THE COLOR OF LOVE ON THE BIG SCREEN:
THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN HOLLYWOOD FILMS
IN INTERRACIAL RELATIONSHIPS FROM 1967 TO 2005

By

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A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2006
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By

Nadia A. Ramoutar
To my parents, Chad Ramoutar and Gloria Jean Ramoutar
For your courage to love outside the color lines

To William, Dorothy, Jean, Helga, Eve and Aaron
for our journey to belonging

To my son, Devin and all our children,
May you be free to love as your heart desires.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The guidance, wisdom and insights of Dr. Lynda Lee Kaid have helped me in ways beyond this mere document and research. Her vast experience as a researcher and academic scholar were of incredible value to me as she generously guided me each step of the way. Her promptness and compassion in everyday decision making and research design supported me beyond compare. She is a role model for me in my career as educator and researcher.

Another role model and brilliant women, Dr. Helena Särkiö, inspired and encouraged me to make this research count. She was there for me at every turn, prompting me to a standard of intelligence I could not have attempted alone, offering not just her wisdom but also her exuberant friendship and support. She motivated me to delve further into race and gender studies knowing all the while it mattered profoundly. I am forever grateful to Helena for her guidance and encouragement.

I would also like to thank my other committee members, Dr. Mark Reid and Dr. Bernell Tripp. As a scholar in Black Film, Dr. Reid's teaching and research gave me the background and skills to question every frame of film I watched and every word of dialogue I heard. He prompted me to expand the scope of my study in significant ways. For her rigorous and knowledgeable role, Dr. Bernell Tripp moved me to question my motives and my methods which resulted in better research designs. Her knowledge of mass Media history gave me a strong foundation for my research. I also thank Danny Shipka for his constant companionship in this program and undying support in my
research and well being. I would like to thank Monica Postelnicu and Hyun Yun for their knowledge, assistance and friendship. Also, I thank Sherry Gilmore for her technical support, encouragement and timely assistance.

This journey would not have been possible without my amazing support team at Flagler College. I thank the Delphi Panel of Jim Gilmore, Jim Picket, Tracy Halcomb and Danny Shipka for guidance and wisdom. I also want to thank the devoted students who supported me and assisted with my research. I greatly appreciate the support from Dean Paula Miller and Chair Tracy Halcomb and thank them for making the impossible possible all the way from the application to the defense. No project as large is ever possible without some very serious support teams at many levels. I would like to thank the people who believed in me and encouraged me to complete this dissertation with such dignity: Arlene Blain, Holley Hackett, Darragh Ramoutar, Elizabeth Claire, Rachel Thompson, Laura Mongiovi, Joe Vlah and Dianne Tymmeson. I thank Kathe O’Donnelly for her constant care and vigilance. I also thank Kenny Hamilton for his infinite patience, humor and insights often at the toughest parts of the journey. I thank Devin Reardon for making it all worthwhile. I could never have done this without all of your support and love. I finally have to express a deep appreciation to the media scholars who paved the way and inspired me to care and the students who are yet to arrive.
PREFACE

In writing this dissertation, which includes a qualitative and a quantitative research method to explore and analyze the portrayal of women in interracial relationships in film from 1967 – 2005, it is important to establish my research interest and personal relationship to the topic. In 1967, the year the study sample begins my mother was pregnant with me. A tall, blonde, green-eyed woman in Dublin, Ireland, my mother was married to a short dark Indian man from Trinidad. Such an ethnic blending in Ireland or anywhere at that time (and some would argue even now) was unusual. After being raised in Ireland, I immigrated to America with my parents as a teenager. Immediately upon arriving here I experienced predictable culture shock but not for the reasons I expected. I found the treatment of American women in society and in the media to be sexualized and patronizing in a more extreme way than European women. The segregation of races among Americans in society and the media was also very obvious to me. I had expected to see many more blended-race people like myself but soon realized that American homes and churches were profoundly segregated.

When I entered the Ph.D. program at the University of Florida I was 34-years-old and a very different person than when I graduated from UF the first time at 21-years of age. In a time of growing multiculturalism in the United States, race relations deserve a closer look. In my specialty of race and gender studies in film I strive to make a significant contribution to the voiceless: the women and men who dare to love or venture
outside the color line of love in America. My intent is to pave the way for future research in a rarely valued realm.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ........................................................................................................ iv
PREFACE ............................................................................................................................... vi
LIST OF TABLES ................................................................................................................ xi
ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................................... xii

CHAPTER

1 INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................ 1

The Influence of Film Portrayals .................................................................................. 4
Theoretical Perspectives ......................................................................................... 22
  The Film Feminist Paradigm .............................................................................. 22
  Cultural Studies ............................................................................................... 24
  Social Construction of Reality Theory .......................................................... 26
  Cultivation Theory ......................................................................................... 30
Research Questions: ............................................................................................ 32

2 METHODS ................................................................................................................. 34

  Triangulation: Using A Quantitative Method And A Qualitative Method ........... 34
  Multiple Methods as “Crystallization,” Not Merely Triangulation ...................... 37
Framing analysis ....................................................................................................... 40
  Creating the Framing Analysis ........................................................................ 43
  Delphi Panel ........................................................................................................ 43
  The Films in the Sample ................................................................................. 44
Coding Procedures ............................................................................................... 47
  Conducting the Framing Analysis .................................................................. 48

3 THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN INTERRACIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN
FILM ............................................................................................................................. 51

  Womanhood in the Sample Films........................................................................ 51
  The White Woman as Flawed and/or Fragile .................................................. 51
  The Portrayal of White Women with Hispanic Men ........................................ 58
  The Portrayal of White Women and Black Men .............................................. 62
White Women as Insignificant .................................................................68
All’s “Fair” In Love and War: The Hierarchy of Skin Tone in the Portrayal
of Women of Color ..............................................................................71
Dark Skinned, Dark Natured Femme Fatale ........................................73
The Portrayal of Hispanic Women in Interracial Relationships: Late Comers ..76
Amerindian Women ..............................................................................77
Asian Women in Interracial Relationships ...........................................78
Love You to Death: Interracial Relationships on the big screen exist in a
Violent and Conflicted World ..............................................................80
“Gender Benders”: Women in Interracial Relationships Failure to be the
Traditional Female ..............................................................................85
The "Super-Model" Minority: Women of Color as Exotic, Erotic, and
Exceptional; Men of Color as the Perfect Gentleman ..........................90
Model Minority Males: The Perfect Gentlemen ....................................93
The Mary Magdalene Frame: Unworthy Women Who Distract Men from
their Mission in Life ............................................................................95
The White Male Fantasy: Skin, sex, subservience and Saving the Damsel in
Distress ...............................................................................................98

4 COMPARING AND CONTRASTING THE CONTENT .............................112

| Content Analysis ...........................................................................112 |
| Research Questions ......................................................................112 |
| Identifying the Content Analysis Sample ....................................113 |
| Defining the Coding Categories .................................................113 |
| Outlining the Coding Process, Training the Coders, and Calculating |
| Reliability ..................................................................................115 |
| Implementing the Coding Process ..............................................116 |
| Findings .....................................................................................116 |

5 REFLECTIONS ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF INTERRACIAL SEX OR
LOVE ON THE BIG SCREEN ...............................................................137

| Implications of the Film Study Research ....................................137 |
| Contributions and Relevance to Theory ....................................140 |
| The Film Feminist Paradigm ......................................................140 |
| Cultural Studies .........................................................................141 |
| Social Construction of Reality Theory ....................................142 |
| Cultivation Theory ....................................................................143 |
Directions for Future Research and Limitations of the Study ..................................143
Conclusion ................................................................................................................148

APPENDIX

A CONTENT ANALYSIS CODING SHEET.............................................................157
B MOVIES FROM 1967 – 2005 IN TOP 15 BOX OFFICE SALES WITH AN
       INTERRACIAL ROMANTIC OR SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP .....................181

REFERENCES ................................................................................................................185
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH ...........................................................................................192
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Frequency of Race by Gender</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Skills Women Exhibit</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ultimate Values of Men and Women</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Challenges Facing the Interracial Relationship Couple</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Decision-Maker in the Relationship Outcome</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Outcome of the Interracial Relationship</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is the color of love on the big screen? It appears that Hollywood’s favorite color is still green, but race differences are used strategically in film. The purpose of this study is to explore the portrayal of women in interracial relationships in blockbuster Hollywood films from 1967 – 2005. Previous research indicates that women are portrayed in film as underrepresented, sexualized and insignificant in comparison to the portrayal of men in the same film. Although studies have been done on women in film, no extensive study has been done on interracial relationships in popular Hollywood film. The intent of this study was ambitiously to examine the role of sex, gender, and race as factors in the interaction between men and women in interracial relationships. The researcher also examined the changes of portrayal in the films under study over four decades. The study was conducted using framing analysis, a qualitative method and content analysis, a quantitative method. The findings of the framing analysis were used to create the categories of the content analysis. The sample of films studied included top
15 box office hits for each year from 1967 – 2005, which had an interracial sexual or physical relationship in the film. The final sample included only 36 films for study out of 540 possible films. The findings indicate that interracial relationships are rarely shown in popular films but when they are shown they are portrayed as problematic, conflicted and sexualized. An interracial relationship in the films under study was as likely to end with the man or woman dead, as with a commitment. Most interracial relationships involve a white man and an Asian woman. All women are stereotypically portrayed as young, socially vulnerable, over-sexualized and living in a violent world. The women are usually portrayed as supporting or minor characters. The interracial relationship is shown as usually being sexualized, short-lived and insignificant to the plot. There are trends of portrayal of different races in different decades. Some races are rarely portrayed, while other races are frequently shown. Gender is impacted by race in the portrayal in interracial relationships in films.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Examining the mass media portrayal of women in interracial relationships as represented in commercially successful film marks the gender and racial differences of social constructs of power structures. Studying the way Caucasian women are portrayed in interracial romantic and/or sexual relationships compared to the way Women of Color are portrayed creates an opportunity to explore the color code of love in a mass medium and, therefore, public sphere. The study also seeks to compare the way Caucasian men and Men of Color are portrayed in the films under study compared to the way the women are portrayed. By studying the way race interaction in sexual and romantic relationships are portrayed we attain a greater insight into America social understanding of race and gender as constructs interdependently.

There have been many studies done on issues of race and on issues of gender in film, but very few studies if any, look at the interaction of race and gender through the lens or romantic or sexual relationships. In this study, therefore, the film industry's portrayal of ethnicity and gender over time from 1977 to 2005 is explored through that lens of the interracial relationship and its portrayal of women. The primary goal of this research is to raise awareness of the limited and problematic nature of Hollywood’s portrayal of women in interracial relationships that may reinforce myths about gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality. This research also suggests that racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual identity in American mainstream film cannot be studied without considering each category's interdependence and influence on each other. It also examines the concept that
there is no “woman’s” experience to be portrayed in film, as issues of race and sex clearly impact that portrayal on the big screen.

Thus, an objective of this research is to discover and contrast constructs of womanhood according to race and gender created by Hollywood films in interracial relationships. Are relationships portrayed as important to these women? Are women of color and white women portrayed the same way in interracial relationships? What impact does the racial or ethnic identity of the male or female have on the portrayal of the relationship? Have these portrayals changed since the U.S. Supreme court deemed anti-miscegenation laws unconstitutional in 1967? Created in a white male dominated industry, do women in the films under study appear to have control over their life or their relationship? This research addresses a concern of film feminism which recognizes that race and ethnicity are important factors in the portrayal of women in film that have been traditionally ignored in academic and commercial facets.

The research also explores the portrayal of women in sexual or romantic relationships with the understanding that social and political values are constructs of “reality” and that certain behaviors are "normalized". Audience members often look to the mass media to define what is important and what is to be desired or even avoided. Although most people know that the primary purpose of the film industry is to entertain, it is also intended to do so in a profitable way. One of the ways in which Hollywood entertains is to offer a mythical version of reality that excites; intrigues and sometimes exploits the audience. There are many myths that media creates about life, who to love and how to love them. This research scrutinizes the overt and covert ways in which cultural transmission around segregation in normal love operates and is portrayed in the
media. The portrayal of interracial relationships is uncommon in American mass media. The portrayal of women in interracial relationships that are healthy and well-balanced is almost non-existent.

It is impossible to study this portrayal without considering the history of race and gender issues in America which rather than a harmonious melting pot, have been problematic. Since its birth, the United States has been an enormous blend of people from a variety of racial backgrounds. This research seeks to understand why some genders and races are portrayed as more favorable than others and how the interaction of people from unlike races is portrayed within heterosexual relationships in film. The culmination of generations of oppression in the United States history involved significant Civil Right's and Women’s Movement efforts in the 1960s and 1970s. Although these efforts did improve the experience of women and people of color in this country, issues of equity still linger. This study explores if the mass media portray genders and people of color as equitable in the decades following the Civil Right’s and Women’s Movement in America. Would choosing a romantic or sexual partner outside of her racial group place a women in a higher or lower position or status in society on the big screen? The second-wave feminist movement has been heavily criticized for addressing the "women's" experience as universal.

This research breaks down the portrayal of women of different racial categories and compares and contrasts their portrayal in popular film. The research ambitiously seeks to use two research methods and extensive variables of gender, race, and sexuality which creates a unique opportunity to see that a woman in a relationship is impacted not only by her race but by the race of the partner with which she is affiliated. There is a hierarchy
in gender and in race that can be identified only after carefully and systematically breaking down the portrayal of women in film into great detail and analyzing its meaning for a much greater impact.

**The Influence of Film Portrayals**

Popular film does more than entertain. Hollywood films also serve as a powerful means to transmit culture from one generation to the next in a society. Film is a powerful medium and is one of the top three exports from the United States to the rest of the world (Kamalipour, 2006). Characterization in film is “a useful like of inquiry into media messages. Characters can be considered the embodiments of ideological positions based upon whose interests they represent”. (Silverblatt & Zlbin, 2004, p. 85). Much research has been done to show that Hollywood and the creation of popular film is a white man’s world where Caucasian men are clearly at the top of the power structure (Eschholz et al., 2002, Grinner, 2004). American films are created in this distribution of power, within a capitalistic system that is competitive and profit-driven (Eschholz et al., 2002, p. 301). The current media ownership trend in the world is one of a transnational corporation which creates an oligopoly. Cultural imperialism exists not merely between nations but between ethnic groups within a nation and globally (Kamalipour, 2006; Kellner, 2003). Society operates on a social order and this order is maintained through formula narrative films (Grinner, 2004). Unless people have personal contact with people of another ethnicity or race or culture, our views are colored by national stereotypes depicted in the media (Silverblatt & Zlbin, 2004). The film industry did not always reflect such a homogenized portrayal of society nor was the film industry dominated by white males originally. The film industry in America originally involved many significant women and minorities as directors, writers, and producers (Slide, 1998, p. vii). It is no
secret that Hollywood is still one of the most powerfully white male dominated industries in America and American film dominates in a global media economy (Slide, 1998; Eschholz et al., 2002; Kaplan, 1987). Most research of film feminist scholars conducted since the 1970s indicates that women in film history have been mostly defined through male definition. Women and people of color are habitually portrayed through the lens by men who have never experienced the reality of a woman or a person of color. Do women of any color and men of color receive more than a stereotypical portrayal in such a media economy? This study explores that very question.

Hollywood and the creation of popular film has evolved over the years into an industry that treats the creation of film like any other commodity that can be sold or exported (Kamalipour, 2006). This was not always the case. The early film making days included many white women in directing and producing roles and story lines presented women as multifaceted members of society. When the studio system began in Hollywood in 1911, women began to lose power and the studio system systematically moved to a formulaic approach to film making which still exists today (Campbell et al., 2006). Some women who made it into history books usually did so because of her on screen presence, while some with technical or leadership skills of other women were overlooked and written out and simply put, “in the 1920s women were left behind because they weren’t wanted” (Slide, 1998, p. 163).

Despite the success of a few female directors and producers, the Hollywood set remains a segregated and heavily guarded elite group limited by gender, class and race. Digital technology may offer some hope for newcomers entering the film arena, but the mass media dominance of specific media corporate giants produces an oligopoly in
distribution that creates a "blockbuster" formula approach to mass movie scripts (Campbell et al., 2005). If American corporate filmmaking serves as the Nation's "storyteller" it also serves to reinforce and distinguish between what is normal and abnormal, desired and undesired and what is morally "the boundary between what is permitted and the forbidden" (Campbell et al., 2005, p. 230). In the portrayal of interracial relationships in popular film is the "forbidden fruit" of a romantic or sexual partner from another race used as a ploy to increase conflict and sexual intrigue on the big screen? Has such a portrayal changed over four decades to reflect social progress in society’s integration?

Why study interracial relationships in mass media portrayal? The study of mass media portrayal reflects the values and power structure of the society in which it is generated and distributed. In White, film scholar Richard Dyer (1988) points out that: “Power in contemporary society habitually passes itself off as embodied in the normal as opposed to the superior. This is common to all forms of power, but it works in a peculiarly seductive way with whiteness, because of the way it seems rooted, in commonsense thought, in things other than ethic difference” (p. 44). The other reason to examine interracial relationships is that it makes it possible to study the phenomena of “whiteness” as being everything and nothing at the same time. In comparison, in Black Film as a Signifying Practice, Gladstone L. Yearwood (2000) says: “For many people . . . blackness is less a color than a metaphor for political circumstances prescribed by struggles against economic exploitation and cultural domination: a state of consciousness that peoples of various pigmentation have experienced, empathized with, and responded to” (p.5). When it comes to race, gender and sexuality, power is a very
important aspect to study in the portrayal of women in interracial relationship. Sex is often used to show who has power and who does not in the narrative film. The person with the sexual appeal is more powerful than the person without sexual appeal. The person who selects the woman with sexual appeal shows his or her power over the situation. Who controls the power in the relationship and the outcome of the relationship is heavily scrutinized in this study. By studying the portrayal of power and positive or negative traits of the interracial relationship we are able to go beyond the surface of the meaning and take a closer reading of what the narrative is saying about interracial relationships.

Merely looking at a popular film does not always make messages about politically sensitive subjects, like race or gender equity, clear but rather blurs it. Blurring the significance of race and gender is a Hollywood special effect that disguises where the true power lies. Making sure that racial and gender inequality are kept “secret” seems to be a major motivator in mainstream American film (Haskell, 1987). According to Molly Haskell (1987) in From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies, keeping this secret is key to social order: “The big lie perpetrated on Western society is the idea of women’s inferiority, a lie so deeply ingrained in our social behavior that merely to recognize it is to risk unraveling the entire fabrication of civilization” (p. 1).

Society reflects a social order and the media are often used to reinforce those social values or beliefs so that examining a narrative plot can “furnish insight into the cultural sensibility of a culture” (Silverblatt & Zlobin, 2004). Such a portrayal is often subtle as the hegemony in a democracy does not force members of a society to comply by brute force. Its power on the behavior of members is much more subtle and often so
normalized that it is invisible to the average viewer. As Holtzman (2000) points out, most people operate as if what is normal or “natural cannot be controlled socially…If we are convinced that something is natural we are also more likely to believe that it is legitimate, permanent and unchangeable” (p. 300). The film industry like most other oligopolies, does not force Western Society to accept its reality. Holtzman further explains that the power in society is reinforced rather than forced:

Hegemony, as you may recall, allows those in power to rule by consent rather than force…Entertainment media, along with religion and education, is one of the institutions that reinforces our sense of what is considered normal. This “normalcy” typically reflects the beliefs or ideology of the dominant culture. (Holtzman, 2000, p. 300)

Holtzman's points are very significant in this study because women exist in a social structure in which they participate without force. Women who appear "sexualized" often self-elect to appear this way because they, too, believe it is normal. John Berger (1977) in *Ways of Seeing* makes the point that if the sexualization of a woman, for example, if a nude image were replaced with a man we would clearly notice "the violence which the transformation" had created (p. 64). The sexualization of women as objects in our society is so normalized in our mass media that it is hard for viewers to identify the violence Berger describes. This study explores the role of violence in the portrayal of women in the films under study. Examples of film violence are often presented in the narrative as so common or normal to the experience of being a woman that they almost go unnoticed. This study uses quantitative and qualitative methods to explore how prevalent violence is in a film world of interracial relationships. Are interracial relationships portrayed as existing in a violent world?

Film is a powerful medium and socialization tool in American culture for several reasons and is considered the major art form of these times. Film allows us to see that
hegemonic social order is maintained as Hollywood movies follow a formula which uses the “order, disorder, and restoration of order” formula of the narrative film (Grinner, 2004, p.199). Linda Holtzman (2000) concludes: “the study of entertainment media and race is complex…Still further there is complexity within each racial group” (p. 209). The proposed research seeks to explore this complexity. Issues of race and gender provide a challenge to research because this “complexity” indicates that much of what is first seen is not necessarily reflective of what exists below the surface. It is as if sexism and racism in Western society are veiled in secrecy or even denial, especially from those creating and enforcing the limitations. In *White Privilege: The Invisible Knapsack*, Peggy McIntosh points out that “whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege” (1990, p. 31). Exposing the oblivious nature of white/male advantage in society creates the goal of raising our consciousness “to seek to reconstruct power systems on a broader base currently very narrow” (McIntosh, 1990, p. 32).

According to Holtzman (2000), racism is so covertly portrayed that it is often hard for people in America to identify it compared to the overt Jim Crow laws of the past. Viewing older films in which the minstrel faced black person is mocked and vilified by white film makers like in *Birth of a Nation* makes identifying negative portrayal blatant and almost impossible to miss for audiences now. But the portrayal in popular films now does not offer such a racial signpost as the minstrel faced black person, though when closely examined other key signposts about racial order do exist. Why should this matter? Today, the media have “assumed a vital role in the transmission of cultural myths” (Silverblatt & Zlobin, 2004, p. 67). Media misinformation about race impacts
people of color and white people in different ways. White people in the United States are socialized to see their race not simply as dominant, but as the norm, the standard for behavior, and the benchmark for what it means to be American (Denzin, 2002).

According to Norman Denzin (2002) in *Reading Race*, “A majority of Americans know and understand the American racial order through the mass media. Accordingly, those who control the media, including cinema and television, shape and define a society’s discourse about race and race relations” (p.2). Interracial relationships in American culture are uncommon compared to same–race relationships but also address issues of power in the “conflicted sexual political arena of desire” (Lester et al., 2005, p.137). The study of women in interracial relationships is often studied only in its context to men in interracial relationships. For example, according to Gail Dines (2003) in *King Kong and the White Woman: Hustler Magazine and the Demonization of Black Masculinity*, “from the box offices success of Birth of a Nation in 1915 to the National obsession with O.J. Simpson, the image of the Black man as the spoiler of White womanhood has been a staple of media representation in this country” (p. 451).

Another interesting aspect of studying the portrayal of women in interracial relationships in film is that the racial profile of male and female change the perception of the relationship. For example, the portrayal of the white-female, black-male coupling and the portrayal of white-female and Asian-male are seen as a threat to patriarchy, while the portrayal of Asian-female and white-male is portrayed in a positive way in Western media (Sun, 2003, p. 657). According to Chyng Feng Sun (2003), “the pairing of a white male and Oriental female is naturalized and has its colonialist root, manifested in the ‘rescue’ narrative. In films with non-white women it becomes apparent that the role
of colonization and “the West’s dominance is secured through narratives of romance and sexuality that justify white man’s possession of the bodies of women of color” (p. 6). In the portrayal of women in film, in issues of sexuality, race, and ethnicity, are all women created equally? This study explores how race is used as a variable in the portrayal of gender in popular film.

It is impossible to study the media of a culture without considering the historical impact of the culture in which the media product is created or consumed. According to cultural critic Toni Cade Bambara (1996), a history of colonization plays a major role in race and gender politics in American media:

The creative imagination has been colonized. The global screen has been colonized and the audience – readers and viewers – is in bondage to an industry. It has the money, the will, the muscle, and the propaganda machine oiled up to keep us all locked up in a delusional system – as even what America is. (Bambara. 1996, p. 140)

The study of race and gender, which focuses on the portrayal of women, is significant and contributes to the field of mass communication research as it is also an exploration of political and social power. According to Croteau and Hoynes (1997), “Historically, the U.S. media have taken ‘whites’ to be the norm against which all racial groups are measured… The absence of the racial signifier in this country usually signifies whiteness. The pervasiveness of white perspectives in media is perhaps its most powerful characteristic” (p. 24).

The movie industry offers a socialized version of not only the norm, but the ideal. According to media scholar Marshall McLuhan (1964), “The movie is not only a supreme expression of mechanism, but paradoxically it offers as product the most magical of consumer commodities, namely dreams” (p. 32). In addition to being a very powerful economic force in mass media, the film industry has become “America’s storyteller”
meaning that Hollywood has long served as “contemporary mythmakers…at their best they tell communal stories that evoke and symbolize our most enduring values and our secret desires” (Campbell et al., 2005, p. 229). This study questions the role of race, gender, and sexuality in perpetuating the myths of the past by examining almost four decades of film.

Since the early days of the Hollywood studio system women and minorities have contributed to filmmaking (Slide, 1998, p. 38) but such an inclusive film industry does not operate in the Western world anymore. The secret desires of modern movie goers are constructed by the powerful Big Five – Paramount, MGM, Warner Brothers, Twentieth Century Fox, and RKO along with the Little Three of Columbia, Universal, and United Artists (Campbell et al., 238). Commercial film, like most entertainment media is dependent on conflict for intrigue and box office sales. The use of gender, race, and/or ethnicity is used as a narrative device effectively to create conflict in film and this technique, in a visual medium like film, is as old as the medium itself. According to film scholar Cameron Bailey (1998) in “Nigger/Love: The Thin Sheen of Race”,

Since the cavalry rode manfully across the cross cutting to save Lillian Gish from blackness in Birth of a Nation, since Barbara Apollonia Chalupiec became Pola Negri and took up a position as Hollywood’s resident Other, black sexuality, indeed anything other than white sexuality, has been both a potent threat and a powerful attraction in American film. Adopting a centuries old signification system, Hollywood from its beginnings linked racial difference to sexual danger, Danger, we saw, lurked in a capital-O Other: sexual transgression became Hollywood’s darkest din, and its surest box-office draw. (Bailey, 1998, p. 28)

The study of these films with an interracial relationship show that Hollywood is still using women’s experiences and race as a sexual transgression and box office draw.

Despite the ideal that race relations in America have been healed since the Civil Right’s Era and integration is openly occurring, the U.S. Census taken in 2000 indicates
that only 2 percent of American marriages are interracial reflecting that each partner is of a different ethnic or racial group (U.S. Census 2000). This extremely low statistic shows that in America love follows specific and narrow color lines. Although the U.S. Supreme court ruled in Loving V. Virginia in 1967 that States prohibiting interracial marriage was unconstitutional (Romano, 2003, p. 188), the Census indicates that segregation still exists in American households. The study of racial and/or ethnic stereotypes in film offers insights into the attitudes and stereotypes that contribute to this on-going segregation, “preventing people from finding love as they wish” (Moran, 2001, p. 37).

Since the early days of American film, when D. W. Griffith directed the American Epic Birth of a Nation, the social fear of interracial interaction has been portrayed to the masses as “dangerous” (Kaplan, 1997, p. 66; hooks, 1992, p. 311). In feminism, film feminism, media studies, and film studies it becomes clear that American film has an agenda: “Ostensibly, American movies have been dedicated to the reinforcement of middle-class morality and have done their share to strengthen capitalism, chauvinism, racism, sexism, and so on” (O’Connor & Jackson, 1979, p. xii).

Frequently, when non-white people are portrayed in film, they are there as performers. Bailey (1998) points out that black culture becomes “entirely performative, resulting in images that make the black body the performing body, a body offered to a consuming, and largely unquestioning public” (p. 40). This study explores the portrayal of women as performers and entertainers.

The concept of the “other” as erotic is frequently used in film to create tension. Bailey points out that in film “Never far behind this black as exotic stereotype is the implication that the black is more primitive or animal-like. The predominant physical
stereotypes of blacks, the stereotype that holds currency in North American film – bulging eyes, thick lips, wide noses, enlarged sexual organs – turn the black into a rampaging figure of excess sensuality” (p. 32).

The struggle over race, gender, and sexuality continues to play out on the big screen even today. The assumption is made that film is one of the oldest forms of Mass Media in Western society and remains one of the most powerful. Mainstream Hollywood film is also a wealthy white man’s industry that promotes and protects a hegemonic social order which places the portrayal of women, both Caucasian and women of color, frequently in stereotypical and limited frames. Because the scope of film is so broad and women can be seen in almost any film, research concentrated on the portrayal of women in the top fifteen box office films annually from 1967 – 2005 with a current interracial romantic or sexual heterosexual relationship only. The framing analysis of females in interracial relationships in film is an innovative addition to the growing dialogue about gender, race, and media. This research was then used to create the categories for a content analysis study of the same sample of films. To obtain the most valid and reliable results this study utilized both a qualitative and quantitative research method.

Much work has been done on the portrayal of women in film and the portrayal of women as objects rather than as subjects. Media Scholar Laura Mulvey (1975) established in “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” that women are constructed in film and other media images for the male “spectator’s gaze” (p. 7). The implication of Mulvey’s research finding of “The Gaze is Male” contributed greatly to film study since its appearance in Screen in 1975. The greater implication being that “the Hollywood text
is gendered and male by virtue not only of the dominant forms of visual pleasure – voyeurism and fetishism, traditionally analyzed as male perversions – but also by the close formal convergence of narrative progress …” (Elsaesser, 2002, p. 253).

The concept of the male gaze is not new to film but finds its root in the early days of commercial images in the Art world. In *Ways of Seeing*, (1977) John Berger makes the important distinction that:

Men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object – and most particularly an object of vision: a sight. (Berger, 1977, p. 47)

The importance of Berger’s distinction in the greater concept of Gramsci’s Hegemony is that women are thereby not merely subjected to the “male gaze” but are so conditioned in a male power structure to actually objectify themselves willingly. Berger builds an argument that women are depicted in a different way from men because the ideal spectator is always assumed to be male and the image of the women is designed to flatter him (p. 64). This study explores the role of women in the portrayal of importance in film and examines if women are portrayed in equally significant roles as men and if women are viable and important players in the plot of storyline. This is measured by examining the role of the female character as leading, supporting, or minor in the film under study.

There has been much study done in academia to examine the portrayal of women in the past but such studies have been limited. When many media scholars were establishing film feminism the focus, which has since been heavily criticized, was of white women and generalized to describe the experience of all women. Clearly, this is not the case. This study explores if women of color are treated the same on the big screen as their
white counterparts. According to media scholar, bell hooks (1992), “there is power in looking” (p. 10). In order to consider the portrayal of women in film we must consider the significance of each race and ethnic group’s history and social standing in America. The framing analysis and content analysis in this study both explore and define the sameness and difference each racial group receives in the portrayal of women in relationships with men of another racial group. Is the portrayal the same for a white man to be in a relationship with an Asian woman as it is when a white man is involved with a black woman? Do certain frames emerge within racial portrayal of women that do not apply to other women?

