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Will the Twenty-Five of You Accept This Rose? Assessing Gender Portrayals on ABC's The Bachelor.

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"Will the Twenty-Five of You Accept This Rose?"

Assessing Gender Portrayals on ABC's *The Bachelor*

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by

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"Will the Twenty-Five of You Accept This Rose?"

Assessing Gender Portrayals on ABC's *The Bachelor*

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Cultivation theory suggests that television viewing influences beliefs and opinions about the real world. Also, framing theory suggests that the way we see an issue may be directly related to how media portray it. The recent pervasiveness of reality-television dating shows in prime time provides a sea of opportunities for gender communication research. The purpose here was to explore women's representations in a courtship context as depicted in ABC's *The Bachelor* to determine the presence of female stereotypes (RQ1). Three groups of eliminated women were also compared to determine differences among them in terms of appearance and behavior (RQ2).

In a mixed-methods content analysis, the women in the show were coded for *general information and natural appearance* (age; occupation; ethnicity; hair color, length and texture; and body type), *superficial appearance* (dress attire, hair style and makeup style) and *behavioral traits* (quiet v. loud, shy v. assertive, cold v. emotional, gentle v. strong, and unconcerned v. jealous). Major findings include the following:

Most of the 25 women portrayed in *The Bachelor* were Caucasians; in their 20s; held professional jobs; had long, straight brown/black hair; and were considered to have an hourglass body type. They wore mostly moderately revealing to revealing clothes, displayed moderately well-groomed to well-groomed hair styles, and wore moderate

makeup. Most women displayed moderately loud to loud communication characteristics, were assertive, were moderately emotional to emotional, and were rated moderate for the "gentle v. strong" attribute. Approximately half of them were unconcerned and the other half displayed jealous behavior. The three groups of women eliminated in *The Bachelor* were not significantly different (Sig. > .05) on any of the items in the *superficial appearance* and *behavioral traits* categories.

Because teenage girls often use the same behavior displayed by women when indicating interest in boys, and because *The Bachelor* calls itself a "reality-television" show – which studies have found may make viewers believe the portrayals reflect actual "reality" – the way *The Bachelor* is presenting women in dating contexts – from the revealing clothes they are wearing to the aggressiveness of their sexual behavior – could possibly influence teenagers who are exposed to the portrayals to replicate those same looks and attitudes.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Reality television is a category of programming that presents unscripted dramatic or humorous situations, documents actual events, and does not feature professional actors, but rather, "ordinary" people. Although the category has existed in some form or another since the early years of television, the current explosion of popularity dates from around 2000, with CBS's *Survivor* as pioneer. Critics and former reality TV participants have claimed that the term "reality television" is a misnomer and what such shows portray is far from actual reality, with contestants put in exotic locations or abnormal situations, sometimes coached to act in certain ways, and with events on screen manipulated through editing and other post-production techniques (Andrejevic, 2003).

It is undeniable that the pervasiveness of reality-television shows in prime time provides ample opportunities for media effects communication research, the origins of which can be attributed to concerns about the potential consequences that media content might have on audience's behaviors (Nabi & Sullivan, 2001). As a theory of media effects, cultivation theory suggests that television viewing influences beliefs and opinions about the real world (Gerbner, 1969). Also, framing theory suggest that the way we see an issue may be directly related to how media portray it. Extensive research supports how media reflects and transmits the social values of a culture, primarily the dissemination of stereotypes (Blaine & McElroy, 2002).

A "stereotype" is a generalization about a person or a group. One develops stereotypes when unable or unwilling to obtain all of the information needed to make fair judgments about people or situations. As a consequence, in the absence of the "total picture," stereotypes may fill in the blanks (Lee, Jussim, & McCauley, 1995).

Because media, namely television, may have a powerful influence on media consumers' values, it is paramount that communication scholars examine media messages and portrayals to assess whether stereotypes are being promoted and thus perpetuated. For instance, by representing women in stereotypical roles in entertainment programming (i.e., stay-at-home moms), the media may be cultivating the audience to absorb biases that will become ingrained in cultural values and eventually be reflected in real-life situations.

Ratings indicate that the most popular type of reality-television shows are those with a dating theme. It is therefore natural that this research uses such a setting to investigate gender portrayals. Unlike its not-so-prominent competitors such as *Blind Date*, *Joe Millionaire*, *ElimiDATE*, *Shipdate*, *For Love or for Money*, *A Dating Story*, *Dismissed*, *The 5th Wheel*, *Paradise Hotel*, *Flavor of Love*, among others, ABC's *The Bachelor* will air its 10th edition in 2007.

The present study will explore gender representations in a courtship context as depicted on ABC's reality-television dating show *The Bachelor* to determine the presence and extent of female stereotypes.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Content analysis of television portrayals have been reported for more than two decades (Elasmar, Hasegawa, & Mary 1999). One frequently cited purpose of this body of literature is to document the manner in which genders are depicted not only in programs but also in commercials and news coverage. The research on this area ranges from simply tracking the on-air presence of a gender (or the lack thereof), to focusing on specific gender-related variables. Other recurring criteria used to study media depictions include race and age. Often, researchers analyzed all three standards simultaneously in the same study.

Media Portraying Gender

Attempting to explore the possible association between the trend of women's presence on prime time TV and the trend in Americans' progressive acceptance of women's importance outside the home, Elasmar, Hasegawa, and Mary (1999) analyzed the content of female portrayals on prime time network television programs during the 1992-93 seasons. Among other things, the researchers found that women were more likely to be shown playing minor roles, more likely to be under the age of 50, less likely to be married, less likely to be housewives, less likely to be caring for children, and less likely to be involved in a romantic relationship. In an "art imitates life" note, Elasmar, Hasegawa, and Mary (1999) argued for a causality relationship between changes in

American values about women in the workplace and changes in women's portrayals on television: "This change influences hiring practices of women in the workplace overall. In turn, a change in the presence of women in the workplace influences a change in the hiring and depiction of women on television" (p. 24).

If a causality relationship between media and cultural values would truly exist, a case of "the chicken or the egg" would arise as the next question would be, "which one comes first?" or "which is reflecting which?" Extensive empirical research has proven media's cultivation effects, so there is a valid possibility that television viewers are constructing their reality based on what they watch, which then becomes "reality," which in turns continues to be re-enacted on TV. In other words, are changes in the workforce shaping media portrayals or is it the other way around? In the case of ABC's *The Bachelor*, it would be difficult to agree with Elasmar, Hasegawa, and Mary (1999), as it is unlikely that many of us know someone who openly dates 25 women simultaneously, taking them in group dates, exotic trips, etc. Having said that, cultivation effects become a concern, as heavy viewers could then be led to believe that portrayals of reality television dating shows truly reflect contemporary courtship.

Concerned with media's influence in the social construction of reality, Signorielli and Kahlenberg (2001) explored the role of television in the transmission of traditionally gender-stereotyped occupations in the United States. The research, grounded on cultivation theory, examined the influence of television in the depiction of occupations as well as the effects of television on attitudes, beliefs and conduct of viewers regarding job selections. The study analyzed leading and supporting characters in 11 week-long

samples of prime-time television drama broadcast between fall 1990 and spring 1998. Overall, Signorielli and Kahlenberg's (2001) study supported the existing body of research on gender and racial stereotypes on television, even though they found more positive occupational depictions of women and other minority groups.

