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Enticing the New Lad:

Masculinity as a Product of Consumption in Tobacco Industry–Developed Lifestyle Magazines

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Abstract

We demonstrate how an industry promoted and defined masculinity as a product of consumption. We analyze previously-secret tobacco industry documents and the content of two tobacco industry-produced magazines, *Unlimited* (from Philip Morris, makers of Marlboro) and *Real Edge* (from Brown & Williamson, makers of Lucky Strike), which were distributed to millions of young adult men from the late 1990s and early 2000s to promote their tobacco brands. We find that *Unlimited* and *Real Edge* exhibited similar themes previously reported to typify “new lad” magazines, but with risky behaviors in the forefront. We build upon the existing masculinity literature by providing insight into how corporations study and interpret cultural constructions of masculinity, and then use masculinity as both a vehicle and a product of consumption.

Keywords

new lad; young men; lifestyle magazines; certitude; new sexism; irony; risky behavior; cigarettes; tobacco industry; semiotic analysis

Introduction

Filtered cigarettes—comprising almost all the cigarettes sold in the United States today (Federal Trade Commission 2007)—were, in the early 1950s, considered a “woman’s smoke” (Burnett 1955). In 1954, Philip Morris Tobacco Company (Philip Morris) asked the advertising agency, Leo Burnett, to transform the filtered Marlboro cigarette brand from a female-oriented cigarette that was advertised from 1927 to 1953 as “Mild as May” (Brandt 2007) into a cigarette that “appeal[ed] to the mass market” and was not perceived by the public as a “fancy smoke ...” (Burnett 1955). Leo Burnett developed a marketing campaign that depicted masculine imagery of tattooed men (Burnett 1955), but the familiar cowboy imagery of Marlboro eventually became the standard imagery by the early 1960s because it was “an almost universal symbol of admired masculinity” (Burnett 1955).

The Marlboro cowboy is the central figure of Marlboro advertising (Philip Morris 1994) and reflects the core aspects of the Marlboro brand identity, which is how marketers want a

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brand to be perceived by consumers (Aaker 1998): masculinity, freedom, and adventure (Philip Morris 1993, 1999a). In response to RJ Reynolds Tobacco Company's successful youthful and irreverent "Joe Camel" marketing and advertising campaigns for the Camel brand in the 1980s and 1990s, Philip Morris began to question the relevance of the stoic cowboy to the modern young adult male (Philip Morris 1993). The Marlboro Man required an update to "represent the full spectrum of masculinity" (Philip Morris 1993), while staying consistent with the well-established and globally recognizable brand identity (Philip Morris 1993, 1999a).

The marketing of Marlboro cigarettes by Philip Morris and Leo Burnett is an example of how a product is constructed relative to the cultural understandings of masculinity, making masculinity as much a product of consumption as the cigarette. As Alexander (2003, 536) notes in her research on masculinity in *Men's Health* magazines, "the image of masculinity is constructed purposely to sell a brand-name product ... [and] shapes the way men see themselves and others."

The rapidly rising popularity of men's magazines in the 1990s, such as *loaded*, *Maxim*, *FHM*, and *Men's Health*, piqued the interest of social scientists because it depicted young men to millions of subscribers as vain consumers and sexist hedonists (Benwell 2003, 2005, 2007; Cook 2000; Edwards 1997; Jackson, Stevenson, and Brooks 2001; McKay, Mikosza, and Hutchins 2005; Nixon 1996; Stevenson, Jackson, and Brooks 2003). In the 1990s, Philip Morris Tobacco Company (Philip Morris 2000) and Brown & Williamson Tobacco Company (Brown & Williamson) (Brown & Williamson 1999) sought out established magazine publishers to develop their own lifestyle magazines for young men as a relationship marketing strategy, which is a way corporations build and nurture long-term business relationships with customers (Egan and Harker 2005).

Previously-secret tobacco industry documents, made public after the Master Settlement Agreement in 1998, describe tobacco marketing strategies targeting young adults and provide insight to how the tobacco industry researched young adult "new lad" masculinity and reconstructed it in the lifestyle magazines they produced to entice "new lads" to use tobacco. Philip Morris conducted extensive psychographic research on the lives and interests of young adults (Philip Morris 1998), concluding that the young men of the 1990s required a different marketing strategy than previous campaigns, in part because of young adults' cynicism of advertising (Philip Morris and Marketing Perceptions Inc. 1994), and developed their lifestyle magazine *Unlimited* to market Marlboro to young men in a new way (Philip Morris and Hachette Filipacchi Magazines 1994). Brown & Williamson developed three lifestyle magazines in the 1990s: *Flair* for young women, *The Art of Simple Living* for women over age thirty years, and *Real Edge* for young men (Brown & Williamson 1998; Philip Morris 1996b). Brown & Williamson conducted psychographic research on young adults for the repositioning of the dying brand Lucky Strike (Tatham Euro Research Group 1995) for young adults (Brown & Williamson 1996a) and advertising it in both *Real Edge* and *Flair* (Brown & Williamson 1998; Spriggs, Wenning, and Brown & Williamson 1999), suggesting that *Real Edge* was part of a broader relationship marketing strategy aimed at young men (Brown & Williamson 1999).

This article explores the development of two tobacco industry-produced "new lad" magazines, *Unlimited* and *Real Edge*. We use previously-secret tobacco industry documents detailing marketing strategies targeting young adult men to inform our semiotic analysis of "new lad" masculinity as depicted in these magazines to demonstrate how an industry—intentionally or not—established masculinity as a product of consumption. Tobacco industry-produced magazines were created to promote cigarettes—the only legal consumer product that is lethal to oneself and others when used as directed (Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention, October 2006)—to millions of young men in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Philip Morris 1996b). In this article, we demonstrate the ways in which the magazines were created to reflect “new lad” masculinity, and the importance for the tobacco industry to highlight a particular component of “new lad” masculinity—risky behavior—as a way to sell a dangerous consumer product. We argue that the tobacco industry’s strategic manipulation of cultural constructions of masculinity for profit has theoretical implications salient to understanding the masculine identity construction of young men in the twenty-first century in relationship to the products they consume.

