

**NO, BUT REALLY, WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A
MAN? AN EXPLORATION OF ADVERTISING AND THE
CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITIES**

by

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ABSTRACT

The present study explores the extent to which the representation of masculinity in advertising affects how middle-class, urban men negotiate gender in their everyday lives. The study takes a two-pronged approach by first providing an overview of the trends in advertising targeted towards men in the form of a content analysis of ads in *Maxim*, *Men's Health* and *Esquire* with findings that suggest contradictions in the representations between traditional macho scripts and passive and sensitive masculinities. Two focus groups with middle-class, urban men were conducted, exploring how the men engage with representations of masculinity and how these images shape their gender identity. As with the content analysis, the focus groups suggest that there is a difficulty in categorizing masculinity and that it is fragmented with a multiplicity of meaning.

Keywords: Masculinity, advertising, gender, identity

DEDICATION

To Nansi Silverstone, my Mom.

I miss you.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

We live in an empire ruled not by kings or even presidents, but by images.
Susan Bordo, 1999, p. 215

Where does our sense of self come from? How do we develop who we want to be and what we are? Is it genetic? Do we learn it from our family? Our friends? What about television? What about advertising? What does it mean when Bordo (1999) says we are ruled by images and not by kings or presidents? Although not wanting to sound deterministic, the argument suggesting that our selves are commodified is a compelling, if disturbing idea. I for one do not like to think that Anne Klein or Chanel define me as a person or help give me a sense of self, and yet when I have an important interview or presentation, the first thing I do is go shopping. Why? To buy something that makes me feel and look how I want others to see me. Similarly, when I feel a bit blue, I flip through a magazine and see what the latest colours or fashions are and, inevitably, I end up at Shoppers Drug Mart buying a new lipstick or nail polish. Does it transform me? No. However, for a fleeting moment I feel like it does; for one moment, my self-perceived boring existence shifts into the glamorous world depicted in the ad. Having spent the last six years critically analyzing media, I should not be susceptible to such whims; but I still am. No matter how I try to fight it, inevitably I define others and myself by an exterior veneer that is all too often informed by advertising. I am a woman and, for the most part, what I

have just described is acceptable—even normal—for a woman to confess. But what about men? Is it normal for them as well? How do they define themselves? Where do their definitions and images of masculinity and their views on what it means to be masculine come from? Although the answer will differ depending on whom you talk to, not so long ago I would have guessed that it would not lie in advertising or in men's magazines. However, I believe these are increasingly becoming sites from which men draw their understanding of masculinity and the self.

Why men?

I first became interested in commercial representations of masculinity after conducting a cursory content analysis of men in magazine ads for a methods course in sociology early in my undergraduate degree. I was surprised to find men being targeted in the same ways women have been for decades, through the use of objectified and sexualized images. Throughout the remainder of my undergraduate degree, I used every opportunity to explore different aspects of masculinity. My research led me to the understanding that masculinity and the privileges once associated with it under a patriarchal system were being dislocated. In fact, the very notion of masculinity has come under fire ever since the feminist movement began questioning femininity (it could be argued), an inevitable consequence of the deconstruction of binary concepts. However, rather than being heralded as emancipatory, the interrogation of masculinity has moved some to call foul, saying that masculinity is now in a state of crisis (Horrocks, 1994; MacInnes, 1998; Faludi, 1999). The root of this crisis is perceived to be the destabilization of traditional forms

of hegemonic masculinity based in patriarchal societies. The changes encouraged men to be reflective and question the masculinity of their forefathers while embracing a gentler, more considerate, and self-conscious masculinity.

Along with these social changes, it became apparent that representations of masculinities in the media have also changed over the last thirty years. On the one hand, traditional manifestations of masculinity associated with muscles and power have remained, evidenced by the popularity of actors like Arnold Schwarzenegger and Vin Diesel. On the other hand, figures such as John Cusack and Matt Damon have emerged as popular leading men for whom sensitivity and understanding outweigh muscle and force. So which exemplifies masculinity: the sweet, sensitive, and caring man, or the muscular, powerful, and strong one? The answer is both. Men are expected to be both sensitive and in touch with their *feminine* side, and at the same time they must be strong and powerful. This tension is played out in consumer culture as illustrated by the “murse,” “a metrosexual *manbag* that’s designed with the *macho* man in mind” (Bandic, 2006; emphasis added). Is the media suggesting that it is now acceptable—even desirable—for macho men to carry purses—I mean murses? Is it any wonder men might be confused?

Scholarly research exploring this confusion began to appear as a distinct field of study in the mid- to late 1980s and 1990s. In the United States, Michael Kimmel emerged as a major force behind the investigation of masculinity from a sociological perspective. In Australia, R.W. Connell became known for his ethnographic inquiries into masculinity. Others have approached the topic of masculinity by investigating its

representations in the media. Violent representations of masculinity in the media have been paid considerable attention (Scharrer, 2005; Jansz, 2005; Consalvo, 2003; Katz & Earp, 1999), as have various investigations of representations in print advertisements (Kolbe & Albanese, 1996; Zhou & Chen, 1997; Patterson & Elliott, 2002; Rohlinger, 2002; Smith, 2005). More recently in advertising, there has been a focus on the portrayal of men as stupid and unable to care for themselves (Scharrer, 2001; Abernathy, 2003). In the United States, there has also been a focus on the Black male experience (hooks, 2004; Reese, 2004; Wilkinson, 2004). In Britain, changes in style and fashion have been used to explore shifting norms of masculinity (Mort, 1996; Nixon, 1996; Edwards, 1997). Sport has also been at the heart of much of the research surrounding masculinity (Trujillo, 1991; Sabo & Jansen, 1992, 1998; Connell, 2005). By no means does this represent an exhaustive description of the studies in the field; however, a common element often missing is the voice of middle-class, urban men; that is, men who do not necessarily fit into a marginalized group. If gender is socially constructed,¹ it seems only logical to explore the types of representations available and to interrogate how these images become signposts in the construction

¹ The social construction of gender refers to the idea that gender is not biologically decided by one's sex (a concept that some also consider to be socially constructed and not biologically determined; see Lorber & Farrell, 1991) but rather includes "psychosexual development, learning social roles, and shaping sexual preferences. Social rearing, or socialization, is a crucial element for gender identity" (Lorber & Farrell, 1991, p. 7). Goffman (1976) suggests that "gender is a socially scripted dramatization of the culture's idealization of feminine and masculine natures, played for an audience that is well schooled in the presentational idiom" (in West & Zimmerman, 1991, p. 19). In this instance, gender is akin to one's other performed social roles such as job, family status, ethnicity, etc. From the idea that gender is not biologically determined but is socially constructed, the notion of *performing* gender emerges (for more on performing gender, see Butler, 1990).

of gendered identities. How do they negotiate representations of masculinity and their own sense of their gendered selves?

Outline of chapters

The objective of this thesis is twofold. First, I want to map out the types of masculinity on offer in print advertisements directed at men² and, second, to explore how men make use of these images when constructing their gendered identities. Recognizing that, in a study this size, not all publications or all men could be surveyed, I elected to focus on publications that target urban, middle-class males and how this targeted demographic constructs their gendered images of masculinity. I recognize that representations of masculinity in other publications and other forms of media will differ³ from those found in the publications selected and that the experiences of this group of men will differ from those of other socio-economic backgrounds (and even of those in the same socio-economic group). Notwithstanding these limitations, this study contributes to the field in that it opens a dialogue between hegemonic representations of masculinity and how these images are negotiated and incorporated in men's construction of masculinity.

The purpose of Chapter 2 is to review the literature in the fields relevant to this study: advertising, gender and identity, and representations of masculinity in print advertisements. I explore the origins of advertising and look at the changes that have

² By men, I am referring to middle-class, heterosexual, urban males.

³ For example, a popular form of masculinity on offer on television is the dumb and incompetent male (see Scharrer, 2001), who is largely absent from representations in print (perhaps a result of the narrative structure required for this form that is difficult to reproduce in print).

taken place in how men have been represented in advertising and how advertisers have reached out to men as consumers. Next, I review literature regarding the construction of gender and identity. Finally, I provide a brief discussion of other studies that have looked at the types of representations of masculinity found in print advertisements. As a result of the literature reviewed in this chapter, it becomes apparent that masculinity is a fluid concept filled with contradictions and complexities that challenge our binary understandings of gender—themes that resonate throughout the study. In Chapter 3, these contradictions are explored through a content analysis of advertisements from three men's lifestyle magazines. This investigation of manifest data is complemented by a qualitative analysis of key ads representative of the primary archetypes that emerged in the sample. In Chapter 4, through the discussion from two focus groups conducted with Vancouver men between the ages of 24 and 51 in October 2005, I probe how men negotiate through these ads and how they use them in the construction of their identity. These sessions reveal that men do internalize the gendered images found in the media and they are included among the signposts upon which the participants rely to construct their own masculine identities and make sense of other people. The study ends with Chapter 5, in which I offer some conclusions as well as highlight areas for future research. The overarching purpose of this inquiry is to begin to take seriously men's perceptions of the effects of representations of masculinity on men and to encourage others to include discussions with men in their studies, to gain insight into an experience otherwise left silent.

CHAPTER 2: THE ROLE OF ADVERTISING IN DEFINING CONTEMPORARY MASCULINITY

The origins of advertising

Advertising offered itself as a means of efficiently creating consumers and as a way of homogeneously "controlling the consumption of a product."
Ewen, 1976, p. 33

Does advertising make us buy things we neither need nor want? Perhaps. Does advertising affect the way we relate to one other and how we see the world around us? I believe it does. Advertising is a multibillion dollar industry (Leiss *et al.* 2005; Heath & Potter, 2004), and it is estimated that we see up to 3,000 ads daily (Heath & Potter, 2004, p. 206). Heath and Potter suggest "that advertising is less like brainwashing and more like seduction." They continue by arguing that "[j]ust as a skilful seduction exploits the fact that on some level you actually want to have sex, so effective advertising can work on needs and desires that you already have" (p. 208). In other words, similar to seduction, advertising awakens latent desires and cultivates existing needs by playing on our emotional sensitivities—a skill that has been cultivated over eighty years.

Advertising plays a far greater role in our society than simply motivating consumption. Indeed, advertising has become part of our cultural background and provides cues by which to understand our social environment. It has become part of our entertainment, it provides cultural references and teaches us how to be ourselves.

As Leiss *et al.* (2005) argue, “[m]aterial objects produced for consumption in the marketplace not only satisfy needs, but also serve as markers and communicators for interpersonal distinctions and self-expression” (pp. 4-5). In our mediated society, advertising expands the value of goods beyond their utilitarian functions to become signifiers of identity.

Stuart Ewen (2001 [1976]), in *Captains of Consciousness*, chronicles the history of advertising and explains the role it had in the development of our consumer society. The introduction of industrial mass production in the latter half of the 19th century generated the need for new national mass markets to be created. Accordingly, corporate and political powers believed they needed “to reinvent the cultural logic by creating the desire to consume” (p. 36). This shift in consciousness, according to Ewen, was accomplished in large part through the development of the advertising industry. In order to create and expand the desire to consume, the function of advertising needed to change. It had to go beyond serving as an informational tool advising potential consumers of the utility of a good and instead reach the audience on an emotional level. Advertisers began to draw on the work of social psychologists such as Floyd Henry Allport, who posited “that ‘our consciousness of ourselves is largely a reflection of the consciousness of which others have of us....My idea of myself is rather my own idea of my neighbor’s view of me’” (quoted in Ewen, 2001, [1976], p. 34). By the 1920s, such views were pervasive in the ad industry: the cultivation of anxiety and dissatisfaction could be used to position consumption as a

means of closing the gap between individuals and the idealized images by which they were increasingly surrounded.

This culture of self-dissatisfaction and self-doubt was nurtured by turning our critical faculties inward and drawing attention to our “inherent” insecurities. Ewen (2001 [1976]) proposes that the culture of self-dissatisfaction was achieved by

elicit[ing] the “instinctual” anxieties of social intercourse....It was recognized that in order to get people to consume and, more importantly, to keep them consuming, it was more efficient to endow them with a critical self-consciousness in tune with the “solutions” of the marketplace than to fragmentarily argue for products on their own merit (Ewen, 1976, pp. 38-39).

In other words, although a hand cream may in fact help with dry skin, this attribute was not highlighted in ads. Instead, advertisers created social scenarios in which dry hands resulted in social alienation, leaving the audience consumed with worry and fear that they would not be socially accepted unless they purchased this particular product.⁴

Roland Marchand (1985) identified four scenarios, or what he terms “great parables”: the parable of the First Impression, the parable of the Democracy of Goods, the parable of Civilization Redeemed, and the parable of the Captivated Child. He argues that these parables were employed by advertisers during this period

⁴ Following the same trajectory, Leiss, Kline, and Jhally (1988) found that advertisements in the 1920s and 1930s employed “worry” and “relief” appeals. Appeals, according to the authors, are “the term most frequently used by psychologists and advertisers to describe the basic motivational or persuasive techniques used in an ad” (1988, p. 220). *Worry and relief appeals* were found to “dwell on the problem” and to be “based on the promise of satisfaction through the alleviation of a human problem or dilemma” respectively (p. 221). This furthers the argument outlined by Ewen (2001 [1976]) and Marchand (1984) that advertisers played on consumers’ insecurities, in some cases creating them, and then steering them towards the product in which the solution or cure lay.

to produce a “logic of living” (p. 234). To produce this “logic” the parables employed similar tactics as outlined by Ewen: playing on society’s insecurities and self-consciousness. The parable of the First Impression, for example, instilled a sense of fear that, if one did not use a particular product, one might never achieve success or happiness. He cites an ad that depicts a young couple inviting the husband’s boss to dinner, only to find that “both completely forgot about their tasteless front doorway, with its lack of beautifully designed woodwork” and neglected their “dreary and out-of-date” furniture. As a result, the husband was never promoted beyond “third-assistant for sales,” and the couple passed on to their children “a hard-won bit of wisdom: ‘Your Future may rest on what the Open Door reveals’” (p. 208). As illustrated by Ewen and Marchand in countless ads from the 1920s and 1930s, advertisers employed fear and dissatisfaction as means of encouraging people to turn to the marketplace to improve their lives. Consumers were taught to move beyond viewing products for their utilitarian virtues and to see them for their emotional and social value—something akin to a security blanket.

One’s sense of worth or social standing was no longer only a result of hard work but also dependent upon external indicators such as clothing that shaped the presentation of self. Of course, the use of fashion as a determinant of masculine identity was not novel as it was only after the industrial revolution that we began to see separate fashion and gender roles for men and women.⁵ Marchand contends that

⁵ Diane Barthel (1992) notes that “[in] earlier centuries, fashionable gentlemen wore ruffles of lace, colorful tights, and pantaloons. Eighteenth-century gentlemen favored colorful silks and considered it only proper to appear in public heavily powdered and bewigged” (p. 138).

“advertising parables of the First Impression stressed the narrowness of the line that separated those who succeeded from those who failed” (p. 210). Failure was a result of not wearing the right suit or properly grooming oneself. As Ewen (2001 [1976]) describes, “[e]ach portion of the body was to be viewed critically, as a *potential* bauble in a successful assemblage” (p. 47). Very little was sacred and most if not all of one’s problems could be rectified through the marketplace, resulting in a happier and more successful life. Or so the parable went.

Ewen (2001 [1976]) further argues that, after World War II, and in the context of a growing fear of communism, the role of advertising grew increasingly important. Difference was feared, for “[t]o look *different*; to act *different*; to think *different*, these became the vague archetypes of subversion and godlessness” (p. 213), attributes that would attract the label anti-American or Communist. To achieve acceptance, Americans, especially recent immigrants, looked to advertising for cues on how to live and how to fit in. Anyone who did not fit the cultural ideal of the time was suspect.

Immigrants felt the pressures more than others did. Ewen argues that “[i]mmigrant cultures, on the levels of social interaction and their traditional political activities, were *Americanized* by corporate imagery and replaced by a homogenous vision of what it meant to be a citizen” (p. 211). Americanization was accomplished largely through consumption: wearing the right suit, driving the right car, and having the right type of hair. Jewish men and women, for instance, rid themselves of their unique characteristics to avoid being labelled “beatniks” or “dark visaged”

communists,” the women turning to bottles of peroxide and the men shaving their beards (Ewen (2001 [1976])). It was through patterns of consumption that immigrants showed that they could be trusted and had embraced the American way of life.

The success and effects of advertising went beyond the scope of the psychosocial. Dissatisfaction or discontentment with the self was furthered by the fetishization of youth, which Ewen claims was a result of the shifting demands of the labour force and was accelerated by the media and advertising. “As youth appeared the means to industrial survival, its promulgation as something to be *achieved* by consumption provided a bridge between people’s need for satisfaction and the increased corporate priorities of mass distribution and worker endurance” (Ewen (2001 [1976], p. 143). Ewen continues, noting that the “canonization of youth provided a two-pronged support for its institutions” in that “it undercut a patriarchal family” and that it “made youngness becoming a desirable and [*sic*] salable commodity” (p. 149). Youth became a commodity that people sought through the marketplace, its various elixirs and clothing offering ways to obfuscate reality and reclaim lost power through youthfulness.

For much of the first half of the 20th century, women were the focus of advertisers in the cultivation of identity through consumption. “The home, the arena of consumption, was central to the woman’s world and consequently only a small percentage of advertising appears to have been directed at the male population” (Ewen (2001 [1976], p. 151). A man’s value was tied to how much money he brought home; for the advertising industry, however, the spending of that money was the

main concern and this was perceived to primarily be the responsibility of women. Although Christine Frederick's decree that "The Anglo-Saxon male tradition is slipping!" (quoted in Ewen (2001 [1976]), pp. 152-153) may have been a calculated exaggeration, her point was not completely off the mark. Although men were "good workers" noted Frederick, they were ill equipped to be active in contemporary consumer society, because "mass industrialism increasingly relied on women as a focus for its social values" (p. 153). In other words, the value of production was being eclipsed by the value of consumption; if men were to continue to have a valuable role in society, it was necessary that they, too, become active consumers.

The first turn: advertisers and men

It was not until after WWII that marketers started to realize the potential that lay in the vast yet relatively untapped market of male consumers. Ewen (2001 [1976]) argues that, as jobs became routine, the self-worth and differentiation once afforded through employment was lost. In its place, marketers positioned their products as the means through which men could achieve self-definition (Ewen 2001[1976]). To explore the role of advertising and masculinity in post-war society, I draw on the works of Andrew Wernick, Thomas Frank, Sean Nixon, and Frank Mort. In *Promotional Culture: Advertising, Ideology, and Symbolic Expression*, Wernick (1991) explores the trends in representations of masculinity in advertising from World War II through to the 1990s. In particular, he focuses upon how male identity is no longer identified through the family or work ties but rather through social circles and consumption practices. Thomas Frank, in the *Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the*

Rise of Hip (1997), primarily focuses on the 1960s, offering an account of the symbiotic relationship between business culture and counterculture. *Hard Looks: Masculinities, Spectatorship and Contemporary Consumption*, by Nixon (1996), explores the “regime of representation” (p. 4) found in advertising in the 1980s in which new masculinities were promoted. Similarly, Mort’s (1996) *Cultures of Consumption* details “the creation of a distinctive market aimed at young men” in Britain in the 1980s (p. 7). Together, these men chronicle the changes and influences in the representations of masculinity and lay the foundation for understanding how these images affect constructions of masculinity.

In the 1950s, Wernick (1991) found that the family man remained the dominant stereotype in advertisements and the purview of goods targeting men was still rather limited in scope, “confined to car, alcohol, certain brands of cigarettes, mechanical tools, and life insurance” (Wernick, 1991, p. 51). However, in the 1960s and 1970s, the scope of products targeted to men gradually expanded. The “promotional imaging of men,” he notes, has been progressively feminized, particularly in “men’s depicted relation to their social milieu, to the world of things, and to sexuality” (p. 51). This time brought many changes not only to women’s roles in society but also to men’s. As women entered the workforce in the post-war period, “men of all classes...became increasingly involved in everyday consumption activities which, only a generation ago, were defined as properly the province of women” (p. 49). Although domestic duties were not equitably shared, more men were becoming involved in household chores and were living on their own. As a result, there was a

realization by “[a]dvertisers of everything from toothpaste and tissues to light bulbs and pasta” that there was “...increasingly [a need...] to take into account that men, too, are potential buyers, and so must be treated as part of the ‘you’ they address” (p. 49). This marked the beginning of the long process of turning men into the consumers that women had already become.

Changes in advertising encompassed more than simply expanding the range of product categories advertised to men. There were also profound changes in how men were represented in the advertisements and how they were addressed by them. “In the ads of the 1950s, the well-nigh universal touchstone for defining social roles and identities was the family” (Wernick, p. 51). By the 1980s, however, Wernick (1991) observes that “[e]xcept in publications which are explicitly family-oriented, it has become unusual for display ads even to mention the family status of the individuals they depict” (p. 52). Increasingly, advertisers showed the models alone in ads, creating a sense of “ambiguity letting the consumers place themselves in an ad from a variety of positions, in keeping with whatever roles and arrangements they may actually live” (p. 52). The lone male symbolized the upwardly mobile young executive of the 1980s that has displaced the older, married, businessman of the 1950s (Wernick, 1991).

In man’s relationship “to the world of things,” Wernick argues that the polarized representations of earlier days in which men used technology to besiege Nature (and women) was replaced with other images. No longer something to (only) be conquered, Mother Nature also appears as a place of escapism and solace from the hectic life man and technology have created. Furthermore, Wernick argues, the

representational differences between men and women began to fade. For example, “[s]ome products, like watches, are designed from the start to be displayed in matching pairs—a minimalist binary of his and hers that reduces male and female to marks (colour, shape, size, etc.) of a purely external difference” (Wernick, 1991, p. 57). Thus, representations of masculinity in advertising were no longer limited to displays of masculine power and prowess but were expanding to promote masculinity in a much softer vein.

