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Chapter 1: Introduction

Reality television has taken America and the rest of the world by storm as every day millions of viewers are engrossed with new episodes of various concepts and ideas packaged into a popular format. The representation of gender within reality television exposes many stereotypes of masculinity and femininity. Pre-feminist ideas are reinforced and criticised through post-feminist theory as negative images of women are broadcast to the audience as familiarity aids in acceptance.

Reality television creates the image that the content relates to real people and events. The content that the viewer receives should be considered as 'real' due to the genre namely reality television, however, what the viewer is not exposed to is the post-production techniques which include manipulative editing and astute casting decisions which in turn influence the final product. This creates a juxtaposition between what is real and what is said to be real.

The following research explores gender representation by focusing on the popular American reality dating show *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*. This analysis considers and assesses the way in which stereotypical images of masculinity and femininity are portrayed and the way in which the post-production techniques are used to further enhance these stereotypes. These issues are analysed using a mixed method approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods and theories of representation, gender, post-feminism and social constructionism.

This research will illustrate the various contradictions and ambiguities displayed through the representation of both masculinity and femininity within these two reality shows. The characters attempt to display true emotion yet it is overshadowed by altered content, editing and the producers need to fulfil advertisers and audience requirements. This will be shown through detailed discussion, analysis, research and studies found to substantiate these points.

A season of each has been chosen for study as *The Bachelor* was the original show to emerge followed by the spinoff of *The Bachelorette*. Thus, *The Bachelor* is used as a foundation for this research and the addition of *The Bachelorette* aids in the further understanding of the relevant feminist theories as well providing room to explore the way in which gender and specifically femininity is represented when in a position of power.

This research also provides an institutional analysis by highlighting the way in which the producers make such decisions due to mounting pressure from advertisers to achieve high viewership and ratings. The political economy of the American television industry is highlighted in order to explain and problematize these post-production techniques.

These editing methods are indicative of social constructionism and its interrelated theories of gatekeeping, agenda-setting and framing and the way in which the ideologies of the executive producers and advertisers who are all male influence representations of masculinity and negative images of femininity. This study also uses the theory of the male gaze and the power play between the male viewer and the female sexuality on display. The male gaze within the realm of reality television plays a key role in enhancing “depictions that become a part of the total discourse housed in the hegemonic tradition that visually objectifies, subjugates, demeans and ultimately renders women powerless” (Giannino 2012:60) and this will be discussed in relation to these two reality shows.

Gender representation and post-production play two very significant roles within *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* and are linked to the stereotypical and manipulated media generated images that the audience receives. These roles and the interlinking theories and concepts will be observed and analysed in order to offer consolidated conclusions.

1.1 Research Problem

Hill describes reality television as a “catch-all category that includes a wide range of entertainment programs about real people” (Hill 2005:2). Hundreds of Reality shows are produced and aired all around the world. They are all based on similar or different formats and focus on various topics from fashion, hairdressing and music to surviving the great outdoors, conquering your greatest fears or finding true love (Hill:2005). In the USA and Europe, the most well renowned television channels which broadcast Reality Television include Fox, NBC, ABC, CBS, MTV and E in America as well as Global Reality Channel in Canada and Zone Reality in the UK. (<http://www.reality-tv-online.com/articles/history-reality-tv.html>).

Research highlights that programs focusing on unscripted content emerged as early as the 1950's with radio games shows such as '*Beat the Clock*' and '*Truth or Consequences*'. This

continued on in the 1970's when '*An American Family*' was aired in 1973. This show followed the Loud family and focused on controversial topics such as divorce and homosexuality. It was extremely popular and garnered a considerable viewership. It is also one of the shows that paved the way for "various other new non-fiction forms" thus "introducing a new authenticity and diversity to fiction and non-fiction programs" (Ruoff 2002: xii) yet it is said that this show was more of a documentary in terms of style and content. The family members of the show felt that the producers were misrepresenting them through editing and post-production techniques as "they considered editing not as a process of making meaning but rather as a means of possible distortion and falsification" (Woods, 1973; Donohue, 1973; Hayakawa, 1973; Sanborn, 1973a in Crawford & Hafsteinsson 1996:284). The Loud family were also critical of their own portrayal and noticed the way in which their lives were edited to show certain aspects and not others (Crawford & Hafsteinsson: 1996). Thus, it is evident that manipulative editing and post-production techniques were introduced at an early stage and have continued until this day in reality television worldwide.

However, many feel that the Reality Television phenomenon started in 1992 when MTV aired '*The Real World*' whose popularity has lasted for almost 20 years with its twenty-seventh season set to air in 2012. "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 cited in Klewin: 2007). This was followed by '*Changing Rooms*' in 1996, the first reality show focusing on the 'makeover' and house redecorating theme. Reality television exploded onto the global scene in the year 2000 with shows such as *Survivor* and *Big Brother* emerging (Klewin: 2007). Hill (2005:3) provides statistics which show that reality television is highly popular in the UK as in 2000, 70% of the population between the ages of 4-65 officially stated that they watched reality shows either occasionally or on a regular basis. American statistics confirm similar numbers. In 2000, *Survivor* topped the ratings as the number one show on the prime time network with 27 million viewers and in 2003, the US was already airing approximately 130 different reality shows (2005:3-5). Currently, statistics reveal that 45% of Americans watch reality television, the majority are adults between the ages of 18-29 (Blake: 2010). Larry Namer who is the co-founder of Reality Central and the highly acclaimed E Entertainment channel re-affirms the popularity of this genre by stating that viewers see "Reality television as TV, it's not a fad" (Hill 2005:2-3).

As earlier stated, this research provides an analysis of the representation of gender roles and stereotypes in the American Reality shows, *'The Bachelor'* and *'The Bachelorette'*. There are various genres within Reality television and these two specific shows can be categorised as reality dating shows.

There are many dating shows that have previously been aired and others that are currently being broadcast on prime time television namely, *Joe Millionaire*, *Who wants to marry a millionaire*, *Next*, *Temptation Island* and *For Love or Money*. It is these shows that “established the prime-time reality dating show as a major entity on the televisual landscape” (Gray 2009 cited in Murray & Ouellette n.d:262).

The Bachelor and *The Bachelorette* are based on the same premise however using either a male or female as the dominant figure suggested by the title of the show. This research focuses on the American version of these shows as together, they “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” (Lupica 2006:11).

The Bachelor is an American reality show that first aired in March 2002 and has produced 128 episodes and sixteen seasons to date. The plot revolves around a single bachelor looking to find true love from a pool of 25 single ladies. *The Bachelorette* is a spin off from the original show mentioned above and since its inception in January 2003, it has aired 8 seasons. This show is centered around a single bachelorette who is also looking to settle down with one of 25 single gentlemen.

Gender roles can be described as the “traits and behaviours that are regarded by the culture as appropriate to women and men” (Unger: 1979 cited in Brannon 2008:15). Jackson & Scott (2002 cited in Masina 2010:29) state that “gender should thus be described as not only encompassing social divisions between women and men, but should also include the characteristics commonly associated with femininity and masculinity”. Therefore, they are defined by various behaviours and certain activities become associated with either the masculine or the feminine. Consequently, the in-depth research, analysis and assumptions constantly associated with the roles of both women and men within society have allowed for an apparent gender stereotyping to emerge. 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: 222 cited in Klewin 2007:5). These stereotypes can be very powerful and

influential as they “affect conceptualizations of women and men and establish social categories for gender” (Brannon 2000:160). Hall (2007:258) also states that stereotypes “divide the normal and the acceptable from the abnormal and the unacceptable”.

According to Gregor (1985), men represent two roles. Firstly, as the ‘Provider’ thus assuring and securing resources and secondly as the ‘Protector’ of the people and territory around them. David and Brannon (1996) further dissect these roles by focusing on American narratives of masculinity. Their research argues that men are represented as highly competitive and continually striving for success; they seem to distance themselves from aspects relating to femininity and too much emotion and lastly they tend to remain in control and emanate a tough and dominant exterior which usually stems from aggression. However, there are also many positive aspects related to the masculine role. Men are seen to be courageous, risk takers, self-reliant and having a good sense of humour which acts as a good defense mechanism against stress. They are also very responsible, loyal and have a great sense of honour. During shared activities, they seem to form bonds with others and their performance of heroic acts have always reinforced and been associated with their sense of manhood (Kiselica & Englar-Carlson: 2010). Thus, “the more closely that the man conforms to these characteristics, the closer he is to becoming a ‘real man’” (Brannon 2000:163). Although there are apparent changes in the way in which both male and female roles have developed over the years, research shows that “there has been little change in hegemonic masculinity (Bereska 2003 in Brannon 2000:164).

Welter (1978 in Brannon 2000:161) highlights that stereotypes and beliefs relating to women and their role can be traced back to the 19th century Victorian era according to what is known as the ‘Cult of True Womanhood’. These roles include submissiveness which deems women to be weak and timid in relation to the strong and dominant male. Secondly, the woman is seen to be sensitive and nurturing and lastly the important role of domesticity whereby “the true women’s place was unquestionably by her own fireside- as daughter, sister but most of all as wife and mother” (Welter 1978:320 in Brannon 2000:162). Consequently, some of these stereotypes are still visible in today’s society.

As mentioned above, the woman is seen to be submissive which in turn is linked to the way in which various media platforms especially television represent women as vulnerable, the victim or objects of desire. These “recurring characteristics of female portrayals have been

identified leading to ‘propositions’ about a woman’s role in life” (Gunter 1986:8 in Harper: 1998).

Thus, these gender stereotypes are said to be prescriptive meaning that “the qualities they ascribe to women and men tend also to be ones that are required of women and men” (Prentice & Carranza 2002:1). Weiten (1997:325 in Holt & Ellis 1998:929) highlights this further stating that these gender roles are directly related to “expectations about what is appropriate behaviour for each sex”.

Lupica (2006:4) states that “research has focused on how women are portrayed in various programming genres, however, because reality programming is so new, there is little research examining the portrayal of women in reality programs”. Thus, this research will probe further into the topic by analysing both the female and male gender roles. In addition to this, in order to ascertain whether the behaviour of the Bachelorette conforms to these outdated characteristics or whether she exhibits a more modern feminist approach in her demeanor, this research focuses on analysing the behaviour of the Bachelorette and the Bachelor. This will reveal to what extent the Bachelorette is in control and how this is reflected in her behaviour, conversations and interactions with the men. The behaviour of the female and the male contestants will also be observed where similar questions and analyses are conducted.

Hess & Grant (1983:371) state that “the content of programming on commercial network television is worthy of attention and analysis in relation to the gender-role behaviour of women and men”. Butler and Paisley (1980) also point out that gender role studies in relation to the portrayal of women have been conducted since the 1960’s however the results of such analyses have been referred to as “largely negative” (Hess & Grant 1983:371).

Post-production techniques play a key role in the quantity and quality of the content that is broadcast to the audience. This research probes further into this topic than previous studies with the additional analysis of post-production techniques and the way in which these play a pivotal role in the media’s representation, production and broadcast of gender roles and stereotypes. Previous research has either assessed gender stereotyping in reality television or the various post-production techniques available to producers and mass media when producing these shows yet none has merged these two issues to ascertain how the two interplay and work together to produce what millions of people watch every day.

Lupica (2006:6) refers to the way in which “the final broadcasts are technical edits of what the producers want the characters to become”. This is the premise for the second aim of this research as this study continues the work of previous scholars by accessing the way in which editing, casting and post-production play a key role in creating these gender stereotypes represented on these shows. In order to achieve this, social constructionism which includes gatekeeping, agenda-setting and framing and theories of post-feminism and representation are used. The research provides an additional approach to existing research and offers new ways of understanding and analysing the data. Post-production is a key factor as reality shows become versions of reality once the various editing techniques have been used. It is important that this study highlights that producers and media systems use these techniques in order to encourage viewership and advertising and through casting and editing, they produce characters and storylines that conform to the stereotypical behaviours that society understands and views as natural. Thus, post-production works together with gender roles and existing stereotypical behaviours in order to produce reality shows.

This research argues that these gender stereotypes influence social constructionism within American Reality television. Hill & Quinn (2002:53 cited in Klewin 2007:6-7) add that “producers undertake exhaustive processes to provide viewers with a ‘cross-section’ of society that they can identify with and come to know as ‘characters’”. These processes, aside from casting include post-production techniques, editing, music and visual cues which they feel will be able to enhance and fully execute the ideal gender stereotypes that viewers long to see. These can include using the ‘confession cam’ whereby the producers can ‘cut’ and ‘paste’ together various words and lines over a period of time and ‘construct’ a new sentence or paragraph thus allowing the character to say what they want him or her to say. This method of manipulative editing has become known as ‘cherry-picking’ (<http://tvtropes.org>). Another method used is ‘prompting’ whereby the characters are asked to speak about a certain topic that they feel will attract more ratings and finally using music in order to create the ambience for a certain character portrayal. Consequently, multimodal techniques are used which are “texts which communicate their message using more than one semiotic mode or channel of communication” (<http://labspace.open.ac.uk>) thus visuals and sound are synchronised to create the desired ambience, character and stereotypical representations.

Dovey (2004) has based his research on *Big Brother* and the way that producers specifically cast contestants according to “character algorithms” (Dovey 2004:243). He compares this process to that of computer games whereby each character is known by a certain character

trait. Similarly, housemates in the *Big Brother* house and in all reality shows are cast according to how they will contribute to the drama and the narrative of the show. These characteristics can be anything from ‘the bad boy’ to ‘the flirt’ and it is these traits that “constitute the algorithms that they hope will make the simulation run in an interesting way” (Dovey 2004:244). The producers rely on the interplay between the controversial, dramatic and quiet characters during events to produce unexpected drama in order to garner a large audience. Thus, this drama can be enhanced further through post-production techniques.

Further research conducted around *Big Brother South Africa* states that intertextuality plays a key role in popular media culture such as reality shows. Once the characters have been cast and the cameras are rolling, the audience becomes emotionally involved in the show and uses online chat rooms, websites and reading daily articles on the show to actively keep themselves up to date. Pitout (2004) states that these personalities are cast in order to act as marketing commodities for online and print media. The stereotypical characters and the dramatic behaviour and events that arise are used as marketing strategies to attract further viewers. The addition of active audience participation is enhanced by allowing viewers to vote and view different rooms or conversations within the house by using their remote which encourages further viewership.

There are many ‘behind the scenes’ methods and thought processes that contribute to producing what is known as reality television whereby viewers believe they are watching real and unscripted footage of everyday people however the use of social constructions and the theories that surround this indicate that reality shows are in fact the antithesis of their name. They have become merely scripted versions of reality produced to sell familiar and easily identifiable gender roles and stereotypes to a large audience, who unknowingly buy into and identify with these character creations. The audience is thus “unable to distinguish between *real* and *mediated* events” (Shapiro & Lang: 1991).

Sasson (1992:374) further dissects this issue when he states that “we walk around with media-generated images of the world, using them to construct meaning about political and social issues. And the special genius of this system [the media] is to make the whole process seem so normal and natural that the very art of social construction is invisible” (Sasson 1992:374). This research and the various tools mentioned above can be linked to the media’s ‘duty’ to constantly increase their ratings in exchange for extensive advertising revenue. If the shows are not producing content that the viewers can identify with and enjoy week after

week, then advertisers would not want to spend their time and money investing in the show. The media are powerful institutions that have a large influence over content and broadcasting decisions. These American corporations have both local and global shares, connections and control. Their main objective is to attract large audiences and produce big profits thus they rely heavily on advertising and familiar formats to ensure success (Dimbley & Burton: n.d). Research confirms that the “USA spends more money on communication products (especially entertainment) than any other country in the world” (Dimbley & Burton n.d:172). Therefore, this research discusses how the producers and Production Company of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* fit into the entire mass communication system. This will shed light on the reasons behind their decision making, broadcasting and editing processes.

The factors mentioned above are highly concerning as they constantly plague reality television and their reputation within society. Thus, this research seeks to ascertain how these factors contribute towards the reinforcement and representation of gender stereotypes and finally allows the viewers and characters involved in the show to be manipulated and thus become a mere pawn in the game known as the media.

1.5 Rationale

My interest with reality shows and the methods used to produce them have kept me captivated since 2001. This has therefore sparked this interest in contributing to existing scholarly debates.

There has been a lot of research conducted within the field of reality television and rightly so as “there’s no escaping it: as a genre, reality television is here to stay...just as sitcoms and drama have become regular staples, Reality TV shows no signs of abating” (Wells & Tibaldi 2001:188 cited in Lupica 2006:5).

Although many studies exist on *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, there has not been much research conducted within the realm of these two seasons of the reality programs. Klewin (2007) conducted research in relation to the representation of gender roles in these two shows however this was based on the very first seasons and in turn analyses the data using the theories of cultivation and hegemony. Brophy-Baermann (2005:44) also conducted a gender study of the early seasons of these shows and states that although her “analysis of one season

each of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* is intended to be an exploratory study of gender and cultural myths in reality romance television. Clearly there is much room for additional work”. Therefore, this research will provide a more up to date analysis as it will focus on more recent seasons of the show and in turn this will assist in exploring whether the show has developed and changed or remained stagnant in its representation of gender roles and stereotypes. In addition, this study adds the issue of post-production techniques used in the two shows and the way the producers use them to enhance and create gender stereotypes that the audience will be familiar with.

I have also chosen these two specific seasons of the reality shows as I have watched each and every season and I feel that season 15 of *The Bachelor* and season 5 of *The Bachelorette* are the most interesting as both the bachelor Brad and the bachelorette Gillian are good examples of the way in which masculinity and femininity are exploited for the purposes of the media. I also feel that Brad is different to the other men that have had the role of the bachelor as he highlights his emotions whilst other men might not be so quick to display their feelings. Gillian is different to previous bachelorettes as she is not the average beauty, she is beautiful yet she emphasises her personality more than her looks. These elements make for an interesting analysis.

Chapter 2

2.1 - Literature Review

The topics and issues related to this research include gender stereotyping on reality television and in particular the reality show '*The Bachelor*' and '*The Bachelorette*' and the editing and post-production techniques used by the producers to shape these roles thus creating scripted versions of reality. There has been extensive research done on some of these topics and much less on others. This chapter is divided into four sections and focuses on the research conducted in each particular field and other related areas.

The first section focuses on the representation of gender, race and class in popular culture and the way in which the media guides the viewer into accepting certain stereotypes by constantly exposing them to these issues in negative ways. This is broadcast on a multitude of media platforms and its credibility is further enhanced by the mere genre of reality television. There is much discussion surrounding the representation of Asian and Latina women on television and in the popular reality dating shows *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* (Monk-Turner *et al*:2010). This is related to this research as these reality shows are constantly being questioned regarding their decision to exclude people of colour, the reasons behind these decisions and the impact on society all of which will be discussed.

The second section focuses on the fairy-tale theme which plays a key role in the media's representation of love and happiness whilst playing heavily on how 'happily ever after' is the be all and end all of all relationships. The discussion also focuses on the way in which these media generated images build unnecessarily high expectations for women who then expect to find their prince charming and white picket fence especially after being exposed to reality dating shows such as *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* which use such elaborate and unrealistic settings and post-production to enhance this fairy-tale.

The third section focuses on literature that examines post-production techniques used in reality television shows and the way that the media casts contestants according to their probable entertainment value. This section also highlights the various post-production and editing techniques and the way in which they are used to garner huge viewership ratings and in turn advertising revenue. This section also ties in with the previous section on fairy-tale's as it is these editing techniques and casting decisions that are cleverly mastered and disguised

as reality in order for the viewer to identify with both the contestants and the storylines thereby believing in the media generated images of true love.

2.1.1 - Representation of Gender, Race and Class in Reality

Television

According to Tuchman's research (1978:7 in Hess & Grant: 1983:373) on gender roles, the extent to which women are portrayed on television and the way in which the media encourage gender role stereotypes highlights that women are not represented to the same extent that men are. He also found that commercial television does not offer females the same amount of airtime unless they are accompanied by males and in the cases where women are allocated sufficient time, they are usually not represented in a positive light. Subsidiary studies by Turow (1974) and Lemon (1978) also suggest that men are seen as having more prevalent occupational roles, engaging in highly intellectual conversations whereas women are given less prevalent occupations and are mainly seen engaging in personal and emotional conversations. Although, television should have progressed to a point where women and men are not recognised by these stereotypical gender roles that were given to them decades ago, research "finds that the image of the woman has not improved" (Tuchman 1978:42 in Hess & Grant 1983:375) and that "depicted behaviour is quite consistent with gender-role stereotypes" (Hess & Grant 1983:375). Gunter's (1986) findings state that marriage, children and parenthood are more prevalent in the lives of women rather than men, who are constantly given work and problem-solving challenges. These findings are connected to the content analyses which have studied female images within the media and the way in which stereotypical views of women are developed in the minds of the viewers when their exposure to these ideas is consistent or increased. More recent research shows that there has been an improvement in female representation on television. Van de Berg & Streckfuss's study of (1992 cited in Thompson & Zerbinos:1995:654) adult television's representation of gender, found that a larger percentage of women were represented on television and they held a bigger variety of occupations while more recently Monk-Turner *et al* (2010) refer to similar research which was conducted through the content analysis of prime time television shows during a two week period in order to study and ascertain the percentage of gender and race represented by the major and minor characters. The results concur that there is a larger representation of women on prime time television.

Thus, it is clear that although there have been changes in the way that gender roles have been represented on television, most scholars and researchers in this field seem to agree that “television tends to epitomise the stereotypes of men as being macho and often aggressive, and the stereotypes of women as being beautiful but submissive or scheming” (Karam cited in Fourie: 2008:322).

Following on from these gender studies in commercial television, research on gender roles, race and class in reality television has emerged.

Jennifer Pozner is a well-renowned feminist, author, public speaker and the founder of Women in Media and News. Her book titled ‘*Reality bites back*’ (2010) focuses on the way in which reality shows reinforce gender stereotypes. Furthermore, her research has been based on over 10 years of research and the analysis of approximately 1000 hours of reality television shows. Her research and presentations are all concerned with the constant negative gender stereotyping which plague these shows. She highlights the way in which reality shows constantly send the wrong messages to the audience. If the audience is constantly bombarded with specific material, signs and messages, they will come to shape their beliefs and the world solely around them thus resulting in negative consequences. Moreover, Pozner (cited in Skolnick 2012: no page) concludes that “all these stereotypes combine to give people an extremely flawed and regressive idea of not only who the people around them are, but also what they should value for themselves”.

Reality shows are one of the cheapest genres to produce and this is why major media corporations rely on these shows to bring in the majority of their advertising income. Statistics reveal that in 2009 advertising revenue amounted to \$235 billion (Bengier: 2012). Pozner’s research emphasises issues oblivious to the loyal viewers, who are more concerned with the dramatic and intriguing content and “fail to recognise the product placement and stereotypes being presented to them by advertisers” (Bengier 2012: no page).

A large amount of Pozner’s research focuses on popular reality dating show *The Bachelor*. She raises a lot of issues about this show especially in relation to the way in which both women and men are represented. The role of the American women is constantly represented as both regressive and negative. Image plays a big role in the entertainment business as a whole and women are constantly judged on their overall look. Reality television uses this stigma as the basis for so many of their shows. Women are degraded and made to believe that beauty is the answer to all their hopes and dreams for a successful life and according to

Pozner “*The Bachelor* reinforces this idea by choosing women based on how beautiful they are” (Bergier 2012: no page). Yep and Camacho’s (2004) study of season 4 of the show found that “*The Bachelor* reinforces similar stereotypes of the ideal woman as being subservient and tending to the needs of her husband”. *The Bachelor*’s format uses a ‘rose ceremony’ whereby the Bachelor or the Bachelorette hand out roses to potential love interests as a sign of their interest in pursuing their relationship further. Even though the same format is used for both *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, “this ceremony gives the women very little power, reducing them to waiting on their man, and to be given identity through the Bachelor’s gaze”. (Gray 2009 cited in Murray & Ouellette (n.d:264). Thus, in this way the woman is controlled by the bachelor’s decisions which reinforce the observations surrounding femininity mentioned above.

The above research and views highlight many stereotypical actions and behaviour that constantly surround women in reality shows. “Men are seen as worthless without wealth and women as helpless damsels” (Pozner cited in Myers 2010: no page). Moreover, women are also represented as desperate, gold diggers, manipulative untrustworthy and more often than not, women are shown having arguments which often lead to ‘cat’ fights. Yep & Camacho (2004 cited in Klewin 2007:20) notes that “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”.

According to Mike Darnell, who is the producer of some of the most popular American reality shows such as *Joe Millionaire* and *Temptation Island*, “when it comes to women, the ‘social beliefs’ that reality producers, writers and editors exploit are both anachronistic and toxic” (Pozner & O Neill 2010: no page). Women are portrayed as having no intelligence and thus need to rely on their beauty in order to further themselves. A prime example is the reality television show *Beauty and the Geek*, whereby intelligent men and beautiful brainless women are partnered up in a house. The purpose is to help the men look and feel better whilst attempting to enhance the women’s intellectual abilities. Thus, this experiment is aiding in the degradation of femininity thereby communicating the message that “one gender’s knowledge is vital to the world, while the other has a lock on all things superficial” (Pozner & O Neill 2010: no page).

Furthermore, Pozner notes that most reality television programs depict women negatively in one way or another. Only one woman has ever claimed the title of *Top Chef*, women are sent

home from *America's Next Top Model* as their intellectual abilities are viewed as too 'intimidating', *Wife Swap* emphasises the domesticity associated with the female role whilst *What not to Wear* undermines a woman's ability to dress herself. (Pozner & O'Neill 2010: no page). The common thread amongst all these American reality shows is the way in which women; feminism and what it means to be a woman in today's world are misrepresented. These shows emphasise that " 'in reality' female solidarity doesn't exist, women's inequality in the workplace and the government is the result not of structural bias but of individual weakness and the most important thing a girl can do is look pretty" (Pozner & O'Neill 2010: no page).