To consider the term “male gaze” as significant one must first address the concept of male and female as constructs of gender under the theory of Social Construction of Reality that will be discussed in more detail later. Although some people use the terms “gender” and “sex” interchangeably, the terms have distinctly different meanings (Wood, 2003, p. 19). Sex is a designation based on biological factors, whereas gender is socially and psychologically constructed (Wood, 2003, p.18). Gender therefore, is a much more complex and dynamic concept than sex. Biology influences behavior, but culture determines how gender is valued. According to Teresa de Lauretis in *Technologies of Gender* (1987), “The term gender is actually, the representation of a relation, that of belonging to a class, a group, a category” (p. 4). She says that gender is used to create “the cultural conception of male and female as two complementary yet mutually exclusive categories into which all human beings are placed constitute within each culture a gender system, a symbolic system or system of meaning that correlates sex to cultural contents according to social values and hierarchy” (p. 5).
Hollywood not only systematically stereotypes women, but films exaggerate stereotypes of women in general (Eschholz et al., 2002, p. 299), and females in each race also seem to be stereotyped further. In an extensive content analysis study of the top 50 films of 1996, it was reported that stereotypes of women and minority films still exist in popular film (Eschholz et al., 2002, p. 299). This study considered the portrayals of women significant as they “are important factors in the social construction of reality among the general public and therefore may perpetuate racism and sexism on a larger scale” (p. 299). Findings for this study and other film studies suggest that females are still underrepresented in popular film. Women not only appear in films less frequently than men, but are also relegated to less important roles like supporting or minor roles (Media Report, 2003). Other findings about race and gender include that Caucasian females tend to be portrayed as more feminine than African-American females. The displayed traits for traditional male and female gender were examined in this study to test the previous finding and to see if it has changed over the past 38 years. In previous studies, African-American females were shown as traditional stereotypes of the “Mammy” or “Jezebel.” Other minorities were rarely shown in any leading roles (Eschholz et al., 2002, p. 322). The study concluded that Hollywood films “represent a traditional social construction of the world where capitalism, patriarchy, and hegemonic masculinity are all represented by the norm and the ideal” (Eschholz et al., 2002, p. 322). Film has and continues to be a “powerful site for the production, transformation, and maintenance of traditional cultural notions of identity” (Berland & Wechter, 1992, P. 35).

After completing a systematic study of top grossing films from 1946 – 1994, Stephen Powers, David Rothman, and Stanley Rothman published their findings in
This study involved a sample of 146 top-grossing films over a 44-year period. Gender and race were factors used in this study. Romance was found to be a leading motivational factor for women in these films. The role of sexuality in film changes after 1968 when the new rating system replaces the Hays Code (Powers, 1996, p. 162). Powers (1996) found that the portrayal of women was found to be more “positively” than that of men, but race was not indicated as a factor in this finding (p. 164).

Since the 1970s, women have been portrayed as more violent and self-involved than in previous eras. The study concluded that women continue to be underrepresented in films (one woman to every three men on average). Representation of women over time has changed and these trends indicate “the traditional myths surrounding them—their civility, maternal instinct, and devotion to family—have declined precipitously in influence” (Rothman & Powers, 1996, p. 170). Romance on the big screen has also undergone change over the years: In romantic situations, most of the attractive qualities of domestic life have been replaced by scenarios that make human existence seem that much more lonely, unpleasant, and dangerous for men and women alike (p. 170). The importance of romance and its significance to the portrayal of women and men in interracial relationships is explored as a value in this research.

The study also examines the previous research, which indicates that women in film are being portrayed as more violent since the removal of Hollywood production codes (Rothman & Powers, 1986, p. 166). The use of sex and violence in film, however, is not new and has been capitalized on since the days of the early Nickelodeon theatres (Campbell et al., 2005, p. 124). Since the lifting of the Hays Code in film in 1968, film
has portrayed a more violent world, but how is the portrayal of women in interracial relationships impacted by this trend? The study looks to see if women are victims of violence or if they actually initiate violence. Are women of certain races shown as prone to violence more than others? Media scholar bell hooks writes in *We Real Cool* that violence in America is being portrayed in media so frequently that it “is the norm”.

Much research has been done in examining the difference between black and white men using violence in film, but little has been done to examine the role of violence as “naturalized” in women when race is a factor. In addition, hooks points out that “sexism in black communities, though intense, is so common that no one takes violence against females seriously”(2004, p. 63). The study seeks to examine if women are significantly portrayed as victims of violence, which is a variable that makes them socially vulnerable.

The portrayal of women as sexualized is another important aspect in the exploration of this study. Previous research indicates that women are often sexualized in American media and also portrayed as being very interested in sex (Wood, 2006, p. 254). A study of sexual imagery of black women in contemporary American films by black and white filmmakers, revealed that popular film tends to portray black women as outnumbering the males as initiators of the sex act (Manatu-Rupert, 1998, p. 100). Findings in the study showed that women were also uninterested in romance or in the man as a person, but only interested in him sexually. The implication of this portrayal is that black women are morally flawed in the hegemonic social structure. In addition, the women were shown to be frequently angry and hostile towards the men despite their sexual interest in them. The content analysis and framing analysis asks the research question if women in interracial relationships are portrayed as sexualized, initiators of sex
and motivated by sex and/or romance. It also examines how the women are dressed as an important aspect of how they are portrayed in the film.

The role of conflict is an important variable in the study of the portrayal of women in interracial relationships. In a qualitative content analysis study of 150 popular films, gendered conflicts in male/female relationships were measured in detail (Hedley, 2003). The films under study consisted of the top 10-box office hits from 1986 – 2000. The study of gendered conflict was used to apply to a greater social system considered to be related to ‘have more to do with systemic stereotypes and hegemonic ideology than with empirical reality” (Hedley, 2003, p. 202). The findings indicate that “the Gendered point of view across these films demonstrates an overwhelming preference for men’s perspective” and that women were found to be “more constrained by their stereotypes” (p. 201). Hedley found that often the women portrayed in the film are not “in control of her romantic/sexual future. He will make it happen. She will wait for it to happen to her” (Hedley, 2002, p. 225). This finding is explored in this study to see if women in interracial relationships are portrayed as “in control” of their romantic or sexual futures.

A major content analysis study was conducted in interracial relationships but focused on pornographic rather than Hollywood films. In a study of 54 films, Black-white, Asian-white and Hispanic-white pornography was examined. The findings indicated that in pornography, “the implicit messages about race are inextricably intertwined with those about sex” (Cowan et al., 1994, p. 335). In this study, findings indicate that race is used to exaggerate sex roles. The study states “pornography is not racially or ethnically neutral” (p. 337). Black females were treated significantly differently in pornographic interracial relationships than Caucasian women. The authors
propose that this discrepancy has a historic root in American culture. Black women were historically, and are often still, portrayed either as the “mammy” figure or the “Jezebel/whore” sexual deviant (Kaplan, 1997, p. 301; Modelski, 1991, p. 330). White women are usually shown as “feminized through pathos” as “girl-victims, mothers, bitches, vamps/sluts, gold-diggers” and “dependent on heterosexual relationships to be fulfilled” (Haskell, 1987, p. 10; Grinner, 2003, p. 199). This research explores these stereotypes and seeks to determine if the race and/or ethnicity of the woman’s partner affects her portrayal and if race is used to exaggerate gender roles.

According to Neal A. Lester and Maureen Daly Goggin in *In Living Color: Politics of Desire in Heterosexual Interracial Black/White Personal Ads* the study of interracial relationships offer significant insights into constructs of race and gender:

> In same-race relationships, power tends to be figured along gender lines; in interracial relations, power seems to be figured first along race and secondarily along gender lines. Desiring interracial coupling requires disrupting racialized and gendered power structures. (Lester & Groggin, 2005, P. 130)

Few mainstream film studies explore the role of gender, sexuality, race, and/or ethnicity in the female experience as interrelated, especially in interracial relationship. This dissertation seeks to fill the need in this area of mass communication research. The absence of women of color in mass communication research or in mass media portrayal addresses a larger concern. According to Holtzman (2000), the story of women of color is absent from pages of American history. Media scholar hooks shares this concern in several of her writings. She states that the absence of black women in film makes a statement in itself: “There was clearly no place for black women” (Hooks, 1992, P. 311). Feminist film scholar E. Ann Kaplan actually released another edition of her book on Film *Looking for the Other* in response to the frustration of black feminist like hooks
about the “cinematic negation” of women of color in early film feminism (Kaplan, 1987, p. xi). This research seeks to add significant findings to this dialogue for greater understanding and representation in racial and/or ethnicity portrayal of women in mass media. The lack of women of color in portrayal in blockbuster film and the lack of research about women of color in film is indicative of a greater issue of importance.

This research explores if women of color in inter-racial relationships in the films are portrayed differently from the way women in same race relationships are portrayed. Research reflects that most research of the portrayal of women in heterosexual relationships in film rarely considers aspects of same race and/or ethnicity of their male partners as a factor. Further research on women in interracial relationships in film is needed. In *Images that Injure: Pictorial Stereotypes in the Media*, article authors Julianne H. Newton and Rick Williams make a passionate call for things to change:

> This is a call to humanity to strip away the false media types and stereotypes that constrict our rights to define our own identities based on our individual, interwoven expressions of the masculine and feminine archetypes. Our goal is psychological and physical freedom. (Newton & Williams, 1999, p. 220)

The primary goal of this research, using both a quantitative and qualitative mass media research method, is to answer this call to end the constriction of our identities and seeks to provide greater insight into current and historic trends in the freedom of women in film to be portrayed psychologically and physically free.

**Theoretical Perspectives**

**The Film Feminist Paradigm**

There is no one experience of “being a woman,” and thereby the feminist paradigm is complex and diverse. As Liesbet Van Zoonen in *Feminist Media Studies* (2003) and other feminist scholars maintain “feminism nowadays is not easily delineated or defined”
According to film feminist Patricia Mellencamp, “we all come to Feminism at different times from different places” (1995, p. 10). Mellencamp points out that Feminism is significant in analyzing stereotypes of women: “Feminism initially is an undoing then a learning that replaces self-hatred with self-regard, worship of men’s ideas and men with respect for women’s thoughts and for women and men” (p. 6). Visual stereotypes of women in mass media are not new. According to Carolyn Kitch (2001) in *The Girl on the Magazine Cover: The Origins of Visual Stereotypes in American Mass Media*, before television or film emerged as a mass media, magazines established the earliest stereotypes of women as early as 1895 (p.13).

Although feminism is now more diverse and offers multiple perspectives, some commonality and elements distinguish it from other theories. In *Feminist Media Studies*, Liesbet Van Zoonen (1994) identifies Feminism’s significance: “Its unconditional focus on analyzing gender as a mechanism that structures material and symbolic worlds and out experiences of them, is hard to find in other perspectives on humanity and society” (p. 5). Van Zoonen also explains “Ethnicity, sexuality, class, and a range of other discourses intersect with gender in various and sometimes contradictory ways” (1994, p. 6). The study of portrayal of women in interracial relationships in film allows an examination of these intersections. According to Kaplan (1987), the movies offer us important insights as “the signs in Hollywood film convey the patriarchal ideology that underlies our social structures and that constructs women in very specific ways” (p. 24). According to Haskell (1987) “we want nothing less, on or off the screen than the wide variety and dazzling diversity of male options” (p. 402).
A greater emphasis is now being placed on the importance of race and ethnicity in creating the experience of women. This was an oversight in the early days of film feminism. According to Kaplan, the early work in film feminism rarely focused on the issue of interracial interaction. In addition, hooks (1992) also addresses concerns about separating race and gender as issues. She raised the issue that Hollywood was not just a white man’s world but a white woman’s world. She writes, “Are we really to imagine that feminist theorists writing only about the image of white women, who subsume this specific historical subject under the tantalizing category of ‘woman,’ do not see the whiteness of the image” (p. 316)? Race is a significant factor as film has a reliance on image and the visual impact of skin color is seen to immediately “mark a person” (Kaplan, 1987, p. 66).

**Cultural Studies**

The studying of narratives of film and critiquing the role of race and gender in America can be done effectively through cultural studies (Eschholz et al., 2002, p. 300). As cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall explains, through cultural studies we are able to examine the “politics of representation” (1996, p. 89). Hall explains that media representations not only provide us with the language by which to name the world but also inform our understanding of categories such as race. The complexity of racism “expresses through displacement, through denial, through the capacity to say two contradictory things at the same time, the surface imagery speaking of an unspeakable content, the repressed content of a culture’ (Hall, 1996, p. 341). This “contradictory” portrayal is also shown in the portrayal of gender in western culture, “the representation of women has appeared its split form – the good/bad girl, the good and the bad mother,
Madonna and whore – so the representation of Blacks keep, at different times, exhibiting this split, double standard” (p. 342).

According to Haskell, “Movies are one of the clearest and most accessible of looking glasses into the past, being both cultural artifacts and mirrors” (1987, p. xviii).

Representations not only tell us about the world in which we live now, but also categorize the world for us, giving it an order that is intelligible and makes common sense (Jiwani, 1992, 183). Early categorizations of women of color tend to portray them as exotic, erotic, and dangerous. Especially dangerous is the way in which the exotic women of color were represented as treacherously distracting the white man from his important mission. Has this stereotype of women of color dissipated over the 38 years of the study sample? Unfortunately, it is feared within cultural studies that popular culture feeds rather than challenges stereotypes over time (MacKinnon, 2001, p. 23).

Dominant attitudes not only dominate, but “normalize”. That which dominant groups see is all that is allowed to be seen. It soon becomes the only vision and, at that point, political and social life ‘stagnates” (p.24). Media representation is therefore so important because it “tells us how we are, who we should be and who we should avoid” (Kimmer, 1992, p. xii).

Although cultural studies began in the United Kingdom it has become widely used in the United States and experienced great internalization as a theory which assumes that:

Capitalist industrial societies are societies divided unequally along ethnic, gender, generational, and class lines. It contends that culture is one of the principal sites where this division is established and contested: culture is one of the principal sites where this division is established and contested: culture is a terrain on this takes place a continual struggle over meaning…it is what makes culture ideological. (Storey, 1996. p.3)
It is this important ideology that is at the center of cultural studies. Cultural studies therefore is very useful in the ongoing struggle to define the political engagement of “gender as an entry into more multiplex and less romantic understanding of the constituents of power, subordination and resistance” (Long, 1996, p. 203). Interracial relationships involve many aspects of power and cultural studies help to untangle the “complex interrelatedness among gender, race, and class as they are constructed” (Long, 1996, p. 202).

**Social Construction of Reality Theory**

It is impossible to consider framing analysis as a method without using the Social Construction of Reality Theory. The very concept of “constructs” is critical to any study or gender and race which are in fact constructs within the society in which they exist. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann in *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in The Sociology of Knowledge* established that “reality” as we experience it is a social construct so “Sociological interest in questions of ‘reality’ and ‘knowledge’ is thus initially justified by the fact of social relativity” (1966, p. 3). This critical approach was further developed to apply to mass media research by Gaye Tuchman in *Making News: A study in the Construction of Reality* where she states “knowledge is always socially constructed” (1978, p. 10). Gender, sexuality, race, and class can be viewed “as social constructs” (Dines & Humez, 2003, p. 4). In feminist media studies which are “intrinsically political,” looks at how these are constructed while working towards “more varied portrayal” of women, sexuality and minorities in the media (Van Zoonen, 1994, p. 4). According to Hubbard in *The Social Construction of Sexuality*, “each of us writes our own sexual script out of the range of our experiences. None of this script is inborn or
biologically given. We construct it out of our diverse life situations, limited by what we are taught or what we can imagine to be permissible and correct” (2004, p. 67).

Media images are significant because they help us determine what we “consider to be good or bad; positive or negative, moral or evil” (Kellner, p. 9). Social construction of Reality Theory acknowledges that film – like other media provides an audience with images that are important factors in social construction of reality among the general public, and therefore may perpetuate racism and sexism on a larger scale (Eschholz et al, 2002, p. 299). Croteau, Gamson, Hoynes, and Sasson (1992) media images contribute greatly to constructs of reality:

By now the story is familiar. We walk around with media-generates images of the world, using them to construct meaning about political and social issues. The lens through which we receive this images is not neutral but evinces the power and point of view of the political and economic elites who focus it.

The authors also point out that in addition to being exposed to a very limited and elite construct of reality, most people do not realize the unreality of it all, for “the special genius of this system is to make the whole process seem so normal and natural that the very art of social construction is invisible” (Croteau D. et al., 1992, p. 374). By focusing on the repeated use of images and text in media we are able to deconstruct the “reality”. Although many people might think that race is a biological categorization, it like gender is also a construct. According to Holtzman (2000), the shift in meaning of race throughout U.S. history provides important clues to its definition. It is not biological, nor is it based primarily on skin color. As we look at history we will see that it is not
necessarily based on ethnicity or one’s country or origin. Rather race is constructed socially, politically, and economically (p. 158).

Messages from the film industry over time have sought to exploit the use of race as a source of conflict. As one of the oldest forms of mass media, films, along with other forms of mass media, have historically helped to determine our own gender and racial identities: What it means to belong to a certain race, or to be a male or female, or to belong to a class or to be heterosexual or homosexual (Kellner, 2003, p. 9).

The objective of this research is to examine the “signification system” of race and gender from Hollywood. Film serves as “a powerful site for the production, transformation and maintenance of traditional cultural notions of identity” (Berland et al, 1992, p.35). While such “cultural notions” exist, film also offers a medium to show change and if gender is a construct, can offer new notions about race, sexuality, and gender. This study explores if notions have indeed changed over the past four decades in the big screen’s most popular box office hits.

Delving into the constructs of gender at this time in Western society offers an important insight as “to image change as empowering and at the same time threatening, as women and men struggle to construct individual and collective meanings during a transitional period” (Berger et al., 1966, p. 43). Doing so in studying film examines the construct in media and reflects a greater issue in our culture: To have a self and to be female is a contradiction at the heart of the social construction of women’s role in contemporary society. The power of the film medium is that it allows us to glimpse new possibilities for integrating these polarities, which can empower women and men to imagine new narrative yet to be written and lived (Berger et al., 1996 p. 43).
Mass media in America has historically used race as a factor in “establishing cultural, economic, and political membership in the Country” where a lack of diversity in the portrayal of race in media is both “significant and dangerous” (Ghosh, 274).

Much effort has been made to show how mass media constructs of race create stereotypical images. There are several problems with stereotyping but the greatest concern is that it leads to ethnocentrism and prejudice (Neuliep, 2003, p. 157). According to Manning Marable in *Racism and Sexism*, “When we try to articulate an agenda of multicultural democracy, we run immediately into the stumbling block of stereotypes – the device at the heart of every form of racism today” (2004, p. 160).

Along with the construct of race comes an implied social power structure. Media Scholar James Lull explains further that “hegemony is the power or dominance that one social group holds over others…but hegemony is more than social power itself; it is a method for gaining and maintaining power” (2003, p.61). The term “hegemony” is attributed to Italian intellectual Antonio Gramsci who saw that the mass media as tools that ruling elites use to “perpetuate their power, wealth and status [by popularizing] their own philosophy, culture and morality” (Boggs, 1987, p. 36).

In American society, where 98% of marriages in the 2000 Census were same-race unions, interracial relationships can be viewed as outside the norm and the framing analysis and content analysis question if interracial relationships are portrayed as problematic or lasting. Does the portrayal of interracial relationships over almost four decades reflect major change? Neal Lester and Maureen Daly Goggin say that despite legal efforts in landmark decisions like *Brown v. The Board of Education in 1954* and the abolition of anti-miscegenation laws in 1967, “interracial coupling”—“continues to be
characterized as deviant and out of bounds by both sides of the black/white sociopolitical divide” (2005, p. 132). Lester and Goggin (2005) suggest that those who seek interracial relationships “acknowledge that their desires and actions transgress socio-political boundaries” (p. 133). Also, according to Lester and Goggin although a romantic or sexual relationship might be considered to be a personal choice, interracial relationship choices indicate that “in matters of sex, race, and gender, personal choices are at times read and rendered as political judgments” (p. 134). Film, as a visual medium, is capable of showing the individual what is “real” and influence the “selves” of individual members of the audience (Hedley, 2002. p. 202).

Cultivation Theory

In using content analysis as research method in this study, Cultivation Theory (also referred to as Cultivation analysis or the Cultivation hypothesis) is an important theoretical element. Cultivation theory was developed by media scholar George Gerbner and argues that mass media cultivate attitudes and values which are already present in a culture: the media maintains and propagate these values amongst members of a culture, thereby binding it together (Boyd- Barrett & Braham, 1987, p. 100). Cultivation analysis is defined by Gerbner as the investigation of the consequences of ongoing and pervasive systems of cultural messages. He adds that the size of an "effect" is far less critical than the direction of its steady contribution (1980, p. 212). This study involves the direction of steady contribution over a 38-year period. Gerbner describes the power of the media as being inherent in the stories that are repeatedly told, though the content analysis at the heart of Cultivation research are almost never about the stories (Gerbner, 1998). The analyses are about the acts of violence, they are about characters and their attributes
Cultivation theory serves ideally in research such as this that seeks to study violence and also the specific attributes of characters.

In media studies the mass media serves as a socialization agent and investigates how media viewers come to believe the television version of reality. Although much of Gerbner’s research was conducted in studies on the effects of television, Cultivation theory is valuable in studying other forms of “mass produced stories” (Gerbner, 1998, p. 176). Gerbner examined “Cultural Indicators” in cultivation research projects which were used to track the “central themes of television’s dramatic content since 1967” (1998, p. 180).

Cultivation theory is useful in looking at the interrelatedness of many variables in mass media studies not merely violence and has dealt with variables such as sexualization, gender roles, age groups, ethnic groups and political attitudes (Dominick, 1990, p. 12; Gerbner et al, 1980, p. 212; Signorelli, 1978). According to Gerbner:

> The point is that cultivation is not conceived as unidirectional but rather more like a gravitational process. The angle and direction of the pull depends on where groups of viewers and their styles of life are with reference to the line of gravity or “mainstream” of the world of television. Each group may strain in a different direction, but all groups are affected by the same central current. (Gerbner 1998, p. 180)

The process of the convergence of outlooks is referred to as “mainstreaming” (Gerbner, 1998, p. 181). Cultivation theorists distinguish between “first order” effects such as the general beliefs about everyday life and “second order effects” such as specific attitudes. Cultivation theory has been used in studies of gender to extrapolate assumptions about the images of women in television which found that the under-representation of women in the world of television has a relationship to higher scores of the “sexism scare” for heavy viewers (Signorelli, 1989). Cultivation analysis “is well
suited to multinational and cross-cultural comparative studies” (Gerbner 1977, 1989; Morgan, 1990). Cultivation analysis “concentrates on the enduring and common consequences of growing up and living with mass media stories that are repeatedly perpetuation certain cultural messages” (Gerbner, 1998, p. 191).

In the study of interactions with racial groups and with gender different from oneself, Cultivation theory (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorelli, 1994) explains that media contributes to one’s expectation about people and places “in the real world” (Larson, p. 223). Studies that compare interactions between different racial groups are rare (Larson, p. 224). Gerbner, like many other media scholars, points out that the "giant industries discharge their messages into the mainstream of common conscious" (Gerbner, 1998, p. 176). The messages created by the media industry then serve to direct the flow of ideas in society in the pull of what Gerbner describes as a "gravitational process.” Although each social group may be affected differently, "all groups are affected by the same central current. Cultivation is thus "part of a continual, dynamic, ongoing process of interaction among messages and contexts" (Gerbner, 1998, p. 180).

Cultivation theory serves as an important element in the use of content analysis as a quantitative method in this study to ask questions about existence, priority or importance, evaluative assessment and relationship between elements (Gandy, 2003, p. 362).

**Research Questions:**

The representation of culture in film and the theoretical perspectives discussed above led to the following research questions which will be studied in the framing analysis and the content analysis.

R1: How are women in romantic and/or sexual interracial relationships in films under study portrayed?
R2: Are sexual or romantic relationships framed as central to the lives of the women in the films under study?

R3: Are the women in interracial romantic and/or sexual relationships in the film under study framed as overcoming adversity and/or hostility from people outside the relationship?

R4: Are the women in romantic and/or sexual relationships in the films under study framed as being in control of their romantic and/or sexual future?

R5: Are the women in interracial relationships under study framed as sexualized in behavior, appearance, and motivation?
CHAPTER 2
METHODS

The objective of the research for this dissertation was to explore and investigate the social constructs of gender and race when examined in the portrayal of women in interracial relationships in popular American film. Two research methods were used.

Triangulation: Using A Quantitative Method And A Qualitative Method

Media scholars along with academic scholars in other disciplines have long debated the superiority of quantitative research methods over qualitative and vice versa. Clearly both quantitative and qualitative research offer benefits to the scholar, and the choice of what method to use would best be made by consideration of the research question. The exploratory and descriptive nature of this study is complex and multi-faceted. After much contemplation, the decision was made to use a qualitative method first and then a quantitative method to test or further explore the findings of the first method. It is no secret that qualitative research can be subjective. Nor is it uncommon for research on race, sex, or gender to be considered controversial. To conduct a study capable of generating the greatest and most significant findings, a framing analysis and a content analysis study were designed to examine the portrayal of women in interracial relationships in film from 1967 - 2005.

John W. Creswell (1998) in Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design explains that ontology asks the important question: What is the nature of reality? Social Construction of Reality theory illustrates that “reality,” as we experience it, is subjective and multiple. The use of qualitative research allows the research to access the versions of reality shown
35

in the media and also as it is experienced by the audience. Researchers in qualitative research go beyond looking at quantitative measures to use quotes and themes in words and images to provide evidence of different perspectives. From an Epistemological perspective the question is: “What is the relationship between the researcher and that being researched?” A researcher attempts to lessen distance between him/herself and the subject being researched. The research intimately explores the text or message and “becomes an insider.” The nature of qualitative research makes it impossible to blend with quantitative research which seeks to maintain objectivity and distance from the studied text, message or audience. This study, therefore, never seeks to blend the traditions of qualitative and quantitative research but sequentially uses each method to explore the textual messages of the film and then to objectively explore the statistical significance of variables present in the film.

The Critical tradition of qualitative research described by Guba and Lincoln (1994) refer to a blanket term denoting a set of several alternative paradigms, including but not limited to neo-Marxism, feminism, materialism and participatory inquiry (p.111). The value determined nature of inquiry or epistemological difference is the common breakaway assumption. In media effects, the investigator and investigated “object” are assumed to be independent. Not so in critical theory. The researcher is thought to be a “transformational intellectual” not an indifferent “disinterested scientist”. The Critical theorist is concerned with historical, social, political, and economic environments surrounding the inquiries. Media effects follow the model of create hypothesis – gather data – prove or disprove data.
The media effects tradition emerged initially in America mass communication and can be seen with the Payne Fund Study, the first and largest media effects study done in mass communication history from 1929 – 1932. The Magic Bullet theory emerged and then uses gratification. The critical tradition however, was born from the social science tradition of the Chicago School, which originated with the Frankfurt School (1920) long before this (Rogers, 1994, p.137). The Frankfurt School concentrated on theories of Marx and Freud. The critical scholars were neo-Marxist, humanistic, and intellectual (Rogers, 1994 p. 129). The Critical cultural tradition is heavily influence by the theories of Marx (1818 - 1883) and Weber (1779 – 1831). The Frankfurt School scholars were philosophers and not interested in merely gathering data. The activities of the critical tradition are intended to lead to an ideal society without human exploitation. Historically, the issues facing the Critical tradition were very much concerned with issues of ownership and control of the mass media. Such topics escaped scholars like Paul Lazafeld, who took to investigating effects. The tension now between the critical and empirical communication scholars poses “a fruitful intellectual challenge” (Rogers, 1997, p. 125). During the 1970s, media effects studies dominated mass communication research efforts but and were dependent on quantitative research that sought to gather and analyze data.

According to Egon Guba and Yvonna Lincoln (1994) media effects methods are very outcome-oriented while critical is process oriented. In qualitative research the impact of anthropology and social science on the Critical-cultural tradition is essential, while the natural science view impacts media effects (p. 115). The goal in critical cultural studies is to understand the investigated view whereas media affects it to find
facts and causes. Media effects are born out of the hard sciences such as chemistry or physics. Critical cultural unlike media effects does not seek statistical relationships but greater insight into human relationships. The role of hegemony is significant in the qualitative research tradition.

As Guba and Lincoln (1994) imply, the differences between qualitative and quantitative methods go way beyond mere “philosophical” difference, but have implications that impact the practical conduct of inquiry, as well as for the interpretation of findings and policy choices. The authors claim that “a dialogue among paradigm proponents of all stripes will afford the best avenue for moving toward a responsive and congenial relationship” (p. 116). Knowing that qualitative and quantitative methods offer very different philosophical and methodological approaches can be viewed as a divisive reality for media scholars.

**Multiple Methods as “Crystallization,” Not Merely Triangulation**

Clearly, media scholars use using either a quantitative or qualitative research method to effectively find valid and reliable results consistently in media studies. The triangulation method is not necessary in order to obtain reliable findings. This study, therefore, uses multiple research methods not merely to “verify” findings but to go beyond the “rigid fixed two dimensional objects” of a triangle and enter into the “crystallization”. In the *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Norman Denzin and Yvonne Lincoln (2000) explain that triangulation methods went through a period of popularity because of validity concerns alone (p. 934). Researchers of multiple methods now seek to go beyond this limitation and use crystallization to “provide us with deepened, complete, thoroughly partial, understanding of the topic” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p.
Crystallization, therefore, is useful in the research of a multi-faceted study that examines interrelated variables of sex, race, gender and time.

This work on sex, gender, and race seeks to embrace the diversity of the two methods and, rather than see one as “superior,” endeavors to utilize the benefits of both measures creating a greater concept of the scope, magnitude, significance, and implications of the portrayal of interracial relationships on Hollywood’s big screen.

This study of interracial relationships spans a sample of 38 years of Hollywood films. Examining the texts of almost four decades of popular film requires a close inspection of the text and images of the film itself. In looking at trends over this long time in media history, quantitative research is very appropriate and useful in indicating statistical significance of frequency, trends, and the inter-relatedness of variables of time, race, gender, and sexual portrayal. Such precise insights are difficult to ascertain with a qualitative method only.

As Van Zoonen (2003) points out the feminist media research, or any interpretive research, is “often conducted by one researcher who formulates the research question, decides on sampling, designs instruments for data collection and analysis, then actually collects and analyses empirical material and finally conjures up the research report”. Such a significant role of the researcher can create validity and reliability concerns about subjectivity and bias “interpretations” (p. 143). For this reason this study was designed to create measures of validity and reliability to correct for such problems in the research design and findings. Using a “cross-check” approach by creating and utilizing a Delphi Panel before the study began was, for this very purpose, to establish that the sample and research methods were valuable beyond one researcher’s possibly “biased interpretation”
Powers, Rothman and Rothman (1996) in *Hollywood’s America: Social and Political Themes in Motion Pictures* make it clear that looking at one film alone or a small group of films “significantly influence audiences over a long haul,” but by studying a large sample of films over a longer period of time, we explore “it is reasonable to believe that such presentation will affect audiences to a significant extent” (p. 10).

What is a researcher to do to create a study that overcomes the potential of bias and subjectivity? Clearly, studies of sex, gender, and race in interracial relationships are rare and, thereby, inherently possess the potential for conflict in the findings. Van Zoonen (2003) points out that “triangulation data sources and methods tend to even out the flaws of individual research methods and augments the likelihood that a variety of perspectives have been brought into the examination and analysis” (p. 164). Using multiple methods and multiple sources can create research that is more “compelling, and therefore be regarded as more robust” (Yin, 1984, p. 234). Another benefit of using multiple methods is that it offers researchers corroborating evidence (Ely et al., 1991; Erlandson et al., 1993; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Patton: 1990). The qualitative researcher benefits from using a quantitative and qualitative method by gaining greater perspective and a “verification procedure” (Creswell, 1998, p. 202).