Literature Review

Men’s lifestyle magazines are particularly rich areas of inquiry for understanding how masculinity is constructed as a consumer product because in lifestyle magazines, readers learn how to construct, and the importance of constructing, gender around consumer products (Alexander 2003). In what Robert Goldman (1992) defines as “commodity feminism,” advertisers begin to “incorporate feminist ideas whilst emptying them of their political significance” (Gill 2009, 149) and “figured out how to make feminism—and antifeminism—work for them” (Douglas 1995, 247). Lifestyle magazine publishers and advertisers create editorial content for men to observe and learn how to express their masculinity physically through body regimens (Barthel 1994; Goffman 1979; Jhally 1995; Kimmel 1996; LaFrance 1995; Rohlinger 2002; Williamson 1978), eating (Alexander 2003; Stibbe 2004), and smoking, even in the absence of tobacco advertisements (Dutta and Boyd 2007). Bethan Benwell (2003, 18) notes the rise of “commodity laddism” in men’s lifestyle magazines where “advertises ... [look] indistinguishable from magazine features” and reflect the “new lad” lifestyle imagery and content in similar ways.

The images of masculinity in lifestyle magazines replicate the persistent cultural feature of hegemonic masculinity (McKay, Mikosza, and Hutchins 2005; Rohlinger 2002). However, masculinity is several stories at once (Kimmel 2005, 30), continuously evolving (Benwell 2003), and takes on many forms depending on the context (Alexander 2003; Beynon 2002; Goltz 2007; Majors and Billson 1992; White and White 1998). Men’s lifestyle magazines in the 1990s, such as *loaded*, *FHM*, and *Maxim*, were a response to the conflicting predicament young men faced in normative expectations of masculinity: to be authentic and self-fulfilled and also a mass consumer (Rutherford 2003). Researchers proclaimed that the masculinity presented in the men’s magazines of the 1990s were one of these “several stories” of masculinity; the young men of the 1990s were “new lads” who challenged previous definitions of what it meant to be a man, such as the “traditional man” and “new man” (Alexander 2003; Benwell 2003; Gill 2003; Rogers 2005; Taylor 2005, 2006).

The “traditional man” adheres to four themes: No Sissy Stuff (must never display strong feminine characteristics), Big Wheel (achievement compared with other men), Sturdy Oak (convey confidence, self-reliance, and stoicism), and Give ‘Em Hell (aggressiveness and violence, typically as a way to obtain sex; Brannon 1976). He is defined by what he *does*, how successful he is at doing it (Franklin 1984; Kimmel 1996), and risked his health because of his aggressiveness, stress levels, emotional inexpressiveness, and tobacco and alcohol use (Pleck 1981). The “new man” is a cultural reaction to changed times, emerging from the antisexist dialogues of the feminist movement as a man who is in touch with his emotions without losing his masculinity (Gill 2003; Messner 1993), who has “turned his back on competitive sports [and] sexist jokes” (Morrell 1998, 7), and embraced the concept of egalitarianism in domestic life and parental duties even though they did not necessarily *do* more around the house or child rearing (Messner 1993). Unlike the “traditional man,” the “new man” is no longer defined by what he creates through labor, but by what he consumes

(Alexander 2003), coinciding with a general shift toward lifestyle advertising (Chapman 1988) with images that stoked his consumerism (Mort 1988).

The “new lad” emerged in the 1990s as a “backlash against the feminism that gave birth” to the “new man” (Benwell 2003, 37) by “drinking with mates, taking risks, telling dirty jokes, and, most of all, looking at skimpily dressed women” (McKay, Mikosza, and Hutchins 2005, 282). Writers and editors unapologetically returned to the sexist “traditional man,” telling readers who were not “in on the joke” and who criticized the sexist humor to “get over it” (Crewe 2003; Gill 2003). The “new lad” magazines further linked masculinity with consumer culture by enticing high-paying advertisers with “their mixture of sex, sport, alcohol, ... and ‘carefully managed’ fashion” (Bonner 2002, 194) to target the heterosexual male “new lad” readership (see also McKay, Mikosza, and Hutchins 2005).

“New lad” magazines share five common themes: certitude, new sexism, irony, contradiction, and double-voicing (Benwell 2003; McKay, Mikosza, and Hutchins 2005; Stibbe 2004). Benwell defines certitude as “an exaggerated emphasis on the certainty of gender and the preservation of male privilege through the exclusion of the ‘other,’ except as an object of desire” (Benwell 2003, 19). In these magazines, the predominant social scientific conceptualization of gender as a social construction is challenged; for the “new lad,” gender is essential and certain, “based on biological assumptions (nurturing is for women/risk-taking is for men)” (McKay, Mikosza, and Hutchins 2005, 282).

New sexism discourse is a “strategic accommodation or negotiation of liberal, progressive or feminist discourses” (Benwell 2007, 540) that often apologetically offer up a disclaimer for a sexist comment (I’m not being a sexist, but ...; Gough 2000, cited in Benwell 2003, 20), refer to men as a new oppressed social category due to feminism (Gough 2000), and often involves the oscillation between traditional and new forms of masculinity (Benwell 2004; Toerien and Durrheim 2001). Sexism is intricately connected with language (Bondi 1997; Krauss and Chiu 1998) and also connected with antihomosexual attitudes because of the association of male homosexuality with the repudiation of all things feminine (Donaldson 1993; Kimmel 2005), so diminutive or disparaging language toward the feminine used in common speech (e.g., “girl,” “babe,” “hottie”), as well as homophobic language (e.g., “That rule is so gay!”) is a form of “new sexism” found in “new lad” magazines because traditional sexist comments are often strategically coupled in the magazines with language that accommodates feminist discourse while simultaneously legitimizing “male power in new and creative ways” (Benwell 2007, 540).

