

A Multimodal Analysis of the Representation of Hegemonic Masculinity and Hegemonic Femininity on *Men's Health* and *Women's Health* Cover Pages (January 2011 – June 2016)*

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Abstract

In essence, the goal of this project is to interrogate the multi-semiotic manifestations of hegemonic masculinity and femininity in male and female body culture as manifested on *Men's Health* and *Women's Health* cover-page corpora that spanned from 2011 to mid-2016. The research uses a mixed-methods design with macro- and micro-level analysis. On the macro level, a 'themes' analysis is conducted to illuminate the ideological nature of the multimodal ensemble of the cover pages. On the micro level, the researcher draws on a trio of analytical frameworks through which the semiotic choices embedded in the media texts can be more objectively examined, namely: Halliday's SFG for the verbal analysis; Kress and van Leeuwen's VG for the visual analysis; and Lakoff and Johnson's CMT for the cognitive analysis of multimodal metaphors and metonymies. While being tangential to the notion of health itself, the cover pages endorse a peculiar fitness discourse in which subtle consumerist ideologies of male and female empowerment are co-opted. *Men's Health* and *Women's Health* perpetuate unhealthy physical standards and unattainable canons of beauty linked to hegemony, more overtly calling for the consumption of products that will transform the millennial male and female consumers into more socially acceptable packages for the outside gaze.

Keywords: cognitive; hegemony; metaphor; metonymy; visual; verbal

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Resum. *Anàlisi multimodal de la representació de l'hegemonia masculina i l'hegemonia femenina en les portades de Men's Health i Women's Health (gener 2011 – juny 2016)*

L'objectiu d'aquesta investigació és indagar en les operacions i manifestacions multisemiòtiques de l'hegemonia masculina i l'hegemonia femenina en la cultura del cos masculí i femení tal com està manifestada en les portades de *Men's Health* i *Women's Health*. El corpus del treball s'estén des de 2011 fins a mitjan 2016. L'investigador emprà una metodologia mixta i fa una macroanàlisi i una microanàlisi. En el primer nivell, l'anàlisi temàtica està dissenyada per dilucidar la nomenclatura ideològica del conjunt multimodal de les portades. En el nivell micro, l'investigador ha dissenyat un triangle d'un marc analític a través del qual les opcions semiòtiques ben emprades en els textos periodístics poden ser més ben examinades des d'una perspectiva objectivista, a saber: les teories SFG de Halliday, VG de Kress i Van Leeuwen i CMT de Lakoff i Johnson sobre l'anàlisi cognitiva de les metàfores i metonímies multimodals. Mentre s'és tangencial cap a la pròpia noció de salut, les portades de les dues revistes mantenen un discurs peculiar sobre *fitness* en què l'apoderament de les formes de consumició dels homes i de les dones és cooptat. Les revistes en qüestió perpetuen uns estàndards físicament no saludables, a més d'unes normes de bellesa insostenibles, la mida del cos i l'aparença física interconnectades amb l'hegemonia, i convidant més obertament al consum de productes que convertiran tant homes com dones en paquets molt més acceptables socialment des d'una òptica exterior.

Paraules clau: cognició; hegemonia; metàfora; metonímia; visual; verbal

Resumen. *Análisis multimodal de la representación de la hegemonía masculina y la hegemonía femenina en las portadas de Men's Health y Women's Health (enero 2011 – junio 2016)*

El objetivo de esta investigación es indagar en las operaciones y manifestaciones multisemióticas de la hegemonía masculina y la hegemonía femenina en la cultura del cuerpo masculino y femenino tal como está manifestada en las portadas de *Men's Health* y *Women's Health*. El corpus del trabajo se extiende de 2011 hasta mediados de 2016. El investigador emplea una metodología mixta y realiza un macroanálisis y un microanálisis. En el primer nivel, el análisis temático está diseñado para dilucidar la nomenclatura ideológica del conjunto multimodal de las portadas. En el nivel micro, el investigador ha diseñado un triángulo de un marco analítico a través del cual las opciones semióticas bien empleadas en los textos periodísticos pueden ser mejor examinadas desde una perspectiva objetivista, a saber: las teorías SFG de Halliday, VG de Kress y Van Leeuwen y CMT de Lakoff y Johnson sobre el análisis cognitivo de las metáforas y metonimias multimodales. Mientras se está siendo tangencial hacia la propia noción de salud, las portadas de ambas revistas mantienen un discurso peculiar sobre *fitness* en el que el empoderamiento de las formas de consumición de los hombres y mujeres es cooptado. Las revistas en cuestión perpetúan unos estándares físicamente no saludables, aparte de unas normas de belleza insostenibles, el tamaño del cuerpo y la apariencia física interconectados con la hegemonía, y más abiertamente invitando al consumo de productos que convertirán tanto a hombres como a mujeres en paquetes mucho más aceptables socialmente desde una óptica exterior.

