

“IT’S GONNA BE SOME DRAMA!”: A CONTENT ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE  
PORTRAYALS OF AFRICAN AMERICANS AND HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES  
AND UNIVERSITIES ON BET’S *COLLEGE HILL*

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A Dissertation  
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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

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by  
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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled

“IT’S GONNA BE SOME DRAMA!”:  
A CONTENT ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE PORTRAYALS OF AFRICAN  
AMERICANS AND HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES ON  
BET’S *COLLEGE HILL*

presented by Siobhan E. Smith,

a candidate for the degree of doctor of philosophy,

and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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*This work is dedicated to my unborn children, to my niece, Brooke Elizabeth, and to the young ones who will shape our future.*

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ABSTRACT

One way the mainstream public comes to learn about Historically Black Colleges or Universities is through the media. Reality television show *College Hill*, aired by Black Entertainment Television, appeared to have the goal of presenting the unique aspects of HBCU life. In spite of this objective, some critics and scholars argued the program fell short, relying on familiar and negative stereotypes to present the majority African-American casts, to the detriment of the reputation of these institutions. To explore this possibility, a content analysis of Seasons 3 and 4 of the program (30 episodes) was conducted. It was found that in general, behaviors and traits of the African-American cast members both supported and contradicted previously established, culturally-based stereotypes of African Americans, and that their appearances suggested normalcy. However, African-American women were portrayed in a significantly more negative manner than their male counterparts. In addition, out of the 327 scenes, only 43 (13.1%) had a reference to the HBCU; 30 scene-level references (69.8%) were to academic goals. Further, while the show mostly depicted the cast members interacting independently of the HBCU backdrop, it appears when the HBCU was referenced on the scene-level, most of these references portray academic, rather than social, concerns. Contrary to the literature regarding *College Hill*, instances of goals occurred statistically significantly more than instances of anti-goals. In addition, all of these references were considered positive on the episode-level. These findings suggest it is possible that some of the negative portrayals of the cast members might become inseparable from the portrayal of the HBCUs in the mind of the viewer.



## CHAPTER 1: RATIONALE FOR STUDY

One of the most important institutions in African-American history is the Historically Black College or University (HBCU; Williams, Ashley, & Rhea, 2004). Though these institutions were originally opened in reaction to the United States' "Separate but Equal" legislation, many are now known for their achievements in sending their students to business and professional schools, for accepting and providing students with higher educational opportunities who might have been rejected by other institutions, and for giving African-American students the chance to learn more about their cultural roots (e.g., Williams et al.).

One way that the mainstream public comes to learn about HBCUs is through the media: for example, movies such as *Drumline* and television shows such as *A Different World* provided their viewers with entertaining—and often informative—perspectives of HBCUs. Unfortunately, as some HBCU defenders have argued, these institutions are rarely given a fair chance in the media (e.g., Gasman, 2008; Mbajekwe, 2006); the public is often not privy to positive achievements of HBCUs but might be more likely to hear about negative situations involving them. In spite of these tensions, one reality television show, *College Hill*, aired by Black Entertainment Television (BET), appeared to have the goal of presenting the unique aspects of HBCU life (Rogers, 2004), including how HBCUs differ from Traditionally White Institutions (TWIs), how HBCU students negotiate diversity issues, and authentic social and academic situations at HBCUs. In spite of this lofty goal, some viewers (e.g., Native Son, 2007) and scholars (Parrott-

Sheffer, 2008) argued that *College Hill* fell short, relying and focusing on familiar and negative stereotypes to present the majority African-American casts as (re)presentations<sup>2</sup> of HBCUs, to the detriment of the reputation of these institutions. For example, some HBCU administrators and scholars complained that the program overlooked the academic strengths of the HBCU to emphasize situations that appeared more inauthentic than those found in fictionalized programming (e.g., Parrott-Sheffer, 2008).

Communication scholars have studied the impact that stereotypes can have on both in-group and out-group members and have found that negative portrayals can indeed negatively impact viewers' self-image with regard to their in-group (e.g., Stroman, Merritt, & Matabane, 1989-1990). In addition, scholars in fields as diverse as sociology (e.g., Gray, 2000; 2004; Hunt, 2005b), cultural studies (Hall, 1997a; 1997b), and African-American media studies (e.g., Bogle, 2001; MacDonald, 1983) have argued that negative stereotypes of African Americans, such as those that refer to their criminal nature, are prevalent in our culture. The media, television in particular, play an important role as the cultural storyteller: many people who do not possess first-hand knowledge of a particular racial group, such as African Americans, may heavily rely on TV to provide them with information about this group of people (e.g., Entman & Rojecki, 2001; Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli, & Shanahan, 2002; Stroman et al., 1989-1990). In the specific context of *College Hill*, viewers and HBCU constituents argued that not only were the institutions being portrayed negatively, but African-American cast members as well (e.g., Dix, Gibbs, & Bannister, 2004; Leger, 2007; Native Son, 2007); these fears imply that some critics believe some audience members regard the program as a reliable source.

Though textual analyses of programs featuring HBCUs have focused on the presentation of these institutions (Gray, 2004; Parrott-Sheffer, 2008) as well as the portrayals of African Americans (Parrott-Sheffer, 2008) in these programs, there has yet to be an analysis that produces quantifiable data which allows for in-depth exploration of African-American stereotypes presented by a particular program. Therefore, not only does this study utilize a content analytical method, but it also differs from previous research in this area with regard to content. More specifically, this study thoroughly examines the behaviors, traits, and appearances of the cast members to explore the portrayals of African Americans on BET's *College Hill* as informed by literature regarding African-American stereotypes. It also examines the portrayals of HBCUs as informed by the literature regarding HBCU mission statements.

Two perspectives in particular, race theory and schema theory, provide the theoretical frameworks of this research project. Though race is an abstract concept, it has tangible socio-political consequences. For example, one form of color-blind racism, cultural racism, depends on culturally based arguments, such as the "laziness" of African Americans, to rationalize this group's often lowly socio-economic status and lack of political power. Utilizing race theory is appropriate for this research study because it suggests racism is system (e.g., Feagin, 2010) and that racial categories function to keep the dominant (Caucasian) group in socio-political power; the media, including television and the specific genre of reality TV, are used to maintain the function of race (Hunt, 2005b). In addition, schema theory (Fiske & Taylor, 1991) provides scholars with a socio-cognitive explanation for the development of racial stereotypes. In sum, people

develop role schema based on how they categorize others. From these categorizations, certain behaviors are expected. Schema theory is an appropriate framework for this study because it provides an understanding of the process in which various stereotypes of African Americans have been created, gendered, and reformulated in our culture in general, and in our media, including reality TV, in particular. This study utilizes both of these theories by recognizing that stereotypes of African Americans have been (re)produced as a result of society's placing this group in a particular role category based on their race. Further, the (re)production of these stereotypes has impacted people's communication, often negatively.

Before discussing the concept of race in depth and schema theory, which provides an understanding of stereotype development, a brief history of the HBCU is provided, in addition to a discussion of the portrayals of HBCUs in the media.

#### A Brief History of Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Since Pennsylvania's African Institute, now Cheyney University, opened its doors in 1837 (Cheyney.edu, n.d.),<sup>3</sup> these centers of higher learning have served African-American college students, as well as young people of other cultural backgrounds. The initial institutions were opened during the Civil War period, and during segregation, these schools provided the "Separate but Equal" education required by law (Williams et al., 2004). As a result, many of the HBCUs' curricula mirror their Caucasian counterparts in some areas (Roebuck & Murty, 1993). According to the U.S. Department of Education, the Higher Education Act of 1965 defines an HBCU as:

...any historically black college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principle mission was, and is, the education of black

Americans, and that is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary [of Education] to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered or is, according to such an agency or association, making reasonable progress toward accreditation. (U.S. Department of Education website, 2009, para.7)

A total of 105 HBCUs exist in 20 of the 50 states, primarily in the South, in addition to Washington, D.C., and the Virgin Islands (e.g., Dilworth, 1994). HBCUs range from public to private institutions, and from four-year colleges/universities and two-year community colleges (e.g., Dilworth, 1994; Evans & Evans, 2002). Some have religious roots, and still others are centers for medical and veterinary education, as well as agriculture, business, and technology. For instance, for the past 14 years (private, Catholic, four-year) Xavier University of Louisiana has ranked first in the nation in placing African-American students into medical schools (Xavier University of Louisiana website, n.d.).

As explained by Dr. Kassie Freeman (1998), member of the Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities from 1994-2000, HBCUs provide mainly African-American students with a safe haven in which they can focus on academic, social and professional achievement. This mission of HBCUs has historic roots: by the 1860s, the Civil War had ended, and Lincoln's creation of the Bureau of Refugees, Freeman, and Abandoned Lands resulted in the establishment of more Black schools. Though the Freedmen's Bureau operated for only six years, it provided \$5 million in federal funds toward the education of African Americans. The first schools were Normal<sup>4</sup> schools, which focused on agricultural and industrial studies. One example is Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee University, which pleased both African Americans and

Caucasians, who felt that African Americans were best suited for farming and domestic jobs.

Over the years, African Americans began to seek access to other fields of learning (Williams et al., 2004). For example, Booker T. Washington's greatest detractor was W.E.B. DuBois, who felt that the only way that African Americans could reach their fullest potential was by receiving an education greater than that of the Tuskegee Model. This educational perspective suggested that African Americans would prosper in learning trades such as farming; it also suggested that African Americans should remain segregated from Caucasians and should not demand suffrage rights. One institution that went against the Tuskegee Model was Spelman University, which was founded to provide a liberal arts curriculum in the form of a female seminary (Spelman College website, 2004). Another was Howard University's School of Law, which opened in 1869 (Howard University School of Law website, 2006).

HBCUs, which were initially created because of the "separate but equal" principle, underwent transformation after 1954's *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Swannee County, Kansas* (which declared "separate but equal" to be unconstitutional), the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Higher Education Act of 1965, and *Adams v. Richardson*, all legislation that laid the groundwork for desegregation (Roebuck & Murty, 1993). These moves toward integration did benefit African-American students, as state governments worked to encourage both African-American and Caucasian students to enroll in TWIs as well as HBCUs. In spite of this, these attempts were met with some wariness, and these early anxieties proved to be well-founded. In 1992, the U.S. Supreme

Court ruled in *United States v. Fordice* that states must properly disassemble vestiges of the parallel system of education which served to keep African-American students and Caucasian students separate. This meant that the burden fell to many HBCUs to justify their existence. This battle between HBCUs and legislators continues until the present (Wenglinsky, 1996).

In addition to their inception, it is also important to note the amount of faith and trust members of the African-American community place in HBCUs to supply these unique learning environments (Freeman, 1998; Tyree, 2008). For example, syndicated morning radio show host Tom Joyner, a graduate of Tuskegee Institute (now University), encouraged his two sons to attend HBCUs because he believes they offer African-American students a love of their own people, in addition to quality education (Joyner, 2006). Joyner's experience is also representative of the great number of family legacies that pass through HBCUs; often, several generations of a family will graduate from the same institution (Bennett, 2008).

HBCUs also give their students opportunities to learn more about Black culture and develop a positive social identity (Samuels, 2007). Referring to this positive aspect of HBCUs, Oakwood College (of Huntsville, Alabama) alum and musician Brian McKnight states, "Everybody at that school looked just like me. That's the part that's inspiring; that these kids now need to see that it's okay to go to school. It's okay to reach for something higher than being an athlete or a music star" (Browne, Cajus, Kenner, & Urena, 2008, para.1). In McKnight's opinion, being exposed to HBCUs can result in community pride and group self-esteem, a perspective supported by research (e.g., Oates,

2004). HBCUs are also recognized for cultural artifacts that have been absorbed into the mainstream, such as stylized marching bands, step shows and Greek-letter organizations (Freeman, 1998). Not only do HBCUs have a strong social component, they also focus on public service, academic achievement and devotion to leadership (e.g., Gasman & Jennings, 2006).

Many of the arguments for the continued existence of the HBCU are summarized in Augusta-Dupar's (2008) content analysis of the mission and vision statements of ten HBCUs. This study explored how committed HBCUs were to academically and socially bettering their students, with the assumption that the mission and vision statements of these universities provide clear goals and emphases of the institutions. This content analysis is relevant to the current study for two reasons. First, August-Dupar argues that ideals which reflect the cultural, historical, and educational significance of the HBCU can be found in their mission statements; therefore, this work summarizes the ideas previously discussed in this chapter. Second, this research project provides a coding scheme with which HBCU goals can be categorized, which influenced the measurement used for this research project, discussed in Chapter 5.

The mission and vision statements of Augusta-Dupar's study (2008) were coded for social and academic characteristics. Drawing from this content analysis, social characteristics involve issues such as peer acceptance, awareness of Black consciousness, and protection from obstacles that African Americans often experience at TWIs, such as isolation. More specifically, these characteristics were "[striving] to educate the whole individual, [offering] programs designed to meet the unique needs of Black students, and



[commitment] to providing academic excellence and leadership qualities” (p. 52).

Augusta-Dupar also found evidence for academic characteristics, which involve creating a classroom environment that nourishes and fosters its students as they pursue higher education. Social characteristics include six points:

[Promotion] of positive regard for humankind, [commitment] to promoting social justice, [promotion] of student self-worth, [emphasis] on the development of Black consciousness and identity, [emphasis] on the development of Black history, racial pride, and ethnic traditions, and [commitment] to maintaining a diversity view. (p. 51)

Regarding academic characteristics, it was found that the HBCU mission statements most often focused on promoting positive thinking towards all people, followed by a focus on maintaining a diverse campus. By contrast, the mission statements referred to Black consciousness and identity, as well as racial pride, the least. The mission statements also revealed that commitment to providing academic excellence was the most referenced social characteristic.

HBCU administrators and alumni are particularly concerned that the public at large be aware of the positive attributes of HBCUs mentioned above (e.g., Mbajekwe, 2006). Obviously, a short-term viewpoint reveals that HBCUs require student enrollment and retention to survive, and there is most certainly concern when there is a drop in HBCU enrollment (e.g., Dilworth, 1994; Evans & Evans, 2002). “The survival and growth of many HBCUs depend on their ability to maintain or improve their relative share of Black students, who traditionally represented their major source of enrollment” (Sissoko & Shiau, 2005, p. 182). However, the longer-term concern of HBCUs is the justification for their existence. Simply, legislators might find it socially and financially

inefficient to pump resources into both HBCUs and TWIs, which often offer their students comparable degree programs (Roebuck & Murty, 1993). Because TWIs usually tend to receive more public resources (including research funds and technical assistance monies) than HBCUs do (Talbert, 2009), as well as larger and more numerous donations from alumni, they clearly can provide their students with amenities that HBCUs often cannot (e.g., Dilworth, 1994; Mbajekwe, 2006).

### HBCUs, African Americans, and the Media

One way in which HBCUs have been brought to mainstream attention is through the media. Television programs such as *A Different World* and *College Hill*, in addition to movies such as *School Daze* and *Drumline*, have acquired fans and critical acclaim. For example, *Drumline* was nominated for Outstanding Motion Picture by the NAACP Image Awards in 2003 (Susman, 2002), and grossed over \$55 million dollars, making over \$12 million dollars in its opening weekend alone (International Movie Database website, n.d., c). *School Daze* made almost \$2 million in its opening weekend, and grossed about \$14.5 million overall (International Movie Database website, n.d., d). These financial successes suggest that in addition to their entertainment value, these media can be informative as well, as some audiences have used these portrayals to enlighten their own understandings of HBCU life. For example, Keisha Knight Pulliam, who portrayed Rudy on *The Cosby Show*, attended Spelman College in Atlanta. She explains:

*School Daze* definitely had an impact on me choosing a HBCU because it was the first insight I had into a black college ...but people in general take film entirely way too seriously. *School Daze* was meant for enjoyment. It's not a documentary. (Browne et al., 2008, para. 2)

This is example, illustrates the importance of media portrayals of HBCUs. Pulliam's quote also highlights the tension surrounding mediated portrayals of HBCUs. Spike Lee's film entertained its audiences, and whether good or bad, served as a form of education regarding HBCUs.

Of course, exploring how the media portray HBCUs is also likely to make one recall the difficult relationship African Americans have with the media, television in particular. In general, recent content analyses have found greater numbers of minority television characters (e.g., Hunt, 2005a; Mastro & Greenberg, 2000). However, both older and more contemporary studies of the television landscape found that the majority of television characters on TV were Caucasian (e.g., Greenberg, Simmons, Hogan, & Atkin, 1980; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005). In addition to the lack of minority of TV characters, stereotypical programming such as *Amos n' Andy* has been removed from the airwaves for less than 50 years (e.g., Gray, 2000), and there is concern that such negative images still abound. For example, critics accused *The PJs*, an animated program produced by Eddie Murphy that aired in the 1990s, of stereotyping African Americans (Moret, 1999). Also, news programming continues to polarize African Americans, portraying them as criminal deviants or examples of the American Dream embodied as successful anchors and reporters (e.g., Campbell, 1995; Entman, 1990, 1992). Further, series such as *The Cosby Show*, which were meant to uplift African Americans, nevertheless provoked mixed emotions from both Caucasian and African-American audiences alike; some Caucasian audiences felt the Huxtables were "safe" because their upper-middle class lifestyle was familiar to their own (Jhally & Lewis, 1992), whereas

some African Americans argued that *The Cosby Show* did not represent their life experiences (Inniss & Feagin, 1995). More specifically, these African-American viewers felt the Huxtables acted “White” (Inniss & Feagin, 1995, p. 700). However, another study of African-American viewers regarded the show positively because they felt *The Cosby Show* portrayed African-Americans in a positive light. Viewers of this opinion argued that there were not enough programs in this vein, and that Bill Cosby’s creative effort met the needs of many African-American audiences to see positive African-American characters on TV.

In addition to concern regarding mediated the portrayals of African Americans, which can impact their own and others’ perceptions of them (e.g., Berry & Mitchell-Kernan, 1992; Entman & Rojecki, 2001), there is also interest regarding the ways in which mediated portrayals of HBCUs impact these institutions. Unfortunately, HBCUs tend to have a negative relationship with the media (Gasman, 2008; Mbajekwe, 2006; Parrott-Sheffer, 2008). These scholars argue the academic achievements of HBCUs are often ignored by higher education sources; it is scandals involving failures in leadership and mishandling of financial aid that lure the attention of the higher education media and more general media outlets. Del Stewart (2001), executive assistant to the president and chief of staff at Mississippi Valley State University (Itta Bena) lists some common misconceptions of HBCUs:

Negative public perceptions of HBCUs continue to increase. Many attempts are made to discredit HBCUs by advancing the argument that students who attend them are ill-prepared to function and successfully in “the real world” due to their limited contact with Whites. Second, opponents continue to deem HBCUs academically inferior to predominately White institutions by indicting HBCUs’ top management of

woeful mishandling of administrative and academic business. Third, opponents feed into the stereotypes that Blacks are good for entertainment and sports through their contributions to annual events that feature Greek step shows, battles of the bands, foot and basketball classics, and the like. (p. 13)

In his article, Stewart also criticizes HBCUs for not recognizing that it is important for these institutions to foster healthy relationships between themselves and media outlets. He specifically calls for action plans that involve HBCU constituents and the media so that HBCUs clearly communicate their achievements to public relations and other media outlets so that these misconceptions might cease.

In addition to the general problems HBCUs face with mediated portrayals, recent studies of televised programs that feature HBCUs suggest that the programs do either a wonderful job of portraying African Americans as in the case of *A Different World* (Gray, 2004), or a terribly poor one, as in the case of *College Hill* (Parrott-Sheffer, 2008). Gray's (2004) textual analysis suggests that *A Different World*, a sitcom aired during the late 1980s and early 1990s, presented African-American life from a multiculturalist perspective, exploring difficult topics like acquaintance rape in an unprecedented fashion. By contrast, Parrott-Sheffer's (2008) textual analysis argues reality TV program *College Hill* does not displace racial stereotypes, but rather continues to (re)produce images of African Americans as one-dimensional characters, such as the cheerleader, the jock, and the wild one. This critique is striking, because BET's reality TV series *College Hill* seemed poised to correct this gross misinformation of the American public by providing a fresh (re)presentation of HBCUs and their students—or at least giving viewers more

information than they had previously. As Stephen Hill, BET Senior Vice President of Music and Programming stated:

There is college life, and then there's Black college life. And those who have been around historically Black colleges and universities know there are social, cultural and attitudinal differences from the more mainstream institutions...what we're capturing in *College Hill* is a one-of-a kind look at college life. (Rogers, 2004, para. 3)

This statement suggests that there is a difference between the environments of TWIs and HBCUs, as well as cultural differences between the students who attend either type of institution. Though there have been mixed responses to the show from cast members who appeared on the show (e.g., Irving, 2006; Leger, 2007), HBCU administrators and students of HBCUs featured in the program (e.g., Dix et al., 2004; Ragster, 2007), and viewers of the show (e.g., Native Son, 2007), it appears in general, that these audiences have been less than pleased with HBCU portrayals on *College Hill* and the portrayals of African Americans as (re)presentations of HBCUs (e.g., Associated Press, 2004; Taylor, 2009) because the reputations of these institutions are at stake. As Parrott-Sheffer (2008) states:

While a spot on the small screen has created a larger recruiting pool of students and has legitimized their existence through media exposure, this publicity has come with a price. HBCUs have lost some power over how they are portrayed and, therefore, how the schools are conceived of by the majority of the population. (p. 217)

The general discussion surrounding the media's portrayals of HBCUs and their students as (re)presentation of HBCUs implies a great deal of tension regarding these portrayals as these institutions continue to appear in the mainstream media. Therefore, this study examines the portrayals of HBCUs, as well as the (re)presentations of African

Americans on the program in light of African-American stereotypes. The portrayals of African Americans are relevant to this analysis for three main reasons. First, as discussed above, the HBCU is a landmark in African-American history; one cannot discuss HBCUs without also discussing African Americans. Second, *College Hill* airs on Black Entertainment Television (BET), a network that targets African-American viewers with African-American-centered programming (Pulley, 2004); BET will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 4. Third, the show features primarily African-American cast members; this analysis also includes an analysis of the cast members' portrayals as (re)presentations of HBCUs. For these reasons, it seems impossible to separate an analysis of HBCUs from an analysis of African Americans. Therefore, the present study is a content analysis of the reality television program *College Hill*; as stated above, this study examines the portrayals of African Americans as informed by the literature regarding African-American stereotypes. In addition, it examines the portrayals of HBCUs as informed by the literature regarding HBCU mission statements. This study will add to the body of the literature that explores television texts, especially those which focus on the portrayals of African Americans. An analysis of *College Hill* would also be able to reveal how the show portrays HBCUs, and if these portrayals support or oppose the goals of HBCUs and its African-American students, as presented in their mission statements.

Chapters 2 and 3 explicate the theories for the study, race theory and schema theory respectively. Chapter 4 provides the literature review for the research project. Next, Chapter 5 provides the method of the study, and the results will be discussed in Chapter 6. The study's findings are discussed in Chapter 7; this chapter also reflects on

the study, putting forth its theoretical implications, weaknesses, strengths, and implications for future study.



## CHAPTER 2: RACE THEORY

As Chapter 1 stated, this study is concerned with understanding how HBCUs and African Americans are portrayed on the reality television show *College Hill*, particularly how African-American cast members are portrayed as (re)presentations of HBCUs. Before discussing the theoretical basis of stereotypes in Chapter 3, this chapter provides a brief discussion of one of the concepts that provides theoretical foundation to this study, specifically race. This is appropriate because as mentioned above, one of the major concerns of this study is the portrayal of African Americans in a reality television program. As discussed below, though race is a social construction, people placed in social categories with regard to their race face very concrete, socio-political outcomes as a result of these categorizations. Furthermore, because racism is systemic, the media play an integral part in the (re)production and understanding of groups of people as they are placed in particular racial categories. Before stereotypes and the media's (re)production of these stereotypes are discussed, this chapter discusses specifically what is meant by *race*, and then discusses racism and the forms of contemporary racism, illustrating how racist thought has not been eradicated, but rather has evolved into new forms.

### Conceptualizing Race

To understand what is meant by race is an attempt to define a concept that is ultimately changing and ephemeral. Sociology scholars, devoted to the study of race in the U.S. for nearly a century, have found defining and understanding race troubling (e.g., Hunt, 2005b; Winant, 2004). According to Winant, the concept uses differences in the

human body (e.g., skin pigmentation, facial features) to organize and justify socio-political struggles for power. As Bonilla-Silva (1997) explains:

In [the view of Omi and Winant, 1994], race should be regarded as an organizing principle of social relationships that shapes the identity of individual actors at the micro level and shapes all sphere of social life at the macro level. (p. 466)

In addition, race is a European creation and has global roots, including European colonization and the Atlantic slave trade. Feagin (2010) states that racist thinking has its origins in the 1600s. Even the very first African slaves were brought to the English colonies were viewed as inferior to their Caucasian masters. Colonists could be legally punished for “lying with a negro” (Feagin, 2010, p. 46), and interracial marriages were banned by both the Church and the legal system because Negroes were seen as savage, barbaric, and ignorant. Feagin (2010) illustrates that the earliest colonial records provide evidence of the colonists’ viewpoints of their slaves: “[The] early legal and political examples reveal that all European colonists, no matter how lowly their social positions, were considered superior to African Americans and were regularly treated as such by laws and political action” (p. 47).

Further, racial categories such as White, Black, Asian, and Indian, etc., are based on human phenotypes. During the colonial period, differences in skin color, hair texture, nose and lip shape and size, and differences between these facial features and the study of craniology were attached to the concepts of “white” and “black” to categorize people; Europeans always viewed Caucasians as the better group during these comparisons, and differences in physiques, cultures, and morals were always seen as natural (Feagin,

2010). For example, the discovery of a skull belonging to a (Caucasian) Canary Islander which was similar to the shape and size of the Hottentot Venus', thus implying similarity between the Black and White races, greatly dismayed European scientists, whose racist viewpoints colored their objective science (Fausto-Sterling, 1995).

In spite of the naturalization of these racial (and racist) comparisons, Winant (2004) points out, "the sociohistorical categories employed to differentiate among these [phenotypical] groups reveal themselves, upon serious examination, to be imprecise if not completely arbitrary" (Winant, p. 155). In spite of the inexact nature of racial categorization, it is on these physical characteristics that we often base our expectations of individual behavior (Fiske & Taylor, 1991).<sup>5</sup> In addition, scholars have pointed out that race is always shifting, reflective of its nature as a social construction. In spite of its ephemeral nature, the concept has quite tangible socio-political consequences, such as legal outcomes (e.g., the "one-drop rule," under which all people of African descent, regardless of physical appearance, were categorized as Black). Furthermore, Blackness is constructed in extreme opposition to Whiteness, using Hispanics (Browns), Asians (Yellows), and Native Americans (Reds) to keep the poles between Whiteness and Blackness separate and distinct (Winant, 2004).<sup>6</sup>

Finally Feagin (2010) states that the racial hierarchy first put into place during the 1600s is still in place today, as it was in fact a central building block of U. S. society. He argues that racism is systemic, meaning that the earliest racist thought has become institutionalized and is a part of all of society's structures, and operates through the *white racial frame*. This term is defined as "an overarching worldview, one that encompasses

important racial ideas, terms, images, emotions, and interpretations” (Feagin, 2010, p. 3). This worldview is dominant, and has been spread by legal, educational, and religious institutions, as well as the mass media.

### Forms of Contemporary Racism

Now that the chapter has discussed the concept and origins of race and racial categories, one should note the different forms of contemporary racism. Understanding how these different forms operate is important because racism serves to keep different types of people apart based on physical, racial differences (e.g., segregation), as well as the dominant group (Caucasians) in socio-economic and political power. As sociologists have (Feagin, 2010; Winant, 2004) explained, racist beliefs assisted in rationalizing global slavery, segregation, and disenfranchisement, for example.

Contemporary racism also illustrates how older, more explicitly racist beliefs have simply transformed into less obvious forms—but possibly become more socio-politically dangerous. Contemporary racism is especially relevant to the current study because these beliefs have been (re)produced by the media, as will be discussed later in this chapter. More specifically, stereotypes of African Americans are rooted in traditional racist thought, which posited that people of color were intellectually, physically, and culturally inferior to Caucasians. In addition, though stereotypes of African Americans are no longer likely to be presented in traditional ways, it is likely that these stereotypes foster aversive racist attitudes, which reject belief in Caucasian superiority to minorities, yet tend to favor in-group members (e.g., the media’s (re)production of African-American men as *The Criminal*). Also, it is likely that these stereotypes have become so

prevalent that they have become normalized for audiences, as suggested by everyday racism. Ultimately, contemporary forms of racism serve to maintain the socio-political order, in a manner not unlike their traditionally racist predecessors. However, before explanations of the various types of contemporary racism are provided, it is essential to start with a basic understanding of racism.

One of the earliest definitions of racism defined the term as “the dogma that one ethnic group is condemned by nature to congenital inferiority and another group is destined to congenital superiority” (Benedict, 1945, p. 87). A more recent definition defines it simply as “a doctrine of racial supremacy, that one race is superior” (Schaefer, 1990, p. 16). In critiquing past understandings and definitions of racism because they tend to reduce racial issues to class struggles (e.g., Marxist interpretations) or view racist practices as irrational (e.g., mainstream social scientists), Bonilla-Silva (1997) puts forth the idea of racialization with regard to racism, explaining that the latter is structural:

[R]aces historically are constituted according to the process of racialization; they become the effect of relations of opposition between racialized groups at all levels of a social formation...on the basis of the structuration there develops a racial ideology (what analysts have coded as racism). (p. 474)

As Bonilla-Silva explains, this structural definition of racism allows for racial phenomena to be understood as deriving directly from the racial hierarchy and provides it with ideological grounding. Rothenberg (2004) first defines prejudice (preconceived notions based on limited information possessed by all people) before providing another definition of racism: “Racism, like other forms of oppression, is not only a personal ideology based on racial prejudice, but a system involving cultural messages and institutional policies

and practices as well as the beliefs and actions of individuals” (p. 127). Both Bonilla-Silva (1997) and Rothenberg’s (2004) definitions are useful to the current study for two reasons. First, Bonilla-Silva states that racism is structural, and explains that it occurs at all levels of society. In addition, Rothenberg puts forth that racism is not only manifested in people’s attitudes but their behaviors as well; further, racism occurs at the micro level (individuals) and at the macro level (institutions). Therefore, these definitions provide a thorough understanding of the far reach of racist practices. Now that racism has been defined, the various types of contemporary racism will be thoroughly explained and linked to the study of reality TV.

The first type of contemporary racism is *symbolic* or *modern* racism, which focuses on the socio-political attitudes of Caucasians. Symbolic racism is a combination of traditional American values (such as hard work and individualism) and anti-African-American affect (Sears, 1988). These hostile attitudes toward African Americans cause a resentment regarding pro-African-American policies. Researchers have identified the three dimensions of symbolic racism as resistance to the political demands of African Americans, irritation with policies viewed as special treatment for African Americans, and the insistence that African Americans now have the ability to achieve the American Dream if they work hard enough (Sears & Allen, 1984). Symbolic racism has been researched for almost 30 years, and scholars have provided evidence that it has concrete consequences, such as influencing political party support and voting behaviors (e.g., Sears, Citrin, & Kosterman, 1985).

To investigate the theoretical concepts of modern racism, Entman (1990; 1992) chose to analyze broadcast news of Chicago because such local news tends to reflect the beliefs/values of the particular community it serves. His content analysis reveals three main findings that line up with the points of modern racism. First, the local news tends to more often portray African Americans as criminal menaces than Caucasians are presented in this manner. The constant (re)presentation of these images can lead Caucasians to fear African Americans and to feel hostile towards them. Second, Entman's research displays that the news showed African-American leaders (not "local" but ones but those known nationwide, such as Al Sharpton) as loud and demanding. Third, though there has been progress in hiring African Americans and other minorities by news organizations (e.g., Greenberg & Brand, 1998), Entman argues that these calm, benign, and well-put-together African Americans seem to take the side of Caucasians as they read the news. In addition, they are such a contrast to other African Americans seen on the news, that some viewers might think that if the successful African-American anchors have achieved status, and that they have enjoyed the same opportunities that other African Americans have had, that those who fail are without any excuses. Entman concludes that though news organizations are not malicious in these portrayals, and consider themselves covering minority interests, they are actually doing irreparable harm to the relationships between different racial groups.

The theoretical framework of modern racism has most often been utilized for the study of news (e.g., Entman, 1990, 2006; Ford, 1997), and has also been used in studies of professional sports commentary (e.g., Rada, 1996). However, it has been used to

explore other television offerings, such as scripted, fictionalized programs (Busselle & Crandall, 2002). This study compared the relationships among viewing news, dramas, and situation comedies. It found that situation comedy viewing had a direct relationship to higher estimations of African-American educational achievement. By contrast, drama viewing led viewers to perceive that there was a greater disparity between Caucasians and African Americans' educational achievement. Lastly, heavier news viewers were significantly more likely than lighter viewers to believe that lack of job opportunities was not a reason for lack of success of African Americans. Busselle and Crandall's (2002) study suggests that the tenets of modern racism could be applied to the study of reality TV by noting if African-Americans cast members display any characteristics that could lead viewers to feel that these cast members are criminal deviants, and also, if these images are joined by portrayals of cast members who seem industrious, intent on achieving the American Dream. This prospect will be discussed more fully in Chapter 7.

The second and quite similar form of modern racism, *enlightened* racism, was conceptualized based on a study of *The Cosby Show* (Jhally & Lewis, 1992). In this context, Caucasian respondents presented a contradiction in how they viewed African Americans. They expressed the Huxtables were atypical of African Americans in their success, simultaneously overlooking the impact of class. These viewers felt that in general, African Americans did not pursue education, and were failures as a result of their cultural inferiority. From this viewpoint, race is no longer indicated by skin pigmentation, but as a cultural category that prevented African Americans from achieving economic success. Caucasian audiences enjoyed *The Cosby Show* because race—particularly



Blackness—was not necessarily salient in the family-centered episodes. Therefore, Blackness could be ignored, or at least briefly forgotten. On the other hand, shows such as *Good Times*, with its explicitly-performed and class-based Blackness, made these participants uneasy. Just because they could accept the *Huxtables*, did not make Caucasian viewers any more tolerant of racial differences. As Jhally and Lewis argue, if *The Cosby Show* had featured a working class African-American family, the program would have reminded Caucasian viewers of the unpleasant class inequities still present in America, and these viewers would have likely rejected the *Huxtables* as well.

Jhally and Lewis' (1992) study utilized qualitative interviews to find evidence of enlightened racism among Caucasian *The Cosby Show* viewers. The fact that evidence of enlightened racism of audience members was discovered in qualitative interviews suggests that a similar interview method would be appropriate to discover if viewers of reality TV viewers might also harbor enlightened racist beliefs. Because the current study does not utilize this method, such a possibility in this vein is speculation. However, changing the perspective from audiences to the text itself, Jhally and Lewis' (1992) study focused on a fictional television program. The possibility that enlightened racist beliefs in particular could be (re)produced within the content of a reality TV show has not been explored. Therefore, this prospect is of interest to the current study, and will be discussed more fully in Chapter 7.

The third type of racism, *aversive*, is characterized by a rejection of openly racist attitudes, which instead supports a belief in racial equality. However, hostile affect is displayed in more implicit ways. For instance, Dovidio and Gaertner (2000) found that a

longitudinal comparison between the attitudes of two groups of students showed a decline in racist attitudes. This is logical, because overtly racist attitudes are currently regarded with distaste, and in some cases, dealt with using legal action. However, in a simulated experiment of hiring practices, it was found that when a job candidate's qualifications were viewed as ambiguous, the participants were more likely to recommend the candidate for the job if they thought he was Caucasian than if they thought he was African-American. Hewstone (1990) suggests that at the roots of aversive racism is a willingness to forgive the short-comings of a fellow in-group member, but not those of an out-group member. People are not often aware of their aversive racist attitudes, making this form of racism more difficult to fight.

As explained above, people have displayed behaviors in simulated employment selections and in experimental contexts. For example, participants displayed decision-making indicative of aversive racism when exposed to television scripts featuring a racially-ambiguous character (Mastro, Behm-Morawitz, & Kopacz, 2008). It is possible that examples of aversive racism also occur on reality TV, whether cast members are portrayed as the victims or the perpetrators of it. Such an analysis would require explorations of the content of the show. This prospect will be discussed more fully in Chapter 7.

The fourth type of contemporary racism, *everyday* racism, was derived from the accounts of African-American women and women of African-descent regarding their experiences with racism in their daily lives (Essed, 1991). This framework utilizes elements from sociology, psychology, women's studies, race relations theory, and

discourse analysis. Further, the study does not focus on racist individuals, but the power structure which reproduces and normalizes racism. Everyday racism involves both socialized attitudes and behaviors. Analyzing both the experiences of African-American women in California and Black Surinamese women in the Netherlands, it was found that racism is a continuous and recurring factor in the lives of these women. New experiences of racism (e.g., at school, at work) are compared against past and vicarious racist instances (e.g., segregation). This form of racism also involves majority group members being oblivious to racism experienced by minorities in every day of life. For an instance of everyday racism, Campbell (1995) offers the news' recurrent invocation of the myth of determination. This belief posits that if people work hard, then they will achieve the American Dream. He also argues that minimal amount of news coverage that people of color receive is a constant example of everyday racism. Campbell also echoes Entman (1990; 1992) by suggesting that African-American journalists who serve as anchors and reporters lend support to the existence of racial assimilation and acceptance, furthering enlightened racist beliefs.

As discussed above, everyday racism was detailed utilizing the similarity among racist encounters suffered by Black women of different backgrounds (Essed, 1991). This framework has also been utilized to explore African-American college students' experiences with this form of racism (Swim, Hyers, Cohen, Fitzgerald, & Bylsma (2003). These studies imply the common and recurring nature of racism, regardless of context. Reality TV is a genre which *raison d'être* is to present individuals in contexts that are seemingly real (Nichols, 1991) and not fictionalized. Because of the prevalence of

everyday racism, it is quite likely that examples of this phenomenon could be captured by a reality TV show, perhaps without the production working to achieve this outcome. This prospect will be explored more fully in Chapter 7.

The fifth and final type of contemporary racism, *color-blind* racism, is put forth by Bonilla-Silva (2010). It was derived from qualitative interview studies with two data sources, the 1997 Survey of Social Attitudes of College Students (which included respondents from a large midwestern university, a large southern university, and a medium-sized west coast university) and the 1998 Detroit Area Study (DAS). The participants in the first study were Caucasian; the DAS included both Caucasians and African Americans. Color-blind racism is characterized by four central frames which echo the types of racism discussed above: abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism, and minimization of racism.

As Bonilla-Silva (2010) explains, abstract realism is the most important of the frames. At the root of abstract realism is liberalism, which includes ideals such as individualism, egalitarianism, and meliorism, and belief in free trade. However, these ideals were only meant for Europeans. This frame utilizes ideals associated with political liberalism and economic liberalism in an abstract manner to explain racial situations. For example, Caucasians who reject affirmative action programs because they are forms of preferential treatment are also likely to ignore the fact that people of color are under-represented in higher-paying jobs. Explaining away racial situations, such as racial segregation, by suggesting that it is natural and normal for people of the same race to

choose to socialize with each other and to exclude those outside of their race, is an example of color-blind racism's second frame, naturalization.

Traditional racist beliefs held that people of color were biologically inferior to Caucasians; by contrast, cultural racism, the third frame of color-blind racism, depends on culturally based arguments to explain minority positions in society (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). For example, those who believe that people of color who receive welfare are not interested in hard work, but instead are waiting for a "handout," harbor culturally racist beliefs. This frame appears similar to enlightened racism, which bases minority lack in cultural deficiencies (Jhally & Lewis, 1992). The fourth frame, minimization of racism, is characterized by a belief that minorities no longer have to deal with discrimination in their lives, or that minorities are being overly-sensitive to discrimination (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). This frame involves Caucasians who are seemingly unsympathetic to the experiences of racial discrimination people of color face; therefore, it appears similar to everyday racism (Essed, 1991). Because these four frames represent the different aspects of color-blind racism, participants were likely to use them in combination with each other. Color-blind racism also has a style, as it can be expressed in participants' avoidance of explicitly racist terms/language, as well as their near inability to express themselves when discussing racial topics they felt were taboo (Bonilla-Silva, 2002). In addition, color-blind racism was expressed in stories shared by participants and color-blind racist beliefs were utilized to rationalize racial segregation and isolation. Ultimately, the four frames of color-blind racism, abstract liberalism, naturalization,

cultural racism, and minimization of racism, all work together to hide the fact that society is not color-blind in the least.

Similarly to everyday racism, the theoretical framework of color-blind racism was derived from qualitative interviews. In addition, like both everyday racism and aversive racism, it is quite possible that an exploration of reality TV content could reveal examples of cast members encountering or displaying this form of racism. This possibility will be discussed more in depth in Chapter 7.

In summary, these forms of contemporary racism—symbolic, enlightened, aversive, everyday, and color-blind—are examples of how racism has not been eliminated, but instead transformed to fit the current cultural context, which disavows openly racist attitudes.

To summarize this chapter, which focused on the theoretical conceptualization of race and contemporary racism, *race* is socially constructed. Race has been used to categorize different groups of people and has socio-political consequences, in spite of its ephemeral nature. In addition, racism is structural; it appears in both individuals' attitudes and beliefs, as well within institutions at the macro-level, such as the legal system. Lastly, forms of contemporary racism were discussed in this chapter because this study is concerned with the evolving nature of stereotypes. Stereotypes, like racist beliefs, have not been completely dismantled or discarded, but have evolved into new forms. This idea will be discussed more fully in Chapter 4, as well as in Appendices A and B. Now that this chapter has briefly explored race and racism, Chapter 3 will discuss the additional theoretical framework of this study, schema theory.

### CHAPTER 3: SCHEMA THEORY

The present study is concerned with understanding how HBCUs and African Americans, including African-American cast members as (re)presentations of HBCUs, are portrayed on the reality television show *College Hill*. Before moving forward, therefore, it is imperative that the literature concerning schema theory and stereotypes is discussed. This is because the stereotypes of African Americans have their roots in cognitive processes. In addition, the media serve to (re)produce these images (Hunt, 2005b). Therefore, the chapter begins with a review of stereotypes, prototypes, and exemplars in the cognitive processing literature. Next, it reviews both some of the earliest and more recent studies to explore racist attitudes and stereotypes. Third, it discusses the media's influence on schematic development through priming.

#### Stereotypes: Theoretical Background and Research

As Parrott-Sheffer (2008) argues, HBCUs often do not have control over their media portrayals; these portrayals, in addition to a lack of knowledge of HBCUs, could result in audiences forming stereotypes about them and their students. A similar argument can be made for African-American media portrayals. Therefore, in order to understand the ideas that people might hold regarding HBCUs and African Americans, one must first be aware of how they are formed. A social cognitive approach to stereotypes posits that their roots lie in schemata. A *schema* is a “cognitive structure that represents knowledge about a concept or type of stimulus, including its attributes and the relations among those attributes” (Fiske & Taylor, 1991, p. 98). Further, categorizing information is a top-down

process, meaning that memory is greatly influenced by one's prior knowledge.

Categorical processes stand in contrast to data-driven processes, which focus on the unique qualities of an object, a situation, or an individual. Objects/situations/individuals are evaluated according to the attributes they share with members of a particular category. As one learns and collects this categorical information, he/she begins to develop schemata or scripts regarding this information, which he/she stores in clusters (nodes). Any information attained serves to reinforce the links between these clusters. Schemata contain general, abstract knowledge about the world, and schemata allow individuals to "fill in" information that they have not been given about a particular situation or concept. For example, schemata exist for certain behaviors in a particular situation (event schemata or scripts), for ourselves (self-schemata), and for other people (role schemata).

Of particular interest to the current study are role schemata. This type of schema is often based on characteristics such as gender, age, and race that carry with them behavioral expectations. Role schemata help researchers to understand and explain the existence of stereotypes. A *stereotype*<sup>7</sup> is "a particular kind of role schema that organizes people's expectations about other people who fall into certain social categories" (Fiske & Taylor, 1991, p. 119). Stereotypes are cognitive shortcuts which tell one what he/she can expect from others based on how they have been categorized. As Fiske and Taylor explain, though people learn schematic information from their own experiences with others, they can also acquire schematic information from being told about other groups of people. For example, the media can influence schematic development by priming certain



links between schemata. These clusters of information can become connected so that one particular aspect of a schema activates an association between others.

Other concepts important to the study of social cognition are prototypes and exemplars. A *prototype* consists of average features of a particular concept/object that are used to categorize new objects (Ross & Matkin, 1999); on the other hand, an *exemplar* is a specific example with which one has actually had experience (Fiske & Taylor, 1991).

As Fiske & Taylor (1991) state:

The perception that some instances are more typical than others led to the idea that instances range from being quite typical to atypical, which a most typical or prototypical instance best representing the category. The *prototype* is the “central tendency” or average of the category members.  
(p. 94)

Because of the categorical-processes involved in cognition, social categories exist without concrete boundaries that are anchored to a particular prototype. Prototypes can be so hard-wired that they can create false memories, as people tend to depend stubbornly on their prototypes, even if they are provided information to the contrary (Fiske & Taylor, 1991).

In spite of the utility of the prototype, it has been suggested that categories of objects, situations, and individuals are actually represented by an ideal, rather than a general set of abstractions. This perspective suggests that when people have been provided previously, abstract information regarding an object, situation, or individual then they use prototypes. However, when they come into direct contact with said object, situation, or individual, then they depend on exemplars to guide their cognitions. More

specifically, people use prototypes to represent out-groups (Judd & Park, 1988), and exemplars for their in-group (Linville, Fischer, & Salovey, 1989).

To provide examples of prototypes and exemplars, one might encounter an African-American woman who is aggressive and hot-tempered and recognize the abstract prototype of the angry African-American woman. By contrast, because of her possible lack of resemblance to other African-American women one might encounter, Condoleezza Rice, the 66<sup>th</sup> United States Secretary of State, illustrates an instance of an exemplar. There is evidence to suggest that people categorize—utilizing prototypes *and* exemplars—simultaneously, implying that people need both to organize the information they constantly encounter. Depending on the task at hand, people might refer to prototypes and/or exemplars (Medin, Altom, & Murphy, 1984). Understanding these concepts is important to the current study because in many cases, it is possible that because people have little or no experience with African-Americans or HBCUs, that they have not developed prototypes or exemplars regarding either. This possibility might influence how some audiences might respond to media portrayals featuring HBCUs. This speaks to the importance of the mediated portrayals of HBCUs and African Americans.

Now that the chapter has explained the development of stereotypes and defined prototypes and exemplars, the following section presents research that explores how role schemata have been empirically studied when they appear as racial stereotypes.

### Empirical Studies of Racial Stereotyping

This section of the chapter is presented here to review empirical research which reveals people associating racial groups with particular stereotypical behaviors. Some of

the earliest work to examine stereotypes and their applications to various races was performed by Katz and Braly (1933; 1935). Their 1933 study utilized survey methods to investigate the public and private nature of attitudes. First, the researchers told 25 Princeton University students to list as many adjectives as possible that could be used to describe ten racial groups; 100 other students were asked to list the ten adjectives they felt described each racial group. It was found that “Negroes” (Katz & Braly, 1933, p. 282) were most often considered superstitious, lazy, happy-go-lucky, ignorant, musical, and ostentatious. However, “Americans” (p. 285; read: Caucasians) were viewed as industrious, intelligent, materialistic, and ambitious. These findings are relevant to the current study for two reasons. First, they provide empirical evidence of the stereotypical beliefs that surround African Americans. Second, they also provide examples of traits that can be operationalized and measured in *College Hill*, as discussed in the Method chapter and Appendices A and B.

More research on racial stereotypes was continued in the vein of Katz and Braly’s (1933; 1935) studies for many decades, though other scholars developed new means of studying racial stereotypes after Katz and Braly’s methods were critiqued (Brigham, 1971) for not exploring *how* stereotypes are formed, or how many people actually subscribe to them. However, a more recent study (Weitz & Gordon, 1993) did use Katz and Braly’s adjective lists with some revisions. Specifically, Weitz and Gordon state that culturally, four images of African-American women recur: The Mammy, The Jezebel (to whom they refer as “sexually loose,” p. 20), The Matriarch, and The Welfare Mother. Though these portrayals have historic and cultural roots, researchers had yet to discover if

the public actually thought these images to be true in reality. It was found that “American” (read: Caucasian) women in general were most often considered intelligent, materialistic, sensitive, and attractive (p. 26). Whereas 45% of the respondents viewed American women as intelligent, only 22% of respondents perceived African-American women in this manner. African-American women were also seen as obstinate, hot-tempered, “bitchy,” and as having “too many children” (p. 26).

In addition, Weitz and Gordon’s (1993) factor analysis of the traits revealed three factors underlying the descriptors of African-American women: as threatening, as good/wives/ and daughters (which seemed to be a derivative of The Mammy stereotype: instead of depicting African-American women as caring for others’ families, this factor depicts them as nurturing their *own* families), and as welfare mothers. In addition, traits that were considered positive for other racial groups (e.g., Caucasians) were seen as *less* positive for African-American women; negative traits followed the same pattern, with negative traits being seen as *less* negative for African-American women. To explain this pattern, it appears that those who expect African-American women to be dependent and have many children are not surprised when they discover examples of African-American women which meet their expectations (Weitz & Gordon, 1993). On the other hand, instances of independent, assertive, and childless African-American women might have shocked and dismayed some participants they attempted to resolve the dissonance between what they had *expected* of African-American women and the African-American women they encountered during the study. The researchers concluded that the same trait has different evaluations depending on the racial group the trait is being used to describe,

such as American women in general versus African-American women. They also concluded that African-American women tend to be judged more negatively by the public in general. Ultimately, images that have been (re)produced culturally are indeed substantiated by society.

### Media Images, Media Primes

This chapter has reviewed studies that have provided evidence of people's belief in racial stereotypes regarding African Americans. Now, it explores how the media play a role in (re)producing these beliefs. To better understand the mechanism by which the media can influence the development of individuals' schemata, consider priming theory. This framework posits the media can make certain issues (and value judgments surrounding these issues) such as race of a criminal suspect, particularly salient for a short time (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). This salience can then be transferred to other contexts, such as attitudes toward the federally-funded Women, Infants and Children program, affirmative action, prison sentences, and other socio-political issues. For example, audiences who viewed African Americans in a stereotypical comedy skit (which portrayed them as impoverished, uneducated, and violent) were more likely than those who watched a neutrally-valenced skit to harshly evaluate African Americans in a subsequent context, such as exposure to vignettes in which an alleged offender was thought to be African-American (Ford, 1997). Though such salience regarding an African-American target can be transferred across contexts, exposure to negative stereotypical portrayals of African Americans does not influence people's judgments of Caucasians.

In addition, researchers have also executed studies to examine how stereotypical portrayals can prime prejudiced attitudes (e.g., Dixon, 2008; Dixon & Azocar, 2007). Dixon (2006) suggests that because African Americans have so frequently been negatively constructed as perpetrators of violence, this prime has become chronically accessible to viewers. It appears that watching the news helps these viewers to associate African Americans with crime, as suggested by Entman (1990; 1992) and Campbell (1995). These studies suggest that current portrayals of African Americans as violent criminals encourage modern racist attitudes.

