LEARNING FROM THE ADS: A TRIANGULATED EXAMINATION OF THE
ASSAULT ON THE LAST BASTION OF HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY:
THE SUPER BOWL 2003-2007

A Thesis by

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I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts with a major in Communication.

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Jeffrey Jarman, Committee Member

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DEDICATION

To my wife, Shannon who has stayed by my side throughout all challenges
Communication… is not a secondary phenomenon that can be explained, be antecedent psychological, sociological, cultural, or economic factors; rather, communication itself is the primary, constitutive social process that explains all other factors.

-Robert Craig
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ABSTRACT

This study was a thematic analysis that attempted to understand what messages television commercials send to the viewing audience concerning appropriate gender roles. Specifically, this study examined the Super Bowl commercials aired on television from 2003-2007, and examined the gender roles portrayed in these commercials.

This study used a triangulated methodology, as both a thematic content analysis and a descriptive textual analysis were used to better understand the “themes” present in the artifacts analyzed. The themes used in this study came from Janet Saltzman Chafetz’s work (1974) concerning gender roles. This study used the themes identified by the focus groups Chafetz conducted and looked for these themes in Super Bowl commercials. In the quantitative section, the frequency each theme was identified (overall and as a trend study), the intensity of the themes were calculated, and correlations were identified between the themes.

The commercials were found to not only portray traditional gender roles (as was expected) but also to depict non-traditional gender roles. Moreover, the correlations used in this study identified that there were several significant relationships between traditional, non-traditional, and transitional gender roles. Finally, the textual analysis used in the qualitative part of this project revealed how gender roles were portrayed in more detail in selected commercials, and this allowed for a deeper insight into the meaning behind these themes.
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CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION/LITERATURE REVIEW

Americans are living in a transitional era with regard to gender. Talk shows commonly feature women who wish to have an active role in combat duty in the military; magazines discuss fathers who have an active role in their children’s lives; men have retreats where they learn what it means to be a “man”, and countless books tell the “modern man” what it means to be a modern man in terms of actions, beliefs, and behaviors (Bly, 1990; Bolen, 1983; Kaye, 2001; Keen, 1992; Newell, 2003; Levant, 1996; Wood, 2003).

Traditional gender roles have been and are changing as a result of a wide variety of social changes. These changes in the ecology of American society have forced men to choose one of two paths: accept the change and adapt, or hold on to the past. The result of this choice has split men, as a group, apart. Some men have clung even more tightly to the traditional hegemonic, male gender roles; others have adapted and changed their behavior in accordance with the evolution of women’s roles in society. Changing American society forced men to choose one of two alternatives: conform to the new way of being a man, or suffer the consequences of being left behind. These consequences include losing jobs, families, and senses of self (Faludi, 2000).

This paper addresses the construction of gender in television advertisements in one of the most popular venues for advertisers, the Super Bowl. In this study, all commercials aired on television during the Super Bowl each year from 2003 to 2007 were examined using a thematic content analysis to identify constructions of gender roles for both men and women. The commercials were retrieved from the ifilm.com Web site. After coding the commercials, the most viewed commercial aired from each year was analyzed using a descriptive technique in order to better understand how the themes identified were portrayed.
1.1 Gender in Today’s Society

Still a relatively new scholarly endeavor, the study of gender became popular as a result of the second wave of the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Initially, gender studies focused solely upon the study of women. This area of study has since evolved to incorporate both the study of masculinity (the process of being a man) and femininity (the process of being a woman). According to several scholars, gender scholarship began in 1792 when Mary Wollstonecraft declared that most differences between the sexes are socially created, not natural (Wood, 2003; Kramer, 2005). However, it really was not until Betty Friedan wrote *The Feminine Mystique* that the study of gender became a serious scholarly pursuit. Friedan (1983) focused on the intersection between gender and the media, which for the most part has been understudied. Gender scholars instead have looked at areas of study such as word choice, biological determinism, the social impact of determining gender, and gender role acquisition.

Many commonly use the terms *gender* and *sex* interchangeably. While this does streamline many thought-processes concerning how society believes a person should act, this is a flawed line of reasoning. To equate sex with gender is similar to equating a building to its materials. While the building and materials were similar in composition, they were different in effect. Wood (2003, p.10) states, “Sex refers to biological, genetic and chromosomal characteristics.” Lorber (1991, p. 7) describes sex as “a biological category and Money (1986, p. 7) asserts that sex “is best understood as a continuum made up of chromosomal sex, gonadal and hormonal sex.” West and Zimmerman (1991, 8) describe sex as “a determination made through the application of socially agreed upon biological criteria for classifying persons as male or female…” Thus, *sex* is the biological, hormonal, and chromosomal make-up of a person.
This is an entirely different aspect than gender. According to Wood (2003, p. 21), gender is “a social, symbolic construction that expresses the meanings a society confers on biological sex. Gender varies across cultures, over time within any given society, and in relation to the other gender.” Gender is the portrayal of masculinity or femininity, or more simply put, it is the actions a society deems necessary for each sex. Messerschmidt (2006, p. 4) reaffirms this point by noting, “gender is a situated accomplishment in which we produce forms of behavior seen by others in the same immediate situation as masculine or feminine.” Finally, Cohn (2006, p. 592) states, “gender refers to the constellation of meanings that a given culture assigns to biological sex differences. Moreover, gender is a symbolic system that not only shapes how we perceive men and women but shapes other discourses.”

1.2 Gender Studies

Much of the theoretical scholarship has focused on gender development. Three main areas of gender scholarship exist: biological, interpersonal and cultural (Kramer, 2005; Wood, 2003). Each of these areas attempts to analyze how gender is acquired. The biological perspective of gender looks at different biological characteristics a person might have (chromosomes, hormones, chemical balance, etc.) and attempts to ascertain why certain people act a certain way. The biological perspective attempts to find a reason on the biological level why certain aspects of gender are enacted and other aspects are overlooked. Specifically, biologically-based theories focus on how X and Y chromosomes and hormonal activities influence the range of human behaviors from cognitive abilities to body features (Wood, 2003).

One focus of these theories is the influence of sex chromosomes. For instance, most males have an X and a Y chromosome because they inherit the X chromosome from their mother and the Y chromosome from their father, while most females have two X chromosomes,
receiving an X chromosome from both their mother and their father. In 1996, biological theorists found evidence that several genes controlling intelligence are located solely upon the X chromosome (Tanouye as cited in Wood, 2003). This finding suggests that male intelligence is derived from their mother’s biological contributions, whereas female’s intelligence is derived from both parents. Furthermore, Langreth (1997) reported the X chromosome is also primarily responsible for social skills. This may suggest why females are more socially aware than males.

Another focus of biological determinism is analyzing the role of hormones in shaping sex-related behaviors (Wood, 2003). For instance, Ferraro (2001) and Shapiro (1990) both found that the presence of estrogen (the “female” hormone) causes women to produce more HDL cholesterol (the good kind) and make women’s blood vessels more flexible than those of men. Furthermore, it was noted estrogen also strengthens the immune system, making women less susceptible and more resistant to infections and viruses.

The third focus of biological theories looks at the brain, specifically focusing on its structure and development. Research indicates that while both genders tend to utilize both lobes of the brain (Wood, 2003), women and men tend to specialize in using different lobes of the brain. Men tend to utilize the left lobe of the brain, which focuses on linear thought, logical reasoning, sequential information, and abstract, analytical thinking. Women tend to use the right lobe of the brain, which is used for imagination and artistic activity, intuitive thinking, and for visual and spatial tasks (Lesak, 1976; Walsh, 1978; Wood 2003).

Another perspective used to examine gender is the interpersonal perspective of gender. This perspective looks at how interpersonal factors impact how masculinity and femininity are developed. From the work of scholars in this field, two theoretical standpoints have emerged that explain how the gendering process occurs. The first standpoint is the psychodynamic theory of
gender development. Sigmund Freud originally posited this theory, which focuses on the impact of family and psychic dynamics on development of gender identity (Wood, 2003). More recently, Freud’s theories have been revisited and refined in order to compensate for some of Freud’s blind spots, particularly concerning his misunderstanding of women’s development.

Psychodynamic theorists believe the development of a “personal sense of self” and a gender identity occurs as an infant internalizes the views of others around him or her. According to Chodorow (1989), “we are all mothered by women…women rather than men have primary parenting responsibilities” (5). Therefore, since the mother herself is gendered, the mother plays an important role in forming a child’s gender. For instance, if the mother has a daughter, than the daughter will notice a fundamental likeness between the mother and herself. As a result of this likeness, the daughter will identify more with the mother, which leads her to emulate herself after her mother. This process is different for a son, according to psychodynamic theorists. According to psychodynamic theory, sons recognize a fundamental difference between themselves and their mothers and as a result of this difference, take an almost Burkean approach (“inventor of the negative, separated from his natural condition by instruments of his own making…”) to gender. Sons identify any behavior “not feminine” as masculine or appropriate behavior for a male.

The other theoretical standpoint utilized by interpersonal gender scholars is the social-psychological theories of gender development. These theories focus on the role of communication in learning how to perform gender and its role in cognitive development. The first such theory is social learning theory. This theory, developed by Walter Mischel (1966), Bandura & Walters (1963) and Lynn (1969), claims individuals learn to be masculine and feminine through observation, experimentation, and responses from others. For instance, a child
could watch television and notice how others behave on the television; they could then portray those behaviors in front of their parents and peers and adjust their behaviors depending on the type of feedback they receive. Social learning theory argues that people constantly learn and relearn how to interact in a society, and that as a group, people are passive acceptors of the messages sent in regard to the “correct” way to behave.

Social learning theory does not regard biological sex as the basis of gender identification. Instead, social learning theory argues children learn gender by imitating others and continued imitation of others’ behaviors as long as those behaviors are met with positive reinforcement. Therefore, when parents respond positively to a specific behavior, that behavior is more likely to be internalized.

The cultural perspective attempts to understand why certain cultures create acceptable behavioral norms for genders. For instance, Margaret Mead (1935) analyzed gender and its impact on three different societies. One society reversed the traditional Western masculine and feminine gender role of both sexes in that a man would behave according to traditional Western feminine gender roles and a woman would portray masculine gender roles. Other studies have been conducted which compared traditional U.S. gender roles to other societies’ gender roles (Griffin, Viswanath, & Schwartz, 1994; Piron & Young, 1996; Wiles, Wiles, & Tjernlund, 1995).

1.3 Media and Social Learning

In scholarship, television’s influence in constructing personal beliefs and worldview is a widely accepted phenomenon. There are countless theories suggesting how television “works” to influence people’s opinions. The attempt to understand the influence of electronic media is not a
“new” area of study in academia, and some say it has not been analyzed in-depth (Chesebro & Bartelson, 1996).

Marshall McLuhan was one of the first scholars to attempt to understand the important roles media play in forming public opinion. As McLuhan (1964) famously said, “The medium is the message (23).” McLuhan (1964) meant that media are an extension of man (humankind). He described how each type of media used in society has a specific focus on how communication is performed. Previously McLuhan (1962) argued each new technology is based on the previous tradition of thought. For instance, after the invention of the written word, it became easier to have an oral culture as the stories told by the storytellers would not be lost with them. However, McLuhan argued later on that each new technology upset the order of the society into which it was introduced, and thus, societies had to adapt to the new technology. Therefore, after the introduction of the written word, people needed to become literate for those stories to be passed on to the new generation.

In using McLuhan as a basis for understanding media’s function in society, conclusions can be drawn upon the impact of the media in society. First, McLuhan (1964) stated media should not only be studied by looking at its “content”, but that the “medium and the cultural matrix in which the medium operates” (McLuhan, 1964, p. 26) are essential aspects of understanding the impact of a specific medium. Therefore, a person cannot just look at the content of any medium and truly understand the impact of those messages; he or she must look at the medium and its strengths and weaknesses, as well as look at the culture the medium is used in, in order to understand the effects of the message.

Therefore, it becomes evident that each medium reflects the values of the previous culture, which is another way insight can be drawn from McLuhan’s observations: The message
of each specific medium in itself is never a completely new and unique message (Alperstein, 2003). Instead, the message each medium elevates is really a reflection of the society from which the message originates (Alperstein, 2003). While this message may influence others to change their opinion after they have thoroughly thought about the assertion, the belief is already in society (McLuhan, 1964).

Scholars prior to McLuhan focused on how media functioned to help form public opinion, overemphasizing media’s role. For instance, the Hypodermic Needle Theory, or Magic Bullet theory created by Katz and Lazarsfeld, positioned the audience members as passive acceptors of mediated messages (Griffin, 2003). While this partially explained how the media functions in forming public opinion, it completely overlooked the impact of individuals analyzing the message to understand the messages. Potter (1954) also fell into this trap of overestimating advertising’s impact and underestimating the audience’s ability to analyze the messages by claiming advertising had as much influence as the institutions of religion and education, and he attributed to advertising the “power to exhibit social control by shaping popular standards” (Potter, 1954, p. 166). Gerbner (2003) however, brings the impact of media into sharp focus when he states, “For the first time in history, most of the stories told about people, life and values are not told by the parents or other members of the community, instead the media decides what to say” (Gerbner, 2003, p. 342).

notes “social learning theory explains how matching performances can result from modeling an observed behavior.”

Furthermore, Bandura (1976a, 1976b, 1977) asserted that people remember events one of two ways—through visual images and through verbal codes. Moreover, the more each event is publicized, the stronger the memory. Bandura (1973, 1976a, 1977) does mention, however, that motivation is essential in determining whether the behavior will be enacted. By motivation, Bandura means the rewards and punishments associated with the behavior. Specifically, if a certain action is shown to lead to a negative consequence it will be less likely to be enacted. However, even if negative consequences are likely to be associated with these behaviors, the behaviors will still be learned and able to be put into use if the person who learned the behavior is pushed enough (Bandura, 1976a).

Utilizing this framework, two other theories can be introduced and then used to explain the role of media in formation of gender roles. The first theory that is necessary to understand how the media affects gender role formation is the social construction of reality. This theory, posited by Berger and Luckmann (1966), is based on the premise that “reality” is a social construction, formed by passing “knowledge” through communication to each participant in reality. Renz (2004) identifies the social construction of reality theory as a perspective that allows one to understand the role of the media in societal integration. Instead of reality being something that is outside of a person (constructed by the environment), reality is co-constructed by the participants within it. Berger and Luckmann defined reality as “a quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognize as having a being independent of our own volition (something we cannot ‘wish away’)” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 1). Knowledge is “the certainty that phenomena are real and that they possess specific characteristics” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p.
Furthermore, both “reality” and “knowledge” typically lie on a continuum somewhere between what the man on the street identifies as reality and knowledge (something taken for granted) and what the philosopher identifies as reality and knowledge (something always questioned). In this argument, Berger and Luckmann (1966) argue that no matter what degree of “free will” a participant in society believes he or she has, he or she will always be constrained by that society’s own values and norms. Therefore, in order to be a full, accepted participant in a society, a person must first understand what is expected of him or her. In order to understand what is expected of him or her, he or she must accept socially constructed knowledge (what society deems as acceptable characteristics) (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

Berger and Luckmann (1966) identify three ways to pass on socially constructed knowledge: verbally, through objects, and through signs. Through verbal communication, humans learn which “reality” their cultures subscribe to, or which reality is “normal” through the observations of others, instruction by others, and ridicule by our peers (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

Humans also articulate meaning through objects. According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), “different objects present themselves to consciousness as constituents of different spheres of reality” (21). By this, Berger and Luckmann use an idea posited by Roland Barthes (1977/1977). According to Barthes, certain signs or series of signs in society associative meaning with them. For instance, a print ad or a commercial showing a sports celebrity endorsing a shoe might lead viewers of the commercial to associate athletic prowess and fame with that shoe. If a viewer bought that shoe, he or she would become a part of this chain of association as they attempt to associate their own identity with that item (Barthes, 1977/1977, p. 33-34). According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), these object associations are essential to everyday life.
The last method of broadcasting reality to participants in society is through signs. A sign has an “explicit intention to serve as an index of subjective meanings” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 34). Signs can be gestures or presentations. A sign system is when several of these signs are linked together to attempt to send a message about what is the “normal” reality (or what is expected of everyone). Typically, this normal reality is determined by those who are in a position to spread their messages to the rest of society. In a Gramscian sort of turn, Berger and Luckmann are essentially saying that the groups who are in power want to stay that way. In order to stay in power, these groups must appear to the public through various means, maintaining control either through language, or through spreading messages through various media.

Finally, Berger and Luckmann (1966) describe two types of socialization, primary and secondary. Primary socialization typically occurs at either a very young age or when moving to a new society. In this step, the person is taught the “way to act” in this particular society through a variety of systems (verbal, object, or signs). If the person decides to “buy into” this specific society’s version of reality and accept these norms, then they become a member of that society (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Secondary socialization happens when the member of society begins to realize there is more than just one world “out there” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). During this step of the socialization process, people learn to differentiate between different sub-worlds in society.

