Living Happily Ever After? : The Reinforcement of Stereotypical Gender Roles on

The Bachelor and *The Bachelorette*

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Abstract

This analysis examined the depiction of stereotyped gender roles on the reality television shows *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* to determine if gender stereotypes are reinforced within these shows. This study found a lack of stereotype reinforcement in that non-stereotypical behavior patterns were most prevalent among both males and females in the "contestant" role. However, stereotype reinforcement was confirmed in that women were more likely to be younger and thinner than men, gender-stereotypical behaviors were more prevalent than not among individuals in the bachelor/ette role, and a female positioned in the more traditionally "male" role of the bachelorette still remained more stereotypically "feminine". Also notable was the reinforcement of patriarchic heterosexuality by a male-initiated marriage proposal in the so-called "feminist" *The Bachelorette*. Overall, gender stereotypes were portrayed as normal and desirable, and female stereotypes continued to persist over male.

Introduction

Within the last five decades, television has established itself as the dominant

American mass medium, and is credited with being the great equalizer in American

society (Davis, 1990). It teaches us what is believed to be important and what behaviors

society considers appropriate (Glascock, 1996). Most recently, reality television has burst

onto the television scene, and in fact, may be displacing drama and comedy as the

mainstays of prime-time programming (Butsch, 2006), with its popularity having grown

rapidly over the past ten years. Reality shows are thought to be more true-to-life than

their scripted counterparts, as they follow the lives of non-actors and display what is

believed to be authentic emotion. Not all reality television, however, displays real life

uninterrupted; many shows are actually cast, plotted and edited to produce a desired

outcome, and yet the misnomer "reality" leads viewers to believe that what they are

watching is in fact real (Robins, 2005).

Background of the Problem

"Realism" and Reality TV

There are many who contend that MTV's *The Real World* began the reality television trend back in 1992 (Roth, 2000). Still on the air 15 years later and in its 18th season, *The Real World* shows how successful the plot device of casting seven strangers of diverse backgrounds and placing them in a beautiful house to live together for six months can be (*The Real World,* 2007). The show combined elements of soap opera narrative style with "fly on the wall" filmmaking, a combination which has played an important role in spawning the reality television genre (Landrum & Carmichael, 2002). However, *The Real World* was not the first program to provide this combination; its roots can be traced all the way back to 1973 with the PBS series *An American Family*.

An American Family recorded and broadcast the lives of the upper-middle class Loud family of Santa Barbara, California in 1973 (Landrum & Carmichael, 2002). The series creator, Craig Gilbert, realized that radical changes were occurring in the "social fabric of America" at the time (p. 67). Believing the traditional American family was becoming obsolete due to a widening generation gap and other cultural indicators, he sought to document those changes through the lens of one American family. According to Ruoff, Gilbert's goal was to develop a portrait of a family that captured "the breakdown of fixed distinctions between public and private, reality and spectacle, serial narrative and nonfiction, documentary and fiction, and film and television" (as cited in Landrum & Carmichael, 2002, p. 66). At the time, *An American Family* was considered a failure because it did not adhere to the codes of traditional documentary film, but its hybrid form

of storytelling can today be appreciated as opening the doors to a new genre – reality television (Landrum & Carmichael, 2002).

As a model for subsequent reality television programming, *An American Family* contributed the now common device of reliance on editing to deliver a story with a certain viewpoint. For example, the filmmakers portrayed Pat Loud as the "good wife" and Bill Loud as the "bad husband" as the story of their impending divorce panned out, "carefully constructing their 'characters' through deliberate editing choices" (Landrum & Carmichael, 2002, p. 69). This combination of soap opera narrative techniques with documentary filmmaking served as the nucleus of the subsequent reality television explosion in the 1990s. In fact, the *The Real World* was created by a woman with a background in soap operas (Mary-Ellis Bunim) and a man who came out of news and documentaries (John Murray), both of whom were fascinated by *An American Family* (2002). Thus, "unrealistic" aspects of reality television can be seen as being a huge part of the mix from the very beginning.

Indeed, the next, current wave of reality television beginning with the break-out hit *Survivor* in 2000 was born out of 'ordinary' people in 'extraordinary' situations – *Survivor* marooned sixteen castaways on a deserted island while competing in physical challenges to win $1 million (Hill & Quin, 2002). In essence, the editors become the so-called "writers" of the show, "construct[ing] a narrative from the raw material that both compresses time and highlights the inter-relationships between members of the 'cast'" (p. 55). Yet these shows are interpreted as "real" for several reasons. First, series such as *Big Brother, Popstars, Temptation Island* and *Survivor* employ the principle of elimination in order to provoke drama and betrayals between people that are real, even if everything

else is highly contrived (Hill & Quin, 2002). The "game show" element of these shows provide make uncertainty a key part of the viewing experience, which leads to the second reason for their perceived reality: these programs exude an element of "liveness." They offer the same attractions as live television to viewers, promising participation, unpredictability and spontaneity, and allow audiences to believe that anything could happen, despite the fact that they are carefully edited (Hill & Quin, 2002).

Many theories exist as to why reality television has caught on to the world's consciousness and remained popular for so long. Hill & Quin (2002) claim the "liveness" of reality television is a primary reason for its success, offering the viewer dual status as "removed observer" and "involved participant" (p. 50). Raphael (1997) argues that its popularity was a result of economic pressures; due to its use of non-actors and unscripted nature, its low production costs in response to rapidly rising production costs made it very profitable. Landrum & Carmichael (2002) cite "America's fascination with celebrity, diversity and individual liberation" as resulting in the widespread popularity of reality television (p. 68), and Reiss & Wiltz (2001) similarly claim that reality television provides an outlet for ordinary Americans to fantasize about "gaining status through automatic fame" (p. 54). Thus, a combination of low production costs and high viewer interest has resulted in the omnipresence of reality television programming seen on the airwaves today.

Gender Stereotypes

An issue that has characterized and plagued the medium of television since its inception in the 1940s has been stereotyping and especially traditional gender stereotyping. Stereotypes are strongly held overgeneralizations about people in a given

social group, which are often not true due to their extreme oversimplification (Basow, 1992). Consequently, gender stereotypes are defined as "structured sets of beliefs about the personal attributes of women and men," and are normative in their implication that gender-linked characteristics not only exist, but are desirable (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1979, p. 222).

Gender stereotypes for men and women are often polarized; that is, their characteristic traits are often viewed as being opposite one another (Basow, 1992). For example, masculinity is often associated with traits such as rationality, efficiency, competition, individualism and ruthlessness. Femininity is conversely associated with such traits as emotionality, prudence, cooperation, a communal sense, and compliance (Chandler, n.d.). The correspondence of these traits with particular genders are expressed in a number of studies conducted during the late 1960s and early 1970s with nearly 1000 males and females (I. Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972; Rosenkrantz, Vogel, Bee, Broverman, & Broverman, 1968). In these studies, more than 75% of those asked agreed that 41 polarized traits clearly differentiated males and females. For men, some desirable traits included being very aggressive, self-confident, worldly, objective, always acting as a leader, and not at all emotional, with the opposite being true for females. For women, desirable traits included being very talkative, tactful, gentle, interested in their own appearance, having a strong need for security, and being aware of other's feelings, with the opposite being true for males. Overall, women were more often categorized as communal, self-less and other-oriented, and men were characterized as assertive and achievement-oriented.

But how did these traditional gender stereotypes, most notably female submissiveness and male dominance, first become embraced by society? Basow (1992) points to both physical and psychological factors. Because men are "naturally" larger and stronger than women, and women are "incapacitated" by childbirth, men have historically been assigned to more strenuous and dangerous positions, such as hunters and warriors, while women were relegated to domestic labor and activities compatible with childcare. The "greater hemispheric flexibility" of the female brain and an edge in verbal skills also seem well suited to the traditional mother's role (p. 111), while men's apparent superiority in visual-spatial skills suit them for a hunter role. Basow (1996) also points to three distinct stereotypes of women that exist today: the housewife (traditional woman), the professional woman (independent, ambitious and self confident) and the sex object. In contrast, the traditional male stereotype is comprised of three main factors – status, toughness, and anti-femininity.

These gender stereotypes exist both on a personal level as well as a cultural level, for example as reflected in the media (Basow, 1992). In fact, Sayre and King (2003) claim that the media are often accused of encouraging stereotyping. All men and women are aware of the cultural prevalence of traditional stereotypes, and television does much to contribute to this awareness (Chandler, n.d.). Indeed, Glascock (1996) points to the rising concern regarding the characterization of women on television due to the omnipresence of stereotypical depictions (Glascock, 1996).

Due to the carefully plotted and contrived nature of many reality shows, the reality television genre is not immune to gender stereotyping. This is especially true in regard to casting – producers undertake exhaustive processes to provide viewers with a

"cross-section of society" that they can identify with and come to know as "characters" (Hill & Quin, 2002, p. 53). A popular form of reality television, for example, is the reality dating show, where men and women set out to find the love of their lives from selected groups of contenders who are also looking to find love. Given the significance of gender interactions to the plots of these shows, it is important to take a closer look at the reality dating show to discover if reality television is indeed continuing to draw on traditional gender stereotypes.

In order to understand how stereotypical depictions of gender roles are reinforced through reality dating shows, the theories of cultivation and hegemony are best applied. Cultivation theory states that television exposure cultivates beliefs, attitudes, and ideals about the real world that match the media-depicted world, creating a distorted perception of the world we live in (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1994). It asserts that long-term exposure to television combined with the stability of images over time have cumulative and gradual effects on shaping views of social reality (Gerbner, 1969). Thus, heavy viewers are more likely than light viewers to adopt television reality as their own social reality as a result of this. The cultivation of television in shaping social reality occurs in two ways: mainstreaming and resonance. Mainstreaming occurs when television's symbols monopolize and dominate other sources of ideas about the world such that people move toward the 'mainstream,' or a shared understanding of how things are that is more closely aligned with television's reality (Baran & Davis, 2003). Thus, initially divergent groups come to hold similar views with greater television exposure (Harrison, 2003). Resonance, on the other hand, refers to the reinforcing ability of television. Where the personal experiences of individuals conform to television portrayals, they will be more

likely to believe in television reality because it reinforces these experiences (Hendriks, 2002).

Cultivation is most appropriate in illustrating how stereotyped gender roles are reinforced within reality dating shows because heavy viewers of these shows are more likely to believe the gender roles they see are the norm and are representative of most women and men. Since many of these dating shows portray traditional gender stereotypes as discussed above, the stability of these stereotypes over time and across other genres of television influences viewers to perceive this television view as reality. Resonance also plays an important role in normalizing gender stereotypes; when a male or female viewer can identify with the man or woman on screen, it further reinforces that the television reality is real. Similarly, mainstreaming can lead viewers who may have had initially divergent beliefs regarding gender roles to more gradually accept the gender roles portrayed on reality dating shows. Ultimately, cultivation theory predicts that regular and repeated exposure to these programs may lead to stereotyping people in the real world (Sayre & King, 2003). Thus, these shows serve to stabilize social patterns by reinforcing existing power relationships and societal beliefs (Sayre & King, 2003), which is also a characteristic of the theory of hegemony.

Drawn from the work of Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, hegemony connects questions of culture, power, and ideology. Hegemony essentially explains how ruling groups use consent and/or coercion to maintain their power and seek to have their ideology accepted as universal. Although coercion can be used to force obedience, consent is the most effective way for power to be wielded at the level of culture, where people essentially agree to current social arrangements (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003). In

operating at the level of "common sense", it provides unquestioned consent in favor of the status quo. When a notion becomes common sense, its truth is taken for granted and often goes uncontested – thus the established order of power and values appear natural and normal. However, as hegemony theorists remind us, these common sense assumptions are not universal truths but merely social constructions, and their adoption constitutes the acceptance of a particular set of beliefs, or ideology, that helps maintain the power of ruling groups. It is important to note that hegemony is neither permanent nor static; it must be constantly reasserted and reinforced over time, as people's actual experiences will lead them to question the dominant ideological assumptions (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003). Thus, unacceptable opposition to the status quo is defined as dissident or deviant in an effort to retain and reassert the dominant ideology. Hegemony is often used to describe the effects of the media on society's consciousness, as sociologist Stuart Hall suggests that media images "re-present" the world, defining reality rather than reflecting it (Hall, 1982).

This research argues that reality dating shows present a picture of gender roles that is neither accurate nor realistic; gender stereotypes and standards such as female submissiveness and male aggression are portrayed as natural and normal, and the deviance of gender traits that oppose this is exemplified in the ousting of the contender who exhibits these traits from the show. When a reward is attached to the gender role, as it is in reality shows where a certain man or woman is ultimately chosen to date the bachelor or bachelorette, these roles are more likely to be desired. Thus, not only are stereotyped gender roles believed to be true, but they are desired by virtue of the positive result that they bring: companionship or even love. The ruling groups in this case are

corporate media giants who create and control the content of these reality television shows; what could be their incentive to having their gender ideology accepted as universal? Their patriarchic, fairy-tale view of gender relations prevents society, according to Ingraham (1999), from seeing how institutionalized heterosexuality "preserves current racial, class, and sexual hierarchies," which corporate media giants continue to reify in order to reach their ultimate goal: to increase consumption and profit.

This study, therefore, will focus on the current reality dating shows *The Bachelor* and its spin-off, *The Bachelorette*, and determine if and how stereotyped gender roles are reinforced within these series. A literature review of existing research will be presented on the background of gender roles and reality television, and a content analysis will be conducted on several episodes from the first season of both series to determine the ways in which stereotyped gender roles are reinforced within these shows and the result of this on the modern viewing public.

Research Question

This research studied the portrayals of gender roles in reality dating shows *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* in order to determine the ways in which stereotyped gender roles are reinforced within these programs. A primary goal was to understand whether or not reality television is continuing to draw on traditional gender stereotypes and the effects of this on the modern viewing public.

Rationale

The popularity of reality television in modern society is enormous, to put it mildly. It has "changed the landscape of American television" and has become a fixture

of world-wide programming (Butsch, 2006, p. 226). In addition to affecting American television, it has largely impacted British television and has spread to several countries in Asia, Europe and Africa (Butsch, 2006). Its global impact is further evidenced by the fact that *Survivor* and *Big Brother* landed among the top ten shows in five out of fifty-five countries surveyed in 2000 (James, 2001). The viewer impact of reality television reaches across all demographics, as Professor Annette Hill found that "a broad spectrum across age, sex, and class watch these shows," not the "uneducated working-class couch potato audience" imagined to be watching (Butsch, 2006, p. 227)

  The Bachelor and *Bachelorette* make up one of the most well-known franchises in reality television, if not the most well-known in the sub-genre of reality dating shows. Premiering on March 25, 2002, *The Bachelor* followed 31-year-old Alex Michel as he searched for love among a group of 25 women, and landed second among total viewers for its timeslot, bringing in 9.8 million viewers ("*Bachelor* Makes Bank", 2002). Popularity continued to grow every week, with the season finale on April 25, 2002 bringing in a series high of 18.1 million viewers ("Alex Selects Amanda", 2002). *The Bachelorette,* the third installment of the franchise (following *The Bachelor II)*, which premiered January 8, 2003, reversed roles and put *Bachelor* runner-up and 29-year-old Trista Rehn in the driver's seat, as she searched for love among a group of 25 men ("*Bachelorette* episode listing", n.d.). Consequently, the series showed even greater popularity than the *Bachelor,* premiering first in its time slot with 17.6 million viewers, and stood as the number one television program on Wednesday night in the demographic of adults aged 18-49 (Rogers, 2003a). The second episode also dominated its ratings hour and scored better adult 18-34 ratings than NBC, CBS and FOX combined (Rogers,

2003b), and the season finale brought in a series-high 20.4 million viewers ("TV Schedules", 2003). Overall, the series ranked as the 14th top-rated prime-time series in the 2002-2003 season ("Favorite Programs", 2003). The remarkable popularity of these two series have resonated with modern viewers, and there is no doubting the influence *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* hold on television audiences, including the manner in which gender relations are represented.