In addition, Dixon and Azocar (2007) found that people who endorsed stereotypes of African Americans and were exposed to a majority of African-American or non-identified subjects in a newscast tended to support the death penalty more than those who did not believe in these stereotypes. This study provides evidence that audience members do indeed fill in knowledge gaps with primed information, including negative stereotypes, and that these stereotypes can influence people's evaluations of social issues. Dixon and Maddox (2005) found exposure to a dark-skinned, African-American perpetrator elicited more emotional upset than those who were exposed to a Caucasian perpetrator in a newscast. This suggests that skin tone plays a role in one's social evaluations and memory of a news story. Simply, viewers who are exposed to a darker-skinned perpetrator are more likely to associate violence and aggression with the stereotypical image of the African-American criminal. This aversion to dark skin echoes traditional racist beliefs (e.g., Pilgrim, 2000b), which have not been eradicated, but have

evolved, creating ambiguous attitudes towards African Americans (Entman & Rojecki, 2001). In addition, this effect was found among heavier news viewers.

Two related studies found some evidence of the long-term effects of news that over-represents African-American lawbreakers: the African-American criminal stereotype has become chronically activated, and the prime is so strong that even *unidentified* suspects are likely to be thought of as African-American (Dixon, 2008; Dixon & Azocar, 2007). This chronic activation of African Americans as criminals can also affect attribution of failure (Power, Murphy, & Coover, 1996). For example, participants who were exposed to a stereotypical portrayal of a (fictional) African-American male were more likely to blame Magic Johnson for his HIV status and Rodney King for being beaten; by contrast, participants who were exposed to a counter-stereotypical portrayal of a (fictional) African-American male were more likely to see Johnson and King as blameless victims in their particular situations.

To summarize the literature discussed in this chapter, the existence of stereotypes can be explained by schema theory. This framework suggests people learn information about the world around them in clusters, storing this information in a manner that allows many attributes about any concept to become linked. In addition, people categorize different concepts and assign behaviors to them, depending on how they are grouped. Role schemata provide the theoretical basis for stereotypes (Fiske & Taylor, 1991), which help people anticipate certain behaviors from particular groups of behaviors. Empirical research has provided evidence that people do indeed associate different racial groups with a range of diverse behaviors (e.g., Katz & Braly, 1933, 1935). In fact, certain images

of African-American women (e.g., The Mammy) have also been discovered through empirical research (e.g., Weitz & Gordon, 1995). In addition, the priming literature provides evidence regarding how schemata become linked through media exposure. For example, the image of the African-American criminal has become chronically accessible (e.g., Dixon, 2006, 2008; Dixon & Azocar, 2007; Dixon & Maddox, 2005; Ford, 1997). In this section, priming was discussed with regard to television news, illustrating that stereotypes are often activated by the media. The previous two chapters have discussed the theoretical frameworks of the study; the next chapter provides the literature review.



## CHAPTER 4: LITERATURE REVIEW

The first three chapters of this study have established the importance of examining the portrayals of HBCUs and African Americans in the media, as well as the portrayals of cast members as (re)presentations of HBCUs; they have also discussed the theoretical concepts of *race* and *schema*, which together assist in explaining the existence of stereotypes. This chapter first presents a historical perspective as described by Gray (2000). Second, the chapter presents a summary of the findings provided by content analyses of televised, fictional programs further illuminated by Clark's (1969) discussion of the four phases of ethnic minority portrayals on TV. This work helps to contextualize the portrayals of African Americans, and allows one to note the emerging patterns within these texts, noting how the content analytical research and the phases presented by Clark (1969) and Gray (2000) complement one other. Third, the chapter focuses on the cultural stereotypes of African Americans, specifically discussing their functions and gendered natures. These stereotypes are then deconstructed, moving from a conceptual basis to more tangible and observable instances; Appendices A and B provide depth here.

After laying this groundwork, the chapter focuses on two television programs developed by Bill Cosby, *The Cosby Show* and *A Different World*, which rejected previous portrayals of African Americans and received both praise and criticism as a result. These two shows were also some of the first to feature HBCUs. The literature review then narrows its focus, centering on the reality TV genre and summarizing the literature regarding African Americans in reality TV. Fifth, the chapter discusses the

tension surrounding BET's programming before highlighting BET's *College Hill*, a program which this study explores for its portrayal of African Americans and HBCUs. The chapter closes with the research questions and hypotheses developed from the literature discussed in this chapter.

### A Historical Perspective of African Americans on Television

Before moving forward, recall from the previous chapter that people can clearly hold stereotypes about any group of people based on such characteristics as gender, age, disability, and age, (Fiske & Taylor, 1991) in addition to race; our media often (re)produce these stereotypes. Because one goal of this study is an analysis of the portrayals of African Americans in reality television, this section of the literature review first presents a generalized, historical overview of African-American portrayals on TV. It is important to note this perspective does not emphasize exact time periods (because some programming aired as late as the 1980s still airs currently, in the forms of syndicated reruns, such as *The Golden Girls*).

To begin, televised African-American portrayals can be historically organized using three lenses: assimilationist, pluralistic, and multiculturalist (Gray, 2000). Gray's (2000) discussion is relevant to the current study because HBCUs tend to be diverse institutions, as they often bring together faculty, students and staff from different cultural backgrounds—even if the people gathered at HBCUs are likely African-American (Drezer, 2006). In addition, by referring to the contrast between “college life” and “Black college life,” (Rogers, 2004, para. 3), BET seems to suggest that the college experience

can be seen from various perspectives, and that *College Hill* explores this cultural diversity.

First, in the assimilationist lens, or the discourse of invisibility, programs are colorblind; racial categories and inter-racial problems are ignored, or at least inconsequential for the majority of episodes. If characters do deal with racism, for instance, the situation is portrayed with either a bitter African-American person who has been a victim of racism (and gets over it by the end of the episode) or a Caucasian character who is ignorant of African Americans (and becomes informed by the end of the episode). Therefore, racism is not seen both as a societal issue and as personal prejudice as suggested by Feagin (2010) and Rothenberg (2004), but only on the level of the individual. If people can just change their minds about African Americans, problems can be resolved. According to Gray, programs such as *I Spy*, *Mission: Impossible*, and *Designing Women* fall under this perspective. In these shows, African Americans do not perform their race in a stereotypical manner, but act in ways similar to Caucasian, middle-class characters. Shows indicative of this lens are not likely to feature stereotypical portrayals of African Americans because such portrayals could make race an issue—the exact opposite of the underlying characteristic of these programs, which pretended as if race did not exist.

The second lens Gray (2000) discusses is that of pluralist, or “separate but equal” programs. These television shows posit African Americans are just like Caucasians, with just a few (often comedic) differences. Several content analyses support this perspective, as the majority of African-American characters in the 1990s were members of the middle

class (Mastro & Greenberg, 2000); in addition, African-American characters discussed issues also important to Caucasian characters, such as business and social concerns. In addition, these shows focus on elements of Black life often ignored by the assimilationist series, such as the importance of the Black church to the African-American community. Though many of these programs have primarily African-American casts, the problem is that like assimilationist programs, pluralist shows are also from the viewpoint of the Caucasian middle class. They also tend to essentialize Blackness, suggesting that all African Americans experience similar life situations. Programs of this perspective include *227*, *Webster*, and *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*. Gray argues recurrent themes here include that of knowledgeable and paternalistic Caucasians (or in the case of *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*, affluent African Americans) who adopt ignorant and/or impoverished African Americans. Such portrayals invoke the idea that impoverished African Americans are, as according to the title of Rudyard Kipling's (1899) poem, the "White man's burden," and perhaps, a concern of the African-American middle class as well.

The third and final lens Gray (2000) explicates is multiculturalist, or one of diversity. While the first two lenses privilege the Caucasian middle class, this lens reflects the double consciousness experienced by African Americans (DuBois, 1903); it explores what is meant to be both of African descent and an American. This lens also deals with issues of racism, sexism, and classism head on. Gray is reluctant to place *The Cosby Show* here. He states the series was unable to deal with issues faced by the majority of African Americans, such as everyday racist practices which rationalize the

underprivileged status of African Americans in America. By contrast, Gray is more comfortable placing shows that regularly challenge the Caucasian middle-class perspective in this category, including *Frank's Place*, *Roc*, and *In Living Color*. He writes, "Television programs operating within this discursive space position viewers, regardless of race, class, or gender locations, to participate in black experiences from multiple subject positions. In these shows viewers encounter complex, even contradictory, perspectives of black life in America" (p. 299). Gray celebrates the multiculturalist discourse over the other two, because it recognizes the fullness and possibilities of life. In this lens, racial stereotypes are acknowledged and challenged by the text, such as sketch comedy *Chappelle's Show* (Kan, 2004).

#### The Portrayals of African Americans on Television

Now that the chapter has provided a historical context for understanding the portrayals of African Americans in TV narratives, the chapter will continue by reviewing a historical summation of the content analytical work that has explored these portrayals. This work and Clark's (1969) study are invaluable to the current study because they allow one to note and contextualize the patterns of African-American portrayals over time. To borrow Gray's (2000) argument, understanding portrayals of African Americans in contemporary contexts such as reality TV, requires one to understand these representations in relation to past portrayals. Further, though scripted TV series certainly entertain their audiences, these shows also (re)produce ideologies about race (e.g., Hunt, 2005b). Therefore, before discussing reality TV, the current discussion will first provide general findings about African Americans in content analyses, illustrating how these

findings map onto the four stages of the portrayals of ethnic minorities on television. These four stages are non-recognition, ridicule, regulation, and respect (Clark, 1969).

Content analyses of television texts tend to primarily utilize cultivation theory (Gerbner et al., 2002) as their theoretical framework. This theory posits that television is society's main storyteller; in spite of the range of options as a result of cable, satellite, and other niche markets, television viewers receive repetitive messages about the world. In addition, those who watch more television than lighter viewers are more likely to believe the real or historical world (which exists outside of textual constructions; Nichols, 1991) is more similar to televised reality than lighter viewers. Cultivation theory is a three-pronged approach that includes institutional process analysis, message system analysis, and cultivation analysis. Message system analysis makes the theory especially appropriate for studies of media representations. The current study content analyzes the portrayals of African Americans and HBCUs on *College Hill*; therefore, cultivation theory also lends itself to this research project. The section that follows organizes the portrayals of African Americans with regard to frequency, characteristics, and status.

### *Frequency*

Meta- and content analytical studies of prime-time, fictional television programming usually report that African Americans are under-represented in television when compared to the general population (e.g., Greenberg & Brand, 1994; Greenberg, Mastro, & Brand, 2002; Mastro & Greenberg, 2000; Poindexter & Stroman, 1981); however, there has been progress in this regard. This minority group regularly outnumbers Asians/Asian Americans, Native Americans, and other people of color,

including Latinos (e.g., Mastro & Greenberg, 2000; Matabane & Merritt, 1996; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1977), though Latinos are currently 15% of the nation's population and the largest minority group (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). The initial underrepresentation of African-American characters in television is illustrative on the non-recognition stage of ethnic minority portrayals, during which these characters do not appear often (Clark, 1969).

As television transitioned from the 1960s to the 1970s, the population of minority characters steadily increased (Dominick & Greenberg, 1970). There is some evidence that suggests, however, that an increase in African-American characters was coupled with a decrease of other minority characters (Seggar, 1977). In spite of an increase in the African-American population on TV, African Americans were still underrepresented in TV shows when compared to real-world statistics during this time (Dominick & Greenberg, 1970). African Americans were more likely to be found on situation comedies followed by Saturday morning cartoons, during the late 1970s (Greenberg al., 1980). These findings suggest African-American portrayals had moved from non-recognition into the second stage of minority portrayals, ridicule. As Clark (1969) explains:

The function of ridicule is two-fold. The group that is being ridiculed feels that it is better, at least, than being ignored. Concurrently, by having a ridiculed group to laugh at, members of the dominant culture feel a boost to their self-esteem. (p. 19).

In addition to portraying their African-American characters in humorous situations, these shows often focused on the importance of family and changing neighborhood dynamics. In the 1980s, the number of African Americans on television continued to grow

considerably, repeating trends from earlier decades (Abelman, 1989; Atkin, 1992; Dates & Barlow, 1990).

In the mid-1990s, 16% of the sample of television characters was African American, and they remained the largest minority group (Mastro & Greenberg, 2000). Though this number reflected an increase, African Americans remained underrepresented during the early 1990s (Elasmar, Hasegawa, & Brain, 1999). An analysis of the broadcast networks programming during the 1996-1997 season found that the percentage of African Americans featured in television was actually slightly *larger* than the percentage of African Americans according to the US Census of 1997 (Glascock, 2001). African-American characters were mostly supporting characters, and continued to be seen primarily on situation comedies, as well as on crime shows (Mastro & Greenberg, 2000; Matabane & Merritt, 1996). The pattern of African Americans being more likely to appear on crime shows than other programs continued on into the new millennium (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005). Mastro and Behm-Morawitz's (2005) study of the five broadcast networks from October to November 2002 also found evidence of African-American progress in televised roles: African-American men were more likely to possess major roles than Caucasian men were, and African-American women were more likely to play major roles than Caucasian women were. When appearing, African-American women were seen in medical roles; African-American men were often portrayed as officers of the court. As Clark (1969) states, during the stage of regulation, African-American characters make more regular TV appearances, and also become members of



forces that maintain law and order; Mastro and Behm-Morawitz's (2005) study provides evidence of these portrayals.

In addition to the common pattern of fictional television programming under-representing African Americans, African-American men tend to outnumber African-American women (e.g., Mastro & Greenberg, 2000; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005), though some studies have found equal numbers of African-American men and African-American women in fictional programs (e.g., Greenberg et al., 1980). With specific regard to age of African-American television characters, another tendency noted in content analyses is that younger African-Americans, such as children and young adults are over-represented when compared to population statistics, though older African-American characters were under-represented (e.g., Greenberg et al., 1980; Signorielli, 2004). In sum, though usually under-represented when compared to the real world population, the number of African-American characters has increased over time (e.g., Hunt, 2005a). Though initially within the bounds of non-recognition (Clark, 1969), African-American characters appear more frequently now than they did during television's earliest offerings. Of course, it is not enough to note frequencies, but to understand how African-American characters behave as well.

### *Characteristics*

In general, content analyses have provided evidence for fictionalized television tending to portray African-Americans as stupid, comical, and slow, or devious and dangerous. Some of the earliest content analytical research of televised portrayals reports that African Americans were presented "favorably" (Head, 1954, p. 186): very few were

portrayed as morally deviant or criminal, and most were presented in a sympathetic light. During the 1960s, African Americans were portrayed as lazy, untrustworthy, and unintelligent, and appeared in programs primarily to entertain Caucasians (Atkin, 1992; Cummings, 1988). This suggests that TV shows of this time (re)produced images of The Sambo or The Coon (e.g., Pilgrim, 2000b) that had been popularized by film (Bogle, 2001). These portrayals also imply (re)presentations characteristic of the ridicule phase of minority portrayals.

In spite of African-American characters existing mainly to amuse Caucasian audiences, there was some progress during the 1970s, because the portrayals of African Americans as criminals or social deviants began to disappear (Gunter, 1998). However, these portrayals were quite polarized, with African Americans cast in roles that involved them in domestic activities, in the pursuit of education, or in illegal activities (Northcott, Seggar, & Hinton, 1975). Like The Coon, these images of The Criminal or The Brute were not new, but had been made more familiar by film (Bogle, 2001). As stated above, during the mid 1970s, African Americans were seen mostly in situation comedies (Simmons, Greenberg, Atkin, & Heeter, 1977). Also during this time period, African Americans were presented equally to their Caucasian counterparts with regard to interracial interactions between these characters (Lemon, 1977). These characters were dominant and submissive to each other in an equal number of instances. Recall that one hallmark of shows representative of an assimilationist perspective featured African-American characters who are similar to their Caucasian counterparts. Therefore, some

programs of this time period and even those initially aired in the 1980s could be considered assimilationist (e.g., NBC's *Night Court*; Gray, 2000).

The 1980s and 1990s, like the 1970s, portrayed African Americans in a polarized fashion, with steady progress being made toward the regulation phase of minority representations on television (Clark, 1970). For example, the trend of African-American characters being more likely to appear on situation comedies than dramas during the mid-1970s (Greenberg et al., 1980) continued into the 1980s (Merritt, & Matabane, 1996; Stroman et al., 1989-1990). African Americans were also portrayed in a positive manner on series such as *The Cosby Show*, but not on crime dramas, which still presented African Americans as mostly antagonistic towards law and order. The gradual increase of African-American police officers, lawyers, and other members of legal agencies signaled progression into the regulation phase of minority portrayals (Clark, 1969). Viewers continued to receive mixed messages about African-Americans: there were positive changes, such as African Americans being found to be less aggressive than earlier portrayals; however, they were still portrayed as lazy and were ridiculed for the amusement of viewers (Stroman et al., 1989-1990). In the mid-1990s, discussions held by African-American characters were more likely to focus on business, personal relationships, and social, leisurely issues, than on criminal activities (Mastro & Greenberg, 2000), showing growth in this area.

A more recent study of the televisual landscape found that the majority of African-American men and women were portrayed as more motivated than Hispanic characters, more intelligent than both Hispanic and Caucasian characters, but were also

portrayed as less articulate and more hot-tempered than their Caucasian contemporaries (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005). These volatile African-American women were likely portrayed as examples of The Sapphire stereotype, which is recognized for her caustic criticisms that are usually directed toward African-American men (e.g., Hill Collins, 2000; Pilgrim, n.d.).

During the mid-1990s, TV programming also provided striking presentations of the manner in which Caucasian and African-American characters related to one another. Entman and Rojecki (2000) explain that one way to improve race relations in America would be with *racial comity*, which they explain as a normative ideal; this “empathic understanding” (p. 12) would allow African Americans and Caucasians to see themselves as both similar and different, which would produce a desire for people to work together to achieve the self-interests of all. However, because people tend to interact with their own race, they must still use stereotypes to gain information about others. Therefore, the researchers analyzed patterns of interracial interactions and the qualities of African-American characters in a two-month sample of the highest-rated TV programs during the 1996 season. This analysis of 66 shows (e.g., *NYPD Blue*, *ER*, *Seinfeld*, *Mad about You*) revealed that organizational hierarchy, or the relationships between characters at work, explained the majority of inter-racial relationships. Further, with specific regard to stereotypes, Entman and Rojecki (2000) argue that the reversal of traditional stereotypes reflects the polarizing tendencies of racial prototypes, with the African-American characters being more industrious than Caucasian subordinates (e.g., *ER*). The researchers argue though successful African-American characters represent progress in

their portrayals, these prototypical, respectable African Americans are only seen as one-sided, undeveloped characters.

Perhaps it is also this portrayal of an African-American doctor that signals African Americans have progressed into stage four of ethnic portrayals on television, that of respect. This stage includes members of an ethnic minority being able to marry Caucasian characters and “be recognized in a natural fashion” (Clark, 1969, p. 21). In the case of *ER*, (Caucasian) viewers were actually quite pleased with the development of a romantic relationship between two characters, the African-American doctor and a Caucasian doctor; it was the African-American actor in this role who did not feel comfortable with the storyline (Gray, 2004).

In addition to the depiction of interracial romance, the growing range of possibilities for African-American portrayals, both stereotypical and otherwise, suggest programming representative of the multiculturalist perspective (Gray, 2000). For example, African-American women and men are now more likely to play major roles in TV (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005). For instance, UPN (and then the CW) aired *Everybody Hates Chris* and *Girlfriends*, both of which featured mainly African-American casts. African-American criminals can still be found however, often in the company of African-American detectives and other members of law enforcement, on shows such as NBC’s *Law and Order: SVU* and CBS’ *CSI: NY*, providing examples of TV shows that display regulation (Clark, 1969).

Lastly, a few studies have also analyzed dress and grooming of African Americans. Mastro & Greenberg’s (2000) analysis of television programming aired

during the 1990s included programs such as *Melrose Place*, *NYPD Blue*, and *New York Undercover*, though networks that targeted African-Americans in particular, such as UPN and the CW, were not included. It was found that African-American characters were more provocatively and less professionally dressed than both Caucasians and Latinos; they were also the least well-groomed (Mastro & Greenberg, 2000). However, there were no significant differences in the make-up and cleanliness among either of these groups (Mastro & Greenberg, 2000). An analysis of television programs aired in 2002 (e.g., *The George Lopez Show*) found that Latinas were significantly less appropriately dressed than African-American women (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005); no other significant differences were found with regard to appearance variables.

#### *Status*

With regard to socio-economic concerns, television viewers have witnessed African-American portrayals change from that of lower-class, domestic workers to that of the normalized view of African Americans as members of the middle class. Programs that aired in the 1950s presented African Americans as domestic and service workers, as opposed to being employed as white collar and members of the police force (Head, 1954). TV shows of this time presented African-American women as examples of The Mammy (e.g., Bogle, 2001; Hill Collins, 2000; Pilgrim, 2000d) and African-American men as instances of The Tom (Bogle, 2001; Pilgrim, 2000e). During this time, the majority of “ethnic deviants” (Head, p. 185) held ambiguous socio-economic status. Television shows of the 1960s and 1970s showed African-American homes as slums and ghettos, and the African Americans who lived in them held service or blue-collar

employment (Greenberg et al., 1980; Northcott et al., 1975) and were portrayed in other low-status positions (Cummings, 1988). African Americans were regularly over-represented in these jobs (Seggar & Wheeler, 1973); only a small number appeared in professional positions (Greenberg et al., 1980). Presenting African Americans as members of a lower social class gave rise to images of The Welfare Mother (Gray, 2004; Hill Collins, 2000). In spite of these earlier portrayals, a content analysis conducted of programming that aired about 25 years later found that the majority of African-American characters were members of the middle class (Mastro & Greenberg, 2000). Though African Americans had moved into the middle class, these characters often existed in spaces separate from Caucasians. Shows with premises such as these were indicative of pluralist programming (Gray, 2000). In addition, in many instances, African Americans had underdeveloped backgrounds, family situations, and unknown occupations, echoing earlier patterns (Elasmar et al., 1999; Matabane & Merritt, 1996). Also, African Americans were not often portrayed as successful (defined as attaining a central goal during the context of the program plot; Elasmar et al., 1999). Further, while African Americans were portrayed in more serious and complex situations, they also continued to be presented in a humorous manner (Matabane & Merritt, 1996), reminiscent of portrayals of the ridicule stage (Clark, 1969). The 2000s provided viewers with images that have become familiar: currently, African-American men and women are more likely than Hispanic characters to be members of the middle class. They are also portrayed with mid-levels of social and job authority (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005). Reflective of the multiculturalist perspective, just as some recent programs feature African Americans

as members of the middle class (e.g., FOX's *The Bernie Mac Show*), others portray them as working class or impoverished, such as HBO's *The Wire* and *True Blood*.

So far, this chapter has provided a review of two complementary historical perspectives of African Americans on TV and a summary of content analytical research regarding African Americans' televised portrayals to establish how this group has been portrayed over time. These discussions also briefly alluded to stereotypes (re)produced by television. The next section focuses specifically on the stereotypes of African Americans, particularly their gendered nature. These stereotypes provide a foundation for the current study, which examines the portrayals of HBCUs and African Americans on reality TV program *College Hill*, in addition to the portrayals of African Americans as (re)presentations of HBCUs. Racial stereotypes have been explored in a range of other media contexts, including magazines (e.g., Bowen & Schmid, 1997), newspapers (e.g., Glascock & Preston-Schreck, 2004; McLean, 1998), television news (e.g., Campbell, 1995; Entman, 1990, 1992) and even the Internet (e.g., Burkhalter, 1999).

### Stereotypes of African Americans

Cultural studies theorist Stuart Hall (1997b) refers to stereotypes as "regimes of representation" (p. 257), which foregrounds racial difference between African Americans and Caucasians. Though Fiske and Taylor (1991) provide an understanding of the cognitive process that produces stereotypes, their explanation does not take into account the issue of power and the struggle between the dominant (Caucasian) and resistant (e.g., African-American) groups in America. Stereotypes use binaries (e.g., light/dark, good/bad, Culture/Nature) to reduce people possessing a certain group of characteristics



as nothing more than those attributes (e.g., Hall, 1997b; Hunt, 2005b). This reduction becomes seen as natural (e.g., Feagin, 2010), privileging the dominant group which becomes associated with the positive side of a binary (White/Culture vs. Black/Nature).

Stereotypes of African Americans as savage and possessing a deviant sexuality have historical roots (e.g., Feagin; Hall, 1997a; 1997b), and they are used to categorize both African-American women and men. Further, these stereotypes do not only focus on the sexuality of this group, but also make reference to their intelligence, loyalty, and overall goals and desires. During slavery, African-American stereotypes suggested that African Americans were ultimately docile, childlike, harmless, and dependent on Caucasians to survive (e.g., Hill Collins, 2000; Pilgrim, 2000b; 2000d; 2000e). According to Hall (1997b), the most negative and vicious images regarding African Americans spread through popular culture once slavery was contested. This was a result of resentment felt by Caucasians who desired maintenance of the status quo. As Entman and Rojecki (2001) explain, as long as African Americans stayed in the submissive positions of the racial hierarchy in the forms of mammies, toms, coons, for instance, then Caucasians could regard them positively. However:

Growing beyond the myths of genetic racial hierarchy, the current culture rejects the most overt claims of Black inferiority—and this ironically cultivates White impatience and hostility...Deferential behavior on the part of members of the out-group stimulates affectionate condescension among the in-group, assertiveness does not. (Entman & Rojecki, p. 3-4)

When discussing the stereotypes of African Americans, it is imperative to also consider how the issues of race and gender are ultimately connected. The interrelatedness of these two concepts is often discussed by Black feminist scholars such as bell hooks

(2000). She puts forth standpoint theory to explain that African-American women are in a unique position in society, as they bear the burden of sexism *and* racism at the bottom of the social hierarchy, because they are positioned lower than both Caucasian women and African-American men. She states:

It is essential for continued feminist struggle that black women recognize the special vantage point our marginality gives us and make use of this perspective to criticize the dominant racist, classist, sexist hegemony as well as to envision and create a counter hegemony. (p. 16)

Therefore, a discussion of African-American stereotypes must take into account the gender differences among the images. These images reflect the struggle for power which ultimately favors Caucasians, particularly Caucasian men.

#### *Conceptualizing Gendered Stereotypes of African Americans*

Several scholars have written about the gendered nature of African-American stereotypes, including Bogle (2001), Hill Collins (2000), Hoberman (1997), Pilgrim (e.g., 2000a; 2000c; 2000d; 2001; 2002; 2007) and Stephens and Phillips (2003)<sup>8</sup>. As discussed earlier in this chapter, content analyses and historical perspectives have provided evidence of African-American stereotypes being (re)produced in television. The stereotypes discussed are comprehensive and represent an exhaustive list of stereotypical portrayals based on my readings; further, these stereotypes have traits that can be operationalized and that are *likely to be seen during analysis of reality television*. For African-American women, recurrent stereotypes include The Mammy, The Matriarch/The Sapphire, The Welfare Mother, The Black Lady, The Jezebel, and The Tragic Mulatto. Appendix A discusses these stereotypes by providing a brief synopsis of

each of the aforementioned stereotypes. These summaries illustrate that though these stereotypes are distinct, they do possess overlapping characteristics.

Also focusing on the negative stereotypes of African-American women, Stephens and Phillips (2003) argue that hip hop culture relies on and (re)produces familiar images such as The Matriarch and The Welfare Mother. However, these scripts have been combined in new ways, resulting in Divas (who are seductive like Jezebels, but control themselves sexually and are financially independent, too) and Baby Mamas (women who are willing to breed like Welfare Mothers to trap the fathers of their children into relationships with them). These new scripts are not mutually exclusive, and can change depending on the context. The authors point out that like previous images, the modern stereotypes of African-American women still focus on their sexuality, and represent the struggle for power between Caucasians and African Americans. In spite of this, it is sobering that hip hop culture, primarily a culture of African Americans, is also embracing these racist images. These new stereotypes are as follows: The Diva, The Freak, The Dyke, The Gangster Bitch, The Sister Savior, The Earth Mother, and The Baby Mama. Appendix A also discusses these stereotypes at length.

While African-American women are arguably in a position subordinate to African-American men and Caucasians of either gender, African-American men are in subordinated positions as well. As Hill Collins (2005) states:

Talking about gender does not mean focusing solely on women's issues. Men's experiences are also deeply gendered...for African Americans, the relationship between gender and race is intensified, producing a Black gender ideology that shapes ideas about Black masculinity and Black femininity. (p. 6)

As Hill Collins (2005) explains, the current Black gender ideology ultimately “uses a framework of ‘weak men, strong women’ ” (p. 20) to construct hegemonic notions of Black masculinity and femininity. This ideology fits neatly within tents of contemporary racism: African-Americans are not inferior because of their biology, but because of their culture. As Hill Collins (2005) states, “[T]he authentic Black culture so commoditized in the media creates images...that [explain] the failures of racial integration by placing the blame on the unassimilability of African Americans themselves” (p. 178). Gendered stereotypes of African-American men, therefore, have as much cultural impact of African-American women.

For African-American men, the recurrent stereotypes include The Brute/The Nat/The Criminal, The Coon, The Sambo, and The Tom. Just as there are updated stereotypes of African-American women (Stephens & Phillips, 2003), new stereotypical images of African-American men exist as well (Hill Collins, 2005; Hoberman, 1997), such as The Athlete. Appendix A discusses both classic and contemporary stereotypes of African-American men, in addition to African-American women.

### *Operationalizing Gendered Stereotypes of African Americans*

Because one of the purposes of this study is to understand how reality television show *College Hill* portrays African Americans and HBCUs, and how these portrayals function as (re)presentations of HBCUs, each stereotype was deconstructed into its essential behaviors, traits, and appearance descriptors (Appendix B). Referencing several sources that described the stereotypes, concrete and tangible descriptions were developed from those that are abstract. For instance, The Matriarch/The Sapphire is known

culturally for her loud and aggressive behavior—this translates into her likely making demands, weakening friendship bonds, and having traits such as arrogance and meanness. This process helped to develop these stereotypical concepts into observable behaviors that could actually be seen, and therefore, measured while watching the program. Therefore, this table represents the move from conceptual definitions to operational ones. One should notice, however, that this chart does *not* contain all of the behaviors, traits, and appearance descriptors that are known to be representative of these stereotypes, but those descriptors that were *actually likely to be observed on College Hill*. For example, The Tom stereotype is based on his deferential nature towards Caucasians, and his emotional dependence on his master and family. However, in a contemporary reality TV program, we are not likely to see an African-American man refusing to cut his ties with his Caucasian master. However, we might see an African-American cast member who is submissive, nice, and nurturing others.

In addition, as these stereotypes have grown and evolved (e.g., Stephens & Phillips, 2003), they will not always appear in the same manner in the media. As a result of this stereotype transformation, I do not expect to see these stereotypes performed exactly according to their particular scripts, but rather the essential behaviors, traits, and appearances associated with them. Appendix B keeps the issues of likely performances and overlapping traits of the stereotypes in mind while providing a link between conceptualization and measurement. Therefore, one should note that in the event of two similar stereotypes (e.g., The Jezebel/The Whore/The Hoochie and The Tragic Mulatto), the indicators that vary between the two representations have been placed in italics.

### The Cosby Perspective: Revisioning African Americans and Debuting HBCUs

So far, this section of the literature review has discussed some general findings regarding the portrayals of African Americans in television and presented historical viewpoints with which to understand (re)presentations of African Americans on television. It has also discussed the gendered nature of these stereotypes. The following subsection slightly changes the focus to spotlight two TV shows, *The Cosby Show* and *A Different World* (a spin-off of *The Cosby Show*), because of these shows' relevance to the current study. In addition, they are the first two of the three television shows to feature HBCUs, with *College Hill* being the third program to do so (Parrott-Sheffer, 2008). In addition, both shows were the creation of educator and HBCU supporter Bill Cosby. As a result, these programs had producers, writers, directors, and actors in common who were especially concerned with how African Americans were represented, and did not rely on stereotypes to develop their characters. Instead, both shows presented African Americans in a progressive manner by offering complex African-American characters and exploring African-American issues, especially when compared to (re)presentations of the past (e.g., Gray 2000; 2004).

#### *The Cosby Show*

As Gray (2000) explains, historically, African Americans have suffered from negative stereotypes in television (e.g., *Amos n' Andy*). Though shows of the 1970s such as *Good Times* attempted to portray authentic and true-to-life African Americans, these programs also relied on stereotypes. Unfortunately, the attempt to provide a greater range of televised African-American life through positive representations seems to be a double-

edged sword: *The Cosby Show* portrayed the happy life of an African-American obstetrician-gynecologist, his attorney wife, and his five children. Cosby himself was careful with the construction of the characters on the show, rejecting what he regarded as the ignorance of other shows featuring African-American casts (Hunt, n.d., a.). Episodes focused on day-to-day trials of life presented in a comical fashion, such as discouraging one's children from drinking alcohol, celebrating the older generation in the form of grandparents and other extended family, and spending quality time with one's spouse. Particularly concerned with education, Cosby choose to support HBCUs. In addition to cast members regularly wearing sweatshirts and hats emblazoned with Howard University's, Spelman College's, and other HBCU's logos, some episodes of the show emphasized African-American students being educated at HBCUs.

The twenty-third episode of Season 2, "Denise's Decision" (Robinson & Sandrich, 1986) focused on the Huxtables' second-oldest daughter's deliberations regarding where she should attend college. Another episode, the finale of Season 3, "Hillman" (Robinson & Sandrich, 1987), served as a backdoor pilot to *A Different World*. In these two episodes, not only were viewers transitioned into the narrative of *A Different World*, but they were also shown several themes common to HBCUs, including the generational nature of HBCU attendance, the intimate and lasting relationships many students enjoyed with professors and even higher administration, HBCU students' concerns about receiving a quality education, and the importance of HBCU alumni being willing to help current HBCU attendees. In spite of *The Cosby Show*'s seemingly redeeming qualities, such as its positive portrayals of HBCUs and emphasis on family

life, Gray (2000) responds to the overall program with mixed emotions. He points out that the series seemed far removed from the actual life experiences of most African Americans, though it openly challenged the many of the pluralistic series of the 1970s.

*The Cosby Show* has also been explored through audience reception studies. For example, Inniss and Feagin (1995) explored the reaction of middle-class African-Americans to *The Cosby Show*. Overall, the researchers found mixed responses to the program. More specifically, some of the viewers regarded the show as unrealistic, and felt the Huxtables were “White people in blackface” (p. 700). In spite of these critiques, other viewers felt the show positively reflected their own experiences as members of the African-American middle class, and some believed the Huxtables were positive role models for younger audiences. Another audience reception study (Jhally & Lewis, 1992), not only explored how viewers felt about the portrayals of African Americans on television, but also discovered examples of contemporary racist beliefs held by participants. As discussed in Chapter 2, although Caucasian audiences welcomed the Huxtables into their homes, this same courtesy would not necessarily be extended to other African Americans. This is because these viewers did not see Bill, Clair, and their children as African-American, but as “normal.” According to Caucasian middle-class standards, “the everyday world of the Huxtables is the everyday, generic world of white television” (p. 79). Cosby and his television family were constructed as colorless—or at least not othered as African-American. In fact, the majority of the sample did not enjoy African-American-centered situation comedies (e.g., *Amen*, *The Jeffersons*, 227) because the characters acted too stereotypically Black. Simply, these programs did not allow



Caucasian viewers to forget about or ignore racial tensions or issues. By contrast, *The Cosby Show* allowed many to claim that racism was over.

### *A Different World*

As discussed in the previous subsection, *A Different World* originally centered on Denise Huxtable's life as a freshman at Hillman College. With her classmates, Maggie Lauten (one of the few Caucasians at Hillman) and Jaleesa Vinson, she came to learn lessons regarding life away from her family, illustrative of "the different world" sung about in the show's opening credits. Staring with Season 2, however, characters Whitley Gilbert, Dewayne Wayne, Freddie Brooks, Charnele Brown, and Ron Johnson took center stage with an exciting cast of faculty and staff for the duration of the revamped series (Hunt, n.d., b.).

Very few studies have been undertaken to explore the portrayals of HBCUs on TV (likely because there are so few portrayals to analyze); particularly relevant to the current study because of its focus on HBCUs is Gray's (2004) analysis, an exception to this trend. He argues *A Different World*, a spin-off of *The Cosby Show*, was remarkable because of "the specific ways that the producers, directors, writers, and cast used existing television conventions to construct the world of black life at Hillman College" (p. 95). The cast, plot lines, characters, setting, and narrative themes presented a multiculturalist view (Gray, 2000) of African-American life by exploring topics and characters in ways not presented by previous television shows. These new and different portrayals of African Americans could be attributed to the nearly all-female writing and production crew, which focused on gender and racial diversity issues. Though a fictional setting,

Hillman College (including its dorm rooms, classrooms, The Pit hangout, and even basketball courts) was used as a site to explore issues very tangible and of consequence to African Americans. For example, plot lines included critique of sexual harassment and violence against women, in addition to thoughtful explorations of black masculinity and interracial global politics, such as apartheid in South Africa, AIDS, and slavery. Gray (2004) celebrates the show for “creating a space for this slice of Black life in the weekly clutter of network television” (p. 112).

After reviewing the literature in these related areas, a few conclusions can be made: first, content analyses and historical perspectives of television programming reveal that though the portrayals of African Americans in fictionalized television still leave much to be desired in terms of creating characters with a wide range of behaviors, some progress has been made. Further, stereotypes of African Americans are evident in our media, including television, which speak to both African-American femininity and masculinity and reflect the racial hierarchy of society (e.g., Hunt, 1997b). Lastly, both *The Cosby Show* and *A Different World* provided audiences with not only fresh images of African Americans which did not rely on racial stereotypes, but also focused on sharing the cultural importance of the HBCU with their viewers. Now that a general understanding of African Americans in TV has been provided, the literature review now narrows its focus to center on the ways in which reality TV portrays African Americans.

Reality TV: History, Stereotypes of African Americans within the Genre, and BET's

*College Hill*

In this section of the chapter, I provide the basics of reality television's history, focus on how this genre in particular stereotypes African Americans, and then discuss *College Hill* in depth. Orbe (2008) argues reality TV is an important area of study for communication researchers because "understanding how producers and consumers of reality TV negotiate issues of representation and truth" (p. 349) allows scholars to develop a better understanding of culture and cultural issues. Specifically, the current study focuses on the portrayals of African-Americans and HBCUs in reality television program *College Hill*. Before discussing this program in depth, however, it is appropriate to provide a historical perspective regarding reality TV in general.

#### *Reality TV: A Brief History*

Within the past decade, reality television has recently become the most popular form of entertainment on the medium (Orbe, 2008). For example, the Nielsen Ratings for September 21 through the September 27, 2009, revealed that ABC's reality show *Dancing with the Stars* received more viewers than some scripted series, such as network-mate *Grey's Anatomy* and Fox's *House* (*USA Today* website, 2009). The genre includes many different "types," including physical competitions (e.g., *The Amazing Race*; *The Biggest Loser*), dating competitions (e.g., *The Bachelor*; *A Real Chance at Love*), *Candid Camera*-esque manipulations (e.g., *Fear*; *Punk'd*), and social experiments (e.g., *Fraternity Life*; *The Real World*). *Candid Camera* and *An American Family* are some of the oldest examples of reality TV (Moorti & Ross, 2004); one of the most popular series, MTV's *The Real World*, is currently in its 22<sup>nd</sup> season, and is contracted to

air through a 26<sup>th</sup> season (THR Feed.com, 2009). Examples of the genre can be found on both broadcast and cable networks.

As a result of reality TV shows' low production costs, producers feel these programs are a better investment than more traditional situational comedies and dramas (e.g., Leone, Chapman, & Bissell, 2006). For example, though one episode of reality show *America's Next Top Model* costs \$800,000 to produce (Dehnart, 2004), *Lost's* pilot episode alone cost at least \$10 million (International Movie Database, n.d., e). To create a reality program, less money is needed for pre-production costs such as writing or developing scripts, as compared to a scripted show. In addition, there seems to be no lack of cheap labor—in the form of undiscovered talents—who are eager for a shot at fame (Orbe, 2008; Strober, 2006).

Reality TV is often thought of as trash television (Geiser-Gertz, 1995), or at the very least, a “bastardized” genre of TV (Dehnart, n.d., para.1). However, dismissing it as such “fail[s] to acknowledge the great diversity with this ever-expanding genre” (Orbe, 2008, p. 345). In fact, to dismiss reality TV as unimportant could also result in scholars overlooking the impact that this genre has on its audience. Communication scholars, and media scholars in particular, recognize that reality TV is an important context in which to understand various representations of people. Some reality TV researchers have focused on issues of gender (e.g., Waggoner, 2004) and class (e.g., Shugart, 2006); one entire volume of *Critical Studies in Media Communication* focuses exclusively on reality TV and race, though Squires (2008) points out the issue focuses *mainly* on Blackness and Whiteness in the genre.

Orbe (2008) brings attention to one of the interesting tensions surrounding reality television. Unlike other programs on TV, which rarely include more than a few actors of color, and an even smaller number of minority producers, writers, and directors (e.g., Hunt, 2005b), reality TV often includes several minority cast members. Whereas selecting diverse cast members helps to increase the drama in these reality situations (e.g., *The Real World*; Bell-Jordan, 2008), they also allow people of color to participate in the construction their own identities. However, just how much agency these cast members have in creating their own identities is debatable, especially because reality TV, like other genres, relies on racial stereotypes to help audiences understand events and cast members' motivations. Orbe suggests that reality TV actually helps to reinforce stereotypes rather than challenge them (Orbe, 1998; Orbe & Hopson, 2002). For example, Boylorn (2008) discusses how stereotypes of African-American women are still alive and well in shows like *Flavor of Love*, whereas Smith (2008) posits that *Father Hood* presents an image of African-American men as criminal and dangerous.

Now that the history, cultural and communicative relevance, and contradictions of reality TV have been discussed, this chapter turns toward a more in-depth discussion of African-American portrayals in this genre.

#### *African-American Stereotyping by Reality TV*

Scholars have found that many of the historically based stereotypes of African Americans are still alive and well in television. More specifically, Bell-Jordan's (2008) textual analysis of three reality TV shows (*The Real World*, *Survivor: Cook Islands*, and *Black. White.*) suggests this genre, like others, regularly uses race and racial tensions as a

plot device. In addition to exploring the uses of racial stereotypes to advance plotlines, researchers have also examined the construction of Whiteness and Blackness on reality TV, as well as their intersection with surveillance and authenticity of racial performance (Dubrofsky & Hardy, 2008). Dubrofsky and Hardy label VH1's *Flavor of Love* as the "ghetto" version of ABC's *The Bachelor*, a program in which a single man chooses his future bride from 20 contestants, explaining that "ghetto" (p. 374) attributes such as being oversexed, criminally deviant, and materialistic have been constructed as behaviors representative of African Americans from urban areas. They also suggest race is seemingly white-washed on *The Bachelor*: Whiteness is constructed as normal and therefore, invisible; by contrast, authentic African Americans on *Flavor of Love* are those that perform the correct ghetto identity. Dubrofsky and Hardy reveal one of reality TV's great paradoxes: even (and perhaps *especially*) when reality TV cast members are in front of the camera, "good [reality] TV participants perform not-performing" (p. 378). Therefore, in order to display authentic Blackness, cast members on *Flavor of Love* must perform a ghetto identity, or otherwise risk being perceived as fake. The researchers provide Deelishis' (one of the competitors for Flav's attention) construction as an over-sexualized African-American female with a large posterior as an example of a modern-day Hottentot Venus.<sup>9</sup> In addition, New York, another competitor, is also presented as ghetto—she is loud, aggressive, and conniving, invoking stereotypes of threatening African-American women (e.g., Weitz & Gordon, 1993). In spite of these negative portrayals, the researchers also argue that *Flavor of Love*, in contrast to *The Bachelor*, actually allows for more complex performances of identity.

In addition to textual analyses, researchers have used autoethnography to explore their responses to the stereotypical portrayals of African Americans in reality TV. Boylorn (2008) specifically challenges—and accepts—the representations of African-American women, utilizing Black feminist theory to share her feelings regarding complex portrayals such as Mammies or Sapphires who act and dress like Jezebels. She unpacks the struggle that she experiences as she is both attracted to and repelled by these images, as well as recounts issues with the construction of “real” Blackness being equated to that of acting ghetto (e.g., Dubrofsky & Hardy, 2008). As Boylorn states in her poem “S.W. A.” (Sister with an Attitude), “beautiful teeth and skin and/ angry defensive words/ demanding respect or love or/ to be heard/ listened to, remembered/ I want to tell her to/ keep in mind/ her actions reflect/ somewhat, sometimes/ on me/ another black woman...no/I’m not like/ New York” (p. 426-428). She insists if African-American women become critical of their media portrayals, they can challenge the mainstream gaze which constructs them as other, as well as recognize the diversity in the experience of the lives of African-American women.

### *BET and African-American “Reality”*

Before discussing reality television program *College Hill* in depth, it is also important to explore the network on which it is aired, Black Entertainment Television (BET). As explained above, the fact that *College Hill* appears on this network, which targets African-American viewers, is one of the reasons it is difficult to examine the portrayal of HBCUs on the show without also analyzing the portrayals of African-Americans on the show. Hence, BET is briefly discussed below.

*BET: For Blacks or for Entertainment?*

According to the corporate factsheet found on the public relations website for the BET Networks (n.d.):

BET Networks, a division of Viacom Inc., is the leading provider of media and entertainment for African Americans and consumers of Black culture globally. BET...reaches more than 89 million...households...and can be seen in the United States, Canada and the Caribbean. BET can also be seen in the United Kingdom and sub-Saharan Africa. (para. 1)

BET was launched on January 25, 1980, by Robert Johnson. BET's media affiliates include Centric (formerly BET J), BET.com, BET mobile, BET Home Entertainment, and BET International.

Though Johnson sold BET to Viacom, Incorporated for \$3 billion in 2000, it was originally started with a \$15,000 bank loan (Pulley, 2004). BET has become one of media's hottest commodities because of Johnson's unwavering focus on profits, in spite of what other members of the African-American community might have had in mind for the network. For example, realizing that often "raunchy" (Pulley, p. 122) programming such as video shows and stand-up comedy shows carried low production costs but attracted a large number of viewers influenced Johnson's decision to maintain—and increase—BET's focus on entertainment over the years. As Johnson allegedly once told former BET news anchor Tavis Smiley, "The E in BET does not stand for emancipation. And it does not stand for enlightenment. It stands for entertainment" (Pulley, p. 181).

In addition to video shows such as *Video Soul* and *Midnight Love* and stand-up comedy shows like *Comic View*, BET expanded its programming in the early 2000s to include interactive video count-downs targeted to younger audiences. Specifically, *106 &*



*Park*, modeled after MTV's *Total Request Live (TRL)*, was the higher-rated of the two programs among Black households (BET.com, n.d., b). The network also began to air reality shows, such as docusoaps *College Hill*, *Baldwin Hills* and *Harlem Heights*, celebrity-centered shows such as *Keyshia Cole: The Way It Is*, and dating shows such as *Hell Date*. In addition, BET airs talk shows, including *The Wendy Williams Show* and *The Mo'Nique Show*.

In spite of BET's continued emphasis on entertaining content, members of the African-American community seemed to focus more on the *Black* in the moniker of BET during its early years; this struggle still occurs. According to Pulley (2004):

No longer would blacks on television be stereotypical buffoons, hustlers, or sidekicks to leading white actors. No longer would the experiences of black people be filtered through a white lens...Bob Johnson had given people more than a cable channel. He had given them a source of pride and hope. (p. 92)

However, Johnson continued to respond to critiques of BET by insisting that the network was a business, and should not have the burden of social responsibility on its shoulders. He argued, for instance, that BET should not be any more socially redeeming than fellow music network MTV.

Its dependence on entertaining fare notwithstanding, BET does seem to have social activist concerns as well. According to BET Network's public relations' corporate fact sheet (n.d.), "BET Networks inspires its audiences to make a difference in their lives and communities with a broad and impactful pro-social agenda" (para. 2). In fact, during the 1990s, the network aired shows such as *For Black Men Only*, *Our Voices*, and *Teen Summit*, which featured panels to discuss issues of interest to African Americans. It also

covered the memorial service of U.S. Secretary of commerce Ron Brown in 1996 and the Million Man March in 1995. More recently, BET has aired programs that have honored Black culture, such as *Celebration of Gospel* and *The Hip Hop Awards* and a celebration of President Barack Obama's inauguration, *Yes We Will!* In addition, BET has undertaken community service initiatives that have concerned physical and emotional health, often focusing on HIV/AIDS education and prevention. As recently as January 2010, BET was one of the networks that participated in the Hope for Haiti telethon.

Ultimately, in spite of BET's informative and educational programming, its focus on entertainment that portrays African Americans in a negative light has drawn criticism from viewers, former employees such as Tavis Smiley and comedian D. L. Hughley, and from intellectuals such as cartoonist Aaron McGruder (creator of *The Boondocks*) and Professor of Sociology (at Georgetown University) Michael Eric Dyson. As Dyson argues:

When you're in the public sphere controlling the representation of the black culture, the image of black people is at stake. That channel could give us more intellectual and social content...But all of that is largely absent. What we have left is the powerful image of black people as entertainers and purveyors of erotic delight. (Pulley, 2004, p. 221-222)

As this study explores the portrayals of African Americans, HBCUs, and portrayals of African Americans as (re)presentations of HBCUs in light of cultural stereotypes of African Americans, I am of the opinion of Dyson. I feel that because there are so few media outlets for people of color, those that target and feature majority African Americans, such as BET, owe it to African Americans and all people, to be socially responsible.<sup>10</sup>

### *African-American Stereotypes and College Hill*

As mentioned above, the African-American college experience has been explored through different perspectives, including Bill Cosby's *A Different World*, which portrayed HBCU life as flawed but nurturing to its students (e.g., Gray, 2004), Spike Lee's *School Daze*, which provided an unflinchingly critical gaze of HBCUs and Greek life (e.g., Maslin, 1988), and *Drumline*, which starred Nick Cannon as a talented drummer and featured one of the most exciting aspects of HBCUs: the African-American marching band (e.g., Ebert, 2002). However, only one reality TV show has tackled the topic of HBCUs, BET's *College Hill*. BET.com (n.d., a.) describes the Atlanta-centered, sixth season of the show as a "half-hour reality series [that] follows the lives of eight college students studying at various prestigious universities [Clark Atlanta University, University of West Georgia, Georgia State University, and Morehouse University] in the Atlanta area."

Originally aired in January 2004, the series was produced by Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds and executive produced by Edmonds' ex-wife, Tracey Edmonds<sup>11</sup>. Steve Rogers (2004), a reporter for Reality TV World.com, quotes a BET press release which explains there are distinct differences between "mainstream" (para. 3) institutions and HBCU. Such mainstream institutions include State University of New York at Buffalo (SUNY), where one season each of MTV's *Sorority Life* and *Fraternity Life* were filmed; these series were precursors to *College Hill*, which was created to combat the lack of diversity seen on other reality TV programs produced on other networks (Lowe, 2007). In addition, Edmonds states that the show was focused on portraying the diversity of the

cast, and how the differences between the cast members influenced “what reality television should portray—real emotion, real situations, and real people” (Rogers, para. 4). Though the majority of the cast members are African American, there have been exceptions. For example, in Season 3 (Virginia State University), one female cast member was of Puerto Rican and African-American descent, and a female cast member in Season 7 (South Beach) was Caucasian and African American.