Since there is currently so little research conducted on the portrayal of interracial relationships in mass media, doing both the framing analysis and content analysis will hopefully establish a foundation for future studies. The findings of the framing analysis were used to create the categories studied in the content analysis. The combination of the
two methods offers the best of both quantitative and qualitative research theory and methodology.

**Framing analysis**

Framing is a research method that is currently extensively used to study media messages (Holstein, 2003, p. 26). The origins of framing analysis can be traced back to the work of sociologist Erving Goffman in *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* in 1974. According to Goffman the “‘frame’ in frame analysis refers to this inevitably relational dimension of meaning” (1974, p. xii) and finds its origins in the Social Construction of Reality Theory. According to Goffman “frame analysis is a slogan to refer to the examination in these terms of the organization of experience” (p. 11). Goffman’s concept of frames as the organization of experience as a “schemata of information” was soon built upon by other sociologists and then media scholars. One early application of framing analysis for media studies was conducted by Gaye Tuchman (1978) in *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*. It has since been used many times by scholars of the mass media. William A. Gamson in *Framing Public Life*, a frame analysis identifies three components: The attention to the production process, the examination of the texts, and addressing the complex interaction of texts with an active audience engaged in negotiating meaning” (2001, p x.). Gamson points out that “frames are of greatest interest to the extent that they add up to something bigger than an individual story” (2001, p. 13). Gitlin argues that "media frames, largely unspoken and unacknowledged, organize the world media frames as a persistent pattern of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual" (2001. p. 16).
Although many scholars have used the metaphor of a picture frame for the method of framing, the media scholar is urged to "move beyond two-dimensional thinking about framing" (Holstein, 2003, p. 7). Tankard suggests that it would be more helpful to think of the frame-of-a-house rather than frame-of-a-picture metaphor. The "house construction has two parts. It is an attempt to provide a useful way of thinking about frames, in a three-dimensional sense, that connects frames to their social context through hegemony and implications of social construction (Holstein, 2003. p. 8).

The argument about the importance of frames in media and portrayal is best made by Stuart Hall (1996), “framing of all competing definitions of reality within [the dominant class] range, bringing alternatives within their horizons of thought . . . sets the limits –mental and structural –within which subordinate classes live and make sense of their subordination in such a way as to sustain the dominance of those ruling over them” (p. 333). Lull (2003) says that “hegemony implies the willing agreement by people to be governed by principles, rules, and laws they believe operate in their best interest, even though in actual practice they may not” (p. 630). According to Hall, the critical element of hegemony is that it is “fragile,” as “it is not a ‘given’ and permanent state of affairs, but it has to be actively won and secured; it can be lost” (p. 333).

This research offers some diversion from that previously collected on the portrayal of women in relationships in film and allows a new look at power, race, gender, and sexuality. The added factor of race to gender appears to create new dynamics of power. This information is important as it shows the comparison of women to one another rather than to men. Most research has a tendency to focus on the portrayal of males and the comparison with males. Hegemony is maintained in our society “not just by males but by
females, too, who often see traditional gender roles as so standard and normal that
hegemonic structures, limits and barriers are all but invisible” (Holtzman, 2000, p. 72).

Recently, framing analysis has taken on many variations in design, at the heart of
the method lies the three-dimensional connection between "power contained within
hegemony and the role of culture" to do so "diminishes the concept” (Holstein, 2003, p.
11).

Framing is a useful tool to examine existing concepts about media hegemony and
possibly offer new insights. Holstein states that "framing offers a means to bring
hegemony to the foreground and challenge the very notion that common sense 'just is'.
Framing can serve as an "illumination" (Holstein, 2003, p. 12). Framing is based on the
premise that individuals interpret media messages in light of previous experience (Hall,
2000, p 44). Frames can assist us in identifying problems and in redefining our
"perceived reality." By redefining the problem, frames allow us to evaluate causal agents
and offer "treatment recommendations" (Entman, 1993).

Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes and Sasson (1992) claim that media creates messages
which promote “apathy, cynicism, and quiescence rather than active citizenship and
participation” (p. 391). The authors challenge media researchers to question the
constructions of reality being offered in a media industry oligopoly marketplace:

Ideally, a media system suitable for a democracy ought to provide its readers with
some coherent sense of the broader social forces that affect the conditions of everyday
life. It is difficult to find anyone who would claim that media discourse in the United
States even remotely approaches this ideal (Gamson et al., 2002, p. 391).
The purpose of the framing analysis element of this study seeks to question the existing constructs of reality about interracial interaction between men and women on the big screen since 1967 in blockbuster films.

**Creating the Framing Analysis**

Before the framing analysis began, the films used for the sample study were identified. As media research textbooks point out, a reliable and representative sample is critical to the validity and reliability of the findings of a study. Great care was taken in identifying this sample and a Delphi panel was created to assist with the final selection of the sample.

**Delphi Panel**

This study involved extensive thought into the design and execution of the research. To create objectivity and solicit insight, a Delphi Panel was consulted on issues related to the design of the study of the film. The Delphi Panel method was developed in the 1950s to systematically utilize expert opinion in "controversial socio political areas of discourse (Spinelli, 1983, p. 73). This method was used because of the complex, and potentially controversial aspects of the study, which focuses on multiple issues of socio-political variables including sexuality, gender, and race. Consisting of five media scholars with a specialty in mass media, film, sex, and gender or research, the Delphi Panel reviewed of the selection of the films in the sample and concurred that the films met the criteria of the study. The panel overlooked the database Top 15 lists for each to make sure that no film had been overlooked in the sample and might need to be included. The panel also assisted in conferring that the unit of analysis of study should be each interracial relationship in each film under study.
Other technical questions were answered by the panel that included how to treat the portrayal of an actor of one race who is being portrayed in the film as another race. For example, in Little Big Man, Dustin Hoffman is portrayed as an Indian man who is actually a white man. The panel determined that the character needed to be studied according to the race they were portraying in the film and not necessarily their actual race. The panel also determined that the study should be limited to include only human male and female relationships. This question was raised as a number of films like Star Wars or Lord of the Rings involved fantasy species and races. The panel was referred to throughout the research to resolve issues of possible controversy and to offer agreement on research outcomes such as the framing analysis findings or content analysis coding categories.

The Films in the Sample

Media scholars have pointed out that one problem with film or television studies is, “depending on the movies or programs one picks as representative – and without a publicly validating scheming coding films – one can prove almost anything” (Rothman et al, 1993, p. 66). The method of selecting films as “representative” therefore is very important to the validity and reliability of the study. The important step to determining the size and scope of the film sample to create an adequate representation was heavily considered before being selected. The determination was made to begin the scope of the study in 1967 because, before this year in the United States of America, many states had laws banning interracial marriage or relationships. The selection of 1967 marks the year of the Supreme Court decision in the Loving V. Virginia abolishing anti-miscegenation laws as unconstitutional. Incidentally, it was also the year that Academy Awards were
given for the film *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner* based upon white parent’s initial alarm at their grown daughter’s desire to marry a professional black male.

Starting the research in 1967 created an unexpected challenge in finding archived databases which offered much detail about the box office sales from the late 1960s and 1970s. Several databases offered the top 100 box office films since 1980. Finding the top blockbuster films for earlier years was challenging and inconsistent. In order to provide an equitable sample size for each year, the top 15 films in box office sales were identified as a consistent and reliable box office listing. This list was compiled from the online database of boxofficereport.com, originally downloaded and finalized in February 2006. Rather than using a random sample, it was determined the sample would contain all films within the 38 year span that featured an interracial relationship.

There are many ways to select movies for study but box office sales was selected as significant since it is a reflection of the highest earning films which had the greatest exposure to the highest number of people in each year. It is often argued that the audience is a significant element in our complex media system (Lind, p. 11). Audience size and exposure does matter when looking at mainstream American films as this is what makes them blockbusters. This study seeks to examine the mass media impact of film and, therefore, examines what was most popular and had the greatest impact. Although video rental numbers are a significant source of film income currently, this would not have been a consistent factor for creating a sample from the 1960s.

The top 15 blockbuster’s lists were researched to identify films that had potential for interracial relationship in them based upon the theme of the film and the race or ethnicity of the actors in the film. The Delphi Panel of media experts also assisted in this
process. The extensive film Database of IMDb.com was used for cast and film story line research. The cast line list was studied to identify ethnicity and gender factors of the actors involved in each film. Descriptions of each film from movie guides were also studied to see if cultural or racial issues were identified. It was generally impossible to make a decision based upon descriptions and cast lists alone so often the film was reviewed to disclose if any interracial relationships were actually portrayed. This process resulted in a list of 60 films initially selected. These 60 films were viewed, and those not actually containing a male and female interracial sexual or romantic relationship were excluded. It is interesting to note how often leading black males flirted with their white female counterparts but no romantic or sexual relationship ever fully materialized. At this point, it was defined that “relationships” were identified as those that are romantic or sexual between a heterosexual male and heterosexual female of different races and not merely based on flirtation or friendship.

The films that qualified for this description were placed on the final list consisting of 36 films. This list is included in the appendix. These films were then carefully studied using framing analysis techniques described elsewhere. Copious notes were taken to document the portrayal, words, actions, images, and behavior of the females in these films in response to the five research questions. After all the films were viewed, the analysis was formed in response to the four research questions based on the frames of the females.

The findings of the framing analysis then served to create the categories for the content analysis study. It was necessary for this research to identify the defining concept of “interracial” relationships. Romantic interracial and/or sexual relationships
were defined as those involving a man and woman who represent different racial
categories identified by the most recent U.S. Census to determine the criteria for film to
study. The U. S. Census identifies interracial marriages and living relationships as those
involving people from two different categories. This same categorization was used for
this research process to ensure consistency in definition.

**Coding Procedures**

Once the films to be included in the sample were established, the next step was to
establish that each interracial relationship within a film serves as the unit of analysis.
Therefore, a film may need to be coded for more than one relationship. In the James
Bond films, for example, Bond often has a number of interracial relationships within one
movie. Each of these relationships would be coded separately in the content analysis. It
was necessary to identify the defining concept of “interracial” relationships. Romantic
interracial and/or sexual relationships were defined as those involving a man and woman
who represent different racial categories identified by the most recent U.S. Census. The
*U. S. Census* (2000) identifies interracial marriages and living relationships as those
involving people from two different categories. This meant that leading roles in films
with men and women of different races made the film a possible sample for this research
if a romantic or sexual relationship was portrayed.

In addition, the sample included films that had interracial relationships as current in
the storyline. For example, in *Meet the Fochers* (2005) the storyline involved an
interracial relationship that the main character had with his Hispanic housekeeper when
he was a teenager. The Delphi Panel members decided that the interracial relationship
had to be part of the plot during the film and coding could not be based on a relationship
in the back-story of the plot. Coding for variables described by characters about the past would have been problematic for several reasons.

The films which qualified as “interracial romantic or sexual relationships” were placed on the final list which consisted of 36 films. Therefore, the review process eliminated 24 films from the sample. The list of films that were actually studied is included in the appendix and descriptions of the film are included in the analyses. The films in the sample were then carefully examined using framing analysis techniques described elsewhere. Copious notes were taken to document the portrayal, words, actions, images and behavior of the females in these films in response to the five research questions. For example, after reviewing the film with sound, the investigator then watched the film without sound to document non-verbal interactions as well as verbal communications.

After all the films were viewed, the content analysis frames were formed in response to the research questions based on the portrayal of the women. This step was also significant not merely because the frames were based upon the actual text of the films but because the content of the frames were used to create the 41 question coding sheet for the content analysis portion of the study. This created the effect of getting the initial findings in the framing analysis and then “quantifying” the findings in the content analysis.

**Conducting the Framing Analysis**

The films included in the study were selected and verified as described previously. The research questions for the framing analysis were identified after conducting an extensive literature review of the mass media research in the history of film, women in film, race in film, gender in film, sexuality in film, interracial relationships in other forms
of mass media, and interracial relationships in film. The questions under study in the framing analysis were used to direct the structure of the framing analysis. Each film in the sample was viewed by the researcher a number of times and copious notes were taken as previously described.

Conducting a framing analysis is an extremely time consuming and energy requiring endeavor for the researcher. Attention to detail was paid not only to the film storyline but to the details of each character in an interracial relationship: How were they portrayed? In what way did they walk, talk and interact with other people in the film, not just the relationship? What was the role of the character in the film? How important was he or she to the film? What was the nature of the relationship in the film? What words, images and film angles contributed to the portrayal of the character? The framing analysis served to identify issues of “salience” within the media text, which in this study was the film itself (Paxton, 2004 p. 44). Great study was given to the interaction of characters as “frames are often unspoken and unacknowledged” (Gitlin, 1980).

The challenge in researching potentially politically sensitive research subjects such as race, sexuality, and gender require the researcher to look beyond what is being shown and see what is not being shown! James Tankard (2001) points out that the researcher has to carefully observe the media text to see beyond the illusion being offered stating “media framing can be likened to the magician’s sleight of hand – attention is directed to one point so that people do not notice the manipulation that is going on at another point” (p.97). The framing analysis was conducted by watching the films, studying the portrayal of the men and women involved in the interracial relationship in the film, and how they were treated within the storyline and by other characters in the film. The frames which
emerged were then discussed in detail with a peer review committee of mass media experts with an emphasis of expertise in sex, gender, and race. The findings and the proposed frames were scrutinized for significance. The use of peer review is considered by many media scholars to be an effective way for qualitative researchers to cross-check for validity (Creswell, 1998; van Zoonen, 2003). The final results and the emerging frames are described in response to the research questions established at the start of the study.
CHAPTER 3
THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN INTERRACIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN FILM

Womanhood in the Sample Films

After conducting the research in the framing analysis, the following is a description of the dominant frames that were identified in response to the research questions established earlier in the study:

R1: How are women in romantic or sexual interracial relationships in films under study framed?

In the 36 films under study, very specific patterns emerged. As a result of extensive research, eight dominant frames were identified from the portrayal of women in the films:

- The White Woman as Flawed, and/or Fragile
- All’s “Fair” in love and war: The hierarchy of skin color in the portrayal of good and evil
- Love you to Death: Interracial relationships in a world of violence and conflict
- Gender Benders: Women in Interracial Relationship’s Failure to be Feminine
- The “Super-model” Minorities: Women of Color as Exotic, Erotic, and Exceptional and the men of color as the perfect Gentleman
- The Mary Magdalene Frame: Unworthy women Distracting Men from Their Mission in Life
- White Male Fantasy: Skin, Sex, Subservience and Saving the Damsel in Distress

The White Woman as Flawed and/or Fragile

From the 38 years of film in this study 1967 - 2005, the top 15 popular films in box office sales were considered and reviewed. This means that of the possible 540 films...
studied only 11 examples of white women in an interracial relationship in almost four decades were found. This in and of itself is a telling statistic. The portrayal of white women in an interracial relationship in film, therefore, accounts for 0.019 percent of all films. What is also interesting to note is that the trend has not changed over the decades but become more exaggerated as there are NO white women in the last decade of the study. Of the four decades of films, there were 11 white women compared to 34 women of color. Before research results are even described, it is clear that a white male with a woman of color as opposed to a white woman with a man of color represents the most reoccurring examples in the portrayal of interracial relationships in film. Hollywood is apparently reluctant to put a white woman in a role in a film with a man of any other color.

The message from Hollywood appears to be very clear for audiences of popular films over the past four decades: White women portrayed in an interracial relationship are rare and atypical, and apparently in the past decade that has become more a trend rather than less and now white women in interracial relationships are a portrayal to be avoided. In the literature review, many media scholars are quoted explaining how society is impacted when certain messages are repeatedly portrayed. This frame addressed the opposite: what happens when a message is excluded? When there are a very miniscule percentage of white women portrayed in an interracial relationship or none for a decade, the portrayal of the 11 women seems even more important. The 11 women in the films under study are “media representatives,” as cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall has identified and these limited portrayals in popular film stand to represent both their gender
and their race. Perhaps that fact alone makes the negative portrayal of white women in popular film all the more damaging and significant.

The framing analysis revealed a disturbing trend in Hollywood’s portrayal of white women who chose sexual or romantic partners of another race in the films under study: there is clearly something socially, morally, or personally wrong with them. Considered in the context of the film’s storyline, their significance to the plot, their interaction with other characters in the film, and their appearance and behaviors, white women in interracial relationships are always portrayed either as flawed, fragile, or considerably less important than the other characters in the film. No healthy, balanced, or safe portrayal of a white woman in an interracial has been offered in the history of film from 1967 – 2005. On the surface, it may appear that the white woman is pretty, successful, and happy, or even sexually liberated and aggressive, but upon closer investigation she is always highly dependent and susceptible to the decisions of the other more powerful characters in the storyline or plot. Unlike women of color portrayed in interracial relationships, white women do not seem capable of taking care of themselves without a man’s care. They also possess very little skill or purpose in life and often appear as an appendage or accessory to the men in the film’s storyline or plot. They are always beautiful and portrayed as sexually desirable but that portrayal is coated in a layer of vulnerability that they seem unaware of identifying for themselves. Specific examples of this will be provided from the films under study in the upcoming descriptions.

In what way are the white women portrayed negatively? Of the eleven women in the films under study they are all portrayed as socially vulnerable, and most are morally corrupt. The women are shown as victims of verbal, physical, and sexual abuse; drug
addicts; sexually immoral, and socially inept or naïve. They have a tendency to create problems for other characters in the film and are presented as needy, dependent, and without a clear purpose in life. More than anything, the most common portrayal of the white women is being self consumed and only interested in what they want: usually sex, drugs, or being taken care of by their non-white partner.

The films under study which include white women are: Guess who’s Coming to Dinner (1967); Billy Jack (1971) and The Trial of Billy Jack (1974); Shaft (1971); Blazing Saddles (1974); Cheech ‘N” Chong movies’ Up in Smoke (1978) and The Next Movie (1980); Scarface (1983) and Pulp Fiction (1994). It is interesting to note that white women were mostly portrayed in interracial relationships in film during the 1970s. This is understandably due to the Civil Right’s and Women’s Movement. Of further interest is that NO women were shown in film in interracial relationships from 1995 to 2005, the period in which the U.S. Census indicated interracial relationships were actually growing significantly. The significance of the 1970s as a time of greater interaction between races and the more positive portrayal of women in interracial relationships is discussed in greater detail in the findings of the content analysis. The role of the white woman in film in the late 1990s and early 2000s appear to have been assumed by the presence of Hispanic. There were no Hispanic females portrayed in any films until this time and Hispanic women in interracial relationships are completely absent from the study before 1994. After 1995, we no longer see any white women in interracial relationships portrayed in the films under study.

The way in which the women in the films under study act, speak, appear, and even survive tells us much about their social significance in the realm of the big screen.
portrayal. The violent and sexual treatment of some white women is both disturbing and painfully significant. In *Rising Sun* (1994), Cheryl Austin, played by Tatjana Patitz, is the beautiful and cold, white female lover of a Japanese wealthy character, Eddie. She plays the role of the bored, drug addicted, unfaithful, and sexually deviant women to the extreme. She is watching Eddie, her Japanese lover and keeper, singing karaoke in a bar. Obviously restless, she leaves the bar and Eddie comes running after her. He roughly grabs her by the arm and she tells him in a heavy Southern slow drawl, “I was bored to death.” Ironically enough, within minutes, she shows up dead.

The camera angles on Cheryl continuously objectify her as a beautiful woman and her long legs and large breasts are frequently the focus of her presence. Before her death, she is shown sitting in front of a mirror, completely naked, powdering her neck to hide her bruises while Eddie watches her. She is an excellent example of Laura Mulvey’s male gaze as the audience voyeuristically watches Cheryl look at her naked self in the mirror as the audience watches Eddie watch her look at herself! Ironically, when not looking at herself, Cheryl is looking at the television news coverage of her other lover in the film. Eddie is aware of her indiscretion and laughs at her. In one of her few lines in the film, Cheryl says “I don’t get you, Eddie.” This becomes an understatement as it is later revealed that Cheryl is Eddie’s mistress, and he most likely offered her sexually to the American politician as a sign of Japanese hospitality. She is portrayed as a possession of Eddie’s that he controls and is in a position ‘to offer” to another man for his own political and financial benefit.

Perhaps the most telling portrayal of the significance (or insignificance) of women in the films under study is when Cheryl is shown later in a very explicit scene having sex
on a conference room table. The angle of the camera shows that Cheryl is below her
male lover who is still fully clothed while her legs and breasts are fully exposed. It is not
clear who the male lover is but it is made clear that Cheryl is very sexually aroused and
continuously begs for more. Within minutes Cheryl is shown dead lying in the very same
spot with her mysterious lover from moments before missing. As the call is made for
special services to investigate, the American Police officer in a Japanese high-rise
building describes her as “lying on the table like a piece of sushi.” Shortly after the
discovery of Cheryl’s death, the Japanese businessman refuses to assist the American
police and cancel the party on the floor below the murder scene because of the death of
“a woman of no importance.”

In *Rising Sun*, a dowdy and unemotional white female forensics officer reveals to
the police that Cheryl may not have been murdered at all but is a sexual “gasper” who
likes to be choked when she orgasms. Bruises on Cheryl’s neck indicate to the forensics
investigator that this is a habitual sexual practice used commonly before by the deceased.
Although Cheryl’s life is treated as insignificant by the men of power who stand around
her corpse, her death directs the rest of the film, exposing a corrupt American politician’s
wrong doing and an equally corrupt Japanese business world. In the investigation, it is
revealed that along with being a sexually deviant pervert and mistress to an Asian man,
Cheryl was an unfaithful mistress with a “back door man”. When Cheryl’s room is
searched by the police, a significant drug problem is also revealed along with handcuffs,
scarves, and ties on her bed. Without directly saying so, the film implies that Cheryl
was, in fact, like a piece of sushi; something to be enjoyed and consumed. The
comparison between an over-sexualized woman’s body and raw fish is not lost in translation.

The frame of the white woman as flawed and fragile is also made more significant by the way in which Cheryl, as a white woman in an interracial relationship, is portrayed in contrast to an Asian woman. Tia Carrere, as a bi-racial Asian female, is also shown in the film in an interracial relationship. Cheryl’s lack of decency and insignificance is portrayed in direct opposition with the ethical, intelligent, and loyal portrayal of exotic but elusive Tia Carerre’s character. Like most Asian women in the films studied, Carerre, an Asian woman is portrayed as the “model minority,” which is a frame to be discussed later in the Framing analysis. As a result of their affairs with Cheryl, both Eddie and the Senator with whom she is also having sex, both end up dead by films end. Despite her beauty and sexual appetite, Cheryl is truly a femme fatale and her death, and the death of the men she had sex with, is treated as inevitable. What is made significant in the storyline is not that she was killed, but that she was murdered by someone of importance. It is also essential to note that, even after her death, she has destroyed the lives of what are otherwise portrayed as decent men.

Ironically, the end of the film reveals that Cheryl was not murdered by any of her lovers as suspected, but by a white American male who was concerned that her affair would potentially damage an important business deal. Cheryl’s murderer, when faced with the truth about his actions, flees and ends up dead, too. We now see that Cheryl is connected to the death of three very successful men. She was not only flawed herself but she was responsible for the destruction of the lives’ of men with whom she came in contact. The demise of the three men is used to show contrast with the two main male
characters in the film played by Sean Connery and Wesley Snipes. As an interracial team of professionals, Connery and Snipes portray characters that do not fall into the obvious pit of deception and temptation that is all around them. The portrayal of a white woman, as in *Rising Sun*, as morally, sexually, and ethically flawed though beautiful and desired by all the men around her, is common in the study of the white women in interracial relationships in film.

**The Portrayal of White Women with Hispanic Men**

It is interesting to analyze how women are portrayed differently when paired with men of a different race. Only three Hispanic males were portrayed in interracial relationships in the films under study. All of the men were partnered only with white women. All of the white women in those interracial relationships were portrayed as drug addicted women with no purpose in life but getting high. The three films were: *Cheech and Chong’s Up in Smoke* (1978), *Cheech and Chong’s Next Movie* (1980), and *Scarface* (1991).

The negative portrayal of Michele Pfeiffer’s character, Elvira, in *Scarface* (1991) conveys a damaging image as a white, drug-addicted, frail woman married to the Cuban man who killed her former husband. From her first moments on screen in *Scarface*, Elvira is portrayed as beautiful, skinny, materialist, cold, aloof, and difficult. There is no doubt that Al Pacino’s character, Tony Montano, is the star and central character in *Scarface*. Elvira is merely one of many objects that Tony acquires on his empire-building from Cuban immigrant to a powerful Miami drug lord. When Elvira first meets Tony, she is already married to the wife of Tony’s mobster boss, Frank. Tony is a Cuban refugee who manages to make his fortune as an assassin and a hit man for Frank, helping Frank to increase his power in the South American drug smuggling world of South
Florida. In *Scarface*, Elvira quickly becomes a conquest that Tony seeks to win along with Frank’s mob power, drug resources, and money. Frank is obviously much older than Elvira and she appears to be visibly bored by him but he “keeps” her in a lavish lifestyle including a beautiful ocean front Miami Beach home, expensive clothes, and an endless supply of cocaine.

A normally cool and unaffected assassin, Tony is clearly mesmerized by Elvira’s beauty and strives to impress her and gain her affection. In a scene at a night club, Frank offers Tony the opportunity to dance with Elvira while he is trying to win Tony’s loyalty. We see again in this film, as in *Rising Sun*, that the men offer the women as a form of hospitality to another man. Such a move also takes place in *Pulp Fiction* when John Travolta’s character takes his Black bosses’ wife, Mia, to go dancing. That relationship is also discussed later in this Frame. Elvira dances with Tony and it is clear that he desires her. Before her relationship with Tony actually takes place, she turns down Tony’s advances, telling him flatly “I don’t fuck around with the help.” All this changes, however, when Tony kills Frank and gains his wealth and power. Elvira then changes her mind and marries Tony. In a bizarre scene, Tony kills Frank and then goes upstairs to Elvira’s room to wake up a sleeping Elvira telling her that Tony is now dead so they can now be together. A sleepy and dazed Elvira is like a bizarre interracial twist to the Sleeping Beauty fable. The implication is clear; Elvira, who once rejected Tony as a lover, now accepts him because his financial and social standing has changed and he is eligible to posses her now.

The portrayal of Elvira reaches an even lower echelon as she enters into a marriage with Tony, the man who murdered her husband and is clearly a dangerous and mentally
unstable criminal. Elvira doesn’t seem to care about this but is portrayed as accepting Tony as her husband because he is capable of keeping her in her lavish drug-addicted lifestyle. A beautiful scene of a lavish outdoor wedding is shown with Elvira in a white dress and Tony in a tuxedo. Happy people celebrate as the two lovers are united. Although life for Tony and Elvira becomes more affluent, the relationship is soon portrayed as turbulent and painful. Tony speaks to Elvira in front of other people in a verbally abusive manner. Now that Tony possesses Elvira, it is clear that he values her less, like the power and fortune he now takes for granted. Elvira has no purpose in life other than to be “fucked” by her husband and Tony finally tells her that she needs to get a job or find a cause, like helping lepers. Elvira ignores Tony as she struts back and forth while Tony insults her and her dead husband. Tony is completely insensitive and cruel to Elvira and she continues to act as if she is only concerned with her appearance and her drug supply.

Few films in this study show how doomed the interracial relationship really can be than Scarface. The moment in which Tony ultimately destroys the relationship with Elvira takes place in an elite restaurant while Tony is wearing a tuxedo and Elvira is wearing a sexy evening gown. In the scene, the image of the couple in the expensive restaurant implies that they have clearly “made it” financially. Tony is no longer the poor Cuban immigrant. Elvira is sitting at the table looking very thin with dark circles under her eyes. She will not eat.

A drunken Tony berates her in a very loud voice. He says that he can’t even have sex with her because she is “in a coma” from taking drugs. He goes on to yell in front of all the restaurant guests: “I’ve got a fucking junkie for a wife.” The fact that she has a
junkie for a husband is left unnoted. Earlier in the film, Tony has stated that he wants to have a family. He now refers to Elvira’s infertility by shouting at her, “Your womb is polluted.” Elvira gets up saying that she can’t take it anymore and then stumbles away leaving the table and the relationship, but not before suffering endless episodes of verbal abuse. Elvira leaving Tony is the signal that the end is near for him. He is about to lose all his most prized possessions, including his best friend, his sister, and his life. Elvira leaves the restaurant and the audience never finds out what happens to her after that.

Tony is shown trying to contact her and asking his employees if she has called him when he leaves town. He instructs the employees to tell her that he loves her. The audience never learns anything else about Elvira’s fate. Was the audience supposed to care? It is clear that Elvira is only important when in a relationship with the men in the film. She is passed around like a football in a game among friendly adversaries.

The films previously described were in the drama genre of film. White women in other genres are not portrayed any more favorably. The females in the Cheech and Chong movies are also shown as motivated by drug use in a comedic approach. There is a clear implication that white women with addictions like non-white men. In Up in Smoke, when Cheech and Chong pick up a white buxom hitchhiker they ask her how far she’s going and she responds “all the way.”

The women of the world of Cheech and Chong also seem very motivated by their sexual appetites. Most of the films portray the white women interested in non-white men as over-sexualized or because of what the non-white men can provide for the white women, be it drugs in The Cheech and Chong Films or social importance in Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner.
The Portrayal of White Women and Black Men

In a column in the New York Times on April 24, 2005, Nicholas D. Kristoff makes the observation: “For all the gains in race relations, romance on the big screen remains largely a taboo.” The negative portrayal of white women in romantic or sexual relationships with black men is an extremely rare occurrence in American popular film. Again, the rarity of the interracial blending of white women with black men is made more salient by the negative and troubled way the relationship and the portrayal of the white woman is constructed by Hollywood. As the literature review indicated, such a portrayal takes place in a historic and cultural history of a nation with very strained race relationships between Blacks and Whites because of the slave narratives, which have gone before. Historically in America, white women created problems, if not death, for Black men who were enslaved. Specific laws in America existed to keep the black man from legally entering into sexual relations with a white woman while no such laws existed for white men entering into sexual relationships with a black woman (D’Emilio & Freedman, 1998, p. 13). In Reading Race (2002), Norman Denzin points out that “America’s cinematic racial order is a fractured, discontinuous system of representation” which was created from the “historical relationship with the state” (p. 25). The portrayal of a white woman with a black man as problematic and rare comes as little surprise.

The portrayal of a white woman in an interracial relationship as an attractive, kept, drug user is not limited to Scarface and Rising Sun but is also prominent in Pulp Fiction (1994). Pulp Fiction is also the last film in the study to portray a white woman in an interracial relationship, although the study continues to cover a decade of films. Uma Thurman’s character Mia in Pulp Fiction is married to a black drug lord who is clearly described as powerful and vengeful, and yet, because of her boredom, Wallace has
arranged for John Travolta’s character to take her out for dinner and dancing. Travolta is warned before ever meeting Mia that the last man who touched her was thrown from a building by her gangster husband. She is clearly attractive and seductive, and Mia is obviously interested in seducing him. When Travolta is reluctant to dance with her at the night club, Mia reminds him that his boss told him to take her out and do whatever she wanted. She overpower Travolta and is portrayed as demanding in a deviant way. Mia is shown snorting coke several times in her short part of the film. Mia, it appears, is attracted to Travolta and is tempting him to sleep with the boss’ woman. He goes to the bathroom to talk himself out of such a bad move. Mia’s husband has already been portrayed as a vengeful mobster and Travolta’s character persuades himself that Mia is not worth the obvious sexual chemistry brewing.