The last step of the socialization process occurs when the society institutes “reality maintenance measures” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). This happens when people look to others to reaffirm that specific behaviors are still acceptable in society. If the person finds out that their behaviors, norms, and overall view of reality does not mesh with what everyone else perceives as
acceptable, then that person must undergo learn the “new rules” of society (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

1.3.1 Advertising as Rhetoric of Society

In American society, people constantly are bombarded with advertisements. In fact, more than one-half of the world’s advertising budget is spent in the United States (Leiss, Kline, Jhally, Botterill, 2005). This adds up to more than $249 billion annually. Advertisements take up “more than half the space in most daily newspapers and consumer magazines” (Campbell, Martin & Fabos, 2005, p. 383). Furthermore, for each hour of prime-time television in 2005, “Eighteen minutes were devoted to commercials, program promos, and public service announcements” (Campbell, Martin & Fabos, 2005, p. 383). The impact of advertisements on American culture is more than just “filling space.” Advertisements have been the vessel for producing consumer driven change in society.

The analysis of advertising as a form of rhetoric is a widely accepted practice. According to Campbell and Huxman (2003), advertisements are a form of rhetoric. In American society, individuals are shown how an object can lead to fulfillment. According to Marchand (1985, p. xviii),

In the process of selling specific products, advertisers also communicate broader assumptions about social values, attempting to reinforce the social system. Early on, advertisers realized the power they wielded as what Jacque Ellul characterized as “integrated propaganda”—aimed at reinforcing and intensifying existing patterns and conceptions.

Rhetoric has a purpose: to persuade and influence. According to Marchand, this is accomplished several ways: by creating a virtual experience, altering perception, explaining, formulating
beliefs, initiating action and maintaining action (1985). As Lull (2003, p. 63) states, “The development of American commercial broadcasting is a vivid example of how capitalistic economic forces assert their power…The rhetoric of TV commercials and programs is recycled throughout our society (music, clothing, stand-up comedians, etc.).”

Since advertisements can be viewed as historical documents, advertisements can be analyzed to identify representations of popular attitudes, values, and social realities. Lears (1994) explains that cultural sameness is related through objects. Lears discusses how a materialistic society (such as dominant American culture) utilizes different products to symbolize values, and, as such, the dominant American culture is a byproduct of a carefully crafted commercial presence (Lears, 1994). As Davis states (2000), the advertising industry should help shape popular notions of identity, and by extension, gender, race, and class. Jackson Lears remarks (as cited in Davis, 2000, p. 1) that “national advertisers…participated in the construction of the modern subject a normative self that suited the emerging corporate structure of power relations in the early twentieth century of the United States.” Davis further argues that advertising strengthens character and functions as a civilizing influence and social force (Davis, 2000). As such, historian and industry advocate Frank Presby argues that advertising was responsible for the “growth of a national homogeneity in our people, a greater uniformity of ideas which, despite the mixture of races, is found to be greater here than in European countries, [which would]…seem to be easier to nationalize” (as cited in Davis, 2000, p. 4). This stance is not universal, however. Many other scholars who have studied advertising’s impact on society think advertising is nothing more than a mouthpiece for society (Goffman, 1976). Instead of shaping public opinion, advertisements are depictions of how society functions.
A more useful method of looking at the impact of advertisements and the role they play in society is proposed by Schudson (1984), where instead of taking an “either/or” approach to the subject of advertising’s role, he takes a “both/and” approach. Schudson argues, “The advertisement does not so much invent social values or ideals of its own as it borrows, usurps or exploits what advertisers take to be prevailing social values” (Schudson, 1984, p. 221). Jhally (2003) argues advertising does not work by creating values and attitudes out of thin air; instead, it draws upon existing beliefs and re-channels them to “fit” into a new structure advertisers believe to be necessary to their survival.

The impact of advertising is primarily due to what Alperstein calls advertising’s role as a “power to be reckoned with, a hegemonic force in the culture in society” (Alperstein, 2003, p. 7). Boorstin (1977) identified advertising as the rhetoric of democracy and believed it was an important element in understanding American civilization. Real (1977) described advertising’s function as the conveyor of information to consumers about goods and services, but he adds it does so in the context of “a world of fables, morality plays, reflections of power and priorities in our society” (28). Utilizing this description, advertising may be analyzed using fantasy themes. In analyzing advertising this way, certain fantasies may be identified as more central to our society.

Alperstein (2003) said, “Advertising competes with other institutions—political, economic, and social—for a place in public discourses and within the private imagination” (Alperstein, 2003, p. 6). In proposing this argument, that advertising is a worthy communication artifact to be studied, the notions of these scholars are essential in beginning to understand how public opinion is formed. However, one must also be careful in making assertions about advertising’s impact. It is necessary to heed the warning of Alperstein:
The inability to commandeerr all the media or to create messages that reach a diverse culture suggests that we do not live in an age dominated by advertising. Advertisements lack the ability to reach all of the people all of the time even though oftentimes it feels as though we are inundated by commercial messages. In order to be considered a dominant institution, advertising would have to do more than bombard consumers with images and messages, and consumers would have to actually pay attention, internalize the messages, and perhaps act on those messages and images (7).

As noted by Zhang (2004, p. 159) “cultural values are the core of the advertising message.” Furthermore, Foot (1999) argues that television transmits cultural values. While it is impossible to determine the entire efficiency and effectiveness advertising has in persuading people, it must be noted that advertising is at worst a mirror into what the advertisers perceive society believes, and, at best, is a minute institution for societal change that plays an important role in the socialization process.

### 1.3.1.1 History of Advertising

Historically, the advertiser prided himself/herself on being in touch with public tastes. As such, these advertisers had to understand not only the public in terms of their values, but also in understanding what the public wanted to purchase. In this aspect, advertisers have historically seen their role as heralds of modernity. During World War I, advertisers were acknowledged as powerful entities of social change, influencing public attitudes in addition to selling products. In doing so, advertising was seen as a “modern” economic force, with “modern” promotions of new urban habits of hygiene, dress and style consciousness (Marchand, 1985; Lears, 1994).

In an attempt to define what was new (and therefore what is not), advertisers shifted their focus from the factory concern to the consumer. Seeing the need of Americans to secure their
own self-identities in the new urban America, they changed their focus to how their products answered the call for discontent. This resulted in advertisers attempting to correlate their product with success in life. Therefore, advertisers sought to show people who use a specific product as having their lives improved by the use of this product (Marchand, 1985).

The last major effect advertising had on society dealt with society’s perception of the advertiser. Early on, advertisers were perceived mainly as charlatans. They sold items that were predominately patent medicines (Campbell, 2005; Marchand, 1985; Lears, 1994). These patent medicines were, at best, questionable, in terms of meeting the claims of the advertisers. In essence, these advertisers had a reputation for misleading the public. It was not until the twentieth century when advertisers began to hold each other responsible for the messages they were sending out. After creating several organizations to monitor the messages sent to the public, advertisers’ reputation grew. In fact, advertisers became advisers to the public as opposed to sellers (Marchand, 1985; Lears, 1994). As a result of the advertising campaigns of the 1920s and 1930s, the public saw advertisers as offering advice that even friends and family would not mention (Marchand, 1985). By this, Marchand meant advertisers would tell a person if they were overweight, if they suffered from an embarrassing malady (dandruff, hair loss, body odor), and finally would tell the public how to remedy this malady. Moreover, Marchand (1985) mentioned a time where the American public trusted advertisers to “offer advice that even family and friends will not tell you” (Marchand, 1985, p. 344).

This new stance on advertisers was not accepted for very long. As Schudson (1984) stated, advertising’s function is to legitimize differences between the products; however, it relies on claims that may not be fully informative. Furthermore, advertising generally is also considered to have less value than other types of media content (Huh, DeLorme, & Reid, 2004).
For instance, people place more trust in news media than advertising and is generally viewed with a high degree of skepticism (Calabro, 2003; Savitt, Lowery and Haefner, 1998) and negative feelings (Thorson & Friestad, 1989).

1.4 Intersection of Advertising and Gender

The intersection of advertising and gender is an under-explored area in relation to its prevalence in society. However, such study has become increasingly popular in the past 10 years. Advertising plays an important role in the socialization process, which is important not only in learning how to perform gender but also in learning how to “fit” into society. Park (2005) notes, “Because many previous studies have shown that mass media exposure can be nearly ubiquitously harmful to young women, we can safely assume that the actual influence of mass media on individuals and their peers is reasonably consistent” (598). Signorielli and Lears (1992) state, “The role of television in…socialization has become an area of considerable concern and the topic of a good deal of research in the past quarter century because television is such a pervasive part of practically everyone’s life” (Signorielli & Lears, 1992, p. 157). As such, the images presented on television play a role in the socialization of the viewers. Specifically, these images provide a site for knowledge to be exchanged between the advertisers and the viewers of the advertisements.

Lull (2003, p. 63) states, “Relationships between and among major information-diffusing, socializing agencies of a society and the interacting, cumulative, socially accepted ideological orientations they create and sustain is the essence of hegemony.” Lull (2003) explains hegemony as “dominance and subordination in the field of relations structured by power. But it is more than just social power itself; it is a method of gaining power and maintaining it” (Lull, 2003, p. 61). Hegemony is not a consistent, constant state of affairs. It can be lost or changed. Ideology
or the dominant way of thinking) is composed of texts that are able to adapt and change over time, and mediated communication reflects these changes. In this case, advertising is one of the texts used to convey the dominant cultural ideology.

Advertising does more than just transmit a cultural ideology. Lull (2003) argues that advertising, just like societal values, pervades every aspect of everyday life. Kellner (2003) echoes this sentiment by stating “Media culture provides the materials for constructing views of the world, behavior and identities” (Kellner, 2003, p. 10). Lipsitz (2003) cites the role of television in the 1950s, which, he asserts, caused American culture to shift from its previous cultural patterns into a consumer-based culture, “television provided a forum for redefining American ethic, class and family identities into consumer identities” (Lipsitz, 2003, p. 43). To accomplish this, television reshaped moral values, psychological viewpoints, and political viewpoints of American society. Davis (2003) echoes this stance by stating “in the first half of the 20th century the entertainment conglomerates were central in creating a nearly all-penetrating national and international mass culture first through film, later through animation, popular music and televised sports” (Davis, 2003, p. 160). Taking this notion of the overall impact of the media one step further, Davis (2003) argues, “in new spaces (created by media) the core cultural ideas are not only embodied by the products (in advertising), they are the products themselves. Citizens have been reduced into consumers…” (Davis, 2003, p. 168). Jhally (2003, p. 249) states “because we live in a consumer culture, it is difficult for us to locate the origins of our beliefs and values. There are many examples of slogans where the slogan has become so ingrained into the culture; it is accepted into cultural beliefs.”

Dines and Humez (2003) argue that advertising normalizes consumption in a capitalistic society to such a point where we cannot think of ourselves existing outside of such a culture. We
cannot separate ourselves from the media images and the culture they create. Furthermore, the media creates and reinforces the idea gender is binary. This belief is produced and reproduced through advertising images. Davis (2000, p. 6) asserts that in order to understand the social impact of the advertising industry on the society, “one has to only look at the impact on gendered ideologies.”

Katz (2003, p. 305) states “there is an absence of literature in regard to how gender roles are constructed especially when analyzing media effects in constructing gender roles.” Therefore, it is essential to begin to uncover and understand how the media, specifically advertising, is essential in constructing gender roles.

1.5 The Super Bowl

Since its relatively modest start in 1967, the NFL Super Bowl has blossomed into one of the most expensive and most watched annual media events in the United States, with a growing world audience (Martin and Reeves 2001), the vast majority of whom are boys and men. The media event does have a growing female viewership (Falchini, 2006). Increasingly over the past decade, Super Bowl commercials have been specially created for the event. Newspapers, magazines, television news shows, and Web sites now routinely run pre-Super Bowl stories that focus specifically on the ads, and several media outlets run post-Super Bowl polls to determine which ads were the most and least favorite (Messner & Montez De Oca, 2005). Post-game lists of "winners" and "losers" focus as much on the corporate sponsors and their ads as on the two teams that actually played in a football game between the commercials. For this project, Super Bowl television commercials were analyzed. As a large audience watches it, the Super Bowl commercials draw as much publicity as the game, and the event itself is the starting point for future advertising campaigns for the next year.
1.6 Hypotheses

Previous studies (Bretl & Cantor, 1988; Courtney & Whipple, 1974; Culley & Bennett, 1976; Dominick & Rauch, 1972; Lundstorm & Sciglimpaglia, 1977; McArthur & Resko, 1975; O’Donnell & O’Donnell, 1978; Schneider & Schneider, 1979) have noted that females are consistently underrepresented in regard to “nonextraneous” or Central characters. As a result of this, the first hypothesis in this study was formulated:

H1. Females will be underrepresented in the commercials analyzed.

Moreover, Wood (2003) and Faludi (2000) note that there has been a shift in the types of representations each gender enacts. As such, the second hypothesis was formulated:

H2. There will be a change in the types of roles represented by each gender.

1.7 Guiding Research Questions

A series of research questions were developed to facilitate investigation of the above hypothesis. They are:

1. What gender roles are most frequently present and clear in televised Super Bowl commercials as a form of media?

2. What are the correlations, if any, between the gender roles portrayed?

3. Has there been any movement toward androgyny as an acceptable form of behavior in relation to gender?

4. Is a specific group displaying more crossover in relation to these categories?

5. What does the movement across these lines indicate in terms of our society’s values and how they may have changed (since 1974)?

1.8 Methodology
To answer these questions, it was essential to choose a method that allowed for reliable and consistent measurement of gender roles. Furthermore, the method needed to be adaptable to incorporate different categories for analysis. Finally, the method needed to be thoroughly grounded in research. In other words, it had to be something widely used and accepted as a legitimate research technique.

Thematic analysis fit all of these categories and offered a flexibility and depth other research techniques failed to achieve. Thematic analysis is a process for encoding qualitative information, and it bridges the gap between qualitative and quantitative research. Thematic analysis is virtually an adapted version of content analysis. However, instead of looking at specific words or phrases, themes are analyzed. A theme is “a pattern found in the information that at minimum describes and organizes possible observations or at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon” (Boyatzis, 1998, p. vii). A benefit of thematic analysis, according to Boyatzis (1998), is it allows for analysis of themes at different levels of manifestation. In other words, the impact of a theme can be analyzed whether it is at the manifest level (directly observable in the information) or at the latent level (underlying the phenomenon). Furthermore, the usefulness of thematic analysis allows for translations across cultures. One does not have to be familiar with the dialect or specific language of a culture; instead, themes can be drawn out of rituals, visual depictions, or behaviors as well as written texts or spoken language. Thematic analysis was also used, according to Boyatzis (1998), in order to enhance the clarity of existing results or findings of different forms of communication. Finally, thematic analysis incorporated the views of the audience and the impact of the message in both a quantitative and qualitative way.
The encoding of these themes required a specific codebook, reliable coders, and patience on behalf of the researcher and coders. As Boyatzis (1998, p. xiii) stated, “Transforming themes into codes does not in and of itself create a link between qualitative and quantitative methods. The computation or articulation of interrater reliability...must occur as well.” In this regard it is essential to adequately train the coders to be able to identify what Boyatzis (1998, p. 11) calls a “coding moment” and how to code that moment correctly. This involved training coders to look for specific themes, testing them to see the coding was done reliably, developing easily understandable codes, and interpreting the information and themes in relation to a concept or theory.

1.9 Framework

Several social science theories drove the analysis of these televised advertisements, as well as several communication-based theories. The notion of television having an impact on society dates back to Albert Bandura’s social learning theory. Bandura believed “we can learn by observing others” (Griffin, 2003, p. 31). Specifically, Bandura was intent on explaining media effects on adults and children. Bandura warned (1963, p. 12), “children and adults acquire attitudes, emotional responses, and new styles of conduct through filmed and televised modeling.” Utilizing this specific statement, a person can start to realize the effects television has on the viewers.

Constructivism, a direct descendant of social learning theory, looks at how cognitive constructs help explain the “cognitive complexity” of a certain individual. According Jesse Delia (2003), originator of the idea, cognitive constructs describe how human perception influences the skillful production and interpretation of a variety of social influence messages. The constructivist theory was based on symbolic interactionism and George Kelly’s personal construct theory.
Utilizing this theory, one can argue that the personal constructs of the viewing public are essential to interpreting the messages advertisers sent to the viewing public. Furthermore, this study looked at the role of media in portraying different constructs to the public concerning gender.

Numerous studies (Belenky et al, 1986; Blankenship, 1995; Brumberg, 1997) regarding feminism and the impact of television have focused on how media has affected feminine sex roles. Specifically, these studies have analyzed how television created an expectation about how females should act in traditional Western society. Using Gerbner’s basic premise of cultivation, these scholars have begun to unearth the impact of media on sex role norms. Specifically, these scholars have utilized the importance of frequency of certain themes in determining the impact of media.

Previous research was analyzed to determine what roles are considered masculine and feminine (David & Brannon 1976; Kanter, 1977; Goffman, 1979). While David & Brannon (1976) did list four traditional masculine characteristics, they did not look into feminine characteristics. Kanter (1977) lists four stereotypical feminine characteristics, but does not delve into masculine characteristics. Typically, studies combine these two studies and look for frequencies of these categories. However, these categories were vague and were not typical in commercials. In an effort to understand how gender roles were portrayed in commercials, it was necessary to find categories that were present in commercials. The categories were also specialized toward one gender; therefore, it was impossible to assess if there had been any movement away from one stereotype.