With respect to male sexuality, Wernick (1991) suggests that, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, two contradictory visions are promoted: the traditional version, in which the man is in control and gazing at portrayals of women, and a new narcissistic version that positions the man as the object of the gaze. Although changes in the portrayal of men in advertising may, in part, be explained as a consequence of women’s liberation, they are also a result of “men’s equalization with women as consumers” (Wernick, 1991, p. 63). Increasing masculine insecurity also had a role to play here. “The softening up of male sexual identity, by playing to men’s anxieties about how they look, is a direct concomitant of their more intensive cultivation by advertising precisely in that role” (p. 63). The result, he notes, is equality of the sexes but an “equality...of self-absorbed, and emotionally anxious, personalities for sale,” concluding that “if gender equality is to mean real freedom...the mirror which bids fair to hold both sexes in thrall will certainly have to come down from the wall” (p. 66). Equality, however, does not mean freedom. Men have simply joined women in

self-consciousness and insecurity—captivated by the mirror held by the hand of the marketplace.

Whereas Wernick offers a useful overview of how changes in the representation of masculinity in the media were made to encourage men to identify more with consumption, Thomas Frank (1997) provides a more detailed look at how the counterculture movement served as a catalyst in the explosion of men's fashion during the 1960s. The 1957 birth of *Gentlemen's Quarterly (GQ)*—"The Fashion Magazine For Men"—marked the dawn of The Peacock Revolution for men in the U.S. According to Frank (1997), "[t]he traditional narrative of the Peacock Revolution goes something like this: in the late sixties responsible, middle-class men of all ages abandoned the sombre tones and severe stylings of conventional clothing to follow the examples of the rebel young and their rock 'n' roll celebrities" (p. 187). For *GQ* this meant a departure from grey flannel suits and an opportunity for a man to "choose his clothes; to 'express himself' rather than to conform to the mandates of his surroundings" (Frank, 1997, 189).

A key aspect of this period was "change." Frank (1997) notes that "[t]rade journals spoke of borrowing the sales and production techniques of women's wear, of rapidly changing tastes, of an accelerated fashion cycle, and above all of the boom that accompanied these new conditions" (p. 187). In contrast to the homogenization found in the 1920s and 1930s, the 1960s celebrated individualism. "Sartorial propriety seemed to vanish in many social circles and years of stasis gave way instantly to a plethora of fantastic garments" (Frank, 1997, p. 191). Through fashion, men could

explore their identities and express their individualities. Although the party began to fade with “[t]he recession of the early 1970s” (Frank, 1997, p. 225), men’s fashion never returned to the dull days of the 1950s.

Although the representation of masculinity in advertising had been changing since the 1950s, the 1980s were a watershed of change. At this time, feminism and the women’s movement as well as gay liberation⁶ were finally beginning to have effects on society, and on masculinity. According to Frank Mort (1996), “[i]n the 1980s the formation of new consumer identities coincided with an upsurge of feminist pressure on the professional fields of advertising and marketing. Women’s growing impact on these institutions—as well as that of gay men—contributed substantially to the strategy making masculinity more self-conscious” (p. 10) (see also Gill, 2003). As a result, the “new man,” he argues, “was principally defined by self-doubt...[,] the loss of traditional gender roles...[and men] being forced to question their social roles” (p. 15).

Dianne Barthel (1992) suggests that the “new man” broke away from “the straightjacket of traditional expectations regarding the strong, silent male” (p. 146). Instead, he was emotionally available in his relationships, a caring and nurturing father, and artistic. Benwell (2003) adds that the “new man” was “an avid consumer and unashamed narcissist” (p. 13). Nixon (1997), while agreeing with these claims, cautioned that the new man was not completely distanced from traditional

⁶ The gay liberation movement and the desire to capture the homosexual male consumer market played a significant role in the way masculinity was represented in the media. For more on this, see Kates, 1998; Bordo, 1999; Gill, 2003.

stereotypes, because he was also defined by his “assertive masculinity” and images of the male hero (p. 119). Thus, the “new man” was *both* strong and stoic but also soft, caring, and sensuous. Tim Edwards (1996) suggests that an “advertisement for Calvin Klein’s Eternity, showing a man cradling an infant, formed a very good example of this kind of iconography” (p. 39). The muscular and strong features juxtaposed the nurturing qualities depicted with the cradling of the baby.

Others, however, were less convinced that widespread social change was actually taking place and that these images of masculinity were little more than a marketing construction. For example, Peter York claimed that “the new man was nothing more than the advertising industry’s dramatisation of its own self-image. His ethics and morality were based only on a ‘mean chic’, which was driven by ‘greed, competition and treachery’” (cited in Mort, 1996, p. 16). Likewise, McKay, Mikosza, and Hutchins (2005) contend that the “new man” was a “marketing hype or blatant pretence” and not representative of what men were really like (p. 282). One London media professional described the new man as someone who is “[e]motional and caring (or at least pretends to be), a mythical creation, completely unrealistic and artificial, an attempt to redefine the masculine model if you wish...the final product of the women’s movement” (cited in Jackson, Stevenson, & Brooks, 2001, p. 138). Similarly, Bordo (1999) argues that this new version of masculinity had less to do with feminism and gay liberation than with “pure consumerism” (p. 179). In other words, the destabilization of conventional masculine identity was a result of the

advertisers creating new markets to sell to rather than being the result of mass social change.

Irrespective of the authenticity of this transformation, changes in men's fashion and the emergent ideas of the "new man" required a shift in how advertisements addressed male consumers. Sean Nixon's (1996) *Hard Looks* provides a detailed account of how advertisers changed the way they addressed the male consumer in order to win over the "new man." Nixon (1996) "argued that more than one form of spectatorship was coded across this regime of representation; different forms of spectatorship related to the different version of the 'new man' produced across the field of imagery" (p. 200). These differences were manifest in the many ways the models were coded. They were expressive of a masculinity that was assertive, muscular, and heterosexual, and at the same time also contained aspects of narcissism⁷ and even sexual ambivalence.

As a result, the ads of this period were perhaps the first to change the male role as spectator. The male gaze was no longer limited to looking upon the female body but also upon his own. The narcissistic qualities that had become the norm in women's advertising in previous decades (Walter, 1998; Shields & Heineken, 2001) were slowly infiltrating men's advertising. These changes of representation and

⁷ I understand the complexities involved with the word "narcissism" and its roots in Freudian psychoanalysis. Here, however, I use the pop culture sense of the word associated with the "new man," "new lad," and "metrosexual" as it refers to a man who has a preoccupation with his appearance (not just musculature but also grooming and fashion), who is self-absorbed, flaunts his sexuality, and desires the attention (and adulation) of others (this is not necessarily associated with his stated sexual orientation; in other words, a heterosexual male will flaunt his sexuality in a homosexual environment to achieve attention—it matters not from whom the attention comes, just that there is the attention).

spectatorship are exemplified by the 1985 landmark Levi's "Launderette" television advertisement. First aired in the UK, the ad was the creation of Bogle, Bartle & Hegarty and featured Nick Kamen, a young, good-looking model with '50s-style hair and sunglasses, walking into a busy laundromat with Marvin Gaye's *I Heard It Through the Grapevine* playing in the background. Kamen removes his T-shirt, revealing, as Nixon describes, "a firm, smooth torso" (p. 2). He undoes his belt buckle and then removes his jeans and puts them in an empty washer with the T-shirt. The significance of this ad, notes Nixon (1996), lies in the way the camera is used to draw the audience's attention to the model's distinct body parts, a practice that had never before been used with a male model. One shot is of his face, another of his chest, arms, and thighs (Nixon, 1996, p. 2). In so doing "the more established code of aggression and power associated with masculine display" (p. 2) is undermined. Instead, the ad "allows the display of both developed (but not too hard) muscularity and a marked softness and sensuality connoted through [the model's] soft lips, eyes and skin-tone" (p. 2). Finally, the ad presents the male model as "self-contained and on his own" (p. 119). In other words, Kamen's performance brought together all aspects of the "new man" for the first time: narcissistic, the object of the gaze, a fashionista, with just a hint of the loner/cowboy stereotype. Ads such as this help to destabilize more traditional manifestations of masculinity in the media. Not only do they present a new form of masculinity, they also require audiences to engage with them in new ways.

Not all men in the 1980s welcomed these new forms for masculinity. Speaking of Britain, Beynon (2002) acknowledges that what was fashionable on the streets of London was quite distant from the experiences of men in rural and/or industrial areas. He suggests that “shifting masculine scripts” have affected all men, but “they did so unevenly” (p. 108). Edwards (1997) declares, “[c]learly, those with the looks, the income and the time on their side have never had it so good, in terms of the opportunities which the expansion of men’s style and fashion have to offer them” (p. 134). However, he continues, “those without the luck, the looks or the time have never had it so bad, and are consigned to looking and longing, or even exclusion and castigation for not playing the game. In this sense, fashion is fascism: conform in the mirror of judgements or else take the consequences” (p. 134). In summary, the 1980s represent a time when masculinity was being called into question in a variety of ways. Advertising picked up on these tensions and led the way in offering images of new softer, gentler, and even erotic forms of masculinity to put on display for all to see, aspire to, and (potentially) admire. The traditional rules of who did the looking and who was being looked at were being broken.

The 1990s brought another version of masculinity that represented a self-conscious reaction to and distancing from the 1980s “new man.” Christened by some the “new lad,” it “offer[ed] a refuge from the constraints and demands of marriage and nuclear family.... and opened up a space of fun, consumption and sexual freedom for men, unfettered by traditional adult male responsibilities” (Gill, 2003, p. 47). According to Edwards (1996), “[h]e likes drinking, football and fucking and in

that order of preference” (p. 82; cf. McKay, Mocosza, & Hutchins, 2005; Crewe, 2003). That said, Edwards notes that the “new lad” is “oddly still all too self-conscious and quick to consider the cut of his jeans or the Lacoste label on his T-shirt” (p. 82). Likewise, Crewe (2003) contends that the “new lads” were still “[i]nformed by post-feminist discourse, intelligent, articulate and in tune with contemporary culture [and] were ‘not quite as boorish/tribal/drunken, or loud as their prehistoric predecessors’” (Crewe, 2003). Thus, seen as a backlash against the gentle and nurturing man of the 1980s, yet not so brash as to completely disavow all social conventions, the man of the 1990s was seen as an attempt to reconcile elements of an inner macho-boorish identity with the changing cultural climate.

The newest incarnation of masculinity is the *metrosexual*.⁸ Mark Simpson first coined the term in 1994, but it did not become part of our vernacular until it appeared in *Salon.com* in 2002. Simpson describes the metrosexual as “a young man with money to spend, living in or within easy reach of a metropolis—because that’s where all the best shops, clubs, gyms and hairdressers are. He might be officially gay, straight or bisexual, but this is utterly immaterial because he has clearly taken himself as his own love object and pleasure as his sexual preference” (Simpson, 2002). The key is that the metrosexual is above all narcissistic, exemplified, according to Simpson, by David Beckham. Finally, he comments that “[m]etrosexual man is a commodity fetishist: a collector of fantasies about the male sold to him by

⁸ Although the term *metrosexual* may appear to be passé, it is still a common term used to signify the current incarnation of hegemonic masculinity. In popular culture, other terms such as the soft-cho, emo, and the metro-male have emerged; yet by definition there is little difference between them and the *metrosexual*.

advertising” (1994). Many men, however, do not view the metrosexual as a negative stereotype or feel as though they have been duped into becoming consumers. In fact, according to the men interviewed by Simpson, some see it as emancipating, making it socially acceptable for them to be as concerned with their appearance as women are and with access to a range of products to support this need. In other words, there was a time when shopping was considered overly feminine, but it has now become an acceptable way for men to create, sustain, and experiment with their masculinity.

Magazines that help the metrosexual find new products and keep up-to-date on the latest fashions have become a dominant way in which new masculinities are promoted. The 1980s saw the embryonic emergence of the male style press, but it exploded in the 1990s. Recognizing that the 1980s’ “new man” publications did not meet the needs of the “new lad,” a new genre of magazines hit the stands. In the UK,⁹ *Loaded* was the first publication to “epitomize these trends” (Jackson, Stevenson, & Brooks, 2001, p. 36). Comparing “new man” publications with those for the “new lad,” Jackson, Stevenson, and Brooks (2001) note that “*Arena*’s original strapline was ‘success with style,’...whilst the covers of *Loaded*, with its strapline ‘for men who should know better,’ featured semi-naked female celebrities, such as fashion models, pop and soap stars” (p. 36). In other words, the newer publications were edgier and focussed more on heterosexual masculinity, whereas the earlier publications played

⁹ The discussion focuses primarily on the events in the UK, because it has been the one most widely chronicled. As noted, the US already had a line of men’s fashion magazines, so in the 1980s and the arrival of the “new man,” it was not seen as such a novelty. Concerning the magazines targeting “new lads,” there was a similar trend in the US, as titles such as *Maxim*, *Stuff*, and *FHM* entered the market in the mid-’90s; similar titles were to be found in Australia.

upon a more refined gentlemanly version of masculinity. Yet, as David Gauntlett (2002) suggests, “[c]ontrary to popular perception, [*Loaded*] was not obsessed with naked women; its attitude to women was often surprisingly indifferent, preferring to focus on macho achievements, gangsters and sport (particularly in the early issues of 1994–1996; of the first 30 issues, only eight had a woman on the cover)” (p. 159). That said, after the success of *Loaded*, other lifestyle magazines, such as *GQ* and *Arena* “cast the 1980s aside by reintroducing a strong heterosexual script and stylish, soft-porn shots of women” (Beynon, 2002, p. 109).

The significance of these new men’s publications is that they represent a new medium for advertisers to reach male audiences. The success of men’s lifestyle magazines confirms that the articulation of masculinity had changed significantly over the decades in accord with challenging binary representations of gender. The magazines represent examples of how masculinity had become subject to consumer culture, meaning that, just as women had for years been objectified and commodified, so now had men. They are also indicative of a shift in the representation of masculinity, so that Berger’s (1973) aphorism and Mulvey’s (2001 [1975]) theory that “man is reluctant to gaze at his exhibitionist like” was being challenged. In other words, men were no longer the subject of the gaze but increasingly had become the object.

Contemporary investigations of masculinity

In John Berger's (1973) classic text, *Ways of Seeing*, he suggests that "[w]omen are depicted in a quite different way from men—not because the feminine is different from the masculine—but because the 'ideal' spectator is always assumed to be male and the image of the woman is designed to flatter him" (p. 64). One aspect of this difference is that "men act and women appear" (p. 47). In other words, women are represented as passive and men as active. Although Berger developed this framework in reference to the representation of gender in oil paintings, he (and others) has also applied it to advertising (cf. Mulvey 2001; Bordo, 1999).

Susan Bordo's (1999) *The Male Body* challenges this dichotomy, with a far-ranging exploration of the male body in culture. In the past, she explains, men's bodies were shown in near naked, muscular form only insofar they were active. A muscular physique was a prerequisite for such activity. Commenting on the bare-chested actors in the films of the '50s, Bordo notes that they were not considered effeminate or threatening to masculinity because they were featured on men of action. She comments, they "were on the bodies of warriors, prisoners, slaves, and prizefighters" (Bordo, 1999, p. 198). These men displayed their bodies, but it was not narcissistic insofar as they appeared either unaware or indifferent to their sexual appeal. Commenting more specifically on men and advertising, Bordo (1999) adds:

The classic formula for representing men is always to show them in action, immersed in whatever they are doing, seemingly unaware of anyone who might be looking at them. They never fondle their own bodies narcissistically, display themselves purely as 'sights,' or gaze at themselves in the mirror. In everything from war paintings to jeans and

cologne ads, men have been portrayed as utterly oblivious to their beauty (or lack of it), intent only on getting the job done—raising the flag, baling hay, lassoing a steer, busting up concrete. The ability to move heavy things around, tame wild creatures—that's manly business. Fretting about your love handles, your dry skin, your sagging eyelids, that's for girls (pp. 196-197).

This norm, however, has changed. As noted earlier, the Levi's Launderette ad presented a man displaying his near-naked body for an admiring audience to gaze upon. In 1983, Calvin Klein posted a billboard ad for underwear in Times Square that featured Tom Hinterhaus, his near-naked, muscular and chiselled body on display for all to gaze upon, another example of the use of beefcake to sell goods. A significant aspect of this ad is that Hinterhaus had his eyes closed, clearly relinquishing and positioning himself as the *object* of the gaze, features that were unlike earlier underwear ads. Drawing on the artistic talents of Bruce Weber, known for his homoerotic photography, Calvin Klein set the standard for the use of objectified male bodies in advertising.

This 1983 billboard was in stark contrast to the steely stare featured on most other underwear models. Bordo (1999) recognized this distinction and aptly divided these distinct representations in two categories: "face-offs" and "leaners." The "face-offs" which, according to Bordo, "except for...innovations in the amount of skin exposed, are pretty traditional—one might even say primal—in their conception of masculinity" (Bordo, 199, p. 188). In these representations, men are active and they are the ones doing the "staring." In contrast, "leaners" "are almost always reclining,

leaning against, or propped up against something in the fashion typical of women's bodies" (p. 188). Such men are passive, explicitly positioned *to be* gazed upon.

Surveying these categories in magazines, Bordo (1999) found that "both race and age played a role" (p. 192) in the differences between the categories.

African-American models, whether in *Esquire* or *Vibe*, are almost always posed facing-off. And leaners tend to be younger than rocks. Both in gay publications and straight ones, the more languid, come hither poses in advertisements are of boys and very young men. Once a certain maturity line is crossed, the challenging stares, the "face-off" postures are the norm (p. 192).

Bordo concludes by suggesting that it would not be surprising if, in the near future, traditional "macho" and other "face-off" models would be seen cross over to "leaners" (Bordo, 1999).

Michael Kimmel (2003) uses the concept of power to explain this age divide. According to Kimmel, most men do not feel as though they *have* power, even though they are *represented* as having it. He states, "men not only feel powerless, but they also feel entitled to power. They feel that if they play their cards right, if they do it all, if they subscribe to this idea of masculinity, if they do everything that they are supposed to do and play by the rules, they will get those rewards. They will get rich, they will get laid, and so on" (Interview with O'Barr, 2003). The use of youth or younger men in advertisements reaffirms this sense of entitlement in men. For older, powerless men, these images appeal to the young man in them,

the one who should and will get all of these goodies, but who doesn't have them now and who feels powerless and who feels there are people who are stepping on him...One of the functions of advertising

is to let men feel that by the consumption of these products, they will actually experience the power, the drive, the dynamism, and the virility that they feel they are missing in real life (O'Barr, 2003).

In other words, the appeal of these ads, for older and younger men alike, is that they identify with the promise of entitlement and power. The fact that they have not achieved it is obfuscated by the idea that it is still theirs to have, even if it is only through consumption.

Once a man reaches a certain age, he should have acquired a certain level of power, so men in their mid-thirties are often portrayed as dominant and powerful, what Bordo refers to as “the face-off postures” (p. 192). If younger men are powerless but hopeful, then older men are powerful and self-confident (or at least they should be). Accordingly, the use of (moderately) older men in “face-off” representations reinforces the idea that men are entitled to power and entitlement that may be claimed through consumption and display of the right brand or product. It is no coincidence, according to Kimmel, that men’s products often have names that conjure images of “primal masculinity” such as Trailblazer and Chaps. He posits that “[o]ne of the functions of advertising is to let men feel that by the consumption of these products, they will actually experience the power, the drive, the dynamism, and the virility that they feel they are missing in real life” (O'Barr, 2003). The masculinities being marketed through the media during this time are thus conflicting: on the one hand there is a process of youthful feminization and on the other there is the older, heterosexual macho-man.

Gendered identity

In short, the reality of personal identity is construed on the basis of other media.

Engel, 2004

Shopping for a pair of ski pants this winter, I found myself drawn towards boarder pants. In one store, the sales clerk pointedly asked me whether I was a skier or a boarder. Upon answering I was a skier, he moved to another section where all I had to choose from were boring ski pants. Not satisfied, I went to another store where the sales clerk was less concerned with the number of planks on my feet when going down the mountain and more with the style and fit of the ski pants. At one point, I informed her that I was not a boarder and perhaps I should be looking at “ski” pants. She laughed and said it did not matter; the function of the gear was the same. I bought a pair of “boarder” pants, but I must admit that I felt a little bit like a poseur on the ski hill, that somehow my identity as a skier was betrayed by the “boarder” pants I was wearing. The fact that I was wearing skis seemed almost irrelevant.

Although my anecdote is not gender specific, it does speak to the fluidity or, more specifically, the performativity of identity as theorized by Judith Butler (1990) in her seminal work, *Gender Trouble*. Butler (1990) posits that “[t]here is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very “expressions” that are said to be its results” (p. 25). Gender, for Butler is developed through discourse. “The production of sex *as* the prediscursive ought to

be understood as the effect of the apparatus of cultural construction designated by *gender*...So for example, the proclamation 'It's a girl!' that is uttered at birth is the initiator for a process of 'girling' the female subject" (Brickell, 2005, p. 7, 26). Sex may be biological, but its relation to gender is socially constructed—there are social conventions that prevent a person of the female sex from displaying what are often described as masculine traits. This raises the question of "[t]o what extent is '*identity*' a *normative ideal rather than a descriptive* feature of experience?" (Butler, 1990, p. 16).

Benwell (2003) explains Butler's notion of gender as "a discourse we both inhabit and employ, and also a performance with all the connotations of non-essentialism, transience, versatility and masquerade that this implies" (p. 8). For Benwell,

[s]uch an account is appealing for studies of the way in which masculinity is produced in popular culture precisely because it acknowledges the reflexive process involved in producing gender in such contexts, the interconnections between and dependency upon various cultural "scripts" or discourses, and the frequent ambiguity, contradiction, negotiation and fissure that accompanies such a process (p. 8).

