

THE FRAMING OF CAITLYN JENNER:  
A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

by

MORGAN RENAE PETTWAY

KENON BROWN, COMMITTEE CHAIR  
CARYL COOPER  
ADAM SHARPLES-BROOKS

A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts in the  
Department of Advertising and Public Relations  
in the Graduate School of  
The University of Alabama

TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

2017

Copyright Morgan Pettway 2017  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

## ABSTRACT

In April 2015, Caitlyn Jenner, formally known as Bruce, announced that she was transitioning into a woman. Through the observation of framing models and framing devices, a textual analysis was conducted within print and audiovisual data to gain an understanding of how framing was used to manage or shape Jenner's unfolding image as a transgender woman. The researcher also investigated the overall tone of Jenner's representation to decipher whether she was portrayed in a negative or positive manner.

Based upon the findings, the prominent framing models that were observed in the texts were the framing of situations and the framing of attributes. The prominent framing devices of contrast and spin were also present. Furthermore, the findings indicated that Jenner was portrayed in an overall positive manner. The findings of this study build upon the current knowledge of framing and demonstrate the utility of framing in the management of a transgender celebrity's image. The utility of framing is also presented as an opportunity for application among other celebrity happenings in the media.

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the family members and friends that supported me through this extensive process. Your love, support and wisdom kept me encouraged throughout the creation and completion of this study. This thesis is also a testimony to other graduate students who may decide not to trek the traditional or most traveled route in their academic or professional careers. Everyone's journey in life is unique and different from the next, so don't be afraid to chart unfamiliar territory. You may face uncertainty or make mistakes as you do so, but if you believe in your abilities and the vision you have for yourself, you will make it to your destination.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to first acknowledge the faithfulness of the Lord as he is the author and creator of my life. I would also like to thank the many colleagues and faculty members who have assisted me with this thesis. Most importantly, I would like to communicate my appreciation to Dr. Kenon Brown, Dr. Caryl Cooper and Dr. Adam Sharples-Brooks for guiding me through this process. Thank you for contributing your expertise and facilitating the expansion of my research capabilities.

## CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	ii
DEDICATION .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	iv
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Caitlyn Jenner, Before the Transition .....	2
Keeping Up With The Kardashians .....	6
The Transition.....	9
Purpose.....	10
Significance.....	11
Summary .....	12
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	14
Celebrity Culture and Stardom .....	14
Celebrity Public Relations and Image Management .....	19
LGBTQ Studies .....	22
Framing Theory .....	37
Framing Studies .....	43
Research Questions.....	52
CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODS .....	53
Methodology .....	53
Pre - Vanity Fair Reveal .....	55

“Bruce Jenner - The Interview” .....	55
Vanity Fair Reveal .....	56
“Call Me Caitlyn” .....	56
“Caitlyn Jenner is Finally ‘Free’ on Vanity Fair’s Cover” .....	56
Post Vanity Fair Reveal .....	56
“‘Call Me Caitlyn,’ a Documentary” .....	57
ESPY Awards .....	57
Caitlyn Jenner on “The Ellen DeGeneres Show” .....	57
“Today Exclusive: One-On-One With Caitlyn Jenner” .....	58
Process .....	58
CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION .....	60
FINDINGS .....	60
“My Story,” “My Truth” .....	60
Using My Story to Help Others .....	62
Jenner’s Body and Feminine Appearance.....	64
Family .....	68
Sexuality .....	71
Tone .....	73
DISCUSSION .....	77
“My Story,” “My Truth” .....	77
Using My Story to Help Others .....	79

Jenner’s Body and Feminine Appearance.....	81
Family .....	84
Sexuality .....	86
Summary .....	88
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION.....	92
Implications for the Field.....	94
Limitations .....	96
Future Research .....	97
REFERENCES .....	99

## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

As an adorned former Olympian and highly visible celebrity, Bruce Jenner<sup>1</sup> captured media attention (Li, 2017) and stimulated public speculation in 2014 and 2015. This attention was sparked by a surge of websites and tabloids alleging that the 65-year old All-American sports icon was transitioning into a woman (Bernstein, 2015). Gossip magazines, such as *Us Weekly* and *In Touch Weekly*, published cover stories in an attempt to expose Jenner's secret (Bernstein, 2015). Cover stories in these magazines enticed readers with sprawling headlines that read "Bruce's Secret Double Life" (O'Leary, 2014), "Finally the Truth" (Andersson, 2015) and "Bruce's Story: My Life as a Woman" (Siegler, 2015). In spite of new developments in the unfolding story and accusations of the gender switch, Jenner refrained from addressing the media and unauthorized sources continued to lead conversations about his transition in the absence of his personal truth.

In April of 2015, under the direction of public relations firm Rogers and Cowan, Jenner addressed the developing discourse within the media and among the public (Adalian, 2015). Despite his retreat from the public attention that once defined his career, Jenner returned to the spotlight to claim authorship of his own story by first "telling it" (Adalian, 2015). On April 24, 2015, in an ABC "20/20" feature story, Bruce Jenner told an audience of approximately 17 million viewers (Kissell, 2015), "For all intents and purposes, I'm a woman" (Dooley et al.,

---

<sup>1</sup> The current study will adhere to the following parameters in regards to pronoun usage; when referencing Jenner's former identity as Bruce the researcher will use masculine pronouns. From the point of the *Vanity Fair* reveal of Jenner's new identity as Caitlyn up until the present, Jenner will then be discussed with feminine pronouns.

2015, para. 2). Finally, relieved to be free of a secret he had been harboring for years, Jenner went on to explain that the person who the world had come to know was now transitioning to live as a woman. Two months later, on June 1<sup>st</sup>, Jenner's new identity as a transgender woman named Caitlyn was momentarily introduced on the front cover of *Vanity Fair* (Miller, 2015).

### **Caitlyn Jenner Before the Transition**

Before Jenner transitioned, she lived 65 years of her life as William Bruce Jenner, the world-renowned Olympian. Jenner was born on October 28, 1949, in Mount Kisco, New York (Holst & Popp, 2005; Jenner & Bissinger, 2017) to her parents Esther and William Jenner (Bissinger, 2015). Throughout Jenner's childhood, dyslexia created difficulties in the classroom (Holst & Popp, 2005), and Jenner was held back in the second grade due to an inability to read (Bissinger, 2015). During this time Jenner also privately dealt with issues of gender dysphoria (Bissinger, 2015), a gender identity disorder in which an individual possesses strong feelings of identification with the opposite sex (Mathiesen, 2016; Jarin & Gomez-Lobo, 2016). Jenner recalled in the *Vanity Fair* interview with Bissinger (2015) that as a child he would secretly dress in his mother's and sister's garments out of curiosity, confusion and an unexplainable personal desire.

Intermediate school was when Jenner discovered confidence in himself through athletic activities (Bissinger, 2015; Holst & Popp 2005). The statement "of all the things I did as a young kid, involvement in sports had the greatest impact on my life" reflected the large role sports played in Jenner's early life as an adolescent (Holst & Popp, 2005, p. 57). Throughout high school, Jenner continued to compete in every sport offered including football and water skiing (Holst & Popp, 2005). His athletic abilities earned him a scholarship to Graceland College where he pursued a collegiate career in track (Holst & Popp, 2005). While successfully competing in

this athletic program, coaches encouraged Jenner to take his talents to the Olympics (Holst & Popp, 2005). For four years Jenner focused on training mentally and physically (Holst & Popp, 2005) every day for up to eight hours each day (Markazi, 2015). At the 1972 games in Munich, Germany, Jenner placed 10th in the decathlon (Holst & Popp, 2005): a medley of running, jumping, and throwing events (Litsky, 1976). It was not until the 1976 Olympics in Montreal, Canada, that Jenner achieved a record-breaking victory in this event and brought home the gold medal for the USA (Holst & Popp, 2005). By championing all 10 athletic events within the decathlon, this triumphant moment earned Jenner the title as “the world’s greatest athlete” (Connelly, 2015).

The public favor, fame and abundance of opportunities that ensued were not just from his unmatched athleticism, but also from what was viewed as his newfound contribution to American history. His defeat of Nikolai Avilov, a Soviet rival who was the current gold medalist from the 1972 games (Yahr, 2015), and the “iconic flag wave,” an enduring celebratory trend we still see today, left a lasting imprint of American-patriotism (Markazi, 2015). Following this achievement, Jenner won many other accolades such as The Associated Press Male Athlete of the Year and was inducted into the Track and Field Hall of Fame, Olympic Hall of Fame and Connecticut Hall of Fame (Holst & Popp, 2005). After his Olympic win, Bruce retired immediately from athletic competitions to pursue other areas of his life that were once put on hold (Holst & Popp, 2005).

Between the late 1970s and early 1990s, Bruce Jenner converted his athletic success into a viable career in entertainment. Jenner described the rationale behind his subsequent celebrity as “I happened to be the right guy, at that right place, at that right time” (Markazi, 2015, para. 17). Despite his humble theory of haphazard celebrity, others thought Jenner had natural star quality.

The New York Times' writer Frank Litsky wrote, "Bruce Jenner of San Jose, Calif., wants to be a movie or television star. After his record-breaking victory in the Olympic decathlon today, he probably can be anything he wants" (Bissinger, 2015, para. 46).

In addition to Jenner's celebrated athleticism, many perceived America's favorite athlete of the 1970s as markedly attractive (White, n.d.). Jenner was described as tall, exceptionally fit, hunky (Bissinger, 2015), handsome and charming. Characteristics such as this made Jenner extremely marketable and sought after (White, n.d.). According to writer Kenneth Turan, Jenner was a natural (Yahr, 2015). Turan described Jenner as "a real-life version of the American dream, fairly bursting with honest vitality, infectious health and cheerful good humor" (Yahr, 2015, para. 37).

Needing someone to channel that star power, agent George Wallach managed Jenner's career and helped him pursue the most attractive television, film and endorsement gigs to enhance his image (McDermott, 1977; O' Day, 2015). According to Holst and Popp (2005) and McDermott (1977), Jenner was the face of the cereal brand Wheaties for several years. He has appeared on television as a commentator, brands spokesperson, actor and celebrity guest (Holst & Popp, 2005). Jenner was also featured on shows such as "CHiPs," "The American Sportsman" and "The Love Boat" in addition to lesser known films such as "Can't Stop the Music" and "Gambling's White Tiger" (Bissinger, 2015). He has also used his platform to raise money for charities through fundraising and monetary awards won from popular game shows (Holst & Popp, 2005).

While enjoying cultural relevancy well after his stint with the Olympics, Jenner enjoyed life as a husband and father of 10 children (Holst & Popp, 2005). In his eight-year marriage to Chrystie Crowover, he fathered two children named Cassandra and Burton (Bissinger, 2015).

With his second wife of four years, Linda Thompson, Jenner had two boys, Brody and Brandon (Bissinger, 2015). Due to re-emerging issues of Jenner's gender identity, as he battled his All-American masculinity and inner desires to become a woman, both marriages wavered and failed (Bissinger, 2015).

In the late 1980s, Jenner fell into a depression as he continued to deal with gender issues and a dwindling professional career. During this time, Jenner half-heartedly attempted to transition with hormones and minor cosmetic procedures (Bissinger, 2015). In reflection of this time in Jenner's life, he revealed, "the gender issues were big at this time" (Bissinger, 2015, para. 70). However, in 1990 Jenner decided to stop transitioning and to continue his life as a heterosexual man (Bissinger, 2015).

Famously known for his third marriage in 1991 to Kris Kardashian, Jenner served as the patriarch of their two biological children, Kendall and Kylie, and four stepchildren Kourtney, Kim, Khloe and Robert, Jr. (Bissinger, 2015; Weisman, 2015). Kris Jenner, the flight attendant turned marketing maven, also served as Bruce's business manager and publicist by helping him market his motivational speaking to big-ticket companies in the 1990s (Weisman, 2015). Not only did Kris negotiate his contracts for infomercial advertisements promoting sunglasses and fitness equipment, she also re-secured Jenner's endorsements and speaking engagements (Bissinger, 2015; Weisman, 2015). Her business acumen enabled Jenner to gradually rejuvenate his dwindling stature as a sports star (Bissinger, 2015) into a sustainable persona as a public figure within the realm of contemporary popular culture. Although Jenner's romantic life and career seemed to be on the rise again, this period was also a time of turmoil with his former wives and Kris concerning issues of custody and child support (Bissinger, 2015). As a result, Jenner's involvement in the lives of four of his biological children severely diminished. Jenner

explained this by admitting that “there was a lot of turmoil in my life, and I wasn’t as close to my kids as I should have been” (Bissinger, 2015, para. 94).

### **Keeping Up With The Kardashians**

The Kardashian family is a pop culture phenomenon as the name alone possesses high degrees of recognition, social status and cultural currency. However, the family name is typically framed in a negative light (McClain, 2013). Despite their current popularity and mainstream success, pinpointing the exact talents that originally enabled them to acquire and maintain fame is highly debatable (McClain, 2013) and even perplexing at times. At their start, the Kardashians were often relegated to being “famous for being famous” (Boone, 2015; Brady, 2016; Miller, 2015). However, over time the family became even bigger as each family member branched into their respective lanes of success. It is now apparent the Kardashians learned how to strategically turn their newfound fame into a “PR-savvy” business (London, 2015). Brodesser-Akner (2015) explained this transformation by stating, “They are famous for the industry that they’ve created, the Kardashian/Jenner megacomplex, which has not just invaded the culture but metastasized into it, with the family members emerging as legitimate businesspeople and Kris the mother-leader of them all” (para. 9).

Although Kris Jenner has proven her mastermind tactics as effectively clever and brilliant, the Kardashians’ journey into the limelight seemingly began with her former husband, the late Robert Kardashian Senior (Weisman, 2015). Alongside other influential lawyers within the well-known dream team, such as Robert Shapiro and Johnnie Cochran, Robert Kardashian was widely known for providing legal counsel to O.J. Simpson who was acquitted for double homicide charges in a 1990s blockbuster trial (Blidner, 2015). The family’s involvement with the case even became the source of inspiration for a 2016 FX network drama, “The People v.

O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story” (Nussbaum, 2016; Wagmeister, 2016). Within her relationship with Robert Kardashian Sr., Kris was immersed in a lavish world of wealth. Access into this world led her to befriend other rich and famous individuals such as Sugar Ray Leonard and the Hiltons (Weisman, 2015). Robert Kardashian Sr.’s status as an eminent attorney set the stage for his spouse and their young offspring to procure a life of fame and fortune (O’Toole, 2013).

Opportunities to achieve this lifestyle were nurtured years later through the family’s television show, Kim’s manifestation into the quintessential sex symbol of the 21st century, Kris’ role as the family’s manager and the subsequent enterprises that ensued (O’Toole, 2013). Former American Idol host Ryan Seacrest has been credited for jumpstarting the Kardashian fame train (Levy, 2015) with his vision and creative television show concept (Candiest, 2015). As the executive producer, in 2007 Seacrest casted the family for a reality series modeled after one of his favorite shows entitled “The Osbournes,” a VH1 reality series capturing the life of rock star Ozzy Osbourne and his family (Levy, 2015). Offered exclusively on the E! network, the show was cleverly catch-phrased Keeping Up With The Kardashians or KUWTK for short (Candiest, 2015). Heightened publicity and exposure was spurred as viewers tuned in to watch the clan’s familial interactions, scandalized drama and comical antics (Yahr, 2015; Woodard & Hendin, 2015). “KUWTK” has enjoyed much success since its debut and continues to air new seasons and spinoffs (Woodward & Hendin, 2015). Woodward and Hendin (2015) wrote, “KUWTK and its multiple spin-offs have become vehicles by which the family [could] fuel the media and keep themselves in the public eye” (para. 10).

It is evident the Kardashians and Jenners are no longer just “famous for being famous.” “KUWTK,” in conjunction with Kim’s global celebrity, has profitably secured the family a

lucrative and enduring space in the public eye. Due to Kris' active involvement in her family's career, each child is worth millions: Kim Kardashian at \$85 million; Khloé Kardashian at \$25 million; Kourtney Kardashian at \$20 million; Kendall Jenner at \$6 million; Kylie Jenner at \$5 million; and Rob at \$2.75 million (Weisman, 2015).

Despite Jenner's consistent involvement in the family's flagship enterprise, he was observably the least engaged participant in the show's drama, excitement and action (Yahr, 2015). Jenner's dwindling celebrity seemingly placed him in the background within a supporting role while the girls and their emerging careers were consistently positioned as the focus of attention (Yahr, 2015). His "KUWTK" portrayal was ineffective or losing in nature amid the repeated familial challenges presented by the women in the family (Pramaggiore and Negra, 2014; Brady, 2016). Yahr (2015) described Jenner's sideline portrayal as, "At most, he looks on at the family antics in amusement, wishing out loud that he were on the golf course instead" (para. 21). This was unexpected to many considering the status Jenner once held as a larger-than-life sports icon (Yahr, 2015). Sportswriter and friend Barry McDermott affirmed this in the following statement:

It seemed almost diametrically opposed to the Bruce Jenner I knew... He was a superstar at one time. And the last four or five years haven't been very kind to him, in the sense that it's all kind of been eroded. (Yahr, 2015, para. 52)

In the last years of his marriage to Kris, the couple drifted apart emotionally. During this time, Bruce physically distanced himself from his wife and the cameras to live in a separate home (Becker, 2014; Longoretta, 2014). Although the cause of the strain was ambiguous, Kris and Bruce's unraveling relationship of over 20 years (Bissinger, 2015) became more and more visible to the public. Kris reflected on the final years of their union by stating, "He was married to me and he wasn't who he wanted to be so he was miserable" (Bissinger, 2015, para. 102).

However, Bruce refuted Kris' rationale instead blaming his mistreatment as the primary cause of strife within their relationship (Bissinger, 2015). As a result of irreconcilable differences, in 2013 Bruce and Kris separated and formally severed their marital ties in a 2014 divorce (Bayley, 2014).

### **The Transition**

After the divorce, rumors started to circulate that Jenner was undergoing a mysterious transformation. Visible changes in his physical appearance sparked the interest of top-tier media, such as The New York Times, and the curiosity of the public (Bissinger, 2015). Gossip blogs and celebrity magazines made claims within cover stories that this "macho" sports star was in the process of becoming a woman (Bernstein, 2015). Tabloids joined the rumor mill with headlines and cover photos featuring Jenner in a more feminine fashion, magnifying small effeminate nuances such as painted nails, earrings and hairstyles that embraced Jenner's growing locks (Bernstein, 2015).

In January of 2014, the flames were fanned with a legitimate break in the newsworthy story (Bissinger, 2015). Photographic evidence of Jenner leaving the surgeon's office after receiving a tracheal shave, a cosmetic procedure used to feminize the face and reduce the appearance of male thyroid cartilage, was captured and released on the internet (Bissinger, 2015). The picture instantly went viral (Bissinger, 2015). According to Bissinger (2015), when TMZ ignored Jenner's pleas for privacy, he went into a state of panic and contemplated suicide after the outlet released the photographs. Transgender model and actress Caroline Cossey shared her sentiments for Jenner after revealing she also tried to commit suicide during her transition (Bucktin, 2015).

After deciding not to take his own life, Jenner knew that he could no longer allow the mounting speculation to contaminate his story (Bissinger, 2015) and destroy his image (Ellentube, 2015). It was time to claim ownership and take agency, but the only way Jenner could “change the narrative surrounding his transition” (Adalian, 2015, para. 2) was to come out to loved ones and to share his truth with the public that he was a male in the process of becoming a female (Bernstein, 2015). This led Jenner to seek the counsel of public relations firm Rogers and Cowan, more specifically practitioner Alan Neirob, to help him devise a plan to say farewell to his public identity as Bruce and introduce his new identity, Caitlyn, in a strategic (Adalian, 2015) yet liberating manner.

According to the Rogers and Cowan team, to accomplish this Jenner needed to be forthcoming about her transition (Bernstein, 2015). To facilitate the telling of Jenner’s story, a “20/20” interview exclusive was granted (20/20, 2015) and was followed-up with a Vanity Fair cover story (Bernstein, 2015). Additionally, Jenner was also portrayed in other media appearances such as the ESPY Awards (ABC News, 2015), “The Ellen DeGeneres Show” (Ellentube, 2015) and the “Today” show (TODAY, 2015).

### **Purpose**

The attention of scholars has been increasingly focused on celebrity portrayals in the media, signifying their influence on “knowledge, power and representation” (Holmes & Redmond, 2010, p. 7) within our social experiences. As previous studies have shown, celebrities have the ability to wield influence over varying aspects of culture, identity, body image, product purchases, aspirations and many other facets of people’s daily lives (Barry, 2008). Despite this, research directed towards celebrity portrayals, and how they are framed in the media, is lacking (Ziek, 2016). Per Turner (2010), there is not “a great deal of depth or variety in academic writing

and research on celebrity” (p. 13). Additionally, framing research specific to transgender celebrities is nonexistent.

Due to her established celebrity, Jenner was able to use her star power to fashion the most desirable image and narrative for herself. By claiming her own narrative, it is evident that Jenner has made an impact on society, sports and the celebrity realm. However, little attention has been granted to the strategies and techniques that enabled her to do so. The focus of this study is based upon the utility of framing in managing a transgender celebrity’s image. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate the framing and the tone of Jenner’s portrayal as a transgender woman in the media.

### **Significance**

The nuanced nature of “coming out,” or coming out of the figurative closet to live openly as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer, is a topic that has been granted considerable cultural and academic attention. Despite this, research regarding the coming out of LGBTQ celebrities isn’t as abundant. This is especially true of transgender celebrities. As identified by the literature, the concept of celebrity image management intertwines the ideology of framing and media representations of celebrity identities. This relationship suggests that framing can be utilized to successfully narrate the coming out experiences of a transitioning celebrity so that it protects and enhances the celebrity’s carefully crafted image.

Framing is critical to the construction and maintenance of celebrity images. The strategic application of framing techniques could enable celebrities to positively position personal life and public life matters in the media. This study holds significance because there are limited studies on the framing of transgender identities in the media, and the results of this study could present a developing framework of its utility. Jenner’s personal narrative serves as a rich resource to

demonstrate a manner in which transgender celebrities can be perceived and discussed. Additionally, Jenner's narrative also illustrates the value of framing as a means to image management. Learning how coming out or transitioning transgender celebrities are framed within the media allows us to deepen our understanding of how LGBTQ celebrity identities are explained, discussed and managed. As the transgender community grows and becomes more visible, the findings of this study provide insight into how practitioners can utilize framing for clients who desire to publicly transition yet maintain a positive image. This study fills the gap in celebrity and framing literature, and it serves as a foundation for future studies.

### **Summary**

Due to the lack of comprehensive research encapsulating the life of Caitlyn Jenner, the current study will discuss various aspects of her life as an Olympian, celebrity and transgender woman. Online entertainment sources, such as the Vanity Fair interview with Bissinger, were primarily used to illustrate this narrative because these types of news sources specialize in covering celebrity news. Celebrity research derived from media and film studies was discussed to illustrate the basis of celebrity and its relationship with the media. Throughout the discussion of celebrity culture, Jenner's history, the role of public relations and publicity are highlighted. In deeper detail, the inclusion of framing in public relations research describes how selection and salience can influence celebrity portrayals. Research regarding celebrity image management is also incorporated. Based upon Jenner's new identity as a transgender woman, research on LGBTQ portrayals in the media were also discussed in detail.

