

Lad Magazines, Raunch Culture and the Increasing Pornification of
South African Media

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of the media in the pornification of society and the subsequent rise of laddism and raunch culture. By pornification I refer to the proliferation of the pornographic phenomenon in mainstream media and everyday life and the subsequent co modification of sexuality. It will examine in full detail lad culture and lad magazines as a genre of the text. The study will draw comparisons between local lad magazine *FHM* to the international pornographic magazine *Playboy*. This is in order to establish whether these lad magazines function as soft pornography, thereby contributing to the fact that mainstream media, is indeed becoming more pornographic and thus leading to an acceptance of the increased pornification of every day life and the ensuing rise of raunch culture. The research paper will examine raunch culture in depth and its subsequent influence on contemporary women and how they respond to these representations. This paper also seeks to identify the magazines as part of backlash to feminism. Backlash refers to the reaction against feminist advancement and the return to traditional gender roles.

This study includes a literature review and theoretical framework chapter which explore the various theories pertaining to the research problem. The methodology chapter discusses the research methods used in the study. These methods include content analysis, semiotics and discourse analysis. The theoretical underpinnings that will be the primary influence of this paper is that of the feminist approach. This is a feminist study as it deals with how current representations found in the magazines influence and are influenced by women and how this will affect gendered society as a whole.

I declare that this thesis is my own work. It has not been submitted to any other university for degree examination before in any form.

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Contents:

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	iii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review	6
Chapter 2: Research Methodology	27
Chapter 3: A Comparison of the Representation of Women in Lad Magazine <i>FHM</i> to the Pornographic Magazine <i>Playboy</i>	43
Chapter 4: Raunch Culture and the Pornification of Society	108
Conclusion	149
Bibliography	158

Introduction:

Considering the role the media plays in society, this study examines its participation in the pornification of society. This is a feminist study of the rise of laddism and raunch culture and how they too, influence this occurrence. By pornification I refer to the proliferation of the pornographic phenomenon in the majority of media and everyday life and the subsequent commodification of sexuality. This study scrutinises lad magazines, examines what a lad is and what the genre of text is and explores the conventions and influences of lad magazines. It compares a contemporary men's lifestyle, *FHM*, to one which was established over fifty years ago, *Playboy*, in order to ascertain whether the newer magazine promotes the same philosophy on gender the older one still advocates. It must be observed that this philosophy was created before the women's liberation movement and has, since its inception, continued with the same representation of women, regardless of any advances made by the movement.

Thus it is interesting to see if the contemporary *FHM* magazine also acknowledges women in the same light, even though it was created in a post feminist culture. This study examines whether the lad magazine functions as pornography, the same way that *Playboy* does and thus leading and increasing the acceptance of pornographic media content in the general public.

Women in pornographic content have traditionally been seen as objects for the male subjects arousal (Kipnis 1993:124). It can be said, then, that by objectifying the female form, pornographic content is exploitative of women and therefore prejudiced. As this project is feminist in its approach, the investigation considers how the pornification of media, and its resultant representation of women, is in fact a form of feminist backlash. It also examines how, due to raunch culture, women have become implicated in these types of pornographic representations and how this has come to be.

It is important to understand the dynamics and practices of pornographic media, in order to grasp whether the genders are being represented in this manner in other media, which can lead to the construction of identities in accordance to the representations found in pornography. It is important to examine if women are more willing to read and appear in lad and what is conventionally known as pornographic magazines. While feminism has given women the right to choose the way they are seen, the choices provided by the male magazine market are limited. This study investigates how these choices revolve around the same representations of women pornography provides. In other words, women are merely given the choice to be depicted as one dimensional sexualised objects.

Hugh Hefner, creator of the magazine *Playboy*, is the global pioneer of such representations, but others in the same vein are guilty of this as it is undoubtedly a global occurrence. It must be noted that while this is a topic of enquiry found

in other contexts within the South African research field, not much attention has been paid to *FHM* in this regard; it is useful to examine these issues in a local context as the magazines seem to be perpetuating these established ideas of the genders. What is more is that some women may be partial to this representation.

Using a combination of research methodologies comprising of content analysis, semiotics and discourse analysis allows this feminist study to examine if the content in *FHM* makes use of the same conventions of female representations found in the *Playboy* magazine. Content analysis enables the study to quantify the number of times women are represented in a certain manner. The combination of semiotic and discourse analysis facilitates an in-depth investigation of both the written language used to represent women as well as the accompanying pictures. These methods also assist in examining the way women have represented themselves in these magazine and if this links to the conventions found in raunch culture.

This methodology was chosen with the intention of determining whether there is a strong correlation between the way women are represented in these two magazine titles. In other words, this project aimed to ascertain and establish whether the lad magazine's portrayal of women is as pornographically motivated as that of the famously pornographic *Playboy*. Does *FHM* portray women in such a way as to incite arousal in its male readers? Do these depictions of their models draw parallels with conventions normally associated with pornography? Are women

accepting stereotypical representations of their sexuality, and thus partaking in what is known as raunch culture?

This is important to ascertain because these magazines argue that they provide men with instruction; thus the way gender relations are depicted and how men are taught to relate to women is a crucial issue to address. It was also important to observe whether there is a diversity in the representations, in relation to ethnicity as well as the variety of female identities found in society. Are represented women given agency and power to show their individuality and sexuality on their terms? Or, are they typecast in a manner that homogenises them and shows them in a particular light?

Chapter one contains the literature review and theoretical framework of the study. It concentrates on the literature surrounding the conventions and practices found in pornography. It closely examines the conflicting stances feminist scholars have taken on the topic of pornography, in order to gain a greater understanding of the research at hand. It explores the conventions and characteristics of the two genres of lad and raunch culture in great detail and examines how they both have contributed to conventional understanding of masculinity and femininity.

Chapter two explores the methodologies that the study employed, highlighting the positive contributions these methodologies make to the research. It examines the

theories of content analysis, semiotic analysis and discourse analysis, as well as their backgrounds and contributions to academic research.

Chapter three focuses on the comparison between the two magazines. It contains the findings of the content analysis, in order to establish if *FHM* is as pornographic as *Playboy*. This provides the foundation needed for further investigation using semiotics and discourse analysis. A complete analysis of the magazine's content is provided as well as the findings this has lead to.

Chapter four focuses on raunch culture and the pornification of society. This specifically looks at how women participate in the magazines and the allure this participation holds. It examines how women represent themselves in the magazine and discusses the implications that this leads to.

The conclusions provides a discussion of the findings and the possible repercussion that may result. It offers a few steps that can be taken that may offset the adverse effects that contemporary female representations may have, as well as those contributed to the pornification of society. It contains a summary of the main arguments of the report and the conclusions from them.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review:

The premise for this study is that society's media today is preoccupied with hyper-sexualised content. This literature review will present various perspectives in order to develop the main argument offered in the dissertation, and to help ascertain if the lad magazines under study function as pornography thus assisting in the pornification of society. It will examine theories and definitions pertaining to the rise of laddism, raunch culture and the subsequent advance in the pornification of society.

Hyde (1964:1) states that pornography is “derived from the Greek *pornographos*, meaning literally ‘the writing of harlots’”. This is important as it gives a clear indication that the content is focused on experiences based on prostitution, thereby foregrounding sexual content for the audience rather than the “harlot” herself. Segal (1993:6) asserts that pornography is “sexually explicit material designed for arousal”. Kipnis (1993: 124) takes this idea further by asserting that pornography is targeted to men and their arousal, while in the content itself women are usually cast as the object of this arousal. From the work of these three scholars, it emerges that pornography is not just the exposure of sexually explicit content, but also that it is for the sexual gratification of assumed men who are the audience, while the women within the frame are the objects of this arousal.

Laddism is a contemporary form of masculinity that emerged as a reaction to feminism and the atmosphere of political correctness that ensued as a result. Laddism is about men being indifferent to the sensitive masculinities that were excavated in the aftermath of feminism's questioning of prescribed gender roles. Laddism's response to more self-reflexive and sensitive masculinity is the reclamation of patriarchal masculinities. It does this through exploiting traditional masculinity and sexism ostensibly in the name of irony (Cochrane 2007:1). One of the characteristics of lad culture is its steadfast objectification of women in the name of irony (Whelehan 2000:58). While this "new/old masculinity", was initially "studiously exclusionary and even intimidating to any stray woman" (Whelehan 2000:59), this has changed with arrival of raunch culture.

Raunch culture claims to be a strand of feminism because it relies on expression of women's agency and women who explicitly embrace sexual self-expression. This claimed version of feminism presents hyper-sexuality and has lead women to partake in bawdy behaviour, that objectifies not only other women but themselves too, in the name of liberation (Levy 2006:4). These categories are both preoccupied with the sexualisation of the female body for external gratification and can thus be seen as a part of pornography.

For this reason it is fitting that the theoretical framework of this study be feminist in approach, therefore acknowledging that texts have an influence on how readers of texts view gender ideologies (Cranny-Francis et al 2003:89). Feminist theory also

describes the “subordination of women to men, the internalization and institutionalization of these differences, the representation of these differences in culture and ideology” (Gardiner 2004:296). Feminist theory will assist in the examination of how women are portrayed in both established pornography sites, such as *Playboy* and in lad magazines, and indeed what forms of overlap exist between these sites.

Hall (1996:11) asserts that people evaluate themselves and others in relation to the texts they read. Representations found in texts help the readers construct their own identities in tangent, opposition to or in confirmation of these representations. Feminist scholarship has shown ways in which cultural values associated with the female body are more oppressive than that linked to male bodies. This means that women are categorically seen as lacking or as subordinate to men. While men are valued for the active nature that is associated with their bodies, the female body is regarded as ornamental amusement for these men to stare at, to acquire and possess. Women are seen as fragile and therefore agency was not normally associated with the female body. Furthermore, cultural norms are gendered and the ideals associated with the female body are historically embedded (Anleu 2006:357-358). This is an important theoretical standpoint as it can help evaluate how the texts used in this study are influenced by historical understanding of women’s bodies and lack of agency. These notions have been shaped by patriarchy and this is clear in the specific kinds of representation they follow.

Pornography has created a divergence amongst feminists, who hold vastly different stances on the issue (McElroy 1995:1-2). On the one hand, feminist like Robin Morgan argue that “pornography is the theory and rape is the practice” (Morgan 1974), a sentiment also expressed in the work of other anti-pornography feminists like Catherine MacKinnon, Andrea Dworkin (Dworkin 1974).

However, many feminists dispute the connections of pornography to violence. The latter state that the former is an extreme view to have in which women are placed in a perpetual victimised role (Rodgerson and Wilson 1991:39). They state that instead of trying to censor these types of images, “central assumptions about sexuality which determine sexual ideology” (Rodgerson and Wilson 1991:12) should be challenged instead. They also believe that while pornography reflects prejudice, it did not produce it (Rodgerson and Wilson 1991:67).

While, feminists who are pro pornography, make valid points regarding the fact that women should not be viewed as being entirely passive and men as being innately violent in relation to pornography, it appears to be problematic to assume and accept that pornographic images only just reflect bias. Continued stereotypical representations of the genders in fact perpetuates biased representations and thus solidifies these ideas in society. Even if these pornographic images do not directly lead to violence, the continual, inflexible and inaccurate representation of female sexuality in pornography will certainly advance the prejudice it is said to merely reflect.

Through these definitions it can be argued that women associated with pornography would themselves be seen in the same light as a harlot, whose main purpose is to amuse her male patrons. It can also be understood that by concentrating specifically on the female form pornography leads to women's objectification. These are important points to consider because if some women buy into media representations of themselves that are increasingly lewd, then they are allowing themselves and their representations to become objectified.

Clover (1993:7) furthers the argument that pornography portrays women as objects for male consumption. She states that women are seen as submissive, "perpetually desiring bodies" (Clover 1993:7). There is therefore no agency given to or recognised in women and their varying sexual desires. They are merely objects for men to obtain. Caputi (2003:434) states that pornography sets up many dilemmas when considering gender representations and relations. Pornography utilises traditional views on masculinity and femininity that "construct feminine and masculine subjectives based on gender inequality, conditioning us to eroticize domination, subordination, violence and objectification" (Caputi 2003:434) on an everyday basis.

If it is to be understood, then, that pornographic media content places women in a subordinate role, it follows that these women will be the ones to bear the burden of the violence and domination that she suggests and men will be the

perpetrators of these indiscretions. If the lad magazines in this research are indeed pornographic in content, it can be deduced that mainstream media is also allowing for this treatment of women, since such magazines are classified as mainstream, rather than pornographic. Although it can be argued that pornography may not lead to violent effects, the repetitive portrayal of women as objects would surely reinforce societal assumptions that objectification must be the commonsensical treatment of female sexuality. The fact that women are depicted in this manner portrays them in a, “false light as persons who desire to be dominated and humiliated” (Russel 1991:159).

However, there are feminists who call for a more neutral definition of pornography. McElroy (1995:42) states that the customary definitions of pornography, as pertaining to the Greek roots, are no longer relevant. She states that as time evolves so do classifications and systems, therefore the definition of pornography has changed and no longer relates to the original meaning (McElroy 1995:42). She proposes the following definition: “Pornography is the explicit artistic depiction of men and/or women as sexual beings” (McElroy 1995:51). She believes that pornography can indeed portray people, women in particular, as “full rounded human beings” (McElroy 1995:51) instead of as objectified victims. She also states that it is the restrictive definitions that increase the likelihood of censorship and bias against pornographic content. Pornography, according to her is an, “integral part of the battle of women’s freedom” (McElroy 1995:78). McElroy (1995:129), asserts that pornography can, in fact, be beneficial for women as it provides

information, divests embarrassment and can be therapeutic. She also states, “pornography breaks cultural and political stereotypes, so that each woman can interpret sex for herself” (McElroy 1995:129).

It is, however, her final idea that poses a few problems. While pornography does indeed show alternative sexualities as opposed to those prescribed to us by traditional culture, it is evident that in turn pornography sets up its own stereotypes which may be more problematic, especially in its depiction of women. In addition, it transpires that these stereotypes are becoming the cultural standard as pornography seems to be infiltrating everyday culture. Wolf (1991:132) describes this as beauty pornography whereby women are instructed, through pornographic images, about what their sexuality should bear a resemblance to. These images by and large depict, “the perfected woman” and “the position is female superior; the stage of arousal, the plateau phase just preceding orgasm” (Wolf 1991:132). These images instruct women that their sexuality should be a series of performances, displaying their appearance in the most favourable light.

Women are cautioned though that their enjoyment is not the main objective, rather; they are meant to look as close to perfection as possible even at their most vulnerable moment. It is clear then that these pornographic representations are not favourable to women as they are taught more about staged performance rather than being informed about the various sexual practices which they can explore, as McElroy advocates. “In the absence of other sexual images, many

women came to believe they must have that face, that body, to achieve that ecstasy”, according to Wolf (1991:135). This is the belief that pornographic representations of women, as those shown in *Playboy*, foster. These ideas of pornographic female perfection is also damaging to men as they are kept “destabilized in pursuit, unable to focus on the beauty of the woman- known , marked, lined familiar- who hands him the paper every morning” (Wolf 1991:144).

Berger (1973:45-47) examines the conventions surrounding the widespread ideals of female representation. He observes historical and current subject matter to develop his argument around the issue of representation and he provides a greater understanding of gendered representations when he states that, “men act and women appear” (Berger 1973:47). This indicates that while men are given agency to be active, women are merely products to be gazed at and therefore are given no power. However, Berger (1973:47) also states that women are brought up to be in constant self-observation, of their appearance and of their actions. This reveals that for most women, visual cultures have historically developed to place individual women so that she is not only being looked at but is also the viewer of herself. This woman, therefore, must be constantly aware of the view she projects, and how she appears and is perceived by society, especially the opposite sex, as the most influential feature of her being. This gives insight into how society has historically been informed that a woman’s worth is based on her appearance. Wolf (1991:155) reinforces this by stating that, “female sexuality is turned inside out from birth, so ‘beauty’ can take place, keeping women’s eyes lowered to their

own bodies, glancing up only to check their reflections in the eyes of men". These ideas are prevalent in *Playboy*, and perhaps in the lad magazines, as they hold traditional gender roles in high esteem and endorse a certain standard of what a woman should be.

There is a possibility that the above can change. McElroy (1995:149) discusses the advent of female produced pornography, stating that, "women are starting to make a real impact" in the industry. It may be possible to change the representations of female sexuality if there is an increase in female friendly, feminist pornography. Lubelski (2008:1) states that as conventional pornography is developing into a more coarse category in which "women are constantly degraded", there is a call for, "more thoughtful representation of sex". Anna Span (in O'Reilly 2007:3), a woman pornographer, argues that "the best way to tackle derogatory sex and speech is to reply with positive sex and speech". She also reasons that female targeted pornography can advance equality and that it is also more beneficial for men to view this type of pornography as all sexes and sexuality are firmly respected.

Wolf (1999:135) asserts that the problem is not with graphic content but rather the way it is still being illustrated. She states that if "explicit means honest and revealing; if there were a full spectrum of erotic images of uncoerced real women and real men in contexts of sexual trust"(Wolf 1991:135), this would no longer be harmful. She further states that representation of women is still "heavily censored"

(Wolf 1991: 135) such that only certain kinds of women's imagery are shown; these images do not depict or "cater to female desire" (Wolf 1991:136). We are rather exposed to "mock-ups of living mannequins" who "reveal little about female sexuality" (Wolf 1991:136). Lubelski (2008: 4) agrees that this traditional form of representation does impede and restrain female sexuality and she further notes that until women demand content produced for them by women like Span, Candida Royalle and the many other women who are starting to produce pornography, this will not change. Keane (2008: 2) emphasises that most pornographic content still represents women in "submissive positions in relation to the camera" and that there is a "high ratio of unclothed women, to men, who are often portrayed clothed". It is this type of problematic representation that surfaces more frequently in mainstream media content.

Feminism has always sought to re-imagine gender roles and abolish biased representations away from those that were "too rigid and oppressive" (Rutherford 2003:1). This has led to new masculinities forming as a result of feminism. The new masculinity that formed, in the 1980's, was called the 'new man'. Gill (2003:37) asserts that this masculinity was "sensitive, emotionally aware and respectful to women". Edwards (2006:39) describes this masculinity as being "pro-feminist". It is clear, then, that this new masculinity transgressed gender stereotypes and incited men to be more respectful, if not more understanding of women, as well as living out masculinity in more interesting ways than the patriarchally sanctioned versions. The current masculinity, however, has been created as an

explicit opposition to the new man. The 'new lad' identity formed in the 1990's and is a "clear reaction to the new man" (Benwell 2003:130). If the new man was sensitive and emotional, the new lad would be its antithesis. This new masculinity would be the, "return to traditional masculine values of sexism, exclusive male friendship and homophobia" (Benwell 2003:13). Therefore, the 'new lad' is a return to pre-feminist masculinities, which means an embrace of older, patriarchal manhood.

It is clear then that these magazines that promote the lad identity function as a backlash to feminist ideas. Susan Faludi describes backlash as the retrospective period in which, "the women's movement is blamed for all manner of social upheaval and unhappiness, justifying a call for a swift return to traditional feminine roles" (Kimmel and Aronson 2004:48). The fact that the women's movement is blamed for the unhappiness of men can be seen as accurate. Lad magazines, categorically depict the masculine "crisis". This is due to the "changing gender roles which have tended to be seen as bolstering the social position and psychic security of women at the expense of the confidence and self-justification of men" (Benwell 2003:14). Therefore, lad magazines try to reinstate a prevailing masculinity to make up for this crisis and this leads to the subordination and the objectification in their representation of women.

The new lad culture venerated a self indulgent lifestyle that is, "consciously immature and anti-intellectual" (Kimmel and Aronson 2004:569). This masculinity became the archetype of masculinity in the 1990's (Kimmel and Aronson

(2004:569). However, it can be argued that this archetype has been continued and maintained in the media. This is clearly seen in the popularity of lad magazines. Kimmel and Aronson (2004: 527) state that general men's magazines, like lad magazines, have only come to be fairly recent developments. Before, "male gender identity was everywhere implied but nowhere directly addressed or expressed" (Kimmel and Aronson 2004:526). Lad magazines address and express male gender identity that looks back to long-established ideals but is also, "inextricable from the contemporary world" (Kimmel and Aronson 2004:570).

Lad magazines target "heterosexual men in their late 20's or early 30's who are 'on the make'- pursuing women, alcohol, football, looking back nostalgically upon childhood and youth and looking forward apprehensively to commitment" (Cochrane 2007: 1).

Although this version of the bachelor lifestyle and masculinity is not as sophisticated as the one provided traditionally by preceding magazines, it is still based on the same premises, which include, "its prevalence of aggressiveness, boisterousness, competitiveness, misogyny and teasing" (Chuddacoff 2004:47). These are magazines that allege that they give men instruction on life; however, it can be argued that instead they give "a distorted image of who women are and what masculinity is about" (Jha 2006:1). These magazines remain in the, "domain of the male alone, where women function only as objects" (Whelehan 2000:58). Women

are not given any agency and women's feelings toward the sexual representation found in the magazines are not taken into consideration.

The lad magazines state that they are being ironic in their representations of women and it must be accepted as being endearing. They use the idea of female liberty and equality as a defense. The culture of the lad magazine is well versed in feminism and "jokes about its contradictory relationship to feminism and in doing so abdicates any responsibility for its own sexism" (Whelehan 2000: 60). It is clear that in a "post feminist" society these "lads" believe that, based on their past experiences with feminism and their new found identity crisis, any objections to their representations are obsolete because they are no longer in power and therefore can no longer be blamed. They feel they are entitled to tease and they assume that their content is "harmless and not to be taken seriously" (Whelehan 2000:69) and anyone who disagrees "only want to spoil men's fun" (Whelehan 2000:60-61).

Lad magazines make use of, "endless pictures of scantily clad women" (Cochrane 2007:1). This indicates that lad culture is in fact "old style sexism served up in the exact same format" (Cochrane 2007:1). This male chauvinism furthermore is dressed up as "new-style irony" (Cochrane 2007:1). Lad magazines are evidently old fashioned in their ideas about women and are just as protective over the long established male identity (Whelehan 2000:65). Thus, "classic notions of distinctions between the sexes appear to be reinforced, but it is never easy to determine to

what extent parody and irony support or undermine those distinctions” (Whelehan 2000:67). It is this situation that lad magazines depend on in order to undercut any valid criticisms of their text.

A lad magazine “gets away with its reactionary despotism by pretending to be enduringly naughty” (Bracewell 1996:2). This has led to a relapse in sexual stereotyping and it’s as if any understanding of gender dynamics has never occurred, it is rather a “massive celebration of the rejection of those advancements” (Bracewell 1996:2).

The recent progression, or rather regression, in female behaviour is without a doubt linked to the prevalence of lad culture. Furthermore, “the lad and ladette could only have emerged in an atmosphere hostile to feminism” (Whelehan 2000:16). It has been noted that one prevalent convention from lad culture is that feminism is “emptied of any significance” (Whelehan 2000:60) and that women who show any inclination to protest against lad media content are looked on with derision. As noted, this is due to the increasing belief in the fact that men are trapped in an identity crisis due to female liberation. It is clear then “feminism and female empowerment become associated with male decline” (Whelehan 2000:114). However, it is not only the lads who are rejecting and getting annoyed with feminist ideals. Women are also showing disregard towards it (Whelehan 2000:32). Platt Liebau (2007: 177) emphasises that “by the 1990’s, some younger women had begun to see feminism as a puritanical theory that was fundamentally

hostile to both males and to heterosexual sexual pleasure". These ideas have led to a new ideas of female empowerment.

Faludi's (1993:1) backlash theory explains that it is largely held that women's fight for equality was won and therefore no more could or needed to be accomplished. Feminism is seen as being "over, completed, accomplished" (Kimmel and Aronson 2004:618) and it "presumes patriarchy is past and has been successfully replaced by choice". The backlash is premised on the claim that there are no existing patriarchal and that women have complete equality in every domain. However, paralleled to these messages were ones which showed how women were being adversely affected by these feminist achievements (Faludi 1993:1-3). Two conclusions can be understood as a result. Firstly, many women were now in the belief that equality was fully gained and secondly they were instilled with a fear that as a result of this equality they could face some misfortune. Thus they needed to distance themselves from feminist associations as this was perceived to be the root of any misfortune. Consequently new ideas such as girl power were developed to deal with the equality while distancing itself from feminism because, "feminism has become a dirty word" and "Girl Power is just a nineties way of saying it" (Whelehan 2000:45). New principles, such as matching male behaviour in "an attempt to subvert or deflect male lechery", were created to further show their empowerment. And in order to show their distance from the austere feminists, they developed "lipstick or girlie feminism" which advocates that women are "entitled to

be as sexually aggressive as their male counterpart, and that true empowerment consists in their doing so” (Platt Liebau 2007:178).

The post feminist age we live in, is one where, “women can pole-dance, strip for lad magazines, enhance their breasts to ridiculous proportions and engage in public girl-on-girl snogging because they want to not just curry favour with the boys” (Hunt 2007:1). Levy (2006:2) discusses a contemporary phenomena termed raunch culture. This is based on this post feminist stance that women are fully liberated and can now “join the frat party of pop culture where men had been enjoying themselves all along” (Levy 2006:2). Women no longer need to fear misogyny because it is believed to be gone. They are now liberated to act in the same manner as men and be as sexual as they please. It is believed that everything can take place on an equal ground as it is now, “magically imbued with (the feminist) agenda” (Levy 2005:5). This means that women can partake in any activities that may be raunchy and believe that it is a way of asserting their liberation. Women want to be treated like, “one of the guys” (Levy 2005:4) and therefore they act in a manner that they think “guys” would accept. This is where the term laddettes comes into being. The conception of this identity conveys that “young women can behave as badly as young men, but it also crosses over with the term ‘girl’ to suggest empowerment through assertiveness” (Whelehan 2000:49). The term ‘girl’ refers to Girl Power. While this subverts masculine standards it also suggests that women cannot advance without adopting these traits (Whelehan 2000:49-50). This does not seem very liberating as it shows that their

autonomy is still based on a gender criterion that has been set up historically. As a result, women have become male chauvinistic in the sense that they, “make sex objects of other women and themselves”(Levy 2006:2). They do this to be accepted by men but it can be argued that this in actual fact only objectifies women further and leads to its justification.

Levy (2005:29) asserts that “raunch culture is essentially commercial”. The idols of this culture are porn stars like Jenna Jameson, celebrities such as Pamela Anderson, Paris Hilton, Brittany Spears and the magazine, *Playboy*. It is clear, then, that this culture is intrinsically tied in with pornography. “Porn has become a source of inspiration whenever a little frisson of naughtiness is required” (Walter 2003:2). This is evident in the rising popularity, amongst celebrities such as Kate Moss, of pole dancing (Walter 2003:2). Women are also becoming increasingly interested in burlesque, hailing fetish model Dita von Teese as a role model of female empowerment (Milliken 2008:18). This neo-burlesque movement is another example of raunch culture and it contributes to women “feeling the pressure to be highly sexualised” (Milliken 2008:18). These burlesque and stripping performances are all done for the male gaze and therefore present a contradiction as a woman “can never have true power when all her power is siphoned from the male gaze and the readiness with which men will pay to see her naked” (Milliken 2008: 19). These newly established pastimes are still linked with performance rather than gaining understanding into what women want and need. It can be deduced, then, that women are now accepting the fact that they are objects of the gaze Berger

(1973:47) discussed, as all their efforts in this age link to performance and improving their appearances. Furthermore, this may lead to their acceptance and enthusiasm for certain types of representations in the media.

These representations all point back to the page three girl or pin up girl (Whelehan 2000:62). As backlash suggests, this is part of the broad retaliation taking place that clearly reverts female representation and agency to that of traditional and objectified female roles. This is linked to the retro-sexism that is found in lad magazines. It hankers after traditional gender roles and women are depicted in a manner that achieves this. Many female celebrities, who many women look up to, are willing to model this way. It is hard to deny that this is a caution that “women will continue to enter the public world on men’s terms and be subject to its sexism” (Whelehan 2000:63).

While the normalisation of pornographic aesthetics is done with the intention to offer the audience a sense of rebellion and “dirty glamour” it also makes its subject matter valid in popular media (Paasonen et al 2007: 8). This means that these representations of women become viable options for women regardless of their nature. The celebrities also validate these representations when any of their forays into pornography, such as leaked sex tapes, lead to great endorsement deals and notoriety. Women are thus made to believe that sex sells and therefore the commodification of their own sexuality becomes appealing. This is seen to hold, even if such appeal is achieved at the cost of their sexual agency. They will partake in

it because it is the popular thing to do and it may help them get ahead. Pornographic aesthetics and raunch are increasingly infiltrating current media.

Hugh Hefner states that this culture is “being embraced by young women in a curious way in a post feminist world” (Levy 2005:5). This is as a result of modern feminism being associated mainly with “an image of sexual liberation” (Platt Liebau 2007:174). Hefner’s envisioning of women, as seen in the iconic bunny and the bunny costume, is alarming. His reasoning for this comparison is that, “you feel like caressing it, playing with it. A girl resembles a bunny” (Levy 2005:58). The fact that he has reduced women to the likeness of a rabbit can be seen as an indication that his ‘philosophy’ sees women as not being equal to men but rather subordinate and for men’s entertainment pleasure. He gives the impression that a woman is no more than a plaything, an unequal playmate. The fact that women look up to porn stars and porn barons for instruction has led to a new, “cartoonish sexual stereotype” (Bancroft 2005:1). This stereotypical concept of sexiness is that of a big breasted and sexually available woman. It is rather disconcerting to realise that women are more than ever looking up to women whose “job it is to imitate arousal” (Levy 2005:1). Furthermore *Playboy* is now selling its products to women, who may think that the manner in which this magazine represents women is what they should aspire to be (Wolf 1991:135).

Contemporary women want to be the women in these men’s magazine and as a result, “traveled an arc from fighting objectification to seeking it” (Dowd 2005:183).

It is evident that women's progress is a challenging terrain and that there are times of empowerment and times of regression (Dowd 2005:5). The increasing popularity of lad magazines may indicate that we are in a state of regression. This is clearly the case as it seems now that "the triumph for feminism would last a nanosecond while the backlash lasted forty years" (Dowd 2005:8). The processes of transforming women into objects and to "eroticize the degradation of women have arisen to counterbalance women's recent self-assertion" (Wolf 1991:142). In today's society, "women of all ages are striving to become self-actualized sex kittens" (Dowd 2005:176), so this counterbalance seems to be welcomed by women themselves.

Some are of the belief that that raunch culture is not a bad occurrence and that it is actually, "about women having the confidence to show off their bodies and not be afraid to take the lead in relationships" (Gibbs 2005:1). It is probable then that the women whose representation will be analysed in the lad magazines are of this belief. However Levy (in Bancroft 2005:1) argues that "there is more to female empowerment than sexual freedom". Sexual liberation may be the reasoning behind the representations of these women. Yet, if the main media message being sent out to women is that their "primary objective should be to elicit lustful reactions from men" (Platt Liebau 2007:184), then this does not suggest emancipation, especially if it is women's sole way to gain authority. Rather it indicates a regression to subordination. Furthermore this empowerment is still "on men's terms" (Object 2004:6). Raunch culture can be damaging as it leads to

women feeling “inferior and cheated, incapable of living up to airbrushed and surgically enhanced perfection” (Paul 2005:260). This inaccessible sexualised beauty stereotype fervently promoted by the media, understandably leads to women finding it “flattering to be considered attractive this way” (Ginsberg 2007: 1). The requirement for this type of approval has increasingly led more women to buy into these representations and disturbingly to, “competition that is profoundly anti-feminist” (Platt Liebau 2007:186).

Women are assuming the social construct of sexual liberation, while embracing a form of sexuality which is embedded in patriarchy. They are “co-opting the system presented by men and taking it on as their own” (Platt Liebau 2007:195). This hyper-sexualised model has lead women “to imitate the men that ridicule them” (Baldwin:2). This “masculinization of sex” is, “rather impoverished view of liberation” (Paul 2005:114). This robs women of any sexual agency. If they believe that they need to appropriate masculine ideas of sexuality, it reinforces the idea that female sexuality is lacking and therefore robs them of their innate and unique desires. It also forces them to adopt a homogenous version of empowerment and sexuality deemed suitable by popular culture. This form of empowerment can be argued as being no more than an excuse to use the women’s movement and the supposed empowerment it has given as a new means to fulfill men’s requirements. Women have “built a self-imposed prison by acting like sex objects” (Das 2005:1) and by objectifying other women, while men on the other hand “can’t believe their luck” (Das 2005:1).

Chapter 2: Research Methodology

The examination of the representation of sexuality in both the lad magazine and pornographic magazine has been investigated in order to establish whether the lad magazine consists of a sizable amount of what is considered pornographic content and thus contributing to the pornification of society. The occurrence of raunch culture in these magazines was also under investigation. The following section will discuss the research methodology choices for this study and data collection issues. The methodology that has been used is important to the research problem. The corpus used in the research consisted of two magazines, *FHM* and *Playboy*. The use of these magazines has enriched the research and helped clarify the issue at hand. It must be noted that while this is a topic of enquiry found in other contexts the South African *FHM* has not been paid much attention to in this regard and it is beneficial to examine these issues in a local context.

The methodology that has been used is triangulated and consists of both qualitative and quantitative research methods (Hildreth and Aytac 2007:10). The text data has been assessed in a two step process. Content analysis was employed first. In the second part of the analysis a combination of semiotic analysis and discourse analysis was used. It must be noted, however, that the qualitative process of analysis was the principal focus of the research. The research was conducted over a ten month period to gain sufficient insight into the practices used by both pornographic and lad magazines under study.

The use of content analysis in this study will be quantitative in nature and is of great use as it allows the researcher to examine copious amounts of data and illustrate their conclusions through coding techniques (Stemler 2001:1). It is a “useful way of confirming or testing a pre-existing theory” (Ezzy 2002:84). In this sense, it can help to draw comparisons between the lad and pornographic magazines to help establish whether the former is indeed pornographic in its treatment of women, as content analysis “allows us to produce systematic descriptions of what documentary sources contain” (Deacon 1999:17).

The portrayal of women takes the form of photographs, articles, interviews, quizzes and supplements, all of which were examined. The investigation has provided sufficient and objective definitions of what is considered pornographic and what is not. It then quantified the instances of pornographic representation found in each magazine and drew comparisons between the magazines to test and confirm the pre-existing theory.

From its inception during the Second World War (Gunther 2000:55) content analysis “evolved methodologically and was used by academic researchers to study a wide range of media issues” (Gunther 2000:56). It has been used as both an individual method as well as a complementary method to other research techniques, such as qualitative research approaches (Gunther 2000:56). This indicates that content analysis can be used as a means to enrich the study at hand.

Content analysis is used to, “quantify salient and manifest features of a large number of texts and statistics are used to make broader inferences about the process and politics of representation” (Deacon 1999:16). According to Bailey (1994:304), the “basic goal of content analysis is to take a verbal, nonquantitative document and transform it into quantitative data”. Content analysis is used to examine a significant amount of media content (O’Sullivan 2003:1). As not all the texts can be examined in great depth, content analysis presents a valuable way in which all texts can be taken into account and thus give added insight how significant the research problem is.

The types of subjects being studied must develop from the content being analysed, not from speculation. Then only can it be “learnable and divorceable from the personal authority of the researcher” (Krippendorff 2004:18). It must also generate equivalent results from another researcher (Wimmer and Dominick:2006:151). Thus, this method presupposes a level organised objectivity, which is necessary for the study. It is the researcher’s obligation to approach the assignment as neutrally as possible in order for it to be completely separate from the researcher. It should also generate the same results from another researcher who wishes to undertake the same study (Wimmer and Dominick 2006:151). The corpus must be limited to that which is specific to the topic in order for the researcher not to go off topic. The reliability of the investigation can be assessed by its stability and reducibility, so that the researcher can at all times achieve

consistent findings (Stemler 2001:4). This certifies that no contamination occurs and that it remains reliable.

Content analysis is an “overview of patterns of attention. It tells us what is highlighted and what is ignored” (Deacon 1999:17). It also looks at “specific characteristics within texts” (Stone et al 1966:5). Trends can be found in the subject matter and therefore described, as too can the composition of communication and its method of persuasion (Bailey 1994:304). Thus this research method can indicate whether the lad magazines highlight and influence certain portrayals of women, while ignoring others, and if these representations parallel those found in *Playboy*.

The researcher is enabled “to summarize results and to report them succinctly” (Wimmer and Dominick 2006:151). As noted, the subjects to be studied must arise from the text itself as “content is contained in messages” (Krippendorff 2004:20). By doing this it gains “mutual exclusiveness and exhaustiveness” (Bailey 1994:307). However, an obstacle associated with content analysis is the fact that it “restricts the extent to which the data are allowed to ‘speak’ to the researcher” (Ezzy 2002:85). Therefore it cannot “delve below the surface to explore implicit meanings, nor does it ask how various levels of meaning are organized or conveyed” (Deacon 1999:17). This research method also cannot make “statements about the effects of content” (Wimmer and Dominick 2006:153). While content analysis is useful to allow the manifest features of the corpus to emerge, this study requires that the latent messages also be examined in depth. Thus it is crucial for the next to methods to be employed.

The next method to be examined is semiotic analysis. Semiotics can be described as a, “discipline that studies the nature of any system of meaning” (Grossberg 2006:143). Semiotics was developed by Charles Sander Peirce and Ferdinand de Saussure (Berger 2005:4). They introduced concept of the sign which is the crucial starting point of semiotics. A sign is “the elementary unit of a code and a code is any system of meaning” (Grossberg 2006:143). A sign has no inherent meaning and only acquires its meaning through its context. It is made up of a signifier, a sound or image, and signified, a concept (Underwood 2008:4). The relationship between the signifier and signified is not natural or automatic; it is only through convention that this relationship exists. These codes of language feature the ideals of culture (Underwood 2008:8). This form of analysis is descriptive in nature (Gunther 2000:83) and looks at various aspect of a text. These include the sign, which is made up of the signifier and the signified, and denotation and connotation to name a few (Underwood 2008:2). By looking at these aspects an examination of how they relate to one another to create meaning can be achieved. Semiotics also enables the researcher to examine “a full range of signifying practices’ (Chandler 2001:1). This includes the analysis of both written text as well as photography, both of which are important for this study.

People “live inside of their codes and take their system of meanings for granted” (Grossberg 2006:144). They therefore assume that these codes occur naturally. They also presume that all of society reflects their own cultural codes (Grossberg 2006:144). Semiotics is a method that reveals the intelligibility of these systems

of meaning as false (Chandler 2001:2). These systems are in fact loaded with conventions and are never basic. Thus it can be argued that cultural agreement is still based on conventions of patriarchy. Semiotics is especially useful as it “foregrounds and problematizes the process of representation” (Chandler 2001:1) as well as the “laws that govern them” (Underwood 2008:1).

This method looks “beyond the manifest content text” (Chandler 2001:1), a trait which is essential to this study. This valuable technique deals with the, “deeper meaning of the message” (Gunter 2000:83). It also concedes that the “production of meaning is grounded in conventions, codes and cultural agreement” (Gunter 2000:83). This means that the representations that have been examined do not occur naturally, but are the results of patriarchal cultural conventions. This is important to the study as it aims to demonstrate that the “new” notions of woman shaped by the lad magazines are in fact informed by this cultural agreement and its conventions.

Semiotic analysis is based on the belief that, “texts are organised around a series of binary oppositions” (Grossberg 2006:184) and that as a result “pecking orders- male over female” (Grossberg 2006:184) are created. It must be stressed again that meanings are based upon codes of cultural agreement. Therefore if these binary hierarchies are continuously enforced through this agreement, problems of representation will simply continue.

It will be of value then to use semiotics to analyse how these organisations of meaning are constructed and how they are imbued with ideologies, “semiotics can thus show ideology at work and demonstrate that ‘reality’ can be challenged” (Chandler 2007:3). Semiotics can, “draw our attention to taken-for-granted practices” (Chandler 2007:3) and perhaps indicate how certain ideologies of female empowerment have been adopted in these magazines as a way for the women to consent to and buy into these representations of themselves. These representation may not be as empowering as they rather recall representations influenced by patriarchy. It can also help distinguish whether these ideologies indicate instances of cultural chauvinism instead. If this is the case the ideologies established are that this version of female empowerment, based purely on the sexualisation of women, is a superior cultural practice and any other ideas are disregarded as second rate. Cultural chauvinism means that a culture values its ideas as being the most important and only promotes this narrow world view. The culture behind the contexts of the magazines may believe that their description of masculinity and femininity is the only worthy one and should be enforced in all cultures. Any people who disagree is seen as unprogressive. Seeing as though these magazines are both originally based on western ideas, it is interesting to establish whether they only promote the type of women their culture venerates as ideal and if this has influenced the South African ideas and representation.

Semiotics also looks at syntagm and paradigm. Syntagm refers to the sequence of signs that make up linear meaning (Underwood 2008:10). Paradigm refers to the

“range of possibilities” (Underwood 2008:10) that could be used. This is critical to the study as it will help show why certain choices led to certain effects and how these could change the meaning of the text. It will also lead to questions of the author’s intentions by making specific choices over others. Sometimes confusion arises when the codes that make up the textual choices by the producer are not shared by the readers. Problems occur because “people are not consciously aware of the rules and codes and cannot articulate them although they respond to them” (Berger 2005:15). Semiotics can help form a response to the issue that perhaps many readers are not aware of the irony found in lad magazines and therefore may not respond in the intended way, which is incredibly problematic. The “relationship between signs is crucial” (Berger 2005:16) as these sequences determine meaning. Semiotics facilitates the analysis of the relationship between signs and the conventions that are embedded in them and it can ultimately give a greater understanding to the meaning found in the texts and how these texts influence society.

Another research method used in this study is discourse analysis. While semiotic analysis will enable the study to establish the meaning of the text, it is beneficial to enhance it with this second method. The fact that discourse analysis’ “application to the media grew out of semiotics” (Gunter 2000:87) indicates that it can enhance this studies’ analysis.

These qualitative methods will be used together when examining the texts in more detail in order to provide in depth investigation of the magazines studied. They

will provide a thorough assessment of each magazine to draw out parallels and differences between the two. This will be done by examining the content found in the magazines which include and represent women. By using these methods the representation of women can be fully examined. The adopted multi-layered combined methodologies will enable a more sophisticated analysis of the magazines than adherence to any one method. For example the representation of women can be more fully integrated, to establish first what forms these representations take and whether the women's agency takes the form of complicity with these representational tropes. Second, this study's methodology will enable me to analyse the connections between these portrayals and raunch culture. It will also establish how all these representations relate to the South African context.

Discourse analysis, which was founded in the 1960's and 1970's, is a diverse field of analysis, that has many theorists contributing to its understanding (Wodak 2006:5). Discourse analysis is the evaluation of language and its correlation to social contexts (Garrett and Bell 1998:2). This is due to the fact that it is language that shapes views of the world (McLoughlin 2000:82). The creators of magazines put forward a particular world view that they wish their readers to adopt (McLoughlin 2000:82). It is imperative to make use of discourse analysis as "any choice of words creates a mini-world or universe of discourse, and makes predictions about what is likely to occur in the same context" (Stubbs 1983:2). Thus this analytic tool enables us to see how the producers' discourses create a mini-world for their readers and if these ideals are echoed in the context they inhabit.

It has been established that language is “central to the construction and reproduction of gendered selves” (Speer 2005:7). Therefore it is reasonable to use a method of analysis that will examine how a text constructs the gendered identities found in the magazines and in society, be it the use of words or in the images that accompany them. Speer (2005:7), asserts that often these discourses repeat and buttress the standards of oppressive institutions. Discourse and “utterances echo other words and utterances derived from the historical, cultural and genetic heritage” (Jaworski and Coupland 1999:9). This indicates that texts do repeat ideas that have already been established, even if they continue to be repressive and damaging. Furthermore, “history and conventions are patriarchal” (Todd and Fisher 1988:6) and the understanding women have of their reality are continuously being influenced by this fact. Thus, by using discourse analysis, oppressive gender ideas that are still prevalent can be brought to light. The way lad magazines represent femininity and their own masculinity in relation to, or in opposition to, this femininity can be examined by analysing the particular discourses used. The analysis will help establish that the way texts are produced influences the beliefs that readers have of these genders and the interaction between them.

Both semiotics and discourses analysis emphasise the ideological nature of language in general and in media texts specifically. Ideology prompts “us to think in the ways that support the interest of powerful groups” (Matheson 2005:5). Fairclough is a notable theorist of discourse analysis, who is concerned with ideologies and the power the media has to exert certain philosophies over others,

and “more precisely about the connections between language use and unequal relations of power” (Fairclough 1988:1). He is interested in the power struggles that cause a representation of the world that is limited to the approval of those in power while excluding any other voices (Fairclough 1995 4-5). He is concerned with, “the production, maintenance, and change of social relations of power” and the part language plays in the “domination of some people by others” (Fairclough 1988:1). His theories are necessary in this study as they can illustrate how unequal the supply is of the female representation within these magazines. That is, it can help uncover how certain representations are substantially preferred while others are significantly absent.

The Fairclough model will therefore be of great value as it looks at the text itself and its construction. This is done by observing, for example, lexicalization, metaphors, themes and intertextuality. Intertextuality is an important aspect to this method as “documents do not stand alone” (Atkinson and Coffey 1997:66) and bearing in mind that both a lad magazine and a pornographic magazine are being examined, it is imperative to “look beyond separate texts, and ask how they relate” (Atkinson and Coffey 1997:67). Intertextuality is a way of looking at how texts link to one another. This can help the analysis determine if they have enough similarities in their representation of women, to describe lad magazines as pornographic themselves. This will be done by looking at whether the lad magazine adopts the same conventions in their posturing of their models and the content that accompanies these representations.

Apart from examining texts, this model also looks at the process of production and reception, as well as language as social practice (Phillips and Jorgensen 2002:68). As noted, it is important to be aware of the producers' intentions and what preferred reading they want to bring about in their readers. It is also important to identify the texts possible reception and the various consequences they may have on society. Texts are based on "implicit assumptions about who will be the 'hearer' or reader" (Atkinson and Coffey 1997:70) and it is important to understand how these texts imagine their implied reader to be.

However, it is "never clear which came first, the desire or the compulsion to desire" (McLoughlin 2000:101) as it is evident that producers also have an influence on their audience's preferences in content. Discourse analysis can be used to explore these conundrums. It can be said then that while readers influence the producers choice of content for the magazine; ultimately it is the producer who composes the text and language that influence society. It must be noted that while advertisers also play a considerably important role in how texts are produced and how this influences both text producers and readers, this analysis will not look at adverts in depth but will refer briefly to relevant examples.

Discourse analysis looks at false consciousness whereby, "people learn to see themselves as those who dominate society want them to see themselves" (Matheson 2005:58). False consciousness is a theory developed by Marxism. It

“refers to the systematic misrepresentation of the dominant social relations in the consciousness of the subordinate classes” (Little 2008:1). This means that the subordinate class will complicate the “realities of subordination, exploitation and domination” (Little 2008:1) imposed by dominant class and espouse the dominant class’s views of them, for themselves. Fairclough (1995:12) emphasises that “the ideological work of media language includes particular representing of the world, particular constructions of social identity and particular constructions of social relations”. These all contribute to false consciousness. Patriarchy, which is a dominant system of beliefs, can be said to teach men and women how to see themselves according to this system. Patriarchy contributes to the “maintenance of sexist behaviour” (Todd and Fisher 1988:5) and therefore media texts must play a crucial role in its maintenance. However, it is important to acknowledge that readers do not passively consume the texts they encounter. Discourse analysis as a method appreciates their agency. It argues the level of agency permitted by the texts as, “discourses are seen as frameworks that limit the subjects scope for action” (Phillips and Jorgensen 2002:17) and many of the ideologies present in the texts are commonsensical. Discourse analysis will show, to what extent, “these common-sense assumptions can be ideologically shaped by relations of power” (Fairclough 1988:4).

It can be said then that people are “both masters and slaves of language” (Barthes 1982) as the structures that influenced people are in return influenced by them (Wodak 1997:258). Discourse analysis examines all the aspects concerning language

as well as how people respond to it, are influenced by it and in turn influence discourse itself, perhaps by challenging or accepting the discourses they interact with.

Another theorist to consider with regards to discourse analysis is Teun van Dijk as he was concerned with “linking textual analysis to socio-cultural analysis”(Fairclough 1995:28-29). He looks, in particular at microstructures and macrostructures. The former refers to the lexical and grammatical aspects of the texts, while the latter examines themes and topics (Garrett and Bell 1998:7). These are both crucial to the analysis at hand as they both influence societal values. Other important aspects that will be observed in the texts, are their schema, style and rhetoric, and social cognition and socio-cultural contexts. These apply to the research at hand and therefore need to be examined further. Schema refer to the categories found in the text as well as in the individuals cognition. They include both the prior knowledge and beliefs that people have before interacting with the texts, and will influence both producer and reader of the text (Granville 1998: 16). Style refers to the textual choices made and this will influence the way the text is written, while social cognition and socio-cultural contexts refer to how meaning is created by the individual and how it is applied to the text (van Dijk 1991:116). These techniques will be significant in the analysis as they deal with all the levels of discourse production and reception that ultimately influence social beliefs and practices.

A crucial aim for this study is not to fall victim to seeing men and women as a “universal group with a specific nature” (Todd and Fisher 1988:5). Much feminist research and activism has been concerned with unpacking these differences. Women are not a homogeneous group. They differ according to appearance, race, class, nationality, sexual orientation and life experience, among others. This, therefore complicates not only representations of women but also widens the possible forms their agency might take. Linking up with my earlier glossing of the notion of false consciousness, recognition of women’s heterogeneity and diverse philosophical investment means some women may express their agency in patriarchal ways.

The use of these research methods in the analysis ensures that the representation of women, raunch culture and lad culture found in the magazines will be successfully analysed. This will help establish the role of the media in the pornification of society and the subsequent commodification of sexuality, particularly that of women’s sexuality. Content analysis is the “systematic, objective and quantitative” (Dominick and Wimmer 2006:15) manner in which the corpus will be examined. This will show the frequency both magazines base the representation of women only on a sexual nature and thus limit diversity and whether this is done in a pornographic and oppressive nature that only values women as objects.

Discourse and semiotic analysis acknowledge that, “language plays an increasingly significant part in the development of both an individual and social identity” (Todd and Fisher 1988:3). By analysing language, this study will show how identities

are constructed around lad culture and how women now base their identities on raunch culture and therefore are willing to partake in these representations. This includes both the women who are paid to model for the magazine and the hopefuls who send in pictures and enter the magazines model search competitions.

Chapter 3: A Comparison of the Representation of Women in the Lad Magazine *FHM* to the Pornographic Magazine *Playboy*

This section contains the findings from the research, which has taken place over a ten month period. The data was collected from *Playboy* and *FHM* from March 2008 up until, and including, December 2008. The content includes articles which main feature is the representation of women.

The way the genders are represented is important. It is crucial for the media to be a responsible channel of information about gender relations as so many people have access to it. In South Africa, men's lifestyle magazines are limited to very few choices thus it is imperative that gender relations are represented in a manner that encourages equality and respect. This study has sought out to establish to what extent *FHM* promotes a specific female and male ideal and whether these ideals are conducive to a post feminist society where women are meant to be on an equal footing as men and thus demand uniform respect in their representation as men have been granted throughout media history. The following section will explore these findings.

The research included content analysis to quantify the content and establish trends that may occur as a result (Stone et al 1966:5). It looked specifically at the articles that were focused on women in order to verify whether the magazines treat women as sex objects and focus on their appearance rather than any other aspects of their identities. It also examined whether the *FHM*, in these articles, adopted the same pornographic conventions in their portrayal of women as that of

Playboy. As my literature review showed, what is considered pornographic as it has proven to be a contested matter. This study does not deal with a category of pornography that is defined as “sexually explicit depictions of genitalia and sexual acts” (Paasonen et al 2007:1) but rather as, “texts intended to arouse their consumers” (Paasonen et al 2007:1). This means that while *Playboy* does show genitalia in its content, there is no actual displays of sexual intercourse. However, there are some instances in certain comic strips but in this case the intention is humour as opposed to arousal. *Playboy* is known as a means to encourage arousal. Therefore the ways in which it does this through its conventions and its portrayal of its models will be compared to the way the *FHM* represents women. If there are strong similarities in the way women are represented then it can be argued that *FHM* also intends to arouse its readers and therefore partake in pornography.

That is soft core pornography. The fringes of what is deemed as pornography are slowly being eroded to only include that which is considered hardcore, while soft-core seems to be integrating more into mainstream media. However, it is crucial to understand that *Playboy* “once the epitome of the genre” (Paul 2005:5) cannot be excluded from the category of the pornographic, as some would like us to assume (Paul 2005:5). Thus it still proves to be the benchmark of what is considered pornography in print media. It is therefore a good source to compare the new generation of men’s magazines. The way one establishes what is arousing can prove to be a challenge. In this regard it was any content that displays conventions of pornographic mannerisms, postures and discourse. The amount of

sexually related topics will also be examined as it is important to establish which magazine is more focused with the topic of sex.

The following table shows the number of pictures found in the magazines that use conventions of provocative posing. In the case of *FHM*, pictures found in the letters section were not looked at as they are not as significant as other pictures. These pictures are only provided with a small space in the letters section and therefore do not necessitate enough attention to arouse the readers. However, the pictures the magazine requested the readers to provide showing their support for South African sport were counted as they featured as content in the sports pages rather than letters from readers. Models found in fashion spreads were not counted as they are used to model clothing and the conventions used for their portrayal differs from the other models in the magazines. However, any pictures shown of women, that followed the conventions of pornography, found in articles not directly focused on the actual models, were also counted. For example the article titled “Make love like a lesbian” (de Grooter, March 2008:42-46) has pictures that strongly correlated to what would be shown in pornography thus they were counted. The supplements that were distributed with the *FHM* were also counted as they contained considerable number of examples pertinent to this study. It must be noted though that the top 100 sexiest women supplement contained 51 pictures that were relevant to the study. While *FHM* does not show full frontal nudity, there are instances where the models are naked but their breasts and genitals are obscured. They are known to be scantily clad and this is a significant convention

for the lad magazine. My research is not as concerned with the aspect of nudity as it is with the way the women are modeled and represented and whether this is objectifying them in the process. Whether the women are shown in a sexually explicit light that allows this act of sexuality to become neutralised and standardised in society rather than experiencing true sexuality.

Playboy does show full frontal nudity and these were counted, as were any articles specifically focusing on the models and their representation. The sections that were not included were “The World of Playboy” which shows the events held by the magazine, “Playmate News” and the “Grapevine”. These sections were not included in the count because their focus was on news involving the *Playboy* franchise not the models. The “Grapevine” was not included as it shows photos of celebrities unaware of their breasts or underwear being exposed. While *Playboy* intention is to show these celebrities in this light, it must be acknowledged that the celebrities may have unwittingly exposed themselves unintentionally and therefore this example of nudity is not applicable to the research.

The table depicts the number of women represented in magazine. These women were shown in a sexualised manner, were either nude or scantily clad in either lingerie or bikinis. The purpose of their appearance in the magazine was mostly ornamental. While there may have been some interviews or content accompanying the models these were mostly about their appearance or sexuality. They were mainly there to titillate the reader as opposed to providing informative content.

Month:	FHM	Playboy
March	32	33
April (FHM Collections supplement)	34	29
May	20	31
June	20	29
July (100 sexiest women supplement)	76	31
August	27	33
September	25	29
October (FHM Collections supplement)	35	47
November (Lingerie Special 2008 supplement)	54	32
December	33	38
Total:	356	332

As shown by the table, the *FHM* does have more women in its magazine than men. It must be acknowledged that without the supplements it would have been significantly less than *Playboy*. However, these supplements were important to include as they accompany the *FHM* every year and also contain important

examples of women being depicted in this light. The “*FHM* Lingerie” issue for example is not necessary to include in a men’s magazine and the models are clearly there for the purpose of tantalizing the reader. The women in this supplement are modeling clothes meant for women but the way they are portrayed is specifically intended for the male readers gaze. The “image of the woman is designed to flatter him” (Berger 1973: 64). These models treat the camera as if it is a male viewer and pose in a submissive manner as if they are there to please him (Chandler 2000:1). These models are made to pose in a manner that takes the male gaze into consideration as the ideal viewer of this supplement is a man and therefore they are there for his benefit. Therefore the use of women in this light is crucial to be included in the count as it shows that they are merely being used in a sexualised manner. The same goes for the “*FHM* top 100 sexiest women” supplement, the women are mainly in this magazine to be ogled at by the readers.

The table shows that, in the months without the supplements, *Playboy* does have more women its magazines. This is not surprising as it is known as a pornographic magazine. What is interesting is that often the amount does not differ by much. For example March shows that there is merely one more woman in the *Playboy* than the *FHM*. May and June shows larger gaps in the number of women used but the fact remains that both magazines have a significant amount of content purely focused on women, their bodies and appearance.

While it is important to examine how many representations of women there are in the magazine, it is also crucial to examine how much content each magazine sets aside for sexual content unrelated to the pictorials. It is important to establish how central sexuality is to the magazines foundation. Sex related topics found in the magazine were counted. Both *Playboy* and *FHM* have sexual advisors and these were counted. *Playboy*, however, shares this forum with other non sexually related topics. This feature was included at all times because it did always contain a few sexually related questions and thus has to be seen as sexual content.

Month:	FHM	Playboy
March	4	2
April	3	1
May	4	1
June	4	2
July	3	1
August	4	1
September	3	2
October	3	1
November	3	2
December	3	1
Total:	34	14

This table depicts how many article each magazines contain involving sexual content. It is clear that *FHM* contains more content related to sex and does so in a patterned way as it has a ratio of how many articles are included in the magazine. *Playboy*, however, only includes sexual topics in its regular feature ‘The Advisor’, while it predominantly uses its pictorials as its sexual content. Reviews relating to sex were only included in four of the ten months analysed. *FHM* uses both pictorial and written content to make sexual commentary.

From both these tables it can be understood that while *Playboy* is generally known as a pornographic magazine, because of its use of nude women, the *FHM* has considerably more pictorials of women, posing purely for adornment, and double the amount of written sexual content. This suggests that perhaps both magazines should be considered in the same category.

These tables are not able to describe or analyse the ways women are represented nor do they depict how the sexual content is constructed or the images that may accompany them. They are used to quantify and show just how central female representation, in a sexualised manner, is to both magazines. This is also true of the sexual content and in this case it is evident that the *FHM* does indeed make more sexual commentary than *Playboy*. However, it is crucial to examine these characteristics in depth. An analysis of the images that accompany the sexual content as well as the content that accompanies the pictorials. The pictorials too

must be looked at in depth. Therefore it is of critical use to now use discourse and semiotic analysis to accomplish this.

It is crucial to understand how gender relations, sexuality and sex function in these magazines, as these inform a whole community of readers. These magazines started in different generations and therefore present two different ideologies surrounding masculinity, femininity and their attitudes towards sex. Firstly, it is crucial to examine the covers of the magazines as these provide the first indicators of difference in the magazines attitudes. The taglines that accompany the titles of the magazines is an important indicator of the difference in the attitude of these men's lifestyle magazines. *FHM* is accompanied by the phrase "It's a guy thing". This is quintessentially a laddish expression. This shows that these are young men, not ready for commitment of any sort and who are interested in all things typically male and heterosexual. These 'guys' are less sophisticated and perhaps less charming. *Playboy* is accompanied by the slogan "entertainment for men". This indicates that the target audience are comprised of more mature men and that the magazine does not promote a juvenile masculinity. The target audience of this magazine is intended to be sophisticated. The magazine was developed for "sophisticate men who enjoyed sex and liked to look at beautiful women" (Gibbons 2003). This magazine is more inclusive of different age groups. Any man, at any age, can read this magazine and be entertained for different reasons. *FHM* presupposes that only men of a certain age can participate in this 'guy thing' and its slogan suggests that a more mature audience will not appreciate its content.

The covers of magazines act as a previews of what the reader can expect. Thus it is critical to examine how each magazine promotes its content, specifically looking at how they promote the sexual content and the women they present. Surprisingly, *FHM* is more uninhibited than *Playboy*. They have titles that range from: “Girl on Girls! Sex tips from a live lesbian” (March); “Take a dip with insanely hot Lieschen!” (March); “Roxy! Babe of the century” (April); “Make her better in bed” (May); Rihanna! She’s wetter inside” (May); Blazing-hot, barely dressed and totally up for it! Monica!” (May); “Sex: Fantasy vs. Reality” (June); “Tanya van Graan! Tight, toned and titillating” (June); “A-Z of Sex!” (July); “Winter Warmer! Joelle Kayembe bring the hot chocolate” (July); Here’s your winner: Tracy McGregor” (August); “Olympic Babe special” (September) ; “Cream of the Crop! Megan Fox! FHM’s sexiest woman on the planet” (September); Lady of the house! Eva! Glorious Ms Longoria!” (October); The supernaturally hot Lisa-Marie” (October); “FHM goes wild on...Cindy Taylor! Boots ‘N’ All!” (November); “How to have a threesome” (November); “Resistance is futile! Minki! Takes it off for FHM!” (December); “FHM Bikini Heaven: the world’s sexiest women! The world’s luckiest swimsuits” (December); “Dominika’s sex-toy bench test” (December). *FHM* is clearly explicit on its covers. These titles indicate that the magazines venerate their models because they are either going to tantalise the reader; be barely dressed or strip for the reader. These women are clearly there as a display for the male readers to gaze at. The women in the *FHM* even test out sex toys for the readers. The title “Rihanna! She’s wetter inside” (May), is clearly a play on words as the model is literally wet in

her pictorial. However, this play on words alludes to sex and arousal. *FHM*'s play on words definitely touches on pornographic conventions of portraying and verbalizing arousal. It also alludes to the common pornographic standard of lesbian sex, in its title "Girl on Girls! Sex tips from a live Lesbian" (March). The play on words "Girl on Girls" refers to lesbian sex and is used to excite the readers' imagination, even though it only promises tips, by a girl on girls, not an actual display of this. It can clearly be seen how the magazine echoes a pornographic predisposition just by examining its cover.



Playboy's covers are more subdued and perhaps a bit coy. Their titles range from: "25 Sexiest Celebrities" (March); "Sexy Flight Attendants First-Class Nude" (April); "Diva Maria shows us the ropes (and the Rack) (April); "The new babes of Russia:

16 reasons to love the bear” (May); “Jennifer Leigh: Sexy Card Pro Plays Strip Poker” (May); “Vegas Showgirls Nude” (June); Respect! Jayde Nicole is Playmate of the year” (June); “Hot Wired, All Nude, All Star Cyber Girls” (July); “Hot MILF Cindy Margopolis: sexy, single and ready to seduce you (July); “Naked Susie Feldman perks up the two Coreys” (August); “The WTA’s Ashley Harkleroad: Nude tennis anyone?” (August); “Phwoar! Wild naked English girls and the voluptuous Keeley Hazell” (September); “College girls nude: The big 10” (October); “I seduced Tila Tequila: An exclusive pictorial”; Rachelle Leah, the UFC’s all access girl: nude” (November); “The ultimate Bond special: naked Bond girls!” (November); “Carol Alt: A tropical holiday treat” (December); “A starlit sex in the cinema” (December). *Playboy* magazine makes less reference to sexual fantasy normally shown in pornography. Unlike the *FHM*, who boldly states “Girl on Girls”, there is no mention to lesbian sex. The only reference to it is on the cover of the March issue, which has a picture of Hefners three girlfriends. However, due to their celebrity, it seems their relationship is more friendly than sexual and this dilutes the effectiveness of the cover.





If the magazine did not have a cult status the only indication that it is pornographic, is the fact that they include the word nude into the titles. There are no explicit announcements of pornographic related material and the women are somewhat covered and posing neutrally. Unlike the *FHM*, it does not make any reports of sexual content to be found inside the magazine. The only promise they make is that there will be nude women, who will show their “rack” or “seduce” the reader. Words like these throw back to the pre-feminist era *Playboy* was created and is based on the premise that the magazine caters for this era’s idea of a sophisticated gentlemen. A running convention found in *Playboy* is “the girl next door with her clothes off” (Acocella 2006:1). The women are normally chosen based on this idea and it seems that the reader is like a neighbour taking a peek. Hefner’s objective is to “take his readers back to a time before their first sexual experience” (Acocella 2006:1). With this comes the coyness found in cover’s lack of explicitness. However, the repeated circulation of the “girl next door” trope also has implications for ordinary women beyond these pages and how they can be sexualised

without their permission. Unlike the *FHM*, these women are not depicted as willing 'take it off' for the guys and the men are not targeted as bawdy observer. Not much is said about the women on the cover of *Playboy*. The desire to see naked women seems to be shrouded in the pretext that the magazines are bought for their articles as these are more highlighted on the cover as opposed to the sexual content.

