THE GENDER DIFFERENCES IN YOUNG ADULT MATE SELECTION:
RELATIONSHIP TO EVOLUTIONARY PSYCHOLOGY, NARCISSISM, AND
CULTURE

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INTRODUCTION

The mate selection process found in the human being is a phenomenon of great complexity. The sexual desires and seeking behaviors that have been present since the dawn of mankind have been the essential behaviors that keep the human race alive. Without these feelings and cognitive processes, the humanoid would be an extinct species. It is also important to understand that it is not just physical characteristics that are important in the attraction of mates; psychological traits are equally, if not more, important than attractive awareness. What is attractive to one individual may or may not be attractive to another.

Mate selection may be a bit different in terms of psychology and physiology when studying the older adult population. This thesis is going to target what specific gender differences are found in the young, heterosexual adult population when it comes to mate choice. More narrowly, it will find out what psychological behaviors are found to be attractive and unattractive in an individual. Whether these traits are shaped by culture, evolution, or both is to be examined.

Evolutionary psychology is one essential perspective of mate selection behavior found in both sexes. Evolutionary psychology can be defined as the development in human behavior based from past and continuing adaptation (Roberts, 2012). Just as the basic view of evolution proposes that certain physical traits adapt to the environment, evolutionary psychology suggests there are psychological traits that adapt as well. What
behavioral characteristics are "acceptable" and "unacceptable" in a male or female are the important focus of this topic. This thesis will include the different possible mechanisms in psychology, such as cognitive, behavioral, and unconscious processes which take place before, during, and after a relationship. The proximity effect and the exposure effect will also be included as well as two mating timelines: short-term and long-term.

Certain psychological manners dealing with mate selection that are found in our culture today have been processed from our early ancestors. Some of these characteristics are shaped by thousands of years of being, hence evolution. For example, having a male with a broad back represents strength to fight off enemies and to protect future offspring in the perception of the heterosexual female. Traits such as being confident and outgoing are also seen as adaptive, attractive traits in both genders. However, there is growing evidence that present day culture greatly affects the perception on what characteristics are attractive and unattractive, which will be revealed in this thesis. Media, family, and acquaintances may highly impact the choices of an individual when it comes to his or her selection in a mate. Culture is another factor that will be explored at much greater length later on in this thesis.

The thesis will also pinpoint further associations of attractiveness such as narcissism and the "Nice Guy Paradox" (Urbaniak & Kilmann, 2003). Stockholm syndrome will also be explained to explore the adverse phenomenon of a relationship becoming abusive, and why some people may choose to stay in these abusive relationships. The Attachment Fertility Theory is also an important factor when studying the unfortunate effects of an abusive relationship, and it also will be a large topic of discussion.
The final purpose of this research is to discover what mechanisms are acting together to facilitate the searching, engaging, and aftermath of relationships within the young college population. The searching element will be explained as what evolved traits are expressed as attractive based on evolution and culture. The engaging element, or when one is actually in a relationship, will be reviewed, and its relationship to the media and society. Lastly, the aftermath of relationships and failed relationships will also be examined on an evolutionary platform (i.e., abusive relationships and mental disorders).
CHAPTER I

PROXIMITY, EXPOSURE, MATCHING, AND WEALTH

Proximity, in this psychological context, can best be defined as the nearness and interaction between two humans. Exposure is the amount and depth of interaction between the individuals. These components are found in both genders. Even with today's technology of Facebook and cellphone use, where relationships can be formed from long distances, the proximity effect is still an important idea (Kassin, Fein, & Markus, 2008, pp. 344-364). Another component of the attraction concept is exposure and familiarity. More specifically, the "mere exposure effect" claims that the more an individual is exposed to a stimulus, the more likely that individual will grow to be content or familiar with it (Verrier, 2012). This is really a mere extension of the proximity effect; the more one is exposed to another person in a location, the more familiar he or she will become with that person.

Another type of attraction model that is important to mention is the “matching hypothesis.” This is the theory that humans generally seek out and are attracted to people of the opposite sex who are as attractive as themselves (Wong, McCreary, Bowden, & Jenner, 1991). This is not strictly limited to attractiveness or physical structure. The matching hypothesis can also be extended to social class, wealth, occupation, and religion. This in a sense seems to be very logical, branching from the proximity and mere exposure effect. One who is raised in a certain social class is most likely to find a mate in
that same social class, for example, at a church, college, or a nightclub. Family is a strong influencing agent when it comes to choosing an acceptable mate (Pederson, Putcha-Bhagavatula, & Miller, 2011). The more protective a parent or guardian is of his or her offspring, the more particular and demanding the offspring will be in his or her selection of a partner.

Wong et al. (1991) suggested that if physical attractiveness is lacking in a male, it can be compensated by intelligence or wealth. They included 71 college males and 71 college females that were shown a series of pictures that included average looking individuals. Interestingly, the male study population chose wealth over intelligence, and the female study population chose intelligence over wealth for the compensatory features.

The level of compensation in the female’s choice was a lot less than the level of the male’s choice. That is, it was “easier” for the female to choose a trait other than attractiveness than it was for the male. The males placed a higher importance on the physical beauty of the females, and the females placed a higher importance on intelligence, attractiveness, and wealth (Wong et al., 1991).

With the idea of sexual attraction in this thesis, it is a wonder whether it is more correlated with physical attractiveness or psychological attractiveness. The mere exposure effect may be more closely related to physical stimuli such as a face or body, but the proximity piece may be closer to personality traits. Thus, the latter is a primary focus to start within this thesis, but the exposure piece will not be ignored. With the proximity effect, an individual is exposed to people and things that are in a relatively close range to him or her. This starts right after birth when the person is raised in an
environment by his or her parents. Thus, the stimuli and events that occur within the time period of birth and young adulthood greatly affect, but do not necessarily decide, the social "rights and wrongs" of traits in a potential mate. Additionally, the female sex is usually a more protected gender when being raised by her parents (Bokek-Cohen, Peres, & Kanazawa, 2007). This may play a major role in the selectivity in both females and males, and why sometimes it is a common perception that females are more "picky" when it comes to the selection of attractive, male characteristics.

A survey conducted by Townsley (2008) at the University of Central Oklahoma asked young college students of both genders what specific traits they found most attractive in a mate of the opposite sex. The two characteristics that were most frequent were warm and affectionate and a good sense of humor (Townsley, 2008). However, one can reasonably see the severe limitations to this type of study: self-report versus actual behavior. Another study conducted by Wyngarden (2008) at Northern Illinois University addressed this limitation. Over 350 female college students were asked what psychological traits they found attractive in a male, and the results were similar to the ones previously mentioned. However, when these females were later asked to complete a private questionnaire and five surveys, over half of their results claimed they were more attracted to meaner men and assertive characteristics (Wyngarden, 2010). Perhaps this is a small piece of evidence on how culture is beginning to shape what traits are desired and not desired in a mate. When orally asked, people may say what they feel they should desire, and then when they can take a private survey they express their true feelings.
It is also important to note that these characteristics and preferences in mating are cross-cultural. That is, many of the evolutionary traits that will be discussed are found in various cultures around the world. Obviously then, the media-shaped traits that are acceptable will most appropriately be culture-specific. According to a cross-cultural study completed by the evolutionary psychologist David Buss, women of most cultures seek out men who can offer many resources, protection, and aid (Haufe, 2008). Haufe tested this idea in 37 different cultures across the world with 10,047 different individuals. The resources would include things such as money and housing while traits such as protection and aid would include security, safety, and income. Going back to the evolutionary model of psychological characteristics, these characteristics would be closely associated with traits such as confidence and egotism. To have a high amount of income, one generally needs to have a high level of intelligence and self-esteem. This would also be related to the protection and aid characteristics that are seen as attractive in many nations around the world. Individuals who have a low self-esteem and low level of intelligence generally have a lower level of income. Thus, these male humans would be less desirable to female counterparts regardless of the social norm. When one looks at evolutionary psychology and inherited traits, safety needs and ego needs (e.g., a lot of income) will overcome what the media projects on inherited traits. Accordingly, society will probably never project that ignorance, poverty, and cowardliness are attractive traits in the male and female. The media in cultures across the globe will most likely keep to the evolutionary traits of intelligence and wealth in its mediums. The way in which one interprets these messages, however, is a completely different research topic.
CHAPTER II

NARCISSISM AS AN ATTRACTIVE TRAIT

With some of the dominant traits listed previously, it is really no wonder that one can become “overly confident” in themselves. A male who has a lot of money and is physically attractive has a higher likelihood than a male of opposite characteristics to become egotistic. This, in its broadest sense, is known as narcissism. For many generations society has projected a negative view of narcissism. People who are narcissistic were labeled as arrogant, self-centered, disrespecting toward others, loud, and obnoxious. There is even a medical condition known as “Narcissistic Personality Disorder” that has these characteristics to an extreme degree thus interfering with interpersonal functioning. Other traits of narcissism include an inflated self-esteem as well as unrealistic beliefs of one’s own importance.

Interestingly, recent research has begun to show that some of these narcissistic traits, in the male mostly, are becoming an attractive trait to the opposite sex (Holtzman & Strube, 2010). With the previously mentioned evolutionary perspective, narcissism as an attractive trait may actually seem logical. Traits that have developed over millions of years that are viewed as sexually dominant have been the confidence and intelligence characteristics. These attributes serve an evolutionary purpose: survival of the fittest. One who is self-assured to the point that others feel inferior and annoyed is generally a level of narcissism. A narcissist not only over-promotes his or her mental traits, but his
or her physical traits as well (Paley, 2000). Overemphasizing muscular strength or makeup to impress a female is a frequent feature of narcissistic behavior. This serves an evolutionary purpose as well. By displaying and integrating their physical looks into society to an extreme degree, they are highlighting how healthy they are for reproduction with a potential mate. One who is confident and sure about his or her body, and is indeed in good physical shape, shows the healthy capability of reproduction (e.g., Roberts, 2012).

A meta-analysis executed by Holtzman and Strube (2010) demonstrated that there is a positive correlation between narcissism and attractiveness in both the genders. This has been researched for all age groups in various literatures written since 1988. Within the contextual research, data was collected and grouped together to finally display a correlation between narcissistic behavior and attractiveness that was .14, which is significantly different than zero.

Thus far, narcissism is not looking like such a bad trait if a college student wants to attract a mate. This is regardless of gender. It is important to discuss characteristics that are attractive in both genders that once were thought to be taboo (e.g., narcissism).

**The Mating Time Frames and Narcissism**

Let us go over the two time frames of relationship-seeking: short-term and long-term. These are generally the timelines that individuals seek out in a potential mate. That is, how committed he or she wishes to be. Short-term generally is for sexual satisfaction while long-term includes sexual-satisfaction and a personal relationship (Pedersen et al., 2011). These two time frames do not have a standard time but rather are dependent on
the individual’s commitment to the possible companion. When an individual is seeking out a mate, the short-term is generally the first stage that one goes through. This may be due to evolutionary theory, since relationships are viewed as a way humans reproduce. The humanoid must be careful in choosing the right mate to create successful offspring that are adapted to the environment. With our population of college students and young adults, the long-term stage may be relatively important to them since many of these individuals are curious about long-term commitments and may not have experienced a personal, sexual relationship before. Interestingly, the short-term mating timeframe is when males typically display narcissistic traits (Jonason, Li, Webster, & Schmitt, 2009).