According to research by D'amour (n.d) the media's representation of men in reality television shows such as *Jersey Shore* and *The Real World* confirms that men "should lack emotion, be uninterested in relationships and be defined by sexual conquests". This discussion can be contrasted to the one in the next section where reality dating shows such as *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* reiterate the fairy-tale theme thus encouraging expectations that are too high and often unattainable.

Producers of these shows continually shape the show and the characters by cleverly casting specific people that they feel can be 'tweaked' into representing the stereotypical roles they know will invite loyal fans for another season. Pozner is concerned that audiences are being made to watch behaviours and attitudes that should have been eliminated years ago thus encouraging American society to hold onto stereotypical views dating back to the 1960's. "In reality TV, there is this active attempt to portray America as if we have never rebelled or problematized them at all, but that they are still a part of our day to day life" (Pozner 2010: no page).

Michelle Brophy-Baermann (2005) has written detailed articles relating to gender role studies in relation to season 3 of *The Bachelor* and the first season of *The Bachelorette*. Her research concurs with that of Pozner's (2010), as after an in-depth comparative content analysis, she too finds that women are represented in a more regressive light. Some of her findings highlight the way in which female contestants are seen to have jobs whereas male contestants are seen to have careers. Dates always revolve around competitions involving sports and stamina and women are portrayed as desperate to find love and willing to do anything to get it whereas men maintain their macho tough exterior and are never seen showing too much emotion over rejection. Another observation was that whilst women are constantly shown

partaking in arguments and general cattiness, men are engaging in manly activities such as gym, sports or drinking beer. She also finds that reality shows such as *The Bachelor* are used to sell a fairy-tale to the modern day woman encouraging her to believe that beauty can help her to achieve this fantasy (Brophy-Baermann: 2005). Pozner (2010) cited in (Myers 2010: no page) reiterates this with her statement that “each dating show is the ‘perfect fairy-tale’ but fairy tales are not real and neither are dating shows”.

Class and race are two other aspects that have been mentioned in relation to television and reality television. The portrayal of class within reality shows is also an issue that raises many concerns. Fairclough (n.d) raises this issue in her study of women and the representation of class in the reality television show *Wife Swap*. It is here where casting decisions play a key role in the overall success of each episode as producers rely on social status and class as the underlying contribution towards the problems, drama and overall entertainment every week. It seems that families belonging to different social classes such as working class, lower class and the rich high class are juxtaposed and pitted against each other in an “overt class warfare” (Fairclough n.d: 346) which encourages humiliation and snobbery and “invites the viewer to delight in sneering at the working classes in a way that hasn’t been acceptable since the 1950’s” (Fairclough n.d: 346).

Mastro and Greenberg’s (2000) cited in Monk-Turner *et al* (2010:1) researched the representation of race in prime time television shows. Their research shows that Latinos represented 3% whilst 16% were African Americans and their roles were portrayed negatively. In 2010, Monk-Turner *et al* reviewed this research and conducted new studies on prime time television shows. Their statistics show that 74% were Caucasian, 16% African American, 5% Latino and 2% Asian American. Thus, not much has changed over this 10 year period and White people seem to dominate the television screen while people of colour continue to have a minimal role.

According to Brooks & Hebert (2006), race is also linked to certain media generated images which have allowed audiences and society to create ideas and beliefs which they now associate with race and class. Thus, “media in short are central to what ultimately come to represent our social realities” (Brooks & Herbert: 2006). These texts are found in various mediums such as radio, television and music which reinforce what it means to be White,

Black, Asian or Latino (Brooks and Herbert:2006) and in turn assist the audience to form very clear and rigid views on both race and class thus further encouraging and instilling the stereotypes that constantly plague these issues.

The media representation of various classes of race and gender is a very important aspect of this study which will be analysed and discussed in relation to other theories. According to hooks (1992:5) cited in Brooks & Herbert (2006:299) the representation of black women in the media “determines how people are seen and how other groups will respond to us based on their relation to these constructed images”. Black women are constantly portrayed and cast by the media in subservient and minor roles such as “mammies, matriarchs, jezebels and welfare mothers” (Brooks & Herbert 2006:299) and it is these images and stereotypes that “simultaneously reflect and distort both the ways in which black women view themselves (individually and collectively) and the ways in which they are viewed by others (Hudson 1998:249 cited in Brooks & Herbert 2006:299).

Latino and Asian women are also under represented and stereotyped in certain ways by the media on television. According to Tajima (1989:309 cited in Brooks & Herbert 2006:302) “Asian women in film are either passive figures who exist to serve men as love interests for White men or as a partner in crime of their own kind”. Thus, these races are seen as ‘the other’ when compared to the presence of White people across mass media platforms. Jennifer Lopez is a global music icon and has featured in many popular movies however these roles either enhance Latina stereotypes by casting her in occupational roles such as a domestic worker or allowed her to break free from the stereotype yet constantly cast her with white male love interests. Thus, this also shows that she too cannot resist the negative stereotypes that plague Latina Women. It is their minimal representation paired with the stereotypical roles they are cast in that “produce socialization in audiences that unconsciously take this misinformation as truth” (Heung 1995 Holtzman 2000 cited in Brooks & Herbert: 2006:302).

Race plays an important role within the realm of reality dating shows in particular. The representation of black men and masculinity has been analysed extensively in a case study of MTV’s *The Real World*. Over six seasons, the portrayal of black men has consistently stereotyped them as “inherently angry, potentially violent and sexually aggressive” (Orbe: 1998:35 cited in Brooks & Herbert: 2006:306). Orbes’s (1998) analysis highlights that little or no positive representation is associated with black men and this further enhances the

negative stereotypes that plague this race and gender. Thus, negative portrayals of certain races and gender on reality television can be the most damaging as they are not “presented as mediated but as real life images captured on camera” (Brooks & Herbert: 2006:3006).

Orbe’s (1998) study of *The Real World* can also be linked to the final section of this chapter as it also focuses on the construction of reality and the way in which post-production, casting, editing and use of semiotic signifiers are used deliberately by the producers to enhance pre-existing and socially acceptable stereotypes especially that of black men. They cast very diverse members of society some of which have included a virgin, female rapper, an aspiring rock star and the constant stereotypical angry black man which is done to encourage future conflict and drama. Orbe (1998:36) further exposes the editing and post-production involved when he explains that “for many of the characters we are able to see beyond the stereotypes that they initially represent and learn some of the complexities of their lived experiences. However this is not the case for Kevin and the other Black men featured on *The Real World*”. Thus, certain images, settings and signifiers associated with violence, oppression and black resistance in certain neighbourhoods of America are constantly shown by “editing of episodes and the juxtaposition of certain images with excerpts of specific dialogue” (Orbe 1998:36). Thus, these editing techniques assist in enhancing the negative stereotypes associated with black men which in turn allow audience members to associate all black men with these media generated images.

Statistics reveal that across all six seasons, African American men “constituted less than 9% of all cast members, they were featured in over 50% of the ‘most dangerous’ segments” (Orbe: 1998:35). This statistic reinforces the facts and theories associated with stereotypical media generated images which are force fed to the audience to produce ratings. This will be linked and discussed further in the section on post-production in this chapter.

Pozner (cited in Skolnick 2012: no page) states that “*The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* portrays that ‘love is a possibility only for pretty White people’”. After 10 years, this show has never used a bachelor or bachelorette of colour. Research by Wong (2005) and Pozner (2010) shows that contestants of colour cast in reality dating shows do not seem to make it beyond one or two episodes. Wong’s (2005:109) research concurs that reality dating shows such as *The Bachelor*, *The Bachelorette* and *Joe Millionaire* “glamorise unions between

white heterosexual, middle-working class subjects”. Producers do not feel the need to change the existing format which has continued to garner a large audience. However, people of colour will continue to see a predominantly white cast and therefore the absence of colour on dating shows seems to reinforce that producers follow dominant ideologies when casting contestants.

2.1.2 - Fairy-tale and Romance

There are other areas of research concerned with ‘finding true love’ namely “romantic love which is the most exploited and discussed subject of our culture” (Wong: 2005:92). Every day, both men and women world-wide are using various methods such as online dating, magazines and ‘lonely hearts’ columns as an attempt to find a romantic connection or their ‘soul mate’.

Online dating is another technological phenomenon for millions who seek love. Research states that “more than 10 million Americans participate in online dating by maintaining memberships or profiles on at least one dating website” (Madden & Lenhart 2006 in Gibbs, Ellison and Lai 2011:71). These sites offer its members chat rooms where they can engage in conversations in order to ascertain whether there is potential for future relationships. Members are also given the opportunity to write and edit their profiles including pictures in order to entice potential partners. Physical appearance and a photo are key factors that attract potential partners and in turn profiles without a photo are interpreted negatively (Epstein: 2007). Deception becomes part of this kind of dating as people constantly lie about their age, appearance and profession in order to attract potential partners. This behaviour emphasises that love has become a necessity rather than a want for some thus people are using technological methods to find their soul mate.

Another relevant study focuses on *Jackie Magazine* which is a British Teen Magazine dating back to 1964 and is still popular today. The purpose of the magazine is to “define the woman’s world” and focuses on specific areas as “all girls want to know how to catch a boy, lose weight, look their best and be able to cook” (Louise:2009). Thus, it is evident that this magazine focuses on dominant ideology and its information and articles cultivate and instil certain beliefs and attitudes towards various ideals and concepts within girls from a very

young age. Romance is the theme of the picture stories which are featured in the magazine. These stories are filled with romantic gestures and older characters as if the teen girls should aspire to be them. Thus, these stories tell these young female readers that “romance is important, serious and relevant yet simultaneously in the content we are told that it is fun, the essence and meaning of life, the key to happiness” (McRobbie:1991). This magazine illustrates the characteristics and desired personality of a woman whilst outlining the various kinds of males that women should find appealing. Thus “in depicting romantic partnerships, *Jackie* is also constructing male and female roles” (McRobbie: 1991). In this way men and women share a common interest and that is romance. There are also many pages in the magazine focusing on beauty, cosmetics and fashion to improve a female’s appearance and in doing so emphasises that it will ensure future romance. This also relates to the earlier research and discussion relating to gender role stereotypes and the way in which males and females conform to pre-conceived ideas about each gender and the role that they should play and the role that the media has in shaping these ideas.

Thus, it is evident from the above research that people use various methods to find love whilst others turn to magazines and other forms of media to understand what love should be like. The media, in any form seems to reiterate dominant ideology that love is very important especially for women so as to ensure they receive their fairy-tale.

Reality Television shows such as *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* conform to a “patriarchal, fairy-tale ethos” (Gray cited in Murray & Ouellette n.d:263). Thus, after being whisked away to magical settings, the man eventually selects the woman he feels is best suited for him. In this way, he “validates her as a person, completing her, rescuing her from a humdrum life and giving her a chance of becoming a Princess of Reality TV Land” (Gray 2009 cited in Murray & Ouellette n.d: 263). Love is made a priority especially for the woman and all her other attributes and achievements are minimised in order to emphasise that her main objective in life is to find true love and marriage which is the ultimate fairy-tale. Thus, dating shows and *The Bachelor* in particular are centred around a single bachelor, who due to his good looks, financial stability and status can be classified as Prince Charming whilst he takes his time deciding who his Cinderella will be thus conforming to the stereotypical fairy-tale protagonists.

Young girls and women all over the world watch romantic movies with fairy-tale endings however - it is reality dating shows such as *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* that are causing the real damage. These shows are labelled as 'reality shows' and thus the audience perceives the contestants, surroundings and occurrences to be so too as they become part and parcel of the fantasy that they are drawn into week after week. They watch girls just like themselves fall in love with men who look like they have just stepped off the cover of GQ magazine and who epitomize their ultimate 'Prince Charming'. They watch them go on dream dates and they tune into every episode as they too have established a connection with them. They feel like they could be the Bachelorette and they watch as she travels all over the world and eventually falls in love. They continue to watch as 'Prince Charming' gets down on one knee and proposes to her with a diamond ring fit for a princess as they stand on a deserted beach island ready to run into the sunset and spend the rest of their lives in romantic bliss. This is how the show ends yet this isn't the end for the millions of girls watching. They do not stop thinking about that fairy-tale romance, in fact they now believe that they too will find it and walk around with these media generated images in their minds. "Such impractical ideas about relationships can lead to idealized views regarding love and marriage" (Pusavat: 2007:3).

According to Segrin & Nabi (2002 cited in Pusavat: 2007:3) "television and other media influence the expectations and perceptions of love and marriage" and "often depict unrealistic representations of love, sex and relationships" (Pusavat: 2007:3). Segrin and Nabi (2002) cited in Richardson (2012) conducted a case study whereby 285 single university students were exposed to romantic movies and television programs which involved the various themes of fate and love in order to ascertain whether this particular movie genre can initiate and communicate idealized expectations of love and marriage. The results of this study positively confirmed these speculations thus proving that "images of unrealistic love have barraged their psyches for years" (Kniffen 2007 cited in Richardson 2012:13).

D'amour (n.d:9) also states that social cognitive theory influences the outcomes of constantly being subjected to similar media generated messages via different media platforms. The more the viewer is exposed to these messages, the more conditioned they are to positively responding to them, identifying with them and adopting similar behaviour. Thus, this can affect young girls, teenagers and adults as the more they are exposed to these ideas and stereotyped, the more likely they are too expect them in the real world.

According to Pusavat (2007:8) “television viewing can also strengthen pre-existing ideas” and “increase romantic partner expectations” (Eggermont: 2004 in Pusavat: 2007:8). Thus, the media provides us with images of love and satisfaction and uses the most beautiful women and handsome men coupled with visions of marital bliss but however fails to show the more realistic side of a relationship which all face conflict and compromise at some point. Thus, this increases audience expectations for their future partners or causes them to second guess the partner and relationship they currently have.

This can be related to Richardson’s (2012) study of Disney movies portrayal of love as a fairy-tale. Her research shows that Disney movies attempt to portray a fairy-tale romance in a short 90 minute time slot yet “there has been scant attention paid to the question of how to live together in the increasingly complex state of marriage or long-term cohabitation, most people are naïve about what it entails.” (Kniffen n.d cited in Richardson 2012:9). Kniffen’s studies (2007) cited in Richardson (2012:13) emphasise similar points to Pusavat (2007) and Eggermont (2004) when he states that even though women are aware of the way love and relationships work in reality, “their emotional side still craves the images that have been fed to them through the media, including advertising and movies”

Richardson’s study (2012) mentioned earlier highlights certain themes that emerge in most Disney movies which further accentuate the fairy-tale element. These include the ‘happily ever after’ that all couples walk away with at the end of the movie. Secondly ‘love at first sight’ is the way most couples are likely to fall in love and lastly ‘true love’s kiss’ which is normally the most highly anticipated scene of the movie and is viewed as a symbol of the couple’s eternal love. In reality, these elements are unlikely to occur instantly and if they do, they will not be able to solely sustain the relationship to the extent that is suggested in the movie. These elements provide the audience and women in particular with false hope and distorted views of reality which explicitly display love as a fairy-tale.

Richardson’s (2012) study of Disney movies such as *Cinderella*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *Mulan* also emphasises the cultivation theory and the way in which the network has continuously used the same format to draw in audiences with romantic storylines ensuring that they leave the cinema with the belief that true love conquers all. This is further enhanced by the addition of marketing and advertising

strategies including toys and books which can be bought before or after viewing the movie and acts as a constant reminder of the movie and the messages that the media hopes to preserve in the minds of the audience. Thus, it is evident that the audience's views are shaped by the content they are exposed to and in this case it refers to the unrealistic view of love as a fairy-tale.

These media generated images and messages are communicated to the audience directly through television programming and the expectations are increased further when the show falls under the 'reality' genre as these messages are viewed as more reliable. However, audiences seem to be unaware that post-production plays a key role in creating this fairy-tale as the "media manipulation of images has altered views of love and diminished erotic love to the mundane" (Mosconi: 2004 in Pusavat: 2007:8).

Research around the various seasons of the two shows reveal that only one connection made on *The Bachelor* and two on *The Bachelorette* have resulted in marriage which means that these dating shows are not able to produce the lasting love connections that they claim to (Roper & McDonald: n.d). Reasons for these short lived relationships can be attributed to the 'fairy-tale' world that they live in whilst forming these connections and the way in which they contrast with the 'reality' of their everyday life. Once these contestants distance themselves from the constructed reality that they have become accustomed to for months and they continue these connections in their home towns filled with everyday problems, financial concerns and dates consisting of a simple movie and dinner instead of fantasy islands, helicopter rides, diamond necklaces and designer dresses, they realise that they might not really know the person to the extent that they had thought and might have fallen in love with a person under false conditions and constraints in a world that in 'reality' does not really exist.

2.1.3 - Post-production Techniques

Pozner (2010) states that this stereotypical behaviour mentioned previously could be natural or it could have been produced through post production and editing methods. This is done by allocating an already existing stereotype to specific characters or enhancing their behaviour to fit these roles in order to achieve a reaction from the audience and advertisers.

This research therefore intends to build on the issues of post-production and editing in order to ascertain what roles they play in constructing certain versions of reality.

Poniewozick's (2006) article in *Time Magazine* informs readers of the top editing methods used in reality shows. These include using and constructing 'fake settings', using camera angles to show 'misleading montages', the side interviews and 'the overdub' where sounds are included to allude to certain incidents that may have never occurred. Podlas (n.d cited in Denham & Jones: 2008:86) refers to the technique of 'selective editing' whereby "producers manipulate what actually transpires by omitting certain scenes, and in some cases, showing scenes out of order to shed positive light on popular contestants". This method is used to strengthen the show's fan base as producers are aware which contestants will appeal to the audience and use these techniques to support the choices they made when casting.

According to Diehl (n.d) the producers of reality shows seem to have forgotten the definition of ethics as their use of these techniques especially those such as 'frankenbyting' used to "create dramatic situations by rearranging the sequence of events and dialogue" (Diehl: n.d) allows for a misrepresentation of people within society to be aired to a non-suspecting audience. He states that the names and reputations of the show's contestants are the "only things not created by the producers" (Diehl: n.d).

Pozner's research confirms that producers use approximately 1% of actual footage and edit the remainders as they "can make someone look any way they want" (Pozner in Parham:2008). Jeff Bartsch, who is a freelance reality television editor, concurs that "you can really take something black and make it white" (Poniewozik: 2006). Thompson (2001:22) cited in D'amour: n.d:22) reiterates this when he states that reality television "resembles the dramaturgical equivalent of jazz: a controlled structure that invites improvisation and unpredictability" which again emphasises that producers encourage dramatic, spontaneous and entertaining behaviour as it entices the audience to continue

watching Yet, if the contestants do not provide this they will edit existing footage to fit in with their pre-existing vision.

Pozner (2010) refers to other methods used by producers in order to alter reality. Cast members are refused access to normal day to day activities such as sleep, books, television and telephones therefore “the complete sensory deprivation and constant surveillance that are intentionally used to break down people’s defences and to change the way real people would normally act”.

Reality show producers need to portray women as needy, backstabbing and stupid. They use post-production techniques to ensure that women are always labelled with these negative adjectives and stereotypical behaviours. “Whether the women are sloshed and overtired or sober and alert, such angry outbursts are stoked and edited ‘to prove’ that no matter how sophisticated and sweet her façade, nearly every woman is a selfish schemer deep down” (Pozner & O Neill 2010: no page).

Orbe’s analysis of African American men in MTV’s reality show *The Real World*, also focused on the construction of reality and the way in which the editing, casting and post-production techniques were used to further enhance the negative stereotypes discussed in the first section of this chapter. The title of this show is called *The Real World* however due to all the post-production involved, it actually becomes the antithesis of its name as “what is displayed for the millions of viewers who watch the show each week are selectively filtered images of Black masculinity as determined by non-African Americans” (Orbe:1998:42). His analysis exposes various post-production and casting techniques that are used specifically to generate the desired images, conflicts and ultimately ratings. Producers cast contestants in accordance with their probability to cause conflict. Moreover, scenes and interviews with contestants were not used in the chronological order in which they occurred, these production techniques are noticeable due to sudden changes in clothing or setting. Thus, “the manipulation of the syntagmatic ordering of ‘Real World’ events results in a construction of reality that reflects a storyline as created by the producers of the show and not necessarily a reflection of the reality of the three months taped for the show” (Orbe:1998:43).

Thus, the above case study of MTV’s *The Real World* should in fact give viewers the opportunity to see the true images and lifestyle of African American men and by doing so

break the mould that they have been boxed into but instead it “merely cultivates the perpetuation of existing stereotypes” (Orbe:1998:44).

The above observations have highlighted that post-production plays a key role in these two reality shows and the importance that this research places on the interplay between the stereotypical gender roles and the decisions made by the producers when casting and editing. The inclusion of these casting and editing techniques and the effect they have on the contestants, the gender roles and the media organisation as a whole is a pivotal to existing research.

The following chapter will focus on the main theories to be used in the analysis of this research namely cultural studies, representation and feminist media theory as well as the social constructionism which will highlight the way in which reality television reinforces stereotypes through manipulative editing and post production techniques with the purpose of increasing advertising and ratings.

Chapter 3

3.1 - Theoretical Framework

3.1.2 - Introduction

This chapter addresses the theories used for this study which include representation and social constructionism, gender and post-feminist criticisms all of which are outlined and explained in this chapter. These theories are used as they aid in the overall analysis and discussion of gender representation, stereotyping and the way in which these issues are enhanced by the post-production and editing methods used by producers to increase ratings and advertising revenue.

This chapter is divided into two sections namely cultural studies and social constructionism and gender representation. The first section discusses the way in which this study is rooted in critical and cultural studies and the way in which meaning is produced through language, concepts and ideas. Moreover, two different representation approaches are defined, discussed and contextualised in relation to *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*. It also focuses on the social constructionism. It is defined and discussed in relation to the way in which the media conditions the viewer to think in certain ways by constantly exposing them to certain media generated images which are eventually instilled in their minds. This section then discusses the three main concepts of Gatekeeping, Agenda Setting and Framing and how the various techniques are used by producers and the media in order to communicate the desired messages especially in relation to these reality shows.

The second section focuses on the meaning of masculinity and femininity and the dominant ideologies that are represented by media images across various platforms. Moreover, feminism and the different strands of feminist media theory are defined together with an in-depth discussion and analysis of the way in which post-feminist criticisms can be used to analyse this research and emphasise the way in which *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* in particular have caused a backlash to feminism and the way in which women are currently represented and stereotyped.

3.2 - Theories of Representation

3.2.1 - Cultural Studies and Social Constructionism

The theoretical and conceptual orientation of this study is rooted in “critical/cultural studies” approaches. Culture can refer to “whatever is distinctive about ‘the way of life’ of a people, community, nation or social group” however within the framework of this chapter and research it is “concerned with the production and the exchange of meanings-the ‘giving and taking of meaning’- between the members of a society or group” (Hall: 2007:2). Hall (2007:1) further states that culture is about “shared meanings” and thus it is linked to language and representation. Language is a medium in which meaning is produced through our shared understanding and access to it (Hall: 2007).

Thus, the people within a culture allocate meanings to various objects, concepts and events as “things ‘in themselves’ rarely if ever have any one, single, fixed and unchanging meaning” (Hall 2007:3). Thus different contexts, interpretations, emotions and personal understandings and representations are key factors in the production of meaning.

Stuart Hall (2007:16) defines representation as the “production of meaning through language”. Representation refers to the construction in media of any aspects of ‘reality’ such as objects, people, events, gender, race and cultural identities. Representation is concerned with the way in which these concepts are made to seem ‘natural’. The above mentioned concepts are linked to specific aspects, concepts or “mental representations” (Hall 2007:17) that we have connected to them. This is the way in which people interpret the world and atmosphere around them. Thus, “meaning depends on the system of concepts and images formed in our thoughts which can stand for or ‘represent’ the world, enabling us to refer to things both inside and outside our heads (Hall 2007:17).

Concepts and mental representations are also made for non-visual and abstract concepts such as friendship or love and we can distinguish between various objects and concepts by referring to their differences and their similarities. This system also comprises “non-individual concepts, but of different ways of organising, clustering, arranging and classifying concepts and of establishing complex relations between them” (Hall 2007:17).

Meaning is constructed through language and this is the basis of the second aspect of representation. Thus, the above mentioned concepts, ideas, people and events are

communicated through various different signs such as words, images and sounds which are used to “express meanings and communicate thoughts to other people” (Hall 2007:18). These signs relate to semiotics and multimodality which is discussed in more detail in the research methods chapter.

Representation theories have two main approaches - intentional and constructionist. These approaches are defined and linked to the way in which they can be used to analyse *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* for the purpose of this research.

The reflective approach refers to the actual meaning that the people, events and concepts have in the world. Therefore, in this case, the language “reflects and initiates the truth that is already there” (Hall 2007:24). In some cases visual cues can represent the objects exactly so there is no misunderstanding involved. This approach is related to this research as the visuals which accompany each episode such as the venues, scenery and romantic gestures used reflect the romantic settings used to aid the contestants on their journey to finding love.

The intentional approach states that “it is the speaker, the author, who imposes his or her unique meaning on the world through language” (Hall 2007:25). Thus, this does not mean that everyone has their own languages just that we communicate and understand each other and concepts based on “shared linguistic conventions and shared codes” (Hall 2007:25).

This approach is related to this research as the producers of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* impose their own meaning on the show by editing and manipulating footage using the various techniques mentioned earlier namely frankenbyting and prompting in order to produce the meaning or the text that they know will attract a large audience and huge profits. Social constructionism is examined in further detail in relation to its impact on these shows in chapter 7.

Hall (2007:25) defines the constructionist approach as the way in which signs and the representational systems mentioned above are used to construct meaning. Therefore each person uses these signs in conjunction with their cultural and linguistic attributes to make and construct meaning for themselves, others and the world around them.

The constructionist approach is also suited to this research as everyone has come to recognise what the characteristics of being male or female entail and in this way stereotypes occur and people associate these traits with a man or a woman. Thus, concepts and signs construct meaning. In this research, the producer uses this approach by casting contestants according to

these stereotypes as they know that by using contestants with well-known characteristics, the audience will identify with them. Thus, they have constructed meaning by using existing stereotypes to fit the format and the audience members view these shows with these pre-existing constructed meanings surrounding gender roles, in mind. This is the reason that *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* are so popular and why the producers continue to use the same principles when making decisions.