In other words, by applying Butler's understanding of gender, we recognize that masculinity is fluid and constructed from our social environment.

David Gauntlett (2002) suggests that the mass media project normative behaviours that we in turn interpret as being "preferable, thereby making the gender categories more 'real'" (p. 140). However, just as these categories are not fixed in real life, they are not fixed in media representations. "Within particular moments, then,

the media might make gendered behaviours seem more 'natural', but when considered over time, the broad changes reveal the very constructedness of gender performance" (p. 140). In other words, our identities are constructed not just from media representations but drawn from all aspects of our social environment and are then performed accordingly.

Gauntlett (2002) argues, "[a]lthough gender categories have not been shattered...alternative ideas and images have at least created space for a greater diversity of identities" (p. 248). Drawing on Ulrich Beck, he states that, "[s]ince the social world is no longer confident in its traditions, every approach to life, whether seemingly radical or conventional, is somewhat risky and needs to be worked upon—nurtured, considered and maintained, or amended" (p. 248). As a result, we turn to the media for guidance for ways of living. "We lap up this material because the social construction of identity today is the *knowing* social construction of identity" (Gauntlett, 2002, pp. 248-249). In other words, we are increasingly aware that our identities are performative. We are not tied to any one representation of ourselves. This way of knowing and being fits very well with the needs and practices of consumer capitalism. By constantly offering "*new* modes of life" (p. 248), we continually turn to the marketplace in search of new identities.

Contemporary research on representations of men in advertising

If we understand that gender is performative and that the media play an important role in modelling such performances, it is important to have an

understanding of what trends and patterns exist in media representations of gender. Countless studies have explored how the media portray women, but less attention has been given to how men are represented. Furthermore, quantitative studies that provide extensive surveys of representations of male models exclusive of female models are even rarer. Law and Labre (2002) provide a 30-year overview of changes in male images in three popular men's magazines; however, their study is limited in scope, as it was only concerned with representations of the male body and not masculinity as a whole. They did find that the percentage of images of "somewhat muscular" or "very muscular" male bodies doubled between the 1990s and 1967–79 (84 and 42 per cent, respectively). Wolheter and Lammers (1980) provide a quantitative look at the roles of male models in print ads between 1958 and 1978. Their study shows a decline in men in working roles and an increase of men in decorative and social roles. Although these studies are important and provide some indication of trends found in representations of men in print, ads are dated and are limited in scope. In contrast, Kolbe and Albanese's (1996) and Rohlinger's (2002) studies are more recent and broader in scope.

Kolbe and Albanese's (1996)¹⁰ study *Man to Man: A Content Analysis of Sole-Male Images in Male-Audience Magazines* revealed that "the majority of men have the physique of the traditional male icon—strong and muscular. Few men have softer bodies" (p. 17). They also note, "men are sometimes objectified, but objectification is

¹⁰ Kolbe and Albanese (1996) analyzed sole-male images in male-audience magazines: *Business Week*, *Esquire*, *GQ*, *Playboy*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Sports Illustrated* for the year 1993.

not common in the sample ads,”¹¹ and these images are most likely found in fashion magazines such as *Esquire* and *GQ* (p. 17). Overall, they note that the men convey an upscale lifestyle and wear conservative clothing styles. Interestingly, they found that “[t]wo characteristics of traditional male-stereotypes—competency and physical domination—are not emphasized by the images in the sampled advertisements” (p. 17). The authors contend that there was not much difference in physical characteristics across the magazine types, but they note that “in the context of the individual magazines, some of the findings are particularly interesting and suggest that advertisers do tailor ad images to coincide with the editorial content” (p. 17). Taking a strictly quantitative approach, Kolbe and Albanese provide a thorough survey of the general patterns and trends of advertisement featuring men only in men’s magazines.

Deana A. Rohlinger (2002) similarly used quantitative content analysis methods to survey representations of masculinity in five male-audience magazines (*Sports Illustrated*, *Men’s Health*, *Popular Mechanics*, *GQ*, and *Business Week*) from 1987 to 1997, with a particular focus on the representations of sexualized images. Although the survey was made only four years after Kolbe and Albanese’s study, the results are significantly different. She found a growing tendency to use erotic representations of male models in which the man’s sexual orientation is unknown (i.e., they were not

¹¹They define objectification “as any presentation emphasizing sexually suggestive body parts or not including the head of the model in the picture.... The judges coded the presence of a bare chest and visible chest hair as a third measure of objectification” (Kolbe & Albanese, 1996, p. 6). I agree that these variables could imply objectification, but it is difficult to assign a model to such a category strictly based on this manifest content. For example, a male model depicted lifting his shirt, drawing attention to his sculpted torso would not be coded as objectified, because his head is visible, his whole chest is not bare, and no chest hair is visible.

identifiable as heterosexual or homosexual). The sexually ambiguous male, Rohlinger theorizes, is an attempt to appeal to a variety of audiences: “the image of the erotic male with an unknown sexuality is sexual, but it is devoid of a *specific* sexual context” (p. 71). The use of ambiguous sexuality in mainstream men’s magazines suggests that these trends are “in part, a response to cultural factors such as...gay liberation” and a desire of advertisers to attract the gay consumer (p. 72).

Rohlinger also found increasing evidence of objectification: the male model, for instance, was increasingly shown “with his face/head obscured or missing” and “without clothing” (Rohlinger, 2002, p. 70). She surmises that “the male body and its related parts are increasingly coming to signify the whole man—and this constitutes objectification” (p. 70). Although she does not claim that the rise in objectified/erotic images of men is a direct *cause* for an increase in the number of men who are dissatisfied with their bodies (and who suffer from associated eating and body image disorders), she does suggest that such representations provide “social effects.” In particular, she comments that “[t]he bodies in advertisements come to represent an ideal that individuals seek to achieve, and hence provide the foundation for a masochistic or punitive relationship with one’s own body” (p. 70).

Notwithstanding the limitations of quantitative content analysis, these studies provide important details in the trends and patterns of representations of masculinity found in print ads. We find that current representations continue to draw on traditional stereotypes because muscularity and power play an important role in defining current renditions of masculinity. Yet we also see that men are increasingly

being depicted in ways that were previously restricted to women, including increasing levels of objectification. As such, the role of the male spectator is changing.

Conclusion

Advertising plays a significant role in our society, and its influence on our lives should not be underestimated. We measure ourselves against these images and use them to help define our identities to ourselves and to others. The literature discussed in this chapter provides a solid foundation from which these topics can be explored. Ewen's work is integral in understanding the evolution of advertising as it evolved beyond the utilitarian function of informing to a reliance on emotional appeals in the cultivation of a culture of dissatisfaction. Consumption became the mark of being a good citizen, and the fear of being labelled otherwise encouraged men and women alike to pay heed. Similarly, he illustrates how advertising played upon people's insecurities and encouraged them to turn to the marketplace for salvation. Interestingly, contemporary advertising no longer needs to instil ads with that level of fear, as it appears that society has internalized the messages of lack so that instinctively we turn to the marketplace to fill the void.

Of course, advertising is just the messenger for our postmodern society. We may internalize its messages, but there is debate on whether *it* is creating the messages or simply playing back to society the images the latter projects. It comes back to the old adage of whether life imitates art or art imitates life. Frank's discussion of business culture and counterculture is instructive in this argument, and he intimates

that it is a bit of both. Mainstream culture and counterculture live in a symbiotic relationship, and influences go back and forth between the two. Representations of gender in the media, it could be argued, mimic this same relationship. In other words, the transitions from “new man” to “new lad” to “metrosexual” are not simply creatures created by marketing departments but are in some part reflective of the changes experienced by men on the street. If such is the case, then we must understand that gender is not biological but performative, as argued by Butler. The discursive nature of identities is a reflection of our mediated environment in which binary distinctions of gender are no longer applicable.

Kolbe and Albanese’s and Rohlinger’s quantitative studies provide important overviews of patterns and trends in representations of masculinity over the last 13 years. From them we learn that traditional stereotypes of masculinity are still found in magazine advertisements; however, they are interspersed with new renditions such as what Bordo refers to as “leaners.” In other words, there are contradictions found in the way masculinity is represented in advertising. This study explores these complexities in greater detail by engaging with the latent content of ads as well as the manifest and by speaking with men and gaining a better understanding of how they negotiate ads. In the following chapter, I build upon Kolbe and Albanese’s and Rohlinger’s studies with a content analysis that explores various aspects in the representations of masculinity in men’s lifestyle magazines.

CHAPTER 3: MEN ACT *AND* MEN APPEAR

Introduction

The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 suggests that gender is not a naturally occurring phenomenon but instead is developed through individuals' interaction with the social environment, including the images which help us make sense of our selves and the world we live in. This chapter presents a content and qualitative analysis of print advertising in three contemporary men's lifestyle magazines with wide circulation: *Esquire*, *Men's Health*, and *Maxim*. Drawing upon Kolbe and Albanese's (1996) and Rohlinger's (2002) studies, I develop a comprehensive protocol that provides an in-depth look at the current trends and patterns in the representation of masculinity in advertising. This study codes for physical attributes of male models (including body type, style of clothing worn), products advertised, the function of the model's role in the presentation of the product, and masculinity types found. My results confirm trends discussed in the previous chapter, in particular, Nixon's insights into the complexities of representations of masculinity. Not only were there contradictions of the types of masculinity represented between ads, these complexities also emerged within ads. Most notable was the finding that, although many of the model's characteristics *seemed* similar (e.g., age and body type), the *types* of masculinity on offer did *not* conform to a single category. Overall, there were two main themes in the conceptions of masculinity represented: primitive/traditional and

a contemporary conception that includes elements traditionally associated with femininity, such as narcissism and sensitivity. As a result, there was not one dominant or hegemonic form of masculinity; instead, each image accommodated several sites of masculinity. These findings were not surprising, as they are consistent with the literature discussed in the previous chapter. In addition, Bordo appears almost prophetic, as the blending of “rocks” and “leaners” appears as a more prevalent trend.

The purpose of the content analysis is to establish trends and patterns in representations of men in the new millennia while also looking at any changes in representation that may have taken place to arrive at these trends. First, I discuss the similarities of the male models, in particular age, ethnicity, class, and body type. Next, I offer an analysis of the characteristics of the models and the advertisements that begin to highlight some the contradictions mentioned. I conclude with a discussion of the key masculinity types found in the 2003 publications in which the contrast between the two main types of masculinity found is made more evident. The content analysis is useful in identifying a macro vision of the types of representations of masculinity. A qualitative analysis is also included in the final discussion as a complementary tool providing a more detailed examination of latent content, thereby allowing for a greater understanding of the representation of masculinity in the advertisements.

Sample

Esquire, *Men's Health*, and *Maxim* were selected in order to ensure an ad sample targeted to a wide range of men and because of their large circulation and readership (see Table 1). The press kits for *Esquire* and *Men's Health* highlight the wealth and influence of their audiences, as well as their penchant for grooming and fashion products, whereas *Maxim* highlights the magazine's appeal to a younger demographic and the sheer number of readers reached. The majority of readers of these publications are college educated (2005 Spring MRI) and have household incomes of greater than sixty-thousand. However, there are important distinctions that set them apart from one another, such as differences in age, sexual orientation of the target markets, and the theme of the publication. The median age of male readers for *Maxim* is 27.8, for *Esquire* it is 44.9 years of age, and *Men's Health* falls in between, reporting an average age of 36.6 (MRI Doublebase, 2005). Additionally, the latter is the only publication that attracts both straight and gay males, compared to the largely heterosexual audience of *Maxim* and *Esquire* (Gauntlett, 2002). Collectively, these three publications reach out to younger and older males, both straight and homosexual, thus attracting advertisers seeking to reach a diverse audience. The sizable demographic of audiences for these publications suggests that the images within them will be reflective of representations of masculinity that appear in mainstream media.

Table 1: Demographic Breakdown of Sample Publications

Magazine	Circulation (000)	Audience (000)	Readers Per Copy	Median Age	Household Income
<i>Esquire</i>	706	1,828	2.59	44.9	69,673.0
<i>Maxim</i>	2,355	10,111	4.29	27.8	63,271.0
<i>Men's Health</i>	1,642	7,269	4.43	36.6	71,253.0

Source: MRI Doublebase, 2005; numbers are for male readers only

Twenty-four issues were randomly selected for coding and analysis: four issues from 1993 and 2003 for *Men's Health* and *Esquire*,¹² and four from 1998 and 2003 for *Maxim*.¹³ This sample produced 1306 advertisements, of which 46 per cent (603) met the coding requirements: advertisements had to be a minimum of a half page in size; have at least one male character, and no more than five characters in total; characters had to be real people and not computerized or graphic images.¹⁴ Every adult character was coded; however, representations of female models were not analyzed. Given that my principal objective is the exploration of current trends and patterns in the representation of masculinity, the majority of discussion focuses on 2003, the 1993 and 1998 sample serving to contextualize how trends have evolved over time.

The distribution of coded advertisements across the three publications was fairly consistent: both *Esquire* and *Men's Health* have around 30 percent and *Maxim* had a slightly higher concentration, nearly 40 per cent of the ads (see Table 2).

¹² The back covers for the 1993 *Esquire* issues were missing.

¹³ 1998 was the first year of publication for *Maxim*.

¹⁴ Notwithstanding the ubiquitous computer enhancement that now characterizes print advertising.

Table 2: Distribution of Coded Advertisements

Magazine Title	1993/98	2003	Total
<i>Esquire</i>	109 44.3	105 29.4	214 35.5
<i>Men's Health</i>	40 16.3	112 31.2	152 25.2
<i>Maxim</i>	97 39.4	140 39.2	237 39.3
Total	246 40.8	357 59.2	603 100.0

Coding protocol summary¹⁵

Using an abductive approach, I developed an extensive coding protocol that surveys general patterns in representations of masculinity found in advertisements targeting male audiences. The protocol was finalized after completing three pilot studies. The first half of the protocol focuses on characteristics of the models and the layout of the ads. I relied on visual cues and text whenever available, and when the categories could not be ascertained they were coded as “unable to determine.” Kolbe and Albanese’s (1996) study influenced the categories in the first half of the protocol: age, ethnicity, body type, and the types of products advertised. The purpose of this section was to systematically describe how men are represented in ads beyond simply anecdotal observations. Although it is common to have homogeneous representations of men in a single advertisement, I coded for each model in an ad. In the second half of the protocol I coded for Bordo’s (1999) “rocks”/“leaner” dichotomy, and I drew on Rohlinger (2002) for a more detailed taxonomy of masculinity types. The findings are instructive in that they offer a detailed account of

¹⁵ Please refer to Appendix A for the complete protocol.

the characteristics of male models found in ads directed to men in men's lifestyle magazines and serve as a valuable tool to generate a better understanding of how masculinity is negotiated.

Findings

Overall, the basic characteristics of the ads and the models are very similar. Age, ethnicity, body type, and the physical setting of the ads are consistent throughout most of the advertisements analyzed. Such similarities could easily support the conclusion that there is a single hegemonic form of masculinity found in advertising. As we look closer at the ads, key tensions and contradictions emerge, suggesting that the portrayals of masculinity are more complex than a superficial content analysis might suggest. I begin with the similarities and then move to the complexities of these representations.

Age

As shown in Table 3, the majority of male models (60.4 per cent) appeared to be between 25 and 35 years of age. Nearly thirty per cent of the male models looked between 20 and 24 years of age, leaving just under ten per cent between 36 and 55 years of age and not quite two per cent over 56 years of age. This age distribution of males in the advertisements obviously does not mirror society at large, as illustrated in Table 3. In other words, the men represented in ads are considerably younger than the audience actually is. This is in line with Ewen's comments that youth is used as a "salable commodity". In other words, the use of young models destabilizes men's

sense of self-worth and accentuates their sense of lack encouraging them to turn to the marketplace to regain their self worth and compensate for the lack.

Table 3: Age Distribution in Ads vs. Actual Canadian Distribution

Age	1993/98	2003	Statistics Canada Males 20+ ¹⁶
20-24	53 20.2	112 28.6	982,285 9.20
25-35	143 54.4	236 60.4	2,194,185 20.46
36-55	57 21.7	37 9.5	4,644,980 43.03
56+	10 3.2	6 1.5	2,902,280 27.10
Total	263 100.0	391 100.0	10,723,715 100.00

Ethnic diversity

Although North America is ethnically diverse, there was very little variation in the male models represented. Nearly 85 per cent of male models were coded as Caucasian; 10.9 per cent were coded as Black; less than two per cent were found to be Hispanic, and Asian, South Asian, and Other each consisted of less than one per cent (see Table 4). Compared with the distribution of age, there is more affinity between ethnic representation and the actual distribution of ethnicity in Canada; however, there are still large segments of the population that are not represented in the ads. According to the 2001 Canadian census, nearly 87 per cent of the Canadian population did not report being a visible minority. However, when we look at two of

¹⁶ Source: Statistics Canada

Canada's major urban centres, Toronto and Vancouver, the disparity between the ethnicity represented in the ads and the actual distribution of ethnicity is staggering (see Table 4). In Vancouver alone, nearly 30 percent of the population is near invisible in the sample publications. In the United States, which has a much larger Black and Hispanic population, the reported distribution in the ads is also considerably different from that in the actual population.¹⁷ In fact in 2000, Hispanics surpassed Blacks as the most numerous ethnic minority, 12.5 per cent and 12.3 per cent of the total population respectively; Asian Americans comprised 3.6 per cent of the US population (Cortese, 2004, p. 120).¹⁸

¹⁷ I am including US figures because the publications the ads are drawn from are American.

¹⁸ The invisibility of Asian masculinity in the ad sample is a topic that needs to be explored in much greater detail; however, it is beyond the scope of this study.

Table 4: Distribution by Ethnicity, 2003 vs. Canadian 2001 Census

Ethnic Background	1993/98	2003	Statistics Canada 2001 Toronto	Statistics Canada 2001 Vancouver	Statistics Canada 2001 Canada
Asian	n/a	3 0.6	221,530 ¹⁹ 10.0	182,290 19.7	551,225 4.0
Black	22 7.0	51 10.9	134,320 6.1	7,660 0.8	283,340 2.0
Caucasian	281 88.9	396 84.6	1,418,100 64.1	595,015 64.2	12,109,470 86.9
Hispanic	n/a	8 1.7	36,860 ²⁰ 1.7	9,030 1.0	105,735 0.8
South Asian	n/a	4 0.9	236,815 10.7	80,375 8.7	454,965 3.3
Other	3 0.9	2 0.4	163,100 7.4	51,920 5.6	429,382 3.1
Cannot be determined	10 3.2	4 0.9	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total	316 100.0	468 100.0	2,210,725 100.0	926,290 100.0	13,934,120 100.0

Class

Similarly, the class of male models was fairly homogenous, nearly ninety per cent appearing to be middle/lower-upper class, 8.5 per cent upper class/élite, and only 4.2 per cent appearing as working class. These findings are consistent with Zhou and Chen (1997), who also found male models more frequently portrayed in high/middle-level occupations than in low-level ones. Of course, these findings are tautological, as the publications in the sample target appeal to middle-class males, and accordingly present masculinity in universalized non-class terms. “Although there are

¹⁹ This includes those reported as being Chinese, Korean, and Japanese.

²⁰ This includes those reported as being Latin American.

considerable differences within this broad middle category, whether these differences coalesce into class differences is a little more difficult to determine” (Morgan, 2005, pp. 174-175). Furthermore, the publications reviewed are lifestyle magazines that promote an environment of aspirationalism and the promotion of the “good life.” They promote a very specific lifestyle of consumption as the central role, and work as only integral as it facilitates the ability to consume. Admittedly, had I included publications with a working-class appeal, class may have emerged as a more significant variable in the construction of masculinity (for more on masculinity and class see Willis, 1977; Kenway & Kraack, 2004; Morgan, 2005).

Body type

When coding for body type, there are three categories that models might fall into: mesomorphic, ectomorphic, and endomorphic. Kolbe and Albanese (1996) define a mesomorph as “[a] person whose body is hard, rectangular, strong, tough, resistant to injury, and generally equipped for strenuous and exacting physical demands”; an ectomorph as “[a] person whose body is linear and fragile, characterized by flatness of the chest and delicacy of the body. He is usually thin and lightly muscled. This is a physique poorly equipped for competitive and persistent physical action”; and an endomorph as “[s]oftness and spherical or rounded appearance; underdevelopment of muscle” (Kolbe & Albanese, n/d, p. 2).

The findings in Table 5 illustrate that the mesomorphic male physique is emphasized over all the others, a trend that is similar to the findings of previous

researchers (Creed, 2003; Patterson & Elliott, 2002; Pope *et al.* 2000; Bordo, 1999; Dotson, 1999; Kolbe & Albanese, 1996). However, the findings from the sample suggest that images of a muscular physique have been supplemented by the thinner, leaner, ectomorphic body type. This finding is consistent with Cortese (2004): “[d]espite an emphasis on muscularity thinness is still demanded of male models. The norm for fashion runway models is a very narrow range: six feet two inches in height and approximately 160 to 170 pounds” (p. 64). Adrian Brody’s success as a model for Ermenegildo Zegna²¹ is exemplary of this trend. However, it is also interesting to note that a hardly recognizable muscle-bound Brody was recently featured on the cover of *Men’s Health* (December 2005); my husband commented that it looked like Brody’s head had been pasted onto the body of a weightlifter. Tall and thin may be a requirement for many of today’s models, but muscularity also remains a dominant feature of masculinity.