Framing theory was the theoretical construct examined to understand how Jenner was portrayed as the sports star Bruce Jenner to the transgender woman named Caitlyn. To accomplish this, the researcher collected and analyzed entertainment media portraying Caitlyn

Jenner before and after her reveal on the cover of Vanity Fair. A textual analysis was conducted by observing visual and audiovisual data from critical moments throughout Jenner's transition to discover potential framing models, framing devices and the overall tone of her portrayal.

CHAPTER II:  
LITERATURE REVIEW  
**Celebrity Culture and Stardom**

Celebrity, also referred to as stardom, has been perceived, postulated and discussed from varying viewpoints. The topic has been explored by scholars in film, television, media and culture studies (Barry, 2008). Turner (2014) agreed that the term can be approached from a number of angles. Holmes and Redmond (2006) stated that “adulation, identification and emulation are key motifs in the study of celebrity culture” (p. 2). Overall, the body of literature covering celebrities includes concepts of cultural significance, extraordinariness, individuality and economic production (Turner, 2014).

According to Alberoni (1972), stars are a social phenomenon that garner a significant amount of interest. Boorstin (1961) defined a celebrity as “a person who is known for his well-knownness” (p. 57) whose image has been “fabricated on purpose to satisfy our exaggerated expectations of human greatness” (p. 58) within a culture that sensationalizes its fascination with image. Boorstin explained the actual celebrity as a human pseudo-event, manufactured and staged for the media’s consumption and celebrity as the developed presentation of this elevated individual to the media (Boorstin, 1961). Dyer (1979) described celebrities and notions of celebrity culture in terms of stars and stardom. Dyer (1979) described stars as mediated images that reflect the lives of humans thriving in an ever-changing cultural environment and contemporary world. Turner’s (2004) definition encapsulated all of the mentioned ideologies:

Celebrity is a genre of representation and a discursive effect; it is a commodity traded by the promotions, publicity, and media industries that produce these representations and their effects; and it is a cultural formation that has a social function we can better understand. (p. 9)

Fischer and Landy (2004) alluded that this phenomenon is “the focus on the exceptional individual as a projection of social, sexual, and class aspirations, desires and failures” (p. 2) within Westernized cultural mores. Even before media existed, there were individuals in royalty and the performing arts whose talents or personal qualities cultivated notable recognition among the masses (Barlow, 2014). According to Kornmeier (2008), this has been evidenced from the popular wax figure attractions featured in Madame Tussaud’s wax museum dating back to the early 1700s (Barry, 2008; Rojek, 2001). Initially, fame was reserved for prominent elites whom possessed the resources and “power to control their audiences and their images,” but as technology advanced the idea of celebrity, it became achievable by anyone (Braudy, 1986, p. 28). Despite this, most can agree that celebrity increased in prevalence around the twentieth century’s rise in mass media circulation among traditional media formats (Rojek, 2001). This stance was demonstrated in early literature where notions of celebrity were typically associated with the Hollywood film industry due to the natural emergence of interest in the lives and professions of popular actors and actresses (Dyer, 1979).

According to Dyer (1979), stardom is built upon all opinions, news and information of interest made accessible to the public about a star. In the case of film stardom, audiences wanted to know more about their favorite industry players and actively sought to consume any information about their public and private lives that was made available (Schickel, 1974). Turner (2007) stated that the public’s interest in headlining thespians manifested into lucrative business opportunities that utilized celebrities as commercial commodities to attract public attention. Movie studios capitalized on the public’s interest in these individuals to further profits for their

films and entertainment ventures (Dyer, 1979). Over the years, celebrity has expanded outside the scope of film stars and entertainers. As it pertains to contemporary celebrity or stardom, Fischer and Landy (2004) found that stardom is limitless, and is now crossing over into other areas such as television, politics and more due to the changing demographics of our societies. Today, the modern celebrity's presence is ubiquitous with fame that stretches across traditional media channels in addition to newer communication formats (Turner, 2014).

According to Turner (2014), the celebrity is a product of media attention and representation in the media. The process of building celebrity entails the commodification, branding and differentiation of one personality from all others (Turner, 2014). This is similar to the ways in which companies brand, promote and distinguish their organization and products from competitors. Parulekar and Reheja (2006) have explained the appeal and marketability of stars emerges through their professional talents, actions on and off-camera as well as their personality. Powdermaker (1950) explained that stars are capital in human form that can be packaged and marketed to consumers, or audiences, through aesthetics or personal qualities. Boorstin (1961) stated that stars were memorable and publicizable with the ability to capture large-scale recognition. Braudy (1986) noted that stars or celebrities possessed an identifiable degree of uniqueness while simultaneously demonstrating some kind of connective attribute or ordinary trait that was relatable to audiences (Gamson, 2007). King (1974) added that a star's representations in the media reflected society at large, and those representations wielded power and influence on society in reality.

Turner (2014) believes that celebrity is the "constructedness of mass-mediated popular culture" (p. 3). Stars are built upon constructed images within media texts and manipulations (Harris, 1957) of attention and beliefs (Gamson, 2007). This is achieved through significant

resource investments into marketing, advertising and publicity/public relations tactics. The first tactic, or resource investment, discussed by Dyer (1979) was the function of promotion. Dyer (1979) explained the function of promotion involved the deliberate production or creation of communicative texts that specifically pertained to the star and promoted the star. Things such as press releases, fashion spreads, product endorsements, announcements and event appearances were used to promote the star (Dyer, 1979). Other instruments used to communicate a star's image are music videos, album cover art and publicity photo shoots (Kooijman, 2004). Another maneuver that was discussed was publicity (Dyer, 1979). Dyer said publicity consists of “‘what the press finds out,’ ‘what the star lets slip in an interview,’ and is found in the press and magazines... radio and television interviews, and the gossip columns” (1979, p. 69). Because this information is perceived to be exclusively leaked from a trusted source or accidentally revealed, it is exciting and highly appealing to the public (Dyer, 1979). Although most publicity is controlled behind the scenes, it differs from promotion because it should be detected by audiences as unstaged and therefore perceived as more authentic (Dyer, 1979). Scandals involving criminal offenses, love affairs, drug addictions, emotional spectacles, tumultuous romances and death also garnered substantial publicity that resulted in a boost of public interest or an end to a career (Dyer, 1979).

Gamson (2007) agreed the systematic management of publicity on and off camera, public and private life, is the foundation of celebrity. According to Braudy (1986), publicity was the driving force behind fame or becoming a celebrity. Due to its critical role in the success of a celebrity, this component of the star's career is managed by a public relations specialist or publicist. Per Turner (2007), publicists or public relations practitioners are hired to be the middle-man between the celebrity, the media and its publics. They carry out communications on

behalf of the celebrity client, coordinate the promotional activities mentioned by Dyer and manage the mediated publicity events within the media. Furthermore, they govern the media to protect the celebrity's image by controlling and orchestrating the dissemination of public and private information regarding the celebrity (Turner, 2007).

Films and acting opportunities were also discussed by Dyer (1979). Movie roles were often created with specific stars in mind and were viewed as a right-of-passage for individuals to gain stardom, exposure or fan popularity (Dyer, 1979). Other texts that shaped star images and the public opinions about them were criticism and commentaries (Dyer, 1979). Criticism and commentary about the star consisted of opinions, critique or appreciation expressed via written and oral communications (Dyer, 1979). Examples of star criticism and commentary can be observed through fan club communication, celebrity gossip columnist, popular culture blogs and talk shows (Dyer, 1979).

As explained by Dyer, the manufacturing and marketing of celebrities is reliant upon the contributions of several other independent industries. Expanding on Dyer's discussion of functions needed to produce viable star images, Turner (2007) identified seven supporting industries: entertainment, communications, publicity, representation, appearance, coaching, endorsement and legal and business services. Per Turner (2007) and Gamson (1994), the entertainment industry dominates the others in its dealings with celebrity culture. The entertainment industry entails activities within sports, music, theatre and movies (Turner, 2007). Communicative texts in visual, oratory or aural formats are produced within the communications industry (Turner, 2007). Together, the entertainment and communications industries provide employment opportunities for the publicity industry, which employs personnel within public relations as well as advertising and marketing professionals (Turner, 2007). Career guidance for

celebrities is provided by the representation industry within a variety of management and representation capacities (Turner, 2007). The creation, maintenance and grooming of the star's public persona is handled by make-up artists, wardrobe stylists and personal consultants (Sekula, 2004; Turner, 2007; Mendelson, 2007). Professional competency is cultivated through the coaching industry and product partnerships arise within the endorsement industry (Turner, 2007). The legal and business services industry provides celebrities with legal counsel and financial services (Turner, 2007).

### **Celebrity Public Relations and Image Management**

Alongside a celebrity's name, credibility, reputation and talent, Dubin stated that a star's image is an intangible asset that contributes to the celebrity's personal brand (Batchelor, 2009). Although publicity is a major component of cultivating and maintaining a celebrity's constructed image, this function falls under the greater umbrella of image management. The controlling of an entity's image and the presentation of self are concepts derived from the public relations practice (Mendelson, 2007).

As it pertains to public relations, an image is defined as the perception or impression of a group, organization or individual (Nekmat & Ye, 2014). This image is created, or constructed as discussed earlier, and impressed upon the respective entity's publics (Nekmat & Ye, 2014). In order for this image to stick in the minds of audience members, aspects of the image have to be continually communicated with audiences and reinforced through appropriate media channels. According to Nekmat and Ye (2014), the management of an image entails "planning, applying, and controlling communication efforts aimed at influencing audiences' perceptions of the communicative entity" (p. 278). In the case of a celebrity, image management is viewed as the activity of controlling how the celebrity's image is presented and portrayed to their publics.

Unfortunately, image management in public relations research has been approached more from a corporate relations perspective and less from a celebrity or individual basis. However, the image-centric strategies of corporations can also be employed by celebrities or high-profile individuals to protect their public image or identity (Towle, 2003). Goffman (1959, p. 14) refers to this safeguarding of images as “protective practices.” In the discussion of Terrell Owens, Brazeal (2008) touched upon the image management objectives and protective practices of a public relations practitioner in regards to a sports star:

PR professionals focus on protecting and enhancing that image by building and maintaining positive relationships with stakeholders... PR professionals nurture and defend an athlete's image, and at its best, PR is proactive in its efforts to create a positive reputation. (p. 146)

Based on the individualistic nature of this definition, these general expectations can also be applied to other types of celebrity clients such as politicians, actors, musical artists and so forth.

Due to the dualism of a celebrity's image, a celebrity public relations practitioner must be able to operate within these responsibilities to manage various aspects of the celebrity's professional life and private life (Mendelson, 2007). Goffman (1959) characterized the public and private lives of a person in terms of performances, which are the interactions of a person's image with its audiences. Mendelson (2007) stated celebrities interact with their audiences through their portrayals in the media. Goffman referred to a person's private life as backstage performances and their public life as front-stage performances (Goffman, 1959).

For celebrities, backstage and front-stage performances are both important because audiences tend to be more interested in the private life of a celebrity than the public version of the celebrity (Turner, 2004). However, it is the intermixing of these sides of a star that makes them seem more authentic (Mendelson, 2007; Meyers, 2009). According to Mendelson (2007),

granting audiences information about a celebrity's personal life make them seem more real.

Meyers (2009) affirmed this by stating:

Although many celebrities bemoan the fact that their private lives are offered up for public consumption by celebrity media, particularly the tabloid press, the blurring of the private/public distinction that occurs in celebrity media is essential for the maintenance of their star power. (p. 891)

To fuel the interest of audiences, celebrities give glimpses of their personal lives. This information is typically revealed in gossip magazines or entertainment television shows (Mendelson, 2007). Under the practice of image management, the communication of this information must be strategically controlled (Mendelson, 2007). Per Mendelson (2007), it is the responsibility of the publicist to properly manage this information, and any other pieces of information circulating among the public, to ensure it is consistent with the celebrity's crafted image.

Positivity, proactivity and consistency within image management are extremely important aspects. Mendelson (2007) stated people want to define how they are viewed by others and try to promote positive perceptions of themselves. To frame their image in a positive light, individuals must consistently elevate desirable attributes and minimize undesirable attributes (Mendelson, 2007). A good image enhances the celebrity's endeavors and opportunities to make money (Mendelson, 2007), however, a bad image "acts as a magnet that attracts further scorn" (Dowling, 2001, p. 8). Unfortunately, damaging information (Goffman, 1959) or events that can cause unfavorable perceptions aren't always avoidable and the public nature of celebrity images leave them susceptible to mediated controversy (Brazeal, 2008), criticism, slander and ignominy. The image repair attempts of sports stars such as Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps, NBA superstar Kobe Bryant, seasoned golf veteran Tiger Woods (Blaney et, al, 2012) and NFL player

Terrell Owens (Brazeal, 2008) serve as examples of controversy and the consequences of a tarnished or negative image.

### **LGBTQ Studies**

Jenner's experience as Bruce the male and then Caitlyn the female characterizes her as a transgender woman. The term transgender falls under the broader spectrum of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community (GLAAD, n.d.). Despite its close relationship with the lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer concepts used to describe sexual orientation, the word transgender characterizes a person's identity as it relates to his or her internal and external associations with gender (GLAAD, n.d.). A transgender identity is not determined by sex, the anatomical indicator of males and females, but rather influenced by gender which comprises societal constructions of men and women that are deemed appropriate classifiers of physical and behavioral attributes (GLAAD, n.d.). Individuals that identify with a gender that does not match the one assigned to them at birth are classified as transgender (GLAAD, n.d.). The phrase "trapped in the body of the opposite sex," which is often used to describe transgender individuals, is a common expression that illustrates the mismatch between gender and sex (Arune, 2005). The above is conveyed through an excerpt from the HBO documentary "The Trans List" as a transgender man, Kylar Broadus, recounted the uneasiness he experienced as a young transgender boy:

I prayed for unity of my body, mind, and spirit. Now obviously I didn't have those exact words as a child, but I knew that my body and my mind didn't conform. I wanted God to change me, to fix me because I knew something was wrong. (Greenville-Sanders, 2016).

To alleviate the internal turmoil that the mismatch between gender and sex may cause, transgender people may undergo a phase of transitioning to live their desired gender (GLAAD, n.d.). In many cases, transgender individuals seek to align their physical body with their

emotional and mental sense of gender through hormones, sexual reassignment surgery or other procedures (GLAAD, n.d.).

Although there are limited studies about the framing of transgender celebrities, there has been research devoted to gay civil rights and the coming-out experiences of LGBTQ individuals (Hackl et al., 2013). “Coming out,” or coming out of the closet, is a metaphor that is commonly used to describe the process of an individual identifying as LGBTQ and their self-disclosure of that identity to others (Hunter, 2007). Coming out narratives are typically constructed around the opposing perspectives of "before/after, shame/pride, secrecy/visibility, hell/heaven, hypocrisy/truth, repression/liberation" (Benozzo, 2013, p. 350).

Several studies such as Dow (2001), Kooijman (2004), Shugart (2005) and Benozzo (2013) have examined the coming out of homosexual celebrities. Based upon Harris et al. (2012) several stars have gone public with their sexualities including entertainer Ellen DeGeneres, musical artist George Michael, comedian Wanda Sykes, *The Biggest Loser*'s Jillian Michaels, *The Big Bang Theory*'s Jim Parsons, Latin pop sensation Ricky Martin and news anchor Dom Lemon. It is unsurprising that the number of stars who openly identify as LGBTQ has increased significantly over the years.

Before Ellen DeGeneres came out in 1997, going public with one's homosexual identity was extremely risky and unprecedented within the entertainment industry (Harris et al., 2012). Dow (2001) discussed DeGeneres' historic revelation. Per Dow (2001), this announcement was communicated across four major platforms including “coming out” episodes on her ABC sitcom entitled “Ellen,” a cover story in *Time* magazine, an exclusive segment on ABC's “20/20” with Diane Sawyer and a sit-down interview with Oprah Winfrey (Dow, 2001). The importance of this monumental and unprecedented event was two-fold because DeGeneres not only came out

as a lesbian in real-life, but also on prime time television within the leading role she played as Ellen Morgan on her television series (Dow, 2001; Reed, 2005).

As a prelude to the airing of the long-anticipated coming out episodes of Morgan, which captured the attention of over 40 million viewers (Weaver, 2017), DeGeneres used the weeks leading up to the broadcast to discuss the storyline and her own sexuality (Dow, 2001).

According to Weaver (2017) and Reed (2005), the public and press had heavily speculated about her homosexuality for some time. The first public account of DeGeneres' sexuality was within her cover story in Time magazine taglined, "Yep, I'm Gay" (Handy, 1997; Dow, 2001). This editorial and interview explained her sexuality as an issue she tried to ignore or avoid talking about (Handy, 1997). The piece depicted her desire to finally be open about her identity (Handy, 1997). Although DeGeneres sidelined the public speculation that she was gay throughout her career as an actress and comedian, she revealed that she wanted her character to come out on the show and she knew it was time for her to be straightforward about her own sexuality too (Handy, 1997). As a result of her coming out, Ellen explained feelings of liberation stating, "this has been the most freeing experience because people can't hurt me anymore" (Handy, 1997; Dow, 2001).

The second appearance she made leading up to the coming out episodes was an interview on "20/20" with Diane Sawyer (Dow, 2001). In the exclusive interview, Sawyer and DeGeneres talked about topics in relation to her sexuality and the coming out episodes of Morgan (DeGeneres, 1997; Dow, 2001). Sawyer and DeGeneres conversed about several aspects of DeGeneres' personal life including her childhood, her sexual identity as a lesbian, homosexual politics and audience backlash in relation to her professional career as an actress and comedian (DeGeneres, 1997; Dow, 2001). DeGeneres' responses explained her sexuality as a lifelong

secret that she was hiding, and a lie she no longer wanted to hold the weight of (DeGeneres, 1997; Dow, 2001).

As a result of her coming out, DeGeneres shared the new happiness she felt that displaced what was once shame (20/20, 1997; Dow, 2001). Once again, DeGeneres spoke of ridding this shame by stating, “I decided this was not going to be something that I was going to live the rest of my life being ashamed of” (Reed, 2005; Weaver, 2017). When discussing issues of gay and lesbian activism, the actress expressed her desire to remain the girl next door by affirming her coming out experience was merely a personal choice, not a political one (20/20, 1997; Dow, 2001).

Feelings of liberation and living in one’s truth were also present in DeGeneres’ interview with Oprah Winfrey on her daytime talk show entitled “Oprah” (Dow, 2001). Winfrey, who also made a cameo appearance as Morgan’s therapist on the coming out episode, engaged DeGeneres in discussions about her personal life, her sexuality, overcoming the fear of losing her livelihood and the backlash she received (Dow, 2001). In her sit-down with Winfrey, DeGeneres not only shared a few details about her first romantic encounter with a woman, but also spotlighted her current love affair with then-girlfriend Ann Heche (Dow, 2001). Her composed and calm responses to disapproving audience members demonstrated DeGeneres’ empathy towards the public and their opposing viewpoints (Dow, 2001). As a result of going public with her homosexuality, DeGeneres’ use of these opportunities to be open and truthful with the public granted her the freedom “to feel completely honest” for the first time in her life (Dow, 2001).

A more recent study of a celebrity unveiling their homosexuality was Benozzo (2013) that analyzed the coming out of Italian musical artist Tiziano Ferro in 2010. According to Benozzo (2013), Ferro’s coming out was also communicated across four channels: a personal

letter published in *Corriere della Sera*, an interview in *La Repubblica*, an interview with *Vanity Fair* and his personal autobiography entitled “Trent’anni e una chiacchierata con papa.” Benozzo's analysis of Ferro's coming out in the *Corriere della Sera* and *La Repubblica* investigated two major discourses; the "counter criminal" discourse and the "merciful father" discourse. Within these two selections, the culmination of Ferro's coming out projected and "promoted repeatedly his image of the good son, the good friend and the happy gay" (Benozzo, 2013, p. 355). These elements interplayed to decriminalize Ferro's self-incrimination of his homosexuality. According to Benozzo, examples of the “counter criminal” and “merciful father” discourses were present within Ferro's letter describing his self-inflicted turmoil, the emotional support provided from his father and the encouragement he received from criminal lawyer Giulia Bongiorno. The "counter criminal" discourse was also observed within the quotes from others advocating for Ferro.

Similar to DeGeneres' coming out, journalist Elia De Pasquale illustrated Ferro's feelings of liberation, shedding the shame of homosexuality, the relief of releasing a lifelong secret and the true happiness of being open about one's true self. Confession of his sexuality was also touched upon, but was tied to Catholicism and its religious beliefs about the sinful nature of homosexuality. Benozzo (2013) wrote that Ferro suffered from depression as a result of his self-torment in conjunction with the social and religious stigma of his sexuality. This torment was demonstrated through Ferro's suicidal thoughts (Benozzo, 2013). Ferro states, "If I'm a homosexual, I can't live in this world" (Benozzo, 2013, p. 344). Ferro's coming out experience, as expressed in the *Corriere della Sera* editorial, transformed his life, introduced him to a new world of happiness and granted him the freedom to live in his truth.

Benozzo also found similar elements in Ferro's La Repubblica feature story. In this account, Ferro continued discourses of authenticity, truth, freedom and liberation. Unlike Ferro's implicit statements about his homosexuality, Ferro explicitly confirms his sexuality by stating, "Now I feel free to be homosexual" (Benozzo, 2013, p. 350). Throughout the editorial Ferro's story reinforced feelings of liberation, his freedom of openness and his relief of releasing the burdens of secrecy. As explained by Benozzo (2013), Ferro was empowered by his decision to reveal his true self.

Within research focused on media representations, Gross (2001) characterized all individuals that deviated from Caucasian male heterosexual norms as sexual minorities. Similarly, De Jong's (2006) discussion of sexuality within the media explained that representations of marginalized minority groups are a significant issue due to the media's ability to influence the way individuals understand the natural world. This power of representation in the media is demonstrated through the framing of homosexual men in newspapers during the 1950s (De Jong, 2006). De Jong explained that homosexuality was framed as sexual perversion, a disease, a crime or moral deviance. Johnson (2004) stated that the terms used in the news media during this time period characterized queer individuals as "'sex perverts' ... 'moral weaklings,' 'sexual misfits,' 'moral misfits,' ... 'misfits,' 'undesirables' or 'persons with unusual morals'" (p. 7). Portrayals such as these were also seen years later in cinema. Depictions of transgender individuals as criminally insane murders in films such as "Dressed to Kill" (De Palma & Litto, 1980) and "Silence of the Lambs" (Demme & Bozman, 1991) exemplified this (Arune, 2005). Negative representations such as these reflected attitudes that reinforced a cultural standard of heteronormativity, influenced public perceptions regarding homosexuality (De Jong, 2006) and enforced a tone of moral intolerance.

Stereotypical depictions also further marginalize LGBTQ images within the media. Stereotypical representations of gay men in news coverage, newspapers, entertainment media, movies or television series disenfranchises homosexual men that do not align with the stereotype (De'Jong, 2006). This is due to the portrayal's lack of diversity in demographics such as age, ethnicity and social class (De Jong, 2006). Gross assessed that sexual minorities fall into stereotypes that are demeaning or derogatory (2001). In comparison to the portrayals of this alienated or marginalized sub-group of gay males within magazines, television, radio, movies and the internet, other identities on the LGBTQ spectrum have far less visibility (De Jong, 2006). According to De Jong, lesbians have even lower levels of visibility than homosexual males in the media (2006). Gross (2001) affirmed this invisibility, the sparse representation of other LGBTQ individuals within the media and the perpetuation of negative stereotypes in implicit and explicit forms.

