

Negotiating borders between 'new mannism' and 'laddishness' in British men's magazines' problem pages: a casestudy

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Desde los años ochenta, lo que se ha dado en llamar new mannism y laddishness se han convertido en dos posiciones de sujeto recurrentes en los discursos sobre la masculinidad construidos en diversos géneros de la cultura popular contemporánea del Reino Unido, incluidas las revistas de temas generales para hombres. Sirviéndonos de un acercamiento a los conceptos de discurso e identidad desde el Análisis Crítico del Discurso, este trabajo da cuenta de las tensiones entre ambas imágenes de lo masculino tal y como se articulan en las secciones de consulta de las revistas para hombres británicas. Mediante el estudio de un caso, examinamos la construcción discursiva de la masculinidad en este género, desentrañando los procesos de negociación de identidad entre dichas imágenes de lo masculino, e iluminando el papel fundamental del lenguaje en estos procesos activados en el acto de lectura de este tipo de publicaciones periódicas en lengua inglesa.

Since the eighties, so-called 'new mannism' and 'laddishness' have become two recurring subject positions in the discourses on masculinity constructed in contemporary popular-culture genres in Britain, men's general-interest magazines included. Drawing upon a critical discourse analysis perspective on 'discourse' and 'identity', this paper delves into the tensions between both images of masculinity articulated in men's magazines' problem pages. The discursive construction of masculinity in this genre is thus examined by means of a case study which explores the mechanisms of border negotiations between 'new mannism' and 'laddishness' in men's magazines' problem columns. This case study likewise highlights the fundamental role of language within the processes activated when reading this type of publications in English.

Palabras clave: análisis crítico del discurso, discurso, identidad, laddishness, new mannism, revistas masculinas británicas

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, discourse, identity 'laddishness', 'new mannism', British men's magazines

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the eighties, 'new mannism' and 'laddishness' have become two recurring subject positions in the discourses on masculinity constructed in contemporary British popular-culture genres, men's magazines included. Although the 'new man' and the 'new lad' are often clearly – and antagonistically – represented in these publications, the borders between these images are sometimes blurred¹. Drawing upon a critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA) perspective on discourse and identity, this contribution means to shed light on the tensions between both subject positions as constructed in men's magazines' problem pages. The analysis of a sample from this genre will serve as a case study exploring the ways whereby masculine identities are discursively constructed in this genre through processes of border negotiations between new mannism and laddishness. The role of language in the identity-negotiation processes activated when reading these magazines will thus be highlighted.

2. CONSTRUCTING THE SELF AND THE OTHER, NEGOTIATING BORDERS

One major approach to identity-construction processes within contemporary cultural theory considers that, being regulated by the power relations of the social formations where they emerge, discourses create 'subject positions' with which individuals will negotiate their own identity². Hall (2000: 19) has seen identities as "points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us". In particular, 'identity' may be said to refer to the meeting point, the point of sature, between, on the one hand, the discourses and practices which attempt to 'interpellate', speak to us or hail us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses, and, on the other, the processes which

produce subjectivities, which construct us as subjects which can be 'spoken' (Hall *ibid.*).

What Redman (2000: 10) has come to label as the 'subject-of-language' approach to identity production entails that "there is no 'essential', 'true' or pre-social self but that, instead, identities are constituted or 'performatively' enacted in and through the subject positions made available in language and wider cultural codes" (*ibid.*)³. As Edley and Wetherell stress, "selves are being accomplished in the course of social interactions, reconstructed from moment to moment within specific discursive and rhetorical contexts, and distributed across contexts" (1997: 2005). This has lead theorists like Sarah Mills to use the notion of 'negotiation' to refer to the process activated as individuals constantly redefine their identity by taking up or resisting the subject positions made available in the discourses surrounding them throughout their social lives:

The categories and narratives which discourse constructs for subjects are not simply imposed, but are subject to negotiation by those subjects. It's the process of engaging with discursive structures that constitutes us as particular types of individuals or subject positions (1997: 96).

