

The New Man And The New Lad: Hegemonic Masculinities In Men's Lifestyle Magazines

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**THE NEW MAN AND THE NEW LAD: HEGEMONIC MASCULINITIES IN
MEN'S LIFESTYLE MAGAZINES**

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

Men are bombarded with contradictory masculine imagery in the media. The perfect man must be aggressive but not violent, sensitive but not emotional, healthy, active and smart without being an idealist, overachiever or too bookish. Heterocentric male focused lifestyle magazines rival women's magazines in number and availability. Some men look to these images as a tool by which to gauge their masculinity and learn their social role performance. This inquiry includes a content analysis of four major men's lifestyle magazines over a 12-month period in which four new masculinities: certitude, irony, new sexism and double voicing were critiqued. Elements of costume, nonverbal expressions and activity level in the photographs of men and women were examined. The findings indicate that *Maxim* and *Stuff* were deluged with displays of certitude of gender roles, irony, "new sexism" and double voicing. *Playboy* had a high level of gender certitude, marginal levels of new sexism and irony and low levels of double voicing. Lastly, *GQ* had relatively high levels of gender certitude but it had very low levels of the other masculinities.

This is dedicated to my family, which seems to be growing by leaps and bounds.

Thanks for putting up with me.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE	3
Masculinity in Context	7
Marginalized Masculinities	11
Media Influence on Masculinity	18
CHAPTER 3: DATA AND ANALYSIS	24
Maxim.....	28
Stuff.....	34
Gentleman’s Quarterly	39
Playboy	43
CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION	48
REFERENCES	51

LIST OF TABLES

<i>Table 1: Comparative Synopsis of Findings.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Table 2: Readership Statistics from Maxim.com 2003.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Table 3: Paid Circulation Statistics.....</i>	<i>29</i>

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“The task of any individual who wants to be free is to demythologize and demystify the authority or myth that has unconsciously informed his or her life. (Shor, 2000:375). Shor proposes to demystify society’s myth of masculinity, which is constantly being reinforced by various elements of our culture. Of all the influences perpetuating our gender roles, the media is the most aggressive and visible. Men are constantly bombarded with contradictory masculine imagery. The perfect man must be aggressive but not violent, sensitive but not emotional, healthy, active and smart without being an idealist, overachiever or too bookish. We don’t typically seek freedom from gender itself but, rather, from the constraints and expectations that are associated with it. How are these roles and constraints perpetuated? How do we define modern masculinity? And where do we begin the search?

Keeping in mind that the media can be seen as a tool of the bourgeoisie to maintain control over the masses, I have chosen to focus on one aspect of that tool - men’s lifestyle magazines. Heterocentric male focused magazines rival women’s magazines in number and availability. Some men look to images in these magazines as a means by which to gauge their masculinity and learn their social role. We must examine the written (is verbal the correct word or do or mean written) and visual gender imagery in these magazines in order to move toward a broader understanding of the media and its influence on masculinity. This study is a content analysis of four major men's lifestyle magazines that were

published within a 12-month period. Bethan Benwell's (2003) typology of masculinity as presented in her book *Masculinity and Men's Lifestyle Magazines* is used in this analysis. Benwell's four expressions of masculinity are: certitude, irony, new sexism and double voicing are utilized in this study. Elements of costume, nonverbal expressions and activity level in the photographs of men and women are examined within the context of Benwell's four expressions of masculinity. It is expected that traditional images and behavioral expectations for both men and women would be found in the magazines identified. The literature regarding masculinity and magazines is abundant, but researchers typically focus on images of women. This study fills a void in the literature regarding representations of masculinity in American magazines. Some limitations of this study must be noted. First, this is an exploratory study and more in-depth research should follow. This study is also limited because of the availability of magazines. The magazines chosen are geared almost exclusively to white men. Resultantly, they have high circulation and are easier to obtain within a limited amount of time than 'ethnic' magazines.

The remainder of this study includes a review of the literature that describes the media's influence on masculinity. Next, the methods section details the data used and the process of analysis. Each magazine is examined to identify key themes and examples of masculinity.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

“What has primacy in everyday life is the gender that is performed, regardless of the flesh’s configuration under the clothes” (Kessler, 1990: 25). Gender is an institution that perpetuates behavioral expectations and social processes. It is built into our institutions such as economy, ideology, family and politics. The media reflects the ideals of those institutions and can reinforce the status quo as well as be a catalyst for change. Radical feminists see gender as a worldwide system of oppression of women by men. Proponents of this view explain that oppression is deliberate and perpetuated by social institutions such as family and especially mass media (Lorber, 1994). Through these institutions, hegemonic femininity and masculinity are learned and perpetuated.

Socialization into gender roles begins immediately upon the parents learning the gender of the child in the womb and continues throughout our lives. Maccoby (1998) describes early childhood socialization into gender roles using conversation analysis to examine the language used by mothers and fathers toward their children. She found that parents use more “power assertive” communication with male children and more “feeling state” language with female children (Maccoby, 1998). This sets up an early precedent and expectations for both genders that carries through in most forms of communication. Advertisements geared toward men use power assertive language and those geared toward women use feeling state language. For example, a recent cologne ad for men described the scent as powerful and strong. This insinuated that

people who wore it were successful and physically active. A similar perfume ad geared toward women described the wearer as loved, capable of eliciting emotional feelings in others (particularly men) and beautiful.

Paul Kivel (1999:11) conceptualized what he calls the “Act Like a Man Box” because “it feels like a box- a 24hour a day, seven day a week box that society tells boys they must fit themselves into.” He discovered that boys developed strategies to fit into this box and, thus, spend an enormous amount of time and energy defining themselves within it. Kivel found that this pressure left permanent scars that they carried into adulthood. Barrie Thorne (1986) found that girls and boys had very different experiences and realities at school- even if they were taking part in the same activities. This gender segregation is most prominent in elementary school and lessens progressively through middle and high school (Thorne, 1986). Most notably, there is no research about the concept of a “shared world” or the experiences of children of either gender who reject both or either of the “gendered worlds.”

Sex roles theorists argue socialization is the method by which children develop gender attitudes and personalities. This leads us to question how change takes place. Is it an issue of resocialization of adults or developing a new, non-sexist socialization of children (Lorber, 1994)?

Lorber (1994) defines hegemonic masculinity as economically successful, racially superior and visibly heterosexual. Women are not the only casualties in the patriarchal structure. “Practices of power are layered and interwoven in a

society and...gender dominance and its ideological justification include men's subordination and denigration of other men as well as men's exploitation of women" (Lorber, 1994: 5).*

"Hegemony ... is about the winning and holding of power and the formation and destruction of social groups in that process" (Donaldson, 1993:685). It is about the "ways in which the ruling class establishes and maintains its domination" (Donaldson, 1993:685). Hegemony is not just a word to describe the dominant ideal; it is an abstract conceptual tool of oppression. "The dominant group needs a way to justify its dominance" by making other masculinities inferior (Cheng, 1999:295). Any alternative masculinity is a threat to hegemony and the status quo.

"The hegemonic model may only correspond to the actual characteristics of a small number of men. Yet very large numbers of men are complicit in sustaining the hegemonic model" (Cheng, 1999:295). Much like the ironic truth that many women participate in reinforcing patriarchy, many men are active participants in their own oppression as well. Donaldson (1993) proposes that "the ability to impose a definition of a situation, to set the terms in which events are understood and issues discussed, to formulate ideals and define morality is an essential part of this process [hegemony]. Hegemony involves persuasion of the greater part of the population, particularly through the media"(p.645). He suggests that of the litany of "weavers of the fabric of hegemony" the media is singled out as the most influential (Donaldson, 1993:655).

