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eminist criticism with a poststructuralist perspective, as outlined by Chris Weedon (1987), takes language as the site of the cultural production of identity: subjectivity is discursively constituted. An individual’s identity is constructed at every moment through subject positions. These positions are taken up by the language user in the enactment of discourse practices and are constantly shifting. From this view of subjectivity as a process, it is evident that a person’s sense of identity is an “effect of discourse,” which is therefore changeable: “A poststructuralist position on subjectivity and consciousness relativizes the individual’s sense of herself by making it an effect of discourse which is open to continuous redefinition and which is constantly slipping” (Weedon 1987:106).

This poststructuralist perspective on identity, combined with a dialogic, or intertextual, view of actual texts, is what Julia Kristeva (1986a, b) proposed in her work in the late 1960s and early 1970s. According to Kristeva, a text consists of a mesh of intersecting voices. These voices can be viewed as an indeterminate “text population” (Talbot 1990, 1992, 1995). The metaphor is intended to capture the way any text is “populated” with a heterogeneous array of voices through which a language user’s identity is built up. A text is therefore not the product of a single author; instead, the
author her/himself is multiple, fragmented, and part of the population of the text. The same can be said of the reader. In reading a text, s/he is drawn into a complex of intersecting voices.

Like the other chapters in this section, this chapter examines the social reproduction of gender norms. My intention is to examine the mass media's contribution to the construction of a kind of femininity based on consumption. The material I focus on is a two-page consumer feature from a British magazine for teenagers called Jackie (which ceased publication in 1993). I outline the notion of women's magazines as a "synthetic sisterhood," which will involve an excursion into the history of magazines. I then concentrate specifically on one aspect of how this imaginary community is established: the simulation of a friendly relationship, I conclude with some discussion of how "unsisterly" this feature really is. Before attending to this synthetic sisterhood and its establishment, I need to consider some broader issues: the discursive organization of femininity and the nature of a reader's involvement in the mass media.

Femininity
What do we mean by femininity? The term refers to a conglomeration of concepts and themes, social relations and practices. It is a particular structuring of social space that spans across institutions and that is a key factor in the constitution of women's subjectivities. It discursively organizes women's lives, even impinging on their bodies. This discursively organized social space called femininity is articulated in commercial and mass-media discourses—especially in the magazine, clothing, and cosmetics industries. Such discourses shape the social practices that form women's identities and relationships. Social conditions bestow upon women feminine social identities and specific kinds of social relationships with other women and with men. Consumer femininity enters into women's daily lives in the resources they draw upon in spoken and written discourses and in nonlinguistic practices.

Dorothy Smith (1988) uses the conception of femininity as discourse to connect diverse phenomena in the economic and symbolic world: resources, women's work, and standards of appearance. Femininity informs the production and distribution of resources [such as clothes and cosmetics particularly, but also nonmaterial resources]. Part of femininity as discourse relates to women's skills and work: "beauty work" and the activities surrounding it [planning, shopping for materials, and so forth]. Most women are nonprofessional practitioners; their work on themselves has the status of a hobby [despite the fact that it is part of the good grooming necessary for entry into the job market].
According to Smith, femininity is a mass-media construction, a discourse realized through and on women's bodies. She stresses that femininity is not simply imposed on women by the mass media or by patriarchal social relations but that it is something in which women actively and creatively participate. It is manifested in women's activities, that is, in the practical skills cultivated, in the expenditure of money and free time, and also in patterns of friendship, especially among adolescents. Women are actively involved in the construction of femininity; manufacturers and the media must be responsive to them. Their active participation is shaped by what manufacturers and the media have to offer:

Women aren't just the passive products of socialization; they are active; they create themselves. At the same time, their self-creation, their work, the uses of their skills, are coordinated with the market for clothes, make-up, shoes, accessories, etc., through print, film, etc. This dialectic between the active and creative subject and the organization of her activity in and by texts coordinating it with the market is captured here using the concept of a textually-mediated discourse. (Smith 1988:39)

Manufacturing, advertising, and the fashion and magazine industries shape fashion and beauty standards. Women's bodies, as Smith says, "always need fixing" (47), because without work they cannot approximate the kinds of appearance offered by images in the mass media. But in the process of her practical efforts, the woman becomes the object defined by the image. She feminizes herself. Smith insists that this is more than a matter of sexualization. In participating in feminine discourse, women construct their identities as women, not sex objects for the male gaze. His feminine discourse shapes women's experiences in diverse institutional domains: in their daily domestic activities, in their friendship relations, in the workplace, and so on. In the Foucauldian sense, femininity is not a discourse in its own right but, rather, is articulated in different discourse types.

