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Real Men Can Dance, But Not in That Costume: Latter-day Saints' Perception of Gender Roles Portrayed on Dancing with the Stars

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REAL MEN CAN DANCE, BUT NOT IN THAT COSTUME: LATTER-DAY SAINTS'

PERCEPTION OF GENDER ROLES PORTRAYED ON

"DANCING WITH THE STARS"

By

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of

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ABSTRACT

REAL MEN CAN DANCE, BUT NOT IN THAT COSTUME: LATTER-DAY SAINTS'

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Master of Arts

This thesis attempts to better understand gender roles portrayed in the media. By using Stuart Hall's theory of audience reception (Hall, 1980) the researcher looks into dance and gender in the media to indicate whether or not LDS participants believe stereotypical gender roles are portrayed on "Dancing with the Stars." Through four focus groups containing a total of 30 participants, the researcher analyzed costuming, choreography, and judges' comments through the viewer's eyes. From participant responses, the conclusion was made that audience members do perceive stereotypical gender roles on "Dancing with the Stars." Participants felt that costuming was the biggest indicator of gender roles on the show, and that choreography and judges' comments also contributed to the perception of gender roles.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dedicated to my sister

Sherese Denney Jessee

July 22, 1965 - October 28, 2010.

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Introduction

In the early 1990's A.C. Slater was a name that everyone knew. Mario Lopez's character from the popular television show "Saved by the Bell" was the cool guy on the show that all young women wanted to date and all young men wanted to be buddies with. Though Slater's popularity was grandiose in the 90's, Mario Lopez and his alter ego A.C. Slater, soon left the spotlight and slipped down to the B-list in Hollywood. In 2007 Lopez had a re-birth. He went from simply being "a guy that was on that one show" to one of Hollywood's "it men." Lopez has hosted multiple events including the Miss America Pageant and the Miss Universe Pageant to become a full-time host of the popular television show "Extra". Lopez was named "People" magazine's bachelor of the year in 2008 and recently starred in "A Chorus Line" on Broadway. He is currently starring in his own reality show "Saved by the Baby." So, what was it that boosted Mario Lopez into the spotlight again? It was "Dancing with the Stars" of course. Lopez's participation in the fourth season of "Dancing with the Stars" was the catalyst that introduced him to the world once again.

Similar to the newfound popularity that B-list stars have from appearing on "Dancing with the Stars," ballroom dance in general has also experienced rejuvenation among the

American public. Similar to the days of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, ballroom dance has once again entered into the spotlight. Cruise lines and popular dance vacation specialists have noticed an increased interest in ballroom dancing since it has been the focus of one of primetime's newest shows (Yancey, 2006). This craze has hit the floor running, or shuffle-ball-stepping, and the media have had an integral part in the trend – but why? Benson (2005) quotes Wong, as saying, "it (Dancing with the Stars) appeals to everybody, there's something for young people, there's nostalgia and love of dancing for older people" (p. 6). Wong's comment, along with high ratings (Benson, 2005; Cha cha, 2005; Steinberg, 2008), shows that "Dancing with the Stars" is indeed popular in our society. Throughout October and November of 2010, the most recent season of "Dancing with the Stars" (Season 11) continuously captured the number one spot in ratings. The high viewer ratings that the show acquires make it a significant one to study.

With the introduction of dance-based reality television shows, dance is at the center of today's popular culture. The following research will help us to understand how LDS people (members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) perceive the gender roles portrayed on "Dancing with the Stars." There has not been any research of religious groups and how they interpret the gender roles portrayed on a dance-based television show. I hope that this research will open the door for future study of the relationship between dance, religion, and the media.

Purpose Statement

Similar to the strong effects that media can have on the popularity of stars in Hollywood, television can affect the perceptions and attitudes toward gender of those who consume the media. It is important that we understand how people are actually interpreting messages that they see on television. In order to understand the connection that LDS people make between gender

roles and dance in the media – I conducted a reception analysis of the gender roles portrayed on

"Dancing with the Stars".

Chapter II

Review of Literature

Dance and Culture

Boyd (2004) claims that dance is important for us to find our cultural identities. She says that "dance is understood as a cultural site that reveals the ever-shifting power relations existing within our social, political, historical, and cultural lives" (p. 67). This is a bold statement that identifies dance as one of the central points between the social, political, and historical aspects that make up our lives. Boyd believes that mainstream media have the power to change social norms in a way that commemorates art as well as all other unique aspects of society (Boyd, 2004). She deems that dance can have a monumental impact on culture.

In some countries, dance is so influential that it has become infused within the society and is associated with the mere definition of the people within that culture. Some well-known examples of such correlations are the Tango in Argentina (Castro, 1999; Karatsu, 2003) and the circle dances, such as the Samba, of Brazil that the indigenous tribes use to create the sensation of belonging to a communal body (Leão, 2007). Ballroom dance, specifically, has become more influential to popular culture in recent years. In China, ballroom dance is one of the most popular leisure activities especially among the middle-aged and retired (Kang, 1997). Ballroom dancing has also become more popular among the Japanese strongly due to the movie *Shall We Dance?* that was originally made in Japan in 1996 before Richard Gear and Susan Sarandon stared in the Hollywood version in 2004 (Karatsu, 2003). Film has proven to have incredibly influential

effects on society (Boyd, 2004; Lowery & DeFleur, 1995b) and any educated human being would have to agree that other media have similar influential effects.

Popularity of Ballroom Dance Today

Even though ballroom dance has a highly competitive organization called dancesport, its organizers are promoting it as a non-competitive sport (Ostlere, 2000). But why is this the case? I would argue that since ballroom dance has recently become an important part of our popular culture, its organizers would like the public to feel as though they would be able to participate in it at any time.

The "Journal of Broadcasting and Cable" reported in 2005 that early ratings for "Dancing with the Stars" were near 13 million viewers in the first season (Becker, 2005). These ratings were substantial for a new show, especially one that premiered in the summer. The goal for "Dancing with the Stars" executives was to create a show that could compete with sweeps shows throughout the year (Benson, 2005). The executives accomplished that goal. After the shows sixth season, viewers reached about 24.9 million (Steinberg, 2008).

Benson and Becker point out that these shows appeal to everyone. Though the average age of "Dancing" viewers was 51-years-old in its first season, the show appeals to all ages (Becker, 2005; Benson, 2005). Many reporters claim that the show appeals to younger audiences because it is so sophisticated and sexy. The show is able to draw in younger audiences by increasing the sex appeal (Becker, 2005; Benson, 2005; Steinberg, 2008; Strauss n.d.). Not only do these shows appeal to different ages of viewers, they bring all ages of participants. Season seven of "Dancing with the Stars" included its oldest star to date, Cloris Leachman, at the ripe old age of 82 and its youngest star, Cody Linley, who was only 18. "USA Today" reports that many different types of stars flock to participate. Reality stars, Olympic gold-medalists, deaf-

Oscar-winning actresses, and former N'Sync boy banders all want to be a part of it (Strauss, n.d.).

New dance-based television shows have without a doubt increased the popularity of ballroom dancing in the United States. Fruitkin says that "Dancing with the Stars" has become one of the most influential reality programs on television today and has drawn a mainstream audience to dance (Fruitkin, 2008). Along with numerous high school assemblies that have put on their own versions of "Dancing with the Stars," local news anchors and radio personalities in Lincoln, NE; Grand Rapids, MI; and Rochester, NY have all participated in programs modeled after the hit television program (Simultaneous, 2006). Engberg, the owner of "Let's Dance" a Tennessee based dance-vacation organization, says that shows like "Dancing with the Stars" and "So You Think You Can Dance" have certainly created more awareness and even interest in ballroom dance, while dance camps across the United States have seen an increase in registration (Yancey, 2006).

There may be a number of different reasons that ballroom dance has become so well-liked among the masses, but I would like to suggest an interesting idea. I believe that the sensuality and interpersonal connection that ballroom dance brings out in its participants has made it stand out in popular culture. When ballroom dance was first introduced in Europe, in the seventeenth century, it was met with outrage and considered an obscene dance for prostitutes and adulteresses (Peters, 1992). Elite members within society could not believe that men and women would dare embrace on the dance floor. The eroticism of the public embrace was what appealed to many people and it soon became accepted among the masses. The sensuality and passion of ballroom dance continues to make it popular today (Peters, 1992).

In her research dealing with the popular movie "Strictly Ballroom," Chaffey (2002) says that there are "a multitude of complex signs, codes and meanings in *Strictly Ballroom*, presented through the careful construction of the *mise-en-scene*" (p. 186). Included in these complex codes and signs is the representation of sex in dance. "The dance as a metaphor for sex has become popularised (sic) in film in the last twenty-five years and *Strictly Ballroom* is no exception" (Chaffey, 2002 p. 186). Chaffey was on to something. She understood the presence and power of sexuality within film. I believe that this is an important reason why ballroom dance has become so popular within today's culture. A writer for "film.com" said that the Latin night that happens a few weeks into each season of "Dancing with the Stars" with its sexy hip movement made them want to jump up and dance along with the contestants (HamsterDame, 2008). In a literature review concerning popular culture, Tisdell (2007) claimed that pleasure is the main reason people consume popular culture. It appears as though ballroom dance brings about that same pleasure for its viewers and participants.

Another reason that popular culture may be intertwined with ballroom dancing is for the physical health benefits that it can bring. The American public has watched season after season as stars such as Tia Carrere, Marie Osmond, and Joey Fatone lost weight on "Dancing with the Stars." Seeing these stars lose weight one week after another could be a significant reason why ballroom dancing is now appealing to so many different people. Knadler (2006) says that "(t)hanks to the popularity of TV shows such as Dancing With the Stars and So You Think You Can Dance, getting your groove on has become more popular than ever" (p. 1). Knadler suggests that people have taken up all kinds of dance for health purposes. According to a study done at the Memorial Hospital of Rhode Island, "professional ballroom dancers are capable of burning 260 calories per hour a burn rate equivalent to a fast walk. Even for nonprofessional dancers,

boogying makes for a better heart rate and improved overall physical fitness and muscle tone, similar to a walk-jog training program…." (Knadler, 2006 p. 1). Ten years ago in China, ballroom dancing was considered the best type of physical exercise rivaled only by the classical martial arts form of tai-chi (Kang, 1997). Even more than a decade ago, the physical benefits of ballroom dance were recognized by the Chinese.

Portraying Gender in Dance

Since the beginning of man, dance has been a form of communication. In biblical times, people danced in praise of their God. Native American Indian tribes would perform their rain dances to the gods in hopes of receiving precipitation for their crops. Some dances even serve certain cultures as a form of courtship or sexual advancement (Funkenstein, 2005; Ilan, 2003; Radhakrishanan, 2003). While dance in America and much of Western Europe is more popular among women than men (Funkenstein, 2005; Sanderson, 2001; Van Dyke, 1996); other countries of the world tend to leave the dancing to the men. Certain dances are in and of themselves the pure definition of masculinity in some African cultures (Radhakrishanan, 2003).

According to O'Connor (2005), "(d)ance had emerged as a significant marker of cultural identity" (p. 90). Through dance, people are often able to effectively communicate to other cultures what they are and what they believe. While hundreds of different languages create barriers for effective communication across cultures, dance has become an international language in which people do not have to speak the same tongue to understand one another. There is often an intercultural exchange within the choreography of a dance (Radhakrishanan, 2003). Dance has become a means in which people specifically communicate gender roles to their audiences. There are many different ways in which the body can communicate or portray gender, even the most simple use of footwork can be seen as masculine or feminine (Shah, 1998).

Gender roles can be portrayed in many different aspects of life. Through social interactions, in the media, and even through dance, one can portray the idea of being masculine or feminine.

> Gender difference is expressed through the manipulation of body movements, expressions and gestures. For instance, broad shoulders and chest, uplifted face, straight spine, and a direct look in the eyes are some of the male physical characteristics; the female may be depicted with relaxed shoulders, slightly drawn inwards, thighs closed together, eyes lowered with a slightly bent head, and so on…. (Shah, 1998 p. 6)

The way in which a person carries him or herself can be the means to portraying gender roles in many different countries. The movement of African dance can provide insight into gender roles and relationships. Many of the dances are gender specific and can convey modesty, grace, demureness, courtship, flirtation, socialization, and passage or initiation to womanhood (Ward, 2008). In Jewish culture, the language proves that there are different ways in which men and women are portrayed in dance; there are different words that describe when a man is dancing (*rqd*) as opposed to a woman (*hwl*). The different terms used for men and women dancing means that there is a formal distinction between how they dance (Ilan, 2003). In India, male dancers perform to express *hari* which means grace and female performers express *timi* which is honor. Those two characteristics define the values of gender relations in the dance (Riak, 2007).

