conflicted with one another and demonstrated the unresolved issue of race and class. Therefore, for the present study, there was no basis for hypothesizing race or class as mediating variables. Accordingly, a mixed race and class composite video of two popular prime-time television programs was used.

Based on the Nielsen ratings indicating that over one million adolescent girls watch prime-time television nightly (Steenland, 1988a), the television programs were chosen generally on the basis of being prime-time programs which featured adolescents as weekly central characters. The specific episodes were selected because the story lines addressed the issues of sexuality and gender relations which the pilot study demonstrated to be of importance to adolescent females. The first segment was from an episode of a popular prime-time program, Fresh Prince of Bel Air. The story opens at the beginning of the school year when a traditionally

all-male preparatory school, Bel Air Prep, enrolled female students for the first time in the school's history. The main characters were two adolescent boys and an adolescent girl from the same household. The two boys had attended the school prior to the school becoming coeducational. The remainder of the story revolved around boys' reactions to girls on campus and their treatment of the girls. The second segment was from an episode from another popular prime-time program, Blossom. The story opens with a young adult male telling his younger adolescent brother the details of administering the life-saving cardiopulmonary resuscitation technique (CPR) to a nude female centerfold model who was choking on a chicken bone. The remainder of the story revolved around the reactions of the male members of the household to the story and to a magazine centerfold layout of the nude model. The story culminates with twelve female centerfold models, one for each month of the year, arriving at the home of the two brothers. Segments from each show were combined into one video presentation to equalize the possible confounding influences and dominance of any one particular program.

### Procedure

Given that peer interaction is increasingly being acknowledged in the construction of knowledge and the recognition of "the change in individual behavior brought about by interaction with others in socially, historically, and culturally embedded contexts" (Bearison, 1991, p. 57) the participants for the present study were interviewed in pairs. Sixty girls, ages 11, 13, and 16, were interviewed once after viewing a composite video of segments from two popular prime-time television programs featuring adolescents in the main story line. Viewing time was sixteen minutes. After the viewing session, subjects were led into a tape recorded, informal discussion session using the interview schedule guide (see Appendix A). They were then asked to respond to the two written questionnaires which explored their social experiences and self-esteem. Each of the sessions, which included viewing the television program, the open-ended verbal interview, and answering the two written questionnaires on self-esteem and social life lasted approximately one-and-one-half to two hours.

### Treatment of the Data

Appendix D is the Coding Manual that was used for the present study. It described the purpose of the study and outlined the sequence of the procedures used. The Coding Manual contained precise definitions and specific examples of terms used in the present study. Tape recorded interviews were transcribed and the written text coded by the following theme and sub-theme categories defined in the chapter, "Explanation of Empirically Derived Categories," and the Coding Manual.

#### (I) Objectification of Females

##### A. Specific instances of objectification

1. Physical
2. Verbal
3. Visual

##### B. Reactions to objectification

1. Resistance
  - a. Physical
  - b. Verbal
  - c. Visual
  - d. Ignoring
  - e. Moral Stance
2. Resignation

(II) Social Context of Experiences of Objectification

A. School-based personal experiences

B. School-based observed experiences

C. Non-school-based personal and/or observed experiences

The basic unit of analysis was a stream of talk by a member of a dyad. Within the stream of talk was coded either a word, sentence, or phrase which made direct or indirect reference to, agreement with, acknowledgement or explanation of resistance or resignation to the objectification of females. Resistance was assigned to one or more of the following categories: physical resistance, verbal resistance, visual resistance, flee resistance, ignoring resistance, or moral resistance. Resistance was represented as a word, sentence, or phrase which directly or indirectly expressed disagreement/confrontation with attempted or completed acts of the objectification of females. Ignoring was represented by attempts to fail to recognize or notice the objectifier and/or act of objectification. Moral resistance was represented by comments which assigned attributions of degradation or virtuousness to the objectifier and/or act of objectification. Resignation was represented by comments which imparted an inability

or lack of agency to initiate remediation on the speaker's behalf.

Social context was categorized as a school-based personal experience, school-based observed experience, non-school-based personal experience, or non-school-based observed experience. Talk related to social experience was represented by direct reference to a personal or observed experience of objectification, for example, "I have had many of those experiences," or "...they do that to [X]."

Each dyad was treated as one voice.

The following excerpts from interviews provided supporting evidence for the existence of the various forms of resistance:

#### Physical Resistance

The following interview excerpts demonstrated the presence of the subtheme of physical resistance:

#### Dyad 13

11a: "But, if they touch me, I'mma hit 'em back."

Interviewer: "Have you ever observed that happening to anybody?"

11a: "Yeah".

Interviewer: "Tell me about that."

11a: "...like my friend she was walkin' in the cafeteria and she left the cafeteria and went in the hallway and this boy ran up to her and grabbed her on the butt, right? And she jumped around and she punched him in his face and all his friends started laughin' and stuff."

Interviewer: "What do you think of that, what she did, how she handled it?"

11a: "Phhff, I think she was right. I would hurt him more than that."

Interviewer: "How about you. Have you observed situations like that?"

11b: "Yeah...This girl, she gave him a hug, and every single time that she gave him a hug he started touching her butt, so when he did it to this girl she kicked him in his balls and he started hitting her on all different parts of her body parts and she got mad at him and hit him back."

Interviewer: "What did you think of that?"

11b: "I think he shouldn't have did that. I think she was right in doing what she did to him."

Interviewer: "If you were in that situation, how would you have handled it?"

11b: "I would do the exact same thing."

Dyad 17

Interviewer: "How about you? What happened with you and your friend when you were getting chased?"

11a: "...they'll catch us, but then I'll, I'll, I hit them; I scratch them with my ring."

11b: "He chase girls cuz, you know, this girl, XX, slapped him."

Interviewer: "Why did she slap him?"

11b: "Becuz he tried to feel her butt one time..., so she was like, "Why are you touching my butt?!" and she was like, "BAMM!" (makes hitting motion).

Interviewer: "Have you ever had any of those experiences with guys, with boys trying to touch you?"

11b: "I'll beat up them."

Interviewer: "Have you observed other girls in that situation. How did they handle it?"

11b: "They smack 'em, they hit 'em, they don't care...they smack 'em, they hit, they just start smackin' 'em and stuff like that."

Interviewer: "What would you do in that situation?"

11b: "Smack 'em."

11a: "Smack 'em."

11b: "They don't, they don't want you to kick 'em where, you know, the sun don't shine, but they will touch you

any kind of way they want to...Cuz I kicked this boy in the um where the sun don't shine AND to the moon...And I kicked him...and I set out 'Bamm!' right in his um, you know, penis."

#### Verbal Resistance

The following interview excerpts demonstrated the presence of the subtheme of verbal resistance:

#### Dyad 11

16a: "Look, first of all, if you're gonna talk to me, you know, address me correctly. My name isn't 'Baby...'

16b: "...or they'll tell you that they're a real man, you know, just stupid stuff like that; You be like, 'Oh, no, not even!...'...this one guy walked up to me and told me, "'Oh, Baby, you like a hamburger waitin' to be eaten.' I just looked at him and said, 'WHAT!...'...and I just turned around and walked away..."

#### Dyad 25

16a: "And then only one girl stood up for herself by saying like, 'If you would talk to me normally, you know, I would maybe talk back to you instead of like hitting on me and saying I look like this'... I wouldn't even stop and give them the time of day in the hallway to even say hi to them. I'd be like, 'You're a fucking',

excuse me, 'You're a fucking asshole...get the hell out of here.'.. I'd be like, 'What the fuck!'"

16b: "What! I'd be like, 'What are you doing?!...Go away.'"

16a: "...this one guy came in [the bar] and he was, he, it was his bachelor party and he handed me a condom...and I go, 'Oh, no, no, no.' I was drunk, I'm like, 'Oh, no, no, I don't want it...'"

16a: "...this other guy, too, and I told them like, 'Get away from me'...He started putting his arm on my shoulder and rubbing my neck a little and...I'm like, 'I'm going home with my friends, we don't live around here, it's a far ride'...and he's like, 'Can I have your phone number?' and I was like, 'NO.' I turned around and...he went over to the girl next to me, my friend, and started doing the same thing to her and I...turned around and said, 'You know what! JUST GET AWAY! JUST LEAVE THE THREE OF US ALONE, PLEASE! YOU'RE MAKING ME SICK!'"

16b: "If it was in school, I'd be like, 'I gotta go to class.' I'd be like, 'Shut up!'...Maybe yell a little or something, say something."

16a: "Yes, I stick up for myself, like, 'You're such an asshole,' you know, 'Why,' you know, 'What the fuck?'"

Ignoring Resistance

The following interview excerpts demonstrated the presence of ignoring resistance:

Dyad 11

16b: "And meanwhile, I wasn't answering them and they're going 'psss, psss, psss,' you know, I just don't like that. But, I think one of the guys, yeah, it was one of 'em, he finally had sense to realize that, you know, I wasn't going to answer to them that way..."

16a: " Um, I don't remember word for [word], cuz I usually ignore them, like I'll be paying attention [to dancing] and they'll just be talking in one ear and out the other...I dunno, I try not to catch an attitude, but I just ignore it."

Dyad 29

16b: "...like everywhere I looked they were like all saying stuff about her [my friend's] chest...but my friend she just said like she just was used to it by now and she just ignores it...My [male] friends never really say anything to me and if it's someone else I usually just ignore them...I think it's better just to ignore them.

16a: "MmmHmmm [agrees].

Moral Resistance

The following interview excerpts demonstrated the presence of moral resistance:

Dyad 3

11b: "Well, the boys, like they...they just cared what they [girls] looked like and not at the inside, you know, how nice they were and everything, they just cared what they looked like and I think that was wrong because someone could be really nice and like not have a nice body but then think of somebody who has a nice body and mean, but then, but then like no one ever gets to know that person, maybe there is a person with a nice body but they're, but they're nice but no one ever really got to know them well, you know, and I, I, I, I think that's mean."

11a: "Well, I think they [boys] were like rude and everything because they um, they didn't get to know 'em [girls] and like they didn't just like one girl, like everyone who had a nice body they'd run after 'em, like they didn't just pick one person that they thought was nice, because they couldn't, because they didn't know how they really were. So you can't pick someone if you don't know how they really are, and they'd, they'd run

up, they'd just chase after them and like they wouldn't talk to them, like."

Dyad 15

13b: "They just want the girl with the biggest butt and the biggest chest, but they don't really know that person inside, and I think if they knew a person inside better, they would like them better. The only thing they see is the outside, not the inside...I don't like it...they all go for the girl with the biggest chest and the biggest butt who dressed the best in school and I know that's not right..."

13a: "I mean, they're going after the girls that look better on the outside. I mean, pretty girls can be total jerks and not so pretty girls can be really sweet, you know. I mean, if a boy ends up with a jerk, that's his problem...It's [objectification] sickening almost."

Resignation

The following interview excerpts demonstrated the presence of resignation:

Dyad 37

13b: "But it's almost like, I don't know, but it's almost like, I don't know, it's just like that's the way. It's almost like they set the way and I don't even know how they do it. You know, how do they get so

dominate over, over like the female?..."It's, you don't even know how it starts. It [objectification] just like gradually happens."

13a: "What else do I do? I don't know, it's just so bad."

#### Dyad 23

16a: "I dunno, I guess guys are like that."

16b: "Alot, it's just usual...It's just, it's, it's expected, kind of. By everyone. You just, that's how they are, guys are, I think. "

Interviewer: "That's how guys are?"

16a: "MmmHmmm [yes]."

16b: "That's just..."

16a: "Most of 'em...I'm just used to it, I guess. It's kind of normal, it's like that in all schools."

#### Interrater Reliability

Interrater reliability between two coders of interviews was assessed at the level of accurate, identical coding of the six categories of Resistance, Resignation, and the four categories of Social Context of Objectification. The evaluation of the participants' coded responses by one coder was examined to determine whether the other coder agreed. Interrater reliability of the coding judgements of the two coders was assessed

for twenty percent of the interviews ( $n = 6$ ) and calculated as the number of coding judgement agreements divided by the sum of coding judgement agreements plus coding judgement disagreements.

The first coder was the researcher who conducted the study. The second coder was a college graduate with graduate school experience in the social sciences. The second coder was given the Coding Manual and the Definition of Terms applicable to the present study. The coder was trained by the researcher on two interviews which were not part of the interrater reliability sample.