Men are not the only ones affected by the demands for hegemonic ideals. An expectation of hegemonic masculinity affects women in a number of ways. “Emphasized femininity is a kind of gender performance that accommodates hegemonic masculine desires while preventing other femininities from gaining articulation” (Cheng, 1999:295). In the American workplace we have masculinized desirable traits to such a degree that women feel pressure to live up to them. “If women desire to become successful managers, they must make a gender presentation of hegemonic masculinity” (Cheng, 1999:295). The cross-gender masculine expectation of the androgynous feminine employee, in contrast to the hyperfeminine model, clearly illustrates that femininities are created (and subverted) in relation to the dominant masculinity. Kevin Goddard (2000) emphasizes that masculinity can't be interpreted as “separate from the image of men... projected by women” (p. 23). Both men and women in their expectations of behavior and gender display perpetuate patriarchy. Frequently, members of marginalized groups “perform hegemonic masculinity in order to gain patriarchal privileges within their group” (Cheng, 1999:295). “Performing hegemonic masculinity by a marginalized person is seen as a passing behavior that distracts from his/her stigma” (Cheng, 1999:295).

An example of this occurs today in Egypt where women who perform hegemonic masculinity are often treated as honorary “men.” For example, modern Egyptian female shopkeepers must dress and act “manly” in order to be treated equally among their male peers (Lorber, 1994). Everyone is aware that

they are women, but the act must be kept up, so to speak, so that the men who afford her the courtesy of equality may also keep their pride. The woman in question must be thought of as a “temporary man” so the acceptance of their power can be rationalized. In some cultures when there is no surviving son a daughter will live, dress and act “like a man” in order to inherit property. She is then treated as a man and is afforded the benefits of being male in her culture. She can smoke and drink with the men and she is able to inherit her father’s business.

Masculinity in Context

Hegemonic masculinity has more than a superficial psychological effect on society. It can shape world events. According to James Messerschmidt (1996), hyper-masculine risk taking behavior led to the space shuttle Challenger disaster in 1986. He found that the “go ahead” attitude was a major factor in the complex decision-making process that occurred in the days before the Challenger was allowed to fly.

Male norms stress values such as courage, inner direction, aggression, autonomy, mastery, technological skill, group solidarity, adventure and toughness (Donaldson, 1993). The demographic characteristics of hegemonic masculinity are white, male, able-bodied and first world (Cheng, 1999). Doty (1994) suggests we replace the roles of *soldier, expert, breadwinner and lord* with *healer, companion, mediator, colleague and nurturer* (Doty, 1994).

He mentions the changing idea of masculinity and says that now it is not how much violence you can inflict, but how much you can prevent, that makes you a man (Doty, 1994). Cheng (1999) suggests that words and phrases like aggression, domination, competition, athletic prowess, stoicism and control are linked to hegemonic masculinity. Shor (2000) mentions that “duty”, “honor” and “patriotism” are also a part of the hegemonic ideal. Expressions of emotions other than anger are discouraged by hegemonic masculinity.

One definition of manhood remains the standard by which all are judged. As Justad (2000) says, “the young buck on Wall Street may look and live worlds apart from the young buck in the 'hood, [but] they both believe that their survival depends upon traditional codes of masculine values that emphasize physical and emotional toughness and above all independence” (p. 355). Masculinity has many faces; I refer to these roles, such as the *hero*, *player*, *new man* and *cowboy*. These archetypes exist only in the ethers and are filtered through our culture and circumstance, but they are the categories of masculinity by which men are bombarded in the media. Ross (1998) discusses the *black superman* and the *strong black warrior* as roles that emerged out of “blacksploitation” movies of the 1970's (p.599).

Scholars who study masculinity still struggle with the same questions that they have in the past in relation to what it means to be a man. More prominent social movements and the internalization of many feminist ideals have led the research in new directions. Essentialists considered “marginalized masculinity”

an oxymoron (Cheng, 1999). Chua and Fujino (1999) state that, “masculinity is gendered, socially constituted, and intrinsically connected to power relations”(p.391). While much of the literature is still ethno- and heterocentric, more emphasis is being placed on the marginalized masculinities of minorities, homosexuals and working class men. Recent research takes notice that masculinities and femininities are not static, homogeneous or created in a vacuum, they are dynamic and diverse. While some argue that history produces a singular product to be studied, defined and dissected before individuals can be considered, it is important not to fall into the trap of thinking about “working class masculinity”, “black masculinity” or “gay masculinity” as singularities. Countless versions of masculinities fall into these categories. They are not mutually exclusive and acknowledging their existence does not detract from the serious examination of commonalities in the Black, working class, or gay experience.

Ann Arnett Ferguson (2000) conducted field research at Rosa Parks Elementary School examining at risk children. She concluded that there are two primary images associated with Black men in contemporary society - the criminal and the endangered species (Ferguson, 2000). Note first the use of the term “species.” Although touted by well meaning individuals, it reinforces the notion of black as “Other.” In this case, it goes beyond one belonging to “another race” and crosses the line to “non-human.” “Institutional practices continue to exclude African Americans...through the exercise of rules and purportedly objective

standards by individuals who may consider themselves to be racially unbiased” (Ferguson, 2000: 19). Sociologists are not immune to this practice either.

Many articles on hegemonic masculinity treat race only incidentally. They ignore the importance of race in constructing White men's masculinity (Ross, 1998). “The White man's masculinity depends on the denial of the masculinity of Blacks” (Cheng, 1999:295). In World War II, Black soldiers were prohibited from the “hegemonic glory” of combat (i.e. actual fighting in combat). Instead, they were largely relegated to racially segregated units and jobs as stewards and cooks (Cheng, 1999). Antimiscegenation laws were written by White men and forms of violence such as lynching were carried out by White men to preserve the chastity of White women. Black men have been consistently constructed as failing to meet civilized gender norms (Ross, 1998; Nandi, 2002). This failure to meet civilized gender norms has resulted in the racism that is not only systemic but people of all races have internalized it to a degree.

While Black masculinity is viewed as locally dominant, “discourses by and on Black men have been concentrated images of scarcity, invisibility, silence, deprivation and lack” (Ross, 1998: 599). Rhetoric of extinction is often used when discussing Black men, using the same vernacular scientists use when discussing an endangered animal. Science has historically been used as a tool to capture, control and exploit Black men and to develop the vocabulary of racial difference (Saint-Aubin, 2002). The images of Black men often depict “the Black male as

the absent, hollering signifier securing the potentially beset masculinity of the national agenda” (Ross, 1998:599).

White men, however, do not have a monopoly on patriarchy. A key difference is that “black men do not have the institutional power of white men” (Cheng, 1999:295). Black men's racial marginalization in American society outweighs their gender advantage. “Although it may be true that men, as a group, enjoy institutional privileges at the expense of women, as a group, men share very unequally at the fruits of these privileges” (Cheng, 1999:295).

Marginalized Masculinities

Michael Eric Dyson (1993) analyzed the construction of black masculinity as reflected in the 1991 John Singleton film *Boyz N the Hood*. The film depicts the hardships of being a black man in the United States. There is no acceptable resolution for the protagonists in the film it offers no solutions. He found that it presented a pessimistic vision of black men, picturing them moving toward “apocalypse” with little hope for “redemption” (Dyson, 1993).

“The portrait of black masculinity that emerges... perpetually constructs black men as ‘failures’ who are psychologically ‘fucked up’, dangerous, violent sex maniacs whose insanity is informed by their inability to fulfill their phallogentric masculine destiny in a racist context” (hooks, 1992: 2). Hooks places the discussion of Black masculinity in a broader historical context. There is a long history of scapegoating black women and holding on to phallogentric

ideals as a form of power- any power (Dyson, 1993; hooks, 1992). W. E. B. DuBois (1903) described his book, *The Souls of Black Folk*, as a, “manual for teaching the sons of master and man how to recognize a real person in the face of a Black man veiled as a social problem.” In other words, DuBois created a map to guide people of all races toward moving past the racism of our culture.

