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**REALM OF POSSIBILITIES: THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN  
FUTURISTIC SCIENCE FICTION MOVIES**

By

Aru Basu

Paper Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Master of Science Degree in

*COMMUNICATION & MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES*

**Rochester Institute of Technology**

March 10, 2005

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Name of author: Aru Basu

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**ABSTRACT:**

This study examines the portrayal of women in 50 science-fiction films produced in the U.S. The method was *content analysis* and the unit of analysis was the film scene. Presentations of women were analyzed by examining *demographic* variables and *behavioral* traits. For a further insight, comparisons have been made between older women (40 years and above) and younger women (below 40 years) *and* between “human” women and “other” women. This study reveals that there are few differences with previous studies undertaken on portrayal of women. Overall, women in the science-fiction future have not been portrayed in a significantly different way than the portrayals seen in the media. The “Other” women have been portrayed more dynamically than “Human” women.

## INTRODUCTION:

In 1903, George Melies created a milestone in film narration when he became the first filmmaker to narrate his story by changing its spatial and temporal dimensions. His film, “*A Trip to the Moon*,” is regarded as the forerunner of science-fiction (SF) films.

Science-fiction films belong to a genre of story telling “which emphasizes actual, extrapolative, or speculative science and the empirical method, interacting in a social context with the lesser emphasized, but still present, transcendentalism of magic and religion, in an attempt to reconcile man with the unknown” (Sobchack, 1987, p. 63). Thus, the science-fiction genre, by altering space and time, tries to envisage an unexplored, unfamiliar situation wherein society or individuals are affected by actual or imagined science within the realm of social interactions. According to Vieth (1999), science is based on rationality and its main objective is to emancipate mankind from superstitions and irrational beliefs. Similarly, the science in science fiction seeks to break free from tradition and to explore new frontiers.

Throughout history, women have always aimed for a recognized place in society, beyond the boundaries of their home. In this regard, science-fiction films have the potential and the opportunity to depict women in a new liberated light and portray them in roles that are different from the traditional portrayals in various media, including films. As Mary Jackson commented on the position of women in cinema:

In the earlier part of this century filmmakers, as well as the public, did not necessarily view the female “media image” as an infrastructure of sex inequality. Today, contemporary audiences and critics have become preoccupied with the role the cinema plays in shaping social values, institutions, and attitudes. American



cinema has become narrowly focused on images of violent women, female sexuality, the portrayal of the “weaker sex” and subversively portraying women negatively in film (Jackson, 2003, para.1).

The science-fiction genre is unique because the narrative usually focuses on the future. Since SF films have the freedom to make an imaginative, yet convincing portrayal of the future, there is a reasonable chance that these films might carry a message regarding the way women are viewed in the society, which is different from the existing portrayals. The present study seeks to examine whether the depiction of women in futuristic films differ from the contemporary depiction of women in different media, such as film, television and video-game.

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW:**

The previous research has been grouped under four different “moving” media. They are *television, television commercial, video game* and *films*.

The medium of **television** has received the maximum focus because most previous researchers have examined the portrayal of women on television, especially prime time television. Also, TV is the medium that most closely resembles cinema. The researchers whose studies are reviewed below are: Glascock, 2001 &2003; Lauzen & Dozier, 1999; Elasmara, Hasegawa & Brian, 1999; Berg & Streckfuss, 1992. Under television advertisement, two studies were reviewed: Stephen, 1992, Eaton, 1997. One study has been reviewed on the presentation of women in video game medium (Dietz, 1998). From the film medium, three studies have been reviewed; one by (Bazzini, McIntosh, Smith, Cook & Harris; 1997), which examines the portrayal of “aging” women in popular Hollywood films; (Escamilla, Cradock & Kawachi; 2000), who examined

women and smoking in Hollywood movies and Pearson (2001) who studied the depiction of women in sport films.

Berg and Streckfuss (1992) made a detailed study on the profile of the working woman as portrayed on prime time TV. The study revealed that portrayal of the working woman in 1980s had not changed significantly since 1950s. Even though women on prime time were likely to be employed as professionals like men, they occupied a lower position in the organization hierarchy. Further, women with higher managerial positions were underrepresented. Women, more than men, were likely to be shown in household occupations and as students. Women were also shown as making fewer decisions though they participated more in interpersonal actions e.g. motivating and counseling.

Elasmar, Hasegawa and Brian (1999) researched the portrayal of women in US prime time television from 1992 to 1993. They found that women on prime time TV in early 1990s were presented as, “young, single, independent, and free from family and work place pressures” (pg. 33, para.2). The result showed that there was an increase in presence of women’s characters on prime time TV since 1970s. The study revealed, among other things, that more married women have an unclear working occupation compared to the women who were depicted as single. The study also discovered that women in 1992-93 prime-time TV were less likely to represent major characters unlike previous studies which had more women playing major characters. Most females were shown to be in their twenties and thirties and Americans of European origin outnumbered the other ethnic counterparts (Blacks, Hispanics and Asians). This study found that blond women, though, fewer in number than the brunettes, were more likely to be successful.

Lauzen and Dozier (1999) mainly studied the relation between women working behind the scenes in prime time TV and the usage of powerful language by women characters on screen. It appeared that female executive producers were more influential than female writers or directors in bringing about the usage of powerful language by female characters. Other findings include: majority of women were younger than men, males outnumber female characters and were less likely than women to be defined by their marital status.

Glascok investigated gender roles on traditional and newer TV networks in 2001 and 2003. The study conducted in 2001 on traditional networks of 1996-97 television season, revealed that overall male characters on prime-time TV outnumbered females. The marital and parental statuses of female characters were less ambiguous when compared to men, but in terms of occupation, the lion's share of the "indeterminate" category belonged to the women. Women were portrayed more as subordinates than bosses in jobs, more likely to be provocatively dressed and typically younger than the male characters. Female characters though inclined to make more negative comments (verbally aggressive) were also more affectionate than men. White women were over represented compared to other ethnic categories. In general, females were found to be underrepresented on prime-time compared to the US general population. Glascok (2001) discussed some changes in characterization of women, for example, more women were depicted in having a job and had access to a variety of jobs. Also, more women, like men were having less defined marital and parental goals. The male stereotypical TV behavior included decision making and physical aggression, while females were shown to display more empathetic behavior like sharing, giving, compassion and affection.

Glascoock (2003) study of non traditional prime-time networks (Fox, WB and UPN during Fall 2001 television season) revealed results that were similar to his 2001 study in regard to the portrayal of women. Overall, female representation on the newer networks was somewhat lower than the numbers reported in his previous (Glascoock, 2001) study. Females were more likely to be depicted as single or married and married females were less likely to have a job, compared to single females. Females on the newer networks were more likely to be provocatively dressed than those in 1990s network programming. Major female and male characters had unclear marital and parental statuses; though in general male characters were shown to have lesser association with marital and parental responsibilities than female characters. In terms of ethnicity, Glascoock's study revealed that African-Americans had achieved parity in many aspects like, job status, employment and body weight in the newer network programming. Glascoock summed the main points of his 2003 study: There is more equivalency in depiction of gender roles towards the major characters in newer networks compared to the traditional networks. However, for newer networks, it appears that in general, there is more emphasis on sex appeal for female characters.