The first season of *College Hill* was taped at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, with the second, third, and fourth seasons at Langston University, Virginia State University, and University of the Virgin Islands respectively. According to BET (2006), executive producer Tracey Edmonds had been excited with both the show’s larger budget for the fourth season and the cooperation of the Virginia State University (VSU) campus with the production. Edmonds states that the increased resources allowed for more opportunities to explore the academic concerns and settings at VSU, and BET President of Entertainment Reginald Hudlin referred to this season as “sexier, edgier, and funnier” (para. 7). The fifth season of the series focused on interns trying to land a steady job in Chicago. The sixth season returned to its original focus on college students, though it was filmed generally in Atlanta, and not at a *particular* HBCU. Filmed in South Beach, Florida, the seventh season started airing in March 2009 and ended in June 2009. This season featured only two cast members (out of eight) who attended HBCUs. In addition, the series is a ratings draw: BlackNews (n.d.) states Season 3 was cable’s highest-rated returning original series of 2006 among Black households, boasting a 15% increase over Season 2 and averaging over a million viewers for each premiere; the first two episodes

of the sixth season drew a record 1.2 million viewers, according to Reuters (2008).

Currently, BET has not announced that it will air another season of the show.

Responses to *College Hill* appear to generate from four major sources: cast members of the show, students of the HBCUs featured in the series, college administrators and alumni of the HBCUs featured in the series, and viewers of the show.

Cast members tend to take positive views. Several of them have used the series as a catalyst to jumpstart modeling, acting, singing, and other careers in the entertainment business (Irving, 2006). Others were pleased to have the opportunity to interact with those different from them (Leger, 2007). For instance, Idesha Browne (of the University of the Virgin Islands, also known as UVI, Season 4) stated that she did not regret anything about the show. She also insisted that some of the sexually-charged episodes which aired early on in the show's run were actually shown out of order to get ratings. "The show isn't about UVI," she argues. "It's about eight students who live in a house and attend UVI" (Leger, 2007, " 'This is TV' " section, para. 4). Browne's comment suggests the focus of the show was never about the *HBCU*, but the cast members.

Similarly to Browne, cast member Kinda Andrews (of Southern University, Season 1) also had positive memories of the show (Dix et al., 2004). Andrews was known for being sexually uninhibited and controversial; her nickname was No Drawers. However, not all cast members relate positive responses. For instance, Jon Walker (of Langston University, Season 2) explained that being on the show made him the target of jealousy of others in the Black community, and also caused him to temporarily lose his focus on school (Irving, 2006).

Speaking directly to the issue of cast members acting as (re)presentations of HBCUs, though Kinda Andrews stated that she was very happy about how she was portrayed, other students at Southern felt she was not a good example because she encouraged viewers to have stereotypical views about women at Southern (Dix et al., 2004). Comparable reactions came from students at UVI, who were concerned that people would associate the University with the outlandish behavior presented on the show. In addition, because these students were concerned that UVI would come to be known as “that crazy school” (Leger, 2007, para. 16), they organized a campaign to increase the university and the community’s awareness of the show.

While some college staff members seem to have accepted the show’s less-than-flattering portrayals of its students as just the nature of the beast (“if everyone on the show was ‘goody-goody,’ no one would watch it”; Dix et al., 2004, para. 13), the majority of administrators and alumni worried about how *College Hill* was representing the featured HBCUs. As Donald Wade, president of the Alumni Federation at Southern states: “I do not have one positive comment about this program...Reality is something I don’t understand when this is a depiction of Southern” (Dix et al., para. 15). Alumni (and parents) at UVI reacted similarly, questioning why school administrators—and BET—would allow negative and stereotypical images of African Americans to air. Allegedly, the Board of Trustees was unaware of President Laverne Ragster’s decision to let UVI appear in the show until *after* she had signed the contract (Leger, 2007). Ultimately, these constituents reacted in such a negative manner to the show that Ragster was advised to apologize to the University and the Virgin Islands. Ragster’s apology (2007) addresses

the show's uneven focus on the social aspects of college life, as well as provides a reason for her decision to allowing the show to be filmed at UVI:

We know that television does not present, even-handedly, all that our institution of higher learning has to offer...What "College Hill" can't depict fully is the value added to the lives of those who participated in the production, both in front of and behind the cameras, beyond the walls of academia, beyond the confines of physicality itself...The number of inquiries from prospective students seeking application has quadrupled since "College Hill 4" bowed. While it's true that our school is depicted in an entertainment-driven format, it's also true that we could never afford to market ourselves as BET has done. (para. 2, 6, 8)

Just as *College Hill* gave UVI a boost in popularity, it also increased the amount of attention that prospective students gave to Langston University (Irving, 2006). In spite of the possible positive influence the show might have had on the featured HBCUs' enrollments, Ragster stated plans to meet with the presidents of other *College Hill* settings and Viacom executives to discuss African-American images in the media. The outcome of this meeting, or if it was ever held, is unknown to the author.

Like cast members and HBCU constituents, viewers of the show have also expressed their responses to the show. These opinions display a range of thoughts and emotions. For example of a negative response, consider blogger Native Son's post (2007), titled, "BET: College Hill Has gone too Damn Far!!!" Native Son refers to BET as "Bootleg Entertainment Television," (para. 2), stating that as a graduate of an HBCU, he cannot understand why the Presidents of the HBCUs featured in the series did so when, in his opinion, a program that does little but reproduce negative stereotypes of African Americans could damage the reputations of the universities:

You would think that BET[,] a network for black people, would attempt to take the high road and show an aspect of black college life that young

black children could watch and be inspired to attend college and especially an HBCU...I am not saying that they can't show the partying, but balance it with showing the students going to class and learning. (para. 6, 7)

Native Son's argument for a more balanced portrayal of HBCU life recalls the tension surrounding BET's programming in general. Others responded to Native Son's post by stating the show only focused on students who displayed sexual promiscuity and were involved in dramatic situations, versus those who focused on their educations. In addition, another respondent to the post, Golden Silence, refers to BET as "Blacks *Embarrassing* Themselves" (comment 1). In another instance, halfabrain, a blogger to the BET-sponsored *College Hill* Wiki (n.d.), fires with indignation about the show:

I don't know much about [the producer] Sean Rankin, but he should have ask[ed] somebody where the intelligent black people were before he decided to do "reality shows" involving us. He must have shopped in ignorant village or buffoonville for the people on Flava of [L]ove or ["college"] hill. (para.1)

Like Native Son, halfabrain appears disgusted by the lack of intelligent (-acting) cast members featured in reality programming, and how theses cast members of *College Hill* reflect on the image of HBCUs.

In spite of halfabrain's anger towards to portrayals of African Americans on the series, others on the *College Hill* Wiki refer to the show as fun and addictive. In another instance, a lone respondent to Native Son's thread (2007), named A college student, insists that *College Hill* is indeed airing a true representation of HBCU life:

As a student of college in this day and age, College Hill is exactly like it is no changes...BET is just showing it just like it is...BET is not lying when they show [yo]u the show...The Real World isn't no better so it isn't a race thing cause I'm black and I watch [The] [R]eal [W]orld and see the same stuff. (comment 19)



Strikingly, this response also includes an argument that the show focuses on social life because the show's target audience includes students, not parents. Though this respondent is alone in his/her insistence that the show does not display any portrayals that *The Real World* does not, this response bolsters Robert Johnson's argument that BET should be held no more socially responsible for its programming than similar networks, such as MTV. In summary, whether the responses are from cast members of the show, HBCU students or other constituents such as administrators, and viewers of the show, *College Hill* inspires a range of responses.

In spite of the popular responses to the program, little scholarly research has focused specifically on *College Hill*, though one textual analysis has been conducted (Parrott-Sheffer, 2008). He points out that starting with *The Cosby Show* and ending with *College Hill*, only three television shows have portrayed HBCUs (*The Cosby Show*, *A Different World*, and *College Hill*), suggesting that the broader academic and social goals of HBCUs are hard to reconcile with the stereotype of ignorant African Americans. As discussed above, throughout the duration of *The Cosby Show*, HBCUs were referenced by characters wearing paraphernalia from HBCUs, such as Spelman College and Morehouse College. Also, two episodes, "Denise's Decision" and "Hillman," focused on the importance of African Americans attending college and the mission of the HBCU. Echoing Gray (2004), Parrott-Sheffer states that *A Different World* tackled topics such as inter-racial friendships (mainly during the first season), HIV and AIDS, and economic crisis in the African-American community. By contrast, Parrott-Sheffer charges *College*

*Hill* with boring, predictable, and stereotypical portrayals of African-American cast members:

The cast of season two...features its own set of trope characters including the flirt, the “baller,” the “rumpshaka,” the cheerleader, the single mother, the pretty boy, the freak, and the good girl. The characterization of the cast provides a cursory glimpse of the values the media associate with HBCUs and those who attend them. What emerges seems to be a simplistic, one-dimensional, and sensational rendering of Black colleges. (p. 211)

He maintains that instead of focusing on the cultural importance of the HBCU, the program spends more time presenting the cast in racy and sensational situations and in a stereotypical manner. This statement reflects a seeming break between the image and mission goals of the HBCU (Augusta-Dupar, 2008) and the portrayals of the institution and its students that are actually being presented in the show. In addition, Parrott-Sheffer (2008) argues that the unlikely situations that occur on *College Hill* are more fictionalized than many scripted programs—evoking the lyrics of the program’s closing theme, which declares the show will involve drama. Though he praises *The Cosby Show* and *A Different World* for their positive portrayals of HBCUs, he also calls them just as uncomplicated as *College Hill*. He states, “The lack of portrayals of Black colleges in television series limits the public’s perception of them as the diverse and unique institutions that remain of great value in contemporary society” (p. 219). He calls for more television series that feature HBCUs, and for portrayals that are both more realistic than the ones that audiences have previously seen.

Before proposing the research questions and hypotheses of the study, it is essential to discuss first, how *College Hill* relates to other programs that have featured college life, and second, if/how *College Hill* fits into the docusoap subgenre of reality

television. According to Lowe (2007), “[College Hill] differs [from other competitors in its genre] in that it takes place on the campus of [an] ...HBCU and of course, the coeds are people of color” (para. 1). While keeping Parrott-Sheffer’s (2008) criticisms at the forefront, it is important to note that other reality television shows that focus on college life on real and fictionalized TWIs, such as *Greek* and MTV’s *College Life*, *Sorority Life*, and *Fraternity Life*, as well as movies such as *Animal House*, the *Revenge of the Nerds* films, and *Old School* also place a great deal of attention on the social aspects of college as opposed to the academic ones. As Lowe explains, “In many respects, the arguing, parties and hanging out depicted in *College Hill* typify the usual group living experiences in college and elsewhere” (para. 5). This quote suggests that perhaps, at least with regard to social activities, the difference between (mainstream) “college life” and “Black college life” (Rogers, 2004, para. 3) is minimal. It also implies that *College Hill* is similar to other reality programs that feature an interesting cast living in a house outfitted with the production equipment that allows audiences to follow their lives.

In addition, though *College Hill* appears to fit *most* comfortably in the subgenre of docusoaps such as *The Real World*, one should keep in mind that in spite of the many subgenres of reality television (e.g., gamedocs, makeovers, crime, shows featuring celebrities), there is evidence to suggest that people cognitively discern among these programs on only two dimensions: romance and competitiveness (Nabi, 2007), but viewers do not appear to make cognitive distinctions of reality TV programs beyond these two subgenres. For example, multidimensional scaling revealed that shows such as *The Real World* and *Road Rules* were also distributed closely to *Nashville Star* (a

competitive program) and *The Simple Life* (a docusoap featuring celebrities). Because *College Hill* was not included in Nabi's analysis, I suggest that viewers might cognitively place the program close to *The Real World* because of their similarities in format, such as a focus on narratives, casting personality types (e.g., Andrejevic & Colby, 2006) and the use of the confessional (e.g., Aslama & Pantti, 2006).

### Research Questions and Hypotheses of Study

As previously discussed, African Americans have historically been plagued by stereotypes; these representations have made their ways into cultural artifacts, including television news (e.g., Entman, 1990; 1992) and fictional programs (e.g., Gray, 2000). Some of the more popular stereotypes have even been "updated" to better reflect current ideologies (e.g., Hoberman, 1997; Stephens & Phillips, 2003). Other studies have also discussed that these stereotypes have made their way into reality TV programs (e.g., Orbe, 2008). Therefore, the present study examined racial stereotypes on *College Hill*, leading to the first set of research questions and hypotheses of the study, which include the representation of race on *College Hill*.

### *Investigating Racial Stereotypes on College Hill*

Appendix A provides a discussion regarding the recurrent list of African-American stereotypes. These generalized descriptions were developed into observable and measurable characteristics that were likely to be seen on *College Hill*; it is helpful to think of stereotypes in terms of their unique behaviors, traits, and appearance descriptors (Appendix B). However, before determining if these characteristics are representative of

particular stereotypes, first, the frequency of these portrayals will be examined. As a result:

RQ1: What are the behaviors, personality traits, and appearances of African-American cast members on *College Hill*?

Recall from Chapter 4 that the behaviors, traits, and appearances that were operationalized were based in concepts provided by the literature regarding the stereotypical portrayals of African Americans. In distilling these stereotypes into their unique characteristics, many of these descriptors can be viewed as logical opposites of each other. For the purposes of this study, a *logical opposite* is a characteristic/descriptor that exists alongside another characteristic/descriptor that could be considered its polar opposite. For example, while some of the stereotype explanations make reference to the asexual nature of African Americans, other stereotypes are known for their hypersexuality. Keeping in that stereotype descriptors can operate as binaries, the second research question was put forth:

RQ2: Of the behaviors, traits, and appearances examined in RQ1, which are the most likely to occur in relation to its logical opposite (e.g., nurtures others/ neglects others; faithful/ unfaithful; dresses modestly/ dresses immodestly; displays European facial norm/ displays African facial norm)?

Also previously mentioned, stereotypes of African Americans have been gendered; for example, Hill Collins (2000) points out stereotypes of African-American women tend to center around their sexuality. By contrast, although some stereotypes of African-American men also center on their sexuality (e.g., Pilgrim, 2000a), these

representations also reflect the socio-political power struggle between African-American and Caucasian men (e.g., Hoberman, 1997). The intersection of race, gender, and stereotypes, therefore, led to the next research question. Once again, before determining if these characteristics are representative of particular stereotypes, a general comparison regarding these portrayals must be determined:

RQ3: Do the behaviors, traits, and appearances of cast members of on *College Hill* differ by gender?

Further, the current study inquires if and how these characteristics actually present themselves together in clusters, and if these clusters display differences between male and female cast members. This thought led to the following question:

RQ4: Do behaviors, traits, and appearance characteristics of cast members on *College Hill* group into interpretable clusters? If so, what are they, and how do they differ according to gender?

#### *Investigating the Representation of HBCUs on College Hill*

As mentioned in the rationale of this research project, HBCUs are an important part of African-American history, and existed even before the abolition of slavery. Supporters of HBCUs explain these institutions act as educational safe havens for their students, who are often from lower socio-economic backgrounds (e.g., Freeman, 1998). Through the social contract that HBCUs have with their students (Brown & Davis, 2001), they work to instill a sense of self-love among African Americans (e.g., Oates, 2004), in addition to making them into skilled professionals (e.g., Gasman & Jennings, 2006). Because many members of the African-American community view HBCUs as sources of

African-American culture, it is quite common for many generations of African-American families to attend these schools (e.g., Bennett, 2008; Joyner, 2006).

While cultural artifacts such as marching bands and step shows have been portrayed in media such as movies and television shows (e.g., *A Different World*, *Drumline*, *School Daze*), BET implies that *College Hill*, which features HBCUs, was produced to present a multiculturalist view of these institutions (BET.com, n.d., a.). Parrott-Sheffer (2008) states that whether the images of HBCUs and their students are positive or negative, they can have an influence on the public perception of these institutions. He argues these images in reality TV are overly simplistic, devoting little time to presenting the cultural significance of HBCUs, or ignoring the significance altogether. He states, “[Such negative] stereotyping limits or distorts the purported special purpose of these institutions to provide academic and economic uplift for a specific population by reducing these schools to mere tropes of college life” (p. 208). Portraying HBCUs in a negative manner could be dangerous for these institutions, because they depend on support from their many publics, including students, alumni, and state legislatures (e.g., Dilworth, 1994; Evans & Evans, 2002; Mbajekwe, 2006; Native Son, 2007; Sissoko & Shiau, 2005). It is possible students might suffer as a result of these negative images. Is the HBCU, as presented by *College Hill*, still able to meet the “educational, social, and emotional needs” (Parrott-Sheffer, 2008, p. 216) of African Americans? This question inspired the second set of questions of the study.

Parrott-Sheffer (2008) states there are very few portrayals of HBCUs on television, and that *College Hill* often focuses on scandalous situations rather than

focusing on aspects relating to HBCUs. Therefore, it is possible that HBCUs are only minimally present in the series; for example, HBCUs might only be presented as background for a few episodes. By contrast, entire episodes might be devoted to the HBCUs. Consequently, though *College Hill* is set at a particular HBCU, it is of interest to the current study just how often the show's narrative actually references the institutions. Therefore:

RQ5: How often are HBCUs explicitly referenced on *College Hill*?

As discussed in Chapter 1, Augusta-Dupar's (2008) content analysis of ten mission statements of HBCUs summarized the various justifications for the continued support of HBCUs. In sum, elements regarding social acceptance and support are categorized as social goals (e.g., striving to educate the whole individual) and elements regarding an environment conducive to students' learning are grouped into the academic goals category (e.g., promoting student self-worth). After determining the number of times HBCUs are referenced by *College Hill*, this study inquires if these references can indeed be categorized as aspects that are important to the image and goals of HBCUs, as articulated by their mission statements. More specifically, it is logical to discover the frequency of the academic and social goals respectively. Hence:

RQ6a: What are the most prevalent academic goals on *College Hill*?

RQ6b: What are the most prevalent social goals on *College Hill*?

The questions above generate interest regarding which type of goal, academic or social (Augusta-Dupar, 2008), appears the most often in the show. One of the tensions surrounding the portrayals of HBCUs is the dialectic between academic and social



concerns. Several have referred to this struggle (e.g., Leger, 2007; Native Son, 2007; Parrott-Sheffer, 2008; Ragster, 2007); one of the show's executive producers, Tracey Edmonds, stated her happiness about gaining the opportunity to better capture the academic side of life on the show, providing more evidence of this tension (BET, 2006). In response to this dialectic,

RQ7: Are the academic goals (summarized from the mission statements of HBCUs; Augusta-Dupar, 2008) more prevalent than the social goals (of the mission statements) on *College Hill*?

Parrott-Sheffer (2008) states that the historical realities of HBCUs are not always a perfect match with their televised portrayals. Further, HBCU alumni, administration, and students have become concerned about the ways in which *College Hill* portrays HBCUs (e.g., Dix et al., 2004; Leger, 2007; Native Son, 2007), with some alumni going as far as calling the show “disgraceful” (Parrott-Sheffer, p. 216). Therefore, there is a definite sense that *College Hill* presents HBCUs (and their students) in ways that would be considered in opposition of their mission statements and goals. For the purposes of the current study, these oppositional portrayals will be labeled anti-goals. This presentation of anti-goals would likely be applicable to both academic and social concerns.

Consequently:

RQ8a: What are the most prevalent academic anti-goals on *College Hill*?

RQ8b: What are the most prevalent social anti-goals on *College Hill*?

In addition to stating that *College Hill* presents HBCUs and their students in an unbecoming manner, there are academic and popular sources (e.g., *College Hill* Wiki,

n.d.; Parrott-Sheffer, 2008; Taylor, 2009) who suggest that these negative images, those that would likely contradict the values HBCUs endorse, appear more frequently than those that would illustrate HBCU morals and goals:

H1: There will be more references that oppose the mission statement and goals of HBCUs (anti-goals) than those that endorse academic goals and social goals portrayed on *College Hill*.

After considering these research questions and the literature surrounding televised portrayals of HBCUs (e.g., Dix et. al, 2004; Native Son, 2007; Parrott-Sheffer, 2008; Taylor, 2009), an issue still remained regarding the portrayal of HBCUs. Many HBCU constituents, such as alumni and students, felt *College Hill* was portraying the featured universities in a negative fashion; more specifically, while much of their concern *did* originate from the standpoint that the production favored the social life of the cast members rather than their academic endeavors, many felt that the HBCUs were being portrayed negatively *in general*. Therefore, it is of interest how a viewer might feel the HBCU was portrayed upon completion of an episode. This idea led to the final hypothesis:

H2: In general, *College Hill* will contain more negative references to HBCUs than positive ones.

## CHAPTER 5: METHOD

### Overview

This study content analyzed the major themes regarding African Americans and HBCUs and the portrayals of African-American cast members as (re)presentations of the HBCU in the reality TV program *College Hill*, aired from January 2004 until June 2009 on BET. Each available (and appropriate) season was viewed on DVD.

Content analysis of *College Hill* is appropriate for several reasons. First, this method requires the frequencies of certain symbols to be counted in order to indicate the emphasis that is placed on the particular symbols in a text (Krippendorff, 2004).

Therefore, content analysis was used to count the number of times certain behaviors, traits, and appearances of African Americans occur in *College Hill* to determine how the cast members are portrayed. Similarly, noting the number of references to the HBCU, and if the reference was in regard to academic or social (anti-)goals, was used to indicate how the HBCU and its students are portrayed in the show. Second, because this method uses statistical analysis, it produced quantifiable data that are both reliable and valid.

Specifically, the method requires the training of coders to ensure that coding decisions are reliable. In addition, it is imperative researchers create a codebook that demonstrates face validity to ensure that one is actually measuring the concept sought, in addition to content validity, “which is the extent to which the measure reflects the full domain of the concept being measured” (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 116), for example. If these conditions are met, content analysis is a valuable method for studying the portrayals of African

Americans in television, as evidenced by the research produced in this vein (e.g., Entman & Rojecki, 2001; Mastro & Greenberg, 2000; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005).

Therefore, care was taken to train coders who would produce reliable data and to derive a codebook that demonstrated validity.

### Sample

In order to generalize to this specific reality TV show, the sampling unit of the project was each episode of the series. The seven seasons of the program have generated 94 episodes ([Tv.com](http://www.tv.com)); however, this study focused only on the seasons that are available on DVD as well as centered on a *particular* HBCU, as opposed to just the general city where filming took place: Season 3, Virginia State University, and Season 4, University of the Virgin Islands. (The first two seasons are not available on iTunes or DVD.) Because the first four seasons focused on particular HBCUs, but only *two* of these are available, it was appropriate to analyze the entire population that *is* available: 30 episodes. Each episode is approximately 20 minutes long.

### Coding and Reliability

The coders for the project were two undergraduate students, a Pakistani-American female and a Caucasian male. These coders were trained for a little over 41 hours in the use of the coding protocols. They received general elective credit as their compensation for their assistance in this study, as well as monetary compensation provided by the University of Missouri's Department of Communication Graduate Student Research Support Fund. For the purposes of reliability, 50 percent of the episodes of Season 3 (7 of 14) and 44% of Season 4 (7 of 16) were randomly selected for the purposes of coder

training. Because only 30 episodes from Seasons 3 and 4 were available on DVD and also were filmed at an HBCU, only these episodes would be appropriate for coder training. Though it is common content analytical procedure to use training materials different from those to be included in the actual analyses of the text being analyzed (e.g., Krippendorff, 2004; Neuendorf, 2002), *College Hill* provided a unique situation such that only actual episodes of the show would be appropriate for training. More specifically, though *A Different World*, a show which featured a fictional HBCU might have provided references to the HBCU as described by Augusta-Dupar (2004), there was concern that there would be an issue of translation between this fictional program and *College Hill*, which in spite of its focus on the HBCU was of a different genre than *A Different World*. In addition, training coders on other reality programs that featured African-American cast members, such as Lincoln Heights or later seasons of *College Hill*, would not include references to the HBCU. Because of this unique situation, it was determined that actual episodes of *College Hill* were the only materials appropriate for coder training. The positive aspect of this situation was that the coders became very well-versed in the coding materials and that their final coding decisions on the training materials were included in the data set.

During training, the coders discussed decisions, as well as revised rules in the codebook with the author. The author's coding choices only took precedence in the occurrence of an impasse. During coding, variables that achieved reliability early in the coding process were assessed for drift; variables remained reliable. Reliability for each variable was achieved (of at least  $\alpha = 0.667$ ; Krippendorff, 2004). See Tables 1-4.<sup>12</sup>

## Coding

### *Units of Analysis*

The shows were coded on four levels: episode, scene, the individual cast member reference, and HBCU reference. In order to code the programs on the episode level, the name of the season, and a brief description of each episode were noted. For this portion of the analysis, unitization was natural: each show was an individual unit.

The second level of analysis was the scene. According to Iedema (2001), a *scene* is a “reconstruct[ed] unit still experienced as being concrete: a place, a moment in time, an action, compact and specific” (p. 188). Scenes are made up of many shots, which are defined as “uncut camera actions” (p. 188). This means the camera angle may change, but the camera movement itself is not moved to a new setting. A scene often ends with a “fade to black.” In addition, an extreme long shot or long shot of the scenery often begins a scene, to establish the setting; music changes in the audio track are also cues for scene changes. All of the scenes for each of the episodes were coded. Coders were instructed to provide the identification number of the season, as well as the identification numbers of the episode and the scene. They also provided a brief description of the scene. Unitization was demonstrated by coders being able to reach an acceptable level of intercoder reliability. For Virginia State University, Season 3, the percent agreement of scene selection between the two coders was 91.3%. For University of the Virgin Islands, Season 4, the percent agreement of scene selection between the two coders was 93.4%.<sup>13</sup>

In order to move from the general images discussed by the scholars above to measurable descriptors, the stereotypes were reduced to their essential behaviors, traits,

and appearances (see Appendix B). For example, The Gold Digger is a combination of The Welfare Mother and The Jezebel, as all three are sexually manipulative, and in some cases, use sex for material gain. Trying to measure the stereotypes without distilling their behaviors, traits, and appearances would be difficult for content analysis, as categories must be mutually exclusive and exhaustive. Consequently, these descriptors are listed in the table; coders noted if these behaviors, in particular, were exhibited by a male or female cast member. In the cases of the cast member appearance (scene and episode) and trait variables, coders indicated how each specific cast member was being portrayed. Cast member names were unique for each season; however, this was the only difference between the coding materials. The logical opposite of each indicator was also listed on the coding materials. Therefore, Appendix B allowed for the indicators of stereotypes of African Americans to actually be measured. It was these essential behaviors, traits, and appearances that were used for the content analysis. See Appendix C, which provides the operational definitions and coding directions found in the codebook; Appendix D presents the codesheet. Coders were instructed to ignore the recaps, previews, flashbacks, and confessionals presented in the show; they were only to code “real time” footage because these clips were often too brief to code for behaviors, presented material that was already being included in the analysis, and often presented cast members in various changes of attire during confessionals, even within one scene. The coding procedures listed below were adjusted as needed, during coder training and finalized before the coders began the sample of episodes not used for training.

#### *Cast Member Behaviors*

For cast *behaviors* the unit of analysis was the scene. In addition to indicating how each of the main cast members behaved, the coders also indicated if the behavior was performed by a male or female. With eight cast members, it was thought that the needs of the study would best be served by a reasonable match between the number of behaviors performed by cast members and the coding materials' ability to measure them; therefore, coders made note of the behaviors on the scene-level, rather than that of the episode. An attempt to code an entire *season* of behaviors appeared virtually impossible. Intercoder reliability was also demonstrated at the level of the scene. Pictures of both casts indicating each cast member's name was provided for the coders, to make sure they were only coding cast members. First, coders were instructed to provide the identification number of the season, as well as the identification numbers of the episode and the scene. They also provided a brief description of the scene. Coders were instructed to indicate each time a cast member performed each individual behavior during a scene. If no cast members performed a behavior, the coders indicated 0. If men (or women) did not appear in a scene, coders were instructed to indicate "X" (system missing). Each behavior was stereotypical or counter-stereotypical of African Americans. See Table 1 for average intercoder reliabilities of cast member behaviors.<sup>14</sup>

#### *Cast Member Traits*

For *traits*, the unit of analysis was the individual cast member reference in each scene. With eight cast members, it was thought that the needs of the study would best be served by a reasonable match between traits displayed by cast members and the coding materials' ability to measure them. Initially, an attempt was made to measure traits on the



level of the episode. However, intercoder reliability was not demonstrated on this level. Therefore, the adjustment was made to the scene-level. Specifically, the coders indicated which traits each of the main cast members exhibited, and how these traits were performed in terms of categories with three levels, such as *faithful*, *unfaithful*, and *not applicable*. *Not applicable* is used to indicate the absence of evidence to code a particular trait. The variable *optimistic/pessimistic* was suggested for inclusion by the coders, in order to differentiate between the variable *happy/angry*. While *optimistic/pessimistic* was coded with regard to cast members' outlooks, *happy/angry* was coded with regard to their moods. These variables were coded for each cast member. If a cast member did not appear, coders were instructed to indicate "X" (interpreted as system missing during data analysis). See Table 2 for average intercoder reliabilities of cast member traits.

#### *Cast Member Appearance*

For the *appearance* variables, the coders indicated which traits referred to how the cast members actually looked like physically. These variables were coded for each cast member; therefore, the unit of analysis was the individual cast member reference. Some of these descriptors were coded on the *scene* level, while others were coded on the *episode* level. This was to differentiate between appearance variables that might change from scene to scene (e.g., one of the cast members may wear flashy accessories in one scene, and wear no accessories in a following scene) and those that are more constant. Appearance variables such as these (e.g., displays a European facial norm) are likely to remain for an entire *episode*, and very likely the entire season, unless a unique situation occurs.

The coders were asked to consider how these variables were performed in terms of semantic differentials, such as *dresses modestly* (1), *neutral* (2), or *dresses immodestly* (3). Unlike the trait variables, which were discussed above, these variables have a true midpoint, since manifest indicators of each point for each variable were developed during the coder training process. It should be noted that in Appendix B, some stereotypes do not involve specific appearance descriptors. For example, both The Welfare Mother and The Black Lady are generally physically attractive.

*Scene-level cast descriptors.* The scene-level cast member descriptors are those that can change depending on the scene, such as *dresses modestly* (1), *neutral* (2), or *dresses immodestly* (3). The coders indicated how each cast member appears in each scene. For example, a cast member may be dressed with little or no skin exposed in one scene, but wear something low-cut and revealing in another scene. In addition to measuring the clothing and posturing of the cast members, it was also appropriate to measure the facial expressions of cast members with the variable *smiles/frowns*. Many of the sources which discuss the stereotypes of African Americans reference their often jolly—or angry—expressions, indicating the importance of such a variable to the current study, which was concerned with the appearances of African-American cast members on *College Hill*. If a cast member did not appear in a scene, coders were instructed to indicate “X” (interpreted as system missing during data analysis). If coders were unable to discern certain traits of a particular cast member (e.g., his/her face is not shown in the scene; his/her body is covered with a blanket), they were instructed to indicate “CT”

(can't tell; coded as 0 during data analysis). See Table 3 for average intercoder reliabilities of cast member appearances on the scene level.

*Episode-level cast descriptors.* The episode-level cast member descriptors are the more steadfast or unchanging physical descriptors that are likely to remain constant for the particular *episode*, and very likely the entire season, unless there is a unique occurrence (e.g., one of the cast members is in an accident; one of the cast members receives plastic surgery), such as *has dark skin* (1), *neutral* (2), or *has fair or light skin* (3).<sup>15</sup> All of the variables measured achieved perfect agreement ( $\alpha=1.000$ ) after four independent coding sessions, intermixed with three training meetings. These variables had to achieve perfect agreement because of the small number of episodes used for training purposes (for Season 3,  $N=7$ , for Season 4,  $N=7$ ).

#### *HBCU Portrayals*

Not only is it important to examine how the African-American students at HBCUs are being portrayed, but the images surrounding the actual HBCUs as well; this study attempts to explore the portrayals of HBCUs, in addition to the portrayals of African-American students as (re)presentations of the HBCU, shown on *College Hill*. To do so, references to HBCUs in the program were noted.

*Scene-level references.* Just as scholarly sources assisted in developing the initial coding categories regarding stereotypical behaviors of African Americans, the literature regarding the historical significance of HBCUs, particularly Augusta-Dupar's (2008) content analysis of mission statements of 10 HBCUs provided the thematic characteristics of the institutions.

Specifically, two academic goals (*emphasizes the development of Black consciousness and identity* and *emphasizes the development of Black history, racial pride, and ethnic traditions*) were combined to meet the content analytic requirements of mutually exclusivity and exhaustiveness. This was because the descriptions from Augusta-Dupar's (2008) analysis of HBCU mission statements did not clearly explain how these two academic goals, with their shared focus on racial heritage and pride of African Americans, were two separate goals. Each descriptor was previously categorized as an academic or social characteristic (Augusta-Dupar, 2008), and was then categorized as a goal or an anti-goal. A *goal* is a positive achievement that an institution desires to accomplish because it results in positive outcomes for the HBCU, students, administrators, and/or society at large. By contrast, *anti-goals* (a term developed uniquely for this project) are negative outcomes that would have detrimental results for the HBCU, students, administrators, and/or society at large.

To continue, within the level of the *scene*, the unit of analysis was the reference to the HBCU. For each *scene*, the coders first indicated if an explicit reference was made to the HBCU or not (e.g., the scene occurs on campus, focuses on a campus event, includes a faculty member). If so, then they also indicated how the HBCU specifically is being portrayed with regard to each particular reference. Coders were instructed indicate each reference, and then indicate either the goal or the anti-goal that is being enacted for each particular reference in a scene, (also indicating if it belonged with an academic categorization or a social categorization as based on Augusta-Dupar's 2008 study). If there were no references made to the University at all, then the coders indicated "X". The

three variables measured achieved acceptable agreement after two independent coding sessions, intermixed with one training meeting. See Table 4 for average intercoder reliabilities of HBCU scene-level references.

*Episode-level references.* Lastly, the coders indicated, if the HBCU was explicitly referenced in the *episode*, whether they categorized the entire episode's overall portrayal of the HBCU as *positive* (1), *neutral* (2), or *negative* (3). If there were no references made to the University at all, then the coders indicated "X". The two variables measured achieved perfect agreement ( $\alpha=1.000$ ) after two independent coding sessions, intermixed with one training meeting. These variables had to be achieve perfect agreement because of the small number of episodes used for training purposes (for Season 3,  $N=7$ , for Season 4,  $N=7$ ).

The results of the research questions and hypotheses are provided in the following, Chapter 6.

## CHAPTER 6: RESULTS

### Descriptive Statistics

Before providing the results to the research questions and the hypotheses, it is helpful to note the basic features of the data generated by the study. Season 3 of *College Hill* consisted of 141 scenes in 14 episodes; Season 4 consisted of 186 scenes in 16 episodes. These two seasons included 327 scenes overall. Both seasons consisted of four male and four female cast members.

#### Research Question 1

The first research question inquires about the number of the cast members' general behaviors, traits, and appearances on *College Hill*.

For cast member behaviors, which were measured on a ratio level (e.g., *nurtures others*), the author determined the frequency of each behavior in 327 scenes. The behavior with the highest occurrence was *strengthens friendship bonds* ( $n = 493$ ,  $M = 1.51$ ,  $SD = 2.34$ ), meaning that behaviors reflecting strengthening friendship bonds occurred on average 1.51 times per scene. In addition, the behavior with the second-highest occurrence was *wants attention from others* ( $n = 107$ ,  $M = 0.32$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ), which was followed closely by *committed to school* ( $n = 106$ ,  $M = 0.32$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ). The behavior that occurred the least was *not committed to school* ( $M = 0.03$ ,  $SD = 0.19$ ); the cast members performed this behavior only 10 times in the 327 scenes. See Table 5 for descriptives of cast members' behaviors.

For cast member traits and appearances on both the scene- and the episode-level, the unit of analysis was each reference to each individual cast member per scene. For cast member traits and appearances on the level of the scene, the total number of cast member references for each trait equaled 1,229 in 327 scenes.

For cast member traits, coders used a categorical coding scheme with three levels to code each trait, such as *faithful*, *unfaithful*, and *not applicable*. *Not applicable* was used to indicate the absence of evidence to code a particular trait. The frequencies of each trait were determined with regard to the three categories. Ten traits, *humble/arrogant*, *submissive/domineering*, *nice/mean*, *quiet loud*, *happy/angry*, *optimistic/pessimistic*, *harmless/threatening*, *image indifferent /image-conscious*, *cautious/impulsive*, and *valuable/useless* recoded so that all variables could be compared on a similar scale, with (in most cases) the positive ends of the binary listed first. In addition, there were three missing references for *athletically-inclined/athletically unlikely*. For all of the traits, the absence of evidence with which to code the particular trait was the most frequent of the categories.

To provide some examples, for the trait *happy/angry*, cast members were happy 485 times (39.5%), in contrast to the 118 times (9.6%) they were coded as angry. Also, cast members were *protected* 29 times (2.4%), but *threatened* by other cast members 51 times (4.1%). When athleticism was referenced, cast members were referenced as *athletically-inclined* 20 times (1.6%)—and as *athletically unlikely* only once. See Table 6 for the frequencies of all cast member traits.

In addition, the two seasons were also analyzed for cast members' appearance, both on the scene- (*i.e.*, *dresses modestly/dresses immodestly*) and the episode-level (*i.e.*, *has dark skin/has fair or light skin*). Coders used semantic differentials, such as *dresses modestly* (1), *neutral* (2), or *dresses immodestly* (3) to rate the presence of the traits; these variables have a true midpoint, since manifest indicators of each point for each variable were developed during the coder training process. As a result, it was possible for cast members to be coded as *neutral*, between *modest* and *immodest*. As discussed above, for cast member appearances on both the scene- and the episode-level, the unit of analysis was each coding reference to each individual cast member.

For cast member appearances on the level of the scene, the mean equaled 1.82 ( $SD= 0.59$ ) for the variable *dressed modestly* (1)/*dressed immodestly* (3). In addition, the mean of the variable *smiling* (1)/*frowning* (3) equaled 1.69 ( $SD= 0.69$ ). See Table 7 for descriptive statistics of cast member appearance on the scene level.

As mentioned above, for cast member appearances on the episode-level, the unit of analysis was each coding reference to each individual cast member. For these variables, the total number of cast member references for each appearance descriptor was 234 in 30 episodes, with six references being absent from the analysis. This was because there were six instances in which cast members were missing from the episodes. The data were analyzed by determining the mean of each appearance descriptor divided by the total number of cast member references. For instance, for the descriptor *has dark skin* (1)/*has fair or light skin* (3), the mean equaled 2.06 ( $SD = 0.81$ ). Also, for the descriptor *has long hair* (1)/*has short hair* (3), the mean for cast members equaled 2.00 ( $SD = 0.81$ ),



the midpoint. See Table 8 for all of the descriptive statistics of cast member appearance on the episode level.

Lastly, the variable *displays European facial norm* (1)/*neutral* (2)/*displays African facial norm* (3) was analyzed for each individual cast member. Only two of the 16 cast members (J.T. and Krystal) had facial features that were considered European. By contrast, seven of the 16 cast members (Anyia, Rodney, Ray, Idesha, Willie Macc, Chicky, and Fallon) possessed facial features that conformed to an African norm. The remaining seven cast members had facial features that fell at the midpoint, as opposed to being positioned at either end of the scale.

#### Research Question 2

Before determining how the portrayals of African-American cast members on *College Hill* might differ according to gender as previously discussed, the second research question inquires about which of the descriptors are most likely to occur in relation to their logical opposites on *College Hill*. Recall from Chapter 4 that stereotypes of African Americans often consist of behaviors, traits, and appearances that are expected of African Americans on the basis of certain stereotypes—and characteristics that appear counter-stereotypical in light of other stereotypes.

For the behavior variables, which were measured on a ratio level (e.g., *nurtures others*), the means of each behavior were compared with the means of its logical opposite utilizing paired-samples *t*-tests. This procedure is an initial step in considering how often traits that might be considered either stereotypical *or* counter-stereotypical of known

stereotypes occur on *College Hill*. These were scene-level variables; there were 327 scenes.

It was found that cast members performed significantly more behaviors that were demonstrative of being *committed to school* ( $M = 0.32$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ) than being *not committed to school* ( $M = 0.03$ ,  $SD = 0.19$ ,  $t(326) = 5.79$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.32$ ). In addition, they also demonstrated acts that were illustrative of *strengthening friendship bonds* ( $M = 1.51$ ,  $SD = 2.34$ ) significantly more frequently than those that *weakened the bonds of friendship* ( $M = 0.30$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ,  $t(326) = 8.56$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.47$ ). The cast members *wanted attention* ( $M = 0.33$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ) significantly more than they *rejected it* ( $M = 0.11$ ,  $SD = 0.33$ ,  $t(326) = 3.93$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.22$ ). Finally, cast members did significantly more *demanding* ( $M = 0.13$ ,  $SD = 0.47$ ) of each other and those around them, as opposed to making *requests* ( $M = 0.07$ ,  $SD = 0.27$ ,  $t(326) = 2.20$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $d = 0.12$ ). Cast members did not *nurture others* more than they *neglected* them, and they *achieved romantic relationships* at the same frequency that they *could not achieve such relationships*. They also *challenged gender norms* as often as they *accepted* them. See Table 9 for the results of these procedures.

By contrast, for the trait variables which were measured on the level of the cast member reference (e.g., *faithful/unfaithful/not applicable*), proportions were examined via one-way  $\chi^2$ -tests to compare the proportions of each category. *Not applicable* was used to indicate the absence of evidence to code the particular trait. Therefore, all of the references that were coded *not applicable* were treated as missing data.

Of the 138 references for the variable *emotional strength/emotional weakness*, it was found that cast members demonstrated *emotional strength* (60.9%,  $n=84$ ) significantly more times than they demonstrated *emotional weakness* (39.1%,  $n=54$ ),  $\chi^2(1, N=138) = 6.52, p < .01$ . In addition, for the variable *humble/arrogant* ( $N=85$ ), cast members were *arrogant* (67.1%,  $n=57$ ) significantly more times than they were shown being *humble* (32.9%,  $n=28$ ),  $\chi^2(1, N=85) = 9.89, p < .01$ . For the variable *nice/mean* ( $N=231$ ), they were portrayed as *nice* (72.7%,  $n=168$ ) to a significantly greater frequency than they were portrayed as *mean* (27.3%,  $n=63$ ),  $\chi^2(1, N=231) = 47.73, p < .001$ , and for the variable *encouraging/discouraging* ( $N=183$ ), they were portrayed as *encouraging* (75.4%,  $n=138$ ) significantly more times than *discouraging* (24.6%,  $n=45$ ),  $\chi^2(1, N=183) = 47.26, p < .001$ . In addition, of the 300 references for the variable *quiet/loud*, they were coded as being *quiet* (60%,  $n=180$ ) significantly more than *loud* (40%,  $n=120$ ),  $\chi^2(1, N=300) = 12.00, p < .001$  or noisy, and out of 603 references for *happy/angry*, were also *happy* (80.4%,  $n=485$ ) significantly more times than they were *angry* (19.6%,  $n=118$ ),  $\chi^2(1, N=603) = 223.37, p < .001$ . The same was also true of the trait *optimistic* (68.0%,  $n=446$ )/*pessimistic* (32.0%,  $n=210$ ) which had a total of 656 references; the cast members were shown as having a positive outlook significantly more than a negative one,  $\chi^2(1, N=656) = 84.90, p < .01$ .

Out of the 170 references for the trait *industrious/lazy*, cast members were also portrayed as *industrious* (68.8%,  $n=117$ ) significantly more times than they were being *lazy* (31.2%,  $n=53$ ),  $\chi^2(1, N=170) = 24.09, p < .001$ . Though there were only 26 total cast member references for *independent* (73.1%,  $n=19$ )/*dependent* (26.9%,  $n=7$ ), cast

members were seen as *independent* significantly more times than as *dependent* ( $\chi^2(1, N=26) = 5.54, p < .05$ ). Interestingly, they were portrayed as *threatened* (36.3%,  $n=30$ ) significantly more than *protected* (63.8%,  $n=51$ ,  $\chi^2(1, N=80) = 6.05, p < .05$ ) out of 80 references for protected/ threatened, and *threatening* (62.8%,  $n=59$ ) significantly more than *harmless* (37.2%,  $n=35$ ),  $\chi^2(1, N=94) = 6.13, p < .05$  for *harmless/threatening* in 94 references.

In addition, out of the 100 references for *image indifferent image-conscious*, cast members were also portrayed as *image-conscious* (65.0%,  $n=65$ ) significantly more times than they were *image indifferent* (35.0%,  $n=35$ ),  $\chi^2(1, N=100) = 9.00, p < .01$ ; however, for the variable *self-assured/self doubting* ( $N=168$ ), they were *self-assured* (83.9%,  $n=141$ ) more than *self-doubting* (16.1%,  $n=27$ ),  $\chi^2(1, N=168) = 77.36, p < .001$ . Further, for the variable *constructive/destructive* ( $N=165$ ), cast members were portrayed as *constructive* (94.5%,  $n=156$ ) significantly more than *destructive* (5.5%,  $n=9$ ),  $\chi^2(1, N=165) = 130.96, p < .001$ . Though the variable *cautious* (22.7%,  $n=15$ )/*impulsive* (77.3%,  $n=51$ ) received 66 cast member references, cast members were coded as *impulsive* significantly more than they were *cautious* ( $\chi^2(1, N=66) = 19.64, p < .001$ ). They were also portrayed as *valuable* (83.5%,  $n=106$ ) significantly more than *useless* (16.5%,  $n=21$ ),  $\chi^2(1, N=127) = 56.89, p < .001$  for the variable *valuable/useless*. In addition, for the variable *forgiving/blaming* ( $N=148$ ), cast members were portrayed as *blaming* (85.8%,  $n=127$ ) significantly more than *forgiving* (14.2%,  $n=21$ ),  $\chi^2(1, N=148) = 75.92, p < .001$ . Lastly, out of the 21 references for *athletically-inclined/athletically unlikely*, they were significantly more *athletically-inclined* (95.2%,  $n=20$ ) instead of *not*

*athletic* (4.8%,  $n=1$ ),  $\chi^2(1, N=21) = 17.19, p < .001$ . There were no significant differences between the proportions of the variables *faithful/unfaithful* and *submissive/domineering*. See Table 10 for the results of these procedures.

Cast member appearance was measured on both the level of the scene (*i.e.*, *dresses modestly* (1)/*dresses immodestly* (3)) and on the episode (*i.e.*, *has dark skin* (1)/*has light skin* (3)). For the former, an ordinal level of measurement was utilized (e.g., *well-groomed* (1)/*poorly groomed* (3)); means were estimated with one-sample *t*-tests to determine if the means were significantly different from two, which was the midpoint on the scale (1-3). As initially put forth in Chapter 5, unlike the trait variables discussed above, these variables have a true midpoint, since manifest indicators of each point for each variable were developed during the coder training process. For these variables,  $N = 1,229$  character references. However, there were six missing character references for *dresses modestly/dresses immodestly*, five missing character references for *sexy/not sexy*, *wears flashy accessories/wears no accessories*, and *smiles/frowns*, and four missing character references for *well-groomed/poorly groomed*. It was found that cast members appeared *dressed* more *modestly* (1) than *dressed immodestly* (3;  $M = 1.82, SD = 0.59, t(1222) = -11.05, p < .001, d = 0.32$ ). However, they also dressed or posed in a *sexy* (1) fashion more than in a manner that was *not* considered *sexy* (3;  $M = 1.94, SD = 0.48, t(1223) = -4.48, p < .001, d = 0.13$ ). In addition, the cast members appeared *well-groomed* (1) more than they did *poorly groomed* on the show (3;  $M = 1.82, SD = 0.71, t(1224) = -8.94, p < .001, d = 0.27$ ). Also, the cast members appeared *wearing no accessories* (1) more than they appeared *wearing flashy ones* (3;  $M = 2.09, SD = 0.79, t(1223) = 3.82, p$

$< .001$ ,  $d = 0.11$ ). Lastly, the cast members *smiled* (1) more often than they *frowned* (3;  $M = 1.69$ ,  $SD = 0.69$ ,  $t(1223) = -15.81$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.45$ ). See Table 11 for the results of these procedures.

For the episode-level appearance measures on the ordinal level (e.g., *has long hair* (1)/*has short hair* (3)), means were also estimated with one-sample  $t$ -tests to determine if the means were significantly different from two, which was the midpoint on the scale (1-3). Like the scene-level appearance variables, these variables also have a true midpoint, since manifest indicators of each point for each variable were developed during the coder training process. For these variables, the total number of cast member references for each appearance descriptor was 234 in 30 episodes, with six references being absent from the analysis. This was because there was a total of six instances in which cast members were missing from the episodes. It was found that cast members *had curly hair* (3) to a degree statistically greater than *had straight hair* (1;  $M = 2.16$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ,  $t(233) = 3.41$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.23$ ). The variables *has dark skin* (1)/*has fair or light skin* (3) and *has long hair* (1)/*has short hair* (3) did not significantly differ from the midpoint. See Table 12 for the results of these procedures.

During analysis of the descriptive statistics, it was found that two of the 16 cast members had European facial features, seven had facial features that fell at the midpoint, and seven had features that were considered African. Therefore, the variable *displays European facial norm* (1), *neutral* (2), *displays African facial norm* (3) was analyzed using a one-way  $\chi^2$  analysis to determine if there was a significant difference in proportion among the three facial norm categories. For this variable, the total number of

cast member references was 234 in 30 episodes because there were six missing cast member references. It was found that there as a significant difference between the three categories,  $(2, N = 234) = 15.10, p < .001$ . Therefore, Marscuilo contrasts (Glass & Hopkins, 1996) were computed to find the differences between the cells. It was found that there were significantly more cast members that displayed African facial features ( $n = 105$  cast member references, 43.8%) than those that displayed European facial features ( $n = 71$  cast member references, 29.6%) at the  $p < .05$  level. In addition, there were significantly more cast members that possessed African facial features than those who had facial features that fell on the midpoint of the scale ( $n = 58$  cast member references, 24.2%) at the  $p < .05$  level.

### Research Question 3

The third research question asked if male African-American cast members on *College Hill* were portrayed differently from female African-American cast members on the show.

To provide some context for the behavior variables (e.g., *nurtures others*) which were measured continuously, male cast members appeared in 276 out of 327 scenes; female cast members appeared in 297 out of 327 scenes. The total number of scenes that women and men appeared in together is  $n = 245$ . However, *nurtures others*, *neglects others*, *views sex as primarily recreational*, *committed to school*, *not committed to school*, *strengthens friendship bonds*, *cannot achieve a romantic relationship*, and *challenges traditional gender norms* each had three missing cases. *Weakens friendship bonds* had two missing cases, and *wants attention from others* had one missing case.

*Strengthens friendship bonds* was the behavior with the highest mean for men, as they performed this behavior 242 times in the scenes in which they appeared ( $M = 0.93$ ,  $SD = 1.36$ ). This was also the behavior with the highest mean for women, who displayed this behavior 251 times in the scenes in which they appeared ( $M = 0.93$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ).

*Wants attention from others* was the behavior with the second-highest mean for men; they performed this behavior 50 times in the scenes in which they appeared ( $M = 0.19$ ,  $SD = 0.59$ ). This was also the behavior with the second-highest mean for women, who displayed this behavior 57 times in the scenes in which they appeared ( $M = 0.21$ ,  $SD = 0.66$ ). *Not committed to school* ( $M = 0.01$ ,  $SD = 0.09$ ) and *requests* ( $M = 0.01$ ,  $SD = 0.09$ ) were the behaviors with the lowest means for men, as men displayed *not being committed to school* only twice, and made *requests* only three times in the scenes in which they appeared. *Not committed to school* was also the behavior with the lowest mean for women ( $M = 0.02$ ,  $SD = 0.14$ ); women performed this behavior only eight times in the scenes in which they appeared.

