

Power and the Production of Subjects: a Genealogy of the New Man and the New Lad

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Introduction

Producing knowledge about men is big business. Where once men represented the invisible, unmarked norm of human existence and experience, today they are hyper visible as a gendered group, with academics, marketing executives, journalists and others devoting considerable attention to masculinity or masculinities. In the past, forms of masculinity were studied only if they were regarded as a problem -- with predictable classed and racialised pictures emerging, and frequent moral panics about male youth and the 'dangerous classes'. Since the mid-1980s, however, masculinity in its own right has become a key focus of interest and interrogation as analysts queue up to explore and document shifts in men's values, tastes, aspirations, feelings, beliefs and behaviour. A whole army of cultural commentators now devotes its time and resources to identifying or picking over 'emerging trends' and to analysing, classifying, measuring and monitoring contemporary masculinities.

This process, as I shall argue, is not merely a descriptive one, but involves careful selections, exclusions and 'ontological gerrymandering' (Woolgar & Pawluch, 1985) in

order to create persuasive accounts about new and changing forms of masculinity. Central to these accounts (whether produced by retail analysts, magazine editors or academics) is the production of new masculine subjects: the 'new father' and the 'superwaif', 'black macho' and 'soft lad', the 'new boy' and 'modern romantic' – these are just some of the terms that have been used over the last decade to capture the apparently novel ways in which contemporary manhood is lived.

Some of these new masculine subjects disappear quickly leaving little trace. The 'new boy' and 'modern romantic', although generating many column inches of discussion and analysis, were ephemeral constructions who scarcely had a life outside fashion spreads, and were not widely taken up as ways of representing men's experience. Other subjects, though no less constructed, appear more solid and are certainly more long-lasting. The figure of the 'new father' is a case in point. Born out of the need for social scientists, retail analysts, market researchers and others to make sense of a variety of apparent changes in men's aspirations relating to fatherhood, the notion of the existence of the 'new father' was given substance by British Prime Minister Tony Blair's decision to take paternity leave for the birth of his youngest child, Leo, and by footballer David Beckham's assertion of his responsibilities to care for his son, Brooklyn, even when it conflicted with work. Both men were presented as examples of the 'new father', with other public figures offering further instantiations of 'new fatherhood' in action. In this way, complex and contradictory findings about the changing domestic and emotional landscapes for heterosexual couples with children were rendered simple and knowable through the figure of the caring, child centred 'new father'.

The aim of this chapter is to examine in detail the production of two other masculine subjects -- the 'new man' and the 'new lad'. These two have been selected from the plethora of available alternatives because of their apparent power as ways of representing contemporary masculinity, their relatively enduring nature (over more than a decade), and because they can be found across many different sites. The paper is divided into two broad parts. In the first, I elaborate my theoretical perspective - a Foucaultian and discourse analytic approach - and discuss how it differs in key respects from existing accounts. In the second - necessarily brief - part I sketch a tentative genealogy of 'new man' and 'new lad' - the aim being to demonstrate the production of these subjects across multiple sites, rather than to say anything in detail about each one.

Part 1: Power and the production of subjects

The approach taken here is a discursive one, which views 'new man' and 'new lad' as constructions. The starting point for the analysis is the Foucaultian (Foucault, 1979; 1980; 1987) idea that power works partly through the production of subjects - that is, rather than being neutral or descriptive terms 'new man' and 'new lad' are part of a power/knowledge nexus in which certain people, practices, ideas and way of living are normalised and others are rendered deviant. Writing about the development of distinctively modern forms of power in the 18th century, Foucault was concerned with 'dividing practices' - for example the spatial separation of different types of subject - and with the scientific classification of people by the emerging human sciences. Today,

however, entire industries are devoted to defining and classifying new subjects: not just the academic disciplines of sociology and psychology, but journalists, futurologists and trend spotters, think tanks, health analysts, psephologists, etc etc. These ‘new cultural intermediaries’ (Featherstone, 1995) interpret and mediate cultural and psychological questions about who we are, how we live and what we want. They represent us to ourselves, and, in doing so, make the world knowable in highly specific ways.

For example, it is now routine for marketing companies to release their ‘findings’ to the press, a short period after they have been reported to the client and are no longer deemed ‘market sensitive’. Hungry for copy to fill the ever-expanding lifestyle sections of newspapers and magazines, journalists frequently produce detailed commentaries and ‘think pieces’ on such reports. The debates are then pushed through the ‘media echo chamber’ (Faludi, 1991) and observations about contemporary masculinity take on the status of truths about ‘how men are’. These truths may then be imported into academic research - perhaps as ‘evidence’ that a project should be funded (e.g. ‘we are witnessing an epidemic of body dysmorphia among young men that requires urgent examination’), or to challenge a received wisdom. Meanwhile, retailing companies and magazines have also digested the findings and are already tailoring their products to take account of the new information about how men are changing: softer lines appear in car designs, fragrances are marketed **to pick up** on the ‘new sensuality’, beer adverts start using gay imagery, and so on.

This is a brief and oversimplified account, but it captures in essence the process by which various forms of knowledge including academic knowledge are involved not just in describing the world, but also in *producing it*. While writing this paper I came across a typical example. Under the headline ‘Young men reject old image’, an article in *The Observer* (26 August 2001) reports on a trend survey by *Informer* which documents a shift away from the ‘new lad’ to a form of masculinity described as ‘nice bloke’ (in brief: happy with equality, serious about work, juggling different commitments). In the same article the editor of the ‘lad mag’ *Loaded* is quoted as saying that he intends to ‘feminise’ his publication in response to this shift. And so the reflexive cycle continues.