Discourse in the Mass Media and the Location of Power

Readers, our involvement in the processes of discourse is relatively passive. But we are still active participants. Reading takes place on readers' terms; they can stop whenever they want to, skip fragments, reread others, so on. Readers are in control of the discourse. Readers are also active participants in the sense that they are actively involved in processes of interpretation. In their involvement in these processes, they are constructed as social subjects. But like any other language users, readers are both
actively agentive and unwittingly acted upon. As readers, we are seldom aware of the resources we are drawing upon in investing texts with meaning. The sense of autonomy that we experience as readers is an illusion, implying a nonsensical ability to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps. Readers are drawn into a kind of complicity with the texts they read. When meanings are simply obvious, that complicity and subjection are complete. Complicity is necessary for understanding; it is not inherently undesirable.3

In contrast with face-to-face interaction, media discourse is a one-sided affair. Producer and interpreter are sharply divided and distant from each other. Because of this distance, producers cannot shape their texts for their actual readers (Fairclough 1989). Addressing a mass audience imposes on mass-media producers the need to construct an implied reader (or viewer) as addressee. At the same time, it imposes on actual mass-media readers or viewers the need to negotiate with the constructed positions. Every text can be said to have such an implied reader, an imaginary addressee with particular preoccupations, values, notions of common sense, and so on. An actual reader who has a great deal in common with the imaginary ideal reader inscribed in a particular text is likely to take up the positions it offers unconsciously and uncritically. Conversely, of course, distance enables a reader to be more aware of the positioning, and perhaps more critical. Consider, for example, how differently a twelve-year-old girl and a forty-year-old man would respond to the following (taken from Jackie): “When you’re trying to impress that hunk in the sixth form ...”

The need to construct an implied reader puts the producers of mass-media texts in a powerful position. They have the right to total control over production, including what kinds of representations of events are included. In the construction of an implied reader as an addressee, they are in a position to assign assumed shared experiences and commonsense attitudes as givens to a mass audience. In addition, the producers of mass-media texts, unlike their addressees, are professional practitioners. They do not work blindly in postulating subjects as addressees; mass-media discourse is targeted for specific audiences. These audiences have been measured by sophisticated market research practices, which are particularly scrutinizing kinds of discourse. As a result, actual addressees, in the targeted audience, are likely to take up the position inscribed, with its commonsense attitudes.

**Mass Media and Communities: The Notion of Synthetic Sisterhood**

The implied readers postulated by mass-media producers are constructed as members of communities. The targeted audience of women’s magazines is represented, simply by virtue of its femaleness, as a single community:
The picture of the world presented by women's magazines is that the individual woman is a member not so much of society as a whole but of her society, the world of women. It is to this separate community that these periodicals address themselves. Their spotlight is directed not so much at the wider "host" society, as at that host society's largest "minority" group: females. (Ferguson 1983:6)

A bogus social group has been described as a kind of surrogate sisterhood by various writers (e.g., Ferguson 1983; McRobbie 1978; Winship 1987). In this female community, which appears to ghettoize women, magazines are targeted for different socioeconomic groups. Jackie magazine, for example, had a predominantly working-class, young readership. (The target audience was young teenagers, ages twelve to fourteen; its actual readership was predominantly younger than this.)

Before going on to look at the synthetic sisterhood offered by women's magazines, let me give some attention to the notion of imaginary community. Using advertisements as an example. As well as informing consumers at what is available, ads also present to audiences the idea of community based on the consumption of commodities. Ads offer consumers membership in imaginary communities; to belong we need only to buy (and presumably use) products. William Leiss, Stephen Kline, and Sut Jhally (1984:653) explain that in the transition from industrial to consumer culture, they term consumption communities, "formed by popular styles and mediations among consumers, became a principal force for socialization in the twentieth century, replacing the ethnic bonds that people brought with them to the industrial city." Of course, being a certain kind of consumer does not in itself form relationships; consumption communities cannot exist in the same way as real communities based on locality, kinship, or work relations. They can provide a sense of belonging, of group membership—no more. In the consumer feature that I am going to discuss, producers and readers are set up in a synthesized sisterly relationship in a community based on the consumption of lipstick.

An increasingly common feature of types of discourse used to address mass audiences is a phenomenon sometimes called synthetic personalization, which is designed by mass-media producers "to give the impression of treating each of the people 'handled' en masse as an individual" (Fairclough 1989:62). Synthetic personalization is extremely common in the media generally in magazine advertisements and articles, front-page headlines, junk mail, and so on. It involves the construction of an implied reader who is treated as actual individual. It also requires the construction of a persona for the
producers. An anonymous audience is addressed as thousands of identical yous, with attitudes, values, and preoccupations ascribed to them.