Not surprisingly perhaps, endomorphic male bodies are neither celebrated nor prominently featured. When those with a larger physique are used, it is most common for men who are issuing a testimonial or endorsement (33.3 per cent); for example, men in positions of authority or in the “before” pictures in health ads. This body type also appears as comic relief (21 per cent), a trend that is consistent with other findings (see Patterson & Elliott, 2002, p. 236). For the most part, I did not find this body type to be depicted in a positive manner.

²¹ Copies of ads are not included due to copyright restrictions.

Table 5: Distribution of Body Types Among Male Models

Body Type	1993/98	2003
Endomorph	8 5.3	24 5.8
Mesomorph	135 90.0	339 82.3
Ectomorph	7 4.7	49 11.9
Total	150 100.0	412 100.0

Pope *et al.* (2000) argue that, because masculinity is in flux, such an overemphasis on muscular images of male models in the media further erodes men's sense of their own masculinity. Characteristics such as ethnicity and age are hard to change; however, changing one's body is a project to which many can commit. Yet achieving the type of body featured in the media remains unrealistic for most. Indeed, images of perfectly toned male bodies may be creating the same generalized anxiety about self-image that research has shown to be commonplace among women (Gauntlett, 2002; Pope *et al.* 2000; Dotson, 1999; Walker, 1998). Stern (2003) for instance, notes that "[m]en have been found to be very aware of images of their body and of the ideal body, and have expressed the greatest dissatisfaction about weight, chest size and musculature, and waist size" (p. 223). She further comments that "[t]he emphasis—or overemphasis—on outer beauty has been linked to dysfunctional body-image behaviors such as 'bigorexia' (reverse anorexia) and an excessive number of cosmetic surgeries" (p. 223) (cf. Pope *et al.*, 2002; Dotson, 1999). In other words, the same measures that have resulted in a culture of dissatisfaction among women are

increasingly being used with men, measures that complicate their understanding and ability to negotiate their own identities within sociocultural renderings of masculinity.

Thus far, the findings suggest that the models share a key set of characteristics. Most of the male models in the sample have well-toned bodies, are young, Caucasian, and appear to be well-to-do. I now turn to characteristics of the ads, in particular the product category advertised and the setting. The setting is important, as typically male models were found outdoors. When indoors, they were most often in a business setting; indoor settings, such as the home, were associated with femininity. Given that consumption is so important in defining masculinity, looking at the types of products advertised is indicative of how men are to construct their masculinity.

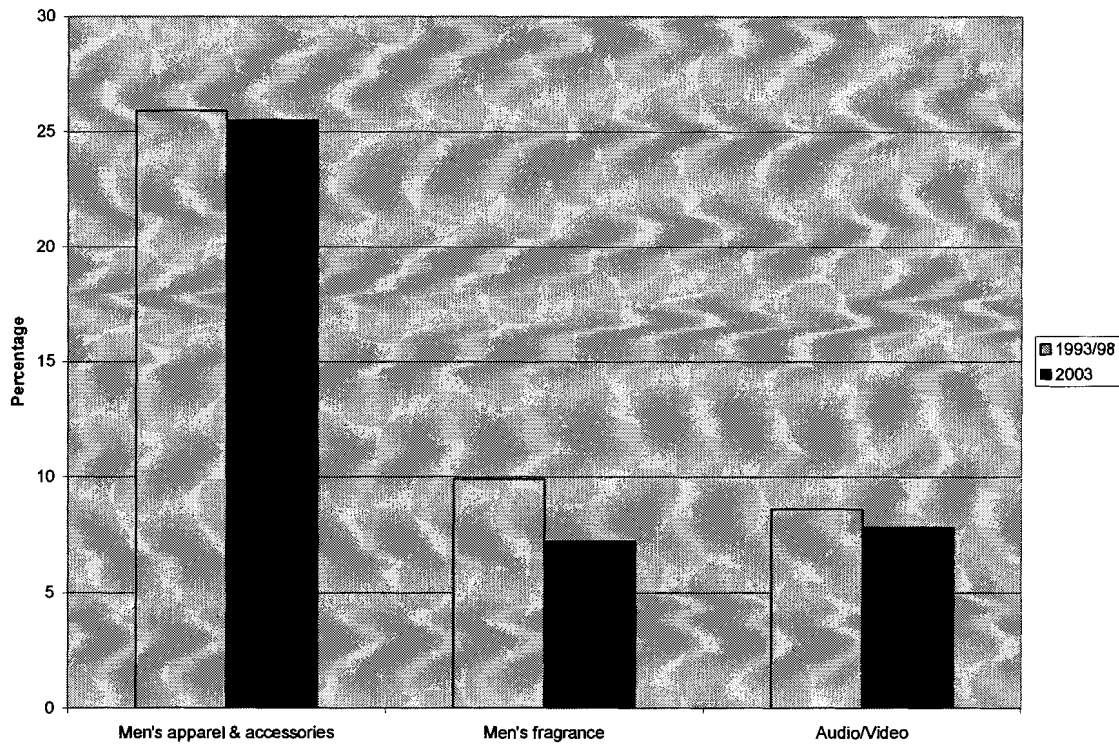
Product category

Looking at Figure 1, we see there is little variation of product category advertised between the years. In the 2003 sample, the largest concentration for this variable, just over one quarter, was men's apparel and accessories,²² followed by audio/video²³ and men's fragrances, 7.8 per cent and 7.2 per cent respectively.

²² This category includes men's clothing and outerwear but does not include men's underwear, men's shoes, or advertisements that were for both men's and women's clothing and accessories.

²³ This category includes everything from CDs to televisions but does not include video games.

Figure 1: Top Three Product Categories Advertised—All magazines



However, by looking at the product category advertised by each publication (Figure 2, Figure 3, and Figure 4), we see there have been significant shifts in the types of products advertised, illustrating the complexities of masculinities on offer. Turning to Figure 4, we see a balancing of “new lad” types of products found in 1998, such as audio/video, alcoholic beverages, and tobacco products that have a clear identification with traditional notions of masculinity, and “new man” products such as men’s apparel and accessories in 2003. These categories alone are indicative of the virtues of masculinity that are promoted throughout the media landscape. For example, if we consider in general the qualities of a *metrosexual* male, we find concern with appearance and presentation coupled with a general appreciation for traditional masculine hobbies such as cars, technology, and socializing. These qualities are

supported by the top three product categories found across the publications that target men of different demographics, suggesting that it does not matter if you are a 45-year-old business man or a 22-year-old university student; the dominant product categories targeting you are the same—the differences are found only in the brand.

Figure 2: Percentage of Top Categories Advertised: *Esquire*

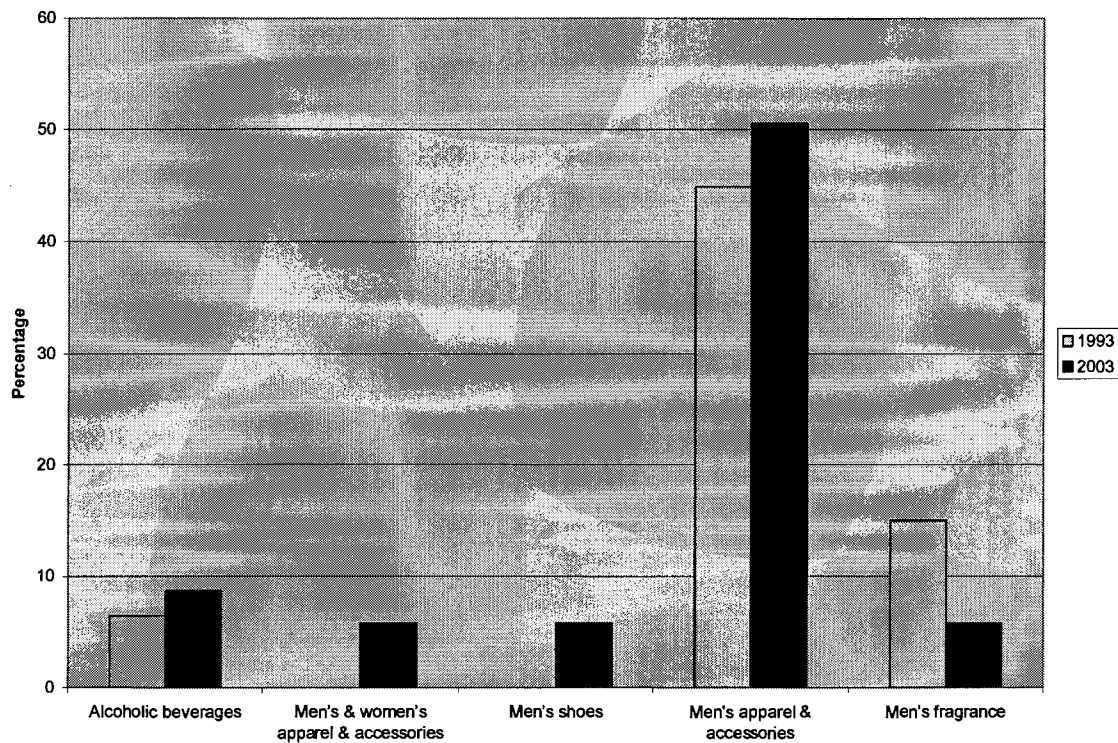


Figure 3: Percentage of Top Categories Advertised: *Men's Health*

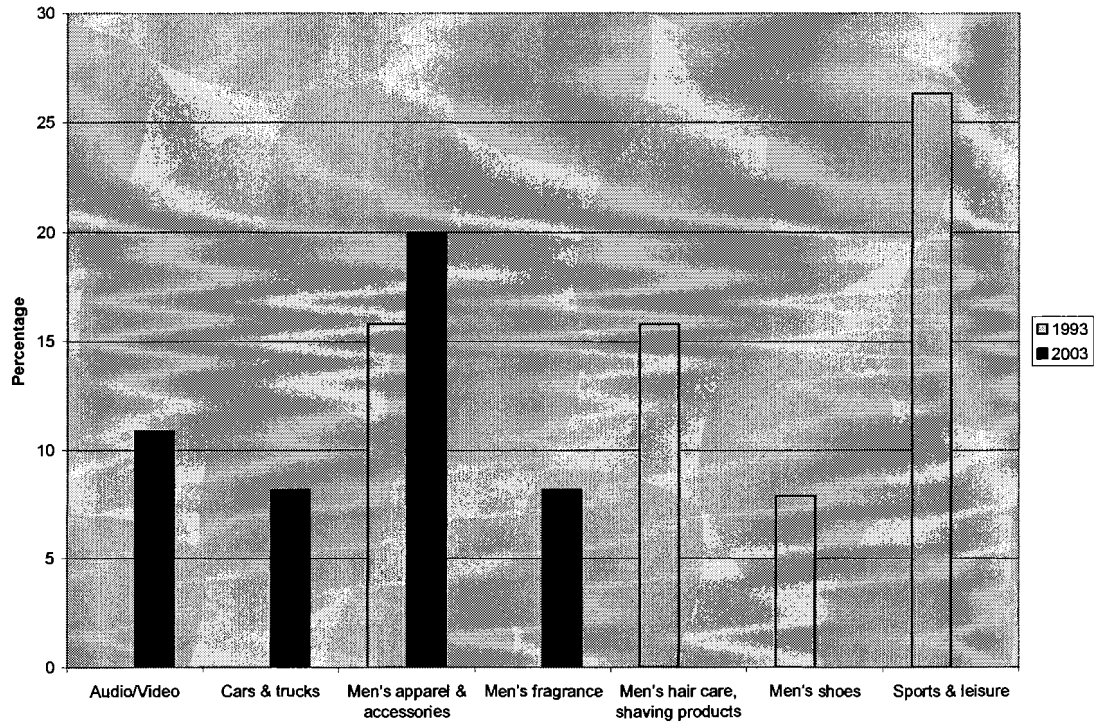
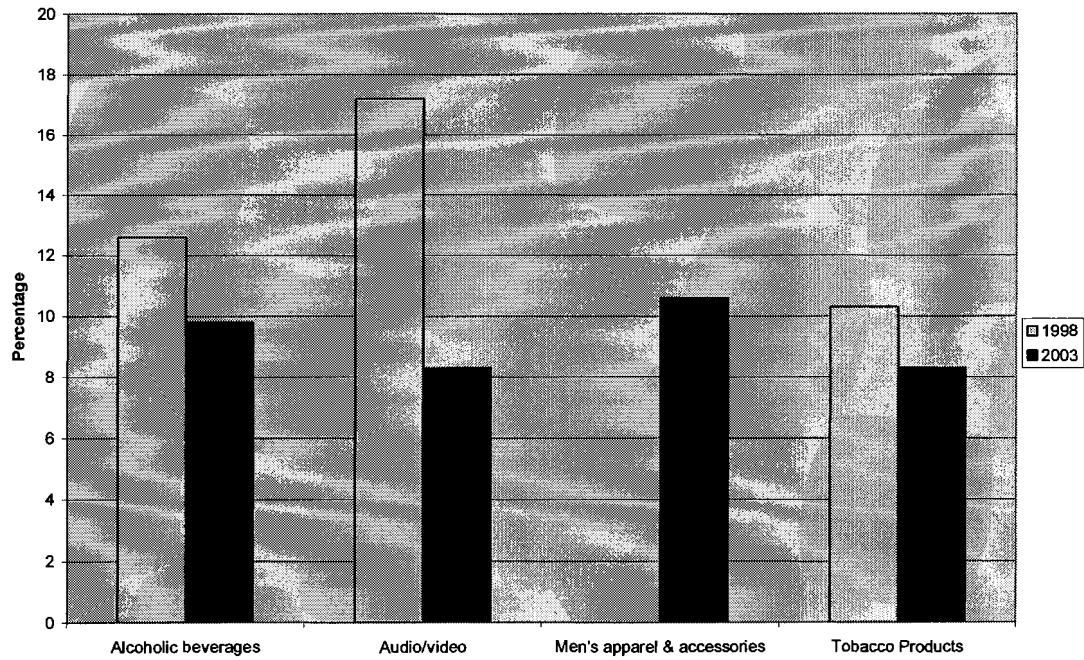


Figure 4: Percentage of Top Product Categories Advertised: *Maxim*



Physical setting of ads

Just as product category offers an indication of the key masculinity traits represented in the advertisements, so, too, does the physical setting of the ads. Traditionally, men in ads were featured in outdoor settings and, when indoors, they were usually found in a business environment as opposed to domestic settings such as the home—the woman’s domain (see Wolheter & Lammers, 1980; Marchand, 1985; Zhou & Chen, 1997; Gauntlett, 2002). Conversely, nearly half of the analyzable advertisements in 2003 (and just over half in 1993/98) appeared to have no discernable physical setting, therefore suggesting that setting is not a key determinant. To lure in a larger audience base, marketers use this ambiguity; by not specifying a particular setting it is easier for the audience to place themselves in the ad (Wernick, 1991).

Table 6: Physical Setting of Advertisements

Physical setting	1993/98	2003
No physical setting	133 <i>53.6</i>	177 <i>49.6</i>
Outdoor	93 <i>37.5</i>	111 <i>31.1</i>
Indoor	22 <i>8.9</i>	69 <i>19.3</i>
Total	248 <i>100.0</i>	357 <i>100.0</i>

There was an increase of just over ten per cent of ads featured indoors in all three publications. Of these ads, none was set in a kitchen or bathroom. Surprisingly though, very few were set in a business locale, only 2.9 per cent falling in this

category. Instead, the favoured indoor settings were bars/restaurants (20 per cent) and the bedroom/living room (16 per cent). Domesticity is not a celebrated aspect of masculinity in these advertisements, and neither is work. Rather, what we find is the dominance of the social male while also acknowledging man in his “castle.” Conventional locales are not as dominant as in other studies; however, men are also not featured in traditionally female settings such as the kitchen and the bathroom. Instead, when a setting is evident, the preferred locales for the social and sexual male are bars/restaurants and the bedroom. Of course, these settings can reveal only a small indication of the types of masculinity found in ads, but they do help us to better understand the complexities of gender as represented in the media.

Gender composition of advertisements

In 2003, just over two thirds of the analyzable advertisements featured men only. Of these ads, as illustrated in Table 7, the models were most often depicted alone or in groups of three or more. There appears to be a reluctance to feature only two men in ads, perhaps a result of the struggle marketers have in straddling straight and gay masculinities. Although advertisers are eager to attract the latter, they are generally unwilling to do so at the expense of the former. By using “gay vague”²⁴ ads, advertisers can make overtures to the gay community while feeling safe that their heterosexual market will not notice the gay undertones. For example, there appears to

²⁴ “Gay Vague’ is a term coined by Michael Wilke in *Advertising Age* in 1997, for ads that covertly speak to gays or seem to imply gayness with a wink—an intention advertisers often deny, or sometimes don’t even intend. This can include ambiguous relationships, blurred gender distinctions, wayward same-sex glances or touching, camp/kitsch, or coded references to gay culture (but not subliminal). Some ads convey different meanings in mainstream media versus gay media because of who is intended to look at it” (www.commercialcloset.org).

be safety in numbers—two male models with no females may be too easily read as two gay men and thus not be considered “gay vague” but simply “gay positive” (Manca & Manca, 1994). However, by having three or more models, the reading of the models’ sexuality can be more ambiguous; that is, such a composition may render it difficult for a straight male audience to read the homosexual undertones coded in the ad. This way, the advertiser can create different levels of meaning that will allow the ad to appellate a diverse range of men in different ways while not alienating any particular audience.

The second most frequent arrangement of models in the 2003 sample was male-female pairings. Not surprisingly, just over three per cent of ads featured men with children, a trend that is similar to others (Wernick, 1991; Leiss, Kline, & Jhally, 1988). Of interest, however, is that, when men were shown with children, they were twice as likely to be shown without an accompanying woman, allowing polysemic readings, including gay vague. These findings are consistent with Gauntlett’s (2002) observation that advertisers try not to “include glaring stereotypes” in their attempt not to “alienate any possible target audience” (p. 81). Furthermore, the near invisibility of men in family positions reinforces the image of a self-contained, individualistic masculinity—traditional traits that are characteristic of the cowboy or “man’s man” (Manca & Manca, 1994). Masculinity is no longer tied to responsibility and commitment; instead, it is associated with freedom, socializing with friends, and consumption.

Table 7: Composition of Characters in Ads

Composition of characters	1993/98	2003
Men only	167 67.61	240 67.23
Men and women	55 26.32	102 28.57
Men and children	6 2.43	8 2.24
Men, women and children	3 1.21	4 1.12
Other	6 2.43	3 0.84
Total	247 100.0	357 100.00

The findings so far are illustrative of the complexities found in masculinity. The characteristics of the male models are consistent—white, young, muscular, and upper class—and the marketing tactics are similar, relying on the use of ambiguous identifiers to allow for a broader reach. However, the variation in product types promotes contradictory messages in the priorities of contemporary masculinity. These findings are consistent with Dotson’s (1999), as he found that it was “[n]o wonder that men are confused about how they should behave and about what is the definition *du jour* of masculinity” (p. 57), because contradictory stereotypes are promoted as the dominant form of masculinity.

On the one hand, men are being told they should break away from past stereotypes of masculinity and embrace the stereotypes of new men. Some members of society want today’s men to care more about their appearance and about what clothes and cologne they wear. On the other hand, men are being told that the old stereotypes are just fine, that it is okay to be auto mechanics and bathroom readers (Dotson, 1999, p. 57).

Let us take a closer at these contradictions.

Man in transition

In Bordo's (1999) evaluation of males in the media, she devised two simple categories: "rocks/"face-offs" and "leaners" (refer to Chapter 2 for definitions). This dichotomy is useful in the current study because it provides a clear division of masculinity types. However, Bordo suggests future depictions of traditional "macho" and "face-off" models may be seen in crossover depictions toward that of "leaners" (Bordo, 1999). With that in mind, I created a "crossover" category to capture those representations that blend these seemingly distinct characteristics.

Among other signifiers, such as the model's physique, body stance, and level of activity, the positioning of the model's lips can indicate whether he is a "rock," a "leaner," or a crossover. Traditionally, in ads, men's lips are closed, or if parted it is a result of laughter, a smile, or because they are talking; conversely, women's lips are more often shown parted as an indicator of sexual availability (Williamson, 1978, p. 59). As such, I coded whether or not lips were parted²⁵ (to suggest sexual availability) as another variable to complement Bordo's classification. Although only 7.1 per cent of male models in the 2003 sample had parted lips, this is more than double the number in 1993, suggesting this may be a trend in the coming years. The parting of the lips represents a vulnerability that has not previously been used when representing men. Thus representations of masculinity continue to draw on more

²⁵ In retrospect, it would have been logical to have expanded this variable to include the variations in the way men's lips are presented, because the use of a smiling man itself is indicative of a less authoritative and more approachable masculinity type.

traditional motifs, but they are increasingly juxtaposed with images of a more sensitive—even vulnerable—form of masculinity, a trend that is also revealed in the discussion of Bordo’s dichotomy, shown in Table 8.

In 2003, nearly one third of all male characters found their way into Bordo’s (1999) dichotomy compared with just under fifteen per cent in 1993/1998. In 2003, 61.3 per cent were classified as “rocks/face-offs,” 31.9 were “leaners,” and 6.7 per cent fell under crossover.

Table 8: Bordo’s Masculinity Types

Type	1993/98	2003
Rocks/face-offs	30 76.9	73 61.3
Leaners	8 20.5	38 31.9
Crossover	1 0.3	8 6.7
Total	39 100.0	119 100.0

The best example in 2003 of a “rock/face-off” is a two-page ad for Calvin Klein’s Pro-Stretch (men’s briefs) featuring Swedish soccer star Fredrik Ljungberg, found in the November issue of *Men’s Health*. The right page is entirely white except for the text “Calvin Klein Pro Stretch” positioned in the middle of the page. In contrast to the “purity” of the layout on the right, the left-hand page features Ljungberg standing against a scuffed, grey, industrial-looking wall, wearing nothing but his Calvins. His chest is bare, except for a few beads of sweat, a pendant, and a

tattoo of a black panther seductively emerging from his briefs. His head is tilted ever so slightly downward; however, there is nothing submissive or vulnerable about this pose, as his steely eyes suggest that he is the one in control. His thumbs are resting on the inside of the waistband of the briefs, the right thumb pulling them slightly, giving the audience a glimpse of his hip bone. Because these are “sports” briefs, the presence of an athletic cup is not out of place; however, the corresponding visual image of a well-endowed man is significant for the creation of meaning in this ad.