Black marginalization in the U.S. can be traced to slavery. Asian marginalization is directly related to colonialization and the view of Asian men (also 1st generation immigration of sojourners) as a conquered people (Cheng, 1999). Chua and Fujino (1999) conducted a series of surveys looking at how college aged Asian American and White men expressed their masculinities and how Asian American and White women perceive Asian American and White masculinities. They found that Asian American men were seen as more nurturing, physically smaller, less aggressive and more “book smart” than their white counterparts (Chua and Fujino, 1999). While media images of Asian men help regulate masculinities and perceptions of them, the men's construction of their own masculinity seems to vary greatly from the perception of the media and women (Chua and Fujino, 1999). Asian men see themselves very differently than do the media. Their self reported perception is counter to the stereotype purported by various media outlets in society. Asian men are not the only minorities whose presentation differs from reality

The Gay Rights Movement also calls into question our definitions and assumptions about conventional masculinity. As Carrigan, Connell and Lee

(1985) put it, "Masculinity lit before women's lib was frankly hostile to homosexuality" (p. 583). Homosexual men face a unique dichotomy; they are simultaneously outside the patriarchal structure and within it. "Homosexual men are penalized for failing to meet the criteria for masculinity"(Carrigan, Connell and Lee, 1985:585; Nystrom, 2002, Donaldson, 1993). Some Gay Rights advocates affirmed and embraced the "charges of effeminacy" and located the problem in the "rigid social definitions of masculinity" (Carrigan, Connell and Lee, 1985:585; Nystrom, 2002). The problem is with society, not the homosexual. The most significant contribution of the Gay Rights movement to the sociological study of masculinity is the shocking idea that heterosexuality is not necessarily the "natural order of things"(Carrigan, Connell and Lee, 1985:585).

Homosexuality directly contradicts hegemonic masculinity in that women are traditionally seen as the sex objects while men are enthusiastically rejected as sexual objects. This idea leads researchers to view hegemonic ideals as a type of masculinity to which others, notably homosexual men, effeminate men, minorities and women, are subordinated. Cliff Cheng (1999) states in his research that it is important to emphasize "hegemonic masculinity is constructed in relation to femininities and subordinated and marginalized masculinities" (p. 295).

New forms of effeminate heterosexual masculinity are being produced in pop culture. From the New York Dolls and David Bowie's Ziggy Stardust in the 70's, to bands like Poison in the 80's, and now Marilyn Manson and Dennis

Rodman, it is increasingly acceptable for men to dress and look like women. This phenomenon challenges the accepted cultural ideals and exists in the fringe of mainstream pop culture. Although, one could argue that these men had to overemphasize other attributes associated with hegemonic masculinity in order to be fully accepted in American culture.

In order to get a full picture of the power structure, we must also address issues of class in relation to hegemonic masculinity. It works differently within families of different socio-economic statuses (Carrigan, Connell and Lee, 1985; Philaretou and Allen, 2001). In upper class homes, the career of the husband is the central theme of the family. The wife is expected to manage home life smoothly, to entertain, to raise funds for charity and to be an active member of an elite social community. Often, this affords her relative autonomy since the husband is away from the home (Carrigan, Connell and Lee, 1985). Much of the time ruling class hegemonic masculinity is expressed through fiscal power. This is a key difference in the type of power available to men. Working class families differ in that often, the self-esteem of the husband is “eroded rather than inflated” in the workplace (Carrigan, Connell and Lee, 1985:593). This sometimes requires him to use alternatives to career and money to dominate. This can be expressed in the form of strict adherence to a traditional ideology of some kind and/or occasional verbal or physical domination and abuse (Carrigan, Connell and Lee, 1985). Of course, there is abuse in ruling class homes, and financial

power struggles in working class homes, these are broad generalizations. Both are patriarchal, hegemonic examples of family dynamics.

In “The Male In Crisis” (1970), Karl Bednarick exemplifies this transition of sociological views on masculinity. He is one of the first to suggest that alienation at work, political bureaucracy and war are undermining masculinity (Bednarick, 1970). Bednarick (1970) emphasized the contradiction between hegemonic masculinity and men's lives. He connected the commercialization of sexuality with increased aggressiveness. While his insights were progressive for the time period, he never questioned that the hegemonic ideal was the true nature of men.

Masculinity of young men “appears reshaped in contemporary representations in the direction of increased passivity, self-indulgence and sexual objectification and also in resistance to these traits” (Gardiner, 2000: 254). This illustrates what many consider to be the crisis of masculinity today. These competing oppositional visions are actively promoted by the media, sometimes even at the same time (Gardiner, 2000). Beynon (2002) believes there is strong evidence for a crisis in masculinity. However, he does consider the idea that it may be a discursive moral panic. He questions whether it is a crisis we are facing or a series of crises. He concludes that more research is needed before we can make a decision.

Levant (1997) argues that the absence of the “good provider” role has left men dumbfounded. He laments that the “good provider” role was not

followed by the “good family man” role, citing divorce as a key factor in the role conflict and emotions associated with being a divorced father (Levant, 1997). Men sense there is a crisis, and it is that sense that drives them to large gatherings like the Promise Keepers (Levant, 1997). The Promise Keepers is a Protestant organization whose seven promises center on evangelizing, maintaining purity of various sorts, and maintaining (read: reclaiming) the member's role as head of family. Promise Keepers assumes that men are inherently weak when it comes to pornography, sex, drugs and alcohol, and they advise their members to rely on a social network of “brother promise keepers” to keep them from their vices. Levant says that discussion of a “masculinity crisis” makes many men defensive, as they recognize there is a problem but largely lack the emotional resources to deal with it (Levant, 1997).

Susan Faludi also uses the crisis framework to discuss masculinity. In her 1991 book, *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man*, she evokes vivid phallic metaphors of men's dispossession. She says that men are objectified in the media by consumer culture but they lack the tools that women have developed to cope with that objectification (Faludi, 1999). Faludi (1999) expands on Levant's ideas and further proposes that globalization has resulted in the displacement of white middle class men from their culturally authoritative position at the center of the nation. As a result, currently, men lack a distinct, culturally authoritative center to look toward (Faludi, 1999).

Komarovsky (1973) echoes that feeling of role strain. "In a rapidly changing society, normative malintegration is commonly assumed to lead to an experience of strain" (p. 873). Warren Spielberg (1993) defines the male crisis as a role conflict as well, stating that, "the greatest difficulty many men have today involves the inability to construct for themselves an identity suffused with an authentic and integrated sense of life meaning" (p. 173). In his study, he examines aspects of shame associated with men's "subjugation to the strictures of the traditional male role model" and the inability to live up to the ideal (Spielberg 1993:173). Brod and Kaufman note that as a group men are powerful but as individuals they feel powerless (1994). Men are empowered by large gatherings like Promise Keepers and the Million Man March (a demonstration for the purpose of raising awareness of racial inequalities).

"Any effort to understand- let alone transform- masculinity must take account of the ways in which we see ourselves reflected through the lenses that record our fantasy lives" (Hollander, 1998:475). Some researchers call for a complete overhaul of masculinity, as we know it. This reconstruction can be thought of as "a manipulation of an identified oppressive social construct that has historical, but not essential, associations with men" (Justad, 1996:355). Perhaps, though, it is "an effort to reestablish some true... form of being and acting like men that has been obscured by a larger social or political force such as feminism or industrialization" (Justad, 1996:355). "Are we left to choose between essentialist re-readings of old (and usually misogynous) myths of masculinity and

constructive suggestions that eschew identification with anything masculine?" (Justad, 1996:355). We are learning that masculinity is not a discrete measure but a continuous, fluid, dynamic and evolving process that affects each member of society.

John Beynon (2002) has clearly defined certain masculine roles. There are *standard bearers* who do their best and achieve as much as they can (Beynon, 2002). There are *workers* who are the breadwinners with high work ethics and the *lovers* who are either faithful husbands or playboys (Beynon, 2002). Also, there are *bosses* who enjoy overcoming hurdles and taking control as well as *rugged individuals* who engage in dangerous and adventurous acts and have confidence in their own abilities (Beynon, 2002). In a separate typology he lays out the foundation of the roles of the *heroic man*, *spiritual man*, *chivalrous man*, *Renaissance man*, *hedonist* and *he-man* (Beynon, 2002).

Media Influence on Masculinity

Benwell (2003) describes several forms of new masculinities that are applicable to this study. The first is *certitude*, defined by Benwell as voicing a certainty of gender. It places the feminine and non-hegemonic firmly in the category of Other, accomplished by using in-group identifiers such as slang or esoteric reference, inclusive pronouns (us or we versus them) and presuppositions involving shared knowledge (Benwell 2003).

