

Introducing Women to the Internet:

Digital Discourse in Women's Media

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Abstract: Over the past decade, the number of women using the Internet has increased from a quiet minority to an equally represented demographic. But before the mid- 1990s, the Internet was characterized as a primarily white, male domain, used by those in privileged positions in academia, government, and the military. Arguably, these origins have shaped the way Internet technology has been viewed and accepted by society. Gender differences, however, have emerged over time in terms of the ways one uses the technology, agency associated with such usage, and the representations created within technology are becoming evident. One way to assess these trends is to look at how women were introduced to the Internet and how they learned about the technology via women's media. This study looked at discourses in the magazines *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Ms. Magazine*, and *Working Woman* during the time when the Internet was gaining in popularity and compared the ways in which women were represented with the technology.

Over the past decade, the number of women using the Internet has increased from a quiet minority to an equally represented demographic. By the end of 2001, women were as likely to access the Internet as men. In 2004, 66% of men and 61% of women were online, with more women online than men in total due to their increased numbers in American society ("Internet: The Mainstreaming of Online Life," January 2005). It is no coincidence that the increase of female Internet users has come at a time when the Internet and related technologies, such as email and Web, were gaining mainstream acceptance. But before the mid- 1990s, the Internet was characterized as a primarily white, male domain, used by those in privileged positions in academia, government, and the military. Arguably, these origins have shaped the way Internet technology has been viewed and accepted by society.

Gender differences, however, have emerged over time in terms of the ways one uses the technology, agency associated with such usage, and the representations created within technology are becoming evident. Women and men often use the Internet for very different reasons. A comScore Media Metrix report in September 2003 studied the Internet content preferences of males and females aged 18-24. The study found that men were more likely to visit gaming, adult, sports, and entertainment sites, while women's interests were in a variety of retail categories (comScore Networks, November 2003). Another comScore report showed that the highest growth sites were those in the retail category, also highlighting the growth of women Internet users (comScore Networks, Inc. November 2004). A 2005 study by the Pew Internet and American Life Project, revealed that women were more likely to seek health information, get religious and spiritual information, and use support-group Web sites, while men were more likely to use the Web to get news, buy travel services, check sports scores, seek financial information and do online stock trading, participate in online auctions, create content for the Internet, and download music files ("Internet: The Mainstreaming of Online Life," January 2005).

Recent research shows that men and women are attracted to different aesthetics of Web sites, but that 94% of sites displayed a "masculine orientation" (Bergstein, 2005).

Before the advent of the Internet, women's magazines began covering the topic of general computing as early as the 1980s, when computers became common in the workplace and started to make an appearance in the home. For example, in September 1983, Ladies' Home Journal published a special content feature entitled "How to Get Smart About Computing." This eight-page spread included an introduction by notable technology futurist Isaac Asimov, a review of high-tech jobs, an explanation of how computers worked, and a glossary of hardware and software terms. The final article was entitled "How I Learned to Love My Computer," a testimonial from one woman about the evolution of her family's relationship with the computer.

During the '80s and into the '90s, other women's magazines presented computer-oriented features including Good Housekeeping ("Welcome to the Computer," September 1991 and "Guide to Buying a Computer," May 1992) and Better Homes and Gardens ("Could a Home Computer Help You?" February 1981).

In the mid- to late- 1990s, women's magazines slowly began to cover the phenomenon of emerging Internet and related technologies. Women were enticed to use the Internet, and for many, this was the first introduction to the technology. While other media, such as television advertising, film, and technology publications provided images of the Internet, these were the first that were primarily targeted at women. But in so doing, these publications often stayed true to their existing tenets of hearth and home, rather than exhibiting the potential of the new technology beyond feminine stereotypes.

An early Cosmopolitan article about the Internet introduced the concept of online courtship. It emphasized the real life relationships that had begun online and resulted in marriage. An ending caveat warned women that online dating could also be dangerous (Aster, 1996). A later article in Cosmopolitan sought to provide an Internet tutorial for women (Forsyth, 1997). While this article provided valuable insight into the history and usage of the Internet, it was wrought with feminine stereotypes designed to make computing less intimidating. "If you think a Web site is located next to the spider's nest in the basement, this tutorial is for you!" or "The Net is still suffering growing pains and often works slowly. Consider doing your nails. You'll have plenty of time to let two coats of polish dry thoroughly while you stare at messages such as 'Host contacted, waiting for reply'; 'Retrieving updated images'; and 'Approximate download time, 28 minutes.'" Additionally, the article focused on proper "netiquette" for newsgroups and warnings about the addictive nature of the Internet and the potential for wasting time.

In contrast, the first usage of the term Internet in the men's magazine Esquire came in February 1994 entitled "You are Where You Jack In" (Patton, 1994). Between 1994 and 1996, when women's magazines were literally ignoring the topic, Esquire abounded with articles that described the technology and its usage in a straightforward manner, detailing the beginnings of cyberculture. But, by September 1995, Esquire was featuring discussions of cyber-porn (Walls, May 1995) and hosting articles that discussed rankings of women's online photographs (Walls, September 1995). More recent articles about the Internet in Esquire include cyber-betting (Kurson, 2003) and online investing (Fishman, 2000).

During the same timeframe, feminist publications were also engaging in discourse around the Internet. True to their missions, many articles about the Internet focused on activism and women's rights. In the late '90s, Ms. Magazine started a semi-regular department called "Techno.fem" in which articles about women and Internet technology were the focus. A few years later, Better Homes and Gardens (BHG), the women's service magazine with the largest circulation ("Paid Circulation in Consumer Magazines," 2003), introduced its own regular department called "[log in to unmask!](#)" In addition to the regular column, BHG also featured short 2-page articles on parenting with technology and selecting software. By contrasting these two publications' approaches to covering the topic of Internet technology, one can identify the different discourses around technology that women negotiated prior to going online.

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Choice or Chance?

Gender, Victimization, and Culpability in CSI: Crime Scene Investigation

Paper submitted for the 2006 convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Commission on the Status of Women Interest Group San Francisco, California

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This research (excerpted here) explored gender and culpability in crime victim representations through a discourse analysis of anonymous victimizations in five seasons of **CSI: Crime Scene Investigation**.

Findings indicate a vast discrepancy between male and female victimizations in that men become victims by chance, whereas carelessness and sexuality cause women to be victimized. Furthermore, female victims often suffer sexual assault prior to death. These results reinforce existing rape myths and suggest ideological support for a patriarchal society.

Introduction

In one episode of CSI: Crime Scene Investigation, the character, Sara Sidle, a crime scene analyst, stands looking at a bloodied bed sheet hanging on a wall. Her supervisor, Gil Grissom walks in and stands close to Sara as she discusses the bloodstain. At this point, Sara turns to Grissom and says, "Pin me down." In response to this demand, Grissom moves towards Sara. She allows him to grab her by the wrists, as Grissom presses against her.

On the surface, the purpose of this scene is to recreate the killer's actions, which results in the discovery of new evidence for the case. At the same time, although Grissom and Sara do not fully reenact the rape itself, by having Sara initiate the actions leading to the rape, this scene could imply that the victim was partially culpable for her own rape and murder. Therefore, this scenario reinforces the myth that victims are, to a degree, responsible for their crimes, particularly in the case of female rape victims.

From a young age, women are taught how to avoid becoming victimized by being aware of their surroundings, dressing appropriately, watching their drinks, avoiding certain neighborhoods, and carrying pepper spray and other protection (Gordon & Riger, 1989). Through these means, a woman is socialized to believe that it is her responsibility to amend her behavior for her own protection (Gordon & Riger, 1989). While some crime prevention for both men and women is necessary, this construction of a woman as a potential victim is problematic. It creates a false sense of control and belief that with proper crime prevention, a woman should be able to avoid becoming victimized. Under this misguided belief, it can be assumed that those who are victimized must have ignored proper precautions and are therefore somewhat responsible for the crime (Karmen, 1990; Weedon, 1997).

This notion that victims contribute to their own attack, or "shared responsibility," dates back to the 1940s, when von Hetig (1948) argued that crime is a partnership between the assailant and the victim. Because "the victim shapes and moulds the criminal," the victim plays a role his/her victimization (von Hetig, 1948, p.348). Von Hetig asserted that certain types of people were more likely to suffer a criminal attack, such as children, senior citizens, women, the mentally ill, immigrants, and the "heartbroken" (1948, p.348). According to von Hetig, by possessing these traits, a victim was somewhat responsible for his/her victimization.

In the 1970s, building on von Hetig's research, Hindelang et al. (1978) argued certain lifestyles and behaviors also heightened one's risk, such as engaging in illegal activities.