Many people learn behaviors and what society considers appropriate from television, and the so-called 'reality' nature of *The Bachelor* and *Bachelorette* in conjunction with the importance of gender interactions within the series very much impacts and contributes to the viewing public's understanding of gender roles and behaviors. The shows are structured as a competition or a game, but play on the real emotions of real people. Thus, despite what Hill and Quin (2002) deem as the series "external unrealism", it's likely that viewers respond to "what *is* 'real' in the situation – the contestants themselves, their inter-relationships and the interpersonal drama" (p. 53). Although the two shows do not portray a typical dating experience, the inherent game-show element is subject to cause many viewers to deem the series more realistic than typical scripted television and even more likely to believe the behaviors they teach.. Furthermore, the two series' identical premises yet reversed gender roles provide excellent grounds for marking and comparing occurrences of gender-stereotypical behavior. This is most obvious with regard to *The Bachelor*'s reliance on a common female stereotype – that of the woman whose ultimate goal is to meet her Prince Charming and live happily ever after – and this modern Cinderella story gives viewers a

false impression of the dating experience and false hope to meet their mate in a similar way.

This paper will first review all background research that exists regarding gender roles in television as a whole, and more specifically within the genre of reality television. This includes studies addressing depiction and support for traditional gender roles on reality TV, research showing reality TV promotes alternative gender roles as deviant, literature depicting the commodification of female sexuality in reality television, and finally research examining the connection between reality dating shows and fairy tales. Next, the paper will discuss the method involved in analyzing gender roles within *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, and present the results of this analysis. This paper will draw on the theories of cultivation and hegemony as it specifically examines how both series showcase gender-specific behaviors which serve to validate and reinforce traditional gender stereotypes. Finally, it will note limitations of the study and areas where further research is needed.

Literature Review

Gender Stereotypes and Television

Research regarding gender roles and television has a long history, dating back to the 1960s and 1970s. Overall, numerous content analyses reveal that television depicts both men and especially women in a stereotypical manner and reinforces traditional sex roles (Courtney & Whipple, 1974; Davis, 1990; Dohrmann, 1975; Dominick, 1979; Downs, 1981; Elasmar, Hasegawa & Brain, 1999; Glascock, 2001; Levinson, 1975; Lovdal, 1989; Seggar & Wheeler, 1973; Signorielli & Kahlenberg, 2001; Sternglanz & Serbin, 1974; Stout & Mouritsen, 1988).

Early studies beginning in the 1970s found that females were severely under-represented on television. In a 1975 study, McNeil found that from a 1973 sample of prime-time programming, 68% of characters were male while only 32% were female. Greenburg (1980) found an average of 71% male and 29% female for three seasons of prime-time programming in the mid 1970s. Davis (1990) determined the percentage of female characters had increased to 35% by 1987. Dominick (1979), in a study spanning 25 years (from 1953-1977), revealed that the low number of females in starring roles remained constant. More recent studies (Elasmar, Hasegawa, & Brain, 1999; Glascock, 2001; Lauzen & Dozier, 1999) show that the percentage of women on prime-time television is indeed rising and is approaching 40%. Despite this growth, however, women are still outnumbered by men in most types of television programming (Signorielli, 1989; Thompson & Zerbinos, 1995), and are under-represented in a nation where women make up more than half of the population.

Stereotypes in the depiction of television occupations are very prevalent as well (Herrett-Skjellum & Allen, 1996). Several studies have demonstrated that marital status is an important predictor of employment for women on television. Kahlenberg (1995) and Signorielli (1982, 1989) found that married women were less likely to hold employment outside of the home compared to their single or divorced female counterparts, although this was not a factor for men, and Elasmar et al. (1999) found twice as many unmarried females as married females to be in professional white collar positions or entertainment occupations in the 1992-1993 prime-time season.

Early studies found that when television women did work, they often held stereotypically female occupations such as secretaries, nurses, or teachers (Levinson,

1975; Kalisch & Kalisch, 1984; Vande Berg & Streckfuss, 1992), and were likely to hold subservient or low-responsibility positions (DeFluer, 1964; Dominick & Rauch, 1972; Gerbner, 1972; Seggar & Wheeler, 1973; Streicher, 1974; Tedesco, 1974). More recent research has found that the sphere of work is consistently dominated by male characters, and that although women's occupational opportunities have expanded, more women than men cannot be categorized by occupation (Downs, 1981; Signorielli, 1989; Signorielli & Bacue, 1999; Signorielli & Kahlenberg, 2001; Vande Berg & Streckfuss, 1992). For example, Signorielli & Bacue (1999) found that about 40% of females did not work on television or their occupation was unknown, while less than 25% of male characters could not be classified in an occupation, possibly suggesting that working outside of the home is not as important for women as for men (Signorielli & Kahlenberg, 2001). Although Glascock (2001) found that more women were depicted as having a job than in previous studies, he was consistent with earlier studies in that television females are generally depicted in "lower-paying, less-prestigious" occupations than males.

Male and female television characters have also been consistently found to exhibit traditional, stereotypical behaviors and personal characteristics. Males are depicted as more dominant (Lemon, 1977) and more independent, assertive, aggressive and powerful than females (Tedesco, 1974; Thompson & Zerbinos, 1995). Conversely, females are depicted as more emotional, sensitive and frail, more likely to cry (Downs, 1981), and more likely to initiate acts of affection (Busby, 1975; Greenberg, 1980; Glascock, 2001; Sternglanz & Serbin, 1974; Thompson & Zerbinos, 1995). Turow (1974) and Greenberg (1980) both found that males gave more orders and made more plans than females in prime-time programming, an act seen as indicative of demonstrating independence.

Similarly, men are most likely to solve their own problems without help from others and rarely helped others with problems (Downs, 1981; McArthur & Eisen, 1976). Conversely, Downs (1981) found that women most frequently dealt with the problems of others and required help to solve their own, demonstrating both a sense of nurturing as well as a dependence on others. Finally, Glascock (2001) found female characters to exhibit significantly more negative verbal aggression than male characters; however, this seeming empowerment can also be viewed as attributing the female stereotypes cattiness and nagging-ness to women.

In terms of violence, males far surpass females. Signorielli (1989) and Greenberg (1980) found males to be twice as physically aggressive as females on prime-time television, and Glascock (2001) found a similar pattern. McGhee & Frueh (1980) reported that males are most likely to initiate violence, while females are most likely to be victims, and Elasmar, Hasegawa & Brain (1999) similarly found that females were more likely to be the victim than the perpetrator of violence.

Females are especially stereotyped in terms of their physical appearance, as well, with more emphasis being placed on it than the male's appearance. Early studies of the 1970s and 1980s report that television women have been portrayed as younger than men, and most likely to be under the age of 50 (Downing, 1974; Harris & Voorhees, 1981; Signorielli, 1989) and later studies confirm this fact as well (Elasmar, Hasegawa & Brain, 1999; Glascock, 2001). Further, female characters remain more provocatively dressed and more likely to have blond or red hair than male characters (Davis, 1990; Glascock, 2001), and Elasmar et al. (1999) found blonde females to be more successful than dark-haired females and twice as likely to hold professional or entertainment occupations.

Thus, blonde hair is associated with attractiveness and success, demonstrating the consistency of the television woman's appearance to reflect "traditional cultural definitions of beauty and femininity" (Davis, 1990, p. 330).

Effects of Gender Stereotyped Television

In addition to the content of gender stereotypes on television, much research has also been conducted on the effects of stereotyped television on viewers, especially children. Several studies have found that television can influence children's attitudes regarding the approval of gender stereotypes (Herrett-Skjellum & Allen, 1996; Morgan, 1987) as well as the "gender appropriateness" of certain traits and behaviors (Davidson, Yasuna, & Tower, 1979; McGhee & Frueh, 1980; Nathanson, Wilson, McGee & Sebastian, 2002). For example, McGhee & Frueh (1980) found that for children, heavy television viewers held more stereotyped sex-role perceptions than light viewers, showing that heavy viewing may contribute significantly to the acquisition of gender-stereotyped perceptions of behavior by children. Exposure to stereotypical depictions has also been linked to stereotyped attitudes in adults. In a review of seven past studies, Lipinski & Calvert (1985) concluded that the research did in fact demonstrate a link between television viewing and sex-stereotyped attitudes. Ross, Anderson and Wisocki (1982) discovered a positive relationship between sex role attitudes and television viewing among adults, and in a meta-analysis of nineteen studies, Herrett-Skjellum & Allen (1996) found that as television viewing increased, the acceptance of gender stereotypes, especially of women, increased as well.

Although a relatively new genre, reality television has already been the subject of numerous criticisms for its portrayal of stereotypical gender roles. These articles discuss the depiction of gender stereotypes within the reality genre.

Depiction and support for traditional gender roles on Reality TV

Consistent with the large body of research on sex stereotypes on television, several scholars have reported the depiction and reinforcement of traditional gender roles within various reality television shows (DeRose, Fürsich, & Haskins, 2003; Fairclough, 2004; Graham-Bertolini, 2004; Harris, 2004; Yep & Camacho, 2004).

Fairclough (2004) reports the depiction of women as solely measured by their success in the domestic sphere in her criticism of the reality show *Wife Swap,* which she claims gives an "outdated and conservative representation of wives and mothers" (p. 345). The program pits women against each other as they must deal with their counterpart's domestic lifestyle, and the premise is exclusively based around the woman's place in the home. The women appear either as extremely controlling or "exploited doormats," while the men are shown doing little of the domestic work, emphasizing the stereotype, according to Fairclough, that "women should be natural homemakers by virtue of their gender" (p. 345). Further, any reference to women's careers and the workplace is very limited and often portrayed as a troublesome interference in the lives of their families. Fairclough relates one episode where one woman's career is used as an assault on working mothers, appearing to corroborate the outdated belief that women "cannot have it all" (p. 345). Overall, Fairclough (2004) remarks that although the program is structured such as to examine gender roles within

the domestic sphere, all it does is reinforce the outdated stereotype that a woman's place should be in the home.

Reality television also depicts the traditional female gender roles of sexual purity, submissiveness and domesticity as ideal, such as in the series *Joe Millionaire, The Bachelor,* and *Paradise Hotel* (Graham-Bertolini, 2004; Harris, 2004; Yep & Camacho, 2004). Graham-Bertolini argues that *Joe Millionaire* glamorizes traditional notions of what behaviors are considered appropriate for women by rewarding them for such "virtues." The female contestants swoon at the possibility of being chosen by the handsome Evan Marriot, a construction worker pretending to be a millionaire. Graham-Bertolini relates an episode where a female contestant's lack of skill in the kitchen combined with overt sexual advances toward Evan resulted in her ousting from the show, clearly demonstrating that these are not "proper" ways for women to behave. In addition, the woman whom Evan ultimately chooses, Zora, is portrayed as sexually pure, domestic and submissive, reinforcing the old-fashioned concept that "traditional girls with good moral conduct will be rewarded for their obedience to conservative societal expectations" (p. 343). Furthermore, *Joe Millionaire* gives the women identity only in relation to Evan, and represents them as virtually powerless, depending on the butler for nearly everything; this serves to emphasize their dependence and passivity, as well as making clear, according to Graham-Bertolini (2004), that "ultimately the women are relying on Evan to rescue them from their own insignificant fates" (p. 342).

Yep and Camacho (2004) emphasize that *The Bachelor* reinforces similar stereotypes of the ideal woman as being subservient and tending to the needs of her husband. In season four, where bachelor Bob Guiney searches for the woman of his

dreams amongst a group of 25 female contestants competing for his affections, Yep and Camacho (2004) found patriarchal gender roles continually reinforced by female participants who declared how they would make the perfect wife for Bob because they liked to mother, cook for him, and would be his servant.

Many reality shows also intensify gender stereotypes of "proper" females being unselfish and desiring the financial prize for others by rewarding those who do. For example, the female winners of three different shows all had intended from the start to use the money to help someone else. Zora of *Joe Millionaire* planned to use her winnings to pay for her aunt's operation, Tina of *Survivor* season 2 planned to use it on her husband and children, and Tara of *Paradise Hotel* wanted the prize money for her mother's surgery (Harris, 2004).

Another gender stereotype played upon in reality television is that of female cattiness. In *The Bachelor*, 'catfights' and displays of rivalry between the women over the bachelor were highlighted, seeming to demonstrate women's natural affinity to turn their backs on each other when in pursuit of a man (Yep & Camacho, 2004). In *Wife Swap,* the premise positions women against each other from the outset, and cattiness is expressed by the "pushy" wives who "attack each other's lifestyles and furiously defend their own" (Fairclough, 2004, p. 345). Similarly, when trying to plot and play the game, the women on *Paradise Hotel* were often typecast by fellow contestants as "bitches, flirts, sluts and nags," exposing the oft-cited double standard that "reinscribes women within heterosexual patriarchy," and were often played off of one another to increase female competition (Harris, 2004, p. 356).

Finally, desire for marriage is shown to be "fundamental to the concept of true womanhood" (Graham-Bertolini, 2001, p. 342) and of utmost importance to the women of reality television, especially those of *The Bachelor* and *Joe Millionaire.* The female participants of *The Bachelor* were depicted as "desperate individuals obsessed with marriage" (Fairclough, 2004, p. 344), and were often shown discussing marriage, their dream weddings, and what makes a good wife, (Yep & Camacho, 2004), while on *Joe Millionaire*, marriage is "touted as women's primary objective" and women who achieve this goal are victorious; the female participants swooned over Evan while their educational degrees and careers were framed as of little importance in comparison (Fairclough, 2004, p. 342). Similarly, *Paradise Hotel* illustrates that women are only happy when they are with a man. When a new woman arrives at the hotel, she is made to spend a week without a male roommate, which is made to seem like punishment (Harris, 2004), reinforcing, as Yep & Camacho (2004) have stated, "heteronormative standards for women" (p. 340).

Alternative gender roles made to look deviant

In order to reinforce traditional gender stereotypes as normative, reality shows often provide alternatives to conventional ideas of gender, but label them as deviant or special exceptions. According to Edwards (2004), individual reality shows, especially in the competition game show subgenre, often transgress and then reassert traditional gender role expectations. He provides three ways this is achieved – first, the shows place importance on physical strength missions and "hegemonic masculinity" or traditional notions of masculinity; secondly, they assume men will be better competitors even when the missions are not very physical; and finally, they frame any "strong woman" as an

exception, one who embraces the traits of a 'man' while perceptions of the other women do not change.

Survivor, Amazing Race 4 and MTV's Real World/Road Rules Challenge all illustrate these gender dynamics, according to Edwards (2004). In Amazing Race 4, several two-person teams compete in a global scavenger hunt which focuses on physical challenges. Two female competitors, Kelly and Tian, are praised for "being tough" and wanting to compete equally with the men. However, they are eventually outperformed by their male competitors, and in Kelly's case, her male partner. Thus, the show demonstrates, according to Edwards (2004), how the females' success depends upon how thoroughly they can inhabit the hegemonic masculinity model, and emphasizes their limited ability to do so.