Some dancers strictly rely on typical gender roles while they danced to help them socially. In the early 20th century "the Charleston and shimmy fostered…courtship and marriage" in the United States (Funkenstein, 2005 p. 24). In ancient Israel, men and women did not dance together. Dancing was a very gendered activity in which strict separation was practiced, although "dancing was mobilized as a means of courtship…." (Ilan, 2003 p. 135). In Ireland the dance hall

made it possible for women to increase their potential pool for marriage and gave them some

control over the matter (O'Connor, 2005).

One of the problems with dance is that many people feel some styles do not portray the

"correct" gender roles. In a study of adolescents in the United Kingdom in regards to ballet,

which is considered the base for most technical dance styles, and male dancers – boys do not

accept the art form willingly. Girls have significantly higher acceptance attitudes than boys. This

finding is unsurprising and suggests that "the male adolescent is insecure and unwilling to be

associated with any activity which may be interpreted as feminine" (Sanderson, 2001 p. 128).

"Classical ballet gestures are widely interpreted as feminine in character" (Sanderson, 2001 p.

128). While many people may argue that ballet should not be danced by men because they do not

portray masculinity, some would argue that it not be danced for other reasons. Feminist writers

suggest that ballet reinforces gender stereotypes arguing that "men virtually always lift and

maneuver women, embodying strength and exhibiting control over the more fragile ballerina"

(Sanderson, 2001 p. 128). "It is in the 'background' noise of dance and movement that normative

expectations are both challenged and confirmed" (Gilman & Fenn, 2006 p. 380).

Masculinity in dance. Dance as a medium is a different way for an audience to be

stimulated through means other than the television, newspapers, or computers. In many different

ways men are able to communicate their gender role through their expression in dance. Greek

men portray masculinity through arrogance and agility in their dancing (Riak, 2007). In Ireland,

men would use the public dance floor as a place where they could prove their masculinity. The

dance hall became a place for men to show their manliness by getting into brawls or shootings.

In accordance with the stereotypical gender roles, the aggressive male "body" took over the

passive female "dancing body" (O'Connor, 2005).

As part of an intercultural dance group in South Africa, called Surilanga, Zulu (native) men would dance with Indian women in a fusion of cultures to send a message of their disdain for apartheid. The group would perform mainly Indian dances with bits and pieces of traditional Zulu dances mixed in. The Indian women would represent femininity in and of themselves, while the Zulu men who were raw, untrained, and brute represented masculinity (Radhakrishanan, 2003).

A popular form of Indian dance called Kathak is an interesting canvas in which a single performer portrays many different characters, and even genders. Kathak is a classical dance form from Northern India that portrays the iconographic representation of the ideology of gender roles within the culture. It was traditionally danced by males until the turn of the century (Shah, 1998). The performance incorporates the language of gesture and a single performer portrays all of the characters. "Effortlessly switching gender portrayal as the roles appear in the narrative without any extraneous use of costumes, makeup, props, or technical effects" (Shah, 1998 p. 9). The performer changes from one character to another with a swift semicircular movement called a *palta* which means to switch. "Gender portrayal and the quick role changes are clearly shown through bodily movements, gestures, gait, facial expression and mood of the character" (Shah, 1998 p. 11). The performer does everything he can to embody each character that he is portraying and will do whatever is necessary to communicate the idea to an audience. Radhakrishnan says that "(t)he transformation, however, is deeper than merely creating a physical image; a Kathak emotes the feelings of the female character with the same intensity and depth as we would a male" (Shah, 1998 p. 6).

Femininity in dance. While dance is considered an art form that belongs to women, it is not difficult for women to portray the typical gender role associated with females. The clubbing

women of Malawi that dare to dance in public perform much more erotic movements than the men, however, they do not make eye contact with one another nor do they look at the audience. This is typical of the traditional gender roles in which women are more submissive. Even when they dare to be different (by going clubbing) they must conform in some way (Gilman &Fenn, 2006).

Women in western civilizations do not have to feel restricted in their expression. Josephine Baker, who was an American Born dancer that became famous dancing in Paris, was not afraid of baring it all to express herself. Baker was best known for a dance that seemed to be African in nature, but was in fact nothing close to it. Being bare-breasted on the stage made her African femininity undisputable among her audiences (Funkenstein, 2005). Josephine used her physical characteristics to show her pure femininity within the dance.

Portraying gender through dance can also be therapeutic in a way. African centered dance is implemented in some schools within the United States to help young women have a healthy alternative to the pressures of drugs, alcohol, and sex. It can connect young women "to their body and its beauty and to their African heritage" (Ward, 2008 p. 4). If women are able to have the space and availability to sing and dance, they are able to "fulfill the roles, obligations, and responsibilities that accompany each of (their) relationships" (Mackinlay, 2003 p. 268).

Gender Roles

Freud believed that the anatomical differences between men and women led them to have different personalities and traits – he did not, however, believe that the personality differences were programmed into a person at birth. Freud believed that one acquires his or her gender identity through life's experiences since birth (Kimmel, 2004).

Are gender roles or sex roles automatically programmed within our genetic makeup, or are these roles something that people innately learn from the society in which they are brought up? This ethical question of nature versus nurture is one that has been debated for years and may continue to be a never-ending debate. In a time when people are becoming more accepting of equal rights, though humanity still has a long way to go, gender roles are changing within the media. While some media generate cultivation effects as they are a significant factor in strengthening stereotypical images (Kim & Lowry, 2007), other media break down the barriers established within the traditional gender roles (Gauntlett, 2008). In the past, gender has had a very stereotypical portrayal on television and in film. Men were masculine while women were feminine. There was no straying from this schema.

Female gender roles in the media. Films from the 1950's almost always focused on male heroes. The men were always making the decisions and rescuing the damsel in distress. These manly men were assertive, confident, and dominant in every aspect. The way they talked, walked and even the way they looked epitomized masculinity of the time (Gauntlett, 2008). The 1960's continued with a male dominance in the media. It was not until the 1970's that film makers started to make small changes within their story lines that went against the stereotypical gender roles. One of the most well-known changes, or better yet modifications, in gender roles was the popular character Princess Leah in "Star Wars" (Gauntlett, 2008). Leah was not the typical woman who sat around and let the man do everything to take care of her and protect her fragile femininity. No, Leah was a woman that knew how to shoot a gun and protect herself to a certain extent. However, even with this emerging sense of the femme fatale, Leah still remained the prized damsel that had to be rescued by the masculine hero in the story. Though Leah's character pushed the envelope when it came to typical gender roles, in accordance with the

stereotypical gender roles of the past, the male hero was the one that was challenged to do whatever he had to do to protect the woman in distress.

One of the first examples of a successful woman in a powerful role within the media was Ripley (played by Sigourney Weaver) in "Alien" which came out in 1979 (Gauntlett, 2008). Ripley was the exception to the typical gender role. She was a kick-butt character that took care of herself and fought off the Alien. Weaver's character created a sense of "female masculinity" in which she successfully took on the role of a tough heroine within the movie. In their book "Genders," Glover and Kaplan (2009) quote Halberstam who says, concerning the idea of female masculinity, "women themselves have helped to create modern masculinity, not just via the contrast with femininity, but by developing their own unique kinds of masculine personae (p. 182). Halberstam's contributions to the world of academia have strongly questioned whether or not masculinity should be a characteristic exclusively for men. There are more and more women in the media that do not portray the stereotypical housewife of the past (Gauntlett, 2008). Gender roles are changing and people like it. Women like Ripley, who take on an androgynous role of masculinity and femininity, are appealing to many people who do not fit into the stereotypical gender roles of society. This female masculinity helps the media viewer feel empowered to make a change in the status quo and embrace the changing face of gender stereotypes.

The 1980's had more prominent roles for women, such as "Aliens", and "Terminator" but most female characters were overshadowed by the "reliable heroic male" (Gauntlett, 2008). In the 1980's the role of men as sole breadwinners began to change while women started to become more empowered in society (Ehrenreich, 1983). Men were then becoming more content to find a woman that could take care of him. This surge of empowered women began to break down the

sturdiness of the masculine and paved the way for the diversity we have today within our gendered society.

Over the decades the "James Bond" series has epitomized Bond as the man of all men. He's the guy that men want to be, and the man that women want to be with. Beating the bad guys, getting the girls, and not letting anything get in his way was how Bond fit the stereotype for the masculine gender role. Though the role of Bond has not changed much over the years, the female co-stars have. The biggest change came when Judi Dench played "M", Bond's boss. Could it be possible that this man's man had to answer to a woman for each of his missions? The idea of a woman in such a powerful role rocked the female stereotype and helped the public see the power that women could have. The female co-stars throughout the evolution of the Bond series have also become more helpful; from a nuclear scientist played by Denise Richards in "The World is not Enough"– to a secret agent, able to keep up with Bond every step of the way, played by Halle Berry in "Tomorrow Never Dies" (Gauntlett, 2008). These characters did not sit idly by as Bond did all of the work, they were working hard to help break down the stereotypes.

Currently there are a number of television shows that challenge the gender roles of the past in the media. The popular television show "Ugly Betty" encourages women to accept themselves for who they are, even if they are not so perfect. Women are prompted to be strong, smart and bold (Gauntlett, 2008). Though there is plenty about Betty that fits the stereotypical role of the female in the past, she is a strong-willed woman who has a career and an ability to take care of herself. As a Latin-American woman America Ferrera, who plays Betty, is at the forefront of a subtle feminist movement within the media that is helping to empower women and minorities all across the world. In past decades there would not have been an ethnic minority and especially not a minority woman as the star of a hit primetime series. Women are also portrayed

in strong assertive roles – taking on gender roles that were associated with men in the past – in popular television shows like "The Closer", "Chase", "Bones", "Grey's Anatomy" and "Buffy the Vampire Slayer."

In a study of primetime television, Glascock (2001) suggested that males were found to be more physically aggressive and females were found to be more verbally aggressive. This is consistent with the typical stereotypes that have existed in television since the 1960's. Men are the ones that resort to being physical to take care of a situation. Women have always been known to gossip and use words to protect themselves or attack others.

Male gender roles in the media. While there have always been, and will probably forever be, masculine depictions of men in the media, the rise of the feminine has brought about changes in what is defined as masculinity. In recent years, men's roles depicted on television and in film have tapped into the feminine. Men are coming to terms with their emotions, seek advice from others, and portray different lifestyles than the typical male of the past (Gauntlett, 2008). More and more women joining the workforce have also contributed to the diminishing role of men as providers for their families. Women can do everything that men can do and that is showing up in the media.

Though most researchers focus on the changing role of women in the media, there are some that mention the decline of the stereotypical male in the media (Ehrenreich, 1983; Gauntlett, 2008; Kim & Lowry, 2007). Male characters in television such as the homosexual Will, from "Will and Grace", is a powerful lawyer and personifies the typical male gender role as he has a good paying job and would easily be available to provide for a family. But Will's homosexuality brings out aspects of his personality that would be considered feminine and exemplify the changing role of men in the media. Will is a very emotional character that often

needs support from other characters in the program so he can work out his emotional issues, something that was strictly associated with women in the past.

Other examples of the changing roles of men in television are male nurses portrayed on "Scrubs", Doug Savant who plays the stay-at-home-dad, Tom Scavo, on "Desperate Housewives", and Charlie Sheen who helps take care of his brother's son in "Two and a Half Men." Even the male designers on all of the "Home and Garden Television" (HGTV) shows, are breaking down the typical stereotypes of the past as they work to design rooms and decorate houses – something that would have been exclusively associated with women in the past.

Chapter III

Dancing with the Stars

As an avid ballroom dancer myself, I have been a fan of "Dancing with the Stars" since the beginning. My wife (who also ballroom dances) and I have watched the majority, if not the entirety, of every season. "Dancing with the Stars" began in the summer of 2005 and is based off of the British version of the show called "Strictly Come Dancing." The popularity of the program has been tremendous throughout the world as its format has been licensed by BBC Worldwide in over 35 countries. "Strictly Come Dancing has spawned more international spinoffs than any other programme (sic)…" (Strictly, 2008).