The second is *New Sexism (strategic negotiation/accommodation of feminist discourses)* (Benwell 2003). Benwell describes this as reinforcing the legitimacy of male power in new and creative ways. This, “sexism by subterfuge” is explainable in terms of the hegemonic workings of masculinity which relies on consent and complicity rather than domination for its power” (Benwell 2003:20). This is often exemplified by the common disclaimer, “I’m not a sexist but...”. This can also be used to distance the reader from racism and elitism. “I’m not a racist but...” followed by an off-color joke spoken in hushed tones actually betrays the speaker as what he claims not to be.

The third, and most applicable form of new masculinity is *irony*. These magazines use humor to create distance between the reader and what is being read. Much of the content of *Maxim* and *Stuff*, more so than the more established magazines, is obviously designed to be satire. The readers know that they are not really advocating beating someone up as a workout. They also know that it is a bad idea to set a cat on fire. The purpose of this analysis is not to over-quote jokes that are meant to be satirical, but to analyze the underlying agenda behind the humor. Irony, according to Benwell (2003), is the most common accommodation of feminism. “An expression of ironic intention (‘only kidding’) is a frequent accompaniment to a politically unpalatable sentiment since it allows the sender to save face whilst preserving the form ... of the original surface uttering intact” (Benwell 2003: 20).

The fourth form is *contradiction, ambiguity, ambivalence and double voicing* (Benwell 2003). This is the hero/anti-hero ambiguity that the discourse of men's magazines reflects from the masculine culture as a whole. Benwell argues that men are being torn in two primary directions and being given contradictory messages. The first is that of a hero. The message is that men must use their manly power to save things that are in danger: women, animals, and morals in society. The second, contradicting message is that men are too incompetent to do their own laundry, much less save anyone. This is exemplified by the clever use of self- deprecating humor.

Although most contemporary research on the portrayal of masculinity in the media has focused on violence, there is also research on gender roles in the media. For example, Strate (1992) examined the myth of masculinity as a form of cultural communication. Specifically, he examined masculinity in the context of beer commercials. He noted that the commercials focus on what men "do" which is represented as physical labor, skillful labor, achieve economic success and reflect a puritanical work ethic. Work is the defining part of a man's identity as is teamwork. Men are often represented as being in groups, working toward a common goal. Strate also noted that when women were included in beer commercials it was often as a competing object of desire for the men. The main character would exemplify emotional restraint and detachment from the objects of desire.

Commercials are just one form of media to study there is also the growing popularity of men's lifestyle magazines such as *Maxim*, *Stuff*, *GQ* and *Playboy*. A new and in some cases, revised, breed of magazines commercialize masculinity "at a time when male power [is] in question" and the male body is sexualized (Beynon, 2002). These magazines, which focus on matters such as health, fashion, sex, relationships, and lifestyle, play a part in defining what it means to be a modern man. Some critics argue that these magazines represent an improvement in media portrayals of gender since they focus on topics previously thought to be solely the concern of women such as appearance and relationships. But others might say that such magazines still rely on stereotypical portrayals of men and masculinity, featuring handsome, white, well-built and well-dressed men, interested only in acquiring the finer things in life. These magazines continue to relegate women to the background and, in doing so, are examples of social backlash directed against specific gains made by women in the paid labor force, mass media industries and other professions. It is no coincidence that as women are achieving greater social, political and professional equality, these magazines symbolically relegate them to subordinate positions as sex objects. I argue that the recent popularity of these magazines is a reflection of men's uncertainty over the roles they are expected to assume in society, at work, and in their relationships.

The normalization of society after World War II left men feeling constrained by the demands of work, marriage, fatherhood and the changing sex

roles in society. At this point the evolving nature of men's sex roles became clear to many Americans. The advent of *Playboy* magazine in 1953 was a catharsis of sorts for men in America. *Playboy* unapologetically celebrated the bachelor's lifestyle. *Playboy* painted an idealistic picture of the well-educated, confirmed bachelor who appreciated the finer things in life: wine, jazz, scotch, art, and women. *Playboy's* success was built on its celebration of male independence from the domestic responsibilities of marriage and fatherhood. The focus of 1950's and 60's articles in *Playboy* magazine often centered around the "discontent and resentment men felt in their marriages" (Nystrom, 2002:41). The famous first issue not only had Marilyn Monroe on the cover, but also included an article entitled, "Miss Golddigger 1953"(Nystrom, 2002). This magazine was the beginning of the modern "hedonistic male consumer" (Nystrom, 2002:41). The focus of media images geared toward men was no longer solely on providing for the wife and kids. Bachelors often used the "playboy image" to avoid the taint of homosexuality during a time when men were expected to marry young. The "playboy" then became an archetype; which has been modified over the years but the core values of the "playboy" remain the same whether we call it a "playboy" or a "player."

Some might suggest that these magazines are being churned out at the expense of more critical art forms that might lead people to question the social status quo. Are these magazines creating false needs in people, needs that are conveniently fulfilled by our capitalist consumer system? Are we promoting the

idea that you are the man you are because of what you buy? This displays commodity fetishism, in that social relations and cultural experiences are objectified in terms of money. The role of man as consumer is an important one and one that is at the heart of men's lifestyle magazines.

Benwell (2003) describes two distinctly different male roles portrayed by British *GQ* and *Loaded* (a British *Maxim* precursor). She describes the "new man" as the sensitive, strong, provider that embraces feminism. The "new man" is a little older, has a bit more money and is frequently found in *GQ*. The role of the "new lad" is a direct reaction to feminism. It is accommodating of feminism to a degree, but it mocks the "new man" role and sees it as weak. The "new lad" displays his discomfort with female power (and the power of minorities) through satire.

CHAPTER 3: DATA AND ANALYSIS

The data were obtained from back issues of *Maxim*, *Stuff*, *Gentleman's Quarterly* and *Playboy* magazines from November 2002 through November 2003. These magazines were chosen because *Playboy* and *GQ* are established cultural icons that are firmly entrenched in our American male culture, while *Maxim* and *Stuff* are upstart potential icons that are highly successful and well on their way to icon status. They are more than fashion magazines in that they attempt to define all aspects of a man's life. The "entire man" is simplified and commodified and broken down into palatable, easy to understand parts. For example the "sports" part the "hip-hop part" the "rock and roll " part the "chick getting" part and the "stuff buying" part. Meanwhile, *Playboy* is synonymous with an idealized bachelor lifestyle. *Playboy* and *GQ* are adjectives that are synonymous with fashion and virility. I think it appropriate to fully disclose these as they inevitably influence the study. *Playboy* is traditionally thought of as the American standard for printed pornography with occasional articles written by important people. *GQ*, on the other hand, calls to mind images of John F. Kennedy, Jr. and games of polo. *Maxim* can be viewed as a younger version of *GQ*, and *Stuff* as an even younger version. *Maxim* and *Stuff* cater to a much younger demographic than *GQ* and *Playboy*. What follows below is a detailed account of the methodology by which the analysis was made.

I took the four forms of the new masculinities and rated their presence in each of the magazines. I counted all of the examples of the typologies and then I divided them evenly and decided that for the purpose of is study not present would mean that it was not found at all in any of the sample. Somewhat present means that it is found at least once in the sample but not in every issue. Present means that it is found at least once in every issue. Very Present means that it is found 45 times or more. I chose 45 because it was a number on the high end of the average. I rated them on the following relative scale:

Very present- Present in the majority of the feature articles and throughout the magazine's entire sample.45-up per issue

Present- Found at least once in each issue of the magazine.1-45 per issue

Somewhat present- Found less than once per issue

Not present- Not found at all in the magazine.

Maxim and *Stuff* attempt to define the man's consumer relationship. In order to receive the following benefits one must possess the following items, act in the following way, and desire the following objectives. Fame is described as an easily achievable alternative to education. Foreign people, cultures and objects are a novelty, to be awed by in the case of women, feared in the case of men and ridiculed in the case of culture. One should enjoy cars, guns and girls. If one should veer from these three main objectives, one is probably gay. Implicit in that message is that being gay is bad. The reader is encouraged to loathe anything that is seen as weak: anti-war protestors, environmentalists, vegetarians and anyone else deemed vaguely "hippie-like".