In contrast, Chafetz (1974) conducted a longitudinal study utilizing focus groups. In this study, Chafetz identifies sixteen acceptable behaviors, eight for men and eight for women. Each
of these themes focused on specific behaviors that are considered acceptable for men and women. This study’s findings were more useful in determining acceptable behaviors for men and women, and efforts to understand how far both men and women have advanced in terms of acceptable behaviors. This study was also more useful than the David & Brannon study and the Kanter study because it looked at behaviors instead of stereotypes. In an attempt to take a new approach to this area of study, this study coded specific sex-typed behaviors, instead of using stereotypes, to assess gender in commercials. Chafetz’s study provided a foundation for examining behaviors and the purpose of this study was to identify how televised commercials portray acceptable behavior for men and women. With a suitable set of themes located, a codebook was constructed. Using Gerbner’s notion of frequency of exposure as an important factor of public consciousness, along with Boyatzis’ notion of measuring theme intensity, several quantitative measures were identified for use in the codebook.

The sample chosen for analysis was the Super Bowl, specifically all of the commercials aired during the Super Bowl between 2003 and 2007. These were available through the ifilm.com web site. These commercials were chosen for several reasons. Multiple studies suggest sport is a powerful cultural institution (Kinkema and Harris, 1998) and have linked sport to identity and ideology (Duquin, 1989; Messner, 1990, 1992, 1994, 2002; Sugden and Tomlinson, 2002). In American sport, there is no greater sporting venue than the Super Bowl. According to Super bowl web-site, XL “was covered by over 3,000 media members, 800 million people watched the game on television in 229 countries and 170 of those countries also heard the broadcast.” Of those 800 million viewers, at least 50 million were women (Falchini, 2006). This indicates that even though an overwhelming majority of men watch the Super Bowl, a large number of women watch it as well.
The Super Bowl advertisements were also ideal for another reason. Many people watch the Super Bowl just for the commercials. In fact, the Super Bowl is considered by many in the advertising world to be the premiere place to launch new commercials. Memorable commercials such as “Mean Joe Green” in 1980, “1984” in 1984, and the “Bud Bowl” from 1989-1996 have remained in public memory for many years after they first aired. Recently, other memorable commercials have aired, such as the debut of the Budweiser Frogs in 1995 and the E-Trade Monkey in 2000 and the Monster.com “When I Grow Up” in 1999. Interestingly, however, these commercials are typically focused on male consumers even though a large percentage of women report watching Super Bowl commercials (140 million viewers total in 2004). Even more interesting is how these commercials seem to create a vision of how a man or woman should act. This study attempted not only to identify the sex roles present in the Super Bowl commercials, but also to identify which sex roles were the most prevalent.

In this thematic analysis, three outside “coders” looked at all 284 Super Bowl commercials aired between 2003 and 2007. The commercials were readily available for viewing on ifilm.com. Coders were trained by the researcher and were given a sample of fifteen commercials to “practice” coding on their own. After achieving an acceptable level of reliability, which Smith (1992) states should be higher than 0.85 (determined by calculated Krippendorf’s Alpha), each coder was given one-third of the commercials to code.

Chapter two provides an in-depth description of the methodology employed in this study as well as background research explaining the chosen method. Chapter Three presents findings and includes an analysis of the findings. Chapter Four explores the dimensions and effects of these findings. Chapter Five includes not only conclusions, but also the implications of the findings of this study.
CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction to Methodology

This study used a thematic analysis to identify and examine themes in advertisements aired during the Super Bowl over a five-year span. This section explains the history of thematic analyses, describes how to conduct a thematic analysis, and explains why this particular method was chosen. This includes a discussion of the merits of thematic analyses as well as a discussion of how this method was translated from literature to electronic media. The next section discusses why the particular coding scheme for this project was chosen, with particular attention to the categories for coding. The next section includes a discussion of the artifact chosen for analysis and an explanation for why it was chosen. The following section includes a discussion of the scale of the project, reliability measures and formulas utilized. Finally, there is discussion of the theory utilized in the project to lend depth to the analysis.

2.2 Thematic Content Analysis

Boyatzis (1998) noted, “qualitative methods have had a rough time gaining acceptance in the mainstream of social and behavioral science research. One of the major reasons has been the lack of methods for bridging or translating between the worlds of qualitative and quantitative research” (vi). While quantitative research looks for hard, reproducible facts using the scientific method as a basis for all research, qualitative research uses interpretation and subjectivity to draw insight into a text. A thematic content analysis is one of the few research tools available that allows a researcher to merge both qualitative and quantitative analyses. Boyatzis (1998) notes:
Thematic analysis is a process for encoding qualitative information. The encoding requires an explicit “code.” This may be a list of themes; a complex model with themes, indicators, and qualifications that are causally related; or something in between these two forms (vi-vii).

Boyatzis (1998) argues that a thematic analysis provides scholars, observers, and researchers the ability to use a wide variety of types of information in a systematic manner that increases the accuracy or sensitivity in understanding and interpreting observations about people, events, situations, and organizations. Prior to any more discussion concerning thematic analysis, it is imperative to define a theme. Krippendorf (1980) defines a theme as, “a pattern found in the text; be it visual, verbal or written” (62). Themes can serve many different functions ranging from describing and organizing observations to interpreting the text. Furthermore, themes can be derived from previous research, theory, or generated inductively (Boyatzis, 1998). A theme provides more than just an interesting way to look at a specific artifact. Cohen (1946, p. 41) stated, “a theme…is analogous to the “laws” of a particular culture.” Therefore, identifying themes, within any specific artifact, is essentially attempting to identify what a specific culture believes to be “true.”

Thematic analysis has predominately been used by scholars in literature; however, it is not solely used in divining meaning from literary texts. According to King and Mitry (2000), a thematic analysis can be used to examine other forms of media, such as film. Fereday (2006) used thematic analyses in coding conversations. Aronson (1994) also used thematic analyses in coding ethnographic interviews. Crabtree and Miller (1992) list a variety of fields in social science in which thematic analyses may be used. Specifically, Crabtree and Miller (1992) cite psychology, sociology, anthropology, communication, sociolinguistics, and other applied
professions such as nursing, educational research, market research and evaluation research as possible fields that can use this methodology. Specifically, in the field of communication, Crabtree and Miller (1992), note that both patterns and rules of communication, and symbolic interactionism are viable areas of research. In symbolic interactionism, Crabtree and Miller (1992) state, this methodology is useful in analyzing how “humans create and interact in a symbolic environment” (Crabtree & Miller, 1992, p. 24). By using this statement as a starting point for analysis, it is evident this methodology is ideal for this type of study.

As stated earlier, a thematic analysis lends itself to a variety of uses for both qualitative and quantitative use. Quantitative users might use it to incorporate open-ended or operant measures into their studies; qualitative researchers can use thematic analyses to give statistical validity to their observations (Boyatzis, 1998). However, just converting themes into codes and then counting the frequency or intensity does not provide a link to both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies; (each of these terms and other terms regarding quantitative measures are discussed in detail later). Instead, it is essential to make sure that there is a similar perception between judges who analyzed the artifacts. Furthermore, the coders must also strive to keep the same viewpoint throughout their coding, and because of this, the coding must be completed in a timely manner (Babbie, 2004).

The ability to code for a thematic analysis is composed of four basic stages (Boyatzis, 1998): 1) sense themes, 2) identify themes reliably, 3) develop codes, and 4) interpret the information and themes and apply it (either through a theory or a conceptual framework) to draw conclusions. Each of these steps requires not only time to ensure “completeness” but also energy to maintain consistency. Therefore, it is essential to explain thoroughly each of these steps in detail.
The first step in a thematic analysis is to sense themes (Boyatzis, 1998). In other words, the coders must not only recognize “codable moments” (moments that are worthy of coding) but also “uncodable moments” (moments not worthy of coding). Therefore, it is essential for the coders to be extensively trained to identify codable moments. To train a coder to identify themes, the researcher must literally teach the coders to see the world a different way. As such, training a coder in a thematic analysis requires much time and effort. As opposed to traditional content analyses, where the coders are given words or phrases, the thematic analysis requires the coder to determine what the text tells the audience on several different levels. These levels may range from obvious messages (e.g. specifically stating all women must be beautiful to be successful) to latent (e.g. portraying only beautiful women as successful).

The second stage of thematic analyses is to be able to code consistently and reliably (Babbie, 2004). Therefore, intercoder reliability measures must be taken prior to allowing the coders to continue coding on their own, and coders must be properly trained in order to ensure consistent coding. Intercoder reliability is a measure used to determine if individual coders are coding an artifact the same way. Tinsley and Weiss (2000) emphasized that intercoder agreement is needed because it measures "the extent to which the different judges tend to assign exactly the same rating to each object" (Tinsley & Weiss, 2000, p. 98). Even when intercoder agreement is used for variables at the interval or ratio levels of measurement (e.g. the coders both code a “5” on a scale of 1 to 5), actual agreement on the coded values (even if similar rather than identical values “count”) is the basis for assessment.

The third step required a codebook to be constructed and for that codebook to provide adequate choices in coding. This aspect was one of the more labor-intensive aspects of thematic analysis. The codebook must not only contain categories that were present in the object being
coded, but the categories must also have provided adequate examples (indicators) or thorough
descriptions of the themes in order to ensure proper coding. Furthermore, the themes must have
been either comprehensive in terms of content covered or provided opportunities to explicate the
themes present in the object being studied. Finally, the coders must have been subjected to the
message, and it is left to them to identify their impressions.

After training the coders, and ensuring both accuracy (they were coding the same things)
and precision (they were coding consistently) in the coding, the results were then analyzed using
quantitative means. These included running tests such as frequency, scalar measures and
clustering themes together using measures such as correlations; each of the measures used in this
study are discussed in detail below.

2.2.1 **Strengths and Weaknesses of Thematic Analysis:**

According to Boyatzis (1998), there are three main obstacles to a thematic analysis in
research. These are projection, sampling, and mood and style. Each of these issues could have
drastically influenced the research conducted. Therefore, it was imperative to address each issue
fully.

Projection is an ego defense mechanism (Freud, 1925). A person projects a personal
characteristic onto another individual to understand the motive behind the action taken. When
ambiguous qualitative information, specifically visual information, is analyzed, the opportunity
exists for the researcher to place his/her own biases onto the artifact being studied. In order to
keep these issues from compromising the integrity of the research project, several steps may be
taken (Boyatzis, 1998). These include: develop an explicit code; establish validity; establish
reliability; use several different coders to code, and give them (the coders) the opportunity to
have input into the coding scheme; attempt to find a coding scheme that is easily identified; and
practice coding. Boyatzis (1998) and Krippendorf (1980) explained that in order to undertake the first step—developing an explicit code—researchers must first identify what is to be coded and describe it in detail. This means to not only name the code, and provide a definition for the code, but also to provide a description for the code as well. The coder must be shown what it is that is to be coded and what is not to be coded. Finally, Boyatzis (1998) explained that several examples must be given to the coders as a reference to revisit when the coders code.

The second step was to establish validity. According to Krippendorf (1980) and Babbie (2004), there are four types of validity: face, semantic, criterion-related, and construct validity. Face validity is if the content categories appear valid to the researcher. This is the lowest type of validity. Semantic validity requires the researcher to ask someone who is familiar with the area of study and the terminology in it to look at the categories and see if they “make sense” to them. Criterion-related validity requires the researcher to give his or her content categories a “dry-run” where they look to see if the categories as equivalent, exhaustive, and mutually exclusive. He or she also looks to see if the content categories need further explanation. The last type of validity is construct validity. This occurs by relating these content categories to previous research or theory to give the further validity. If any of these steps fail, the researcher must rework the content categories and attempt to “fix” the problems. This type of validity is generally considered the strongest and most reliable measure of validity. The way the content categories in this study were constructed (from previous research) construct validity was used.

The third step, according to Boyatzis (1998), is to establish reliability. Reliability requires the researcher to test to see if the coders are coding the same things. Krippendorf (1980) outlines a strategy to determine reliability. After coders are found, they must be trained in relation to the instrument used. After the coders are trained, which occurs when the researcher describes how to
code different content categories, the coders should be given a sample of equivalent to 10 percent of the population examined. This is done to ensure the coders are coding the same categories to the same degree. Once the coders finish coding, intercoder reliability is determined. There are many ways to check for reliability (e.g. Holsti method, Krippendorf’s alpha). Smith (1992) states that 85 percent agreement or higher is required for a thematic analysis. This level of proficiency (85 percent agreement) must be attained in order for a thematic analysis to be considered acceptable. This is because thematic analysis coders not only code for manifest content (evident content) but also latent content (content on a less obvious level); in coding both types of content, it is imperative to have high intercoder reliability (Smith, 1992; Henry, 1956). After a satisfactory level of reliability is reached, the sample is then divided between the coders. If 85 percent is not reached, then the instrument needs to be refined (may need to clarify content categories) and the coders need to be re-trained.

The second issue with a thematic analysis deals with sample size. Much like any quantitative analysis, the issue of representativeness of the sample is central. Babbie (2004, p. 189) defines representativeness as:

The quality of a sample of having the same distribution of characteristics as the population from which it was selected. By implication, descriptions and explanations derived from an analysis of the sample may be assumed to represent the similar ones in the population. Representativeness is enhanced by probability sampling and provides for generalizability and the use of inferential statistics.

Therefore, the quality of a sample is essential to understand not only how many conclusions can be drawn from the analysis but also to determine the reliability of the results and the type of analyses which can be conducted. In this case, the sample chosen was a convenience sample, of
five years worth of commercials aired during the Super Bowl. The reason for this choice is discussed later in this chapter.

Finally, mood and style also affect the perception of theme presence. In other words, internal and external factors may impede the perception of themes (Boyatzis, 1998). For instance, a tired coder could misinterpret codes. The coder may also have been given a codebook that was insufficient and, as a result, would become confused while coding. In order to combat these barriers, it is necessary for the coding to be broken up and conducted over a period to assist in alleviating these barriers.

The “interpretation of impression” aspect of thematic analysis is both a strength and weakness of this tool of analysis. While the goal of this project is to identify the images the media shows its consumers, particularly those concerning acceptable gender role behaviors, it is extremely difficult to train coders to perceive the same message to the same degree of clarity. This is due to each coder having a different frame of reference. While it is useful to obtain different opinions on what each message means to each coder, for the purpose of this study, it is first necessary to obtain uniform coding from both coders. This results in a uniform view of the text. Therefore, the selection of quality coders was essential. The coders not only had to be able to identify themes at various levels of presentation, but they also had to be able to identify these themes accurately (in accordance with each other) and precisely (consistently). This also required an extensive training period where the coders were trained, given sample selections, and then reliability was tested. Since the reliability was high enough (over 0.85), intercoder reliability was deemed adequate.

Aside from errors in coding, thematic analysis suffers from another shortcoming as well. For instance, in developing a code system, it typically takes longer to develop thematic analysis
Thematic analysis provides many unique benefits to research. First, it allows a scholar to “see” within a text (Boyatzis, 1998; Daniels, 2006; Kassing, 2002; Quinn, 2006; Turner and Kriseck, 2006). Thematic analysis allows researchers to break out of their frameworks and assumptions concerning what concepts are “research worthy” and what are not. Furthermore, it allows researchers to understand there is a critical methodology to utilize when analyzing any artifact.

The second benefit of a thematic analysis was that it merged both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Quantitative methodology requires the researcher to be so specific that their findings are almost inconsequential. What thematic analysis does is allow the researcher to choose an artifact and apply broad qualitative approaches to in-depth quantitative approaches and, as a result, creates an in-depth understanding of a broader aspect of research. As such, a thematic analysis provides the ability to understand an artifact (or series of artifacts) better than using other quantitative or qualitative methodologies.

2.3 Themes Chosen

The themes chosen for this project come from a study conducted by Janet Chafetz (1974). This project came from focus group work conducted by Chafetz. This study consisted of 13 small groups (five to six people per group) of students of both sexes who discussed the question: “What kind of words and phrases do you think most Americans use to characterize males compared to females, or ‘masculinity’ versus ‘femininity’” (Chafetz, 1974, p. 35). In essence, Chafetz was attempting to establish identifiers for each gender role. Furthermore, since the
words or phrases resulted in descriptors, which were mostly behavioral-based, these descriptors can be identified as acceptable behaviors.

