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Evaluations of Masculinity in Women's Magazines

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Research Goals

To find out how men are represented in women's magazines available to UK consumers, taking into consideration social categories of race and sexuality.

To consider the implications of masculine representation for feminism.

To assess the benefits of using corpus linguistic methodologies for discourse analysis in small corpora.

Methodology: Corpus linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis and Evaluation theory

Corpus linguistics uses quantitative methods to analyse large bodies of naturally occurring language, which may indicate how language is used in the construction of discourses.

Critical Discourse Analysis is a qualitative approach to text analysis which uses linguistic tools such as modality and transitivity, and seeks to expose ideology in texts.

Evaluation theory is concerned with the writer's authorial position in terms of attitudinal (usually concerning lexis) and epistemic stances (concerning modality).



Corpus Design

The corpus comprises 149 articles across 21 magazines, amounting to approximately 150,000 words.

Why Men in Women's Magazines?

Representations of men in women's magazine constitute the creation and reflection of gender relations in wider society.

Previous studies have focused on femininities, but "men are more able to sustain an indifference to feminism as long as women remain the primary focus of such theorizing." (Johnson 1997: 12). This has negative repercussions for feminism, because it is through this silence that men are able to uphold power over women.

Heroes and Monsters: Positive and Negative Figures of Masculinity

These are masculine stereotypes which occur in magazines targeted at white, working class heterosexual women. The **monster** is characterised by violence, infidelity and criminality. **Heroes** are characterised by protection, romance and being the breadwinner.

Both figures are connected to the hegemonic masculinity: an amalgamation of concepts and practices including "rationality, heterosexuality, hierarchy, dominance, violence and being the breadwinner" (Talbot 1998: 191).

They constitute physical and behavioural attributes, and are assigned positive and negative evaluation:

"Stocky with lovely dark hair, he paid me lots of attention" (*That's Life*)

"But behind his fake tan and dazzling smile lurked cold, hard, evil..." (*Real People*)

"He had long, bedraggled hair, a potbelly and dressed like a biker" (*That's Life*)

"One was a popular big-hearted man adored by hundreds on his estate. The other was jealous, spiteful and hell bent on getting revenge." (*Pick Me Up*)

Target audience	Number of magazines	Percentage of corpus
Black Am. women	2	9.5
Asian women	1	4.8
Lesbian women	1	4.8
Bisexual women	1	4.8
White, heterosexual women	16	76.1

