

Negative images of black women in videos, films

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woman is somebody who has excess sexuality spilling out all over the place. It's excess sexuality that white men are entitled to," she said.

Black women stew about the narrow, negative ways they are nearly always portrayed. They are quick-tempered and full of attitude like Tyler Perry's Madea character or the comedian Mo'Nique, or barely dressed and brazenly sexual like the women mimicking strippers in so many videos. Black women cheered when Halle Berry won an Academy Award in 2002 for "Monster's

Ball." But why, some grumbled, did a black woman have to take off her clothes and perform sex scenes with a white man to win cinema's highest honor? Why are black women so rarely portrayed as flirty or romantic without being slutty?

However some music artists who put together videos say they're not exploiting women, they're providing jobs.

In a recent VH1 news special, "Hip Hop Videos: Sexploitation on the Set," North Carolina rapper Big Delph was featured as he filmed an uncut video in a Fayetteville strip club. The

dancers, according to the documentary, weren't paid. Despite that, Big Delph said it was easy to get women into the video, of "VIP."

"Not too many people shoot videos in North Carolina or bring a TV station like VH1 to North Carolina," he said.

Though Delph (who's real name is Doug Robson) said his video shoots are handled professionally, "There's no disrespect of women on the set," he said, there are women who

show up to be groupies.

"Of course you have groupies," he said. "But because we're independent, everybody in my crew is working. We don't have time to entertain them."

Delph said doing an uncut video was never his main focus and doesn't plan to do another anytime soon.

"We shot a clean version of VIP and it didn't get recognized," he said. But when Delph shot the raunchy version of the video, people took notice. Though he's on his way to fame and possibly fortune, Delph said he didn't exploit women in his video to

get there.

"These women already dance at a club," he said. In places like Atlanta, New York and Los Angeles, women go to strip clubs as much as men do. "A lot of women watch uncut videos."

A representative with BET didn't return a call from The Post about the ratings of its uncut show.

The Associated Press contributed to the reporting of this article

Prom fashion goes old-school for guys

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trashy. A saleswoman at David's Bridal on Independence Boulevard said shimmering materials and bright colors are popular with prom goers.

Men are also going with bright colors and tradition, said Lashanda Millner-Murphy, co-owner of DW Designs in Uptown Charlotte.

"They're going with the yellows, greens and oranges," she said. "Young guys are also going for traditional look,

wanting to be fashionable and classic."

Millner-Murphy said gone are the requests for hats, canes and long jackets of a few years ago.

"They want more of the two and three button coats," she said. And since a lot of young men that have gone to DW Designs are going to prom alone, Millner-Murphy said they come to the designer knowing what colors they want without worrying about clashing with a date.

"You can't go wrong with

the clean classic look," she said. "You won't look back at your picture years from now and laugh, wondering why did I wear that."

And if classic isn't your thing and you want to get outrageous at the prom, keep in mind that Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools don't play that.

"According to CMS Student Rights & Responsibilities, a student will maintain personal attire and grooming standards that promote safety, health and acceptable stan-

dards of social conduct, and are not disruptive to the educational environment. Examples include but are not limited to gang colors, bandannas or gang clothing, to include displaying gang signs on notebooks, book bags or other personal or school material. This will include student clothing that materially and substantially disrupts classes or other school activities. This applies to prom," a spokesperson said in an e-mail.

Academic looks for life's meaning in coffee shop

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON—A cup of coffee is just a drink. But a frappuccino is an experience.

So believes Bryant Simon, a historian who is searching for the meaning of modern life amid the round tables and comfy sofas of Starbucks coffee shops.

Simon, who teaches at Philadelphia's Temple University, thinks that by spending time at Starbucks—observing the teenage couples and hurried laptop-users, the solitary office workers and busy baristas—he can learn what it means to live and consume in the age of globalization.

"What are we drinking, and what does it say about who we are?" Simon asked during a recent research trip to London.

His research has taken him to 300 Starbucks in six countries for a caffeine-fueled opus titled "Consuming Starbucks" that's due for publication in 2008. He is one of several academics studying a type of 21st-century cafe culture—Italian

Radio gets bronze statue

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ANDERSON, S.C. — The story of James Robert "Radio" Kennedy, a mentally disabled black man who was the subject of a major motion picture, is now etched in bronze.

A life-size statue of Radio, a fixture at T.L. Hanna High School since the 1960s, was unveiled Wednesday before about 100 people.

The statue shows Radio in a pose typical of a fall Friday night at Hanna— smiling, waving and holding a radio.

The movie about Radio, which shows how he gradually became accepted and loved by the local community, inspired artist Andy Davis to create the sculpture.

"It seems Radio just doesn't have a bad day, and that makes me feel good," Davis said.

"You did a good job on the statue," Kennedy said during the unveiling ceremony.

In his notoriously spontaneous fashion, Radio also gave a cheer as former T.L. Hanna football coach Harold Jones mentioned that the statue will eventually be moved to the school's campus.

The piece now stands in the Medius Sculpture Garden at the Anderson County Arts Warehouse.

coffee in an American package—that has spread rapidly around the world.

Founded in Seattle in 1971, Starbucks Corp. now has 11,000 outlets in 37 countries, including 500 in Tokyo. There is a Starbucks in Beijing's Forbidden City, and the round green logo adorns the streets of Edinburgh and the boulevards of Paris.

The company expects to open 1,800 new stores this year and aims eventually to have 30,000 outlets, half of them outside the United States.

British historian Jonathan Morris said that even in Britain—a stalwart bastion of tea drinking where there are now almost 500 Starbucks stores—the chain has become entrenched in daily life.

While British coffee consumption lags far behind most other European nations, sales of "premium" coffee drinks like lattes and cappuccinos are on the rise.

"I'm not sure how much Starbucks is American any more for British customers," said Morris, a University of Hertfordshire professor who is leading a research project called "The Cappuccino Conquests" about the global spread of Italian coffee.

Simon, whose last book, "Boardwalk of Dreams," was a study of Atlantic City, New Jersey, estimates he has spent 12 hours a week in coffee shops for more than a year.

"I try to limit myself to two to three coffees a day," he said over a "tall"—that is, small—filter coffee at a Starbucks outlet in London's bustling Islington neighborhood.

Starbucks and other coffee houses, he believes, fill "some kind of deep desire for connection with other people."

But unlike the coffee houses of 18th century London or the bohemian java dens of 1950s New York, "Starbucks makes sure you can be alone when you're out if you really need to be," he said. "You get the feeling you're out in public, but you don't need to talk to anyone."

Simon's research has made him finely attuned to the many varieties of the Starbucks customer, from the twentysomething female friends at a nearby table to the middle-aged man hunched over his laptop computer.

"This kind of guy is renting space," said Simon, a boyish 44-year-old who visited 25 Starbucks during four days in

the British capital. "He bought a cup of coffee in order to have some space. These two women in front of us—where else can women meet in urban settings?"

"I was at a Starbucks up the street, and there were kids downstairs making out."

Starbucks' chairman, Howard Schultz, told shareholders at their annual meeting Feb. 8 that the company is focusing on "the Starbucks

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Family, Friends and Politicians Gather to Celebrate the 5th Annual Wil Leary Memorial Cook Out



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