With the development of the Second Wave Feminist movement, discussions of victimization turned to rape. Many feminists focused on dispelling rape myths, especially implied culpability, and focused on creating

awareness of sexual assault (Burton, 1998). The 1970s and 1980s also experienced a general emphasis on crime victims, with efforts such as President Ronald Reagan's creation of the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime, designed to instigate victim's rights legislation (Barajas & Nelson, 1997).

Due in part to the rise in the crime victim's movement, contemporary scholars dispute the idea of shared responsibility, particularly in reference to personal attributes (Roberts, 1990). However, the extent to which a victim is culpable for the crime because of his/her actions is still widely debated (Karmen, 1990). Even with efforts to contest myths of culpability, blaming the victim still occurs, especially with sexual assault. For example, in a 1989 rape case, a Florida jury found the defendant "not guilty" because, they argued, the victim had "asked for it" as indicated by her provocative clothing (Baer, 1991).

Karmen (1990) classifies the victim's role in a crime into one of four types of shared responsibility (Karmen, 1990). Repeated victims are people who routinely place themselves in risky situation. The second type, victim facilitation, describes a situation where "victims unknowingly, carelessly, negligently, foolishly, and unwillingly make it easier for the criminal to commit the crime" (Karmen, 1990, p.110). Thirdly, with victim precipitation, the victim incites the action leading to the crime (Karmen, 1990). Finally, the fourth type of shared responsibility is the completely innocent victim, referring to, "Crime-conscious people who tried not to be victimized" (Karmen, 1990, p.115).

These types of shared responsibility are significant because the extent to which a victim is believed to be culpable affects the initial police arrest, the trial, if there is one, and its outcome, as well as how the media frames the event and the public's perception of the crime (Karmen, 1990). Therefore, it is important to study the notion of shared responsibility in media representations of crime since it is likely that these depictions will influence the public's perception of which crimes are viewed as justified. The construction of shared responsibility in relation to gender is also important to consider because of the societal emphasis on female vulnerability and victimization.

Of the 115 episodes of CSI examined, approximately 23 contained anonymous victims.⁴ It was determined that women are victimized more frequently than men (about 14 episodes for women versus 9 episodes with male victims). Only one man is victimized per episode. In comparison, multiple female victims often exist within a single episode. Women are also more likely to be murdered by a serial killer. In the five seasons studied, only one serial killer killed men, and this was stretched over three episodes. At least five serial killers murder women. In addition to the quantity of female victims, women also differ from men in that only women are sexually assaulted, which occurs in at least eight episodes with multiple victims. In six of these episodes, the raped women were then murdered. One woman survives the attack, but becomes brain-dead in the process.

Overall, it was found that anonymous men were "completely innocent" of their victimization. On the contrary, for women, it is suggested that they played a role in their attacks by making themselves vulnerable, thus susceptible to victimization.

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"I may decide it's not worth it to balance it all":

The experiences and values of young women in sports journalism careers

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In the first part of a longitudinal study to explore the factors that impact career longevity of women in sports journalism, women who have worked in the field for less than two years were interviewed about barriers and opportunities in regard to their career success. Three general themes emerged during the interviews:

1. Being a woman is not a barrier but is instead an (unfair) advantage; 2. The world of sports is a man's world; and 3. Family responsibilities will likely change, or perhaps end, their careers.

Introduction

Joanne Gerstner, sports writer for more than a decade, often visits college classes to talk about opportunities in sports journalism. On a recent visit, she was approached by a student. 'Is it OK for women to work as sports journalists?' asked the female college sophomore who attended a major university. 'I think I might want to try that, but my professor said women don't do well in that job.' (Gerstner, 2006, p. 3).

Gerstner's story, about a young woman who had been discouraged from seeking opportunities in a field that has been traditionally dominated by men, illustrates one hurdle women face in breaking into sports journalism in the United States. Nevertheless, Gerstner and others assert that the sports journalism workplace has improved for women into one in which they can, indeed, thrive. "We're no longer pariahs....The word is spreading: women are getting ahead in sports media because this is a worthy and worthwhile field" (Gerstner, p. 4).

The numbers of women practicing sports journalism in the U.S. seem to indicate that women are not, however, "getting ahead." Women comprise only 11% of the sports-related workforce at the top 200 newspapers in the United States; many of those papers reported having no women in their sports departments (Hardin & Whiteside, 2006).