Blaine and McElroy (2002) analyzed the content of weight loss infomercials to determine the extent to which this type of paid programming reflected the gender role expectations that have been observed in other kinds of programming. Particularly, they examined gender representations and the messages being sent by these TV ads, in order to evaluate the implications for weight-based prejudice, stigma and health issues deriving from these portrayals. Eighteen hours of infomercials were studied both for their messages (e.g., "you can eat your favorite foods") and images (e.g., before and after looks of testimonial figures). The researchers found that the social messages in weight loss infomercials reflected stereotypic beliefs that heavy people are gluttonous, lazy, and lacking in willpower. The ads were also found to reinforce cultural norms that being heavy is unattractive and that weight is fully controllable, a seductive mistruth that "further contributes to prejudice against heavy people" (p. 355).

Powell and Abels (2002) evaluated the influence of television programs on the gender behavior of preschoolers by analyzing depictions of gender and messages in 10 episodes each of the shows *Teletubbies* and *Barney and Friends*. Eight gendered-themes emerged from their data: gender representation, leadership, appearance, gender roles, occupation, activities, play roles, and social skills. The researchers' analysis confirmed the presence of gender messages and behavior in preschool programming, some of which

included: The female characters were followers a majority of time, appeared feminine, were underrepresented in a variety of occupations and played feminine roles. The male characters, on the other hand, were the leaders, appeared in a variety of masculine occupations and roles and were larger and stereotypically male in appearance. Both shows were also found to portray males as being more active and females as being more social and passive. The researchers concluded that "Preschoolers will indeed see stereotypical sex roles models of the feminine and the masculine on these shows, but will also see social skills be affirmed for both sexes" (p. 20). The research results also suggested that such programs have the power to confirm stereotypes and non-traditional gender behavior more for boys than for girls.

Through a radical feminist lens, Carty (2005) turned to television commercials, print ads, and press coverage of sports to analyze how media portray women athletes. Upon examining television commercials during the 1996 Summer Olympics, the 1999 Women's World Cup tournament, the 2000 women's NCAA basketball tournament, and regular season WNBA games in 2001 and 2002 as well as print advertisements from *Gear*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Women's Sport and Fitness*, and *The National Sports Review*, Carty (2005) concluded that most media commonly focus more on the sexual appeal of female athletes and their "feminine" qualities than on their athletic achievements. The researcher warned that although the popularity and visibility of women in sports is a positive thing, the mechanisms through which this is achieved can be controversial (e.g., swimmer Jenny Thompson posing topless for *Sports Illustrated* in the summer of 2000). "What is essential is that women take advantage of the benefits sports participation offers

and use this access in a constructive way to further diminish discrimination and unequal treatment on the basis of gender" (p. 153).

In 1998, Ganahl, Prinsen, and Netzley (2003) studied a sample of 1,337 prime time commercials from the three major networks (ABC, CBS and NBC) and coded each character for gender, age, acting role, and product being advertised. Their findings were then compared to Bretl and Cantor (1988), the U.S. Census Bureau's 2000 population statistics, and Mediamark Research and Simmons syndicated marketing services. The researchers concluded that although women make most purchases of goods and services, they are still underrepresented as primary characters during most prime time commercials except for health and beauty products. In addition, they found that "women are still cast as younger, supportive counterparts to men, and older women are still the most underrepresented group" (Ganahl, Prinsen, & Netzley, 2003, p. 545). The results in this study clearly show television commercials as sustainers of traditional stereotypes of both women and men. But with the "baby boom" reality becoming more and more tangible, it would be interesting to replicate this research today to detect changes in the representation of older women. As the boomers head to retirement taking with them great amounts of free time and capital, a mass communications revolution is expected to change commercial advertising to reflect the needs of this aging population (Hilt & Lipschultz, 2005).

Exposing participants to gender-stereotypic TV commercials designed to elicit the female stereotype, Davies, Spencer, and Steele (2005) explored whether vulnerability to stereotype threat could persuade women to avoid leadership roles in favor of non-

threatening subordinate roles. Over the course of two studies, the researchers confirmed that exposure to the stereotypic commercials undermined women's aspirations on a subsequent leadership task. The results also established that creating an identity safe environment eliminated vulnerability to stereotype threat despite exposure to threatening situational cues that stimulated damaged social identities and their corresponding stereotypes.

Finally, the analysis of communication practices that disseminate gender ideology constitutes a large category in feminist scholarship. Researchers in this area generally work from the assumption that the communication of gender ideology is a central function of cultural messages, and they employ diverse analytical techniques to examine the variety of forms in which this ideology is manifested and through which its effects are produced (Dow & Condit, 2005). Feminist scholars have examined gender stereotypes in television and video entertainment (Acosta-Alzuru, 2003; Botta, 1999; Harrison & Fredrickson, 2003); organizational discourse (Ashcraft & Kedrowicz, 2002); cartoons (Edwards & Chen, 2000); music (Padva, 2003; Sellnow, 1999); popular books (Garner, 1999) and even toys (Acosta-Alzuru & Kreshel, 2002).

Television, Female Body Size and Perceived Realism

Television, among other media outlets, is a world in which how women look is critical. Television under-represents overweight women and over-represents thin women (Silverstein, Perdue, Peterson, & Kelly, 1986; Spitzer, Henderson, & Zivian, 1999). Women are often depicted in traditional women's roles (Signorielli & Bacue, 1999).

Larger women are often depicted negatively—as less attractive and less likely to have romantic relationships (Fouts & Burggraf, 1999, 2000; Greenberg, Eastin, Hofschire, Lachlan, & Brownell, 2003). There is evidence that these depictions influence beliefs about the appropriate role of women, influence standards of attractiveness, lower self-esteem, and encourage eating disorders (Harrison & Fredrickson, 2003; Stice, Schupak-Neiberg, Shaw, & Stein, 1994).

One aspect that has only scarcely been explored is whether these depictions of women are perceived as "realistic." This may modify some of the effects of these depictions. At least in some cases messages perceived to be realistic have greater effect. For example, realistic negative portrayals of alcohol drinking result in more negative attitudes towards alcohol abuse than less realistic messages (Bahk, 2001).

Shapiro, Barriga, and Jhaveri (2005) explored the variables of context and perceived reality to find that while the body type of an actress had little effect in a domestic setting, larger women were perceived as less realistic and less likely to get a television role if the program was in a professional setting. These results have implications for both how audiences judge body types and for how audiences make realism judgments. Professional women with families may be feeling pressure to not only advance careers and to care for a family, but to also do all that while maintaining what is for many of them an impossibly thin body.

Gender in Reality Television

A series of critical commentaries concerning reality television shows published in *Feminist Media Studies* in 2004 are worth mentioning. Despite their short length, these peer-reviewed critiques certainly add to the still limited literature on analyzing the recent phenomenon of reality television. The first one, Fairclough (2004), addressed the place of women in ABC's *Wife Swap*, in which as the author suggested, women's worth are entirely measured by their success in the domestic sphere. "*Wife Swap* achieves nothing except to further emphasize the fact that women should be natural homemakers by virtue of their gender and confirms the notion that there is little positive about these types of outmoded gender stereotypes" (p. 345). Fairclough (2004) re-ignited the debate over standards in television bemoaning its effects and expressing a parental concern for the audience.

In another commentary article criticizing images of women in popular culture, Graham-Bertolini (2004) analyzed FOX's *Joe Millionaire*, a reality television dating show that she argued, "by presenting a version of reality distorted [through] editing, perpetuates problematic stereotypical images of appropriate female demeanors and goals" (p. 341). The author claimed that the show helped preserve traditional notions of patriarchy by reinforcing the concept that traditional women with good moral conduct will be rewarded for their obedience to conservative societal expectations. "The program ensures that the female 'contestants' will demonstrate 'sexual purity, submissiveness, and domesticity' by rewarding them for such virtues" (p. 341).

Reviewing a different genre of televised reality shows, Harris (2004) analyzed FOX's *Paradise Hotel*, which followed a group of singles in their 20s through a summer at an exotic resort, where the last standing male and female contestants would be given an unspecified sum of money. The author reasoned that shows like *Paradise Hotel* exemplify gender equality to the extent that "feminine sexuality is freed from the responsibility and respectability of marriage" (Fiske as quoted in Harris, 2004, p. 356).

> The very premise of women swapping partners in a hotel – ultimately for money – implicitly invites viewers to cast the female contestants as prostitutes, and while both men and women must negotiate a Scylla and Charybdis-like set of expectations requiring them to be sexually uninhibited without appearing promiscuous and to plot without appearing manipulative, women are readily typecast by fellow contestants as bitches, flirts, sluts, and nags (Harris, 2004, p. 356).

Media Portraying Race and Ethnicity

Meyers (2004) used discourse analysis to examine how violence against African American women was represented in local TV news coverage of "Freaknik," an annual "spring break" ritual that drew African American college students from throughout the country to Atlanta, Georgia in the 1990s. The researcher drew from Black feminist theory in examining the ways that gender, race, and class intersected to shape the representation of the victims, the perpetrators, and the violence. The results indicated that "the convergence of gender, race, and class oppressions minimized the seriousness of

the violence, portrayed most victims [women] as stereotypic Jezebels whose lewd behavior provoked assault, and absolved the perpetrators [men] of responsibility" (p. 95).

Meyers (2004) suggested that the coverage also reinforced race and class stereotypes by representing locals as underclass troublemakers susceptible to crime while students were linked to law-abiding, middle class values and norms. Furthermore, the researcher argued that the news criminalized Black men primarily with respect to property damage while decriminalizing them concerning their abuse of Black women. "The safety of Black women appears of less consequence than that of property" (p. 113). Meyers (2004) concluded that by blaming the victim, by turning the abuse against her so that she appeared responsible for it, the news established and reinforced the parameters of appropriate public behavior for women, providing all women with a warning about the dangers of transgression while reaffirming middle class values and behaviors as the remedy for male violence against women.

In a multipurpose paper, Quinn (2004) focused on Italian American womanhood on HBO's *The Sopranos*. Among other things, her research explored the history of how Italian Americans have been portrayed on television (e.g., mobsters and in crime shows). Quinn (2004) argued that all of the *Soprano* women are portrayed as "someone's moll." The researcher contended that the show's content invites debate about who Italian American women are and have been in American culture over generations. She also advocated the necessity for expanding feminist scholarship in the field of Italian American women's studies not simply to enrich the literature but also to fight this type of ethnic stereotyping.

Media Portrayals Affecting Viewers' Values

Some social psychology researchers have argued that the key mechanism linking exposure to thin body images and negative self-appraisals is that such exposure leads to the establishment of a "thin ideal" used in evaluating oneself (Stice as quoted in Wedell & Santoyo, 2005). Wedell and Santoyo (2005) investigated how and when exposure to different body contexts alters body ideals used in judgment. To test the existence of the "thin ideal," university students judged the width and pleasantness of human figures, with context manipulated by presenting mostly narrow or mostly wide forms. The researchers also examined individual self-assessments of the students' own body satisfaction and explored the linkage of these measures to their judgments. Wedell and Santoyo (2005) found that women who were dissatisfied with their own bodies consistently used "thin ideals" to judge body images and were insensitive to the contextual manipulation of body image. Although other reasons are undoubtedly involved in perpetuating the "thin ideal" in our culture, Wedell and Santoyo's (2005) research boosted the claim that mass media presentation of positively skewed distributions of body images is one way this cultural norm is perpetuated, which suggests that inclusion of a fuller range of body images in the media may reduce these effects of skewing and lead to an ideal that is closer to the real norm.

Taylor (2005) tested whether: (1) the messages embodied in sexual television content, (2) the degree to which viewers perceive television content as realistic, and (3) sexual content that is conveyed using visual or verbal symbols, influence sexual attitudes

and beliefs. The researcher experimented by exposing 182 college students to visual or verbal sexual television content, neutral content, or no television at all prior to completing measures of sexual attitudes and beliefs. Taylor (2005) found that although exposure to sexual content generally did not produce significant main effects, it did influence the attitudes of those who perceived television to be relatively realistic. Also, verbal sexual content was found to influence beliefs about women's sexual activity.

Media Portraying Age

Hardwood and Anderson (2002) found that older adult characters not only continue to be underrepresented in major network television programs, but also tend to be portrayed more negatively than their younger counterparts.

Responding to charges that American advertisers have often portrayed the elderly in a negative light, which critics suggest not only offend elderly consumers but also contribute to ageism, Miller, Leyell, and Mazachek (2004) examined portrayals of elderly characters in television commercials. Employing a concept of stereotypes found in cognitive psychology, they looked for trends in the portrayal of the elderly in a random sample of television commercials produced in the United States from the 1950s through the 1990s. Their results, however, did not support Hardwood and Anderson (2002) or the contentions of the critics, as they found very little negative stereotyping in the commercials. On the contrary, their analysis indicated trends in the appearance of several positive stereotypes, and differences in the stereotyping of gender groups and age

segments within the elderly group. These results may reflect the "boomer" revolution mentioned earlier.

Hilt and Lipschultz (2005) warn that through cultivation, media's influence, whether positive or negative, may slowly set the parameters and thus our conceptions of what later life might hold for aging adults. The authors explain that the underrepresentation of elders on television programs may contribute to an unrealistic view of that age group by viewers. "Cultivation theorists would say that heavy television viewers might think that few people are elderly and elderly persons were of less consequence because they were rarely seen on television," (Hilt & Lipschultz, 2005, p. 28).

Social Identity and Gender Stereotypes in Courtship Contexts

Social identity is one's perception of membership in a given social category, such as gender or ethnicity, in conjunction with the personal significance of that membership (Stroink, 2004; Deaux, 1996; Hogg, 2003; & Tajfel, 1978). The inclusion of a social identity in the self-concept often involves adopting the behaviors and characteristics that others both within and outside of the self-relevant social category expect of group members (Stroink, 2004). For example, there are multiple understandings of appropriate male and female behavior within a particular context. Closely related to the idea of social identity, gender stereotypes refer to the structural set of beliefs about the personal attributes of men and women. According to the most popular measures of masculine and feminine sex roles (i.e., Sex Role Inventory, Bem, 1974; PAQ, Spence, Helmreich, &

Stapp, 1974), a typical man makes decisions easily, does not give up easily, and is competitive, outspoken, outgoing, intellectual, self-confident, and not easily influenced. The typical woman likes children and is warm, emotional, considerate, tactful, gentle, helpful, and aware of others' feelings (Eun Jung Suh, Moskowitz, Fournier, & Zuroff, 2004).

As the research literature shows, gender stereotypes give clear messages about how women and men are supposed to behave in various situations, including dating. Sakalli-Ugurlu (2003) examined the interaction among genders, gender stereotypes and relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships. The researcher found that "having a set of beliefs about how men and women should behave in a romantic relationship might exert a strong influence on future plans and expectations that are formed through interacting with incoming information from the individuals' social environment" (p. 295).