The idea behind the show is that celebrities are paired with professional ballroom dancers and compete against each other week after week. There are three judges (Carie Ann Inaba, Len Goodman, and Bruno Tonioli) that critique the dancers and then give them a score from one to ten. After the judges give their scores for all of the dancers, phone lines are then opened up for the American public to call in and vote for their favorite couple. Once the scores from the judges and votes from the public have been tallied, the couple with the lowest combined score is eliminated from the competition the following day in a results show. The couples continue to learn a new dance every week. Sometimes they will learn two or three dances or even a group dance and then compete until only 3 couples remain. In each season finale, the three remaining couples compete until there is only one couple left standing.

Before each couple dances, viewers are shown a package of footage that is put together from the week's rehearsals and other responsibilities that the celebrities have. Many of the

celebrities continue with their day jobs and athletes continue with their training while

participating in "Dancing with the Stars." The packages shown are a great way for viewers to get

to know the participants lives and personalities better. When the show first began, in my opinion,

it appeared as though the celebrities that were the most famous would be the ones that would

avoid elimination each week and continue with the competition. Week after week and season

after season I would see some of the better dancers get sent home prematurely. However, as the

show has matured, the American audience has also matured and become more educated about

what is good ballroom dancing. I still believe that some of the celebrities make it a little further

than they should because of the star power that they have, but results are starting to become

much more of what I would deem as accurate.

"Dancing with the Stars" has had high ratings from its beginning. In 2005 producers

launched the show hoping that it would be able to compete with other shows during sweeps, and

it did. While the ratings have certainly fluctuated over the seasons, the show had its highest

ratings in the fall of 2010 with its 11th season (Benson, 2005; Cha cha, 2005; Steinberg, 2008).

One of the things that I believe is the most appealing about the show is the sex appeal of the

Latin dances. We live in a society that is tolerant and even expectant of skimpy clothing and

beautiful bodies on primetime television. I have come to the conclusion that the sensual moves

and abundant hip thrusting of the Latin dances make it popular with the younger audiences that

producers only hoped that they would have as viewers. During the packages, they will often

show the celebrities and even the dancers in situations that allow for them to use silly gimmicks

or wear as little clothing as possible. There have been multiple contestants over the years that

have been filmed practicing a trick or lift in a swimming pool. While there may be a little benefit

of practicing in the swimming pool, I think it is done simply so they can show beautiful bodies in swimsuits to help increase ratings.

Many former contestants come back to "Dancing with the Stars" to make guest appearances. Some of them, like Chuck Wicks, have come back in a later season to sing on a results show; those like Joey Fatone have come back to help a new contestant train for the competition; and others, like Kenny Mane and Jerry Rice who often do a parody of "Sports Center" called "Dance Center" have come back to do bring humor to the program. Participation in "Dancing with the Stars" can bring new-found fame to celebrities who are struggling to maintain their name in Hollywood. While I have watched each season, I have seen former contestants appear as hosts on "Dancing with the Stars." Season two winner, Drew Lachey, filled in as co-host for Samantha Harris while she was on maternity leave during season five. Harris left the show after season nine and was replaced by season seven winner Brooke Burke.

RQ: Do LDS viewers agree that stereotypical gender roles are portrayed on "Dancing with the Stars?"

Chapter IV

Method

Reception Analysis

Reception analysis started with audience reception theory by Stuart Hall. Hall discovered that audience members decode certain messages within the media (be it books, television, movies, or some other creative work) in different ways. Through dominant or negotiated positions, the audience can interpret messages within the media (Hall, 1980; Jensen, 1991). The message is not just automatically interpreted by the audience in the way that the author intended it, but is interpreted and made sense of through the audience member's cultural background and life experiences (Fingerson, 1999). The reader of a certain text is able to create the meaning of that text through a relationship that they decode within it. Encoding by the media producer can never determine 100% what is decoded by the audience. Because audience members have so many different factors in their lives, such as age, gender, culture, religion, etc…that affect their perception, they have different views of messages contained within the media (Hall, 1980).

Audience reception analysis is often researched in three different ways: (1) Broad surveys and opinion polls that are able to capture information from large random samples; (2) Smaller, representative focus groups that are ideal for discussing popular culture through interview (Fingerson, 1999; Frederiksen, 2000; Macgregor & Morrison 1995); and (3) In-depth ethnographic studies in which a researcher lives within the community being studied as a participant (McMillan, 2002).

Focus groups have long formed an important tool for the media researcher seeking to

understand audience response. Popular with humanistic researchers for allowing them

access to the audience without the financial and technical baggage of survey research

which some, in any case, dismiss 'as the (rather tedious) empirical (or empiricist)

province of mass communications research. (Morley, 1992, p. 6)

People often make sense of the world around them by talking to others. They make sense of the

media specifically by discussing their favorite book or the latest episode of a popular sitcom with

their colleagues at work. Through social interaction and experience the world makes much more

sense (Fingerson, 1999).

"Group discussions have a certain appeal as a means of putting flesh on statistical

skeletons and piloting material for survey research" (MacGregor & Morisson, 1995, p. 141). The

relative low cost of focus groups has made them attractive to academic researchers unable to find

funding for national surveys of worthwhile length and sophistication. Focus groups can help us

to understand how the media can affect audiences in many different ways. In a study by Wood

(2007) it was found that viewers of broadcasts often speak to the characters in the television set

as if they can hear them. These comments to the television are called response tokens. The

viewer uses these response tokens to insert themselves within the conversation because it is

having a real effect on them simply as the viewer.

Fingerson (1999) says that "audiences use television and other media in everyday social

interaction as vehicles for creating meaning and gaining understanding of the world around them.

Television depicts a way of life that offers models to be emulated, criticized, and talked about

collectively in everyday conversations" (p. 390). It is because of this that we study the media,

popular culture, and the world around us to understand and assign meaning to the different facets

of our lives. Since the introduction of the television at the World's Fair in 1939, its popularity

has been tremendous. In multiple studies of children and television use from 1958 – 1960,

researchers found that the percentage of children from the age of two to six watching television

went from 14% to 91%. By age 9, 96% of children were watching television (Lowery &

Defleur, 1995a). Though new media have taken some of the attention away from the television in

recent years, many people old and young still turn to the television set for their entertainment.

Sim and Snell (1996) defined a focus group as "a group interview – centered on a specific

topic (focus) and facilitated and coordinated by a moderator or facilitator – which seeks to

generate primarily qualitative data, by capitalizing on the interaction that occurs within the group

setting" (p.189). Focus groups are a great way to discuss how participants make sense of the

media they consume. The steps of audience reception analysis using focus groups are as follows:

- Participants that fit the demographic desired by the researchers are contacted by random

  sampling, convenience sampling, snowball sampling, or other various methods.

- Once selected, the participants are assigned to focus group numbers and scheduled to

  attend a specific focus group. If maintaining anonymity, participant I.D. numbers are

  assigned to each individual. Groups can consist of anywhere from 8-12 participants

  (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990; Krueger, 1994), or 4-6 participants (Strong, Ashton,

  Chant, & Cramond, 1994).

- During the focus group, the participants are shown a portion of the media being studied

  and are allowed to share comments about what they are viewing at any time.

- Once the media has been viewed, the researcher asks questions from the interview guide

  about what the participants saw and their interpretation of such media. Participants are

able to comment at any time and interject, agree, or disagree with one another's

comments.

- The researcher, who tape-records the discussion, later codes the responses and evaluates

  them to draw conclusions as to the audience reception and perception of the media based

  on the comments during the focus group.

Kitsinger (1995) sums up the essential role of the focus group technique as follows: "The idea

behind the focus group method is that group processes can help people to explore and clarify

their views in ways that would be less easily accessible in a one to one interview…When group

dynamics work well the participants work alongside the researcher, taking the research in new

and often unexpected directions" (p. 299).

This particular study used reception analysis to indicate whether or not LDS people

believe that stereotypical gender roles are portrayed on "Dancing with the Stars". Reception

analysis has been used as a method for research in similar studies of the media (Fingerson, 1999;

Giomi, 2005; Johnson, Oliffe, Kelly, Bottorff, & LeBeau, 2009; Krijnen, 2006; Obregón, 2005;

Sreenivas, 2007; Thomsen, Bower & Barnes, 2004). Reception analysis has been used as a

method for research in reality television (Wang, 2009). Reception analysis has been used as a

method for research in similar studies of popular culture (Fingerson, 1999; Frederiksen, 2000;

Hart, 2007; O'Connor & Klaus, 2000; Schiappa, 2007). Reception analysis has been used as a

method for research in similar studies of gender (Frederiksen, 2000; Hart, 2007; McMillin, 2002;

Montiel, 2005; Schiappa, 2007). Reception analysis, however, has not been used as a method for

research in studies involving dance in the media. Due to the lack of literature involving this

particular methodology, I hope that this study will open up the door for more reception analysis

of dance in the media and dance in general.

Background Information

The researcher. As a researcher I find this particular topic interesting. I have a unique curiosity to study ballroom dance as it is portrayed in the media because I am a ballroom dancer myself. I took my first dance classes when I was ten years old and have been fascinated with all different styles of ballroom dance for the past 19 years. I was fortunate enough to participate in a ballroom dance program at my high school in Sandy, Utah. The development I had within that High School program prepared me to receive a scholarship to Brigham Young University (BYU) and participate in the University's ballroom dance program for five years. The BYU Ballroom Dance Company has been the undefeated United States National Formation Champions for the past 29 years. They are also the current British Formation Champions, a title they have won several times since the 1970's. I was able to participate in five of those National titles and was on the British Formation Championship team in 2004. During my time as a member of the ballroom dance company I had the opportunity to travel to eight different countries and nine different states as a performer.

Throughout my dance career I have been an active competitor. I have won numerous awards and National titles as a junior, youth, and amateur competitor. My wife, Betsy, and I are currently competing across the United States in the professional American Smooth division. I have been teaching ballroom dance classes and a competitive youth formation team at BYU since 2004. I also have many couples that I coach one-on-one for individual competition.

Characteristics of LDS subjects. I have been attending the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for 29 years. I was baptized an official member of the church when I was eight years old and later served a two-year service mission to the country of Panama at the age of 19. I have been actively participating in educational classes, church activities, and studying church

doctrine all my life. While I still do not know everything that there is to know about the LDS church, because of my association, I would consider myself an expert in the characteristics, culture, and beliefs of those who are affiliated with the LDS church.

Different people have different personalities and can vary in characteristics such as: temper, sense of humor, discipline, motivation, etc… The following description will be a general portrayal of the characteristics of LDS people. Members of the LDS church believe in Jesus Christ and consider themselves Christians. There are 13 Articles of Faith that summarize the beliefs of LDS church members. The 13th Article of Faith (Smith, n.d) says "We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men….If there is anything virtuous, lovely or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things" (p. 61).

Members of the LDS church are typically mild-tempered people who tend to avoid conflict and look for the good in any situation. They are prone to be more conservative in language and dress. Foul language is discouraged and the LDS church has modesty guidelines that members are encouraged to adhere to. It would not be unusual to see a female member of the LDS church wearing knee length shorts and a cap sleeve t-shirt on a hot day when other women would be prone to wear extremely short shorts and a spaghetti strap tank top.

While members of the LDS church may not agree with the beliefs or actions of other groups or people they are respectful of all and allow everyone (including those within their own congregation) to make their own choices. It is important among the LDS culture that everyone have their own free agency to make decisions for themselves. I think most people that consider themselves to be religious would agree that belief is more important than knowing. While members of the LDS church like to understand things and know of their validity, they believe in a greater power that has influence over all of us.

Definition of masculinity and femininity.   A description of masculinity and femininity is difficult to nail down with one specific definition. With as many people as there are in the world there are potentially that many definitions of masculine and feminine. In academic research, it is common for researchers to define masculinity and femininity with the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) (Bem 1981). Originally, Bem wanted to prove that people were more androgynous than they were masculine or feminine. However, by simply creating the BSRI Bem reinforced the stereotypical ideas of what is masculine and what is feminine. According to the BSRI, some of the characteristics that are listed to define masculinity are: self-reliant, independent, athletic, assertive, forceful, dominant, competitive, aggressive, and acts like a leader. Some of the characteristics that are listed to define femininity are: yielding, cheerful, shy, affectionate, flatterable, loyal, compassionate, soft-spoken, warm, tender, and gentle (Bem, 1981).

LDS church members would most likely agree with the masculine and feminine characteristics listed by the BSRI. Members of the LDS church believe that a person's gender was pre-determined before they came to earth. Gordon B. Hinckley, a prophet of the LDS church, outlined this idea in a message to LDS church members in 1995. Hinckley said, "Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose" (Hinckley, 1995). LDS people also believe that there are different roles that a husband/father should portray as a man and a wife/mother should portray as a woman.