Agreements on the set of Resistance coding judgements were as follows: Total Resistance, 88%; Physical Resistance, 86%; Verbal Resistance, 91%; Visual Resistance, 100%; Flee Resistance, 81%; Moral Resistance, 91%; Ignoring Resistance, 62%. Agreement on the set of Resignation coding judgements was 88%.

Agreements on the set of Social Context of Objectification coding judgements were as follows: School-personal, 87%; School-observed, 65%; Non-school Personal, 86%; Non-school-observed, 89%.

## RESULTS

Resistance - Hypothesis 1

A one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at three levels of age as the independent variable was performed on the Subjects' mean composite Resistance scores. Results of the one-way ANOVA were not significant.

A 3 x 6 Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) at three levels of age as the independent variable was performed on the mean proportion scores for the six dependent Resistance variables and yielded a significant result,  $F(2,27) = 3.04$ , ( $p < .003$ ). The six dependent Resistance variables were: Physical Resistance, Verbal Resistance, Visual Resistance, Flee Resistance, Moral Resistance and Ignore Resistance. Student-Newman-Keuls post hoc analyses indicated that 16-year-old and 13-year-old girls had significantly higher proportions of Verbal Resistance coded turns of talk than 11-year-old girls ( $p < .05$ ), ( $M = 8.90, 7.15$  vs.  $3.03$ ). Figure 1 shows the mean proportion of Resistant coded turns of talk for each age group.

Resignation - Hypothesis 2

A one-way ANOVA at three levels of age as the independent variable performed on the Subjects' mean Resignation scores yielded a significant result,  $F$

(2,27) = 8.60, ( $p < .001$ ). Student-Newman-Keuls post hoc analyses indicated that 16-year-old and 13-year-old girls had a significantly higher proportion of Resignation coded turns of talk than 11-year-old girls ( $p < .05$ ), ( $M = 7.57, 6.44$  vs. 0.90). Figure 2 shows the mean proportion of Resignation coded turns of talk for each age group. Table 1 summarizes the mean Resistance and Resignation responses of each age group. Table 2 displays the correlation coefficients for the Resistance and Resignation dependent variables.

#### Self-esteem and Resistance - Hypothesis 3

A one-way ANOVA at three levels of age as the independent variable performed on the subjects' mean scores for self-esteem did not yield significant results.

After transforming self-esteem into a categorical variable, a one-way ANOVA at two levels of self-esteem (high self-esteem, low self-esteem) as the independent variable was performed on the subjects' mean resistance scores. Results were not significant. Having high or low self-esteem did not have any effect on Resistance.

## Research Questions

### Social Involvement and Resignation -

#### Research Question 1

A one-way Anova at three levels of age as the independent variable performed on the participants' mean scores for the dependent variable Total Social Involvement with Boys yielded a significant result,  $F(2,27) = 5.94$  ( $p < .007$ ). Student-Newman-Keuls post hoc analyses indicated that 16-year-old girls had significantly greater overall Total Social Involvement with Boys than 11-year-old girls and 13-year-old girls ( $p = < .05$ ), ( $M = 7.50$  vs.  $5.00, 5.30$ ). Figure 3 shows the Total Social Involvement with Boys score for all age groups.

A one-way ANOVA at three levels of age as the independent variable performed on the participants' mean scores for the dependent variable Social Involvement Hang out with Boys yielded a significant result,  $F(2,27) = 3.62$  ( $p < .04$ ). Student-Newman-Keuls post hoc analyses indicated that 16-year-old girls "Hang out with boys" significantly more often than 11-year-old girls ( $p = < .05$ ), ( $M = 4.00$  vs.  $2.70$ ). Figure 4 shows the Mean Hanging Out with Boys for each age group.

A one-way ANOVA at three levels of age as the independent variable performed on the participants' mean scores for the dependent variable Social Involvement Intimacy with Boys yielded a significant result,  $F(2,27) = 6.41, (p < .005)$ . Student-Newman-Keuls post hoc analyses indicated that 16-year-old girls were significantly more intimate with boys than 11-year-old girls and 13-year-old girls ( $p = < .05$ ), ( $M = 3.50$  vs.  $2.20, 2.20$ ). Figure 5 shows the mean Intimacy with Boys score for each age group. Table 3 summarizes the mean Social Involvement score per age group.

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient computed to measure the extent of the relationship between Resignation and Total Social Involvement with Boys was not significant, indicating that girls who entered into a particular level of social involvement with boys were not more or less likely to engage in Resignation.

#### Career Choice and Resignation - Research Question 2

A one-way ANOVA at two levels of Career Choice (gender-specific career choice, non-gender specific career choice) as the independent variable performed on the subjects' mean scores for the dependent variable Resignation did not yield significant results. The

analysis was performed to assess the relationship between Resignation and career choices. Adolescent girls who selected non-gender-specific occupations were not more or less likely to engage in Resignation than girls who selected gender-specific occupations.

### Social Context

A 3 x 4 MANOVA at three levels of age as the independent variable performed on the subjects' mean responses for four levels of the dependent variable Social Context yielded significant results,  $F(2,27) = 2.43$ , ( $p < .02$ ). The four levels were school-personal, non-school-personal, school-observed, and non-school-observed. Student-Newman-Keuls post hoc analyses indicated significant results for the school-observed social context and the non-school-observed social context. Eleven-year-old girls reported the school-observed context significantly more often than sixteen-year-old girls ( $p < .05$ ), ( $M = 6.95$  vs.  $1.57$ ). Results indicated that 11-year-old girls reported the non-school-observed context significantly more often than 13-year-old girls and 16-year-old girls ( $p < .05$ ), ( $M = 2.20$  vs.  $.85, .64$ ). Figure 6 shows the mean proportion of Social Context coded turns of talk for all age groups.

A Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was computed to assess the direction of the relationship between age and school-observed context,  $r = -.46$ , ( $p < .01$ ), indicating that the lower the age, the higher the reporting of school-observed objectification. A Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was computed to assess the direction of the relationship between age and non-school-observed context,  $r = -.45$ , ( $p < .01$ ), indicating that the lower the age, the higher the reporting of non-school-observed objectification. Table 4 summarizes the mean responses of each age group for all levels of social context.

## DISCUSSION

The results and the interpretation of results are organized by hypotheses and research questions.

### General Hypothesis

Based on Gilligan's (1990) findings of different levels of interpretive sophistication among her adolescent participants, it was expected that adolescent girls' reactions to, and talk about, the objectification of females would be qualitatively different at ages 11, 13, and 16; that their themes and sub-themes of talk would vary significantly as a function of age. In general, the results showed that adolescent girls' themes and subthemes of Resistance varied significantly as a function of age, however, not always in the expected direction. Specific hypotheses will be discussed below.

An additional analysis was performed to identify the social context of adolescent girls' experiences of objectification, resistance, and resignation. In general, adolescent girls' talk about their experiences of objectification, resistance, and resignation revealed that these experiences occurred in school and out of school. The lower the age, the higher was the rate of referring to observing other girls having these

experiences in and out of school. The responses of the specific age groups will be discussed in more detail below.

#### Specific Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: The theme of resistance to the objectification of females will emerge with greater frequency from the talk of eleven year old girls than from thirteen year old girls. There was not an apriori hypothesis regarding sixteen-year-old girls.

When all forms of Resistance were collapsed and the composite Resistance score was compared across ages, statistically significant differences were not found. Considering composite scores only, Resistance strength was present equally among eleven-year-old, thirteen-year-old, and sixteen-year-old girls. Not until the individual subthemes of Resistance were examined were age related differences in Resistance found. Specifically, it is within the subtheme of Verbal Resistance where age-related changes were observed. Within this subtheme, at age thirteen, adolescent girls were even more outspoken about objectification than eleven-year-old girls. At age sixteen, significantly greater outspokenness was observed. While the present study was not a replication of Gilligan's work (1990a;

Brown & Gilligan, 1992), her interviews and interpretations of adolescent girls served as a guide in developing Hypothesis One, specifically her observation that eleven and twelve-year-old girls were irreverently outspoken compared to thirteen-year-old girls, who were reluctant to claim their own knowledge, inclined to suppress what they did know, and drove their knowledge underground. These observations were not borne out by the present data for composite Resistance nor by the data for specific Verbal Resistance. With regard to composite Resistance, according to the data, it could be argued that overall Resistance was present as strongly in conforming thirteen-year-old girls as in Gilligan's irreverent eleven-year-old. It can also be argued that sixteen-year-old girls were holding onto their overall Resistance with the same tenacity as Gilligan's irreverent eleven-year-olds and Resistance did not pass through a period of retrenchment at age thirteen, as both Gilligan (1990a; 1990b) and the self-esteem literature predicted (Harter, 1990; Rosenberg, 1986); nor did it reemerge as uncertainty by late adolescence, as Gilligan observed. In support of Gilligan's irreverent and outspoken eleven-year-old, it could also be argued that age eleven is, indeed, the site of

nascent Resistance. However, such a claim cannot be made with any confidence without comparing the eleven-year-old girls to a younger age group.

Differences between the findings of the present study and Gilligan's work (1990a; Brown & Gilligan, 1992) could be attributed to methodological differences. Gilligan's work was a collaborative effort involving several researchers (Gilligan 1990a; Brown & Gilligan, 1992). Consequently, several different researchers/interviewers were involved in interviewing participants. In the present study, there was only one researcher-interviewer and presumably the same interview style prevailed across all interview situations. Gilligan's research design was longitudinal (1990a; Brown & Gilligan, 1992) which allowed the interviewers to revisit individual participants over a protracted period of time. In contrast, the present study was a cross-sectional design. The researcher/interviewer for the present study interviewed participants in dyads. Gilligan's work is primarily qualitative, a sentence completion task appears to be the only assessment instrument, and the responses obtained from the interviews were not quantified and subjected to any quantitative analysis. The present study quantified the

qualitative interview and attempted to locate measurable differences between age groups.

The daily environments experienced by the participants from each group were fundamentally different. The participants in Gilligan's collaborative work were residential students of an exclusive all-girls boarding school in Troy, New York and day students at an exclusive all-girls suburban private day school in Shaker Heights, Ohio (Gilligan, 1990a; Brown & Gilligan, 1992). Both of these schools were within an atmosphere of privilege not readily available to the participants of the present study. In contrast, participants in the present study all attended co-educational New York State Public Schools which drew primarily from socioeconomically and racially/ethnically diverse areas. It is quite possible that attending an all-girls educational institution, where encounters of objectification by boys is basically non-existent, serves as a buffer against the resigning and silencing experience of objectification and affords greater opportunities for mutual respect within relationships.

With regard to specific Verbal Resistance, not only did it not go underground following eleven-year-old

irreverence, it increased significantly at age thirteen and remained significant at age sixteen.

The results suggested that the open-ended interview was an effective measure of differences within specific subthemes. It was an instrument which readily lent itself to highlighting various forms of the objectification of females and the common responses to the objectification which served as markers of differences between age groups. The results showed that the thematic coding criteria selected to parse the stream of talk effectively brought forth significant differences between the age groups, albeit in an unexpected direction. Similar to Press' (1990) research in which an open-ended interviewing style was employed, the participants in the present study were also able to talk about television and their lives in an unconstrained manner which brought forth revealing views about what the girls were experiencing. The following interview excerpts show that the girls were all experiencing objectification on some level:

From an eleven-year-old dyad:

Yeah...like my friend she was walkin' in the cafeteria and went in the hallway and this boy ran up to her and grabbed her on the butt,

right? And she jumped around and she punched him in his face and all his friends started laughin' and stuff... This girl she gave him a hug, and every single time that she gave him a hug, he started touching her butt...He chase girls cuz, you know, this girl slapped him...becuz he tried to feel her butt one time.

From a thirteen-year-old dyad:

"Yeah, they [boys] just make comments on the way somebody looks ...just about a person's body or whatever...their boobs, their chest, yeah...just commenting on the way she looks or just the size of her chest or whatever. He just comments and says things, you know, and even does things. He like puts his arm around her, or somebody else, and he even does it to me sometimes...that happens alot on the [school] bus...[They] both said, 'Oh, will you marry me' and all this stuff like that and they just wouldn't end it...He had like a tic tac in his mouth and he kept saying, 'Oh, do you want it, do you want it?' [sticking his tongue

out] and he kept doing that a few times and finally I just hit him and I said some choice words."

From a sixteen-year-old-dyad:

My parents have this small apartment building in the city and I had to go and paint the fence...I bent over just to touch the bottom of the fence...every like two seconds like the guys would go by and beep the horn and whistle out of the car.