Long-term and short-term mating divisions are of extreme importance in the mating phenomenon. Long-term can be defined as actual reproduction and maintenance of an offspring between the two mates, and narcissistic traits seem to dissipate when one thinks about long-term commitment (Jonason et al., 2009). It has commonly been thought that females look for a long-term relationship more than males do. Accordingly, it has been a popular stereotype that most men look for only sexual satisfaction (short-term) in women when seeking a mate. However, recent research is beginning to show a weakening in this gender stereotype. A recent project implemented by Pendersen et al. (2011) at California State University studied the mating devotion and commitment of 89 young adult males and 257 young adult females. These participants were issued a survey that was an open-ended format asking a variety of questions dealing with things such as the amount of time needed in a relationship as well as the amount of money. The results indicated no significant gender difference (a .02 difference in standard deviation) in the ratio of time
and money spent in the short-term or long-term preferences in mating selection. This is an interesting find due to the fact that the common stereotype was that men spent more time and effort in seeking out women in the short-term than women. Males are viewed as the dominant species in societies all over the world, although there are exceptions. The male is supposed to do things that indicate their confidence and strength to the female. An example may be asking the female out on a date, which can be viewed as the very first step in the human reproductive process. The male is the one that should actually ask the female as well as spend a certain amount of money and time in an attempt to impress the female. Buying the female expensive dinners shows dominance and strength to the woman. This may be from an evolutionary view, because money is a symbol of wealth, wealth is a symbol of dominance, and dominance looks healthy for reproduction.

On the other hand, we should not be limited to this black-and-white thinking. It is appropriate to incorporate the “grey-thinking” as indicated by the above study. For a potentially naïve college woman, money and wealth look really good. However, for an older woman who has found her career, a wealthy man may be a signal of threat, especially if narcissistic traits are less valued (e.g., Jonason et al., 2009). Nonetheless it is safe to state that the amount of effort acted out between males and females are almost identical in the short-term and long-term time frames of mating relationships. Narcissism also can effectively be used in both genders, yet it typically is displayed more in males (Holtzman & Strube, 2010; Jonason et al., 2009).

At the beginning of this thesis it was asserted that women have an overall tendency to be more selective, or “picky,” than men since the female is a more protected sex in
Secondly, it was found that males do indeed place a higher importance on beauty, and females place a higher importance on intelligence; although the two preferences are loosening and not significantly different. Thirdly, the matching hypothesis was tested in 37 different cultures and indicated that both males and females generally want aid and resources in a mate, and that these traits are shaped in the cultures’ media (Wong et al., 1991). And lastly, commitment levels in the searching process of short-term and long-term mating relationships are relatively the same for both sexes. Now that we have the similarities mentioned we may now shift over into the differences. These gender differences will be examined in great detail. The similarities previously mentioned will not be forgotten and even will be cited again later in the document.

From here the gender differences in the human mating selection process will be illustrated through five large concepts, or rather, speculations: The Nice Guy Paradox, media influence, religious identity, childhood attachment patterns, social aspects, mental disorders, and Stockholm syndrome. Each category will be explained not as independent structures per se, but as connected system of mechanisms that generally determine a likely outcome in a mating preference. Let us discover a newer, yet controversial, subject known as the Nice Guy Paradox (NGP). The reason it is important to understand the NGP is due to the idea that it lays a possible foundation for why some individuals choose to pursue unhealthy relationships.
CHAPTER III

NICE GUY PARADOX

The NGP may help one’s understanding in why some individuals decide to pursue a seemingly unhealthy relationship. For centuries the male has been defined as masculine and strong. With these defining characteristics come many expectations and stereotypes. Masculinity has often been associated with intelligence and confidence. It also has been connected with physical strength as well as dominance. This label is not culture specific, for it has been found in a countless number of literature and writings across various lands all over the world. For example, religious texts such as the Bible even state things about how the male is the dominant species. For example, “… your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you” (English Standard Version, Genesis 3:16). Men also are portrayed to show less emotion than women, in a sense to show emotional strength and independence. A man who exhibits the same emotional behavior as that of a female may be at risk from his peers to be labeled as homosexual. Thus, it is clear why many men seek out women’s approval of their dominant and masculine behavior and actions.

With these various masculine characteristics, it is somewhat simple to outline the evolutionary concepts that are correlated with it. Since the male is naturally larger and physically stronger than the female, appropriate psychological traits accompany the physical traits. It only makes sense to have confident and powerful mental characteristics to coincide with matching physical attributes.
With all of these personality pieces and expectations in the male, the male may feel obligated to fulfill these socially and evolutionary defined traits. He may believe he needs to not only be dominant toward the female to win her sexual approval, but also feel that he needs to be dominant toward other males. This can mean many different things and ranges through a variety of different contexts shifting from money, intelligence, athletic ability, humor, and “being a jerk.”

First, let us define what exactly the NGP is. NGP can, in its broadest sense, be defined as the phenomena of a woman purposely seeking out behavior in a potential male mate that appears to be emotionally harmful to her (Ahmetoglu & Swami, 2012). It asserts that, even though females often claim they wish to date friendly, sensitive males, when given the choice, females will decline friendly men in favor of men with unfriendly characteristics (Urbaniak & Kilmann, 2003). For example, Holansworth (as cited in Urbaniak and Kilmann, 2003) wrote:

“Not long ago, I watched my friend Laney, an assistant county prosecutor who spends her days putting criminal behind bars, try to choose between a sweet guy who sent her poems and flowers and petted cats, and a guy who wore sunglasses indoors and found a way to hit on every woman who came his way. Laney fell madly in love with the second guy. “But the first guy adores you,” I said. “I don’t even think the second guy even likes you very much.” “Sorry,” she said, “but the first guy is dull.” (p. 413).

It does not require lengthy evidence and empirical information to see this. Many people are aware of it within a given society. Women do seem to stay with men who display behaviors and actions that are originally deemed to be unacceptable. As with the above example, men who exhibit heterosexual traits of confidence and dominance tend to
be the more successful creature when choosing a female. Many other behaviors can display dominance as well. For example, walking with an upright posture and having the nose slightly in the air may have one look like a “jerk,” but in reality it is a display of certainty. An individual tailgating a driver with his expensive Jaguar and then speeding in front of him or her shows sureness of self-image.

Other types of behavior that reflect the NGP may be deceit, callousness, and impulsive behavior. These behavior types all mirror the popular stereotype of a “bad boy” (“Why Nice Guys Finish Last,” 2008). As stated previously, these traits were once considered taboo among societies. However, they are becoming more popular and socially acceptable for the young-adult male to acquire in order to gain sexual partners. Another intriguing correlation with these NGP traits is the fact that most of these traits are exhibited purposely for the short-term mating frame (“Why Nice Guys Finish Last,” 2008). This goes back to the concept of evolutionary psychology: displaying actions that win over a sexual partner’s acceptance in order to potentially reproduce. There may or may not be much time and effort committed in this short-term relationship, since many males may present these traits on a regular basis.

**Humor and NGP**

Humor is also an important element for a male to exhibit in the context of NGP, self-image, and a display of confidence. Humor may aid the process of exhibiting characteristics that are associated with insensitive behavior toward the female and other competing males. It is generally a well known reality that women normally find humor to be an important personality trait in a male (Duane, 1998). Humor is a personality trait
that is often displayed by a male when he is trying to achieve acceptance of a female, while simultaneously displaying assertive and dominating traits, consistent with the NGP. Humor can be thought of as a sort of extroverted trait. Extroverts generally tend to be more social among peers and tend to be less “quiet” than their introverted counterparts.

Humor can be broken down into three types: self-deprecating, other-deprecating, and no-deprecating (Duane, 1998). Self-deprecating is when one will joke about his or her own qualities and features, while other-deprecating is defined as joking about and verbally attacking others in the environment. No deprecating is just humor about objects and things in an environment with or without intention to create some type of psychological attack. One would most likely think that other-deprecating humor would be the most attractive form of wit a male can perform in front of a female. When a male makes jokes about other people around him, he appears to be the dominant, secure individual. This reflects the jerk component of the NGP.

In a study conducted by Duane (1998) at the University of Louisville, a controlled experiment was executed using participants exhibiting these three categories of humor. Each male that was used in the study was rated as “physically attractive” on a rating scale. The men then were told to present some type of witty behavior that would exhibit their assigned subtype, while men who were in the control group were instructed not to use humor at all when communicating. Men who used other-deprecating humor and self-deprecating humor came in a tie when the amount of women claiming to want to date them were recorded, while men with the no-deprecating humor subtype had a significantly lower dating approval. Men that displayed no humor were not chosen at all
by the female participants (Duane, 1998). Humor will be reviewed in more depth when the study of pick-up lines and gossip are introduced.

Pulling together the flow of the humor component in the NGP, one can categorize humor into three subtypes of extroverted-behavior. Other and self deprecating may be the best ways for a male utilizing the NGP to display his traits to a potential female, with other deprecating possibly being the most effective. This is stated because it follows the evolutionary concept. Other deprecating humor might be most effective since it shares defending factors in evolutionary psychology such as dominance, confidence, and self-image, which all look healthy for mating (Bale, Morrison, & Caryl, 2006).

It needs to be stated that not all women desire this type of humoristic trait in men. One cannot generalize some findings to an entire population. Not all female college students actively seek out a male mate that possesses all of these traits, at least not at the conscious level. Respectively, not all males exhibit or feel the need to exhibit NGP behaviors. While reading about the NGP in this thesis, it may be easy to generalize the traits in all young men and women in this generation. This should never be the case. The previous experiments and studies that were described in this NGP section did have female participants not finding the NGP male attractive.

These traits of NGP symbolize healthy factors for the potential offspring due to protection factors; the male will “ward off” any enemy that attempts to harm the couple’s children. Of course, this is an evolutionary theory as well as a Freudian point of view, since it involves ideas of unconscious, naturally evolved traits. It also reflects back on the upbringing of the female, the “more protected sex” concept mentioned earlier. If a
female is brought up by the parents in a very protective environment, this will coincide with the perceived protective features of the self-certain male. It is a perfect evolutionary match.

**Self-reporting vs. Actual Behavior**

Self-reporting is an issue when it comes to conducting research about what traits are desirable in a mate. It doesn’t even have to be in a controlled, experimental environment for self-reporting errors to occur; it can be witnessed naturally if one knows an individual’s personality. As mentioned earlier, it is a widespread event that women and men claim they want certain psychological and physiological traits in a mate. These traits then appear to be ignored when they enter the realm of the NGP environment. To illustrate, Urbaniak and Kilmann (2003) conducted a study using the young-adult population of study. Forty-eight female college students having an average age of 20.5 years were approached by their university for this research. The females rated their sexual orientation as mainly heterosexual, based on the Kinsey’s seven point rating scale.

The procedure that Urbaniak and Kilmann (2003) used in this experiment was much like a dating game show. Two males (named “Michael” and “Todd”) were told to respond to the females’ questions in a certain personality profile. In the first condition, Todd was told to present himself in a friendly, caring manner to the females’ questions. Condition two was more of a neutral personality, and condition three was labeled as “Jerk Todd” and exhibited responses of self-absorbed, insensitive answers. Michael was told to stay neutral in all three conditions to compare and contrast with Todd.
The women would ask questions such as “What do you think makes a real man?” and “What do you want in a woman?” After the questions were asked, graphs and other pragmatic data were collected to reveal the results.