Chafetz also took these descriptors and categorized them into different characteristics. These characteristics were separated into seven different categories for masculine roles and seven different categories for feminine roles. These categories are typically diametrically opposed to each other. For instance in the physical trait category, masculine individuals were considered to be virile, athletic and strong; sloppy, less worried about appearance and aging; and brave. Feminine individuals were considered weak, helpless, dainty, and non-athletic; worried about aging and appearance; sensual; and graceful (Chafetz, 1974). The main issues with these categories set up by Chafetz are the depth and breadth of the descriptors. While these descriptors are thorough, it is difficult to identify if one particular aspect of each descriptor is present or if all aspects are present. Later on, Chafetz remedies this by providing the list utilized in this experiment. In this list, Chafetz (1974) lists nine different categories for each gender. The masculine traits are: athletic and strong; worry less about appearance and aging; breadwinner; sexually experienced; unemotional, stoic; logical, rational, objective, and intellectual; leader, dominating; independent and free; aggressive; and success-oriented, ambitious. Chafetz (1974) lists traditional feminine traits as: weak, non-athletic; worry about appearance and aging; domestic; virginal; emotional, sentimental; scatterbrained, inconsistent, intuitive; follower, subservient; dependent, overprotected; passive; and easily intimidated, shy. Since these themes are more performance-based themes (they are visually evident), the identification of these themes required adaptation of the existing structure for two reasons: 1) the themes required identifiers, that is, key words to help categorize each theme, and 2) it was necessary to help remove some of the societal stigmas associated with these signifiers. Listed below are the
adjusted names of each theme and their descriptors for traditional male and female behaviors that were used in this study:

2.3.1 Traditional Masculine Behaviors

1. Warrior—Person is virile, athletic, strong, brave, and aggressive.
2. Sexually Aggressive—Person is sexually aggressive, experienced; single status is acceptable.
3. Appearance Unconcerned—Person is unconcerned about appearance and aging.
4. Functional—Person is the primary provider, breadwinner.
5. Risk Taker—Person is uninhibited, adventurous, unconcerned with risks.
6. Unemotional—Person is unemotional or stoic.
7. Upwardly Mobile—Person is success-oriented, ambitious, “climbing the ladder”.
8. Leader—Person is the leader, dominating; a disciplinarian; independent, and individualistic.
9. Intellectual—Person is logical, intellectual, rational, objective and practical.

2.3.2 Traditional Feminine Behaviors:

1. Weak—Person attempts to avoid conflict whenever possible; person is shown as weak.
2. Sexually Passive—Person is not concerned with sexual gratification.
3. Appearance concerned—Person is concerned about appearance and aging.
4. Dependent—Person is not the breadwinner of the family; may or may not contribute to the income.
5. Safety Concerned—Person unwilling to take risks.
6. Loving—Person is comfortable with showing emotions.
7. Stuck in the Mud—Person is not ambitious (in work or in life); failing to, or barely meeting the status quo. Person is not moving up in the company.
8. Follower—Person is a follower, meek; a mindless drone.
9. Subjective—Emotions play a part in the person’s decision-making process.

This specific set of themes was chosen because it was constructed by the public or a section of the public through a set of focus groups. Therefore, if the public believed these certain behaviors were acceptable behaviors for specific genders, then several other possible analyses can be explored. Since Chafetz’s study was conducted in the early 1970s at least two feminist movements have commenced, and an analysis of the media (discussed later) should provide a measuring stick to see if any progress has been achieved about acceptable feminine behaviors.
This analysis did not stop with just these themes based on the work of Chafetz. Instead, a qualitative approach was used when constructing the final theme, by offering the coders an opportunity to fill in an “other” category and explain it.

2.4 Artifact Chosen

For this project, Super Bowl television commercials were analyzed. As stated in Chapter One, the choice of this specific venue and the commercial advertisements was not random. The significance of the Super Bowl in global and American culture cannot be easily measured.

Several studies have concluded sport is a powerful cultural institution (Kinkema and Harris, 1998) and have linked sport to identity and ideology in both males and females (Duquin, 1989; Messner, 1985, 1990, 1992, 1994, 2000; Sugden and Tomlinson, 2002). In American sport, there is no greater sporting venue than the Super Bowl. According to the Super Bowl Web site, Super Bowl XLI was watched by 93.2 million viewers in the United States. Of those 93.2 million viewers, a significant portion of the viewers, 44%, were women (CNN.com, 2005), so even though a majority of men watch the Super Bowl, a large number of women watch it as well.

Messner and Montez de Oca (2006) note that Super Bowl commercials are an integral part of the Super Bowl experience. “Newspapers, magazine, television news shows, and Web sites now routinely run pre-Super Bowl stories that focus specifically on the ads and several media outlets run post-Super Bowl polls to determine which ads were the most and least favorite” (1879-1880). Indeed, the television commercials that air during the Super Bowl sometimes draw more viewer attention than the actual game. As such, the Super Bowl is not only seen as a major sporting venue, but also as a site for advertising campaigns to begin. Advertising is considered to be both the mouthpiece of society and also as a molder of societal beliefs (Grossberg, Wartella, Whitney & Wise, 2006). This particular event, where advertising is
central, is key to understanding how society functions in regard to media effects. Since the Super Bowl is a large media-driven event, where commercials are a centerpiece, and since it happens only once a year, it can be used as a “measuring stick” to see if any major changes have occurred within American society.

2.5 Coding

In coding the commercials, the coders were given a code sheet that asked for more than just themes within the commercial. The coders were also instructed to code for the specific product the commercial was advertising. This was done to see if any specific product, or type of product, was more likely to portray stereotypical behaviors or promote change within acceptable behaviors. Scholarship does suggest that there is such a link. For example, Stabile (2003), argued that Nike’s advertising campaigns attempt to create a cultural view by tying sport involvement with feminine advances. Jhally (2003) argues the commodity image-system provides a particular vision of the world, by way of validating oneself by what a person has rather than what a person is. In this system, the commodity is a depiction of what a person is psychologically, socially and physically. By presenting a commodity as a part of the image system, the advertisements reinforce gender identity.

Drawing upon Erving Goffman’s work, Jhally (2003) points out it is not how men and women act that is important, rather it is how we think men and women should act that matters. By associating specific behaviors with these products, a viewer will associate these products with gender identity. Taking this argument one step further, Katz (2003) notes that historically, gender in advertising has reinforced differences. However, with the rise of the metrosexual in 21st century U.S. culture, the task of stressing differences has become more difficult, which results in reverting back to violent masculine images. One way this is done is by associating violent male
icons with history (Katz, 2003). This is portraying men as always being violent, equating masculine products and behaviors with historically violent characters (i.e. condoms are equated with warriors). Therefore, an understanding of the type of products associated with specific behaviors allow for a greater understanding of the intersection between gender and advertising-based media. In an attempt to identify this correlation, each theme identified was analyzed if it was focused on depicting the behaviors toward males or females.

2.6 Sample and Procedure

In this project, three outside trained coders were utilized in coding. These coders were two Caucasian women between the ages of twenty-two and thirty, from a mid-sized, Midwestern university. The women chosen were in the first year of their graduate program. These women were also in the middle class in socioeconomic status. The other coder was a Caucasian, male of middle class between twenty-five and thirty years of age. This coder was also of middle-class standing and at the time, in the second year of graduate school in the same mid-sized Midwestern university.

After an initial training session, each coder was given a sample of ten commercials to code. Upon receiving the sample, intercoder reliability was assessed using Krippendorf’s alpha. An acceptable level was achieved ($\alpha=0.90$). After this, each coder was given a sample of commercials to code.

Finally, this thematic analysis required some sort of quantitative analysis to these qualitative-based themes. In this specific analysis, several measures were utilized: correlation, frequency, and intensity.

In terms of frequency measures, Brown (1990) reported that repetition of stereotypical or novel images on TV, and their reappearance in other media (e.g. print or radio), reinforces
learning of the viewers. Griffin, Viswanath, and Schwartz (1994); Bresnahan et. al (2001); Potter, Wetherell, and Chitty (1991); and Allan and Coltrane (1996) note that frequency is an important measure to understand how representational forms are disseminated to the public. The more frequent these forms are disseminated to the public, the more likely they are to be accepted or viewed as acceptable. Furthermore, analyses of media effects concerning eating disorders concluded that increased exposure to media resulted in a lower body image for females (Park, 2005). As such, the frequency of specific media messages is essential to understanding the impact of these messages on the viewing public. Even Gerbner and his colleagues (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli & Shanahan, 2002) echo this sentiment in attempting to correlate the amount of television exposure to attitudes about violence. Moreover, Southwell (2000) states, “at the media content level, the sheer prevalence of an advertisement… should predict (average) encoded exposure” (317). Chaffee and Wilson (1977) and, later, Hornik (1997) have suggested that the sheer physical prevalence of information in an environment should be predictive of individual likelihood of exposure to that information. Many commercial entities underscore this point, depicting exposure, for example, as a function of simple correspondence between the prevalence of content within an information environment and aggregate availability of individuals to engage that content (Webster, Phalen, & Lichty, 2000, p. 117). Watanabe, Nanaz, and Sasaki (2001, p. 84) emphasized the importance of understanding message frequencies as they noted:

When we are bombarded by unimportant information we hope that by consciously ignoring it, we will escape its effects. This belief now seems unwarranted. The brain seems to equate frequency with ecological importance,
and even though this may once have been a good strategy, it may be less adaptive in the context of our manipulative, modern-day media.

Therefore, it is essential to understand the frequency of a theme in any environment is an adequate predictor of exposure to the masses. Exposure, as stated earlier, is a predictor of impact on society.

Another measure utilized in this study is intensity. According to Boyatzis (1998, p. 134), “intensity scoring may be part of the code. That is, the code may specify levels of the theme.” Moreover, Boyatzis indicates how intensity has a positive correlation on perception. This also proves to be true in a logical sense. If, for instance, a person is instructed to behave a certain way, the intensity (or clarity) of the instruction would lead to different results. If a person were directly told to behave a certain way or something negative will happen, then he or she would be more likely to act that way. If, however, the person were ambiguously told this, then they would be less likely to interpret that message correctly. Furthermore, Stewart and Schubert (2006) argue that “extensive evidence shows humans automatically process stimuli that may or may not be consciously experienced” (Stewart & Schubert, 2006, p. 103). In other words, individuals respond to stimuli they are not consciously aware of just as they respond to stimuli they are consciously aware of (Damasio 1999; Fazio et al. 1986; LeDoux 1996; Lodge & Taber 2005) and may even learn from them (Morris et al. 1998; Watanabe et al. 2001).

Finally, a correlation was be used to see if any of these thematic behaviors were correlated to each other. This is to see if any traditional masculine or feminine behaviors were directly related to each other or to see if particular traditional masculine behaviors were linked to particular feminine behaviors.
2.7 Guiding Theory

Prior to this section, many different theories were discussed about how television commercial advertisements could be analyzed. While many previous studies have sought to establish the direct influence of advertisements, be it televised (Meyers-Levy & Sternthal, 1991), print (Meyers-Levy & Mahaswaran, 1991), or even Internet-based advertisements (Garst & Bodenhausen, 1997), they have not indicated there was such an influence related to advertising. This study does not attempt this either, as such a study would require sociological research and consumer data drawing on a far wider range of material than the advertisements themselves. As such, it was important to pursue a different approach in analyzing these commercials in terms of the message sent to the audience concerning gender-appropriate behaviors.

The approach used in this study was similar to that of Williamson (1978). Williamson (1978, p. 12) looked at advertisements as “structures that can transform the language of objects to that of people and vice versa.” Moreover, Williamson (1978, p. 12) identified ads as “sites where people become identified with objects.” According to Williamson (1978), ads transmit meaning in society, and serve as a way to transmit the ideology of the dominant group in society. However, Williamson never explained how these ads function in terms of transmitting the dominant ideology.

Instead, another theory was used to explain how advertising helped create dominant ideologies. According to Cronin (2000), advertisements are an artifact that can be used to measure cultural change. Cronin (2000, p. 15) noted, “advertisements provide a “unique window” on the logics of a consumer-based society” and that “advertisements serve as a way to help construct social reality.”
The concept of social reality dated back to Berger and Luckmann (1966). Berger and Luckmann (1966) based the social construction of reality theory on Scheler’s social construction of knowledge theory. According to Berger and Luckmann, knowledge impacts perception and perception influences reality. Berger and Luckmann (1966, p. 13) noted that “The sociology of knowledge must concern itself with everything that passes for ‘knowledge’ in society.” Later on, Berger and Luckmann (1966) stated that knowledge was socially distributed, and that the mechanism that distributes this knowledge was worthy of study.

The social construction of reality theory examines these mechanisms and looks to understand how knowledge guides conduct in everyday life. According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), different objects present themselves to consciousness as constituents of different spheres of reality. Moreover, multiple realities present themselves in everyday life. Therefore, it is necessary to examine different artifacts in society in order to understand the different realities in society.

Cronin (2000, 2004) identified advertisements as mechanisms for the construction of social reality. Therefore, it is necessary to examine advertisements of different types and periods to understand the dominant reality that is disseminated throughout a culture in a given time period. This study used Cronin’s assertions and attempted to understand how these advertising images helped to create a social reality in regard to gender roles, and to determine if these gender roles portrayed in the commercials analyzed have changed from the traditional gender roles as identified by Chafetz (1974).
CHAPTER 3
QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS:

3.1 Introduction

A sample of 284 Super Bowl television advertisements was analyzed in this study. These commercials were viewed from the ifilm.com web site, which has archived every Super Bowl commercial from 2003 to 2007. Each advertisement typically ran either for 30 seconds or for 60 seconds. All advertisements that depicted males or females were coded. Advertisements (16 in all) that did not visually contain males or females were excluded from the coding.

Each of the three trained outside coders was given a set of 100 commercials to code for presence of themes. They were also to code the intensity of each theme (how obvious it was to the viewer). After the data was coded, it was then analyzed for frequency of males and females, frequency of each theme, intensity of the theme, and finally, for correlations to determine if any relationship between themes existed.

3.2 Population of Central Characters

The population of the Central characters (characters important to the plot) in the commercials in 2003 was 59.2% males and 40.8% females. In 2004, the population was comprised of 60% male and 40% female central characters. In 2005, the commercial population of central characters was 50.9% male and 49.1% female. In 2006, the central character population was 50.3% male and 49.7% female. In 2007, the population of central characters was 50.5% male and 49.5% female.
3.3 **Theme Analyses**

The themes in this study were measured in three different ways: frequency, intensity and through correlations. The frequency of each theme was discussed below in terms of a trend analysis, where not only the frequency of the theme each year was discussed but also the frequency of the theme as a whole. Later, the intensity of each theme was measured to see there were different levels of manifestation in the advertisements. Finally, correlations were conducted to determine the relationships between any of the themes present in the commercials.

3.3.1 **Theme Frequency as a Trend Analysis**

Many scholars had previously identified the frequency of representations to be an important aspect in understanding how media exposure and the impact of that exposure are related (Schneider & Barich-Schneider, 1979; Sexton and Haberman, 1974; Venkatesan & Losco, 1975). This study examined not only the frequencies of traditional masculine and feminine themes found in the entire sample, but also looked at how these frequencies changed over time. Below is a discussion of what was found for each theme in both the frequency overall, but also as a trend study.
3.3.1.1 Warrior Theme in Males

A warrior in this study was a person who was virile, athletic, strong, brave, and aggressive. The warrior theme in males was the most frequently occurring theme throughout the entire study. Overall, this theme was coded for 135 times throughout the 283 Super Bowl commercials (present in 47.8% of the commercials) coded in this study. Moreover, the trend for this theme in the commercials was positive. The frequency of this trend increased, even after taking into consideration that the frequency of this theme 2007 was slightly lower than 2006.

![Figure 3.2 Warrior Theme in Male Central Characters from 2003 to 2007](image)

3.3.1.2 Warrior Theme in Females

The warrior theme in females was one of the most frequently occurring themes in females throughout the entire study. Overall, this theme was coded for 28 times throughout the 283 Super Bowl commercials (present in 9.9% of the commercials) coded in this study. Interestingly, this trend tended to fluctuate slightly in its frequency, but it was consistent in its presence.
3.3.1.3 Weak Theme in Males

A weak person in this study was a person who attempted to avoid conflict whenever possible. The weak theme was one of the least frequently occurring themes in this study. This theme occurred in 21 of the 283 commercials (7.4%). With the exception of 2006, when the theme was present in 10.7% of the commercials, this theme was present in around 6.5% of the commercials, excluding all commercials from 2006. In relation to the trend of this data set, once 2006 was removed, the presence of the weak theme in the commercials was consistently low.

3.3.1.4 Weak Theme in Females

The weak theme in females was also one of the least frequently occurring themes for females and was consistently infrequent throughout the five year period analyzed, occurring in
only 13 (4.6%) of the 283 commercials. This theme was also less frequently occurring in females than in males.

![Figure 3.5 Weak Theme in Female Central Characters from 2003 to 2007](image)

### 3.3.1.5 Sexually Aggressive Theme in Males

A sexually aggressive person in this study was a person who was sexually aggressive and/or experienced sexually. The sexually aggressive theme in males occurs in 53 of 283 commercials, or 18.7% of the commercials. Over the five-year period analyzed, the frequency of this theme increased 50% overall. While this may not seem like much, it was one of the largest increases for a theme on a percentage basis.

![Figure 3.6 Sexually Aggressive Theme in Male Central Characters from 2003 to 2007](image)
3.3.1.6 Sexually Aggressive Theme in Females

The most common theme for females was to depict them as sexually aggressive. This theme was present in 59 of the 283 commercials (20.8%). Throughout the five-year period analyzed, the theme increased until 2005 and then returned to the same frequency as the beginning of the study.