Paired samples *t*-tests were used to answer this portion of the research question. These statistics compared the means of the male cast members to the means of the female cast members for each variable to determine if men or women performed the behaviors more frequently than the other. It was found that women ( $M = 0.14$ ,  $SD = 0.45$ ) were significantly more *neglectful* than men ( $M = 0.08$ ,  $SD = 0.40$ ,  $t(242) = -2.29$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $d = 0.15$ ), and that they *accepted gender norms* ( $M = 0.07$ ,  $SD = 0.27$ ) significantly more than male cast members did ( $M = 0.03$ ,  $SD = 0.19$ ,  $t(243) = -2.53$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $d = 0.16$ ). In addition, female cast members ( $M = 0.13$ ,  $SD = 0.45$ ) made *demands* significantly more



often than male characters ( $M = 0.04$ ,  $SD = 0.19$ ,  $t(244) = -3.63$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.24$ ); interestingly, they ( $M = 0.07$ ,  $SD = 0.26$ ) also made *requests* significantly more often than men ( $M = 0.01$ ,  $SD = 0.09$ ,  $t(244) = -3.19$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $d = 0.21$ ).

The following behaviors did not demonstrate statistically significant gender differences: *nurtures others*, *views sex as primarily recreational*, *committed to school*, *not committed to school*, *strengthens friendship bonds*, *weakens friendship bonds*, *achieves a romantic relationship*, *cannot achieve a romantic relationship*, *wants attention from others*, *rejects attention from others*, *challenges traditional gender norms*, *accepts traditional gender norms*, *demands*, and *requests*. See Table 13 for the results of these procedures.

For cast member traits and appearances on both the scene- and the episode-level, the unit of analysis was each reference to each individual cast member. Recall from Chapter 5 that for these variables, the coders indicated which traits referred to how the cast members actually looked like physically. To provide some context, for male cast members,  $n = 589$  cast member references (in 327 scenes); for female cast members,  $n = 640$  cast member references (in 327 scenes). Additionally, some variables were measured on the episode level for cast members. For male cast members,  $n = 118$  cast member references (in 30 episodes), with two references being absent from the analysis as a result of a cast member being absent from two episodes; for female cast members,  $n = 116$  cast member references (in 30 episodes), with four references being absent from the analysis as a result of a cast member being absent from four episodes.

For the traits variables, which were measured on the level of the cast member reference (e.g., *faithful/unfaithful/not applicable*), proportions were examined via two-way  $\chi^2$ -tests to compare the proportions of each category. *Not applicable* was used to indicate the absence of evidence to code the particular trait. Therefore, all of the references that were coded *not applicable* were treated as missing data.

It was found that there was a statistically significant relationship between gender and emotional strength ( $\chi^2(1, N=138) = 10.48, p < .001, V = 0.28$ ). More specifically, Marascuilo contrasts (Glass & Hopkins, 1996) found that there were significantly more instances of men (78.4%) demonstrating *emotional strength* than women (50.6%), and women (49.4%) demonstrating *emotional weakness* than men (21.6%) at the  $p < .05$  level. Similarly, there was a statistically significant relationship between gender and humility ( $\chi^2(1, N=85) = 9.47, p < .01, V = 0.33$ ). More specifically, Marascuilo contrasts found that there were significantly more instances of women (79.2%) demonstrating *arrogance* than men (46.9%) at the  $p < .05$  level. In addition, there was a statistically significant relationship between gender and submissiveness ( $\chi^2(1, N=129) = 20.69, p < .001, V = 0.40$ ). More specifically, Marascuilo contrasts found that there were significantly more instances of men (66.1%) being *submissive* than women (26.0%), and women (74%) being more *domineering* than men (33.9%) at the  $p < .05$  level.

Also, it was found that there was a statistically significant relationship between gender and kindness ( $\chi^2(1, N=231) = 4.70, p < .01, V = 0.14$ ). More specifically, Marascuilo contrasts (Glass & Hopkins, 1996) found that there were significantly more instances of men (80.0%) being *nice* than women (67.2%) at the  $p < .05$  level. It was

found that there was a statistically significant relationship between gender and how quiet or loud a cast member was portrayed ( $\chi^2(1, N=300) = 6.99, p < .01, V = 0.15$ ). More specifically, Marascuilo contrasts found that there were significantly more instances of men (67.1%) demonstrating *quietness* than women (52.1%), and women (47.9%) being significantly *louder* than men (32.9%) at the  $p < .05$  level. Similarly, there was a statistically significant relationship between gender and a cast member's mood ( $\chi^2(1, N=603) = 15.27, p < .001, V = 0.16$ ). More specifically, Marascuilo contrasts found that there were that there were significantly more instances of men (87.2%) demonstrating *happiness* than women (74.5%), and significantly more instances of women (25.5%) demonstrating *anger* than men (12.8%) at the  $p < .05$  level. Lastly, there was a statistically significant relationship between gender and a cast member's outlook ( $\chi^2(1, N=656) = 9.58, p < .01, V = 0.12$ ). More specifically, Marascuilo contrasts found that there were significantly more instances of men (73.8%) demonstrating *optimism* than women (62.5%), and significantly more instances of women (37.5%) demonstrating *pessimism* than men (26.2%) at the  $p < .05$  level.

There were no statistically significant relationship between the genders and the following variables: *faithful/unfaithful*, *encouraging/discouraging*, *industrious/lazy*, *independent/dependent*, *protected/threatened*, *harmless/threatening*, *image indifferent/image-conscious*, *self-assured/self-doubting*, *constructive/destructive*, *cautious/impulsive*, *valuable/useless*, *forgiving/blaming*, and *athletically-inclined/athletically unlikely*. In summary, out of the 14 gender differences analyzed,

eight showed significant gender differences. See Table 14 for the results of these procedures.

Cast member appearance was measured ordinally on both the level of the scene (*i.e.*, *dresses modestly* (1)/*dresses immodestly* (3)) and on the episode (*i.e.*, *has dark skin* (1) *has light skin* (3)). These variables also have a true midpoint, since manifest indicators of each point for each variable were developed during the coder training process.

To provide some context for the scene-level appearance variables (*i.e.*, *well-groomed* (1), *neutral* (2), *poorly groomed* (3)), the total number of cast member references was  $N = 1229$ . For male cast members,  $n = 589$ ; for female cast members,  $n = 640$ . The data were analyzed by determining the mean of the cast member references divided by the total number of cast member references; this procedure was completed for each appearance descriptor and both genders. For male cast members, there was one missing reference for *sexy* (1)/*not sexy* (3), *wears flashy accessories* (1)/*wears no accessories* (3), and *smiles* (1)/*frowns* (3). For female cast members, there was one missing reference for *dresses modestly*/ *dresses immodestly*. For the descriptor *wears flashy accessories* (1)/*wears no accessories* (3), the mean for male cast members equaled 2.24 ( $SD = 0.80$ ); for female cast members, the mean of this descriptor equaled 1.95 ( $SD = 0.76$ ). In addition, for the descriptor *sexy* (1)/*not sexy* (3), the mean for men equaled 1.98 ( $SD = 0.39$ ), and for women, the mean for the same descriptor equaled 1.91 ( $SD = 0.49$ ).

Means of the scene-level appearance measures were estimated with independent-samples *t*-tests with gender as the grouping variable to compare each of the means of the male cast members to the means of the female cast members for each variable. It was found for the variable *sexy* (1)/*not sexy* (3), that men ( $M = 1.98$ ,  $SD = 0.39$ ) were portrayed significantly less sexy than women ( $M = 1.91$ ,  $SD = 0.49$ ), ( $t(1194.74) = 2.91$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $d = 0.16$ ). In addition, for the variable *well-groomed* (1)/*poorly groomed* (3), there was a statistically significant difference in the way the cast members were portrayed. Specifically, women ( $M = 1.74$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ) were coded as more well-groomed than men ( $M = 1.90$ ,  $SD = 0.66$ ),  $t(1221.86) = 4.10$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.23$ . Lastly, there was a statistically significant difference between the amount of jewelry and other adornments male and female cast members wore: for the variable *wears flashy accessories* (1)/*wears no accessories* (3), male cast members ( $M = 2.24$ ,  $SD = 0.80$ ) were portrayed as wearing fewer accessories than women were ( $M = 1.95$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ),  $t(1196.44) = 6.46$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.37$ . There were no significant differences between the genders regarding the *modesty* (1) or *immodesty* (3) of clothing or whether they *smiled* (1) or *frowned* (3). See Table 15 for the results of these procedures.

To provide context for the episode-level appearance measures on the ordinal level (e.g., *has long hair* (1), *neutral* (2), *has short hair* (3)), the total number of cast member references was  $N = 234$ . The total number of cast member references for men was  $n = 118$ . For male cast members, there were two missing references because a cast member was missing in two episodes. The total number of cast member references for women was  $n = 116$ . For female cast members, there were four missing references because a cast

member was missing in four episodes. In addition, for the descriptor *has long hair* (1)/*has short hair* (3), the mean for male cast members equaled 2.31 ( $SD = 0.88$ ); for female cast members, the mean of this descriptor equaled 1.67 ( $SD = 0.56$ ).

Like the scene-level appearance variables, means of the episode-level appearance measures were also estimated with independent-samples *t*-tests (with gender as the grouping variable) to compare each of the means of the male cast members to the means of the female cast members for each variable. It was found that there was a significant difference in the skin color and the hair length of the cast members. Specifically, men ( $M = 1.81$ ,  $SD = 0.81$ ) were coded as *having darker skin* than female cast members ( $M = 2.32$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ),  $t(232) = -5.14$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.67$ ). In addition, for the variable *has long hair* (1)/*has short hair* (3), male cast members ( $M = 2.31$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ) were portrayed as having hair shorter than their female counterparts ( $M = 1.67$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ ,  $t(197.6) = 6.65$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.78$ ). The two genders did not differ in the *straightness* (1) or *curliness* (3) of their hair. See Table 16 for the results of these procedures.

During analysis of second research question, it was found that for the variable *displays European facial norm* (1), *neutral* (2), *displays African facial norm* (3), there were significant differences among the three facial norm categories. Therefore, the variable was analyzed using a two-way  $\chi^2$  analysis to determine if there was a significant difference in proportion among the three facial norm categories with regard to gender. It was found that there was not a significant difference between the proportions,  $\chi^2 = (2, N = 234) = 4.02$ ,  $p = .13$ ,  $V = .13$ . Therefore, no further tests were computed.

#### Research Question 4

The fourth research question explores whether the behaviors, traits, and appearance characteristics of cast members on *College Hill* group into interpretable clusters and how they differed according to gender.

This question required the use of hierarchical cluster analyses. Specifically, there were four individual cluster analyses performed by gender and variable type: male behaviors, female behaviors, male traits and appearances, and female traits and appearances. These analyses involved only scene-level (male and female behaviors) and cast member reference-level (male and female traits and appearances) variables; because there were only five episode-level appearance variables in the study, they were not appropriate for cluster analysis. In addition, behaviors were analyzed separately from traits and appearances because they utilized different units of analysis. Because stereotypes of African Americans are often gendered (e.g., Hill Collins, 2000, 2005; hooks, 2000), it was appropriate to run analyses separately for men and women to discern how the clusters differed.

Also, the furthest neighbor technique was selected, the means of the variables were standardized using z-scores, and because the behaviors were measured on the ratio level, traits were measured on the categorical level, and appearances were measured ordinally, the method selection utilized squared Euclidean distance for the interval measure for all four analyses.<sup>16</sup> In addition, the analysis grouped variables, as opposed to cases because this analysis was not concerned with which individual cases of variables would cluster with each other, but which *variables* would cluster together. The analysis

produced clusters which required inductive reasoning to interpret; analyses of the dendrograms and the agglomeration schedules assisted in the interpretation process.

The first cluster analysis involved male behaviors, resulting in three clusters. The first cluster included *views sex as primarily recreational*, *wants attention from others*, *strengthens friendship bonds*, and *achieves a romantic relationship*. All of these items are behaviors that involve voluntary interactions with others, or *social behaviors*. The second cluster included *committed to school*, *asks*, *nurtures others*, and *challenges gender norms*. These behaviors display *respect for self and others*. The third cluster appears to be the conceptual opposite of the first, as it includes *neglects others*, *demands*, *weakens friendship bonds*, *rejects attention from others*, *not committed to school*, *accepts gender norms*, and *cannot achieve a romantic relationship*. These behaviors are representative of *anti-social and self-centered behaviors*, or those behaviors that display selfishness and a desire to be away from others. See Figure 1 for the dendrogram of this analysis.

The second cluster analysis involved female behaviors, resulting in four clusters. The first cluster included *views sex as primarily recreational*, *wants attention from others*, and *strengthens friendship bonds*. All of these items are behaviors that involve voluntary interactions with others, or *social behaviors*. The second cluster included *challenges gender norms*, *accepts gender norms*, *neglects others*, *weakens friendship bonds*, *rejects attention from others*, and *demands*. These behaviors display selfishness and a desire to be away from others, or *anti-social and self-centered behaviors*. The third cluster includes *committed to school*, *not committed to school*, and *achieves a romantic relationship*. These behaviors reflect a *tension of involvement*, particularly with regard to



one's studies and the desire to maintain a romantic relationship. The fourth and final cluster suggests a *devoted serving of others* and includes *cannot achieve a romantic relationship*, *asks*, and *nurtures others*. See Figure 2 for the dendrogram of this analysis.

To compare between these two cluster analyses, the male and female cast members on *College Hill* both presented behaviors that could be categorized as *social behaviors*, though this particular cluster was stronger for men and contained one more variable than the female counterpart. In addition, both men and women presented behaviors that were *anti-social and self-centered*. However, these clusters did differ with regard to the variables that they included, and the cluster strength was stronger for women. Also, only men appeared to display behaviors that suggested *respect for self and others*; this cluster was of equal strength to the other male behavior clusters. By contrast, female cast member behaviors also involved two other clusters that male cast members did not portray: *a tension of involvement* and a *devoted serving of others*. These two clusters were of equal strength and stronger than the other two clusters of female cast member behaviors.

The third cluster analysis involved male traits and appearance variables, resulting in six major clusters. The first cluster included *happy/angry*, *optimistic/pessimistic*, *smiles/frowns*, and *forgiving/blaming*. These traits represent *a positive reaction to a situation/a negative reaction to a situation*. The second cluster included *humble/arrogant*, *harmless/threatening*, *nice/mean*, *emotional strength/emotional weakness*, and *protected/threatened*. These traits suggest *good treatment of others/poor treatment of others*. The third cluster consisted of three variables: *constructive/destructive*,

*valuable/useless, and industrious/lazy. Together, these traits imply an active and constructive attitude/a lax or destructive attitude.*

The fourth cluster consisted entirely of appearance variables, suggesting *a concern with appearance/an indifference to appearance*. These variables were *well-groomed/poorly groomed, wears flashy accessories/wears no accessories, and dresses modestly/dresses immodestly*. The fifth cluster included *image indifferent/image-conscious, self-assured/self-doubting* and *faithful/unfaithful*. These traits represent *a positive evaluation of self and support of others/a negative evaluation of self and a lack of support for others*. The sixth and final cluster included *submissive/domineering, quiet/loud, cautious/impulsive, and encouraging/discouraging*. These traits reflect *a calm temperament and emotional balance/an excitable temperament and emotional instability*. Three traits did not fit sensibly into any of the related clusters. They were *sexy/not sexy, independent/dependent, and athletically-inclined/athletically unlikely*. See Figure 3 for the dendrogram of this analysis.

The fourth cluster analysis involved female traits and appearance variables, resulting in six major clusters. The first cluster included *happy/angry, optimistic/pessimistic, smiles/frowns, and forgiving/blaming*. These traits represent *a positive reaction to a situation/a negative reaction to a situation*. The second cluster included *humble/arrogant, nice/mean, harmless/threatening, emotional strength/emotional weakness, protected/threatened, and harmless/threatening*. These traits suggest *good treatment of others/poor treatment of others*. The third cluster consisted of three variables: *constructive/destructive, valuable/useless, and*

*industrious/lazy*, implying an *active and constructive attitude/a lax or destructive attitude*.

The fourth cluster included *image indifferent/image-conscious*, *self-assured/self-doubting* and *faithful/unfaithful*. These traits represent a *positive evaluation of self and support of others/a negative evaluation of self and a lack of support for others*. The fifth cluster included three traits, *submissive/domineering*, *quiet/loud*, and *cautious/impulsive*. These traits reflect a *calm temperament and emotional balance/an excitable temperament and emotional instability*. The sixth and final cluster included three appearance variables, *well-groomed/poorly groomed*, *wears flashy accessories/wears no accessories*, and *dresses modestly/dresses immodestly*. These descriptors suggest a *concern with appearance/an indifference to appearance*. Three traits did not fit sensibly into any of the related clusters. They were *independent/dependent*, *encouraging/discouraging*, and *dresses modestly/dresses immodestly*. See Figure 4 for the dendrogram of this analysis.

To compare between these two cluster analyses, the male and female cast members on *College Hill* both presented traits and appearances that could be categorized as a *positive reaction to a situation/a negative reaction to a situation*, and both of these clusters were of equal strength. In addition, both men and women presented traits and appearances that were representative of *good treatment of others/poor treatment of others*. The cluster strength was equal for both groups. Also, both men and women presented traits and appearances that were representative of *an active and constructive attitude/a lax or destructive attitude*. However, the cluster for men was stronger than the cluster for women. Further, both male cast members and female cast members possessed

traits and appearances that suggested *a concern with appearance/an indifference to appearance*; they were of the same strength. Both men and women on *College Hill* displayed traits and appearances that suggested *a calm temperament and emotional balance/an excitable temperament and emotional instability*. These clusters consisted of the same variables and were of the same strength. In addition, both male and female cast members had traits and appearances that suggested *a positive evaluation of self and support of others/a negative evaluation of self and a lack of support of others*; these clusters were equally strong. Lastly, the variables *independent/dependent* and *athletically inclined/athletically unlikely* did not have suggest meaning within the cluster analyses of either group; *encouraging/discouraging* did not suggest meaning within the clusters of the female traits and appearances.

In summary, both male and female cast members of *College Hill* demonstrated behaviors that indicated *social behaviors* and *anti-social and self-centered behaviors*. By contrast, only male cast members display behaviors that suggested *respect for self and others*, and only female cast members displayed behaviors that implied a *tension of involvement* and a *devoted serving of others*. Both men and women displayed the same six traits and appearances clusters on the show: *a positive reaction to a situation/a negative reaction to a situation, good treatment of others/poor treatment of others, an active and constructive attitude/a lax or destructive attitude, a positive evaluation of self and support of others/a negative evaluation of self and a lack of support for others, a calm temperament and emotional balance/an excitable temperament and emotional instability, and a concern with appearance/an indifference to appearance*.

### Research Question 5

The fifth research question is concerned with comparing the number of scenes of *College Hill* with an explicit reference to HBCUs with the number of scenes that do not have explicit HBCU references. This comparison required a one-way  $\chi^2$ . The analysis revealed that during the two seasons, there were significantly more scenes without references to the HBCUs ( $n = 284$ ) than those with references to HBCUs ( $n = 43$ ),  $\chi^2(1, N = 284) = 177.62, p < .001$ .

### Research Questions 6a and 6b

Question 6a inquires which of the academic goals is most prevalent in *College Hill*. For example, within the academic goals category, which of the five categories is the most prevalent? To provide some context, forty-two of the scene references were coded as goals, and categorized as those that *promoted student self worth* (38.0%,  $n = 16$ ), followed by those that illustrated the HBCU as *promoting positive regard for humankind* (28.6%,  $n = 12$ ) and *striving to educate the whole individual* (28.6%,  $n = 12$ ). See Table 17 for all of the descriptive statistics of HBCU references on the scene level.

To answer this research question, a one-way  $\chi^2$  was executed. This analysis revealed that there was a significant difference among the three academic goals categories that were referenced by *College Hill*,  $\chi^2(2, N = 30) = 10.40, p < .006$ . Therefore, Marscuilo contrasts (Glass & Hopkins, 1996) were computed to find the differences between the academic goal cells. It was found that the *promotes student self-worth* category (53%,  $n = 16$ ) was significantly greater than the other proportions. As noted in Table 17, of the 43 references to HBCUs in *College Hill* scenes, *striving to*

*educate the whole individual* was the only social goal that appeared on the show (27.9%,  $n = 12$ ). Therefore, a one-way  $\chi^2$  was not necessary to answer RQ6b, that inquires which of the social goals is the most prevalent.

#### Research Question 7

This research question focused only on the goals category overall. Specifically, the question asks about the frequency of both academic goals and social goals, and which category is more prevalent. This comparison required a one-way  $\chi^2$ . To do so, the five subcategories of the academic goals were combined to create an overall “academic goals” category. In addition, the three subcategories of the social goals were combined to create an overall “social goals” category. The one-way  $\chi^2$  analysis compared the “academic goals” and “social goals” categories. The analysis revealed that there were significantly more academic references to HBCUs (71.43%,  $n = 42$ ) than social references to HBCUs (28.57%,  $n = 12$ ),  $\chi^2(1, N = 42) = 7.71, p < .005$ .

#### Research Questions 8a and 8b

These two research questions are similar in structure to RQ6a and b, first inquiring which of the academic anti-goals is most prevalent during *College Hill*. For example, within the academic anti-goals category, which of the five categories occurs the most? To answer this question, descriptive statistics provided sufficient information, as there was only one instance of a reference to the HBCU that was categorized as an academic anti-goal (see Table 17). Out of the 43 references to the HBCU on the scene level, this single anti-goal, which appeared in Season 3, was *promotes student self-devaluing* (2.30%). Therefore, statistical analyses, such as  $\chi^2$  or Marscuilo contrasts

(Glass & Hopkins, 1996) were not needed to answer this question. To answer RQ8b, which inquires which of the social anti-goals is the most prevalent, Table 17 was again sufficient; there were no instances of social anti-goals coded on the show.

### Hypothesis 1

This hypothesis suggests that overall, there are more anti-goals (both academic and social) portrayed on *College Hill* than are goals (both academic and social) portrayed. This hypothesis required the five sub-categories for the academic goals to be combined, creating an overall “academic goals” category. Next, the three sub-categories for the social goals were combined, creating an overall “social goals” category. These two sub-categories were then combined, creating a large category referred to as “goals.” This procedure was repeated, creating an “academic anti-goals” category, a “social anti-goals” category, and a large “anti-goals” category. Finally, the overall number of goals was compared to the overall number of anti-goals, which required a one-way  $\chi^2$ . The analysis revealed that there were significantly more references to HBCUs that were categorized as goals (97.67%,  $n = 42$ ) than anti-goals (2.33%,  $n = 1$ ),  $\chi^2(1, N = 43) = 39.09, p < .001$ . Therefore, the data provided sufficient evidence to reject this hypothesis.

### Hypothesis 2

This hypothesis posits that generally, references to HBCUs on the show will be more negative than positive. This hypothesis required a comparison to the number of episodes with positive references (=1) to HBCUs with the number of episodes with negative references (=3) to HBCUs. To do this, first, the number of positive references for each episode was summed. This procedure was also performed for the negative

references. As mentioned above in the descriptive statistics section of this chapter, over half of the 30 episodes had explicit references to the HBCUs (60%,  $n = 18$ ). Of these 18 episodes, all 18 (100%) were considered to present the HBCU in a positive manner; there were no negative references to the HBCU on the episode-level. As a result, a one-sample  $t$ -test was not appropriate, because the standard deviation would be equal to zero. Therefore, the data provided sufficient evidence to reject this hypothesis.



## CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

The previous chapter provided the results to the research questions and hypothesis initially put forth in Chapter 4; the current chapter discusses each of the findings in depth as well as final reflections regarding the study. As previously established, the HBCU is a cornerstone of African-American history and pride. These institutions preceded the abolition of slavery, and though they have faced struggles such as meeting academic rigor and achieving financial stability, they have continued to serve students as educational safe havens. In addition, they work to promote African-American self-love and community-consciousness and service. It is quite common for several generations of one family to graduate from one institution. HBCUs have appeared in the mainstream media before, in movies such as *School Daze* and television programs such as *A Different World*. These portrayals might have acted as a double-edged sword, however, because HBCUs often do not have control over these portrayals. This lack of control could be dangerous for these institutions because they depend on many forms of public support. As stated in an advertisement that was created to educate University of the Virgin Islands constituents about *College Hill*, “The potential influence of this worldwide T.V. series on the image of our university is immense. Exposure of this magnitude can either make or break the image of our University” (Leger, 2007, para. 25). In spite of these misgivings, BET suggested that its reality program *College Hill*, the most recent television show to feature HBCUs, would provide viewers with a fresh perspective of these institutions and their students. However, there have been both positive and negative reactions to the

show, in terms of how the HBCUs were portrayed, in addition to how their African-American cast members were portrayed.

In an attempt to better understand how reality television in particular handles (re)presentations of African Americans and HBCUs, this study content analyzed the portrayals of African Americans and HBCUs on BET's *College Hill* as informed by literature regarding African-American stereotypes and HBCU mission statements. It was also concerned with the portrayals of the African-American cast members as (re)presentations of the HBCUs. The researcher expected to find mostly negative portrayals of African Americans, and less-than-flattering portrayals with HBCUs. However, the results were not so easily interpreted. It was found there were behaviors, traits, and appearances derived from the literature regarding the stereotypes of African Americans that did occur on *College Hill*. Also, though men and women often were coded similarly, women were portrayed in a manner that was consistently more negative than the way in which men were portrayed. There was evidence that HBCUs, though not referenced often by the show, were portrayed in a positive manner. Lastly, it was found that though the HBCUs themselves were portrayed in a positive manner, it was the range of portrayals displayed by the African-American cast members that suggested sometimes negative (re)presentations of HBCUs.

#### Research Question 1: Frequency of Behaviors, Traits, and Appearances

This question inquired about the general frequency of the behaviors, traits, and appearances of the African-American cast members on *College Hill*. To clarify, to address RQ1, tests of statistical significance were not required; instead results were based

on general frequencies each of the categories of variables under investigation. Therefore, this section provides some examples for each type of the variables. It was found that the descriptors derived from previous literature regarding both African-American stereotypes and counter-stereotypes did appear on the show.

With regard to the behaviors, previous research of the portrayals of African Americans in television has found that during the 1990s, this group was portrayed as being focused on their interactions with each other and their use of leisure time, as demonstrated through conversations that focused on social issues (Mastro & Greenberg, 2000). Though the current study did not measure trends regarding African-American portrayals over time, it appears that African Americans still displayed concerns about their social lives, at least in the context of *College Hill*. On the show, cast members spent most of their time strengthening friendship bonds. This finding makes sense, as a large portion of each episode of the series shows the cast members interacting with and getting to know each other in a positive way. For instance, in an episode of Season 3, Will and Ray discussed the recent loss of Will's father. In the subsequent confessional, Ray discussed that though his own father was still alive, he could understand Will's perspective because they both shared an intense love for their fathers. Cast members ate together, partied with each other, and shared beds, sometimes without sexual intentions. Even the clichéd games of Truth-or-Dare brought the cast members closer. The high frequency at which cast members bolstered friendships also draws attention to the frequency with which the bonds of friendship were weakened, and in some cases, even broken. Interpersonal conflict is a necessary component of the reality TV narrative (Reiss

& Wiltz, 2004). These instances of conflict ranged from disputes over food and other personal property, love triangles, and in Season 4, an actual physical fight occurred as a result of clashing personalities.

Cast members also desired attention from other cast members, or attention from others outside of the house, such as peers at school and romantic partners. For example, one of the sub-plots of Season 4 was the potential romantic relationship between Fallon and J.T. When J.T. suddenly stopped interacting with Fallon, she sulked instead of participating in the group's paintball game. Willie Macc speculated that Fallon's behavior was just a ploy to get J.T.'s attention. However, the desire for attention did not always manifest itself in this manner. Cast members often purposefully put themselves on display, to the delight of their fellow cast members, by mocking others or themselves. This is not to suggest that attention-getting behaviors are common only to African-American cast members on reality TV programs, especially in romantic contexts. Though the current analysis did not compare *College Hill* cast members to cast members of other reality programs, one need only to watch dating competitions such as ABC's *The Bachelor*, MTV's derivative of this program, *A Shot at Love with Tila Tequila*, and MTV's *The Challenge: Cutthroat*, which features physical and intellectual competitions among cast members, for examples of characters of all races displaying behaviors such as these attention-getting displays employed by *College Hill* cast members.

The study also analyzed the traits of the cast members, in addition to their behaviors. It is important to note that cast members on *College Hill* most often did not portray *either* the positive or the negative aspect of the traits. That is, cast members acted

in a manner such that there was no evidence with which to code a particular trait. This finding is reasonable in the context of the docusoap, the sub-genre of reality TV which includes *College Hill*. For example, like characters on a soap opera, cast members on this docusoap spend time discussing current house events with other cast members. They also use the confessional to speak to the viewer (e.g., Aslama & Pantti, 2006). For example, cast members might *talk* with each other about a situation in which they were dependent on another, but the viewers (and the other cast members) probably do not directly experience a cast member *displaying evidence* of a particular descriptor. For instance, in episode 9 of Season 3, Bianca told Ray, Anya, and Audrina how she needed her father's financial assistance so she could remain enrolled in school, but there was a chance he would fail her. This was an example of a cast member being dependent on others for support as illustrated during a discussion, but not actually enacted during the show. In sum, the majority of cast member references fell into the category of absence of evidence with which to code a trait category for each trait.

Though the majority of the cast member references fell into the category which indicated that the cast members did not display evidence to assess a trait, there were references which indicated either the positive or the negative categories of the traits *did* occur. Some of the oldest stereotypes suggest that African Americans are naturally happy (e.g., The Mammy and The Tom). One might expect for current portrayals of African Americans to contradict these out-dated beliefs because the cultural landscape has changed much since then. However, these stereotypes do provide some context for the current study. For example, the members of the cast were portrayed as happy

significantly more times than they were angry. Though cast members did acknowledge the stressful nature of their lives, which included living a house with seven unfamiliar people (for the voyeuristic pleasure of viewers), they were generally in high spirits, and enjoyed their collective situation. At the end of both seasons, all of the cast members referred to their time spent in their respective houses as one of the happiest times in their lives, were grateful for the opportunity to live with others different from themselves, and were sad to be leaving. Happiness was the most frequent of the positive traits in this study and is similar to one of the oldest stereotypical descriptors of African Americans (natural happiness). On the other hand, if the trait of anger had been found to be one of the most frequent descriptors in this study, then this finding could have lead to support of the equally stereotypical idea that African Americans are usually angry (e.g., *The Matriarch/The Sapphire and The Brute/ The Criminal/The Nat/ The Buck*). This tension regarding the emotional displays of African Americans suggests a double-bind; it appears that one way out of this dialectic is for African Americans to avoid emotional displays all together—a suggestion that is both ridiculous and impossible for most people, regardless of race.

In addition, some of the more traditional stereotypes suggest that African Americans are lazy by nature (e.g., *The Welfare Mother, The Coon, and The Sambo*). One might not be surprised if current portrayals of African Americans contradict these out-dated beliefs because the cultural landscape has changed much since their inception during slavery. Though these stereotypes do provide some context for the current study, *College Hill's* cast acted in a manner that contradicted these stereotypes. Members of the

cast were portrayed as industrious more often than they were lazy. For example, in Season 3, cast members volunteered at a food bank and also organized and hosted a party to benefit victims of Hurricane Katrina. In addition, they recorded both a radio and television public service announcements for BET's Wrap It Up Campaign, which focuses on HIV/AIDS education and prevention. Similarly, Season 4's cast also supported the Wrap It Up Campaign by working at a booth to get UVI students tested. When Krystal's excuse for not working at the booth was her lack of a t-shirt with the campaign's logo, Idesha rolled her eyes and muttered that Krystal was "useless." In this situation, the other cast members viewed Krystal as lazy and useless because she was not working to complete the task that had been assigned to them; she would rather let the others do the work. The seven others did not want to tolerate her laziness, but the only option they had was to display their irritation with her by rolling their eyes at her and talking about her before focusing on the task at hand. Therefore, this finding suggests that portrayals of African Americans in *College Hill* contradict the belief that all African Americans are lazy (Katz & Braly, 1933).

Previous research regarding the portrayals of African Americans (particularly men) has found that there is a cultural belief in their superior athletic abilities (e.g., Entine, 2001; Hoberman, 1997; Rada, 1996). However, in total, *College Hill* made only 21 references to cast members' athletic abilities, and these references portrayed cast members as athletic 20 times. Thus, the show did not focus on this aspect of HBCU life. Even though there were three athletes featured in the two seasons, only one episode in Season 3 and two episodes of Season 4 featured them in action, during a game. For

example, Chicky's basketball game was over-shadowed by the argument between J.T. and Idesha, and later, the physical fight between Krystal and Vanessa. In addition, the other fourteen cast members were not referred to as athletes in any other sense. For example, though cheerleading is considered a sport by many, cheerleader Deirdra (of Season 3) is never referred to as an athlete. Therefore, this finding suggests that the stereotype of The Athlete was not salient in the context of this show.

In addition to behaviors and traits, the study also examined the appearance of the cast members. Recall that RQ1 does not involve any tests of statistical significance, but reports general frequencies each of the categories of variables. Stereotypes of African Americans suggest a range of appearances, from the immodest (e.g., The Freak) to the modest (e.g., The Sister Savior), the sexy (e.g., The Brute/The Criminal/The Nat/The Buck) to the not sexy (e.g., The Mammy), and those that are known for their displays accessorizing and grooming (The Diva) or lack thereof (The Coon). There are also those who are described for their smiles (The Tom) or their frowns (e.g., The Matriarch). In the current study, for cast member appearance on the scene-level, it was found that African-American cast members dressed modestly, were close to the midpoint for the sexy/not sexy scale, and were well-groomed. They wore fewer accessories, and smiled. Overall, the cast members were not provocative in their dress, and they were well-groomed. The cast members were not portrayed at an extreme for any of the variables; these findings contradict many of the stereotypes discussed in Appendices A and B, because stereotypes by their nature emphasize the extremes of any given characteristic. Simply, the cast members displayed appearances that were not stereotypically exaggerated.



For the cast member appearances measured on the episode-level, it was found that cast members' skin tone averaged near the midpoint of the scale; the cast members' skin tone ranged from very dark to very light. This suggests that *College Hill* does not favor either dark-skinned or light-skinned African Americans. In addition, the average length of the cast member's hair was also at the scale's midpoint; the cast members wore short hairstyles, long hairstyles, and those that fell in between. The straightness/curliness of the cast member's hair was also close to the midpoint. Like the hair length of the cast members, their hair textures also displayed variation. Similarly to the variable that measured skin tones of the cast members, the variables examining the hair of the cast members reveal the show favored neither African Americans whose hair adhered to an African beauty norm nor a European beauty norm. For the facial norm variable, it was found that only two of the 16 cast members had facial features that adhered to a European norm. This finding implies that *College Hill* did favor cast members who displayed more African features. Because this show aired on BET, featured HBCUs, and African-American cast members, it is understandable why the cast members' skin tone, hair length and hair texture displayed a large range, and also why the majority of cast members had facial features that fell at the midpoint of this scale or possessed more African features. Simply, African-American viewers enjoy programs that feature African Americans (Poindexter & Stroman, 1981; Watkins, 2010), and they also enjoy seeing people who look like them. *College Hill*, therefore, could satisfy this desire among these viewers.

As stated in Chapter 2, race uses physical differences to arrange and rationalize differences in socio-political power among different groups of people. The racial hierarchy (with Caucasians dominating other peoples of Color) maintains its structure, even if the characteristics used to define a particular racial group are subjective. The great deal of physical variability of the African-American cast members illustrates that people with a great range of physical features are categorized as one group (e.g., Feagin, 2010; Winant, 2004); physical (and cultural) differences among racial groups have been capitalized on by networks such as BET, which targets primarily African-American audiences by providing them with “the latest and greatest in Black entertainment” (BET Networks PR website, n.d.).

To summarize, for Research Question 1, the data yielded evidence that the cast members’ behaviors both supported and contradicted previous stereotypes of African Americans. In addition, though the cast members spent the majority of the time acting in ways that did not allow data to be gathered, they displayed traits that both supported and contradicted African-American stereotypes. With regard to African-American appearance, the cast members were portrayed in a manner that suggested normalcy, rather than the extremes characteristic of stereotypes. Also, although cast members’ physical features averaged at the midpoint for each scale, the cast members actually presented a range of appearances to appeal to *College Hill*’s—and BET’s—target audience.

#### Research Question 2: Behaviors, Traits, Appearances, and Logical Opposites of Characteristics

This question inquired about which of the descriptors were the most likely to occur in relation to their logical opposites on the show. It was found that there were instances in which the binary opposite of a particular behavior, trait, or appearance did appear significantly more than the other. These findings suggest that it is possible for several descriptors to occur in the same scene (and the same episode), even if they portray logical opposites. Content analyses of primetime television found that even as late as the 1990s, images of African Americans ranged from them engaging in criminal activities (though to a lesser degree than preceding portrayals) to pursuing business achievements (e.g., Mastro & Greenberg, 2000). There is also evidence of the seemingly contradictory nature of the portrayals of African Americans on *College Hill*.

Regarding the behaviors of the cast members, they were portrayed being committed to school significantly more than being not committed to school. This finding was unexpected, given the critique of the show by both scholarly (e.g., Parrott-Sheffer, 2008) and popular press sources (e.g., Dix et al., 2004; Leger, 2007). To summarize these critiques, detractors of *College Hill* suggest that the show focuses on circumstances that stress conflict and often present the cast members in hyper-sexualized situations. In addition, they argue the show presents African Americans as little more than familiar, negative stereotypes whose appearances can tarnish the reputation of the HBCU. However, the data provided evidence to the contrary. In order to reconcile what the researcher expected to discover versus the finding provided by the data, a change of perspective was necessary. First, the name of the series is *College Hill*, and according to BET (2006), the show offers its viewers a perspective of the academic and social sides of

HBCU life. Though Season 3 arguably showed more of the HBCU and the cast members' navigation through college life (BET.com, n.d., c), both seasons *did* show the cast members as pursuing their educations and being active in campus organizations. For instance, cast members of Season 3 included Virginia State University's mascot, a cheerleader, a member of a Greek-letter organization, and members of the basketball and football teams; Season 4's cast included an athlete who was on many of the University of the Virgin Islands' teams. To provide another example of cast members displaying a commitment to school, J.T. and Willie Macc of Season 4 wanted to organize, host, and participate in a talent show on campus. They envisioned an event that would showcase the talents of UVI's students. Though they were both afraid the show might not actually take place, Idesha put them into direct contact with school administration, and the event was a great success. In addition, commenting on his status as the school mascot and being on the show, Ray of Season 3 explained that there was a balance between his academic and social concerns, with school receiving top priority.

To restate, the cast members were portrayed as being committed to school significantly more often than they were portrayed as being not committed to school; also, not committed to school was the behavior that was performed the least. This finding could be interpreted in at least two ways: the first is that the series' focus on HBCU life combined with the cast members' devotion to their studies resulted in many more displays of commitment to school; on the other hand, it is also possible that this behavior occurred more often in reality (Nichols, 1991) but was not included in the show's narrative. To provide an example that illustrates the varying degrees of devotion to one's

studies, consider episode 8 of Season 3, which showed the cast members in various stages of midterm preparation the weekend before the exams begun. The viewers saw Audrina at the dining room table, surrounded by piles of textbooks and paper. Bianca approached Audrina, stating that she had not started studying at all. “Are you one of those people that don’t have to study?” Audrina asked her. “Nope,” Bianca responded. Here, one can see that a dedication to school could exist alongside a less-than-enthusiastic view of one’s studies. In summary, though the behaviors being committed to school and not being committed to school were logical opposites, they were both present on the show, and could occur in the same scene, in spite of their contrast. This was also true of strengthens friendship bonds/weakens friendship bonds, achieves a romantic relationship/cannot achieve a romantic relationship, wants attention from others/rejects attention from others, and demands/requests.

Traits were also examined for the frequency of variables occurring with regard to their logical opposites. As stated in Chapter 6, ten traits, *humble/arrogant*, *submissive/domineering*, *nice/mean*, *quiet/loud*, *happy/angry*, *optimistic/pessimistic*, *harmless/threatening*, *image indifferent/image-conscious*, *cautious/impulsive*, and *valuable/useless* were recoded with (in most cases) the positive ends of the binary listed first. Though some variables consist of categories that arguably do not have a positive one (e.g., *submissive/domineering*), there was nevertheless an attempt order the variables in order to facilitate comparisons between variables.

There has been previous research to suggest that African Americans are portrayed as loud (Pilgrim, n.d.). However, the cast members on *College Hill* were portrayed as

significantly more quiet than loud, countering this finding. This is surprising, because most of the cast members referred to themselves as outspoken and as go-getters during their preliminary introductions. Even cast members were surprised when others acted in this fashion; a period of prolonged silence or quietness displayed by one cast member was usually followed by a display of concern from another. Therefore there are instances in which the show's portrayals of African Americans contradict previous findings.

On the other hand, there were six negative traits that occurred significantly more frequently than their positive counterparts (i.e., arrogant, threatened, threatening, image-conscious, impulsive, blaming). As discussed earlier, previous scholarship has explored the portrayals of African Americans, noting that they were portrayed more hot-tempered than Caucasians (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005). Though the current study did not compare traits with regard to racial groups, it did provide evidence to suggest that cast members on *College Hill* are often hot-tempered. For example, cast members were threatened significantly more often than they were protected, as well as threatening significantly more than they were harmless. This finding is easiest to apply to the show's conflicts between the cast members. These conflicts were mostly in the form of verbal attacks; there was only one physical altercation (between Krystal and Vanessa of Season 4). For example, after the cast members originally from the Virgin Islands invited the cast members originally from California to attend the Tramp, which is a celebration of Virgin Islands culture, J.T. was conflicted. He was not sure where his loyalties lay, and this caused Idesha to verbally attack him. She called him names, and he attempted to retaliate. Willie Macc and Andres stood only a few feet away—but did not attempt to defuse the

situation. Eventually, J.T. did attend the Tramp—though he insisted it was his own decision, independent of Idesha’s cruelty. In summary, there was evidence of significant differences between the logical opposites of the trait variables, such as harmless/threatening, on *College Hill*.

There were also significant differences between the logical opposites of the scene-level appearance variables. It was found that the cast members dressed significantly more modestly than immodestly, though they also were portrayed in a manner that was sexy significantly more often than they were not. In addition, they were well-groomed significantly more often than poorly groomed, wore significantly fewer accessories than flashy ones, and smiled significantly more often than they frowned. As mentioned above, stereotypes of African Americans make reference to a range of appearances; *College Hill*’s cast provides evidence that both substantiates and contradicts these stereotypes.

First, it is interesting to note that the cast members dressed modestly significantly more often than they dressed immodestly, meaning little or none of their skin was exposed and/or they wore loose-fitting clothing. However, they were dressed in a sexually tempting manner, displayed sexual intent, and/or held their bodies in a manner that *was* considered sexy significantly more often than they were portrayed as not sexy. This finding makes sense in the context of the show. For example, when going out on the town, the women often wore long-sleeved, fitted shirts (without exposing cleavage), fitted jeans, and stilettos. In addition, male cast members often wore fitted shifts and baggy jeans. Based on only the clothing of the cast members, such an instance would be regarded as the cast members being modest, because the majority of their skin was

covered. However, cast members could still be dressed as previously described and be considered sexy, if they were regarded as sexually tempting by others and/or posed in a sexual manner. On the other hand, cast members could be immodest yet not sexy, as when they lounged around the house. It was not uncommon for male cast members to wear basketball shorts without a shirt, and for female cast members to wear see-through t-shirts and shorts with extremely high hemlines for relaxing. Therefore, while the cast members might not have been as conservative as The Sister Savior, they certainly were not reflective of the appearance suggested by The Freak.

Also, the cast members were well-groomed significantly more than they were poorly groomed. This finding was surprising, given that a great amount of time the cast members were shown around the house, and were therefore dressed down in t-shirts, basketball shorts, and other comfortable clothes, suggesting that they put little effort into their appearance. However, this is not to suggest that cast members were never shown in the house while appearing well-kept. In addition, when cast members attended classes, grooming varied by cast member. For example, Will of Season 3 and Willie Macc and J.T. of Season 4 were often shown in class dressed in t-shirts and shorts; by contrast, Ray, Arlando, and Rodney of Season 3 made regular appearances in button-down, collared shirts. However, when cast members went out to socialize, they regularly put effort into their appearances. Traditional stereotypes such as The Coon and The Sambo suggest that African Americans are unkempt and disheveled. However, taken all together, these findings suggest African Americans, at least on *College Hill*, are actually well-groomed, contradicting stereotypes such as The Coon and The Sambo.



Stereotypes of African Americans posit that they wear flashy accessories (e.g., The Diva), wear gaudy clothes (e.g., The Coon; The Sambo), and tend to over-accessorize when compared to other groups of people; the current study's findings contradicts these stereotypes: *College Hill*'s cast members appeared in no jewelry significantly more often than they wore flashy jewelry. For example, though cast members such as Krystal preferred to accessorize, the majority were like Andres, who were rarely if ever seen wearing any jewelry or any other conspicuous adornments.

Lastly, literature discussing the stereotypes of African Americans often refers to the smiling, friendly faces of Toms and Mammies, which are a stark contrast to the scowls worn by Matriarchs, for example (e.g., Bogle, 2000; Hill Collins, 2000; Pilgrim, n.d.; 2000d; 2003). It was found that the cast members smiled significantly more often than they frowned. This makes sense in the show's context, which included happy and optimistic cast members, who were building friendship bonds with each other. In sum, there was evidence that scene-level traits both supported and contradicted what has been suggested by literature regarding African-American stereotypes.

Cast members' appearances were also evaluated on the level of the episode. It was found that significantly more of the cast members had hair that displayed a natural wave pattern (curly), as opposed to being chemically relaxed or naturally straight (straight). This finding is logical for two reasons. First, the cast members (particularly those of Season 4) wore their hair in various styles, such as afros, braids, and cornrows. This suggests the cast members reflect a cultural perspective that embraces African expressions of beauty. Second, it is quite likely that an African-American cast, featured

on a show set at an HBCU, and aired on BET would display non-traditional hair styles that are more natural for many African Americans, as opposed to chemical processing. This finding suggests that the cast members on *College Hill* wear hair styles were reflective of The Earth Mother's Afro-centric nature, rather than that of The Tragic Mulatto.

To summarize, for Research Question 2, the data yielded evidence that it was possible for the logical opposites of characteristics to exist together in the same scene and episode. Regarding behaviors, it was found that cast members were portrayed in ways that contradicted African-American stereotypes (e.g., committed to school). Regarding traits, it was found that cast members were portrayed in ways that contradicted (e.g., quiet) and bolstered African-American stereotypes (e.g., threatening). With regard to African-American appearance, the cast members were portrayed in a manner that challenges some stereotype descriptors (e.g., African Americans dress in an immodest and sexual manner and wear flashy accessories) and supports others (e.g., African Americans smile naturally and often; they wear their hair in natural, Afro-centric styles).

### Research Question 3: Difference in Gender Portrayals

An important aspect regarding the portrayals of African Americans is that these (re)presentations are gendered, reflecting that race and gender are inseparable when discussing African-American portrayals (Hill Collins, 2000; hooks, 2000). As a result, Black masculinity and Black femininity are unique perspectives in the struggle for socio-political power. Therefore, Research Question 3 asked if male cast members were portrayed differently from female cast members on the show.

In terms of behaviors, past content analytical research has found African-American women in particular to be hot-tempered and harsh (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005). It was found that female cast members on *College Hill* were significantly more neglectful than male cast members. This finding was logical in the context of the show, which often portrayed females as cruel, selfish, and uncaring. For example, in Season 4, Krystal, homesick for California, made biting comments about the Virgin Island's lack of shopping malls, food chains, and other amenities. Vanessa, who was hurt by her words, told Krystal she should think about what she says before she says it. Krystal then stated it was unfair that she could not have her own opinions about the Island, leaving Vanessa and the other cast members originally from the Island flabbergasted. Of course, this is not to imply that male cast members were not neglectful, or that either gender did not take care of others by displaying nurturing behaviors. However, female cast members displayed this behavior significantly more than male cast members.

It was also found that women accepted traditional gender norms significantly more frequently than they challenged them. In the show, women made statements to men such as, "Hey, I'm a girl, you're *supposed* to hold the door open for me!" In one instance, a female cast member used the arrival of her menstrual period as an excuse for missing work. In addition, women regularly cooked for other cast members. For example, Season 3's Audrina was known as the resident cook; she appeared to be happy with this role. In one episode, Will stated, "Audrina's in the kitchen, and she can throw down!" However, in moments of anger, women might only cook for themselves and select others,

furthering the script of the spiteful woman. This was true of Krystal of Season 4, who refused to cook for anyone except Fallon after a spat with several other cast members.

However, this is not to suggest that both genders did not challenge gender norms. For example, Season 4's Andres chose Vanessa to be his date to the dinner which celebrates the last night spent in the house. As they walk into the building, Vanessa enacts the behavior usually displayed by men: "Ooo, you're going to hold the door open for *me*?" Andres gasped. In this instance, both cast members are very aware that they have switched gender roles, if only briefly. In another example, though the show did not feature scenes of cast members cleaning up very often, Season 3's Ray was usually the cast member shown putting the house back into order.

It was found that female cast members also made significantly more demands than male cast members. Though women were more demanding than their male counterparts, this is not to suggest that their demands were unreasonable. Some of these demands were fair, such as when Season 3's Anya demanded that Arlando keep his fraternity brothers under control after the house, and the female cast members in particular, were invaded by So Sweet. This older man went into people's sleeping quarters and other areas of the house uninvited and cursed at cast members when they questioned his actions. Meanwhile, Arlando just laughed at the antics. Though Arlando initially thought Anya was overreacting, he became able to view the situation from her and the other cast member's perspectives. However, some demands *were* unfair, such as when Deirdra and Arlando continuously bothered Ray for some of his cognac while he was studying. What started out as a playful request for liquor became harassment when

Deirdra and Arlando repeated their demands, even while Ray was trying to sleep. Finally, Ray, pushed past his breaking point, opened the door to his room and poured cognac onto the floor of the hallway. Deirdra and Arlando were stunned and angered—but they *did* get some cognac.

It was found that female cast members made more requests than male cast members on the show. Instances of women making requests did not happen very often, especially when compared to behaviors such as making friendship bonds. For examples of this behavior in Season 3, Bianca asked the other cast members to pool their money so that they could purchase liquor for their house party. In Season 4, Fallon asked J.T. for a foot massage during their brief courtship. In addition, Fallon and Krystal asked J.T. and Willie Macc to bring certain food items back from the store for them during the one time Krystal and Fallon trusted them with the grocery shopping.

In addition to there being significant differences between the genders for the behaviors, there were also significant differences between the genders for the trait variables. Out of the seven traits that reveal significant differences between men and women, it was found that men were portrayed significantly more positively than women, and women were portrayed as significantly more negatively than men. For example, men were portrayed as submissive significantly more frequently than women, and women were portrayed as domineering significantly more times than men. As mentioned above, ten traits, humble/arrogant, submissive/domineering, nice/mean, quiet/loud, happy/angry, optimistic/pessimistic, harmless/threatening, image indifferent/image-conscious, cautious/impulsive, and valuable/useless were recoded so that all variables could be

compared on a similar scale, with (in most cases) the positive ends of the binary listed first. While some traits are obviously more positive than their opposite (e.g., faithful/unfaithful), this is not true of all of the traits (e.g., submissive/domineering). In the case of the submissive/domineering, submissiveness could be viewed as a positive trait if one's meekness allowed for an altercation to be avoided, while an aggressive attitude might instigate conflict.

For an example of women being portrayed negatively and men being portrayed positively simultaneously, consider the heated verbal exchange between J.T. and Idesha regarding the Tramp. For example, after Virgin Island natives Chicky and Vanessa invite the California natives to attend the Tramp, J.T. was caught in a double bind. He wanted to remain loyal to the California cast members, but he also wanted to repair the rift between the California and the Virgin Island cast members. As a result of his indecisiveness, Idesha verbally attacked him. She engaged in name-calling, and he attempted to retaliate. During the altercation, J.T. finally muttered, "Know what, man? I give up." Idesha responded, "All right then." J.T. attended the Tramp, insisting his decision had nothing to do with Idesha's brow-beating. In this example, one could certainly argue that neither cast member could be described favorably; however, J.T. ultimately yielded to Idesha's aggressiveness, and defused the fight. The pattern of women being portrayed significantly more negatively than men were portrayed also emerged for emotional strength, volume, mood, and outlook of the cast members. There was a slightly different pattern for the variables that examined humility and kindness: though these two variables contained only one significant difference between the genders for a particular trait (as

opposed to two), it still held that male cast members were portrayed significantly more positively than women. More specifically, women were portrayed as arrogant significantly more times than men were, and men were portrayed as nice significantly more times than women were.

Ultimately, this pattern suggests that traits that have been used in the past to describe either gender are not mutually exclusive to just men or women. In addition, the pattern also points to an overall unflattering portrait of African-American women. Such portrayals might influence viewers who may watch the show and develop or confirm that African-American women are negative, at least in comparison to another group. This finding is in agreement with previous research that has suggested that the negative portrayals of African-American women in the media, including the reality TV genre, are evidence of a trend (Springer, 2007). More content analyses of reality TV programs and other TV shows from a range of genres would allow for better understanding of this occurrence.

On the other hand, African-American men were portrayed more positively than African-American women. Several scholars have discussed the stereotypes of African-American men which often make reference to their supposed laziness, hyper-sexual nature, and criminal pursuits (e.g., Bogle, 2001; Pilgrim, 2000a, 2000b, 2007), and content analyses have found evidence of negative portrayals on television (e.g., Atkin, 1992; Cummings, 1988; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005). However, male cast members were portrayed significantly more positively than female cast members for seven traits; one such trait was nice. For an example of men being nice to others, Season 4's Chicky

provided Krystal with some tips to help calm her fears regarding her first day at the University of the Virgin Islands, and exchanged class schedules with her so they could meet up during the day. In this scene, Chicky went out of his way to be kind. Of course, male cast members could be mean to others. Such was the case when Andres of Season 4 rescued an iguana that had been terrorizing Krystal by staring in at her through the laundry room window. “You saved me!” she told him. However, because Krystal and Andres had recently fought, he responded to her, “I saved *him* from you.” Krystal’s facial expression registered puzzlement, then hurt in response to Andres’ words.

Recall from Chapter 4 that Hill Collins (2005) argues the media’s portrayals of African Americans rests on a Black gender ideology which “simultaneously defines Black masculinity and Black femininity in relation to one another and that also positions Black gender ideology as the opposite of normal (White) gender ideology” (p. 178); this ideology characterizes African-American men as too weak, while African-American women are constructed as too strong. In the case of *College Hill*, there were certainly instances in which African-American women were arguably portrayed as stronger than their male counterparts (e.g., female characters were found significantly more domineering than male characters; male characters were found significantly more submissive than female characters). However, male cast members demonstrated significantly more emotional strength than female cast members. These findings both bolster and counter Hill Collins (2005) argument, demonstrating the often polarized nature of African-American portrayals when gender is taken into account.



Boylorn (2008) also takes issue with the construction of the strong Black woman and its (re)production through reality TV:

As a Black woman I often times feel like I am performing an identity rather than just being myself. I am supposed to be...the 'strongblackwoman'...Independent. Indestructible. Emotionally numb. Strong. I am in conflict. I relate to Black women on reality television in more ways than one. In more ways than I would readily admit...I understand the desperation to have your voice/experience heard after being silenced for far too long. (p. 420)

Reality TV, like other media contexts, often requires African-American women to perform their strength. This mandate prevents African-American women from not only displaying possibly more vulnerable selves, but also limits the (re)presentations of African-American women in the media.

To restate, this study found that African-American men were portrayed more positively than African-American women on *College Hill*. This leads one to inquire if this finding would be replicated beyond the context of this show; to do so, more content analyses of television programming featuring African-American characters are needed. In addition, as Gray (2000) explains, multiculturalist programming allows for a *full* range of portrayals of African-Americans to be explored, from those that would be regarded as negative to those that would be considered positive. By providing variation in the (re)presentations of African-American men, it is possible that *College Hill* is a multiculturalist program. Also, it is important to note that African-American men were portrayed as positive *in comparison to* African-American women. Therefore, it is of interest if more positive portrayal of African-American men is independent of the portrayals of African-American women, or if it is achieved at their expense. More content

analyses of African-Americans in television programs would also assist in answering this query.

There were also differences between men and women in their appearance. Previous research of African-American appearances has found that African-American women were well-dressed the majority of time (Matabane & Merritt, 1996). A more recent study found that African-American women were significantly more appropriately dressed than Latinas (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005). Both of these studies suggest a well-groomed African-American female. This finding is replicated by the current study. For the scene-level appearance variables, it was found that women were portrayed as significantly more sexy and well-groomed than men. In addition, they also wore significantly more flashy jewelry than men did. Taken together, these results suggest that female cast members put much more effort into their look. As Season 4's Krystal stated, "I have to always have my look together. I have to have my hair looking good, and my nails done, and a cute outfit." This finding implies it was a greater endeavor for female cast members than male cast members to display concern for one's outward appearance.

Literature profiling the portrayals of Africans Americans has described men and women of various skin tones and hair textures (see Appendix A). On *College Hill*, it was found that for the scene-level descriptors, male cast members' skin was significantly darker than female cast members', and that women's hair was significantly longer than that of their male counterparts. The second finding is not surprising, when one considers the Western cultural norm for women to have longer hair than men (Synnott, 1987). However, profiles of African-American men and women often refer to darker-skinned

men (e.g., The Tom) and lighter-skinned women (e.g., The Jezebel/The Whore/The Hoochie; The Tragic Mulatto; The Diva). The cast members of *College Hill* substantiate these profiles. This gendered difference in skin tone is contradictory to the general physical appearances of the cast members as discussed in RQ1, and suggests that in the context of the show, the producers might cast lighter-skinned African-American females because they are considered attractive. In general, it is more important for women to be considered physically attractive than it is for men. This attractiveness double standard might explain why it is more important for African-American females than males to have fairer skin. In the field of advertising, it has been found that women with light brown skin are considered more attractive than paler or darker skinned models (Frisby, 2006). As Frisby explains, the preference for models with Eurocentric features is displayed in magazines targeted to both Caucasian and African-American audiences, such as *Ebony* and *Essence*. Therefore, it is possible that the producers of *College Hill* utilized a similar process of selection as they cast the show, choosing lighter-skinned African-American women to appeal to viewers. It is also possible that this trend would be replicated in other reality TV programs; more content analyses of reality TV shows would be necessary to explore this possibility. However, it seems contradictory to the corporate mission of BET that the network, which airs programming that features African Americans who possess a range of physical features to appeal to its 89 million (and predominately African-American) viewers, would display evidence of preference for women with fair or light skin. This preference might reflect intra-race hatred (Shropshire, 2010) or adherence to a

mainstream, European beauty norm for African-American women (i.e., light skin), to which BET even ascribes.

In summary, African-American women were significantly more neglectful than African-American men, accepted traditional gender norms significantly more than African-American men, and made significantly more demands and requests than African-American men on the show. These behaviors were all logical in the context of the show. In terms of traits, women were portrayed significantly more negatively than men for seven descriptors. In addition, this finding suggested that African-American men could be portrayed more positively than they have been in the past. In terms of appearance, African-American women were sexier, well-groomed, and wore more accessories than African-American men, indicating that they had a greater concern about their appearance than men. African-American women also had significantly lighter skin than their male counterparts.

#### Research Question 4: Cluster Analyses

RQ4 examined whether the behaviors, traits, and scene-level appearance characteristics of cast members on *College Hill* grouped into interpretable clusters and how these clusters differed according to gender.

First, it is understandable that the *social behaviors* (which both male and female cast members had in common) and *anti-social and self-centered behaviors* (which both male and female cast members had in common) clusters formed the way they did in the context of *College Hill*. As discussed in relation to RQ1, strengthening friendship bonds and wanting attention from others were two behaviors displayed the most by the cast

members; it makes sense that they would cluster together. However, it is unclear whether these clusters would be replicated if the coding scheme was applied to another text featuring an African-American cast. Some variables, such as committed to school/not committed to school are relevant only in the context of this study, or in a program that is also placed in an educational context.

For male cast members, it is sensible that the variables of *the respect for self and others* cluster appeared together in the context of the show. Recall from RQ3 that the data suggested African-American men on the show were portrayed more positively than the African-American women; the *respect for self and others* cluster bolsters this finding. While this is not to suggest that only African-American men were respectful of themselves and others, or that they were never disrespectful, recall from the discussion of RQ1 that male cast members often nurtured others by taking care of them when they were ill (female cast members were *not* shown doing this) and often engaging in cooking and cleaning for the house. These behaviors imply a gentlemanly, chivalrous aspect of the male characters on the show. On the other hand, this cluster might point to the differences in the current constructions of Black masculinity and Black femininity, which (re)produce images of strong African-American women and weak African-American men. Both stand in opposition to the “normal (White) gender ideology” (Hill Collins, 2005, p. 178). This cultural otherness, instead of systemic racism (e.g., Feagin, 2010), is used to explain current racial relations in society; it is also used to illustrate the tensions surrounding the development of Black masculinities and femininities that do not rely on stereotypes (Hill Collins, 2000, 2005; hooks, 2000). In the context of *College Hill*, a

male cast member who performs domestic tasks and treats others with kindness might not be portrayed as respectful, but as weak.

For female cast members, *the anti-social and self-centered behaviors* cluster includes two variables which appear to contradict with each other (i.e., challenges gender norms and accepts gender norms). However, recall from the discussion of RQ3 that female cast members might reject gender norms (e.g., refusing to cook for cast members to display anger towards them) and accept a gender norm, such as being the “weaker sex” (e.g., using the start of menstruation as an excuse for missing work) when doing either benefited them.

Also, it is logical that the clusters manifest only by the female characters, a *tension of involvement* (consisting of committed to school, not committed to school, and achieves a romantic relationship) and *devoted serving of others* clusters (consisting of cannot achieve a romantic relationship, asks, and nurtures others) came together in the manner they did in the context of *College Hill*. Though the *tension of involvement* cluster includes seemingly contrasting variables (i.e., committed to school and not committed to school), further analysis provides evidence of this logic. For example, Anya of Season 3 spoke regarding the importance of her studies. By contrast, she was less than impressed with her boyfriend, telling him that he needed to “be a strong man” to keep her interested. Other female cast members feel the tension between completing their educations and wanting to have romantic relationships, even if the viewers only saw a few scenes illustrating the problem. This issue might also be displayed on the show when Bianca (who had not started studying for midterms at all) invited a male classmate over to help

her study. The problem was that her attempts at flirting with him were distracting her from her goal of midterm exam preparation.

In addition, female cast members tended to each other and to the male cast members. Instances of this *devoted serving of others* include cooking for other cast members and listening to problems and providing advice. On *College Hill*, however, one should not assume that the *devoted serving of others* was always a result of a pure and selfless concern for others, or that cast members were always receptive to more negative displays of devotion. As Season 4's Andres critiqued Krystal and Fallon's less-than-noble interest in his love life: "Y'all are so busy worried about me, focus on *yourselves*!"

With regard to the trait and appearance clusters, both genders had all six of the clusters in common. It is logical that the traits of the *active and constructive attitude/a lax or destructive attitude* cluster appeared together. For example, sometimes the cast members were shown lounging around the house or sleeping in bed; it was not uncommon for such shots to be juxtaposed with shots of other cast members being in class, studying, or working at another task. In addition, the viewers sometimes saw the cast members at work for a humanitarian cause. As mentioned above, in the discussion of Research Question 1, viewers did see both seasons' efforts toward the Wrap It Up Campaign. Season 3's cast members recorded both public service announcements for the effort, and Season 4's cast also supported the Campaign by working at a booth to get UVI students tested for HIV.

One such example of the *positive reaction to the situation/a negative reaction to a situation* cluster was seen when Ray (of Season 3) attended to Will when the latter got

food poisoning at their house party. Even though Will made a terrible mess of himself and the living room, Ray cleaned up the vomit, undressed Will, and put him to bed. He was shown putting Will's soiled clothes into the washing machine. In the subsequent confessional, Ray explained that even though he *was* disgusted, Will was his close friend. In addition, he would want someone to do the same for him. This scene illustrated Ray's generosity. For female cast members, this cluster was bolstered by the devoted serving of others cluster. Therefore, this cluster is logical in the context of *College Hill*.

An instance which illustrated the *good treatment of or by others/poor treatment of or by others* cluster was from Season 4, in which Krystal and Vanessa came to blows after a heated verbal exchange. Though the actual physical fight displayed physical threat (and deliverance) on the part of both women, it was actually the past weeks of hurtful comments and selfishness that fueled the fight. Even in the final episode of the season, Krystal said she would fight Vanessa again if need be. Therefore, this cluster is logical in the context of the show, and also highlighted the pattern of negative traits that were displayed by African-American women, as put forth in the discussion of Research Question 3.

This overall negative portrayal is connected to the recurring patterns of negative portrayals of African-American women in reality television as discussed by communication scholars (e.g., Andrejevic & Colby, 2006; Boylorn, 2008; Dubrofsky & Hardy, 2008). More specifically, these scholars note the frequent existence of an angry, aggressive, loud, and generally abrasive African-American woman in shows such as MTV's *Road Rules* and VH1's *I Love New York* and *Flavor of Love*. In the current study,



women were significantly more arrogant, domineering, mean, and loud than African-American men. In a more micro-level example (and one that illustrates that the angry African-American woman is not found in only Viacom's offerings), the negative portrayal of African-American women was actually capitalized on by reality TV star Omarosa Manigault-Stallworth, who explained that in order to get face time on NBC's *The Apprentice*, knew that she had to behave badly, acting as a cold and calculated naughty girl as she eliminated her competition (Hollihan, 2006). These perspectives and findings, including those from this study, suggest there is a consistent, recurrent script of an angry African-American woman presented in reality TV. These findings also connect to the ideologies of the strong Black woman and the weak Black man (Hill Collins, 2005) as discussed above and in RQ3.

The *concern with appearance/an indifference to appearance* cluster was supported by previous research, which has suggested that there is a precedent for a well-groomed African-American female (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Matabane & Merritt, 1996). This finding is particularly salient in light of the discussion of Research Question 3, which explored the pattern of women who were more concerned with their appearance (or at least looked better) than men.

The *positive evaluation of self and support of others/a negative evaluation of self and lack of support for others* cluster could be seen in Audrina's desire to maintain a relationship with her boyfriend Brandon in Season 3. In this situation, Audrina constantly questioned her desire to date Brandon because she recognized that their relationship was

not healthy. However, this knowledge did not stop her from wanting to spend time with him, cooking for him, and wanting to believe that their relationship had a future.

The cluster *a calm temperament and emotional balance/an excitable temperament and emotional instability* also had logical basis on *College Hill*. For example, J.T. was portrayed as impulsive after a series of pranks go wrong. Though the pranks start out innocently, Krystal became frustrated and decided to take J.T.'s watch. This threw him into a rage, and he decided to throw her makeup away. He seemingly forgot that he was the one who initiated the pranks, and even talked about leaving the show before he had to "lay hands on Krystal."

In summary, there were differences between the clusters of behaviors demonstrated by male and female characters. These clusters imply an overall negative portrayal of African-American women, and also illustrate the tensions surrounding the portrayals of Black masculinity and femininity. By contrast, there was a great deal of similarity between the traits and appearances clusters between the two genders. It was also sensible that these characteristics clustered together in the ways they did, given the context of *College Hill*.

#### Research Question 5: Frequency of HBCU References (Scene-Level)

In addition to examining the portrayals of African Americans, another goal of this study was to examine the portrayals of HBCUs and the portrayals of African Americans as (re)presentations of HBCUs. Therefore, this research question first involved the importance of the HBCU to the show's narrative. More specifically, it asked about the number of explicit references to HBCUs during the show. Out of the 327 scenes, only 43

had a reference to the HBCU. In addition, it was found there were significantly more scenes without references to the HBCUs than those with references to HBCUs. This finding suggests that the HBCU is not very important to the narrative of the show. This also seems to contradict BET's goals from the outset to provide viewers with an "absolutely real" (Rogers, 2004, para. 5) view of the HBCU. To recall a quote from Stephen Hill, BET Senior Vice President of Music Programming and Talent, "Those who have been around historically Black colleges and universities know there are social, cultural and attitudinal differences from the more mainstream institutions...what we're capturing in *College Hill* is a one-of-a kind look at college life" (Rogers, 2004, para. 3). In addition, when speaking of Season 3, Executive Producer Tracey Edmonds appeared excited by the "chance to delve more into some of the academic issues and things going on on-campus" (BET, 2006, para. 8). These quotes imply that the HBCU is an important focus of the show.

Examples of the HBCUs being explicitly referenced during Season 3 include the cast members' visit to the mass communication department to record a radio public service announcement for the Wrap It Up Campaign, scenes of the Homecoming game, and Audrina's auditions for both BET's Black College Tour poetry slam and the modeling club. Season 4's references to the HBCU include Krystal's on-campus meetings with Dr. Moss after her fight with Vanessa, as well as the on-campus Tramp. However, the majority of the scenes take place in the house or out in the city where the show was filmed. This footage includes cast members' interactions with each other while relaxing at home and scenes of the cast members going out to socialize with each other at

an eatery, shop, or club. As a result of these scenes, audiences might expect college in general, whether one attends an HBCU or a TWI, to mostly involve social aspects; at the very least, college life appears to include more than just academic or social interactions centered on the campus proper.

As stated above, *College Hill* critics have argued the show needs to provide a fuller portrayal of HBCUs (e.g., Dix et al., 2004; Leger, 2007; Parrott-Sheffer, 2008). In support of this critique, Seasons 3 and 4 of the show treat the HBCU as more of a backdrop than an important narrative device; in this respect, the majority of the show quite resembles other docusoaps. As Lowe (2007) states, *College Hill* is similar to other reality programs that involve coeds living together in a house that allows for every public—and private—moment to be recorded. Rogers (2004) goes further, referring to *College Hill* as “an apparent all-black old-school takeoff of sorts on MTV’s *The Real World*” (para. 2). As mentioned above, much of the show’s narrative takes place in the house proper, or out in the cities where the HBCUs are located. In fact, without the HBCU staging, *College Hill*’s friendships, fun, and fights resemble those of other programs in the docusoap genre (e.g., *College Life*, *Sorority Life*) and movies in which college life plays a major part in the narrative (e.g., *Higher Learning*). This is not true only of Viacom’s other reality TV series such as *The Real World* (MTV) or *The Surreal Life* (VH1), but the entire genre, including programs aired on broadcast networks, such as *Big Brother* (CBS).

Starting with Season 5, *College Hill* changed formats, no longer focusing on the HBCU, but on interns trying to start a career with Dr. Ian K. Smith (of VH1’s *Celebrity*

*Fit Club*) in Chicago. In fact, this season is referred to as a “spin-off” by BET.com (n.d., a., para. 1). Returning to its more traditional format, Seasons 6 and 7 of *College Hill* were centered in Atlanta and South Beach, respectively. Though these seasons still featured college-aged students, the focus on the HBCU was no longer apparent. The author was unable to find any information as to *why* this change occurred. Possible factors include desires for BET to maintain a fresh and unique program which would lure and satisfy audiences that could be sold to advertisers, pressures from HBCU constituents to present a positive image of the institutions and their students, and/or a lack of agreements from HBCUs to participate in future seasons. Another possible factor could be for the implications uncovered by Research Question 4: it could be that *College Hill*’s producers and/or BET realized that the HBCU as an institution was ultimately being ignored by the series and felt nothing would be lost by revising the format of the show. To revisit a quote from Idesha Browne, a cast member of Season 4, set at the University of the Virgin Islands, “The show isn’t about UVI. It’s about eight students who live in a house and attend UVI” (Leger, 2007, “ ‘This is TV’ ” section, para. 4). In fact, BET Senior Vice President of Music Programming and Talent Hill also states:

What we’re capturing in *College Hill* is a one-of-a-kind look at college life through eight very diverse and interesting co-eds. Our BET cameras will capture the ups, downs, tears, joys, successes and failures as these young people become adults and pursue higher learning at the same time.  
(Rogers, 2004, para. 3)

Though Hill’s quote suggests more of a balance between a portrayal of the HBCU and the cast members, Browne states, quite firmly, that *College Hill* is *not* about the HBCU, but about the students who attend them.

On one hand, the findings certainly support Browne's opinion (Leger, 2007) that *College Hill* is about the students attending the HBCUs. On the other, the concerns displayed by attendees and administrators of the show in addition to the show's viewers suggest it is impossible to completely separate the students' portrayal in the show from the portrayals of the Universities featured (Dix et al., 2004; Ragster, 2007). As a UVI student stated, "The decision of a small group of people is going to affect a large group of people because now when people from the States see the name 'University of the Virgin Islands,' they are going to say, 'Oh, that's that crazy school!'" In addition, the fact that UVI President Laverne Ragster was organizing a meeting with other the presidents of other HBCUs featured in *College Hill* to discuss the portrayals of African Americans in the media (Leger, 2007) suggests that there is a strong link between the portrayals of the cast members and the portrayals of the University. Therefore, even though the HBCUs were referenced only 43 times on the scene-level, one could argue the portrayals of the African-American cast members, whether they are displaying their commitment to school or the female cast members are significantly more arrogant than their male counterparts, or the female cast members are significantly more well-groomed than the male cast members, theses portrayals still reflect on the University. This is because the portrayals of the cast members act as (re)presentations of the HBCU.

It is possible that the portrayals of the cast members act as (re)presentations of the HBCU because the cast members' portrayals have become inseparable from the portrayal of the HBCU in the mind of the viewer. Recall from Chapter 3 the role of schema development in cognitive processing: as people collect information about a particular

object, they store this information in clusters (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). New information can reinforce the links of information within the clusters such that this information can become chronically primed. This means that a physical altercation such as the one between Krystal and Vanessa featured on Season 4 can become incorporated into a viewer's schema such that when she thinks of *College Hill*, she also thinks of the fight. As stated in Chapter 1, there is concern about the public perception of HBCUs and their students because it is possible that many people do not have direct contact with HBCUs or African Americans. Therefore, *College Hill* might assist in the development of prototypes or exemplars regarding both. Therefore, a fight aired on *College Hill* could be stored in the minds of viewers as prototypical of angry African-American women and violent African-American men, especially by those who have little or no experience with them. However, an experiment, not a content analysis, would be able to explore this possibility.

To discuss prototypes and exemplars more in depth, recall from Chapter 3 that a prototype contains the average features of a particular concept (Ross & Matkin, 1999), and an exemplar stands out from other examples as a result of the uniqueness of its aspects (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). This study provides evidence that the portrayals of African Americans could be grouped into three broad categories: those that were stereotypical, those that were counter-stereotypical, and those that did not appear to fit into portrayals previously discussed by the stereotyping literature.

In addition, the analysis of the traits of the male and female cast members displayed a pattern in which the African-American women were portrayed negatively in

comparison to African-American men. The negative portrayals of African-American women in these instances could indicate prototypes, but the positive portrayals of African-American men might stand out as exemplars. For instance, in *College Hill*, the portrayal of the stereotypical, angry African-American woman is not out of the ordinary (especially since this portrayal is common in the media; e.g., Hill Collins, 2000, Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005, Stephens & Phillips, 2003), but the instances of African-American men portrayed as nicer, quieter, and more humble than their female counterparts could be considered exemplars because these portrayals are unique; *the respect for self and others* cluster as explained in the discussion of RQ4 provides an example of this.

The last category of portrayals of African Americans on *College Hill* included those that were not previously discussed by the stereotyping literature. For example, the social *behaviors* cluster for men included *views sex as primarily recreational*, *wants attention from others*, *strengthens friendship bonds*, and *achieves a romantic relationship*. These behaviors did not indicate a previous stereotype, suggesting that this cluster could imply the behaviors of a unique exemplar—or at the very least, behaviors that appear to stand out from other behaviors until they are recognized as a distinct cluster in more contexts. More content analyses would be necessary to make such a determination. Additionally, an experiment, not a content analysis, would be able to explore the storage of exemplars and prototypes from viewing *College Hill*. It is also worth mentioning that if the sample also included the first two seasons, which were highly critiqued by viewers, the study might have yielded different findings.



### Research Questions 6a and 6b: HBCU References and Goals

Another goal of this study was to discover whether the references to HBCUs during the show could be categorized as aspects that are important to the image and goals of their mission statements as categorized by Augusta-Dupar (2008).

Research Question 6a asked which of the academic goals was the most prevalent on the show. It was found that of the 43 explicit references to the HBCU on the scene-level, 30 were academic goals. Further, those references which showed the HBCU promoting student self worth occurred statistically more often than the other references in this category (i.e., promotes positive regard for humankind and emphasizes the development of Black history, racial pride; ethnic traditions/Black consciousness and identity). This category was defined as dedicating to building student's characters, as well as encouraging their integrity, respect, and responsibility (Augusta-Dupar, 2008). An example of the HBCU promoting student self-worth included Season 4's Krystal and Vanessa's visits to Dr. Moss after their explosive fight in the house. During these individual therapy sessions, Dr. Moss encouraged both women to analyze the situation from an objective viewpoint. She also wanted both of them to treat themselves and others with respect, and to accept full responsibility for their actions. Lastly, she told them that they were important members of society and to never forget that.

In addition, an example of the HBCU promoting positive regard for humankind was displayed in Season 3, when representatives of the Wrap It Up campaign partnered with Virginia State University representatives to visit the cast members in the house to educate them about HIV/AIDS. This goal category consisted of a dedication to service

and contribution to society in a productive manner (Augusta-Dupar, 2008). During this educational, yet intimate, session, many of the cast members were brought to tears as they heard a young woman share her story of contracting HIV after having sexual intercourse only once. UVI's Tramp, which is a celebration of the Island's culture, was one example (of only two) of the HBCU emphasizing the development of Black history, racial pride, ethnic traditions/Black consciousness, and identity. This goal is categorized by its celebration of the diversity of African-American culture (Augusta-Dupar, 2008). The Tramp was a block party of sorts, and though this event is authentic to only the Virgin Islands, it is similar to other African-American block-party events, such as Atlanta's Freaknik. Though Krystal and Fallon refused to participate, J.T. and Willie Macc were happy to have the experience. Instances of the other two academic goals—commitment to promoting social justice and commitment to maintaining a diversity view—did not occur. It is interesting to note that although these examples are categorized as examples of academic goals, that they do not involve schoolwork per se. This could be because as Augusta-Dupar (2008) has explained, HBCUs do not view education as occurring just within the classroom, but outside of it as well; their mission statements reflect the belief that it is their duty to educate their students so that their students experience character growth as well. These examples illustrate this viewpoint.

Similarly to Research Question 6a, Research Question 6b inquired what the most prevalent social goals on *College Hill* were. It was found that striving to educate the whole individual was the only goal that occurred in this particular category. It is defined as providing the student with a holistic environment that helps to develop written and oral

communication skills and critical thinking (Augusta-Dupar, 2008). Examples of this category being presented on the show included both seasons' cast members' efforts to host on-campus events. During Season 3, the cast members held a party with the proceeds benefiting Hurricane Katrina victims. During Season 4, J.T. and Willie Macc's comedy show highlighted talents of UVI students and provided a social outlet for them. In both examples, cast members were required to work closely with campus administration, other students, and of course, each other. In addition, they used media such as fliers and the Internet to plug their event. These instances required cast members to utilize and strengthen their communication and critical thinking skills, another goal of the HBCU.

In summary, RQ6 found that HBCU goals as suggested by their mission statements were presented on *College Hill*. Promoting student self-worth was the academic goal presented the most frequently by the show. The show also presented examples of the HBCU promoting positive regard for humankind and emphasizing the development of Black history, racial pride, ethnic traditions/Black consciousness, and identity, two other academic goals. Striving to educate the whole individual was the only social goal presented by the show.

#### Research Question 7: HBCUs and the Portrayal of Academic or Social Goals

As discussed in Chapter 4, one of the pressures that *College Hill* has faced is the tension surrounding the portrayal of academic and social aspects on the show. For instance, Laverne Ragster, President of the University of the Virgin Islands (where Season 4 was set), stated in her apology (2007) to the University that though the show presented many social aspects, such as parties and interpersonal conflicts, what the show

could not fully portray was the way in which the “UVI academic experience validates...eager intellect...which ultimately is the vehicle for improving the quality of life enjoyed by [UVI] students, [UVI] alumni, and [UVI] families” (para. 7). This statement implies that when the show does focus on the HBCU, that these instances tend to spotlight the social aspect of college life.

In response to the academic/social tension, Research Question 6 inquired if the academic goals were more prevalent than the social goals, as defined by Augusta-Dupar (2008). There were significantly more academic goals portrayed on the show than social goals. Therefore, while the show mostly depicted the cast members interacting independent of the HBCU backdrop, it appears that when the *HBCU* was referenced on the scene-level, most of these references do portray academic concerns. This finding was surprising because based on past literature (e.g., Dix et al., 2004; Leger, 2007; Parrott-Sheffer, 2008), the researcher was expecting to find mostly social aspects presented by the show. Perhaps an explanation for what is occurring is not a lack of references to academic goals, but that the social lives of the cast members do not always involve the goals (academic or social) of the HBCU. It could be the case that viewers remember portions of the narrative that involve social concerns *from the perspective of the cast members*. Such a viewpoint often includes the more exciting aspects of the show, such as off-campus, rather than on-campus, parties. In fact, one episode of Season 3 is dedicated to the struggle of midterms: the first half depicted the cast members struggling to study, and the second portion showed the cast members enjoying a house party they host. During this party, Bianca, who was in the hot tub, took off her bikini top off and caused

quite a stir. By contrast, as described above, social goals of HBCUs are often reflected by on-campus parties (which certainly cannot compete with the excitement of topless cast members). However, the portrayals of academic goals seemingly cannot compete either: the cast members of Season 3's devastation of learning about the personal story of a woman who was battling HIV does not appear more salient than a memorable hot tub event. Because of audience members' possible forgetfulness of these rather mild portrayals of academic goals, maybe what the show's viewers and critics are calling for are more substantive instances of academic goal portrayals, such as an entire episode dedicated to HIV/AIDS prevention or education (which was not depicted by either season). However, this begs the question if viewers would find such an episode appealing; such a question is better answered with focus group discussions. Regardless of this speculation, when HBCUs are referenced, academic goals are more prevalent than social goals (as described by Augusta-Dupar, 2008) on *College Hill*.

#### Research Questions 8a and 8b: HBCUs and Anti-Goals

In addition to portrayals that would support the mission statements of HBCUs, Parrott-Sheffer (2008) and others have suggested that the program presents the HBCU in a negative manner. For example, alumni at Langston University referred to its portrayal in Season 2 of the show as disgraceful (Parrott-Sheffer, 2008, p. 216); alumni at Southern University also expressed similar concerns regarding the images of the HBCU as presented by the show. HBCU students have also expressed their mixed emotions about this topic. For instance, when one FAMU student was featured in Season 7, other FAMU students felt that any public exposure for FAMU was good for the institution, even if the

exposure was *not* a representation the administration would prefer (Taylor, 2009). These comments suggest that much of the show presents images that are negative. More specifically, these images would likely go against the ideals presented in the mission and vision statements of HBCUs.

This study referred to the aforementioned negative portrayals as anti-goals, and as a result of much of the negative critique of *College Hill*, the researcher suggested that these negative portrayals would concern both academic and social aspects on the show. Therefore, Research Question 8a asked what the more prevalent academic anti-goals on *College Hill* were. Of the 43 references to the HBCU on the scene-level, only one was categorized as an anti-goal: promotes student self-devaluing. This anti-goal is defined as displaying little or no dedication to building students' characters or does not encourage their responsibility or integrity (Augusta-Dupar, 2008). This instance occurred on Season 3, when Anya over-slept and was late to her midterm. She was panicked because if she missed this test, she would fail the course. After arriving, she attempted to speak with her professor, but the professor ordered her to leave. In this scene, the professor appeared dismissive, unconcerned about Anya or whether she accepted responsibility for her lateness. It was not that the professor did not let Anya take her midterm, but her quick dismissal of a student that contradicted the goals of the HBCU.

Research Question 8b asked what the more prevalent social anti-goals on *College Hill* were. There were no instances of social anti-goals. The researcher was surprised by this finding because it contradicts much of the uproar surrounding the show and what many feel are its negative portrayals of the HBCU. As explained in the discussion of

RQ5, it appears the portrayals of the African-American cast members, particularly the negative ones, are seemingly inseparable from the portrayals of the HBCUs in viewers' minds. Also, just as portrayals of academic goals might not be perceived as salient and substantial as social goals to viewers, perhaps portrayals of goals are not as easily recalled as portrayals as anti-goals. However, content analysis is not the proper method for discovering if this particular occurrence is indeed what is happening; a better method would be a focus group. Much of the critique of *College Hill* that has been published by the academic and the popular press has centered mostly on Seasons 1 and 2, which were not included in this analysis. It is quite possible that if these seasons were analyzed, more instances of anti-goals would have been detected, providing more agreement between findings and previous critiques of the show.

#### Hypothesis 1: Goals versus Anti-goals

In addition to the existence of anti-goals, many sources suggest that these negative portrayals of HBCUs outnumber the presentation of goals on *College Hill*. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 posited that there would be more anti-goals than goals presented on the show. However, the results suggested that instances of goals occurred statistically significantly more than instances of anti-goals. As a result, this hypothesis was rejected. Similarly to Research Questions 8a and 8b, this finding contradicts much of the uproar surrounding the show and what many feel are its negative portrayals of the HBCU and those that attend them. As previously stated, of the 43 references to the HBCU on the level of the scene, 42 were categorized as goals, and only one was considered an anti-

goal. When HBCUs are explicitly referenced, the show actually reflects the goals of the institutions.

For an example of a *College Hill* detractor, consider Donald Wade, Alumni Federation President at Southern University, who stated that he had no desire to see another episode of the show, and that people “who did not understand the ‘Southern tradition and values’ should not have played a part in such an endeavor” (Dix et al., 2004, para. 14). Blogger Native Son (2007) also vents his frustration regarding negative portrayals of HBCUs and its students. His opinion represents those of many HBCU constituents who felt that BET had failed the Black Community by airing a show that portrayed the HBCU in a negative light:

As a graduate of a Historically Black College and University, I am outraged that BET aka: Bootleg Entertainment Television, would create a show about the black college experience and film nothing but negative images and stereotypes, without even the thought of giving little or no positive balance!! Especially at a time when HBCU enrollment is on decline and with the stereotype or perception that HBCUs are not as good as main stream schools. (para. 2)

I was also dismayed the first—and before I began this research project, the only—time I viewed *College Hill* in the spring of 2004. I felt angry because the cast members’ conflicts with each other, combined with hyper-sexualized behaviors and what I felt was general buffoonery of the cast members, was reflective of past stereotypes of African Americans. In addition, as a graduate of an HBCU, I also felt the show did not reflect the time I spent at Xavier University of Louisiana (XULA) with concerned faculty, dedicated students, and fun outings in New Orleans. At XULA, my professors worked hard to make sure that my classmates and I became proficient in our chosen fields, as well as



developed a dedication to community service. Many of my classmates who had attended majority-Caucasian schools before college came to XULA to learn more about Black culture and traditions. The show also did not relate to my experience as an instructor at the University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff. During my two years there, I was proud to see many of my students achieve academic recognitions on the Dean's List and participate in athletics, Greek-letter organizations, Student Government, the Arts, and other organizations. I also carefully advised my students to assist them with their goals beyond UAPB, illustrating dedication to the University's motto: "education with a personal touch" (University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff website). Ultimately, the HBCU did not seem to be of importance to the narrative of the episode I viewed. HBCUs and their students (regardless of race) do indeed have their shortcomings, but I felt *College Hill* was not fully exploring the positive or negative aspects of HBCUs. As a result of this upsetting viewing of the show, I boycotted BET for three and a half years.

One commonality I shared with viewers who responded to *College Hill* with hurt, confusion, disappointment, and/or anger was previous knowledge of the HBCU, perhaps gained by attending or being employed by an HBCU. Such knowledge could have also been attained by indirect knowledge of the HBCU through friends and family. Of course, the media also often play a role in educating one about the HBCU. The second commonality was a belief that BET, as a network centered to Black audiences, would treat Black institutions with respect—or at least, provide (from the perception of those knowledgeable about HBCUs) a more balanced portrayal of the institutions that would present both the positive and the negative aspects of them and HBCU attendees.

In response to the critiques of *College Hill* presented above, just as portrayals of academic or social goals might not be perceived as salient and substantial as social happenings to viewers, perhaps portrayals of goals by the show are not as easily recalled as portrayals as anti-goals. As discussed in RQ5, the responses to the show revealed a fear that the negative portrayals of the students would tarnish the HBCUs' portrayals. In the researcher's case, it was what she perceived as the negative portrayal of both the students and the University that caused concern. As previously stated, content analysis is not the proper method for discovering the nuances of other viewers' reactions to *College Hill*.

#### Hypothesis 2: Evaluation of HBCU (Episode-Level)

As discussed above, much of the sentiments expressed by HBCU constituents originated from the standpoint that the production favored the social life of the cast members rather than their academic endeavors, and many felt that the HBCUs were being portrayed negatively *in general*. Therefore, though the previous research questions and hypothesis have been concerned with scene-level references (and portrayals of academic and social [anti-] goals), the second hypothesis suggested that *College Hill* would contain more negative references to HBCUs than positive ones. This analysis considered how the HBCU was evaluated after a viewer watched an entire episode. It was found that out of 30 episodes, 18 had references to HBCUs. In addition, all 18 references were considered positive. Therefore, this hypothesis was rejected.

Once again, the findings go against what was suggested by the literature. For example, Parrott-Sheffer (2008) refers to the program as a "nonstop party of sex and

alcohol” (p. 219). This comment refers to the program’s negative portrayals of the HBCU and its students and illustrates a desire to see the HBCU portrayed in a positive manner. Other critiques of the show (e.g., Dix et al., 2004; Leger, 2007; Native Son, 2007) imply a desire to see a reality show similar to *A Different World*. This show, because of conscious decisions from creator Bill Cosby and producers Debbie Allen and others, is arguably a positive media portrayal of the HBCU. In spite of these critiques, it was found that when the HBCU was referenced on the level of the episode, the reference was a positive one. For instance, in Season 3, the viewers were treated to the VSU’s homecoming festivities; in episode 14 of Season 4, the cast members (sans Vanessa) enjoyed a UVI-sponsored trip to the beach of Virgin Gorda. In both of these examples, the universities were evaluated positively. This begs the question of why viewers apparently did not judge as such. This could be a result of one or more of the following factors. First, though a little over half of the 30 episodes did contain a positive reference to the HBCU, the other 14 did not. This suggests that the material within these episodes is more memorable than those *with* an HBCU reference. University of the Virgin Islands President Laverne Ragster (2007) states this could be the case in her apology:

We at UVI hope this momentary blaze of attention [as a result of *College Hill*] will allow us to illuminate what really goes on here and at so many fine, smaller schools: the learning, the progress, the betterment of all whom we educate and serve...This is what remains and grows, long after saucy television reruns fade from memory. (para. 11)

It could be that the “saucy” episodes, those which include the “sex and alcohol” of which Parrott-Sheffer (2008, p. 219) refers, simply have a longer half-life in the memory of viewers. Second, it is also plausible that the coders of this research project were unable to

judge the series with the mindset of the viewers who provided many of the critiques of the show. Viewers such as those interviewed by Dix et al. (2004) and Leger (2007) were often quite familiar with HBCUs as a result of attending one or being an administrator at one, for example. Blogger Native Son (2007), who discussed *College Hill* with visitors to his webpage, was also an HBCU attendee. As a result of this familiarity, it is a possibility that the episodes did not have the same substantive value for these viewers. This possibility suggests that a focus group methodology would be better at exploring the perspective of actual viewers, which this research project could not do. Further, it could be that for these viewers, negative references (on the level of the scene) were given more weight than entire episodes, even ones that presented the HBCU in a positive fashion. It could also be that the portrayals of African Americans act as (re)presentations of the HBCU, such that even though all 18 of the references to the HBCU on the episode-level are positive, the negative portrayals of the cast members still color the portrayals of the HBCU.

In summary, there were behaviors, traits, and appearances derived from the literature regarding the stereotypes of African Americans that occurred on *College Hill* and a number of these descriptors did appear more than their logical opposites on the show. In addition, men and women were portrayed differently, with women bearing the burden of stereotypical and negative portrayals. In addition, previously established stereotypes of both men and women were manifest by cast members. Lastly, though HBCUs are not referenced often by the show's narrative, are evaluated positively in the context of the entire episode. However, it appears that because the cast members act as

(re)presentations of the HBCUs, portrayals of the cast members must be taken into account when evaluating the portrayals of HBCUs.

Now that this chapter has discussed the results presented in Chapter 6, it will close by presenting final reflections on the study. As stated throughout this document, this study content analyzed the portrayals of African Americans and HBCUs, and the portrayals of African-American cast members as (re)presentations of HBCUs on BET's *College Hill*, as informed by literature regarding African-American stereotypes and HBCU mission statements. Race theory and schema theory provided the framework for the study. This chapter will now discuss implications for theory, before discussing the weaknesses of the study and its strengths. It will close with implications for future study.

#### Reflections: Implications for Theory

As discussed in Chapter 2 and earlier in this chapter, race is a social construction with socio-political consequences. With regard to the concept of race specifically, the cast members displayed a large range of physical variability. In spite of differences in skin tone, hair texture and length, and facial features, they categorized themselves as African-American. The African-American target audience of the show, and of BET, would also display many physical (and cultural) differences, yet they are considered members of one racial group (e.g., Winant, 2004). Because of this racial structuring, cable networks such as BET, TV One, and Galavision (which targets Hispanic viewers) have achieved success in niche marketing. Therefore, entrepreneurs like Bob Johnson, the founder and former chief executive officer of BET, have managed to make the racial hierarchy, which tends to favor Caucasians, be productive for people of Color.

In addition, racism is systemic (Feagin, 2010), meaning that it exists on all levels of society, specifically at the levels of individuals and institutions; it also has behavioral and attitudinal aspects (Rothenberg, 2004). In society, traditional racist beliefs have evolved into more contemporary forms (e.g., Entman, 1990, 1992; Jhally & Lewis, 1992; Bonilla-Silva, 2010). With regard to traditional racism, some of the images of African Americans (re)produced in *College Hill* arguably had their roots in the racist thought generated in the colonies in the 1600s; however, there were images that also challenged these stereotypical portrayals. Research exploring reality TV has also found evidence of contemporary racism in this genre (e.g., Andrejevic & Colby, 2006; Boylorn, 2008; Dubrofsky & Hardy, 2008). In the context of *College Hill*, one finds some examples of contemporary racism. For example, though the show did portray African Americans as both industrious (e.g., working towards goals in college in order to achieve a more financially stable lifestyle) and lazy (e.g., refusing to perform tasks assigned to the entire cast), it did not portray them as criminally deviant. Therefore, the tenets of modern racism did not seem to apply to this show. As discussed in Chapter 2, the cultural racism frame of color-blind racism appears similar to enlightened racism, because it also bases minority lack in cultural deficiencies. In the context of *College Hill*, the cast members did not appear to deal with situations involving color-blind racism; however, as staged throughout this study, the range of portrayals of the African-American cast members and their portrayals as (re)presentations as HBCUs might influence the viewers to harbor color-blind racist beliefs. This possibility will be discussed as a prospect for future study.

In addition, aversive racist beliefs did not appear to be displayed by cast members, nor did they appear to be effected by any (at least, as far as viewers could see). As discussed in Chapter 2, aversive racism has been explored with interviews and experiments; perhaps future research could explore aversive racist beliefs of viewers who watch this program.

Though modern racism and aversive racism did not seem very applicable to *College Hill*, enlightened racism and everyday racism do provide some opportunities for theory application. With regard to enlightened racism, Jhally and Lewis (1992) found that some Caucasian viewers of *The Cosby Show* enjoyed the program because they were able to forget the Huxtables Blackness. Lowe (2007) remarked on the similarities of *College Hill* to other docusoaps; in fact, without the HBCU staging, many of the same plot elements (e.g., cast members dealing with loss and other stressors, developing and destroying friendships and romances) that can be found on *College Hill* can be found on other shows within the docusoap genre. Though viewers of the show are not likely to forget that *College Hill* is a Black show because it has a majority African-American cast and airs on BET, they act similarly to and experience some of the same situations as cast members on *College Life* and *The Real World*. Another possibility for future research would be a project that would explore if Caucasian viewers of the show display enlightened racist beliefs as a result of watching the series.

In addition to enlightened racism, everyday racism is also applicable to *College Hill*. As mentioned above, *College Hill* was created in a vein similar to other docusoaps (e.g., Lowe, 2007); in fact, Rogers (2004) calls the show “an apparent all-black old-

school takeoff of sorts on MTV's *The Real World*' (para. 2). While in some respects College Hill is a copying the success of shows such as College Life, Fraternity Life and Sorority Life, in the same manner it replicated MTV's TRL video countdown with its own 106 and Park, College Hill was created to meet a need for African-American viewers. By airing the show on BET, the network was able to deliver this target audience to advertisers—but also to let African-American audiences see a portrayal of one of their most historic institutions, the HBCU. As discussed in Chapter 1, the mediated portrayals of HBCU are severely lacking. In addition, African-American viewers do like—and need to see themselves on television because in spite of the growth of African Americans in the media, they are still under-represented or ignored (Clark; Poindexter & Stroman, 1981; Watkins, 2010). The continued dissatisfaction regarding media portrayals of African Americans and other people of Color illustrates an aspect of everyday racism: racism has become naturalized to the extent that most people of Color have become used to these structures and those in dominant positions (i.e., Caucasians) often remain oblivious to this dissatisfaction.

In summary, *College Hill* illustrates that though programming featuring African-Americans may no longer be as blatantly stereotypical as *Amos n' Andy*, there is still a struggle for more complete portrayals of African Americans. Because racism is ever evolving (e.g., Entman, 1990, 1992; Jhally & Lewis, 1992; Bonilla-Silva, 2010), the battle for more representative images will continue in reality TV, other television genres, and the media in general.



Because the method of this study was not appropriate for determining if the portrayals of African Americans on *College Hill* prime schema or influence cognitive processing of stereotypes, implications for theory here are largely speculative. These portrayals could be considered positive or negative, and might influence schematic development regarding African-Americans. Recall from Chapter 3 that a schema is a cognitive structure in which clusters of information about a particular concept can be stored, and that recurring information can strengthen the bonds between clusters. In addition, people utilize role schemata for others, categorizing other people based on demographics such as gender, age, and race (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Both those who are familiar with African Americans and/or African-American culture (such as the target audience of *College Hill*) and those who are not might watch the show and develop new ideas about African Americans, have their few existing schema challenged, or have the minimal bonds between their schema reinforced (e.g., Matabane & Merritt, 1996; Poindexter & Stroman, 1981). For example, those who believe African-Americans to be lazy might note the cast members' dedication towards the Wrap It Up campaign and change their mind about this characteristic in relation to African-Americans—or believe the industriousness of the cast members is merely an exception to the rule. Similarly, an audience member may notice the negative portrayals of the African-American females on the show and believe these portrayals to be authentic or reject them as false. Therefore, through the development, reinforcement, or challenge of one's schema by positive or negative images displayed on *College Hill*, one's perception regarding African Americans could be influenced. Though this study could not provide evidence of *College*

*Hill* priming schema, it does provide evidence regarding the contents of the schemata about African Americans and HBCUs present in the show.

In addition, it was one of the goals of the study to examine the portrayals of African Americans as (re)presentations of HBCUs; and it was found when the HBCU was referenced on the level of the episode on *College Hill*, these references were positive. However, those who critiqued the show argued that the show negatively portrayed HBCUs. Therefore, it is possible that some of the negative portrayals of the cast members might become inseparable from the portrayal of the HBCU in the mind of the viewer. Because people store information in clusters (Fiske & Taylor, 1991), it is possible that physical altercations, sexual situations, and other situations deemed negative by viewers become attached not only to the show, but to HBCUs. A priming effect could be occurring, such that when viewers think of *College Hill*, they automatically think of negative images and cognitively link them to HBCUs (e.g., Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007); other reality TV shows could be priming other cognitive responses in their viewers. This possibility would be best explored with an experimental method.

Though not two of the major theoretical frameworks of the study, Gray's lenses which represent the historical perspectives of African Americans on television (2000), and Clark's (1969) discussion of the four stages of the portrayals of ethnic minorities on television complimented the content analytical work discussed in Chapter 4. They also assist in contextualizing *College Hill* in relation to other recent television programs featuring African Americans.

First, recall that most African Americans on television have achieved middle-class status (e.g., Mastro & Greenberg, 2000; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005). However, many television shows of the late 1990s and 2000s, though attempting to portray their African-American characters as more financially successful *and* providing more character development for them, still portrayed them in worlds mostly separate from Caucasians. This issue directly relates to the pluralist and multiculturalist lenses Gray (2000) discusses. Though some scholars have argued that it is racial comity, or serious and intimate relationships between African Americans and Caucasians that would allow for understanding between these two groups of people (Entman & Rojecki, 2000), TV shows such as FOX's *Martin* and *Living Single*, and more recently, ABC's *My Wife and Kids* suggest African Americans exist in worlds largely separate from Caucasians, similarly to one of ABC's older programs, *Family Matters*. This situation seems to suggest a tension between the pluralist and multiculturalist lenses: African-Americans do have the ability to play a greater range of roles, but perhaps only in the company of other African Americans. *College Hill* seems caught within this tension as well. As stated throughout, though the cast members were portrayed in some instances that could be considered counter-stereotypical in light of stereotypes regarding African Americans (e.g., *the respect for self and others* cluster of behaviors manifest by African-American males on the show), cast members mainly interacted with other African Americans. Of course, the majority of these interactions are a direct result of students attending HBCUs, which exist to serve African-Americans and tend to have a majority of African-American attendees. In addition, the show airs on BET, which targets African-American viewers.

However, the world of African Americans is *not* an all Black one—though a viewer who watches many of the recent programs featuring African Americans might be lead to think so.

One must also consider the four phases of ethnic portrayals on television (Clark, 1969) which adds in contextualizing *College Hill* in light of other programs featuring African-American casts. The stages of non-recognition and regulation do not seem applicable to *College Hill*. First, African-American cast members appear regularly on TV, though there *are* some TV shows without African-American cast members, such as CBS' *How I Met Your Mother* and *Rules of Engagement*. Second, *College Hill* did not portray cast members as agents of or as antagonistic to the law. However, there did appear to be a tension between the ridicule and respect phases of ethnic minority portrayals. Recall that many of the critics of *College Hill* displayed a fear that the show could cause its viewers to judge the HBCU and its students negatively. Specifically, some students worried that the behaviors of the cast members would become associated with the HBCUs (Leger, 2007) and other HBCU constituents were concerned that viewers, after watching the show, would not be privy to the educational, cultural, and social betterment these institutions provide their students (Ragster, 2007). These concerns reveal a fear of being ridiculed, and this study found evidence that in some instances, the images of the HBCU's students were not flattering. However, the study also found that when the HBCU was explicitly referenced, it was a positive reference. In the strictest sense, therefore, the HBCU was presented in a way that did indeed display the goals as described by their mission statements; they were treated with respect. On the other hand,

the cast members, as (re)presentations of the HBCU, could influence audience ridicule on behalf of the University.

Though *College Hill* illustrates a tension surrounding ridicule and respect of African Americans and African-American institutions on TV, this is not to suggest that it is the only show that illustrates this issue. For example, consider influential African-American director/producer Tyler Perry's *House of Payne* and *Meet the Browns*,<sup>17</sup> which both feature majority African-American casts. These shows have been critiqued by other African Americans in the entertainment industry, such as Spike Lee, for (re)producing stereotypical images of African Americans (EURweb.com, 2009). When comparing the portrayals of African Americans in *College Hill* to the portrayals of Perry's shows, it is difficult to say which set of portrayals is more positive. In addition, though *Chappelle's Show* was critically acclaimed for its satire of racial stereotypes (Kan, 2004), it was the tension surrounding these racial portrayals that ultimately resulted in David Chappelle deciding to stop production of *Chappelle's Show* (K.L., 2006). As illustrated by *The Cosby Show*, a program that has been on the air for almost 30 years through syndication, the attempt to portray African Americans is a difficult undertaking; *College Hill*, with its range of portrayals of HBCU students, still provides evidence of this difficulty.

#### Reflections: Weaknesses of the Study

The limitations of this study are with regard to the sample, including the episodes that were used for coder training and the episode-level variables, the fact that the cast members often behaved in ways that could not be measured by the coding materials, a dissonance between the conceptual grounding of the study and the variables that were

actually measured, shortcomings regarding content analysis in general, the descriptors that could cluster with each other, and the attempt to bridge the literature that profiles the stereotypes of African Americans with content analytic research.

The first limitation was with regard to the sample. Though there have been seven seasons of this program, only four were filmed at HBCUs. In addition, only two seasons, Seasons 3 and 4 were available on DVD. These two seasons, therefore, yielded 30 episodes that included both African Americans and HBCUs. As a result, coder training required use of the actual sample; an independent sample that could be used just for training purposes did not exist. For instance, though other reality television docusoaps feature African-American cast members (e.g., *The Real World*), only *College Hill* featured HBCUs in a reality TV setting. On the other hand, *A Different World* featured an HBCU and African-American characters, but using this program for training was not appropriate because its categorization as a fictional program makes it generically different from *College Hill*. In addition, as discussed in Chapter 4, Bill Cosby and the other producers of this show were especially concerned with portraying the HBCU in a positive light and exploring African-American issues from a fresh perspective. Simply, this show displayed a positive bias toward HBCUs and African Americans (Parrott-Sheffer, 2008). For these reasons, only *College Hill* episodes were appropriate for coder training.

In addition, if circumstances *do* require one to use a portion of the sample for coder training, it is common and appropriate practice to use ten percent of the sample. In the case of the current study, this would have been two episodes each from Seasons 3

(which consisted of fourteen episodes) and two episodes from Season 4 (which consisted of sixteen episodes). However, utilizing only four episodes was not enough to calculate intercoder reliability of variables; therefore, seven episodes each of both seasons were utilized. For this reason, almost 47% of the 30 episodes were coded during coder training.

Also, because of the small number of episodes being used for intercoder reliability, coders had to reach perfect agreement on episode-level variables, such as cast member appearance. Krippendorff's  $\alpha$  (2004) is a stringent reliability statistic, and did not permit even one disagreement between coders on any variables measured on the episode level. Therefore, coders discussed these variables at length and had to demonstrate reliability on the coding materials so that reliability was achieved.

Second, the cast member behaviors, traits, and appearance descriptors were derived from the literature regarding stereotypical portrayals of African-American men and women. Thus, it was these particular characteristics that were being measured. However, a problem was encountered when cast members acted in ways not considered stereotypical or counter-stereotypical. As discussed in Chapter 7, much of the program involved cast members talking and interacting with each other, a behavior that is common on similar reality programs such as *The Real World* and *College Life*. These discussions regularly center on day-to-day activities, and are supplemented with talking-head confessionals and flashbacks. Therefore, many of the behaviors and traits could not be measured based on the coding materials. Future research continued in this vein should borrow from Katz and Braly's (1933; 1935) and Weitz and Gordon's (1993) studies,

which have empirically derived lists used to describe African Americans, as well as content analytic research that has explored the portrayals of African Americans in television (e.g., Greenberg & Mastro, 2000; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005). In a related issue, the cast member behaviors, traits and appearance descriptors were derived from the literature regarding stereotypical portrayals of African-American men and women that would likely be seen on *College Hill specifically*. Therefore, it is unclear whether this method would be appropriate to study other reality television programs, or other television programs, without some adjustments.

Third, there was dissonance between the study's conceptual grounding and the measurement of these concepts. More specifically, the literature regarding the stereotypes of African Americans provided much of the theoretical background for the variables measured. This literature included detail-rich stereotypes of African Americans. However, the method called for coding of micro attributes in the form of behaviors, traits, and appearances. This was problematic because though a character might display attention-getting behaviors, this attribute does not necessarily indicate The Diva. Once again, basing future research on studies such as Weitz and Gordon's study (1993) and Greenberg and Mastro's study (2000) might avoid this issue.

Fourth, this study would have likely been bolstered with textual analysis. While content analysis notes the frequencies of a particular occurrence in a text in order to draw conclusions regarding concepts often not directly measurable, textual analysis targets particular instances in a text to illustrate an argument. Therefore, a mixed method approach using both content and textual analysis would have been particularly useful



when the content analytical method was not yielding measurable results, such as the cast member behaviors and traits. In spite of this limitation, it is hoped that the examples provided during Chapter 7 will provide some context for the study's results.

Fifth, there was also a major problem involving what descriptors could cluster with other descriptors during the cluster analysis. Because the behaviors, traits, and appearance variables were derived from the stereotype literature and adapted to what characteristics would likely be seen in the context of the show, it was impossible for some descriptors to cluster properly. For example, a decision to drop the variable physically unhealthy/physically healthy meant that the stereotype of The Athlete was only recognized by his athletic inclinations and nothing else. In addition, because the behaviors, traits, and appearances were measured using different levels of analysis, it was not possible to determine what the overall stereotypical (or counter-stereotypical) portrayals the cast members embodied on *College Hill*. This was initially one of the major goals of the study that was unable to be achieved because of faults of the method.

Lastly, though the literature which discusses the stereotypes of African Americans provides detailed profiles, content analytic research did not always provide a precedent for all the characteristics which make these profiles so rich. Therefore, it is difficult to note if the study found evidence of a newly-emerging stereotype. Future studies in this vein should keep this mind. Now that the chapter has discussed the weaknesses of the research project, its strengths will be examined.

#### Reflections: Strengths of the Study

To the author's knowledge, this research project is the first and only to use content analysis to examine the portrayals of African Americans and HBCUs and the portrayals of African-Americans as (re)presentations of HBCUs in reality television. Both Gray (2004) and Parrott-Sheffer (2008) used textual analysis to explore the portrayals of HBCUs. Of course, HBCUs have only been featured in few media texts, and only three that aired on television (*The Cosby Show*, *A Different World*, and *College Hill*). Because of this, differences in the treatment of the HBCU and African Americans and the overlap between the two were able to be noted. In spite of the study's weaknesses, it used the profiles of cultural stereotypes to derive the coding schemes regarding the portrayals of African Americans, and literature regarding HBCUs, particularly Augusta-Dupar's (2008) study of the mission statements of HBCUs to developing the coding scheme for the HBCUs. Now that the chapter has discussed the strengths of the research project, implications for future research will be examined.

#### Reflections: Implications for Future Research

Now that the limitations and the strengths of the research project have been discussed, implications for future study are also discussed. There are those directly related to the current study, questions more generally associated with reality TV analysis, and lastly, general concerns for communication scholars who study the portrayals of race and gender in the media.

To continue research inspired by the current study, an audience reception study of *College Hill* viewers would be an appropriate next step. This project would be concerned with the possibility that audience members with a range of knowledge about HBCUs

would have different readings of *College Hill*. As Bobo (1995) discussed in her exploration of African-American women audience members, different cultural locations and identities can influence how one reads a text. In explaining how these women could have different viewpoints of *The Color Purple*, perspectives which often were quite different from the opinions expressed by African-American men, she states that these readings are a result of being in different social locations. A social structure distributes different forms of cultural decoding strategies through different sections of the media audience, which can explain differences in textual readings between individual audience members. This study would aim to answer questions centered on cultural background and audience, and how different social locations can result in different readings of a text. For example, if one has knowledge of an HBCU through her cultural background, it is likely this previous experience will inform her perspective of the show. By contrast, how does one who has little or no knowledge of the HBCU interpret the text? Does any aspect of color-blind racism influence viewers' responses? This study would likely use focus group methods.

Also in the vein of the current study would be a research project inspired by blogger Native Son's questioning (2007) of HBCU presidents who allowed their respective universities to be portrayed in what he perceived was a negative fashion on TV. This study would involve qualitative interviews with HBCU higher administrators (e.g., presidents, chancellors, and deans), BET executives, *College Hill* executive producers, and cast members of the show to explore their reactions to the program in retrospect. For example, Ragster (2007) stated in her apology to the University of the

Virgin Islands community that a desire to increase UVI's exposure influenced her decision to allow filming there; would other university presidents/chancellors of HBCUs featured in the show agree with Ragster's position? Now, over six years since Season 1 aired, do the administrators think allowing their HBCU to be featured in the show was worth it? Perhaps there *were* increases in enrollment, which is always a concern of HBCUs (e.g., Sissoko & Shiau, 2005). In addition, are producers Tracey Edmonds, Kenneth Edmonds, and Sean Rankine satisfied with the outcome of their production? More specifically, did the show meet their expectations with regard to subject matter(s)? It would also be of interest to talk to cast members regarding their experiences.

While some popular press sources have discussed cast members' reflections after a season's end (Dix et al, 2004; Irving, 2006), these reflections might also be a fruitful source for scholarly research. For instance, what aspects of their televised selves were highlighted for the shows? How do reality television participants of color feel their race intersects with their gender portrayals, for example? How much control did they have of their portrayals? The tension surrounding internalized oppression and agency of the cast members is also of importance here. Internalized oppression is "systematic and pervasive," so that "individuals who internalize their oppression begin to see themselves other members of their group, their community, or their culture as lacking in some way" (Bohmer & Briggs, 1991). This explanation is certainly applicable to the often negative portrayals of African Americans that television has cultivated over the years (e.g., Atkin, 1992; Cummings, 1988; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005); Boylorn (2008) discusses some examples of how reality TV in particular can foster internalized oppression within

its viewers. In addition, some scholars have argued that for many African Americans on reality TV, an authentic portrayal is one that involves a performance of a “ghetto” (p. 374) identity, one that portrays African-American women, in particular, as loud, aggressive, and cruel (Dubrofsky & Hardy, 2008). It is quite possible that some of the cast members of *College Hill* might have internalized negative televised images that they have seen, such as ghetto performances, and then re(enacted) these images. Though Omarosa Manigault-Stallworth appears to have had some agency in her own portrayal on *The Apprentice* (Omarosa, 2004), how much control the cast members of *College Hill* retained regarding their televised identities remains unclear, and could also be explored utilizing qualitative interviews.

In addition to prospective studies directly related to the current research project which examined the portrayals of African Americans and HBCUs and the portrayals of African Americans as (re)presentations of the HBCU on *College Hill*, there are also those studies that explore the portrayals of people of color (and other minorities) on reality TV in general. As discussed in Chapter 4, reality TV, like other genres, continues to rely on stereotypes of African Americans (e.g., Andrejevic & Colby, 2006; Bell-Jordan, 2008; Boylorn, 2008; Orbe, 1998, 2008) and Hispanics (e.g., Dubrofsky, 2006), for instance. The majority of the research in this area involves textual analysis of reality TV programs (e.g., Dubrofsky & Hardy, 2008). In order to expand the literature, it would be appropriate to undertake qualitative interviews of people of color who have participated in reality television programs (e.g., *The Real World*, *America’s Next Top Model*, *Faking the Video*), preferably those who have appeared in such shows for more than one episode

(e.g., *Boiling Points*, *The X Effect*). This analysis would explore how reality TV participants understand the representations of their identity, race and gender in light of previous mediated portrayals of minorities. Of particular interest would be the participants' awareness of the producers' constructions of their personas during any phase of the production process. As discussed above, were they aware of their own identity construction, and how much agency did they possess in this process? Did they suffer internalized oppression from previous media images? This research study would also be appropriate if it focused on a singular reality TV participant, adopting a case study approach.

To take a broader scope, communication scholars must continue to contribute to the discourse surrounding race, gender, and the media because our media (re)produce images and shape our understandings of the world, influencing our interactions with each other. Though the images of African-Americans have grown more progressive since the earliest televised portrayals of the 1950s, this research project provides evidence that stereotypes still perform cultural work that serves to maintain the current social order. As long as these images still exist in television and other media, communication scholars must take an active role in examining our media. It is the author's hope that this study will be another step in the effort to understand, evaluate, and change the current media landscape.

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>This is a reference to the closing theme of *College Hill: Virginia State University*, which promises viewers imminent drama during the show.

<sup>2</sup>Throughout this document, I write “(re)presentation(s)” and “(re)produce” to refer to the cultural work our language performs. According to Stuart Hall (1997a), representations are reflective, presenting that which *already* exists. In addition, representations are social constructions, created through our language. Therefore, the media are not the *initial* sources of stereotypical images, but some of the major sources that continue to recreate and share these cultural constructions.

<sup>3</sup>Though Cheyney University is the oldest HBCU, Lincoln University (Pennsylvania) holds the distinction of being the United States' first degree-granting HBCU. It was founded in 1854 (Lincoln University of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania website).

<sup>4</sup>As Williams et al. (2004) explain, some institutions started by the Freedman's Bureau were changed to normal schools, which focused on teacher education and vocational training of high school graduates. For an example of a normal school, consider the University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff, which was founded as Branch Normal College for Colored People in 1875, then became Arkansas Mechanical and Normal in 1927. It became UAPB in 1972 (The Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts website, n.d.).

<sup>5</sup>The terms “Caucasian” as opposed to “White” and “African-American” instead of “Black,” for example, also reflect the elements of political correctness that surround the issue of race.

<sup>6</sup>It is important to note that Whiteness is also a construction (e.g., Roediger, 2002) and has changed over the years. For instance, Katz and Braly (1933) separated Irish and Italians from the Americans (Anglos); today, though the Irish and the Italian can celebrate their heritage, they also enjoy the comforts that come with being Caucasian. For example, Harris (1993) argues that historically, being Caucasian has been used as a resource to attain a good education, fundamental healthcare, and legal protection.

<sup>7</sup>According to Brigham (1971), Walter Lippmann was the first to coin the term in his book, *Public Opinion*, when he referred to “the pictures in our heads.”

<sup>8</sup>As a Black feminist scholar, I trust Hill Collins scholarship; her descriptions of African-American women stereotypes speak to my own experience as an African-American woman. I chose Hoberman to discuss the stereotype of the African-American male athlete because of his thorough research of the topic. A mass communication professor at Xavier University of Louisiana first introduced me to Ferris University’s Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia Online in a media criticism class. The stereotypes that Pilgrim, the curator, explicates on the website truly enlightened my early-twenty-something sensibilities, challenging me to recognize that racial stereotypes are everywhere, often hiding in plain sight. My graduate advisor at the University of Missouri (Columbia) suggested the Stephens and Phillips article to me. As a member of the hip-hop generation, I found their arguments to be enlightening and showed me that

many of the feelings I held regarding the categorization of women in hip-hop could be theoretically explored. Further, they also use Hill Collins as a source for their work. Overall, these scholars' works illustrate that stereotypes will often bend as to not break, transform but never completely dissipate.

<sup>9</sup>The Hottentot Venus, also known as Sarah Baartman, was a member of the Khoi tribe, and lived in Paris and London during the early 1800s. She became a sideshow curiosity because of her large buttocks and protruding labia. These physical attributes were utilized as evidence of her (and African-Americans') uncivilized and overly sexualized nature.

<sup>10</sup>Although I agree that channels such as MTV are not charged by their critics to air pro-social programming and to initiate pro-social projects (though MTV does do this), this does not combat the fact that though there are a range of portrayals of the Caucasian majority in the media, both positive, negative, and those that fall somewhere in-between, African Americans do not enjoy these nuanced presentations. Though progress has been made with regard to African-American portrayals, I also agree with Gray (2000) that still more are needed. BET could—and should—fulfill this media gap.

<sup>11</sup>Both Kenneth Edmonds and Tracey Edmonds are African-American; neither attended an HBCU (International Movie Database, n.d., a; b). Their production company, Edmonds Entertainment, of which Tracey Edmonds is CEO, has produced television shows such as BET's *Lil Kim: Countdown to Lockdown*, Showtime's *Soul Food*, and feature film *Good Luck Chuck* (The Edmonds Entertainment website, n.d.).

<sup>12</sup> Variables initially proposed for the project were removed from the analysis either because intercoder reliability of at least  $\alpha = .667$  (Krippendorff, 2004) could not be achieved and/or they did not appear frequently enough on the show to be measured. These behavior variables are *views sex as purely functional*, *views sex as functional and recreational*, *views sex as purely recreational* (revised to *views sex as primarily recreational*), *engages in safe sex practices*, *engages in unsafe sex practices*, *has children out of wedlock*, *married with children*, *accepts racial heritage*, *rejects racial heritage*, *buys expensive material possessions*, *indifferent to expensive material possessions*, *sexually-empowered*, *sexually-controlled*, *rejects criminal behavior*, *condones criminal behavior*, *rejects media-projected norms of beauty*, *accepts media-protected norms of beauty*, *expects partner to strengthen the relationship*, *views a partner's strengthening the relationship as optional*, *expects partner to have a strong sense of self*, *views partner's having a strong sense of self optional*, *rejects racial and gender exploitation*, *accepts racial and gender exploitation*, *accepts racial and gender exploitation*, and *demeans self*.

The trait variables are *rich/not applicable/poor*, *educated/not applicable/uneducated*, *competitive/not applicable/unambitious*, *cultured/not applicable/crude*, *intelligent/not applicable/stupid*, *impressive/not applicable/pitiful*, *innocent/not applicable/guilty*, *law-abiding/not applicable/criminal*, *sociable/not applicable/anti-social*, *stable/not applicable/unstable*, *religious/not applicable/atheist*, and *musically-skilled/not applicable/ musically-unskilled*.



The scene-level appearance variables are *uses body language to attract attention/neutral/uses body language to avoid attention*, *dresses modestly/neutral/dresses sexily*, *wears many clothes/neutral/wears few clothes*, *wears expensive clothing/neutral/wears cheap clothing*, *wears high quality clothing/neutral/wears low quality clothing*, and *dresses in a flashy manner/neutral/dresses in a subdued manner*.

The episode-level appearance variables are *appealing/neutral/unappealing*, *attractive face/neutral/unattractive face*, *underweight/neutral/overweight*, *physically out of shape/neutral/physically fit*, *traditionally appealing/neutral/untraditionally appealing*, *bald/neutral/hairy*, *has large eyes/neutral/has small eyes*, *physically weak/neutral/physically strong*, *physically unhealthy/neutral/healthy*, and *has a wide nose/neutral/has a thin nose*.

<sup>13</sup>Percent agreements are provided because there were no 0-0 pairs in the coincidence matrices since there were no occasions when both coders would have indicated “not a scene.” Recaps, preview, talking head confessionals, flashbacks were not coded because these clips were often too brief to code for behaviors, presented material that was already being included in the analysis, and often presented cast members in various changes of attire during confessionals, even within one scene.

<sup>14</sup>The  $\alpha$  reliabilities provided in Tables 1-4 are averages. For each behavior variable, the data were calculated by averaging the reliabilities from Seasons 3 and 4. For each appearance variable, the data were calculated by averaging the reliabilities for all 16 cast members. The same procedure was utilized to calculate each trait variable  $\alpha$ . For

each HBCU scene reference variable, the data were calculated by averaging the reliabilities from Seasons 3 and 4.

<sup>15</sup>Regarding the cast member appearance descriptors measured on the episode-level, there were four that for the purposes of this study, had to be measured on a semantic differential; specifically they are *has dark skin* (1)/ *neutral*/ *has fair or light skin* (3), *has long hair* (1)/ *neutral*/ *has short hair* (3), *has straight hair* (1)/ *neutral*/ *has curly hair* (3). However, that is not to say that these traits are valued more than others, *especially* when dealing with the sensitive matter of racial stereotyping.

<sup>16</sup>The interval measure was selected for the cluster analysis because the variables were measured on the ratio, categorical, and ordinal levels, as opposed to the other two options provided by SPSS: binary and counts; this level of measurement influences the distance measure choices. In addition, squared Euclidean distance is the default selection for interval-level data. This distance type places more emphasis on outlining objects.

<sup>17</sup>Both shows air on TBS.

Table 1

*Intercoder Reliabilities and 95% Confidence Intervals of Cast Member Behaviors*

	$\alpha$	95% CI
Nurtures others	0.77	[0.60, 0.90]
Neglects others	0.77	[0.60, 0.89]
Views sex as primarily recreational	0.86	[0.73, 0.93]
Committed to school	0.86	[0.73, 0.96]
Not committed to school	0.84	[0.73, 0.92]
Strengthens friendship bonds	0.87	[0.78, 0.94]
Weakens friendship bonds	0.88	[0.79, 0.96]
Achieves a romantic relationship	0.81	[0.69, 0.91]
Cannot achieve a romantic relationship	0.81	[0.68, 0.92]
Wants attention from others	0.86	[0.76, 0.94]
Rejects attention from others	0.78	[0.64, 0.89]
Challenges traditional gender norms	0.83	[0.71, 0.94]

	$\alpha$	95% CI
Accepts traditional gender norms	0.81	[0.68, 0.92]
Demands	0.81	[0.67, 0.91]
Requests	0.85	[0.72, 0.95]

Table 2

*Intercoder Reliabilities and 95% Confidence Intervals of Cast Member Traits*

	$\alpha$	95% CI
Faithful/unfaithful	0.88	[0.81, 0.95]
Emotionally strong/emotionally weak	0.88	[0.81, 0.94]
Arrogant/humble	0.87	[0.74, 0.94]
Domineering/submissive	0.85	[0.76, 0.93]
Mean/nice	0.84	[0.75, 0.91]
Encouraging/discouraging	0.87	[0.78, 0.94]
Loud/quiet	0.84	[0.73, 0.92]
Angry/happy	0.87	[0.79, 0.94]
Pessimistic/optimistic	0.85	[0.76, 0.92]
Industrious/lazy	0.89	[0.80, 0.94]
Independent/dependent	0.89	[0.81, 0.95]
Protected/threatened	0.89	[0.82, 0.95]
Threatening/harmless	0.88	[0.81, 0.95]
Image-conscious/image indifferent	0.89	[0.81, 0.95]
Self-assured/self-doubting	0.87	[0.78, 0.94]
Constructive/destructive	0.87	[0.79, 0.95]
Impulsive/cautious	0.86	[0.76, 0.94]
Useless/valuable	0.88	[0.79, 0.95]

	$\alpha$	95% CI
Forgiving/blaming	0.88	[0.80, 0.94]
Athletically- inclined/athletically unlikely	0.90	[0.82, 0.96]

Table 3

*Intercoder Reliabilities and 95% Confidence Intervals of Cast Member Appearance  
(Scene-Level Cast Descriptors)*

	$\alpha$	95% CI
Dresses modestly/dresses immodestly	0.86	[0.78, 0.87]
Sexy/not sexy	0.86	[0.75, 0.92]
Well- groomed/poorly groomed	0.86	[0.77, 0.93]
Wears flashy accessories/wears no accessories	0.83	[0.75, 0.90]
Smiles/frowns	0.87	[0.77, 0.93]

Table 4

*Intercoder Reliabilities and 95% Confidence Intervals of HBCU References (Scene Level)*

	$\alpha$	95% CI
Reference to HBCU	0.95	[0.88, 1.00]
HBCU Reference Number	0.95	[0.88, 1.00]
HBCU Scene Reference Descriptor	0.93	[0.87, 0.97]



Table 5

*Descriptive Statistics of Cast Member Behaviors*

	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Nurtures others	41	0.13	0.45	0-4
Neglects others	65	0.20	0.69	0-7
Views sex as primarily recreational	31	0.09	0.67	0-8
Committed to school	106	0.32	0.91	0-6
Not committed to school	10	0.03	0.19	0-2
Strengthens friendship bonds	493	1.51	2.34	0-8
Weakens friendship bonds	99	0.30	0.79	0-4
Achieves a romantic relationship	41	0.13	0.47	0-4
Cannot achieve a romantic relationship	25	0.08	0.28	0-2
Wants attention from others	107	0.32	1.01	0-8

	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Rejects attention from others	35	0.11	0.33	0-2
Challenges traditional gender norms	34	0.10	0.35	0-2
Accepts traditional gender norms	32	0.10	0.39	0-4
Demands	43	0.13	0.47	0-3
Requests	23	0.07	0.27	0-2

*Note.* The total number of scenes is 327. *n* = the number of times the behavior was performed in 327 scenes.

Table 6

*Descriptive Statistics of Cast Member Traits*

	<i>n</i>	%
Faithful	30	2.4
Unfaithful	18	1.5
Not applicable (neither faithful nor unfaithful)	1181	96.1
Emotionally strong	84	6.8
Emotionally weak	54	4.4
Not applicable (neither emotionally strong nor emotionally weak)	1091	88.8
Humble	28	2.3
Arrogant	57	4.6
Not applicable (neither humble nor arrogant)	1144	93.1
Submissive	56	4.6
Domineering	73	2.8
Not applicable (neither submissive nor domineering)	1100	89.5
Nice	168	13.7
Mean	63	5.1
Not applicable (neither nice nor mean)	998	81.2
Encouraging	138	11.2
Discouraging	45	3.7
Not applicable (neither encouraging nor discouraging)	1046	85.1
Quiet	180	14.6

	<i>n</i>	%
Loud	120	9.8
Not applicable (neither quiet nor loud)	929	75.6
Happy	485	39.5
Angry	118	9.6
Not applicable (neither happy nor angry)	626	50.9
Optimistic/ pessimistic	446	36.3
Pessimistic	210	17.1
Not applicable (neither optimistic nor pessimistic)	573	46.6
Industrious / lazy	117	9.5
Lazy	53	4.3
Not applicable (neither industrious nor lazy)	1059	86.2
Independent / dependent	19	1.5
Dependent	7	0.6
Not applicable (neither independent nor dependent)	1203	97.9
Protected/ threatened	29	2.4
Threatened	51	4.1
Not applicable (neither protected nor threatened)	1149	93.5
Harmless/ Threatening	35	2.8
Threatening	59	4.8
Not applicable (neither harmless nor threatening)	1135	92.4
Image indifferent/ image-conscious	35	2.8

	<i>n</i>	%
Image-conscious	65	5.3
Not applicable (neither image indifferent nor image-conscious)	1129	91.9
Self-assured/ self-doubting	141	11.5
Self-doubting	27	2.2
Not applicable (neither self-assured nor self-doubting)	1061	86.3
Constructive/ destructive	156	12.7
Destructive	9	0.7
Not applicable (neither constructive nor destructive)	1064	86.6
Cautious/ impulsive	15	1.2
Impulsive	51	4.1
Not applicable (neither cautious nor impulsive)	1163	94.6
Valuable/ useless	106	8.6
Useless	21	1.7
Not applicable (neither valuable nor useless)	1102	89.7
Forgiving/ blaming	21	1.7
Blaming	127	10.3
Not applicable (neither forgiving nor blaming)	1081	88.0
Athletically-inclined/ athletically unlikely	20	1.6
Athletically unlikely	1	0.1
Not applicable (neither athletically inclined nor athletically unlikely)	1205	98.3

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*Note.*  $N = 1229$ , the total number of cast member references for each trait. In addition,  $n$  = the total number of times the trait was referenced out of 1229 references in 327 scenes. However, there were three missing references for *athletically-inclined*, *athletically unlikely*, and *not applicable* (*neither athletically-inclined nor athletically unlikely*). Traits were measured in categories with three levels, such as *faithful* (the positive category), *unfaithful* (the negative category), and *not applicable* (the absence of information with which to code the trait).

Table 7

*Descriptive Statistics of Cast Member Appearance (Scene-Level Cast Descriptors)*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Dresses modestly (1)/dresses immodestly (3)	1.82	0.59
Sexy (1)/not sexy (3)	1.94	0.45
Well-groomed (1)/poorly groomed (3)	1.82	0.71
Wears flashy accessories (1)/wears no accessories (3)	2.09	0.79
Smiles (1)/frowns (3)	1.69	0.69

*Note.* For the total number of character references,  $N = 1229$ .

Table 8

*Descriptive Statistics of Cast Member Appearance (Episode-Level Cast Descriptors, Ordinal-Level Measures)*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Has dark skin (1)/has fair or light skin (3)	2.06	0.81
Has long hair (1)/has short hair (3)	2.00	0.81
Has straight hair (1)/has curly hair (3)	2.16	0.71

*Note.* For the total number of character references,  $N = 234$ .



Table 9

*Paired-Samples T-Test Results of Cast Member Behaviors*

Behavior			Behavior			Paired Behavior		
<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>N</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i> Effect Size
Nurtures others	0.13	0.45	Neglects others	0.20	0.69	327	-1.66	326 0.09
Committed to school	0.32	0.91	Not committed to school	0.03	0.19	327	5.79***	326 0.32
Strengthens friendship bonds	1.51	2.34	Weakens friendship bonds	0.30	0.79	327	8.56***	326 0.47
Achieves a romantic relationship	0.13	0.47	Cannot achieve a romantic relationship	0.08	0.28	327	1.59	326 0.09
Wants attention from others	0.33	1.01	Rejects attention from others	0.11	0.33	327	3.93***	326 0.22

Behavior			Behavior			Paired Behavior			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Effect Size
Challenges traditional gender norms	0.10	0.35	Accepts traditional gender norms	0.10	0.39	327	0.23	326	0.02
Demands	0.13	0.47	Requests	0.07	0.27	327	2.20*	326	0.12

*Note.* \* $p < .05$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

For behavior variables,  $N = 327$  scenes. In addition, effect size, Cohen's  $d$ , is calculated as the mean divided by the standard deviation.

Table 10

*One-Way  $\chi^2$  Results of Cast Member Traits*

	<i>N</i>	Category 1 %	Category 2 %	$\chi^2$ Value
Faithful (1)/unfaithful (2)	48	62.5	37.5	3.00
Emotionally strong (1)/emotionally weak (2)	138	60.9	39.1	6.52**
Humble (1)/arrogant (2)	85	32.9	67.1	9.89**
Submissive (1)/domineering (2)	129	43.4	56.6	2.24
Nice (1)/mean (2)	231	72.7	27.3	47.73***
Encouraging (1)/discouraging (2)	183	75.4	24.6	47.26***
Quiet (1)/loud (2)	300	60.0	40.0	12.00***
Happy (1)/angry (2)	603	80.4	19.6	223.37***
Optimistic (1)/pessimistic (2)	656	68.0	32.0	84.90**
Industrious (1)/lazy (2)	170	68.8	31.2	24.09***

	<i>N</i>	Category 1 %	Category 2 %	$\chi^2$ Value
Independent (1)/dependent (2)	26	73.1	26.9	5.54*
Protected (1)/threatened (2)	80	36.3	63.8	6.05*
Harmless (1)/Threatening (2)	94	37.2	62.8	6.13*
Image indifferent (1)/image-conscious (2)	100	35.0	65.0	9.00**
Self-assured (1)/self-doubting (2)	168	83.9	16.1	77.36***
Constructive (1)/destructive (2)	165	94.5	5.5	130.96***
Cautious (1)/impulsive (2)	66	22.7	77.3	19.64***
Valuable (1)/useless (2)	127	83.5	16.5	56.89***
Forgiving (1)/blaming (2)	148	14.2	85.8	75.92***
Athletically-inclined (1)/athletically unlikely (2)	21	95.2	4.8	17.19***

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*Note.* The total number of cast member references is 1229;  $N$  = the sum of the number of times the trait was referenced. Also,  $n$  = the number of times the trait was observed in category 1 and category 2. Also, for the one-way  $\chi^2$  tests  $df = 1$ .

Table 11

*One-Sample T-Test Results of Cast Appearance (Scene-Level Cast Descriptors)*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Effect Size
Dresses modestly (1)/dresses immodestly (3)	1.82	0.59	-11.05***	1222	0.32
Sexy (1)/not sexy (3)	1.94	0.48	-4.48***	1223	0.13
Well-groomed (1)/poorly groomed (3)	1.82	0.71	-8.94***	1224	0.27
Wears flashy accessories (1)/wears no accessories (3)	2.09	0.79	3.82***	1223	0.11
Smiles (1)/frowns (3)	1.69	0.69	-15.81***	1223	0.45

Note. \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

For scene-level appearance variables,  $N = 1,229$  character references.

However, there were six missing character references for *dresses modestly/ dresses immodestly*, five missing character references for *sexy/ not sexy*, *wears flashy accessories/ wears no accessories*, and *smiles/ frowns*, and four missing character references for *well-groomed/ poorly groomed*. In addition, effect size, Cohen's  $d$ , is calculated as the mean difference divided by the standard deviation.

Table 12

*One-Sample T-Test Results of Cast Appearance (Episode-Level Cast Descriptors)*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Effect Size
Has dark skin (1)/has fair or light skin (3)	2.06	0.81	1.14	233	0.07
Has long hair (1)/has short hair (3)	2.00	0.81	-0.08	233	0.00
Has straight hair (1)/has curly hair (3)	2.16	0.71	3.41***	233	0.23

*Note.* \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

For episode-level appearance variables,  $N = 234$  character references; there were six missing cases. In addition, effect size, Cohen's  $d$ , is calculated as the mean difference divided by the standard deviation.

Table 13

*Paired-Samples T-Test Results of Cast Member Behaviors by Gender*

	Men		Women		Paired Behavior		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i> Effect Size
Nurtures others	0.08	0.33	0.07	0.36	242	0.14	241 0.00
Neglects others	0.08	0.40	0.14	0.45	242	-2.29*	241 0.15
Views sex as primarily recreational	0.05	0.36	0.07	0.45	242	-1.16	241 0.09
Committed to school	0.17	0.54	0.18	0.57	242	-0.42	241 0.02
Not committed to school	0.01	0.09	0.02	0.14	242	-1.34	241 0.07
Strengthens friendship bonds	0.93	1.36	0.93	1.33	242	-0.08	241 0.01



	Men		Women		Paired Behavior			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>ES</i>
Weakens friendship bonds	0.14	0.38	0.19	0.55	243	-1.95	242	0.12
Achieves a romantic relationship	0.07	0.27	0.08	0.28	243	-0.71	242	0.06
Cannot achieve a romantic relationship	0.04	0.19	0.03	0.18	242	0.26	241	0.02
Wants attention from others	0.19	0.59	0.21	0.66	244	0.14	243	0.04
Rejects attention from others	0.05	0.21	0.07	0.25	243	-1.00	242	0.06
Challenges traditional gender norms	0.05	0.24	0.05	0.24	242	0.20	241	0.01

	Men		Women		Paired Behavior		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i> Effect Size
Accepts traditional gender norms	0.03	0.19	0.07	0.27	244	-2.53*	243 0.16
Demands	0.04	0.19	0.13	0.45	245	-3.63***	244 0.24
Requests	0.01	0.09	0.07	0.26	245	-3.19**	244 0.21

*Note.* \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

For behavior variables, the total number of scenes that women and men appeared in together is  $n =$

245. However, *nurtures others, neglects others, views sex as primarily recreational, committed to school, not committed to school, strengthens friendship bonds, cannot achieve a romantic relationship, and challenges traditional gender norms* each had three missing cases. *Weakens friendship bonds* had two missing cases, and *wants attention from others* had one missing case. In addition, effect size, Cohen's  $d$ , is calculated as the mean divided by the standard deviation.

Table 14

*Two-Way  $\chi^2$  Results of Cast Member Traits by Gender*

	Male Cast Member %	Female Cast Member %	Total (N)
Faith			
<i>Faithful</i>	58.6	68.4	30
<i>Unfaithful</i>	41.3	31.6	18
Total (N)	29	19	
$\chi^2 (1, N=48) = 0.47, V = 0.10$			
Emotional Strength			
<i>Emotionally strong</i>	78.4 <sub>a</sub>	50.6 <sub>b</sub>	84
<i>Emotionally weak</i>	21.6 <sub>a</sub>	49.4 <sub>b</sub>	54
Total (N)	51	87	
$\chi^2 (1, N=138) = 10.48^{***}, V = 0.28$			

	Male Cast Member %	Female Cast Member %	Total (N)
Humility			
<i>Humble</i>	53.1 <sub>a</sub>	20.8 <sub>a</sub>	28
<i>Arrogant</i>	46.9 <sub>a</sub>	79.2 <sub>b</sub>	57
Total (N)	32	53	
$\chi^2 (1, N=85) = 9.47^{**}, V = 0.33$			
Submissiveness			
<i>Submissive</i>	66.1 <sub>a</sub>	26.0 <sub>b</sub>	56
<i>Domineering</i>	33.9 <sub>a</sub>	74.0 <sub>b</sub>	73
Total (N)	56	73	
$\chi^2 (1, N=129) = 20.69^{***}, V = 0.40$			

	Male Cast Member %	Female Cast Member %	Total (N)
<b>Kindness</b>			
<i>Nice</i>	80.0 <sub>a</sub>	67.2 <sub>b</sub>	168
<i>Mean</i>	20.0 <sub>a</sub>	32.8 <sub>a</sub>	63
Total (N)	100	131	
$\chi^2 (1, N=231) = 4.70^{**}, V = 0.14$			
<b>Support of others</b>			
<i>Encouraging</i>	73.8	76.8	138
<i>Discouraging</i>	26.2	23.2	45
Total (N)	84	99	
$\chi^2 (1, N=183) = 0.21, V = 0.03$			

	Male Cast Member %	Female Cast Member %	Total (N)
Volume			
<i>Quiet</i>	67.1 <sub>a</sub>	52.1 <sub>b</sub>	180
<i>Loud</i>	32.9 <sub>a</sub>	47.9 <sub>b</sub>	120
Total (N)	158	142	
$\chi^2 (1, N=300) = 6.99^{**}, V = 0.15$			
Mood			
<i>Happy</i>	87.2 <sub>a</sub>	74.5 <sub>b</sub>	485
<i>Angry</i>	12.8 <sub>a</sub>	25.5 <sub>b</sub>	118
Total (N)	281	322	
$\chi^2 (1, N=603) = 15.27^{***}, V = 0.16$			

	Male Cast Member %	Female Cast Member %	Total (N)
Outlook			
<i>Optimistic</i>	73.8 <sub>a</sub>	62.5 <sub>b</sub>	446
<i>Pessimistic</i>	26.2 <sub>a</sub>	37.5 <sub>b</sub>	210
Total (N)	317	339	
$\chi^2 (1, N=656) = 9.58^{**}, V = 0.12$			
Strength of Work			
<i>Industrious</i>	69.0	68.7	117
<i>Lazy</i>	31.0	31.3	53
Total (N)	87	83	
$\chi^2 (1, N=170) = 0.00, V = 0.00$			

	Male Cast Member %	Female Cast Member %	Total (N)
Self-maintenance			
<i>Independent</i>	90.0	62.5	19
<i>Dependent</i>	10.0	37.5	7
Total (N)	10	16	
$\chi^2 (1, N=26) = 2.37, V = 0.30$			
Threat from others			
<i>Protected</i>	31.4	40.0	29
<i>Threatened</i>	68.6	60.0	51
Total (N)	35	45	
$\chi^2 (1, N=80) = 0.63, V = 0.09$			



	Male Cast Member %	Female Cast Member %	Total (N)
Threat to others			
<i>Harmless</i>	39.1	35.4	35
<i>Threatening</i>	60.9	64.6	59
Total (N)	46	48	
$\chi^2 (1, N=94) = 0.14, V = 0.04$			
Concern about public perception			
<i>Image indifferent</i>	31.9	37.7	35
<i>Image-conscious</i>	68.1	62.3	65
Total (N)	47	53	
$\chi^2 (1, N=100) = 0.37, V = 0.06$			

	Male Cast Member %	Female Cast Member %	Total (N)
Belief in Self			
<i>Self-assured</i>	81.0	86.5	141
<i>Self-doubting</i>	19.0	13.5	27
Total (N)	79	89	
$\chi^2 (1, N=168) = 0.94, V = 0.08$			
Effect on Surroundings			
<i>Constructive</i>	94.0	95.1	156
<i>Destructive</i>	6.0	4.9	9
Total (N)	83	82	
$\chi^2 (1, N=165) = 0.11, V = 0.03$			

	Male Cast Member %	Female Cast Member %	Total (N)
Carefulness			
<i>Cautious</i>	27.3	18.2	15
<i>Impulsive</i>	72.7	81.8	51
Total (N)	33	33	
$\chi^2 (1, N=66) = 0.78, V = 0.11$			
Worth to others			
<i>Valuable</i>	82.4	84.7	106
<i>Useless</i>	17.6	15.3	21
Total (N)	68	59	
$\chi^2 (1, N=127) = 0.13, V = 0.03$			

	Male Cast Member %	Female Cast Member %	Total (N)
Pardoning for others			
<i>Forgiving</i>	20.0	11.7	21
<i>Blaming</i>	80.0	88.3	127
Total (N)	45	103	
$\chi^2 (1, N=148) = 1.79, V = 0.11$			
Athletic ability			
<i>Athletically-inclined</i>	94.7	100	20
<i>Athletically unlikely</i>	5.3	0	1
Total (N)	19	2	
$\chi^2 (1, N=21) = 0.11, V = 0.07$			

*Note.* \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ . N= the total number of times the trait was observed for both genders in 327 scenes. Subscripts differing in the same row differed at  $p < .05$ . Pairwise comparisons were conducted via Marascuilo contrasts (Glass & Hopkins, 1996). Pairwise comparisons were not conducted on models in which the omnibus  $\chi^2$  test was not statistically significant.

Table 15

*Independent-Samples T-Test Results of Cast Appearance (Scene-Level Cast Descriptors) by Gender*

	Men		Women		Appearance		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Effect Size
Dresses modestly (1)/dresses immodestly (3)	1.82	0.59	1.82	0.59	0.01	1221	0.00
Sexy (1)/not sexy (3)	1.98	0.39	1.91	0.49	2.91**	1194.47	0.16
Well-groomed (1) poorly groomed (3)	1.90	0.66	1.74	0.75	4.10***	1221.86	0.23

	Men		Women		Appearance		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Effect Size
Wears flashy accessories (1)/wears no accessories (3)	2.24	0.80	1.95	0.76	6.46***	1196.44	0.37
Smiles (1)/frowns (3)	1.68	0.68	1.70	0.70	-0.43	1216.87	0.02

*Note.* \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

For these appearance variables, the total number of cast member references was  $N = 1229$ . The total number of cast member references for men was  $n = 585$ . For male cast members, there was one missing reference for *sexy/not sexy*, *wears flashy accessories/wears no accessories*, and *smiles/frowns*. The total number of cast member references for women was  $n = 640$ . For female cast members, there was one missing reference for *dresses modestly/dresses immodestly*. Also, when the variance between the two conditions was not equal, as determined by the Levene's test for equality of variance, an adjusted t-test and degrees of freedom was utilized to account for this. In addition, effect size, Cohen's  $d$ , is calculated as the difference between the male and female means divided by the

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pooled standard deviation.

Table 16

*Independent-Samples T-Test Results of Cast Appearance (Episode-Level Cast Descriptors) by Gender*

	Men		Women		Appearance		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Effect Size
Has dark skin (1)/ has fair or light skin (3)	1.81	0.81	2.32	0.72	-5.14***	232	0.67
Has long hair (1)/ has short hair (3)	2.31	0.88	1.67	0.56	6.65***	197.58	0.78
Has straight hair (1)/ has curly hair (3)	2.18	0.55	2.14	0.84	0.43	197.14	0.05

*Note.* \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

For these appearance variables, the total number of cast member references was  $N = 234$ . The total



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number of cast member references for men was  $n = 118$ . For male cast members, there were two missing references because a cast member was missing in two episodes. The total number of cast member references for women was  $n = 116$ . For female cast members, there were four missing references because a cast member was missing in four episodes. Also, when the variance between the two conditions was not equal, as determined by the Levene's test for equality of variance, an adjusted t-test and degrees of freedom was utilized to account for this. In addition, effect size, Cohen's  $d$ , is calculated as the difference between the male and female means divided by the pooled standard deviation.

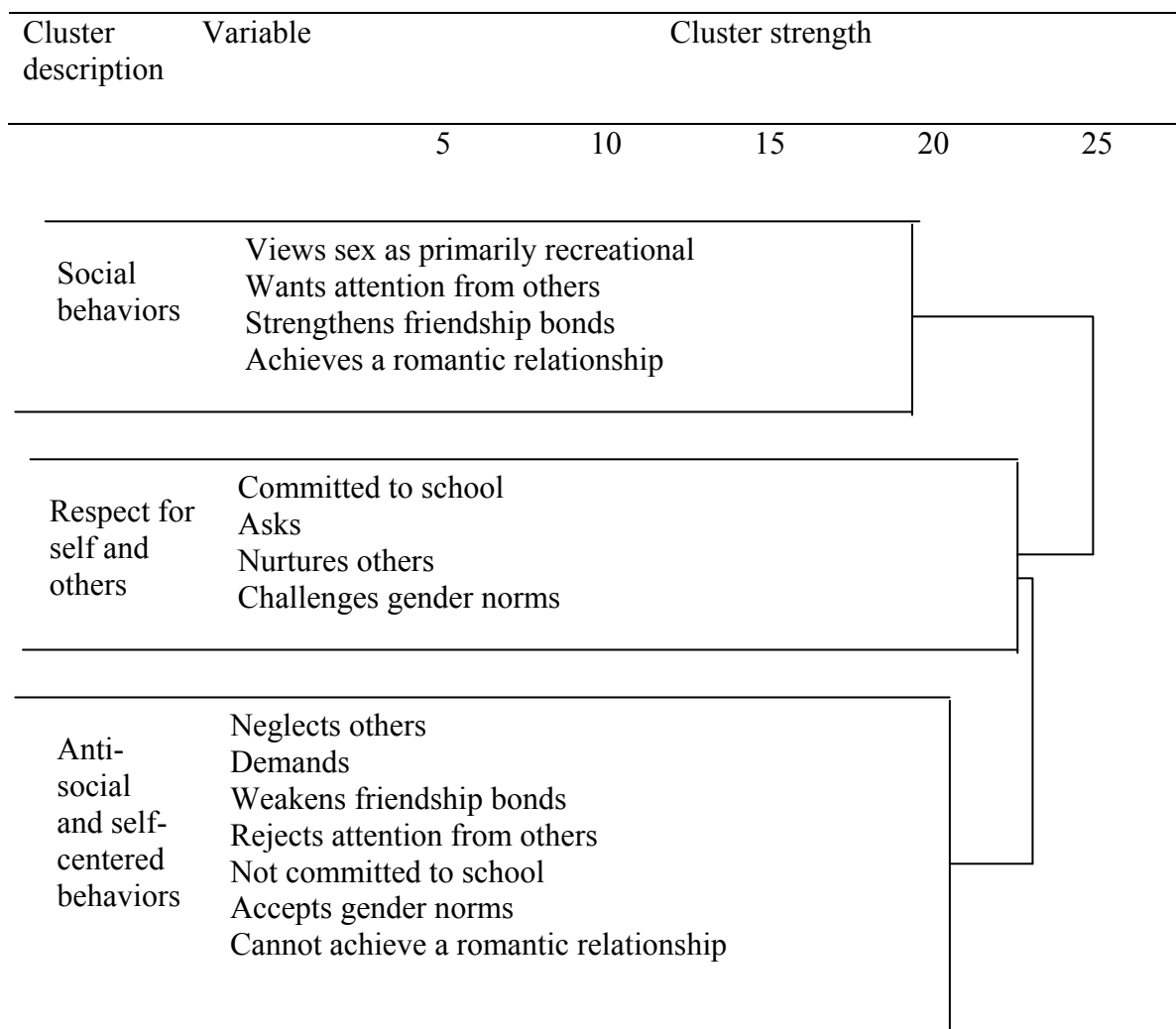
Table 17

*Descriptive Statistics of HBCU References (Scene-Level)*

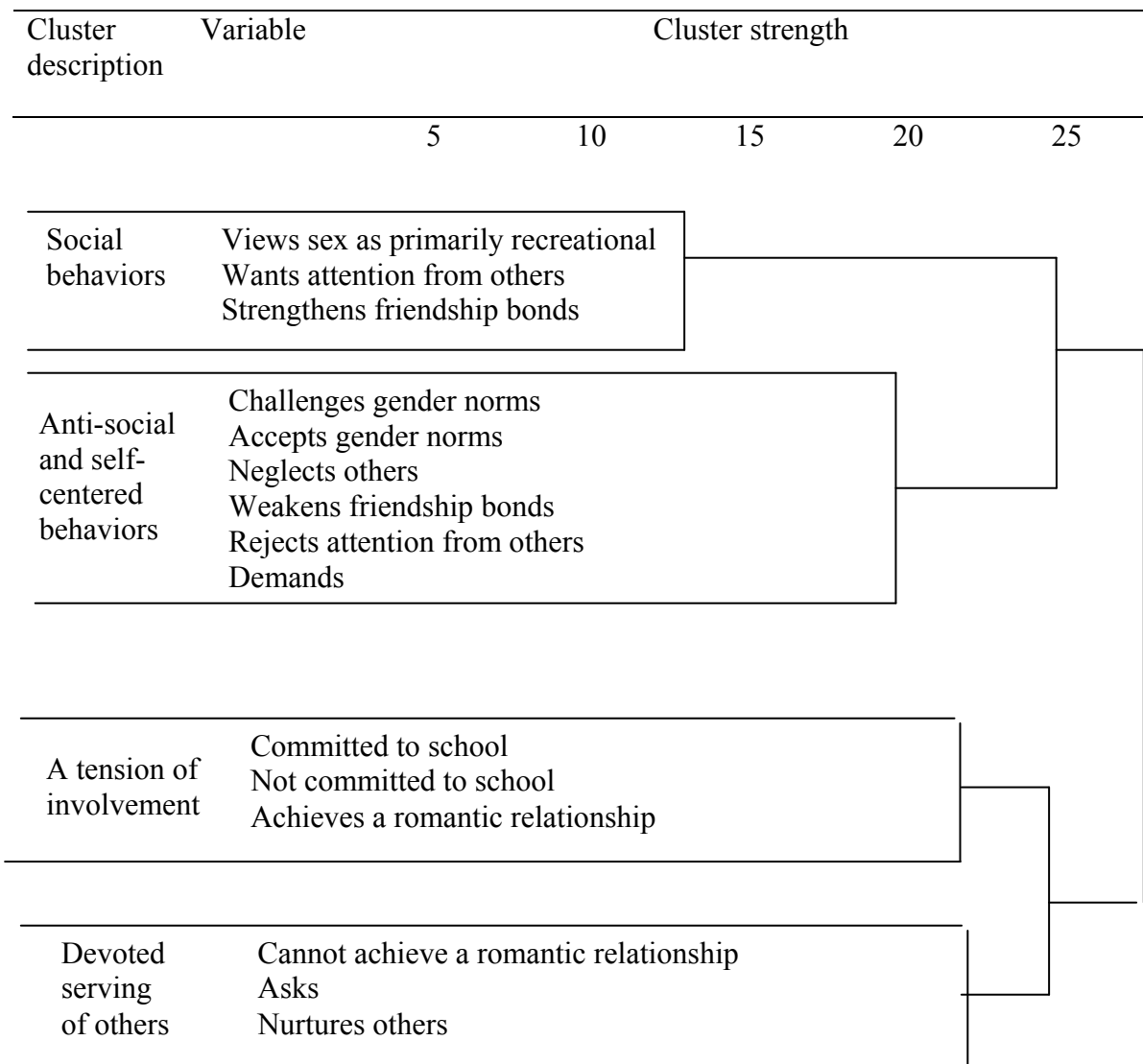
Academic characteristics					
	Goal			Anti-Goal	
	<i>n</i>	%		<i>n</i>	%
Promotes positive regard for humankind	12	28.6	Promotes little regard for humankind	0	0.0
Committed to promoting social justice	0	0.0	Disregard for social justice	0	0.0
Promotes student self-worth	16	38.0	Promotes student self-devaluing	1	100.0
Emphasizes the development of Black history, racial pride, and ethnic traditions/ Black consciousness and identity	2	4.76	Ignores the development of Black history, racial pride, and ethnic traditions/ ignores the development of Black consciousness and identity	0	0.0
Committed to maintaining a diversity view	0	0.0	Unconcerned with maintaining a diversity view	0	0.0

Social characteristics					
	Goal			Anti-Goal	
	<i>n</i>	%		<i>n</i>	%
Striving to educate the whole individual	12	28.6	Striving to educate only portions of the individual	0	0.0
Offers programs designed to meet the unique needs of Black students	0	0.0	Offers little or no programs designed to meet the unique needs of Black students	0	0.0
Committed to providing academic excellence and leadership qualities	0	0.0	Disregard for providing academic excellence and leadership qualities	0	0.0
Total	42	100.0	Total	1	100.0

*Note.* The total of number of HBCU references is  $N=43$ . The total number of goals is  $n = 42$ . The total number of anti-goals is  $n = 1$ .