Social constructionism is closely related to the cultural study approaches mentioned above. The inter-related theories of gatekeeping, agenda setting and framing can be seen as specific lenses for understanding how cultural meanings are constructed in the mass media. Social constructionism originated from the theories revolving around human existence and in turn analysed the way in which individuals “make sense of the world” (Pollock: n.d). Berger and Luckman (1966) state that ‘reality’ and ‘knowledge’ are fundamental to this theory. Reality can be defined as a “quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognise as having a being independent of our own volition” and knowledge is defined as “the certainty that phenomena are real and that they possess specific characteristics” (Berger & Luckman 1966:13). Thus, this theory has philosophical roots as questions relating to what is real are constantly pondered in philosophical studies.

Social constructionism states that “social practices engaged in by people and their interactions with each other” form the basis of this approach. (Burr 1995:7). Language plays a key role in social construction as it is people and the way they use language in their daily lives and interactions that allow knowledge to become “fabricated” and these are “practices during which our shared versions of knowledge are constructed” (Burr 1995:4). Words have meaning and through social interactions amongst various groups of people, the meanings can alter and ‘realities’ already associated with certain words or concepts can change and in turn new meanings and understandings are constructed (Burr: 1995). Thus, the concepts, ideas and understanding of society and the world can be defined as a “product not of objective observation of the world, but of social processes and interactions in which people are constantly engaged with each other” (Burr: 1995:4).

Berger & Luckman (1966) put forward their theory which is the anti-essentialist account of social life which consists of three important processes namely externalisation, objectivation and internalisation (Burr: 1995). Thus, people focus on a specific concept or an idea and then by explaining this to others, they have externalised it and thus it has entered into the ‘social

realm' (Burr 1995:10). Once these concepts or ideas have become entrenched in the social world "it has become an object of consciousness for people in that society and has developed a kind of factual truth which appears to be natural" (Burr 1995:10). These ideas become embedded in the world and people understand and internalise them as truthful and a part of society.

To put this theory into the context of the mass media and reality television in particular, it refers to the role that the media plays in shaping the view of the audience. The producers use the knowledge of the world around them and the ideas and concepts that are seen as natural and truthful and use them to produce convincing versions of reality. Producers realise that there are stereotypical character traits associated with femininity and masculinity within society and thus when casting a show such as *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, they understand that viewers will accept these ideas and concepts presented to them as they have been externalised to them and thus internalised over time. The knowledge of 'reality' and the understanding of how certain ideas have become embedded in society over a period of time and the way in which the producers use these to their advantage is what contributes to the success of these shows. Sometimes the media's role is so significant that it reduces the individual's ability to "distinguish between *real* and *mediated* events" (Shapiro & Lang 1991 in Pollock: n.d).

This thesis will use the concepts of Gatekeeping, Agenda-Setting and Framing which are closely connected in order to further dissect the cultural meanings which are constructed in the mass media specifically reality television.

3.2.2 – Gatekeeping, Agenda Setting and Framing

Gatekeeping is a theory first documented in 1947 by Lewin who contributed to the mass communication theory. However, it was in the 1950's that David Manning White (De Beer & Botha cited in Fourie 2008:237) defined this theory as the way in which "news 'flows' along certain channels which contain 'gates' where decisions are made that influence the way the news is perceived, reconstructed and eventually packaged". White's initial study of a newspaper editor who he called 'Mr Gates' highlights the way in which certain aspects of news are favoured over others. Items can be rejected due to personal views and thus indicates

that gatekeeping is subjective as it is based on the way in which the communication of news is related to “the gatekeepers’ own set of experiences, attitudes and expectations” (Schudson 2000:177). Bissel (2000) cited in Shoemaker (2009:42) studied photographic gatekeepers and his research also concluded that their choices are influenced by their own political choices and in turn the audience’s expectations. Henningham (1997) cited in Shoemaker 2009) concurs that the personality type of the gatekeeper can impact on the news content. Gieber’s research (1956) cited in Roberts (2005:7) contradicts that of White and highlights a second model of this theory. He states that tight deadlines and the constant newsroom rush are key factors influencing gatekeepers.

Bass (1969:71 cited in Roberts 2005:9) concurs that there are many factors, people and organisations involved in the gatekeeping process and thus the editor is not the “key decision maker. Shoemaker (1996) cited in Roberts (2001:11) has provided the most recent research and opinions on the theory and also highlights that the “characteristics of gatekeeping within an organization, and the internal processes and external forces play a role on individual gatekeepers. The model, like other mass communication models, recognizes effects from the individual to the organizational to the institution to society”. This research highlights that the gatekeeper who may be the editor or the producer is not the only person who has a say in the newsroom, it is the combination of the editors, producers, the needs and wants of the news organisation and the advertisers and how they would like the audience to view the content.

Lang and Lang (1953) cited in MacGregor (1997) initiated gatekeeping studies in relation to television coverage. Their findings revealed that broadcasts were not truthful representations of the actual events. They emphasised that “the picture of the events was shaped by selection, emphasis and suggested inferences which fitted into the already existing pattern of expectations” (Lang & Lang 1953:188 in MacGregor 1997:46). News events were dramatized in order to garner a large audience and reduced their ability to view and understand the event for themselves and “uncritically accept the vision and particularly the commentary offered” (MacGregor 1997:47). More recently, Lagan (1984) and Berkowetz (1990) found that salience and conflict were key factors in what content was aired (Pitts: n.d).

This is a very important way of analysing *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* as it is clear that only certain footage, which the producers view as salient is aired to the audience. A large amount of this footage emphasises gender stereotypical behaviour as shown by previous

research. Yet, these gatekeepers have specifically chosen to show this to the audience revealing subjective and most of the time misrepresented scenes and images. This research uses this theory of gatekeeping in order to understand who is making the decisions and the reasons behind these decisions and how they are influenced by outside factors such as advertisers and media organisations.

Gatekeeping also encourages stories that are going to attract the attention of the audience and thus sensational and dramatic stories are favoured over others. Gatekeeping involves sifting and choosing and sometimes creating news. The gatekeeper's selection is “systematically biased, driven by a combination of organizational factors, news norms and audience interests” and the outcome is “skewed towards stories that are, for instance, more sensational, and/or unusual, and/or conflictual, and/or geographically proximate” (Soroka 2011:2). Thus, this research highlights the way in which this approach can be used within the realm of reality television. The producers of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* can choose to cast controversial and stereotypical characters that the audience can relate to or immediately identify and use post production techniques to edit footage in order to regulate meanings for viewers and emphasise drama which will ensure large profits and viewership.

Therefore, it is evident that since White (1950) a plethora of researchers have explored and expanded on his work which can be seen in the above observations. These include Snider (1967), Whitney & Becker (1982), Bleske (1991) and Reese & Ballinger (2001).

Closely related to gatekeeping is ‘agenda-setting in which the media “select and call to the public’s attention both ideas and events” (De Vito; 1991:477 cited in De Beer: 1998).

McCombs & Shaw (1977) cited in De Beer (1998) also explain how media corporations tell the audience what should be seen as important and what is not as prevalent.

McComb (1997) states that agenda-setting is largely influenced by the target audience which advertisers, producers and news organisations have already identified. Thus, in reality television, editing and post-production are forms of gatekeeping and agenda-setting as the producers either accept or reject footage based on their significance to the television show and the messages and footage is rejected on the basis of its value and instead most of it is altered to fit in with their expectations, those of the media channels and corporations and the

advertisers. Thus, footage is altered to create dramatic and sensational scenes which are aired as reality television. These theories highlight the way in which these are not real but in fact constructed events.

Approximately 300 academic studies relating to this theory have been conducted up until 2012 and Scholars such as Kiouisis (1999) and Golan & Wanta (2000) have found that the media “not only help to tell people what to think about but also how to think about salient news topics” (De Beer & Botha cited in Fourie 2008:239).

The third and final aspect of social constructionism is framing. Goffman (1974) cited in Fourie (2008:239) defines this as the “numerous ways in which the media create the news context within which the audience may ‘locate, perceive, identify and label’ whatever is going on in the world; in other words to make sense of events”. Thus, framing is the way in which journalists organise news so that it fits into their organisation and network. In regards to reality television, it is closely related to the way in which characters and events are framed in specific ways to reflect the desired outcome. Therefore this theory is very prevalent to this research. Through a detailed content analysis of the specific seasons of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, the various models of this theory are used to highlight the way in which the producers of these reality shows are impacting the way audience members view gender roles by representing them in certain ways and editing characters to fit the roles that they would like the audience to see. This theory emphasises the way these reality shows are constructed by various entities and used to frame certain topics and stereotypes.

Moreover, it examines the expectations that media corporations have for popular television programs and their ideal success rates. This in turn sheds light on the way in which they cast people with their own sets of beliefs and attitudes towards ideas and frameworks in mind thereby shaping the content based on their own needs. The consequences affect the audience who in turn are spoon fed content and made to believe that this is truth which can have an effect on society, traditions and beliefs that will continue to grow for further generations to see. Thus, this is an on-going process with a ripple effect on society and future behaviours.

Thus, through the various models of gatekeeping, agenda-setting and framing many stories and events are not published or broadcast for the audience to see. This can be problematic as

gatekeepers block certain viewpoints and salient issues from an unsuspecting audience (Bennet: 2003). This research provides a context for these models through a detailed content analysis of these shows.

3.2.3 – Feminist Media Theories

Gender is a social construct through which a society defines what it means to be masculine or feminine. This section outlines the way in which constructions of femininity and masculinity are part of a dominant ideology and how the media play a key role in shaping our gendered media culture.

Feminism is a branch of gender studies and can be defined as “the opposite of a male-dominated society” (Karam n.d cited in Fourie: 2008:307) and Carter and Steiner (2004:347 cited in Fourie: 2008: 308) state that it is “a political philosophy and social-political movement. It is...marked by an emancipatory concern to explain and overcome subordination and oppression of all kinds”. Feminism started to progress in the 1960’s and 1970’s when different branches of feminism emerged to “specify and clarify the various political stakes for feminists” (Gerhard 2005:39). Women are associated with many characteristics one of which being their nurturing and caring qualities (MacDonald: 1995). Women have not always been given the same opportunities or salaries in the work place and are most often associated with motherhood, the home and parenting. Thus, these branches of feminism aim to promote equal rights and opportunities for women. Each branch progressed differently and had affiliations with liberal, socialist, radical, cultural and civil rights organisations which became less significant in the 1990’s (Gerhard:2005). Thus, many questions surrounding feminism were exposed. These included the backlash against feminism through popular media culture and the emergence of post-feminism which will be discussed in this chapter.

The following discussion will focus on work which deals specifically with how feminists have explored media constructions of gender whilst also introducing how the use of the male gaze is a key factor in gender representation in the media.

Early feminist theory which emerged in the 1960’s and 1970’s is very important to the discussion and observations about feminism and the progress of femininity in modern society. In ‘*The Feminist Mystique*’, Frieden (1963) raises the issue of the ‘problem that has

no name' which plagued the lives of most American housewives during the 1950's and 1960's. She describes the way in which magazines during this era endorsed myths of fulfilment through domesticity thus shackling women to the home without any freedom. According to Meyerowitz (cited in Kennedy 2011:3), magazines "reinforced rigid definitions of appropriate behaviour and sexual expression". Moreover, Frieden's research describes the ultimate suburban and American housewife as "healthy, beautiful, educated, concerned only about her husband, her children, her home. She had found true feminine fulfilment" (Frieden 1963:18). Her research states that women were proud to label themselves as housewives whilst any mention of freedom, careers and female independence were unheard of. A phenomenon took over American society in 1960 as reported in the media, whereby women began to realise and verbalise the way in which their lives were empty as they began to crave independence and ambition towards achieving goals which were only achieved by men (Frieden: 1963). Other scholars such as Kennedy (2011) and Meyerowitz (cited in Kennedy: 2011) advocate that the media did not solely concentrate on the domesticity of women in this era as Frieden describes however they do believe that her work "encourages women to jump over the barriers of oppression, reject their suburban melancholy and achieve self-actualisation through a 'New Life Plan for Women'" (Kennedy 2011:2).

Moreover, Frieden's research led to a plethora of studies and research on femininity including Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* (1970) which refers to the way in which romance novels discuss idealised views and beliefs of romance as well as the way in which "a woman's sexuality is both denied and misrepresented by being identified as passivity" as the restriction of their sexuality has repressed them. Moreover, women have been brought up to believe that they are inferior to men which has led to much unhappiness amongst women leaving them powerless (Greer: 1970).

The above section has focused on how television and the media have provided viewers with images that stem back to a pre-feminist era and these criticisms and theories will be discussed in relation to post-feminism.

3.2.4 – Post Feminism

Post-feminist theory is very useful in analysing texts related to gender roles and stereotypes as they provide insight into the way in which feminism is represented in various forms of popular media culture especially television.

Post-feminism is a complex term however according to Kim (2001), it encompasses three approaches. Firstly, it refers to the era of the 1980's and the 1990's after second-wave feminism; secondly it refers to a backlash against feminism and a feeling that it is not necessary due to the achievement of equality amongst the sexes. Thirdly, Brooks (1997 cited in Kim 2001:321) states that post-feminism “engages with the discourse of feminism’s fight against patriarchy while also challenging the hegemonic assumptions that oppression is universal among women, race and class”.

Research shows that post-feminism has become like a fairy-tale and is evident in popular media culture. These commodities include ‘girl power’ logos in various media, self-help books encouraging women to become more independent and powerful and women as fashion icons and career moguls. According to Isbister’s (2007:8) research, this has allowed women to achieve “transformation into empowered femininity”.

However, there has been a backlash to post-feminism. MacRobbie (2004) refers to what she calls a ‘double entanglement’. Thus, there were many positive improvements that came from earlier feminist movements, it seems that whilst popular media culture tries to assist in the representation of women as powerful and independent as opposed to the housewife with children, television programs such as *Ally McBeal*, *Desperate Housewives*, *Sex and the City* and *Bridget Jones Diary* are in fact undermining this progress by highlighting and allowing the themes of loneliness and a women in constant search of true love and the fairy-tale to prevail.

Bridget Jones focuses on a single woman without children who is able to enjoy life and do the things most married women wouldn’t be able to. She is seen as the “product of modernity in that she has benefitted from those institutions (education) which have loosened the ties of tradition and community for women, making it possible for them to be disembedded and re-located to the city to earn an independent living without shame or danger (MacRobbie 2004: 261). It is topics such as loneliness, being surrounded by friends and family who are married with children that are foregrounded and juxtaposed in relation to a stable marriage with

children. Thus, “the portrayal and concept of independent women who are challenged by their independence” is the way in which the media represent women. The representation of women has “been replaced by the depiction of independent women who are shown as unhappy because of this independence” (Kim 2001:320). This is relevant to the way in which these two reality shows depict the ambiguous and contradictory ideas of masculinity and femininity. In chapter 5, this research will analyse the way in which Gillian and the female contestants view themselves as independent women with good jobs and stable lifestyles yet constantly need the validation and love of a man in order to feel complete.

Gill’s (2007: no page number) research focuses on the shift in feminism within the realm of media popular culture which she refers to as a postfeminist sensibility. She states that “women are not straightforwardly objectified but are presented as active, desiring sexual subjects who choose to present themselves in a seemingly objectified manner because it suits their liberated interests to do so”. Thus, this shows that these women are not afraid of displaying their sexual freedom and confidence. She also refers to ‘self-surveillance’ whereby talk shows and magazines are constantly advising women on ways in which they can enhance their appearance and their inner self and personality. Thus, in “magazines, in contemporary fiction and television, in talk shows, it is women and not men who are addressed and required to work on and transform the self” (Gill 2007: no page number). Some forms of media are highlighting the importance of ‘girl power’ and the sexual assurance that women have whilst others focus on helping women to become better versions of themselves. Thus, the media provide the audience with a combination of both feminist and anti-feminist texts.

The Bachelor and *The Bachelorette* are concerned with modern day females who claim to be strong and independent yet as research surrounding previous seasons have shown, these women change and act differently when faced with the opportunity of finding true love. These women are constantly crying and fighting with each other over a man and allowing themselves to be the objects of desire and judged on their appearance. These aspects undermine the progress made by women. This can be linked to the male gaze which is evident in reality shows such as *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* which focus on “subjugating female bodies and experiences to the interpretation and control of a heterosexual male gaze” (Mulvey 1975 in Giannino 2012:62). This will be discussed further in chapter 7.

This research will use these specific seasons of the show to ascertain whether these female contestants conform to what has been shown in previous seasons and the impact this has on

feminism in today's society. It will also emphasise how the show reinforces ambiguities and contradictions related to femininity and will play a key role in analysing these shows specifically *The Bachelorette*. *The Bachelorette* is supposed to give the woman a sense of independence and control by allowing her to choose the men and activities that they participate in however at the same time, she still exhibits stereotypical gender role behaviour. Finding a husband and the ultimate fairy-tale of marriage and children is seen to be the sole occupation of *The Bachelorette* and the female contestants in *The Bachelor*. Thus this theory is used to analyse the message that these two dating shows are putting across and the way in which this can be linked to the backlash to feminism.

The Bachelorette is supposed to empower the woman by giving her the opportunity to be in control of her life and to make decisions about the men that she dates. However, earlier research, as indicated in the previous chapter has shown that previous bachelorette's have exhibited characteristics which emphasises behaviour that is not indicative of being independent or in control. This research also analyses to what extent her behaviour and emotional and sexual confidence conforms to post-feminist theories.

Women and men are represented in certain ways in the media and stereotyping plays a key role. Stereotypes as mentioned earlier are based on "repeated description and ideas or stands for a set of people and is supposed to typify that set" (Dimbley & Burton n.d:181). The media use these stereotypes to communicate their messages as it is "easier to represent a stereotype than to describe and build a full character" (Dimbley & Burton n.d:181). This can be related to the constructionist theory of representation mentioned earlier as the media's representation of gender roles become "cultural signifiers rather than reflect gender definitions, meanings and identities" (Hall 1997:346). Thus, these stereotypes are used by producers as a "short-hand reference to specific cultural perceptions" (Hall 1997:346).

The reasons for the media representing gender roles in these ways can also be attributed to dominant ideology. The media "constructs, presents and even dictates what 'reality' is as well as what is 'normal' and 'natural' (Karam cited in Fourie: 2008:317). This can be related to the Marxist concept of ideology as it is the producers and media organisations which "control the means of producing and circulating a society's ideas" (Hall 1997: 347). These ideologies are shown to be so natural that society recognises these as real and does not challenge or question them and has been labelled as "ideological domination" (Hall 1997:348).

The main aim of the media is to sell a product, to gain profit, attract advertisers and garner a large audience. Thus, in order to achieve this, the media continually feeds the audience with certain positive or negative gender stereotypes which allows people to believe and associate these characteristics with women and men. The images of femininity and masculinity become inbred in audience members who will find it difficult to form their own opinions after being force-fed these constant gender representations.

The media uses various mediums to represent these gender stereotypes including film, television, advertisements and magazines. Even though there is a percentage of television programs that steer away from stereotypical behaviour, “in general, television tends to epitomise the stereotypes of men as being macho and often aggressive and the stereotypes of women as being beautiful but submissive or scheming” (Karam cited in Fourie 2008:321-322). Magazine content tries to empower women by providing details on being independent in relation to houses and cars however remains stagnant in its stereotypical content which focuses on the home, appearance and finding and keeping love. Advertisements represent women in two stereotypical ways. One being “beautiful, dutiful, subordinate, submissive, faithful or domesticated women” and the other represents women as “sluts, prostitutes, unfaithful wives and negligent caregivers” or portraying women in other manipulative ways (Karam cited in Fourie 2008:323).

These stereotypes are used constantly in *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*. Their appearance and expected behaviour are taken into account when casting as the producers know that the audience will recognise and identify with these characters. This research analyses the various contestants in order to see how many stereotypical characters there are and to what extent they impact the show.

3.2.5– Sex Role Stereotyping

The theoretical framework which will be used to analyse and observe various data throughout chapter 5 and 6 centres around gender representation thus this section will provide more detail and background to this theory. Stereotypes and the behaviour traditionally associated with both masculinity and femininity have been discussed in great detail by various researchers. According to Macdonald (1995:13), “the concept of the stereotype is used to

criticize the reduction of the three-dimensional quality of the real to a one-dimensional and distorted form” and when the “group being stereotyped is already in a disadvantaged position, the stereotype intensifies the offence”. Moreover, and as mentioned earlier, a “gender stereotype consists of beliefs about the psychological traits and characteristics of, as well the activities appropriate to, men or women” (Brannon: 2000).

Gender consists of many stereotypical physical, mental and emotional characteristics which are associated with both masculinity and femininity. In addition “gender stereotypes are highly prescriptive and the qualities they ascribe to women and men tend also to be the ones required of women and men” (Prentice & Carranza 2002:269). The gender stereotypical characteristics and traits noted by various researchers will be used in order to ascertain the behaviour of Gillian and the thirty bachelors and in turn define the interactions between them throughout this season of *The Bachelorette*.

These characteristics and qualities stem back the early 19th Century and relate to research conducted by BEM (1974). This research relates to the gender and sex role identity components which were “designed to develop a trait-based measure of individual differences in the internalization of societal gender prescriptions” (Prentice & Carranza 2002:269). According to the BEM Sex Role Inventory (1981 cited in Prentice & Carranza 2002:269), there are 20 characteristics that typically describe both women and men.

The feminine characteristics include “affectionate, cheerful, childlike, compassionate, does not use harsh language, eager to soothe hurt feelings, feminine, flatterable, gentle, gullible, loves children, loyal, sensitive to the needs of others, shy, soft-spoken, sympathetic, tender, understanding, warm and yielding”. Appendix 9.1 highlights the Cult of True Womanhood components which states that the four main virtues include ‘piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity (Welter: 1978 cited in Brannon 2000:161).

Furthermore, there are models of masculinity which focus on the characteristics and qualities ideally associated with men. The BEM Sex Role Inventory states the twenty most common characteristics associated with men. The “masculine characteristics are: acts as a leader, aggressive, ambitious, analytical, assertive, athletic, competitive, defends own beliefs, dominant, forceful, has leadership abilities, independent, individualistic, makes decisions

easily, masculine, self-reliant, self-sufficient, strong personality, willing to take a stand and willing to take risks” (Prentice & Carranza 2002:269-270).

BEM’s Male gender role identity component is one of the main models which states that in order for man to be seen as successful and true to the role he should embody all the qualities and characteristics. These traits or components can be found in appendix 9.2 and are classified under four fields namely “no sissy stuff, big wheel, sturdy oak and give ‘em hell” (Brannon 2000:174) which will be described in more detail and linked to various examples during the analysis chapters.

The components of masculinity and femininity mentioned above will be described and linked to various examples during the course of this analytical chapter. Each component will be used to observe the behaviour of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* and the thirty female and male contestants on both reality dating shows.

3.3 – Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the various representation and gender theories related to this research and the way in which they play a key role in the analysis of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*. The above research and discussion highlight the way in which the media uses stereotypes in order to reinforce existing views of masculinity and femininity to the target audience therefore garnering and retaining a large viewership and in turn profits and ratings. It has reviewed research and literature relating to how feminists have explored media constructions of gender. Moreover, post-feminist theory was discussed in relation to the way in which the producers of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* reinforce pre-feminist ideas and provide snippets of the modern day independent woman. Finally social constructionism which discusses gatekeeping, agenda-setting and framing highlights the casting methods, manipulative and selective editing used in post-production used to frame cast members thus creating their personas. The next chapter will discuss the research design to be used for this study and the way in which elements of both quantitative and qualitative research design principles and methods will complement each other in order to produce a detailed and thorough analysis of the two seasons of this reality dating show.

Chapter 4

4.1 - Research Design

This proposal uses aspects from both the qualitative and quantitative research design methods. As this research involves analysis based on statistics and samplings from the shows, it is suitable to use both research designs as they will complement each other in achieving the necessary research and analysis.

Qualitative research is “concerned with developing ideas of social phenomena” (Hancock: 1998:2). The aim of this research design is to ask questions related to social aspects of society. This type of research aims to answer questions on a particular topic and in order to develop conclusions; extensive research and analysis are conducted using specific methods in order to provide answers that were not “predetermined” (Mack & Woodsong 2005:1). It is also usually subjective and contains much opinion and analysis of particular content. The inductive approach is used in this design as “data is used to develop concepts and theories that help us to understand the social world” (Hancock 1998:2). Mack & Woodsong (2005) also state that qualitative research is “effective in identifying intangible factors, such as social norms and gender roles, whose role in the research issue may not be readily apparent”. The main focus of this research is gender role stereotypes within the context of reality television and thus this approach has been used in the analysis.

Case study (Hancock: 1998) is one of the four kinds of qualitative research which has been used in this research proposal. It refers to an “in depth analysis of a single or small number of units” and for the purpose of this proposal, it is the “extended case study which traces events involving the same actors over a period of time enabling the analysis to reflect changes and adjustments” (Hancock 2002:6). Therefore, *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* are the units of analysis in which content samples of the show are analysed. Content includes events over 10-12 episodes of a season in which the behaviour of the same cast of characters is analysed in order to deduce whether or not gender role stereotypes are prevalent and to what extent these stereotypes are shaped by post-production and the broader political economy of reality

television. This is a very useful method as it “offers a richness and depth of information not usually offered by other methods” (Hancock 1998:6).

According to Borgatti (n.d), open coding is also a key factor as it is “the part of the analysis concerned with identifying, naming, categorizing and describing phenomena found in the text”. Lawrence Neuman (1994) finds that after extensive reading, open coding allows the researcher to narrow down the field of research by summarising and placing this information into various categories which allows various themes to develop. The coding scheme that follows is axial coding whereby the researcher analyses the previous codes whereby various themes arise and it is during this period that the researcher focuses on “causes and consequences, conditions and interactions, strategies and processes” (Lawrence Neuman 1994:408). The final scheme is selective coding which refers to the themes that have already been identified and uses this to compare and contrast this data (Lawrence Neuman: 1994).