The neutral personalities of both Michael and Todd appeared to be the most desired personalities among the young college women. Michael (the one displaying neutral behavior throughout) got the majority in two of the situations, when Todd was being neutral and then insensitive. Nice Todd shared 30% attractiveness and Michael received the other 70% in the liking decision. Thus, from this experiment, we may be able to conclude that we have witnessed the devastating effects of self-reporting versus actual behavior, since indeed the women’s’ identities were not private. In other words, since the women’s names were made public, this may have created a sense that they needed to vote for more socially acceptable traits. This reinforces the idea of self-reporting versus actual behavior.

To further demonstrate this effect of self-report versus actual preference, when identities were private for women in a study conducted by Wyngarden (2010) at Northern Illinois University, over 350 female college students participated in a verbal conference that focused on what defining attributes they searched for in a male. Many of the college students said traits such as “easy going,” “sensitive,” and “real.” Interestingly, the same group of students later completed an anonymous questionnaire asking very similar questions. The most frequent terms this time were “confident,” “assertive,” and “demanding” (Wyngarden, 2010). In conclusion with these two studies, there is evidence
that supports this notion of public self-reporting being different that actual, personal preference.

It can be seen that self-reporting can be a constraint in the context of collecting data for measuring what traits are desirable in a mate. Various factors can interplay to distort the reality of what individuals truly desire, one of these factors being the media.
CHAPTER IV
MEDIA’S INFLUENCE ON MATE SELECTION

The next component that will be explored is the media’s influence on dating behavior. The media is comprised of television, news, commercials, movies, music, internet sites, and even video gaming. Media also displays which gender is to partake in certain mating and attractive behaviors. For example, many fashion shows on television are centered toward female models advertising beauty products. These stimuli may serve as a defining measure of what to search for in a potential mate. Media may also be culture specific when it comes to the topic of dating and mating.

Current research indicates that there is a positive correlation with the media and narcissistic behaviors from its recipients (Ermann, 2004). Popular films and television series may often show men being the “jerk” in certain roles to attract the beautiful women acting in them. Often, these men may be quick-witted, great at pick-up-lines, rich, intelligent, and physically attractive. These characteristics may serve as a model for men of all ages in searching for a female partner. If a young male is watching these types of media, he may be more susceptible to mimicking the behaviors. The same goes for females; media in the United States personify women as seductive, feminine, naïve, controlling, and deceptive. The media also creates a type of stigma when it comes to interracial relationships as well as religious-based relationships, which will be discussed later in this thesis. Interestingly, college women are more influenced by body image and status projected in films and television than their male peers (Roberts & Good, 2010).
One element about the media is how it displays the actions and ideas of what intelligence may be perceived as by society. Intelligence may often be correlated with wealth in all types of films. Music often sings about money and sex, which create schemas and associations in the listener’s mind. From a Freudian perspective, these mediums serve the evolutionary need of sex; men and women get educated to become intelligent, then getting a good job to make money, which in turn gets them sex. This displays a relationship the media has among evolutionary psychology and the processes of mating selection. In fact, the media portrays very unrealistic perceptions on what is desirable in a mate, and many of these perceptions stem from evolutionary psychology (Kenrick & Gutierres, 1980). Women are also projected in the media to be dependent on men and less intelligent, such that males have the higher paying jobs and more money than the females (Matthews, 2007).

**Media and its Projection of Wealth**

Wealth is a common signal of status and security across many cultures in the world, and is commonly perpetuated in the media. The more money one has, the more assets one has. Expensive cars, classy houses, stylish cloths, frequent vacations, and the potential to make even more money all indicate success and attractiveness. Television shows and films may often use these as a setting for their plots.

It really should be no surprise that wealth is an attractive feature for mating. The same can be said for intelligence, and the two usually go hand in hand. However, this characteristic of wealth and smarts that the media portrays doesn’t strictly apply to men in the real world; it is an attractive feature in women. Contrary to what the media
projects for women, females are actually starting to move up more frequently in their occupations and earn more money (McBride, 2011). Women who are classified as picky would be stereotyped to be the ones to stress wealth and power in a male; however, recent studies show that men also sometimes prefer wealth and intelligence in a female (Stanik & Ellsworth, 2010).

The idea of media projecting what is considered wealthy goes back to the short-term and long-term mating timeframes. Women invest more in the long-run (i.e., looking for providing characteristics) and men invest more in the short-run (i.e., wanting sex). This is an interesting concept though, because one would think that since men think more in the short-run timeframe, men would think less about the wealth, intelligence, and other providing characteristics in a female. This is where the media influence comes into play. Today’s films, music, and television series project ideas of wealth and status for men (Matthews, 2007). Fancy cars and enormous houses all symbolize success in Hollywood, and this may greatly influence and encourage people to try to accomplish these successful feats. Women may accept these gender-biased views in the media, and thus be more influenced to look for long-term variables (e.g., wealth and intelligence).

However, when one looks at wealthy females in the real world, there seems to be a fascinating trend. Lam Le (2008) conducted a study through questionnaires that focused on what traits a high-status female found attractive in a male in both the short-run and long-run. The study showed that women desired looks in the short-run and earning capacity in the long-run (Lam Le, 2008). By earning capacity, the study meant income
capability. This finding suggests that as the status level increases in a female, the female becomes more like the male in the mating timeframes.

Now let us go back to the male’s identity in the media. Since it is evolutionary, as well as stereotyped, that the man be smart and rich, we will explore his influence on “middle-class” women who are looking for providers. Since it was discussed earlier through the NGP that men exhibiting overly confident behaviors tended to be more successful in mating, it would only make sense that this would correlate with wealth. Narcissism, a feature of the NGP, is found to be exemplified within the media, and narcissists are expected to have better occupational success than that of non-narcissistic individuals (Ermann, 2004; Westerman, Bergman, Bergman, & Daly, 2012).

Sundie (2003) applied a study at Arizona University where female college participants were surveyed after looking at pictures of males with varying wealth and rank. These photos also had descriptions of how much money these males have spent within their budget. The men all were labeled as average looking according to an attractive rating scale completed by the female participants. Accordingly, the men who spent the most money were labeled as the most attractive by the young women.

**Media as a Correcting Mechanism**

Perhaps the projections in the media can be used as a useful tool for young people searching for a partner. In this sense, the media may make a man or woman feel insecure about him or herself, which can cause a sense of needed action to make the individual feel less insecure. There may be a film that displays a powerful man that is secure and witty, while at the same time there may be an insecure man watching the movie.
Insecurity can actually be a useful, evolutionary tool for an anxious, partner-seeker. With this level of anxiety, one may feel more compelled to search for a mate. More precisely, an insecure male will witness in the media what types of behaviors he needs to apply in order to be secure and successful in choosing a mating partner. Thus, films may be able to serve as an outline for both a male and a female in what he or she needs to do in order to successfully date someone.

Brumbaugh (2007) implemented a study at the University of Illinois, where three experiments were executed dealing with insecure and secure partner prototypes. This was done for both male and female perspectives. The study indicated that insecure individuals, who realized they were insecure and less confident of their mating strategies, actually exhibited stronger, secure traits. All three experiments focused on cognitive and other psychological traits, and each one had a male and female admit he and she was insecure. After all of the results and data were collected, the study indicated that positive advice from insecure people made them more striking as partners and also that insecure individuals had numerous dating devices that they may use to win over dating partners. This is an interesting concept, since the NGP theory generally was interpreted as extreme security as one of the most attractive characteristics a male can have. Perhaps this indicates some type of correcting mechanism for humans that are insecure. This mechanism changes the way an insecure individual perceives him or herself, and promotes better tactics in mate selection activity. This may also be fueled by the media. Movies, television, and music are generally artistic ways of expressing feelings about issues such as mating selection.
It regularly is the case that these sources of media project ideas of romance and sex. Music often has lyrics dealing with romantic, sexual relationships. The same can be said for television series and movies. With this stated, one can construe that media is really societies’ self-correcting mechanism. Perhaps on an unconscious or subconscious level, media is the human’s way of leading insecure people into healthy mating behavior to keep the human race alive. Without these powerful sources of media that may deeply influence people, the insecure society may be less motivated to involve itself in mating behaviors. Not much research has been done on this specific element, but it can reasonably be implied with the previous information and studies presented in this thesis.

Let us look back at the matching hypothesis that was discussed earlier. Again, the matching hypothesis generally states that people who are in a certain attractive class will attract mates of that same class. For example, average looking people attract average looking people. An insecure, nervous, average looking male generally will never date a confident supermodel. However, this may not be entirely true. With elements of the media discussed earlier, evolutionary psychology, and the potential for human learning, one can adapt his or her behavior in certain situations. In other words, a person who feels unconfident about mating can learn what behaviors need to be executed to attract a partner. This would be known as seduction strategies. Seduction strategies can be used by anyone who is able to learn them (Naar & Masala, 2010).

In conclusion with the media being a powerful force in the mate selection process, it is seen that the media can promote NGP traits. Additionally, gender stereotypes concerning wealth and intelligence are also created through the common outlets of the media.
Movies, music, and television shows can serve as a model (i.e., the correcting mechanism) for individuals who are insecure about their mating capabilities.
CHAPTER V

RELIGION’S INFLUENCE ON MATE SELECTION

Religion can be a large part of peoples’ lives, since it is often introduced into an individual’s life at an early age. Recent studies dealing with religion and gender roles have found that religious belief plays a major role in the shaping of masculine and feminine traits within a given culture (Hoover & Coats, 2011). This would be associated with dating behaviors as well as early childhood experiences dealing with what gender-role behaviors may be non-acceptable.

In an experimental work implemented by Njus and Bane (2009) at Luther College, Iowa, two studies were done correlating mating strategies and religious commitment. In the first study, 219 college students completed questionnaires placing them into three different religious categories: intrinsic (religion as a valuable tool), extrinsic (religion as a necessity in life), and quest (religion as a means of always thinking and searching). In the second study, these students completed a questionnaire dealing with scenarios about a mate who has some of these religious traits. The type of religious commitment that was found the most attractive was intrinsic.

It was implied from the study that intrinsic religiosity is a personal difference variable that succeeds the differences in mating techniques hypothesized in Sexual Strategies Theory (Njus & Bane, 2009). Sexual Strategies Theory outlines the different ways in which males and females organize their behaviors and desires toward a potential partner. Intrinsic means, in a religious sense, that one’s religion is a part of them. If one is
confident in his or her religion, this may display a protective trait that is a sign of confidence and self-assurance. Since religion is generally socially acceptable, highly encouraged by parents, and occasionally displayed in media, it is viewed as an important mannerism in an individual.

Another extension of the idea of religion and relationship seeking is the suggestion of narcissism being an attractive trait. Recall that narcissistic behaviors are commonly seen as attractive characteristics as well as a part of the NGP (Holtzman & Strube, 2010; Urbaniak & Kilmann, 2003). With the concept of religious participation and belief, religious individuals can have a tendency to become narcissistic (Piven, 2006). This may propose a positive relationship between NGP characteristics and religious characteristics when one searches for a mate.