The following interview excerpts show that within each age group girls demonstrated the ability to verbally resist forms of objectification:

From an eleven-year-old dyad:

He's like, '[she] got a big butt', and stuff like that. 'Oh, I like girls with big butts and big titties' and stuff like that...I'm like, 'Shut Up'...They be like, 'She's a B-I-T-C-H and stuff like that, they be calling me a dog and stuff like that and then they be like, 'Oh, a TomGirl,' and

that's when I go off, and plus, I don't like when people call me a B-I-T-C-H.

From a thirteen-year-old dyad:

Personally, I speak my mind all the time and I don't let anybody change my mind and especially guys. I mean, I don't, like, you know, let them like talk me into things or anything like that...If I sit down and some guy puts their hand on my leg [I say] 'Bye' and I'm just like, 'Stop!'

From a sixteen-year-old dyad:

He's a real scumball, he really is. He goes up to my friend...he goes, 'Is that a mirror on your zipper cause I can see myself in your pants.' I was like, 'Alright, that's it. Bye-bye. That's really rude.' Like, guys will like give girls attention by like whistling at them...after a while, it's like, 'Alright!, 'Shut Up!', 'Get away from me!'

After the girls in the present study viewed the television programs, they talked about similar events in their own lives, which supported the conclusions of Christian-Smith's (1990) research on teenage girls' interpretations of romance fiction, namely, that a

relationship existed between the reader, the text and the context of the reader's life. In the present study, the relationship was between the television viewer, the television program, and the context of the viewer's life. Their understanding of the shows was informed by the experiential knowledge and resistance that they brought to their viewing experience and their ability to identify with the setting of the experiences of objectification. Consider the following comments from dyads from each age group about their interpretation of the televised shows:

From an eleven-year-old dyad:

Like Fresh Prince [television character], he was talkin' about like their butt and how they come to school and stuff like that...their breast and their butt that's what I think, and their legs. That's all they think about. That's all boys think about is their breast, their butt and their legs. That's what I think...Like, you know, when they went 'Hurt me, hurt me,' like, like, that is uncalled for, you know. Like, they don't have to say that, they can just go up to a girl and say, 'Oh, I like you' and stuff like that, they

don't gotta do all that. That's what that girl, Veronica [television character] was talkin' about because she didn't like the way boys came up and did that and stuff like that the way Will came up to her and all this...like, 'Ooh, baby, you on my mind,' and all this stuff...Like, she didn't like that and all this...and on Blossom [television show], those girls, I don't know what's wrong with them cuz I wouldn't like that. Cuz, see, he was just staring at them, I don't like, boys stare at you too much, you know...when they like, you know, like the way you dress, like the way you appear yourself somewhere, they stare at you like in a different way, like they droolin' over you and that's like, 'No, too heavy.' I think it's really, you know, uncalled for. It's the way they act when they get around girls and they shouldn't approach girls like that...He said, 'hurt me, hurt me' and the girl just looked at him...and she said, 'If you're going to talk to me, talk to me in a right way'...It was disgusting! Cuz the girl didn't like it, he liked it but she

didn't like it. Um, because the girls today they really don't like the way boys approaching them and stuff and the boys think it's very funny the way they approach, they like it's very helpful to like get a girlfriend and it's like, you know, the only thing they want is to touch her butt most of the time...We hear it a lot, we hear it a lot, yeah, in school, in school, it's like...but we hear it at like the park, there'll be a bunch of boys together and then like a girl will walk in, like they have these type of shorts they [boys] call 'booty cutters'...and they have tank tops on. And when the girls walk in, the boys like go up to her, they going 'Ooh, man, go up to her, just go up to her' and then he'll approach her like, 'Oh, hey baby, you lookin' fine,' like, they go [makes wolf whistle sound]...they, um, just like give you the wolf whistle like you a dog or something.

From an eleven-year-old dyad:

Well, I noticed that like both the shows are about women and like how man, men see women. See women, like, like when they see a woman

what they look, what they like notice first, like their body and how they look, like if they have like a big chest...They're [boys in school] like, they're really mean sometimes to my friend. They've never done this to me, but once they said that they were having a dream, that they were feeling my friend's chest and then they woke up and it was just the wall. And then, my other friend who's really big in the chest and they like always like ask her if they can touch, if they can touch them, and it's really gross and mean cuz, cuz, it's like they always do it and she feels so like dumb and used.

From a thirteen year-old dyad:

Well, all the guys [television characters] were sexist. They were just like when a girl just walked by they were like, 'Oh my God!' and they came up to the girl, saying, 'Hey, baby,' you know, 'You wanna be with me?' and they just think that the girls want to be with them and the girls they really don't and that one girl was pretty, like, she was right about saying what she said ['If you're going to talk

to me, talk to me in a right way']...and people, you know, they were laughing at it. It was funny when you were watching it, but if you actually think about it, it is serious...Actually, in the Fresh Prince of Bel Air [television show], like, what um, the girl did, that's like I think the thing that alot of girls do, especially like at our age...They're [television characters] being plain stupid, they're being sexist...I mean, when you act like that it's like I don't mean to be like, oh it's not civilized or whatever, but it's not like, there's no need for it. It's like, if there were a purpose, it would be like, oh okay, you know. But there's no, I mean, it's like, it's like someone, someone made them feel like they have to act like that and so they are...All the guys in our grade do...just how they acted on tv. If a girl come in like that, 'Oh my God!' Like, 'Hello,' stuff like that...He [boy at school] acts just like Will [television character]. Exactly like it...[He says] 'Schwing'...like, 'Schwing.' You know, when a guy um like gets

like, a boner...Or, they talk about, 'Wow, did you, did you see so and so today? She's looking good, looking hot. She's looking fine. Oh, yeah, look at that butt. I hear [boys] say that all the time, 'Look at that butt' if some girl walks by...He's [boy at school] like, if I was wearing a skirt he would come up to me and be like, 'Are you wearing any underwear?'...I was chewing on my pen, I always chew on my pens and he just comments about that like, 'Oh, that looks good, want to do that to me?' It [television characters' comments] wasn't appropriate. I just think that if you're at home and watching it, you know, ha ha, it's funny stuff like that, but if people actually ask you a question about it, that's the kind of stuff that gives people the idea that that's okay. I kind of wish we could give this [television program clip] to our guy friends, they don't know what girls go through at all.

From a sixteen-year-old dyad:

In the Fresh Prince of Bel Air, they were like, the guys were kinda um, like, choosing

which of the girls they thought were like the best and why and everything and, like, which one had the best body and what they like and the girls felt they were kinda being, felt like they were being degraded, and they were like fighting, like I guess discussing why they thought so and it, it's funny but I think kind of degrading to girls...

...the girl [television character] thought she got more respect when the guy talked to her like a normal being instead of like an object...and sort of like looked down at her. And she was like talking to him like, 'I'm a human being.' Kinda like the girl was saying how she wouldn't, she didn't wanna like have a relationship with him if she was going to be treated as only like a physical body, like, you know, a sex object...He didn't care like about her personality, he didn't know who she was, he just liked her for how she looked. Yeah. So he didn't really know if he like her or not. I don't think it's right...Like, that list - There was a list the other day in our school with the top like hottest 50 girls of

[our] school...They [boys on television show] they're like looking at all the girls and they're like yelling when they go by and the girls who they really think are pretty and they're rating them...I don't think it's right or whatever, but I'm sure alot of people do it...but like, I mean, I don't think like if I were, like I wouldn't like it if like a bunch of girls were walking by and like guys were screaming and stuff, like whatever. I think it's kind of degrading, I mean, guys yelling at girls and who's pretty and who's not...it's degrading, I think. It's obnoxious. ...like alot of guys at our school like sit on the benches and the girls walk by and stuff...you walk by and they're like, 'Ooooh, oooh,' they yell your name...or like whatever number you are on the list.

The above excerpts are consistent with Brown's (1990c) conclusions in her analysis of resistant interpretations of daytime television. She found that adolescent girls have an appreciation for female characters who are outspoken in the face of the expectation to be nice and silent. In the words of one

of Brown's participants, "...the power of the women seems to have to do with their mouths." In the present study, girls in all age groups spoke in positive, approving terms of the female character in the Fresh Prince of Bel Air excerpt who verbally resisted the male character's verbal objectification of her. The male character proceeded as if the female character was culturally positioned to receive his comments as complimentary, reflecting the state of the relationship of adolescent girls vis-a-vis adolescent boys which speaks to the larger question of girls relationship to their culture. The findings for Verbal Resistance indicated that adolescent girls were quite capable of abandoning the quiet, acquiescent route in favor of a more instrumental and active response to objectification; thirteen-year-old and sixteen-year-old girls were more outspoken than the eleven-year-old girls.

Hypothesis 2: The theme of resignation to the objectification of females will emerge with significantly less frequency from the talk of eleven year old girls than from the talk of thirteen and sixteen year old girls.

Although thirteen-year-old and sixteen-year-old girls were significantly higher in Verbal Resistance than eleven-year-old girls, they were also significantly higher than eleven-year-old girls in Resignation. This particular finding suggested that between eleven and thirteen years of age, girls come into conflict with themselves - perhaps because for at least two years they have been pushed up against the wall of socially constructed prescriptive gender relations. They are persistent in verbally resisting their cultural positioning as recipients of objectification, yet, they are accepting this positioning as status quo and seriously question their ability to effect change. Future studies will contribute to determining whether or not this is a fixed or transient state of disenfranchisement.

An interesting contrast emerged between the statements of an eleven-year-old dyad and a sixteen-year-old dyad which was emblematic of the state of Resignation for each group:

From an eleven-year-old dyad: "Like, just say, 'Don't, don't look at me for my body and look at me, look at my brain instead." From a sixteen-year-old dyad: "He's just a guy...all guys look at girls. It's like a guy,

he'll look at a good-looking girl, you know...[he'll look at] her figure, what she looks like. Well, we know he's not looking at her brains." At eleven years of age, interactions between girls and boys are filled with the potential for the absence of objectification; at age sixteen, objectification is the given thread that is woven into the fabric of their relationships.

The findings on Resignation also speak to the relationship of the adolescent girl to her culture and whether she thinks of herself as possessing agency. Consider the following comments about male objectification of females: From a thirteen-year-old dyad: "...it's almost like, I don't know, but it's almost like, I don't know, it's just like that's the way. It's almost like they [males] set the way and I don't even know how they do it. You know, how do they get so dominate over, over like the female? It's, you don't even know how it starts. It just like gradually happens. What else do I do? I don't know. It's just so bad." From a sixteen-year-old dyad:

I guess it [television show] was just the typical guy scene. Yeah. It was degrading to women. Yeah. It was just so degrading to them, but that's, that's...But that's like so

like typical of how tv shows it and like that's how most guys I know are. Yeah, like all our friends...Typical guy scene...if they see a girl walking by, they'll make a comment or they'll say something and we'll have to like slap them or something, you know, like, come on, 'Don't say things like that!'...I get that all the time, I mean, just from guys in general. But, even when I'm with my boyfriend, and other girls pass by, he'll be like, he'll say stuff about them, I mean, just joking, but - Oh, he'll be like, oh, you know, like, 'Nice ass' or he'll just say stuff like that and all the guys do, you know.

Hypothesis 3: Girls with a higher self-esteem index will have significantly higher rates of resistance than girls with a lower self-esteem index.

The question remains as to why having high or low self-esteem did not have any effect on Resistance. It could be argued that the assessment instrument was weak in that it did not consist of enough questions which accessed the various dimensions of self-esteem and lacked construct validity. At the time of the limited question selection from the AAUW (1991) self-esteem

battery, there did not exist any evidence that the questions, although limited in quantity, lacked construct validity. The self-esteem battery was part of a large nationwide study of 3,000 children commissioned by the American Association of University Women and contracted out to Greenburg-Lake: The Analysis Group. Greenburg-Lake used factor analysis to probe certain constructs and to look at the underlying dimensions across questions. Presumably, the test constructors and administrators who collaborated with the State Assessment Center at the Council of Chief State School Officers and with the National Association of State Boards of Education, were familiar with issues of face and construct validity. While it could be argued that more traditional measures of self-esteem have been examined for construct validity and have been used repeatedly, the matter is more complicated. The reality is that researchers disagree about the definition and measurement of self-esteem. Susan Harter (1990) has noted that "despite hundreds of studies on adolescent self-esteem" the field was plagued with "ambiguous definitions of the construct, inadequate measuring instruments, and lack of theory" (p. 356). One of the problems that beset the traditional research enterprise

was trying to capture self-esteem with measures that combined evaluations across diverse domains such as scholastic competence, social acceptance, behavioral conduct, and appearance into a single summary score as in the traditional Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (1967). It has now been recognized that a more productive method is to access discrete domains of the self-concept separately. According to Harter (1990), adolescents possess a "global self-esteem" (p. 366), reflecting how much they like and respect themselves overall as a person, which can be tapped into independently by its own set of questionnaire items. The three questionnaire items extracted from the AAUW (1991) self-esteem battery for the present study came from the battery section on general, global, self-esteem. With regard to "how much one likes oneself as a person overall, there is considerable consensus that physical appearance heads the list," (p. 367), ergo the question extracted from the AAUW self-esteem battery for the present study, "I like the way I look."