While he is gone, Mia illustrates her deviance further by taking a supply of drugs from Travolta’s character’s coat. Here we see how vulnerable and incapable of being independent Mia really is. Thinking the drug she found in his coat was cocaine, Mia snorts it while he is in the bathroom. To further her portrayal as reckless and helpless, she has misunderstood what drug she took and she snorts heroine not cocaine. Clearly, had she been more savvy she would not have done this and to prove how damaging her misjudgment is she is now shown with blood running from her nose while she appears to be in a coma. When Travolta’s character finds her, she is clearly overdosing and he is in a terrible situation. His life will be jeopardized too if his bosses’ wife dies. He is forced to save her life. In an act of desperation, he takes Mia to his junkie supplier who dramatically saves her by stabbing her in the heart with a needle.
While presented on the surface as attractive, interesting and fun, Mia is clearly a very morally compromised and helpless woman. She is shown as a liability to John Travolta’s character placing him in great danger. We have heard in the film before this point how Mia’s husband is protective of her and Travolta’s character knows that if the boss’ wife had died of an overdose while under his care he was a dead man. Mia is shown as being a reckless young woman in desperate pursuit of a good time. One of the most disturbing traits of most of the white women framed in these films is that they are careless about their own safety and blatantly disregarding their own life’s value. The implication in the portrayal is clear that they are immoral women who are thereby deserving of ill treatment. Without the white men around her, Mia would have clearly died because of her own bad decisions. She is clearly in the film to make the men around her white or black, look better and to add to their importance. Without the male characters, Mia has no purpose in the storyline and apparently could not even survive.

Not all portrayals of white women are as dramatic as Mia’s in *Pulp Fiction* but offer the same model of dependence and deviance. In a highly comedic approach to white women’s sexuality, Madeline Kahn is the saloon dancer, Lilly Von Shook, in *Blazing Saddles* with a big appetite for the new black sheriff she was supposed to betray. Before her sexual romp with the sheriff, we see that Lilly is a saloon dancer and singer with a wide array of male suitors. She performs a song on stage mocking her role as a sexual woman constantly being pursued by men singing “I’m tired, sick, and tired” of being with “thousands of men again and again, coming and going -- and always too soon.” Her mocking of the men is used for comedy but she is portrayed as a woman who is promiscuous and has literally worn herself out with her sexual deviance. She is also
portrayed as “untrustworthy” and she double crosses the town’s leader. The mayor of the
town recruits Lilly to help him by seducing and, ultimately, destroy the new black sheriff.
Lilly is clearly a pawn in the mayor’s plan to destroy the new black sheriff. As
instructed, Lilly performs her show and then invites the sheriff to her dressing room. The
sheriff, of course, cannot resist Lilly’s charm and goes to see her. Lilly claims to be
curious to know it is true what people say about black man’s penis size. In a comedic
moment in the darkness she yells, “It’s true, it’s true” which sounds like “it’s twue, it’s
twue” because of her famous lisp.

Lilly is portrayed as being won over by the Sheriff’s sexual powers and she later
refuses to give information about the sheriff to his enemies. The formerly bored
performer is dazed and amazed at the Sheriff’s sexual prowess. She betrays the mayor
and when the local men try to get the information out of her but she will not cooperate.
The film concludes with the sheriff loving and leaving her as he literally is shown riding
off into the sunset with his white side kick character, played by Gene Wilder. Again, we
see the ambivalent ending in which the white woman is portrayed as insignificant to the
storyline. She is used merely to emphasize the masculinity of the male sheriff and as a
deviant ploy by the villainous white mayor. We never find out what happens to her
which is the most common outcome for white women in the films under study.

The white woman as sexualized and insignificant is classically portrayed in *Shaft*
(1971). It is very clear that the leading male character Shaft is the important focus of the
film. The white woman character, Carol, is briefly portrayed as initiating sex with Shaft
when she sees him in a bar. Carol is an attractive woman who has a tendency to touch
herself often and act seductively. In her initiation of sex with Shaft she sends her gay
male friend to tell Shaft that she is interested in him. The two men (even though one is gay) discuss her “great boobs”. After Shaft apprehends two men in the bar, the film cuts immediately to a scene in which Carol is shown caressing Shaft’s cut hand. He then tells her he needs to go take a shower. Not to be deterred from her sexual appetite, Carol surprises him by showing up and getting into the shower with him. The audience sees the couple embracing and kissing behind the frosted glass shower glass door, which clearly shows the darkness of Shaft’s skin in contrast to Carol’s white skin. Shaft apparently leaves Carol in the morning to take care of business at the police station. When Shaft returns to his apartment, he wakes a sleeping Carol up and tells her it’s time to go. His manner is clearly cold and dismissive to Carol as if she has overstayed her welcome. Shaft calmly walks away from the bed and then picks up the phone to make a call. Carol approaches him and says “you might be great in bed, but you’re shitty afterwards”. She leaves and that is the last we see of her in the film.

Even when white women are not portrayed as drug addicted or sexually deviant, they are portrayed as fragile and vulnerable. In the 1967 classic interracial relationship film *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner*, the frame of being fragile continues in the portrayal of Joey. Beautiful, naïve, and in love with an older black man, Joey surprises her white parents by bringing her black fiancé, John, played by Sidney Poitier, home. Arriving unexpectedly from her trip in Hawaii, Joey brings John home and tells her parents that she and John are going to be married soon. Despite the condition of race relations in America in the 1960s, Joey is completely confused and amazed by her father’s objection to the union. She acts as if it is a complete shock to her. She announces to her parents “He’s so wonderful, you will love him in 20 minutes.” Having been raised by liberal
parents, Joey is convinced (she says so several times in case the audience has any doubt) that her parents will have no objection to John. Not only does Joey’s father have an objection to the union, John’s father also has an objection. Joey didn’t see that possibility coming either. Even the black housekeeper is upset about the idea of Joey marrying John.

Despite John’s urging to “lay it on them gently,” Joey ignores the mature and scholarly John’s advice saying to her mother, “I’ve told him 97 times that it wouldn’t make a difference to you or Dad.” Joey also makes the point that John is a very important doctor and then adds the statement that “When I am married to him, I will be important, too.” Joey states no professional or life interests of her own. Her identity will shift from being her parent’s to now being attached to John’s identify. The idea that her parents might object to their 23-year old daughter marrying a 37-year old black widowed male who lives across the world doesn’t occur to Joey in the climate of 1967 America. Such a reality check is impossible for the delightfully cheerful and adorable character of Joey.

The major acting accomplishments in this film clearly belong to Sidney Poitier, Katherine Hepburn, Spencer Tracy, and everyone other than Joey in this classic film. In fact, this film was hailed as an Oscar Award winning film in 1967. The experience and talent of Poitier, Hepburn, and Tracy is sheer filmic joy for an audience that has enjoyed the career of each of these actors as significant to American film. The performance of Joey flounders in the shadow of the cast around her and she is unable to appear as anything other than a pretty accessory. Joey is demanding and refuses to accept anything but what she wants. After much drama, eventually Joey’s father gives into her wishes.
This concession has nothing to do with Joey however, but with the amazing job her mother is able to do in changing his mind. The mother is clearly concerned that Joey will be crushed if she does not get the support of her parents. This concern is enough to make her parents overcome their concern for the difficulties that lie ahead if she marries a black man. Joey gets her man in the end but not before the white and black parents experience epiphany. At the surface, it appears that *Guess who is Coming to Dinner* is a tribute to the hopeful future of interracial love in America in 1967. At a closer inspection though the film and its Award winning attention appears to pay tribute to the career of many great actors’ capacity to act, rather than the interracial relationships basis in reality. But if the film is about love, it is a tribute to the love shown between the white parents for each other and their child, and the black parents and their child. Yet again, in this frame we see that it takes a much deeper exploration to establish what is really going on with the interaction of characters. Future frames will also examine that Sidney Poitier is the model minority and therefore does not represent the typical black male experience in America in the 1960s.

**White Women as Insignificant**

In many of the previous example of white women in film the storyline or plot offers the audience no information about what ultimately happens to the white female character at the end of the film. An ambivalent ending in which the audience goes without knowing the outcome for the white women in an interracial relationship in the examined films is the most common outcome offered. In seven of the interracial relationships, the storyline does not include an outcome for the white women. It is as if the woman is so unimportant to the plot or storyline that the audience does not need to worry about her future. In *Studying Contemporary film: A guide to movie analysis,*
Thomas Elsaesser and Warren Buckland (2002) point out that film theorists know that film study is “a complex” process of a medium that is not a “mere form of harmless entertainment, and instead maintains that it is an intrinsically significant medium” (p. 2). It is important, therefore, to consider how films create “meaning”. The lack of information about what happens to certain characters in a film is a clear indication to the audience that the character is unimportant to the plot and to the world of the main character.

It is also meaningful in this frame to acknowledge that only one white woman in the films under study is married, which is the same number as the women who are killed. Another woman is planning to get married which means that nine out of 11 women in the study are not married. The outcome for the only remaining woman the audience knows about is that she is gang-raped by white men. In the 36 films under study it becomes apparent that Hollywood frames white women in interracial relationships differently than women of color. With the exception of the character of Jean in Billy Jack, the other white women in the films under study seem to have no purpose or occupations in society. When John Berger made the observation in *Ways of Seeing* (1977), that ”men act and women appear,” he may have been referring to white women only. Despite the reality that women are an active part of the employment economy, the majority of the white women have none in the storylines. Unlike the women of color, most white women do not display any specific skills other than sexual skills. The white women seem to have no sense of purpose outside their connection to the man in the film and do not work towards a cause or dream the way most women of color are portrayed. Frequently, the white
females are portrayed having no identity of their own but only as an extension of their male partner.

It is clear that Hollywood is reluctant to put white leading females in roles opposite non-white males. Only eleven of the possible 540 films of the top 15 blockbuster movies contain a white woman in an interracial relationship over a 38 year period. It is interesting to note that this trend never increased over the decades in fact white women do not appear at all in the last decade of the study. The white female in an interracial relationship in the film under study were framed as being less active, skilled, or interesting as the women of color, all of whom possessed some obvious skills. Michele Pfeifer’s character Elvira in Scarface; In Rising Sun, Cheryl Austin; Madeline Kahn in Blazing Saddles and Uma Thurman’s character Mia in Pulp Fiction are clear examples of this overwhelming commonality of white women. Though beautiful, their only role in life is to be observed and act as a sexual companion to men who can afford to “keep” them or sexually please them.

The white women’s flaw or disorder is obvious to the audience in each film. The white females are often “kept” women despite their difficult or demanding personality. These women seem to be without family or real friends and have made life choices which alienate them from “decent” women either because they are deviant as drug users or have a very aggressive appetite for sex. Elivira and Mia have significant drug problems and are frequently shown doing drugs.

This frame shows that when white women are shown in the films in interracial relationships, they were often portrayed negatively. Sometimes covertly and sometimes more subtly, over the past four decades it has been clear that the big screen has portrayed
interracial relationships as a negative option for white women who value their moral character or even safety. The message is quite clear in this Frame: White women who enter into romantic or sexual relationships are portrayed as experiencing hardship and often social isolation in a relationship that will most likely bring family strife, death, rape or the unknown.

**All’s “Fair” In Love and War: The Hierarchy of Skin Tone in the Portrayal of Women of Color**

All women of color are not portrayed in the same way even amongst their own race. Bi-racial or fair skinned women are commonly portrayed in the films under study as being ambassadors of good. Dark-skinned women are still portrayed as the "femme fatale" who will bring about harm to the good, white male character. Like the Black Widow spider, she is shown as being fatal to her lover. The lighter-skinned women however, are portrayed more favorably. Some women of color are rarely shown in the films compared to the frequent portrayal of Asian women in film. Not only are Asian women portrayed in interracial relationships with white men more frequently than any other racial group, they are also shown more frequently. Another aspect of this racial hierarchy is that the women of color who appear in this film are also partially Caucasian.

What do Halle Berry, Lucy Liu, Yvonne Eliman, Jennifer Beals and Tia Carrere have in common? All of these women are female actresses who have appeared in one or more of the top 15 blockbuster films in interracial relationships since 1967. At a closer look, however, the actresses have more in common. As bi-racial women, they are used to portraying exotic "women of color" roles while offering very Caucasian features giving them a classic western world beauty and appeal. The inequality of the treatment of women in the films under study is a very subtle frame that could be missed if attention
was not paid to their racial heritage. Understanding of the actual racial heritage of the actresses requires further study than the film itself offers the audience.

Tia Carrere, for example, is featured in both *Wayne's World* and *Rising Sun*, as having a relationship with white males. In *Wayne's World*, her character, Cassandra, is ethnically ambiguous and in *Rising Sun* she plays a bi-racial Black-Asian mixed character. In actuality, Carrere's ethnic heritage as described on her official website (Tiacarrere.com, 2006) describes her as "Filipino, Chinese and Spanish". The blend of her racial heritage allows the filmmaker to pass her off as an Asian-black woman instead. In both films, however, Carerre is portrayed as predominantly Asian, giving her the "model minority status" to be discussed later. She is attractive, smart, and desired by the men around her creating an almost mesmerizing effect. Her physical features, like the other actresses described above, are ethnic enough to be desirable yet white enough to be familiar to audiences. She is portrayed as smarter, sexier, and more interesting than the other white women in the films in which she appears in an interracial relationship. In both films, the men around her desire her. In each film, men seek her as a prized possession.

There is a phenomena in the films under study that the majority of non-white women on the big screen are, in fact, at least partly white or pale skinned. The more Anglican looking the female, the more positive or prominent her character is portrayed. We see this trend repeated over all four decades. The presence of Halle Berry in two films in this study illustrates her popularity as an American film icon. As both a Bond Girl in *Die Another Day* and a secretary in *The Flintstones*, we see her portrayed as a stereotypical "Jezebel" character that uses her body and sexuality to get what she wants.
Berry is in fact a bi-racial female who was raised by her white mother when her black father left them when she was four-years-old (IMDb). She is able to pass as a very light-skinned black woman on the big screen. Like Carerre, fair skinned enough to be familiar while dark enough to be exotic.

**Dark Skinned, Dark Natured Femme Fatale**

From this frame, we can also see that women who are dark-skinned are rarely used in blockbuster films and, if used, for the specific purpose of making them the villainess or "femme fatale". The only time dark-skinned women are shown in the study films is usually in a negative role. A very masculine but sexualized, Grace Jones plays the "Amazonian bad girl" character of May Day in James Bond’s *A View to a Kill*. Initially in the film, Jones is the lover/body guard/assassin of villain Max Zorin played by Christopher Walken. May Day is later double crossed by Zorin in the film and decides she will now do some double crossing of her own. As is expected in a James Bond film, May Day later comes to her senses, having sex with Bond and betraying Zorin. She not only changes sides for Bond but she also looses her life in a suicide mission to detonate a bomb. Bond is saved but May Day dies, with her last words to Bond being “Get Zorin for me.” Even in her final moments she is portrayed as calculating and vengeful.

Tina Turner plays the "Acid Queen" in Tommy, an eccentric drug-addicted prostitute who seduces the blind, vulnerable Tommy, sexually and with drugs at his father's demand -- for money. She is portrayed as morally corrupt, destroying the innocence of the blond, pale blind boy virgin unable to defend himself from her "dark" and evil ways.

It may seem that Turner's negative role in Tommy was an era long gone. We see however, that as recently as 2003, Queen Latifah was portrayed as a lying, black female
convict who cons Steve Martin's character into supporting her. Martin is portrayed as vulnerable following a painful divorce. Latifah is initially shown as a tough and tenacious black woman who is preying through online dating from prison on Martin's naive nature. Latifah's character, Charlene, literally gets into a cat fight with Martin's skinny, white former sister-in-law. In case there was any doubt about the progress made for black women on the big screen at one point in the film, Charlene is actually called "Aunt Jemima," a reference to the stereotypical "Mammy" character of American mass produced breakfast foods. Charlene fights her way through the film defending her self from a racist old white women and a young materialist white women. She even has to defend herself from her former black boyfriend who framed her and sent her to jail. The turning point in Charlene's redemption can be seen as she starts to wear her hair straighter and wear traditional white, middle-class clothing. When she goes from looking like an escaped convict to a Junior Service League member, the audience is signaled that all will be well for her now that she has abandoned her "ghetto" roots.

One of the important issues in this frame is that negative portrayals of women of color with darker skin tones perpetuate a cultural stereotype that is rarely discussed due to its politically incorrect nature. The concern is that "negative media images of racial/ethnic groups simultaneously provide individuals with a cultural other alongside a representation of his/her internal fears" (Tamborini & al, 2000, p. 639). Research on mass media programming has already shown that the portrayal of African Americans on television remains "distorted and stereotyped" with African Americans playing "much less prestigious roles" (Tamborini & al, 2000, p. 642). As mentioned previous, in Black Film as a Signifying Practice, Gladstone L. Yearwood (2000) makes the connection that
in this culture, skin tone is as much political as physical: “For many people . . .
blackness is less a color than a metaphor for political circumstances prescribed by
struggles against economic exploitation and cultural domination: a state of consciousness
that peoples of various pigmentations have experienced, empathized with, and responded
to . . .” (p. 5).

In "Nigger/Lover: The Thin Sheen of Race in 'Something Wild',” Cameron Bailey
(1988) gives significant insights into how the concept of "black" has been traditionally
associated in Western culture with "all that is evil and inscrutable. Blackness is
inextricably linked with darkness and darkness means the underworld, the fearsome, the
unknowable" (p. 32). In addition to Cameron, many other media scholars have
connected the symbolism of darkness in color with darkness in moral character. If
frames offer us a "schemata" to assess our reality, this frame indicates that the limited
concept of the binary oppositional is alive and well on the big screen. If black and white
are the binary oppositional, where one term has privilege over the other as Jacques
Derrida has established in Western culture one need not reason long and hard to
determine which reigns in this pair" (Bailey, 1988, p. 32).

The portrayal of the black women in the film exists as a fantasy type realm that
portrays the black women as spies, entertainers, and prostitutes. Of all the women of
color’s characters, black females are portrayed as partially positive but mostly negative.
They are often shown, as will be discussed later, as needing to be rescued or protected by
their white male partner. Such a dynamic reflects a tradition of the black woman as
subject to the white male’s colonization and conquest. Black women in the film are
shown as strong but also as angry and aggressive. They are frequently violent or use bad
language. Even the somewhat positive character of Rachel in the *Body Guard* as a very successful and talented entertainer and film star, negates her positive image by showing her as a woman who acts badly and immaturity. She is self-consumed, vain, and ultimately needs her white male body guard to protect her from her own stupidity and vulnerability.

**The Portrayal of Hispanic Women in Interracial Relationships: Late Comers**

Hispanic women portrayed in popular film in interracial relationships have only been shown in top 15 films since 2001. Prior to that, no Hispanic women were shown in interracial relationships in any of the top 15 blockbuster films. In *Reading Race*, Norman Denzin points out that “Hispanic Hollywood” appeared to emerge between the summer of 1987 and the spring of 1988 with films such *La Bamba*, *Born in East LA* and *Stand and Deliver*. Since these films did not make the top 15 of box office sales for their year of release, they are not included in this study. These films also starred the Hispanic male as the main characters.

Hispanic women are the most marginalized female group in this study as there are only three Hispanic females portrayed in interracial relationship in the 38 year span of popular films. The Hispanic female is clearly portrayed as barely visible and thereby is given little significance in popular American film. Interestingly, the Hispanic women are not shown with white men in any of the films under study. In *Rush Hour 2* (2001), Isabella is portrayed as the stereotypical “sassy spitfire” Hispanic woman who is a CIA double agent who enters into a briefly shown romantic relationship with Jackie Chan’s character. Chan is the only Asian male shown in an interracial relationship in the study which covers almost four decades. His character will be discussed more in the model minority frame.
In addition to being portrayed as the sassy spitfire, Hispanic women are traditionally portrayed as secondary characters such as sisters and mothers (Tamborini et al, 2000, p. 639). The portrayal of Hispanic women in film at all is rare but has been documented by media scholars as stereotypical and limited (Denzin, 2003, p. 32). In the *Fast and the Furious* (2001), the character of Mia is portrayed as both “sister” and “sassy spitfire”. She plays the sister of the main character portrayed by Vin Diesel. She also plays the love interest of the white undercover cop who is trying to arrest her brother for running smuggling and armed robbery ring of crime. She is outspoken and feisty, but is also shown as being a very loyal and loving sister.

The most recent Hispanic woman portrayed in an interracial relationship in the films under study is in *Hitch*, (2005) when Sarah, a character played by Eva Mendes is shown in a relationship with another model minority male, Will Smith. Sarah’s character is also shown as both a sister and a sassy spitfire. Sarah’s character is a professional gossip columnist who will stop at nothing to get her story. She is emotionally guarded, revealing to Hitch’s character played by Smith that her sister’s near drowning as a child has deeply affected her life. Hitch responds that this incident has come to define Sarah. We see in this film that the Hispanic woman is portrayed as the traditional loving sister and stereotypical sassy spitfire. Hispanic woman may finally be making it into the big screen top 15 films but their portrayal is extremely stereotyped, as it is for other women of color.

**Amerindian Women**

Women of Amerindian heritage, like Hispanic, women are rarely shown in American popular film and, like white women, have not been shown in an interracial relationship in top 15 blockbuster film since 1990. When Indian women are shown in
films they follow the stereotypical portrayal of Native American women as passive and
loyal to their families or tribes. In the popular film starring Kevin Costner, *Dances with
Wolves*, Mary McDonnell’s character lives with the Sioux Indians and looses her Indian
husband in battle. She is portrayed positively but also as dependent on her tribe and chief
for their permission to love a white man. In *Pocahontas*, the Indian Princess is shown as
very spirited and independent initially but in the end she is shown as being obedient to
the wishes of her family and the importance of her role in the tribe. In *Little Big Man*, the
Indian women play very minor roles and appear to serve to show the main character
played by Dustin Hoffman as more masculine. He is asked by his Indian wife to have sex
with her sisters because they are without a man of their own. The idea of the Indian
woman as benevolent and self less while spirited is offered in their portrayal setting them
apart from the portrayal of other women in the films under study. Although more
positively portrayed than most other women, the portrayal of Indian women is done in a
historical storyline or plot and does not occur in a real or current portrayal of America.
This gives the Indian woman a mythical portrayal of a world long gone. There is no
portrayal of Indian women in a modern America.

It is interesting to note that Amerindian women are all grouped together as if all
Amerindian cultures were the same. This is very common in media portrayal as the
distinctive nature of individual cultures is homogenized into one stereotype.

**Asian Women in Interracial Relationships**

The theme of Asian women as model minorities and sexualized or erotic women is
discussed in this and other frames. It is an obvious and interesting finding that keeps
emerging when researching the portrayal of interracial relationships in popular American
film. The portrayal of women in interracial relationships in film is portrayed as positive
or negative depending on the character of the main male in the film. For example, the portrayal of the white-female, black-male coupling historically has been seen as a threat to patriarchy. The portrayal of Asian-female and white-male is portrayed in a positive way in Western media (Sun, 2003, p. 657). This is the most common racial coupling found in the films under study.

According to Chyng Feng Sun in “Ling Woo in Historical Context: The New Faces of Asian American Stereotypes on Television,” “The pairing of a white male and Oriental female is naturalized and has its colonialist root, manifested in the ‘rescue’ narrative. In the study of films with non-white women it becomes apparent that the role of colonization and “the West’s dominance is secured through narratives of romance and sexuality that justify white man’s possession of the bodies of women of color” (Marchetti, 2003, p. 6). In the portrayal of women in film, in issues of sexuality, race and ethnicity, are all women created equally? Clearly not, and Asian women are portrayed more consistently positive than any other race of woman in the findings. Also, despite the fact that there are more white women in American society than Asian women, this reality is overlooked in the Hollywood world of interracial relationships. Asian women are portrayed in interracial relationships as frequently as white women and more than any other women of color. The popularity of the Asian woman as white male partner is actually reflected in U.S. statistical records in America (U.S. Census 2000).

Asian women in film are portrayed as smarter, more ethical, and less sexually aggressive than their female counterparts in any other race. This is the portrayal of women in *Rising Sun*, *Charlie’s Angels*, *The Golden Child*, and the Bond Films in which Asian women appear. In addition to being intelligent, Asian women are portrayed as
having a higher moral character than any other group of women. The Asian women as a sexual or romantic partner is portrayed as a more favorable option for white men in the films under study for all these reasons and other reasons that are discussed in more detail in other films.

**Love You to Death: Interracial Relationships on the big screen exist in a Violent and Conflicted World**

Women of color and white women portrayed in interracial relationships in the films under study live in a difficult and dangerous world. Violence and victim-hood is a common theme in the majority of the films in all four decades. Much research has already been done by media scholars to show that violence in television has impacted "reality" by "mainstreaming" violence as normalized (Gerbner et al, 1986, p. 212). In cultivation theory, Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, and Signorelli have defined violence as defined as "the overt expression of physical force (with or without a weapon, against self or others) compelling actions against one's will on pain of being hurt and/or killed or threatened to be so victimized as part of the plot" (1980, p. 213). The majority of films under study involved the portrayal of violence that made verbal or physical abuse seem a normal part of everyday life. Perhaps the most disturbing element of this frame is the implication that getting into an interracial relationship could be dangerous.

Many of the men and women who have interracial relationships in the films end up dead. Being hurt or killed is a “normalized” portrayal of a possible outcome of an interracial relationship in film. It becomes apparent that an interracial relationship is as likely to result in death then in marriage! For the viewer, this repeated message over so many years offers the warning -- interracial relationships result in pain, conflict or possibly death. This frame makes salient the undesirable nature of interracial sex or
love. The films studied use the interracial relationship as an overt or covert form of conflict in which there is a high probability of conflict for women of any color who enter into a union with a man unlike themselves.

The interracial relationship is framed in a fantastic world, where violence is not only common but initiated by the woman as well as the men. Women do not use violence merely to defend themselves. Women of color are show initiating it at times for no apparent reason. The message here is that women of color should be treated with caution. Even in the romantic comedy Hitch (2005), Sarah, the professional writer character played by Eva Mendes uses violence when unprovoked. She aggressively kicks a man in the genitals in a public street because he upset her friend. May Day and the Bond Girls are commonly shown as using violence to get revenge or to enter a restricted area. In the fantasy world of violence, the women with the fantasy jobs like spies or entertainers are very aggressive and violent.

Emotional confusion or conflict was common for the women who were unsure of what action to take, torn by conflicting choices (family or relationship), and overwhelmed by life. These women were often portrayed as volatile and potentially or actually violent. A smart, white male wanting to find a passive partner, might see these portrayals as a reason to stay with the more even-tempered and even passive white female instead. The frame shows that women of color may be beautiful but they can't be trusted to behave appropriately in a social setting.

Violence is shown as a very normal or naturalized way for women of color to solve problems in their world. The women of color have a tendency to be more physically brutal than their white counterparts. Over sexualized behavior, drug use, violence, lying,
insulting their partners, incarceration, prostitution, stripping, infidelity, embezzling, and
sexual perversion are ways the women are framed as being deviant. We frequently see
the women of color swearing, fighting, and even killing. Most of the white women are
victims of violence, but are not initiators of violence like their more colorful counterparts.

The women of color unlike frail women are tough and able to defend themselves
physically, often by beating up several men at one time. In Wayne’s World Tia Curare’s
classic, Cassandra, is the lead singer of a rock band who stops a bar fight by using
martial arts while wearing a mini skirt and high heels. Using martial arts or violence in
this way is common in many of the movies showing the women of color who are dressed
provocatively. Queen Latifah’s character Charlene in Bringing Down the House is
extremely violent, deviant, and untrustworthy at the start of the movie until she softens
later. The film opens with her lying to Steve Martin’s character online as she develops a
relationship with him. She pretends to be a blonde, upper middle-class, white lawyer
when, in fact, she is an inmate for committing armed robbery. She gets out of jail and
manipulates Martin to let him stay with her in his upper class home. She blackmauls him
to get her way. She later gets into a major cat fight with scene with Martin’s white
former sister in law and beats her severely. Charlene is shown as a much larger woman,
when angered by racist remarks, beating the women severely and leaving her hanging on
a hook. Although initially tough and deceptive, Charlene shows her caring and
concerned side in her treatment of Martin’s children. This, of course, is tainted because
she does things like teaches his son to read by giving him pornographic magazines. Near
the end of the film, Charlene gets into a dangerous fight with her former boyfriend who
has framed her for a crime she did not commit. He actually shoots her execution style as he overpowers her in a fight on a night club dance floor.

Lucy Liu as Alex in *Charlie’s Angels* is also shown initially as a deceptive, violent, domineering, and demanding woman who lies to her naïve, white boyfriend and enjoys beating up other people. She wears a tight, black leather suit in one scene and has a room full of male engineers lusting after her as she whacks the desks with her cane with full force occasionally grabbing a man by the hair like a dominatrix. She is portrayed as intellectually superior to the other women in the film and is also portrayed as cold and indifferent compared to the other two more congenial white Angels. Alex is often the leader in a scenario who plays a more vital role than her counterparts. As beautiful and intelligent as she is, she explains that her strength makes it hard for her to keep a relationship. She complains about her relationship with men saying “They are all lovey-dovey until they find out I can break a cinder block with my head.”

Violence is included in 30 of the 34 films with nearly all of the women in danger at some point in the film. While some are rescued, a number are not and are killed and/or raped. For some, the abuse they receive is verbal though for most it is physical. Some of the women are exotic dancers or prostitutes placing them in the line of danger. All of the “Bond girls” risk being killed in their roles and a number of them are killed or very nearly killed. In fact, they usually die saving Bond or live because he has just saved them.

In *Scarface*, Michele Pfeiffer’s character Elvira lives in a violent gangster world where her boyfriend is murdered. In *Pulp Fiction*, Uma Thurman’s character Mia allegedly caused a man to be killed for letting him give her a foot massage. In *the Fast*
and the Furious, Michelle Rodrigez’s character, also called Mia, lives in a gangster’s world where people are constantly in fear of being killed. Gunshot breaking out at any time is common in the gangster world of film.

Even in comedies like Austin Powers in Goldmember, Beyonce Knowles character is held at gunpoint and threatened with being killed on more than one occasion. Being in an interracial relationship appears to exist in a physically dangerous full of risks to women of any color. The world in which they live is portrayed as unsafe and dangerous.

Equality in gender seems to have attracted violence as a way of showing that women can be just as strong as men on the big screen. Media scholar Jean Kilbourne (1999) in her book Can’t Buy my love warned that the objectification of women in mass media advertising not only demeans women, but also perpetuates the potential for violence against women. This frame comes with the same cautionary warning. The statistics show that women remain more unsafe in their home than anywhere else in America. A woman is most likely going to be raped or killed by someone she is or was in a relationship with than by a stranger (FBI, 2006) so the portrayal of women as victims or violence contributes to our normalizing this situation. If women are almost always victims of violence on the screen then violence is almost to be expected in real life.