**Wealth and Religion’s Influence**

Wealth is a status symbol in many nations. Wealth indicates that one has spending power and can have a certain level of power over other individuals. Religions may often instruct its members on important life issues such as money and earning capability. Religious teachings shape the perception one has about wealth and providing behaviors, and thus may create a positive relationship in a person’s mind between success and religious identification. Recent studies have demonstrated that there is a strong brain connection between religious belief and the perception of one’s success (e.g., wealth) and stress in his or her life (Caton, 2010). Physiological needs are known to be met with wealth, food, shelter, clothing, and sex.
A category of psychological need that should be fulfilled is the need for safety and protection (Best, Day, McCarthy, Darlington, & Pinchbeck, 2008). This need could be met with the purchasing of a strong health care provider and a location of a dwelling that supports social stability (e.g., a wealthy neighborhood). Religion itself may have a role in the providing and shaping of safety needs.

A next stage of requirement for the human is a sense of belonging (Best et al., 2008). This would include things such as family love, friendships, and other sources of social support. Religion often perpetuates a sense of community and identity within an individual, including a strong sense of social support. Religion itself is a very effective tool in satisfying a myriad of emotional needs (Caton, 2010). One could argue that the search for a potential mate may satisfy this need; finding a partner who has the characteristics of the same religious system that satisfies emotional needs.

The next psychological component has a direct relationship with wealth. This is the ego and self-esteem need (Best et al., 2008). Wealth, for the most part, can satisfy this need. It gives an individual recognition in his or her community, a sense of achievement, a feeling of mastery in his or her occupation, and a feeling of pride. This is very similar to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, and religion’s influence on wealth and self-image may have a powerful impact on one’s self-esteem (Caton, 2010).

**Religion and Media**

Present day society commonly associates certain gender roles with certain types of religions (Hoover & Coats, 2011). However, religion may interfere with the values that are taught within its institutions and the values that are displayed in secular media.
Commercials that advertise alcohol are commonly targeted to younger, college attending males. Many beer commercials have a setting in which young people are socializing with one another, and the symbolic prize of the commercial is the beautiful woman. The commercial attempts to create a broad association between alcohol and attractive females. This has a strong impact on any viewer, and can have instant effect on one’s behavior without him or her being directly aware of it (Ward & Friedman, 2006). Media also projects these schemas not only in commercials but also in music, films, magazines, and television shows. This may demonstrate a blending or an association with secular culture and religious identity, especially in the young adult population.

The influence of media on gender identity affects both sexes greatly (Kassin et al., 2008). Women who view the feminine identity depicted in the media may try to mimic or model that specific behavior (e.g., Roberts & Good, 2010). Phenomena such as this demonstrate how the secular media may push through the religious philosophies of a spiritual community.

Media is different from culture to culture and thus may have different ideas on what is found as attractive in a gender, especially when related to religion. Besides confidence and self-image that were described earlier and categorized as evolutionary, a number of physical traits in men and women vary among Western and Eastern cultures (Bailey & Ostrov, 2008). For example, what is considered thin and healthy in the United States may be viewed as weak and unhealthy in other cultures (Kassin et al., 2008). However, early upbringing probably has a huge influence on a person’s perception and religious
choice. Perhaps this indicates that certain religions in specific demographics of the world are not as blended with secular media as it is in Western cultures.

With the previous data and correlational studies mentioned, one can agree that religion is most likely an important factor in mate selection. Early upbringing and institutionalization of religion are important sources of identity matching when an individual may have the desire to get into a relationship. The secular media, especially in Western cultures, may have “taken control” of what religious characteristics are suitable and acceptable in a mate of the opposite sex.
CHAPTER VI
ATTACHMENT FERTILITY THEORY

The Attachment Fertility Theory (AFT) claims that when the nurturing from parents makes the chance of offspring survival more likely, those offspring are much more likely to develop the same types of nurturing traits (Pedersen et al., 2011). The theory goes on to state that if the amount of parental investment in the offspring is particularly pleasant and memorable, both genders will seek the same traits when looking for a potential mate. If the upbringing of the offspring, or children, was not a pleasant experience, this would be referred to as a poor attachment pattern.

Pederson et al. (2011) conducted a study with 66 males and 151 females with a mean age of 19. A survey was executed that used a Likert scale that indicated actively seeking (+3) or actively avoiding (-3) having sex in the short-term if they knew that having sex would likely result in pregnancy. Men had a mean score of -2.03 and women had a mean score of -2.29 (Pedersen et al., 2011). This is highly indicative of AFT since the scores were similar in both genders. This is stated because it indicates a possibility that these individuals were raised in a protective environment and that most of them probably remember it while being raised. This illustrates AFT because these students, regardless of gender, still chose to invest less in the short-term. They were not seeking a reproductive relationship or even a relationship with the risk of it, since early in their lives they remember their parents had the time and money to raise them adequately. This
also illustrates how the students are aware they do not have the responsibility skills and resources that it takes to raise offspring.

So this can be seen as a similarity in both genders when seeking satisfaction in a relationship. It must not be forgotten that parental roles play a huge role in the precision of AFT (Trivers, 1972). If men and women did not have much parental investment and care giving at a young age, or just didn’t remember it, men are less likely to be concerned with pregnancy than women are. This illustrates an evolutionary mechanism within the female. Women know that they are limited in the number of times they can have intercourse, due to the unconscious idea that they can only give birth to so many offspring. If men were not actively raised in their childhood, the theory shifts to Sexual Strategies Theory (SST), when men take more risk in favor of satisfying current sexual desires (Pederson et al., 2011). This is an interesting concept, and AFT and SST may play a role within the forming of NGP traits within the development of a short-term and long-term relationship. Early attachment and upbringing for both sexes are known to play a critical role in most psychological and personality theories of development.

**Religion and its Influence on AFT**

Religion, as we discussed earlier, may also be a variable in AFT. The parents who belong to religious groups may have a higher probability in raising their offspring in a very protective matter than that of agnostic or atheistic families, since religion reinforces many psychological needs, such as protective and safety needs (Caton, 2010).

Religious organizations are sometimes changing their rules, and many members among these faiths are beginning to live their own types of lifestyles, sometimes
contradictory to what their religious texts tell them. As stated previously, the media may have a huge influence on this possible change in religious tenets (e.g., Hoovers & Coats, 2011).

We learned with the matching hypothesis that religion is a factor when individuals search for a mate. This may also be because a parent reinforced a religious identity with the offspring, and then these offspring may search for mates with similar beliefs and upbringings. However, not many studies have been conducted to illustrate this point. It does seem logical, in a sense, that AFT would also be highly associated with religious families. This may be due to the notion that many religious practices focus on safety needs and interpersonal emotions that individuals may feel (e.g., Caton, 2010). This is why religion can become ingrained into a person’s character at a very early stage of life.

AFT is a factor in both genders, as stated earlier in this section. However, the female is naturally the more protected sex in upbringing. Another reason as to why the female is guarded in excess is due to the fact that a mistake in mate choice is more costly than it is for the male (Bokek-Cohen et al., 2007). If a female becomes impregnated from a male that she ends up not liking, the offspring poses a risk to the parents. The female will be much less happy in the relationship if she views the male was the wrong choice, especially after having children. Additionally, unconscious phenomena dealing with mate decision are more frequent in the female mind (Weiderman & Dubois, 1998).

For the offspring in the above example, parental attachment features will most likely be negative for the child. Since there may have been disruption in the upbringing, the child, when he or she matures, will most likely look for short-term satisfactions. This
obviously is a negative process for the family, and can be labeled as maladaptive for society as a whole. These attitudes about relationships and sex can be passed down generation from generation, and the AFT is negative within these group members. This in turn would cause too many short-term relationships and no serious commitments within these families, which could be emotionally devastating.

In conclusion with AFT, it is a very important topic in the psychological mechanisms in human mating choices. Countless studies have supported the idea of personality development and mate choice generally stems from early attachment patterns (Del Giudice, 2009). AFT may possibly be an unconscious mechanism that has been reinforced through upbringing. The offspring, when he or she grows up, has a high likelihood of basing his or her decisions about short and long-term mating choices on the levels of parental involvement he or she has experienced.
CHAPTER VII
SOCIAL ASPECTS OF THE MATE SELECTION PROCESS

Studies have been conducted to find whether or not unconscious factors play a role in the social development of personal relationships and mate selection. We already discussed that numerous amounts of unconscious forces may occur in the general process of mating choice (e.g., evolutionary psychology and AFT). In this social aspects section, we will explore what research has been done across cultures to determine what social elements may play huge roles in the perceptions and judgments of a future and current relationship. Additionally, these figures and findings will be tied together in order to find a connection between what has already been studied (i.e., wealth factors and NGP) and a new connection on what others think of them.

Recent studies suggest that the level of attachment that an infant experiences in the first years of life highly correlates with the levels of attachment with a romantic partner when the individual is older (Cassidy & Shaver, 1999). This is the first step in the theory of socialization’s impact on mating behavior in an individual (e.g., AFT). Babies who were anxious when their parents were gone typically display the similar behavior in later years when their significant other is gone (Cassidy & Shaver, 1999). The same idea can be applied for a baby who had a calm temperament around his or her parents. This baby will most likely display calmer traits as he or she grows older.

Other theories that explain similar phenomena of childhood and adult behavior are known as the “life history theory” and the “parental investment theory” (Del Giudice,
2009). These are both very similar to AFT and may be a likely predictor of the types of traits these children will look for in a future mate (Pedersen et al., 2011). Recall earlier that the difference in sex upbringing plays a significant role in the attachment theories. That is, women have a tendency to be the more protected sex while being raised, thus being more choosy when searching for potential male mates (e.g., Bokek-Cohen et al., 2007). This early attachment theory sets the base for both genders in how they perceive the acceptance of their potential or current relationship. Family and acquaintances are agents in this phenomenon as well, since they are generally the ones that influence the ideas and feelings that are related to the judgment of a relationship. Additionally, recent studies have found that poor attachment patterns found in the early upbringing of girls resulted in lower self-esteem than that of boys (Nishikawa, Sundbom, & Hägglöf, 2009). This last piece of research may set the stage for negative relationship searching in the future for some females.

Social factors such as family and friends do not stop after a relationship is successful. If anything else, these variables increase in amount. For example, if a couple gets married, family on both sides tend to become more personal to both the husband and wife, both in good and bad terms. This is where the famous “monster-in-law” stories evolve. Other things include friendship relationships, career success, and academic success. It is also theorized that infancy is not the only factor in deciding how a relationship will be or not be successful. Attachment patterns can adapt and change within an individual’s experiences (Del Giudice, 2009).
The first component that will be most appropriate to start with is childhood upbringing. From birth to early childhood, perceptions, imagination, ideas, values, and opinions begin to shape and form the outline for the individual throughout the rest of his or her life. These traits are integrated into the everyday decisions that the person makes throughout the rest of his or her life. Looking back at the attachment theory, if a child was secure and confident in his or her parents’ ideas and decisions, safety needs were meant. This created a positive and calm temperament within the child’s personality development. On the other hand, if a child had a poor attachment with his or her caretaker, that child would most likely have negative temperament (Hopwood & Zanarini, 2012). This is not the case for all infants and children with positive temperaments; it is just a tendency.