According to traditional stereotypes, in romantic relationships men are supposed to be assertive leaders, and dominant decision makers, whereas women are supposed to be submissive, passive conformists (Peplau & Gordon, 1985). For example, at the beginning of the relationship, initiation is assumed to be the man's role. Women, however, are expected to refuse or accept the man's offer and are expected to resist men's sexual advances (Basow, 1992; Peplau, Rubin, & Hill, 1977). "Women are stereotypically viewed as less dominant than men even when they express the same type of dominance behavior as men do" (Henley & Harmon, 1985, as quoted in Schmid Mast, 2005, p. 920).

Using data from a Speed Dating experiment, Fisman, Iyengar, Kamenica, and Simonson (2006) studied dating behavior to determine gender differences in mate selection. Their results showed that women put greater weight on the intelligence and the race of partner, and exhibit a preference for men who grew up in affluent neighborhoods. Men, on the other hand, respond more to physical attractiveness and do not value women's intelligence or ambition when it exceeds their own. Moreover, the authors found that male selectivity is invariant to group size, while female selectivity is strongly increasing in group size.

Fisman, Iyengar, Kamenica, and Simonson (2006) also explained that according to social structure theory and the closely related social role theory, gender differences in mate selection criteria derive from the differences in the social positions and roles of men and women:

> Evolutionary psychologists (e.g., Buss [1989] and Kenrick & Keefe [1992]) argue that women's emphasis on mate's resource acquisition ability and men's emphasis on mates' physical attractiveness arise from different parental roles. According to Buss, male choice reflects women's time-limited reproductive capacity and the tendency of men to seek women with attributes that signal such capacity. Female choice reflects women's desire to find men who can provide resources to aid in the upbringing of their offspring (p. 675).

Likewise, using an evolutionary theory framework, Buss (1989) found in a study of 10,047 individuals from 37 cultures located on six continents and five islands that men expressed a greater desire than women for young and physically attractive mates.

Anderson, Kontos, Tanigoshi, and Struckman-Johnson (2005) argued that sexual strategies are related to sexual behavior history and early courtship behaviors rather than cultural setting or demographics. Comparing American women from rural and urban areas, the researchers found that even though the women did not differ in their use of sexual strategies (i.e., persuasion, non-physical coercion and physical force) to obtain sex from a man, those who used persuasion strategies had fewer lifetime sexual partners than women who used any other strategy. Furthermore, women who used physical force strategies reported a lower age at first intercourse and more early courtship behaviors than all others.

Dating 101

Simon and Gagnon (1986) proposed that in society there are cultural scenarios that guide "collective life." Dating is one type of scripted cultural event, as research shows that men and women are fully aware of the gender-based role differentiation that takes place during courtship (Bartoli & Clark, 2006).

Morris (1971) suggested 12 steps that heterosexual couples in Western culture go through from initial contact through intimacy: (1) eye to body, (2) eye to eye, (3) voice to voice, (4) hand to hand, (5) arm to shoulder, (6) arm to waist, (7) mouth to mouth, (8) hand to head, (9), hand to body, (10) mouth to breast, (11) hand to genitals, and (12) genitals to genitals or mouth to genitals. One who skips steps or fails to respond to a step may be seen as "fast" or "slow."

In a thorough description of what happens during a kissing round, Kendon (1975) discovered that the woman's behavior, particularly her facial expressions, functioned as a regulator in modulating the man's behavior. Likewise, Cary (1976) discovered that the woman, through eye contact, controlled the course of interaction with a male stranger, both in the laboratory and in singles' bars. Perper (1985) gave a detailed description of courtship, stressing an escalation-response process in which women play a key role in escalation or de-escalation. The steps in this process are approach, turn, first touch, and steady development of body synchronization.

Research has shown, therefore, that the cultural myth that the man is always the sexual aggressor, pressing himself on a reluctant woman, is incorrect. According to Cary (1976), Moore (1985) and Perper (1985), the woman often makes the first move. Because her move is subtle – perhaps standing close to her target or looking at him – it is understandable how men have come to be seen as initiators in the courtship process:

> The use of subtle indicators of interest on the part of women may not only allow men to maintain the illusion of dominating courtship, but also make it more likely that women will be afforded the opportunity to assess the man's willingness to employ a long-term sexual strategy in which he invests in the relationship (Moore, 1995, pp. 320-321)

Moore (1995) covertly observed adolescent girls in mixed-gender settings to document the types of nonverbal behaviors used to indicate interest in boys. The data were then compared to similar work done with women in the construction of a catalog of nonverbal courtship signals. The results showed girls used many of the same signals

commonly exhibited by women in earlier studies. Furthermore, the author found that girls were most often imitating the behavior of the dominant girl in the group (the dominant girl was the one who received the highest gaze frequency). Similarly, other researchers (Goodchilds & Zellman, 1984; Green, 1985) pointed out the extent to which teenagers rely upon one another for information about sexuality.

This "copycat" idea is paramount in understanding the possible social and cultural effects of women's portrayals in *The Bachelor*. Following social construction of reality, all it may take for a given group of teenage girls to display a behavior similar to that of the women portrayed on dating reality television shows is for one dominant girl to "take tips" from such shows.

The finding that girls often copied the flirtatious expressions and gestures of the dominant girl indicated that learning plays a central role in the development of nonverbal courtship behavior. Early adolescence is a period when learning how to attract male peers may have adaptive significance for girls at a later date.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this inquiry:

RQ1: Are the women in *The Bachelor* being portrayed in ways that may be considered gender stereotypical according to the literature about gender expectations?

RQ2: Are there any differences in natural appearance (age, occupation, ethnicity, hair and body type), superficial appearance (clothing, hair and makeup style) and behavioral traits among the groups of women eliminated in *The Bachelor*?

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The Show

"Once upon a time, there was a charming young bachelor searching for the woman of his dreams. And 25 women trying to prove they are 'the one'" (Next Entertainment, 2002). Host Chris Harrison's opening statement summarizes what ABC's popular romance reality series *The Bachelor* is all about. Harrison's introduction tells viewers that ABC spent months searching the entire country for one of America's most eligible bachelors, who they eventually found to be management consultant Alex Michael, a "good-looking, successful, funny, but most importantly, ready to get married" guy (Next Entertainment, 2002).

At the beginning of the show, Alex met 25 women who were said to also be "looking for love." On the first episode, 10 women were eliminated based mostly on "first impressions," as Alex later explained. The 15 remaining female competitors moved together into a villa, or as the show described "the perfect Malibu beach-front mansion," and Alex moved into the villa's guest house. Each week, viewers watched Alex take the women on both group and individual dates and followed the elimination process that would ultimately lead to Alex's possible engagement. The elimination at the end of each episode was referred to as "invitation night" or "the rose ceremony," where Alex would give a single red rose only to the women who he wished to keep in the show. So with each elimination, the 15 starters became eight, who then became four, who then became

three, who then became two, until finally the "chosen one." At the last rose ceremony, viewers held their breath anticipating whether Alex would propose marriage to the last standing woman, and most important, whether she would say yes.

Sample & Coders

The sampling frame for this study was *The Bachelor*'s entire first season, originally aired in the fall of 2000. Gathered in a DVD format, the season consists of six episodes. The length of episodes is inconsistent, suggesting that scenes that were originally aired were cut during the DVD formatting. Lengths are as follows: Episode 1, 19:40; episode 2, 24:14; episode 3, 23:57; episode 4, 24:37; episode 5, 15:22; and episode 6, 7:19. The season was chosen since it is the only one currently available for purchase, making it suitable for a detailed analysis. The DVD used for the analysis is titled "Best of the Bachelor" and was purchased through an online store.