Admittedly, identities have been discussed as materializing in the course of ongoing processes of border negotiations between uniqueness and difference, for "it is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks, to what has been called it *constitutive outside* that the positive meaning of any term – and thus 'identity' – can be constructed" (Hall 2000: 17). Therefore, identities are articulated as a result of a process where the self and the other negotiate borders of sameness and diversity: As maintained by Gilroy (1997: 315), the Other, against whose resistance the integrity of identity is established, can be recognized as part of the self [...] This means that the self can no longer be plausibly understood as a unitary entity but appears instead as one fragile moment in the dialogic circuit that connects 'us' with our 'others'.

2.1. Negotiating subject positions in media discourse

Echoing Foucaultian-inspired discourse theory, Stuart Hall considers

that identities are constructed as a result of the power of discourses to generate what they name and regulate as well: “the discourse produces ‘subjects’ – figures who personify the particular forms of knowledge which the discourse produces [...] But the discourse also produces a *place for the subject* (i.e. the reader or viewer, who is also ‘subjected to’ discourse)” (1997: 56)⁴. If different types of discourse come to construct different subject positions, which happen to be “specific to discourse types and ideologically variable” (Fairclough 1989: 102), what makes media discourse specific in this respect lies in its construction of “an ‘ideal’ reader who is at the same time both produced and in a sense imprisoned by the text” (Caldas-Coulthard 1996: 250)⁵. Consequently, media discourse builds into subject positions for ideal subjects “and actual viewers or listeners or readers have to negotiate a relationship with the ideal subject” (Fairclough 1989: 49).

2.2. CDA and the analysis of the discursive construction of identities

As substantiated by the above-mentioned approaches, ‘discourse’ is a vital notion to understand identity-construction processes. By way of example, Petersen has emphasized the fact that “increasingly, *identity is seen as a discursive construction* – one that is arbitrary and exclusionary, and acts as a normative ideal for regulating subjects” (1998: 14, emphasis added). CDA has thus become a major instrument for cultural analyses, providing “the methodological tools by which to demonstrate the place of language in the constitution and regulation of cultures and cultural identities” (Barker and Galasinski 2002: 27). Considering discourse as a form of social practice, CDA posits as a basic premise the fact that “discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially shaped: it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people” (Fairclough and Wodak 1997: 258). As it is, CDA has become a fundamental tool to examine the discursive construction of identities and the positioning of people as social subjects, disentangling the role of language in these processes as well. As Fairclough maintains, “discourses do not just reflect or represent social entities and relations, they construct or ‘constitute’ them; different discourses constitute key entities in different ways, and position people in different ways as social subjects” (1992a: 3-4).

Norman Fairclough's (1989, 1992a, 1992b, 1995a, 1995b, 2003) model of CDA, as drawn upon in this paper, is organised on the basis of a three-fold conception of discourse: "discourse, and any specific instance of discursive practice, is seen as simultaneously (i) a language text, spoken or written, (ii) discourse practice (text production and text interpretation), (iii) sociocultural practice" (Fairclough 1995a: 97). This approach to discourse involves a three-dimensional analytical framework involving three stages. (i) *Description* of textual features leads to the (ii) *interpretation* of the discursive practice constructed by such textual features, focusing on processes of textual production, comprehension, distribution and consumption activated in such an interaction. This interaction is finally (iii) *explained* as a form of socio-cultural practice, embodying a certain ideology and being socially determined.