**Social Aspects and Attachment Styles of AFT**

An interesting study recently concluded by Del Giudice (2009) suggests a certain gender behavior correlation in the assessment of gender differences in upbringing. Del Giudice (2009) noted that children behave in the same manner from about one to six years of age when looking at parental attachment patterns. However, after the age of six, girls begin to display more “organized” patterns of behavior when separated from the mother and father than that of boys (Del Giudice, 2009). These organized behaviors included stable emotions and less aggressive actions in the absence of caregivers. This may suggest that females have a natural tendency to display early signals of awareness in the mating selection patterns. That is, it is a premature display of the choosy and long-
term behaviors that will later evolve into larger mediums such as actual mate selective tendencies.

One can imply that the disorganized and more aggressive behaviors that are seen when boys were separated from parents may relate to their mating behavior in later years (Del Giudice, 2009). Recall earlier that men invest less in the short-term mating strategy techniques, thus worrying less about long-term commitments than that of the female population. These recent findings in toddler behaviors may be an evolutionary indicator in attachment and searching patterns later seen in the individuals’ future sexual relationships.

Temperament was mentioned very briefly, but it may be related to a more narrow group of infantile attachment styles that later indicate possible behavioral patterns. The first one is known as “secure attachment style,” which is characterized by a sense of safety among the child and among his or her peers. It is considered the most common type of attachment (Ainsworth, Blehar, Walters, & Wall, 1978). The second type of attachment pattern is “anxious-ambivalent style,” while the third is “avoidant attachment style” (Ainsworth et al., 1978). These three main styles of attachment are later used in friendship and romantic relationships when the offspring is older. In fact, the children will most likely have personalities similar to their parents’ and the parents’ attachment style. For example, if a child is a secure attached individual, he or she will most likely treat others in a warm and friendly matter. On the other hand, a child who had the avoidant pattern of attachment is more likely to display cold and rejecting styles of personality toward his or her friends, partners, and family (Ainsworth et al., 1978).
Again, all of these attachment styles may stem from biological factors as well as learned
behaviors of socialization.

According to a longitudinal study executed by Fraley (2002), attachment styles remain
relatively stable over the first 19 years of life. This is crucial since the teen at 19 years of age is beginning to experience high levels of sexual attraction, as well as relating
concepts of commitment and satisfaction within the context of a sexual relationship.
Additionally, the older the individual gets, the more stable the attachment pattern
becomes within the context of selecting a potential mate (Fraley & Brumbaugh, 2004).
Factors that may affect the levels of this stability are negative events, such as the
witnessing of a divorce (Saini, 2012).

The life history model that was discussed earlier has a great amount of impact in
developing identity within an adolescent, according to many personality psychologists
(Jackson, 2010). The adolescent now begins to form schemas and associations with
relationships and sex, and thus begins to develop attitudes and rules within his or her own
thinking. With the short- and long-term perspectives previously noted, we can make an
accurate association that young men will spend more time thinking about short-term
while young women may have a tendency to think more about long-term mating
strategies. Limits and possibilities in a relationship are realized based off of the parents’
mating strategies history, as well as the morals that were displayed within the family
structure (Jackson, 2010). Status among peers may also start to evolve, and this will
continue for the rest of the adolescent’s development. One of the major mental
associations and schemas that are seen at this age in Western cultures is the link between
sexual beauty and intelligence (Denny, 2008). We brushed up on this concept earlier dealing with potential NGP factors and wealth, and this may set a precedent for the teen’s potential acceptance and portrayal of NGP behaviors.

Intelligence at this stage of life may be viewed as doing well in school, social-interaction skills, and coming from a wealthy background. These factors are completely recognized by the time of adolescents, thus beginning to shape the strategies that the young male and female will adopt to adapt to the social demands of society. This can be were NGP forms and stays within a young male or in some cases, a female. The adolescent male, for example, begins to see that attractive young females have a higher status (popularity) among the students in a given high school. Recent study into the adolescents’ school environment showed that males who work hard and earn high grade point averages become much less attractive than those of drop-out males (Dijkstra, Lindenberg, Verhulst, Ormel, & Veenstra, 2009). This may also show a possible occurrence of NGP qualities evolving in late adolescents (i.e., “too cool for school” attitude). This puts together a possible relationship of poor attachment patterns from childhood and NGP seeking behaviors in later adolescents.

**Cultural Characteristics and Mate Choice**

Culture itself has a huge influence on how a person projects him or herself. Cultural norms give a person a sense of identity among the population he or she lives in. Culture may be expressed through things such as careers, activities, education, clothing, food, body piercings, and tattoos. These cultural traits have been correlated with concepts such as the matching hypothesis, NGP, AFT, and evolutionary psychology. The last two
items, piercings and tattoos, are going to be the topic of information in this next section. These were once viewed to be taboo in society but now it appears they are becoming a lot more common among modern societies in cultures across the globe. Body piercings and tattoos are becoming more sexually attractive among the older and younger populations (Roberts, Miner, & Shackelford, 2010). These cultural characteristics are starting to become the norm amongst Western cultures more so than others (Roberts et al., 2010).

So why are these traits attractive amongst both genders? One may reason that it draws a notion of individuality and personality. Piercings in the ear have long been accepted in female populations, but it now is more acceptable among males. Piercings in the male’s ear actually began in ancient civilizations, but now they occur frequently and are sometimes wrongly stereotyped with prisons of the Western world (Garner, Garfinkel, Schwartz, & Thompson, 1980). The media also is an agent in this socially-evolved attribute, associating many actors with earrings as prison inmates (Garner et al., 1980). This is an interesting association, since men in prison may be labeled as “bad,” “independent,” and “self-serving.” These traits seem like they have a high level of correspondence with NGP features mentioned earlier. It is possible that females find earrings in males attractive because of this loose association. That is, the male with earrings who is masculine may seem confident and able to protect the relationship and the offspring (e.g., Roberts, 2012). It also clarifies a sense of identity and higher self-perceived importance (i.e., self-esteem), which is important for one who is looking for mates (Sarwer et al., 2008).
So then one is likely to wonder why men find piercings in women attractive. One reason is that it has been culturally accepted for centuries, and a male being raised within these time periods has been reinforced by parents to associate this with social acceptance. Even though piercings are no longer labeled as feminine in the West and certain Eastern cultures, it still has a feminine connotation and is even expected in some civilizations. Again, this may even bring out the idea of AFT, since the parents brought up the male child in awareness of his culture, having the child see the association of women and ear piercings.

Another basis as to why men find piercings attractive in women is that it outlines her facial symmetry. For example, piercings of the ear make her ears noticeable and perceived as symmetric and thus attractive to the male viewer. Or piercings of the nose or lips will outline her symmetry in comparison to the rest of her face and body, which highlight the possibility for healthy genetics (Roberts et al., 2010).

Even though these piercings are more of a physical subject with the mating process, it also reflects countless psychological traits. Women who get piercings demonstrate their own perceptions of their beauty and physical attractiveness. This perception outlines their self-image and self-confidence to men who are considering mating. This will make the female have a sense of mating value through the reinforcement of physical attractiveness, whereas the male who has body piercings reinforces his dominance in psychological qualities, such as confidence and aggressiveness (Roberts et al., 2010).

This could be purely a concept that is reflected in the NGP model. Women may sometimes claim they find men who have body piercings as unattractive and insecure;
however, through the unconscious factors of NGP, they are attracted to them. They associate these “consciously prohibited” traits with prison, aggressiveness, and breaking the law (Roberts et al., 2010). These powerful and domineering attributes are strong enough to protect the female mate and her offspring from danger (Roberts, 2012).

Another common cultural trait that is emerging is the tattoo. The tattoo is an artistic way of expressing one's personality and ways of thinking. The tattoo, like the piercing, was once thought to be a social taboo in the Western world. It was associated with social deviants and prisoners. Today however, tattoos are becoming a fashion and are accepted by many people (Karacaoglan, 2012). The media also has an effect on the perception of tattoos. These would include things just like the ones mentioned with piercings: confidence, distinction, and attitude. All of these traits would be useful in searching for a mate, regardless of gender. An interesting concept with the tattoo emerges, however. Not only is the tattoo a tool that can be used to outline specific body qualities (i.e., muscles and legs), but it also signifies that the human body can withstand pain (Roberts et al., 2010). It displays that the body can handle the painful incisions and drawings made into the flesh, which signals to a potential mate that the body can be strong to ward off enemies of future offspring. This obviously is coming from an evolutionary perspective. The same can probably be stated for body piercings; however, not much research has been done with that idea, and one cannot forget that piercings still have that feminine identity. Men and women of present society are now starting to get more tattoos to outline their unconscious sexual desires (Karacaoglan, 2012).

**Culture and its Relationship to Evolutionary Psychology**
Other cultural traits may also emerge in the future with the idea that they emphasize physical attractiveness. For example, contact lenses that are light in color may unconsciously signify to a mate that one can hunt in the night. Longer fingernails may symbolize the ability to dig and search for food better (e.g., Roberts, 2012). The humorous concept of pick-up lines, which will be discussed in greater detail later, may even be a culturally and evolutionary significant style of mating behavior (Senko & Fyffe, 2010). The list could go on and on, but the idea is that these cultural attributes all are able to lead to some evolutionary concept. Some may be more biological and some may be more cognitive, but it still is under the umbrella of evolutionary psychology. This idea may be difficult to prove or disprove, but it still raises an interesting component in the idea of evolutionary psychology and is parallel to some of the behaviors we witness in relationships.

**Social Media and Dating**

In today’s society, mate selection may be faster, easier, and more accessible (Finkel, Eastwick, Karney, Reis, & Sprecher, 2012). This is mainly due to the changing levels of technology that are seen within the global environment. That is, faster internet speeds and more capable cellphone technologies. With this fantastic equipment comes more opportunity for humans to meet people and stay in touch with one another. This is advancement in society for potential mates to meet one another in a safer manner. The internet has many dating websites that help individuals meet people who have similar interests and beliefs. This helps the strength of the matching hypothesis mentioned earlier. Since people can sign up for this service and enter in characteristics such as
occupations, hobbies, and interests, the website can search for people of the opposite sex that match these characteristics.

With the idea of the matching hypothesis, it must be remembered that it is not just based on physical appearance. Many psychological qualities are considered within the hypothesis, and that is the main purpose of online searching and dating. The interesting phenomenon of online dating is that it reverses the concept of actual dating (Kassin et al., 2008, p. 353). That is, personal and psychological traits are seen first, and then if the dating persists, the physical is seen. This is the opposite of the traditional dating sense. If a male is interested in a female from first glance, based off of physical traits, then he may pursue for more details within her ranging from her history to her attributes. The same can be said for the perception of a female. Physical and psychological behaviors (e.g., volume of voice, hand gestures, and facial expressions) are judged from the first impression.

Internet and other sources of communication are becoming more and more popular, and it is likely that this medium will grow. It may even be said that it is indeed healthier and safer for both genders, since one can receive more information about the potential mate and make better judgments than just merely slipping into a beauty bias.

**Pick-up Lines as an Important Cultural and Evolutionary Influence**

Pick-up lines can be defined as riddle-like statements that are meant to show sexual interest. Women are usually the ones that are the recipients of pick-up lines (Senko & Fyffe, 2010). Pick-up lines, like anything else in the human mating realm, have an evolutionary background. Also, it must be noted that pick-up lines are mainly a short-
term mating characteristic. Pick-up lines are very important in the idea of making a good first impression when searching for a female mate, especially in the young adult population (Bale et al., 2006).