This moment is also reflexive in another way: individuals are being exhorted constantly to *reflexively monitor* their selves. We are invited to identify, measure and compare our desires, aspirations and behaviours against well-publicised but ever-changing norms that relate to every aspect of human life: our frequency and variety of types of sexual intercourse; the amount of time we spend with our children; the number of times we visit our doctor; the duration and nature of our experience of bereavement; the quantity of units of alcohol we consume in a week; etc. No area of life is immune. As Foucault pointed out, power in contemporary society operates increasingly through processes of *subjectification* in which self-regulation is paramount, and the self is experienced as an ongoing *biographical project* to be worked on and disciplined (Rose, 1991; 1999; Giddens, 1991; Beck & Beck-Gersheim, 1995; Walkerdine et al, 2001)

The 'new man' and the 'new lad': theoretical reflections

This paper is concerned with exploring these processes of subjectification in relation to 'new man' and 'new lad'. 'New man' and 'new lad' represent perhaps the two dominant and most pervasive constructions of masculinity circulating in Britain over the past decade. Although, as I have already noted, there have been many other different attempts to label and classify masculinities, none have had the staying power of 'new man' and 'new lad', or their ability to capture or speak to changes in the landscape of gender. 'New man' and 'new lad' have become familiar and recognisable stereotypes. Despite the fact that constructions of them are always *occasioned* - that is, produced for particular purposes in specific interpretative contexts - there is considerable consensus about what constitutes each. The 'new man' is generally characterised as sensitive, emotionally aware, respectful of women, and egalitarian in outlook - and, in some accounts, as narcissistic and highly invested in his physical appearance. He is as likely to be gay as straight. By contrast, 'new lad' is depicted as hedonistic, post-(if not anti) feminist, and pre-eminently concerned with beer, football and 'shagging' women. His outlook on life could be characterized as anti-aspirational, and owes a lot to a particular classed articulation of masculinity (see Crewe, this volume). A key feature of some constructions of 'new lad' is the emphasis on his knowing and ironic relationship to the world of serious adult concerns.

'New man' and 'new lad' are frequently represented as products of particular chronological moments, with 'new man' representing the zeitgeist of the 1980s and 'new

lad' the 1990s (in the familiar journalistic tendency to map ideas and identities onto decades). Indeed, one of the most common cultural narratives of masculinity in the 1990s (alongside talk of its crisis) was the story of the *displacement* of 'new man' by 'new lad'. In such stories 'new lad' is a reaction against 'new man', as well as a backlash against the feminism that gave birth to him.

Such accounts are not limited to journalism, and indeed a striking feature of contemporary academic scholarship on the new man and new lad is the extent to which it draws on, borrows from and reworks other knowledges (e.g. from market research or advertising or fashion retailing).

It is not simply that these domains constitute the *object* for academic researchers, but - in a more significant shift in terms of intellectual production - that academic research increasingly *resembles* the kinds of knowledges produced by other interested groups. John Hartley (2002) has argued that this shift in cultural studies more broadly represents a welcome (and postmodern influenced) recognition on the part of academics that they do not have the monopoly on useful knowledges or truths. An alternative, more sceptical, position, however, might point with concern to the political economy of universities or to the need increasingly to justify academic research by reference to wealth creation or innovation and to frame research in terms of potential 'users' (not infrequently business enterprises).

In relation to narratives of the shift from new man to new lad there are often considerable similarities between the accounts produced by market research agencies or journalists and those of academics. A lad-mag editor might point to the success of his publication being due to its recognition of the inauthenticity or dishonesty of portrayals of 'new man', together with its appreciation of the fact that straight men like looking at sexy photographs of young women. Tim Southwell of *loaded* tells us to 'get over it', while a Condé Nast press release widely reported in the broadsheets asserted:

GQ is proud to announce that the New Man has officially been laid to rest (if indeed he ever drew breath). The Nineties man knows who he is, what he wants and why he's going, and he's not afraid to say so. And yes, he still wants to get laid. (January 1991)

Meanwhile an academic points out that 'the most important lesson of the emergence of representations of the "new lad"... concerns the way it points up the difficulty of reinventing masculine heterosexual scripts. This relates to a clear limited position within the shifts in masculinity associated with the "new man"... [B]ecause no new heterosexual scripts were articulated - scripts that were both sexy and anti sexist - the opportunity for established scripts to re-emerge was always left open' (Nixon 2001, pp. 383-384)

The tone of these two accounts is very different, but they both stress the reality of the shift and its origins in the failure of discourses of 'new manhood' to address heterosexual men's sexuality.

One writer taking a very different position is John MacInnes. MacInnes is not interested in the putative shift from new man to new lad or in the pluralisation of masculinities since 'just as there is no such thing as masculinity, neither are there any such things as masculinities' (1998, p. 40). For him, gender does not exist except as 'an ideology people use in modern societies to imagine the existence of differences between men and women on the basis of their sex where in fact there are none' (1998, p. 1). The key question for MacInnes thus becomes not what is masculinity and how is it changing, *but under what historical conditions did men and women come to believe that masculinity exists, what forms has this belief taken, and what consequences does it have?* (1998, p. 77).

MacInnes has made a powerful intervention into the field of masculinities studies and maintains a critical distance from the issues that have preoccupied most other scholars. I share his thoroughgoing 'culturalist' (Beynon, 2002) stance which refutes any essential, a priori psychological differences between males and females, and his assertion that gender is an ideology. Where I differ, however, is in the significance accorded to ideology. For me there is nothing 'mere' about ideology, it is not just an epiphenomenon, and nor can such a stark distinction between the real (material) and the discursive be maintained.

Ideologies or discourses are real and have material effects, and it is these discourses that I take as my object of study.

This paper, then, differs from both the perspectives outlined above. It does not assume the existence of a real and profound shift in men's sensibilities over the last two decades, presented in shorthand as the displacement of new man by new lad. But nor does it regard the discussion of different types of masculinity such as new man and new lad as essentially trivial. Instead it argues that new man and new lad are best treated as discourses (or interpretive repertoires, myths, or cultural constructions) for making sense of contemporary (largely white British) masculinity. These discourses are drawn on in different ways at different times in different forums for different occasioned practices. Rather than one displacing the other, they *coexist* as alternative formulations of masculinity which are constantly reworked and recycled and used to 'kick off' (Williamson, 1978) against each other. My perspective, then, takes seriously Beynon's point that: 'perhaps what we are currently witnessing at the start of the 21st century is nothing less than the emergence of a more fluid, bricolage masculinity, the result of "channel hopping" across versions of the "masculine"' (2002, p. 6)

New masculine subjects and real men

One advantage of this perspective is that it leaves open questions about the existence of a profound cultural shift in masculinity. Such changes have been remarkably difficult to document. While there have been a number of excellent and insightful examinations of

new man and new lad as 'regimes of representation' or practices in advertising, fashion and photography (Nixon,1996 Edwards, 1997; Mort,1996), attempts to read off from these anything about the lived experience or sensibility of contemporary young men have proved problematic. There are no agreed-upon criteria for identifying new man or new lads among actual male populations. Indeed the one much repeated 'key index' of newmannishness is his contribution to domestic work - something that is usually only invoked to support arguments that the figure of the new man does not exist in the real world!