If showing that violence is a normal part of everyday life is of concern, then an additional concern would be showing the portraying of the average petite female as being able to physically defend herself against several men at the same time. This is shown in a number of films with women like Lucy Liu in Charlie’s Angels or Tia Carrere in Wayne’s World overcoming much larger men in groups. This is an equally irresponsible scenario to promote in the mainstream media. Even a woman with extensive martial arts
training or a weapon would be unlikely to be able to perform such a feat. Giving women an unrealistic or even impossible portrayal as physically dangerous when violence is initiated against them by much larger men has serious consequences in society. Violence as a way to solve problems or emotionally express one selves is not an evolutionary step for women in their social standing. The Civil Right's and Women's Right's movements did not seek to make violence an equal opportunity method of communication. Showing women as strong and dangerous to men does not make them appear more equal or free. It also does not reflect what is in reality, a very unacceptable phenomenon of violence and sexual violence against women and children in our society on a daily basis. This frame is further examined in the content analysis study which offers specifics about the role of violence in the films under study.

“Gender Benders”: Women in Interracial Relationships Failure to be the Traditional Female.

The previous frame that shows how white women are more likely to be victims of violence, and women of color are more likely to initiate violence leads us to the next dominant frame: women in interracial relationships in the films under study are mostly portrayed as less feminine than women traditionally. This is an interesting frame because if the social construction of gender portrays women as traditionally feminine when they are: physically attractive, deferential, emotional, nurturing, and concerned with people and relationships (Woods, 2006, p. 23), does going outside of the construct portray the women negatively? Are they actually not "real women" when they are less feminine because it means they are acting like men? Or does it portray them as defying tradition and being more independent? We will examine this more closely to identify what is the greater meaning behind this frame.
On the surface, the women in the films under study appear to initially be feminine. All of them are physically attractive and only one woman in 36 films is overweight. But, that is the most common, if not only true aspect of the initial portrayal of the women in interracial relationships that meets the criteria. The traditional masculine traits of being strong, ambitious, successful, rational, and emotionally controlled are often seen within the portrayal of the women in the films under study. Other research on women in media illustrates the importance of gender in media portrayal. Femininity according to Allan Johnson in *Patriarchy* is tricky: “femaleness isn’t devalued entirely. Women are often prized for their beauty as objects of male desire, for example, but as such they are often possessed and controlled in ways that ultimately devalue them” (1997, p. 167).

The women are shown as "beauty objects" and in a number of the films that is all the women are portrayed as being. They don't have any other attributes in the storyline than being lovely to look at and watch. So in what ways are the women portrayed as less than feminine? The most obvious issue is that most of the women very self-consumed and uninterested in what other people think or want. In almost all of the films, women in the relationship are shown as being self-consumed, difficult, defiant, domineering or demanding. Even in *Guess who is Coming to Dinner*, sweet and adorable Joey is portrayed as a difficult and demanding young woman who insists that her parents accept and even embrace her older, black fiancé. As much as she claims to love her parents, she is clear that what she wants is the most important aspect of her decision making.

It is clear in *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1973) that Mary Magdalene's relationship with Christ is creating problems with his friends and followers. Despite this, Mary played by Yvonne Elliman, continues to parade in front of them showing her devotion
and affection for Christ while disregarding what their opinion is of her, a former prostitute. In *The Bodyguard*, Whitney Houston’s character Rachel is a superstar rock singer in need of protection from a perverted stalker. Kevin Costner’s character, Frank Farmer, is hired to protect her. In the beginning, she is rude and insulting to him while frequently ignoring his advice and swearing at him. She is diva-like and acts badly to her sister (which might have provoked her to hire the stalker and kill her) and her staff. She is confrontational with Farmer saying “no fucking freak is going to run me off the stage”. She, of course, later softens and then seduces him. Rachel tells him, “you probably won’t believe this but I have a reputation of being a bitch.” Rachel is difficult and demanding only to later show herself as a scared woman who is terrified about the safety of her son. Her violent bitchiness, like Halle Berry’s, Queen Latifah’s, Lucy Liu’s, and Tia Carrere’s characters, all seem to dissolve into benevolence as she is “transformed”.

Although many of the white women are shown as passive in that they don’t have jobs or seem to do much, with Elvira in *Scarface* played by Michelle Pfeiffer, Mia in *Pulp Fiction* played by Uma Thurman and the character of Barbara in Billy Jack, they seem to be completely uncaring about what other people think about them and their behavior. Elvira's character is openly difficult, demanding, demeaning, and almost appears to be emotionally devoid of feeling. This could be because of the large amount of drugs both she and Mia in *Pulp Fiction* are portrayed as consuming!

Conflicted or confused is another way women are framed in the films under study. In almost all the films the women are at some point torn about what to do. They are portrayed as not passively going along with what other people want. Hollywood films thrive on such storylines. At the start of the films, most of the women are dreaming out
loud of something they wish for or they seem confused about in their lives. In *Flashdance*, Jennifer Beals’ character is conflicted as a welder by day and a stripper by night. She secretly dreams of becoming a ballerina. She shows her anger at one point in the film by vandalizing her boyfriend's house out of frustration.

The frame is emerging that women in interracial relationships in the study are not traditional females and defy conformity. Most, however, eventually learn the important moral lesson that being deviant really does not pay in a moral society. The women of color, like the white women, are framed as untrustworthy and capable of creating conflict. In the *Flintstones*, Halle Berry’s character of the seductive secretary to the dumb Fred Flintstone, finally gets tired of deceiving Fred after she and her white boyfriend executive have used Flintstone to embezzle millions. In her closing lines, as she is being taken away in handcuffs by the police, she turns to Flintstone and says “I’ve been a very bad girl – but I was very good at it.” Halle Berry plays a tough and deceptive American agent in the James Bond Film *Die Another Day*. Her character, Jinx, lies to Bond several times and acts rudely to get her way. As he takes her to bed, Bond says to Jinx, “I’ve missed the love of a good woman,” to which she replies “Who says I’m good?”

Gender communication scholar Julia Wood (2006) explains in *Communication, Gender and Culture* that gender is learned (p. 23). As discussed previously, it is a social construct that people experience from birth through personal interactions, in media images, and the view's of gender that permeate public and private life. It is clear in this frame that when women step outside of the traditionally feminine role and adopt more masculine roles, they must be prepared to suffer or to placate to their more feminine
traits. For example, as powerful, intelligent, and domineering as Lucy Liu's character Alex is in Charlie's Angels, it is obvious that her possible over-masculine traits of strength, ambition, and smart are minimized by her extremely sexy outfits and her inability to cook. Alex is shown as being a notoriously bad cook who seeks to please people with her food. She is also portrayed as a very feminine and vulnerable stripper, Middle Eastern belly dancer, Asian masseuse and Swedish yodeler to offset her threatening traits.

Another aspect that connects many of the women in the films is their ambition. Very often women are shown as striving to have more and be more than they are. Just like with Alex's character, these women experience difficulty to show how vulnerable they are and how they need someone, (always a man) to rescue them or move them ahead in life. Although many of the women act, behave, and talk tough, as if they were independent women, by the end of the film (or usually their relationship which may not make the length of the film) they have been transformed and returned to their "natural" state of caring more for other people than they do for themselves. Those women who do not experience this "enlightenment" to their feminine self usually end up dead or dumped in the storyline. The frame offers the salience that female success involves the female character’s capacity to keep her masculinity as secondary to her traditionally feminine traits – that, of course, is if she wants to survive. It is essential in many of the films that the women maintain a degree of feminine vulnerability so they can be rescued by the main male character in the film. This will be discussed further in a later frame.
The "Super-Model" Minority: Women of Color as Exotic, Erotic, and Exceptional; Men of Color as the Perfect Gentleman

It is clear after viewing these films that most interracial relationships in Hollywood’s most popular films consist of a white male with a woman of color. When a white man is portrayed in a sexual or romantic relationship with a woman of color, then the woman of color is usually shown as erotic, exotic, highly attractive, and capable of exceptional talents. The exceptional talents of the woman are usually complimentary to the skills of the man portrayed in the film. When a white woman or woman of color is shown with a man of color in a film, he is often shown as a model minority male such as Sidney Poitier in Guess Who’s coming to Dinner, Will Smith in Hitch and Jackie Chan in Rush Hour 2. These men are portrayed as perfect gentlemen who never exhibit any threatening sexual behavior. It is interesting to note that in Enter the Dragon and Shaft the black males are shown as sexually powerful but they are “presented” with women and do not actively seek the sexuality of the woman.

The women of color in the films under study are no ordinary women and exhibit super talents or abilities, giving them skills which are almost “unreasonable” or unrealistic. Dancing, singing, performing, martial arts, weaponry, electronics, athleticism, spiritualism, sexual secrets, problem solving, sky-diving, highly intelligent and seduction are ways in which the women of color are framed as “above average.” Alex in Charlie’s Angels is a sky diving, computer hacking, black belt martial artist who can defeat a room full of men – her only misgiving is that she is a bad cook. In Rush Hour 2, Roselyn Sanchez’s Isabella character is a double agent who serves as a U.S. Secret service officer who is playing both the role of a crooked customs agent and a lover.
to the Japanese gangster. She shows incredible strength and skill in her catfight with an Asian martial artist female who has killed many men in the film.

In recent years, Halle Berry has been portrayed as the ideal model minority female. As Mark A. Reid (2005) describes in *Black Lens, Black Voices: African American Film Now*, Berry’s roles in films recently cast her as the “sole black in a leading or supporting role, giving her a career trajectory similar to those of black male actors such as Denzel Washington and Cuba Gooding, Jr.” (p. 97). Halle Berry, as Jinx, places her in a role as the sole black character of significance in *Die Another Day*. As is required of a “Bond Girl,” Jinx is portrayed as not just a martial artist but she is also a brilliant computer hacker who solves mysteries that even Bond is troubled with. She also, of course, possesses the sexual skill to lure and keep Bond as a lover until the films very last scene despite his sexual escapades with other women during the film.

Women of color are frequently shown as having skills that mystify every one else in the film. In *Rising Sun*, Tia Carrere’s character, Jingo, is an electronics expert who solves the murder of Cheryl Austin with her knowledge of digital equipment when no one else can. Pocahontas is a psychic, an athletic and a wise young woman who learns to speak English instantly by listening to her heart and the wind blow. She is also capable of courageous feats like diving off high cliffs into water and defying the wishes of her father, the tribes’ chief. She is able to communicate with animals and has a mystical ability to understand the future.

Charlotte Lewis’ character in the *Golden Child* also posses the amazing psychic, spiritual, and physical attributes that Pocahontas demonstrates. She is capable of leaping over tall walls or from high buildings, usually just wearing Eddie Murphy’s shirt and her
underwear. The women of these films are remarkably smart, energetic, talented, and resourceful. This is often in comparison with the portrayal of the white women in these films whose greatest accomplishments appear to be that they can do a large amount of drugs. This is apparent in *Rising Sun*, *Pulp Fiction*, *Scarface*, and *Cheech and Chong’s Up in Smoke*. Women of color apparently have much more to prove to earn their role in the film.

We frequently see females in the films dancing or performing while men watch them. This is true in the *Karate Kid II*, *Flashdance*, *Charlie’s Angels*, *Blazing Saddles*, *Austin Powers in Goldmember*, *Bringing Down the House*, *Pulp Fiction*, *Scarface*, *Tommy*, *The Bodyguard*, and *Wayne’s World*. In many of the films, the women use dancing to be seductive. A number of the women are exotic dancers like in *Flashdance*, when Jennifer Beals’ character is dosed in large volumes of water as she pulls a shower lever on stage. Uma Thurman’s character loves to dance and insists that John Travolta dance with her in the memorable scene in *Pulp Fiction*. These women all seem to love to dance and want men to watch them while they dance. This frame shows how women are often the object of the “male gaze” in film.

Queen Latifah’s character Charlene in *Bringing Down the House* dances erotically with Steve Martin to show him how to be “an animal” so he can win back his wife.

Kevin Costner in *The Bodyguard* privately watches film of Whitney Houston dancing and singing on stage. There is a form of voyeurism that takes place for the men in the film and for the audience as they watch the women move. Few scenes of dancing are as powerful or disturbing as Tina Turner in *Tommy* as she plays the Acid Queen. She is working in a brothel and is paid by Tommy’s stepfather to have sex with the deaf and
dumb young man. In a series of dramatic moves, Turner dances seductively around Tommy assuring him that he “will be a boy no more.” Wearing lingerie and revealing outfits, she promises pleasure to the scared young man while she waves the large syringe she holds in her hand.

**Model Minority Males: The Perfect Gentlemen**

Media scholars have written extensively about the career of Black Actor Sidney Poitier. In addition to being the first black male to win an Oscar Award for his role in a film, he was a pioneer in the portrayal of black men as professional and sophisticated. Gladstone L. Yearwood describes that after World War II the portrayal of black men in Hollywood began to change and Sidney Poitier’s presence in American film was important: “For Blacks, Poitier’s screen persona was one of intelligence, quick wit and controlled circumstances” (2000, p. 39).

Such a portrayal of black men was new to Hollywood and as Norman Denzin describes, Poitier was embraced because “he was a paragon of white, middle-class values. He was intelligent, educated, a conservative dresser. He did not carry the cultural baggage of the black ghetto” (2000, p. 29). Most importantly, Denzin explains, Poitier was perceived as “non-threatening.” This study begins with Poitier’s interracial relationship in *Guess who’s Coming to Dinner* (1967) is which he conveys the attributes described by previous media scholars. In his bid to marry the young, pretty, and careful white woman, Joey, he seems as likely to lecture her as to have sex with her. He is portrayed as an important doctor and a well-dressed, articulate, and educated man. He is, nonetheless, a black man and in 1967, bringing a black home for dinner created problems. Even the black housekeeper admonishes Poitier for stepping above his station in life. His parent’s are opposed to him marrying a white woman, though no one seems
to question for a moment why such an intelligent, mature, handsome, and wealthy man would want such a needy and naïve wife? Apparently, Joey was white and pretty, and that in and of itself made her desirable.

Sidney Poitier’s career was also significant because it paved the way for other minority males to make it on the Big Screen. In *Black Skin, White Mask*, (1967), Frantz Fanon states “. . . the Black man cannot take pleasure in his insularity. For him there is only one way out, and it leads to the white world . . . He requires a white approval” (p. 51). Fanon wrote these statements in the same year that *Guess who is Coming to Dinner* was released. As the Civil Right’s movement moves away from its pinnacle years, Hollywood made way for black model minority men who were embraced in the mainstream. Since the 1960s, the path of other mainstream black actors has followed a similar trajectory. We also see the role played by Eddie Murphy in the *Golden Child* (1986) as an example of Murphy’s mainstream popularity in the 1980s. It is interesting to note that although Murphy was often the only black person in many of the films which made him popular, he was never coupled with a white woman and was instead paired with an Asian Woman. In 2005, Will Smith is included in this study for his title role as *Hitch*. Smith, a former popular music and television star, has been the mainstream, black leading man in the 2000s that has also NOT been cast as the romantic interest of a white woman in a popular film. In *Hitch*, he is paired with Hispanic Actress Eva Mendes. Hitch is played by Smith as a well-educated, well-dressed, and articulate black man; almost identical to the manner of Poitier in 1967. It appears that for the black male model minority, little has changed in 38 years of film.
In 2001, an Asian model male minority is filled by Jackie Chan’s role in *Rush Hour* 2. Chan is also portrayed in this film with a Hispanic female. She is a very intelligent and feisty double agent who initiates a kiss with Chan in the very last scene in the film. Chan is always the perfect gentlemen, which is played in contrast to black actor Chris Tucker’s inappropriateness. In a scene when Tucker and Chan are shown driving in Los Angeles, Chan says to Tucker: “American women like me. They think I am cute.” In the same tradition pioneered by Poitier, Chan is not seen as a threat in a white, middle-class world. He is a powerful and entertaining martial artist and a good friend, but he is not, in any way, portrayed as sexually menacing or threatening. In one scene, Tucker’s character and Chan’s character are watching the female double agent across the scene in her underwear. The voyeurism of Chan’s character implies that he understands he can look, but ever the gentleman, Chan never seeks to touch without being given permission. He does thereby remain, one of only two Asian males portrayed in an interracial relationship in a top 15 film during the 38 years of this study. This stands in stark contrast to the finding that Asian Women are the most frequently shown woman of color in the same study.

**The Mary Magdalene Frame: Unworthy Women Who Distract Men from their Mission in Life**

Women in the film are often used to distract or destroy the man on his path to success. This frame gets its name from the archetype of Mary Magdalene but also from the character in the film under study in *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1973). The portrayal of the woman as a distraction from anything meaningful is very common in these films. The role of the woman is often minor or unimportant compared to the huge role of the male as the savior of his company, country, or society. She is, by contrast, overlooked
and inconsequential. Her only significance is to make his life better whether it is for a moment or the entire movie. There are many women portrayed in the films under study, especially prostitutes (which is the alleged profession of Mary Magdalene), who briefly appear in the film and appear to have absolutely nothing to do with the plot.

A disturbing element of this trend is that it is typically not merely one woman who is distracting the man from his mission, but often a group of women at the same time. We see this in Enter the Dragon where a black, male supporting character, Black belt Jones played by Jim Kelly, gets a late night visit from a madam with a group of women to offer him. He chooses an array of women to stay and please him. In the James Bond film On her Majesty's Secret Service, the same type of scenario is used when Bond is entertained by a group of women who are listed in the cast credits by their ethnicity: Irish, Jamaican, Chinese, and so on. They are not even given names. The women in the film are supposed to be patients who are suffering with allergies but who are really going to be used by the Villain to spread mutated viruses throughout the Globe.

In some cases the woman is not merely a threat but is the actual downfall of the man, who is deviant in the film. Elvira is prophesized to bring down Tony in Scarface. John Smith’s obsession with Pocahontas is clearly going to bring trouble to the British settlers as it invokes the anger of the Indian warrior. Wayne in Wayne’s World gazes upon Cassandra chanting “She will be mine.” Women are visibly lusted after in this movie and this is part of their power over men. It is also evidence that the women are usually seen as objects to possess. The men who have leading roles in the film are central to the storyline. The women who are usually supporting or minor characters are used as ploys that the heroic man must overcome.
In the *Fast and the Furious* (2001), Paul Walker plays the white blonde male undercover agent who puts his life in danger by entering the Hispanic area of the Barrio to solve a major crime ring. In the film, he poses as a street-racing car enthusiast with a crush on Mia, Vin Diesel’s characters sister. The plot predictably shows Mia as a liability to the undercover cop’s mission. His fellow white law enforcement agents warn him that his feelings for Mia are compromising his ability to solve the crime and to see the situation for what it really is. She is portrayed as a beautiful distraction that puts the main character in danger of losing not only his cover, but his life.

In *Hitch* (2005), Sarah’s character, played by Eva Mendes, threatens to destroy Hitch’s career as a date doctor. Angry at him, she reveals his secret identity in her gossip article robbing him of his anonymity and prosperous business. His business is completely devastated by her writing in the newspaper and his client’s immediately suffer, too. The very likeable characters who have found love because of Hitch’s incredible ability to attract women are also devastated by Sarah’s selfish and professionally driven motives. Sarah later goes to Hitch and apologizes for what she has done and acknowledges her role in his demise.

In *Pulp Fiction*, Mia’s taking a drug overdose while out with John Travolta’s character clearly places him in a very vulnerable position. It has been made clear in the movie that Mia’s black husband is a mobster who would kill a man for his treatment of Mia. Desperately, Travolta’s character tries to save Mia’s life by taking her to his drug dealer’s home realizing that if she dies, his own death is imminent. When Queen Latifah’s character, Charlene, is in danger in of being shot and killed by her boyfriend, a
very white but determined Steve Martin journeys into the ghetto to save her when clearly he could be killed in the process.

The women are frequently portrayed as putting the men in danger or serving as a distraction from some very important mission that may or may not include rescuing the woman from herself. This portrayal is discussed further in the next frame.

**The White Male Fantasy: Skin, sex, subservience and Saving the Damsel in Distress.**

In *Reading Race*, (2002) Norman Denzin points out that the Hollywood film often contains the “kernel of utopian fantasy” (p. 8). The complex racial history of the United States has been played out in the cinematic representation in American popular film, placing the white man in a critical role of leadership in which, “the white man’s burden obliges white to lead non-whites into full assimilation” (Denzin, 2002, p. 2). The importance of the white man’s role in the portrayal of interracial relationships in film becomes very apparent in this study. The frame that emerges in the study of popular films over the 38 year period of this study is that the world reflected on the big screen is clearly a white male fantasy in which all women are young, attractive, and sexually available. There are no older women in any of these films and, as mentioned before, only one is overweight. The women are constantly portrayed as sexualized by wearing very sexy clothing or even by initiating sex. The majority of women in this film are portrayed as sexually available to the men in their world and dispensable shortly after sex has been traded between partners. Very often the women in the films are shown as vulnerable or in a bad situation. This becomes crucial to the storyline because the male protagonist becomes the hero when he completes the impossible important mission before him. It is clear that most of the women play supporting or minor roles and their main purpose in the film is to look good or to make the male leading character look good.
Clearly the fact that very few interracial relationships exist in top 15 Blockbuster films reflect a world in which race is a divisive issue. The coupling of mostly white men with women of another race also shows that a minority man with white women is not a highly-valued coupling. The white male with a woman of color portrayal is the most common interracial relationship shown in popular film and light-skinned women are clearly preferred as interracial partners for white men. According to cultural critic Toni Cade Bambara, a history of colonization plays a major role in race and gender politics in American Media:

The creative imagination has been colonized. The global screen has been colonized and the audience – readers and viewers – is in bondage to an industry. It has the money, the will, the muscle, and the propaganda machine oiled up to keep us all locked up in a delusional system – as even what America is. (1996, p. 140)

American film’s domination in the Global media markets means that Hollywood has created a “world industry, just as much as it is a world language, a powerful, stable, perfected system of visual communication. As such it represents real power, not just in and through cinema” (Elsaesser & Buckland, 2002, p. 4).

It is impossible to consider this frame without exploring the significance of eight of the films in the study, all James Bond films. The representation of James Bond films in the study spans the years from 1967 until 2002. In addition to representing “an imperialist code,” the Bond films also support another changing front: the sexual relations between men and women in the 1960s. Bond not only conquers the villain but also the heroine or “girl.”¹ Like the villain, the ‘girl’ in need of Bond’s assistance was usually “out of place, either sexually, in the sense she is initially resistant to Bond, or ideologically in that she is in the service of the villain, or both” (Chapman, 2000, p. 33).
Bonds physical and mental conquest of women in the film was important to restating the social order between genders and nationalities. As the enemies of the United States and Britain changed over time, so did the villains in the Bond films.

Critics of Fleming’s books often point out that Bond’s character was launched the same year as the Playboy, “the first mainstream pornographic magazine” (Chapman, 2000, p. 36). The Bond films in the 1960s cemented relationships with Playboy, formalizing the photo-article feature of the “Girls of James Bond” promotion. The women of Bond were as central to the popularity of the films as the character of Bond and his high-tech gadgetry in the films. The promotional posters for the early Bond films show that two essential elements are needed for Bond’s Blockbuster success: James needs a gun and a girl or sometimes several girls (Chapman, 200, p. 38). As former Bond girl, Maryam D’Abo, remarked “there have been Bond films without megalomaniac villains, without Q’s gadgets, but there has never been a Bond film without a Bond woman.” The marketing use of the Bond girls of the 1960s was no exception to his and their images that were used extensively to promote the films. The images were seen in mainstream magazines, television commercials, movie posters, and theater trailers: “The Bond girls of the sixties were everywhere; on television, in music in advertising, in fashion” (Ladenson, p. 188). Denning points out “the James Bond tale can be rightly seen as an important form of the mass pornography that characterizes the consumer society, the society of the spectacle, that emerges in Western Europe and North America in the wake of post-war reconstruction” (Denning, 2003, p. 70).

Despite a few martial arts moves or acts of betrayal, the Bond girls were subjected to more than their fair share of “powerlessness” from the Bad guy and from Bond. The
rate at which leading ladies are killed or disappear in a Bond film is an important
statement about the “replaceable value” of a Bond girl. It is interesting to note that
actresses were so “replaceable” that the same actress would be used to play different
characters in a future Bond film. Actress Mai Ling was cast to play Mei in *Goldfinger*
(1964) and then was used to portray another character in *You Only Live Twice*. This was
specifically true for ethnic actresses in the Bond girl legacy when many ethnic actresses
were unacknowledged for their performances in the cast.

When the popular original Bond, Sean Connery, completed his contract, Australian
model George Lazenby was hired as his replacement. (Rubin, 2003, p. 227) The public
had become used to Connery as Bond and the change in leading men created an issue for
the producers. The Bond girls’ images were used to solve this problem in the
promotional efforts of Lazenby’s role as Bond in *On Her Majesty’s Secret Service*. In *On
her Majesty’s Secret Service*, Bond falls in love with Dianna Rigg’s character Tracy and
actually marries her. True to the novel of the same name, Tracy was later killed in the
film on their Honeymoon leaving Bond devastated. Tracy’s strong character challenged
the role of Bond Girls as “passive playthings,” but the 12 female patients at Blofelds’s
clinic are portrayed as mindless “brainwashed” beauties of various ethnicities that
flocked to adore Bond. He seduces two of them before the films end, reminding
audiences that even though in the film he gets married, Bond has not lost his appetite for

Perhaps the status of Bond girls and women in the world of the 1960s is best
summarized by the character Tanaka in *You Only Live Twice*, when he tells Bond: “In
Japan, men come first; women come second.” The sales figures for *On Her Majesty’s
Secret Service were lower than the previous three films (Chapman, 2003, p. 145). The change from Connery to Lazenby, the sad ending with Tracy’s murder and other factors all seemed to indicate that Bond might be a “relic of the past” (Sanger, 2004, p. 200). The reliance on violence in the film also seemed to have lost its appeal in an era that saw the violent loss of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy. The images of the Vietnam War dominating the television may have also contributed to this change in audience’s appetites for gratuitous violence on the big screen.

By 1968, American women were heavily dependent upon the medical technology of the oral contraceptive but as Alexander Sanger, grandson of Margaret Sanger, contraceptive pioneer, points out the use of hormonal contraception may “have led to an increase in sexually transmitted diseases, which can cause infertility, premature death, and bad birth outcomes” (Sanger, 2004, p. 134). What happened in the sixties was indeed significant for impacting future generations. Those who lived through the sexual revolution of this era or those who study the period now may disagree on the impact it had but historian scholar Arthur Marwick explains that “left, center and right do seem to agree that, for good or ill, something significant happened in the sixties” (Maxwell, p. 4).

In 1970, Germaine Greer published the Female Eunich announcing that the book was “part of the second feminist wave” (p, 152). Greer revealed that the sexual revolution did not necessarily leave women feeling free at all:

Any woman who goes to bed with a man for the first time knows that she runs the risk of being treated with contempt. Her chosen loves may leave or may turn his back on her immediately after his orgasm and fall, or pretend to, asleep; he may be laconic or brisk in the morning: he may not call again. She hopes that he will not discuss her disparagingly with her friends. (Greer, 1970, p. 252)

Although the women’s movement earned success in the Supreme Courts during the 1960s for Equal Pay and Equal employment, establishing sexual equality proved more
challenging on and off-screen. By early 1970s, sales for *Playboy* circulation began to fall for the first time (Miller, 2003 p. 189). The use of the female body as an arena for male conquers in media was starting to come under scrutiny as many feminists entered the academic realm. In the 1970s, Laura Mulvey’s coined the term “male gaze” in her work “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” and film students would never view the Bond Girl’s or other Hollywood beauties the same way ever again (Mulvey, 1975, p. 12). Joan Mellen in *Women and their Sexuality in the New Film* (1975) criticized the films of the previous decades:

> One searches in vain in the contemporary cinema for a new perception of women, which assumes their capacity and value. An international and rapidly developing women’s movement has induced the cinema to be only slightly more self-conscious about its patronizing and hostile portrayal of women as flawed creatures. (Mulvey, 1975, p. 15)

As media historian James Chapman explains, the use of the Bond girls in the films “do lend credence to Mulvey’s thesis” (p. 84).

The Bond girls seemed to freely engage in such sexual activity with an irresistible James Bond – but no Bond girl ever faired well beyond the moment of Bond’s attention passed and he was on to the next Bond girl. Off-screen, rarely did an appearance in a Bond film launch a major movie career for any Bond girl as anything other than a model, unless she had a successful acting career before her Bond appearance. The “replaceable value” of a generic Bond girl appeared to be valid on and off the screen. Marwick questions whether or not the sexual revolution really benefited the girls at all:

But was this sexual liberation for women, or simply enhanced liberation. For men, a grand occasion for the even more ruthless sexual exploitation of Women? It would be hard to deny that the general loosening of prohibitions, inhibitions, and the equalizing of rules and codes as between men and females were of enormous benefit to women, and increased opportunities for fulfillment and happiness. But that could be true in general, while at the same time bearing down excessively on women, depriving them of genuinely free choices and forcing them into activities
which they did not enjoy and perhaps even found unpleasant; or at any rate left them feeling oppressed, used, exploited, treated as objects without individuality, without humanity except as expressed through the sexual interest of a male lover. (Marwick, 1998, p. 160)

Bond is not the only hero in the films under study that show the white man as the hero. In fact, this seems to be the main plot in most, if not all, of the films that include a white male as a main character. In most instances, this study offers the White male as savior. For example, John Smith is shot trying to save Pocahontas’ father, the chief, from being shot. He is clearly portrayed as saving the savage Indians from annihilation. In Jesus Christ Superstar, Christ is clearly the salvation of a 1970s version of a lost and troubled humanity. In the Fast and the Furious, the undercover white male cop comes to the rescue and saves all the Hispanic characters from the Barrio, risking not only his career in law enforcement but also his life. In the Body Guard, Kevin Costner’s character, Farmer, saves Rachel, played by Whitney Houston, on several occasions not merely because he is her bodyguard but because he is in love with the shrew, black woman no one else can get close to in her life. He dramatically saves her in a number of scenes risking his life in the line of duty.

White men also serve in an important role to inspire and motivate the people around them in the films under study. In Hitch, although Will Smith is the leading man in the film, when his life appears to be in ruins, his career lost and the leading lady long gone, it is a speech from his heavy-set white client Albert Brenneman that allows Hitch to re-emerge and win the girl and the day. In The Karate Kid II and Flashdance both women dream of becoming a famous dancer and, in both films, it is their white male partner who encourages them that their dream is possible despite the obvious obstacles the women fear.
This role of the white male as the hero is extremely common in popular narrative film and almost to be expected. It is interesting to note that the only films that do not place the white male as the obvious hero, *Tommy* and *The Flintstones* pair the white man with a black female. In every film in which a white man appears, he a leading character and is critical to the positive outcome of the film. If the white male in the interracial relationship is not the hero, as in *The Flintstones*, then another white male will be the hero. In a film where the male is non-white and portrayed as the hero, he is usually the model minority male such as characters portrayed by Jackie Chan in *Rush Hour* or Eddie Murphy in *The Golden Child*.