> By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. (Hinckley, 1995)

While men are expected to be leaders and support for their families, and mothers are expected to

nurture their families; LDS church members believe that a man and a woman should be flexible

and help one another with their respective responsibilities when needed.

Church members would be likely to define masculinity and femininity by traditional

gender roles where men are more dominant and women are more submissive. This may differ

from the general population that would be more prone to define masculinity and femininity by

the newer gender roles where men and women are not afraid to embrace some of the gender role

characteristics of the opposite sex (Ehrenreich, 1893; Gauntlett, 2008; Glover and Kaplan, 2009).

Artifact

The researcher conducted a reception analysis of three elements of "Dancing with the

Stars" programming: (1) dancers' choreography, (2) dancers' costuming, and (3) judges'

comments, from the 2010 Season 10 of "Dancing with the Stars". The "Dancing with the Stars"

clips for this study were drawn from the website www.youtube.com which carries clips of the

ABC program. The researcher showed focus group members clips from episodes of Season 10

that aired from March 22, 2010 to May 25, 2010. These episodes were from one of the most

recent seasons of "Dancing with the Stars" which received the second highest ratings for the

show thus far. Only the latest season (Season 11) had higher ratings. Because "Dancing with the

Stars" was the highest rated primetime show in fall 2010 (Pure, 2010), it is relevant in this type

of study. Season 10 had a very diverse cast that is appropriate for analysis. The 11 participants

included:

2 male athletes

- Evan Lysacek, 24-year-old 2010 Winter Olympic figure skating Gold Medalist.

   Paired with professional ballroom dancer Anna Trebunskaya.

- Chad Ochocinco, 32-year-old wide-receiver for the Cincinnati Bengals. Paired with professional ballroom dancer Cheryl Burke.

1 female news correspondent

- Erin Andrews, 32-year-old correspondent for ESPN. Paired with professional ballroom dancer Maksim Chmerkovskiy.

1 male astronaut

- Buzz Aldrin, 80-year-old astronaut that accompanied Neil Armstrong on the original moon walking mission of "Apollo 11." Paired with professional ballroom dancer Ashly Costa.

1 female singer

- Nicole Sherzinger, 31-year-old lead singer of the "Pussycat Dolls." Paired with professional ballroom dancer Derek Hough.

1 male actor

- Aiden Turner, 32-year-old soap opera star of "All My Children." Paired with professional ballroom dancer Edyta Sliwinska.

1 female actress

- Shannon Doherty, 38-year-old star of the original "Beverly Hills 90210." Paired with professional ballroom dancer Mark Ballas.

1 female actress/model

- Pamela Anderson, 42-year-old model and star of the international television show "Baywatch." Paired with professional ballroom dancer Damian Whitewood.

1 male reality television star

- Jake Pavelka, 31-year-old star of "The Bachelor" season 14. Paired with professional ballroom dancer Chelsie Hightower.

1 female reality television star

- Kate Gosselin, 34-year-old star of the reality series "Kate plus 8." Paired with professional ballroom dancer Tony Dovolani.

1 female comic/actress

- Neicy Nash, 40-year-old host of HGTV's "Clean House" and star of "Reno 911." Paired with professional ballroom dancer Louis Van Amstel.

All of the choreography, costumes worn by the dancers, and the judges' comments were considered and analyzed. Choreography is defined as each full routine that is performed during the competitive portion of the programming from the moment the music begins to the moment the music ends. Costumes are defined as the attire that each person in the partnership wears while they are on the dance floor performing their routine. Judges' comments are defined as each complete thought that a judge shares with the dancers immediately after the couple performs their routine. There are three judges that critique the dancers, and the judges have remained the same since season one of "Dancing with the Stars." They are Carrie Ann Inaba, a dance and television choreographer; Len Goodman, a professional ballroom judge; and choreographer Bruno Tonioli. All three judges get the opportunity to critique each couple after they dance their routine.

Procedure

Representative focus groups were used for this particular study. The data was derived from four focus groups consisting of six to eight participants. The researcher contacted

participants through the social networking website "Facebook", and by word of mouth recruiting. The researcher asked for anyone that was 18 years or older that had an interest in focus group participation to contact him. After hearing back from those interested, the researcher set specific times with the respondents to participate in a focus group that was convenient for them. The researcher scheduled interview rooms for the focus groups on the Brigham Young University campus in Provo, UT during a four week time period. The groups were conducted in the late afternoon and evening, to accommodate participants that were students or those who worked full-time.

   All participants were 18 years or older. Participants were chosen because they had an interest in focus group participation. The researcher also asked for participants who were already viewers of "Dancing with the Stars" so that results could be more generalizable to the "Dancing with the Stars" demographic. Upon arrival to the focus group each participant was asked to sign a consent form (Appendix I), and fill out a demographic interview sheet (Appendix II). Refreshments were offered as compensation to the participants during the focus groups. Each focus group lasted approximately 60 minutes, and was tape recorded for accuracy. All participants were given opportunity to decline participation at any time throughout the research process. Only one participant left early from the third focus group because she was unable to stay the entire time.

   The researcher began by showing the participants a set of clips. After viewing two or three clips, questions were then asked to start the discussion. Once the first group of clips was shown and discussed, the researcher repeated that pattern with the second and third sets of clips. After viewing the clips, participants were asked questions from the interview guide (Appendix III). For quick reference to each of the clips the participants were shown a photograph of each

routine performed (Apedixes IV-XII) during the discussion about that dance. The first question after each dance was whether or not they liked the dance and what their overall impression was. Participants were asked if they liked the choreography and if they felt like the choreography was in accordance with the stereotypical gender roles within society. Participants were asked if they would be comfortable dancing the choreography themselves (whether or not they felt they had the skill), and why or why not. They were also asked if they would feel comfortable if one of their family members was dancing that choreography.

Participants were asked to identify whether or not they felt a costume was masculine or feminine. They were also asked to explain why they felt a costume falls into a masculine or feminine category. Typical masculine costumes consist of pants, a shirt, tie, and jacket in a dark color. These costumes are not typically adorned to the same extent as the feminine costumes. Typical feminine costumes consist of skirts and dresses that enhance the feminine physique. They are often adorned with large amounts of rhinestones, fringe, sequins, feathers, and high heels.

Male participants were asked if they would wear the costume that the male dancers were wearing and why or why not. Female participants were asked if they would wear the costume that the female dancers were wearing and why or why not. Participants were asked to discuss whether or not they felt the costumes coordinated well with the choreography and overall theme of the dance routine. The participants were prompted to indicate whether or not they felt like the costumes coincided or contradicted stereotypical gender roles.

Participants were also asked whether or not they felt that the judge's comments were beneficial and if they reinforced or contradicted the gender roles portrayed by the couple during their routine. They were then prompted to expound upon their answers.

The researcher acted as a moderator during the discussions and encouraged group interaction by asking participants to talk with each other and not be afraid to agree or disagree with other participants. As best as he could, the moderator encouraged conversation between the participants, not between the participants and the moderator (Carey, 1994). In order to ensure consistency in the data collection, the same researcher facilitated all of the focus groups. After each focus group the researcher adjusted the questions for the following groups to focus on emerging themes. After four focus groups the level of redundancy was high enough that a fifth focus group would not have produced any new data.

Group discussions and comments were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Study data consisted of participant statements reflecting attitudes and preferences. All focus groups were transcribed appropriately, resulting in an electronic written script for each focus group. After the electronic scripts were created, the researcher then coded the responses similar to other studies (Ip, Mehta, & Coveney, 2007; Sim, 1998) into three categories: costuming, choreography, and judges' comments. From the original three categories the researcher then coded the responses into nine additional categories that emerged as underlying themes within the participants comments. The nine categories were: control, religious influence, wearing less to cover up, concerned about ratings, professionals vs. celebrities, out with the old, dance is feminine, physical characteristics, and a time and a place. The comments were then used to put together results and a discussion of the themes that emerged from the participant's perception and interpretation of the gender roles portrayed on "Dancing with the Stars." In order to maintain anonymity of the volunteers, each participant was assigned a random number during their focus group. As responses were coded, they were assigned to the appropriate participant I.D. number. All participant names contained in the entirety of this paper have been changed.

The choreography, costumes, and judges' comments were all considered in each of the clips selected for analysis of the artifact. Using audience reception analysis (Hall, 1980), the artifacts were analyzed according to the opinions of the participants. Depending on the culture, background and beliefs of the participants, answers are expected to vary in reception analysis. For participants of similar backgrounds, their reception and analysis of the artifacts will most likely be harmonious or related. For participants of different backgrounds, their reception and analysis of the artifacts will most likely be different or contradictory (Hall, 1980; Jensen, 1991). Through the use of these focus groups, the researcher was able to identify how audience members perceive the gender roles portrayed on "Dancing with the Stars."

Grounded Theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) guided the procedures of this research. Willig (2001) stated that "grounded theory involves the progressive identification and integration of *categories of meaning* from data" (as quoted in Whitty, 2008, p. 33,). Although grounded theory ideally puts aside any existing theory in order to develop new theory, this research took into account previous research on dance, gender, and the media. Other researchers have also conducted qualitative research in this way (Willig, 2001).

Participant Demographics

As the participants were contacted near the Salt Lake City and Provo, Utah areas the majority were from middle to upper-class families and did not vary significantly in race (there is not a considerable amount of racial diversity in the area) 28 participants were Caucasian/White, one was Black/African-American and one was Hispanic. 90 percent of the participants were of the same religious background, Latter-day Saint (LDS). Two of the participants were unaffiliated and one was agnostic.

Six participants considered themselves regular viewers of "Dancing with the Stars," while 10 watched the program a few times a season and 13 had seen it once or twice. The average amount of time that participants had been watching "Dancing with the Stars" was 2.7 years. Six of them had been watching for five years (since the show began in 2005), and five participants had been watching for less than one year. Two participants considered themselves ballroom dancers. While most of the participants did not ballroom dance themselves, 24 of them had a family member or close friend who ballroom dances. Six participants did not have a family member or close friend who ballroom dances. There were 12 men and 18 women in the entire study, and the average age of participants was 38.5 years with the oldest being 67 and the youngest being 19. The majority of participants had a bachelor's degree or attended some college. Three participants held a master's degree while three held only a high school diploma. Nine participants worked full-time, eight worked part-time, seven were full-time students, one was a part-time student, six were homemakers, three were retired, and one was unemployed. All but 13 participants were married. Of those not married, eight were single, one was widowed, two were engaged, and two were divorced.

Artifact Shown

Four separate focus groups were shown nine clips of "Dancing with the Stars." The clips contained a good variety of dances, costuming, and choreography from five of the couples from season 10. The first clip was a Viennese waltz by NFL star Chad Ochocinco and his professional partner Cheryl Burke. They danced to the song "Sparks." The costuming for Chad consisted of white high-waisted pants, white shoes, and a white mesh jacket with satin cuffs and lapels. He did not wear a shirt, exposing his chest under the jacket that was fastened together just above the waist. His partner, Cheryl, wore a long white dress with a beaded bodice, low cut back, and see-

through mesh skirt. The dress had long sleeves, however they were see-through mesh. Her shoes were a nude colored pump.

The second clip was an Argentine tango by ESPN correspondent Erin Andrews and her professional partner Maksim Chmerkovskiy. They danced to the song "Una Música Brutal." The costuming for Maks consisted of gray high-waisted pants, gray shoes, a black suit coat and tie, a gray collared shirt, and a black fedora hat. Erin wore a short dress with a red bodice and black lace overlay. The skirt of the dress was short black satin. The dress had a heart shaped neckline with spaghetti straps. Her shoes were black high heels with a strap across the top of the foot. The costuming was very stereotypical of the Argentine tango as the short skirt showed off the long leg lines that Erin created.

The third clip was a foxtrot by "Pussycat Dolls" lead singer Nicole Sherzinger and her professional partner Derek Hough. They danced to the song "Haven't Met You Yet." Derek wore a very traditional outfit for the foxtrot. He had black pants, black shoes, a black vest and bowtie with a white collared shirt. Nicole had a long tan colored dress with a rhinestone bodice and a smooth satin skirt. The neckline was V-cut with spaghetti straps and rhinestoned gauntlet sleeves from the wrist to the elbow. Her shoes were a nude colored pump.