Further, a paltry number have been promoted to opinion-leader (columnist) or gatekeeper (editor) status. Only 7% of supervisors (editors, assistant editors or associate editors) in sports departments at medium or large papers are women; in comparison, 35% of the editors in the overall newsroom are women (Hardin & Whiteside, 2006). The same is true for women in U.S. sports broadcasting; the numbers are low, and women do not occupy jobs such as play-by-play announcer or analyst (Coventry, 2004).

The small number of women in sports journalism is caused, at least in part, by the "revolving door" through which they seem to enter the field. It is likely, as more women have entered journalism schools

and pursued opportunities in sports journalism, that more women have entered the field in recent years.¹ Further, Title IX in the U.S. has dramatically increased the interest of women in sports and, consequently, sports journalism (Suggs, 2005). However, many women leave the profession, and the overall percentage of

women has failed to increase (Etling, 2002). Yet, ironically, women who work in the field report high satisfaction levels with their career choice (Hardin & Shain, 2006; Smucker, Whisenant, & Pederson, 2003).

Why, then, do numbers of women in the profession stay relatively low? Research has pointed to the social construction of gender (i.e., women as caretakers of home and family; men as "breadwinners") and its institutional manifestation as major reasons why women do not stay (Coventry, 2004; Hardin & Shain, 2005). Another contributor may be the well-documented history of general harassment and discrimination women say they have faced in the sports media workplace (Claringbauld, Knoppers, & Elling, 2004; Hardin & Shain, 2005; Hoshino, 1998; Ricchiardi, 2005).

A survey of women in sports media careers by Hardin & Shain (2006) found that "hours," "lack of advancement" and "pay" were among the primary reasons women considered leaving jobs in sports journalism.

Newsrooms in the United States operate on a rigidly hierarchical structure that has been charged with disguising masculine values such as independence, detachment and "objectivity" as neutral, desired components of journalism (Chambers et al., 2004; de Bruin & Ross, 2004). Most newsroom cultures are "aggressive/defense," meaning they value independence, competitiveness and confrontation (Cunningham, 2000). Professional values in news (such as toughness and detachment) have been shaped to support the "macho" culture of newsrooms (de Bruin & Ross, 2004).

Female journalists are expected to meet both the social definition of femininity and at the same time meet the criteria for professionalism, which are often at odds (van Zoonen, 1994, 1998; Steiner, 1998; Frolich, 2004). On one hand, they learn that "feminine" values such as compassion and kindness "are at odds with qualities expected of journalists such as a certain amount of directness, distrust and toughness" (van Zoonen, 1994, p. 54). Everbach (2005), for instance, interviewed a woman photographer who said colleagues and management frowned on crying but accepted angry outbursts by male colleagues.

Frolich (2004) calls the socialization of women into feminine role expectations a "friendliness trap" (p. 67); their demonstration of caring and intuitive communication skills opens doors to entry-level jobs (and may get them more substantive interviews with sources), but these attributes turn into a disadvantage when women seek promotion because these same skills are associated with lack of assertiveness and weak leadership.

Thus, women in journalism management positions often adopt a "thick skin" in order to climb through the ranks (Chambers et al., 2004). Chambers et. al. (2004) argue that one strategy of women in newsrooms is that of incorporation – working to be perceived as "one of the boys" and adopting masculine values and practices.

The perception of women as possessing superior communication skills may, however, be an advantage for them, especially as communication fields become more "feminized" (van Zoonen, 1998; Wrigley, 2002). Frolich (2004) writes that in the communication field: '[F]emale' characteristics such as empathy, thoughtfulness, the need to reach consensus, a talent for dealing with people, and the ability to work in a team-oriented atmosphere, are all considered to be qualifications that could be used as career advantages in contrast to supposedly typical male characteristics as cool rationality, competitiveness, aggression and individualism. (p. 67)

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Western Media Meets Eastern Tradition:

Examining the Views of Chinese-American Women on Beauty

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This study utilized in-depth interviews with Chinese-American women, prompted with mass media images of both Chinese and Western celebrities, in order to better understand their perspectives and views on beauty. Five major themes emerged: Health/Energy, Natural, Comfort/Closeness, Personality/Wholesomeness, and Chinese and Western Appearance Differences. Analysis indicated that although Western media images have an impact on the way Chinese-American women view beauty, the traditional Chinese attitudes on beauty remain highly influential.