Despite these findings, other research has found that not all depictions of transgender people are bad. Within the last 25 years, a handful of more realistic reflections of transgender identities include movies such as "Different for Girls" (Spence & Chapman, 1996), "Boys Don't Cry" (Peirce & Hart, 1999), "Normal" (Anderson & Brokaw, 2003) and books such as "Man into Woman" (Hoyer, 1933) and "The Danish Girl" (Ebershoff, 2000) (Arune, 2005; Vrouenraets, 2016). Rigney (2003) applauded the cinematic portrayal of Brandon Teena in "Boys Don't Cry" because it was the first time "audiences were introduced to a transgender character that was not demonized as either a killer, sexual predator, or deranged psychopath" (p. 4). However, there still remains an ongoing paucity of positive, multi-dimensional LGBTQ voices and portrayals within the media, especially those of transgender people, in addition to the social and political ramifications of simply existing as openly transgender (Arune, 2005). Transgender author Janet

Mock's statement, "We fight to be seen as we see ourselves and live our truth without compromise," expresses this issue of visibility (Greenville-Sanders, 2016). Arune concluded that media in modern times still fails to recognize the value this particular group contributes to our societal makeup stating, "Even today the media has yet to fully recognize the transsexual and transgendered experience as part of our human diversity and mosaic" (2005, p. 130).

Currently, it has been noted that transgender people are not the focus of research as often as other identities on the spectrum (Hackl et al., 2016), and the topic of transgender identities is often conflated with notions of sexuality versus the complex nature of gender identity. Arune (2005) noted that the difference in identifying as a male or female is a separate matter that differs from sexual preference, but is still closely associated. At the time where transgender people were still referred to as transsexuals, Cauldwell explained that "Trans-sexuals are individuals who are physically of one sex and apparently psychologically of the opposite sex. Trans-sexuals include heterosexuals, homosexuals, bisexuals and others" (in Meyerowitz, 1998, p. 44). Although sexuality and gender identity are closely related, and even intertwine at times, the amount of media coverage of transgender individuals compared to coverage of lesbian and gay individuals is scarce (Becker & Todd, 2013; Hackl et al., 2016).

When this marginalized group is represented, Arune (2005) identified derogatory overtones, sensationalism and sarcastic humor. According to transgender activist and theorist Kate Bornstein, transgender people who were brave enough to come out to the public were "studied under a microscope, ridiculed in the tabloids, or made exotic in the porn books" (1994, p. 8). Gross (2001) found that the media portrays transgender individuals as focal points of controversy. This is reflected in the controversial and sensationalized coverage that is primarily granted to transgender identities. Examples of notable transgender individuals discussed in this

manner include Thai Boxing Champion Parinya Charoenphol (Arune, 2005) and Brandon Teena (Sloop, 2004). Other examples include outed or exposed individuals such as Bond Girl Caroline Cossey and the multi-talented television and film actress Aleisha Brevard (Arune, 2005). From this, scholars have acknowledged a dearth of information regarding the unique experiences of transgender identities sourced from positive media discourse or accurate representations (Hack et al, 2016).

Arune's (2005) work on transgender portrayals in the media discussed the case of transsexual Christine Jorgensen and issues surrounding news coverage of transsexuals or transgender people. Although she was not the first transgender individual portrayed in the media, coverage granted to her story significantly exceeded reporting of any transgender person before her (Meyerowitz, 1998). Jorgensen was a clerk in the army that underwent hormonal and medical procedures to transform from a male, known as George, to a female named Christine in the early 1950s (Arune, 2005). Once the story was exposed to the media, Jorgensen was barraged with media attention and publicity (Arune, 2005; Meyerowitz, 1998). Reports on her transformation appeared in major publications such as *The New York Times*, the *Associated Press* and *Time* magazine (Meyerowitz, 1998).

The volume of interest in Jorgensen's transformation and the media's emphasis on her youth and beauty granted her mediated fame (Meyerowitz, 1998). Meyerowitz (1998) stated Jorgensen was a celebrity within mainstream media and in other forms of entertainment and countercultural media. The frenzy devoted to Jorgensen's unintentional public transition reeled in readers with headlines of "Ex-GI Becomes Blonde Beauty" (White, 1952) and "The Truth about Christine Jorgensen" (Davis, 1953) alongside medical explanations of her classification as a transsexual (Arune, 2005).

Transsexual was a term popularized by endocrinologist Dr. Benjamin (Bornstein, 1994) to describe one sex becoming the opposite sex until the usage of the term transgender came about in the 1980s (Arune, 2005). Transgender became a more inclusive term for those who were unable to reassign their sex medically, but still desired to live and behave within a desired gender not of their biological sex (Arune, 2005). In the 1950s Jorgensen's role as the modern-day poster child for transgendered individuals even secured her an exclusive, in-depth extended series with American Weekly entitled "The Story of My Life" (Jorgensen, 1953; Meyerowitz, 1998). This interview and first-person account accentuated her feminine attributes and emphasized the physiological aspects of her identity just as much as the physicality of her situation. She also notably articulated her distress outside of the commonly used "trapped" phrase. Instead, she framed her overall state as "lost between sexes" (Meyerowitz, 1998, p. 172).

Sloop (2000, 2004) discussed the representation and discourse granted to the tragic story of a transgender man known as Brandon Teena. Sloop was not only interested in what others were saying about Teena, but also the discourses that discussed what Teena said about himself. Authors utilized this information to provide audiences context to the unique nature of Teena's story and how other people perceived Teena.

According to the mediated narrative, Teena Brandon was a troubled young female that lived in a small Nebraska town as a male named Brandon Teena. Teena was killed after two of his male friends raped and shot him upon discovering that he was anatomically a female (Sloop, 2004). Teena's story was not only portrayed in the award-winning film "Boys Don't Cry," but was also the topic of mainstream news and the subject of several mediated projects (Sloop, 2000; Sloop, 2004; Rigney, 2003). Due to the significant amount of local and national press coverage,

the research of Squires and Brouwer (2002) used the Teena case to examine the media frames present in dominant newspapers.

Sloop (2000, 2004) found that a narrative of gender deception, labeled “deception in the heartland,” was used in the media to describe the film and Teena’s case. According to the media’s discussions about the movie, Teena death was discussed as the result of her tricking the intolerant Midwest community into thinking she was a male by “masquerading as man” (Sloop, 2004). This was observed through titles and subtitles from crime books, plays, essays and movie posters. Aphrodite Jones’ crime book, “A True Story of Sexual Deception and Murder in America’s Heartland,” exemplified this (Sloop, 2004). Sloop also found this theme within film reviews and news reports. The concept of masquerading also emerged in the work of Squires and Brouwer (2002) as a media frame the authors labeled as “masquerade and deception.” The authors found that reporters consistently characterized Teena as a troubled female pretending to be a male. This was apparent through the inclusion of Teena’s history of deceptive behavior, the use of female pronouns and the emphasized use of Teena as a first name instead of Brandon.

Although Teena appeared and behaved as a man, Teena’s gender was discussed within the media as primarily female based upon her genitalia (Sloop, 2000, 2004). Squires and Brouwer (2002) identified this as the “genitalia proves sex identity” media frame in major news coverage. According to Sloop, discourse discussing Teena as a male was only observed in gay and lesbian media. Due to Teena’s lack of a penis, the anatomical and symbolic marker of maleness, Teena was reported to have told a few girlfriends that he was either a hermaphrodite or a transsexual with the intentions of getting sexual reassignment surgery. This evidence was discussed in the Omaha World Herald, Aphrodite Jones’ crime book, the Denver Post and the Boston Globe. Furthermore, Sloop (2004) found that several sources attributed the cause of

Teena's condition as either a hormonal imbalance caused at birth or a psychological reaction to childhood abuse by a male relative. Quotes from Brandon's sister, Tammy, and mother, JoAnn, were used to support these narratives. JoAnn stated in a press conference that her daughter "was a man so no other man would touch her" (Sloop, 2004).

Accounts of Teena's manly body language or movements and rugged style of dress helped to illustrate the masculine persona Teena exuded. Sloop noted that authors also called upon details of Teena's many romances with women to illustrate Teena's life in the community as a heterosexual male. Descriptions of Teena's attractiveness, natural ability to woo women and impressive, as described by Teena's past lovers, sexual encounters with heterosexual women were also utilized. The uncovering of Teena's past of dating heterosexual women supported Squire and Brouwer's (2002) media frame "the sex was not lesbian." Statements from past lovers and JoAnn's commentary on Teena's sexuality demonstrated Teena's rejection of lesbian desires. "She told me she wasn't a lesbian and was very adamant about that" affirmed JoAnn, while others revealed Teena's disgust with homosexuality (Sloop, 2004, p .71)

The case of Chelsea Manning was a more recent instance of media coverage focused on a transgender person. In 2013, Private Bradley Manning, a notoriously known governmental figure convicted of espionage, expressed desires to transition and be addressed as a woman via the following statement on the "Today" show:

... As I transition into this next phase of my life, I want everyone to know the real me. I am Chelsea Manning. I am a female. Given the way that I feel, and have felt since childhood, I want to begin hormone therapy as soon as possible. I hope that you will support me in this transition. I also request that, starting today, you refer to me by my new name and use the feminine pronoun (except in official mail to the confinement facility). (Pearson, 2013; Manning, 2013)

This caused a stirring among news outlets and concerns were raised regarding how the event should have been reported. Issues such as journalistic styles, news reporting practices, public perspective of transgender individuals and audience familiarity of the event came into play.

Hackl et al. (2016) conducted a study to evaluate how the news of Manning's transition was covered, if the media was responsive to approaching the coverage in a progressive manner and how the coverage differed internationally. Through quantitative and qualitative methods, the researchers analyzed print sources within a two-week time frame following the announcement to see if mainstream outlets addressed Private Manning according to her preferred name of Chelsea and the associated female pronouns. Newspaper articles were retrieved via Lexis-Nexis including samples from The New York Times, international publications such as the Daily Telegraph and local newspapers. The final count of 197 articles were utilized for analysis.

Results of the study showed a predominantly masculine portrayal of Manning. The results showed that the media dialogue employed the significant use of Bradley Manning instead of the preferred reference of Chelsea Manning. The results also showed the inclination of the international press to discuss Manning in terms of male pronouns, but gradually female pronouns were incorporated. The U.S. coverage also saw a shift from male to female pronouns, but researchers noted this practice was adopted at a slower rate than the international publications. Overall, Manning was referenced with male pronouns approximately seven times more than female pronouns. Researchers discovered that Manning's overwhelmingly masculine depiction within the media's discourse was in accordance with what journalists believed would align with readership and audience clarity (Hackl et al, 2016).

Pieper's research on Mike Pinner serves as another important case study that situates the coming out and the framing of transgender individuals within mainstream media (2015). In 2007,

Mike Penner, seasoned Los Angeles Times writer, revealed to readers that for years he had experienced gender dysphoria. In his column, “Old Mike, New Christine,” Penner announced his decision to transition into a woman and that he would return from vacation to live his life as Christine Daniels (Penner, 2007). Among a very personal account of his battle with his gender identity, Penner declared “I am a transsexual sportswriter” (2007, para. 4). This self-disclosure gained notable attention from readers and journalists. It was also discussed substantially on television news segments, news print and the radio. When Penner began living and writing as Christine Daniels, her pieces addressed sports and transgender issues. However, Daniels disappeared along with the blog, and Penner re-emerged heightening the newsworthiness of the original event storyline. In November 2009, Penner committed suicide.

Pieper (2015) investigated three significant periods in Penner’s life by analyzing the discourse in mainstream publications. The compilation of data sources was selected by categories ranging across print newspapers, magazines (monthly and weekly), sports magazines, radio and online news sources.<sup>2</sup> Pieper also analyzed alternative media to capture unconventional perspectives outside of the mainstream narrative. These consisted of The Advocate (magazine), BitchMedia (multi-media), ReACT (online forum), Outsports (online), Washington City Paper (weekly) and Queerity.com (online).

Pieper found that the discourse concerning Penner/Daniels, P.D., in mainstream media differed from the alternative media sources. Each category of media discussed P.D. depending upon cultural motives. Mainstream media highlighted P.D.’s athletic centrality with a lean towards male representation versus the alternative media’s focus on P.D. as an exemplar and contributor to the transgender community. In mainstream media, P.D. was remembered as

---

<sup>2</sup> Newspaper selections: Chicago Tribune, Los Angeles Times, New York Times, Washington Post and USA Today; Sport-Related Magazine selections: ESPN the Magazine and Sports Illustrated; Magazines: GQ (monthly) and Newsweek (weekly); Radio: National Public Radio; Online: ABC News

Penner compared to the preferred memory of Daniels for the alternative sources. The mainstream media also focused on P.D.'s achievements as an expert sportswriter while providing shallow discussions of transgender identities. Writers often intertwined notions of homosexuality with transgender identity obtaining quotes and information from the homosexual community. The use of male pronouns was still present in coverage and supporting statements. Confusion concerning the complexity of gender representation through female and male pronouns was also evident.

Alternative media perceived "Old Mike, New Christine" as a written record of P.D.'s coming out experience, situating pre-Christine life as unhappiness and post-Christine life as contentment. In-depth discussion of transgender issues was present in conjunction with uncovering P.D.'s mental and emotional states. Accounts of P.D.'s internal turmoil, anxiety, distress and depression were underscored. The idea of being trapped in the body of a man was also identified within an alternative media source. Alternative media also positioned P.D. as a role model and provided readers with the differentiation between transgender people and homosexuals. The re-emergence of Penner from the newfound identity of Daniels was only reported by one mainstream outlet with a conjecture about the cause of P.D.'s transition reversal. Although P.D.'s return to Penner obtained scant coverage, P.D.'s death garnered immense media attention.

Again, P.D.'s framing differed according to the cultural alignments of mainstream media and alternative media. P.D.'s legacy within mainstream media was masculine in nature as alternative media fashioned P.D. as a transgender woman who succumbed to an intolerant society. In regards to P.D.'s professional work, mainstream media did not want P.D.'s transgender identity to overshadow P.D.'s large contribution as a respected male sportswriter. P.D.'s accomplishments as a transgender woman were overlooked or briefly touched upon. On

the other hand, alternative media focused primarily on P.D.'s bravery and legacy as an LGBTQ advocate (Pieper, 2015).

### **Framing Theory**

The concept of framing is closely related to agenda-setting. Agenda-setting is a function in which the media directs the audiences' attention to issues and discourse surrounding them based upon the stories they decide are important and the coverage they devote to them (Esrock et al., 2002). Many scholars and researchers perceive framing as a second-tier of agenda-setting (Esrock et al., 2002; McCombs et al., 1997) while others believe framing is a completely separate process (Esrock et al., 2002; Entman, 1993; Kosicki, 1993). However, instead of the media setting the agenda or dictating what audiences should think about, framing supplies context to audiences to direct how they should think about issues or topics of interest (Esrock et al., 2002). Framing analysis is a valuable tool for scholars and professionals within the communications discipline because it examines which aspects of an event or issue are selected and presented over others (Matthes, 2009). This is observed through the exploration of devices used to convey meaning such as "stereotypes, metaphors, actors, and messages" (Matthes, 2009, p. 349). As it pertains to this study and the field of public relations, the challenge that framing presents to public relations practitioners is how to most effectively and strategically frame a story (Esrock et al., 2002; Hallahan, 1999).

Framing is grounded in the studies of sociology and psychology (Pan & Kosicki, 1993), but over the years its application has been diversified across a wide range of disciplines (Borah, 2011; Reese, 2001; Rendahl, 1995). From a social sciences perspective, Goffman (1974) was the first to theorize framing as a means to which individuals process or give meaning to events they experience in reality (Borah, 2011; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). In his work, he described

primary frameworks as schemata, organizational structures of the mind (Di Maggio, 1997), used to interpret information individuals encounter every day (Goffman, 1974). In 1984, framing research within the field of psychology emerged (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Kahneman & Tversky, 1984). However, Entman (1993) believed the notion of framing was ambiguous and the overall conceptualization of framing was unclear or scattered. From a communicative standpoint, his work sought to address this by developing a more refined and clarified version of the theory (Matthes, 2009). Entman (1993) asserted that framing analysis magnified how oral or written communications could influence the thoughts, emotions or behaviors of humans.

Framing has also been applied specifically to the field of public relations because the discipline foundationally “involves the construction of social reality” (Hallahan, 1999, p. 206). As it pertains to public relations, Hallahan (1999) characterized the paradigm as a strategic public relations tactic used to fashion messages intended to influence audiences and their responses. Within the context of public relations, this maneuver is used on behalf of groups and enterprises (Reber & Berger, 2005) to craft meaning and to position the focus of an issue around certain aspects to achieve favorable outcomes (Hallahan, 2008). Framing also helps establish and maintain beneficial relationships with key publics (Hallahan, 1999).

Described by scholars, framing is an active communicative process in which an issue or event is positioned to be viewed or interpreted a certain way (De Vreese, 2005). This process is gradual and in flux with politics, society (Kenix, 2011) and culture (Reese, 2001). Entman explained, “To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient” (1993, p. 52) by way of embedding frames into communicative texts. Framing makes observations of reality more salient or prominent by magnifying some aspects and minimizing others (Entman, 1993). This influences the observer’s cognition (Reese, 2001) and alters or

shapes the way issues are processed or interpreted (Entman, 1993; Rodriguez & Blumell, 2013). Gitlin (1980) similarly characterized frames as “persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, emphasis, and exclusion” (p. 7). The intentional ways in which frames include, exclude, obscure or draw attention to specific elements aims to direct how audiences cognitively and affectively process them (Entman, 2007; Iyengar & Simon, 1993). Hallahan (2008) supported this by stating, “Framing is a critical element in constructing social reality because it helps shape the perceptions and provides context for processing information” (p. 1). Kinder and Sanders (1990) affirmed this by stating that the promotion of frames influence how issues are interpreted and evaluated.

Frames are the primary devices of framing. They serve as constructs to furnish “meaning to an unfolding strip of events” (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987, p. 143; Garrison & Modigliani, 1994, p. 376) through definition or explanation (Shah et al., 2002). Based upon Entman’s work, Rodriguez and Blumell (2014) stated that frames have the four functions of “problem definition, causal analysis, moral judgment and remedy promotion” (p. 2). Framing’s efforts of selection and salience are implemented “especially by the media, media professionals, and their audiences” (Reese, 2001, p. 7) and can be found within varying sites such as “the communicator, the text, the receivers, and the culture” (Entman, 1993, p. 52).

These elements interplay within the stages of frame-building and frame-setting (D’Angelo, 2002; Scheufele, 2000; De Vreese, 2005). Frame-building pertains to factors that affect media frames (De Vreese, 2005). This process is affected by factors internal and external to journalists in addition to their interactions with social movements and elites (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Cooper, 2002; Snow & Benford, 1992; De Vreese, 2005; Gans, 1979; Tuchman,

1978). Frame-setting pertains to the influence of media frames on the “learning, interpretation, and evaluation of issues and events” of individuals (De Vreese, 2005, p. 52).

Due to the construction and consumption of frames, framing can be evaluated on an individual and media basis (Scheufele, 1999). Often with political coloring, the distinction of the two was found among many researchers (Scheufele, 1999). Entman (1991) distinguished the two by labeling media frames as “attributes of the news itself” (p. 7) and individual frames as “information-processing schemata” (p. 7). Hallahan (1999) stated that cognition is affected by framing because the selection and salience aspects guide the observer’s interpretation. Kinder and Sanders (1990) fashioned media frames as the communicative devices within political discourse and individual frames as the psychological schemata of receivers. Furthermore, the researchers noted the interplay between media frames and the role of elites. Elites are defined as individuals who hold formal power, control or influence (Mills, 1959; Mendelson, 2007). They asserted that media frames are “invented and employed by political elite” and “intended to make favorable interpretations prevail” (Kinder & Sanders, 1990, p. 74). According to Rodriguez and Blumell (2014) and Hallahan (1999), frames are deployed in the media by politicians and other media players or framers.

Frames within texts or media such as the news can be observed or analyzed through the inclusion or omission of certain information (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). Framing devices can manage or assign meaning in a variety of ways. Gamson and Modigliana (1989) labeled devices of framing as metaphors, catch phrases, exemplars, depictions and visuals. Entman (1993) listed framing elements as “keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments” (p. 52).

According to Fairhurst and Sarr (1996), meaning can be managed in different ways through the use of framing devices which include metaphors, jargon/catchphrases, contrast, spin and stories. Metaphors create meaning by comparing similarities between a subject and another idea, concept or thing (Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996). Next, jargon as a framing device uses terminology that is unique to a particular subject, field or industry (Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996). A catchphrase is a statement that relies upon configuring familiar language in a memorable way (Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996). Similar to metaphors, the framing device of contrast defines a subject by juxtaposing it against its alternative or what it is not (Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996). Spin frames a subject from a positive perspective or a negative perspective, which is also explained as framing a subject by its strengths or weaknesses (Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996). Lastly, stories detail an event in a memorable and vivid manner.

Two brief examples of framing devices demonstrate their ability to frame the meaning of messages. For instance, the common expression “shining like a star” is sometimes used to describe a person’s outstanding ability to distinguish themselves. It is a metaphor that compares something or someone to the undeniable glow of a star which captures the attention of all who comes across its beauty. Another example is the use of a catchphrase. If a mother humorously coins herself as the “Terminator Exterminator” after spraying her wooden deck with termiticide then she is using a catchphrase to frame her pest control efforts. These terms, terminator and exterminator, were common words that were applied to her actions in a catchy, creative and distinctive way.

In the interest of public relations, Kirk Hallahan (1999) identified seven models of framing applicable to the field. The seven models discussed were situations, attributes, choices, actions, issues, responsibility and news (Hallahan, 1999). Hallahan (2008) explained that these

types of framing are employed to provide context for messages and are often intermixed by public relations practitioners, whom he characterized as frame strategists, to further the interest of their clients (Hallahan, 1999). Hallahan (1999) stated that “Public Relations workers routinely strive to position clients and their products or services so they will be evaluated favorably” (p. 225). These models underpin the effectiveness of framing devices which are purposed to drive home key points or enhance messaging (Hallahan, 1999).

Hallahan (1999, 2008) explained each of the seven models and their utility to public relations practitioners. When framing situations, the communicator seeks to explain and describe relationships or scenarios that transpire within everyday occurrences. In public relations, situations are framed to achieve positive reception of encounters among audiences. The framing of attributes entails accentuating specific qualities or features of individuals, events or things while ignoring others. Public relations practitioners constantly seek to promote the best attributes of people, groups, companies, goods, services or causes so that audiences will act favorably or think highly of the company. Framing of choices presents potential benefits and risks of decisions. The objective of framing risky choices is to encourage audiences to make a decision and to assuage their concerns with potential losses and gains associated with that choice. In efforts to achieve a goal, framing of actions persuades receivers to behave in a cooperative or compliant manner by suggesting desirable courses of action. Practitioners seek to “maximize behavioral intentions” (p. 226) by framing actions in a fashion that provokes key publics to act favorably towards the client.