The ad reaches out to men, suggesting that it is desirable, even for rugged, athletic men, to be fashionable, even in the locker room—it does not make one appear “weak” or “effeminate.” If anything, Ljungberg is positioned to show that wearing the “right” underwear will make one appear more virile. The grittiness of the ad—the steely background with the chipped paint and writing on the wall—combined with the grittiness of the model—shaved head, unshaven face, hand on hips causing the shoulders to be rounded and highlighting his muscularity—evoke a sense of power, dominance, and masculine virility. Ljungberg almost smirks at the reader, implying an awareness of the contradictions he represents—traditionally masculine but also making himself the object of the gaze. His pose, look, and challenging demeanour reassure the reader that he is in control of his display, thereby making it acceptable for other (heterosexual) men to gaze upon his near-naked body, because there is nothing soft or vulnerable about it—he is tough. Moreover, through sport, the ad hails men who would otherwise associate with more conventional characteristics of masculinity, informing them that masculinity also means being self-

conscious and that competitiveness is not reserved for the playing field but the locker room as well.

In contrast to the “rock” in Calvin Klein’s ad is the “leaner” in a Davidoff Cool Water ad that appears in the November 2003 issue of *Maxim*. This ad features a naked man lying in water, his head leaning back and his chest arched forward. His lower body (including his pelvic region) is submerged in the water. The model’s eyes are closed and his lips are ever so slightly parted. He has the appearance of being in absolute peace even though he is supposed to be in “cool water.” To show how cool the water is, the model’s pectoral muscles are covered with goose bumps accentuated by beads of water. The man’s left nipple is bare and the other has the water line crossing over the top of it. The water line and the absence of water over his pectoral muscles draw our gaze to this part of his body. The model’s physical positioning suggests a posture of vulnerability, not simply because he is partially submerged in water but also due to the basic incongruity of the pose. Another possible interpretation is that he is being sexually gratified and he is arching his body to better receive his lover. The positioning of the model in this ad is reminiscent of the impractical and implausible poses women are often found in to project an air of vulnerability and submissiveness. Being engaged in a sexual act, especially as the receiver, is perhaps when we are at our most vulnerable. Compared with Ljungberg, who stares down the reader and is seemingly in control of the gaze, the Cool Water model presents a representations of a much weaker masculinity. He has the

appearance of being caught in a private moment, suggesting that it is the audience that holds the power in the scenario.

In contrast to these “pure” representations of the “rocks” and “leaners” categories is a third advertisement, which provides a good example of the blending of these types that is becoming more common. A June 2003 black-and-white ad for Calvin Klein’s Truth fragrance for men shows a model standing in the shower or the rain. The image is a close-up of the model’s head, with his neck and very little of his shoulders showing. He appears to be standing sideways; however, his head is turned to face the reader. Similar to the lips of the Davidoff model, his lips are parted in a feminine manner and his hair is slicked back. As in the other Calvin Klein ad, the model is staring at the audience in a manner that suggests he is in control, emitting a sense of dominance and power. At the same time, the positioning of his head toward the reader suggests that he was caught off guard and surprised by the photographer, evoking a sense of vulnerability. In addition, the model has full pouting lips, further implying a sense of sexual availability: the prey rather than the predator. Yet his chiselled facial features and heavy, almost bushy, eyebrows, as well as the stare that engages the audience, evoke the hunter.

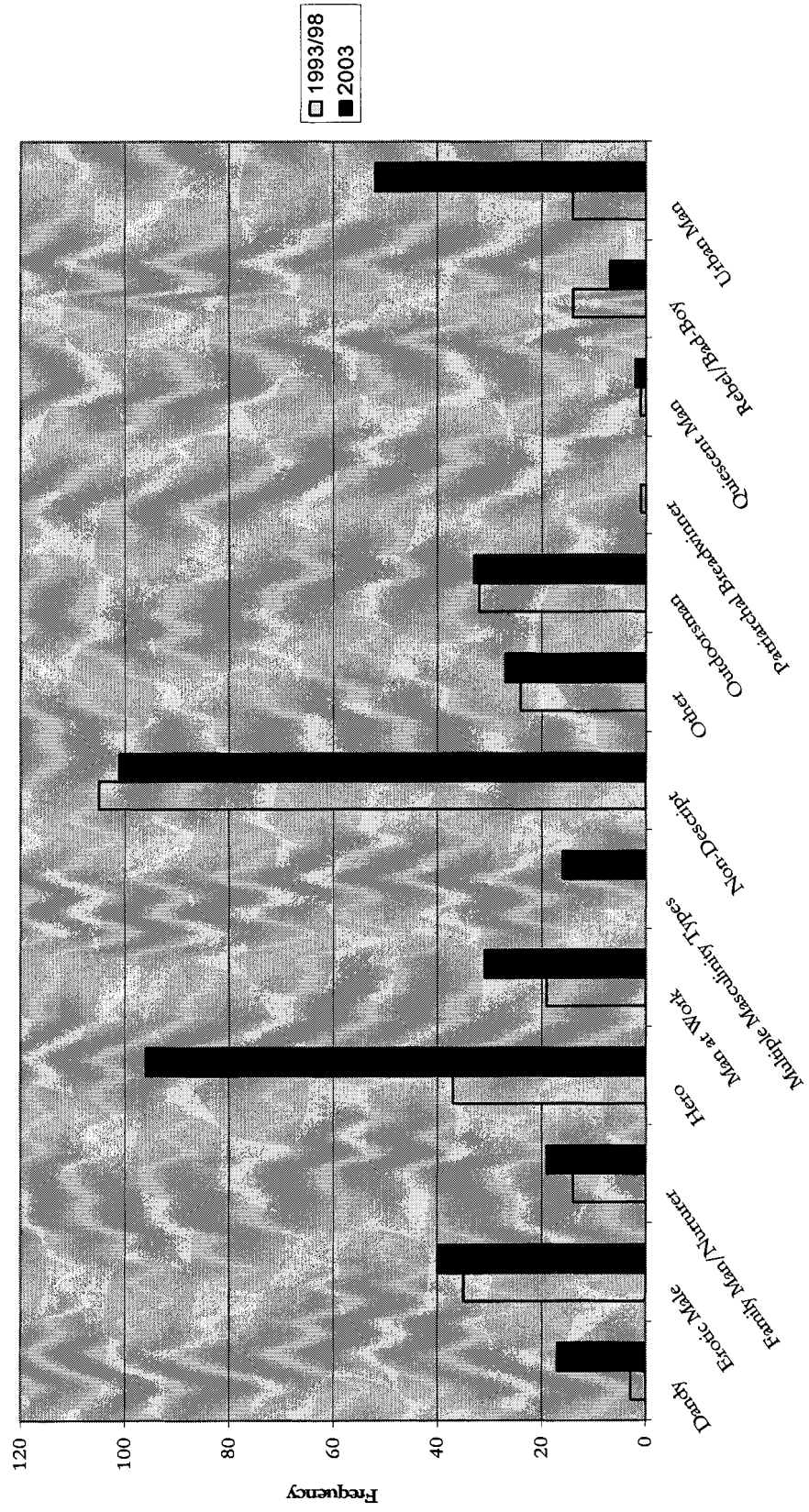
Similar to the model in the Ljungberg ad, this model has characteristics that fit the “rocks/face-offs” category. He has strong muscular features and his stare possesses a level of power: he returns the gaze of the reader. Yet, as with the Cool Water model, there is an air of submissiveness about this model that is reminiscent of the “leaner.” These representations suggest that it is no longer necessary for men to

be strong and powerful all the time, but they may also position themselves as vulnerable and sensitive. Of course, the combination of these different types of masculinity into one image allows advertisers to appeal to a larger audience. The Ljungberg ad may not appeal to all men or women, as it may simply be too “rough”; the Davidoff ad may repel some by being too erotic, whereas the Truth ad has traits that could appeal to each of the other categories.

Taxonomy of masculinities

Bordo’s dichotomy is helpful in providing an understanding of how certain types of male models appear; however, it does not provide a comprehensive overview of the types of masculinity on offer. To reveal these patterns, I have developed a taxonomy of masculinity types that consists of 12 categories, most of which come from Rohlinger’s 2001 study in which she identified eight archetypes of masculinity: Hero, Outdoorsman, Family Man/Nurturer, Patriarchal Breadwinner, Man at Work, Erotic Male, Urban, Quiescent Male, and Consumer. I did not use the last type, because I found it to be too open and vague, and it did not adequately identify a clear masculinity type. I added four categories: the Dandy, Rebel/Bad Boy, Non-Descriptive, and Multiple Masculinity Types. What follows is a discussion of the top five archetypes and their subcategories (where applicable): Non-Descriptive, Hero, Urban Man, Erotic Male, and Outdoorsman. Although Multiple Masculinity Types does not appear in the top five, I have included a discussion of this type because, before 2003, he did not appear in the ads and represents a new trend in the types of masculinity on offer.

Figure 5: Distribution of Masculinity Types



Non-Descriptive

I begin this discussion with the non-descriptive category, because it has the greatest concentration of representation of models in 2003 and 1993/98 (see Figure 5). The male model in this category has no major identifiable characteristics, and none can be ascertained through the setting, text, or product category advertised. He is most often shown alone, modelling a suit or sweater with no background signifiers. The prevalence of this type of masculinity is demonstrative of the desire of marketers to appeal to a wide-ranging audience. That is, the fewer identifiable characteristics a model has, the less any one type can feel alienated by the representation.

Hero

The Hero, according to Rohlinger (2001), is identified by “his celebrity [status] or possesses this status due to his affiliation with a heroic organization, such as the armed forces” (p. 45). To this classification, I added male models that were otherwise “average” men but were shown conducting a heroic act. In most instances, this category was identified through the image in the ad; however, the text was sometimes necessary to place a model in this category. As illustrated in Table 9, the Hero category is divided into five categories: Sports Hero, Entertainment Hero, Average Man as Hero, Military Hero, and Other.

Overall, the Hero was the second most dominant category in 2003, nearly twenty-two per cent of the male characters falling in this category. Of these, just under sixty per cent were coded as Sports Heroes—men whose physical prowess on

the field is celebrated, and identifiable by dress; 16.7 per cent were Entertainment Heroes—movie, TV, music or other entertainment celebrity category; 15.6 per cent fell in the Average Man as Hero—described as average men performing heroic or super-human feats, often identified through text; and 9.4 were identified as Military Heroes²⁶—identified through appearance and text. Finally, 2.1 per cent fell in the Other Hero category—male characters who were performing heroic activities but did not fall into any of other categories.

Table 9: Type of Hero

Type of Hero	1993/98	2003
Average Man as Hero	2 <i>5.4</i>	15 <i>15.6</i>
Entertainment Hero	5 <i>13.5</i>	16 <i>16.7</i>
Military Hero	2 <i>5.4</i>	9 <i>9.4</i>
Other	0 <i>0</i>	2 <i>2.1</i>
Sports Hero	28 <i>75.5</i>	54 <i>56.3</i>
Total	37 <i>100.0</i>	96 <i>100.0</i>

A 2003 Subaru WRX ad with Lance Armstrong appeared in all three publications and is reflective of the key characteristics of the Sports Hero category. The full-page ad is divided into two sections. The top half depicts a close-up of Lance Armstrong on his bike, dressed in his racing gear, shot from the front. He is against a

²⁶ Military Hero represents only 2 of all the advertisements in 2003; however, in 1993 there were no ads depicting male characters as Military Hero. As the “War on Terror” progresses, it would not be surprising to see an even greater increase in the number of ads with this type of masculinity.

red background and the words LANCE ARMSTRONG appear to the right of his shoulder in white. He has a look of determination on his face, intimating the end of a race is near and that he is exerting all his might. Below him is a picture of a silver WRX Subaru, also shot from the front, against a grey background in contrast to the red above. The headlights and fog lights of the car are on, and it is coming towards the audience, similar to Armstrong's image described above. The headline "CONTROL YOUR POWER AND YOU'LL OWN THE ROAD" appears between the two images in quotation marks, as if spoken by Lance Armstrong.

A four-time Tour de France winner and a survivor of cancer, Armstrong is widely perceived as iconic of success, courage, and determination. His popularity extends well beyond cycling and sports enthusiasts, and he is not only an "All-American Hero" but an "International Hero" as well (www.lancearmstrong.com) and is described as "gentlemanly and heroic" (www.askmen.com). However, he signifies basic elements of traditional masculinity: strength, competitiveness, and more specifically, power. Armstrong's public persona is not aggressive or domineering, traits that Stern (2003) notes are characteristic in representations of heroes. Instead, he is emblematic of the new man who is reflexive, kind, and understanding. By positioning Armstrong alongside this "ultra high performance" vehicle, the car's appeal is given a softer edge—machine-like heroic masculinity meets gentleman.

Urban man

The third most prevalent masculinity type was Urban Man, typically defined by his setting—city streets, bars, restaurants—almost 12 per cent of male characters

displaying this type. The Urban Man is often presented as a metrosexual or, as Rohlinger (2001) observes, this is a man who “specifically enjoys the luxuries and offerings of the city” (p. 51). A good example is a Stolichnaya Russian Vodka ad that appeared in both *Esquire* and *Maxim* in 2003. The black-and-white image is framed by a red border on top and bottom with “STOLICHNAYA” in large block white letters on top and “RUSSIAN VODKA” on the bottom. The black-and-white image is of three men and one woman, all between the ages of 25 and 35, sitting in a row at a table in either a bar or a restaurant. The characters all have glasses in hand, raised as though making a toast. The three male models are wearing casual dress shirts, collars unbuttoned, and they all look as if they have already enjoyed a few drinks. The man in the middle has his mouth open as though he is making the toast; the others are laughing. The characters do not appear to be married: two of the four have visibly ringless ring fingers on their left hands. The image of masculinity here is of the upwardly mobile, young, single, urban professional enjoying the company of good friends. They are well dressed and stylish but not excessively so. At the edge of the table, to the left of the Stoli logo is the tagline “Is there anything not worth drinking to?” implying that this group is celebrating, but the “something” they are celebrating matters much less than the act itself.

This advertisement privileges self-indulgence and a carefree pursuit of pleasure, a trend, according to Wernick (1991), that is a result of “[t]he displacement of males from fixed family roles in recent advertising” (p. 53). Ads such as this serve as “a sign system which highlights the fluidity of social bonding and associates the

pleasures of consumption with the sexual, status or existential rewards to be obtained from exercising individual freedom in that setting” (1991, p. 53). They offer a vision of masculinity that is free from familial ties and in which social status is a function of effective self-promotion.

Erotic male

The Erotic Male is fourth on the list with nine per cent of male models falling into this category in 2003, a decrease of 2.6 per cent from the 1993/98 sample. The most identifying descriptor here is overt signs of sexual activity. However, it also includes male models that are “essentially put on display...and...positioned in a sexual manner” (Rohlinger, 2002, p. 49). In addition, “[t]he most distinguishing characteristic of this masculinity type is that the model’s body is emphasized, and therefore the setting is often plain, blurred or otherwise unclear” (2002, p. 49).²⁷ This category, most of all, suggests that the gaze is no longer limited to men looking upon women but now includes women looking at men *and* men looking at other men. It also challenges Berger’s (1972) claim that “men look at women, and women watch themselves being looked at” (p. 47), as well as Mulvey’s claim that “man is reluctant to gaze at his exhibitionist like” (Mulvey, 2001, p. 398).

This shift is further evidence that masculinity is no longer defined only by productive activity but also through consumption and the trappings of lifestyle. Gill explains that “[t]he decline of manufacturing and the end of the notion of a job for

²⁷ As a woman coding these ads, I tried to adhere to the guidelines and not code all good-looking models with what I saw as a come-hither look only as “erotic.” In doing so, I may have erred on the side of caution.

life has led to assertions that men have been searching for new sources of identity. What [men] have come up with is their body as a study in identity and self-definition” (2000, p. 20). Rather than emancipation from the restrictive forms of patriarchal masculinity, the newer versions have only added new rules to the older ones. These changes are exhibited in the attributes of the top four archetypes in the 2003 sample: the requirements of strength and power are mixed with the need to be the social and sexual young male who works just as hard at maintaining his lifestyle as he does at being upwardly mobile.

Outdoorsman

Under the heading of Outdoorsman fall the Cowboy, the Frontiersman, and Other. Common in this category are men shown in the great outdoors, often engaged in a physical activity, be it taming the surf or herding the cows. The Cowboy is defined primarily by his clothing: flannel shirts, cowboy hat or cowboy boots, and is not as prevalent as the Frontiersman, perhaps a result of western-style clothing falling out of favour. The Frontiersman is often, but not always, shown on his own and going where none have gone before. This was the most common type for this category in 2003, as illustrated by Table 10. There are two key themes here, each promoting a common sense of adventure and independence: one shows man seeking solace in nature and the other has him battling or taming it. In the first instance, man needs nothing other than his horse/Jeep/bike and the great outdoors—and quiet reflection. According to Shane Gunster (2004), in these depictions “[n]ature appears as a benign, forgiving refuge from the everyday, a place in which people can immerse

themselves in soothing contemplation of the mysterious beauty of the wild” (p. 6). In the second instance, man is battling Nature’s harsh elements. In the examples below, a tension emerges between what the image signifies—a pure and immediate relation with nature—and the fact that it is signified through an image of consumption.

Table 10: Outdoorsman Type

Outdoorsman Type	1993/1998	2003
Cowboy	12 37.5	11 33.3
Frontiersman	11 34.4	16 48.5
Other	9 28.1	6 18.2
Total	32 100.0	33 100.0

A May 2003 ad for Jeep in *Esquire* shows the vehicle parked on a riverbank and a man standing facing the water throwing a stick for his dog. The text reads: “Never confuse your net worth with your self worth.” A sepia tone elicits a sense of nostalgia, a longing for a time gone by, and the serene setting evokes a sense of tranquillity and peacefulness. As with so many ads of the new millennium, this ad is not only trying to sell a product but a lifestyle. Here, Jeep is reminding the reader that fulfilment is derived not only from material objects but also from being in touch with nature and the simple things in life. Men are instructed to have humility and not be too materialistic. In this example, masculine traits are tied to material wealth and consumption as well as to humility. The peacefulness and serenity of the setting, juxtaposed with the power of the Jeep to destroy, suggests that masculinity is about

balancing power and progress with Nature. Furthermore, according to Wernick (1991), “the tranquilizing pictures of earth, sky and water have become commonplace signs for Nature as the ultimate balm in the redeeming maternal opposite, in effect of city, industry and man” (p. 57). The placement of masculinity in these settings reinforces the fluidity between masculinity and femininity. “It has given way to a contradictory melange in which the wider meaning of gender within the advertising cosmos cannot with any consistency be pinned down at all” (1991, p. 57). In other words, the Jeep ad is demonstrative of the competing demands in the construction of contemporary masculinity.

The second form of masculinity on offer is the Frontiersman, identified by man conquering the elements and taming nature. A two-page Nautica ad in the October 2003 edition of *Esquire*, featuring a man in a kayak battling fierce water, is illustrative of this type of representation. The brand name NAUTICA is the only text, appearing in large, bold letters running across both pages. Such ads represent a traditional and powerful version of masculinity. The masculine virtues extolled in this case are once again primordial—power, dominance, and daring. This is the kind of man who would stare danger in the face, take risks, and be willing to go to battle (be it to conquer nature or the Wild West).

The category of Outdoorsman provides a further illustration of the contradictions found in the sample: it exhibits traditional manifestations of masculinity of man engaging with nature by either seeking solace through it or by exerting power over it, and it offers a new way of engaging with nature—through

consumption. The outdoors and nature have become indicators that signify masculinity. It is about the image of experience, not the actual experience. External signifiers such as fashion and style serve as indicators of engaging with nature and the outdoors displacing the need to engage in the activity. By driving a Jeep or wearing Nautica clothing, the Frontiersman archetype of masculinity is achieved.

Multiple Masculinity Types

Although in 2003 only a small number (3.6 per cent) of models fell into the Multiple Masculinity category—identified by models that exhibit more than one distinct masculinity type—it was non-existent in the earlier sample. This trend thereby serves as another reminder that masculinity types are becoming more difficult to separate into distinct categories. Consider an April 2003 ad in *Esquire* for Canali suits, featuring a man in a suit against a background of West Coast scenery: coniferous trees, a large body of water, and islands (or a peninsula) feature prominently. Only the right half of the model's body is visible. There is an array of contradictory signifiers that make it difficult to position the model in any given category. He is impeccably dressed in a burgundy and blue pinstriped Canali suit, white and blue shirt, and a matching burgundy and blue tie. The clothing suggests that this man belongs in a boardroom, executive office or, at the very least, an urban location. However, other signifiers complicate this reading. The model has medium/long hair and is unshaven—it looks as if he is trying to grow a beard but has been at it only for a week or so. Furthermore, the ad is set in nature, suggesting the Outdoorsman classification. The marrying of what would otherwise be considered

distinct masculinity types allows the ad to reach a broad audience. It also appears that the ad is encouraging the audience to identify with multiple masculinity types, letting the reader know he does not have to choose to be one type of man over another. Of course, by encouraging the audience to identify with various masculinity types, the construction of a masculine identity becomes much more complex, and conceivably more expensive. In other words, by promoting identification with multiple archetypes, a broader arena of consumer products opens up to more men as they construct and develop their multiple masculine identities.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed key findings from a content analysis of *Esquire*, *Men's Health*, and *Maxim*, with a primary focus on recent ads from 2003. The results reveal some common themes in the kinds of images and representations of masculinity that appear irrespective of the targeted demographic. I have also included a qualitative analysis of select advertisements, to explore how meaning is given to these representations of masculinity.