Introduction

Different cultures may interpret beauty in different ways. **One culture may value a particular characteristic, while another culture may find that characteristic undesirable.** As the world becomes a global marketplace – with beauty products, cosmetic surgery, and the like being available to women around the world – the depiction of beauty through the mass media becomes ever more important as it reaches more and more people. Although researchers have probed the effects of mass media on girls and women from the United States, not much research has been done on those effects on women from other parts of the world. Yet it is likely that these women see many of the same images and share the same ideals of beauty as do Western women.

The research that has been published has been mainly quantitative, describing the status of female imagery in the mass media. The present study aims to fill a gap in the existing literature by using qualitative methodologies to examine the views of Asian-American women about beauty. Due to the often wide cultural differences between individual Asian countries, this study focuses on women that grew up in one single Asian country – China. Chinese-Americans were chosen as participants for two main reasons: 1) the results of a report commissioned by Dove showed that **Chinese women were more likely than some other Asian women to report themselves as being beautiful** (Dove Commissioned Report, 2005), and 2) it would be interesting to see how China's one-child policy would effect the views and opinions of the participants.

Literature Review

The effects of mass media consumption on individual and societal perceptions of beauty have been studied in a number of contexts, most of them quantitative in nature. A study in which photos were digitally manipulated to alter body size, skin color, and leg length (Hitchon, Park, & Yun, 2004) found that the participants (the majority of whom were Caucasian) preferred the non-digitized photos, which they saw as more realistic. A qualitative, open-ended portion of this study revealed that some participants were even offended by the manipulation that takes place in media images.

Other studies have focused on multicultural aspects of beauty ideals, and have attempted to discern differences in beauty ideals among participants from different ethnic backgrounds. For example, a survey of Asian, Hispanic, Black, and White students in the United States (Cunningham, Roberts, Barbee, Druen & Wu, 1995) found an extremely high correlation among attractiveness ratings, regardless of the participant's ethnicity. That study found that, across all ethnicities, the most important determinants of beauty were large

eyes, small noses, and large smiles. The researchers could not, however, find a relationship between increased exposure to Western culture and higher ratings of Western appearances – that is, participants who had not lived in the United States gave very similar ratings to those who had lived in the United States for at

least a few months. What could be causing this inter-cultural consistency in beauty ratings? Is there an innate sense of beauty that all humans share? Or has the mass media granted certain appearance types more airtime, thereby normalizing those appearances and making them the worldwide standard of beauty? This issue is especially important considering the heavy reliance on Western media usage across the world, which is due both to popularity and cost effectiveness (Havens, 2002).

Many studies on culture and beauty have chosen to focus on advertising as a means of looking into how beauty is interpreted in a given society. A content analysis of magazines from the United States and two Asian countries with a history of Confucianism – Singapore and Taiwan – showed that women are depicted differently in Western and Asian advertising (Frith, Shaw & Cheng, 2005). In the United States, Singapore and Taiwan, Caucasian models appeared more frequently than did Chinese, Malay, Indian, Pan-Asian, or mixed race models. Only in the United States were any African-American models depicted. Chinese models appeared relatively frequently in Taiwanese advertising due to the large Chinese population in Taiwan. When the ads were analyzed through seven of the eight types of beauty identified by English, Solomon & Ashmore (1994), differences between the three countries surfaced. Although the most common form of beauty shown across the three countries was the "Classic" type, the "Sensual/Sex kitten" type was found much more frequently in American advertising than in Singapore or Taiwan, and the "Cute/Girl next door" type was found more frequently in the Taiwanese ads. Caucasian models were also more likely to be placed in the "Sensual/Sex kitten" role than were Chinese models, who were frequently placed in the "Cute/Girl next door" model roles.

Another study analyzed images of Asian-American women in print advertisements and argued that Asian-American women were depicted as foreign, as outsiders and as the "Other" in order to maintain the position of white male as normal (Kim & Chung, 2005).

Findings

Five main themes emerged from the analysis of the interview transcripts: Health/Energy, Natural, Comfort/Closeness, Personality/Wholesomeness, and Chinese and Western Appearance Differences. Each theme is discussed in depth below.