The framing of issues positions a specific interpretation of a problem among a few people, organizations or society at large that promotes the favorable reception of a desired viewpoint. Issues are framed in efforts to manage, minimize or amplify controversial issues or

social issues (Hallahan, 1999) and to direct public discourse surrounding them (Hallahan, 2008). How individuals assign blame or cause of an event is labeled as framing of responsibility. In corporate social responsibility, public relations efforts for organizations seek to gain recognition or credit for good deeds. In times of crisis, public relations efforts seek to deny, accept or avoid responsibility for mistakes or harmful behavior. Hallahan (2008) affirmed, “a common strategy for both individuals and organizations is to take credit for successes and to avoid blame for failures while ascribing blame to others” (p. 3). Lastly, news framing is concerned with the structuring or depiction of stories in the news by the media. Public relations practitioners sponsor frames on behalf of their clients, exercise their influence on the media and are actively involved in the framing of news content and sponsor frames.

Hallahan explained how the role of public relations creates competition among media players of frames, coverage and media portrayals. Framing of the news gives media players a unique opportunity to present and advocate their perspectives. Because of this competition, public relations professionals have to creatively package stories in a way that is interesting and appealing to their audiences. Hallahan (2008) emphasized that “it is essential for strategic communicators to understand what’s newsworthy and capitalizing [sic] on the culturally resonating elements of a particular story in order to make it attractive to media gatekeepers and audiences” (p. 4). According to Hallahan (1999), this is achieved through the creative use of framing devices mentioned by Gamson and Modigliana (1989).

### **Framing Studies**

Framing research has emerged from a number of disciplines, but has actively grown in the field of public relations within recent years. Lim and Jones’ (2010) quantitative analysis of framing studies in public relations from 1990 to 2009 found almost 70 percent of the studies had

been conducted within a four-year period and over 85 percent were conducted over the last nine years of their observations. The literature discussed in this section pertains to framing in the media and its utility to public relations practitioners.

Glascok (2000) analyzed frames that were presented in the press regarding the breakup of the American Telegraph and Telephone Company, AT&T, in 1982 due to a settlement with the government in an antitrust lawsuit. The researchers were concerned with how the story played out in the press in lieu of the company's efforts to make a negative situation seem positive. Seven national newspapers including The Washington Post, Los Angeles Times and The New York Times were examined. The time span that was selected was the week post-announcement. Fifteen frames were identified over a total of 104 news stories. The frames were characterized as follows: "Retain Bell Labs, Western Electric, long lines," "Free from government regulation, enter new markets," "Telco services will continue without change," "More choice in service, equipment for consumers," "Stockholders' assets will remain proportional," "No harm to national security," "Settled to avoid further court review, legislation," "Divest local operating companies," "Local phone rates may rise," "Breakup may lead to worse service," "More competition in the industry," "Long-distance rates may go lower," "Settled because company was losing case," "Breakup could be harmful to national security" and "Stock prices may go down."

Results revealed the most frequent frame that was used removed the company from governmental control, emphasizing increased competitiveness and growth in addition to the company's opportunity to compete in new markets. This reflected the media's positive perspective of the settlement in which AT&T was framed as a winner in the situation when in reality the company was negatively affected by no longer being able to operate in a monopolistic

manner. Although the media's coverage was overall positive, Glascock (2000) concluded that AT&T's orchestrated frames were not as influential as expected due to the viewpoints of unattributed sources and other factors that prevailed.

The construction of frames and their dissemination are often performed by the elite or the media, but in some instances audiences create their own frames or wield influence over the framing efforts of others. In the case of Nabisco's discontinuation of the Crown Pilot Cracker, and its subsequent resurrection due consumer backlash, Esrock et al. (2002) examined the media's use of frames and protestors' influence on those efforts. A triangulation approach was taken to examine the data. This included an analysis of a website and news stories within major national and regional newspapers, such as The New York Times and The San Francisco Chronicle, in addition to in-depth interviews with key players associated with the event.

The saga began with Nabisco nixing the production of the beloved regional cracker due to low sales. Upon discovering the cracker would no longer be available, a Chebeague Island local wanted to voice her opinion to assert that the corporation's actions had larger social and cultural ramifications. The local achieved this by publishing emotionally charged articles that framed the corporation as a great behemoth versus the powerless and poor while incorporating themes of depriving consumers of their heritage. In detail, her writings emotionally conveyed the cracker's sentimental value to the mariner tradition, as well as the overall history of the New England region, and how the community felt a part of their identity was being stripped away. Esrock et al. (2002) categorized the positioning of her arguments as conflict and human interest frames.

Shortly thereafter, the story gained momentum and national news coverage. The local coverage had more opportunities to incorporate framing devices such as slogans and visual and

figurative imagery to enhance the event's newsworthiness. This resulted in bad publicity for the corporation. Nabisco was then motivated to reverse the initial decision and negative perceptions by restarting production and reframing the story in attempts to get back in a positive light. The company devised a large-scale corrective action strategy that presented counter-frames communicating to the media and audiences that they cared about their customer's concerns. Crown Pilot's revival gained substantial media attention as Nabisco tried to ameliorate its brand image by framing the story from a more favorable angle. The details of this case study not only showed the power of corporations to use frames in attempts to improve their image in the media, but also the ability of audiences to influence those framing efforts or even construct and package their own frames for media access and subsequent utility. Due to framing, all parties influenced a satisfactory outcome as the protestors got their product back, and Nabisco experienced an improvement in sales from what was once perceived as a poorly performing product (Esrock et al., 2002).

Framing can also be applied to controversial events within popular culture. Tucker (1998) deconstructed the media framing of Calvin Klein's controversial fashion advertising campaign in 1995 that incited media criticism and the development of the "kiddie porn" frame. The "kiddie porn" outrage resulted in a public apology from the high-fashion designer and a withdrawal of the campaign.

The researchers explored the varying elements of the frame and associated themes. The political roots of the frame, as explained by Tucker, were grounded within a political hotbed of opinions surrounding youth and the ability of this demographic to exercise cultural, social and economic power. Print media from pre-event, event and post-event was analyzed which consisted of 31 news stories and opinion pieces. These articles were derived from sources such

as The Wall Street Journal, Time and Advertising Age. Four themes emerged from the media discourse: 1) Calvin Klein exploited youth for financial gain; 2) the advertisements were bordering the lines of child pornography; 3) denouncement of advertisements and Calvin Klein among industry opinion leaders and 4) expressions of an impassioned public.

Within the first theme the researcher found that the media characterized Calvin Klein as a “dirty old man” using stock phrases such as “pushing the envelope,” “went too far” and “crossed the line” to describe his displeasing marketing strategy (Tucker, 1998, p. 148). The word “creepy” was used within the media discourse to describe the second theme of the advertisements that featured soft pornographic imagery involving minors (Tucker, 1998). References to the National American Man/Boy Love Association, an organization that promotes and advocates for pedophilia and pederasty, were also found (Tucker, 1998). Also garnering commentary among the child pornography theme was the minimalistic decor, the “cheesily furnished rumpus room,” and the “cheap” or “tawdry” styling of the models. The combination of the two was perceived as low-class and a deliberate turn from the high-class taste making expectations of major fashion houses (Tucker, 1998). The third theme entailed an overwhelming consensus of disapproving statements, often reiterating the use of the terms “kiddie porn” and “child pornography,” from experts and critics among the advertising, fashion and marketing industries (Tucker, 1998). This further reinforced the kiddie-porn frame and the public’s perceived bad intentions of Calvin Klein.

Lastly, Tucker (1998) discussed framing elements of the public voice theme. Although the target market, young adults and teenagers, felt no harm in a little sex appeal, their indifferent attitudes were overshadowed by the majority of enraged adults. Mentions of the authoritative intervention of the American Family Association and the FBI legitimized the seriousness of the

kiddie porn accusations among media discourse. The cumulative nature of all of these findings illustrated the construction of a frame within the media that reflected society's judgment of the advertisement campaign as immoral and criminal and the exemplification of child pornography within a mainstream platform (Tucker, 1998).

There have been a few studies pertaining to framing celebrities and celebrity culture. For instance, during an empirical analysis of digital discussions about celebrities, sex and issues of morality, Van De Bulck and Claessens (2013) examined tales of celebrity sex and audience responses via websites specialized in celebrity news. The researchers examined approximately 50 articles from HLN, Heat and People with over 680 responses. The researchers found that media and audience reactions were targeted toward the more scandalous stories covering the rendezvous of adulterous heterosexual celebrity men. Results showed the content covering celebrity sex and audiences' reactions were less prudish in comparison to content on the television and magazines. Van De Bulck and Claessens (2013) found that the media's framing of the content was predominantly without explicit judgment, however, readers' discussion of the scandals and criticism of the celebrities were very critical and judgmental.

The researchers also further investigated audience interest in scandalous celebrity sex stories with another framing analysis of 17 articles and 366 reactions. In this analysis they identified seven frames. The researchers found that the frames characterized adultery as an addiction, a character flaw, a lustful sin, a phenomenon catalyzed by society's eroding moral compass, a natural occurrence, a signifier of masculine potency and the fault of women — all expressing to some degree positive, negative or neutral evaluations. Results showed the “flawed personality” and “women's fault” frames dominated the media and audience responses (Van De Bulck & Claessens, 2013). Deeper analysis revealed that readers adopted the frames they saw in

the media or counter-framed as a result of personal accounts and interactions or observations (Van De Bulck & Claessens, 2013).

Smith and Beal (2007) examined the gendered and racial framing of “cool” by famous professional athletes on the MTV television show “Cribs.” As the athletes showcased their elaborate homes, the authors searched to find patterns in the construction of male masculinity within the show’s representations of their extravagant celebrity lifestyles. Smith and Beal analyzed eight episodes featuring Caucasian and African-American athletes from mainstream and alternative sports. Within the findings, they found two primary models of masculinity labeled the “Cool Pose” and the “James Bond” in addition to the emergence of the third image labeled as the “Attentive Dad.” Descriptions of all three, in the same order as they are previously mentioned, are as follows:

someone who is muscular and athletically competent, with extensive knowledge and ability to use upper-class knowledge and tastes... one who is muscular and athletically competent, with the ability to define oneself outside of upper-class knowledge and tastes, and celebrates success with extravagant living... the ‘provider,’ a modern and cooler version of *Father Knows Best*. (Smith & Beal, 2007, p. 110)

The trends identified in the athletes’ discussions about their homes and lifestyles were strongly tied to notions of masculinity and social class. In general, various aspects of the athletes’ homes and consumer goods were gendered such as spaces devoted to male leisure (aka “mancaves” and the beloved possession of “trophy” cars). Social class projections were often present during the athletes’ discussions of various valuable items in their home. Single athletes flaunted their hyper-heterosexuality while married athletes often incorporated their wives into the tour visually and orally.

Despite the trends that transcended across the board, representations of masculinity fluctuated depending on marital status, race and sport. African-American athletes often reflected

upon humble beginnings or lessons learned from elders and attributed their success to a foundation of family support. They also made racial references towards nuances of being “black” such as keeping Kool-Aid on hand or “keeping it real” despite playing into high-culture markers of upper-class elitism and opulence. Caucasian athletes seemed to lean upon their own abilities and talents as a means for their success. Racial references were also present in the discussions of the Caucasian athletes. Overall, they were perceived to subdue conventional race and class privileges. In conclusion, Smith and Beal (2007) believed that the show framed masculinity by presenting top-tier exemplars of success through racialized packages, comprised of dialogues and images, in efforts to sell “the good life” or a “cool lifestyle” to male segments of their target market.

Kamenova et al. (2013) used framing theory to examine news coverage concerning Angelina Jolie’s bilateral mastectomy. The researchers conducted a content analysis of 103 articles published within the following of her mastectomy. Kamenova et al. found that the story made headlines in top-tier global newspapers, such as The New York Times and The Times (London), with a significant amount of coverage. The major frames identified among the media about the actress or her decision were “brave and courageous,” “rational, well-informed, and evidence based,” “empowering, inspiring, and a role model for other women,” “fearful and made under duress” and “an act of narcissistic and attention-seeking celebrity.” Although the angle was centered on her celebrity, Jolie’s decision was reported positively because it raised public awareness about breast cancer and prevention. Aligning with the positive interpretation of her proactive choice, a combination of frames described her decision as brave and courageous that inspired other women at high risk for breast cancer to learn more about their options (Kamenova et al., 2013).

Berkers and Eecklaer (2014) conducted a comparative framing analysis of how two British newspapers, *The Guardian* and *The Independent*, gendered the lifestyles of rock and roll artists Amy Winehouse and Pete Doherty. Using a qualitative content analysis of 87 editorials, the researchers identified two categories of frames that they characterized as “rock and roll” and “rock and fall,” the first having a positive connotation and the second having a negative connotation. The five frames that aligned with the “rock and roll” category were labeled as: “living on the edge,” “hero,” “independent individual,” “authenticity” and “success.” The five frames attributed to the “rock and fall” category were labeled as “concern,” “cannot deliver,” “media victim,” “dependent individual” and “crazy.” Although both artists are well known for their musical talent and struggles with substance abuse, the analysis showed that the newspapers framed Doherty more positively than Winehouse. Journalists often discussed Doherty in terms of “living life on the edge” while expressing “concern” about Winehouse’s similarly destructive behavior. The authors concluded that whereas Doherty’s behavior was condoned or even praised at times, Winehouse was positioned as a victim to the excesses of fame and her rock star lifestyle (Berkers & Eecklaer, 2014).

Because entities, such as journalist or public relations practitioners, have the ability to control how LGBTQ celebrity images are contextually positioned or framed, representation in mediated formats combats a heteronormative society from defining who those individuals are (Dyer, 2001) and how they are perceived by others. Due to the media’s power to contribute positively or negatively to how publics encounter these identities, uncovering how Jenner was portrayed and the tactics that were observed managing her image during this event is important. Given the pervasiveness of celebrity culture, its influence on society and an increasingly open LGBTQ community, more research in this area is needed. Although Caitlyn Jenner is not the

first known transgender celebrity, her transition serves as a notable case study because a strategized, public transition such as hers is unprecedented within the intersection of celebrity culture, sports and the transgender community.

### **Research Questions**

Exploring how events are framed from a public relations image management perspective is critical since public relations practitioners influence the construction, maintenance and longevity of a celebrity's image and how public perceptions of them are shaped. Based upon this, the following research questions will direct this study:

1. What are the prominent framing models (situations, attributes, choices, actions, issues, responsibility and news) employed in the portrayal of Caitlyn Jenner?
2. What are the prominent framing devices (metaphors, jargon/catchphrases, contrast, spin and stories) employed in the portrayal of Caitlyn Jenner?
3. What was the overall tone of the portrayal of Caitlyn Jenner?

CHAPTER III:  
RESEARCH METHODS

**Methodology**

Through the lens of framing theory, the current exploratory study seeks to observe the framing of Caitlyn Jenner's transition within mainstream media. Drawing from methodologies used in the previous framing and celebrity research discussed, the researcher will assume an inductive qualitative approach. This will be achieved through a textual analysis of audiovisual and print media depicting the culmination of Jenner's transition before and after the Vanity Fair reveal.

According to Neuendorf (2002), content analysis is cited as a burgeoning technique that has been rising in popularity and usage within the field of communications (Riffe & Freitag, 1997; Yale & Gilly, 1998). Its range of application is substantial as content analyses have been used to examine a variety of topics covering television portrayals, gender roles, mediated imagery of minorities, politics in the news and advertising (Neuendorf, 2002). Content analysis is identified as one of many qualitative research methods (Burnard, 1995). Qualitative content analyses originate in disciplines outside of communications and the field of public relations. Although Bengtsson (2016) notes that qualitative content analysis is rooted in the field of social studies and has also been utilized in humanities studies (Jensen, 2002), this method of analysis has also been applied to public relations research.

Schroder stated there are two major types of content analysis; content analysis (quantitative) and textual analysis or discourse analysis (qualitative) (Jensen, 2002). Patton

(2002) stated that textual analyses consist of “any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings” (p. 453). According to Saldana (2011), textual analyses are a systematic way to examine news, print media, visuals, websites, movies, transcripts, television shows and cultural artifacts. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) described textual analyses as tools that allows one to delve deeper into the text. Krippendorff (2004) emphasized that this technique allows researchers to extract meaning and draw inferences from contexts when utilizing this method as a qualitative research method. Because meaning can be drawn from patterns, themes, phrases, categories, classifications and explicit or implicit messages among texts (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), textual analysis helps us to gain a deeper understanding of reality and the things that influence our society’s worldview (Dean, 2016; Hesse-Biber & Levy, 2006). Kondracki and Wellman (2002) stated that by allowing the text to reveal its own categories gives researchers the opportunities to gain new information or understanding of a particular phenomenon (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Among research in the areas of visual communications, including televised, electronic and print media formats, textual analyses are better tools for deriving meaning outside of calculated results obtained from quantitative processes (Jensen, 2002). Meaning can be discerned from patterns or themes that manifest from communicative texts, helping researchers to “uncover reality” through this approach (Saraisky, 2015, p. 27).

The researcher assumed a textual analysis to examine the framing of Caitlyn Jenner. Despite the existing research regarding celebrity culture, coding schemes from previous studies could not be replicated for the current study. Although Hallahan’s (1999) seven models of framing and Fairhurst and Sarr’s (1996) framing devices were utilized as guidelines to identify frames and framing devices, this led the researcher to rely on inductive reasoning to discover and

develop codes through themes and categories that emerged from the data. This method is relevant to the current study due to its ability to “[provide] us with relevant predictions, explanations, interpretations and applications” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 1) and the overall descriptive nature of the research.

The researcher began by first structuring the time frame of the study. The time frame selected was a six-month period (April 2015 – September 2015) entered around Jenner’s Vanity Fair reveal. Based upon the researcher’s interest in Jenner’s public transition, it was important to capture the peak of activity before and after she officially debuted her female identity as Caitlyn. In response to that focus, the six-month period was set to include three pivotal moments within the Caitlyn Jenner public relations storyline. The moments are as follows: [a] Pre-Vanity Fair (Apr 25, 2015 - May 31, 2015), [b] Vanity Fair Reveal (June 01, 2015) and [c] Post-Vanity Fair Reveal (June 02, 2015 – Sept 10, 2015). A purposive sample of videos, photographs and print media from various sources featuring Jenner that were aired or released within these time frames was utilized. The units of analysis were accessed electronically via youtube.com, nbc.com, abcnews.com, ellentv.com and in print via the Vanity Fair July 2015 issue. The data sources are listed and described according to the time frame in which they were aired or released.

### **Pre - Vanity Fair Reveal**

Before Jenner officially announced her new identity as Caitlyn, media and public speculation about the transition was significant. This category of observation spanning three months prior to the Vanity Fair reveal was created to cover media selections that were aired or released within this time frame.

*“Bruce Jenner - The Interview”*

Bruce Jenner's interview on April 24, 2015, with Diane Sawyer on ABC's "20/20" was selected because it was offered on a major network, it was released in prime timing and it received high-profile coverage (20/20, 2015). Due to the high anticipation of Jenner's explanation of the soon-to-be event, the show captured almost 17 million viewers (Kissell, 2015).

### **Vanity Fair Reveal**

June 1, 2015, is the day Bruce Jenner became formally known as Caitlyn Jenner on the front cover of Vanity Fair. This incited a plethora of media coverage from a diverse array of outlets and fed the public's fascination and curiosity about Jenner's transition.

#### *"Call Me Caitlyn"*

Released on June 1<sup>st</sup>, the unveiling of Caitlyn Jenner on the cover of Vanity Fair was a major turning point in Jenner's media portrayals (Bissinger, 2015). This magazine issue not only showcased Jenner's new female identity on the front cover and within a series of high-fashion photographs that accompanied the editorial, it also detailed Jenner's transition and her life leading up to her major transformation (Bissinger, 2015). This text was selected because Buzz Bissinger's feature story was the first account of Jenner's transition into Caitlyn and Annie Leibovitz visual depiction of Jenner as her new self was the first public presentation of Jenner as a woman.

#### *"Caitlyn Jenner is Finally 'Free' On Vanity Fair's Cover"*

The day Jenner's Vanity Fair issue was released, June 1, 2015, the magazine also released a promotional teaser of the interview spread on their official YouTube channel (Vanity Fair, 2015). To date, the video has received more than 15,500,000 views (Vanity Fair, 2015).

Although the short snippet was a supplemental component to the actual magazine spread, this video holds value as the first video representation of Jenner as a Caitlyn.

### **Post Vanity Fair Reveal**

After Jenner revealed her new identity, she selectively seized opportunities to share more information about her physical, mental and emotional transformations. The dates for this category range between June 2, 2015, and September 9, 2015.

#### *“‘Call Me Caitlyn,’ a Documentary”*

This brief interview posted on July 26, 2015, seemed to be an extension of the first Vanity Fair video discussed above (Vanity Fair, 2015). However, instead of functioning primarily in a promotional manner, this video provides more behind-the-scenes exclusives. To date, this video has received more than 2,300,000 views (Vanity Fair, 2015). The interviews included in this miniature documentary provide another set of perspectives from Caitlyn as well as key players within the Vanity Fair team. The video was selected due to the framing opportunities that are present in the imagery and general commentary, but also within the emotional sentiments and personal moments that are depicted (Vanity Fair, 2015).

#### *ESPY Awards*

Aired on July 15, 2015, Caitlyn’s acceptance of the Arthur Ashe ESPY Award was especially significant due to Jenner’s ties to the sports world as a former male athlete (ABC News, 2015). The award and Jenner’s speech publicly marked a monumental milestone in Jenner’s professional career as well as a controversial first for the long-running award show. This piece was selected because Jenner utilized this platform to discuss transgender issues and to promote change.

#### *Caitlyn Jenner on “The Ellen DeGeneres Show”*

Aired on Sept 8, 2015, this text was selected because it was Caitlyn's first appearance on a talk show (Ellentube, 2015). Not only did Caitlyn discuss various aspects of her new life including her controversial perspective on gay marriage, she shared these intimate feelings on primetime television with one of the most famous LGBTQ celebrity advocates, Ellen DeGeneres. *"Today Exclusive: One-On-One with Caitlyn Jenner"*

This "Today" show interview was conducted by veteran journalist Matt Lauer and aired on September 9, 2015 (TODAY, 2015). While playing a round of golf, Jenner and Lauer casually discussed several aspects of her new life (TODAY, 2015). Examples of their discussion topics included her ESPY Arthur Ashe Courage Award, her car accident, the tabloid coverage of her transition, the reactions of others, politics, gender roles in sports, family life and dating (TODAY, 2015; Stump, 2015; Kim, 2015). This interview was selected because it was another exclusive aired on a major network, NBC, and the setting was notably less formal.

### **Process**

Once the comprehensive time frame was set, the researcher began the analysis process. For recording purposes, an excel workbook was utilized to house all findings in one central location. Documentation for each data sample was recorded in the excel workbook on labeled spreadsheets. The spreadsheets served as electronic coding forms for each sample.

First, the researcher immersed herself into the data (Elo & Kyngas, 2008; Dean, 2016) to familiarize herself with the content of each sample. This was accomplished by reading, viewing or observing each sample in its entirety at least once (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Then, utilizing Hallahan (1999) and Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) as guidelines, the researcher conducted an in-depth textual analysis of the material to identify and document dominant framing models and framing techniques that manifested from the data. Like the research of Kamenova et al. (2013),

the overall tone of each unit of analysis was also surveyed and notated as positive, negative or neutral. Other general information that was recorded for each sample included; title, format, source of retrieval, description (provided by respective resource), original airdate/release date, main characters, seven models of framing (situations, attributes, choices, actions, issues and responsibility) notes, framing devices (metaphors, jargon/catchphrases, contrast, spin and stories) notes and tone notes.