3. MEN'S MAGAZINES, PROBLEM PAGES, NEW MANNISM AND LADDISHNESS IN CONTEMPORARY BRITAIN

Since the mid-eighties, a new generation of general-interest men's magazines has emerged in the British print-media market⁶. Titles like *Arena*, *Esquire*, *FHM*, *Loaded*, *Maxim* or *Stuff for Men* have become well-established magazines for men sold on a monthly basis at two-to-three pounds per issue. Only ten years after they first started being published, men's lifestyle magazines had already become "the fastest-growing magazine sector" (Smith 1996: 1-2), and "had established a mass market and were, in some cases, outselling the most popular women's magazines" (Jackson, Stevenson and Brooks 2001: 1) in Britain⁷. These magazines are targeted at "single, affluent, city-dwelling, high-earning and high-spending, primarily heterosexual men" (Edwards 1997: 76), and, as various market-research studies confirm (Cf. Mort 1988: 211; Smith 1996: 32), are addressed at a twenty-five- to thirty-five-year-old ideal male reader.

Men's magazines incorporate various features to do with sex and women, fashion and grooming, health and fitness, sport, cars and travel. In addition to interviews with famous male icons and celebrities and how-to sections, these periodicals include a great deal of advertising about high-tech, drink, tobacco, men's wear and accessories. Following the long tradition of 'agony aunts' in women's weeklies, problem pages

are a regular feature in these magazines, where readers and counsellors interact about various problems associated with the assumed masculine lifestyle, for instance, conflictive relationships with women, fathering, health, personal looks, style and fashion concerns.

New mannism and laddishness have become two dominant subject positions in the discourses on masculinity constructed in present-day British popular-culture genres such as TV shows, advertisements, self-help books and men's lifestyle magazines⁸. In contrast to traditionally patriarchal constructions of masculinity, new mannism has come to define a renovated form of masculinity characterized by a more egalitarian treatment of women, an attempt to come to terms with the realm of emotions, and a remarkable concern about personal looks:

New man represents the ideal partner for the modern, liberated, heterosexual woman. He is a softer, more sensitive and caring individual, who also avoids sexist language, changes nappies and loves to shop all day his own clothes (Edley and Wetherell 1997: 204).

Following its advent in the mid-eighties, new mannism has been discussed as a response to the impact of second-wave feminism on men since the seventies attempting "to resolve some of the obvious contradictions of the Classic Macho, to recognize and make peace with the feminine within itself, in response to feminist critiques [...] invigorated by his enthusiastic embrace of female roles and qualities" (Chapman 1988: 227). The impingements of consumerism on men have likewise been considered as a fundamental element contributing to the shaping of the new man imagery and "the space it represented for the display of masculine sensuality, the sanctioning of a highly staged narcissism through the codes of dress and grooming" (Nixon 1996: 202).

Nonetheless, by the late eighties Rutherford (1988: 32) echoes the emergence of a 'retributive man' representing "the struggle to reassert a traditional masculinity, a tough independent authority". Throughout the nineties, laddishness has come to represent what Storry and Childs (1997: 338) consider "a reaction to the idea of the caring, sensitive 'new man' produced by the feminist movement". The new lad has thus come to herald the most 'destructively' patriarchal aspects of masculinity by re-

creating hegemonic male values like sexual objectification of women, aggressive and disruptive behaviour in soccer matches, homophobia or excessive drinking. As Edwards puts it, “where the New Man was caring and sharing the New Lad is selfish, loutish and inconsiderate to a point of infantile smelliness” (1997: 82).

Highlighting the media-driven character of new mannism and laddishness, Rowman has recently insisted on the mutual constituency between, and the antagonistic nature of, both subject positions: “the so-called New Man [...] is a media creation who is not to be found in the real world. Even if he did exist, my belief is that he would deteriorate into the New Lad all too easily” (1997: 250). Although the ‘new man’ has become a highly celebrated and politically correct image of masculinity in various media representations of cotemporary Britain, in elbowing his way forward, the new lad has succeeded in validating and reminding society of the persistence of the most patriarchal and hegemonic burden inherited by contemporary masculinities. Both images have coexisted in media representations of masculinity ever since, but laddism has come to express the other – more repressed – side of aspirational new mannism for masculine selves.