Figure 3.7 Sexually Aggressive Theme in Female Central Characters from 2003 to 2007

3.3.1.7 Sexually Passive Theme in Males:

The sexually passive person in this study was a person not concerned with sexual gratification. The portrayal of males as sexually passive was not a prevalent theme in the commercials analyzed as it only appears in 18 out of 283 commercials (6.4%). However, with the exception of 2007, which was a unique year to analyze commercials (to be discussed later); the trend for this depiction was increasing.
3.3.1.8  Sexually Passive Theme in Females:

The representation of females as sexually passive was one of the least frequent themes in the commercials aired between 2003 and 2007. During this period, this theme was shown in 17 of the 283 commercials (6.0% of the commercials). However, if 2007 were discounted from the data, females were portrayed as sexually passive more often as the years in the sample progressed.

3.3.1.9  Appearance Unconcerned Themes in Males

An appearance unconcerned person in this study was a person who was unconcerned about appearance and aging. The portrayal of men as unconcerned with their appearance was a
theme that was present in 29 of the 283 commercials (10.2%). This theme fluctuated as it began with eight representations then decreased for three years and increased to nine instances the last year the commercials were analyzed.

Figure 3.9 Appearance Unconcerned Theme in Male Central Characters from 2003 to 2007

3.3.1.10 Appearance Unconcerned Theme in Females:

The portrayal of females as unconcerned with their appearance was one of the more infrequent themes in the commercials analyzed. This theme was present in only eight of the 283 commercials (2.8%). The theme was also consistent each year.

Figure 3.11 Appearance Unconcerned Theme in Female Central Characters from 2003 to 2007
3.3.1.11 Appearance Concerned Theme in Males

The appearance concerned person in this study was a person concerned about appearance and aging. The representation of males as appearance concerned was one of the fewest occurring themes for males in the commercials analyzed. This theme was present in 25 of the 283 commercials (8.8%). However, the frequency of this theme increased over the period analyzed from one instance in 2003 to eight instances in 2007.

Figure 3.12 Appearance Concerned Theme in Male Central Characters from 2003 to 2007

3.3.1.12 Appearance Concerned Theme in Females

The portrayal of females as being appearance concerned was one of the most frequently occurring themes in the commercials analyzed. This theme occurred in 30 of the 283 commercials (10.6%). This theme has remained constant throughout the time period analyzed.
3.3.1.13  **Functional Theme in Males**

The functional person in this study was the primary provider or breadwinner. The depiction of males as functional (serving as a breadwinner) was a theme that was present in 52 of the 283 commercials (18.4%). This theme increased each year as it began with four representations in 2003 and ended in 2007 with 27 representations. This resulted in a 675% increase.

3.3.1.14  **Functional Theme in Females**

The representation of females as functional (serving as a breadwinner) was a theme that was present in 15 of the 283 commercials (5.0%). This theme increased as it began with two
representations in 2003 and ended in 2007 with six representations. This resulted in a 200% increase. While this theme set was not a frequently occurring one, the recent dramatic increase was worth noting.

![Bar Chart](image)

Figure 3.15 Functional Theme in Female Central Characters from 2003 to 2007

### 3.3.1.15 Dependent Theme in Males

The dependent person in this study was someone who is not the breadwinner of the family; he or she may or may not contribute to the income. The depiction of males as dependent (needing someone else to provide income) was a theme that was present in 17 of the 283 commercials (6.0%). This theme fluctuated slightly in whether it increased at a year-to-year basis but increased overall as it began with one representation in 2003 and ended in 2007 with four representations.
3.3.1.16 Dependent Theme in Females

The portrayal of females as dependent (needing someone else to provide income) was a theme that was present in 59 of the 283 commercials (20.8%). This was one of the most common depictions of females within any of the themes coded. This theme had a bell-shaped curve that peaked in 2005 with 16 portrayals and has since returned to the same number of portrayals as was present in 2003.

3.3.1.17 Risk Taker Theme in Males

A person who was identified as a risk taker was a person who was uninhibited, adventurous, and unconcerned with risks. The representation of males as risk takers was one of
the most prominent male themes and was present in 96 of the 283 commercials (33.9%). This theme fluctuated slightly in whether it increased at a year-to-year basis but increased overall as it began with 14 representations in 2003 and ended in 2007 with 25 representations.

![Figure 3.18 Risk Taker Theme in Male Central Characters from 2003 to 2007](image)

**3.3.1.18 Risk Taker Theme in Females**

The representation of females as risk takers was present in 21 of the 283 commercials (7.4%). This theme fluctuated slightly in whether it increased at a year-to-year basis but slightly decreased overall as it began with four representations in 2003 and ended in 2007 with two representations.

![Figure 3.19 Risk Taker Theme in Female Central Characters from 2003 to 2007](image)
3.3.1.19 Safety Concerned Theme in Males

A safety concerned in this study was a person unwilling to take risks in any part of their lives. The depiction of males as concerned with safety was one of the least prominent male themes and was present in 24 of the 283 commercials (8.5%). This theme fluctuated slightly in whether it increased at a year-to-year basis but slightly decreased overall as it began with four representations in 2003 and ended in 2007 with two representations.

![Figure 3.20 Safety Concerned Theme in Male Central Characters from 2003 to 2007](image)

3.3.1.20 Safety Concerned Theme in Females

The representation of females as concerned with safety was present in 15 of the 283 commercials (5.3%). This theme increased in frequency steadily until 2007 when its prevalence decreased to only one representation.
3.3.1.21 Unemotional Theme in Males

A person who was identified as unemotional in this study was unemotional or stoic. The portrayal of males as concerned with safety was one of the least prominent male themes and was present in 32 of the 283 commercials (11.3%). This theme was unique as it sharply decreased between from 10 representations in 2003 to three instances in the 2004 Super Bowl. It then slightly increased each year between 2004 and 2006, but then sharply increased in 2007 with 12 representations.
3.3.1.22 Unemotional Theme in Females

Depicting females as unemotional was one of the least prominent female themes and was present in 10 of the 283 commercials (3.5%). This theme was unique as it sharply decreased between from four representations in 2003 to zero instances in the 2004 Super Bowl. It then slightly fluctuated each year between the 2004 and 2007 Super Bowls.

![Graph showing the unemotional theme in female central characters from 2003 to 2007]

Figure 3.23 Unemotional Theme in Female Central Characters from 2003 to 2007

3.3.1.23 Emotional Theme in Males

An emotional person in this study was depicted as comfortable with showing his or her emotions. The depiction of males as emotional was one of the most prominent male themes and was present in 86 of the 283 commercials (30.4%). This theme was unusual as it sharply increases over the time period (417%) analyzed. While this theme’s frequency slightly decreases in 2007, it was still much higher than any of the representations before the 2006 Super Bowl.
3.3.1.24 Emotional Theme in Females

The depiction of females as emotional was one of the most prominent female themes and was present in 55 of the 283 commercials (19.4%). This theme was unusual as it slightly increases between 2003 (seven instances) and 2005 (10 instances) and then sharply increases in 2006 with 30 coded instances, the falls off dramatically in 2007 with only six instances.

3.3.1.25 Upwardly Mobile Theme in Males

An upwardly mobile person in this study was success-oriented and ambitious. This type of person was shown as “climbing the (corporate) ladder.” The representation of males as upwardly mobile was present in 48 of the 283 commercials (17.0%). This theme was shown as
increasing steadily from 2003 (four instances) until 2006 (14 instances). In 2007, there was a slight drop-off (to 13 instances) in the frequency of these themes but overall this theme steadily increased in frequency.

![Graph showing upwardly mobile theme in male central characters from 2003 to 2007](image)

**Figure 3.26 Upwardly Mobile Theme in Male Central Characters from 2003 to 2007**

### 3.3.1.26 Upwardly Mobile Theme in Females

The representation of females as upwardly mobile was present in 11 of the 283 commercials (3.9%). This theme was not present until 2005 when it was shown as happening once. In 2006, the portrayal of women as upwardly mobile increases dramatically to five instances, and then maintains this frequency the next year.

![Graph showing upwardly mobile theme in female central characters from 2003 to 2007](image)

**Figure 3.27 Upwardly Mobile Theme in Female Central Characters from 2003 to 2007**
3.3.1.27  **Stuck in the Mud Theme in Males**

A person who was depicted as stuck in the mud was shown as not ambitious (in work or in life). They could also be depicted as failing to meet, or barely meeting, the status quo. Finally, the person could have been shown as not moving up in the company. The representation of males as stuck in the mud was present in 29 of the 283 commercials (10.2%). This theme was shown as fluctuating wildly between the period shown.

![Figure 3.28 Stuck in the Mud Theme in Male Central Characters from 2003 to 2007](image)

3.3.1.28  **Stuck in the Mud Theme in Females**

The portrayal of females as stuck in the mud was present in seven of the 283 commercials (2.5%). This theme was shown as constant from 2003 until 2006 with one instance per year. In 2007, there was a slight increase (to three instances).
3.3.1.29 Leader Theme in Males

In this study, a leader was depicted as the leader, a dominating person. This person was a disciplinarian. He or she was independent, and individualistic. The representations of males as leaders were present in 52 of the 283 commercials (18.4%). This theme was shown as increasing steadily from 2003 (three instances) until 2007 (19 instances). In 2007, there was a large increase from the previous year (13 instances).
3.3.1.30 **Leader Theme in Females**

The representations of females as leaders were present in 21 of the 283 commercials (7.4%). This theme was shown as coded once in 2003, and not identified again until 2006 (one instance). However, in 2007 there was a sharp increase in this theme’s frequency (19 instances).

![Figure 3.31 Leader Theme in Female Central Characters from 2003 to 2007](image)

3.3.1.31 **Follower Theme in Males**

A follower in this study was someone shown as a follower. This person was a meek, mindless drone. The depiction of males as followers was present in 33 of the 283 commercials (11.7%). This theme was shown as slightly increasing from 2003 (two instances) to 2004, (three instances). In 2005, there was a large increase from the previous year (10 instances), this frequency held steady in 2006 and decreased slightly in 2007 (eight instances).
3.3.1.32 Follower Theme in Females

The depiction of females as followers was present in 23 of the 283 commercials (8.1%). This theme was shown to fluctuate from three instances in 2003, to two instances in 2004, then increase to eight as instanced in 2005, decrease to six instances in 2006, and in 2007, decreased to four instances.

3.3.1.33 Intelligent Theme in Males

An intellectual person was shown as logical, intellectual, rational, objective and practical. The portrayal of males as intelligent was present in 25 of the 283 commercials (8.8%). This theme was shown as increasing from 2003 (two instances) to 2004 (six instances). In 2005,
was a decrease from the previous year (one instance); this frequency increased in 2006 (five instances) and increased sharply in 2007 (11 instances).

![Figure 3.34 Intelligent Theme in Male Central Characters from 2003 to 2007](image)

**3.3.1.34 Intelligent Theme in Females**

The portrayal of females as intelligent was present in five of the 283 commercials (1.8%). This theme was present once per year from 2003 to 2005. In 2006, this theme was not coded at all. However, in 2007, females were portrayed as intelligent twice.

![Figure 3.35 Intelligent Theme in Female Central Characters from 2003 to 2007](image)
3.3.1.35 Scatterbrained Theme in Males

A scatterbrained person in this study was a person who did not make logical, intellectual, rational and practical decisions. The depiction of males as scatterbrained was present in 19 of the 283 commercials (6.7%). This theme was shown as increasing from 2003 (two instances) to 2004 (seven instances). In 2005, this theme was not present. In 2006, this theme was present only three times and increased in 2007 to seven instances.

![Figure 3.36 Scatterbrained Theme in Male Central Characters from 2003 to 2007](image)

3.3.1.36 Scatterbrained Theme in Females

The depiction of females as scatterbrained was present in seven of the 283 commercials (2.5%). This theme was shown as decreasing from 2003 (three instances) to 2004 (one instance). In 2005, this theme was not present. In 2006, this theme was present only once and increased in 2007 to two instances.
3.3.2 **Intensity of Themes**

The measured intensity of all male and female behaviors coded by the coders typically fell at or near the “extremely evident” level, which was coded as a “3”. In almost every theme whose measure of central tendency (mean, median and mode) was not exactly “3”, “3” fell within one standard of that measure. The two themes that did not fall within this category were “Emotional” for males and “Appearance Unconcerned” for females. While this finding was unsuspected, it does support the assertion by Chaffee and Wilson (1977) and, later, Hornik (1997) that the sheer physical prevalence of information in an environment should be predictive of individual likelihood of exposure to that information. This implies the level of intensity was not needed in this study to understand exposure.
Table 3.1: All Male Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Standard Dev.</th>
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<td>Weak</td>
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<td>3.00</td>
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</table>

*=Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Table 3.2: All Female Behaviors

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<thead>
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<th>Theme</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Standard Dev.</th>
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<td>Weak</td>
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<td>2.31</td>
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<td>3.00</td>
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<td>2.68</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
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<td>Sexually Passive</td>
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<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00*</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance Unconcerned</td>
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<td>1.78</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.00*</td>
<td>0.83</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dependent</td>
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<td>2.53</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.62</td>
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<td>Risk Taker</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>3.00</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*=Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

3.3.3 Correlations

A bivariate correlation was used to determine the relationship, if any existed, between the themes in this study. Prior to discussing the significant correlations, it is first essential to understand how the correlations were clustered together in their presentation. Barthes notes that...
by linking a specific behavior to another behavior, a chain of association is created. A chain of association links two seemingly unrelated ideas or notions together. Barthes argues that complex ideas are disseminated to the public through chains of association. Barthes notes that advertising uses these chains of association to explain how advertising functions in terms of persuading people what to buy, where to buy it, and why they should buy it. However, these chains of association are also able to expose the viewing audience to acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. This section examines two “links” in each of these chains and discussed the strength of their connection.

In looking at these chains two links at a time, different metathemes arose. These metathemes are actually themes consisting of themes. A more thorough discussion of these themes is be undertaken later in Chapter 5.

3.3.3.1 Female Significant Correlations:

The significant correlations between identified female themes were present on every “metatheme” (traditional, transitional, and non-traditional). Moreover, females were more likely to be portrayed in roles that did not fall into the traditional feminine stereotypes (transitional or non-traditional roles). As such, this study found that females were portrayed in a different light than indicated by previous research (Griffin, Viswanath, & Schwartz, 1994; Piron & Young, 1996; Wiles, Wiles, & Tjernlund, 1995).

3.3.3.1.1 Traditional Feminine Female Correlations:

The first set of correlations deals with linking two “traditional” feminine stereotypes together. By identifying the traditional feminine stereotypes and their correlations to other traditional feminine stereotypes, a scholar can begin to establish the different “levels” of these stereotypes. The importance of identifying the levels of these stereotypes is that these stereotypes
link traditional feminine behavioral themes together. By understanding what behavioral themes were linked together, a better understanding of traditional femininity in contemporary society was accomplished.

The traditional feminine themes positively correlated in this study were: “Emotional” and “Appearance Concerned”, “Sexually Passive” and “Emotional”, “Weak” and the “Appearance Concerned”, and “Weak” and the “Stuck in the Mud”. Moreover, the relationships were positive between each of these two theme sets. This indicated that there was a strong positive relationship between these two variables; when one theme was present, the other theme was present. Moreover, since each set of these two roles were traditional feminine stereotypes, these findings suggests that these stereotypes were linked in their depictions in this data set. This could be because each central character was portrayed as depicting both roles, or they were in the presence of someone who depicted the other role.

3.3.3.1.2 Transitional Feminine Female Correlations:

The second set of significant relationships between two feminine themes were the Transitional Female Correlations. These correlations linked together a traditional feminine gender role with a non-traditional feminine gender role. The positive transitional feminine correlations were “Scatterbrained” and “Leader” and “Weak” and “Leader”. From these correlations, two possible conclusions could be reached. The first conclusion was that all female central characters who were portrayed as depicting both roles as linked. The second conclusion was the female leaders were in the presence of weak females.

Some traditional feminine gender roles were also negatively correlated with non-traditional gender roles. These correlations were: “Functional” and “Emotional” and “Intelligent” and “Follower”. The relationship was negative between these two themes. This indicated that
when one theme was present; the other theme was not present. As such, this would lend support to Barry, Gilly, and Doran’s (1985) findings that when professional women were portrayed in advertisements, they were removed from the traditional feminine stereotypes.

3.3.3.1.3 Non-traditional Feminine Female Correlations:

The next significant relationship between two female themes was the relationship between the “Intelligent Female Theme” and “Risk Taker Female Theme”. The relationship was positive between these two themes. This correlation indicated that intelligent females were also risk-taking females. This finding had no literature-based explanation and therefore, needs further examination. However, these themes were traditional masculine themes, and their presence and correlation indicated a shift in the accepted behavior patterns of females. In this case, females who were intelligent would also take risks, if they deemed it necessary.

The next significant relationship identified between two female themes in this study was between the “Sexually Aggressive Female Theme” and the “Unemotional Female Theme”. The relationship was positive between these two themes. This indicates that in this data set either all females who were sexually aggressive were also unemotional or females who were sexually aggressive were in the presence of an unemotional female.