Irony is a typical vehicle by which to express overt sexism (i.e., “only kidding!”; Benwell 2003, 20), saving face while leaving the form and meaning of the sexist language intact (Benwell 2003). Contradiction, like irony, is often the vehicle by which writers and editors convey contradictory messages in the magazines (Benwell 2003). McKay, Mikosza, and Hutchins provide an example of contradiction by explaining how men’s bodies are “constructed in ‘new lad’ magazines as instruments that need to be managed through contradictory regimes of exercise, sex, and sometimes dangerous practices (e.g., drinking, driving fast cars)” (McKay, Mikosza, and Hutchins 2005, 283). Similar to women’s magazines that may feature a story encouraging the reader to be happy with her body juxtaposed with an article about a new diet, the “new lad” magazines give the reader contradictory messages of risky behaviors, which they enjoy, but allay their insecurities and fears about the aging male body (McKay, Mikosza, and Hutchins 2005). Double-voicing is visible in articles that convey an authoritative and peer voice simultaneously; for example, where an article intertwines medical and scientific language with an informal “buddy” voice “to act as an intermediary, explaining and interpreting medical science for the reader” (Stibbe 2004, 36). The use of double-entendres or puns within the titles and texts of the

articles is another way in which the writer may use the buddy voice to “lighten up” a dense informational article.

A sixth common theme that is not fully explored in the “new lad” research, but critical to tobacco industry–produced magazines, is the depictions of risky behaviors. The construction of masculinity around risky behaviors is particularly salient when connected with a risky product such as tobacco. Stevenson, Jackson, and Brooks (2003) reported that a small group of readers of “new lad” magazines used “harmless fun” as descriptor of the magazine articles. Although harmless fun can signify teasing jokes (Goltz 2007), it also can include risky behaviors. The “new lad” masculinity construction depends upon an oscillation between heroic and anti-heroic/ordinary masculinities (Benwell 2003), where the “new lad” demonstrates his heroism by engaging in risky and dangerous behaviors, while simultaneously recognizing or cowering from the life-threatening risks. For example, in a radio interview with Johnny Knoxville, a writer and actor in the *Jackass* television and movie series, Knoxville demonstrates this oscillation by heroically describing his aloof reaction to very risky stunt involving an explosive, while simultaneously and anti-heroically defending his inability to ingest animal bodily fluids or hooking a fishhook in his mouth due to his squeamishness (Hot 30 Countdown and Johnny Knoxville 2006). Readers of lifestyle magazines are hailed by this simultaneous admission of invincibility and vulnerability.

Other lifestyle magazines also focus primarily on the heroic dimension of masculinity when depicting risky behaviors. Stibbe alludes to risky behaviors as an integral part of the social construction of masculinity in *Men’s Health* magazine by pointing out health-risk behaviors, such as limiting vegetable consumption by eating more red meats and drinking alcohol, which are frequently depicted in this magazine (Stibbe 2004). Dutta and Boyd (2007) found instances of smoking in the articles and advertisements in *GQ*, *Maxim*, and *Men’s Health*, which most often linked smoking with the pleasures of the senses, independence, mystery, and the desire to be someplace else with friends. Tobacco industry–produced lifestyle magazines simultaneously normalize risk as a positive masculine trait, while disguising the risks associated with tobacco use. The magazines avoid explicit discussion of the risks of tobacco use, while associating it with overtly risky pursuits in a way that comparatively minimizes the risks of smoking.

In this article, we demonstrate how the tobacco industry–produced “new lad” magazines were an efficient way to communicate “new lad” masculinity to millions of young adult men in numbers that exceeded other “new lad” publications. We engage with the literature on “new lad” magazines to show how these magazines were similar to other “new lad” magazines of the time and provide examples of how masculinity is a by-product of consumption. Lastly, we demonstrate how risky behaviors—a key element of these “new lad” magazines—may have benefited the tobacco industry’s goals of connecting masculinity with tobacco use.

Methods

Our article is based on findings from a multimethod research project designed to understand how and why the tobacco industry created lifestyle magazines during the late 1990s and early 2000s (see Cortese, Lewis, and Ling 2009). We utilize a synergistic methodology (Anderson, Dewhirst, and Ling 2006) to analyze the ways in which the tobacco industry magazines conveyed messages about young adult masculinity, and how these messages integrate tobacco use with young adult masculinity. By synergistic, we mean that we use an iterative approach, analyzing previously-secret tobacco industry documents to inform the semiotic and content analyses (Cortese, Lewis, and Ling 2009). Although our article utilizes document and semiotic analyses, some content and cover imagery findings are from a

content analysis of the tobacco industry-produced lifestyle magazines. We refer the reader to our publication (Cortese, Lewis, and Ling 2009), where we explain in greater detail this synergistic methodology.

Documents Analysis

Previously-secret tobacco industry documents, which were made available as part of the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement between the four largest tobacco companies in the United States and the Attorneys General of forty-six states, detail the cigarette companies' marketing strategies including their intentions to establish relationships with the target market. We searched tobacco industry document archives from the University of California, San Francisco Legacy Tobacco Documents Library (legacy.library.ucsf.edu) between February 2006 and June 2008. Initial search terms included Custom publication; Unlimited; Real Edge; young adult; psychograph*; brand identity; brand names; and industry acronyms (e.g., "YAMS" for young adult male smokers). Initial searches yielded thousands of documents; we reviewed those documents that related to custom publication development and related marketing activities. We focused repeated searches using standard techniques (Malone and Balbach 2000), and "snowball" searches for contextual information on relevant documents using key words, names, project titles, brand names, document locations, dates, and reference (Bates) numbers.