In this research, samplings from various episodes are analysed according to the questions posed by this research. “In qualitative research, only a sample is selected for any given study” (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen *et al* 2005:5). For the purpose of this research, purposive sampling is used. This method “groups participants according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question” (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen *et al* 2005:5). Thus, this method of sampling is used together with analysis and review of secondary sources in order to conduct successful research.

Thus, the code schemes and sampling mentioned above are used and developed allowing specific themes to arise. These themes are then placed into further categories. These themes include the fairy-tale, stereotypical male and female characteristics and behaviour, emotional and sexual behaviour.

Qualitative research also includes searching for “patterns in data-recurrent behaviours, objects, or a body of knowledge” (Lawrence Neuman 1994: 411). Thus, this includes the behaviours and themes mentioned above and once these are identified, they are analysed according to the relevant theories.

Thus, it is imperative that one is constantly researching and reading secondary sources in order to provide answers to the key questions posed by the research at hand. The qualitative

research design is suitable as this research proposal focuses on the phenomenon of reality television and uses data analysis and other theories to develop existing research on the two very popular American reality dating shows. Through constant research, reading and analysing of secondary sources, it groups together both similarities and differences found whilst analysing the two shows and builds interrelationships between this data in order to develop theories and constantly refers back to the way in which these processes are linked to the questions posed by the research.

The above discussion has focused on the specific types of qualitative research design. The various aspects of this research design have been defined and discussed in relation to the topic at hand thus illustrating the way in which these aspects of qualitative research are best suited to this research.

The quantitative research design is the second methodological approach that is used for this research. Quantitative research design uses tables, charts and graphs filled with various units and variables to assist in understanding and analysing the data. Thus these techniques are used to “summarize its features, and interpret or give theoretical meaning to the results” (Lawrence Neuman 1994:283).

This research also uses a quantitative content analysis or textual coding which uses “objective and systematic counting and recording procedures to produce a quantitative description of the symbolic content in a text” (Lawrence Neuman 1994: 262). This is well suited to research that involves a large amount of text and thus suited to this research as *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* contains many lengthy episodes. Thus, tables are used to produce objective results. The units used for analysis can include themes, words or characters. In this research, it takes aspects such as contestants, their ages and occupations which are used in tables to produce statistics.

Sampling is a tool used in quantitative research by “sorting a collection of cases into two or more groups” which “if well done, lets a researcher measure variables on the smaller set of cases but generalize results accurately to all cases” (Lawrence Neuman 1994: 194). The sampling element that is used refers to “the unit of analysis or case in a population and it can be a person, a group, an organisation, a written document or symbolic message or even a social action” (Lawrence Neuman 1994:195). Thus, the units of study for the purposes of

this research are *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* and the male and female contestants. These categories will be divided further in order to define what is known as the sampling frame which consists of various elements to be studied within the case (Lawrence Neuman: 1994). These elements are used to construct coding categories which, in relation to this study, include the occupations, dress and hair colour. These are notated on a coding sheet. The information gained from the samples is known as statistics and they are used to estimate the parameters surrounding the case. Thus, the statistics from the sampling frame allow conclusions to be made about the kind of people who are cast in these shows and the standard or most regular characteristics featured on these shows. These statistics assist in analysing and understanding why producers constantly use the same format and types of people and how it helps the media to function as a whole mass communication system.

Another method is Ideal Types which are “models or mental abstractions of social relations or processes and are pure standards against which the data or ‘reality’ can be compared” (Lawrence Neuman: 1994:416-417). Thus, the ideal type in this research refers to the gender role stereotypes and the way in which society views femininity and masculinity. This method is used in conjunction with the method of agreement as the researcher “could develop an ideal type of a social process or relationship” which in this case would be gender roles within reality television “then compare specific cases to it” which would be *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* (Lawrence Neuman 1994:418-419).

Negative evidence is also an important factor within this analysis as “the nonappearance of something can reveal a great deal and provide valuable insights (Lawrence Neuman 1994:419). Within the context of this research, it is important to notice the absence of certain people or events. This is linked to the issue of homosexuality and the reason why there has never been a gay or lesbian Bachelor or Bachelorette and the issue of race mentioned earlier. There has never been a Bachelor or Bachelorette of colour and the percentage of contestants who are of colour is so small and sometimes non-existent. This reveals much about the pre-existing formats that *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* adhere to which in turn has negative consequences. People of colour who watch these shows will feel that they do not matter whilst producers and mass media systems continue to focus on representing the dominant ideologies within society to audience members which allows these to continue undermining the progress of a supposedly modern day world. The types of contestants which are cast and their characteristics reveal a lot about what type of contestants are not chosen which in turn

highlights the issues surrounding gender stereotypes mentioned earlier. Within these shows, the dates are centred around certain events and the types of events are usually male orientated whilst the one on one dates are romantic fairy-tales. Thus the absence of female-orientated events and the emphasis on the fairy-tale reveals a lot about the way in which these themes relate to stereotypical gender behaviours.

Thus, it is evident from the above information that the qualitative and quantitative research designs assist in analysing and understanding the data needed for this research.

4.2 - Methods of Data Collection

In order to conduct this research, I have used two primary sources. Firstly, I have watched season 15 of *The Bachelor* and season 5 of *The Bachelorette*.

As mentioned above, this study uses purposive sampling as a way of selecting episodes for analysis. Thus many aspects are taken from various episodes in order to make commentaries on the gender roles represented and the way in which these fit into the broader political economy of television. These aspects include important scenes and the conversations involved, music and sound effects used to accompany certain scenes and other important signs, objects and events.

Viewing the episodes is vital to the overall conclusions that are made. The coding schemes mentioned earlier are closely linked to sampling. From the samples, tables are drawn up based on different criteria and used in the analysis to draw certain conclusions relating to gender roles and stereotypes.

Secondly, I have read, analysed and referenced from secondary sources such as relevant literature and journals in order to substantiate the points made and their relation to the theories. Interviews with people who are closely linked to the research topic are also a key aspect in the qualitative research design and are used in this study. Interviews are usually “useful for getting the story behind a participant’s experiences (McNamara: 1999). Thus, a content analysis of existing interviews with important cast members from the two seasons and statements made by reality show producers will be used in this research proposal. It is not possible to conduct these personally, thus the study will rely on these to add to the analysis and discussion. These interviews are taken from the official sites of the cast

members and talk shows and are thus readily available. These highlight how certain cast members feel about the way in which their characters were stereotyped and the producers reasons behind post-production and editing. These interviews cannot be seen as completely trustworthy and they can be viewed as performative texts as they could have been edited or constructed for specific purposes. The producers could use these to continue to construct identities for the contestants and to garner large viewership for the show. Thus, the information and the comments that stem from these interviews cannot be proven and are limited to some extent.

4.3 - Analysis Methods

There are several techniques which can be used to analyse data. However, it is important to use the methods which closely relate to the type of research being conducted and those that will compliment this research. There are three methods which I have used to analyse data. These methods are linked and include multi-modal techniques, content analysis of secondary sources and institutional analysis.

4.3.1 - Content Analysis

Lawrence Neuman (1994:260) defines content analysis as the “technique for gathering and analysing the content of text” which refers to “words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes or any message that can be communicated”. Thus, for this research proposal, the text is *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*. As stated above, samples of each episode are notated, coded and analysed.

As mentioned earlier, internet interviews conducted with cast members from the relevant seasons of the two shows are used as a means to understanding their views on how they are edited to represent certain roles and highlights the fact that the negative or positive reputations that they have incurred as a result of this show may not be true reflections of who they are. However it is not possible to state with certainty that these sources are accurate as this research could not access original footage and behind the scenes decisions were not witnessed first hand.

These interviews attempt to reveal the true feelings of the cast and provide further insight into the way in which editing and post-production techniques play a key role in labeling and stereotyping their characters however it is not known as to whether these sources are being displayed in certain ways, manufactured or edited in order to enhance the shows image further.

4.3.2 - Multimodal Approach

The Bachelor and *The Bachelorette* can be classified as multimodal texts which are “concerned with texts which contain the interaction and integration of two or more semiotic resources – or ‘modes’ of communication – in order to achieve the communicative functions of the text” (O’Halloran & Smith n.d: 2). These resources can include images, sound such as music, gaze, production and dress (O’Halloran & Smith: n.d). Kress (1998:57) states that television uses so many of these modes that it takes a high degree of knowledge to be able to mould them and “orchestrate them to accord with his or her design”. Thus, the modes of texts which convey verbal messages and secondly the addition of sound and images address people using different forms of communications and this can produce “different takes on the world, different images of the world, and different dispositions by their users-whether as text producers or as text-consumers-towards the world” (Kress:1998:72). Thus, this is linked to the way in which producers use the sounds, music, dress, camera angles and verbal messages and arrange them accordingly in order to represent characters and gender roles in specific ways. Kress (1998:72) reiterates this when he states that “the screen is the new space of representation. How it will be organised-as a largely visual entity or as a largely linguistic entity-will have far reaching consequences”. Therefore, reality show stars incur the negative consequences during and after the production of the show as their roles are created and stereotyped in various ways in order to fit in with larger economic variables.

This proposal analyses each of these multi-modal aspects found within *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* using the various methodologies of semiotics and discusses the way in which they are integrated and work together to form the entire text.

Semiotics “is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign and involves the study not only of what we refer to as ‘signs’ in everyday speech, but of anything which ‘stands for’ something else” and can “take the form of words, images, sounds, gestures and objects” (Chandler 2002:2). Semiotics is a good way of exploring and understanding the connotations

of a text. This is well suited to this research as many conversations are analysed and the connotations of their words and the way they express themselves will be used to understand and contribute to the gender role representation within these two shows. The structuralist semiotics approach and the post structuralist approach can be related to this research. The structuralist approach can be defined as “seeking to delineate the codes and rules which underlie the production of texts by comparing those perceived as belonging to the same system and identifying invariant constituent units” (Chandler 2002:243) whilst the post structuralist approach can be defined as the “deconstruction, emphasising the instability of the relationship between the signifier and the signified and the way in which the dominant ideology seeks to promote the illusion of a transcendental signified” (Chandler 2002:237). These approaches are suited to this research as they are concerned with the way in which the various elements of the texts work together to create meaning.

For this research based on *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, the social and textual codes are analysed. These are analysed using various semiotic methodologies. Social codes include verbal language and bodily codes which focus on appearance, facial expression, gestures and bodily contact, commodity codes which focus on clothing and dress and behavioural codes which include role-playing and games. When analysing certain images in these two shows, it is important to note the “signifying functions of: postures, expressions and gestures: the associations evoked by depicted objects and settings and relationships with accompanying text” (Chandler 2002:164). Therefore, when analysing images within *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, the gestures made between people and the settings will be analysed together with their conversations. In the context of these shows, romantic dates and group or intimate conversations are used and the settings and the choice of language used assists in understanding how all these elements work together to create gender role perceptions.

Textual codes include the genre and mass media codes including televisual techniques and the technical and conventional format of the text. Genre is a difficult concept as many forms of media contain sub genres. Other textual codes which are used to analyse the genre include characterisation which is the use of stereotypical and similar characters and behaviours, subject matter, settings and the use of iconography whereby the show uses images, dress, décor and familiar dialogues which have fixed connotations attached to them thus emphasising certain concepts and themes (Chandler: 2002). The romantic dates in *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* always involve beautiful settings, expensive jewellery,

designer dresses, gourmet food and romantic music. This reveals the way in which romance and the fairy-tale are the dominant themes within this genre of the dating show. These choices are also analysed and discussed in relation to modes of address and the way in which the target audience, class, race and gender influence the format, casting and post-production decisions.

Denotation and connotation are used to describe the literal meaning and the meaning that is implied or suggested by the text and which is influenced by social, cultural and personal factors and are referred to as the ‘levels of meaning and levels of representation’ (Chandler 2002:140). Codes are used in conjunction with denotation and connotation. Thus, connotation can be influenced by the expression and tone used and the “codes to which the interpreter has access” (Chandler 2002:142) and cultural codes are a good example of the way in which a person’s cultural beliefs and attitudes can influence the interpretation of meaning within the text. These semiotic methodologies are used within a qualitative research design as it focuses on the analysis of various aspects of phenomena. In the context of this research, denotation and connotation analysis are used to ascertain the deeper meanings of words and phrases used in conversations and interviews and how these construct meaning in relation to gender role construction, stereotypical behaviour and the themes of romantic love mentioned earlier. Connotation will also be used to analyse the symbolism behind the rose which is used throughout these two reality shows and how it represents more than meets the eye which will be discussed further in chapter 6.

Sound is also important when analysing texts as it “is not only the visual image which is mediated, constructed and codified in the various media” (Chandler 2002:170). There are many codes involved in the audio-visual aspects of a text. This research focuses on the sound choices namely the diegetic sound which emanates from the events and action in the show and the non-diegetic sounds which are dubbed or simulated (Chandler: 2002). *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*’s use of diegetic sounds is related to the use of music with lyrics and melodies which assist with the storyline such as a romantic love song playing whilst the couple is on a date which adds to the fairy-tale romance theme or a break-up song playing whilst the heart-broken and rejected contestant is driven away in the limousine. Simulated sounds are also being taken into account when analysing the shows. These additional sounds could be added to allude to certain happenings which the viewer cannot see which could be seen as manipulative editing and post-production methods.

Encoding and decoding play a role in understanding and analysing how these codes interact within these texts. Decoding refers to “the interpretation and evaluation of the meaning with reference to relevant codes” (Chandler 2002:175) whilst encoding refers to “foregrounding some meanings and back grounding others” (Chandler 2002: 229). Modes of address also play a role when analysing a text as the producers have positioned the readers in certain ways so that they understand the preferred reading. Thus “in order to communicate, a producer of any text must make some assumptions about an intended audience; reflections of such assumptions may be discerned in the text” (Chandler 2002:180). Thus, these assumptions are made in relation to dominant ideologies relating to issues such as race, class and gender (Chandler: 2002). This research ascertains to what extent stereotypical gender role behaviour is represented in *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* and the way in which the absence of certain races and classes is related to these dominant ideologies and what this says about society. Thus, these dominant ideologies “exist only in relation to interpretative practices and are constructed through the use of signs” (Chandler 2002: 180). Thus, the position of the reader is assessed by the producer and thus this text also analyses from this point of view in order to understand the code, genre and format that these texts use. This is also discussed in the discourse analysis below.

Thus, the semiotic signs and codes mentioned above are used to analyse and understand the multi-modality of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*.

Another method of multimodal analysis that is used for this research is critical discourse analysis. This method uses similar techniques to semiotics and some of them may overlap however they are both used in this research to deconstruct and analyse *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*.

This can be defined as the “exploration of the interplay between discourse, text and context which builds the focus of the discourse analysis” (Bondarouk & Ruel: 2004). This method also emphasises that “people use language to construct accounts, or versions of the social world” (Bondarouk & Ruel: 2004). Thus, this research analyses the samplings from the two shows and discusses the context of the language and how it reflects the themes and concepts relating to dominant ideologies within society.

Deconstruction is a useful method within critical discourse analysis as it “attempts to take apart texts and see how they are constructed in such a way to present particular images of

people and their actions” (Burr 1995: 164). As mentioned earlier within the discussion on semiotics, samplings are used and deconstructed using the analysis of discourses method which can focus on discourses such as *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* where issues of gender and sexuality are “examined and their identity and power implications brought to the fore” (Burr 1995:166). This too involves the analysis of the subject position mentioned earlier.

The identification of interpretive repertoires within critical discourse analysis uses interviews or conversations to assist in the research analysis. This research uses samplings of conversations and internet interviews with both cast members and reality show producers. These repertoires are important for the analysis as by listening and analysing these conversations and interviews, the repetition of various themes, grammatical constructions or figures of speech can be used to determine the way in which “respondents can be expected to make use of different repertoires to suit their current purposes” (Burr 1995:177). Thus, this research focuses on the use of repeated phrases or themes that contestant’s use which emphasise certain concepts and ideas relating to gender roles, stereotypes and casting decisions and how these all contribute to the overall format and concept of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*.

4.3.3 - Institutional Analysis

An institutional analysis can be defined as “antithetical” and “focuses on a groups collective behaviour within a media institution” (Cathey 2009:no page). Chomsky states that “if you want to understand the media or any other institution, you begin by asking questions about the internal institutional structure. And you ask about their setting in the broader society” (Chomsky 2007: no page). This is linked to the way in which they are associated with other powerful institutions and the decisions made are due to these power relations.

This research explains the hierarchy of the media and the way in which ownership, finance and control are linked to the decisions made by television production companies and producers specifically in relation to *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*.

The two shows are produced by Mike Fleiss and Lisa Levenson for Next Entertainment Telepictures Productions and they are broadcast on The American Broadcasting Company better known as ABC.

As previously mentioned, Dimbley & Burton (n.d:162) state that the media is “made up of, run by and controlled by organisations which are described as institutions” which in turn make up the mass communication systems. Thus, they have a lot of control and power as they are responsible for selling products, running production systems and most have similar institutions and shares in other local and overseas companies.

However, the production and broadcast of any television show involves ownership, finance and control and thus “media messages come from somewhere, and must be paid for by someone” (Dimbley & Burton n.d:172). Due to the above mentioned factors, large media corporations produce content that they feel will garner a large audience and in turn produce profit therefore they will “produce material, which, in order to have a mass appeal, works to a formula” (Dimbley & Burton n.d:173). America is particularly concerned with promoting products and entertainment and use highly successful and effective marketing strategies.

Advertising is a key factor in the media world and it is the reason behind many decisions thus “commercial television couldn’t exist without advertising” (Dimbley & Burton n.d:190).

All the above mentioned factors will be taken into account when discussing the impact that these issues have on the final content that is broadcast to the audience.

4.4 Conclusion

The above chapter has discussed the various research designs and data analysis methods which are used in the analysis of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*. Qualitative and quantitative research design methods are used as both contain specific methods necessary to accurately discuss and analyse these two seasons of reality television. Moreover, the content and institutional analyses together with the multi-modal approach are used to gather information and create detailed observations related to concepts around gender and post-production and the relation between them. The following chapter will focus on the

contradictions found within the representation of masculinity and femininity in season 15 of *The Bachelor* and season 5 of *The Bachelorette*.

Chapter 5

Contradictions in the Representation of Gender in *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*

5.1: Contextual Background

The Bachelor and *The Bachelorette* are two reality television shows that were first introduced in 2002. The show has a familiar format whereby one man and one woman are chosen to fulfil the role of the bachelor and the bachelorette, an opportunity to choose from a pool of 25-30 eligible contestants in the hope of getting engaged by the end of the journey. At the end of each episode, a rose ceremony takes place whereby a certain number of the contestants are offered roses and the opportunity to stay whilst the others are eliminated. In the end the bachelor and the bachelorette can only choose one person who he/she will propose to and he/she will accept if they feel the same way.

Brad Womack is the star of this fifteenth season of *The Bachelor*. He is a 38 year old bar owner from Austin, Texas. This season is described by host Chris Harrison as the most controversial yet as this is not the first time that Brad has taken on the role of the Bachelor. Three years previously, he was *The Bachelor* yet he decided not to pick either of the two remaining girls in the finale, leaving them both heartbroken. This controversy left America both confused and angry that he would not give either of the two ladies a chance yet now he is back to try and find love a second time around.

The Bachelorette season 5 centres around Gillian Harris who is a 29 year old interior decorator from Alberta, Canada. She was the third runner up in season 9 of *The Bachelor* and was sent home heartbroken. She is back to embark on this journey for the second time in order to find true love.

The show includes thirty bachelors and bachelorettes from all over America who are introduced to the Bachelor and Bachelorette and the possibility of finding true love. The

contestants are chosen from thousands of entrants and thus stem from various backgrounds, occupations, cities and towns.

Chris Harrison has been the host of both *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* since its inception in 2002.

5.2 Contradictory Themes

This chapter examines the representation of gender in season 15 of *The Bachelor* and season 5 of *The Bachelorette* by observing various examples in order to fully understand the way both genders are displayed to the audience. After evaluating and reviewing all episodes, extracting specific themes from the content and tabulating the data in relation to these topics, the main argument that emerges foregrounds the contradictions generated within gender representation. Consequently, the bachelor Brad portrays the image of the new metrosexual man who is in touch with his emotions and feels comfortable revealing his vulnerability yet he also represents the stereotypical and more superficial view of masculinity. Theories relating to masculinity and the representation of the new metrosexual man will be used to explore and analyse these contradictions thus showcasing the way in which Brad is displayed as the ultimate provider and protector as well as representing his new ability to express his emotions and display the modern day version of masculinity.

This chapter will show the way in which the bachelorette Gillian portrays the image of the new improved female who thrives on independence and success while at the same time representing a different and more superficial view of femininity. Post-feminist theory will be used to explore and analyse these contradictions thus showcasing the way in which Gillian is displayed as incomplete without a husband as well as freely promoting her independence.

These contradictory representations are constructed by the producers and the advertisers so that the audience will connect with their characters. This chapter will discuss the way in which reality producers and advertisers construct an identity for the bachelor Brad and the bachelorette Gillian that matches the vision and format the audience is familiar with. The identities are altered and certain characteristics are highlighted more than others in order to please advertisers and generate revenue. Furthermore, this chapter also examines the 30 male

and female contestants by using content and data from the season in order to accurately analyse their behaviour and the overall representation of masculinity and femininity. The lengthy analysis of their behaviour and characterisation highlights contradictions in the general portrayal of masculinity and femininity as findings present both a backlash to and a substantiation of the stereotypical male and female. Thus, post-feminist theory together with gender representation theory related to the new modern and metrosexual man will be used thus providing a lens through which gender and the various contradictions to the norm can be both scrutinised and problematized.

5.2.1 - The Bachelor – Brad and the male contestants - Expressing emotion

Episode one of The Bachelor reveals Brad Womack who affirms that the man he used to be was the reason that he could not commit to a woman, he announces that he is a changed man and has thus returned to the show. He describes his former self as commitment phobic and thus unable to open his heart to a woman. He was defeated after the end of the previous Bachelor journey and describes himself as being “a broken man” (The Bachelor: S15: E1:2011). According to Womack, who consulted a therapist after the show, “I did not want to admit that I just needed help” (The Bachelor: S15:E1:2011). The root of his trust issues stem from his relationship or lack of with his father, and “for the majority of my life I have been a very very closed off individual only because I want to push people away before they can hurt me” (The Bachelor: S15 E1:2011). Moreover, he openly admits that “all that tough guy stuff is just a facade and it took a lot of therapy and a lot of time but I have learnt that the only way I am truly going to fall in love is to be vulnerable, to open up my heart” (The Bachelor: S15 E1:2011). He reiterates this later when he reveals to host Chris Harrison that “I tried to put up this tough façade and this unemotional real tough guy, I am anything but that” (The Bachelor: S15 E1: 2011). There is a definite change in the characteristics he used to portray and the ones he represents now as a new changed man. As shown from the above examples, he mentions many times that he wanted to portray the tough masculine exterior that is traditionally associated with masculinity. Thus, the man Brad used to be is clearly indicative of ‘the sturdy oak’ thus exhibiting the stereotypical male characteristics of being emotionally guarded, tough, independent and strong (Brannon: 2000).

This is juxtaposed with the description and affirmations of the changed man he describes himself to be who is open and vulnerable to finding love on this journey. Brad expresses his desire to find a woman and a wife, his ability to open up his heart and express his feelings many times during the course of this season. Womack's constant reiteration of lines such as "I want to find somebody" (The Bachelor S15 E2:2011), "I don't want to end up alone" (The Bachelor S15 E2:2011) and "never in a million years has my heart been this open to falling in love" (The Bachelor S15 E9:2011) illustrates Brad's desire to find a wife, his vision of a future with one of the remaining women, his hope to propose to one of them and his fear of ending up alone.

Brad also displays a lot of emotion when seeing his family for the first time since the beginning of the journey. He cries intensely, unable to contain his emotions revealing that these are "happy tears, I just couldn't control it" (The Bachelor S15 E11:2011). This illustrates Brad's varied characteristics and behaviour created by the producers as this behaviour is indicative of the male gender identity role component known as 'no sissy stuff' which states that men never cry (Brannon: 2000).

According to Lindsay (1990:163), "if intimacy and self –disclosure are seen as feminine qualities which men must disavow, men learn to conceal their emotions" then the above mentioned observations illustrate characteristics which highlight the more emotional side to his character. Furthermore his fear of not finding a partner is indicative of his strong need for security. Brad is representative of "the 'new' man" who emerged from a more contemporary movement and view of masculinity which stems back to the 1970's and 1980's. These men were different to the men who "actively suppressed and dominated their wives and daughters and saw them as their property" thus the "new man did not repress his emotions" (Karam in Fourie 2008:313). These examples and data indicate gender characteristics traditionally associated with femininity or the modern man which the producers have highlighted in these particular scenes.

However, sometimes Brad is afraid to fully open his heart to the women disclosing that "it's a huge internal struggle for me but I want to move forward, that's all I care about. The only way I'm truly going to fall in love is to be vulnerable, to open up my heart" (The Bachelor S15 E5:2011). There are a few instances when it seems that the emotional intensity, jealousy and drama related to the women and the feelings he has to deal with can be too overwhelming

leaving him defeated, intimidated, nervous or tempted to close off and become the man he used to be at times. This is evident when he makes statements such as “my first instinct would be to close off and not hurt a single woman but I can’t allow myself to do that” (The Bachelor S15 E5:2011) and “it makes me worried that I may get hurt” (The Bachelor S15 E6:2011) and “I’m defeated, I’m completely defeated” (The Bachelor S15 E11:2011). These examples are indicative of Brad’s temptation to revert back to the unemotional man he used to be thus highlighting contradictory gender behaviour of a new modern man versus a man with a tough exterior. In addition, his behaviour contradicts the traits listed under ‘the big wheel’ as these observations are not representative of the qualities of self-confidence and dominance which are traditionally associated with the masculine gender role. (Brannon: 2000).