One problem, I would contend, is the tendency to think in rather static terms, with a kind of one-size-fits-all notion of masculine identity - itself surely a product of the marketing led tendency to assert the existence of a limited number of 'types of man'. In fact, new man and new lad are not fixed identity positions or essences but are, as I have suggested, best thought of as discourses or cultural repertoires. Any of us - as skilled cultural actors in a society saturated by representations of new man and new lad - could 'do' 'new man' or 'new lad', and indeed some accounts of the new lad makes precisely this point when they assert that the performance of a new man sensibility is something that they knowingly enact to get women into bed. For example Sean O'Hagan says that new lad 'aspires to New Man status when he's out with women, but reverts to old lad type when he's out with the boys. Clever, eh?' (1991).

Most contemporary empirical research on/with young men points to an extremely complicated relationship between the self descriptions made by real young men and the templates of masculinity on offer in magazines and other cultural forms. The important work by Peter Jackson, Nick Stevenson and Kate Brooks who interviewed groups of magazine readers, highlights the profound ambivalence of different investments and reading positions (Stevenson et al 2000a; 2000b; this volume; Jackson et al 2001). They point, for example, to the variety of distancing strategies deployed in accounts of magazine consumption, with the emphasis upon rebutting the potential charge that they take themselves or the magazines too seriously. My own recent research with Karen Henwood and Carl McLean, in which we interviewed 140 men aged between 15 and 35, found similar disavowals, such as claims that the magazines are only ever purchased for a train journey, or flicked through in a dentist's waiting-room, or just bought 'for a laugh'.

We also found that many of the men we interviewed were highly invested in independence and autonomy and in 'being different' (Gill et al, forthcoming). Highly individualistic claims were often made persuasive through the construction of implicit and explicit contrasts with other men. Thus while men characterised their own decisions as independent, other men were described as 'fakes' or 'clones' or 'like sheep'. This can be seen in the focus group extract below with a group of Welsh men discussing (brand) labels.

Int: You mentioned Dolce & Gabbana there, I mean, do you think labels play a big part in it?

Paul: Yeah, I would have said so, definitely. It's all, it's all a big image thing, isn't it, really?

John: How to be [...] on a magazine.

Paul: Well, this is it.

John: And people treat it like the Bible. I'm not saying people do, but I reckon people do.

Jake: See something in it and they want to copy that.

Paul: Well, this is it, yeah. This is it.

John: It's in this magazine, it costs this much so it must be cool. Who cares what it looks like or smells like or whatever.

In this extract, the representation of magazine readers is that they use magazines like (life) style Bibles, slavishly copying the fashions displayed, regardless of what they actually look or smell like. The speakers construct their own identities contrastingly in terms of the intrinsic value of their own choices, and their defiant refusal to buy labels.

Our analysis of men's feelings about and reactions to eroticised magazine and advertising images of the male body points up similar complexities. While the producers of these images - such as the muscular torso that graces every month's cover of Men's Health - code these as *aspirational* and expect male consumers to regard them that way, our research found that this was a minority response. There were in total 8 different kinds of response including feeling pressured, anger and resentment, desire, and indifference, and men are combined and moved between these in a subtle and fluid manner (Gill, et al, 2000).

At a very general level, then, our research makes a point made by most empirical research on 'ordinary' men: namely that lived identities are complex, contradictory and dynamic and do not have an unmediated relationship to any particular sites of cultural production (see also Stevenson et al and Wheaton, this volume). It is noteworthy that discussions of the new man and the new lad have come out of analyses of fashion, retailing and magazines and have then tried to find evidence of these lifestyles among actual populations - rather than the other way round. Contemporary sociological and social psychological analyses, by contrast, seem to have found little evidence for large numbers of men straightforwardly inhabiting either a new man or a new lad identity - without a huge dose of irony (Frosh, Phoenix & Pattman, 2001; O'Donnell & Sharpe, 2000; Wetherell & Edley, 1997)

Recent studies have pointed instead to the significance of class, 'race', ethnicity and region in producing and fracturing young masculine identities. Stephen Frosh, Ann Phoenix and Rob Pattman point out that the cultural resources available to construct masculinities are racialised –a key point when thinking about the overwhelming whiteness of representations of the new man and the new lad (Frosh et al, 2000; 2001). In their important study of boys in London secondary schools they found that black young men of African Caribbean descent are viewed as 'super masculine', embodying highly valued traits associated with toughness, a particular masculine style and dress, and physical ability. This rendered them popular/hegemonic figures, but also had major costs in terms of being trapped by what Majors and Billson (1994) call the 'cool pose', with little cultural capital in wider society. In fact the very traits that were admired, were also liable to produce fear and discrimination from authority figures such as teachers and potential employers.

Les Back's (1994) work on 'white Negroes' is also pertinent here as it explores the phenomenon of whites who wish to imitate and take on the powerful masculine image associated with black straight men. Back argues that far from challenging racism, this apparently admiring attitude to blackness actually appropriated it as a white artefact, without any necessary impact on the 'white Negroes' racist beliefs. This point about the racialised performance of masculinity is also made by Louise Archer whose study of 'Muslim brothers, black lads and traditional Asians' showed that the young Asian men could (and did) construct their identities in quite different ways, 'as a shared site of solidarity against racism, as a resistance to whiteness but also as a means of drawing

divisions between black groups, and as an assertion of masculine power' (Archer, 2001, p. 98). Archer argues that the young men's identity discourses can be read as part of a process of 'imagined' construction which is fluid, flexible and constantly reinvented, thus challenging traditional notions of essentialised gender, cultural or racial identities. against this backdrop, the persistent whiteness of representations of both new man and new lad is particularly striking.