Interestingly, the overwhelming image that I saw in the advertising is a well-manicured, well coiffed, lip-gloss-and-eyeliner-wearing rebel, who is pretty and seems dangerous. This “rugged pretty” image dominated *Maxim* and *Stuff*. That is either contradictory to the verbal messages of toughness, or *Maxim* and *Stuff* are redefining toughness to include the occasional makeup session.

Table 1: Comparative Synopsis of Findings

	Certitude	New Sexism	Irony	Double Voicing
Maxim	Very Present	Present	Very Present	Very Present
Stuff	Very Present	Present	Very Present	Very Present
Playboy	Very Present	Present	Present	Somewhat Present
GQ	Present	Somewhat Present	Somewhat Present	Somewhat Present

I concentrated on both the advertisements and the content. I looked at the poses of the figures in the pictures. I examined whether they were active, as in playing a sport or making some strong movement or passive, as in resting or sleeping. I looked at the advertisements for cigarettes, alcohol, clothes, and cologne. I went through each magazine and took careful notes. First, I jotted down notes on large index cards. Then I typed up my notes so that I could more easily calculate the totals. I found that out of the sample of *Maxim* there was an average of 52 examples of Certitude per issue for a total of 624 examples over

the 12-month span. I found an average of 43 examples of New Sexism for a total of 516. For Double Voicing I found an average of 78 examples of Irony for a total of 936. I found an average of 51 examples per issue for a total of 612. For *Stuff* I found similar statistics, I found an average of 49 examples of Certitude per issue for a total of 588 examples over the 12-month span. I found an average of 39 examples of New Sexism for a total of 468. I found an average of 84 examples of Irony for a total of 1008. I found an average of 51 examples of Double Voicing per issue for a total of 612. Playboy had different numbers possibly because there are so many advertisements for the same male enhancements. I found an average of 46 examples of Certitude per issue for a total of 552 examples over the 12-month span. I found an average of 37 examples of New Sexism for a total of 444. I found an average of 62 examples of Irony for a total of 744. I found 11 examples of Double Voicing total for the entire Playboy sample. GQ differentiated itself the most having 36 examples of Certitude on average per issue for a total of 432. Also, New Sexism was present only 5 times in the entire sample. Most of those were comments made by interviewees. Irony was present 25 times, but concentrated in just a few issues, so this qualifies as “somewhat present”. Double Voicing was not very present. It was only found 7 times. GQ men have a strong idea of who they are.

Since roles are signaled by both the performers’ behavior and words, both verbal and visual cues are important to analyze. I considered the costuming and the physical positioning- whether active or passive- of the images of men in the

advertising. I examined the definition of the male reader as well as the portrayal of women and discussion of gender/sexuality. I also discuss the portrayal of “non-white” groups, and the political slant, if any, of the magazine.

Maxim

The majority of *Maxim’s* readers are single, male, 18-34 and have a household income of around \$64,315 according the press kit available on *Maxim’s* website.

Table 2: Readership Statistics from Maxim.com 2003

	Maxim	Stuff	GQ
Readership	12,637,000	1,212,695	764,512
Men	77%	82.9	73
Married	30%	31.3	39.4
Single	61%	60.5	48.5
18-34	76%	77.8	57.5
25-49	57%	54.2	61.6
35-44	16%	24.5	13.9
Median Age	27.5 years	27.1	32.6
Median Household Income	\$65,793	64,180	72,930
Earn over 100k	26%	22.3	30.7
Attend/Graduate College	65%	60.8	71.7

According to the Audit Bureau of Circulations *Maxim* has a paid circulation of 2,515,356 (see table 2), which puts it at number 2, right behind *Playboy*, the most read men’s magazine.

Table 3: Paid Circulation Statistics

Publication Name	Paid Circulation
CIGAR AFICIONADO	246,739
DETAILS	418,005
ESQUIRE	724,617
FHM (FOR HIM MAGAZINE)	1,103,434
FIELD AND STREAM	1,531,046
GQ GENTLEMEN'S QUARTERLY	764,512
MAXIM	2,515,356
MEN'S HEALTH	1,697,026
MENS FITNESS	630,582
MENS JOURNAL	653,230
OUTDOOR LIFE	949,313
OUTSIDE	662,985
PENTHOUSE	477,357
PLAYBOY	3,154,942
POPULAR MECHANICS	1,222,351
STUFF	1,212,695
WIRED	539,963

(Audit Bureau of Circulation 2003)

<http://abcas2.accessabc.com/ecirc/magsrdssearch.asp>

Maxim is a general interest lifestyle magazine that caters to a slightly younger demographic than does *GQ* or *Playboy*. On the top of every issue are the words, "Sex, Sports, Beer, Gadgets...". There are usually three more terms added on each cover that refer to the particular issue's contents.

Maxim's website defines the magazine for vendors:

Maxim is written for young, **professional** men who are **confident, intelligent, everyday** guys. It serves as both a **fun** and **informative** publication, delivering a healthy **balance** of accessible service with a **humorous tone**. Editorial features include articles on **women, food, work, sports, fashion, and sex** (emphasis mine) (www.Maximonline.com, 2003).

Note the language used to describe the men includes the terms professional, confident, intelligent and everyday. These adjectives describe what the readers want to be. *Maxim* sees itself as informative and fun. Readers of *Maxim* are expected to be interested in the following: women, food, work, sports, fashion and sex. One clear message that emerges from a careful study of this magazine is that money is important in defining men. One should try to get money if one does not already have it. In the March 2003 issue, an article entitled “Rags to Beeyotches” provides basic financial advice next to a ‘before’ picture of a homeless man and an ‘after’ picture of a man with recently acquired clothes, car and three Asian women. The April 2003 issue lists as one of the greatest quotes, Michael Douglas’ monologue from the movie *Wall Street* that lauds the benefits of greed.

Dominance and aggression are also traits that *Maxim* expects its readers to embody. Military hero stories frequently appear, as do articles that glorify biker gangs and organized crime. These articles emphasize danger and heroism. The April 2003 issue includes an article about the great workout benefits of beating someone up. As it walks the reader through step-by-step, illustrations depict a white man in his mid 20’s beating up a man who bears a remarkable resemblance to Mohandas Gandhi. A caption in the table of contents that reads “Hin-don’t” firmly establishes the Other while using irony to distance the reader from any real negative connotations. Gandhi was known for non-violence and

thus becomes the perfect example to beat up since he will not fight back and simply smiles and accepts his fate.

Black men are almost always represented as athletes, rappers or criminals. The few exceptions to this trend exist primarily in the advertisements. If a black man is mentioned, most likely the paragraph includes the word 'playa', 'pimp' or 'nigga'. The September 2002 issue has a Fila ad showing a black man in an expensive leather suit clutching a basketball as his image is projected onto the side of a public housing building. Black women are rarely found in the advertisements or features. With the exception of a few well-known models, like Iman and Naomi Campbell, the black women that are shown have Anglo features and light skin. Asian and Hispanic women appear more frequently than Black women but less frequently than Whites. Asian men appear the least, with just five appearances in the entire sample. They almost always appear as math or computer geeks. In the September 2003 issue, an Asian man is found wearing an athletic cup over his clothes, ostensibly to protect himself from the Goldschlager that he is holding in his hand. This is another example of the pairing of irony with the reinforcing of Otherness in a non-hegemonic group.

There is typically one 'serious' topic per issue. The November 2002 issue presented an article about Rwandan civil war and child soldiers. The article contained language that reinforced the Otherness of Rwanda and its separateness. It is "over there" thus we are not really affected by it. The article was accompanied by close up photographs of dead soldiers. I got the impression

that the article's primary function was as a conduit for the gory photographs. In a September 2003 article about the Gbayas Yaayu tribe in Cameroon further exemplifies distancing of the self from the "inferior Other." The tribe's older men collect honey while wearing traditional straw suits to deflect bee stings. The caption below this picture reads, "Intrepid African Tribesman Beehave Unbelievably Beestupidly" (p38). The article goes on to suggest that the younger generations ought to go down to the grocery store and pick up a honey bear. While this is a pragmatic suggestion, it utterly ignores the implications of the loss of cultural distinction. The cover of the December 2002 issue indicates that it will provide the reader with advice on how to flip off foreigners and conquer Mexico.