Because most viewers who watch *The Bachelor* are between the ages of 18 and 49, three people – a female communication professor in her fifties, a male graduate student in his forties, and a female undergraduate student in her twenties – served as coders in this study. Because the present study does not use human subjects as research data but simply analyzes coders' personal opinions of the show's portrayals, IRB approval was not required (See Appendix A).

All coders received a detailed training session on use of the coding instrument (See Appendix B). In the presence of the researcher, coders watched all six episodes in the order in which they were aired. Coders rated the characters using the coding

instrument designed for the study, while pausing for note-taking as needed. Coders were provided with detailed descriptions and examples of each category in the coding instrument.

Intra-coder reliability was ensured with careful planning and training of coders. Inter-coder reliability was tested after each episode, as well as overall once all coding was completed using Holsti's (1969) coefficient for reliability.

Coding

The goal of the study was to code the female characters in various dating scenes for the presence of stereotypical portrayals according to the literature about gender expectations, as well as to look for differences among the groups of women eliminated throughout the show in terms of appearance and behavior. Consequently, scenes with no dating (i.e., when the women are talking to each other about the aftermath of a date, or about how they feel about another woman) were not included in the sample.

The attributes of the women in the show were documented in a systematic content analysis. A coding instrument was developed to obtain physical, behavioral and conversational characteristics.

Consistent with recent content analyses in this area, a scene was defined as an interaction between a single set of people in a single location at one point in time (e.g., Kunkel, Cope & Biely, 1999; Kunkel, Cope-Farrar, Biely, Farinola & Donnerstein, 2001; Lampman, Rolfe-Maloney, David, Yan, McDermott, Winters, Davis, & Lathrop, 2002). Each of the show's weekly presentation was considered an episode. Characters included

all of the 25 women who were introduced in the first episode until they each were eliminated.

The coding instrument for this study was created from expanding previous content analysis of television shows (i.e., Kunkel, Cope, & Biely, 1999; Kunkel, Cope-Farrar, Biely, Farinola & Donnerstein, 2001; and Lampman, Rolfe-Maloney, David, Yan, McDermott, Winters, Davis, & Lathrop, 2002) along with the researcher's own perceptions of how *The Bachelor* could be examined.

Categories of analysis for characters included: (1) *general information & natural appearance*, (2) *superficial appearance,* and (3) *behavioral traits* (See Table). Attributes included on the coding instrument were those that the literature suggests as primary components of image formation and stereotyping (Berg, 1990).

At the *general information & natural appearance* category, coding was for *age*; *ethnicity*; *occupation*; *hair color, length and texture*; and *body type*. The age and occupation of the characters were provided in the first episode when they introduced themselves to the man playing the role of *The Bachelor*. Levels of ethnicity were determined based on appearance, speech dialects, and mention of race. Levels of hair color, length and texture were determined based on appearance. Levels of body type were determined based on the commonly used Sheldon's categorization (Sheldon & Stevens, 1942; Sheldon, Stevens, & Tucker, 1940).

At the *superficial appearance* category, coding was for *dress attire*, and *hair and makeup style*. Both were visually determined based on appearance and coded using semantic differential indexes.

At the *behavioral traits* category, a set of five behavioral characteristics was also observed on seven-point, bipolar adjective scales. Items in the set reflected attributes associated with expected female behavior according to the literature.

Before coding for the study began, a pilot study was conducted using one female and one male college students, who pretested the coding instrument to ensure the reliability of each item. For the pretest, the coders viewed five dating scenes chosen randomly from the six episodes and coded them using the coding instrument. Changes to the original coding instrument were made to conform to the pre-test results.

Data Analysis

After all the coding was complete, data analysis consisted of two steps: 1. Patterns and themes among the three categories were sought to determine if the women in the show were represented stereotypically as described by the literature on gender expectations, and 2. The women eliminated throughout the show were placed in three groups and compared to determine any significant differences among them in terms of appearance and behavior.

Data collected in the semantic differential indexes in the *superficial appearance* and *behavioral traits* categories were collapsed into three groups: Values 1 and 2 were considered to be the low intensity of each attribute; values 3, 4 and 5 were considered to be the moderate intensity of each attribute, and values 6 and 7 were considered to be the high intensity of each attribute. Also, because the three coders' answers varied in the

semantic differential indexes in the *superficial appearance* and *behavioral traits* categories, the mean among their answers was used for performing statistical tests.

To determine if the women in *The Bachelor* were being portrayed in ways that may be considered gender stereotypical according to the literature about gender expectations (RQ1), frequencies were sought, while to detect if there were any differences in natural appearance (age, occupation, ethnicity, hair and body type), superficial appearance (dress attire, hair style and makeup style) and behavioral traits among the groups of women eliminated in the show (RQ2), all ordinal data in the *superficial appearance* and *behavioral traits* categories of the coding instrument (See Table 1) were examined using the Median test. The 10 women eliminated in episode 1 were not included in this sample because the show did not provide sufficient behavioral data on them.

Table 1 - Coding instrument for rating women in *The Bachelor*

Name of Character: _____ Eliminated on episode # _____

A
General Information & Natural Appearance

Age:
1. 20-29 ( )
2. 30+ ( )

Occupation:
1. Student ( )
2. Part-time/temporary ( )
3. Professional ( )
4. Manager/Supervisor/Director ( )
5. Self-employed ( )

Ethnicity:
1. Caucasian ( )
2. African-American ( )
3. Pacific Islander ( )
4. Hispanic ( )
5. Asian ( )
6. Native American ( )

Hair Color, Length & Texture:
1. Brown/Black ( ) 2. Blonde ( ) 3. Red ( ) 4. Short ( ) 5. Medium ( ) 6. Long ( )
7. Straight/Wavy ( ) 8. Curly ( )

Body Type:
1. Ectomorph/Ruler ( )
2. Mesomorph/Hourglass ( )
3. Endomorph/Pear ( )
4. Endomorph/Apple ( )

B
Superficial Appearance

Dress Attire:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Non revealing								Revealing

Hair Style:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Disheveled								Well-groomed

Makeup Style:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
No makeup								Excessive makeup

C
Behavioral Traits

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Quiet								Loud
Shy								Assertive
Cold								Emotional
Gentle								Strong
Unconcerned								Jealous

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Reliability

Inter-coder reliability was determined by calculating Holsti's (1969) coefficient for reliability (C. R.), which provides a formula for calculating percent agreement:

$$\textbf{C. R.} = 3M / N1 + N2 + N3$$

Where: M = the number of coding decisions upon which the three coders agree
N1 = number of coding decisions made by rater 1
N2 = number of coding decisions made by rater 2
N3 = number of coding decisions made by rater 3

Table 2
Reliability for episodes

Episode 1	*Episode 2*	*Episode 3*	*Episode 4*	*Episode 5*	*Episode 6*
r = .94	r = .78	r = .84	r = .84	r = .85	r = .90

The overall reliability for the study was r = .87. According to Lombard, Snyder-Duch, and Bracken (2002), all reliabilities reported in the present study are acceptable for content analysis research.

Frequencies

General Information & Natural Appearance

Of the 25 women portrayed in *The Bachelor*, 22 were in their 20s; 14 held professional jobs; 22 were Caucasians; 19 had long hair; 13 had brown or black hair; 24 had straight hair; and 21 were considered to have an hourglass body type (See Table 3).