Synthetic Sisterhood

The roots of synthetic personalization as a gendered capitalist strategy lie in the history of women’s magazines. A mixture of instruction and entertainment in publications specifically for women goes back to the late seventeenth century. A precursor of the modern women’s magazine was a British publication for aristocratic women called Ladies’ Mercury, which first appeared in 1693. This publication is generally considered the first women’s magazine (Ferguson 1983; White 1970; Winship 1987). It contained a range of elements: fiction, readers’ letters with editorial response, fashion articles and plates, educational tracts. In the mid-nineteenth century magazines aimed at a middle-class audience were produced. As Marjorie Ferguson remarks (1983:16), these publications “offered their readers—the socially climbing wives and daughters of the professional and business classes—guidance about what to buy, wear, and do to further their aspirations.” The first women’s magazine for a middle-class readership was The Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine, which began in 1852. Like its upper-class predecessors, it contained a mixture of fiction and nonfiction, written text and illustration. Unlike them, it dealt with activities and topics relating to women’s unpaid work in the domestic domain of the home. The nonfiction element consisted of informative and facilitating features: recipes, instructions for knitting men’s socks, articles on the management of servants, and so on.

Another new element was the presence of advertisements. Cynthia White (1970) reports that women’s periodicals in 1800 carried very few ads, but by the end of the century, advertising was the main economic support of the magazine industry:

The expansion of the women’s periodical press was in fact being underwritten by advertisers from the 1880s onwards, and this dependency greatly enhanced the status of the advertising industry and modified editorial attitudes to advertising copy. The older generation of publishers had consistently frowned on advertising as an obnoxious nuisance and treated it with suspicion and contempt. (66)

As magazines became dependent on advertising revenue, editors were “forced into a position first of neutrality, then of concurrence, and finally of collusion” with the advertising industry (White 1970:115). In the late 1930s, magazines began to carry consumer features, in which advertising is
present as part of the editorial content. As this brief history suggests, the
magazine has developed in the context of patriarchal and capital-
elations.

The editorial shift that was precipitated by this economic restructuring
in how the addressee-addresser relationship constructed in
changed over time. Janice Winship (1987:27) describes *The
Englishman's Domestic Magazine* as "coolly formal and distant in tone"
asts it with the "more relaxed and less intimidating style" in
publics in the 1890s that were aimed at the lower-middle-class end of
it. The change in tone was more than a matter of level of formal-
ver. The aim of achieving "an active and intimate relationship"
ers became specific editorial policy in a new publication in 1910
called *Weekly* (produced, incidentally, by the same publisher as *Jackie,*
C. Thomson). Looking at the preface of the first issue, which is
some length below, we can see that the editor professes to know
rstand the reader and offers her friendship, in order to encourage
respondence:

>>> editorial experience has left me impressed with one thing in
icular and that is the need for what is called the "personal note"
 journalism.... I will try to appeal to readers through their human
ure and their understanding of everyday joys and sorrows. For I
ow well that, in order to get into active and intimate relation
h the great public, one must prove oneself fully acquainted with
fections, sentiments and work. ... I understand, too, how that
an nature is strangely and pathetically eager for friendship. I
n willingly to become the confidant of readers, young and old,
and poor, who can safely trust me with their ideas and difficul-
s. [quoted in *White* 1970:88]

This image in the producer-audience relationship spread to other publica-
d is now a defining characteristic of women's magazines (Leman
1980:63). The internal structuring of magazine texts follows an easily
able format in which the distribution of written text, photographs, and
illustrations is highly conventional. Turning to content, one can see that the
es and topics taken up in magazines relate to women's domains of work
and leisure. Of particular relevance here is women's work on their own bodies as objects to be looked at and their use of commodities, that is, women's activities as consumers who feminize themselves. Magazines for women contain informative and facilitative elements on fashion and beauty products and their use, which appear both in advertisements and in consumer features produced by the editorial board. They are sites of the rearticulation of what Smith calls a "discourse of femininity."

An important element of feminizing practices is the concept of a woman as a visible object requiring work. In advertisements and do-it-yourself sections of magazines for women, women's bodies are frequently itemized as areas requiring separate attention with separate products. For new readers, such a perspective may have the effect of actually creating new concepts: "Are you doing enough for your underarms?" "How high is your bikini line?"

This itemization has been intensified by an endless proliferation of products by manufacturers and accompanying distinctions among colors, skin types, hair types, and so on.

The women's magazine as discourse type sets up subject positions for the individuals it impinges upon. As mentioned earlier, interaction through mass-media texts is asymmetrical and puts producers in the powerful position of setting up addresser and addressee. But it is difficult to determine who this empowered producer really is. Who is it that actually wields the power inhering in the construction of ideal subjects in magazines? The employees who put the pages together work under specific editorial control. Any directives from the editor will have been informed in a more general way by company policies shaping the production of the magazine, and ideological positions are not questioned or examined (Leman 1980). The major determinant is profit, which is earned through advertising revenue. Manufacturers, in addition to buying space in magazines, also provide publishers with goods and information about their products in return for free advertising in commercial features. Magazines are therefore constructed within the relationship among staff, publisher, and manufacturers; more specifically, among those who actually produce the magazines (the editor and her/his staff, the story writers, photographers, and printers), the publishing company management, and the promotion departments of manufacturing companies. Hence the kinds of material made available to the copywriter and paste-up artist on the editorial staff are not determined by the editor only. In the case of *Jackie*, they were also determined by the relations in capitalism between the publishers and manufacturers such as Gibbs Pharmaceuticals (makers of acne cream who advertised regularly in *Jackie*), EMI (a record company that provided exclusive interviews with pop stars), and so on.
because magazine production is economically dependent on advertising
income, in the 1950s editors were pressured by higher management into
operating with advertisers in stimulating consumption. An (anonymous)
employee interviewed by White in 1964 relates:

Magazines have been forced to beg for advertising and to make
concessions in return that would have been unheard of fifteen years
ago. There has been a continual battle between management [run
largely by accountants] and editors, who have the interests of their
readers at heart and wish to retain their autonomy. The fight is a
losing one. Content is planned with an eye on what will best serve
the interests of the advertiser. ... The whole policy of a magazine is
now dictated from above where only the advertiser counts. Because
of the limitations on space, and the necessity of filling it to the
advertiser’s advantage, the order has gone out to dispense with
“general interest” features in favour of “home service,” because
manufacturers do not like content which cannot be used to sell
goods. An editor has to comply, despite the knowledge that readers’
interests are much wider. (quoted in White 1970:206–7)

The women’s magazine as a discourse type is not homogeneous. Publishers
use sophisticated market research methods to provide manufacturers with
profiles of readerships as consumption groups. Women, who have a lifelong
concern with the marketplace as wives, mothers, and so on, are placed in
the subject position of consumer in diverse discourses. This subject posi-
tion is part of the femininity offered in women’s magazines because femin-
izing practices involve the use of products. The definition of femininity as
mode of consumption has intensified in these publications since the
consumer boom of the 1950s. One area of expansion was the cosmetics
industry, another was the magazine industry itself. Jackie magazine
appeared in 1964 when Scottish publisher D. C. Thomson picked up on the
new teenage consumer market.

According to Angela McRobbie (1978:3; original emphasis), Jackie
resisted its teenage readers with a “false sisterhood” and imposed an ideol-
ogy of femininity that isolated women from one another: “(1) The girls are
being invited to join a close, intimate sorority where secrets can be exchanged
and advice given; and (2) they are also being presented with an ideological
bloc of mammoth proportions, one which imprisons them in a claustro-
phobic world of jealousy and competitiveness, the most unsisterly of emotions,
so say the least.” She asserts that Jackie “addresses ‘girls’ as a monolithic
grouping,” so that differences in the social conditions experienced by actual
readers became obscured. The magazine presented its readers with an ideology of adolescent femininity in which the emotional was of paramount importance. Following Roland Barthes (1967), McRobbie picks out four semiological codes to characterize this ideology: romance, personal life, fashion and beauty, and pop music. As part of the semiological "raw material" [12] in the production of Jackie, they were drawn from a preexisting culture of femininity that already impinges upon girls' lives. By means of the codes, girls were addressed as a group with shared interests in romance, makeup, fashion, and so on. The codes thus constructed a teenage-girl grouping, and their mere presence in the magazine is the main substantiation for McRobbie's declaration that Jackie offered an "invitation" to its teenage readers to join a bogus social group. Apart from this she refers, in an impressionistic and unsystematic way, to the "tone" of the codes at specific points. More generally, she refers to the informal "lightness of tone" [9] characteristic of the magazine and the "sisterly" social position taken up by the producer.

By lightness of tone McRobbie means those properties of Jackie that mark it as a magazine rather than a serious text: the presence of advertisements, use of color, choice of layout, and so forth. She also refers to informality and an unserious attitude toward subject matter, which presumably contribute to Jackie's tone, although she does little more than suggest these in passing, forcing her readers to try to draw them out for themselves from the occasional fragments of text given as examples.

The main example McRobbie gives of a sisterly relationship is in the problem pages, which she discusses in her chapter on the code of personal life. The characters set up as counselors replying to readers' letters (Cathy and Claire at the time of the study) are likened by McRobbie to older sisters. She refers to the tone of the letters as "friendly and confidential" and describes the replies to them as "both jolly and supportive" [27]. In the problem pages in general, she observes "a tone of secrecy, confidence, an intimacy evoking a kind of female solidarity, a sense of mutual understanding and sympathy" [29]. She identifies Cathy and Claire as part of girls' feminine education, their function being to advise the less experienced by distributing "useful feminine knowledge" about how to behave [29].