*Figure 1.* Dendrogram for Cluster Analysis of Male Behaviors



*Figure 2.* Dendrogram for Cluster Analysis of Female Behaviors

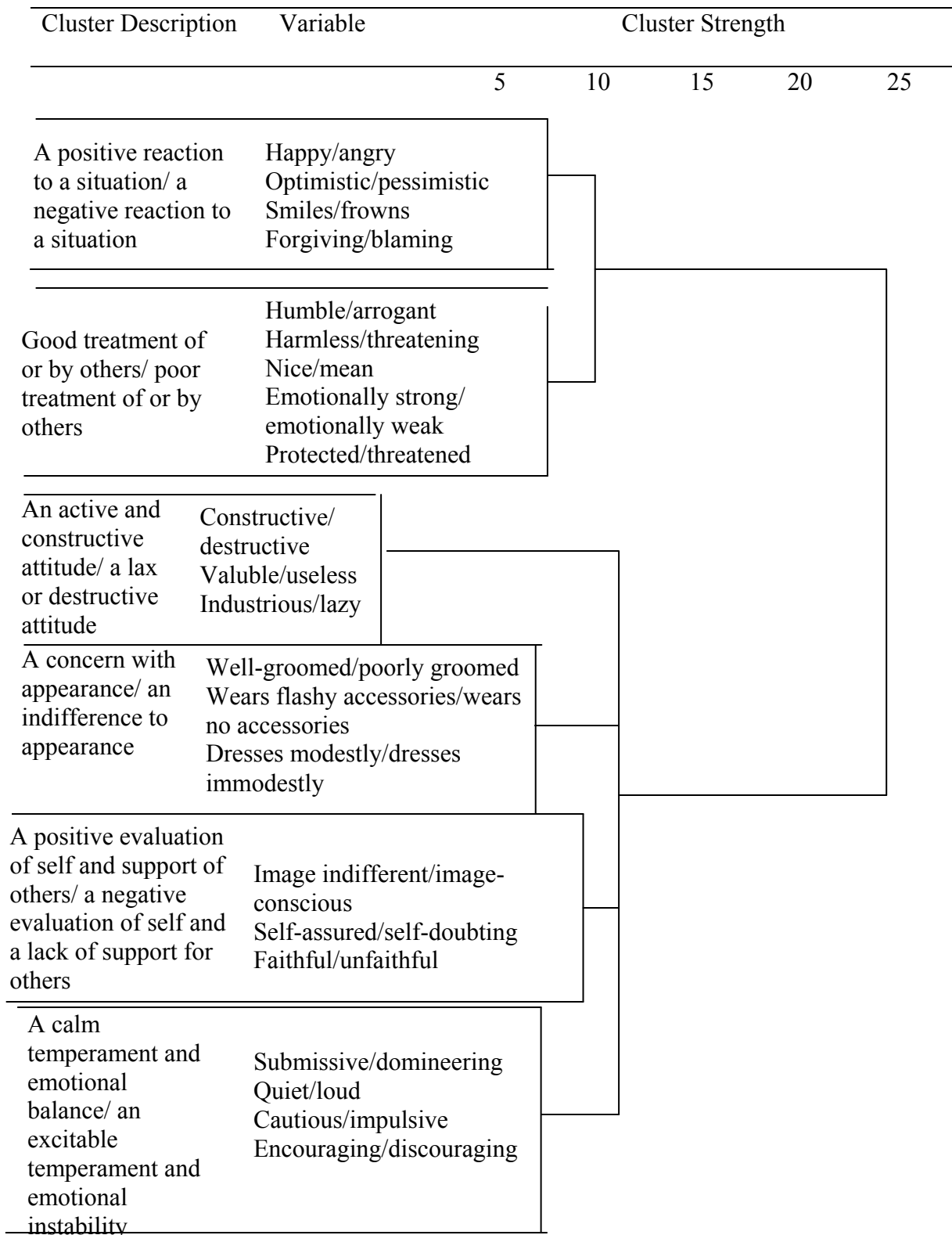


Figure 3. Dendrogram for Cluster Analysis of Male Traits and Appearances

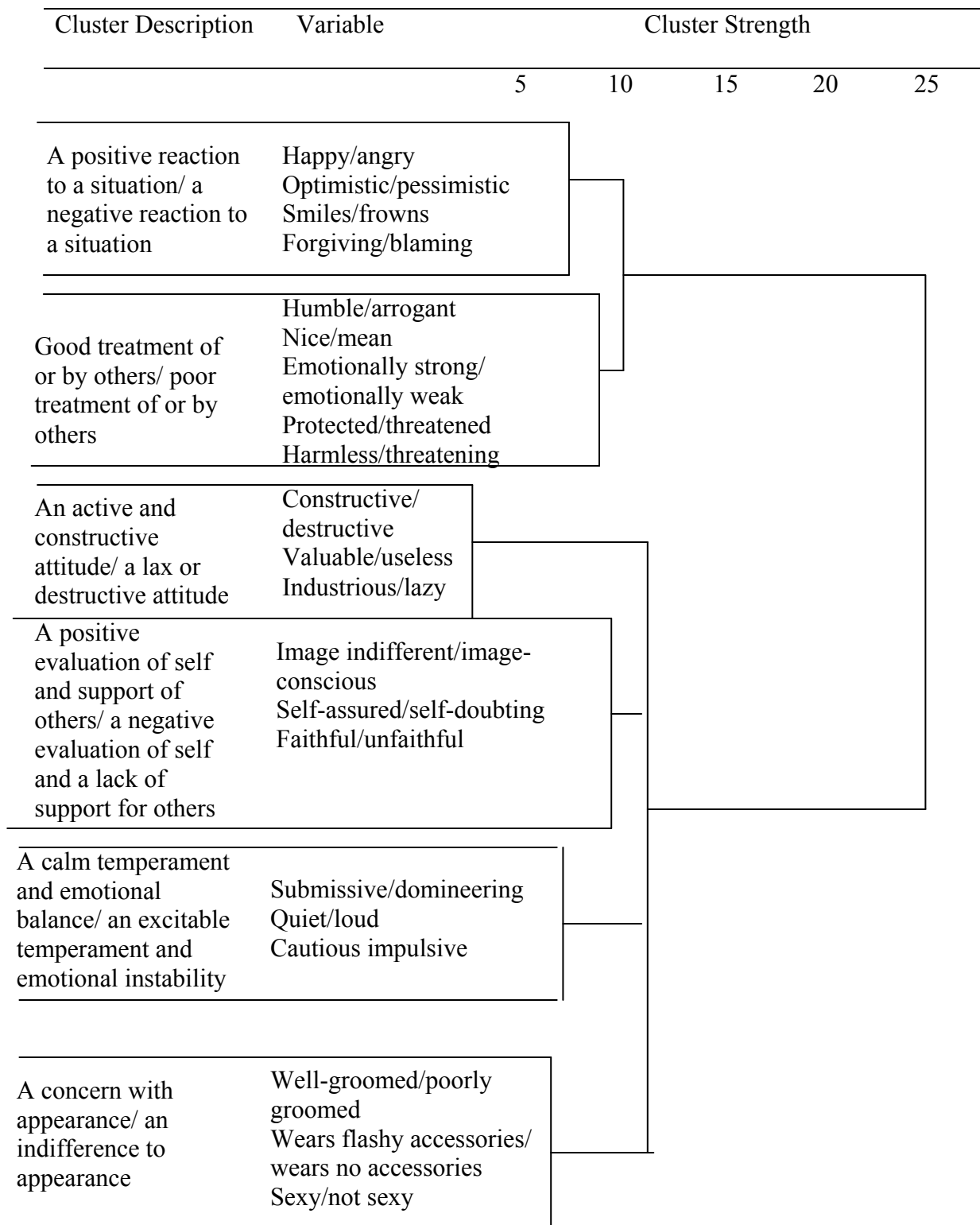


Figure 4. Dendrogram for Cluster Analysis of Female Traits and Appearances

## Appendix A

### Gendered Stereotypes of African Americans

#### *African-American Women*

##### *The Mammy*

During slavery, the Mammy cared for the master's family, often to the detriment of her own (Hill Collins, 2000). Heavy, dark-skinned, and without a sexuality of which to speak, the Mammy symbolizes the ideal African-American woman in her relationship to the Caucasian man because she was sexually non-threatening and served the master's family faithfully and obediently (Bogle, 2001). Aunt Jemima of syrup fame and Hattie McDaniel's character in *Gone with the Wind* (Selznick & Fleming, 1939) are examples of mammies (Pilgrim, 2000d). Hill Collins contests this image by arguing that African-American women historically had no other options for employment than to work as caretakers in the homes of Caucasians. They did these jobs because they had to do so to survive, not because they especially loved their profession. As discussed in Chapter 4, some of the earliest portrayals of African Americans on TV cast them in domestic roles (e.g., Head, 1954). This stereotype might be seen on *College Hill* in the form of cast members, male or female, who are portrayed as particularly nurturing. This stereotype might also be seen in those female cast members who cook, clean, and perform other domestic duties. In terms of demeanor, perhaps they are happy and optimistic. They might also be especially nurturing, and appear as dark-skinned and possess an African facial norm.

##### *The Matriarch/The Sapphire*



This image became popularized through media texts through characters such as *Amos n' Andy's* Sapphire and Esther from *Sanford and Son*, and from historical texts such as the Moynihan Report (1965). This overbearing, aggressive, and un-feminine mother emasculates and belittles the African-American men around her. Because of her focus on working outside of the home and being in control, she spends too much time neglecting her home and the domestic duties associated with it, such as her children. Her un-feminine behavior contributes to the failures of the African-American community. She sees no need for romantic relationships and feels she needs a man *only* for his seed. Cruel, bossy, loud, and angry, she is often seen rolling her head around on her neck in an aggressive fashion, rolling her eyes or pointing and/or snapping her fingers at her (more often than not) male target (Pilgrim, n.d.). Hill Collins (2000) argues that this representation has been found very little in studies that focus on the actual lived experiences of African-American women. Further, it allows African-American mothers to take the blame for failures of American capitalism, as well as supports racial oppression. As previously mentioned, content analyses have found examples of African-American women being portrayed as hot-tempered (e.g., Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005). On *College Hill*, this stereotype might be seen in the figure of African-American women who verbally chastise or emasculate male cast members or other men appearing on the show. It might also be displayed in physical displays of attitude, such as a female cast member who is loud and displays physical or verbal threat towards other cast members. They likely demand that others behave in a certain manner, because of their desire to control situations. As a result of this critical nature, it is also likely that they

weaken friendship bonds with others and are not supportive or encouraging of others' endeavors; they are domineering, mean, angry, and blame others or are highly critical of them. Physically, she is likely appears not sexy.

### *The Welfare Mother*

This stereotype involves a single, economically disadvantaged “breeder” with a poor work ethic. Instead of working, she threatens the socio-political stability of the U.S. by receiving government assistance. She has many children out of wedlock, but no male partner, and certainly no job. Ultimately, she is dependent, waiting on others to support her neediness. Hill Collins (2000) posits the image of The Welfare Mother has its roots in slavery, which generated the myth of African-American women's over-fertile nature. For media examples of The Welfare Mother, consider news stories which focus on African-American mothers who draw monies from the State without working for their income (e.g., Campbell, 1995); Gray (2004) also points to the Welfare Queen popularized by Reaganism. Though the seasons utilized for this analysis of *College Hill* does not feature any single mothers, many of the cast members (both male and female) are considered lazy, dependent, and emotionally weak by their fellow cast members.

### *The Black Lady*

A hard-working, middle-class African-American woman who has no time to waste on African-American men, The Black Lady is all about business (Hill Collins, 2000). While other African-American women around her focus on family or employment, she stays in school to get a good job. She competes with men successfully for jobs as a result of her assertive and focused nature. However, it is her firm nature that

has resulted in her relational downfall: because she takes jobs meant for African-American men, she remains single, perpetually unmarried. Along with the image of The Welfare Mother, the stereotype of The Black Lady “constitute[s] class-specific versions of a matriarchy thesis whose fundamental purpose is to discredit Black women’s full exercise of citizenship rights,” specifically rights to a family and educational and occupational success (Hill Collins, p. 81). Omarosa Manigault-Stallworth of *The Apprentice* has been packaged as this stereotype. For instance, she separated from her husband in 2005 (Omarosa fires husband?, 2005), and marketed a self-help book, titled *The Bitch Switch: Knowing How to Turn It On and Off*, in which she teaches women the appropriate times to utilize their “inner bitch” (Omarosa, 2008, p. xiii). However, there is also evidence that Manigault-Stallworth is quite aware of the negative portrayals of African Americans in television, and is playing a role expected of her by viewers (Omarosa, 2004). On *College Hill*, this stereotype might be seen in the form of cast members, particularly women, viewing education as a means to bettering themselves. Therefore, they are likely committed to educational endeavors and industrious. It may also be seen in them rejecting attention from male suitors, or being unable to achieve a romantic relationship. Because this cast member is business-minded, she might also present herself in a business/professional manner by wearing modest clothing that would not be considered sexy, be well-groomed, and wear subdued accessories.

#### *The Jezebel/ The Whore/ The Hoochie*

This stereotype is lusty, sexually aggressive and deviant. In appearance, she is young and exotic, often possessing face considered pretty by Eurocentric standards (e.g.,

straight hair, thin lips and a thin nose), light skin, and a shapely body, which she shows off with immodest clothes that bare her breasts and buttocks (Pilgrim, 2002). She uses her sexuality as social capital, willing to participate in amoral activities (e.g., lesbianism, anal sex) for money (Pilgrim). Her animalistic passions do not burn for African-American men, but for Caucasian men (Pilgrim). Unfortunately for them, they are just powerless weaklings who fall victim to her plans. As Hill Collins (2000) explains, African-American women are often categorized as sexually-aggressive, while such behavior is usually frowned on by mainstream society. This is because it is “natural” for men to be sexually-aggressive, not women. This image helps to construct African-American women as the Other because the legend of her raw sexuality contrasted so greatly with the myth of the chaste Caucasian woman (Hill Collins, 2000). Furthermore, such animalistic behavior implies African-American women cannot be raped, because they are always willing to engage in intercourse with anyone, especially Caucasian men (Pilgrim, 2002). On *College Hill*, this stereotype might be represented by female cast members who act in a flirtatious manner; these behaviors might also be performed in tandem by those who display a more phenotypically European face, as well as long, straight hair and light skin. Her dress is likely immodest and sexy.

### *The Tragic Mulatto*

The racially-mixed offspring of an African and Caucasian relationship, the Tragic Mulatto would be a perfect woman: she is well-mannered, articulate, intelligent, and beautiful (Bogle, 2001). With her light skin, light-colored eyes, long and straight hair, and thin lips and nose, she could pass for Caucasian. It is these traits that make her

attractive and able to seduce Caucasian men. She also enjoys special privileges from Caucasians. However, she is of African descent, and can never be fully accepted by Caucasian people. She desires to be accepted into Caucasian society, but always fears that her ancestry will be discovered. It is this fear of being discovered that keeps her from developing any relationships with people of African descent (Bogle). Because she lives in between two worlds, never to be accepted by either, she is unhappy, and suffers from depression, alcoholism, and suicidal tendencies. Pilgrim (2000f) explains that while The Tragic Mulatto stereotype suggested that biracial African Americans are never accepted, many were quite successful and were often the leaders in the community, such as Mary Church Terrell, the first president of the National Association of Colored Women. Pilgrim also argues that tragedy followed both African-American women *and* men, regardless of skin tone. Because *College Hill* regularly features African-American cast members interacting willingly with other African-American cast members and strengthening friendship bonds, it is not likely that this stereotype would be viewed in a traditional sense. However, cast members might perform behaviors that would result in weakening of friendship bonds in general, and appear more phenotypically European than African (e.g., possess a European facial norm, have light skin, and long, straight hair). They might also display mental instability or emotional weakness.

#### *Updated Stereotypes of African-American Women*

As discussed in Chapter 4, hip hop culture relies on and (re)produces familiar images of African-American women. These new scripts are not mutually exclusive, and can change depending on the context. Like the more traditional stereotypes, the modern

stereotypes of African-American women still focus on their sexuality (Stephens & Phillips). These new stereotypes are as follows:

### *The Diva*

This African-American woman is high-maintenance and has an attitude. Like The Black Lady, she is successful, and has worked hard to achieve success—without a man (Stephens & Phillips, 2003). The Diva focuses on maintaining her financial and cultural status by investing in her appearance to make sure that she is the center of attention. Physically, she is often curvy and fair-skinned, recalling the image of The Jezebel. Her long, straight hair is perfectly-coiffed and her nails are immaculate. She wears designer fashions which show off her body, but never in a way to make those around her think she is loose. She looks for a high-status man who can complement her own status. She is independent and awe-inspiring, and in control of her sexuality, reflecting her middle-class values. She is sexually-tempting, but not aggressively so. Stephens and Phillips suggest singer Beyoncé Knowles has been packaged as this stereotype; singer Mariah Carey has been similarly marketed (Joy, 2010). It appears that Knowles has embraced this image: her latest album, *I Am...Sasha Fierce*, has a track titled “Diva,” in which she refers to herself as a “female hustla’ ” who has made millions worldwide (Knowles, 2008). In the context of *College Hill*, Diva-esque behaviors might manifest in the form of cast members who dress in a manner that would be considered sexy yet modest; they would be well-groomed. The investment in one’s appearance might also be displayed by wearing flashy accessories, such as expensive (-looking) jewelry, purses, shoes, etc. Once again, cast members who embody this stereotype might be phenotypically European.

Behaviorally, these cast members likely want attention from others, and might demand it. They are probably also image-conscious. In addition, they have likely worked for their measure of status independently of others.

### *The Freak*

Dressed in tight clothes, short skirts, and strutting in a sexy fashion, The Freak is attractive to men (Stephens & Phillips, 2003). Also, her kinky and uninhibited desires lead her to engage in high-risk, deviant sexual behaviors to meet her own sexual needs. The Freak has sex because she wants to do; *she* enjoys it. Her hyper-sexual nature challenges gender roles as she is often just as sexually aggressive as men, if not more so. Her sexuality also suggests that she is not monogamous. However, though she is good for one night, her sexual over-the-top sexual behaviors frighten off any man who might want to marry her. The media often package rapper Lil' Kim as an embodiment of The Freak because of her explicit descriptions of bedroom conquests in her lyrics (Stephens & Phillips). There has been much evidence to suggest that constituents of HBCUs such as administrators and students have concerns regarding this portrayal (e.g., Dix et al., 2004; Leger, 2007). As mentioned in Chapter 4, Kinda Andrews (of Southern University, where Season 1 of *College Hill* was filmed) was known as No Drawers, referring to her sexually-liberated natured (Dix et al.). The Freak is also one of the stereotypes Parrott-Sheffer directly references in his research (2008). On the show, this stereotype might be displayed in cast members, female and male, who view sex as primarily recreational, reflecting the idea that Freaks engage in sexual relations because it is fun and enjoyable

for them. They do not offer any apologies for this view, and are self-assured in their sexuality. They might also dress both immodestly and sexy.

### *The Dyke*

She is a strong, sexual woman who does not allow any men into her bedroom (Stephens & Phillips, 2003). She is emotionally strong, successful, powerful, and is in control of her sexuality. However, her lesbianism is interpreted as just bitterness towards men who have hurt her in the past. Physically and behaviorally (e.g., rejecting traditional gender roles for women), she is seen as masculine. Because she does not fit into the heteronormative standard of the African-American community, she is viewed as deviant. She is an intersection between asexual The Mammy and the contemptuous-towards-men and aggressive Matriarch stereotypes (Stephens & Phillips, 2003). The hip-hop media have often portrayed rapper, actor, and businesswoman Queen Latifah as a Dyke (Stephens & Phillips). This is because she is smart, business-savvy, and has often responded ambiguously to questions regarding her sexual preference, even to mainstream media sources such as *People* (Belge, n.d.). On *College Hill*, this stereotype's characteristics might be seen in cast members who are emotionally strong, independent, and industrious, and also like the Matriarch, reject traditional gender roles (e.g., domestic duties). In addition, she might be unable to achieve a romantic relationship. It is likely that she dresses modestly and not in a manner that would be considered sexy. Though Season 7 does feature a lesbian, this season was not included in the current analysis.

### *The Gangster Bitch*



This woman has survived a broken home which often involved drug abuse, domestic violence, and many other forms of abuse (e.g., emotional, sexual; Stephens & Phillips, 2003). Aggressive and emotionally and physically tough, she has survived her impoverished life by being self-sufficient. Though she is uncaring and unfeeling about most as a result of her troubled past, she is exceptionally loyal to the man with which she is in a relationship. She and her male partner view each other as friends, and she is accepting of his criminal lifestyle. She is willing to prove her loyalty to her man through sex. Sometimes he is threatening to her, but more often than not, he protects her. The Gangster Bitch does not challenge patriarchy, but stands beside her man in his struggle. Rappers Eve and Da Brat have been marketed as this stereotype (Stephens & Phillips). Because *College Hill* focuses on college students who are not likely to engage in criminal behaviors (beyond that of underage drinking), this stereotype might not be embodied very often. However, The Gangster Bitch's qualities might be displayed in the form of a cast member who acts in an aggressive (particularly physical) and threatening manner, in addition to those who display selfishness and neglect others. Despite their aggression, they might be also protected by those around them. Though they likely weaken more friendship bonds than they strengthen, they may have a few close friends. These cast members are probably also emotionally strong from surviving past obstacles.

#### *The Sister Savior*

Rooted in religious dogma, The Sister Savior avoids sex because it is considered amoral by her socially conservative religious beliefs (Stephens & Phillips, 2003). Demure and obedient, she particularly follows the orders of men of the church. Because of the

church's negative perspective of sex, she feels guilty regarding her sexuality and is ignorant of knowledge that would help her to make informed sexual decisions about herself. Physically, she wears clothes that fully cover her body and uses "modest" body language, unlike *The Freak* (Stephens & Phillips). Evangelist Juanita Bynum, whose sermons include guidance regarding submission to God and preaches against sexual promiscuity, has been marketed as an example of The Sister Savior. On *College Hill*, religion does not appear as a part of the narrative very often; for example, in the episodes utilized for this analysis, only one episode in Season 4 involved the cast members engaging in an impromptu church session. The Sister Savior's characteristics might be seen in cast members who are submissive, reject attention from others, and dress in a manner that would be considered both modest and not sexy. They also do not view sex as primarily recreational. These cast members are likely faithful, humble, harmless, and act in ways that strengthen friendship bonds.

### *The Earth Mother*

By contrast to the Sister Savior, The Earth Mother is spiritually-grounded, rather than having her roots in an organized church (Stephens & Phillips, 2003). She is sexually, spiritually, and intellectually self-aware. Politically, she is Afrocentric and rejects any form of sexual or gendered exploitation. The Earth Mother's clothes reflect this perspective, and she celebrates all body sizes, hair textures, and skin tones, rejecting traditional norms of Caucasian beauty. Her own natural hair, worn in dreadlocks or an Afro, is often adorned with colorful headwraps, and she wears loose-fitting, flowing garments that regularly have an African flair. Her healthy self-esteem, coupled with her

political activism, causes those around her to respect her. However, her emotional strength often intimidates men. Her political views influence her relational perspective, and she demands that to be her partner, an African-American man must be as strong as she. Therefore, he must also have a strong sense of self and contribute emotionally to their relationship. In the media, Freddie (Cree Summer) of *A Different World* has been presented as an example of The Earth Mother, as well as neo-soul singers India.Arie, Erykah Badu, and Jill Scott. Cast members might display characteristics of The Earth Mother by dressing modestly and wearing hair in styles that would be considered less traditionally mainstream (i.e., straight, short), in cornrows, braids, and Afros. They likely exude emotional strength, stability, self-assuredness, and the political involvement of The Earth Mother might be shown by general constructiveness. In addition, they may challenge traditional gender norms.

### *The Baby Mama*

A combination of The Jezebel, Mammy, Welfare Mother, and Matriarch stereotypes, she can initially appear as any of the aforementioned portrayals and then become pregnant (Stephens & Phillips, 2003). Because this woman desires a particular man so much, she sacrifices everything to have him. She is deceptive, and plots to become pregnant. She might also lie about the identity of her baby's father. She is obvious proof of male sexual prowess. In spite of this tenuous relationship between The Baby Mama and her baby's daddy, she must maintain love and respect for him unconditionally. Though her baby's father is often abusive to her, she is still perceived as the primary woman in his life. She is alternatively loving and easily manipulated through

sex, yet demanding and controlling of her baby's father. A mediated example of The Baby Mama stereotype is neo-soul singer (and Earth Mother) Erykah Badu, who had a child by rapper André 3000 of Outkast. In the song, "Ms. Jackson" (Outkast, 2000) André argues that his son by Badu should represent more than a child support payment. In the two seasons of *College Hill* utilized for the portrayals of African-American stereotypes, none of the women (or men) had children with the purpose of trapping a relational partner. However, cast members might still act in a demanding fashion, as well as be submissive to the wishes of others. In addition, the deceptive nature of The Baby Mama might appear as unfaithfulness. Physically, this stereotype has no particular indicators.

### *African-American Men*

#### *The Brute/The Criminal/The Nat/The Buck*

The Brute is a savage. He is dangerous, conniving, and sexually threatening, especially to Caucasian women (Pilgrim, 2000a; 2007). His behaviors include lurking and unleashing his animalistic rage on those around him. He acts on impulse, performing criminal and brutal acts of terror. This stereotype came to popularity during the Reconstruction period after slavery (Pilgrim, 2000a; 2007). "Many White writers argued that without slavery—which supposedly suppressed their animalistic tendencies—Blacks were reverting to criminal savagery" (Pilgrim, 2000a, para.4). Pilgrim argues that this myth was created to keep the races—more specifically, African-American men and Caucasian women, separate after the abolition of slavery. The supposed violent tendencies of African-American brutes against Caucasian women were also used to

justify lynching, which was used to keep African Americans in Caucasian control (Bogle, 2001). Physically, The Brute is muscled, powerful, and often seen bare-chested, reflecting his wild nature. Dixon's (2006) research of television news provides evidence that the news media often air news stories that refer to criminal, African-American men, so much so that this Brute-ish behavior is often attributed to African-American men, even if race is not mentioned in a story. As discussed above with regard to The Gangster Bitch stereotype, since *College Hill* focuses on college students who are not likely to engage in criminal behaviors (beyond that of underage drinking), this stereotype might not be embodied very often. Also similar to The Gangster Bitch, The Brute's qualities might be displayed in the form of a cast member who acts in an aggressive (particularly physical) and threatening manner, in addition to those who display unfaithful, mean, destructive and impulsive natures. His threatening behaviors likely result in the weakening of friendship bonds. They may also display angry and destructive tendencies. The Brute's sexual prowess might be exhibited in cast members who view sexual activities as recreational; he might also be considered sexy and dress immodestly.

### *The Coon*

Though an adult, The Coon is less-intelligent than a child (Pilgrim, 2000b). He spends most of his time avoiding work, and his hedonistic ways make him unreliable and useless to Caucasians, who have to physically abuse him to get him to do any work. In spite of his occupational deficiencies, he desires to be in control like Caucasians and attempts to mimic them. He desires to be in a position of power, but cannot figure out how to do so. This is because The Coon is illiterate and inarticulate, and he can never

hope to be anything more than a buffoon (Bogle, 2001). As Pilgrim states, “The coon, although he often worked as a servant, was not happy with his status. He was, simply, too lazy or too cynical to attempt to change his lowly position” (para.1). He is especially superstitious and easily scared. If he is married, his wife (often physically) dominates him. In appearance, he is often young, tall, and skinny, with a bald head. He wears gaudy, ill-fitting clothes. His large, white eyes stand in stark contrast to his black skin.

According to Pilgrim, the most well-known Coon is actor Stephin Fetchit, who played basically the same role as the African-American dim-wit in many movies between the late 1920s to the 1940s. As a result of the current media climate which is not likely to reflect traditionally racist beliefs, The Coon is not likely to be seen in a traditional sense. Therefore on *College Hill*, a cast member who is poorly-groomed, dark-skinned, and has short hair might embody The Coon. The buffoonish qualities of The Coon might also be exhibited by a cast member who is perceived as comical by others; for instance, The Coon’s ignorance might be presented as a lack of commitment to education, and The Coon’s desire to be in power may also be presented as a desire to receive attention from others. In fact, this cast member might behave in a humorous manner to make others pay attention to him. Cast members might also display unfaithfulness, laziness, uselessness, and arrogance, other characteristics of The Coon.

### *The Sambo*

Pilgrim (2000b) explains that The Sambo myth was used as a rationale for slavery. “How bad could these institutions have been... if Blacks were contented, even happy, being servants?” (para.1). Similarly to The Coon, he is a perpetual child, as well

as stupid, lazy, and superstitious. However, unlike The Coon who can never achieve his childish plans, The Sambo is ultimately harmless and requires Caucasian supervision to keep him out of mischief. Older than The Coon in appearance, he also differs from The Coon because he serves Caucasians happily. Dependent and loyal, he rejects freedom from Caucasian control and knows his place. He *can* be slothful, but he is careful to never disrespect Caucasians. According to Pilgrim, character Jar Jar Binks from *Star Wars: Episode I- The Phantom Menace* embodies The Sambo. Like The Coon, The Sambo is an artifact from a time which openly embraced racist beliefs. However, this does not mean that The Sambo has been completely banished from the media: *College Hill's* cast members might be passively submissive to the will of others, and does not mind going with the flow. He/she is submissive in nature, and is not likely to make decisions based on groupthink. They are portrayed as happy, dependent, faithful, submissive, harmless, and lazy, qualities embodied by The Sambo. Physically, these cast members might be poorly-groomed, dark-skinned, and have short hair.

### *The Tom*

Like The Sambo and The Mammy, the Tom is also used to justify African Americans working in positions of submission to Caucasians (Pilgrim, 2000e). Physically, The Tom is old and often an asexual, physically weak character with poor eyesight who depends on a cane. He is dark-skinned with large eyes and smiles often. Though he is harassed and abused by his Caucasian master, he maintains love for his master and his family (Bogle, 2001); like The Mammy, he is happy to serve them. His psychological dependence on and love for his master is crippling, rendering him loyal,

docile, and accepting of all forms of ill-treatment. He is stoic, refusing to ever leave his master's side. He is kind, gentle, humble, and selfless to a fault. He is often of Christian faith. Uncle Ben, trademark of Uncle Ben's Rice, is a commercialized example of The Tom. Though some elements of the Tom are not likely to be noted in *College Hill* (such as his elderly physical traits, because the show features young college students), some cast members might be portrayed as nurturing, self-sacrificing, faithful, nice, optimistic, happy, and submissive, as well as physically dark-skinned. In addition, because of their happy natures, these cast members are likely to smile often. The Tom's devotion might also be displayed as a desire to strengthen friendship bonds.

#### *Updated Stereotypes of African-American Men: The Athlete*

Just as there are updated stereotypes of African-American women (Stephens & Phillips, 2003), new stereotypical images of African-American men exist as well (Hoberman, 1997). Though *The Athlete* developed recently, it has cultural depth similar to that of the previously discussed stereotypes. Focusing on African-American men, Hoberman argues African-American athleticism has impacted African-American life; in fact, the fixation on the African-American athlete (both inside and outside of the African-American community) has resulted in anti-intellectual and/or anti-educational attitudes in the African-American community. One instance of this is the belief, as illustrated by sports media, that African-American athletes are displaying their natural ability for sport. Content analytical research has provided empirical evidence for this idea: a study (Rada, 1996) analyzed the commentary provided by announcers during television coverage of National Football League games aired on the broadcast networks during the 1992 season.



It was found that announcers were significantly more likely to comment on African-American players' physical characteristics; by contrast, announcers were significantly more likely to refer to Caucasian players' cognitive abilities. According to this stereotype, African-American male athletes are *only* physically superior to others—they lack intelligence. As a result, they can never hope to compete with Caucasian men on the level where it really matters—one of socio-political power. Therefore, this stereotypical African-American man appears with exceptional athletic prowess and is successful at competitive sports. However, he is quite stupid. Physically, he is in great shape. Mike Tyson, characterized for his brute strength in the boxing ring rather than his intellect, has been packaged as The Athlete stereotype (Entine, 2001). On *College Hill*, this might be seen in a cast member who is particularly athletically-inclined (though this portrayal is not likely to be shown very often because the show presents such extracurricular activities rarely), and show a commitment to school activities, especially those related to sports. The “jock” (p. 211) is also one of the stereotypes Parrott-Sheffer (2008) directly references in his analysis of *College Hill*.

## Appendix B

### Behaviors, Traits, and Appearance Derived from Stereotypes of African Americans

Stereotype	Definition	Behavior(s)	Trait(s)	Appearance	Citation	
Female stereotypes						
The Mammy	Traditionally: An asexual character who cares for her master's family.	*Nurtures others	*Nurturing	*Overweight	Bogle (2001);	
		*Follows orders	*Faithful	*Dark-skinned	Head (1954);	
			*Happy	*Possesses very African features	Hill Collins (2000);	
			*Obedient		Pilgrim (2000d);	
			*Asexual			Stephens & Phillips (2003)
<hr/>						
	On <i>College Hill</i> : Cast members, male or female, who are portrayed as particularly nurturing. This stereotype might also been seen in those who cook, clean, and perform other domestic duties. In addition, they may be unable to achieve a romantic relationship.	*Nurtures others	*Faithful	*Not sexy	Not applicable.	
		*Cannot achieve a romantic relationship	*Happy	*Dark-skinned		
			*Accepts traditional gender norms (women)	*Optimistic	*Displays an African facial norm	

Stereotype	Definition	Behavior(s)	Trait(s)	Appearance	Citation
Female stereotypes					
The Matriarch/ The Sapphire	Traditionally: An overbearing, aggressive, and un-feminine mother who emasculates and belittles the African-American men around her.	*Refuses to cook, clean, or perform other domestic duties	*Strong	*Unfeminine (e.g., straight-hipped)	Gray (2004);
			*Arrogant		Hill Collins (2000);
			*Mean		Mastro & Behm-Morawitz (2005);
		*Shrugs off romantic advances	*Aggressive		Pilgrim (n.d.);
			*Assertive		Stephens & Phillips (2003)
		*Rolls eyes, neck, and points fingers	*Loud		
		*Yells	*Angry		
		*Screams			
		*Puts people down/insults them			
On <i>College Hill</i> : A female cast member who is loud and displays physical or verbal threat towards other cast members.					
		*Weakens friendship bonds	*Emotionally strong	*Not sexy	Not applicable.
		*Demands	*Arrogant		
			*Domineering		
			*Mean		

Stereotype	Definition	Behavior(s)	Trait(s)	Appearance	Citation
Female stereotypes					
The Matriarch/ The Sapphire	On <i>College Hill</i> : See above.	See above.	* Loud  * Discouraging  * Angry  * Pessimistic  * Threatening  * Blaming	See above.	Not applicable.
The Welfare Mother	Traditionally: A single, economically disadvantaged “breeder” with a poor work ethic. Instead of working, she threatens the socio-political stability of the country by receiving government assistance.	* Has many children out of wedlock  * Does not work/works very little at a job or school  * Depends on others for support	* Unwed mother  * Poor  * Lazy  * Dependent	* Physically attractive (no particular indicators)	Hill Collins (2000);  Stephens & Phillips (2003)
	On <i>College Hill</i> : A cast member (male or female) who is considered lazy, dependent, and emotionally weak by his/her fellow cast members.	* Not committed to school	* Lazy  * Dependent	* No particular indicators	Not applicable.

Stereotype	Definition	Behavior(s)	Trait(s)	Appearance	Citation
Female stereotypes					
The Black Lady	Traditionally: A hard-working, professional, middle class African-American woman who has no time to waste on African-American men.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Achieves a great deal</li> <li>*Cannot get African-American men to marry her</li> <li>*Successfully competes with/Takes jobs meant for African-American men</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Hard-working</li> <li>*Successful</li> <li>*Assertive</li> <li>*Competitive</li> <li>*Single</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Physically attractive (no particular indicators); presents self in a business/professional manner</li> </ul>	Hill Collins (2000)
On <i>College Hill</i> : A cast member, particularly a female, who views education as a means to bettering herself. It may also be seen in female cast members rejecting romantic attention from male suitors.					
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Committed to school</li> <li>*Cannot achieve a romantic relationship</li> <li>*Rejects attention from others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Industrious</li> <li>*Independent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Dresses modestly</li> <li>*Not sexy</li> <li>*Well-groomed</li> <li>*Wears subdued accessories</li> </ul>	Not applicable.

Stereotype	Definition	Behavior(s)	Trait(s)	Appearance	Citation
Female stereotypes					
The Black Lady	See above.	See above.	See above.	See above.	See above.
The Jezebel/The Whore/The Hoochie	Traditionally: A sexual deviant. Young, exotic, and promiscuous, she uses her sexuality as social capital.	*Participates in sexually-deviant activities (e.g., lesbianism, anal sex)—often for money  *Has inappropriate and/or insatiable sexual desires  *Not satisfied with African-American men sexually	*Sexually-aggressive  *Amoral/whorish  *Uncivilized/uncontrollable  *Immodest  *Deceptive  *Seductive	*Pretty  *Light-skinned  *Long, straight-haired  *Shapely  *Thin-lipped  *Slender-nosed	Hill Collins (2000);  Pilgrim (2002);  Stephens & Phillips (2003)
<i>Note.</i> Traditionally, both The Welfare Mother and The Black Lady are generally physically attractive. Therefore, in order to discriminate between these stereotypes, coders indicated if a female character is well-groomed or poorly groomed, and if she wore flashy or no accessories, for example.					

Stereotype	Definition	Behavior(s)	Trait(s)	Appearance	Citation
Female stereotypes					
The Jezebel/The Whore/The Hoochie	Traditionally: See above.	*Has insatiable desire for/preys on Caucasian men	See above.	* <i>Dresses in an immodest fashion (e.g., exposes breasts, buttocks, etc.)</i>	See above.
<p>On <i>College Hill</i>: A female cast member who acts in a flirtatious manner; these behaviors might also be performed in tandem by those who appear more phenotypically Caucasian.</p>					
		*Views sex as primarily recreational	*Unfaithful	*Displays European facial norm	See above.
				*Has fair or light skin	
				*Has long hair	
				*Has straight hair	
<p><i>Note.</i> In the event of two similar stereotypes (e.g., The Jezebel/The Whore/The Hoochie and The Tragic Mulatto), the indicators that vary between the two representations have been placed in italics.</p>					

Stereotype	Definition	Behavior(s)	Trait(s)	Appearance	Citation
Female stereotypes					
The Tragic Mulatto	Traditionally: The racially-mixed offspring of a Black and White relationship. Ignorant of her ancestry and culture, she is rejected by both African Americans and Caucasians. With her Caucasian features, she is especially appealing to Caucasian men, whom she prefers.	*Refuses to interact with African Americans (e.g., platonic or romantic relationships )	*Well-mannered *Articulate *Intelligent *Seductive  *Deceptive  *Ambitious  *Power-hungry  *Emotionally-troubled	*Beautiful  *Light-skinned  *Long, straight-haired  *Shapely  *Thin-lipped  *Slender-nosed  *Light-eyed	Bogle (2001); Pilgrim (2000f)
On <i>College Hill</i> : A cast member who might physically appear more phenotypically European than African.					
		*Weakens friendship bonds	*Unfaithful  *Emotionally weak	*Displays European facial norm  *Has fair or light skin	Not applicable.



Stereotype	Definition	Behavior(s)	Trait(s)	Appearance	Citation
Female stereotypes					
	On <i>College Hill</i> : See above.	See above.	See above.	*Has long hair	Not applicable.
				*Has straight hair	
The Diva	Traditionally: A high-maintenance woman with an attitude. She is sexy, but not overly so. She has achieved financial success without the help of a man. She wants a high-status man that adds to her own status.	*Surrounds herself with people who give her attention  *Competes against other women for male attention  *Focuses on/invests in self-maintenance and status	*Attracts/demands attention  *Sultry  *Tempting  *Always controls sexuality  *Successful  *Independent  *Inspires awe and envy	*Pretty, according to European standards  *Long, straight-haired  *Perfectly-coiffed hair, nails, etc.  *Slender, but curvaceous enough to be deemed attractive	Stephens & Phillips (2003)
<i>Note.</i> In the event of two similar stereotypes (e.g., <i>The Jezebel/The Whore/The Hoochie</i> and <i>The Tragic Mulatto</i> ), the indicators that vary between the two representations have been placed in italics.					

Stereotype	Definition	Behavior(s)	Trait(s)	Appearance	Citation
Female stereotypes					
The Diva	Traditionally: See above.	<p>*Purchases status symbols reflecting her success (e.g., purses, shoes, cars, homes, etc.)</p> <p>*Chooses men who will enhance her image</p>	See above.	<p>*Light-brown- to medium-brown-skinned</p> <p>*Dresses to show off, but not in a whorish fashion</p>	Stephens & Phillips (2003)
	On <i>College Hill</i> : A cast member who focuses on outward displays of status; works to gain status symbols. Wears flashy accessories to show the level of status achieved.	<p>*Wants attention from others</p> <p>*Demands</p>	<p>*Independent</p> <p>*Industrious</p> <p>*Image-conscious</p>	<p>*Dresses sexy</p> <p>*Dresses modestly</p> <p>*Well-groomed</p> <p>*Wears flashy accessories</p>	Not applicable.
The Freak	Traditionally: Possessing uncontrollable sexual desires like the Jezebel, this woman engages in high-risk, deviant sexual behaviors to meet her own sexual needs. While she is good for one night, her sexual behaviors brand her “unwedable.”	<p>*Has sex because it brings her pleasure</p>	<p>*Sexually-deviant</p> <p>*Sexually-aggressive</p>	<p>*Dresses provocatively (e.g., wears tight clothes, short skirts, etc.)</p>	Stephens & Phillips (2003)

Stereotype	Definition	Behavior(s)	Trait(s)	Appearance	Citation
Female stereotypes					
The Freak	Traditionally: See above.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Has sex outside of a committed relationship</li> <li>*Sexually aggressive because she wants to be</li> <li>*Uses extremely sexy body language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Sexually-empowered/comfortable/aware</li> <li>*Outrageous</li> <li>*Tempting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Sexually attractive to men</li> </ul>	See above.
On <i>College Hill</i> : Cast members, both female and male, who view sex as primarily recreational.					
		*Views sex as primarily recreational	*Self-assured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Dresses sexy</li> <li>*Dresses immodestly</li> </ul>	Dix et al. (2004); Leger (2007); Parrott-Sheffer (2008)

Stereotype	Definition	Behavior(s)	Trait(s)	Appearance	Citation
Female stereotypes					
The Dyke	Traditionally: She is a strong, sexual woman who does not allow any men into her bedroom. Because she does not fit into the heteronormative standard of the African-American community, she is viewed as deviant. She is an intersection between the asexual Mammy and the assertive Matriarch stereotypes.	<p>*Only engages in sexual activities with women (lesbian)</p> <p>*Actively rejects male advances</p>	<p>*Aggressive</p> <p>*Deviant</p> <p>*Sexually-empowered/ comfortable/ aware</p> <p>*Powerful/ strong</p> <p>*Self-determined</p> <p>*Successful</p>	<p>*Mannish (e.g., not shapely but asexual; possesses an unfeminine body type or body language)</p>	Stephens & Phillips (2003)
On <i>College Hill</i> : Though Season 7 does feature a lesbian, this season was not included in the current analysis on Seasons 3 and 4. However, this cast members might display emotional strength and, reject traditional gender roles for women (e.g., cooking, cleaning).					
		<p>*Challenges traditional gender norms</p> <p>*Cannot achieve a romantic relationship (with a male)</p>	<p>*Emotionally strong</p> <p>*Independent</p> <p>*Industrious</p>	<p>*Dresses modestly</p> <p>*Not sexy</p>	Not applicable.

Stereotype	Definition	Behavior(s)	Trait(s)	Appearance	Citation
Female stereotypes					
The Gangster Bitch	Traditionally: A woman who is condones the criminal tendencies of her male partner because they take care of each other. She does not challenge patriarchy, but stands beside her man in his struggle. She is both sexual partner and friend.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Engages in/supports criminal behaviors (e.g., sells drugs for money, etc.)</li> <li>*Actively supports male in the gangster lifestyle</li> <li>*Physically protected by male partner</li> <li>*Physically threatened by male partner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Aggressive</li> <li>*Emotionally tough</li> <li>*Uncaring about most others (except male partner)</li> <li>*Self-sufficient</li> <li>*Im-poverished</li> <li>*Able to fight</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Physically attractive (no particular indicators)</li> </ul>	Stephens & Phillips (2003)
On <i>College Hill</i> : a cast member who acts in an aggressive (particularly physical) and threatening manner, in addition exhibiting selfishness and neglect of others.					
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Neglects others</li> <li>*Strengthens friendship bonds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Emotionally strong</li> <li>*Domineering</li> <li>*Protected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*No particular indicators</li> </ul>	Not applicable.

Stereotype	Definition	Behavior(s)	Trait(s)	Appearance	Citation
Female stereotypes					
The Gangster Bitch	On <i>College Hill</i> : See above.	*Weakens friendship bonds	*Threatening	See above.	Not applicable.
The Sister Savior	Traditionally: Rooted in the doctrines of an organized church or religious doctrine (e.g., The Bible), she avoids sex. However, she supports patriarchy from the pulpit and beyond. She is rooted in religion.	*Avoids sex  *Does not want male sexual attention  *Feels guilt/shame regarding her sexuality  *Does not view sex as primarily recreational	*Demure  *Obedient, especially toward men  *Moral  *Sexually unaware	*Garments fully-cover her body  *Extremely “modest” body language	Stephens & Phillips (2003)
<i>Note.</i> The Gangster Bitch, like The Welfare Mother, is generally physically attractive. Therefore, in order to discriminate between these stereotypes, coders indicated if a female character is well-groomed or poorly groomed, and if she wore flashy or no accessories, for example.					

Stereotype	Definition	Behavior(s)	Trait(s)	Appearance	Citation
Female stereotypes					
The Sister Savior	On <i>College Hill</i> : A cast member who is submissive, rejects attention from others, and dresses in a manner that would be considered both modest and not sexy. She also does not view sex as primarily recreational. In addition, she is likely cautious and self-doubting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Strengthens friendship bonds</li> <li>*Rejects attention from others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Faithful</li> <li>*Submissive</li> <li>*Humble</li> <li>*Harmless</li> <li>*Self-doubting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Dresses modestly</li> <li>*Not sexy</li> </ul>	See above.
The Earth Mother	Traditionally: By contrast to the Sister Savior, she is spiritually-grounded. She can be a member of a particular “faith” without following the doctrines of organized religion. She is sexually, spiritually, and intellectually self-aware. She demands that to be her partner, an African-American man must be as strong as she.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Seeks a male partner who knows himself as well as she knows herself</li> <li>*Seeks a supportive male partner</li> <li>*Intimidates men</li> <li>*Rejects sex and gender exploitation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Self-aware</li> <li>*Sexually-empowered/comfortable/aware</li> <li>*Politically and spiritually Afrocentric</li> <li>*Respected</li> <li>*Politically aware</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Wears natural hair styles (e.g., dreadlocks, afros, etc.)</li> <li>*Attractive</li> <li>*Wears African-inspired or traditional African clothing</li> </ul>	Stephens & Phillips (2003)

Stereotype	Definition	Behavior(s)	Trait(s)	Appearance	Citation
Female stereotypes					
The Earth Mother	On <i>College Hill</i> : A cast member who is self-assured and constructive. Also, dresses modestly and wears hair in styles that would be considered less traditionally mainstream (i.e., straight), in cornrows, braids, and Afros.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Challenges traditional gender norms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Self-assured</li> <li>*Emotionally strong</li> <li>*Constructive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Dresses modestly</li> <li>*Has short hair</li> <li>*Has curly hair</li> </ul>	Not applicable.
The Baby Mama	Traditionally: A combination of the Jezebel, Mammy, Welfare Mother, and Matriarch stereotypes. She got pregnant to “trap” her baby’s daddy. Her relationship with her baby’s father is a constant power struggle because they both manipulate each other.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Acknowledges a bond with the child’s father</li> <li>*Loves the baby’s father unconditionally</li> <li>*Plans to get pregnant on purpose to trap a man</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Submissive to her baby’s father</li> <li>*Controlling</li> <li>*Loving</li> <li>*Demanding</li> <li>*Deceptive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Physically attractive (no particular indicators)</li> </ul>	Stephens & Phillips (2003)



Stereotype	Definition	Behavior(s)	Trait(s)	Appearance	Citation
Female stereotypes					
The Baby Mama	Traditionally: See above.	<p>*Desires the man so much she sacrifices everything else to have him</p> <p>*Lies about the identity of her baby's father</p>	See above.	See above.	See above.
	<p>On <i>College Hill</i>: Cast members who act in a demanding fashion, yet submit to the will of others. Might also appear unfaithful. In the two seasons of <i>College Hill</i> utilized for this analysis, none of the women (or men) had children in order to trap a relational partner.</p>	*Demands	<p>*Unfaithful</p> <p>*Submissive</p>	<p>*No particular indicators</p>	Parrott-Sheffer (2008)
<p><i>Note.</i> The Baby Mama, like The Welfare Mother, is generally physically attractive. Therefore, in order to discriminate between these stereotypes, coders indicated if a female character is well-groomed or poorly groomed, and if she wore flashy or no accessories, for example.</p>					

Stereotype	Definition	Behavior(s)	Trait(s)	Appearance	Citation
Male stereotypes					
The Brute/The Criminal/The Nat/The Buck	Traditionally: He is dangerous, conniving, and sexually threatening, especially to Caucasian women. He often has physically violent, impulsive tendencies.	*Expresses interest in Caucasian women	*Savage  *Remorseless  *Criminal  *Terrifying  *Impulsive  *Insatiable  *Crazed  *Violent	*Muscled  *Powerful  *Shirtless	Bogle (2001);  Dixon (2006);  Pilgrim (2000a; 2007)
On <i>College Hill</i> : A cast member who acts in an aggressive (particularly physical) threatening, mean, destructive, and impulsive manner.					
		*Views sex as primarily recreational  *Weakens friendship bonds	*Unfaithful  *Domineering  *Mean  *Angry  *Threatening	*Dresses immodestly  *Sexy	Not applicable.