This frame also offers a deeper insight into the true hero in the film or “power broker,” which is often a covert or hidden message. For example, in *Charlie’s Angels*, although on the surface the three women employees may seem like the heroes of the film, their bravery, beauty, and skill is all attributed by the end of the film to their unseen, but revered boss, Charlie. In the Oscar-Award winning *Guess who’s Coming to Dinner*, although Sidney Poitier may appear to be the leading male in the film, the power of the decision about the interracial relationship really belongs to Joey’s father, played by Spencer Tracey. The older white man, is indeed the one who changes his mind about opposing the relationship and in doing so, allows the movie to have it’s optimistic ending. Sidney Poitier’s character, John, makes it clear that he will not marry Joey without her father’s consent. He is far too much a gentlemen and model minority to do otherwise.

As explained previously in the study, this frame reminds us of the important point that film creates meaning. For the global film market it is clear that if the American Film
is a cultural colonizer, the white male is its hero when his sexual or romantic partner represents another race.

R2: Are sexual or romantic relationships framed as central to the lives of the women in the films under study?

It is interesting that for most of the women of color, the relationship is not portrayed as being central to the lives of the woman, though it is portrayed as being central to life of the white women. For most of the women of color there are other more important aspects of their life. For some, the central theme of their life is the dream of a better future like in *Flashdance*, *Karate Kid II*, *Bringing Down the House*, *Billy Jack*, and *the Flintstones*. For the white women it appears that living a lavish life style with drugs is important as in *Rising Sun*, *Scarface*, *Up in Smoke*, and *Pulp Fiction*. These women have the relationship as central to their lives because it gives them a certain lifestyle which includes mainly sex and drugs.

The women of color are frequently busy with other roles in their lives, using their super talents or skills. In all of the Bond movies, the women are busy trying to save the world from evil. In their role as super females they have issues other than just the relationship. This is also true in *Charlie’s Angels*, *Rush Hour 2*, *Austin Powers in Goldmember*, and *the Golden Child*. These women are on important missions to overcome adversity that will harm the world. Their greater vision is more important than the man in their lives.

In many of the films, the women of color are performers or professionals and their careers are important to them, unlike the white women who predominantly do not have an occupation. The exceptions are Jean’s character in the *Billy Jack* films or Lilly Von Shook in *Blazing Saddles* who claims to be bored with being a performer. Having a
career and being a successful person is expressed by the women of color in *The Body Guard, Wayne’s World, Flashdance, Karate Kid II, and the Flintstones*. Another aspect of importance to the women of color is that they are concerned about their family. They often do not choose their partner unless they have the support of their family and if forced some choose to stay with their family. *Pocahontas, Dances with Wolves, The Golden Child, Little Big Man, The Fast and the Furious* are all examples of this. This perhaps is also a reflection that in some cultures the woman belongs to her family more than to a sexual or romantic partner unless she is “gifted” by the family to him.

Loyalty is often an issue in deciding which path to follow. This is seen in *The Fast and the Furious* when Vin Diesel’s sister Mia is torn as whether to follow her beloved white boyfriend or her brother and his friends. She chooses her brother but is distraught in doing so. *Pocahontas* is confused for most of the film as she is torn between her responsibility to her tribe and her dreams for the future. She is finally faced with the difficult choice in deciding whether to go with John Smith or stay with her father. Jean in *Billy Jack* is conflicted about telling Billy Jack that she has been raped because she is afraid he will kill her rapists and her school will be closed down. Rachel in *The Bodyguard* is confused about who is threatening her and doesn’t realize it is her own sister who lives with her and works for her.

Lucy Liu’s character in *Charlie’s Angel* struggles with whether or not to tell her boyfriend the truth about her job. Perhaps there is no more classic conflict than Joey in *Guess whose Coming to Dinner*, who acts completely confused when her father raises an objection to her marrying a black man whom she has only known for a short time. She acts as if she just doesn’t understand. Mary Magdalene’s character in *Jesus Christ*
Superstar sings “I don’t know how to love him,” lamenting her confusion about her feelings of being a prostitute who has had “so many men” with her new feelings of love for Jesus.

In Rising Sun, Tia Curare’s character, Jingo Asakuma, does not let Wesley Snipes character ever know that she is the lover of Sean Connery’s character until the very end of the film, when she is confused about what to do about her feelings for Snipes. This confusion or torn loyalty is a common theme which emerges in reaction to the earlier theme that the women are deviant. Sooner or later they have to face their negative traits or failure to comply with the social order.

R3: Are the women in interracial romantic/sexual relationships in films under study framed as overcoming adversity and/or hostility from people outside the relationship?

Women in interracial relationships are shown in the frames previously described as suffering from confusion or conflict. Adversity is central to the lives of most of the women though differences in race are rarely shown as the reason, with the exception of Guess Who’s Coming For Dinner. Often the relationship initially causes a problem but since the relationship is not the most significant aspect of the women’s life, it is less of an issue. The objection to the relationship is usually veiled in some other concern than partner’s race. This also shows that Hollywood is more covert in showing discrimination than it was in the late 1960s. The conflicts that the women face exist as the conflicted and confused frame illustrates but not usually because of the relationship – because the interracial relationship is not the most important aspect of the women’s life. This is also because only a deviant woman in a Hollywood film would be in an interracial relationship.
Often the adversity from outside the relationship is what unites the woman with the man in the sexual or interracial relationship. Fighting against a greater evil is what brings the man and the woman together like in *The Bodyguard*, when she is under threat of being murdered.

**R4:** Are the women in romantic or sexual relationships in the films under study framed as not being in control of their romantic and/or sexual future?

This research poses a complicated response as often the outcome of the relationship is determined by an outside force other than the woman or the man. A death or a person outside the relationship typically determines the outcome. In most cases, the women chose if their relationship makes it or not. Unlike much of the previous research on women in films in relationships, this research indicates that the women in interracial relationships make decisions about whether or not it should continue. Faced with a conflict about the relationship, the women will make a choice. In *Wayne’s World*, Cassandra chooses Wayne over Rob Lowe’s character of the music executive. Part of the women being decisive about their relationship is related to the frame that these women are unfeminine and care more about themselves than other people. They don’t do what society tells them to do.

Queen Latifah in *Bringing Down the House* finally chooses a relationship with Eugene Levy’s quirky character of a white male lawyer who speaks in jive talk. Most of these women are independently minded and many do not continue with the relationship. In *Pocahontas, the Fast and the Furious, Scarface*, and the *Flintstones* the women decide to end the relationship. Many of the women chose to have sexual relationships with the men in the films regardless of the possible negative outcome. This can be seen in all the *Bond movies, Shaft, The Golden Child, Shaft, Rising Sun, Blazing Saddles, Up in Smoke*
The women in these films chose a sexual relationship. Ending or continuing the relationship does not seem to be an issue to the women as she makes her choice. Whitney Houston’s character, Rachel, stops her private plane from leaving so she can run out to Kevin Costner and kiss him after the relationship was finished. Roselyn Sanchez’s character Isabella in *Rush Hour 2* kisses Jackie Chan at the airport and then continues on her journey to New York leaving him to change his plans to follow her.

The portrayal of Indian women in film shows them as appearing stereotypically very dependent and concerned with their tribe. They are shown as being willing to forgo their happiness for the benefit of the tribe. We see in the portrayal of the entire Indian woman a willingness to sacrifice what they want for the will of the other person. In *Little Big Man*, his wife urges him to sexually take care of her sisters who have become widows. We see in the character of Pocahontas a woman who is willing to let John Smith go to England without her so she can stay with her tribe where she is needed.

The women of color in these films are talented and resourceful and they are not merely waiting for the men to dictate the future to them. It also shows how insignificant interracial relationships are in society. Or like Halle Berry’s character, Jinx, in *Die Another Day* states relationships never work out so why not just have fun. Most of the interracial relationships under study in these films also seem “jinxed.”

The prevalence of ambivalence in the endings of relationships or the brief period the women spend in the film is examined more in the Content analysis, which quantifies these elements. Very often the relationship is barely a relationship at all. It is a brief interaction that is unrelated to the plot or storyline in any way.
R5: Are women in interracial relationships framed as sexualized in behavior, appearance and motivation?

Sex is portrayed as being a very significant factor in the portrayal of the woman in the sample films. Depending on the genre and rating of the film, sex is shown as being a major motivation for women and men in interracial relationships. Most women dress very provocatively and show considerable amounts of flesh. A number of the women are portrayed as prostitutes or entertainers who use their sexuality to make a living. This can be seen in *Full Metal Jacket* where an Asian prostitute is used to show the power structure between a white soldier and a lower ranking black soldier. In *Flashdance*, the main character dreams of becoming a professional ballet dancer while working as a welder by night and transforming into a highly erotic stripper at night. In *Enter the Dragon*, a black martial artist forgoes his martial arts tournament training to have sex with a group of women he is presented with as a gift from his host. In *On her Majesty’s Secret Service*, Bond also has sex with an ensemble cast of women from a variety of ethnicities.

Most of the interracial relationships in these films are portrayed as sexual rather than romantic or emotional. With the exception of the Billy Jack films or the PG-rated films like *Pocahontas* and the *Karate Kid II*, few films omit the overt sexual attraction which is presented as almost “animal magnetism” between the interracial couples. Very little caring or feeling is shown in most of the interracial relationships and the interaction appears to be about something other than the possibility of love.

The content analysis findings will address these research questions in more detail in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 4
COMPARING AND CONTRASTING THE CONTENT

Content Analysis

The second research method used in this study was quantitative content analysis.

Berelson’s (1952) classic definition of content analysis is as a “research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (p. 18). This definition includes the important particulars of the research method and the process as being focused on manifest content rather than its “implied or latent meaning” (Riffe, 1998, p. 19). The content analysis part of this study was done in the traditional approach to content analysis. The procedure used to create the content analysis methodology follow the seven step procedure outlined by Lynda Lee Kaid and Anne Wadsworth (1989) in Measurement of Communication Behavior.

Research Questions

The first step in creating the content analysis was to identify the research questions to be identified. The exact same research questions that were used in the framing analysis Study were used to conduct the content analysis. The intention of the researcher was to use the findings of the framing analysis for closer examination of the portrayal of women in interracial relationships in film from 1967 – 2005. The research questions explored were, of course, the same as those addressed in the qualitative analysis:

R1: How are women in romantic and/or sexual interracial relationships in films under study portrayed?

R2: Are sexual or romantic relationships framed as central to the lives of the women in the films under study?
R3: Are the women in interracial romantic and/or sexual relationships in the film under study framed as overcoming adversity and/or hostility from people outside the relationship?

R4: Are the women in romantic and/or sexual relationships in the films under study framed as being in control of their romantic and/or sexual future?

R5: Are the women in interracial relationships under study framed as sexualized in behavior, appearance, and motivation?

**Identifying the Content Analysis Sample**

The content analysis used the exact same sample of 36 films featuring an interracial romantic or sexual relationship from 1967 – 2005 that was used in the framing analysis. No changes were made to the sample. A complete list of the 36 films included in the study is included in the Appendix. The procedures to select the sample are outlined in detail in previous chapters, which document the steps taken by the researcher to ensure the systematic selection of the films in the sample and the validity of the sample as representative. The goal of using the same sample of films was to create a crystallizing effect between the findings of the framing analysis and the content analysis as described by Denzin and Lincoln. (2000, p. 391).

**Defining the Coding Categories.**

The unit of analysis in this study was the interracial relationship within the film, not the film itself. From the sample of 36 films, 45 units of analysis were identified. Selecting the criteria for the coding categories is a critical step in the content analysis design which impacts the reliability of the findings (Riffe, 1998, p. 105). To create objectivity and validity in the content analysis study the coding categories were based upon the findings of the framing analysis and on categories from previous content analysis studies focused on issues of race, gender, and/or sexuality in film.
The categories on racial identity are based on the categories used in the U.S. Census Bureau publications (U.S. Census, 2000, p. 15). The categories on social vulnerability are based on a study conducted by Vincent E. Faherty (1991) of 19 Disney films which focused on variables of diversity (gender, race/ethnicity, and age). Several of the categories of the portrayal of women are based on an extensive content analysis study conducted by Stephen Powers, Stanley Rothman, and David J. Rothman (1996) of shifts in the treatment of the roles of women from the 1930s – 1990s. Their extensive content analysis was conducted on films from 1945 to 1994. Many of those categories were duplicated for this study, specifically those that looked at the portrayal of women in film and examined occupation, character rating, violence, and sex. The categories were based on the framing analysis and models of similar content analysis studies of film focusing on ethnicity and/or gender in previous film studies. Prior media studies have suggested using categories such as “presence of women and men, race, age, occupation, marital status (van Zooten, 1994, p. 70). These categories were also used in the study.

The code sheet was created accordingly to reflect the following major categories:

- Genre of the film
- Year of the film
- Age of the female and the male characters in the interracial relationship
- Race of the female and male characters in the interracial relationship
- Role of the female character
- Gender attributes of the male and the female characters
- Character perception of the female character
- Social vulnerability of the male and the female character
- Occupation of the female character
- Violent behavior
- Ultimate value of the male and the female character
- The relationship outcome
- Opposition to the relationship
- Skills of the female character
- Sexual relations
• Depiction of the woman and her physical Appearance
• Power distribution in the relationship
• Length of the relationship
• Positive or negative labels of characters
• Challenges faced in the relationship
• The woman’s satisfaction with the outcome of the relationship
• Final outcome

Outlining the Coding Process, Training the Coders, and Calculating Reliability

The code sheet was developed to reflect the main categories. It included questions about the male and the female characters in the interracial relationship. Since the portrayals of the women in interracial relationships were studied in detail, the coding sheet included 41 questions. Copies of the coding sheet and the codebook are included in the appendix.

The selection of the coders in a study of gender, race, and sexuality required a selection process to include coders that represented both genders and a variety of racial/ethnic groups. Since study also examines the role of age, coders were selected who reflected a variety of ages. The majority of coders were undergraduate students, but coders with graduate degrees were also included. Two coders were black-white bi-racial, one was Hispanic, and three were white. The researcher was careful to select coders that represented the cultural diversity displayed in the study.

Coders were trained extensively in a three-hour training session by the researcher. Those coders who were not confident or clear were given additional private training sessions. The researcher explained the codebook in great detail with the coder and coded a sample film with the coders as part of the training process. All coders were given a sample film to code, and the results were discussed in the presence of the coder. The results of this training process and detailed codebook were tested for intercoder reliability.
and on the specific group of categories from Q2_1 to Q2_12 the intercoder reliability was 1.0, using Holsti’s formula.²

Some categories involved open-ended questions, which allowed the coder to add additional answers other than, those offered. In these cases, this was used to gather additional descriptive information to be used in the findings section. Examples of this can be seen in Appendix A. For categories like this, the intercoder reliability ranged from .467 to 1. Intercoder reliability for all categories resulted in a very high .965 reliability using Holsti’s formula. The coders were instructed to contact the researcher to identify any problems or issues they might incur in the coding. No major issues emerged.

Implementing the Coding Process

After a successful coder training process, coders were randomly assigned films and coding sheets to conduct the coding analysis. Coding was done on an individual basis during a two-week period in February, 2006. Each coder was instructed to watch the film in its entirety as many times as needed to then complete the coding sheet when they felt familiar with the content of the film. Even though the female characters may not have been portrayed for the entire film, coders were instructed to watch the entire film.

Findings

The coding sheet responses completed by the coders were analyzed using the SPSS statistical program. The analysis of the content analysis offers many interesting insights

² The formula used to compute reliability is a formula given by North, Holsti, Zaninovich, and Zinnes (1963). It is given for two coders and can be modified for any number of coders.

\[
R = \frac{2(C_{1,2})}{C_1 + C_2}
\]

C_{1,2} = number of category assignments both coders agree on
C_1 + C_2 = total category assignments made by both coders
into the portrayal of women in interracial relationships in film from 1967 – 2005. The findings of the content analysis will be addressed in answer to the research questions identified earlier in the study. One limitation of the content analysis findings was that because some cases offered so few examples of interracial couples the findings were found to be insignificant. The significant statistical findings are described in response to each research question in the section that follows.

**Results**

R1: How are women in romantic and/or sexual interracial relationships in films under study portrayed?

**Age and Gender**

An initial and interesting finding of the content analysis before even examining issues of race is the relationship between age and gender in the study. An overwhelming majority of women portrayed in the film were 21 to 30 years old (77.8%), while the more frequently portrayed age of the men in the film was 31 to 40 years old (55.6%). This finding confirms many other studies in mass media that shows women are usually portrayed as younger than men. The other interesting finding about age is that no women over the age of 50 were ever shown in the films under study, and only one woman was over 40. This is in direct contrast with the portrayal of males where male characters were shown as old as 60 years old. Again, this finding indicates that gender portrayal in mass media severely limits the portrayal of aging women. The variable of race was not found to be statistically significant, which implies that when it comes to age, older women of any color are avoided and men in films are consistently paired with younger women, regardless of race.
For example, in *Pocahontas*, *Billy Jack*, and *The Karate Kid II* a woman is more likely to be portrayed as a girl in a popular film than as a mature woman. In addition, young women are paired with a romantic or sexual male partner who is much older as in *Rising Sun* and *Enter the Dragon*, but none of the films portray a visibly older woman in a sexual or romantic relationship with an older man. An exception was *Tommy*. The age trend is reversed in this film where an older black prostitute, portrayed by Tina Turner as the Acid Queen, seduces a blind virgin white boy for money. The negative portrayal of this relationship shows that older women can be dangerous for innocent young white men! The trend of age differential is clearly a one-sided issue in which younger women are positively portrayed as the "norm" and women appear to seek to be with older men.

**Role of the Woman in the Film**

The most common genre to show an interracial relationship in film is Action (46.7%), which perhaps explains why so many of the women of color are portrayed as being skilled in many activities. The next most popular genre is drama, which may suggest why the outcomes of the interracial relationships are so prone to endings of conflict or even death. Comedy is the third most popular genre accounting for 8% of the settings for interracial relationships in film. Interracial relationships in film are often portrayed as being a serial monogamy or polygamous relationship. Men in interracial relationships are shown with more than one woman during the film in a number of cases under study as in *On her Majesty's Secret Service*, *Enter the Dragon*, and *Little Big Man*. In two films, *Scarface* and *A View to a Kill*, women are shown in more than one interracial relationship in the storyline. Both of these films portray the women in a negative way whereas men in multiple relationships are not. Gender often influences the storyline differently.
Women are less likely to be shown as having a principal role in the film than a supporting or even minor role. Women are shown in principal roles in few films like *Pocahontas, Billy Jean,* and *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner.* Women were identified as having a leading role in only 20% of the cases studied. Commonly, the woman was cast in a supporting role (46.7%) while being cast in a minor role was a close second at 33.3% or one third of all films. Race was found to be statistically insignificant as statistically insignificant as $p=0.046$. The pattern becomes obvious that women of any color portrayed in an interracial relationship are not portrayed as significant in the popular films under study.

**The Portrayal of Race and Gender**

As identified previously in the framing analysis, it is very obvious that white men are more likely to be portrayed in the interracial relationship than white women. Table 1 shows that white women are portrayed in the films in only 24.4% of cases while men are portrayed in 66.7% of relationships with women of color.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amerindian</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambivalent</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings in the content analysis further contribute to the results of the framing analysis and indicate how gender is impacted by race in the chosen films. This can be seen in Table 1. The frequency of the portrayal for white women and white men is statistically reversed in that White men appear in 66.7% of relationships and White women are portrayed in 24.4% of interracial relationships. There is also a significant
difference in the portrayal for Asian women and Asian men. Asian Men are portrayed in only 4.4% of relationships while Asian women are portrayed in 24.4% of relationships. An Asian woman is the most likely woman of color to be portrayed in a film, while an Asian male is the least likely to be portrayed. The portrayal of Hispanic men and women are shown as a very marginalized group for both genders. Black women are shown slightly more frequently than black men. Amerindian women are shown twice as often as Amerindian men but still, on a very limited basis. These cases reflect such low numbers of cases that the chi-squares scores are not valid for significance because of the low counts in the cells.

These findings imply that the impact or significance of race on gender in the portrayal of interracial relationships in film is not consistent or comparable but depends significantly on what specific race is being studied. It also implies that Hollywood tends to use certain racial inter-couplings more than others and avoids some interracial relationships entirely. The content analysis reveals trends within the portrayal of race and gender over time. When the year of the film is considered as a variable, we see that white men have been consistently portrayed in interracial relationships over the past four decades. Actor Sean Connery appears in Top 15 blockbuster films as a leading man in an interracial relationship in a time spanning 1967 to 1993. The opposite is true for the portrayal of an Asian man. Jackie Chan in *Rush Hour 2* (2001) marks the first time an Asian man has been cast in an interracial relationship in a popular film.

Like white men, white women have been shown in interracial relationships since 1967. The comparison ends here, however, as white women have not been shown in an interracial relationship in film since *Pulp Fiction* in 1994. Amerindian women have not
been portrayed in a popular interracial film in the study since Dances with Wolves in 1995, but Amerindian men have not been shown in a popular interracial relationship since The Trial of Billy Jack in 1974! In the sample analyzed here, Hispanic women were not shown in interracial relationships in film until Rush Hour 2 in 2001, which historically marks the first time an Asian man was ever shown in an interracial relationship in Top 15 box office sale film. It is obvious that Hollywood can create "racial" trends by including certain races and excluding others. The trend, as to what race is popular, shifts over time, and certain races become excluded while others are then included. It is implied that there is not enough room to give space on the big screen to more than a few marginalized racial groups at a time.

It is important to note that many significant ethnicities are completely omitted from portrayal in all four decades in the sample of mainstream films which portray an interracial relationship. There are no women or men of Arabic or East Indian origins portrayed in any films for example. The complete absence of so many other ethnicities in this study shows that some ethnicities are considered to be more attractive, desirable or identifiable in American Mass Media despite the actual presence of these ethnicities in American culture.

**Gender Attributes of Women and Men**

The coding sheet reflected 16 possible gender attributes, but did not indicate to the coders if the traits were traditionally masculine or feminine traits. The same list was used to code for the woman and the man in the interracial relationship. Eight traits listed describe traditional masculine attributes: competitive, athletic, strong, risk taker, aggressive, achievement, intelligent, and dangerous. The remaining traits listed were traditional feminine traits: responsible, sensitive, flirtatious, romantic, deceitful,
untrustworthy, manipulative and emotional. The findings indicate that interracial relationships create some leeway for traditional gender traits in both men and women. Although a character like Lucy Liu in *Charlie's Angels* is portrayed as a strong, athletic, risk taker, she is also portrayed as a flirtatious, deceitful, and responsible woman. Her attributes allow her to cross over traditional gender lines.

When women are studied for gendered attributes, it appears that women in interracial relationships are not portrayed as traditionally female but as possessing more masculine traits than feminine traits. Race, however, was not statistically determined to be a significant factor in how feminine or masculine a character was portrayed. Men, as expected appear to have predominantly masculine attributes with small showings in feminine traits, especially the traditional feminine attribute of flirtatious (24.4 %). Men like Jackie Chan in *Rush Hour 2* and Will Smith in *Hitch* are shown as risk takers but also shown to be sensitive and responsible.

Another consideration in the portrayal of the women in these films was whether they were portrayed as socially vulnerable or not. The same list of possible vulnerabilities was used to code for the men in the films under study. The possible traits of social vulnerability were: physical disability, speech, low intelligence, poverty, confused, dead parent, missing child, single parent, overweight, widow, drug addicted, prisoner, eccentric, allegiance to family, infertility, victim or sexual, physical or very verbal abuse or killed. The findings indicate that the women were portrayed as socially vulnerable in 84% of the relationships. Race appears an interesting variable, in that 100% white women in the films under study are portrayed as socially vulnerable. For women of color, 15.6% or seven women were considered to be non-vulnerable. The
content analysis indicates that for men in the films under study, race does not appear as a statistically significant factor in whether or not men are portrayed as vulnerable. For men, the vulnerability is predictably reversed. Unlike the portrayal of women, 60% of men are portrayed as non-vulnerable. An example of a male who appeared vulnerable in the films under study was the character of Tommy who was a blind, young man who was violently introduced to illegal drugs. The other man reasons a man was portrayed as socially vulnerable was because of exposure to violence and/or drug use. For example, this is seen in Scarface, Cheech and Chong, and Billy Jack.

**Occupations and Skills of the Women**

The framing analysis data implies that women in the interracial relationships were portrayed as existing in a male utopian fantasy world. The findings of the content analysis take the implication of a fantasy world portrayed in film to a whole new level when the occupation of the women in the study is analyzed. Findings show, despite the large number of women actively working in the American workplace, the most commonly portrayed occupation of women in the films is that they have no identified occupation. In the study, 37.8% of women are shown without an occupation or job. Race was found to be statistically insignificant as a factor in the portrayal of women’s occupations, though white women are more likely to be portrayed without a job than women of color. An example of this can be seen in Scarface, Pulp Fiction, and Guess Who's Coming to Dinner.

The next most popular job for a woman in an interracial relationship is as a Spy/government worker. There are no government workers in the film, which means that all the women in this category are spies. Women are portrayed as spies in all eight James Bond films in the study and in Rush Hour, Austin Powers as Gold Member, and Charlie's
Angels. The third most common occupation for a woman in the films under study is a tie between the categories of prostitute and entertainer. Women are shown as prostitutes in some of the James Bond films and also in *Full Metal Jacket* and *Rising Sun*. The portrayal of women in fantasy careers or no careers at all do not reflect the social reality that women are a diverse and essential part of the Western world’s workforce in a large variety of professions. Some of the films do not reflect an American society such as *Karate Kid II* or *On her Majesty’s Secret Service*.

More positive roles of women in occupations are really needed on the Big Screen. In *Hitch*, even when the character of Sarah is portrayed as a professional writer, she is shown to be a gossip columnist in a newspaper who uses her power for personal revenge. In the *Billy Jack* and the *Trial of Billy Jack* films, the character of Jean is shown as a hard working and dedicated school principal on an Indian Reservation. During the course of two films, however, her job leads her to danger, and she is gang raped in the first film and then shot in the second film. Even when women are given an occupation, the portrayal of women doing their job can be negative.

If the occupations of the women in the films under study contribute to the “fantasy” world of interracial relationships in films, the findings for the skills the women possess certainly do as well. The possible skills the women exhibit were developed from the findings of the framing analysis. Women of color were found to exhibit many exceptional skills in their portrayal in interracial relationships.

The coders were asked to identify all skills that were exhibited by the women in the films in the study as present or absent. Table 2 indicates that the frequency of skills exhibited by the women reflect the future “utopia” of the film-male world fantasy.
Evaluating the skills of the women was used to further investigate the framing analysis that identified white women as without a purpose and women of color as capable of unrealistic skills making them spontaneous gymnasts, as in *Charlie's Angels* and *The Golden Child*, or capable of speaking languages within minutes of hearing them for the first time, as in *Pocahontas*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dancing</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martial Arts</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapons use</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer hacker</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supernatural</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comedian</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreter</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The portrayal of white women shown in table 2 which shows skills that women exhibit suggest that only four white women can dance, one has leadership skill, and one can sing. The only skill that remains for the majority of the other women is sexual. Women of color are portrayed as exhibiting skills in athleticism, computers, weapons, gymnastics, the supernatural, comedy, interpreting, and racecar driving. Often these skills seem as much of a fantasy in the portrayal of women as 60% of women in the film possessing sexual skills. More details on the portrayal of all women as sexual are discussed in another research question, which explores the portrayal of women in the films as sexualized.
Perception of the Women in Interracial Relationships

Overall, the perception of the women in interracial relationships in the films under study was slightly more positive than negative. The coders identified the portrayal of the women in the films to be positive 35.6% of the time and mostly positive in 20% of the cases, giving a positive portrayal 55.6% of the time. Negative perceptions of the women in the interracial relationships in the study films were identified in 40% of the cases and mostly negative with some positive in only 4.4% of the cases. This gives an overall negative perception rating of 44.4%. The variable of race in factoring negative or positive portrayal was statistically insignificant as p < .05 in the findings.

In response to this research question, women in interracial relationships are shown in a diverse way and yet, some very prominent and interesting findings emerge. In summary, women in interracial relationships are portrayed as being predominantly without an occupation or employed as a spy, prostitute, or entertainer. The most exhibited skill by women is sexual, and white women are shown as less talented than women of color, who exhibit an eclectic array of exceptional talents like dancing, singing, martial arts, weapons, and gymnasts. A few women exhibit skills in martial arts, computer hacking and the supernatural. Asian women are mostly paired with white males, and white women are never shown with Asian men. The women who are portrayed in interracial relationships are always shown as younger than the men, no women past mid-life is shown at all. Women are portrayed as socially vulnerable, and men in the same films are predominantly shown as not socially vulnerable.

The portrayal of women in interracial relationships represents a sexual, fantasy world in which people are portrayed differently depending on their race, gender, and age.
The world portrayed in interracial relationships in film is both eclectic and diverse with little room for a multi-faceted portrayal of a woman of any color.

R2: Are sexual or romantic relationships framed as central to the lives of the women in the films under study?

As the first research question findings indicated, sex is portrayed as important to women but romance is rarely portrayed as significant. The results of the coding indicate that women do not value the same things as men in the study films. One way of determining the significance of the relationship in the lives of the women and men is to examine the findings for the men and the women’s ultimate values, as shown in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ultimate Values</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romance</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Interest</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power*</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional interest*</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>42.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fame</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotism</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenge*</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Values</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates a significant difference between the values of women and men.

The leading values of the men and the leading values of the women in the study films are clearly different in some traits as indicated in Table 3. The findings indicate that women are most likely to value sex (33.3%) and men are most likely to value their professional career (43.2%). Men are identified as valuing sex less than women. Both men and women in the films under study are identified as being fairly self-interested, but women value their own self-interest (26.7%) considerably more than their family,
religion, professional careers, or patriotism. Self-interest is the second highest value identified for the women in these films. Romance is only valued by 17.4% of women and 11.1% of men. The implication here is that the men and the women in interracial relationships in popular films are more interested in sex than in romance or family.

It is clear that the romantic element of the relationship is less important to the men and women in the portrayals of interracial relationships than the sexual but it is also significant to note if the interracial relationship is deemed important in the film. Does the interracial relationship matter to the audience? The content analysis results show that the interracial relationship is not shown as important to the plot in the films. In only six cases was the relationship identified as central to the storyline in the film, making it the least likely option. The most commonly selected role portrayed of the relationship was as a subplot to the storyline (37.8%), but the relationship was also frequently rated as incidental (28%). The interracial relationship was identified as completely unrelated to the plot in 20% of the cases. This shows that the interracial relationship the woman is involved in is unrelated or incidental in almost half of the films situations studied. It appears that the interracial relationship is not that important to the woman, the man, or even the audience. What do seem to matter most to the character are the sex and their own self-interest.

R3: Are the women in interracial romantic and/or sexual relationships in the film under study framed as overcoming adversity and/or hostility from people outside the relationship?

The categories in the coding sheets specifically explored possible elements of adversity or hostility that women in interracial relationships experienced in these films. An analysis of the results shows that relationship opposition was portrayed in 40.4% of films in all decades, with 59.6% not experiencing conflict. The majority of opposition,
which equated to 21.3% of cases, portrayed society as the source of opposition against
the relationship. The next most common source of opposition identified was from
potential suitors of the woman (14.9%). Families were identified as sources of
opposition in only 6.4% of the results. Very little opposition from friends of the man or
the woman in the films was identified by the content analysis findings.