McRobbie's references to sisterliness are frequent. My own sample text is a beauty page, so for a further example I will look at the sisterliness she observes in the code of fashion and beauty. The beauty pages contribute to feminine education, giving instructions for essential beauty work. As McRobbie points out, this training is necessary for girls' future entry into
she the part market. She also notes that in learning self-maintenance, girls lift the load of domestic reproduction from their mothers. The beauty provide a kind of do-it-yourself manual, educating girls in self-nance, or grooming, which includes becoming a feminine

ere the girls learn how to apply mascara correctly, pluck their eyebrows and shave their legs. Each of these tasks involve labour at becomes fun and leisure when carried out in the company of friends, besides which when the subject is the self, and when “self-cautification” is the object, narcissism transforms work intoisure. Nonetheless, this labour, carried out in the confines of the home (bedroom or bathroom) does contribute, both directly and indirectly, to domestic production, itself the lynchpin upon which the maintenance and reproduction of the family depends. (41; original emphasis).

... anonymous authors pass on essential knowledge about using aids to match up to accepted standards of feminine appearance (34; standards of beauty). McRobbie notes “a tone of hesitancy and aesthetics” about the skills being passed on. She puts this tone down to an acknowledged double-edged guilt surrounding the inevitable fail-one hand, to match up to conventions of beauty without resort to aesthetics and the dishonesty, on the other hand, of achieving it with them. In the beauty pages she studied, the skills that were transmitted concern “how girls can get the best of both worlds by deceiving men into believing they are naturally lovely, whilst subtly hiding their own flaws” (40). The authors pass on this guilty knowledge with a combination of “sisterly nation” and reassurance, followed by the offer of specific actions as practical solutions, actions involving the use of commodities. McRobbie is deeply critical of these pages for offering consumption as the only way of compensating for inevitable failure in the natural beauty stakes, and their of any discussion of “why women feel ashamed or embarrassed by this thing” (40; original emphasis). This kind of neglect is certainly unsisterliness, and is probably more harmful than the enticement to competitiveness and mistrust that McRobbie asserts she observes in Jackie. The next section develops her loose observations about Jackie’s offer of a “false

hood,” detailing the linguistic means by which a close relationship is established in my sample text. I return to the issue of unsisterliness in the conclusion.
Synthetic Personalization and Friendship in a Magazine for Teenagers

How do we establish friendship? In part, by communicating, "I know what you're like, and I'm like that too." This kind of friendly behavior, the signaling of closeness and interest in another person, is sometimes known as being "positively polite" (Brown & Levinson 1987). It involves the participants' attention to "positive face": their need to be liked, approved of, flattered, or thought of as interesting. It is referred to as positive politeness, not in an evaluative sense, but to distinguish it from the kind of politeness, used predominantly among strangers and to superiors, that attends to "negative face" needs: participants' need for freedom from imposition and harassment. Positive politeness is probably central to the well-documented cooperativeness of women. For example, Janet Holmes (1990, 1993) presents a detailed picture of New Zealand women's use of politeness strategies. These are mostly positive (affective tags and other hedges, boosting devices, compliments), but some are negative (e.g., apologies).

Positive politeness is very much in evidence in the mass media, and magazines are no exception. Certain kinds of linguistic features that are common in advertising and the mass media in general contribute to synthetic personalization and the establishment of an informal friendly relationship between the producers of mass-media texts and their audience. I concentrate on the mass-media producer's persona as a friend and the synthesized friendly relationship set up between producer and audience in a single sample of mass-media discourse, a consumer feature from Jackie. I shall briefly present two examples of synthesized positive politeness: the simulation of friendship and the simulation of reciprocal discourse.

The Simulation of Friendship

Aspects meriting attention in examining the producer's construction of a friendly persona for herself are the use of the pronouns we and you, relational and expressive values of lexis and punctuation, the setting up of shared presuppositions and projected facts (beliefs attributed to the reader, to "us," or just to common sense), and, a variant of this, negating the reader's supposed assumptions. In focusing on these specific linguistic features, I attend to the way the producer realizes her simulation of friendly interaction with her audience, how she shows she knows who the reader is, and how she establishes herself as a member of the same social group. The entire consumer feature is reproduced in Figure 6.1. The column of text on the history of lipstick reads as follows:
A Synthetic Sisterhood

Any clever advertiser how to suggest femininity with a product. He'll probably tell you "a kissprint." Lipstick on a collar, a glass, his eek—they all suggest that a woman was there. When men think of make-up, they think of lipstick.

It's hardly a modern invention—women have been adding artificial colour to their lips for centuries now. Before the days of lipstick as we know it, ladies used vegetable or animal dyes like cochineal—beetle's ood—to colour their lips.

The reason behind it wasn’t simply to make themselves more beautiful—superstition lingered that the devil could enter the body through the mouth, and since red was meant to ward off evil spirits “lipstick” was put around the mouth to repel his evil intentions!

These days there are more complicated (and ruder!) theories. Experts in human behaviour say it's all to do with sex (what else?).

Other “experts” claim that the shape of your lipstick can reveal a lot about your character—i.e. if you wear the end flat you’re stubborn, if it’s round and blunt you’re fun-loving etc. etc.—but don’t seem to take into consideration the fact that each brand of lipstick is a different shape to start with and it’s easiest just to use it accordingly. So much for the experts!