The fourth clip was the second dance from Chad Ochocinco and Cheryl Burke. They danced a rumba to the song "Try Sleeping with a Broken Heart." Chad's costume consisted of a reddish-brown colored pant and shoes with a peach colored chiffon shirt. The shirt was un-tucked and resembled a top that men would wear as pajamas. It had a wide collar and was unbuttoned down to the sternum. Cheryl was in a long peach colored dress that had a mix of chiffon layers and rhinestones throughout the bodice. Though the skirt was long it showed off the

legs because of the see through chiffon material and slits to the top of the thigh. Her shoes were

nude colored latin sandals.

The fifth clip was a Viennese waltz by Olympic gold medalist Evan Lysacek and his

professional partner Anna Trebunskaya. They danced to the song "Piano Man." Evan wore a

traditional black tails suit tuxedo with a white collared shirt, white bow tie, black cuff links, and

black shirt studs. He also wore common black patent leather ballroom shoes. Anna wore a blue

and white halter-top dress with a long skirt. The blue and white swirls within the fabric made for

an interesting costume that did not need a lot of adorning. There were a few jewels across the

waist and neckline of the dress and on the large, chunky bracelets she had on each arm.

The sixth clip was a cha cha by reality television star Jake Pavelka and his professional

partner Chelsie Hightower. They danced to the song "Old Time Rock and Roll." While Jake

started out the routine wearing nothing but his white button up collared shirt, tighty whities, and

black shoes and socks – he eventually completed his outfit with some comfortable looking black

casual pants. Chelsie wore a short, silver beaded fringe dress that had spaghetti straps and

rhinestones along the low-cut neckline. Her costume had a little extra dimension with long black

gloves, silver bracelets and nude colored latin sandals.

The seventh clip was the second dance by Erin and Maks. They danced a quickstep to the

song "Dancin' Fool." The routine began with both of them dressed from head to toe in black.

Maks had a traditional black tails suit, and Erin wore a long black dress that covered her body

from the neck to the ankle. As soon as the music started, so did the costume change. Erin helped

Maks take off his jacket to reveal a bright salmon color on the inside, he put the jacket on inside

out and then they both ripped away the remainder of their black clothing to reveal an explosion

of bright salmon. Maks was dressed in a traditional looking tails suit other than the fact that the

color was what some people would consider to be pink, and he had rhinestones on the lapels of his jacket. His shoes, collared shirt, and bow tie were all black. Erin was dressed in a beautiful dress that had a nude colored bodice that was covered in rhinestones. The bodice was long sleeved with a high neck and continued over the hip until it blended into the long skirt that was salmon colored satin godets. Her shoes were a nude colored ballroom pump.

The eighth clip was the second number danced by Nicole and Derek. They performed a rumba to the song "Lady in Red." Derek was dressed in black tuxedo pants with a satin stripe down the side, black patent leather shoes, and a black belt. He had an undone black bowtie that draped around the neck of his white tuxedo shirt with black shirt studs. Nicole was dressed in a short red dress that had lace on the top and the bottom to appear somewhat like a negligée. She had some red chiffon fabric attached to the dress that hung from her shoulders and appeared to give the look of a short robe. The dress had a few rhinestones that peered through the chiffon fabric as she danced. Her feet were covered by nude colored latin sandals.

The final clip was the second one danced by Evan and Anna. They performed a paso doble to the song "Bring Me to Life." Evan wore black, high-waisted pants with black shoes and a long-sleeved black vest. The vest was adorned with white beads in a repeating "V" pattern. He did not wear a shirt which showed off the front of his torso from the neck to the belly button. Anna had black shoes and a black, off-the-shoulder dress that had a matching beaded "V" pattern on the bodice. Her skirt was long and black on the outside with a red underskirt. In the middle of the dance, Evan tore the skirt from her waist and used it as a cape similar to the manner in which a matador would use a cape for a bull fight.

Chapter V

Results and Discussion

Overall, LDS participants believe that stereotypical gender roles are portrayed on "Dancing with the Stars." While the men generally portray a masculine demeanor, some participants believe that certain characteristics or elements within the dancing they do and costumes they wear are feminine. Participants felt that the women all portray femininity in their costuming, and choreography, although there are certain levels of femininity that they exude. The following results and discussion will describe what were identified to be overall themes as they were described by the participants during the focus groups. The themes emerged through discussion of gender roles as they relate to the costuming, choreography, and judges' comments on "Dancing with the Stars."

The participants thought that the women were all feminine in their costuming and the participants were appreciative of that. Jada, a 24-year-old student that has been watching "Dancing with the Stars" since 2007, said that the first aspect of femininity for all of the women was their costuming. She felt that all of the women had a flowy or skimpy costume and therefore fit within the mold of what is feminine. While all participants of this study agreed that the women's costumes seen in the clips were certainly feminine, the majority of the participants, male and female, did not approve of the costume designs. They believed that most of the women's costumes were inappropriate and immodest. Two of the female participants even said that they felt as though certain costumes made them feel like they were seeing something that they shouldn't.

Costumes

What is it that makes a woman's costume feminine? Jamie, a 58-year-old divorced mother of 5, thought that Cheryl's Viennese waltz costume was totally feminine because it had lots of lace, it was form-fitting, and sheer. Of course the fact that it was a long dress and Cheryl was wearing high heels gave the costume the overall feeling of femininity. When asked what kind of costume fits within the stereotypical female gender role, many participants listed: flowy, light colored, form fitting, lacy, and decorated with jewels as feminine characteristics.

Participants felt that the men's costuming was a mix of traditional and non-traditional clothing for men. While the majority of the participants thought that overall the men's costumes portrayed masculinity and the stereotypical male gender role, there were a few costumes that the participants (especially the men) thought were feminine and thus took away from the masculinity of the dancers. Some of the costumes that were thought of as masculine were the dark colored suits that were accompanied with a hat or a bowtie. Costumes that were considered not as masculine were those that were more non-traditional such as the ones made out of see-through material, and those that were a girly color, such as pink or red.

Choreography

Different dances portray different ideas for people depending on their background and culture. While some participants felt that the regal Viennese waltz or the chivalry of the foxtrot were the best examples of stereotypical gender roles, others preferred the sexual chemistry of the rumba. For 51-year-old Melina and 41-year-old Quinn, who are both homemakers, the Viennese waltz danced by Evan and Anna seemed to portray the most stereotypical gender roles through the choreography because of the way they touched each other. The touch was gentle and

romantic between the couple. Anna looked back at Evan coyly over the shoulder and he cupped

her head with his hand as she laid it on his chest.

One participant, a 27-year-old software consultant, who thought that the rumba was a

better representation of gender roles mentioned that the female gender role is often thought of as

more provocative than the male gender role. He said:

Excerpt 1

There's something provocative about a woman opening her legs like 'this' position

(Appendix V) or the position where she straddles him. There's something more

provocative than other dances where you see the legs are together…In this dance it's

connecting the man and the woman in more of sexual poses.

Ruth, a 65-year-old grandmother who has been watching the show since it began in 2005, loved

the way that all of the women showed their femininity through their choreography. It didn't

matter if it was a Viennese waltz or a rumba, Ruth thought both were great representations of

gender roles. The soft lines the women create with their arms and the beautifully pointed feet

were just some of the things that made Ruth think that they were all feminine.

Overall, the participants thought that the choreography for the men fit within the stereotypical

gender roles. With the exception of the celebrity men on occasion, the men did a good job as the leaders

of the dance. Specific movements from the men that seemed masculine to the participants were the dips

and tricks that they would support the ladies in. There was choreography throughout all of the men's

routines that the participants deemed masculine.

Judges' Comments

Some of the judge's comments coincided with stereotypical gender roles, while others

contradicted them. Comments such as "that was beautiful" and "that was hot," were

complementary of the women and coincided with the typical gender roles that women normally

portray. Judges' comments for Maks and Erin in the Tango typified gender roles. Angela pointed out that the judges' comments generally stated that the girl is supposed to be hot and the guy is supposed to get the benefit of that. That's exactly what the tango routine was and the judges liked it.

Judge's comments that referred to parts of the women's bodies or how they moved their bodies also backed the traditional gender roles. Marie noticed that in general the judges' comments do reinforce the typical gender roles because they talk about how beautiful the woman looks and they talk about how the man made her look good. They also reinforce the sexuality roles of all of it with comments like, "oh wow, you were hot tonight." 25-year-old Troy agreed that the judges' focus on the body parts made it fit within the stereotypical gender roles. Many participants said that most of the judges' comments to the women were focused on body parts and comments to the men were focused on action.

Control

In order to fit within stereotypical gender roles, men need to be in control. Participants thought that Cheryl looked like she was rushing Chad through the rhythms in the Viennese waltz and that her power over him contradicted the stereotypical gender roles. Kirby, who has seen many ballroom dances throughout his life, said that he didn't see much of a dance there because it seemed that Cheryl just pulled Chad around. Because Chad was so untrained he was not secure and the confident female dancer was more in control than he was.

The choreography of the rumba that Chad and Cheryl danced, for the most part, portrayed them as masculine and feminine. There were times that Chad took control of the movement and sometimes even threw Cheryl from one pose to the next. But there was not a lot of consistency in the choreography. Angela said that the only things Chad did that were masculine were dip Cheryl

and lift her, things that were a matter of brute physical strength that he obviously has on his side.

Most of the time, it looked like Chad was just standing there and Cheryl was dancing around

him. If the man appeared to lack control, he did not seem to be as masculine as the men who

were in control and leading the movement.

One participant mentioned that Derek was very masculine throughout his foxtrot because

he fanned his partner, dipped her, and carefully put her in her place. One of the biggest things

that participants noticed as being masculine within the choreography was leading the routine.

Janae, whose 29-year-old son is a professional ballroom dancer, thought that the foxtrot

portrayed the most typical gender roles because Derek really appeared to be holding Nicole and

leading her movement. For many of the participants, the idea of the man as the leader in the

dance fit well within stereotypical gender roles.

LDS Influence

According to audience reception theory (Hall, 1980) audiences decode messages within

the media according to their culture, beliefs, and background. One thing that the majority of

participants (90 percent) had in common was their religion. Twenty-seven of the 30 participants

were members of the LDS church, commonly known as the Mormons. Many of the answers

given during focus group participation were heavily influenced by the things Mormons believe

and how they live their lives. When asked if the judges' comments reinforced or went against

stereotypical gender roles Sam, the oldest participant at 68-years-old, made a good point about

the participants of his focus group. He said:

Excerpt 2

Some of the judges' comments were referring to the sexual part of it where...that was a

good thing, and it was exciting, and we like that. But I was thinking all of our comments

here are the other way. But if this thesis was being done at UCLA or somewhere like that

they'd have a different frame of reference, your study group, it wouldn't be LDS people,

so it would be different. I think we all know that, but that's reality of it.

Sam knew the influence of the LDS church on its members and was recognizing that influence in

many of the participants' comments.

When the researcher asked the five women of the first focus group if they would like

wearing Cheryl's Viennese waltz costume they said that they would not want to wear it for fear

that they would be too exposed. Vicky pointed out the same thing as Sam, that "you're going to

get different answers here than you are going to get anywhere else." Because of the modest

clothing guidelines of the LDS church, costuming standards for most people in the Salt Lake and

Provo areas are going to be more conservative than in other areas that do not have as strict of

guidelines. Vicky said "when you go to competitions here they have the tape measure out and

they are looking at strap width and length of the skirt." While Vicky liked the costumes that she

saw in the clips, certain types of dresses, like Erin's tango dress, would not be deemed

appropriate in her community when coupled with suggestive choreography. Angela mentioned

that she would wear the costume that Anna wore in her Viennese waltz as long as she could wear

a cardigan over it. Many LDS women have to be creative and wear more layers in order to adapt

popular fashion in to the clothing guidelines that they prefer.

Erin Andrews wore a short black and red dress for the tango. The dress did not have

anything cut out of the bodice, but had spaghetti straps and was quite short. All participants

agreed that her dress was certainly feminine and many of them would be comfortable wearing

the dress, but as Vicky, a 43 –year-old participant, put it "not in that pose" (Appendix V). While

Kay was accepting of the tango dress, she felt it was a lot like a negligee. She said, "I find the

costumes appropriate because in fact I know where the Tango started – in brothels, and so I find it – not appropriate – but fitting. However, I would not wear something like that unless I was alone with my husband." Clearly Kay, and other participants, thought that the dress was inappropriate for television.

The participants seemed to be so against the short dresses that show off most of the woman's body that they were happy to see costumes with any coverage, even if it was just a little bit more. Vicky mentioned that Nicole's foxtrot costume was not modest by standards around here (Provo, UT), but that it was more modest than some of the other dresses that were presented in the clips. Most of the women said they would be comfortable wearing it, but only if they were dancing. The five women in the third focus group were insistent that they would wear it because it was long and full. One of those women, Celeste, who works a lot with ballroom dancers and sees many of their costumes, said that Nicole's costume was preferable over Cheryl's because even though Cheryl's had sleeves and Nicole's didn't, Cheryl's was sheer everywhere.