MTV's Real World/Road Rules Challenge is especially notorious for normalizing gender stereotypes such as hegemonic masculinity by making alternatives appear deviant. Participants compete in missions such as obstacle courses and other tests of endurance, along with (few) logic games and mind puzzles. In the "Battle of the Sexes" season, the women's leader, Ruthie, is better at physical challenges than many men, but instead of changing the way female competitors are perceived, she is "framed as a hard-bodied exception who single-handedly saves her team from complete shame" (Edwards, 2004, p. 227). Her skill does not change the way the other females are perceived, but rather reinforces women's "weakness" in comparison to men, as the male competitors see Ruthie as more closely resembling the males on the show who subsequently win the challenge, rather than the other females who they view as inept. Similarly, in "The Gauntlet" season, where co-ed team members must vote one of their own into an

elimination challenge which sends the loser home, the 'weakest' players are assumed to be the women (Edwards, 2004). The women insist they are being voted off unfairly, and the men reveal that they feel the strongest team is one without women. Even when the women win elimination challenges and outperform the men, these victories are framed as 'exceptions', leaving gender perceptions to remain the same and women still being considered the weaker sex (Edwards, 2004).

Other reality shows reinforce gender stereotypical behaviors in the ousting or rejection of cast members who take on alternative gender roles. Graham-Bertolini (2004) points out that *Joe Millionaire* valorizes traditional feminine virtues by rewarding those who have them and eliminating women who do not. The two finalists, Zora and Sarah, are positioned as complete polar opposites; while Zora is portrayed as a "model of virtue," Sarah is edited as overtly sexualized and assertive (Graham-Bertolini, 2004, p. 342). In one episode, she convinces Evan to hide in the woods from the cameras, but with microphones still intact, the editors insert subtitles such as "Sluurrrp" and "smack" to make Sarah's intentions clear. By demonstrating her assertiveness and sexuality, she is portrayed negatively by the show's editors as "impure" and not to be trusted, and Sarah is ultimately eliminated in favor of the more traditional Zora, reinforcing the traditional notions of gender ascribed to her (sexual purity, submissiveness and domesticity) as proper and normal.

Many other reality shows reject participants who don't subscribe to traditional gender roles, most notably the patriarchic ideal of the submissive and "nice" woman. In *Paradise Hotel,* the quiet female participants Tara and Charla remain until the end while the more assertive and strident women Toni, Desiree and Amy are voted off early on in

the series (Harris, 2004). Although the game specifically calls for manipulation and plotting to get ahead, the women are most often called out over the men as being "bitches" or "nags" because assertiveness goes against traditional gender expectations of how women should act. Similarly, Putnam (2001) argues that the series *Survivor* similarly alters the rules for female behavior and what is acceptable to win the game. She goes on to say that "if a woman survives the last vote, she sure can't be a bitch" (p. 3). Thus, although many reality series depict women who break the barriers of female stereotypes, they ultimately reject these women for those who more closely adhere to traditional gender roles.

Gender criticism of non-stereotypical behavior is most obvious on the reality series *Blind Date*. The show follows couples going on blind dates, and uses supertext commentary by the producers to comment on each date. Overall, this supertext is rather harsh, and criticizes behavior that deviates from "hegemonic social protocol", according to DeRose, Fürsich and Haskins (2003). The commentary criticizes male participants who "fail to exhibit acceptable career ambitions, financial goals, and desire for upward mobility" (DeRose et al., 2003, p. 180) and also "punishes frugality" among participants, especially males who don't want to pay a lot for their dates (p. 181). Conversely, female participants are criticized for exhibiting non-stereotypical aspirations and goals, as the supertext advises one woman to "move to Rio" when she states her career options of either becoming a forest fighter or a stripper in Rio de Janiero, and harshly comments on another that her goals of becoming a successful investor and business owner are a "pretty big step from your waitress gig" (DeRose et al., 2003, p. 181). Similarly, the supertext castigates other behavior that doesn't meet the societal "norm", such as being too

intelligent or not intelligent enough, drinking too much on the date or not drinking enough, and expressing too much or too little energy, such as one especially relaxed man who the supertext associates with using marijuana. Although the daters themselves may not express discontent with any of their date's non-stereotypical characteristics, the supertext establishes for the viewer what is and is not "normal." Thus, although there is a wide representation of different qualities and traits among participants on *Blind Date*, DeRose et al. (2003) describe how the supertext diminishes any potential for the acceptance of counter-hegemonic gender roles, and instead "serves to maintain the social order and punish deviance from behavior traditionally regarded as normal" (p. 185).

Commodification of Female Sexuality on Reality TV

In contrast to the traditional gender stereotype of the sexually pure and submissive woman, research has found that reality television also exacerbates the stereotype of women as naturally sexual beings and commodifies this sexuality for male viewers, as well as reinforcing current standards of female beauty (DeRose, Fürsich & Haskins, 2003; Harris, 2004; Sgroi, 2006; Waggoner, 2004; Yep & Camacho, 2004).

Waggoner (2004) contends how *Survivor* naturalizes female sexuality as commodity in its "festishization of the female body" (p. 218). Women's bared body parts are often caught on camera, along with close-ups of women's "bikini-clad breasts and buttocks" (Waggoner, 2004, p. 218). In the *Survivor: Amazon* series, the camera follows male tribe members secretly watching their female teammates bathe themselves in a river. Male contestants in *Survivor: Marquesas* also discuss how many sexually aggressive women are in their respective tribes. This commodification of sexuality is translated to the realm outside of the show as well, as many news magazines including

Time featured the show on their covers by picturing female contestants in bikinis. Waggoner (2004) continues that female sexuality is constructed as a "valuable survival tool" for female contestants, and that similar to the ousting of reality show participants who take on unconventional gender roles, many *Survivor* females whose bodies do not meet the standards of "young, nubile female sexuality" are the first to be eliminated from the game (p. 218-219). This in effect reinforces female sexual appearance and behavior as the appropriate and natural "norm", especially when framed within *Survivor's* reality-based premise of watching "real people do what comes 'naturally'" in a self-described natural and exotic environment (Waggoner, 2004, p. 218).

However, this sexuality is not one which females have control of; rather, its value is determined by the men who consume it. When there is no consumer, this sexuality has no value, and is even resented by other females and uninterested men. For example, the female competitor Jerri on *Survivor: Australian Outback* attempts to use her blatant sexuality to ally with the attractive, male Colby in order to stay in the game; when her female teammates resent her for this and when Colby rebuffs her, her sexuality is valueless and she is eliminated (Waggoner, 2004). Thus, what may appear to be a form of "power" for women proves to be nothing less than sexual subordination, as women learn to value their sexuality "in terms of its utility for others" and see this commodification of their sexuality as inherently part of their feminine identity (Waggoner, 2004, p. 219).

Research has shown that several other reality shows objectify women and place strong importance on their appearance, in contrast with a lack of emphasis on male appearance. Yep & Camacho (2004) point out that in *The Bachelor*, all of the women are "tall, young, fit and thin" and the cameras continually focus on their physical appearance

(p. 339). Many "plot devices" of the show allowed for women to expose body parts, such as pajama parties, mingling in hot tubs and amusement park water rides. Similar to *Survivor,* camera shots often focused on the women's breasts, buttocks, and legs as they entered hot tubs or removed clothing, thus presenting them as 'objects of the male gaze' or in other words, commodifying their sexuality for male consumers (p. 339). In contrast, bachelor Bob Guiney's body was hardly scrutinized. DeRose et al. (2003) similarly found that on *Blind Date*, the producer-written supertext reserves any commentary on physical appearance to the discussion of females. The supertext often described males as fixated on their dates' busts or panting or bug-eyed if their date was especially attractive. It also commented frequently on the females' sexual features, fixating on the breasts of one female dater throughout the entire episode, using animated characters such as the pop-up plastic surgeon to comment on his "good work" or personifying "Leila's blouse" to comment on her own breasts. The show also utilizes the *Blind Date* dictionary to sexualize many comments made during the date, such as when one female dater explains her work as an exotic dancer to "pay the bills", and the dictionary defines this as "*See loan for boob job*" (DeRose et al., 2003, p. 179). However, the supertext never makes any comments regarding male sexual body parts, and the male body often goes uncriticized, whether "chiseled" or "chubby" (DeRose et al., 2003, p.178).

Finally, Harris (2004) also points out how on *Paradise Hotel*, women only come into focus as sexually available, attractive beings. While some may see the program as "freeing" female sexuality from the "responsibility and respectability of marriage" (Fiske, 1990, p. 139) and equalizing the playing ground in requiring both sexes to be sexually uninhibited, it is the women (not men) who are typecast by their fellow

contestants as "flirts" and "sluts", and the premise of "swapping partners in a hotel…for money" subjects women to be interpreted as prostitutes (Harris, 2004, p. 356). Overall, female sexuality in *Paradise Hotel* is commodified for male consumption as well, and rather than empower women, serves to sexually subordinate them to men through the use of double standards.

Dating Shows' Connection to Fairy Tales

Several reality dating shows emphasize a fairy-tale connection to romance, reinforcing ideologies of patriarchal heterosexuality, including the stereotype that women's most important goal is to marry a man who will take care of and protect her, the most notable being *The Bachelor* and *Joe Millionaire*.

The Bachelor, according to Yep & Camacho (2004), offers a fairy tale ending for one woman who will be "chosen" by her 'prince', the bachelor, and thus has as its core premise "the ideology of patriarchal heterosexuality" (p. 339). Using statements such as "Cinderella" "fantasy date" and "happily ever after", they claim the show serves to associate fairy tale romance with patriarchal heterosexual courtship, and thus reinforce this ideology as natural and normal (Yep & Camacho, 2004, p. 339-340). The female participants are portrayed as obsessed with marriage and strengthen patriarchic gender roles, as several confess that they will make the best wife based on their abilities to "mother" "cook" and "be a servant" (Yep & Camacho, 2004, p. 339).

Joe Millionaire is even more linked to fairy tale romance, as it similarly claims to offer a "fairy tale ending" to one lucky woman. Like *The Bachelor*, there is plenty of Cinderella imagery, and it reinforces patriarchal heterosexual courtship through its premise: the contestants arrive at a 'castle' "via horse-and-carriage, in a scene

reminiscent of Cinderella's arrival at the ball" (Graham-Bertolini, 2004, p. 342), and the women swoon at the possibility of marrying their prince/millionaire, Evan. In its fairy tale construction, the show also normalizes, according to Graham-Bertolini (2004), what stereotypical behaviors are acceptable for females beyond desiring marriage, and that in fact make women worthy of marriage: sexual purity, submissiveness and domesticity. Contestant Zora is shown in one episode stroking her horse's nose while on a horseback-riding date with Evan to emphasize her fairy-tale virtue; animated bird chirps are even edited into the background to call further attention to the fairy-tale nature of the scene. Further, *Joe Millionaire*, like fairy tale, portrays women as objects that can be bartered, "with virtue being a prized commodity" (Rowe cited in Graham-Bertolini 2004, p. 343). According to Rowe (1979), by submitting to patriarchy and adopting traditional female virtues, the fairy-tale heroine wins the prince and financial security through marriage. This same dynamic is played out in *Joe Millionaire*, when Zora is 'rewarded' for her virtue by winning Evan as well as half a million dollars - since he is not actually a millionaire but she was virtuous enough to love him for himself, she wins the financial security as well. Thus, both *The Bachelor* and *Joe Millionaire* use fairy-tale associations to idealize and normalize patriarchic notions of heterosexual courtship.

Method

This study will examine two television programs, season one of *The Bachelor*, premiering March 25, 2002 on ABC, and season one of *The Bachelorette*, premiering January 8, 2003 on ABC, and will determine ways in which stereotyped gender roles are reinforced within both series. Both *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* were chosen to ensure role reversal equality, as a male chooses from among female competitors in *The*

Bachelor and a female chooses from among male competitors in *The Bachelorette*.

Season one was selected for both series in attempts to ensure as much equality among

series as possible. For both six-episode series, half of the episodes (weeks three, five and

six) were analyzed due to time constraints. Episode one was solely analyzed for

demographic information, as the majority of the episode introduces the viewer to the

bachelor/ette and contestants. Episode two was eliminated from analysis arbitrarily when

choosing between two and three, and episode four was eliminated due to the fact that

contestants bring the bachelor/ette to their hometown that week to visit their families,

resulting in significantly less interaction between contestants and the bachelor/ette. To

facilitate the research, a coding system was devised that enabled the systematic

recognition of gender stereotypes among both males and females.

First, general demographic characteristics were coded, including the age of each

character (20s, 30s, 40s, 50s), hair color, and general body type (thin, average, heavy). In

general, a belief guiding this research is that women are more likely to be younger,

blonder and thinner than men of both series. In addition, the bachelor is more likely to

choose a young, blonde and thin woman, while the bachelorette is more likely to choose a

muscular man, with hair color and age making no significant difference.

Next, several gender-stereotypical behaviors for each gender were coded. For

females, these include *Emotionality* – crying, becoming visibly upset or discussing

feelings; *Affection* – likely to initiate acts of affection; *Romance/Desiring Cinderella*

fairytale – romantic actions/comments, desiring marriage and living "happily ever after";

Dependence – relying on others; *Sexual Modesty* – rejecting sexual advances and other

chaste behavior; *Lack of Confidence* – statements indicating low self-esteem or not

believing in oneself; *Non-Aggression* – actions demonstrating passivity and submission; and *Impressed with Appearances* – general preoccupation with physical appearances, including materialism, personal appearance and appearances of opposite sex.

Gender stereotypical behaviors for males were also coded for, most of which were polar opposites of the aforementioned female stereotypes. These male stereotypes include *Aggression* – physical or verbal forcefulness or hostility; *Independence* – solving problems on one's own, not relying on others for help; *Unemotionality* – lack of showing emotion, becoming visibly upset; *Confidence* – statements indicating self-esteem and being able to effectively deal with a situation or problem; *Sexual Assertion* – initiating sexual acts and discussion about sex; *Lack of Affection* – unlikely to initiate acts of affection; *Lack of Romance/Desiring Cinderella fairytale* – lack of romantic actions/comments and lack of desire for marriage or fairytale ending; and *Valuing female Sexuality* – statements indicating strong emphasis on females' bodies or physical attractiveness/sexuality.

First, the demographic information of each character was recorded (age, hair color, body type). Next, using a checklist, the coder made frequency counts of each of the above behaviors exhibited by, in *The Bachelor*, the male bachelor and each of the female contestants, and in *The Bachelorette*, the female bachelorette and each of the male contestants, as well as utilized rich description to describe each moment a stereotypical behavior occurred. In addition, the coder recorded any opposite-gender stereotypes (i.e. female stereotypes among men, male stereotypes among women), noting times when individuals went against traditional gender roles. Observations ceased during commercial pauses, and began again when the program resumed. At the conclusion of

each episode, eliminated contestants were recorded. Overall, This study utilized an emergent design, allowing the flexibility to add or change codes during the research process.