4. CASE STUDY

Since they started publishing, titles like *GQ*, *Arena*, *Later* or *Esquire* have been loyal to the representation of the new man throughout their features. The following example from *Later* magazine (September 1999, p. 26) dealing with masculine preoccupation with personal looks is illustrative of the construction of this subject position in the problem pages of the above-mentioned magazines:

Q: My girlfriend told me that I spend more time in front of the mirror and worrying about how I look than she does. She says it's a real turn off that I'm so vain. But I know she also likes the fact that I look good, so what's the problem?

THE EXPERT

Your problem can be broken down into two parts. First, maybe your girlfriend likes you looking good, but not

if you make too much of a fuss about it. This leads onto the second part of the problem. Are you making yourself look good for her or for yourself? The sad part of the story of Narcissus was that by falling in love with his reflection he was condemned to isolation. Many women give up on narcissistic men as they feel that they can never love them as much as they love themselves. So be warned.

Something similar has happened with the recurrent construction of laddish images of masculinity in magazines like *Sky Magazine*, *Loaded* or *Stuff for Men*, whose representation of the new lad has come to pervade the problem columns of such publications, as the next example from *Sky Magazine* (September 1999, p.162) illuminates:

Dear Karen

I'm desperate to shag this 22-year-old. I know her very well and we are good friends, though I've fancied her since day one. She has huge tits. But I'm worried if I make a pass and she doesn't like it, she'll hit me.

Adam, Manchester

Your problem is that you want a fuck but don't have the balls to ask. Christ, I've never seen such a wimp. Pussy does not spill out of those little gumball machines at the mall, you know. (If it did, I'd own a few.) You have to risk your arse to get some – that's the law. So, yellow-belly, why not take her for a drink and then say you fancy her? You know, in a few years you'll look back on this and think, "All that fuss over a pair of tits that aren't even attached to an offshore bank account and a bag of drugs."

New mannism and laddishness have coexisted since the late eighties onwards, and, more often than not, both constructions of masculinity can be found in the same title. What is more, it is sometimes difficult to establish clear borders between both subject positions in the images of masculinity projected from different sections of titles like *FHM*, *Maxim*, or *Men's Health*, problem pages included. This is the case of many questions about fathering, where a widespread strain emerges

between a caring, nurturing and sensitive representation of the so-called 'new father' (Brandth and Kvande 1998: 294) as a major dimension of the new man, and more "authoritarian or distant breadwinner images of fatherhood" (Lazar 2000: 380). Drawing upon CDA, we thus proceed to examine one of such instances in order to explore such border-identity negotiations as articulated through discourse⁹.

4.1. Negotiating borders between new mannism and laddishness in discourse: from text to socio-cultural practice

Various *textual features* come to construct a discursive practice taking shape around the reader's reluctance to fulfil his wife's wish for him to accompany her in the delivery room for fear of losing his sex drive. The lexis of committed fathering (e.g. "more involved"; "the sooner and stronger [...] the connection [...] between father and child"; "make yourself useful"; "mopping your wife's brow"; "holding her hand"; "letting her crush yours") coexists with that of laddish self-centredness and men's sexual priority over their wives' requirements (e.g. "don't want to be in the delivery room"; "feel sick"; "murder my sex drive"; "excuses"; "your sexuality"; "destroy your sex drive"). In actual fact, the very lexical formulation of the reader's question ("Got any good *excuses* I can *use*?") is significant of the unclear border between new mannism and laddism, for, in spite of selfishly prioritizing his sexual drive at all costs, the reader manifests some consideration of her wife's desires by seeking appropriate excuses helping him not to upset her too much. Furthermore, in describing the reader's sexual anxiety as "a common fear among men", the expert somehow acknowledges and shows a certain empathy with this husband's preoccupation.