Based on the covers alone, *FHM* seems more sexually explicit. This is paradoxical as it is not considered pornographic like *Playboy* but rather as a men's lifestyle magazine. This is the first indication that society is becoming more pornified, as it is becoming more tolerant of this type of content and therefore treatment of women. Language is evidently changing to accommodate the pervasive nature of pornography, so that in contemporary society, content that was previously called pornographic is now merely given the label 'lifestyle' while what was considered pornography is corroding to only include the hardcore. Perhaps there was not a significant enough shift in the treatment of women, in men's magazines, since the women's movement. Women were probably not portrayed in anyway different to the sexist conventions always used by men's magazines and the rise of lad magazines just offered a confounding realization of this as it reinforces this portrayal. Society seems to becoming compliant with it too. It is critical to examine how women are represented within the magazine and how they are treated in the written text as well as the pictorials. The following section will now give an in-depth analysis of this.

Sexuality is the “area of women’s lives’ that the most pernicious distortions in reality are delivered by the media” (Davies et al 1987:70). *Playboy* has been establishing an idea of female sexuality over the past fifty years that is infact sexist and harmful to women. Every month the magazine introduces a centerfold, who then is acknowledged as a ‘playmate’. While this is seen as a prestige’s honour by the women who pose in the magazine, there are many alarming features to consider. The name alone proposes a problem. Woman are not seen as autonomous sexual beings but rather play things for men to amuse themselves with. Every month the ‘playmate’ is given a centerfold, accompanied by several pictorials, a paragraph write up and a data sheet.

While the pictorials are pornographic and consist of full frontal nudity, bottom-up posing and poses bending over objects, the paragraphs giving details about these sexualised women, provide no indication that these women have their own sexual desire. They do not provide any information about what they find sexually gratifying. Rather they submissively pose in suggestive ways to please the onlooker. They are all ready for sex but not for self gratification. They are there to give pleasure to the viewer. The way the pictorials are shot provides an insight into what *Playboy* essentially, is about and what it is aiming to achieve. They all stay true to Hefner vision of the girl next door. All the photos are shot in a private location. While some may start in a more public area: a locker room in Octobers (72-81) issue; a swimming pool in the August (76-85) issue; a yacht

in the July (76-85) issue and a ballet studio in the September (80-89) issue, they all conclude in a private sphere namely a bedroom filled with cushions. These all suggest a voyeuristic surveillance of these women by the acknowledged male reader. This functions in two separate ways. Firstly, it reinforces *Playboy's* intention of selling fantasy. These women are unattainable in reality but *Playboy* delivers them to the reader in the form of fantasy where they can in some sense attain them through the gaze and imagination but not in actuality. The other is that the readers are permitted to partake in voyeuristic behaviour and take satisfaction in that, without the need to gratify the model's need. The women are virtually silent, available, to an extent, and they do not protest and thus the male reader can use them as his imaginary play things.

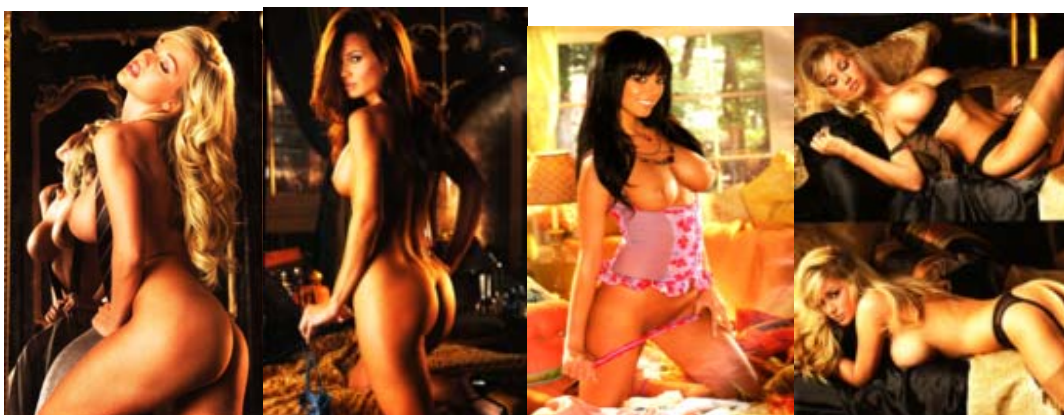




Hefner stated that he wanted to retain the romance to his pictorials and therefore would “put a girl into a natural setting and introduce the suggestion of a male presence” (Gibbons 2003:2). However, romance has rationally been a patriarchal construct of how men and women should interact and court one another. If one looks at romance novels, one notices the women is always passive and reserved “since she cannot seek or instruct the man she wants, she must be in a state of constant passive readiness” (Boyle 2003:430). The romance novel heroines never instruct their lovers on how to please them, they are merely a “passive, receptive figure” who has the desire, “to be blindly ravished” (Boyle 2003:433-431). The ideas of female agency in romance is that there is none. Women must wait submissively for her chivalrous hero to ‘ravish’ her. If this is the outcome Hefner strives for, he is successful as his models are very much shown in this light. The guise of using romance is that it offers more pleasing language for what it is really describing. A women who has no sexual agency and who cannot ask for

sexual gratification but merely has to wait for a man to decide to sleep with her for his own pleasure.

An idea of a mutual pleasurable relationship, that Hefner is trying to insinuate, is hard to acknowledge when looking at the pictorials. The photo's do suggest a male presence, normally looking down and descending on the model as she lays there unmoving. These pictures provide a sense of domination over the women, definitely not a setting of a mutual romantic rendezvous like Hefener suggests. Perhaps this feature is used to enrich the fantasy for the reader. They can imagine they are the male presence. However, there is also the factor of voyeurism to consider and these pictures certainly suggest a male presence but a hidden one. This presence is leering at the women and taking pleasure in it. The pictures do not provide any glimpse into passionate romance but rather make the dubious act of voyeurism seem acceptable. This presence is not part of the picture but ultimately outside of it, staring at it and the women, exploiting her for his own enjoyment.





The centre folds each come with a information sheet that tell the reader their bust, waist and hips size, as well as their height and weight. This is perhaps to add authenticity to the fantasy and make them more real. These specifications are however, dangerous as this implies that in order to be deemed sexually attractive one must have these exact proportions. This reinforces the idea that female sexuality is “reduced to a few, limiting stereotypes” (Davies et al 1987:70). This gives a negative message to society especially men, who are trained by these images to only find one variety of female manifestation appealing. These sheets also tell the reader about the females ambitions, turn-ons and turn-offs as well as a few other characteristics such as favourite food and TV shows. However, these are basically attributes they find appealing and unappealing in men not, in fact, what excites them sexually. This supports the idea of pornography being focused on the female form as the site of pleasure as objects, but not as having agency (Clover 1993:7). Their pictorials comprise most of the space given to them, while other information is marginalised. *Playboy* is astute as they use models who are either well educated such seen in the March (74-85), April (74-85), June (84-93) November

(72-81), centerfolds or are going to further their studies like the December (100-109) twin models. These models are also hard working women. Novembers (72-81) playmate, Grace Kim is an aspiring writer, while April's (74-85) model, Regina Deutinger, aspires to run her families business. This way *Playboy* shows its support for female empowerment and this may alleviate any scruples people have with its relationship with women. *Playboy* tries to come across as progressive and emphasises their models professional roles in order to be seen as politically correct, even though their handling of female representations is actually far from it.



The centerfold that stood out as most problematic was the December (100-109) edition. Not only does it depict a common fantasy of twins and hint at incest, these girls are not seen as individuals with personal desires. While in the paragraph, that accompanies their article, states that they “delight in their differences” (Playboy, December 2008:100) they are only given one data sheet and answer the standardised questions in one unified voice. This is the strongest indication that women are not seen as individuals whose wants and needs are

important. Rather the magazine objectifies women in the same way, most pornography does, and does not take individuality into account.



Playboy does not only have playmates posing in its magazine. It also consists of other pictorials of famous and semi famous women. What is essential to note is that while *Playboy* does uphold stereotypical ideals of femininity, the age groups of women represented range from eighteen to about forty two. The July and December editions, both had women, in their forties, on the cover. This shows that *Playboy* intends for the audience to see their representation of women as being unbiased and not ageist. However, while *Playboy* does seem to show some diversity, the number of older women are limited in the magazine. These women are both famous, outside of the magazine and it also very unlikely that a women over the age of thirty would be considered as a centerfold. These women are both given a platform to discuss their interests. Cindy Margolis, who models in the July edition, is famous for being the “most downloaded woman” (Robertson, July 2008:102) but she is also an author and fertility expert. The article has steps on

how to date her and she is briefly given space to discuss her interest in infertility. This article is accompanied by eight pictures, mainly full frontals and she states that her posing naked is “help families out there” (Robertson, July 2008:119). Carol Alt, is a famous supermodel and she has used the *Playboy* as a platform to discuss her lifestyle of eating raw food (Malanowski, December 2008:140). She is also given a pictorial but only poses topless in it. These women are given more space, than those normally given to models, to discuss their views. These women are given space because of their fame and renowned beauty. It seems that the magazine’s views on women and age is that when you are young, you should be looked at more than heard and only the few in shape older women are given a place in the magazine to discuss their points of view. These older women are stylised and measure up strongly to an idealised vision of feminine beauty. It is highly unlikely that older women would ever be given the same treatment in *Playboy* if they are not famous or look a certain way.





There are pictorials of reality stars such as Kristy Morgan, from the show “A shot of love with Tila Tequila” (October: 54-59); Susie Feldman from the “Two Corey’s” (August:58-63) and Amanda Corey from “Beauty and the Geek” (September:60-65). Sport show host Rachelle Leah (November:114-123) and WWE wrestler Maria Kanellis (April:104-113) are also shown in the magazine. All these women have nude pictures with a few paragraphs dedicated to speaking about them. While *Playboy* shows naked pictures of the women, the conversations are not sexually related. The only one out of these articles is that of Susie Feldman, who discusses her bi-sexuality but also states she was a “a lost puppy” (*Playboy*, August 2008:59) before becoming a housewife. She states that it is for her and her husband and perhaps this is indicative of bisexuality only being acceptable when there is a man involved. There are a few articles in which the husband partakes in the interview. This is seen in the article, “Ice-T’s hot Coco” (Itzkoff, March 2008:53). Firstly the title suggests that she belongs to her husband. However what was noted in the articles accompanying married celebrities, was that these women

are permitted to discuss provocative topics. Coco, discusses the fact that her husband oils her down for her photo shoots (Itzkoff, March 2008:139). However, she says so in a provocative tone. These are characteristics not normally found in any pictorials of *Playboy*. This suggests that perhaps it is seen as safe for a woman to be provocative if she has a spouse. Husbands, in this instance offer validation. Whereas unmarried women, still needing validation, are there to be stared at and their tastes not heard.



The most alarming and poignant feature of this magazine is that the women are shown as sexualised objects but do not speak in a sexualised manner, “Women are there to feed an appetite, not have any of their own” (Davies et al 1987:74). This may be line with the idea that the models are like the girl next door. Men want to watch her from a distance but not necessarily know such intimate details. The most disconcerting example of a women as objectified and being silenced is that found in the article, “Petter Hegre’s Luba” (Playboy, March 2008:68). Again, the title implies the woman in the photos belongs to her husband. What is concerning is the fact that this woman has no voice. Her husband speaks about her to the magazine. Unlike the American models, she isn’t given an option to speak for herself. She is merely a body to be consumed by the reader. Her body is the only quality that is discussed about her and she is described as having a “perky ass and nice full breasts” (Playboy, March 2008:68). This is done because the magazine only focuses on her physical attributes and asks about these.

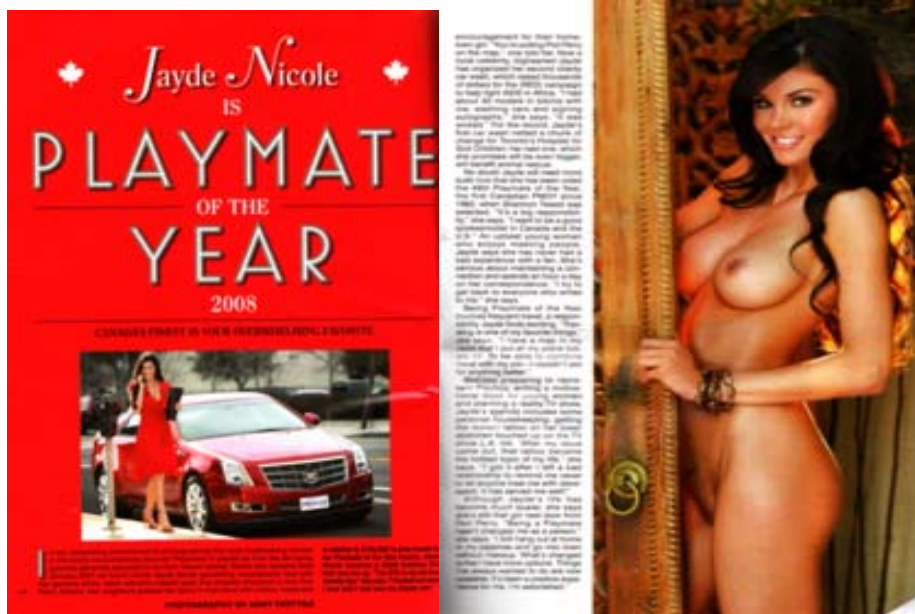
The women who pose for the magazine are given no or little sexual agency and this reinforces the idea that women are there to amuse the readers and are seen as merely playthings. They silently pose for the male reader who gazes at their female form. Alarmingly this form is stereotypically a slender-with curves figure, large breasted and with no body hair. Although there are Black, Asian and Cajun centerfolds, the majority are white women. Three centerfolds are brunette, including the twins and four are blonde. This shows that *Playboy* reinforces, even in present times, a narrow stereotype of blonde and white being the superior femininity, that is found sexually attractive. The blonde models are shown in settings quite

different to the other models. Some include glamorous settings and props such as velvet settees, silk bedding and pearls. Others include an all American look as the one blonde model is wearing a sports top and posing in front of a locker (October:74), while another blonde model is photographed in an ice-cream parlor (August:79). Pinks and florals are normally used for these models. The brunette models are portrayed in tomboyish settings. One girl is drinking a beer while on a yacht (July:76). The twins are on jet skis and then on a blue checkered bed (December: 101), while the May(76-77) centerfold is shown fixing a car. These models are accompanied by props in blue and red. From this contrasting treatment of women with different haircolour, it is clear blondes are believed to be more feminine and delicate. With regards to ethnicity the models are shown in similar settings but the props hint at differing sexuality. The black model is adorned with beads and a gown with leopard print trimming (March: 77-78). There is also a leopard print dress prop in one photo(March:76). This reinforces the idea that women of colour are exotic. The Asian model is sprawled on oriental print bedding with screens in the background which strongly refers back to her Asian heritage (November:93-95) . Regardless if she even likes type of interior design, she is still made to pose in this setting. The Cajun model is portrayed in a ballet studio as she is a dancer and even though she is brunette she is depicted in purples and very bright colours (September:84).



Any imperfections that the models may have are airbrushed out and this adds an extra bout of discrimination to women. Real women have flaws and do not have the same luxury of airbrushing and editing afforded to the models. Even though the magazine sells fantasy, the expectations of women it generates in its audience is hazardous and very real. These images construct a female sexuality that is submissive and at hand only to ensure that male satisfaction is carried out. It doesn't depict the reality of sexuality and it reinforces the notion that female self-determination is secondary in sexuality to that of their male counterparts. This gives rise to inequality and recreates and reinforces chauvinism. It shows that Hefner's sexual revolution is still, to this day, one sided.

Playboy also uses a method of speaking on behalf of their models. They speak about the models, describing their physical attributes and disclose a bit about their background. They do insert a few quotes from the models but they do not use the technique of an interview. They can take the models words and place them in a context they find fitting for what they are aiming to achieve. An example of this can be found in any of the articles supplementary to the pictorials. A specific example is the pictorial of the Playmate of the year, Jayde Nicole. The magazine provides a few paragraphs describing her as having “a genuine smile, warm almond eyes and a shapely physique” (Playboy, June 2008:110) and then it goes on to describe her work in charities and inserts a quotation of her explaining how the money was raised. It carries on explaining her role as Playmate of the year and concludes by discussing her tattoo. The main feature of this type of discourse, is that the magazine maintains its primary voice, while only supplementing hers in. The fact that this is the main form their content takes, gives the impression of *Playboy* as all powerful. The magazine speaks as a whole and no writer is not credited. The *Playboy* has ultimate control over what is said about the models and which of their contributions it includes. This method shows how power relations work in this instance and it is the magazine who holds this position.



The main area where sexism is prominent in *Playboy* is in the magazine's illustrations. There are several examples of illustrations found in the magazine. There are often comic strips involving sex and many illustrations of orgies and women giving men oral sex. It can be said then that one of the chief devices of showing sexually explicit content in the magazine is through illustration and comic strips. In terms of how women are depicted in these illustrations, the idea of a woman as always sexually available is strongly reinforced through this framework. Every month there is artwork done by Olivia de Berardinis. These illustrations always show a woman semi-nude, seductively posing and accompanied by captions. For example, the September issue has an illustration of a woman lying on her back, with her legs open, accompanied by the caption "Come in...!" (September: 95). October's edition has an illustration of one of Hefner's girlfriends, Bridget, also semi-nude and drawn as Dr. Frankenstein's creation, followed by the caption "Okay Dr. Frankenstein, bring on your monster" (October: 99). The

captions all include sexually suggestive phrases such as Decembers women lying on a chaise lounge saying, “Is that all you want for Christmas?” (December: 111). Other captions include: “Why don’t we play something I’m good at?” (June: 99); Is that a carrot in your pocket or are you happy to see me?” (April: 103) and “Come over. We’ll think of something to do?” (November: 77). All these illustrations evoke an impression of women as “perpetually desiring bodies” (Clover 1993:7), they are merely objects for men to obtain. This is a clear convention of pornography to portray women in this manner.



Women in *Playboy* are not only objects to be obtained but also poked fun at. Women are often portrayed as gullible and always ready to have sex. There are often comics of women standing nude at the door asking the male visitor if they can help them (September: 130). One example depicts a female worker at a computer store stating to the customer “If compatibility is a problem, I think you’ll find me very user friendly” (May: 93). Another cartoon depicts a women wearing a top with the words “Blow Job Betty”, while stating to her friend that it promotes brand recognition (June:130). These are examples of women objectifying themselves for men. An example of women described as gullible can be seen in the

cartoon in the September issue, where a blond woman asks her colleague, “If Mr. Barnes isn’t interested in interior design then why did he ask me if my carpet matched my drapes” (September: 120). This is also seen in Decembers (168) issue where a woman is straddling Santa’s face in confusion as she starts to realise she should be on his lap. These cartoons depict women as naïve and unaware of men’s lascivious intentions. The work related comic also pokes fun at sexism found at work, which is a serious issue, in which many women experience emotional distress. This woman is so gullible, she did not even realise that he is sexually assaulting her.



The most sexist cartoons are those depicting women in working environments. These women are always represented as incapable of actually doing serious work and always using their bodies to advance their positions. One cartoon shows a woman in a very short dress, with one exposed breast standing in front of a display board depicting a plummet in earnings while in front of a meeting of men.

The accompanying caption declares, “In lieu of profits, our CEO has agreed to shake her booty for the board of directors” (May: 122). This woman does not look like a professional business woman, capable of being a CEO. The way that she is depicted is to suggest that she cannot be taken seriously and in effect this makes a statement that no women, in position of power, can be. Another shows a woman photocopying her buttocks for her résumé (November: 132) and a different one shows a woman attending an interview naked, while a man states that, “of course, being a woman, you have an unfair advantage” (September: 124). This indicates that *Playboy* does not believe women can be in powerful positions and can only be appreciated based on their appearance and how sexually available they are. It also states that all women try to advance their careers by exploiting their own bodies. This may in a sense be used as a way to appease themselves of the fact they are exploiting women to make profit for themselves. As if to suggest that women would do this anyway, so it would be foolish not to benefit from it too.

Playboy, as a pornographic magazine, is an exemplary example of the genre of soft core pornography. It was in fact the first of its kind. It does depict female genitalia and sexualises women’s bodies with the intention to arouse its readers. It also depicts sex acts in its cartoons and in this form of content, it reinforces the idea of women as sexualised objects. While *Playboy* does answer sex related questions in its advisor section, this is by no means the main subject of this regular feature. Only four out of the ten months had articles pertaining to sexual

content. These articles included subjects such as “The Sexual Male, Part Four: The Look Of Love” (Rowe, March 2008:98); “Things You Never Knew About Call Girls” (Baime, June 2008:104); “Swinging A To Z” (Playboy, September 2008:92) and “The Sexual Male, Part Five: The Hard Facts” (Rowe, November 2008:110). These articles are not pornographic but it is important to discuss them. The main area of pornographic content in the magazine is found in the representation of women. However, it is crucial to examine whether they use women as an ornamental device to accompany the articles and thus underpinning their role as sex items. Neither of Rowe’s articles are accompanied by women and this may signify that this content has important substance and therefore does not need to use women to appeal to the readers. Or perhaps having women will distract from the content. The other two articles do contain pictures of women. The call girl article shows a woman, naked and bending over on top of a bed. The swingers article has several pictures depicting orgies and two depicting a swinger teacher. She is the focal point in the pictures, even though she is depicted with other people. These articles have pictures because their content is less serious and are basically instructions when partaking in swinging or hiring a prostitute.

Playboy promotes a lifestyle of bachelordom and casual sex. Its women are there to be consumed and the magazine portrays them on the premise that they are part of the *Playboy* fantasy. However this still has negative effects. Pornography reflects prejudice already established in society and it is argued that it did not produce it, however, it still retains a responsibility in perpetuating these beliefs.