Overall, this study will make four sets of comparisons: **1)** The male contestants of *The Bachelorette* will be compared to the female contestants of *The Bachelor* to determine whether traditional male and female stereotypes persist when both males and females are in the contestant (passive) role. **2**) Alex the bachelor will be compared to Trista the bachelorette to determine whether traditional male and female stereotypes persist when both genders occupy the "power" role; **3)** the bachelor will be compared to the male contestants of *The Bachelorette* to determine whether men take on more stereotypically "feminine" behaviors when positioned in a traditionally "female" role, and **4)** the bachelorette will be compared to the female contestants of *The Bachelor* to determine if putting a woman in a traditionally "male" role will lead to the acquisition of more stereotypically "masculine" behavior. It is anticipated that first, gender stereotypes will be found to characterize both series, and second, they will remain consistent throughout and despite role reversal, with both men and women exhibiting the same degree of stereotypic behavior in the "power" role as the "contestant" role, and that putting a women in the powerful "bachelor" role will not erase female stereotypes and equalize gender roles, just as positioning men in the submissive contestant role will not succeed in erasing male stereotypes.

Results

Demographics

Demographic information for each of the 25 contestants of each series yielded interesting patterns. Overall, it was found that women were more likely to be younger and thinner than men, but no real differences were found for hair color.

Age

The female contestants of *The Bachelor* spanned a 10 year age range from age 22 to age 31, and all but one (31 year old Jill) were younger than 31 year old bachelor Alex Michel. In contrast, the male contestants of *The Bachelorette* had an older and much longer 18 year age span, ranging from age 24 to age 42. Characteristic of both series, the majority of both male and female contestants were about the same age in their late 20s (27-29). However, in *The Bachelorette,* although the majority of men (48%) were younger than 29 year-old Trista Rehn and three were her own age (12%), the oldest contestant vying for her heart was 12 years her senior. In addition, whereas there was at least one woman of every age in the 10-year age span of 22-31 on *The Bachelor*, the same was not true for the male contestants of *The Bachelorette*, with the largest gap between Wayne, 37 and Matt, 42. Thus, not only do the women have a shorter age span in comparison to the men, but they are younger than the men in general as well. This supports the hypothesis that not only do the series portray younger women than men and within a much shorter age span; also, reinforces the stereotype that desirable women are younger than the man they desire, while desirable men can be of any age in relation to the woman.

Hair Color

No significant differences were found with regard to hair color in the male and female contestants. There were 12 brunette males (48%) compared to 11 brunette females (44%), the same number of blondes for both genders (32%), and a slight difference of black-haired females (16%) to black-haired males (20%). There were two red heads among the female group, and no red heads among the males.

Body Type

Different categories of body type were coded for the females and the males. The male categories were muscular, average, and heavier, while female categories included thin, average, and heavy. While 60% of males were average, a mere 4% (one male) was heavy, and only 36% met the ideal of muscular, only 8% of females were average while the overwhelming majority – 84% - met the thin ideal, and 0% were heavy. In addition, a new category was formulated for two women who did not fit into any of the pre-determined body types – thin and busty – which accounted for 8%.

The Bachelor demographics

In total, the majority of women had brown hair (44%), were in the older age bracket of 27-31 (56%), and were thin (76%). The age span among all of the contestants ran only 10 years (age 22 to age 31) and all of the women except for one, who was his age, were younger than bachelor Alex (age 31).

At the end of episode one, Alex eliminated 10 women and gave roses to 15. Of the women Alex eliminated, 7 (70%) were in the older age bracket between the ages of 27 and 31, and only 3 (30%) were in the younger bracket, aged 22-26. In the first round, Alex effectively eliminated the three oldest women (Jill, 31 and Daniela and Denise, 30)

and three out of four who were 29 (Lisa, Rachel & Amber). In terms of hair color, half of the women Alex didn't give a rose to were brunette, 30% were blonde, one had black hair (10%) and one was a red head (10%). Finally, 80% of eliminated female contestants were thin and 20% were average.

Thus, of the remaining 15 females, the majority (53.3%) were young (age bracket 22-26), brunette (40%) and a vast majority were thin (80%). About the same number of brunettes were kept in the competition as eliminated (6 to 5) but while only 3 blondes were eliminated, 5 were kept. The largest degree of change occurred with regard to body type; while 8 thin women were eliminated, 13 were kept, and both of the average-sized women were eliminated. These results fit the hypothesis that the bachelor is more likely to keep younger, thinner women in the competition, and thus, that young, thin, blonde women are seen as most attractive, as his first round decisions were made shortly after meeting each of the women, and likely based more on their appearances than their personalities.

At the end of episode 3, four more women were eliminated, leaving only 4 remaining; of those eliminated, half were in the older age bracket, half in the younger; half were brunette, a quarter blonde and a quarter with black hair, and all were thin. Of the remaining women - Kim, Shannon, Trista & Amanda - 75% were young (ages 23 and 24) and only Trista was of an older age, 28 (25%); this contrasts with younger girls accounting for 44% of the original 25. 75% of these remaining women were also blonde (3 out of 4) with Shannon being the lone brunette, a much higher percentage than the percentage of blondes to other hair colors in the original 25 contestants (32%). Finally, 75% of these women were also thin, close to the original 84% of thin women making up

the original 25. However, Amanda was busty, making up 25% of the group while busty girls only accounted for 8% of the original 25. Overall, the women whom Alex chose as his final four were younger and blonder than the original group of 25.

At the end of episode 5, Alex gave out only two roses to the final two contestants, Trista and Amanda. Shannon was eliminated, and in the season finale, Amanda was chosen over Trista. Thus, although Alex's final two were both of different age brackets and different body types, they were both blonde. In the end, Alex chose the younger woman, Amanda, over Trista, making him eight years her senior. All in all, Amanda was truly a minority in all three categories – only 44% of the original 25 were younger than 26, only 32% were blonde and only 8% were busty. The hypothesis that Alex would pick a woman young and blonde was correct.

The Bachelorette demographics

In total, the majority of *The Bachelorette's* male contestants had brown hair (48%), were in the younger age bracket of 24-30 (64%), and had an average body type (60%). The age span among all of the contestants ran 18 years (age 24 to age 42), the majority of men (48%) were younger than 29 year-old bachelorette Trista Rehn and three were her own age (12%), and in contrast to the bachelor, the oldest contestant vying for her heart was 12 years her senior.

At the end of episode one, Trista eliminated 10 men, keeping and giving roses to 15 in the competition. Of the men Trista eliminated, 6 (60%) were between the ages of 30 and 42, and only 4 (40%) were 24-30. In the first round, Trista effectively eliminated the five oldest men (Eric, 33; Greg. H, 34; Chris, 35; Wayne, 37; & Matt, 42), and two thirds of all men in the older age bracket (30-42) while she only eliminated 25% of the younger

men (24-30). Matt was somewhat of an anomaly, as he was five years older than the next youngest guy and the only man in his 40s, likely placed on the show to give Trista the option of an "older" and 'more mature' man. In terms of hair color, half of the men Trista didn't give a rose to were brunette, 20% were blonde, and 30% had black hair. Thus, while more brunettes were eliminated in total, a higher percentage of men with black hair were eliminated with regard to the original 25 (60%). Finally, 70% of eliminated male contestants were average and 30% were muscular, eliminating nearly half of the average sized men from the competition, but only a third of the muscular men.

Thus, of the remaining 15 males, the majority (80%) were young (age bracket 24-30), brunette (46.6%) and had an average body type (53.3%). About the same number of brunettes were kept in the competition as eliminated (about 60% to 40%), but while only 25% of blondes were eliminated, 75% were kept. In contrast to the female contestants of *The Bachelor*, the majority of the remaining 10 men had an 'average' body type (53.3) while only 40% met the muscular 'ideal' body type, and the one heavy male was kept as well. However, although more average men remained than any other body type, 66.6% of all muscular men from the original 25 remained in contrast to only 53.3% of average men. Thus, it seems that ideal body type is less of a factor in choosing a mate for women than it is for men. However, appearance is important to women too, as noted by the greater percentage of muscular men than average men remaining.

At the end of episode 3, four more men were eliminated, leaving only 4 remaining; of those sent home, 75% were in the younger age bracket, 25% in the older; half were brunette, half were blonde; and half were muscular, a quarter were average and a quarter were heavy. Of the remaining men - Greg, Russ, Charlie & Ryan - 100% were

in the younger age bracket, though at the higher end (28-30). This makes sense in regard to the fact that almost half (44%) of the original 25 men were between the ages of 28 and 30. Indeed, the only age repeated among the final four was age 28, which also was the most frequent age among the original 25. 75% of these remaining men were also brunette (3 out of 4), while 25% had black hair, and quite opposite of *The Bachelor's* final four, none were blonde. Finally, exactly 50% of these men were muscular and 50% were average, less than the original percentage of average men (60%), but more than the original percentage of muscular men (36%). Overall, the men whom Trista chose as her final four were more brunette and more muscular than the original group of 25.

At the end of episode 5, Trista gave out only two roses to her final two, Charlie and Ryan. Russ was eliminated, and in the season finale, Ryan was chosen over Charlie. Thus, both of Trista's final two were fairly identical in terms of demographics: both were brunette, both were muscular, and both were in the younger age bracket, being only a year apart (Charlie was 28, Ryan was 29). In the end, Trista chose Ryan over Charlie, and they were both the same age – 29. All in all, Ryan was in the majority in terms of hair color and age – 48% of the original 25 guys were brunette and 64% were aged 24-30 – but a minority in terms of body type – only 36% of the original men were muscular. Thus, physical appearance was shown to play a role in Trista's decision. She preferred men with brown hair over blondes, and even though more "average" men comprised the original 25, she chose the "ideal" muscular men over the average majority.

Behaviors – Frequency Counts

Emotionality (F) & Unemotionality (M).

   The Bachelor: Emotionality is a stereotype associated with women, while lack of, or unemotionality, is associated with men. This indeed was proven true in *The Bachelor* as the female contestants were more emotional than Alex by 43% (14 counts to 8). The emotionality expressed by female contestants ranged from crying to appearing visibly upset to talking about their feelings. For example, in episode 3, Rhonda began crying after the last individual date was given out and she did not receive one, and spoke about how emotionally frustrating the experience was. Through tears, she told the camera:

> This is harder than I thought it would be. It's not fair. I've liked this guy from the moment I saw him. If I could make a list, he fits it all, you know, it's like I've always known what I was looking for and it's just like, why do I have to meet you under these circumstances? (*The Bachelor*, Episode 3, 2002).

   The greatest display of emotion occurred when Rhonda was eliminated at the end of episode 3; she said through tears that she felt that Alex "made the wrong choice," and became so overwhelmed with emotion that she began hyperventilating, eventually needing assistance from the paramedics (*The Bachelor*, Episode 3, 2002). Shannon also became emotionally charged and somewhat angry in episode 5 when Alex offered the chance to stay in a couples' suite on their overnight date – she was visibly upset with Alex the rest of the night, and told the camera that the 'proposition' "ruined dinner, it almost ruined the day" (*The Bachelor*, Episode 5, 2002). Although Alex displayed less emotion that the women, he goes against traditional male stereotypes in that he exhibited emotion more often than not (8 times to 1) throughout the series. For example, he revealed his feelings toward Trista in episode 3, as he told her she made him "nervous" and how when he got home from the first date he "couldn't sleep, it was like butterflies in

my stomach…anyway, I think you're the greatest" (*The Bachelor*, Episode 3, 2002). He also told Shannon in episode 5 that he was an "emotional basketcase" and announced in the season finale how he was following his heart more, and "I believe in the chance for real lasting love" (*The Bachelor,* Episode 6, 2003).

Unemotionality was exhibited less by the women throughout the series (5 times), an understandable contrast in light of the fact that emotionality is traditionally associated with females, while lack of, or unemotionality, is associated with males. However, it was exhibited more by the women than it was for Alex. This can be qualified by the fact that 4 out of 5 (80%) of the female acts of unemotionality are attributed to one woman, Trista, 29, who differed from the other women in that she was emotionally guarded and had a propensity for putting up emotional walls. For instance, when Alex revealed his feelings toward Trista on their individual date in episode 3, Trista responded with "good to know", and quickly changed the subject by commenting on how delicious their dinner was (*The Bachelor*, Episode 3, 2002). Trista even admitted during that same dinner that her single status is the result of her putting up walls to protect herself. Conversely, Alex only showed a lack of emotion once, when he revealed in the last episode how he had been keeping Amanda at arm's length because he was "a little scared of Amanda" because of her strong feelings for him, and of getting "swept away"; however, he expressed a desire to stop doing that on their last night together (*The Bachelor,* Episode 6, 2002).

Thus, although the women are more emotional than Alex by 33%, they also show an 80% greater lack of emotion than he does, and overall, Alex is 87.5% more emotional than not.

The Bachelorette: Both Trista and the men vying for her heart were more emotional than unemotional. Trista exhibits 17 instances of emotionality throughout the series. For example, she cried several times, sometimes out of joy (when Ryan read her a poem he wrote for her (*The Bachelorette*, Episode 3, 2003) and Ryan proposed to her (Episode 6)); and sometimes out of sorrow (when she eliminated Charlie (Episode 6)) Trista also spoke a lot about her feelings for the men; she said in episode 3 that "Ryan makes my heart go pitter patter…I really can feel something brewing," and "with Charlie, every time I'm with him it feels right, natural…the connection that we have between each other is real" (*The Bachelorette*, Episode 3, 2003). Interestingly enough, the male contestants exhibited 26 counts of emotion, 53% *more* than Trista. Moreover, 65.4% of male emotion was attributed to Ryan, 29, who was the most emotional man on the show. Ryan often talked about his frustration at not knowing Trista's true feelings for him, declaring that she had "consumed my life" and close to tears, "this hurts, like right now this hurts, not knowing anything hurts" (*The Bachelorette,* Episode 6, 2003). He also talked the most about his strong feelings toward Trista, making declarations such as "I'm not falling in love anymore, I'm submerged in it" (*The Bachelorette,* Episode 5, 2003), "I can't help the way I feel about her" (Episode 5), and "there is a place in my heart only you can fill" (Episode 6).

Ironically and against stereotypes, Trista exhibited more than three times a higher degree of unemotionality than the men did (10 to 3). This often dealt with her inability to reveal her true emotions due to multiple men being left in the competition, and their openness with her; for example: "Charlie's been pretty open since our overnight date to Mexico…it's really hard for him since I'm not able to really reciprocate any feelings"

(*The Bachelorette*, Episode 6, 2003). The men, on the other hand, only showed a lack of emotion 3 times, 70% less than Trista, mostly occurring after certain men were eliminated. For example, both Russ and Charlie acted stoic and quite emotionless after Trista did not give them roses. Overall, the men and Trista were both more emotional than unemotional; however the men were 53% more emotional (26 to 3) than Trista was (17 to10).

Affection (F) & Lack of Affection (M)

> *The Bachelor:* 19 counts of initiated affection were exhibited by female contestants on *The Bachelor*, as opposed to a high count of 30 exhibited by bachelor Alex, including hand-holding and affectionate touches of any kind. This goes against predetermined assumptions, since initiating affection is a stereotype most often associated with females rather than males. This may have occurred because Alex was the pursuer and, unlike the women, had no chance of being eliminated from the competition; thus he may have felt more comfortable initiating affection than the female contestants vying for his love. Finally, there were no counts of the opposite behavior, lack of initiating acts of affection, among Alex or the female contestants.

> *The Bachelorette:* While Trista initiated affection a total of 40 times throughout the series, the males won again, with the male contestants beating her by 30% with a count of 52. This again goes against the stereotype that initiating affection is most often associated with females, except for a different reason. Whereas Alex may have felt most comfortable being in the 'power' position, these male contestants were not and had the risk of going home. However, it may have been a case of males being more sexually

aggressive than females, a male stereotype, since the boundary between initiating

affection and sexual aggression wasn't always clear cut.