Palabras clave: cognición; hegemonía; metáfora; metonimia; visual; verbal

1. Introduction

In visual cultures, media representations are such influential and pervasive reflections of societal norms to the extent that they impact the way genders view themselves. Reinforcement of the dominant culture is a common practice for mass media to normalize their views of the world, particularly in a capitalist culture. Contemporary consumer culture in most Western societies is a hegemonic culture which produces a system in which psychological needs cast a shadow on genuine physical needs. Health and fitness magazines, particularly *Men's Health* and *Women's Health*, serve as a good site to explore the competing contemporary forms of hegemony. They are best regarded as multifunctional artefacts that reconstruct reality and identity while establishing inter-relationships among the publishers, editors, advertisers, image producers, and reader-viewer(s) in attempt to integrate the latter in postmodern, consumerist Western societies.

The value placed on physical attractiveness is evident in the consumer culture that promotes ideals of bodily perfection (Barry and Phillips, 2015; Bordo, 2003; Featherstone, 1991; McQuarrie and Phillips, 2016; Shilling, 2003). For research purposes, a postmodern consumerist society is understood as one that “uses images, signs and symbolic goods which summon up dreams, desires and fantasies which suggest romantic authenticity and emotional fulfillment in narcissistically pleasing oneself, instead of others” (Featherstone, 1991: 19). The value placed on physical attractiveness is evident in the consumer culture that promotes ideals of bodily perfection (Frank, 2002; Shilling, 2003; Signoretti, 2017) and the body is regarded as a medium of self-expression open to investment and consumption.

2. Popular discourse and cultural hegemony

In postmodern consumerist societies, as forms of mass communication, advertisements circulate images that reflect hegemonic views of society. They selectively highlight and reinforce some values while undermining others. Since it is a product of cultural ideals, hegemony is the power that explains how the dominant classes maintain their supremacy over the economic, political, and cultural direction of a given nation (Gramsci, 1971). More specifically, mass media are pivotal to the function of cultural hegemony in the US (Croteau et al., 2014). In the US context, the most powerful economic groups obtain consent for their leadership through the use of ideological and political norms. Media discourse, in turn, maintains asymmetrical social and power relations through patterns of representation.

Hegemonic masculinity encompasses the *socially dominant position* (although not necessarily the most common) on the hierarchy of masculinities (Connell and Wood, 2005). It confers considerable power in relation to women and other categories of masculinity. Hegemonic femininity, on the other hand, which in some ways parallels hegemonic masculinity, does not

embody cultural power or inculcate patriarchal values. Being in a hegemonic position is about being in a position of power within her circle, that is, being able to construct the world for oneself and other women in a given culture or society so that her power is unchallenged and taken for granted.

Scholarship pertaining to popular magazines focuses on advertising (see, for example, Eisend, 2010; Finn, 2008; Kilbourne, 2000; Knoll et al., 2011; McQuarrie and Phillips, 2008; Shaw et al., 2014; Wasike, 2017). Historically, having appearance concerns defies normative notions of masculinities. With the increased visibility of the male body in popular media, men are more susceptible to media influence and so are increasingly objectified (Ricciardelli et al., 2010). Similarly, with the rise of consumerism and bodily surveillance, women began to realize that their social standing and lifestyle choices are dependent on the appearance of their bodies and this, in turn, became part and parcel of feeling and being hegemonic in society (Duncan and Klos, 2012; Kuipers et al., 2016; Lewis et al., 2010; McDonnell and Lin, 2016).