What is interesting is the way that fashions in lipsticks have changed over the years. When lipcolour first came into fashion at the beginning of this century, dark colours and the style of “drawing” on little pursed lips meant that women looked cutsey and doll-like. Later on, in the forties, film stars wanting to look lovable and “little-girl”ish continued this, while the newer breed of dominant, business-like women opted for a bolder look, colouring right over the natural “bow” in the lips. By the sixties “women’s lib” was in style and most girls abandoned lipstick altogether, or used beige colours to blank out the natural pink of their lips, and concentrated on over-the-top eye make-up and face painting instead.

Now, in the eighties, there are more colours available than ever before—right down to blue, green and black! “Glossy” lips, popular for a while in the seventies, are out again, and the overall trend is for natural pink tints, with oranges and golds in summer, on big, full lips.

Large cosmetic manufacturers will have upwards of 70 shades available at a time, introducing a further three or four shades each season to complement the fashion colours of that time. And with some companies churning out batches of lipstick at a rate of 9,000 an hour, that’s an awful lot of kisses to get through...
Figure 6.1 The Consumer Feature

Pronouns. In the column there is an example of the inclusive we, referring to both producer and audience together: lipstick as we know it. Elsewhere in the feature, use of exclusive we (i.e., the editorial we) contributes to setting up the producer as a team, the anonymous group voice is a friendly gossip in the orientation beneath the title (see Figure 6.1).

Pronominal reference to the reader as if she were an individual addressee is quite frequent. An example of it occurs in the first sentence in the
column of text: Ask any clever advertiser how to suggest femininity with a product and he'll probably tell you a “kissprint.”

The informative and expressive values of lexis and punctuation. The inform-
exclamation marks add expressive value, attributing to the writer a friendly, enthusiastic emotional state. They seem to be the strongest boosting devices in this particular magazine feature. [Other boosting devices in this and similar magazines include really, brill, well-trendy, mega]. The use of scare quotes contributes to setting up the familiar and the normal for the reader: the writer makes out that she knows what is and is not normal usage for her readers.

Common ground: projected facts and presuppositions. In the column of text in Figure 6.1, the writer negates an assumption attributable to the reader concerning the modernity of lipstick: it’s hardly a modern invention. Similarly, in a set of instructions (reproduced below; see Figure 6.1 for the accompanying photographs), the writer challenges the reader’s assumed pessimism about using lipstick successfully: you can achieve a long-lasting look!

LIP TRICKS!
Choosing the right shade of lipstick is easy—making it stay on is a bit more tricky. But by applying lipcolour correctly, you can achieve a long-lasting look!

1. Outline the lips with a toning lip-pencil—this will help stop your lipstick from “bleeding” around your mouth (a touch of Elizabeth Arden’s Lip-Fix Creme, £4.95, provides a good base to prevent this, too).

2. Fill in using a lip brush loaded with lipstick—a lip brush gives you more control over what you’re doing, and fills in tiny cracks more easily.

3. Blot lips with a tissue, dust over lightly with face powder, apply a second layer and blot again.

The writer is represented as the reader’s friend and as knowing what the reader thinks. She minimizes the social distance between herself and her readership, claiming common ground and a social relation of closeness. With her implicit claims to common ground in presuppositions and projected facts, she sets herself up as a member of the same social group as her readers. So, for example, two agreed-upon and interesting facts in the column are that each brand of lipstick is a different shape, and that fashions in lipstick have changed over the years. These are projected by the fact-nouns fact and way, respectively. The writer assumes shared knowledge that relates to historical details about “breeds” of women, kinds of “looks,” fashion changes, choice and ownership of lipstick, details relating to lipstick as a commodity that is subject to fashion change, the dullness of experts, and so on.
The features that are used to simulate reciprocal discourse contribute to acting relationships on the advertisement page: response-demanding clauses (commands and questions in particular), adjacency pairs, and interactions.\textsuperscript{8}

For the reader. Response-demanding utterances directly addressed to the reader occur notably in the instructions text. These commands requesting action as response are highly conventional in instructions scripts.

[^1] "Outline the lips with a toning pencil....
[^2] Fill in using a lip brush....
[^3] Blot lips with a tissue, dust over lightly ... apply a second layer ... blot again"

In the column, the writer begins with a command addressing the reader: "As the advertiser...." In the same text, she interpolates her own statements:

\begin{quote}
\begin{itemize}
\item Interpolation: "... ladies used animal dyes like cochineal, beetles's blood—
\item Statement: to colour their lips"
\item Interpolation: "These days there are more complicated (and ruder!) theories."
\item Statement:
\end{itemize}
\end{quote}

Her interpolated remark occurs in the caption of a testimonial in the feature: CLARA \textit{(wouldn't tell us her age!)}

