**From “A CONTENT ANALYSIS**: **Reflections of Girls in the Media, A study of Television Shows and Commercials, Movies, Music Videos, and Teen Magazine Articles and Ads” (1997)**

 By Nancy Signorelli, Ph.D.

Media favored by teenage girls often contain stereotypical messages about appearance, relationships and careers. Findings in the study confirm previous research which shows that appearance is shown as more important -- and more uniformly idealized -- for women than for men. Teen girls’ favorite television programs and films continue to under-represent women. In addition, the priorities and activities of women in the media may send girls the implicit message that relationships are more important for women than occupations or careers.

Women are portrayed as spending much of their time dating and talking about the opposite sex while men are primarily seen working and concerned about their success.

*Details from the report:*

- The most obvious differences are seen in the activities reflecting the world of work and the

world of romance and relationships. There is a difference in the percentage of men and the percentage of women seen “on the job.” In these television programs favored by adolescent girls, four out of ten of the men compared to a little more than a quarter of the women are seen working.

- Women on television and in feature films are more likely than the men to talk about specific romantic relationships

- The women in these media are also more likely to be seen doing activities best described as

stereo-typically female [such as] grooming or preening (i.e., combing hair, looking in the mirror)

 - Similarly, more than a quarter of the women in these television programs and movies perform female-stereotyped chores (doing dishes, cooking, cleaning) compared to 1 percent of men who perform male-stereotyped chores (fixing things, taking out the garbage, etc.).

- In both television and film a greater percentage of women were seen talking about romance and dating than talking about work and jobs.

- Most [women] were neither shown on job nor mentioned an occupation. Of the television characters who were presented as having an occupation, over a third of the men and one-fourth of the women were cast as professionals (doctor, lawyer, teacher, social worker, entertainer, etc.) or white collar workers (administrators, managers).

- [Of female] motivations, having a romantic relationship and succeeding in a

job appeared most frequently. On both television and films a higher proportion of men than women were motivated to succeed in a job.

 - Although crying and whining are behaviors exhibited by men and women, more of the women on television whine or cry than the men.

- More women on television try to use flirting to achieve their goals.

- Men are also likely to use gender stereotyped behaviors. Specifically, they are more likely to

use brawn and physical force, particularly in the sample of movies.

- [More] women rely on their male romantic partner to help them solve problems and…to help them achieve their goals.

- A substantial proportion of women across all the media are seen as “thin” or “very

thin”

- While almost a quarter of women in television wore business attire, more than a third of men were portrayed in business clothes. Women in television programs, commercials, and particularly movies, were more often than men found in sleepwear or lingerie. While only a small percent of women or men were partially clothed, women on television were more likely to be partially clothed than men.

Signorelli, Ph.D., Nancy. *A CONTENT ANALYSIS: Refletions of Girls in the Media A Study of Television Shows and Commercials, Movies, Music Videos, and Teen Magazine Articles and Ads.* Kaiser Family Foundation and Children Now, Apr. 1997. Web. 3 July 2012. <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/loader.cfm?url=/commonspot/security/getfile.cfm&PageID=14517>.

***From* “The Influence of Television on Children’s Gender Role Socialization: A Review of the Literature” (2000)**

By Susan D. Witt, Ph.D.

*Regarding gender role development on television, the National Institute of Mental Health has determined:*

- In male-female interaction, men are usually more dominant.   - Men on television are rational, ambitious, smart, competitive, powerful, stable, violent, and tolerant, while women are sensitive, romantic, attractive, happy, warm, sociable, peaceful, fair, submissive, and timid.   - For men, the emphasis is on strength, performance, and skill; for women, it is on attractiveness and desirability.   - Marriage and family are not important to television’s men.

*Other findings:* - Gender stereotypes occur with frequency on daytime soap operas; women are often shown as hopeless individuals, unable to solve problems without assistance.

- A study of Saturday morning cartoons found females were pictured less often than males, were less active than males, played fewer roles than males, played fewer lead roles than males, and worked primarily in the home (Streicher, 1974).  Although these findings were obtained two decades ago, there has been no improvement.  Females are not more fairly represented in children’s programming.

- Most females on nighttime television are young, attractive, thin, and ornamental (Davis, 1990).  Most female characters are either under 35 or over 50.

- Females are consistently placed in situations where looks count more than brains, and helpless and incompetent behaviors are expected. Men are twice as likely as women to be shown as competent and able to solve problems (Boyer, 1986).

Gender stereotypes abound on television, with women being depicted as sex objects more frequently than men, and men portrayed as inept when handling children’s needs (Seidman, 1999; Horovitz as cited in Basow, 1992).

Witt, Ph.D., Susan D. "The Influence of Television on Children’s Gender Role Socialization." *The Journal of Childhood Education: Infancy Through Adolescence* 76.5 (2000): 322-24. Print.

***From* “Boxed In: Employment of Behind-the-Scenes and On-Screen Women in the 2010-11 Prime-time Television Season” (2011)**

By Martha M. Lauzen, Ph.D.

*Findings/On Screen*

- 41% of all characters and 43% of major characters were female in the 2010-2011 season. This represents a decline of 2 percentage points from the 2007-08 season when female characters accounted for a historical high of 43% of characters.

- Female characters continue to be younger than their male counterparts. 67% of characters in their 50s and 71% of characters 60 and above were male.

- Female characters 40 and older comprised 11% of all characters. Males 40 and older accounted for 23% of characters.

- 76% of female characters were white, 12% were African American, 5% were Asian American, 5% were Latina, and 1% were some other race or ethnicity.

- Viewers were less likely to know the occupational status of female characters than male characters. 36% of female characters but only 22% of male characters had an unknown occupational status.

- Viewers were most likely to see female characters on programs airing on CW where female characters accounted for 52% of all characters. CW is the only network that represents females in accurate proportion to their representation in the U.S. population. On the other networks, females accounted for 43% of characters on ABC programs, 40% on CBS, 39% on Fox, and 36% on NBC.

- Regarding genre, viewers were more likely to see female characters on reality programs where they accounted for 46% of all characters, than on drama programs (40%), or situation comedies (34%).

Lauzen, Ph.D., Martha M. *Boxed In: Employment of Behind-the-Scenes and On- Screen Women in the 2010-11 Prime-time Television Season*. Rep. Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film, San Diego State University, 2011. Web. 3 July 2012. <http://womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu/files/2010-2011\_Boxed\_In\_Exec\_Summ.pdf>.