In the quest for in-depth analyses of the complex social practices of meaning-making, a growing body of communication studies now turn its lens to examining the multiplicity of semiotic resources that operate independently and interdependently in the design of the semiotic ensemble (Djonov and Zhao, 2014). Despite the influence of health and fitness magazines on body surveillance, research related to the design of their cover pages is scarce, particularly research that examines cover page design in conjunction with gender. On a related note, researchers of multimodal genres encounter creative metaphors and metonymies that cannot be easily described in light of entrenched conceptual mappings between a concrete source and a more abstract target (see, for example, Kövecses, 2010). Still, little research has been carried out to determine which modes are preferred over others to render the conceptual source or target domain. In advertising discourse, few scholars study *multimodal metaphor* (see, for example, Forceville, 2013; Forceville and Urios-Aparisi, 2009; Pérez Sobrino, 2017) and *multimodal metonymy* (Forceville, 2013; Pérez Sobrino, 2017; Ruiz de Mendoza and Mairal Usón, 2007) where the target and source are rendered exclusively or predominantly in two different modes.

3. Research questions

The overarching question of the study is “What are the contemporary representations of hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic femininity that are detected on the cover pages of *Men’s Health* and *Women’s Health* magazine editions from January 2011 to June 2016?” To answer this question, the following three sub-questions are put forward:

1. What are the contemporary representations of hegemonic masculinity and femininity realized *ideationally* and *interpersonally* by means of the coverlines on the cover pages?

2. What are the contemporary representations of hegemonic masculinity and femininity realized *representationally*, *interactively*, and *compositionally* on the cover pages?
3. What are the *multimodal metaphor* and *multimodal metonymy* used to promote the contemporary representations of hegemony on the cover pages?

4. Methodology

The research uses a mixed-methods design, namely *concurrent triangulation*, to pinpoint patterns and consistencies of gender representation. Methodologically, the analysis is conducted on macro and micro levels. On the macro level, a 'themes' analysis is conducted to isolate the overarching themes that dominate the fitness discourse on the cover pages. On the micro level, the research draws on a trio of analytical tools.

First, based on Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), the systems of transitivity and mood are examined in the verbal analysis. While mood is recognized as the choices made between declarative, interrogative, and imperative clauses on the cover pages, transitivity encompasses five processes that lend themselves for analysis by representing human experience in terms of physical and physiological actions (material and behavioral), thinking and speaking (mental and verbal), and actions that signal the identifying features of someone/something (relational). Material processes can be either creative (participants come to existence) or transformative (some change takes place in an existing participant) and relational processes can be either attributive (establishing a relation of class membership between two participants) or identifying (defining the identity of a participant).

Second, based on Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996/2006) Visual Grammar (VG), the visual analysis examines the representational meaning in terms of conceptual processes (representing participants in terms of generalized and more or less stable and timeless essence); the interactive meaning in light of image act (demand or offer gaze), size of frame (social distance), and perspective (point of view); and the compositional meaning with respect to information value (placement), framing (connectedness), and salience (foregrounding).

Finally, based on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980/2003) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), the cognitive analysis identifies the verbal and visual resources that cue multimodal metaphors and multimodal metonymies. Within CMT, multimodal metaphor is a cross-domain mapping between the source (abstract concept) and target (physical experience) domains, where the target and source are rendered exclusively or predominantly in two different semiotic modes. While a metaphor is a mapping between two different conceptual domains, a metonymy is a domain-internal conceptual mapping.

To identify whether the results yielded from the qualitative and quantitative analyses are statistically significant, given the fairly small sample size

examined, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with $\alpha = 0.05$ and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) are carried out for each set of data.

5. The sample

A homogenous convenient sample of 110 newsstand cover pages of *Men's Health* and *Women's Health* (henceforth *MH* and *WH*) spanning from January 2011 to June 2016, 55 from each magazine, was used. Top circulation and consistency of representations are the dual criteria that guided the selection of the magazine cover pages in the current study.

6. Analysis

6.1. Analysis on the macro level

The sibling magazines host a unique blend of health, fitness practices, nutrition, relationships, and lifestyle topics. Despite the minor seasonal and annual variations in the distribution of the six overarching themes on the sample examined, there are stereotypical portrayals that persist which represent the consumerist ideologies discursively communicated on each magazine's cover page.