One obvious theme throughout the magazine is France-bashing. The sample was taken around the time of the second Gulf War and reflects the patriotic sentiments of some readers. The August 2003 issue has this commentary about American Special Forces uniforms, "The illustrious American Special Forces sometimes wear green berets, but they wear them mainly for camouflage...just in case they need to blend in among a bunch of spineless, reeking, chain-smoking mimes" (p24). There is a particularly strong comment in the June 2003 issue that combines gender dominance with nationalism as well as evoking images of rape. The author states that the U.S. is the one, "who unties France from the tree and helps her find her panties every time the Germans are done with her" (p135).

There is an article in the February 2003 issue, entitled “Ugly, American and Damn Proud of it,” that suggests that men in the UK, France, Germany and Spain are gay. All of them. Headlines like these reinforce cultural hegemony and perpetuate stereotypes both of culture and sexual orientation. In the June 2003 issue a photograph of a disemboweled frog with a beret and a cigarette is captioned, “Look Ma, No Guts!” (p134). Neither are children immune: a December 2002 article reads, “French children are just like American kids except for the smell, the snottiness and the mustaches” (p68).

One overwhelming theme in *Maxim* is to provide advice to men about how to manipulate women into providing them with oral sex, a clean house, a good dinner and no backtalk. Women are frequently represented as subservient objects to be manipulated. The November 2002 issue has illustrations of facial expressions for men to memorize so they can fake sincerity when talking to their girlfriends. There are several articles on how to make a woman break up with you, none of which involve actually talking to the woman directly. Laura Gilbert wrote an article for the September 2003 *Maxim* called, “Girlfriend Obedience School: Believe it or not Girlfriends can be Trained...If You Start Early Enough” (p144). The August 2003 issue asserts that, “the more naked she gets, the more empowered she is” (p69) and “a gentleman always assists a woman in peril- if there’s something in it for him” (p60). These quotes stand as good examples of certitude and double voicing as rhetorical techniques.

In the June 2003 issue there is an article describing mental illness excuses, it states, "You're not a Misogynist, you have yakyakyakophobia. Symptoms: A conditioned response to incessant, mindless, 'girl talk'" (p158). The June 2003 issue describes what the editors think are the lamest superheroes, including the invisible woman. The reason given is that they would rather have the inaudible woman, reinforcing that women, like children are to be seen and not heard. The April 2003 issue proclaims, "Protect your *worthless* valuables with these tough talking security details...one for your house, car and girlfriends ass" (emphasis mine) (p4). In the same issue you can find an article detailing how to get out of trouble if you get accused of sexual harassment at work.

The advertisements in *Maxim* are overwhelmingly filled with white men. There are a lot of ads for tobacco and alcohol. There are ads for a variety of price points ranging from mid-to-upscale garments and gadgets. Most of the body positions of the models in the ads are surprisingly passive. I expected to see more active poses. However, passive poses are mitigated by the inference of potential activity and action. For example, the man is relaxing after just having played basketball, or is resting before he begins a race. The advertisements, as expected, exemplify the ideals that the language in the magazine lauds.

Stuff

The statistics for *Maxim* and *Stuff* are remarkably similar. The median income is \$64,180 and the average age of the reader is 27.1 years (see table 1). The only noticeable difference between *Stuff* and *Maxim* is that *Stuff* attracts

5.7% fewer women readers than does *Maxim*, although *Maxim* has a much higher readership on the whole. According to the Audit Bureau of Circulation, *Stuff*'s paid circulation is 1,212,695, a fair portion of the market share (see table 2). The publishers have a similar advertising blurb for vendors.

From the publisher's of *MAXIM*, *Stuff* is aimed at male readers 18-25 years old with **irreverent** humor about the subjects they love most: **beautiful women, sports and the latest gadgets** (emphasis mine) (<http://www.1st-in-magazine-subscriptions.com/Stuff-magazine.htm> 2003).

Stuff particularly emphasizes the male as 'consumer.' It is a lifestyle magazine with an emphasis on gadgets. It is less serious than its brother magazine *Maxim*. The humor is more overt with occasional moments of sincerity. A sense of humor is the number one masculine trait emphasized in *Stuff*. A section in the May 2003 issue that features various pictures of bald animals as well as 'Randy the helpful pineapple' who regularly shows up throughout the magazine with random facts. *Stuff* emphasizes cars, guns, and women as the prized possessions of men. The ideal man should have everything, but should not necessarily work for it. Many articles give tips on how to get things without exerting much effort. These "things" are usually cars, guns or girls. There are references to socio-economic status as well, such as the common addendum 'your family must have been poor'. Men are not immune to body image pressure. *Stuff* frequently has a section called "Guess the Fatty" where candid shots of chubby male celebrities are shown.

Aggression is a prized trait of the ideal man according to *Stuff*. The February 2003 issue describes organized crime in London in a romantic, almost wistful way. The May 2003 issue has, “What is War Good for? Answer: Cool Weapons!” this article describes in detail the various combat tools used by U.S. armed forces in the second Gulf War. The April 2003 issue has a section that scores video games for their realistic death. Also in the May 2003 issue is a scathing review of Rolling Stone’s anti-war issue. Anything that is anti-war is seen as “hippy –like” and is reviled and mocked.

Dominance is also a respected trait within *Stuff*. The May 2003 article, “How to raise Your Self Esteem,” jokingly advises readers to: pick on dumb kids, taunt a fat guy, threaten someone who is different from you, and single out a poorly dressed man and tease him for wearing a K-Mart suit. (p86). The use of the phrase “threaten someone who is different from you” is indicative use of irony. This reinforces Benwell’s assertion that irony and accommodation are techniques that are used frequently to distance the reader from the statement. It is not just dominance over other people, but dominance over one’s surroundings as well that is the issue here. Environmentalists are reviled, in “Plunder,” an article by Mark Pappas in the November 2002 issue. The reader is given the clear message that environmentalists are whiny, oversensitive and weak, characteristics that are not seen as ‘manly’ (p56).

Stuff has a regular piece called “Different Culture Alert” that appears in every issue. This is also strategic use of irony to distance the author and readers

from negative comments made about other potentially threatening groups. It at once distances the reader from the negative statement and distances the reader from the outside group. With the various African tribes, Thai Elephants and Venezuelan fisherman firmly placed in the category of Other, they become less intimidating to the mostly white, male audience. *Stuff* reinforces the superiority of western, patriarchal ideas and culture. There were far fewer instances of “French bashing” in *Stuff* than there were in *Maxim*. In the November 2002 issue there is a section called “Crappy Foreign Music” (p56). There was emphasis on the “ugliness” of women from the Middle East. It was referenced in the April 2003 issue in several places and can be exemplified by this quote from a November 2002 interview with Fox News pundit Bill O’Reilly:

“The most unattractive women in the world are probably from the Muslim countries. You can’t see them. So you are assuming that if [they’re] dressed head to toe in black and I can only see eyebrows, there’s something going on” (p124).

The April 2003 issue includes a contest for the “World’s Hottest Virgin” ironically situated parallel to a cartoon mocking the banality of *Maxim*. The best example of irony, accommodation of feminism and certitude combined is the long running “Women’s Studies” scholarship contest. Women send in their pictures, are filtered through and then some are chosen for the contest. Readers vote on finalists who pose in very little clothing and explain how they aspire to be doctors, lawyers, and CEO’s all the while maintaining a prone position and staring into the camera seductively. The March 2003 issue lists 12 finalists, 3 Hispanic, 9 White.