Once each sample was examined and all the observations were documented, the information from the workbook was analyzed. An open-coding process of “breaking down, examining, comparing, and categorizing data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 61) was applied to the recorded information. Emergent categories and instances of phenomena were constantly developed and compared (Hill & White, 2000) via the comparison method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lindlof & Taylor, 2011; Dean, 2016) and related sub-categories were connected to respective broader categories (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Smaller categories were grouped, combined or separated based upon the researcher’s logical discretion via axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Corbin & Strauss, 2007). Connective similarities and distinctive differences gathered from the process above allowed the researcher to identify major themes. Interpretation of the major categories and themes took place. The findings of each are described and explained in depth within Chapter IV.

## CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

### FINDINGS

The development and management of Jenner's image was critical in the months surrounding her very public transition into the woman she revealed as her authentic self. The following section will describe the framing models and devices found in the text that were used to portray Jenner's coming out, advocacy to help others, new identity and accompanying look, familial relations as well as her sexuality.

#### *"My Story," "My Truth"*

Jenner's long-awaited revelation that she was transitioning into a woman, whose name was revealed on the cover of *Vanity Fair* as Caitlyn, was portrayed through the framing of situations. This model chronicled a lifetime of Jenner's internal battles with her gender identity, and it detailed every aspect of her journey towards becoming her authentic self. Via the framing device of stories, Jenner's narrative or truth provided an in-depth, personal account that humanized the reality of her situation in a vivid way. The focus of this model was not only on the contents of her story, but also on her desires to tell the story the right way.

The framing of situations positioned Jenner's authentic self, Caitlyn, as imprisoned within the lie she had been perpetuating living as Bruce. In the "20/20" interview Jenner explained to Sawyer that mentally, emotionally and spiritually she had always been more female than male and her true being or "authentic self" was a female (20/20, 2015). When asked directly if she was a woman by Sawyer in the "20/20" interview, Jenner stated:

Yes, and for all intents and purposes I am a woman... my heart and my soul and everything that I do in life, it is part of me, that female side is part of me. It's who I am... I was not genetically born that way [as a female], as of now I have all the male parts and all that kind of stuff, so in a lot of ways we're different okay? But we still identify as female... (20/20, 2015)

Jenner further explained that she could no longer live the falsehood of her life as Bruce, and that she was ready to confront this issue. Jenner revealed to Sawyer in the "20/20" interview, "I look at it this way, Bruce always telling a lie, he's lived a lie his whole life about who he is, and I can't do that any longer" (20/20, 2015). Jenner was ready to share those truths so that she could openly live as a woman and freely experience the remainder of life as her authentic self.

However, this time around there would be no secrets.

As an effort to gain control of her story after enduring months of ridicule in the tabloids, Vanity Fair was granted exclusive access to Jenner's coming out. She explained in the "20/20" interview that it was the "story that was in [her] soul that [she] couldn't tell" (20/20, 2015). Due to the complex nature of Jenner's transgender identity, the Vanity Fair cover story was extremely in-depth, elaborate, detailed and comprehensive. Over the course of 33 pages and several high-fashion photographs, various aspects of Jenner's journey were revealed and detailed. Entitled "He Says Goodbye, She Says Hello," writer Buzz Bissinger and photographer Annie Leibovitz captured every notable moment of Jenner's life and transformation. This included her past as Bruce the Olympian, star, husband and father of 10; her present as Caitlyn, a woman seeking to discover who she is; her path to happiness; and her hopes for the future.

Emphasis was placed not only on the content of Jenner's story and truth, but also upon communicating those intimate details the right way. Jenner articulated this emphasis through her statement, "I'm clear with my responsibility going forward, to tell my story the right way" during her speech at the ESPY Awards (ABC News, 2015). To ensure her story was

communicated and explained in the best way, Jenner needed to acquire a team and a plan. This was evidenced when she called upon the expertise of her long-time publicist, Alan Neirob, to help her come out to the public. In her discussions with Ellen DeGeneres about coming out amid all the rumors surrounding her transition, Jenner explained:

If I [wanted] to keep it up here instead of down here in the trash and in the media how do I do that? I got my PR guy, Alan Neirob... I called him up again and [asked] how we can do it. (Ellentube, 2015)

Jenner then took DeGeneres by the hand to share in a playful manner that, “We started exactly the way you started. Diane Sawyer held our hand and walked us down the aisle of freedom” (Ellentube, 2015). In the same fashion, Jenner made sure to publicly acknowledge her gratitude to Sawyer for authentically portraying her story in a graceful manner during her ESPY speech.

A few months after the interview with Sawyer, Jenner was strategically unveiled in true female form on the cover of *Vanity Fair*. *Vanity Fair*’s involvement with Jenner’s coming out was important to note because the executive team hired the perfect personnel, writer Bissinger and photographer Leibovitz, to support their great efforts to portray her story in the most in-depth, attractive and compelling manner.

### *Using My Story to Help Others*

Jenner’s monumental coming out was often overshadowed with skepticism of her motives. Even Jenner’s loving and supporting mother was mentioned as initially doubtful. Throughout the texts, Jenner was consistently depicted as refuting the speculation that she came out for money, reality television ratings or publicity via the framing device of spin. Jenner outright confronted those cynical lines of thought in the “20/20” interview and the *Vanity Fair* cover story where she reiterated, “I’m not doing it for money. I’m doing it to help my soul and help other people” (Bissinger, 2015, p. 30). This portrayal not only actively fought negative

perceptions of Jenner, but was purposed to boost Jenner's image as an individual who cared about the welfare of herself and others.

This humanitarian spin was used to counter the accusations mentioned above by framing her decision to go public as one for the greater good of society and the transgender community. In several ways, Jenner was observed communicating the desire to use her platform to share her story and incite change. "We're going to make a difference in the world with what we're doing," she stated in the "20/20" interview (20/20, 2015). This point was supported in her ESPY award speech where she proclaimed:

I'm clear with my responsibility going forward, to tell my story the right way... to keep learning, to reshape the landscape of how trans issues are discussed, how trans people are treated. And then more broadly to promote a very simple idea: accepting people for who they are. (ABC News, 2015)

Jenner also explained that she hoped her truth would help others the way the honesty and openness of transgender pioneers helped her. Honorable mentions of transgender individuals in the "20/20" interview such as Laverne Cox, Janet Mock and Chaz Bono in combination with the historical recounting of Christine Jorgensen and Renee Richards illustrated the valuable contributions of transgender people who came forward about their transgender identity. Likewise, it indirectly suggested Jenner could become a pioneer as well.

Jenner's mission to be an agent of change was initiated when she brought the issues of violence, suicide and bullying of transgender people to the forefront during her ESPY acceptance speech. Outside of taking a stand for the transgender community, Jenner eloquently urged audiences to try and empathize with others by learning to respect differences. The following excerpt from the conclusion of her speech is as follows:

So for the people out there wondering what this is all about — whether it's about courage or controversy or publicity — well, I'll tell you what it's all about. It's about what happens from here. It's not just about one person, it's about thousands of people. It's not

just about me, it's about all of us accepting one another. We are all different. That's not a bad thing, that's a good thing. And while it may not be easy to get past the things you always don't understand, I want to prove that it is absolutely possible if we only do it together. (ABC News, 2015)

Another one of Jenner's efforts to incite change through her E! docu-series, purposed to share her journey and full transformation, was also discussed in the texts. On "The Ellen DeGeneres Show," DeGeneres enthusiastically commended the docu-series' appeal as "fantastic and educational" while Jenner expounded on its goals "to make a difference and educate people and open up a conversation so we can talk about this issue" (Ellentube, 2015). Statements her from family and other individuals involved in the reveal, including members of the Vanity Fair staff and the production team of the E! docu-series, also contributed to this humanitarian spin. "We understand the power and responsibility to be able to share this story," E!'s head of programming Jeff Olde assured in the Vanity Fair cover story, "If I get one thing right in my professional career, it will be this" (Bissinger, 2015, p. 30). Bissinger supported this in the Vanity Fair documentary by affirming Jenner's story is important and valuable to our culture.

#### *Jenner's Body and Feminine Appearance*

Jenner's feminine appearance, communicated through the framing of attributes, was a large theme throughout the text. The consistency of this theme served to answer the public's question of what Jenner would look like as a woman, and how she achieved that aspect of her identity once her transition was completed. The answers to these questions are observed through the discussions and visual presentation of Jenner's physical image that accentuated her feminine appearance via her body, style of dress and personal grooming.

Sawyer sparked the conversation about Jenner's appearance in the "20/20" interview through her voice-over; "and he's so eager to get started, we wondered how would she look" (20/20, 2015). Jenner explained in the Vanity Fair documentary that her outward appearance was

a big aspect of who she was becoming because it was not only critical for her to be comfortable in her own skin, but for others to be comfortable in her presence. In the Vanity Fair documentary Jenner reflected:

I was always worried you never wanted to look like the guy in the dress. If you're going to do that, come out, you really have to look the part, that you have to look very feminine.... What I call my presentation is extremely important because it puts people at ease... they're just comfortable being around you. (Vanity Fair, 2015)

Although Jenner had yet to fully transition into a woman at the time of her “20/20” interview, it was evident to audiences that she had already begun to transition physically. According to the interview, Jenner had “surgery on his nose and hours of painful electrolysis to remove his beard and the hair on his chest” to alter his appearance during his first attempt to transition in the 1980s (20/20, 2015). At the point of the interview the structure of Jenner’s face appeared to be slimmer and more defined. Her long hair was parted down the middle of her forehead and gathered in a low ponytail, which she let down in efforts to become more comfortable as she discussed her female identity. The blue button-down, collared shirt she wore also showed hints of developing breasts.

Once the Vanity Fair cover story was released, it was revealed that Jenner’s physical image as a female was constructed through the combination of several things. However, it was noted that Jenner opted not to have sexual reassignment surgery. Jenner discussed her intentions to get the procedure in the future in the “20/20” interview and the Vanity Fair cover story, but that it would be an intimate milestone that would not be publicly announced. This decision was supported by the transgender community’s ideology that “genitals do not equal gender,” as expressed in the “20/20” interview and the Vanity Fair Cover story, and sexual reassignment surgery is not a requirement to successfully transition into another gender (20/20, 2015). The

medical and cosmetic procedures Jenner did undergo to become Caitlyn were described in the following excerpt from the Vanity Fair cover story:

Jenner had already been taking hormones. The hair on his body and his facial hair had been removed. He had had his nose fixed twice and the tracheal shave. On this Sunday his destination was the office of a surgeon specializing in what is known as facial-feminization surgery... it can involve such procedures as hairline correction, forehead contouring, and jaw and chin contouring. There would also be a procedure to augment his breasts. (Bissinger, 2015, p. 2)

Various components of the above were made more salient throughout further discussions in the text. For example, one effect of hormone therapy, during Jenner's first attempt at transitioning in the 1980s, was colorfully illustrated through Jenner's description of his B-cup breast size in the Vanity Fair cover story. This selection re-emphasized the conspicuous changes of Jenner's breast size through the words of Jenner's son. A young Brody informed his mother, "Mommy, we saw Daddy get out of the shower and he's got boobs" (Bissinger, 2015, p. 21). The noticeability of Jenner's breast size was later downplayed as a "little bit of a man boob situation" in the Vanity Fair cover story by Jenner's former wife Kris (Bissinger, 2015, p. 23).

What was then Bruce's "man boob situation" became Caitlyn's perfectly perched buxom after Jenner debuted her surgically enhanced breasts in the Vanity Fair cover shoot. As mentioned earlier, the augmenting of her breasts was one of the many surgeries that she undertook to physically solidify her transition into a woman. In efforts to achieve that classic hourglass look that most women strive to achieve, Jenner's unveiling as a woman accentuated her new body in a cinched satin, ivory-colored corset and a matching pair of bloomers showing off her elongated legs. Jenner's body was showcased similarly in form-fitting and low-cut ensembles exposing her back, legs, shoulders and décolletage throughout "Caitlyn Jenner is Finally 'Free' on the cover of Vanity Fair" and "'Call Me Caitlyn' a Documentary." Although not as scantily clad, her womanly shape was still visible in the business casual outfit she wore on

“The Ellen DeGeneres Show” as well as the sportswear she golfed in with Matt Lauer on the “Today” show segment.

Jenner’s wardrobe and grooming were also highlighted attributes of her newfound image. Jenner’s style of dress was an important aspect of her image and identity because her secret cross-dressing sessions, as a child and adult, were explained as a way for her to express her inner femaleness. Now, Jenner no longer had to cloak her female undergarments under suits and menswear to feel a sense of connection with her authentic self. She could openly enjoy the excitement that women feel about accessorizing and dressing-up. This was observed when Jenner showed Sawyer in the “20/20” interview a “very chic, classy black little outfit” that she wanted to wear to dinner while informing Sawyer about her future closet stating, “in the next house I am building a glam room” (20/20, 2015). Jenner’s sister Pam also helped to identify her budding style of dress during the “20/20” interview because Jenner revealed her plans to get rid of all her men’s clothing as she unified herself with her female identity. In the Vanity Fair documentary, Fashion and Style Director Jessica Diehl briefly discussed her involvement in helping Jenner develop her personal wardrobe. Diehl identified this style as something that would have to be influenced by Jenner’s taste, comfort level and the type of woman she wanted to present to the world. In the “20/20” interview, Jenner and her sister characterized the most befitting look for her personal style as conservative and classy yet fashionable.

Caitlyn’s debut in the Vanity Fair cover story was the culmination of her polished feminine presentation. Jenner’s high-fashion clothing, in addition to the glitz and glamour of her makeup and styled hair, allowed everyone to recognize that she had officially arrived and the shell of the man she once hid under was no more. Jenner unabashedly showed off her cleavage, painted nails and growing locks that were softly coiffed to frame the curves of her face. Jenner’s

appearance at the ESPY Awards, and later on “The Ellen DeGeneres Show,” reinforced that femininity with a confident air.

As Jenner discussed issues of the transgender community, she radiated a glow with poise and elegance. Her styled hairdo and makeup highlighted her facial features. The long form-fitting dress she wore draped her statuesque figure, and her jewelry accented the whole ensemble. Her confidence projected a natural air of softness which communicated to the public that she was empowered by her transformation and finally comfortable in her own skin. Jenner’s revelation of the first time she saw herself in the mirror during the Vanity Fair cover shoot exemplified how her physical transformation empowered her. In the Vanity Fair documentary Jenner stated:

I kind of from a distance looked in the mirror, and I thought ‘Oh my God.’ It was the first time I’d ever really seen an image of me, of who I am. I mean over-the-top better than what I thought it ever would be... seeing that image was powerful for me. (Vanity Fair, 2015)

Jenner’s air of confidence was also observed in her interactions with Ellen DeGeneres. After receiving DeGeneres’ compliment, “You look fantastic,” Jenner sassily informed Ellen with a smirk of approval that she felt “Fabulous” (Ellentube, 2015).

### *Family*

Naturally, the topic of coming out prompts discussions regarding the acceptance and rejection of an LGBTQ individual by their family and friends. Due to Jenner’s previous representations in the media and real-life role as a father and husband, the framing of situations expounded on Jenner’s reality of coming out to her family and their subsequent reactions. Thus, this model was purposed to demonstrate acceptance and tolerance at the most intimate levels.

Jenner’s sister, Pam, and mother, Esther, were portrayed as accepting, compassionate and supportive. When Pam recalled in the “20/20” interview the first time she found out about

Jenner's gender identity issues and her cross-dressing in the past "[she] couldn't believe it," and was devastated to think about the years of sadness and pain that Jenner had gone through dealing with this problem alone (20/20, 2015). Pam stated that she wept deeply, "but the tears were for him mostly, the pain that he experienced as child" (20/20, 2015). However, she communicated that was relieved to know that Jenner was now on a path to happiness. Pam even shared a bout of laughter with Jenner while they chatted about what Jenner's new identity would look like. In the same supportive and loving fashion, Esther explained that she was just as proud of Jenner during her transition as she was during the 1976 Olympics. In the "20/20" interview she was recorded telling Jenner, "I was very proud of you when you stood on that podium in Montreal. I never thought I could be more proud of you, but I'm learning I can be" (20/20, 2015). Esther's emotional support was also apparent in her attendance to the ESPY Awards ceremony where Jenner was recognized for the Arthur Ashe Courage Award. Jenner bragged about her relationship with her 89-year old mother on "The Ellen DeGeneres Show" stating, "she's been great" (Ellentube, 2015).

It was also expressed in the texts that all of Jenner's former wives knew about her secret within varying degrees. In the Vanity Fair cover story and "20/20" interview the first two wives, Chrystie and Linda, were explained as compassionate and understanding. Despite her devastation, Linda naturally sympathized with Jenner. This is evidenced in the following excerpt from the Vanity Fair cover story:

As much as I felt my life and my dream were destroyed and I was going to have to get a divorce and then my kids, I was going to have to explain to them - I thought my pain doesn't compare to the pain that he's in. (Bissinger, 2015, p. 20)

According to Jenner, her relationships with the two and the children they shared were greatly affected by her gender identity issues because the issues intensified during these two marriages.

Her confusion led to the end of the marriages and the role that Jenner took on as a distant father to four children. However, despite the years of pain and hurt, Jenner's children were portrayed as very supportive when Jenner came out to them. In the "20/20" interview and Vanity Fair cover story, Brandon, Brody, Burt and Cassandra expressed their excitement to have an opportunity to build a new relationship with the more authentic version of their once absentee father. "I feel like I'm getting an upgraded version of my dad, or a parent," Brandon stated in the "20/20" interview (20/20, 2015).

Contrastingly, Kris and the children she parented with Jenner weren't as unanimous in their acceptance of Jenner's coming out. Throughout the "20/20" interview and the Vanity Fair cover story, Kris was explained as having the most trouble accepting Jenner's truth. There was a visible dispute between Jenner and Kris regarding her awareness of Jenner's gender issues. Kris argued, "there wasn't a gender issue. Nobody mentioned a gender issue" (Bissinger, 2015, p. 23). In opposition to Kris' downplay of the issues, Jenner claimed in the Vanity Fair cover story that she may not have been able to articulate how deeply seeded the issue was, but that Kris knew she took hormones before they met and would allow Jenner to cross-dress when she traveled by herself, just not in the home.

Although Jenner tried to preserve the special bond that she cultivated with the remaining two biological children and six stepchildren, the texts showed that she received somewhat of mixed support from them. Her two biological daughters, Kylie and Kendall, expressed their support of Jenner in the "20/20" interview by stating, "We love our dad very much... we just want him to be happy. If he's happy then we're happy" (20/20, 2015). In the "20/20" interview Jenner also reflected upon how Kim came to accept her decision to transition, through Kim's husband Kanye West, and how she even lent Jenner some friendly image advice. On the other

hand, Jenner noted in the “20/20” interview that Kourtney was worried about how Jenner’s young grandchildren would process the change, and Khloe was the child that took the news the hardest. According to Jenner in the “20/20” interview, “she’s had the toughest time with it because she has had a lot of losses in her life” (20/20, 2015). Surprisingly, no commentary from or about Jenner’s stepson, Robert Jr., was mentioned.

### *Sexuality*

Jenner’s coming out as a transgender woman cultivated great interest in her sexuality as it was discussed several times throughout the texts. The framing device of contrast took the unwanted focus off of Jenner’s sexual orientation by first dispelling any assumptions or speculations. This portrayal not only helped take the emphasis off of her sexuality by talking in terms of what she was not, but it also simultaneously made the clear distinction between sexual desire and gender identity. Lastly, it served to classify her sexuality as to be determined in the unforeseen future.

When the topic arose, the complex and ambiguous nature of Jenner’s sexuality as a transgender woman was often juxtaposed with her past sexuality as a heterosexual man. This supported her claims that she was not homosexual. In the “20/20” interview and the Vanity Fair cover story, Jenner was described as having a healthy sex life with former wives. Her past sexual relationship with her first wife, Linda, was described as good in the “20/20” interview. When asked her opinion about her sex life with Kris in the “20/20” interview, Jenner stated, “I thought we had a pretty good sex life” (20/20, 2015). Similarly, Chrystie’s perspective of Jenner’s sexuality in the Vanity Fair cover story was that “[Jenner] had a strong, healthy sex drive” (Bissinger, 2015, p. 19). When asked explicitly in the “20/20” interview if the speculations about her homosexuality were true, Jenner claimed that she was never gay. Jenner affirmed, “No I’m

not gay, I am not gay. I am, as far as I know I'm heterosexual... I've never been with a guy, I've always been married raising kids" (20/20, 2015). Although in this instance Jenner stated that she was not gay, she failed to clarify her sexual orientation.

In reference to Jenner's sexuality, the distinction between gender and sexuality was also called upon. When Sawyer continued to press Jenner for a clearer answer, Jenner then reminded her that she was getting the two topics confused. "Sexuality is who you are personally attracted to, who turns you on, male or female, but gender identity is how to do with who you are as a person, and your soul, and who you identify with inside," Jenner informed Sawyer in the "20/20" interview (20/20, 2015). This difference was also made clear in the Vanity Fair cover story when discussing Jenner's sexuality as Caitlyn. Bissinger noted, "It should also be emphasized that sexual preference and gender identity have nothing to do with each other" (Bissinger, 2015, p. 19).

As the conversation about her sexuality in the texts progressed, Jenner then communicated that her love life was not a priority at this stage in her transition. In the "20/20" interview, Jenner defaulted to the label of being asexual until she was ready to explore those possibilities in the future. "I'm 65. It's not like you wanna [sic] go out and get it on all the time," she added (20/20, 2015). Jenner reiterated her lack of concern regarding her sexual orientation in the Vanity Fair cover story by stating, "If you have a list of 10 reasons to transition, sex would be number 10" (Bissinger, 2015, p. 19). Jenner's low level of concern was apparent in her response to DeGeneres' inquiry about what gender she was interested in dating. "Right now I'm just very busy doing a lot of things. I'm just kind of getting used to where I'm at and who I'm at, and as time goes on I'll kinda deal with that subject," Jenner affirmed (Ellentube, 2015). Jenner shared a similar sentiment with Matt Lauer on the "Today" show segment when asked what type

of person she was attracted to. Jenner stated, “Right now I’m just happy living [sic] myself. I have no idea what the future holds. I’ll cross that bridge when I come to it. I just want to enjoy myself right now” (TODAY, 2015).

### **Tone**

The third research question sought to identify the overall tone of Jenner’s coming out story and the unveiling of her new identity as Caitlyn. The tone of the texts were assessed by the positive or negative portrayal of these events. This was observed through commentary from others, statements from Jenner and conversations about Jenner. Based on the textual analysis, the overall tone was positive. Despite this, the researcher also came across moments of negativity.

Jenner’s public coming out and subsequent transition into Caitlyn was positioned by others as a brave and courageous decision. In the “20/20” interview, Dr. Norman Spack of Boston Children’s Hospital noted transgender people “by nature [were] courageous” (20/20, 2015). Jenner’s older children supported this positive descriptor by agreeing that she was brave for being open and honest with them. In the “20/20” interview Jenner’s oldest daughter, Cassandra, explained her embrace of Jenner’s courage when she heard Jenner’s story. “I just held [her] hand and I cried with [her] and I just told [her] how proud of [her] I was and how inspired I was” Cassandra stated (20/20, 2015).

Furthermore, her selection as the recipient of the Arthur Ashe Courage Award was indicative of other people’s perception of her courage and bravery. As Jenner walked to the stage to accept her award, she was commended by the crowd with a roar of applause and a standing ovation. Her acceptance speech made her courage more salient as she capitalized on the opportunity to bring awareness to transgender issues despite the potential backlash.