In addition to lexical features like "common fear", masculine anxieties in the reader's question are constructed through mental processes (e.g. "and I *don't want* to be in the delivery room"; "the thought makes me *feel sick*")¹⁰. However, in promoting a model of fatherhood where men are more committed and willing to comply with their wives' needs, the counsellor tends to draw upon relational processes describing his own view upon the problem (e.g. "This *is* a common fear among men"; "Your sexuality *is* not that delicate"; "The more involved you *are* [...] the sooner and stronger the connection *will be* between father and child"), and

material processes, which hint at specific behavioural patterns for the new fathers (e.g. “*Take* a front-row seat”; “*Make* yourself useful by *mopping* your wife’s brow or, better still, *holding* her hand and letting her *crush* yours”). In quoting an expert’s opinion by means of verbal processes (e.g. “*says* Frank Pittman” [twice]), the counsellor succeeds in providing further credibility to his own advice.

This tension between new mannism and laddishness is evidenced by various aspects of mood and modality. Thus, whereas *can* as a modal of possibility serves the anonymous writer to wonder about which resources are available to evade his wife’s demands and preserve the full enjoyment of his sexuality (e.g. “Which excuses *can* I use?”), the column expert does not hesitate to use the imperative and modal auxiliary of certainty *will* to urge more nurturing attitudes towards fathering (e.g. “*Take* a front-row seat”; “the sooner and stronger the connection *will* be between father and child”; “*Make* yourself useful”)¹¹. On the other hand, negation helps the reader to reject what he considers as uncomfortable attitudes and behaviours of a would-be new man when in the delivery room (e.g. “and I *don’t want* to be in the delivery room”). This resource is likewise used by the magazine counsellor to disregard laddish overestimations of male sexuality (e.g. “This is a common fear among men, but *not* always a rational one”; “Your sexuality *is not* that delicate”)¹².

From a cohesive point of view, the writer’s use of copulative *and* as a major information organiser in his question projects a cumulative effect in the construction of his wife’s demands as actual hindrances for the safeguarding of his libido (e.g. “My wife is pregnant with our first child *and* I don’t want to be in the delivery room when it pops out – the thought makes me feel sick, *and* I’m sure it would murder my sex drive”). Moreover, although *you* refers sometimes to the reader having written to *Men’s Health’s* problem page (e.g. “*Make yourself* useful by mopping *your* wife’s brow or, better still, holding her hand and letting her crush *yours*”), this pronoun incorporates a generic value which accounts for the magazine’s attempt to diffuse its new mannist ideology amongst many other male readers assumed to share the same problem (e.g. “*Your* sexuality is not that delicate”; “it’s going to take more than a slippery placenta to destroy *your* sex drive”; “The more involved *you* are at the beginning”)¹³.

Following the conventions of counselling columns as a print-media genre, the choice of textual features described above may be *interpreted* as constructing a discursive practice constituting a subject position articulated on the basis of masculine anxieties about fathering, sexuality and the satisfaction of wives' demands. In drawing upon the schema of the problem page as a genre, where an individual seeks advice from the expert of a periodical publication to overcome personal troubles, magazine readers will come to comprehend men's relation with such dimensions as problematic¹⁴. Questions and answers like this have been selected and published by the section's editorial board as representative of ideal readers' systems of values and concerns. Whereas the projection of a man willing to preserve his sexual pleasures at all costs is consistent with the ideology of the new lad, an alternative representation of the new man emerges out of the reader's wife's desire to satisfy her demands and the counsellor's recommendation that he behave as a committed father since the very birth of his first child.

Faced with masculine-identity dimensions like this, magazine readers are accordingly positioned as having to negotiate their masculinity drawing upon elements of new mannism and laddishness whose borders are often blurring. Quoting O'Hagan (1996), Jackson, Stevenson and Brooks (2001: 35) refer to this self-and-other identity-negotiation process as producing "a would be New man who can't quite shake off his out-moded, but snug fitting, laddishness". As proved by various textual features from this discursive instance, the borders between new mannism and laddishness are not hard-and-fast. For the reader's self-centred concern over his sexual drive betrays a certain preoccupation with his wife's understanding of this attitude, which somehow brings him closer to the counsellor's recommendation to satisfy his partner's demands.