“Discourse is an important form of social practice which both reproduces and changes knowledge” (Phillips and Jorgensen 2002:65). The discourse in this magazine strongly reflects the discourse prevalent when it was founded. This being prior to the women’s movements most important work, and based in a very prejudiced and patriarchal atmosphere. *Playboy* has always held a powerful position and its popularity is increasing (Levy 2006:36). Regardless of the fact that it tried to sell fantasy or a degree of sophistication, it is still essentially “men leering at women’s passive bodies” (Gibbons 2003:1). It is also due to *Playboy* that pornography is now tolerable and mainstream (Gibbons 2003:2). The formula of the magazine has influenced many other magazines, including the *FHM*. It is essential to investigate to what extent this is, what similarities and differences there are and if ultimately the *FHM* can be catagorised in the same way as *Playboy*.

Playboy as a magazine, has set up a fantasy world of bachelordom. The reader gets to steal a look into Hefner’s world at the beginning of the magazine in the section titled “The World of Playboy”. This world is star studded, luxurious and full of semi-naked and naked women. *FHM* also sets up a vision of bachelordom but in a very different way. This world is filled with, “sport, pop, alcohol, drugs, heterosex and soft porn” (Whelehan 2000:58). This lad magazine does not try sell the idea of glamour. Its treatment of women is free from any pretences of the romance *Playboy* tries to fake.

The context in which the *FHM* emerged is the post feminist nineties (Magforum 2008:9). By this time feminist principles were taken for granted as being embedded in societies psyche. Lad magazines since their inception were quick to proclaim the struggle for sexual equality, being won by women. It is on this belief that these magazines have based their genre. These men are, “aware of the embeddedness of their own history within the histories of the women’s, gay and ant-racist movements” (Whelehan 2000:65). They use this knowledge as a defense mechanism to guard from any criticisms, as they claim any offensive content as ironic and not intentional. They are in essence claiming that they are making fun of their situation in the process and any critics should give them a break because they have had to endure a lot and know better than to do something out of malice. However, there is a wistfulness for a time when “men were men and women were women” (Whelehan 2000:65). This is prevalent in their representations of women and gender relations. The question of their formula of irony, as being relevant in current magazines, will be addressed at a later stage.

Playboy has two articles every month. These are called babe of the month and employee or co-ed of the month. In the babe of the month article, the magazine normally features a well known person such as TV presenter Carrie Keagan (July: 15). In the employee or co-ed of the month, they scout and interview women. These women hold the following job titles “Army Contractor” (July:19), “Playboy Publisher”(August:19) and “strip club owner” (June: 22), to name a few. While these women pose nude, the babe of the month models pose in lingerie. One

exception was the babe of the month in the December (23) *Playboy*. The significance of these articles is that the *FHM* uses a similar format. While *Playboy* discusses their professions to show that they are politically correct, the *FHM* addresses its models rather differently. They have a section called the Reporter, in which they interview several women each month.



The March issue has an interview with the “winner of *FHM* Spain’s Casting 2007” (*FHM*, March 2008:15). What is significant in this interview, is that they ask the model which part of her body she likes best. She responds that she likes her hands and legs, then comments that she has “incredible breast” and asks if they are natural. *FHM* does this often with several of their models, as seen in the Reporter May (19) and their interview with Nonhle Thema in the October (44-49) issue. This can be seen as a technique *FHM* uses to draw attention back to the model physique, making it clear that these article’s are chiefly about their bodies. In pornography, female body parts such as breast, genitalia and buttocks become the sum total of the actual female human. This is also the case of these models. Little attention is paid to their qualities as a person but rather most attention is paid to their physical ‘assets’. *FHM* does not ask their models if other parts of

their bodies are real, only the sexual parts, therefore there is a predominant interest in the models as sexual objects and their sexuality.



These interviews are accompanied by the models pictorials. These pictorials consists of the models wearing lingerie while customarily clawing at their panties or holding their breasts. In some of these features the models are semi-naked or completely naked. October's (18-20) *FHM* shows Germanys' Home Grown honey winner, topless and bending over slightly. June's (21-23) *FHM* has David Beckham's former mistress, topless in one picture and nude in the next, only wearing a belt but lying down in a way to prevent full exposure, while cupping her breast. December's (20-22) *FHM* shows several pictures of a Dominican model. Two of which she is wearing a lace corset but is bottomless, while the third she is topless. France's Miss *FHM* (July: 22) lies sprawled naked on a bed while September (18) has a completely nude Francesca Lodo, a showgirl. The only difference between these pictorials and those found in *Playboy*, is that there are no full frontals or exposed nipples. Other than that the feel is very similar. These women are also submissively posing for the male reader. However, these models are not the smiling-girl-next-door variety of women found in *Playboy* who are

only too happy to be leered at. These models all have slightly parted lips, and suggestive expressions, as if they are waiting expectantly, ready to seduce.



The November issue has a pictorial of Bruna Abdullah, titled “All Tied Up” (Singara 2008:20). The theme is BDSM, a theme that is often found in pornography. BDSM is an umbrella term which refers to an alternative sexuality and the acronym stands for several of these sexualities interests. The BD stands

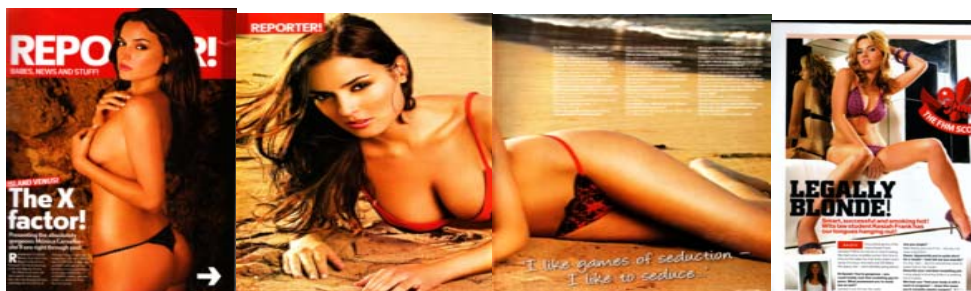
for bondage and discipline; the DS stands for domination and submission and the SM refers to sadism and masochism or sadomasochistic behaviour. This BDSM, erotises submission, domination, discipline and punishment. The imagery of this photo shoot alludes to this fetish. The wording used also reinforces the imagery. *FHM* states that her body is built for “strip poker” and that she “fulfills our dominatrix fantasies” (Singara, November 2008:20). By depicting women in this light fetishises domination and subordination of women, as this is a fetish that in reality locates pleasure in humiliation. This could be part of *FHM*’s irony, to depict a women in a pose that is considered exploitative and shows, “possession of women by conquering men” (Caputi 2003:440). This is indicative of its tongue in cheek remark about female empowerment versus men. That they feel that its all right to show such imagery because women have already won and are fully emancipated, so there can no longer be a threat of domination. However, it still is debasing and suggestive of the fact that there are disparities between the sexes. She is not fulfilling the role of a dominatrix, she is the one being dominated. She is not the feme fatale, “unchastened Eve before the “fall” but rather, “the punished submissive” result (Caputi 2003:440). The magazine plays on the fact that female sexuality was historically associated with sin an therefore punishable. This is distinctly a play on their belief of what a woman’s place is in society. It implies that female self independence is not desirable in their world but female obedience is. This is also strongly indicative that *FHM* makes use of pornographic conventions as “pornography sexualizes hierarchy” (Caputi 2003:440) and this image does this.



FHM is not interested in any female qualities that do not relate to their physicality or sexuality. This article makes that clear when she speaks about her honesty being her best feature and them responding that they meant physical assets (Singara, November 2008:22). These pictorials are headlined with quotes by the models all of which reinforce *FHM* interests. A few headlines include: “When I grew up I started to find my breasts beautiful” (March:17); “I like games of seduction-I like to seduce” (May: 21); “I don’t mind being photographed topless. I’m a women and we all were born naked” (October: 18); “A lesbian affair opens your eyes” (June: 22). These headlines reveals that, while *Playboy* shows full nudity, *FHM*’s subject matter is more preoccupied with sex and the female body. This shows that they are just as guilty of objectifying and sexualizing women, if not more so as they discard any real qualities outside of the physical. They also ask questions that can somehow pique their interest and stimulate their sexual tastes. They asked June’s model about her lesbian affair and her answer plays into a common male fantasy. The model from October’s answer and highlighted headline,

show's that her belief is that women should be made to pose nude because of their gender, as women are meant to be gazed at, and therefore have no reason to be uncomfortable with the idea. The fact that this was highlighted shows that it fits well into their creed.

FHM does not promote the fact that their models are well educated or make any pretences, like *Playboy* that their models are progressive for wanting to pose. *Playboy* constructs the idea that their magazine is the last step for, intelligent women to take before they are fully actualised and they utilise the fact that some of their models are educated or hold a good job position as a method to oppose any criticisms that they exploit women. By showing these women are smart, eases any responsibility on their part. *FHM*, on the other hand, shows disappointment at the fact that some of their models have greater ambitions than to only model for lad magazines. This was seen several times in the interviews, in the articles: "The X factor!" (May: 19-21); "Legally Blonde!" (August: 22-23) and "Rah-Rah Girl!" (September: 26-27).





May's *FHM* features a radiology student Monica Carvalho. They describe her as "absolutely gorgeous" (*FHM*, May 2008: 19) and the first question they ask is, "So, Monica...Radiology? Why?" (*FHM* May 2008: 21). The tone suggests that they are staggered by this fact. She replies, "It's hard to explain. I always thought I would be an architect" this answer shows that education is important to her and she had many options to choose from. The magazine replies "Frankly, *FHM* reckons you could do more for mankind as a full-time model.". While it is meant to come across as though they are teasing her, it shows that they disregarding her intellect and only focusing on her body. This shows that this magazine does not have any interest in women and their intelligence and nor do they think there is any use for woman other than to ogle them. As discussed this isn't a once off situation. This is another devise used by *FHM*. In the August issue they tell the model that she is gorgeous and could, "totally rock this modeling gig for years. What possessed you to study law?" (August: 22). Firstly, its seems *FHM* believes that women would need to be possessed to consider educating themselves, when they can use their looks to make money. They don't believe that women would want to be acknowledged for anything other than their appearance, nor should they be

seen in any professional capacity outside of modeling. Modeling being an industry solely concerned with appearance and beauty. Another interesting point from their statement is that they basically implied she would only be beautiful for a few years, completely ignoring the fact that there are older models in the industry. They say “for years” rather than indefinitely. This implies they wouldn’t have any interest her modeling for them after these years. This also shows that like pornography *FHM* is preoccupied with beauty and youth. The third article, they ask the model what she does besides modeling and she replies that she is studying public relations. Instead of being impressed by the fact they asked “Why? You could be a full-time model!” (*FHM*, August 2008:22). The tone, gives the impression that they feel cheated by the fact that these models want more out of their lives than to model for them. It’s as if they believe, being admired physically should suffice for these women. They believe it’s an honour, to be considered beautiful enough to be a model by them and use these protestations as compliments, when in fact it is rather insulting, that they believe women should not want aspire to be more.

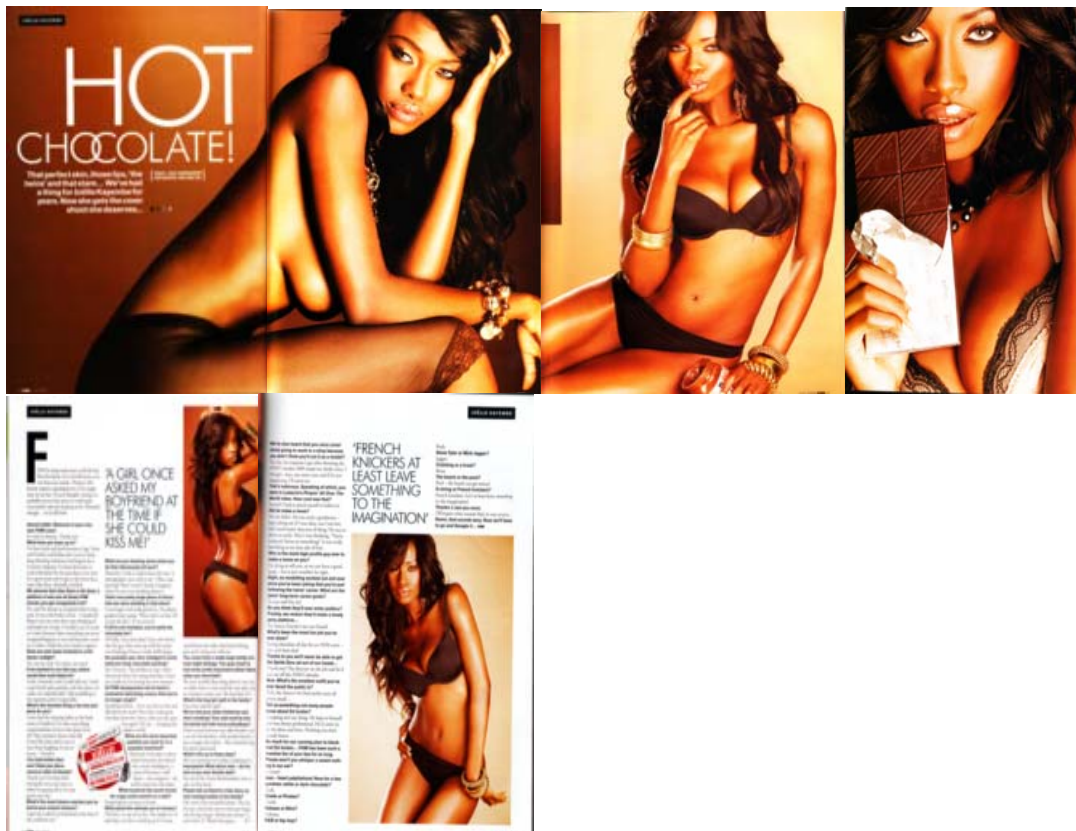
It also demonstrates how fickle *FHM* is. This is a magazine that refers to women as though they are fodder. In April’s *FHM* They have an article with the title, “Tasty Babe: Hot Tamale” (*FHM*, April 2008:17) and it is with a Mexican model Karen Manzano. They refer to her as “delicious” and in their description of her the phrase “spicy sexiness” is used. The words delicious and spicy are terms conventionally used to describe the taste of food. Therefore they are already,

through calling her spicy and delicious, likening her to food that can be literally consumed. She is literally there for male consumption. They also refer to Mexico as a “culinary hotbed”. This shows, that they do not only refer to her in this way but see all women as things to consume. Both through the gaze and sexually.



The July issue is no exception. An interview with Joelle Kayembe is another example of this. The title is “Hot chocolate” (Raubenheimer, July 2008:88) and thus she is being compared to something edible. She too is there for male consumption. Their description of her is as follows, “that perfect skin, those lips, ‘the twins’ and that stare” (Raubenheimer, July 2008:88). The fact that they describe her in terms of her body parts as opposed, to her as a complete and whole person is another example of them objectifying their models. This time it is to an extent that her breast’s have their own identity as “the twins”. She has become dehumanised in two ways. Firstly by comparing her to a snack and secondly by focusing on her body. They also presuppose a sense of familiarity with her. While *Playboy* develops some sense of barrier between the readers and the models, by

reinforcing the idea that the models are there to provide fantasy, *FHM* creates a intimacy with the readers that makes it seem acceptable to discuss her body in such a casual manner. Its important to note here, that she plays into this. *FHM* ask her about her breast, “long-term career goals?” and she remarks, “to stay real”. She is partaking in her own objectification and in a sense makes it tolerable for men to consider her in this manner.



Most questions *FHM* put forward to their models are based on sexually related topics, such as posing nude, sexual situations and lesbian relations. This is not done in a manner that expresses their sexualities as liberal women but rather they

are asked for the purpose of pleasure for the male reader. They hardly ask the models opinion's on pressing matters or about their aspirations. Other than their use of lesser known models *FHM* have several women they have firmly placed on a pedestal. This means that, in the same instant they objectify these models, they also praise them. In terms of their beauty and their qualities that always seem to reinforce the *FHM* manifesto of living. These are the normally the cover models of *FHM*, however, there are many celebrity models found in the pages of the magazine.

The March issue of *FHM* introduces it's readers to Miss Nude Australia (March: 28-29), the host of World Online Poker (March: 56-61) and South African Model Lieschen Botes (March: 86-93). Apart from Lieschen, who appears in a bikini, the other two women are nude. The host of World Online Poker has a few photos where she has a thin piece of fabric place to cover her nipples but apart from that she is fully naked and in one picture her nipples are clearly airbrushed out. These photo's are almost identical to those found in a magazine that is known as pornographic. Therefore it shows that *FHM* is pornographic and perhaps more so than *Playboy*. This is due to the sexualised manner in which they treat and interview their models. Often these models play into it, as if they are porn stars, there to tantalise the male audience. *FHM* refers to Tina Wallman, the poker host as, "one of our hottest bodies ever!" (Bruce 2008:57) . Firstly this suggests that she belongs to them and that she is nothing more than a body, a piece of meat.



Women are considered as currency for the men in *FHM* world to obtain, in a way to reinforce their masculinity and this is an indication of this. She plays into their interview and states how the fabrics, “felt incredible on her naked skin” (*FHM*, March: 59) . This interview reads like a script for soft core pornography. The magazine considers it serious questions, as those that relate to sex and ask her about her best “sex fix” to which she responds, the shower and that there is, “something erotic about the water moving over your body” (March: 60). She also states that she has had same sex encounters and claims that “all girls experiment” (March:60). This interview is clearly done as a way to arouse their readers and this is one of the conventions of pornography. It also reinforces the stereotype that all women are willing to experiment with their own sex but are not lesbian. This in effect diminishes the validity of homosexuality. This was a convention found throughout the interviews with these models.



FHM models counter the perception has of regular women. They are, “Naked Perfection” (Laws, May 2008:78) like Monica Hensen in the May edition. She too is bisexual. However, what is more important is that she like all *FHM* models s honoured to be in the magazine, “I feel so lucky to be featured in your awesome magazine”(May: 81). These models are of the belief that it is an accomplishment to model for the magazine. In some sense it is because the magazine creates an impression that women who are lucky enough to be considered beautiful by them are not like ordinary ‘boring’ women. The idea of objectification becomes appealing because it works on the ego. *FHM* appeases their sexist treatment of women by focusing on the ego and being complimentary. However, these compliments are only about appearances and this unhealthy as it creates an environment were women and men only value the beauty of women and their ability to act in a sexual way. It definitely links back to a time when women were

not appreciated in society for anything other than their looks and housekeeping skills.



This is another trait the magazine esteems. In the October (Hill 2008:101) interview with Eva Longoria, they praise her for the fact that she cooks and goes to basketball games. *FHM* models do not blatantly confront these men for their behaviour and while they partake in stereotypical gender roles; they also participate in “guy” activities or are not opposed to them. In the interviews with Lieschen Botes, they ask her how she would react if her, “man staggered home at 4 am reeking of booze” (Engler, March 2008:92). Her response is that it depends on the situation. She doesn’t seem to really mind or perhaps, these models do not want to come across as stereotypical nags that *FHM* proclaims other women to be, and lose their spot in the *FHM* limelight. The only objections came from Cindy Taylor in the November issue (Laws 2008:97). Firstly, she too is honoured to be in the magazine, “what better magazine than *FHM*”, as she has been on 20 of its various of its international covers. *FHM*, in this instance, attempts its famous irony by asking her how to translate the phrase, “We’re not a piece of meat, we

have feeling” into Spanish. They are poking fun at the fact that women want to be taken more seriously than just being seen as objects and are turning it on themselves as if to say they are in that predicament. Straight after this question, they ask her, “what’s the best thing about being paid to be so hot?”, this is particularly sexist as they have just made a comment prior to it about sexism. This underpins the fact that they do not care much for being labeled bigots and will say anything they want, regardless if it is offensive. They also believe they can get away with it by claiming irony and trying to be enduringly juvenile. Her response indicates that she is taken a back, as she states that she think her work in her TV show deals more than just looks. *FHM* does not give up and rephrases the question to, “what is the worst part of being amazingly sexy?” and she sates that its is being seen as a piece of meat. The writer than states, that it is not true of *FHM* and that they think she is “amazing in general”. However, this is a weak attempt to conciliate her and they have already made it clear they only value her looks, as they do not concentrate on her general amazing qualities but rather her appearance.



FHM is overtly insulting to women in this sense, however, it was noted that they treat local celebrities in a different manner. The local celebrities that were featured include Joelle Kayembe (July: 88-95), Lieschen Botes (March: 86-93), Tanya Van Graan (June: 72-79), Tracy McGregor (who was named *FHM* sexiest woman) (August: 64-73) and Roxy Louw (April: 82-89). These models are not asked as many sexually explicit questions but they are asked about their bodies. Joelle Kayembe and Roxy Louw were asked about their breasts. Roxy Louw was asked specifically about their size (Engler, April 2008:87) and Tracy McGregor was asked for sex advice (Laws, August 2008:72). This is due to the fact that she was a sex advisor in their brother magazine and more sexist *ZOO weekly*, which was discontinued. However, they are still treated the same way in their photos. They are all scantily clad and posing in sexually suggestive way. Tanya Van Graan's introductory photo is in a buttocks up photo which is conventionally used in pornographic photography. While she is in a bikini, this shot does allude to certain sexual acts and used as means to create this effect.