Stephen (1992) conducted an interesting study on gender portrayals in 2,209 network **television commercials** in different day parts (daytime, evening prime time and weekend afternoon sportscasts). The results revealed that advertisers manipulated gender portrayals according the image of the gender most familiar to and comfortable for their target audience. For example, day time ads usually aimed women homemakers and thus focused on the traditional stereotypical images associated with the American housewife (cooking, child care, or maintaining an attractive physical appearance). Men appeared in

these ads (during daytime) generally in a position of authority. Commercials aimed at the weekend audience (mostly men) frequently excluded women and children and focused on traditional stereotypes of masculinity (independence, aggressiveness, physical strength etc). Alcoholic beverages commercials were mainly shown on weekends and the women who appeared in weekend ads were generally seen in roles subservient to men or as sex objects or models. On the other hand, during prime time, whose audience includes the "working woman", women were more likely to be portrayed in positions of authority and in settings away from home than they were in daytime and men more likely to be portrayed as a parent or spouse and in settings at home than they were on weekends.

Eaton (1997) studied prime-time stereotyping on five television networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX and UPN) with regards to promotional announcements. The study found that women were underrepresented in all TV networks' promotional announcements and that stereotypical portrayal of women (e.g., scantily clad, attractive) were more pronounced in the newer networks, like FOX and UPN, which mainly targeted the young male audience. All networks depicted predominately White characters and NBC, FOX and UPN did not depict any elderly women characters.

Dietz (1998) examined violence and gender roles in the **video game** medium. Dietz revealed that the traditional and negative portrayal of women contributed to the gender role socialization, especially to impressionable children. Most of the sampled video games lacked women characterization; only 15% of women were portrayed as heroes or action characters. Women were shown as the weaker sex and physical attributes such as big breasts and thin hips were emphasized. They were also portrayed as evil or as impediments to the goal of a game.

Escamilla, Cradock and Kawachi (2000) analyzed smoking behavior of women as presented in Hollywood **films**. Their study revealed that by age, younger actresses were more likely to be depicted as smokers in the movies. The results of the qualitative analysis of smoking revealed that women were more likely than men to be portrayed using tobacco products to exert control on their emotions, to assert their sex appeal, to control weight, to enhance their self image and to provide themselves with a feeling of comfort. Also, female characters were depicted smoking when facing a threatening or stressful situation or when they were trying to regain or establish control. This indicates that women are dependent on smoking and that they need to use tobacco products to aid in enhancement of their self esteem.

Bazzini, McIntosh, Smith, Cook and Harris (1997) researched the portrayal of aging women in popular Hollywood films from 1940s to 1980s. The study's findings matched with the authors' hypothesis that Hollywood indirectly supports existing female stereotypes by under representing older women in films and depicting older women in a negative light compared to the older men. In general, there are ageist stereotypes for both men and women, but older women were shown as being less attractive, friendly or intelligent. Also, this study shows again that with the exception of the 1970s, the female central characters were much younger than their male counterparts. This gave the impression that physical attractiveness is the main reason for a woman's success and opportunities. On the other hand qualities such as wisdom and intellectual competence in an older woman are ignored.

Pearson's (2001) examination of the depiction of women in sport films before and after the establishment of Title IX (a legislation passed in 1972 to encourage female sport

involvement), showed a notable increase in the depiction of women as heroines in sport films post Title IX. There were attempts, especially in the 1980s, in sport films to show women in more non-traditional roles by addressing themes like leadership qualities, overcoming sexual barriers and alternative lifestyles. However, more often it was seen that a female character's heterosexual attractiveness would be given greater importance than their role as female athletes with enviable game prowess.

The main characteristics in the portrayal of women that have been considered are physical appearance, occupation, marital and parental status, ethnicity and behavior. The general thread of the previous studies reveals that in prime-time television and Hollywood, although women are gradually being depicted as part of the work force and having an identity of their own, most women are still portrayed as subservient to men. In terms of characteristics such as, physical appearance, occupation, marital and parental status, the portrayal of women have not changed much from 1989 (the oldest literature reviewed). The most traditional and to an extent negative portrayal of women is in the video game medium and the negative portrayal for ageing women is found to be in the film medium.

Science-fiction narrative has the ability to transcend the boundaries of the present portrayals and depict the role of women in a new light. There is virtually a limitless opportunity for filmmakers to depict women in any way they want. In SF films, the presentations of characters are bounded only by imagination. The present study seeks to reveal the portrayal of women in futuristic SF films and whether their role has evolved from the past perceptions and portrayals. This study focuses on those SF films from 1920s till 2003, which at the time of their release depicted a future period.

The present study seeks to examine the following research question:

**RESEARCH QUESTION:**

*How have women been portrayed in futuristic science fiction films?*

**RATIONALE:**

The main reason I chose this project is my interest in the field of cinema and its role as a communicator in our society. I believe that cinema, like other media has the power to alter the traditional perceptions of women by portraying them in a way which does justice to their capabilities.

Most research on the portrayal of women focus on their past and present portrayals whereas; the current study focuses solely on the likely future portrayal of female characters. From an academic point of view, the purpose of the present study is twofold:

- To add to the available knowledge about how women are portrayed in the medium of cinema and
- Investigate and document how women have been portrayed in the future.

This study is unique as there have been very few empirical studies undertaken on the portrayal of women in films. There is a plethora of studies available regarding the depiction of women in the medium of TV, but there is a dearth of scientific studies based on the presentation of women in cinema, especially SF cinema. How have the makers of cinema envisioned the role of women in the future? What are the different attributes of the future woman? What are the similarities or dissimilarities between the present portrayals of women compared to the future portrayal of women? The present study has examined these various aspects. For example, similarities or dissimilarities between the present and future portrayals of women have been ascertained by comparing previous



research done on the portrayal of women with the findings of the current study. All empirical studies deal with the past or the present whereas my study deals with a future situation. The present study also examines how “other” women (cyborgs/androids) who appear externally as human women, have been depicted.

Various researchers (Berg & Streckfuss, 1992; Dietz, 1998, Glascock, 2003) were concerned with the portrayal of gender in media and their influence as a powerful source of information regarding a variety of gender related behavior. Dietz (1998), in particular, examined the media depiction of gender behavior and how these portrayed behaviors are internalized by adolescents which in turn affect their perspective and forms a basis for his/her future actions and interactions within the society. Science-fiction films afford a golden opportunity to imaginatively depict women in the future society. The present study can reveal how creative the film makers have been in presenting women. Did they utilize the opportunity and chose to characterize women in a way that is different from the past portrayals of women in media? Maybe the filmmakers have succeeded in characterizing the future woman in a manner which does justice her capabilities. On the other hand, despite the opportunity, did the film makers portray the future woman in a manner which reinforced the traditional “feminine” stereotypes? This study will add to the pool of research done on the portrayal of women – the difference being that the portrayal is set in the future.

The analysis of the role of women in SF films seeks to put into perspective the possible associations between the present reality and future perception of gender roles in society and how that may influence the acceptance of women as important individuals outside the boundaries set by present society.

**METHOD:**

The present study examines theatrical, feature-length, US made SF movies released between 1930 and 2003, whose stories are set at a future date from the year of their release. The main objective is to analyze the portrayal of women these futuristic films.

The population from which the sample is chosen is the Filmography list of SF films (Appendix). This list has been compiled from three sources: *The encyclopedia of science-fiction movies* by C. J Henderson (2001) and from the filmography section of the book titled *Science Fiction Film* by J.P. Telotte (2001) and [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com). The sample excludes non-US sci-fi films, silent sci-fi films, animated sci-fi films, and sci-fi films made for television. The first criterion for sampling is to choose those SF films that have their story set in the future. Also, films with futuristic themes, like nuclear holocaust, interplanetary travel, alien invasion and so on have been included. From the selected films, random sampling will generate the final selection of films to be analyzed. This will be done by selecting every second film out of the initial sample of films.

To establish intercoder reliability, 10% percent of the films were randomly sampled from the final list of films and independently coded by the author and a graduate student. The Codebook (Appendix) provides guidelines to the coder. However, because some variables such as age, height, weight are estimated, in the case of any discrepancies, the relevant segments were viewed again together by two coders. One reason for selecting two coders is the subjective nature of the content being coded.

The coding instrument has been based on prior studies mentioned in the literature review. The unit of analysis is a film scene. Since, the present study is focusing on the

presentation of women, all female characters with speaking parts and those who appear in more than one scene are coded. The presentation of women can be analyzed by examining the *demographic* variables and *behavioral* traits.

In the present study the *demographic* factors under consideration are: race, age, weight, height, marital status, parental status and occupation. Two other variables that have been added are dress and industry of female characters. Occupation will be coded according to *industry* and by *occupational role* (Berg & Streckfuss, 1992). Industry is defined as the work setting of the characters. The major categories of industry and of occupational role have been adapted from Berg & Streckfuss's (1992) study. If a female character does not belong to any industry or occupation mentioned in the codebook, it is coded as "None." The behavioral category includes verbal and physical behavior. Both verbal and physical behavior will be coded under *aggressive* and *non-aggressive* behavior. Physical aggression as defined by Glascock (2001) is overt behavior, such as hitting or shooting intended to harm oneself or another. Non-aggressive physical behavior includes, for example, patting, hugging, kissing, consensual sex and so on. If a female character does not display any of the behaviors mentioned in the codebook, it is coded as "None". "Advising and ordering" is coded under non aggressive verbal behavior. "Advising and Ordering" was examined by Turow (1974) both in prime-time and day-time television. Turow's study revealed that men gave directives in 70% while women gave directives in only 30% of the episodes (Turow, 1974). Smoking, drinking and drug usage have also been coded. According to Berg & Streckfuss (1992), a female character can be coded as *positive*, *negative*, or *neutral* in accordance to the plot function. These above mentioned characterizations fall under the general behavior category as they are

determined by a character's actions. But, they are coded separately in give a further insight to the portrayal of women. *Positive* depictions were defined "as those that benefited the organization and its members or the broader society of which the individual or organization was a part" (p.199, para.1). Positive elements of a characterization would include charitable/philanthropic, sympathetic/helpful, and friendly and so on. On the other hand, in a *Negative* portrayal, the character displayed negative traits (like, greedy/selfish, foolish, malevolent or unfriendly) in her interactions between individuals and towards society in general. When a character had no positive or negative plot function, displaying mere civility or general politeness, it is defined as *Neutral* depiction.

## **RESULTS:**

A total of 2644 movie scenes were coded for the 50 movies. In the case of the behaviors (physical & verbal) and depictions (positive, negative and neutral), their total number is greater than the total number of scenes coded, i.e., more than 2644. This is due to the fact that in some scenes there are instances where more than one type of behavior or depiction has been coded. For example, in the category of "Aggressive Physical Behavior", a female character may punch as well as kick another character and both the actions are coded separately.

To gain a further insight on the portrayal of women in the future, this study examined the relationships between:

- a) Age and other demographic and behavioral variables
- b) Ethnicity and other demographic and behavioral variables
- c) A comparison between "human" women and the "other" women with regards to the demographic and behavioral variables.

Elaborating further on the demographic categories beginning with:

**Age:** Women in the future have been depicted to be mostly in their twenties (20-29) commanding a majority 68% of scenes coded. The age group of (30-39) is second largest (22%) while women above 40years of age comprise only 1% of the scenes coded.

**Weight & Height:** That the physical appearance of a woman is still considered important, even in the imagined future is evinced by the fact that an overwhelming majority (91%) of the women are depicted as slender (“slim”) and none of the scenes showed any women as “extremely thin” or as “extremely fat”. Height seems to have been a factor in appearance as in 78% of scenes women were depicted as “tall”. None of the scenes showed any women as “extremely tall” or as “extremely short”.

**Race:** According to the Census 2000 report on [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), among the racial groups, Whites comprise 75.1% of the US total population, Blacks (12.3%), Asians (3.6%) and Native Americans (0.9%). In this study, despite being the second largest group to be depicted in terms of percentage, Blacks comprise only 8% of the scenes coded. In contrast, Whites comprise 88% of the scenes coded. Hispanics and Asians/Pacific Islander (PI) though considerably large and still growing minorities in US comprised 1% and 2% of scenes respectively, while Native Americans were not represented at all.

**Dress:** Majority of the scenes (80%) showed women wearing “not-provocative” clothing.

**Marital & Parental Status:** The “indeterminate” category has the highest percentage (72%), followed by “single” (14%) and the third largest category is “married” (9%).

Similarly, the “indeterminate” Parental Status category has the highest percentage (74%), followed by “none” as parental status (17%), i.e., having no children.

**Industry:** In 52% of the scenes, a female character's industry could not be categorized ("none") within the codebook categories and /or she is shown as not working. A significant percentage (24% of scenes) has shown women working in space-related industry - a sensible finding since all the films coded are futuristic. Female characters were also shown working for Public Admin/ Government and the Medical industry more often than in industries such as, Education Military or Service. No women were coded as belonging to the Manufacturing and Construction industries.

**Occupation:** In this category 33% of the scenes depicted female characters working as "professionals" and at the same time 33% of scenes also showed them as having no occupation ("none"). The second depiction was "law breakers" (14%). Women were more likely to be portrayed as "managers" or "officer/soldiers" than "students".

**Behaviors:** Both physical and verbal behaviors of the female characters were coded. Women characters displayed more non-aggressive behaviors than aggressive behaviors. However, in the majority of instances women did not exhibit either physical or verbal behaviors and were coded as "none".

Among *aggressive physical behaviors*, the second largest displayed are "hitting/slapping" and "shooting" which each accounted for only 2% compared to "none" which was 92%. The second largest category in *non-aggressive physical behavior* is "running" (9%). "Hugging", "kissing" and "crying" each accounted for 4% of non-aggressive physical behaviors. Behaviors such as "flirting/seducing" or "consensual sex" were rarely depicted.

Among *aggressive verbal behaviors*, the second largest behavior displayed by women is "ordering" – which is only 5% compared to "none" which accounts for 84% of

scenes. “Obscenities/curses”, “negative comments”, “shouting” and “argumentative” behaviors were rarely displayed and none of the female characters made verbal “sexual advances”. The second largest category in *non-aggressive verbal behavior* is “questioning” (15% of scenes), which is defined as expressing an inquiry that invites or calls for a reply or uttering an interrogative sentence or phrase or gesture without aggression. Questioning is followed by “advising” (5%) and “screaming” (4%) while “sarcasm”, “pleading” and “muttering” are exhibited rarely.