There are articles about how to have sex with someone you just met and how to have sex with someone that you meet in the supermarket in the February and March 2003 issues, as well as an article advising readers about how not to get “ripped off” by strippers. There is a regular feature where the author has transcribed tapes recorded of women in public restrooms talking amongst themselves. The conversations are funny, inane and give the general impression that the women you hear speaking are ridiculous. There seem to be fewer articles involving coercion or manipulation of other people as compared to *Maxim*. There are gay stereotypes and references throughout the magazine, however there is a moment of profundity in the April 2003 article about the homosexual lifestyle of pirates:

“What can be drawn from a study of those features of a pirate society that make it truly distinctive is that homosexual communities can function virtually independent of heterosexual society. Aside from the production of children, homosexuals alone can fulfill satisfactorily all human needs, wants, and desires, all the while supporting and sustaining a human community remarkable by the very fact that it is unremarkable” (p133).

This article drew a distinction that is rarely discussed beyond academic circles; it differentiated between effeminacy, sexual identification and sexual preference. It took a traditional hero of masculine imagery, the pirate, and shattered the illusions of the reader.

The advertisements in *Stuff* were indistinguishable from those in *Maxim*. They had the same products, models and wording. There were marginally more advertisements for technological gadgets, but those were integrated into the

features of the magazine. The ads ranged from relatively inexpensive to rather upscale.

Gentleman's Quarterly

Gentleman's Quarterly has an older readership than *Maxim* and *Stuff* at 32.6 years. GQ readers also have a higher household income than *Maxim* and *Stuff* at \$72,930. Condé Nast, the publisher of GQ, was not forthcoming about the demographics beyond that which is listed in their advertiser's information. I tried to contact them repeatedly and there was no response. The readership statistics are from *Maximonline.com* which has included competition research on its website and advertiser page. The Audit Bureau of Circulation reports the paid circulation of GQ as 764,512.

Masculinity, as defined by GQ, involves being cultured, refined, tasteful, intellectual and polite. GQ epitomizes the "New Man." This is a vastly different masculinity than *Maxim* and *Stuff* encourage. The music, art and book reviews often showcase offbeat independent artists. The August 2003 issue has an article filled with How to's. It describes how to roll a joint, make a Bloody Mary, play poker, make a correct cappuccino (with a heart in the froth), get a high-gloss shine on your shoes, perform a dead on ally-oop and how to knock someone on their ass. The July 2003 further explains how to whiten your teeth, drive really fast, get a hip-hop tux and play in a rock band. These how-to's are indicative of what the readers presumably want to do. These modern "Renaissance Men" can

be aggressive, dominant, cool, clever, well presented and they can do it all without nicking their manicure.

Men should earn their money by working hard and being clever, but they should definitely have money. *GQ* doesn't overtly state that real men have cash, but clearly implies as much by the subject matter. For example, in the regular section entitled "A Man's World," there is advice on how to wear an ascot, pick a choice steak cut and choose fine wines. There are also frequent articles on expensive dining and travel to exotic places that even the thriftiest middle class man would be hard pressed to afford.

GQ has a fair representation of different ethnicities as opposed to *Maxim* and *Stuff*. The August 2003 issue has an article featuring the southern hip-hop group Nappy Roots. Over the span of the sample LeBron James, Outkast's "Andre 3000," Mos Def, DMX, Tracy McGrady and Eve are all covered extensively as fashion icons. Of the 25 Men of the Year in the November 2003 issue six were Black. One of the four women of the year was Black. Most of the others were white, although many were of indiscernible ethnicity. Since *GQ* is foremost a fashion magazine and the fashion industry has deep European roots, *GQ* is far more accepting of and enthusiastic about European countries than *Maxim* and *Stuff*. The July 2003 issue has an article by Robert Draper about WNBA star Latasha Byears. Latasha Byears is a large, dominant, loud, aggressive, and outspoken woman from Memphis, TN. Draper points out that the WNBA uses prettier women as their stars; women like Byears get relegated to

the back row. With the exception of one mention of her resembling a silo (p74), the article did not make fun of her “masculine attributes”; it just presented a profile of an under-reported talented woman.

The women that appear inside *GQ* are mostly pale white, waifish and gaunt. They are no less sexualized than the women in *Maxim* and *Stuff* they are just a different aesthetic type. They are less cartoonish, more natural and appear to have had less cosmetic surgery than the women in *Maxim* and *Stuff*. The April 2003 issue has an article describing how the reader can get a woman to enjoy sports. This is an example of certitude of gender, with a little irony mixed in. The traditional gender role line is blurred in *GQ*. There is a definite emphasis on grooming that isn't present in other magazines. The October 2003 issue reports that 54,057 US men have received collagen injections and 233,771 have undergone Botox treatment in 2002 (p136). It also reports that 18% of men said they would consider undergoing cosmetic procedures (p136). A July 2003 article about the male spa movement, entitled, “Do Real Men Exfoliate” indicates that the trend toward immaculate male grooming crosses ethnic lines, if not socioeconomic ones. Damon Dash, Co-CEO of Rock-A-Fella Enterprises said the following on the subject of getting a pedicure:

“I don't wanna sound vain- I just like my shit clean. You know what I mean? I don't like girls with hard feet, so I can imagine girls don't wanna have hard feet on their shit. You know what I mean” (p170)?

Baby, CEO of Cash Money Records, describes how he started getting his nails done:

“Wherever I’m at I get my nails done. My brother, Gangsta used to get his shit done all the time. I used to be like, ‘Man, you trippin’!’ and he used to be like, ‘Nigga, I’m cuter than you! My shit stay fly.’ And as time went on, I just said, ‘screw it’ and I wound up doing my shit” (p136).

Politically, *GQ* is a left leaning magazine as demonstrated by the inclusion of frequent articles by Margaret Carlson and Neal Pollack. The October 2003 issue has an article by Pollack called “Looking for Dick” (p256) which is about the often difficult to locate Vice President of the United States, Dick Cheney. In the same issue there is an article describing the race for governor of California as an ego-driven free for all. The article lambastes the Republican candidates while taking it relatively easy on Democratic governor Gray Davis. The August 2003 issue has an article by Anton Corbijn about Senator Rick Santorum’s (R-Pennsylvania) anti- homosexual comments to a reporter. Corbijn points out discrepancies in Santorum’s logical pattern and calls him a “champion of moral absolutes” (p119).

Stability is another key masculine trait that *GQ* espouses. This stability often involves commitment. The August 2003 issue describes actor Johnny Depp, who has settled down with his partner in France to have children. A quote from Mark Falanga in the September 2003 issue sums up *GQ*’s stance on settling down. “One day it happens: Your life as you know it ends. You buy a house and leave the city and start living in the suburbs” (p194). It is described as an inevitable, albeit bittersweet change.

Men are not always portrayed as perfect. An April 2003 article chronicles the experience of the author as he goes to get a colonoscopy. It defies the superman idea of masculinity and admits that all men are not indestructible. An article in the July 2003 issue about actor Eric Bana, discusses his bouts with terrifying anxiety attacks. Discussing what can be perceived as male weakness is unusual.

The advertisements are geared toward wealthy people. There are a lot of tobacco and alcohol ads, and advertisements for expensive liquor. They use key words like *distinctive* and *refined*. In the only example of what might be considered political advertisement, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) took out a full-page ad in the April 2003 issue.

Playboy

Playboy has a readership of 3,154,942 (Audit Bureau of Circulations 2003) making it the most widely circulated men's magazine. Its median age is 33.1, a little higher than *GQ* (playboy.com 2003). The median income is \$56,682, which is substantially lower than the other magazines in this study. One half of the readers are married and 44% graduated college (playboy.com 2003). *Playboy* is known for its articles and insightful contributions as well as airbrushed pictures of naked women. The Letters to *Playboy* section is often filled with questions and comments about relevant political and social issues. There are articles ranging from monster trucks, motorcycles, and office sex to former Czech intelligence

officers posing naked, and the DC sniper investigators. One particular standout was “Kill ‘em All”, a Steve Kurtz article about Thailand’s strict drug policy that includes the imprisonment of thousands and the killing of hundreds of people suspected of using or selling drugs with very little evidence. The “*Playboy* Advisor” section has advice ranging from how frequently brake fluid should be changed to how men feel about various labia sizes. There is a regular section called “Mantrack,” a list of things that the editors think men should care about. Hunting lodges and ways to make strong eggnog are listed as well as various expensive gadgets. *Playboy* isn’t all about sophisticated, liberal sex; it has its playful side too. For instance, there are articles in the April 2003 issue that illustrate how to powereat a cannoli and how to toss a cow chip. The ideal man is a bit dangerous, likes motorcycles, drinking, sports and especially women. The *Playboy* man should be virile, interested in being tough, making jokes and fighting for the freedom to read *Playboy*.