This discursive practice involves the interaction between the individual reader writing in, *Men's Health's* counsellor, this section's editorial board and the plurality of magazine consumers. The construction of this type of discourse may be *explained* as part of wider socio-cultural practices representing masculinity in popular-culture vehicles like men's magazines. As stated above, the social matrix of new mannist and laddish discourses on masculinity emerging in genres like problem columns is to be located in the changing socio-cultural circumstances experimented by men in Britain since the late seventies, such as the challenges of

feminism to patriarchal gender relations, the increasing effects of consumer culture on men, and the backlash against these trends. In this context, men's magazines have succeeded commercially "through the commodification of men's gender anxieties [...] giving men the discursive resources to handle their changing circumstances and experiences" (Jackson, Stevenson and Brooks 2001: 156). Men's magazines – counselling pages like this included – have thus had an essential role in representing and constructing such fundamentally media-driven images as the new man and the new lad, as well as in distributing the discourses on masculinity articulated around such images¹⁵.

5. FINAL REMARKS

Although new mannism and laddishness have often been explored as opposite versions of masculinity, both subject positions may be taken to be two sides of the same phenomenon, the one not being understandable without the other. Soon after these images started taking shape in the eighties, Rutherford hinted at this mutual dependency between the new man and the so-called retributive man by exploring them as "two idealised images that correspond to the repressed and the public meanings of masculinity [respectively]" (1988: 28). This coexistence of new mannism and laddishness and their somehow blurring limits may thus be taken as evidence of the shifting nature of masculinities in contemporary Britain; the ongoing process involving masculine selves' incorporation of dimensions formerly associated with the realm of femininity; and the simultaneous struggle to hold on to parameters traditionally defining male culture.

Being constructed as readers with specific identities, media discourse consumers are frequently positioned within a process where the self and the other negotiate borders of sameness and diversity. This case study of a sample from men's magazines' problem pages has served to explore this process of identity-construction in discourse, focusing on identity negotiations between new mannism and laddishness in this genre¹⁶. In particular, CDA has shed light on the fundamental role played by language in this process, as substantiated by the results concerning lexis, processes, modality, negation or cohesion.

NOTES

- ¹ Jackson, Stevenson and Brooks (2001) draw upon notions like 'laddishness', 'laddism', 'new lad' or 'retributive man' alike to refer to the same type of construction of masculinity. Due to their unusual character, such terms tend to be found written between single quotation marks; however, given their pervasive use in this paper, we will avoid quotation marks if at all possible to avoid reiteration.
- ² As Davies and Harré put it, "a subject position incorporates both a conceptual repertoire and a location for persons within the structure of rights for those that use that repertoire. Once having taken up a particular position as one's own, a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of the particular images, metaphors, story lines and concepts which are made relevant within the particular discursive practice in which they are positioned" (1990: 46).
- ³ Woodward acknowledges some differences between the notions of 'self' and 'identity', between which there is a great deal of overlap. Individuals' subjectivity includes their sense of the self, of 'who we are'; however, our experience of subjectivity takes place in a social context "where language and culture give meaning to our experience of ourselves and where we adopt an identity" (1997: 39).
- ⁴For Foucault, discourses designate "the practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (1972: 49).
- ⁵ Media discourse presupposes the existence of systems of values and beliefs among ideal readers, viewers or listeners. As Reah underlines with reference to newspapers – which may likewise be applied to other media vehicles – "newspapers assume the existence of groups that may not actually exist as groups within society and, by addressing themselves to these groups, create a shared ideology" (1998: 35).
- ⁶ Although the generation of lifestyle magazines explicitly addressed at men is fairly new, traditionally there has existed a long tradition

of titles dating back to the nineteenth century, which have had men as their primary readers. These interest magazines comprise titles about sports, fishing and hunting, photography, cars, DIY, soft-core, etc.