Melina said all of the women's costumes were feminine, but in order for her to wear any of the dresses she would have to change something on all of them because she said that she is too "BYU standard," meaning that her opinions and actions are highly influenced by the LDS-sponsored university. She really liked Nicole's Foxtrot dress the best because it was elegant, but she would have to have a jacket with it. Assuming that the nude color of the dress would be offensive to the participants, the researcher asked how Melina felt about it. She said that the fact that the dress was close to Nicole's skin tone didn't bother her because it was very apparent with the adorning of the dress that it was not her skin.

A costume that was a little more modest than the others, like Nicole's foxtrot dress, was just enough for the majority of the women to say that they would be comfortable wearing the

dress if they were dancing. Jessica, a 19-year-old BYU student, thought that the sheer costume of Cheryl's Viennese waltz focused too much on Cheryl's body and Nicole's foxtrot dress focused on the dance and the story that went with it. Kay is especially bothered by see-through costumes because she feels like she's seeing something that she's not supposed to be seeing. She said, "if they are blatantly showing skin, at least they are being honest about it."

Her religion teaches Jessica that intimate things are to be done in private and therefore, she thought that Cheryl's rumba costume, that had the appearance of a long negligée, was more suggestive than Chelsie's short skirt and was more offended by the long one. Celeste thought that if Cheryl's costume would have been with a different song, other than "Try Sleeping with a Broken Heart," it would not have been so suggestive of making love. She thought that it was very inappropriate how the dancers ended on a bed of feathers. The sexual implications would most likely not bother someone who does not have much of a religious background. Jessica said that it was also very suggestive when Nicole took down her hair in the rumba, but did not find any offense to the costume change in the quickstep. While the quickstep was more of a fun dance it would have been okay if Erin would have taken her hair down, whereas if the Nicole would have taken part of her costume off, participants would have been appalled. It is apparent that the slow sensual moves of the rumba fuel the gender roles of sexuality. Jamie noticed that Derek had his tie undone. If she takes her hair down and his tie is undone every part of the dance is very sultry and sensual.

Janet was very uncomfortable because of a lack of clothing, and pelvic thrusts all the way throughout Jake's cha cha routine. She agreed with other participants that it wasn't just the lack of costume that made her feel uncomfortable. It's the choreography and the sexual connotation within the choreography that made her feel uncomfortable along with the costume. If it is just the

outfit that might be skimpy and not those other aspects of raunchiness, many LDS participants are able to look past the skimpy costume and enjoy the dancing. The combination of skimpy clothing and suggestive choreography makes her very uncomfortable. Nathan says that the music selection, costuming and choreography in the rumba are designed to put it in a super sexual arena. Kay agreed with him, but said that dances like the rumba have a very fine line between sensual and too far. Something that probably only a religions person would think about.

Darrin doesn't usually watch "Dancing with the Stars" on his own, but is usually in the room when his wife is watching it. He said that because of the costumes he's seen on the television shows, the costumes are starting to seem more and more covered up. He says that he's becoming desensitized. Ben feels that he is also desensitized to the costuming because of all the ballroom dancing that he has seen. According to the moral standards for clothing in the LDS culture, he said he should be appalled at what he saw with the costumes. However, the deteriorating moral standards within society are altering what seems to be the norm even among very religious persons.

Gavin and Destinee, who are not Latter-day Saints, like the sexy dances. They thought the foxtrot was cute but they preferred the tango because of the sexual energy, and Chad and Cheryl's Viennese waltz because of the racy costumes. Both Gavin and Destinee have grown up in the Salt Lake City area and are familiar with the LDS culture. They were very respectful of the other participant's opinions, like Elliott who thought the tango was immoral dancing. Gavin and Destinee were respectful, but were sure to point out that they preferred the raw sexuality in the dances.

Kay is LDS, but says that she grew up out of the "Utah bubble" so she thinks that her ideas are a little jaded compared to the typical Latter-day Saint. On the contrary, Darrin, who is

also not from Utah, said that his ideas are not jaded, and that just because someone grows up in

an LDS area does not mean that they conform immediately to the majority. Darrin pointed out

that Chelsie Hightower grew up in the heart of Utah's LDS area, and trained around Provo, but

even growing up in this culture she still chooses to wear the skimpy costumes.

Wearing Less to Cover Up

Because of their similar backgrounds, many of the participants had the same idea that

showing a lot of skin was meant to be a distraction. It appeared that in the minds of the LDS

participants, a woman couldn't possibly want to wear something that is skimpy just to show off

her nice body...there must be some reason behind it. Participants said that the feeling they get

when female ballroom dancers show a lot of skin is that they are trying to hide their actual

dancing. Kay says, "I'm too busy looking at the skin to actually focus on it (referring to the

dancing)." Later, when viewing a clip with Nicole's foxtrot costume, Kay noticed that her dress

was "actually covered up," she said she was able to focus on the dancing rather than worrying

that she was going to see something that she didn't want to see. Other participants also

commented that they were not able to pay attention to Cheryl's dancing because of the sheer

fabric of her Viennese waltz costume. Later, when Kay saw the short fringe costume worn by

Chelsie Hightower, she reiterated that the short flashy stuff is just trying to cover something up.

The short dress made her look more critically. Even though Chelsie was the professional, Kay

already had that bias in her head that she was trying to hide some aspect of her dancing.

There was however, a strong difference in opinion to Kay's idea. Darrin said that he did

not think the costume was distracting nor was Chelsie trying to hide something. In fact he liked

that he was able to see the dancing better as her legs were not covered up. Darrin thought that

Chelsie was very comfortable in that costume. He said:

Excerpt 3

> She has proven that she is a great dancer. She may have some insecurity, but she knows
>
> that she can wear something like that and look good in it, and she has the skills to back it
>
> up.

Darrin said that Kate Gosselin however, did not look like she was as comfortable in a sexy costume and she did not have the skills to back it up, so he said that he could see how one could think that there is insecurity festering behind the skimpy costumes. Darrin said that he doesn't take away from a person's dancing because of the costume they are wearing, nor does he attribute anything more to their dancing because of the costume they are wearing.

The women were not the only ones that were being accused of showing off a little skin to create a diversion. Angela felt like Jake couldn't dance very well and he knew it so he tried to overdo his routine with his personality. He didn't wear any pants and seemed to be too cocky. He was very macho throughout the entire dance, but looked like he had something to hide all the while. Janet thought that every bit of "Dancing with the Stars" was all sexual and sensual. The judges appeared to like that it was sexual and sensual, but Janet did not. She feels like all of the routines are like that to cover up the dance. They are just trying to win votes by titillating people, she says.

Concerned About Ratings

Pants off in Jake and Chelsie's cha cha showed that "Dancing with the Stars" is more interested in attracting viewers than having good dancing. While no pants might sell television, it sure was terrible dancing. One of the participants claimed that she was uncomfortable because of the lack of Jake's clothing and that the inappropriate pelvic thrusts all the way through the routine made it even worse. Celeste feels like the skimpy clothing like Chelsie's dress is

inappropriate for television because it is supposed to be a family show, but that the skimpy clothes are all for ratings. Celeste does not think a short or long dress affects the dance or the look. She mentioned that at BYU, an LDS run school, they do a lot to make sure costumes are more covered and coincide with the modesty guidelines of the LDS church. Even with costume guidelines and restrictions, dancers are able to express their creativity and create costumes that enhance the overall movement of their ballroom dances.

The judges are also focused on ratings for the show. Many participants said that the judges' comments seem to be about riling up the audience rather than being beneficial to the actual dancers. James pointed out that it's the nature of the show that the public doesn't know about dance so there is a certain amount of sensationalism that helps the audience to relate and know what is going on. So the women seem to dance sexier and the judges are looking for that rather than how well they can dance. It was the costuming that also made Ruth think that the purpose of "Dancing with the Stars" executives is to emphasize the sexual aspects of it all. Everything that they do has to do with ballroom dance, but that's not all. The executives make sure everything is very sexual.

James hadn't been to a lot of dance shows or competitions growing up, and thought that it was interesting that it's catching America's attention. The general public likes to watch these dance shows and it seems like there is a certain sexuality that is pumped into them, maybe more than one would see in an actual competition. Reality television is painting stereotypes, but with shows like this, there is more positive than negative. James makes a valid point that with competition shows there are better stories that come out of reality television than there would be in a sitcom that just portrays sex. The majority of the participants agreed that the judges' comments aren't necessarily helpful, but that they are more for the sensationalism of the

program. The majority of the judges' comments fit within the stereotypical gender roles because it's usually something of a sexual nature that can be quoted. James said, "A proper way to describe it would be that it's very passionate, there was emotion and feeling, but instead they go with 'oh you're a naughty, naughty girl.'"

Professionals vs. Celebrities

Participants noticed a big difference in the gender roles portrayed between the professionals and the celebrities. Elliott thought that the untrained men were more masculine than the trained men, but the untrained women were less feminine than the trained women. He felt like he needed to separate athleticism from feminine and masculine. Other participants agreed that the professionals all appeared to be better masters of their bodies and their movement, but many of the participants did not think that the men seemed less masculine because they knew how to control their bodies better.

When comparing the professional men and the celebrity men, the participants in group one thought it was interesting that the professional men rarely expose themselves. Perhaps the thought is that the celebrity men can't dance so maybe the audience will get distracted by their chests. On the contrary, Randy said that they could be trying to draw attention more to the ones that are competing and not the professional dancers. But other participants pointed out that the women's costumes are very similar whether they are professionals or celebrities. When comparing the professional men and their masculinity, physical characteristics seemed to play a part. Many of the participants thought that Maks was more masculine than Derek because Maks is bigger and brawnier. Destinee also thought that the other men moved their hips around too much and because of that didn't seem to be as masculine as Maks.

Some participants thought that the professional men had the perfect balance between being graceful and keeping their masculinity, but those that were learning sometimes would take it too far and lose their masculine balance with trying to be graceful. The first group of participants came to the conclusion that perhaps if a man has done a piece of choreography so many times it becomes rehearsed and it doesn't seem to be as feminine because he is confident in it. Participants thought that the confidence the professional men had throughout their movement made them look more masculine. However, Jada thinks that the waltz is the most feminine of all the dances because the movement is so soft and slow and she thinks that even if she would have seen one of the professional men dance the waltz he would have still seemed feminine. While most of the participants in group four agreed that there wasn't much of a difference in the gender roles of the professional and celebrity men, Quinn thought that Evan's big pirouette that he did in the Viennese waltz made him seem more feminine than the other men.

One of the participants from the first focus group pointed out that she did not notice any difference between the professional women and the celebrity women's portrayal of gender roles through their choreography. However, one of the gentlemen in the same focus group noticed a difference in the women. He thought that the female celebrities would lose the flow of the dance as they would transition from one step to another and that their feet were sloppier than the professionals. For this participant, this difference in transitions and foot placement made the professional women fit better into the female gender role as women are associated with dance and being able to dance well. While he was looking for the subtle differences, Angela noticed a big difference. She said:

Excerpt 4

> I don't feel like I ever saw the professional women show off their legs or their costume
> nearly as much as I did the contestants who were women. Even in the one with Jake
> where the girl was in the really skimpy outfit she never, like, posed with her legs split or
> held any of those positions. It was never selling the dance on selling her attractiveness or
> her ability to seduce him. Maybe that's because they were trying to highlight their partner
> cause they didn't want the votes to come in for them or whatever. But, yeah, the women
> that had done this forever, even though they probably would have been better at that, they
> didn't need to and they still seemed very feminine.

Out With the Old

While gender roles for women have changed from what they were 50 years ago, depictions of gender roles are also changing within the media. Marie points out that Cheryl's Viennese waltz outfit isn't stereotypically traditional, because so much of the skirt is see through. "But at the same time it has become the traditional look on television, where they are hardly wearing anything anymore, which really bothers me" she says. It appears that even in a highly religious community the media images are getting to everyone. Something interesting about the costume that Chelsie Hightower wore in her cha cha routine (Appendix IX) was that one of the participants said that her costume was feminine like Cinderella. Forget the fact that Chelsie's dress was a short, tight-fitting, "latin" dress with fringe on it that resembled a burlesque costume – the participant thought that it was like Cinderella. That comment was not made about any of the longer ball gowns that the women wore for the "ballroom" style dances. For someone to liken Chelsie's dress to Cinderella makes it obvious that the depictions of what is feminine are changing within the media and also within society.