Self-esteem is a very complex construct. Although considerable attention has been given to the issue of construct validity, skepticism abounds with regard to intervention efforts based exclusively on self-esteem.

Girls, Inc., an organization devoted to the enhancement of girls, their education, and opportunities, "rarely uses measures of self-esteem to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs. Instead, Girls, Inc. programs focus on skills and competence, allowing girls to experience success and, as they describe it, to take charge of their lives" (Schultz, 1991, p. 8). A new research question now arises as to whether Resistance is a skill.

The questions selected for the present study, "I like most things about myself," "I like the way I look," and "I'm happy the way I am," dealt primarily with the girls' personal, individual feelings about themselves and not about how they felt or thought about how others perceived them, liked them, or treated them or how such treatment made them feel about themselves. The girls' answers to the limited self-esteem questions in the present study were evaluations of self which were not premised upon others' evaluations and they continued to be able to demonstrate a significant and steady increase in Verbal Resistance over time; the girls were not evaluating themselves from the perspective of an observing other. While the traditional self-esteem literature reports that declining self-esteem has the

greatest impact on girls' ability to speak out and that boys are more likely than girls to speak up in class and argue with teachers (AAUW, 1991), it may be that outside of the perceived or actual asymmetrically structured power relationship of adult - female student, adolescent girls maintain the ability to verbally resist on their own behalf. It is within the language of Resistance where we can see an alternative to the traditional "decline" in self-esteem and we see another aspect of adolescent girls' personalities emerging. The present findings show that the language of Resistance resonates with assertiveness, confidence, independence, and individuality and may not submit to traditional conceptualizations of self-esteem.

#### Social Context Analysis

When taking a closer look at the girls' interpretive comments about the television programs, it can be seen that the social setting of the real life experiences of objectification enabled the girls to relate to the social setting of the experiences of the female characters on television. The setting for the Fresh Prince of Bel Air program was in-school and the setting for the Blossom program was non-school. The 11-year-old girls showed a significantly higher rate than

16-year-old girls of referring to an in-school social setting as the site for observing the objectification of other girls. They also referred to a non-school social setting as the site for observing the objectification of other girls significantly more often than 13-year-old girls and 16-year-old girls. This finding indicates that at eleven years of age, girls witnessed the objectification of females both in and out of school.

Of interest is the finding that 11-year-old girls, the age group with the highest reported witnessing rates, also had the lowest rate of Resignation. The findings also indicate that the rate of reporting the witnessing of the objectification of other girls decreased at each age. This finding may be attributed to the eleven-year-old girls focusing on objectification happening to others and not to themselves; they were not yet resigned to the situation. At age thirteen, girls presumably have had at least two years of witnessing objectification and appear to begin to resign themselves to the situation. At age sixteen, we see the lowest rates of reporting witnessing school-observed and non-school observed objectification of females. At age sixteen, we also see the highest rates of Resignation. At every age, girls were witnessing and experiencing

objectification in every social arena of their lives. The steadily decreasing reporting rate cannot be attributed to decreasing rates of objectification or differential rates of provocation among younger and older boys because measures of males' instances of objectification and provocation were not analyzed in the present study. That is a question for future research. What can be said is that the reporting of the event decreases. The differential reporting rate could be interpreted as evidence of the stronghold that Resignation is acquiring on adolescent girls, notwithstanding the evidence of increasing rates of verbal resistance across age groups.

Research Question 1: Girls who have entered into a level of social involvement with boys will be more likely to engage in resignation: The greater the social involvement with boys, the greater the resignation.

Although a significant correlation was not found between Social Involvement and Resignation, it was found that the 11-year-old girls had more limited social involvement with boys compared to 13-year-old or 16-year-old girls, such as hanging out with boys or intimacy with boys, and they tended to have had lower rates of Verbal Resistance and lower rates of

Resignation. The data suggested that 11-year-old girls did not have to resist against objectification as strongly as 13-year-old and 16-year-old girls. Because of the 11-year-old girls' pubertal status and physical development, their bodies are just beginning to have social stimulus value to others (Brooks-Gunn & Warren, 1989) and the onslaught of objectification is just beginning for them. Consequently, 11-year-old girls haven't begun to fight as strongly as thirteen-year-old girls and sixteen-year-old girls, nor have they resigned themselves to something with which they have not had steady, repeated experiences. At age thirteen, however, there was an increase in "hanging out with boys" accompanied by a significant increase in Resignation. Girls who were beginning to hang out more frequently with boys and, thereby, were gaining more exposure to boys socially during free periods in school, in between classes, schoolbus rides, and coed after-school and weekend parties, spoke in the following resigned manner: "Yeah, it [verbal and physical objectification] happens everywhere...in classes, well, not really in classes, but before. Like, when you're switching classes or in, like, the morning before homebase or at lunch." "It [television program] proves one thing, that guys always

want a girl from the outside rather than the inside...They never pay attention to the inside, just the outside...A show is based on what goes around the world, that's mostly what they write about that that happens...That really happens and I know that that's true, everywhere you go there's gonna be a group of boys who just go for a girl with the best body or whatever and so I don't really know what to do, so...Just let them do whatever they have to do...It happens to my friends." These girls are responding to the television portrayals by talking about what happens to them in their daily lives during contact with boys. Within these resigning comments, we can hear dispossessed agency and helplessness: "...so I don't really know what to do, so...Just let them do whatever they have to do..." The findings also suggest that although 13-year-old girls have experienced various forms of objectification for approximately two years and, although they show a significant increase in Resignation, they also demonstrated the ability to reconnect with their voice of Resistance: "They do this to every, almost every girl, they walk down the hall and they grab our chest! And we punch 'em! And we kick them, and we punch them, we'd be like we be hurtin' them

and they just like keep on doin' it. ' You had no business puttin' your fingers there!'"

The results showed that 16-year-old girls' interactions with boys were more intimate than 11-and-13-year-old girls by having had a boyfriend in the past or in the present. Their interactions with boys were no longer exclusively within a group social situation. They also had greater overall social involvement with boys than the other age groups. This group also had the highest rate of Resignation. However, like the 13-year-old girls, they also demonstrated the ability to reconnect with their voice of Resistance, for example: "Yeah, I wouldn't even stop and give them the time of day in the hallway, to even say 'Hi' to them. I'd be like, "You're a fucking...you're a fucking asshole, you know, get the hell out of here, you know, and I'd be like, What are you doing?!...Go Away!...I hate when that, I hate that kind of stuff. It totally turns you off, like that one girl [tv character], you know? That makes me think that's what you're about, and if, you know, if you're that way with me, why when I'm not around won't you be that way with the next girl that walked by? You know?"

Girls who had greater overall social involvement with boys, including hanging out with boys and intimacy, tended to have increasingly higher rates of Resignation and Verbal Resistance. They were in constant conflict with themselves, thereby, demonstrating a tensional relationship with their social world.

Research Question 2: Adolescent girls who select a non-stereotypical, non-gender-specific occupation, will be less likely to engage in resignation than girls who do not select a stereotypical, gender-specific occupation.

The majority of girls had career aspirations which were not considered traditional female jobs or activities. The choices of twenty-two out of thirty dyads (73%) made career selections that were categorized as other than female-only. An explanation for the lack of a significant correlation between Resignation and Career Choice may be that Resignation emerges within the context of lived, concrete gender relations while career aspirations are, at this time in their life, an abstract notion with which they have had no concrete experience. Since they have not had direct experience with career "glass ceilings" and sexual harassment in the workplace, the girls may very well expect that future careers in

adulthood have the potential for parity in much the same way that eleven-year-old girls on the edge of adolescence expected parity in their interactions with boys. Therefore, during adolescence, we may not see a positive correlation between increasing Resignation and increasing preference for traditional, gender-specific occupations.

### Conclusions

Exploring adolescent girls' responses to television portrayals was the driving force behind this work. The exploration uncovered certain thematically organized responses which can now be viewed in light of previous research. These findings contribute to the anthology of work on mediators of the influence of television and expands the work of researchers who are concerned with representations of women in the mass media and women's interaction with those representations. In as much as resistance is a relatively new concept in the literature on adolescent girls, this study expands the work of researchers concerned with resistant interpretations of television and other media forms and broadens the application and understanding of the construct of resistance in adolescent girls pioneered by the work of Gilligan and her colleagues (Gilligan, Lyons, & Hanmer,

(1990). The present study also afforded the opportunity to broaden the application of Gilligan's (1990b) description of age-related changes in resistance, a description which is proposed for all adolescent girls and not to a specific subgroup of privileged adolescent girls.

In general, the findings weaken the arguments that presume direct effects of media content on attitudes, beliefs, and behavior and provides support for the position that there are mediators of the influence of television. It may still be the case that an understanding of sex-role stereotypes is derived from exposure to sex-typed programming as Davidson, et al. (1979) and Huston, et al. (1984) claim, however, the message sent is not always the message received. The expressed resistance revealed through the participants' responses indicated that adolescent girls were not readily adopting the relational positioning of females that they were observing on television. This places constraints on discussions and interpretations of the effects of media content on this particular population of viewers. The findings from the present study strengthen the arguments that the influence of television is mediated by the context of the viewers'

lives as claimed by Friedrich-Cofer, et al. ((1978), Buerkel-Rothfuss, et al. (1982, 1983). According to Rothschild and Morgan (1987) who state that "While television can influence social relations, those relations can also mediate the impact of television" (p. 301), thereby weakening the argument for unidirectional causation.

Researchers who have explored the effects of television content specifically on adolescent girls have also taken the position that the dominant portrayals of girls and women are distorting, damaging and influence young girls negatively (Press, 1991; Steenland, 1988a). This prescriptive view of television does not take into account the subjectivity of the viewer. While Press claimed that television is ideologically reinforcing, she also allowed for the active interpretation and reception of meaning by the viewer, a position which is strengthened by the findings of the present study. We see the girls constructing their own meanings rather than approvingly and passively accepting the portrayals as a prescriptive for their own lives. The girls' statements illustrated that they were able to bring their interpretations of their lived experiences of objectification to their television viewing rather than

being passive recipients of the influence of television. They responded to the programs with evaluative opinions and understandings of the state of relationships between males and females within their world. The present study also supported Brown's (1990b) and Christian-Smith's (1990) arguments that girls have considerable control over their "reading practices" of television and construct their own meanings of televised representations. As can be seen by the findings of the present study, depictions of objectification were mediated not only by the context of the girls' lives but also by the girls' active confrontation and repudiation of boys' attempts to demean them. This resistance, as well as her experiential understanding of the conditions she is resisting, is what the female adolescent viewer brings to the viewing situation. Thus, she is able to verbally confront, repudiate, and resist demeaning media constructions. The rich union of media-story and lived experience is emblematic of the relationship between the viewer, the presented media text and life. The girls' interpretive responses pivot around the interplay between what they have observed on television and what they have lived. The connecting theme of their narratives was directly concerned with personal

relationships, resistance to relational violations, and the conflicts presented by objectification. What these girls brought to the viewing experience was their relationship to their culture and this relationship informed their responses. Their commentary on the content of television programs was a clear commentary on their relational experiences. From the interaction of the media representation of females with the girls' personally constructed representations of themselves derived in part by interpretations of their life experiences, which varied at different times in their lives, we see the emergence and the maintenance of a resistance which seeks to claim and preserve an authentic identity.