Our original search yielded thousands of documents. This analysis is based on a final collection of 109 research reports, presentations, memoranda, and plans. We reviewed the documents, organized them thematically, and wrote summary memoranda. We identified and discussed common themes. We triangulated information with data from published literature searches, legal cases, online search engines, and news stories.

Semiotic Analysis

Semiotics is a well-established qualitative research method for studying advertising and textual messages derived from the linguistic and cultural studies disciplines (Anderson, Dewhirst, and Ling 2006). The purpose of the semiotic analysis is to examine the elements of the magazines that reflect both masculinity and brand image elements very strongly and then to examine them more closely for concepts and themes associated with "new lad" masculinity.

We analyzed twenty-five *Unlimited* (from Philip Morris) and ten *Real Edge* (from Brown & Williamson) tobacco industry-produced lifestyle magazines housed at Trinkets and Trash (trinketsandtrash.org), an archive and surveillance system of historic and current tobacco promotional materials. To minimize the possibility of arbitrarily choosing examples of masculinity, we drew a random sample of thirty-one articles from *Unlimited* and eighteen articles from *Real Edge* with the highest masculinity content as established in our previous research (Cortese, Lewis, and Ling 2009) for in-depth analysis for the presence of "new lad" masculinity themes. We then analyzed the content using standard methodological techniques (Anderson, Dewhirst, and Ling 2006; Danesi 1999) to parse the connotative and denotative meanings of these six themes in the articles: certitude, new sexism, irony, contradiction, double-voicing, and risky behaviors.

The term psychograph refers to the search term for the tobacco industry document archives that would find all words with the word "psychograph" in it. Using this technique, we found documents with the words "psychographic," "psychographics," "psychographical" and so on.

Results

Tobacco Industry–Produced “New Lad” Magazines

The main goal of men’s lifestyle magazines, such as *Maxim*, *FHM*, and *loaded*, is to generate profits for the publishers through the sale of advertisements. In 2000, *Maxim* led the core group of lifestyle magazines marketed to young men with a circulation of 2.5 million in the United States, followed by *FHM* with 500,000, and *loaded*, circulated in the United Kingdom only, with about 400,000 copies (Advertising Age 2001; Drake 2000; Zgodzinsky 2001). Editors of men’s lifestyle magazines had neither a vested interest in any one particular advertised product nor a desire to transform the young adult male culture to fit a particular brand identity (Crewe 2003). Editors were free to generate masculinity in any way they saw fit, and companies purchasing space for their products developed advertising messages to comport with the magazine discourse (Crewe 2003; McKay, Mikosza, and Hutchins 2005).

In contrast, tobacco industry–produced lifestyle magazines were designed specifically to reinforce cigarette brand identities and to promote the use of these risky products by connecting them with the other risk behaviors, interests, and image of young adult male smokers as a way to effectively market to young men (Brown & Williamson 1996b; Philip Morris 1998; Philip Morris and Marketing Perceptions Inc. 1994). The varying cultural definitions of masculinity, though, are the underlying links between the target identity of the consumers and the brand identities; traditional, new man, and “new lad” masculinities inform both the brand and the target identities and are also shaped by both the consumer and the tobacco marketers (figure 1).

Philip Morris and publisher Hachette Filipacchi Magazines, publishers of men’s magazines *Road & Track* and *Car & Driver*, developed the controlled circulation lifestyle magazine *Unlimited* between 1994 and 1996 to reflect the masculine aspects of the Marlboro brand (Buckley 1994; Young 1996) by encapsulating Marlboro imagery from cover-to-cover to give the reader repeated positive impressions of the brand (Cortese, Lewis, and Ling 2009). In 2000, *Unlimited*’s circulation equaled or surpassed the subscription rates of top men’s magazines, such as *Maxim*, *Men’s Health*, *Car & Driver*, *Rolling Stone*, *Esquire*, and *GQ* (Advertising Age 2001). Nearly two million young adults between its 1996 launch (Kelly 2004) and at least early 2005 received a complimentary issue of *Unlimited* quarterly (Philip Morris 2002; Young 1996) through direct mail from lists of names and personal information collected by the tobacco industry through bar and nightclub promotions, sweepstakes, coupons, and other direct mailings (Lewis, Delnevo, and Slade 2004; Ling and Glantz 2002b; Sepe, Ling, and Glantz 2002).

The cover images and magazine content of *Unlimited* were intentionally designed to entice the “new lad” reader by addressing his interests as reflected in Philip Morris’ research on *Unlimited* readers (Beta Research and Hachette Filipacchi Magazines 1998; Hachette Filipacchi Magazines and Philip Morris 1995; Kohli 1995b; Looking Glass Group 1995; McCole 1999; Philip Morris 1999b) and exhibited themes learned from their psychographic research of the young male target market (Ansberry, Oboyle, and Roberts 1994; Philip Morris 1992) that was deployed in Marlboro marketing campaigns (Ling and Glantz 2002a, 2002b). The covers captured the Marlboro brand essence by depicting “Marlboro Country in action” (Philip Morris 2002). The title font on the cover is the familiar “Marlboro red” color (Cortese, Lewis, and Ling 2009), and issues after Spring 2003 use the Marlboro font in the title (figure 2).