The findings in this study suggest that marketers employ a variety of tactics to reach a broad audience. For example, one fifth of the ads in the magazines surveyed were not included, because no model was featured—a ploy used by marketers in order not to alienate any one demographic from identifying or placing themselves in the ad (Wernick, 1991). In ads that featured male models, the setting was not discernable in nearly fifty per cent, another device employed to make ads more

accessible to a diverse audience. Furthermore, by having a blurred or indeterminate background, greater emphasis is placed on the model, a device that is commonly used in the production of images that use the model as an erotic or sexual object. Lastly, male models tend to appear on their own (67.2 per cent), a device that Wernick (1991) suggests “[lets] the consumers place themselves in an ad from a variety of positions, in keeping with whatever roles and arrangements they may actually live” (p. 52) (cf. Kolbe & Albanese, 1996). When female models were featured with male characters, the status of the relationship was generally left open; that is, identifiers such as wedding rings (18.2 per cent) or children (1.1 per cent) rarely appear. Wernick (1991) also found this to be a common element, stating that “couples are usually shown in dating situations, or even at the moment of first encounter, with commitment not yet settled and the marital context, if any, left vague” (p. 53). The use of ambiguous male-female relationships allows for polysemic readings. For example, when a man and woman are shown together in an ad, when there is no sexual activity, the absence of a wedding band allows readers to understand the relationship in a manner that has meaning for them and not necessarily the meaning the producer intended; the relationship could be familial, platonic, or sexual.

In addition, men rarely appeared in familial roles, and when they were depicted with children, women were conspicuously absent. This device allows for men to be shown in nurturing and paternal roles, emphasizing the perceived increased responsibility men have in raising children. It also leaves the situation open enough to have appeal for both gay and straight male audiences as well as single

fathers. Of course, the absence of children and family overall is significant and draws our attention to the idea that the types of masculinity on offer promote a masculinity that is free of commitment and responsibility. The use of single men and the absence of wedding bands and children promote nostalgia for being single and suggest that, through the commodities advertised, the carefree life can be recaptured.

Overall, the representations of masculinity on offer revealed a number of contradictions and complexities. On the surface, there appears to be a hegemonic representation of masculinity—most of the models are white, young, have muscular bodies, and are upper-middle class. These common attributes, however, are used to construct both traditional and newer renditions of masculinity and differences—some ads foreground primitive characteristics, such as power and strength, whereas others emphasize a sensitive, self-reflexive and emotional male. In an increasing number of cases, masculinity is further complicated by the combination of these two otherwise oppositional forms of representation. How do men negotiate these competing visions in constructing their gendered identity?

Walking to my local coffee shop recently, I was surprised by the variety of differences found in every individual and the complexities each exhibited. Flipping through some of the latest home decorating magazines, I was again confronted with a wash of contradictions. The pages were filled with images of art deco, modern, and retro pieces, all passing themselves off as the newest home-chic. I suppose this is one of the results of living in a post-everything society. Pastiche is everywhere, advertising and gender included. It should thus come as no surprise that there is a growing trend

towards combining distinct masculinity types and representing them as a whole. It serves as a reminder that masculinity cannot be defined as a single type and that it encompasses a variety of aspects, including traits that were traditionally viewed as feminine. The trends that appear in the content analysis emerge as patterns in the focus group conversations in Chapter 4. In addition, through these discussions, we learn the role these ads have in the participants' understanding of masculinity and the level to which they are aware that gender is socially constructed.

CHAPTER 4: WHAT MEN HAVE TO SAY

*Most of us don't live our lives with one, integrated self that meets the world,
we're a whole bunch of selves.*

Christopher Moore, 2006, p. 210

Introduction

At the level of text, content analysis helps us to map out dominant patterns in the representations of masculinity. But what about the audience? What role do such images play in the construction of identity? How do men negotiate the bewildering array of signifiers in assembling their own understanding of what it means to be a man today? More specifically, the focus group discussions drew from the content analysis findings, seeking to gain an understanding of how men negotiate the tensions found in the representations of masculinity in the media. Do these images act as significant signposts for the participants in their understanding and definition of masculinity? How do these tensions affect the way men understand masculinity and see themselves as masculine?

I conducted two focus groups with seventeen men between the ages of 24 and 51. Not surprisingly, some of the same tensions found in the content analysis emerged in the discussions with the men in the groups. Overall, the participants found it difficult to define masculinity and the particular influences that affected their ideas about it. There was a surprising level of reflexivity in explicitly conceiving gender as a project rather than an essential category. Participants were aware that

masculinity as a concept is fluid and ever changing, and most identified the media as a dominant force in the construction of their identities. They identified contradictions similar to those found in the content analysis and discussed their identification with contrasting visions of masculinities. Traditional and patriarchal definitions of masculinity remained important but were also challenged by more contemporary notions, as found in identities such as the metrosexual.

In this chapter, these contradictions are explored in greater detail, as the participants discuss their negotiation of masculinity. After a review of the methodology, participant selection, and demographic information about the participants, I look at the discussions that emerged around traditional constructions of masculinity identified by the participants, followed by a discussion of the metrosexual. Next, the role of advertising in the construction of gender and identity is examined. The chapter concludes with the question of how the participants understand what it is to be a man.

Methodology and sample

In order to match the diversity of the target audience found in the publications I analyzed, I wanted to include individuals from a broad range of demographic groups in my sample. I emailed friends and acquaintances, asking them to forward my request for men aged 19–65 to participate in a focus group discussing the role of advertising and the construction of gender and identity. The seventeen participants were selected based on availability, and represented a mix of students and

young professionals with an average age of 33.25, all of whom reside in the Greater Vancouver area. Overall, the participants fell within the target market of the publications, and the majority reported reading at least one of the three magazines used in the content analysis (70.6 per cent). I was successful in recruiting a diverse group of men so that in each group there was a wide range of ages and a mix of heterosexual and homosexual males, although the former significantly outweighed the latter. Similarly, there was a mix of ethnic backgrounds in each group, the majority being Caucasian. The relationship status of the participants varied, an equal number of single and married, two separated/divorced, and one in a long-term relationship. The sessions were held in the evening at the downtown SFU campus, were audio- and video-recorded and ran for approximately three hours with one break. In order to maintain anonymity of the participants, pseudonyms are used. Upon arrival, participants were asked to complete a short form to provide demographic information as well as their media habits (see Appendix B). I began the sessions in a casual manner, asking the participants to introduce themselves, and having them tell the group what they did for a living and what they did for fun. This helped them relax and feel at ease. Throughout the session, I led several discussions regarding their ideas and definitions of what it meant to be a man. I also used two activities in which the participants engaged with a variety of ads from the 2003 sample. The first consisted of a projective activity of providing each participant with ten ads and asking participants to choose between three and five of them and write a short story about the depicted scene. This was followed by a roundtable discussion of their scenarios

and the motivations behind them. The second activity had the participants choose their favourite and least favourite ads from another set of twelve. Each participant had an opportunity to discuss his selections, providing insight into why participants chose the ones they did.

Return of traditional masculinity?

In the content analysis, signifiers of traditional masculinity emerged as an important trend, and these same elements figured prominently in the participants' definition of masculinity. Neither focus group included anyone that might be described as chauvinist. Participants' willingness to discuss issues of gender and masculinity clearly demonstrated a reflexive posture vis-à-vis traditional constraints of masculinity. Yet, when asked to provide a definition or offer characteristics of masculinity, the participants overwhelmingly drew upon the patriarchal metaphors of the provider and highly conventional attributes of power and strength. Exemplary statements include:

- ❖ *"The hunter...the provider";*
- ❖ *"Strength";*
- ❖ *"Protecting and power";*
- ❖ *"I would say muscles";*
- ❖ *"You can be rude and crude and it's sort of acceptable; it's OK because you're a man. You can fart and shit...burp...women do it; you know it's not so cool";*
- ❖ *"If we burp or fart, we're not embarrassed by it; it's a natural function";*
- ❖ *"I think that at some basic level, men have to procreate and that is what they often describe; you know, part animal...";*
- ❖ *"Then you have the provider aspect";*
- ❖ *"Hunter-gatherers."*

Notably absent from this list are any of the qualities ascribed to the “new man,” such as the nurturer or someone concerned with physical appearance. Even though we live in a society that considers itself to be distanced from patriarchal understandings, this list seems little different from what I would expect from men fifty years ago. As with the content analysis, these stereotypical signifiers remain a touchstone in gender identity. This does not, however, mean that these men believe women are somehow subordinate to men. Indeed, when pressed, there was considerable willingness to accept a more fluid account of masculinity.

- ❖ *“Are you proud to be a man?” [Referring to the list], (Harry, 46)*
- ❖ *“You know a lot of things I was thinking of when you asked the question...I was thinking yeah, but that’s changing...and that’s also changed...” (Matt, 33)*

These comments suggest a certain level of discomfort with simply defining masculinity in opposition to femininity and drawing upon such primitive characteristics. Instead, we begin to see how the contradictions that appeared in the ads are both reflective and constitutive of how men understand and negotiate masculinity in their own lives. That these old metaphors emerged in the focus groups is significant suggesting that they are still relevant in our current understanding of masculinity.

Metrosexual and new age masculinity

"The only thing that's certain about the metrosexual is that he's the kind of man that the modern world deserves."

Mark Simpson, 2004

The term metrosexual, like most labels, has come to mean different things to different people. To some, it means being concerned with external appearances; for others, it includes being more sensitive and in tune with their feminine side. Discussion of the term metrosexual also bore witness to men's struggle to balance opposing conceptions of masculinity. Below we see how these negotiations are played out with two participants at different life stages:

Metrosexual is you can look good, you can dress good, you can smell good, and you can still go out and play your sports...have a beer or have a martini...you can pretty much be whatever you want to be. It's OK to care about how you look and how you smell...and you can talk with the ladies and hug your buddies and still go out and booze it up with your buddies and yak in the alley and go rah-rah rock on.

Nate, 26

Through Nate, who describes himself as "a 26-year-old man-boy who has run the gamut from homophobic boy to metrosexual man" (personal communication, November 10, 2005), the complexities of masculinity are illustrated. Nate identifies with the term metrosexual and sees it as a means of managing the different attributes that he sees as constitutive of masculinity. This includes both being sensitive and concerned with appearances, and refers to "traditional" activities such as playing sports and exhibiting boorish behaviour. For Harry, however, who defined masculinity more exclusively in traditional terms, the metrosexual is criticized for being overly "soft" or "feminine":

I think what we're trying to say here is that there is a very overt feminine side to the metrosexual, and I don't really agree with that. There are some very manly, manly men that can be metrosexuals as well, depending on the way they dress.

Harry, 46

He continues:

I think my Sensei might take offence. While he's metrosexual, he might take offence to the fact that it's "pretty"...He's not pretty. He could kick your ass, but the women think he's metrosexual.

It is important for Harry that the identity of the metrosexual is as a consumer and distinctly not feminine. This could be that his Sensei is someone he respects and sees as emblematic of masculinity, and thus it is difficult for Harry to associate him with qualities he sees as being distinctly outside the realm of manliness. The narrowness of scope for masculine traits could be a result of Harry's age. That is, he has had longer exposure to traditional representations of masculinity than to newer versions. Alternatively, his disposition could be a result of the phenomenon that, as we age, we develop "conservative attitudes" (Gauntlett, 2002, p. 249). Both of these explanations result in a narrower formation of masculinity, causing him to remove those qualities that he identifies as feminine and therefore see the metrosexual as clearly inhabiting the realm of traditional masculinity.

These discussions confirm the contradictions identified in the content analysis. Each man negotiates with the images in the media landscape, drawing on representations that have meaning for him. Thus when Nate is presented with the notion of metrosexual masculinity, he understands it as a blending of traditionally masculine and feminine realms (being able to both play sports with men as well as

have a sensitive relationship with them), whereas for Harry traditional masculinity is more heavily weighted. For both of them, though, the contemporary understanding of masculinity involves a self-conscious relationship with the self, including the body. Regardless of how men manage their understanding of masculinity, they often have a self-consciousness about appearance that is akin to that of women. In the following two sections that we become even more aware of the complexities involved in understanding masculinity.

Media and the body

According to Stern (2003), “[t]he manly male is associated with the prevailing cultural view of masculinity, centered on the ‘shoulds’. Men ‘should’ be powerful, strong, effective, and even domineering or destructive when necessary. Male musculature is the symbolic embodiment of these traits, and men view their body image and potency as related” (p. 222). Men are increasingly becoming self-conscious and concerned with their appearances—judging themselves against media images and looking to the market place to make them “better” (Pope *et al.* 2000; Dotson, 1999; Walter, 1998; Barthel 1992). Thus, just like women, men have become slaves to consumption in hopes of improving their self-image. As Gauntlett (2002) argues, having the ideal body is “a pressure that our culture puts on *people* these days, but it’s not just limited to women” (p. 78). Similarly, Pope *et al.* (2000) cite a 1997 study in which “...43 percent—*nearly half*—of the men in this survey reported that they were dissatisfied with their overall appearance. More than half were dissatisfied with their abdomen (63 percent) or weight (52 percent). Forty-five percent were dissatisfied

with their muscle tone, and 38 percent with their chest” (p. 27; emphasis in original). Pope *et al.* (2000) conclude that “sociocultural influences, such as the media, tend to make women feel worse about their bodies...preliminary studies of these influences suggest the same is true for men” (p. 60). These preliminary studies are supported by the discussions in the focus groups.

...women look at fashion models and fashion magazines and say oh I want to be that thin...guys do the same thing. I remember about ten years ago, just before I started working out, I would see all these buff guys and say “why can’t I look like that” you know...all you gotta do is get yourself in the gym, so guys do that as well, its not just women that look and say, oh I want to be skinny or that thin. Guys see it and say “yuck”; I look like the guy in the Timex ad²⁸ but I want to look like that guy...

Patrick, 29

Those influences, did they come from people around you, or was it from media images?

Facilitator

Media images...because, none of my friends that I was hanging out with were really working out. They were not, you know, really overweight; they were all different. But no one was really working out. It was totally a media thing, looking at Men’s Health or Men’s Fitness, those type of muscle/fitness magazines...I was like, yeah right I wanna look like that...that’s what got me into working out...it’s definitely a media thing.

Patrick, 29

Patrick reminds us that men are not impervious to the images in the media, a realization that some are reluctant to admit (Dotson, 1999). Representations of masculinity in the media do have an effect on how men see themselves as masculine. Dotson (1999) argues that “ads have tremendous influence on the way we think and

²⁸ The Timex ad referred to is in the December 2003 issue of *Men’s Health*. Three fourths of the ad is a close-up a man’s hairy chubby belly bulging over his striped polyester pants; the bottom quarter of the ad is white except for an image of the Timex Ironman Sleek watch in the middle.

how we feel about ourselves. If men buy what the ads are selling, they pay for it with deeply eroded self-esteem and shattered self-confidence” (p. 59). These concerns are echoed by Dale, commenting on *Men’s Health*:

Then when you see Men’s Health...I’ve got to admit myself...especially through my early twenties...I felt intimidated that I had to look...especially hot and stuff like that. I’m not broad shouldered, but I felt almost, not inadequate, but less attractive, if I didn’t have this perfect, you know, sculpted body.

Dale, 35

In the previous chapter, I noted how endomorphic physiques rarely appeared in the sample ads, and on the rare occasion when they did appear, it is often used as comic relief. The absence of images of men who do not meet the ideal results in a society in which these people are made to feel inferior because they do not have a six-pack or chiselled chin. “An accepted component of current-day gender behavior is that men and women cannot tolerate someone who isn’t beautiful” (Dotson, 1999, p. 58). This intolerance is echoed by Patrick’s disdain for the endomorphic image of the Timex ad and his celebration of the muscular and fit body.

Cortese (2004) contends that “[a] strong physical image may compensate for a lack of economic security and control over one’s work. In other words, a physically powerful look validates masculine identity and provides a dominating image for safety and protection” (p. 63). Thus in a time when masculinity is fluid and defined by more than economic and social capital, the dominance of the heavily muscled physique in the media further enhances its position as symbolic of masculinity. When these images are so prevalent, it is not surprising that men who do not “measure-up”—

which means everyone—may feel inadequate as men and thereby look elsewhere to compensate.

The clothes make the man

What we wear speaks volumes about who we are. Our clothes reveal our age and income, our education and our social class; they reveal our current attitudes and political beliefs, our gender and even our sexual orientation. They play an extraordinarily important role in mate selection... In short, who we are is firmly wrapped up in what we wear.

Heath and Potter, 2004, p. 163

Advertisements provide resources for defining our identity and for categorizing others. This does not mean that individuals slavishly mimic ads without thought or individuality. Rather, advertisements are used as tools to help us relate to one other and understand where we fit—something akin to signposts (Mort, 1996). Barthel (1992) comments, for instance, that “the man looking to climb the corporate ladder has to learn both how to read the messages given off by other men’s appearances (polished and confident or cheap and sleazy) *and* how to send the right messages himself” (p. 140). Such messages are not static; rather, they have a fluidity and flexibility about them. As Mort found in his interviews, flexibility in style suggests the ability to “wander through a range of social and spatial terrains, rather than projecting wholly coherent identities” (p. 186).

Again, the focus group discussions provide a valuable glimpse into how style and fashion play a key role in the formation of masculine identity.

It's a tell...it's a visible manifestation of who you think you are and how you see yourself
Matt, 33

At the same time it's open enough. I've had days on the bus I'm wearing my most metrosexual gear and this really cute skater chick is sitting across the way, and I was totally wishing that I had my baggy pants and skater shirt...like baby, no this isn't me on Tuesdays...but I'm still the same person...but it is definitely a tell. It depends on how I wake up in the morning and more likely as to what's clean and not wrinkled. But it is definitely a tell. Maybe not an accurate one, depending on how varied your wardrobe is, but certainly you do like to go with what you like.

Nate, 26

Matt and Nate comment on how clothing is a “tell”; in other words, the exterior gives others an indication of what kind of man you are—lets others know how you identify yourself as masculine. Nate's comment in particular resonates with Gauntlet's (2002) statement that we have become conscious of the performative nature of our identities. Men are increasingly aware that their identities are communicated not simply through clothing alone but also the ads that surround the goods and the lifestyles associated with them. A pair of jeans is no longer just a pair of jeans; instead, the brand and how it is positioned inform us whether the wearer is a metrosexual or a skater, within commercial culture (Heath & Potter, 2004).

George provides an example of how the commodity and the media were used to cultivate his sense of masculine identity. Acknowledging at an early age that he could not rely on his physique, he chose to draw on fashion sense to present his masculine identity. Rather than spending time at the gym trying to change his body into something it was not, he poured over men's fashion magazines like *GQ*.

Me, growing up, in high school and my early twenties, I never had the look. My Dad wasn't big; he was very slim, I was slim, I never had a big body. I shied away from those things [magazines like Men's Health] like the plague—not to look at them, because, I just didn't want to have any...look at what the world was looking at in that perspective. I had

my own...my own take. I read GQ. Because I thought if I cannot compete at all with the body the least that I can do is have some style...that will take place... 'cuz I knew that going to any clubs, it wasn't going to be the body or the muscles that we're going to work for me. If anything, it was at least trying to impress them with some style or something. I just...shied away from those things like you wouldn't believe. I never wanted to see the front cover, because it just reinforced me. No matter how hard I worked, I tried to get that amount of muscle, there was no way it was going to happen. And the steroid thing just wasn't an option...I just didn't want to look at that stuff.

George, 34

For George, masculinity was found in fashion, not the gym. His statement suggests that at some level he was aware of the performative nature of masculinity. In other words, he saw that some men performed it through musculature, whereas he chose to perform it through fashion. Barthel's (1992) discussion of how goods are used to construct identity is helpful in this context. Drawing on the work of Georg Simmel (1978), Barthel (1992) argues: "[w]e...use goods as extensions of ourselves. They extend our power. They communicate our sense of ourselves to others. And they give that sense back to us again" (p. 138). Thus those men who cannot achieve power through muscularity turn to fashion as a substitute to communicate to others their masculinity. Either way, masculinity emerges as a site of self-doubt and critical awareness, a site that is informed by the media and performed by those who want to identify with it (or be identified by it).

In the following example, we see that Frank felt his identity was called into question by a change of fashion:

...about ten years ago. I had all my suits, I was a young lawyer...I saw in a magazine that I shouldn't have flat pants, but they should be cuffed. It just ruined my entire image of my entire wardrobe....I just had to keep on changing it. I went to my wife and said is there something wrong...and she was like "oh shut up"...but I'm supposed to have them cuffed and stuff.

His concern stems from using advertisements as signposts in the construction of his identity—a worry that is reflected in Barthel’s example of a “lawyer role model in a clothing advertisement, who says, ‘Sometimes the right suit is the best defense’” (p. 140). For Frank, his identity was challenged by not having the right cuff on his pants. He was concerned that his authenticity would be challenged, thus questioning how he identified with himself as a man. Heath and Potter (2004) argue that “being predictable is the very essence of what it is to have an identity” (p. 214), and predictability in part revolves around belonging to a particular group and conforming (at least to some extent) to the rules of that group. For Frank, not having the right type of cuff on his pants positions him outside the very group to which he wants to belong.

Clearly, men internalize the struggles and contradictions at play in the media as they develop and construct their masculinities. They are not impervious to media representations and, as women have for decades, look to the marketplace to compensate for their lack as represented in advertisements. These images permeate men’s consciousness and become that which they measure themselves against. When men construct their gendered self, it is these images, which they have internalized, that they draw upon.

No, but really, what does it mean to be a man?

