

BEYOND ANNIE OAKLEY: AN ANALYSIS OF TV'S PORTRAYAL OF MARKSWOMEN

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Media portrayals influence how women are perceived in society. Historically, women have often been chastised or punished for exhibiting skills and attributes, which are perceived as masculine. Some reality television series seem open to portraying women in roles, which have historically been considered inappropriate for them. Nevertheless, can appearance be deceiving? Could these seemingly open portrayals really be masking misogynistic undertones? The purpose of this study is to discern whether the History Channel's television series *Top Shot* provides a misogynistic representation of female markswomen and whether female contestants are marginalized due to gender. This study also explored the possibility of gender-biased casting, through a comparison of available data on gender ratios of marksmanship in the military, law enforcement, competition shooting, and hunting sectors, compared with ratios expressed on the show. These sectors are explicitly represented in the series; therefore, a comparison of available data on gender ratios showed a relative discrepancy between the show and reality. A content analysis determined how closely the show's representation of markswomen matches that of reality, and thematic analysis of fan comments determined whether female contestants appeared marginalized.