**Depictions:** A positive, negative or neutral depiction is defined through the action of a character in a scene. In this study, a female character is coded having a “neutral” depiction when she displays neither positive nor negative behavior in a scene. The sample of films coded reveals that an overwhelming majority (76%) of the female characters of the future were depicted as “neutral” – neither positive nor negative. Neutral is often seen in the negative sense, which makes a rather drab, colorless illustration of the women in the future. There is a large difference between “none” for both positive and negative depictions and the second largest for such a depiction.

In “*Positive Depiction*”, the major depiction after “none” (81%) that are relatively more often depicted are “helpful/supportive” (9%), followed by “friendly” (4%) and “courageous” (3%). It appears that women in the future are envisioned as mainly as nondescript, supportive characters, rarely displaying leadership traits. It is to be noted that more women are relatively shown positively rather than negatively. In case of “*Negative Depiction*” – the second major depiction after “none” (94%) is “unfriendly” (3%).

***Smoke, Drink & Drugs:*** About 99% of the scenes coded had no incidence of drinking or smoking; there were very few scenes of “implied” drinking and none for “implied” smoking. There were no instances of drug usage coded. The futuristic women seem to have none of the above-mentioned vices!

A cross-tabulation was performed to investigate:

- a) The relationship between ethnicity and variables such as, occupation, depiction and behaviors and,
- b) Age and variables such as occupation, depiction and behaviors. Age has been divided into 2 groups – female characters of less than 40 years and those who are 40 years and greater of age.

It is to be noted that White female characters comprise the majority in all the variables – this representation though skewed, appears unbiased as Whites enjoy the majority in positive variables, they are also a majority in all the negative variables too.

***Ethnicity & Occupation:*** The prominent findings of the cross-tabulation between each professional category are: Hispanics have only been represented as “Officer/soldiers” Both Asian/PI and Hispanics are not depicted as law-breakers. Only the Whites represent the “student” category and command the majority of scenes in negative occupation category like law breaking or having “none” as occupation.

***Ethnicity & Depictions:*** Asians/PI had the second highest percentage (5%) in Negative depiction and Hispanics were not depicted negatively.

***Ethnicity & Behaviors:*** The “none” coding category for physical and verbal behaviors were excluded for this cross tabulation. In Aggressive Physical behavior, Blacks had the lowest percentage (2%) and Asians/PI the second highest (5%). In Non- Aggressive



Physical behavior, Blacks had the second highest percentage (8%) while Asians/PI and Hispanics accounted for the lowest percentage (1%). Blacks displayed the second highest majority of aggressive as well as non-aggressive Verbal Behavior.

***Ethnicity & Smoking, Drinking and Drugs:*** Whites, Blacks and the Indeterminate accounted for actual incidence of smoking. There were no incidences of smoking by Hispanics and Asians/PI.

Various demographic and behavioral variables have been compared between women aged less than 40 years and those aged 40 years and above. There are more women below 40 years (96% out of 2644 scenes coded) than above 40 years (4% out of 2644 scenes coded). Comparisons of different variables will be according to the total number of scenes coded, i.e., out of 2644 scenes.

***Age & Race:*** Besides Whites and Blacks, none of the other racial groups were represented over the age of 40 years. For women less than 40 years, Whites comprised the majority.

***Age & Weight:*** An overwhelming 90% of total scenes coded presented women less than 40 years of age as “slim”. Older women were more likely to be shown “overweight”

***Age & Dress:*** All women above 40 years have been shown to be dressed “not-provocative”. Women less than 40 years did appear provocatively attired but were more likely to be dressed as “not-provocative”.

***Age & Height:*** None of the women above 40 years had “short” stature unlike women below 40 years who were coded as “short” in 3% of scenes.

***Age & Marital Status:*** Most women of both age groups were depicted as having “indeterminate” marital status. Besides, younger women were depicted either as “single” or “married” while older women were only shown as “married”.

***Age & Parental Status:*** The “indeterminate” category in parental status had the highest respective percentages for both age groups. Women above 40 years have no other parental statuses unlike women below 40 years.

***Age & Occupation:*** In 32% of scenes, women less than 40 years have appeared as “professionals” compared to only 1% in case of women more than 40 years. Women less than 40 years have a broader range of occupations. A high 14% of scenes depicted women less than 40 years as “law breakers” while none of the women above 40 years were depicted as lawbreakers.

***Age & Behaviors:*** The instances of “none” in both physical and verbal behaviors have been excluded for comparisons between age and behaviors. Compared to younger women, none of the women above 40 years displayed aggressive physical behavior and were less likely to exhibit non-aggressive behaviors and aggressive verbal behavior.

***Age & Depictions:*** “Neutral” depiction enjoys the greatest percentage among depictions for women of both age groups. However, none of the older women have been depicted negatively.

***Age & Smoking and Drinking:*** There are no instances of “implied” smoking for both age groups. “Actual” smoking & drinking is accounted by women less than 40 years, though it’s negligible.

Bazzini, McIntosh, Smith, Cook and Harris (1997) researched the portrayal of aging women in popular Hollywood films from 1940s to 1980s. The study’s findings

revealed that older women were under represented and portrayed in a negative light, for example, they were presented as less attractive or intelligent while qualities such as wisdom and intellectual competence were overlooked. The present study findings in relation to presentation of women in the younger and older age group are similar to Bazzini et al. study, in that women over 40 years have been under represented. Compared to women below 40 years, older women have *all* been shown to dress “averagely”, more likely to be overweight, less aggressive and are shown in a narrower range of occupations. Unlike Bazzini et al. study, however, women below 40 years have mostly appeared dressed “not-provocatively” and have been often portrayed as “lawbreakers” and having “negative depiction” compared to women above 40 years.

#### **Comparisons Between Present Study & Previous Researches:**

The findings of the present research have also been compared with the previous studies noted in the literature review to investigate whether the current study diverges from the previous studies of portrayal of women. The comparisons are based on two main themes: *Demographic and Behavioral*. It is to be noted that the unit of analysis of the present research is a film scene whereas the other studies might have a different unit of analysis. The *demographic* variables that are common with previous studies are race, age, weight, dress, marital status, parental status and occupation. The *behavioral* variables examine physical and verbal behavior.

All the previous studies that analyzed “race” and “age”, without exception, reported that female characters are more likely to be portrayed as “white” and belonging to a younger age category. A woman’s physical attributes have traditionally received greater emphasis than her intellectual abilities. The importance to outer appearance has

been underscored by the fact that often women have been shown to dress provocatively and belonging to a younger age category. Previous studies reveal a trend towards steady decline in marital and parental status for female characters. Analyzing occupation, the general trend from previous research shows that women have mostly been depicted as having no occupation or having limited occupation. Usually married women have an unclear work status or are less likely to work than single women. Glascock (2003) found no important relationships between race (blacks and whites) and that of work status. On the other hand Elasmr, et al. found 50% of African-Americans and 28.5% of European-Americans had occupation that could not be easily identified. Female characters have rarely exhibited physical aggression while there are some instances of verbal aggression. Generally female characters have rarely been depicted as smoking or using drugs which is supported in the current study's findings (Berg & Streckfuss, 1992; Dietz, 1998; Elasmr, et al., 1999; Glascock, 2001; Glascock, 2003).