⁷ At the beginning of 2002, the British Audit Bureau of Circulations reported a circulation of over 570,000 items per month for titles like *FHM* (Cf. its web site at <<http://www.abc.org.uk>>).

⁸ Strictly speaking, the terms ‘new man’ and ‘new lad’ – or ‘retributive man’ – are to be taken as mere images of masculinity represented in various cultural artefacts in the UK. ‘New mannism’ and ‘laddishness’ – or ‘laddism’ – may be understood as wider subject positions articulated around such images in the discourses on masculinity constructed in contemporary British popular-culture genres such as men’s magazines. As explored by Nixon (1996: 202; 1997: 327), images like the new man or the new lad designate ‘regimes of representation’ whereas the corresponding subject positions (i.e. new mannism, laddishness) incorporate further ideological repertoires positioning as social subjects the individuals participating in the discourses where such subject positions are constituted. Considering du Gay, Hall, Janes, Mackay and Negus’s (1997: 3-5) ‘circuit of culture’, we can therefore associate the new man or the new lad with the practices of cultural representation in society, and new mannism or laddishness with those of identity construction. Incidentally, despite their direct connection with the new lad, expressions like ‘new laddishness’ or ‘new laddism’ are never employed in the literature on contemporary masculinities in Britain, but just ‘laddishness’ or ‘laddism’.

⁹ See final appendix.

¹⁰ According to systemic-functional linguistics, reality consists of ‘goings-on’ or processes. In Halliday’s (1994) typology, mental processes have to do with emotions and cognition (e.g. *like, want*); relational processes are processes of being (e.g. *be, become*); material processes concern the world of acting and creating (e.g. *do, go, stop*); and verbal processes reflect verbal conduct (e.g. *say, suggest*).

¹¹ As Palmer (1986: 108) stresses, the imperative is to be considered as the unmarked member of the system of deontic modality.

- ¹²As claimed by Fairclough (1989: 154-155), we tend to use negations “as a way of taking issue with the corresponding positive statements [...] What the writer in fact seems to be assuming is that these assertions are to be found in antecedent texts which are within reader’s experience”.
- ¹³ According to Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Starvik, “[generic] you again retains something of its 2nd person meaning: it can suggest that the speaker is appealing to the hearer’s experience of life in general, or else of some specific situation, as in: This wine makes you feel drowsy, doesn’t it?” (1985: 354).
- ¹⁴ Schemata may be said to be “‘higher-level complex (and even conventional or habitual) knowledge structures’, which function as ‘ideational scaffolding’ in the organisation and interpretation of experience” (Brown and Yule 1983: 247).
- ¹⁵ As indicated by Mills (1997: 17), we can assume that “that there is a set of discourses of femininity and masculinity, because women and men behave within a certain range of parameters when defining themselves as gendered subjects”.
- ¹⁶ Of course, these results apply to the positioning of magazine consumers in the act of reading such publications. Further sociological analyses – which are out of the scope of this work – should be undertaken to investigate the incorporation of features of new mannism and laddishness, which are but media constructions, by actual individuals.

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APPENDIX: SAMPLE ANALYSED

(Men's Health, July/August 1999, p. 97)

Q. My wife is pregnant with our first child and I don't want to be in the delivery room when it pops out – the thought makes me feel sick, and I'm sure it would murder my sex drive. Got any good excuses I can use?

A. This is a common fear among men, but not always a rational one. "Your sexuality is not that delicate", says Frank Pittman, a marriage and family therapist who thinks it's going to take more than a slippery placenta to destroy your sex drive. His advice: take a front-row seat. "The more involved you are at the beginning of the process, the sooner and stronger the connection will be between father and child", says Pittman. Make yourself useful by mopping your wife's brow or, better still, holding her hand and letting her crush yours when the going gets tough.