Romantic/Desire Cinderella fairytale (F) and opposite (M)

   The Bachelor: This stereotype is very much associated with females, and was

predicted to be especially high among females of the series, since *The Bachelor's* entire

premise revolves around women vying for the love of one man and living happily ever

after. Thus, it seemed fairly logical for the female contestants to have a higher count (16)

than Alex (5). Several of the women likened their experience to a fairytale, including

Amanda, who "felt like we were in a fairytale or something" when she kissed Alex on the

ice on their date to New York (*The Bachelor*, Episode 5, 2002), and Shannon, who

exclaimed on her date with Alex in episode 3, "I am Pretty Woman, I am Cinderella

tonight, I am Snow White tonight" (*The Bachelor*, Episode 3, 2002). Alex described this

date with Shannon as "one of the most romantic nights I've ever had, and I literally had

visions of her as, like, the mother of my children" (*The Bachelor,* Episode 3, 2002).

   In contrast, the counts for the opposite, not desiring a fairytale marriage or

expressing a lack of romance, were much different. While they were much lower across

the board for both Alex and the women, it was one of the women, Trista, who actually

demonstrated lack of desire for marriage twice, while Alex did not demonstrate it at all.

Trista told Alex's parents in the season finale that she couldn't see herself saying yes to a

proposal from Alex because she didn't think they were "there yet" and "I really am in

like with your son, but I really don't think (pause) either of us is in love per se, yet," and

after being eliminated, she confessed "It's not that I 1000% wanted to be engaged today,

I was very anti-engagement the whole way through" (*The Bachelor*, Episode 6, 2002).

Alex, however, never demonstrated any such desire. Thus, the gender roles were somewhat reversed for Trista and Alex; while Trista had a fear of commitment and predilection for putting up 'emotional walls', which was brought up many times throughout the series, Alex's sole purpose, as the bachelor, was to find his one true love and marry her. Overall, the women were over 3 times more romantic and desiring a fairytale ending (16 to 2) than Alex was (5 to 0).

The Bachelorette: Displaying romance and a desire for marriage/a fairytale ending was much different in *The Bachelorette*. Although both the men and Alex were more romantic than not, the stereotype was twice as frequent among the men vying for Trista's heart (30) than it was for the female bachelorette herself (14). Most notably, Ryan revealed to Trista that he used to think he needed a lot of time to get to know someone before he could get engaged and married, but had recently changed his mind:

> If this is gonna be some sort of fairytale ending, like I came on television and met this beautiful person and I'm engaged to her, let's just carry out the fairytale, let's walk out into the sunset and live happily ever after. (*The Bachelorette*, Episode 5, 2003).

Several of the men also revealed a very romantic side, most notably Ryan, who often wrote poems about Trista and would read them to her, with lines such as "I got my first glimpse of heaven in your eyes" (*The Bachelorette,* Episode 5, 2003) and "here I am looking for a place to land, my heart in the palm of her hand, a boy dying to be her man" (Episode 3). Trista also made several comments alluding to her desire for marriage and romance, such as telling Ryan that she had dreamt about the day she would have a ring on her finger since she was a little girl, and saying how Charlie "would make an excellent husband for me because he's got everything I've always looked for... He's affectionate, romantic, and would be able to take care of me" (*The Bachelorette,* Episode 6, 2003). It

was quite surprising that the men were more expressive of this behavior than Trista, since the stereotype is so strongly associated with females, and traditionally, it is often men who are less romantic and not as interested in marriage as women. It makes more sense within context of the fact that the male contestants of the series were specifically interested in finding true love and a wife in Trista. However, it is still surprising that Trista expressed a desire for marriage and a fairytale ending less often than the men she was courting. Even more surprising was the fact that Trista expressed a lack of desire for this fairytale ending once, while the men never did at all. This occurred in the finale, when Trista brought her two final choices, Charlie and Ryan, home to meet her family. After the two men had left, Trista told her family that in contrast to Ryan's desire to jump into marriage, she wanted a long engagement to really get to know the other person and see if they would be compatible in the real world (*The Bachelorette,* Episode 6, 2003). Thus, she did not get as wrapped up in the romance of a fast engagement and fairytale ending as much as Ryan, and thought about it in more practical terms. Again, this is somewhat of a reversal of more traditional gender roles, as the men exhibited twice as much romantic desire (30 to 0) as Trista did (14 to 1).

Independence (M) and Dependence (F)

The Bachelor: Acting independent is traditionally associated more with males than with females, who are traditionally regarded as more dependent on others, especially on men. This was very much true in terms of the female contestants' dependence in the series, which occurred at total of 14 times – they were completely dependent upon the male of the show, Alex, who decided which of them would get chosen for individual dates, where they would go on their dates together, and most importantly, who would be

sent home and who would stay and possibly become the woman *he* would propose to. For example, all of the women would cheer in excitement when they would receive a special box from Alex revealing who he had chosen for the three individual dates in episode 3 (*The Bachelor,* Episode 3, 2002), telling them what time Alex would pick them up, and in Shannon's case, even how to dress (casual). The date's description was often vague, leaving the women even more dependent on Alex. In contrast, Alex showed dependence only 5 times, such as in episode 5 when he became physically sick and Trista came and stayed with him, and in the season finale when he asked his family for help regarding his final decision (*The Bachelor*, 2002).

Although the women showed more dependence than Alex, they consequently also shored more independence, with a total of 4 counts in comparison with Alex's 3. For example, Trista told Alex in episode 5 that she was only 'in like' with him and didn't know if she would be able to say yes to a proposal from him, while Shannon backed away from many of Alex's advances and asserted her independence to not do some of the things he wanted of her in episode 5, especially when they were offered a couple's room to spend the night together (*The Bachelor*, Episode 5, 2002). Alex's acts of independence included proclaiming that he was "not bound by [his parents'] advice" (*The Bachelor*, Episode 6, 2002) regarding whether he would choose Trista or Amanda, and, when he chose Amanda, asking her to move to California to be with him, in contrast to moving closer to her or working out some sort of location compromise.

The Bachelorette: Unlike *The Bachelor*, *The Bachelorette* showed the men to be four times as independent as Trista (4 to 1). Trista's only act of independence occurred in episode 3 in response to a comment from Charlie that he didn't feel comfortable with her

being intimate with other guys. Rather than try to appease Charlie, Trista thought

Charlie's comment was "a way for him to control a situation that he had no control over"

and made her control over the situation clear, stating "if I need to be looking into the

intimacy level with other people, then that's what I need to do" (*The Bachelorette*,

Episode 3, 2003). However, this was Trista's only act of independence, while the men

expressed theirs in several ways, such as Charlie's attempt at asserting control by telling

Trista not to be intimate with other guys, and Russ's claim in episode 5 that even if he

was offered a rose by Trista, he might not accept it (he was subsequently eliminated).

In terms of dependence, traditional gender roles were retained; Trista expressed

more dependence (8 counts) than her male contestants (6). Although Trista was

supposedly in the "power" role as the bachelorette, she succumbed to several female

dependence stereotypes, most of which occurred toward the end of the series in the

season finale. In the last episode, Trista described why Charlie would make an excellent

husband, claiming, among other things, that "he's got everything I've always looked

for…he would be able to take care of me…he is definitely someone I could see spending

the rest of my life with" (*The Bachelorette*, Episode 6, 2003). Thus, one of the things that

attracted Trista to Charlie was that she saw herself as dependent on him. Further, in an

odd twist on supposed female power, although Trista chose which of the two men she

wanted to be with, it became clear in the finale that the *man* would propose to her, and

not the other way around. Cameras even followed Charlie and Ryan in the season finale

as they each visited a jeweler to pick out an engagement ring for Trista. Whether this was

Trista's personal decision or one made by the producers will never be known, but it is

clear that the series did not start out with this idea in mind for a few reasons; first, the

series' tagline transformed from "will *she* propose" in episode 1, to "will *he* propose" in the last episode, and secondly, Trista was depicted in the first episode as a totally independent woman, going so far as to say "I think women in society these days have powerful roles and I think it's a great thing for a woman to be able to propose" (*The Bachelorette*, Episode 1, 2003). Thus, although *The Bachelorette* may have begun with the very untraditional concept of a female bachelorette proposing, this was not carried through to the end, and patriarchy won out as Ryan proposed to Trista in the season finale. Finally, the only acts of dependence exhibited by the men were their dependence on Trista's decision of who would get a rose at the end of each episode, such as Ryan's comment in the finale that he was "vulnerable to Trista, my heart is out there on the line and in her hands" (*The Bachelorette,* Episode 6, 2003). Overall, though both the men and Trista expressed dependence more than independence, Trista was far more dependent than the men, expressing 8 times more dependence than independence while the men were only 50% more dependent than they were independent.

Sexual Assertion (M) and Sexual Modesty (F)

The Bachelor: Traditionally, men are stereotyped as more sexually assertive than women, who are viewed as more modest. However, this stereotype was seemingly proven wrong in *The Bachelor*, as the female contestants were 20% more sexually assertive than was Alex (12 to 10). This was mostly due to female contestant Amanda, who was extremely sexually open and assertive, and accounted for 83.3% of all instances of female sexual assertion, far more than any of the other women in the house; it was ultimately she whom Alex chose. For example, Amanda revealed to Alex in episode 3 on their first individual date that she liked to keep things "adventurous" with a collection of

sexy outfits ranging from Wonder Woman to a cowboy outfit that included "a little thong and chaps" (*The Bachelor*, Episode 3, 2002); in episode 5 she was excited by the prospect of an overnight date with Alex "to see how physical it could get, to see how comfortable he is with me"; and when Alex read her an envelope offering them the chance to forgo their individual rooms and stay in a suite together that night, Amanda made a motion to leap up from the table, and said "Let's go!" (Episode 5). Alex was also quite sexually assertive; he kissed Amanda in the limo on the way back to the hotel in that same episode, and told the driver to hurry up; when they entered the hotel bedroom, he closed the doors behind them, and was shown ordering a "sex in the sheets" dessert for himself and Amanda. Alex was sexually assertive with other women besides Amanda – also in episode 5, Alex tried numerous times to kiss Shannon on the ski slopes and she continually backed away; visibly frustrated, he said "I tried to give Shannon a little kiss. She wouldn't let me, for the 50th time" (*The Bachelor*, Episode 5, 2002) Even when he saw how uncomfortable she was with the idea, he suggested they check out the hot tub at their lodge and the couples' suite anyway.

Although the women displayed slightly greater sexual assertion than Alex, they also displayed 7 times as much sexual modesty (7 to 1). As female sexual assertion was greatly attributed to Amanda, sexual modesty was greatly attributed to Shannon, who accounted for 100% of all sexual modesty. In episode 3, Alex told Shannon a 'story' about a beautiful princess named Shannon who kisses a frog (Alex) and turns him into a prince; Shannon slyly responded, "Did the frog not know that Shannon doesn't kiss on the first date?" (*The Bachelor*, Episode 3, 2002). In episode 5, when Alex suggested that he and Shannon "push the limits" of their relationship and try to pretend they were not on

their third date, Shannon told him, "Some of the questions that you ask, I'm not gonna answer, and some of things you wanna do… just not gonna happen" (*The Bachelor*, Episode 5, 2002). In this episode, she also pulled away from Alex several times when he would attempt to kiss her (although she did finally give in once) and, most notably, became visibly angry and upset when Alex presented her with the card to forgo their individual rooms and stay overnight together in the couples' suite, claiming it "ruined dinner, almost ruined the day" (*The Bachelor,* Episode 5, 2002). Interestingly enough, Shannon was eliminated in that episode. Alex's sole act of sexual modesty did not involve a lack of desire, as it did for Shannon, but purposeful restraint; in episode 3, he said that kissing Amanda "makes the temptation to sleep with her even greater," but that at this point in the competition, "it's not a good idea for her, for me…it's too soon. I don't want to live for the moment so much that I lose the future here" (*The Bachelor,* Episode 3, 2002). Overall, although the women displayed 20% more sexual assertion than Alex, Alex was 10 times more sexually assertive than modest, while the women were only 1.7 times more sexually assertive than modest in total.

The Bachelorette: Sexual assertion was 50% more prevalent among male contestants (9 times) than it was among Trista (6 times). For example, Russ confessed in episode 3 that he may have "pushed it a little more than I should have" after Trista kissed him, and Trista commented on how Russ was rushing things - "you were all over me, you were pulling me aside, into the bathroom…" (*The Bachelorette*, Episode 3, 2003). In episode 5, when Trista read Ryan the famous card to forgo their individual rooms, Ryan responded with instant excitement. The normally quiet and laid-back guy exclaimed "Let's go! Check please!" and told their limo driver, "If you could drive a little faster that

would be great, I'll pay for the ticket!" As he kissed Trista in the limo, he continued: "We're taking the phone off the hook. I'm locking the deadbolt…they won't be able to get us out!" (*The Bachelorette*, Episode 5, 2003). However, Trista also expressed sexual assertion, when she kissed Ryan in the hot tub in episode 5 and invited both Charlie and Ryan back to her room after they met her parents in the season finale.

In typical fashion, sexual modesty was also 4 times more prevalent among Trista than it was among the male contestants (4 to 1). When Russ told Trista in episode 3 that he had never kissed anyone on a flight before their private helicopter ride, Trista responded with "what makes you think you're getting a kiss?" (*The Bachelorette*, Episode 3, 2003) and after he expressed unhappiness at the fact that they didn't really kiss or touch on their date in episode 5, Trista exclaimed that it was only their 3rd date, and just like the first night she didn't think he needed to rush things. In contrast, the only time that sexual modesty was displayed by a male was from Jaime in episode 3; in a video message before the rose ceremony, he apologized to Trista for asking for a kiss from her, saying "I think you know I'm not that guy that was trying to make out with you, that's not me" (*The Bachelorette*, Episode 3, 2003). Overall, the men were much more sexually assertive than Trista, while she was much more sexually modest.

Confidence (M) and Lack of Confidence (F)

The Bachelor: Confidence is a stereotype more often associated with males than females; however, the female contestants of *The Bachelor* displayed more acts of confidence than the bachelor himself. Alex displayed confidence only twice, and both times in the season finale; for example in the beginning of the episode, Alex stated that he "[felt] really good" about the two women he'd chosen for his final two (*The Bachelor*,

Episode 6, 2002). The females, on the other hand, displayed confidence more than twice as much as Alex, a total of five times. For example, in episode 5, Shannon confidently told Alex that "some of the questions that you ask, I'm not gonna answer, and some of things you wanna do… just not gonna happen," in response to his suggestion that she "push the limits" of their relationship (*The Bachelor*, Episode 5, 2002). Also, in the season finale, Trista looked visibly confident in the limousine on the way to the final rose ceremony, and said "I think that he will choose me, just because of the conversations we've had and the things that he's mentioned to me" (*The Bachelor,* Episode 6, 2002).

In a similar twist, lack of confidence was four times more prevalent among Alex than it was among the females vying for his heart (8 to 2). For someone in the 'power' position, Alex lacked confidence four times more than he showed it, often second-guessing himself, worrying about his decisions, and feeling nervous around the women. In episode 3, Alex was extremely nervous on his individual date with Trista, claiming it was "awkward, I'm watching her, bumbling around the kitchen, being nervous, not knowing what to say," and at dinner "I was nervous and feeling like I couldn't be really smooth, I couldn't be funny" (*The Bachelor*, Episode 3, 2002). In the season finale, Alex was so unsure of himself and who he wanted to be with that host Chris Harrison revealed to viewers that "feeling he desperately needs more time to make his decision, Alex demands one last unscheduled date with both of the women" (*The Bachelor,* Episode 6, 2002). Even after this extra time together, Alex worried that the woman he chose might reject him:

> This time more than ever there's really a risk of saying no. I mean, Trista and
> Amanda have accepted their roses every step of the way and have always been
> interested in going one step further. But what we're talking about now is going a

lot further than one step. She may not want to do it. And this is the one time when it will be the most devastating for me. (*The Bachelor*, Episode 6, 2002).