FHM always asks the models about their ideal types of men. Normally they answer they just want to be loved and looks aren't important like Lieschen claim (Engler, March 2008:91). However, *FHM* asks the questions in a manner that makes the models answer in a way that sounds as if the lads *FHM* targets are exactly what they look for. An example can be seen in the question they ask Tanya Van Graan. They phrase the question as follows, "we're broke, fat and unfit, but we have a heart of gold. What can we do to impress a girl like you?" (Raubenheimer, June 2008:77). Another example found in the June (22) issue, is "could your soul mate be someone with a beer belly?". By asking questions such as these it frames the models answers in such a way that makes them seem accessible. Rebecca Loos replies that she doesn't have any physical preferences and Tanya states that she just wants love. This device, while not indicating sexual explicitness, sets up the *FHM* masculinity as endearing and the models as more available. These women are idealised and seem approachable. Unlike *Playboy* model's which are not made to seem this way. This in a sense is more dangerous because these sexualised women make it seem like this brand of femininity is a realistic notion and that men can expect this type of behaviour from regular women, even if it reduces women to nothing more than objects and essentially pulls their independence back a few decades. This image of women makes women solely dependable on male approval and validation.

This magazine has numerous pictures of women and often the same tasteless interviews accompanying them. November's issue had a pictorial spread showing three sets of twins and December's (64-81) issue featured "Bikini Heaven". This issue had contained articles named "Double Dip"(December:64-70), "Exotic Treat"(December:70-73); "Hottest Eva"(December:74-77) and "Bikini Angel"(December:78-81). The first article presents two women, one blonde and one brunette, perpetuating the idea that men's ultimate fantasy is two women. The second refers to its model Dominique Le Toullec in the same mannerism that suggest she is food as they have before by referring to her, "whipped caramel skin and her lush red raspberry-flavoured lips" (Bruce, December 2008:71). There is no depth to their writing and the stereotypical way of representing women becomes unimaginative and redundant. It is insulting to men to provide such a limited representation of women and female sexuality, as if saying all men are the same and like the same ideals. It also clearly indicates that *FHM*, like pornography, relies on the same formula of representing women as either bisexual or exotic if they are not Caucasian like Le Toullec (December: 70-73). Like *Playboy*, their representation of ethnicity is rather problematic. Like La Toullec, who is Moroccan, Joelle Kayembe (July:88-95) and Tina Wallman (March:56-61) are also represented in a manner that exoticises them. These women are not represented in the same manner other models are. Kayembe (July:88-95) is depicted with several forms of milk chocolate and is referred to as, "hot chocolate". This is a typical racialised stereotype to likening black women to the flavour and appearance of chocolate. One never sees white women, holding white chocolate or being referred

to as white chocolate. This increases her objectification, perhaps more than that of white women. She is turned into a consumable object while white women are merely just things to look at. La Toullec (December: 70-73) is dressed in hessian fabric fashioned to look like a loincloth of some sort. She looks as though she is a native of some oceanic- tropical place. She is definitely made to look exotic, even her hair is wild. The pictorials on the subsequent pages shows white models in expensive looking bikini's and high heels which is a great divergence from her look. Tina Wallman (March: 56-61) is a Caucasian women but due to her dark features she is also exoticised. In her photo shoot she is surrounded by silk sari fabric and bamboo. This gives the impression that she is of Middle Eastern or South Asian. It is evident that women with darker features are made out to be exotic and mysterious. However, the most racial discrimination comes in the form of a question asked by the magazine to model Rosette Mogomotsi. They refer to themselves as having, "total jungle fever" (FHM, November 2008:12) and ask her which other black models they should approach for the magazine. This is not only derogatory, it alludes to history of white colonialist men and how they believed they were superior to the 'native' people they colonised. By likening their attraction to black women as having jungle fever, it insinuates a kind of illness. Perhaps it is disorder for lads to have interracial relations and it makes black women come across as primitive and unsophisticated. When it comes to representing black women they are guilty of using two stereotypes, the primitive and exotic. This just reinforces the hegemonic and racist nature of lad culture.



All photo's have sexually suggestive poses, which fall in the conventions of pornographic photography. Although these models are somewhat covered, the camera angles are always positioned in such a way that the focal point lies either on the models breast and torso or are positioned low enough that the camera is at eye level with their open legs. In the pictorial "Bikini Angel" (FHM, December 2008: 80) two specific picture stands out. In one is topless pressed against the tree.

While her nipples are airbrushed out of the picture the main focal point is her spread legs and covered genitalia. However, the costume is wrinkled in such a suggestive way, that little is left to the imagination. The next picture, she is sitting with her legs open and the same result is achieved. These pictures clearly show that while *FHM* claims to not show naked women, they may as well because their imagery is more explicit than *Playboy*.



FHM supplements are no different. Their fashion supplements feature modes and boasts, “100 style buys that’ll help you score babes”(FHM, April 2008). Everything for these lad’s is about obtaining women as if they are currency with which men can use to improve their own status. Women in *FHM* are used to reinforce the readers masculinity and restore confidence in their heterosexual identities. There are scantily clad women all over the covers. In fashion spreads, to make them appear more butch rather than make the men feel effeminate. The magazine also comes with an annual lingerie supplement which features more of their models and function as an excuse for more voyeuristic pleasure.

Apart from the pictorials and interviews with models, *FHM* contains other sexual content. Unlike *Playboy*, where the models feature as the main source of pornographic and sexual content, this magazine has additional content. The first example of this comes in the form of readers letters. *FHM* has a monthly section whereby female readers send in confessions of sexual experiences. This section is called “Ladies Confessions”. It functions as erotica as it details sexual encounters in a manner that is evocative. They feature threesomes, anal sex, voyeurism, sex in aero planes, sex with strangers and lesbian encounters to name a few. They are written in a way that is intended to arouse the reader, the same way pornography functions. An example of the type of wording they use is as follows, “his big strong hands wandered all over the place and we kissed each other passionately” (September: 134) and “fingers and tongues going places that made my knees weak” (September: 134). This evocative language is used clearly as a means to titillate the readers. If *FHM* cannot be labeled pornographic, by its pictures the content that it contains has enough of the conventions used by pornography to be classed in the same category. This type of content reinforces the idea that women’s main purpose in a mans life is for his satisfaction as these are written by women not by men.

The magazine also has its own agony aunt, Dominika, whose credibility is based on her seductive, lingerie optional pictures. She is there to answer questions of a sexual nature and gives the readers insight into the needs of women. This content is sexually explicit and therefore shows that *FHM* is pornographic. She is either

posing sprawled on a bed, straddling benches, sitting open legged or the favoured pose of her bending over. Her pictures in themselves are objectifying her and making her the object to be gazed at. Her advice and credibility is weakened by this as opposed to suggesting her sexual expertise. She can be gazed at in the same way the models are. This may be a way of comforting the male readers of their heterosexual masculinity because it is emasculating taking advice from a woman. Dominika also progressively becomes more scantily clad to the point where she is lying bottomless on a bed, with only a sheet covering her. Her advice may not be taken so seriously because she is sexualised to such an extent. December's article has her advice on sex toys, she has tried out in the article, "Dominika's DIY! Sex toy bench test!" (FHM, December 2008:135-140). This features her in several pictures wearing different lingerie and handling heavy machinery such as chain saws. This does not suggest the same credibility as a qualified sex therapist. She often gives advice with the intention that the reader will score out of it. She works as an accomplice to the male reader to get his way. She often advises them how to pick up women as seen in the August (119-120) and October (124-125) issues but she also gives men advice how to improve their sex life. This form of advice is more sexually explicit than the *Playboy*. It is also accompanied by pictures unlike *Playboy*, and this gives it a more informal feel but may at the same time weaken her credibility. It is also indicative of *FHM*'s views of women as mainly having ornamental purposes and that they will only accept advice from a woman if she looks and acts in a certain way, that fits in with their ideals of women.



Sexual content found in the *FHM* includes articles advising men on various things. The advice normally includes advice on how to attract women and score, “score a Perfect 10” (Maree, April 2008:51-53); improving their sexual technique, “Jenny’s guide to rediscovery” (Mcarthy, March 2008:37); sex guides, “Fantasy vs. Reality” (Hankinson, June 2008:48-51) , “Make love like a lesbian” (de Grooter, March 2008:42-46), “FHM A-Z of sex” (Adams, July 2008:136-138); “Is 3 the magic number” (Quirk 2008:135-138), “Become a sexual explorer” (Smith, September 2008:128-132) and others to improve their girlfriends, “Pimp your girlfriend” (Hankinson, August 2008:123-127) and “Make her better in bed” (Hankinson, May 2008:46-50).



All of these articles are accompanied by scantily clad women or female body parts such as breasts. “Fantasy vs. Reality” (June:48-51), has three pictures two of which are breast, in lingerie and the other is of the models buttocks. “FHM A-Z of sex” (July:136-138) has various pictures. Some of BDSM situations and a dominatrix and others of breasts and a female’s climaxing face. There is also a picture of three women dressed up like school girls, with their bra’s exposed eating bananas. This is typically relating to a fantasy often used in porn and it also suggestive of oral sex. “Become a sexual explorer” (September:128-132) also depicts pictures of a model in various situations, in her underwear, one of which repeats the popular bondage theme used by the magazine. “Is 3 the magic number” (Quirk, November 2008:135-138) is about threesomes, yet it only depicts two women in lingerie in various stages of sexual play. Firstly this refers back to the convention used by *Playboy*, that implies a male presence. This is a devise to excite the reader. However, it also implies that this sex act should only take place when there are two women and one male involved. It completely ignores any other variations that may threaten heterosexual masculinity. It also links to pornographic texts that make use of this fantasy.



The two articles that stand out are the ones that involve advice on improving the readers female companions. Not only does, “Pimp your girlfriend” (August:123-127)

contain the usual sexualised female imagery and specifically a picture of a woman with a ducked taped mouth, it offers advice that is in essence extremely sexist and degrading. It contains advice to make her more ladylike; lose weight; less ladylike; have more sex; stop being clingy; to cook more; dress sexier and be more adventurous in sex. Supposedly all the qualities the featured model possesses. This implies that women, particularly the ordinary women the readers encounter, are inherently deficient in some sense. Ordinary women need to be improved to meet *FHM* standards of female perfection. A female ideal that is equal to their models, who are beautiful and extremely sexual. “Make her better in bed” (May:46-50) is accompanied by an illustration. It is still of a sexualised women none the less. This article discusses ways to make a girlfriend watch porn, improve her libido and “sweeten” her. This article also implies that women are the ones in need of improvement. Men only need to improve to score women and possibly only temporarily. While the core of being a woman needs to be improved to suit the requirements of their men. This magazine insists that women are lacking and in need of improvement. It is also apparent that women are seen as decoration as the magazine uses models every chance.



“Make love like a lesbian” (de Grooter, March 2008:42-44) gives essential insight into *FHM* views on sexuality. Firstly the pictures suggest that women are there to arouse men, even lesbians. The main headshot depicts the topless ‘lesbians’ drinking from a hose pipe while staring at the camera. They have no apparent interest in each other but mainly the third person, who is most likely a male. This suggests that all female sexual interaction is for the benefit of men. The last picture is especially pornographic as a third female enters the scene. However, only her spread legs and panty are in view, with the other two girls in the background in between her legs. The panty is also tight enough to expose more than necessary for a non pornographic magazine. These article pictorials, are undoubtedly there to function as an arousing extra. However, by objectifying these supposed lesbians, in a sense they objectify all lesbians and weaken the threat on their masculinity. This is done by suggesting all lesbians are still feminine and there for their pleasure only. It is threatening to them to think women can access pleasure without their involvement. The article is also written by a lesbian. To reassure the readers that she isn’t transgressing the neat gender roles *FHM* depends on for security, she refers to the “odd butch”. This implies that women who identify with a more masculine role are amiss and immoral, as these women transgresses and threatens their masculinity. This shows that in the *FHM* world a limited sexualities exist. This dilutes the legitimacy of homosexual relation as it suggests these lesbians want to partake in heterosexual relations, even if it is as a ‘teacher’. It also

reinforces long standing prejudices of lesbian women and shows that the lad is typically homophobic.



This lad magazine is clearly pornographic as there are many similarities with *Playboy* but there also similarities with other pornographic conventions, as already seen. *FHM* and *Playboy* have advertisements for pornography. *Playboy* advertisers their other magazines and the other mediums they use. *FHM* consistently, every month has two to three adverts, advertising pornographic phone calls and videos'. They also advertise sms's of nude or scantily clad women.

Lad magazines are essentially misogynist and sexist. Every month they contain sex quizzes. These quizzes involve questions to do with the following: "How dirty is your girlfriend" (June:42); "Is she wife material" (September: 126); "Should you move in with your girlfriend" (July: 140) "How good is your sex life" (April: 42); "Is your girlfriend a moron" (October:126) and "Does she want a baby?" (December:144). These questions are offensive and once again reinforce the notion that as opposed to their models, women in general are defective. The pictures are also less attractive, insinuating that the readers real life relations is not as idyllic as what the *FHM* offers, in terms of women. Pictures include women cutting their

boyfriends jeans, an unattractive bride smoking and the quintessential dumb blonde Jessica Simpson pulling a tongue. The women are generally less attractive and the advice at the end suggests that men need help regardless if their girlfriend as a result of the quiz proves to be perfect. They are then mocked about their masculinity or that they unfortunately may have to commit. Regarding the baby article, the fact that the girlfriend may want a child, is reason enough to dump her. This supports the lad manifesto of commitment phobia.



These are all examples of their use of irony as a convention. However, lad magazines started a decade ago in a context considered post feminist. They target a fairly young age group of adolescent men and men in their twenties. The men who fell in this demographic ten years ago may have understood the context and

therefore the joke. However, the male audience presently, do not have the same relationship with feminism. Men and women in this age group take the benefits from feminism for granted as they were not there during the main struggle. They do not automatically understand the nuances of this time and context. Thus it is unlikely they will understand the irony. Irony in this light is dangerous. This group is more likely to read the messages at face value and internalise the message the magazine is sending about gender relations. This being that objectification and maltreatment of women is acceptable. That pornographic treatment of the female body is acceptable And the message for women is to objectify themselves and seek male approval of their appearance for validation and to be as sexualised as possible to prove that they are independent women.

FHM undeniably looks up to *Playboy* and there are cross references to the pornographic magazine. One model Joanna Krupa (July:49) has posed for *Playboy* while model Karen Manzano is running for the Miss Playboy TV title (April:18). In the quiz “How good is your sex life” (April: 43), there is a picture of Hugh Hefner by the result implying that him and his lifestyle are the ultimate goal for men. This magazine essentially adopted Hefner’s vision of women. Not a sexual equals but rather as sex objects and entertainment. There seems to be no real connection with women, other than a carnal need to possess them. The fact that there are so many cross references and that both magazines use the some of the same models is a clear indication of the pornification of society, and that

pornography is seeping more into mainstream media. *FHM* is clearly pornographic and should be treated as such.

Chapter 4: Raunch Culture and the Pornification of Society

Now that it is understood that both *Playboy* and *FHM* contain content that is pornographic in their characteristic treatment of women, it is of great relevance to deal with the question: What is the female involvement in these representations? This is of importance as women happen to play a predominant role in both magazines popularity. It is understood that men use women in their magazines to reaffirm their heterosexual masculinity, by treating these women as items for them to possess and consume. The question arises as to the stance these women, who participate in these representations, take. Contemporary women are benefitting from the struggles fought by previous generations of feminists. While, many women do not want to be associated with the movement, they still take full advantage of its achievements in this post feminist setting. It is widely believed that full equality has been achieved and now women can partake in an environment devoid of any gender related impediments. Attainment of self determination, means women can now conduct themselves in a manner they see fit. However, it also means that they believe asserting their independence means adopting male like characteristics as opposed to showing strength in womanhood. The following section will discuss these nuances as well as the demonstration of the raunch culture found in the magazines.

Raunch culture, has been established as recent type of female empowerment that has permeated modern pop culture as well as society. This empowerment comes in the form of women performing a certain type of identity and sexuality. These women possess a male like perception. This means that they make “sex objects of other women” (Levy 2006:4) and of themselves. They endorse chauvinistic behaviour in the endeavor of joining, “the frat party of pop culture where men had been enjoying themselves all along” (Levy 2006:2). This is an attempt to be seen as, “one of the guys” (Levy 2006:4). These women believe power is located in masculine behaviour. They attend strip clubs, read lad magazines and pay for lap dances. They understand and seem to appreciate these traditionally male activities and therefore are at ease with the representation of women found in these magazines (Levy 2006:93). However, while these women are like their male friends, they also need to retain the same feminine look of the women they objectify. They believe that apart from male behaviour being powerful, asserting a hyper sexualised image will confirm their empowerment.

There seems to be a dichotomy with this culture. On the one hand these women behave in masculine ways in which they fundamentally objectify other women. They also, however make objects of themselves. These women want to be like men and accepted by them but they also want to be liked by the same men and to be considered sexually attractive by them. These women are not akin to the ladette, in the sense that a ladette is seen as, “women with whom one shouldn’t have relationship” (Whelehan 2000:49). Ladettes appear to be too masculine in their

behaviour, thus, women partaking in raunch culture must be accepting of certain masculinities, act them out to a degree but still maintain a level of femininity that will establish them as attractive. In other words they must perform a feminised gender role but instead of chastising men about their treatment of women, they must accept it and have the attitude that “boys will be boys”. The following section will examine closely the examples of raunch culture in the magazine, in order to gain a deep understanding of this contemporary culture trend.

There are many examples of raunch culture in these magazines but some of the most apparent examples come in the form of the troupes of girls both magazines have. *FHM* has its “Deal or No Deal Models” and “Homegrown Honey’s” and *Playboy* has several groups of women. These include “Playboy Playmates”, “The Big Ten” girls, “Cyber Girls”, “Career Girls” and the infamous “Playboy Bunnies”(Playboy Online 2009:1). *FHM* holds annual competitions in order to find both sets of models, which is an apparent example of raunch culture taking place. These girls enter the competitions in the hope to become *FHM* models. *Playboy* recruits its models, not by holding competitions, but by having women send in photos of themselves and then choosing the women they deem suitable for the various groups. *Playboy* seems to have a tier system, with the Playmate status considered most prestigious. They are based on similar premises and both use methods to make their model searches seem like esteemed titles to hold. These models are employed for the purpose of gratifying the male readers. These

magazines exploit female empowerment to gain female support and in the end suppress their liberty by turning them into objects for male pleasure.

However, the women who partake in this, aspire to be seen in this light. The British *FHM* alone “receives more than 1,200 submissions of women topless or in lingerie every single week” (Aitkenhead 2007:1). Many modern women have been made to believe that the best way to demonstrate power is to exhibit their sexuality. To show that they do not have puritanical beliefs like generations before them and they can enjoy their sexuality. An example of this belief was found in *Playboy’s* June publication.

Playmate Juliette Frette, discusses why she as a feminist scholar, chose to pose for *Playboy*. She states that she first chose to do a pictorial as she was working on a thesis about female empowerment. She at first discusses how she tried to escape, “the big-busted blonde stereotype” (June:85) but soon realised she was happy with the way she looked and about wanting to work with the magazine again. She also discusses how feminists are far from being “man haters” and that she herself is a “man lover” (June:85). She discusses what feminism is about and acknowledges that “many women feel compelled to weigh such issues as objectification, pornography and body image before acting on their intuition” (June:128). She goes on to say that women should not judge themselves or, “undercut” their own empowerment (June:128) because of these politically correct issues (June:128). She states that she feels empowered by being in the magazine

even though she realises that feminism is at odds with the type of feminine ideal it sets out. While it is commendable that she wishes to celebrate her empowerment, the way she chooses to is problematic. She assumes that women are innately predestined to make this same choice, based on some homogenous intuition, if they were not afraid of not being politically correct. While she might find this liberating, there are many women in the porn industry who are disadvantaged and do not know their choices, and what she suggests dilutes the issues she briefly acknowledges. She states that women should be concerned with their identities as individuals. This reinforces the lack of solidarity amongst women, who are now working for their own personal gain. She also states that she had to reconcile the fact that she looks a particular way that she believes is not consistent with some feminist typecast but rather one that fits this magazine. At the same time she is implying that feminists cannot be blonde and busty, or fit the ideals *Playboy* has of women. She basically, underpins the idea that there is only one way a women can feel sexually attractive or empowered and that is to pose nude for a pornographic magazine such as this one. She also creates a division between herself and other feminist, who she portrays as being more narrow minded because they are concerned with issues of objectification as opposed to venerating *Playboy's* positive influences and posing for them.



Her idea of sexually attractiveness, is basically the same as that of the magazine. This presents a typecast version of sexuality. This is a characteristic factor of raunch culture. One resolute version of female sexuality being endorsed, ignoring all other options as viable illustrations of sexuality and empowerment. The sexuality that is being encouraged is that of a, “cartoonish sexual stereotype” (Bancroft 2005:1). This stereotypical concept of sexiness is that of a big breasted and sexually available woman. This feminist is suggesting we embrace one type sexuality. A sexuality that has been set up by men’s idea’s of what female sexuality should be. This is not empowering but rather a repressing residue of patriarchy that women cannot seem to disconnect themselves from. She extols the principles of raunch culture that only values one kind empowerment in the form of a kind of sexual explicitness while ignoring all other female issues and sexualities.

Playboy works in hierarchy of models. Their Playmates are at the top of the tier system of *Playboy* and many women aspire to make it as a centerfold in order to stand a chance to become Playmate of the year. This is an esteemed title to hold

within the *Playboy* community. The title in itself is desirable but it also offers the chance for the model to win money and other prizes. The most worthy prize is the fact that these models represent the brand for the year and gain a level of celebrity. In the June (110-113) issue the Playmate of the year Jayde Nicole is featured.

Playboy uses language to describe their models as, “the most breathtaking women in the world” (June:110-113) and she even admits that this position has provided her with more opportunities. *Playboy’s* recent revival and improved popularity amongst women, men and even children, has ensured that many women wish to be part of this community and to stand a chance of holding this prestigious title. *Playboy* ensures that the advantages of being in the magazine are well publicised. Octobers (72-74) centerfold, Kelly Carrington, states that due to *Playboy’s* reality show her perception of the magazine changed. She states that, “the series portrayed *Playboy* in a really girly, fun, all-American way” (October:74). The magazine has created an atmosphere that appears friendly, safe and devoid of smut normally associated with porn. It has glossed over many realities of this industry.