The present study supports the previous research's findings in race, age, weight, marital and parental statuses. But it differs regarding dress as women in the future have been often shown as dressed "not-provocatively" than "provocatively". The present research reveals that female characters in the sci-fi future were more likely to be depicted as "professionals" or having "none" as occupation. More women were depicted as "law-breakers" than as "managers", "labor/worker" or as "students." In only 3.3% of scenes married women are shown as working, which supports previous research findings. However, more married women were depicted as "professionals" (3.1%) than that of single women (2.4%), which differ from previous studies. Unlike, Glascock (2003), the present research reveal that there is relation between ethnicity and occupations. More

Whites had “none” as occupation (91%) compared to 5% for Blacks which clearly diverges from Elasmr, et al.’s results. The present study reveals women are more likely to exhibit non-aggressive physical and verbal behaviors than physical and verbal aggression.

Dietz (1998) discovered that the most common portrayal of women was their absence in 30% of the videos. During the coding of films for the current study, the author came across two films (No Escape and Silent Running) in which there were no women to code – they presented a future without women. Pearson’s (2001) noted the dearth of women depicted in leadership roles in sport films. This fact is supported by the present study which discloses women only portraying “leadership” on only 2% of scenes.

#### **Comparisons between “Human” & “Other” Women:**

Since this study revolves around the portrayal of women in the future, the present study has taken into account whether women have been presented as humanoids or cyborgs. The “cyborg/android” category is identical to human women in appearance but are actually not biological human beings. Hence, they have been termed “Other”. The “Other” female category accounted for 7% of total scenes coded (out of 2644 scenes). Since, they appear exactly as any other human female in external appearance, they have been attributed the same demographic and behavioral variables like the human female characters.

Analyzing the scenes depicting these characters disclose that 98% of the scenes showed them in the (20-29) age group and the rest 2% showed them in the (30-39) age group. They were depicted overwhelmingly as Whites (98% of scenes) and in the rest as Blacks. They were shown as “slim” and “tall” in 98% of the scenes and contrary to the

“human” women, most “other” women were “provocatively” dressed. The “Other” women characters’ “marital status” is restricted only to mostly as either “indeterminate” (93%) or “single” (7%) and their “parental status” is also limited to either “indeterminate” (48%) or “none” (52%). In the sphere of “industry”, these women have a narrower range than human women. Only 2% of scenes show “other” women working for the “space-related” industry compared to 24% for “human” women. Occupation wise, the “other” women are more likely to be depicted as “law-breakers” and “labor/workers” relative to “human” women. None of the “other” women were represented as a “student”.

The “other” women appears to have displayed more aggressive physical behaviors compared to the “human” women, while the latter appears to have displayed more of the aggressive verbal behaviors. The major aggressive physical behavior exhibited by “other” is shooting. The aggressive verbal behavior most displayed by “human” women was “ordering”, while for “other” women it was the use of “obscenities”. The major depiction for non-aggressive verbal behavior for human women is “advising” and for “other” women, it was “screaming”. Also, more human women “questioned” than the “other” women. Comparatively, more “other” women were depicted drinking than human women, while both categories were equally shown to smoke and both were coded as not using any drugs. Interestingly, “other” women have been presented more often as being “non-neutral” (29%) than human women (24%). In “positive depiction”, more of “other” women were characterized as being “courageous” compared “human” women. On the other hand more “other” women were shown as being “malevolent” and “deceitful” compared to “human” women.

From the above results, it appears that the “other” women have been portrayed in a narrower scope than “human” women. Their physical appearance has been over-emphasized in terms of age, weight, height and dress. However, these women seem to have a more dynamic representation compared to human women and on the account of the fact that they exhibit more non- neutral depictions and reveal more emotions, they are perhaps more spirited and complex than their human counterparts.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Science-fiction is a genre that allows its creators to speculate about our future and gives us the freedom to explore different possibilities. The present study reveals that women in the science-fiction future have not been portrayed in any significantly different way. Women in the future lack diversity - they mostly belong to one racial group. The media depiction of women is often concentrated around her physical appearance, which emphasizes the importance of physical attractiveness as the main reason for a woman’s success and opportunities. In the future, there is still an importance attached to a woman’s outward appearance but it seems to be changing slightly, at least where dress is concerned. More women are being dissociated with the traditional marital and parental statuses. The high percentage of ambiguity in marital status could imply that the institution of marriage and related responsibilities are obsolete in the future and a lesser association with marital and parental responsibilities for female characters. There has not been much change in the portrayal of women in the work arena as most women in the future also don’t have a clear occupation. However, a significantly high percentage of women are depicted as “professionals” also. The second most common depiction is law-breaking. It would seem that being on the wrong side of the law is negative. However, a

closer look at some of the future scenarios envisioned for mankind will reveal that society is ruled by oppressive and authoritarian corporations or rulers and often women who are coded as “law-breakers” are actually rebelling against the injustices and playing a part in changing the societal order. Despite this, an overwhelming majority of female characters in the sci-fi future have neither a distinctive positive nor a distinctive negative depiction and are mostly portrayed as “neutral”. When the majority of female characters do not exhibit leadership or any physical and verbal behaviors, they are relegated to the background or assume less importance in the future.

#### **LIMITATIONS & HEURISTICS:**

There are several limitations in the current research. The variables such as “age”, “height”, and “weight” and to an extent “race” have been estimated according to the appearance of the female character. The biggest limitation of content analysis is the fact that only the manifest content is studied and the researcher has not delved deeper to reveal the hidden subtexts and messages of the content. Thus the instrument is not sensitive to point out the finer aspects of the portrayal of women. In the Depictions, for instance, a female character sometimes exhibited both positive and negative depictions simultaneously. For example, in order to help her ally, a female character may behave deceptively with another character but her intentions are overlooked. Hence, the duality of a woman’s character is overlooked. Also, there is no reference to compare the portrayal of female characters with, say male characters. The sample is limited to SF movies only and does not consider those movies which do not fall under the SF genre, yet whose story is set in the future. Also, the present study does not consider the SF films made outside the U.S.



Further research could investigate relationships between major male and female portrayals in future science-fiction movies. The gender comparisons can be based on general demographic and behavioral variables or restricted to a particular variable such as in the occupation, physical and verbal behavior or depictions and so on. The films that have been adapted from science-fiction novels/stories can be compared to note how the depictions of women in those stories have been adapted and if they have been changed. This study can be extended in terms of examining the portrayal of women in SF serials and SF films for television or in SF literature; or to any study which researches the role of women in future societies. This study is descriptive in nature and could be utilized by scholars who are interested in feminist critique or deducing gender roles from a given portrayal.

The reasons behind the more dynamic portrayal of “other” women against “human” women can be looked into. Another method of researching the portrayal of women could be to compare a sample of futuristic sci-fi films across time to note changes, if any, in the presentation of women. Research could also be conducted on the relationship between the gender of the film director/producer or scriptwriter of the sci-fi films and the resulting portrayal of female characters.