From January 2011 to June 2016, 'lifestyle' takes precedence as the #1 dominant theme manifested in the coverlines of both *MH* and *WH*. Lifestyle coverlines subsume a wide range of fixes for personal appearance, apparel and fashion-related items and accessories, beauty and grooming tricks, tips for boosting self-confidence, and advice for financial success. Lifestyle examples to cite from *MH* are "Dress like a winner! Look your best every day" (July, 2012) and "Age erasers. 5 quick fixes she'll notice" (Jan, 2016) and examples from *WH* are "Look great naked! Toned sexy abs, high tight tush, long lean legs" (Jan, 2011) and "Erase zits and wrinkles. A flawless skin solution" (Mar, 2012). While 'branded masculinity' is omnipresent in several coverlines that accompany models in several issues as in "Joseph Gordon-Levitt. Make his surprising success strategies work for you. Joe wears an LNA shirt and Levi's jeans" (Oct, 2013), *WH* brands women by identifying the elements of a perfect body. This is executed by singling out specific body parts and describing them in idealistic, youthful terms such as "Flawless skin. Boost your glow from head to toe" (May, 2012) and "Age-in-reverse special" (Mar, 2014). Overall, the coverlines representing lifestyle align with the view that aesthetics, stylistic expression, and grooming play a central role in contemporary consumerism and the representation of hegemonic masculinity and femininity.

The second dominant theme is 'Exercise for physical appearance'. Overall, the coverlines pertaining to this theme underscore dynamic engagement in physical activities as a viable means for enhancing physical appearance,

namely toning, ab-shredding, muscle-building, and sculpting. While *MH* relates physical exercise to the augmentation of muscle mass and shredding abs, *WH* closely ties physical exercise to shrinking, toning, and becoming lean. Examples to cite from *MH* are “21-inch biceps” (Oct, 2015) and “Free pullout guide. 6 moves for 6-pack abs” (Mar, 2016) whereas examples to note from *WH* are “Sleek toned arms in 4 easy steps” (May, 2012) and “Sexy curves now. Power moves for abs and legs” (Mar, 2016). In total, these coverlines praise corporal perfection and the ultimate healthy lifestyle can only be obtained if the reader-viewer ventures to take serious steps in the quest of bodily perfection.

The third dominant theme is ‘weight loss’. Although 26 out of the 55 issues of *MH* do not offer coverlines that celebrate weight loss to the male reader-viewer, 46 out of the 55 issues of *WH* dwell heavily on weight loss. It is remarkable why the weight loss theme does not occupy a significant space on *MH*, if no space at all in several issues. *MH* promotes greater strength which comes from increasing muscle mass via diet, exercise, fitness training, and the consumption of huge amounts of nutrients and supplements. When an *MH* cover page has a minimal occurrence of a weight-loss coverline, it is featured in multiple layers, urging the need to either fight/shred fat or promote fat-free foods. Examples are “Flat-belly secrets. Lose your gut in just 8 days!” (May, 2011) and “Lose 30, 50, 90 pounds. Your plan is on p. 158” (Nov, 2014). Similar to *MH*, the cover pages of *WH* promote fat-free bodily ideals; a female cannot obtain an ideal ultra-thin body if fat is present. Examples to note are “Burn fat all day. Surprising ways to boost your metabolism” (Sep, 2014) and “Lose belly fat forever” (July, 2015). In both *MH* and *WH* media texts, fat is presented as the primary obstacle in the journey of self-actualization—an obsession that may lead to unhealthy physical standards.

The fourth theme is ‘Diet/Food’ which is presented as a moral choice, a way for men and women to demonstrate their willpower and control in their quest for optimal health and fitness. The coverlines incorporate healthy recipes and food swaps, as well as restrictions on the consumption of calories. The *MH* cover pages teach men the virtue of self-control, cultivating the physical and psychological strength to embrace certain foods. Examples to cite are “15 power foods that fight fat” (Jan, 2011) and “7 power supplements for men” (May, 2016). Despite the low frequency of diet/food coverlines in *WH* issues, an integral part of maintaining a flab-free figure, according to the magazine, is a meticulous diet plan as shown in “8 new super foods boost energy, prevent cancer, slash stress” (Mar, 2012) and “How cool chicks live green” (April, 2016). By labeling food with empowering lingo, *MH* and *WH* blur the line between health and beauty messages. It is important to propose nutritional advice to improve health and lifespans, yet an obsession with physical attractiveness promotes unhealthy eating habits.