Opposition over time was identified as shifting but in a surprising pattern. The
statistical analysis also indicated that opposition was least likely to occur in the films
from the 1970s. The findings also indicated that there was almost as much likelihood of
opposition to an interracial relationship in the 1960s as in the 2000s. The implication is
seen in many of the findings that the films of the 1970s reflected the most frequent time
an interracial relationship would be shown in a top 15 box office success and also the
least likely time it would be opposed. This is possibly best explained by the political and
social climate of the 1970s created in response to the civil right’s and the women’s
movements. The direction of the trend is also of interest for future study.

In the majority of the films under study, the women encounter violence (42.2%).
The portrayal of women as violent in the films is also an interesting finding. When
violence is committed against them, 28.9% of women do not respond. When violence is
committed against them, 17.8% of women respond with violence. It is interesting to note
that 11.1% of women initiate violence without being provoked or attacked. The
implication is that interracial relationships exist within a world of conflict and violence,
and that women sometimes contribute to that world without being provoked while others
are victims without responding with violence in their own defense. It appears to be a
hostile world for women in interracial relationships in the films under study. The content
analysis identified 19 different insults that the women in the studied films were faced
with, including such harsh terms as: bitch, slut, whore, bimbo, junkie, twat, gook, and
bimbo. Men were more frequently insulted than the women. 24 different insults were
identified that the men in the films were faced with in the films and included such harsh
words as: nigger, motherfucker, freak, bastard, asshole, dick and son-of-a-bitch. The
insults were most frequently used to reference a women’s sexuality or a man’s behavior.
Both men and women of color are identified as being insulted because of their race with
terms such as calling Queen Latifah’s character Aunt Jemima in *Bringing Down the
House*. In *Billy Jack*, the title character is often referred to as injun, and in the Cheech
and Chong movies the main characters are often called spicks.

When it comes to making sacrifices for the relationship, both men and women are
identified as making sacrifices, but women under study were identified in 37.8% of cases,
while men were identified as making sacrifices in 28.9% of the relationships. Race was
not found to be statistically significant as a factor in this finding. The challenges that the
men and women in the interracial relationships experience were identified as having a
variety of sources but the greatest challenge identified was cultural issues (29.8%) while
the second most significant challenge to the interracial relationship in the films was the
man’s lack of commitment to the relationship (17 %). The woman’s lack of commitment
to the relationship was only identified as a challenge in 6.4% cases by comparison. The
diversity of the challenges facing the interracial relationship couples in the films studied
implies the complex and diverse portrayal of different relationships.
Table 4 Challenges Facing the Interracial Relationship Couple

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Issues</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Issues</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic Issues</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Issues</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Issues</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Issues</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Issues</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Issues</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Her lack of commitment</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His lack of commitment</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues from past relationships</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is interesting to note cultural issues as the number one challenge facing the interracial couple, but would not be an issue in a same race, and or ethnicity relationship, though many of the other issues could be a challenge for a same race couple.

R4: Are the women in romantic and/or sexual relationships in the films under study framed as being in control of their romantic and/or sexual future?

Previous findings have already identified that the portrayal of the man’s lack of commitment has been identified as a challenge to the interracial relationship in the films under study. Additional findings reveal that the women in interracial relationships are portrayed as satisfied with the outcome of the relationship only 33.3% of the time. The woman is shown as being somewhat happy with the outcome in 13.3% of the relationships. Often because of the ambivalent way the outcome for many of the women is shown in the films, it is hard to know what reaction the women has to the relationships’ outcome. The second most common reaction of the women in to the outcome of the film is unknown at 31.1%. In one fifth of the relationships, the woman is shown as being “not at all” satisfied with the outcome of the relationship. This implies that women are pleased with the outcome of the relationship in almost half of the interracial relationships in the films under study.
The power in the relationship in the films does not seem very evenly distributed. The findings indicate the man appears to have the power in the relationship a slight majority of the time (51.1%) while the woman is only identified as having power in the relationship less than one tenth of the time (8.9%). The power in the relationship was identified as being shared by the man and the woman in almost one third of the relationships (31.1%). In some cases, the coder could not determine who seemed to have the power in the relationship perhaps because, as we shall examine later, the majority of interracial relationships are so briefly portrayed in the films under study.

Who makes the decision to end a relationship if the man has the power during the relationship? Considering the finding that the man has the most power during the relationship, it is interesting to note, as Table 5 shows, that in ending the relationship the man has the least control.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision Maker</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He makes the decision</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She makes the decision</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They decide together</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Outside force decides</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown decision</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of this finding are very interesting because it implies that an outside force in the relationship decides the outcome of the interracial relationship, most commonly. This could include death or a parent or family member makes the decision. In a number of the James Bond films such as a *View to a Kill*, the woman dies trying to protect James Bond. In *Rising Sun*, not only does Cheryl, the main die but so do both her lovers in the film. The idea that the woman is not really in control of the outcome of the relationship and the man is even less in charge than she, points to the volatility or
unpredictable nature of the interracial relationships in the study films. The woman is not portrayed as being in control of her sexual or romantic relationship in the interracial relationships in the study.

In addition to who controls the outcome of the relationship, it is important to explore the final outcome of the romantic or sexual relationship in the film. When it comes to the portrayal of interracial relationships, the outcomes are often portrayed as undesirable or even disastrous.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break up by him</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break up by her</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambivalent</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dating commitment</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She Dies</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He Dies</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of all the findings in the study of interracial relationships in popular Hollywood films from 1967 – 2005, perhaps Table 6 is the most insightful. Most of the time the outcome of an interracial relationship in a film is unknown to the viewer. This occurs in a number of films, including *Pulp Fiction, Shaft, The Fast and the Furious* and *Blazing Saddles*. Such an ambivalent outcome implies that the interracial relationship did not warrant being addressed by the filmmaker, but the most common reason we do not know the outcome is because we do not know what happens to the women in the interracial relationship in the film. Women in interracial relationships have a habit of disappearing from the film, and the audience never finds out what happens to them. Also, after a brief one-night-stand sexual encounter, the woman is no longer shown in the film.
It is interesting to note that in a film industry that likes to see the guy get the girl at the end of the movie, this is not the case in the portrayal of interracial relationships. To put this in perspective, it is important to note that only 12.8% of interracial relationships result or remain in marriage. There is a greater probability that either the man or the woman will end the relationship than that the relationship will end up in a dating or marriage commitment. More dramatically, however, the man and the woman have a greater statistical probability of dying than of getting married or dating seriously. The implication is clear: interracial relationships are not long term or marriage bound, if anything they are ambivalent and at worst, deadly.

R5: Are the women in interracial relationships under study framed as sexualized in behavior, appearance and motivation?

The majority of the women in the interracial relationships in these films are portrayed as sexualized in every possible way. The most identified skill of the women has already been discussed as being sexual. In addition to this, the findings also indicate that sex was portrayed as the most important value for most women in the films, substantially ahead of other values like romance, family, fame, money, or religion. This portrayal of both white women and women of color in the films under study is predominantly as sexually attractive women who are motivated by sex and talented at having sex.

Specific questions were explored in the content analysis study about the appearance of the women in the films. The most frequent way a woman is portrayed in the films is as sexy, conveyed in 60% of cases. This is quite an accomplishment considering there are a number of PG and PG-13 rated films in the study! An overwhelming majority of women expose bare body parts during the film and only 26.7% showed very little skin. The most
commonly exposed body parts are the legs at 53.5% and the chest or cleavage at 44.4%.

Halle Berry, as Jinx in *Die Another Day* and also in her role in *The Flintstones* as Sharon Stone, is portrayed as wearing sexy clothes and showing a lot of skin in two very diverse roles. Women are shown as naked in over one tenth of the films (11.1%) including in *Rising Sun* and *Shaft*.

Women are portrayed exposing body parts to increase their sexual prowess on the big screen. The effort is apparently working since women are identified as being sexually skilled and motivated by sex in these films. It is also interesting to note that women are portrayed in the films as initiating sexual relations almost as frequently as men-- in one fifth of all relationships. In over one tenth of the films, sex between the partners in an interracial relationship is initiated by an outside person, pimp, or madam. In only 6.7% of the cases was the sexual relationship viewed as mutually initiated by the man and the woman as in *Enter the Dragon* and *Tommy*. The implication is that women are sexually advanced and will initiate sex almost as often as men.

The sexual nature of the relationships in the films under study is also exhibited in the prevalence of one-night stands as the most frequent length of a relationship. This happens in a number of the James Bond films and also in *Shaft, Full Metal Jacket,* and *Tommy*. The next most frequent length of a relationship is short which was defined as less than one year. Sex only takes place in a long term relationships 4.4% of the time and in marriage only 8.9% of the time. When the length of the relationship in the film was measurable, the most common response was “briefly” almost half the time (46.7%). The relationship lasted the entire film in only 13.3 % of the cases and most of the film in one fifth of the cases. The relationship lasted less than half the film in 17.8% cases. The
implication is that, in addition to being troublesome, interracial relationships in the films under study are also brief and based on quick sexual exchanges rather than meaningful long term relationships. The overall portrayal of the interracial relationship as being short, sexual, and stormy is continuously implied throughout this study and is present in many aspects of the findings.
CHAPTER 5
REFLECTIONS ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF INTERRACIAL SEX OR LOVE ON THE BIG SCREEN

Implications of the Film Study Research

The results of this study sadly indicate that racial and ethnic segregation in sexual and romantic relationships is heavily practiced in popular Hollywood blockbuster films and has become more common, rather than less common over the past four decades. The deliberate exclusion of many ethnicities and races, compared to the inclusion of other ethnicities indicates a “veiled” hierarchy or preference for some racial groups over others. It also shows that women of color may be portrayed as exotic and erotic, while men of color by contrast and are required to be portrayed as the model gentleman or the extreme opposite of social reject. The role of sex and sexuality are exaggerated in relationships in which race blending occurs on the big screen. Interracial relationships are rarely portrayed and when they are they are presented in such a negative way to make the message clear: It’s best to stay with your own race unless sex is all you want! Such a message might seem like a good sale technique in a media world where “sex sell” is a common motto, however, the superficial flirting and fornicating disguise a greater issue of political power and control.

An analysis of the results of this study would be incomplete without addressing the issue of the Hollywood film as a “white male utopia”. Very few of the films in the sample were created, directed or produced by woman. Only three women were involved in the 36 films in the key role or producer or director. This is important to note because
the world on the big screen is a white male creation of what interracial relationships look like. It is also interesting to note that all three women involved in the making of the films were white and there are no women of color involved in the creation of any of these films. This has not changed significantly over four decades either. It is perhaps up to the independent and foreign film market to give female directors and producers a place to create and sell thought provoking film. Television production also offers more opportunities for women than the expensive realm of blockbuster films. We do see more diversity in current television programming because of demographic targeting than we do in blockbuster film. It is as if the Popular film industry sees itself as marketing only to white middle class males. Perhaps change will come about in the mainstream film industry when producers and film studios realize that this is no longer the true American demographic.

The findings of the content analysis and also the framing analysis offer some very important new findings along with some confirmations of existing findings in the study of race, sex, and gender in film. The findings also offer a dismal display of racial integration in portrayal in mass media. While more and more interracial marriages are being reported in the media and Census data, the film industry ignores such a reality. The most obvious confirmation is that women and minorities continue to be underrepresented in significant roles in film. A study of popular film in 1996 identified that women of all races continue to be stereotyped and this finding is still true almost a decade later (Eschholz et al., 2002, p. 229).

If anything, trends in the portrayal of women in film seem to be stagnating. For some racial groups, the situation of representation is getting better but the nature of the
stereotypical portrayal is as bad as ever. We see in the framing analysis and content analysis that a woman is still limited to being portrayed as sassy spitfire if she is Hispanic or a Jezebel if she is black. Little has changed here however an important finding of this study is the trend that Indian women and white women have not been portrayed in a popular film in an interracial relationship since the 1990s. Hispanic women have only started being portrayed since the 2000s as have Asian men. Asian women continued to be portrayed as the model minority woman that white men seek in the highest numbers.

The previous findings that women not only appear less frequently than men but are also portrayed in less significant or minor roles is also found to be true in both the framing analysis and the content analysis findings. It is interesting to note that interracial relationships are found to be of little or no significance to the story line. Brief or short sexual interactions are the most common portrayal of relationships in popular film today.

The prevalence of violence in the films under study is an important finding as it shows that interracial relationships are more likely to end up with one partner dying rather than the couple making a commitment to marriage! This finding helps cut to the heart of the message that Hollywood sends about interracial relationships: they are dangerous, short lived, and problematic. White women in interracial relationships are clearly shown as being socially and moral outliers. They lose social standing and significance by entering into an interracial relationship. The portrayal of white women in interracial relationships is flawed and fragile, implying that no healthy or normal white woman would want to enter into a relationship, sexual or romantic, with a man of another race. If she does, Hollywood shows that on the big screen there is clearly something
wrong with her! Perhaps this is why there has not been a white woman shown in an
interracial relationship in popular film for the past 15 years.

Interracial relationships tend to make the women look bad, but often the men are
portrayed as gaining status in the relationship. They are less vulnerable than the woman
and appear to be a more sensitive, balanced male. Women are portrayed as overly
sexualized and masculine. Women continue to be "feminized through pathos" and are
portrayed as girl-victims, ”vamps/sluts" and "gold diggers" (Haskell, 1987, p. 10).
Older woman and women of certain races have been completely overlooked by
Hollywood in the portrayal of women in interracial relationships.

The overall findings in this study imply that interracial relationships in popular film
are used to make action films more exciting, drama films more conflicted, and comedies
more humorous. Race and gender are exaggerated in stereotypes according to the genre
in which the interracial relationship appears. But in all genres, one thing is clear:
interracial relationships are rare and risky. Women and men who want interracial
relationships are portrayed as being overly interested in sex with no interest in romance
or the well being of their partner. Self-interest and sex are the two key values of the men
and women portrayed in the interracial relationships in the study.

Contribution and Relevance to Theory

This study makes significant contributions to the theories used to created, design
and conduct the study. The findings also offer relevance to the fundamental basis of each
theory identified in the literature review and introduction.

The Film Feminist Paradigm

A criticism of the early works in film feminism was that the studies conducted
spoke to the experience of middle and upper class white women rather than all women
including women of color. Criticism followed that there was no such thing as a “woman’s experience” because not all women experienced the world in the same way based upon other variable such as race, education, class and ethnicity. This study shows that there is no universal experience of being a “woman” in an interracial relationship. The portrayal of the woman as positive or negative is clearly influenced not only by her ethnicity or race but also by the ethnicity and race of her partner. A deliberate attempt was made in this study to take a multi-faceted look at the way the world of film portrays women in interracial relationships in contrast to men in the film but also to women of the same and/or other races or ethnicities.

The power and persistence of patriarchy in mainstream popular film in America is clearly shown in the findings of this study. The contribution of this study to film feminism is not only rooted in its focus on the portrayal of women of color and white women, but also in the emphasis on the complicated matter of interaction between people of different genders and races. The study also focuses on the way sexuality is used in a narrative film to convey power and to establish meaning. The findings of this study indicate what film scholar Molly Haskell (1987) asked for almost twenty years ago, “we want nothing less, on or off the screen than the wide variety and dazzling diversity of male options” (p. 402).

Cultural Studies

The significance of Stuart Hall’s (1996) “politics of representation” becomes very clear in this study (p. 89). It is clear in the findings that race and gender carry significant implications for power and social standing on the big screen. Race or ethnicity is used in a visual medium, like film to mark a person and often to indicate not only who to like or dislike, but who an audience member should avoid (Kimmer, 1992, p. xii). A young
savvy film watcher should be able to determine that interracial relationships portrayed in popular film are flawed and highly likely to fail – unless of course the viewer thinks that interracial relationships only contain a sexual component and not any emotional elements. The importance of cultural studies in relation to the findings indicate that sex, race and gender are indeed constructs in society that have complex meaning in an economic climate in which films are created, distributed and consumed. The findings of this study indicate that cultural studies are correct in proposing that media images of race, sex and gender are complex and compromised.

Social Construction of Reality Theory

The true power of a mass media like popular film is the mystical way in which the portrayal no matter how unrealistic is presented as natural or normal. We can see in the findings of the study that social constructs like gender and race are not biological and have no basis is scientific structure but in social design. The media generated images that are offered in this study illustrate the lens through which people come to accept concepts of men and women of color, interracial relationships, sexuality and power. The very art of social construction is the invisible way that “reality” is constructed for the viewer who comes to accept the hierarchy of power that is presented as real or normal. It is clear that women are still heavily stereotyped in the media portrayal of popular film while some ethnicities of women are completely omitted or overlooked. The hegemonic social order of one hundred years ago in America appears to be very much in tact in a film fantasy world in which women barely work, have sexual skills as their prominent ability and accept the will of outside forces or the man without question or expectation. The continuous use of stereotypes in portraying women and men in interracial relationships extends the social myth that interracial relationships are deviant and undesirable.
Cultivation Theory

The results of the content analysis clearly verify the findings in other studies on violence which show the significance of cultivation theory. Violence is being used more and more frequently by women in film often showing women unrealistically fighting off several men at a time. A large number of women in the films under study are the victims or violence and some are in fact murdered. The implication is clear that the world of interracial sex and romance is riddled with violence and fear. Cultivation theory is also used to look not only at the results in the area of violence but also in complex issues of sexualization, ethnicity and political power. Contributions are made by this study to the cross cultural and comparative studies previously done using cultivation theory.

Cultivation theory explains the importance of the findings of this study as media contributes to one’s expectations about people and places in the real world. The negative and limited portrayal of interracial relationships established in the findings of this study indicate that interracial relationships in popular film over four decades have been showing audiences how rare and unsuccessful such relationships really are for romance but how desirable they are for sexual purposes only.

Directions for Future Research and Limitations of the Study

Clearly, more research on interracial relationships in media portrayal needs to be done. We have perhaps, like the Titanic, only hit the tip of the iceberg on how deep the segregation issues and gender issues run in mass media portrayal. The scope of this study was strategic and based over four decades, but also limited to popular film. The research design of this study was created to examine 38 years of popular film and to use two research methods, one qualitative and one quantitative, to gather the most interesting and insightful findings possible. The limitations of the study were:
• The categorizations of race could be further broken down and the pairings of men and women of different racial groups could be looked at in more detail. The research could examine the comparisons or differences in interracial relationships in more detail. This would offer a greater insight into the role of race in the portrayal of gender.

• The portrayal of women in racial groups did not account for the diversity within that group. For example, within the racial category of "Asian" exists a diverse and rich group of ethnicities and cultures that cannot be so easily labeled or stereotyped. This study was unable to offer a more focused emphasis within racial groups which would honor the differences within racial or ethnic categories.

• Emphasis was placed on popular film according to box office success only. Video rentals were not possible before the 1970s but are obviously an important part of the film industry now.

• The films under study did not include independent film but reflected mostly films created and/or distributed by large film studios. Independent films are often produced without the pressure to be profitable that Hollywood films experience. Also, Independent films tend to be less formulaic than Hollywood productions.

• The films in the study were mostly American and did not reflect films outside of the United States film industry where many significant films are being produced.

• Although the study spanned 38 years of film, the portrayal of interracial relationships in film is so rare it did not yield a very large sample of films to be studied. The implications of this for my study were that it was often hard to calculate statistical significance because there were so few cases to study which made the chi-square results insignificant. For example, there was only one Asian man in an interracial relationship to study which makes findings on this limited.

• The relationships in the films were heterosexual only and did not explore the portrayal of interracial same sex relationships.

• There is much work to be done in the area of the portrayal of gender, sex, and race in mass media. Directions for future research could be done to correct for any of the limitations mentioned that existed within this study. Interracial relationships in film could be studied in a number of additional ways. Suggestions include:
  • The portrayal of interracial relationships in international films
  • The portrayal of interracial relationships before the anti-miscegenation laws of 1967
  • The portrayal of interracial relationships in independent films
  • The portrayal of interracial relationships in gay or lesbian relationships in film
• The portrayal of interracial relationships in television during the same time period
• The portrayal of interracial relationships in popular music videos

Further research clearly needs to be done in the areas covered in this study and in the areas this study was unable to address. This examination has revealed many interesting findings that require further investigation by media scholars. For example, how has the portrayal of interracial relationships on popular television been during the same time frame in America? The spectrum of this study was narrowly constructed for objectivity, validity, and to meet time constraints involved in using two research methods. Further research could be done in comparing the portrayal in Hollywood films to independent and foreign films. Also, the portrayal of women in interracial relationships in television would be a very important study to be conducted while looking at the same time frame since the 1967 Loving Vs. Virginia decision in other areas of mass media.

Another study might consider the portrayal of interracial relationships in all or other forms of mass media, including advertising in magazine and television commercials, Web advertising and also music videos. The findings of this research need to be questioned and applied to other areas of mass media in American culture to gain a greater perspective of the impact of the issues of sexuality, race, and gender within the context of the historically forbidden interracial relationship. Further, the reaction of audiences to mass media portrayal of interracial relationships needs to be studied in more detail. Survey research could also offer some interesting findings on the subject of interracial relationships.

An important area of study in the portrayal of interracial relationships could be in the realm of children’s entertainment and programming. By studying cartoons, children’s
television programming, video games and magazines we could explore if our children are being socialized to being more or less accepting of other races than in previous generations. This could provide very interesting insights into whether interaction between gender and race has changed over decades too.

In addition to doing further studies of quantitative methods, it is very important that qualitative studies be conducted that extend this research to the impact it has on the audience. Men and women in interracial relationships need to be given a voice during in-depth interviews which allow them to share their real life versions of these stories. Also, focus groups of women of same race and then women of mixed race demographics could be a powerful research tool. Focus groups that address the issues of men in interracial relationships need to be initiated. This study has shown that different races are portrayed differently by the film industry. The inequitable way the mass media portray racial groups needs to be addressed within the groups impacted by such portrayals.

Another aspect of future research that needs to be pursued is the way in which some ethnic and/or racial groups have been excluded completely from mass media. There are no East Indian or Middle Eastern men or women in any of the films under study over 38 years. Why are so many other ethnicities and racial groups completely ignored in the mass media? How or why are certain racial groups able to be represented in the mass media? What would it take to have the racial groups currently represented have a less stereotyped portrayal in the mass media? Will the future racial composition of the American landscape continue to be ignored on the Big Screen for the big dollar projects?
Many people in interracial relationships have “normal” and “healthy relationship” experiences comparable to people in same race relationships. These stories are missing in the mass media and need to be told openly. If we, as media scholars, do not create these studies, which offer to “humanize” women and men rather than dehumanize them, there will be little change in the future. It appears that this research beats the grass for snakes in that it raises as many questions about race, sex, and gender in the mass media portrayal of interracial relationships as it actually answers.

It is interesting to note that so little research has been done on this area in the past. The research of interracial relationship portrayal in media has been treated as rare and unusual as the portrayal itself in media!

Does the lack of research on this topic indicate a greater lack of interest on issues of racial and sexual interaction in America? How different is this attitude to those found in other media research around the world? This could be a focus of future research also. Why are race relations in America so heavily avoided in social conversation and in academic research? Is it impolite or unpatriotic to question the progress of race relations in America because of the problematic history the country has because of issues such as slavery and immigration? Research and communication could actually assist in this dialogue as the political and ethnic composition of the American population continues to become more diverse and less homogenized.

Media research can play a significant role in creating a media literate public who enjoy the entertainment and educational aspects of media while critically examining the meaning of the portrayal and representation it offers. There is room to do much more research and take these new findings to a higher level in mass media studies. It is
important that people in interracial relationships become just that – people. We need to move away from the categorization of people as a race and see that they are people first, and then a member of a race. We need to see that people are complex and multi-faceted and not merely bodies with different color skin or a collection of sexualized body parts.

**Conclusion**

Stuart Hall (1996) reminds us that popular culture is mythic (p. 474). Norman Denzin states that when considering this myth, we must be “on guard concerning what we learn about ourselves” (2002, p. 1890). Media scholars and sociologists suggest that children learn cultural definitions of gender and its roles in part from the cultural myth (Matti & Lisosky, 1999, p. 66). This study involves some PG and G-rated films in which children have seen that interracial relationships, unlike the storylines they are used to seeing, showing relationships between same race people involved problems, violence, and a sad ending. We see this in the way the boy does not get the girl in the end as he typically does. The message, which begins with the cultural myth for children, is continuously reinforced in adolescents and into adulthood. As Gayle Rubin (2000) notes in *The Traffic in Women: Notes on the “Political Economy of Sex”* the current sex/gender system “still carries the social burden of sex and gender of socializing the young” (p. 24). Film is a powerful medium for the cultural transmission of values in society from generation to generation.

The study of interracial relationships in film spans almost four decades and each one offers a unique insight into interracial relationships. What becomes apparent in examining that journey more closely is that the 1960s were about social change and unrest, which was demonstrated in the Civil Right’s movement and the Women’s Movement. The landmark film *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner* (1967) offered an open
dialogue between a black and a white family about liberalism confronting racism. The 1970s offered the most examples of interracial relationships with the least likelihood of opposition. It was an age of strong black characters like Shaft and strong Indian characters like Billy Jack. All this, however, is quickly lost in the political correctness of the 1980s where, with the exception of three James Bond Films, there are only five popular films with interracial relationships as a theme. As we move into the 1990s, we no longer see white woman or Indian women portrayed in interracial relationships. It is clear by then that Asian women are the most desirable minority on the Big Screen. In the 2000s, however, something shifts. Half way through the decade by 2005 there have been seven films with interracial relationships as a theme, almost more than all of the 1990s. Yet, we do not see any white or Indian women in the portrayals. Are we entering the era of multiculturalism in American Film?

Henry Louis Gates Jr. (1998) notes that there is a cultural war going on and asks “if multiculturalism is just a pretty name for ethnic chauvinism, who needs it?” He goes on to say that “the challenge facing America in the next century will be the shaping, at long last, of a truly common public culture, one responsive to the long silenced cultures of color” (p.23). There was a long silence for black woman as leading ladies in popular film . . . and now, when there is a light- skinned black woman playing a leading lady as a Bond Girl in a James Bond film, can we call this multiculturalism or is it ethnic chauvinism instead of regular old white male chauvinism? Is this progress? Is it what Stuart Hall (1996) has called the “theatre of desires, a space of popular fantasies” (p. 474) rather than a way in which we can use communication mediums to overcome barriers of the past, history, socio-economics, and power? As Feagin (2000) asks, “how can we
overcome the structures of racism that are so deeply engrained in the marrow of this democracy?” (p.270)

If culture is mythic as Hall suggests, then it appears that Hollywood and popular film seeks to keep reinventing the traditional fairy tale in which the fair, handsome prince must rescue the beautiful but needy princess from her imminent demise. Fairy tales are recorded going back to before 8 A.D. Although fairy tales have developed into a collective unconsciousness in society, problems emerge when “one accepts the tales and their values as a part of one’s psyche without questioning their validity” (Robbins, 1998, p 60). Fairytales have been justifiably criticized by feminist for their “narrow portrayal of women as passive objects, as romanticized innocents, as victims of mental and physical abuse” (Stone, 1998, p. 20). Stone argues that people are drawn to the traditional stories because they offer a “transformative potential” and it is this change that “continues to draw contemporary tellers and listeners” (p.21). The challenge remains when the same fairy tales are used as measures to prevent transformation, not encourage it.

One of the most recognizable fairy tales, the Cinderella story, features a small glass slipper as the Prince’s key to finding his true love. In Chinese ancient culture, women had their feet bound tightly to make them appear small and exotic. For this reason, the glass slipper is an important signifier of beauty. In today’s culture, the thin, and light-skinned black body of Halle Berry as a Bond Girl could be considered the “glass slipper” prized by the older white male (Bailey, 1998, p. 22).

The myth of popular film and interracial relationships today is a gory tale. The prevalence of violence in the films studied here is both discouraging and disturbing.
Violence against women and even murder continue to be used gratuitously in film. Instead of being minimized, violence is being cultivated as normal for women to initiate as well as men. Some media scholars hold a vision for better times ahead. Norman Denzin (2002) envisions a new cinematic era in which we say farewell to the violence of popular film and the racist legacy in American film by founding father director D. W. Griffith. This reference is made to end finally an era of film built on the success of the legacy of sexist and racist storylines and leading men.

Many media scholars have commented that the favorite hue of Hollywood is green. The implication is that the incentive to make films the way studios do is to comply with a profitable formula and thereby, profits, justifying the old stereotypes and jaded storylines. In *Black Lenses, Black Voices: African American Film Now*, Mark A. Reid explores the success of independent films with a “womanist” and independent film *Sanfoka*, which was both cinematically valuable and financially successful. In 2006, *Crash*, a film which bravely portrays the harshness of race relations in America stands nominated for an Academy Award. Is America ready for more than the same old story redressed in a more sexualized and violent veil? The desire and the possibility exist that white and non-white portrayals of “reality” could represent something more humanistic and respectful about women and men than has been offered in the past four decades of popular film. Such a change will require a vision and a commitment from mass media makers in America. The segregated past seems to be kept actively alive on the big screen. The stereotypical portrayals of interracial relationships reveal bigger issues, indicating that American race and gendered relationship have not come as far as most people would like to think.
The idea for a more integrated America represented in film may come from the next generation or even from another form of mass media. Segregating love along color lines has not been a mute point in the popular music industry. The history of music with rock ‘n’ roll, blues, jazz, rap, and hip hop has been one in which the color lines have made room for more voices. The big screen may still be segregated but this is not true in all forms of mass media. Race has been more successfully integrated in recorded music over the years than in any other form of media. Is film capable of such integration?

Recently, pop music icon Gwen Stefani created a very popular and commercially successful duet with Hip-hop sensation Andre 3000, entitled "The Color of Love" (2005) which questions the progress in American interracial dating relationships. The lyrics of the song’s chorus include:

We’ve got a long way to go  
When snow hits the asphalt, cold looks and bad talk come  
We’ve got a long way to go  
It’s beyond Martin Luther upgrade computer

Repeatedly, the question is asked “what color is love?” In response, the lyrics echo the sentiment that interracial relationships are still taboo in American culture:

His skin wasn’t the same color as mine  
But he was fine, he was fine  
If all men are made equal  
Then he was fine, he was fine  
Up until the time we went out on a date  
It was fine. I was fine  
Now, I’m getting dirty looks, I wonder what they’d say  
If we were blind, we were blind

The song makes a plea to see race relations in America improve, stating: “There shouldn’t be a rule how to choose your lover.” The song concludes with the phrase “we’ve got a long way to go, we gotta get there quicker” (Stefani, 2004).
Outside of this pop music mantra from a highly successful pop diva and hip hop sensation, there seems to be little urging in society to see a new approach to interracial relationship acceptance. The implications of the study conducted are that the portrayal of women in film continues to perpetuate limited stereotypes of sexuality, gender, and race. Sexuality is exploited and exaggerated beyond any recognition of reality for women in their portrayal of interracial relationships in film. Perhaps more disturbing is the way in which the stereotypical portrayal of certain races is used to trap people into contrived notions of what it means to be a member of their race. If, as media scholars propose, people learn about race through the media, then the world is a segregated place where intimacy is concerned.

Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, and Sasson (2002) point out that media research can serve as space to scrutinize limited constructs by mass media message creators:

The undetermined nature of media discourse allows plenty of room for challengers such as social movements to offer competing constructions of reality and to find support for them from readers whose daily lives may lead them to construct meaning in ways that go beyond media imagery (p. 373).