Table 3 – Frequencies for *General Information & Natural Appearance* of the women in *The Bachelor*

Age	*n=25*
20-29	**88%**
30 +	**12%**

Occupation	*n=25*
Professional	**56%**
Part-time/Temp	**24%**
Management	**12%**
Student	**8%**

Ethnicity	*n=25*
Caucasian	**88%**
African-American	**4%**
Pacific Islander	**4%**
Asian	**4%**

Body Type	*n=25*
Hourglass	**84%**
Ruler	**12%**
Pear	**4%**

Hair Color	*n=25*
Brunette	**52%**
Blonde	**32%**
Red	**16%**

Hair Length	*n=25*
Short	**4%**
Medium	**20%**
Long	**76%**

Hair Texture	*n=25*
Straight/Wavy	**96%**
Curly	**4%**

Superficial Appearance

Of the 25 women portrayed in *The Bachelor*, 19 wore moderately revealing to revealing clothes; 19 displayed moderately well-groomed to well-groomed hair style; and 16 wore moderate makeup (See Table 4).

Table 4 – Frequencies for *Superficial Appearance* of the women in *The Bachelor*

Dress Attire	*n=25*
Moderate	**24%**
Moderately Revealing	**48%**
Revealing	**28%**

Hair Style	*n=25*
Moderate	**24%**
Moderately Well-Groomed	**48%**
Well-Groomed	**28%**

Makeup Style	*n=25*
Low makeup	**4%**
Moderate	**64%**
Moderately Excessive	**24%**
Excessive	**8%**

Behavioral Traits

The show did not provide behavioral data for the 10 women eliminated in the first episode. Also four additional women, not eliminated on the first episode, were not portrayed enough to enable coders to rate for "quiet v. loud," "shy v. assertive," "cold v.

emotional," and "gentle v. strong." Therefore, for these attributes, only 11 women were coded. Thirteen women, however, were coded for the attribute "unconcerned v. jealous."

Of the 11 women coded for "quiet v. loud," "shy v. assertive," "cold v. emotional," and "gentle v. strong," 6 displayed moderately loud to loud communication characteristics; 7 were assertive; 5 were moderately emotional to emotional; and 7 were rated moderate for the gentle v. strong behavioral trait. Of the 13 women coded for "unconcerned v. jealous," approximately half were unconcerned and the other half displayed jealous behavior (See Table 5).

Table 5 – Frequencies for *Behavioral Traits* of the women in *The Bachelor*

Quiet v. Loud	***n=11***
Moderate	**20%**
Moderately Loud	**20%**
Loud	**4%**

Shy v. Assertive	***n=11***
Moderate	**8%**
Moderately Assertive	**8%**
Assertive	**28%**

Cold v. Emotional	***n=11***
Cold	**8%**
Moderate	**16%**
Moderately Emotional	**12%**
Emotional	**8%**

Gentle v. Strong	***n=11***
Moderate	**28%**
Moderately Strong	**8%**
Strong	**8%**

Unconcerned v. Jealous	***n=13***
Unconcerned	**24%**
Moderate	**4%**
Jealous	**24%**

Differences

The women eliminated throughout *The Bachelor* were placed in three groups and compared to determine any significant differences among them in terms of their appearance and behavior. The 10 women eliminated on the first episode were excluded from the sample because the show did not provide sufficient behavioral data on them.

Group 1 included the 7 women eliminated in episode 2, group 2 included the 4 women eliminated on episode 3, and group 4 included the 3 women each eliminated in episodes 4, 5 and 6.

The three groups of women eliminated in *The Bachelor* were not significantly different (Sig. > .05) on any of the items in the *superficial appearance* (dress attire; hair style; and makeup style) and *behavioral traits* (quiet v. loud; shy v. assertive; cold v. emotional; gentle v. strong; and unconcerned v. jealous) categories.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Although, there were no significant physical and behavioral differences among the groups of women eliminated in the show – which was expected since most of the women had similar looks and acted in similar ways – much can be said about the way *The Bachelor* portrayed gender through the performances of the women as individuals.

Research question 1 asked if the women in *The Bachelor* were being presented in ways that may be considered gender stereotypical according to the literature about gender expectations. The results showed that the answer is yes for most items in the coding scheme (categories 1 and 2 and part of category 3). As Silverstein, Perdue, Peterson, and Kelly (1986) and Spitzer, Henderson, and Zivian (1999) explain, television still under-represents overweight women, which was seen in the fact that 88 percent of the women in *The Bachelor* were thin (hourglass and ruler body shapes). Most of the women were also in their 20s, in other words, in the prime of their child-bearing years. According to Buss (1989), in a dating environment male choice reflects women's time-limited reproductive capacity, so it was expected that a show designed to ultimately find a wife for the man playing the role of *The Bachelor* would offer him young candidates. Fisman, Iyengar, Kamenica, and Simonson (2006) explain that in mate selection, women put greater weight on the intelligence and race of partner and exhibit a preference for men who grew up in affluent neighborhoods. It was therefore understandable how the women found it appealing to date a Caucasian born into a prominent family, an ivy-leaguer and a management consultant for top-tier firms. According to Fisman, Iyengar, Kamenica, and

Simonson (2006), men, on the other hand, respond more to physical attractiveness, which was displayed by the show's portrayal of thin and young female candidates with long, straight hair. This idea that men place so much weight on looks could also explain the women's choice of dress attire, and hair and makeup styles. Although it is obvious that in any television show – with the help of the station's makeup and hair stylists, and wardrobe professionals – characters will be purposely made to look more polished than normal, it is probable that characters have at least some input on the amount of makeup, the type of hair style and the kind of outfit he or she will wear on air. Guy & Banim (2000) argued that women have a dynamic relationship with their clothes that can be grouped around three co-existing views of self: "The woman I want to be," "The woman I fear I could be," and "The woman I am most of the time." The researchers explain that these three views illustrate women's attempts to achieve satisfying images as they engage with clothes to create, reveal or conceal aspects of their identity. With that in mind, it is safe to say that the women chose (or agreed with) their "looks" based on what they thought would make them look attractive to the man they had to impress in order to stay in the show. As seen in the results, most of the women's idea of an attractive female involves moderate to excessive makeup, well groomed hair style and moderately revealing clothes.

According to Bem (1974) and Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp (1974), the typical woman likes children and is warm, emotional, considerate, tactful, gentle and aware of others' feelings. Peplau and Gordon (1985) add that women are supposed to be submissive, passive conformists. However, following these researchers' findings, most

women in *The Bachelor* can be surprisingly considered "atypical." As shown by the results, most women were coded towards the high intensity of each behavioral attribute, which means they were portrayed as being more loud than quiet; more assertive than shy; and more strong than gentle. As the literature suggest, though, most of the women displayed emotional behavior. Furthermore, while women are expected to be more jealous than men (Peplau & Gordon, 1985), half of the women in the show displayed the opposite behavior by being portrayed as unconcerned when the man playing the role of *The Bachelor* would take other women on dates or on "one-on-one talks."