The fifth theme is ‘Sex/Relationships’. The coverlines endorse heterosexual socialization, highlighting tips for sexual appeal, physical enhancement, quality sex, and better marriage. Men and women are constantly bombarded

with advice on how to achieve sexual fulfillment. Several intriguing examples surface on *MH*, namely “30 red-hot sex secrets” (Jan, 2011) and “Sexplosions! 27 sizzling seduction secrets” (April, 2012). Similarly, examples to cite from *WH* are “Sizzling sex moves – for you & him!” (Mar, 2011) and “Unlimited orgasms! Longer, stronger, more plentiful peaks. Yes, please” (May, 2013). In sum, the heterosexual messages on the cover pages can be alarming; to achieve the title of ‘sexy’ or ‘desirable’, intimate relations are likely to lose meaning, thus resulting in high-risk behaviors and performance anxiety.

‘Health’ is the sixth theme with almost equal frequency and representation on the sibling magazines. The corresponding coverlines accentuate overall well-being, mental health, and physical health such as health recipes and overcoming stress. On the cover pages of *MH* and *WH*, a recurrent health-related issue is fighting stress and getting a good night’s sleep. Examples to note from *MH* are “Secrets of the male brain. Focus your anger, tame your stress, sharpen your thinking, find your keys” (Dec, 2011) and “Smash stress! In 30 seconds or less!” (Mar, 2012). Likewise, example coverlines to cite from *WH* are “Strip away stress. Discover a happier, healthier you!” (Jan, 2011) and “End mental health stigma. Join us p. 174” (May, 2016).

Finally, the ANOVA results show an overall p value equal to or less than 0.05 – i.e. statistically significant. While the themes of ‘physical exercise for personal appearance’, ‘lifestyle’, ‘diet/food’, and ‘weight loss’ are found to be statistically significant and have a great impact on males’ perception of hegemonic healthy figures, the themes of ‘physical exercise for personal appearance’, ‘lifestyle’, ‘weight loss’, and ‘sex/relationships’ are shown to be statistically significant and hence shape the way women perceive themselves as belonging to the hegemonic class. Likewise, the subsequent MANOVA between the two sub-datasets is also statistically significant with an overall p value less than 0.05. This affirms the strong influence of the themes of ‘physical exercise for personal appearance’, ‘lifestyle’, ‘diet/food’, ‘weight loss’, and ‘sex/relationship’ on the reconstruction of a hegemonic notion of health and fitness. The male and female reader-viewer is incited to pursue a multifaceted physical ideal that promises (and demands) physical attraction, health, and youth—an ideal that can hardly be reached.

6.2. Analysis on the micro level

6.2.1. Verbal analysis

Ideationally, the majority of the processes that surface in the media texts of *MH* and *WH* are either relational of the attributive and identifying type or material of the transformative type with the ultimate goal of extreme bodily makeover in light of the norms and conventions of the two magazines. Minimal occurrences of mental, verbal, and behavioral processes are visible in *MH* and *WH*. Distinctly, whenever verbal and behavioral processes surface in the

media texts, they relate either to the cover model or some celebrity mentioned on the cover page. The sayer and behavior in the verbal and behavioral processes, respectively, are figures that provide the attributes that stand in close relation to the relational processes choices used to synthesize the entire theme of hegemony.

The high frequency of the transformative material processes ties the reader-viewer closely to the consumerist ideology endorsed by *MH* and *WH* and the relational attributive and identifying processes depict the reader-viewer as the carrier of several attributes communicated via a multitude of coverlines along with the cover model image in order for them to be ideal. To ensure the immediacy of the reader-viewer's reactions, time frames are dominant features of the majority of clauses, exemplified by time pegs like "in 27 days" and "for your 20s, 30s, 40s & beyond". In tandem with the use of time pegs is the intriguing manipulation of numbers in different fonts. The eccentric, uneven numbers in "375+ smart new beauty" and "675 amazing health, nutrition, beauty, style & fitness tips" tend to resonate better and get more traffic and hits than typical numbers such as 15, or 30 would do.

The key differences between *MH* and *WH* are the lexical choices of verbs and the goals that follow the process verbs. In *MH*, the male reader-viewer is inculcated to "sculpt," "build," and "sharpen" in pursuit of the ideal figure, whereas the female reader-viewer is instructed to "firm up," "slim down," and "burn" to reach the ideal self as informed by *WH*. Moreover, the goal of most clauses in *MH* are their "muscles," "gut," and "abs," whereas the goal of most clauses in *WH* are their "belly," "butt," and "thighs." While the male-reader viewer is cajoled to be strong, wealthy and tough with bigger arms, a fitter body and broader shoulders, the female counterpart is lured to become slim, sexy and toned with jiggle-free arms, smooth skin, and lean legs.