As we can see, participants were drawn to contradictory conceptions of masculinity similar to those that surfaced in the preceding chapters. The presence of such tensions is not surprising, as they are found in most current discussions involving masculinity. For example, drawing on Baudrillard, Barthel (1994) posits that men can now “operate in both modes: the feminine mode of indulging oneself and being indulged and the masculine mode of exigency and competition” (p. 8). Written over a decade ago, Diane Barthel’s words have perhaps never been truer. As both the content analysis and focus groups show, it is increasingly difficult to simply define masculinity in binary terms through its opposition to femininity. This does not, however, suggest that *gender* has evolved into a new more homogeneous single category and the distinctions between masculinity and femininity are gone; instead, it suggests that it has become even more complex for those operating within it.

There was a time not too long ago when masculinity was not questioned and it was standardized, “fixed by biology, into which all ‘normal’ men [were] placed” (Beynon, 2002, p. 2). Today, however, as previously noted, there is an understanding that gender is a social construction and that masculinity and femininity “are loosely defined, historically variable, and interrelated social ascriptions to persons with certain kinds of bodies—not the natural, necessary, or ideal characteristics of people with similar genitals” (Gardiner, p. 35). Being mindful of the various ways of defining masculinity, I asked the participants to provide their understandings of what

masculinity means to them—an exercise that proved difficult, some finding it near impossible to answer.

Is there any one...it's just so full...all over the spectrum. On the one side, you can have the feminine type guy; on the other, the masculine type guy. I don't think you can really pin point what exactly a male is...if someone were to ask that question, I don't think I can answer it...I don't know...

Quentin, 35

And then you have rural and urban, and you have cultures and everything that will broaden the spectrum.

Matt, 33

As societies evolve... we've progressed at such a rapid rate. Fifty years ago we knew what a man was. It was pretty meat and potatoes. And now it is completely skewed, like everything. So, it's...I think it is an impossible question to define except for on a personal level. Personally, to be a man, to be a masculine-man...I play sports and I shower with fruity soap afterward. You know I want to cook a good meal but also sit down with a bag of chips and a six-pack. You know it's entirely up and down, yin and yang that way. There is no definitive...there is no mould. I think men have collectively broken the mould. Some for the good and some for the bad.

Nate, 26

Admittedly, Nate is being nostalgic in suggesting that masculinity was static. He is, however, aware of the complexities of trying to define masculinity, as it is fluid and “[n]arrow stereotypes based upon biological differences have finally been laid to rest...It would appear that we live at a time when gender identity has less to do with biology than with economic and cultural circumstances” (Beynon, 2002, p. 6). In other words, two men of different socio-economic positions may be less similar in gendered characteristics than a man and a woman of the same socio-economic position. The latter man may hold a position of power, be the sole or primary

provider for the household, and have weekly manicures and facials, whereas the former may have little in common beyond their biological forms.

The complexities of masculinity are further revealed through the discussions of three ads: Skyy Vodka, Dolce & Gabbana, and Sony Handycam. These ads elicited a dialogue that illustrates how traditional archetypes of masculinity are renegotiated in a postmodern context, providing an understanding of why they remain such an integral part of our modern understandings of gender. More specifically, traditional concepts of the “cowboy” and the “provider” are given meaning, as is the newer concept of the “nurturer,” by the participants in this contemporary context.

The cowboy or the loner has often been seen as emblematic of contemporary masculinity. Manca and Manca (1994) suggest that “this type was normally shown alone, completely absorbed in his own quest for freedom.... [The authors] noted the systematic exclusion of women from advertisements portraying the loner, which reinforced the notion of a separate and superior male sphere” (p. 12). Although images of the Marlboro man still exist, the significance of the “cowboy” has declined in recent years, in part because of the limitations of the his clothing style and because urban trumps rural as a favoured setting for consumption. Yet, the image of the cowboy has not been completely abandoned, as illustrated in the content analysis. Indeed, certain characteristics that have been conventionally ascribed to the cowboy regularly appear in other masculinity types. For example, a Skyy Vodka ad that was in the June 2003 issue of *Maxim* featured a man sitting at a bar, looking away from the camera as though deep in thought. There is a lava lamp in front of him, a drink by his

fingertips; in the foreground is a signature blue bottle of Skyy Vodka. His hair is perfectly coiffed and he appears to be well dressed, although we see only his shirt. There does not appear to be anyone sitting or standing near him—he is alone in an urban desert. Although the model is not a cowboy or really even a frontiersman, the masculine traits associated with those identities reappear in this metrosexual depiction of masculinity. He is alone in solitary contemplation: the signature of his isolation is neither horse nor wide open sky but the vodka bottle. Focus group participants were struck by the iconic positioning of the loner in this ad.

I picked this one, too [Skyy Vodka ad]. I actually really liked that ad. It really said something to me, as soon as I saw it. Because I think we all have these moments. I saw a guy in the coffee shop this morning and he had this look on his face. I turned around and looked at him about three times, and I really wanted to go up to him and say, “are you OK?” but I could tell there was something he was really thinking about. I mean, guys really like to do this when they have an issue or problem or something. I put here,²⁹ his wife is leaving him or he’s got a big deal going sideways or his wife’s just told him they’re expecting. Like there’s some big thing; guys like to cocoon; they like to go off and think about stuff like that.

Matt, 33

Can you expand on what you mean?

Facilitator

Contrasting it with women, I think women like to talk through what they’re feeling or what they’re thinking, and it’s in the talking it out and talking it through where they sort out their feelings. I mean just speaking for myself, I don’t want to talk about it at all; I want to sort through it. Give me the information and I’m going to go off and think about it and think about what my reaction is. I don’t want to talk it through without having the time to sort it out.

Matt, 33

That’s the whole, like, women are emotional and guys are rational? I feel I’m a very good communicator but, that is to say I do, if there’s something on my mind, I like to be by myself and rationalize it in my head before having a discussion about it, so

²⁹ This discussion surfaced around a projective activity which asked the participants to write a brief storyline for a set of three to five ads that appealed to them

I've thought it maybe through every angle or the situation. That's definitely something a lot of guys do...that's dealing with their thoughts.

Patrick, 29

So not only is this vision of masculinity a matter of being alone with your thoughts in contemplation but engaging with them in a rational fashion. For Patrick, rationality is a function of isolation as compared to the feminine (emotional) practice of talking about and working through the thoughts. In the process of unravelling the participants' discussion, it becomes evident that masculine traits that are associated with the cowboy/loner type are found outside of this limited category. Therefore, using external cues to categorize masculinity types overlooks the actual traits that the audience associates with. In this case, the contemporary representation of metrosexual masculinity is actually normalizing and reinforcing traditional masculinity traits previously associated with the cowboy. Men, such as those in the focus groups, draw on these cues to crystallize their constellation of masculinity.

A similar discussion was inspired by a Dolce & Gabbana ad, from the October 2003 issue of Esquire. Set in a spartan interior location, the ad contains little other than a man of Eastern European descent sitting in a chair by himself. His head is shaved and he is wearing shiny, black boots, black dress pants, a charcoal grey coat (with his hands in the pockets), a black T-shirt, and a hooded sweatshirt that is partially unzipped.

Solitude. He's well dressed, he looks successful but he's alone, with his thoughts almost...and I kinda like that. I like to be alone with my thoughts sometimes. And I also really like what he's wearing, too. The all black, black boots, shoes, pants, black jacket...solitude is what I think of and it's really actually quite nice sometimes.

Patrick, 29

Yeah, that's really what I first thought of when I saw it, too. Focus on solitude...

Nate, 26

Isn't that one of the things we talked about masculinity...stand by yourself, the cowboy image, solitude independence, doesn't need anybody around.

Simon, 51

The discussion around these two ads provides insight into how gendered characteristics are not only found in the manifest content of media images but also in the way the latent content is negotiated by audiences. Such discussions are also important in helping us understand not only how individuals take meaning from the representations but how they serve to inform and normalize the constructions of their masculine identity. By recognizing the residual influence that traditional manifestations of masculinity have on current media representations, we are better poised to understand how contemporary urban men construct their gendered identities. Frank sums it up best:

The [metrosexual] hasn't broken free from his 4 million years of evolution...he just covers it up, but deep down he's a guy.

Frank, 39

According to Frank, the exterior composition of masculinity is merely a veneer, and at the core, traditional conceptions of masculinity still linger. Yet not all participants were as wedded to a depth model of identity with a biological essentialism at its core. This appeared most prominently in discussions of the difficulties negotiating the changing expectations in the family: how to reconcile being both provider *and* nurturer. A November 2003 Sony Handycam ad in *Men's Health*

featured a man in his late 20s/early 30s holding a Handycam in one hand and a teething bunny in the other. The model is making baby faces at his young child, whom we see in the LCD flip screen on the camera. “Buying a special toy keeps him occupied, while he adjusts,” reads the text. “After all, he is your husband.”

I picked the Sony one, the guy with the camcorder and a little bunny. Mostly because I'm going to be a father in a few months, and it just appealed to me that you can be goofy...he's not being manly or anything, it's just being...that's part of manhood as well.

Chris, 34

Chris, an expectant father, is using the ad as a resource in expanding his masculine identity to include the role of father. Interestingly, he describes this version of masculinity as *not* being manly, as though before becoming a father he may not associate such behaviour with masculinity. Through both the ad and his own changing circumstances, this vision of masculinity is being normalized.

I think that ultimately how you should be judged as a guy, assuming you are a father or you become a father, is how you raise your children. And it's amazing how having a child allows you to almost be a child again, but you're like the adult one, and um...I think as much of manliness is being able to put aside the belief that you just do those kind of things you can get away with it.

Frank, 39

I think he's a good father. Basically, he plays with his kid and he's capturing the moment, as opposed to "yeah, yeah, honey I'm watching TV right now, don't bother me"...he's a good father figure, so that's why I liked about this ad. It shows that.

Kael, 24

Part of being a “good man” is also being a nurturer or least spending time with your child. It is incumbent upon the man to participate with his child, to be active in his daily life. The distant father no longer appears to be an acceptable formulation of masculinity. Nevertheless, one cannot help noting that the man is not depicted

actually giving *care* to the child and that, as the participants mentioned, the ad is more about being able to be “goofy” and a child again. The restraints of the stoic and patriarchal father figure of the 1950s have been shed for a combination of the ’80s’ “new man” and the ’90s’ “new lad” in father form. Fatherhood allows men to put their guard down, be silly, and enjoy time with their children; yet the primary responsibility of nurturer still belongs to the woman.

I think women would like this [Sony] ad the most because deep down women are trying to find a good father for their children.

Frank, 39

Frank’s comment reinscribes the distinction between provider and nurturer.

...I know for myself there was a couple of years, where my wife made a bit more than I did, for a variety of reasons, and that was like ripping out my gut. There’s something, you know its silly, ’cuz she has almost as much education as I do, um, and it was just circumstance, whatever, but it was like “I have to be able to make more than her to provide” even if we split things, I make more than her and I can pay for that extra...it, it’s really silly, um, but I still think that I should be the one who supports her and takes care of her when necessary.

Frank, 39

Frank, in particular, struggles with newer constructions of masculinity. He is clearly uncomfortable with not being the “provider” yet also has difficulty admitting this belief. It is as though admitting to this discomfort is not exhibiting masculinity. He appears to have internalized the representations that position masculinity as both provider and nurturer, yet this conflicts with other influences that privilege more traditional forms of masculinity. Frank’s experience is demonstrative of the balancing required of modern constructions of masculinity. Men must negotiate between equity with their partners in nurturing roles while at the same continuing with their father’s

and grandfather's legacy of providing for the family. Men are allowed to embrace their inner child but not to the extent that it renders them irresponsible and unable to provide for their families.

These tensions were not shared by all participants. For example, Quentin, a divorced man, suggested that he would in fact relish the opportunity to stay home and raise his children, should he marry again and have children.

Put it this way...in this day and age...When I'm married again and if I have kids and my wife wants to go to work and wants me to stay at home, I'll have no problem with it...it's just...again, 50 years ago that would never have happened. The woman would have stayed at home and taken care of the children.

Quentin, 35

Similarly, Dale responded to Frank's concerns about his wife making more than him by congratulating him:

You chose wisely...you have a wife that has a good income potential; that's awesome.

Dale, 35

This discussion suggests that the constructions of masculinity found in the media consciously and unconsciously permeate the minds of these urban men and help to form their gendered construction of the self. Thus, it is of little surprise that, as the media blurs the distinctions of masculinity types to appeal to a wider audience, the men negotiating these images are increasingly finding it difficult to draw their own lines of distinction and their constructions are riddled with contradictions and uncertainty.

Conclusion

The focus groups suggest that the construction of masculinity is complex and involves negotiating the competing and even contradictory scripts that are represented in the media. The participants exhibit what Beynon (2002) refers to as the “hybridized masculinity” of the 21st century that is “a more fluid, bricolage masculinity, the result of ‘channel-shopping across versions of the masculine’” (p. 6). The contradictions that emerged in our discussions are also consistent with the schizophrenic quality of postmodern masculinity as identified by O’Hagan. He observes that men “aspire to New Man status when [they’re] with women, but revert to old man type when...out with the boys” (cited in Nixon, 1996, p. 204). As with the content analysis, the focus groups suggest that there is a difficulty in categorizing masculinity and that it is fragmented with a multiplicity of meaning.

Perhaps Butler is correct and there is no such thing as authentic masculinity or femininity; perhaps we should strive to rid ourselves of this binary approach to defining ourselves. However, change, especially significant change, does not happen overnight. Rather, it takes decades upon decades filled with small incremental shifts before significant change actually happens. In the meantime, the fact that these men had difficulty defining masculinity in opposition to femininity suggests the lines are blurring and that, as Nate comments, masculinity is changing, for better or for worse.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

*heaven loves ya
the clouds smile for ya
nothing stands in your way when you're a boy
clothes always fit ya
life is the pop of a cherry when you're a boy
when you're a boy
you can wear a uniform
when you're a boy
other boys check you out
you get a girl
these are your favorite things
when you're a boy*
David Bowie, 1979

So, really, what is masculinity? It does not appear to be something that can be defined concretely. Yet, similar to the quandary of Canadian nationalists not pleased with solely defining Canadians as *not Americans*, defining masculinity in opposition to something, in this case femininity, does not offer a concrete understanding of what it means to be a man. There are no shortages of texts on this subject. Among the most recent additions to the library shelves is Harvey Mansfield's (2006) book, titled *Manliness*. Gender, for him, is unequivocally tied to sex. I don't agree. This would suggest that cultural environments and social influences have no bearing on one's gendered identity. Yet, as the discussions in Chapter 4 suggest, media images play an important role in the construction of gendered identity. Although elements of biological essentialism occasionally appeared (especially with one or two participants), most participants viewed their identities as fluid projects.

I would debate is metrosexuality something that is from here on, that is the way it's gonna be? Or is just marketing? ...heroes today in film... who are they? They're people like...Leonardo DiCaprio or Brad Pitt...these are not masculine guys like Sean Connery, you know, with the hairy chest and everything...they're pretty boys and stuff. But is this not just a fashion fad? Is it long term or is short term? Societies change. People want change. So I mean, I agree it is a change, but I don't know that it is something that is going to be.

Simon, 51

Does this fluidity mean that there is a 'crisis of masculinity'? Perhaps, though not, as some might suggest, because masculinity has been destabilized through the efforts of the feminist and gay rights movements. Rather, I argue that masculinity is and always has been a fluid concept but that there is a crisis in our ability to define masculinity which has resulted from the social shift towards defining identity through consumption. Although this shift may be seen as emancipatory by some it is by no means liberating. Any sense of identity achieved through consumption can be quickly lost because of the complexity and constant change found in the representations of masculinity in advertising. For example, Frank, a young successful lawyer found his identity de-stabilized by not having the proper cuff on his pants. Seeking ones identity through the marketplace leads to a continuous cycle that is difficult to escape when the internalized images that are used in the construction of masculine identity are always changing. This destabilizes masculinity as it becomes an identity that is never fully attainable. Those whose class, race or body type limits their ability to respond through consumption are further marginalized and excluded from being able to construct the masculinity they seek. In others words, the crisis of masculinity through consumption is experienced by all, regardless of socio-economic status or physique.

The media, and more specifically in this study I argue advertising, provide us with the images of who we want to be. These representations are internalized and become the form against which we measure ourselves. Richins (1991) argues that “individuals exposed to ads with physically attractive models were less satisfied with their own level of physical attractiveness” (cited in Lin, 1997, p. 247). Lin (1997) offers anecdotal examples of the detrimental effects of advertiser’s idealized body: Women undergo all sorts of medical treatment “from liposuction to hair straightening and eye-rounding surgery” (p. 247). Dissatisfaction with the self surfaced in the focus groups as well. Evan, a 36- year-old professional, talked about the difficulties he had in coming to terms with going bald at a very young age.

I'd like to do something with my hair again if I had hair, because, you know, because it says something about us ourselves, if we are thinking, you know, when we look in the mirror and we want to look nice and we want to wear these nice clothes or we want to step out. You know, especially being single, its like you... obviously it's the first thing that the woman is going to see...and...so, you know...still it's a little bit...but not so much anymore, but for me that was a big change.

Evan, 36

Although he does not explicitly make reference to his lack, with respect to the images in the advertisements for those nice clothes, the comparison is implied. Evan’s understanding of manliness stems from the images that surround him and others, and he believes that he is compared to these images by others. A similar discussion ensued around body type, Evan lamenting that he was too skinny and Adam lamenting the opposite—that all his life he has “carried more weight” than he should. The ideals that these men measured themselves against were represented in men’s magazines. George’s comments, discussed in Chapter 4, further inform us how

the participants internalize the representations of identity and negotiate them in the construction of their gendered selves.

This focus on the external appearance in men is a relatively new phenomenon. Although in the myth of Narcissus the protagonist was male, in recent history, reference to narcissism has often been directed toward women, not because women are inherently more self-obsessed than men are, but rather because, as Ewen notes, since the early days of advertising, women have been at the centre of attention, a centre that has meant spending incredible amounts of time gazing at reflections of oneself and judging oneself against them. However, as revealed by Nixon and Simpson, narcissism has returned to its master and has become a significant characteristic of contemporary masculinity. As discussed in this thesis, men are no longer defined by their productive labour but instead by their consumption habits.

Moreover, masculinity is no longer primarily defined by strength and power but also by emotional availability. Bordo's "leaners," and even the crossovers discussed in Chapter 2, reveal that vulnerability is increasingly permeating men's construction of masculinity. Brandon's self-reflexivity and remarks about being able to "hug your buddies" is an example of how this has become a signpost of masculinity. At a dinner party last weekend, I overheard a couple talking about how their son and his friends refer to themselves as "emo" males. Emo, for those no longer in the hip high school crowd, refers to *emotional* males. However, as noted throughout this thesis, masculinity has not completely shed its traditional traits. Although images of the "cowboy" are no longer as popular as they once were, the

characteristics associated with him are found in contemporary representations of masculinity, as discussed in Chapter 4 and found in the Skyy Vodka ad. When I first embarked on this study, I wanted to find all of the answers to all of the questions surrounding advertising, masculinity, and consumption. I soon realized that not only could I not find *all* the answers; I most likely would not even be able to fully answer one piece of the puzzle. I had to be satisfied with knowing that my work was to become one part of a never-ending project that investigated these areas.

Future research

Similar to Beynon's (2001) recommendations, I believe that the study of masculinity could be greatly enhanced with the inclusion of more ethnographic discoveries. In addition, I think that there is room for longitudinal studies that begin research with young boys who are discovering their gendered identity and beginning to exert their independence in this media-saturated environment. On the opposite end, a demographic that is growing yet increasingly becoming invisible, are the baby boomers. An analysis that focussed on the representation of older men in ads complemented by a discussion with men in this age group would shed light on an area that is often overlooked and would help to understand how different age groups construct their gendered identities. As noted in Chapter 2, there is also room for an investigation of the lack of ethnic diversity in ads, in particular the near invisibility of Asian males in mainstream advertising. What is it about this masculinity that finds it excluded from the dominant forms of representation. In addition, what does this mean for Asian males? How is their construction of masculinity affected by this? A

study that compares experiences across nationalities would also further inform our understanding of the construction of masculinity.

In addition a study that explores representations of masculinity in women's magazines would also be informative. In the cursory content analysis that I conducted several years ago, I wanted to include women's lifestyle magazines; however, there were so few ads that featured only men, I did not include them. However, through simple observation I have recently noticed several ads of men and women in women's lifestyle magazines such as *Oprah*, home decorating publications like *House and Home*, and even in bridal magazines, which play with traditional conceptions of masculinity. Such a study would be complemented by discussions with both men and women and their understanding of masculinity vis-à-vis advertising. We may never fully understand what masculinity is. However, the more that is learned about how representations of gender are internalized and the role advertisements play in our construction of self, the more that can be done in creating responsible advertising and in influencing policy to govern what is considered acceptable and what is considered harmful.

Finally, what does it mean to be a man?