\textbf{Presentations of dialogue.} The opening sentence of the column places the reader in an imaginary dialogue with a male advertiser. This dialogue consists of a two-part question-answer exchange, in which the reader asks the advertiser for information and he provides it:

\begin{quote}
\begin{itemize}
\item Question: "... how to suggest femininity with a product
\item Answer: "... 'a kissprint.'"
\end{itemize}
\end{quote}

Although reciprocal discourse is commonly constructed between writer and audience, in the sample I have chosen, the simulation of two-way discourse is most striking between the writer and various characters set up in the text. The effect is an impression of overhearing gossip. Simulation of reciprocal, two-way discourse is particularly noticeable in the testimonial section of the \textit{Jackie} consumer feature. These testimonials are reproduced (see Figure 6.1 for the accompanying snapshots):
MARGARET (15)
"I wear it all the time, because I always wear make-up. My favourite shade's a sort of brown-and-red mixture—I usually buy Boots 17 or Max Factor lipstick. I got my first one when I was 10, for Xmas—it was a sort of pink colour; I think it was just for me to play with."

EMILY (12)
"Usually I just wear lipstick when I'm going out, but sometimes for school, I like pinks, oranges and plain glosses. I was about 7 when my mum gave me a bright red lipstick to experiment with—I think I've worn it ever since!"

CLARA (wouldn't tell us her age!)
"I always wear red—dark red—and usually from Mary Quant or Estee Lauder. I don't know if I can remember my first lipstick—wait! yes I can! It was called 'Choosy Cherry' by Mary Quant—everyone used to ask me if I was ill when I was wearing it!"

RHONA (18)
"I like pinks and deep reds. I don't wear it all that often. My first lipstick? I stole it from my sister's drawer—I was about 12—dying to look grown-up even then!"

To make any sense of these statements at all we need to postulate a set of questions or first pair-parts that were asked by an interviewer but that do not appear on the page. They are interviewee responses to three reconstructable questions: How often do you wear lipstick? What's your favorite shade? When did you get your first lipstick? Notice the echoing repetition of the question in the fourth testimonial.

Interestingly, although the whole consumer feature establishes a friendly relationship between apparently like-minded people, as I have indicated, it is particularly in these testimonials that positive politeness strategies of the kind used by women in face-to-face interaction are prominent. The high proportion of hedges (sort of, I think, about) contrasts sharply with the authority of the editorial voice in the other sections. The editorial voice is that of the expert with special knowledge. The interviewees do not always use the modality of categorical certainty, as the editorial voice does; in fact, the only things they are not tentative about are their color preferences. But of course the interviewees' supposed "own words" have been structured by the interests of the editor-as-interviewer (present only as the shadow cast by her questions), who has set the agenda and constructed these interviews with "ordinary" people. The hedging presumably contributes to the simulation of informal speech.
Conclusion

In concluding, let me emphasize that I am not presenting the readers of publications for women as passive receptors and ignorant dupes. This simplistic view of readers as gullible consumers has been most determinedly and effectively challenged by ethnographic work on readers of romance novels (Owen 1990; Radway 1987), which has shown us that readers are not simply taken in by the fiction they read, at least not in any straightforward way. Romance readers use fiction strategically—to escape everyday demands, for instance—and are quite capable of spotting poor writing and of challenging stereotypes. The readers of Jackie magazine cannot be dismissed as fools, either. As McRobbie (1991) demonstrates, the magazine was used oppositionally, as a challenge to teachers and parents. Such publications for teenagers, along with other elements of nonschool culture, provide strategies of resistance for low achievers in school. Like Radway’s romance readers, teenagers use reading deliberately to cut themselves off from the rest of the world and the obligations it tries to impose on them. Actual readers of the sample text analyzed in this chapter would have taken up multiple, and almost certainly contradictory, subject positions. At most, one can say they may have been simultaneously both duped and not duped, so to speak.

Perhaps I had also better make it quite clear that lipstick per se is not under criticism here and no disparagement of lipstick wearers is intended (or indeed of practitioners of any of the other feminizing practices available to us). It is not a matter of repressing the pleasures of self-beautification. What I have been investigating are some of the mechanisms by means of which consumer femininity intrudes into the subjectivities of women. Women actively construct their own femininity, but this frequently means drawing on resources supplied by the magazine, clothing, and cosmetics industries. The femininity available to women is articulated principally in commercial and mass-media discourses. This very fact has certain consequences that are not beneficial to women and girls.

The audience of the feature analyzed here is offered sisterhood in consumption. Synthetic personalization and the need for adult femininity catch readers up in a bogus community, in which the subject position of consumer is presented as an integral part of being feminine. Members of this community other than the reader and her friendly editorial big sister are media celebrities, the testimonial givers, and other wearers of lipstick.