Part 2: Outline for a genealogy

Having set out the theoretical perspective, it is time to move on to providing an outline for a tentative genealogy of the cultural discourses of new man and new lad. It is not possible to be either detailed or exhaustive here, but merely to point to some of the varied influences on the construction of these figures, drawing on existing work and on my own analysis of influences that have been overlooked in other accounts. My starting point is Tim Edwards' assertion that the new man was not simply the product of the media or even of responses to second wave feminism, but 'he was rather the crystallisation of consequences in economics, marketing, political ideology, demographics and most widely consumer society in the 1980s' (1997). This, I think, gives a very valuable sense of the *multiplicity* of different influences and determinations that produced the discourses about the new man and (equally) the new lad

The 'new man'

1. Feminism and the new social movements

It would be impossible to make sense of the figure of the 'new man' without reference to feminism. Since the late 1960s feminism has had an enormous impact on every area of social life from paid employment to intimate relationships, and the transformations of gender relations that it provoked are still underway. Feminists interrogated many taken for granted aspects of traditional masculinity and lay at its door responsibility for atrocities from rape to nuclear war (Chapman, 1988). Early feminist criticisms of hegemonic masculinity as distant, uninvolved, unemotional and uncommunicative are still to be found reverberating through sites as diverse as talk shows, health forums and business think tanks.

These critiques gave rise to a great appetite for a new kind of masculinity which would encompass many of the traits previously thought of as feminine - emotionality, intimacy, nurturing and caring (Chapman & Rutherford, 1988; Seidler, 1989; 1992; Connell, 1987; Kimmel, 1987; Hearn & Morgan, 1990) and it is partly against this backdrop that 'new man' must be understood.

Additionally, feminists sought to challenge the fiction of the unified and universal male subject, and to make masculinity visible as a gender. Moreover, some feminists - as well as other postmodernist thinkers - sought to deconstruct some of the binary ways of thinking that constructed masculinity as rational and instrumental against emotional and relational femininity. At its most basic, then, feminism started a conversation about

gender, power, work, sex, intimacy, nature and culture - and opened up a space where gender relations could be progressively revised.

This revisioning was reinforced by a number of other social movements during the 1970s and 1980s - the peace movement, anti-racist organisations, environmental movements, movements for sexual liberation, postcolonial struggles and a variety of identity based political organisations e.g. disability rights groups. What this loose categorisation of groups share is both a disillusion with conventional class-based party politics, and a commitment to new forms of organisation and struggle, based less upon representative democracy and more upon direct action. Taken together, the new social movements disrupted the very understanding of what 'the political' meant, expanding its definition to reach far outside of the institutions of representative democracy, and into everyday life. In this way, questions about domestic labour, childcare and consumption all came to be seen as irredeemably political. This redefinition also promoted a different model of the individual, as someone connected not simply to a family, but to wider communities and to the environment. In doing so it sowed the seeds for a revisioning of traditional masculinity, and helped to create a cultural milieu in which discourses of new manhood could emerge and flourish.

2. Popular psychology and masculinity

Another profoundly important set of influences on 'new man' can be found in the rise of a variety of different psychological perspectives in the last third of the 20th century -

themselves influenced by feminism. The humanist psychology that was popularized in the UK and US throughout the 1970s took as its focus the 'whole person'. It promoted assertiveness in place of aggressiveness or passivity (which were popularly mapped on to men and women respectively), and it placed high value on good communication.

Psychoanalysis also experienced an upsurge of interest at the same time, as evidenced by the growing number of different schools of psychoanalytic thought and training institutions, and increasing numbers of people seeking personal therapy and counselling. Moreover, a mounting disaffection with traditional science and medicine produced a flourishing alternative health movement, encompassing a whole range of natural and/or non-Western approaches to healing, many of which have a much more holistic view of the person than allopathic disciplines.

Taken together, these movements put the idea of the 'whole person' or 'self-actualised person' (Maslow, 1970) on the cultural agenda. Significantly, the whole person was often seen as an androgynous person [*could put reference to Sandra Bem?*], as extreme masculinity and extreme femininity came to be regarded not simply as socially restricting or damaging, but also as profoundly unhealthy (Chapman & Rutherford, 1988). Such concerns fed into the growing men's health movement which saw threats to men's health coming not just from coronary heart disease or cancer but also from patterns of behaviour and ways of relating that added up to a kind of 'toxic masculinity'.

Popular psychology and popular health movements, then, provided a supportive context for the 'new man' to emerge and develop.

3. *The rise of the style press*

A different site of production of 'new man' imagery came from the rise of the style magazines in the 1980s. (Nixon,1996; Edwards,1997; Mort,1996; Stevenson, et al, 2000)

For years, people working in the fashion, magazine, advertising and retailing industries had fantasised about the creation of a magazine which could be targeted at affluent male consumers - but it was seen as an impossible dream. The main reason identified for this was that men did not define themselves *as* men, in the same way that women defined themselves as women. Men lacked self-consciousness about their sex (the 'male as norm' problem, identified by feminists), and while they bought magazines about cars or fishing or cameras there was scepticism about whether they would buy a title organised around *being a man*, rather than a specific hobby. A second problem concerned the tone such a magazine should adopt - women's magazines had long adopted the formula of treating their readers like friends, with an intimate tone, but this was seen by people within the industry as potentially threatening to heterosexual men because of its implication of homosexuality.

In terms of understanding the emergence of new ways of representing masculinity Sean Nixon argues that *The Face*, launched by Nick Logan in 1982 was of primary importance. It promoted itself as a style magazine rather than a men's magazine, although the vast majority of its readers were male, and was organised around fashion and music and any kind of social commentary deemed to be chic enough to fit in its pages. Nixon

(1996) argues that *The Face* developed a new aesthetic: it was not just *about* style, but it was emblematic of stylishness itself, creating a new vocabulary for fashion photography – a vocabulary, significantly, that extended the notion of style to include fashion spreads of menswear and advertising for body products targeted at men as well as women.

The style press exercised two key kinds of influence, then - first in opening up space for fashion/lifestyle magazines aimed at men, and secondly in pioneering radically new ways of representing male bodies. Arguably, however, the two ‘problems’ that industry people had identified did not disappear. Their residues are clearly visible in contemporary men’s magazines. Anxieties about how to address heterosexual men were resolved in two ways: first through the adoption of a ‘laddish’ tone which enabled male editors and journalists to address readers as ‘mates’, and secondly through an almost hysterical emphasis on women’s bodies and heterosexual sex juxtaposed alongside avowedly homoerotic photographs. As Tim Edwards (1997) has argued, this allowed magazines to appeal directly to a gay readership whilst still defensively asserting the heterosexuality of their readers.