The women, on the other hand, only expressed a lack of confidence twice, and displayed confidence twice as much as they lacked it. In episode 3, Amanda revealed to Alex that her ex-husband often told her what to wear and what not to wear and basically controlled her; however, the fact that they were no longer together at the time could be reason to believe that she was no longer unconfident. The final act of low confidence came from Shannon in episode 5; Alex suggested they go in the hot tub, but Shannon showed that she was uncomfortable with how she looked in a bathing suit, hesitating to take her robe off, even though Alex remarked that she had no cause for concern because her body was "flawless" (*The Bachelor*, Episode 5, 2002). Overall, Alex lacked confidence 4 times as much as he showed it (8 to 2), and 4 times as much as the women (8 to 2), while the women were twice as confident as they were unconfident (4 to 2) and twice as confident as Alex (4 to 2).

The Bachelorette: Both Trista and the male contestants were more confident than lacking confidence. The males were more confident than Trista, displaying 77.8% more confidence (17 acts while Trista only had 9). Most of the men's acts of confidence revolved around their assurance that they would be given a rose by Trista, or even selected as the final man standing. For example, Russ stated in episode 3 that he "wouldn't be surprised if I was the last guy with Trista" (*The Bachelorette*, Episode 3, 2003), and Charlie said in episode 5 that in his heart he believed Trista would choose him and that he would be "very shocked" if he wasn't chosen (*The Bachelorette*, Episode 5, 2003). Charlie also directly referred to himself as confident when he discussed meeting Trista's parents: "I'm not nervous at all…I am very confident in who I am and what my

answers are gonna be" (*The Bachelorette,* Episode 6, 2003). At the end of the season finale, Charlie's abundance of confidence left him in shock after his elimination; he stated that it was "ridiculous that this has happened," and even went so far as to say that "there's no one that's gonna be able to have guessed this," and "I have no doubt I'll make an amazing husband" someday (*The Bachelorette,* Episode 6, 2003). Trista also displayed her share of confidence, but more in the vein of standing up to the men. She told Russ in episode 3 that she disliked how he was so aggressive all the time, and wouldn't give a rose out to someone for that reason. She was also confident in expressing her choice to sleep with the men if that's what she felt would help with her decision, and displayed confidence in her decisions every week, as she claimed "In my mind, there is no mistake. Everything happens for a reason and I cannot even let myself think that I am going to make a mistake" (*The Bachelorette,* Episode 5, 2003).

Although the men outnumbered Trista in confidence, they also outnumbered her in lacking confidence (10 to 1). Charlie expressed that he was nervous several times on their date in episode 3, and even Trista told her girlfriends that she worried about his "insecurities" (*The Bachelorette*, Episode 3, 2003). 60% of the signs of lack of confidence were attributed to Ryan, who was least confident of all the men. He often doubted Trista's feelings toward him, and told Trista that it bothered him that she didn't make her feelings toward him known; in episode 6, he even said "it would just be nice to sometimes hear it and not be like, well she did hold my hand so maybe she does like me" (*The Bachelorette*, Episode 6, 2003). In contrast to Charlie, Ryan was hardly confidant about his meeting with Trista's parents, stating that he "hoped they liked [him]," and even Trista's father commented that Ryan seemed nervous and a little uncomfortable

(*The Bachelorette,* Episode 6, 2003). Both Charlie and Ryan expressed nervousness the day of the final decision, as both worried that they might not be chosen by Trista. Trista, in a huge contrast, only displayed a lack of confidence once, in episode 6, and it was not even regarding herself; she only worried that after hitting it off so well with Charlie, her parents might not give Ryan a fair chance when they met him. Overall, despite the fact that the men had 88.8% more counts of confidence than Trista, Trista showed higher confidence, as she was 9 times more confident than unconfident, while the men were only 1.7 times more confident than unconfident.

Aggression (M) and Lack of Aggression (F)

  The Bachelor: Aggression is often stereotyped as a male characteristic, while lack of aggression is more often associated with women. However, although both Alex and the female contestants demonstrated higher counts of aggression than lack of aggression, female contestants were found to be 50% more aggressive than Alex (3 to 2). While none of these acts involved physical aggression and all involved verbal, the majority of female aggression was directed at other females on the show. For example, in episode 3, both Cathy and Rhonda made negative remarks about Shannon; Cathy said she didn't want to see Alex with Shannon because "she seems very princessy. I think she's had a lifestyle that's more materialistic," while Rhonda claimed that "Shannon is just here to win a ring" (*The Bachelor*, Episode 3, 2002). The only act of aggression towards bachelor Alex occurred in episode 5; when Alex asked Shannon her thoughts regarding staying overnight together in the couples' suite, she snapped back with "well what are your thoughts??" and snidely said:

    I knew this was coming… I was just thinking in my head how funny it would
    have been if you had broken out the Alex & Amanda card or the Alex & Trista

card, because I'm sure you get one of these for all your dates. That's what I was thinking, to be honest. (*The Bachelor,* Episode 5, 2002).

When Alex showed aggression, it was not malicious, as it was for the females, but was more forceful. His only acts of aggression occurred in episode 5, when he pointedly told Amanda, "I wanna know about your boobs," in obvious reference to their large size, and later told Shannon that he needed her to "push the limits of our relationship and not pretend that we're on our 3rd date" so that he could be sure he wasn't making a mistake (*The Bachelor*, Episode 5, 2002).

In terms of lacking aggression, both Alex and the female contestants exhibited smaller counts of non-aggression than they did for aggression; however, Alex was the most non-aggressive, exhibiting it once while the females did not demonstrate it at all. Alex's sole act of non-aggression also occurred in episode 5 and was more of a reflection on his relationship with Shannon. After he eliminated her, he told the camera that "it was easy for me to say the wrong thing, and I've gotten in trouble with her 5 or 6 times in three dates…I thought if only she would stop being mad at me it would be great, but that would have required her to change" (*The Bachelor*, Episode 5, 2002). Thus, Alex seems to be lacking aggression in his dealings with Shannon, as she is framed as the aggressor who blows up at him and he "takes it" in return. However, another way to look at the situation is that Alex makes Shannon look 'deviant' in that the problem lay in her over-reacting to his advances and not being willing to change, while Alex's behavior is framed as normal and not the source of the problem. The possibility that Shannon be commended for not willing to compromise her values is totally ignored.

The Bachelorette: Overall, Trista and the male contestants both exhibited more aggression than non-aggression. However, the amount of each was much higher among

the men than it was among Trista. In accordance with the stereotype, the men were over 7 times more aggressive than Trista, with a count of 15 to 2. Most of this aggression (78.6%, or 11 out of 14) came from Russ, who was regularly referred to as the most aggressive by the other men, Trista, and even himself. In episode 3, the other guys created a name for Russ – "the chiseler" – because he constantly needed Trista's attention and was always "chiseling his way in" (*The Bachelorette*, Episode 3, 2003). Trista also told Russ a number of times that he needed to "lay off the aggression" and even Russ confirmed his aggressive nature when he told Trista he felt he couldn't be himself with her after she revealed her dislike of aggressive men (*The Bachelorette,* Episode 5, 2003). Trista's only acts of aggression occurred after Russ verbally provoked her on two separate occasions, including once when she argued with him after he claimed she was too guarded all the time (Episode 3), and again after he claimed he was eliminated because he challenged her too much (Episode 5).

Non-aggression was also much higher among the men than it was among Trista; while the men displayed non-aggression a total of 13 times, Trista never exhibited it at all. Similar to how aggression was greatly attributed to Russ, non-aggression was mostly attributed to Ryan, who exhibited 77% of all acts (10 of 13). A reason for the much higher counts of both aggression and non-aggression among the male contestants may be the extremist nature of the remaining three men. While Russ and Charlie were both very outgoing and aggressive men, Ryan was completely opposite in that he was shy, sensitive and passive. Trista said on four different occasions how much she was drawn to Ryan's "gentle nature" and Trista's mom revealed that the family had to "tone it down" when they met Ryan (*The Bachelorette*, Episode 6, 2003). Even Ryan admitted that because he

was "more subdued and a quieter person," he didn't really stand out on the group dates and was thankful for the individual date opportunity in episode 3 (*The Bachelorette*, Episode 3, 2003). Overall, although the men exhibited much higher counts of aggression and non-aggression than Trista, Trista was twice as aggressive as non-aggressive (2 to 0) while the men were only 15.4% more aggressive that not (15 to 13).

Competitiveness (M) and Non-Competitiveness (F)

The Bachelor: Competitive behavior is a stereotype often associated with men, while non-competitiveness is often associated with women. However, this was not the case on *The Bachelor*. Although Alex and the women were both more competitive than they were not, the women were clearly more competitive than Alex, outnumbering the bachelor five times to one. This outcome is quite logical, however; the women, after all, were participants in a competition, so it is likely that they would exhibit competitive behavior. For example, the women of episode 3 who were not granted an individual date with Alex were visibly upset, even angry about it; on the group date, Alex discussed how the women were tense with competition:

> Honestly, nobody was giving me a good vibe. They were all mad at me. I was glad these women didn't have guns. They were tense, mad they were on this 5 person date. They were like, I got screwed. Bad vibes all around...they were like, give me a rose or kick me out. (*The Bachelor*, Episode 3, 2002).

Later in the season finale, Alex's father grilled Trista and told her that he sensed "that you're a pretty competitive person, and this whole thing was sort of a contest that you wanted to win, regardless of the final outcome" (*The Bachelor,* Episode 6, 2002). Trista admitted that she was competitive, but that it was not the case with Alex. Alex, on the other hand, was only competitive once - he commented that his individual date with Trista was "the most important date of the year" because it was his night "to win her over

or not" (*The Bachelor,* Episode 3, 2002). Alex's competitive mentality towards his date with Trista raises questions, considering it is literally Trista who is competing to win *him* over. In his position of power, Alex has no need to be competitive. However, perhaps this example brings some truth to the stereotype of high male competition, so much so that they create competition in situations where it is not necessary.

A lack of competitiveness was not exhibited any time by either Alex or the women. Thus, although both exhibited more competitiveness than non-competitiveness, the women were much more competitive than Alex.

The Bachelorette: Competitiveness was more prevalent among the male contestants of *The Bachelorette* than among Trista, as the men showed competitiveness six times, while Trista didn't show it at all. In contrast to the female contestants of *The Bachelor,* the men often talked about the experience in terms of getting to the next round and strategy of the competition. For example, Jaime mentioned in episode 3 that the group date was the last time for him to "secure a spot in the final four", and in episode 5, Ryan referred to Charlie as a "formidable opponent" and that "it sucks to have to compete with someone of his caliber" (*The Bachelorette*, 2003). The men competed in a go-kart race in episode 3 on the group date that made them even more competitive; it functioned somewhat as a metaphor for the competition for Trista that the men were all participating in, and all wanted badly to win it. Mike most directly connected the competition in the race with the competition to win Trista; when Mike won, he exclaimed, "I'm glad I won, I'm a competitive person. Whenever there's a sporting event I like to come out on top, but I've got to fight these other 4 guys tonight for this final position" (*The Bachelorette,* Episode 3, 2003).

Although the men were more competitive than Trista, they were also ironically more non-competitive. While Trista exhibited zero acts of non-competitiveness, Charlie demonstrated one act of non-competitiveness in the season finale. Upon meeting Trista's parents, they asked him if he would mind if Trista made more money than him, and he commented that it wouldn't bother him at all because marriage is a mutual partnership. Thus, the men were both more competitive and more non-competitive than Trista, but were 6 times more competitive than not.

While the previous eight stereotypes followed a dichotomy in which the opposite or lack of each stereotype was stereotypic of the opposite gender, two stereotypes did not fall into that category, but are nevertheless worthy of note.

Impressed with Appearances (F)

The Bachelor: This female stereotype involves a general preoccupation with physical appearances, including materialism as well as physical appearances of the opposite sex. In *The Bachelor*, the female contestants exhibited this behavior seven times. However, five of these involved materialistic interests, including the womens' own appearances, while only two were directed at Alex and commented on his appearance. For example, in episode 3, Shannon received a card telling her what to expect for the last individual date. When she opened it, the logo for Harry Winston, the famous jeweler, was etched inside, and immediately the women all began to scream "Jewelry? Harry Winston!? Ahh!" (*The Bachelor*, Episode 3, 2002), obviously impressed by the famous name and prospect of expensive jewelry. In addition, Shannon's individual date was specifically set up as a sort of mini Cinderella story, with the idea of transforming her

into a 'princess'; she was taken to a fancy dress store in Beverly Hills, allowed to choose a gown of her choice, had dinner in an expensive Four Seasons hotel suite with Alex where he presented her with expensive jewelry to wear, and ended the night slow dancing with him to the music of a personal violinist. The date was seemingly created on the presumption that women are impressed by money and expensive clothes and jewelry, and Shannon complied with this assumption; as Alex gave her a tour of their hotel suite, Shannon looked around in amazement and exclaimed, "This will work Alex, I'll take it!" (*The Bachelor*, Episode 3, 2002). Later in the evening, Alex presented Shannon with a diamond necklace and earrings, and she responded with, "Oh my gosh.. I could get used to this Alex!"; when showing off her jewelry to the camera, she pretended to be out of breath over the sheer excitement of wearing so many diamonds – "He gave me this [fake-gasp for air] necklace, if I can breathe!" (*The Bachelor*, Episode 3, 2002). When she proclaimed that this date was one of the best of her life, her preoccupation with diamonds and an expensive lifestyle is remembered over any feelings she may have had for Alex, thus reinforcing the stereotype that women are impressed by appearances.

The Bachelorette: In contrast, Trista on *The Bachelorette* demonstrated that she was slightly more impressed with appearances than the females of *The Bachelor* with a count of eight acts, the majority (5) dealing with the physical appearances of male contestants while only three involved preoccupation with materialism or personal appearance. For example, 80% of all comments on male physical appearance are about Charlie, whom Trista repeatedly claims she is most attracted to. She mentions several times how she'd been attracted to him from the first day he stepped out of the limo, and made comments such as "Charlie looked great, he always does, I always get butterflies

when I see him" (*The Bachelorette*, Episode 5, 2003), and "he's got it, he's got the look" (Episode 6).

The theme of preoccupation with personal appearance was also revisited in *The Bachelorette*, as Trista & Charlie's individual date in episode 3 mirrored Alex & Shannon's. However, despite the fact that the roles were reversed and a female was now in the 'power' position, the fixation on female appearance remained, as Trista's physical appearance was glamorized at Saks 5th Avenue for hours, while Charlie simply watched. A celebrity hairstylist carefully worked on Trista's hair and makeup, all the while making comments such as "we're gonna make you pretty and beautiful for a great romantic dinner," and told her she'd need fake eyelashes so she could "do a lot of this," proceeding to bat his eyes (*The Bachelorette*, Episode 3, 2003). After she was finished, he exclaimed, "Here she is, Miss America!" (Episode 3), and even Trista's favorite designer made an appearance to help her personally pick out a dress, including one made just for her. In contrast, no time was spent on the transformation of Charlie's appearance for dinner that evening, as he was shown walking out of a room in a tuxedo completely ready in two minutes. Thus, the implication is that fixation on physical appearance is a feminine trait that males simply do not possess.