Brannon (1976 cited in Lindsay 1990:162) describes the fourth definition of masculinity as the ‘Macho Man’ which highlights “an emphasis on sexual prowess and sexual conquests”. In this season of the show, Brad kisses a large majority of the women as he wants to explore every possibility with each woman which advocates this gender component. However, during other scenes he verbalises the importance of enjoying a relationship at a certain pace which in turn emphasises the significance of intimacy. According to Womack “if I am dating a woman, I take things really slowly” (The Bachelor S15: E: 2011) which does not conform to the above mentioned sexual behaviour associated with men.

The producers have constructed an identity for Brad which consists of both stereotypical male characteristics and those associated with the modern man. D’acci’s study (1994) of US crime drama *Cagney and Lacey* discusses the juxtaposed arguments surrounding the depiction of men and women in television by questioning the characteristics and roles to be associated with each gender. Can women be represented as strong, independent, successful women with professions usually associated with men? And how do audiences react to and understand these images? These arguments question what the role of men and women should or should not be in society and the way in which advertisers and producers support content which is familiar to the audience and which is associated with gender stereotypes.

This explains the reasons behind the producers desire to represent Brad as the stereotypical male as well as the modern man. The fear of losing advertising and revenue prevents them straying too far from a format that has achieved success. This is reinforced by D’acci (1994

cited in McCabe & Akass n.d :111) by stating that “gender is so deeply ingrained in television practices and conventions that it ‘is produced at the level of the overall production process – in the myriad imperatives that directly govern the construction of audiences and programs’”. The advertisers direct the content as “to understand the prevalence of traditional gender roles in programming, magazine copy and other media, we need only ask what is in the best interest of advertisers”.

Thus, it is evident from the above analysis that there are contradictions in the way that Brad is presented as a new modern man in touch with his emotions and the ever present stereotypical masculine behaviours that the producers have decided to highlight in relation to his representation.

This section will now highlight the contradictory behaviour displayed by the male contestants. Data and content analysis has revealed that whilst some of the men are comfortable expressing their vulnerability, others are emotionally restrained. Various examples are used from the content and data from this season of *The Bachelorette* and gender representation theory, elements and components mentioned in the beginning of this chapter in order to analyse and discuss this juxtaposition.

As mentioned in chapter 3, the ‘sturdy oak’ component comprises of characteristics such as “unemotional, hides emotions, not excitable in a minor crisis and able to separate feelings from ideas” (Brannon 2000: 174). Within this season of *The Bachelorette*, there are men that conform to this model and there are others that deviate from it indicating a contradiction.

There are many examples which substantiate these findings as some men find it difficult to express their emotions. Ed demonstrates stereotypical masculine behaviour when he reveals “I don’t open up easily and I’m guarded. I don’t do this stuff” (*The Bachelorette* S5 E3:2009) whilst Robbie states “I surprised myself, I did not know I was so emotionally committed. I don’t usually show too many emotions” (*The Bachelorette* S5 S5:2009) and according to Mark “I am my own worst enemy when it comes to relationships” (*The Bachelorette* S5 E4:2009). During the final episode, Kipton disguises his vulnerability by stating “I am a man and I will have to get through this” (*The Bachelorette* S5 E11:2009). This also refers to the ‘sturdy oak’ component as it is evident from this statement that he refuses to succumb to his emotions whilst remaining tough on the exterior thus he feels that as a man he is able to

“separate feelings from ideas” (Brannon 2000:174). Gillian describes Kipton as a ‘softy’ and he himself confirms this representation. This in itself is an indication that he is not always representative of the stereotypical male as most men would never admit to being anything less than tough on the exterior.

Many of the men do not find it difficult to express their emotions or their desire for marriage or a long term relationship. There are many instances whereby the men feel they are able to openly express their emotions. According to Kipton “I see Gillian as the type of person I could be in a relationship with” (The Bachelorette: episode 4:8:45, “I would definitely ask her to marry me”, I believe in my heart I am the better guy for her”, “if it is meant to be in the end, it will just be her and I” (The Bachelorette S5 E11:2009) and finally “I can see myself marrying her” (The Bachelorette S5 E11:2009). David is also able to show a more sensitive and emotional side when he reveals that he “truly feels a connection, I mean it from the bottom of my heart”. In episode 6, Jake says “I am one of those guys, when I love, I love so hard” (The Bachelorette S5 E6:2009).

Therefore, on the whole, “males are socialised to hide their emotions, whereas females are expected openly to admit and display their feelings” (Frieze *et al*: 1978 in Gunter 1986:12). The above observations reveal the contradictions in the representation of masculinity. Most of the men display a much higher level of emotional behaviour thus displaying behaviour associated with femininity. This is juxtaposed to some of the men who feel uncomfortable expressing their emotions and cannot allow themselves to become completely vulnerable thus displaying elements of the ‘sturdy oak’ whilst others are happy to follow their hearts and express their inner feelings and true desires which is more indicative of the characteristics of females who are associated with being emotional.

5.2.2 Gillian and the female contestants- Desire to find a husband vs. Independence

The aim of this section is to ascertain the extent to which Gillian and the female contestants of *The Bachelor* display behaviour which embodies strength, confidence and independence or that which embodies dependence, need and reliance on a man. This will be observed using

gender, feminist and post-feminist theory which are closely linked in order to provide both a detailed and exploratory analysis.

According to McRobbie (cited in Gennaro: 2007:251), post-feminism is based on what has become known as the ‘double entanglement’ which “comprises the co-existence of neo-conservative values in relation to gender, sexuality and family life...with processes of liberalization in regard to choice and diversity in domestic, sexual, and kinship relations”. There are many examples which exemplify the above statement. During the very first episode, Gillian presents herself as a strong and independent woman by making statements such as “I have been waiting for Mr Right to come along for a while, feels great that now I can take matters into my own hands and find him myself” (The Bachelorette S5 E1:2009). This is very interesting as this focuses on the role that the bachelorette has in this show and the way in which she is given the opportunity to hand pick her future husband thereby strengthening the idea of the changing role that women play in society today. Women are free to choose their own career, earn their own salary and now Gillian is able to turn the tables around and choose the man of her dreams too.

There are many examples which highlight Gillian as a confident and independent woman. During a few side interviews, the audience is able to see a more independent side of Gillian as she expresses her obsession with providing financial security for herself during her youth thereby emphasising her strength and her belief that she “does not need to be a trophy wife” (The Bachelorette S5 E5:2009). This indicates that at certain times in her life, she has emulated the new pro feminist woman of the twenty-first century whose focus is to be independent and not reliant on a man.

The men view Gillian as highly independent and successful as seen by their comments in various side interviews. Jesse describes her as “independent, decisive, attractive, great sense of humour” (The Bachelorette S5 E5:2009) and in a later episode as “successful, super independent and has her own house” (The Bachelorette S5 E7:2009). These examples highlight the way in which she defies the stereotypical dependent behaviour associated with women thus foregrounding the “no sissy stuff” element categorised under the male gender role identity component (Brannon 2000:174).

According to Gerhard (2005:37), “women, if they so choose can work, talk, and ‘have sex’ like men while still maintaining all the privileges associated with being an attractive woman”. This can be closely related to the way in which Gillian is presented as the bachelorette. In many ways, she is shown as vibrant, confident and independent with a successful career and she is now free to explore romance with thirty men. In this way, she embodies a confident woman who is able to take control of any situation thus enjoying the freedom to explore just as men have always enjoyed due to the rise of feminism.

Feminism gave rise to both first and second wave feminism however it was the latter that ensured that not only certain classes and individuals were empowered by collective groups and various classes thus becoming known for ‘women’s liberation’. Second wave feminism emphasised the way in which “male power is exercised and reinforced through ‘personal’ institutions such as marriage, child-rearing and sexual practices” (Tozzi: 2007). Therefore it was this branch of feminism that highlighted a new aspect of femininity namely that of female sexuality which was discussed in the previous section and will be discussed further in chapter 7.

A key question which is strongly linked to the above statement and standardised format of this reality dating show proposes “does ABC’s *Bachelorette* provide audiences with a new feminist icon: a real and thoroughly modern woman, comfortable with her own sexuality, empowered by the ability to pick her mate?” (Brophy-Baerman 2005:24).

However, this idea is juxtaposed and contradicted by the way in which Gillian accepts the show format which allows the man to propose even though she is the woman in control of her own destiny. The word ‘accept’ is very significant as it implies that in fact the man is in control and that he will be the one to propose to her. There is a disparity between Gillian as the liberated and self-determining woman in control of choosing her dream man and the engagement whereby the man she chooses gets down on one knee to propose. Thus, even though *The Bachelorette* is supposed to allow the woman the opportunity to be in control, it merely makes “the single female appear more desperate than the cool and collected men” and allows the “men a lot more power and agency in the process” (Gray 2009 cited in Murray & Ouellette n.d:265).

If this show really offers a woman the chance to empower herself and her future by taking control of the situation, why does she not get the opportunity to propose herself yet instead succumb to the conventional behaviour that is associated with a proposal. Klewin (2007:74), whose research is based on both *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, substantiates this issue and voices her concern by stating that “an image of women as strong and independent in their own right was rejected in favour of patriarchic tradition; what is worse, this occurred on a television series that was aimed at *reversing* patriarchy and urging gender equality”.

Gillian does assert control during each rose ceremony by standing in front of the remaining men, roses in hand, she is able to make a decision on which men she would like to keep and which she would like to send home. In this way, she is in control of her voyage to find love whilst the men are at her mercy. However, at the same time, this show and the way in which Gillian is represented reinforces the “social norms it critiques by placing such a heavy influence on finding the right guy to settle down with and marry” (Gennaro: 2007:251).

There are several examples of the way in which Gillian is prepared to sacrifice her independence in order to find and secure the right man. During numerous conversations Gillian gives her power away by expressing her desire to move to another city for a man and compromise in order to share her life with someone. According to Gillian, “it is hard for me to say this because I am such a huge career girl but I want to put my life in someone else’s hands” (*The Bachelorette*: S5 E1:2009). Thus, in this way she promotes the idea of becoming dependant on a man and in the process losing the independence associated with being a woman in today’s society. Her overall commitment to finding a husband is emphasised by statements such as I threw away everything that I had for the possibility to find love, like everything” (*The Bachelorette* S5 E5:2009).

Gillian’s insecurities are foregrounded further when she questions her class status and whether she would be able to live up to the expectations set by the men and their families (*The Bachelorette* S5 S7:2009). This demonstrates her insecurities which can be compared to the independent confident women we see in other episodes. This is further reinforced by expressions such as “I want to thank you guys for making me feel so special, beautiful and loved” (*The Bachelorette* S5 E8:2009) and “I am going to find somebody that loves me” (*The Bachelorette* S5 E8:2009).

Gillian's family refers to one of the remaining men as almost perfect for "allowing her to have that freedom and independence" with her job. (*The Bachelorette* S5 E11:2009). This is a very interesting statement as it again indicates that Gillian is a very independent woman and she is looking for a man who would give her the freedom to embrace her liberation. This suggests that she wants to break free from the traditional characteristics given to a woman. However, the word "allowing" is also very descriptive as it indicates that many women are restricted by men with regard to the amount of independence that they are given and in turn some are not in control of their own independence or their relationships. Instead their independence and confidence is measured by the man in their lives and most are given the traditional female role to fulfil which they accept whether they want to or not.

Thus, Gillian's behaviour and her need to find love and eventually a husband is indicative of the way in which women are being presented on television today. Shows such as these convince the audience that "women consider this opportunity more important than anything else in their lives. Their degrees, careers and loved ones are marginalized for their chance to accomplish what is being touted as women's primary objective, marriage" (Grey: 264). This reiterates the constant contradiction which is evident throughout the season whereby Gillian often reverts back to traditional female behaviour whilst at the same time declaring her independence.

Thus, even though Gillian is independent in many ways, one must bear in mind that she is the star of a show which focuses on finding man, receiving a proposal and getting engaged in the space of a few months on an international reality television dating show. Moreover, Gillian is still shown as a woman whose main aim is to find a man who will be able to protect and provide for her and her desire to start a family. Therefore, "social texts normalise post-feminist gender anxieties so as to re-regulate young women by means of the language of personal choice" (McRobbie: 2004:262).

However, even though women have the opportunity to choose and decide for themselves, it is still seen as a high priority to find a man who will be able to provide her with a family and provide her with stability and the knowledge that she is very special to them. This is evident in this season of *The Bachelorette* as a common theme that is noticeable is that Gillian is focused on the men revealing and expressing their feelings for her. She wants to see and hear the emotions that they are feeling. This is indicated by the way she directs the conversation,

posing revealing questions which lead to discussions on their thoughts on love, marriage and whether they are ready to settle down and start a family. Gillian overtly states “just so you know I am not one of those girls who needs a guy to tell me every single day” but for the purpose of this show she feels it is necessary. This again, shows that there is a side to Gillian that needs a man and wants to feel loved and protected by him even though she says she is independent.

“Feminist readings of fairy-tales have contributed to the emergence of postfeminist popular culture, replacing the transformative narrative ideals of ‘true love’ and ‘happily ever after’ with new gendered ideals centred in part on transformations of the self, female empowerment and self-realisation” (Isbister:2008:2). In accordance with the above statement, this show, *The Bachelorette* and Gillian are supposed to portray an independent woman trying to find love however, it is almost impossible to separate the undeniable fairy-tale theme that is found throughout this season with the aim of a ‘happily ever after’ ending. Even though Gillian does empower woman by verbalising her independence and success, she also strays from the feminist movement during many scenes when she engages in behaviour indicative of pre-feminist movements. This has been indicated through the analysis and description of various quotes and scenes. Moreover, it is evident that there is a large juxtaposition, contradiction and emphasis on the way in which Gillian moves steadily between the roles of the ultra-feminist and the traditional woman searching for love and protection from a man therefore there is a discrepancy between finding a balance between having the “fairy-tale of the ‘true self’ in partnership with ‘true love’” (Isbister: 2008:2).

The virtue referred to as submissiveness notes the way in which “women were expected to be weak, timid and dependent, whereas men were supposed to be strong, wise and forceful” (Brannon 2000:162). Gillian allows Kipton to help her during an extreme sport. His response to her behaviour is cited as “Gillian is such a strong girl, she is strong willed. She can be stubborn when she wants to but during the ropes course she showed a side of her where she could use somebody else’s help” (*The Bachelorette* S5 E9:2009). Gillian also seemed amazed at her behaviour during this date and substantiated her feelings with the following statement, “because I am so independent, it surprised me how much I relied on you today” (*The Bachelorette* S5 E9:2009) and adds “I try to be too strong sometimes and I am really not” (*The Bachelorette* S5 E9:2009). These statements indicate her vulnerability and need to be protected by a man. Her behaviour conforms to the cardinal virtue of submissiveness

mentioned above and furthermore this states that “dependent women wanted strong men, not sensitive ones” (Brannon 2000:162). Gunter (1986:11) reinforces this sentiment by stating that a “prominent stereotype of women in our culture is that they are more emotional than men and generally dependent on male help and support in all kinds of personal and professional situations”. Thus, the above scene is indicative of a common sex-trait stereotype which Gillian seems to portray.

This can be juxtaposed to the representation of Gillian as active, sporty and eager to participate in various adrenaline-filled activities such as kayaking, scaling high rise buildings, snow-shoeing and snowboarding which is testament to the fact that she is not altogether representative of the stereotypical woman who prefer to be wined and dined. Instead she is open to trying and experiencing new things. According to Gillian “I need to know that somebody can keep up with me. I want someone to push me and challenge me” (The Bachelorette S5 E4:2009). Her interest and desire to compete in such activities shows that she is both “athletic” and “competitive” and “willing to take risks” (Prentice & Carranza 2002:269).

Women are reliant on a man to be a provider and a protector. According to Pusavat (2007:6), “women rate dissatisfaction with their partner’s performance as a financial provider” as very high on their list of important factors. Gillian sends a few of the men home due to their age and employment status. She rationalises the decision as “he is putting himself out there but I need him to figure out how he is going to pay the bills or get a job before I can trust putting my life in his hands” (The Bachelorette S5 E6:2009). This is also the deciding factor in her relationship with Michael as she expresses her concern about his age in the same episode. This again emphasises the theoretical points mentioned above and in turn reiterates the traditional beliefs instilled in her as she is more concerned with how he will provide for her than whether she can develop real feelings for him. Thus, Gillian’s “expectations follow stereotypical gender roles: men are expected to be providers” (Yulia 2000 in Pusavat 2007:6).

These questions are also indicative of her need to be in control and validation of her as a woman. If she knows how they are feeling, then she feels in control of the situation and she will know what decision to make and whether they are worthy of her feelings in return. If she is unsure of how they feel towards her, she might choose the wrong man and she will not be able to have the marriage and family that she has always dreamt of. Thus “even well

regulated liberty” can backfire (comic relief), and this in turn gives rise to demarcated pathologies (leaving it too late to have a baby, failing to find a good catch, etc.) which carefully define the parameters of what constitutes liveable lives for young women without the occasion of re-invented feminism” (McRobbie:2004: 262).

The fourth virtue of True Womanhood discussed in chapter 3 is that of domesticity which is concerned with a woman’s place in the home and raising a family. There are elements of Gillian which show her as being indicative of this virtue. According to Gillian “it’s every girl’s dream to be in the kitchen, hot and flustered and so nervous in case the meal turned out right or wrong” (The Bachelorette S5 E4:2009). Moreover, one of the bachelors, Jake refers to Gillian as “so nurturing and so genuine” (The Bachelorette S5 E6:2009). These are traditional characteristics associated with woman as they have always been there to nurture their families and children and provide them with good food and a clean home. This is the way in which many men view woman in today’s society. These comments and the way that certain men perceive Gillian and her behaviour substantiates the fact that sometimes she is indicative of true women who were “wives whose concern was with domestic affairs-making a home and having children” (Brannon 2000: 162).

This section has observed the constant contradiction between the independent and dependent woman displayed by Gillian throughout this season of the show. Even though Gillian continually emphasises the way in which she is an independent woman with a successful career with a strong, confident and vibrant personality which is linked to the continued strength and liberalization of women over the years, she “distances herself from those same movements by continually searching for “the one” and having the traditional husband-wife relationship as the end goal” and thus the theme for this reality dating show (Gennaro: 2007:252). This is linked to beliefs that stem back to the pre-feminist era as Gillian refers to marriage and children multiple times during the course of this season. Thus, these observations reveal that Gillian displays elements of the domestic and submissive components within the Cult of True Womanhood as her behaviour indicates that she has a desire for dependence and security (Brannon 2000:61). This is substantiated by Isbister (2008:3) who feels that historically “womanhood was defined through the love of a husband, conjuring up the ‘1950’s’ housewife” for whom “love becomes for her like a religion”. She also displays elements of submissiveness. This further reinforces the fact that even though

women such as Gillian try to distance themselves from pre-feminist behaviours, the constant need and desire to find a husband seems to be dually visible.

The above analysis and observations related to the contradictions is also indicative of the producers need to portray Gillian in a way that is familiar to the audience and thus stay true to the format and existing stereotypes that society has come to recognise as a part of femininity. As mentioned before, television shows which have represented women as strong and independent have not been very popular with the media, producers and advertisers. Producers have given reasons for their disapproval of such representations as “these women aren’t soft enough” and “these women aren’t feminine enough” (Faludi 1991:150 cited in Wood 1994:33). Thus, in *The Bachelorette*, it is evident that Gillian is portrayed as having stereotypical characteristics of a woman who needs protection from a man as well as snippets of independence. This can be attributed to the fact that “the rule seems to be that a woman may be strong and successful if and only if she also exemplifies traditional stereotypes of femininity-subservience, passivity, beauty and an identity linked to one or more men” (Wood 2004:33).

The female contestants in *The Bachelor* are very serious about their reasons for embarking on this journey and most of those include the need and desire for a man in their life. They want a husband, marriage and children. This section will use examples from the season in order to accurately analyse the way in which the women are reliant on a man versus women who are confident enough to enjoy their life with or without a man.

During the season, the audience is introduced to 30 women, many of whom are counting on finding the man of their dreams. They express their need to find a husband which can sometimes border on desperation with statements such as “I have everything lined up, I have a great job, a great family, a great home but I do not have that somebody special” (Emily in *The Bachelor* S15 E1: 2011) “it is very imperative I get this date, I spent a fortune on clothes, dresses, gowns, I quit my job, I did all these things to be here” (Melissa in *The Bachelor* S15 E2:2011) and “I need to find a husband” (Michelle in *The Bachelor* S15 E1:2011).

Every time a woman is not given a rose and thus eliminated from the show, the audience is privy to watching each woman cry whilst listening to them list the reasons why they are not good enough for the bachelor and reminiscing about their failed relationships of the past.

Thus, it is possible that the rose symbolises a woman's validation. If she receives a rose, she feels confident, beautiful and worthy of love yet if she does not, the rejection reduces her to tears. James (2002: no page) reinforces this observation when she states that "as the women are waiting to be chosen or rejected, their downturned eyes and agonized expressions reflect an enormous lack of confidence".

Thus, it is evident from the above examples that the women are adamant about finding a husband. According to Pozner (2010: no page), "dating shows emphasize women's matrimonial motivations with a nearly endless stream of marriage-minded femmes professing the belief that being the 'last girl standing' 'will make all my dreams come true'". This strong desire to secure a husband associates itself with post-feminist theory. The high percentage of references to this need conforms to the domestic component of the cult of true womanhood which clearly states that women have a "strong need for stability" (Brannon 2000:174).

According to Brophy-Baerman's (2005:30) analysis of this reality dating show, "the women are hopeful and desperate" and constantly "mention finding true love, soul mates and stability" whilst O'Neill (2010:no page) states that women on reality dating shows are portrayed as "desperate pathetic gold diggers who aren't happy without husbands". This season of *The Bachelor* proves to be no different as they vocalise these desires constantly thus causing women to lose a grip on their long deserved and hard earned independence.

This desperation and need to find a husband is juxtaposed with the strong independent and confident female. There are a few women who are proud to express their independence. Ashley H reveals both her independent and emotionally dramatic side. On the one hand she describes herself as "very ambitious and driven, I need to be able to stand on my own two feet" (*The Bachelor* S15 E2:2011) and she emphasises her desire to achieve her goals and the fact that she is very career orientated (*The Bachelor* S15 E9:2011) and on the other hand, she expresses her concerns and need for security. In addition, Madison shows her independent side by stating "I came here because I wanted to meet somebody, I wanted to fall in love and see if there is a connection, the whole experience. I wanted to and I feel like some girls need to" (*The Bachelor* S15 E3:2011). At the end of this episode, she decides to leave as she feels that she does not deserve to be there as much as a girl "who put her everything on the line and had her heart on the line" for Brad. (*The Bachelor* S15 E3:2011). This reveals that she is able to rely on herself and not only on a man.

Thus, from the above analysis it is clear that there are very few women who express their independence, instead the majority are willing to put their life on hold, move cities and give up the life they once knew for a man that they hardly know yet believe to be their soul mate. Thus, even though these women all come from good homes, they have jobs and some successful careers, they still do not seem to be complete without a man as “there is the fear of loneliness, for example the fear of remaining single, and the risks and uncertainties of not finding the right partner to be a father to children as well as a husband”. These observations clearly illustrate that these women can display behaviour eminent of pre-feminist times as their focus is on family, marriage and the security offered by a man. Moreover, it also highlights the backlash to feminism which is so often spoken about in post-feminist studies which as stated previously refers to the “active process by which feminist gains of the 1970’s and 80’s come to be undermined” (MacRobbie 2005:255).

Thus, the above representation of contradictory behaviour is a result of the producers need to create familiar identities for the audience to relate to. It is not possible for the female characters to be represented as altogether independent firstly due to the male gatekeepers and ideologies which will be discussed in chapter 7 and secondly due to the way in which advertisers and producers do not want to stray from “culturally emphasised images of femininity” (Cavender *et al* 1999:661). According to Wood (1994:36), “media images of women as sex objects, devoted homemakers and mothers buttress the very roles in which the majority of consuming takes place”. Thus, producers of these reality shows have incorporated these characteristics into the women portrayed in this season by casting mothers, women with nurturing and care-giving professions and those who flaunt their sexuality to Brad.

Cagney and Lacey as mentioned earlier was a show which diverged from the stereotypical view of femininity however “network executives pressured the series producers to make the characters more closely conform to television’s standard image of women as beautiful and subordinate to men” (D’acci 1994 cited in Cavender *et al* 1999:661). This can be seen within the context of *The Bachelor* as the female contestants are represented as mostly subordinate, powerless and in need of a husband and security. These images are juxtaposed with minimal snippets of independence and equality which is deliberately constructed by the producers in order to further their reputation and revenue within the global media market.

The above section has aimed to discuss the way in which female contestants are represented in season 15 of *The Bachelor* and the way in which these traits are portrayed as a power tool that women use to further themselves in this journey to find love. *The Bachelor* highlights the observation that “women’s power, it seems, is sexual: her ability to be desired, to be chosen” (Brophy-Baerman 2005:25). Thus, the observation of this section can conclude by noting that “dating shows also all too often render the date, and more specifically the woman, as spectacle” (Murray & Ouellette n.d: 265) and season 15 of *The Bachelor* has proven to be no different.

5.6.1 Gillian and the female contestants – Emotion

There is a contradiction in the way that the female contestants are represented as many of the women find it easy to express their feelings however others find it more difficult as they are afraid of getting hurt. Some of the bachelorettes express emotional restraint with statements such as “I am a little bit more shy. I need to come out of my shell” (The Bachelor S15 E1:2011) and “when things get tough and I get emotional, all I want to do is just retract and take the easy way out” (The Bachelor S15 E7:2011). Thus, these insecurities stem from jealousy and the knowledge that they are not the only girl the bachelor is dating.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, there are women who are very vocal about their feelings, falling in love with Brad and not shy to express their emotional side which is evident by constant and excessive crying associated with happiness, heartbreak or as a result of cat fights with the other women.