The "Reality" Aspect

In determining the implications of the stereotypic portrayals in *The Bachelor* as they relate to cultivation and social construction of reality, it is important to mention that according to Moore (1995), teenage girls – who often rely upon one another for information about sexuality (Goodchilds & Zellman, 1984; Green, 1985) – often use the same behavior displayed by women when indicating interest in boys, which implies they learn in part by watching women in dating scenarios, whether in real life or on TV. It is also significant to remember that *The Bachelor* is advertised as a "reality-television" show, which studies have found to be a fallacy as it makes viewers believe the portrayals reflect actual "reality." According to numerous interviews with former reality-TV participants found in magazines focusing on pop culture (i.e., *Time* and *People*), most reality shows are cast, contrived and edited to be dramatic. Quotes are manufactured, crushes and feuds are constructed out of whole cloth, episodes are planned in storyboards

before taping, and scenes are stitched together out of footage shot days apart. Yet, because of the term "reality-television," many viewers believe in the illusion that the shows are authentic and true to life. So whether what was displayed in *The Bachelor* really represents the characters and behaviors of the women in the show, the portrayals the public watched could affect viewers' perceptions about how women in real life behave or should behave in dating situations, as implied by cultivation and framing theories. For example Taylor (2005) found that although exposing subjects to sexual content on television did not produce significant main effects, it did influence the attitudes of those who perceived television to be relatively realistic. That means that the way television is presenting women in dating contexts – from the revealing clothes they are wearing to the aggressiveness of their sexual behavior – could possibly influence teenagers who are exposed to the portrayals.

Compared with other reality-television shows with a dating theme, portrayals in *The Bachelor* clearly result in a distinct concern for the viewers. For instance, Graham-Bertolini (2004) who analyzed FOX's *Joe Millionaire*, argued that the show helped preserve traditional notions of patriarchy by reinforcing the concept that traditional women with good moral conduct will be rewarded for their obedience to conservative societal expectations. In other words, it pays to be a "good girl." In *The Bachelor*, however, the last woman standing was actually one of the few who raters agreed wore the most revealing clothes and displayed the most aggressive sexual behavior towards the man. In fact, in episode 5, when there were 3 candidates left, the third woman, Shannon, was eliminated because she refused to "spend the night as a couple" in the show's

"fantasy chalet." Alex explained his decision of letting Shannon go by telling viewers that the two of them would "struggle with each other too much" because they were "two different people at different points" in their lives. But what Alex was really implying was that, at the tender age of 23, Shannon did not understand that Alex had to test the sexual chemistry between him and all the women in the show in order to decide with whom he was in love or with whom he was willing to possibly share the rest of his life.

The winner, Amanda, on the other hand, was completely submissive to Alex's sexual needs from their very first date. The two of them were shown making out and touching passionately on several occasions, and when host Chris Harrison offered Amanda the opportunity to spend the night with Alex in a "fantasy suite," unlike Shannon, Amanda said, "That Chris… Bless his heart." All this suggests to viewers the idea that sex is no longer viewed as the endpoint of a romantic relationship, but rather the means or component of emotional intimacy, without which the affair may be doomed. As Woody Allen once said, "the heart wants what it wants." Those who agree that reality shows are manipulated by producers can argue that Shannon's heart did not want what *The Bachelor*'s producers and Alex needed it to want – and it would have made a better story otherwise – so Shannon had to go.

Watching and Learning

Compatible with cultivation, social construction of reality and framing theories, social learning theory says that young girls may associate the roles and tasks performed by the women in *The Bachelor* and begin to model what they see. For example, watching

Amanda passively give in to Alex's every sexual need in an attempt to stay in the show, may lead teen girls who are exposed to these portrayals to accept it as appropriate for the female gender. Needless to say that the overall physical appearance of the women in the show could also make teenage girls want to re-evaluate their bodies as it relates to beauty and weight. Even though the present study did not code the man playing the role of *The Bachelor*, coders agreed that teenage boys watching the show could be led to think men are aggressive, strong and in control. Teen boys could imitate the behavior they observe and think it is appropriate for the male gender.

Limitations

As with most qualitative content analyses, data for the present study were based on raters' personal opinions. Despite their training session, coders still drew from their own understandings of the attributes in the coding instrument when rating the women. In the data analysis process, it was easily seen that while the 2 female raters seemed to always code similarly – if not exactly the same – the male rater was often in disagreement. For example, clothing that the female raters considered "revealing" were coded as moderate or even non-revealing by the male rater. A woman with "long hair" to the male rater seemed to include any woman with hair long enough to be put up. The male rater also seemed to have difficulty coding for women's makeup, which is something that the female raters were naturally more familiar with. On the other hand, the female raters had trouble coding women for "emotional" behavior, something that the male rater could easily code for. This could be explained by the fact that many women

do not think they are emotional, thus, by being women themselves, the female raters may have considered the women's constant display of emotion as accepted, normal behavior. In general, it seemed that the female raters were a lot more critical of the women in the show than the male rater, possibly because they were coding their same gender. To avoid this coding discrepancy and prevent skewing the data, future studies on similar topics should include the same number of female and male raters.

Furthermore, the coders reported that occasionally the women's appearances and behaviors fluctuated from one episode to the next. For example, women who in early episodes dressed conservatively and behaved shyly were later portrayed as dressing more provocatively and acting more aggressively towards the man. This behavior adjustment is part of a dating "supply and demand" system, as explained in the literature. Following Buss (1989) and Kenrick and Keefe (1992), Hill, Donovan, and Koyama (2005) explored the idea of females seeking cues that relate to resources and future earning potentials in males. They hypothesized that if women truly pursue marriage as an economic strategy, female sexual advertisement should increase during periods of poor economic conditions when the number of high-quality male partners becomes a limited resource. Examining clothes featured in Vogue magazine from 1916 to 1999, the researchers found that female sexual display increases as economic conditions decline, with the level of breast display and the tightness of clothing at the waist and hips the key factors underlying this increase. Accordingly, as the women in *The Bachelor* strived to be chosen by one man, an obviously limited resource, many of them may have felt the pressure to "update" their attire to what they thought would seem more appealing to the man. Grammer, Dittami

and Fischmann (1993) agree that females are expected to wear clothing that emphasizes their body shape and physical attractiveness, particularly when there is competition for access to males. Furthermore, as their alone time with the man diminished as the competition tightened, many once-quiet women also began speaking before being spoken to; After all, they could not miss the chance to tell the man how they felt about him before the next elimination night. Undoubtedly, a confined environment where the gender ratio was 25 females to one male such as *The Bachelor* was most appropriate to observe this behavioral adjustment phenomenon.

When evaluating this study's findings, it is important to consider that the literature on gender expectations, dating scripts and mate selection reviewed here was based mostly in American research. As patterns of beauty and gender roles vary by location and culture, the conclusions and recommendations in this study cannot be considered ubiquitous. Future research could explore this inherent discrepancy and compare dating portrayals between American and foreign television.

Also, more current seasons of *The Bachelor* may have been more appropriate in judging how dating reality television shows portray gender. As explained in the methodology section, season one of *The Bachelor* was chosen solely for being the only one available in video at the time the present study began, making its content analysis possible. However, because *The Bachelor* pioneered the dating reality television style, in the year 2000 when it was originally aired, there were few if any such shows being broadcast. With little competition, *The Bachelor*'s producers did not yet feel the pressure to extrapolate on the appearance and behavior of characters as they have done in more

recent editions of the show, as the current proliferation of contenders created the need for displaying a dramatic dating soap opera, far from reality.

Conclusion

At a time when media has uncovered a disturbing trend between teenagers and misguided sexual education – with sexual intercourse among teenage students, and among teenage students and teachers making headlines across the country – it would be meaningful for future research to advance media cultivation studies by actually determining the influence of dating reality-television portrayals – namely sexual behavior – on viewers themselves. It is easy to say that the results of any media content analysis show that media *could* be influencing beliefs, but that doesn't really add new findings to the literature.