Before *Unlimited*’s 1996 launch, Philip Morris hired Looking Glass Group to conduct three phases of focus groups with young male smokers aged twenty-one to twenty-nine years

about the magazine concept (Looking Glass Group 1995), and the prototype was revised after each phase (Looking Glass Group 1995). Moderators asked the young men lifestyle questions and their interest of the articles in the prototype (Looking Glass Group 1995). The resulting report stated that *Unlimited* accurately reflected the activities and interests of a particular target population of Marlboro who appear to typify the “new lad” in that the young men:

... do not ... take a broad, intellectual interest in the world around them. They like being out having fun with their buddies rather than sitting at home reading and contemplating Most seem to prefer spending a free evening with their buddies in a bar, drinking, smoking, chasing women, playing darts, shooting pool ... or, as a last resort, spend time with their wives or girlfriends (Looking Glass Group 1995).

Philip Morris tested the prototype on young adult females, who found the masculine references and sexist references “alienating” (Kohli 1995a). Although Philip Morris briefly considered developing a female-oriented version of *Unlimited* (Meltzer 1998; Philip Morris 1997), a parallel magazine risked “compromising Marlboro’s traditionally masculine, rugged image” to young adult males (Philip Morris 1997). For the first two years, it was sent only to young adult men between twenty-one and twenty-nine years who were listed in Philip Morris’s database (McCole 1999), and later expanded circulation to young adult female market segments who viewed *Unlimited* positively (Cortese, Lewis, and Ling 2009).

We did not identify many planning documents for the men’s lifestyle magazine *Real Edge* due to its development after the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement when tobacco companies were fully aware their internal documents would be made public; it is likely that efforts were made to hide or destroy inflammatory materials, (LeGresley, Muggli, and Hurt 2005) and Brown & Williamson was less forthcoming about its intentions or plans for the lifestyle magazine. *Real Edge* debuted in 1999 and marketed multiple male-oriented Brown & Williamson brands (Brown & Williamson 1998). *Real Edge* is the tobacco industry-produced magazine most similar to other “new lad” magazines.

Cover Imagery

The cover and content of *Unlimited* is similar to the Marlboro brand advertising (figure 2). We found between eleven and twenty-nine nontobacco advertisements in each issue (table 1), confirming Philip Morris documents that limited nontobacco advertisements in *Unlimited* to around forty pages of around 120 (Philip Morris 1996a, 1999c). The most frequent articles in *Unlimited* were about sports or competition, automobiles or motorcycles, and celebrity news and interviews, including music celebrities (table 2). The front cover of *Unlimited* typically included an article “teaser” that referenced a celebrity or sports figure (figure 2). Nearly all *Unlimited* covers featured men alone or in a group of two engaging in homosocial activities.

The cover images and magazine content of *Real Edge* also convey masculinity (figure 3). Unlike *Unlimited*, the cover of *Real Edge* does not reflect any Brown & Williamson tobacco brand advertising. *Real Edge* contained ninety-eight pages, most of which featured celebrity news and interviews (most often with young, attractive women), sports or competition, and automobiles or motorcycles (table 2). We found between five and thirteen nontobacco advertisements in each issue (table 1). Most front covers of *Real Edge* featured a celebrity as the main image and included small article “teasers” with images that referenced additional content (figure 3).

References to and depictions of tobacco use were notably absent in *Unlimited* and *Real Edge*, relegated to mostly tobacco advertising (table 1). This finding is surprising, given that

these magazines were created by the tobacco industry, but consistent with our argument that the main product commoditized in the magazines is brand image, and by association, masculinity.

Semiotic Analysis of the “New Lad”

Our sample of articles strongly conveyed themes of certitude, new sexism, irony, contradiction, double-voicing, and risky behaviors in the verbiage and images. Although it is nearly impossible to parse each concept separately, given that in many examples there are multiple themes present, we discuss each category separately while noting when more than one theme is present in a particular example.

Certitude

There was a notable absence of women from the images and articles, except when women were portrayed as sexualized objects (e.g., Benty 1999; Chanko 2000; Semel 2004a; Stone 1999), or trophies that were won as a reward after competition with other men (e.g., Binelli 1999; Stitt 2002). Rarely, and mostly in *Unlimited*, some women were competitors with men in sports or sports participants themselves (Frezno 2000b; Jarvis 2003; Synnott 2002), but most sports articles sexualized women (e.g., Dunn 2001c; Stein 1999).

In the article “Snake, Rattle, and Roll” in the Spring 2000 issue of *Unlimited*, readers did not see or read about women when reading how men “grab rattlesnakes by the hundreds ... [locking] them in their cellars and [waiting] for the [Mangum Rattlesnake] derby” in Oklahoma (Eig 2000, 92). The author reinforced the irrelevance of women in the derby by using “man as hunter” language to describe a good rattlesnake hunter: “A guy who calls in sick a lot, ignores family engagements, and doesn’t incur any unexpected hospital costs” (Eig 2000, 92).

Celebrities of interest to young men had an active role in *Unlimited* and *Real Edge*. Jennifer Garner from TV’s *Alias*, Natasha Gregson Wagner from the film *High Fidelity*, and Tara Reid from the film *American Pie* were some of “Hollywood hotties” (Chanko 2002, 35), celebrities who were so wild that they were “ready for the jungle” (Huffman 2000, 26) and had “certain powers over men” (Semel 2004b, 39) because of their beauty. The format for these interviews followed a typical questioning and commentary pattern: how the interviewer and/or the celebrity perceived the celebrity’s attractiveness; how the celebrity enjoyed/used her celebrity status for her benefit; and what type of man she found sexually attractive. The images of the celebrity were highly sexualized.

New Sexism

Unlimited and *Real Edge* were filled with sexist language and imagery throughout, typically followed by an apologetic disclaimer that, at times, may be found pages later. The article “How to Make a Splash with a Swimsuit Model” in the Spring 2004 issue of *Unlimited* chronicled how the author became friends with the swimsuit model Stacey Williams (“Wait until she’s 30” so that she’s more accessible and “a lot more interesting” [Stein 2004, 54]). The author also makes her the butt of his sexist jokes, while simultaneously accommodating progressive feminist critiques of the ideal female body as needing starvation to be perceived as beautiful. Eat at good restaurants because “when [swimsuit models] *pretend to eat*, they prefer expensive restaurants” [emphasis added] (Stein 2004, 54).