4. Retail power: masculinity goes to the mall

The rise of the style magazines can in turn be understood in terms of massive changes in the economy that were taking place in the 1980s. There was a dramatic decline in manufacturing and a rise in the service sector and retailing – itself producing a ‘genderquake’ (Wilkinson, 1994) The employment of increasing numbers of people

within the retail sector was, however, just one of a number of factors that were changing the structure and meaning of shopping and consumerism (Mort, 1996). There was a significant trend towards conglomeration within clothes retailing, with five or six companies controlling the high street by the end of the 1980s; a growth in out-of-town shopping; and shopping began to be promoted as a major cultural or leisure activity - with the opening of large themed shopping centres, the provision of creches and restaurants in shopping centres, and the promotion of trips to large out-of-town stores as a relaxing day out. Indeed, studies consistently find that shopping is the main leisure activity of the British (e.g. *Cultural Trends*, 1998; Miller, 1995; Miles, 1996).

Another key shift was evident in the growth of marketing and the displacement of a selling orientation (selling what is already made) by a marketing orientation (making what will sell) (Edwards, 1997; Wernick, 1991).

In the 1980s the 'new man' became a new target for fashion companies - men were the new market (Edwards, 1997; Hession, 1997). This was heralded as a quiet revolution in fashion companies - as men had been considered a market that was difficult to crack, and shopping had hitherto been seen as a traditionally female pursuit. The move was associated with the meteoric rise of a few companies - most notably *Next* and the *Burton* group. *Next*, in particular, launched in 1986, borrowed images of the city and of share dealing and city gents for its clothes - striped shirts, brogues, double breasted suits. As such it was trading on images that were circulating elsewhere through the privatisation campaigns, the Big Bang, as well as in major 'zeitgeist' films like *Wall Street*. Frank

Mort (1988) argues that *Next* was important for allowing men to *play* with these images without commitment. Where once clothes had been a powerful and stable signifiers of social location, increasingly they were worn in more flexible and playful ways, such that men could 'try on' new identities through their apparel- perhaps working as a labourer throughout the week, but dressing like a share-room dealer to go out in the evening, and wearing 'outdoor casual' at weekends (Edwards, 1997; Mort, 1996).

5. Punk and after

Frank Mort (1988;1996) argues that this new playful relationship between clothes and identity was the result of a series of changes that took place in 1970s, provoked in part by punk music and style. With its emphasis on bricolage – the putting together of things that are normally kept apart - for example, Doc Martens and ballet dresses – punk created a space for men and women to be able to play with different self-presentations, and broke down stable chains of signification - such that it was no longer straightforwardly possible to read off social location from particular ways of dressing.

There is little research exploring the connections of contemporary music with representations of masculinity, yet it would seem obvious that musical styles have a profound effect upon the ways in which masculinity is codified and lived. In relation to the 'new man' it is striking to note how the waves of music that gained popularity in the late 1970s and early to mid 1980s (ie at the moment when 'new man' emerged as a discourse and regime of representation) all encoded challenges to traditional masculinity

in the dress and style of their male artists: the sexual ambiguity of Boy George and Prince; the soft femininity of the new romantic movement; Gothic style, etc

6. Gay liberation and the pink economy

As with feminism it is hard to overestimate the impact of the gay liberation movement - post Stonewall - on the construction of the figure of the 'new man'. One avenue for this influence has been on visual representations of the male body in popular culture. Magazines aimed at gay men, together with pin-ups and particular subcultural styles within the gay club scene have had a profound effect upon representations of masculinity, through a routing that has gone from gay porn through art house photography to advertising (Parsi: 1997). Whilst there is considerable anger within parts of the gay community about the ways in which homoerotic images have been appropriated and commodified by straight media/marketing/retailing worlds, there has also been much excitement about the ways in which men are literally re-visioned in popular culture (Edwards, 1997; Simpson, 1994). In particular, the mainstreaming of selected gay representational practices served to cleave apart the automatic association of masculinity with heterosexuality, and the elision of masculinity with activity, by showing men not only as active sexual subjects, but also as objects of desire.

This in turn impacted upon the heterosexual scopic orders. Suzanne Moore (1988) has argued that it was precisely the growing visibility of eroticised representations of men outside the gay media that facilitated, or gave permission for, a new kind of gaze among

women. She suggests that this constituted a major disruption to heteronormative politics of looking - in which old assumptions about subject /object, active/passive were challenged. Rather than simply being objects of the gaze, women have become active subjects who can look as well as being looked at. An important literature in film and photography studies deals with the ways in which representations of masculinity are designed to disavow homoeroticism: using the 'reassuring' presence of a woman as love interest, excessive violence or humour as their main means (e.g. Neale, 1983; Cohan & Hark, 1993; Tasker, 1993) (And this constitutes perhaps an alternative reading of the preoccupation with 'gore' in magazines like FHM - see Benwell, introduction, and Rutherford, 2000). It also details the punishment meted out to women in film whose sexuality is deemed too active or independent. Moore's argument is that this shift made both the disavowal and the punishment redundant and facilitated more egalitarian sexual relations between men and women.

Another impact of gay politics upon the emergence of 'new man' is through its influence on retailing and consumerism. As Tim Edwards (1997) has pointed out, gay men tend to have higher disposable incomes than straight men and this can have a disproportionate effect on markets for all kinds of products. Their buying patterns also differ as consumption can be used to signify and reinforce sexual orientation.

Finally it is worth pointing to the significance of gay male culture in the wake of HIV/AIDS for any understanding of 'new man'. As well as having a devastating effect on the lives of tens of thousands of gay men in the West, HIV and AIDS has also been

important in generating new representations of masculinity. One representation - seen best in the flourishing artistic and cultural activity which the crisis produced (see Griffin, 2000) - is of masculinity as loving, caring and nurturing – exemplified by the many men who have cared for partners and friends while they are living or dying with HIV. This offered a powerful alternative vision of masculinity - to heterosexual and bisexual as well as gay men - which differs markedly from hegemonic understandings of what it means to be a man.

The ‘new lad’

1.A backlash against feminism

The dominant way of understanding the emergence of ‘new lad’ is as part of a backlash against feminism. From this perspective the figure of the ‘new lad’, constructed around knowingly misogynist and predatory attitudes to women, represents a refusal to acknowledge the changes in gender relations produced by feminism, and an attack upon it. Imelda Whelehan argues that the ‘new lad’ is ‘a nostalgic revival of old patriarchy; a direct challenge to feminism’s call for social transformation, by reaffirming - albeit ironically - the unchanging nature of gender relations and sexual roles’ (2000, p. 5). He represents, then, a defensive assertion of masculinity, male power and men’s rights against feminist challenges.