Since influences from parents, peers and educators help shape the type of individuals teenagers become, further theoretical research could allow these role models to become more aware of how our nation's youth is developing. Parents and teachers could also take a more active role in educating teens about gender identity and behavior by having conversations about the kinds of male and female stereotypes in our society. In fact, it would be significant for parents to actually watch dating reality television shows, like *The Bachelor*, with their teenage sons and daughters and ask them how they feel about the content and actions of the characters. As advertisements reinforce, if parents should talk to their teens about not smoking and not doing drugs, why shouldn't parents also talk to their sons and daughters about societal values that will affect their

future romantic relationships? And since most teens consider watching television programs a fun pastime, parents and educators should take advantage of the fact that teens may be willing to talk about their favorite programs and use it as a learning experience to guide our youth.

Finally, because of the critical implications that these activities have for dating outcomes, dating scripts should be re-examined to determine if portrayals of courtship in reality television have changed contemporary expectations of the traditional roles of sexual initiation, sexual limiting and relationship development.

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Appendix A - IRB Guidelines

(Retrieved January 15, 2007 from the World Wide Web:

http://www.unmc.edu/dept/irb/index.cfm?L1_ID=6&CONREF=7)

A. Investigational Activities Requiring IRB Review and Approval

1. Any systematic investigation (research) involving human subjects as defined by 45 CFR 46.102(d) which is designed (in whole or in part) to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge must receive IRB approval prior to initiation. This includes investigations conducted by faculty, students, staff or others on the premises of UNMC/NHS/UNO as well as investigations conducted elsewhere by any representative of UNMC/NHS/UNO in connection with their institutional responsibilities unless the investigation is conducted under a cooperative research agreement as per 45 CFR 46.114. The type of review required depends upon the classification (Full Board, Expedited, Exempt) of the proposal.

   Research can be broadly classified as therapeutic and non-therapeutic. Therapeutic research is a clinical investigation designed to determine the efficacy and safety of a therapeutic or diagnostic method. The interventions are not applied solely to enhance the well-being of the individual subject who is sick (note use of the term "subject" as opposed to "patient"). The objective of therapeutic research is to increase generalizable knowledge (i.e., test a hypothesis and draw conclusions) and at the same time provide the subject with a needed health benefit. Accordingly, the responsibilities of a physician or other health

care professional who is also an investigator must take into consideration the fact that the patient is also a research subject. In contrast to therapeutic research, non-therapeutic research is an investigation that has no intent of producing a diagnostic, preventive, or therapeutic benefit to the subject who is usually healthy and is not seeking nor expecting a health benefit from the research.

Appendix B – Training Manual

General guidelines

All three raters will meet at the researcher's house to code for the study. You will code all six 30-minute episodes of the show on the same day. Although you will all be doing your coding simultaneously, each of you will be watching the DVD from a different machine and will not be allowed to speak to each other during coding. Having your own machine will allow you to pause and rewind as necessary for note-taking. I will be present to watch you code and answer any questions you may have concerning the coding instrument. Episodes will be viewed in the order in which they were aired.

You will code using the coding instrument designed for the study.

Each coder will be given a folder to keep the coding sheets. You will have separate coding sheets labeled for each character. Once you finish coding, please place all coding sheets inside the folder.

If even after studying the coding instrument, its notes and definitions, you are unsure about coding a certain character, please ask me for clarification before coding. Guessing will only decrease inter-rater reliability and undermine the results of the study.

Coding Instrument – Notes & Definitions

A General Information & Natural Appearance	Notes/Definitions
Age: 1. 20-29 ( ) 2. 30 + ( )	Indicate character's age (provided by show)
Occupation: 1. Student ( ) 2. Professional ( ) 3. Manager/Supervisor/Director ( ) 4. Self-employed ( )	Indicate character's job (provided by show)
Ethnicity: 1. Caucasian ( ) 2. African-American ( ) 3. Pacific Islander ( ) 4. Hispanic ( ) 5. Asian ( ) 6. Native American ( )	Indicate character's ethnicity based on physical appearance or mention of race.
Hair Color, Length & Texture: 1. Brown/Black ( ) 2. Blonde ( ) 3. Red ( ) 4. Short ( ) 5. Medium ( ) 6. Long ( ) 7. Straight/Wavy ( ) 8. Curly ( )	Indicate character's hair color based on appearance. For length and texture, please use the following guidelines: 4. *Short* - Hair that is chin length or shorter. 5. *Medium* – Hair that is longer than chin but above shoulder. 6. *Long* - Hair that is longer than shoulder. 7. *Straight/Wavy* - Hair that is straight or wavy. 8. *Curly* - Hair with obvious curls.
Body Type: 1. Ectomorph/Ruler ( ) 2. Mesomorph/Hourglass ( ) 3. Endomorph/Pear ( ) 4. Endomorph/Apple ( )	Indicate character's body type based on the following guidelines: 1. *Ectomorph/Ruler* - Skinny persons with a linear appearance and narrow shoulders, hips and waist. 2. *Mesomorph/Hourglass* – Persons with equally proportioned top and bottom and a defined waistline. Athletic build persons will also be included in this category. 3. *Endomorph/Pear* – Persons that are small on top but full on the bottom (characterized by wide hips). 4. *Endomorph/Apple* – Large persons that are full on both top and bottom and have a less defined waistline.

B Superficial appearance	
Dress Attire: Non Revealing v. Revealing	Mark the box closest to the adjective that describes each character based on the following definitions: *Non Revealing* - Shirts, sleeved and sleeveless tops that do not show cleavage; shorts, skirts and dresses that are mid-length or longer; and loose clothing. *Revealing* - Tanks, tubes and sleeveless tops that show cleavage; shorts, skirts and dresses that are shorter than mid-length; and tight clothing.

Hair Style Disheveled v. Well-groomed	Mark the box closest to the adjective that describes each character based on the following definitions: *Disheveled* – Untidy and messy. Someone with uncombed and disarrayed hair. *Well-groomed* – Tidy, neat. Someone with combed and done hair.
Makeup Style No makeup* v. Excessive makeup	Mark the box closest to the adjective that describes each character based on the following definitions: *No makeup** – To be on television, everyone (even men) must have some makeup (i.e., powder to camouflage oily skin). Therefore, this category does not mean absence of all makeup, but rather, someone who has minimal makeup and still looks natural (i.e. only gloss or light lipstick is visible). *Excessive makeup* – Someone who looks overdone with eyeliner, eye shadow, mascara, blush and lipstick.

C

Behavioral Traits

Quiet v. Loud Shy v. Assertive Cold v. Emotional Gentle v. Strong Unconcerned v. Jealous	Mark the box closest to the adjective that describes each character based on the following definitions: *Quiet* – A person who says little. Someone who doesn't speak unless he/she is asked a question. *Loud* – A person who speaks freely without reservations. *Shy* – A person who is reserved and withdrawn. *Assertive* – A person who is confident and aggressively self-assured. Someone who takes the initiative. *Cold* – A person who is distant, impersonal and emotionless. *Emotional* – A person who is temperamental and show his/her feelings easily. *Gentle* – A person who is docile and kind. *Strong* – A person who is determined, bold and independent. *Unconcerned* – A person who seems unworried and carefree about sharing the man playing *The Bachelor*. *Jealous* – A person who seems worried about sharing the man playing *The Bachelor*. Someone who is suspicious and untrusting of the intentions of the man playing *The Bachelor*.