Not all sexist comments were apologetically delivered in a “new sexist” way. The front cover of the May/June 2000 “Thinly Disguised Premier Swimsuit Issue” of *Real Edge* (figure 3) referenced the article “Wave-Making, Breathtaking Pool Toys!” which encapsulated the sexist objectification of women. On the cover lay a blonde woman in a

strapped bikini bathing suit atop a Bombardier personal watercraft in shallow, clear water that is just as easily a large pool as a lagoon (figure 3). The models of the article were relegated to the status of “pool toy,” which relied upon the connotative understanding of language construction to get the sexist joke: women, much like the Bombardier, are toys to be ridden loudly and forcefully enough to make waves and take the “new lad’s” breath away.

The introduction to the “Pool Toy” was delivered with a “tongue-in-cheek” tone that acts as a disclaimer:

Summer is calling. You know, that wonderful time of year when a young man’s fancy turns to thoughts of high-powered water toys, fun in the sun and plenty of well-deserved rest and relaxation. Blah, blah, blah, so on and so forth. Who are we kidding? You’re not actually reading this, are you? We may as well be talking to a wall at this point, since any *Real Edge* reader worth his Y-chromosome has probably blown past this chunk of text and dived head first into the most refreshing pictorial ever to grace our pages. See you when you come up for air (Unattributed Author 2000).

The introduction is followed by twelve additional pages of women in bikinis posing in a “centerfold” format. One photo in particular stood out for its sexist language (figure 3):

The big lunkers don’t seem to be biting today, but angler Amy Weber isn’t too heartbroken about it. Perhaps she’s got bigger fish to fry (Unattributed Author 2000, 54).

In fishing parlance, “a lunker” is a game fish that is large for its size. The “new lad” would most likely get the joke; the lunkers are not fish, but her breasts.

Irony

In ironic discourse, the writer is somehow distancing himself from his apparent sexism. The author of the “Australian for Feminine” article in the March/April 2001 issue of *Real Edge* confessed in the opening sentence that he has “always been a sucker for tough chicks on screen” (Dunn 2001a, 45). Australian actor Peta Wilson, star of the TV show *La Femme Nikita*, was tough on Dunn after his off-color remark regarding rugby. The interview commenced with a confused, and then irate, Wilson:

Real Edge: Do you like rugby?

Peta Wilson: Huh?

... Maybe you can help me explain some stuff ... I don’t think most Americans understand the game.

(A bit flustered) I’m not sure I understand what you mean.

Rugby has positions known as locks, props, loose forwards and even a hooker. The props, the locks, and the hooker are collectively known as the “tight five,” which is strange, since you’d think the hooker would be hanging around the loose forwards, right?

(Pissed) That’s rude. What kind of interview is this? (Dunn 2001a, 46)

Wilson clearly did not find the author’s ironic use of sexism amusing and he apologizes to her shortly thereafter. The author avoided further sexist or ironic discourse even when set up by Wilson when she describes their exchange with the Australian idiomatic expression for not taking oneself seriously, “having the piss taken out of myself” (Dunn 2001a, 46). The

author politely responds, “We’re actually a piss-free publication” (Dunn 2001a, 46). Wilson’s unamused stance toward the author highlights the fragility and vulnerabilities of “new lad masculinity,” particularly in response to feminist challenges to the creative legitimization of male power through irony and sexism.

Contradiction

An example of contradiction is a cover story in the January 2000 issue of *Real Edge* that demonstrates and challenges the stylized body acts of traditional constructions of male and female, while also engaging the “new lad” with his perspective of gender and exhibiting the features of “new lad” masculinity. The *Real Edge* cover depicted a silhouette of the female author inside a narrow box with her palms up and out, bracing herself as a fireball bursts toward her, with the title caption next to the image “Fired Up! A Blazing Carnival of Art.”

The author engaged the “new lad” in her article by taking the perspective of the male artist, courageously exploring the intertwining of art and fire (Ryan 2000) in an interactive piece of art called “The Fireshower,” which blasted flames as she remained trapped inside an eight-and-a-half foot steel cage:

I was told to enter the cage ... Spelletich [the artist] started the machine, promising to let me out when I screamed ‘Stop!’ ... I was engulfed in a blinding column of fire. I believe I yelled stop in record time, which wasn’t long ... only five to seven seconds. But strangely, laughing wildly as I emerged from the manmade maelstrom, I felt the need to go in again—and again. (Ryan 2000, 30)

The female author took the “new lad’s” perspective of the oscillation between heroic and anti-heroic/ordinary masculinities where she simultaneously presented herself as heroic by reengaging in the activity and enjoying the danger while cowardly shouting that she “yelled stop in record time” (Ryan 2000, 30). She, and the female photo assistant who also endured “The Fireshower,” contradictorily challenged the typical depictions of the sexually charged women in the magazine. Spelletich, the vegetarian artist also simultaneously contradicted and supported “new lad” masculinity; he “grants interviews only if the writer buys him his favorite vegetarian sandwich and personally experiences [The Fireshower]” (Ryan 2000, 27). His vegetarianism is a direct challenge to the “new lad’s” predilection for meat (Alexander 2003; Stibbe 2004), while also asserting his dominance by granting interview access when the women endure The Fireshower, where “[you] risk your life. And then you survive. And suddenly life is worth more” (Ryan 2000, 31).