Activism when it comes to censorship and privacy rights, at least, is an important topic to *Playboy*. Specifically, *Playboy* rails against members of the religious right who want to restrict or ban pornography. This expands to appear hostile to any Christian value system. For example the November 2003 article “God and Satan in Bentonville” (p64) describes Wal-Mart, America’s largest corporation as ruthlessly running out Mom and Pop competition and enforcing Christian values at the expense of freedom. The January 2003 issue has an article decrying Attorney General John Ashcroft’s TIPS (Terrorism Information

and Prevention System) program as a threat to American freedom. In the September 2003 issue there is an article by Matt Taibbi “Keeping the Faith,” a caustic accusation about the hypocrisy of legislating morality and the influence of the religious right on government.

Playboy frequently has female contributors and the CEO of *Playboy* Enterprises International, Inc. is Christie Hefner, daughter of editor in chief, Hugh Hefner. The women who are pictured are perfectly airbrushed, with exaggerated sexual signals: full lips, big breasts, round hips. In the November 2002 issue a book review of “Fast Girls” by Emily White, somewhat ironically, describes the harm of sexual stereotyping of young women (p59). Centerfold ambitions range from real estate investment and publishing to being a good wife and mother someday. The desire to be a good wife and mother or to “find Mr. Right and have babies” was present in five out of the twelve centerfold interviews. Every single interview listed success at a professional career as one of the playmate’s future goals. The November 2003 issue has a cartoon depicting Vikings looting a Medieval Village. There is a man carrying a treasure chest and a woman looking angry with her breasts exposed. The caption reads, “Are you telling me you just came to pillage” (87)? This doesn’t fall neatly into any of Benwell’s categories. The reinforcement of the rape fantasy myth as a joke perpetuates ideas of violence toward women and encourages the ‘no means yes’ idea. It also reinforces women as the ideal Victorian keepers of morality, who must be forced to enjoy themselves.

In September 2003's "Looking for Love in all the Strange Places" by Corey Levitan the author goes into a lesbian bar, funeral, gynecologist, sexaholics meeting, porn set and Scientology meeting to pick up women. The caption regarding the lesbian bar is as follows; "even vegetarians get hungry for a meat on the bone." This exemplifies irony and double voicing promoting the mistaken idea that the lesbian's sexuality is irrelevant and reinforcing the myth that the "right man" can change it. In fairness to the author, he is rebuffed by the lesbians and is self-deprecating and realistic in the story telling. This story is meant as unlikely humor, not as a tale of a man converting lesbians, but the caption reveals the underlying message. While it is unlikely that "you" can change these women, someone can. This is an example of irony, accommodation of feminist discourses and double voicing.

Maybe because it is a magazine full of naked women, *Playboy* doesn't address the issue of homosexuality except in the case of the playmates with each other, and even then it always includes a man. However, in the December 2002 issue the in the article "Senator Sodomy" (p50) by James R Petersen there is a scathing indictment of Senator Rick Santorum (R-Pennsylvania), who recently expressed extreme displeasure with homosexuals and equated homosexuality with incest and bestiality. The author is supportive of the gay community and mocks the emphasis of traditional Catholic values by the senator since Santorum never spoke out about clerical vice. *Playboy* is geared toward single men, but married life is not always negatively reported. In the May 2003

issue there is a follow up on a former playmate and her husband and child, the baby's recent acquisition of a little helmet and hockey jersey is the entire subject of the blurb.

The centerfolds are overwhelmingly white, with the occasional Hispanic or Asian woman. There was one black centerfold in the 12-month sample. The argument is difficult to formulate. It is not to say that if women are to be exploited, they should be exploited equally. This magazine is either reflective of an ideal woman or it is promoting an ideal woman. Admittedly, *Playboy* has more variation than *Maxim* or *Stuff* in the body shape of the models, but the level of "perfection" is the same. The implicit message is that men should like light skinned women, who have little variation in their body shape. It is notable that in the 12 issues that I sampled, with an average of 7 contributors an issue, one was Black and one was Asian. They list Halle Berry, O.J. Simpson and Rep. Charles Rangel (D-New York) as contributors, but their roles, in fact, were as interviewees.

There is considerably less advertising on the whole in *Playboy* than in any of the other magazines. What advertising there is overwhelmingly promotes alcohol, tobacco, fragrance or penis extenders. There were ads for upcoming movies and television shows. Most of the men pictured in the ads were in passive physical positions and conveying an air of relaxation. This is the image of the *Playboy* lifestyle: relaxed, comfortable and satisfied.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

All of these magazines represent the aspirations of their readers. They may not reflect the reality of modern men so much as they reflect what modern men want to be. The younger men that read *Maxim* and *Stuff* are seeking freedom from what is seen as oppressive feminism. They want to be “men” (responsible, strong, breadwinners) but they also want to be “guys” (enjoying beer, sports and girls). Young men are taught that they should be like the new man: sensitive, understanding, and pro-feminist. They rebel against their father’s masculinity by embracing the new lad role. This role conflict leads to double voicing. The median reader of *Maxim* and *Stuff* was born in 1976; they weren’t around to witness the struggle for women’s liberation in the 1960’s and 70’s. They don’t feel responsible for the oppression and they don’t think they should have to bear the brunt of women’s wrath. The *Maxim* and *Stuff* generation inherits the white male legacy. They are told that as white men they have privilege and power. They may not be aware of the power they wield because they have been surrounded by the empowerment of women and minorities during their lifetime. The readers of *Maxim* and *Stuff* seem to be coping with perceived disempowerment with sarcasm and wit. These jokes underscore a sense of disillusionment with their societal inheritance.

The *GQ* reader has embraced his role as a new man and has found a place for his masculinity. It may be because the average *GQ* reader is already established financially, thus rendering them potent in at least one of the

masculine power categories, that he is secure with his place in society. He does not feel particularly threatened by women or minorities. This again may be because there is not much chance of him losing his power base. He embraces and encourages the idea of diversity while maintaining a largely homogenous social network.

Playboy readers have the lowest median income in comparison to the other magazines. The readers of *Playboy* embrace the new man role to a large extent in their political views and the “theoretical” ideas about gender. *Playboy* men are able to find peace with their roles as new men not because of their financial power, as in *GQ*, but by their sexual power. They might not make a lot of money but they are acutely aware of the power of their masculinity. The strong and sometimes stern women that are described, discussed and debated in the articles starkly contrast the fantasy of sexually submissive and permissive women that abound in *Playboy*.

Future research on the subject of masculinity in men’s magazines should include a holistic methodology or method triangulation. Content analysis alone is only the starting point for an investigation of this topic. Focus groups should be conducted with various age, class and ethnic groups to discern the reaction to the magazines and how men feel about the way men are defined in them. This could be complemented by in depth surveys inquiring about the attitudes, politics and in-depth demographics of the readership. Future research would do well to include a broader spectrum of magazine reader demographics. Research should

look more in depth at magazines geared toward minorities. This study was limited by the availability of the data and does not reflect a fair range of ethnic groups or socio-economic class.

Masculinity may indeed be in crisis. However, traditional masculinity is not what is in jeopardy. It is the new generation of men struggling to find a place in the world that are at risk. Women and minorities continue the long struggle for respect and parity in society. It is because we are closer than ever before to top of the mountain of equality that we are at risk of sliding backward. We must encourage and empower young men. They should not live in fear of being emasculated by the fair distribution of power. The masculinity of Black, Hispanic and Asian men should not be held up for scrutiny against a vanilla backdrop of hegemony. These various masculinities should be embraced and encouraged. The diversity of masculinity is not what threatens it. What threatens masculinity is the role conflict faced by a new generation. Their struggle for a place in the world will define masculinity for years to come.

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