The Playmate of the year has to travel while representing the brand, attend functions, do publicity and Jayde Nicole has appeared in several reality shows (Playboy, June 2008:113). These opportunities and the honour of being considered as one of the most beautiful women by the magazine, and therefore the public, is a label that is desirable to many. The agreeable atmosphere created in the publicity

of *Playboy* makes being a model for the magazine and its pornographic nature more acceptable in society. This reinforces raunch culture and its tenet to be as sexually obvious as possible.

While women today are able to purge restrictions set up by patriarchy, it appears the only limitation seen as significant enough to eliminate is the policing of female sexuality. Instead of having to be considered virtuous, women can now be as unchaste as they wish. However, they are adopting the same conduct formerly associated to women on the other side of the chastity scale. Instead of exploring all avenues of sexuality, women are assuming the opposite roles that men have prescribed for them and they are taking their cue from sex performers instead of from themselves. It appears women need cues on how to behave and navigate their sexuality. Instead of producing them themselves they just inhabit the one prescribed stereotyped category of female sexuality.

Levy states that “trying to gain your freedom from the people you want to sleep with is complicated” (Bancroft 2005:2). Women have to navigate their way around being treated as equals and still being viewed as attractive. The deceptive appeal of raunch culture is that both can be attained through it. However, acting sexy for the sake of men rather than to please themselves, infact renders women powerless because they are now seeing pleasure and power as a performance rather than a natural right for both sexes. Instances that show this come up several times in *Playboy*.

The pictorial titled “Girls of the Big 10” (Playboy, October 2008:100-109) features students from various universities. This pictorial includes women who are well educated, well travelled and ambitious. However, it refers to them as “girls”, which is somewhat belittling for women even if they are still college students. The accompanying write up also reads similarly to an advertisement. It describes what they are majoring in, whether they are looking for a relationship and if so what they look for in one. This portrayal gives the impression of a catalogue from which men can pick and choose which college ‘girl’ they fancy. While the idea behind posing nude seems liberating, one woman claims “I feel sexiest when I’m naked” (Playboy, October 2008:107), the manner in which they are depicted is far from liberating and is still simply objectifying them. Questions arise from the afore mentioned claim. Is the feeling of sexiness stem from the fact that she embraces her own nudity and sexuality or does it stem from the exhibition of her sexuality to others? Is her sense of validation from feeling complete in and of herself or is it still dependent on the approval others, namely men? The premise of raunch culture is that women are still dependent on the endorsement from others.



One of the most eminent examples of raunch culture and its bedfellow lad culture is found in the September *Playboy*. This pictorial presents the page 3 girls of the British tabloid newspapers. *Playboy* proclaims this as the “golden age for British nudity” (September 2008:104-113) and openly displays its insidious relationship with these two contemporary cultures. The fact that this magazine salutes lad culture shows that it is in no real manner interested in female liberation, as the culture it salutes makes no pretense of political correctness. *Playboy* thus reveals its guise and true intentions. This is that it always has been and always will be a conduit of bigotry and female repression under the pretense of a sexual revolution. The pictorials showcase the routine formula used by the laddish media. The most significant being the lesbian themed photo. Lucy Pinder and Michelle Marsh are “posing partners” and have worked together on numerous occasions. *Playboy* pokes fun at all their headlines which include “breast friends” and bosom buddies” but still corroborates the stereotype by showcasing it in its own magazine.



One model Malene Espensen compares her breasts to her coworkers, claiming that she and two other models have the best breasts. The models repeatedly stress that the British men prefer larger breasts. The significance of this is that firstly it demonstrates the competitiveness of the women and the judgmental nature of raunch

culture. The women compare each others bodies as if they are the chief quality women possess. Obviously these women want to be found most attractive and this in turn is most likely going to contribute to an atmosphere of hostility amongst them. Raunch culture leads to an environment of competitiveness, dissonance and selfishness as opposed to the solidarity that is needed for a historically suppressed group. Another characteristic from this culture is that women objectify each other and this precisely what this model is doing by comparing breast and seeing them as the only important female quality.

The fact that they stress breast size and male preference indicates that one female ideal is promoted and that in order for women to be considered attractive and therefore feel sexual is to look like these page three models. This is a very narrow stereotype. Although these models, in some instance are, a bit larger than the typical *Playboy* centerfold, both groups of models exemplify a certain overt version of female sexuality. Another significant characteristic feature of the page 3 models, is that they are featured in newspapers that is so openly available to the public. This shows how pervasive pornographic content has become in society.

This is dangerous as impressionable young girls look to these types of representations to guide their identities and their idea of women's roles in society. This will breed a future that is filled with objectified women, who paradoxically objectify themselves while thinking it is all right. Model Rhian Sudgen states that she would draw over the models as a young girl to cover them

but when she grew up and developed into a woman she decided to become a model herself (September:109). It seems like this decision was only natural and commonsensical decision for her because she grew up to believe this type of representation is fine and in fact admirable and she happened to have large breasts and therefore fitted the mold. This shows that these objectified representations of women are progressively becoming more naturalised and tolerated in contemporary society. These women do not even see the need anymore to question the consequences of their representations for younger girls and society at large. The girls who might, also at first dislike these representations but who may grow up to partake in the same representations, because this has become so standardised. This future is starting to be seen increasingly as a viable and valued choice. The standards women are setting for future women are low and actually quite debasing. Women are not so much liberating themselves, as they are selling one absolute idea of sex and commodifying it to an aesthetic. This aesthetic is only occupied by a small handful of women fitting its mold while others are made to feel left out of something that is an innate part of their physiology.

Playboy also exhibits the resurgence of burlesque entertainment in it “A night at the Crazy Horse” (Playboy, June 2008:66-71). This is another example of raunch culture and is seen as a ‘classy’ alternative to a strip show. This troupe of dancers are originally from Paris but do to increasing popularity it has started a group in the USA. There are many examples of the global impact of raunch culture. *Playboy* has two pictorials of women from different countries in their April (58-

63) and May (104-113) editions. The April edition present Brazilian flight attendants, while the May edition has a photo spread of Russian women. It is interesting that posing in this magazine has become so conventional that corporations such as airlines would approve their employees involvement with the magazine and even use it as, perhaps, a marketing strategy. *Playboy* is an American iconic company and it is increasingly becoming a popular global marvel due to the increasing acceptance of pornography.



Every month, *Playboy* includes a small article dedicated to professional women and students. The women who have been featured, exhibits a broad range of professions. The professions shown include, a strip club owner (June:22), a sheriff (December:28), a publisher (August:19), a reporter (November: 25), an army contractor

(July:19), a life insurance case processor (October: 16), several student and graduates. This reveals to what extent this culture is burgeoning in society as women in professions outside of the porn industry, apart from the strip club owner, choose to partake in it, to an extent. An industry which has been established as mainly depicting women as being sexually available and always up for sex with any man. These women must see their foray into this industry as a means to show case their desirability and desires and as a means to partake in something mischievous. These women are not scouted by the magazine, they send in their own pictures and then get chosen to appear in the magazine. This indicates how it has become trendy for women to partake in these portrayals. These women see it as a bit of harmless fun but this fun does not subsist without repercussions. The 'desires' they trying to show point to an idea that women crave to fulfill the needs of men and to be put on view for male pleasure alone.



These women are in no way concerned how this may affect their working relationships. Especially in a profession as male dominated as being an army contractor (Playboy, July 2008:19). This model states that it is difficult to be in a

male dominated environment because of all the ridicule, so it is of importance to try understand why one would subject themselves to further probable ridicule by posing for a magazine such as this. It points to the fact that when women act this way in today's society, they are seen as open-minded because of the nature of raunch culture. They understand the secret to what guys want and before men can objectify them, they beat them at it. They may feel that they are in control of this situation because they are making the choice to be represented in this manner but in actual fact women are now merely accomplices in their and other women's objectification.

Technology today has enabled a proliferation in pornographic content. With the advent of the internet came the upsurge of amateur pornographic content and a potential threat to the *Playboy* brand. However, *Playboy* has for eleven years taken advantage of this avenue (July:54). The magazine states that the "Cyber Club was, in essence, the first true high-class web-based gentlemen's club" (July:54). It still promotes its high end image to set itself apart from the amateur pornography normally found on the internet. This has also offered a new method for women to partake in raunch culture. This form of media is less restrictive to the women who send in their images. The article states that apart from the Playmates that this site features, there are photo's being uploaded every day (July:54) of other aspirant models. This is evidently the bottom of the *Playboy* hierarchical standard. Every month a girl is awarded the title Cyber Girl of the month, and much like the idea of a Playmate, a model of the year is chosen. It allows everyday

women the opportunity to make an attempt at climbing up the *Playboy* ranks. The fact that there are so many images, 100,000 to be exact (July:54), on the site shows how popular it is to be a *Playboy* model. As discussed, *Playboy* is becoming more acceptable and accessible to women. However, the standards of *Playboy* beauty is still limited to a few.



The year 2008 was the fifty fifth anniversary of the magazine and as a result lead to a global search for the Playmate who would represent this occasion. The article presenting the top twenty models states that “hundreds of beautiful women” auditioned (December:120). Again, this establishes just how popular it is becoming to be in *Playboy*. The article asserts that this is “an affirmation of the sexual revolution, which began decades ago and, many argue, is still picking up steam” (December:118). Hefner, often accredits himself as the main pioneer of this revolution and insists that his magazine is a celebration of all types of women, especially the “good girls” who like sex (December:118-119). However, the type of sexual revolution he is promoting is a male centric one, which only aims to fulfill their pleasure while women act as decorative entertainment for these men.

His vision of female sexuality is far from promoting women as sexual allies in this revolution. Their sexuality is still being co modified for his profit. With the introduction of raunch culture this co modification is infiltrating more women's lives as a desired fad to undertake. It is successful as it conceals itself discourse that proclaims liberation and revolution, when in fact the opposite is occurring. The fact that he still refers to women as 'girls' and still sets up the good girl versus bad girl dichotomy shows how limited and limiting his view of female sexuality is. It also rises the question as to whether bad girls constitute the ones who do not want to partake in his vision. He is patronizing treatment of women is unfortunately not limited to America, as this article shows. His deficient idea of sexuality is far reaching as they also scouted Europe for this model. His influence has also reached other international media.



Playboy's, claim of celebrating female diversity is also a falsification. One mould of feminine beauty has to be assumed by women, in order for them to be considered sexual beings by *Playboy*. Often sports women are depicted in the magazine. In the August magazine two pictorials are dedicated to professional athletes. One shows various Olympic players to commemorate the Olympics that took place (August: 70-71) and the other is an eight page spread dedicated to tennis player Ashley Harkleroad. She claims that tennis players are the sexiest athletes and that in general athletes have better sex (Playboy, August 2008:137). She clearly wants to exhibit to the public that she is a desirable and desiring person and this reinforced in her statement that, "God made female athletes beautiful and sexy, and I want to represent that" (Playboy August 2008: 137). Levy(2005:44) makes a valid point when she says that if athletes were secure with themselves and truly thought they "were both sexy and athletic", they wouldn't feel the need to pose for these magazines. Playing their sport would be enough validation. She also states that in the magazines they are taken out of their environment to showcase their sexuality, and therefore it shows an incongruent relationship between them as sexual people and them as sport people (Levy 2005:44). Apparently one cannot occupy these positions simultaneously as they are not seen in their professional settings rather in other environments. It is as if they need to separate women from their professions and any hint of authority in order to be considered sexy. This indicates that in order for these readers to find women sexually attractive they need to be put in a non threatening environment and made to seem inferior to them. Strong professional women are still threatening and their sexuality

must be threatening too, so these magazines have to package women in a way that is non threatening for men and co modifying their sexuality displaces their power. Their sex is essentially for sale and therefore they are now seen in a feeble light associated with sex workers.



This athlete is depicted on the tennis court but her *Playboy* pictures differ greatly from the accompanying pictures taken at one of her matches. As Levy (2005:44) states their determined expressions on the field are replaced with coy smiles and flirty expressions. The rest of the pictorial has her in a different more private environment. While, people have different roles that they play in life, is it necessary for women to advertise their sexuality in order to feel strength and substance in it and themselves? And why is it that these women need to appropriate the methods set out by *Playboy* in order to feel and be considered sexy? Levy (2005:44) states that, “we have accepted a myth that sexiness needs to be something divorced from everyday experience of being ourselves”, when infact it is intrinsically part of our nature and should be experienced in a natural manner. Raunch culture upholds the idea that sex needs to be a performance and

take place a certain way, like how it is in pornography, in order for it to be authentic. However, women don't always have flawless make-up and soft lighting around them, nor do all women find being photographed naked, arousing. This is far from being authentic or organic or part of everyday life.

It is critical to mention that sexuality is such a extensive, intricate and highly personal subject. This means that there may be many women out there who may genuinely take pleasure in this type of sexuality and performance. However, "what we once regarded as a kind of sexual expression we now viewed as sexuality" (Levy 2005:5). This means that this ideal has become so persistent that many women are not exploring other options or even aware of them as these are the only representations they are basically being exposed to. This is evidently the case in South African media as well.

While *Playboy* has some international titles, its influence is felt in other magazines such as the *FHM*. Women in *FHM* are represented in the same chauvinistic way as women are in *Playboy*, yet there are some differences. Fundamentally *FHM* offers a slight variation of the *Playboy* model, in terms of its representation of women. While *Playboy* portrays their models in somewhat more demure way, *FHM's* models are more brazen. This may be for the reason that, while *Playboy* models are nude, *FHM's* models are mainly scantily clad and the sexual content has to be augmented to achieve the same level of salaciousness.

FHM also has a piece on Olympic athletes in its September issue. The women are also divorced from their athletic persona in these pictorials. Unless one was familiar with the sports, the women would easily be mistaken for lad magazine models. Tennis player Ana Ivanovic is photographed in bikinis by a pool. Amanda Beard is photographed in a steam room, while South African athletes Marsha Marescia and Odette Richard are also photographed in swim wear. These women are praised for being “hot” (Wilson 2008:45) and are called “babes” (Raubenheimer 2008:54). Beard is questioned about her personal relationships and whether she go swimming in the nude (Wilson 2008:51-52). While some questions are asked about their regimes, most are targeted toward their social life and, in the interview with Marescia, whether the Olympic athletes are wild (Raubenheimer 2008:54). These women are all photographed in a way that makes them appear less like they are tenacious sportswomen and more like sex objects. The interviews that accompany them functions as a means to expand on the fantasy set up by the pictorials.





Beard sits, watching the readers with her legs open (September:53). This representation of her in a sense disempowers her because she appears as though she readily wants to arouse and pleasure any male reader. Her talent is being diminished to that of the attractiveness of her body. She is only appreciated for her physique. These women can gain publicity in a number of ways. They do not have to appear in these magazines, so it clear that they do want to exert their sexuality and make a statement about it. It is admirable that they are happy with their sexuality but by representing themselves in this manner reinforces this as a standard for all women to achieve. This means that when women are not happy with this conduct they are seen as odd and prudish because even professional athletes agree to it. There are many young women and children who look up to

these athletes and their choices in their representation has a great influence on their supporters views of the world and, in a nuanced way, gender relations. Young men will think that all women are there for them to observe. Young women, who look up to these sportswomen, will believe that they too should act in this way to show their own power. They will also start believing that being admired for ones looks far outweighs being admired for any other abilities.

These women have more responsibility than regular women. Models appears in these magazines mainly because of the money and therefore their representation do not resound as strongly with the audience. Young women however, will view this as their only option if the women they look up to also participate in raunch culture. This is also true for the other celebrities that appear in this magazine. As a celebrity obsessed culture, many people take their cues for behaviour and adopt any trends from their favourite celebrities.

The same issue of the magazine contains an interview with Megan Fox (*FHM*, September 2008: 78-85). She is a new starlets that's fan base consist of young men and women. She holds the international title for *FHM's* Sexiest Women in the World 2008. She is venerated for her looks rather than her acting ability or acting career. The article discusses their idea of an iconic film moment, as the scene where her character is working on a car. This has somehow established her as a tomboy rather than a girlie-girl. Fox plays into this idea throughout the article too. A juxtaposition is set up in her pictorials, as she is dressed in very pale feminine

lingerie, holding a teddy bear or lying under furry bedding. However, her teddy bears stuffing is ripped from it and she is also shown in another shot biting its nose. This sets up her persona up as an anomaly. She seems very feminine and possesses all the traits that are considered as the epitome of beauty but she also is edgy and not what she seems.



Like all *FHM* models, she gushes over how much she loves the magazine. It is clear in the interview that she has a lad mentality. That she is one of the women

who follows their ideas of gender relations. She objectifies herself, by not only being part for the magazine, but also by referring to her body using slang. She refers to her vagina as a, “pie” (Mooney, September 2008:83). By using, normally offensive terms to describe her body, she sets herself apart from other women, she too like a guy uses derogatory language to describe female body parts. She is, in essence, in touch with masculinity and lad ideals but she is still extremely feminine looking so is not threatening. In this light she is an ideal woman, according to standards set by the magazine. She goes on to describe her experiences at the various strip clubs she has attended and even danced at. She discusses what the strippers looked like, “you see a 63-year-old stripping next to a pregnant woman, next to a girl with six teeth” (Mooney, September 2008:85). She intends this to be somewhat humorous. The fact that she is poking fun at women, who evidently in poorer situations than she, makes her what Levy (2005) describes as a ‘female chauvinistic pig’. She doesn’t discuss these women’s situations for what they are, unfortunate state of affairs. The unfortunate aspect of them stripping, for her, is that they don’t look a certain way she would approve of. She disparages their physical conditions as if they are merely aberrations. She doesn’t have a problem with stripping, it something that is a fun activity for women to do but like some people, she has a perception that it should be glamorous. This is a result of raunch culture. Society is made to believe this is a fun activity, even a great workout. The uglier aspects of it, like old women being in such dire situations that they have to exploit themselves to survive, are glossed over and even ignored. Pornography is becoming more accepted in society and the negative

aspects, which clearly exist in many cases, are forgotten as they do not promote the trend. Women blindly use pornographic conventions to improve their standing with men, perhaps not for their own benefit and simply ignore that this is a male dominated industry that is historically known to exploit women. The message being sent out in society is that, “porn is sexy and if you want to be a sexually attractive and forward-thinking woman, you’ve got to catch on” (Paul 2005:109). But it is rather problematic trying to establish ones progressive ways based on something so dogmatic and obnoxious in its treatment of women.

This message is also clearly being supported by *FHM*. Fox carries on to say that she, cooks for her boyfriend in “nothing but panties and shag-me pumps” (Mooney, September 2008:85). She is evidently playing into both traditional female roles as well as settings that are common to male fantasy and pornographic conventions. She also describes herself as having a fifteen year old boys libido and unlike other women who, “call other women sluts” (Mooney, September 2008:85) she enjoys sex. Firstly she discloses her sexual relationship with her boyfriend quite freely. It is apparent that in raunch culture one has disclose their sexual encounters to both promote their sexual prowess and show their independence. This make them appear more advanced and attractive. This is also a devise used by *FHM* to set her and her version of femininity up as an ideal and to arouse their readers. This links well with the performance quality of raunch culture. A schism is set between her and other women. She has a strong sex drive, enjoys sex as well the performance aspect of it. While the women the readers are more

likely to encounter, are name-calling and unprogressive who do not enjoy sex. Mainly because they may not dance at strip clubs or serve their fully dressed partners, dinner in a state of undress. These women are in fact offended by sex (September:85). What this kind of account of female sexuality does is, make any opposing version of sexuality seem less important or down right abnormal. Women who are not exhibitionists are now accused of finding sex offensive. This is not the case they just choose to experience it in another way. However, in order to gain favour with the lads, women now have to behave in this manner so that they are no accused of being uptight. Then they too can be seen in the same light as Fox.

Women can no longer find strip clubs or pornography offensive. Even if they do not want to partake fully in this culture by dancing themselves, they must encourage this behaviour. "Taking your boyfriend for a lap dance is what every sexy and supportive girlfriend should do" (Paul 2005:110) or perhaps agreeing to be photographed for the *FHM*. In almost every magazine there is a section in the *FHM* mail titled, "Check out our cherries" or "Early honey entries". The latter are entry pictures for *FHM*'s version of a beauty contest. All these girls are photographed in lingerie or bikini's. Popularity dictates that they all have a serious and seductive expression. They are also sometime's wet, sprawled on beds, cars or even rocks. This is the same for the 'cherries', which consist often of women sending in their own photos. These women are either in their bikini's, lingerie's and sometimes even topless. Sometimes girls send in pictures of themselves with

their ‘girlfriends’ and occasionally they will even be kissing each other. These are prime examples of raunch culture. Women want to be seen as sexy and in vogue. While it is established that raunch culture is believed by many as a way to proclaim female advancements, in this sense, it is questionable that these young women even know this fact. Perhaps it is becoming so standardised that women simply see it as something they must do, without understanding the fundamentals. This is indicative of the subtle nature of the pornification that is taking place in society. Not all women are out there in society thinking they should prove their empowerment; they may be doing it merely for the sake of doing it.



Some letters are women asking the magazine to show their pictures, as seen in these examples , “Hi *FHM*- I’m 24 and like to be in check out our cherries” (June :18) and “I want to be in your magazine” (August:11). Other letters are women sending in pictures to impress their boyfriends, “This is for my man Pieter Terblanche” (August:11) and “It would make my man so proud” (March:12). However, some are sent in by guys asking to, “just look at my gorgeous girl” (September:15); “Please print this pick of my fiancé. She’s one of your biggest

fans”(May:16) or “what do da boys think of my busty beauty?” (August:11), while another state that its ‘my wonderful girlfriends dream to be the FHM” (August:11). Women are increasingly wanting to be seen in this light by men. They are fans of the magazine and are not bothered by the sexist nature of it. They want to be like the models in the magazine and will objectify themselves in order to get recognition by the readers and their boyfriends. Men use their girlfriends as collateral, to enhance their own value in the eyes of other men and go so far as to objectify their own girlfriends. This shows how the subordinate nature of female agency in pornography is increasingly becoming assumed by raunch culture and the people who partake in it.