In many ways, the findings of the qualitative and quantitative research conducted in this study offer a bleak overview of the portrayal of women and of men in interracial relationships although the portrayal of women is clearly more disturbing. Gamson, et al (2002) claim that the current media operate in ways to encourage apathy and cynicism (p. 391). Perhaps such apathy is the explanation for why stereotyped and degrading representations of women continue. The continued lack of equity in the portrayal of gender and race in Hollywood seems to be tolerated and, in fact, deemed as “normal” by
people of all colors. Spanning over a 38-year period, which included the era following the Civil Right's Movement and the Women's Movement in America, there appears to be little movement in the improved or more expansive portrayal of women as healthy, well-balanced and three-dimensional characters who exist beyond historic stereotypes.

This research serves as a call to take the portrayal of women in general, but absolutely in their portrayal in interracial relationships, to a higher level in future. Women are still portrayed on the "edge of importance" regardless of their color. Few women are portrayed as anything more than sexualized objects that show equality only in their ability to have sex and to use violence like a man. The overall message is clear: women only matter on the big screen in their capacity to make men look more like men. All women are not portrayed equally and race does indeed matter when it comes to the selection of a romantic or sexual partner on the big screen.

It is important to begin a dialogue that moves us into a new era of mass media portrayal of men and women as people who are multi-dimensional individuals with a unique voice, not carbon copies of archaic stereotypes. We have to ask for more from filmmakers, America’s storytellers, and modern myth makers. We have to believe that change is possible and important. To reiterate Gwen Stefani’s lyrics, "we’ve got a long way to go, we gotta get there quicker” (2004). According to Film Feminist Sue Thornham, the last point is a very important one: filmmakers minds must be changed or this stereotyping will go on forever . . . films express the fantasies and subconscious needs of their (mostly male) creators” (1999, p. 15). Women of all races must become multi-faceted images in American films.
As the United States faces a revolution in its racial and ethnic make-up, the metaphor of the melting pot, where race and ethnicity blend and are annihilated as the “melting,” seems both outdated and deeming. In order to “melt” into the melting pot of mass media portrayal, it appears that people are being asked to forgo their racial identity or ethnicity to become as white as possible. Popular music performer and songwriter Nelly Furtado writes in her song, “Place my face on your magazine and make me look whiter than I seem… wash away my ethnicity.”

The rare and unusual portrayal of interracial relationships shows that society is still heavily segregated on the big screen and interaction between races in sexual or romantic relationships is limited. When there is race mixing on the big screen the portrayal is often negative and stereotypically limited. Is society ready to allow an array of skin shades to be shown as both positive and negative on the big screen? It appears that for some actors of darker skin color more positive roles are emerging but, are we ready to pair such dark-skinned actors with white women or to give an East Indian or Middle Eastern woman a positive leading role? It appears that the talented Morgan Freeman-like actors of this society will continue to be cast to rescue the desperate Ashley Judd-like characters of this world and do so as a perfect gentleman, an asexual, and safe “model minority,” never threatening the hundreds of years of racial order. Further research needs to be done in the area of interaction of race and gender in other areas of mass media. It is obvious that the world of media needs to be further explored for evidence of hierarchy in the treatment of race when the person is in interaction with a person of another race, not merely interacting with their own race.
Instead of a melting pot, could we envision a deluxe pizza in which every colorful ingredient maintains its unique color and flavor and is not expected to mutate to be more palatable? In the place of the melting pot, as America looks to the future, the mass media film industry has an opportunity to entertain a new generation of filmgoers. Both males and females will seek out, appreciate, and identify with the multi-faceted characters and diverse images of the “Americans” of all colors they see on the big screen in both positive and negative roles, and maybe even communicate instead of killing one another or having meaningless sexual encounters. When people in interracial relationships see the popular film version of interracial relationships on the big screen the portrayal is unnecessarily rare and most likely unkind. The element that appears to be missing is the multifaceted nature of two people in a relationship regardless of their race or skin tone.

One of America’s greatest orators, Martin Luther King Jr. expressed the importance of race relations in American frequently before his assassination and worked diligently to express that issues of race do not only impact the minorities in society, but people of all ethnicities and races. He reminded us that “all people are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny.”
FILM CODE:

RELATIONSHIP CODE:

CODER INITIALS:

1. Name of film:
2. Film Genre:
   01-Drama
   02-Comedy
   03- Romance
   04-Thriller
   05-Horror
   06-Musical
   07-Animation
   08-Action/Adventure
   09-Crime/Gangster
   10- War
   11-Fantasy/Science fiction
   12-Western

3. Female character's name:

4. Age of female character:
   01 -- 11 years old - 20 years old
   02 -- 21 years old - 30 years old
   03 -- 31 years old - 40 years old
   04 -- 41 years old- 50 years old
   05-- 51 years old - 60 years old
   06- 60 years old and above

5. Age of male character:
   01 -- 11 years old - 20 years old
   02 -- 21 years old - 30 years old
   03 -- 31 years old - 40 years old
   04 -- 41 years old- 50 years old
   05-- 51 years old - 60 years old
6. Main Film Role of female:
   01- Principal
   02-Supporting
   03-Minor

7. Her Race/Ethnicity:
   01- White
   02-Ambivalent Minority:
   03-Black
   04-Amerindian
   05- Asian
   06-Hispanic

8. Race/Ethnicity of male partner:
   01-White
   02-Minority ambivalent
   03-Black
   04-Amerindian
   05-Asian
   06-Hispanic
   07- Other (write in)

9. Gender Attributes of female:
   01-Competitive
   02-Athletic
   03-Strong
   04-Risk taker
   05-Aggressive
   06-Achievement
   07-Intelligent
   08-Dangerous
   09-Responsible
   10-Sensitive
   11-Flirtatious
   12-Romantic
   13-Deceitful
   14-Untrustworthy
   15-Manipulative
   16- Emotional

10. Gender Attributes of male:
    01-Competitive
    02-Athletic
03-Strong
04-Risk taker
05-Aggressive
06-Achievement
07-Intelligent
08-Dangerous
09-Responsible
10-Sensitive
11-Flirtatious
12-Romantic
13-Deceitful
14-Untrustworthy
15-Manipulative
16-Emotional

11. Character Perception Rating:
01- Positive
02- Negative
03-Mostly positive, some negative
04-Mostly negative, some positive

12. Social Vulnerability of female:
01--None Present (If so, complete the following)
02--Physical disability
03--speech impediment
04--low intelligence,
05--poverty
06--absent minded/confused
07--parent missing or dead
08--child missing
09--single parent
10--widow
11--overweight
12--Drug addicted behavior (drug/alcohol)
13--prisoner/fugitive
14--Eccentric
15--Allegiance to family
16--Infertility
17--Victim of physical violence
18--Victim of verbal abuse
19--Victim of sexual violence
20--Killed.

13. Social Vulnerability of male:
01--None Present (If so, complete the following)
02--Physical disability
03--speech impediment
04--low intelligence,
05--poverty
06--absent minded/confused
07--parent missing or dead
08--child missing
09--single parent
10--widower
11--overweight
12--Drug addicted behavior (drug/alcohol)
13--prisoner/fugitive
14--Eccentric
15--Allegiance to family
16--Infertility
17--Victim of physical violence
18--Victim of verbal abuse
19--Victim of sexual violence
20--Killed.

14. Occupation:
01-None identified
02-Athlete
03- Attorney
04-Businessperson
05-Educator
06-Entertainer
07-Factory Worker
08- Farmer
09-Homemaker
10-Law enforcement
11-Physican
12- Nurse
13-Restaurant business (wait staff, cook, bartender)
14-Secretary/clerical
15-Student
16-Writer
17-Hotel business
18-Spy/government
19-Artist
20-Independently wealthy (does not need to work)
21-Unemployed
22- Criminal/convict
23- Prostitute
24-Military
25- Service oriented (flight attendant, hairdresser) (write in answer)
26-Other (Write in)

15. Violent behavior:
01--None
02--Violence is committed against her and she does not respond w/violence
03--Violence is committed against her and she does respond with violence
04--She initiates violence against other people

16. Ultimate Value of female:
01--Romance
02--Self Interest
03--Power/political interest
04--Professional interest
05--Family affiliation
06--Financial gain
07--Notoriety/fame
08--Religious/spiritual value
09--Patriotism
10--Sexual prowess
11--Revenge
12--Unclear
13--None

17. Relationship opposition: (Rate 1-a little, 2-moderately, 3-Completely)
01--None
02--From her family
03--From his family
04--From his friends
05--From her friends
06--From society
07--From her ex-partners
08--From his ex-partners
09--From potential other suitors

18. Relationship Outcome:
01--Marriage
02--Break up initiated by him
03--Break up initiated by her
04--Ambivalent (unclear)
05--Dating Commitment
06--Friendship
07--She dies
08--He dies

19. Her Skills:
01--Dances
02--Sings
03--Martial arts
04--Athletic skills
05--Computer hacker
06--Weapons expert
07--Gymnast
08--Sexual
09--Supernatural
10--Comedian
11--Leadership

20. Ultimate Value of the Male:
01--Romance
02--Self Interest
03--Power/political interest
04--Professional interest
05--Family affiliation
06--Financial gain
07--Notoriety/fame
08--Religious/spiritual value
09--Patriotism
10--Sexual prowess
11--Revenge
12--Unclear
13--None

21. Sexual relations initiation:
01-None
02-Initiated by her
03-Initiated by him
04-Mutual initiation
05-Unclear

22. Sexual Activity :( Smith)
01-In a marriage
02-Outside a marriage/affair
03-In longstanding heterosexual relationship (greater than or equal to one year)
04-In short term heterosexual relationship (Less than one year)
05-One sexual encounter (one night stand)
06-Other (write in)
07-None

23. Her physical appearance: (Signorielli)
01-Extremely Sexy clothing
02-Sexy Clothing
03-Business attire
04-Conservative attire
05-Neutral clothing
06-Formal attire
07-Working class clothing
08-Ragged looking
09-Costume/uniform

24- Exposure of body parts (Signorielli)
01-Chest/cleavage
02-Legs
03-Midriff
04-Back

05-Naked
06-Very little skin shown

25. Year Film was released:
01-1967 - 1969
02-1970s
03-1980s
04-1990s
05-2000 - 2003

26. How is power distributed in the relationship?
01-He has the power (1 - somewhat, 2- moderately, 3-mostly, 4-completely)
02-She has the power 1-somewhat, 2-moderately, 3-mostly, 4- completely)
03-Shared evenly
04-Unable to tell

27. How long does the sexual or physical relationship last in the film:
01-The entire film
02-Most of the film
03-Less than half of the film
04-Briefly

28. Who controls the outcome of the relationship?
01-He makes the final decision
02-She makes the final decision
03-They make the decision together
04-Some outside force (death, war, illness)

29. What sacrifice does the female make for the other person in the relationship?
01-None
02-Personal
03-Professional
04-Physical
05-Monetary
06-Politically
07-Family
08-Other friendships
09-Religious
10-Ambition
11-Homeland
12-Personal vice (drugs, alcohol, sex)
13-Children
14-Current relationship with other man
15-Other (write in)

30. What sacrifice does the male make for the other person in the relationship?
   01-None
   02-Personal
   03-Professional
   04-Physical
   05-Monetary
   06-Politically
   07-Family
   08-Other friendships
   09-Religious
   10-Ambition
   11-Homeland
   12-Personal vice (drugs, alcohol, sex)
   13-Children
   14-Current relationship with other man
   15-Other (write in)

31. In the script does the female get labeled negatively by another character in the film?
   01-Slut
   02-Bitch
   03-Whore
   04-Witch
   05-Evil
   07-Drunk
   08-Liar
   09-Cheater
   10-Traitor
   11-User
   12-Fucking broad
   13-Junkie
   14-Other (write in)
32. Is the negative label given to the female in reference to?
01-Her ethnicity/race
02-Her religion
03-Her behavior
04-Her sexuality
05-Her economic status
06-Her addictions
07-Her gender
08-Her interracial relationship
09-Her intelligence
10-Other (state)

33. Do other people in the film, compliment the female or give her praise?
01-Often
02-Sometimes
03-Never
List what positive compliments she gets from other actors:

34. Is the positive label given to the female in reference to?
01-Her ethnicity/race
02-Her religion
03-Her behavior
04-Her sexuality
05-Her economic status
06-Her addictions
07-Her gender
08-Her interracial relationship
09-Her intelligence
10-Other (state)

35. In the script does the male get labeled negatively by another character in the film?
01-Jerk
02-Asshole
03-Dick
04-Loser
05-User
07-Drunk
08-Liar
09-Cheater
10-Traitor
11-Son of a bitch
12-Bastard
13-Injun
14-Fucker
15-Jack ass
36. Is the negative label given to the male in reference to?
01- Her ethnicity/race
02- His religion
03- His behavior
04- His sexuality
05- His economic status
06- His addictions
07- His gender
08- His interracial relationship
09- His intelligence
10- His job
11- Other (state)

37. Do other people in the film, compliment the male or give him praise?
01- Often
02- Sometimes
03- Never
List what positive compliments she gets from other actors:

38. Is the positive label given to the male in reference to?
01- Her ethnicity/race
02- Her religion
03- Her behavior
04- Her sexuality
05- Her economic status
06- Her addictions
07- Her gender
08- Her interracial relationship
09- Her intelligence
10- His job
11- Other (state)

39. What challenges does the couple face in the relationship?
01- Cultural issues
02- Legal issues
03- Geographic issues
04- Communication issues
05- Economic issues
07- Religious issues
08- Political issues
09- Behavioral issues
10- Her lack of commitment to the relationship
11- His lack of commitment to the relationship
12- Issues from past relationships
40. Does the female seem pleased with the outcome of the relationship?
   01-Completely
   02-Somewhat
   03-Not at all
   04-Unknown (dead, not indicated)
   05- Other (write in)

41. Is the interracial relationship central to the movie plot/story line?
   01- Central to the movie storyline/plot
   02- A subplot to the movie storyline/plot
   03- Incidental to the movie storyline/plot
   04- Completely unrelated to the movie storyline/plot

   Thank you. That completes this coding sheet.
THE COLOR OF LOVE ON THE BIG SCREEN

Content Analysis

Code Book

Coder Name:  Your name or initials

1. Name/ID # of film: The film will be given an ID that will be placed on the box on a label.

1b. ID number of the relationship coded in on this sheet. Give the first relationship coded in this film the designation of 001, the second one is 002, and the third one is 003 and so on.

2. Film Genre: This is the categorization of certain types of art based upon its style, form or content. They are generalizations about the film. The IMDb film fact sheet that accompanies your DVD or VHS clearly states the genre of the film. Select ALL that apply. Many have more than one genre, but just use the choices listed here. (IMDb database)
   01-Drama
   02-Comedy
   03- Romance
   04-Thriller
   05-Horror
   06-Musical
   07-Animation
   08-Action/Adventure
   09-Crime/Gangster
   10- War
   11-Fantasy/Science fiction
   12-Western

3. Character's name: Write down the name of the female character who is involved in an interracial romantic (involves kissing or holding hands) relationship or a sexual relationship with a man of a different racial/ethnic group from her. Coders only code for one woman at a time in each film if there is more than one woman in an interracial relationship with a man. We are coding heterosexual relationships only. If the man has an interracial relationship with more than one woman at a time, use another coding sheet to code for her. If she has an interracial relationship with more than one man in a film, use separate sheets for each relationship and give each character a separate ID number as indicated in #2 above.

4. Age of female: If her age is not clearly stated, guess what age she is portrayed at in the film. If you cannot tell at all, then select 07.
   01 -- 11 years old - 20 years old
01 -- 11 years old - 20 years old
02 -- 21 years old - 30 years old
03 -- 31 years old - 40 years old
04 -- 41 years old - 50 years old
05-- 51 years old - 60 years old
06-   60 years old and above
07- Unable to tell

5. Age of male character: If his age is not clearly stated, guess what age he is portrayed at in the film. If you cannot tell at all, then select 07.

01 -- 11 years old - 20 years old
02 -- 21 years old - 30 years old
03 -- 31 years old - 40 years old
04 -- 41 years old- 50 years old
05-- 51 years old - 60 years old
06-   60 years old and above

6. Main Film Role of female: How often is the female portrayed in the film? Principal means she is a main character with equal appearance time and/or significance than any other character in the film. (Example, Pocahontas is the lead character in the film Pocahontas and has equal time and portrayal as John Smith, the main character.) A supporting character is one who has a significant relationship and active impact on some aspect of the principal character's life. This relationship and active impact is important to the story and observed through the supporting character's actions and behavior (Smith code book). (Example, for example in the film Die Another Day, Halle Berry plays an important role in supporting the character of James Bond. Although she is often shown, she is less significant than Bond) A minor character is one who has no active impact on the story. (Smith codebook).

(Example, in the film Shaft, the character Pamela is briefly in the film and has a short sexual encounter with Shaft.)

01- Principal
02-Supporting
03-Minor

7. Her Race/Ethnicity: This refers to the race/ethnicity traits of the portrayal of the women in the film. If the women's actual ethnicity or race is different from the character she portrays, then mark it according to the portrayal. (For example in Dances with Wolves, although she appears to be white, Mary McDowell is portrayed as an Indian woman, so although she is actually white, you would code her mark American Indian as she portrays a native American Indian women in the film).

01- White
02-Ambivalent/minority, but unclear:
03-Black
04-Amerindian
05- Asian
06-Hispanic
07- Mixed race (Specify)
8. Race/Ethnicity of male partner: This refers to the ethnicity and/or race of the man in the interracial relationship you are coding for in the film. It refers to how he is portrayed in the film. If his portrayal is different than his actual race and/or ethnicity, mark for the way he is portrayed in the film (For example in Little Big Man although Dustin Hoffman is white, he is portrayed as an Indian man in the film therefore you would mark him as Amerindian.)

01- White
02- Ambivalent/minority, but unclear:
03- Black
04- Amerindian
05- Asian
06- Hispanic

9. Gender Attributes of female:
01- Competitive
02- Athletic
03- Strong
04- Risk taker
05- Aggressive
06- Achievement-oriented
07- Intelligent
08- Dangerous
09- Responsible
10- Sensitive
11- Flirtatious
12- Romantic
13- Deceitful
14- Untrustworthy
15- Manipulative
16- Emotional
17- Honest/has integrity

10. Gender Attributes of her male partner:
01- Competitive
02- Athletic
03- Strong
04- Risk taker
05- Aggressive
06- Achievement-oriented
07- Intelligent
08- Dangerous
09- Responsible
10- Sensitive
11- Flirtatious
12- Romantic
11. Character Perception rating of the female character: What way is the female perceived by the audience? Is she likeable and positive or is she portrayed negative? This refers to if the character is portrayed in a way that the audience likes her, and then her portrayal is positive. If she is portrayed in a way that the audience does not like her, she is portrayed positively. If her portrayal is both negative and positive then try to determine which is most dominant. (For example, in Die Another Day, Halle Berry's character Jinx is portrayed as being very smart and resourceful in helping James Bond save America and the Western world. Her portrayal is positive. In Shaft, the character of Pamela is played as a very sexually aggressive female who has a one night stand. She is portrayed in a negative way. In Pulp Fiction, the character of Mia played by Uma Thurman is played slightly negatively as she has a drug overdose, but is still shown in a positive way for the remainder of the film)

01- Positive
02- Negative
03-Mostly positive, some negative
04-Mostly negative, some positive

12. Social Vulnerability of female: This refers to traits or events that make the female seem like to struggle or experience hardship in the storyline. This could happen in the back story of the film and not just during the film, for example Pocahontas has no mother, but this happened before the film storyline begins.

01-- None
Present (If so, complete the following. Mark all answers that apply.)
02--Physical disability
03--speech impediment
04--low intelligence,
05--poverty
06--absent minded/confused
07--parent missing or dead
08--child missing
09--single parent
10--widow
11--overweight
12--Drug addicted behavior (drug/alcohol)
13--prisoner/fugitive
14--Eccentric
15--Allegiance to family
16--Infertility
17--Victim of physical violence
18--Victim of verbal abuse
19--Victim of sexual violence
20--Dead

13. Social Vulnerability of male: This refers to traits or events that make the female seem like to struggle or experience hardship in the storyline. This could happen in the backstory of the film and not just during the film.
01-- None
Present (If so, complete the following) Mark all answers that apply.
02--Physical disability
03--speech impediment
04--low intelligence,
05--poverty
06--absent minded/confused
07--parent missing or dead
08--child missing
09--single parent
10--widower
11--overweight
12--Drug addicted behavior (drug/alcohol)
13--prisoner/fugitive
14--Eccentric
15--Allegiance to family
16--Infertility
17--Victim of physical violence
18--Victim of verbal abuse
19--Victim of sexual violence
20--Dead.

14. Occupation of female: Does she appear to have a job? If so, what does she do for a living -- for example in Flashdance, the main character played by Jennifer Beals is a welder (factory worker) by day and a stripper/dancer by night. Mark all answers that apply.
01-None identified
02-Athlete
03- Attorney
04-Businessperson
05-Educator
06-Entertainer
07-Factory Worker
08- Farmer
09-Homemaker
10-Law enforcement
11-Physican
12- Nurse
13-Restaurant business (wait staff, cook, bartender)
14-Secretary/clerical
15. Student
16 - Writer
17- Hotel business
18- Spy/government
19- Artist
20- Independently wealthy (does not need to work)
21- Unemployed
22- Criminal/convict
23- Prostitute
24- Military
25- Service oriented (flight attendant, hairdresser) (write in answer)
26 Other (Write in)

15. Violent behavior of the female: Do you see the female in acts of violence? What is her role in the violent behavior? If multiple acts of violence occur in the film, code for all that apply.
01--None
02--Violence is committed against her and she does not respond with violence
03--Violence is committed against her and she does respond with violence
04--She initiates violence against other people

16. Ultimate Value of female: What does she appear to value the most in her decision making? What has the greatest influence over her decisions? Mark all that apply.
01--Romance
02--Self Interest
03--Power/political interest
04--Professional interest/career
05--Family affiliation
06--Financial gain
07--Notoriety/fame
08--Religious/spiritual value
09--Patriotism
10-- Sex
11-- Revenge
12-Drugs/Alcohol
13- Pride/reputation
14- Unclear
15-- None

17. Relationship opposition: Do the other characters in the film have an objection to the interracial relationship? For example in Guess Who's Coming to Dinner, both his and her parent's object to the marriage and it is stated that society will also be against the marriage.
(Rate each possible opposition on a scale 1-3: 1-a little, 2-moderately, 3-Completely)
01--None
02--From her family
03--From his family
04--From his friends
05--From her friends
06--From society
07--From her ex-partners
08--From his ex-partners
09--From potential other suitors

18. Relationship Outcome: What is the ultimate outcome of the relationship at the end of the film?
01--Marriage
02--Break up initiated by him
03--Break up initiated by her
04--Ambivalent (unclear)
05--Dating Commitment
06--Friendship
07--She dies
08--He dies

19. Her Skills: What abilities does the female character show during the film? For example in the Bodyguard, Whitney Houston, sings dances and has her own business. Mark all skills that apply.
01--Dances
02--Sing
03--Martial arts
04--Athletic skills
05--Computer hacker
06--Weapons expert
07--G
08--Sexual
09--Supernatural
10--Comedian
11--Leadership

20. Ultimate value of male: What seems to motivate him in his decision making? Mark all that apply.
01--Romance
02--Self Interest
03--Power/political interest
04--Professional interest/career
05--Family affiliation
06--Financial gain
07--Notoriety/fame
08--Religious/spiritual value
09--Patriotism
10--Sex
11-- Revenge
12-Drugs/Alcohol
13--Reputation/pride
14-- Unclear

21. Sexual relations initiation: If the couple is sexually active, who made the first move?
01-None (No sexual relationship)
02-Initiated by her
03-Initiated by him
04-Mutual initiation
05- Unclear

22. Sexual Activity :( Smith) what is the relationship of the people who are having sex?
01-In a marriage
02-Outside a marriage/affair
03-In longstanding heterosexual relationship (greater than or equal to one year)
04-In short term heterosexual relationship (Less than one year)
05--One sexual encounter (one night stand)
06-Other (write in)
07- None

23. Her physical appearance: (Signorielli) What way does the female most frequently appear in the film? What way is she most commonly dressed?
01- Extremely Sexy clothing (Scantily clad, tight fighting)
02- Sexy Clothing (revealing, implied)
03- Business attire
04- Conservative attire
05- Neutral clothing
06- Formal attire
07- Working class clothing
08- Ragged looking
09- Costume/uniform
10- Naked

24- Exposure of body parts (Signorielli): If the women wear's revealing clothing, what body parts are featured and visible? Mark all that apply.
01- Chest/cleavage
02-Legs
03- Midriff
04- Back
05- Naked
06- Very little skin shown
07- None (she is conservatively covered up)
25. Year Film was released: (This will be on the IMDb sheet and on the cover of the box of the DVD or VHS.)
01- 1967 - 1969
02- 1970s
03- 1980s
04- 1990s
05- 2000 - 2003

21. Is the interracial relationship central to the movie plot/story line? Is the film really about the relationship or about something else? For example, In Guess who's coming to dinner, the plot is about the relationship. In Die another Day, the film is about international spying and adventure.
01- Central to the movie storyline/plot
02- A subplot to the movie storyline/plot
03- Incidental to the movie storyline/plot
04- Completely unrelated to the movie storyline/plot

26. How is power distributed in the relationship? From the way they talk to each other and act, which seems to be in charge of what is decided?
01- He has the power (1- somewhat, 2- moderately, 3-mostly, 4-completely)
02- She has the power (1-somewhat, 2-moderately, 3-mostly, 4-completely)
03- Shared evenly
04- Unable to tell

27. How long does the sexual or physical relationship last in the film:
01- The entire film
02- Most of the film
03- Less than half of the film
04- Briefly

28. Who controls the outcome of the relationship?
01- He makes the final decision
02- She makes the final decision
03- They make the decision together
04- Some outside force (death, war, illness)
05- No one seems to decide anything, it just happens

29. What sacrifice does the female make for the other person in the relationship? Mark all that apply.
01- None
02- Personal
03- Professional
04- Physical
05- Monetary
06- Politically
07- Family
30. What sacrifice does the male make for the other person in the relationship? Mark all that apply.

01- None
02- Personal
03- Professional
04- Physical
05- Monetary
06- Politically
07- Family
08- Other friendships
09- Religious
10- Ambition
11- Homeland
12- Personal vice (drugs, alcohol, sex)
13- Children
14- Current relationship with other man
15- Other (write in)

31. In the script does the female get labeled negatively by another character in the film? Make note of any name calling that is used in the script about the female or to her directly. It can be said outside of her presence in the film too. Write down any term not listed here.

01- Slut
02- Bitch
03- Whore
04- Witch
05- Evil
07- Drunk
08- Liar
09- Cheater
10- Traitor
11- User
11- Other (Write down exact wording)

32. Is the negative label given to the female in reference to?

01- Her ethnicity/race
02- Her religion
03- Her behavior  
04- Her sexuality  
05- Her economic status  
06- Her addictions  
07- Her gender  
08- Her interracial relationship  
09- Her intelligence  
10- Other (state)  

33. Do other people in the film, compliment the female or give her praise?  
01- Often  
02- Sometimes  
03- Never  
List what positive compliments she gets from other actors:  

34. Is the positive label given to the female in reference to?  
01- Her ethnicity/race  
02- Her religion  
03- Her behavior  
04- Her sexuality  
05- Her economic status  
06- Her addictions  
07- Her gender  
08- Her interracial relationship  
09- Her intelligence  
10- Her appearance  
11- Other (state)  

35. In the script does the male get labeled negatively by another character in the film?  
Make note of any name calling that is used in the script about the male or to him directly.  
It can be said outside of his presence in the film too. Write down any term not listed here.  
01- Jerk  
02- Asshole  
03- Dick  
04- Loser  
05- User  
07- Drunk  
09- Cheater  
10- Traitor  
11- Other (Write down exact wording)  

36. Is the negative label given to the male in reference to: (Mark all that apply?)  
01- His ethnicity/race  
02- His religion
03- His behavior
04- His sexuality
05- His economic status
06- His addictions
07- His gender
08- His interracial relationship
09- His intelligence
10- Other (state)

37. Do other people in the film, compliment the male or give him praise:
01- Often
02- Sometimes
03- Never
List what positive compliments she gets from other actors:

38. Is the positive label given to the male in reference to?
01- Her ethnicity/race
02- Her religion
03- Her behavior
04- Her sexuality
05- Her economic status
06- Her addictions
07- Her gender
08- Her interracial relationship
09- Her intelligence
10- Other (state)

39. What challenges does the couple face in the relationship? Mark all that apply.
01- Cultural issues (society, prejudice, race)
02- Legal issues (laws, rules)
03- Geographic issues (distance)
04- Communication issues (don't understand each other, can't get along)
05- Economic issues (financial, employment)
07- Religious issues (difference of religious/spiritual beliefs)
08- Political issues (opposing views on politics, loyalty to opposing views)
09- Behavioral issues (Acting or behaving a certain way)
10- Her lack of commitment to the relationship (She doesn't care as much as he does)
11- His lack of commitment to the relationship (He doesn't care as much as she does)
12- Issues from past relationships (Exes that emerge, pain from past relationships, inability to let go of someone from the past)
13- Other (write in)

40. Does the female seem pleased with the outcome of the relationship?
01- Completely
02- Somewhat
03- Not at all
04-Unknown (dead, not indicated)
05- Other (write in)

41. Is the interracial relationship central to the plot/story line?
01- Central to the story line/plot
02- A subplot to the movie story line/plot
03-Indicential to the movie story line/plot
04-Completely unrelated to the movie story line/plot

Thank you so much
APPENDIX B
MOVIES FROM 1967 – 2005 IN TOP 15 BOX OFFICE SALES WITH AN
INTERRACIAL ROMANTIC OR SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP

FILMOGRAPHY
LISTED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

Source: boxoffice.com retrieved on July 7, 2004 and January 10, 2006

1967


1970
Millar, S. (Producer) & Penn, A. (Director), (1970). Little Big Man, Paramount Studios, USA.

1973

Jewison, N. (Producer & Director). (1973) Jesus Christ Superstar, Universal Pictures, USA.

Heller, P. & Lee, B. (Producers) & Clouse, R. (Director) (1973) Enter the Dragon, Warner Bros., USA.
1974


1975
Russell, K. (Producer & Director), (1975) Tommy. Hemdale Film Co., UK

1978

1980

1983


1985

1986


1987

1989

1990

1992

1993

1994

1995

1997

2000

2001
2002

2003

2005
REFERENCES


U.S. Census Bureau; Population by Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin, for all Ages and for 18 Years and Over, for the United States: 2000; published April 2, 2001.


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Nadia A. Ramoutar was born in Ireland and attended high school there before coming to the United States to attend college. She initially completed her Associate of Arts degree at Florida Community College at Jacksonville, Florida. Following that she attended the University of Florida and completed a bachelor's degree in political science with a minor area of concentration in journalism and communications. She then completed a master's degree at the University of North Florida, Jacksonville, with a major area of concentration in political science where she was a Fellowship recipient. This dissertation document reflects her completion of the Ph.D. program in mass communication at the University of Florida, Gainesville. Since 1999, she has been an instructor at Flagler College, St. Augustine, and was promoted to the rank of Assistant Professor in Spring 2006.