3.3.3.2 Male Significant Correlations:

The significant correlations between identified male themes were present on every metatheme (traditional, transitional, and non-traditional). Moreover, males were less likely to be portrayed in roles that did not fall into the traditional masculine stereotypes (transitional or non-traditional roles), and were more likely to be negatively correlated to another theme. As such, this study found that males were portrayed in a different light than previous research (Cantor, 1987; Gould, 1991; Schneider & Barich-Schneider, 1979).
3.3.3.2.1 Traditional Masculine Male Correlations:

The traditional masculine themes for males correlated in this study were the “Risk Taker” and “Appearance Unconcerned” and “Risk Taker” and Warrior. The relationship was positive between each of these two theme sets. This indicated that either a male was portrayed as both themes or males portraying one theme were in the presence of males portraying the other theme. These finding supports Leppard, Ogletree, and Wallen (1993) when they stated that men are portrayed stereotypically in advertisements.

Other relationships identified between two male themes in this study were between the “Functional” and the “Emotional”, “Weak” and “Upwardly Mobile”, and the “Sexually Aggressive” and “Safety Concerned” themes. These relationships do not fall into the transitional correlations as it reinforces traditional masculine male stereotypes since the relationship between these two themes was negative.

3.3.3.2.2 Transitional Masculine Male Themes:

The next significant relationships between two male themes identified in this study were the transitional masculine male themes. These themes positively correlated a traditional masculine male theme with a non-traditional masculine male theme. These transitional masculine male themes were: the “Stuck in the Mud” and the “Intelligent” themes, the “Scatterbrained” and the “Appearance Unconcerned” theme, the “Sexually Aggressive” and the “Dependent” themes, the “Sexually Passive” and the “Appearance Unconcerned” themes, the “Sexually Passive” and the “Functional” themes, the “Unemotional” and the “Follower” theme, the “Weak” and the Appearance Unconcerned” themes, and the “Risk Taker” and the “Dependent” themes.
3.3.2.3 Non-Traditional Masculine Male Themes:

The next set of relationships identified were the non-traditional masculine themes for males. In these relationships, two themes were significantly correlated for males that arose out of traditional feminine themes. These themes were: the “Safety Concerned” and the “Scatterbrained” themes, the “Sexually Passive” and the “Dependent” themes, the “Sexually Passive” and the “Emotional” themes, the “Sexually Passive” and the “Scatterbrained” themes, the “Stuck in the Mud” and the “Follower” themes, and the “Weak” and the “Follower” themes.

3.3.3 Correlations Between Males and Females

The significant correlations between identified female themes and male were present on every metatheme (traditional, transitional, and non-traditional). Moreover, these themes were more likely to be portrayed in roles that did not fall into the traditional gender stereotypes, particularly the transitional metatheme category. As such, the findings of this measure identified that both males and females are undergoing changes in acceptable gender role behaviors.

3.3.3.1 Traditional Correlations

The traditional correlations between males and females indicated there was a positive correlation between a tradition masculine male gender role and a traditional feminine female gender role. These correlations were: the “Follower Female” and the “Unemotional Male” themes, the “Safety Concerned Female” and the “Unemotional Male” themes, the “Scatterbrained Female” and the “Male Leader” themes, the “Unemotional Male” and the “Emotional Female” themes, the “Weak Female” and the “Functional Male” themes, the “Weak Female” and the “Unemotional Male” themes and the “Weak Female” and the “Upwardly Mobile Male” themes.
There were also roles that were negative in their correlations to each other. These negative correlations indicated that one theme was not present when the other theme was present. These themes were: the “Safety Concerned Male” and the “Safety Concerned Female” themes, the “Safety Concerned Male” and the “Appearance Concerned Female” themes, and the “Scatterbrained Female” and the “Follower Male” themes. Since the relationship was negative between these two themes, these themes were traditional as one theme was not present when the other was present.

3.3.3.2 Transitional Correlations

The transitional correlations between males and females indicated there was a positive correlation between a traditional gender role and a non-traditional gender role. These correlations were: the “Appearance Unconcerned Male” and the “Leader Female” themes, the “Appearance Unconcerned Female” and the “Risk Taker Male” themes, the “Emotional Male” and the “Emotional Female” themes, the “Sexually Aggressive Female” and the “Sexually Aggressive Male” themes, the “Sexually Aggressive Male” and the “Upwardly Mobile Female” themes, the “Sexually Passive Female” and the “Appearance Concerned Male” themes, the “Sexually Passive Male” and the “Dependent Female” themes, the “Sexually Passive Male” and the “Sexually Passive Female” themes and the “Sexually Passive Male” and the “Weak Female” themes. These correlations indicated that these themes were in the presence of each other in the commercials analyzed.

3.3.3.3 Non-Traditional Roles

The traditional correlations between males and females indicated there was a positive correlation between a non-traditional female role and a non-traditional male role. These roles were: “Sexually Aggressive Female” and the “Weak Male” themes, the “Sexually Aggressive
Female” and the “Dependent Male” themes, the “Stuck in the Mud Male” and the “Upwardly Mobile Female” themes, and the “Weak Male” and the “Upwardly Mobile Female” themes. In these correlations, it was indicated that one theme was performed in the presence of another theme.

There were also roles that were negative in their correlations to each other. These negative correlations indicated that one theme was not present when the other theme was present. For instance, even though the “Scatterbrained Female” and the “Intelligent Male” themes were significantly related, his relationship was negative between these two themes. This indicated that appearance scatterbrained females were never portrayed in the presence of intelligent males. This portrayal is contrary to traditional gender roles as Chafetz argued that these two themes would be positively correlated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 1</th>
<th>Theme 2</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
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* = p<0.01, ** = p<0.05
CHAPTER 4:
QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

Historically, advertisements have been analyzed in terms of how advertisements serve as a forum for cognitive awareness of alcohol consumption (Austin et. al, 2002), how they visually function in regard to gender and power (Goffman, 1976), and how they depict gender roles in regard to career-choice (Lepard, Ogletree & Wallen, 1993). In addition, multiple other studies look at the depiction of gender in relation to advertisements.

This particular study took a two-pronged approach to this analysis. The previous chapter was dedicated to a quantitative description of the different themes in the advertisements. These themes were constructed from a focus group’s notion of gender stereotypes (Chafetz, 1974). These stereotypes were encoded into a codebook and the frequencies were examined to see if any other role was predominate.

This chapter is focused on a description of the advertisements from a different perspective. This perspective incorporates the identification of these roles as well as a textual description of each commercial. The commercials are then analyzed in terms of the “knowledge” they pass on to the casual viewer (Berger & Luckmann, 1964; Cronin, 2000). By examining these commercials through textual description and analyzing the messages sent to the audience through these commercials, it is possible to understand what messages advertisements are sending to the viewing public.

The commercials analyzed in this section were the most viewed Super Bowl commercials each year on the ifilm.com web-site. As such, it seems that these commercials seemed to strike a
cord with the audience, as members of the audience sought out these commercials more than any other commercial for that year.

4.2 Terry Tate Office Linebacker-2003

This particular commercial began in an office where there were hardbound books in the background. The lighting was soft as to allow a feel of rich decadence. Looking straight at the camera was Ron Felcher, a white male in his forties who was balding and wearing a black suit, white shirt, and a blue tie. Underneath Ron’s face was his title in white block-style text: “Ron Felcher CEO of Felcher and Sons”. Looking directly into the camera, Ron described the time when he asked Reebok to let him borrow Terry Tate. Felcher says, “Others (outside of his company) thought we were crazy, but I like to break down paradigms, you know, think outside of the box.”

The next shot showed a white male, Mitch, in his twenties, wearing a button-up shirt and a tie. Mitch walked out of the break room holding a cup of coffee. As Mitch stopped to drink the coffee, Terry Tate flew into the screen and tackled Mitch. Terry then yelled angrily at Mitch, “Break was over 15 minutes ago, Mitch!” Terry Tate was an African-American male in his late thirties. He was dressed in the style similar to a football player, with a red jersey on, black eye-paint, and a nose strip.

The commercial then switched back to Ron who said, “And since Terry’s been with us, productivity has increased 46 percent.” The commercial, then, transitioned into a montage of Terry’s previous attacks. The viewer could identify Terry tackling a white male, a white female, and throwing a white male into a cubicle. After which Terry yelled, “Get back to work!”

The commercial returned to a close-up face shot of Ron who said, “And we’re getting more from our employees than ever before.” The commercial cut to a scene where Terry was
yelling over the prostrate form of another co-worker. The camera was looking up at Terry this time. The camera moved back and showing the feet of the co-worker, Terry angrily yells, “You need to have a cover sheet on your TPS reports, Bridget. This is not new!” During this time, another female co-worker walked by in a business suit and greeted Terry. Terry responded by saying “Hi, Janice” in a pleasant tone.

The commercial returned to Ron (another face shot) who said, “What’s really interesting is how Terry has become a part of the Felcher family.” This led to another series of cut scenes where Terry was tackling males, both African-American and Caucasian. This series ended with a scene where Terry was chasing a white male down the hallway while a meeting is going on. The white male was screaming in fear, while Terry laughed. No one in the meeting noticed anything amiss.

The commercial then returned to Ron (another face shot) who said, “He really fits in here.” Immediately following this statement, there were other scenes depicting Terry throwing people across the office, tackling women and finally hitting the cubicle of a white male who was making an unauthorized long-distance phone call on the company’s phone.

The commercial concluded by Ron saying, “I wish I had 10 more Terry Tates” and another scene where a Caucasian male who just won a game of solitaire was tackled by Terry who, while standing over the man yelled at him “If you want to play games, then you will bring on the pain.”

4.2.1 Analysis:

This advertisement provides an opportunity for each and every person who buys Reebok footwear to connect with his or her inner Terry Tate. By doing this, the consumer becomes a more attractive person. They become indispensable at their job, and as a result of that become
successful. According to Goldman (1992), this was an abstraction type of appeal, where the advertiser set up two seemingly unrelated circumstances and showed the product as being the only connection between these two worlds. In this case, it was the over-the-top motivation displayed by Terry Tate as a connection to the Reebok brand. Therefore, according to Goldman, this set up a chain of association that resulted in Reebok being tied to motivation by means of this “office linebacker.”

While this situation may seem unrealistic, Williamson (1978) would counter this by arguing that realism was not the point of this advertisement. The function of this advertisement was instead to provide a fantasy-typed escape from the real world. In this fantasy world, where productivity was second-to-none (even employee health and well-being), employers would use any means necessary to make sure their employees were doing their jobs. Furthermore, the choice of using an African-American male as the enforcer of these rules set up an even more interesting dynamic.

This commercial portrayed African-American males as unable to control their emotions and as a warrior-class in society. Moreover, by showing an African-American male in a sports-related role (linebacker) this seemed to suggest to African-American males that the only way to be successful in the corporate world was to be hyper-aggressive and unable to control his emotions. While this commercial did depict another African-American male, he was represented as a victim of Terry’s abuses. With the exception of one brief instance, Terry was shown as being unable to control his rage, acting upon both men and women of various ages and ethnicities. To Terry, all people who were not doing their jobs, as set forth by the powerful white male executives, were prey upon which he would act. This commercial set up a paradigm for African-American males; they can be either aggressors or victims. By glamorizing the role of
Terry Tate, by suggesting he was invaluable to the company, the advertisement suggested that this culture values aggressive African-American males.

Terry was also characterized as being a ”watchdog” for the white male. In this capacity, Terry was a weapon to be released on his co-workers whenever they were not performing their duties as the white, upper-class male executives saw fit. In this capacity, the white executive of this company was seen as heartless, unemotional, and manipulative. In other words, the commercial portrayed white males in generally negative terms. White males were shown either as heartless, as in the case of the executive, or as victims of the African-American male rage. In this case, white males were forced to choose either between one of two paths: either the master controlling the leash of the over-aggressive black man, or as a victim of the black man’s rage.

Women of all ethnicities in this commercial were characterized as victims. They were just in the office to be acted upon by the black male, and they were powerless to do anything about this behavior. In this capacity, women were shown as weak and helpless, and there was no way for them to escape this situation.

4.2.2 Themes:

In this commercial, multiple themes were present. Ron Felcher embodied the first few themes in the commercial; the first themes were the leader theme and the upwardly mobile theme, two themes that were identified as frequently occurring themes in the study. In this commercial, Ron Felcher was shown as a leader in his company, through several different methods. The first method used in this commercial that depicted Ron as a leader was the display of his title at the bottom of the screen when the commercial began. The second method used in this commercial was the way that Ron was dressed. Ron was dressed in a “power” suit, which showed that he was a person who was a successful businessperson. Moreover, Ron looked either
directly at the camera, or slightly down at the camera, which further increased Ron’s position as a leader and as upwardly mobile. Furthermore, Ron was shown as a middle-aged male in a position of high power. This showed that Ron was an upwardly mobile person.

Ron was not the only person who was shown as upwardly mobile, however. Terry Tate was also shown as an upwardly mobile man. While Ron seemed to use his personality and creative thinking as tools for power, Terry Tate used brute force. Terry Tate was shown as the aggressor in many situations, and as such, his power increased throughout the commercial. Terry was also shown as upwardly mobile as Ron stated several times how important Terry was to the company. While the position of ‘office linebacker’ would seem to be an almost dead-end job, with no chances for promotion, Ron’s affinity for Terry indicated that Terry would soon move up within the company.

Terry also embodied the warrior theme, the most frequently occurring theme for males in this study. In this aspect, Terry was seen as the aggressor in almost every situation. If a person within the company broke any rule, then Terry was there to exact physical punishment. The incorporation of face paint under Terry’s eyes added to Terry’s intimidating appeal and added a warrior-like quality. Terry was also a physically imposing male whose build and stature were certainly chosen to represent a warrior. Moreover, the connotation of an office linebacker took the linebacker, a modern-day warrior on the football field, and placed him in the office, where he used his warrior skills in another way.

Terry also appeared to be comfortable with showing his emotions in this commercial (emotional theme). While Terry did not show a variety of emotions, he did show anger often. Whenever Terry was shown as angry, the emotion was easily identified. While Terry did not show a variety of emotions in this commercial, he did appear comfortable showing anger.
4.3 Homer Gets His Errands Done--2004

This commercial from 2004 featured Homer Simpson and the cartoon world of Springfield. The commercial began at the Kwik-E-Mart where it showed Homer opening up a beer case and retrieving a six-pack of Duff Beer. After retrieving the beer, Homer was shown with a variety of items, all of which he dropped on the counter of the Quick-E-Mart check-out. During this time a male voice-over was heard: “Diapers, milk and laundry detergent, $26.” After this announcement, Homer said, “Oh, yeah, that stuff, too” to Apu, the Middle-Eastern man who owned and cashiered at the Quick-E-Mart.

In the next shot, Homer was at the mechanic’s getting his oil changed. During this time Homer was eating a donut, watching the male mechanic remove the oil plug from the car. Once it was removed, bees flew out of the plug and onto Homer’s donut. Homer screamed and fled the scene. The voice-over said, “Oil change, $20.”

In the next scene, Homer was at the hair salon. Viewers could see the reflection of the hair stylist in the mirror outlined with unlit light bulbs. The male stylist grabbed Homer’s hair, pulled it up and cut off the hair. The voice-over said, “Haircut, $75.” Homer angrily retorted, “$75!?”

In the final scene, Homer’s car was parked outside of a bar. The scene cut inside to Homer drinking beer. The voice-over said, “Spending more time with your family, priceless.” As Homer began to drink more of his beer, the voice-over cleared his throat and said, “I said, spending time with your family…” Homer angrily replied, “Yeah, yeah, I heard you,” and left angrily. The commercial ended when Homer opened the door of the bar and knocked over an old man while he left the bar.
4.3.1 Analysis

The first scene showed a working-class male, who was illustrated and animated with yellow ink. Therefore, his actual ethnicity is undetermined, but he is probably Caucasian. He was forgetful, stupid, and selfish. It was only by being reminded of his actual chores that he remembered why he came to the store. He solely focused on consuming beer and food. In essence, Homer only looked out for himself. In this scene, a male of Middle-Eastern ethnicity was shown in a service-oriented role. His job was to serve the “white” male in front of him. While he did not actually say anything, it was evident that he works at the store and is not climbing the corporate ladder. For those who are familiar with The Simpsons, they know this individual is at work everyday, and seems to be always at work. Moreover, this individual was so dedicated to his job that he worked through various physical ailments, such as getting shot or stabbed.

The next scene showed Homer observing a mechanic who was trying to change his oil. Homer was so inept that bees actually were in his oil pan, and when the mechanic removed the plug, they attacked Homer’s donut he was eating. The mechanic was shown as competent. While the mechanic was shown in this light, the connotation for a mechanic is that of a person who, while educated in some regard, is not a successful person in American society, who is not always honest and forthcoming with his or her customers. Once the bees were on the donut, Homer screamed and fled, not caring for the safety of the attendant and only watching out for himself.

The next scene was Homer at a bar drinking beer alone. As the voice-over mentioned how the male should be with his family, Homer became agitated at the voice. Homer did not want to go home to his family as they restrict him. Finally, after being told where he should be
Homer angrily left the bar and ran over an elderly man entering the bar. Homer did not care if he had hurt the elderly man and was unapologetic as he sped off. In this commercial, the elderly male was not only shown as weak, but also a victim upon whom others could act.