Stephen (1992) study revealed that advertisers manipulated gender portrayals according the target audience’s image of the gender, which they were most familiar to and comfortable with. Eaton (1997) study found that stereotypical portrayal of women (e.g., scantily clad, attractive) were more pronounced in the newer television networks, which mainly targeted the young male audience. Film-making is a business and the

product, in this case, science-fiction cinema, caters to a particular audience. According to Hobby (2000),

Historically, most science fiction films have reflected a decidedly male perspective.

They have usually featured heterosexual male fantasies that sprang from male writers, were envisioned by male directors, and were enacted by male actors. Female characters, who occasionally trip through this phallic prism, often serve as stereotypical models that reflect both male desires and anxieties (para1)

If we could examine the primary audience of sci-fi cinema, then maybe the portrayal of women will be better explained.

**APPENDIX A:**

In order to research the portrayal of women in science-fiction films, I was looking for similar studies done on portrayal of women in media.

The key words used in “advanced search” were “portrayal of women” and “media”.

The method of analysis that is apparent to study the depiction of women is content analysis. Thus, the third keyword used in the search was “content analysis”.

The databases used were:

- ABI Inform Global (via Proquest)
- Academic Search Elite (via EBSCO)
- Communication and Mass Media Complete (via EBSCO)
- Contemporary Womens Issues (via FirstSearch)
- Humanities Full Text (part of Wilson Omni file)

Another consideration was the electronic availability of the full journal article and I was looking for studies done in USA. The time frame considered for review are the studies undertaken from 1990 to 2003. The non electronic journal referenced for method section is Journal of Communication (1974, Vol.2).

**APPENDIX B:**

## Content Analysis Codebook

**CODING MANUAL**

The purpose of the content analysis is to study the portrayal of women in futuristic science-fiction (SF) movies. The term *futuristic* implies those SF movies that narrates a story about future or is set in the future, i.e., a SF movie released in 1950 which tells a story in the year 1951 and beyond.

- 1) Number of Coders: 2
- 2) Sample size: 50
- 3) Date of release: Between 1930 & 2003
- 4) Country of origin: USA

**CODING RULES**

The research method being followed is *Content Analysis*. The unit of this analysis is a film *scene*. A scene is defined by its location – a change in location indicates that a new scene has begun. A scene is coded and numbered only if a woman is present in the scene. After showing a different location, or showing a dissolve, if the scene returns to a previous location, it is counted as a new scene. Women with speaking roles and or, those who appear in more than one scene are coded. All vocal utterances or a physical behavior on the part of the actress is coded. Coding is excluded when a woman appears in instances, such as a dream sequence, as a holographic image or appearing in the background in TV. Also, a woman is not coded when we just hear her voice-over and she is not shown physically. Women shown in flashbacks or when shown in electronic conferences, when she is directly interacting/communicating with other characters, are coded. While coding it is to be noted that the current status of the character is to be coded

– for example if a woman’s occupation is shown to change in a certain scene, then her current (new) occupation is coded henceforth.

**AGE:**

Age is coded according to the current appearance and by any reference made during a scene. Thus, in the course of the film, if the same woman is shown to age, then her age coding will change accordingly. It is to be noted that the age of the character being portrayed is estimated rather than the age of the actress performing. If by any chance the age can’t be categorized by the above means, then it is coded as “Indeterminate”.

Children (0-12):	1
Teen (13-19):	2
Twenties (20-29):	3
Thirties (30-39):	4
Forties (40-49):	5
Fifties (50-59):	6
Above sixty years old:	7
Indeterminate:	8

**RACE:**

A character’s manifest race is coded according to a combination of factors like skin color, facial features, language and accent and by any reference made during a scene. For example, “Whites” are a member of a racial group of people having light skin coloration, especially one of European origin. A person of Asian descent is recognized by skin color or by appearance features, such as the almond-shaped eyes of the Oriental. If a woman’s race cannot be determined by the above factors, then it is coded as “indeterminate”.

White:	1
Black:	2
Hispanic:	3
Asian/Pacific Islander:	4
Native-American:	5
Indeterminate:	6

**HUMANS/OTHER:**

Since the study revolves around the portrayal of women in the future, we have to take into account whether women have been presented as humans or humanoids or cyborgs. The “cyborg/android” category will encompass women who have been presented or it is

clearly stated that they are machines, robots or androids, with the external physical appearance of a woman. Humanoids are beings, not necessarily from Earth, but who resemble a human being externally. For machines/robots, the “parental status” is coded as “None” unless stated otherwise in the film.

**WEIGHT:**

Weight is coded according to appearance and an “Extreme” category includes an exceptionally skinny or obese individuals.

Slim:	1
Medium:	2
Overweight:	3
Extremely Thin:	4
Extremely Overweight:	5

**HEIGHT:**

Height is coded according to appearance and is a visual estimate. An “Extreme” category includes an exceptionally short or tall individual. A woman’s height is coded as “Indeterminate” when she is sitting or when there is no full length shot of her.

Tall:	1
Medium:	2
Short:	3
Extremely Tall:	4
Extremely Short:	6
Indeterminate:	5

**DRESS:**

Dress has three categories. "Not-provocative" whereby a female character’s clothing covers the majority of the body whereas “Provocative” attire is when a character’s clothing “is scanty or sexy, exposing a generous amount of skin and / or is extremely tight fitting” (Eaton, 1997, pg, 861) . “Provocative” dressing would include miniskirts, tight blouses, bodysuit, transparent clothing, clothes revealing cleavage, midriff, backless blouses, bikini, or clothes which reveal breasts and the pelvic region. In a situation when it is implied that a woman is naked, for example, she is depicted as having sex, but her body is partly covered with a sheet, she is still coded as “naked” because she is not “dressed” in the real sense of the term.

Not-provocative:	1
Provocative:	2
Naked:	3

**MARITAL STATUS:**

Marital Status is coded according to the current status of the female character. It is coded by characteristics such as the presence of a wedding band, which, would indicate that a woman is married or when she is described by terms like “Mrs.”, “wife” or she herself claims that she is married. If the woman states that she is engaged or wears an engagement ring or is referred to as “fiancée”, then it confirms her “Engaged” status. The absence of the wedding band or engagement ring indicates she could be either single, partner, separated, divorced or widowed – the confirmation of such a status depends on whether it is clearly verbally stated in the movie, or if she claims it herself or if she is referred to by another person as a “divorcee”, “widow” or “partner”. Also, if a female character is shown as a daughter and living with her family, unless stated otherwise, she is coded as “single” and her parental status is coded as “none”. If the marital status cannot be determined, it is coded as “Indeterminate”. The status of “partner” also applies to a lesbian couple.

Single:	1
Engaged:	2
Married:	3
Separated/Divorced:	4
Widowed:	6
Indeterminate:	7
Partner:	8

**PARENTAL STATUS:**

Parental Status is coded according to the current status of the female character The confirmation of a “Single parent” status depends on whether it is clearly stated in the movie, or if she is shown with children and no husband or a partner, or if she claims the status herself or if she is referred to as a single parent by a third person in the movie. "Full nest" as parental status means a family consisting of husband, wife and at least one child, or 2 heterosexual partners living together with at least one child (the child be biological or adopted). On the other hand, “Empty Nest” denotes a status where a couple’s children have moved or staying separately. Confirmation of “Pregnant” status depends on her appearance or if the woman states that she is pregnant or if it is stated otherwise in the movie. A woman’s parental status could be coded as both “pregnant” and “full nest”. Incase where the female character is pregnant and her other children are

not living with her; her parental status is coded only as “pregnant”. The status “None” is when the woman is not a parent or if her child is dead. When it is not clearly stated in the movie, the status is coded as “Indeterminate”. For female characters coded as “children”, and those depicted as “cyborgs”, their parental status will be coded as “none”, unless stated otherwise in the movie.