Valuing Female Appearance/Sexuality (M)

The Bachelor: This male stereotype is similar to being impressed with appearances, but is solely focused on feminine appearance and sexuality specifically. While the women of *The Bachelor* were only impressed with Alex's appearance twice, Alex valued the women's appearances and sexuality an astounding nine times as much (18). For example, Alex in episode 3 commented on his high appreciation of Amanda's

sexuality - "she has this incredibly creative sexuality that more or less nobody's ever appreciated, and here I am getting it like a gift" (*The Bachelor*, Episode 3, 2002). He also revealed his obsession with Kim's appearance: "She's got these pale blue eyes, fine golden hair and I just realize, I would kill to date a woman like this" (*The Bachelor,* Episode 3, 2002); consequently, Kim was given a rose that night. Alex also often referred to the women as beautiful first when listing traits he liked about them, and basically revealed that the way Amanda looked in the season finale – in her "beautiful blue dress, she had this beautiful smile" - confirmed that his decision to choose her was correct, and that "something about seeing her made every doubt go away" (*The Bachelor,* Episode 6, 2002).

The Bachelorette: In contrast, the men of *The Bachelorette* exhibited significantly fewer acts of valuing feminine appearance and sexuality, only one third of what Alex displayed. Most of these occurred toward the beginning of the series, and dropped off more towards the season finale, and 83% were made by Charlie. For example, in episode 3, Charlie was shown a video message of Trista in her swimsuit inviting him on a date to a water park. Charlie told the camera that "she looked amazing in her [swimsuit]" and "some of the guys were like, play that again, play that again!" (*The Bachelorette*, Episode 3, 2003). Later, after Trista is glamorized for their dinner date that evening, Charlie stated that he was excited to see both sides of Trista, the "natural" side at the water park, and "the side after she's been all dolled up," but noted that "she looked amazing after that was done" (*The Bachelorette,* Episode 3, 2003). Charlie even got down on one knee in mock proposal when he saw her, exclaiming "you look amazing…do you think I can do it now or do I have to wait?" (*The Bachelorette,* Episode 3, 2003). Trista laughed and told

him to stop, but looked flattered nonetheless. Overall, despite the fact that there were significantly fewer instances of valuing feminine appearance in *The Bachelorette* than *The Bachelor*, they took similar form.

Comparisons Among Series

Alex (Bachelor) v. Trista (Bachelorette)

In terms of comparing stereotypic behaviors between the individuals in the "power" role, interesting patterns emerged. Trista held higher counts for 5 out of 8, or 62.5% of, traditionally female stereotypic behaviors (not including "impressed with appearances"), being twice as emotional, 28% more dependent, four times as sexually modest, three times as romantic/desiring the Cinderella fairytale, and 33% more likely to initiate affection than Alex. However, she also held higher counts for 3 out of 8, or 37.5% of stereotypes traditionally associated with males (not including "valuing female sexuality"); she was four times more confident, 10 times more unemotional, and twice as lacking romance/desire for Cinderella fairytale.

Out of the 8 traditionally male stereotypic behaviors, Alex held higher counts for three (37.5%); he was twice as competitive, three times as independent, and 45% more sexually assertive than Trista. However, he also held higher counts for 2 stereotypes (25%) associated with women, lacking aggression twice as much and lacking confidence eight times more than Trista. Trista and Alex tied for two male stereotypes, aggression and lack of initiating affection, as well as one female stereotype, lack of competitiveness.

Overall, 8 stereotypes were reinforced, 5 were exhibited more by the opposite gender, and 3 were exhibited equal times by Trista and Alex. Thus, in determining whether male and female stereotypes ring true for individuals in the 'power' position, the

bachelor and bachelorette, the answer is both yes and no, as half are confirmed while half are not.

Female Contestants (Bachelor) v. Male Contestants (Bachelorette)

Female contestants of *The Bachelor* held higher counts for 25% of traditionally female stereotypic behaviors (2 out of 8) (the stereotypes "impressed with appearances" and "values female sexuality" were not used, as they were the only stereotypes that did not follow the dichotomy); they were over twice as dependent as and six times more sexually modest than their male counterparts. However, females also held higher counts for 37.5% of stereotypes (3 out of 8) traditionally associated with males, as they were 40% more unemotional, 33% more sexually assertive and twice as unromantic as *The Bachelorette's* male contestants. Thus, the females were more unstereotypic (37.5%) than they were stereotypic (25%).

Out of the 8 traditionally male stereotypic behaviors, the male contestants held higher counts for 3 (37.5%); they were over three times as aggressive, 20% more competitive, and 4 times as confident as *The Bachelor's* female contestants. However, they also held higher counts for 75% of stereotypes associated with women (6 out of 8), lacking aggression 13 times more, lacking competition once more, lacking confidence 5 times as much, showing emotion twice as much, and expressing romance and desire for marriage 76% more than their female counterparts. Thus, the males were also more unstereotypic (75%) than stereotypic (37.5%). In addition, the males and females only tied for one stereotype, lack of initiating affection, which neither group had any counts for.

Overall, 5 stereotypes were reinforced, 10 were exhibited more by the opposite gender, and only 1 was exhibited equal times by Trista and Alex. Thus, in determining whether male and female stereotypes ring true overall for contestants of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, the answer is no, as only 5 stereotypes were confirmed while the majority, 11, were not.

Alex (Bachelor) v. Male contestants (Bachelorette)

Male contestants held higher counts for 5 out of the 9 traditionally male stereotypic behaviors (55.5%), as they were 7 times as aggressive, 6 times as competitive, 8 times as confident, over 3 times as unemotional, and 33% more independent than Alex. However, they also held higher counts for 7 out of 8 traditionally female stereotypic behaviors (not including "impressed with appearances"), over 77%; they were 13 times more non-aggressive, 1 time more competitive, 20% more unconfident, 3 times more emotional, 73% more likely to initiate affection, and 6 times as romantic/desiring of the Cinderella fairytale as Alex.

Out of the 9 traditional male stereotypic behaviors, Alex held higher counts for two (22%); he was 18% more sexually aggressive, and valued female appearance and sexuality 1.6 times more than the male contestants of *The Bachelorette*. In contrast, Alex did not hold higher counts for any of the stereotypes associated with women. Finally, Alex and the male contestants tied for two male stereotypes - lack of initiating affection, and lack of romance/desiring the Cinderella fairytale - as well as one female stereotype, sexual modesty.

This study sought to determine if men would take on more traditionally feminine behaviors (stereotypes) when put in a traditionally "female" role – the more passive, less

powerful contestant role. The male contestants exhibited 7 out of 8 female stereotypes more frequently than Alex did while they only tied once, which seems to imply that men do take on more "feminine" behaviors when positioned in a "female" role. However, since there were more males in the passive role than in the active, powerful role, the numbers tended to favor the male contestants in many instances. Thus, the truth of this assumption may be skewed due to disproportionate numbers, despite the fact that both the male contestants and Alex had about equal amount of air time per episode in both *The Bachelorette* and *The Bachelor*, respectively. However, the fact that Alex still managed to outnumber the male contestants in terms of both sexual assertion and valuing female sexuality/appearance lends to the belief that these two stereotypes are in fact mitigated when the roles are reversed.

Trista (Bachelorette) v. Female contestants (Bachelor)

Female contestants held higher counts for 4 out of the 9 traditionally female stereotypic behaviors (44.4%), as they were 21% more romantic/desiring the Cinderella fairytale, twice as dependent, 50% more sexually modest, and twice as unconfident as Trista. However, they also held higher counts for 5 out 8 traditionally male stereotypic behaviors (not including "valuing female sexuality"), 62.5%; they were twice as unromantic/not desiring of marriage, 4 times as independent, twice as sexually assertive, twice as aggressive, and 5 counts more competitive than Trista, who was not competitive at all.

Out of the 9 traditionally female stereotypic behaviors, Trista held higher counts for three (33%); she was 41.6% more emotional, over twice as likely to initiate affection, and 28.5% more impressed with appearances than the female contestants of *The*

Bachelor. In contrast, Trista held higher counts for 2 of the stereotypes (25%) associated with men, being twice as emotional and more than twice as confident as the females. Finally, Trista and the female contestants tied for two male stereotypes – lacking romance/desiring the Cinderella fairytale and lack of initiating affection - as well as two female stereotypes, non-aggression and non-competitiveness.

This study sought to determine if a woman would take on more traditionally masculine behaviors (stereotypes) when put in a traditionally "masculine" role – the active, "power" role of the bachelorette. Trista exhibited 2 male stereotypes more frequently than the female contestants did, and exhibited 4 female stereotypes less often than the female contestants and they tied three times. However, Trista also displayed 3 female stereotypes more frequently and 5 male stereotypes less frequently than the female contestants. Thus, Trista took on 6 stereotypically masculine behaviors while she was the bachelorette, but did *not* conform to 8 others, and tied with the female contestants on 3. She therefore only exhibited 6 'masculine' behaviors more often than the females, while she exhibited the majority, 11 behaviors, less frequently or the same, showing that even though she was put in a powerful, male-oriented role, this did not lead her to take on the majority of male stereotypic behaviors. However, similar to *The Bachelor*, since there were more females in the passive contestant role than in the active, power role, the numbers tended to favor the female contestants in many instances. Thus, the truth of this assumption may be skewed due to disproportionate numbers, despite the fact that both the female contestants and Trista had about equal amounts of air time per episode in both *The Bachelor* and *Bachelorette*, respectively.

Distinct Roles Discovered

In the process of coding for stereotypic behaviors among the men and women of both series, and interesting pattern emerged. While initially it was thought that each of the female contestants would exhibit similar amounts of certain stereotypes as the other female contestants, and the same with male contestants, it was soon discovered that certain contestants of each show adopted certain stereotypic "roles", with often one contestant accounting for all or most instances of certain stereotypes.

For *The Bachelor*, the three remaining women – Shannon, Trista and Amanda – were analyzed, as they appeared and their personalities were understood the most in the three episodes examined. It is easy to see the clear divisions between the three women. Shannon was the most emotional, impressed with appearances, and sexually modest, accounting for 100% of female sexual modesty; thus, she fit the role of the more conservative, materialistic woman. Amanda was very much the opposite; as sexually modest as Shannon was, Amanda was as sexually assertive (83.3% of all counts), and she was also the most romantic, dependent, and affectionate, fitting the role of the adventurous, hypersexual woman. Finally, Trista was a different extreme all together, as she was the most unemotional, non-competitive and unromantic (she alone accounted for both acts of lacking desire for marriage (100%)); thus, Trista was the most rationally-minded and emotionally unavailable, fitting much closer with male stereotypes than with female.

For *The Bachelorette*, the three remaining men – Russ, Charlie and Ryan – were analyzed, for the same reasons. There were also clear divisions among the behaviors of these three men, and they were in many ways polar opposite of each other. Russ was the

most aggressive, independent, and sexually assertive, thus fitting the role of the super aggressive, selfish man. Charlie was the most confident, unemotional, non-competitive, affectionate and valuing of female sexuality, putting him in the role of the masculine, macho man. Ryan was the polar opposite of both of these men; while Russ was the most aggressive (73.3%), Ryan was by far the most passive (76.9%), and while Charlie exuded confidence and a sense of "manliness", Ryan exuded the most dependence, emotion, romance and lack of confidence, aligning with more female stereotypes. He was the only man who was brought to tears on the show, and even desired marriage more than Trista. Thus, Ryan fit the role of the sensitive, Renaissance man.

Discussion

Demographic statistics of the contestants of both series demonstrate that women on television are more likely to be younger and thinner than men, confirming what countless studies over the past 30 years have found (Downing, 1974; Elasmar, Hasegawa & Brain, 1999; Glascock, 2001; Harris & Voorhees, 1981; Signorielli, 1989). In addition, youthfulness and thinness are associated with attractiveness and success in women, as Alex was more likely to eliminate women who were in the older age bracket and were of average physique. In contrast, male physique was not as significant a factor in attractiveness, as the majority of men populating the pool of male contestants were average-sized, and Trista was more likely to keep average-sized men in the competition. However, physique was still found to be somewhat important to women, as the final two men that Trista chose between were both muscular, the signified male "ideal".

Despite the fact that hair color did not differ significantly among male and female contestants, blonde women were more likely to be kept in the competition than darker-

haired women, and in fact, the last two women left were both blonde. These findings coincide with those of Elasmar, Hasegawa & Brain (1999), who found that televised blonde females achieved more success than televised dark-haired females. Thus, blonde hair is associated with attractiveness and success, supporting the claim that the television woman's appearance consistently reflects "traditional cultural definitions of beauty and femininity" (Davis, 1990, p. 330).

In terms of overall stereotypical behavior in each series, female stereotypes were more prominent in *The Bachelor*, and male stereotypes were more prominent in *The Bachelorette.* This is supported by findings showing females had higher occurrences of four female stereotypes while Alex was rated higher for no male stereotypes, and the male contestants had higher occurrences of five male stereotypes, while Trista was only rated higher for two female stereotypes. However, whereas *The Bachelor* showed no examples of Alex outnumbering the women for male stereotypes, Trista exhibited two female stereotypes over the men, showing that female stereotypes are the most prominent among the two series. In addition, dependence and sexual modesty were the two most stereotypical behaviors among women, as they appeared the most among the women of *The Bachelor* and Trista.

Comparisons of behaviors between the men and women of both series both confirmed and contrasted with previous studies. The study confirmed that gender-stereotypical behaviors are more prevalent than not among individuals in the "power position", the bachelor or bachelorette. Compared to Alex, Trista exhibited more female-stereotyped behaviors, and compared to Trista, Alex exhibited more male-stereotyped behaviors.

In contrast, when the "contestant" role was examined, non-stereotypical behavior patterns were most prevalent among both males and females. Males exhibited more female-stereotyped behaviors than females, while females exhibited more male-stereotyped behaviors than males.

The results also revealed that when put in the more passive, traditionally "feminine" role of the powerless contestant, males are less stereotypically "male", and do display more stereotypically feminine behaviors than when put in the "power" role of the bachelor. This seems to contend that stereotypical behaviors are dependent upon the "role" each gender is given to play, and less a factor of innate gender differences. However, this does not take into account the fact that men specifically auditioned to be contestants for *The Bachelorette*, and it makes sense that those willing to put themselves in the position of less power to find true love were likely more romantic, affectionate, emotional, and ready for marriage than most. Indeed, host Chris Harrison hints at the stereotype of the uncommitted man, confessing that "you usually don't hear of men lining up to get married" (*The Bachelorette*, Episode 1, 2003). However, what made these men different was the fact that they had seen Trista on the first season of *The Bachelor*, and had wanted to meet her. Further, it is revealed in episode 1 that the contestants were chosen based on characteristics that Trista was looking for in a man; they were not simply "random samples". This is a big qualification, demonstrating how *The Bachelorette* differs from *The Bachelor,* where Alex did not have a say in the women who were chosen for him. Thus, the result is that the male contestants are in many ways not characteristic of the general population.

Finally, this study found that when females are positioned in the more dominant, traditionally "male" role of the powerful bachelorette, they still remain more stereotypically feminine than females in the passive, contestant role. Evidence for this results from the fact that Trista displayed more female-stereotypical behaviors and less male-stereotypical behaviors, while the female contestants of *The Bachelor* displayed more male- than female-stereotypical behaviors. Several trends are evident here that contradict with the analysis of male behavior in a traditionally "feminine" role; first, that gender stereotypes are not a product of the roles individuals are positioned in, and second and most significant, that female stereotypes remain when women are taken out of the passive role and put in the dominant role.