4.3.2 Themes

In this commercial, each character displayed several themes. In this commercial, Homer used drinking at the local bar to escape the drudgery of his every day life at home. In this regard he was stuck in the mud, as this theme refers to a person who lacks ambition not only at work, but in the rest of life as well. The stuck in the mud theme was not one of the most frequently occurring themes. However, this instance explains the light these stuck in the mud males were presented. The stuck in the mud males were shown as dumb and lazy. While Homer was so reluctant to leave his haven at the bar and return home, he must be reminded by the voice-over to go home and spend time with his family.

The next theme that Homer displays is that he is scatterbrained (one of the least frequently occurring themes). In this commercial, Homer must be reminded of why he showed up to the Kwik-E-Mart in the first place. Once he was reminded of that, he quickly followed the instructions. This shows that Homer was not only scatterbrained, but also lacked ability to have an independent thought. In the second scene, Homer was so inept, that he actually had bees in his oil pan. While this discovery would typically render a car useless, as there would be no oil in the engine, Homer somehow was able to overcome this obstacle.

The next theme that Homer displayed was emotional (one of the most frequently occurring themes). Homer did not seem to mind showing his fear when the bees attacked him, as he screamed and fled from the scene, nor did he mind showing his anger when he was
interrupted at the bar and told to go home. In either instance, Homer was comfortable with showing his emotions in front of others.

4.4 Diet Pepsi “Stayin’ Alive”–2005

In this commercial, a white male in a stocking hat, a t-shirt and jeans walked down a street with a can of Diet Pepsi in his hand to the tune “Staying Alive.” The commercial zoomed to two, white female police officers sitting in their squad car. One police officer nudged the other to point out the attractive male passing by. As the male passed by, the camera zoomed in on the face of one of the police officers, who bit her lip in ecstasy just to see this man walk by.

The next scene was of the man walking again and various indistinct women enjoyed him passing by. These women were pictured using a soft focus effect. As the male stopped to take a drink of his Diet Pepsi, three women who were following his walk stopped and admired his physique. These women were slightly out of focus, but the viewer could see them point and talk to each other.

The next shot was of a business female in her twenties who was immediately pulled from her work by the sight of this passerby. She was enthralled as he stopped in front of her window. At this time, the camera panned down from the man’s head to his Pepsi can. He then continued walking. Eventually, he passed by Cindy Crawford who was taken aback and enjoyed the sight of this man. In this scene, the camera zoomed in solely on Crawford’s face.

The next scene was where another male, a white homosexual male (Carson from Queer Eye for the Straight Guy) was shown unabashedly looking at this man with a look of pure ecstasy.
The commercial ended by slowly panning across an entire group of women, all between twenty and forty seductively gyrating before the camera as the object of their desire (the mysterious man) slowly turns around.

4.4.1 Analysis

This advertisement was unusual in a specific regard: it was filmed from a both female’s point of view and a man’s point of view. This commercial predominately showed a man as an object of desire for women. This was further typified through the slow pans of the male’s body, and how the camera broke the male’s body into different sections. In this regard, it was groundbreaking to portray the objectification of a male lead.

This commercial was also groundbreaking as it included a homosexual male’s point of view. This commercial actually included Carson, a male who became famous for his role in *Queer Eye For the Straight Guy*. Carson was shown ogling this male. In another turn of events, this male whom Carson was ogling was neither depicted as heterosexual or homosexual. This lack of identification of sexual preference was not mentioned. The male who was the lead in this commercial was just embodied as a sex symbol, either heterosexual or homosexual.

While this commercial did show a female’s point of view, it also showed a man’s point of view. Whenever these women were shown ogling at this man, they moved seductively for the camera. While this was subtle throughout most of the commercial, it built to its climactic finish at the end of the commercial when Cindy Crawford, a male sex symbol was shown as “turned on” by this passer by. Women of various ages and ethnicities shown in states of ecstasy as they watched the male slowly turn around followed this. Through this series of shots, women once again were objectified by the male gaze.
4.4.2 Themes

In this commercial, the two female police officers were shown as sexually aggressive (the most frequently occurring female theme). Especially, the one female officer who bit her lip in delight as the male passes by. In this instance, the male was a sex object for the female officer and other females in the commercial to ogle. Moreover, these police officers were also warriors in this commercial (a frequently occurring theme for females). While they did not actually perform any warrior-type actions, they were depicted as police officers, people who are willing to fight and uphold the law.

Every female in this commercial was seen as sexually aggressive. While they did not aggressively pursue the man and grab him in order to fulfill their sexual wants, they did follow him and enjoyed watching him move. The women in this commercial were shown biting their lips or just checking out this male passer-by.

Other females in this commercial portrayed other themes in the coding scheme. For instance, the businessperson was shown as a female of power. Therefore, she was depicted as an upwardly mobile female (a theme that did not occur frequently). This woman, however, was unable to keep her focus on the meeting that she was in when the male passed by. This could be interpreted in one of two ways: that the male had some unforeseen power over the business woman, or that she was seen as taking power away from the male by ogling him as he passed by. Quinn (2004) would argue that this second interpretation is more accurate, as she argues that ogling a person is seen as a power-taking maneuver.

Cindy Crawford was also shown in this commercial. Crawford is typically a sex symbol for males. She was shown in this commercial as coming out from shopping, an activity that is
associated with appearance concern (one of the frequently occurring female themes). When the male passes by, Crawford stopped shopping just to watch this male pass by.

The last theme present in this commercial was portrayed by Carson from *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*. In this commercial, Carson was also depicted as sexually aggressive (one of the frequently occurring male themes). However, Carson was sexually aggressive toward another male. This is the first and only time in the entire series of commercials that this happened. Moreover, there were no negative consequences from this action, which is even more significant. By showing a homosexual male gazing at another male, this commercial paved the way for a broader depiction of males in later commercials.

4.5 **Sierra Mist Airport--2006**

In an airport security line, a white male in his twenties picked up his suitcase, and a white female security guard in her thirties stopped him and informed him that she would have to “wand him.” At this time, a white, middle-aged balding man came over and instructed the passenger to drop his bag. After the passenger set down his bag, the passenger allowed the female security guard to wand him. While she “wanded” the passenger, the camera zoomed to her face to see her make a sound similar to the wand identifying metal when she passed over the Sierra Mist in the passenger’s hand. The female security guard passed over the bottle again and she once again made the sound that was indicative of the wand identifying metal. The female security guard informs the man that she would have to take the drink from him.

The camera zooms to the passenger who asked her, “What?” She told him that she would have to take the Sierra Mist. He argued with her by saying, “You’re making that noise,” and she asked “What noise?” He replied, “Yes, you are, when you pass over my Sierra Mist.”
security guard passed the wand over the bottle, made the sound again and replied, “No, I’m not.” The passenger replied, “Yes, you are.”

The camera then zoomed out to see the entire scene where the female security guard motioned over to the other security guard and said, “We got a trouble-maker over here.” As the man walked over, the camera zoomed in to the male security guard’s torso. The male security guard was straightening a latex glove on his hand and said, “Just give me the word, Wendy.”

The camera zoomed to the passenger who consented to the confiscation of the Sierra Mist and left.

4.5.1 Analysis

This commercial was another significant commercial insofar as it positioned a female in a position of authority and power. In this commercial, the white female was shown as the aggressor, using the power of her position to exert control over a white male. While this was set-up to be a humorous anecdote showing the desire for a soft drink, the use of power was intriguing. When the white male attempted to exert any power in this interaction, the white female was not hesitant to use any tools at her disposal. This included a larger white male who seemed ready to exert domination over the first white male.

This may have seemed like an attempt for a white male to rescue this white female. It was not. Instead, she used the other white male as a tool to intimidate and control the male passenger who did not readily bend at her will. In this capacity, she was portrayed as an aggressive, manipulative, and an unemotional person who will use any method to obtain her goal even if she had to use questionable means, such as lying, intimidation, and ultimately threatening to invade the body of the white male passenger. Finally, the white male bent to her will and consented to her demands.
4.5.2 Themes

In this commercial, there were several themes present for each character. The first character, the female security guard Wendy, showed multiple themes: warrior, leader, and unemotional. The first theme shown by the security guard was that she was a warrior (one of the frequently occurring themes in females). This was evident in several different instances. The first instance was when she was initially shown. While security guards are not typically the most glamorous, or high-paying job in American society, the role of the airport security guard is essential. As an airport security guard, it is essential to protect the passengers on the plane from any possible harm. The security guard must be ready to act in a moment’s notice. Moreover, these people are entrusted with guarding people when they are in a vulnerable situation. This position lends itself to association with the warrior theme. Wendy took this theme even further by being extremely aggressive toward the male passenger when she forced him to be “wanded.” Later on, she was aggressive when she took the Sierra Mist away from the passenger. While the passenger did fight this maneuver, eventually, the passenger surrendered his Sierra Mist.

The second theme Wendy displayed was the leader theme (the least frequently occurring theme in the sample set). In this commercial, Wendy was shown as always in control. What decisions Wendy made (pulling the man aside, wanding him, manipulating the system, etc.) were always made quickly and without a second thought, characteristics of a leader. Moreover, Wendy was also shown as in charge of the male security guard as well. When she first pulled the passenger aside, the male security guard acted as a second-in-command, following the orders of Wendy, and then promptly leaving. When she ran into trouble with the passenger, Wendy used the male security guard again as a tool for intimidation. When she called the security guard over,
he quickly followed her orders, and even reassured the audience that Wendy was in charge by referring to her as a leader in this “investigation.”

The third and last theme portrayed by Wendy in this commercial was ”unemotional” (one of the least frequently occurring themes for females). In this commercial, Wendy never seemed to show any emotions when she took the passenger, manipulated the system, and intimidated the passenger into giving up his Sierra Mist. While the passenger was becoming agitated and angry, Wendy was cool and calm. Throughout the entire commercial, Wendy seemed to be removed from any emotion.

The passenger is the next character with multiple themes present. These themes were emotional (one of the most frequently occurring themes for males) and weak (one of the least frequently occurring themes for males). The first theme was evident throughout the commercial. The passenger was visibly agitated when he was pulled aside by Wendy to be inspected by her wand. When she ”found” the Sierra Mist to be a problem, the passenger became even more agitated, and he attempted to draw Wendy into an argument. He became even more agitated in this exchange when Wendy remained cool.

The next theme the passenger portrayed was that he was weak. In this commercial, he attempted to challenge Wendy in her authority; however, when Wendy immediately called over another security guard to enforce the rule she had just created, the passenger quickly relents and flees the confrontation. The manner in which he surrendered his Sierra Mist is evident of the weak theme. He gave up the Sierra Mist by quickly releasing the bottle, and then he ducked his head as to avoid eye contact and hurriedly left the scene of the confrontation.

The last character in this commercial was the male security guard. The themes he portrayed were warrior (the most frequently occurring theme for males) and follower (one of the
least frequently occurring themes in the sample analyzed). The male security guard was a warrior as he seemed to enjoy the confrontation with the male passenger. When Wendy called him over, the male security guard was willing, almost eager, to be a part of a confrontation with the passenger. Moreover, the male security guard was willing to be so aggressive that he would violate another man’s body (evident when he snapped the latex glove on).

This security guard was also a follower. In this commercial it was evident that he was subordinate to Wendy. When Wendy called the passenger over, the male security guard assisted her with the placement of the passenger and then left. Furthermore, the male security guard was subordinate to Wendy as he followed her directions. This was later epitomized when he was waiting for Wendy’s orders, before he acted upon (body cavity check) the passenger. In all of these instances, it was evident that the male security guard was a follower of Wendy.

4.6 FedEx Ground--2007

The commercial began with a close-up of a middle-aged, white female seated at a table in a business meeting. In this commercial, this female was depicted as “in-charge” of this meeting. Apparently, this meeting was focused on determining a new shipping service to use. The female began the commercial by discussing how FedEx has saved the company money. In the background of this commercial, a FedEx delivery person was depicted as delivering a package to the company.

As the female discussed the value of FedEx Ground, the camera zoomed out to show everyone seated at the table. There was an overweight, elderly, white male in a black suit (apparently an executive in the company) sitting beside the female in charge of the meeting, and another female dressed in a business suit. Across the table from the female in charge was a middle-aged white male. The camera then zoomed out even further to show a large portion of the
meeting room. In this shot, there were four more individuals. One white male filled a cup of coffee while two white males and one white female carry on a discussion in the corner. These three individuals have their backs to the female in charge of the meeting. At this point, the white male seated across from the female in charge of the meeting mused, “FedEx Ground...that sounds slow.” The white male filling his coffee told the other male he was wrong, that FedEx Ground is fast. The white female in charge of the meeting said, “You can’t judge things by their names, Joel.” She then asked the opinion of other people in the meeting. Harry, a hairy white male in his fifties, agreed with her. Eileen, an African-American female in her thirties who was leaning on Harry, agreed, and Joy, a brightly dressed white female in her forties, giggled and nodded her head. Bob, a white male in his forties, bobbed his head in agreement.

The camera zoomed to Joel who was noticeably uncomfortable at having his mistake pointed out. The camera then moved to the man in the black suit, who summarizes what everyone has said. The female in charge of the meeting praised this statement and referred to the male in the suit as “Mr. Turkeyneck.” The commercial ended with a male voice stating the FedEx has many different services, through the air or on the ground while the FedEx insignia is on the screen.

4.6.1 Analysis

This commercial provided another unique perspective in regards to gender roles portrayed. Initially, it showed a white female in control of a meeting. She was depicted as a successful, upwardly mobile female who was a leader in this organization. While it did show a white male as an executive of the company, this female was characterized as being confident and calm.
This changed rather quickly as the camera zoomed out. When this happened, the commercial undermined the power of the female in charge of this meeting. In the next shot, there were several people with their backs to the meeting having a conversation. Moreover, these people were actually in the meeting room with the female manager. As she did not show any problem with their inattention to her, this decreased the female manager’s power.

This power further decreased when a white male who is obviously in a lower position than she is questions her decision in front of the executive. To make matters worse, she did not immediately respond to this questioning of her authority. Instead, another white male came to her rescue when he responded to this criticism of the decision. The white female manager reinforced this idea as correct. While it did show the female as a competent person in regards to shipping, it also seemed to question her abilities as a manager.

These abilities are brought back into question when she asked the opinions of the other people at the meeting. These people, who were just introduced to the viewer, were shown as being higher up than the female manager is. They were standing during this meeting, not far from the table. Moreover, the males were shown as looking down when speaking to the female manager, whereas the females were shown as either looking straight ahead at the manager or avoiding all eye contact altogether. In this sequence, the first male (Harry) questioned looked down at the manager and affirms the manager’s statement. The second person (Eileen) was an African-American female, who was depicted as being visually subordinate to Harry. While her height may have contributed to this, she even further subordinated herself by awkwardly leaning against Harry. The next person questioned was a white female who was unable to form a coherent sentence. Instead, she just giggled and nodded her head. The last person questioned was a white male, who did not even need to answer the manager. He just nodded in agreement. After
having her statement vindicated by the other people in the meeting, the male executive summed up what everyone else has said. In this capacity, this male was serving a role as an intelligent, successful leader, whose opinion was never questioned. The commercial ended with the female manager serving as a “yes”-woman by praising the eloquence of the male executive.

4.6.2 Themes

In this commercial, many characters demonstrated a variety of themes. The first character in this commercial was the female manager. She demonstrated the leader theme (the least frequently occurring theme in the sample), the upwardly mobile theme (one of the most frequently occurring themes in the sample) and the functional theme (one of the most frequently occurring themes in the sample). The female was portrayed as in charge of the meeting. She was the first person to speak in the meeting and in doing this; she summarized the company’s history with FedEx. In doing so, this female oriented everyone to the direction of the meeting and made sure that everyone was “on the same page.”

The second theme for the female manager in this commercial was upwardly mobile. The woman was shown as valuable to the company, as she was orienting an executive to the progress of the team. Moreover, this woman was a middle-aged woman. She was shown as someone who was moving upward through the company, through her ability to manage different individuals and keep this team “on track.”

The last theme this female personified was the functional theme. This female was shown as a manager in a successful company. As such, the connotation of this job indicated that she was a breadwinner and was not tied to a family. This supported the assertion of Busby and Leighty (1993), that women shown in family and home roles have been decreasing.
The next character in this commercial was ”Mr. Turkeyneck” (the business executive). This person was shown as a leader (one of the most frequently occurring themes in the sample), and intelligent (one of the least frequently occurring themes in the sample). Mr. Turkeyneck was portrayed as an executive in this commercial. Moreover, the meeting in this commercial apprised Mr. Turkeyneck of the progress of the team in their endeavor. Mr. Turkeyneck was not in charge of the meeting, but the presence he exuded over the meeting was that of a leader.

Mr. Turkeyneck was also shown as intelligent. After everyone has attempted to convince Joel that FedEx Ground was a good decision, Mr. Turkeyneck summed up what everyone had said and stated the usefulness of FedEx Ground for the company.