The present study, which could be viewed as a blend of practical psychology and cultural critique, has several practical implications. The girls were clearly revealing the process and the relational context which can drive their voices underground. Fortunately, resistance was still present in spite of the onslaught of experiences that can drive it underground. To keep it alive and above-ground, and visible and audible, resistance must be educated on a pedagogical, social, and institutional level. Girls' courage and voices must

be strengthened rather than lost in order to become integrated in the social construction of reality and to foster "a belief in self far greater than anyone's disbelief" (Robinson & Ward, 1991).

It is very useful to have discovered the common thread of resistance to objectification and relational violations that ran through the girls' interpretive responses to television portrayals. Their responses tell us loudly and clearly the value of recognizing and developing resistance in adolescent girls in order for them to have equal access to an environment free of the hostility of gender-based biases. Scholars, researchers, and grass-roots activists are becoming increasingly aware of the threads of objectification and relational violations that run through the fabric of girls' everyday lives. The question is repeatedly raised as to what effect this has on the development of a girl's sense of self, her understanding of her relationship to her culture, and her ability to employ her voice on her own behalf in a way that allows her to "stay with herself" without jeopardizing her connection to others and not be overcome by the voices around her so that she "goes along to get along" and thereby falls in line with social constructions of gender. It was

important to see in the present study how strong a showing resignation made at ages thirteen and sixteen and the "voice lessons" adolescent girls were receiving which forces their spoken thoughts through the filter of the wider cultural audience. Resignation and Resistance are the windows through which we see into the underground where the girls' voices meet and, as such, presents an opportunity for the development of policy and programs which will help girls rise to the occasion of challenging the "unedited authority" (Brown, 1996) of a cultural framework which denies her authenticity. For example, listen to the following pleas of adolescent girls from small suburban American towns (Stein, 1992):

From a fifteen-year-old girl in New England:

"Even when it is "joking" or casual comments they should be taken seriously by authority figures at the school...when a teacher told a male student in my Spanish class that he would have to move into the empty seat next to me if he didn't stop talking to his friend the guy said, "Woah, she's too fast for me!" sarcastically. I was really upset about it, but the male teacher let it slide saying that this jerk was joking! After that every other guy

in the class thought it was cool to slam all the girls in the class with similar remarks."

From a fourteen-year-old girl in a small town in Pennsylvania:

"When I was thirteen years old and just starting Junior High School...I started being sexually harassed constantly by a group of guys on my bus. It was horrible. It lasted the whole year and some of 8th grade without anything being done about it. They would grab my breasts, thighs and other places, make rude comments and sexual gestures towards me. When I finally yelled at them to stop, hit them, or moved away, the bus driver would yell at me."

From a high-school girl from a small town in Ohio:

"This boy started looking at me, giving me weird looks. Soon he was making fun of me, snapping my bra, calling me a fat horse...pinching me (both on my bottom and on the top), trying to go up my skirt, and the list goes on and on. And, he didn't do it privately either. Once in a classroom, he did alot of the above and my female teacher sat and watched. How do I know she was watching - I

glanced up to see if she would help and I caught her eye!"

From a fifteen-year-old girl in Hawaii:

"I just wish that someone would make sexual harassment as big of an issue as Aids, money and the President."

If we are to contribute to the groundbreaking research literature focused on understanding girls' development and girls' relationship to their culture, it is important to understand what is actually happening to girls. Given the content of television programming and the large nightly female adolescent audience, television can be a useful tool to facilitate discussions and illuminate issues related to the significant biological, psychological, and social challenges which are unique to adolescent girls. When we listen to the girls' stories, and their understanding of their experiences, we can then examine how existing models of development have addressed those challenges and the clinical issues which emerge in the transition to female adulthood. On a policy level, educational institutions need to listen carefully to what girls are saying about their experiences and develop strategies which grant access to

intervention resources and provide education and training about the objectification of females.

Future research could focus on meaningful clusters of girls' responses which would demonstrate who is being affected in the long-term as well as explore the link between experiences of objectification, resistance and school performance. This is particularly meaningful in that "nearly 33 percent of all girls who experienced harassment wanted to stay home from school or cut class...Thirty-two percent of girls reported not wanting to participate in class" (National Council for Research on Women, 1994). Specific strategies can be developed and used to change how school systems are failing to meet the needs of adolescent girls.

#### Limitations of the Study

As reflected in the results section, several of the measures did not yield significant results. It is possible that a problem resides in trying to correlate individually administered measures of self-esteem, career choices, and individual social measures with the non-individual dyad administered measures of Resistance and Resignation. The nonsignificant results may have more to do with the "mathematical messiness" that ensues when attempting to relate instruments and assessment

techniques that are arithmetically and conceptually mismatched. For future analysis, it may be more productive to discuss the issues of self-esteem, career choices, and social life in a separate and comprehensive qualitative analysis from an ecological/contextual perspective, rather than try to correlate an individual measure with a dyad measure which violates the underlying consistency that is needed for mathematical comparisons. Rather than pose certain questions as mathematical relationship questions which require correlational statistics, more useful information might be yielded by a qualitative, contextual question such as, "What are the contextual factors that possibly contribute to these findings on Resistance and Resignation?" While it may be useful to administer and measure an instrument in order to talk about the girls in some assessed manner, the measures need not be correlated mathematically. Certain important facets of life cannot be related digitally.

The question of the existence of correlations need not be completely ignored. Considering that a girl can still be a resistor of objectification and not have the level of social involvement specified on the social questionnaire - adolescent lesbianism is a good

example - quantifying the various forms of the objectification of females (e.g., physical, verbal, visual) would be more useful information than correlating the level of social involvement with boys with Resistance or Resignation. Quantifying encountered objectification (a dyadic measure) allows us to determine if a relationship exists between objectification and the dyadic measures of Resistance and Resignation.

Of necessity, the research design of the present study was cross-sectional, and therein lies another limitation of the work. While a cross-sectional design offers the opportunity to observe several cohorts on one occasion, to obtain data on age differences, and is a relatively quick and inexpensive method, a major limitation is that differences may reflect cohort changes rather than developmental changes. The present study was not a longitudinal study and consequently there wasn't any way of knowing if the sixteen-year-old girls responded the way they did because they grew up in a different time, a different socio-cultural-historical moment, a different *Zeitgeist*, than the eleven-year-old girls. Cross-sectional studies have the additional limitation of not showing the pattern of changes within

the individual girl and are thus unable to inform us about the sequences of development of Resistance or Resignation and what happens to lead to increased or decreased rates of Resistance and Resignation; there is no window from which to observe the consistency of individual girls' responses of Resistance and Resignation over time. A longitudinal study would address the important question of whether or not Resignation is a fixed or transient state in the lives of adolescent girls. It should be noted, however, that when age groups being compared are close in age, as in the present study, cohort effects are not usually a major problem. Cohort effects may be significant over age ranges of as much as ten years (Bee, 1995). It should also be noted that longitudinal studies contain inherent disadvantages.

Another limitation of the present study, and which leads to future research questions, is the absence of exploring the role of ethnicity in response to the objectification of females. Does ethnicity matter in response to objectification? Future research would provide the opportunity to look specifically at African-American, Asian-American, and Hispanic adolescent girls for the existence of Resistance and Resignation,

differences between groups in Resistance and Resignation, and differences in the types of objectification experienced.

## Appendix A

ID#\_\_\_\_\_ AGE\_\_\_\_\_ GRADE\_\_\_\_\_  
SCHOOL\_\_\_\_\_ ETHNICITY\_\_\_\_\_

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Probes: Tell me more; Explain; What else; What do you mean?; Why?; Why is that?; Tell me more; Like what?

Interview Questions

1. Tell me what went on in the show, what went on here - in your own words?
2. What kinds of things did you notice? What stood out for you? Did you see/hear anything that stood out for you?
3. Can you relate to anything you saw or heard on the show?
4. What are the girls doing on the show? What do you think about that? What do you think of the girls on the show?
5. What are the boys doing on the show? What do you think about that? What do you think of the boys on the show?
6. Have you had situations/experiences in your life similar to the situations/experiences you saw on the show? Describe them. How did you handle the situation/experience?

7. Do you know anyone who had situations/experiences similar to the situations/experiences you saw on the show? Describe. How did they handle the situation/experience?

8. What went through your mind, what were you thinking or feeling, when you observed the situations/experiences on the television show?

## Appendix B

ID#\_\_\_\_\_ AGE\_\_\_\_\_ GRADE\_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL\_\_\_\_\_ ETHNICITY\_\_\_\_\_

Please circle one description that best describes how  
you feel: (ALL RESPONSES ARE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL)

1. I like most things about myself.

always	sort of	sometimes true/	sort of	always
true	true	sometimes false	false	false

2. I like the way I look.

always	sort of	sometimes true/	sort of	always
true	true	sometimes false	false	false

3. I'm happy the way I am.

always	sort of	sometimes true/	sort of	always
true	true	sometimes false	false	false

## Appendix C

ID#\_\_\_\_\_ AGE\_\_\_\_\_ GRADE\_\_\_\_\_  
 SCHOOL\_\_\_\_\_ ETHNICITY\_\_\_\_\_

WHO ARE YOU SOCIALLY?

Circle all that apply or fill-in answer. Use back of paper if you need more space. ALL RESPONSES ARE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.

1. Do you hang out? Yes No
2. How often do you hang out?  
 Every day Every night Every weekend Most weekends  
 Other:
3. Where do you hang out?  
 Mall Library Park Neighborhood Other:
4. Who do you hang out with most of the time?  
 Girls Boys Girls & Boys Neighborhood Kids  
 School Friends Myself Other:
5. What do you do after school?
6. What do you do on weekends?
7. Do you date? Yes No
8. Do you Group date Double Date Single Date  
 Other?
9. Do you go to parties? Yes No

10. Do you attend parties/get-togethers that are:  
Girls Only    Mostly Boys    Mixed Girls & Boys    Other?
11. Are the parties/get-togethers you attend: School-  
Sponsored    Church/Temple-Sponsored    Community-  
Sponsored    Parent-Supervised    Totally Unsupervised  
Somewhat Unsupervised    Other?
12. Do you have a boyfriend now (in other words, are you  
"going out" with anybody)?    Yes    No
13. Have you had a boyfriend in the past (in other  
words, have you ever "gone out" with anybody)?    Yes    No
14. Do you dislike some of the things boys do and/or say  
to you?    Yes    No
15. If you answered "yes" to #12, list the things you  
dislike:
16. What would you like to be when you become an adult?
17. If you could, is there anything you would change  
about being a girl?

## Appendix D

Coding Manual

The purpose of this study is to understand adolescent girls' responses to television portrayals through the use of a guided interview and questionnaire responses. The television portrayals were segments from two popular prime-time television programs featuring adolescents as main characters - The Fresh Prince of Bel Air and Blossom. The segments totalled approximately 15 minutes and were viewed by one pair of girls at a time. A tape recorded interview began immediately after the viewing and lasted for approximately one hour. Participants were interviewed in pairs. Sixty girls (30 pairs) ranging from ages eleven to seventeen participated in the study.

Each interview was subsequently transcribed and coded according to the Definition of Terms below. The basic unit of analysis was a turn of talk by a member of a dyad. Any turn of talk which made direct or indirect reference to, agreement with, acknowledgement or explanation of resistance or resignation to the objectification of females was underlined and coded (in abbreviation form) in the margin. Any turn of talk which referred to the objectification of females was coded.

The social context of the objectification of females was noted by coding any turn of talk which referred to the location of the experience. The coded categories (abbreviated form) were: Resistance-physical (Rst-p); Resistance-verbal (Rst-vb); Resistance-visual (Rst-vs); Resistance-Flee (Rst-f); Resistance-moral (Rst-m); Resistance-Ignore (Rst-Ig); Resignation (RSG); Objectification-general (Og); Objectification-physical (Op); Objectification-verbal (Ovb); Objectification-visual (Ovs); School-personal (SP); School-observed (SO); Non-school-personal (NSP); Non-school-observed (NSO).

#### Definition of Terms

The basic unit of analysis was a turn of talk by a member of a dyad. Within the turn of talk was coded either a word, sentence, or phrase which makes direct or indirect reference to, agreement with, acknowledgement or explanation of resistance or resignation to the objectification of females. Resistance was assigned to one or a combination of the following categories of physical resistance, verbal resistance, visual resistance, flee resistance, ignoring resistance or moral resistance. Resistance was represented as an action, word, sentence, or phrase which directly or indirectly expressed

disagreement or confrontation with attempted or completed acts of the objectification of females. Ignoring was represented by attempts to fail to recognize or notice the objectifier and/or act of objectification. Moral resistance was represented by comments which assigned attributions of degradation or virtuousness to the objectifier and/or act of objectification and/or passing judgements of disapproval upon the objectifier and/or act of objectification. Resignation was represented by comments which imparted an inability or lack of agency to initiate remediation on the speaker's behalf, for example, comments which reflected yielding, acquiescing, appearing to consent to, or offering a rationalization/justification for the objectification.