In a similar vein Suzanne Franks has argued that as women’s roles and identities have changed and expanded into domains previously thought of as male, ‘new lad’ represents a response which moves men further into the heartlands of masculinity - rather than

blurring gender identities. In this sense, the 'new lad' seems clearly to be part of a backlash against feminism across multiple sites and domains (cf. Faludi, 1991). The growth of a conservative men's movement, organised around the assertion of fathers' rights after divorce, emerged at the same moment to attack feminism and use equal opportunities legislation to attempt to reinstate male power and privilege. [*e.g. UK Men's Movement, Families need Fathers, Million Men movement*]

However, as Peter Jackson, Nick Stevenson, and Kate Brooks (2001) point out it would be a mistake to read 'new lad' *only* in terms of a backlash against feminism. They draw on Barbara Ehrenreich's analysis of the success of Playboy magazine to argue that new lad's individualistic, hedonistic, pleasure-seeking attitude must also be understood as a reaction to and rebellion against the figure of the male as 'breadwinner' and family provider (see also Segal, 1990). In this context the 'new lad' offers a refuge from the constraints and demands of marriage and nuclear family. He opened up a space of fun, consumption and sexual freedom for men, unfettered by traditional adult male responsibilities.

Jackson et al (2001) suggest that 'new lad' may be a more ambiguous figure than straightforward backlash accounts suggest. Perhaps a useful analogy may be made with the rise of 'muscular heroes' in action cinema during the late 1980s and early 1990s (e.g. Schwarzenegger, Stallone and Willis). One reading of the state of action movies at this time was that they were classic 'backlash texts', which were concerned with bolstering hegemonic masculinity in the service of right-wing US foreign policy under Reagan and

Bush. Moreover, they seemed to threaten to erase women from acting roles in films altogether. However, an alternative reading put forward by Yvonne Tasker (1993) is that the films should be understood in terms of the difficulty of maintaining masculine physicality in the microchip era. Thus the muscular masculinities on offer *simultaneously reassert, mourn and hysterically state* male power, whilst also *parodying* it.

My own inclination would be to caution against going too far down this route of textual openness in relation to the 'new lad': we do not, after all, live in a semiotic democracy, and there are only so many ways in which 'new lad's' misogyny can be read.

Nevertheless, Tasker's insights about the *polysemic* nature of texts of masculinity and the *contradictory factors* that produce them are valuable ones to remember.

Another argument for not viewing 'new lad' purely as a backlash against feminism is that his construction is also a response to and attack upon 'new man'. That is, he is born of debates within/among masculinities as well as those between women and men.

Elsewhere (Gill, forthcoming a) I have looked in detail at 'obituaries' of the new man and the announcement of the birth of the 'new lad' in newspapers in the US, UK and Australia throughout the 1990s. These birth and death announcements frequently occur in the same texts, given the prevalence of the cultural narrative that new lad displaced new man. What these texts (mostly written by 'new lads' and their female champions) have in common - besides their viciousness and chillingly reactionary politics - is a widely shared analysis of the multiple problems or pathologies of 'new man'. One set of

criticisms is frequently directed at the *narcissism* of 'new man': 'grooming is for horses', opined James Brown in an early editorial of *Loaded*. Interestingly, almost as common are attacks on 'new man's' *lack of concern for his appearance* (see below). A further criticism (often made by female journalists) is of the a-sexual nature of 'new man'. Jo Ann Goodwin, writing in *The Guardian*, pulls together these two criticisms in a scathing article about 'new man' as the 'toxic waste of feminism':

The worst of it is that these men are so unappealing, so unaesthetic, so unsexy. Once you see through the dubious charm of someone 'who really understands women', what you are left with is a man whose clothes are appalling, and who is so busy trying to be supportive he has probably forgotten what an erection is for. (The Guardian, February 13 1993)

Finally, 'new man' is condemned as inauthentic. In these accounts, in a somewhat strange ontological move, the final nail in his coffin is the fact that he never really existed at all! He was, alternately, a media fabrication or marketing strategy or a calculating pose by ordinary men in order to get a woman (or women) to sleep with them. Against the duplicity of this figure, 'new lad' is constructed as refreshingly honest and free from artifice: he knows what an erection 'is for' and he is not afraid to use it!

2. Media productions of 'new lad'

Although 'new lad' can be seen or heard across a variety of media there seem to be three domains that have played a key role in constructing and promoting this form of masculinity: men's lifestyle magazines, the hybrid news/sport/quiz/talk shows on television, and 'zoo' radio. Most attention has been given to the role of magazines in producing new forms of masculine subjectivity - examining ideologies, visual economies, and the kinds of subject position on offer.

There is now a growing body of work which charts the development of 'laddism' in magazines from 1990 onwards (Jackson et al, 2001; Nixon, 2001; Crewe, this volume). The shift first appeared in GQ and Arena in 1991, marked by an increase in sexualised representations of women and a more 'assertive articulation of post permissive heterosexual masculine scripts' (Nixon: 1996, p. 203). In a characteristically reflexive move one of the first attempts to make sense of this new masculine identity was itself published in Arena magazine (O'Hagan, 1991). Part sociological analysis, part 'ladifesto', this article sought to expose the 'myth' of the sensitive, caring and non-sexist new man, and celebrate the arrival of his hedonistic, libidinous, postfeminist alter ego. The arrival of *loaded* magazine on the scene in 1994, however, gave laddism its most distinctive voice, dedicated, according to its first editorial letter, to 'life, liberty and the pursuit of sex, drink, football and less serious matters' (*loaded*, Issue 1, May 1994).

Since *loaded*, *Arena*, *FHM* and *Maxim* are explored in detail elsewhere in this collection, I will not elaborate upon them here, but merely wish to point to their pivotal role in

constructing a powerful discourse of 'laddism' which kicked off against feminism, the figure of the new man, but also older (unreconstructed or Neanderthal) lad identities.