One of the participants seemed to like the fact that the tango was more like the evolving gender roles of today's society where men and women are on more equal grounds. Yolanda, who is an energetic Hispanic woman, liked that Erin seemed to be seducing Maks with her Latin movement. Yolanda felt like the confident movement of Erin doing a lunge where she was behind Maks and put her leg between his legs fit very well in to the stereotypical gender roles of today. Kay, a newly married student whose husband is a ballroom dancer, agreed with Yolanda and insisted what was so sexy was the strength that was in the moves. Kay points out in Spanish culture the women generally play stronger roles. It's more like a challenge in the dance. To her, that seemed sexier that one of the dancers wasn't going to give in to the other, but that they were on equal footing.

Others within the group voiced their opinions that went along well with what they believe religiously. Angela thought that Erin, in the tango, seemed more like a hooker rather than an actual woman in a relationship. Maks seemed like a cool guy, but he wasn't relatable to society. Angela said, "Personifying a hooker is not what is expected of women, but there are some women that are like that, so it is not surprising that it was in the dance." The majority of the participants agreed that there needs to be a balance between sensual and sexy. One participant even mentioned that the tango has a sense of crudeness, which is unnecessary.

Janet thought that when they told Chad that he was so tender it went against traditional gender roles. She says that "traditional gender roles, the man is strong, and protective...and the woman is soft and tender, and it almost seems like these days, you know, all the women want to see the man tender or something and...the woman they want to see strong. It's like a reverse."

In an attempt to understand the dichotomy of portraying masculinity on the show, Troy says that there are two different sets of gender roles that fit within what is stereotypical for men.

One set that deals with men being chivalrous and the other that deals with male dominance over the female. When comparing Maks in the quickstep and Derek in the rumba, Troy said that each of them demonstrated different sets of gender roles. While Maks appeared to be more chivalrous in his actions, Derek demonstrated the second idea that the woman is an object. Kent, a 35-year-old substitute teacher, noticed that Derek had a lot more movement throughout the hips and made the routine seem so much more sexual. Kent thought Evan was the classiest male, but in today's world – classy male – is not the stereotype. Kent argued with Troy that the chivalrous set of gender roles is all but gone. He said, sadly, the stereotypical male of today is the bachelor dude on the far right (Chad). He's the typical guy in America.

Kay sees gender roles as a sign of respect. Like opening the door for a woman. It's like he says, "I know you can do this, but I'm going to do it for you out of a sign of respect for you." Janet said that whether or not something is masculine all depends on what your idea of masculine is. For her, the whole prideful masculine makes her sick. If she sees someone that is more humble, that as a positive way to be masculine. Kay said that Evan's humility made her like him more. Elliott thought that Jake was the manliest because of his pursuit of Woman. All of the participants in the fourth group agreed that Evan dancing the Viennese waltz was the most feminine when compared to Chad dancing the rumba and Jake dancing the cha cha, but Destinee pointed out the history of the waltz and that it is not supposed to be sexy or anything like that. It is apparent from the number of different ideas about what gender roles should be, and what they are, that masculine and feminine gender roles have changed from what they were in the past and continue to change today.

Is Dance Just Feminine?

Just like there are stereotypical gender roles for men and women in society, there are also stereotypes for male dancers. That stereotype was apparent for some of the participants. Elliot made the comment that:

Excerpt 5

Because they make such refined, soft, beautiful lines with their bodies, the professional men who were more trained in ballroom dance appeared to be more feminine than the celebrity men who were less trained in dance.

Elliott also thought that Evan Lysacek, who is a trained performer, seemed to be more feminine than the other celebrity men.

Chad was doing well with his dancing, but even though he is a football player Marie didn't sense masculinity from him, he did not seem like a tough football player. Perhaps it's because he doesn't have the dancing skills that the other men do and they keep putting him in non-traditional costumes. Some of the participants found it very interesting that once Chad stepped in front of the judges he turned into a different person from the one that was dancing. Gavin said:

Excerpt 6

While Chad was dancing he was very graceful stretching his arms, and then when the dance was over he would strut around giving high fives to his friends and kids. He strutted like a football player. He was able to separate the dancing from being a football player very well.

Some participants thought that perhaps the celebrity men have the idea in their heads that

dancing should be more feminine and they thus try to act more feminine when they are on the

dance floor.

Sometimes people think that men who dance, in general, are feminine. Kent said:

Excerpt 7

All of the examples picked here, these men did a very good job portraying the male

gender role compared to a lot of times what we see in the dancers. Maybe more

specifically in like "So You Think You Can Dance" I think, but these guys regardless of

the weird costumes sometime with the sheer or whatever. These guys, they were men.

They were guy's guys to me, compared to the stereotypical ballroom dancer that you

might think of.

Elliott thinks that dance in general slots the women into more feminine roles and the men into

more feminine roles as well because of the nature of dance and the beautiful lines that they

create. Because Chad is a football player, Jada thought it was so funny that the judges told him

he was so tender and graceful in the dance. She said that guys are expected to be more tender and

graceful on the dance floor more than in real life.

During Derek and Nicole's foxtrot Darrin felt like he was watching Gene Kelly in

"Singin' in the Rain." It doesn't come off as feminine at all, he said. A big part of it is the

attitude before and after the dance and the costuming helps to keep a masculine feel to it. While

he does not agree with the idea, Darrin said that some might say that ballroom dance, in general,

is not masculine.

Most of the participants thought that Chad looked funny at the beginning of his Viennese

waltz when he was moving his arms slow and feminine. Celeste said the maybe it's because she

knows he is a football player it looked weird to her. People aren't used to seeing a football player move his arms slow like that, but if they were to see Evan Lysacek move his arms slowly then it would be more normal because he is a trained artist. Traditionally, guys that are in ice skating and dancing get a different stereotype. If there is a guy that is more muscular, they grasp on to the masculine stereotypes easier. Basically, if they are stronger, they seem more masculine. In the Viennese waltz Evan seemed to be masculine, but outside of the dancing he would have come off as cheesy and even effeminate.

Celeste said that Chad looked a little awkward starting the Viennese waltz by himself, but if it would have been one of the male professionals, who is expected to do that, then it would have seemed more masculine. Elliot thought otherwise, that the professional men seemed to be more feminine than the celebrity men because they have been trained to be more refined and he thinks that is what lends toward more femininity. However, not everyone agreed.

Jessica felt like Evan seemed the most masculine of the men because he was the most confident in what he was doing. Even though the other men are more masculine and manly, she thought that Evan seemed the most elegant and in control than the other guys. While Jessica considered an elegant man to be masculine, Elliott did not think that the judges' comment about how Evan made gorgeous lines went along with stereotypical gender roles.

Costumes vs. Physical Characteristics

Material can have a profound effect on the perceived masculinity of a costume. Because Chad's costume was see-through and exposed so much of his chest, none of the male participants said they would have been comfortable wearing the outfit. Even with a strong physique, it is still difficult to portray masculinity when the costume does not go along stereotypical lines. Thirty-two-year-old Elliot, who automatically thought that Chad was the most masculine of the men

because he was a football player, thought that Chad looked a lot more feminine in his white, see-through shirt than Maks (who is a trained dancer) did in the dark colored suit he wore for the Tango.

One aspect of the costuming that made participants feel as if the dancer was more masculine was if he was showing off his muscles or physique. Participants were not offended by the men exposing themselves above the chest, but some of them thought it was inappropriate when Jake Pavelka began his cha cha without any pants on. In Jake's situation, there were differing opinions as to whether or not the lack of costume made him seem more or less masculine.

While a certain article of clothing can enhance or reduce the perceived masculinity of a performer on "Dancing with the Stars," lack of clothing can also enhance or reduce the perceived masculinity of a dancer. Elliott thought that Chad Ochocinco showing his chest muscles in both of his routines, and Jake Pavelka showing off his bare legs from the ankle to the upper thigh showed that the men were comfortable with their manliness and therefore appeared to be the most masculine of all the dancers. One of the other participants, Angela, thinks that the reason that men baring their chests is considered masculine is because the men are moving so gracefully, you have to redeem them somehow, and the costume makes you think "oh they're ripped, they're still men."

There were some characteristics of the male dancers, other than costumes and choreography, that the participants thought were masculine. Quinn thought that Chad Ochocinco seemed more masculine than the other guys because he was tall and muscular. "Because you can see the muscles, his masculinity was very apparent," she said. Ben pointed out that Derek's athleticism in his Foxtrot made him seem very masculine. There were some characteristics of the

men that participants thought were feminine. Elliot thought that Derek was the most feminine because he is shorter, and the fact that he wore a bowtie made him look smaller than he actually was.

Participants agreed that the men are very well built and the women have beautiful bodies. The dancer's bodies are able to portray masculinity and femininity by the way they are built. Even someone's face can make them appear to be manlier. Quinn said that Maks is rougher around the edges than the other guys and she sees him as being rougher around the edges when he dances. Melina and Kent also thought that Maks was more stereotypically manly. Celeste thought that even though Maks wore a pink colored tails suit he looked masculine because he carries himself so well.

Janet, who is a slightly heavy-set woman, pointed out that not only the movement within the choreography can reinforce the gender roles, but the body type of a celebrity can affect how well the gender role is portrayed. Janet commented how the thinner women that are models or athletes have an easier time being sexy and attractive than others who are heavier. The beauty of those women's bodies (that everyone can plainly see) is completely in line with the female gender role. Janet thought that when, the robust, Neicy Nash dances and even tries to be sexy, it's just funny. It isn't considered to be sexy because of her size.

A Time and a Place

Jamie commented that the pose from the tango picture shown during the group discussion looked trampy. Nathan pointed out that ice skaters wear flesh colored material on the tops of their costumes, and extremely short skirts because they need that movement. So, he asked the group "Does that make ice skaters trampy?" Jamie responded that "Ice skaters don't have stiletto heels, nor do they don't have spaghetti straps, so it's the whole thing together." It was very

apparent that items that many people would not think twice about wearing, stiletto heels and spaghetti straps, were a little bit offensive to this particular woman. Celeste argued that there is a time and a place for everything. She mentioned that she would not even consider wearing one of the ballroom costumes in everyday life, but that she wouldn't wear her volleyball uniform on the streets either. So, to a certain extent, she thought that the costumes were fitting for someone that was dancing.

Celeste said that it's the dancing coupled with the movement that they are doing, that can make something look trampy or make it look tasteful. She felt that in ice skating and even in couples skating, regardless of their short costumes and nude material, it's not as raunchy because of the movement they do…"a latin dance is much more seductive," she said. If Erin would have been dancing a waltz or a different dance in that costume, Celeste didn't think that it would have looked trampy at all. Overall, it is the combination of the costume and the dancing that can make a routine look tasteful or trashy.

For Rachel the tango, with its controversial costume, is art. She says, "It is all a storyline and the costume is part of the story.... You have to be able to follow what the story is. Some people might have been uncomfortable with it, but it is art, like a naked woman painted. Like, that's an art form. They can't put everyone in pants or a long sleeve shirt." To a certain extent, Angela agrees. She doesn't always think that a short skirt is bad. She mentioned that a short skirt shows movement. Normally Angela wouldn't wear a really short skirt, but if she were dancing then it would show off the movement that her legs are doing. She also doesn't think that a tight shirt for a man is all that bad. If a man is wearing a tighter shirt, it would show his movement more accurately and allows that judges to see if his arms are moving correctly. Destinee liked all of the costumes because she could see the movement of the dancers' bodies and she likes to be

able to see well what the dancers are doing. Participants also wondered if the men's tighter shirts were because the men are a little bit of eye candy. Perhaps a lot of the women viewers were complaining that the men didn't show enough skin. Even Melina, who is very strict with her views on what is modest and what is immodest, thinks that there are different standards when you are dancing and if you were headed to the prom or a similar event.

Chapter VI

Theory and Conclusion

LDS men and women, alike, agree that "Dancing with the Stars" clearly portrays stereotypical gender roles in the media. From the flowy, tight-fitting, sexy costumes for the women; to the dark, sleek, traditional costumes for the men, there is no denying the gender roles that the ballroom dancers portray. Ballroom dance choreography clearly lends itself to the masculine male as he leads the woman in and out of dips and splits across the dance floor. LDS participants from focus groups identified control as a major theme that defined gender roles. When participants felt that the men were in control of the movement, they felt that the men were masculine. If the women were being led across the floor and following the men, participants thought that they were feminine. With their focus on the women's bodies and then men's actions, the judges' comments also help to reinforce the masculine and feminine gender roles within the media.