The way others addressed her was viewed as positive, progressive and respectful. Based upon Jenner's preference during the different phases of her transition, in every scenario her desired pronouns were used. For example, in the "20/20" interview it was explained that Jenner requested to be addressed as Bruce with male pronouns. When asked by her children what Jenner wanted them to call her in the "20/20" interview, she told them to continue to call her Dad and that she would always answer to that. The proper pronoun usage was also reflected when Jenner was revealed as a transgender woman named Caitlyn. It was noted that there was no use of stereotypical phrases.

Positivity also radiated from Jenner herself. Jenner no longer desired to cope with her issues in the darkness. Now she was free to share her story and be herself. When Jenner reflected on her tough journey in the Vanity Fair documentary, she was visibly overwhelmed with emotion that she had come so far and was able to see the progress she could never have imagined. She had exceeded her own expectations and was in awe at her newfound image, life and worldview. Throughout all of the samples, Jenner was also very grateful for her family and often credited them for supporting and loving her as well as the Vanity Fair team for their contributions. "I have so many good people, and love and support," she affirmed in the Vanity Fair documentary (Vanity Fair. 2015).

Positivity radiated from her hope for the future which was observed as inspiring and contagious. "Every day is a new adventure," she stated in the Vanity Fair documentary (Vanity Fair, 2015). Each day was expressed as a new phase for her to experience as Caitlyn. Jenner was excited to explore new things or things she had always wanted to do, but never could as Bruce. Jenner explained her joy just to be able to "be one of the girls" during girls' nights filled with laughter, wine and camaraderie (20/20, 2015). Her hope for a brighter future was not limited to

herself, but was also apparent in her views towards a more understanding society. In the Vanity Fair documentary, Jenner explained there was some progression on the issue of transgender identities, and that the social climate was now more progressive due to the increase of awareness and information on these issues. This progress was also acknowledged in the Vanity Fair documentary from a clip of “Late Night” talk show host Seth Meyers. “I’m so happy. I can’t believe we are sorta [sic] living in this time where this is happening and people are being so positive about it,” Meyers commended, “So congratulations!” (Vanity Fair, 2015).

Despite the overwhelming positivity, Jenner’s public coming out and transition was cast in a negative light during various scenarios. Negativity arose from the questioning of Jenner’s motives as something she wanted to do for money or popular culture relevancy. It was mentioned in the Vanity Fair cover story that in the beginning even Jenner’s mother was doubtful of Jenner’s intentions. Due to her affiliation with the Kardashian fame train and their publicity driven tycoon, Jenner had to implicitly and explicitly defend her reasons for coming out. An example of this was observed in the “20/20” interview where Jenner went from amused to flabbergasted by the publicity stunt accusations. Jenner exclaimed, “Yeah right! Oh my God Diane. Do you have any idea of what I’ve been going through all my life? And they’re gonna say I’m doing this for publicity, for a show?” (20/20, 2015).

Another instance of negativity within the samples was DeGeneres’ passive challenging of Jenner’s conservative viewpoints on her talk show. When the topic of gay marriage came about, Jenner didn’t seem to be a genuine advocate for the cause. DeGeneres’ blatant comment, “It’s funny cause you’re still kind of not on board with it,” (Ellentube, 2015) expressed her surprise at Jenner’s misguided response as to how she came around to accepting gay marriage. Despite the flat expression on DeGeneres’ face, she tried to clean up Jenner’s answer to make it sound more

supportive. Unfortunately, her questioning made it obvious that Jenner still had a lot to learn about equality and non-discrimination against the LGBTQ community.

Jenner was also framed negatively in the Vanity Fair cover story as a dead beat parent to the children she fathered in her first two marriages. The Vanity Fair cover story was purposed to capture every major aspect of Jenner's story, which included her mistakes just as much as her achievements. One of the things that Jenner admitted she regretted was her involvement, or lack thereof, in the lives of her four oldest children. The following excerpt from the Vanity Fair cover story illustrated this:

Juggling two ex-wives with a third wife was at times very difficult. But not seeing his children for long periods, beginning around the time of their adolescence, not acknowledging birthdays, not going to graduations, and intentionally not being there for the birth of his daughter were Jenner's own decisions. (Bissinger, 2015, p. 12)

Furthermore, the Vanity Fair cover story bluntly characterized Jenner as insensitive and weak despite her acknowledgment that she should have done a better job of being present in her children's lives. Although the Vanity Fair cover story noted the factors that influenced Jenner's absenteeism, it didn't excuse or grant Jenner any absolution for her faults as a parent.

## DISCUSSION

The following discussion was based on the interpretation and evaluation of the findings. Existing literature was re-introduced to gain contextual understanding of her perceived strategy. By way of framing techniques identified in the literature, this paper argues that various aspects of Jenner's portrayal fed the public's curiosity about her newfound identity and personal journey while simultaneously educating them about the reality of being a transgender person. Thus, making her experiences as a transgender woman non-threatening, less alien, relatable and easier for audiences to comprehend, and ultimately empathize with. The following framing models and devices that were used to portray Jenner's coming out, advocacy to help others, new identity and accompanying look, familial relations and sexuality were discussed in detail.

### *"My Story," "My Truth"*

By February 2015 the media had caught on to Jenner's secret that she was transitioning into her a woman. At the time of this event, Jenner had already established years of global stardom and celebrity. This classified any leaked information regarding her private life and public life as a topic of interest for the paparazzi (Mendelson, 2007) and then the public (Dyer, 1979; Turner, 2004). As Jenner's transition grew more and more noticeable, the falsehoods of speculation surmounted, ridicule became abundant and her image suffered greatly. Due to the detriment of "destructive information" to the process of celebrity image management (Mendelson, 2007), Jenner and her publicist hastily developed some "protective practices" or what Adalian (2015) entitled, "Caitlyn Jenner's Masterful Press Strategy," to handle her desire to come out publicly as a transgender woman.

Analysis of the texts showed that Jenner had to first address the issue at hand by thwarting the spread of unauthorized information, lies and half-truths. Jenner achieved this by

first by telling the truth (Adalian, 2015) and claiming ownership of the narrative through what she characterized as “my story” (20/20, 2015). Per Jenner, this plan began with her emotional “20/20” interview with Diane Sawyer in which she explicitly stated that she was physically, mentally and emotionally gendered female (20/20, 2015). This interview served as a detailed preview of what was to come on the cover of *Vanity Fair*’s July issue which exclusively portrayed Jenner’s story in its entirety, covering her childhood all the way to her recent transformation into womanhood.

Jenner’s need for image management during this turning point in her life lends itself to existing public relations and LGBTQ literature. Jenner’s initial image woes, pre-transition, were reflective of Mendelson’s (2007) discussion centered around the paparazzi and its function to challenge the control of celebrity images in the media. However, Mendelson (2007) affirmed that same power is granted to celebrities and their publicists to contribute positive portrayals of themselves by means of selection, salience, emphasis and minimization. Through the power of framing, or what Mendelson refers to as self-presentation (2007), Jenner was able to successfully reconfigure the initial narrative that was being told about her in the media.

According to Harris et al. (2012), the trend for modern-day lesbian or gay celebrities is to come out nonchalantly or in a passing and fleeting manner. Contrastingly, the transgender literature shows that the complexity of transgender identities often requires in-depth accounts and discussions to help the public understand their unique experience of the natural world. Male-to-female transgender entertainer Aleshia Brevard wrote two books about her life entitled, “The Woman I Was Not Born to Be: A Transsexual Journey” (Brevard, 2001) and its sequel, “The Woman I Was Born to Be” (Brevard, 2010). Although Jenner has recently written a memoir, “The Secrets of My Life” (Jenner & Bissinger, 2017), the findings of this study show that Jenner

had more commonalities with DeGeneres and Ferro in regards to the media channels she selected to utilize. Dow (2001) listed the major outlets and media DeGeneres utilized to discuss her coming out as the following: a cover story in Time magazine, interview with Diane Sawyer and open dialogue with Oprah Winfrey on “The Oprah Winfrey Show.” Similarly, Jenner followed DeGeneres’ strategy by utilizing one televised news outlet, ABC’s “20/20,” one magazine publication, Vanity Fair, and one daytime talk show, “The Ellen DeGeneres Show” as well as an appearance on the “Today” show. Ferro was also cited as taking advantage of an interview opportunity in Vanity Fair to publicize his coming out (Benozzo, 2013).

### *Using My Story to Help Others*

Jenner's previous affiliations with the Kardashian’s perceived obsession with themselves and the spotlight made her image even more susceptible to the threat of damaging information. In this instance, damaging information took on the form of disparaging accusations that her desire to come out was to gain publicity. As a means to further protect and manage her image, Jenner used the framing device of spin to extinguish those negative perceptions. In conjunction with that, Jenner worked to build her image by promoting her desires to spur social change and to increase visibility of transgender issues. By positioning her coming out as a mission to help others, this humanitarian version of spin helped Jenner's image by combating the accusations that she transitioned to boost ratings and viewership for “KUWTK.” It also improved Jenner's image by framing her as an advocate for a more accepting society and as a positive representation of the transgender community.

Advocacy for equality (Egan et al., 2005), visibility and representation (Arune 2005) and economic politics (Wright et al., 2006) are all important motifs in the current body of LGBTQ literature. They also operate in the natural world as pressing issues that are constantly being

addressed on a global scale. For LGBTQ celebrities, these topics are also of great concern. Celebrities such as Ellen Paige and Miley Cyrus avidly advocate for causes they are passionate about, while other LGBTQ celebrities opt out of political activism and avoid using their platform to engage in political discussions (Jang, 2015). For example, Dow (2001) demonstrated that DeGeneres successfully came out to the public as a lesbian while deliberately forgoing the responsibility of poster child politics. According to Dow (2001), DeGeneres purposefully framed her coming out as a personal choice and not a political one. To avoid further backlash from mainstream America at a time when the stigmatization of homosexuality was high, in her Time magazine cover story DeGeneres explicitly stated, "I didn't do it [coming out] to make a political statement" (Handy, 1997, para. 15).

Although this may have been a viable option for DeGeneres, or other likable homosexual celebrities, this approach would not have been suitable a formula for Jenner. From an image management perspective, telling her story solely for the sake of authenticity and the pursuit of personal freedom would not have accomplished much to improve audiences' attitudes regarding her motives to go public. Due to the fact that there were already many factors working against Jenner, including her support of conservative politics, Jenner needed to proactively go above and beyond if she was going to win over the general public.

Despite her progress and seemingly successful efforts, there is still a lot of work to be done in this area for Jenner. To build or strengthen good perceptions of herself with the transgender community and advocates for social justice, Jenner needed to continually acknowledge the notion of white privilege in relation to society's treatment of marginalized groups. Justification of this can be observed through the commentary of comedian and social change agent Amanda Seales. On the Breakfast Club Power 105.1 FM (2017), a popular urban

radio show, Seales discussed a moment in June 2017 when she felt compelled to confront Jenner about her privilege during a “dinner of discourse” hosted by pop singer Katy Perry (Breakfast Club Power 105.1 FM, 2017). Amid national conversations about equality, sex, race and gender, Seales’ passionate perception of Jenner’s advocacy was observed in the excerpt below:

Caitlyn Jenner, she be [sic] tryna [sic] glamour folks... she’s gone through this journey and you’ve been shown this transgender moment, but it makes you forget that for a long time [she’s] been this very privileged white man, [she’s] been a part of the Kardashian family. That just doesn’t go away. That just doesn’t get erased. [She] killed somebody in a car accident and nothing happened to [her]. That’s white privilege... People think ‘oh she’s an influencer,’ what’s she influencing? All she’s influencing is you to watch because you’re trying to figure out what the [expletive] is going on, but she’s not using any of her clout to change anything. She had a ‘Make America Great Again’ hat on the other day! Get outta here! (Breakfast Club Power 105.1 FM, 2017)

As evidenced through perceptions such as this, Jenner needed to proactively illustrate her awareness of these disparities transgender people face, especially the ones that don’t look like her.

#### *Jenner’s Body and Feminine Appearance*

When it was rumored that Jenner would become a woman, tabloid magazines quickly photoshopped crude depictions of Jenner as a woman to pique the public’s interest in the story and to create shock value (Bernstein, 2015). Although these depictions were unflattering and demeaning, it was an unsurprising attempt to feed people’s natural interest and curiosity about that aspect of her new identity. On the surface level, general interest in her appearance was derived from the fact that she was transitioning from a male to a female in old age. On a deeper level, Jenner’s past as an attractive or hunky sports star in addition to her ties to the hyper-feminized branding of the Kardashian name set a standard of attractiveness that Jenner’s new identity as a woman had to meet or exceed in her own unique way.

The objective of the Vanity Fair reveal was to dismantle and reframe the negative portrayals propagated by the tabloids. Ultimately, Jenner's presentation of her new self on the front cover had to visually transcend the tawdry tabloid imagery with the same level of shock or sensationalism. The presentation of Jenner's new appearance in this image-based, fashion magazine had to first emphasize the physical characteristics of her transformation visually and verbally. To satisfy people's curiosity with the transgender body (Ho, 2006), the cover and accompanying photographs elegantly accentuated Jenner's new womanly figure and feminine look. Although cosmetic surgery set the physiological foundation, this feminine image could not have been achieved without a team of "cultural intermediaries" (Rojek, 2001, p. 18) including expert hair, makeup and wardrobe stylists (Sekulah, 1984; Turner, 2007; Mendelson, 2007).

Secondly, the framing of Jenner's femininity had to be executed in a sexy and appealing manner due to her past as Bruce the Olympic icon and the Kardashian-Jenner patriarch. According to Lazar (2011), there is a strong relationship between the concepts of beauty, femininity and womanhood:

'Doing' beauty is a vital component of 'doing' femininity: being beautiful, as defined by the norms of a society and working towards achieving those conventional standards are an accepted (and expected) part of what women do by virtue of being a woman. (p. 37)

From this, it is logical to assert that Jenner's authenticity as a woman required an image that achieved conventional levels of beauty and femininity. However, because of her status as a celebrity and a member of the Kardashian family, just being feminine and beautiful would not have been sufficient. The findings implicitly and explicitly revealed that there was an expectation of Jenner to meet the Kardashian standard of beauty. This was communicated by Kim's words of advice to Jenner, "Girl you gotta rock it, you gotta look good. You are representing the family," as recounted by Jenner in the "20/20" interview (20/20, 2015). Although Jenner confirmed that

her new identity was figuratively a Jenner and not a Kardashian, the presence of the Kardashian beauty standard was implicitly acknowledged.

Additionally, the way Jenner was encountered in the 1970s and 1980s as Bruce Jenner, the handsome hyper-masculine athlete (White, n.d.; Bissinger, 2015), also set an expectation of attractiveness that Jenner had to meet and exceed. Because Jenner's image as an Olympian conveyed hyper-masculinity and masculine appeal, her new identity as a woman had to rival that with higher levels of femininity and feminine attractiveness. This was evidenced in the selection of form-fitting dresses and lace corsets that bared her décolletage, cleavage, shoulders, back and legs. As the Kardashians, marketing and advertising communications have proven, "sex sells" and well-executed sex appeal is an easy tactic to capture and maintain the attention of consumers (Blair et al., 2006) or key publics.

The presentation of Jenner's new identity via the framing of attributes favors the framing of other transgender identities in popular culture. Lovelock (2016) affirms, "Jenner's depiction on the pages of *Vanity Fair* contained the blueprint of a long established framework for representing transgender women within celebrity culture" (p. 2). More specifically, this aspect of Jenner's portrayal aligns with media representations of pioneers such as Christine Jorgensen and Aleshia Brevard. As discussed in the literature review, the media's proclamation of Jorgensen's beauty and the public's astonishment with her story (Meyerowitz, 1998) paved the path for Jenner's high-profile and glamorous unveiling on the cover of *Vanity Fair*. Additionally, discussions and photographs presented in Brevard autobiographies documenting her professional careers as a drag queen, Marilyn Monroe impersonator, playboy bunny and successful actress exemplified a woman's ability to express her beauty in a myriad of ways (Brevard, 2001;

Brevard, 2010). Jenner's cover shoot is proof that the beauty of a woman can be flamboyant, glamorous and provocative depending on the message she is trying to convey to her audiences.

Despite the similarities, one important thing she didn't have in common with Brevard and Jorgensen was the completion of reassigning her sex. For Jorgensen and Brevard, sexual reassignment surgery was observed as the finalization of their transformation into what they identified as their true gender. It seemed that the ladies relegated sexual reassignment as a way of passage or a requirement of authentic femaleness. This may be in response to the long-standing belief that genitals are determinants of gender, which was noted as an ideology the transgender community actively seeks to disprove (Bissinger, 2015; 20/20, 2015). Although Jenner revealed that she hadn't undergone the procedure, her desire to do so in the future reaffirmed that it is an important part of the process. However, her decision to keep it a private milestone sends a clear message that she didn't regard it as a requirement or license to live as her true self.

### *Family*

Jenner's coming out to her family and friends as a transgender woman was observably a difficult and uncomfortable thing to do. However, it was necessary if Jenner wanted to uphold her decision to be honest with herself and honest with others. The portrayal of Jenner's family and their acceptance or rejection of her decision to transition into a woman, via the framing of situations, demonstrated the ability of individuals to unselfishly support the welfare of others. This model expressed her familial relations through portrayals of love, acceptance and tolerance.

At its core, Jenner's family was the best resource to illustrate principles of compassion and empathy. The portrayal of her relationships with her family realistically demonstrated how those concepts evolve as the dynamics of the relationship changes. Furthermore, representations

of Jenner's relationship with her children, mother, sister and former wives also served as realistic examples of dialogue and interactions between a transitioning person and their family members.

Seeing tolerance at the most basic, yet complex, social level was utilized to force people to subconsciously question their own bias, prejudices and treatment of others. Although some of Jenner's family members took the news harder than others, it was important to portray the fact that Jenner wasn't some alien being. It reminded people that she was a person, not a controversial topic, that is connected to a group of people she loves unconditionally and that love her. It demonstrated that she was someone's son, brother, father and grandfather. More importantly, it showed that she was merely a human seeking to better herself and the world. That alone made her deserving of respect which is something everyone can relate with and connect to. When audiences saw that Jenner's family still loved her in spite of her identity, this display of tolerance and compassion subconsciously posed the question - If the people that are closest to her, who know her in the most intimate ways, can accept her decision, then why can't I?

Unfortunately, Jenner's reality of having a supportive family is not the case for a lot of LGBTQ people. The Time magazine news story recounting the life and the suicide of a 17-year-old transgender female, Leelah Alcorn, serves as an example of parental rejection and the potential repercussions (Fox, 2015). In support of LGBTQ individuals who are scared to come out in fear of being rejected, real or fictional portrayals of individuals such as DeGeneres or her character Morgan could give them the courage to have these uncomfortable conversations. DeGeneres revealed that when she came out to her father and stepmother they asked her to find another location to live in efforts to prevent her from influencing their young daughters (20/20, 1997). DeGeneres admitted their reactions were painful, but her discernment helped her to

understand that not everyone would be supportive or accepting of her lesbian identity (20/20, 1997).

According to Dow (2001), the purpose of these representations in the media was to send the message that “gays and lesbian [sic] need to accept and value themselves and to expect the same from their loved ones” (p. 134). Although she did not explicitly communicate that empowering message to her audiences, Jenner’s coming out to her elderly mother, 10 adult children and three former wives at different periods in her life was more than enough information to educate and encourage others. Similarities to DeGeneres were observed in the portrayal of Jenner’s perspective on her strained relationship with stepdaughter Khloe. Just as DeGeneres stated that she understood others would not understand her identity, Jenner acknowledged that her transition was a hard situation for her family to process and that it would take time for them to adjust to the changes. Despite this, Jenner still felt good about her decision to move forward, and she didn’t let that stop her from pursuing her life as a woman. This reinforced DeGeneres’ philosophy that LGBTQ people can’t focus on what people think about their identity, that instead they have to focus on nurturing what they think about themselves.

### *Sexuality*

Another critical aspect of Jenner’s coming out portrayal was her sexual orientation. Naturally, as a celebrity people were fascinated with the private life happenings of her romantic and sexual endeavors. Additionally, her new status as a transgender woman heightened that interest and complicated questions about her sexuality. To avoid anything that would not improve the public’s perceptions of her, by steering clear of any prejudices or further complications of her identity, Jenner denied being homosexual and intentionally postponed further discussion of her sexuality.

Previous literature points to the fact that sexual minorities are more accepted or less vilified when they are presented as non-threatening or less likely to partake in variant behaviors (Shugart, 2003). Jenner's retreat to being asexual or disinterested in sex for the time being was a safe maneuver, or a "protective practice" (Goffman, 1959). In relation to the literature review, this study finds that the framing of Jenner's sexuality is similar to the portrayals of Brandon Teena as well as Ellen DeGeneres' fictional character Ellen Morgan. For example, Jenner first contrasts her sexuality as not homosexual by exclaiming, "No, I'm not gay." Jenner seemed amused at the idea of being or becoming homosexual even though she never defined what her sexual preference was or would be. The same desire to prevent the homosexual classification was apparent in the case of Brandon Teena. Sloop (2004) characterized this theme in the discourse as the "sex was not lesbian" frame. Although Teena identified as a heterosexual man, but was portrayed by the media as a woman who had many romantic relationships with other women, her lived actions and behaviors explicitly and implicitly condemned the designation of being lesbian.

In the same turn, when the discussion of Jenner's sexuality or sexual orientation came up again in the "20/20" interview Jenner respectfully rebuffed Sawyer's question. Instead of trying to clarify her sexual preference, Jenner relegated her sexuality as something to be determined in the future. The intentional postponement, or concealment (Shugart, 2003), of her to-be-determined answer was also observed in later texts. This was perceived as Jenner keeping her sexuality in check to deliberately avoid conflating her sexuality with her gender identity and further complicating the public's perception of her. Jenner's consistent attitude towards not revealing her sexuality made it evident that she didn't want to purposefully alienate herself, if she could avoid it, or implicate herself of anything else contrary to what heteronormative society

deemed as normal. Therefore, she verbally curtailed the answer in an attempt to present herself in the most non-threatening manner. According to Dow (2001), Ellen Morgan's portrayed behaviors followed the same characteristics. Revealing her lesbian sexuality was already one controversial revelation. To keep the show from further being subjected to public outrage and prejudice, Morgan's sexuality had to be portrayed within the comfort of heterosexual norms. Resultantly, Morgan was never depicted as having lesbian romantic desires or engaging in lesbian sexual interactions.

### **Summary**

Through Jenner's decision to come out publicly as a transgender woman and claim ownership of her narrative in the media, it was evident that she desired to shape and define the way she was being portrayed, and ultimately perceived. The purpose of this study was to uncover the framing of Caitlyn Jenner during the first six months of her coming out as a transgender woman. The existing body of literature provided contextual background into the rationale behind her perceived strategy. The following section examined, described and interpreted the prominent framing techniques, models and devices, used to manage her image. To supplement this objective, the current study also sought to examine the overall tone of her portrayal.

The findings show that the framing of situations educated audiences about Jenner's truth, or her identification as a woman, in a positive and accurate manner. The eloquent delivery of this model was executed in the Vanity Fair cover story through a narrative she called "[her] truth" and "[her] story" (20/20, 2015). Jenner's ownership exercised her portrayal power and served as a protective practice to redirect her image from damaging information. Her story also made her situation more relatable because everyone has a story that only they can author and share with accuracy. Brevard's autobiographies established the blueprint for in-depth and detailed accounts

of a transgender person's story, however, Ferro's partnership with Vanity Fair supported Jenner's decision to give the outlet an exclusive cover story. Jenner's initial coming out in the "20/20" interview also followed in the footsteps of LGBTQ pioneer DeGeneres.