Pick-up lines are divided into three categories: flippant, direct, and innocuous (Senko & Fyffe, 2010). Flippant pick-up lines are characterized by showing interest with a strong sense of humor. An example would be “Did it hurt? When you fell from heaven?” Direct pick-up lines can be classified as showing interest with genuineness, for example, “I couldn’t help but notice the nicest and prettiest woman in the room.” Innocuous pick-up lines are labeled as simple conversation starters. An example would be, “So what do you think of this show?”

Women’s attitudes with pick-up lines vary from situation to situation (e.g., being drunk vs. sober; Senko & Fyffe, 2010). Research has found that the pick-up lines most preferred by women are direct and innocuous (Senko & Fyffe, 2010). However, if a female views a man as attractive and is looking for a short-term relationship, she may be more interested in the flippant lines (Fletcher, Simpson, Thomas, & Giles, 1999). This is an evolutionary reason that can be analyzed with what we have already explored. Since flippant lines express a sense of humor and a level of sexual interest, this may be viewed as a dominant trait in the short-term for the male. Since the creativity of pick-up lines can be correlated with confidence and intelligence, the female may be more attracted to this style of pick-up lines as opposed to the warmer, more sensitive ones. This is because creativity is known to be a very attractive trait among men (Prokosch, 2008). The other two, direct and innocuous, can be viewed as less attractive in the short-term. Flippant
pick-up lines can reflect the NGP, but direct and innocuous pick up lines are viewed to be more attractive for long-term relationships (Cunningham, 1989). These two styles reflect more maturity and potential to be a good father to the future offspring, since they display more of a personal affection rather than a short-term mating attempt.

Pick-up lines, regardless of type, do indeed demonstrate a level of confidence from the male. If a male has the audacity to communicate with a female he does not know for potential mating, it displays sureness of identity to some degree. This sureness might be transferable to potential offspring, in which the female can help pass it on to keep the human race flourishing and self-assured. Of course, this cognitive process does not happen at a conscious level, at least for most women (e.g., Weiderman & Dubois, 1998). Rather, it is an embedded evolutionary trait that took thousands of years to hardwire into the human brain. This is in the best interest of the offspring, since these traits helped our ancestral background to fight off enemies and hunt for food.

Not much study had been conducted to see if the media has a direct effect on pick-up lines, but with the previously mentioned attributes that the media does have, it is most likely a reasonable consideration. Since the media can be viewed as the self-correcting mechanism that the human race has created for its fellow inhabitants, it may be a powerful vehicle for pick-up lines to spread. This is because many pick-up lines display traits of psychological-fitness, such as intelligence, which looks healthy for reproduction (Bale et al., 2006; Roberts, 2012).

**Physical Beauty Perception and Culture**
Let us go back to the specific traits that people look for in a mate. Men have the role of being financially resourceful, confident, and independent. Women have the role of being physically attractive, choosy, and dependent. Again, many of these traits are shaped by society, media, and family values. However, something else seems to be correlated with these mental characteristics. This variable isn’t a psychological component; it is a physical component. When one thinks about the psychological attributes just mentioned, one may associate it with physical beauty.

Humans typically spot out beauty in others at an early age. This may create a sort of beauty bias in others. More narrowly, some may judge other people’s personalities based on their looks. A study conducted by Clifford and Walster (1973) with elementary school teachers demonstrated this effect. Teachers were given information on young boys and girls as well as photographs. Most of the teachers that saw the more beautiful children viewed them as smarter, more successful, and more extroverted than the less attractive children.

Chaiken (1979) demonstrated the same effect with college students. Both male and female experimenters came up to college students in an attempt to get them to sign a petition on a certain issue. The experimenters who were labeled as more attractive got a significantly higher level of signatures than those of the less attractive individuals. This may indicate a correlation of psychological attributes such as trustworthiness and desire among attractive individuals of both genders.

Downs and Lyons (1991) showed a more significant outcome with this so called beauty bias. They used photographs of individuals who were suspects of violating the
law. A group of Texas judges set lower bail amounts and lesser punishments to the group of attractive individuals than those of the lesser attractive individuals. The judges all received the same information about the individuals. At the societal level, studies conducted in the United States, Canada, and England showed an association between beauty and income. Within a number of job sectors of these nations, attractive men and women earned higher amounts of money than that of their peers within the same occupation (Hamermesh & Biddle, 1994).

Looking back at the positive associations with attractive children in the perception of teachers just mentioned, another study indicated this potential trend. A meta-analysis conducted by researchers demonstrated that physical attractiveness was mildly related to intelligence in the adult population, but was higher in the child population (Jackson, Hunter, & Hodge, 1995).

So it is observed that individuals who are physically attractive also acquire psychologically attractive traits. This creates a sort of cognitive association when one views a physically attractive person. When the physically attractive person is viewed, schemas may form dealing with these positive associations. For example, a female may witness a good-looking male and assume he has wealth, smarts, humor, status, and NGP traits (e.g., Jackson et al., 1995; Urbaniak & Kilmann, 2003). The same may be true for a male when he sees a physically attractive female. However, it must not be forgotten that males usually place a higher level of importance on the physical traits than the mental characteristics of a woman (Wong et al., 1991).
These associations, or schemas, have probably developed over a long period of time through similar processes like that of evolutionary psychology. Family and media have also most likely played a role in these cognitive associations. Encouraging offspring to search for attractive and wealthy individuals would create these associations in a person.

The association between bodily attractiveness and positive psychological traits is cross-cultural (Cunningham, Roberts, Barbee, Druen, & Wu, 1995). However, it must be realized that not everyone who is attractive possesses these personality traits. Good looks alone are not sufficient for a successful relationship, starting with any gender. But if one was to look at the history of an attractive person, it is likely that he or she was encouraged to achieve and excel at a higher number of things than less attractive individuals (Clifford & Walster, 1973).

Consistent with Berschheid and Reis (1998), the matching hypothesis is true for personality traits as much as it is for physical traits (Berscheid & Reis, 1998). So the popular saying “opposites attract” appears not to be entirely true. Similar traits and backgrounds, especially those of social class, religion, and nationality, are likely to be attracted to one another.

As one can reasonably conclude from the information given, there generally is a positive correlation between beauty and intelligence. Again, beauty and intelligence are strictly subjective matters and depend on the perception of the person witnessing. However, there are common agreements between intelligence (e.g., good grades in college or a wealthy occupation) and physical attractiveness (e.g., body build and face symmetry). As stated previously, views of attractiveness can be different in various parts
of the world. However, there are a few things that are seen as a collective agreement on certain features, such as weight and figure (Buss & Schmitt, 1993). Wealth and intelligence are also factors that are accepted in almost all parts of the world, thus further encouraging dynamics for a relationship to start.

**Gossip as a Tool for Mating Manipulation**

With the evolved human being able to use social interaction as an instrument to attract a mate of his or her choosing, gossip is one medium that can be used. Animals, on the other hand, only have the ability to physically fight off predators if they feel their mate is threatened.

One difficult thing is to define what gossip exactly is. We can conceptualize that gossip is usually an unfriendly statement or opinion based off of one’s reputation. Gossip is practiced by many to achieve different social goals. I will focus on gossip that is strictly related to mating reputation by our subject population of young adults. However, it is appropriate to realize that other forms of gossip may have an impact on the sexual relationship opportunities that a human may have. For example, gossiping about a young woman's sexual encounter history may alter her reputation in the perception of possible male mates.

Romantic relationships are indeed the most gossiped about topic, and gossip can have a profound effect before, during, and after relationships (De Backer, Nelissen, & Fisher, 2007). A subtype of gossip, known as *strategy learning gossip*, is the one that is used as a defense or tool in the sexual selection process for humans to use as their medium of attraction. This strategy gossip usually is more interesting to the person listening, since it
involves an individual who is associated with either the idea of wealth, health, or sexuality (De Backer et al., 2007). Strategy gossip is consistent with evolutionary ideas on health, survivability, and the likelihood of conceiving children (De Backer et al., 2007). Thus, one can recognize the significance this may have on a college-aged population’s mating phenomenon.

Gossip not only affects the individual being spoken about, but also the individual that is expressing the gossip. This can have a benefit to the individual gossiping since it may imply that he or she has knowledge and is worth listening to. If one knows about the sexual reputation of another individual (e.g., “she sleeps around a lot”), then it may mean that the individual is aware of his or her sexual environment (Bromley, 1993). It can imply that the person is knowledgeable when it comes to his or her awareness of other people, which can signal as a desirable trait. It also is directly beneficial to the speaker at a cognitive level. This is because he or she can use gossip to create an image, whether true or not, that is less attractive for the subject being gossiped about. For example, a male who feels he is competing with another male for a desired female may gossip about him. The ideas expressed in the gossip can range from sexuality, wealth, health, and even behavior that may be unattractive to the female (e.g., drug use). It also may show dominance toward the male expressing the gossip; a feature of the NGP model. It can reflect dominance due to the possibility that the things being said about the target make the target look weaker or too immature for mating activity (e.g., “he still lives with his mom”) or even directly attack his reputation (e.g., “he rips off a lot of people, that is why he is rich”).
Another interesting component of gossip is the cultural tendency for females to gossip more than males (Leaper & Holliday, 1995). This may be from the idea of evolutionary psychology. This is because, as we recall, women have a tendency to desire mental traits over physical traits in men. Thus, things like reputation and wealth are mostly based off of cognitive and mental attributes. Since men desire sexual and physical appearance more, their gossip is more likely to be about the sexual behaviors and looks of women (De Backer et al., 2007). Gossip, even though it is considered a social taboo, is a fashionable trait to have in the mating environment. It perfectly fits the NGP model, especially if the male is gossiping directly to the female of interest. This is because the male is displaying confidence and dominance in his communication when gossiping to the female. Gossip that also denotes potential intelligence in the speaker is also a gain, since intelligence was said to be a positive trait in both genders.
CHAPTER VIII

THE RELATIONSHIP COMPONENT

So now let us look at what happens when two young partners are actually in a relationship. There are numerous psychological behaviors that occur in a relationship as well as outside of a relationship. Satisfaction in a human relationship can be thought of as one big business transaction. This is labeled as the Social Exchange Theory. A successful romantic relationship must have higher rewards and benefits than costs (Homans, 1961). The rewards would include things such as sexual satisfaction, perceived affection, and trust, leading to evolutionary satisfaction as well (Roberts, 2012). The costs of the relationship may include things like time, commitment, and a forfeit of other potential relationships.

Both males and females generally have the same amount of benefits and costs in a relationship. Some of these benefits and costs are influenced by the media, and others are influenced by social interactions of friends and family. However, as revealed earlier, men and women have different types of goals in the long-term and short-term timeframes, and women are the more selective sex because they are limited to the number of offspring they can tolerate (Buss & Schmitt, 1993). This means that women, of all ages, should be attracted to men who encompass traits such as wealth, confidence, intelligence, and other characteristics that promote safety and dominance (Buss & Schmitt, 1993). These criteria fit the NGP; the more extreme a male exhibits these
factors, the more selection in females he may get (Urbaniak & Kilman, 2003; Wyngarden, 2010).