Social experience was categorized as a school-based personal experience, school-based observed experience, or non-school-based personal or observed experience.

For the purposes of this study, the following terms and definitions, with supporting examples, applied:

Objectification of Females. The physical and/or non-physical positioning of a female which emphasized and embodied her sex, gender, and sexuality, thus granting her sex, gender, and sexuality a material reality to be acted upon by an acting subject. The female was positioned as

an object to receive carnal attentions based on an acting subject's desire for aspects of the female object's sex, gender, and sexuality. Treatment of a female as a non-person and "not formally acknowledged as a co-participant in social interactions; and her sexuality, as opposed to personal or professional characteristics, is the topic of discourse" (Gruber, 1992, p. 457). According to Bartky, "a person is sexually objectified...when her sexual parts or sexual functions are separated out from the rest of her personality and reduced to the status of mere instruments, or else regarded as if they were capable of representing her...Such parts are not regarded as aesthetic objects, of intrinsic, not instrumental value...the sex object is not an aesthetic object, since her value is in her instrumental ability to sexually stimulate or attract others...taking the sexual part of a person for the whole" (in Lemoncheck, 1985, p. 107).

Categories of the objectification of females in the context of the current study were:

General. A non-specific range of physical, verbal, and/or visual objectification generally referred to by the respondents as flirting, sexism, being followed by males, "checking them out," "going after," "chasing after," "running after," and males "hitting on" females.

Physical. Direct physical touching of a female's body. Included sexual touching, for example males attempting to touch females on the chest area, buttocks, and external genital area. "Violations of personal space and attempts to...have physical contact" (Gruber, 1992, p. 457).

Visual. Males staring at females. Females being the general object of male gaze or specific parts of the female anatomy being the specific object of male gaze. A type of visual objectification was the use of sexual materials such as calendars with pictures of unclothed women or women in bathing suits; Playboy centerfolds - "...like all she resembled was her nakedness." "...like she wasn't a person, she was just a naked person in a magazine."

Verbal. "Comments or questions of a nonsolicitory nature...includes jokes, teasing, questions about sexuality or appearance" (Gruber, 1992, p. 457); Unauthorized references to female anatomy and biology, for example, "Have you had your period, yet?," "They'll like go ahead and say like something like about boobs," "Did ya see her, did you see her shirt, see her chest?"; "Wow! Did you see that?!"; Sexual directives such as "Let's talk about sex, baby," "My friend wants a blow job"; Wolfcalls

(whistles) "made by a man to express his admiration of a sexually attractive woman" (Guralnik, 1972, p. 1635); Adolescent girl's comment about male's discussion of a nude centerfold model, "He was talking about her like she was...an object...rather than a person...he was just thinking about her body." Use of diminutives was another form of verbal objectification, for example, "Hey, chiquita"; "baby" as well as the use of "pick-up lines." Verbal objectification was not limited to the spoken word but also included written language and gestures, for example, males licking their lips as a sexual gesture to females, giving a female a condom, or "giving the finger."

Resignation. The submission to a particular circumstance, condition, or event, for example, "That's just the way things are," "There's nothing you can do about it," "I'm just used to it," "That's typical, that's how it is," "This is reality," "That's how it is, they're like that," "It didn't do any harm" (accepting the objectifying comment/action as 'a joke'), "Whatever" (going along to 'get along'), "It's out of my control, 'It' just happens," "How did this happen?!" (incredulously). Comments which reflect: lack of agency; offering justification or rationalization for the

objectification; yielding, accepting, consenting or giving in/up to the objectification; objectification as all-over and pervasive; absence of protest.

Resistance. A confrontation with, and/or rejection of, behaviors reflective of a negative stereotype based on sex, gender, sexual identity or other differences from cultural norms. "Self-determination through confrontation and repudiation of oppressive attempts to demean self" (Robinson & Ward, 1991, p. 99).

A physical act of resistance would be to "...slap him across the face...", "pushing/shoving, kicking male in the groin.

Verbal acts of resistance included saying, "Get away," cursing, reprimanding, responding incredulously, for example, "What!," "What did you say?!"

Visual acts of resistance involved glaring or rolling eyes upward.

Flee acts of resistance involved active avoidance by removing the self, running away, walking away, going to an authority, etc.

Ignoring Resistance. Less direct forms of resistance were to ignore or assume a moral posture. For example, "I just try to ignore it, if you pay attention to it, the more they'll do it;" "I just don't pay any attention.

Moral Resistance was a broad category of comments which reflected attitudes toward the objectification of females (e.g., "It's a little degrading"). These types of comments passed judgements of approval/disapproval or degradation/virtuousness upon acts of objectification and reactions to objectification, for example males' use of 'pick-up lines' and females' reactions to the use of 'pick-up lines.' Moral resistance encompassed being annoyed, bothered, amazed or angered by objectification as well as the use of sarcasm and humour as a reaction to objectification.

Experiential Context.

Talk related to social experience was represented by direct reference to a personal or observed experience of objectification, for example, "I have had many of those experiences," or "...they do that to [X]."

A School-Personal experience was objectification experienced directly and personally during school hours, inside school, on the school bus, on school grounds, or at a school-related/sponsored function.

A School-Observed experience was the observation of the objectification of a female (or females) other than the self during school hours, inside school, on the school

bus, on school grounds, or at a school-related/sponsored function.

A Non-school Personal experience was objectification experienced directly and personally in a location unrelated to school grounds or activities (e.g., the mall, vacations, trips, visiting, beach).

A Non-school Observed experience was the observation of the objectification of a female (or females) other than the self in a location unrelated to school grounds or activities (e.g., the mall, vacations, trips, visiting, beach).

Table 1

Mean Resistance and Resignation Responses with Standard Deviations for Each Age Group

Variable	AGE GROUP					
	11 <sup>a</sup>		13 <sup>b</sup>		16 <sup>c</sup>	
	M	(SD)	M	(SD)	M	(SD)
RST-Physical	1.44	(3.05)	1.11	(1.55)	.56	(.55)
RST-Verbal	3.03	(3.18)	7.15*	(4.85)	8.90*	(4.13)
RST-Visual	.43	(1.38)	.00	(.00)	.35	(.78)
RST-Flee	1.23	(1.68)	1.80	(1.82)	1.78	(1.78)
RST-Moral	22.33	(9.25)	18.77	(5.43)	20.96	(8.62)
RST-Ignore	.69	(.95)	1.99	(1.51)	2.11	(1.49)
Resignation	.90	(1.54)	6.44*	(4.60)	7.57*	(4.57)

Note. RST = Resistance.

<sup>a</sup>n = 10. <sup>b</sup>n = 10. <sup>c</sup>n = 10.

\*p < .05.

Table 2  
Correlation Coefficients for Resistance and Resignation

	Variables						
	RST.P	RST.VB	RST.VS	RST.F	RST.M	RST.IG	
RST.P	1.0000 (.30) P=.	.0299 (.30) P=.875	-.1012 (.30) P=.595	.2439 (.30) P=.194	-.2140 (.30) P=.256	-.1989 (.30) P=.292	.1989 (.30) P=.292
RST.VB		1.0000 (.30) P=.	-.1045 (.30) P=.583	-.0320 (.30) P=.867	-.0184 (.30) P=.923	-.1440 (.30) P=.448	.1440 (.30) P=.448
RST.VS			1.0000 (.30) P=.	.0551 (.30) P=.772	.0066 (.30) P=.972	-.1387 (.30) P=.465	.1387 (.30) P=.465
RST.F				1.0000 (.30) P=.	.0280 (.30) P=.883	-.0151 (.30) P=.937	.0151 (.30) P=.937
RST.M					1.0000 (.30) P=.	-.0151 (.30) P=.937	.0151 (.30) P=.937
RST.IG						1.0000 (.30) P=.	.0000 (.30) P=.
RSG							.3352 (.30) P=.070

Note. RST.P = physical resistance; RST.VB = verbal resistance; RST.VS = visual resistance; RST.F = flee resistance; RST.M = moral resistance; RST.IG = ignore resistance; RSG = resignation.

Table 3

Mean Social Involvement Score per Age Group

<u>Age</u>	<u>Social Involvement</u>					
	<u>Hang Out (SD)</u>		<u>Intimacy (SD)</u>		<u>Total Social (SD)</u>	
11	2.70	(1.42)	2.20	(0.79)	5.00	(1.82)
13	3.10	(1.29)	2.20	(1.14)	5.30	(2.31)
16	4.00*	(0.00)	3.50*	(0.85)	7.50*	(0.85)

Note. Maximum Total Score = 8.00. Maximum Hang out Score = 4.00. Maximum Intimacy Score = 4.00

\*p < .05.

Table 4  
Mean Response per Age Group for Social Context

<u>Age</u>	<u>Social Context</u>					<u>TOTAL</u>
	<u>SP</u>	<u>SO</u>	<u>NSP</u>	<u>NSO</u>		
	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>	
	<u>(SD)</u>	<u>(SD)</u>	<u>(SD)</u>	<u>(SD)</u>	<u>(SD)</u>	
11	2.93 (3.95)	6.95* (5.33)	1.23 (2.08)	2.20* (1.62)	13.32 (7.07)	
13	3.42 (2.96)	5.27 (5.36)	1.44 (1.61)	.85 (1.25)	11.0 (7.84)	
16	1.51 (1.50)	1.57 (.95)	1.52 (1.60)	.64 (0.91)	5.27 (2.70)	

Note. SP = school personal; SO = school observed; NSP = non-school personal; NSO = non-school observed.

\* $p < .05$ .

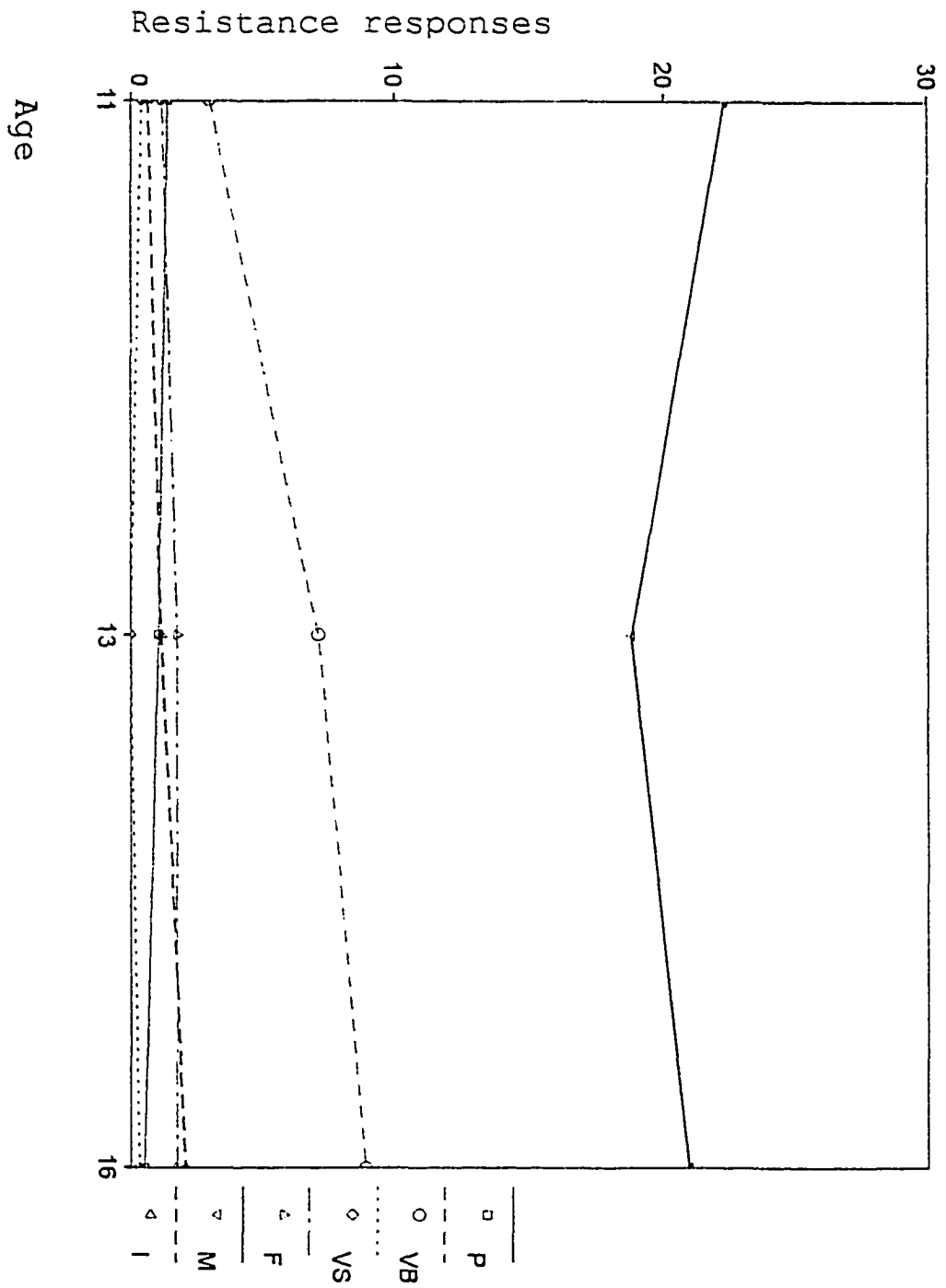


Figure 1. Mean proportion of resistant coded turns of talk for each age.  
 P = physical, VB = verbal, VS = visual, F = flee, M = moral, I = ignore.