Double-Voicing

Unlimited and *Real Edge* were replete with examples of a “buddy” voice. However, double-voicing was most apparent in the informational articles, such as the Editors Letter in the debut issue of *Real Edge* where the “buddy” voice conveys information to the reader:

... Want to know something about high-tech cars but don’t have time to read a new-car buyer’s guide? Where else but *Real Edge* can you read six pages on the top eight cars in the world and know the most important stuff about today’s hottest wheels? Understand the Corvette’s Traction Control? No? Read up. (Brown & Williamson and EMAP Petersen Inc. 1999)

The author introduced *Real Edge* and, therefore, the tobacco company, as a source of knowledge on information of interest to the “new lad,” and conveyed the cultural definitions of masculinity. The Editor’s letter used a “buddy” voice to convey to the reader that any technical information of the Corvette’s traction control system will be accessible and simplified to the “most important stuff about today’s hottest wheels” (Brown & Williamson and EMAP Petersen Inc. 1999). If the “new lad” did not have the time (or desire) to read

scientific or analytical information about cars in a new car buyer's guide, then the magazine put it in simple terms around sexualized images of women to make it more enticing to the "new lad" reader.

Risky Behaviors

Many articles demonstrated some sort of risky behaviors, with articles like the binge eating in the "Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest" (Binelli 1999) and "All About Steak" (Huffman 1999), signaling the contradictory messages about risky health behaviors when juxtaposed with health-related articles, such as one on how to lose a beer gut in six weeks, complete with images of a woman as a trophy (Stein 1997). More typical examples featured extreme sports such as off-road mountain biking (Winsborough 1997) and the Extreme Football League (Frezno 2000a) that also highlighted risk. In the March/April 2001 issue of *Real Edge*, the cover story article on the Eco-Challenge 2000, "a story about extreme competition and the triumph of the human spirit" (Dunn 2001b, 25), featured on the front cover three scantily clad Playboy Playmates who "take on the world's toughest adventure race" (Dunn 2001b, 25). Their participation was described in "new sexist" terms to position himself in opposition to the sexist detractors from other teams:

Because they were [Playboy] Playmates, nobody—especially the other teams—believed the girls had what it takes to complete an Eco-Challenge. They were expected to fail and treated accordingly ... [and] were subjected to intense, often unfair scrutiny and ridicule." (Dunn 2001b, 28)

In a subsequent article, the author Dan Dunn chronicled his own experience engaging in risky behavior (and, arguably an example of contradiction as well because of his self-admitted struggle to compete) in the competition:

No doubt, most mortals would have a better chance surviving a weekend-long unprotected sex-a-thon with a pack of IV-drug-using Thai hookers than they would making it through one day of Eco-Challenge competition. It's a race designed to break people down physically and mentally. The competitors arrive knowing they will suffer ... The uninitiated may think it sheer madness. Those who love the sport *know* it is, and that's what makes it so appealing. (Dunn 2001b, 32)

These related articles, capturing the multiple dimensions of "new lad" masculinity, demonstrate to the reader how dangerous, and thrilling, the Eco-Challenge 2000 is. The risks associated with smoking pales in comparison with the Eco-Challenge 2000; the Kool cigarette ad on the opposite page that entices the reader to receive a free gift with a purchase of a pack of Kool menthol cigarettes is innocuous in comparison to "feet [that look] like raw hamburger" (Dunn 2001b, 32) and the Malaysian leech "moving around *inside his penis*" after one of the challenges [emphasis in original] (Dunn 2001b, 30).

Conclusion

Philip Morris Tobacco Company and Brown & Williamson Tobacco Company teamed up with major magazine publishers in the 1990s and early 2000s to develop and distribute their magazines, *Unlimited* and *Real Edge*, respectively, to entice almost four million young adult men into relationships with the tobacco companies. *Unlimited* and *Real Edge* did not contain many tobacco advertisements or images of tobacco use, which raises the question: why would these tobacco companies invest millions of dollars to produce lifestyle magazines for young adult men? Our findings suggest that the primary purpose of the lifestyle magazines was to encourage the use of risky products, such as tobacco, in part by linking risky behaviors with the contemporary "new lad" concepts of masculinity. These magazines also (perhaps inadvertently) served to define and reinforce constructions of "new lad"

masculinity. *Unlimited* and *Real Edge* were a part of a relationship marketing strategy that let the reader know that the magazines were from tobacco companies. Situating the tobacco product in the magazines, which the reader viewed in a positive way, helped solidify associations between risky products and “new lad” masculinity. The reader could associate tobacco with his interests, activities, and aspirations and could make these positive associations throughout the magazine with more involvement or intensity than any single advertisement exposure could achieve.

Unlimited and *Real Edge* are excellent examples of “new lad” magazines because they display the six common themes of “new lad” masculinity: certitude, new sexism, irony, contradiction, double-voicing, and risky behaviors. The tobacco industry magazines provide particularly vivid examples of risky behaviors, which appear more prominently in this sample than in the previous discussions of “new lad” magazines. This may be because tobacco industry magazines are designed to sell cigarettes, the most deadly consumer product ever produced. Tobacco advertising is often designed to minimize or distract from the risks of smoking (Anderson, Dewhirst, and Ling 2006; Anderson, Pollay, and Ling 2006). The risks of smoking may appear relatively trivial when juxtaposed with bungee jumping, off-road mountain biking, or “The Fireshower.” Social scientists interested in gender should be mindful of risky behaviors as a part of male identity construction and recognize that corporations have a vested interest in perpetuating the myth that risky behavior is a masculine trait; it, too, is a cultural creation that marketers use to their advantage to normalize risk, making risky products (such as cigarettes) appear less so, or to increase the “excitement” of lackluster products (such as AXE deodorant spray).