Since males do not go through child bearing and have an unlimited tolerance of offspring, they are much less picky in the realm of psychological traits. This is why men seem to place more importance and physical attractiveness. Men may generally seek out younger women who are thin, figured, and have large breasts. All of these features signal to the male that she is healthy for reproduction, and it also lets him know that the woman may have not had offspring in the past. Men generally desire women who have not reproduced yet, and those attractive features just mentioned display the possibility of that. Thus, a man will most likely not be attracted to a female who is older, has children from a past mate, and is not as physically attractive.

With the research that has been conducted, men sometimes seek out similar mental traits that women seek. These traits also are characteristics of the NGP: confidence, arrogance, aggressiveness, and an inflated self-esteem. Evolutionary and even socially, these traits display a healthy mental status of well-being and protection. Even though many societies across the world view them as taboo, they seem to be accepted within smaller social groups. These traits all exhibit potential success in careers, activities, and social status, which in turn promotes protection for future offspring.

**Perception of a Potential Long-term Mating Timeframe**

Every long-term relationship will run into problems ranging from sex, children, and in-laws. Interestingly, the number one factor that causes marriages and other serious relationships to end is money (Conger, Reuter, & Elder, 1999). This is notable since it
was mentioned earlier how resources are one of the leading attributes for a long-term and potential short-term relationship. Resources such as economic power are an attractive feature, more for the female, and thus may be a high, yet important standard. If the economic power of an individual were to fail, then the love for that person would most likely fail as well. This could explain high divorce rates during a troubled economy.

Going back to evolutionary psychology, the protection and healthiness of the relationship is strained because there is no strong basis for offspring, given the demands of society. If there is a weakened economic base within the family, then the offspring and female are likely to suffer from its consequences.

The amount of risk that one perceives in a relationship can parallel the amount invested in the relationship, for both genders. The more risk one perceives, the stronger the relationship will be (Murray, Holmes, & Collins, 2006). This is consistent with the Social Exchange Theory that was used earlier. A potential relationship, on the conscious and unconscious levels, can be viewed like a stock purchase (e.g., Homans, 1961; Weideman & Dubois, 1998). If the risk of the stock (i.e., relationship) is higher and the price (i.e., commitment) is high, then the reward (i.e., satisfaction) is likely to be viewed as high. However, if one of the rewards fails, the relationship loses a lot of value and thus may be discontinued.
CHAPTER IX
MENTAL DISORDERS AND MATE REJECTION

Another concept when one looks to psychological qualities in humans is the factor of mental illness and its relationship to mating. On an obvious note, mental disorders generally are not attractive for any gender to have. However, as noted earlier, narcissism may have positive effects on women and men. Narcissistic Personality Disorder is classified as a psychological disorder by the American Psychiatric Association, but the traits that are involved within the disease are healthy components for a male to have when he is searching for a female. These attractive narcissistic traits would obviously be to a lesser degree than the actual personality disorder diagnosis.

Other mental disorders that may be more severe, like schizophrenia and panic disorder, have an interesting relationship with mating choice and differences among genders. Many theorists have hypothesized that these illnesses are a result of one not gaining the mating satisfaction he or she needs (Shaner, Miller, & Mintz, 2008). It is theorized that schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders are a result of failed adaptive and communicative abilities when searching for a sexual partner (Shaner et al., 2008). The mentally ill individual exhibits behavior that is completely unfitting for offspring and living with a sexual partner.

Another interesting relationship within this hypothesis is that these severe disorders typically strike individuals at the young adult age (Anjum, Gait, Cullen, & White, 2010). That is, late adolescence and early adulthood are the ages when one begins to form his or
her sexual identity. If these young individuals fail to find a partner or fail to find a partner that satisfies their sexual identity, then they are at higher risk of developing these disorders (Shaner et al., 2008).

Another obstruction is the fact that most of these severe disorders strike males at a slightly higher rate (Andersson, 1994). This strongly correlates with the idea of this entire thesis, since we learned earlier that males have a high responsibility in displaying psychological qualities and strengths to the potential mate. If a male is rejected amongst the female population because of his psychological traits, these traits have a higher risk to back fire on the identity, thus possibly causing schizophrenia and other severe mental disorders.

Granted, one cannot ignore other causes of disorders. These would include things such as biochemical factors, genes, stressful environments, and even drug induced factors. There are cases when one may be diagnosed with schizophrenia but still live a “normal” lifestyle, having a wife, job, and family. Another component that should be mentioned is the idea that certain disorders are gender related. I stated earlier that schizophrenia is more common in males, but panic disorder is more common in females (Potoczkek, 2011). This may indicate that the female has failed to properly display her mental or physical traits. This may create an anxiety or neurotic type of identity, since the female has anxiety that she will never be able to find a sexual mate and produce offspring.

We can view these mental traumas as a vicious cycle amongst the mating world, and this may even be related to evolutionary psychology, since a mental disorder is a signal
that one is in no shape to mate (e.g., Roberts, 2012; Shaner et al., 2008). Someone may develop a mental disorder from the feeling of inferiority among his sexual peers, and thus the mental disorder that is displayed keeps his sexual peers away from him. This will then reinforce the idea that he cannot fulfill his sexual identity as he cannot keep competitors away.

Depression can be explained through evolutionary concepts as well; it may be a defense mechanism for the sufferer and a signal to others that the individual who is suffering from depression is not in shape for mating. That is, it is a "low mating-fitness indicator," which means an individual is in no psychological state to mate (Shaner et al., 2008). Depression communicates that something else may be going on in the individual’s life, and that finding a mate is not a priority. Recall earlier that money was an important indicator in the potential success in a relationship. Studies show that a major cause of depression is financial problems (Krause, 2009). So there is an association of mating potential and economic strength; if one or both are low, depression is likely to occur in an individual.

This tells the male or female who may be interested in this individual that short and long-term mating frames are not currently available, and that the mate seeker should not waste his or her time. Even though this theory makes sense, it only supports the idea that mental disorders are formed first. Then proceeding is the failing in mate selection. Anxiety may also have a similar role in this proposal, since the individual suffering from it has something that needs to be solved in his or her life, and mating is not currently one of them.
So what about the reverse scenario: lack of sexual relationships causing mental disorders? There is a lot of evidence that supports this is most likely the case (e.g., Shaner et al., 2008). That is, that mental illness is somewhat of a resistance factor in potential harm. A breakdown of the mind is an indication that some harm has been done to the mind’s perception, and a restructuring process needs to take effect. The harm would be the rejection of a potential partner that the individual was greatly interested in. The symptoms that range across disorders (e.g., social withdrawal and lower functioning) indicate the latter statement. The symptom of social withdrawal signifies the innate desire to stay away from people, since this could cause the same harm to happen again to the individual. The breakdown of functioning in memory and cognitive ability may signify a restructuring process.

Another example is the phenomenon of dissociation. Dissociation is seen across many different mental disorders, and many psychologists believe it is a defense mechanism that removes the conscious identity from an external stressor (Merckelbach & Muris, 1999). This leaves the sufferer to feel withdrawn from an issue that he or she cannot control, as if another person is dealing with the stressor. Hence, this could be an element of evolutionary psychology in human mating behavior since the “identity” is removed from a negative mating environment.

The evidence reviewed does suggest that relationship rejection and mental illness are highly correlated (e.g., Shaner et al., 2008), but other factors not dealing with sexual partners also need to be considered. These would include things such as hereditability, biochemical factors, physical disorders, and other forms of trauma. Additionally, society
has and does redefine what a mental disorder actually is. Individuals experience illness for many different reasons with different levels of daily functioning. Recall earlier the discussion of AFT and its potential to be a negative experience for a child, thus resulting in poor attachment patterns (Pedersen et al, 2010). Poor attachment patterns may also interact with the development of psychological disorders. Additionally, mental illness has its occasional ability to go away through time or to get better with treatment.

When studying the relationship between mental disorders and mating, it may be noted that finding a partner is extremely important for a human to do. If a human fails to find a partner or feels rejected by a desired mate, the damage done on the individual can be a disaster, hence a mental illness. This indicates the need for most humans to find a relationship that offers protective and sexual satisfactions. It also points toward why it is an important component in the study of human psychology, sociology, and mating behavior as a whole.
CHAPTER X
STOCKHOLM SYNDROME

Stockholm syndrome (SS) is a term that is occasionally used in the media and in society. It is defined as the paradoxical development of positive feelings between hostages and their captors, which may improve the captives’ coping with traumatic occurrence (Cantor & Price, 2007). The development of the name is related to the historical bank robbery in Stockholm, where after a few days the hostages showed positive feelings toward the robbers. This is just one example of the complex nature that the human mind goes through when faced with a traumatic event. We mostly hear the term used when referring to abusive relationships. Additionally, it is usually related to women with abusive husbands. Hearing cases of men suffering from SS with their wives is exceptionally rare. It also is seen in children with an abusive parent, although this is not the topic of this research.

SS is commonly labeled as a protective measure against an abuser. If the individual who is the target of the abuse feels unable to cope with a situation, he or she will give in to the abuser’s wishes. He or she may even have to hide feelings of fear and anxiety when in public or with friends. The heart of the “disorder,” however, is characterized by borderline delusional beliefs that the abuser is worthy of praise and is an ideal figure. This is what is so complex about SS and what makes it difficult to precisely explain. Some researchers even believe that it is a more complex form of post-traumatic stress disorder with its response to abusive, traumatic events (Cantor & Price, 2007).
On an evolutionary perspective, the idea that most of the SS cases are caused by abusive men makes some evolutionary sense. This is because men have evolved characteristics that are in conjunction with anger and aggressiveness. In ancient times, men were warriors and war leaders, all to protect their genes so that they could mate and have offspring (Kanazawa, 2008). This also was to protect the female in which the male felt very sexual with, and if the male could not achieve sexual satisfaction because of the lost female mate, he became even more aggressive and angry toward anyone that could be a potential threat to his sexual necessitate. Another intriguing connection with SS and its relationship to the mating field is that abusive individuals have a tendency to be highly narcissistic (Rinker, 2010). Thus, a common component of an abuser and NGP is a high degree of narcissism.

Recall that NGP components included contradictory elements of what women claimed they wished to have in a man. Traits such as confidence, demeaning of others, and narcissistic behaviors were all positive ingredients into the NGP model. So one may identify the relationship between NGP and the phenomenon of SS; they have many of the same traits (e.g., great narcissism). Thus, it can be conceptualized that SS is a more advanced, complicated, and severe class of the NGP. NGP and SS can be classified on a timeline, with the times of each paradox being technically irrelevant in precision. One study showed that many of the men in a college study who were labeled as “macho” and fit the NGP model later became abusive toward their female partners (Wyngarden, 2010). One must understand though that NGP is generally a model of actions that are displayed by the male to attract a potential female. SS is then the potential, and unfortunate, after-
effect of a relationship formed with a male who exhibits NGP traits. It also was mentioned that NGP traits included socially taboo traits such as obnoxious behavior and crude humor.

An additional factor that may interplay with the development of an abusive relationship is the poor attachment patterns of AFT mentioned earlier. Negative and abusive upbringing may cause a child, when he or she grows older, to search for these same negative and abusive traits in a mate and other relationships (Rodriguez & Tucker, 2011). Further, evidence shows that attachment patterns stem from evolved, psychological traits (Del Guidice, 2009). These interacting variables may suggest that women, and in some cases, men, who choose to stay in abusive relationships may have an evolutionary malfunction in the perception of protective traits. That is, a network of interaction between poor AFT patterns and evolutionary psychology may result in the acceptance of an abusive mate.