The next character in this commercial was Joel, the male who questioned the female manager’s decision. Joel was shown as scatterbrained (one of the least frequently occurring themes in the sample), stuck in the mud (one of the least frequently occurring themes in the sample), and appearance unconcerned (one of the least frequently occurring themes in the sample). The first theme Joel personified was scatterbrained. Joel questioned the decision of the female manager. After he did this, everyone in the meeting told Joel how incorrect he was. After Joel was informed about is lack of knowledge in this area, he was shown as uncomfortable with having his lack of knowledge pointed out.

The second theme Joel portrayed was stuck in the mud. Joel was shown as an inept person who does not know enough about shipping to be a vital part of the organization. Moreover, Joel was dressed like someone who was not successful in his career. This aspect is tied to the next theme he portrayed: appearance unconcerned. Joel’s wardrobe was disheveled. Joel wore a blue, button-up shirt that was wrinkled. This portrayed two different messages; the
first was that Joel was unorganized in his wardrobe and life. The second message was that Joel did not understand what was required of a businessperson.

The fourth character in this commercial was the male who poured coffee. This male was shown as intelligent. When Joel questioned the female manager’s explanation, it was this male who explained how reliable and fast FedEx Ground was.

The fifth character in this commercial was Harry. Harry was shown as an appearance unconcerned male (one of the least frequently occurring themes in the sample). Harry had a very messy appearance. He had long hair that was wild and uncontrollable. He was, in fact, a very hairy individual. Harry was also a follower, as he was shown as a “yes”-man. When he was asked if he agreed with the female manager, he immediately said, “Yes.”

The sixth character in this commercial was Eileen. Eileen was a follower (one of the most frequently occurring themes for females in the sample) in this commercial. Just like Harry, when she was asked a question she agreed with the female manager.

Joy was the next character in this commercial. Joy was shown as scatterbrained (one of the least frequently occurring themes in the sample) and a follower (one of the least frequently occurring themes in the sample). When Joy was asked a question, she was unable to formulate a sentence. Instead she giggled uncontrollably and had to nod her head in agreement. Moreover, this method of agreement (unable to form a sentence) indicated that Joy was a follower of the female manager.

Bob was the last individual shown in this commercial. While Bob did not have any lines in the commercial, he was still a central character. Bob also was a follower (one of the least frequently occurring themes in the sample) in the commercial. When he was asked a question by the female manager, he immediately indicated agreement by nodding his head.
4.7 Discussion

These commercials provided valuable insight into the themes coded in the data set. By examining each of these commercials, specific themes were not only identified as present in each commercial, but also the context of the themes portrayed was examined. Moreover, this qualitative analysis began to provide insight into some of the quantitative findings from chapter three. A further discussion of these findings and how they relate to each other is provided in chapter five.
CHAPTER 5:

DISCUSSION:

5.1 Introduction

When an advertiser chooses to portray someone, either male or female, in advertising, the proper role portrayal becomes a central issue. This is particularly relevant in advertising scenarios today, since evidence indicates that messages are perceived as more persuasive when gender-appropriate role concepts are used by the advertiser (Meyers-Levy, 1988). Moreover, viewers interpret messages that embody role-consistent values; they use these roles (Meyers-Levy, 1988). Previous studies have examined stereotypical portrayals of both men and women in advertising in great detail. This study sought to add both quantitative and qualitative measures to the already large body of research in existence concerning gender-role portrayal. Furthermore, this study also sought to use a different instrument (one constructed by Chafetz) that incorporated the stances of the viewing public as a basis for the study.

As a quantitative analysis, this study also sought to determine if there has been any change in the gender-roles portrayed by the characters in the television advertisements analyzed. Moreover, this study attempted to determine the frequency of the gender roles portrayed in Super Bowl commercials, determine if any relationships existed between these gender-roles and determine the strength of these relationships. As a qualitative analysis, this study attempted to understand commercials, which were the most viewed on ifilm.com, by providing “thick” descriptions of the commercials and identifying the themes present within the commercial. As a triangulated study, this project attempted to connect the quantitative findings and provide pertinent examples what the findings mean.
5.2 Theoretical Findings

The results of this study indicated that there had been a shift in the roles portrayed by males and females, and perhaps even more importantly, this shift was still happening during the duration of the study.

5.2.1 Hypothesis One Analysis of Findings

The data supported the first hypothesis. The commercials depicted a slightly lower percentage (45.9%) of female representation as “central” characters (characters important to the plot of the advertisement) than Bretl and Cantor (1988) indicated (46.4%). While females make-up a majority of the population, they were underrepresented in the commercials analyzed. This finding supported the findings of previous studies (Bretl & Cantor, 1988; Courtney & Whipple, 1974; Culley & Bennett, 1976; Dominick & Rauch, 1972; Lundstrom & Sciglimpaglia, 1977; McArthur & Resko, 1975; O’Donnell & O’Donnell, 1978; Schneider & Schneider, 1979). However, the percentage of female central characters increased in 2006 and 2007, to nearly 50% as opposed to nearly 40% from the first two years analyzed. This change indicated a recent shift in the portrayals of females in advertisements to where female central characters were portrayed more frequently.

5.2.2 Hypothesis Two Analysis of Findings

The data supported the second hypothesis. The population of both males and females in stereotypical roles had changed from previous studies. While males were still more likely to be shown in stereotypical roles than females (Leppard, Ogletree & Wallen, 1993), there had been a shift to portray males away from the traditional stereotypes. One such example of this was the depiction of males as emotional. While this theme had historically been nonexistent in regard to males, this theme became one of the more frequently occurring themes in this study. Moreover,
the males in this sample also showed a variety of emotions, such as anger, embarrassment, fear, and even sadness.

Another finding of this study was that females are also portrayed differently in television commercials. Previous research had examined how underrepresented females are in the media in professional roles (Bardwick & Schumann, 1967; McArthur & Resko, 1975; Courtney & Whipple, 1974; Dominick & Rauch, 1972). When women were portrayed in occupational roles, it was in clerical or secretarial jobs with no authority. However, this study identified that while females are still underrepresented in authority roles, there had been a recent trend toward portraying females as authority figures.

This study also illuminated another frequently occurring depiction of females. In this study, the most frequently occurring theme for females was sexually aggressive. While this theme did play into the hegemonic male fantasy of a female who was constantly sexually aroused, another conclusion could have been drawn. Specifically, in the Diet Pepsi commercial “Stayin’ Alive” there was a shift in the portrayal of females as subjects of the male gaze. In this commercial, females were shown “man watching.” Typically, man watching was not portrayed in television commercials. Instead, men were typically shown as “girl watching” as Quinn (2004) identifies the term. This depiction of a male under the female gaze provided a unique example as to how females were depicted in the changing environment concerning appropriate gender role depiction. While this commercial also used the male gaze to objectify certain females, one particular male was shown as being objectified.

5.2.3 Research Question 1 Analysis of Findings

The data indicated that there were several different “levels” in terms of frequency in the data set. The most frequently occurring set of themes (first level themes) for males were warrior,
risk taker and emotional. The second most frequent set of themes (second level themes) were: sexually aggressive, functional, upwardly mobile and leader. The rest of the themes present in the data set were virtually equivalent and do not occur as frequently as these two levels of themes. The “first level” themes all increased each year, whereas the “second level” themes increased in frequency from 2003 to 2007 but did not exactly increase every year.

While many of these first and second level themes fall into traditional masculine roles, the introduction of one first level theme was intriguing. The emotional male theme does not fall into the traditional masculine theme set. From the year, 2005 to the year 2006 occurrences increased by 24 instances or 240%. This theme had the largest increase, by frequency not percent increase, of any theme in the data set. As such, this theme’s prevalence in 2006 and 2007 indicated that males were allowed to show their emotions freely during this period.

Figure 5.1 Total Themes Identified in Male Central Characters

The frequency of certain themes concerning females also was present in three different sets. The first set (first level) consisted of Sexually Aggressive, Dependent, and Emotional. The
second set of themes was Warrior, Appearance Concerned, Risk Taker and Follower. While these themes did not show the same characteristics as the male themes, they did fit into what previous literature indicated would happen. Ferguson, Kreshel, and Tinkham (1990) identified that women were portrayed as sex objects more often than any other portrayal. While another study by Piron and Young (1996) contradicted this statement, this study supported the findings by Ferguson, Kreshel and Tinkham (1990).

Figure 5.1  Total Themes Identified in Female Central Characters

5.2.4 Research Question 2 Analysis of Findings

This study identified the relationships between certain gender roles. These relationships were not only identified between masculine roles for males (e.g. warrior and risk taker) or feminine roles for females (e.g. appearance concerned and emotional), but it also identified the different relationships between the themes for the genders (e.g. emotional male and emotional female). As such, this study provided a unique insight into how these different gender roles
interact not only between a single sex but also across the two predominate sexes identified in American culture.

There were 53 different significant correlations between themes in this study. Moreover, these correlations were both positive and negative, and the strength of these correlations indicated a strong connection not only to traditional gender roles, as these roles were identified by Chafetz, but also that there were different types of relationships between the various themes. While a thorough description of each significant correlation was undertaken earlier in this study, the way these themes were grouped together in this study provided a unique insight into how gender was constructed in commercials during the Super Bowl. Furthermore, the three types identified in this study (traditional, transitional, and non-traditional) indicate there is some movement in terms of the portrayal of gender in commercials.

5.2.5 Research Question 3 Analysis of Findings

Wood (2003) identifies androgyny as the quality of having both strong male and strong female characteristics (341). As such, the themes identified in this study suggested that there is a movement toward androgyny by both sexes. Both males and females depicted in this study through a variety of themes, both masculine and feminine. As such, the traditional gender roles are no longer effective in determining what it means to be masculine or feminine. Instead, the more frequently occurring themes in this study, mentioned earlier, could provide a more thorough description of contemporary gender roles.

5.2.6 Research Question 4 Analysis of Findings

The data in this study suggested that males were actually portrayed as breaking away from stereotypical masculine behaviors more than females were portrayed as breaking away from stereotypical feminine behaviors. This is apparent for two different reasons. The first
reason was that males were portrayed more frequently in non-traditional roles, as described in Chapter 3. While males were portrayed more frequently overall than females, the depiction of males against stereotypes is unusual. Moreover, all literature (Leppard, Ogletree, & Wallen, 1993; Schneider & Barich-Schneider, 1979; Siu, 1996) in the area of advertising and gender portrayals indicated that females would be more likely to be portrayed in non-traditional (stereotypical) roles.

5.2.7 Research Question 5 Analysis of Findings

Messner and Montez de Oca (2005) identify sports as the “last bastion of hegemonic masculinity” (486) and, since the advertisements analyzed in this study identified significant changes in the roles of males and females, it is accurate to say this bastion has fallen. Moreover, since many gender scholars have looked at American culture as one that was based on hegemonic masculine values, and this study identified a change in these values, the very notion of what it means to be a “man” or a “woman” has changed.

Marchand (1985) and Lears (1994) both identified that advertising’s main function was to identify public beliefs and disseminate those values back to the public. If this was the case, then these advertisements have indicated that the belief system of the society these advertisements depicted (American society) has changed.

5.8 Future Research

This study identified a shift in the gender roles portrayed on television advertisements, and this shift was still in evidence at the end of the study. Future research can attempt to identify not only when this “shift” first began but also chart where it is going. Moreover, the commercials analyzed in this study identified several new and intriguing results (e.g. men portrayed as emotional). These commercials are worthy of future analysis to determine not only what
emotions (for instance) were depicted, but also to determine whether or not these changes were met with positive or negative reinforcement. Furthermore, other commercials need to be analyzed to determine if the trends identified in this study are comparable to other programming times and venues. This includes analysis of not only television sports programs, but also primetime television and children’s television.

The 2007 Super Bowl commercials need to be analyzed from a variety of different levels. The most important reason for this deals with approaches taken by two companies, Doritos and The NFL Network. These two companies had commercials that were not constructed by advertising agencies, but instead were constructed by “regular” people. Because of this, the 2007 Super Bowl commercials provided a forum to understand how society views “normal” gender roles. Therefore, there needs to be a more thorough investigation into the advertising campaigns of these two companies at the 2007 Super Bowl, in order to see how these commercials provided an insight into what society believed to be “true”.

Finally, other advertising venues (primetime, daytime, and nighttime programming) need to be analyzed to see if the trends identified in this study are consistent throughout the commercials or if the themes identified are unique to the sample set. Moreover, analysis of other commercial-based advertisements would identify the context in which these themes are presented. Furthermore, an analysis of other venues allows for a more complete view of the messages sent to the populace regarding gender behaviors.

5.4 Conclusions:

Aside from all of these findings, what exactly does this mean in terms of the roles presented to the American viewing public? Berger and Luckmann (1966) argue that the reality is a socially constructed process, and as such the dominant structures in society are the foundation
from which a society builds its reality. Cronin (2000, 2004) identified advertising as a foundation for capitalistic cultures to build their realities. As such, after the analysis of these commercials, it was evident that gender roles in American society have changed and, as of this study, are still changing. Because of this, the definitions of what it means to be a male and what it means to be a female need to be updated and adapted to “fit” this changing perception.

On a more practical level, this means that people in television advertisements are “blurring the lines” on what it means to be male and what it means to be female. As a result, people may behave differently today than they did in previous years, and as participants in a society that is based upon human interaction, the participants need to realize that the hard and fast “rules” that have been adhered to (even if they were done reluctantly) are changing.
BIBLIOGRAPHY
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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

CODEBOOK:

You will be coding Super Bowl commercials concerning masculine/feminine archetypal western gender roles. Use this codebook as your sole reference as you code the commercials. If you have any questions, please let me know. Code all answers on the code sheets that have been provided. For the actual project you will need to access this Web site: http://v1.ifilm.com/superbowl

COMMERCIAL NUMBER:

Assign each commercial according to year and sequence.


COMMERCIAL YEAR

Place the year the commercial aired at the top of the sheet.

TOPIC:

Code the topic of the commercial. Each commercial is trying to sell a particular product, identify the product being marketed.

1. Alcohol
2. Automobile
3. Cellular Phone
4. Cleaning Agent
5. Credit Card
6. Fast Food
7. Food Brand
8. Insurance
9. Internet-based service
10. Loan Company
11. Movie
12. Office Supplies
13. Pain reliever/Prescription Drug
14. Personal Hygiene Product
15. Restaurant
16. Shipping Company
17. Soda Pop
18. Transportation Service
19. Unable to determine
20. Other
CENTRAL CHARACTERS:
For each commercial, identify the number of central characters. A central character is a character whose gender is identifiable and whose absences would impact the message being sent in the commercial. Also identify the number of male central characters and the number of female central characters.

THEMES:
Code the following themes concerning gender roles that may be present in each commercial and record the clarity of the theme.
Watch each commercial, at least once, and identify the level of clarity for the following themes. Each commercial may contain several different themes, be sure to code EACH theme that arises. On a scale of 0 to 3, code the clarity of each theme in the commercial. Please use whole numbers.

Clarity Scale:
0=Not present
1=Not very obvious (hinted)
2=Moderately obvious
3=Extremely obvious

Gender:
Identify the gender of the central character(s) displaying those themes after indicating the clarity of the theme.

Themes:

1. **Warrior**-Individual(s) are virile, athletic, strong and brave. Individual(s) are ready to fight for what they want. Individual(s) also fight for what they believe is necessary to fight for. Also are athletic and aggressive.

2. **Weakling**-Individual(s) attempt to find common ground, avoid conflict. Individual(s) are nonathletic.

3. **Sexually Aggressive**-Individual(s) are sexually aggressive, experienced; single status is acceptable.

4. **Sexually passive**-Individual(s) are married, not overly concerned with sexual gratification, devoted to family. Sexually inexperienced.

5. **Appearance Unconcerned**- Individual(s) are unconcerned about appearance and aging.

6. **Appearance concerned**-Individual(s) are concerned about appearance and aging.

7. **Functional**-Individual(s) are the primary provider, breadwinner.
8. **Dependent**-Individual(s) are not the breadwinner of the family; may or may not contribute to the income.

9. **Risk Taker**-Individual(s) are uninhibited, adventurous, unconcerned with risks.

10. **Safety Concerned**-Individual(s) are concerned with safety.

11. **Unemotional**-Individual(s) are unemotional or stoic.

12. **Emotional**-Individual(s) are comfortable with showing emotions.

13. **Upwardly Mobile**-Individual(s) are success-oriented, ambitious, they must be “climbing the ladder”.

14. **Stuck in the Mud**-Individual(s) are not ambitious; failing to, or barely meeting the status quo. Individual(s) are not moving up in the company.

15. **Lone Leader**-Individual(s) are the leaders, dominating; they are also disciplinarians; independent, and individualistic.

16. **Follower**-Individual(s) are followers, meek; a mindless drone.

17. **Intellectual**-Individual(s) are logical, intellectual, rational, objective and practical. They are not ruled by their emotions.

18. **Scatterbrained**-Individual(s) are idealistic, inconsistent, frivolous, and/or shallow.

19. **Other**-Describe the theme in your own words.
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<thead>
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<th>Theme</th>
<th>Clarity (0-3)</th>
<th>Gender (M/F)</th>
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