Stereotype	Definition	Behavior(s)	Trait(s)	Appearance	Citation
Male stereotypes					
The Brute/The Criminal/The Nat/The Buck	On <i>College Hill</i> : See above.	See above.	*Destructive  *Impulsive	See above.	Not applicable.
The Coon	Traditionally: Though an adult, he is less-intelligent than a child. He has difficulty speaking proper English, and is a lazy good-for-nothing. He tries to display his intelligence in the Caucasian world, but is a total failure.	*Works very little/avoids work  *Acts childish  *Embarrasses himself  *Speaks unclearly/poorly	*Lazy  *Inarticulate  *Stupid  *Unreliable  *Shiftless  *Superstitious  *Frightens easily  *Easily confused/bewildered	*Skinny  *Bald-headed  *Wears ill-fitting clothes/Gaudily dressed	Bogle (2001); Pilgrim (2000b)

Stereotype	Definition	Behavior(s)	Trait(s)	Appearance	Citation
Male stereotypes					
	Traditionally: See above.	See above.	<i>*Considers himself intelligent</i>	See above.	See above.
	On <i>College Hill</i> : A cast member who is perceived as comical by others or behaves in a comical manner in order to receive attention.	<p>*Not committed to school</p> <p>*Wants attention from others</p>	<p>*Unfaithful</p> <p>*Lazy</p> <p>*Useless</p> <p>*Arrogant</p>	<p>*Poorly-groomed</p> <p>*Dark-skinned</p> <p>*Has short hair</p>	Not applicable.
<p><i>Note.</i> In the event of two similar stereotypes (e.g., The Coon and The Sambo), the indicators that vary between the two representations have been placed in italics.</p>					

Stereotype	Definition	Behavior(s)	Trait(s)	Appearance	Citation
Male stereotypes					
The Sambo	Traditionally: A perpetual child, he is stupid and lazy. However, he is ultimately harmless and requires Caucasian supervision to keep him out of mischief. He knows he is not the Caucasian man's equal and does not try to be.	<p>*Perpetually childish</p> <p>*Speaks unclearly/ poorly</p> <p><i>*Defers to Caucasians</i></p>	<p>*Lazy</p> <p>*Inarticulate</p> <p>*Stupid</p> <p>*Dependent</p> <p>*Irresponsible</p> <p>*Frightens easily</p> <p>*Easily confused/ bewildered</p> <p><i>*Loyal</i></p> <p><i>*Contented</i></p> <p><i>*Docile</i></p> <p><i>*Industrious</i></p>	<p>*Skinny</p> <p>*Bald-headed</p> <p>*Wears ill-fitting clothes/ Gaudily dressed</p>	<p>Bogle (2001);</p> <p>Pilgrim (2000b)</p>
<p><i>Note.</i> In the event of two similar stereotypes (e.g., The Coon and The Sambo), the indicators that vary between the two representations have been placed in italics.</p>					

Stereotype	Definition	Behavior(s)	Trait(s)	Appearance	Citation
Male stereotypes					
The Sambo	Traditionally: See above.	See above.	* <i>Kind</i>  * <i>Respectful</i>	See above.	See above.
	On <i>College Hill</i> : A cast member who willingly bends to the will of others, and is likely to be a follower, not a leader. He/she is submissive in nature, and does not make independent decisions. Is just “there.”		*Faithful  *Dependent  *Lazy  *Happy  *Submissive  *Harmless	*Poorly-groomed  *Dark-skinned  *Has short hair	
The Tom	Traditionally: A servant faithful and dependable for his Caucasian family. Eager to please, loyal, and utterly devoted, though he is often physically mistreated by his masters.	*Serves others  *Depends on Caucasians psychologically	*Faithful  *Happy  *Illiterate  *Stoic	*Smiles  *Wide-eyed  *Dark-skinned	Bogle (2001);  Pilgrim (20003)
<i>Note.</i> In the event of two similar stereotypes (e.g., The Coon and The Sambo), the indicators that vary between the two representations have been placed in italics.					

Stereotype	Definition	Behavior(s)	Trait(s)	Appearance	Citation
Male stereotypes					
The Tom	Traditionally: See above.	See above.	*Selfless/ generous  *Kind  *Humble  *Forgiving  *Religious (Christian)	*Asexual (e.g., skinny or has poor muscle definition)	See above.
On <i>College Hill</i> : A cast member who is portrayed as nurturing, self-sacrificing, faithful, and submissive. Might also present happiness, optimism, and a desire to strengthen friendship bonds.					
The Athlete	Traditionally: Popular in the sports media, this figure recalls the “natural” ability of the African-American athlete, as opposed to his intelligence in playing sports.	*Nurtures others	*Faithful	*Smiles	Entine (2001);  Hoberman (1997);  Rada (1996)
		*Strengthens friendship bonds	*Submissive	*Dark-skinned	
			*Nice		
			*Optimistic		
			*Happy		

Stereotype	Definition	Behavior(s)	Trait(s)	Appearance	Citation
Male stereotypes					
The Athlete	On <i>College Hill</i> : A cast member who is particularly athletically-inclined; likely a player for a University team. However, this cast member is likely more concerned with his performance on the field than in the classroom.	*Committed to school	*Athletically-inclined	(No particular indicators)	Parrott-Sheffer (2008)



## Appendix C

### HBCUs in Reality TV Codebook

#### **HBCUs in REALITY TV CODEBOOK**

The purpose of this content analysis is to code all cast members and the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) according to cast behaviors, traits, appearances, and HBCU references. Use the definitions and codes in this codebook as a guide.

**PLEASE IGNORE THE RECAPS AND THE PREVIEWS. ALSO, ONLY CODE THE “REAL TIME FOOTAGE,” AS OPPOSED TO THE TALKING HEAD CONFESSIONALS OR THE FLASHBACKS.**

#### **Variables**

For each episode, you will code the season, provide numbers for both the episode and the scene, and give a description of the scene.

Season ID#: Title of the season of this particular episode of *College Hill*.

3. Virginia State University
4. University of the Virgin Islands

Episode ID#: Provide the number that refers to the chronological order in which the episode aired.

Iedema defines a *scene* as “reconstruct[ed] unit still experienced as being concrete: a place, a moment in time, an action, compact and specific” (p. 188). Scenes are made up of many shots, which are defined as “uncut camera actions” (p. 188). This means the camera angle may change, but the camera movement itself is not moved to a new setting. A scene often ends with a “fade to black.” In addition, an extreme long shot or long shot of the scenery often begins a scene, to establish the setting.

Scene ID#: Provide the number that refers to the chronological order in which the scene appears.

Scene Description: Provide a brief description of the scene in no more than three sentences. (This might be easier to provide AFTER you’ve watched the scene.)

**SCENE Level variables include cast member behaviors, cast member traits, cast member appearance (scene), and HBCU reference (scene).**

## CAST MEMBER BEHAVIORS

For each scene, you will code behaviors of each of the **main cast members**.

Cast Description: Main cast members are those who are recurring. A picture of the cast with each cast member's name is provided for you, to make sure you are only coding cast members.

A list of common personality traits appears in a chart. This chart allows you to select if these portrayals refer to **M**(ales) or **F**(emales).

Please indicate **each** time (N=0 through ???) one of the descriptors can be used to describe the behaviors of the main cast members, indicating whether the behavior(s) is/are performed by male or female cast members.

**If no males or females appear in the scene, then indicate “x”.**

Nurtures others: displays caring and concern for others; takes care of others, even to one's detriment; e.g., takes care of others when they are physically and/or emotionally, ill, etc.

Neglects others: ignores/disregards others' needs; selfish, self-centered, etc; e.g., leaves a cast member alone when they are feeling upset or sick, etc.

Views sex as primarily recreational: is not necessarily concerned with developing an emotional, loving relationship or establishing a healthy relationship with a partner because he/she *primarily* wants to have intercourse for fun; views intercourse as casual fun; e.g., says he/she just wants to hook up, discusses sex in a light-hearted fashion, and/or engages in casual sex behaviors.

Committed to school: remains committed to the pursuit of education, school organizations, and educational concerns, especially during crises; e.g., might have to take out student loans, but does not drop out of school.

Not committed to school: stops pursuing education, activity in schools activities, and educational concerns, especially during crises; e.g., decides that school is just “too much”: too expensive, too difficult, is taking too long to achieve.

Strengthens friendship bonds: performs behaviors that encourage/bolster platonic relational maintenance; e.g., attends outings, parties, and other social events, or appears to enjoy spending time with others.

Weakens friendship bonds: performs behaviors that discourage/destroy platonic relational maintenance; e.g., engages in fights with other cast members, refuses to spend time with other cast members.

Achieves a romantic relationship: appears to gain some measure of success at starting (and perhaps achieving) a romantic relationship with a partner; e.g., starts flirting with another cast member and the flirtation is reciprocated.

Cannot achieve a romantic relationship: unsuccessful at starting (and/or maintaining) a relationship with a partner; e.g., starts flirting with another cast member but the other party rejects the flirtation.

Wants attention from others: Sees self as someone to be worshipped and adored; surrounds self with people who give him/her attention; wants to be the focus and/or to stand out; e.g., performs actions that will guarantee he/she will be in the limelight.

Rejects attention from others: Avoids the limelight; unconcerned with being the focus/center of attention; tries to blend in with the background; e.g., reluctant to make him/herself the “hot topic,” does not want “everyone looking at him/her.”

Challenges traditional gender norms: for women, refuses/mocks cooking, cleaning, child-rearing, etc., those roles which have been primarily assigned to women; for men, accepts these roles; e.g., a female cast member performs heavy lifting, etc., even if this “is a man’s job.”

Accepts traditional gender norms: for women, welcomes cooking, cleaning, child-rearing, etc., those roles which have been primarily assigned to women; for men, rejects these roles; e.g., for a male cast member, refuses to clean up a mess because it is “woman’s work.”

Demands: requires or forces one to behave, think, feel, etc. a certain way.

Requests: asks one to behave, think, feel, etc. a certain way.

## CAST MEMBER TRAITS

For each scene, you will code *traits* of each of the **main cast members**.

You will also indicate, how these traits were performed in terms of polar opposites, such as faithful (1), not applicable (2), or unfaithful (3).

If there is no evidence with which to judge traits, code not applicable (2).

**If an individual cast member does not appear, then indicate “x.”**

These traits are as follows:

Faithful: dependable; eager to please; loyal; devoted; steadfast, trustworthy, honest, candid, and one that others can count on, especially in a crisis; works to make others happy; e.g., is “there” for another cast member when they are in trouble; does not let a cast member down; tells the truth about his or her relationships; or is honest with cast members about what others are doing. /Not applicable/ Unfaithful: disloyal; untrustworthy; unreliable, lies; deceives; conniving; one that turns his/her back on one’s friends; e.g., leaves cast members alone in times of crisis; plots to undertake something; purposefully keeps cast members “in the dark.”

Emotionally strong: maintains control over emotions; able to withstand emotionally-trying situations. /Not applicable/ Emotionally weak: unable to maintain control over emotions; has no ability to deal with emotional difficulties.

Arrogant: snobby, conceited, haughty; immodest. /Not applicable/ Humble: modest.

Domineering: oppressive, overbearing; aggressive: disagreeable; e.g., possesses an attitude, and/or instigates altercations with others. /Not applicable/ Submissive: yielding, meek; passive.

Mean: bad-tempered; cruel; displays caustic wit. /Not applicable/ Nice: gets along well with others; kind.

Encouraging: motivates others to achieve goals; verbally or nonverbally pledges or displays motivation of others; e.g., tells others to “go for it” or says/does the right things a cast members needs to “keep going.” /Not applicable/

Discouraging: Cuts others down; verbally or nonverbally pledges of displays un-enthusiasm for other’s plans; e.g., tells others that they cannot achieve a goal.

Loud: noisy, deafening, clamorous; e.g., yells and keeps cast members from sleeping. /Not applicable/ Quiet: free from noise; silent; e.g., speaks softly as to not distract cast members.

Angry: mad, furious, enraged. /Not applicable/ Happy: in a good mood; jovial.

Pessimistic: sad, depressed, dejected, and/or has a negative outlook. /Not applicable/ Optimistic: upbeat, cheerful, and/or has a positive outlook.

Industrious: works hard; energetic; e.g., “keeps nose to the grindstone” and/or “takes care of business”; employed. /Not applicable/ Lazy: works very little; lethargic; e.g., lies around doing little or nothing and/or spends time being inactive; spends majority of the time “chillin’” or relaxing; unemployed.

Independent: self-sufficient; takes care of oneself; e.g., works to support oneself by paying bills. /Not applicable/ Dependent: needy; counts on others for needs to be met; e.g., waits for a handout.

Protected: physically/emotionally cared for; defended, guarded by others; e.g., a cast member uses their own body as a shield for this particular cast member in a fight, or a cast member comes to aid/"back up" this particular cast member. /Not applicable/ Threatened: physically/emotionally attacked or insulted by others; e.g., a cast member tries to instigate a fight with this particular cast member, or is the target of physical/verbal attacks.

Threatening: terrifying; dangerous; violent; causes others to feel threatened emotionally, physically, etc; makes others feel uncomfortable; e.g., encourages or instigates violence; starts or encourages fights between cast members; tries to rile others up; physically displays an "attitude," by rolling eyes, neck, or pointing fingers, especially in an altercation. /Not applicable/ Harmless: mild, innocent, unobjectionable, benign; safe, soothing, helps others to feel comfortable; e.g., breaks or attempts to break up a fight between cast members; tries to calm others down; physically displays calmness, especially in an altercation.

Image conscious: concerned about what others think of him/her; e.g., selects a relational partner that adds to one's positive perception by others; e.g., the cast member's boyfriend/girlfriend possess' material commodities or positive attributes that reflects positively on the cast member. /Not applicable/ Image indifferent: unperturbed about what others think of him/her; e.g., indifferent to the ways in which a relational partner adds to one's perception by others.

Self-assured: displays knowledge of self-identity or understanding of self; speaks of/refers to "who he/she is" as a person; displays knowledge or understanding of cultural practices, roots, etc. /Not applicable/ Self-doubting: displays little knowledge of self-identity or understanding of self; ignorant of whom he/she is" as a person; displays little knowledge or understanding of cultural practices, roots, etc.

Constructive: helping to improve; promoting further development or advancement. /Not applicable/ Destructive: tending to destroy; causing destruction or much damage; e.g., a cast member ransacks a room.

Impulsive: rash, quick, hasty. /Not applicable/ Cautious: timid, careful.

Useless: without useful qualities; of no practical good; trifling; good for nothing. /Not applicable/ Valuable: of considerable use, service, or importance.

Forgiving: to grant pardon for or remission of; cease to feel resentment against others. /Not applicable/ Blaming: feels reproach; e.g., critical of others.

Athletically-inclined: displays genuine/raw talents and/or trained skill with the body; e.g., is good at playing a sport or more than one; can dance. /Not applicable/ Athletically-unlikely: uncoordinated; displays little control over body or talent at sports/dancing.

### CAST MEMBER APPEARANCE (SCENE)

For each scene, you will code appearance of *each* the **main cast members**.

Cast Description: Main cast members are those who are recurring. A picture of the cast with each cast member's name is provided for you, to make sure you are only coding cast members.

For cast *appearance (scene)*, you will indicate which appearance descriptors the main cast members are exhibiting within the entire *scene*. Also, how these traits were performed in terms of polar opposites, such as dresses modestly (1), neutral (2), or dresses sexily (3). This variable will be coded for *each* cast member.

**If you are unable to discern certain trait(s) of a particular cast member (e.g., their face is not shown in the scene, or their body is covered with a blanket), then indicate “ct” (can’t tell).**

**If an individual cast member does not appear, then indicate “x.”**

These appearance traits are as follows:

Dresses modestly: for both males and females, cast members wearing hoodies and other large or baggy shirts and pants of any kind that covers the majority of the skin. /Neutral: for male cast members, wearing shorts and t-shirts, or just shorts. For female cast members, wearing shorts and t-shirts or shorts and tank tops. Dresses immodestly: For male cast members: wearing just underwear of any kind or appearing naked. For female cast members: wearing bikinis, lingerie, or appearing naked.

Sexy: (for both male and female cast members, how sexy he/she appears is determined by their physical appearance (sexy clothing, seductive appearance/posing), and/or the treatment of and/or the intent of the cast member to be seen as a sexual object by the other cast members.) **Cast members must meet at least two of the criteria to be considered sexy.** A cast member is sexy if he/she has a lot of skin showing, is provocatively dressed, is sexually posed, and/or has a sexual look on his/her face. /Neutral. /Not sexy: a cast member is not sexy if he/she has little/no skin showing, is not provocatively dressed, is not sexually posed, and/or does not have a sexual look on his/her face. **Cast members must meet at least two of the criteria to be considered not sexy.**

Well-groomed: puts effort into appearance; e.g., has perfectly-coiffed hair, nails, clothing, etc; the cast member dresses in clothing appropriate for a nice dinner or other special event; the cast member works to maintain attractiveness, and we see him/her combing hair, etc. / Neutral: the cast member is dresses in clothing appropriate for a mall or grocery store; is dressed in just one instance that would be considered poor grooming (e.g., wearing a wrinkled shirt); cast members dressed in athletic gear such as gym shorts, pants, etc. / Poorly-groomed: puts little effort into appearance; looks unkempt; e.g., uncombed hair, wrinkled clothes, etc; e.g., neglects attractiveness by neglecting to comb hair, etc.; the cast member dresses in a way that is appropriate for lounging about the house.

Wears flashy accessories: wears jewelry, belts, shoes, purses, etc. that displays high levels of adornment relative to one's gender; e.g., a male cast member wears large platinum and diamond necklaces. / Neutral: wears subdued accessories, such as jewelry that displays low levels of adornment relative to one's gender; e.g., a female cast member wears no rings, earrings, necklaces, or other jewelry. / Wears no accessories: wears no jewelry, belts, etc. or other forms of adornment.

Smiles: appears happy, cheerful; e.g., looks pleasant; smiles often. / Neutral / Frowns: appears angry; scowls; e.g., frowns often, seems to experience discomfort.

### HBCU REFERENCE (SCENE)

Indicate if the scene makes distinct references to the HBCU.

HBCU Reference:

- 1. Yes
- X. No

If YES, then indicate the type of HBCU Descriptor.

REFERENCE #: If there is more than one reference in the scene, then please provide the chronological reference number.

HBCU DESCRIPTOR #: A list of HBCU descriptors appears in a chart. Each descriptor has been categorized as a **goal** or an **anti-goal**, and has also been categorized as an **academic** or **social** characteristic. A goal is a positive achievement that an institution desires to accomplish because it results in positive outcomes for the HBCU, students, and/or society at large. By contrast, anti-goals are negative outcomes that would have detrimental results for the HBCU, students, and/or society at large.

Place a hash mark in front of the descriptors that *best* describes each of the HBCU references.

### **Academic Goals:**

1) Promotes positive regard for humankind: Marked by dedication to service and contributing to society in a productive manner, responsive to all human needs; e.g., encourages and/or hosts community service projects, outreaches, etc.

2) Committed to promoting social justice: Actively finding solutions to racism, sexism, discrimination and other forms of oppression; promoting moral and ethical values; e.g., encourages and/or hosts forums that seek to erase violence, discrimination, etc. against others.

3) Promotes student self-worth: Dedication to building students' characters, as well as encouraging student integrity, respect, decency, dignity, and responsibility; educating students so they are prepared to pursue graduate study or professional careers; e.g., encourages students to become more accepting and/or pleased with who they are; encourages them to become more adult/mature; works to educate students so that they can go on/and be successful in continuing their education.

4) Emphasizes the development of Black history, racial pride, and ethnic traditions/ emphasizes the development of Black consciousness and identity: Nurtures and provides an environment that celebrates the diversity of African-American culture; maintains ties to religious institutions, beliefs, etc.; hosts/encourages African-American celebrations such as Kwanza, King Day, Juneteenth, etc. or encourages reverence for African-American leaders and/or initiatives.

5) Commit to maintaining a diversity view: Characterized by openness to other racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds; e.g., encourages/hosts celebrations/initiatives of other cultures, such as an International Expo, etc.

### **Social Goals:**

6) Striving to educate the whole individual: Provides the student with a holistic educational environment; helps to develop written and oral communication skills, as well as critical thinking skills and interpersonal relationships; e.g., encourages intellectual growth as well as fosters interactions with others.

7) Offers programs designed to meet the unique needs of Black students: Identifies and secures additional sources of funding to support academically- and financially-deserving students; e.g., provides financial aid, scholarships, fellowships, etc. for African-American students.

8) Committed to providing academic excellence and leadership qualities: Prepares students for leadership and service roles in their communities; e.g., encourages



students to hold leadership positions in organizations, such as Student Government, campus-wide and community-wide organizations.

### **Academic Anti-goals:**

9) Promotes little regard for humankind: Marked by little or no dedication to service or contribution to society in a productive manner, unresponsive to human needs; e.g., does not encourage and/or host community service projects, outreaches, etc.

10) Disregard for social justice: Not trying to find solutions to racism, sexism, discrimination and other forms of oppression; does not promote moral and ethical values; e.g., does not encourage and/or host forums that seek to erase violence, discrimination, etc. against others.

11) Promotes student self-devaluing: Displays little or no dedication to building students' characters, and or/does not encourage student integrity, respect, decency, dignity, and responsibility; does not educate students so they are prepared to pursue graduate study or professional careers; e.g., does not encourage or assist students in becoming more accepting and/or pleased with who they are; does not encourage students to become more adult/mature; does not work to educate students so that they can go on/and be successful in continuing their education.

12) Ignores the development of Black history, racial pride, and ethnic traditions/ignores the development of Black consciousness and identity: Does not nurture and/or provide an environment that celebrates the diversity of African-American culture; does not maintain ties to religious institutions, beliefs, etc.; does not host and/or encourage African-American celebrations such as Kwanza, King Day, Juneteenth, etc. or discourages reverence for African-American leaders and/or initiatives.

13) Unconcerned with maintaining a diversity view: Not characterized by openness to other racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds; e.g., does not encourage and/or host celebrations/initiatives of other cultures, such as an International Expo, etc.

### **Social Anti-goals:**

14) Striving to educate only portions of the individual: Does not provide the student with a holistic educational environment; does not help to develop written and oral communication skills, or critical thinking skills and interpersonal relationships; e.g., does not encourage intellectual growth or foster interactions with others.

15) Offers little or no programs designed to meet the unique needs of Black students: Identifies and secures very few or no additional sources of funding to support academically- and financially-deserving students; e.g., does not provide financial aid, scholarships, fellowships, etc. for African-American students.

16) Disregard for providing academic excellence and leadership qualities: Does not prepare students for leadership and service roles in their communities; e.g., does not encourage students to hold leadership positions in organizations, such as Student Government, campus-wide and community-wide organizations.

**EPISODE Level variables include cast member appearance (episode) and HBCU reference (episode).**

For each episode, you will code the season, provide numbers for the episode, and give a description of the episode.

Season ID#: Title of the season of this particular episode of *College Hill*.

2. Virginia State University
3. University of the Virgin Islands

Episode ID#: Provide the number that refers to the chronological order in which the episode aired.

**Please note: the season ID# and episode ID# should match the ones previously provided by you.**

Episode Description: Provide a brief description of the episode in no more than three sentences.

**CAST MEMBER APPEARANCE (EPISODE)**

For each episode, you will code appearance of *each* the **main cast members** over the **entire** episode.

Cast Description: Main cast members are those who are recurring. A picture of the cast with each cast member's name is provided for you, to make sure you are only coding cast members.

For cast *appearance (episode)*, you will indicate which appearance descriptors the main cast members are exhibiting within the entire *episode*. Also, how these traits were performed in terms of polar opposites, such as dresses appealing (1), neutral (2), or unappealing (3). This variable will be coded for *each* cast member.

These traits are as follows:

Displays European facial norm: a cast member's face falls in line with European norms of beauty: has long, straight-hair, if African-American, not too dark-skinned/light-skinned, and/or thin-lipped, slender-nosed, light-eyed; e.g., Brad Pitt, Halle Berry, /Neutral: a cast member's face displays facial features that fall in line with both European and African norms of beauty: e.g., Angelina Jolie, Beyonce' Knowles. / Displays African facial norm: a cast member's face falls in line with African norms of beauty: is dark-skinned, and/or has very African features (thick-lipped, wide-nosed, dark-eyed), and/or wears hair in natural styles (e.g., dreadlocks, afros, etc.); e.g., India.Arie, Bernie Mac, Wesley Snipes.

Has dark skin: has skin that is particularly/heavily pigmented./Neutral/ Has fair or light skin: has skin that is particularly without pigment.

Has long hair: has hair that reaches the shoulders or below. /Neutral: has hair that reaches below the tips of the ears to just above shoulder-length. / Has short hair: has hair that falls between being worn shorn closely to the head to reaching the tops of the ears.

Has straight hair: has hair that is naturally or chemically straightened; e.g., hair with no wave/curl pattern. Neutral/ Has curly hair: has hair that displays a natural, manipulated, or chemical wave/curl pattern. If a cast member wears hair in braids, code as curly.

### **HBCU REFERENCE (EPISODE)**

Indicate if the episode makes distinct references to the HBCU.

#### HBCU REFERENCE:

- 1. Yes
- X. No

If YES, then indicate the type of HBCU overall reference.

For HBCU OVERALL REFERENCE, you will indicate whether if you consider the entire episode's overall affect regarding the HBCU as positive (1), neutral (2), or negative (3). This variable will be coded for each episode. If there are no references made to the University at all, then the coders will leave the HBCU overall reference portion of the coding sheet blank.

## Appendix D

### HBCUs in Reality TV Codesheets

#### **HBCUs in REALITY TV CODESHEET (Already indicated for Virginia State)**

SEASON ID#: (3)

EPISODE ID#:

SCENE ID#:

SCENE DESCRIPTION:

### **SCENE Level Variables**

#### **CAST MEMBER BEHAVIORS**

If males appear in scene, then indicate n=0-?; if no males appear in scene, then indicate “x”.

If females appear in scene, then indicate n=0-?; if no females appear in scene, then indicate “x”.

MALE	FEMALE	Behavior
		Nurtures others
		Neglects others
		Views sex as primarily recreational
		Committed to school
		Not committed to school
		Strengthens friendship bonds
		Weakens friendship bonds
		Achieves a romantic relationship
		Cannot achieve a romantic relationship
		Wants attention from others
		Rejects attention from others
		Challenges traditional gender norms
		Accepts traditional gender norms
		Demands
		Requests

## CAST MEMBER TRAITS

### *Anya*

(1)	NOT APPLICABLE (2)	(3)
Faithful		Unfaithful
Emotionally strong		Emotionally weak
Arrogant		Humble
Domineering		Submissive
Mean		Nice
Encouraging		Discouraging
Loud		Quiet
Angry		Happy
Pessimistic		Optimistic
Industrious		Lazy
Independent		Dependent
Protected		Threatened
Threatening		Harmless
Image conscious		Image indifferent
Self-assured		Self-doubting
Constructive		Destructive
Impulsive		Cautious
Useless		Valuable
Forgiving		Blaming
Athletically-inclined		Athletically-unlikely

### *Will*

(1)	NOT APPLICABLE (2)	(3)
Faithful		Unfaithful
Emotionally strong		Emotionally weak
Arrogant		Humble
Domineering		Submissive
Mean		Nice
Encouraging		Discouraging
Loud		Quiet
Angry		Happy
Pessimistic		Optimistic
Industrious		Lazy
Independent		Dependent
Protected		Threatened
Threatening		Harmless
Image conscious		Image indifferent
Self-assured		Self-doubting
Constructive		Destructive
Impulsive		Cautious

Useless  
Forgiving  
Athletically-inclined

Valuable  
Blaming  
Athletically-unlikely

***Bianca***

**(1)**

**NOT  
APPLICABLE (2)**

**(3)**

Faithful  
Emotionally strong  
Arrogant  
Domineering  
Mean  
Encouraging  
Loud  
Angry  
Pessimistic  
Industrious  
Independent  
Protected  
Threatening  
Image conscious  
Self-assured  
Constructive  
Impulsive  
Useless  
Forgiving  
Athletically-inclined

Unfaithful  
Emotionally weak  
Humble  
Submissive  
Nice  
Discouraging  
Quiet  
Happy  
Optimistic  
Lazy  
Dependent  
Threatened  
Harmless  
Image indifferent  
Self-doubting  
Destructive  
Cautious  
Valuable  
Blaming  
Athletically-unlikely

***Rodney***

**(1)**

**NOT  
APPLICABLE (2)**

**(3)**

Faithful  
Emotionally strong  
Arrogant  
Domineering  
Mean  
Encouraging  
Loud  
Angry  
Pessimistic  
Industrious  
Independent  
Protected  
Threatening  
Image conscious  
Self-assured

Unfaithful  
Emotionally weak  
Humble  
Submissive  
Nice  
Discouraging  
Quiet  
Happy  
Optimistic  
Lazy  
Dependent  
Threatened  
Harmless  
Image indifferent  
Self-doubting

Constructive  
Impulsive  
Useless  
Forgiving  
Athletically-inclined

Destructive  
Cautious  
Valuable  
Blaming  
Athletically-unlikely

***Deirdra***

**(1)**

**NOT  
APPLICABLE (2)**

**(3)**

Faithful  
Emotionally strong  
Arrogant  
Domineering  
Mean  
Encouraging  
Loud  
Angry  
Pessimistic  
Industrious  
Independent  
Protected  
Threatening  
Image conscious  
Self-assured  
Constructive  
Impulsive  
Useless  
Forgiving  
Athletically-inclined

Unfaithful  
Emotionally weak  
Humble  
Submissive  
Nice  
Discouraging  
Quiet  
Happy  
Optimistic  
Lazy  
Dependent  
Threatened  
Harmless  
Image indifferent  
Self-doubting  
Destructive  
Cautious  
Valuable  
Blaming  
Athletically-unlikely

***Arlando***

**(1)**

**NOT  
APPLICABLE (2)**

**(3)**

Faithful  
Emotionally strong  
Arrogant  
Domineering  
Mean  
Encouraging  
Loud  
Angry  
Pessimistic  
Industrious  
Independent  
Protected  
Threatening

Unfaithful  
Emotionally weak  
Humble  
Submissive  
Nice  
Discouraging  
Quiet  
Happy  
Optimistic  
Lazy  
Dependent  
Threatened  
Harmless

Image conscious  
Self-assured  
Constructive  
Impulsive  
Useless  
Forgiving  
Athletically-inclined

Image indifferent  
Self-doubting  
Destructive  
Cautious  
Valuable  
Blaming  
Athletically-unlikely

***Ray***

**(1)**

**NOT  
APPLICABLE (2)**

**(3)**

Faithful  
Emotionally strong  
Arrogant  
Domineering  
Mean  
Encouraging  
Loud  
Angry  
Pessimistic  
Industrious  
Independent  
Protected  
Threatening  
Image conscious  
Self-assured  
Constructive  
Impulsive  
Useless  
Forgiving  
Athletically-inclined

Unfaithful  
Emotionally weak  
Humble  
Submissive  
Nice  
Discouraging  
Quiet  
Happy  
Optimistic  
Lazy  
Dependent  
Threatened  
Harmless  
Image indifferent  
Self-doubting  
Destructive  
Cautious  
Valuable  
Blaming  
Athletically-unlikely

***Audrina***

**(1)**

**NOT  
APPLICABLE (2)**

**(3)**

Faithful  
Emotionally strong  
Arrogant  
Domineering  
Mean  
Encouraging  
Loud  
Angry  
Pessimistic  
Industrious  
Independent

Unfaithful  
Emotionally weak  
Humble  
Submissive  
Nice  
Discouraging  
Quiet  
Happy  
Optimistic  
Lazy  
Dependent



Protected  
Threatening  
Image conscious  
Self-assured  
Constructive  
Impulsive  
Useless  
Forgiving  
Athletically-inclined

Threatened  
Harmless  
Image indifferent  
Self-doubting  
Destructive  
Cautious  
Valuable  
Blaming  
Athletically-unlikely

### CAST MEMBER APPEARANCE (SCENE)

If you are unable to discern, then indicate “ct” (can’t tell).

If an individual cast member does not appear, then indicate “x.”

#### ***Anya***

**(1)**  
Dresses modestly  
Sexy  
Well-groomed  
Wears flashy accessories  
Smiles

**NEUTRAL (2)**

**(3)**  
Dresses immodestly  
Not sexy  
Poorly groomed  
Wears no accessories  
Frowns

#### ***Will***

**(1)**  
Dresses modestly  
Sexy  
Well-groomed  
Wears flashy accessories  
Smiles

**NEUTRAL (2)**

**(3)**  
Dresses immodestly  
Not sexy  
Poorly groomed  
Wears no accessories  
Frowns

#### ***Bianca***

**(1)**  
Dresses modestly  
Sexy  
Well-groomed  
Wears flashy accessories  
Smiles

**NEUTRAL (2)**

**(3)**  
Dresses immodestly  
Not sexy  
Poorly groomed  
Wears no accessories  
Frowns

#### ***Rodney***

**(1)**  
Dresses modestly  
Sexy  
Well-groomed  
Wears flashy accessories

**NEUTRAL (2)**

**(3)**  
Dresses immodestly  
Not sexy  
Poorly groomed  
Wears no accessories

Smiles

Frowns

***Deirdra***

**(1)**

**NEUTRAL (2)**

**(3)**

Dresses modestly

Dresses immodestly

Sexy

Not sexy

Well-groomed

Poorly groomed

Wears flashy accessories

Wears subdued accessories

Smiles

Frowns

***Arlando***

**(1)**

**NEUTRAL (2)**

**(3)**

Dresses modestly

Dresses immodestly

Sexy

Not sexy

Well-groomed

Poorly groomed

Wears flashy accessories

Wears no accessories

Smiles

Frowns

***Ray***

**(1)**

**NEUTRAL (2)**

**(3)**

Dresses modestly

Dresses immodestly

Sexy

Not sexy

Well-groomed

Poorly groomed

Wears flashy accessories

Wears no accessories

Smiles

Frowns

***Audrina***

**(1)**

**NEUTRAL (2)**

**(3)**

Dresses modestly

Dresses immodestly

Sexy

Not sexy

Well-groomed

Poorly groomed

Wears flashy accessories

Wears no accessories

Smiles

Frowns

**HBCU REFERENCE (SCENE)**

HBCU Reference:

1. Yes

X. No

REF #:

HBCU DESCRIPTORS: Indicate the *best* one.

MARK	Goal	MARK	Anti-Goal
<b>Academic Characteristics</b>			
	1) Promotes positive		9) Promotes little

	regard for humankind		regard for humankind
	2) Committed to promoting social justice		10) Disregard for social justice
	3) Promotes student self-worth		11) Promotes student self-devaluing
	4) Emphasizes the development of Black history, racial pride, and ethnic traditions/ Black consciousness and identity		12) Ignores the development of Black history, racial pride, and ethnic traditions/ ignores the development of Black consciousness and identity
	5) Committed to maintaining a diversity view		13) Unconcerned with maintaining a diversity view
<b>Social Characteristics</b>			
	6) Striving to educate the whole individual		14) Striving to educate only portions of the individual
	7) Offers programs designed to meet the unique needs of Black students		15) Offers little or no programs designed to meet the unique needs of Black students
	8) Committed to providing academic excellence and leadership qualities		16) Disregard for providing academic excellence and leadership qualities

## EPISODE Level Variables

SEASON ID#:

EPISODE ID#:

EPISODE DESCRIPTION:

### CAST MEMBER APPEARANCE (EPISODE)

*Any*

(1)

Displays European facial

NEUTRAL (2)

(3)

Displays African facial

norm  
Has dark skin  
Has long hair  
Has straight hair

norm  
Has fair or light skin  
Has short hair  
Has curly hair

***Will***

**(1)**  
Displays European facial  
norm  
Has dark skin  
Has long hair  
Has straight hair

**NEUTRAL (2)**

**(3)**  
Displays African facial  
norm  
Has fair or light skin  
Has short hair  
Has curly hair

***Bianca***

**(1)**  
Displays European facial  
norm  
Has dark skin  
Has long hair  
Has straight hair

**NEUTRAL (2)**

**(3)**  
Displays African facial  
norm  
Has fair or light skin  
Has short hair  
Has curly hair

***Rodney***

**(1)**  
Displays European facial  
norm  
Has dark skin  
Has long hair  
Has straight hair

**NEUTRAL (2)**

**(3)**  
Displays African facial  
norm  
Has fair or light skin  
Has short hair  
Has curly hair

***Deirdra***

**(1)**  
Displays European facial  
norm  
Has dark skin  
Has long hair  
Has straight hair

**NEUTRAL (2)**

**(3)**  
Displays African facial  
norm  
Has fair or light skin  
Has short hair  
Has curly hair

***Arlando***

**(1)**  
Displays European facial  
norm  
Has dark skin  
Has long hair  
Has straight hair

**NEUTRAL (2)**

**(3)**  
Displays African facial  
norm  
Has fair or light skin  
Has short hair  
Has curly hair

***Ray***

<b>(1)</b> Displays European facial norm Has dark skin Has long hair Has straight hair	<b>NEUTRAL (2)</b>	<b>(3)</b> Displays African facial norm Has fair or light skin Has short hair Has curly hair
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***Audrina***

<b>(1)</b> Displays European facial norm Has dark skin Has long hair Has straight hair	<b>NEUTRAL (2)</b>	<b>(3)</b> Displays African facial norm Has fair or light skin Has short hair Has curly hair
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<b>(1)</b>	<b>NEUTRAL (2)</b>	<b>(3)</b>
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**HBCU REFERENCE (EPISODE)**

HBCU Reference:

- 1. Yes
- X. No

HBCU Overall Reference:

<b>(1)</b> Positive	<b>NEUTRAL (2)</b>	<b>(3)</b> Negative
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## HBCUs in REALITY TV CODESHEET (Already indicated for Virgin Islands)

SEASON ID#: (4)

EPISODE ID#:

SCENE ID#:

SCENE DESCRIPTION:

### SCENE Level Variables

#### CAST MEMBER BEHAVIORS

If males appear in scene, then indicate n=0-?; if no males appear in scene, then indicate "x".

If females appear in scene, then indicate n=0-?; if no females appear in scene, then indicate "x".

MALE	FEMALE	Behavior
		Nurtures others
		Neglects others
		Views sex as primarily recreational
		Committed to school
		Not committed to school
		Strengthens friendship bonds
		Weakens friendship bonds
		Achieves a romantic relationship
		Cannot achieve a romantic relationship
		Wants attention from others
		Rejects attention from others
		Challenges traditional gender norms
		Accepts traditional gender norms
		Demands
		Requests

#### CAST MEMBER TRAITS

*Vanessa*

(1)

NOT

APPLICABLE (2)

(3)

Faithful

Emotionally strong

Arrogant

Unfaithful

Emotionally weak

Humble

Domineering  
Mean  
Encouraging  
Loud  
Angry  
Pessimistic  
Industrious  
Independent  
Protected  
Threatening  
Image conscious  
Self-assured  
Constructive  
Impulsive  
Useless  
Forgiving  
Athletically-inclined

Submissive  
Nice  
Discouraging  
Quiet  
Happy  
Optimistic  
Lazy  
Dependent  
Threatened  
Harmless  
Image indifferent  
Self-doubting  
Destructive  
Cautious  
Valuable  
Blaming  
Athletically-unlikely

***J.T.***

**(1)**

**NOT  
APPLICABLE (2)**

**(3)**

Faithful  
Emotionally strong  
Arrogant  
Domineering  
Mean  
Encouraging  
Loud  
Angry  
Pessimistic  
Industrious  
Independent  
Protected  
Threatening  
Image conscious  
Self-assured  
Constructive  
Impulsive  
Useless  
Forgiving  
Athletically-inclined

Unfaithful  
Emotionally weak  
Humble  
Submissive  
Nice  
Discouraging  
Quiet  
Happy  
Optimistic  
Lazy  
Dependent  
Threatened  
Harmless  
Image indifferent  
Self-doubting  
Destructive  
Cautious  
Valuable  
Blaming  
Athletically-unlikely

***Idesha***

**(1)**

**NOT  
APPLICABLE (2)**

**(3)**

Faithful

Unfaithful

Emotionally strong  
 Arrogant  
 Domineering  
 Mean  
 Encouraging  
 Loud  
 Angry  
 Pessimistic  
 Industrious  
 Independent  
 Protected  
 Threatening  
 Image conscious  
 Self-assured  
 Constructive  
 Impulsive  
 Useless  
 Forgiving  
 Athletically-inclined

Emotionally weak  
 Humble  
 Submissive  
 Nice  
 Discouraging  
 Quiet  
 Happy  
 Optimistic  
 Lazy  
 Dependent  
 Threatened  
 Harmless  
 Image indifferent  
 Self-doubting  
 Destructive  
 Cautious  
 Valuable  
 Blaming  
 Athletically-unlikely

***Willie Macc***

**(1)**

**NOT  
 APPLICABLE (2)**

**(3)**

Faithful  
 Emotionally strong  
 Arrogant  
 Domineering  
 Mean  
 Encouraging  
 Loud  
 Angry  
 Pessimistic  
 Industrious  
 Independent  
 Protected  
 Threatening  
 Image conscious  
 Self-assured  
 Constructive  
 Impulsive  
 Useless  
 Forgiving  
 Athletically-inclined

Unfaithful  
 Emotionally weak  
 Humble  
 Submissive  
 Nice  
 Discouraging  
 Quiet  
 Happy  
 Optimistic  
 Lazy  
 Dependent  
 Threatened  
 Harmless  
 Image indifferent  
 Self-doubting  
 Destructive  
 Cautious  
 Valuable  
 Blaming  
 Athletically-unlikely

***Krystal***

**(1)**

**NOT**

**(3)**



<b>APPLICABLE (2)</b>	
Faithful	Unfaithful
Emotionally strong	Emotionally weak
Arrogant	Humble
Domineering	Submissive
Mean	Nice
Encouraging	Discouraging
Loud	Quiet
Angry	Happy
Pessimistic	Optimistic
Industrious	Lazy
Independent	Dependent
Protected	Threatened
Threatening	Harmless
Image conscious	Image indifferent
Self-assured	Self-doubting
Constructive	Destructive
Impulsive	Cautious
Useless	Valuable
Forgiving	Blaming
Athletically-inclined	Athletically-unlikely

***Chicky***

<b>(1)</b>	<b>NOT APPLICABLE (2)</b>	<b>(3)</b>
Faithful		Unfaithful
Emotionally strong		Emotionally weak
Arrogant		Humble
Domineering		Submissive
Mean		Nice
Encouraging		Discouraging
Loud		Quiet
Angry		Happy
Pessimistic		Optimistic
Industrious		Lazy
Independent		Dependent
Protected		Threatened
Threatening		Harmless
Image conscious		Image indifferent
Self-assured		Self-doubting
Constructive		Destructive
Impulsive		Cautious
Useless		Valuable
Forgiving		Blaming
Athletically-inclined		Athletically-unlikely

***Fallon***

(1)	NOT APPLICABLE (2)	(3)
Faithful		Unfaithful
Emotionally strong		Emotionally weak
Arrogant		Humble
Domineering		Submissive
Mean		Nice
Encouraging		Discouraging
Loud		Quiet
Angry		Happy
Pessimistic		Optimistic
Industrious		Lazy
Independent		Dependent
Protected		Threatened
Threatening		Harmless
Image conscious		Image indifferent
Self-assured		Self-doubting
Constructive		Destructive
Impulsive		Cautious
Useless		Valuable
Forgiving		Blaming
Athletically-inclined		Athletically-unlikely

***Andres***

(1)	NOT APPLICABLE (2)	(3)
Faithful		Unfaithful
Emotionally strong		Emotionally weak
Arrogant		Humble
Domineering		Submissive
Mean		Nice
Encouraging		Discouraging
Loud		Quiet
Angry		Happy
Pessimistic		Optimistic
Industrious		Lazy
Independent		Dependent
Protected		Threatened
Threatening		Harmless
Image conscious		Image indifferent
Self-assured		Self-doubting
Constructive		Destructive
Impulsive		Cautious
Useless		Valuable
Forgiving		Blaming

Athletically-inclined

Athletically-unlikely

### CAST MEMBER APPEARANCE (SCENE)

If you are unable to discern, then indicate “ct” (can’t tell).

If an individual cast member does not appear, then indicate “x.”

#### ***Vanessa***

**(1)**  
Dresses modestly  
Sexy  
Well-groomed  
Wears flashy accessories  
Smiles

**NEUTRAL (2)**

**(3)**  
Dresses immodestly  
Not sexy  
Poorly groomed  
Wears no accessories  
Frowns

#### ***J.T.***

**(1)**  
Dresses modestly  
Sexy  
Well-groomed  
Wears flashy accessories  
Smiles

**NEUTRAL (2)**

**(3)**  
Dresses immodestly  
Not sexy  
Poorly groomed  
Wears no accessories  
Frowns

#### ***Idesha***

**(1)**  
Dresses modestly  
Sexy  
Well-groomed  
Wears flashy accessories  
Smiles

**NEUTRAL (2)**

**(3)**  
Dresses immodestly  
Not sexy  
Poorly groomed  
Wears no accessories  
Frowns

#### ***Willie Macc***

**(1)**  
Dresses modestly  
Sexy  
Well-groomed  
Wears flashy accessories  
Smiles

**NEUTRAL (2)**

**(3)**  
Dresses immodestly  
Not sexy  
Poorly groomed  
Wears no accessories  
Frowns

#### ***Krystal***

**(1)**  
Dresses modestly  
Sexy  
Well-groomed  
Wears flashy accessories

**NEUTRAL (2)**

**(3)**  
Dresses immodestly  
Not sexy  
Poorly groomed  
Wears no accessories

Smiles

Frowns

***Chicky***

**(1)**

**NEUTRAL (2)**

**(3)**

Dresses modestly

Dresses immodestly

Sexy

Not sexy

Well-groomed

Poorly groomed

Wears flashy accessories

Wears no accessories

Smiles

Frowns

***Fallon***

**(1)**

**NEUTRAL (2)**

**(3)**

Dresses modestly

Dresses immodestly

Sexy

Not sexy

Well-groomed

Poorly groomed

Wears flashy accessories

Wears no accessories

Smiles

Frowns

***Andres***

**(1)**

**NEUTRAL (2)**

**(3)**

Dresses modestly

Dresses immodestly

Sexy

Not sexy

Well-groomed

Poorly groomed

Wears flashy accessories

Wears no accessories

Smiles

Frowns

**HBCU REFERENCE (SCENE)**

HBCU Reference:

1. Yes

X. No

REF #:

HBCU DESCRIPTORS: Indicate the *best* one.

MARK	Goal	MARK	Anti-Goal
<b>Academic Characteristics</b>			
	1) Promotes positive regard for humankind		9) Promotes little regard for humankind
	2) Committed to promoting social justice		10) Disregard for social justice
	3) Promotes student self-worth		11) Promotes student self-devaluing
	4) Emphasizes the		12) Ignores the

	development of Black history, racial pride, and ethnic traditions/ Black consciousness and identity		development of Black history, racial pride, and ethnic traditions/ ignores the development of Black consciousness and identity
	5) Committed to maintaining a diversity view		13) Unconcerned with maintaining a diversity view
<b>Social Characteristics</b>			
	6) Striving to educate the whole individual		14) Striving to educate only portions of the individual
	7) Offers programs designed to meet the unique needs of Black students		15) Offers little or no programs designed to meet the unique needs of Black students
	8) Committed to providing academic excellence and leadership qualities		16) Disregard for providing academic excellence and leadership qualities

## EPISODE Level Variables

SEASON ID#:

EPISODE ID#:

EPISODE DESCRIPTION:

### CAST MEMBER APPEARANCE (EPISODE)

***Vanessa***

**(1)**

Displays European facial norm  
Has dark skin  
Has long hair  
Has straight hair

**NEUTRAL (2)**

**(3)**

Displays African facial norm  
Has fair or light skin  
Has short hair  
Has curly hair

***J.T.***

**(1)**

Displays European facial

**NEUTRAL (2)**

**(3)**

Displays African facial

norm  
Has dark skin  
Has long hair  
Has straight hair

norm  
Has fair or light skin  
Has short hair  
Has curly hair

***Idesha***

(1)  
Displays European facial  
norm  
Has dark skin  
Has long hair  
Has straight hair

**NEUTRAL (2)**

(3)  
Displays African facial  
norm  
Has fair or light skin  
Has short hair  
Has curly hair

***Willie Macc***

(1)  
Displays European facial  
norm  
Has dark skin  
Has long hair  
Has straight hair

**NEUTRAL (2)**

(3)  
Displays African facial  
norm  
Has fair or light skin  
Has short hair  
Has curly hair

***Krystal***

(1)  
Displays European facial  
norm  
Has dark skin  
Has long hair  
Has straight hair

**NEUTRAL (2)**

(3)  
Displays African facial  
norm  
Has fair or light skin  
Has short hair  
Has curly hair

***Chicky***

(1)  
Displays European facial  
norm  
Has dark skin  
Has long hair  
Has straight hair

**NEUTRAL (2)**

(3)  
Displays African facial  
norm  
Has fair or light skin  
Has short hair  
Has curly hair

***Fallon***

(1)  
Displays European facial  
norm  
Has dark skin  
Has long hair  
Has straight hair

**NEUTRAL (2)**

(3)  
Displays African facial  
norm  
Has fair or light skin  
Has short hair  
Has curly hair

*Andres*

(1)

Displays European facial  
norm

Has dark skin

Has long hair

Has straight hair

**NEUTRAL (2)**

(3)

Displays African facial  
norm

Has fair or light skin

Has short hair

Has curly hair

**HBCU REFERENCE (EPISODE)**

HBCU Reference:

1. Yes

X. No

HBCU Overall Reference:

(1)

Positive

**NEUTRAL (2)**

(3)

Negative

## VITA

Siobhan Elizabeth Smith was born and raised in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. She attended Xavier University of Louisiana (New Orleans) from August 1998 until May 2002, when she graduated summa cum laude with a degree in Mass Communication. At Xavier, Siobhan anchored and reported for X-TV, the student news station of the Mass Communication Department. She also received the Truman Capote Creative Writing Scholarship and the Rousseve Scholarship. From August 2002 until August 2004, she pursued graduate education at Louisiana State University (Baton Rouge) and earned a Master's of Mass Communication degree. During her studies at LSU, Siobhan received the Outstanding Graduate Student Award. In addition, she worked for the Manship School of Mass Communication as a teaching assistant, as well as at KLSU, the student radio station.

Siobhan worked at the University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff from August 2004 until May 2006, in the Department of English, Theatre, and Mass Communication, teaching courses in TV Production, Radio Production, TV/Radio Documentary, Voice and Diction, Oral Communication, and served as an academic advisor. She also advised the Department's chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists. Siobhan earned her Ph.D. from the University of Missouri from August 2006 until December 2010. She taught courses in Television Criticism and Public Speaking, and served as a teaching



assistant for Media and Society courses, in addition to Introduction to Communication courses. Siobhan served as the Treasurer for the Association of Communication Graduate Students from August 2007 until May 2008, and received the Loren Reid Teaching Award in 2008. She also was a recipient of the George Washington Carver Fellowship.

Siobhan joined the faculty of the Department of Communication at the University of Louisville (Kentucky) in August 2008, where she teaches courses in mass media, race, and culture. Her research interests include the portrayals of race and gender in the media.