Interpersonally, the majority of clauses in *MH* and *WH* media texts are short imperatives to create a sense of urgency. Coupled with the selling lines "the magazine men live by" and "it's good to be you" frequently visible below the *MH* and *WH* masterheads, respectively, the twin magazines presuppose that the reader-viewer craves the hegemonic looks of the cover models. The imperative mood blurs the line between the reader-viewer and the magazine—the magazine speaks and the male and female reader-viewer act—bringing them quickly into the little world of *MH* and *WH* and engaging them in transformative actions.

In light of this analysis, the cover pages of *MH* and *WH* use desirable versions of hegemony and infuse their characteristics into the product being sold (i.e., the ideal self). These representations re-shape the reader-viewer's beliefs about gender, normalizing *MH* and *WH* proliferations, presenting them as acceptable. While the agency of men and women is acknowledged in the clauses examined, their discursive and social positioning underscore the desire of men's and women's existence only as reproducers of the hegemonic class.

6.2.2. *Visual analysis*

On the representational level, the image of the cover models belongs to conceptual processes. The cover model (the carrier) can be identified in terms of a part-whole structure (the analytical process) whereby the reader-viewer has access to the represented participants and their possessive attributes which are part of the whole. These attributes encompass the clothes, the accessories, and the shape of their bodies, etc., which all signify sophistication, style, and taste. While both *MH* and *WH* attach the names of the models in the proximity of their images, *MH* exclusively labels them, though infrequently, along with the brands of their attires. Examples to cite are “The Men’s Health guy Tron star Garrett Hedlund. Garrett wears an LNA T-shirt and Diesel jeans” (Jan, 2011) and “The Three Musketeers’ Orlando Bloom wears an Alternative Apparel T-shirt, Acne jeans, Anda Bremont watch” (Oct, 2011).

On the interactive level, the dominant configuration is a demand gaze whereby the models directly reveal themselves as idealized figures of a hegemonic class. While the demand gaze of *WH* is associated with social affinity, affiliation, and equality, the demand gaze of *MH* is linked to submission and a superior-inferior type of relationship. It seems that while the hegemonic project of power spares no room for masculine emotions, the hegemonic woman is portrayed as hyperfeminine and emotional. Furthermore, the majority of the cover models are positioned in some sort of a standing pose with three-fourths of their bodies displayed (i.e., a medium shot) to imply a sense of more distance and less engagement. An added value is the use of the frontal angle which encodes maximum engagement whereby the cover models invite the reader-viewer to be part of the sibling magazines’ world for hegemonic status and solidarity.

On the compositional level, the cover models and coverlines are organized from the center-margin configuration perspective. This objectification is performed by large air-brushed images of the models, foregrounded in large images taking up most of the cover page design and represented in a diversity of bright colors. When it comes to framing, all verbal and visual elements are weakly framed, hence driving the consumerist messages across to the reader-viewer’s mind is a simple undertaking. *MH* and *WH* seem to belong to the mainstream discourse which portrays the dominant depictions of maleness and femaleness in physical terms, linked to hegemony. The dominant, hegemonic class (represented by the cover models) defines bodily ideals, excluding alternative worldviews and values, thus naturalizing what it means to be fit from a postmodern, consumerist perspective.

6.2.3. *Cognitive analysis*

As far as the discursive realization of gendered multimodal metaphors is concerned, the source and target domains are not manifested in the same mode on the media texts of *MH* and *WH*. While the target HEGEMONIC SELF

is cued visually, the source BODILY PERFECTION is cued textually (conceptual metaphors are written in uppercase whereas their linguistic realizations are written in lowercase). The postmodern consumerist self is cognitively structured by the conceptual metaphor HEGEMONIC SELF IS BODILY PERFECTION. A tight mapping exists between the target and source domains whereby entities in target domain of hegemonic self correspond systematically to entities in the domain of bodily perfection, namely: hegemonic gender identities correspond to optimally fit figures and negation of hegemony corresponds to lack of bodily discipline.