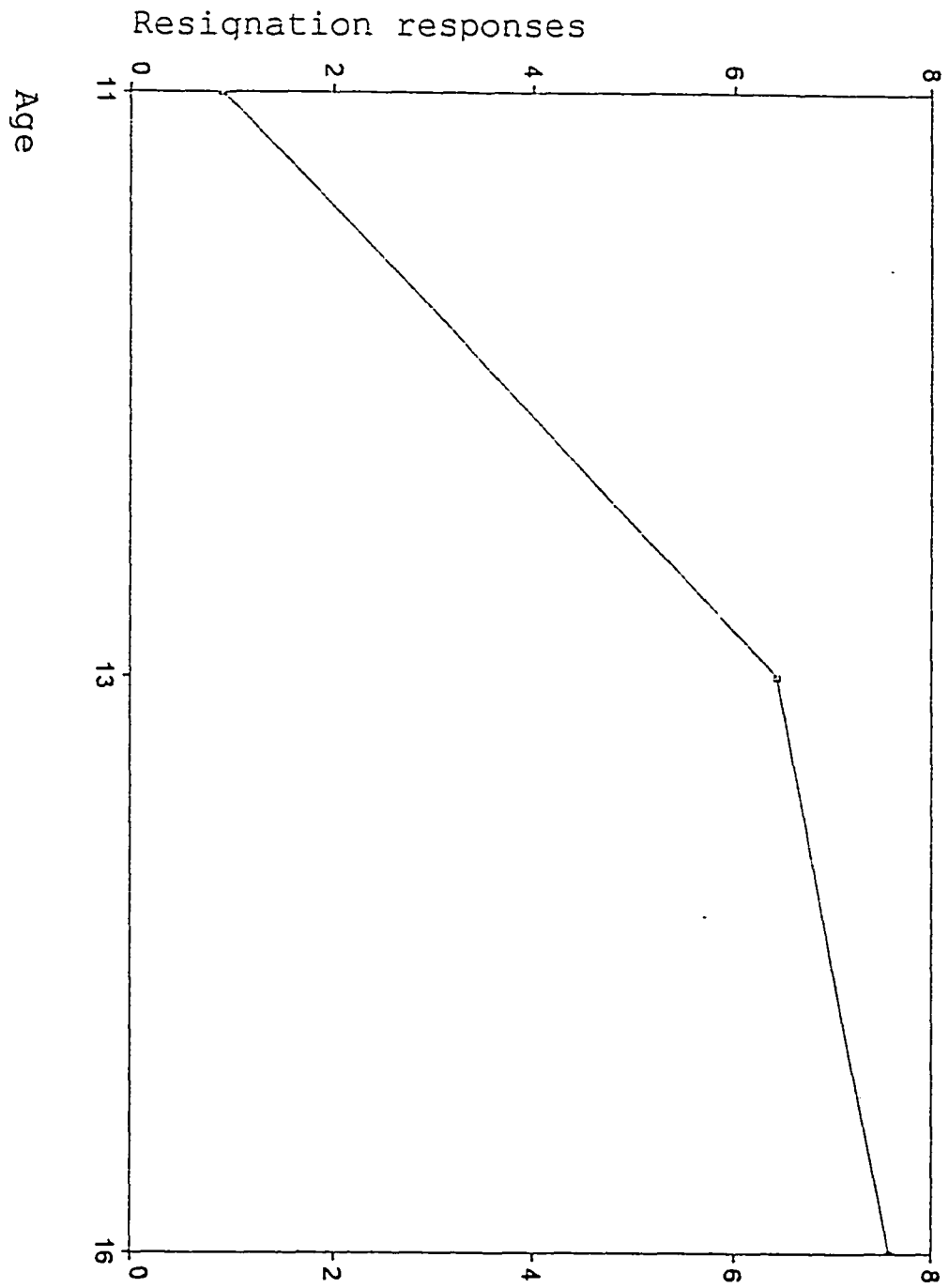


Figure 2. Mean proportion of Resignation coded turns of talk for each age group.

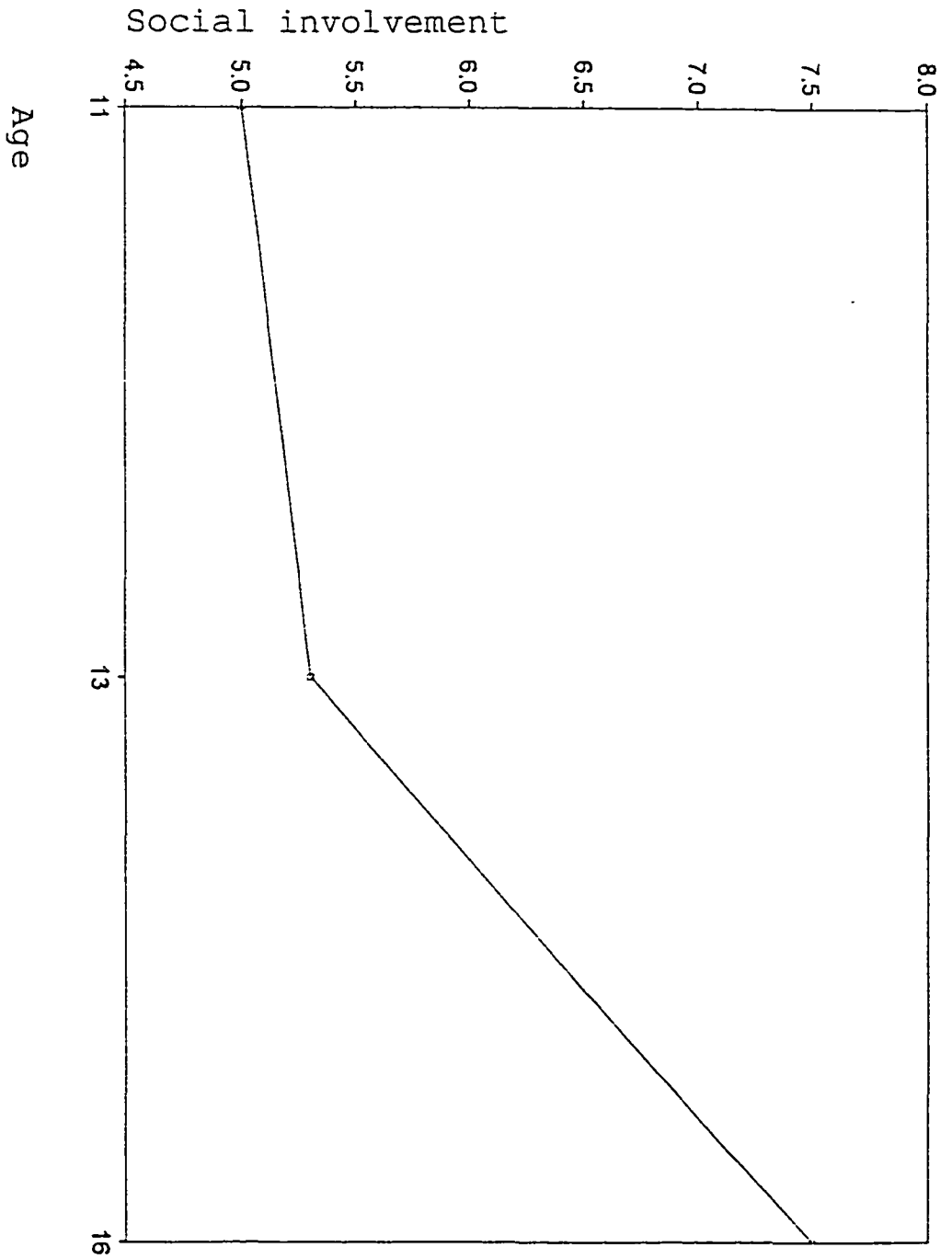


Figure 3. Mean total social involvement with boys score for each age.  
Includes "hanging out" and "Intimacy." Maximum score = 8.0.

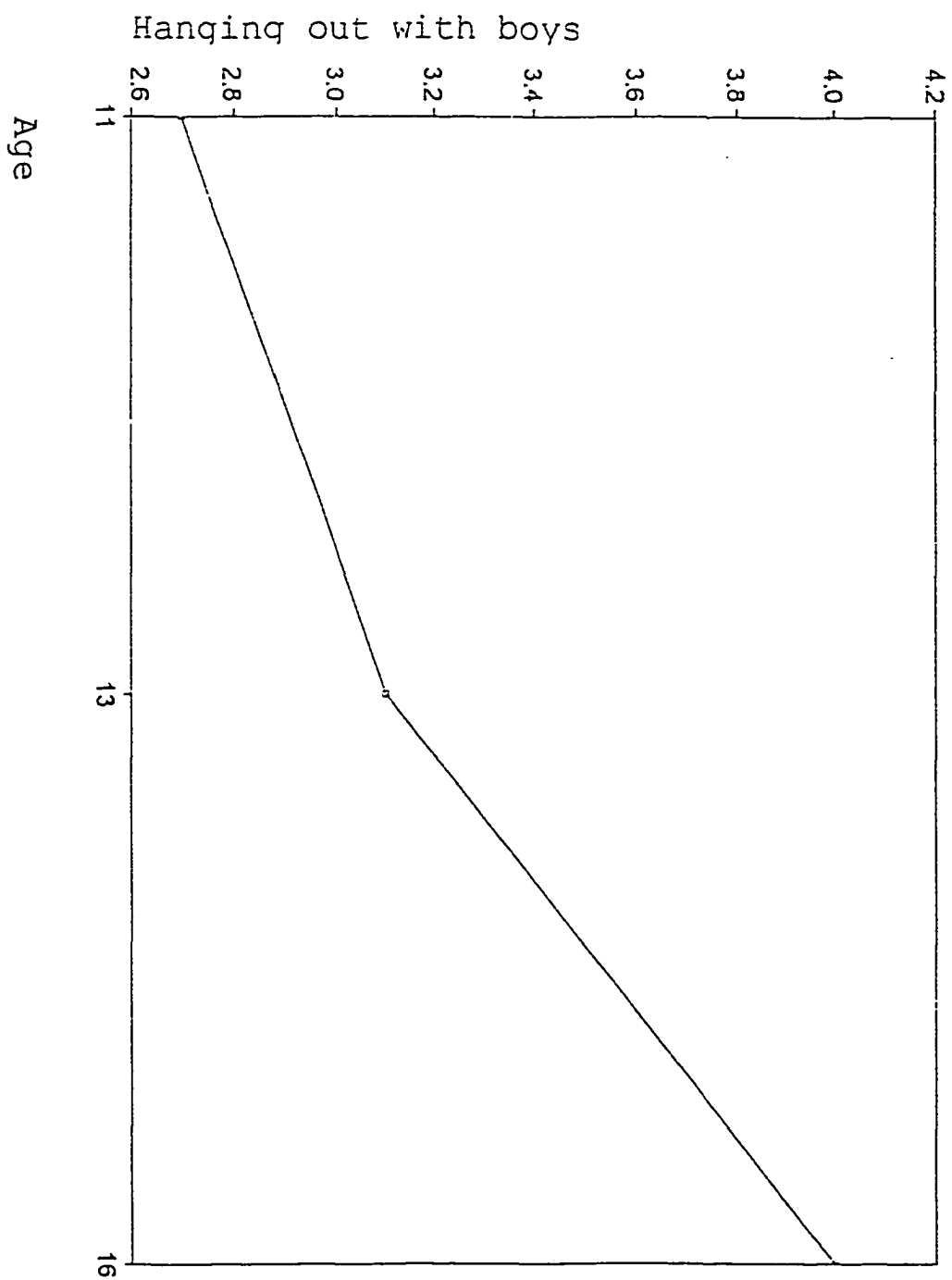


Figure 4. Mean Hanging out with boys score for each age.  
Maximum score = 4.0.