Thus, it is evident that whilst the first group of bachelorettes are unable to fully express their emotions, they are not conforming to existing stereotypes of women who are traditionally characterised by their ease and ability to express their emotions and begin to take on the characteristics and roles of their male counterparts as “emotionality is traditionally associated with females, while lack of is associated with males” (Klewin 2007:40). This characteristic, as mentioned earlier is known as ‘sturdy oak’ component of gender role identity which clearly indicates men as being unemotional thus hiding their feelings. However, in their inability to express their emotion, they do reveal their inner fears and concerns and according

to Gunter (1986:12) “emotionality tends to refer most often to those reactions- fearfulness, anxiety, moodiness and neuroticism-which are typically associated with women”. In this way, they do express a form of emotionality and thus display both male and female gender roles within the realm of this parameter

5.3 Conclusion

The chapter has discussed the common themes found within season15 of *The Bachelor* and season 5 of *The Bachelorette* by focusing on the contradictions found within the show. These contradictions focus on the juxtaposition of images related to Brad’s representation of a new man in touch with his emotions and the stereotypical tough man who aims to provide and protect his woman and who struggles to openly reveal his emotions. It also focuses on similar behaviour and contradictions of the male contestants. The bachelorette Gillian and the female contestants also display contradictory behaviour by displaying qualities of both a strong independent woman and the woman who needs a husband. However, this contradictory behaviour is constructed by the producers due to the format constraints of this show and the media’s need to increase ratings, advertising and revenue.

Chapter 6 – Stereotypical Themes

6.1 Introduction

As mentioned in the Methodology chapter, this research uses a thematic analysis in order to identify the main themes that arise from the content analysed. The themes which dominate season 15 of *The Bachelor* and season 5 of *The Bachelorette* include stereotypical representations of gender. These stereotypical themes will provide adequate observations about the way in which masculinity and femininity are represented and to what extent their characteristics and traits conform or are juxtaposed to existing stereotypes. In addition, this chapter will also focus on the fairy-tale aspect of the show and how the producers use this theme in order to garner a large audience.

6.2 - Man as the Provider and the Protector

Beasley (2005: 178 cited in Fourie 2008:312) categorises masculinity as a “social construct which is socially, culturally and historically constructed”. It can also be defined as “what men and boys do” (Paechter 2006:254) and can refer to as ‘hegemonic’, ‘dominant’ and ‘subordinate’ masculinities recognising that in any social grouping there are a number of masculinities” (Thorne 1993 cited in Paechter 2006:254).

Borisoff & Merrill (1998 cited in Fourie 2008:312) defined the stereotypical man as “an ineffective listener, emotionally inexpressive, categorical and certain in his language use, and dominating in discussion”. These are some of the stereotypes which surround masculinity. Masculinity is also associated with the social roles of both the provider and the protector (Gregor: 1985) This section will observe the content and data of this season in order to ascertain whether the Bachelor Brad and the male contestants of *The Bachelorette* fit into this stereotypical gender role.

Brad is always available to help the women ensuring they feel safe and protected when they are unable to express their feelings or attempt a task thus acting as the protector. Brad constantly reinforces his desire to protect these women. Womack states numerous times

“when I see a woman cry, I want to comfort her, I want to be a shoulder to cry on literally” (The Bachelor S15 E5:2011), “I’ll protect you” and “I see a woman that I want to protect, that I want to provide for” (The Bachelor S15 E11:2011).

Brad expresses his desire to be a father figure and a provider many times during the course of this season by reiterating statements such as “I would cherish the opportunity to be a father figure to little Rikki” (The Bachelor S15 E8:2011) and “I’m asking you to please give me your forever, please let me be your best friend, please let me protect you and your beautiful daughter and please give me the opportunity to love you for the rest of your life” (The Bachelor S15 E11:2011). According to Lindsay (1990:168), “the biological father who takes his economic responsibilities to his family seriously, has met the necessary criterion for masculinity in American culture”. Thus, it is the above mentioned content that indicates Brad’s desire to provide and protect these women which in turn highlights the fact that he does display these traditional masculine traits to some degree.

During the course of this season of *The Bachelorette*, there are a few examples of men who wish to become Gillian’s provider and protector. During a two on one date in episode 4, Mike realises that he is in danger of being eliminated and does everything he can to convince Gillian of his intentions. “I will make you very happy, I will do whatever it takes to take care of you, to provide for you, that is the most important thing” (The Bachelorette: episode 4: 48:10). The second example can be found in episode 7 when Jake declares “I’ll stand up and protect her whatever that means” (The Bachelorette S5 E7:2009).

These statements fit in perfectly with both the stereotypical gender behaviour. Mike shows signs of being a man who wants to be the ultimate provider and protector for his future wife which subscribes to the general behaviour linked to men. In turn, this shows that he thinks that she is a woman with traditional beliefs regarding the long established characteristics and ideals that a woman should hold regarding her place in the home and the role her husband would play in her life.

These examples illustrate that Brad and the male contestants conform to the ‘Big Wheel’ as their constant reinforcement of supporting, protecting and providing for their future wife and family is linked to the way in which traditionally “manliness is tied to career success and the ability to provide for their families” (Lindsay 1990:163).

Brad's constant enjoyment of adventure and athletic activities is evident as most of the dates are sport orientated ranging from scaling buildings, repelling off cliffs, deep sea diving, swimming with sharks and racing cars. Brad is appreciative of these activities and thrives on the adrenaline as it "is every single guys dream to be able to drive and race a nascar race car" (The Bachelor S15 E5:2011). Thus, he displays the competitive and adventurous traits which are representative of the 'give 'em hell' male gender role identity component (Brannon: 2000) which are juxtaposed to his fears demonstrated earlier.

This need to provide and protect the women and his ability to attempt new activities which are traits stereotypically associated with the male are contradicted by Brad's fears to conquer new physical challenges. According to Womack, "I am trying to be tough in front of Michelle, I can honestly say this is the toughest thing I've ever had to do in my entire life" (The Bachelor S15 E4:2011) yet he is still able to help her and support her during this adventure.

Thus, from the above observations, it is evident that Brad is able to maintain a "manly air of toughness, confidence and self-reliance" as foregrounded in the 'Big Wheel' component of the male sex gender role as well as expressing "confidence in his ability to carry out tasks that appear insurmountable" which "he must do with a sense of stoicism which shows he is in command of the situation" (Lindsay 1990:164) whilst at the same time contradicting this behaviour with certain statements which are not generally associated with masculinity namely fear.

A man's need to protect and provide for a woman can be linked to their level of ambition and business acumen which in turn is related to the third element of the male gender identity component of the 'big wheel'. This element comprises of characteristics such as ambition and business skill (Brannon 2000:174). These are clearly evident from the quantitative research provided which indicates the age and occupation of each bachelor. Thus, this is substantiated by the research of Lemon (in Gunter 1986:13) which states that "one of the most important defining attributes of power and competence was occupational status"

After careful analysis of this research, which can be found in the research design chapter, it is clear that most of the men are highly successful and they have important careers rather than

jobs which they have achieved at quite young ages. During the first few segments of the show in episode 1, there are a few men that are singled out and the viewer is given insight into their life in their home town and there is a lot of focus on their career. Many are seen in suits, attending meetings at the office, sitting at desks surrounded by important documents and books and the narration and conversation is also centred around the way in which they have built their careers, become entrepreneurs or taken over family businesses. Thus, Gunter's research which is based on male dominance on television and the way that masculinity is displayed by the media reiterates the fact that "men tended to be portrayed more often than women in high-prestige occupations" (Gunter 1986:13).

Thus, Brad and the men within these seasons represent many characteristics but most are related to hegemonic masculinity. This can be defined as "assumptions and beliefs about masculinity that have become common sense, that may be uncritically observed or spontaneously consented to, but that are presumed to have an imperative character in shaping consciousness, norms of conduct, affect or desire" (Hanke n.d: no page). It is evident from the analysis that most of the men portray hegemonic characteristics such as their need to protect a woman, their inability to fully express their emotions, aggressive and competitive behaviour which will be discussed later in this chapter.

6.3 Competition, Jealousy and Cattiness

Men are known to be both competitive and adventurous which is underlined in the 'give 'em hell' component of the male sex role identity component list (Brannon 2000:174). This section will explore the extent to which the male and female contestants portray these characteristics followed by an analysis of the other stereotypical characteristics normally associated with women namely jealousy and cattiness.

Every woman wants the opportunity to speak to Brad in order to ensure the chance of receiving a rose. Emily remarks that "you can just feel the tension in the room, everyone wants it" (The Bachelor S15 E1:2011). The desire to receive a rose creates a competitive atmosphere and according to Michelle "I want that rose so bad and I don't think I will settle for anything less" (The Bachelor: S15 E1:2011). In addition, jealousy which is closely

connected to the competitive nature of the women is evident within the house as indicated by statements such as “I am definitely jealous of Jackie, I mean I had to spend my time with Brad with 14 other girls” (Kimberley in *The Bachelor* S15 E2:2011) and “I feel like every time I start to feel special with you, someone else has the same experience” (Chantal O in *The Bachelor* S15 E3:2011). Thus, this reveals that there is a relatively high degree of competitiveness displayed by the women which indicates that they display a characteristic and trait traditionally associated with men.

The jealousy and cattiness displayed by the women stems from their competitive side as they all vie to win time and the love and affection of the same man. Brophy-Baerman (2005:41) reinforces this idea when she states that it is the “women who are seen as bitchy and backstabbing. They’ll do whatever it takes to win their man”. This is reinforced by statements made by various women such as “all of these ladies are trying to get up on my man” (Michelle in *The Bachelor* S15 E2:2011) and “these girls are not right for Brad, I’m not going to lie, I hate them” (Michelle in *The Bachelor* S15 E3:2011).

Brophy-Baerman’s (2005:41) previous *Bachelor* research claims that “competition also manifests itself on nearly every group date” as most of the dates involve competing in various sport and action filled activities which can also be observed in this season of the reality dating show. The girls are faced with many sporting and adventure filled activities such as racing a nascar, swimming with sharks, game drives, deep sea diving, scaling and propelling high rise buildings and taking part in an action movie just to name a few. It is through their participation in these activities and their desire to achieve the end goal that they again reveal their competitive and adventurous side which are usually stereotypical characteristics associated with men.

The theme of competition is heavily accentuated during the course of *The Bachelorette* and it all begins in the first episode. The emotion that is the driving force behind the men’s competitive nature is jealousy and their desire not to share Gillian with anyone. The cocktail party that precedes every rose ceremony is a prime place for the men to do anything that they can to get a few minutes of one on one time with Gillian. They are all vying for her attention and use various methods to do so. These include serenading her with songs or trying to impress her with their various talents as each man wants to surpass the next. Each man will do anything that he can to interrupt another’s conversation in order to further his chances.

There is also a strong emphasis on the frustration amongst the men to get what is referred to as 'alone time' and the other all important and ever allusive 'rose'. The rose is the most sought after object during the course of this season as it symbolises the opportunity to stay and hopefully find true love which plays into the fairy-tale theme discussed in this chapter yet on the other hand it can also be seen as playing into the theme of masculinity and the way in which there is a fine line between it being a competition to win a rose and not the girl. This can also be related to the element of the 'big wheel' and the BEM sex role inventory list as it shows that the men are portraying dominant behaviour as they are attempting to take charge of the situation.

In Episode 3, Ed asks Gillian at the end of their one on one date if he is going to receive the rose after revealing that he is nervous. After accepting the rose that she offers him he seems to be extremely happy almost as though this rose has validated him and endorsed his manhood.

The competition is fierce and this is indicated by various statements and actions made by the bachelors. One of the men, Wes says "it's like a shark and there's blood in the water and all the guys are swarming. I came for the prize and I'm going after it" (The Bachelorette: episode 1: 48:46). This is followed by a scene whereby Michael who is a break dance instructor decides to teach Gillian a few moves when another bachelor Greg interrupts and suggests a dance off to vie for Gillian's attention to which we see Gillian say "I'm starting to see the competitive nature of the guys starting to come out" (The Bachelorette S5 E1:2009). Thus, the competitive nature displayed by these men conforms to the stereotypical traits of masculinity and the male gender identity component described above.

The competitive nature of the men is an on-going theme in every episode. In episode 3 this is reiterated by the men's reaction to the group date which includes Gillian and eleven of the bachelors. David says "I don't want to be with eleven other guys" (The Bachelorette S5 E3:2009) whilst Wes says "when is the last time you went on a date with eleven other people" (The Bachelorette S5 E3:2009). Later on in the episode David says "I'm used to being the top dog and getting all the attention and I'm not getting it" (The Bachelorette S5 E3:2009). This definitely reveals the frustration linked to their competitive nature. Another example can be found in episode 4, there are only 13 men left in the running and the men can feel the pressure. David says that there are "13 guys left, the competition is getting more

fierce” (The Bachelorette S5 E4:2009), Ed says “we are all going to have to step up our game”. This substantiates the mounting pressure that the men feel as the journey goes forward and is definitely testament to the ‘give ‘em hell’ element of the male gender identity component.

The competitive nature is also evident in the conversations that the men have with one another whilst Gillian is on a one on one date with one of the other men. The conversation is always centred around the man in question as they are all envious of him and the quality time that he gets to spend with her. There is usually some negative chatter related to the reasons why he is not good enough for her and some hope that she will send him home and he will not return to the house after the date. In episode 5, an example of this behaviour is clearly evident when Gillian is on a one on one date with Robbie. In the train, the men debate the reasons why Robbie is not the right guy for her. These reasons include his age and maturity level and the conversations amongst the men always ends in the common belief that he is not worthy of her and therefore should not get a rose. This behaviour is repeated in the same episode when Gillian is on a date with Jesse.

Ed’s one on one date with Gillian in episode 3 involved scaling a building which is not for the faint hearted and Ed did express in his side interviews that he was scared but had to continue as he did not want to look foolish in front of her which again demonstrates the competitive and daring nature of a man which fits in with the stereotypical traits of ‘masculinity which fall under the ‘give ‘em hell’ element.

It is evident after completing the entire season of *The Bachelorette* that each date has a common theme which focuses on sport, male-orientated activities involving extreme sports such as ski-ing, scaling buildings, obstacle courses, helicopter rides, kayaking, zip lining, snow-mobeeling, test driving sport cars and diving.

These activities are all well suited to men more so than woman as men are always associated with sport and tend to excel in these fields and it also allows them to tap into their competitive side once again, this time displaying their strength and fitness level.

6.4 - Aggressiveness

Aggression is listed as one of the components under the ‘give ‘em hell’ male gender role identity list whilst being submissive and gentle is associated with women. The following section will assess the extent to which the women and men portray this characteristic.

During this season of *The Bachelor*, there is only one woman who behaves aggressively towards the other females as well as towards Brad and this is Michelle and this aggression is indicated through both her verbal and physical behaviour

She is adamant about her desire to win Brad’s heart and this is indicated by statements such as “if he can’t make a decision I’ll be forced to take matters into my own hands” (The Bachelor S15 E6:2011). Her aggressive behaviour is also highlighted through her ability to dominate conversations using a forceful tone and the way in which she enforces her sexuality to tease Brad and direct his train of thought. This behaviour does not go unnoticed by Brad who describes her as “very aggressive, very intense” and “a strong, almost volatile woman” (The Bachelor S15 E7:2011) Thus, from the above observations, it is evident that only one out of the 25 women displays “aggression and dominance- which are regarded as masculine traits” (Gunter: 1986:11).

Dominance, as mentioned earlier is a trait which is associated with this element of the gender role identity component as well being on the list of the BEM sex role inventory. One of the male contestants, David, is always portrayed as very domineering, angry and sometimes bordering on violent. He is constantly drinking alcohol and is drunk at times. He shows signs of stereotypical dominant male behaviour as well as revealing a sexual side. The production team has also decided to focus on the constant battle between him and Juan. David consistently treats him badly, expresses negativity towards him in front of the other men and to Juan himself. He also expresses his dominance through constant verification of his manhood. This again proves that David bares the characteristics of a stereotypical dominant male figure and he is outspoken enough to express them thus reinforcing the fact that “men should have an aura of aggression, daring and violence” (Brannon 2000:162).

His competitive side is further revealed when Gillian rejects his advances to which he responds by saying ‘I think she was testing me and I love it, she did that, game is on’ (The Bachelorette S5 E4:2009). Thus, this highlights the way in which the rejection has ignited his inner flame and thus reinforces the competitive and dominant side of the male.

Therefore, these stereotypes associated with both masculinity and femininity listed within the BEM sex role inventory and which have been explained in chapter 3 are related to these seasons of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* and “provide a good representation of prescriptive gender stereotypes” (Prentice & Carranza 2002:270). However, due to the fact that this list dates back to the 1970’s, the research completed in recent years has “provided evidence for the persistence of these stereotypes”

6.5 - Female sexuality and Physical Appearance

The following section will focus on the way in which *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* highlight the image of Gillian and the female contestants and the way in which their sexuality and obsession with physical appearance are foregrounded. This allows certain feminist and post-feminist theories to emerge as these shows do not represent women as equal and independent instead they continue to disempower them through their representation as sexual objects of desire and foregrounding the need to look beautiful over images of successful women in the workplace.

After an analysis of all episodes, it is evident that female sexuality is dominant in the majority of the events during this season of *The Bachelor*. As James (2002) noted in her analysis of previous seasons of the show, “‘*The Bachelor*’ has a contemporary veneer of sexual titillation; there seems to be a hot tub for every date”. Season 15 of this reality dating show proves to be no different as the girls strip down to their bikini’s in every group date and many of the one on one dates and enter the unmistakeable hot tub, heated or swimming pool whilst the camera slowly pans and zooms in on their beautifully tanned near perfect bodies. James (2002) compares the appearance of these bachelorette beauties to the possibility that “it’s as if they came straight off the shelves of Toys “R” Us, part of a game called ‘Barbie meets the Bachelor’”.

However, it is during the group date in episode 7, that female sexuality is escalated as three of the women are given the opportunity to do a bikini photo-shoot for the sports illustrated swimsuit issue. The scenes become highly sexual as two of the women are photographed topless whilst the third woman uses her sensuality and her near perfect body to mesmerise and overpower Brad. Thus, the emphasis on sexuality can be associated with post-feminist theories as “it appears that femininity is defined as a bodily property rather than (say) a social structural or psychological one” (Gill 2007:6). The traditional nurturing and motherly roles that used to be associated with women have been outweighed by her sexuality and it seems that “it is possession of a ‘sexy body’ that is presented as women’s key (if not sole) source of identity” (Gill 2007:6).

During this season of *The Bachelor*, women use their beauty and sexuality as a way of acquiring attention and getting what they want which in this case is Brad. Certain women are able to use their bodies and the sexuality to their advantage. Michelle embodies this sexuality very well when she seats Brad on a chair, sits on his lap and prevents him from talking by kissing him passionately and dominating the conversation followed by Shawntel N who takes the opportunity to kiss Brad and describes her actions as “a women’s got to do, what a women’s got to do” (The Bachelor S15 E3:2011). Thus, these examples highlight the way in which the “body is presented simultaneously as women’s source of power” (Gill 2007:6) and a way in which women can ensure uninterrupted attention from a man, which in this case is Brad. A question that Brophy-Baerman (2005:25) poses in her observations about this reality dating show is “but what about those real women who are powerful without flaunting their sexuality and “can’t women be sexy *and* smart *and* powerful?” This is a something to think about when watching the female contestants in this season as their intelligence and knowledge outside of their beauty and sexuality is never referred to and viewers come to recognise them for traits that are purely superficial. Thus, programs such as this are focused on presenting women as objects of desire by foregrounding both their beauty and their sensuality.

The way in which a woman’s sexuality is presented in *The Bachelor* is indicative of the changing role of the woman. During the times before feminism came to the forefront, women were merely associated with motherhood and domesticity until they decided to highlight their need for independence and equality in both the workplace and the home. However, a

backlash to feminism has ensured that the representation of women has shifted to the extreme opposite end of the spectrum meaning that women are now “presented as active, desiring sexual subjects who choose to present themselves in a seemingly objectified manner because it suits their liberated interests to do so” (Goldman 1992 in Gill 2007:9). Therefore, what is foregrounded is the fact that both the traditional and the current sexual role of the woman are damaging to the image of femininity.

There is also an emphasis on the way in which beauty and appearance are of high importance to the women. Firstly, they are always focused on looking beautiful for Brad. During many of the dates, the women are delighted when they are given the opportunity to pamper themselves, choose from designer clothes and accessories and being made over by professional makeup artists and hairstylists. It is also noticeable that the emphasis is always on the pampering and preparation of the women’s appearance yet there is never any screened footage which shows Brad preparing himself for the dates. Thus, according to Klewin’s (2007:62) research on previous seasons of this reality dating show, “the implication is the fixation on physical appearance is a feminine trait that males simply don’t possess”.

In addition to the theory and examples mentioned above, it is also common knowledge that men are attracted to beautiful women and Brad Womack is no exception. During one on one and group dates, Brad never fails to compliment the women on their appearance. He describes Ashley H by saying “this girl is the entire package, intelligent and pretty” (The Bachelor S15 E2:2011) and he describes Shawntel N as an incredibly sexy woman” (The Bachelor S15 E5:2011) Pozner (2010: no page) describes this emphasis and validation of a woman’s beauty in *The Bachelor* as “the only real value that they have, and the thing that defines why somebody should love them or not, is their appearance”.

Thus, women thrive on being appreciated for their beauty and their appearance. However, they also seem to be terrified when their physical appearance is not up to standard. This is evident in episode 7, as the women have not had time to prepare themselves for a photo shoot thus feeling very self-conscious. Statements relating to their diets, weight and body image concerns are highlighted with comments such as “I look atrocious and feel disgusting” (Michelle in The Bachelor S15 E7:2011) and “I am regretting eating as much as I have the last couple of days, I feel like a fat lard and the idea of having to go get into a swimsuit and try to act sexy when you don’t feel sexy, it terrifies me” (Chantal O in The Bachelor S15

E7:2011). The above examples indicate woman's preoccupation with looking beautiful and in turn competing with the beauty of the other bachelorettes. Thus, "women on television constantly struggle through un-winnable beauty contests" (Bengier: 2012).

The woman's constant need to look and feel desirable can also be attributed to post-feminist theory. According to Gill (2007:12), women are 'pleasing themselves' by empowering their bodies with beauty and confidence and in turn using their appearance to make themselves feel good which is indicative of a new modern woman who is following her own ideas and desires. However, the question that seems to arise from this observation is how the media present the audience with these female contestants who all seem to share a similar look. James (2002) reiterates this in her research on previous seasons of the show by stating that the female contestants are "all young, uniformly attractive and deeply deluded". This in turn points to the idea that "socially constructed mass mediated ideals of beauty are internalised and made our own" (Gill 2007:13). Moreover, even though these women do use beauty to please themselves, "the viewer understands she does so in order to please others, especially men" (Brophy-Baerman 2005:25). Thus, the producers of *The Bachelor* are aware of what the media constitutes as a beautiful woman and uses it to their advantage by both casting existing beauties and by integrating events and scenes surrounding female sexuality into each episode thus highlighting the validity of post-feminist theory.

The casting of beautiful women and the constant filming and depiction of their bodies can also be attributed to advertising, marketing and ideology. Advertisers want to sell a product and in the case of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, they are selling ideas that beauty and sexuality is the key to a man's heart thus women who do not conform to these images will have negative images of themselves in comparison. Thus, according to Pozner (2010) these false images and ideas of perfection are being presented as real experiences to the audience.

The Bachelorette Gillian is also representative of beauty and sexuality yet this is displayed in a different way to that of the female contestants mentioned above. Gillian is by no means the usual kind of girl that is cast on this show. She does not conform to the stereotypical blonde, ditzy model that viewers have become accustomed to. Instead she seems real and down to earth and even admits this herself in the opening sequence when she says "I'm not a princess, I don't think I'm drop dead gorgeous, I think I'm cute" (*The Bachelorette*: 03:36).

On the first date with Kipton, she rejects the invitation to stay as a couple in the fantasy suite as she is not ready and he respects her decision (The Bachelorette S5 E8:2009). During her second date with Reid, she rejects the invitation again as she feels that she is struggling to determine and differentiate her feelings for the various men and thus she decides it would be better not to stay together overnight (The Bachelorette S5 E8:2009). During her date with Wes, she rejects the invitation for a third time as she is unsure of his feelings and intentions. This highlights the way in which Gillian does not use her sexuality or rely on physicality to attract the men. Thus according to the cardinal virtues of true womanhood, Gillian just as the women of that era could “withstand the advances of men” (Brannon 2000:161) and the disappointment shown by the men when she turned down the invitations is testament to the fact that they stay true the way in which men are “prone to sin and seduction” (Brannon 2000:161).

Gillian’s rejection of the invitations can also be due to the fact that staying as a couple overnight in a fantasy suite does allude to romance and intimacy and it is apparent that “genders also hold different requirements before engaging in sexual acts” and it is women more than men that “require emotional commitment and the state of “being in love” before engaging in sexual acts” (Taris: 1997 in Pusavat 2007:5)

Gillian’s dress code throughout the season has been assessed and it is evident that she is most comfortable wearing casual and sporty clothing with the exception of the rose ceremonies where she does wear evening gowns. This reveals much about Gillian, the type of woman she is and how she would like the audience to view her. If she was a high maintenance woman, who relied on her sexuality to further herself in both the working world and in her romantic life, she would not be wearing the clothes that she does during this season. In this way, she is able to overcome the boundaries and breaks the shackles placed on woman which not only encourage but sometimes pressurise them to parade around in revealing clothing. Even though previous research on the representation of women on television has shown that “female characters appear as very attractive, they were also portrayed as very concerned with the way they looked” (Long and Simon 1974 cited in Gunter 1986:17), this is clearly not the case as Gillian does not conform to that even though she is a very attractive woman. Therefore, in this context she is portrayed as an independent woman who is not bound to either traditional ideals or stereotypical characteristics that have become associated with woman.