These results are particularly disheartening for a series like *The Bachelorette¸* which prides itself on reversing gender roles by having "a woman call the shots" for "the first time in television history," (although that last part is debatable) (*The Bachelorette*, Episode 1, 2003). The first episode introduced Trista Rehn as a strong, successful woman who would indeed be calling the shots, with the last episode signifying how far in fact women have come, by having her propose to her future husband. In fact, Trista even tells host Chris Harrison in the first episode that "women in society these days have powerful roles and I think it's a great thing for a woman to be able to propose" (*The Bachelorette,* Episode 1, 2003). However, whether for personal reasons or due to a decision made by the producers, the feminist vision of a woman proposing to a man on national television never was. As the series progressed, it became increasing clear that the *man* whom Trista chose would propose to her, and not the other way around. The tagline of the series switched from the phrase "will *she* propose?" to "will *he* propose?" and cameras even

followed Charlie and Ryan in the season finale as they each visited a jeweler to pick out an engagement ring for Trista. Sadly, an image of women as strong and independent in their own right was rejected in favor of patriarchic tradition; what is worse, this occurred on a television series that was aimed at *reversing* patriarchy and urging gender equality.

As previously mentioned, it was discovered that stereotypes were not distributed evenly among all members of a particular gender, but that contestants of each show adopted certain stereotypic "roles", with often one contestant accounting for all or most instances of certain stereotypes. Often, these roles were at opposite ends of the stereotypical spectrum, as female and male contestants were juxtaposed and seemingly pitted against one another by their differences. For example, Shannon was portrayed as extremely sexually modest while Amanda was extremely sexually assertive; Shannon was rejected while Amanda was chosen. In an astounding similarity, the final three women Alex chose – Shannon, Trista and Amanda – each paralleled one of the three distinct stereotypes that Basow (1992) allocates to women today: the traditional woman (Shannon), the professional woman who is independent, ambitious and self-confident (Trista), and the sex object (Amanda). This parallelism supports the notion that reality television not only shows contestants exhibiting certain stereotypical behaviors, but goes one step further by generalizing each contestant's identity to an already existing stereotype. Whether this is achieved through casting or post-production editing, and whether these stereotypes are treated as desirable or unpleasant, the effect is the same: stereotypes are reinforced by their mere presence.

The biggest juxtaposition of contestants occurred between Ryan and the other men. While most of the men, including Russ and Charlie, exhibited typical male

characteristics such as high confidence, aggression and independence, Ryan was a sensitive, gentle person who wrote poems for Trista and was the ultimate romantic. Thus, while Russ and Charlie aligned with Basow's (1992) description of the traditional male stereotype – tough, independent and anti-feminine – Ryan fit no such male stereotype. Ultimately, he was chosen over the other stereotypically male contestants.

The implications of Alex's and Trista's final choices are quite significant. On a physical level, Amanda's physique is paralleled with what Harrison (2003) refers to as the "curvaceously thin woman", who is glamorized in the media for her small waist and large breasts. As Amanda is ultimately "chosen" by Alex, her physique is reinforced as desirable, and hegemonically rewarded, further reinforcing this body type as ideal. Alex further confirms desirability of Amanda's physique when he overtly asks her to "tell me about your boobs" and comments that they are a top focal point when he looks at her (*The Bachelor,* Episode 5, 2002). He also doesn't seem to mind that she had partial breast augmentation to even out her breast size because it visually bothered her. The implications here are that body dissatisfaction and desire for body types that the media espouses as ideal are reinforced among women. In addition, surgical alterations to achieve this "curvaceously thin" physique are portrayed as normal and desirable, a notion supported by the results of Harrison's 2003 study, which found that while women desired a smaller waist and hips than their own, they also wanted a larger bust size, and exposure to idealized body images was positively related to women's approval of plastic surgery to attain this image.

In addition, while Amanda's sexual assertiveness is met with positive reactions by Alex, Shannon's sexual modesty is met with frustration. In fact, what Alex seems to love

most about Amanda is her "creative sexuality" (*The Bachelor*, Episode 3, 2002), and their

relationship is one of passion and lust. Initially, Alex seems to like Shannon for being a

conservative girl, as she makes it to the final three, but his opinions toward her quickly

change when she doesn't give him what he wants. During their overnight date, Shannon

is appalled when Alex pulls out a card offering the chance to forgo their individual rooms

for a couple's suite, but Alex doesn't understand why she is so upset. Consequently,

Shannon is eliminated at the rose ceremony in that episode, and it is clear it has

something to do with Shannon's uncompromising nature. When Alex claims that "if only

she would stop being mad at me it would be great, but that would have required her to

change" (*The Bachelor*, Episode 6, 2002), the theory of hegemony comes into play, as

Shannon is framed as the aggressor who "blows up" at Alex for no reason, while he

calmly takes it. Shannon's ousting by Alex frames her sexual modesty and aggression as

"deviant", while Alex's view is accepted as natural and normal. Oppositely, Amanda's

sexual assertiveness is further hegemonically "rewarded" as she is chosen in the end by

Alex, and thus is more likely to be desired by those watching the show.

One might think it odd that a traditional stereotype such as sexual modesty would

be outwardly rejected by a male, and indeed many studies have shown that sexual

assertiveness and the commodification of female sexuality is quickly becoming a new

type of female stereotype (DeRose, Fürsich & Haskins, 2003; Harris, 2004; Waggoner,

2004; Yep & Camacho, 2004). However, despite all of this and upon closer look, what is

really being labeled as deviant is Shannon's "unfeminine" aggression and

uncompromising nature towards Alex, reinforcing the traditionally stereotypical

"submissive" nature of women as normal. The possibility that Shannon be commended

for not willing to compromise her values is totally ignored, and even her comment post-elimination that "I think that Alex is weak. I scared him, because I'm not going to say, ok Alex, whatever you want" (*The Bachelor*, Episode 5, 2002), is discredited because according to hegemony, she has already been classified as deviant. Thus, similar to Harris (2004), Putnam (2001), and Graham-Bertolini's (2004) critiques on *Paradise Hotel*, *Survivor,* and *Joe Millionaire, The Bachelor* depicts women who break the barriers of female stereotypes, but ultimately rejects these women in favor of those who more closely adhere to traditional gender roles. What stands out about *The Bachelor* is that traditional gender roles seem to be apparently rejected in favor of modern ones (Alex's rejection of Shannon's sexual modesty in favor of Amanda's sexual assertiveness). However, as previously noted, Shannon's aggressive, uncompromising nature is what is truly being rejected, and although Amanda's sexuality emerges as a desirable female trait, as Waggoner (2004) claims it did in *Survivor*, its value is ultimately determined by the male who consumes it, Alex. Thus, Amanda's sexual assertiveness still accords with traditional beliefs, as what appears to be a form of "power" is actually "sexual subordination" to dominant male desire (Waggoner, 2004, p. 219). In addition, cultivation theory supports belief in this assumption, as, according to McGhee & Frueh (1980), heavy television viewers hold more gender-stereotyped perceptions than light viewers, and thus the repeated exposure of female-stereotypical behavior results in a further distorted perception of gender roles.

In the case of Trista, she chooses as her final two the most polar opposite men in the group. Ryan aligns more with traditionally female stereotypes, as he is the most non-aggressive, emotional, romantic, dependent and unconfident male. However, what makes

Ryan atypical is what Trista loves about him; she often comments on *The Bachelorette* (Episode 3, 2003) that the fact that Ryan is a "sensitive soul" draws her toward him, and even admits that Ryan's romantic side is "less traditional" but that she has "always wanted a person like that." Indeed, Ryan becomes completely emotionally wrapped up in Trista, writing her poems, professing his love for her and talking about jumping into marriage. In total contrast is Ryan's opposition, Charlie, who is highly confident and aggressive; ironically, Trista is attracted most to these stereotypically male attributes in Charlie. However, she surprises everyone, including Charlie, by choosing Ryan; thus, Trista succeeds in somewhat reversing stereotypes, according to hegemony; as a reward is attached to Ryan's un-stereotypical behavior – the love and companionship of Trista – it becomes desired by viewers by the positive result that it brings. More stereotypically male behaviors, such as high confidence and aggression, are initially viewed as attractive, but soon abandoned for Ryan's sensitivity and romance. However, Ryan's modern behavior doesn't threaten the status quo too much, as he participates in the patriarchic tradition of male-initiated marriage proposal, which as has been stated, serves to combat his initially non-stereotypical behavior and bring him back to the mainstream of patriarchic culture. This single act hegemonically reasserts the status quo, and reassures viewers that despite the show's feminist appearance, patriarchy still exists. In addition, in applying cultivation theory, as Ryan's behavior contrasts with the majority of male behavior on television, heavy viewers are less likely to believe it due to lack of consistency with other images they have seen. Viewers are, however, more likely to believe in the naturalness and normality of Ryan proposing to Trista because this is more consistent with television images of male dominance and power.

Conclusion

Overall, hegemony and cultivation play large roles in the effect that gender behavior on *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* have on the viewing public. Through cultivation, heavy viewers of these series are more likely to believe that traditionally stereotypical gender roles, such as male proposals and female emotionality, are the norm and are representative of most women and men. The stability of these stereotypes over time and across other genres of television influences viewers to perceive this television view as reality. Ultimately, this can lead to stereotyping people in the real world, and thus reinforcing the existing status quo. Similarly, through hegemony, both *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* portray stereotypical behaviors as natural and normal through their omnipresence, and cause certain non-stereotypical behaviors, such as female aggression, to appear "deviant" through the elimination of contestants who exhibit them. In addition, certain stereotypical traits, such as youth, dependence, and thinness for women, are desired by virtue of the positive result they bring – love – to the contestant who embraces them. The fact that male stereotypical traits are not "rewarded" with love by Trista is positive in its non-acceptance, but also serves as further confirmation that female stereotypes continue to be more ubiquitous and reinforced by their desirability than male stereotypes in television. Thus, the overall results of this study support the notion that traditional gender stereotypes are very much reinforced on *The Bachelor* and *Bachelorette*, and continue to be more prevalent among women than among men.

This study revealed several limitations, most notably in the gender comparisons between series. Since there were more males and females in the "contestant" role than in the "bachelor/ette" role, the numbers tended to favor the male contestants over Alex and

the female contestants over Trista in many instances. Thus, comparisons made with regard to frequency counts may have been skewed due to disproportionate numbers, despite the fact that both the male contestants and Alex had about equal amount of air time per episode in *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, respectively, and the same with Trista and the female contestants. A way to rectify this discrepancy would be to use weighted means analysis in future research where there is a disproportion. In addition, only half of all episodes of each season were analyzed, and only the first season of each series due to time constraints; analyzing all episodes in multiple seasons of both *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* would yield a more complete scope of gender-stereotypic behavior throughout the franchise, and would be able to indicate possible changes over the duration of each series. Future research might also look at several different reality dating series in addition to *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, to determine if certain stereotypes remain constant across the reality dating show sub-genre.

Despite these limitations, it is clear that stereotypical gender roles are not only present throughout *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, but are portrayed as normal and desirable, and female stereotypes continue to persist over male. Despite *The Bachelorette's* guise as a 'feminist' alternative, traditional gender stereotypes are alive and well, leading to a stabilization of social patterns among viewers that serves to reinforce the institution of patriarchic heterosexuality. As seasons two and three of *The Bachelorette* both culminated with the chosen men proposing, not much has changed. However, with hope, future installments of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* will truly showcase the "powerful roles" (*The Bachelorette*, Episode 1, 2003) that Trista attributed to women in society today.

Appendices

Appendix A
STEREOTYPIC BEHAVIORS AMONG WOMEN ON *THE BACHELOR*

Stereotype	Opposite	Episode 3	Episode 5	Episode 6	Total
Emotional		6	4	4	14
	Unemotional	3	2	0	5
Likely to Initiate Affection		8	7	4	19
	Unlikely to Initiate Affection	0	0	0	0
Romantic/Desire Cinderella Fairytale		4	5	7	16
	Unromantic/Don't Desire Fairytale	0	0	2	2
Dependent		5	3	6	14
	Independent	0	4	0	4
Sexually modest		2	5	0	7
	Sexually assertive	4	6	2	12
Lacking Confidence		1	1	0	2
	Confident	1	2	2	5
Lacking Aggression		0	0	0	0
	Aggressive	2	1	0	3
Non-Competitive		0	0	0	0
	Competitive	4	0	1	5
Impressed with Appearances		4	2	1	7
	Not Impressed with Appearances	0	0	0	0

Appendix B
STEREOTYPIC BEHAVIORS FOR ALEX ON *THE BACHELOR*

Stereotype	Opposite	Episode 3	Episode 5	Episode 6	Total
Unemotional		0	0	1	1
	Emotional	2	3	3	8
Unlikely to Initiate Affection		0	0	0	0
	Likely to Initiate Affection	10	8	12	30
Unromantic/Don't Desire Fairytale		0	0	0	0
	Romantic/Desire Cinderella Fairytale	1	1	3	5
Independent		1	0	2	3
	Dependent	1	1	3	5
Sexually Assertive		3	5	2	10
	Sexually Modest	1	0	0	1
Confident		0	0	2	2
	Lacking Confidence	5	1	2	8
Aggressive		0	2	0	2
	Lacking Aggression	0	1	0	1
Competitive		1	0	0	1
	Non-Competitive	0	0	0	0
Values Female Appearance/sexuality		6	8	4	18
	Doesn't value Female Appearance/sexuality	0	0	0	0

Appendix C
STEREOTYPIC BEHAVIORS FOR TRISTA ON *THE BACHELORETTE*

Stereotype	Opposite	Episode 3	Episode 5	Episode 6	Total
Emotional		5	3	9	17
	Unemotional	1	6	3	10
Likely to Initiate Affection		12	8	20	40
	Unlikely to Initiate Affection	0	0	0	0
Romantic/Desire Cinderella Fairytale		5	1	8	14
	Unromantic/Don't Desire Fairytale	0	0	1	1
Dependent		1	0	7	8
	Independent	1	0	0	1
Sexually Modest		2	1	1	4
	Sexually Assertive	1	2	3	6
Lacking Confidence		0	0	1	1
	Confident	3	4	2	9
Lacking Aggression		0	0	0	0
	Aggressive	0	2	0	2
Non-Competitive		0	0	0	0
	Competitive	0	0	0	0
Impressed with Appearances		5	1	3	9
	Not Impressed with Appearances	0	0	0	0

Appendix D
STEREOTYPIC BEHAVIORS AMONG MEN ON *THE BACHELORETTE*

Stereotype	Opposite	Episode 3	Episode 5	Episode 6	Total
Unemotional		0	1	2	3
	Emotional	8	7	11	26
Unlikely to Initiate Affection		0	0	0	0
	Likely to Initiate Affection	15	12	25	52
Unromantic/Don't Desire Fairytale		0	0	0	0
	Romantic/Desire Cinderella Fairytale	9	6	15	30
Independent		1	3	0	4
	Dependent	1	1	4	6
Sexually Assertive		4	4	1	9
	Sexually Modest	1	0	0	1
Confident		5	3	9	17
	Lacking Confidence	3	0	7	10
Aggressive		8	7	0	15
	Lacking Aggression	4	3	6	13
Competitive		3	1	2	6
	Non-Competitive	0	0	1	1
Values Female Appearance/Sexuality		3	2	1	6
	Doesn't value Female Appearance/Sexuality				

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