One participant summed it up perfectly when she said, what she likes about ballroom dance is that it is built for gender roles. This participant, Celeste, has worked a lot with the dance department at BYU and she said:

Excerpt 8

> Ballroom more than any other style of dance typifies your stereotypical roles of male and
> female. One may be more exaggerated than another through the sensuality of it because
> that's what the world throws at you, what we see every day. When I think about what
> I've been brought up being taught and what I know, it's those classic dances that really

portray the way the roles are in a relationship and they're just two different aspects of the

male and female role. One's just more publicly appropriate and one is far more privately

appropriate.

Pointing out that one aspect of gender roles is more privately appropriate shows that Celeste's

religious background and experiences have swayed her opinions. She feels that the gender roles

portrayed in the quickstep are appropriate for the public eye, while the sensuality of the rumba

would be more appropriate in private. Like the majority of the participants, what she believes to

be true and right has come from her religious culture. Many LDS participants were upset by, or

disinterested in the dancers that wore skimpy costumes. From this we can postulate that persons

with a religious background prefer that gender roles be defined through ways other than showing

off the anatomy of the body that is distinctly male or female.

Not knowing the sexual preferences of any of the professionals on "Dancing with the

Stars," one would never guess that some professional dancers had anything other than an interest

in the opposite sex by watching them dance. It can be surprising how those that are homosexual

carry themselves in a heterosexual way that coincides with stereotypical gender roles.

Participants felt that, because ballroom dance typifies gender roles, the dancers themselves fit

within the stereotypical gender roles.

Using grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to generate data, this research coincides

with Hall's audience reception theory (Hall, 1980; Jensen, 1991). Whether the message that

"Dancing with the Stars" creators were hoping to get across is that dancing is fun, celebrities can

make fools of themselves, or that it is cool to dance, LDS viewers of the show perceive a clear

message. The viewers seemed to all agree that "Dancing with the Stars" is focused on ratings.

All participants were able to find the same underlying message – "sex sells." The further

development of this research and Hall's audience reception theory could lead to the development of a theory in which religious affiliation is a major emphasis.

Because the sample population was so homogenous there are certain limitations in this study. While results can be generalized to the LDS community, the results are not generalizable to the overall public. Further research should find sample groups of different religious denominations, and racial diversity to find out whether or not other groups agree that stereotypical gender roles are portrayed on "Dancing with the Stars." There could also be great benefit in conducting research with a completely diverse group to see if similar themes emerge.

Appendix I

Dancing with the Stars **Research Subject Consent Form**

As a participant in this focus group you will be asked to view certain clips of the television show *Dancing with the Stars.* While you view the clips you are invited to discuss your thoughts (specifically about costuming, choreography, and judges' comments) with other participants. After all clips are viewed, the researcher Karson Denney, will ask questions dealing with gender roles, choreography, costuming, and comments from judges, and how you received the media presented.

You will be asked to participate for approximately 60 minutes. You will only be asked to attend one focus group and all pertinent information will be collected at that time.

This study will have minimal risks. Because the focus groups include discussion of personal opinions, extra measures will be taken to protect each participant's privacy. It is important that you keep everything discussed in the room confidential to preserve the rights of other participants. Information will remain confidential and will be reported as a group and not as data identifiable to a specific person. All of your responses will be confidential and anonymous when presented in the research results. Only the researcher will have access to the data collected. Any tapes and transcripts of the focus group will be destroyed after one year or at the end of the study.

The benefits to you as an individual are also minimal. Refreshments will be provided for your participation. Benefits to society will however be more significant. Similar to the strong effects that media can have on popular culture, the media can affect the perceptions and attitudes toward gender of those who consume it. As the media drive popular culture and popular culture drives the attitudes within society it is important to understand the content of the media consumed by society and how the audience receives such content. This study will help us to understand the connection between television media, audience reception of popular culture, gender roles, and dance.

Participation in this research study is voluntary. <u>You have the right to withdraw at anytime.</u>

Subjects have the right to be able to contact the researcher if any questions come up. Researcher: Karson Denney karson22@gmail.com (801)787-9373. Faculty advisor: Dr. Clark Callahan clark_callahan@byu.edu (801)422-1493.

If you have question concerning your rights as a research subject you are welcome to contact the communications department Institutional Review Board (IRB) administrator. Dr. Mark Callister mark_callister@byu.edu (801)422-6143.

I have received a copy of the consent form with associated risks and benefits for this research. I agree to participate in the research.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix II

Dancing with the Stars Focus Groups

<u>DEMOGRAPHIC INTERVIEW</u>   **Date:**_____

(Participants will be asked to fill out a sheet with the following demographic information. All information will be anonymous, as participants will be assigned an identification number).

Focus Group Number: _____   Participant ID _____

1. How often do you watch *Dancing with the Stars?*
___(1) I've seen it once or twice
___(2) A few times a season
___(3) Regularly
___(4) I've missed a few episodes
___(5) I never miss an episode

2. How long have you been watching *Dancing with the Stars?*
___(1) Since 2005 (5 years)
___(2) Since 2006 (4 years)
___(3) Since 2007 (3 years)
___(4) Since 2008 (2 years)
___(5) Since 2009 (1 years)
___(6) Since 2010 (less than 1 year)

3. Do you ballroom dance yourself?
___(1) Yes ___(2) No

4. Do you have any family members or close friends that ballroom dance?
___(1) Yes ___(2) No

5. **Your Gender:** ___(1) Male ___(2) Female

6. **Your Age:** _____ Years

7. What is the highest level of education you have <u>completed</u>?
___(1) High School Diploma or equivalent
___(2) Vocational/Technical School (2 years)
___(3) Some College
___(4) Bachelor's Degree
___(5) Master's Degree
___(6) Doctoral Degree
___(7) Professional Degree (MD, JD, etc.)
___(8) Other _____

8. What is your current employment status (Check all that apply)
___(1) Work 40 hours or more a week
___(2) Work fewer than 40 hours a week
___(3) Student full-time
___(4) Student part-time
___(5) Homemaker
___(6) Retired
___(7) Unemployed

9. What is your primary occupation (whether or not you are currently employed)?
_____

10. What is your total family income (including your spouse's income, if applicable):
___(1) Less than $20,000/year
___(2) $20,000 – $39,999/year
___(3) $40,000 – $59,999/year
___(4) $60,000 – $79,999/year
___(5) $80,000 – $100,000/year
___(6) More than $100,000/year

11. Would you classify yourself?
___(1) Arab
___(2) Asian/Pacific Islander
___(3) Black
___(4) Caucasian/White
___(5) Hispanic
___(6) Indigenous/Aboriginal
___(7) Latino
___(8) Multiracial
___(9) Would rather not say
___(10) Other _____

12. What is your current marital status?
___(1) Divorced
___(2) Living with another
___(3) Married
___(4) Separated
___(5) Single
___(6) Widowed
___(7) Would rather not say
___(8) Other _____

13. Would you consider yourself?
___(1) Latter-day Saint (LDS)
___(2) Catholic
___(3) Evangelical
___(4) Protestant
___(5) Buddhist
___(6) Eastern Orthodox
___(7) Hindu
___(8) Islamic
___(9) Jehovah's Witness
___(10) Baptist
___(11) Jewish
___(12) Unaffiliated
___(13) Other _____

Appendix III

INTERVIEW GUIDE

(These questions will be asked by the researcher during the focus group.)
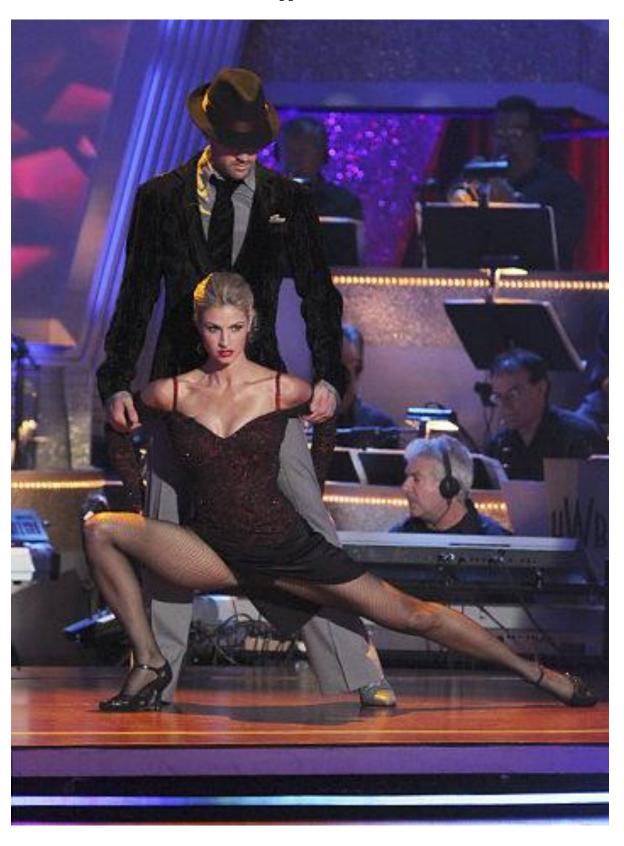
MQ = Main question
PQ = Probe question

1. What was your first impressions about this clip? (MQ)
    a. What did you like? (PQ)
    b. What did you dislike? (PQ)

2. Did you like the choreography?
    a. Why or why not (PQ)

3. Do you think the choreography fits the stereotypical gender roles of society? (MQ)
    a. Why or why not? (PQ)
    b. Would you feel comfortable if it was you dancing that choreography? (PQ)
    c. Would you feel comfortable if one of your family members was dancing that choreography? (PQ)
    d. What stood out to you the most about the choreography? (PQ)

4. Do you think the man's costume is masculine? (MQ)
    a. Why or why not? (PQ)
    b. Would you wear that costume (men)? (PQ
    c. Did you like his costume? (PQ)
    d. Did his costume fit well with the routine? (PQ)

5. Do you think the woman's costume is feminine? (MQ)
    a. Why or why not? (PQ)
    b. Would you wear that costume (women)? (PQ)
    c. Did you like her costume? (PQ)
    d. Did her costume fit well with the routine? (PQ)

6. Do you think the judge's comments seem beneficial? (MQ)
    a. Why or why not? (PQ)

7. Did any of the judge's comments reinforce stereotypical gender roles portrayed by the couple in the routine? (MQ)
    a. If so, what were the comments? (PQ)

8. Did any of the judge's comments contradict stereotypical gender roles portrayed by the couple in the routine? (MQ)
    a. If so, what were the comments? (PQ)

9. Are there any differences in the gender roles portrayed between a professional and a star of the same sex? (MQ)

      a. Why or why not? (PQ)

10. What types of emotion does the man portray? (MQ)

      a. Does he portray masculine emotions? (PQ)

      b. Does he portray feminine emotions? (PQ)

11. What types of emotion does the woman portray? (MQ)

      a. Does she portray feminine emotions? (PQ)

      b. Does she portray masculine emotions? (PQ)

12. What type of movement does the man perform that you would consider masculine? (MQ)

      a. What type of movement does the man perform that you would consider feminine? (PQ)

13. What type of movement does the woman perform that you would consider feminine? (MQ)

      a. What type of movement does the woman perform that you would consider masculine? (PQ)

14. What masculine characteristics does the man portray? (MQ)

15. What feminine characteristics does the woman portray? (MQ)
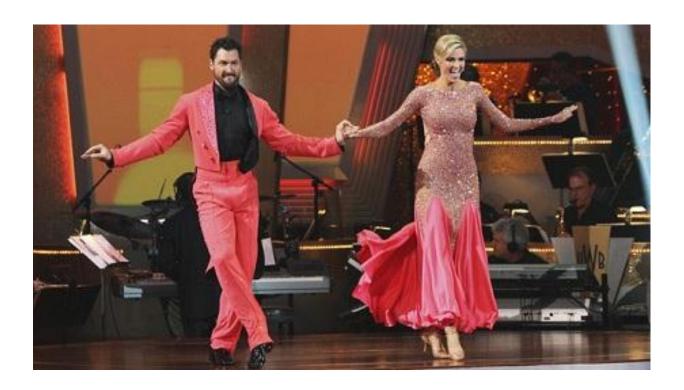
Appendix IV

Appendix V

Appendix VI

Appendix VII

Appendix VIII

Appendix IX

Appendix X

Appendix XI

Appendix XII

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