However, the above mentioned examples highlight the way in which Gillian is portrayed not using her sexuality in order to attract the men and this can be juxtaposed with the way in which other content reinforces the opposite. During the first episode, the viewer is presented with a montage of images which show Gillian in various outfits whilst she narrates her feelings and excitement about the journey. These images include Gillian parading in bikinis and also include extreme close-up's on her body. She is also shown washing her car with a wet t-shirt and high heels and then driving a convertible on the freeway. These images connote and emphasise her beauty and sexuality by using stereotypical female images in order to attract and draw in the male portion of the audience. In turn, this stereotypes Gillian as a beautiful and attractive woman which will allow the viewer to see her as worthy of the role of *The Bachelorette*.

These images and the connotations expressed above are contradicted by a statement made by Gillian in episode one. She introduces herself with a simple yet very informative statement. She says "I think I'm cute, I've got a huge heart" and later in this episode she states "I'm not the kind of girl who relies on her looks, I rely on my personality" (The Bachelorette S5 E1:2009).

Thus, the images described above can be related to the way in which this show presents the viewer with the idea of gender and the characteristics associated with it. According to Eggermont (2004 in Pusavat:2007:8), "television can also strengthen pre-existing ideas as all men and women hold expectations in a romantic partner however television increases romantic partner expectation". An example of this could be the way in which "physical attractiveness in a partner is important to all males, but television strengthens this idea" (Eggermont: 2004 in Pusavat: 2007:8). Thus, the images of Gillian strengthen the idea of her beauty and sexuality in the mind of the male viewer and in turn allow them to build the idea and hope of finding a partner that resembles her.

Eggermont (2004 in Pusavat: 2007:8) states that "both genders raise higher expectations of partner's personality qualities when television viewing increases". Thus, this substantiates the fact that Gillian is presented as being more than just a pretty face and possesses both beauty and brains which in turn raises the expectations that male viewers have for a future or current partner.

The above section has highlighted the way in which both the female contestants and Gillian are represented in regard to their sexuality. The female contestants are more overtly sexual and their need to look beautiful is emphasised whilst the data and content show that Gillian does not overtly express her sexuality

6.6 Fairy-tale

A fairy-tale alludes to a stereotypical idea of romance by displaying idealised views of perfection, everlasting love and splendour. According to Isbister (2008:3), “discourses of love and romance share a long association with women and the popular cultures they consume- they have been intricately interwoven into their lives by way of classic fairy-tales and early romance novels”. It is this plethora of media that have allowed women of all ages all over the world to succumb to the idea of finding their very own fairy-tale.

According to Pusavat (2007:8), “people are constantly exposed to film and television versions of love and relationships” and “such portrayals vary in degrees of realism”. The media are constantly providing the viewer with both fictional and real versions of love within the spectrum of movies and reality television. Romantic movies are mostly fictional, unless based on a true story and the viewer is aware of this, however it is reality television that presents a problem and a high risk to the audience. The audience is enticed by the idea of real people, ordinary citizens like themselves, expressing their genuine emotions on national television thus witnessing how exciting events in their lives increases their expectation of similar experiences. Consequently, this is validated by the way in which “individuals have cited such fairy-tale depictions of love as important factors in beliefs and expectations about romantic love, which, when, unsatisfied, can result in disappointment” (Pusavat: 2007:8).

The Bachelor and *The Bachelorette* create the opportunity for contestants to experience a life of luxury and pure fantasy as they begin a journey to finding true love whilst at the same time creating the myth that this fantasy could be a reality in the minds of the avid viewers. This section will focus on the way in which this season does highlight the fairy-tale romance most

women dream of by observing the extent to which this is shown and provide examples of the nature of the dates.

These seasons are crammed with extraordinary and fantasy filled events including travels to Costa Rica, Las Vegas, shopping sprees and private performances by famous musicians. Brad and the women compare various dates, scenery, events and their feelings and emotions which stem from these events to a fairy-tale by describing them as the most ideal and perfect encounters they have ever experienced. Statements such as “this is the best date I have ever been on” (The Bachelor S15 E2:2011) and “I feel like such a special lady. Every day I wake up and live a normal life and to be treated like this I just feel like I am out of my element in such a great way” (The Bachelor S15 E2:2011) highlight the fantasy land that is created within the realm of this reality show.

The fairy-tale theme is also connected to the woman’s desire to find the perfect man which was discussed in the previous section. As seen from the above examples and content observations, the women really seem to appreciate being spoilt with designer dresses, accessories and luxurious and extravagant locations therefore “reality-romance TV shows like *The Bachelorette* sell women the same old Cinderella story, updated for modern times” (Brophy-Baerman 2005:44). The women continue to emphasise the perfection of every date and every minute they get to spend with the Bachelor. In essence “girl meets man in a magical setting and man eventually chooses her above all other suitors, thereby validating her as a person, completing her, rescuing her from a humdrum life and giving her the chance to become a princess of Reality-TV land” (Murray & Ouellette n.d:263). Moreover, the combination of the women’s desire to find the perfect husband together with the perfect dream date experience ensures that these women are portrayed as wishful thinkers whose “degrees, careers and loved ones are marginalized for their chance to accomplish what is being touted as woman’s primary objective, marriage” (Murray & Ouellette n.d:264).

New episodes, scenes and episode previews are introduced with phrases and quotes doused with sentimental and emotional substance. According to host Chris Harrison “25 lucky men will get the chance to win Gillian’s heart and give Gillian the fairy-tale ending she so rightly deserves” (The Bachelorette S5 E1:2009) and constantly reminds the remaining bachelors that “only one of you will be the man of her dreams” (The Bachelorette S5 E4:2009). Cliché statements and quotes by Gillian and her family are included in multiple scenes with a

constant emphasis on finding ‘Prince Charming’ and ‘Mr Right’ which are universal indicators of a fairy-tale. During an interview with Chris Harrison, Gillian reiterates her anticipation and desire to find the perfect man whilst emphasising the idealism involved in such a journey. According to Gillian (The Bachelorette S5 E1:2009), this journey is such an incredible opportunity that “who ever dreams that something like this could ever happen?” whilst her supposition regarding the elimination process is simply “you have to slay a few dragons to find the right prince”. Subsequently, this symbolises the way in which this reality show attempts to “associate fairy-tale romance with patriarchal heterosexual courtship, and thus reinforce this ideology as natural and normal” (Yep & Camacho 2004 in Klewin 2007:28).

The one on one dates as well as the group dates are idealistic, based on fantasies and include extensive scenery and venues coupled with extraordinary activities and elements which differ from what is renowned as a normal and average. There are various examples of these incredible dates including dinners on mountain tops and beaches against the backdrop of snow and ice sculptures, horse and carriage rides through Spain and helicopter rides in Hawaii. During every date, Gillian and the men reiterate their exhilaration and gratitude for these indescribable experiences. “I feel like a queen”, “I seriously feel like I’m in a fairy-tale right now. We are in a place of culture and excitement, I feel like a princess” (The Bachelorette S5 E8:2009) are common phrases used by Gillian during the course of this season as she compares her experiences to that of a fairy-tale. The men do not stray from these analogies either as they make references to “the best date I have ever been on in my life” (Reid in The Bachelorette S5 E6:2009), and “probably one of the best experiences I have ever had” (Reid in The Bachelorette S5 E9:2009).

The show gives the Bachelor and Bachelorette the opportunity to spend quality time together by introducing what is known as the ‘fantasy suite’. Chris Harrison sends an envelope on each of the final four dates which reads “should you choose to forego your individual rooms, please use this key to stay as a couple in the fantasy suite”. According to Gillian, it is easy to forget about any serious issue due to “the fantasy land that we are living in right now” (The Bachelorette S5 E9:2009). This card provides the opportunity to experience a night of perfect romance including candles, rose petals, beautiful music, bubble baths, champagne and dessert.

Consequently, this show is renowned for its representation of love as a fairy-tale and provides couples with the chance to experience dates and activities so far removed from the real world, that it in turn inspires an unattainable idea of what love should be. However why are these counter narratives included in the show? Why do the cast members acknowledge that this is a fantasy yet at the same time accentuate their approval of these idealised visions of love? Perhaps the producers use this to create a short hiatus from the far removed fairy-tale allowing the viewer to see some form of a normal and natural environment that they are familiar with. Thus, this aids in their further attachment to the show by creating the belief that such a fairy-tale could happen to ordinary people such as themselves.

The ultimate culmination of this fairy-tale which viewers have been following for months ends with the final rose ceremony. The viewer watches as Brad and Gillian prepare for this special day. Romantic music plays as Brad and the man chosen by Gillian get down on one knee and propose with a beautiful diamond ring. The seasons end with a collage of romantic images and scenes from throughout their journeys of love which is played to the backdrop of a romantic ballad. The camera pans between this collage and the new happily engaged couple. Finally, the final rose is offered and they run off into the sunset together just as a true fairy-tale should end.

The rose plays an important role as it is not just a flower that allows the contestants to move onto the next level of the game. It is a symbol that has many functions and it is linked to the fairy-tale and the overall aim of the game which is to find true love.

The literal meaning of the rose is a flower yet there are many connotations behind the meaning of the rose. The rose ceremony which is held at the end of every episode, the rose that is given out on each date and the final rose that is given to the last man and woman standing is all a symbol of the journey of love that needs to take place in order to reach the end goal which is marriage. The rose is also the reason for much of the aggression, jealousy and cattiness mentioned earlier in this chapter. The male and female contestants vie for the attention of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* in order to get the rose which becomes a symbol of power. Once you have a rose you have power, you have confidence and you are one step closer to finding true love.

The following chapter focuses on the post-production techniques involved in these reality television shows and the way in which they impact the content. The chapter highlights the way in which female sexuality is used to create a larger viewership and the use of the male gaze to enhance male power. The theories of social construction namely gatekeeping, agenda-setting and framing are discussed and the way in which these influence the content and the percentage of 'real' versus manipulated and edited footage.

Thus, it is evident from the above analysis that these seasons of the show are reliant on fairy-tale and idealism created through insurmountable amounts of romantic and fantasy filled scenery. It is these idealised ideas and beliefs associated with love, romance and marriage that are perpetuated by television shows such as this one (Lockhart 2000 in Pusavat: 2007). The constant fairy-tale analogies, references and visuals enhance these beliefs within the minds of the viewers who in turn create their own expectations. Therefore "such unrealistic values towards romance create strong gender role expectations that can be difficult to completely fulfil" (Pusavat 2007:7) whilst using "fairy-tale associations to idealise and normalise patriarchic notions of heterosexual courtship" (Klewin 2007:29).

Chapter 7

7.1 Post-Production

The focus of this chapter is to examine the post-production of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* which includes the way in which masculine perspectives aid in influencing and constructing the overall characterization and depiction of both masculinity and femininity. Firstly, the male gaze within these reality dating shows is discussed in order to ascertain the way in which femininity is presented to the male viewer who in turn gains power over these women and the images they represent. It also discusses the negative views and images of women that are created and reinforced in the eyes of the viewer. In order to analyse this effectively, the theories of gatekeeping, agenda-setting and gender representation theory are used in order to aid in answering questions such as “how do the ideologies and ideals of the gatekeepers influence the media content broadcast to the audience?”, “in what ways do these ideologies affect the casting for these two shows?” and “how do these images and representations provide the viewer with stereotypical and patriarchal views of femininity and masculinity and what are the reasons behind these decisions?”. These questions are deliberated and answered using the above theories together with quantitative analysis tables listing the various occupations, physical attributes and age groups of the contestants in order to understand the differences between both the male and females cast and whether the influences of male gatekeeping and agenda-setting are evident in these results. The dominant ideologies within society are also foregrounded and the nonexistence of different races and the focus on wealth will be discussed in relation to the cast and content of these two reality dating shows. In addition, using research mentioned in chapter 4, a clear understanding of the media as a global entity and institution and the way in which advertising and ratings influence the footage, content, casting and post production techniques will be discussed and used when answering these key questions. Secondly, the highly strategic use of editing and post-production techniques used behind the scenes of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* are discussed in order to ascertain the extent to which these shows portray reality versus a hyper-reality. In order to analyse the content, the theory of framing which is embedded within social constructionism will be used. The discussion and fundamental argument focuses on the various methods used by the production team in order to manipulate the footage, evoke drama, re-construct certain characters and thus provide the audience with a slanted and

unrealistic storyline created for specific purposes. The use of interviews with specific cast members from these seasons of the show coupled with statements released by the producers are used to problematize these important issues.

7.2 Gatekeeping and the male gaze

As mentioned in chapter 4, the hierarchy of the media, their need to remain powerful and extend their control, growth, integration and ownership is essential to understanding the reasons behind the decisions made by the media and images broadcast to viewers on a national and international level. As stated in chapter 1, *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* are the most popular and most viewed reality television dating shows in America and around the world. Reality television has become part of the American society's staple diet and "the ratings continue to grow and popularity continues to rise" as it "has become the new choice drug and television networks and producers are just fuelling the addiction" (Blair: 2006) through their post-production, editing and casting decisions.

The Bachelor and *The Bachelorette* are aired on ABC and produced by Mike Fleiss, the founder of Next Entertainment which is a "major studio and cornerstone of Warner Horizon Television's unscripted business" (Adalian: n.d) who due to the success and overwhelming popularity of these reality dating shows have enabled him to become "one of the most prolific reality producers during the early part of the decade" (Adalian: n.d).

These reality dating shows are broadcast on the ABC network which is just a small component and interest of The Walt Disney Company which is "the third largest global media conglomerate".^[1] It consists of interests and assets covering parks, resorts, studio entertainment and media networks. This again indicates that the producers and networks which make and broadcast *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* are powerful media institutions of the highest level thus the techniques and decisions that they make are used to reinforce and further their global influence.

Advertising is a very integral element behind the media's decision making processes as "advertisers are still the dominant source of revenue for news media; journalists, editors, and producers are well aware of who pays the bills" (Hoynes & Hoynes 2002: 71). Therefore, it is advertising that keeps the production of reality shows such as these afloat and thus producers

need to ensure that the content is both dramatic and enticing as that is what will keep the ratings high and a constant influx of advertising income. Post-production and editing decisions are largely due to the fact that “the person who pays the piper calls the tune” (McNair 1998:102).

Social constructionism as described in chapter 4 is the way in which the media package various images and present it to the audience. However, “the lens through which we receive these images is not neutral but evinces the power and point of view of the political and economic elites who operate and focus it” (Gamson *et al* 1992:374). Gatekeeping, agenda setting and framing are three very integral elements within social constructionism and will be used to clearly explain and discuss the reasons why the producers of this reality television dating show choose to highlight and disguise certain themes and storylines. These decisions are also influenced by the male gaze and the way in which women are stereotypically objectified in order to satisfy the male viewers, producers and advertisers.

As mentioned in the theoretical chapter, gatekeeping is a “process that determines what gets covered, who is interviewed and what story elements are emphasised as all of this material is turned into a narrative” (Bennet 2003:2). This can be seen in the way that dramatic and controversial storylines are favoured and spoon fed to the audience week after week. Another important element of this component is the way in which it also indicative of “opening the news gate to admit certain voices and ideas into public view and closing it to others” (Bennet 2003:15). Gatekeeping is a process whereby news gets disseminated amongst many different people and plateau’s and it is through the process that the news gets moulded into what these authoritative sources believe is important. Shoemaker (1999 in Fourie:2008:238) states that potential messages flow through various channels to the different news organisations, such as wire services, newspapers or television networks, where the messages are either rejected or selected and shaped before being passed on to the next person or organisation”. In relation to these two reality dating shows, the footage would be taken and given to the editors and post-production team and they would edit it accordingly.

It is also noted that the personal characteristics, ideologies and beliefs of the people in charge influence the final product (Shoemaker 1999 in Fourie: 2008). According to Storey (1998 in Hall 2005:21), an ideology is “a systematic body of ideas articulated by a specific group of people” which in turn enables a better understanding as to why certain ideas and concepts are

favoured over others. Moreover, as noted above, the producers of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* are male and this in turn enables further observations and questions to arise. Masculine Perspectives and beliefs about women, their power, and their place in both the domestic and working world may influence the overall representation of femininity broadcast to the audience. This observation is reinforced by *Bachelor* and *Bachelorette* producer Mike Fleiss when he states that “it’s really fun to watch girls cry; never underestimate the value of that” and Mike Darnell, producer of other American Reality dating shows who expresses that “all of the most successful reality shows ever done have been built around social ideas” (Pozner:2010). The social ideas that he is referring to are based on “reinforcing regressive ideas, tweaking our most problematic, old school ideas about gender and then race and class that most people have moved beyond at this point” (Pozner: 2010). These statements aid in foregrounding the way in which a masculine outlook on life and on femininity in particular can assist in depicting hegemonic beliefs and media generated images to a wide spread audience which ensure that “we rarely see anything in ‘reality’ television to give the impression that there are other, more enlightened, more egalitarian ways to live, or that we have made social progress in our society and in our day-to-day life” (Pozner: 2010).

The data and analysis surrounding the representation of femininity during both seasons of the show present women in a highly negative light. Throughout both seasons, the women are “generally characterised as engaging in social-emotional behaviour” (Hess & Grant 1983:275) whilst the men are not representative of such behaviour instead the majority display strength, dominance and confidence.

The “ideology of the male gaze” mentioned earlier in chapter 3 can be referred to as the way in which women “are framed as objects of the male reader’s gaze; in other words they are construed subjectively, according to stereotyped cognitions (mental schemata) which harmonise with the expectations of the male reader” (Brandt and Carstens 2005:235). There have been many scholars who have studied this ideology and its relation to power and dominance (Brandt and Carstens: 2005). According to Brandt and Carstens (2005), the media or in the case of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, the producers ensure that they create identities for the characters through the use of editing, camera angles, language and poses as they are under pressure from the advertisers to increase ratings. Thus, it is through the “semiotic translation of stereotypical images, power is (ceded) to the male spectator or voyeur who has purchased the right to stare shamelessly” (Brandt and Carstens 2005:235).

Cartwright (cited in Brandt and Carstens 2005:235) reinforces this observation by stating that “the spectators become more powerful than the object of their gaze- so powerful that the stereotypical identities created by them are uncritically accepted by the objects of the gaze”.

There are three different representations of women in the media namely ‘the sex object’, ‘person trying to be beautiful for men’ and ‘wife and mother’ (Brandt and Carstens 2005:233). In *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, the producers have stereotyped the women in all three of these categories as mentioned in previous examples in chapter 5 and 6. Firstly, women have been objectified by focusing on their bodies, highlighting the hot tub and swimming scenes which then uses camera angles to pan their bodies, their bikinis and their sexuality. The objectification of women occurs when “a woman’s body or body parts are separated from her as a person and she is viewed primarily as a physical object of male sexual desire” (Bartky 1990 in Szymanski, Moffit and Carr 2011: 8).

According to Kim (2001:324) “self-objectification could be defined as the conscious effort to gain attention through one’s feminine traits-again sexual attention not professional attention”. Thus, when women expose themselves to this gaze, they are not showcasing their true inner beauty, depth and achievements but merely relying on their physical attributes (Kim: 2001). Some view women who use their sexuality to their advantage as weak yet many scholars state that in fact “it is men who are the weaker sex because they have remained eternally powerless over their desire for the female body” (Kim 2001:325). This self-objectification allows women to regain the power that they lost before feminist movements initiated an environment for a new contemporary and independent woman to appear. Thus, women perform for men using their femininity and sexual powers.

Wood (1994) describes the objectification of women in the media is ironic as “the very qualities women are encouraged to develop (beauty, sexiness, passivity and powerlessness) in order to meet cultural ideals of femininity contribute to their victimization”. The data observed from the two seasons clearly indicates that the female contestants within *The Bachelor* are represented as more beautiful, younger and thinner than the average women (David 1990 in Wood 1994 :7) and are highly exploited by the show with constant footage of their bodies in minimal clothing and constant emphasis on their beauty without any focus on their intellect thus “they are defined by their bodies and how men treat them” (Wood

1994:36) which in turn “reward women for relishing the roles of sexual object and spectacle” (Murray & Ouellette n.d: 266).

Secondly, there were multiple scenes during *The Bachelor*, whereby the audience observes the female contestants as obsessive about their appearance. Thus, women thrive on being appreciated for their beauty and their appearance. However, they also seem to be terrified when their physical appearance is not up to standard. This is evident in episode 7, when Brad wakes up a few of the women in the early hours of the morning for their secret date excursion. The women have not had time to prepare themselves and are feeling very self-conscious. Their comments include “I look atrocious and feel disgusting” (The Bachelor S15 E7:2011) “I am feeling like a fatty today and the idea of being in a swimsuit is not exciting” and “I am regretting eating as much as I have the last couple of days, I feel like a fat lard and the idea of having to go get into a swimsuit and try to act sexy when you don’t feel sexy, it terrifies me” (The Bachelor S15 E7:2011). Another woman is concerned about her bodily appearance and she is embarrassed to wear a bikini as she feels her breasts are too small and says “I might need a boost in that department” (The Bachelor S15 E7:2011). The above examples indicate woman’s preoccupation with looking beautiful and in turn competing with the beauty of the other bachelorettes. Thus, “women on television constantly struggle through un-winnable beauty contests” (Bengier: 2012) yet their insecurities and need to look beautiful for a man is highlighted by the producers.

Thirdly, the women constantly refer to their desire to be a wife and mother as discussed in chapter 5 and 6 in relation to post-feminist theory. Thus, this trait is visible in many ways and “apart from wearing ribbons, ponytails, make-up and dresses, making statements about wanting to settle down eventually if not yet married can help them to win or to maintain social acceptability and media visibility” (Coakley 1998 cited in Brandt and Carstens 2005:236).

As noted in the previous chapter, feminism “is meant to be the opposite of patriarchy, the opposite of a male-dominated society” (Karam in Fourie 2008:307) enabling women to break through the restrictive chains and free themselves from a life of pure domesticity and submissiveness. Yet, the content points to the assumption that male domination behind the scenes of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* may have reinforced these archaic female stereotypes thus highlighting that “female solidarity doesn’t exist, women’s inequality in the

workplace and government is the result not of structural bias but of individual weakness and the most important thing a girl can do is look pretty” (Pozner in O’Neill n.d:107).

Women are also negatively represented in relation to their business acumen and job descriptions. Producers surely cast females specifically in relation to their looks, age and job description as women are supposed to look beautiful without any need for intelligence (Pozner in O’Neill n.d:107).

Appendix 2 attached clearly indicates the 30 bachelorettes, their ages and occupations. However, the occupations listed highlight that 16% of the women hold jobs that are children orientated, 16% of the women hold jobs within the beauty, modelling and skincare industry, 6% within the restaurant industry and 6% within the art, dance and music industry, whilst 43% have various jobs ranging from assistants and sales to co-ordinators. Thus, on the whole 7% of the women have careers namely attorney and dentist whilst the remaining 93% hold middle range jobs.

Appendix 2 provides a listing of the age and occupations of the 30 male contestants. The attached list clearly indicates the way in which nearly every occupation is disguised with eloquent phrasing to ensure that even the most ordinary jobs sound prestigious namely pizza entrepreneur, marketing specialist, baseball camp owner however this does not seem to exist within the list of female occupations. The occupations fall within certain spheres namely 26% of the men hold jobs within the finance and IT industry, 13% have their own business, 16% hold jobs within the sport industry, 23% have careers in various other fields whilst only 20% hold general positions in various fields. It is noticeable that the jobs fall mainly within fields stereotypically associated with men such the economic, sport and electronic industries. Lemon’s (1978 in Gunter 1986:13) research methods used to analyse the sex role portrayals in television drama shows reinforces the observation that “one of the most important defining attributes of power and competence was occupational status” and “men tended to be portrayed more often than women in high-prestige occupations” which is evident in these reality shows from the above data generated.

The casting of contestants with such occupations is closely linked to gatekeeping theory as it is possible that the male producers have selected to represent men in more prominent

positions and the women in more domestic and lower class positions in order to reinforce pre-feminist ideas and beliefs surrounding women and their place in society.

Agenda-setting is closely related to gatekeeping and “describes the media’s very powerful ability to focus public attention on specific issues” (McQuail & Windahl 1981 in Fourie 2008: 238). This is evident in this season of *The Bachelorette* as certain stories are viewed as more important than others whilst certain elements are hidden. There is never any inclusion of contestants of other races and there is never any debate shown around it. In this way, it conforms to the dominant ideology that minority races are not worth time or money which in turn attaches a negative stigma to them.

Dominant ideology leads the viewer to believe that minorities are not as important as white people and due to the fact that they are not as visible on television as more dominant races it further enhances this belief. In this season of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, Gillian and Brad are white as well as both the male and female contestants. The lack of colour present in this show sends a very negative message to minority races which is that this show is not aimed at them. It is as if we, as the producers “do not want you to see yourself in a romantic starring role. You don’t get to play prince and princess. You don’t get to fantasize about love” (Pozner in Bauder: 2012). It also highlights the fact that minority races are not worthy and thus viewers are not given the opportunity to learn about their race and culture and the existing stereotypes will remain embedded in their minds. Moreover, if only one person of that race is featured on a show or no one from the race is featured, it aids in enhancing existing or creating new stereotypes as they “end up being representative of their entire group”. This might be due to the fact that the audience is predominantly white. Research reveals that 88% of current viewers of this show are white and thus the producers are using their target market as a way to navigate what kind of contestants to cast.

Wong (2005:98) also reinforces the issue of class within reality dating shows such as *The Bachelorette* as it “enhances the “whimsical fantasy sanctioned by modern patriarchal capitalism that class is a non-issue when it comes to romantic love”. Thus, this show provides the couples with fairy-tale dreams and promises of future happiness by allowing them to fall in love within an unrealistic and idealic world of fantasy instead of reality. They are unaware of the various circumstances in the outside world that might pose a problem to their

relationships. Thus, it “perpetually exaggerates the wishful, transcendental power of love and reinforces the fairy-tale myth that love is money-and class-blind” (Wong 2005:98).

The elaborate dates and visits to various parts of the world would ordinarily cost a fortune and most people would not be able to afford it yet in this fantasy environment anything is made to seem possible and this is why most of the relationships do not last after the show has ended. Thus “in this way the show perpetuates the capitalist disconnect between love and economics” (Wong 2005:99).