The set of correspondences becomes apparent in the metaphorical expressions used. Examples to cite from *MH* are “Shred your abs in 4 weeks!” (May, 2013), “Chisel abs like these” (April, 2014), and “Sculpt your arms” (Jan, 2016). Several examples also surface in *WH*, namely “Sleek arms, flat belly, firm butt” (April, 2011), “Lean, slim, sexy thighs” (Jan, 2011), and “Toned arms, flat abs” (April, 2016). On all the cover pages, certain source-target domains can be systematically associated with the promotion of hegemonic masculinity and femininity. While the target (i.e., hegemonic self) is cued visually in terms of the cover model, the source (i.e., bodily perfection) is cued textually by virtue of the coverlines on the design layout. Given that the source of the metaphor exhibits better qualities than the target, it is verbally cued to lure the reader-viewer to embark on the self-as-body project. The closer the body is to representing the idealized images that saturate the media texts, the higher its exchange value is.

The center-margin configuration of the cover model and multitude of coverlines further kindles the peculiar metaphor A HEGEMONIC MALE/FEMALE IS AN EFFICIENT MACHINE. In *MH* and *WH*, the target domain coincides with the product advertised (HEGEMONIC MALE/FEMALE) whereas the source domain coincides with A MACHINE. The target domain borrows the positive associations of the source domain—in this case functionality, strength, accomplishment, productivity, differentiation, etc., while the target (i.e., hegemonic male/female) is cued visually in terms of the cover model, the source (i.e., an efficient machine) is cued textually by virtue of all coverlines on the design layout.

The male reader-viewer is tempted to believe that actions like flattening, chiseling, and sculpting are what it takes to reach the hegemonic body ideal he is socially sanctioned to possess. Examples of the metaphorical expressions are “Sculpt summer abs” (June, 2011), “Flatten your belly” (April, 2013), and “Chisel abs like these” (April, 2014). Similarly, the female reader-viewer is lured to think that acts of firming, toning, sculpting, shrinking, and resizing are all that she needs to reach the hyperfeminine hegemonic body ideal she is socially dictated to possess. Examples of metaphorical expressions are “Banish stretch marks” (Mar, 2011), “Shrink your belly” (Mar, 2011), “Sculpt sexy curves” (Dec, 2011), and “Resize your thighs” (Oct, 2013). On the *MH* and *WH* cover pages, the models are instrumentalized and commoditized as machines that ought to perform better, faster, and longer in the least possible time. The textual cues dehumanize men and women, reducing them to machines instructed to

accomplish several tedious tasks that underscore their functionality and efficacy in the quest of self-as-body project, hence reducing their essential value to an unattainable bodily ideal symbolizing social prestige and hegemony.

Several metonymical patterns emerge in *MH* and *WH*, namely Target-in-source-metonymy verbalized as STEREOTYPICAL FEATURES FOR A MAN/WOMAN whereby the target domain is a subdomain of the source domain (the cover model). Alternately, it can be verbalized as SEXINESS/PHYSICAL ATTRACTION FOR A MAN/WOMAN whereby the target domain (sexiness/physical attractiveness) is a subdomain of the source domain (the cover model). Examples to cite from *MH* are “insane arms” (June, 2015), “sex magnet” (Jan, 2015), and “back of steel” (May, 2016). Examples from *WH* are “Sleek arms, flat belly, firm butt” (April, 2011), “Lean, slim, sexy thighs” (Jan, 2011), and “Toned arms, flat abs” (April, 2016). These target-in-source-metonymies can further be understood as being represented in the form of a metonymy complex, namely a double-domain-reduction-metonymy which involves two subsequent reductions of the source domain verbalized as BODY PART FOR MODEL FOR MAN/WOMAN. Similar to metaphors, the metonymical patterns observed in the media texts are reflective of gendered, consumerist ideologies which intensify cultural imperatives that define bodies as in need of constant size control.

7. Findings

Taken together, *MH* and *WH* media texts, in the name of hegemony, prescribe gender self-preoccupation with bodily surveillance, insatiable consumer desires, and heterosexual socialization rather than mindfulness, emotional harmony, and optimal health. The empowering messages on *MH* and *WH* cover pages are smothered by the consumerist, objectifying messages and endorsements of sexuality and physical perfection.