Our data set is limited in that we do not know how the readers of the magazines understood the lifestyle magazines and how they used them, if at all, to construct their own masculine identities. However, we build upon the existing “new lad” literature by providing a glimpse into how corporations study and interpret cultural constructions of masculinity to shape a brand identity, and then are able to use masculinity as a product of consumption through lifestyle marketing by using article text as well as more traditional advertisements.

Our findings elucidate how the tobacco industry built upon their perception of a preexisting construct of the “new lad,” enticing him as they understood him to exist, and constructing this form of masculinity in tandem with other commercial forces. This is a remarkable divergence to the construction of the “new man,” which was a cultural reaction to changed times. The tobacco industry has a well-established history of using its resources to influence biomedical scientists (Barnes and Bero 1996; Barnoya and Glantz 2005; Muggli et al. 2001) and sociologists who were secretly managed by tobacco industry lawyers to slow the declining social acceptability of smoking by encouraging the manipulation of the social construction of knowledge and the cultural symbolic meanings of smoking (Landman, Cortese, and Glantz 2008).

Cultural symbols can be used strategically (Swidler 1986), and the construction of “new lad” masculinity is no exception to how organizations can use culture to their advantage. Unlike identity-based social movement organizations that construct, develop, and deploy identity strategically as a way to achieve social justice (Bernstein 1997; Cortese 2006), the tobacco industry researched how young adult men constructed, defined, and understood “new lad” masculinity and reconstructed it in lifestyle magazines to comport with the brand identity of their product as a way to maximize profit and entice young adult men into tobacco use. The strategic manipulation of culture for profit has dire social consequences as it obfuscates how one sees oneself in relation to particular products; a person’s identity and self-image may be influenced by the brands that they consume.

Linking cigarette brand identities with social constructions of masculinity has the potential to make the tobacco product as much a part of a man as his masculinity, so that to quit tobacco is to quit himself. Currently, new media, particularly interactive channels such as the Internet (e.g., YouTube, Facebook, and MySpace), appears to use the same strategies pioneered in these lifestyle magazines. Our analytical and theoretical framework is salient to cutting-edge gender and cultural analyses of new media by elucidating how corporations seamlessly integrate entertainment content with product placement to entice the next generation of consumers with, perhaps, multiple expressions of masculinities.

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Biographies

Daniel K. Cortese is an Assistant Professor at Governors State University, where he conducts research on the social psychological and sociological processes of identity construction, and how organizations strategically shape collective identities through culture. His most recent publications included analyses of thousands of previously secret tobacco industry documents detailing marketing strategies targeting young adults while as a postdoctoral scholar at the University of California San Francisco. Dr. Cortese also published the book, *Are We Thinking Straight?* (Routledge, 2006), where he explored how an LGBT social movement organization deployed straight identities strategically and differently to achieve organizational goals in conservative and liberal political environments.

Pamela Ling is an Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of California San Francisco, where she conducts research on tobacco, media, and social marketing to young people. Her work includes analyses of thousands of previously secret tobacco industry documents detailing marketing strategies targeting young adults, and translating the lessons learned to improve tobacco control efforts for young adults. Dr. Ling has special interest in young adult smoking patterns and counter-engineering tobacco industry marketing, the global proliferation of U.S. tobacco marketing strategies, marketing to women, smokeless tobacco marketing, and using market research to guide clinical and public health interventions.

Figure 1. Relationship between masculinity and brand/user identity

Cultural definitions of masculinity, such as the traditional man, "New man", and "New lad" underlie and inform the target identities of male consumers as well as the brand identities. The tobacco product, as well as masculinity, is a product that the user can consume.

Figure 2. Cover of winter 2005 issue of unlimited compared with Marlboro advertisement inside the front cover

The cover of the Winter 2005 magazine (left), with the snow-capped mountain vista and active downhill skiers looks strikingly similar to the Marlboro advertisement (right) found in the inside cover. *Unlimited's* cover entices the “new lad” reader to take a look inside with “teasers” of celebrities and sport stories.

Figure 3. Real Edge, May/June 2000 issue

Women, much like the Bombardier, are presented as “pool toys” for the “new lad’s” pleasure. The “Swimsuit” article features women in seductive poses (right) with the ironic and sexist statement “The lunkers don’t seem to be biting today,” connotatively suggesting that her breasts, not the uncaught fish, are the lunkers.

Table 1

Number of Articles and Advertisements and Smoking Instances in Tobacco Industry–Produced Lifestyle Magazines

		Unlimited	Real Edge
Articles	Total	656	231
	Articles per issue: median (range)	26 (24–29)	23 (19–28)
	Percent of articles depicting, alluding, or mentioning tobacco use	1.4%	5.6%
Tobacco Ads	Total	68	47
	Tobacco ads per issue: median (range)	2 (1–6)	5 (3–7)
	Percent of tobacco ads depicting, alluding, or mentioning tobacco use	23.5%	46.8%
Nontobacco Ads	Total	528	82
	Nontobacco ads per issue: median (range)	24 (11–29)	8 (5–13)
	Percent of nontobacco ads depicting, alluding, or mentioning tobacco use	1.5%	4.9%

Table 2

Most Frequent Articles in Lifestyle Magazines, By Topic

Category	Subcategory	Unlimited (N = 656)	Real Edge (N = 231)
Leisure and Recreation	Sports/competition	16.2%	13.0%
Leisure and Recreation	Automobiles/motorcycles	11.7%	7.8%
Entertainment	Celebrity news and interviews	10.1%	21.2%
Leisure and Recreation	Travel or tourism	7.0%	6.1%
Information	Career or personal profiles	5.3%	2.6%
Leisure and Recreation	Electronics, video games, or Web sites	4.0%	1.3%
Entertainment	Music	3.5%	5.2%
Catalog	Entertainment, electronics, or video games	1.7%	3.9%
Advice, Tips and Guides	Nightlife	0.8%	2.2%
Catalog	Tobacco	0.0%	0.0%