In the beauty feature, womanhood is a pattern of consumption. Teenagers aspire to adulthood. What girls aspire to be as women is presented for them as a matter of what kind of look they will opt for. The
beauty feature is not a piece of sisterly advice or an exchange of sisterly secrets; it is covert advertising: a consumer feature. Its producers' aim, apart from filling two pages in the magazine inexpensively, is to promote lipstick as a commodity. The advice that it does provide for readers—that is, the instructions for professional application of lipstick—is curiously inappropriate for the age range. These instructions seem to be calculated to encourage experimenters to consume extravagantly by playing at being movie star and beautician rolled into one.

Girls need peer-group membership; they turn to other girls for friendship and to learn how to behave like teenage girls. Consumer femininity is a real part of adolescent patterns of friendship. The consumer feature, however, offers no real human relationship. The testimonials are an example of how, at puberty, girls are drawn into synthetic consumption communities of commodity users. Whether based on actual interviews or invented altogether, they are manipulative. Cosmetics use is presented as a natural part of a woman's identity, making demands on her discernment, her creative energies, and her time. In reading the feature, girls "associate" with business people. Fashion and beauty alone are newsworthy. The only practices cultivated relate to being a competent consumer; in fact, readers are encouraged to ridicule the scientific and analytical.

The sisterhood offered in the consumer feature is also unsisterly because it is patriarchal. The feature makes a small contribution to the shaping of the "paradigms for women's production of appearances" [Smith 1988:43] that are formed for women by the manufacturing, advertising, fashion, and magazine industries. In the opening paragraph of the column, in which the kissprint is presented as a symbol of femininity, this symbol is provided by a male character. It is a man who is the authority on femininity. The same passage goes on to present lipstick smudges as indices of a woman's presence. These are located on a man; to be feminine is to be (hetero)sexual. Feminine identity is achieved in consumption and in relationships with men. The friendly older sister writing for Jackie magazine (who could perfectly well be a man, of course) betrays her young readers, tying up their self-definition with external patriarchal standards of femininity. Given the poststructuralist vision of identity with which I opened, however, we need not view these readers as deterministically positioned in the act of reading this feature. Identity is not fixed but constantly in flux; being constructed moment by moment in the complexes of intersecting voices, or text populations, with which we engage in reading.
See, for example, Angela McRobbie (1978) and Leah Cohen (1984), both of whom are cited by Smith.

Smith is here taking issue with assertions made by other theorists of femininity. For Catharine MacKinnon (1982:530–31), for example, femininity is first and foremost a matter of sexualization: "Socially, femaleness means femininity, which means attractiveness to men, which means sexual attractiveness, which means sexual availability on male terms. What defines woman as such is what turns men on.... Gender socialization is the process through which women internalize [make their own] a male image of their sexuality as their identity as women. It is not just an illusion."

The subject positioning of readers is an issue I consider in more detail in an analysis of fiction in which I examine its potential for both socially reproductive and socially subversive tendencies (Talbot 1995).

Martin Barker (1989) observes that Jackie's predecessors were more overtly dictatorial. Most notable was Marilyn, which ran a feature entitled "Mum Knows Best."

Barker (1989) finds McRobbie's justification for this claim very tenuous. Hedging and boosting devices are kinds of modals, that is, elements that modify the force of a statement (Holmes 1984, 1993). Hedges (e.g., sort of, kind of, rather, about) are used to avoid making categorical statements by adding an impression of tentativeness. Tags (e.g., isn't it, don't you!) sometimes function as hedges. Boosters, in contrast, serve as intensifiers and are used in expressions of interest or enthusiasm (e.g., I'm so glad we came, we had a really good time).

Projected facts and presuppositions are both kinds of external, prior text embedded in another text (Talbot 1990, 1995), but whereas projections are formal metalinguistic devices (Halliday 1985), presuppositions cannot be accounted for as formal features because they may be triggered by a wide variety of textual elements (Levinson 1983). Both projected facts and presuppositions tend to be backgrounded ideas that are noticeable only when assumptions of shared knowledge are erroneous.

Adjacency pairs are utterances that occur in pairs, forming small two-part exchanges such as question-answer (Schegloff 1968; Schegloff & Sacks 1973). The first pair-part sets up an expectation of the second pair-part. In simulations of interaction in written discourse, a first or second pair-part may be present without its partner.

In a study of the language of a disc jockey on BBC's Radio 1, Martin Montgomery (1988:94) notes how frequently the DJ uses utterances requiring responses and observes that these utterances are contributing to a "sense of reciprocity" in the one-way discourse of the radio. Other features he observes contributing to this sense of two-way talk are short shifts in speaker role, which he refers to as interpolations. They are often response-demanding or expressive utterances. Jackie frequently contained bracketed remarks that seem to be simulations of such interpolations.

Cathryn Houghton (this volume) analyzes other discursive mechanisms that impose the capitalist agenda on teenage girls.
References


Houghton, Cathryn [this volume]. Managing the body of labor: The treatment of reproduction and sexuality in a therapeutic institution.


A Synthetic Sisterhood