Single parent:	1
Full nest:	2
Empty Nest:	3
Pregnant:	4
Indeterminate:	5
None:	6

### **INDUSTRY:**

A woman is coded as belonging to the industry category “Service” when she works for example, in fashion, hospitality, financial services (banks, insurance), and tourism industries or in call-centers. All government related jobs like, law keeping, public administration, firefighters, politicians, ruling corporations, rulers and religious rulers are coded as “Public Admin/Government”. A woman’s primary occupation is coded. For example, if a woman works as a teacher in a governmental college, then her industry coding will as “Education”. “Transportation” includes airlines, buses, trucks, railroad, automobiles, car rentals, maritime/shipbuilding, *excepting* space transport (rockets, spaceship, ground station for space aviation etc) which falls under “space-related” category. The “Communication” category includes broadcast media (TV, cable-TV, radio), painting, poets, sculpting, advertising/PR, cinema, and media related jobs. Farming and or the production of food grains, fish farming, and animal rearing/farming are categorized under “Agriculture”. If a woman is working in any store, shop, or restaurant, parlor she is coded under “Retail”. “Manufacturing” sector takes into production of all tangible goods with the exception of those which would fall under Agriculture. For example, manufacturing of auto parts will fall under “Manufacturing” and not “Transportation”. The “Construction” category includes the building of dams, bridges and buildings. Professors, teachers, researchers, scientists, those working for an education institution, museums or art galleries or such will be categorized under “Education”. Doctors, Vets, nurses, psychiatrists, chemists, working for a hospital, nursing home or health care centers are included under “medical”, except those involved



in the actual manufacturing of medicines (coded under “manufacturing”). If a woman works for the armed forces (army, navy, and air force), mercenaries, or paramilitary, her industry is coded as “Military”. If a particular female character’s industry does not fall under the ones stated below and /or she is shown as not working, it is coded as “None”.

Service:	1
Public Admin/ Government:	2
Retail:	3
Transportation:	4
Communication:	5
Agriculture:	6
Manufacturing:	7
Construction:	8
Space-related:	9
Education:	11
Military:	12
Medical:	13
None:	14

**OCCUPATION:**

A woman is coded as a “Professional” in an industry when she is a skilled practitioner, an expert such as a doctor, teacher, chef, scientist, pilot and so on. When a female character handles, controls, or directs, especially, in an executive branch of an organization, her occupation is coded as “Managers/Admin”, for example, secretaries. This includes women working for the administrative side of an organization who is not a professional, yet not a labor/worker. When a character is involved in tasks involving physical work, like a manual labor, construction worker, waiter, bar-maid, sweeper, maids, cook or gardener are categorized under “Labor”. The category “Officer/Soldier” includes airman (airwomen?), cadet, cavalryman, commando, conscript, officer (army & navy), law keepers (police officers), paratrooper, and guardsman/bodyguard. It excludes all “Law breakers” who are defined as violating existing laws, e.g., like militants/terrorists, mercenaries, gangster, moll (a woman companion of a gunman or gangster), thief, assassins / professional killers. Also law breakers are not coded for industry. A “Student” is categorized as one who is enrolled or attends classes at a school, college, or university or one who studies something, e.g., a student of martial arts. If a female character has no occupation in the list below or her occupation isn’t clearly stated or she is shown as not having any occupation, it is coded as “none”

Professionals:	1
Managers/Admin:	2
Labor / Worker:	3
Officer/Soldier:	4
Student:	5
Law breaker	6
None	7

**CHARACTER DEPICTION:** It includes the elements which determine whether the female character is Positive, Negative or Neutral.

**POSITIVE DEPICTION:**

A woman is coded as a “Charitable/Philanthropic” when is shown to be involved in charity/missionary work for the poor or less well off sections of a society, specifically by donating funds to say a church. A woman is coded as being “Sympathetic” when she expresses a feeling resulting from sympathy, or she is favorably inclined towards to another person and is comprehending of another person’s situation. All acts of providing assistance, cooperation to another character, excluding direct charity work are coded as “Helpful/ Supportive”. A woman is coded as “Friendly” when is amicable, exhibiting goodwill or being little more than just civil (e.g., displaying interest in a person’s background); especially when meeting a stranger for the first time. An act of motivation, giving confidence, hope, or stimulation is coded as “Encouraging” and when a female character makes key decisions, leads by example and or manages other people/groups or situations; she is coded under “Leadership”. A depiction is coded as being “Courageous” when a woman possesses or displays courage, puts herself knowingly in a dangerous or potentially dangerous situation and is able to face and deal with that danger or fear without flinching or being foolhardy. When a female character’s depiction fits none of the above, it is coded as “none”. Sometimes the female character can display more than one positive or negative trait

Charitable / Philanthropic	1
Sympathetic	2
Helpful/ Supportive	3
Friendly	4
Encouraging	5
Leadership:	6
Courageous:	7
None	8

**NEGATIVE DEPICTION:**

A woman is coded as “Greedy/Selfish” when she displays a need of acquiring or possessing, especially wishing to possess more than what one needs or deserves without giving others any consideration and when she is concerned chiefly or only with herself. A woman is coded as “Foolish” when she is foolhardy or rash and lacking or exhibiting a lack of good sense or judgment. “Malevolent” depiction occurs when a female character is malicious, has or exhibits ill will; evil intentions or wishes harm to others. “Unfriendly”, on the other hand is not being disposed to friendship, when a character is aloof/reserved, antagonistic, grouchy, quarrelsome, surly, uncharitable, haughty, supercilious, unconcerned, unresponsive or unsympathetic; but *not* malicious. When a female shows a lack of courage; is faint-hearted and runs away from the face of danger is coded as “Cowardly” and a deliberately misleading, deceptive, fraudulent or cheating female character is coded as “Deceitful”. When a female character’s depiction fits none of the above, it is coded as “none”.

Greedy/Selfish	1
Foolish	2
Malevolent	3
Unfriendly	4
Cowardly	5
Deceitful	6
None	7

**NEUTRAL DEPICTION:**

When a female character exhibits none of the above positive *and* negative depictions, then she is coded for “Neutral” depiction. If a woman exhibits either a positive depiction or a negative depiction or both, she cannot be coded as being “Neutral”.

**AGGRESSIVE PHYSICAL BEHAVIOR:**

Most of the aggressive behaviors listed below are self-explanatory and coded when displayed by a woman or she indulges in it. A female character can be coded for exhibiting more than one behavior. Sexual Advance needs further explanation. Sexual Advance crosses beyond the line of mere flirting (defined latter), into a stage where the character makes a direct overture which is sexual in nature. This definition encompasses both physical and verbal sexual behaviors. When a female character’s behavior fits none of the below, it is coded as “none”.