Health/Energy. When asked to select a celebrity photo to talk about, one of the first characteristics mentioned by participants was perceived healthiness. One participant, a 27-year-old married woman, said, "I don't like models a lot, because they are too skinny. [I] look at them and think maybe they are sick, [they] need more food." Another participant, a 28-year-old, also mentioned sickly-looking models: "I don't know, I think a lot of people around me don't like models too much. They [are] like, sick or something. I guess they just try to keep their career, so they just go on fast a lot, go on diets a lot." Other photos were described as showing healthy women, and some characteristics the interviewees identified as healthy were young, tight skin, clear and bright eyes ("[I] just feel her eyes are clear and bright").

Youth, like health, was mentioned by several participants as a desirable quality: "I admire those women who, they are in their forties, and they look so young." Another said, "I think when...for [a] teenager, or when they are young, they don't need makeup. Being young is beautiful, [to] have young skin, [you] don't have to worry about too much of life, [it] will make people feel that kind of glowing beauty. When we get older, I would choose those things, like, to make me feel, look younger, at least to cover some of my not-that-good features."

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Body Image of Older Adults in Magazine Advertisements:

A Content Analysis of Their Body Shape and Portrayal

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Excerpts from the paper...

RUNNING HEAD: Body Image of Older Adults

Because body disturbance, eating disorders, and the drive for thinness, are all conditions that effect older individuals, the images of older adults in the advertisements of national magazines can have a lasting impression. These media images compete with real life role models as the predominant source for body comparisons among both men and women **This study uses a content analysis to determine what body image of older adults is portrayed in national magazine advertisements.** The findings indicate that magazines present an "ideal image" of older people that is healthy, happy and of an average body weight. Given the proclivity of older people to make comparisons from media images of peers and the potential for many to suffer from these comparisons in terms of eating disorders, feelings of inadequacy, and dissatisfaction, a concern arises over the prevalence of the "ideal body image" that abounds in these portrayals.

Introduction

As baby boomers increase in age, **the number of older Americans is predicted to increase to over 86 million by the year 2050** (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). According to the American Association of Retired Persons, **5,000 people turn 65 every day**. In fact, as the older population continues to grow, its members will begin to

outnumber the teenagers of America by a 2-to-1 ratio (Doka, 1992). Proof of this growth is due to the expansion of life expectancy. With modern advancements in medicine and the increased availability of information on living healthy, Americans are taking better care of themselves, eating healthier, exercising more, and seeing their doctors on a regular basis (Wellner, 2003). For example, a male born in 1995 could expect to live to be 71 and a female to 79 on average; however, by the year 2050 the average life expectancy is predicted to increase to 79 years for males and 84 years for females (Hoyert, Kung, Smith, 2005).

Even with their increased numbers, healthier lifestyle, and life longevity, older adults continue to experience negative stereotypes and attitudes toward them, their ways of thinking, and their abilities (Wellner, 2003). **The media continues to portray older people as, "institutionalized, in poor health, senile, constipated, incontinent, and either extremely poor or very wealthy"** (Deets, 1993, p. 134). Research has found that when older individuals are exposed to these negative images they tend to internalize and believe them (Hummert, 1990; Levy, 1996, 2000).

Studies have shown that negative images of aging can have a powerful psychological and physiological impact on older people. A study conducted at the Harvard Medical School study found that viewing either positive or negative images of aging had a significant effect on older people's ability to walk (Hausdorff, Levy & Wei, 1999). **Older individuals who were shown positive images walked faster and appeared spryer while older individuals who were shown negative images walked slower and more hunched over.** Gunter and

Wykes (2005) note that "an important psychological mechanism that may underpin mediated influences upon body self-perceptions is the tendency for individuals to make comparisons between themselves and the role models" (p. 154). These media images compete with real life role models as the predominant source for body comparisons among both men and women (Gunter & Wykes).

For those older individuals who frequently consume media images, whether in print or broadcast sources, the realistic portrayals of people that characterize these sources may form the basis for many of their conceptions of the ideal body image. Gunter and Wykes (2005) state **that "exposure to the media-portrayed thin ideal is related to eating pathology and suggests that women may directly model disordered eating behavior presented in the media" (p. 161).** However, women are not the only ones impacted by media portrayals.

Research indicates that males experience body image disturbance (the muscular body) as frequently as females (the thin body) (Cohane & Pope, 2001). In fact, **as men age their feelings of unattractiveness increases "suggesting that the body image of males is more affected by the aging process"** (Paxton & Phythian, 1999, p. 119). The purpose of this study, therefore, is to explore the body image portrayals and physical characteristics of older men and women in the advertisements of national magazines.

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