The above observations and findings also allude to the way in which the producers inject these shows with specific images, concepts and ideologies in the hope that the audience will adopt their preferred meaning. A preferred meaning refers to “the different positions readers (viewers) take when using and interpreting media messages (such as television programs)” (Fourie 2008:281). The dominant reading occurs when the viewers accept the dominant ideologies within the messages and interpretations offered. The audiences of these two reality shows might be playing right into the hands of the producers by constantly tuning into every episode, increasing the ratings and satisfying the advertisers thus accepting “the assumptions of the encoder, the person who composes the message” (Fourie 2008:282). The data and content analysis indicates that the producers have encoded *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* with aged, stereotypical and often negative images of femininity in a modern world whilst upholding the views of what it means to be a man.

This is associated with the advertisers influence over producers and the content broadcast to the audience. As mentioned in chapter 5 and 6, images of gender are constructed by the producers in order to fit in with existing stereotypes familiar to society. *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* have provided contradictory images and representations of gender. According to Wood (1994:36), ‘advertisers support media and they exert a powerful influence on what is presented’. This affects the way in which the producers edit footage and ultimately construct a character’s identity for the purpose of the show.

Thus, the content discussed above indicates that gatekeeping and agenda-setting play a key role in the selection and broadcast of certain images and ideologies. The predominantly male gatekeepers of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* have promoted imagery and story-lines highlighting female sexuality, physical appearance, constant emphasis on emotion, cattiness

and jealousy in order to project to the audience, a skewed view of femininity in today's modern society. It has also highlighted female sexuality in relation to the male gaze allowing the power to be shifted to the male viewer who is able to look at the female beauty and sexuality broadcast. Moreover, according to Pozner (2010) "these shows are against women's rights" as "the obsession with women's appearance, sexuality, ability to please men, desperate need to compete with each other over men reinforces and celebrates pre-feminist gender codes" (Brophy-Baerman 2005:43).

7.3 Hyperreal vs. Real

The hyperreal can be defined as an "'artificiality' that is produced rather than made" (Derrida cited in Chin-Yi 2007:31). According to Chin-Yi (2007) "the nature of the hyperreal world is characterised by 'enhancement' of reality. Thus, reality television provides a sub division between what is real and produced images. However, when the audience "loses its ability to distinguish reality from fantasy, and begins to engage with latter without understanding what it is doing, it has shifted into the world of the hyperreal" (Chin-Yi 2007:31). The audience is attracted to this genre of television because of "its 'live' element, its telepresence" and it "offers a diversity and spontaneity that we cannot find in scripted television programs" (Derrida cited in Chin-Yi 2007:32).

As stated in the theoretical framework chapter, framing describes the "selection of certain thematically related news attributes for inclusion on the media agenda, when a particular news object is reconstructed" and represented as news (Fourie 2008: 239). Thus, the media uses large frames into which they can quickly label and distribute media messages, storylines and images which allows the audience to understand and place them accordingly.

In season 5 of *The Bachelorette* there are many dramatic story-lines and characters which are used to add excitement to the show and entice constant and further viewership ratings. "Reality TV reinforces gender stereotypes, glorifies cutthroat behaviour, and deceives viewers into thinking these highly edited shows are raw, unfiltered reality" (Waddle in Blair: 2006)

Three of the most dramatic storylines within this season are focused on five male characters namely Ed, Reid, Jake, Wes and David. These men are represented in certain ways, they are associated with certain storylines, attributes and in turn they are provided with a persona which is created for them by the producers and the handy work of the highly skilled production and editing team.

Firstly, there is the whirlwind story-line which follows Ed throughout this season. It revolves around the way in which he leaves the show in a dramatic farewell in order to pursue his career. His exit is accompanied by the sombre strumming of guitar music as he drives away in the limousine reiterating his regrets. At the same time, the viewer is shown images of a depressed and emotional Gillian against the backdrop of a sombre soundtrack. In a later episode, he makes an even more dramatic return and entrance during the rose ceremony. These intense scenes and emotions surrounding his exit and return are constantly reiterated during the show thus foregrounding the fact that his job could take priority over love.

The producers continually focus on this dramatic storyline which entices viewers to continue to watch. It is evident that Gillian continues to invite Ed to stay regardless of his actions thus emphasising that he could be the one which creates a romantic scenario that the producers use to their advantage in to market the ‘love conquers all’ motto which outlines the overall fairy-tale.

The storyline surrounding Reid focuses on his inability to express his feelings to Gillian. The season ends with Reid making a dramatic return in an attempt to win Gillian’s heart. His arrival coincides with that of Ed, the man Gillian has decided to marry thus creating both chaos, excitement and curiosity in the mind of the viewer as the producers draw out her confusion and final decision with their excellent editing techniques.

These storylines are encouraged by the producers in order to create higher viewership, ratings and in turn promote further advertising income. This is reinforced by Bevins (in McKie 1995 in McNair 1998:104) who states that “to survive and rise in, or on, “the game”, you pander to the political prejudices of your paymasters, giving them the stories that you know will make them salivate”.

The most dramatic storyline associated with this season of *The Bachelorette* is that of Wes Hayden who is a 32 year old musician from Texas. Throughout the season, his musical achievements, country urban voice and ‘bad boy’ physical attributes are foregrounded. There is a constant implication that his decision to join the show is based on his desire to gain exposure for his music career and thus gain a bigger fan base. Gillian and the remaining bachelors are continuously questioning his sincerity, integrity and honesty.

Most of the scenes featuring Wes represent him as the traditional stereotypical charming southern man. The common stereotypes associated with musicians are used to create a character for Wes. Musicians are usually labelled as ‘bad boys’ who serenade women and break their hearts and this is evident from the constant attention and romantic displays of affection centred around music. The ‘bad boy’ character which has been moulded for him is very effective and noticeable to both Gillian and the other members of the show. According to Gillian and host Chris Harrison (S5 E7), Wes is the “all Texan bad boy” and a “certain stigma comes along with musicians”.

During certain episodes, the viewer is privy to information revealed by Wes himself, describing his hidden agenda. According to Wes (S5 E6) he has Gillian “wrapped around his little finger” and “there is no woman that can get you to feel the way you feel when you are on stage”. These statements divulge dramatic elements of his character thus encouraging interest and further viewership.

The above mentioned content from this season of *The Bachelorette* is integral to the overall discussion of reality television and social constructionism. Thus, it is not only the decisions regarding what to broadcast and what to hide from the audience that empower the media and the images they provide on a daily basis to an unsuspecting audience, it is the clever casting and gender representations which are in turn dramatized through post-production and editing techniques. Jennifer Pozner (2010) who is an expert analyst of reality television especially *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, states that reality dating shows are “constructs” as these episodes are scripted in ways that the audience could never imagine.

According to Pozner (2010) “if you believe that you know anything about somebody you’ve seen on a reality show, then you don’t know the genre isn’t real”. The producers and editors

stereotyped many of the men but none so negatively like that of Wes thereby creating his dramatic and highly unrealistic persona. It is possible that Wes is not the person that the show has characterised him to be. His created persona will be analysed and juxtaposed to the character that he really claims to be. This will be performed with the aid of national radio and television interviews with Wes whereby he explains the detailed manipulation of his character, speech and actions which in turn will assist in the overall discussion of the construction of reality within reality television shows.

During his interview, it becomes apparent that the producers were both excited and insistent on his inclusion in the show mainly due to his occupation. Many of the scenes were contrived and staged by purposely planting the guitar when and where it was deemed necessary or content worthy. Once Wes recognised the manipulation of his character, he approached the producers and asked to exit the show however they convinced him to stay with a response of “Wes play the game” (Wes Hayden: 2009)

Pozner (2010) highlights the impact of post-production and the methods used to disguise and alter the truth. “You don’t know about frankenbite editing that can splice together different pieces of conversation from a Monday and a Wednesday and a Sunday, change the context and the content and the meaning and the impact of what somebody said or did”. Wes substantiates this argument by stating “they can edit things you said in week one and splice it with something you said in week six, they can make it sounds however they want to make it sound” (Wes Hayden: 2009).

He lists further examples of frankenbiting in relation his portrayal on the show. During one episode he states “I can taste the fame I can feel it” which highlights the fact that he is using the show to gain further exposure for his career. In his interview he explains the way in which the producers have removed the beginning part of the sentence which would enable the audience to contextualise his sentence. He refers to the way in which the producers asked him to describe how it feels to write a song and that is how he answered their question. However, the way in which they edited this quote ensures that the audience does not fully understand the context and thus enhances the negativity surrounding his character. In the limousine after he has been eliminated from the show in Spain he is shown saying “I am the only guy in bachelor history to get to the final four with a girlfriend”. He explains that they cut off the

segment where he asks why he would be on this show if he had a girlfriend however they edited it accordingly.

A third example is from the same scene in the limousine, Wes is quoted as saying “I’m in Spain, everyone’s gonna know my name”. During this statement, he sings the second half of the sentence but not the first. He explains that the handler who accompanies the cast members everywhere had downloaded some Texan country music for him. The words “everyone is gonna know my name” is a section of the lyrics to one of the songs. The producers proceeded to ask him what good has come out of this experience for him to which he replied “I’m in Spain”. Thus, they took that sentence and spliced it together with a piece of the song that he was singing in the limousine to form a whole new sentence that he never said. This is a further example of the way in which “love, anger and fright, all of those things can be manipulated and fabricated out of whole cloth within the reality genre” (Pozner: 2010). This is one of the processes used within frankenbiting as the “audio bytes are accompanied by video cuts which help to cover up the splices as well as make the whole situation believable” (Diehl: n.d).

The anger expressed by Wes is evident in his statement, “I can’t believe some people would conjure these ideas and edits they are doing to me. I had no idea these people were so clever” (Wes Hayden: 2009). According to radio host Reality Steve, Wes “was cast as the villain so they needed to find as many villainess quotes as they could come up with” (Wes Hayden: 2009). Mike Fleiss who is the producer of both *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* is quoted as saying “we have to create villains” (Pozner: 2010) which confirms the reasons behind this apparent character manipulation.

The way in which Wes and several of the other men were stereotyped are “malicious edits which deface the individual and give them a bad reputation which they keep after the show is over” (Diehl: n.d) and Wes is experiencing the effects of this and he expresses “I want my character to be healed in some kind of way” as “everything I am seeing is totally opposite to the person I am” (Wes Hayden 2010:55:43). Wes also notes that the producers edited David’s character who was discussed in chapter 6 representing him as a “a psychopath and that is not him” (Wes Hayden: 2009). Apparently, they only aired about 1% of the actual footage related to his behaviour. They edited the footage and chose only to air the negative imagery and scenes.

The interview with Wes is highly informative and sometimes astounding yet it is also a possibility that these were staged or exaggerated in order to increase the ratings of the show. Through his lengthy interviews, he focuses on the negativity surrounding his character and the show in general yet this attracts the attention of the audience who in turn would be further intrigued by the content of the show encouraging them to tune in to further episodes and seasons of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*. This increased interest in the show would aid in the monopolisation of the producers, media networks and advertisers involved in the show. If these interviews were staged, it could be seen as an extension to the construction of reality surrounding these shows as again, it displays misrepresentation of events and the characters involved.

There are several other men whose characters are highlighted and moulded into interesting and dramatic personas during this season of *The Bachelorette*. Tanner P is a 30 year old financial analyst from Dallas. From his very first encounter with Gillian, his role in this season is highlighted which is centred around his foot fetish. In every scene, we are given more information about his likes and dislikes with regard to woman's feet. Thus, there is a comical aspect which is linked to the portrayal of Tanner's character however this could also connote a sexual undertone. His detailed descriptions and ideas of Gillian's feet coupled with physical demonstrations is highly sensual and erotic. Another male contestant is Juan who is 35 years old and his physical appearance can be described as suave, tall, dark and handsome and as suggested by his name, he is Spanish. His character is portrayed as a true gentleman yet at the same time he is the victim of verbal abuse from various other male contestants during his time on the show.

The Bachelor did not include as many stereotypical characters as the season of *The Bachelorette* but the two that are foregrounded are Emily and Michelle. Emily represents the traditional Southern Belle whilst Michelle represents the polar opposite of the aggressive man eater. This is reinforced by the story-lines and examples mentioned in the previous chapter. They both conform to stereotypical women, one being the more passive, homely nurturing and shy woman whilst the other expresses her sexuality and uses it in order to lure the man. Thus "the media have created two images of women: good ones and bad ones" which are often juxtaposed against each other in order to highlight the dramatic differences (Wood 1994:33).

Michelle is representative of the bad woman who is the “witch, bitch, whore or nonwoman – who is represented as hard, cold, aggressive-all the things a good woman is not supposed to be” (Wood 1994:33). This is highlighted through her aggressive nature towards both Brad and the other women and the way she uses her sexuality in order to garner more attention from Brad.

The good girls are usually represented as “victims, angels, martyrs and loyal wives and helpmates (Wood 1994:33). Emily is representative of the above characteristics namely the victim as she was left alone when her fiancé did not survive a plane crash, a martyr as she participates in activities which remind her of her painful past yet she overcomes them whilst remaining a loyal and helpful mother to her daughter. Thus, there is a clear distinction between the two stereotypical characterisations of femininity represented by these two women.

These edits and character creations are attributed to the need and desire for advertising and income. According to Wes Hayden (2009) “they care about the all mighty dollar” which is referring to the greed and opportunity for further global media growth. These characterisations are clearly indicative of the framing method described earlier as the producers have clearly taken these men and created persona’s for them by sifting through footage and choosing what they think is most salient. Salient for reality television producers refers to what will create the most attention stemming from drama and controversy. This is reinforced by Entman (1993 in Fourie 2008:240) when he describes framing as the “selection of some aspects of a perceived reality, making them more salient in a text “in such a way to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described”. The consequences of framing gender, race and ideas in this way ensures that “there is an acceptance of certain frames by members of the audience, with consequences for their attitudes, outlook and (e.g. cynicism) and behaviour” (McQuail 2000:453). Thus, just as the media sends out these framed messages embedded with certain ideologies and beliefs, it is done in the hope that “audiences employ some of the same frames in *their* processing of incoming news”. (McQuail 2000:453). This encourages further stereotyping and also ensures that the audience has understood and accepted these which will make it easier to use as a template for future formats.

Amongst the many cast members this season, it is apparent that there are many stereotypical male characters ranging from Wes, the ‘Texan bad boy’, Jake the ‘all American boy next door’, David the ‘drunk, bully and outspoken guy’, Tanner P the ‘guy with the foot fetish’, Reid, the ‘shy guy’ and Juan ‘the victim’ in the house. The burning question that surrounds these characters and the reason why reality television shows and the entertainment industry as a whole relies on using these stereotypes is simple, it is because “drama is more readily propelled by the use of stock characters because the less you have to think about who a person really is, the more quickly the show can get to things like the plot (such as it may be).

In conclusion, it is evident that the male gatekeeping influence behind the scenes is noticeable through the content and editing of the females in particular. Negative and regressive images of women are foregrounded revealing patriarchal, pre-feminist ideals and stereotypes and dominant ideologies surrounding race and class. In addition, the intensive editing methods increase both drama and chaos and lead to character creation, destruction and manipulation. Cast interviews together with statements by the producers have been clearly discussed and problematized in order to fully understand the way in which editing can be disguised thus creating characters and scenes that never existed. The hyper reality of these shows was clearly juxtaposed against the minimal reality that is shown to the audience thus foregrounding the overall conclusion that advertising and media monopolies and the need to increase ratings are the main reason for the extreme editing, manipulation and drama broadcast during the course of these reality dating shows.

Another result that emerged from the research is that “a trait that is more desirable for one gender is prescribed for that gender” (Prentice & Carranza 2002: 271). Thus, if it is desirable for men to emanate characteristics mentioned above namely being competitive, jealous, ambitious, dominant and athletic more so than women or people as a whole, then that is how society will require them to be and act (Prentice & Carranza: 2002).

Finally, “*The Bachelorette* illustrates the tenacious perseverance of obligatory sexualities and gender roles-that is traditional notions of what it is to be masculine or feminine- in contemporary Western society” (Wong 2005:93). There has never been a homosexual, transgender or bisexual Bachelor or Bachelorette nor have there been any male or female

contestants of this nature on any of the seasons of the show including this season 5. This is reinforced by Wong when she states that “if the women’s Movement and the Gay rights movement have succeeded in dismantling some of the (mis)conceptions regarding femininity, masculinity and the notion of compulsory heterosexuality, then shows like *The Bachelorette* can be construed as a backlash against the feminist deconstruction of rigid gender prescriptions as they renew and reinforce the traditional masculine/feminine dichotomy”

Chapter 8

Conclusion

8.1 Reflections on Findings

This thesis has observed and analysed gender representation within season 15 of *The Bachelor* and season 5 of *The Bachelorette*. This study has found that femininity and masculinity representations are constructed by the producers to present mostly stereotypical and traditional gender images which are familiar to the audience. It has also focused on the contradictory behaviour displayed by the bachelor, the bachelorette and the male and female contestants within both seasons. This study has analysed the behaviours of the men and women involved and has observed that femininity is portrayed in a more negative light than that of the male exploiting female sexuality and pre feminist ideas that women need a husband and security in order to be happy. This was theorised using feminist and post-feminist theories as well as gender representation theory and juxtaposed to male images which are not associated with any form of negativity and in fact are represented as something all men should aspire to and all women should want in a husband.

This research has discussed the use of post production and editing techniques and the minimal percentage of actual footage used thus revealing the manipulative methods involved in what is known as reality television. Producers and advertisers work under extreme pressure to ensure large viewership, ratings and revenue and thus revert to such techniques in order to provide familiar formats and views to the audience. This study has revealed the observations and views of reality show producers who admit to using these techniques to enhance the show and cast members who have observed these techniques and experienced first-hand the way in which editing was used to create their persona. The global media market relies on advertising revenue and ratings in order to continue their success thus casting and editing decisions are key in the creation of ideas and gender roles presented to society. The audience does not always realise that even though they are watching what is known as ‘reality’ television, the content is anything but real.

The above research has covered all of the above topics and theorised them accordingly using a variety of existing research and scholarly debates.

8.3 Limitations of Study

This study would have been enhanced if I would have been able to interview Mike Fleiss and the producers of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* as well as cast members and members of American society. This would have provided the opportunity to ask questions that have not been found in existing interviews thus advancing the observations and analysis of this research. Moreover, access to original footage to compare to footage shown, as well as access to the editing techniques would aid in proving theories and statements made by cast members and academics used within this thesis.

8.4 Areas of further research

There is much research that could still be conducted within the context of this study. This research has chosen to use feminist and post-feminist theories together with gender representation theory in order to analyse these two seasons of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, however future studies could focus on theories of masculinity and the way in which these impact the portrayal of the bachelor and the male contestants.

9 Appendix 1

9.1 - Elements of Stereotyping of Women and Men

The Cult of True Womanhood- Stereotypical Traits

Piety	True Women were naturally religious.	Religious
Purity	True Women were sexually uninterested	Does not use harsh language
Submissiveness	True Women were weak, dependent, and timid	- Aware of feelings of others, gentle, tactful - Quiet
Domesticity	True Women's domain was in the home	Neat in habits, Strong need for security

9.2 Male Sex Role Identity

No Sissy Stuff	A stigma is attached to feminine characteristics.	- Never cries - Not dependent - Direct - Thinks men are superior to women - Not conceited about appearance
The Big Wheel	Men need success and status	- Dominant - Skilled in business - Knows the ways of the world - Acts as a leader - Self-confident - Ambitious - Worldly
The Sturdy Oak	Men should have toughness, confidence, and self-reliance	- Unemotional - Hides emotions - Not excitable in a minor crisis - Able to separate feelings from ideas

Give 'Em Hell	Men should have an aura of aggression, daring, and violence	• Aggressive • Not uncomfortable about being • aggressive • Adventurous • Competitive
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9.3 Appendix 2

Occupations and Ages of the 30 female Bachelorettes in season 15 of *The Bachelor*

Name	Age	Hometown	Job	Eliminated
Emily Maynard ^[3]	25	Morgantown, West Virginia	Children's Hospital Event Planner	Winner
Chantal O'Brien ^[4]	28	Mercer Island, Washington	Executive Assistant	Runner Up
Ashley Hebert ^[5]	26	Madawaska, Maine	Dental Student	Episode 9
Shawntel Newton ^[6]	25	Chico, California	Funeral Director	Episode 8
Michelle Money	30	Salt Lake City, Utah	Hair stylist	Episode 7
Britt Billmaier	25	Woodinville, Washington	Food writer	Episode 7
Jackie Gordon	26	Newport, Rhode Island	Artist	Episode 6
Alli Travis ^[7]	24	Columbus, Ohio	Apparel merchant	Episode 6
Lisa Morrissey	24	Ottawa, Kansas	Marketing Coodinator	Episode 5
Marissa May	26	Mesa, Arizona	Sports Publicist	Episode 5
Ashley Spivey	26	Ellerbe, North Carolina	Nanny	Episode 5
Lindsay Hill ^[8]	25	Plano, Texas	First grade teacher	Episode 4
Meghan Merritt	30	Princeton, New Jersey	Fashion Marketer	Episode 4
Stacey Quirpel	26	Quincy, Massachusetts	Bartender	Episode 4
Kimberly Coon	27	Orlando, Florida	Marketing Coordinator	Episode 3
Sarah Powell	27	Denver, Colorado	Real Estate Broker	Episode 3
Madison Garton	25	Vail, Colorado	Model	Episode 3 (Quit)
Keltie Colleen ^[9]	28	Sherwood Park, Alberta	Radio City Rockette	Episode 2
Melissa Schreiber	32	Westport, Connecticut	Waitress	Episode 2
Raichel Goodyear	29	Fullerton, California	Manscaper	Episode 2
Britnee Marks	25	Holland, Pennsylvania	Paralegal	Episode 1
Cristy Caserta	30	Davie, Florida	Attorney	Episode 1
Jessica "J" Mauss	26	Seattle, Washington	Operations Manager	Episode 1
Jill Ruskowski ^[8]	28	Frisco, Texas	Sales director	Episode 1
Lacey Garbelman ^[10]	27	Tampa, Florida	Insurance agent	Episode 1
Lauren Cooper	26	Culpeper, Virginia	High School Teacher	Episode 1
Lisa Pastrich	27	Dix Hills, New York	Sales Consultant	Episode 1
Rebecca Fielder	30	Mission Viejo, California	Esthetician	Episode 1

Name	Age	Hometown	Job	Eliminated
Renee Halpin	28	Palos Hills, Illinois	Nanny	Episode 1
Sarah Lockwood	25	Saginaw, Michigan	Musical Theatre Performer	Episode 1

9.4 Appendix 3

Occupations and ages of the 30 Bachelors in season 5 of *The Bachelorette*

Name	Age	Hometown	Occupation	Eliminated
<u>Ed Swiderski</u>	29	<u>Monroe, MI</u>	Technology Consultant	Winner
Kiptyn Locke	31	<u>Encinitas, CA</u>	Business Developer	Episode 10
Reid Rosenthal	30	<u>Upper Dublin, PA</u>	Realtor	Episode 9
Wes Hayden	32	<u>Huntsville, TX</u>	Musician	Episode 8
Jesse Kovacs	27	<u>Carmel Valley, CA</u>	Wine Maker	Episode 7
Michael Stagliano	25	<u>Tacoma, WA</u>	Break Dance Instructor	Episode 7
<u>Jake Pavelka</u>	31	<u>Dallas, TX</u>	Commercial Pilot	Episode 6
Robby Descant	25	<u>Spring, TX</u>	Bartender	Episode 6
Tanner Pope	30	<u>Brownfield, TX</u>	Financial Analyst	Episode 6
<i>Ed Swiderski</i>	<i>(see above)</i>		<i>returned Episode 7</i>	<i>Episode 5</i>
Mark Huebner	26	<u>Woodstock, IL</u>	Pizza Entrepreneur	Episode 5
David Good	27	<u>West Alexandria, OH</u>	Trucking Contractor	Episode 4
Juan Barbieri	35	<u>Buenos Aires, Argentina</u>	General Contractor	Episode 4
Mike Steinberg	28	<u>New York, NY</u>	Baseball Camp Owner	Episode 4
Brad Leddis	27	<u>Park Ridge, IL</u>	Financial Advisor	Episode 3
Sasha Petrovic	27	<u>Houston, TX</u>	Oil & Gas Consultant	Episode 3
Tanner Fanello	28	<u>Derby, KS</u>	Sales Representative	Episode 3
Brian Duke	32	<u>Birmingham, AL</u>	IT Consultant	Episode 2
Julien Hug	34	<u>San Diego, CA</u>	Restaurateur	Episode 2
Mathue Johnson	25	<u>Andover, KS</u>	Personal Trainer	Episode 2
Simon Ambrose	26	<u>Bradford, England</u>	Soccer Coach	Episode 2
Adam Duvendeck	27	<u>Santa Barbara, CA</u>	Olympic Cyclist	Episode 1
Bryan Vaderman	28	<u>Lawton, OK</u>	High School Coach	Episode 1
Bryce Harlow	31	<u>Ft. Lauderdale, FL</u>	Furniture Dealer	Episode 1
Caleb Kuhl	27	<u>Kansas City, MO</u>	Photographer	Episode 1
Greg Bilbro	31	<u>Albuquerque, NM</u>	Entrepreneur	Episode 1
John Hardesty	27	<u>Boise, ID</u>	Branding Consultant	Episode 1
John Presser	29	<u>Fort Wayne, IN</u>	Marketing Specialist	Episode 1
Josh Yocam	25	<u>Tustin, CA</u>	Lifeguard	Episode 1
Kyle Yauch	26	<u>Austin, TX</u>	Graphic Designer	Episode 1
Stephen Reich	30	<u>Lexington, MA</u>	Lawyer	Episode 1

Biographical information according to ABC official series site, plus footnoted additions.^[2]

10 End Notes

1. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cool/giants/disney.html>

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