Radio has received far less attention than television or magazines as a site where the 'new lad' is produced and reproduced. Yet 'zoo' formats *[imported from the US in the 1980s, and which breakup of the monologue of typical DJ shows]*. - best exemplified in the UK by Steve Wright, Chris Evans and *Chris Moyles* - were implicated early in 'new laddism' using fast talk, multiple characters, quizzes, true stories and many other postmodern devices *[bit throwaway?]* to obscure or ironically distance themselves from the underlying sexism. Many of the so-called 'talkie bits' in shows were deliberate attempts to simulate male pub banter; the 'weathergirl' could be used as a device for the 'new lad' presenter to bounce his witty remarks off; and the disparate, fragmented nature of zoo shows allowed a myriad of politically reactionary ideas to enter the programme's discourse unquestioned. Steve Wright, for example, regularly featured surveys that 'reveal' 'facts' like men's resentment of their family's dependence upon them (described by Wright as 'meal ticket syndrome') or women's secret appreciation of being whistled at by builders, etc. In fact, close analysis of the (apparently merely) 'wacky' or 'zany' fragments that make up zoo radio shows reveals that there was a clear political subtext organised around right-wing populism, laddish sexism, homophobia and a highly exclusionary notion of (white) Englishness in shows broadcast in the period 1986 to 1990 (Gill, 1993) which clearly prefigured the rise of the new lad in magazines

3. Psychology: Neo Darwinism and interplanetary communication

If psychology played a role in producing the figure of 'new man', then it has also been equally important in the emergence of the 'new lad'. Perhaps the biggest shift can be seen in the rise of evolutionary thinking within psychology during the 1990s/noughties. Sociobiology and evolutionary psychology were previously confined to small and specialised fields of psychology, and, in the wake of outrage over attempts to link 'race' and intelligence in the 1970s, were regarded as marginal and politically suspect. However, the promise of a 'genetics revolution' made possible by the mapping of the human genome, unleashed a wave of interest in evolutionary thinking in the 1990s. One effect of this was to threaten the entire basis of psychology as a discipline, as the topics associated with 'the mind' were recoded in terms of biochemical/neurological 'events' in the brain.

More significant - in terms of thinking about masculinity - is that an evolutionary psychology turn, often based on extrapolations from studies of animals, gained increasing prominence and publicity. Founded on the premise that all behaviour has an evolutionary basis, this social Darwinist work is preoccupied with gender and 'sexual selection'. It employs exaggerated and stereotypical descriptions of male and female behaviour and seeks to demonstrate how this is underpinned by sound evolutionary principles. The image of the male to influence from this writing is not dissimilar from the 'new lad': testosterone driven and motivated by a desire to 'spread his seed' among as many women as possible. Moreover, it is notable that exponents of 'laddism' frequently draw upon

evolutionary psychological ideas to justify their conviction that men are ‘beyond reform’ and need to simply accept the fact that they are subjects of their natural impulses [*e.g. lad mags frequently invoke these discourses*]. In doing so, they draw support from writers like Robert Wright, who attack feminism for ‘doctrinal absurdities’ and argues that in short ‘human males ‘are by nature oppressive, possessive, the flesh-obsessed pigs’.

(Wright, 1996, quoted in Segal, 1999, p.82) in turn, Stephen Pinker, explains the evolutionary basis for ‘men behaving badly’: ‘A prehistoric man who slept with 50 women could have sired 50 children, and would have been more likely to have descendants who inherited his tastes. A woman who slept with fifty men would have had no more descendants than a woman who slept with one. Thus, men should seek quantity in sexual partners; women, quality – a source of protection, resources and good genes for their children’ (Pinker, quoted in Bordo, 1999 p230)

Psychological writing at the populist end of the market has also played a major part in producing/allowing space for ‘new lad’. The last decade has seen a return to essentialist accounts of gender as a way of making sense of the apparently intractable problems between women and men. Bookstore shelves are groaning under the weight of these volumes which consider myriad aspects of human experience. The chief exponent is John Gray who has given traditional sexism a psychological gloss in his ever **expanding** oeuvre putting forward the view that men and women are creatures from different planets. Gray does not appear to believe that men and women share a single characteristic, but nevertheless argues that they can form good relationships if they acknowledge their difference. This means accepting that when it comes to sex, for example, men are like

blow torches(they heat up fast and turn off in an instant), women are like conventional ovens, slow to heat and slow to cool down. Meanwhile in emotional terms men are like rubber bands (he needs to pull away before he can get closer), while women's self esteem follows the movement of the tides.

As Susan Bordo (1999) has pointed out, Gray's work has spawned a whole industry of men generously sharing the secrets of male psychology with women . From this perspective, the new lad appears archetypal of normal masculinity—simply a man who refuses to accept the false and feminised ideal of masculinity that women have sought to thrust upon him.

4.Publishing: lad lit and chick lit

The 'equal but different'/ Mars and Venus approach to gender has also been at the heart of a contemporary publishing phenomenon: the arrival of 'chick lit' and 'lad lit' . While gender and genre have long been interrelated, the late Nineties saw the explicit codification of this in publishers' and booksellers' categories. Chick lit got its founding mother in Helen Fielding whose *Bridget Jones* novels established the genre, and 'new lad' was hailed by Nick Hornby's *High Fidelity* and the work of Irvine and Tony Parsons. Today, there are any number of pretenders to the throne of 'lad lit', including Mike Gayle, Tim Lott and Nick Earl. *Clearly, there are significant differences among these writers, and Hornby's later work – particularly How To Be Good, with its female protagonist, no longer fit this genre.*

Every aspect of such books, from the colour and design of the cover to where and how they are advertised, follows rigidly prescribed gender lines. The rise of chick lit and lad lit was underwritten by changes in the political economy of publishing - the collapse of the net book agreement and the explosion of discount book 'clubs', increasingly using gender as the central tool in their marketing strategy and attempting to establish the clear blue water of gender difference between 'his 'n' hers' books.