The framing device of spin effectively built upon Jenner's story by portraying her decision to go public as a means to help other people. Spin countered negative perceptions of Jenner's egocentric motives and boosted her image as an agent for social change. Although DeGeneres strategically rejected political responsibility of coming out, Jenner had to use activism to her advantage in order to combat the negative perceptions of her coming out.

Thirdly, the framing of attributes addressed Jenner's female identity, Caitlyn, by verbally and visually accentuating her new look and womanly appeal. This model helped Jenner counter demeaning imagery from the tabloids by showcasing her new feminine attributes. It also presented Jenner in an extremely beautiful and feminine way to rival the beauty of the Kardashians and attractiveness of her old identity as Bruce. Her hyper-beautiful presentation resembled that of Brevard who was cited for her flamboyant glamor and provocative femininity. DeGeneres' reactions to Jenner's feminine look on "The Ellen DeGeneres Show," as well as the crowd's response, was reminiscent of the media's astonishment and awe of Jorgensen's beauty. However, both pioneers were legitimized as authentic women through sexual reassignment surgery. This made it necessary for Jenner to address it in a way that confirmed its significance without undermining her mental, emotional and spiritual identifications as a female.

Findings of this study also illustrated Jenner's reality of coming out to her family and their subsequent reactions. This was achieved through the framing of situations to illustrate how each immediate family member reacted to her revelation. This demonstrated acceptance at the most intimate level which subconsciously subverted society's heteronormative inclination to

reject difference. Her portrayals of her relationships with her family members also highlighted the reality of rejection. Jenner's compassion and patience contributed more positivity to her image. Jenner's attitude towards rejection was more understanding than that of DeGeneres, however, she didn't experience rejection in the same degree that DeGeneres did.

Lastly, the device of contrast was used to frame Jenner's sexual orientation as not homosexual and not significant enough to be determined at that point in her journey. Contrast allowed Jenner to avoid further complicating her transgender identity and the prejudices that come with sexualities that are non-conforming or nonheteronormative. This was similar to Teena who condemned the lesbian sexual orientation due to her masculine gender identity despite the public and media's treatment of her as a woman who deceived heterosexual women into lesbian relationships. Jenner's concealment of her sexuality was reminiscent of Morgan whose lesbian, sexual desires were never portrayed or even mentioned on DeGeneres' televised series.

The overall tone that was communicated throughout Jenner's representation in the media was a positive one. The love and encouragement from a large portion of Jenner's family supported a positive representation of Jenner's transition. Positivity was also evidenced in discussions about Jenner's newfound freedom as a woman through her optimism for the future despite her mistakes in the past. Although negativity surfaced within a few areas, the way Jenner framed herself as a real person with faults prevented these events from overtaking her positive image within the texts analyzed in this study.

Overall, the findings of the current study clearly demonstrate that the framing of Caitlyn Jenner was an integral component of managing her image. More specifically, the prominence of the framing of situations and attributes as well as spin and contrast proves the utility of these framing techniques in transgender celebrity image management strategies. Observance of the

overall positive tone reflects the positive portrayal of Jenner that was formulated throughout the framing models and framing devices discussed above. Although Jenner's portrayal was similar to the portrayals of other out LGBTQ celebrities, the personalization of techniques to specifically target and address Jenner's unique circumstances was noted.

## CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION

In modern popular culture, the presence and success of out transgender identities can be seen in every facet of celebrity culture including television, film, fashion, literature and sports. While the number of out lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer celebrities has increased and the stigma of rejection has been reduced, it is expected that Jenner's coming out will inspire other closeted celebrities to tell their stories and live in their truth. As this happens, image management strategies that are both innovative and reminiscent are critical for the image management of highly visible cultural figures of the future. To address this, the study focused on how framing facilitated the management of Jenner's evolving image through framing models and framing devices.

The first research question sought to uncover the prominent models of framing employed in the portrayal of Jenner. The findings showed two models were used to uncover Jenner's version of her reality. The framing of situations claimed ownership over Jenner's story and characterized it as her own personal account. This model combated damaging information and accurately depicted Jenner's story in a digestible and relatable manner.

The framing of attributes addressed Jenner's female identity, Caitlyn, by verbally and visually accentuating her new look and womanly appeal. This model helped Jenner dismantle demeaning imagery from the tabloids by showcasing her new feminine attributes. It also emphasized her new feminine features to portray her in an extremely beautiful and feminine manner. This enabled Jenner's physical presentation to meet the beauty standards of the

Kardashians and exceed the attractiveness of her former persona, Bruce. Within the framing of attributes, sexual reassignment surgery was addressed in an intentional manner that would not undermine the mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of her feminine identity.

Jenner's relationships with her family after coming out as a transgender woman was also communicated via the framing of situations. This model exemplified acceptance and tolerance at the most intimate level. The acceptance of Jenner's family also subconsciously challenged heteronormative prejudices and bias. However, the reality of rejection was also acknowledged as well as Jenner's compassionate perspective on it, which further bolstered her image.

The second research question sought to uncover the prominent framing devices employed in the portrayal of Jenner. In regards to her decision to transition, spin positioned Jenner's public transition as a decision that would help other transgender people. This helped combat accusations that she came out as a transgender woman for money or publicity and promoted her advocacy for social change.

The device of contrast shaped the perception of Jenner as an asexual transgender woman by informing others of what she was not. This allowed Jenner to avoid further complicating her transgender identity. Relegating her sexuality to the asexual classification also prevented Jenner from being subjected to prejudices that come with sexualities that are non-conforming or nonheteronormative.

The third research question was proposed to investigate the tone of Jenner's portrayal. The overall tone that was communicated throughout Jenner's representation in the media was a positive one. This was evidenced from her optimism for the future and society's aptitude for tolerance. Positivity was also observed from the overwhelming love and support she received from her family, friends, Vanity Fair team and E! docu-series production team.

As evidenced through the findings and discussion, Jenner utilized framing opportunities to manage her image by communicating her story in the most comprehensible and favorable manner. Thus, making her truth easier for people to grasp and her story easier for publics to empathize with. Furthermore, an empowered and hopeful tone along with the use of framing models and framing devices allowed her to promote a positive image. It even sparked a re-emergence of Jenner's popularity and catapulted her into a newfound cultural relevancy as a transgender poster child. In conclusion, the current study demonstrates that framing, by way of framing devices and framing models, serves as a viable model to manage the images of transgender celebrities who desire to come out or transition publicly.

### **Implications for the Field**

Although framing ultimately helped Jenner successfully manage her evolving image, it also helped publics, academics and public relations professionals understand the larger event of transgender identities within our social world. The review of existing literature and results of this study communicates the many opportunities to frame celebrity happenings in the sphere of popular culture. As evidenced from the portrayal of highly visible out LGBTQ individuals, the current study indicates framing models and devices can help protect, build and manage celebrity portrayals in the media. More specifically, framing models and devices can help protect, build and manage the mediated image of a transitioning celebrity. The findings of this study also suggest that these techniques can be applied to high-profile politicians, socialites, media spokespersons and sports stars that desire to transition publicly. The results further emphasize the importance of appropriate content, delivery and platform selection.

The recommendations for the field has implications that show the transitioning celebrity needs to first seek a seasoned public relations professional to formulate a holistic plan that is

specifically tailored to their unique circumstances. The client-representative relationship will need to have an open and transparent dialogue with a foundation of mutual respect so that the public relations professional can thoroughly assess the situation and develop the appropriate strategy. Success is dependent upon the celebrity and what aspects of their transition can be spotlighted or need rectification. The outcome of the framing strategy will also be contingent upon the combination of client involvement, content, mode of delivery and media platform selection.

The existing body of literature shows there is no clear-cut or concrete method of managing the image of a transitioning or transgender celebrity. However, the current findings indicate that coming out strategies of modern day transgender celebrities are reminiscent of the strategies employed by transgender pioneers. It also shows they have similarities with the coming out strategies of lesbian and gay celebrities. Although there is no cookie-cutter approach to the task of managing transgender celebrity portrayals, framing does provide a framework equipped with several models and devices that can be interchangeably mixed and matched to create the most suitable plan for a transgender celebrity's specific needs and unique circumstances.

From a practical standpoint, the findings suggest that image management of a transgender celebrity can be achieved through the utilization of framing models and framing devices. More specifically, the findings recommend the framing of situations and the framing of attributes. Depending on the situation, spin and contrast can also be used to reinforce or underpin the other two devices. The multiplicity of usage and mode of application as well as the mix-and-match nature of the techniques result in an endless number of possibilities for utility.

For example, a young pop star may want to come out to his fans that he is a transgender male and may need to frame his sexual reassignment surgery as a corrective action via contrast, stories and the framing of responsibility. As a technologically inclined member of the generation Z cohort (Williams & Page, 2011), these models can be employed via written blogs and video blogs on media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram Live and WordPress then promoted via social media posts to Snapchat, Instagram or Facebook.

These techniques would work together to first disprove his femaleness by mobilizing vivid stories of gender identity realization. Then via the framing of responsibility, he would attribute the cause of his transgender identity as a complication of hermaphroditism. Via YouTube, the actor could present his story exactly the way he wanted it to be portrayed. Then when he decides to get sexual reassignment surgery and the rest of his transformation is complete, he can frame his new masculine attributes on a reality television show featured on Bravo or E! portraying his professional life as an artist and his private life as a young transgender male. As this example illustrates, the possibilities are endless and these techniques can take on new meaning with creativity and purpose. This strategy also demonstrates opportunities to draw inspiration from the strategy of other LGBTQ celebrities.

### **Limitations**

This study was conducted within limitations. First, this study only focused on the public transition of a transgender celebrity, which is not representative of every LGBTQ identity on the spectrum. Therefore, the results of this study cannot be generalized to the coming out of all LGBTQ celebrities. Also, the data samples selected for analysis were a part of a purposive sample. The purposive sample only included samples that involved Jenner directly within a six-month period before and after her transition into Caitlyn. Finally, this study was an observatory

analysis that relied upon the inductive reasoning of the researcher based upon definitions of framing models, framing devices and tone derived from the literature. Due to a variety of factors, information regarding the actual strategy of Jenner's publicist, Alan Neirob, and his public relations firm was not retrieved directly nor was the information readily available.

### **Future Research**

The results of this study prompt further research into the framing of Jenner. Since this study only analyzed a six-month period surrounding Jenner's Vanity Fair reveal, future studies should explore the continuation of Jenner's framing. This research could be pursued by analyzing the framing devices and framing models present in the full season of Jenner's docu-series on E!, entitled "I Am Cait." Another body of work that should be examined is Jenner's memoir, "The Secrets of My Life," which was released on April 25, 2017. More research in this area should be done to understand the ongoing management of Jenner's image. The findings of the samples discussed above can be compared to the current study to demonstrate whether the present methods of framing persevered or if they changed.

Due to the magnitude of Jenner's unprecedented coming out and the highly publicized nature of the Kardashian family, the researcher expected to see much more involvement from that side of Jenner's family. There wasn't even any mention of Robert Jr., Jenner's stepson of over 20 years, throughout the data samples. Commentary from or about the rest of the Kardashian family was scanty and surface level, failing to penetrate the core of their thoughts and feelings about Jenner's transition. Unsurprisingly, their reticence seemed deliberate as if they were strategically withholding this information so that they could communicate their perspectives on their own terms. For example, there are "KUWTK" episodes centered around Jenner's transition and several media appearances on "The Ellen DeGeneres Show," the "Today"

show and many other outlets where the Kardashians opened up about the situation. Subsequent research can focus on how Jenner was framed within the above examples to analyze the Kardashian's framing efforts of Jenner and how they differed from the framing activities observed in the current study.

The utility of framing should not just be limited to studies focused on Jenner's transition. Research on the framing of different celebrities in various scenarios would give scholars a more robust and diverse understanding of its application. Therefore, subsequent research should be applied to other celebrities who publicly experience a major life event in the media. Although DeGeneres and Ferro each framed their coming out without labeling it as such, the coming out of other LGBTQ celebrities such as Anderson Cooper or Laverne Cox should be analyzed. The use of framing should also be applied to heterosexual celebrity scandals as well. Research in this area would expound on the tool's versatility and provide a different perspective to the current body of knowledge.

## REFERENCES

- “20/20” (2015, April 24). Bruce Jenner - The Interview [Video File]. Retrieved August 15, 2016 from <http://abc.go.com/shows/2020/episode-guide/2015-04/24-bruce-jenner-the-interview>
- “20/20” (1997, April 25) 20/20: Special on Ellen DeGeneres. 20/20, ABC
- ABC News (2015, July 15). *Caitlyn Jenner Accepts Arthur Ashe Courage Award* [Video File]. Retrieved August 15, 2016 from <http://abcnews.go.com/video/embed?id=32482615>
- Adalian, J. (2015, June 05). *The Story Behind Caitlyn Jenner's Masterful Press Strategy*. Retrieved April 01, 2016, from <http://www.vulture.com/2015/06/behind-the-caitlyn-jenner-press-strategy.html#>
- Alberoni, F. (1972). The Powerless Elite: Theory and Sociological Research on the Phenomena of the Stars. *Sociology of Mass Communications: Selected Readings*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Anderson, J. (Director), & Brokaw, C. (Producer). (2003). Normal [Motion Picture]. USA: HBO Films & Avenue Pictures Productions
- Andersson, E. (2015, February 9). Bruce's New Reality. US Weekly, Cover Story, 40-45. Retrieved from <http://usweekly.eoncontent.ebscohost.com/944541#&pageSet=21>
- Arune, W. (2005). Transgender Images in the Media. *News and Sexuality: Media Portraits of Diversity: Media Portraits of Diversity*, 111-133.
- Barlow, A. (Ed.). (2014). *Star Power: The Impact of Branded Celebrity [2 volumes]: The Impact of Branded Celebrity [2 volumes]*. ABC-CLIO.
- Barry, E. (2008). Celebrity, Cultural Production and Public Life. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 11(3), 251-258.
- Batchelor, B. (2009). *American Pop: Popular Culture Decade by Decade*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Bayley, L. (2014, December 19). *Kris to Pay Bruce Jenner \$2.5 million in Divorce?* Retrieved May 22, 2016, from <http://www.glamourmagazine.co.uk/news/celebrity/2013/10/03/kris-jenner-splits-from-bruce-jenner>

- Becker, A. B., & Todd, M. E. (2013). A New American Family? Public Opinion Toward Family Status and Perceptions of the Challenges Faced by Children of Same-Sex Parents. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 9(5), 425-448.
- Bengtsson, M. (2016). How to Plan and Perform a Qualitative Study Using Content Analysis. *NursingPlus Open*, 2, 8-14.
- Benozzo, A. (2013). Coming Out of the Credenza: An Italian Celebrity Unveils His 'New' Gay Self. *Sexualities*, 16(3-4), 336-360
- Berkers, P., & Eeckelaer, M. (2014). Rock and Roll or Rock and Fall? Gendered Framing of the Rock and Roll Lifestyles of Amy Winehouse and Pete Doherty in British Broadsheets. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 23(1), 3-17.
- Bernstein, J. (2015, February 04). *The Bruce Jenner Story Goes from Gossip to News*. Retrieved April 01, 2016, from [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/05/fashion/the-bruce-jenner-story-goes-from-gossip-to-news.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/05/fashion/the-bruce-jenner-story-goes-from-gossip-to-news.html?_r=0)
- Bernstein, J. (2015, December 19). Caitlyn Jenner's Secret-Sharer. Retrieved August 15, 2015, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/20/fashion/caitlyn-jenner-alan-nierob-crisis-manager.html?mcubz=1>
- Bissinger, B. (2015, July). *Caitlyn Jenner: The full story*. Retrieved August 05, 2016, from <http://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2015/06/caitlyn-jenner-bruce-cover-annie-leibovitz>
- Blair, J. D., Stephenson, J. D., Hill, K. L., & Green, J. S. (2006). Ethics in Advertising: Sex Sells, but Should it?. *Journal of Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues*, 9(1/2), 109.
- Blaney, J. R., Lippert, L., & Smith, S. J. (Eds.). (2012). *Repairing the Athlete's Image: Studies in Sports Image Restoration*. Lexington Books.
- Blidner, R. (2015, October 1). *O.J. Simpson Contemplated Suicide in Kim Kardashian's Room*. Retrieved May 30, 2016, from <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/o-simpson-contemplated-suicide-kim-kardashian-room-article-1.2381035>
- Boone, J. (2015, May 27). *14 Reasons Why Kris Jenner is the Ultimate Momager (and Deserves to Trademark that Phrase)*. Retrieved May 30, 2016, from [http://www.etonline.com/news/165154\\_14\\_reasons\\_why\\_kris\\_jenner\\_is\\_the\\_ultimate\\_momager\\_and\\_deserves\\_to\\_trademark\\_that\\_phrase/](http://www.etonline.com/news/165154_14_reasons_why_kris_jenner_is_the_ultimate_momager_and_deserves_to_trademark_that_phrase/)
- Boorstin, D. J. (1961). *The Image: A guide to Pseudo-Events in America*. Vintage.
- Bornstein, K. (1994). *Gender Outlaw: On Women, Men, and the Rest of Us*. NY: Routledge.
- Borah, P. (2011). Conceptual Issues in Framing Theory: A Systematic Examination of a Decade's Literature. *Journal of Communication*, 61(2), 246-263.

- Brady, A. (2016). Keeping Away from the Kardashians: Celebrity Worth and the Re-Masculinising of Caitlyn Jenner. *Celebrity Studies*, 7(1), 115. doi:10.1080/19392397.2016.1131011
- Braudy, L. (1986) *The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and its Discontents*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Brazeal, L. M. (2008). The Image Repair Strategies of Terrell Owens. *Public Relations Review*, 34(2), 145-150.
- Breakfast Club Power 105.1 FM (2017, Aug 9). *Amanda Seales Dishes On Floetry, Getting Fired Because Jay-Z, Her Hollywood Come-up & More* [Video Format]. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from <https://youtu.be/b3vH92yuVSc>
- Brevard, A. (2001). *Woman I Was Not Born To Be: A Transsexual Journey*. Temple University Press.
- Brevard, A. (2010). *Woman I Was Born To Be*. Temple University Press.
- Brodesser-Akner, T. (2015, May 09). *Where Would the Kardashians be Without Kris Jenner?* Retrieved May 30, 2016, from [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/10/magazine/where-would-the-kardashians-be-without-kris-jenner.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/10/magazine/where-would-the-kardashians-be-without-kris-jenner.html?_r=0)
- Bucktin, C. (2015, July 24). *Transgender Bond Girl Caroline Cossey Warns Caitlyn Jenner Not to 'Rush' Her Transition as She Praises Star - Mirror Online*. Retrieved May 22, 2016, from <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/transgender-bond-girl-caroline-cossey-6134477>
- Burnard, P. (1995). Interpreting Text: An Alternative to Some Current Forms of Textual Analysis in Qualitative Research. *Social Sciences in Health*, 1(4), 236-245
- Candiest. (2015, January 18). *How Did Keeping Up with the Kardashians Get Started?* Retrieved April 30, 2016, from <http://candiest.com/ryan-seacrest-talks-creating-idea-keeping-kardashians/>
- Connelly, C. (2015, July 7). *Bruce Jenner: The World's Greatest Athlete*. Retrieved April 01, 2016, from <http://espn.go.com/video/clip?id=12747142>
- Cooper, A. H. (2002). Media Framing and Social Movement Mobilization. German Peace Protest Against INF Missiles, the Gulf War and NATO Peace Enforcement in Bosnia. *European Journal of Political Research*, 41, 37-80.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2007). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- D'Angelo, P. (2002). News Framing as a Multi-Paradigmatic Research Program: A Response to Entman. *Journal of Communication*, 52, 870–888.
- Davis, A. (1953, April 6). The Truth About Christine Jorgensen. *New York Post*, p. 3.
- Dean, M. (2016). Celebrity Health Announcements and Online Health Information Seeking: An Analysis of Angelina Jolie's Preventative Health Decision. *Health communication*, 31(6), 752-761.
- De Jong, M. J. (2006). From Invisibility to Subversion: Lesbian and Gay Representation in the US News Media During the 1950s. *News and Sexuality: Media Portraits of Diversity*, 37-52.
- Demme, J. (Director), & Bozman, R. (Producer). (1991). Silence of The Lambs [Motion Picture]. USA: Strong Heart/Demme Production & Orion Pictures
- De Palma, B. (Director), & Litto, G (Producer). (1980). Dressed to Kill [Motion Picture]. USA: Filmways Pictures & Cinema 77 Films.
- De Vreese, C. H. (2005). News framing: Theory and typology. *Information Design Journal+ Document Design*, 13(1), 51-62.
- Di Maggio, P. (1997). Culture and Cognition. *Annual Review of Sociology* 23 (1): 263–287. doi:10.1146/annurev.soc.23.1.263.
- Dooley, S., Dawson, M., Zak, L., Ng, C., Effron, L., & Keneally, M. (2015, April 24). Bruce Jenner: 'I'm a Woman.' Retrieved April 01, 2016, from <http://abcnews.go.com/Entertainment/bruce-jenner-im-woman/story?id=30570350>
- Dow, B. (2001). Ellen, Television, and the Politics of Gay and Lesbian Visibility. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 18(2), 123-140
- Dowling, G. 2001. *Creating Corporate Reputations: Identity, Image, and Performance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Dyer, R. (1979) (reprinted 1998) Stars. London, BFI.
- Dyer, R. (2001). *The Culture of Queers*. London: Routledge.
- Ebershoff, D. (2000). *The Danish Girl*. Viking Press & Allen & Unwin.
- Egan, P. J., & Sherrill, K. (2005). Marriage and the Shifting Priorities of a New Generation of Lesbians and Gays. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 38(2), 229-232.
- Ellentube. (2015, September 08). *Ellen's Season 13 Premiere Week... with Caitlyn Jenner!* [Video File]. Retrieved October 06, 2016 from <http://ellentube.com/videos/0-12vwyloh/>
- Elo, S., & Kyngäs, H. (2008). The Qualitative Content Analysis Process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 62(1), 107-115.

- Entman, R. M. (1991). Framing U.S. Coverage of International News: Contrasts in Narratives in the KAL and Iran Air Incidents. *Journal of Communication*, 41(4), 6-27.
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51-58.
- Entman, R. M. (2007). Framing Bias: Media in the Distribution of Power. *Journal of Communication*, 57(1), 163-173.
- Esrock, S. L., Hart, J. L., D'Silva, M. U., & Werking, K. J. (2002). The Saga of the Crown Pilot: Framing, Reframing, and Reconsideration. *Public Relations Review*, 28(3), 209-227.
- Fairhurst, G. T., & Sarr, R. A. (1996). *The Art of Framing: Managing the Language of Leadership* (Vol. 50). Jossey-Bass.
- Fischer, L., & Landy, M. (2004). *Stars: the Film Reader*. Psychology Press.
- Fox, F. (2015, January 08). Leelah Alcorn's Suicide: Conversion Therapy Is Child Abuse. Retrieved August 23, 2016, from <http://time.com/3655718/leelah-alcorn-suicide-transgender-therapy/>
- Gans, H. J. (1979). *Deciding What's News*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Gamson, J. (1994). *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America*. Univ. of California Press.
- Gamson, J. (2007). The Assembly Line of Greatness: Celebrity in Twentieth-Century America. *Stardom and Celebrity: a Reader*, 141-155.
- Gamson, W. A., & Modigliani, A. (1987). The Changing Culture of Affirmative Action. In R. G. Braungart & M. M. Braungart (Eds.), *Research in Political Sociology* (Vol. 3, pp. 137-177). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Gamson, W. A., & Modigliani, A. (1989). Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach. *American Journal of Sociology*, 1-37.
- Garrison, W. A., & Modigliani, A. (1994). The Changing Culture of Affirmative Action. *Equal Employment Opportunity: Labor Market Discrimination and Public Policy*, 373-394.
- Gitlin, T. (1980). *The Whole World is Watching*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- GLAAD. (2017, April 14). Transgender FAQ. Retrieved May 22, 2016, from <https://www.glaad.org/transgender/transfaq>
- Glascok, J. (2000). The Role of AT&T's Public Relations Campaign in Press Coverage of the 1982 Breakup. *Public Relations Review*, 26(1), 67-83.
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). The Discovery of Grounded Theory. *London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson*, 24(25), 288-304.

- Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. London: Harmondsworth.
- Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame Analysis: An essay on the Organization of Experience*. Harvard University Press.
- Greenfield-Sanders, T. (Director). (2016). *The Trans List* [Video file]. USA: HBO. Retrieved March 15, 2017, from <http://www.hbo.com/documentaries/the-trans-list>
- Gross, L. (2001). *Up from Invisibility: Lesbians, Gay Men, and the Media in America*. Columbia University Press.
- Hackl, A. M., Becker, A. B., & Todd, M. E. (2016). "I Am Chelsea Manning": Comparison of Gendered Representation of Private Manning in US and International News Media. *Journal of homosexuality*, 1-20.
- Hackl, A. M., Boyer, C. R., & Galupo, M. P. (2013). From "Gay Marriage Controversy" (2004) to "Endorsement of Same-Sex Marriage" (2012): Framing Bisexuality in the Marriage Equality Discourse. *Sexuality & Culture*, 17(3), 512-524.
- Hallahan, K. (1999). Seven Models of Framing: Implications for Public Relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 11(3), 205-242.
- Hallahan, K. (2008). Strategic Framing. *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Handy, B., & Bland, E. L. (1997). Roll over, Ward Cleaver. (cover story). *Time*, 149(15), 78.
- Handy, B. (1997). He Called Me Ellen Degenerate? (cover story). *Time*, 149(15), 86.
- Harris, M., Maerz, M., Naoreen, N., & Vary, A. B. (2012). BY THE WAY WE'RE GAY. *Entertainment Weekly*, (1213), 30.
- Harris, T. (1957). The Building of Popular Images: Grace Kelly and Marilyn Monroe. *Studies in Public Communication*, pp. 45-8.
- Hesse-Biber, S. N., & Levy, P. (2006). *The Practice of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hill, L. N., & White, C. (2000). Public Relations Practitioners' Perception of the World Wide Web as a Communications Tool. *Public Relations Review*, 26(1), 31-51.
- Ho, J. (2006). Embodying Gender: Transgender Body/Subject Formations in Taiwan 1. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 7(2), 228-242.
- Holmes, S., & Redmond, S. (Eds.). (2006). *Framing Celebrity: New Directions in Celebrity Culture*. Routledge.
- Holmes, S., & Redmond, S. (2010). *A Journal in Celebrity Studies*.

- Holst, D., & Popp, M. S. (2005). *American Men of Olympic Track and Field: Interviews with Athletes and Coaches*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland.
- Hoyer, N. (1933). *Man into Woman*. Beacon Library.
- Hsieh, H. F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis. *Qualitative Health Research, 15*(9), 1277-1288.
- Hunter, S. (2007). *Coming Out and Disclosures: LGBT Persons Across the Life Span*. Psychology Press
- Iyengar, S., & Simon, A. (1993). News Coverage of the Gulf Crisis and Public Opinion a Study of Agenda-Setting, Priming, and Framing. *Communication Research, 20*(3), 365-383.
- Jang, M. (2015, October 03). 10 Notable Celebrity LGBT Supporters. Retrieved August 14, 2016, from <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/lists/celebrities-who-support-lgbt-rights-828708>
- Jarin, J., & Gomez-Lobo, V. (2016), Management of Adolescents with Gender Dysphoria. *Contemporary OB/GYN, 61*(4), 32-38
- Jensen, K. B., Gunter, B., Hjarvard, S., Larsen, P., Lotz, A. D., Murdock, G., & ... Schroder, K. C. (2002). Discursive Realities. In *A Handbook of Media and Communication Research. [electronic resource]: Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies*. (pp. 106-250). New York : Routledge May 2002 Florence : Taylor & Francis Group [Distributor].
- Jenner, C., & Bissinger, B. (2017). *The Secrets of My Life*. New York: Grand Central Publishing.
- Johnson, D. K. (2004). The lavender scare. *The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government*.
- Jorgensen, C. (1953, March 1). The Story of My Life. *American Weekly, 15*.
- Kahneman, D., & Tversky, A. (1984). Choices, values, and frames. *American psychologist, 39*(4), 341.
- Kamenova, K., Reshef, A., & Caulfield, T. (2013). Angelina Jolie's Faulty Gene: Newspaper Coverage of a Celebrity's Preventive Bilateral Mastectomy in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. *Genetics in Medicine, 16*(7), 522-528.
- Kenix, L. J. (2011). *Alternative and Mainstream Media: The Converging Spectrum*. A&C Black.
- Kim, E. K. (2015, September 9). "A Tremendous Experience": Caitlyn Jenner tells Matt Lauer about her "new" life. *TODAY*. Retrieved from <http://www.today.com/popculture/caitlyn-jenner-tells-matt-lauer-about-life-woman-today-show-t42981>
- Kinder, D. R., & Sanders, L. M. (1990). Mimicking Political Debate with Survey Questions: The Case of White Opinion on Affirmative Action for Blacks. *Social Cognition, 8*(1), 73.

- King, B. (1974). *The Social Significance of Stardom*.
- Kissell, R. (2015, April 25). Bruce Jenner Interview Ratings: 17 Million Watch ABC Special. Retrieved April 01, 2016, from <http://variety.com/2015/tv/news/bruce-jenner-interview-ratings-17-million-watch-abc-special-1201479968/>
- Kondracki, N. L., Wellman, N. S., & Amundson, D. R. (2002). Content Analysis: Review of Methods and Their Applications in Nutrition Education. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 34(4), 224-230.
- Kooijman, J. (2004). Outside in America George Michael's Music Video, Public Sex and Global Pop Culture. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 7(1), 27-41.
- Kornmeier, U. (2008). The Famous and the Infamous: Waxworks as Retailers of Renown. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 11(3), 276-288.
- Kosicki, G. M. (1993). Problems and Opportunities in Agenda-setting Research. *Journal of Communication*, 43(2), 100-127.
- Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology*. Sage.
- Lazar, M. M. (2011). The Right to Be Beautiful: Postfeminist Identity and Consumer Beauty Advertising. *New Femininities: Postfeminism, Neoliberalism and Subjectivity*, 37-51.
- Levy, R. (2015, January 18). 'They Throw Each Other in the Pool!' Ryan Seacrest on the Audition Tape that Won the Kardashians their First Reality Show. Retrieved April 30, 2016, from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-2915784/Ryan-Seacrest-says-winning-audition-tape-won-Kardashians-reality-show.html>
- Li, M. (2017). Intermedia Attribute Agenda Setting in the Context of Issue-Focused Media Events Caitlyn Jenner and Transgender Reporting. *Journalism Practice*, 1-20. doi:10.108/17512786.2016.1273078. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2016.1273078>
- Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. C. (2011). *Qualitative Communication Research Methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lim, J., & Jones, L. (2010). A Baseline Summary of Framing Research in Public Relations from 1990 to 2009. *Public Relations Review*, 36(3), 292-297.
- Litsky, F. (1976). Jenner Triumphs In Decathlon Trial. Retrieved May 13, 2016, from <http://www.nytimes.com/1976/06/27/archives/jenner-triumphs-in-decathlon-trial-jenner-captures-decathlon.html?url=http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1976/06/27/105359389.html?action=click&ion=ArchiveBody&module=LedeAsset&pgtype=article&contentCollection=Archives>
- London, B. (2015, May 07). From Dowdy Flight Attendant to PR-Savvy Momager: FEMAIL Charts the Meteoric Rise of Kris Jenner and How She Made her Five Daughters the Most

- Famous Faces in the World. Retrieved May 31, 2016, from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-3071858/From-dowdy-flight-attendant-PR-savvy-momager-FEMAIL-charts-meteoric-rise-Kris-Jenner-five-daughters-famous-faces-world.html>
- Longeretta, E. (2014, January 19). Bruce Jenner: The Moment He Tells Kris Jenner He Wants To Separate. Retrieved April 30, 2016, from <http://hollywoodlife.com/2014/01/19/bruce-jenner-kris-jenner-break-up-keeping-up-with-the-kardashians/>
- Lovelock, M. (2016). Call Me Caitlyn: Making and Making Over the ‘Authentic’ Transgender Body in Anglo-American Popular Culture. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 1-13.
- Manning, C. (2013, August 22). Chelsea Manning Announces Gender Transition – Full Statement. Retrieved August 23, 2016, from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/22/chelsea-manning-bradley-full-statement>
- Markazi, A. (2015, July 30). Retrieved April 01, 2016, from [http://espn.go.com/olympics/story/\\_/id/13346959/bruce-jenner-became-olympic-icon-exactly-39-years-ago](http://espn.go.com/olympics/story/_/id/13346959/bruce-jenner-became-olympic-icon-exactly-39-years-ago)
- Matthes, J. (2009). What's in a Frame? A Content Analysis of Media Framing Studies in the World's Leading Communication Journals, 1990-2005. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 86(2), 349-367.
- Mathiesen, A. M. (2016). Gender dysphoria. Magill’s Medical Guide (Online Edition),
- McClain, A. S. (2013). *Keeping Up the Kardashian Brand: Celebrity, Materialism, and Sexuality*. Lexington Books.
- McCombs, M. (1997). New Frontiers in Agenda Setting: Agendas of Attributes and Frames. *Mass Comm. Review*, 24(1&2), 32–52.
- McDermott, B. (1977, September 6). Back to Bruce in a Moment. First This Commercial. Retrieved October 31, 2016, from <http://www.si.com/vault/1977/09/26/622725/bruce-jenner-advertising-1976-olympics>
- Mendelson, A. L. (2007). On the Function of the United States Paparazzi: Mosquito Swarm or Watchdogs of Celebrity Image Control and Power. *Visual Studies*, 22(2), 169-183.
- Meyerowitz, J. (1998). Sex Change and the Popular Press: Historical Notes on Transsexuality in the United States, 1930–1955. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 4(2), 159-187.
- Meyers, E. (2009). “Can You Handle My Truth?”: Authenticity and the Celebrity Star Image. *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 42(5), 890-907.

- Miller, J. (2015, July 26). The Inside Story of Caitlyn Jenner's Historic Vanity Fair Cover. Retrieved May 22, 2016, from <http://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2015/07/caitlyn-jenner-documentary>
- Mills, C. W. (1959). *The Power Elite*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nekmat, E., Gower, K. K., & Ye, L. (2014). Status of Image Management Research in Public Relations: A Cross-Discipline Content Analysis of Studies Published Between 1991 and 2011. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 8(4), 276-293.
- Neuendorf, K. A. (2002). *The Content Analysis Guidebook*. London: SAGE.
- Nussbaum, E. (2016, February 8). Not-Guilty Pleasure. Retrieved July 31, 2016, from <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/02/08/not-guilty-pleasure>
- O'Day, J. (2015, February 6). Olympic Golden Boy Jenner Hits Jackpot. Retrieved May 31, 2016, from <http://www.nydailynews.com/sports/olympic-golden-boy-jenner-hits-jackpot-article-1.2106027>
- O' Leary, K. (2014, November 24). Bruce's Double Life. *US Weekly*, Cover, 40-45. Retrieved from <http://usweekly.eoncontent.ebscohost.com/904808#&pageSet=21>
- O'Toole, C. (2013, November 09). Sure, She's Beautiful, but Why Is Kim Kardashian Famous? Retrieved May 30, 2016, from <http://www.wetpaint.com/sure-shes-beautiful-but-why-is-kim-kardashian-famous-697080/>
- Pan, Z., Kosicki, G. M. (1993) 'Framing Analysis: An Approach to News Discourse', *Political Communication* 10: 55-75.
- Parulekar, A. A., & Raheja, P. (2006). Managing Celebrities as Brands: Impact of Endorsements on Celebrity Image. *Creating Images and the Psychology of Marketing Communication*, 161-169.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice* (4th ed.). SAGE.
- Pearson, M. (2013, August 23). Bradley Manning Adopts New Gender, Name: Now Chelsea Manning. Retrieved August 23, 2016, from <http://www.cnn.com/2013/08/22/us/bradley-manning/index.html>
- Peirce, K. (Director), Hart, J. (Producer). (1999). *Boys Don't Cry* [Motion Picture]. USA: Fox Searchlight Pictures, The Independent Film Channel Productions, Killer Films & Hart-Sharp Entertainment
- Penner, M. (2007, April 26). Old Mike, New Christine. Retrieved March 14, 2017, from <http://articles.latimes.com/2007/apr/26/sports/la-sp-oldmike26apr26>

- Pieper, L. P. (2015). Mike Penner 'or' Christine Daniels: the US Media and the Fractured Representation of a Transgender Sportswriter. *Sport in Society*, 18(2), 186-201.
- Powdermaker, H. (1950). *Hollywood, the Dream Factory: An Anthropologist Looks at the Movie-Makers*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Pramaggiore, M. and Negra, D., (2014). Keeping Up with the Aspirations: Commercial Family Values and the Kardashian Brand. In: B.R. Weber, ed. *Reality Gendervision: Sexuality & Gender on Transatlantic Reality Television*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 76-96.
- Reber, B. H., & Berger, B. K. (2005). Framing Analysis of Activist Rhetoric: How the Sierra Club Succeeds or Fails at Creating Salient Messages. *Public Relations Review*, 31(2), 185-195.
- Reed, J. (2005). Ellen Degeneres: Public Lesbian Number One. *Feminist Media Studies*, 5(1), 23-36.
- Reese, S. D. (2001). Prologue--Framing Public Life. S. Reese, O. Gandy, & A., Grant (Eds.), *Framing Public Life: Perspectives on Media and Our Understanding of the Social World*.
- Rendahl, S. (1995, May). *Frame Analysis: From Interpersonal to Mass Communication*. Paper presented to Cenbal State Communication Association, Indianapolis, IN.
- Riffe, D., & Freitag, A. (1997). A Content Analysis of Content Analyses: Twenty-Five Years of Journalism Quarterly. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 74(3), 515-524.
- Rigney, M. (2003). Brandon Goes to Hollywood:" Boys Don't Cry" and the Transgender Body in Film. *Film Criticism*, 28(2), 4-23.
- Rodriguez, N. S., & Blumell, L. (2014). What a Year! The Framing of Marriage Equality through Media's Selected Sources in 2013. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 38(4), 341-359.
- Rojek, Chris (2001) *Celebrity*. London: Reaktion.
- Saldaña, J. (2011). *Fundamentals of Qualitative Research*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Saraisky, N. G. (2015). Analyzing Public Discourse: Using Media Content Analysis to Understand the Policy Process.
- Scheufele, D. A. (1999). Framing as a Theory of Media Effects. *Journal of Communication*, 49(1), 103-122.
- Scheufele, D. A. (2000). Agenda-Setting, Priming, and Framing Revisited. Another Look at Cognitive Effects of Political Communication. *Mass Communication & Society*, 3, 297-316.

- Scheufele, D. A., & Tewksbury, D. (2007). Framing, Agenda Setting, and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models. *Journal of Communication*, 57(1), 9-20.
- Schickel, R. (1974). *His Picture In The Papers: A Speculation on Celebrity in America Based on the Life* (1st ed.). New York, NY: Charterhouse.
- Sekula, A. (1984). *Photography Against the Grain: Essays and Photo Works 1973–1983*. Halifax, NS: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design.
- Shah, D., Watts, M. D., Domke, D., & Fan, D. (2002). News Framing and Cueing of Issue Regimes. Explaining Clinton’s Public Approval in Spite of Scandal. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 66, 339–370.
- Shoemaker, P. & Reese, S. D. (1996). *Mediating the Message*. New York: Longman Publishers
- Shugart, H. A. (2003). Performing Ambiguity: The Passing of Ellen DeGeneres. *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 23(1), 30-54.
- Shugart, H. A. (2005). On Misfits and Margins: Narrative, Resistance, and the Poster Child Politics of Rosie O'Donnell. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 2(1), 52-76.
- Siegler, M. (2015, April 13). Behind In Touch’s Bruce Jenner Photoshop Job. Retrieved March 29, 2017, from [http://pagesix.com/2015/01/14/in-touch-magazines-bruce-jenner-photoshop-foibles/?\\_ga=1.72687251.1054113987.1392645097](http://pagesix.com/2015/01/14/in-touch-magazines-bruce-jenner-photoshop-foibles/?_ga=1.72687251.1054113987.1392645097)
- Sloop, J. M. (2000). Disciplining the Transgendered: Brandon Teena, Public Representation, and Normativity. *Western Journal of Communication (includes Communication Reports)*, 64(2), 165-189.
- Sloop, J. M. (2004). *Disciplining Gender: Rhetorics of Sex Identity in Contemporary US Culture*. Univ of Massachusetts Press.
- Smith, M. M., & Beal, B. (2007). “So You Can See How the Other Half Lives” MTV “Cribs” Use of “the Other” in Framing Successful Athletic Masculinities. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 31(2), 103-127.
- Snow, D. A., & Benford, R. D. (1992). Master Frames and Cycles of Protest. In A.D. Morris & C.M. Mueller (Eds.), *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Spence, R. (Director), & Chapman, J. (Producer). (1996). *Different for Girls* [Motion Picture]. UK: British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) & CiBy 2000
- Squires, C., & Brouwer, D. (2002). In/Discernible Bodies: The Politics of Passing in Dominant and Marginal Media. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 19(3), 283-310.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of Qualitative Research* (Vol. 15). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

- Stump, S. (2015, September 10). 'So Scary': Caitlyn Jenner Opens Up about a Difficult Moment in her Transition. *TODAY*. Retrieved from <http://www.today.com/popculture/caitlyn-jenner-tells-matt-lauer-about-having-massive-panic-attack-t43181>
- TODAY (2015, September 9). Caitlyn Jenner Talks Transition And New Life | TODAY [Video File]. Retrieved August 22, 2016 from <https://youtu.be/xFhV7-IEPc0>
- TODAY (2015, September 10). Caitlyn Jenner Opens Up About Dating, Family | TODAY [Video File]. Retrieved August 22, 2016 from <https://youtu.be/R-rh7dJMhEI>
- Towle, A. (2003) Celebrity Branding, *Hollywood Reporter*, (November 18), [available at [www.hollywoodreporter.com](http://www.hollywoodreporter.com)]. (Retrieved on 30 November, 2015).
- Tuchman, Gaye (1978) *Making News. A Study in the Construction of Reality*. New York: Free Press.
- Tucker, L. R. (1998). The Framing of Calvin Klein: A Frame Analysis of Media Discourse about the August 1995 Calvin Klein Jeans Advertising Campaign. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 15(2), 141-157.
- Turner, G. (2004) *Understanding Celebrity*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Turner, G. (2014). *Understanding Celebrity* (2nd ed.). SAGE.
- Turner, G. (2007). The Economy of Celebrity. *Stardom and Celebrity: a Reader*, 193-205.
- Turner, G. (2010). Approaching Celebrity Studies. *Celebrity Studies*, 1(1), 11-20.
- Van Den Bulck, H., & Claessens, N. (2013). Guess Who Tiger is Having Sex with Now? Celebrity Sex and the Framing of the Moral High Ground. *Celebrity Studies*, 4(1), 46-57.
- Vanity Fair. (2015, June 01). Caitlyn Jenner Is Finally "Free" on Vanity Fair's Cover [Video File]. Retrieved August 14, 2016 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0OwDp2LMVbg>
- Vanity Fair. (2015, July 26). "Call Me Caitlyn," a Documentary [Video File]. Retrieved August 14, 2016 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4uxD7anED0>
- Vrouenraets, L. J., Fredriks, A. M., Hannema, S. E., Cohen-Kettenis, P. T., & Vries, M. C. (2016). Perceptions of Sex, Gender, and Puberty Suppression: A Qualitative Analysis of Transgender Youth. *Archives of sexual behavior*, 1-7.
- Wagmeister, E. (2016, January 06). Khloe Kardashian Looking Forward to Seeing FX's 'People v. OJ Simpson'. Retrieved June 31, 2016, from <http://variety.com/2016/tv/news/khloe-kardashian-fx-american-crime-story-oj-simpson-1201673822/>

- Weaver, H. (2017, April 28). Ellen DeGeneres's Groundbreaking Coming Out: 20 Years Later. Retrieved May 13, 2017, from <http://www.vanityfair.com/style/2017/04/20th-anniversary-of-ellen-degeneres-coming-out>
- Weisman, A. (2015, May 15). THE INCREDIBLE EVOLUTION OF KRIS JENNER: From Stay-at-Home Mom to Megamillionaire Manager. Retrieved May 30, 2016, from <http://www.businessinsider.com/kris-jenner-stay-at-home-mom-to-millionaire-manager-2015-5>
- White, B. (1952). Ex-GI Becomes Blonde Beauty. *Daily News*.
- White, M. (n.d.). Bruce Jenner. Retrieved May 13, 2016, from <http://data.desmoinesregister.com/hall-of-fame/single.php?id=474>
- Williams, K. C., & Page, R. A. (2011). Marketing to the Generations. *Journal of Behavioral Studies in Business*, 3, 1.
- Woodward, E., & Hendin, R. (2015, September 25). How The Kardashians Manipulated The Media To Become The Most Famous Family In The World. Retrieved May 30, 2016, from [https://www.buzzfeed.com/elliewoodward/how-the-kardashians-manipulated-the-media-to-become-the-most?utm\\_term=.ka3rpz3zEk#.bj86XdGd3q](https://www.buzzfeed.com/elliewoodward/how-the-kardashians-manipulated-the-media-to-become-the-most?utm_term=.ka3rpz3zEk#.bj86XdGd3q)
- Wright, T., Colgan, F., Cregany, C., & McKearney, A. (2006). Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Workers: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace. *Equal Opportunities International*, 25(6), 465-470.
- Yale, L., & Gilly, M. C. (1988). Trends in Advertising Research: A Look at the Content of Marketing-Oriented Journals from 1976 to 1985. *Journal of Advertising*, 17(1), 12-22
- Yahr, E. (2015, February 4). The Forgotten History of Bruce Jenner: How the All-American Hero of the 1970s Ended Up Here. Retrieved April 01, 2016, from [https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/the-forgotten-history-of-bruce-jenner-how-the-1970s-all-american-hero-ended-up-here/2015/02/04/3c594ae0-abdf-11e4-ad71-7b9eba0f87d6\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/the-forgotten-history-of-bruce-jenner-how-the-1970s-all-american-hero-ended-up-here/2015/02/04/3c594ae0-abdf-11e4-ad71-7b9eba0f87d6_story.html)
- Ziek, P. (2016). Cultivating Celebrity through Public Relations. *Celebrity Studies*, 7(1), 122-124. doi:10.1080/19392397.2016.1131015