So, what does it mean to be a man? Not surprisingly, there is not one definition. Masculinity is a site of contradictions and complexities. In many ways, it can mean whatever one wants it to mean. Admittedly, change is slow and cyclical. Two steps forward in one direction will often result in three steps back in another. In

other words, masculinity is a long way from shedding its ties to traditional and conservative archetypes. Just as I found trends suggesting the emergence of crossovers, I would not be surprised that in five years' time "face-offs" and "cowboys" were once again more prevalent than any other archetype. That is not to say that there will be an emergence of patriarchal masculinity. Have the frilly and lacy styles in women's magazines meant a return to subordinate roles for women? Not exactly. All it means is that the fashion industry has realized it is time to change the styles to increase consumption. As we try to understand gender, we must remember that these are social constructs and there are a number of influences affecting the way masculinity is constructed. Attempts to better understand masculinity require approaching it from different perspectives. What I have presented in this thesis is only one way of trying to understand the complexities of gender and the role of advertising in its construction.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: CONTENT ANALYSIS PROTOCOL³⁰

- only real people in the ads will be coded, cartoons, drawings etc. will not	Ads that are not being coded should still have a column representing them and an explanation of why they are not included, e.g. woman only, no people featured
- only ads that at least feature one primary male character will be included in the ad.	
Publication	Esquire 1; Maxim 2; Men's Health 3
Date	month/year
Ad Number	
Ad Title	
Advertiser	
Size of ad	1=full page; 2=half page; 3=2/3 page; 4=2 pages; 98=other
Colour of ad	1=colour; 2=b&w; 3=sepia; 4=mixed; 5=b&w & colour; 98=other
Brief description of ad	
Coded	No 00 Yes 01
If no, why?	1=woman only; 2=woman & child only; 3=children only; 4=no models-product/text only; 5=cartoon/drawing of people; 6=more than 5 characters; 98=other
Before Table of Contents	No 00 Yes 01
Product or Service category advertised † ³¹	1=automobiles, trucks, vans, SUVs; 2=Automotive products & services; 3=travel; 4=banking, investments, insurance, credit cards; 5=contributions, memberships, public activities; 6=games & toys, children's and babies apparel & specialty products; 7=computers, software & related products/services; 8=books; 9=cds, records, tapes, stereo, telephone, TV, video/dvd, movie; 10=photography; 11=home furnishings; 12=home improvement; 13=sports & leisure including exercise equipment; 14=jewellery/watches; 15=men's apparel & accessories; 16=women's apparel & accessories; 17=men's & women's apparel & accessories; 18=men's shoes; 19=women's shoes; 20=men's & women's shoes; 21= alcoholic beverages; 22=tobacco products; 23=non-alcoholic beverages; 24=food products; 25=chewing gum, candy, cookies; 26=coffee, tea; 27=household cleaners, room deodorizers, pest controls, pet foods; 28=supplements (Viagra, muscle supplements; 29=health care products; 30=oral hygiene products; 31=men's skin care, deodorants, and drug stores; 32=women's skin care, deodorants, and drug stores; 33=men's hair care, shaving products; 34=women's hair care, shaving products; 35=men's beauty aids, cosmetics & personal products; 36=women's beauty aids, cosmetics & personal products; 37=the character is the product; 38=multiple products appear in advertisement; 39=military service; 40=telephone, cmns, lng distance services, cell phones; 41=office equipment; 42=men's underwear; 43=women's underwear/lingerie; 44=both men's and women's fragrances; 45=men's fragrance; 46=women's fragrance; 98=other; 99=product category cannot be determined

³⁰ I would like to thank Richard Kolbe and Paul Albanese and Deana Rohlinger for graciously sending me the protocols from their studies.

³¹ † identifies variables borrowed from Kolbe & Albanese (1996)

Product or service category, other	
How many characters appear in the ad	
What is the composition of the characters in the ad?	1=men only; 2=men and women; 3=men and children; 4=men, women and children; 98=other
Composition, other	
Physical setting of advertisement †	1=indoor; 2=outdoor; 3=no physical setting
Indoor settings †	1=business office; 2=retail store 3=bar; 4=restaurant; 5=hotel/motel room; 6=indoor sporting event; 7=home: bedroom; 8=home: bathroom; 9=home: kitchen; 10=workroom; 11=home: garage; 12=home: basement; 13=home: living/family room; 14=gym; 15=indeterminate indoor setting; 98=other
Indoor, Other	
Outdoor settings †	1=urban; 2=rural; 3=great outdoors; 4=outdoor sporting event; 5=on or in the water; 6=outer space; 7=construction site; 8=residential yard; 9=desert; 10=beach; 11=driving on the road; 12=indeterminate outdoor 13=golf course; 98 other
Outdoor, other	
Sex of character	1=male; 2=female; 99=cannot be determined
Age of Character	1=early to mid-20s; 2=25-35; 3=36-55; 4=56+; 99=cannot be determined
Ethnic background of character	1= black; 2=Caucasian; 3=Hispanic; 4=Asian; 5=Aboriginal; 6=South Asian; 98=other; 99=cannot be determined
Ethnic background, other	
Class of character	1=working class; 2=middle/upper class; 3=upper class/elite; 98=other; 99=cannot be determined
Class, other	
Is the character presented in the ad a celebrity, political, or sports figure	No 00 Yes 01
To what extent were the models in the ad clothed? (up to 5 models can be coded)	1=fully (legs & torso are covered); 2=partially (includes wearing shorts; no shirt); 3=not at all; 4=cannot be determined from image

Describe the clothing style worn †	1=Classic Menswear / Womenswear (classic styled suits, sports coat, tie, dress pants, shirt shoes, etc); 2=formal evening wear (tuxedo, formal gown); 3=Casual Upscale/Preppy (unbuttoned dress shirt, polo shirt, knit shirt, slacks, deck shoes, sweaters, sport coat with jeans or slacks; golf sportswear); 4=Casual Hip (exotic forms of dress intended by the wearer to make a major fashion statement, does not involve standard jackets, suits, ties); 5=Hip Hop (baggy trousers, t-shirt, lots of showy jewellery); 6=Professional Uniform (excluding sports and medicine, but including military, pest control, delivery services, hotel doorman, security personnel); 7=white lab coat; 8=Casual downscale (blue jeans, t-shirts, sweat shirts, sneakers); 9=Blue Collar Work Clothing (blue, gray, brown work clothing—usually matching colours of shirt and pants; clothing used by unskilled and skilled labourers); 10=Western Wear (blue jeans, cowboy boots, pearl-but Outdoor Recreational Wear (clothing worn for hiking, fishing, mountain climbing, mountain biking. Individual NOT involved in an athletic sport); 11=ton shirts, big belt buckle, cowboy hat); 12=Biker Wear (leather jackets (usually black or dark brown), leather pants (usually black or dark brown), blue jeans, engineer or biker boots); 13=Recreational Athletic Attire (for informal recreation—i.e., jogging, skiing, swimming); 14=Sports Uniforms (professional sports, college sports, etc); 15=costumes (Halloween costumes, theatre costume, clown); 16=Science Fiction and Outer space Garb (Star Trek attire, etc); 17=historical period attire; 18=underwear; 19=lingerie; 20=pyjamas; 21=man wearing women's clothing; 22=matronly/motherly; 23=boarder/skater gear; 24=bathing suit; 25=not enough clothing shown - style cannot be assessed
Is head visible	No 00 Yes 01
Can eyes be observed	No 00 Yes 01
If No, Why Not?	1=wearing sunglasses; 2=eyes closed; 3=only back of head visible; 4=head not visible; 98=other
Where does the character in the ad appear to be looking? † ³²	1=looking at himself; 2=looking at male model; 3=looking at female model; 4=looking directly at audience; 5=looking at product being advertised; 6=Looking at the task in which he is involved; 7=Looking in the distance or at an unknown location; 98=other; 99=point of gaze cannot be determined
Are Model's Lips Parted?	No 00 Yes 01
What is the model's hairline †	1=no apparent hair loss; 2=receding hairline (male pattern balding); 3=top of head bald, but with fringe hair; 4=completely bald; 98=other; 99=hairline not discernible
What is the length of model's hair †	1=short; 2=Medium (average men's hair length); 3=long; 4=brush cut; 99=Cannot determine length of hair
Describe model's facial hair †	1=none, clean shaven; 2=moustache; 3=handlebar or atypical; 4=beard; 5=full beard and moustache; 6=goatee; 7=5 o'clock shadow; 8=3 day stubble; 9=soul patch; 10=mutton chops; 98=other; 99=facial hair cannot be determined
Model's bare chest shown? †	No 00 Yes 01
Does model have visible chest hair †	No 00 Yes 01
Is there visible jewelry on the male model (if no skip to Q) †	No 00 Yes 01
Does the model have one or more earrings visible? †	No 00 Yes 01
Does the model have any visible piercings (other than earrings)?	No 00 Yes 01
Is the model wearing a wedding band? †	No 00 Yes 01

³² † identifies variables borrowed from Rohlinger (2001).

Is the model wearing a ring other than a wedding band? †	No 00 Yes 01
Is the model wearing a necklace/chain? †	No 00 Yes 01
Is the model wearing a bracelet? †	No 00 Yes 01
Is the model wearing a watch? †	No 00 Yes 01
Does the model have one or more visible tattoos? †	No 00 Yes 01
Cant of head	1=to the right; 2=to the left; 3=downward; 4=upward; 5=no cant of head
In ads that have more than one character what is the level of engagement between characters?	1=Direct social interaction/engagement (face to face); 2=Indirect engagement/interaction-touch not facial interaction; 3=Parallel action (no engagement/interaction bw characters); 98=other; 99=Level of engagement cannot be determined
What is the character's power relationship with the other character(s)	1=Egalitarian - same sex; 2=Egalitarian - opposite sex; 3=Egalitarian - Both same & opposite sex ; 4=Dominant - same sex ; 5=Dominant - opposite sex; 6=Dominant - both same & opposite sex; 7=Violent - same sex; 8=Violent - opposite sex; 9=Violent - both same & opposite sex; 10=Instilling fear - same sex; 11=Instilling fear - Opposite sex; 12=Instilling fear - both same & opposite sex; 13=Instilling fear - both same & opposite sex; 14=Subordinate/Submissive - Opposite sex; 15=Subordinate/Submissive - both same & opposite sex; 98=other; 99=Power relationship cannot be determined
Touch between self and other characters or with self †	1=Model is touching himself/herself; 2=Model is touching a female; 3=Model is touching a male; 4=Model is touching both a male and a female; 5=Model is touching him/herself and other(s); 6=Model is not engaged in touch behaviour; 99=Touch cannot be determined
If there is touch between characters or self is it feminine? Masculine? provide details as to the kind of touch	
Is there sex play between the characters?	No 00 Yes 01
Type of Sex Play	1=Playful - opposite sex; 2=Playful - same sex; 3=Playful Other; 4=Passionate - opposite sex; 5=Passionate - same sex; 6=Passionate other; 7=S&M - opposite sex; 8=S&M - same ; 9=S&M - other; 98=sex play other
Portions of Body Shown	1=head only; 2= head and shoulders only; 3=from waist up; 4=from knees up; 5=full body; 6=legs only; 7=waist down; 8=torso (chest/back) only; 9=buttocks only; 10=extremities only; 11=shoulders down (head not visible); 98=other
Body Type †	1=endomorph; 2=mesomorph; 3=ectomorph
Muscles are glistening with oil/sweat/water?	No 00 Yes 01
Narcissistic	No 00 Yes 01
If Narcissistic - Comment	
Male bodies	1=rocks/face-offs; 2=leaners; 3=crossover; 98=other; 99=cannot be determined

Masculinity Type ㄨ	1=hero; outdoorsman; 3=family man/nurturer (seen with family; playing with children; doing housework); 4=patriarchal breadwinner; 5=man at work (briefcase; pictured at office; in rush hour traffic); 6=erotic male (sultry looks; parted/pouty lips; languid); 7=urban man (man about town; pictured in club/bar; in a yuppie/urban neighbourhood); 8=quiescent man; 9=non-descriptive (usually found posing with no identifiable characteristics; 10=multiple masculinity types (more than one type visible in model); 11=rebel/bad boy; 12=dandy; 98=other; 99=cannot be determined
If HERO, What Type ㄨ	1=sports hero; 2=entertainment hero; 3=average man as hero; 4=military hero; 98=other
If OUTDOORSMAN, What type ㄨ	1=cowboy; 2=frontiersman; 3=time traveller; 98=other
If MAN AT WORK, What Type ㄨ	1=white collar worker; 2=blue collar worker; 3=corporate worker; 4=self-employed; 98=other
Sexual Preference ㄨ	1= heterosexual; 2=homosexual; 3=ambiguous; 4=unknown; 98=other
Activity Type	1=athletic-outdoor; 2=athletic-indoor; 3=Socializing with friends; 4=shopping; 5=violent; 6=Attending sports game; 7=attending a concert; 8=office work; 9=blue collar work; 10=clubbing; 11=playing video game; 12=travelling; 13=Household chores - indoors; 14=Household chores - outdoors; 15=childminding; 16=Driving/flying; 17=performing on stage/TV/movie; 18=Watching television/film/play; 19=Reading a book; 20=relaxing; 21=sleeping; 22=Reading a book; 98=other
Is the product or service depicted in the ad?	No 00 Yes 01
Physical contact with advertised product/service †	1=using product or service as typically used; 2=using product in atypical manner; 3=touching the product; 4=No physical contact with product
If touching the product what type of touch?	1=feminine touch; 2=masculine touch; 98=other
What is the function of the character's role presentation †	1=wearing the advertised product; 2=comic relief; 3=demonstrating the product or service; 4=decorative but related to product use ; 5=decorative only; 6=issuance of testimonial/endorsement; 7=consuming the product; 8=presence supports product; 9=inability to use product correctly; 98=other; 99=cannot be determined
Type of ad	1=mainstream, ordinary; 2=cutting edge
The coding for this ad was	1=very easy; 2=easy; 3=difficult; 4=very difficult
Comments	

**APPENDIX B:
FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPATION BACKGROUND
FORM**

Focus Group Participant Background Form

Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Profession: _____

Ethnic Background: _____

Relationship Status (Please circle one):

Single	Married	Separated/Divorced
Widowed	Living with partner (not married)	Long term relationship
Dating casually	Other _____	_____

Sexual Preference (please circle one):

Heterosexual	Other: _____
Homosexual	
Bi-Sexual	

For each of the following media, in an average week how much time do you spend (Please circle):

Watching television

>1 hr 1-2 hrs 3-6 hrs 7-10 hrs 11-20 hrs 21+ hrs

Surfing the Internet

>1 hr 1-2 hrs 3-6 hrs 7-10 hrs 11-20 hrs 21+ hrs

Watching movies

>1 hr 1-2 hrs 3-6 hrs 7-10 hrs 11-20 hrs 21+ hrs

Reading Newspapers (print)

>1 hr 1-2 hrs 3-6 hrs 7-10 hrs 11-20 hrs 21+ hrs

Reading Magazines

>1 hr 1-2 hrs 3-6 hrs 7-10 hrs 11-20 hrs 21+ hrs

Please Turn Over....

Please put a ✓ where appropriate:

	Sub- scribe	Read 8+ issues/yr	Read 5+ issues/yr	Read ≤ 4 issues/yr	Never read	Newsweek	Sub- scribe	Read 8+ issues/yr	Read 5+ issues/yr	Read ≤ 4 issues/yr	Never read
Blender											
Bon Appetit						Out					
Business Week						Outside					
Car & Driver						Parents					
Cosmopolitan						PC Gamer					
Details						People					
Entertainment Weekly						Playboy					
Esquire						Popular Science					
FHM						Powder					
Forbes						Rolling Stone					
Golf						Runner's World					
GQ						Scientific American					
Harper's						Smart Money					
House & Home						Sports Illustrated					
MacLean's						Stuff					
Martha Stewart Living						The Advocate					
Maxim						The Economist					
Men's Health						Time					
Muscle & Fitness						Vanity Fair					
National Geographic						Wired					
Other:						Other:					

APPENDIX C: OUTLINE OF FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS

Introduction

Who I am, my research, why focus group

My name is Naomi and I am completing my MA in communication at SFU.

- My thesis is on representations of masculinity in the media and the construction of gender identity. I have been researching various aspects of this topic for about five years.
- I have been reading about this topic for several years one thing I have noticed is that much of the research stops short of going out there and talking to actual men. I can read and analyze as ads until the cows come home but I cannot truly understand what it all means to a man unless I talk to them directly.
- For this reason I am conducting these focus groups. Thank you for agreeing to participate.

What is focus group

- Are any of you familiar with focus group formats? (show of hands).
- Was it for market research?
- The idea of focus groups is pretty much the same whether for market research or academic purposes – a group of people discussing a particular topic.
- The main differences are that I'm not trying to find out how to market a particular product to you rather I am more interested in how the different products marketed to you affect how you see yourself as a man. In that vein the purpose of the session is also not to analyze you as the subject, but rather to find out what you, as a man, feel about masculinity. How do you define it? When you see a particular ad what sorts of masculine traits do you recognize in it.
- Another difference between academic and market research is that unlike in market research I don't have envelopes with money to hand out to you at the end of the session. I will however be giving away two bottles of wine and please, help yourself to sandwiches and drinks.

Recording, time frame, cell phones

The session is being audio recorded and videotaped. Your identity will however remain confidential and at any time if you are uncomfortable or wish to no longer participate you are welcome to leave the room.

- I will try to keep the session within a 2-hour time frame
- There will be a 15-minute break.

- turn your off cell phones, pagers, etc.

What to expect over the next couple of hours

For the next couple of hours we will be talking about the concept of masculinity. Another way of saying this is that we are going to talk about masculine gender identity. What sorts of traits do you consider “masculine”? Where do these ideas come from? What types of masculine roles, traits, identities and the like are exhibited in the ads that we will be looking at tonight.

All opinions important; not looking for consensus

I have a list of questions that we will go through. I want everyone to feel comfortable to speak their mind. Each one of you comes from different backgrounds and has different influences so your thoughts on a given topic may vary. While respecting these differences, if you hear something that you don't agree with speak up. The idea is not for us to come to some sort of consensus but rather for me to learn about the different views out there. Similarly, if you do not understand what someone has said, please ask them to explain. I will ask however that you not to speak over other people—it makes really hard to distinguish what is being said when I'm transcribing the tapes and it also makes it hard for people to finish their points. But please do pick up on what others are saying and carry on those thoughts.

Everyone to talk— if quiet will be called upon, if talk a lot sshh

I will also encourage everyone to speak. It is important I hear what each one of you has to say about a particular question. So if you're shy or quiet please be aware that I will call on you - and similarly if you dominate the conversation please don't be offended if I ask you to let someone else speak first. I will come back to you though. Before we begin are there any questions?

Group Introductions

1. Introductions: please introduce yourself and tell us what you do for a living and what you like to do for fun. I will start – my name is Naomi and I'm a full-time grad student. For fun, I enjoy dining out, drinking wine and socializing with friends.

Projective

- I am passing around a grouping of 11 ads. **(All ads used in this session are from *Men's Health*, *Maxim* & *Esquire* magazines.)**
- Individually, I want you to select any 4 ads and on the notepaper provided write down what you think is going on in the picture.
- What do you think one of the characters is thinking about?
- What do you think the storyline is?
- What is the character's role? Is he a father figure or an athlete?
- Look for a wedding band? Is he married?
- Are there other characters featured in the ad? Kids, women, men? What is his relationship with the other characters?
- What is his sexual orientation?
- Where is he going? Or where is he coming from?
- What is he doing?

- Think of the setting – where are they?

Things to remember if there are more than one character you can just choose one, but it has to be one of the **male characters**.

- To get the ball rolling we'll use this Best Buy ad to help explain the process – it is a bit of cheating ad as he already has a bubble that is telling us what he's thinking.
 - Once you are done we'll go around the table and I will ask you to share at least one of your ads.
4. Next is a group exercise. I am passing around a group of 15 ads. They should all be in the same order. We will go through these ads and talk about the types of masculinity on display. So, looking at the first ad,
- What is the first thing that draws you in to this ad?
 - What are some of the attributes that you see defined (thinking in terms of gender).
 - What role or roles are portrayed?
 - Is there a particular type of masculinity you see being put forth? Are there multiple types of masculinity?
 - What kind of visions of masculinity do they portray? (Attainable? Realistic? Heroic? Average?)
 - How does it relate to your own vision of masculinity?
 - Do you relate to this ad? I.e: do you see the ad as 'speaking to you'? If not, whom do you think the ad is speaking to?

BREAK: 15–20 minutes

5. The group will now turn to more specific discussion around masculinity.
- If a Martian came from another planet and wanted to know what it was to be a guy what would you tell him? How do you define masculinity?
 - a. What do you think are the most significant characteristics or ideas about masculinity in our society today?
 - b. Where would you tell the Martian to look for ideas about your version of masculinity? Where do those ideas come from?
 - c. What do they mean to you and other men you know?
 - d. What role do the images that we have been looking at play in your own understanding of masculinity?
 - e. How have your ideas about masculinity changed as you have gotten older
 - f. What role do they play in terms of forming your own identity and defining how you understand the world and your place in it?
6. The last exercise is another combination individual and group one. I am passing around a pack of 13 ads. I would like each of you to rank your top 3-5 and least 3-5. For the top, think about the images that you relate to the most; perhaps they fit most with your image of masculinity, perhaps it is an image you aspire to. For the images you put in the least favourite pile, think of the opposite: traits that you do not like about yourself or maybe they remind you of someone you do not like. On the accompanying piece of paper, I'd like you

to jot down some notes for the top three and the least three. What is it about the image that had you sort it in the top 3 or the least 3.

- If you are stuck and don't relate to any of the pictures in the pile I've given you, please feel free to select from any of others I've put on the table.,

7. Before ending the session I will go around the table once more to see if anyone has anything more to add/comment on regarding their conception of masculinity, influences, etc.

APPENDIX D: INTRA-CODER RELIABILITY

Variable	Percent
Coded?	100.0
If not coded, why not?	99.7
Product or service category advertised	99.4
How many characters appear in the ad	98.5
What is the composition of characters in the ad	99.4
Physical setting of advertisement	98.8
Indoor settings	99.4
Outdoor settings	97.6
Sex of character	100.0
Age of character	97.6
Ethnic background of character	99.7
Class of character	97.6
To what extent is the model clothed?	96.7
Are the model's lips parted?	98.8
Body type?	96.7
Male bodies	99.1
Masculinity type	97.6
If hero, what type	99.4
If outdoorsman, what type	99.4
If man at work, what type	99.7
What is the function of the character's role presentation?	98.2

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