Pushing:	1
Kicking:	2
Hitting /Slapping:	3
Shooting:	4
Knifing:	5
Punching	6
Biting:	7
Sexual Advances:	8
None:	9

**NON-AGGRESSIVE PHYSICAL BEHAVIOR:**

Most of the non aggressive behaviors listed below are self-explanatory and coded when displayed by a woman or she indulges in it. A female character can be coded for exhibiting more than one behavior. “Flirting / Seducing” is defined as being playfully romantic, charming with hint or display of subtle sexuality. When a female character’s behavior fits none of the below, it is coded as “none”.

Patting:	1
Hugging:	2
Kissing:	3
Holding hands:	4
Consensual sex:	5
Flirting / Seducing:	6
Running:	7
Crying:	8
Laughing:	9
None:	10

**AGGRESSIVE VERBAL BEHAVIOR:**

Most of the non aggressive behaviors listed below are self-explanatory and coded when displayed by a woman . Aggression is not necessarily hostile, but can also imply assertiveness. Verbal sexual advance is more of a proposition that is sexual in nature and may or may not be accompanied by physical sexual advances. An “Argumentative” behavior is when a female character verbally disputes, debates, challenges others opinions and beliefs verbally. When a female character’s behavior fits none of the below, it is coded as “none”.

Negative comments/ Criticism/Accusation:	1
Threats:	2
Shouting:	3
Obscenities / Curses:	4

Ordering:	5
Argumentative:	6
Sexual Advances:	7
None	8

**NON-AGGRESSIVE VERBAL BEHAVIOR:**

A female is coded for “Advising” when she counsels, recommends or suggests a particular decision or course of action as worthy or expedient to be followed.

“Whimpering” is defined as crying or sobbing with soft intermittent sounds and a character can “whimper” when hurt or afraid. A woman who expresses an inquiry that invites or calls for a reply or utters an interrogative sentence or phrase or gesture is coded for “Questioning” behavior. If a female character speaks to herself or speaks indistinctly in low tones, it is coded as “Muttering”. “Sarcasm” is coded if a woman taunts another person or indulges in “a form of wit that is marked by the use of sarcastic language and is intended to make its victim the butt of contempt or ridicule” ([www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)).

“Pleading” includes begging, beseeching or appealing earnestly to another character for anything. When a female character’s behavior fits none of the below, it is coded as “none”.

Advising:	1
Screaming	2
Whimpering	3
Questioning:	4
Muttering:	5
Sarcasm:	6
None:	7
Pleading	8

**DRINKING:**

It is defined as the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Implied drinking behavior includes holding a drink in hand, having a drink on the table or bar while eating or talking; and other situations where it is evident that a speaking actor did consume, is consuming, or is about to consume a drink; drinks from coffee cups, pop bottles, and other unusual (for alcoholic beverages) containers only when there is a clear statement or implication that the unusual container does indeed contain alcohol rather than, or in addition to, its usual contents (Lowry, 1981)

Actual: 1  
 Implied: 2  
 None: 3

**SMOKING:**

It is defined as the act of inhaling and exhaling the smoke of a tobacco product. Implied smoking behavior includes holding or smoking a lit or unlit tobacco product and the presence of cigarettes or other smoking paraphernalia e.g., cigars, matches or ashtrays (Escamilla, Cradock and Kawachi, 2000). If a woman is depicted smoking pot & or, weed, then it is both smoking and drug usage.

Actual: 1  
 Implied: 2  
 None: 3

**DRUG USAGE:**

It is defined as the usage of non medicinal drugs, such as narcotic drugs which cause harm or injury to the body. It could be taken internally through intravenous means and externally through inhalation or orally. Implied drug usage includes holding the drug or needle in hand, snorting powder through nose or situations where it is evident that a speaking actor did take, is taking, or is about to take drugs.

Actual: 1  
 Implied: 2  
 None: 3

## References

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THE RUNNING MAN  
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CITY LIMITS - 1985  
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BLADE RUNNER  
CYBORG - 2  
12 MONKEYS  
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LATE FOR DINNER  
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BATTLEFIELD EARTH - SAGA OF YR 3000  
FORTRESS  
DARK CITY  
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STARSHIP TROOPERS  
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TRANCERS

PITCH BLACK  
EVENT HORIZON  
DAMNATION ALLEY  
SOYLENT GREEN  
SUPERNOVA  
JASON X  
JOHNNY MNEMONIC  
PLANET OF BLOOD  
SPACE FLIGHT IC - 1  
L5: FIRST CITY IN SPACE  
NO BLADE OF GRASS  
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE  
TIME RUNNER  
THE THIRTEENTH FLOOR  
THE TERMINATOR  
MATRIX REVOLUTIONS  
VIRTUOSITY  
PREDATOR II  
MISSION TO MARS  
CHERRY 2000  
THIS IS NOT A TEST  
ALIEN NATION  
DIMENSION 5  
CAPTIVE WOMEN  
RAVAGERS  
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JUST IMAGINE  
T3: RISE OF MACHINES  
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MATRIX  
TIMECOP  
ROBOCOP - 2  
THINGS TO COME  
WING COMMANDER  
ARENA  
THE PEACE GAME  
THE FIFTH ELEMENT  
IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE  
TANK GIRL  
SILENT RUNNING  
THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR  
LOGAN'S RUN  
FREEJACK  
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BENEATH THE PLANET OF APES  
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DEMON SEED  
THE BOY AND HIS DOG  
PLANET OF THE APES - 1968  
PLANET OF THE APES - 2001  
2010: THE YEAR WE MAKE CONTACT  
DUNE  
IMPOSTOR  
STAR TREK VI: THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY  
EQUILIBRIUM  
REPO MAN  
DEMOLITION MAN  
6TH DAY  
RED PLANET  
ESCAPE FROM LA  
JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF TIME  
FUTURESPORT  
PRAYER OF THE ROLLERBOYS  
DEATH MACHINE  
ESCAPE 2000  
CYBERCITY  
DRAGON FIRE  
STEEL FRONTIER  
GANGLAND  
QUEEN OF OUTER SPACE  
OMEGA COP  
STAR TREK: NEMESIS  
5<sup>TH</sup> ELEMENT  
OMEGA DOOM  
AUTOMATIC  
A. I  
PAYCHECK  
STAR TREK V: THE FINAL FRONTIER  
STAR TREK III: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK

**SELECTED SAMPLE (50 MOVIES):**

STAR TREK GENERATIONS  
BLOOD OF HEROES  
BATTLEFIELD EARTH  
RUNAWAY  
NEMESIS  
EVENT HORIZON  
13TH FLOOR  
ROAD WARRIOR  
SCREAMERS

ESCAPE FROM NY  
JOURNEY TO 7<sup>TH</sup> PLANET  
VIRTUOSITY  
12 MONKEYS  
ALIEN 2  
MINORITY REPORT  
ROLLERBALL  
SOYLENT GREEN  
JASON X  
JOHNNY MNEMONIC  
SLEEPER  
ON THE BEACH  
FORTRESS  
ALIEN NATION  
LAST MAN  
PARASITE  
A.I  
BLADE RUNNER  
THX 1138  
BACK TO THE FUTURE  
STAR TREK IV  
5TH ELEMENT  
PROJECT MOONBASE  
LOGAN'S RUN  
BARBARELLA  
PLANET OF THE APES  
GATTACA  
6TH DAY  
A BOY & HIS DOG  
EQUILIBRIUM  
SUPERNOVA  
CYBORG  
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