8. Conclusion

A changing notion of health and fitness is shaped and re-shaped by *Men's Health* and *Women's Health*. The fitness discourse therein serves a system of power relations, and all representations involve decisions about what to include and what to exclude, what to foreground and what to background. The macro- and micro-level analyses showcase the orchestration of the verbal, visual, and cognitive features of the media texts to attend to the consumerist ideology authorized by the magazines.

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Appendix A. The Cover Pages of *Men's Health* (Jan 2011-June 2016)

2011

January

March

April

May



June

July

September

October



November

December



2012

January/February

March

April

May



June

July/August

September

October

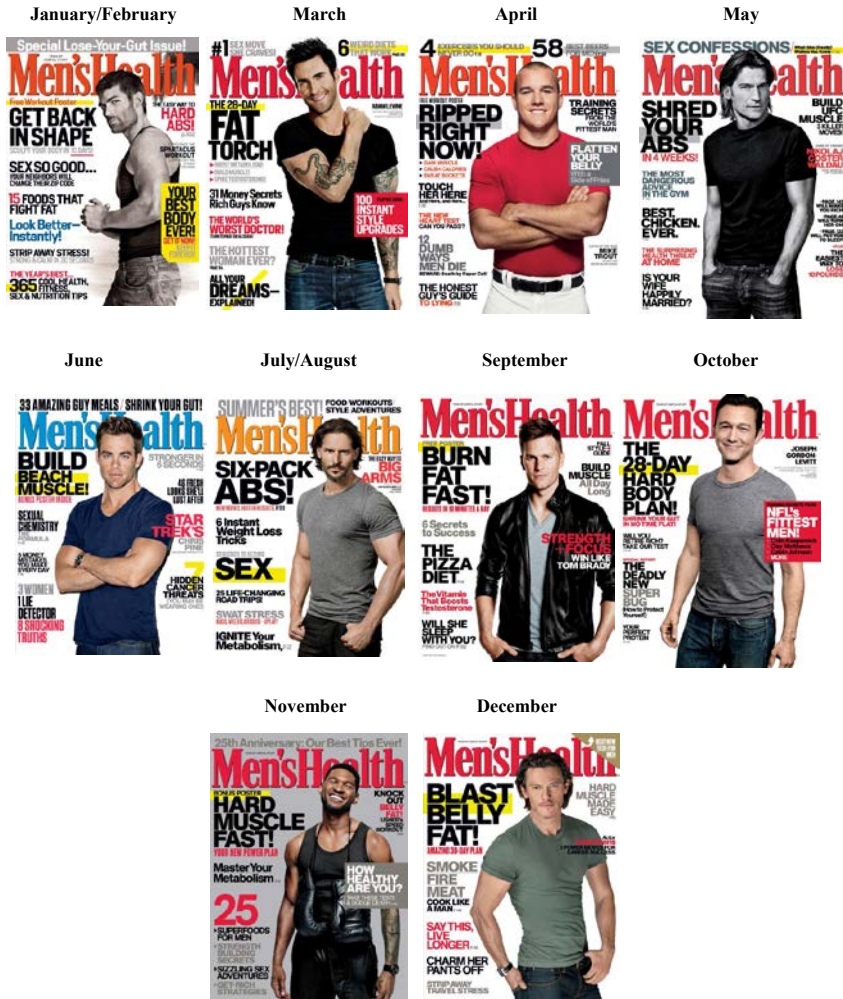


November

December



2013



2014

January/February

March

April

May



June

July/August

September

October



November

December



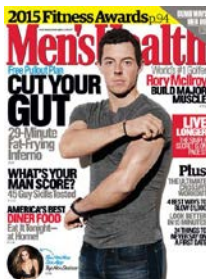
2015

January/February

March

April

May

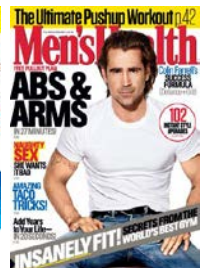


June

July/August

September

October



November

December



2016

January/February

March

April

May



June



Appendix B. The Cover Pages of *Women's Health* (Jan 2011-June 2016)

2011



November

December



2012

January/February

March

April

May



June

July/August

September

October



November

December



2013

January/February

March

April

May



June

July/August

September

October



November

December



2014

January/February

March

April

May



June

July/August

September

October



November

December



2015

January/February

March

April

May



June



July/August



September



October



November



December



2016

January/February

March

April

May



June