The main case here is that women are no longer in power as much as they claim they are. Their esteem and worth comes from the approval of others and they allow themselves to be reduced to their bodies and only appreciated for this aspect. They are all exploiting their sexuality to gain a reputation that they are clued in, even if this will negatively impact any future relations they have with people as people may now see them as inferior because even they make objects

of themselves. The most disturbing entry comes from a parent in the September (18) issue. This father states that he thinks his daughter is prettier than most of the magazines models (June:18). Unfortunately this entry is a signal as to how women are still being objectified and sexualised by others, even by their parents and that feminism has still got a way to go. The fact that this young woman is being put on display for other men's gratification, by her own parents, shows how raunch culture is not infact about individual liberation but rather an indication that pornography is now so pervasive that even parents think it is noble and advanced to exploit their children. The sexualisation of female bodies, once looked at with disdain, is now encouraged to the point that women partake in it, while those close to them encourage it and even help them.

FHMmail

Check out our cherries!

JAMIE-LEE
Hey guys. Isn't my girl Jamie-Lee just gorgeous? Thanks for a great mag!
DANIEL, VIA EMAIL

JAMILLA
I believe I have a unique look, so now I'm putting you guys to the test...
JAMILLA, VIA EMAIL
➤ **Unique indeed! Okay, we passed the test. So, what do we win?**

LUCINDA
Hi FHM - I'm 24, and I'd like to be in *Check out our cherries!* What do you think? Looking forward to hearing from you...
LUCINDA, VIA EMAIL
➤ **What do we think, Lucinda? Is niice...**

DADDY'S GIRL
I just wanted to say that I think our daughter is far prettier than most of your models - but then that's us admiring her because we love her so much.
RAY AND RIKA VAN RENSBURG, VIA EMAIL

WANT TO SCORE A CHERRY OF YOUR OWN? GO TO: fhm.yesnomayb.co.za

Ray and Rika's daughter

The magazine put a twist on this regular feature by asking its readers to send in pictures of themselves in sports wear (FHM, October 2008:142). Again in this instance the ordinary girls wear bikini bottoms with the various team logos on them but with no top. Either they are covered by a sports scarf or they hold their breast seductively. All these women are, “acting out some male construct of what sexual desire is supposed to look like” (Paul 2005:11). This is not benefitting women or men. Sex is now longer about the act but the look of it. Women are now left with a sexless sexuality. They are more concerned with looking desirable rather than exploring their own desires. They claim to be sexually liberal but its mainly for the sake of the proclamation and to garner favour with men. The fact that it is based on performance will not benefit them in the long run nor will men benefit from something that is merely pretense and not authentic. Male readers of lad magazines are deceiving themselves to believe that all women would sincerely want to partake in this culture and these magazines. It is doubtful that all these women partake in *FHM* for their own pleasure rather than be accepted by the lads.



FHM deifies one variety of femininity while it derides and even ignores others. They also offer motivation for women to engage in their brand of femininity. Apart from the admiration the magazine bestows on its women, there are other more attractive aspects to being in the magazine. The magazine holds annual model searches. One offers a position on a television show *Deal Or No Deal*. The magazine promotes the competition as a means for the women to, “win fame, fortune and fans” (April:20-21). This is an appealing prospect for any women seeking these things. These women are required to pose for the magazine so they have to fit into this particular sort of beauty as well as be comfortable being portrayed in this sexualised manner. The July(68-73) magazine has a spread on these model. Only four are shown here though. They are all wearing red lingerie and are either clawing at their underwear, crawling across the floor or spreading their legs. However, the fact that they have gained some recognition is enough encourage other women to behave in this manner in order to gain fame and fortune.





The most popular competition held by the magazine is the *FHM* Homegrown Honeys competition. Much like the letter page, women send in provocative picture of themselves in the hope of being chosen as South Africa's favourite contestant. Male readers vote every month until the deadline and the appeal of this competition is the prospect of being found attractive by a large portion of South African men. This is their version of a beauty pageant but instead of asking questions about their dreams and aspirations these models are asked about more risqué topics. In the April (70-75) edition the winner Maxzell Lerm, emphasises what a prestigious event it is to be an *FHM* model. This further authenticates this femininity as they set up the magazine in such an appealing way that ordinary women would want to be part of it and therefore act in the appropriate way to be accepted by it. Maxzell discusses the fact that she is naughty, “losbandig” and that she enjoys seducing men (Lawrence, April 2008:72). She also speaks about how the fabric of the lingerie felt on her skin (Lawrence, April 2008:73). The approval from men that comes from these competitions, strengthens the idea that women need to behave in a sexualised manner. If they want to be glorified like these winners then they too must pose topless in a g-string and discuss their sex

lives. However, it comes at the cost of only being valued for your sexuality and being objectified by all the people who helped you obtain your new title.



Women are clearly negotiating their own way through patriarchy. They are now striving to achieve their own success. However, this is leading to an atmosphere of selfishness as these women do not seem bothered if their representations are possibly going to create a near future where gender roles regress instead of progress. By reinforcing the stereotypes associated with women to make progress with the men, women are creating a dismal future. Dominique La Toullec states that she doesn't mind "inciting male fantasies" (December:73) and this is an

example of her perpetuating a stereotype, of women being sexually available at all times, to gain popularity. This stereotype flows into the next one. She specifically implies that these fantasies should include another woman (December 2008:73). It has been established that most of these models claim to be bi-curious, however, the fact that she feels the need to discuss it shows that her experiences are rather for show and male benefit than for herself. She and other women, in these magazines, are reinforcing stereotypes and this is not conducive to promoting an environment of equality. If women are allowing men to see them as objects than it makes sense that men's behaviour towards women will turn severe. They will start treating women as second class citizens because women targeting themselves.

In this culture women are hyper sexual and/or are like lads. Amanda Klaassen admits to pole dancing classes, doing a *Playboy* commercial and kissing women (FHM, December 2008:81). However, these models always prefer men. Tracy McGregor admits to heavy drinking (FHM, August 2008:72), while Kirby Aurret (FHM, November 2008:28) drives Harleys and Karen Manzano (FHM, April 2008:18) is a fan of guns. These are activities that have normally always been associated with masculinity. While women should be able to partake in activities associated with men, this culture promotes masculine behaviour as an ideal. These women, are deemed honorary men by *FHM*. They are not treated like other women, they are represented as though they are above them, more on the level of the lads. However, the aspiration to be like men should not be the main objective of female liberation. Hoping to be, "experienced like a man" (Levy 2005:4), like most

women in raunch culture hope for, is a denigration of womanhood. It implies womanhood is lacking and this reinforces this central idea of patriarchy. Fox (FHM, September 2008:85) is a glaring example of women appropriating male ideas of womanhood and male behaviour. She objectifies other women and criticises them. All the women who claim to kiss other women, are in fact objectifying them. They are basically using these faceless participants for the pleasure of men and to increase their popularity. Masculinity is ironically still a solid identity while femininity is becoming even more commodified and even maligned, if they do not commodify themselves, than in the past. Men are still allowed to be sexist, as they can brush it off as irony. Even if they didn't it wouldn't matter because women partake in sexist behaviour as well and therefore justify it.

The sex therapist Dominika shows that society is becoming so enveloped in all that is raunch as even its experts need to look like a porn star to be thought to have credibility. Some of the questions sent to her are from women, which further indicates how popular *FHM* is with women. One would think they would seek advice from a sexpert from a woman's magazine but perhaps they believe Dominika is more knowledgeable because her appearance typifies that of raunch culture and therefore she portrays this culture's idea of sexuality. She portrays this image of femme fatale and comes across as being very experienced and sexually satisfied. This gives the impression that in order to be considered knowledgeable on this topic, women must look like Dominika. It also gives the impression that

women need to be raunchy to obtain the same level of sexual experience this women appears to have. This shows how raunch culture is commercializing sex as it is more about the appearance of sexuality. Women must acquire the props, like Dominika's lingerie, satin gloves and silk stockings in order to appear sexual. They may also be of the belief that by having all these things they too will learn more about themselves sexually and while it may help in this, it still emphasises the performance aspect over the more important factors of sexuality.

Dominika also acts for the camera and the male gaze. The December (135-140) issue is the best example of this as it is her article on her bench mark test for sex toys. This article has several pictures of her, all consist of her oiled body clad in various lingerie. She seductively stares at the camera in a teasing fashion and one picture specifically shows her acting as though she is in mid orgasm. While it is laudable that they are informing both their male and female readers of various sex aids, the accompanying pictures are not helpful. They are rather stereotypical as they show her handling this heavy machinery. Either this implies that using these toys may prove to be a chore and having sex with men alone is a better option or FHM may just think it sexy for a women to do handy work while barely dressed. Either way it sets up an idea of what sexuality looks like or should look like. That is women should be as dramatic or flirty as possible while men can just be.



Male readers will assume that she epitomises sexuality and female pleasure and they will assume all women should be like her. Women in turn will look to her for instruction and try to imitate her brand of femininity of it in hopes of either gaining what looks like it could be pleasure or to merely come across as though they too are experienced.

In the section Ladies Confession, women send in the raunchiest account of their sexual experiences and they can win underwear, lubricant and clothes if their story is featured in the magazine. It may lead to the readers thinking that women should be so candid and raunchy. Women are also made to believe that in

everyday relations they must talk dirty and be open about their sexuality because this is what is expected in the *FHM*. This is problematic as it encourages a degree of embellishment instead of being genuine because more explicit accounts are praised in the media and therefore it must be consistent that this would be the case in reality. In reality there are also double standards so when women are candid their reputations may become tarnished regardless of how popular raunch culture is. However, *FHM* provides incentives for women to send in their stories and include their identities as they are likely to win prizes like lingerie, lubricant or tops.

It is glaringly obvious that raunch is part of a consumer culture and the more women buy into this standardised idea the more they deceive themselves and disregard their own desires to follow a trend. While some women may genuinely find pleasure in this, this should not be the only way form of sexuality. More options should be available even if they don't lead women to gain parity with men. Women should not see their femininity as lacking and strive to occupy male ideas of sexuality to the extent that they victimise other women. Men are also stereotyped and portrayed negatively by the pornification of society and raunch culture. They are perpetually targeted by magazines as though they driven by some innate animalistic carnal desire and that they all only see women as meat. The fact that magazines do this disregards the complexity of their sexuality as well.

Believing that this form of sexuality is empowering and partaking in this co-modified culture is far easier than admitting there is a lot of work to be done that requires female solidarity. The same solidarity our predecessors attained to enable us to have a wide range of choices. However, in society today sex does sell and women will rather form their own ways of existing in a patriarchal society and if this means they can make money in the process then that seems to be fine by them. They do not worry about the effects their behaviour will have on society. Women will not, under these circumstances, be able to work together to create a better environment. Especially if they buy into the competition to be considered most desirable and therefore most powerful by this culture and particularly its men. There seems to be a common belief that *FHM* like *Playboy*, is merely a channel for women to exploit to get ahead. However, this means that women can only advance their careers by exploiting their bodies and competing with other women in the process. Raunch culture plays on the ego and the fact that women seem to need validation from outside themselves to feel authoritative. This validation comes in the form of women being able to perceive themselves as desirable to others, regardless if they have success in other areas of their lives. It seems that this culture feeds off and creates an atmosphere of insecurity in women and therefore creates animosity. They send in their own pictures in hopes of being in the various competitions or even in the letters section. They compare themselves to the models and re-enact their poses when creating their entrance photos. Women, who not wish to partake appear to be prudish and less progressive as this culture is becoming more persistent. Women, partaking in raunch culture, are

all complicit in adding pressure on other women to partake in the same displays of sexuality. They are moreover implicated in the normalization of pornographic content and the hyper sexualisation of femininity. While it may be believed that these developments are helping women to become more open about sexuality, the promotion of only one sexuality is problematic and counter productive. Female identity is becoming more subjugated than actually advancing forward. The representations used in these magazines and consequently increasing pornification of society are clear indications of this fact.

Conclusion:

The two previous chapters compare the lad magazine and the pornographic magazine to establish whether both magazines feature pornographic content. It also sought out to establish whether the women, both models and ordinary readers, partake in raunch culture. All these factors contribute to the pornification of the media and, as a result, also of every day life.

Many conclusions have been made from this research. Gender roles have undergone many changes through recent history due to feminism; however the inception of a more tolerant masculinity was shortly snuffed out and replaced by the lad. While this masculinity is seen as a contemporary means of dealing with the new dynamics created between the genders, it is in fact no more than a carbon copy of the pre-feminist masculinity found in *Playboy*, even if it is less sophisticated and more juvenile. Both these masculinities predate the texts. They are both firmly entrenched in historical patriarchal ideologies set up around gender identities.

Both magazines cater for the philosophies surrounding this patriarchal masculinity, one of which includes the management of the representations surrounding women. Both magazines make extensive use of female representation but the style of this representation has proven to be problematic. These representations do not depict the diverse expressions of women's identities. They do not show women in all the different roles they perform throughout their days. Rather, the women shown in both magazines have been proven to be limited and oppressive. They rely on the

archaic patriarchal notion that women are merely there as ornamental entertainment and for the sole purpose of pleasing male desires. These women are submissive and desiring. They appear as if they are there chiefly to cater to the needs of the male reader. Whether they are the 'smiling girl next door' of *Playboy* or the 'raunchy girl' of *FHM*. These women appear naked or wearing the bare minimum. Both magazines make use of pornographic conventions when posing their models. These conventions either use high camera angles to portray the women in submissive sexualised positions or else the angle is centered on the midriff of the model to emphasise the body as opposed to the face.

Women are merely desiring bodies. *FHM* used the common convention of focusing on their models spread legs by using lowered camera angles. However, in this instance it was not meant as a way to make her seem more powerful as it was a means to focus on her sexualised body. Many pornographic conventions were used throughout both magazines. The lad magazine has proven to be irrefutably pornographic in its portrayal of women, and so much so that it has more women in its magazine than *Playboy*. While these women are somewhat clothed they are there for the purpose of inciting arousal in the male readers. This is a definitive category of pornography. *FHM* also emphasises the sexual nature of its women as it consistently draws attention to their bodies in its discourse. It discusses sex much more than *Playboy* and has many more articles related to this topic. *Playboy* magazine uses naked models as its main means of provoking arousal in its readers.

FHM undeniably uses more conventions to sexualise its content as opposed to just displaying naked bodies. In this sense it has evaded the title pornography and can reach a larger target audience as a result. However, the increasing public fascination with pornography has indeed lead to soft-core pornography being appropriated in mainstream media texts and therefore *FHM* is not the only form of media that uses its conventions without its label.

Both these magazines and pornography depend on sexist tropes when dealing with women. As seen in *Playboy's* cartoons, it can be brutally sexist and cruel to women. While *Playboy* does not hide under the guise of irony, it still may make use of the excuse of equality in its defense of its sexist nature. *FHM* tries to undercut all criticisms by using this excuse. These men believe, in a self pitying way, that to make themselves feel better for losing the benefits of patriarchy they can poke fun at women. These women cannot complain as a result because it would be seen as reprehensible. However, the problem with this irony is that it is not ironic anymore. It is slowly being diluted into reality.

The contemporary target audience was not brought up in a context just post feminism. It has become normalised for them, thus they do not have any feminism to rebel against like the initiation of the lad declared. Lads now are seeing this treatment of women as truth. Sexism that was used formerly as a joke is now just

plain sexism, without any pretense at irony. It is becoming less excusable and unfortunately more acceptable by this generation. Misogyny is becoming more brutal.

It is more brutal as women are becoming more accepting of it. This research has continuously pointed back at how it is the models and wannabe models, contestants and readers who seek this treatment. For them it is seen as a compliment to be seen as sexually desirable and sexually available to the public. They also see self-objectification as a warped version of liberation. The allure of raunch culture has led to this. Women want to be likened to the fantasy women of *Playboy* and to gain some closeness with this ideal they have accepted its ideas of womanhood. They are trying to negotiate their power in society and still be accepted by the men they have “taken” it from. They have thus appropriated male behaviour and male constructs of female sexuality in order to gain favour with them.

While women now have the independence to decide how they want to be seen by the world, this study has shown women involved in raunch culture are unfortunately choosing narrow and self-defeating modes of representation. Acting out a male developed construct of what women’s sexuality is, is to ignore what they as women innately know of themselves. Women appear to find approval from others more important than their own fulfillment. By sending in pictures of themselves in objectifying poses and partaking in lad magazines ideas of beauty pageants are in actual fact disempowering. While some women may find this

sexually fulfilling, it is questionable that all these young women do it for the same reasons. For the younger generations raunch culture, and the objectification of themselves and by implication other women, is now just something they should partake in because pornography is so widely accepted.

The advancement of feminism and the sexual freedom it has permitted women cannot and should not be ignored. Nor should there be a return to a more modest approach to sexuality as this can be more detrimental to women's rights. However, representations and society itself should open up to the variety of sexual identities out there. A whole range of women's sexualities has been completely ignored by these magazines. As a result so has a whole range of masculine sexual identities. The line between sex as a performance and sex in reality needs to be towed so that women cannot feel stifled by the pressure of this culture. In a way, female sexuality has once again become regulated by raunch culture and the pornification of society. By only providing one version of sexuality women are not permitted to explore other avenues.

Women are betraying their own varying desires to partake in this monolithic trend and this complacency must end. More female friendly representations of sex should be employed and created for women by women. There should also be a larger variety in ethnicity and age incorporated into these portrayals. These magazines have proven to be both ageist and racist in their representations apart from their extremely misogynist portrayals of women in general.

This study has shown that many women aspire to be more like men. This holds a danger in the fact that it indicates that contemporary society still views women and their sexuality as deficient. They need to supplement it with male traits. This is not the case as women can just look inwardly and discover all their strengths and media representations should permit this. Appropriating and celebrating representations created by the likes of Hugh Hefner can still be seen as unsavory. This is a man who believes that only in “the intervening years women really have become human” (Gladstone 2002:2). This means that he feels that contemporary women are only now becoming human because they are adopting his philosophies on themselves and the broader gender interactions. He believes that women wanting to be treated like sexual equals instead of mere playmates are anti-sexual and anti-revolutionary (Gladstone 2002:2). Women are only seen as human if they follow his ideals. This shows just how degrading and backward the increasing integration of pornography into mainstream media can be. It still depends on patriarchy and still views women as second class citizens. Instead of adopting the rivalry and collapse in female solidarity this moment has created, women should read the underlying messages of this porn baron and realise that he and his protégées, found in likes of lad magazines, are still promoting masculinity at the expense of women. They are not concerned with the liberation of women.

This study has shown this throughout its analysis of female representation. These magazines still objectify women and use pornography as a means to present women.

Media not marketed as pornography, but that still employ its conventions, will lull the audience into the belief that these representations are safe. The fact that people look to media for information and instruction on life will lead them to appropriate behaviour that may lead to a regression in gender relations. If the idea of female objectification and male dominance is esteemed, through these increasingly pornified media messages, then certain women and men will follow its lead and treat themselves and each other in these ways. While an increased openness to sexuality has its many positive aspects, the aim of this practice in the media is to represent the copious sexualities in society instead of one narrow and potentially damaging ideal for people to try to occupy. Women may still take something, without negating their sexual pleasure, in these pornified representations of themselves but then its proponents should not make it something it is not. They should call it pornography instead of liberation and self expression. This will be more valid. Pornography should be seen for what it is and new forms of sexual representation should be explored to incorporate more diverse, authentic and realistic portrayals. The new knowledge this study has provided can enable further areas of inquiry into this field of study.

The “freedom to be sexually provocative is not enough freedom; it is not the only ‘women’s issue’ worth paying attention to” (Levy 2005:200). However, society seems to have forgotten this and this may be why feminism is considered in a negative manner and is routinely being called prudish by lads and laddettes alike (Cochrane 2007:1). Women do not need to be like men or typecast-sexualised femme fatales (Levy 2005:200). Women will never gain equality and deserve respect if they use the same tools lad magazines and pornography do to define and represent themselves. By using these representations women will only validate the sexist ideas these industries utilise.

In conclusion, this form of popular culture and media has proven to be problematic. This is because people believe it to be a result of liberation and gender equality but in reality is reinforcing original misogynist binaries and is in actual fact oppressive. The pornification of society can be seen as a backlash to feminism and real gender liberation. Women are still represented in oppressive and narrow ways. Their sexuality is still represented much like that prior to the women’s liberation movement. While they are still being leered at by men and seen only for what their bodies can provide, then it does not matter how these representations are packaged to charm, it is still old school oppression not a means to assert female liberty. The only way to move beyond this is to represent women more respectfully and realistically. Women should stop looking up to capitalist and patriarchal consumer trends that promote an unrealistic standardised ideal and learn to promote their uniqueness, and abilities beyond their sexuality.

They should focus on all women's issues, including the realistic representations of female sexuality, that need liberating because it is clear that this is still neither a liberal nor a liberated society, like many would like to believe. New kinds of media texts should be incorporated, and demanded, to provide more variety for men and women and to create pressure on lad magazines to either change or openly declare themselves for what they really are: misogynist pornographic media texts. Sexual openness is never the problem. It is the manner in which it is represented that offers problems. If a full spectrum of sexuality is shown, that is educational, diverse and honest in its representations of the sexes, and if women are shown as equal sexual partners as opposed to objects for sex, then an increase in sexual representation, targeted to adult society is not harmful but can be helpful in replacing negative sexual representations.

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