NGP and SS are not necessarily two distinctly different phenomena, but more of a spectrum of severity. However, one could possibly exist without the other. For example, a male can show NGP attitude but never advance into the SS stage. Also, a man may become abusive with traits fulfilling SS but never have previously displayed NGP traits, but this is very unlikely due to the high level of association between SS and NGP (e.g., Rinker, 2010).

On a more optimistic note, about 75% of relationships are without NGP and other potentially abusive traits (Kanazawa, 2008). But that still leaves us with an interesting large group of minorities that may be staying in abusive relationships. These may be the
women who have the evolutionary mechanism that is defective with the perception of
protected offspring and other reproductive success. The strength portrayed by the abusive
husband or boyfriend may erroneously demonstrate how he can attack a predator that is
trying to harm the family, hence the evolutionary malfunction discussed earlier. The
female gets firsthand experience, and then unconsciously decides whether or not this
strength is sufficient for protection (e.g., Roberts, 2012; Weiderman & Dubois, 1998).
Again, this is protection designed for offspring and even perhaps the woman herself.
Charles Darwin, the pioneer of evolution, even associated women’s perceived physical
protection in a male mate with his violent acts in short-term mating timeframes
(Moschgat, 2012). We must remember though that this is not the theory for every single
abusive relationship. There are many other factors that could come into play when
domestic violence unfortunately occurs, and it isn’t always the male who is the abuser.

A direct look into nature also suggests that SS and NGP relationships exist, consistent
with evolutionary thought. A recent study of baboon behaviors in Kenya suggested the
possibility of a natural desire for an abuser over a non-abuser. When male baboons were
abusive to others in the tribe, they ended up with the most female mates (Sapolsky &
Heminway, 2008). This is especially supportive due to the fact that humans and baboons
are of the same primate order and share a large proportion of genes, due to evolution.
This suggests a possible association among human acceptance of abuse (e.g., SS) and
baboon behavior (e.g., the abusive baboons getting mates), hence the name evolutionary
psychology (e.g., Roberts, 2012).

Stockholm syndrome and NGP: Perpetuated by the Media
Partner abuse has actually been perpetuated by the media, thus indicating an innate desire in certain humans for these abusive relationships. The Rolling Stones had a debut album titled *Black and Blue* that was released in 1974 (Richards, 2009, March 1). The album received much controversy from feminist groups, especially after The Rolling Stones posted a billboard in Hollywood advertising their album. The billboard featured a woman strapped down to a chair. She had bruises all over her legs, arms, and face. At the top of the billboard was the sentence *I’m black and blue...and I love it!* Additionally, the album featured a song titled *Hand of Fate*, which told the story of a man killing another man in hopes to gain acceptance of a women (Richards, 2009, March 1).

Some films also depict and portray characters that are in abusive relationships. Films such as *If Someone had Known*, *Enough*, and *Kill Bill* depict the different possible outcomes of abusive relationships and Stockholm syndrome. Males and females may unconsciously perceive these stories as attractive ways to be in a misleadingly healthy relationship as it protects the survival of their children (e.g., Moschgat, 2012; Roberts, 2012; Weiderman & Dubois, 1998).

**The Male's Experience within the Context of Stockholm Syndrome**

A large factor that influences the level of violence associated with partner abuse by men is age. Younger men have a tendency to be more physically abusive to their younger partners than older men are (Mize, Shackelford, & Shackelford, 2009). One reason for this is that younger men may feel more threatened by older men who have a hold on all the qualities mentioned earlier such as the wealth, experience, and confidence components that younger women find attractive. Since women are more "picky" in their
mate choosing due to limited physical capabilities of offspring and protective upbringing, a male may feel he is obligated to do as much as he can to keep the female. Moreover, given that women are more choosey, they are the ones that are more likely to search for the more adapted, older men if they feel it is necessary.

Recent studies suggest that non-married men kill their partners at nine times the rate as married men kill their wives (Mize et al., 2009). Another interesting construct from this information is that most domestic violence events occur outside the context of marriage (Mize et al., 2009). That means the most vulnerable time that a woman is at risk for violence is before the union of the two by law. It is not necessarily a fact that marriage makes the relationship more profound. It just suggests that marriage is another value that is added by a relationship, since it coincides with social standards, financial opportunities, and legality principles. So, if the male feels that he is being undermined in the relationship before marriage, he will feel inferior, thus increasing his likelihood of becoming violent toward his partner (Shackelford, Buss, & Peters, 2000).

We now can tie together how the male's mind works in the context of unconscious evolutionary psychology in the framework of partner violence. Previously, it was stated that NGP features include a feeling of superiority and narcissistic traits (e.g., jerk behavior) within the identity of the young male. Also, if the college-aged male comes from a wealthy background and has superior physical traits (i.e., tall and broad), these traits of dominance are further enhanced. NGP is the potential stage before and shortly after a relationship forms.
Accordingly, SS is an advanced form of NGP in the male's unconscious mind. For example, a relationship that has held strong within the last year but now appears weak in the perception of the male threatens his sexual identity, capabilities, and reputation. Since this identity is now threatened in his mind, he will do all he can to preserve it, even if it means abuse toward his partner (e.g., Shackelford et al., 2000).

Jealousy may be the driving factor to abusive relationship on the man's side. This makes sense due to the idea that couples who are living together and not legally married are looser when it comes to other relationships. Women may feel they can still have close friends who are male, as well as men feeling the same way. However, the male partner may become jealous of his partner's male friends, thus increasing the risk of abuse and SS. Interestingly, individuals who are living together but are not married also have a feeling of higher shared responsibilities (Dawson & Gartner, 1998). This may give the male a feeling of pressure and thus generating an action that may guarantee his relationship with the partner. Married couples tend to not have this same pressure, most of the time, since they have established identities and roles that carry out day-to-day functioning to ensure survival for them and their possible or current offspring (Dawson & Gartner, 1998).

It must be understood that all of the things previously mentioned about the theories behind SS are only theories, and that SS signifies a small portion of the total population. Abusive relationships are a bit puzzling since logic seems to be completely destroyed when one is to view the context of an abusive relationship. Given that women in abusive relationships usually have the full opportunity to reach the authorities and family
members for protection, but in many cases do not attempt to, may show the possibility of a poorly evolved mechanism and a poor AFT pattern. This may be explained by the malfunctioned interaction between poor AFT patterns and the misrepresentation of evolutionary protective traits (e.g., Moschgat, 2012; Roberts, 2012; Rodriguez & Tucker, 2011).
CONCLUSION

This thesis has reviewed the potential evolutionary, social, and psychological variables that interplay in the development of mate selection of the heterosexual, young adult population. The human has many complex social schemas for mating selection that have been discussed within this paper. These included psychological schools of thought ranging from cognitive, behavioral, and unconscious processes.

Proximity and exposure were found to be important elements in the possible development of a romantic relationship. The matching hypothesis was also found to be an essential component when one is searching for a mate similar to him or her, thus eliminating the support for the popular phrase “opposites attract.” These mating models fell into two main timelines of relationship status: short-term and long-term. Other aspects such as intelligence and beauty also played a large role in the development of mating selection behaviors, and their association with wealth. Wealth and potential wealth were central ingredients for a relationship to be successful, and it was also found to be one of the many leading causes of disrupted mating consequences, including mental disorders.

Narcissism was an example of a potentially effective trait in both sexes, as illustrated by the research of evolutionary psychology. Narcissistic traits were heavily studied and found that they may lead to other relationship phenomena such as the spectrums of SS and the NGP. These were the exaggerated, masculine traits that mainly men can portray to have better chances of getting a mate. The research shows that the
more domineering and confident a male is, the more likely he is to have a successful mating event, no matter how inflated or dramatic those traits are. It was suggested that men of the young adult population who possessed aggressive and unfriendly behaviors had a higher likelihood of getting into a short term relationship with women. Traits such as an exaggerated self-esteem, over-confidence, and being wealthy also showed to be beneficial for the college-aged male. NGP and SS were also found to be shaped by the media, culture, and sometimes religion.

Religion played a chief role in the AFT of attachment patterns and mate seeking behaviors, since religion can be controlled by the media and may provide psychologically protective needs. Religion was also found to potentially teach philosophies of growth, prosperity, and well-being, which are associated with financial strength (i.e., wealth). It was established that religion is important in the perception of many individuals, and thus they seek these same ideals, such as protective needs stemming from upbringing, unconsciously and cognitively in their mates. Again, narcissism was found to be positively correlated with mate seeking behavior and religious identity.

Cultural and other social aspects such as simple pick-up lines and gossip proved to be very influential in one’s opinion of a potential mate. Studies indicated that the use of pick-up lines by males is a very important representation of evolved, dominant traits. Gossip, which is generally conducted by females, also proved to be highly manipulative of one’s mating reputation. It was found that gossip is an evolutionary efficient device in the influencing of one’s sexual environment. Gossiping and pick-up lines may also be related to the idea of attractive, narcissistic traits.
Body piercing and tattoos were shown to be physically effective tools in the manipulation of one’s mate setting. Loose cognitive associations show that tattoos are connected to physical strength (e.g., withstanding pain) and NGP traits of confidence. The same was found for body piercings on women, since men may associate these with confidence and identity. The study established that the more physical beauty a female had, the greater her chances are of selecting a mate of her choice, especially if she has not had any previous offspring. All of these desired characteristics were found to stem from an interaction of evolutionary psychology, changing cultures, growing media, and socialization from childhood onset.

Mental disorders were seen to be a possible outcome of failed mating attempts. Many severe disorders, such as Schizophrenia and panic disorder, are found to be potentially associated with denied mating advances. Mental illness was discovered to frequently happen in the young-adult population of interest, and was theorized to be a low-fitness indicator. That is, an evolutionary signal that one is not healthy for reproduction. Depressive symptoms were also connected to poor financial status, additionally indicating the connection between wealth and romantic relationships. Depression was also found to be an evolutionary signal that one needs to fix something in his or her personal life (e.g., financial troubles) before mating.

When actually in a relationship, there was a well respected school of thought introduced known as the Social Exchange Theory, which views relationships as an analysis of rewards versus costs. Again, evolutionary facets came into account with the Social Exchange Theory (e.g., women being more selective because of the “cost” of
offspring). Costs were viewed to be lower in the male, since he does not have to bear offspring, hence more investment in short-term relationships. Rewards were labeled as sexual satisfaction, potential offspring, and the exposure to intelligence, beauty, and protective needs.

It was concluded that a number of women may stay in abusive relationships stemming from unconscious acceptance of abusive traits as evolutionary misperceptions, such that they have the potential to protect future offspring (i.e., abuse directed to the physical strength needed to stop a predator). SS is an advanced stage of the NGP, and the studies suggested these were the evolutionary malfunctions in the current mating behaviors seen in present society. It is also concluded that poor attachment patterns from early childhood (i.e., AFT) sets the stage for possible engagement into an abusive relationships. Poor attachment and evolutionary psychology interacted at an erroneous level to produce this unfortunate outcome, as supported by evolutionary research, upbringing studies, and behaviors in animals other than the human.


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