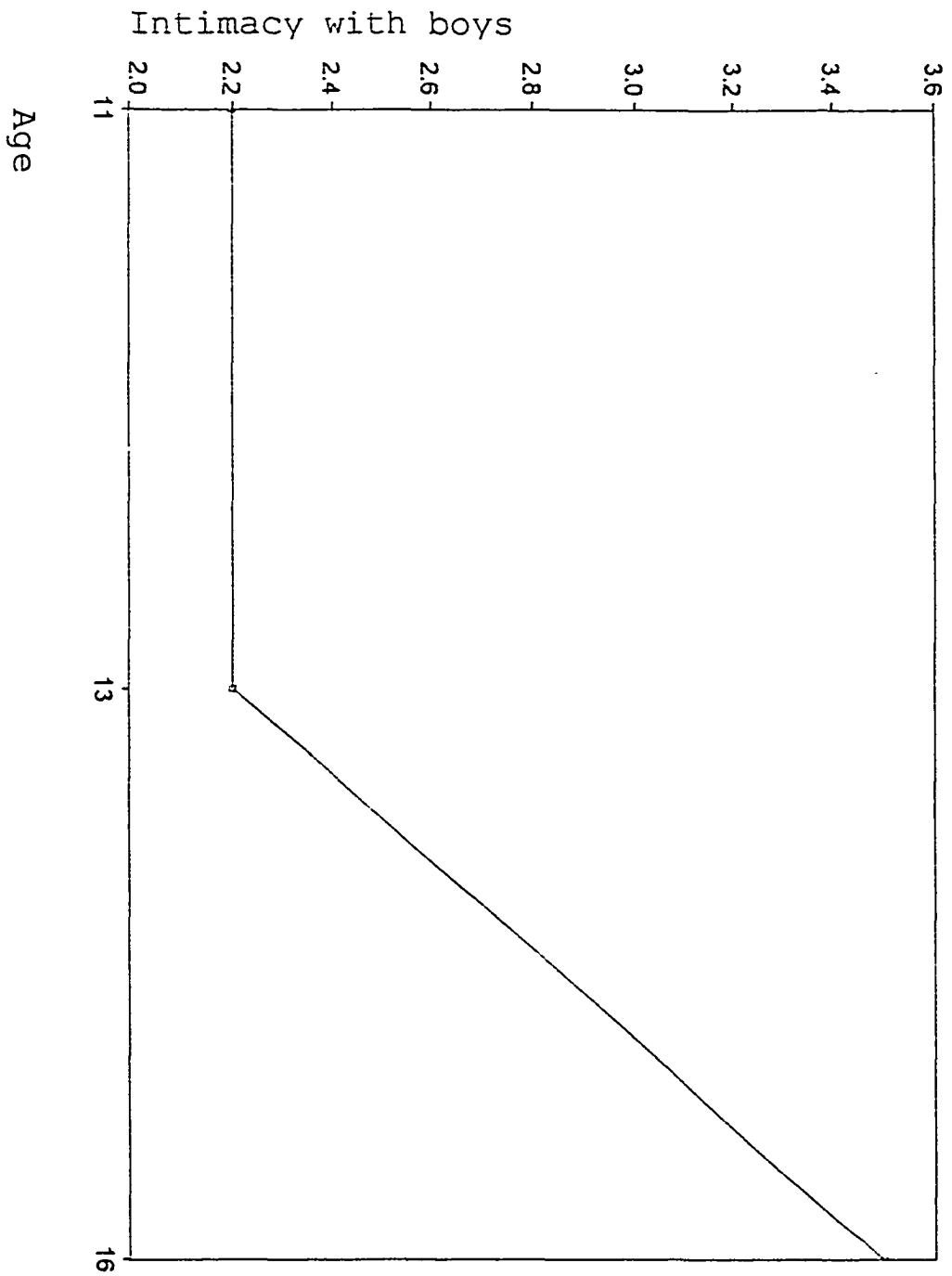


Figure 5. Mean Intimacy with boys score for each age.  
Maximum score = 4.0.

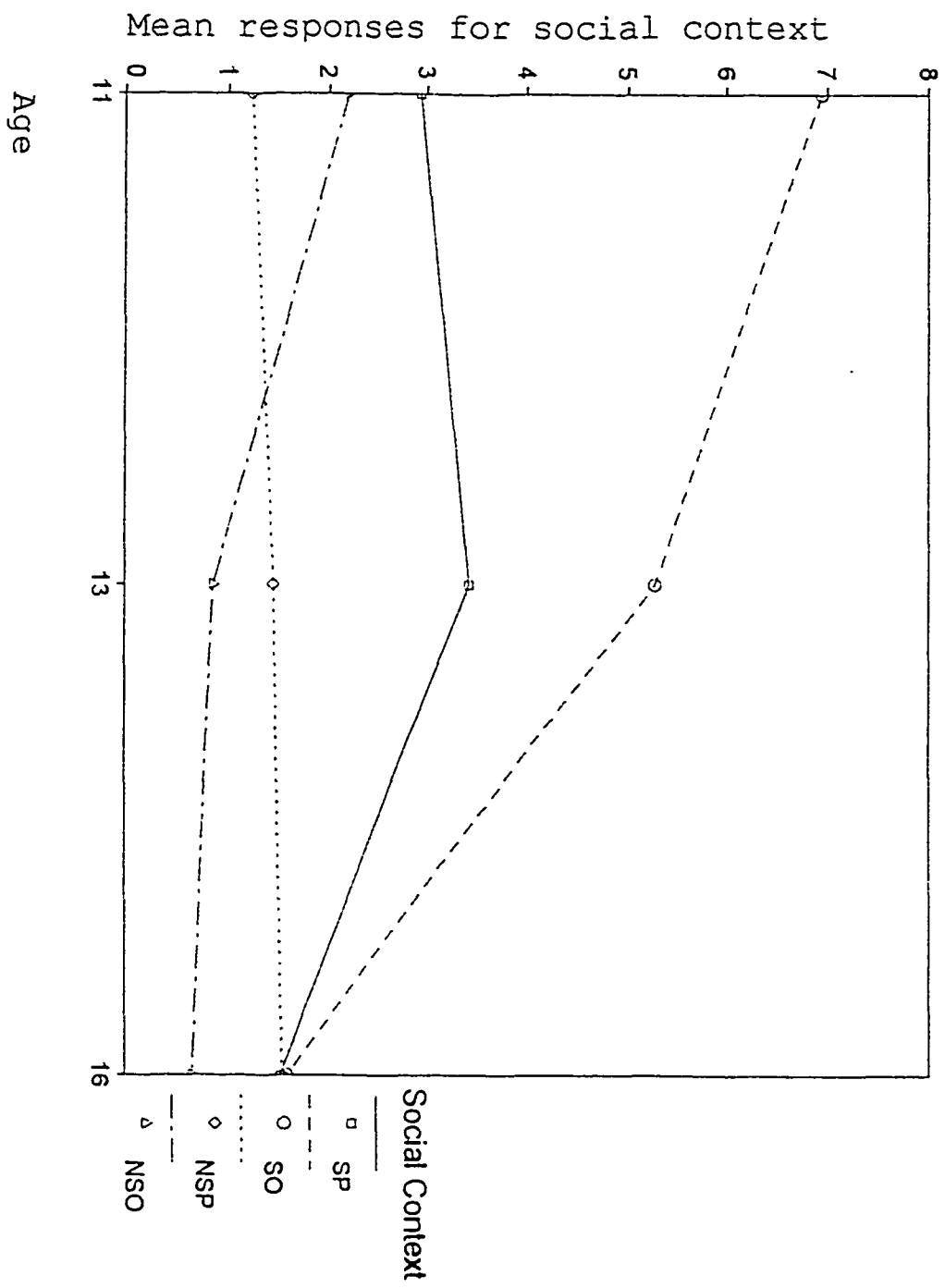


Figure 6. Social context of objectification. SP = school personal, SO = school observe, NSP = non school personal, NSO = non school observe

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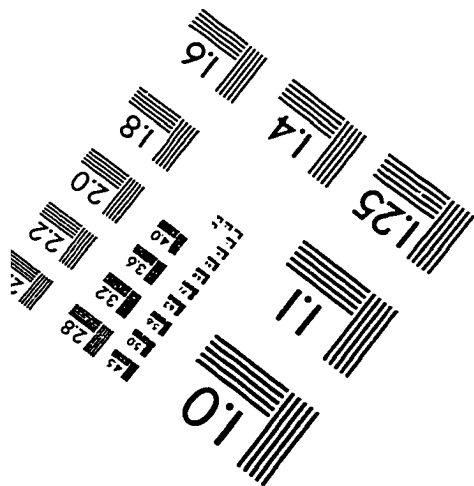
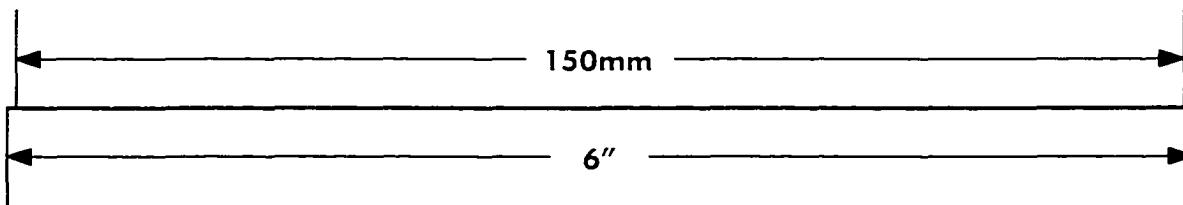
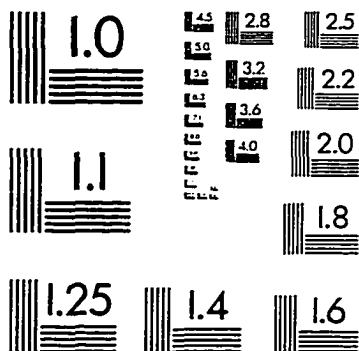
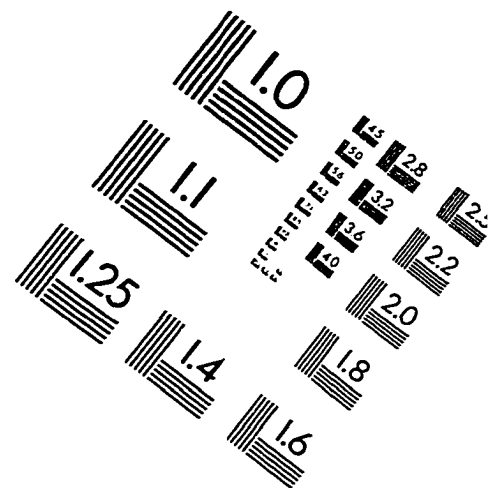
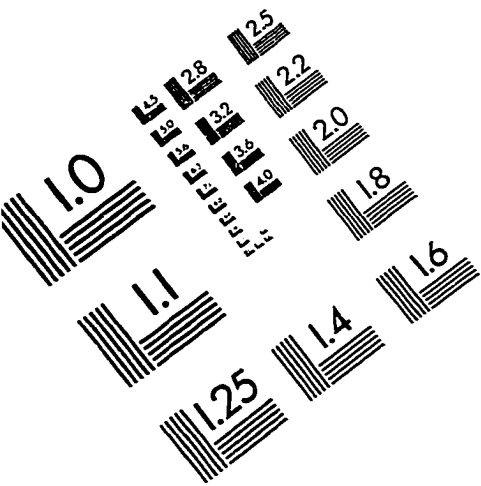
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