The protagonists of lad lit are heterosexual men in their late 20s or early thirties who are 'on the make' - pursuing women, alcohol and football, looking back nostalgically upon childhood and youth, and forward apprehensively to commitment, marriage and children. Anti-aspirational, inept, optimistic and self-deprecating, the heroes of lad lit mirror precisely James Brown's vision of *loaded* as 'for the man who believes he can do anything, if only he wasn't hungover' (*loaded*: 1994, p. 3). Elaine Showalter describes David Baddiel's second novel, *Whatever Love Means*, thus:

'The novel begins on the day of Diana's death, with a statement meant to shock: "Vic fucked her first the day Diana died". Baddiel's laddish protagonist has hayfever and persuades the woman that his reddened eyes are tokens of his tears of grief; she goes to bed with him believing that he is a sensitive New Man who shares her emotions. In fact, Vic scores while England mourns. "At first Vic thought he was just exploiting one individual's grief, but then he realised he was exploiting the whole nation's...he felt like each day was a bank holiday"' (2002, page 25)

This cynical and knowing performance of new mannishness notwithstanding, Showalter argues that Baddiel's novel and others in the lad lit genre represent a coming of age or settlement with 'adult' concerns, which is frequently expressed in terms that recognise that the 'freedoms' of the lad have costs or that the important things in life are difficult. In this sense, their discourse about heterosexual relationships can be seen to have clear resonances with the ambivalence expressed in the lad mags (see Stevenson et al, 2000)

5. Football, television and masculinity

No discussion of the emergence of the new lad would be complete without an understanding of the role football has played in this. Football is not only one of the salient interests/pursuits of the 'new lad' as he is usually presented, but it is also implicated - as a multi-million pound industry - in the construction of this masculine subject.

Top-level professional football in Britain has undergone a number of wide-ranging changes over the last decade: the political economy of the League has been restructured; many grounds have been rebuilt to replace stands with all-seater stadiums; and a set of deals have been established between football clubs and television companies with reverberations that led to the collapse of ITV digital in 2002. These changes have transformed the meaning and experience of football and are complexly related to changing representations of masculinity.

The rebuilding of many stadia in the 1990s in the wake of the disasters in Heysel and Sheffield has transformed the experience of football for many fans. As the terraces or stands have been replaced by seating, many clubs have attempted to reinvent football as a 'family friendly' game, with particular efforts to attract more affluent audiences, more women and children. In fact, the size of female audiences has remained relatively static over the last 15 years, but the *image* of the game has changed, meaning that many traditional male fans needed to find new ways to express their own distinctive fandom. In this context an accentuated 'laddism' can form a bulwark against what may be perceived as 'feminisation' of the game.

If the association between football and a particular kind of masculine solidarity is seen as under threat by these changes, the working-class audience has also found itself increasingly marginalised by dramatic increases in ticket prices. Together with a number of direct and indirect forms of exclusion and control (for example rationing of tickets, restriction of particular areas of the stadium, being forced to sit down when large groups had got up to cheer, etc.) this was experienced by many fans invested in 'masculine' identity as a betrayal of their love of their team (King, 1997). Against this, then, a series of attempts to defend particular styles of masculine fandom can be read as part of the project of preserving authentically masculine practices of football consumption (including singing, drinking and ecstatic solidarity) in the face of increasing commodification.

This too is evidenced in the commercialisation of the game, heightened merchandising activity, the growth of a 'celebrity culture' around Premier League players, and the globalisation of the transfer market, challenging local affiliations. All these have impacted upon the meaning of football fandom and have offered different subject positions for male football fans to occupy. In this way, then, we can see that football is not simply one of new lad's interests but has also been profoundly important in his very constitution.

6. Libidinous heterosexuality after HIV and AIDS

Earlier in this chapter I explored the significance of HIV and AIDS in promoting a new model of masculinity: the 'new man'. Here I want to argue that popular responses to HIV and AIDS also played a part in constructing 'new lad' [see Baker this volume]. One important general representational shift in response to HIV and AIDS has been the production, since the late 1980s, of more explicitly sexualised and eroticised imagery of both men and women. This was partly a response to the inadequacy of early government health promotion campaigns (e.g. Britain's 'Don't die of ignorance' promotion, dominated by large icebergs) and partly as a reaction against the sexual puritanism that HIV and AIDS seemed to threaten.

One impetus behind the emergence of the new lad in the late 1980s was the desire to retrieve sex-as-fun from the 'shadowlands' of HIV. In this sense it was part of a libidinous, life affirming refusal to equate sex with death. One fact which may be read as

a sobering outcome of this shift, however, is the steep decline in condom use among heterosexual men, compared with their gay counterparts. It is notable that campaigns directed at the heterosexual population have been much less successful in promoting safer sex practices, perhaps because of entrenched inequalities in gender relations (Holland et al, 1997), the failure to produce an adequate 'erotics of health promotion' (Wilton,1992), and also the discourses of risk-taking and hedonistic pleasure of 'new laddism' itself which are difficult to sustain alongside the notion of 'love safe, love sexy' - and may ultimately have devastating consequences.

Conclusion

In the first part of this paper I set out a new theoretical approach for studying masculine identities, arguing that a Foucaultian emphasis upon power and the production of subjects was important if we were to avoid reifying or essentialising the figures of 'new man' or 'new lad'. I stressed the point that new man and new lad were best thought of as discourses, rather than as representations of any real men. In the second part of this chapter I attempted to follow this up by producing a tentative genealogy of new man and new lad discourses. This has been rather dissatisfying to write, since the attempt to give a sense of the range of different influences upon the production of new man and new lad discourses has rendered the account cursory and list-like. **What I have tried to convey overall is the *diversity* of different influences upon discourses of new man and new l.ad, and to locate the studies of men's magazines that follow within this broader context**

More significant than any one of the influences discussed, however, to understanding the circulation of new man and new lad discourses, has been the rise of the new cultural intermediaries, discussed at the start of this paper. We have become a culture preoccupied with interpreting itself - discovering or producing meaning in anything and everything. Legions of professionals now exist whose role it is to pick over and analyse every aspect of human behaviour from the bedroom to the street, to find or create a pattern in what they see, and to narrate the story of who we are back to us in compelling new terms. In this hyper-reflexive moment a single event may be random, but two instances of it are highly suggestive and three constitutes a major trend - whether that trend relates to male 'bad lad' pop stars getting married, celebrity women in their 40s having babies, or magazines closing down.

The new cultural intermediaries (of whom academics constitute one group) have been crucial to the emergence and persistence of discourses about the 'new man' and 'new lad' because they have obsessively searched for meaning in the changes in men's lives and sensibilities and refracted these repeatedly through stories of the dramatic tension between these two versions of masculinity. As the 'new lad' is increasingly being represented as passé and tired, we can confidently expect new cultural intermediaries to be at the forefront of producing new masculine subjects for the 21st century.

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