Meriwether’s New Girl

Roommates. Lovers. Idiots.

- CODY SILVERTHORN
Brief Overview:

- Relational staircase model
- Dialectical tensions
- Portrayals of stereotypes
- Symbolic interactionism
- Standpoint theory
- Conclusion
Why I chose *New Girl*:

- **Emotional connection** created through the correlation with an optimal, down-to-earth version of an average citizens living in contemporary Los Angeles.
  - Resembles traits of uses and gratifications theory
    - Proposed as the intellectual or emotional need that pleases the viewers while occupied with a form of media
- Viewer’s depiction of reality vs. fiction is brought to the surface
Elizabeth Meriwether, writer of *New Girl*, uniquely incorporates satire, romantic comedy, and interconnected friends who seemingly experience every relational delight and misfortune altogether.
Relational Staircase Model:

- Nick & Jess

- Better known as the flourishing and depreciating stages of development in a relationship (Guerrero et al., 2014)

- Jess & Nick went from intro→ bonding→ down to avoiding, but **never terminating**
Dialectical Tensions:

- **Nick & Jess**
  - Led to relationship’s termination:
    - Masculine (Nick) portrayed lack of connectedness
    - Feminine (Jess) portrayed desire for autonomy and dialogue
  - Kept relationship, as a whole, alive:
    - Masculine wanting more dialogue
    - Feminine wanting to be more active
Portrayals of Stereotypes:

- Schmidt- overcompensated for rough past and lack of confidence led to his androgynous, heterosexual, narcissistic, breadwinner mentality (Wood, 2015)

- Cece- grew up feminine, used to receiving attention based off of her looks, eventually proclaimed the label as a ditsy sex object (Wood, 2015)
  - Characteristics contradicted Cece’s mold society bestowed on her
    - Ex: emotional laborer, competent, resourceful, drive for professionalism
Fiction vs. Reality:

Schmidt & Cece
- Unrealistic standards draw viewers toward stereotypes
  - creates relational problems

Albion College researchers predicted what observers witnessed on television was a template for them to incorporate into their lives (Rozenfeld, 2013)
the medium is the message (Campbell et al., 2013)

explains how viewers consume a type of media and it influences their experience on the interpretation in which they receive it
Symbolic Interactionism

Schmidt & Cece

- A form of communication that assists in the achievement of one’s own view of the world by interacting with the people that are presented to them

- Present during the conflict between Cece’s mother, devoted to her native country’s traditions and customs, and Schmidt when they told her they were getting married

Standpoint Theory:

- Schmidt & Cece
  - Defined as taking gender identities, race, ethnicity, and social classes and evoking a perception onto individuals as to how they perceive the world and understand social life
  - Ex: Schmidt utilizing standpoint theory to better understand Cece’s mother’s disregard for their wedding
Conclusion:

From this presentation, the viewer should:

- properly navigate through relational staircase model
- Know anticipations could relate to masculine/feminine personality
- acknowledge stereotypes embodied by characters
- depict difference between unrealistic standards & reality
- incorporate standpoint theory in their communication skills, producing a viewpoint towards other cultural behaviors
References: